The Viking Age in Åland presents a mystery. Some disciplines see a (near-) complete discontinuity of language and culture from the Viking Age to the Middle Ages, which produces challenging riddles concerning the people who lived there, the societies that they created, and indeed why there would be such discontinuity at all. An equally puzzling question concerns who those people were. The Åland Islands were positioned on the frontier between Scandinavian and Finnic cultural areas, in a key location along the so-called Eastern Route that connected them. Even though Åland was not a significant political or economic center during the Viking Age, its cultural and geopolitical situation makes it extremely significant to understanding the networks spanning the Baltic Sea and how these networks related to the identities of cultures, polities and individuals. At the same time, the position between Sweden and Finland has politicized the reconstruction of history as heritage, which is inevitably bound up with current identities and conflicts. The present volume introduces the topic of Åland in the Viking Age and discusses it from the perspectives of a number of different disciplines with emphasis on questions of identities. The chapters review earlier interpretations, present current views, and also offer exploratory investigations that will stimulate future discussion and will certainly be of interest to specialist and non-specialist alike.
THE VIKING AGE IN ÅLAND
The Viking Age in Åland

Insights into Identity and Remnants of Culture

EDITED BY

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Frog
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Åland has been a border area or a contact zone between Finnic and Scandinavian cultural and linguistic groups for at least two thousand years. This position has always had a significant impact on how the Ålanders have been seen – and still are seen – by themselves and by others. Nevertheless, numerous cultural features also inevitably emerge that distinguish the Ålandic people from their eastern and western neighbors across the centuries. The chapters that comprise the present volume represent several different scientific disciplines and in many cases are results of collaborative, interdisciplinary efforts. They illustrate and discuss different factors that contribute to the historical identity of the Ålanders and show how multifaceted a concept such as ‘identity’ may be. This is especially the case when discussed in connection with the Viking Age, the period that belongs to a distant past. The other side of this process involves elaborating the understandings of Åland in the Viking Age from the perspective of different disciplines and advancing toward a synthesis of such perspectives. Major challenges to understanding this fascinating period are, on the one hand, the limitations of the data through which it can be observed and understood, and on the other hand, the challenge of overcoming images that have been constructed of Viking Age Åland by earlier scholarship. Even though focusing on the Viking Age in Åland, the chapters discuss the concept ‘identity’ as a research tool for scrutinizing the prehistoric era more generally. Even with
their emphasis on ‘identity’, these chapters offer a dynamic and multifaceted arrangement of perspectives on Åland in the Viking Age. In order to interweave the multifaceted discussions in different chapters, authors have cross-referenced other chapters in the volume by placing the authors’ names in SMALL CAPITALS. A separate index for cross-references to different discussions is included at the back of the volume.

Åland and the Viking Age

Passage to Åland, and indeed the whole subsistence on the islands, has always required seafaring. The Viking Age (ca. AD 800–1050) was a period in the past that is largely characterized by increased mobility and (partly consequent) settlement expansion outwards from Scandinavia. Quite emblematically, this mobility took place by means of seafaring. The increased mobility meant intensifying and expanding intercultural contacts not only between Scandinavians and other peoples but among peoples across the whole of Northern Europe – even if Scandinavians must be reputed with the most visible and significant activities in this respect. These intercultural contacts mostly took place in the form of trade and warfare. Trade and warfare were not wholly distinct activities: trade voyages were conducted for profit, and if a location along the way possessed goods that were acquirable for a reasonable cost or even for free – as in the case of a village or farm with insufficient defenses – a trade voyage could easily turn into pillaging.

The increased mobility of the Viking Age produced a new connectivity across Northern Europe (HEININEN et al.). The increase of mobility across the Baltic Sea can be assumed to have affected Ålandic culture because Åland is situated in a key position on the primary east–west sailing route for the northern Baltic Sea that connected Sweden and Finland (SCHALIN with FROG): this increased mobility meant an increase in sea traffic in Ålandic waters. Viking Age Åland nevertheless presents strong local features that distinguish it from its eastern and western neighbors. The archaeological record suggests that the roles and activities of Ålanders in this period were in several respects different from those of peoples in the adjacent areas of both Finland and Sweden. This makes Viking Age Åland both very interesting and very important to discuss.

Address of this topic has more often than not been entangled with the contemporary politics of the scholars doing research. The consequence has been that the images of Viking Age Åland that scholars construct have in fact been constructions of heritage, whether as a retroactive cultural appropriation of
Viking Age Åland by Sweden or Finland (with implications for contemporary politics) or as an assertion of the heritage of Åland (and thus of contemporary Ålandic culture) as distinct from both and with independent value. At the same time, discussions of the Viking Age have tended to focus on Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, with more recent attention also given to the Rus’ or Varangians in Russia, whereas Finland has until much more recently remained extremely marginal. Within the frame of discussions of the Viking Age, Åland has generally appeared annexed by either Sweden or Finland and tends only to come into the foreground when drawing attention to the distinctively Ålandic so-called ‘clay paw rite’ (Gustavsson et al.; Ahola et al.; Frog). Of course, Viking Age Åland gets addressed in the context of numerous specific discussions, considering particular details or features from particular perspectives. However, these have in general not been brought together in a concentrated way and many aspects of the topic have tended to be marginalized owing to the challenges posed by limited data. In the lack of a general frame of reference, studies have sometimes even deepened the mysteries surrounding the Viking Age in Åland rather than solving them. Therefore, Viking Age Åland presents an interesting and important topic for address.

The present volume has been developed in order to answer the need for a concentrated multidisciplinary discussion of this topic, its sources and problems associated with them. The chapters of this volume are concerned with the culture(s) in the Åland Islands during the Viking Age, their continuities and discontinuities with earlier and later periods, their connections to other cultures and their position on the broader stage of Northern Europe at that time. They also consider how Åland and Ålanders may have been perceived by other cultures and polities in that period. The volume is oriented to address a broader range of aspects of Viking Age Åland than normally receive concentrated attention. It has also consciously sought to introduce perspectives on the topic from disciplines that normally remain outside of discussion: limitations of data have left firm conclusions in certain areas problematic or impossible and thus certain questions have remained unaddressed and unexplored. This orientation of the volume also means that the chapters presented here are quite diverse. These chapters include reviews of discussions and interpretations of earlier scholarship as well as the presentation and interpretation of quite detailed data in the archaeological record. On the other hand, some chapters set out to test the limits of what in fact can be said about topics that are otherwise easily marginalized or taken for granted. Such chapters elucidate questions and their problematics with an exploratory orientation and are in fact relevant to a
much wider range of research dealing with limited data and the problems of its interpretation. These diverse perspectives and discussions are all complementary, and together they will open the reader to a dynamic and multifaceted view of Viking Age Åland.

**Identity and Identification**

Viking Age Åland is characterized by combinations of cultural features from cultures both east and west as well as features that are unique to Åland or even appear linked to groups in certain parts of Åland as opposed to others. This situation makes Viking Age Åland a relevant frame to discuss how people have identified themselves as members of a group in the ancient past and how this is reflected and recognizable in remnants of the culture in question. Discussions in different chapters of this volume highlight that the development of Ålandic culture has always been relational and linked to mobility. Åland's position at the junction of multicultural sea routes during the Viking Age meant receiving influences from different directions. Cultural areas to both east and west have impacted and even colonized the islands repeatedly throughout history. At the same time, Åland's environment was characterized geographically by the sea and archipelago and culturally by a long history of habitation. These features set basic prerequisites for living and frameworks for livelihoods. With the important possible exception of the colonization following the Viking Age (Sjöstrand), most cases of immigration and associated radical cultural change seem to have resulted in a synthesis with the indigenous culture leading to a distinctively ‘Ålandic’ cultural arena (cf. Gustavsson et al.). Indeed, many cultural features that were distinctly local survived largely intact even through phases of significant immigration and cultural change, implying a strong, distinct identity at least in some spheres of culture. At the same time, the discussion of scholarship has been characterized by thematic attention to the identification of these same people from historically removed perspectives that have been ostensibly objective yet entangled in political and social discourses of their own time (Lucenius). In some cases, such identifications are built on interpretations of how Ålanders and Åland were identified by Viking Age contemporaries, such as by the people who comprised the kingdom of the Svear in Sweden (Aalto) and even (and perhaps surprisingly) by the ‘Finns’ in Finland (Ahola). The questions surrounding identity and identification thus form a major theme that unites the discussions of this volume.
The term ‘Viking’ (Old Norse *víkingr*, on which see Schalin with Frog) literally refers to the men conducting raiding voyages, although the term is also commonly used today to designate Scandinavian cultures during this period more generally. The vagueness of the term easily conceals the problematics concerning the manner and grounds on which different groups of people living in Northern Europe were identified by one another in that period and how they identified themselves. Identity and identification are both complicated concepts, but in simplistic terms, *identification* may refer to the active construction of one’s identity, the act of seeing oneself as part of some kind of group (e.g. Deaux 1996), whereas *identity* may refer to a result of this construction process, the realization of seeing oneself and/or being seen by others as a member of a particular group (Turner 1982: 17–18). A group may be formed on the basis of a number of alternative factors: people who speak the same language may consider themselves as members of a group as opposed to those who speak other languages (although see further Ahola et al.), and people sharing the same myths and conducting similar rituals may consider themselves as a group in relation to people who have different demiurges and heroes and who perform different rituals, even if they speak the same language (Frog), and so on. (See e.g. Nagel 1994.) When the different factors contributing to a community’s identity as a group change, such as when the community receives immigrants, identification may be seen in terms of negotiation between the community and the newcomers (Phinney et al. 2001). These issues of identity and identification can be placed fruitfully in dialogue with evidence of Ålandic culture and potential relevant indicators of how Åland and Ålanders may have been perceived by Viking Age contemporaries as well as how images of these identities have been constructed through later scholarship.

The title of this volume highlights that Viking Age Åland and its inhabitants are approached through *remnants of culture*, which here refer to the different kinds of traces that a culture in the past has left of its existence, and which different historically oriented scientific disciplines utilize as evidence. These remnants of culture can be broadly categorized in terms of *tangible evidence*, such as man-made objects and constructions and particles that have layered on lakebeds throughout centuries or other evidence in the material record, and *intangible evidence*, such as place-names, language and folklore that have been maintained through culture as such and have a diachronic relation to the target of investigation rather than reflecting synchronic outcomes of cultural practices (Ahola & Frog 2014). These remnants, interpreted correctly, are like pieces in a puzzle that help in creating a comprehensive image of a period in the history of
the culture in question. The more pieces we have for this puzzle and the more valid the interpretations we are able to make from them, the clearer the image we get. A major challenge in addressing Viking Age Åland is that evidence of the indigenous culture of that period is more or less exclusively in the category of tangible evidence. This means that specific outcomes of cultural practices and expressions of identity can be observed in the archaeological record but corollary aspects of intangible culture such as language, stories, mythology and beliefs of the people at that time are little more than ghosts that can only be inferred and hypothesized. Many of the discussions in the present volume address precisely this challenge in different ways in the exploration of Viking Age identities and the problematics of identification.

**Background of the Volume**

The present volume has been developed on the basis of the scientific seminar-workshop “Identity and Identification and the Viking Age in Finland (with Special Emphasis on the Åland Islands)” that was held in Mariehamn, Åland, 3rd–4th September 2012. The initiative for this seminar came from the collaborative interdisciplinary research project Viikinkiaika Suomessa – The Viking Age in Finland (VAF) and the event was co-organized with and hosted by the Åland Board of Antiquities.

The VAF undertakes to explore and assess the significance of the Viking Age for Finno-Karelian cultures and Finno-Karelian cultural areas. The goal of the project is the development of holistic models – models which not only work toward a synthesis of insights, approaches and evidence offered by diverse disciplines, but which also take into consideration the history of discourse surrounding the Viking Age, and the strengths and limitations of the contributions from each discipline. The pilot year of the project in 2011 was organized around two seminar-workshops for the development of *Fibula, Fabula Fact – The Viking Age in Finland* (Ahola & Frog with Tolley 2014) that introduces the perspectives of a number of different disciplines, the materials they research, their methods and their basic perspectives on the ‘Viking Age’ and ‘Finland’.

The special position of Åland in relation to the Viking Age in Finland was raised in initial seminar-workshops of the VAF project. Border areas (if such even exist) are difficult to categorize by definition. In discussions of the Viking Age in Finland, the position of Åland as a border area became foregrounded. On the one hand, its role as a border area revealed that is was crucial for understanding the area in focus. This attention also placed the many problems
of approaching Viking Age Åland in the spotlight, raising questions about how they should be resolved and more generally raising awareness of how poorly Viking Age Åland is indeed understood. This same attention simultaneously exposed the fact that the questions and discussions connecting with Åland commonly addressed it precisely as a border area, addressing it and indeed defining it in relation to adjacent areas that were in focus rather than turning attention to Viking Age Åland on its own terms. Therefore, Åland became a natural direction in which to turn attention for the VAF project. The Åland Board of Antiquities and its small but active work community received the suggestion of an international joint event with enthusiasm and cooperation began immediately.

The Åland Board of Antiquities is a department of the Government of Åland’s Department for Education and Culture. It is responsible for managing cultural heritage on the islands. This means that the Åland Board of Antiquities is a government authority that manages and protects archaeological sites, built heritage and cultural-historically valuable material, environments and immaterial heritage. The Åland Board of Antiquities is responsible for the preservation and conservation of sites and monuments, and for the collection of knowledge through documentation, excavations and collection management. As an authority and center of knowledge concerning the Åland Islands’ cultural heritage, the Åland Board of Antiquities welcomes initiatives to collaboration with projects such as the VAF. Because of the limited resources for research within the authority’s field of work, such cooperation is needed in order to make the Ålandic material and data available to researchers and thereby to include Åland in current research.

The idea of the seminar-workshop was to bring together representatives of different scientific disciplines that would cover as manifold and representative a portion of social reality of Viking Age Åland as possible. This was a discussion-oriented event in which presenters would speak for twenty minutes followed by forty minutes of multidisciplinary discussion that sought to coordinate the diverse views represented by the group. Focus was given in particular to different levels, forms and manifestations of identities and identification linked to the Viking Age. In theoretical and methodological terms, the seminar-workshop focused on discussing the possibilities of different evidence – remnants of the culture – to illuminate identities and identification in the distant past. Present conditions are conceived in terms of history and describing the past
is, therefore, simultaneously explaining the present – or describing how the present should be. Historiography is necessarily political by nature, be it consciously or unintentionally so; the position of Åland in discourse on history has always been in many ways political, and not infrequently also politicized. Therefore, the seminar also invited discussions on interpretations and the utilization of the Viking Age in later historical periods, such as in new social and political structures where identities have been and are being partly discussed and constructed through reflections upon the past. The present volume is the outcome of these coordinated discussions, which were enriched and expanded following the initial event.

**Toward a Dynamic View**

The present volume opens with a general introduction to the Viking Age in Åland by Jan-Erik Tomtlund. The subsequent eleven chapters are organized in three broad thematic sections, each accompanied by a brief editorial introduction to help orient the reader to its contents. Tomtlund’s introductory chapter offers a concentrated overview of Åland in the Viking Age. It is intended to be easily accessible to non-specialist readers, leading them through different thematic areas of culture, drawing attention to many of Åland’s peculiarities that are referred to in following chapters. This introduction provides a basic frame of reference for more detailed discussions of different aspects of this research topic. The first section of the volume, *Interpreting Evidence of the Past*, then helps to orient the reader in the history of discourse on the Viking Age in Åland, the interpretations that have been put forward in research and the importance of developing well-founded, interdisciplinary perspectives. The second section, *Between Sources and Their Lack*, leads the reader through discussions of different types of source materials as well as the problem that sources are lacking for certain areas of knowledge. The closing section, *Contexts, Contacts and Perceptions*, draws together different views on Åland in the Viking Age in order to contextualize this cultural area in that period of history from different perspectives and explore and elucidate its relationships to other cultures.

It is perhaps not possible to provide a comprehensive overview of the cultural circumstances of Viking Age Åland, its identities and associated processes of identification. Certain limitations of the sources are inevitably insurmountable. Nevertheless, the present volume presents an extensive survey of current knowledge on this topic and brings forward new ideas and suggestions that hopefully will stimulate further discussion. These chapters highlight that
scientific study and interpretation can never be completely divorced from the context in which knowledge is produced, although we can seek to be conscious of that context. It has been common to address Åland as a border zone in relation to other cultural areas, which itself becomes a form of ‘othering’, viewing Åland from the outside as Finnic groups might identify it with a mythic ‘Island’ or Scandinavians might view its inhabitants as Finnar. Perhaps most importantly, this volume acknowledges that Åland was a place between quite different cultural areas rather than reducing it to a border zone.

Åland may not have been a significant location overall in the turmoil of the Viking Age, yet it was quite central in the framework of the northern Baltic Sea. Moreover, the Viking Age was a very significant period in Åland’s history. It was preceded by significant immigration and followed by radical cultural change, but while it lasted, the Viking Age meant increasing prosperity that seems to have been quite directly attached to the important trade route that connected Central Sweden to the river routes in Russia. This era then concluded with a rapid decline in economy and in population when this trade route lost importance. This period of Åland’s rise and fall, discussed in this volume from a wide array of perspectives, almost coincides with the beginning and end of the Viking Age.

References


The Åland Islands with a reconstructed shoreline that corresponds to that during the Viking Age. Following Tomtlund 2005: 15 (see also TOMTLUND).

1. Kvarnbo, Saltvik (Sa 14.4/14.5 and 14.7 Kohagen)
2. Bertby, Saltvik (Sa 2.4 Kvarnbacken)
3. Borgboda, Saltvik
4. Germundö, Saltvik
5. Kastelholm, Sund (Su 12.7 Långängsbacken)
6. Gölby, Jomala (Jo 10.3 Brömsängsbacken)
7. Hammarudda, Jomala
8. Hindersböle, Mariehamn(Ma 5)
9. Godby, Finsström (Fi 8.11 Godby)
10. Svartsmara, Finsström (Fi 18.1 Svartsmara)
11. Marby, Eckerö
12. Lemböte, Lemland
13. Styrsö, Lemland
14. Järsö, Lemland
15. Ledösöra, Värödö
16. Lappo, Brändö
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication is an outcome of a cooperation of the Viking Age in Finland (VAF) project and the Åland Board of Antiquities. We would like to thank the Finnish Cultural Foundation for their generous support in funding the seminar-workshop “Identity and Identification and the Viking Age in Finland (with Special Emphasis on the Åland Islands)” that was held in Mariehamn, Åland, 3rd–4th September 2012 and from which the present volume was developed. We would also like to thank the Åland Museum for hosting the event. We would like to express our appreciation to the authors of the present volume, who have worked hard with the editors and also with each other in developing this volume. Our gratitude also goes to the concentrated attention of the numerous anonymous peer-reviewers, who committed time and energy to strengthening this volume’s individual chapters. We also greatly appreciate the support of the Academy of Finland project “Oral Poetry, Mythic Knowledge and Vernacular Imagination: Interfaces of Individual Expression and Collective Traditions in Pre-modern Northeast Europe” of Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki. We would also like to mention Aliisa Priha, for her hard work in drawing maps and their templates for several contributions to this volume. In addition, we would very much like to thank Petteri Koskikallio, for the great work he has done in helping to prepare this manuscript for publication. Finally, we would like to mention the participants of the seminar-workshops for their contribution to discussion and the many people who have offered their support and stimulated the work presented with their interest, questions and comments in different venues – we hope that this volume meets your high expectations.
INTRODUCTION
THE VIKING AGE IN ÅLAND:
AN INTRODUCTION

Jan-Erik Tomtlund
Åland Board of Antiquities

The Viking Age is a prehistoric period with which most people are familiar and the Åland Islands are very rich indeed in archaeological finds from this time. Although it is difficult to define exactly when the Viking Age occurred in Åland, the period is generally considered to comprise the ninth and tenth centuries AD and to have ended sometime during the eleventh century. The end of the Viking Age is considered to coincide with the transition from paganism to Christianity. However, when precisely this transition would have taken place in Åland is a topic of debate.

Today’s Landscape: A Legacy of the Viking Age

Looking back on the settlement history of the Åland Islands, it becomes possible to observe that its societal development is characterised by periods of change and stability: times of great cultural exchange are followed by periods of great isolation. The Viking Age settlements in Åland derive from the sixth century AD, when older settlements and burial grounds were abandoned and new areas were populated. The new settlements which appeared were farms with continued habitation and use of land for cultivation and pasturage. It is not known who exactly these settlers were, they may have come from eastern Sweden or been Ålanders who simply chose to change livelihood – perhaps it was a combination of the two. However, regardless of where these people came from, it was they who created the foundation of the agricultural landscape we see today.

1 This text appeared in an earlier form as Vikingatid på Åland (Mariehamn: Ålands landskapsregering, Museibyrån, 2005).
The agricultural landscape of today’s mainland Åland is where the burial sites and settlements of the Viking Age can be found. The fact that these remains can be found so close to modern settlements and fields is no coincidence, as there can be no doubt that our modern countryside has its origins in the agricultural toil which began here some 1,500 years ago and which reached its first pinnacle during the Viking Age. This period of prehistoric Åland is the subject of the present book.

Sources of Knowledge

Most of what is known about Viking Age Åland stems from archaeological excavations of burial sites and settlements. Archaeological finds shed light on different aspects of life and death and much can also be learned of how everyday life was lived through the manner in which people were buried.

Late Iron Age sites are identified by tumulus fields with more or less clearly defined barrows (cf. Lucenius, Photo 2 on p. 48). Although other types of graves do exist, they are very rare. There are some 400 identified Late Iron Age grave fields on, or in close proximity to, the main island. The smallest number of barrows that must be visible in order for a site to be considered a grave field is three, and no Ålandic grave field consists of more than 200 visible mounds. All in all, the grave fields hold over 10,600 registered graves. Unlike Bronze Age and Early Iron Age graves, which can be found at the outskirts of today’s villages, most tumulus fields lie in close proximity to cultivated land.

Although there are a few instances of inhumation, the dead were generally cremated. A lot of information regarding what kind of clothes people wore or what other equipment they carried is lost in burial rituals which involve burning. However, some graves hold jewellery and clothing accessories, as well as weapons and other personal items, which shed light on the deceased’s social status. Other common grave goods include pets such as cats, dogs or, in rare cases, even horses. Sheep, cattle and pig bones have also been found, but these are most likely remnants of foodstuffs.

It appears men and women were treated equally after death, a fact that may reflect conditions in social life. Family structures may have been very similar to those of the modern world, and in some rare cases double burials – holding both a man and a woman – have been found. Social differences sometimes become apparent in the find of individual graves including very valuable grave goods.
Settlements

Viking Age settlements in Åland are primarily found on the main island as well as in Eckerö and Lemland. In general, the settlements are located inland or in the innermost parts of long inlets or straits, well-protected from prying eyes. Some areas seem to have been more densely populated than others, and

Map 1. The distribution of tumulus fields illustrates the development of agricultural communities. The grave fields have been divided into four categories according to size represented by different sized circles: less than 20 barrows; 20–39 barrows; 40–79 barrows; 80 or more barrows. The shoreline is consistent with that of the late Viking Age.
all the largest grave fields can be found on the main island. Large grave fields can indicate that the area in question was inhabited for a longer period of time, whereas areas with many grave fields relatively close to each other would suggest expansion and more concentrated settlements.

During the Late Iron Age larger and larger areas were taken into use through the expansion of older settlements. The manner in which communities developed was determined by agriculture, and the elevation of the land – as well as other topographical conditions – regulated to what extent settlements could grow. The geographical distribution of ancient remains, grave fields in particular, indicate that some regions were more densely populated than others and that some areas were most likely populated earlier than others. There were densely populated communities of great importance in central Jomala, in east and west Saltvik, along the waterways starting at Slottssundet and Västra Kyrksundet in Sund and along the bodies of water flowing off into Ämnäsviden in Finström as well as along the inner parts of Boda fjärden in Hammarland. Map 1 illustrates the distribution of settlements at the end of the Viking Age as reflected through grave fields. The distribution of tumulus fields illustrates the development of agricultural communities. The grave fields have been divided into four categories according to size: from grave fields consisting of less than 20 barrows to those comprising more than 80. The shoreline is consistent with that of the late Viking Age.

Barrows generally represent areas where farmers and the propertied classes lived. There is less archaeological evidence of people who made their living hunting and fishing. However, in the Turunmaa archipelago, the dead seem to have been laid to rest following old customs – in cairns – during the Viking Age as well. Perhaps this may also have been the case in the Åland archipelago.

Society

The archaeological record reveals little regarding what Viking Age communities in Åland looked like, but it can be assumed that some kind of communal social structures existed in order to carry out tasks greater than individual farms and their inhabitants could accomplish. A shared view of life, taking the shape of laws and regulations, must have existed in order to settle arguments both among local people and across communities to which they belonged.

Situated in the middle of an east–west bound trade route, the Åland Islands may not have been able to function as an independent district. No archaeological remains or finds suggest the existence of any kind of administrative centre from
which this archipelago would have been ruled over. Instead, there may have been several local chiefs of greater or lesser influence. In periods when a more sovereign centre of power may have been of importance, that centre was almost certainly located elsewhere. Although the location of such an administrative centre may have varied over time, influences from eastern Sweden are apparent in medieval source material. This kind of foreign sovereignty, however, must not necessarily always have been very strong, as there were probably periods in which Åland constituted a uniform and relatively independent region. Perhaps it is even possible that the division of Åland into ridings, of which there is evidence of from the Middle Ages, may have existed as early as during the Viking Age.

Grave finds show there were social differences among the population. Most likely there were those who were very rich and those who were very poor on a social scale running from the elite, who considered themselves lords, to the thralls at the very bottom of the social ladder. Although it is a matter of debate whether or not there actually were any thralls in Åland, Swedish laws of the time reveal that thralldom did exist even during the Middle Ages. It was not until 1355 that keeping Christians as thralls became illegal.

Livelihoods

From the rich Viking Age finds, it is easy to create a popular image of Vikings looting wealth − sometimes acting as robbers, sometimes as merchants. Although it is true that this did occur, it was the exception rather than the rule. For ordinary people, the primary concern was simply to accomplish everyday chores in order to survive, be that in the Viking Age or in any other period. The majority of the population lived off what the earth and sea provided. Fishing and hunting − primarily of seal and seafowl − played a much greater part in how people made their living than archaeological finds may indicate. The few fish hooks, fish spears and arrow heads which have been found do not do justice to the significance fishing and hunting must have had for people's livelihood. Plenty of agricultural remains, however, have been found in burials and ancient settlements alike. Bone finds, both burnt and unburnt, indicate that farms kept much the same number of cattle as farms do today. Apart from cows, horses, sheep, goats and pigs, people also kept dogs and cats, and it is possible that some farms even had domesticated chickens. Although it is impossible to determine exactly how many animals the average farm had, the number of cows could probably have been quite large indeed at times, because one way of demonstrating one's wealth was through the number of cattle one kept.
Grain and other crops were also grown, as is evident from the charred remains found of wheat, barley, oats and rye. Although nothing is known of the field systems of the Viking Age, there are several cases of documented traces of ancient fields where the bottom layer still holds ard marks, visible as dark lines in the earth. In cases where ard marks are found underneath barrows (Figure 1), it is reasonable to believe the grave was either placed on a disused field – or that the ground was ritually ploughed prior to the burial.

**Buildings and Foundations**

During the Viking Age, the dead were never buried far from the living. As a result, house foundations (cf. Figure 2) are often found right next to grave fields. Out of 83 known sites where there are foundations of Iron Age houses, no less than 49 settlements, all-in-all comprising over 100 foundations, lie in close proximity to a grave field. In general, each location holds between one and three visible foundations, but as many as ten have been documented on one single site. Excavations indicate that Viking Age settlements in Åland primarily consisted of individual farmsteads.

House foundations in which a simple stone frame determined the outer walls of the building are the most common. Archaeological excavations of such houses have been limited to the area immediately surrounding the visible foundations, leaving the living space in between untouched. The Viking Age
foundations discovered are either those of houses with roof posts and wattled walls made weatherproof with clay daub or those of log houses. Sizes vary, although the aforementioned, more common kind of building, could be over 20 metres long and up to 10 metres wide. In addition, there are buildings that lack any clearly defined stone frame. In Borgboda, Saltvik, excavations were carried out on a damaged foundation where remains of the outer wall were still visible as a flat turf ridge. This foundation has yet to be given an exact dating.

Some settlements lack visible foundations and are only discovered as a result of their middens which can be recognised either as layers of earth darkened by soot and coal or areas of soil with unusually high phosphate levels. Many such a Viking Age midden has been found in connection with the churchyard in Saltvik for instance, as well as in Kattby in Hammarland and Borgboda in Saltvik. Furthermore, finds at the latter two sites indicate that bronze casting took place there.

**Hill Forts and Defensive Structures**

Archaeological finds show that the Åland Islands experienced a period of cultural prosperity during the Viking Age. Whether this was the result of war or
peace, however, is difficult to determine. Buried silver hoards and grave goods including weapons may indicate times of war and unrest. Hence, some kind of community-organised defence must have existed.

Åland’s six hill forts, all of which are located on or in connection to the main island, are most likely tangible evidence of such an organised defence system. Although it has not been determined exactly when these hill forts were constructed, individual artefacts found suggest that they were in use during the Viking Age. Five of these hill forts are situated inland and are generally considered to be forts used for protection by local people in times of unrest. Borgöborgen, however, is somewhat different in that it is located on an island in Marsundet separating Eckerö from the main island. If the inland forts were used for defensive purposes, perhaps it is possible that the fort in Marsundet might have had a more offensive function.

Archaeological excavations have been carried out at one of these forts, namely at Borge in Borgboda, Saltvik. This fort, stretching over some 3 hectares, is the largest one in Åland. It was originally constructed on a hill next to a waterway between Saltvik and Sund. Due to the elevation of the land this waterway no longer exists. The Borge fort is of quite simple construction; the hill is surrounded by sheer slopes on two sides and the less steep parts of the hilltop are encircled by a wall. At the entrance is a small bailey where the walls have been fortified by a bank. The low walls facing the waterway may have been the foundations of some kind of timber construction. As this hill fort is situated at the narrowest point of the former waterway, it is possible that its purpose was to guard the passage. Trial excavations have unearthed thin cultural layers where glass beads have been found, indicating that the fort was used during the Viking Age. However, any permanent settlement ever having been here is highly unlikely.

**Beliefs and Religious Practices**

Although few artefacts related to pagan religion have been found in Åland, one can assume beliefs and practices here much resembled those of the Nordic region in general.

Beliefs and religious practices were most likely of a private nature, something which becomes apparent in the rituals surrounding burial. The grave fields in Åland are pagan, in that burning the dead along with their personal possessions, food and sometimes even pets is a custom that stands in stark contrast to the Christian practice of burying the body alone. Archaeologists have come across
a few cases considered to date from the transition between pagan and Christian rituals; among the Viking Age cremation graves of the grave fields, areas of dark soil are sometimes found, stemming from inhumation burials lacking grave goods.

Various aspects of pagan beliefs and practices can be seen in the arrangements and rituals surrounding burials. Something which is unique to Åland are the clay paws often found in cremation graves. Placed on top of the ashes, they most likely served as some sort of magical protection for the deceased. And perhaps the chip of red sandstone frequently found in the cremation layer of the graves acted as a symbol of life.

There are also other artefacts thought to have held some sort of religious meaning. Of these, the most well known is a type of amulet, called Thor’s hammer rings (Figure 3), found mainly in the region around Lake Mälaren and on the Åland Islands. Many such amulets have also been found in Russia, proving that there must have been links between the two regions.

Exactly how and when the transition between pagan and Christian beliefs occurred on the Åland Islands is still a matter of debate. Although it has been suggested that Åland was Christianised at an early stage, there is as to yet no evidence of this being the case.
The Farmer and His Wife

Regardless of what society looked like during the Viking Age, farmers, fishermen and their families formed its basis. It has been calculated that the average Viking Age farm could feed some 10–15 people, including children, adults and elders. As a result, the number of people living on the Åland Islands during the Viking Age greatly exceeds the number of graves found. Perhaps only the masters and mistresses of the households were laid to rest among their relatives in the grave fields, whereas the farms’ other inhabitants may have had more simple burials which are also more difficult for archaeologists to detect. Through grave finds and Nordic depictions of the time, it is possible to get an idea of how these people would have been dressed on special occasions.

Men wore a wide tunic over tight trousers or socks along with a cloak or coat worn asymmetrically in order to leave their sword arm free. The coat or cloak, which could be of very fine material indeed, was fastened with a penannular brooch (Figure 4) or pin. Articles of Oriental dress could also be included. Both men and women wore moccasin type shoes. Although it is rare that graves contain weapons, they should be considered to belong to men’s accessories.

Women wore relatively uniform clothing. A pleated, almost floor-length shift of fine linen was worn beneath an apron-skirt with shoulder straps. As the intention was to show off the beautiful under-dress beneath, the apron-skirt was considerably shorter than the shift. The shoulder straps of the apron-skirt were fastened with a pair of oval brooches. The outfit was completed with a shawl, sometimes secured with a third brooch. It was common for women to adorn themselves with beads – at times hundreds of them – lined up in rows and kept in place by bronze bead dividers. In general, these glass beads were worn together with bronze chain necklaces or necklaces made of twisted bronze wire. It is more rare to find bracelets and rings. In addition, women sometimes included knives and keys as parts of their dress.

Excavated Farmsteads

Archaeological excavations have been carried out on several individual houses. On a couple of occasions, these excavations have been large enough to provide more extensive information on the structure of the farm as a whole. Since these excavations were performed some years ago, the area excavated was limited to the immediate vicinity of the visible foundations.

A farm could consist of several buildings and, since it could be in use for many years, it is sometimes difficult to determine how many of these buildings
were used at the same time. During a couple of excavations, traces of the field systems surrounding these ancient farms have been found reflected in ard marks in the bottom layer of the soil. In Borgboda, Saltvik, archaeologists unearthed the remains of small postholes where a round-post fence once stood. Excavations at a building complex in Storhagen in Finström, Kulla, showed that the settlement had been inhabited from the seventh century until about AD 1000, and it appears that it was not abandoned in haste. The complex consisted of a couple of three-naved longhouses, a few timbered cottages as well as a building whose simple roof appears to have been resting directly on the structure’s low walls. It is not possible to determine what function each of these buildings had. However, in the case of a longhouse from the early Viking Age in Tjudnäs, archaeologists have come to the conclusion that the building was most likely divided into living quarters and barn.

The foundations that were richest in finds are located in Kohagabacken in Kvarnbo, Saltvik. Five of the seven buildings in the area were excavated during the 1950s and 1960s. Unlike other settlements in Åland, this settlement was destroyed in a fire. Artefacts found indicate that this was most likely a richer, grander Viking Age settlement. Some imported objects were found, among which were silver coins from the East. A lot of organic material, for instance large quantities of grain, was charred, and hence preserved, in the fire.

*Figure 4.* Penannular brooch (fibula) from Långängsbacken, Kastelholm, Sund. Photograph by Augusto Mendes (© Ålands landskapsregering, museibyrån).
The Lord and Warrior

Some grave goods found in Åland indicate that there were social differences between those buried. Furthermore, it also appears that some areas or settlements were more important than others. Although not common, the dead were sometimes buried along with objects representative of their role in life, for instance the mistress with her key, the craftsman with his tools or the warrior with his weapons. One craftsman that archaeologists have yet to identify in Åland is the smith with his tools. However, it is rare indeed to be able to gain any understanding of the social standing of the deceased through material found in their graves.

One of the barrows at the large grave field in Larsas Kvarnbacke in Bertby, Saltvik, contained such a wealth of equipment there can be no doubt that it was once raised over a local chief. In addition, the burial itself was unusual for its location. The deceased’s weapons were placed on a bed of sand on the bare ground along with two horse harnesses. A dagger and spearhead were thrust into the soil, while all other weapons – including two swords, a spear and two shields – were placed upon the ground and covered with sand. The deceased himself was burnt on a pyre at another location, along with his horse, dog and a female companion. In addition, more than 400 rivets were found in the grave’s cremation layer, indicating that a ship was also set afame. The ashes were then collected and placed on top of the weapons. The cremation layer was then covered with rocks, among which was placed a cauldron made from iron and bronze. The cauldron rested on a bed of birch bark and a sandstone slab had been placed on top of it. Inside the cauldron, several items were found wrapped in a piece of woollen cloth, for instance a couple of knives, four bronze rings, a bone comb, a penannular brooch, human hair as well as unburnt human bones. Finally the grave was covered with earth.

The Ship

Vikings and ships are two concepts very strongly intertwined indeed. In the case of the Åland Islands, it is virtually impossible to overrate the importance of ships and boats. For people living in the Åland archipelago, they were an absolute necessity whether you were a Viking or not. Unfortunately, not a lot is known about Viking Age ships in Åland. There are many legends regarding sunken Viking ships, ships found in bogs and lakes as well as iron mooring rings in the rock. However, there is no actual proof to substantiate these tales. The
closest we can come to the ships of the time is through grave finds such as rivets, nails, staples and fittings stemming from burnt ships.

The fact that rivets are the single most common find in Iron Age graves in Åland says a lot about how important boats were. Cremation burials almost always contain a number of iron rivets – not enough to be the equivalent of an entire boat – but it is safe to assume that they were placed there as a symbol of one. From the sheer number of rivets found in some individual graves, it is clear that they are authentic ship burials. One example of such a burial is a grave, richly equipped with weapons, at the grave field in Johannesberg in Kvarnbo, Saltvik, which coincidentally is also the largest grave field in Åland. No fewer than 1,200 rivets were found in this grave. Measurements of rivets found in another grave showed that most rivets were between 19–35 mm long, indicating the outside planking of a clinker-built boat. Both smaller and larger rivets used for other purposes were found. Although most intact rivets varied between 11–68 mm in length, there were also fragments of rivets as long as 80 mm.

Contacts to the West

During the Viking Age, the Åland Islands acted as an important intermediate station in the flourishing trade between the East and the West. This was due to its central location right between Sweden and Finland. Åland contributed to this trade with products provided by the sea, for example dried fish, seal oil and skins. There can be no doubt that the vast network of people involved in trade at that time must have included many an Ålander as well.

People here were dependent on this trade, since the Åland archipelago lacked many important primary products. As there were no minable metals, for instance, all iron, bronze and precious metals had to be imported, either as raw material or finished objects. Excavations of burials and settlements alike have come up with rich evidence of this kind of trade.

As Åland's most important cultural contacts were directed westwards, there was a constant flow of attractive items imported from the Swedish mainland and Gotland. Although individual farms made the household objects they needed from imported iron bars, many swords and spears found in Åland originated from the weapon smithies of the Frankish realm and the Rheinland. Men and women of status boasted high-quality jewellery made in the very best of Scandinavian taste. A couple of pieces of women's jewellery typical of Gotland have also found their way here, possibly along with their wearers.
One particularly good example of western European influence is the so-called Syllödanålen, a magnificent dress pin previously considered to have been made somewhere on the British Isles. However, as it turns out, the pin is most likely of Scandinavian origin but of a typically British design. The closest equivalent of the Syllöda dress pin was found in the grave of a man in Birka, a place that was of great importance to trade in Åland during the Viking Age.

Contacts to the East

Not only did Ålanders trade with the West, they also had both business and personal contacts with the East. Some pieces of jewellery found in graves can be explained by networks of family relations extending towards Finland and the Baltic countries. As the trade between East and West was the reason why the Åland Islands thrived during the Viking Age, trade routes were maintained through a network of personal contacts.

The importance of trade is further illustrated by the fact that some of the constant flow of Oriental silver imported to the West succeeded in finding its way to Åland as well. More than 1,400 Arabic silver coins have been found here, mainly as treasure finds. A case in point is the hoard found in Bertby, Saltvik, which is the largest of its kind ever found in Finland. The Bertby treasure consisted of over 860 coins placed in an Oriental tankard. Coin hoards were buried primarily during the ninth and tenth centuries, and following AD 950 the import of coins seems to have ceased. Individual coins have also been found at settlements and grave sites. In addition, a Viking Age silver hoard containing hack silver – i.e. silver scrap from broken pieces of jewellery – but no coins, was found in Västergeta.

Cultural contacts with the Orient added a touch of excitement to everyday life. It is possible that some exotic products became popular in the more affluent social classes. Although it is impossible to know whether this had any effect on food and drink, settlement and grave finds include fragments of Oriental dress. It is therefore safe to assume that some well-to-do Ålanders at times showed off wearing silk clothes. Other artefacts imported from distant countries include beads. Polished carnelian beads are of eastern origin, most likely from Iran or India.
Ålandic Identity

During the Viking Age, the Åland Islands were the easternmost part of a culturally fairly homogenous Scandinavian region. Although there was some variation from area to area, the similarities far outweighed the differences. To try to pinpoint any specifically Ålandic features in the archaeological record can be difficult. Whether of local origin or imported, there are, however, two kinds of artefacts that are more typical of Åland than any others. There is, for instance, a specific type of women’s jewellery called an equal-arm brooch (Figure 5). Although equal-arm brooches are of Scandinavian character in general and have been found elsewhere in Finland as well, they are still the most common type of jewellery found in Åland. As there is evidence that these brooches were made locally, it is highly likely they were an important piece of women’s accessory in Åland.

Another artefact typical of Åland is the clay paws that were placed as protective amulets in cremation burials. The amulets are shaped like an animal’s paw, reminiscent of that of a beaver or bear. Although neither of these two species has ever been native to Åland, the geographical distribution of these clay paws provides a greater perspective. Most clay paws have been found either
in Åland or in the Jaroslavl’ region of central Russia. The clay paws found in Russia date from the Viking Age, whereas those found on the Åland Islands include examples that predate this period. As evidence that Åland had dealings with Russian regions during the Viking Age, these clay paws form part of the vast circle of contacts Åland had at this time. Evidence of this rite is extremely exciting for the insight into the role the Åland Islands played during the Viking Age that is offers.

Contributions to the present volume bring forward and discuss phenomena such as the clay paw rite, evidence of Ålandic contacts and many other important issues connecting with questions of Ålandic identities during the Viking Age. The contributions of different scholars brought together here address and explore these topics from different perspectives, some of which are quite new, while others open the riddles about Viking Age Åland, some of which will never be finally resolved. Together, these chapters lay important foundations for future discussions of the Viking Age in Åland. In parallel with this, archaeological research in Åland is on-going, and it will be extremely interesting to see what new finds and ideas the future holds.

(Translated by Mira Darmark)
PART I
INTERPRETING EVIDENCE OF THE PAST
The construction of ‘modern’ identities in recent history has greatly informed interpretations of Åland in the Viking Age. Limitations of the data have facilitated the freedom with which interpretations could be formed and the resulting representation of Åland in this period of history. The limited data has equally facilitated the degree to which these interpretations could be informed – consciously or unconsciously – by the political environment and trends surrounding individual researchers. This is brought forward in the cogent discussion of Jenni Lucenius, who highlights the fact that even scientific discussion has been colored by national idealism. Since the nineteenth century, discussions of Åland’s Viking Age have been treated in politically motivated discussions surrounding the Ålanders’ national identity.

An interesting case of political contexts affecting interpretations is discussed by Joonas Ahola, who reviews the historical context of an interpretation that the locality called Saari ['Island'] in Finno-Karelian kalevalaic epic tradition derives historically from a Viking Age reference to Åland. The origins of this argument can be traced back to the period when Åland’s position either as a part of Finland or of Sweden was under discussion. This case is more generally illustrative of the problems of attempting to identify and reconstruct specific historical locations and events through oral poetry traditions recorded hundreds of years later. At the same time, it can be concluded that, rather than the ‘Island’ deriving from a reference to Åland, Åland could have been conceived by Finns through this poetic image as a fascinating albeit fearsome place already as early as the Viking Age.

Perhaps the most problematic, mysterious and controversial issue of the Viking Age in Åland is the question of the transition from the Viking Age to the medieval period. The problem arises from the fact that there seems to be a
discontinuity of place names between these periods: this has been interpreted as a complete depopulation of the islands, although the evidence of plant pollen in the archaeological record seems to indicate a continuity of agricultural practices. This is a topic that is found addressed or referred to in a number of chapters in this book. The discussion and its problematics are lucidly treated by Per Olof Sjöstrand. He situates Åland's population history in a long-term perspective and evaluates different views on the topic that have been raised especially in relation to toponymic evidence and medieval historical documents. Sjöstrand offers an excellent overview of this topic that seeks to balance the diverse data from different disciplines, gradually advancing towards an interdisciplinary synthesis.

The three chapters of Interpreting Evidence of the Past provide an important range of background information about discussions on the Viking Age in Åland. They also equip the reader with critical tools for approaching this topic as it is explored in the chapters of later sections. Likewise, they enable an informed awareness of many of the challenges and hazards of interpreting different types of material when approaching this historical period, especially in the case of Åland, for which sources are so limited. These chapters provide a rich variety of information and perspectives that will be reflected back to in later chapters.
In Search of Identities:
A Look at Interpretations of the Viking Age on the Åland Islands

Jenni Lucenius
Åland Board of Antiquities

The Viking Age is one of the most used and abused periods of history in a Nordic and Scandinavian context. It has been used for a range of purposes from political nation building to neo-nationalistic argumentation. Depictions of history in popular culture often display a picture that has very little or nothing to do with the Viking Age as seen through actual archaeological remains. The archaeological and historical research has a tradition of being influenced by its sociopolitical context.

The scientific and popular depictions of the past have reflected the fluctuating needs of modern society, in particular the need to legitimize political, linguistic, ethnic or similar requirements. The Nordic regions have been perceived as peripheral to the ‘grandeur’ of prehistoric Europe, with the exception of the Viking Age, when cultural connections originated and spread from the north (Østigård 2009: 20). This serves as one explanation as to why the Viking Age in particular has been the focus of nationalistic efforts to reinforce the past in the present day. Archaeological remains from the Viking Age are often visible features in the landscape and have served as physical reminders of a distant past. For a long time, the Iron Age (of which the Viking Age is the final phase) was believed to be the earliest period of human presence on the Åland Islands, and therefore the subject of every theory on Ålandic cultural origins.

On the Åland Islands, from the beginning of antiquarian research in the mid-1800s to the present day, there has been a tendency to emphasize certain elements of the past in order to validate a contemporary politically induced agenda. The emphasis has varied depending on the prevailing sociopolitical context. Identity has always been a central concept in defining the past and
seeking legitimacy in the present. The history of the Åland Islands is one of different national affiliations. Consequently, the Viking Age on Åland has been defined through comparison with Viking cultures in surrounding geographical regions (see also Hylland Eriksen 1993: 93).

This chapter is an introduction to the discussion about historical and archaeological research, using examples from the Viking Age on the Åland Islands, as a means of defining identities in the interpretation of the Viking Age. Research on the use and misuse of archaeological research for different national purposes is important in order to understand both interpretations and constructions of the past. As historian Derek Fewster, whose work serves as a starting-point for this discussion, phrases it in the preface to his thesis *Visions of Past Glory: Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (2006): “Nosce te ipsum, Know Thyself” (Fewster 2006: 11).

**Institutionalized Identities**

According to Fewster, the construction of ethnic origins and identities began with the professionalization of archaeology in the 1800s. The folkloristic tradition described ancient monuments as having vague or *supernatural* origins, and did not define ethnic groups or people. (Fewster 2006: 16.) It is when archaeology becomes institutionalized that it becomes available as a political means, and consequently politically important (Østigård 2009: 19–20). In Finland, archaeology was institutionalized in 1884 by imperial ordinance when the Archaeological Commission was made into a central authority, led by a state archaeologist (Fewster 2000: 107; 2006: 147).

The Finnish historian and archivist Karl August Bomansson was the first native Ålander to write about the history of the Åland Islands. His thesis in archaeology from 1859 *Om Ålands folkminnen* [‘On the Folk Lore of Åland’] describes the Åland Islands as having a number of heathen centers. He stresses that the people on the islands, having emigrated from Sweden, historically defined themselves not as Finns or as Swedes but as their own, autonomous and indigenous people (Bomansson 1859; Holmén 2009: 312).

Bomansson represents a time when the Grand Duchy of Finland was a part of the vast Russian Empire. The Åland Islands were fortified after the war of 1808–09 as the building of the fortress of Bomarsund began. The town of Skarpans was established in the vicinity of the fortress. During the Crimean war in 1854, the fortress was attacked and destroyed, and Bomarsund was abandoned. The harbour-town of Mariehamn, civil in character, was established
in 1861. Bomarsund and Skarpans were places where people from all over the Russian territory came together; it was a multicultural society where different ethnicities and representations of different beliefs were present in everyday life. This historical setting can be understood as one of the reasons why Bomansson found it important to stress the local identity of the prehistoric and Iron Age populations on the Åland Islands, as a strengthening identity in opposition to all of the external influences prevailing in his contemporary context.

In Finland on the other hand, the idea of a Germanic heritage was fuelled by the ongoing cultural and linguistic conflict resulting from the Russification of Finland (Fewster 2006: 177). On the Åland Islands, only a few decades later, the Swedish language would become one of the important factors in stressing the Germanic/Swedish influences in the past, in this case not opposed to the Russian but to the Finnish language. On the Finnish mainland, the ideological battle had been fought by the time of independence in 1917, but the concealed social or political implications of academic work were still the core and purpose of many scholarly constructions and of the national antiquarian consciousness. Both in the mid and late 1800s, the question of ethnic descent and other nationalistic topics were evident in communicating the past. (Fewster 2006: 398). This pattern of activated nationalism in response to political and societal change has also been obvious on the Åland Islands. This illustrates the similarities in how the past is being used and for which purposes, and that this ‘ideology’ is being activated when there seems to be a need to strengthen the identity of ‘us’ as opposed to ‘them’ (Hylland Eriksen 1995: 327; 2004: 53). The idea that the concept of a shared historical identity legitimizes claims to privileges (Wallerström 2006: 8) has been practised several times in the political discourse on the Åland Islands, for example in issues concerning language. This battle for language has parallels in Finnish Ostrobothnia, where a similar validation was sought in the Swedish Viking ideology (see Engman 2000; Högnäs 2000).

**From the Autonomy Onwards: The Mats Dreijer Era**

After the First World War, the peace treaty of Versailles 1920 saw a political and territorial restructuring of Europe. With the construction of nations and autonomous regions, identities became important within areas such as the Åland Islands. In many cases, this led to the dawn of movements where a specific region and its identity were defined as being not only in a functional context but also in a historical and emotional context. (Gullberg 2001: 475ff.; Gerner 2001: 474).
The Åland Islands became an autonomous region of Finland in 1921 by a decision in the League of Nations. Ever since Finland’s independence from Russia in 1917, there had been a strong political movement on the Åland Islands with the agenda of reuniting Åland with Sweden (referred to as the emotional motherland) arguing that this was the ‘natural’ solution to the question of Åland’s future political status. The arguments presented were based on interpretations of the islands’ history and traditions. Some politicians of Åland saw the islands as Swedish, both historically and culturally. When the League of Nations declared the Åland Islands to be an autonomous part of Finland, geographical, political and military arguments were considered. The decision had the intent to create stability and security in the Baltic region. To preserve the islands’ Swedish language, right to ownership of land, political decision making and right to vote, certain guarantees restricting outside interference were given by the League of Nations (Article 3) and eventually legislated in the Åland Islands Autonomy Act (Sw. självstyrelselag) of 1922.1 Since then, the Autonomy Act has been revised but the core remains the same and the intent to “preserve the Swedish language and culture” and “local customs” (Sw. lokala sedvänjor) is still considered to have political relevance by both politicians and parts of the population.

With autonomy came the political aim to establish an appropriate and unifying prehistory for the Åland Islands. This is symptomatic for most young nations or autonomous regions that often tend to seek out confirmation and raison d’être in the past. Nationalism and defining a national identity is conducted with the aim of creating a sense of unification and belonging. A fundamental feature of nationalist myths is the urgent need for an early history, proven by archaeological finds and traditions as well as language (Fewster 2006: 16).

In 1933, The Åland Islands’ Premiere (Sw. Lantråd) Carl Björkman, who had been one of the foremost politicians during the crisis regarding reunification, established the office of a ‘state’ archaeologist (Sw. Landskapsarkeolog) on Åland. The job was given to Matts Dreijer, who would dominate the islands’ historical research for nearly half a century. Dreijer studied archaeology and was in 1969 given the honorary title of professor. Björkman thought that it was of importance that the islanders themselves would research their own history, since a united identity was important in asserting autonomy (Holmén 2009: 12).

In the beginning of Dreijer’s career, the Åland Islands autonomy was newly established and there was a political need to reaffirm its identity and

1 Barros 1968; the treaties; see also www.kulturstiftelsen.ax.
the traditional ties to Sweden, because the international reassurance of these traits was part of the compromise that defined the autonomy. Dreijer draws a sharp geographical, cultural and historical line between the Åland Islands and mainland Finland. He claims prehistoric Åland to have been an integral part of Sweden (Dreijer 1937: 3; Holmén 2009: 313), and was influenced by the Scandinavianism of historians such as Martin Weibull and Oscar Montelius. The idea of a unified Scandinavian past had been prevalent since the turn of the century and was conserved within folk culture and in the local society. Dreijer’s theories of the Scandinavian Viking Age and later of the town of Birka, which he located in the Åland Islands, should be seen as a legacy of these ideas from the 1800s (Fewster 2000: 121).

Dreijer uses the Iron Age and Viking Age grave typology as evidence of a borderline between the Åland Islands and Finland, and sees the Åland Islands as the easternmost outpost of the Scandinavian people (Holmén 2009: 317). This is in line with the aims of earlier political activists on Åland in the conflict regarding the islands’ sovereignty in the early 1920s, and the continuing wish to look to the west in the early period of the autonomy. Later, Dreijer revises his view and, in his autobiography from 1984, he explains his national-romantic
theories as being symptomatic of a time when promoting all connections with Sweden was highly commended on the Åland Islands (Dreijer 1984: 315).

After the Second World War, Dreijer revised his theories on Åland’s history during the Iron Age and medieval period. The strong political and national orientation towards Sweden had received a setback in 1945, when the Åland government expressed a wish to be reunited with the Swedish ‘motherland’, and Sweden showed no interest (Holmén 2009: 313ff.; Dreijer 1984: 227ff.). As a response to this refusal, the political climate on Åland saw a change in perspective, with the development of the autonomy as a priority. With this shift in focus from looking westward to a more local perspective came a new historical focus. Traditionally, Åland had emphasized the islands’ identity as Swedish and the cultural and historical ties to Sweden. In the changed situation, the focus instead became the strengthening of the local identity; an idea already established by Bomansson almost a decade before. This time, the local perspective did not derive from within the local historical communities, but was defined by stressing the dissimilarities between Åland and Finland, but now also between Åland and Sweden. This shift is visible in Dreijer’s work. The one thing his works have always stressed is the historical and cultural differences between the Åland Islands and mainland Finland (Holmén 2009: 317). But in his revised outlook on Åland’s prehistory, where he describes the Iron Age/Viking Age of the islands as period of grandeur and identifies Åland as the town of Birka (Dreijer 1984: 249ff.), he also by default diminishes the importance of the Swedish influence on the Åland Islands. The islands now become the center that influences its surroundings.

Dreijer states in his autobiography that his reassessment of the history of Åland began in 1949 with the discovery of a cross made of chalkstone in the parish church of Sund, which was the starting point of his hypothesis of the Åland Islands being the important trading center Birka; situated strategically along the Eastern Route (Dreijer 1984: 249ff.). This idea also has implications for what he defines as other historical misconceptions of the Viking Age (Dreijer 1984: 259; Holmén 2009: 313). In his monograph on the history of the Ålandic people (Det åländska folkets historia, 1980), Dreijer presents his theories on the prehistory of Åland and his reassessment of the Iron Age Ålandic community. The historian Janne Holmén argues that, in Dreijer’s later theories, he reduces the historical importance of the Vikings and thus makes a break from the traditional view of the era in Nordic research (Holmén 2009: 313).

Holmén has discussed the examples given of political tendencies in archaeological research and literature. Dreijer serves as an example because of his
influence on archaeological research specifically of the Viking Age. Alongside this often politically inspired writing, which actually in Dreijer’s case served as the official history of Åland, there has also been research done on the Viking Age by researchers and academics both within and outside the Åland Islands. In the 1980s, Dreijer’s theories were still prevailing in the official written history of the Åland Islands, but from the turn of the millennium, Dreijer’s theories are seldom mentioned, and when they are mentioned, it is only in order to dismiss them (Holmén 2009: 319ff.). Holmén suggests that Dreijer’s theory on the Iron Age was so different from the thinking of the rest of the contemporary scientific community that it was characterized as possibly damaging to Åland’s reputation and image as a self-sufficient autonomous region, and therefore often not mentioned in the historical discourse (Holmén 2009: 325). In the 1990s, the Board of Antiquities on the Åland Islands became close to autonomous from the Finnish National Board of Antiquities, and unfortunately this separation in a way has isolated Åland even further from the academic and scientific community in Finland.

Håkan Petersson (2004) has done research on the relationship between archaeology and the national state in a Nordic context. Although his analysis is of the Neolithic period, the discussion is relevant for the Viking Age. Research on nationalism did not derive from a unified thought or a contemporary societal spirit, but a conscious ideological choice of seeking legitimacy for the idea of a national kinship or community. As a consequence, the research is affected by its relation to the social and sociopolitical context. (Petersson 2004: 6, 12–13) It is in this idea of uniting people into an experienced ‘natural’ community that the significance of nation-building archaeology can be understood. The relationship between archaeology and nationalism has been seen as ‘natural’ since the objective of history was to reinforce and carry out the idea of the nation (Engman 2000: 36; Østigård 2009: 19–20). Dreijer does not acknowledge having any moral problems with the political or ethical aspect of the contemporary archaeological research. He explicitly describes the political agenda and acknowledges the nation building aspect of his office and the use of archaeological research. Dreijer later criticizes the national-romantic character of his early work, explaining it in the light of the prevailing politics of the time. Even if he acknowledges the political aspects of his historical interpretations, Dreijer still believes in the objectivity of the researcher and a fact-based reconstruction of a course of events “close to reality” (Dreijer 1984: 279).
Identity in Viking Age Research: The East–West Discourse

The concept of space in archaeological research is visible in the theoretically constructed social organization schemes, or patterns. The idea is that the spatial distribution of finds indicates ethnically defined territorial areas and their borders, which is, in turn, equal to the spatial interpretations of the nation state. The physical and cultural borders should be clearly defined in implementing the nation-building concepts in archaeology (Petersson 2004: 274). Usually the borders coincide with the modern borders of the nation state. The history of a country or region, such as Norway, is traditionally written from a perspective where the modern national border defines the area of interest and excludes outside areas (Østigård 2007: 8). This does not translate to Åland, where the neighbouring areas outside the islands have played a major role in defining identities and the origin of material culture and, by default, also ancient peoples and archaeological ‘cultures’. This is visible in much of the traditional archaeological research concerning the Viking Age on the Åland Islands in the efforts to fit results into the existing cultural models. Simultaneously, there is a trend towards accentuating the role of the Åland Islands during the Viking Age as an important core area, as opposed to a peripheral one. As a result, archaeological research, especially after 1921, has had a focus on interpreting archaeological records in accordance with verifying the islands internal importance during the Viking Age.

As the discussion in the earlier sections of this chapter has shown, the research on Viking Age Åland has traditionally been concerned with the question of identity. In diverse political and social contexts different identity markers have been stressed. What is interesting is to observe that the period has always had a tendency to be defined in relation to an outer influence.

Culture and identity as well as discussions on these topics are still very visible in sociopolitical and popular contexts on Åland, which also reflects the way history is presented. This is probably part of an archaeological research tradition to define the islands not as an entity in itself but by defining its opposites and trying to demonstrate cultural and traditional relations outside the islands, and more importantly, to define itself as being opposed to or different from another element. Societies have throughout history used tools such as stereotypes and identity markers and symbols to identify themselves as a unity, ‘us’ as opposed to the ‘others’ (Hylland Eriksen 1993: 81; 1995: 327; Paasi 2001: 525; Tarsala 1998).
Bomansson saw the 1800s as a period of strong local influence and autonomy, but he also saw this in contrast to the surrounding area in the Baltic Sea region. He stressed the local perspective and traditions in a contemporary context of the multicultural society in Skarpans and later in Mariehamn of the mid 1800s. It is noteworthy that archaeological academic research was still in its formative phase and, especially in Finland, there was not much published material for comparison. During Dreijer’s era, the political context became more defined. Where Bomansson’s theoretical framework can be seen as a reflection of the prevailing society and the social context, in Dreijer’s case there is a political agenda for the historical research and its interpretations. This agenda shifts through time with the political currents, which is also visible in Dreijer’s theories concerning the Viking Age. The importance of the Swedish influence on Åland’s prehistory and particularly on the Viking period is stressed during the period when the question of sovereignty was debated and eventually decided by the League of Nations. Viking Age Åland was logically defined as the easternmost outpost of the Swedish and Scandinavian Viking tradition. Later, Dreijer revised his view and stressed the local traditions, but still in opposition to the tradition on the Finnish mainland, and similarly in opposition to the tradition of the Swedish mainland, although not to the same degree. This was in the context of a political aim to strengthen the local identity with focus on expanding and evolving the autonomy.

The east–west discourse has been visible in the historical and archaeological research concerning the Åland Islands. At some point, national markers such as Sweden, Finland and motherland became replaced by the more neutral concepts of east and west. It is in this discourse of eastern or western influence, whether in the form of ethnicity, culture, trading goods or ideas, that the Viking Age has been researched and evaluated. The scheme has been to define the material culture and to fit it into the existing typologies of Sweden or Finland. The Åland Islands were not viewed from a local perspective but as territories that were either inhabited by or culturally connected to outside influences which also defined it. Any inconsistency that did not fit the presupposed picture has traditionally been dismissed as accidental or otherwise explained in a manner that does not upset the presupposed picture. Some researchers have suggested differing interpretations to these occurrences but have seldom taken the discussion further. The professor of archaeology Ella Kivikoski, for example, notes the fact that even though the Viking Age grave tradition and artefacts are characteristic of those of middle Sweden, the similarity of some objects from the
same contexts to Finnish types suggests some influence on the islands also from the east (Kivikoski 1964: 232; for further examples, see also Gustavsson et al.).

Dreijer’s early theories serve as an example of this phenomenon of defining material culture in the framework of preexisting notions of ‘culture’. The concept of culture itself is vague and loaded with many different meanings. An archaeological ‘culture’, defined in terms of similarities in material culture within a geographical territory, in fact excludes anomalies that could be crucial to our understanding of the past. Dreijer chooses to focus his research on a specific period in order to use a phenomenon such as the grave mound tradition to prove the theory of the Scandinavian influence on Åland as opposed to eastern, or Finnish, influence. (Holmén 2009: 317.) Therefore, any influence on the material culture that has an eastern reference is often interpreted as accidental.

For archaeological research, one way of renegotiating the identities of the past and their presentation in the present is by returning to the objects of research; the structures and artefacts. The objects are neutral and do not have an identity, culture or gender in themselves (Svanberg 2013). It is in the contemporary contexts and in the interpretations that the researcher applies to the objects that they become communicative.

The Problem of Definition: The Concept of Culture and Identity

A political or national trauma often becomes a cultural trauma, where the past becomes a means to strengthen and renegotiate a feeling and respect for a specific political group, for example, a nation, region, society or minority (Aronsson 2005: 2–3). In 1921, it was legislated in the Autonomy Act that the Swedish language and by extension “the local culture and traditions”, at
that time defined as Swedish, should be preserved and protected from outside interference. In section 1 of the Åland Islands’ agreement in the council of the League of Nations, it states that Finland is

resolved to assure and to guarantee to the population of the Åland Islands the preservation of their language, of their culture, and of their local Swedish traditions (www.kulturstiftelsen.ax).

Since then, the law has been revised but the guarantees are still referred to as well as politically acknowledged. This makes the situation on the Åland Islands exceptional, since the preservation of its culture is protected by legislation. The problem is how the concept of culture and specifically Ålandic culture and traditions have been and are still defined.

In 1921, the Åland Islands had a concept of a predefined cultural identity; a ‘Swedish’ culture based on language and similarities in cultural traditions. The presumption is that there are static cultural values and symbols that can be defined as Ålandic neglects the idea of culture being a non-static re-definable organism. It was defined in a contemporary political context with the intention of preserving the islands’ culture and protecting the people’s cultural identity. This raises the question of how the definitions of Ålandic identity today differ from the historical interpretation: what is it that we are protecting today and from whom?

Culture should not be seen as static, but as organic. Culture is constantly evolving and changing and being redefined by internal and external influence. It is impossible to preserve something that is characterized by change. Identity, culture, tradition, nation and gender both objectively exist as such and as phenomena, ideas, and norms that are simultaneously constructed and open for renegotiation. Ålandic society today is different than it was in the 1920s. This means that the Ålandic identity and the definition of what constitutes the culture and traditions of the Ålandic population have been, and constantly are, renegotiated. The idea of a fixed national identity that it is necessary to preserve was part of the nationalistic history writing of young nations seeking validation through their past. Creating myths of a common origin and national continuity throughout history is about describing the national idea as natural and unproblematic (Petersson 2004: 23). This opens the discussion to historical generalizations and to a terminology that allows the writing of ‘the prehistory of Sweden’, or of any other nation (for discussion on Finland, see Fewster 2006; Engman 2000: 31–46). This picture of a national static past has since been
forwarded by the structure that we, intentionally or not, apply to the narrative account of the past (Svanberg 2013).

The nationalism of today uses history and archaeology in arguing national identities and searching for the nation's essence. Neo-nationalism is described as an attempt to ethnically and culturally unify groups of citizens. This is done on different levels of society, one example being the nationalistic political parties that are currently experiencing a rise in popularity in Finland and Sweden. The cultural heritage then becomes a means of excluding people from a predefined identity that makes up a ‘genuine’ Finn, Swede or Ålander. The solution is not to canonize tradition but to find new ways to work with diversity (Svanberg 2013), and to reassess the definitions of the contents of, for example, ‘Åland culture and traditions’.

**Conclusion**

The anthropological view of the story of our past is that history is not a product of the past, but an answer to the demands of the present (Hylland Eriksen 1993: 147). Identities are negotiable and changing in different situations according to what we as actors in the present choose to emphasize. Historians and archaeologists traditionally aim to describe history as objectively as possible, but as the preceding discussion has suggested, we are influenced by our present context in our interpretations of the past. We either consciously or unconsciously choose to interpret and present our research according to a theoretical and ideological basis, both as academics and as actors in a political and social framework.

The Åland Islands have traditionally, because of shared political history, had a need to activate the islands’ identity in relation to its neighbouring countries. This has also translated into archaeological research where comparisons to east and west, and trying to fit the archaeological material into pre-existing norms and models of surrounding regions, has been of great importance in defining the past. This has resulted in some aspects of the past being exaggerated in order to strengthen and validate contemporary political intentions, such as the Swedish influence in the Viking Age when seeking to strengthen the ties to Sweden. The autonomous Åland Islands needed to strengthen an ‘Ålandic’ identity and feeling of belonging, rooted and legitimized in a shared distant past. The focus shifted to a regional or local perspective and interpretations of the past suggested the importance of the islands as a center especially during the Viking Age.
Our past is not a product of the present, but our interpretations are. With politically or ethnically motivated archaeology, we have not researched the past as much as we have the present. This reasoning is also applicable to today’s research. It is important to define what we choose to study and how we present it, and for what reasons. The interest in history and the past has different positive social effects, and it provides the basis for studying archaeology and history in the first place. But the use of cultural heritage, by defining it as legitimizing and belonging to ‘us’ in the present, can be deceptive, and also ignores the concept of a future.

References


This chapter will discuss the use of Kalevalaic epic as a source for the historical study of the Viking Age in Finland. The material poses several issues to be addressed because of the span of time between when it was recorded – mainly during the nineteenth century – and the period that is under scrutiny. A location identified in the epic tradition as Saari ['The Island'] will be addressed as a case study. Saari is presented in the epic poem about the hero Kaukomieli as his refuge after a violent encounter. In this role, Saari is represented as a place beyond a distance, as a manifestation of otherness, and as such reflects the conceptions of the inhabitants of the mainland. First in 1919 and then in a developed form in 1924, the renowned folklorist Kaarle Krohn suggested that Saari – the Island – is identifiable with Åland as observed from southwestern Finland. Archaeologist Matts Dreijer brought up this suggestion in his influential book *Det åländska folkets historia* (1983; *The History of the Åland People*, 1986), in which he accepted Krohn’s suggestion at face value (Dreijer 1986: 314–317; on Dreijer, see further Lucenius). The present chapter will address Krohn’s argument, which also provides an opportunity to discuss Kalevalaic epic as a historical source more generally. The discussion will touch upon matters concerning the time and place in which Kalevalaic epic originated, this epic as an expression of identity, and the variation within the epic as a reflection of the issues related to identity and identification. Finally, this chapter will return to the historical context in which Krohn made his interpretation, observing that research is not separate from the social reality in which it is conducted.
The Epic Poem about Kaukomieli

In 1834, Elias Lönnrot wrote down the epic poem about the hero Kaukomieli sung by the renowned singer Arhippa Perttunen in Latvajärvi, Viena Karelia.\(^1\) This is only one of the many recorded versions of this epic, but it is quite representative of the common narrative structure and poetic conventions that are applied in the other versions (cf. however Frog 2010: 397–398).

Typically, the poem about Kaukomieli begins with a description of the preparation of a feast at Päivölä, part of which is a sequence that describes the origin of beer. However, Arhippa Perttunen’s poem begins by recounting how the hot-headed Kaukomieli becomes furious when he does not receive an invitation to this feast. Kaukomieli determines to equip himself with armour:

\[
\begin{align*}
Oi emoni kantajani, & \quad O my mother who bore me, \\
Tuos tänne soti somani, & \quad Bring here my war-gear, \\
Kannas vaino vaattieni, & \quad Carry here my battledress: \\
Lähen Päivölän pitohin, & \quad I’m off to Päivölä’s feast, \\
Sariolan juominkihin. & \quad Off to Sariola’s revels. \\
\end{align*}
\]

(SKVR I, 759: 10–14.)

In spite of his mother’s warnings, he sets off on the journey to Päivölä (referred to in this example also with the parallel name Sariola). During the journey, Kaukomieli confronts fantastic obstacles that he passes or skirts around.\(^2\) When Kaukomieli arrives in Päivölä, he gets into a duel with the master of Päivölä:

\[
\begin{align*}
Sano kaunis Kaukomieli: & \quad Handsome Kaukamieli said: \\
‘Anna mieki miekallani, & \quad ‘Let me try with my sword too, \\
Jos on luissa lohkiellut, & \quad Though it has been chipped by bones, \\
Pääkasuissa katkiellut!’ & \quad And broken by skulls!’ \\
Laski pään päältä olkan, & \quad He took the head off the shoulder, \\
Niinkun naatin nakribista, & \quad Like the top off a turnip, \\
Evän kaikesta kalasta. & \quad Or a fin off a whole fish. \\
\end{align*}
\]

(SKVR I, 759: 146–152.)

In other words, Kaukomieli overcomes his adversary. After the duel, Kaukomieli flees from the consequences of this deed, returning to his mother. She

\(^1\) This version of the poem is included in the collection of Kalevalic poetry *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (vol. I, item 759) and also in *Finnish Folk Poetry: Epic* (Kuusi et al. 1977: 224–231, “Kaukamoinen I”), a collection of Kalevalic epic with English translations. This translation is followed here as well.

\(^2\) For a survey of these dangers and their variation, see Harvilähti & Rahimova 1999 and Frog 2010: 377–395.
advises him to escape to an island beyond the sea where his father also once hid from pursuers. Kaukomieli follows this advice:

Silloin kaunis Kaukamieli
Sillön laivahan laske,
Alasehen asteleke;
Nostu päälle purjeputa,
Niinkun männikön mäellä;
Laskoo sinistä merta
Saarehen selälsiehen,
Manterehen puuttomahan.
(SKVR I$_{2}$ 759: 199–206.)

On this island, Kaukomieli seduces all the women – which is quite a respectable number:

Silloin kaunis Kaukomieli,
Saaressä selälissessä
Yhtenä kesää sönä
100 neitosta makasi,
1000 tunsi morsienta.
(SKVR I$_{2}$ 759: 221–225.)

This angers the men of the Island, who prepare to kill Kaukomieli:

Ei ollut sitä urosta,
Jok’ ei miekkoa hivonut
Pääle kaglan Kaukomielen
(SKVR I$_{2}$ 759: 235–237.)

Kaukomieli appreciates the evident danger and escapes from the island in his ship.

This poem was among the most popular of the epic kalevalaic poems. For instance, in Viena Karelia and in Olonets Karelia, Kaukomieli’s journey to Päivölä is the epic subject that has been documented the most (Virtanen 1968: 51; Tarkka 2013: 67). Kaukomieli and Lemminkäinen are heroes who are both associated with the journey to Päivölä whereas the hero who travels to the Island is more frequently referred to as Kaukomieli. The popularity of the topic is accompanied by variations in the narrative. In many redactions, Kaukomieli’s mother suggests that he transform into a tree or a fish as means of hiding from the pursuers. The length of the journey to the island is occasionally
also mentioned to have taken three days (e.g. SKVR I₁ 828: 194–195), and in some redactions, each day of sailing is also characterized:

\[
\begin{align*}
Laski päävän suovesiä, & \quad \text{He sailed marsh waters for a day,} \\
Toisen päivän maavesiä, & \quad \text{Another day land waters,} \\
3:n meren vesiä. & \quad \text{The third, sea waters.}
\end{align*}
\]

(SKVR I₁ 759: 260–262.)

In some redactions of the poem, the hero dies in the duel in Päivölä (e.g. SKVR VII₁ 799, 823, 830, 832) and hence does not need to flee to the island in the first place. Whereas in Viena Karelia, Kaukomieli is a rather ambiguous character as an unwanted guest, in Northern Karelia, Kaukomieli is a more heroic figure. The focus of the documented poems in this region is typically on Kaukomieli’s dangerous journey to the feast and the poem often ends with Kaukomieli arriving at the feast as a guest:

\[
\begin{align*}
Pääsi Päivölän pitoihin, & \quad \text{He arrived to the feast of Päivölä,} \\
Jumalisten juominkihin & \quad \text{To the drinking feast of the god-like ones} \\
Parahaksi tietäjäksi, & \quad \text{To be the best of sages,} \\
Parahaksi laulajaksi. & \quad \text{To be the best of singers.}
\end{align*}
\]

(SKVR VII₁ 792: 132–135; also VII₁ 765, 779, 780a, 781b, 790, 822.)

In Ingria, in another kind of poetic culture, the poem is concentrated around the duel at the feast (SKVR III₁ 466, 1236, III₂ 2247; see Frog 2010: 92–93). The versions of the poem about Kaukomieli in different areas made Krohn consider the narrative about Kaukomieli’s journey to Päivölä to have originally depicted a shaman’s journey to the otherworld, whereas he considered the narrative about the duel at the feast and the following escape to Saari / the Island to have originally been a separate poem (Krohn 1903–10: 556–571, 516–541; see also Kuusi et al. 1977: 538). Anna-Leena Siikala has noted that the poem was formed differently in the densely populated agricultural area of Ingria than it was in Karelia where the hunting, fishing and trade expeditions comprised a central part of livelihood (Siikala 1990: 10–11).

The general conception holds that the heroic epic was a tradition of the men (e.g. Salminen 1934: 89). The collectors and the researchers of kalevalaic epic have preferred male singers of epic (Tarkka 2013: 65–66), partly due to this preconception. Actually, a relatively high number of the singers of epic were female in the nineteenth century when the poetry was recorded. The distribution among the singers of epic differs areally, the northern areas (Viena
Karelia) presenting a larger portion of male singers than the southern areas (Ingria) but in general, the usage of epic tradition can be said to have been more common among women (Harvilahiti 1992: 16–17; Tarkka 2013: 65–66; Frog & Stepanova 2011: 201, 210). It is possible, nevertheless, that this relatively high number of female singers of the epic in the nineteenth century reflected quite recent processes within the tradition communities and that prior to that, epic was predominantly a tradition of men. It is also possible that men had been entrusted with the public performing of the epic whereas women’s uses of the epic belonged to less formal contexts. If the public arenas for performing epic were reduced, it is natural that the less formal uses of epic occupied a greater role within the scene of epic singing as was the case in Viena Karelia when the poems were recorded in the nineteenth century. (Harvilahiti 1992: 17; Timonen 2004: 24–25.) Here, Kalevalaic epic is discussed in terms of male poetry on the basis that the focal characters of these poems are men and that the activities that are described in the poems reflect male experience with emphasis on heroic ideals linked to magical power and battle or warfare. The focal characters and the point of view are presumed to reflect cultural expectations of the representation of the male sex.

Parts of this epic poem were used on different occasions: certain parts were used as elements of wedding songs (Virtanen 1968: 76; Tarkka 2013: 195–200, 263) and in connection with beer brewing (Virtanen 1968: 15) as well as a magical incantation (Frog 2010: 84, 86–87). However, Jukka Saarinen has observed that a single singer seldom performs sequences as constituent elements of different epics (Saarinen 1994: 182). According to Satu Apo, the subject matter of this epic points to a history of performing in communal feasts and agrarian rituals in which male drinking has played a significant role (Apo 1994: 205–206). Lotte Tarkka points out how effective the poem has been in a wedding context in which the poem recounts events that were potentially similar to the events that were taking place at the place where the poem was being sung. According to Tarkka, the poem reflects the alcohol culture of the community in which it was performed, and she presumes that exactly this has been the basis of the popularity of the poem (Tarkka 2013: 199–200).

The motif of the hero escaping to the Island is most typical for the poems about Kaukomieli in Viena Karelia and in Ingria, whereas it is absent in the intermediate areas (see Frog 2010: 88). The place to which the hero escapes comprises another community that presents both opportunities and threats. Eventually, the hero is unable to stay there.
Åland as the Epic Island

Kaarle Krohn was the founder the discipline of folklore studies in Finland and a prominent scholar within the study of Kalevalaic poetry. In a series of studies labeled Kalevalastudien (1924–28), Krohn suggested that this island (Saari), where Kaukomieli sought refuge, originally referred to one of the large islands in central Baltic Sea, namely Saaremaa, Hiidemaa or Åland. On the basis of the narrative, he preferred Åland as the referent:

Früher dachte ich an Dagden (Hiiumaa) oder Ösel (Saaremaa), später kam ich zu der überzeugung, dass mit dem Namen Saari Åland gemeint sei (Krohn 1924: 122; see also Krohn 1926: 59–60). ['Earlier, I used to think of Dagden (Hiiumaa) or Ösel (Saaremaa); later, I came to the conviction that the name Saari referred to Åland.]

In the background of Krohn’s suggestion was the conception that Kalevalaic poetry reflected historical settings, events and personae. In Kalevalastudien, Krohn made historical interpretations of the poetry to a far greater extent than before (as in Kalevalankysymyksiä, 1918). However, he suggested already in (1903–10) that many of the oral epic poems, which were in his view were originally composed in the Southwest Finland, such as the poem about Kaukomieli, were preserved in Karelia in transformed forms and as combinations of the constituent elements that differed from the original (Krohn 1903–10: 819–821). Even though Krohn considered the archaic poems to have generally been vernacular adaptations of Christian narratives in his earlier interpretations of the poems (e.g. Krohn 1914: 360), he considered the poem about Kaukomieli to refer to a historical context already in Kalevalankysymyksiä. More specifically, he suggested that this poem referred to the last pre-Christian era and to the hostilities between the Finns and Swedes at that time (Krohn 1903–10: 832–833). As evidence, Krohn referred to the wording and narrative expression (ibid.) and to the warrior ethos in the poem that pointed to a Viking Age Circum-Baltic tradition (Krohn 1914: 102, 175–176). Eventually, Krohn found in the poem references to concrete events, places and persons of the era (see Krohn 1914: 304–334, 341–347; 1918: 216–226). Hence, he considered the poem about Kaukomieli to have originally been sung in Southwest Finland. As Krohn points out, Kaukomely, a rather evident transliteration of a name very similar to Kaukomieli, is met as a surname in this area already in records from the fifteenth century. Indeed, place names that are relevant for the poem about Kaukomieli also seem to be concentrated in a rather restricted area in Southwest Finland (Jaakkola 1935: 394–396; Vahtola 1987; also Siikala 1994: 144–146).
Southwest Finland in the Viking Age seems to be a suitable context for the contents of the adventure poems, among which the poem about Kaukomieli belongs.

Furthermore, Krohn considered Saari in this poem to refer to the islands that it was possible to reach from Southwest Finland (Krohn 1914: 333) and eventually he suggested that Åland was a convenient referent as an island that was large enough to maintain those thousands of women that are talked about in the poem and as an island lying between Southwest Finland and Sweden (Krohn 1926: 47–60). According to Krohn, this location is relevant because Sweden is mentioned in some redactions as the place to which Kaukomieli continues his flight from Saari (Krohn 1924: 122–123). However, this argument does not take into account that the great number of women whom Kaukomieli is said in the poem to have seduced is most plausibly a mere hyperbole, a common rhetorical device in epic, and ‘Sweden’ (Ruotsin ma) a metonym for foreign lands in general. It is important to refrain from leaping to overhasty conclusions concerning historical referents behind poetic images. Vihtori Laurila (1964: 186) is quite willing to interpret Saari historically, but he quite rightly points out that the ‘island’ in different poems may in fact refer to different locations.

Krohn’s argument that Saari refers to Åland, based on a rather literal interpretation of the poem, relies on the following hypotheses: a) that the poem was composed in Southwest Finland; b) that the poem depicted actual events or at least an actual environment in which the events could take place; and c) that the poem was preserved essentially intact through the centuries. These hypotheses will be discussed in the following sections before finally taking a look at the socio-political context in which Krohn formulated his interpretation.

Origins of the Poem about Kaukomieli in Southwest Finland

It seems evident that the contents of the poems about Kaukomieli could not have been created in Viena Karelia. Both the image of Saari as an island that was large enough to provide a habitat for a whole community and the description in the poem of a sailing voyage that starts from the home yard were alien for the environment where the poem was most vital in the nineteenth century (i.e. Viena Karelia). The part of Viena Karelia where kalevalaic poetry was

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3 Krohn states explicitly: “Da auch die größe der Insel durch die Zahl der Jungfrauen, Hundert bis Tausend, angegeben wird, kann schwerlich eine andere Insel an der finnischen Küste als Åland in Frage kommen” (Krohn 1926: 60). [*Since the size of the island is specified by the number of young women, a hundred to a thousand, hardly any other island on the Finnish coast but Åland can come into question.*]
predominantly met is roughly as far as it is possible to get from great islands and bodies of water that can be sailed in ships. This would suggest that these images originally became an established part of the traditional imagery in another environment.

Possible directions from which that imagery could have been adopted are in the White Sea region or to the south of Viena Karelia, in the vicinity of Lake Ladoga and/or the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland. The poem has been recorded in the latter regions of Karelia. However, the vocabulary of the heroic epic and the settlement history of Viena Karelia suggests otherwise. A. A. Borenius noted as early as 1873 that the epic of Viena Karelia included linguistic and other features which seemed to indicate western Finland as their original context.

Marti Pöllä (1999) has studied the roots of the inhabitation of the Vuokkiniemi area, the area where Arhippa Perttunen and many other significant families of singers lived in the nineteenth century. According to him, these roots are in the seventeenth century. The original population, however, diminished during the famine in the end of the seventeenth century. In the early eighteenth century, many immigrants arrived, perhaps owing to the Great Northern War. These immigrants were mostly from Finland: from Finnish Karelia, from Kainuu and especially from northern Ostrobothnia. In the area of Vuokkiniemi, a greater proportion of the population had a background in Finland than elsewhere in Viena Karelia. (Pöllä 1999.)

The fact that the roots of the population in Vuokkiniemi are from Finland suggest that the roots of the poetic tradition are from there as well. However, the presence of western features in the traditional poems in the nineteenth century may not be solely a heritage of these settlers. Many of the men in the area travelled regularly around Finland as travelling salesmen. Without a doubt, they adopted some of the local poetic expressions and images during these voyages (Tarkka 2013: 66). However, already in the early nineteenth century, Kalevalaic epic had lost popularity in Finland, and the Finnish influence that such population mobility had on the epic poems was thus most probably quite limited.

The argument that Saari of the poem about Kaukomieli refers to Åland presupposes that the poem was composed and became popular in an environment in which Åland would be a reasonable referent for it. However, without sources, it is impossible to say whether the narrative about Kaukomieli’s journey to Saari has ever been known in such areas in the first place. It is only possible to note that the observations of Kaarle Krohn and A. A. Borenius concerning
the western linguistic elements in the epic seem correct and that it is extremely unlikely that the maritime image of Saari was composed in the area where Arhippa Perttunen sang the poem about Kaukomieli in the nineteenth century. The different aspects connected to the imagery of Saari seem to suggest the western coast of Finland as a relevant environment in which the imagery found conventional expression and popularity.

**Epic Reflecting Historical Events or Environments**

Oral poetry reflects only secondarily the actual historical environment in which it is performed and composed as fictive and mythical elements have a central position in it. Väinö Salminen notes that before proposing that a poem refers to a historical context, it is necessary to conduct a comparative study concerning the subject matter and theme of the poem (Salminen 1934: 238–252). Researchers had noted this already in the late nineteenth century, which makes Kaarle Krohn an exception (Siikala 1990: 8–9). However, even the mythical or fictive elements that derive from the past may reveal interesting things about that past. On the other hand, oral poetry also always reflects the conceptions and worldview of the time when it is performed, and these reflections can accumulate across the different elements making up the poem. As a consequence, the poems actually include significations given to their constituent elements over the whole history of their usage in performances (Haavio 1935: 11–18). Anna-Leena Siikala (1994) has demonstrated that these significations may be preserved rather intact for long periods. Therefore, under certain circumstances, oral poetry may reflect the mentality of bygone eras.

The study of a historical mentality reflected in the poetry requires that it can be connected to a given era. This is possible with the help of comparative evidence. Neighbouring cultures tend to communicate with each other and simultaneously leave marks of this communication on different cultural phenomena, including folklore. These marks are generally recognizable as similarities of different kinds. Those similarities in a neighbouring culture that are possible to date may help in the dating of the cultural phenomenon under study, such as an element in an oral poem.

There are heroic characters that resemble Kaukomieli in the heroic narratives of both the eastern and western neighbouring cultures, as I have discussed in “Kalevalaic Heroic Epic and the Viking Age in Finland” (Ahola 2014b). It was possible to conclude that this type of a heroic character was familiar in Scandinavian heroic narratives that derive from the Viking Age and also in
Russian heroic epic. The island as a refuge for a pursued solitary warrior is familiar from the Icelandic saga literature from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Ahola 2014a). Islands are central also in the saga depictions of Viking voyages on the Baltic Sea. This centrality shows the importance of islands in descriptions of voyages and perhaps also in navigation (Zilmer 2006: 262–267; 2008: 241–244). The island depictions in the saga literature sketch a picture of isolation and inwardness that are accompanied with potential danger and that extraordinary things can be expected to happen in these places (Zilmer 2008: 238–239, 244). The medieval sagas reflect conceptions connected to islands as narrative settings in the Icelandic tradition that derive from the Viking Age, but possibly these conceptions did not differ drastically from those in the parts of Scandinavia with which the Finns had closer connections during this time.

Mythological poetry was put into writing in Iceland but these poems have been associated with Scandinavia in a more general sense. The literary form of this poetry dates back to the thirteenth century but the poems are generally considered to be much older. In one poem, there is a passage in which the hero of the narrative, the chief god Óðinn, boasts of having seduced numerous women on a certain island (Harðbardslóð 16–20, here stanza 16):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Var eg með Fjölvæi} & \quad \text{I was with Fiolvar five winters long} \\
\text{fimm vetur alla} & \quad \text{on that island called All-green;} \\
\text{i ey þeirri} & \quad \text{we fought there and wreaked slaughter,} \\
\text{er Algæn heitir.} & \quad \text{we tried out many things,} \\
\text{Vega vér þar knáttum} & \quad \text{had the choice of many a girl.} \\
\text{Og val fella,} & \quad \text{(Sigurðsson 1999: 105.)} \\
\text{Margs að freista,} & \quad \text{(Larrington 1996: 71.)} \\
\text{Mans að kosta.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

These events are not referred to elsewhere in the preserved poetic corpus and it is therefore difficult to evaluate their significance within Scandinavian mythology. However, the fact that the events are referred to in this poem suggests that the audience of this poem was supposed to be familiar with them. Nevertheless, this occurrence suggests that the idea of an island as a place for a hero to accomplish erotic feats was familiar in Scandinavia already before this poem was put into writing, perhaps even before the thirteenth century.

Whether or not the similarity between the passages in the Kalevalic epic and in the Scandinavian myth follows actual cultural contacts in the past is a more difficult question. A wandering hero having erotic adventures on an
island is not a rare motif. The Mediterranean maritime peoples have many myths connected to islands, and for instance the erotic adventures of Odysseus with Circe demonstrate that the motif is not exclusive to northern European narrative traditions. However, unknown islands appear rather seldom in medieval European literature, although the Irish maritime environment created an exception. Where islands are presented, they appear generally as allegorical representations of refuge where the individual’s love of God is restored (Classen 2007: 70–74). Exotic islands return to the European literary sphere following the voyages of discovery to the New World. In this time, islands beyond the seas are represented and depicted in a rather different sense, as exoticized sources of benefit (Egerer 2001).

The scarcity or incomparability of the literary sources that would deal with odysseia to remote islands in Europe naturally does not serve as evidence of an earlier age of such a topic in the Kalevalaic epic. This is because oral tradition seldom follows literary trends. Moreover, the oral tradition remained predominantly beyond the scope of literary sources up to the nineteenth century, and therefore we do not know much about the oral traditions prior to the era of National Romanticism. However, the lack of the narrative theme of a remote island where the hero has erotic adventures within medieval European literature would suggest that this theme’s appearance in the Scandinavian myth was not adopted from European literature but more probably reflects the indigenous mythological tradition.

In summary, it is probable that the poetic image of a remote island where the hero has erotic adventures was familiar in the territory of western Finland prior to the eighteenth century, possibly already considerably earlier. It is also probable that the narrative about a mythic hero’s erotic adventures on an island were familiar in Scandinavia in the thirteenth century at the latest, and possibly considerably earlier. Hence, the roots of the image in the Kalevalaic epic seem to reach close to the Viking Age at the very least. The poem is fundamentally based on the spatial dichotomy between a homestead and ‘elsewhere’. This dichotomy suggests that the imagery of the poem had relevance in a cultural context in which permanent settlements formed the centre from which the world was observed. During the Viking Age, permanent settlements (if cemeteries are considered indicators of these; cf. Tomtlund) in western Finland that also had access to the sea spanned across a fairly limited area. This area consisted of the southwest tip of Finland and limited parts of the eastern coast of the Gulf of

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4 E.g. Saint Brendan’s famous travelogue Peregrinatio Sancti Brandani.
Bothnia. (Ahola & Frog 2014.) However, it is another question to which extent oral poetry, such as a kalevalaic poem, can resist change over time.

**Preservation of an Oral Poem: Variation**

The textual manifestation of a kalevalaic poem is grounded on a tradition-based register comprised of elements such as the verbal idiom, models of expression and poetic images (Harvilahti 2004: 196–199; Tarkka 2013: 67–75; Frog 2010; 2011). The collective nature of the tradition-based register was articulated and hence realized in individual performances. Indeed, the performances of individual singers were quite fixed especially in connection with epic (Harvilahti 2004: 196–197), yet as a rule these performances differed from each other to a certain extent. The capacity for flexibility in the handling of these elements had the consequence that a given poem was not exactly the same in every performance. Words, lines and clusters of lines could potentially be replaced by others that seemed appropriate in the situation in which the poem was being performed. However, all elements of a poem were not equally exposed to variation.

The plot of an epic poem consists of sequences of elements that are recited in a successive order. These sequences were hierarchically ordered in the mind of a singer. Hierarchically higher sequences defined or specified the subordinate sequences that were hierarchically lower. The sequences that were hierarchically lower were more exposed to variation (Saarinen 1994: 183–184). The hierarchically higher elements of a poem that also comprise its narrative back-bone can be called key elements. These key elements function both as mnemonic devices and indicators of a certain narrative being performed and therefore, they tend to resist change (see Harvilahti 1992: esp. 88–90; also Ahola 2014b). Jukka Saarinen calls this variation between a given singer’s textual articulations of a poem minor variation whereas the variation between the versions of a poem sung by different singers he calls major variation (Saarinen 1994: 181). Both these modes of variation caused the tradition-based register to be continuously reassessed, producing changes in broader conventions of acceptable variation and non-variation in local communities and on a regional basis (see Honko 1981: 50–52).

Images and associations of expressions play a significant role in verbal arts. If an expression does not have a clear referent, the connotative meanings gain a foothold in its interpretation. This means that even if a poetic expression remains in use through a change in the cultural context, this change may have
effect on its meaning. The same holds true concerning changes in the textual environment in which the expression is used.

Anna-Leena Siikala has pointed out that the differing meanings given to an expression may reflect the history of the meanings that have been attached to it in the past:

We cannot reach the frame of reference of the performance that is always connected to a moment. However, the constituent elements of the performance may bear traces of the tradition processes, different interpretations, that date back even long periods of time.5 (Siikala 2004: 39–40.)

In other words, the different meanings that are attested for a poetic expression are indications of a history of significations. Whereas a poem’s breadth of distribution is, in many cases, a relevant indicator of its age within the poetic tradition, the distribution of meanings attached to its constituent units (poetic expressions) does not question this dating. This is because oral poets adopt the poetic expressions in accordance with their contemporary cultural context, which leads to different meanings being attached to these expressions. The changing meanings maintain the expressions as being relevant and viable even in varying contexts. In principle, even if a poetic expression was introduced across the whole area where kalevalaic poetry was sung, this expression would receive different meanings in different areas because of differences in the cultural environment of each area. Therefore, the meaning of an expression needs to be interpreted in relation to the context in which it is being used. The common elements with the meanings attached to a poetic expression in the individual, local or areal levels of variation as well as in different poetic genres may provide indications of the meanings attached to the poem or the poetic expression in the more distant past. In the following, I will present meanings that have been attached to the poetic image of an island (saari) within the corpus of kalevalaic poetry in different areas.

The Poetic Image of an Island

In scholarly discussion concerning the poems about Kaukomieli, the island to which he flees is regularly spelled with a capital letter as if “Saari” were a proper noun that referred to a specific location instead of being a mere appellative that designates an island in general. In many cases, the poetic environment in which the noun appears gives basis for such an interpretation:

5 “Hetkeen sidotun esityksen viitetaustaa emme voi enää teksteistä tavoittaa. Esityksen ainekset sen sijaan saattavat kantaa kauaskin haarovien traditioprosessien, erilaisten tulkintojen jälkiä.”
In this poem, Kaukomieli’s mother seems to refer to a specific island and not just any one of them – even though there is also room for the latter interpretation. This is because in spoken language, a proper noun is not marked as such in a way that would exclude other interpretations if the noun itself is not exclusively used as a proper noun (i.e. Finnic languages lack articles, so there is no verbal differentiation of ‘Island’, ‘an island’ and ‘the island’). In many cases, *saari* can be understood simply as an appellative and it even seems reasonable to ask if there are grounds to consider ‘*Saari*’ as a proper noun at all. Therefore, the islands that appear in other poems than the one about Kaukomieli can also be informative of the island in this poem. If there can be found common meanings attached to the noun *saari* that are not directly linked to the noun’s referent, it is possible to continue discussion upon whether these meanings actually may have a background in the history of the poems.

Especially in the poem about Kaukomieli, the island functions as a refuge for the hero. However, the hero who appears on the island where he seduces all the women is not always Kaukomieli. Other heroes in this role include Ahti Saarelainen (note: *Saarelainen* [‘islander’]) (SKVR I₂ 787), the son of Tuiretuinen (SKVR I₂ 954, 977) as well as Kullervo, the son of Kaleva (SKVR I₂ 984). The journey to the island of the two latter heroes is preceded by a shameful scene of the hero accidentally seducing his sister. In other words, the island in the poems is a place for these heroes to escape the revenge of their own people or to escape from their shame. In all cases, the hero flees from his own in-group or possibly another group with which he participates in a common social setting (i.e. a wedding or other communal feast).

The island also functions as a refuge for a girl in a fragment of an Ingrian balladic song. This fragment recounts the escape of a girl from home. It begins by telling that the maiden has fled from something and is floating on the sea. She eventually drifts to Finland. She asks for permission to rest ashore but:

6 E.g. SKVR I₁ 593; I₂ 702a, 729, 731, 759, 816, 828, 831ff.; IV₂ 1961, 1962.
The maidens of Finland replied:

There is no room in Finland,

For a traveller to lie down

And for a refugee to rest,

There is room in the Island,

For a traveller to lie down

On the hot stones of a sauna,

On the sparking coals.

(SKVR IV, 129: 22–29.)

However, the hot stones and embers mentioned suggest that the advice is given in an ironic mode and that the island is not necessary considered to be that good of a refuge after all.7

The image of an island in a wide sample of Kalevalic poetry is interpretable as a general designation for a distant location. Already the conventional beginning of the poem about Kaukomieli in Viena Karelia reflects this notion. Here, Kaukomieli notes the smoke that rises from below the kettle in which beer is being made for the feast in Päivölä:

Savu saarella palavi,
A smoke burns on an island,
Tuli niemen tutkamessa;
A fire in the head of a peninsula;
Pienebkö soan savuksi,
Small to be a smoke of war,
Saauri painomen paloki.
Large to be a fire of a herdsman.

(SKVR I, 714: 1–4.)

In this formulation, the island represents a distant location of which it is possible to have only an imperfect visual perception. Furthermore, the feast that Kaukomieli intends to crash therefore appears actually to take place on an ‘island’. This association is also hinted at in parallel designations for the feast of Päivölä including Saariolan juomingit [‘the drinking feast in Saariola’] (SKVR I, 362), saari-joukon juomingit [‘the drinking feast of the island-folks’] (SKVR I, 750) and others that employ the stem saari- in one form or another (e.g. SKVR I, 702a, 1019; II 192; XII, 320). Especially in the Kalevalic balladic poems in South Karelia and Ingria, an island is used as a paraphrase for a foreign land without a reference to any specific place (e.g. SKVR XIII, 59), which also becomes evident in its use as a parallel noun for specific foreign places.8

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7 See also SKVR IV, 1003, which recounts events that may resemble those that are referred to in the poem discussed above.
8 Such parallel couples are for instance Viro/Isari [‘Estonia/island’] (SKVR III, 2799, 2825), linnav/saarenmaa [‘castle/island land or Osel’] (SKVR IV, 650) and saari/Tukulmi [‘island/Stockholm’] (SKVR IV, 4010; XIII, 13).
Another use of *saari* in the balladic poems on the eastern shores of the Gulf of Finland is as a parallel noun for a nearby but still separate area in relation to the place where the poem is being sung, as for instance in the parallel couplets *Karjalan kasket / saaren saunat* ['the burn-beaten lands of Karelia / the saunas of the island'] and *Inkermaan majat / saaren saunat* ['the cottages of Ingria / the saunas of the island'] (SKVR XIII, 1226: 19–20, 1483: 16–17). It seems quite natural that fears and hopes connected to distant places that are possible to reach in imagination were attached to the location of an island in Kalevalaic poetry, especially as the poetic image of an island was associated with the otherworld.

In response to Kaarle Krohn’s views on the historical referents of the Island, Onni Okkonen pointed out that the Island “has, at least occasionally, to be located in other waters than those of the Gulf of Finland or the Baltic Sea” (Okkonen 1938: 83). He also observes that in many poems of origins, the Island is a parallel noun for the underworld. Okkonen connects Saari with Päivölä through the parallel term for Päivölä, ‘Sariola’ or ‘Saariala’, that is found in many redactions of the poem (Okkonen 1938: 84–85). Martti Haavio interprets these parallel terms as the morning or evening glow. According to Haavio, this designates the sky as the home of the gods and hence the parallel term *jumalisten juomingit* ['the drinking feast of the god-like-ones'] for the feast at Päivölä in many redactions of the poem (Haavio 1959). That the island does not necessarily belong to this world is articulated in the poem about Kaukomieli in the island’s common epithet *sanaton* ['wordless'] or *nimetön* ['nameless'] (e.g. SKVR I, 449, 461) and in its parallel terms *luoto puuton* ['treeless islet'] (SKVR I, 704: 244–245) or *manner puuton* ['treeless continent'] (SKVR I, 703: 222–223). This is exemplified in the lines of the poem about Kaukomieli in which he is told to sail to the island: *Laskia karettelevi / Saarella nimettömällä* (SKVR I, 834: 275–276) [‘He sails / To a nameless island’]. As Lotte Tarkka has noted, defining a creature or a place in terms of negation is a common strategy in Kalevalaic expression to designate that it belongs to the otherworld (Tarkka 2013: 389–391). Additionally, Tarkka points out that within the poetic tradition of Vuokkiniemi, the Island is depicted in terms of both a refuge and a place to which diseases were banished in incantations (Tarkka 2013: 367–368). This makes it comparable with Pohjola, another location that was associated with the otherworld (Tarkka 2013: 386–388). The connection in charms is further strengthened by the fact that the origin of another useful commodity, iron, could be located on an island (e.g. SKVR VII, 433, 434) and that in

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9 *Jumaliset* (sing. *jumalinen*) is a difficult expression to interpret. It seems to refer to a mythic quality in general, whence ‘god-like-ones’ is not necessarily best possible interpretation.
healing incantations, a magical bee is told to fetch ointment from “an island on the open sea” (e.g. SKVR II 61a; VII, 373, 462). The conceived effectiveness of the ointment from this specific location may be connected to the conception of the primeval beer brewing taking place on an island (in the poem about the origin of beer, which is the typical introductory portion of the poem about Kaukomieli), which apparently was considered as evidence of competence in manufacturing liquid substances, but perhaps also connected to the fact that the image of an island was central in the formation of the world. The knee of Väinämöinen or another demiurge was the only spot in the primeval sea that comprised firm ground, referred to as an island, and the egg out of which the world was created was first laid on it (e.g. SKVR VII, 14, 18).

A forested spot, which is differentiated from the surrounding flora as being higher, was referred to with the word saares (e.g. SKVR II 1026). This is the place to which the hunter wished to be led in incantations for hunting luck (e.g. SKVR XII, 6555) and a distant location to which a bear was being shooed in repelling incantations (e.g. SKVR XII, 6480; esp. 99–100; 6479). In both of these cases, saares functions as a recognizable spot in the landscape where there is potentially plenty of game. In other words, an island-like land formation, which was also linguistically related to the word for ‘island’, could function as the image of a distant location saturated with hopes and conceptions of plenty even in a forested environment.

As an expression of mythic otherworldliness, the poetic image of the island is represented in terms of things that differed from the everyday: uncontrollable forces, insecurity, a place from which return was uncertain, etc. Different bodies of water such as rivers, lakes and seas have always been connecting elements between people but have also often been troublesome and even dangerous to use. In this kind of a setting, islands presented a kind of intermediate place, a liminal location, between one place and the other. When the other place is too distant to reach or too impossible to long for, the hopes and fears connected to it are reflected upon this intermediate island. Therefore, it is no wonder that one family found it fitting to recount that Kaukomieli was killed on the island (SKVR I, 845; Frog 2010: 78).

It also follows that when a place is too distant, it ceases to have significance for a narrative. This is because places and people who inhabit them only appear relevant to a narrative as long as they are identifiable to some degree – as long as they have relevance to the audience. When Kaukomieli is expelled from the Island, the poets do not normally have interest in him any longer. If his journeys are addressed to any extent, these references are limited either to mentioning
that he sailed farther away into foreign lands or that he travelled to Pohjola, apparently as a way to express that he was doomed never to return.

As a location that is generally distant, the island also functions in the kelevalaic poems as a spatial image of longing or desire. As a rule, the island is associated with young women and as such, a feminine mental place. For example, Anni, the object of competitive courting of the kelevalaic heroes, is referred to as saaren neito ['maiden of the island'] (SKVr I, 30: 135). The sister of one of the courters, Annikki, is also similarly addressed (e.g. SKVr I, 434–439). In fact, Anni and Annikki seem occasionally to have been interchangeable names. Anni is also the name of the girl who is promised to the old sage Väinämöinen as a wife against her will in an epic cycle (e.g. SKVr I, 149, 165, 216). A courting song begins with a depiction of a girl named Annikka, another form of the stem Anni, who is willing to get married:

Annikka, korii neiti
Istu saaren sillan päässä,
Vuotti miestä mieluhista,
Sulhaista sulosanaisa.
(SKVr VII, 1183: 1–4.)

However, the subject of this poem turns out to be equally choosy concerning the groom, as in the case of Anni concerning Väinämöinen in the poem discussed above. The island is used as an image of a place where the daughter is raised in safety in wedding songs (e.g. SKVr I, 1492) and as such, a place where a young girl can be courted (SKVr VI, 273, 559). A rather fixed poetic passage in the poems of eastern Finland describes how an island is formed out of silver (e.g. SKVr VI, 167, 264, 362; VII, 479; XIII, 441) or out of a swallow's egg (e.g. SKVr VI, 85–87; VII, 65, 68, 69, 75; XIII, 684), how grass grows on the island, how a house is built on it, and how a girl is raised in the house. The girl of an island is also the object of desire in this South-Karelian poem:

Katsoo yksi, katsoo toinen:
"Kenen tyttö, kenen neiti?"
"Saaren kukka, Saaren neiti,
Saaren morsian mokoma."
"Kun mie tuon mokoman saisin,
En mie pahoin pitäisi,
Sylissäni syyvessäni,
Kätissäni käyessäni,
Maatessani vieressäni."
(SKVr XIII, 1313: 21–29.)

One looks, another looks:
"Whose girl, whose miss?"
"The flower of the Island, the miss of the Island,
The bride of the Island."
"If I only had her,
I would not mistreat her,
[I would hold her] in my lap when I eat,
[I would hold her] by the hand when I walk,
[I would hold her] by my side when I lie down."
In short, the island is represented in the Kalevalaic epic and balladic poems as the home of desired young women who are also depicted as willing to get involved with the opposite sex. As such, the poetic image of an island has been applicable in the poems performed by both men and women, although from two quite different points of view.

In contrast with the tendency to conceptualize islands in Kalevalaic poetry as distant and alien places, the island is occasionally also depicted in the Viena Karelian epic as the homestead of a member of the epic in-group. The hero of the poem about Kaukomies is in some redactions named as Lemminkäinen or Ahti. In the poem about the theft of mysterious object called a *sampo*, there is typically a scene in which a man joins the heroes who are sailing to Pohjola to steal that magical object. The heroes meet this man when they sail to *Nenän utusen niemen, / Päähän saaren terhenisen* ['To the tip of a foggy peninsula, / To the head of a misty island'], (SKVR I 79a: 228–229; see also e.g. I 758) who may be the young rascal Joukahainen (e.g. SKVR I 96: 140–141; 246, 251, 647). This formulaic expression of a location is connected to Lemminkäinen in the poem about how the hero catches a fish that is in fact a maiden in a fish’s shape (SKVR I 246, 251; I 758) in which role also appears the epic sage Väinämöinen (SKVR I 262, 273, 275, 280a, 670). The expression is also applied as a designation for a fishing spot despite the narrative context (e.g. SKVR I 497: 47–48). Indeed, an island seems to be a rather natural place for fishing, but it is worth noting that a romantic element is involved in this fishing through the association with the poem about the maiden in the shape of a fish. Furthermore, the hero’s name Ahti is connected to an island by his epithet *Saarelainen* ['islander'] that indicates his homestead, which is also mentioned in the following conventional line cluster:

\[
\begin{align*}
Ahti saarella asuupi, & \quad \text{Ahti lives on an island,} \\
Kauko niemen kainalossa, & \quad \text{Kauko in the armpit of a peninsula,} \\
Veitikki nenässä niemen & \quad \text{Veitikki in the tip of a peninsula} \\
\text{(SKVR I 729: 1–3.)} & \end{align*}
\]

The apparent incoherence that the hero who visits the Island is associated with an island himself may partly be caused by the narrative. In the initial scene, the hero sees a smoke rising from an island on the horizon – and this requires that he is located by the water himself. The fact that the island could

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10 This man is also named in some reductions Vesi-Liito (SKVR I 79, 79a) or Ikutiera (e.g. SKVR I 54, 54b, 58a) but in the latter case, he joins the other heroes already when they are departing.
be comprehended as the home of the epic in-group indicates that the image of an island is not categorically distancing but may be applied in the poem for the sake of the frame narrative. Another example of this is in the above-mentioned poem about the theft of the *sampo*. According to some redactions of the poem, the mistress of Pohjola reaches the heroes of the poem when they are returning from Pohjola with the stolen *sampo* on board their ship. She suggests that they stop and negotiate the matter on an island (SKVR I, 79, 647, 649). In this connection, the island functions as a spot between the in-group and the out-group but it does not seem to comprise further meanings or references to any specific real or mental location. It is, however, worth noting that even if the narrative contexts provide grounds for the image of an island to be applied, the image is still applied predominantly in a narrative context in which the focal character(s) of the narrative is on his way either to or from the distant, threatening otherworld, be it labeled as Pohjola or Päivölä. In other words, even if the image of an island does not always seem to have been associated with the otherworld, the otherworld seems to lurk in the vicinity of this image.

On the whole, the uses of the poetic image of the island seem to form a rather confusing picture. However, it is possible to recognize the image as a sort of boundary surface between the familiar and the alien, between the safe and the dangerous, between the boring and the exciting, and between the inevitable and the promising. The poetic image of the island is perhaps best reflected in the South-Karelian poem that juxtaposes the quality of life in the environments of the inland and an island:

*Saaress oli hyvä elämä:*  
Sunshine, a sandy beach,  
*paivä paiste, hiekka ranta,*  
There the stubble did not whip the shin,  
*siel*’e sänk säärtä lyötä,*  
The sickle did not cut the fingers;  
*siirpp*’ei sormii sipaise;*  
*paiksuin leivin paistettiin,*  
The sickle did not cut the fingers;  
*hoikin pytykin leikattiin.*  
Thin slices were cut.  
*Katsos maan syvämmen miestä,*  
Look at the man in the heartland,  
*paarmat söivät paiat päältä,*  
Gadflies ate the shirt on him,  
*itikat heposet ieestä,*  
*itikat heposet ieestä,*  
Mosquitoes ate the horses in the yoke,  
*kätet kärmehet reppiit,*  
The hands were torn by snakes,  
*sänget säärykset jalasta.*  
By stubble the gaiters on his legs.

(SKVR XIII, 3392: 1–11; see also 3375, 3391.)

It seems to be justified to consider the narrative voice of this text as being from the mainland, discussing the life on the island from beyond a sweetening distance. The poem seems to express one element of a ‘mainland’ identity, namely the
uneasiness and painfulness of life, in an ironic mode. However, the articulation of enduring such hardships in the poem is also possible to interpret as an expression of pride. One’s identity is reflected in the poetry he performs, and especially epic comprises collective dimensions as a form of identity expression, as will be discussed in the following section.

The Poetic Image of an Island and Epic as Identification

When one is interested in things that oral poetry recorded in the nineteenth century can reveal about a more distant past, it is necessary to look beyond the variation among the transcribed poems, into the conceptions on the basis of which the poems were being produced in performance. Both the minor and major levels of variation among individual performances of a poem should have room within the scope of these conceptions. In other words, the limits of variation reflect these conceptions. In simplistic terms, it can be presumed that the more fixed these conceptions are across poems that are recorded in different times, in different places and representing different genres, the deeper their origins must run into history. A poetic image may reflect a variety of conceptions and therefore, its usage in poetry is also variable. However, the meaning of a poetic image that is relatively consistent, among potentially a number of alternatives, can be presumed to reflect an older stratum of meanings.

The common denominator of the poetic image of the island in different uses of kalevalaic poetry is in its use as a reflective image of the ‘other’. Otherness is connected to identification: identification is fundamentally a differentiation of oneself as an individual or as a member of a group in relation to others. Especially epic as a poetic genre is strongly connected to identification, as Lauri Honko argues. The general definition of ‘epic’ is a narrative poem that celebrates the deeds and adventures of heroic or legendary figures of the historical past of a people, in an elevated style.\(^\text{11}\) There are conceptions and emotions strongly involved in epic that a member of a group has concerning his group’s relations to other groups and concerning himself as a member of the group (Honko 1984; 1994: 21). Further, according to Honko, it is appropriate to call epic a source of identity representations. This is because epic by definition belongs to the centre of oral traditions as text that is referred to in traditional expressions of many other genres as well (Honko 1998: 28). In other words, central units of traditional expression, which are connected to the conceptions of the individual and the community concerning themselves and their past, reflect their identity.

\(^{11}\) As adapted from the Oxford Dictionary and the Merriam Webster Dictionary.
However, identity is a complex concept and it is not possible on the basis of any single narrative to characterize an ‘identity’ which that narrative is supposed to reflect. This is because narrative tradition works as a system within which each constituent unit is attributed meanings in relation to the other units that comprise the system. In addition, identity is always partly situation-bound because, in terms of social psychology, identity becomes relevant only in relation to a reflective party (see e.g. Tajfel 1981; Hornsey 2008).

Oral tradition is a form of communication. Even if the transmission of information is not necessarily the main purpose of performing oral poetry, it creates a situation in which the performer is enabled to transmit a certain kind of narrative. The reasons behind the will to transmit the narrative may vary according to the situation and audience. Nevertheless, while performing a traditional poem, the performer expresses, strengthens and renews his identity both as an individual and as a member of a group. To the degree that epic reflects one’s identity, the concurrent context of identification affects this reflection as one of the many factors of minor variation. Major variation can be considered the manifestation of individual identification, as differentiation from other performers of the epic. Furthermore, major variation may result in a social redaction such as a regional or kin-group tradition. In fact, the differences in epic may reflect differences in identity. On the minimal level, this means that, for example, an individual, who witnesses an epic poem being performed differently than he is used to hearing it, may identify himself as a member of a different group than the performer.¹² In a more collective sense, these differences may be reflected, for example, in conceptions concerning what kind of behaviour is acceptable or preferable for a hero, such as what can be sensed in the differences between the poems about Kaukomieli in North Karelia and in Viena Karelia.

A single element of an epic poem may have different uses in different narrative environments and these uses contribute to the meaning of the element. However, the use of a single element in a predominantly consistent sense indicates that its meaning is stable to a certain degree. As shown in the discussion above, the poetic image of an island is connected to the alien and as such, it reflects conceptions about the Other. Furthermore, these conceptions are the surface on which the mental image of one’s own identity is reflected. Hence, it is possible to state that the poetic image of an island reflects the identity of both the group within which this poetry functions as a source of identity representations and of an individual member of that group.

¹² Frog (2011: 54) discusses these recognized differences and similarities in poetic conventions between singers in terms of “dialects” of singing.
The poetic image of an island is both dreadful and attractive. As a distant location, it appears as laborious to reach and it is not self-evident that one is able to return from it at all. Fears about strange lands, such as the fear of hostilities towards a solitary traveller, could be projected on this image. As such, the image is strongly associated with death and the otherworld. In contrast, as an image of an unknown land, the island in the poems is also associated with things that are desired. These things are most visibly embodied in young desirable women. The desirability of these women is manifested in the wedding poems as the stereotyped homestead of a girl who is to be married. Indeed, as the bride was acquired from another kin group, every marriage was symbolically an acquisition of the bride from the otherworld. However, in the balladic songs, an island is often the stage of an erotic tragedy.

In short, the poetic image of an island was utilized differently in poetic genres that were clearly gendered. In women's songs, it may be used as an attribute of the desired woman's model, and in epic, where the protagonist is male, the island is a stage of a hero's erotic adventures. Nevertheless, the fears and hopes that were connected to a strange place, the reflective surface of one's own identity, were expressed in the Kalevalaic poetry in connection with the poetic image of an island.

**The Poetic Image of an Island and Its Historical Contexts**

This chapter departed from Kaarle Krohn's suggestion that the Saari to which the hero Kaukomeli escaped in an epic poem referred to Åland at the time when the poem was composed, considered in the Viking Age. This suggestion is built upon three hypotheses: a) that the poem was composed during the Viking Age; b) that it was composed in south-western Finland; and c) that the poem refers to actual locations. None of these hypotheses can be confirmed or refuted. In the course of discussing these hypotheses, I brought up several issues involved in Krohn's suggestion that are relevant in connection with the disciplinary diachronic study of Kalevalaic epic that can shed light upon the Viking Age in Finland, or upon the Viking Age in Åland for that matter.

The poetic image of an island is attested with rather uniform meanings across a wide span of recorded Kalevalaic poetry. This wide distribution may indeed indicate an old age of the meanings. It is also evident that the epic poem about Kaukomeli was not composed in the area where a vast amount of its redactions were recorded during the nineteenth century. The vocabulary of the epic suggests origins in western areas of Finland and the population history of
the area points to the same cardinal direction. This epic was preserved in Viena Karelia, where it maintained relevance and popularity as an oral narrative in separation from the new trends in folklore that displaced kalevalaic poetry in southern Finland. (See Salminen 1941: 70–72; Siikala 1990: 26.)

General conceptions may endure for long periods of time, as for instance the poetic image of an island as a referent for conceptions concerning alien lands and otherness. However, a poem as a concise, emplotted entity cannot be reconstructed into a form that it assumed in the distant past. Individual words and expressions can reach far into the past but their referents change constantly. Any adjacent, relatively large populated island may have functioned as a concrete referent to the poetic image of an island. This holds equally true of the image of Åland for the people in south-western Finland. However, it is impossible to say anything certain concerning the referents of the poetic images in the past.

Nevertheless, it is understandable why Åland was a ready referent for the poetic image of an island for Kaarle Krohn. In the wake of a young nation, the oral epic with obvious archaic features could meet the desire and need for a national history, a common past (Wilson 1985: 79; see also Lucenius). Krohn was an active figure in the nationalistic Fennoman movement that struggled to resist Russian influence and to elevate the vernacular Finnish culture (e.g. Jussila 1989: 157–158). This involved juxtaposition with the Swedish-speaking minority. Finland became an independent nation in 1917, but the question of Åland still remained open after that (Kuvaja et al. 2008: 598–607). The Ålanders offered to be ceded to Sweden but the issue was submitted to the League of Nations. Eventually, in 1921, the League of Nations announced that Åland was to remain part of Finland, but it was to be made an autonomous territory. This guaranteed the Ålanders the right to maintain Swedish language and their own culture. (Tudeer 1993: 43–58; see also Lucenius.)

This meant that Åland became an anomaly, an intermediate place between Finland and Sweden. The issue of Åland was in vivid public discussion at the time when Krohn was preparing Kalevalastudien. Krohn probably did not have any sort of a political agenda in mind while preparing his suggestion about Saari referring to Åland. Nevertheless, it was quite natural for him to associate the poetic image of an island that reflected conceptions of otherness and alienness with Åland at this particular time on the basis of his political worldview and his interpretation of the kalevalaic poetry as being historically grounded. Just as the singers of kalevalaic poetry applied the poetic image of an island differently according to their local heritage, according to situation-bound poetic aims and
according to the genre to which their craft conformed, Krohn reinterpreted Saari according to his perception of the historical context in which the poetic image of Saari was created. Probably intuitively, this perception merged with the concurrent political reality. However, it is fully possible that the image of an island in the poetic expression of the Viking Age Finns in Southwest Finland was associated with Åland. Indeed, the subject matter of the poem about Kaukomieli seems to have a natural context in south-western Finland, and Åland was the closest large island community to the south-western Finns. Culturally, it differed from the mainland while close connections seem to have been maintained (see Sjöstrand). To the degree that the poetic image of an island really comprised similar associations during the Viking Age as it did in the poetry recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the poetic image of an island that can be discerned from the recorded Kalevalaic poetry is depictive of conceptions that these Finns might have held about Åland. However, these conceptions are expressed in the epic in a simplistic, ethnocentric form that responded to the requirements of typical performance arenas and the tastes of the performers. The willing young ladies and the hostile, jealous men were associated with the conveniently exotic island in the heroic epic because this kind of subject matter results in an absorbing epic narrative.

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HISTORY GONE WRONG: INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TRANSITION FROM THE VIKING AGE TO THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD IN ÅLAND

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In the first part of *Finlands svenska historia* [‘Swedish History of Finland’] (2008), Kari Tarkianen notes that there are two competing theories about the settlement in Åland before Christian times – Lars Hellberg’s and Birgitta Roeck Hansen’s – and Tarkiainen (2008: 109) cannot decide which one of them is correct. This chapter will address these theories and later attempts to handle the problems in question. In the present author’s opinion, the discussion has tended to both set aside very central knowledge about the townships and in some cases goes quite far outside critical scholarship. Attention will be given especially to attempts to show continuities in settlement and toponomy from the Viking Age through the medieval period in the arguments of Roeck Hansen and later by Åsa Ringbom. Exploring the problematics of earlier work with the sources and different types of data by a wide range of scholars provides a framework in which the insights available through that material can be brought into better alignment. The overall goal of this chapter is not simply to highlight methodological problematics in analysing the issues addressed here, but also to advance to a more dynamic synthesis and interpretation – however tentative – that can place this historical transition in a new, and hopefully more sustainable light.

**Overview of the Problem and Discussion**

Hypotheses about Åland in the late Viking Age have been built largely on a few well-known facts. There are no identified burials in prehistoric burial grounds
after the middle of the eleventh century. No rune stones have been found, whereas such are found in huge quantities in the neighbouring province of Uppland, dating from the late tenth century to the early twelfth. There are also no finds of coins from the latter part of the tenth century to the latter part of the twelfth. Artefacts in general dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries are very rare. Hoards of Arabic coins of the ninth and tenth centuries have been found in Åland in quantities comparable to Swedish finds. In Sweden and also in Southwest Finland (SW Finland hereafter), Anglo-Saxon and European coins dating from after this period have been found, denoting changes in trade networks around the year 1000. No such coins have however been found in Åland. In the vicinity of many of the Late Iron Age burial grounds, house foundations of rough stone are found, which could be taken as indicators of deserted settlement. Most of the place names are considered to be medieval, as are the names of townships that have prehistoric burial grounds within their boundaries (Roeck Hansen 1991: 21).

Lars Hellberg found that almost every township name in Åland is medieval, which together with the lack of finds of various kinds of artefacts from the Early Middle Ages and the many deserted house foundations would clearly indicate a break in settlement continuity. That virtually no prehistoric place names have survived is taken as a clear sign that Åland was deserted for so long that no living memory of the names was left. The reasons for this are sought in an economic regression and fierce external threat in the form of piracy that made life on islands unbearable (Hellberg 1987).

1 The Cross of Sund (Sw. Sundskorset), which Matts Dreijer used for his infamous theory that the trade center Birka was in fact in Åland (cf. Mattsson-Eklund 2000: 80), is obviously a relatively late feature without any relevance to the Viking Age and early medieval period. My interpretation of the runes on the cross is the Latin word *vene(rab)ilis* ['venerable'], but I will leave a detailed discussion of this artefact to another occasion.

2 According to Ringbom & Remmer (2005: 17), the continuity in settlement in Åland has been discussed since the 1930s. However, the question was put forth for the first time in the late 1940s by Helmer Salmo (1948) concerning the complete lack of coins in Åland from the eleventh century, whereas there are rich finds of Western coins in SW Finland (discussed below). Salmo found it unlikely that such deep poverty would strike Åland alone, and he also rejected the theory that Åland and parts of SW Finland were Christianized already in the late tenth century (also discussed below). He considered the only reasonable explanation would be that “... *ist die Besiedlung auf Åland um das 11. Jahrhundert stark vermindert oder völlig geschwunden gewesen*” ['the settlement in Åland had been greatly reduced or completely disappeared in the eleventh century'] (Salmo 1948: 423; emphasis original). From a historiographical point of view, Dreijer’s absurdist paradigm concerning the period ca. 800–1300 with the Birka-theory (note 1) was a direct response to Salmo’s theory of depopulation, a theory that thus is not an ‘invention’ of Hellberg. In later writings by Dreijer there can be no doubt that the depopulation theory is seen with great disliking. The same goes for his loyal follower Erik Bertell.

3 An earlier version of this theory was published in Hellberg 1980, and Hellberg had also shared his discoveries in lectures before scholars in the 1970s. His main investigations of the place
In a discussion on Hellberg’s work, Ulf Sporrong has questioned the usage of violent external disturbances to explain the break in continuity. He has suggested instead a gradual internal restructuring of the agrarian society in the form of change of settlement sites from the dispersed, Late Iron Age pattern, to the medieval hamlet agglomerations, involving the organization of cooperation in the townships, the introduction of new systems of cultivation and so on. (Sporrong 1985: 64.) Åke Hyenstrand (1985: 273) has also criticized Hellberg’s interpretation of settlement development from an archaeological point of view and found that the evidence of a break in settlement continuity is hardly convincing.

The question has been whether the supposed break in continuity is real or imaginary, caused by too little knowledge and perhaps by misinterpretations of the known facts. The question of continuity is not a simple one of settlement or lack of settlement. More often the problem concerns continuity of place, which may be interrupted, while at the same time continuity of production, as attested by pollen analysis, shows that settlement has continued unbroken within a certain area (Roeck Hansen 1991: 25, 163). From about AD 500, a sedentary agrarian economy can be said to have predominated in mainland Åland. According to pollen analyses, a continuous cultivation of seed began in AD 370 in Saltvik and in AD 450 in Jomala and Finström. A fully developed agricultural landscape with fixed dwelling sites, cultivated fields and pastures appears from about AD 1070.4

An interpretation of settlement development cannot consider external influences only, but must also be based on knowledge about conditions inside Åland itself during this critical period. Although hardly any regional development takes place independent of external influences, the conditions prevailing in the region itself must to a large extent determine the effects of those influences. It is also necessary to re-examine the facts that have been used by earlier scholars and this knowledge must be compared with what is known of development in other regions. (Roeck Hansen 1991: 25, 26–27.)

Birgitta Roeck Hansen sees Åland as a peripheral part of the Swedish territory and one which has been subject to influences from both west and east. Her main hypotheses are that the peripheral situation has led to a development

4 Roeck Hansen 1991: 29, 53–54, 166; Tomtlund 2005: 3; Ringbom 2010: 9; Alenius 2012: 13; cf. also ALENIUS.
that is late compared with that in Central Sweden and that the change in the settlement pattern from the dispersed, Late Iron Age sites, to the agglomerated settlements during the historical period, was part of a re-organization in connection with the process of hamlet formation. The change in question could not be regarded as an indication of a break in settlement continuity, only of a break in continuity of place. The changed settlement pattern in Åland is seen as a result of the local adaptation of ideas originating outside Åland and common to the Scandinavian region, modified by domestic, natural and demographic conditions. (Roeck Hansen 1991: 26–28.)

Only a handful burial grounds from the Late Iron Age have been fully excavated and a firm chronology for the archaeological material is lacking, a fact which also influences the way in which other processes, among them settlement development, are interpreted (Roeck Hansen 1991: 28–29). Plotted on a map, the Late Iron Age burial grounds in Åland form a pattern of settlements dispersed over large areas. When compared with the Early Iron Age, this indicates an enormous increase in population. According to Roeck Hansen, the question nevertheless remains whether all the Late Iron Age burial grounds are contemporary, each representing a single farm. If they did not exist at the same time, most of the farms may instead be represented by two or three burial grounds in a chronological sequence. This would also mean a lower population pressure, which in turn would influence future land use and settlement development. The dispersed settlement pattern would in itself point to little competition for land. (Roeck Hansen 1991: 80–81.)

According to leading archaeological excavations and works by Ella Kivikoski (1963; 1980) from around the mid-twentieth century, the Late Iron Age burial grounds in Åland ceased to be used sometime in the first half of the eleventh century. This same dating, obviously following Kivikoski, is given by Torsten Edgren (1993) in a major work on the prehistory of Finland from the early

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5 Roeck Hansen contradicts herself on this topic. In this context, she tries to advocate the possibility of single farms having several burial grounds in chronological sequences, and thus that Åland had a lower population pressure than would be the case if every burial ground is taken as representing a single contemporary farm. In another context (1991: 158), she asserts that the densely populated area around the church of Saltvik was split up into several, rather small hamlets after the Viking Age, and that the population probably declined as Saltvik is the only parish in which the number of fullgärdar (taxation units corresponding farms in the later thirteenth century) is lower than the number of Late Iron Age burial grounds. In the latter case, she clearly implies that the number of burial grounds would be equal to the number of farms at the very end of the Late Iron Age. In yet a third place (1991: 164), she notes that the total number of Late Iron Age burial grounds most probably exceeded the number of settlements at the end of the Late Iron Age and that, furthermore, the number of fullgärdar records the existing settlements in a completely re-organized society, which leaves it uncertain whether the number of fullgärdar can be reasonably compared to the number of Late Iron Age burial grounds.
1990s. Edgren goes on to state that a similar period without finds can be seen regarding house foundations, with the exception of the complex investigated in Kohagen near the church of Saltvik. Contrary to the theory that Åland would have been abandoned for about 150 years, another interpretation proposes that the islands were Christianized in the first part of the eleventh century. Such a situation would, according to Edgren, be comparable to that in northern Finland Proper (i.e. the south-westernmost tip of Finland), where the large cremation burial grounds fall out of use at about the same time. (Edgren 1993: 227–228.)

It must be stressed that this is quite a questionably early date for a Christianization on the presupposed administrative level, in the sense that the subscription to Christianity was no longer a question of free will on the individual or collective level, but rather that some kind of hierarchic ecclesiastic organization had been established, putting jurisprudential restraints on the religious habits of the population as a whole. There is no evidence of such administratively compelled conversion in the surrounding areas at that time, which makes such implementation in Åland far less probable. Such an implementation would also need the support of a strong earthly power.\(^6\) Regarding the difficulties the Church still had to cope with in Uppland in the first decades of the twelfth century, it would seem really odd if a peripheral area like Åland – totally lacking finds of coins – would have been successfully ecclesiastically organized a century earlier. On the contrary, the Church as an institution manifesting its power by founding churches and introducing a parish organization was in all probability established relatively late in Åland (Roeck Hansen 1991: 161–162). Gotland, the very centre of exchange and communications in the Baltic, as mirrored in the huge influx of coins, was certainly not Christianized on the administrative level in the early eleventh century. That stage was perhaps not reached before the late twelfth century (Hultgård 2008: 216). It must also be underlined that there is no positive evidence of the assumed early Christianization in Åland (Roeck Hansen 1991: 161; Tomtlund 2005: 17).\(^7\) Nor do the excavated burial grounds show much of the otherwise typical transitional stages with inhumations rather

\(^6\) On Christianization from these points of view, see Sannmark 2004. There is an obvious problem in that the term ‘Christianization’ is often used without any closer theoretical reflection. There is a need to distinguish between earlier stages of religious plurality and syncretism based on free will with individual people and even groups having been baptized and a later stage when monotheistic Christianity becomes the sole legal religious core of society and an ecclesiastical organization is built up (Sjöstrand 2010; 2011; cf. Frog). It is only in this last stage that traditional ‘heathen’ burials are no longer possible.

\(^7\) Ringbom (2010: 9) also acknowledges this; e.g. Pirinen (1991: 30–31, 34) does not seem to have any problem accepting such an early Christianization in Åland (or of northern Finland Proper), though he says that nothing is known about this.
than cremations and an absence of grave-goods (Ambrosiani 1981–82: 78). In Larsas Kvarnbacke in Bertby, there were five empty mounds with rectangular settings of large rocks that have been interpreted as inhumations. Although the form of the graves is traditional, the inhumed could have belonged to the first baptized generation. Two inhumations have also been examined in Kattby in Hammarland (Edgren 1993: 227; Tomtlund 2005: 17), but those seem to be about all of the potential ‘transitional’ cases, and the case of Larsas Kvarnbacke is somewhat uncertain.

According to Edgren, there are numerous finds in Åland that can be dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Such finds include those from Kohagen in Saltvik mentioned above, occasional graves and single early medieval objects from the church of Saltvik, as well as traces of a wooden church from the early medieval period in Finström. With this in mind, a settlement continuity would be evident, according to Edgren, who also refers to Åsa Ringbom’s observation that the stone churches of Åland bear witness to an unusually rich and dynamic thirteenth century and that there had probably already been wooden churches a century earlier. (Edgren 1993: 227–229.) According to Ringbom (1991), it is by no means possible that soldiers of the ledung (a form of military conscription institution to form a naval militia) from Uppland posted in Åland would have the time, peace and resources to build such individual and nevertheless uniform churches in an otherwise depopulated wasteland. The sumptuous fittings of the churches also point rather to the south and southeast rather than to Uppland.

The reference to ledung—soldiers from Uppland bears a clear echo of Hellberg. According to the latest general publication by Ringbom on the churches of Åland, the oldest known material indications of ecclesiastical activity in Åland are from the latter part of the twelfth century (Ringbom 2010: 10–11). Stone churches mainly from the second half of the thirteenth century, however grandiose they ever might be, and traces of probable wooden precursors from the latter half of the twelfth century do not, however, necessarily tell very much about what happened in Åland from the latter half of the tenth century to first half of the twelfth. To this it must be added that the supposed early medieval settlers being warriors from Uppland needs to be dropped as an outdated feature. There is a tendency in the writings of Ringbom’s to make the scarce ecclesiastical material from the latter part of the twelfth century representative of that whole of the century. Notably, the oldest finds of coins following the Viking Age are also from the first half of the thirteenth century, found in the floors of churches
Concerning the finds mentioned by Edgren, they do not, with the possible exception of Kohagen, in any certain way fill the whole ‘gap’ between the first half of the eleventh century and the second half of the twelfth. Somewhat paradoxically to his statement of apparent continuity, Edgren declares at the same time that the problem remains unsolved (Edgren 1993: 229). Considering that only about 4% of the ancient monuments of Åland have been investigated, it is quite likely that new investigations in the future will bring the question closer to a solution.

The dating of the pre-Christian burial customs, and the dating of their discontinuance in particular, can naturally also be problematized. A later dating, say at least about a hundred years or so, would mean that Christianity reached Åland later than for example the central areas of eastern Sweden, an assumption that would accord with a view of Åland as a peripheral region and with investigations in peripheral areas in Sweden itself, such as in north-eastern Uppland (e.g. G. Andersson 1997). The little competition for land and the possibly longer duration of pre-Christian burial customs would, according to Roeck Hansen (1991: 81), be significant for discussing the dating of the formation of hamlets. As long as population pressure did not increase the competition for the available cultivable land, a re-organization of the cultural landscape and a nucleation of the existing settlements would not have been seen as a necessary measure.

Roeck Hansen presumes that the reasons for the supposed restructuring would certainly have been rational and economic. However, another factor would probably have been that Åland now had been made more firmly a part of the Swedish state and was thus in closer contact with current ideas, as well as subjected to Swedish administrative regulations. The introduction of taxation on the land, based on farms as parts of hamlets, may, according to Roeck Hansen (1991: 81), have coincided in time with the formation of these hamlets. In fact, the introduction of permanent taxes may have necessitated a closer co-operation within the agrarian society. The little competition for land should also be viewed in connection with the increase in land area by the shoreline regression. Added land resources and a sparse population in the beginning of the Late Iron Age could have been the reasons why it was economically possible for the single farms to live on for such a long time without rationalizing the use of land. This restructuring of the landscape only took place when external

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8 There is one coin from the latter half of the twelfth century found in the church of Finström; the oldest coins found in the Signilskär and Lemböte chapels, in Saltvik, Lemland, Jomala and Eckerö, are otherwise from the first half of the thirteenth century.
influences demanded it. The assumptions behind this model reflect a quite clear similarity between the approaches of Roeck Hansen and Hellberg: both view the development in Åland in terms of quite drastic jumps, mainly accredited to external factors. Whereas Hellberg operates with a depopulation model caused by a catastrophic outer threat, Roeck Hansen sees the entrance of the Swedish Crown and Church as producing a radical shift that motivates a comprehensive reorganization of the whole agrarian landscape accompanied by the introduction of a wholly new toponomy. It might, in fact, be questioned which of these two lines of argumentation is the more radical.

Roeck Hansen’s model brings to mind the following questions. Could the entrance of Crown and Church actually have been such a profoundly re-structuring event in Åland but never elsewhere? Is a relatively instantaneous and profound shift not only in the settlement pattern but also in settlement toponomy actually realistic in a sedentary agrarian society? How would the indigenous local inhabitants orient themselves and identify themselves if the whole province suddenly changed most of its settlement place names? Why are reorganizations of this supposed magnitude not known from later times in areas with ongoing shore displacement and a certainly much stronger, demanding and capable state?

It must be pointed out that models and theories postulating a ‘central power’ that regulates and re-names settlements and local districts during the early medieval period or earlier are improbable in the extreme. Such interventions in local communities are known only from the time of King Gustavus Vasa in the sixteenth century. The Crown’s changing administrative needs were expressed by other means and led to changes on other levels of society. Fiefs (Sw. län) or bailiwicks (Sw. f öld er i e r) around the Crown’s main castles and strongholds were only formed beginning in the later thirteenth century with the introduction of a fixed taxation. These were maintenance areas, the extent of which would shift over time to meet different needs. This purely administrative division concerned only the manner in which the Crown’s taxes and fines from the districts inside the bailiwicks were to be disposed of (Rahmqvist 1996: 51). Possible changes in the settlement pattern in Åland due to reactions to any sort of ‘feudal pressure’ can hardly have occurred before the late thirteenth century. In addition, the great division (Sw. storskiftet) starting in the mid-eighteenth century did not stir up the existing settlement names to any degree.9

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9 On the grand division in Åland from the middle of the eighteenth century to ca. 1840, see S. Dreijer 2006: 103–108.
In this connection, it must be pointed that an almost total depopulation of Åland has occurred later in history, namely in 1714 during the Great Northern War, when the Ålanders fled before the Russian navy to the Swedish mainland and the islands became a no-man’s land. In 1718–19, a Russo-Swedish peace conference was held in Lövo in Vårdö, as Åland had become a borderland between the combatants. After these peace talks had failed, Tsar Peter the Great used Åland in the last years of the war as a summer base for comprehensive naval ravaging of the Swedish coast. After peace was restored in 1721, a large part of those who had fled soon returned, but it took a couple of decades before all the farms had been taken in use again. Many of those who fled never returned, whereas many deserted farms were taken over by newcomers with no previous connection to Åland. A sorry sight met these who started to arrive in Åland from the early 1720s. This scene was repeated shortly thereafter, during the Russo-Swedish war 1741–43. In the Russo-Swedish war 1808–09, Åland became once again a borderland and has been such ever since (S. Dreijer 1970: 10, 40, 53, 61–63, 133–134; 2006: 11–30, 394–402, 409–411). Kari Tarkiainen (2008: 110–111) asks whether something similar to this happened at the end of the Viking Age, with the difference that there were no possibilities of a quick return.

Of course, in the eighteenth century there were organized states waging wars on each other on a large scale. If some area was devastated, the state could use both force and inducement to repopulate it and build it up again relatively quickly. Nothing of this was at hand about 700 years earlier. There were, however, certainly both destructive and violently exploiting forces. If these got the upper hand, there was no other alternative than to flee, but neither was there anyone to either force or induce people to move back. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the later depopulation events necessarily lack value as potential parallels. The settlement of Late Iron Age Åland was localized to the inner parts of elongated inlets and bays, well protected from foreign eyes, as Jan-Erik Tomtlund (2005: 6) puts it. There are also six ancient hill forts in Åland. Although their age has not been established, single objects found in them indicate that they were in use during the Viking Age (Tomtlund 2005: 14–15), which can be considered an indicator of a latent outer threat. The eighteenth-century cases show, first and

10 Whereas five of the six ancient hill forts may have had a defensive nature, one, Borgö on an island in Marsundet, would seem to have had a more offensive character (Tomtlund). In comparison, six hill forts is quite a modest number. There are, for example, 127 known ancient hill forts in the province of Östergötland (Harrison 2012: 27). Concerning ancient hill forts in general, it may be noted that, although they manifest some kind of a power with both defensive needs and potential to direct work recourses to large collective efforts, it is in reality hard to say whether they together formed any larger cohesive and permanent ‘defence systems’ in a region or if they rather were individual outcomes of a everyone’s war or feud against everyone else.
foremost, the manifestation of the idea of a general exodus from the islands before an approaching enemy fleet. Furthermore, a major motivation for the people to flee in a panic before Peter the Great’s forces was that the Russians took people and sold them as slaves far away in the east. There would have been no need to flee from house and home before a more ‘humane’ conqueror, as was the case when the Russians later arrived in 1809. This can be directly compared to the threat of a fierce enemy coming over the sea around AD 1000, a time when capturing people to be sold as slaves was a common economic motivation.

For the sake of discussion, let us imagine that wars and corresponding flights had occurred every now and then during the rest of the eighteenth century. Most likely the islands would then develop a bad reputation and probably no one would want to stay there except perhaps for seasonal use of natural resources such as fishing and perhaps hunting. Let us now say that after about a hundred years, in the mid-nineteenth century, new possibilities of a peaceful and prosperous life in the islands were presented. A new settlement would arise. It would be quite certain that any traditions that had been established before would have been largely or entirely lost and a totally new structure of settlement and toponomy have been established. The newcomers would give their settlements names describing their current time and situation, as well as quite likely referring to visual remnants of earlier settlements both for their toponomy and landmarks for their territorial organization. Such a model could readily account for the discontinuity in toponomy in Åland.

This hypothetical model can be further contextualized among circumstances of the tenth and eleventh centuries in the Baltic Sea region. The late tenth century was a critical time as the Christianization and consolidation of the first Russian state shut off the Scandinavians and others around the Baltic Sea from freely exploiting the vast areas of eastern Europe, notably in the form of slave hunting, which meant that activities of this type had to be more narrowly concentrated in the Baltic area itself. The ‘Scandinavian’ Viking Age was soon continued by a Wendish and Finnic ‘Viking Age’. The town of Birka in Lake Mälaren was instrumental for the Viking Age trade of Åland (Tomtlund 2005: 29), and Birka disappeared in the 970s, obviously after having been fiercely attacked and ravaged, at which point it was replaced by Sigtuna. A chaotic situation in the Mälar region resulted from power struggles and attempts of Christianization. This situation may have had the consequence that more peripheral areas were left without protection and had to manage on their own. At the same time, there was a regression in long distance trade. The influx of Arabic silver ceased and it took several decades before this was replaced by coins from Western
Europe in conjunction with renewed Scandinavian (notably Danish) attacks on England, creating a short-lived Danish–English–Norwegian North Sea empire under Canute the Great (d. 1035). In such uncertain conditions, the situation in Åland might have become unbearable and it is possible that the islands were evacuated as a consequence. Contemporary desolation can be traced in many regions along the coastal areas of the Baltic, among which the evacuation of Åland would be only one example.  

On the other hand, this hypothetical model would not account for the field investigations and metrological analyses (i.e. studies of the measurement of fields reflected in the archaeological record) that seem to show continuous agriculture in Åland since the first half of the first millennium. The analyses of pollen in particular indicates a continuity even if the peaks seem to occur at about 800 and 1500, which has been used as a backbone for theories of restructuring before desertion (cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 109).

History

The scarcity of the written sources from the dawn of Nordic history is ambiguous insofar as it is difficult to draw conclusions ex silentio. The first fully certain written mention of Åland and places there is found in the so-called “Danish Itinerary”, dated by different scholars to between ca. 1250 and 1300 (Zilliacus 1989: 21–29; Lindholm 2012: 50). The first known document made up in

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12 It nevertheless remains open to discussion precisely how reliable the methods of pollen analysis are in any single case, the role of interpretation in pollen analysis and how much weight should be given to this data if it does not seem to be supported by other categories of data (cf. Orrman 1994a; 1994b; 2002). In some scholarly circles there is a strong belief that natural scientific methods are ‘objective’ and superior to ‘subjective’ humanistic methods, like the study of place names, but in fact the former methods also rely greatly on interpretation, although of other types. In any case, if one considers pollen analyses as decisive and unquestionable ‘evidence’ of an unbroken and even expanding cultivation from the Iron Age to the Middle Ages, it nevertheless remains necessary to explain why the place names and the historically known configuration of settlements appear to present a wholly different picture.

13 Besides mare Aland (cf. Alandz haff ca. 1340) the source mentions Lynæbøtæ (Lemböte), Thiyckækarl (Kökár) and Fyghelde (Föglö) (see Schalin with Frog). Centuries ago there have also been speculations about Åland being mentioned under other names in the oldest sources (a number of these can be found in Radloff 1795). After the mid-twentieth century, Mats Dreijer (1979) made such identifications almost a virtue: Dreijer found the islands under more than a dozen different names. This whole paradigm tells mostly about the dramatic earlier stages of the autonomy of Åland in the twentieth century (Sjöstrand 1996: 91–94; 2000; Holmén 2009; cf.
Lucenius and also Ahola). Such speculations have a clear taste of absurdity and rest on a very shaky linguistic basis, while the same names identified with Åland in these discussions have been interpreted and identified in much more probable and reliable ways by others (cf. Suvanto 1980; Gallén 1981–82: 100). There is consequently no need to go further into this. It might, though, cautiously, be questioned whether the very similar names Åland and Öland (Ölandia 1268) have in some cases been mixed up with each other (cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 111–112). A known case from somewhat later was discovered only in the 1940s: in 1560, the provincial arms of Åland and Öland were confounded. In modern Latvian texts, for example, Åland is referred to as Olandie or Alandu salas [‘– islands’], whereas Öland is called Elande (cf. Lith. Elandas). This leads also to the question of whether the names Öland and Åland may have a very similar origin: Öland [‘island-land’] and Åland [‘land of islands/archipelago’], that is, the first one is singular as Öland is one big island, and the latter plural as Åland is a conglomerate of islands. However, Åland looks as though it were derived from a lexeme represented by Lat. *aqua, Fr. eau* [‘(running) water’] (cf. Freudenthal 1868: 26–27, 39), but that would not seem to make any sense (cf. Hellberg 1987: 233). However, the lexemes represented by Sw. *ä* [‘river, (running) water’] and Sw. *ö* [‘island’] are etymologically closely entangled with each other and it might be that the form *Åland < ‘Aaland* has evolved from a plural of the latter (which then rather should have become *Öja-) in interaction with a corresponding Finnish form *Ahveh > Ahvenanmaa* (cf. Est. Ahvenama). Another question concerning the later (folk etymological?) Finnish form *Ahvenanmaa*, which would mean ‘perch land’, is whether, in fact, the Finnish word for ‘perch’, *ahven* (Sw. *abborre*), is derived from the same lexeme as Sw. *ä* (cf. e.g. Germ. Flussbarsch, and Linné’s Latin name *Perca Fluviatilis*, the word *Fluss, fluvius* refers to running water). As the oldest known place names in Scandinavia are from the Early Iron Age (ca. 500 BC – AD 500), mainly denoting large features in the landscape, among them islands (cf. Brink 2008: 59), it would seem likely that the name Åland goes back to this time or a little bit later, say around the middle of the first millennium, but it can, however, be questioned whether both parts of the name are contemporary, or more closely that only the first part, the topographic designation, is that old and that the latter part -land has been attached later as the islands became a ‘land’ in the judicial-administrative sense, perhaps only in the early Middle Ages. Something in that direction is hinted at by the Finnish name for the Sea of Åland (Sw. *Ålands hav*, cf. Ru. *Аландское море*, Ahvenanmeri (Ahvenmeri 1874), cf. Est. Ahvenameri, notably without -maa- (land) in it (cf. e.g. Pohja – Pohjanmeri – Pohjanmaa). (On the names *Åland* and *Ahvenanmaa*, see Schalin 2008: 24–37; Heikkilä 2014: 145–148; cf. also Schalin with Fros; Heikkilä). In that respect, it may be noted that the inhabitants of Öland were known as *öningjar* in the Middle Ages. They also seem to appear in the Old English Poem *Widsith* as *Ewuan* and at least some scholars have believed that already the Aviones or *Aviones* [‘island dwellers’] mentioned by Tacitus around AD 98 are the inhabitants of Öland. The point is that the name of the inhabitants is modelled only on the first part of the historically known name of the island, that is as though the island were originally known only by the lexeme represented by Sw. *ö* and the latter part -land is a later addition. The island is mentioned in the account of Wulfstan as *Ewoland* in the late 800s. The name *Ålands hav* is (cf. Zilliacus 1989: 169–170; SOL, p. 378) given from the west, meaning ‘the sea (we cross to get) to Åland’, or, perhaps less likely, ‘the sea where we pass Åland (when sailing along the Swedish coast)’. The sea is mentioned as “Allannzhaf” in connection to a journey from Norrbotten to Denmark in an old mythical story known as *Fandinn Noreg* that can be found in the introduction to *Orkneyinga Saga* in Flateyjarbok (compiled around 1390) and other related saga works. The story is believed to have received its final form around 1230 but is based on older myths (Gallén 1981–82: 99). It should finally be mentioned that there is also a parish named *Åland* in Uppland. The name is, however, spelled (de) *Olanum* 1220 and is believed to have a quite different etymology relating to either *lana, lane* [‘path, road, lane’] or *ol* [‘height’] (SOL, p. 379). In Birger Häkansson’s and his wife’s deed of gift to Riseberga monastery in Närke, dated 3.5.1281, a certain *Magnus presbytero de Alandia* is mentioned among the witnesses (orig. on parch. DS, no. 719; FMU, no. 6570; SDHK, no. 1174). E.g. Gallén (1981–82: 98) believes this relates to the province of Åland because the name of the parish in Uppland was usually written *Olana, Ulatna*. This is, however, somewhat uncertain as, on the other hand, both the geographical context and the specification *prebyter de* would rather imply *Alandia* is the parish in Uppland.
Åland is from Saltvik, dated 15 March 1322, and survives only as a copy in the Registrum ecclesiae Aboensis from the latter half of the fifteenth century. In any case, the total silence about Åland before the fourteenth century is at least an indicator that the islands were not of any special significance for the outer world in the early medieval period.

One source of special interest in this respect is the description of Svíaveldi [‘The Wealth of the Svear’] by Snorri Sturluson (d. 1241) from ca. 1230 (Olav den heliges saga 77; on Snorri, see e.g. Nordal 2008: 315–318). In my forthcoming dissertation, I argue that Snorri has used sources connected with the creation of the Swedish archbishopric in 1164 for this description, and thus that the description is valid for the situation in the mid-twelfth century. As Åland is not mentioned among the areas of Svíþjóð sjálfrí [‘Svitjod proper’], it was not seen as a part of the Mälar region nor, notably, belonging to the Svíaveldi.

No Finnish bishopric is mentioned by Snorri or in the papal letters concerning the creation of the archbishopric of Uppsala in 1164. A papal letter from the early 1170s shows that a Swedish mission had been instigated among the Finns (phinni), but no reference is given to a Finnish episcopal church. The first reference to a Finnish bishopric is found in a papal letter from 1209. As the latter letter mentions an already former bishop, it seems reasonable to assume that the Finnish bishopric had been created in the late twelfth century, or at latest around 1200. The first ascertainable Finnish bishop, under the guidance of the archbishop of Uppsala, appears in the sources from the early

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14 Copy REA, no 29; DS, no 2327; FMU, no 303; SDHK, no 3124 (Saltvik 15.3.1322). Saltvik here does not refer to the parish but the site of the church.

15 Copies DS 49, 50; SDHK 139, 202, 203 (Sens 5.8.1164).

16 Copy DS 59; FMU 24; SDHK 207 (Tusculanum 9.9. 1171/72).

17 Copy DS 136; FMU 48; SDHK 321 (The Lateran 30.10.1209).

18 The papal letter of 1209 is directed to Archbishop Andreas Sunesson of Lund in Denmark, who also had the rank of primas over the Swedish archbishopric. According to laconic Danish annals, the Danes had sent expeditions to Finland in 1191 and 1202. The latter expedition is said to have been carried out by Andreas and his brothers. It should be noticed that the Swedish king at that time, Sverker Karlsson, was married to a daughter to one of Andreas’ brothers. By the time of the papal letter, Sverker had, due to power struggles at home, fled into exile together with the Swedish archbishop to the king’s Danish relatives. Sverker returned in 1210 but was killed in the battle of Gestilren. Sverker’s Danish father-in-law, as said a brother of Andreas, had been killed supporting Sverker’s kingdom in the battle of Lena two years earlier. The history of these distant times cannot be seen from any ‘national’ perspective in the modern sense. The very elite in Scandinavia were all bound to each other by family ties and were acting in the missionary activities first and foremost as Christians. In the very first years of the thirteenth century, Sverker’s kingdom was at its height, obviously in a very close alliance with the Church (Harrison 2012: 91–93). I would say it is quite likely that Sverker was involved in the expedition to Finland in 1202 and that the Finnish bishopric was created in connection to this. The Scandinavians were hardly unaware of what was going on in the lands on the eastern side of the Baltic. The German crusade in Livonia started in 1198 and in 1201 Riga was founded as a bastion and bishopric there.

According to Roeck Hansen, a fully organized legal-administrative Christianization would have occurred in Åland only in the mid-thirteenth century after a long and undramatic, locally varied phase of conversion in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when old and new coexisted. That the pre-Christian burial customs ceased already before the mid-eleventh century can be questioned on the basis of the large number of undated graves in the surveyed graves and that dating methods from the natural sciences have not been used. If Åland fell into a difficult backwater, older forms could have survived in the grave material until the twelfth century. The relevant questions can, as Roeck Hansen points out, only be settled by recourse to modern methods such as carbon dating and dendrochronology. (Roeck Hansen 1991: 22–24, 77–82, 161–162, 166–167.) However, Roeck Hansen’s theory can be considered to posit too late a date when compared to what is known about the churches today. The division of Åland into parishes would seem mostly to coincide with the variations in the physical environment (Roeck Hansen 1991: 89). Åsa Ringbom notes that until further notice there are no data about the time of the formations of the parishes in Åland. A guess is that they were formed within the twelfth century (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 17). This is nonetheless probably a little bit too early. Parishes generally grew forth as administrative units when people visited the same church and were territorially fixed by the introduction of tithes. In the Finnish bishopric, tithes seems to go back in their oldest forms to about 1200 and were fully established in the latter half of the thirteenth century (on the formation of parishes in the Nordic countries, see Brink 1990). The likeliest time for the formation of the parishes in Åland would perhaps be the first half of the thirteenth century with firm limits from the same time as the building of churches in stone began, or from the second half of this century.

That the largest burial grounds tend to be found closest to the churches has repeatedly been claimed to be a sign of cultic continuity (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 16; Ringbom 2010: 9). But can this really be the case? At least the parishes of Saltvik and Finström have clearly been named after the farmsteads or townships where the churches were built. These names are secondary, not originally referring to settlements, and the farmsteads or townships are parts of larger communities where the mother township has a typically medieval name, which shows that the churches have been built in settlements without
any connection to the Late Iron Age monuments near the churches.  

Eckerö, Hammarland and Lemland have been named after the islands.  

The name Sund ['Strait'] has often been explained being after the strait that formerly ran through the parish, of which now Östra and Västra Kyrksundet remain (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 12; Ringbom 2010: 123). More likely, however, Sund is the name of a former township where the church and parsonage were established. Nevertheless, this township, most probably secondary to Gesterby, was named after the strait, but the point here is that the name of the parish is not after a natural district (Sw. bygd), but, as in Finström and Saltvik, after a medieval secondary township where the church was built (Skogsjö 2007b: 257).

Jomala is tricky in the questions of both the etymology of the name and the fact that there is a Jomalaby but the church is in another place (cf. Hörfors 1988: 171). The idea of a cultic place continuity from pre-Christian times to the establishment of churches in Åland is gravely problematized also by the fact that nothing in the toponomy in the vicinity of the churches gives any hints to pre-Christian cult (Sjöstrand 2012a: 154). One major argument concerning the medieval dating of the place names and thus also the settlement in Åland is the total absence of pre-Christian theophoric and sacral names of the type that is very common all around Scandinavia – i.e. with either the name of a god (Thor,  

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19 The historical backgrounds of the settlements in connection to the churches of Saltvik and Sund are taken up in close detail further on in this chapter. The cases of Jomala and Finström are both relatively complicated, but, to put it simply, the church village in Jomala is obviously secondary to Ingby, whereas the settlement with the church known as Finström has been broken out from Grelsby, which in its part is secondary to Godby. My thanks for this information goes to Håkan Skogsjö, who is currently working on these two parishes for forthcoming publications in his series on people and settlements in Åland. The name Ingby (Jingaby 1537, Ingaby 1538) has a man’s name in the first part, Inge, and is typically medieval ['Inge’s Farmstead']. The names Grelsby (Gregorisby 1351, Gregersaby 1438) and Godby (Godhaby 1382, Godaby 1537 < Gode ['the good']) are also of the same type. The man’s name in the case of Grelsby is furthermore a Christian one (Grels < Gregers < Lat. Gregorius < Greek Γρηγόριος ['alert, watchful']) (cf. Hellberg 1987: 39, 94; Huldén 2001: 54, 57, 58).


21 Skogsjö also earlier believed that Sund was named after the strait (2003a: 16, 460, 580; 2003b: 39, 245, 361–362), but says that he has abandoned this idea. To this may also be added that the oldest recorded form Sunde (1352) is a singular dative, which can be interpreted as ‘(the farmstead/township by the) strait’. It can furthermore be noted that there is a parish Sund (Sund 1337) in Östergötland, named after the township with the church situated by a short strait between Stora and Lilla Sundsjön. There are several townships in Sweden named Sund, one has given its name to the town of Sundsvall (SOL, p. 302). According to Hellberg (1987: 64–65) and Huldén (2001: 70), Sund (in Åland) would be connected to the name Sundby, but that name is not known before the 1680s and has a wholly different background (Skogsjö 2003a: 14, 16, 460; 2003b: 39, 361–362).
Odin, Frey etc.) in the first part and a cult site (lund, harg, vi, hov etc.) in the latter or some other compound containing a word for a cult site. Such names have often even become the names of parishes.

There are not many material traces of the pre-Christian cult in Late Iron Age Åland, but it can be inferred to have had common features with the pre-Christian cult in Scandinavia in general (Tomtlund 2005: 16–17; Tomtlund; cf. also Frog). The total lack of such names is naturally also to be taken as a sign that the known settlement has been established only in medieval, Christian times, thus being without roots in pre-Christian times.

One (remotely) potential exception to the absence of theophoric place names is the very odd parish name Jomala (Jumala 1351). However, as a wholly unique simplex of Fi. jumala ['god', ‘cultic monument' or possibly ‘cultic servant'], it would seem likely it is a sort of a hybrid, a Finnish word used as a Swedish place name with a somewhat blurred meaning (cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 107).

Still the more difficult is to say what the original context was, such as whether it has to do with pre-Christian or Christian features (e.g. some kind of a harbor-marking in the form of a cross). There is also a Jomalö in Hammarland and another in Geta. The name of the parish must in some way be connected with the Jomal-names in the north-eastern part of the parish (Granlund 1982: 78–94). Observing that parishes are often named after the townships or farms where the churches were built, it could be inferred that a wooden church first

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23 I have suggested that the first part of the name Lembôte in Lemland could refer to the old well of St Olof there. The well is obviously of pre-Christian origin and has been known by passing seafarers (Sjöstrand 2012a: 151–153).

24 Names of this type are also on the whole absent in the Swedish speaking tracts in Finland (Lindholm 2012: 40), which are currently considered to have emerged through immigration after the Viking Age. The very few cases, like Odensö ['Odin’s Island'] near Ekenäs/Tammisaari, are most likely remnants from a later time when the pre-Christian gods had become symbols of evil and their names could be used to demarcate fierce and desolate places: cult sites were not situated on small and remote islands.

25 According to a local legend recorded in writing just over a century ago, the church of Jomala had been built by Finns who had landed in the vicinity (FSF II.1, p. 271). At least this would seem to reflect a local consciousness or tradition connecting the element Jomala with Finnish, although this could easily be the result of folk etymology. In Forsby in Nyland/Uusimaa, there was a story about Jomalberget ['– mountain'] as a former Finnish cultic place. A pit (Sw. jättegryta) in the mountain was said to have been a sacrificial place (Sw. offerplats) and the water there to have had healing powers (FSF II.1, p. 250). There is in Jomalö in Jomala a cairn believed to be from the Bronze Age, ca. 15 m. in diameter, also mentioned in the national inventory of antiquities in the 1670s (Fornminnesinventering Jomala, Mariehamn. pp. 47–49).
stood in Jomalaby (Jumalaby 1333) (cf. Nyman 1980: 28). There are, however, no known remains of a former church there. Of course, after ca. 800 years, all visible traces of a wooden building can have been lost, but nothing points to any pre-Christian centrality in Jomalaby, whereas the known church is situated near what is by far the largest Late Iron Age burial ground (ca. 150 mounds) in the parish. The church village is obviously secondary to Ingbys, which is a typically medieval name with a man’s name as the first element [‘Inge’s Farmstead’]. This also shows that the church and the adjacent remains of a medieval central farm do not have any connection with the large Late Iron Age burial ground (see note 19). This is a quite complicated equation. One possible explanation could be that there was a connection by water between the church village and Jomalaby in early medieval times (cf. Huldén 2001: 50–53).

Jomala church is situated oddly in the respect of not, at least in later times, being close to any open water. If a former waterway has been closed, it is most likely that Jomalaby served as the harbor of the central farm by the church. The stone church of Jomala is the oldest of the churches of Åland, already from the first part of the thirteenth century. Typologically, it differs from the others, having traits of a magnate’s church, which can also be connected to the adjacent remains of a medieval central farm, most likely belonging to the ‘Dalkarby nobility’ that appears in the sources in the fourteenth century. It would seem likely that the central farm got a functional successor in Jomala gård (today Ålands lantbrukscentrum) in Jomalaby sometime between the mid-sixteenth and the first part of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, Jomala gård is a judge’s residence, which also would indicate an older connection between the places. Of special interest is a document from 1438 telling about a high-level judicial assembly held in Jomalaby that involved all of Åland, which points to a centrality as a judicial meeting place.

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26 Nyman says that the according to the tale (Sw. sägner) the first church was situated in Jomalaby, but what this “tale” actually is based on is unknown. Nyman speculates, or rather fantasizes that in “oldest times” the magnate’s farm that built the first church would have been here and gave its name to the parish. A similar problem as in the case of Jomala would seem to appear in the chapel of Vårdö, as there is a Vårdö by but the known church stands in Vargata. Also in this case, Nyman (1972: 43; 1975: 64–65) meant with reference to a local tale that the first church stood in Vårdö by. (Cf. Andersson 1949: 50; Bertell 1983: 31.)


29 “then tiidh jach Sone Sonasson, laghman j Norfinna och j Alandh, lagmanztng hiolt met allmohgen j Alandh, j Jwmalaby” (orig. on parch. FMU 2252; SDHK 23018 (Jomalaby in Jomala 3.7.1438). One may, by the way, notice that the title “laghman j Norfinna och j Alandh” seems
The element *jomal-* appears also in several Swedish names in Finland, e.g. *Jomalvik* in Ekenäs/Tammisaari and *Jomalsund* in Strömfsors/Ruotsinpyhtää. There is, furthermore, a group of such names in Gräsö in Roslagen in Sweden, in the area closest to Åland (Schalin with Frog). It would seem likely that the Finnish word *jumala* has also sometimes been used in a wider context of divinity and religious cult in the Swedish, or perhaps eastern Scandinavian dialects spoken in the eastern half of the Swedish realm, which reasonably is to be seen first and foremost in the light that the whole eastern half of the realm, including Åland, was ecclesiastically organized as one diocese without regard to language. My interpretation of the parish name *Jomala* would be that actually the known church as such has, through verbal contacts with clergymen from the Finnish mainland, been named from a functional aspect *Jomala* or *Jomala kyrka* (cf. *apud ecclesiam Jumala* 1351 ['by the church Jumala']), in the sense of ‘God’s church’, and that the other *jomal-*names on the NE fringe of the parish are secondary to this and have been given as the localities were at the mouth of the waterway that led to the church (of Jomala), perhaps also in a contrastive sense to the other parishes in this direction. Together with the church, the medieval central farm by the church has also been called *Jomala* or *Jomala gård*, a name then later also transferred to the successor farm known as *Jomala gård* in Jomalaby. The moving of the central farm by the church to Jomalaby in the age of the Reformation was due to the fact that the former waterway from Jomalaby to the church had been closed and that Jomalaby had already taken over its function as a judicial focal point in the later medieval period.

to treat Norrfinna and Åland as two different units. The division of the Finnish law-saga into a northern and a southern part was then only three years old.

Both the higher and the lower clergy in the Finnish diocese seem to have been quite bilingual (Tarkiainen 2008: 204). The name *Jomala* cannot in any likely way be derived from Scandinavian language and is most obviously to be seen in an eastern, Finnish context (cf. Hellberg 1987: 43–44). The appearance of a group of such names in Gräsö in Roslagen must reasonably be seen in the light that Gräsö is situated closest to Åland and Finland and that the influence comes from that direction. The case would be different if such names were to be found in places further away in Sweden.

The phrase *apud ecclesiam Jumala* (from copy DS 4734; REA 145; FMU 605; SDHK 6210 (26.6.1351)) can be compared to e.g. *in ecclesia beati Botwidi* ['in holy Botvid’s church'] 1283 and *parochie Bothuide kirkiu* ['the parish Botvid’s church'] 1298, from which the name *Botkyrka* (< Osw. *Bothvidhakirkia*) in Södermanland derives (SOL, p. 45). This is the case when the (special) name of the church as such (not primarily the name of the farmstead or township where it was built) has become the name of the parish. On the different principles of naming parishes, see Brink 1990.
In the Very Long Run ...

In the very long run, the development in Åland appears as having changed between dynamic periods with rich cultural contacts and times of regression and severe isolation (Tomtlund 2005: 3). During the Viking Age, Åland by its location played an important role as an intermediary in the booming trade between East and West. The products Åland could contribute were probably commodities such as dried fish, seal oil and seal skins. Since many raw materials were not available locally, Åland was dependent on trade. In the absence of mineable metal ore, all the iron, copper and precious metal had to be imported. (Tomtlund 2005: 30; Tomtlund.)

As Åland was situated along a west–east oriented trade route during the Viking Age, it is likely that Åland was not, at least not a completely self-governed area during this period. Nothing has indicated an internal supreme ruler. There were more probably several local chieftains, whereas the overall power was situated outside Åland. This external power might have changed hands over time, as well its intensity. The holders of this outside power are most likely to be sought in the Mälar area (Tomtlund 2005: 8). There was as yet no ‘Sweden’ as a coherent single political entity during the Viking Age. Rather there were several small and unstable units of different character. Some of these have been immediately dependent on controlling the sea and engaging in the organization of maritime warfare (Lindkvist & Sjöberg 2003: 29–36).

In the spring of 2014, however, new intriguing finds from the Late Iron Age in Kvarnbo in Saltvik have been reported within the framework of a project led by Kristin Ilves. Finds, consisting mainly of personal ornaments of silver and bronze, were unearthed in connection to the remains of a 40 x 12 m large

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32 One of the graves in Lassas Kvarnbacke in Bertby shows such rich features that the man buried there must have been some kind of a local chieftain. Just about 100 metres west from there, the largest Viking Age treasure of today’s Finland was also found, with over 860 coins from AD 739–890 packaged in an oriental beverage can (Tomtlund 2005: 25, 30). As Lassas Kvarnbacke is one of the main sites of the knowledge of Late Iron Age Åland, it is both striking and ironic that the name of the township, Bertby (Bertaby 1418, Berthaby 1494, Bertteby 1544), is certainly a much later, medieval feature, containing a man’s name of German origin, Berte (a short form of Berthold and others). The same name Bertby can also be found in Nurmiwijärvi (Fi. Perttelij) in Nyland/Uusimaa and in Vorå in Ostrobotnia. As the name also denotes a single settler’s farm, it is noticeable that there are all in all six Late Iron Age burial grounds in the domains of Bertby in Saltvik. Bertby is probably one of the founding settlements of Saltvik, with Lavsböle and Vassböle as secondary units. Bertby could possibly also be an early settlement extension from Rangsbys. (Hellberg 1987: 53–54, 81; Huldén 2001: 64, 354, 390; Skogsjö 2007a: 14–24, 18–19, 22, 24, 60, 226, 776–777; 2007b, 460).

33 Cf. e.g. Lindholm (2012: 56), who considers Åland to have been a part of the Swedish realm since the middle of the first millennium (“… räknades då hörta till svenska riket”). It is in reality very hard to claim the existence of any coherent Swedish realm so far back in time.
building. Overall, the results point towards the existence of an elite settlement at the site, comparable to only a handful of places in the Baltic Sea region.\(^3^4\) It is nevertheless still an open question of what actually remains when the waves of media sensationalism have rolled by and how these finds are to be seen regarding the question of any leading local power in Åland during the Late Iron Age. The adjacent Late Iron Age burial ground known as Johannisberg is the largest known in Åland (ca. 180 mounds) and the whole area around the church of Saltvik is very rich in finds, but there are at least no unusually huge individual mounds here indicating a dynasty of any kind of ‘rulers’ socially positioned widely over the rest of the population. The by far largest single grave mounds are found in other places in Åland (M. Dreijer 1950: 19; Sjöstrand 2012a: 150–151).

Most of the Late Iron Age burial grounds are adjacent to farmland, unlike the graves from the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, which are found in the outer areas of the modern townships. The sixth century is described by Tomtlund as a time of restructuring. Old settlements were abandoned and new land was taken into use. One can, as Tomtlund states, only speculate concerning who these settlers were. It could have been immigrants from eastern Sweden or people living in Åland who changed their livelihoods, or perhaps a combination of both (Tomtlund 2005: 3; Edgren 2008: 472; Lindholm 2012: 33, 35). The settlement in Åland during the Late Iron Age seems to have consisted of single farms (Edgren 1993: 227; Tomtlund 2005: 12). Nothing corresponding to the clearly Scandinavian Late Iron Age burial customs in Åland can be found on the Finnish mainland in the east (Lindholm 2012: 33).

The dating of the Late Iron Age burial grounds has, as Roeck Hansen (1991: 166) points out, been modelled on results from central areas in Sweden with a long history of settlement and cultivation. In practice, this means that graves have been dated according especially to the goods they contain as compared with graves on the Swedish mainland. As several facts indicated that Åland was a peripheral region in this respect, this comparison likely gives an inaccurate perspective. Åland’s position was central only for a very short time, the period when the trade with Russia and Byzantium passed via Åland and brought wealth and close contacts with eastern Central Sweden. Both before and after this time, the preconditions for settlement here were not in any way outstanding. The most important dating concerns the discontinuance of the use of the Late Iron

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\(^3^4\) Continuous information on the progress of the excavations of the hall are given by Kristin Ilves, on the website “The Hall at the Crossroads of Baltic Waterways: Revealing Details about the Iron Age on the Åland Islands” (http://kvarnbohall.wordpress.com/).
Age burial grounds. The ‘traditional’ dating produces a gap in the settlement chronology and it should therefore be reconsidered. There is a large number of undated graves and no dating methods from the natural sciences have been used. The fact that Åland occupied a central position for a period, followed by a period of regression, probably meant that the influence on the grave furnishings of the affluent period also continued during the following times. External contacts then probably became scarcer and the old forms and fashions lived on with the continued circulation of goods already in Åland. The artefact material must therefore be interpreted in that light. The deposition of the Viking Period artefacts found in Åland cannot be regarded as contemporary with the material from Central Swedish regions. Investigations in the latter area have shown that Late Iron Age artefact forms and burial traditions lived on during the twelfth century, and they therefore could have done so most probably in Åland as well. This does not necessarily mean that Christianity was introduced as late as the twelfth century; the gradual process of Christianization could also have involved an equally gradual abandonment of pre-Christian burial customs, especially in peripheral regions. Ringbom points out that a systematic investigation of the burial grounds could reveal to what extent the dead were traditionally buried at home, in the burial grounds of the particular farms during a transitional period from 1000 to 1200, before churches had been built and cemeteries had been consecrated and declared protected (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 17). These questions can only be solved by radiocarbon dating of the burials (Roeeck Hansen 1991: 166).

Although great changes are said to have occurred in the landscape organization, Roeck Hansen (1991: 89, 167) argues that each parish exhibits a core area of stability, in which the prehistoric, territorial structure lived on until the present day. The densest concentrations of Late Iron Age burial grounds are found around the churches in the parishes of Saltvik, Hammarland, Lemland and Jomala. In Finström, Godby might be an alternative, with its concentration of ten burial grounds. Sund is an obvious exception, with its centre in the area around Kastelholm. The church is located comparatively peripherally. There are in total 175 registered house foundations from the Late Iron Age. Of these, 58 are in Saltvik and 56 in Sund. (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 13–14.) One example of an investigated building complex is Storhagen in Kulla in Finström. The place is said to have been inhabited from the seventh century to “around 1000”, when the settlement appears to have been abandoned in an orderly manner (Tomtlund 2005: 22). The many house foundations have also been related to the question of a possible break in the settlement (Ambrosiani
1981–82: 78; Orrman 2002: 58). Ringbom says that the house foundations in Sund, among others, show that they were by no means all deserted at the same time. Rather, one can discern a pattern where foundations of houses in a single settlement area have been successively abandoned as new buildings have been erected in the same place. It would thus seem that the residents in the usual case had the time to remove their household things in an orderly manner and thereafter have left the older houses to decay. The house foundations are usually relatively poor regarding finds and only a few show signs of fire and conscious destruction. (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 17.) This does not, however, tell very much about the actual reasons for abandoning the houses. Old house materials were also usually re-used for building new houses, so the obtrusive number of house foundations in Åland is an intriguing element.

**Townships and Place Names**

Another problem concerning the prehistoric burial grounds pointed out by Roeck Hansen (1991: 81), is the fact that they also exist in townships with place names indicating colonization in the Middle Ages. But does this unequivocally mean a break in settlement continuity in this locality, or are other explanations possible? An alternative view of this situation involves the hypothesis that many of the present-day township boundaries do not go back in time as far as the Late Iron Age but are secondary and the result of later colonization, by which ‘primary territories’ have been split up. This development would have also had consequences for the toponomy.

The general question of when the historical hamlets (villages) were founded and their continuity from prehistoric settlements has been occupying scholars from several countries without being fully answered. There are, however, apparent similarities in development in separate regions. The greatest difference between regions lies in the time of the re-organization. It would seem possible that in central regions the restructuring took place earlier than in peripheral regions (Roeck Hansen 1991: 15–20).

The land-use organization shown on the eighteenth-century maps is usually regarded as the result of a development that started during medieval times, whether by colonization or by earlier Late Iron Age settlements nucleating into hamlets (Sporrong 1971; Jeppesen 1981; Rowley 1981). The early cadastral maps of the Åland townships are one of the richest sources for the settlement history, most of which belong to the middle of the eighteenth century. From 1734 to the 1790s, 134 townships of the 192 that exist today were mapped and
described in some detail (Jaatinen et al. 1989: 11; Roeck Hansen 1991: 32–33). When a farmstead is divided, for instance when a part of a primary unit moves in order to settle in a new location, resources and rights within the domain may not be divided. Common land and rights as between otherwise separate farms or hamlets are therefore a sign that they have a common origin. The location of the infield area at the periphery of a hamlet domain may also mean that the hamlet in question is a partial product of an older and larger domain. Special conditions relating to resources and economy may in some cases explain the deviation from the model location. For example, waterways, important for transport and fishing, may be factors that influence the location of the infield area and the settlement site. The use of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cadastral maps is most important for this kind of reconstruction (Roeck Hansen 1991: 87, 93).

Analyses of later fields in Åland, dated either by radiocarbon method or metrological analyses, show that they were divided into parcels, using medieval measurements known from Sweden but not according to any strictly regular system connected with the situation of the individual farm toft or the taxation of the farm. However, the use of a measuring rod mentioned in fourteenth-and sixteenth-century sources points to land division by solskifte ['sun-division']. A more regular solskifte and legally regulated hamlets can be documented from the eighteenth century. The regulated hamlet tofts are also absent in Finland, as well as in the peripheral parts of Sweden. It is only in Central Swedish areas with the best prerequisites for agriculture that this type is found. Åland, as a marginal agrarian region, cannot therefore be expected to show such traits (Roeck Hansen 1991: 165).

Place names are another important category of sources, transmitted orally from times before written documents and they are generally assumed to bear witness about settlement history and social and legal organization during the early medieval period and before. One main task is to sort out different chronological layers in old names of farms, townships, parishes, counties (Sw. härader) and so on. Roeck Hansen (1991: 55–71) finds place names and groups of them that could be given an interpretation and dating that differ from those suggested by Hellberg. She states, however, that most of the names or groups of

35 The 'open field system' was the prevalent agricultural system in much of Europe from the Middle Ages to as recently as the twentieth century in some places, particularly Russia and Iran. Under this system, each manor or township had several very large fields, farmed in strips by individual families.

names in the results of Hellberg’s onomastic analyses must be accepted, even if the conclusions referring to settlement history would not always be as readily acceptable. A study of place names in Åland must pay attention to the fact that the shore regression has radically changed the landscape and created completely new features. Most of the lakes, for instance, are late phenomena and did not exist in their present form in the prehistoric period. This has certainly influenced the name-giving. As the use of the land has changed, so have the names. The late establishment of permanent, agrarian settlements in many places in Åland would be one of the many features in the local settlement history that must be considered in studying its toponomy. The probably late settlement nucleation when the hamlets were formed must also be taken in to account in discussing the influence in the toponomy (Roeck Hansen 1991: 70–71).

It must first and foremost be said concerning the place names, that there has been an overemphasisis on Hellberg himself due to his overall interpretations, as a large portion of the questioned interpretations of single names are not his own.37 Most of these can actually be found already in the very first pioneering work on the place-names of Åland by A. O. Freudenthal (1868).38 In this connection, Peter Slotte (1988), a place name scholar from Ostrobothnia, has admitted the astonishing fact that, although the place names of Åland had been studied systematically ever since the 1860s, no-one had really noticed what young types they are, lacking any connection to the Late Iron Age settlement. Hellberg’s interpretations are almost entirely accepted by Lars Huldén in his monumental book on the Swedish settlement names in today’s Finland, published in 2001. In the very beginning of the chapter on Åland, Huldén (2001: 43–89) states that the names of townships in Åland are, as Hellberg has shown, of medieval types, which means that the name tradition has for the most part been broken after the Viking Age, when there are also archaeological signs of a decline in population. Ever since the 1990s, I have also myself discussed the place names of Åland on almost innumerable occasions with Professor Stefan Brink (University of Aberdeen), a leading expert on Scandinavian place name scholarship, and asked for a second opinion, to which he has said he stands fully behind Hellberg.

37 I would say that this is partly a general reflection of the numerically very small scholarship on older history in eastern Fennoscandia, so that theories and outlooks easily become ‘personalized’, but it can also be seen as a part of a strategy to dismiss disliked theories and views, as though everything behind them were just personal fantasies of some particular eccentric individual.

38 In this early work, the names are not seen in a closer structural context regarding settlement history and there are also no systematic attempts to date them.
There is no need to mystify the place names of Åland or place name scholarship in general, as if every single scholar in this discipline had his or her uniquely individual way of interpreting the names. The major bulk of the names are quite transparent and easy to interpret without any controversy, and are of types that in Scandinavian place name scholarship are considered to be connected with medieval demographic expansion (for general overviews, see Ståhl 1976; Brink 1983; 1984; 2008; Pamp 1988; Strid 1999). Place names are generally a fairly constant cultural element. Most names for larger permanent features have remained since they once emerged. It is only at re-settlements and population displacements that changes have occurred on a larger scale (Zilliacus 1989: 29, 170). To this it must however be added that Hellberg's overall conceptions of societal organization around the turn of the first and second millennia stem from an outdated paradigm from the mid-twentieth century, especially noticeable in the concept of an ancient ‘Svea kingdom’ with the properties of a state belonging to a much later epoch in history (cf. Heininen et al.). I do not in any way claim that absolutely all of Hellberg’s interpretations and explanations would be indisputably correct, but on the other hand I am certainly not convinced by the re-, or rather counter-interpretations presented by Roeck Hansen. As there is not room for discussing all of these I will only bring forward a few examples here.

One immediate methodological problem is that Roeck Hansen’s theoretical approach leads her to assume that the names she picks up go back to prehistoric times and accordingly she interprets them in that way, or rather presses them into her theoretical frame. By using new knowledge regarding shore displacement and the reconstructed Late Iron Age territories, as she herself says, a large group of names has been given a prehistoric dating and an interpretation that is based

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39 Some general comments on the place-names of Åland: The word -by can mean both ‘township’ and ‘farm’, whereas -böle denotes ‘a single person’s settlement on an outfield or common land’. The latter element appears almost without exceptions together with a man’s name. The -böle-townships represent a younger layer and they are often also situated so that their secondary nature is apparent. Names formed on -torp are relatively rare, whereas those formed on -boda are common, denoting sheds for different purposes. The few names on -stad are not authentic prehistoric features. The quite frequent -bolstad seems in many cases to denote deserted settlements, thus giving impetus to the depopulation theory. This is, naturally, disputed by Roeck Hansen (1991: 56–57), who interprets such names in Åland as denoting parts of prehistoric territories. However, the element -bolstad also appears, for example, in names of possessions and these are doubtlessly primary, making Roeck Hansen’s wholly theoretical interpretation hardly sustainable (cf. Huldén 2001: 28). Very old elements like -vin, -hem, -lisa, -liv are totally unknown in Åland, as are also elements from the Late Iron Age, such as -bo, -land and -säter. Of this last group, the last two most certainly originally denoted some kind of arable land or meadow, whereas the first one probably denoted the actual farm. From the viewpoint of the typology of the settlement names, it is obvious that the historically known settlement in Åland has no roots back to the archaeologically traceable settlement in the Late Iron Age.
on a reconstruction of the structural and physical changes that have taken place (Roeck Hansen 1991: 166). This is done with quite shallow onomastic insight. The same thing goes for other scholars outside the place name discipline when they try to ‘adjust’ the disturbing mismatch between the names and the theory of continuous settlement that remains more or less unproblematised. This indicates a clear weakness of individually carried out interdisciplinary studies. As Roeck Hansen (1991: 25) states, such studies require a clearly defined framework which binds together results from the various disciplines and which defines the problems and decides the methods used to answer the questions. The imminent risk of this kind of approach is that it easily leads to a more or less slipshod and amateurish treatment of the disciplines outside one’s ‘own’, which can then go terribly wrong when trying to either ‘correct’ or ‘bypass’ results from those other disciplines to have them conform to one’s own theories, instead of adjusting one’s own theories to the evidence. This in turn becomes easily a ballast that is readily open to severe criticism, which can hinder the clear exposition of the results of one’s own discipline.

The re-organization of the agrarian landscape and the various developments of settlement in Åland is said by Roeck Hansen to have resulted in a toponomy that is particular to Åland and one which cannot be directly compared with other regions. The fact that many of the permanent agrarian settlements would probably have been established during the latter part of the Late Iron Age would also have set its stamp on the toponomy. The fact that Åland at that time was young as an agrarian society must have made its toponomy traditions different from those in regions with a long history of cultivation and settlement. (Roeck Hansen 1991: 165.) Nevertheless, the fashion in place names must have varied during the 500–600 years of the Late Iron Age and yet no such variation is reflected in the toponymic record.

Concerning some names of supposed Finnish origin, Roeck Hansen questions Hellberg’s and others assumption that a Finnish colonization took place in the early medieval period after the desertion of the prehistoric Swedish settlements. She observes that no onomastic reasons are given for such a dating of these Finnish names. From an archaeological point of view, a more proper dating for Finnish presence would be the time of the oldest Late Iron Age graves or even earlier, when people from both Finland and Sweden settled in Åland. The name Posta (Postaa 1507) in Hammarland is given a Finnish background, *poosta > puosta [‘meadow by the sea-shore’], but Roeck Hansen finds the best topographical conditions for the name of this settlement at the beginning of the medieval period. Archaeological investigations of building
remains in the western part of this area, about 7 metres above sea level (a.s.l. hereafter) have given a radiocarbon dating of 860 BP ± 70 (= AD 1130 ± 70). The question of settlement continuity between the Late Iron Age burial grounds and the inhabitation of the medieval period can, according to Roeck Hansen, not be answered. (Roeck Hansen 1991: 64–65, 113.) This, however, directly contradicts her starting point of the unlikeliness of Finnish names from the early medieval period.

She then goes on to the two Sålis, one in Saltvik (Sollagx 1537) and the other in Hammarland (Sollagx 1537), interpreted as *Sool(a)ksi > Suolabti ['marshy inlet'] (on which, cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 107). As both these townships are situated far from the sea, the naming would have taken place at a time when the topographical situation was very different from what is today. Both townships also have large, Late Iron Age burial grounds. They are also mother settlements in territories that were later split-up. Considering the topography between the 10-metre and 5-metre contours, the respective inlets that had given the settlements their names existed in the Late Iron Age, and accordingly the names are given such a dating by Roeck Hansen (1991: 65–66). This is highly questionable. First and foremost, the names *Sool(a)ksi ['marshy inlet'], do not primarily refer to settlements but to natural localities.40 In other words, the reference to settlement is secondary, which also goes for the name Posta, given one takes these interpretations of the names as a starting point.41 The names are

40 Also, when Roeck Hansen (1991: 93–96) discusses in detail Sålis in Saltvik being the mother township of Ödkarby and Ovanäker, which as such obviously is quite correct, she is not bothered by the question of why the mother township does not have a primary settlement name. Sålis is most probably secondary to Laby, which is a typical medieval name (Skogsjö 2007a: 8; 2007b: 302, 304, 552–556). Later on Roeck Hansen (1991: 166) also says concerning the two Sålis settlements that the connection with Sweden evidently existed already at the end of the Early Iron Age or at the beginning of the Late Iron Age as the burial customs are the same as those in eastern Central Sweden, even when the place name connected with the burial ground and the grave furnishings are of Finnish origin. To this it must be said that, if there had been larger, independent immigration from the east during the Late Iron Age, this should appear in the grave forms, as it is not likely that such immigrants would have immediately adapted the 'Scandinavian' way of burying the dead. The eastern, mainly female jewellery in the graves can more likely be explained by cross-cultural family-related connections with Finnish and Baltic areas, that is, some men from Åland probably obtained wives from there (Tomtlund 2005: 30; Edgren 2008: 472). It may be noticed from an ethnological point of view that exogamy, that is obtaining a wife from outside one's own group, seems to have been more or less a rule in prehistoric times (Tarkiainen 2008: 12).

41 In the case of Posta other both Finnish and non-Finnish interpretations could also be discussed, but this must be left to another occasion. There are a few additional names – Narmo, Kajtoviken and Vandö – that potentially seem to have a Finnish background, noting, however, that none of them is a primary settlement-name. On names with either a background in Finnish language or containing the element Fin(n)- in Åland, see Voionmaa 1919: 239; Pitkänen 1985: 16, 370; Huldén 1982: 95–103; 2001: 43–89; Ahola et al. In this connection, one must be aware that the question of Finnish names in Åland has a political encumbrance (cf. Meinander 1983:
thus not even necessarily given by the local inhabitants in the area, noting that there are no primary settlement names of purely Finnish origin in the vicinity of these townships or even in Åland as a whole. The name **Finby** ['the township of the Finns'] in Sund, on the eastern shore of mainland Åland, shows however that there was some settling from SW Finland. The odd parish-name **Jomala**, together with **Jomalön** and **Jomalviken** with **Jomalaby** in the north-eastern part of the parish, must reveal at least some Finnish connection. To this must be added quite a few names beginning in **Fin(n)**- which do not directly refer to Finnish settlement but at least indicate an intimate Finnish presence or movement, like **Finström** ['the stream/brook of the Finns'] and **Finbo** ['the Finnish (fishing-) shed'], which most likely points at relatively well established Finnish fishermen in the area (cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 107).

Secondly, the *Soola(a)ksi* names as such also obviously refer to a relatively late period when the inlets in question have, due to the shore regression, become marshy. Roeck Hansen dates the sea level of the 5-metre contour quite far back in time, to around AD 900 (Roeck Hansen 1991: 41–43). According to a later look at the shore regression by Martin

229; Tarkiainen 2008: 49; Lindholm 2012: 56–57; Lucenius). The writing of Voionmaa from 1919, echoing in later texts on the topic, is directly connected to the contemporary question of Åland and has a pronounced political intention to demonstrate that Åland is a part of Finland, which manifests itself in an exaggerated quest to find Finnish names and thus leads him to some obviously erroneous and incautious conclusions, although he in many cases is probably, at least partly, right. For his part, Huldén has, and has been criticized for, a tendentious predilection for Finnish suggestions and interpretations in general. In the case of Åland, this is certainly overdone. The other way around, to rashly deny every Finnish element (e.g. Bertell 1983, *passim*; M. Dreijer 2000, *passim*) is no way to go either. In the latter case, where there are no clear Scandinavian counterparts, the interpretations tend to get very free and lead to distant and wholly unlikely times and/or places (cf. Hellberg 1987: 43–44; Zilliacus 1989: 49). The whole feature should not be exaggerated and, above all, be kept free of political ideology.

42 There is also a smaller number of maritime names beginning with **Est**- that also points to Estonians moving in these waters. In the Stockholm archipelago, there are numerous maritime names beginning in **Finn**- and **Est**- bearing witness of old Finnish and Estonian sea traffic (Stahre 1986: 269, 273; Huldén 2001: 45).

43 Discussing the shore regression, Roeck Hansen mentions two graves of Late Iron Age type which are said to be situated at 4.8 ± 0.3 m.a.s.l. (Ha 5.1. Byttböle) and 4.1 ± 0.1 m.a.s.l. (Sa 7.1 Germundö) respectively. Although the graves in question have not been excavated and therefore not dated, they would, according to her, certainly point to a late dating of heathen burial customs in Åland. What this is actually based on is quite obscure. According to the Survey of Prehistoric Field Monuments, Sa 7.1 is situated on the top of a high north to south ridge that in the north devolves into a mountain. On the general map, the top is over the 10-metre contour. The monument is also noted on the map on that level. One would think that Roeck Hansen should have commented on the extremely low level in more detail. The burial ground in question is furthermore quite large – 40 mounds – so it might be wondered whether she means that all of them are on that level, or only the lowest mound. In that case, is it really a grave and not some other kind of formation? The circumstances seem to be similar concerning Ha 5.1. According to the general map, the burial ground is situated between the 7.5 and 10-metre contours. (My thanks go to Håkan Skogjö for this information.) Furthermore, if one follows Ekman in that the 5-metre contour corresponds to the sea level around AD 1100, a grave at 4.1 m.a.s.l. would have
Ekman (1996) the 5-metre contour would in round figures correspond the sea level about AD 1100. Taking this into account, these names can obviously not be taken as any evidence of settlement continuity from prehistoric to historic times, on the contrary, they are most likely from the early medieval period and, what is even more important, refer to secondary settlements.

According to Hellberg, Gölbys is one of four neighbouring townships in Jomala with a man’s name as their first element and ending in -by, interpreting Gölby as from OSw. Gyrdh (> Giurdh, Giordh). The group as such is dated to the Middle Ages (Hellberg 1987: 39–40, 73). Roeck Hansen points out that the form of the name linking Gyrdh and Göl- is not given and that this method of dating the names of neighbouring townships is not entirely convincing, particularly concerning Gölby. The original form of the name might well be Gölby, as the topographical preconditions for this kind of name were present in the Late Iron Age. The first element would be göl ['small lake or mere']. A small lake might indeed be found in Gölby beneath the 5-metre level. A small lake with the same kind of situation is also found immediately east of the boundary with Björsby and the name Gölby could also refer to this lake, as it would be quite possible that the Late Iron Age Gölby encompassed the whole area, which is today covered by the townships of Gölby, Buskbōle, Björsby and Andersbōle (Roeck Hansen 1991: 61–62). Such a linguistic interpretation of the name Gölby was already proposed by Freudenthal (1868: 36; cf. Thors 1959: 36). On the other hand, the three other townships in this -by-group unquestionably contain men’s names. It would thus seem quite reasonable to assume that the same also goes for Gölby. Place names of this type, composed of a person’s name and -by, denote single farmsteads (the personal name most probably being that of the ‘founder’ of the farmstead) and are considered as an undoubtedly medieval feature among Scandinavian place name scholars, whereas names ending with -by with a natural feature in the first part are notably older.44 Roeck Hansen only gives the form Göleby 1492, but a closer look at the old spellings of the name

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44 Hellberg 1987: 79–80, 88; Pamp 1988: 40; Strid 1999: 82; Huldén 2001: 28; SOL, p. 52; Brink 2008: 58–59. Contrary to this, Roeck Hansen (1991: 167), claims that names like Haraldsby (<> Harald) in Saltvik and Gunnarsby (<> Gunnar) Sibby (<> Sibbe) and Vivasteby (<> Vifast) in Sund would be from the late Viking Period, although she considers that the men’s names in them tell of the persons who first claimed and cultivated the land in these townships and thus that place names of this type denote individual settlers’ farms. Such a dating runs into serious problems owing to the fact that, as Roeck Hansen herself (1991: 98–100, 165) is aware, Gunnarsby and Vivasteby are parts of the Persby community. The name of the mother township, Persby, consists of a Christian man’s name and -by, which most certainly is a younger, medieval feature. (Hellberg 1987: 88; Huldén 2001: 73; Skogsjö 2003a: 21, 26; 2003b: 170–175, 531; 2007a: 24.)
reveal forms such as Gölaby 1537, Gördeby 1546 (G. Hausen 1927: 84–85). That Hellberg would not give an explanation of how Gyrdh becomes Göl- is also not correct. In the OSw. name Gyrdh the sequence -rdh- transforms to a thick l whereas y is given a more open pronunciation (> /ö/). \(^{45}\) The genitive form of the name has had the ending -a(r). (Hellberg 1987: 39–40, 73.) The word göl (f.), on the other hand, hardly turns to a -rd-. Direct comparative references regarding place names containing the male name in question are given by Gördavik in Ingå/Inkoo in Western Nyland/Uusimaa (Gördavik bol 1405, Giordewijk bol 1451, Gördewijk 1527, Gördauik bol 1450) and Gördböle (Fi. Köörtlä) in Sastmola/Merikarvia in Satakunda/Satakunta (Gölb 1546, Giödheböle 1571, Giördheböle 1701) (Thors 1959: 36. Huldén 2001: 238, 433). One notices especially the Gölb spelling of the name in Sastmola from 1546. Also Hjulsbro in Östergötland, written Giordzbroo 1506, can be mentioned (SOL, p. 127). The name Gölb most likely contains the male name Gyrdh and refers thus to a single farm of a medieval settler, as do the three other names in the group. There are four Late Iron Age burial grounds in Gölb, which also is the mother township of Buskböle (Roeck Hansen 1991: 96–97).

Önningeby in Jomala belongs to a special group of names found only in Åland and Swedish-speaking Finland. These are -by-names of which the first part denotes the origins of the settlers (Sw. särnamn)\(^{46}\) by referring to the province or region in Sweden from which the settlers came from. Other names of this type found in Åland are Gottby, Sviby, Dalkarby, and two Gesterby (one in Sund, and another in Jomala, nowadays parted into Ytter- and Överby).\(^{47}\) According to Hellberg the background of these names was a colonization from Sweden initiated by the Swedish crown just before the middle of the twelfth century (Hellberg 1987: 20).

Roeck Hansen does not dispute the dating of the names from the early Middle Ages, but states that Hellberg’s interpretation of the situation that gave

\(^{45}\) Examples of the umlaut rd > l can be found in the names Alvik in Nederluleå in Norrbotten, written Aardewik, Aarderwik 1486, Gälsjö in Ångermanland (< Gärdsjö) and Håle (< Härde 1546) in Västergötland (SOL, pp. 22, 100, 139).

\(^{46}\) This perhaps not fully adequate term was coined by Gunvor Kerkkonen in the mid 1940s.

\(^{47}\) Kerkkonen 1945: 235–240; Hellberg 1987: 20–21, 65–74, 273; Orrman 1990: 226–228; Huldén 2001: 18, 32, 53, 55, 57, 70, 83, 106, 133, 156, 205, 212, 214, 222, 264, 323, 327–328, 335, 379; Skogsjö 2003a: 14–16, 20, 26, 32, 460; 2007a: 30; Tarkiainen 2008: 107, 109. Freudenthal (1868: 49–50) had already found that Dalkarby in Jomala refers to Dalkarlar (< Dalarna), Hellö in Kökar is of Hälsing (< Hälsingland), Gesterby in Sund resp. Jomala Gästrikar (< Gästriklan) and Önningeby in Jomala Önningar/Olänningar (< Öland). Whether Sviby in Jomala was of Svear or only of the same obscure origin as Svear, he dared not say. However, neither he, nor Gunvor Kerkkonen in the 1940s, made any further conclusions concerning the settlement history of Åland.
rise to them cannot be accepted uncritically. A development from ‘primary territory’ to present-day township would give a possible alternative explanation. Some of these townships would have been formerly parts of larger territories that, as independent units, had required names of their own. It cannot, according to Roeck Hansen, be completely ruled out that the names refer directly to colonizers from specific parts of Sweden, but she finds it hard to see these townships as a continuous area of land ownership and the result of an organized colonization instigated by the Swedish Crown, as they only reflect a few townships in two parishes (Jomala and Sund). All the farms in these townships were freehold in the sixteenth century, whereas Crown property was, on the whole, quite rare in medieval Åland.\footnote{The Crown could however have been involved in the naming of the townships. Roeck Hansen refers to Åke Hyenstrand (cf. 1985: 275), who suggested that new names might have been given in connection with the introduction of a new territorial division. This name-giving may, according to Roeck Hansen herself, also have taken place when the young Swedish state introduced an administrative and fiscal organization in Åland and settlement in hamlets was established (Roeck Hansen 1991: 62).}

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It is, quite admittedly, hardly likely that these names were a result of a colonization led by the Crown: such an interpretation is also an eruption of Hellberg’s outdated social paradigm. However, as already mentioned, neither is it likely that the Crown had anything at all to do with the naming of these townships. Nevertheless, whoever might have given these names, the question remains why such names would have been given to these townships, if their inhabitants were not from the places the names refer to? As noted, names like these are totally unknown in today’s Sweden, whereas they occur in the medieval tracts of Swedish-speaking Finland, which makes their appearance also in Åland the more pregnant (cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 109).\footnote{It may be noticed here that the denial of the Crown’s involvement and the remark in this context, correct in itself, that Crown property was quite rare in Åland, can hardly be said go very well together with the otherwise generally assumed central role of the Crown in the correspondingly assumed all-embracing re-shaping and re-naming of the settlement in Åland during this critical period.}

49 Finby in Sund must, by the way, also be counted into this category, although the settlers in this case are from the mainland in the east (Hellberg 1987: 79; Huldén 2001: 70; Skogsjö 2003a: 22, 178; 2007b: 553). This name Fin(n)by is quite common in the

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49 The following is, admittedly, speculative, but the series of särnamn-townships along the whole coast of Jomala could point at a local interlocutor. One notices that the Byskallar, or ‘Dalkarby nobility’ (see Nyman 1980: 23; Ringbom 2010: 13, 18), who reasonably were connected to the large central farm by the church, appears in the oldest sources in the first half of the fourteenth century as having possessions in these särnamn-townships.
Swedish-speaking tracts of Finland, and is in a couple of instances contrasted by a neighbouring Svenskbyn/Ruotsinkylä ['the township of the Swedes']. There are also two Finnby in Sweden, one in Rimbo in Uppland, and another in Ramsjö in Hälsingland (Hellberg 1987: 79).

However, the main interest here are the names in Åland referring to settlers from the area of today’s Sweden. In contrast to names consisting of a person’s name and -by, the plural forms of the first elements of these names denote larger groups of settlers, at least larger than a single farmstead, which is also reflected in the relatively large areas of these townships with their secondarily townships that have dispersed from them (Hellberg 1987: 79–80). This can be contrasted with names in Finland that refer to a single settler from a province in Sweden, such as, for example, Gästersö in Snappertuna (Granlund 1956: 219; Hellberg 1987: 272; Huldén 2001: 206). In another context, Roeck Hansen (1991: 158; 1992: 155) herself states that the so-called särnamn indicate that Åland also was involved in the process of colonization from Sweden, which began in the western parts of Finland at the end of the twelfth century:

Names such as Dalkarby, Gottby and Gesterby, possibly Önningeby, may be witnesses of Swedish colonization during this time (Roeck Hansen 1991: 167).

Here, although even if she puts her words carefully, she directly contradicts herself concerning Önningeby.

It seems quite obvious that these särnamn, both in Åland and in Finland, reflect an ‘otherness’ in respect to the majority of the ‘Swedish’ population in the area and that they denote later new comers (Orrman 1990: 226–228). More strikingly, all the names of this type in Åland and in Finland refer to peripheral places or areas of the medieval Swedish kingdom (Hälsingland, Tjust in Småland, Gästrikland, Öland, Gotland, Dalarna; see map in Hellberg 1987: 66), or rather, these were not yet integrated into the kingdom in earliest medieval times. There are no names of this type referring to the central provinces of the kingdom ‘proper’, marked by the right to take part in the elections of kings and counted into the kings’ Eriksgata described in the medieval laws. My thought is that these names reflect an opposition between a majority of settlers from the Swedish kingdom ‘proper’ and minor groups from areas half

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51 Actually, seen in a broader context, there are numerous different examples of this särnamn-type in Finland, referring to Estonians, Curonians, Russians, Tavastians (outside Tavastia) and so on. This type of naming settlements can be found all over the world.
Such a distinction can clearly be seen in the *Chronicle of Erik* (Sw. *Erikskrönikan*), written sometimes in the 1320–30s, where in the Swedish warfare in Karelia a couple of decades earlier the *Hälsingar* are singled out as a separate group of their own among the Swedish warriors. Hälsingland was in these times just becoming more closely tied up to the Swedish kingdom (Harrison 2009: 203–209, 440–444; 2012: 140–141).

Önningeby is given special attention by Roeck Hansen (1991: 116–138), as it is the township which has been the object of the most thorough investigations in her dissertation. She starts by stating that older interpretations of the name as a very old *-inge*-name with *-by* added later are repudiated by Hellberg, as the original form of the name contains the element *-inga* and not the older *-inge* and the oldest documentary records have the form ending in *-by*. However, Roeck Hansen continues, by considering the special settlement development in Åland, including the late nucleation into townships assumed in her work, the element *-by* could have been added in connection with the establishment of the hamlet. In this connection, a name, *Bydingen* in Rimbo parish in Uppland, discussed by Hellberg, would in some respects be comparable with Önningeby. The name designates an area but is said formerly to have been the name of a territory with common land-ownership, later split up into several townships. The primary settlement that bore the name of *Bødhunge* has ceased to exist. Both the areas, Bydingen and Önningeby, originally consisted of undivided territories under common ownership. In the latter case, several dispersed settlements would have nucleated into a common hamlet. The separate habitations might have had their own names, but, when merged into a hamlet, the name of the territory with the added element *-by* was adopted to designate the new settlement formation. Roeck Hansen suggests that the topography of Önningeby, in particular the situation at the time of the 10-metre shore level (which according to Roeck Hansen’s curve of shore displacement would correspond to the sea level about 2,000 years ago) could give a possible background to the name (Roeck Hansen 1991: 62–63).

Roeck Hansen’s line of reasoning here must be seen as mere free imagination in an attempt to press the place-names into her theoretical frame, which does

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52 *Sviby* ['the township of the Svear'] in Jomala in Åland is an exception in this respect, but the name is obviously to be seen in opposition to the other särnamn-townships, as Sviby is situated between Gottby and Dalkarby. The more interesting aspect of this name is that the reference is to ‘Svear’ and not to any single province, as it most probably designates more generally settlers from the Swedish kingdom ‘proper’.

53 No clear indications of when the hamlet was established in the toft area have been achieved. Where Bydingen is situated is actually never mentioned by Roeck Hansen.
not become clearer when she, as noted, in other contexts says that that Önninge- 
by may have been named after early medieval Swedish settlers. Roeck Hansen 
does not even mention what the supposed original form of the name would 
have been before the addition of -by (but obviously *Öninge). According to 
Hellberg and others, however, the original form of the name does not contain 
-inga nor -inge but -ingia, which is a plural genitive, and the ending -by is there 
from the oldest records of the name from the 1330s. There can hardly be any 
doubt that OSw. Øningiaby means ‘the township of the Ölänningar’. It is well 
attested that the inhabitants of the island of Öland were in medieval times 
called Øningiar.54 This interpretation would seemingly also be substantiated 
by the fact that the neighbouring township to the west, which seems to have 
been separated from Önningeby, bears the name Kalmar(e) (Calmara 1431, 
Kalmarna 1433), nowadays divided into Öster- and Västerkalmare, after the 
town of Kalmar (Calmarna oppidum ca. 1200) in Småland on the Swedish 
mainland coast opposite the island of Öland. For both names, the latter element 
is recorded as -arn(a) (Hellberg 1987: 18).

This last interpretation is also questioned by Roeck Hansen. The assumption 
that Kalmar is secondary to Önningeby is said not to be substantiated by any 
documentary evidence. Even if it was accepted that the name Önningeby is 
derived from the island of Öland, Roeck Hansen finds it more difficult to 
accept the town of Kalmar as a model for the name. Instead, she departs to 
find the same origin for both names in similar topographic features. The most 
interesting feature that could be connected to the name, in which the first part 
designates (natural) heaps of stone whereas the second part designates islands, 
originally banks of sand or gravel, is the long point of land forming the southern 
part of the two Kalmare townships and shared by them. Geologically, it contains 
a moraine formation which is found in several places in Åland. It runs north to 
south and is characterized as a drumlin-like ridge. Its highest point reaches just 
below 20 metres and, at the time of the 5-metre level and earlier, the formation 
must have been a characteristic feature here. As a topographical feature, it would 
answer well to the prerequisites for the name. Roeck Hansen therefore suggests 
that the township name Kalmare is an independent formation on the same 
grounds as the name of the town Kalmar (Roeck Hansen 1991: 63–64.).55

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55 The first part kalm is ‘heap of stones’ and the latter part -arna is a plural of OSw. arin, ærin 
referring to a formation or area of gravel. SOL, pp. 25, 159.
This could perhaps be the case at a hasty look. Somewhat confusingly, this same interpretation of the name can be found in a book from almost ten years earlier by Erik Bertell, who says, also in an attempt to dismiss Hellberg, that the formation’s height is over 40 m.a.s.l. and has formed an ancient island. The main height in the south is named Bölsberget, whereas the northern part is Åkerberg. The area continues in the south in Kalmarnäs [‘-isthmus’]. Bölsberget together with Åkerberg could according to Bertell be the ancient island Kalmarna that has given the townships their names. (Bertell 1983: 71.) This explanation seems very strange. Why, then, are the heights in question named as they are and why would the township Kalmare have been named after an island off its coast? Roeck Hansen also states that other place-name scholars cited by Hellberg have observed the similarity between the two names in Åland and Småland respectively but have interpreted them as independent formations (Roeck Hansen 1991: 63). This is certainly not correct. The cited scholars in question are Ivar Modéer and C.-E. Thors (Hellberg 1987: 18n.4). The first noted already in 1936 that the name in Åland was called after the Swedish town in Småland, although he did not present any special motivation for this (Modéer 1936: 109). The latter is also of the same opinion and notes that the name in Åland has the same OSw. form (-arna) as the name of the town, to which he also adds that corresponding forms are unknown in Finland (Thors 1968: 44). Regardless that no documentary evidence would substantiate that Kalmare is secondary to Önningeby, the configuration of the boundaries clearly gives that impression. Roeck Hansen by the way puts forth herself quite frisky assumptions about townships’ relations to each other without any direct documentary evidence or even onomastic indications.

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56 It may be noticed that the idea of the name Önningeby having to do with islands in the area at the sea level of the 10-metre contour, about 2000 years ago, also can be found in Bertell 1983: 84–86. Bertell does however not try to give the name some other original form. Roeck Hansen does not refer to Bertell, but the obvious similarity seems to point at that her ideas about Önningeby and Kalmar have been taken from Bertell. The interpretations of place names given in Erik Bertell 1983, a loyal follower of the local patriotic outlines of Matts Dreijer, are of a clearly quasi-scientific nature with the typical features that the names are treated in isolation and are more or less freely associated with very distant and wholly unlikely times and/or places (cf. Orman 1984; Hellberg 1987: 58; Zilliacus 1989: 49).

57 On the spellings of the name Kalmare in Åland before 1600, see G. Hausen 1927: 88–89.

58 One example of this is when Roeck Hansen (1991: 97) assumes that Gölby/Buskböle and Björsby/Andersböle may have formed one primary territory and that the division into two came into being after the Late Iron Age, probably when the hamlets were formed. Besides that, there is no documentary evidence to support this, the idea is naturally dependent on that the first part of the name Gölby is after a natural phenomenon, as such names are older than such ending with -by containing a personal name, which would make this township the mother settlement. But as
she in fact says that together with the Kalmare townships Önningeby may have formed one Late Iron Age territory (Roeck Hansen 1991: 116). In the poor documentary situation, one is at times left without more or less secure assumptions about primary and secondary townships, but such assumptions are to be justified by tenable arguments from topography, the typology of the names, how the boundaries have been drawn and so on. In this context, it must be pointed out that the name Kalmare is of a secondary type, whether or not it is named after the town in Småland, which also points to the fact that the township is of secondary nature, in other words that the township has been broken out from another, older township, and this is most likely Önningeby. Even in the independent case of the name Kalmare, the suggestion of Roeck Hansen would not necessarily bind the name to pre-historic times, because, as she herself states, the local feature she thinks could be the origin of the name still at the 5-metre level (the sea level around AD 1100 according to Ekman) would have been a characteristic feature here.

The name of Kalmare’s probable mother township, which refers to inhabitants from the island of Öland, and the identical old spellings of the Kalmar-names in Åland and Småland, opposite the island of Öland, forms unknown in Finland, are undoubtedly quite strong indicators that the name Kalmare really is after the town in Småland. To this might be added that the strait between Öland and the Swedish mainland is known as Kalmarsund < Osw. Kalmarna sund, mentioned already on a rune stone in Södermanland from the eleventh century (Sö 333) (SOL, p. 160). The name must have been at least partly given from the direction of Öland, meaning ‘the strait (we cross to get) to Kalmar’, and for others ‘the strait where we pass Kalmar’. In any case, the name of the strait naturally reflects that Kalmar was early an important feature in the region. That settlers have brought known names from their former home tracts with them is a very well-known feature around the world, especially with many famous examples in the U.S.A. Kalmar was one of the major cities in medieval Sweden, but the oldest history of the town has been obscure. The name as such is much older and it has been speculated that the settlement goes back to the Iron Age, which seems likely, but a medieval town appears in the sources only in the beginning of the thirteenth century (Hellberg 1979):

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the name Gölby most probably is made up of a personal name, such a theory runs into problems. Björsby is made up of a man’s name (< Bjørn) and -by, denoting a single settler’s farm, notably the man’s name also has a younger s-genitive. Just as -bole is certainly medieval, so is Anders-, as it is a Christian name (< Greek Ἀνδρέας, Andreas). One of the apostles of Jesus was named so, Andrew in English.

In the oldest tax-registers from the late 1530s, Önningeby is a tax-district of its own and counted into the tax-districts of Lemland, whereas it is in the registers of rökar and mantal placed in Jomala, in 1537, however, listed as the last one in Jomala without any connection to tax-districts and townships nearby. This would seem to reflect that Önningeby had recently been transferred from Lemland to Jomala (Bertell 1983: 73–74, 85–87, 140–141). In the late medieval local judicial order, known from the late 1530s, Önningeby formed a local judicial district (Sw. länsmansdöme) together with Haddnäs and Granboda in Lemland, Lumparland, Ångsö in Värdö and northern Föglö (Bertell 1983: 130, 140 and map 23).

The name Önningeby with reference to Öland and the township's older administrative relation to Lemland is obviously to be seen in the light that Lemland together with Lumparland, Föglö and Kökar further east seem to have been mainly settled from another direction than the rest of Åland. The structure of the settlement names here in south-eastern Åland is of a different and remarkably uniform type, with one or a couple of townships with names ending with -by, then a couple of adjacent townships with names ending with -torp, further away ending with -boda and on the outskirts with names of natural features. With the exception of Lemland, there are no traces of settlement in the Late Iron Age in this area. The settlement in Lemland clearly has its origins in the townships of Söderby and Norry. The personal names that appear in the names of the secondary townships are in most cases primarily connected with the south-western parts of medieval Sweden, that is Östergötland, Småland, Öland, Gotland, whereas the personal names in the place names in the central parts of Åland mainly point at Uppland and the area of Mälaren. In other words, it appears as though the central parts of Åland have been settled mainly from the mainland directly in the west, whereas Lemland together with Lumparland, Föglö and Kökar have been mainly settled from areas further away in the south-west (Skogsjö 2005a: 17–27; 2005b; 268–269; Sjöstrand 2012a: 145–146). Önningeby has thus been the westernmost settlement of the latter area and in that way received its contrastive name.

There are also certain noteworthy names that Roeck Hansen does not say anything about. This concerns especially her discussion on the Persby com-

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60 Bistorp < Bise, Hellestorp < Helvid, Knutsboda < Knut, Vessingsboda < Vessing, Haddnäs < Hadde, Järsö < Järp, Rörstorp < Rolf, Bengtsböle < Bengt.
munity (Sw. *samfällighet*) in Sund, comprising of five settlement units with a common background: Persby, in a cadastral map of the community 1765 called mother hamlet, Persnäs (in the map said to be secondary to Persby), Träsk, Skarpans and Vivasteby. The six Late Iron Age burial grounds in Persby and two in Vivasteby are said to point at a tradition from the prehistoric period, but no attention is paid to the name Persby (*Pedhersby* 1418, *Pedersby* 1431, *Persby* 1531) of the mother township (Roeck Hansen 1991: 98–101, 165). Besides being composed of a man’s name and *-by*, already as such a medieval feature and denoting a single settler’s farmstead, the man’s name is a Christian one, *Per* < *Peter/Peder* < Lat. *Petrus* < Greek πέτρος [< Aram. *Kefā* *stone, rock*]. This single settlement is most obviously from medieval, Christian times without any connection to the twelve Late Iron Age burial grounds on the undivided domains of Persby (Hellberg 1987: 88; Huldén 2001: 73; Skogsjö 2003a: 21, 26; 2003b: 170–175, 531; 2007a: 24).

**The Early Church in Åland**

Roeck Hansen states that the Swedish crusades against Finland were followed by colonization there from the end of the twelfth century. This would imply that Åland already was regarded as part of Swedish territory. She goes on underlining that Sweden’s importance as a centre of influence on Åland is witnessed by both archaeological and historical material, although she acknowledges that the Finnish influence should probably be stressed more than it had been up to that time. The early cultural influences in Finland came from another direction. According to Roeck Hansen’s model, the influence of Sweden became stronger over time, which might be coupled with the growing power of the Swedish state that came to have its centre in the Mälar region and of which Åland became a part. She points out several dissimilarities between Åland and Finland, which would indicate that the relationship between Sweden and Åland was closer – and earlier – than between Sweden and Finland. Åland would have been part of the *ledung* (the ancient naval militia) when this was still a naval organization, as Finland would not have been. Of the taxation terms that can be found both in Åland and Finland, those from Finland are later. Certain place names that can be found in Åland do not exist east of the *Skiftet* – i.e. the water that constitutes the frontier between the provinces of Åland and Finland Proper (addressed below) – such as *skeppshus*-names. Finnish archaeologists – the reference is here to C. F. Meinander – are said to regard Åland as an “extension of Central Sweden”, while Ella Kivikoski is said to have found that the burial grounds
and the culture as a whole in Åland differ completely from what is found on the Finnish mainland. Although the knowledge of developments in Finland during the Viking Age has been imperfect, the direct influence from Sweden was considerably weaker there than in Åland (Roeck Hansen 1991: 158–160).

Having said all this, it is striking that Roeck Hansen does not even mention the fact that when Åland appears in the written sources from the first half of the fourteenth century, the islands were ecclesiastically, judicially and administratively attached to the mainland in the east. As Tarkiainen and others have taken up, this is an indicator that, in the early medieval period, Åland was seen in the same context as the newly integrating lands in the east open for Swedish colonization. The settlement of Åland had, in other words, a continuity with the newly colonized areas of Finland Proper, Satakunda/Satakunta and Nyland/Uusimaa [literally ‘new land’]. Had there been an unbroken ‘Swedish’ settlement in Åland ever since the Iron Age as more or less an “extension of Central Sweden”, it seems hardly likely that the islands would have been subsumed like this into the divisional systems of the medieval Swedish realm (Orrman 1990: 212; 1994a: 681; Tarkiainen 2008: 109–110; Sjöstrand 2011: 26–27).

That Åland makes its appearance in written history as counted into the eastern part of the Swedish realm has puzzled scholars for centuries, ever since Johannes Messenius (d. 1636), who thought that Åland would earlier have been part of the Uppsala diocese and then been transferred to the diocese of Åbo/Turku in the early fourteenth century with bishop Ragnvald of Åbo/Turku (in office 1309–21), who was from Åland. Juhani Rinne (1932: 114–115), and in his footsteps Matts Dreijer, also had this same idea, with the difference that Åland would earlier have been part of the diocese of Linköping in Östergötland, under which Öland and Gotland also were (M. Dreijer 1979: 179–181, 292–297, 374–378). Ringbom (1991: 80–81; Ringbom & Remmer 2000: 19), too, has been on this track, thinking, based on the outer influences in the thirteenth-century stone churches pointing mainly to the south and southwest, that Åland

61 The town of Sigtuna in Uppland was clearly a planned construction with a royal farm at the centre. Its emergence ca. 975 could be seen as a step in a process of political centralization in the Mälar area, a manifestation of the king’s power and his control over other chieftains in the region (Lindkvist & Sjöberg 2003: 38; Ros 2008: 140–144; Eriksson 2011: 49). As Viking Age Åland was undoubtedly quite strongly associated with the mainland in the west, the fact that Åland appears in written history in the first part of the fourteenth century attached to the mainland in the east would clearly indicate that Åland had fallen outside the political process in the Mälar region during the late Viking Age and the early medieval period.

62 For earlier writers on this topic, see Radloff 1795: 167–168; for later writers, see e.g. Schybergson 1903: 65; Hornborg 1929: 241; Bertell 1953: 19; Chrispinsson 2011: 13; Lindholm 2012: 55.
might possibly have had a relatively independent position with connections to the diocese of Linköping.

Any written testimony or hints of Åland having belonged to some other diocese and later been transferred to Åbo/Turku by the time of bishop Ragnvald around 1320 do not exist. The variation in ideas about which diocese Åland would have formerly belonged to prompt viewing these hypotheses as no more than free speculation and vagaries. There are, however, a few facts that directly contradict this line of reasoning. First and foremost, it is in itself highly unlikely that a whole province at such a relatively late and well-organized stage would have been transferred from one diocese to another (cf. Pirinen 1991: 77). According to the medieval chronicle of the bishops of Finland, Ragnvald from Åland had already earlier been a canon, a member of the cathedral chapter in Åbo/Turku (Juusten, Chronicon episcoporum Finlandensis, pp. 16–17; Tarkiani nen 2008: 191). Besides, if Åland really had belonged to either Uppsala or Linköping until the early fourteenth century, this should have given a clear echo in the relatively rich written sources of these dioceses. On the contrary, the lack of sources concerning Åland before the 1320s is in itself an undoubtable sign that Åland had long been a part of the diocese of Åbo/Turku, the archives of which were completely devastated in the Russian attack on Åbo/Turku and Kuustö/Kuusisto in 1318 (Pirinen 1991: 76; Lena Huldén 2004: 93; Tarkiainen 2008: 191). Furthermore, the medieval provincial seal of Åland, known since the 1320s, has an ecclesiastical motif, as the other provinces in the Åbo/Turku diocese. More precisely, the seal represents St Olav, who was also the patron saint of Satakunda/Satakunta and Nyland/Uusimaa. These seals must have existed at least since the second half of the thirteenth century. The choice of ecclesiastical motifs is connected to the fact that the provinces in the area of the Finnish diocese were legal-administrative bodies created by the church as counterparts to the church (Alifrosti 1984). The name of the water that constitutes the frontier between the provinces of Åland and Finland Proper, Skiftet, written Vatna skipthet ['the division of waters'] 1400, also seems to be a result of this creation of the 'lands' of Åland and Finland Proper in the judicial-administrative sense (Sjöstrand 1993: 133–134).63

63 The unique name Skiftet (> Fi. Kihti) designates a very irregular area of water, which makes Zilliacus (1989: 163–164, 177) think it cannot originally have been a name for the whole area. Although Zilliacus reasons about the verb skifta in the sense of ‘divide, split’, he does not consider the name as being a result of an administrative division, even though Skiftet coincides precisely all the way with the frontier between Åland and Finland Proper. Considering the form Vatna skipthet (1400), it may be mentioned that, for example, Snorri Sturluson uses the principally identical term landskipeti for the frontier between Norway and Sweden in a saga ca. 1230 (Olav den heliges saga 80). The uniqueness of the name Skiftet can naturally be seen in the light of
Perhaps the strongest and hardest positive evidence of Åland having belonged to the Finnish diocese from the beginning is provided by the ecclesiastical taxation of Åland, being – ever since the sources start to cast light on this from the 1330s – of the same kind of ‘Swedish right’ as in the Swedish coastal settlements in Finland. This circumstance also reveals something else of crucial importance. The ‘Swedish right’ was specially designed for the young Swedish coastal settlement, whereas the old Finnish Iron Age tracts, where the ‘Finnish right’ prevailed, had different arrangements. These different ‘rights’ had less to do with ‘nationality’ than with the settlements’ different age and sources of income. As new Finnish townships were established, they were also taxed according to the ‘Swedish right’ (Pirinen 1962: 90–96). Concerning the general question of settlement continuity in Åland, this is then the more striking: Åland had the same type of ecclesiastical taxation adjusted to new settlers as in the Swedish coastal settlements in Finland established in the early medieval period.

The oldest stone churches in the medieval Finnish diocese are found in Åland and in Finland Proper. These stem from the thirteenth century, whereas most of the other stone churches are from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (cf. Hiekkänen 2007; Tarkiainen 2008: 202–204; Lindholm 2012: 70). This must be seen as reflecting that Åland, along with Finland Proper, constituted the very core area of the Finnish bishopric in the thirteenth and the early fourteenth century, also mirrored in that the first two bishops who were from the diocese were from this area, that is Magnus (in office 1291–1308) from Rusko in Finland Proper and the aforementioned Ragnvald from Åland (in office 1309–21) (Pirinen 1991: 74, 76; Tarkiainen 2008: 190–191).

**Boundaries, Names and Traditions**

Roeck Hansen notes that the pattern formed by Late Iron Age burial grounds and township boundaries in Åland deviates to some extent from the ‘normal’

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the absence of corresponding divisions by water between provinces elsewhere in the Swedish speaking area. In this connection, Zilliacus also discusses in similar terms the equally unique name Delet (from the verb dela [‘divide, partition’]) for the water between Vårdö and Kumlinge. The latter name is most probably also a result of an administrative division, that is when the old parish of Sund, which was then also comprised of Kumlinge and Brändö as chapels, was divided in the 1460s as Kumlinge was established as a parish of its own with Brändö as its chapel (Cf. Hallberg 2001: 23). The name is furthermore hardly so very unique: e.g. the two lakes Del-lensjärna or Dellarna in NE Hälsingland seem to be from an OSw. *Delder [‘the divided (lake)’], which also has also given name to Delsbo (Elmveik 1994: 5–8; SOL, pp. 59–60).

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After having analyzed the structure of the system of ecclesiastical taxation in Åland, Pirinen (1962: 96; cf. 1991: 77) explicitly denounces the conception of Åland having been secondarily transferred to the diocese of Åbo/Turku in the early fourteenth century.
situation in eastern Sweden in that the burial grounds are more dispersed within the townships and also in some cases are situated on the actual township boundary. Such cases are taken by her to mark that burial grounds and boundaries belong to different periods and that the former have been established without any regard to the latter (Roek Hansen 1991: 85). The problem of townships with medieval names and prehistoric monuments, as well as with the anomaly of Late Iron Age burial grounds situated on the township boundary, are explained as having to do with boundary chronology and with the extension of township territories at different stages in settlement development (Roek Hansen 1991: 87). But does this actually not imply something quite different concerning settlement continuity? To begin with, Roek Hansen mostly only talks about “medieval names”, as if the problem were simply one of chronology without any need to pay closer attention to what the names actually denote. Mother townships with several Late Iron Age burial grounds on their undivided domains on the one hand and, on the other hand, with names referring to medieval immigrants from Sweden (or Finland in the case of Finby in Sund) or – what is their most common feature – consisting of a personal name and -by denoting a single settler’s farmstead, hardly corresponds with any model of, as Roek Hansen puts it:

[A] shift from Late Iron Age territories with dispersed, single farms and small, privately owned fields, to agglomerated habitation in hamlets and an open-field agriculture as an adaptation to the physical, economic and social-administrative changes that took place during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. (Roek Hansen 1991: 164.)

In Sund, for example all the mother townships, from which the other townships have been divided, have names of the aforementioned type. The same thing goes also for the mother townships in Saltvik.

Furthermore, the early medieval Scandinavians were not unaware of ancient monuments as expressions of property claims and tradition. For example, the provincial laws of Väster- and Östergötland refer to the pre-Christian mounds

65 Gesterby (< gästrikar from Gästrikland), Björby (< Björn), (Öster-)Sibby (< Sibbe), Persby (< Per, Peder), Finby (< Finns from SW Finland) and Tosarby (< Tor) and probably also in the area of Kastholm (Väster-)Sibby (< Sibbe) and Fastersby (< Fastulf) (Huldén 2001: 70–74; Skogsjö 2003a: 14–25).

66 Rangby (< Ragnvald), Främmanby (< Frömund or possibly Fridhmund), Bertby (< Berte) and Laby (< Lave < Olav), and also two mother townships in the neighbouring parishes, Björby (above) in Sund and Stålsby (< Stolt) in Finström (Huldén 2001: 64–69; Skogsjö 2007a: 14–22, 226–227). Björby in Sund and Stålsby in Finström are mentioned in this connection as they are mother townships to some secondary townships in Saltvik. It must also be noted that the names of the men in the cases of Bertby and Stålsby are of German origin and that the names of these townships thus most certainly are medieval (Hellberg 1987: 54, 95; Huldén 2001: 59, 64).
on the lands of the townships as juridical documents concerning the age and conventional rights of the townships. As Roek Hansen herself notes, during the Late Iron Age burial grounds were situated close to the settlement in a central part of the territory (Roek Hansen 1991: 86). To be more specific, they were, as a rule, placed at the outer limit of the cultivated infields. Sometimes they are also found a bit further away in the commons (Sw. allmäning), in these cases in connection to more important roads. The burial grounds were also readily to be seen by neighbours. The burial grounds seem thus to have played a part in defining or delimiting the fenced-in infields where the fences were the physical manifestations indicating that the land belonged to different farms, whereas the graves appear to have been symbolic expressions of ownership and inheritance rights to the fenced-in land (Fallgren 2006: 119–120, 136–140; 2008: 73).

In Åland, too, there is a close natural spatial relationship between burials and dwelling sites. Of 83 known archaeological areas with foundations of houses, no less than 49 dwelling sites are close to burial grounds. The number of localized building foundations is far over 100 (Tomtlund 2005: 12). The special feature in Åland of burial grounds on the actual township boundaries – in some cases also between old primary townships – would rather clearly indicate that those who drew up the boundaries were not descendants of those who used the burial grounds, but new people without any emotional or legal adherence to the ancient monuments, only using them among other physical features as symbols for demarcating a territorial division without any connection to the earlier times of the burial grounds.

A quite intriguing, although late, testimony is found in the priests’ accounts 1667–74 to the national inventory of antiquities. The priest in Hammarland notes concerning the remains of the hill fort on Borgö in Marsund that no one knows anything to tell about them. Noting the many earth mounds in his parish, he concludes that nobody knows anything else about them than that, in heathen times, before any churches had been built, the dead would have been buried under such mounds. The priest in Sund reports that there are some earth mounds north of the church, but no story about them. At one

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68 On this national inventory of antiquities in general, see Evert Baudou & Jon Moen 1995.
69 Men inget wett sätja något derom (Bomansson 1858: 117).
70 Men ingen wett sätja annat derom, än att när hedendomen war, och inga kyrkor ännu voro funnderade, at dhe Vunder sådana högar skola hava lagt sina döda (Bomansson 1858: 117–118).
71 ähre någre jordböggar, men ingen berättelse derom (Bomansson 1858: 121).
stage he says that about all the aforementioned there is no story.\textsuperscript{72} The priest in Lemland notes the large earth mounds by the church and says that no-one knows anything to relate about them.\textsuperscript{73} The priest in Finström has made almost an entire catalogue. Talking about the 15 earth mounds in the parsonage’s field, he states that of everyone alive, nobody knows anything certain to tell about for what purpose these many earth and stone mounds were erected in old times.\textsuperscript{74} All this seems to indicate an absence of local traditions connected to the Late Iron Age remains and mounds (cf. Sjöstrand 2012a: 154).

**Coins and Rune Stones**

The Arabic coins indicate that, in the ninth and first half of the tenth century, people in Åland took part in the exchange of products on the route between eastern Central Sweden through Russia to Byzantium and the Arabic world. The absence of coins in Åland from the late tenth century to the late twelfth would, according to Roeck Hansen, only be a consequence of the fact that Åland no longer formed a natural part of any sea route that was used during this period. Its position became peripheral: it was not in any case a natural part of any sea route to England or the continent, either from Sweden or from Finland. In the next sentence, Roeck Hansen claims that when the eastern trade was discontinued, Finland’s importance for Swedish trade increased. Several rune stones in Uppland are said to tell of campaigns in Finland during the eleventh century (Roeck Hansen 1991: 158, 161, 167).

This all sounds quite strange. To start with, a small correction: there is actually only one single rune stone in Uppland that tells about a man who died in Finland (U 582) (Sjöstrand 2012b: 209–211). Nevertheless, as there are English and German coins in SW Finland, it is very hard to imagine they all came there only by sea routes with no connection to Åland and those who lived there, given that the islands were not deserted in this period. The same goes for the asserted increasing importance of Finland for Swedish trade. Which odd road would this trade have taken, if not by the waters and harbors of Åland?\textsuperscript{75}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{72}] *men om alle desse fôreskrifne fins ingen berättelse* (Bomansson 1858: 121).
\item[\textsuperscript{73}] *ingen weth någon Relation* (Bomansson 1858: 145).
\item[\textsuperscript{74}] *Af alle som nu leffwa weet ingen wist beretta till hwaad ända thenne mange jorde och steenhögar åbro I gamla tidher uprettadhe* (Bomansson 1858: 147).
\item[\textsuperscript{75}] Edgren (2008: 473–474, 477) also notes the influx of Western coins to Scandinavia and to SW Finland in the eleventh century where Arabic coins from the previous centuries are quite rare, and gives the same explanation as Roeck Hansen for the lack of such coins in Åland. This would presuppose that either these coins had exclusively arrived to SW Finland on waterways that did
\end{itemize}
One quite significant single category of numismatic material in this context are the coins minted by King Olof Skötkonung and his son Anund Jakob in Sigtuna in Uppland ca. 995–1030 (Malmer 1995; Lindkvist & Sjöberg 2003: 37–38). As just over a dozen of these coins have also been found in SW Finland, it is the more striking that no such coins (or indeed any coins from that period at all) have been found in Åland (Jonsson 1983).

According to Roeck Hansen, Åland may have undergone a period of stagnation or even regression during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. There may have been several reasons for this. One would be the discontinuance in the eastern trade, which meant that Åland was perhaps deprived of a market for surplus production. Another change during this period was an accelerated rate of shore displacement, which changed the sea contour of Åland and made many of its harbours and waterways too shallow for navigation. This process was accompanied by, and to some extent caused by, a deterioration in the in the climatic conditions. The possibilities of surviving in Åland, Roeck Hansen asserts, must have been gravely impaired. (Roeck Hansen 1991: 159, 161, 167.)

Well, the shore displacement would naturally have had effects on local communications and settlement, but it can hardly have hindered communications and exchange with the outer world in any imaginable way. Nevertheless, when the other aforementioned factors of “gravely impaired possibilities” for “surviving in Åland” are complemented by the nuisance of an intensified slave-trading piracy in the Baltic Sea region due to the closing of routes in Russia in the late tenth century, one is right on the spot to the prerequisites assumed by the spokesmen of the depopulation theory.

The fact that rune stones do not appear in Åland is explained by Roeck Hansen in only a few words by the absence of a pronounced social hierarchy and a late Christianization (Roeck Hansen 1991: 162). Writing in runes started around the second and third centuries AD under influence from both Greek and Roman writing, but runes were not in any broader use before the ninth century. The Scandinavian rune stones are mostly from the tenth and eleventh centuries. The reasons for the erection of rune stones have been debated. One prerequisite is, however, quite correctly, the need of a higher social stratum to manifest their status, complemented by religious (the adherence to Christianity) and legal motives connected to inheritance. The central inspiring source seems to have been the Danish King Harald ‘Bluetooth’ Gormsson’s (d. ca. 987) large rune stone (DR 42) in Jelling in Jutland from around 970, on which he boasts

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not pass Åland or the inhabitants of Åland somehow were unable to profit on this traffic. Neither alternative seems very probable.

The monuments in Åland from the Late Iron Age hardly reveal a totally unstratified society. There are indications of persons of special rank, as in the case of one of the burials in Larsas Kvarnbacke in Bertby and the boat grave in Johannisberg in Kvarnbo in Saltvik (Tomtlund 2005, passim). Some burial grounds have large stones erected in them, as in Norrgård in Lemböte in Lemland. Åland’s largest mound, situated in Överby in Jomala, is 21 metres in diameter and 2 metres high. In Gölby in Jomala there is a mound 20 metres in diameter and 3 metres high (M. Dreijer 1950: 19). The newly found hall in Kvarnbo in Saltvik has initially been described as an elite settlement, but, strikingly, there are no rune stones here, nor any early Christian elite grave monuments by the adjacent church. Rune stones, or at least runic writings, are found almost everywhere in Scandinavian settlements in the late Viking Age and Åland was the immediate neighbour to the world’s absolute centre in the erection of rune stones – Uppland – in which direction Åland had quite close contacts during the Viking Age. It would therefore seem quite odd that not even a single rune stone was erected or that no runes at all were even carved here. No matter how one twists and turns the subject, it remains an obtrusive fact that the eleventh century of Åland exhibits an archaeological image that in several considerable respects deviates from that of the surrounding regions (cf. Skogsjö 2003a: 31; 2007a: 28. Tarkiainen 2008: 108).

Saltvik

According to Ringbom in her recent synthesis on the churches of Åland, the idea of depopulation begins to look more unlikely. The fact that the farms in northern Åland are situated close to burial grounds is proposed to indicate some degree of population continuity. Archaeological excavations have shown that several Late Iron Age farms exhibit continuous use, for example Borgboda and Kohagen in Saltvik as well as Tjudnäs in Sund. Pollen analyses indicate an unbroken practice of agriculture. It would be tempting, Ringbom says, to consider early missionary activity in Åland, but she admits that too little is presently known to develop such a hypothesis. One important indication adduced is that the

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76 The burial ground in Norrgård in Lemböte is perhaps the most grandiose of all in Åland. It is most likely that it reflects riches gathered as small tributes and gifts in connection to the passing sea traffic (cf. P. O. Sjöstrand 2012a: 150–151).
largest burial grounds are found by the churches, which would give evidence of a continuity of central places from pre-Christian to Christian times. More research should be able to provide information on this topic in the future. In this respect, the Åland churches and their surroundings are said to be crucial (Ringbom 2010: 9). Exactly what is meant by ‘early missionary activity’ is never clarified.

As already mentioned, several of the parishes have been named after the farmstead or township where the church was built. These names are secondary and the settlements are secondary to mother townships with clearly medieval names. Nothing in the toponomy near the churches gives any indication of pre-Christian cult. To take the case of Borgboda: according to Marita Karlsson, investigations there may suggest a settlement structure where the main farm moved within a limited area at different times and a continuity in this settlement “can be discerned”. Stagnation and/or restructuring of settlement could be related to the shore displacement and to the ancient waterway becoming impassable, with the result that the district became more isolated and more purely agrarian (Karlsson 1984: 72–73). In her monograph on the church of Saltvik, Ringbom claims, with reference to Karlsson’s study, that findings in Borgboda suggest a continuity in the settlement from the Iron Age to the Middle Ages (Ringbom & Remmer 2000: 14). The detailed chronology of the individual burials and the building remains in the area is, however, left completely open in Karlsson’s study. Any incontestable continuity from the Iron Age into the Middle Ages is not proven. Nor is anything said by either Karlsson or Ringbom concerning why the settlement has such an obviously very young, medieval name of a secondary type: Borgboda (Borgboo 1544, Borgboda 1547), which alludes to some kind of sheds, in this case most probably connected with pasture, by the ancient hill fort, to which the first part of the name refers.77 Borgboda, consisting of a total of 150 jordmarker, is not mentioned in the oldest tax registers from the late 1530s because it was owned by the bishops of Åbo/Turku. Borgö äng in Borgboda, also known as Prästgårdsängen, worth 50 jordmarker, was counted along with the ancient hill fort as part of the parsonage and was farmed by the local vicar (Bertell 1953: 79; 1983: 38–39, 157).

The hill fort in question seems to have been in use in the Viking Age, but there has hardly been any permanent settlement (Tomtlund 2005: 14, 23). The easternmost part of Saltvik, that is the townships of Långbergsoda, Tengsöda, Syllöda and Sonröda, Borgboda and Ryssböle, has probably been populated

from the south, from Björby in Sund parish. North of Björby, a system of elongated bays spread during the early Middle Ages up to Främmanby in the west and to Syllödaträsk and Askarträsk in the north. Several factors point to the parish boundary between Saltvik and Sund having been changed at some stage, and the aforementioned area having earlier belonged to Sund (Skogsjö 2007a: 21–22, 172, 226; 2007b: 163–165, 255–258).

Ringbom also notes that, according to the 5-metre contour, Hjortö ['deer island'] in Saltvik has been an island, which would indicate that the name goes back to the Iron Age. Ringbom continues by saying that, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Hjortö developed a land connection with Ödkarby (Ringbom & Remmer 2000: 16–17). This would mean, however, that Hjortö would still have been an island in the latter twelfth century and presumably still perceivable as an island in the beginning of the thirteenth and could thus have received the name at that time. This name thus offers no support for continuity from the Iron Age. It might also be noted that the name does not primarily refer to any settlement (Skogsjö 2007a: 274, 560–562).

Concerning the curia Saltwiik, mentioned in 1351 as a former Crown possession donated to the bishop in Åbo/Turku, Ringbom states that it has not been located. F. W. Radloff and Reinhold Hausen are said to have considered it identical with Germundö manor. Ringbom also notes that Bertell and Dreijer have argued for the identification of Kvarnbo with the church, which should be considered speculation without evidence. Ringbom, however, draws attention to a silver chalice and paten donated by the canon in Åbo/Turku, Laurentius Arnberni, in 1346, to Ecclesie sue Saltwiik, rendered by her as “his church in Saltvik”. This would make it clear that the church of Saltvik was via a canonry coupled with the Åbo/Turku cathedral, and accordingly it would not be too farfetched to interpret curia Saltwik as a prebendary. (Ringbom & Remmer 2000: 18–19.)

Ringbom’s interpretation of the chalice and paten is most probably correct, but the reasoning concerning the location of curia Saltwiik is quite puzzling. In his work on Germundö, Reinhold Hausen – contrary to what Ringbom says – rejects the interpretation of curia Saltwiik as Germundö in favour of Kvarnbo by the church. The reasons given for this are that, as a rule, parishes receive their names from the farms on which their churches have been built, and that, in 1539, the peasants of Kvarnbo are called tenants of the bishop: Ludvig Rasmusson, the secretary of King Gustavus Vasa (d. 1560), identifies curia Saltwiik 1351 as Boo, which was an alternative name used for Kvarnbo
in the sixteenth century (R. Hausen 1926: 3n.1). It would seem self-evident that the name *Saltvik* in itself points at the site of the church, which thus has become the name of the parish, whereas the township has instead been given the name Kvarnbo due to the mills there (*kvarn* ['mill']). Ecclésie sue *Saltwik* inscribed on the chalice of Laurentius Arnberni is not ‘His church in Saltvik’ but ‘His church Saltvik’: the church was named Saltvik. When, for example, medieval documents say that the provincial assembly (Sw. *landsinget*) has met in “Saltvik”, they naturally mean by the church, not the parish as a whole. Concerning how long the former royal *curia* had been in the hands of the cathedral in Åbo/Turku, I would say that it is quite probable that it was donated by King Magnus Birgersson (r. 1275–1290) in connection with the establishment of the cathedral chapter in Åbo/Turku in 1276. It is impossible to determine how long the *curia* had been in the hands of the Crown before that. Almost needless to say, hardly anything is known about how Åland was attached to the formation of the medieval Swedish kingdom and when Swedish royal power consolidated its positions here (cf. Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 17).

Kohagen is situated ca. 400 metres north of the church of Saltvik. The excavations there in the 1950s and 1960s have unfortunately not been published, but can briefly be described concerning five (of a total of seven) foundations of houses next to each other, separated by a stone-free passage along the rich surroundings of cultural layers. In some cases, there were low remains of houses in several layers on top of each other. The stone-house foundation-frames are clearly distinguishable. They represent different types of houses of the characteristic elliptical shape of the Viking Age and a later type with a rectangular or square floor plan. Foundation number 5 is from the Viking Age, a large house (about 15 x 8 m at its widest point, the end walls over 5 m) located along the slope. In the house were remnants of an older building. To the north, in the extension of the house’s central axis, could be the remains of a similar house. These findings would, according to Ringbom, suggest a continuity of settlement in the mid-eleventh century, including an oriental belt fitting and fragments of a bronze vessel, further iron knives, glass beads, a harpoon tip and a ploughshare (Ringbom & Remmer 2000: 19–20). Next to house foundation

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78 As Hausen also notes in this work, the latter part -ö ['island'] in the name Germundö (Kermundö 1537, Kermundö 1539, Gärmundöö 1547) cannot be a topographic term. In a compound with the male name Gerund (or Kettilmund?), it corresponds to a fashionable medieval way of naming a settlement (cf. Zölliacus 1989: 110).


80 On the establishment of the cathedral chapter in Åbo/Turku 1276, see e.g. Pirinen 1991: 73.
5 could also be seen the remains of an older building that could have been destroyed during the construction of the foundation of number 5. In parallel with each other were two foundations with a north–south orientation. Among the foundations, a younger type of house was also found 16 metres from house foundation 5. The square stone foundation of 5 x 5 metres was constructed on top of an older building of the Viking Age type. In the northeast corner, a hearth was framed by logs and shod with stone slabs on the surrounding walls. The excavations testified to an urban-like settlement of the upper stratum of society, where different types of houses have been built on top of each other ever since the Vendel Period until the Middle Ages. The black earth region in Kohagen is not of the same magnitude as around the church. Numerous arrowheads and traces of fire have been interpreted as signs of unrest. (Karlsson 1987: 22–24; Tomtlund 2005: 23.) One wonders what this last notion of unrest behind finds of arrowheads and indications of fire might have been about. An internal vendetta or external enemies? Can it perhaps be connected to the fact that Saltvik/Kvarnbo is known to have been in the hands of the Crown at an early stage? This Kohagen site is, undoubtedly, very interesting, but without any clearer chronological data, it is better to not say anything further.

Looking further into the cultural geography of the area, Saltvik/Kvarnbo is together with Lagmansby, Antböle and the parsonage undoubtedly separated from Rangsby. Until the eighteenth century, these townships held their outfields in common ownership; they owned the forest, pasture and fishing together. To this day, there are clear traces of this co-ownership in the area called Jägplatsen ['Hunting Grounds'] between Saltviksfjärden and Åsgårda träsk, where all five townships have numerous small plots around each other that have arisen in recent times when the area has been partitioned. Such a comprehensive joint ownership can hardly be explained otherwise than that the townships have a common origin, so that one township – that is Rangsby ['Ragnvald’s Farmstead'], a typical medieval name after a single settler – is the oldest and the others have developed from it. The name Saltvik ['Salt Inlet'] does not primarily refer to settlement. Most obviously, it is originally the name of the inlet that is today called Kvarnboviken. As a secondary settlement was established from Rangsby on the outfields by the inlet, this settlement was attached to the name Saltvik, and as the church was built and land was given for the parsonage in that place, ‘Saltvik’ became the name of the parish (Skogsjö 2007a: 14–16, 38–40, 645).81

81 The name Saltvik ['Salt-'] refers most probably to salty water (cf. Saltsjön ['Salt-Sea'] referring to the Baltic Sea; i Salta siøin, (1490). In Finland (incl. Åland), there are about 50 townships with names ending with -vik ['-inlet'], like Djurvik in Jomala, Granvik in Pargas/Parainen, Lappvik
The Kohagen site, as well as the quite impressive black earth area upon which the church itself has been built, and the newly found large hall, flanked by the largest Late Iron Age burial ground in Åland, called Johannisberg,\(^{82}\) do not stand in any reasonable connection with the later known settlement in the area. The fact that ‘Saltvik’/Kvarnbo had not been separated from the comprehensive co-ownership is also an indicator that the once royal *curia* Saltvik hardly had any administrative functions at all, and was just more or less ordinary tenant farmland paying rent to the Crown. Talking of Crown properties, it is also a striking fact that there are no old ‘administrative’ names like *Tuna* and *Husaby* in Åland whatsoever.\(^{83}\)

**Sund**

In her monograph on the church of Sund (Ringbom & Remmer 2005), Ringbom proposes a settlement continuity extending back to the Bronze Age. She notes that two dwelling sites from the Bronze Age have been registered in the parish, one in Sibby and another in Kulla, and that there is a striking number of graves from this period in Sund, about 200 in total, concentrated in Sibby, Brännbolstad, Mångstekta, Domarböle, Svensbøle, Tosarby and Kulla. Ringbom writes that a continuity of settlement would be suggested by the fact that “samma ortsnamn återkommer vid övergången från bronsålder till äldre järnålder” [‘the same place names recur at the transition from the Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age’] (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 13, cf. 12–14).\(^{84}\) Ringbom’s

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\(^{82}\) There is also an example of a richly equipped weapon grave with ca. 500 rivets from Johannisberg, suggesting a boat grave (Tomtlund 2005: 26). Ships were a means of travel, trade as well as control, and gave their owners prestige, which the dead could take with him to the other side (cf. Eriksson 2011: 29–31).


\(^{84}\) To this, Ringbom has joined an early donation from 1328 by the bailiff of Åland (*advocatus Alandie*) Nils Magnusson to bishop Bengt in Åbo/Turku of \(\frac{1}{2}\) *bol* in Sibby (*in Sibboby*) in the presence of witnesses (*fastar*) who are listed. The seals of the letter’s exhibitors, the province of Åland (*sigillium terre Alandie*) as well as two canons in Åbo/Turku have been attached to the letter (copy DS 2679; REA 46; FMU 362; SDHK 3561 (21.9.1328)). Ringbom stresses the official character of the letter and that the donation, as in the case of Tjuddnäs six years earlier, was confirmed with the seal of the province. If it concerned Östersibby, it could, according to
suggestion that those names and townships go back all the way to the Bronze Age (ca. 1800–500 BC), notably without any references, is absurd and cannot be taken seriously. The oldest known place-names whatsoever in Scandinavia are believed to be from the Early Iron Age (ca. 500 BC – AD 500), perhaps some also from the Bronze Age, mainly denoting main features in a landscape, such as large lakes, islands, bays and rivers. The bulk of settlement names for the central areas of Sweden and Norway emanates from the Late Iron Age (ca. AD 500–1000), whereas most of the names in Sund in Åland mentioned by Ringbom are unequivocally of late, medieval types (Brink 2008: 57–60).

The farm Tjudnäs, mentioned in 1322 as assigned to the cathedral in Åbo/Turku, was located on the isthmus south of Kastelholm’s demesne, but disappeared in the mid-sixteenth century when the area was placed under the royal demesne (Bertell 1953: 50; Skogsjö 2003a: 12; 2003b: 39, 446; 2007a: 12). The old farm was probably in the area where the cottage Tjurnäs was and where the farm Tjudnäs is now located, a bit south of the isthmus near Tjudnäs träsk. However, this is difficult to confirm based on old maps. Hans Hansson’s map from around 1650 offers no clues. In Olof Mörn’s map from 1700, Tjudnäs träsk is called Kynis träsk, probably a corrupt form of Tjudnäs träsk. Thus it seems likely that old Tjudnäs was situated near Tjudnäs träsk. Just west of the lake, there are remains of few houses. According to archaeological studies these belong to the Viking Age and are thus to be connected with a pair of adjacent burials dating from the Late Iron Age (Skogsjö 2003a: 641–642). According to Ringbom however, this complex of house foundations and the associated burial ground hint at “a settlement with unbroken continuity into the Middle Ages” (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 14–16).

The foundations Tjudnäs I and II Tjudnäs were excavated in 1953–54 by Matts Dreijer. The finds were few and difficult to date. According to Dreijer (1955), ceramic fragments with ribbed imprints of a long comb of bone showed that the foundations cannot have been built later than about 1100. Ringbom finds house foundation 1 next to the homestead of the current manor house of particular interest in the matter of continuity. The old dwelling house, now abandoned, is perpendicular to the east from the foundation’s north-eastern

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Ringbom, be stated that “även den byn företer en anmärkningsvärd kontinuitet genom tiderna, ända från bronsåldern” (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 19) [‘even this township shows a remarkable continuity through the ages, all the way from the Bronze Age’]. It is, however, incomprehensible how the letter could give such information.

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85 In addition, e.g. Mängstekta (Magnustektom 1376) contains part the Latin man’s name Magnus [‘great’] as its first (Huldén 2001: 72). On the chronology of Scandinavian place names, see further Brink 1983; 1984; Strid 1999: 43ff.
corner. According to Dreijer, it would be quite possible that there are still more foundations of buildings from different periods. No datable findings were made at this location either. However, there was pottery in fairly large quantities, including typical rough Viking pottery and also hand-glazed earthenware goods from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. A little wavy crock of hard black brown goods could, according to Dreijer, possibly be dated to the thirteenth century. Ringbom finds it noteworthy that Siegburg pottery, unglazed stoneware made in area of Cologne during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, did not appear, whereas black crocks were found, which are without parallels in the Iron Age burial grounds of Åland. It would be conceivable that this type of pottery belonged to the early Middle Ages, with a close counterpart in the so-called Trelleborg vessels from about 900 to 1070. Foundations Tjudnäs I and II should be seen in respect to two adjacent burial grounds with 13 and 58 mounds, respectively. Neither burial ground has been archaeologically investigated. (M. Dreijer 1955; Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 14–16.)

As the critical reader will notice, this is very vague. With respect to the question of continuity, Ringbom finds it interesting that the said excavated foundations in Tjudnäs – according to her – appear early in the written source material, concerning which she refers to the earliest known letter written in Åland from 1322 (copy DS 2327; REA 29; FMU 303; SDHK 3561 (Saltvik 15.3.1322), dealing with the estate Tjudnäs ( bona, dicti Thiidanes). The letter reflects a legal dispute between certain individuals and the Church over land which they presumed to inherit but which had fallen to the ownership of the Church. The oldest surviving records often revolve around similar conflicts that arose between the Church and heirs whose parents had bequeathed land to ecclesiastical agencies for their souls' prosperity (cf. Sjöstrand 2010: 121; Lindholm 2012: 78) and there is nothing to suggest that this property conflict can provide any information about Tjundäs in the thirteenth century, let alone earlier.

86 The letter petitioners are Andreas in the name of his wife Siglögn, Sibbi and Johannes, heirs to one Ingvald in time; they admit to have erred when they improperly had seized some property acquired by the church and the bishop of Åbo/Turku and now transferred this possession – Tjudnäs – to the church and bishop with all claims. In order to verify the transfer, the letter's petitioners had it confirmed by sköting at the provincial assembly through the signatures of eight fastar ['witnesses'], who are listed, along with the one of Jakob, then exactor (probably an officer of the bishop) in Åland, förskalamän (chairman of the sköting-board). For further confirmation, the letter petitioners had let the record be authenticated by the seal of the province of Åland (sigillo terre nostre Alandie) along with the seals of the provost Ragnvald, the priest in Salvitik Sigbjörn and the aforementioned Jacob. Ringbom finds that the record gives evidence of ownership relations concerning the farm in previous generations, when apparently the farm had been illegally usurped from the bishop. Exactly when this happened is not clear. It is neither
The name *Tjudnäs* (*Thiudanes* 1322, *Thiudhanes* 1414) consists of a genitive of the man’s name *Thiudhe* (a short form of compound names like *Thiudhrík*, -*sten, -mund, -ulf* and *nás* ['isthmus']. The first part is relatively rare. There is a *Tjūdō* (*Thiwdö* 1377, *Tiudhō* 1381, *Tiwdhō* 1430) in Finström, a *Tjūda* (*Tyudø* 1406, *j Tydom* 1420, *Tiwda, Tiude bol* 1540) in Kimito/Kemiö in Finland Proper and a *Tjudas* in Ingå/Inkoo in Nyland/Uusimaa. The name *Kūmmendū* (*Tijmmendö* 1539, *Kimendö* 1579) in Örnsö parish in Södermanland probably emanates from OSw. *Thiudmunda(r)ø* ['Thiudmund’s Island']. A more direct connection between these names, especially those in Åland and Kimito/Kemiö, is not unlikely. There are over 150 township names in Finland (incl. Åland) known whether “Ingevald in time” was the culprit. According to Ringbom, it would however be obvious that the church and the bishop of Åbo/Turku had owned the estate by the end of the thirteenth century. In 1322, it was time to return the farm. (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 18–19, 27–28n.18.) Both this transfer letter (Sw. *fastebrev*) and the earlier mentioned letter from 1328 seem in all to have been issued in accordance to stipulations in the provincial law of Uppland (1296), later also occurring in the law of Hälsingland (ca. 1340), which was used in Österland/Finland along with local customary legal traditions (Holmbäck & Wessén 1962: lx n.12; Lindholm 2012: 60). To this may be said, that the excavated foundations of the houses in Tjudnäs do not in any reasonable manner appear in this letter, which neither has been materialized with respect to any age of the estate in Tjudnäs, but has been preserved as a copy in the register of the church of Åbo/Turku from the latter fifteenth century due to the access of the church to the estate in question. The letter is reasonably related to the fact that one Ingevald had bequeathed the estate to the church of Åbo/Turku “in time” and thus it had not gone to his heirs Siglögn (represented by her husband Andreas), Sibbi and Johannes. These potential heirs had disputed Ingevald's will, but now had fallen short and been forced to dismiss their claims on the estate. Of this follows that the bequest to the church of Åbo/Turku hardly had happened very far back in time but was quite recent. A plausible background is also found in that the bishop’s seat of Åbo/Turku was in the years 1309–21 occupied by a certain Ragnvald from Åland (not to be confused with the just mentioned provost with the same name) and that he had influenced Ingevald’s choice of bequest. It would by no means seem improbable that the bishop in question and Ingevald even were related, as it is quite reasonable to assume that all the local elite persons who figure in the oldest Ålandic documents from the fourteenth century were closer or more distant relatives of one another. That the estate Tjudnäs belonged to the church of Åbo/Turku already by the end of the thirteenth century is thus not likely. Only on the basis of this letter nothing can be said about the age of Tjudnäs beyond the beginning of the fourteenth century. Tjudnäs is mentioned again in 1414 and 1450 as run by tenants and owned by the Åbo/Turku cathedral. It seems to have been quite large, worth 200 *jordmarker*, whereas farms generally were around 100 or little less. Tjudnäs appears in the oldest tax registers from the late 1530s to have been a part of a *marklag* (a certain type of tax district) together with Kulla, Fastersby, Björnsnäs, (Väster-) Sibby, Gesterby, Berg and Lappbōle (Bertell 1953: 45; 1983: 21, 25, 27; Skogsjö 2007a: 804; the provost Ragnvald mentioned 1322 was probably parson in Sund, on which see Henriksson 1989: 35; Ringbom & Remmer 2000: 17). Hellberg (1987: 87) points out briefly that it perhaps was the father Ingevald who had improperly acquired the estate, but in the letter the petitioners themselves state that it was they who had done it. Reasonably, the case must be that Ingevald had bequeathed the estate to the church of Åbo/Turku, and when Ingevald died the church had claimed ownership to the estate, which was disputed by the heirs, who, however, had to give way, of which the letter in question is a result. Skogsjö (2003a: 641–642) has considered the settlement of Sund in great detail but has seen no connection between, on one hand, the Late Iron Age complex of house foundations and the associated burial ground and, on the other hand, the Tjudnäs property mentioned in 1322, whose exact location he considers as unknown.
ending with -näs; it is thus quite a common feature, especially in Nyland/ Uusimaa and Åboland/Turunmaa. Although the basic meaning is ‘isthmus’, it can be questioned whether all these names have been determined by natural conditions. It seems as though the element became something of a fashion. The many compounds with a personal name in the first part indicate that they are to be considered primary settlement names, which means that the names have been given in connection with the settling of the places. The element -näs is thus rather to be seen as a suffix appended to the personal name of a ‘founder’ indicating a settlement. Chronologically, this place name type belongs mainly to the medieval period and the sixteenth century.87

It may be observed that there are two other names of the same type in Sund, namely Björnäs (Biornses 1537, Bijörnsnes 1539) and Persnäs (Pedhersnæs 1418, Perssnes 1537). The first one was probably situated next to Tjudnäs. It has a younger, medieval s-genitive instead of -ar. The latter is a ‘joint-township’ with Persby. As its name contains a Christian personal name (Per < Peter/Peder < Lat. Petrus < Greek πέτρος), it can certainly not be pre-medieval.88 As Tjudnäs was confiscated by the Crown and disappeared in the mid-sixteenth century along with (Väster-)Sibby, Fastersby and Björsnäs, it is difficult to reconstruct the settlement in the area. Tjudnäs might have been a secondary settlement of either Fastersby or (Väster-)Sibby, presumably rather the latter as they were neighbours.89

Remarkably, there were two completely different townships named Sibby in Sund, one in the western part near Kastelholm and one in the east. To distinguish them, they have sometimes been called Väster- (Wester Sibby 1537) and Östersibby (Öoster sybby, Öster Sybby 1537), but mostly, as in all surviving medieval documents, they are called only Sibby, by which it is often difficult to determine which of them is meant, as is the case when the name Sibby is mentioned the first time in 1328 (Sibbaby, Sibbæby) and in 1330 (Sybbaby). The eastern Sibby still exists, known only as Sibby, while the western Sibby

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87 Gardberg 1944: 17; Thors 1959: 87–88; 1973: 15; Modéer 1964: 66; Hellberg 1987: 199, 203, 254; Ziliacu 1989: 108–110; Huldén 2001: 59, 73, 138; SOL, p. 170. The same thing can also be said of names of townships on -ö with a personal name as the first element, like Tjudö in Finström. The element ö ['island'] is in these cases not primarily a topographic designation but a fashionable suffix for a settlement. This would also point to a more direct connection between Tjudö and Tjudnäs, in other words that the men behind the names were from the same, shall we say fashionable family circles.


was withdrawn in the demesne of Kastelholm in the mid-sixteenth century but
was left as a cottage under the royal manor in the eighteenth century. At the
time of the suspension under Kastelholm, the western Sibby had three farms.
The township should have been located adjacent to Slottsundet just south of
Långängsbacken. The township’s old fields are today a golf course. On a map
from around 1650, these fields are called Sibbo åkern and on another map from
1700 Sijby åkern. A knoll just off this is marked as Sibbyholm ['Sibby-Island']
on today’s general map and should have still been surrounded by water in the
Middle Ages (Skogsjö 2003a: 641–642). That the names have been confused
many times by scholars is understandable. The existence of two different
townships with the same name in the parish of Sund also suggests that the parish
boundary with Saltvik at some stage had been changed so that both townships

On the west side of Slottsundet, about 500 metres south of Kastelholm,
is the Late Iron Age burial ground Långängsbacken and two foundations that
were comprehensively examined in the mid-1960s. The results were published
by Ella Kivikoski in 1980. According to Kivikoski, the people behind the burial
ground probably had a continuation in (Väster-)Sibby (Kivikoski 1980: 9). The
foundations were excavated in 1967 by Matts Dreijer. The findings indicate that
the foundations were contemporary with the burial grounds. The soil was very
stirred up and Dreijer assumed that several other foundations are still hidden in
the terrain (Kivikoski 1980: 56–57). Regarding Kivikoski’s preconception that
the inhabitants of the medieval township of Västersibby were descendants of the
population behind the burial ground, it must be pointed that nothing was found
at the excavation of the burial ground to support this (cf. Hellberg 1987: 56).
That the township does not date back to the Iron Age (let alone to the Bronze
Age) is attested by its name, Sibby, containing a man’s name and -by, in this case
Sibbe, a short form of Sighbjörn,"79 and to quote Stefan Brink: “The Scandinavian
-by names [from the Late Iron Age] never contain a personal name” (Brink
2008: 58). The name Sibby is, in other words, unequivocally medieval and
after a single settler. Besides Långängsbacken, there is also another Late Iron
Age burial ground on the former domains of Västersibby, Sibbyakersbacken
(Hellberg 1987: 90).

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Remmer 2005: 19.

91 Freudenthal 1868: 54; Hellberg 1987: 56; Huldén 2001: 73, 74 (Huldén has also confused the
two Sibbys).
It is noteworthy that a Sibbi or Sibbe is mentioned in the letter from 1322 on the Tjudnäs property dispute (mentioned above), and he is the only man with this name recorded from the whole of the former eastern half of the Swedish realm. According to Hellberg, it could be asked if this Sibbe in 1322 was the founder of (Väster-)Sibby ['Sibbes Farmstead'], which would be dateable to around 1300 (Hellberg 1987: 87). This Sibbe in the letter appears as an heir in the dispute. It would also seem preferable to consider (Väster-) Sibby to probably be one of the mother townships in the Kastelholm area, in which case such a late dating would hardly be conceivable. Nonetheless, the very unique appearance of the name Sibbe just here in Sund – where there have been two townships with the name Sibby – is quite striking. The Sibbe of 1322 is quite probably a descendant of the settler Sibbe who has given (Väster-) Sibby its name, which would also be connected to the fact that Tjudnäs is most probably secondary to (Väster-)Sibby. Sibbe is, on the other hand, a short form of Sigbjörn, which is a name quite well known in Åland (Thors 1959: 78–81; Huldén 2001: 73, 74).

Regarding Sund, Ringbom notes that the pattern of the largest Late Iron Age burial grounds being situated next to the church is not so obvious in this case. The burial ground closest to the church, Prästgården, contains only ca. 50 mounds and two house foundations. It is known, however, that it has been much larger and has later been partly damaged by roads and cultivation. Ringbom also notes the large concentration of Late Iron Age burial grounds and house foundations in the Kastelholm area. She relates these to the location here of the castle of Kastelholm known in writing since the 1380s and proposes a relation to probable former fortifications on the same spot ever since about AD 1000, when the older hill forts of Brännbolstad and Borgboda would have become obsolete due to the shore regression shutting them off from open water (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 16–19). The only motivation given for this claim

92 The name Sibbe appears in one place name in Finland: Sibbo ['Sibbes river'] (Sibbaa, Sibboa 1352, Sibba 1405, Sibbo 1425, Sibba 1542) in Nyland/Uusimaa, in Finnish Sipoo. The man behind the name was probably a leader among the medieval Swedish settlers at the mouth of that river (Granlund 1956: 33–36; Huldén 2001: 304). As the form Sibbe was so rare in medieval Finland, it could be asked whether there might have been a closer connection between Sibbo and the two Sibby in Åland. In this connection it may be noted that also Inga ['Inge's River'] (Inga 1335, Ingaa 1369) and Svartå ['Svart's River'] (Swarttzå 1516) in Nyland/Uusimaa are names of the same type (Granlund 1956: 33–36; Huldén 2001: 233, 322). Can it be only a coincidence that also these personal names are found in Åland, in Ingby (Ingaby 1537) in Jomala and Svartsmar (Swartsmarum 1376) in Finström? (On these names, see Granlund 1956: 54, 59.) To this should also be added the very rare name Tjudans in Ingå/Inkoo in comparison with Tjudnäs and Tjudö in Åland.
is that the date of the foundation of Kastelholm is left open in what was then the most recent latest publication on the castle.

Kastelholm is mentioned for the first time in 1388 among the castles and bailiwicks of the late Bo Jonsson (Grip) that were handed over to Queen Margaret. The name Kastelholm [‘Castle Island’] could be perceived as an older name for the island on which the castle was built, thus indicating an older fortification on the spot, but this is not certain, as it may also be a contemporary naming with a borrowed prefix (some German medieval castles have Kastel- as a prefix). Åland was part of the bailiwick of Åbo/Turku and became a separate stewardship under Kastelholm around the year 1400. The castle was erected on a selected clip back on an islet that, by a combination of uplift and strategic work, has been converted into a broad promontory. There are no definite indications of buildings on this island before the main castle. The oldest traces of human activity are from the later fourteenth century. The castle is situated deep in a bay and had a protected harbour to the east. It can hardly have been intended to monitor the sea routes; instead, the location suggests it was established for administration and the collection of taxes. Furthermore, and what is most important, the oldest parts of the castle are situated only 4.3 m above sea level, which means that they or anything else on that spot hardly can be much older than the latter part of the fourteenth century, when the sea level was around 3.3 ± 0.5 m higher than today (Ekman 1996: 119–121; Lovén 1996: 149–152).

Concerning the area where the church of Sund is situated, Ringbom refers to Roeck Hansen who is said to have “funnit en sannolik bebyggelsekontinuitet genom tiderna” [‘found a probable continuity of settlement’] from AD 500 to 1500 in Berg, Gesterby, Lappböle and Rosenberg (Ringbom & Remmer 2005: 16–17; see also Roeck Hansen 1991: 138–152, 155–157, 163–167). Ringbom’s mention of Rosenberg – formerly Håkanbøle – in this connection is clearly a mistake. Furthermore, Berg appears, in fact, along with Kulla, Lappbüle, Sundby and Prästgården (the parsonage) to be a secretion from Gesterby.

On the first map of Berg from ca. 1650, it said that Berg had joint forest with Gesterby, suggesting a common origin of the townships. A close relationship with Lappbüle is evinced by the fact that the farmer in Berg had several meadows in division of parcels (Sw. tegskifte) together with the two peasants

93 Håkanbøle, along with Brändbolstad, is most likely a partition from Björby. The later name Rosenberg is attested for the first time in 1759 and is evidently after the contemporary user of the farm, Captain Hans Karl Rosenmüller (1724–1789) (Skogsjö 2003a: 17–19; 2003b: 230–232). Håkanbøle is clearly counted as part of Saltvik in the register of rökar from 1537, which would seem to indicate an earlier connection with Saltvik (Bertell 1983: 25, 39). This is a further indication that the parish boundary between Saltvik and Sund was revised at some stage.
in Lappböle. A map of Berg from 1700 shows that the strange configuration of properties, owing to the division of the township into two separate areas on either side of Gesterby, already existed at the time. This would also show that Berg has originally been partitioned from Gesterby. In addition, the map shows that a large area which today belongs to Gesterby was at that time owned jointly by Kulla and Gesterby. (Skogsjö 2003a: 14–15, 45, 47; 2003a: 8, 14.) The map from 1700 which states that land south of Berg’s northern division (Sw. *skifte*) belonged jointly to Kulla and Gesterby has also been noted by Roeck Hansen (1991: 140–145; 1992: 146). She is however not willing to assign this information any relevance; instead, she thinks that the area would have belonged to Berg linking the parcels (Sw. *skiften*) of the townships. That seems to be a far-fetched explanation. It is far more likely that Berg has been separated from Gesterby and received its land in two areas because the infield area has been divided on the one hand and forest land on the other to achieve the greatest possible justice. The same is true of Sundby, which has a large part of the forest in a long, narrow parcel, bordering the parsonage. That Kulla and Gesterby jointly owned outfield land strongly indicates that the townships have a common origin, but by all accounts Kulla has been broken out earlier from Gesterby than Berg. A map from 1763 shows that Lappböle included Sundby and that Lappböle and Gesterby still had some meadows and pastures (Sw. *beteshagar*) in joint use. In the map from ca. 1650, the single homestead of Berg is also a co-owner of one of these meadows, which equally shows that these townships have a common origin (Skogsjö 2003a: 16n.6, 463). In the oldest tax-registers from the late 1530s, Gesterby, Berg and Lappböle formed a tax district called *marklag* together with Fastersby, Björsnäs, Tjudnäs and (Väster-) Sibby (Bertell 1983: 21, 25, 27).

Roeck Hansen too considers Gesterby as the original settlement but, according to her, Berg would be the older name (Roeck Hansen 1991: 138–146; 1992: 147–148). She does not say anything about the etymology of the names of the townships in this context, but in another section, she wants to treat the name Berg [*mountain*] (Bergh 1395, Berghe 1397) as referring to a simple topographical feature and very old: “As will be shown […] Berg has a long history and was probably the name of the primary territory which has later split up into three parts, Gesterby, Lappböle and Berg” (Roeck Hansen 1991: 58). This focus on the name Berg is clearly based on the realization that the name Gesterby cannot be pre-medieval, which Berg, as she stresses, linguistically could be. Roeck Hansen thus believes that both townships have an ancient origin, but she is, however, not able to show that the early farms in the area are
the direct predecessors of the medieval settlement, known in writing from the late fourteenth century. Nor does she reason why the older unit has been given an apparently medieval name – *Gesterby* (*Gestrikaby* 1397, *Gæstrikaby* 1448), referring to *Gästrikar*, medieval immigrants from Gästrikland (*Gestrikalandía* 1253, *Gestricaland* 1280) in Sweden— or why the unit that would have been allowed to keep the territory's original prehistoric name – *Berg* – has its property divided in two divisions (Sw. *skiften*) in a way that shows it was originally divided from Gesterby (Skogsjö 2003a: 17n.9). There can hardly be any doubt that Gesterby is the mother township.

As noted, the Sund church site along with the parsonage also appears as secondary to the mother township of Gesterby (Skogsjö 2003b: 205–206). The name of the mother township, *Gesterby*, is, as also stated, one of the *särnamnn* in Åland, in this case referring to *Gästrikar* ['people from Gästrikland']. The same name also occurs in Jomala, later split into Över- and Ytterby. In Finland, it can be found in Kimito/Kemiö, Kyrkslätt/Kirkkonummi, Bjärná/Perniö (Fi. *Keistrikki*), Pojo/Pohja and Sibbo/Sipoo. If one does not want to labour with theories of violent conquest from the Swedish mainland driving away older settlement, it would seem quite clear that the settlement in the area around the church of Sund is (like the rest of Sund) a result of a resettlement in a depopulated milieu without any connection to the Iron Age monuments there. The name of another mother township in Sund, *Finby* (*Fynnaby* 1431, *Ffijnnaby* 1537, *Ffinneby* 1544), is also a clear sign of early medieval settlement from outside, in this case from Finland.

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94 In another context, as mentioned above, Roek Hansen says that the name *Gesterby* along with *Dalkarby* and *Gottby*, perhaps also *Onningeby*, may be connected with Swedish colonization in the early medieval period (Roek Hansen 1991: 158, 167; 1992: 155).

95 To this should be added that the spelling *Berge* 1397 is a singular dative, by which the name can be interpreted as 'The Farmstead/Township by the) Mountain'.


97 Freudenthal 1868: 49; Hellberg 1987: 70; Huldén 2001: 70; Skogsjö 2003a: 22, 178; 2007b: 553. One notices by the way that the names of the two large islands *Prästö* ['Priest Island'] (*Prestöö* 1530, *Prestööö* 1544) (< OSw. *prüster* < Lat. *presbyter* < Greek *πρεσβύτερος* ['elder']) and *Mickelsö* (*Michilssö* 1537, *Michel's öö* 1544) ['Mickel's Island'] (< *Mickel, Mikael*, a Christian name < Hebr. *מיכאל* / מיכאל ['Who is like El/God?']) closest to Sund mainland are most certainly not pre-Christian (G. Hausen 1927: 169–170, 185). In the 1530s, the bishops of Åbo/Turku owned two tenant farms in Prästö (Bertell 1983: 27). The strait between mainland Sund and Prästö is known as *Prästösundet*, a name which is secondary to the name *Prästö*. 
Conclusions

In my opinion, solutions to the questions surrounding the settlement history of Åland from the Late Iron Age to the medieval period must be sought between the extremes of ‘re-organization’ and ‘depopulation’. It is indisputable that there has been a profound shift and discontinuity in the settlement pattern between these periods. The question remains how this is to be explained. The idea of ca. 150 years of total desertion is perhaps too simple, but any theory of straight continuity by scattered Iron Age settlements nucleating into hamlets contradicts the empirical evidence. The sometimes absurd interpretations and datings of individual place names not only discredit individual claims; they also undermine the general credibility of the scholar’s overall interpretation within this debate. Drawing together the threads of the preceding discussion, the quite tentative model that emerges is a decline into a severe destabilization of Ålandic society in the tenth century conditioned by four complementary factors. The first and foremost of these was by being dropped into economic backwater with the disruption of trade routes to the east which produced the need for alternative ways of making a living. The second was an increase in piracy and slave hunting in the Baltic Sea region, to which the scattered settlements of the island communities could easily be vulnerable. The third was the ‘making of Sweden’, in which power struggles on the Swedish mainland led to insufficient ‘protection’ for Åland (purchased by paying tributes) from, among other things, the rising threat of piracy. On top of these factors was also a speedy shore displacement that was reshaping the landscape. This changed, for example, the relationship of settlements to access to the sea that was otherwise essential to livelihoods and was a factor promoting the investment of building a new house and establishing a more practical settlement site, whether within Åland or abroad. Rather than any instant, catastrophic event, the this model suggests that Åland sank into an ongoing state of affairs that was critical enough to cause a thorough reshaping of the social and economic situation and ongoing cycle of internal and external depopulations and repopulations connected to both west, south and east, until the situation began to generally stabilize again beginning from about the latter half of the twelfth century, with people living in organized hamlets, starting to build churches and getting organized into parishes according to the newly established episcopal organization on the Finnish mainland. This demographic process is also to be seen in the light of Åland forming a ‘fluent bridge’ for the Swedish immigration along the Finnish coasts during the early medieval period (ca 1150–1350). With a stable Swedish monarchy and
church, and the entrance of German trade and towns into the northern Baltic in the time of Earl Birger Magnusson (d. 1266) and his royal sons, the economic situation in Åland was improved, which can be seen in the rich medieval stone churches that were erected from the latter half of the thirteenth century.

The number of farmsteads in Åland (including in the eastern archipelago where there was no settlement in the Late Iron Age), as deduced from the medieval taxation units (each corresponding roughly to a farmstead at the time when the unit was introduced), indicates a tremendous demographic expansion in the early medieval period, as the number of farmsteads in the late fourteenth century (ca. 961) is ca. 46% larger than in the late thirteenth century (ca. 658). Nothing is directly known about how Åland was affected by the Black Death (Sw. digerdöden) in 1349–50, and following waves of plague that diminished the population up to about 2/3 in many areas in Europe. The number of farmsteads in the late 1530s (ca. 1081) is however only 12.5% larger than that in the late fourteenth century, which points to a demographic stagnation. These numbers are, of course, not to be taken as absolute, but they give at least some indication of the situation and its changes over time. It may also be observed in this context that the medieval system of the Crown’s taxation in Åland, with units corresponding to farmsteads and the grouping of such into local tax-districts, is very similar to the systems on the Finnish mainland. Many technical terms used in Åland are also the same. This naturally also reflects Åland’s administrative ties to the mainland in the east ever since the thirteenth century (Sjöstrand 1993: 160–163).

A very important perspective is offered by the notion that development in Åland appears in the very long run to have alternated between dynamic periods with rich cultural contacts and times of regression and severe isolation (Tomtlund). Especially the drastic depopulation in 1714–21 in a time of a severe crisis is to be taken seriously into account when considering Åland in and around the eleventh century. Such considerations also lead on to general questions about the long-term stability of settlements in very maritime and small-scale milieux along important waterways like prehistoric Åland, together with a tendency to abandon settlements in times of deep crisis.

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98 To my knowledge no-one has gone through the oldest tax registers of Åland in seek traces of deserted farms. The Black Death, that together with following waves of plague is believed to have reduced the population of Europe as a whole something like 30–50%, reached Norway in 1349, and northern Germany and the area of today’s Sweden in 1350. After that, the lack of sources makes it difficult to follow its progress further east, but it is known that many died of the plague in Novgorod and Pskov in Russia in 1352. Epidemic plagues are thereafter known in Sweden from almost every decade until the 1650s, after which there was a pause until the last epidemic plague in 1710–13 (Harrison & Eriksson 2010: 26–29, 41).
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DS = Diplomatarium Suecanum / Svenskt Diplomatarium, Stockholm 1828–. http://riksarkivet.se/diplomatariet.
Sö 333. Runestone, Årja ödekyrka, Åkers sn, Södermanland, Sweden, eleventh century.

Literature


PART II
BETWEEN SOURCES AND THEIR LACK
BETWEEN SOURCES AND THEIR LACK: AN INTRODUCTION

Like all periodizations of history, the ‘Viking Age’ and its delineation from earlier and later periods is a construct that helps us to think about and talk about the past. Among such constructs, the Viking Age can be considered anthropocentric. Use of the term is marked as not simply a tool for discussion of a historical period, but a discussion that is directly or indirectly concerned with the people and cultures that lived and acted in that particular historical frame. A wide variety of natural and cultural features and circumstances contributed to people’s cultural and social identification in Viking Age Åland. Information about these features and circumstances is accessed through an equally diverse range of data from many disciplines. Information about some areas of culture, life and identities is continuously complemented by new data from the material record that is physically connected with the Viking Age in some way. Such data falls in a broad category of tangible evidence, which is especially linked to the archaeological record for this period. Such evidence can offer increasingly sensitive perspectives on topics such as the modes of livelihood in different areas of Åland or cultural contacts east and west. Nevertheless, this tangible evidence requires insights and perspectives from other disciplines in order to be soundly interpreted. This category of data can be contrasted with data that lacks this direct physical connection to the Viking Age, a category of intangible evidence or evidence that has been communicated by people and culture (e.g. language, folklore) from the Viking Age until its documentation at a later time. The challenge of investigating Viking Age Åland is the general lack of this whole broad category of supporting data. One consequence of this lack is that certain fields of culture seem to remain extremely difficult or impossible to access to any degree of specificity simply because the sources are limited or non-existent, or the methods to interpret the scarce sources have not yet been sufficiently
developed. These are challenges faced by all of the contributions to the present volume.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Viking Age culture in Åland is precisely that it simultaneously exhibits connections to cultures to both the east and west. This diversity and synthesis that seems to characterize Åland is a phenomenon that is easily marginalized in discussions that concentrate on single features and their connectedness to one external culture or another. Rudolf Gustavsson, Jan-Erik Tomtlund, Josefina Kennebjerk and Jan Storå make a cooperative effort to offer a multifaceted overview of the relationship between the Viking Age population in Åland and the contemporary populations in the areas of what are today Finland and Sweden. The issue is approached on the basis of what Viking Age grave finds reveal about the prevailing culture and livelihoods as well as what these reveal about cultural contacts and directions of influence. They proceed to discuss the cultural change that seems to have occurred in Åland during the Viking Age. It is rather intuitive from a modern perspective to view Åland as a uniform and unified cultural space. By not reducing Åland to a border zone and approaching it instead on its own terms, Gustavsson, Tomtlund, Kennebjerk & Storå bring forward the internal diversity of Ålandic culture and do a valuable job in breaking down many of these assumptions.

A very important category of information about livelihoods in the Viking Age comes from palaeobotanical data – the study of pollen and other evidence of plants from earlier historical periods. This field of information is particularly relevant to the controversy of settlement continuity or discontinuity in Åland during the transition from the Viking Age to the Middle Ages (Sjöstrand). Teija Alenius discusses the information on the development of agriculture in Åland that palaeobotanical research may provide. The Viking Age seems to be a period of extensive forest clearance and agriculture in Åland. Fishing and seal hunting still undoubtedly played a crucial role in livelihoods, as discussed by Gustafsson et al., yet there was a clear emphasis on an agrarian economy. Alenius shows evidence of continuity of agriculture – at least local to those areas covered by her study. This complements a recent case of what appears to be settlement continuity introduced by Gustafsson et al. These together can be fruitfully considered in relation to the discussion of Sjöstrand in the opening section.

A rather mysterious aspect of Åland is the lack of reference to it as a location or polity or to ‘Ålanders’ as a people in early histories that otherwise often contain accounts of journeys along the austrvegr or ‘Eastern Route’. The Eastern
Route passed from the trading center of Birka in Sweden crossing the Baltic Sea along the Åland Islands to the corresponding center at Staraya Ladoga in Karelia and then continued along the river routes to the east and south. Åland was thus doubtlessly familiar to individuals travelling this route, who must have discussed both the place and its inhabitants, which for other locations and populations has been carried as intangible evidence documented in historical sources or potentially reflected in place names and folklore. In the opening section, Ahola discusses the problematics of interpreting oral epic traditions in relation to remote historical realities and considers the perception of Åland from the perspective of Finnic groups to the east through their systems of traditional images. Sirpa Aalto takes up this type of discussion from the opposite side of the Baltic Sea, considering the terms Finnar and Lappir used especially to designate Finno-Ugric groups in medieval Scandinavian sources. Aalto discusses some of the source-critical problems of these terms as well as variations in their use. In Sweden, for example, these terms were used complementarily to distinguish what seem to be Finnic groups of Finland from Sámi or other mobile groups to the north, whereas Finnar was a general term referring normally to the Sámi in Norway. Although Ålanders are not distinctly mentioned in the sources, Aalto suggests that the inhabitants of Åland could have been considered Finnar from a perspective as remote as Norway or Iceland and looks at the possibility that Ålanders might even have been placed in that category as ‘other’ from the perspective of the Svear in Sweden.

The question of whether populations of Åland might have been called Finnar by people in Sweden is intuitively grasped by people today as a question of what language people in Åland spoke at that time – i.e. if they were Finnar and that was a term for Finnic speakers in Finland, then people in Åland would have spoken that same Finnic language. This, however, is a rather idealized modern correlation of language with ethnic identity which is connected to the particularly troublesome question of what language people would have spoken in Åland in the Viking Age. This is a problem related to the issue of settlement continuity and not least to the mysterious lack of place names with a continuity from the Viking Age that could offer indications of what language was spoken by the Viking Age inhabitants (cf. Heikkilä; Schalin with Frog). This has led to inferring the language of Åland directly from the archaeological record: presuming that Ålanders spoke either ‘Swedish’ or ‘Finnish’, it is assumed that they spoke the same language as the most closely related culture in the archaeological record. This problem is discussed by Joonas Ahola, Frog and Johan Schalin. Their multidisciplinary collaboration reviews the topic. Highlighting
its connection to political discourses and heritage construction (Lucenius) they also offer a more general overview of the relationship of language to identities in historical environments. This provides a frame against which evidence of culture can be taken up from other disciplines and discussed in relation to the language problem in a social-historical context. Rather than resolving the question – which may be unanswerable – Ahola, Frog and Schalin introduce the non-specialist reader to this topic that otherwise tends to be marginalized or dismissed rather than directly addressed and problematized.

The four chapters in Between Sources and Their Lack open by introducing the reader to the potential for archaeological evidence to lead into information about identities in Viking Age Åland and the distribution and variation in culture of that time. This expands into indicators of livelihoods behind the tangible evidence of synchronic outcomes of the activity of individuals. Attention then turns to consider perceptions of ethnic groups and how these are designated and distinguished in intangible evidence that was only documented centuries later. This leads to a key problem in approaching identities in Viking Age Åland: such intangible evidence of indigenous culture simply does not exist, nor are there clear references to the culture(s) of Åland in other materials. The closing chapter of this section entails a broad synthesis of data and perspectives in order to develop a perspective on Ålandic culture and identities, simultaneously referring back to the introduction of the problem and importance of an interdisciplinary approach brought forward by Sjöstrand while also anticipating the discussions of the closing section of the volume.
IDENTITIES IN TRANSITION IN VIKING AGE ÅLAND?

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JAN-ERIK TOMTLUND
Government of Åland

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JAN STORA
Stockholm University

The Late Iron Age in the Åland Islands was a period associated with many cultural changes, such as transitions in burial customs, settlement structures, subsistence patterns and material culture expression. Corresponding changes occur on the two surrounding mainlands although they take other forms and they were different in Sweden and Finland. The Late Iron Age is characterized by intense contacts between Finland and Sweden but the western (or Germanic) influences are more visible in the archaeological record of mainland Finland than eastern traits are in Sweden. A recent study of eastern ornaments and other finds at the Viking town of Birka reports that such artifacts have only been found in 4% of the excavated burials (Gustin 2012). However, there is obviously some imbalance in the visibility of evidence since possible trade goods from the east side of the Baltic probably to a large extent may be invisible in the archaeological record.

There is no question that eastern Central Sweden was important for the Late Iron Age development on Åland (e.g. Ambrosiani 1983; Dreijer 1983a; Hyenstrand 1985; Kivikoski 1963; 1980; Roeck Hansen 1991; Tomtlund 1999). To a large extent, the archaeological finds and monuments (burial mounds) are similar to those found to the west of the Islands and migrations and colonization of the Islands from Sweden have been suggested (Kivikoski 1963; 1980; Dreijer 1983a; T. Edgren 1992; Rundqvist 2010; Tarsala 1998; Tomtlund 1999). In fact, it has even been claimed that Åland was the “eastern outpost of Scandinavian
culture” (Callmer 1994) and part of the Viking town Birka’s hinterland (Jansson 1985: 152). It is difficult to argue against some level of migration to the Ålandic archipelago at the turn to the Late Iron Age. The number of cemeteries increases markedly after AD 500 compared to earlier periods and it seems improbable that the population increase would be a result of a regional demographic process. Still, the colonization did not reach an empty area. There was also a settlement continuity (Callmer 1994; H. Edgren 1983a; 1983b).

There are important finds that show a resemblance to those found east of the Islands, such as jewelry, dress ornaments and/or weapons. The ‘eastern’ finds in the burials appear to be more visible in the Merovingian/Vendel Period than in the Viking Age (e.g. Dreijer 1983a; T. Edgren 1992; Kivikoski 1963; 1980). The most often mentioned local trait is the clay paws found in many Late Iron Age burials. They, however, also have a link to the east where similar finds have been found in the Volga region (e.g. Callmer 1994; Dreijer 1983b; Kivikoski 1934; Tarsala 1998). The paws on Åland are older than those found in the east and, thus, their origin has been placed on Åland. There are other ornaments that apparently were locally produced on Åland but with models in both east and west (Kivikoski 1980: 27). Finds on the dwelling sites indicate the production of e.g. bronze and/or metal working in Saltvik (Karlsson 1984a), Hammarland (R. Gustavsson 2007b) and Jomala (Kennebjörk 2014). In addition, some of the settlements seem to have had a special character of having very rich find material, such as at Kohagen in Saltvik parish (e.g. Dreijer 1983a; Ringbom & Remmer 2000: 13–16). Obviously, there was some level of social stratification and organization among the settlements on Åland (Tomtlund 1999). In this context, the variation in the archaeological record may be associated with questions relating to regional patterns and, thus, a question of identity in the islands. This variation was probably meaningful in Viking Age Åland.

There seem to have been differences in the social organization on both sides of the Baltic Sea that are reflected in settlement patterns, burial customs and types of cemeteries. In eastern Central Sweden – and on Åland – the common burial was a mound built over the remains of a cremation. Other burial forms occur in Sweden, such as inhumations on Gotland and cairns and some mounds in the North. In Late Iron Age south-western Finland, several different cemetery types existed such as cremation cemeteries under level ground, earth-mixed cairns, sometimes forming large cemeteries, and inhumation graves (Köyliö, Eura) (Lehtosalo–Hilander 1982; Wessman 2010: 31–33). This is probably an indication of regional social structures (or groups), which were not, however, socially isolated. The archaeological finds indicate close contacts between the
different areas. Because of its geographical location, Åland was probably an important area between the two mainlands (cf. Heininen et al.; Sjöstrand) but it is difficult to fully evaluate the regional cultural characteristics of Åland and how they might have been affected and shaped by cross-cultural contacts. The difficulties in linking material culture expressions to questions of identity and/or ethnicity need to be considered, but we may expect that Åland became an area with intense cross-cultural contacts and some level of hybridization and development of regional (material) culture patterns (cf. Ahola et al.). The regional Ålandic characteristics are not fully understood and it may be said that they have not been evaluated independently (enough). The archaeological records for either mainland have been considered as the base criteria for ‘norms’ when approaching Åland. This has led to views that adopt center–periphery reasoning (for a review on this topic, see Tarsala 1998). Åland has accordingly been considered being ‘on the margin’, ‘in the east’ or ‘in the west’ (Tarsala 1998) with, however, some important exceptions (e.g. Dreijer 1983).

The aim of the present chapter is to highlight life (and death) in Viking Age Åland with special focus on issues relating to identity and patterns of cultural interaction between Åland and ‘the two’ adjacent mainlands. It is difficult to discuss ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ aspects on Åland in relation to what would be characterized as a ‘regional’ pattern. Topics that have been discussed earlier by Tarsala (1998) and Callmer (1994) provide the starting point of our study. These namely concern the regional distribution of cultural patterns of Åland where the north-eastern and the south-western part of the islands appear to exhibit differences in the burial patterns. Our ambition is to integrate results of archaeological and osteological analyses in order to highlight depositional patterns in the burials that will in turn shed light on the burial rituals. The cremation and burial rituals may give important clues to questions of identity and social organization on the island. Our main assumption is that depositional patterns are created by conscious and repeated human activities and actions. Thus, the patterns are considered meaningful and, in that context, we investigate the ritualistic practices that were linked to the burial of the dead on Åland – and ultimately to mythology and (Norse) religion. However, we only briefly touch upon this last topic, which is addressed more fully in the chapter by Frog in the present volume. We highlight aspects of the cremation ritual and the subsequent deposition of the burnt bones and other funerary remains in a burial mound. We present the bone finds in the burials at two cemeteries in order to seek chronological and regional variation in the depositional practices. We also discuss settlement sites and subsistence strategies on Åland in order
to highlight the economic premises of the islanders. By integrating osteology and archaeology, we hope to be able to produce new perspectives on Viking Age Åland. The present chapter deals centrally with questions on identities and social contacts as well as geopolitics in the Viking Age. However, it is important to also include the preceding (Late) Iron Age periods in the discourse. Many cultural changes and innovations on Åland appear in the Merovingian/Vendel Period or even as early as at the end of the Migration Period around AD 500/550. The Viking Age is probably a period which may be seen as a continuation of earlier habits and cultural manifestations and thus a ‘historical’ perspective may shed some light on Viking Age Åland.

**Settlements and Subsistence**

At the turn of the Late Iron Age (during the sixth century), there was a marked decline in the number of farms with a corresponding relocation of the settlements in eastern Central Sweden. The period is also marked by similar changes in Finland. It is of interest that a possible human movement to Åland roughly corresponds chronologically with these marked changes. The importance of agriculture on Åland seems to increase around the same time (e.g. Andrén et al. 1996; Glückert 1979; Núñez 1993).

The settlement sites on Åland have been interpreted as farmsteads (Hackman 1941; Kivikoski 1946; Dreijer 1983; Karlsson 1984a; 1987), and finds of charred cereal grains recovered in several house foundations as well as ardshares and ancient (plowed) fields confirm the importance of agriculture in the islands (e.g. Karlsson 1984a; Kivikoski 1980; Núñez 1993; Tomtlund 1999; see also Alenius). Recent excavations (in 2012) in Hammarland have shown that, in the late eleventh century, the clearing of an extensive area for agricultural activities was initiated in close vicinity to a Late Iron Age cemetery and that these agricultural activities continued into the medieval period. The areas suitable for farming were probably limited due to the topography in the archipelago and the subsistence economy could not rely on agrarian production in a similar way as on the mainland. Analyses of osteological finds from settlement sites on Åland show that animal husbandry was important and that sheep were more common than cattle (see Table 1 and Figure 1). This is probably linked to the availability and quality of pasture and suitable soils for fields. Sheep are more common than cattle in the coastal areas than further inland in several regions; eastern Central

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1 E.g. Callmer 1994; Roeck Hansen 1991; see also Gräslund & Price 2012 and Göthberg 2007, just to mention two recent sources on the topic.
Table 1. Composition of analyzed faunal assemblages from Ålandic Late Iron Age settlement sites (sources: Formisto 1980; Fisher 1996; Gustavsson 2003, 2007; Kennebjörk 2014; Larsson 1999).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Finby</th>
<th>Kohagen</th>
<th>Högtomt</th>
<th>Hammarland</th>
<th>Brömsängsbacken</th>
<th>Mariehamn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep/goat</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>1545</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervid</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Otter</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|       |       |         |         |            | 2113            | 189        |

786 2495 1077 2249

Figure 1. Composition of the faunal assemblages recovered from Late Iron Age settlement sites on Åland, data in Table 1.
Sweden, Finland and also Estonia (Maldre 2012; Sigvallius 2007; Storå et al. 2012 and works there cited; Wigh 2001).

The subsistence economy on Åland exhibits a regional character and the archipelago offered a broad spectrum of resources that complemented agriculture and animal husbandry (R. Gustavsson 2004; Kennebjörk 2014; Storå et al. 2012). This was also the case in the coastal areas of Southwest Finland (Tuovinen 2011). It may be claimed that the Islands were characterized by multiple subsistence strategies (for discussion, see Tuovinen 2011) – probably with regional differences within Åland but with a high level of resilience. Fishing was probably important but it is difficult to evaluate its contribution to subsistence due to poor preservation on many of the sites and also to the (insufficient) recovery techniques used in earlier archaeological excavations. The Ålandic Iron Age sites exhibit a comparatively high frequency of seal bones (and wild birds), indicating the regional importance of sealing (R. Gustavsson 2004; Storå & Lõugas 2005; Storå et al. 2012) (Figure 1). Sealing was also important on the Estonian Islands (Storå & Lõugas 2005) and on Gotland and Öland as well as in the coastal areas of the Bothnian Bay (Broadbent & Storå 2010). Sealing was so important on Åland that in later periods the Church collected tithe on seal (Wessén & Holmbäck 1940: 266; Sundwall 1954: 21–22 [Svb nr. 82; MUI nr. 426]).

Obviously, the products of seals were important on Åland in the Late Iron Age but probably not equally important on all sites. There is some variation in the frequency of seal bones in different sites where Hammarland, Högtomt (Saltvik parish) and Mariehamn exhibit a slightly higher frequency than Kohagen in Saltvik and Brömsängsbacken in Jomala parish. Noteworthy is the highest frequency of seals bones in Finby (the oldest site), indicating a possible chronological trend. The importance of seal hunting apparently decreased somewhat with the introduction of the farmsteads in the Late Iron Age.

**The Cemeteries at Långängsbacken and Kvarnbacken**

There are about 400 cemeteries that are found in the central parts of the islands (e.g. Núñez 1993; Tomtlund 1999) while they are rare in archipelago settings (Karlsson 1990). Osteological analyses of five cemeteries are now available and they show that animals are commonly found in the cremation remains together with the human bones (Table 2). The most common animals in the Ålandic burials are dogs and sheep. There are differences in the frequency of animals
### Table 2. Rank order of animal species at the settlement sites and the cemeteries (data from Auner 2012; Gustavsson 2003, 2007; Kennebjörk 2014; Landin 1982; Larsson 1999; Storå et al. 2012; Vormisto 1981; 1984; Wallin 1986).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Dwelling sites</th>
<th>Cemeteries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finby</td>
<td>Køhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep/goat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Bear</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay paws (occurrence in burial)</td>
<td>2/140</td>
<td>7/113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* all burials not included (data in Auner 2012)
and the representation of different animal species between north-eastern and south-western Åland.

At Godby and Grelsby in Finström, there is a more limited range of animals and also a different representation of animal species than at the other cemeteries. Here sheep and cattle (Godby) are common. This also corresponds to differences in the occurrence of archaeological artifacts recovered in the burials. The differences in the frequency of clay paws at different cemeteries have earlier been discussed by Callmer (1994) and Tarsala (1998). In 1994, Callmer reported that clay paws had been recovered from ca. 11% of the excavated burials on Åland (N=650, in 1980). Today the number of recovered paws is 104, which are distributed unevenly across the parishes; Finström 30, Jomala 29, Saltvik 24, Geta 2, Lemland 2, Hammarland 3, Mariehamn 2, Sund 11 and Eckerö 1 (RG, archive at Section of Antiquities). There are also some chronological differences and a possible association with different sexes in the two areas Saltvik-Sund and Finström-Jomala. Tarsala (1998) has also noted that the Ålandic clay paws are not commonly found together with weapons (see also Callmer 1994). This phenomenon also appears to correlate with areal distribution: weapons are found mainly in Saltvik and Sund (i.e. in the north-eastern area of Åland) while the clay paws are more evenly distributed in different areas, but with some concentration to the south-eastern (or southern) parts of Åland. Tarsala (1998) interprets this as a possible reflection of different attitudes or conceptions towards death.

In the following, we present an analysis of patterning among the deposited grave goods at two cemeteries, Långängsbacken in the parish of Sund (Kivikoski 1980; Landin 1982) and Kvarnbacken in Saltvik (Kivikoski 1963; Wallin 1986). These cemeteries, despite the fact that both are located in the north-eastern part of Åland, offer the best possibilities for comparisons. The cemeteries span over a long time period and the number of burials is over 100 in both cemeteries. There is also a rather marked variation in the occurrence of grave goods between different burials in the same cemetery (see e.g. Kivikoski 1963; 1980).

The cemetery at Kvarnbacken in Bertby in Saltvik parish was first excavated in 1950 by Matts Dreijer, who excavated six burial mounds. Between 1957–60, Ella Kivikoski (1963: 13) conducted large-scale archaeological excavations of all remaining 134 mounds at the cemetery. Långängsbacken in Sund was excavated in 1962–67 by Ella Kivikoski (1980: 9). A total of 113 mounds were excavated in addition to a few other features. Osteological analyses have identified burnt bones in 108 mounds at Kvarnbacken (Wallin 1986) and 90 at Långängsbacken (Landin 1982). A small number of mounds with burnt bones have not been
analyzed (for various reasons). At Långängsbacken, 44 burials were typologically dated and 57 at Kvarnbacken (Tables 3–4). Långängsbacken seems to contain more burials from the Viking Age than Kvarnbacken, a factor which needs to be considered in the comparisons below. Kivikoski (1963; 1980) found that the oldest burials at both Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken clustered in a certain area of the cemetery while the later ones were found in other areas (Figure 2). At Kvarnbacken, the oldest Merovingian/Vendel Period burials were found in the northern part of the cemetery while the Viking Age burials are found more to the south. At Långängsbacken, the oldest burials were found in the eastern area of the cemetery. Both cemeteries seem to have grown in a direction towards the shore and water. The pattern is not fully coherent and there is no marked border between the early and late burials. Some of the burials dated to the older period e.g. at Kvarnbacken are found in what looks like an isolated location at some distance from the cluster of burials in the northern area of the cemetery. However, this could also indicate that the typological dating may be slightly too early and that the artefacts on which the dating is based were in use for a long time before their deposition in the grave. In some burials, old artefacts have been found together with Viking Age artefacts. At Kvarnbacken, the north-eastern (oldest) area (and to some extent also the north-western area) contain Viking Age burials. Also at Långängsbacken, late burials are found near the oldest burials in the eastern area of the cemetery. This reflects a general chronological pattern in the growth and expansion of the cemetery but it seems that it cannot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Långängsbacken</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Middle (Vendel p.)</th>
<th>East (Viking a.)</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merovingian period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viking period</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.* Chronological distribution of the burials at Långängsbacken. Dating according to typology of artifacts (data in Kivikoski 1980).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kvarnbacken</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>North (Viking a.)</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merovingian period</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viking Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.* Chronological distribution of the burials at Kvarnbacken. Dating according to typology of artifacts (data in Kivikoski 1963).
fully explain all differences. Some of the late burials have obviously been built next to older mounds in a manner that indicates a spatial re-connection to the older burials.

At Kvarnbacken, there are several differences in grave goods between the northern and the southern areas of the cemetery which reflect a general chronological trend (Tables 5–6 and Figure 3). The mounds become larger over time (data not shown) and there is a general increase in the frequency of grave goods and also in the number of animal species in the burials. The southern area exhibits a higher occurrence (at least +5%) of dog, brown bear, pig, cat, bird and beads of material other than glass (Table 4). The occurrence of sheep and glass beads decrease in a corresponding manner in the late phase of the cemetery. The Viking Age mounds located close to the oldest Merovingian/Vendel Period mounds seem to exhibit a pattern similar to the other late burials but not completely. The burials exhibit a low frequency of cat (in one burial only) and no clay paws nor beads of material other than glass.
At Långängsbacken, the youngest mounds cluster at the west end of the cemetery, opposite to the oldest burials which are found to the east (Tables 6–7 and Figures 2 & 4). The middle area exhibits mounds from the Viking Age with the exception of one burial that contained one Merovingian/Vendel period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grave goods</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>North (Viking a.)</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burials with burnt bones</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep/(goat)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown bear</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scythe, sickle, scissors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay paw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beads (glass only)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beads (metal)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thor’s hammer ring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5.* Distribution of different find categories at Kvarnbacken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of species</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>North (Viking a.)</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6.* Number of species in the burials at Kvarnbacken.
artifact (Kvikoski 1980). The late burials, i.e. those found in the west and in the middle group and with dated artifacts in the eastern group, exhibit a higher frequency (at least +5%) of dog, brown bear, seal, combs of type B, tools and beads of material other than glass. The mounds also become larger in the late phase. It is of some interest that the Viking Age mounds in the eastern part of the cemetery contain a higher frequency of combs of type A (i.e. the older type).
Figure 4. Distribution of animals and archaeological finds in the burials at Långängsbacken.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grave goods</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Middle (Vendel p.)</th>
<th>East (Viking a.)</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burials with burnt bones</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep/(goat)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown bear</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scythe, sickle, scissors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combs, type A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combs, type B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay paw</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beads (glass only)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beads (metal)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thor’s hammer ring</td>
<td>1?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Distribution of different find categories at Långängsbacken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of species</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Middle (Vendel p.)</th>
<th>East (Viking a.)</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Number of species in the burials at Långängsbacken.
Chronology seems to be relevant to some degree for this variation, but it is not fully clear. The middle area of the cemetery also exhibits a higher frequency of combs of type A but here beads of material other than glass occur in seven mounds. Of seven clay paws (including two of uncertain identification) from Långängsbacken, three were found in the eastern and three in the central area and one in the western area. Balance weights were recovered in three burials: two in the western area and one in the central area.

*Rivets and Boats?*

Unfortunately, no preserved remains of boats have been found on Åland. In the setting of the archipelago, however, boats must have been important. An indirect indication of their importance is found in the burials where iron rivets are a common find. Boat burials (in Finland) have been seen as a Scandinavian tradition with roots in the graves at Vendel and Valsgärde (Wessman 2010: 66). In some burials, the number of rivets is so high that they have been interpreted as possible boat-burials while others contain only a few. The ship itself was an object built for seafaring and probably for the transport of cargo as well as people. A ship may have been built in one place and maintenance work may have been carried out somewhere else. In the end, the ship, or parts of it, apparently followed – or helped to move – someone to the afterlife via the funeral pyre.

Rather than discuss whether we may actually identify boat-burials (see the critique in Wessman 2010: 66), we focus attention here on another aspect of the rivets that highlight an interesting aspect of Late Iron Age Åland. Jan Bill (1994) has shown that, in the early phase of the Late Iron Age, there are differences in the shape of the rivets in the eastern Baltic area and western Scandinavia. The difference occurs in the cross-section of the stem. The Scandinavian type which was favoured in Sweden, Denmark and Norway has a round stem, while those of the eastern areas exhibit a square stem. Later, at the transition to the medieval period, the Scandinavian shipbuilders changed to using rivets with a square section. This change in rivets is associated with changes in ship building techniques. We found the question of rivet morphology to be of interest in the present context and therefore rivets from 34 individual burial mounds were investigated and categorized (by RG). The burials investigated date from the seventh to the eleventh centuries. There is a risk that the rivets may originate from wooden containers but this probably has not affected the comparison at large. The length of the rivets was measured and found to be variable in most burials with many rivets – which probably would be the case in a ship/boat.
Rivets with both the head and the ‘washer’ were included in the study. The shape of the stem was assessed as round or square (quadratic). The mounds chosen were from Kvarnbacken (Saltvik 2.4), Långängsbacken, (Sund 12.7), Godby (Finström 8.11) and Grelsby/Prestgården (Finström 12.1). All burials have been subject to osteological analysis. From the cemeteries Fi 8.11 and Fi 12.1, all mounds with rivets were investigated (Table 9). Admittedly, the comparison is not without flaws, but it shows that rivets of both types occur in all studied cemeteries – i.e. western and eastern traditions are also visible in this category of ‘find’. However, it is of some interest that when only one type of rivet is found, the square type (i.e. the eastern type) is more common.

### Table 9. Stem morphology of iron rivets in a sample of burials from four Ålandic cemeteries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Round only</th>
<th>Square only</th>
<th>Both types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saltvik 2.4 Kvarnbacken (10 burials)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sund 12.7 Långängsbacken (9 burials)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finström 8.11 (5 burials)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finström 12.1 (10 burials)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The animals and most of the burial goods in the Ålandic burials seem to have been on the funeral pyre. However, burials seldom contain enough burnt bones to represent a complete individual. The burnt bones seem to have been moved to the place of burial from the location of cremation. Ceramic vessels are commonly found in the burials and quite often with bones inside them. Kivikoski (1963: 64; 1980: 11) mentions a few cases at Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken where the cremation probably took place at the same place as the burial. This seems, however, to be an exception which is the case also in eastern Central Sweden (G. Andersson 2004; Sigvallius 1994). The urn and the cremation remains seem then to have been deposited directly on the surface of the ground (Kivikoski 1963; 1980); occasionally, a pit was dug into the ground where the funeral remains were deposited. Unburnt animal bones have been recovered in association with the burials. Most often, these are unburnt tooth fragments of domestic animals – cattle, sheep and horse. The horse is here of
special interest. At Långängsbacken, horse was identified in six burials and at Kvarnbacken in nine. At Kvarnbacken, three burials exhibit an amount of bones which indicates the presence of a complete horse while this seems to be the case in five of the six burials at Långängsbacken. One of the burials at Kvarnbacken contained horse equipment. (Kivikoski 1963.) In four burials at Kvarnbacken, a few unburnt fragments of horse were identified. Thus, there seems to have been a different handling of the horse at the two cemeteries. At Kvarnbacken, it appears to have been more common to only deposit selected parts of the horses – and quite often they were unburnt. At Långängbacken, the horse was most often included on the funeral pyre. The handling of the horse in the burial ritual may have changed over time. The burials at Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken where the horse apparently was cremated are all dated to the Viking Age.

An important step in the burial rite was the cremation. A preliminary examination of the burials (RG and JS) from both Långängsbacken and Kvarnbacken indicate that the level of firing of the bones varies. Detailed data on this is still lacking, but despite this, we here wish to highlight one cremation as it may be interpreted through the level of firing of the bones. During firing, bone undergoes changes due to the heat resulting in the metamorphosis of the bone structure. The level of firing may be compared using a colour scheme going from a light (yellowish) tone towards black and finally towards a white colour (Stiner et al. 1995). In 2006, a burial mound (A41) at a cemetery in Finström Svartsmara was excavated (R. Gustavsson 2007a). The mound was ca. 9 metres in diameter and contained more than 12 liters of burnt bones – more than in any burial at Långängsbacken or Kvarnbacken. The burial contained rich
artifacts, and at least one human and one horse – which had been on the funeral pyre. From the comparison of the human and horse bones, it is obvious that the horse bones exhibit a lower level of firing than the human bones (Figure 6). In addition, the human bones exhibit a variation from partly fired to well fired (or fully incinerated) bones. A low level of firing probably should have been obvious when handling and re-depositing the bones in e.g. a clay vessel. It is evident here that the different body parts of both the human and the horse were differently affected by the fire. Some part of the back bone and the hand/foot bones of the horse were even unburnt. It may be claimed that the cremation was not fully successful and we may ask whether it was performed by a specialist

Figure 6. Level of firing of the human and horse bones in a burial in Svartsmara, Finström. Quantification according to weight of the bone fragment.
or whether cremation was a matter for the relatives. In this case, we may doubt that a specialist was involved.

Towards Identities?

The transition to Late Iron Age on Åland is characterized by a number of changes in the archaeological record. The introduction of the mound cemeteries on Åland has to be considered an obvious change in the cultural landscape of the islands. The new burial type reflects a strong cultural influence from eastern Central Sweden and, as mentioned above, the introduction has been associated with human movement and settlement in the islands. The chronologically oldest mound burials on Åland seem to be of almost the same age as the oldest ones in eastern Central Sweden (Bennet 1987). The location of the cemeteries seems associated with areas suitable for farming and animal husbandry, i.e. the farmstead (Tomtlund 1999). However, it needs to be considered that agriculture in the archipelago had limited prospects compared to the mainland – and ‘old’ traditions prevailed in the archipelago, where sealing and fishing were important. It is noteworthy that the harp seal (*Phoca groenlandica*) was an important prey at the Ålandic sites (Storå & Lóugas 2005). It has been speculated that seal oil may have been an important trade item for the islands (e.g. Dreijer 1983a; T. Edgren 1992). A recent excavation in Mariehamn of a settlement site in Hindersbøle highlights a new aspect of the processing of the blubber from the seals (R. Gustavsson 2013). Here, separate areas of the site were used for different activities. Of special interest is the north-western area of the site, where a small mound of fire cracked stone and sooty layers had been deposited. The layers contained large amounts of animal bones and, next to the mound, two hearths with a ditch between them were found. The constructions may be interpreted as seal oil preparation features where the liquid seal oil (from the heated blubber) was collected. Similar structures have earlier been excavated on Kökar, and chemical analysis of fats from them proved to be of marine origin. Some remains of seal skins were also found (K. Gustavsson 1987). These features date to the Early Iron Age. Apparently, the activities that were performed far out in the archipelago during the Early Iron Age were performed close to the dwelling sites in the Late Iron Age. This is a potential relevant indicator of the increased importance of the farmstead as a central settlement unit. The settlement sites dating to the Early Iron Age in e.g. Sund and Lumparland (J. Andersson 1990; H. Edgren 1983b) seem to be different from the farmsteads of the Late Iron Age, being smaller and lacking larger house structures.
The monumental mounds, or so-called *Storgravar* ['great graves'], in eastern Central Sweden indicate a regional organization there where the large mounds may be seen as important markers in the landscape (Bratt 2008). The osteological material in such graves is often extensive and very rich, including many individual animals (of the same species) (Bratt 2008: 72ff.; Sten & Vretemark 1999). Such large burials – and also such rich osteological finds – are lacking on Åland. When compared to eastern Central Sweden, the number of animals (and species) in the burials correspond to cemeteries that have been characterized as ‘normal’ (Storå et al. 2012 and works there cited). However, in another respect, Åland has been identified as a rich area; for example, the number of oval brooches is high compared to many other areas in eastern Central Sweden (Jansson 1985: 152ff.). It is evident from the comparison that the areas of Saltvik and Sund (and even Lemland) stand out as richer than Jomala, Hammarland, Finström, Geta and Eckerö. As mentioned above, a similar pattern is seen in the distribution of weapons and clay paws (Callmer 1994; Tarsala 1998), and also in species representation at the settlement sites and animal husbandry practices (Kennebjörk 2014).

Of some interest here is the question of the ownership of land – and material manifestations of it (Zachrisson 1994, and works there cited). The agrarian areas in eastern Central Sweden were probably organized according to some level of *odal* system (Old Norse *ódal*; i.e. an inherited landed property) (Zachrisson 1994), but this is uncertain for Åland (see also Ambrosiani 1983; Hyenstrand 1985; Roeck Hansen 1991). There is an obvious link between the Late Iron Age settlement and development of agriculture but, in the setting of the archipelago, the question of ownership of waters might have been important and this may also have required agreements or even regulations. The hunting of seals was most probably a collective maritime effort that required collaboration between farmsteads. Most probably, hunting occurred rather far out on the seas – and in open waters, since the harp seal is unable to keep open breathing holes in fast ice. Such hunting patterns would require hunting teams or boat teams that in turn may have been an important feature of the social organization of the islands. These collective structures may even have had significance for the organization of trade and other kinds of expeditions *from* Åland. The rivet morphology in the burials indicate that Ålanders used boats of different types and possibly different building techniques.

The Late Iron Age cemeteries are located in different areas as are the cairns of the Early Iron Age, but the association between the cemeteries and the burial cairns of the Early Iron Age is not fully understood. Tarsala (1998)
has noted that the cemeteries with weapon burials in the north-eastern part of Åland exhibit a weak spatial association with the archaeological traces of the Early Iron Age – possibly an indication of a weak link to older times. The cemeteries in northeast Åland, i.e. in Saltvik and Sund (near Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken), actually have a spatial closeness to (large) Bronze Age cairns (Figure 7). However, the cairns do not seem to have been the focus of extensive re-use in the Late Iron Age. Secondary deposits in Bronze Age cairns on Åland mainly date to the Early Iron Age (H. Edgren 1983a). The cemeteries in South and Southwest Åland have a closer spatial association to the cairns of Early Iron Age but also here there is a difference. In Lemland, for example, the Early Iron Age cairn cemeteries are located in the southern parts of the parish while the Late Iron Age cemeteries are located in the northern parts – probably closer to suitable soils for agriculture – but also in a location farther from the sea. The criteria for the chosen location of the Late Iron Age cemeteries seem to be different from those in the Early Iron Age. The spatial association between

Figure 7. Map of Åland showing the location of Bronze Age and Early Iron Age cairns and cemeteries.
cemeteries and Early Iron Age cairns are strongest in Jomala, Finström and Hammarland.

At both Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken, there are several chronological trends in the archaeological outcomes of the burial ritual suggesting that there was some level of change and variation in the performance of the burial ritual as practice. The pattern is slightly more evident at Kvarnbacken, which may be a result of the chronological difference between the cemeteries. Kvarnbacken exhibits a higher number of burials from the Migration/Merovingian Period and thus this period is more visible here. It is, however, interesting to see that the eastern influence is rather different at the two cemeteries. At Kvarnbacken, the eastern artifacts were recovered in the older part of the cemetery while they were found in the late burials at Långängsbacken. This observation to some extent stands in opposition to Kivikoski (1980), who claimed that the Scandinavian influence increased in the Viking Age compared to the Merovingian period. This seems to be the case at Kvarnbacken but not at Långängsbacken. It may be noted that the occurrence of eastern (Finnish) pottery also increases in north-eastern Åland in the Viking Age (Callmer 1994). This could potentially be a reflection of more lively contacts between the two mainlands, each with a flexible contact network that may have changed over time within Åland.

In Finland, the burial customs were different and varied but, in this context, the earth-mixed cairns with cremations of the Kokemäenjoki River area are worth mentioning (see T. Edgren 1992; Wessman 2010). These burials were used throughout the Late Iron Age. The link to these burials is admittedly weak, but in contrast to the cremation cemeteries under level ground on the Finnish mainland, the cremation remains were here deposited under a visible burial structure/construction. These burials exhibit the strongest similarities to Åland. According to Kivikoski (1963; 1980), a number of artifacts in Ålandic burials may also be associated with Gotland, but this connection is more difficult to interpret. Obviously, some artifacts indicate contacts but again this is mostly restricted to dress or other personal ornaments. The inhumation burial practice of Late Iron Age Gotland did not reach Åland, but it may be noted that some building structures in Kulla, Stenhagen in Finström parish have been linked to Gotlandic models (Kivikoski 1946). Other houses have Scandinavian models, but some details such as strong stone foundations are uncommon features there (Vuorinen 2009: 21, 59).

Some chronological trends on Åland follow those of eastern Central Sweden while others are different, such as the increase of brown bear in the late burials (and together with the finds of balance weights in the same area at
Långängsbacken). Considering the clay paws and their possible association to this animal, the increase is interesting. There is, however, no association between the paws and the finds of brown bear at Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken. They were not recovered together in any burial. In east central Sweden, the bear becomes uncommon in Late Iron Age burials (Sigvallius 1994; 74ff.). It is tempting to see the increased use of bear furs in the burials on Åland as an indication of contacts to the east. Many of the artefacts that have been found on Åland are, in fact, rather common over large areas (see e.g. Jansson 1985), and eastern and western elements are often found in the same burials (Kvikkoski 1963; 1980). It is also noteworthy that the ‘eastern’ finds in the Late Iron Age are personal ornaments, but they have somehow been seen as being ‘out of their (correct) context’ – which by extension also concerns the persons associated with the finds. Individuals buried with ornaments of western types have seldom been considered in a similar manner – despite the fact that the finds also may be considered ‘out of place’, and, in fact, associated with a process of colonization.

The people of Åland were probably active adopters of new elements and, in fact, this may be an important characteristic of Late Iron Age Åland. We might perhaps see the eastern and western artefacts and their combinations as an Ålandic characteristic. This would change perspectives and interpretations. In such a scenario, the origin of the artefacts may not have been of significant importance; instead, the symbolism linked to them would be local and regionally important. It is difficult to translate the meaning of similar artifacts found in different areas without a direct spatial connection. This is the case with the clay paws which, as unique elements on Åland, were integrated into a Scandinavian burial ritual. Despite a similarity in form, the find circumstances on Åland and in the east appear to be rather different. The paws are more often found in female burials on Åland (Callmer 1994) while they seem to be found in male burials in the Volga area – quite often together with weapons. On Åland, weapons and clay paws appear to be almost exclusive artifacts (Tarsala 1998). The symbolism of the artifacts may well have been altered and different when adapted into a new cultural space (see also FROG), and the symbolism of many artifacts may have become distinct in Åland. Another example is the so-called Thor’s hammer rings on Åland – an important Scandinavian symbol – although their meaning is not specific (G. Andersson 2004; cf. Tomtlund, Figure 3, p. 29). On Åland, these artifacts have mostly been recovered in settlement contexts, which has to be considered surprising. Such finds have in eastern Central Sweden most often been recovered in burials (e.g. G. Andersson 2004). There is no doubt that this artifact is linked to Scandinavia where at the Valsta cemetery, for example,
it occurred in 11% of the burials (with a slight increase in late burials), and in the nearby Skälby in 53% (G. Andersson 2004, fig. 20). The frequency in the Ålandic burials is considerably lower. Thor’s hammer rings have been recovered in two burials each at Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken, and one in Lemland – here together with a clay paw. It is difficult to assess the depositional circumstances of the rings in the settlement sites since they appear to have been recovered among other finds and animal bones (i.e. normal settlement debris). However, it is of importance that the rings have not been deposited in burials with the same frequency as in eastern Central Sweden. Perhaps on Åland these rings were more important in life than in death? We may never know the answer to such a question, but this may nonetheless be interpreted as a regional trait on Åland.

The external characteristics of the burial ritual on Åland seem to be similar to those in eastern Central Sweden. However, it seems that there is a greater similarity between eastern Central Sweden and the areas in north-eastern Åland (Sund and Saltvik) than those in the south and southwest of Åland. In any case, the variation in the find material and occurrence of unique finds and find combinations on Åland indicate some level of hybridization where different cultural expressions were incorporated and combined. In the Late Iron Age, there is some kind of break in the pattern of re-use of monuments and reconnection with older times. The older monuments from the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age do not seem to have been the focus of reconnection, at least in Sund and Saltvik. In other areas, however, the spatial connection to Early Iron Age cemeteries is stronger. This is also to some extent reflected in differences in subsistence (Kennebjörk 2014; Storå et al. 2012). Furthermore, some Viking Age burials at both Kvarnbacken and Långängsbacken have been placed in close vicinity to older burial mounds, apparently dating to the earliest phases of the cemeteries. It seems that some of the mounds from the Late Iron Age are spatially associated with the area which represents the ‘beginning’ or foundation of the cemetery. This phase may have been of importance for identity – or for how identity was perceived and identified in the Viking Age – and may thus reflect some kind of historical perspective. Anna Wessman has linked late artifacts found in cremation cemeteries under level ground to commemoration and an active use of the past (Wessman 2010; Wickholm 2007). A similar kind of reconnection has also been discussed in eastern Central Sweden where older burials have been the target of re-use (see e.g. G. Andersson 2004: 50). We may have some parallels to this on Åland. Could this be linked to the colonization and an earlier ‘arrival’ that was remembered? Or was this perhaps a colonization
that also involved a colonization of the burial ground itself – constructing a continuity and kinship with those buried in the earlier mounds, which would affirm the *odal* rights of the settlers and their possession of the land, complete with myths of their own origins (cf. Ahola et al.)? Insofar as the spatial establishment of the new burial mounds in relation to an earlier burial ground was a conscious choice, it is probable that it was a choice linked to the meaning given to the mounds and the relationship to them, even if that meaning remains a mystery to us today. This period may well have been a situation favourable for innovation, dialogue and renewal in mythology and religion – as well as in subsistence and burial customs. This would separate the islanders from both mainlands but regional variation also developed and was upheld within Åland (see Tarsala 1998). The cultural patterns took slightly different forms in north-eastern and southern/south-western Åland. Late Iron Age Åland has to be characterized as a dynamic period. Paradoxically, the end of the period is still poorly understood. The first signs of new ideas – and actually of the transition phase – are visible at Kvarnbacken, where a few apparently Christian inhumation burials are found in direct association with the youngest burial mounds. This transition is intensely debated but falls outside of the scope of the present study (on which see further Sjöstrand).

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank Frog and Joonas Ahola for very valuable comments and suggestions that have improved the manuscript and also for editing the text. JS would like to thank the Berit Wallenberg Foundation for economic support.

**References**


During the past 80 years, numerous pollen diagrams have been made through the analysis of lake sediments and peat deposits in the Åland Islands. Especially in the earliest pollen analyses, focus was on the different aspects of natural and vegetation history. For example, the first pollen diagram from 1934, published by A. L. Bäckman, placed special emphasis on forest development, and especially on the spruce invasion. In this study, little effort was made to study past human activities and the resolution of the pollen analyses (i.e. what the pollen diagram showed) was not sufficient to allow any conclusions about the past human activities.

Another study with focus on the history of nature was done in 1978 by G. Glückert, who studied bog basins for pollen and diatom in order to assess the shore displacement history and forest history on the island. In this extensive study, altogether 21 sites were analyzed and Glückert also made some conclusions about the past human activity during the Iron Age. Cereal cultivation was identified in the analyses from Geta, Saltvik, Sund, Hammarland, Jomala, Lemland and Kumlige. Unfortunately, radiocarbon dates were not available for dating the observed phases of human activity, but Glückert estimated that the continuous occurrence of cereal (mainly the rye curve) began in Geta at the beginning of the present era with continuity through the Viking Age. In Saltvik, cultivation began ca. AD 300–400, and in Lemland cultivation has apparently been practiced from ca. AD 1500 onwards.

Figure 1 shows the locations of the four pollen analyses that have been sufficiently dated and allow conclusions to be drawn concerning human activities during the Viking Age. The first work that was clearly aimed to study not
only the vegetation history, but also the past human impact on the island was conducted in 1961 (see also Fries 1963) when M. Fries made a pollen analysis in Dalkarbyträsk in Jomala. In his study, the beginning of continuous cultivation was dated to cal AD 450. However, there was a regression in the intensity of cultivation that was not dated. According to sedimentation properties, Fries estimated that the regression in rye cultivation may fall in the Viking Age. According to Fries this change could potentially indicate a general decrease in land use practices or a shift of cultivation and grazing activities away from the sampling place.

The first convincing pollen analyses that were clearly oriented to elucidate the early agriculture and its continuity on the mainland of Åland were done by Kaarina Sarmaja-Korjonen, Yrjö Vasari, and Carl-Adam Häggström in 1991, in the same year as Birgitta Roeck Hansen’s (1991) well-known study of settlement history. For the pollen analyses, Sarmaja-Korjonen, Vasari and Häggström obtained sediment cores from Lake Kvarnträsk, situated in the northern part of Finström, and from Lake Kolmilaträsk, situated in Saltvik. Roeck Hansen obtained a sediment core from the parish of Jomala, from the

Figure 1. Locations of pollen analyses.
bog of Flyet. Around the bog of Flyet, the cultivation of rye had started already during the first centuries AD. Judging from the diminished proportions of the broad leaved trees birch (*Betula*) and alder (*Alnus*), the landscape was relatively open already during the Viking Age. Especially juniper (*Juniperus*) and grasses (*Poaceae*) dominate in the diagram, indicating grazed areas and meadows. During the Viking Age, there has been intensive cultivation of both rye (*Secale*) and also other cereals that have not been further identified. Occurrence of plantain (*Plantago lanceolata, Plantago major/media*) indicates trampled ground. The interpretation of the diagram from Flyet is unfortunately complicated by the fact that, in the uppermost half meter of the sediment core, the lake gradually turns from lake into a bog. This alteration changes the pollen source area and, as a result, the pollen data in the uppermost half meter is not directly comparable to the lower levels representing the lake stage.

The clearest evidence of past human activities comes from Lake Kolmilaträsk and Lake Kvarnträsk, published by Sarmaja-Korjonen, Vasari and Häggström (1991). Both diagrams extend to about 2500–2000 14C years BP, when they became isolated from the Baltic basin. Around Lake Kvarnträsk, small scale cultivation began about cal AD 450. However, the Viking Age seems to have been a period of change, during which the landscape is gradually opened up and broad leaved trees, especially birch and alder, decrease. A progressive increase in the proportion of pollen originating from rye indicates a gradual increase in the cultivation of rye. An increase in fallow lands, meadows, pastures, footpaths and ruderal communities is correspondingly indicated by an increase of other principal anthropogenic indicators in pollen diagrams, such as goosefoot (*Chenopodiaceae*), buttercup (*Ranunculus*) and chicory (*Cichoriaceae*). By the end of the Viking Age, cal AD 1070, the environment had already turned into an open cultural landscape. At this point, cultivation of rye reaches its maximum values and other cereal pollen also began to occur on a continuous basis. It is worth noting that, in the Kvarnträsk pollen diagram, the increase in juniper indicates intensive grazing already during the Viking Age. The Viking Age land use also seems to have included some cultivation of hemp/hop (*Cannabis/Humulus*), judging from the regular occurrence of hemp/hop pollen in the sediment.

Small-scale cultivation seems to have begun around Lake Kolmilaträskin ca. cal AD 370, yet the Viking Age also appears as a transition period here. Like in Kvarnträsk, broad leaved trees (especially birch) decrease dramatically during the Viking Age, while juniper, rye and other unidentified cereal pollen increase, as does the overall proportion of grasses and herbs. These changes indicate a
gradual shift to an open cultural landscape with grazing areas. This pattern of increase in land use at this site, which also includes cultivation, culminates at the end of the Viking Age, ca. AD 1070. Around Lake Kolmilaträsk, the hemp/hop pollen type increases dramatically already during the Viking Age.

Figure 2 summarizes the most important land use phases around the four sites that have aimed to study the land use history in Åland. To make the radiocarbon results comparable, the radiocarbon dates have been recalibrated using the same calibration dataset (intcal04.14c; Reimer et al. 2004) with the radiocarbon calibration program CALIB version 6.1.1 (Stuiver & Reimer 1993). This data is presented in Table 1. These medium sized lakes all have a radius of 80–150 meters and therefore, according to studies by Poska et al. (2011), the source area of pollen found in them probably varies somewhere between 1500–1200 meters. This must be considered a very general estimate as various factors, such as the distribution of the patchiness of surrounding vegetation and the sizes of those patches greatly impact the relevant source area of pollen (see e.g. Alenius 2014). Despite these problems in interpreting the data, the four pollen diagrams in Åland show a generally similar pattern of

Figure 2. Overview of land use around Flyet (Roeck Hansen 1991), Dalkarbyträsk (Fries 1963), Kolmilaträsk and Kvarnträsk (Sarmaja-Korjonen et al. 1991). Radiocarbon dates are presented in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lab. no.</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Radiocarbon date</th>
<th>One Sigma Ranges: [start:end] relative area</th>
<th>Two Sigma Ranges: [start:end] relative area</th>
<th>Median probability cal AD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ua-995</td>
<td>Roeck Hansen 1991</td>
<td>530±115 BP</td>
<td>[cal AD 1292: cal AD 1461] 1</td>
<td>[cal AD 1269: cal AD 1533] 0.87706</td>
<td>AD 1404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ua-996</td>
<td>Roeck Hansen 1991</td>
<td>860±110 BP</td>
<td>[cal AD 1147: cal AD 1261] 0.625832</td>
<td>[cal AD 972: cal AD 1308] 0.985073</td>
<td>AD 1156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 U-234</td>
<td>Fries 1963</td>
<td>1610±90 BP</td>
<td>[cal AD 376: cal AD 550] 0.898427</td>
<td>[cal AD 242: cal AD 622] 1</td>
<td>AD 445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ua-836</td>
<td>Sarmaja-Korjonen et al. 1991.</td>
<td>975±115 BP</td>
<td>[cal AD 974: cal AD 1191] 0.964849</td>
<td>[cal AD 857: cal AD 1270] 0.977193</td>
<td>AD 1065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ua-837</td>
<td>Sarmaja-Korjonen et al. 1991.</td>
<td>1670±105 BP</td>
<td>[cal AD 249: cal AD 442] 0.810128</td>
<td>[cal AD 131: cal AD 594] 1</td>
<td>AD 371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Ua-832</td>
<td>Sarmaja-Korjonen et al. 1991.</td>
<td>975±90</td>
<td>[cal AD 986: cal AD 1164] 1</td>
<td>[cal AD 890: cal AD 1229] 0.987162</td>
<td>AD 1074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Ua-833</td>
<td>Sarmaja-Korjonen et al. 1991.</td>
<td>1605±95</td>
<td>[cal AD 377: cal AD 560] 0.910034</td>
<td>[cal AD 244: cal AD 636] 1</td>
<td>AD 449</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Radiocarbon dates obtained from Flyet, Dalkarbyträsk, Kolmilaträsk and Kvarnträsk. Radiocarbon dates have been converted to calibrated years (cal yr), that is, years that represent true calendar years using the radiocarbon calibration program CALIB version 6.1.1 (Stuiver & Reimer 1993) with the intcal04.14c calibration dataset (Reimer et al. 2004).
land use that can be used to give an overview of human impact on the island during the Viking Age. In the pollen data, a more or less continuous cultivation becomes visible already from AD 350–450 onwards. It can be hypothesized that this phenomenon might be connected to an increase in the population on the island. According to M. Núñez and T. Lempiäinen (1992), an immigrating wave of Scandinavian farmers reached Åland beginning ca. AD 500 accompanied by a rapid population expansion (see also Gustavsson et al.; Tomtlund).

**Intensification of Land Use**

During the Viking Age, a general trend of the opening up of the vegetation can be seen in the pollen data in Kvarnträsk, Kolmilaträsk, Flyet and Dalkarbyträsk. By cal AD 1070, the environment has turned into an open landscape with cultivated fields and grazed areas at least around Kvarnträsk and Kolmilaträsk. The increase in land use during the Viking Age is likely to be connected to settlement expansion in Åland that reached a climax during the Late Iron Age (ca. AD 500–1000). Abundant grave findings are also expressions of this development (Jaatinen et al. 1989; Sjöstrand).

The change to an open landscape has meant a clearing of forests for different land use activities. The decline in proportions of birch and alder in the pollen diagrams from Åland indicates that the clearing during the Viking Age was especially concentrated on the nutrient-rich broad-leaved forests. This so-called ‘Alnus decline’ was not only limited to the Åland Islands; it is a phenomenon widely recorded in southern Finland, and it generally coincides with the inception of continuous cultivation (Sarmaja-Korjonen 2003). In Finland, the minimum values of alder pollen proportions occurred between ca. AD 600 and ca. AD 1000. In Estonia, the greatest reduction in alder occurred during the Late Iron Age (between AD 900 and 1000) and was likewise associated with the start of extensive cultivation, especially with the clearing of land suitable for growing rye (Saarse et al. 2009). This shift to an open cultural landscape during and at the end of the Viking Age can be seen as a part of larger development in Europe. In Europe, the period 950–1350 was a period of territorial expansion, population growth and economic growth. The cultivated area expanded and hundreds of new towns were established (Bartlett 1993). Åland was situated on both east–west and north–south trade routes that passed the islands (see Heininen et al.). It has been hypothesized that in the Åland Islands, nearly every Viking Age farmstead had its own harbour (Lindholm 2012).
In the Viking Age town of Birka in Sweden (ca. 30 km west of Stockholm) as well as elsewhere in the Lake Mälaren region (southern Central Sweden), population pressure increased during the Viking Age and many new farms were established (Ambrosiani & Eriksson 1991). Pollen diagrams from the Lake Mälaren region show that the areas for cultivation and grazing were enlarged during the Viking Age (Karlsson & Robertsson 1997). The increasing proportions of Juniper and grasses in the Åland Islands also obviously reflects increasing proportions of fields, grazed meadows and the presence of domesticated animals in the environment (Hæggström 1990). During the Viking Age, grazing was already intensive on some parts of the island and the grazing area was increasing on the other parts. Osteological analyses from Åland show that sheep were the most common domesticated animals. Also cattle (Bos taurus) were important (see Gustavsson et al. and works there cited). This has apparently also been the case in Southwest Finland in the historical village site of Raisio Ihala, near Turku. Osteological analyses from the Mulli fields revealed that 51.5% of the bone material in bone finds came from sheep/goat; cattle constituted 14% of the bone material and pig 16% (Vuorinen 2009).

Viking Age has also been an active and expressive period in southern Finland (for a general overview, see Ahola & Frog 2014). On the coast of western Uusimaa, the creation of an open cultural landscape mainly dates to AD 950–1100 (Alenius 2011; Alenius et al. 2014). In the archipelago of Southwest Finland on the islands of Kemiönsaari, Nauvo and Parainen, the Iron Age finds increase somewhat, and according to pollen analyses, cultivation gained importance on Kemiönsaari Island from around AD 900 onwards (Asplund 2008; Alenius 2008; Asplund & Vuorela 1989). In the inner archipelago, the Kyrksundet marketplace on Kemiönsaari Island is dated to use between AD 800 and 1100. This site is also an indication of the growing importance of sea travel and contacts for the interior of Finland, as well as Åland, Sweden, Estonia and Central Europe (Edgren 1999; Asplund 2008; cf. Schalin with Frog). Henrik Asplund has stated:

What we see is probably a reflection of intensified trade and increasing wealth, in combination with population growth and escalated interest in outlying resource areas as well as new areas for permanent settlement (Asplund 2008: 147).

**Cultivated Species**

During the Viking Age, a gradual increase of rye (Secale cereale) pollen is visible in the Kvarnträsk and Kolmilaträsk pollen diagrams and rye pollen also occur
in the diagrams from Flyet and Dalkarbyträs. In addition, other cereal pollen that have not been further identified also occur in the pollen data, albeit in smaller proportions. It is probable that these cereals (including barley, among others) have played an important part among the cultivated species, even if they are poorly represented in the pollen data. The pollen proportions of different cultivated species cannot be translated into estimates of proportions of what was actually cultivated because wind-pollinated species such as rye produces substantial amounts of pollen compared to insect pollinated or autogamous species such as barley (see Alenius 2014). In this respect, macrofossils such as seeds preserved in the soil are especially useful because they are much more locally distributed than pollen, and they can be identified with greater precision than pollen. An important macrofossil analysis that has shed significant light on the cultivated species in the Åland Island during the Iron Age has been conducted in Sund, in the Kastelholms Kungsgårda Late Iron Age farming complex. The macrofossil findings have been dated to between AD 800 and 1300 and reveal that barley was the most important cereal in this farming complex: 95% of identified cereal macrofossils originated from barley. Other cereal macrofossils included some common oats (Avena sativa) and only one macrofossil of common wheat (Triticum aestivum) (Núñez & Lempiäinen 1992). It is surprising that not a single rye macrofossil was found although pollen analyses from different localities show that rye was cultivated in different parts of the island.

When comparing the macrofossil results from Kastelholms Kungsgårda, from mainland Finland and from Birka, Sweden, certain similarities can be observed. Santeri Vanhanen (2012) has summarized the finds of charred plant remains in Finland and (Russian) Karelia during the Late Iron Age. Most of the sites in the list he presents are located in south-western Finland, in the Lieto–Paimio area and further inland in the Hämeenlinna–Hattula area. The comprehensive list clearly shows that barley (Hordeum vulgare) has also been the most common cultivated crop in mainland Finland during the Late Iron Age, while rye has been the second most cultivated crop. The macrofossil analyses from excavations at Birka and also Sanda (situated ca. 30 km northwest from Birka) also show a dominance of barley and wheat instead of rye; rye and oats were present only in smaller proportions (Pålsson 1992; Hansson 1995).

One pollen type that can occur regularly in the Viking Age layers in Åland is pollen originating from hemp or hop. In contrast to cultivated hemp that has been used for fiber (e.g. to make hemp ropes), hop also grows naturally on seashores and along rivers (Hämet-Ahti et al. 1984). Pollen originating from these species has a similar morphology; in the pollen studies, they are therefore
often grouped in a single category, the *Humulus/Cannabis* pollen type. Because of the problems in distinguishing between hemp and hop pollen, the cultivation history of these species relies mainly on macrofossil analysis.

A notable increase of the hemp/hop pollen type during the Viking Age is visible especially in the Kolmilaträsk pollen data. Even when the pollen analyses from the Åland Islands did not distinguish between hemp and hop, it is likely that the pollen has originated from cultivated hemp. In the archaeobotanical studies from the farming complex of Kastelholms Kungsgård, tree seeds of *Cannabis sativa* dating to the Viking Age were found. These are, in fact, the oldest hemp finds in Finland (Nunez & Lempiäinen 1998). The cultivation of hemp is also known to have been important as a crop in the Viking Age town of Birka as well as elsewhere in the Lake Mälaren region, and an expansion is reflected in some of the pollen diagrams from that area (Karlsson & Robertsson 1997). According to one charred seed of flax found in Kastelhoms Kungsgård, flax was apparently also cultivated for fiber in Åland (Núñez & Lempiäinen 1992).

In mainland Finland, flax is present in minor portions of the macrofossil data, but there is only one hemp macrofossil finding dating to the Viking Age. This is from Eastern Finland, from the agricultural complex at Orijärvi, near the town of Mikkeli (Vanhanen 2012). Macrofossil studies from archaeological localities in Southern Finland show that seeds of hemp and hop become very common finds at sites dating from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries (Lempiäinen 2007).

**Concluding Remarks**

Looking at the general picture provided by pollen analyses and other macrofossil data, it can be concluded that the Viking Age in Åland has been a period of growth when areas were deforested and settlements expanded and grazed areas and cultivated fields increased. Åland was situated along important sea routes that passed by the islands. Land use practices developed in Åland in a manner parallel to developments in Birka and mainland Finland. In the Viking Age peasant economy, cultivation of barley, rye and hemp played an important role, as did animal husbandry. Obviously maritime activities such as fishing, sealing, fowling and seafaring have also played important part in Viking Age subsistence and living. Nevertheless, many important aspects of life also become invisible through pollen analyses.
References


When it comes to distant places, it is usual for medieval sources – let them be narratives or maps – that the depictions are vague and not trustworthy. In this case, the geographical depiction seems to be surprisingly accurate. However, the passage presents only toponymy and does not tell anything about the people who lived in these areas. The value of the passage is therefore primarily as an indication that the Baltic Sea area was not totally unknown in West Norse sources, even if it is only described very briefly. It is typical of saga texts that they describe travels in the Baltic Sea in a very general manner, usually mentioning only the place of departure and where the journey ended. This passage is rather exceptional in medieval Old Norse sources because it mentions Álandshaf [‘Sea of Åland’].

It is difficult to study Viking Age (or medieval) Åland or its inhabitants with the help of Old Norse sources because Åland does not appear anywhere in these materials outside of the short passage in Orkneyinga saga above, where in fact the term Álandshaf designates the channel of water between Sweden and Åland rather than referring to the island or islands per se (see further Schalin with Frog). The present chapter turns attention instead to examine the group or groups called Finnar in Old Norse sources, a people or peoples who were neighbours of Norwegians and Swedes. Although the ethnonym Finnar does not have direct relevance for Viking Age Åland, it has indirect relevance via...
discussions concerning settlement in Åland Islands. Åland must have been on the threshold of Germanic and Finnic cultures in the Viking Age, which makes it an interesting case for research in several disciplines (Ahola et al.; Frog; Gustavsson et al.; Heikkilä; Heininen et al.; Tomtlund). The question of the *Finnar* has relevance to questions of Pre-Finnish(-speaking) settlement on the islands prior to the medieval Swedish settlement (on which, see Sjöstrand), how it developed and what kind of effect it may have had, for instance, on toponyms. The *Finnar* were one of the groups representing ‘otherness’ for the Norse cultural sphere (see Aalto 2010), and may have functioned as a term for a variety of groups perceived as ‘other’. This leads to an interesting — if unanswerable — question of whether Viking Age Ålanders might have considered their neighbours to the east ‘Finnar’ and indeed whether they might have been grouped with the *Finnar* from the perspective of the Svear on the Swedish mainland or perhaps from the remote perspective of medieval Iceland, where the greater part of the Old Norse saga literature was produced. For instance, Per Olof Sjöstrand argues that there must have been some reason that Åland appears as part of the northern Finnish legal district (Sw. *lagsaga*) in the Middle Ages and not, for instance, as part of Svealand (see also Heininen et al.). The Old Norse sources do not solve this problem, but they should not be ignored because there is no comparable Swedish material available. Examination of the ethnonym *Finnar* may offer insight into how Norsemen and eventually Swedes thought about their neighbours who did not share the same language and culture. When discussing the contacts between speakers of Swedish and Finnish in the archipelago and the identity of inhabitants of the Åland Islands, this information may be relevant and form some kind of background.

All Scandinavian languages have the word *Finne/Finni* (pl. *Finnar*), which today denotes an inhabitant of Finland. However, the word itself is older and its meaning has not always been clear. The present chapter will concentrate on what can be said about the identification of these *Finnar* in sagas written in Old Norse. Scholars usually identify the *Finnar* in Old Norse sources as the Sámi people (normally with the problematic presupposition that all Sámi language speakers across Fennoscandia viewed themselves as a single and unified ethnic group). The ethnonym seems, however, to have had a different meaning in West and East Scandinavian languages, and there are questions of the connection that such ethnonyms as *Finnlendingar, Lappir,* or *Semsveinar* may have had. These questions have been dealt earlier by other scholars,¹ but the information remains

scattered and has not been analyzed as an entity. Some scholars that have looked for written evidence of the Finns in Old Norse materials have used, for example, the saga material without understanding the limitations of the sources. The present chapter offers an updated view on this topic.

The approach used here is twofold: on the one hand, the *Finnar* will be analyzed as literary characters (in the saga literature), and on the other hand, this information will be compared with the historical context observable through laws and diplomatic material. The discussion will synthesize what can be said about the *Finnar* in the medieval context and what possibilities there are to apply this information retrospectively to the Viking Age.

**Sources**

The source material consists of Old Norse sagas and Norwegian legal texts. The source material limits the questions that it can reasonably be used to answer. Because the Old Norse written sources (not including runic inscriptions) date from the Middle Ages, they cannot be used as direct and unambiguous sources for the Viking Age (on runic inscriptions and toponyms, see Zilmer 2005). Therefore, information concerning the forefathers of the Sámi and Finns in the Viking Age relies heavily on archaeological evidence, which itself is problematic. It is not self-evident that certain evidence of material culture can be connected to an ethnicity.

Saga literature as such is a very heterogenic source material. The first sagas were written down before the 1150s in Iceland, but the saga tradition flourished especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Jónas Kristjánsson 2007: 22–24; Mundal 2007). Following this ‘golden era’, saga writing seems to have waned, and was in part adapted into a new tradition of the ballad-like singing tradition of narrative *rímur* poetry (Jónas Kristjánsson 2007: 369). The saga literature is divided into different genres by scholars in order to categorize the sagas. It is uncertain how people who produced the sagas or listened to them perceived them, but it is inferred that some sagas were considered more reliable than others: some of sagas seem to have been made or composed in order to record past events, while others were definitely written only as entertainment (Driscoll 2006: 203).

The saga sources used here consist mainly of so-called kings’ sagas (*konungasögur*) which are stories about Norwegian kings and their deeds. These sagas were written down between ca. 1150 and 1265. The kings’ sagas are not ethnographic accounts but they contain information about peoples with whom
the Norsemen were in contact, which makes them indispensable as sources concerning other ethnic groups. Among these belong both compendia and individual sagas of Norwegian kings. The most famous of them is *Heimskringla* (ca. 1230–35) attributed to the Icelander Snorri Sturluson. Many of the authors are anonymous, but those known to us were Icelanders. The kings’ sagas are often taken as an example of Old Norse historiography, but it should be remembered that there was no strict division between sagas that would have been considered ‘history’ or ‘fiction’ (Aalto, forthcoming). Generally, it can be said that saga literature was first directed towards religious texts (e.g. hagiography, translations of ecclesiastical texts) and then towards kings’ sagas. Around 1250s and thereafter, sagas of Icelanders, chivalric and legendary sagas were in focus.

The sources used here are not limited to kings’ sagas only; other sagas that have something to do with ethnonyms concerning the *Finnar* are also taken into account. Other sagas addressed here are *Orkneyinga saga* and *Vatnsdœla saga*. *Orkneyinga saga* is preserved in a collection of sagas in the Flateyjarbók manuscript that was compiled around 1387. However, it is assumed that the saga may have existed already around the year 1200 (Chesnutt 1993: 456–457). In Flateyjarbók, the saga was placed among the kings’ sagas, which suggests that it was intended to be understood as historiography and not just as entertainment (Jesch 2010: 171–173). *Vatnsdœla saga*, written prior to the year 1300 but extant only in later manuscripts, is classified as a family saga but the introduction of the saga is modelled on earlier sagas (Vésteinn Ólason 1993: 689). Although *Vatnsdœla saga* may not be seen as a reliable historical account, it served like many other family sagas as a way to reconstruct the Icelandic past.

In order to understand how the sagas function in their presentation of the past and their relation to historiography, it is useful to begin by looking at the concept of saga genre. The traditional way of categorizing sagas is to divide them to kings’ sagas, family sagas (or sagas of Icelanders), chivalric sagas and legendary sagas (Schach 1993: 561). Probably the idea of the past and how to present it was much broader and undefined in the Middle Ages than it is today and therefore we cannot confine the concept of history writing to only certain sagas. Different saga genres have a certain literary mode that is typical of that particular genre – which is, of course, concluded later by scholars and not by contemporary saga authors and audiences (Guðrún Nordal et al. 1992: 291). The kings’ sagas provide the closest vernacular Old Norse parallel to medieval history writing in Europe.
Division to saga genres is made by scholars, but the challenge is that sagas do not necessarily appear constrained to one genre. In other words, a reader can detect differences of mode or register within individual sagas. Sagas may mix two or three modalities, and this actually seems to be rather typical (Andersson 2006: 18; Clunies Ross 2010: 96). For instance, a saga about King Ólaf Tryggvason in *Heimskringla* is formally classed as one of the kings’ sagas: it generally depicts the king’s life in an apparently neutral way so that the author remains in the background (often referred to as ‘saga style’). However, some parts of the saga are more reminiscent of a legendary saga (for example, when Ólafr participates in Viking raids in his youth) or hagiography (when he encounters evil spirits or destroys pagan sacrificial sites). (*Heimskringla* I, pp. 225–372.)

This leads to a methodological issue regarding how to use the (kings’) sagas as sources. When it comes to single events found in a saga, the information can be compared with other available evidence. Sometimes there are no comparisons to be made and it is impossible to determine whether a single event took place in the way it is described. Dialogues that are presented as part of a particular event should be considered either to reflect an oral tradition or may be invented by the author who wrote down the saga. This is one of the reasons why it is safest to look at the sagas as reflecting the understandings and ideologies of the time when they were written down rather than offering an accurate representation of the earlier period that is ostensibly described. However, those scholars who look at the sagas from the perspective of historical anthropology shift attention to general phenomena, such as social structures or behaviour, as reflections of the past, not just of the time of writing. This kind of approach requires comparative analysis and the results still remain conditional on the representativeness of the material analyzed.

**Etymology**

The etymology of the word *Finnr* cannot be dealt without referring first to Tacitus who, in his work *Germania* (ca. AD 98), mentions a group called *Fenni*. Tacitus made a division between the Germanic peoples, who practiced agriculture, and the *Fenni*, whom he described as hunters. As it is probable that Tacitus himself did not have firsthand knowledge about the *Fenni*, his account is very approximate. He had probably acquired it from the Germanic peoples. It has been debated whether his description of the *Fenni* concerns a Proto-Sámi culture, Proto-Finnic tribes or maybe some other undefined groups (Pekkanen 1984: 230). Considering Tacitus’s limited information about distant areas and
peoples, it is questionable whether he speaks of (forefathers of) Finns or Sámi. It is perhaps easiest to understand the word *Fenni* as simply referring to a people that differed from the Germanic peoples (Ockenström 2010: 172–173, 210), or, as Welinder has suggested, that *Fenni* was a nebulous concept referring to some group that was “beyond the horizon” (Welinder 2008: 40). Still, some authors of late Antiquity may have had an understanding of two kinds of *Fennil Finni* as the other group was called *Skerefenna* (cf. Old Norse *skrída á skíðum* [‘to ski’], thus possibly ‘skiing Finns’), mentioned for example by Jordanes (Pekkanen 1984: 237; Grünthal 1997: 44).

This inability to distinguish between the forefathers of the Sámi and Finns has been more of a problem for later generations. It is relevant to ask to what degree outsiders could or would actually distinguish these two groups. This does not just apply the Latin words, but as this chapter will show, also to Old Norse/Swedish word usage.

In the Old Norse language, the words *Finnr*, *Fiðr* and *Finni* are used in the sagas and they denote a Sámi man. A Sámi woman was called either a *Finna* or a *Finnkona*. It is difficult to say anything certain about the background of the word *Finnr*, but it was by no means a rare word. The personal name *Finnr*, or *Finn-/-finnr* as a component in compound personal names (e.g. Þorfinnr) was used by Scandinavians, but this was hardly behind the ethnonym *Finnar* (Grünthal 1997: 38). There were and still are place names with the compound *Finn-*, such as *Finnveden* in Sweden (cf. Heikkilä; Ahola et al.; Sjöstrand). Brink has suggested that this place name is related to the verb ‘to find’ (< Pr.-Germ. *fæna*) with the cognate in Old English *fundian* [‘to hunt, to go’]. This would give an older meaning for the word ‘mobile people who hunt’ (Brink 2008). Grünthal also considers the verb *fæna* to give the most plausible explanation to the etymology of *Finnar* (Grünthal 1997: 47). However, this explanation is contested as the etymology would not produce the form *Fenni* as early as Tacitus, if that is considered related. *Finnr* could derive from Germanic *fenna* [‘man’], which is a plausible explanation because usually an ethnonym is derived from words meaning ‘men’ or ‘people’ (Kallio 1998: 617; Koivulehto 1995: 82–83; 1993: 400; cf. Suomalainen paikannimikirja 2007: 221).

All in all, we can say that the ethnonym *Finnr* is an exonym, meaning that it is given by outsiders: it is an ethnonym that cannot be found among the Sámi or Finnic peoples. The etymology of the word remains uncertain, but in fact it is not relevant for the present discussion. It is sufficient to say that *Finnr* denoted first and foremost people who were neighbours of Scandinavians and who seem to have differed markedly from them. A clear linguistic and cultural boundary
between speakers of Scandinavian languages and those who they called *Finnar* must have been the reason why Scandinavians did not adopt an ethnonym that these groups used of themselves.

**Lappir and Semsveinar**

Latin ethnonyms *Finni* and *Lappi* were used by speakers of Old Norse in medieval Latin sources, and they can thus indirectly tell about the word usage in Old Norse. It is generally thought that the word *Finni* in the papal bull *Gravis admodum* from the year 1171 or 1172 is the first attestation of the word with reference to Finns in Finland (Pekkanen 1984: 230). The papal bull concerned Finland from the Swedish perspective, but correspondence in Norway continued to use *Finni* to refer to people living in Finmark. Also the anonymous author who wrote *Historia Norvegiae* ['History of Norway'] around 1170–1180 uses the word *Finni* when he refers to the Sámi people (*Historia Norvegiae*: 58–65). Saxo Grammaticus, who wrote his *Gesta Danorum* ['History of the Danes'] around the turn of the thirteenth century, uses the word *Finni*, although he is aware of a place called *Lappia*. He seems to have referred to the Sámi although it is suspected that in the Danish language the word *finni* would already by the thirteenth century mean an inhabitant of Finland (Gallén 1984: 259; Bysted et al. 2012: 146). Thus, the authors would use the word *Finnr* when using their native language.

In a Swedish royal decree from 1328, it is mentioned that the people living in the north were known as ‘Lapps’ (“vulgariter dictos Lappa”, FMU 360). Later, in 1389, Queen Margarethe and Archbishop Magnus wrote to the ‘Lappish people’ to give up their heathen idols for Christianity (“universo populo Lappenorum”, SDHK 13560). Apparently in the Swedish context, the Old Swedish *Lapp* was Latinized and used in documents (Timo Sironen, p.c.). *Lappi* replaces *Finni* gradually and the words develop different referents, at least in Swedish. For instance, Johannes Schefferus (1621–1679), who wrote about the Sámi people in his book *Lapponia* (1673), was unaware of the background of these words. He thought that *Finnr/Finnar* had always referred only to the Finns and that the Swedes had adopted the word *Lappar* from the Finns (Schefferus 1956: 82, 91). However, it should be emphasized that we do not actually know what is meant by ‘Lappish people’ in these sources. Is it an ethnonym for one people or maybe a general term for people living in ‘Lapland’? We must surmise that the difference was also not always clear for civil servants who produced documents. (Korpela 2008: 149; 2004: 228–231.)
It is suggested that the Old Norse Lappr was of Finnish origin. In Finnish the word lappalainen [‘Lapp’] is explained as (among other proposed etymologies) deriving from a translation of the Sámi word *wuowjoš* [‘wedge; strip’], which would have been an old name for the Sámi. Another explanation would be that it refers to a remote district, but this explanation is contested in the light of recent linguistic research which suggests that Sámi languages were spoken in most of Finland and Karelia through the Iron Age, and the word may indeed have a connection to the Sámi (Koivulehto 1995: 83; SSA, p. 48; Suomalainen paikannimikirja 2007: 221; cf. Saarikivi 2006). The Scandinavian etymological dictionaries are either silent of word’s origin (Kalkar 1881–85; Fritzner 1954, II: 419; Holberg-Ordbog 1984: 576; Falk & Torp 1994) or they refer to the word’s possible Finnish origin (Hellquist 1922: 397; de Vries 1962: 346; Nationalencyklopedin 1996, p. 266). Interestingly, the Old Norse word Lappr (pl. Lappir) occurs in the opening of Orkneyinga saga which is known as Fundinn Noregr. This opening is closely related to another passage known as Hversu Noregr byggódisk, which, however, does not mention Lappir because it is much shorter in the relevant section. Both of them are included in a compilation called Flateyjarbók written in Iceland in 1387 (Flateyjarbók I, pp. 21–24, 219–221). Fundinn Noregr tells how Norway came into being and about King Fornjótr who ruled over Finnland and Kvenland. One of Fornjótr’s descendants was Porri, who had two sons, Nórr and Górr, and a daughter, Goi. Goi disappeared mysteriously and her brothers set out to look for her. The saga mentions in this case many toponyms, and not all of them are clear.

Fundinn Noregr gives a following passage concerning the Lappir:

*En Nórr, bróðir hans, beid þess, er snjó lagði á heiðar ok skiðfœri gerði got. Eptir þat fór hann af Kvenlandi ok fyrir innan hafsbotninn ok kömu þar, er þeir men váru, er Lappir heita; þat er á bak Finnmørk. En Lappir vildu banna þeim yfirfær, ok þoksk þar hardagi, ok sá kraptr ok fjöldyngi fjéldi þeim Nórr, at úvinir þeirra urðu at gjáti, þegar þeir heyrðu heróp ok sá våpnum brugðit, ok lagði Lappir á flóttu.* (Orkneyinga saga 1965: 3.)

His brother Nor waited until the moors were under snow so that he could travel on skis, then set out from Kvenland skirting the head of the Gulf, and so reached the land of the Lapps on the far side of Finnmark. The Lapps tried to bar the way and this lead to clash between them. But so great was the uncanny power and magic of Nor and his men that as soon as the Lapps heard their war-cry and saw them drawing their swords, they were scared out of their wits and ran away. (Orkneyinga Saga 1981: 23–24.)

There is no material which would indicate that the Finnar and the Lappir refer exactly to the same people in Old Norse (Mundal 1996: 98), although this description situates the Lappir geographically in an area that other West Norse texts would identify with Finnar. The term Lappir [‘Lapps’] is not attested.
elsewhere in saga literature and it is problematic because it is later used as a synonym for the Sámi. It seems to be of eastern origin, because it is known in Finnic languages and in Russian. It comes up in medieval Russian sources, where Lop’ means ‘a Lapp’ but it is not clear whether this term referred only to the Sámi people or more generally to Finnic peoples (Korpela 2008: 146). In Finnish, lappalainen referred – at least after the Middle Ages – to a person who conducted mobile/semi-mobile lifestyle according to seasons. Later it was used for the Sámi people. The opposite concept to lappalainen was lantalainen: a person with sedentary lifestyle (lanta deriving from Swedish land [‘land’]). In the case of Orkneyinga saga, the word Lappir could indicate that it was known in the West Norse language area, but it is impossible to discern where it stems from. It is similar to ethnonyms Semsveinar and Finnlendingar (discussed below) which are also used only once in Old Norse sources. The use of both words Finnar and Lappir is not indicative of change because we do not have knowledge about the words prior to first written sources. However, we can surmise that they express a need to differentiate groups.

Next I would like to turn to another saga, Vatndœlasaga, which uses two ethnonyms in the same passage: Finnar and Semsveinar. The saga begins in Norway and the time of the action is between AD 875 and ca. 1000. It tells how a man called Ingimundr wants to know the whereabouts of an amulet, which he had received from King Haraldr hárfagr, and which had disappeared. He sent for ‘Lapps’ (Finnnum) who could help him and three of them came from the north.

They answered, ‘This is a hazardous mission for Lapp messengers [Semsveinar] to undertake, but in response to your request we want to make an attempt. You must now shut us up together in a shed and our names must not be revealed.’ This was duly done. And when three nights had passed, Ingimund went to them. They stood up and sighed deeply and said, ‘It has been hard for us [Semsveinum, lit. ‘for Semsveinar’], and we have had much toil and trouble, but nevertheless we have returned with these tokens so that you may recognize the land from our account, if you go there; but it was very difficult for us to search for the amulet, and the spell of the Lapp woman was a powerful one because we placed ourselves in great jeopardy. (The Saga of the People of Vatnsdal 2000: 207–208.)

In the English text the word Semsveinar is first translated as Lapps and in another sentence left out. The reason may be that the men speak of themselves in the third person, which makes it challenging to translate without the text becoming
clumsy. However, the component *Sem-* has been interpreted to denote *Same-* (later in Norwegian and Swedish pl. *samer*) and *sveinar* (sg. *sveinn*) denotes ‘young men’. The compound is close to Sámi *sabme* (today SaaN *sápmelaš* ['a Sámi'] or *Sápmi*, term for the area of the Sámi people), so it could derive from an endonym, i.e. an ethnonym that people use of themselves. However, the component *Sem-* is *hapax legomenon*, a word not attested elsewhere in saga literature, so it is difficult to determine its history and origin. If the component *Sem-* really derives from the Sámi word that denotes the Sámi people, this would be exceptional in Old Norse sources. As the later evidence shows, the word *Finnr* is generally used for the Sámi in Norwegian. *Vatndælasaga* cannot be seen as one of the most reliable historical sources, but this does not rule out the possibility that the component *Sem-* could derive from a Sámi endonym and that it was known in Iceland, although Icelanders may not have recognized it as an endonym but perhaps only as a word similar to ‘sorcerer’ or ‘shaman’. Hermann Pálsson has pointed out that people coming from Naumudalur and Hálögaland to Iceland must have had knowledge of the Sámi, and that there were Icelanders who had ancestors of Sámi origin in the family (Hermann Pálsson 1997: 44, 59).

To conclude, the term *Finnar* generally referred to the Sámi people in the sagas. The Swedish use of the word may have been different because Scandinavians in Central Sweden had ongoing contacts with populations across the Baltic Sea and the Sámi who were their neighbours prior to the Middle Ages. However, we have no written evidence of this. Norwegians had no corresponding need as the Swedes had to change their word for the Sámi so the word *Finnar* was used for a very long time (Fritzner 1954, I: 417; 1954, II: 419).

**Kvænir, Kirjálar and Bjarmar**

There are two other ethnonyms that have been connected to Finno-Ugrian or Finnic linguistic-cultural groups in the sagas: *Kvænir* and *Bjarmar*. As limitations of space do not permit deep analyses of these two groups, I will give only an overview of them here.

Kvenland is mentioned already in King Alfred’s *Orosius* which is dated to the end of the ninth century. The inhabitants of Kvenland, *Cuenas*, are also mentioned there. Kvenland does not appear in the kings’ sagas but in some other sagas, such as *Fundinn Noregr* quoted above, the variation of this text called *Hversu Noregr byggðisk*, *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar*, *Bárdars saga Snæfellsáss* and *Norna-Gests þáttr*. These sagas have not been classified as very
reliable historical sources, yet I would like to point out that even though they do not describe historical events, the geographical place names they contain should not be ignored. Even if their information value is limited, they may be examples of contemporary knowledge of other places and cultures. The knowledge may be based on oral tradition, written sources or possibly (at least concerning the Kvænir) even more direct accounts of travellers arriving in or returning to Iceland. The authors may also have considered them places that exist in the borderland of real and fantasy.

Kvenland has been connected with the Finnish place name Kainuu (Julk 1986) which today denotes the eastern part of Finland between Lapland and Karelia. Kyösti Julku wanted to connect Kvenland to an imagined ‘Ancient Kainuu’ that would have extended on both sides of Gulf of Bothnia and that was inhabited by ‘a Finnish tribe’. However, this must be seen as an anachronistic reconstruction. Julku projected back in time ideas of coherent Finnish tribes which stem from the era of Romanticism. In reality, we have very little evidence of how people were organized in that particular area called Kainuu. With all probability it was inhabited by both Finns and Sámi. Egils saga mentions that the Kvænir had a king called Faravið and that the Kvænir formed an alliance with Norwegians. Even if the events in Egils saga could be interpreted as generally reflecting the shifting trade and tribute collecting in northern Fennoscandia in the early Middle Ages, it does not give firm evidence of historical events. For example the ethnicity of the Kvænir is impossible to assess based on saga evidence.

Egils saga mentions Kirjálaland as a target for a joint plundering expedition of Norwegians and Kvænir (Egils saga, pp. 35–37). This place is mentioned also in the kings’ sagas (Fagrskinna, p. 178; Heimskringla II, p. 115). Its inhabitants are rarely mentioned with an ethnonym, but the ethnonym Kirjálar/Kereliar is not unknown either (Antiquités Russes 1852, II: 380; Egils saga, p. 35). Kirjálaland is thought to refer to Karelia, but as in other cases of geographical names in the sagas, this must be understood as a very broad term (Aalto & Laakso 2009). Egils saga also mentions a group called Kylfingar who traded and raided in northern Fennoscandia and were thus rivals of the Norwegians (Egils saga, p. 27). There have been guesses whether the Kylfingar could be Karelian or Novgorodian merchants, but again it is impossible to say anything about their ethnicity or background based on an ethnonym (Gallén 1984: 253). The greatest value of these passages is as reflections on how the undefined area of northern Fennoscandia was imagined in the Middle Ages and how many groups tried to take advantage of its peoples and resources.
The Norwegian chieftain Ottar describes his long voyage in the north of Norway in King Alfred’s *Orosius*. Ottar distinguished three groups in the north, which he called *Finnas*, *Terfinnas* and *Beormas*. It seemed to Ottar that the *Finnas* and *Beormas* spoke almost the same language (Ross 1981: 18–21; *Orosius*, p. 14). It is possible if not probable that there was more than one group speaking a Finno-Ugric language on the Kola Peninsula during Ottar’s time, at the end of the ninth century (Valtonen 2008; Koskela Vasaru 2008; Ahola & Frog 2014). We do not know anything about the *Terfinnas*, but we may surmise that all of these ethnonyms were used by Scandinavians because there was a need to distinguish the different groups if only when discussing trade relations.

The Bjarmians (Old Norse *Bjarmanr*) have raised at least as many or more questions than the *Kvenir*, and their background has been studied in detail (Valtonen 2008; Koskela Vasaru 2008). Bjarmaland is supposed to have been situated somewhere around the White Sea (Jackson 2002; 1992). The assumptions concerning the Finno-Ugrian background of the Bjarmians is based on two details: it is mentioned in *Orosius* that the *Finnas* and the Bjarmians spoke a language that resembled each other and that they worshipped a statue that was called *Jómali* (*Heimskringla* II, p. 230), which resembles the Finnish word *jumala* ['god']. The evidence is very scant, but it is nonetheless suggested that the Bjarmians could have been people who spoke a Finnic language and later assimilated with the Karelians (Ross 1981: 50; Koskela Vasaru 2008: 430; 2012: 47) or Russians if they inhabited the Northern Dvina river basin (Ahola & Frog 2014). I consider the evidence too scarce to make such conclusions based on the single word *Jómali* (on the problematics of which, see Frog 2014). In my opinion, it would be reasonable to suppose only that the Bjarmians spoke a language that differed from Scandinavian languages and that it may have been a Finno-Ugric language. I do agree with Koskela Vasaru’s suggestion that, whatever the ethnic background of Bjarmians may have been, it is plausible that they were assimilated to another group because they disappear from the sources as do the *Kvenir*. The sources mention only Karelians and different Sámi groups in the area of Kola Peninsula after the mid-thirteenth century (Koskela Vasaru 2012: 54).

The various ethnonyms for groups living north or northeast of West Norse peoples show that there was a need to distinguish these peoples from one another. These peoples were ‘others’ to the West Norse, and they came to represent ‘otherness’ especially during the time of writing the sagas, when the West Norse had already adopted Christianity but their neighbouring Finno-Ugric peoples were still ‘pagans’. It should be noted that the sagas do not present
accurate information from the time of writing down the sagas, but they tend to rely on tradition. Yet their image of the heathen Finnar may not be that inaccurate, because the conversion process among the Sámi people was ongoing for centuries.

**Toponyms Finnland and Finnmørk**

One way to approach the ethnonym Finnr is to look at toponyms Finnmørk and Finnland in the sagas. Because the sagas usually mention that the Finnar lived in Finnmørk, which refers to Finnmark in northern Norway, this detail further supports the idea of the Finnar being a Norse designation for the Sámi. Finnland is used rarely, appearing for instance in Hversu Noregr byggðisk, Fundinn Noregr, Ynglingsaga and Ólafs saga helga in Heimskringla.

Fundinn Noregr gives a similar account that mentions that Þorri was king of Kvenland and Finnland, and that this was east of the Gulf of Bothnia and extended to Gandvik, which was the Old Norse term for the bay on the White Sea south of the Kola Peninsula (Orkneyinga saga 1965: 3). Later in the same text, a sailing route is described including the reference to the ‘Sea of Åland’ in the epigraph of this chapter that is minimal but not inaccurate (Heikkilä; Schalin with Frog). Hversu Noregr byggðisk is a redaction of the same text that mentions that Þorri was king of “Gottlandi” as well as “Kønlandi ok Finnlandi” and lacks much of the topographic information of Fundinn Noregr (Flateyjarbók I, p. 21). The latter account seems not to have independent source value. Fundinn Noregr shows that Finnland was known as a toponym in Old Norse tradition and seems to situate Kvenland and Finnland as roughly in territories of the Baltic Sea region where we consider Finland today and extending to the White Sea. Geographically, the description is general and vague, but it is consistent with accounts of geographical relations and travel elsewhere in Old Norse literature.

In Ólafs saga helga in Heimskringla we are told that, in his youth, the king was on a plundering expedition in the Baltic Sea. He plundered Eysýsla (which is Ösel) and after that it is said that he came to Finnland. The Finnar fled into the woods and they surprised Ólaf and his men. It is said that the Finnar shot at them with bows and arrows so that Ólaf and his men had to retreat back to their ship. Many of Ólaf’s men were killed or wounded. During the night the Finnar conjured up a storm but nevertheless Ólaf and his crew were able to flee (Heimskringla II, pp. 10–11; Fagrskinna, p. 167.) This passage has been of interest to scholars, because it is one of those rare occasions in saga literature where the word Finnland is used and it seems to denote the area of present day Finland.
Moreover, the passage mentions two place names, Herdalar and Bálagarðssíða in a poem, which also refers to the inhabitants as Finnlendingar, not Finnar. Scholars have tried to identify these names with real place names (Julku 1986: 52–91), but I would consider the task impossible (see also Schalin 2014). The place names given in this case are very general, and it is a typical feature in saga literature that distant places are given names which are not necessarily based on geographical information (Schalin 2008). Furthermore, the toponyms (and the ethnonym Finnlendingar) are mentioned only in the poem attached to the saga. The relation between these two is discussed by Johan Schalin (2014). If we consider that the saga was of West Norse tradition, it is highly unlikely that the tradition would contain detailed information about a remote place in the distant east. This does not, however, preclude the possibility that King Ólaf’s plundering expedition was thought to have taken place in Finland.

Finnland is further mentioned in Ynglinga saga, which is the opening saga in Heimskringla and which deals with the kings of the Svear. Whereas Finnmork normally appears with reference to the territory of northern Norway as the antecedent for what is known as Finmark today, Finnland appears used in relation to the activities of kings centered in Uppsala, especially as a location where they undertook battles, raiding and sought to assert their authority. Moreover, Finnland is not simply situated relative to the kingdom of the Svear on the Baltic Sea, but indeed appears to be across the sea, as indicated in Ynglinga saga chapter 19, for example, where an account is given of King Agni who went raiding and attempted to extend his control over territories in Finnland, taking the daughter of the leader of the Finnar who opposed him and returning to Stokksund (thought to be in the area of today’s Stockholm) austan [‘from the east’]. Within Ynglinga saga, the location of Finnland appears to be to the east across the Baltic Sea, which would correspond at least generally with today’s Finland or perhaps Southwest Finland.

Although the account of this saga cannot be considered to provide reliable information about specific historical events, it suggests that the sea-kings of the Svear were sailing across the Baltic Sea on their raiding expeditions and in attempts to extend their power perhaps already prior to the Viking Age. The kingdom of the Svear appears directly opposite Åland across the Sea of Åland, and such marshal activities can be assumed to utilize the sea route which passed the Åland Islands, a sea route that seems to have been in use already in the Bronze Age (see also Heininen et al.) and seems to have remained in continuous use into the Middle Ages (Schalin with Frog). Although the inhabitants of Finnland are referred to as Finnar in the saga prose, the geographical space to
which it refers is clearly distinct from the usual referent of the more common place name *Finnmørk*, associated with Finmark of northern Norway or the forested areas of the Scandinavian Peninsula more generally. Although Åland is not mentioned in these accounts, such activities of the Svear kings would carry them first to Åland and would doubtless affect the polity or polities there. The general geographical situation of *Svealand* and *Finnland* would seem to correspond to parts of Sweden and parts of Finland on opposite sides of the Baltic Sea, and Åland is not a distinguished site in this controversy. If Åland was not viewed in later times as an extension of the growing kingdom of Sweden (Sjöstrand), it raises the question of whether it might have been included in the geography of the ‘other’, as among the lands linked to *Finnland* where a leader could purportedly gather a great force from the diverse groups there (cf. Heinininen et al.). Of course, there is no reason to expect that Åland would be mentioned in prose accounts from thirteenth-century Iceland if Åland lacked any significant position on the geopolitical stage of that era (Heinininen et al.). Whatever the case, the marshal engagements of the Svear with the *Finnar* – if such activities belonged to the history of the Svear kings – would necessarily involve mobility carrying them past the Åland Islands, raising questions of how this may have impacted the local population, and indeed how Ålanders and their identities would have been situated in relation to such conflicts and the groups involved in them (Ahola et al.).

The account of *Ynglinga saga* does not provide proof that the *Finnar* of *Finnland* refer to Finnic linguistic-cultural groups and not Sámi as seems to be the case for *Finnmørk*. The *Finnar* mentioned in episodes of *Ynglinga saga* and elsewhere in saga literature do not differ from the *Finnar* in *Finnmørk*. They are described with the same literary devices: they use magic and their names are connected to winter and coldness (e.g. *Frosti* [‘Frosty’] is the leader of the *Finnar* who gathers a large force to oppose Agni above). The Svear doubtless perceived a difference between, on the one hand, the mobile hunting and fishing cultures that we customarily identify with Sámi languages living to the north of them and inland on the Scandinavian Peninsula as well as elsewhere around the Gulf of Bothnia, and on the other hand, the populations in southern territories of Finland with significantly more fixed-settlement livelihoods and lifestyles, and with whom there were different sorts of trade relations. Although we lack Swedish sources from this period, Schalin (2014) has argued that the toponym *Tafëistaland* (Tavastia/Häme, a region in Finland), attested in a runic inscription dated to the end of the Viking Age, contains the ethnonym *Tafëistar* [‘Taf-Estonians’]. However the ethnonym would be viewed, it would attest to
a differentiation of not just one but presumably other perceived ethnic groups all in the area of Finland. However, the representation of Finnar in the saga prose must be considered from the perspective of Icelanders composing the saga and representing its narrative and events. The representation of the indigenous population as Finnar may simply be an inference from the toponym Finnland on analogy to the toponym Finnmørk with which saga authors were more familiar.

In order to understand the difference between Finnland and Finnmørk, it is necessary to look at the components -land and -mark which have different meanings. Land refers to an inhabited area whereas mark denotes wilderness, forest area or frontier area (Hansen & Olsen 2004: 80). It is possible that Finnmørk was (at least originally) a term for any area without fixed settlements where the Sámi (or similar cultural groups) lived or used resources (Mundal 1996: 102). In this case, the word could have originally been applied to any area beyond domains of settlements as wildernesses inhabited by the ‘other’ rather than referring to a single specific geographical location. This kind of toponym without fixed borders could easily change over time. We could, for instance, pose the question whether Finnmørk originally extended to the area of the South Sámi who inhabited parts of southern and south-eastern Norway in the Iron Age. This is further backed by archaeological research that brings old paradigms of fixed Scandinavian settlements into question (Hansen & Olsen 2014: 98). Again, if -land denoted an inhabited area, we could speculate that Finnland referred to south-western part of Finland as it did in the Middle Ages – the territory that was inhabited by sedentary agriculturalists by the Viking Age, even if the settlements in the area were sparse. This would suggest that the ‘land’ was perceived as settled by Finnar. This remains, however, speculation without decisive proof, and is problematized by the fact that mobility between today’s Sweden and Finland across the Baltic Sea had been ongoing more or less continuously since the Bronze Age: there is no reason to assume that the toponym Finnland is a term that first emerges in the Viking Age, and it is unclear which linguistic-cultural group was referred to when the toponym was coined, or why (cf. Ahola & Frog 2014).

Understandably there were differences between West and East Scandinavian languages when it comes to toponymy. Per Olof Sjöstrand (p.c.) has pointed out that there are occasions in which West Norse languages use different toponyms than Old Swedish, for example the name Järnberaland that is middle and north western part of Dalarna in Sweden: there is no Swedish toponym that would be of the same root. Similarly, there may have been variation or misunderstandings concerning Finnmørk and Finnland in Old Norse sources. The medieval Danish
chronicle *Chronicon Jutensis* [‘The Jutish Chronicles’] provides an example: a place called *Fynlandia* is situated in present-day Småland in Sweden. This may be explained by a conflation by the author of two place names beginning with the element *Finn-* – *Finn-land* and *Finn-veden*, which was considered as a (hundred) district of Småland [lit. ‘small lands’, i.e. consisting of several areas south-eastern Sweden], which could easily result from a weak grasp of place names that held no immediate significance or relevance to the writers or the immediate groups to which they belonged. For this reason, uses of *Finnland* and *Finnmýrk* cannot be expected to be fully consistent in the sources, and it should not be considered at all surprising that Icelanders writing in the thirteenth century would imagine the inhabitants of *Finnland* to be ethnically equivalent to the *Finnar* of the more familiar *Finnmýrk*.

Another detail in *Ólafs saga helga* that is peculiar is that the inhabitants of *Finnland* are called *Finnlendingar* in the skaldic poem by Sigvatr Þórðarson that is attached to the passage. The word choice is in this case conditioned by the metrical structure of the verse: *Finnlendingar* completes four of the six metrical positions in the line whereas *Finnar* would only have completed two. However, this should not be given too much weight because use of *Finnar* could have been easily accommodated by completing the subsequent two positions with an additional word (poetic syntax allowing great flexibility in its relationship to the clause) (Frog, p.c.). The component *-lendingur* stems from *-land*, to designate people who lived in the particular inhabited area (*land*). Although this term could be an ethnonym distinguishing *Finnar* from the inhabitants of *Finnland* in the time of king Ólafr – notably used by one of the poets who was his companion rather than a geographically and chronologically remote Icelander – the significance of this one word remains ambiguous and is not enough evidence to reveal any perceived difference between *Finnar* and *Finnlendingar* – if there was any. (*Heimskringla* II, pp. 10–11.)

To sum up, the northern part of Norway has been known as *Finnmýrk* at least since the Middle Ages. In the Swedish realm, *Finnland* denoted first the south-western part of present-day Finland, also known as ‘Finland Proper’. *Finnland* gradually became synonymous with Österland [‘East Lands’], which was used to designate the eastern half of the Swedish kingdom. However, the toponym *Finnland* was historically maintained and was elevated to designate a geopolitical space that has gradually taken the shape of the present Finnish borders known today. Bjarmia or Bjarmaland and Kvenland do not seem to appear outside of saga literature and later became half-mythical toponyms that appear in learned treatises across subsequent centuries. Bjarmia, for example, is
mentioned on the Kola Peninsula in Olaus Magnus’ *Carta Marina*, published in 1539. Within these varying uses of terms of place, it is impossible to tell whether Åland was viewed as part of *Finland* although it presumably fell with *Finnland* into the broader Österland of the Swedish kingdom. It is impossible to assess whether Ålanders may also have been viewed as ‘other’ to a degree that they might even be grouped as *Finnar*.

**Love and Marriage with the *Finnars***

*Ynglinga saga* contains two interesting passages concerning relationships between Norsemen and the *Finnars*. This saga is structured around and at least in part based on a poem called *Ynglingatal* and potentially the discourse surrounding it carrying interpretations of its allusive and ambiguous verses. It has been argued that the poem could have been composed as late as around the year 1200 (e.g. Krag 1991), but the dominant view in Old Norse scholarship is that the poem has a longer history and its references reflect an oral tradition of that time (e.g. Steinsland 1991; Clunies Ross 1993; Sundqvist 2002). The poem tells about the kings of the Svear, whose family is called Ynglingar. Snorri Sturluson included *Ynglinga saga* in *Heimskringla* because it functions as a kind of introduction to the history of the kings of Norway. In the end of the saga, the king of the Svear, Ingjald, and his son Ólaf trételgja [‘Treefeller’] flee to the east and settle in Värmland. Ólaf trételgja’s descendants became rulers of parts of Norway.

The first interesting passage concerning the *Finnar* in the saga is when the king of the Svear, Vanlandi, is invited to spend the winter in *Finland* (*Heimskringla* I, pp. 28–29). He was invited by Snær [‘Snow’], who was presumably the leader of the *Finnar*. Vanlandi married Snær’s daughter Drífa [‘Snowdrift’], but he did not take her with him back to Uppsala. Instead, he promised to come back for her after an interval of three years. Vanlandi did not return despite his promises. Drífa sent a witch called Huld and her son after Vanlandi in Uppsala. Huld’s task was to bring Vanlandi back to *Finland* by magic or else to kill him. Huld cast a spell which made Vanlandi eager to go to *Finland*. His friends and advisors forbade him and said that the urge was caused by magic. Then Vanlandi started to feel heavy with sleep and lay down. After a short while he cried out that a *mara* (cf. Eng. *night-mare*) was trampling him. People tried to help him, but the *mara* smothered his head so that he died.

The destiny of another king of the Svear was no better. King Agni was mentioned above as harrying in Finland, and where he forced Skjálf [‘Shiver’], the daughter of Frosti, to come with him and marry him. Skjálf asked Agni
to give a memorial celebration for her deceased father, who had been slain in the battle with Agni. A great festivity was organized. King Agni wore a golden necklace, and Skjálf asked him to take care of it. During the party Agni became heavily intoxicated and he went to his tent to sleep. While he was sleeping, Skjálf came with a thick rope and tied it around the necklace. Men loyal to Skjálf then hanged Agni on a tree. Skjálf and her men leapt aboard on a ship and rowed away, presumably returning to Finnland across the sea to the east (Heimskringla I, pp. 37–39.)

Whereas these were marriages of kings of the Svear with Finnkonur ['Finn-women'], another famous (or infamous) marriage of the same sort was told about Haraldr òaðragi ['Fine-Hair'], king of Norway, as his marriage to the Finnkona Snæfríðr. King Haraldr fell in love with Snæfríðr, who apparently gave him some kind of love potion. Snæfríðr had children, but then she died. King Haraldr did not let her body be buried. Her body was uncorrupted, and King Haraldr mourned her for three winters. Þorleifr spaki, who was a loyal man of the king, suggested that they should change Snæfríðr’s clothes. But when the body was removed from the bench, a terrible smell came out of it. The body was burned and all kinds of disgusting creatures came out of it. After this, however, King Haraldr came to his senses and began to rule his kingdom again. (Ágrip af Noregs konungasögum, p. 5; Heimskringla I, pp. 125–127.)

These three episodes are to be interpreted first and foremost on the symbolic level. They present a topos of the sagas: marriages with Finnkonur result in disasters. It may be possible that this marriage pattern has its counterpart in Old Norse mythology, in which gods marry giantesses. For example, Njörðr, god of the sea and fertility, wanted to marry the giantess Skaði, and Freyr was married to the giantess Gerðr. According to Gro Steinsland, this kind of marriage in which two different elements unite is a hieros gamos myth, a holy matrimony and fertility myth of a union of the god with a woman symbolic of the earth. This marriage pattern is extended into the sagas: kings become symbolically equivalent to the gods and giantesses are replaced by Finnkonur. (Steinsland 1991). However, Steinsland’s theory has been challenged and presents only one way of interpreting the marriage topos in the sagas (Clunies Ross 1994: 127; Sundqvist 2002: 35–37, 168). Even if the hieros gamos myth interpretation is contested, it is obvious that the distinction between Sámi and giants can become blurred in the Norse tradition and they could be symbolically and even literally identified (Mundal 1996: 105). Especially the giantess Skaði has been characterized in relation to the Sámi because she is described to have used skis and a bow for hunting (Kusmenko 2006: 25–26). Giants of the mythology and
the Finnar of the sagas share certain features: they frequently have names that refer to winter and coldness (Schulz 2004: 265), as in the names above, and both giants and Finnar were thought to live on the outskirts of the world – or at least outside ‘civilization’. The encounters with giants could take place in forests, mountains or at sea, which emphasizes their nature as ‘other’ – they were not to be encountered in geographically defined places but in places that were defined only topographically (Schulz 2004: 241). Giants were ambivalent figures in mythology. On the one hand, they were opponents of the gods, but on the other hand, gods could marry giantesses, and they were progenitors of important families. Giantesses were associated with the earth, personified by the giantess Jörð ['Earth'] (Clunies Ross 1994: 55–56). Giants also had ambivalent qualities: they were thought to be wise, courageous and wealthy, but they were also ugly and deformed; they represented otherness in the world of the gods, and the same applies to the Finnar in the sagas. The image of otherness of the Finnar may thus be partly informed by a symbolic or intertextual correlation with the corresponding pattern in the mythology. However, the sagas show clearly Christian influence when depicting the Finnar (Aalto 2010: 130–134). The Finnar were defined as ‘others’ because they were not Christian and they practiced magic. The sagas do not thus give actual information about the Finnar, but they convey how they were imagined by their Norse neighbours.

**Finnar as Representatives of Otherness**

It is difficult to find hard facts in the kings’ sagas when it comes to the descriptions of the Finnar. However, I would like to look at the descriptions of magic of the Finnar and what connections it may have for reality. Namely, it is a common *topos* in the sagas that the Finnar are somehow connected to magic (Old Norse *seiðr*) and therefore being a Finnr is used almost as a synonym for a person who is able to use magic. This does not only apply in the sagas. In the Norwegian laws of Eidsivathing and Borgarthing, which stem from the twelfth century, it is forbidden to go to see the Finnar in order to get medical aid or for fortune telling. The punishment was outlawry. Else Mundal has suggested that because the laws had to explicitly forbid people from going to see the Finnar, it was seen as a real problem – namely by the Church and Crown (Mundal 1996). The Finnar’s knowledge of magic challenged the authority of the Church.

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2 Eigi maðr a at trua. a finna. … En ef maðr fuor til finna. oc værðr hann sannr at þui. þa er hann utlegr. (NGL I, pp. 350, 389–390.)
The *Finnar* were associated with the practice of magic in the sagas (and in the laws as well), but it is unclear how this information should be interpreted. As mentioned above, this is a *topos* in the sagas which is further supported by the theory that the *Finnar* in historical texts were in a way symbolically correlated with the giants of mythology. If we consider that the saga texts were products of Christian authors, it is no wonder that the heathen *Finnar* were presented as dubious characters.

Features that are associated with the magic of the *Finnar* in the sagas are shape-shifting, control over the weather, healing, prophecies and control of spirits (such as the *mara* in the case of King Vanlandi’s death). Neither the sagas nor the laws reveal how the *Finnar* practiced their magic, although they mention some forms of it. *Historia Norvegiae* from ca. 1170–80 is an exception as it tells how a man, probably a shaman, makes a soul journey (*Historia Norvegiae* 2006: 62–63). Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that the practice of magic was not something that was exclusive to the Sámi; it must have been part of Norse heathenism as well. Practices that we would consider ‘magic’ can also not be said to have been exclusively negative because there are also examples of practices such as healing that were positively valuated (Dillman 2006: 65–71; Heide 2006: 242; see also Frog).

*Finnar* as representations of otherness function as a counterpart for the Norse people. They represent those qualities that Norse people did not wish to attach to themselves, constructing the identities of both groups through oppositions and contrasts (see also Ahola et al.). Sometimes these qualities are exaggerated and they are not necessarily based on reality, because their purpose was to define something as different from oneself or one’s own reference group. The written sources we have primarily reflect the attitudes of the elite, and the image of the *Finnar* among those who were in direct contact with them on a regular basis must have been rather different.

The position of Ålanders in this construction is impossible to determine. However, the archaeological record shows that their culture and society had a strong background in the Scandinavian culture, but also seems to have become distinct (Tomtlund; Gustavsson et al.; Heininen et al.; Ahola et al.; Frog). At the same time, the Ålanders seem to have maintained close networks with the polities on the mainland of Finland, which would affect their perception of these groups as ‘other’. This makes it more likely that the Ålanders would have designated inhabitants of the mainland of Finland with more specific ethnonyms enabling relevant distinctions between multiple cultural groups (e.g. *Kvenir, Täfeistar*) insofar as such distinctions would be relevant to them.
Following the discussion of Joonas Ahola, Frog & Johan Schalin, it cannot be assumed that they saw all of these groups as *Finnar* or viewed ethnic identity on the basis of a shared or similar language only rather than in terms of a broader constellation of cultural markers. It is correspondingly unlikely that the Ålanders were viewed as ethnically ‘the same’ as cultures on mainland Finland from the perspective of the Svear, yet it is possible that from the more remote perspectives of, for example, Denmark, Norway or Iceland, the Ålanders may have been perceived as ‘not Svear’ and belonging to a cultural sphere of what late became ‘Österland’ – as ‘other’ – and potentially falling into the broad category of ‘*Finnar*’ even if Ålanders might appear more strongly aligned with the Scandinavian cultural sphere according to the archaeological record.

**Conclusions**

Åland as such is absent from the Old Norse sources. It was thus not a very central area in the world of the West Norse people, and it seems not have been one of those lively, fascinating emporia that are frequently mentioned in the sagas. Settlements on the Åland Islands seem to have taken the form of farmsteads rather than villages during the Viking Age (see the discussion in Sjöstrand) and there is no evidence of a major emporium on the islands (Tomtlund). Åland was clearly connected to Mälar region, as can be seen from the archaeological record (Gustavsson et al.) and it clearly held a key position along the *austrevegr* ['Eastern Route'] of Viking trade (Schalin with Frog). However, Lassi Heininen, Jan Storå, Frog & Joonas Ahola have observed that the lack of references to Åland and Ålanders in Old Norse literature may be related to the fact that Åland had dropped off of the geopolitical map by the end of the Viking Age owing to radical economic and social changes: people would just stop talking about it and referring to it after a few centuries if it had been largely peripheral from the start.

As is discussed in other chapters of this volume, Åland appears to have been connected with the eastern cultural sphere of Finland in the first part of the Iron Age (Gustavsson et al.), a cultural sphere associated with Finno-Ugric linguistic-cultural groups and the arena in which Finnic languages gradually became dominant (Ahola et al.). In the Late Iron Age, a radical cultural change took place in connection to immigration from the west and population expansion in connection to the arriving forms of livelihood with the result that Åland exhibits stronger alignment with the western cultural sphere of Scandinavia through the Viking Age (Gustavsson et al.; Tomtlund). At the same time,
especially different parts of Åland maintained contacts with the mainland of Finland, where Finnic languages exhibit an increasing predominance and must have obtained relevance in at least parts of Åland (Ahola et al.; Heininnen et al.). Although the perception of Åland in the Viking Age remains obscure, it was attached to the (north) Finnish legal area in the Middle Ages with no indication that it was perceived as an integrated part of the space of the Svear (Sjöstrand). There is an implication that Åland was perceived as belonging to the sphere identified with the Finnar in sources from Iceland, even if the inhabitants might have been perceived as ethnically Norsemen as a local area of settlement.

The Finnar are not described explicitly in the sagas: they appear occasionally and then usually as minor characters. The word Finnr is usually understood to refer to the Sámi, which has raised questions among scholars concerning why, for example, forefathers of the Finns are not described in the saga literature. One reason could be that the West Norse had little to do with them, and thus the material that we have would not give a complete picture of how these different groups would be perceived, for example, from the perspective of the Svear. Therefore the area and its people are hardly mentioned at all in Old Norse sources, which is understandable considering the geographical distance between Iceland – where the sagas were written down – and the Baltic Sea area. Despite the marginal role that the Finnar have in the sagas, it is interesting that there are several names for (supposedly) Finno-Ugrian peoples given by Scandinavians in medieval sources (Lappir, Sensveinar, Finnlendingar, Kvenir, Kirjálar, Bjarmar). These terms are indicative of a need to differentiate between these groups. It is safest to conclude that these ethnonyms reflect several cultures connected to the Eastern Route (Korpela 2004: 56–60). However, the need to differentiate different groups has probably come up prior to the opening of the Eastern Route, but as we lack written sources for that period, this cannot be demonstrated. This is especially evident in the legendary sagas in which fanciful adventures take place in the distant north and east. However, the ethnonyms and descriptions, often scarce or non-existent in the sagas, are difficult to identify with any historical group of people with any degree of certainty. This problem is magnified by the fact that the term Finnar is used with reference to a wide variety of groups rather than in a formalized, ethnographic way – it appears in some cases to be no more specific than use of ‘Asian’ might be today.

As Jenni Lucenius highlights, the debates about the identities of different cultural groups in the Viking Age is further problematized by the interpretation of Viking Age identities as reflections of our present identity and construals
of our present heritage. This issue has been central to the debates surrounding ethnicity in Viking Age Åland. The transposition of modern frames of reference, viewing language and identification with nation-states as essential formants of ethnic identity, have also tended to be transposed on the early sources, which leads to horribly skewed models of cultures, such as conceiving of coherent and uniform ‘Finnish’ and ‘Sámi’ cultures in the Viking Age based on hypothesized language affinity that is both romantic and anachronistic for a time when such groups would have local, tribal or regional identities (Ahola & Frog 2014; Ahola et al.). We should also not underestimate that the representations in the sagas may be significantly removed from ethnographic realities and be more informed by popular imagination and the symbolic construction of otherness in relation to conventional models such as tropes and mythological models, especially where these reflect Christian authors’ representations of ‘pagan’ others. Although in the majority of sources, the term Finnar appears to refer to Sámi groups, it was itself more generally a term for the ‘other’, defining what Norwegians were not, the most familiar extreme of heathen otherness for Christian writers. By the period of saga writing, Åland had dropped off of the geopolitical map, but in the era of the Christian king Ólafr’s raids in Finnland, the inhabitants of Åland may have been perceived as no less ‘other’ insofar as they belonged to that foreign, ‘pagan’ cultural space, and thus may also, from the perspective of such Norwegian adventurers, potentially have been perceived as Finnar – even if they spoke a dialect of Scandinavian language.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Frog for the time and effort he put into working with me in the development of this chapter. His many comments greatly helped to strengthen it.

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Abbreviations


Saan = North Sámi


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Literature


Questions surrounding the languages of speech communities in the Åland Islands during the Viking Age present a great challenge to research owing to a discontinuity of language and apparently also of toponymy in the eleventh to the twelfth century. These questions are complicated by the modern perception of language as emblematic of cultural identity. This perception leads the identification of language communities in the past to be interpreted as the heritage of language communities in the present. As a consequence, trying to answer questions of language in Åland in the Viking Age becomes entangled with the current politics and debates surrounding language and identities (see also Lucenius; Raninen & Wessman 2014). Language is obviously first and foremost a means of communication. During human history, language has become an important constituent of culture and as such also developed into a feature defining the demarcation of cultural spheres as well as our sense of belonging to them. With the efforts to form national states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an illusion was created that languages could be separated by borders mainly based on geography and government. This trend has now been reversed by globalization and (particularly in Europe) by regional integration. We are now again reminded that, in history, multilingualism has been more of a norm than an anomaly, not only at the level of individuals but also in societies as a whole. For example, a Jew of Galilee in the first decades AD could easily have spoken Aramaic with his neighbour, Greek with his teacher, simplified Latin with a civil servant and Hebrew with his Rabbi.
Any tacit assumptions of this kind are particularly relevant to bear in mind when considering the population of the Åland Islands when maritime mobility and trade networks on the Baltic Sea in the Viking Age involved speakers of Baltic, Finnic, Germanic, Sámi and Slavic languages as well as potentially others. The present chapter does not seek to resolve questions of language in Viking Age Åland *per se*. Instead, it is intended as a general introduction to the problem oriented to non-specialist readers.

It should be stressed at the outset that questions surrounding the language or languages of speech communities in Viking Age Åland will probably never be resolved beyond the most general impressions. The language(s) current in Åland in the Viking Age are easily taken for granted and the questions dismissed; the topic may be circumvented entirely or addressed in negative terms – what *cannot* be said. The present discussion is exceptional as a concentrated address of this topic and its problematics with an aim to explore what (little) *can* be said in positive terms about language in these island communities between Finland and Sweden at this time. This is here considered from different sides: a) what can be extrapolated about the language situation in Åland during the Viking Age by applying generally accepted methodology relevant to historical linguistics; and b) what can be said through conjecture by means of other academic disciplines. This has been undertaken as a cooperative effort by researchers with complementary skill-sets and areas of expertise – historical linguistics and toponymy studies, and folklore studies¹ and cultural semiotics. The language question of Åland is framed in relation to its position in the Baltic Sea region. The lack of direct linguistic evidence is reviewed followed by a discussion of what evidence of the cultural history and contacts observable in the archaeological record can and cannot reveal about languages in Viking Age Åland. There is no doubt that language held an indispensable place in the daily lives of Viking Age Ålanders, but any more specific claim will necessarily advance into hypotheses seeking to negotiate the relationship between the historical context, the empirical (non-linguistic) evidence and theoretical models for relating language to cultural practices and social identities. Any statement about language in Viking Age Åland will involve a degree of speculation, but that does not mean that the question is better unasked, and many readers may be unaware of the range of issues that this question entails. Confronting the limitations of the data simulta-

¹ The field referred to as ‘folklore studies’ differs considerably in different national scholarships. Finnish folklore studies is deeply informed by and to some degree overlapping with linguistic anthropology, although with focus on traditional practices associated with linguistic behaviours, and both how these relate to individual and social identities on the one hand and how these can function as and be applied by individuals as semiotic resources.
neously tests the epistemological horizons of these fields and compelled us to recognize preconceptions and revaluate interpretations as part of this process. What can be said remains limited and hypothetical according to varying degrees of probability, but leads to a basic model for thinking about language(s) in the Åland Islands during this period.

The Problem

In the 1980s, a very convincing case was made by Lars Hellberg (1987, *passim*) that the settlement names in Åland are of a post-Viking-Age type and that their relations with each other and their distribution is consistent with names given in a context of relatively swift and organized colonization. From this toponymy and from evidence that had been produced up to that time within other disciplines such as archaeology, Hellberg (1987: 263) drew the conclusion that settlement in Åland had been discontinued from the late tenth century and that especially parishes, villages and farms had been named beginning from the twelfth century. His reasoning regarding settlement continuity was challenged, most importantly in the 1990s by Roeck Hansen (1991; see especially the discussion of Sjöstrand).2 A major difficulty with the theory of population discontinuity is that it is inconsistent with archaeological record (e.g. Gustavsson et al.) and palaeobotanical evidence (Alenius) that show continuous human habitation. This presents a riddle that is referred to in a number of contributions to this volume.

One should emphasize that Hellberg (1987: 211, 238ff., 265) considers it possible or even probable that single coastal and insular names known by seafarers could be from the Viking Age or before (see Schalin with Frog), a fact that does not alter his big picture regarding the overall (re)naming exercise on the mainland in the twelfth century. The same could be said of attempts to exploit the margins of uncertainty for the chronology of some individual names to date one or two of them to an earlier period. It is easy to agree with Per Olof Sjöstrand:

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2 The most ambitious challenge by Roeck Hansen (1992: 114ff.) as regards the place names is built mainly on arguments outside of linguistics, such as concerning settlement structure and archaeological findings. For toponyms, her primary method is the use of the 5-metre elevation curve in order to show that the supposed naming bases are consistent with Iron Age topography. This attempt is undermined by the fact that she significantly underestimates the shore displacement, indeed to the extent that most of her findings could be used as such to support a dating of the twelfth century. Another attempt to use the shore displacement by Olav Ahlbäck (1952, *passim*) for the Salvik region is problematized by Hellberg (1987: 179ff.). For references on shore displacement, see further Schalin with Frog; Sjöstrand.
The major bulk of the names are quite transparent and easy to interpret without any controversy, and are of types that in Scandinavian place name scholarship are considered to be connected with medieval demographic expansion (this volume, p. 107).

This big picture corresponds to the toponymic aspect of Hellberg’s big picture – his chronology for the vast majority of settlement names. Scientific debate surrounds why this (re)naming occurred beginning from the twelfth century, advocating and contesting scenarios regarding assumed population, depopulation, resettlement and/or reorganisation of settlement.

It is important to point out that a large-scale language shift could not have caused a renaming, because in that case one would assume a much larger share of names phonetically adapted from that hypothetical (presumably Early Finnish) language to Old Swedish (Hellberg 1987: 266ff.). Thus in some respects this picture produces more questions than answers, leaving us with very little to go on as regards the language situation in Åland prior to the twelfth century.

Languages and Contacts: Between East and West

The Baltic Sea region has been an arena of contacts and interactions between diverse linguistic-cultural groups throughout history. To over-generalize somewhat, waves of culture (which is not necessarily the same as waves of people) have arrived in Scandinavia mostly from the south, or from today’s Western Europe, while corresponding waves have arrived in what are Finland and Estonia today first from the (south-)east or from the south along the eastern side of the Baltic Sea. This appears reflected already with the first populations to the region arriving ca. 10,000–9000 BC following the rapid end of the last Glacial Period (Carpelan & Parpola 2001: 78) and continues with the arrivals of different waves of culture through history until the Early Metal Age. Among these movements of populations and culture, Åland appears in many respects as a place of encounters, a site that has been reached and impacted by cultures both east and west. At the same time, it has remained a distinct cultural space through this long history. When considering languages in Viking Age Åland, it is necessary to consider Åland within that frame.

By the Viking Age, Åland had become not just a site for habitation, but a significant site for shoreline-based navigation (see HEININEN et al.; SCHALIN with FROG). Åland has been a maze of expanding and consolidating islands between cultures, east and west. It is situated roughly forty kilometres from

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3 On languages and language contacts in the Circum-Baltic area, see further Dahl & Koptevskaja-Tämm 2001.
the coast of Sweden to the west across a channel known as the Sea of Åland. Today it is only some fifty-five kilometres through an archipelago from the main island at Sund to the mainland of Finland to the northeast, although owing to the shore displacement caused by geological uplift, this distance would have been around eighty kilometres in the Viking Age. The Bronze Age had brought both changes in sailing technologies and in economic networks that incited the mobility of Pre-Germanic-speaking cultures across the Baltic Sea. This led to establishing trading posts and the spread of cultural influence from Scandinavia to the eastern side of the Baltic Sea. In Finland, this process involved the development of permanent settlements and (presumably) some degree of colonization that gradually penetrated through the coastal cultural areas. (Siiriäinen 2003: 58–59; cf. Huurre 1986: 52 map; Vasks 2010: 154–156.) Under this mobility, southern and western Finland rather than Åland presumably became the primary frontier of language contacts between the different linguistic-cultural groups characterizing either side of this part of the Baltic Sea. This effectively consolidated a divide between coastal Finland and the inland, a divide that was inherited from the Kiukainen culture, a divide which persisted until coastal cultures began to spread into the lake basin in the middle of the Iron Age. These sailing routes passing Åland potentially maintained a degree of continuity extending through the Viking Age (Schalin with Frog) and can be considered to have played a fundamental role in the historical construction of Ålandic identities.

The language situation in Åland during the Viking Age tends to be viewed in binary terms that either connect it with the ancestor of Modern Swedish or with that of Modern Finnish. Germanic language areas, which had been developing and expanding on the Scandinavian Peninsula for at least some millennia, were characterized by the mobility and expansion of populations in the Viking Age (one of several such periods in their history). This period was also characterized by the increasing centralization of power to form larger kingdoms in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, which was gradually coupled with the apparatus and religious authority of the Church in the advancement toward nation-states in Northern Europe. The development of the linguistic situation in coastal Finland and in the archipelago through Åland during the Iron Age is much more opaque. The models for the history of languages in Finland have been significantly revised across roughly the past decade. Finnic languages cannot be shown with

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4 For a short, accessible introduction to this topic, see Lindqvist 2003.

5 The spread of West Uralic or Finno-Ugric languages into territories of Finland are significantly later than previously supposed (Kallio 2006; cf. Honkola et al. 2013: 1247–48).
certainty to have been spoken in the Baltic Sea region before the Bronze Age and in coastal areas of Finland before the late first millennium BC. Indeed, the presence of Finnic languages north of the Gulf of Finland before the present era, albeit quite possible, remains hypothetical. The process of language spread remains opaque as does the question of what language or languages were already spoken in these cultural areas or in the Åland Islands and the archipelago during the Early Metal Age. On the mainland of Finland, however, Finnic languages seem to have become dominant among communities especially in Finland Proper and Satakunta. Their territories nevertheless remained very limited in contrast to where Finnish is found today. The groups of Finnic speakers seem to have been in complementary geo-economic distribution with Sámi. Across the latter half of the Iron Age, Finnic culture advanced inland into the Häme region (Salo 2000) and about a century before the Viking Age, groups from Southwest Finland seem to have spread also east to the Ladoga region, likely in connection with increasing economic opportunities in trade (Uino 1997). The extent to which Finnic languages were already present in the Ladoga region prior to that time remains unclear (Saarikivi & Frog 2014; cf. Aikio 2012: 105ff.). By the Viking Age, Finnic languages appear to have become dominant across these territories: many of the place names associated with Germanic languages from this period seem to be secondary, notably based on personal names of Germanic origin or even appellatives of Germanic origin (Schalin 2014), from which one may conclude that Germanic was of wide-ranging social significance (consistent with long-distance trade networks) but perhaps no longer represented by local speech communities.

What should be stressed here is that, throughout the Iron Age, the groups inhabiting Finland, Åland, Sweden and elsewhere in the Baltic Sea region constituted multiple and diverse polities – not ‘nations’ in the modern sense (Heininen et al.). The functioning of individual polities (however simple or complex) is dependent on communication, with an implication of a common socially conventional language for relevant public activities (cf. Emberling 1997):

6 Attempts to correlate the updated chronology of Uralic languages with an archaeological phenomenon consistent with the spread of West Uralic languages have considered the so-called Netted Ware or Textile-Ceramic Culture a likely candidate (Kallio 2006: 12; Parpola 2012: 288). The Textile-Ceramic Culture spread rapidly from the upper Volga in ca. 1900 BC, roughly to Lake Peipus in the south and through Karelia and Finland roughly up to Lapland in the west and north, but this does not seem to have displaced the Kiukainen Culture of coastal Finland (following Carpelan & Parpola 2001: 89; cf. Salo 2000: 48). Accordingly, it remains uncertain whether the populations of coastal Finland and Åland spoke dialects of Proto-Germanic, a West Uralic language, some other Indo-European language or even otherwise unattested indigenous languages of Northern Europe; it is equally unclear what degree of language diversity may have been current at that time.
These could potentially participate in common networks in which the speech communities could be thought to speak dialects of a common language. In practice, however, they only require a common language of communication for relevant spheres where individuals from the different polities interact. Such a common language could be a widely shared language of religious and political authorities like Latin in medieval Europe or situationally determined (and negotiated) by the immediate participants according to whatever languages they had in common. There is also no reason to assume that the east–west contact frontier formed a clear border separating polities of one language from those of another.

**The Challenges of Linguistic Evidence**

In order to study a language of the past, historical linguistics is helplessly dependent on material or immaterial remains of it. At least the following five sources of information could in theory exist, bringing the object of research within reach for the linguist:

1. The language could have left traces in synchronic or near-synchronic written sources
2. The language could have directly descending later representatives in known dialects
3. The language could have left traces through contact with neighbouring dialects (linguistically related or unrelated)
4. The language could have left traces in oral tradition
5. The language could have left traces in toponyms.

No information about the language of the Åland Islands in the Viking Age is preserved in written sources. There are in fact no references to the culture or populations of Åland in the early medieval literature at all (see Heinnen et al.). Somewhat surprisingly, neither the Old Norse saga literature nor the corresponding historical literature in Latin such as the *Gesta Danorum* [‘History of the Danes’] make any identified reference at all to the islands of Åland as such. The references that do appear, like those in the thirteenth-century *Liber*...
census Danie, which contains the so-called ‘Danish Itinerary’ by king Valdemar II, refer to larger land masses as sites for orienting coastal navigation (see Schalin with Frog). Thus category (1) of those above is lacking.

The settlement in Åland declined in 1050–1150 to a state that enabled toponymic discontinuity. Under these conditions, any sparse former population would presumably have been effectively absorbed by the twelfth-century immigrants. In such a scenario, the settlers’ mainland dialects would most certainly, with the continued support of contacts to Uppland and Åboland (the modern administrative meaning of Fi. Turunmaan seutukunta, roughly the south-western part of the archipelago), have overlaid the previous vernacular, to the effect that few significant traces may a priori be recoverable in later Åland dialects. Indeed, the dialects spoken in Åland in historical times fit quite well into the continuum of those of neighbouring counties in Roslagen and Uppland as well as in Åboland, which has also been settled from the west. Åland is in this respect utterly different from Gotland, where insular ‘isolation’ has created not only a separate Scandinavian language but a language forming a subgroup of its own, branching off the family tree earlier than Icelandic (Palm 2004: 329). As regards Åland dialects, they are certainly not known for features that would stand out as excessively archaic in relation to the neighbouring dialects mentioned. The absence of excessively archaic features cannot as such be used as evidence against a high age of the settlement since dialects may have taken nearly parallel paths of development from the earlier Iron Age onwards, provided that contact was close enough. The example of the Öland dialect in relation to neighbouring counties on the Swedish mainland would provide an analogy for such an assumption. In any case, data of category (2) is also lacking.

The possibility of traces of an earlier language’s neighbouring dialects yields no greater possibility for insight. The dialects geographically closest to Åland with roots going back to the Viking Age or earlier are the Finnish dialects of Vakka-Suomi on the Finnish mainland, particularly those in the Taivassalo and Vehmaa Parishes. These are separated by a zone of Swedish archipelago dialects roughly 55–70 km wide. These intermediate dialects are in present-day Vårdö, Kumlinge, Brändö and Iniö; all of them have their roots in Swedish settlement that certainly occurred later than that on the Åland mainland and could hardly have fossilized traces of an earlier vernacular there. Some traces in the Vakka-

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8 In a scenario of complete depopulation, the vernacular in Viking Age Åland would of course have no directly descending later representatives unless, on a purely theoretical note, the population had resettled around 1050, say in coastal Estonia. No claims of any such organized resettlement are known and such a scenario would of course be pure speculation, and by no means necessary to explain Estonian Swedish.
Suomi dialects might nevertheless be expected, especially as Vakka-Suomi seems to have maintained connections with especially north-eastern Åland in the Viking Age (Heininen et al.). However, the difficulty here is increased when it is uncertain even what language of contact should be expected. If it is taken as a premise that a Scandinavian language was the main language on Åland, then evidence of contacts would mainly appear as loan words, but criteria to isolate such influences from other Scandinavian language contacts would be extraordinarily hard to establish without any prior knowledge of the distinguishing features of the source vernacular. In addition, the loan words would be of such a high age that their distribution could be anything from dialectal to general Gulf of Finland Finnic and thus not necessarily discernible locally. Thus data of category (3) lends no support to the investigation of language in Viking Age Åland.

In a process of significant immigration, the arriving populations come equipped with an arsenal of their own traditions that could be utilized in asserting and negotiating personal and social identities (Frog). The discontinuity of toponymy associated with the arrival of large-scale immigration in the twelfth century suggests that the traditions of local Ålanders were displaced no less than the toponymy that they used. As a consequence, there is no reason to anticipate any significant continuity of indigenous oral traditions through this process. If a limited range of such traditions did get adopted in this process, these would be separated by many centuries from the settlement process, with the consequence that relevant cognate traditions may not have survived for comparison in other cultures. If such parallel traditions did survive, it would be impossible to reliably distinguish such long-term continuities from later cultural exchange. Oral traditions about encounters between settlers and indigenous inhabitants are probable in the century or possibly centuries surrounding the settlement process. However, the farther in time these are removed from the events, the more they are likely to advance to ‘legend types’, or popular tales disconnected from specific historical events that will most likely be updated to be meaningful to current cultural circumstances. In other words, if the way of referring to an ‘indigenous Ålander’ became obscure, he would be turned to a ‘Finn’, a ‘Russian’, a ‘Turk’ – something recognizable. Attempting to use such

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9 On the other hand, if an opposing hypothesis were taken that the language were Finnic or Finnic were the language of these contacts, then the possibility of distinguishing one Finnic language or dialect on another a thousand or more years ago is no less problematic.

10 Cf. for example, Swedish legend types (following af Klintberg 2010) in which ‘Finns’ and ‘Laplanders’ may vary (M32, M135, M151, T46) or ‘Finn’, ‘Laplander’ and tattare [‘gypsy’]
oral traditions to reconstruct aspects of centuries-remote settlement history (e.g. Salo 2000: 49) is horribly problematic and, to the present authors’ knowledge, there is no data that could be reasonably applied of category (4).

Data of category (5) – toponymy – is of course the site of difficulty that challenges us here. Major hydronyms tend to exhibit greater historical sustainability, but the hydronyms of Åland are not very old (Hellberg 1987: 233), nor are the names of most islands (Hellberg 1987: 229). However, a relevant hydronym associated with Åland is attested as *Mare Alandh* [‘Sea of Åland’] in the thirteenth-century ‘Danish Itinerary’ by king Valdemar II (Schalin 2014) and as “Allannzhaf” [‘Sea of Åland’] in the (probably) thirteen-century Icelandic *Fundinn Noregr* (Nordal 1913–16: 2; see also Schalin with Frog). This name contains the name Åland, of which the etymology has been a subject of long-standing controversy and may be so old that it stands beyond the scope of relevance to the present discussion (Heikkilä), or even have been coined by seafarers travelling this route during the Viking Age (Schalin with Frog). Other toponyms that could be expected to be of greater age would be harbours, stations for naval support and formations that would be visually helpful for navigation (Hellberg 1987: 289). There is in fact a series of such names that appear to be associated with a sailing route along the south of Åland on the way to Staraya Ladoga. These all appear to be names that antedate the twelfth century. Etymologically, they appear to be Germanic. Their continuity in use can be directly associated with their ongoing significance to seafarers through the period of other toponymic discontinuity. (See further Schalin 2014; Schalin with Frog.) However, it is methodologically problematic to attempt to use these names as indicators that the earlier population spoke a Norse dialect for precisely the reason that they were preserved: these were seafarers’ terms. These terms could have developed among seafarers without necessarily reflecting the toponymy of the indigenous population. The twelfth-century immigrants could then have adopted and applied these toponyms to the landscape in the settlement process. At the present stage of research, there are in fact no toponyms that can be reliably dated to the Viking Age that would be primarily or wholly dependent on continuity of use by inhabitants of Åland. This caveat also concerns the Early Finnish originals of the names phonologically adapted to Swedish (such as *Sålis*) that are discussed in the following paragraph. Thus it appears that the present state of toponymy research in Åland can offer no reliable perspective on language spoken in Åland during the Viking Age.

(M61–M65), ‘Finn’ and ‘Norwegian’ (M66–M67), ‘Laplander’ and ‘gypsy’ (T66), or ‘Finn’ and ‘beggar’ (Q41).
Toponymy nevertheless offers additional significant information by the presence of many medieval names of Finnish origin in Åland. This has been argued beyond doubt, and at least some of these names have been old settlement names, notably *Posta* and *Sålis* in Hammarland as well as another *Sålis* in Saltvik (Huldén 1982: 97ff.; Hellberg 1987: 136ff., 219ff.; FSB, s.v. *Posta, Sålis, Sjöstrand*). Although wide consensus has prevailed that the latter part of *Sålis* (attested 1537 as *Sollogx, Solloss, Sollox, Sollagx*) derives from Early Finnish *laksi* ['inlet, bay'], there has been uncertainty whether the first element would have been *Suo*– ['marsh, wetland'], *Suola*– ['salt, salty'], *Suoli*– ['intestine-shaped'] or *Saari*– ['island']. Only the last proposal, which has been made by Lars Huldén (FSB, s.v. *Sålis* with references), would actually provide regular parallels for the vowel of the first syllable. In a similar way, giving precedence to phonological arguments, one should in fact challenge the origin for the last element as well. Since the vowel indicates a long Old Swedish /ā/ the original should rather have had a long vowel as well, which is not in line with how Early Finnish is reconstructed. All in all, some amount of inexplicable variation is often encountered in toponyms for a number of reasons (Schalin 2014).

As already pointed out, the names phonetically adapted from Early Finnish into Old Swedish are, on the whole, not very numerous. Even if many of the additional names that Lars Huldén (1982, *passim*) has suggested to be of Finnish origin indeed would be so, the fact would remain that the toponymy of Åland is very Swedish in comparison to other similar contact zones (Hellberg 1987: 266ff.). This scarcity would in effect constitute counter-evidence should a shift of an earlier dominant language be suggested. As a result of such a shift, one would expect a much larger share of phonetically adapted names. Therefore one should indeed not *a priori* assume a continuity of Finnish speaking settlement from the Viking Age. However, it suggests that settlers of this period included speakers of Early Finnish, rather than being exclusively Swedish-speaking. The parish name *Fin(na)ström* and village name *Fin(na)by* in Sund and some other names containing the ethnonym in genitive plural referring to the Finns’ habitations have customarily been cited as evidence for a relatively early trickling in of settlement, perhaps beginning in the twelfth century, just a little bit earlier than the Swedish settlement (Hellberg 266ff.). Mikko Heikkilä also draws attention to a few toponyms containing the element *Lapp*-, which could be an indicator of Sámi immigration. Whatever language was spoken in Åland

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11 Cf. Huldén 2012: 243, in which he retreats from some of the 1982 proposals.

12 The element *Lapp*- in medieval place names can be associated with the Sámi, and this has been done increasingly in recent decades. Yet, it is still good to remember that it does not necessarily
during the Viking Age, toponymy suggests at least some degree of linguistic diversity around the twelfth century.

The acquisition of available land could itself be a motivator for settlement. However, the use of ethnonyms for ‘Finns’ in these place names stimulates the question of whether these might be motivated by geopolitical factors. Names of this type have been associated with the strategic establishment of settlements to secure access to or control of routes for commerce. This mechanism of settlement is assumed for names like Dal(a)kar(la)by ['Village of the Settlers from Dalarna'], Gottby (< Gutaby) ['Village of the Settlers from Gotland'], Gästrikaby ['Village of the Settlers from Gästrikland'], Svi(a)by ['Village of the Settlers from Uppland'] and Öningiaby ['Village of the Settlers from Öland'], all of which are present in Åland (Hellberg 1987: 25–35; although cf. Sjöstrand). This presents the possibility that ‘Finnish’ settlements in twelfth-century Åland may not have been independently motivated for the acquisition of land. The need for the Swedish rulers to claim land along strategic sea routes and river mouths increased after the break with the rulers in Russia. These names could be an indicator that the Swedish rulers had sufficient authority over some Finnic language populations to mobilize their settlement in Åland (cf. Heininen et al.). However, the political situation and structures in Finland at this time are obscure as are the potential draws for immigration to Åland. Further research in this area could increase our understanding of twelfth-century history in the wider region through materials that have yet to be explored in this light.

follow from the toponym that the people referred to were Sámi-speaking or even that they were ethnically Sámi. In any event, the toponym at least witnesses that the people were culturally ‘other’ and were perceived as differentiated by cultural traits, practices or livelihoods that the Scandinavian population associated with the Sámi.

The schism between Rome and the Byzantine Church in 1054 complemented the tensions that developed between the political powers of Sweden and Novgorod with religious controversy. This clearly came to effect populations in Finland: in 1229, papal requests were sent out for sanctions against trade with un-Christian ‘Russians’ until they stopped causing trouble for the Christian Finns (FMU 74–76).

Unto Salo (2000) has suggested on basis of the lack of silver hoards in Vakka-Suomi that this area had some kind of a taxation relation to Svealand already during the Viking Age. This argument presumes that the silver hoards were made under threat of foreign (often Swedish) troops and that belonging to the taxation system protected against such hostilities. Tuukka Talvio (2014) suggests that the lack of silver hoards in Vakka-Suomi was due to trade being conducted here predominantly in the form of barter. Nevertheless, the material culture in Vakka-Suomi indicates very vivid connections contacts with Svealand.

The existence of villages named Fin(n)by in Tavastian regions far beyond the borders of Finland Proper, like those in Närpes, Porvoo, Pernå and Ruotsinpyhtäa, are similarly curious.
Language, Culture and Identity

Inquiry into the language(s) of Viking Age Åland is not only motivated by an exclusive interest in that language situation for its own sake, but rather by an interest in the culture, ethnicity and identities of populations of Åland at that time and their relationships to other populations. It was observed above that the question of language in Viking Age Åland is entangled with questions of the heritage of cultures today. This entanglement is rooted in a view of language as emblematic of cultural and ethnic identity – i.e. if Viking Age Ålanders spoke the Viking Age equivalent of Swedish, then they were Swedish and their history belongs to the heritage of Swedish history; if they spoke Finnish, then they were Finnish and their history belongs to the heritage of Finnish history. This rather superficial approach warrants problematizing here, but for the moment it brings forward two significant points. First, that the interest in language is closely aligned with an interest in ethnic identity. Second, that – without explication – claims about language in Viking Age Åland will be interpreted by many readers as claims about ethnic identity. This issue takes on greater immediacy because the limitations of information that can be produced by direct and indirect linguistic evidence requires turning to what can be inferred from other evidence of culture and cultural practices reflected in the archaeological record. Hellberg (1987: 256), for example, did the same, and simply took for granted that the Iron Age population of Åland was linguistically an extension of that on the Swedish mainland. In other words, he assumed that if the archaeological culture in Viking Age Åland appeared Swedish, then Swedish was their language. He makes this point rather briefly and probably does not recognize it as being particularly contested and therefore does not elaborate the argumentation. This line of interpretation, for which Hellberg is here only a representative of his time, is extremely problematic and it is therefore warranted to introduce some of the issues attached to it as well as the approach used here.

Throughout the twentieth century, historical ‘cultures’ identified with a particular reconstructed language or archaeological culture would be represented on maps as spread over huge, coherent and mutually exclusive geographical areas. This tends to give an impression that these defined areas were more or less like modern nation-states: that the people there all spoke in a more or less uniform way with a more or less uniform shared identity, even if they lacked electronic and printed media to help maintain internal cohesion and collective identity. This image tends to overlook the dependence of language continuities and change on speech communities, their communication networks and their
relationship to one another across time (cf. Aikio 2006: 42–43). Over time, language does not correlate very well with other features of culture and humanity (Häkkinen 2010, *passim*). We should also not assume that the movements of every archaeological culture is necessarily linked to only one language group (Saarikivi & Lavento 2012: 207) or that the spread of language is necessarily a spread of a complete culture or requires large-scale immigration (cf. Mufwene 2007). Nor should we assume that the presence of one language in an area or in a community excludes the possibility of others: multilingual environments are a commonplace both today and throughout history, and within such environments people can capitalize on the full range of linguistic resources at their disposal.  

English is today spoken as a first language in very different cultural settings and by populations whose genetic heritage are exceptionally diverse. This situation is hardly quite as unique for human history as we may imagine. Although the technological, economic and political circumstances are quite different today, the same fundamental processes that are involved in the spread of English across speech communities of diverse cultures were already functioning long before the Viking Age. Iron Age population movements from the steppe into Europe were comprised of networks of groups speaking quite different languages, illustrating that migrations bringing tremendous cultural impacts are not dependent on a uniform linguistic group. It is also possible for culture to spread without dependence on the spread of language, as illustrated by the spread of Christianity, which was accompanied by technologies, material symbolism, architecture and burial practices that were spread across countless language communities with the outcome of making them appear more culturally uniform in the archaeological record. Commodifiable artefacts in particular – whether a fibula broach in the Viking Age or a soda can today – do not necessarily carry any information about the linguistic proficiency of the person who possesses or disposes of it. The correlation of material culture observed in archaeology with language and language-based aspects of culture presents tremendous methodological challenges (Saarikivi & Lavento 2012).

Archaeological cultures are identified and distinguished according to features of material culture and other evidence of practices that leave enduring traces in

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16 There are numerous social environments in which multilingualism is an inherent part of the culture, especially where speech communities are relatively small (on cultures in Papua New Guinea, see e.g. Salisbury 1972: 54ff.; in environments of modern cultures, see also Agha 2015 and works there cited). Within such communities, it becomes obvious that language is only one means of communication (Haugen 1972: 325; Harris 1990: 203) in which the language used in communication may be chosen on basis of e.g. the location of communication (Salisbury 1972: 55) or its social context (Mühlhäusler 2002: 36ff.).
the synchronic environment. This is why many early archaeological cultures are designated by an emblematic variety of pottery. Language and (most) so-called intangible heritage do not leave such traces and therefore can only be reconstructed or inferred through diachronic outcomes of their history of use. Both types of evidence in general can only be interpreted with the support of comparative evidence or with the support of theoretical frameworks that have been developed through comparative evidence. A central problem is that linguistic and archaeological evidence present different categories of data that reflect different aspects of culture and cultural practices (see Saarikivi & Lavento 2012; Ahola & Frog 2014). At best, each of these types of data presents only a certain range of features of a particular culture and the image produced cannot be considered complete. The problem is complicated by the fact that even within one category of data, the distribution of features targeted by a researcher will not necessarily form a tidy isogloss because different cultural traits can be shared and transferred across groups, and not all features are meaningful to the groups themselves in the same way (Emberling 1997: 297). Hellberg’s inference that Swedish was the language of Åland in the Viking Age is based on an assumption that culture is an objectively defined and tidy package that is transferred with populations without considering how those populations may have perceived their own culture, which features were relevant to maintain as distinguishing them as a group, and which were not. This can be considered the difference between culture and ethnicity: whereas culture is the objective manifestation of a group’s situated practices, ethnicity is the subjective perception of groups and the emblems of culture characteristic of them (e.g. Baden 1995: 33). Thus when someone is identified as of a particular ethnus, this essentially means he or she is presumed to ‘perform’ and have capacity to ‘perform’ a particular culture – i.e. he or she is expected to be able “[t]o assume responsibility for the way in which one carries out [acts/activities]” with the implication of “a standard of judgement against which one’s performance is to be evaluated” (Bauman 1977: 21, on performance). In other words, identification as a member of an ethnus is to be perceived as a metonym of a distinct culture as living practice. Attention to ethnicity is attention to what elements of culture are meaningful to those who manifest it and to those who see others manifest their own or different cultures. This has led Geoff Emberling (1997: 296) to claim: “Understanding ethnicity, then, is a necessary precondition to adequate understanding of the past.”
In this sense, ethnicity is a social construct of perceived belongingness to one group as opposed to a different group. Rather than being an inherent quality per se, ethnicity is based on a social perception of traits that are viewed as meaningfully differentiating broad social groups (see e.g. Weber 1968: 385–398; Barth 1969). If culture is approached as made up of cultural features in various constellations, ethnicity is the socially constructed identity perceived as linked to a culture. In this process, the culture itself (whether one’s own or that of another group) is not perceived objectively with uniform attention to all of its features. Instead, certain sets and constellations of features as opposed to others become socially recognized as indexing the ethnicities that are bearers of that culture. Language, a technology for making pottery and the conventions for ornamenting it are all only individual features in the constellation, even if they may be individually perceived as emblematic of an ethnicity and an expectation for bearers of such an ethnic identity. Such features may also include dress, cuisine, architecture, social behaviours and (of course) physiological features. Cultural immersion instills to the relevant semiotic competencies (Frog) and habitus (Bader 1995) as the equipage of an ethnic identity while the social process of constructing the image of an ethnos determines which cultural features are valorized, stigmatized or simply ‘invisible’ (Lotman 1990: esp. 58).

As an era of mobility, contacts and cultural interactions, the Viking Age likely produced an environment in which ethnicities may have been continuously negotiated. On the one hand, the clear distinction of established ethnic categories could persist while individuals could flow across that threshold (Barth 1969: 9). On the other hand, interaction between groups “both requires and generates a congruence of codes and values” (Barth 1969: 16), leading to some degree of convergence at least in spheres and situations of their immediate interaction. The notion of an ‘ethnos’ or ‘ethnicity’ as a distinctive qualifier is not unproblematic when addressing a historical culture through limited data. The challenge presented by the archaeological record is determining which cultural features would have been seen as socially meaningful, which would not, and how relevant meaningful features might be reflected in archaeological data (Emberling 1997: 311). This issue is augmented by the “double subjectivity” (Geary 2014) necessarily involved in interpretation: the researcher’s relationship to the data is necessarily subjective in attempting to gain insight into subjective perceptions of a remote culture. Methodologically, this motivates looking for

17 For a discussion of the term’s background and history of use, see Emberling 1997: 300–304.
18 The process considered here corresponds to the phenomenon discussed by Asif Agha (2007) as enregisterment.
multiple co-occurring (and contextualized) indicators of meaningful differentiation. There remains, however, the difficulty that the archaeological record will necessarily only preserve a certain range of features characteristic of ethnic identities (Emberling 1997: 316–318, 325), and without writing, language is not among these. The picture in the archaeological record may be complicated by the fact that groups may perceive themselves as sharing an ethnic identity while adapting their practices in relation to, for example, livelihoods and resources in the immediate environment (Barth 1969: 12). It is also not always clear whether indicators of a distinct historical group qualify as an ‘ethnos’ or as something else – such as a ‘Viking’. Especially in archaeological evidence, it can be difficult or impossible to determine whether a social category being distinguished is one of ethnos, gender, age, occupation or status, etc. We should also not underestimate potential diversity and dynamics both within and across groups in the historical environment of the Viking Age. At the same time, an ethnic category is always contextually determined, hence an Ålander may have been perceived as belonging to one of several different ethnic groups when in Åland among different inhabitants of the Åland Islands, but then as an ‘Ålander’ when abroad, participating in a broader, collective Ålandic identity (cf. Emberling 1997: 304). We should not expect evidence of historical cultures to be able to produce information about ethnic identities comparable to what might be accomplished through modern ethnographic fieldwork. Any inference about language in the speech communities of Viking Age Åland on the basis of the archaeological record is an inference developed on theories of how language connects to the constellation of features characterizing a culture. Considering how those processes are socially enacted across a period of centuries must take into consideration the ability of language to index identities – and ethnic identities in particular – or the result will be a two-dimensional interpretation like that of Hellberg.

**Evidence of Culture and Contacts**

In Åland, the archaeological record offers indications of shifts in the strength of cultural connections east and west across the Iron Age. Although this does not itself indicate the language of speech communities on the islands, it is important as a frame of reference for considering language in this cultural arena. In this section, the evidence of cultural contacts will be reviewed and the question of how this relates to language will be returned to in the following section.
At the beginning of the Iron Age, Åland appears strongly linked to this eastern cultural zone. The so-called Morby Ware pottery type seems to have emerged in Western Finland around the beginning of the Iron Age in ca. 500 BC (see discussion in Asplund 2008: 218–222). The Åland Islands seem to exhibit common cultural features with settlements on the south-western coast of Finland of this period and artefacts of Finnish type have been found especially in northern parts of Åland (Kivikoski 1963). The Morby Ware pottery type exhibits strikingly close ties with pottery in Northern Estonia and might therefore invite a correlation with the diaspora of Finnic language and culture. Most probably, this pottery may be linked to increased networks of contact and trade that also extended to the eastern parts of Central Sweden. (Asplund 2008: 210–231, 300–301.) Moreover, this is the era of the “technological quantum leap” of the introduction of iron-working technologies (Salo 2006: 31), which may have been essential to, among other things, making agriculture a main source of livelihood in these areas (Solantie 2005: 37). Rather than a direct correlation of Finnic languages with Morby Ware pottery, Morby Ware pottery is illustrative of the methodological problems of correlating archaeological cultures with the language situation in Åland during the Viking Age or in any other period. With these reservations on language, culture and archaeology, however, Åland presumably was closely linked to a system of peer polities in territories to the east of Åland that endured through the first half of the Iron Age. This appears to situate Åland in the same network of peer polities engaged in cultural exchange in which Finnic languages came to be predominant, whether or not Finnic languages advanced to a common language for populations in Åland.

The strong alignment of Ålandic culture(s) with cultures to the east exhibits a shift in the late Migration Period and early Vendel Period, when rapid population growth and settlement expansion is observable in the archaeological record (Callmer 1994: 18; cf. Huurre 1979: 108–109; Roeck Hansen 1991). Immigration appears to have been significant in this process, although rather than migration from a single part of Sweden, immigrants likely arrived from more than one region, and probably from more than one culture (Callmer 1994: 18–19). This involved significant changes in livelihoods, settlement patterns, burial practices and presumably a range of other aspects of culture (Tomtlund; Gustavsson et al.; Frog; Heininen et al.). However, the indigenous population should not be assumed to simply disappear. A significant immigration process would necessarily affect the existing population, their social organization and settlements. A rapid transition to pastoral and agrarian livelihoods could equally affect rapid population growth in any local population adopting these arriving
subsistence strategies (cf. Zvelebil 1998: 16). Funerary practices in particular suggest primarily Swedish connections (e.g. Edgren 1984). The material culture nevertheless retained partly Finnish features and small-scale immigration from Finland has been considered probable (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984: 293–294). The material culture exhibits connections to eastern Baltic cultures as well (Gustavsson et al.). Other practices, such as those related to participating in the seal-oil economy, potentially have a remarkably long-term continuity in the local culture (cf. Gustavsson et al.; Storå 2000). In parallel with such evidence of material culture, local intangible culture very likely bore similarly diverse features within these small local populations.

The social processes which took place in this period are a mystery, but it is apparent that there was not a simple displacement of the preceding culture by a new population arriving from Sweden. ‘Who’ participated in the population boom is also unclear, but this did not produce a comprehensive discontinuity of culture. Instead, Ålandic culture seems to have developed a distinct local culture as an outcome of this process. The significance of Scandinavian impact on mortuary culture suggests a degree of uniformity in public ritual behaviour connected with belief traditions and religious practice. These practices also show that populations in Åland characterized their dead in terms of agricultural practices in spite of a mixed subsistence economy. In other words, they represented their dead as people who farmed and raised livestock in accord with the arriving cultural models rather than (as far as we can see) more evenly representing their associations with a diversity of livelihoods, some of which were assimilated from the indigenous culture(s). Such burial practices can be considered a self-characterization of the social identities of ‘Ålanders’ insofar as the basic practices seem to exhibit general uniformity rather than the diversity found between Sweden and Finland or even only within Sweden. Although the local material culture presents variation and was probably paralleled by variation in intangible culture, there is nevertheless a clear dominance of features from Scandinavian influence in the observable ritual life of communities and these cultural features can be considered cultural traits meaningful for the performance of (ethnic) identities.

Although Åland is discussed and conceptualized as a coherent and uniform cultural space, the archaeological record shows diversity in livelihoods and cultural practices (Gustavsson et al.). The strong ties of the archaeological culture to Sweden are paralleled by later evidence that Åland was also politically linked to Sweden. It has been thought probable that Åland was incorporated into the expanding kingdom of Central Sweden during the Viking Age.
(if not before), yet this would not resolve how Åland was perceived at that time (Heininen et al.). Within the broad and flexible framework of shared mortuary ritual, there appear symbolic activities such as the clay paw rite and the deposition of a piece of red sandstone (Tomtlund). The clay paw rite is a distinctive part of burial rituals that emerged uniquely in Åland in the seventh century: a small clay model of an animal’s paw is placed on or near the cremated remains of the deceased. The rite is an indicator of the emergence of a distinctive culture in Åland, the symbolism of which is viewed as reflecting influences from a Finnic or other West Uralic culture. In any case, it manifests a performance of social identities and appears regionally centered in Åland. The co-existence of different ethnic groups in close interaction inclines them to converge, reducing the number and perhaps pronouncedness of distinguishing cultural traits, yet this does not mean that ethnic differentiation will be lost even across centuries. The historical maintenance of such ethnic identities in ongoing contact is, however, not accidental: it requires some degree of the social structuring that prescribes situations and conditions of interaction, allowing for articulation [of ethnic identity] in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors (Barth 1969: 16).

Distinctive regionally centered practices could be features linked to distinguishing ethnic identities within Åland, or may have emerged as cultural features emblematic of differentiating ethnic identities that gradually, in a process of cultural convergence, become more narrowly associated with kinship relations, religious identification or other identity within an increasingly consolidating ‘Ålandic’ identity.

Within Åland, there was likely a strong correlation between networks of shared cultural practices and speech communities, acknowledging that communities speaking the same language may potentially be associated with different livelihoods and cultural practices that would distinguish them in the archaeological record (Saarikivi & Lavento 2012: 200–201). The conceptualization of the Åland Islands as a cultural space is not unreasonable, but it may have been comprised of a network of local or regional polities in interaction rather than necessarily forming a single kingdom or commonwealth with a unified administrative structure. Elsewhere in this volume, it is suggested that Åland as a geographical space may have been, at least for some period of time,

19 On evidence of the rite and its areal distribution, see further Callmer 1994; Gustvasson et al.; on the connection to belief traditions and possible connections with Finnic or West Uralic influence as potentially more subtle and complex than considered in earlier scholarship, see FroG.
divided between two distinct polities (Heininen et al.). Populations likely also distinguished themselves from one another at the level of local ethnic groups perhaps comparable to phratries or clans, although it remains unclear to what degree such social identities may have been linked to polities. Among these, communities in different areas exhibit different degrees of connection to cultures east and west (Gustavsson et al.). Especially at the beginning of the Viking Age, north-eastern parts of Åland seem to have been engaging in contacts with polities in south-western Finland (Heininen et al.). These contacts are suggestive of having a language for mutual communication (which does not mean having the same first language) and notably oriented to territories where Finnic dialects had advanced to dominance (suggesting that Finnic dialects were practical and presumably esteemed). Even if the question of the primary language of the Ålandic population is left open, the presence and relevance of different languages in interactions with outsiders may have varied considerably in different areas.

The mobility of island cultures in the Baltic Sea region seems to have been a significant factor for both their development and for their local economies. The Åland Islands, for example, maintained trade relations with the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea already in the Bronze Age (Tuovinen 2011: 31). Evidence of silver coins in Åland indicates that Ålanders participated in trade networks differently than populations on the Finnish mainland (Talvio 2014). Proportionate even to other places in Scandinavia, the archaeological record suggests that there was considerable wealth in Åland relative to its size and population, suggesting a thriving economy in the Viking Age until the mid-tenth century (Tomtlund; Gustavsson et al.). Trade seems to have been significant to Ålandic communities to a degree that is unlikely to reflect the commodification of local resources alone. Although much less significant in the silver trade overall than other insular communities such as those of Gotland and Öland (cf. Wessman & Raninen 2014), the relative prominence of silver in Åland suggests that Ålanders may have been active in these trade networks in a manner to some degree similar to them. Trade in silver was itself oriented toward cross-cultural markets: communities producing furs and related resources as

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20 Cf. the social distinction of groups according to (to some degree selective) alignment with a mythic ancestor found among the Khanty (Siikala & Uljašev 2011). It warrants caution assuming that different (hypothetical) clans in Åland necessarily viewed themselves as forming a coherent ethnus rather than an allegiance. Emberling’s (1997) position that “[e]thnicity extends the kinship idiom to include groups larger than the family, clan, or lineage” (1997: 302) presents an elegant hierarchy of belongingness, but discounts the potential for ethnicity to converge with lower organizational units under certain conditions.
commodities for trade did not, in general, exchange these for silver. Silver on the Eastern Route seems not, for the most part, to have remained among the populations acquiring and trading furs. Instead, the furs went south while the silver went into Scandinavia, indicating that the trade with the hunting populations producing the furs was not predominantly in silver (cf. Heininen et al. 2014), but rather mediators acquired such goods and traded these for silver that they could then accumulate. Thus evidence of the acquisition and accumulation of silver in Åland is evidence of orientation of at least parts of the population toward mediating roles in the trade networks along the Eastern Route and/or participation in ‘international’ trade economies in the Baltic Sea region to the west and south. A significant relevant indicator of the eastern silver trade for the Ålandic economy is also attested by the fact that, when the flow of silver was interrupted in the tenth century (Tālvio 2014), the flow of material wealth into the economy of Åland also seems to have stopped (Tomtlund). It therefore appears that the participation of Ålanders in this international economy was perhaps largely dependent on this eastern silver economy.

Insofar as Åland does not exhibit a Viking Age trade center of its own, it is reasonable to assume that participation in such trade had a strong orientation outward. A relevant indicator of Åland’s participation in trade is the establishment of the so-called clay paw rite mentioned above in the Meryan cultural area (a West Uralic language closely related to Finnic). The clay paw rite is a distinctively Ålandic practice that can be reasonably assumed to be connected to belief traditions. In the ninth century, following the opening of the silver trade, the rite appears at Timerēvo (seven kilometres from today’s Jaroslavl’) around the time it was founded, and at the associated near-by sites of Petrovskoe and Mihkajilovskoe. Timerēvo is among the most important sites along the Volga exhibiting a strong Scandinavian presence (see e.g. Duczko 2004: 190ff.). From here, the rite was assimilated by the local population and spread considerably, only disappearing with the transition to inhumation practices (see Callmer 1994: 17, 30–40). The rite is so distinctive that its appearance in these two areas can be assumed to have resulted from contact rather than being independent developments. Both the chronology and locations are consistent

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21 Technically, ‘Merya’ as used in medieval chronicles refers to a social, political or ethnic group rather than to a linguistic group in the modern sense (Saarikivi 2007: 94–95).

22 The clay paw rite is only otherwise attested as an isolated phenomenon in Södermanland Sweden (Callmer 1994: 17), where it does not exhibit establishment as even local cultural practice and thus is also most reasonably attributable to the mobility of Ålanders, perhaps even as a single Ålandic family moving into this area.
with these contacts occurring in connection with the emerging silver trade. The appearance of the clay paw rite only here has been considered to show that at least some part of the Norse population here had its roots in different areas from the Norse people in other regions of Eastern Europe (Duczko 2004: 193).

The rite is characterized by the fabrication of a material artefact for use in a burial ritual. This distinguishes it as a cultural *practice* rather than the transfer of artefacts as commodified goods in trade and makes its spread dependent on agents capable of communicating that practice. Moreover, the practice involves the activity of artefact production rather than the symbolic enregisterment of circulating artefacts (like swords or silver coins) as emblematic of e.g. economic status, social power or other aspects of identity. The assimilation of this practice by other groups therefore reflects not only a social ascription of symbolic meaning to the artefact but also suggests motivation for adopting artefact production and its establishment as an extended part of ritual activity anticipating the use that resulted in the clay paw artefact’s deposition in a burial. Contact must therefore have been sufficiently intimate to affect the symbolic activities of ritual practices and, by implication, belief traditions of the local population. This process can be viewed as the assimilation of a new feature into the evolving constellation characterizing social identities within an ethnos, and potentially advancing to a feature of ethnic identity (which notably does *not* require a comprehensive change in practices). It may be noted that this rite did not remain static but was accompanied by innovation and possibly changes in its significance. In theory, the transmission of cultural practices could be affected by a single individual with sufficient social authority and influence to impact the indigenous population (whether actively or passively regarded as a model, but necessarily as an individual communicating the practice). As a social phenomenon, however, this is most likely symptomatic of the presence of Ålanders in eastern trade and their influential presence at least at trade centers in this area along the Volga. (See further FROG.) Evidence of the clay paw rite is interesting in the present context because the transfer of ritual practices linked to belief traditions can be assumed to be dependent on language-based communication.

Material culture suggests that, overall, the Åland Islands were strongly linked to Scandinavian culture and associated identities to the west. At the same time, Åland appears throughout the Iron Age as an arena of contacts between the cultures to the east and to the west, and such contacts appear still vital in the Viking Age. The diversity within the archaeological record suggests that
these various contacts both affected local populations and that local populations also engaged in ongoing processes of negotiating identities with one another. In these respects, Åland can be described as a contact zone, “or [a] social space where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt 1991: 34). Within Åland, the “asymmetrical relations of power” appear probable for the immigration processes that brought about a broad cultural shift prior to the Viking Age and perhaps in the (re)colonization of the twelfth century. During the Viking Age, polities or ethnic groups within Åland may have been in more symmetrical relations of power. However, we should not underestimate that, following a basic phenomenon observed in anthropology (Lévi-Strauss 1952; de Castro 1998), that the ethnic groups with which Ålanders identified themselves or Ålanders as an ethnic group quite probably regarded themselves as superior to at least some of the other cultures with which they were in contact. Indicators of alignments and contrasts in the archaeological record suggest that in the Viking Age these populations may in general have regarded themselves as closer to ‘Scandinavian’, especially in the public social sphere. Coastal ‘Finns’ are more likely to have been regarded as ‘other’ (cf. Aalto), even if the groups or polity in north-eastern Åland may have had a greater degree of convergence with e.g. the inhabitants of Vakka-Suomi, as could have developed through their history of contacts. Such ‘othering’ was still more likely in the case for Balts, Slavs and other cultural groups with which they had contact. At the same time, the Viking Age economy of Åland exhibits connections with the silver trade, which equally situates Ålanders in mobile networks and trading centers that qualify as contact zones. The expansion of the clay paw rite can be seen as an outcome of interactions in such contact zones, with a high probability that the adaptation of this rite into local practice reflects perceived power relations between the foreigners associated with the center of commerce and the local populations.

**Considering Language(s) in Viking Age Åland**

Concerning the language environment of Åland, as observed in the opening of this chapter, Hellberg’s general picture of the discontinuity in toponymy holds for the present state of research. Future research may challenge some existing etymologies and perhaps offer views on microtoponyms that have eluded the attention of etymological investigation. The present discussion complements this with the observation that the toponyms that can be assigned an earlier date do not necessarily offer accurate information about the language spoken
in Åland during the Viking Age (following Schalin with Frog). Overall, however, the paucity of place names adapted from Early Finnish suggests that there was not a pronounced presence of these language speakers at the time when the existing toponymy became established (Hellberg 1987: 266ff.). The extent of discontinuity in toponymy that would be used by those living on the islands rather than only by those sailing past it remains a mystery. As the archaeological record presents evidence suggesting some degree of continuous habitation (Alenius; Gustavsson et al.), the lack of toponymy assimilated by immigrant populations raises significant questions about the relationships between arriving and indigenous groups. If these relationships did not involve the communication of toponyms, any indigenous population was likely proportionately quite insignificant to the immigrant population, and communication between these groups was potentially either closed or even hostile (cf. also the model proposed in Sjöstrand). Whatever happened in this process, the discontinuity of toponymy is likely in part attributable to social factors in the immigration process. As a consequence, the information about the language in Viking Age Åland can only be broadly inferred from data supplied by other disciplines.

The primary evidence for cultures in Åland during and prior to the Viking Age is accessed through archaeology. Inferences about language on the basis of archaeological data are necessarily speculative and conditional on interpretations of sometimes ambiguous evidence. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the development of hypothetical models accounting for the available data are without value. It remains highly uncertain what language(s) were current in Åland prior to the immigration from areas of Sweden and the population expansion that eventually produced the culture of the Viking Age. Language was necessarily carried by immigrant communities and it can be inferred that a dialect or dialects of Scandinavian language were current in Åland at the time of population expansion. This would be alongside whatever indigenous language or languages were spoken. It is uncertain whether or to what degree language was viewed as emblematic of identities for arriving or indigenous populations.

Åland was situated in the midst of vital intercultural trade routes. When considering speech communities on these islands, the situation of island culture has important implications for language development as it also does in the case of Gotlandic mentioned above. Language is maintained through speech communities and their networks. Water geographically defines the spaces of island-based speech communities. This places constraints on interactions of that speech community on the one hand while mobility by sea allows the develop-
ment and maintenance of contact networks with a greater degree of selectivity on
the other. In other words, one community has the ability to maintain networks
with more remote communities as opposed to those that are geographically
closest to it. The population of Åland has never been very large. Smaller speech
communities of only several hundred individuals or a few thousand speakers can
more easily negotiate innovations or even a complete language shift (Saarikivi &
Lavento 2012: 212). These conditions are conducive to the development of
distinctive dialects among such insular communities. They also create a situ-
ation in which immigration of any extent has an immediate impact on the local
culture. The question that this raises is how the indigenous groups identify
themselves and whether or to what degree they valorize certain cultural features
as emblematic of ‘us’ and others as emblematic of ‘them’.

When considering the implication of how contacts, changes reflected in
material culture and the significant changes in cultural practices affected
languages and language use in Åland, the question in many respects becomes
one of language ideology, or the social set of feelings and beliefs about language
and its use in the relevant speech communities. Language ideologies can, for
example, valorize the language or dialect of a community as a central emblem of
identity with its capacity to persist in the wake of otherwise potentially radical
and comprehensive cultural changes. It is possible to put forward evidence of
language ideologies among Germanic populations that resisted, for example,
influences from other languages, such as the extremely limited range of Celtic
influences on Anglo-Saxon or Icelandic. If such an ideology were associated
with the Iron Age immigrant population that provided such fundamental
foundations for the collective culture of Åland in the Viking Age, it is probable
that the cultural transition also involved a transition to a (perhaps synthetic)
Scandinavian dialect as the primary language. It is, however, equally possible
to bring forward examples of linguistic assimilation to the environment, as in
Novgorod or Brittany, as well as examples of assimilation with significant impact
on the local vernacular, as in the development of Manx Gaelic on the Isle of
Man. Research suggests that when communities of modern insular populations
receive more or less permanent incomers, the established population tends to
emphasize distinctive, indigenous features in their languages and dialects (Labov
Thus populations in Åland may have upheld a language ideology that sought to
maintain their established language(s) in the wake of immigration and arriving
cultural influences. However, the change in burial practices and assertion of
identification with the agricultural practices of the arriving groups support the
possibility that the Norse language was valorized and held a prominent role in communication networks among Ålandic polities. In the centuries leading up to the Viking Age, the form of language spoken in Åland would nevertheless develop into a distinct dialect, although its degree of differentiation from other dialects cannot be predicted. This does not exclude other languages from remaining current in some areas or the maintenance of distinct ethnic identities within the broader cultural area. The valorization of a Norse language might nevertheless lead to a gradual language shift throughout the islands. Evidence that Åland remained a contact zone suggests that competence in the language of cultures on the coast of Finland retained value and currency, at least among some speech communities, especially in north-eastern Åland.

Language Competence and Trade

From the above discussion, multilingualism in Finnic and Scandinavian seems probable among at least parts of the Ålandic population. Such multilingualism has potential relevance for trade, which is necessarily dependent on communication (linguistic or otherwise), and for which relevant linguistic competence is undoubtedly an asset. The founding of Starya Ladoga ca. AD 750 is emblematic of the draw that anticipated the opening of the Eastern Route, which involved not only Scandinavians but also groups from Southwest Finland. Whatever was behind it, this draw was presumably also at least known in Åland. Staraya Ladoga was founded in what appears to have been a predominantly North Finnic (Vepsian) dialect area while other North Finnic groups seem to have positioned their settlements along water routes where they could presumably mediate and potentially control trade with inland areas to the north, and it is probable that Finnic languages played a prominent role in cross-cultural interactions in this environment (Ahola & Frog 2014). It is thus

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23 Sámi dialects quite probably had some presence as well as being a language with which perhaps more Scandinavians would have had contact previously, but Sámi areas were inland to the north – the direction in which Finnic languages were slowly beginning to spread. In addition, the influence of Germanic language on Finnic was already considerable (see below) as were models of culture and social order and even evidence of heroic ideology (Ahola 2014; Frog 2014; Heininen et al. 2014), which together suggest that Finnic linguistic-cultural groups had undergone a “congruence of codes and values” (Barth 1969: 16) with Scandinavian – and also Slavic – cultures through intensive participation in the same networks. The direction of loans between languages is an indicator that the relative valorization of Finnic was in an asymmetrical relation to Scandinavian and Slavic, but in all probability such ethnic differentiation of Finnic participants in these networks would nevertheless change contextually to a greater degree of belonging when set in relation to mobile cultures of e.g. Sámi speakers – and, by association, their language would also be seen as belonging to the network more than languages of other groups.
noteworthy that the Slavic ethnonym for the Scandinavian Novgorodians seems to derive from a Scandinavian term but was borrowed from a Finnic language rather than deriving from Scandinavian language contact directly (see Schalin 2014 and works there cited). In this period, the North Finnic dialects are still believed to have been mutually intelligible (cf. Kallio 2014). Multilingual Ålanders would be decidedly equipped for trade in these environments.

As a West Uralic language, the Finnic languages have a completely different basis than Indo-European languages, such as the Germanic, Baltic and Slavic: even something as basic as counting is based on unrelated vocabulary. Finnic language communities were, for the most part, at a remove from Scandinavian language communities, separated by the Baltic Sea. This makes it less likely for Finnic languages to be common in multilingualism in Scandinavia more generally. This was a period when competence in additional languages was developed through social interaction independent of formalized schooling and without the aid of phrase books and pocket dictionaries. This means that, as Scandinavian activity began orienting to penetrate via the inland routes to the east, the numbers of Scandinavian speakers with Finnic competence was probably relatively low – if only because opportunities to learn the language would presumably be largely limited to those already engaged in trans-Baltic trade or perhaps born to Finnic brides. Among those individuals, the majority probably had only quite rudimentary language skills, in which case unfamiliar dialects could present an obstacle like a different language. Of course, there would also be Finnic speakers with Scandinavian language competence, although the development of that competence would suffer the same constraints. Within this environment, multilingual competence could potentially become commodifiable knowledge on which individuals could capitalize as an economic and social asset (Heininen et al. 2014). This situation would progressively change as the Eastern Route opened and as the multilingual networks of trade centers to the east functioned across increasing generations. However, especially as early interest was not likely limited to those already possessing relevant language competence, a relevance or need would be produced for intermediaries and translators for individuals or

24 It may also be observed that the name for the Finnic sky-god *Ilmari appears to have been adapted into Permic languages to produce the Udmurt theonym for the supreme sky-god Inmar/Ilmar (see Frog 2012: esp. 33). This loan suggests an impact on belief traditions and presumably religious practice that would require Finnic language speakers to be in a position of authority and respect in interaction with a culture quite far to the east.

25 Translators may have been important for many travelling along the Eastern Route, although they may vanish especially from narrative sources as mediators of communication. Ahmad ibn Fadlan’s description of a funeral ritual of the Varangian Rus’, for example, differs as a travelogue
groups wielding the economic capital. It may also be noted that Ålanders appear as culturally ‘Scandinavian’ in the archaeological record: if Ålanders were filling such mediating roles, they would potentially be regarded by Scandinavians as ethnically ‘us’ rather than ‘other’ and accordingly valued with preference. The resources available for conversion into economic capital were otherwise limited in Åland: linguistic competence could provide a form of cultural capital that could be converted into the sorts of economic capital reflected in the archaeological record and thereby into social capital within Ålandic polities.\textsuperscript{26}

The archaeological record presents only outcomes of the activities along the Eastern Route without indications of how languages and language networks functioned in practice, which remains hypothetical. In general, Ålanders are not distinguishable from ‘Scandinavians’ in the archaeological record, which makes it impossible to determine the degree of their activity in specific roles and locations. The exception is the appearance of the distinctively Ålandic clay paw rite at the Viking Age center of Timerëvo along the route of the Upper Volga in the Jaroslavl' Oblast (e.g. Callmer 1994; Tarsala 1998; FroG; Gustavsson et al.). Timerëvo emerged in the ninth century as a trading center and settlement founded with a pronounced Scandinavian presence. Scandinavian activity seems first to have reached an established center of Meryan territory now known as Sarskoe Gorodishche on in the Sara River near Lake Nero, not far from Rostov. Timerëvo emerged shortly thereafter, presumably by the Scandinavians and those associated with them opening this trade route. (Duczko 2004: 190.) This route appears to have extended to the east from the Ladoga region to Lake Beloye, which correlates with Finnic language spread (Vepsian). The Lake Beloye region was an area to which Meryan also appears to have spread, creating a contact zone for North Finnic and Meryan language groups where multilingualism was likely to develop. As a consequence, this presumably constructed an environment in which North Finnic could function as a contact

\textsuperscript{26} This possibility would be comparable to the strategies employed by Icelanders to situate themselves as the poets and propagandists of kings and earls in courts in Scandinavia and to maintain a reputation in those courts for their ability to narrate history. In that case, competency in poetic composition or historical narration provided forms of commodifiable knowledge that could function as cultural capital to be converted to political and economic capital in courts of Scandinavia, which could then in turn be translated into social capital when returning to Iceland (see further Wanner 2008). The comparison is interesting because it was quite significant for the economy of Iceland and for (the elite of) Icelandic society as well as for constructing the image of Icelanders abroad, yet the number of Icelanders capitalizing on these competencies appears limited and the activity of that limited number of individuals did not produce an image of Iceland as a wealthy and luxurious society in the archaeological record.
Map 1. West Uralic, Germanic, Baltic and Slavic groups in Northern Baltic Sea region around AD 1000. Stars indicate significant sites of settlement and trade that were, with certainty, established by AD 1000; dots indicate corresponding sites in the Finnic speaking regions, that were probably established by AD 1000. Circles indicate roughly approximate areas of distinguishable tribal/ethnic entities associated with Finnic languages that are mentioned in the historical sources and/or established in the archaeological record with a reasonable degree of certainty; squares indicate similar tribal/ethnic areas associated with Indo-European languages; a dashed line indicates that the cultural area or identity under consideration is uncertain; labels without circles indicate that specifying group identities and/or their locations are problematic on the basis of historical and archaeological sources. However, they are reconstructed in their approximate areas on the basis comparative and reconstructive historical linguistic methodologies.

Key: F = Finnic tribes; B = Baltic tribes; Sv = Slavic groups and activity areas; G = Scandinavian groups; E = Other (extinct) Finno-Ugrian groups; S = Sámi groups; MG = Mobile groups (some probably Sámi, but many of which must have spoken other languages). (Source: Saarikivi & Frog 2014.)
language with Meryan groups. Hypothetically, the same environment would be conducive for fluent Finnic speakers to develop competence in Merya (if only at a practical level). The site at Timerëvo was the result of opening this route deep into the Meryan language area (E2 in Map 1). The appearance of the clay paw rite at this site is noteworthy because the practice of this burial rite is dependent on the community of the living rather than on the culture and beliefs of the deceased. Its appearance in Timerëvo thus most likely suggests a social presence of Ålanders in the settlement. 27

The spread of this rite practice into the local Meryan populations does not simply suggest close contacts, but contacts with practitioners of the rite in social or political positions of prestige or authority or otherwise situated to influence the local population more directly, and through whom the rite and presumably its significance could also be communicated. The archaeological record does not yield any direct information about language, but it does yield information about contacts. The nature of these contacts suggests impacts on understandings of the otherworld or the journey to it actualized through funerary ritual performance (see Frog). The clay paw symbol is not simply a commodity: this is a small and visually unremarkable artefact fabricated specifically and exclusively for the rite; this practice is unlikely to be transferred independent of the meaningfulness of the symbol and its function in the rite, and it can be reasonably assumed that this was dependent on linguistic communication. This leads to the interesting question of whether that language would be most probably Scandinavian, Finnic or Meryan. The pronounced presence of Ålandic culture precisely along the trade route where Finnic language competence would be viable for the greatest distance raises questions of whether this curious – and perhaps accidental – case may reflect Ålanders capitalizing on linguistic competence during the opening of the Eastern Route.

No discrete methods or broader methodology have been developed for assessing the potential degree of reciprocal intelligibility of historical dialects and languages. However, a few observations may be made here. Although a continuum of languages and dialects spread to the east and southeast of the Lake Ladoga region, these rapidly moved into different language areas where Finnic (or Sámi) language would not be viable for communication without the development of new language competence. Finnic languages were on the

27 The death of an individual Ålander among non-Ålanders would likely not be accompanied by the rite while its practice by a group of Ålanders on a trading expedition could potentially accompany a burial abroad, but then the practice of the rite but would not exhibit a local social practice (cf. the isolated example of the rite found in Södermanland, Sweden: note 22 above and Frog).
western periphery of the West Uralic language and dialect continuum and contacts with especially Germanic languages and culture had a transformative impact on them. From West Uralic to Late Proto-Finnic, seven out of nineteen consonant phonemes were lost completely and another two changed significantly while many consonant clusters changed and new ones became possible. Finnic languages were thus differentiated from other Uralic languages at the level of phonology. At the level of vocabulary, the attested word stems inherited into Finnic, whether originally borrowed into Pre-Finnic language stages or endemically Proto-Uralic, exceeds 400 by a somewhat uncertain margin. This can be compared to the 500–800 items with a reasonably reliable Germanic etymology that would have been in use in Early Finnish by the sixth century, not to mention some 200–250 with a Baltic etymology. Some of these borrowings were in high-frequency vocabulary like ja ['and']. Thus, the early Germanic influence on Finnic was considerable indeed and can very well be compared with the French superstrate in English, for instance (Kallio, 2000: 95ff.). To draw on a rough modern analogy, this would make a Finnic speaker learning, for example, Meryan something like an English speaker learning Swedish or German: it would certainly require the development of a special competence. Finnic language fluency would nevertheless provide a significant foundation for developing basic competence, whereas a speaker of a Scandinavian or Slavic language would have no such advantage: Merya would probably be for them about as remote as Arabic or Hebrew. The reverse for speakers of Merya would, of course, also be true: competence in Finnic languages could be developed with relative ease in comparison with Scandinavian or Slavic. The relevant point here is that the potential for developing a fair degree of competence in communication with Meryans with the ability to communicate complex concepts and beliefs is most probable for someone beginning with Finnic language fluency than for someone without it. Of course, someone fluent in a

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28 It is very hard to classify whether ostensive Sámi-Finnic etymologies are genuinely Pre-Finnic and moreover we do not know how many word stems were there in the Viking age that has gone extinct in all Finnic languages.

29 A number of 518–1077 has been counted in Kylstra et al. 1991–2012, according to particular criteria defined there; see also Kallio 2012.

30 It might be noted that this substrate vocabulary would in some respects make it easier for Scandinavian speakers to develop rudimentary communication skills in Finnic as opposed to Merya or Sámi.

31 This degree of difference is nevertheless conditioned by the role of Finnic languages in multicultural areas and networks among West Uralic speakers on the one hand, and the degree to which Finnic languages and their speakers became connected with the networks of Scandinavians and Slavs on the other.
Sámi dialect might be at a still greater advantage with Merya *per se* owing to the changes in Finnic, but they would lack the advantage of the Vepsian–Meryan contact zone as an arena in which Finnic language competence could provide the primary medium for developing basic competence in Meryan. This is all very hypothetical, but it presents a model for considering both how individual Ålanders could have actively capitalized on the Eastern Route while Åland itself remained quite marginal in Northern Europe, as well as an explanation for the rather mysterious appearance and spread of an Ålandic rite in Meryan territory (even if in practice Ålanders were linguistic mediators rather than the social and economic authorities *per se*). It is therefore at least possible that some Ålanders actively sought to capitalize on their linguistic competence with the opening of the Eastern Route. It thereby becomes noteworthy that the appearance of Ålanders in Timerëvo would appear to follow to the limits of where North Finnic language could bring them, where they could then build a new competence on that base to penetrate another language area.

**Closing Perspectives**

It is not possible to resolve the language that was conventional to the public social sphere in Viking Age Åland. The language spoken cannot be directly traced to any surviving languages nor has it left discernible traces in other dialects of the same or different languages and there is no toponymy preserved which can be connected to the inhabitants of the Viking Age (and therefore their language). The culture of the archaeological record suggests a predominance of Scandinavian influence. This extends to burial practices, and thus the ritual life of the community, as well as to settlement organization. Scandinavian models are of such range and scope that they likely extended to models for many or most socially structuring conventions such as an institution of laws (Heininen et al.). Scandinavian language was almost certainly established in this process. The riddle, however, is how this may have interacted with the language spoken by the indigenous population – a language which itself cannot be identified. This riddle is complicated by the fact that Finnic dialects presumably spread across the same period to make Finnic the dominant language in coastal areas by the Viking Age, and it is not possible to assess whether Finnic language penetrated Åland in this process (or indeed before the arrival of Scandinavians).

Whatever language is hypothesized for the local populations, archaeological evidence that Åland was a cultural contact zone suggests that Åland was also a multilingual environment, even if multilingualism was not uniform across
speech communities.\textsuperscript{32} Without subscribing to which single language would be most prominent in Åland, this would nevertheless conform to more general expectations about language competence in the greater number of communities at that time – i.e. that most people active in public social activities were not monolingual. This multilingual competence could potentially have functioned as a form of commodifiable knowledge with the opening of the Eastern Route. Individuals capitalizing on such commodifiable knowledge would offer a possible explanation for the economy of Åland in the Viking Age (cf. Heininen et al.) and also for the curious establishment of an Ålandic burial rite at Timerëvo, although it cannot be demonstrated that the Ålandic presence in Timerëvo is linked to extended trade through Finnic areas and opening the trade route from Lake Beloye deep into Meryan territory. Nevertheless, these traces of evidence of the roles taken by Ålanders present the possibility that within the constellation of features characterizing Ålandic ethnic identity would be precisely a variety of multilingual competence – at least along the Eastern Route.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Pauli Rahkonen and Arja Ahlqvist for their valuable insights and discussion on questions of Merya language which have contributed to strengthening this chapter, and also Janne Saarikivi for the benefit of more general conversations on languages in the Viking Age. Within the present work, the authors have contributed to varying degrees in individual sections: JS has been centrally responsible for the sections titled “The Problem” and “The Challenges of Linguistic Evidence”; “Languages and Contacts: Between East and West” has been a collaboration of JS and F; “Evidence of Culture and Contacts” and “Considering Language(s) in Viking Age Åland” have been a collaboration of JA and F; F has been centrally responsible of “Language, Culture and Identity” and “Language Competence and Trade”; all authors have cooperated in the development and coordination of all sections. Frog’s contribution to this chapter is based on research completed within the framework of the Academy of Finland project “Oral Poetry, Mythic Knowledge and Vernacular Imagination: Interfaces of Individual Expression and Collective Traditions in Pre-Modern Northeast Europe” of Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki.

\textsuperscript{32} It perhaps warrants stating explicitly that the hypothesis of multilingualism in Viking Age Åland does not entail the same multiple languages for all communities: the mobility enabled by water may have made, for example, Baltic or Slavic languages relevant for communities in some parts of Åland but not for others. Although trade and livelihoods have been emphasized in this discussion, connections through exogamous marriage and historical kinship should not be underestimated as potential factors.
References


PART III
CONTEXTS, CONTACTS AND PERCEPTIONS
CONTEXTS, CONTACTS AND PERCEPTIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

Mobility and seafaring can easily be considered the most characteristic feature of the Viking Age. Åland is comprised of an archipelago where people have moved since the island rose above the surface of the Baltic Sea. By the Viking Age, this situated Åland in a strategic position in relation to trade routes, and not least in relation to the Eastern Route along which Islamic silver flowed into the Baltic Sea region beginning from the Viking Age. Seafaring was unambiguously significant to Ålanders as well. This importance in Åland was not least owing to the situation of an island community in which water travel held a central role. Cremation burials indicate that parts of boats or whole boats were burned on pyres, which certainly in some if not most cases held symbolic, ritual significance (Gustavsson et al.). Mobility was fundamental to long-distance trade along the Eastern Route, in which Ålanders also seem to have participated (Ahola et al.). This type of mobility is linked to toponymy – place names – through which geography is communicated, referred to and discussed. Johan Schalin with Frog pick up the theme of language from the preceding section and discuss the few toponyms that have probable continuity from the Viking Age. They show that these place names seem to most probably have developed among seafarers during the Viking Age. Accordingly, they in fact offer no indication of the language of the indigenous population at that time, yet they are a testament to the significance of Åland to seafarers and a continuity of that significance into the Middle Ages.

Identity only comes forward as a relevant issue when groups with differing identities come into contact. Different signs of historical contacts can thus warrant special interest when considering questions of identity. Among other things, such contacts are produced through immigration. The topic of toponymy is taken up in this context by Mikko Heikkilä, who sketches the language
situation in Southwest Finland and Åland and its reflections in historical data. Part of the controversy surrounding identities in Viking Age Åland is linked to the question of the history of the Swedish-speaking population of Finland and whether they have continuity form the Viking Age. Whereas place names in Åland do not present reliable information about settlement continuity and the language of Viking Age inhabitants, Heikkilä reviews questions of possible Scandinavian language continuity indicated in place names in the archipelago in order to assess whether Scandinavian settlement had already extended so far to the east in the Viking Age. This discussion complements the views in Sjöstrand and Ahola et al. with perspectives on language presence in this wider, framing context.

Åland is situated quite centrally in the northern Baltic Sea, and intercultural connections have always marked the cultures there. Lassi Heininen, Jan Storå, Frog and Joonas Ahola situate Åland’s position in a broader geopolitical context of Northern Europe. They carry forward the topic of seafaring and mobility to discuss different routes that may have linked to Åland and especially the varying degrees of connectivity of different parts of Åland to other regions. This discussion picks up the question of the historical relationship of Åland to the Svear and their kingdom from which Åland was probably considered a distinct territory and polity (cf. Sjöstrand). Heininen, Storå, Frog & Ahola also consider the cultural variation internal to Åland (see Gustavsson et al.) and consider whether this may reflect internal ethnic or political diversity and indeed whether Åland may have at one time been home to more than one polity. The discussion of this chapter develops a dynamic frame against which to consider Åland. It is in many respects exploratory, opening new lines of possible interpretation that can be tested through future inquiry.

When considering culture and identities of the Viking Age, perhaps the most alluring topic of inquiry concerns mythology and religion. Åland presents quite intriguing data for consideration in this area, such as the so-called ‘clay paw rite’ (cf. Ahola, Frog & Schalin), and the several so-called ‘Thor’s hammer rings’ that have been found (cf. Tomtlund; Gustavsson et al.). How these should be interpreted, however, faces the same problem as interpretations of language in Viking Age Åland. In order to approach this problem and to provide a frame for discussion, Frog introduces Åland as a cultural area as a contact zone situated in the Baltic Sea region and puts forward a model for approaching mythology (in a broadly defined sense) within that larger cultural area. This model is then applied as a methodological frame for making inferences about the mythology and associated conceptions behind ritual practices reflected in
Åland’s archaeological record. This contribution pulls together diverse topics and discussions from the preceding chapters and forms a concluding chapter to the volume as a whole.

The four chapters of *Contexts, Contacts and Perceptions* advance towards synthetic interpretations based on multiple sources and interdisciplinary approaches. These discussions help the reader to contextualize different cultural bases for the identification of the Ålanders during the Viking Age. The approaches are in some areas exploratory and also break new ground. They will certainly offer a valuable basis for developing future discussion.
TOPONYMY AND SEAFARING: 
INDICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF 
NAVIGATION ALONG THE ÅLAND ISLANDS 

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Perhaps the most emblematic feature of the Viking Age (AD 800–1050) is seafaring. Indeed, the term vikinge, attested already in (probably) ninth-century runic inscriptions was used with reference to expeditions across the seas. Later, sources from thirteenth-century Iceland unambiguously use the expression fara i vikinge [‘to go on a freebooting voyage’] in connection with sea-raiding and the word for a person conducting such activities, vikingr, hence meant ‘freebooter’. Thus the Viking Age can be said to take its name from seafaring activities.

The use of the word vikingr to refer to a pirate is, however, an outcome of a long semantic chain. In Old English, the word wicingas (m.n.pl.) is attested before the period of Viking raids and the oldest meaning of the noun was probably not associated with raiding. The long-dominant view was that the term originally referred to a seafarer from Vik(in) (f.) [‘The Norwegian Skagerrak coast’] (VAEO, s.v. Viking; S. Hellberg 2008). The arguments are, however, strong that a masculine Scandinavian noun *wikingr [‘seafarer’], which formally could even have been cognate with OE wicing (m.), is best understood as having been derived differently and that the word originally had a meaning associated with long distance seafaring in some more general sense (Heide 2005; T. Andersson 2007). Even if this interpretation seems to gain ground, the debate is still ongoing whether the masculine noun was derived from the abstract feminine *wiking [‘voyage performed in rower-shifting turns’] (Daggfeldt 1983; Heide 2008) or directly from some nautically specialized meaning that may have developed for the strong verb *wik(w)ing [‘to give way; to turn (away)’] (Mees 2012). The precise semantic and derivational sequencing
will probably continue to be debated, as will the particular stage of which Germanic language the word was initially derived from. Within this discussion, however, the nineteenth-century attestation cited by Thorsten Andersson (2007: 10ff.), according to which the Swedish verb *vika* has carried the meaning of ‘give way [to a new shift of rowers]’ should be given due attention. Whatever the history of this term’s semantics, it underwent a shift that linked it to quite a specific field of activity which in many respects directly mirror’s the narrowing of attention in thinking about the Viking Age itself.

The emblematic role of seafaring in this period is certainly valid. This role was an outcome of the sophisticated application of seafaring technologies that Scandinavians had developed during the two previous centuries. The light, lean Viking ships had a shallow draught. This made them suitable for rowing as well as sailing the open sea. They could be used to navigate shallower inland water routes as well as sail directly onto gentler shores and row out again without difficulty. (Heininen et al.) These developments were gradual, without a simple break in continuity from earlier periods: rather than any single development or innovation, it was a series of developments and their combination (cf. Johnstone 2001: 115–117). However, the onset of the Viking Age might be described as a watershed produced from a constellation of factors that affected how seafaring technologies were used and how they were perceived (see also Ahola & Frog 2014). Raiding was only one small part of Viking Age nautical mobility, which more generally led to the development of networks of contact, trade and communication that defined Northern Europe as a unified space for the first time (Heininen et al. 2014). Probably raiding and freebooting was even less dominant along the so-called *austrvegr* or Eastern Route, where hit and run tactics was not as viable due to the topography of rivers.

The situation of the Åland Islands in the Baltic Sea roughly midway between Roslagen of coastal Sweden and the south-western tip of Finland places it in a key position for navigation. Aspects of seafaring and its significance for populations in Åland are discussed elsewhere in this volume (Gustavsson et al.; Ahola et al.; Frog), as is the geopolitical situation of Åland in the Baltic Sea region and in Northern Europe more generally (Heininen et al.). The present chapter turns attention to evidence of the significance of Åland for Germanic language seafarers as reflected in some place names associated with the Åland Islands.

1 “veko från sin plats och lemnade roddbänkarne åt en ny afdelning”.
The Toponymy in Geographical and Historical Context

The Åland Islands are situated roughly forty kilometres from the coast of Sweden and, in the Viking Age, the easternmost of Åland’s major inhabited islands was separated from the mainland of Finland by some 80 kilometres through an archipelago. Sailing routes from the coast of Sweden across the channel known as the Sea of Åland and from there via the archipelago seem to have been established already in ca. 1500 BC (Siiräinen 2003: 58–59). It is probable that such routes in the Viking Age ultimately have at least some degree of continuity since that time rather than being periodically ‘rediscovered’. Once across the Sea of Åland, it is probable that there were two major sea routes: one along the southern parts of the archipelago branching also towards the Gulf of Finland, and the other shortcutting across the north-western parts of Åland and the archipelago toward the Ostrobothnian coast of Finland (Heininen et al., esp. Maps 4 & 5). Although the sailing routes themselves may have had long-term continuity, the degree of activity along the routes fluctuated considerably over time. Shortly prior to the Viking Age, there appears to have been a significant rise in economic activity in the Ladoga region of Karelia, which became a centre for contact and trade through networks extending to the east, west, north and south. Scandinavians played a central role in connecting these networks to the rest of Northern Europe as the Eastern Route became an open channel of trade.

The opening of these trade networks was not exclusive to Scandinavians: it appears to have motivated immigration from western Finland to the shores of Lake Ladoga already across the eighth century (Uino 1997: 174–179). These immigrants can be assumed to have followed indicators of potential economic or social gain to the east. The precise nature of this emerging environment remains uncertain, but Scandinavians clearly played a significant role in the founding of the trading centre Staraya Ladoga (Old Norse Aldeigjuborg [‘Fortified Town of Ladoga’]), which can be given a terminus ante quem of AD 753 according to dendrochronological evidence (Kuz’min 2008). The Scandinavians seem to have traded mainly in furs and weapons. However, changing situations to the south led to a rather rich and rapid opening of fur trade networks which carried a flow of Islamic silver into the Baltic Sea region at roughly the beginning of the Viking Age (Talvio 2014; Heininen et al.; cf. Kovalev 2001). This became complementary to other trade of the Scandinavians and may have been an additional draw to the east during the Viking Age (Duczko 2004: 61–64).

² In the Old Norse toponym Aldeigja could be etymologically related to ‘Ladoga’, assuming a metathesis in the first syllable (La- > Al-), but there is as yet no consensus regarding the etymology of this hydronym (e.g. Janhunen 2009: 204–207).
The opening of the Eastern Route had an invigorating effect on mobility along trade routes via the Gulf of Finland. As an example of this activity, an etymology which can probably be associated with it may be mentioned. The Finnish word *reitti* ['route'] is first attested as referring to 'sea routes' (Hääkkinen 2007, s.v. *reitti*; SSA, s.v. *reitti*). As stated in *Suomen sanojen alkuperä* (1992–2000, SSA hereafter) ['The Origins of Finnish Words'], nautical and maritime connotations are also present in compounds known from the west Scandinavian area, namely the cognate Old Norse *áreitr* ['section of river course'] and *sjóreitr* ['confined nautical or lacustrine area']. As no such maritime use of the Old Swedish cognate *vrēter* ['furrow, partitioned/delimited area'] (cf. Hofstra & Hahmo 1999: 383) is attested and the significant difference in meaning also indicates that the word may have developed independently for some time, the semantics may be used to suggest a prehistoric dating. With a dating to the Viking Age, the word *reitti* should thus be considered as one of the very oldest Scandinavian loanwords, where an Old East Scandinavian *æi* has been substituted by Early Finnish *ei*. SSA indicates that the Estonian word *reit* would probably be a separate borrowing from Finnish or from a Swedish dialect. This assessment is probably correct. As shown elsewhere (Schalin 2014c; cf. Hofstra 1985: 48ff.), a substitution with *ei* (rather than Gulf of Finland Finnic *öi*) of a borrowed Scandinavian *æi* cannot be shown to have been productive before the Viking Age in any analogous borrowing. Or in other words, no Proto-Finnic etymology is known to exist, where the reflex of this Scandinavian diphthong would be a correspondence of the Finnish diphthong *ei* and the Estonian diphthong *ei* (rather than *öi*). On the other hand, substitution of Swedish (dial.) *æi*, *ei* and (standard) *è* with Finnish *ei* became totally dominant from the Middle Ages onwards up until modern times. The probability is therefore high that this loanword *reitti* is neither (much) older nor (much) younger than the Viking Age, a fact that illustrates well the geo-economic context of maritime mobility in those times.

The main sea route from the east via the Gulf of Finland can be assumed to have continued from the Finnish coast along the archipelago and the Åland Islands to the coast of Sweden across the Sea of Åland. Navigation along this route was linked to being able to name and distinguish features of the landscape. Consequently, toponymy can be assumed to have been significant to those sailing this route and to the communication of this route to individuals who had not sailed them before. Put another way, place names were essential to talking about the places that marked the voyage. For example, although Old
Norse saga literature does not offer a single reference to islands of Åland, there is a single reference to *Allannzhaf* [‘Sea of Åland’] in the description of a journey sailing from the north-eastern coast of the Gulf of Bothnia through the Sea of Åland and along the coast of Sweden, contained in the version of *Fundinn Noregr* (probably datable to the thirteenth century) that functions as a preface to *Orkneyinga saga*. As far away as Iceland, toponymy of this area was significant to presenting accurate descriptions and information about the events and activities that took place there (cf. Aalto).

As discussed elsewhere in this volume, the language or languages spoken in Åland during the Viking Age present a riddle that may never be resolved (Ahola et al.). Surprisingly enough, most topographic place names of types that are known to resist change well are demonstrably medieval: for example, the hydronyms of Åland are not very old (L. Hellberg 1987: 233). Tophonymy used in seafaring along the Eastern Route could of course be older than the settlement names and those topographic names that were of little use for outside speech communities. Such toponyms would be harbours, stations for naval support and formations visually helpful for navigation (L. Hellberg 1987: 289). It is not self-evident that such names would reflect the terms for these places that were used by the local inhabitants. The names passed on to later generations may have had a primary social use in spatial/geographical orientation rather than being primarily associated with and potentially adapted from local inhabitants. We do not know exactly when the use of pilots started, but it would be reasonable to attribute the need for pilots to later medieval types of cargo ships with a greater draught and see it as a motivator for the later and the settlement of the hazardous archipelago east of mainland Åland. Whatever the case may be, this toponymy still has potential to produce information about the perceptions of people who used it. In the present case, this information will be considered for its potential indications of the significance of the Åland Islands in seafaring and navigation and its historical continuities.

**Early Toponyms of Åland and Perceptions of Åland from the Sea**

All four names of naval stations mentioned in the in the thirteenth-century ‘Danish Itinerary’, contained in the *Liber census Daniae* by king Valdemar II (Schalin 2014b), would qualify as good candidates for old names. *Linæbøtæ* (now *Lemböte*) was a navigational station and early medieval harbour site. This site visually provides a crucial landmark for the navigational approach from the open sea. The names *Lemböte* and associated island-name *Lemland* present
complex and important issues that will be left aside for concentrated discussion in a separate section. *Fyghelde* (now *Föglö*) was also a navigational station, while *Thiyckækarl* (now *Kökar*) was a landmark navigational station and early medieval harbour site. The fourth is *Iurima* (now *Jurmo*), an island incorporated in modern times into *Korpo* in Åboland, which was a visible landmark and sheltered harbour that provided an alternative access to/from the open sea, bypassing mainland Åland. The Danish Itinerary also mentions *Mare Alandh* ["The Sea of Åland"]. The ‘Sea of Åland’ is later attested as *Ålands hav* and *Ahvenmeri*, now *Ahvenanmeri*. The Icelandic example noted above shows the form with *haf* roughly synchronous with the Danish Itinerary, although the phonetic structure of the first syllable behind the transcription is uncertain. In any case, customary habits for the formation of names allow us to infer that the later established toponym *Alandh* (attested 1376; cf. Latin *Alandia* 1281), cognate with *Åland* as known today, presumably referred to the islands or an island already at the time when ‘Sea of Åland’ became established. The compounding genitive -s in this nautical name testifies to the fact that -land in the insular name *Alandh* is grammatically singular, rather than plural. The complexities surrounding the toponym *Alandh* will also be left for a concentrated discussion in the penultimate section. All together, the Danish Itinerary therefore presents us with four relevant naval stations, the hydronym of the channel separating Åland from the coast of Sweden, and – by implication – a macrotoponym for Åland as an island or otherwise geographically (and perhaps politically) defined space.

In addition to the names in the Danish Itinerary, we should mention a few more, all discussed by Lars Hellberg (1987: 238ff.), namely *Eckerö, Geta, Hammarland, Lemland* and *Slemmern* as well as *Järsö, Skedholm* and *Styrsö*. The

3 Vowel length was not normally marked and it cannot be certain that the doubling of the following consonant was phonetically significant or if so in what way, thus ‘Allannzhaf’ could potentially be read as, for example, *Ålands haf, Allands haf, Ålands haf, Allands haf*, or possibly even *Olands haf or Qlands haf*. This problematizes the use of this attestation in etymological investigation of Åland. However, even if the phonetic reconstruction were secure, the example would be methodologically problematic because it appears as an exceptional toponym in a more generally exceptional text. *Fundinn Noregr* presents general geographical knowledge of the Gulf of Bothnia region and also includes the only use in Old Norse saga literature of the ethnonym *Lappir* [‘lapps’] (associated with use in eastern language areas) with reference to the inhabitants of the Scandinavian Peninsula where *Finnar* [‘Finns’ (= Sámi)] is expected in West Norse (cf. Aalto). The exceptional features of this text leave it uncertain even whether the content knowledge was in fact established in Icelandic culture or linked somehow to the east (e.g. acquired through contacts from travel or trade). If the toponym was unusual for Icelanders, its recorded form could reflect folk-etymologization or even mythologization that could make a peculiar or unrecognizable element meaningful (e.g. *Al-lands haf* [‘Sea of Everything-Land’], *A-land* [‘River-Land’] or *Q(ī)lands haf* [‘Sea of Ale-Land’]; cf. *Kven-land*, interpreted owing to homonymy as ‘Land of Women’).
last three of these have potential etymologies with archaic content. A possible etymology for the first part of *Järsö* would be *Jarl-* ['earl; noble chieftain'], although the name could also have arisen later from a person’s by-name (FSB, s.v. *Järso*, three occurrences in Lemland, Föglö and Kyrkslätt). Judging from other toponyms and Old Icelandic poetry, *stýr* is Old East Scandinavian for ‘captain’ and an OESc *skeiþ* was a Viking Age naval ship (well known from Icelandic literature as *skeið*). In Old Swedish, the first word was substituted for *stýrmaþær* [lit. ‘steer-man’] and the *skeiþ* ship-type gave way to new types of ships. If *Styrsö* was just an island to steer towards (OSw. *styra*), it would be difficult to explain the compounding in genitive case. However, one *Skedö* (*Sked Holmen 1706*) in Ekenäs has been interpreted in quite a different way (Westman 1935, s.v. *Skedö*) so the etymology remains uncertain.

The fact that would favour the older alternative etymologies for some of these names is that they are concentrated in a small area (south of present day Mariehamn) where a ship approaching from the Mälaren region coming from the southwest would have to pass in order to continue past the stations of *Lemböte*, Föglö and Kökar, and then further past *Aspesund*, *Örsund* and *Hangethe* into the Gulf of Finland and towards Staraya Ladoga off of Lake Ladoga. A route towards Vakka-Suomi (an area in the north of Finland Proper, roughly the mainland of Finland adjacent to the main archipelago to the north) and on to the west coast of Finland would also, before turning to the northeast, have passed these three islands leaving the bay *Slemmern* to the north. *Slemmern* is also one of the few names in Åland that, according to Lars Hellberg (1987: 235ff.), could be from the Iron Age. The large island *Lemland*, which appears to share the first part of its name with *Lemböte* hill, chapel and harbour, would then be seen to the south (for arguments that the route passed north of Lemböte, see Zilliacus 1994: 55ff.). When approaching this archipelago from the southwest on the open sea of the Sea of Åland, important landmarks for a helmsman to sight on his left would have been the southern tip of another large island of that time, where the parish of *Hammarland* is today situated. The characteristic south point qualifies well as an Old East Scandinavian *hamarr* ['protruding rocky cape'] and is today called *Hammarudda*. Within a relatively small area, there are thus a few names that are all relevant to seafarers, all situated by the same sea lane, and more than one of them (especially *Hammarland*, *Styrsö*, *Lemböte*, *Lemland*) could be older than the twelfth century.

Of the names mentioned in the Danish Itinerary *Thiyckær* has a near-transparent etymology based on a perceptibly characteristic thick (or ‘fat’) -karl ['round cliff'] (FSB, s.v. *Kökar*). There is, however, no consensus on which cliff
this would refer to (for a discussion, also on some Estonian names, see Zilliacus 1994: 60ff.). The name *Fyghelde* is quite obscure and without a convincing interpretation. The first element could contain an Old East Scandinavian word *fylgi* derived from *fugl* ['bird']. The cognate derivative is attested in West Scandinavian with a meaning of ‘bird trapping’ (FSB, s.v. *Föglö*). The residual element -de is reminiscent of notoriously difficult dental suffixes in a number of coastal and archipelago names, including attestations for names such as *Jersijda* for Järsö and *Hangethe* for Hangö, mentioned later in this chapter (other relevant names *Narigeth – Naissaar* and *Dageida – Gutnish Dagaip* – Estonian *Hiiumaa* are mentioned in Schalin 2014b). The first element of the name *Jurmo*, a name which also occurs in another location in Eastern Åland, defies interpretation. The similarities with Baltic *jura* ['sea'] are perhaps coincidental, especially as the name is used for two very different locations, and the possibility that it contains a short form of the name *Georgius* is impossible to verify or refute (FSB, s.v. *Jurmo*; Schalin 2014b cf. Heikkilä, *Map 1*).

The name *Geta* refers to the northernmost island of Åland, which most importantly exposes some of the highest hills in the region, reaching an altitude of 107 metres above sea level. There are two competing interpretations that

*Map 1. Selected toponyms along the approach from Mälaren to Lumparn according to a reconstructed Viking Age shore line (following Tomtlund 2005: 15).* 

have been under discussion. The primary one is a place where goats (OSw gēter) graze. The suffix could be Iron Age or medieval (L. Hellberg 1987: 211ff.). Lars Huldén has discussed the possibility that the same appellative present in the name Vargata in northern Åland (attested in oblique case as Wargætto in 1367) could be behind the name. On the basis of early attestations like Getu (appr. 1325), Ghoto, Goto (1328) he assumes a weak feminine derivate from OESc gat ['hole'], known from Icelandic and East Scandinavian dialects (FSB, s.v. Geta). This would be a seafarers’ name like many of the other old names in Åland and would make perfect sense if the naming basis was a narrow passage, such as the one that at the time separated today’s Geta from Åland proper at Höckböl. Yet, while this explanation solves the phonological difficulties concerning the oldest attestations, it creates others regarding the younger ones. These difficulties may well be solved by assuming a folk etymological levelling with the word for ‘goat’ (FSB, s.v. Get). This interpretation is undoubtedly the most powerful presented so far.

Concerning the name Eckerö, suffice to say that it contains the Old East Scandinavian word *æik ['oak'] in genitive case and this reflects an archaic non-syllabic form of the genitive ending belonging to originally monosyllabic stems. According to Lars Hellberg (1987: 210ff.), it need not, despite this, be older than the twelfth century. Considering that the island is large, visible and relevant to navigation and that the compositional genitive ending is not attested in Old Swedish, it is however probably more economical to accept the indication of old age (Edlund 1988: 167).

Although it is possible that all of these terms could be as old as the Viking Age, the individual toponyms can only be assessed according to relative degrees of probability. When looking across these names, however, certain points become observable. First, the term ‘Sea of Åland’ is doubtless relevant to seafarers. It may be hypothesized that the beginning of the Sea of Åland could be recognized by some type of landmarks when sailing along the coast of Sweden, at which point ships could steer onto open water with reasonable hope of reaching Åland. A concentration of arguably older names can be identified with a particular seafaring route that penetrates the Åland Islands from the southwest around the north of the island of Lemland. The names in the Danish Itinerary maintain references to major islands relevant to a sailing route along the south

4 The name of Ekerö village in the province of Nyland is in any event likely to be younger. On the basis of its first attestations, it must be reconstructed as *Eke-ryd, which highlights the possibility that whole names may be transferred by settlers from Sweden (FSB, s.v. Eckerö, *Ekerö). The reconstruction of the compositional suffix would in this case depend on dialectal considerations.
of Åland and along the south side of the archipelago (Föglö, Kökar) while other toponyms thought to be of great age are for Hammarland and Eckerö, which would potentially be the first parts of Åland sited when approaching from the southwest or more directly from the west. Geta stands out among these names as associated with a promontory on the northern coast of Åland that can be inferred by its natural features to have been relevant to seafarers, but which would have been associated with a different sailing route (see Heininen et al.), and Jurmo holds potential as an alternative approach from the open seas of the central parts of the Baltic Sea to mainland Finland. Although only some of these names may be datable to the Viking Age, it warrants an initial observation that these names have potential for especial significance for seafarers.

The Case of Lemböte and the Island of Lemland

The second element in Lemland certainly means ‘large island’ or ‘land mass visible from the open seas’ exactly as in the names Hammarland and Lumparland. The name Lemböte has certainly received its second element from one of its characteristic high cliffs (böte means ‘a site for lighting a beacon’). We should be able to accept as reasonable the assumption that the naming of the island Lemland has a causal relationship with the naming of Lemböte, which, with its harbour and chapel, was very important for navigation. This relationship puts a big question mark on the spelling of the three attestations of Lynæbøtæ, Linæbøtæ and Lynæbetæ in the Danish Itinerary (for the text, see Gallén 1993: 51). In addition to the more general doubts regarding the reliability of the spelling attributed by Lars Huldén (1982: 101) to Ivar Modéer, it should be stressed that, while the name Lemböte could of course have arisen from a form with an -n- in the second syllable, the name Lemland cannot be explained in the same way. The expected outcome of an -n- in *Linæbøtæ should, after syncope of the second syllable and the assimilatory effect of the following -b-, indeed be an -m- and would conform to the attestations Lymböth (1492; Lemböte 1537). However, the oldest attestations of Lemland unambiguously show that the nasal was -m- already before the syncope of the medial syllable and as early as 1431: Lymland, cf. Lemmalanda 1492, 1499, 1505, Lyymmala 1492, Lemeland 1537, Leemeland 1539 Lemland 1544 (Huldén 1982: 101; FSB, s.v. Lemböte, Lemland).

To interpret the two names in mutual isolation would be methodologically flawed, but a slight chance must be left open for an additional possibility of

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For a discussion of böte as a naming element, see Huldén 2012: 238ff.
some kind of levelling between two, previously distinct elements (i.e. *Lem- and *Lim(ma)- or *Lin(na)-). The observation that the syncope has not affected the two names synchronously seems to be new: *Lymböth seems to have lost its medial syllable in 1492 at the (very) latest, whereas the spelling of *Lemland is definitely not bisyllabic before the 1540s. This chronological difference of two human generations could be consistent with an assumption that *Lim(ma)bøte or *Lin(na)bøte, either had a heavy root syllable, with the well-known automatic consequence that the medial syllable was weaker and more prone to syncope, or no medial syllable at all, whereas *Limaland had a light root syllable, with the well-known automatic consequence that the medial syllable carried stronger emphasis and was less prone to syncope. This would mean that *Limaland most likely contained an Old Swedish word *limber ['branch, twig; member, limb' (in the transferred sense of 'peninsula' or of ‘inlet’)] in genitive plural (where no intrusive -b- occurs): ‘the island of the many peninsulas’ or ‘the island of the many inlets’. By contrast, *Lemböte either contained the same word in a so-called 'stem compound' corresponding to ‘inlet island’ or ‘peninsula island’, or it contained a completely unrelated word with a heavy root syllable.

The latter alternative for *Lemböte would open up a possibility that the first element is a reminiscence of the Finnish word *linna ['hill fort'], as once suggested by Lars Huldén. This possibility is, however, as narrow as a needle’s eye because neither the attestation in the Danish Itinerary nor subsequent attestations have any reflex of the etymological cluster -tn-, which is preserved in Vepsian and Ludic (SSA, s.v. *linna) and which requires a reconstruction *litna at least up until North Finnic, probably with preserved pronunciation into the medieval period. As seen from Huldén’s (1982: 100ff.) presentation, this is by no means the only Finnish word that may come to mind, but it is without doubt a most intriguing one. Other possibilities mentioned are *lehmä ['cow'], *lemi ['mire'] and *lemme (dialect) ['waterlily’], some of which may or may not have reflexes in the borrowed names Lemnäs (in Kimito), Lemlöx (in Pargas) and Lemmon (in Houtskär). Interpretations based on these borrowed elements unfortunately carry the same difficulties as the autochthonous interpretation but add no new economy with regard to the assumptions around the naming. In fact, they have the drawback that they do not allow for the variation between *limb- and *lima- which neatly conforms to the attested data and provides a better parallelism between the two names. The autochthonous interpretation also fits better in the picture of seafaring names in the area.

When considering *Lemland and *Lemböte, the best economy of assumptions would undoubtedly be achieved if we assume that *Limaland has its first
element in plural, because it has many inlets used by seafarers as harbours in its essential north-western parts (see Map 1 above for a map with an approximation of Viking age shorelines) and Limböte was the ‘inlet beacon hill’. In that case, a logically interdependent naming basis is more easily conceivable if at least either of the two cognate names (whichever is the younger one of the two) was given at a time after the smaller island, where the important harbour, chapel and Lemböte beacon hill were situated, was perceived as having merged with the main island, called Lemland. Even with due consideration given to all the uncertainties around the uneven rise of the sea level and the exact pace of the postglacial lift of the bedrock, one might state with a sufficient margin of confidence that the perceived merger of the two islands could not have happened before the last quarter of the first millennium. Ekman (1996: 117–118) estimates that the shore displacement in the Lumparn area has in one millennium amounted to 5.5 mm annually with an error margin of +/- 0.8 mm. According to the recently published elevation model raster of the National Land Survey of Finland, the isthmus between Västerviken-Labbsund and Älvik (see Map 1 above) hardly reaches an elevation of 6 metres above sea level today. With the assumption of a 5.6 mm rise +/- 0.8 mm, this would give a terminus post quem for the naming at a point in time somewhere between AD 700 and AD 1050. The naming is therefore hardly conceivable in the context the sixth-century settlement and more plausible in the context of the navigation needs on the sailing route to Staraya Ladoga, founded in the mid-eighth century and a burgeoning center for trade by the beginning of the Viking Age.

The Name Jomala and the Missing Name for the Largest Island

Studying the elevation curves for this sea lane area, it becomes evident that only one major island does not have a name that has been identifiable in extant

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6 The more recent pace for the last century at Lemström by the modern shipping channel in the corner of the Lumparn area is, according to Ekman (1996: 116), only 4.57 mm annually, an order of magnitude that is well in line with contemporary and newer publications (Kakkuri 1997: 101–102; Kylli 2001: 25–28; Saaranen 2005: 203). The maps presenting 4–5 mm annually for Åland are not to be confused with maps containing numbers in the range of 6 mm annually, which consistently applies to the crustal uplift that is measured against the Earth’s center of mass as opposed to the sea level. For the last millennium, however, the rate of shore displacement exceeded the pace during the last century, the difference amounting quite neatly to some 1 mm annually, measured against the sea level. This is due both to a gradual slowing down of the crustal uplift (as measured against the Earth’s center of mass) and a more recent speeding up of eustatic sea level rise. An average of 5.5 mm/annum in the last millennium for the Lumparn area, which is given by Ekman (1996: 116), and which would correspond to 5.6 mm for Lemböte, can be checked against a more updated theoretical analysis by Påsse (2001, passim; see in particular illustrations applied to Stockholm and Olkiluoto near Åland, p. 24) and subsequent discussions on refining his model (Pohjola et al. 2011, passim).
historical records. This one island was the largest and most central in the framework of the whole Åland archipelago, consisting of three land masses connected by two narrow isthmuses and reaching a north–south extension of more than 34 kilometres. The largest of the three landmasses extended far south and covered most of the central and eastern parts of the modern parish Jomala, including the isthmus Näset, which ends in the modern Lemström shipping channel, the peninsula Kalmarnäset, opposite Lemböte, and the peninsula where Mariehamn is situated today. The two latter peninsulas enclose the bay Slemmern and the


The map in most locations is close to the 5 metre elevation curve, corresponding to the late Viking Age shoreline. One should however note that, at the time, the largest land mass discussed here and the ‘main island’ in Saltvik were connected by an isthmus south of Strömma hamlet, which does not show well on this map. The isthmus, which today reaches an elevation of almost eight metres above sea level, must have risen from the sea around the sixth century. Thus almost the whole of Saltvik had merged with the main landmass. This isthmus is also discussed by Olav Ahlbäck (1952: 170ff.). In addition, the island between Hammarland and Ättbøle had in the Viking Age merged with the main island to the southeast.

In the beginning of the first millennium, the southernmost landmass became connected in the north by an isthmus reaching today’s Ättbøle in Finström and accreting that way to most of the southern, central and eastern parts of that parish. At approximately the same time, these parts of Finström were connected to a large island reaching north to present day Stälby, Pettbøle and Toböle over the heights between Kroklund and Daglösa in the western parts of present day Saltvik. This happened when a sound connecting the opposite bays named Vändöfjärden and Ödkarviken today dried as result of the uplift.
last of these is adjacent to the three islands with old names discussed above (compare Map 1 and Map 2).

For this huge, quite twisted and indented but contiguous island, no names have survived, neither names referring to it as a whole, nor names for any of its three main land masses. A seafarer sailing along the route past Lemström and Lemböte would definitely have needed a name for that ‘land’, regardless of whether the name would have referred to the southernmost land mass only or to the extended complex uniting the three land masses.

The only surviving naming element on the southernmost land mass with a good claim to be older than the twelfth century is the name of the parish Jomala. The name may be explained as deriving from hypothetical Scandinavian elements only after making unparalleled combinations of language material that is remote in both time and space (Granlund 1982: 81; L. Hellberg 1987: 42). Most relevant arguments on the question of whether or not Jomala ultimately has its name from the Finnish word *jumala* [‘god’], have been extensively discussed in an article by Åke Granlund (1982). Many of the parallels for using the element *jumala* in Finnish names indicate abnormal formations in nature, supposedly with divine connotations (Granlund 1982: 82).

In addition to several names containing the element *Jomal* in two northwestern parishes in Åland itself, there are four very interesting parallels on the south coast of Finland, which indicate narrow inlets or passages in the archipelago. Two of these are the Swedish names *Jomalvik* in Snappertuna and *Jomalsund* in Ruotsinpyhtää. Two are identical Finnish names *Jumalniemi*, both in the Kymi archipelago, where Swedish has also been used in the past. The apparent semantic differences with relation to many attestations in the inland Finnish language area might indicate that the Swedish names were directly transferred derivates from Åland (S. Andersson 1964–65: 299). A more fascinating but complicated hypothesis, however, is that the element *jomal* had been (or was occasionally) borrowed from Finnish and, in the coastal regions, acquired a specialized function as a technical appellative in the Swedish language, perhaps referring to a type of signpost used in navigation to mark inlets. In such a case, the loan would be suggestive of the technical uses having some type of connection to Finnish religion. The word would for some limited period of time have

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9 The religion of speakers of dialects of Early Finnish presents a number of complex problems. The changes in burial practices ca. AD 1000–1150 (cf. Huurre 1979: 224 and discussion in Syöstränd; Ahola & Frog 2014) could reflect a vernacularization of Christianity – i.e. assimilating elements and systems of elements considered ‘Christian’ into the vernacular religion rather than displacing one religion with another as exclusive categories (see Frog). Consequently, it is impossible to anticipate how such a hypothetical loan might relate to religious practice: it could
been productive as a naming basis for such sites in navigation (Huldén 2012: 243ff.; FSB, s.v. *Jomala*). This possibility is stimulating for its possible religious connotations of how such sites were used by the Finns (or at least concerning those sites from which the naming practice would have derived).

The possibility that a Finnic language theonym or noun associated with religion could have been applied as a naming element is not unreasonable. Scandinavian familiarity with the term *jumala* is attested as a loan treated as a proper name *Jómali* (with manuscript variants “*jómáli*”, “*jómale*”) in the thirteenth-century Ólafs saga helga [*The Saga of St. Ólafr*] (Aðalbjarnarson 1945: 294) and in the later Bósa saga ok Herrauðs [*The Saga of Bósi and Herrauðr*] (Jiriczek 1893: 25, 29). The attestations are identified with the so-called ‘Bjarmians’ on the White Sea (cf. Aalto), but it is within a narrative plot that can be described as a legend type (cf. af klintberg 2010) to which it may have been attached (Frog 2014). In practical terms, this means that the theonym *Jómali* could be a loan from potentially any Finnic group and used with reference to any appropriate-seeming group without necessarily giving an accurate representation of how that group referred to a particular god (or even what language they used). Both narrative accounts describe raids on temples of the god *Jómali*. These accounts should be considered fictionalized.

For the present discussion, this is relevant because it demonstrates a loan of a Finnic *jumala > Norse* *jómali* and that this term was used in discourse surrounding Finnic religions. Moreover, these accounts designate the idol of the temple as *Jómali* (e.g. as though embodying the god). The representations of temples in these accounts may be modelled on Christian Icelanders’ imaginings of pre-Christian Scandinavian religion rather than offering an ethnographic representation of Finnic religion. However, the lexical identification of the idol with the theonym reflects a Scandinavian perspective that is relevant here: the symbolic object of Finnic worship could be designated by the theonym *jómali*. Consequently, it becomes quite conceivable that, where that symbolic object was a natural feature, it could – at least hypothetically – be designated *Jómali* by Scandinavians (equating to identifying it as a sacred place). Such use could easily manifest a generative usage in referring to sites with a relevant perceptible feature irrespective of whether the particular feature was in fact linked to local religious practice. Unfortunately, however, there is no way to test such a hypothesis and it therefore remains at a level of speculation.

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*reflect a usage connected with the common noun *jumala* [‘god’] or could also reflect a distinctive use of a theonym *Jumala* [‘God’], possibly under influence from Christianity (Frog 2014).*
A hypothesis of a permanently borrowed appellative is problematized, however, by the fact that a similar phone [u] or [o] is used in Swedish dialects in all three regions. Contrary to expectation, these phones do not represent a regular set of correspondences. The phone [o] in the pronounced name föm:ala in Åland would require the correspondence **Ju:malvi:k in Snappertuna and **Ju:malsvund in Ruotsinpyhtää, whereas attested fömalsund in Ruotsinpyhtää would require **Jömalvi:k in Snappertuna and **Jö:m:ala in Åland. This last set of correspondences has been extensively discussed and demonstrated recently (Schalin 2014a, passim). The first element of the attested form Jömalvi:k in Snappertuna in fact corresponds to nothing among inherited words and must therefore be either a young borrowing from Finnish or an adaption either to a known Finnish word or to a known transferred name from Åland. In addition, the oldest attestations for the Ålandic name do not correspond to modern pronunciation. Therefore no Swedish appellative can be reconstructed for Old Swedish and the name must have been repeatedly and separately borrowed from or adapted to Early Finnish relatively late, say in the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries.

Most interpretations of the name Jomala in Åland depart from a group of names within that parish containing that same element Jomal- as a first element. The names are located in a peripheral location of that parish around a village Jomalby [‘Jomala Village’]. The parish has potentially received its name either after a larger village, one part of which still carries that name (L. Hellberg 1987: 41), or ultimately from one of the terrain names, which in a parallel development gave name to the village (Granlund 1982; FSB, s.v. Jomala; for a more detailed discussion and an original new suggestion see Sjöstrand).

All the solutions above seem to call for an explanation of some further archipelago names Jomale-/Jomala- to the west across the Sea of Åland as somehow secondary to the names discussed here that are in more eastern locations. These names are found clustered in a group in the north of Gräsö socken, Östhammar kommun, in Northern Roslagen just opposite Åland. The primary name in Gräsö seems at first sight to be a sheltered harbour (very much analogous to the above cases) also called Jomala or Jomalestrand. If this micronym (or one of the other names in Gräsö) would turn out to be more significant than its first appearance and was to receive a good primary etymology of its own, all the Swedish names east from there could certainly be explained as derivatives transferred with settlers from Roslagen. Per Olof Sjöstrand points out that the route between Southwest Finland and Roslagen did not involve mobility and settlement only from west to east: Roslagen exhibits a concentration of
toponyms with the element *Finn-* , not found generally distributed through Sweden, which suggests that Finnic populations also resettled in Sweden. Precisely when this occurred might be questioned when the route of contact has such a long history. This should not be misconstrued as indicating the Finnic speakers carried the *Jomale-* / *Jomala-* element into the toponymy of Roslagen, but it at least warrants consideration that the presence of Finnic populations, however marginal, may have given relevance to the toponym in this area – if, that is, the element was associated with Finnic linguistic-cultural groups. This would, however, be consistent with the attestation of the toponymic element precisely here rather than being found more widely along sailing routes, for example along the coasts of Sweden. The limited distribution of the term also raises the question of whether, following the hypothesis of a connection to a Finnic religion, it may have been associated with Finnic groups quite broadly or was more closely linked to a narrower ethnic identity of ‘Finns’. A quite logical naming basis could also simply be that the landing site *Jomalestrand* was associated with ‘people from Jomala’. The questions surrounding the parallel toponyms in Roslagen have not received much attention, if any, so far.

**The Names Åland and Ahvenanmaa**

The large island of Åland which has no recorded name of its own is precisely alongside the Viking Age sea route and must have been well known to Viking Age seafarers. As Lars Huldén has pointed out (FSB, s.v. *Jomala*), it is unexpected that the name of the island could have fallen into oblivion without leaving a trace (even in a single micronym). The vanished name of the whole island could hardly have been *Jomala* originally, because the village *Jomalby* ['Jomala Village'] should not have been named after either a parish or an ancient island, to which its location is peripheral. This problem brings us to the origins of the names *Åland* and *Ahvenanmaa*, which JS has discussed in two other articles (Schalin 2008; 2014b). There are three main problems regarding this pair of names and their solutions are in a way intricately intertwined, which make solving the riddle of these names a case study in economizing unnecessary assumptions.

The first question is whether there is a phonetic relationship between the first element in each of the two names. This has commonly been assumed as nearly certain because these two names are a more or less perfect phonological match, assuming that one name was phonologically adapted from the other well before the Viking Age. Sound laws in Scandinavian account well for the drastic shortening in *Å­land* as well as for the precise quality of the long vowel. However,
taking this perfect match as a starting point leads to two other problems that lack an elegant solution. Firstly, the early date required by phonology would situate the loan in a period when the latter part -land would have meant ‘large island’ or ‘land mass visible from the open sea’. A naming basis like ‘province’, which would correspond to the referent of the name today, seems anachronistic for a time significantly prior to the Viking Age (Ståhl 1964: 13). Secondly, the first element of the name would have had a primary meaning ‘river’ in Germanic. However, the Åland Islands are characterized by anything but rivers, either as a whole or considering its constituent islands individually. This word has taken a meaning of ‘stream, brook’ in Faroese and Dalecarlian (Kroonen 2013, s.v. *ahuwó-; cf. also the meaning ‘stream’ in Old English), but even this sense does not seem to serve well as a naming basis in the Åland Islands.

The problem of reconciling the name with a semantic field related to rivers may be solved by assuming that the borrowing direction is from North Finnic rather than the reverse. JS has elaborated this possible basic solution elsewhere (Schalin 2008; cf. Heikkilä 2014: 145ff.; Heikki, based on an idea first put forward by Lars Huldén (1976), but which he later has set aside in favour of his preferred alternative. JS there explained the Finnic loan original, namely the precursor of the name Ahven-maa, attested in 1833, as an early borrowing into an appellative meaning ‘islands, archipelago’ from a Proto-Germanic lexeme today represented by Sw. ö (‘island’) ~ Icl. ey (‘island’). The borrowing would have occurred before the development of PGmc *g > -w- in this word. Naming based on this Germanic appellative (or in some cases its synonymous weak stem), which in plural appears to have meant ‘a cluster of islands’, is attested at least in Scandinavian languages for many localities, one further north along the west coast of Finland and several occurrences across Sweden, always appearing in the plural (Öja), as well as (Vestmann)eyjar off the coast of Iceland, colloquially called Eyjar.

The Middle Proto-Finnic suffix *-eš > *-ehj > -eh may well have been added as a reflex of the plural ending, or spontaneously as in the name Häme, resulting in (late) MPF *Ałvehj. The suffix is certainly attested in (1833) Ahven-maa whereas the earlier attestation of Ahuen maa is ambiguous as vowel length was not marked in spelling at that time. A reborrowing of early Northern Finnic *Ahveh- [‘the archipelago region’] around the sixth century could have resulted in OSw. Ålandh, on condition that the substitution of the second syllable

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10 Huldén himself (1982: 95) gives some of the credit retroactively to Heikki Ojansuu.
(probably *Ahwa- with accommodation to the most common stem vowel for compounds), would not trigger \( i \)-mutation.

JS has recently reviewed all of the problems involved at greater length elsewhere (Schalin 2014b). His summary concerning the economy of assumptions may be configured as follows.

(1) If we want to maintain that the phonological match is not a coincidence, this requires accepting that the name is older than just about all the other names in the region.

There of course always remains the possibility that proposition (1) should be rejected, taking the position that the phonological resemblance is more or less coincidental and that the name is not necessarily older than most of the other names in Åland. However, if proposition (1) is pursued, it becomes necessary to:

(2a) Accept and explain the unlikely naming basis ‘creek island’ (Ståhl 1964; S. Andersson 1964–65: 290ff.; FSB, s.v. Jomala), as well as an additional assumption of a differential treatment of the first element (sound substitution) in relation to the latter (translation)

(2b) Accept the assumption of a (re)borrowing from Finnish and explain how and when the Finnish name originated, as well as the later annexation of the elements -land and -maa respectively (Schalin 2008; Heikkilä 2014: 145ff.)

(2c) Postulate a hypothetical word, derived with a suffix from the same etymon, which might allow a number of the other necessary assumptions to be disposed of (Pipping 1917: 84ff.; Greule 2004: 75ff.)

Or:

(2d) Postulate an even earlier Pre-Roman Iron Age borrowing, with the shorelines of those times, thus reducing the postulated borrowing events from two to one.

Option (2a) is problematized by the fact that in the myriad of named islands of Sweden and Finland, there is not a single example of a name in which the lexeme Sw. Å- or Fi. Joki- as a first element would refer to a watercourse on that island (see further Schalin 2008: 26). As already mentioned, this also lacks a good semantic fit as there are no proper rivers on the Åland Islands. Watercourses there are rather brooks than creeks, and these would have been still smaller in

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11 References are to sources that defend the respective solutions, not to difficulties implied in this text.
the Iron Age, when they drained smaller watersheds. It is noteworthy that of the three scholars, who have defended that hypothesis each has proposed a different favoured rivulet behind it (Ståhl 1964; S. Andersson 1964–65: 290ff.; FSB, s.v. Jomala). In his monograph on toponyms in Åland, Lars Hellberg (1987: 233) deems it “very unlikely” that the name Åland is based on any known stream in that province.

Options (2b) and (2c) suffer from the disadvantage that they require the necessary postulation of extinct appellatives, which is always costly in the economy of assumptions. At a minimum, such an appellative should be backed up by parallels in other toponyms. Option (2b) remains highly dependent on whether an extinct appellative in North Finnic can be derived from other place names or through conjecture from an interpretive reading of one attestation from the late sixteenth century CE of ahuen maan miehett as the ‘archipelago’s men’ (Schalin 2008: 29ff.; Heikkilä 2014: 145–150; Heikkilä). Some arguments for the hypothetical Finnic appellative have been presented by Mikko Heikkilä (2014: 49; Heikkilä, note 5). An essential part of that argument is a rather hypothetical etymology, namely Abborrfors < Old Swedish Abborrafors (in 1357 CE) < Runic Swedish Abbora < PScand *Aχwebburχn ← Early Finnish12 *Ahveppurha < Early Finnish *Abveh-purha. At least the antiquity of this etymology for a micronym far in the east sticks out somewhat and the sound substitution of the geminate seems ad hoc. The gemination itself, postulated for an Iron Age stage of Finnic seems early. For option (2c), Hugo Pipping (1917: 85ff.) has looked for other toponyms with a view to reconstruct a suitable Proto-Scandinavian appellative, but his explanations of two toponyms in Sweden are no longer mentioned in two standard handbooks on the matter (SOL, s.v. Enåker & Jönköping; Pamp 1988: 62). For the same purpose and working with the same suffix, Albert Greule has compared the name with toponyms in the West Germanic area, which is methodologically farfetched.13 Neither option (2b) or (2c) can be complemented by compelling support.

Option (2d) presents the possibility to explore a very different solution to the problem here. This solution can build from the hypothesis that the Scandinavian naming basis included the word meaning ‘island(s)’ for the first element without resorting to an assumption of a borrowing and reborrowing to account for the etymology of the Finnish and Swedish names. At first glance,

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12 Heikkilä here uses “Early Finnish” for a language contemporary with Proto-Scandinavian, it would, in the terminology of this chapter, be approximately the developmental stage called Gulf of Finland Finnic (see Schalin 2014b, following Kallio 2014).

13 For some observations on the attempt by Greule, see Schalin 2014b, n. 14.
this could solve much of the semantic problem because islands are abundant and characteristic for the area in the same way that rivers are not. Despite its apparent tautology, a naming basis ‘island of islands’ is plausible in the Baltic where the post-glacial uplift has resulted in shoreline displacement and caused islands to merge into larger entities over time. In the Ekenäs archipelago, a formation Skärlandet is found: this name literally means ‘Skerry (Is)land’ and its semantics could be elaborated as ‘the large island characterized by accreting skerries’ or ‘the large island of the archipelago (skärgård)’. Another possibility would be a naming basis such as the ‘island of peninsulas’ or the ‘island of the watery meadows’, based on various other well-known meanings of this particular word for island (SEO, s.v. ö; VAEO, s.v. ø; Kroonen 2013, s.v. *aujō-).

Following this line of reasoning, the problem that must be solved is the absence of so-called i-mutation, which would have to be explained. In theory, there are well-known cases where the expected compositional Proto-Scandinavian suffix -ja- is attested as a simple -i-, which after a light syllable would not cause i-mutation. Whether the known Runic attestations14 (represent regular or irregular outcomes of sound laws is however controversial (Syrett 1994: 70ff.). It is correspondingly controversial whether the missing i-mutation in the Norse name Haraldr (ultimately from *Harjawalda-) is due to a regular shortening into *Harwalda- (Janzén 1947: 77ff.). If it is assumed that the correct explanation for these parallels is indeed phonological, as argued by Heikkilä (2014: 117), and that a toponym could have behaved like a personal name, one could in any event not exclude the possible emergence of a Proto-Scandinavian form *awi­landa-. The expected outcome of this form would have been Åland rather than Öland. An almost perfect parallel is the Jylland-Danish word for ‘female lamb’, namely ålam (Nielsen 1985, s.v. ålam), which must originate from *awi-lambaz.15

The question remains whether there are enough bases to assume the emergence of the form *awi­landa-. Many compounded names containing this appellative as a first element show another front vowel, regular with regard to i-mutation. A major island/province in Sweden carries the name Öland (SOL, s.v. Öland) and the ancient Scandinavian name for Saaremaa in Estonia is Icelandic Eysýsla, Sw. Ösel. These names effectively constitute counter-examples to the explanation for the missing i-mutation attempted above, unless the name

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14 KJ 136 Tjurkö kunimu(n)diu, KJ 96 Stentøften hAriwolAFR KJ 98 Istaby hAriwolafa.
15 The Swedish word Åda ‘adult female of Somateria mollissima’ most probably originates from a parallel phonologic environment *awiþōz (Bjorvand & Lindeman 2007, s.v. ær).
for Åland would have been compounded significantly earlier than the counter-examples. Hence, given a sufficiently high age of the name and considering in particular that the first element in a compound would have to be in so-called stem form (T. Andersson 2012: 42), it is not at all clear which outcome of the sound law called Verner’s Law would be expected here. This opens up the first element to be reconstructed as *aχi- < *aχja-, but this sound law would not provide a good original for a Finnic borrowing with -hv- and would also require a date for the naming significantly prior to the Roman Iron Age. 16

A slightly less ancient alternative would be provided by a remarkable new contribution on this lexeme published by Sverre Stausland Johnsen. According to Stausland Johnsen (2009: 205ff.), the origin of the derived noun is not denominial and bisyllabic as it has been construed so far. Instead, the noun is based on the feminine form of a now extinct trisyllabic genitival adjective, early Proto-Germanic *aɣw*-ia-/*aɣw*-i-ō- ['pertaining to water']. 17 Flowing from this, a compounding before the sound law called Sievers’ Law would result in the trisyllabic *aw-ia-landa-. This form would certainly, more than a bisyllabic *awja-landa-, be exposed to the wear and tear known to affect toponyms, and a shortening to *aw-V-landa (where ‘V’ stands for a short vowel of unknown quality) would be likely to occur. Thus, this opens up to a possibility that Åland would be compounded before the sound change of Sievers’ Law while Öland and Ösel would be compounded thereafter. However, this model does not provide a good loan original for the Finnic name as the sequence -gʷ- must have been lost very soon after Verner’s Law took effect. The Finnish name Abvenanmaa would, in this case, also have been adapted to conform with the name of the fish species Abven(a) [‘perca fluviatilis’] to quite a significant degree. Even with the latter interpretation, the name would be much older than the sixth-century settlement of Åland associated with immigration from Scandinavia (Gustavsson et al.). Considering that the dates of the vast majority of toponyms in Åland are from the medieval period and those with potential to

16 The topography to match would rather than the 7.5 m or even 10 m elevation curve be the curve for (12.5 m or) 15 m. In this case, the naming basis could have been the rather extensive and distinctive ‘watery meadows’ in front of present-day Överby, Kyrkoby and Ingby on the original southernmost island in Jomala. Seafarers would have spotted the distinctive shore to their west after passing some sounds near Lemström into the bay Lumparn.

17 Stausland Johnsen argues that the jō-suffix as such is not used to form genitival formations but rather abstracts. The meaning of *awjō-, however, is clearly not an abstract ‘waterness’, but a regular genitival ‘pertaining to water’. Therefore one should take into account that genitival formations are well attested with the similar suffix *-ja-. These nouns in *-ja- are originally adjectives that have been substantivized by ellipsis of the noun. If an eclipsed noun was a feminine, the feminine form seems occasionally to have been substantivized. (Johnsen 2009: 205ff.)
be older do not give reason to assume that they significantly antedate the Viking Age (if at all), all interpretations under option (2d) are thus generally rendered highly hypothetical due to their otherwise unparalleled antiquity for this area.

Options (2a–d) all appear problematic in establishing proposition (1), it warrants giving serious consideration to whether proposition (1) is the problem as a base assumption that the relationship between the names must significantly antedate all other names in the region. When this proposition is questioned, the best available Viking Age etymology can be explored without the assumption that the Swedish and Finnish names are phonologically related. Elements for such an etymology are given by Sven Andersson (1964–65: 287ff.; cf. Schalin 2008: 27, n.4), who argues for the significance of the above discussed ancient sailing route stretching from the southwest into the bay of Lumparn and for a naming basis analogical to the names Hammarland, Lemland and Lumparland: the very characteristics that have served as a naming basis are visibly displayed to the seafarers on that route. Andersson (1964–65: 296ff.) concludes that the island Åland may have been named after a large esker (or kame) – i.e. a gravel ridge of glaciofluvial origin – and/or a chine (ridge, crest). The element Ål– with a reconstructed meaning of ‘esker’ has, according to his sources, given names to at least six parishes in Uppland. Because Andersson makes an attempt to link the same element to the latter part of the name Jom-ala, an attempt that may be characterized as quite futile, he is looking for the characteristic esker only in the high grounds of the island. In order to justify the plural declension *Ālaland, which he deems necessary in order to assume a haplology to *Āland, he also identifies a second chine, which inconveniently is not an esker at all. In this endeavour, he also fails to mention that in Ostrobothnia the etymologically identical element is known as a naming basis for long narrow reefs, or for skerries of sand and gravel (Karsten 1921–23: 414–416). The name Laxbådålen [‘the reef of the salmon skerry’] makes it very difficult to assume a connection to the homonymous ‘eel’ species (FSO-LEX, s.v. ÅL) and the etymology for Ård– [‘stony capes in Gotland’] also does not compare well. While it would fit the consonants in Ostrobothnia, where -red merges with [r̠] postvocically, the vowel is a poor match since the Gutnish element derives from Proto-Scandinavian *-urp- (Olsson 1959: 49ff.; 1979: 38ff.) and would therefore have developed into [œrl̠] rather than [œl̠].

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18 Lars Hellberg (1987: 232ff.; cf. Edlund 1988: 168) therefore probably advances a false etymology for the name Rankgården as proof of Gutnish settlement, unless that name is a borrowing from Gutnish occurring very late in the Middle Ages.
An extensive and detailed analysis of the etymon ål- in some Swedish and Norwegian toponyms was recently published. There, Thorsten Andersson (2012: 40, 49) argues that the correct reconstruction of this element in Scandinavian toponyms is Proto-Scandinavian *anhulō-. As also represented by Kroonen (2013, s.v. *anhula-, *anhulō-), this lexeme derives from the Indo-European root *ank-< *h₂enk- ['bend'], present in the Greek adjective ἀνκύλος ['bent'] and the noun ἀνκύλη f. ['strap'] and is cognate with Old Norse áll/ól (f.) ['strap']. The oldest meaning assumed on this basis for toponyms has according to Andersson been something extending in a convex shape. In his view, Old Norse áll ['underwater trench; stripe on the back of an animal'] has another etymology, possibly PGmc *ēla.

The large island in the south of Åland is situated in an area south of the higher rocky hills of the northern islands. During the end of the Ice Age, this has been conducive for the formation of glaciofluvial eskers in the direction of the movement of the glacier. These are discernible in Figure 1 as ridges with

19 The possibility that Finns would have adapted a late Proto-Scandinavian form like *Āhulaland into Ahvenanmaa is of course highly unlikely.

20 The English abstract on p. 27 is somewhat confusing on this point. The original text must be consulted.

21 The direction of movement in Åland has been from slightly west of north to slightly east of south, which is different from that in Ostrobothnia, which is seen in Map 3 as being northwest to southeast.
soft even contours (circled). This map shows that all three peninsulas extending from the large island in the vicinity of Lemböte, Slemmern and Styrsö (the names discussed above in connection with the sailing route) are of this type and there are other smaller ones east of Kalmarnäset. Each of these peninsulas is inclined towards the sea, which is important, because it means that all of them have had underwater partitions during all stages of shore displacement. In fact, most of the reefs in Ostrobothnia, like Grundålen i Korsnäs, (FSO-LEX, s.v. ÅL), are still submerged reefs probably named not too many centuries ago, while the rapid shore displacement rate in Ostrobothnia strongly suggests that those like Långålen have also been named under water. For a seafarer passing between Åland and Lemland, it must have been important to keep these gravel reefs at a distance when passing through the straits into Lumparn. Therefore, this is a most serious candidate for a Viking Age naming basis of Åland.

**Perspectives**

The preceding discussion suggests that Scandinavian languages had an established vocabulary of toponyms associated with the Åland Islands that dates back to at least the Viking Age. In addition, there are indications that this vocabulary was enriched during that period. Reservations of uncertainty and probability on many etymologies must, however, be acknowledged, particularly considering the
methodological limitations regarding all ancient place names (Schalin 2014b). Nevertheless, the oldest toponymy linked to the Åland Islands that exhibits archaic content co-occurs with the rise in seafaring activity and the increased significance of trade routes to the Lake Ladoga region in or near the Viking Age. This suggests a ‘big picture’ in which the establishment of major toponymy for this region was in connection to precisely that mobility and trade. This ‘big picture’ remains conditional on the probable dating of individual place names and must be interpreted with equal caution. However, the review here suggests that many of these toponyms were developed by seafarers and continued to be used through the later settlement of these areas. One appellative *reitti* [‘sea or lake route’] borrowed into Finnish from OESc has been addressed, and if not attributable to Åland itself, it warrants discussion here on the merits of being datable approximately to the Viking Age and testifying to the seafaring context so relevant to Åland. The model has a cohesiveness that can be considered to reciprocally support the relative probabilities of individual etymologies discussed.

Whether the oldest names discussed here reflect place names used by inhabitants of Åland already in the Viking Age is an inspiring but open question. It has been argued above that, unlike the big picture in Åboland (and the name Jurmo) and further east, none of these older names are of Finnish origin. In addition, an autochthonous origin for the name Åland itself seems probable, even if a sixth-century borrowing from North Finnic cannot be excluded. If autochthonous, it could in fact be a product of the Viking Age, potentially as a testament to its significance to seafaring during this period. The most important name of demonstrably Finnish origin is the name Jomala, which is paralleled by some other Finnish names and some referring to ‘Finns’, meaning persons originating from Finland Proper that are discussed by Joonas Ahola, Frog and Johan Schalin and Per Olof Sjöstrand. They are scarce, they typically cluster further north and northeast and nothing suggests that they be older than the twelfth or thirteenth century.

References

Abbreviations

FSB = Finlandssvenska bebyggelsenamn.
FSO-LEX = Finlands svenska ortnamn/namnledslexikon.
KJ 96 = Runic inscription DR 357 (DR357) - Stentoften stone. Available at: https://abdn.ac.uk/skaldic/db.php?table=mss&id=15227&view=&val=&if=runic (last accessed 1.12.2013).


SEO = Hellqvist 1980 [1922]: Svensk etymologisk ordbok.

SOL = Wåhlberg 2003: Svenskt ortnamnslexikon.

SPNK = Paikkala 2007: Suomalainen paikannimikirja.


Sources


Literature


The present chapter deals with the linguistic (pre)history of the Åland Islands and south-western Finland primarily in the Viking Age (793–1066 CE). Language is considered today an essential part of identity and ethnicity. People speaking other languages tend to be perceived as them rather than as one of us (Ahola et al.). According to Lars Hellberg (1987; cf. Huldén 2001: 43), the Åland Islands became depopulated ca. 1000 CE, whereas Birgitta Roeck Hansen (1991) argues for a continuous cultivation of land – and consequently continuous settlement – since the beginning of agriculture in the Åland Islands (see also e.g. Ringbom 1994: 459–460; Tarkiainen 2008: 108–110; for a review of these discussions, see Sjöstrand; for a review of palaeobotanical evidence, see Alenius; for a specific case in the archaeological record, see Gustavsson et al.). The present chapter seeks to contribute to this discussion by addressing the (interrelated) questions: a) what is the beginning of continuity of Swedish (i.e. a North-Germanic language) in the geographical area extending from the Åland Islands through the archipelago to southern and south-western Finland; and b) which language(s) was/were spoken in the Åland Islands in the Viking Age.

I have earlier briefly dealt with the topic Germanic language presence in these areas elsewhere (see M. Heikkilä 2012b: 452–455, 464–468; 2014: 145). It is necessary to acknowledge that the question of the age of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland has long been debated and argued in Finland. This is in part due to nationalistic reasons and associated language political reasons (see e.g. The Association of Finnish Culture and Identity; Linna 1996; Janhunen 2009: 210; M. Heikkilä 2012b: 464). Corresponding issues have been particularly charged in conjunction with Åland, as brought forward in the
chapter by Jenni Lucenius, while Joonas Ahola, Frog and Johan Schalin have foregrounded the problem and problematics of correlating language identifications in the Viking Age as emblems of cultures that provide the heritage of cultures and nations where historically related languages are spoken today. Although the present chapter is concerned with the issue of language presence, its major outcome is showing evidence of the potential presence of multiple language and cultural groups in the archipelago of Southwest Finland by the end of the Viking Age.

**Approach and Methodology**

The North-Germanic element in the linguistic history of Southwest Finland is both relevant and interesting with regard to that of the Åland Islands, because Southwest Finland lies farther away from Scandinavia than Åland. The initial working hypothesis behind the present study was that language distribution areas in the Iron Age would in general form cohesive and mutually exclusive isoglosses. Accordingly, evidence that a North-Germanic language (~ [Old] Swedish) was spoken in Southwest Finland at a certain moment of history would suggest that this would represent an extension of the language area from across the Baltic Sea in Sweden. In this case, evidence that a North-Germanic language was spoken in the archipelago or on the coast of Finland would suggest that the same language was also spoken in contemporary Åland as opposed to reflecting a small local language community or network of language communities settled in a larger language area.

I approach the issue areas of historical language use mainly through onomastic evidence (i.e. place names). Runology and datable early historical documents provide a *terminus post quem* and a *terminus ante quem* for the language (sound) changes either visible or absent in the onomastic material. In addition, the continuous glacio-isostatic land uplift in Åland, the archipelago and Finland provides quite an effective extra-linguistic tool for absolute chronology against which individual place names can be tested (cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 112; Sjöstrand). I have surveyed the documented Swedish toponymy of the Finnish archipelago accessible in onomastic research literature and on maps in search of old, datable place names (e.g. Pitkänen 1985; Zilliacus 1989; 1991; Namnledslexikon; Huldén 2001; Paikkala 2007; MapSite). The investigated toponyms were selected from the entire toponymy because they are early attested and demonstrably old toponyms and thus relevant to the research question. The place names that are analyzed can be dated with reasonable accuracy either
linguistically or extra-linguistically. In my opinion, proposed etymologies for place names that antedate written documentation stand on a solid ground – and are hence reliable – when the following criteria are fulfilled (cf. M. Heikkilä 2014: 32):

1. The suggested etymology for the place name fits the known phonemic history of the language.
2. The semantics of the place name in question can, without great difficulty, be explained on the basis of the (former) physical properties of the site that the name refers to.
3. There are parallels for a similar name-giving pattern in the same region.

The Earliest Evidence of Germanic Language in the Åland–Finland Area

The current Swedish-speaking population in Finland is commonly considered not to have been established already in the Iron Age, but is instead considered to have come into existence gradually sometime between ca. 1150 and 1300 CE – roughly at the same time as Western and Southern Finland were incorporated into the (emerging) kingdom of Sweden (see e.g. Zilliacus 1991; Ivars & Huldén 2002; Jokipii 2003; Vahtola 2003: 53; Pitkänen 2007; Tarkiainen 2008; M. Heikkilä 2012b: 464; Sjöstrand). The greatest argument in favour of this theory is the apparent lack of (datable) Swedish (as opposed to Finnish) place names for locations in Finland of Proto-Scandinavian origin (ca. 100–800 CE), not to mention possible place names going back to Proto-Germanic (ca. 600–1 BCE). The common ancestor of all Germanic languages. Interestingly, the only exception to this circumstance so far discovered seems to be the province name Åland, whose thus-far best, Proto-Finnic loan-etymology was discovered by Johan Schalin (2008a), and whose date of origin through borrowing from Proto-Finnic into Proto-Scandinavian I have recently dated to the Middle Iron Age (M. Heikkilä 2014: 145–150). This example is, however, little surprising for obvious reasons: Åland is geographically situated considerably nearer to Sweden (especially Svealand around Lake Mälaren) than, say, Ostrobothnia and Nyland. It is also situated on a major sailing route across the Baltic Sea (Schalin with Froog). The first exactly datable attestation of the name Åland is in its Latinate form Alandia, found in a Swedish letter dated 3rd May 1281 CE (Huldén 2001: 43; SDHK 1174). No Swedish place name demonstrably as old as Åland has been hitherto demonstrated for the Finnish mainland.
Previous onomastic research has put forward some Finnish place names that seem to be of Proto-Germanic, Early Proto-Germanic or even Pre-Germanic origin. These are especially the primary hydronyms *Euro, Aura, Kymi (=: Kymen) and *Roine (x 2), as well as the macronym *Suomi (=: Suomen)1 [*Finland (Proper)’] and corresponding macroethnonym *suomalainen [‘Finn’] (Koivulehto 1987; 1997; Kallio 1998; Paikkala 2007: 30, 51, 204, 382, 430; M. Heikkilä 2012d: 23; 2014, passim). These toponyms testify to contacts between Ancient Germanic people and Ancient Finns in remote periods. They do not, however, testify to continuous ancient Germanic/Scandinavian presence in the geographical region of today’s Finland. If these names had a continuity of use among speakers of Germanic languages, we would anticipate Modern Swedish cognates that would have developed in accordance with the (North-)Germanic sound laws.2

The break in continuity of use for Swedish speakers can easily be demonstrated with the following illustrative toponyms: *Karjaa (- EFin *Karjas > Fin Karjaan), *Loja (- Fin Lohja), *Poja (- Fin Pohja) and *Kumlinge. Their probative sound shapes show that they have not gone through the (younger) i-umlaut (i.e. partial regressive vowel assimilation) and the loss of an unstressed vowel (syllable), indicating that these place names entered the Swedish language when the Northwest Germanic i-umlaut and the loss of an unstressed vowel already had taken place and become unproductive. If they had gone through the i-umlaut and syncope as well as apocope, these place names would now have the sound shapes **Kär (cf. PScand harjaz > Icel herr, Swe här [‘troops’]), 3 **Lö, **Pö 4 and **Kymlinge (cf. Kymlinge in Stockholm). (see Schalin 2008b; M. Heikkilä 2012b: 466; Kartsök; Ortnamnsregistret; Vikstrand 2013: 154–155). In my dissertation, however, I among other things point out previously unnoticed ancient Germanic place names in Finnish toponymy, some of which even seem to have cognates in Swedish (M. Heikkilä 2014). The contacts between Proto-Finnic speakers and Proto-Germanic speakers, and Proto-Finns and Proto-Scandinavians were intense, intimate and prolonged, which resulted in a massive import of loanwords in many distinguishable strata from Germanic into

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1 The earliest attestation of the name Suomi is from the year 811 CE (Lehtinen 2007: 16–17).
2 Consider, however, the discussion of the macrohydronyms Kymmene and Vånå in my dissertation (M. Heikkilä 2014: 219–224, 263–266).
3 Not to mention that the outcome would have been an even more archaic **Här through Grimm’s Law – i.e. the First Germanic Consonant Shift, on which see e.g. Ringe 2006: 93–102; M. Heikkilä 2014: 42–58.
4 Not to mention that the outcome would have been an even more archaic **Fö through Grimm’s Law.
Finnic assimilated across a long period of time (see Koivulehto 2002; Lehtinen 2007; M. Heikkilä 2012a; 2014; cf. also Ahola et al.).

As I stated above, Åland is probably the oldest known Swedish place name in Finland identified to date. Schalin (2008a) has argued on good grounds that the Swedish name is a borrowing from an unattested Ancient Finnish lexeme *ahveh : *ahvehen ['archipelago'], which is probably itself an earlier borrowing from Proto-Germanic. In my view, the phonemic development would have been as follows: Pre-Germ *ák-wās ['waters'] – *ak-wās ['water-related'] (cf. Got abva ['water'], Fin Akka < OFin Akas in 1483 CE) → EPGerm *áχ-wās (cf. Icel áár ['rivers']) – *aχ-wās > EPGerm *aχwōjōs ['islands'] (⟩ P Germ *agwōjōz > *aghwōjōz > PScand *aujōz > Icel eyjar ['islands']) → PFin *aiveš ['islands (collectively), i.e. archipelago'] > EFin *Abveh ['Åland'] (cf. Ahven-maa in 1833 CE, A hvennamaa) → PScand *Aχweχ ‘Åland’ → OSwe Åland > Swe Åland ['Archipelago-Land'] (see also M. Heikkilä 2014: 145–150). On the Finnic side, this *Abveh ['Åland'] has developed as follows: *Abveh : *Ahvehen ['Archipelago'] → *Ahvehen maa ['Land of Archipelago'] > Ahvennamaa > Ahvenmaa, which further developed into Ahvenna ma ['Land of Perch'] through folk-etymological association with the Finnish common noun abven(a) ['perch'].

On the basis of the sound shapes, the borrowing of *Ahveh from a pre-stage of the Finnish language into a pre-stage of the Swedish language can be dated to the Proto-Scandinavian period (ca. 100–800 CE). The linguistic dating of the emergence of the name Åland coincides with the archaeologically visible material incorporation of the Åland Islands into an Iron Age Eastern Scandinavian culture sphere in the sixth century CE (Tømtlund 1999: 19; Tarkiainen 2008: 108; TØMTLUND). Consequently, I assume that the name Åland goes back to the sixth century CE. If the name had been borrowed from the Finnic side into the Germanic side later, the sound substitutions would have been different as it appears from the probative case (O)Fin Ahvensaari → OSwe *Åvensåri (cf. Affuensari in 1542 CE) > Swe Åvensor (**Åsor) (Paikkala 2007: 16).

Names for smaller localities (i.e. micronyms) are generally more informative and probative than names for larger regions (i.e. macronyms) in the search for the emergence of the Swedish-speaking population in Southwest Finland and surrounding areas. This is because micronyms indicate habitation, whereas

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5 Cf. the phrase attested in the late sixteenth century CE abuen maan miehet ['archipelago’s men'] (cf. Hemen maa = Hämennmaa ['Land of Tavastia'] from 1548 CE); Ahven-maa in 1833 CE; Ahwenmeri in 1874 CE.

Macronyms do not necessarily indicate more than people being conscious about the existence of the region in question (cf. Schalin with Frog). There exist many Swedish place names in Finland that cannot be regarded as macronyms and whose probative sound shapes enable us to set a clear *terminus post quem* for the emergence of settlement continuity for Scandinavian language speakers in that region. This is the case with Karis, Lojo, Pojo and Kumlinge mentioned above. It is also observable for the toponym Swe Jomala in Åland from Oswe Jumala (attested in 1351 CE; Jumalaby already in 1333 CE) borrowed from EFin *Jumala* ['God'] (cf. Fin jumala ['god']; see also Sjöstrand; Schalin with Frog): Sw Jomala would have produced **_Omala, **_Omal or **_Omla if it were borrowed from Finnic speakers earlier. Similarly, the name of three homonymic islands in the Finnish archipelago, Swe Jurmo (Map 1) from Oswe *Jūrimā* (Iurima in the thirteenth century CE, Juremaa in 1401 CE) was borrowed from EFin *Juurimaa; this would have produced **_Yrmo if it were borrowed earlier.7 (Huldén 2001: 50–54, 87–88, 100; Paikkala 2007: 137, 241, 341; M. Heikkilä 2012b: 464–468). The sound shapes of the names tell us that all these Swedish place names undoubtedly postdate the Late Proto-Scandinavian (ca. 500–800 CE) sound changes i-umlaut caused by a surviving non-initial syllable [i] or [j], loss of unstressed syllable and loss of initial [j], and certainly postdate the Germanic Consonant Shift (i.e. Grimm’s Law) that took

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7 N.B. The origin of the Early Finnish place-name *Juurimaa (Iurima, Juremaa) is irrelevant in deciding the *terminus post quem* for the emergence of the Swedish settlement in Finland. The decisive factor is the fact that *Juurimaa has become expressly Jurmo instead of **Yrmo, which would indicate an earlier date of borrowing. Furthermore, the name Juurimaa is attested elsewhere in Finnish toponymy (see MapSite).

**Micronyms with a Continuity from Proto-Scandinavian**

Although the majority of toponyms attested in written records cannot be considered to have been in continuous use from the era of Proto-Scandinavian, there seem to be at least a few previously unnoticed Swedish place names of the micronym type that antedate the turn of the Iron Age to the Middle Ages (ca. 1200 CE in the Finnish context). The hydronym *Abborrfors* may be such a place name (*Map 2*). The referent of *Abborrfors* is situated at the mouth of the Kymijoki River, a major river in the area. I suggest the following etymology for the name: EFin *Ahveh-purha* [‘Archipelago Rapids’] > EFin *Ahveppurha* > PScand *Aχwebburyχɔ̄n* > RSwe *Åbora* > OSwe *Abbora-fors* (in 1357 CE), *Aabor-forsby* (in 1455 CE), *Abor-s-by* (in 1455 CE) > Swe *Abborrfors* [‘Perch Rapids’] (cf. Åland). The sound shape of the Swedish hydronym indicates an early date of borrowing, which would have taken place before the beginning of the Viking Age that began slightly before 800 CE (Ralph 2002; M. Heikkilä 2012c, 2014: 125–127, 129–132). This, however, would perhaps not be so strange because *Abborrfors* is situated at the mouth of the major river Kymijoki (Swe *Kymmene älv*), along the waterway through the Gulf of Finland from Svealand in Sweden to the Neva River (OSwe *Nyn* in 1303 CE) and Lake Ladoga. New trading centers, such as Birka and Staraya Ladoga (ON *Aldeigjuborg*), were

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8 Cf. the hydronym *Ankkapurha* in the same river and *ahuen maa, Ahven-maa* above.

9 If this etymology is accepted, the word *ahveh* [‘archipelago’] would not be a completely unattested, hypothetical common noun.
established at ports around the Baltic Sea by the eighth century CE (Cunliffe 2008: 434; Harrison 2009: 108), and *Abborrfors* is situated along the famous *austrvegr* ['east route'] of the Vikings (on which see e.g. Harrison 2009: 112, 117; cf. also Heininen et al.). The mutual relations of the sound shapes of the Old Swedish, Middle Low German and Finnish names for the River Neva (i.e. *Nyn, die Nühe* and *Neva*) indicate that the Germanic name-forms antedate (the end of) the syncope period (ca. 550–800 CE) (see M. Heikkilä 2012d: 22–23; 2014: 232, 266).

The suggested etymology for the hydronym *Abborrfors* is supported by the names *Ahvionsaari* and *Ahvionkoski*, the former of which denotes an island in Lake Pihlajavesi and the latter a course of rapids situated on both sides of an island in the river Kymijoki. These names allude to the presence of a common noun *ahvio* with the meaning ‘island’ in Early Finnish. This reconstructed word would be a transparent borrowing from the Proto-Germanic common noun *aχwjo* ['island'] (cf. Ahvenanmaa). It should be noted that no common noun *ahvio* with any perch-related (Fin *ahven*) meaning has been attested in the Finnish language (Tuomi 1985), nor has any such corresponding family name or personal name such as *Ahvio* (USN; Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 60–61). Furthermore, the Swedish place name *Abborrfors* (spelled *Abborafors* in 1357 CE) can hardly have anything to do with the Swedish common noun *abborre* ['perch'], which was spelled *aghborre* ['sharp bristle'] in Old Swedish (see Namnledslexikon, s.v. *Abborr*, Bjorvand & Lindeman 2007: 23; Hellquist 2008: 1). Moreover, the rapids *Abborrfors* is said to be significant for salmon fishing (rather than perch) (DF 1689). In addition, the Swedish name of the river where the rapids *Abborrfors* are situated, namely *Kymmene*, may be a direct descendant of the river’s Early Proto-Germanic name *Reumjā* ['Fairway'] (cf. the hydronym *Kymmen* in Sweden), from which the Finnish name of the river, *Kymi*, is likely borrowed (M. Heikkilä 2014: 263–266; see also Janhunen 2009: 209).

Although the hydronym *Abborrfors* offers potential continuity in use in Swedish antedating the Viking Age, it is problematic as an example of language continuity among local inhabitants for the same reasons discussed by Schalin and FROG concerning corresponding toponyms in Åland. Just as this location held potential relevance for seafaring along the Eastern Route during the Viking Age, it could also have been maintained among seafarers and carried with them in the establishment of later settlements in coastal areas.

A probative datable place name of the micronym type within the Åland Islands is at least *Strömma träsk* (in *Strömp* in 1322 CE, *Ströma* in 1537 CE,
Strömma in 1546 CE) [‘Stream Pond’], denoting an ancient strait situated in the municipality of Saltvik, because the latest possible time of naming of this place name can be estimated by means of the topography of the referent and the known rate of land uplift, which is circa five centimetres per year in the region. As regards Strömma träsk, the sill between Tjärnan and Saltviksfjärden lies at an altitude of more than 5 metres above current sea level. Hence, the ancient stream (= strait) that the name Strömma träsk refers to was silted up by the end of the Viking Age (cf. Hellberg 1987: 181–182; Huldén 2001: 68–69). Consequently, the Swedish name in question is at least equally old, i.e. it probably descends from the Viking Age. Interestingly, Strömma träsk is situated in the (north-) eastern part of the main island of Åland, i.e. farther away from Scandinavia (see Map 3).

Map 3. The location of Strömma träsk, Saltvik, Åland. In this approximate reconstruction, it is possible to see that a) the valley of present-day Strömma träsk b) was a channel during the Viking Age and formed a section of a north–south directed sailing passage across the Åland Islands (see also Map 1). (Contains data from the National Land Survey of Finland Shaded relief raster series 9/2014.)

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Huldén 2001: 41; 68–69; Pässe 2001; Salo 2004: 21; Tikkanen 2007: 11; DF 303; MapSite.
It is also possible that some Swedish place names on the mainland of Finland may have a continuity going back to the Viking Age. One potential candidate for such an early Swedish toponym is Tövsala, the name of a municipality in south-western Finland called Taivassalo in Finnish. The initial syllable vowel correspondence between Taivassalo ['Sky/Heaven Island'] and Tövsala seems irregular at first sight (cf. Fin Raisio - Swe Reso, Fin Kaitasaari - Swe Kaitor, Keitos; Fin Laitila - Swe Letala and Fin Paimio - Swe Pemar) (see Huldén 2001: 156; Paikkala 2007: 442). The vowel correspondence can, however, be reconciled as follows: EFin *Taivalsalo ['Isthmus Island'] (cf. the Finnish common noun taival - taipale ['isthmus between two bodies of water']) > (O)Fin Taivassalo -> AEScand *Tēiwassala > *Teywassala (cf. the Swedish male name Birger > Byrger > Börje) > *Tøywasala > OSwe Tōwosalu (in 1353 CE), Thōwesalum (in 1373 CE), Tōwesala (in 1374 CE), Thouesala (in 1386, 1395 CE), Theuasale (in 1400 CE), Tōwissala (in 1402 CE) > Swe Tōvssala (cf. Jōns Taivassalo in Turku in 1596 CE, Taivassalo in Jämsä, Taipale in Taivassalo(!) and Taivalsaaret in Ikaalinen) (Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 641; MapSite; SDHK, nos. 6512, 10537, 15961).

Accordingly, the sound shapes of the etymon and the borrowed proper name point to a relatively early date of borrowing (cf. Köyliö - Kiulo below).

Judging from the five metre altitude contour and the meaning of the common nouns included in the name, the Swedish toponym Nynäs ['New Promontory'] (→ Fin Nyynäinen) situated in the municipality of Masku in south-western Finland (attested as early as 1232 CE) stems from approximately the same time as Tövsala. As indicated above, the Swedish place names show no sign of undergoing i-umlaut, which is therefore the terminus post quem for their genesis of ca. 800 CE. The hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that Finnish place names derived from Swedish manifest forms that have already undergone i-umlaut on the Germanic side at the time of borrowing, e.g. Furuskeri (cf. Fin kari ['rocks']) and Räntämäki (M. Heikkilä 2012b: 456, 465–466; Paikkala 2007: 298; MapSite).

The marine waterway through the archipelago to and from Finland’s oldest town Turku (Swe Åbo; first mentioned in a papal letter dated 24th February 1259 CE; DF 118) is called Airisto in Finnish and Erstan in Swedish. The origin of the name pair Airisto - Erstan [irston/ersstan/äirston] is obscure (Pitkänen 1985: 332–333; Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 62; Paikkala 2007: 17). I equate the name pair Airisto - Erstan with the name of the nearby situated river Aurajoki and the village name Aerla, and suggest the following etymology for them: Fin

11 Nyønes in 1418 CE (Haggrén 2007: 50–51; SDHK 19101).
Aura(joki) < EWFin *Aôra ['Waterway'] (<- PScand *Âdrön) - EWFin *Aôristo ['Waterways'] > (O)Fin Airisto -> OSw Eristen (in 1488 CE) > Eristan (in 1565 CE) > Swe Erstan. The vocalization of the dental fricative [θ] into the vowel [i] (and further into [e]) can be compared to the same, regular sound change attested in the history of the etymologically related name of the nearby situated village Aërla and in the history of the name of the village Kaërla situated in the same region (cf. ij adhre viku in 1377 CE, Adrelax in 1450 CE, Adhrelax in 1451 CE, Ayralax in 1477 CE, Ayriala in 1540 CE < EFin *Aôralaksi, and Kadrealum in 1359 CE, Kayriala in 1363 CE < EFin *Kaôriala). This type of derivative can be compared to Fin kone ['machine'] -> koneisto ['machinery'], Fin haapa ['aspen'] -> haavisto ['aspen stand'] and honka ['pine tree'] -> hongisto ['pinewoods']. The sound shapes of the name pair Airisto - Erstan show that the Swedish name form Erstan is in any case a medieval borrowing of Early Finnish (*Airisto (cf. Huldén 2001: 119). The phonemic development tr > ţr > ur is regular in the north(west)ern parts of Finland Proper. Similarly, the phonemic development tr > ţr > ir (and further into er) is regular in the south(east)ern parts of Finland Proper (see Koivulehto 1987: 35–36; Tuomi 1985, s.v. aura; Lehtinen 2007: 252–254).

Some Finnish place names actually allude to the earlier presence of a common noun *atra ['aquatic passage'] in Early Finnish. I refer to such hydronyms as Aurakoski and Auralampi in the major river Simojoki in Ranua, Arrajoki (spelt Ainajoki in 1566 CE) and Arrajärvi in the water system of the major river Kymijoki in Nastola and Iitti, and Aurikkajärvi in the water system of the major river Kokemäenjoki in Orivesi, not forgetting Aurajoki, Airisto and Aerla (Virtaranta 1958: 238; Paikkala 2007: 30; MapSite; Names Archive). Obsolete common nouns are often preserved in place names (cf. Huldén 1987: 43). As to the phonemic development, consider the accidentally homonymic Finnish common noun (Icel arðr ['plough'] < (P)Germ *arðraz ->) atra ['plough'] > EWFin *aôra > aura,aira in the south-western Finnish dialects and aura, arra in the Tavastian dialects (Virtaranta 1958: 230; Tuomi 1985, s.v. aura; SSA, s.v. aura). Furthermore, the word constituting the name Kymi(joki) (as well as Kemi and Kiminki) seems also to have been a common noun – of Germanic

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12 Cf. OSw âôra ['blood vessel, vein; waterway'], OEng êôdre ['river'], Germ Adêr ['blood vessel; waterway'] and, the German macrohydronym Oder (spelled Adêra in 968 CE, Odera in 1139 CE) (M. Heikkilä 2014: 102, 180).

13 The word-final nasal is a definite article.

14 Koivulehto 1987: 35–36; Paikkala 2007: 17, 27, 30; Hellquist 2008: 1416; SDHK 7560, 8363, 10955. Also consider the name Aarlahti (Arelax in 1467 CE) in Mynämäki. The sound change *aôra > aura is regular in the local dialect. (Tuomi 1985, s.v. aura, Names Archive).
origin (M. Heikkilä 2014: 255–259, 263–266). The same might even apply to the *Eura* names. The most famous *Eura* (attested since 1344 CE) is the name of a river in (south)western Finland, and the other homophonic names denote places along rivers (Hulden 2001: 173; Paikkala 2007: 51, 448; MapSite). *Eura* is likely a Proto-Germanic loan-word or loan-name in the Finnish language (PFin *ētra ← EP Germ *ēþrā [‘blood vessel; river’]), and is actually etymologically the same word as *Aura(joki)* – just an earlier borrowing (Koivulehto 1987: 33–36; Paikkala 2007: 30, 51).

As a final example, the Finnish name for Lake Köyliönjärvi and its Swedish counterpart *Kiulo träsk* can be considered. The initial syllable vocalism of the place name *Kiulo* (← EFin *Keyliö > Fin Köyliö) indicates a somewhat later time of borrowing than that of *Tövsala*, since the sound shape of the toponym *Kiulo* (→ Fin Kiulon järvi [‘Lake Köyliönjärvi’] in the death-lay of Bishop Henry of Finland) is very probative as to the relative time of borrowing. The name was borrowed from Early Finnish into Old Swedish after the Ancient East Scandinavian sound change *ey* > *öy*, but before the same sound change *eią* > *öy* that also occurred in Early Finnish (Lehtinen 2007: 196–197; M. Heikkilä 2014: 177–179). This lake is connected to the tradition of Bishop Henry of Finland. According to the well-known death-lay, which is thought to stem from the late thirteenth century, Bishop Henry was killed on the ice of Lake Köyliönjärvi by a local peasant called Lalli [‘Good-for-Nothing’]. Medieval calendars assigned the date of the murder to the 20th of January. The year of the murder has been dated to 1160 CE at latest, but quite likely occurred somewhat earlier.15

The name *Kiulo* was likely borrowed from Early Finnish into Old Swedish in connection with the murder of Bishop Henry.

We can now conclude that almost all the Swedish toponyms in Finland are younger than the umlaut and syncope period in Ancient Scandinavian (ca. 550–800 CE), which indicates that the current Swedish-speaking population in Finland does not antedate the Viking Age. The macrotoponyms Åland, Finland, Kvenland [‘Ostrobothnia’] and Tavastland [‘Tavastia’] and the macrohydroonyms Vänå, Kymmene as well as Abbørrfors seem to make an exception to this pattern (M. Heikkilä 2012c, 2014). Above, I have argued that Abbørrfors is a Swedish micronym – the sole known one –, whose coming into existence antedates the umlaut and syncope period. The exception presented by this example may be connected to its continuity of relevance to sea traffic rather than continuity of a Scandinavian-speaking population.

Consequently, if we manage to date the $i$-umlaut caused by a remaining second syllable vowel [i] (in eastern Scandinavia), we will obtain a *terminus post quem* for the establishment of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland, including the Åland Islands. So, when did the North Germanic $i$-umlaut caused by a remaining second syllable vowel [i] occur (in eastern Scandinavia)? The oldest attested forms of the Swedish toponym *Helsingborg* (situated quite near Copenhagen) are probative concerning the question. Magister (master) Adam of Bremen mentions *Halsinburg* ['Helsingborg'] in *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* written in the early 1070s, whereas the name form *Helsingburgh* is found in the deed of gift of the Danish King Canute the Holy dated 21st May 1085. The surviving copy of the document was written down in the first half of the 12th century CE. Another probative toponym mentioned in Adam of Bremen’s book is the province name *Halsingland* ['Hälsingland']. (Adam of Bremen 1985; Pamp 1988: 61; Kroon 1989; SDHK, no. 171; SMP, s.v. *Henrik*). Adam of Bremen wrote down the information for his book during his visit to Denmark in the late 1060s (Bremen 1985; Nyberg 1991: 155). The attested name form *Halsingland* with no $i$-umlaut is particularly probative (cf. *Helsingia* ca. 1120 CE, *helsingeland* 1188–97 CE [Nyberg 1991; SDHK, no. 264]), because the province of *Hälsingland* lies quite near Finland geographically (N.B. the etymological connection between *Hälsingland* in Sweden and *Helsinkil/ Helsingfors* (*Helsinga* in 1351 CE) in Finland). My conclusion is therefore that the $i$-umlaut caused by a remaining second syllable vowel [i] in Ancient East Scandinavian slightly postdates the late 1060s, and so does the birth of Finland’s permanent Swedish-speaking population, at least east of the main island of Åland (consider *Kumlinge* and *Kymlinge*), because the Finland-Swedish place names have not gone through this probative sound change. In brief, the *terminus post quem* for the $i$-umlaut caused by a remaining second syllable [i] is approximately 1070 CE, and the *terminus ante quem* is 1120 CE. This correlates well with the example of the name *Kiulo*, which, if borrowed in connection with the murder of Bishop Henry in or prior to 1160 CE, that event can be considered the *terminus ante quem* for the beginning of the permanent Swedish-speaking population on the Finnish mainland. Consequently, the establishment

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16 The North Germanic $i$-umlaut caused by a *disappearing* second syllable vowel [i] was noticeably earlier, which is proved by e.g. the male name *Herigar-ius* (< PScand *Harjagaizaz*) attested in Birka in the ninth century CE (cf. OSwe *Hærger*) (Wåt 1884; Robinson 1921: Modéer 1967: 26; Harrison 2009: 120–121; M. Heikkilä 2014: 110–118).

17 The Provincial Law of Hälsingland was in use in medieval Finland (Sjöstrand 1994: 569; Harrison 2009: 291). The name *Helsing* has been attested on Finnish soil since 1329 CE (SDHK 3622).
of the Swedish settlement in the area of Southwest Finland, the archipelago and also the Åland Islands probably postdates the end of the Viking Age (ca. 1066 CE) but began before 1160 CE.

A View of the Language Situation in the Viking Age

The preceding discussion has led to the development of a theory that the beginning of the permanent settlement in the Åland Islands and the Finnish mainland by speakers of Scandinavian languages with continuity through the present slightly antedates the year 1160 CE. However, Eastern Fennoscandia certainly belonged at least to the outer circle of the known world of the ancient Scandinavians already considerably earlier since the main tribal areas Finland (Fin Suomi), Kvenland (Fin Kainuu) and Tavastia (Swe Tavastland, Fin Häme) had their own Scandinavian names. This being the case, we can now turn to the question of which language(s) were spoken in the Åland Islands and on the islands in the Archipelago Sea before Old Swedish spread to the region.

There is a considerable number of place names which either are of Finnish origin or at least witness to an earlier presence of Finns and the (Early) Finnish language in the archipelago. Such names include Jomala (Jumala in 1333 CE), Ledsöra, Sālis (x 2), Finström, (Finnaström ['Stream of the Finns'] in 1328 CE) and Finnö ['Finn Island'] (Pitkänen 1985: 15–16; Hellberg 1987: 215–228; Pitkänen 1991: 139–159; MapSite). Furthermore, there exist a couple of place names that allude to an earlier presence of ‘Lapps’ ['Sámi people(?)']18 in the Åland Islands, e.g. Lappaböle (in 1537 CE), Lappnäs and Lappo (Namnedlslexikon, s.v. Lapp-, Huldén 2001: 72, 89; MapSite). (See also AHOLA et al.) Although the latter place names do not antedate the arrival of Swedish language speakers, they do provide evidence of additional cultural groups in this area. Interestingly, in Åland, there are examples of Finnish-influenced spellings of linguistically pure Swedish personal names and place names in the documents from the sixteenth century. The most famous case is the toponym Germundö that contains the Swedish male name Germund but whose traditional spelling has been Kermundö (cf. Swe Germund - Girmund --> Fin Kirmul/Kirmunti) (Hellberg 1987: 226–228; M. Heikkilä 2013: 353).

18 I have dealt with the origin of the name Lapp and its relation to Sámi people in my dissertation (M. Heikkilä 2014: 136–139).
Conclusions

This chapter has argued that the current Swedish-speaking population in Finland came into existence gradually, beginning with its establishment in Åland and south-western Finland, where the permanent North-Germanic settlement probably started soon after 1100 CE (see also Sjöstrand). With the possible exception of Abborrfor, no Finland-Swedish micronym (i.e. a place name denoting a smaller locality) dates back to the time before the Viking Age. This exception may be accounted for by the location’s relevance to seafarers, who could maintain the toponym independent of local inhabitants (cf. Schalin with Frog). The macronyms Åland, Finland, Kvenland and Tavastland, however, are considerably older, as may also be Kymmene and Vänå. The oldest Finland-Swedish micronyms discussed in this study probably date to the Late Viking Age and the Early Crusade Period, i.e. ca. 1000–1150 CE. These names can be considered indicative of continuity of a Scandinavian language in these areas.

When the Old East Norse to Old Swedish language began gaining a foothold in these areas, the place name evidence indicates the presence of Early Finnish speakers and references to both ‘Finns’ and ‘Lapps’ [‘Sámi people(?)’] in the Åland Islands when the (Old) Swedish language was introduced there, although this could indicate the arrival of these language groups in conjunction with that settlement process (cf. Ahola et al.; Sjöstrand). Consequently, the Late Iron Age linguistic ‘landscape’ of the Åland Islands may have been rather different from what it has been in historical times. Hence, a significant change in that linguistic landscape has taken place across a period of a couple of centuries. Furthermore, it seems that the Finnish language persisted to a certain extent in the Åland Islands for at least a couple of centuries after the archipelago between Svealand and Finland Proper had been incorporated into the expanding Swedish kingdom, which happened by the middle of the thirteenth century CE (M. Heikkilä 2012b; Sjöstrand; Heininen et al.).

References

Abbreviations

AESCand = Ancient East Scandinavian
EFin = Early Finnish (= varhaissuomi)
EPGerm = Early Proto-Germanic
EWFFin = Early Western Finnish
Fin = the Finnish language
Got = the Gothic language
Icel = the Icelandic language
Nor = the Norwegian language
OEng = Old English
OFinn = Old Finnish (= vanha kirjasuomi)
ON = Old Norse
OSwe = Old Swedish
PFin = Proto-Finnic
PGerm = Proto-Germanic
Pre-Germ = Pre-Germanic
PScand = Proto-Scandinavian
RSwe = Runic Swedish
SaN = North Sami
Swe = the Swedish language
* = reconstructed sound shape
** = impossible or non-existing sound shape
A > B = A develops into B
A >> B = A develops into B via intermediate stages
A --> B = B is borrowed from A
A -> B = B is a derivative of A
‘X’ = official English translation
“X” = unofficial English translation

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**Literature**


ROBINSON, Charles H. 1921. *Anskar, the Apostle of the North, 801–865: Translated from the Vita Anskarii by Bishop Rimbert, His Fellow Missionary and Successor*. London: SPCK.


The Åland Islands are situated – some might say strategically – in the midst of the Baltic Sea region. They are roughly mid-way between the southern shores of the Baltic Sea and the northern coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia on the one hand, and roughly mid-way between the Scandinavian Peninsula and Finland on the other. In the Viking Age, this placed the islands between two culturally quite different settlement areas: the expanding kingdom of the Svear in Central Sweden to the west and Satakunta, Vakka-Suomi and Finland Proper of what is now south-western Finland to the east (Map 1). Åland was in an important position for shoreline-based navigation and provided a waypoint along different sailing routes that linked it to extensive and vital routes of trade to both the west and the east. Several of the contributions to this volume highlight Viking Age Åland as an arena of diverse cultural backgrounds and influences. The present chapter sets out to discuss Åland in terms of its polities and geopolitical context.

The Viking Age here denotes a chronological phase between ca. AD 800–1050. The period on Åland has to a large extent been identified and defined on the basis of comparative analyses of material culture, burial customs (and grave types) and settlement characteristics with neighbouring areas. Such comparisons have revealed the greatest similarities to the west of Åland but there are important features that point to the east and also some local traits (e.g. Callmer
Without doubt, interaction, maritime relations and mobility were important aspects of Viking Age Åland while the significance of regional characteristics of Åland is more difficult to discuss (see e.g. Tarsala 1998). Even though the Viking Age is in the main focus here, it is important to bear in mind that many of the developments that characterize the Viking Age had beginnings prior to this era, in earlier phases of the Iron Age. For example, the ‘small’ political units had developed into larger regional coalitions or polities already during the Vendel Period (ca. 500–800) and they continued to develop in different parts of the Baltic area through the Viking Age (e.g. the kingdom of the Svear).

Strictly speaking, there are no specialists of ‘Viking Age Geopolitics’ as such. A broad geopolitical view of Northern Europe in the Viking Age can be enabled by a diverse range of data, but turning focus to the situation of the Åland Islands within this frame is methodologically problematized by the limitations of such data. The authors of the present chapter have confronted this challenge as a multidisciplinary cooperative effort. Rather than beginning from a more uniform knowledge base, as is more common in collective authorship, we are each in different ways approaching this topic as outsiders and it is at the overlapping intersection of our diverse areas of specialization that the present
work was created. In this sense, each of us in our roles as specialists became instruments or tools of the research itself and sounding boards against which that research was developed. The present discussion will necessarily be speculative, building hypotheses through interpretations of limited evidence surrounding a culture or cultures that can never be wholly reconstructed. Rather than conclusions per se, this chapter brings forward possibilities and probabilities with an exploration of their implications. However, this does not diminish the potential value of perspectives enabled here. Viewing empirical evidence of the Viking Age in Åland necessarily requires hypothetical models of cultures, contacts and relations in order for that evidence to be meaningfully interpreted as reflecting a phenomenon in a broader context. The present chapter sets out to offer new ways of thinking about the polities of the Åland Islands when framing empirical data in relation to such models.

New Geopolitics

Geopolitics deals with both ‘Geography’ and ‘Politics’ with an emphasis on the interrelationship between them. Geopolitics is traditionally interpreted to mean and focus on physical ‘space’ and ‘power’, meaning physical space and natural resources connected with the power of a state. This is largely concerns ‘Classical Geopolitics’, the oldest, and if you wish, the original, school of thought of geopolitics. ‘New Geopolitics’ and ‘Critical Geopolitics’ came to challenge and problematize the main discourse. In addition to physical space and state power and (foreign) policy, these approaches held that there were additional factors, such as (geographical) knowledge as a format of power, which are relevant (Ó Tuathail & Agnew 1992; also Moisio 2001). The term ‘factor’ in this sense is applied to broad abstract categories such as ‘actor’ per se – acknowledging actors other than the state and people(s) in particular (Abele & Rodon 2007) – ‘social space’ and ‘identity/ies’. ‘Geo-economics’, which was introduced by the New Geopolitics, is often mentioned, although it tends to deal with globalization and liberal economics, and its high importance is (too) much emphasized in the globalized world of the early-twenty-first century (e.g. Ohmae 1995; Tuomi 1997). ‘Critical Geopolitics’ politicizes physical space and brings new, relevant, immaterial, factors into academic discussion, such as innovations, devolution of power, and the interrelationship between power and knowledge (Heininen 2005).

Looked at in terms of Classical Geopolitics, the term ‘factor’ becomes a tool for addressing phenomena that affected states, their relationships and
interactions. *State* in this sense is understood as the institution of a nation, or a unified state as a political and administrative system, and the unified state system in the international context. However, this turn affected the focus and concern of geopolitics. Classical Geopolitics had centred attention on the *national* level, in the sense of a state as the centre and its power over its territories (including peripheries) and citizens. This view emphasizes the importance of (state) sovereignty as the ultimate aim of a state as an entity. Shifting attention to additional factors has provided the equipment to more effectively address the role of local agents and polities both within a state and in transnational areas, agents (e.g. Greenpeace) that may aggressively work to affect national policies or international relations, and also factors that may motivate these agents, such as the knowledge or technologies that have mobilized agents or that are translated into power within that context, and so forth. A significant outcome of this reframing is that states are relativized as a category of actors among other actors. Within this frame, any organized groups with social hierarchies and conventions of conduct that differentiated them from other organized groups can be broadly described as forming polities, even if the objects of attention are small tribes of hunter-gatherers, a local village community or a multi-ethnic trading centre (whether subject to an agreed social order or authoritarian exercise of power). However simple or complex, such polities function as actors on a geopolitical stage no less than states in the modern sense. Accordingly, the discourses of New and Critical Geopolitics can be applied as approaches to the polities of the Viking Age and their relationships to one another. This perspective brings different aspects of interactions in the Viking Age into focus, and consequently has great potential for producing new information.

**Mobility: Illustrating Geopolitical Factors**

Before turning to specific actors in interaction, some of the geopolitical factors relevant to the Viking Age can be first introduced in order to clarify and illustrate how such factors can be approached and interrelated. A key factor of the Viking Age is mobility, which greatly increased during this period. Mobility is invariably a relevant factor in geopolitics insofar as geopolitics is concerned with people, their polities and networks, and mobility is a factor that constructs or constrains the geographical spaces these inhabit or control, as well as the relationships between such spaces. Consequently, mobility becomes a determinant on polity interaction. Mobility is therefore a factor in the production and development of *contact zones* as social spaces where negotiations of power and identities are
ongoing between different actors as ethnic groups, polities or their networks, whether the power relations between those actors is symmetrical or asymmetrical (Pratt 1991: 34; Ahola et al.).

Mobility of the Viking Age was enabled by the gradual development in preceding centuries of knowledge relevant to seafaring and the development of ship-building technology to sail the open waters of the North Atlantic and, with the same ships, navigate inland river routes that could be quite narrow and shallow by comparison (Brøgger & Shetelig 1971; Crumlin-Pedersen 1986; Larsson 2007). ‘Knowledge’ and ‘technology’ both qualify as distinct categories of geopolitical factors. Knowledge enables actors and it can, among other things, be translated into a commodifiable resource – i.e. knowledge can be marketable (cf. Ahola et al.) – or into power that can be applied in relation to populations and polities. Knowledge also enables technologies, but the knowledge of how to build and sail a particular variety of ship remains distinguishable from the manifestations of that technology and its use. A produced ship may be commodified and transferred to populations that can use it but not make it themselves; the technology of writing could produce books that might be stolen and traded by groups unable to read. The mobility of the Viking Age is in this sense interfaced with additional factors through which it was enabled.

As a factor, mobility is a prerequisite of widening the sphere of influence over new spaces. Settlements are the most visible and effective form of spreading political power and also of economic, technical and cultural exchange that embody political power. Mobility was a factor connected to the spread of Scandinavian colonies across the North Atlantic and the contact networks that these initiated. It was also connected to the opening of sailing routes along the north of Norway to the White Sea, the increased activity along routes to the east, of which the trading centre of Staraya Ladoga became a central node, as well as the opening of river routes from the Ladoga region and the Daugava or Western Dvina River to the south that carried a flow of silver into the Baltic Sea region. (See Map 2.) The expansion of contact areas and resulting connectivity enabled by mobility led to the establishment of a cooperative region and to reimagining Northern Europe as a whole for the first time. (See Heininen et al. 2014.) Mobility thus enabled connectivity as an additional factor characteristic of this period.

This cooperative region consisted of peer polities that were connected by economic, cultural and political ties. Peer-polity interaction describes the negotiation of power and authority between polities through their networks rather than being subordinated to a common dominant central authority
This does not mean that relationships between peer polities were always purely symmetrical or that they were not subject to change. Peer-polity interaction provides a useful model for approaching the societies and networks of Northern Europe through the Iron Age and earlier as well as processes of the consolidation of power as individual polities sought to extend the geographical scope of political, economic and potentially religious control (e.g. Storli 2000; Holmblad 2010). Mobility affected the geographical spaces across which polities engaged in interaction and the degree of connectivity between them. Mobility and connectivity as factors also implement the ‘ politicization ’ of the physical space, including its identification with polities or other agents and its potential as a resource for power or for the exercise of power. These same factors also construct the frame for the politicization of space and its scope (from the perspectives of different polities) as the geopolitical stage on which factors are active. The strengthened connectivity of the Viking Age, which had roots in the preceding periods, defined Northern Europe and the North Atlantic as a

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1 A version of this map was published in parallel in Ahola & Frog 2014.
geopolitical space for the first time during the Viking Age (Heininen 2011: 92–93), with the consequence that the relative prominence and positioning of polities of Northern Europe were, to varying degrees, reimagined in relation to that new frame.

Mobility and the technologies that enabled it translated into maritime contacts but also into sea power (cf. Mahan 1918) that could be mobilized by polities for conflicts of varying scale. In addition, it produced new actors with new identities, including long-distance traders, explorers and also raiders or pirates — the vikingar [‘pirates’] who capitalized on the potential of their ships for rapid ‘hit-and-run’ attacks on settlements and other sites close to shorelines. Of course, the stereotyped image of ‘Vikings’, for which the ‘Viking Age’ was named, only holds true to an extent, and it warrants pointing out that this was an actor identity of practice rather than of ethnicity (Ahola et al., and only concerned a very limited portion of the population even among Scandinavians. Such actors were distributed rather than centralized and can be regarded as a general phenomenon of widespread practice rather than organized at the initiative of one or more geographically stable polities. However, violence clearly belonged to the social arenas of the Viking Age and actors such as raiders had a significant impact on settlements that were only relatively close to the shores: the increase of traffic on the Baltic Sea during the Viking Age was characterized by fleets of varying size that apparently did not hesitate from pillaging if given an opportunity. Even the poorest communities were not safe because the lively slave trade made people themselves a commodifiable resource for trade (e.g. Brink 2008; see also Sjöstrand). As a consequence, established and emerging polities of this period tend to be situated at a greater distance from shorelines and there seems to be an increase in the development of defensive fortifications.

Geopolitical factors are not only interconnected in synchronic constellations; their relationships and constellations change over time. Accordingly, ‘time’ can itself be understood as a geopolitical factor characterized by particular constellations of factors and relations between polities. In this sense, the Viking Age can be described as a geopolitical factor in Northern Europe. For the Åland Islands, this factor accounts for, among other things, the location in close vicinity to several developing larger polities and development in relationship to them, the situation as a key site on a vital east–west trade route and factors of mobility and knowledge associated with it, as well as a period characterized by contacts with new religious ideas that were, to varying degrees, being assimilated and

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2 For critical discussion of the semantics of the term, see Svanberg 2003; Ahola & Frog 2014; cf. also comments on the term and its etymology in Schalin with Frog.
adapted in Northern Europe. For the present discussion, the factor of ‘time’ is a fundamental framing factor.

The Åland Islands and Seafaring Routes

Water routes provided the most significant connections between locations during the Viking Age. Mobility thus becomes a key factor when considering the geopolitical situation of Viking Age Åland. Åland is and was roughly forty kilometres from the coast of Sweden and was then roughly eighty kilometres from the coast of Finland, to which it was also in a sense linked through the archipelago; Hiiumaa, the nearest island of Estonia, was some 150 kilometres across the sea. Owing to the geological uplift and resulting shore displacement, the main islands of Åland are somewhat larger and more consolidated today than they were during the Viking Age, when the total area of the main islands of Åland did not exceed 900 km². Polities of the Åland Islands were therefore well-situated for engaging in mobility and were better connected to settlements elsewhere than, for example, many settlements in the inland area of Western Finland were (cf. Map 3). Furthermore, the environment and predominant livelihoods, which largely comprised fishing and hunting, motivated every household to have one or more likely several boats or ships (Lindholm 2012; cf. Map 4). This means that most Ålandic households were equipped with the necessary means for mobility even if not all vessels were suitable for travelling longer distances. It is obvious that connections were relatively good to the mainlands of both Sweden and Finland for a large part of the year. Mobility was also not limited to Ålanders: the natural resources of Åland attracted people from both Finland and Sweden. Fishing, seal hunting and fowling had been performed in the seas surrounding Åland for thousands of years. As Åland was otherwise a small economic area and does not seem to have been a centre for trade per se, these resources were probably a primary draw to Åland for populations of either mainland (cf. Gustavsson et al.; Dreijer 1983: 132; Hinneri 1997: 28). Accordingly, mobility and ongoing contacts surrounding these resources presumably produced a local connectivity in the region associated with those natural resources.

Åland is also situated at the junction of three major bodies of water: the Gulf of Bothnia, the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea. Consequently, major

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3 Since the ice sheet of the Last Glacial Maximum (Weichselian Glacial) withdrew some 11,000 years ago, the land of Åland, the archipelago and the coast of Finland have been gradually rising out of the sea. The present-day sea level is thus 5–6 metres lower in Åland than it was during the Viking Age. See also Sjöstrand and works there cited.
Map 3. Four directions of sailing routes bringing contact with the Åland Islands. The most significant can be considered routes connecting the trade centers of Birka, southwest of Åland, with Staraya Ladoga in the east via the Gulf of Finland; additional routes also travelled along eastern and western shores of the Gulf of Bothnia that would either pass the Åland Islands or relatively near them on the way to major centres.

Map 4. Probable sailing routes through the Åland archipelago and two probable important harbors of the Viking Age, following Marcus Lindholm (Museum of Åland; map developed via personal correspondence). Key: 1. Kvarnbo; 2. Borgboda. (Cf. also SCHALIN with FROG.)
sea routes passed Åland during the Viking Age. It was a significant site on the so-called Eastern Route (*austrvegr*) that linked the trade centre of Birka in Sweden with the trade centre Staraya Ladoga and the water routes leading into and through Russia. When travelling from Birka, Åland would be the first visible land mass that a ship would attempt to reach after departing from the coast of Sweden. This route across the Baltic had likely been in use since the Bronze Age (*Schalin with Frog*). From Åland, ships would continue along the archipelago to the coast of southern Finland, from which it was possible to cross the Gulf of Finland to the northern coast of Estonia. From the end of the Gulf of Finland, ships could enter the river routes heading toward Lake Ladoga and the rivers that could carry travellers south toward Novgorod or the Volga or east in the direction to Lake Beloye and further on toward the Meryan centre of Sarskoye Gorodishche near which the centre Timerëvo was established (cf. *Ahola et al.*).

In the Viking Age, trade in Islamic silver began arriving via the Eastern Route. The importance of this trade route for the economy of Åland is suggested by the prosperity reflected in grave goods and silver hoards (Talvio 2014; Tomtlund). This affluence is unlikely to be based on trade in local resources alone. Although there appears to have been a general discontinuity of place names in the Åland Islands following the Viking Age (*Ahola et al.; Sjöstrand*), place names of Åland connected with this route continued to be used in navigation during later centuries, indicating that at least this portion of the route remained vital (*Schalin with Frog*).

The route connecting Vakka-Suomi, the area of mainland Finland at the northern end of the archipelago, with the Swedish mainland passed Åland as well. Sea routes are problematic to reconstruct insofar as they are extrapolated from evidence of where ships arrived, departed or otherwise landed along the way (cf. *Map 5*). Nevertheless, the sea routes from Vakka-Suomi seem to have followed major islands in the archipelago to northern parts of Åland as well as to the southern part of Åland where they joined the Eastern Route at the island of Föglö (Hinneri 1997: 32–35, 74) or followed the more sheltered route via Lumparn to the north of Lemland (*Schalin with Frog*). Commodities from northern Häme/Tavastia seem to have been transported to polities in Central Sweden largely along these routes (Masonen 1989). The route from Estonia could cross the sea directly from Hiiumaa or Saaremaa to central Sweden in the west but a more secure and sheltered route would be to travel north to the coast of Finland and from there to the west, passing by Åland. This situates especially the southern coastal areas of Åland in a position also significant for trade routes between these Scandinavian and Finnic cultural areas.
Trade was also active in the Gulf of Bothnia, with a long history of continuity (cf. Huurre 1986). Viking Age Germanic settlements associable with trade networks have been found as far north as Ångermanland (Broadbent 1991) and especially in river valleys (Ramqvist 2004: 44–45). The river valleys here and further north on the western coast of the Gulf of Bothnia seem to have developed centres for trade in furs and other commodities that were brought from inland Sweden and also from Norway (see Härth 1996; Selinge 1977). These commodities were transported to the south along sea routes that followed the coast of Sweden and passed close enough to Åland that it could be seen (Westerdahl 1991). This would be regardless of whether the voyage was heading towards trade centres in Sweden such as Birka or Gotland, elsewhere in the Baltic Sea or into Russia. Trade along the eastern coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia could reach Sweden by travelling along those coasts and the northern parts of the archipelago and of Åland. This northern route of trade was probably well-maintained in the Viking Age as suggested by contacts between Scandinavia and polities of the coast of Satakunta as well as of Häme (see e.g. Salo 2000: 102). The indications of contacts between these areas (e.g. Eura) and Gotland are also of interest in this context (see e.g. Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982).

Map 5. Probable major sailing routes connecting significant coastal areas of Southwest Finland to the Åland Islands and on to central Sweden. Major places for mainland access to the sea during the Viking Age are also labelled. (Sources: Masonen 1989: 130; Hinneri 1997; Salo 2000: 92; Tuovinen 2011: 43; Schalin with Frog.)

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Trade in the Gulf of Bothnia heading to Russia could also potentially navigate via the inland water routes passing through Finland to Lake Ladoga, but this was likely much slower and potentially more dangerous.
Seafaring was likely a fundamental aspect of Ålandic livelihoods and held a central position in their cultural practices. At the same time, the geographical situation of Åland placed it at a nexus of mobility of the Viking Age. Sea traffic was probably quite lively during parts of the year and the harbours were no doubt visited. Such a position at that time would be accompanied by both significant threats and great potential – not only for Ålanders, but also for larger polities interested in expansion and the exercise of power.

The Question of Ålandic Polities

An archipelago consisting of tens of thousands of small islands and skerries connects Åland to the mainland of Finland, and Sweden can almost be seen from Åland’s western shore across the open sea. The natural resources of Åland that attracted people from both Finland and Sweden guaranteed that they came into contact in Åland: hunters from Sweden and Finland undoubtedly met both each other and those who were permanently settled in the area. Ålandic archaeological evidence testifies of vivid connections to both eastern and western mainlands throughout history. Significant immigration from central Sweden began in the late Migration Period (Callmer 1994: 18; also e.g. Ahola et al.; Gustavsson et al.). Nevertheless, northern parts of Åland in particular remained a target of fishers and hunters from Vakka-Suomi through the Iron Age, as they had already for centuries; even though a significant part of the archaeological findings indicate a predominance of Scandinavian cultural influence, this seasonal mobility had potential to develop permanent settlements (Hinneri 1997: 32–35, 74).

In the Late Iron Age, Åland was evidently an area with intense cross-cultural contacts where both the development of regional cultural patterns and a certain level of hybridization occurred. The difference between north-eastern and the south-western parts of the islands observable in the grave goods have been discussed earlier by both Ilse Tarsala (1998) and Johan Callmer (1994). Important features are the finds of clay paws, weapons and pottery which exhibit regional (and chronological) differences on Åland. Osteoarchaeological analyses have further shown that these differences also include subsistence patterns and even settlement patterns (Kennebjörk 2014; Gustavsson et al.). Of special interest for the contacts with Southwest Finland are the finds of pottery of Finnish type in Late Iron Age burials on Åland (Callmer 1994). The frequency of this pottery increases in the late Viking Age and, interestingly, is more common in Northeast than in Southwest Åland. The north-eastern area of Åland may have
developed more intense contacts to Southwest Finland during the Viking Age than Southwest Åland did. Another observation of interest here is the increased frequency of bear bones (i.e. claws – suggesting the presence of furs) in the younger burials of the Långängsbacken cemetery. In the archaeological finds in central Sweden, bear claws become rare during the Late Iron Age (Frog). It is tempting to consider the bear bones found in Åland as an indication of (trade) contacts to the east. In two of the burials at Långängsbacken, the bear bones are accompanied with balance weights (Gustavsson et al.) – which could be associated with trade. The notion of ‘Åland’ as a uniform and homogenous polity of a single culture and shared identity may, thus, have to be nuanced. This uniform image is further contested by several contributions to this volume (Gustavsson et al.; Ahola et al.; Frog). Viking Age Åland is a complicated mixture of features from different areas of the Baltic Sea region (cf. Tarsala 1998; Gustavsson et al.). Probably of significance here is the general context of Åland between presumably Germanic language cultures and probably Finnic language cultures of polities in Sweden and Finland, respectively (cf. Ahola et al.).

The potential threats carried by the increase of traffic on the Baltic Sea made it important for settlements to create systems for defence. Hills with steep slopes provided natural defences, and convenient hills were often improved by constructing defence works on their gentler slopes. More than one thousand hill forts have been registered in Sweden and approximately ninety in Finland. The exact functions of hill forts in general are not clear and without a doubt their functions varied from place to place: in addition to occasional use in defence, they could be used, for example, as market places, meadows, assembly sites or ritual centres (Taavitsainen 1990; Manneke 1983). In general, it is nevertheless possible to conclude that the construction of hill forts required collective organization. They therefore reflect local social organizations – at least in a period of their distress, and occasionally also in a wider sense.

Six Iron Age hill forts are found in Åland. Only a few have been archaeologically excavated but they seem to have been in use during Late Iron Age (e.g. Tomtlund). These hill forts were located on different islands separated by narrow channels and all were in the vicinity of the coast. The distribution of the hill forts can be described as divisible into two groups of three: the south-western group including the hill forts Borgö in Eckerö, Borgberget in Hammarland and Dalkarby in Jomala, and the north-eastern group including the hill forts Borgdalsberget in Näs (Saltvik), Borge in Borgboda (Saltvik) and Brändbostad

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5 The situation has changed somewhat in the present day, due to shore displacement from the gradual geological uplift.
in Sund. Each hill fort probably served the population in its vicinity, which accounts for a major share of the Viking Age settlements (as identified through their cemeteries: see Tomtlund’s Map 1, on p. 25 and Map 6 below). Borge is situated most centrally in relation to the settlements and therefore it may be no wonder that it is the largest of them and exhibits defensive structures more clearly than the others.

Despite the term, the hill forts were probably not only for ‘defensive’ purposes (see e.g. Olausson 2009 and works there cited) but instead, they may also have served as nodes for important social interactions of a contact network. They seem often to be located at some distance from the areas of the densest settlement and often in close proximity to probable sea routes. The effectiveness of hill forts as defensive constructions – or observation points – requires that the approach of a potentially dangerous fleet is observed in due time and that it is signalled across a wide area. This would require some kind of guard be kept and that a functional signalling system was developed. Probably, this signalling was done by the same means as in continental Finland, by burning a flare on a high spot from where the fire and smoke could be seen over a vast area and then the alarm could be transmitted further.\(^6\) The north-eastern hill forts are suggestive of threats also along the northern coasts, potentially no less than along the south, which may be a relevant indicator of activity on the trade route along the northern side of the archipelago to the eastern coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia.

Insofar as the hill forts reflect cooperative efforts of local populations for which they can be assumed to function as some form of central places, the hill forts are also indicators about the societies that produced them and the organization of those societies. The distribution of hill forts in two groups of three follows the two major areas of land and linked islands which are for the most part separated from one another by water (see Map 6; cf. also routes on Map 4). The archaeological record indeed reveals that Åland was not a uniform and homogeneous cultural area. Instead, some of the differentiating cultural traits divide the Åland Islands into a north-eastern area and a south-western area, as was discussed above (see also Callmer 1994; Tarsala 1998), although they also shared common traits. However, these differentiating cultural traits co-incide areally with the distribution of the hill forts in two groups. This is in part related to trade routes and contact networks, but where an island community maintains contact networks via water routes, such networks are to some degree selective (Ahola et al.). If it is accurate to interpret the distribution of hill forts as two sets of three, associated with geographical spaces largely separated

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\(^6\) Cf. Schalin with Frog for an early toponym that appears to describe a beacon location.
from one another by water, then these sets of hill forts can be interpreted as reflecting organized groups with social hierarchies and conventions of conduct differentiating themselves from other organized groups – i.e. as separate polities (Storå 2012). This would suggest that, rather than a single geopolitical space, Åland was internally distinguished according to two, large, separate geopolitical spaces. Consequently, rather than an ‘Ålandic’ identity per se, inhabitants may have viewed their identities in terms of the particular polity to which he or she belonged, observing that such a concept of identity would no doubt vary according to social settings and contexts (see Ahola et al.).

If this line of interpretation is pursued, the parallel distribution of three hill forts across each area may then not be accidental. On the one hand, it could be an aspect of peer-polity interaction – that equivalence in symbolic displays of power was a function of maintaining a political balance between two larger polities (Renfrew 1986). On the other, it is interesting to consider that the three hill forts of either polity could equally reflect aspects of internal social order through the historical establishment of central places, such as a division of districts (among which Borgö may have been a central place for all of Eckerö) or a union of smaller independent polities. The model of a geographical division of

an area into regional districts with a shared system of laws is attested elsewhere for Scandinavian cultures of the Viking Age – notably in the island cultures of Iceland (see *Grágás* and *Landnámabók*) and Gotland (Peel 1997). The instatement of a corresponding system in Åland would be consistent with the marked and visible impact of Scandinavian culture on Åland through immigration and rapid population expansion at the end of the Migration Period and into the Vendel Period (Callmer 1994: 18; cf. Huurre 1979: 108–109; Roeck Hansen 1991; see also Ahola et al.). The restructuring of land use and probably the seascape, changes in livelihoods and burial practices (i.e. the ritual life of communities) associated with the changes of this period make it reasonable to stipulate that changes extended to cultural mechanisms for moderating social behaviours and regulatory systems for social interaction. In other words, it is likely that changes affecting social, economic and religious life also extended to a framework of laws and associated institutional roles.

Interestingly, the populations of both Iceland and Gotland developed legends about their prime settlement and establishment of their legal systems – their establishment as inhabited spaces from the perspective of their later cultures – that reflect and adapt images and paradigms from Germanic mythology, symbolically correlating the establishment of the inhabited space with the creation of the world (cf. Eliade 1954). Icelanders and Gotlanders both drew on contemporary forms of cosmogonic elements that presumably derived from inherited Scandinavian mythology traditions (which can be assumed to have been carried to Åland as well) although different specific cosmogonic elements were drawn on in each culture to form their respective ‘foundation myths’ (cf. the discussion in *FROG*). The Icelanders divided space into four districts and employed a set of mythic models that does not concern us here (see Lindow 1997). However, the Gotlanders employed (fantastic) mythic motifs to a much more prominent degree and divided habitable space into three areas according to the mythic model of three male descendants in the third generation as its prime founders (Peel 1999: xvii–xviii, 2; Buchholz 1993: 327). Although speculative, a division of space into three districts would parallel the division of political space in Gotland, in which case it would also quite probably be linked to a Germanic cosmogonic exemplar.7

7 The prime settler of the island becomes responsible for the creation of the island as a habitable space realized through the motif of the first earth rising from the sea of (some versions of) the world-creation (Schier 1963: 327–328).

8 It should however be noted that Gotland exhibits many more hill forts and corresponding installations than one per legal district. It is at least interesting to note, however, that Gotland and Åland both belong to the eastern Norse area, whereas Iceland was primarily settled from Norway.
Correlating these sets of three hill forts with districts of collective legal authority is speculative. Nevertheless, it brings into focus a reasonable inference that Viking Age Åland had a complex societal order, with a high probability that a Germanic-based system of laws and social assemblies was incorporated and developed in connection with the cultural change of earlier centuries. If Ålanders followed the Germanic practice of collective legal assemblies, this implies a structure of districts, each of which would have a central place, as well as a primary social and ritual centre of the assembly of the larger polity. Hill forts could have functioned quite naturally as such central places. Of course, this interpretation is in part dependent on the prior interpretation of the distribution of hill forts as reflecting two distinct peer polities, which itself remains speculative. However, this prior interpretation is more significant for the possibility that the sets of three hill forts would reflect a Germanic mythic model behind the division of districts paralleling that in Gotland; the number of districts could also have been six, or districts and hill forts may have had no direct correlation. An initial division of Åland into separate polities could also later have been (and perhaps probably was) consolidated into a unified ‘Åland’. Although such a union might be established prior to or at the beginning of the Viking Age, it would nevertheless suggest a potential longue durée of identities in Åland constructed according to that earlier division. In any case, the hill forts reflect the social activity and order of earlier polities, even if the order itself remains open to interpretation.

The Åland Islands and External Polities

The number and diversity of polities in Åland remains uncertain. If Åland is seen as consisting of two broad polities, the north-eastern polity exhibits strong connections to both eastern Sweden and the coastal areas of Finland, especially Vakka-Suomi. The south-western polity exhibits generally ‘weaker’ indications of contact (especially with Southwest Finland) but perhaps a more regional and local character. The interaction between these hypothesized Ålandic polities would likely have been as peer polities. The archipelago seems to have been (and begun) only sparsely settled during the Viking Age (Karlsson 1990), in which case these settlements may not have been directly or consistently linked to the more complex polities in Åland or those that were presumably also estab-

or the western Norse area. Although it may be purely circumstantial, the development of founder myths in both Gotland and Åland on the same core cosmogonic elements would not be at all surprising if those elements held greater immediate significance in territories on the Baltic Sea.
lished in Finland. Interactions with Finnic polities seem also to have been as peers in a distributed network.

The question of relationships to the west presents more significant questions. A major political development across the Viking Age was the centralization of power of the kingdom of the Svear in Central Sweden. This process involved different independent provinces in the vicinity of Lake Mälaren and others to the north acknowledging a centralized political authority of a single king and an associated ritual centre in Uppsala. However, this stage of centralization was not accompanied by an administrative apparatus or bureaucracy: the areas that became subject to centralized control maintained their own local systems of laws, which were only superseded by a national law on the mainland in the mid-fourteenth century. (Peel 2009: vii.) In this connection, the kingdom of the Svear appears to have instated a so-called hundare ['hundred'] system that made a district responsible for providing a 'hundred' armed men (at which time a 'hundred' was 120) as a military force for the king when required for war campaigns. This system was also implemented in other parts of Scandinavia and also in England, and it has been suggested that the system of ‘hundreds’ had also been implemented in Finland.9 It is believed that Åland was also subjugated in the consolidation of power because of its closeness and strong connections to Central Sweden (e.g. Hafström 1962). If the Ålanders’ initial agreement with the Svear was comparable to that which seems to have been established with Gotlanders (Peel 1999: 6–7), this allegiance likely began as an agreement of reciprocal support and an associated agreement of freedom of movement within the kingdom of the Svear for inhabitants of all of its polities. In practice, the responsibilities of Åland in this (hypothetical) agreement have been thought to have taken the form of taxation only, because the small island community had limited capability to produce and maintain armed forces (Salo 2000: 123–128; Dreijer 1983: 118–119; see also Flink 1995). This kind of relation would politically subject Åland to the king of the Svear in the expansion of the

9 The name of the district Satakunta ['hundred-district' or 'hundred-company (of men)'] in coastal Finland is very possibly a translation-loan reflecting this system. However, the age and background of this institution are unclear: in the first century AD, Tacitus mentions an administrative unit in which the leader selects a hundred men from the polity to support him (Germania 12). A system of this sort may also have been instated in Sweden several centuries before the Viking Age (Arrhenius 2007). (Salo 2000: 114–115.) Researchers have pointed out that Swedish influence is especially strong in the area of Satakunta during the Viking Age and that signs of restlessness, otherwise so common during this period, are remarkably few in this district (Salo 2000) – although that in itself is not indicative of alignment with the kingdom of the Svear as a political and ritual centre. This system could also have been established on the coasts of Finland in earlier periods of intensive contact. As a translation loan, the place-name does not reveal when or under what circumstances it was established.
kingdom of Svealand, although Ålanders would presumably also maintain their established internal political and legal structures without direct administrative interference from across the Sea of Åland.

The allegiance of Åland with Svealand, acknowledging its political and religious centre, remains an inference. This would be generally consistent with the annexation of spaces of other polities in the extension of political power. However, earlier discussions of this topic have most often assumed that Åland was a unitary political space (but see Tärsala 1998; Callmer 1994). This assumption has been challenged above with the possibility that the annexation of such territory to the kingdom of the Svear may have required the annexation of multiple independent polities.\footnote{Following the questions of the military conscription institution of the hundrare system, it is interesting to note that, among the possible differentiation of polities in north-eastern and south-western Åland, there seem to have been differences of weapons in the burials, judging from the areal distribution.}

This raises questions of how Åland was perceived by the Svear at that time and with what territories or groups it was identified. \textsc{Per Olof Sjöstrand} has drawn attention to the fact that Åland appears from the start to have belonged to the Turku/Åbo diocese rather than having been viewed as belonging to a diocese based in Sweden. This grouping is suggestive of how Åland was perceived from the perspective of the kingdom of the Svear.\footnote{The lack of runic inscriptions and runic stones on Åland may also be mentioned here. It seems that Åland did not share in this social practice with Eastern Sweden, where the runic stones are most prominent (cf. Sjöstrand). In this, Åland aligns with SW Finland.} Whatever the linguistic and cultural identity of polities of the Åland Islands, this later division could reflect the \textit{longue durée} of historically constructed perceptions of political spaces and their relations (cf. Heininen et al. 2014). This presents the possibility that, as a geographical space, Åland was viewed in some sense as an extension of the archipelago and perhaps also of mainland Finland rather than ‘Åland’ being viewed as a distinct unitary space as it is viewed today.\footnote{Sjöstrand observes that the later judicial-administrative frontier between Åland and Finland appears to post-date the Viking Age. This factor could also warrant consideration for the possible (and again hypothetical) position of Åland in the hundrare system: rather than Åland being a hundrare itself, it may have been conceived as part of a larger hundrare as a collective of multiple smaller polities. The probability of this possibility would be increased if Åland were already an area of two distinct polities.}

The trade routes with which Åland was associated also brought Ålanders into contact with diverse other groups representing different polities with the potential to participate in corresponding activities or to accompany them more directly. On that broader geopolitical stage, it is not clear to what degree Åland as a polity or the polities of which it was constituted interacted with...
remote polities (e.g. reciprocal agreements of safety/non-aggression for their populations to support trade). Ålanders could nonetheless fill roles of actors on that stage. Ålanders seem to have participated in the east-bound voyages to a greater extent than the people living on mainland Finland, as implied by the substantially greater number of eastern silver coins and artifacts of eastern origin that have been found in Åland in contrast to in the rest of Finland. A relevant indicator of the impact of these agents is the spread of the distinctive Ålandic ritual practice referred to as the ‘clay paw rite’ to the trading centre of Timerēvo along the Volga (in today’s Jaroslavl’ Oblast) at the beginning of the Viking Age and its subsequent spread through the indigenous population (Callmer 1994; FROG; Ahola et al.). This makes it important to distinguish Ålanders as agents from Åland or Ålandic polities as agents on the geopolitical stage.

Åland Drops off the Geopolitical Map

The silver trade along the Eastern Route was interrupted in the mid-tenth century, with only a minimal and short-lived revival in the following decades before stopping entirely. This change in trade economy was probably due to the extensive control of the river routes by the Kievan Rus’, and perhaps because of the turmoil in the area of the Caucasus that led to the foundation of the Kingdom of Georgia. The Eastern Route’s diminishing importance coincides with the decline of Birka and with the diminishing of the economy in the Åland Islands. (Androshchuk 2013: 45ff.; Hedenstierna-Jonson 2009.) Practically no silver coins have been found in Åland after the year 1000 (SJÖSTRAND), nor graves dated after that time which would include grave goods (TOMTLUND) – although there has been some circularity in this issue as graves may be dated to before the year 1000 precisely because they contain grave goods (cf. SJÖSTRAND). This change in the economy of Åland coupled with the later discontinuity of place names has led many scholars to think that the islands were abandoned altogether (for discussion, see SJÖSTRAND). Others have suggested that the lack of finds is due to Christianization (e.g. Dreijer 1986: 214–215), although Svealand was converted more than fifty years later, and even then had a long struggle with the Christianization process (SJÖSTRAND; cf. Nordberg 2012). Recent pollen analysis has shown that Åland exhibits continuous practice of agriculture, which implies a continuity of habitation (see Alenius). Nevertheless, it is obvious that Åland’s prosperity was linked to that of Birka or to a common source. At the turn of the millennium, Gotland’s importance rose and trade was redirected from the Eastern Route (mostly Karelia and the Ladoga region) to the west.
(England etc.). Åland’s economy never reopened in that direction and indeed seems not to have recovered.

One consequence of this process is that the polities of Åland seem to have waned in relative significance. Åland cannot be said to have been a significant agent on the geopolitical stage of Northern Europe, but what little position it did hold seems to have been impacted by the change in the Eastern Route. The population of these polities also seems to have decreased significantly, perhaps in large part owing to complementary factors, such as raiding and the slave trade, as well as the natural phenomenon of shore displacement that removed settlements increasingly from the shoreline and motivated resettlement in any case (cf. Sjöstrand; Ahola et al.). However, the possible archaeological invisibility of certain types of burials in changing practices should also be considered and could thus affect this picture. Whatever the precise process, Åland seems to drop off the geopolitical map: it is conspicuously absent from mention in Old Norse saga literature and early Latin histories – texts written centuries after this economic change. There is of course the possibility that the polities of Åland were known under names different from those today, but it seems in general that the waning of this polity or polities at the end of the Viking Age was followed by its fading from memory in those areas where histories related to the Viking Age were written.

Overview and Epilogue

Åland comprises a set of relatively small islands located strategically in the middle of the northern Baltic Sea at the junction of important sea routes. Its rich maritime resources, especially fish, seal and sea fowl had attracted people from both Finland and Sweden since the Stone Age. The population history of Åland reflects waves of immigration and/or shifting trends in cultural influence from these directions and also East Baltic impact. This grounded Åland’s nature as a cultural contact zone throughout its later history (Ahola et al.). During the Viking Age, the culture was predominantly based on that which had arrived from Central Sweden in preceding centuries. It is highly probable that its polities were also structured on the basis of Germanic models. Significant traits associable with Finnic cultures are nevertheless also recognizable. Common cultural features throughout Åland imply a distinct ‘Ålandic’ identity insofar as the material culture suggests that populations in the Åland Islands were culturally more similar to one another than to populations, for example, in Finland or Sweden. Nevertheless, culture was not uniform across the islands. It is possi-
ble that the areal distribution of cultural features, such as hill forts, reflects different polities within Åland and their construction of Åland as a geopolitical space. If the hypothesis of political division between north-eastern and south-western Åland is correctly interpreted, this would suggest that these polities had somewhat different contact networks with distinguishable orientations to polity interactions especially in relations with Central Sweden and Vakka-Suomi. These differences in contacts would be associable with differences in the archaeological record and may have equally produced differences in local identities. These groups of ‘people’ can, in the terms applied here, be labelled as ‘actors’.

Because of Åland’s location, it is understandable that the population of Åland was constantly changing as both immigration and emigration took place: the social space was probably subject to constant negotiation. Still, there were stable cultural features whose survival extended over centuries. The particular features shared by Ålanders and their corresponding circumstances of living likely formed a foundation for common, shared identity factors. ‘Mobility’ was an element of coastal Scandinavians’ identity that grew in importance in the Viking Age. It can be presumed that mobility was even more significant for Ålanders as their sustainability and wealth was fully dependent on maritime mobility and the technology and knowledge thereof. The primary source of Viking Age wealth for the islands as a whole becomes clear when the Russian river routes leading to Byzantium ceased being a central route of trade for central Sweden. Åland had never been a significant actor on the geopolitical stage of Northern Europe and when the silver trade dissolved, Åland seems to have dropped off of that stage more or less entirely. Rather than its polities as actors or even members of its resident population holding influential actor roles, Åland seems to have become especially marginalized and isolated by the end of the Viking Age.

What happened in Åland during the eleventh and twelfth centuries remains a mystery. Although the archaeological record exhibits indications of continued habitation, it is improbable that there was any significant population by the end of this period (Ahola et al.; Sjöstrand). However, Åland’s position on the geopolitical stage became significant as competition for economic and geographical control between the kingdom of the Svear and that of Novgorod increased, especially in the twelfth century (Roeck Hansen 1991: 158–162). This struggle for control led to a (re)politization of geographical space on the eastern side of the Baltic (Heininen et al. 2014). In this period, Åland may have become of significant strategic importance for the sea power of Svealand, when
“Åland may have served as a base for naval campaigns in the Baltic undertaken from Sweden” (Roeck Hansen 1991: 161). The mobilization of populations for the settlement of Åland appear to be part of the strategy of Sweden to ensure its control over Åland as a strategic location for seafaring trade and potentially also for the exercise of the power of an emerging state. Although the polity or polities of Åland may have dropped off the geopolitical map, Åland re-emerges following the Viking Age as a key space for the exercise of state power.

References


The Åland Islands and the cultures inhabiting them tend to remain outside of discussions of mythology in the Viking Age. This appears largely attributable to three main factors. Firstly, no written evidence offers indications of the mythology, religion or even the inhabitation of Åland in the Viking Age. Secondly, no place-names can be unambiguously connected to pre-Christian religion. Thirdly, no sacred idols or indications of worship *per se* that can be directly connected to recognizable ‘mythologies’ of the Viking Age have been identified in the archaeological record. Quite simply, there is a lack of evidence to directly connect Åland to other discussions of mythology. Ålandic mythology has not only been left unaddressed in the vague space between discussions of the cultures to both the east and the west of it; it is not even entirely certain what language(s) were spoken in Åland in the Viking Age (AHOLA et al.), leaving it uncertain with which of these cultures it should be aligned. Nevertheless, it may be presumed that mythology – in one form or another – was significant to communities of Åland in that era, even if the question tends only to be addressed with regards to specific materials in the archaeological record. The question of Ålandic mythology still remains generally interesting, as questions of mythology tend to do, while mythology is particularly pertinent to identities and how identities relate to one another, as a theme addressed both here and in this volume more generally.

The present discussion addresses ‘mythology’ as more than simply a bunch of stories about gods and their adventures. Mythology is treated as belonging
to an imaginal level of understanding – it belongs to ways of seeing and conceptualizing the world, and also to ways of imagining worlds beyond what can be seen. This discussion is exploratory. It begins from mythology at the most widely familiar level of gods and narratives, considering what it may and may not be possible to infer about these in the mythology of Viking Age Åland. Consideration will then expand to the interfaces of ritual practice with mythology, looking at mythology not as fixed and invariable but rather as a matrix of symbols, as a resource that can be engaged in different ways and from different perspectives. The so-called ‘clay paw rite’ will be discussed and explored as an illustrative case study, placing archaeological evidence of ritual practices in dialogue with probable inferences about the symbolic matrix of the contemporary mythology. The clay paw rite appears to have emerged as a uniquely Ålandic tradition associated with certain social groups or networks as opposed to others. It was later carried by Ålanders deep into Finno-Ugric cultural areas, to trading centers in what is the Russian Federation today. The clay paw rite provides an interesting example for exploring questions of inherited resources of mythology, relations to historical and environmental circumstances, and the relationship of the use of symbols to the distinction of identities in limited material. This case study also highlights that the evidence from Viking Age Åland which can be assumed to be interfaced with mythology typically appears to engage areas of the symbolic matrix that would not be covered by ‘story’-based definitions of mythology. From the clay paw rite, discussion will then turn back to more general considerations of relationships between mythology and social practices, looking at ritual specialists and discussing differences in perspectives that can be established within the shared symbolic matrix of the mythology. This closing part of the discussion will gradually advance to the relationships of those perspectives to identities and historical processes of change – including conversion processes with the rise of Christianity, which is more generally characterized as marking the end of the Viking Age.

The proposals offered here provide a backdrop against which it becomes possible to discuss findings from other fields of research. This provides the groundwork for the reconstruction of features of a historical cultural mythology in relation to which, for example, artefacts and burials can be considered. The image of that cultural mythology can then potentially be refined and developed in a dialectic process with empirical data as we gradually accumulate and test indicators and fragments of information like so many pieces of scattered (and multiple) jigsaw puzzles. This discussion concentrates on Åland, but the
problems addressed are relevant to many cultural environments of the Iron Age while the methods employed may have more general relevance.

1. Modelling a Tradition Environment in Viking Age Åland

Traditions, by definition, create and construct real or imagined continuities in practice with the past that simultaneously imply a momentum leading to their continuation in the future. At the same time, traditions provide practical resources for negotiating circumstances and interactions in the social and natural worlds. When talking about traditions, we are talking about constitutive elements of culture. The interface of language and culture is variable rather than fixed, and the spread of either can occur independent of large-scale population movements, as discussed by Joonas Ahola, Frog and Johan Schalin in an earlier chapter. There is nonetheless a strong linkage between language and culture, and the spread of either or both was, in the Iron Age, dependent on their communication by people to other people. The _longue durée_ of linkages between language and especially central elements of mythology has also long been recognized, even to the point of being taken for granted. This can be used here as a point of departure.

According to the current model for the expansion of Finnic language and cultures, these were initially associated with populations inhabiting inland territories south or southeast of what is now St Petersburg. The process by which Finnic languages spread remains ambiguous, but it was most probably linked to some type of mobilization of groups and their networks. This resulted in speakers reaching the Gulf of Riga, where they developed into or assimilated a coastal culture that seems to have spread especially north, into the islands and coastal areas of what is now Estonia and the Gulf of Finland, and continuing north into the Finnish archipelago (Saarikivi & Frog 2014; cf. Kallio 2014; Ahola et al.; see also Map 1). This process doubtless affected the Åland Islands to at least some degree as well. It has been argued that certain major hydronyms of Finland and a major access to Lake Ladoga have Germanic etymologies which

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1 For studies and discussions of such _longue durée_ for cultures relevant to this chapter, see e.g. Napolskikh 1992; 2012; Watkins 1995; Siikala 2002a; West 2007; Tolley 2009; cf. also the approach to mythology in Viking Age Finland in Frog 2014b. The elements, structures and features of a mythology exhibiting a _longue durée_ nevertheless remain culture-dependent, and thus differ considerably between Uralic and Indo-European linguistic-cultural populations. It should be noted that the view on linkages of language and mythology may be skewed by the prominence of certain exceptionally large language families which may not be representative of all types of cultures. For example, mythology could be as susceptible as language to variation and change small-community mobile cultures (cf. Saarikivi & Lavento 2012; Ahola et al.).
are thus suggestive of these earlier being Germanic language areas (Koivulehto 1987; Helimski 2008; Janhunen 2009: 209–210). Although these etymologies may not be reliable, contacts and probable settlements from Scandinavia have a long history in this region, the rich loan-word substrate in Finnic languages indicates not only contacts but a remarkable degree of cultural impact and exchange, which seems to have begun already during the Bronze Age (see Kylstra et al. 1992–2012; Kallio 2012; Ahola et al.). These impacts can be assumed to have primarily occurred east of the Baltic Sea, where Germanic languages must have played a significant role, while the lexicon suggests the assimilation of social structures and technologies (e.g. related to iron working and seafaring) from Germanic language speakers (Kylstra et al. 1992–2012; Heininen et al. 2014). Within that frame, Åland was likely already at a nexus
of contacts and interactions between Finnic and Germanic cultures perhaps a millennium before the Viking Age (Ahola & Frog 2014; Ahola et al.).

From this perspective, Iron Age Åland was likely a contact zone, or place “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt 1991: 34; cf. Tarsala 1998; Ahola et al.). This would suggest Åland was an arena in which cross-cultural influences were synthesized and mediated between the linguistic-cultural groups in question. Evidence of the flow of cultural influences can be generally seen to be from North Germanic into North Finnic (cf. Hofstra 1985; Salo 1996; Siikala 2002a), yet this interaction would not be one-sided. In the Åland Islands, cultural ideologies may have also been different than in mainland communities to the east or west. For mainland communities, speakers of the other language would likely be geographically remote and viewed as a culturally unfamiliar ‘other’ (cf. Aalto). Cross-cultural engagements may therefore have been negotiated much differently in Ålandic networks of communities. The greater immediacy of these ‘other’ communities would produce opportunities for different types of encounters, cooperative undertakings and marriage alliances. Interaction of cultural groups leads to “a congruence of codes and values” (Barth 1969: 16) that easily involves the exchange of practices, the convergence of practices and symbols to become more similar or shared, and it also leads the traditions of other cultures to be recognized as meaningful in various ways – at least in arenas and situations where the different groups interact. Of course, some cultural traits could mark difference, while others would develop continuities across groups and still others might be adopted consciously and strategically for reasons of social and political power. As a contact zone, the Åland Islands was a space that likely offered more opportunities for traditions to be adapted across cultures, increasing the probability that there were developments and degrees of synthesis in Ålandic cultures that never penetrated to mainland environments to the east or west.

1.1. The Åland Islands as Geographically Situated

Åland and the surrounding archipelago present environmental and ecological conditions differing from the mainland. These form a subsistence environment and construct socio-economic conditions for the culture(s) inhabiting Åland (Tuovinen 2011). For example, Jan Storå (2012) recently observed that evidence of seal hunting is indicative of organized collective activities as social practices that are relevant to the development of individual and group identities (Gustavsson et al.). Social practices develop traditions in relation to conditions of the natural
and social environment, especially where these are directly connected with
the effective maintenance of the welfare of individuals and the community.
Among the multiple subsistence strategies, seal hunting is only one of many
practices engaged in Åland across a year (cf. Tuovinen 2011: 11). Populations
in Åland (and the archipelagos) would adapt and develop traditions as a socio-
historical process. The arrival of populations from other environments might
carry different traditions with them and continue these in Åland. However, it
can be assumed that traditions carried from different environments would not
be equipped for all areas of social and economic life in the new place (see also
Gustavsson et al.). It is therefore probable that indigenous traditions would
be assimilated to fill these gaps for arriving populations (cf. also §5 below on
Christianization). Consequently, traditions in Åland can be assumed always to
have become distinctive, even when significant immigration occurred, so long
as arriving populations assimilated indigenous groups (see also Ahola et al.).

The geographical situation of island cultures is a factor that inclines them
to become distinctive, with distinctive cultural identities. The water simul-
taneously isolates the communities, presenting unequivocal boundaries between
‘our’ territory and that of ‘others’, which would not only distinguish Ålandic
communities from the mainland, but potentially also communities on different
islands of Åland (cf. Heininen et al.). It simultaneously provides a medium
for selective and directed mobility, which could allow intensively sustained
interaction with communities and cultures that were more geographically
remote. For example, the Åland Islands had north–south connections to the
southern coasts of the Baltic Sea already in the Bronze Age (Tuovinen 2011:
31). North–south economic connections seem to have continued through the
Iron Age and on into the Middle Ages (Roeeck Hansen 1991: 25). This can be
seen in relation to economic supply and demand for particular products such
as seal blubber, in which case networks of long-distance trade may have been
regionally concentrated among groups on certain islands rather than in ‘Åland’
as a uniform cultural arena (Tuovinen 2011: 15; Gustavsson et al.). These
extended networks presented conditions for the exchange of traditions.

Cultures and groups with comparable ecological environments and eco-

This can be compared, for example, with medieval Iceland, where maritime mobility enabled
contacts to be maintained especially with Norway (where the majority of landholding Icelanders
had emigrated from) as opposed to the British Isles or Normandy. It can also be compared
with Gotland’s refusal to participate in the 1199 crusade against Livonia and in 1226 against
Saarenmaa/Ösel, which has been interpreted as reflecting a priority of their trans-Baltic trade
and needs of Ålanders than groups inhabiting the Swedish or Finnish mainland. Participation in maritime contact networks would simultaneously infuse the relevant traditions with associations, including their value and relevance to other participants in the networks. Some degree of shared cultural practices very likely developed cross-culturally during the long history of these interactions. It is therefore probable that traditions associated with different genres (e.g. magical charms, taboos, legends) were historically maintained in maritime networks on the Baltic Sea (cf. Roper 2006: 159). If these shared or exchanged traditions extended to gods (cf. Perkins 2001: 73–81), it could explain why the obscure god identified as Taarapita of the Oeselians (the island culture of Saaremaa/Ösel, Estonia) seems to show up as Turupið among the Wends on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea.³ This is a little-explored area that will benefit from future comparative research. The purpose here is merely to draw attention to it insofar as it problematizes some of the assumptions that we might otherwise make about mythology in Viking Age Åland. Even if populations of Åland were linguistically quite close to populations in Sweden and Finland, they may nevertheless have been culturally quite distinct. Variation from cultures of Sweden and Finland can be anticipated to be greatest where traditions were most closely connected with subsistence strategies and practical needs specific to the Ålandic environment and differing from those of mainland cultures.

1.2. Viking Age Ålandic Culture’s Emergence from the Past

An approach to traditions in Viking Age Åland must begin by considering the degree to which the traditions of Åland can be anticipated to be similar to or different from those of earlier periods and of other cultures. The tendency to view Åland as simply falling into cultural alignment with Sweden, or less often with Finland, is bound up with modern political discourses and also with the history of controversies over culture and cultural history (Lucenius; cf. also Ahola et al.). The result is a tendency to underestimate the fact that Åland was not an uninhabited and remote island environment colonized in or just prior to the Viking Age (as Iceland was). The Åland Islands have a continuous history of settlement extending into the past well beyond the history of any language groups that can be identified (Tomtlund 2012; Ahola et al.). In the archipelago between Finland and Sweden as well as in Åland, the history of Finnic–Germanic contacts was likely continuous through the Iron Age since the initial

³ See Sutrop 2004: 34–37 and works there cited. For the present discussion, only the probability that these names are related is of relevance, not identifying the language of origin of the two terms, which need not necessarily be either Finnic or Slavic (as supposed by Sutrop).
arrival of Finnic language speakers in the region, as suggested above. The late Migration Period and early Vendel/Merovingian Period appear to have involved a rapid population growth and settlement expansion in the Åland Islands, in which immigration appears to have been quite significant (Callmer 1994: 18; cf. Roeck Hansen 1991). This same process is identifiable with radical changes in livelihoods and increased reliance on agricultural practices. The changes in livelihoods impacted settlement patterns (Tomtlund; Gustavsson et al.) and, by implication, also impacted both social organization and cultural practices more generally (Heininen et al.). The rapid transition to a pastoral and agrarian culture is generally associated with rapid population growth (Zvelebil 1998: 16). It is therefore less clear to what degree the population increase is directly attributable to arriving immigrants or was complemented by indigenous populations assimilating arriving subsistence strategies and experiencing a corresponding population boom. In spite of attempts to identify the immigrant population with a particular territory of Sweden, it seems probable that they came from more than one region, and probably from more than one culture (Callmer 1994: 18–19).

Even if it remains unclear what language(s) were spoken by the indigenous Ålandic population (see Ahola et al.), a significant portion of the immigrants likely spoke dialects of Proto-Norse. The indigenous population appears to have assimilated arriving subsistence strategies as well as many cultural practices. In fact, intensive influence from Germanic cultures seems to have extended to southwest Finland during the same period (see Ahola & Frog 2014; Frog 2014b). However, local Finnic dialects seem to have superseded the presence of Germanic languages through the archipelago and on the mainland by the Viking Age, assimilating Germanic language populations (Ahola et al.; also Heikkilä; Schalin 2014). The cultural impacts on Åland can therefore not be assumed to indicate that the area was linguistically Norse or even linguistically homogeneous. North Finnic dialects not only eclipsed local Germanic languages in or by the Viking Age; Finnic languages also spread significantly in this period, perhaps beginning as a regional *lingua franca* in some areas east of the Baltic Sea (Ahola & Frog 2014).4 Indicators of an apparent increase of eastern influences in parts of Åland during the Viking Age may be connected to the same processes (Gustavsson et al.; Heininen et al.). Unknowns in the process

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4 Not only was the major trade center Staraya Ladoga in a North Finnic language area (the Vepsian dialect) but also the other major site of access to the Eastern Route, via the Western Dvina in the Gulf of Riga, was also a Finnic language area (the Livic dialect). A role of these languages in the contact networks to the east is suggested by the probable ethnonym for Scandinavians being borrowed into Slavic via a Finnic dialect (see Schalin 2014 and works there cited).
of Finnic language spread are political and economic factors that could be primary determinants on the valuation and relevance of different languages and their use (cf. Mufwene 2007). The language situation in Viking Age Åland thus remains quite ambiguous. However, settlement in Åland seems to have built up in conjunction with the economic boom accompanying Åland’s prominence in trade east–west during the Viking Age (Roek Hansen 1991: 166–167; cf. Sjöstrand). Multilingual communities therefore seem quite probable (Ahola & Frog 2014; Ahola et al.). The significant Ålandic presence in Meryan cultural areas of the Jaroslav’ Oblast of today’s Russia (Callmer 1994; Dyczko 2004: 193) also has implications for multilingualism and multilingual networks that could be a relevant indicator of Ålanders capitalizing and building on Finnic language competence in dealing with groups along the Eastern Route (Ahola et al.).

Whatever Ålandic traditions may have been prior to the Late Iron Age, it appears that there was a significant influx of Germanic culture and cultural practices. Migrations have a stimulating effect on the cultural activity of traditions. Narrative activity, for example, is clearly precipitated by the introduction of outsiders into a community and in the formation of temporary communities surrounding collective activities such as fishing, construction, forest work – or the seal hunting mentioned by Storå (cf. Gil’ferding 1894; Dégh 1969; 1995). Groups arriving in Åland inevitably brought various traditions. Even where groups share a common language, in oral cultures, traditions will have conventional forms and conventions of use at the level of local communities and their networks (cf. Siikala 2012). These might vary greatly by region, especially between groups that have been separated geographically. Traditions and the variations between them provide resources for the individuals and groups to assert and negotiate their own identities in relation to others. Exposure

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5 Uralic or Finno-Ugric languages constitute a completely different family of languages from Indo-European languages such as Germanic and most other languages of Europe. It thus differs not only in vocabulary, but even at quite basic levels of sounds and how words are put together. Germanic languages predominated from the Baltic Sea to Iceland, making trade quite practical for the Norsemen: not only were other Germanic languages easy to learn, but the pervasiveness of Germanic languages greatly increased the likelihood that it could function as a contact language with speakers of other branches of Indo-European such as Slavic, Baltic or Celtic, which would in turn produce multilingual environments in which it would be easier to learn these more distantly related languages. To the east, however, the linguistic environment was radically different and in the Ladoga region and nearer the Baltic Sea, Finnic languages likely played a similar role for indigenous populations (see Ahola & Frog 2014). For Norsemen without competence in a Finnic or Sámi dialect, the Finno-Ugric languages there and farther east and southeast might as well have been Turkish or Japanese: it would be incredibly challenging for an adult to develop even very basic communication skills, especially with no organized instruction, let alone no dictionaries.
to cultural diversity can also increase awareness and potential for innovation (cf. Honko 2003: 61). Practice itself becomes an assertion and affirmation of individual and group identities within a community and/or in relation to communities: traditions can become emblematic of a cultural or social group and even quite subtle variations can become strongly marked as meaningful distinctions between ‘us’, who do it ‘our way’, as opposed to ‘them’, who do something else (Frog 2010a: 202–205, 225; 2010b: 99–100). The comparison and contrast of variation could be as interesting and meaningful among groups with different dialectal forms of the same songs as between groups with traditions in different languages.

Migration stimulates the use of certain traditions and their value especially in this interplay and negotiation of identities, while those particular traditions evolve in relation to their use. The traditions require social relevance for use and contexts in which to use them or they will disappear (cf. Dégh 1995: 93–118). The traditions stimulated by migration and contact can be anticipated to be especially those relevant to negotiating contacts (including practical magic), those providing central representations of identity models, value systems and reflections on social order (cf. Honko 1996; 1998: 20–29), and those relevant as identity markers of a group (cf. Honko 2003: 27–28). These include traditions with direct parallels in the other groups being encountered, which appears to stimulate the value and/or relevance of those traditions (Frog 2011a: 92–93). For example, migrations from different regions of Finland and Karelia to the region of Viena (or White Sea Karelia) brought together many variant forms of Kalevalaic epic, and this had a stimulating effect on the tradition (Siikala 2002b). One result was that the region of Viena was still the most vital and dynamic region of the tradition two hundred years later, with diverse forms of individual epics associated with small networks of communities and kin groups (Frog 2010a: 72–80, 202–205). The variant forms of epics also provided alternative and complementary resources that even led to new narratives and unique uses of familiar epics (Frog 2010a: 377–378, 396–399). Although there are no sources for oral traditions in Viking Age Åland, this may have been an exceptionally rich and dynamic tradition area as one outcome of earlier migrations. There is a tendency today to think of mythologies in the Viking Age more or less as mirrors of an ideal Christianity in the sense of uniform and consistent monolithic systems that everyone recognizes and understands in the same way. However, mythology was bound up with traditions and varied just as they did, and a number of mythologies were likely in dialogue in Åland throughout the
Iron Age. This probable dynamism of traditions in Viking Age Åland would then certainly extend to mythology, which must have been both rich and vital.

The stimulation of traditions in Åland does not mean that a new Ålandic identity did not take shape. This might be compared to Iceland, where the stimulation of traditions associated with the settlement of the country may ultimately have provided an essential condition for the remarkable vernacular narrative literature production that became characteristic of Iceland from the twelfth century (Frog 2010a: 234–235). This certainly did not inhibit Icelanders from mythologizing the origins of their common society (Lindow 1997) or constructing an international image of ‘Icelanders’ from the perspective of Norway and Denmark (Wanner 2008: 54–57). Similar processes are not improbable for Ålandic communities, in which case an ‘Ålandic’ identity emerging in relation to immigration and associated radical changes in cultural practices would likely have already been quite developed by the Viking Age.

One site where assertions of identity through practices can be observed in Viking Age Åland is burials in the archaeological record. Burial practices reflect the social construction of, and relationship to, the identity and role(s) of the deceased for a community. In other words, burial rituals and their products are particularly concentrated on individual and social identities from the perspective of the individual or groups organizing those rituals. In Viking Age Scandinavia and its diaspora, burial practices group into a few broad, basic patterns, within which individual cases and community practice exhibit potentially quite intricate ritual activities of which “the variety is almost infinite” (Price 2012: 21). Although the language of individual communities in the archaeological record may remain obscure, burial practices remain a major indicator of belongingness to a cultural group, of cultural continuities, and of population movements (cf. Uino 1997; Wessman 2010). Immigration to Åland prior to the Viking Age carried diverse models and influences, but Johan Callmer observes:

During the time of only a few generations [a] distinct agrarian Iron Age culture evolved on Åland, certainly partly on the basis of the autochthonous population and in particular partly on the basis of immigrants. [...] The population on the Åland Islands very rapidly develops [...] new traits and new combination of traits which obviously, from the very beginning, become widely accepted. (Callmer 1994: 19.)

This process seems to have produced a synthesis resulting in at least some degree of a shared cultural identity and a shared cultural arena. This does not mean that local groups and networks were culturally (or linguistically) undifferentiated. As RUDOLF GUSTAVSSON, JAN-ÉRIK TOMTLUND, JOSEFINA KENNEBJÖRK and JAN STORÅ observe elsewhere in this volume, “The cultural patterns took slightly
different forms in north-eastern and southern/south-western Åland” (p. 183), which may be related to participation in different networks of contacts. The clay paw rite addressed below may be connected precisely with cultural practices reflecting distinct group identities. Nevertheless, the differences across regions and networks of communities seem to have shared in a common fundamental cultural system.

2. Approaching Ålandic Mythology

2.1. Mythology as a Symbolic Matrix

Mythological narratives provide symbolic illustrative and explanatory models for conceptualizing and understanding the natural world, unseen worlds and also social realities for both human and non-human communities. They may provide an ‘explanation’ for how the world, some part of it or a social reality came into existence (cf. Eliade 1963: 5–6). They may also provide illustrative exemplars and even ideal models for behaviors and practices, or counter-models illustrating unacceptable behaviors and their consequences (Doty 2000: 61–65, 67–74). Within such models, “values are portrayed not as subjective human preferences but as the imposed conditions for life implicit in a world with a particular structure” (Geertz 1973: 131). Many such narratives may center on the characterization of mythological beings and their relationships. They may construct the images of these beings in their roles related to human communities, such as the thunder-god as an adversary and destroyer of devils and giants, protecting the world order. They may also construct them as symbolic identity-models for individuals in the community, like Väinämöinen of Finno-Karelian Kalevalaic mythology as the cultural model for a poet/singer and magical practitioner (Siikala 2002a: 210–211; cf. Haavio 1952: 233) much as Odin seems also to have been of Germanic mythology (Frog 2013b: 79–80; cf. de Vries 1956–57: 66–75; Schjødt 2013: 12–13). The images of such identities can be approaches as symbols, as can the motifs associated with their actions and even whole narratives where these are recognized as coherent, meaningful units or integers of tradition. Mythologies more generally can be approached as “systems of symbols” (Witzel 2012: 7). As Anna-Leena Siikala observes:

Instead of logically related concepts, mythic consciousness works in the form of metaphors and images welling up from symbolism common to cultures. Thus religious symbols and ones which express human and societal organisation generate a network of images and metaphors [...]. (Siikala 2002a: 19.)
Stories about gods and the organization of the world stand in many respects at the center of the symbolic network of a mythology precisely because they are verbalized or ‘told’: they function as informational assets that can be communicated and known independent of one’s own experience. These narratives and also images and metaphors are multifunctional resources: they can be used to do different things to varying degrees in diverse contexts, and they can fill multiple functions all at the same time. Their use may range from ritual performances and functional roles in magic to secular entertainment. (Entertainment should also not be considered necessarily exclusive of uses in magic or ritual.) Although it is common to think of mythologies in terms of unified and coherent monolithic systems, it should be remembered that all of the diverse elements of a mythology have their own social relevance, conventional contexts, functions and uses. These become naturalized through use (Barthes 1972): they are taken for granted as ‘natural’ aspects of social and empirical reality. Naturalization occurs in relation to the contexts of use which results in a non-reflective acceptance in that context. Individuals will not normally observe ‘inconsistencies’ and ‘contradictions’ in mythology naturalized to one context in comparison with another (Converse 1964). This variation makes it more appropriate to view mythology not as a single, uniform ‘system’, but as a matrix of symbols of which portions may be active or have centrality from one perspective but not from another.

This matrix of symbols is characterized by participants in the community or cultural area thinking through those symbols and placing them in dialogue with images of themselves and with their social and phenomenal experiences – or, to borrow the phrase of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962: 128), they constitute things that are bonnes à penser ['good(s) to think with']. This makes mythology extremely important for the formation of individual and social identities. Rather than ‘beliefs’ per se, which are an individual’s subjective engagement with the symbolic matrix of the mythology or with its parts, this matrix of symbols provides essential and emotionally invested resources and frames of reference for the internalization, communication and negotiation of ideologies and value systems – ways of thinking and “a form of knowing” (Doty 2000: 55–56, original emphasis). As Bronisław Malinowski (1926: 100) put it, “Myth [...] in its living primitive form, is not merely a story told but a reality lived.” It is thus unsurprising that “Old Norse religion was described by contemporaries as forn síðr or ‘the old way of life’” (Andrén 2005: 108). These traditions function at a level of cultural competence and sensitivity that provide a fundamental framework against which social interaction takes place. In practice, these traditions
simultaneously work for the development of distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the same manner that ethnic identity can be approached and defined in relation to cultural competence that exists at the level of social meanings, understandings and appraisals which cannot be literally communicated or translated across languages or cultures (Frog & Latvala 2013: 328–329, on Glukhov & Glukhova 2012).

Accordingly, mythology is fundamental to belongingness to a cultural or social group.

2.2. Ålandic Mythology in the Circum-Baltic Cultural Arena

As noted above, the Åland Islands are geographically situated between North Germanic and North Finnic linguistic-cultural areas near the center of the Baltic Sea region. More generally, the Baltic Sea region was an exceptional cultural arena characterized by a rich history of cross-cultural contacts and exchange going back thousands of years. This history greatly impacted mythologies of both Indo-European and Finno-Ugric cultures, resulting in certain patterns in mythologies, their structures and even some narrative material becoming common cross-culturally. These shared patterns, structures and material can be considered to characterize a Circum-Baltic mythology (Frog 2011a). This does not mean that the mythologies in all of these cultures were the same. Rather, they shared, according to varying degrees of probability, certain similar features, equivalent symbols and sets of relationships among these symbols, each within a vernacular symbolic matrix. The historical situation of Åland in the heart of the Circum-Baltic cultural-geographic space allows the deduction that it participated in this phenomenon, which enables certain inferences about mythology and related traditions with varying degrees of probability. Concentration here will be on non-Christian mythology. Questions of Christianity in Viking Age Åland will be reserved for section 5.1 of this chapter, where diverse perspectives within the symbolic matrix of the mythology will be considered as will the conversion processes conventionally identified as concluding the Viking Age.

2.2.1. Ålandic Mythology as a ‘Dialect’ on a Continuum

According to Anna-Leena Siikala,

Oral mythology is reminiscent of language in that the presenters and their communities continuously adapt it. For this reason, mythology has dialects, which cannot be reduced to a single original form. (Siikala 2012: 15.)

The mythology of Åland can be approached as one mythology on the language and dialect continuum of the Circum-Baltic cultural area, developing histori-
ally at or near Åland appears to have been geographically and culturally at or near a nexus of Germanic–Finnic interactions. In the Viking Age, it can be reasonably situated between the Norse cultures of Sweden and North Finnic cultures of Finland even if the linguistic-cultural groups inhabiting the Åland Islands remain ambiguous. Among diverse populations of the Circum-Baltic arena, essential features of mythologies in the Viking Age can most reasonably be identified for precisely North Germanic and North Finnic cultures. The location of Åland between these on the dialect continuum of Circum-Baltic mythologies enables somewhat more specific inferences about aspects and elements of the symbolic matrix current in Viking Age Åland, which in its turn provides a context for the discussion of specific evidence.

Whatever the culture of Åland may have been in the preceding era, the wave of especially Germanic immigration produced a synthesis and distinct culture. Burial practices seem to suggest a dominance of Germanic models rather than connections to Finnic cultures (Gustavsson et al.). The change in burial practices was accompanied by the establishment of new cemeteries while (many of) those of the preceding period fell into disuse (see also Tomtlund; Gustavsson et al.). This discontinuity in the use of burial grounds is a relevant indicator of radical revisions in cultural practices. Germanic models also had revolutionary restructuring effects on North Finnic mythologies in mainland territories east of Åland where Germanic groups were linguistically assimilated (Frog 2012; 2013b; 2014). It therefore seems highly probable that Germanic models predominated in the mythology in Åland as well.

By the Viking Age, the mythology would likely have been distinctively ‘Ålandic’ owing to the integration and adaptation of elements and features of the indigenous culture and those associated with maritime networks. This does not mean that it was completely homogeneous and uniform. In all likelihood, there would have been multiple dialects of mythology within Åland, shaped by settlement history and the selective mobility which enabled maritime networks to vary by island (cf. Tuovinen 2011: 15; Heininen et al.). Diversity could have been quite pronounced or socially marked if the dominant language was not consistent on every island (cf. Callmer 1994: 31). There may have been a broad social and political division through the Åland Islands with differing orientations to the trade routes along the south from Sweden to Lake Ladoga

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6 However, there is not a clear and direct transposition of burial practices connecting the emerging rites of Åland with particular burial practices thus far identified in Sweden (Callmer 1994: 18–19). This implies that adaptation and probably some form of hybridization occurred (cf. Gustavsson et al.).
and along the north from Sweden to Ostrobothnia (Storå 2012; Heininen et al.). The reflection of variation between north-eastern and southern/south-western parts of the Åland Islands may be connected with these processes (Gustavsson et al.; Heininen et al.). However, Åland does not exhibit evidence of unification under a single, ultimate political entity and seems more likely to have had multiple chieftains (Tomtlund). This implies multiple centers with at least somewhat different cultural features already emerging with immigration processes, population increase, and the negotiation of the new social order in networks of local communities. Lassi Heininen, Jan Storå, Frog and Joonas Ahola discuss the fact that the indicators of a north-eastern and southern/south-western cultural divide is paralleled by the distribution of hill forts, which could reflect the formation of two polities in the Åland Islands. The degree of emerging uniformity in burial practices nevertheless suggests that variation within the Åland Islands was in some sense secondary to its coherence as a cultural arena, potentially as a consequence of geopolitical circumstances. In light of this cultural coherence, it does not seem unreasonable to abstract generalizations about a broadly ‘Ålandic’ mythology.

What can be said about Ålandic mythology will necessarily remain quite abstract. It is best approached in terms of a symbolic matrix, within which elements or constituents can be approached through probabilities. This can be assumed to be characterized especially by central elements and conceptions in the matrix, especially where these interfaced with public social practices. Generalizations about a broadly shared mythology will inevitably level variation between sub-dialects within Ålandic mythology or developments that Ålandic mythology may have undergone over time, such as potential differences between mythology in north-eastern and southern/south-western Åland. Thus, this approach cannot necessarily illuminate exceptional local developments (which must also have been present, at least to some degree), such as if Taarapital/ Turupid (mentioned above) developed a prominent position on one island owing to seafaring contacts, but remained insignificant on others. Within the broadly shared Ålandic mythology, it is quite possible that, for example, some communities identified the thunder-god as the hero in a particular narrative and as the object of a certain ritual while other communities identified these with a different god. In other words, the narrative, ritual and the two gods in question could all be part of the common Ålandic symbolic matrix of the

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7 It therefore seems more probable than not that there was correspondingly a shared system of laws as in Iceland (e.g. Dennis, Foote & Perkins 1980; Miller 1990) or the island of Gotland (Peel 1999; 2009), on which see also Heininen et al.
2.2.2. Considering Ålandic Gods

The most prominent surface features of a vernacular mythology are often gods and/or supernatural beings that have personal identities imagined in (or at least in relation to) human terms. These complex identities can be approached as a special type of mythic image and as potentially key symbols in the matrix of the mythology. A few such identities can be surmised for Ålandic mythology.

It can be inferred that the thunder-god, likely characterized by the epithet ‘old man’, was central in the mythology, that he was a subject of prayer and rite, and that he was characterized through legends, tales and mythological narratives as the adversary to devils, giants or equivalent supernatural beings (cf. Laurenkiene 1996; Valk 1996; Uther 1997–99; Bertell 2003; Frog 2011a). This is supported by the so-called Thor’s hammer rings (Gustavsson et al.) which can be interpreted as symbolically representing the god’s weapon and its power. The role of the thunder-god can be distinguished from the mythic image of the identity that fills the particular role. In other words, Germanic Thor was not identical to Baltic Perkūnas, but Thor and Perkūnas filled equivalent roles in many cultural practices and narrative traditions. Similarly, so-called Thor’s hammer symbols found across cultures in the north could be interpreted as the attribute of the vernacular god rather than necessarily of Scandinavian Thor. It is not possible to be certain about the specific identity of the thunder-god in different communities in Viking Age Åland. In a Norse language community, we might anticipate this simply to be ‘Thor’. North Finnic cultures refer to this god almost exclusively as ‘Old Man’ (Ukko, Äijä), which may also have been current in Åland irrespective of which language was spoken.\(^8\) It should not be assumed that the mythic image of this god in Åland would be precisely identical to the image of the god either in the contemporary territory of Svealand or the corresponding territory of Finland Proper, even if these shared common essential features (cf. Frog 2013b: 73–74, 86).

Other gods are more challenging to assess. The patterns of relationships between Germanic and Finnic traditions make it probable that there was a cultural

\(^8\) On the problem of the name and identity of the North Finnic thunder god, see Frog 2013b: esp. 72–73, 86.
model of a singer and magical practitioner. This would be a role equivalent to that of Germanic Odin and Finno-Karelian Väinämöinen, but the image of this figure is more difficult to estimate and this god may have been narrated more than worshipped (cf. Frog 2013b: 80–83). The role of this mythological model held extreme centrality in both Norse and Finno-Karelian mythologies, with Åland situated on a continuum between them. Also likely is some sort of a tradition of an iron-working ‘smith of heaven’, possibly identified directly with the thunder-god, but this may not have been uniformly established across communities or may have remained/become peripheral in the mythology (cf. Frog 2012: 216–218; 2013b: 70–72; 2013a). It can also be inferred that there was a category or set of categories of mythic beings that were adversaries of the thunder-god (Frog 2011a) – although precisely what these categories may have been is uncertain, and they may have been different in different genres (cf. Frog 2013c: esp. 67). At present, however, the few gods that can be inferred – or rather the roles of gods and their adversaries – are exceptional: in most cases, evidence of specific gods or mythological beings does not suggest a continuum spanning cultures across Finnic and Germanic cultures. Although it might be inferred that there was, for example, a god or supernatural being addressed or sacrificed to in order to secure a good catch of fish or for success in hunting seals, only the most abstract roles can be extrapolated, albeit sometimes with implications of associated genres (e.g. prayers, charms), but little else.

2.2.3. Considering Ålandic Mythological Narratives

The Ålandic dialect of Circum-Baltic mythology can also be inferred to have maintained certain mythological narratives and mythological narrative material. For example, narratives about the thunder-god’s confrontations with adversaries were probably prominent both in the mythology and in local legend traditions. The so-called Theft of the Thunder-Instrument (identified as international tale-type ATU 1148b) was established in Baltic, Germanic, Finnic and Sámi traditions (Frog 2011a; 2013a). This is a complex narrative of multiple episodes

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9 Väinämöinen’s role is most probably a vernacular adaptation of a Germanic model identifiable with Odin in Old Norse mythology (Frog 2012a; 2013b). A direct relationship is also probable between traditions of Odin and of Velnias, the chthonic Lithuanian one-eyed god of magic, although not of poetry (Gimbutas 1974; cf. Liberman 2006). Together, these reinforce the probability that essential features characterizing a god of magical practice circulated cross-culturally as elements assimilated from one symbolic matrix of mythology into another, even if the origins and directions of influence remain obscure, and even if the valuation, significance and uses of these elements may have developed historically in dialogues of cross-cultural contact and exchange that echoed through the centuries (cf. Frog 2011a: 92–93).

10 On the concept of centrality in belief traditions, see Converse 1964.
that can be presumed to have been current in Åland as well. The specific form and images of the tradition remain uncertain, although it probably maintained a basic narrative pattern: the adversary of the thunder-god steals the god’s thunder attribute while the god sleeps and hides it in his home; the god assumes a disguise as a servant, enters the adversary’s home (with a companion, who has been invited to a wedding celebration); the god is unwittingly provided with the thunder-attribute by the adversary who expects to be entertained (by its music or the disguised god’s failure to make the object sound correctly); the god uses his strength to ‘play’ the instrument, destroying everyone present (except his companion). This narrative is unlikely to have been divorced from the thunder-god because ‘thunder’ remained semantically central to the narrative in connection with belief traditions (cf. Frog 2013a: 119, fig. 7). The Ålandic tradition of this mythological narrative would nevertheless probably have had a conventionally characteristic Ålandic form, and most likely employed an image of a thunder-producing object that was not the god’s axe or hammer but rather some mythic image that may have already seemed archaic and peculiar, such as a blown ‘musical instrument’, a hand-mill or implements associated with iron-working and fire-striking (Frog 2011a; Frog 2013a: 114, 118–119; 2014a). The actual narrative cannot be ‘reconstructed’; its basic pattern and the motifs and images that characterize it can only be anticipated according to varying degrees of probability.

Most mythological narrative material can only be inferred in terms of abstracted motifs and systems of motifs that might form a narrative core rather than a coherent plot. In these cases, a system of motifs might be inferred as having a high probability of being current in some form in Viking Age Åland. However, what can be said about it might be conditioned in certain ways. For example, in the Baltic Sea region, a whole ‘package’ of mythological narrative material circulated cross-culturally in conjunction with iron-working technologies (Frog 2011b: 30–32; 2013b: 70–72; cf. Laurenkine 2008). This ‘package’ was associated with the smith of heaven identity and one of its functions seems to have been to characterize a (vernacular) sky-god as the ‘smith of heaven’ (Frog 2013b: 80–81). This material was almost certainly familiar in some form in Ålandic culture(s). However, it is not certain to which mythological figure it would be attached – probably the thunder-god, but possibly another sky-god that had been more significant earlier in the Iron Age. The

11 This is what appears to have occurred in Finnic cultures where it was identified with Proto-Finnic *Ilmari (Frog 2012a; 2013b). Although it is probable that this ‘package’ was identified with the thunder-god throughout Scandinavia, the peripheral position of Åland and its adjacency to
identification of the narrative material is, for the most part, restricted to minimal motifs at the core of a plot, such as a stinging insect corrupting a mythic object while it is being forged; the use of metal-working technology in an (attempt to) produce a living woman or part of a woman (e.g. her hair); the forging of a mythic object that will be destroyed or fail at the end of the world order; and so forth (cf. Frog 2011b: 30–32; 2013b: 70–72). Moreover, this narrative material had presumably already been in circulation for so long that, by the Viking Age, it cannot be certain that it was still attached to the ‘smith of heaven’ figure at all. Practically speaking, what can most reliably be construed about mythological narrative traditions is a) at the level of identifying probable images and motifs that were powerfully charged resources in the symbolic matrix of Ålandic mythology, as well as b) some potential groupings and relationships between them. It can be assumed that these were employed in conventional narratives, but it is not possible to reconstruct those narratives as such. In other words, it is possible to infer some symbols and that they had conventions of use or even certain general associations or functions, but it is not possible to deduce their precise shape, how they were used, or what they signified to their users.

2.2.4. Situating Mythology in Culture

Relationships of mythology to society and practice are very important to consider. Mythological narratives are not told accidentally: people use them for things. For example, Finno-Karelian narratives about Väinämöinen were in some cases integrated in magical and ritual practices. These narratives were more generally significant for constructing the mythic image of Väinämöinen as an identity model for ritual specialists as users of the poetry. As a historical process, the narrative traditions about Väinämöinen were reciprocally shaped especially by those specialists, who used them to reflect and project images of their social role – their identities – through the god (Siikala 2002a; Frog 2010a: 191–196; 2012: 221–222, 240–242). Similarly, Norse mythological narratives about Odin primarily center around the acquisition or possession of mythic knowledge and its use (Schjødt 2013: 12–13), of which ‘poetry’ can be seen as a category (cf. Siikala 2002a; Clunies Ross 2005: 40–44, 61–65, and cf. 19–21; Tarkka 2005: 82–101). It is probable that whatever figure was in this role (or its equivalent) in Viking Age Åland was surrounded by corresponding traditions of narration. However, the narrative material would be adapted to the

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Finnic cultural areas leaves open a possibility that it could have been assigned to Proto-Germanic *Tīwaz (> Old Norse Týr), if the latter retained a more central status e.g. under Finnic influence (cf. Frog 2012a: 213–214).
construction and construal of the god as an identity representation related to
the particular traditions of mythic knowledge and magical practice. This type
of adaptation dependent on relationships to other traditions makes the specific
narrative material difficult to anticipate (cf. Frog 2013b: 81–83).

Ecological and social environments would also be placed in dialogue with
the mythology and its development. This can be anticipated to impact the
use and significance of mythic images and motifs that were associable with
those environments, especially where they intersected with social practices (cf.
Ahola). It is also fairly common that the circumstances of telling stories are
a factor that prompts the selection of the narratives to be told according to
connections or associations between them (cf. Virtanen 1968; Tarkka 2013). To
oversimplify, this basically means that when you are fishing, stories about a god’s
fishing adventure are more likely to be interesting; they will probably have an
increased potential for producing meanings in relation to immediate activities
and the environment. This makes it probable that, for example, the thunder-
god’s fishing adventure with a giant/devil was likely current in Åland, although
it is difficult to anticipate whether this was an episode in the local Theft of the
Thunder-Instrument tradition, as in Finnic traditions, or a separate adventure
identifiable with Thor’s fishing for the world serpent, as in (West) Norse tradi-
tions – or perhaps both, potentially in quite different forms (cf. Krohn 1922:
204–207; Meulengracht Sørensen 1986; Frog 2011a: 88–91). The same is
quite possible for a motif linked to the package of traditions associated with
the ‘smith of heaven’: the god goes fishing in a group with a net and catches a
mythic fish with his hands; although in this case it is difficult to anticipate what
sort of narrative this might have formed and what other material it may have
been attached to (cf. Frog 2011b: 32; 2013b: 71). The ecological environment
of Åland makes it particularly probable that the central (to at least some groups)
world-creation tradition was a variation on a diver motif of raising the first
earth as an island in the primal sea. The role of the diver would be most likely
filled by the god equivalent to Odin or Väinämöinen.12 This world-creation

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12 The earth-diver motif was a constituent of Uralic mythologies (Napolskikh 2012) and remained
the central element of North Finnic mythologies even through the Christianization (Frog 2012a:
222–227). It also appears to have been integrated into Germanic mythology (Völuspá 4.1–4; cf.
Frog 2010a: 175–176), where it may have been reinforced by Christianity (cf. McKinnell 2008:
12–18). The fulfilment of this role by an Odin/Väinämöinen figure is inferred from that figure’s
fulfilment of the role in both Finno-Karelian (Väinämöinen) and Old Norse traditions (the sons
of Burr = Odin and his brothers). There has been an inclination to question and challenge Odin’s
dominant role in Germanic mythologies (esp. Gunnell e.g. 2013). It may therefore be observed
that this role in North Finnic traditions is directly interfaced with Väinämöinen’s function as an
identity-model for magical practitioners: this role realizes first-hand knowledge of the world-
creation as an ultimate power-attribute. At the same time, it is also a reflex of this god’s earlier
image seems also to have provided a mythological model for the aetiology of 
the island of Gotland (Peel 1999: xvii–xviii, 2; Schier 1963: 327–328; cf. Eliade 1954). There may have been similar traditions accounting for the origin and 
settlement of the Åland Islands (Heininen et al.). On the other hand, a motif 
of creating an island or the world by ‘ploughing’ these from or into the sea is 
also found peripherally in Old Norse in an aetiology of the island of Zealand 
(Faulkes 1982: 7) and in North Finnic traditions in Väinämöinen’s description 
of his creation of the world in The Singing Competition (e.g. Kuusi et al. 1977: 
107, item 11.44–45). This suggests that, at some point in time, this ploughing 
motif was widespread and perhaps more fundamental to the world-creation for 
at least some groups.\textsuperscript{13} Considering immigrations to Åland and the diversity of 
traditions that this implies, all of these motifs may have held currency in Viking 
Age Åland; they may have had different functions (e.g. the origin of Åland 
versus the origin of the world)\textsuperscript{14} and/or may have been regarded differently in 
different Ålandic communities.

Once established, the mythology’s central matrix of symbols may be con-
tinuously reimagined through the contemporary environment of its users (cf. 
Honko 1981: 19; Ahola). However, it does not follow that the environment 
will necessarily generate completely new symbols and narratives. It can therefore 
be anticipated that the resources constitutive of the symbolic matrix of the 
mythology in Viking Age Åland were historically conditioned – i.e. its range 
and diversity was built on what was inherited or imported and its conventions 
developed on established foundations (cf. Siikala 2002a). For example, kaleva-
laic mythology and epic was most vital in the inland forested regions of Karelia. 
Although the depictions of farmstead households and social environments can

\begin{footnotesize}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[	extsuperscript{13}] Cf. also Tomtlund, who observes evidence of burials situated on ground ploughed with an ard.
\item[	extsuperscript{14}] It may be noted that the ‘ploughing of the sea/waters’ by Väinämöinen appears as direct speech 
claiming to have participated in the world-creation; this motif is absent in the \textit{narration} of the 
world-creation, where Väinämöinen fills the role of an earth-diver. Both motifs have socially 
established functions in the mythology rather than e.g. alternating between these narratives 
according to ‘beliefs’ of the singers. The same thing should not be underestimated for Ålandic 
mythology – i.e. that the presence of certain wide-spread elements of the mythology might 
nonetheless have been used in quite narrow ways in a single conventionalized context.
\end{enumerate}
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reflect and project images of (sometimes anachronistic) social realities, the narratives generally do not depict adventures in forested landscapes or familiar realities of navigating systems of rivers and small lakes. Instead, the most central mythological epics are situated in image-systems rooted in a seafaring culture most reasonably identified with the Viking Age (Ahola 2014; AHOLA). The resources and symbolic matrix of the mythology are, in this case, largely removed from social realities to an imaginal sphere of narration. The image-systems of the authoritative genres of mythology and epic were historically conditioned by the remote cultural environment in which the current, central exemplars of the genre(s) were instantiated (cf. Siikala 2002a: 30–32). This is no different than the way that the imaginal world of European fairytales maintained roots in the symbols and roles of a medieval feudal society and the imaginal worlds of that era, peopled by damsels, princes and dragons (Dégh 1995: 93–118) rather than prom queens, skateboarders and aliens. This means that even though seafaring must have been a fundamental social reality in Viking Age Åland, it cannot simply be assumed that Ålandic mythology centered around the sea and seafaring culture.

If the fundamentals of the majority of Ålandic mythology’s symbolic matrix were adapted from Germanic models that were established in a different milieu, then the mythology may have remained centered within those symbols and roles with their conventions rather than spontaneously producing new symbols and roles identifiable with seafaring. Medieval Iceland was no less an island culture, settled in the seafaring boom of the Viking Age. Although seafaring journeys held a marked position in Icelandic epics, sagas and social realities, surprisingly little in the documented mythology is identified with seafaring. The most noteworthy exceptions are the (apparently quite popular) tradition of Thor’s fishing adventure (Krohn 1922: 204–207; Meulengracht Sørensen 1986), which actually describes coastal fishing rather than travel, and images of sailing on the flood to an apocalyptic battle at the end of the world (Völuspá; Faulkes 1982: 50–52; cf. Olrik & Ræder 1931: 66), which may not be rooted in ‘seafaring’ adventures *per se*. The narratives of mythology documented in Iceland thus most probably reflect their historical connections to the remote cultural environments in which exemplars of the relevant genres were instantiated. This does not mean that the individual narratives all stem from the instantiation of the genre. Instead, it suggests that the adaptation and generative production of mythological narratives was historically conditioned by a framework of conventions and imaginal models that were established for
the relevant genres, and that that framework engaged the symbolic matrix of the mythologies in those ways.

In Viking Age Åland, processes of immigration would increase the range of potential resources of tradition that were available, but these can nevertheless be assumed to remain largely within the limits of the mythologies of immigrant groups and the indigenous populations. In other words, the range of resources brought together in Åland would remain limited and the development within Åland would primarily occur at the level of reinterpreting, adapting and recombining those resources rather than expanding the matrix of symbols in directions where models were otherwise lacking. The question of available resources in the symbolic matrix is, however, complicated by three significant factors. First, the arriving Norse dialect(s) of mythology would likely be from East Norse cultural areas of Sweden. Medieval sources for Norse mythology are predominantly from the West Norse cultural area of Iceland, and it is uncertain how and to what degree these may have been at variance. Second, North Finnic mythologies underwent revolutionary development under Germanic influence during the Iron Age and quite likely spread to Karelia shortly prior to the Scandinavian Viking Age (ca. 800–1050) or at the beginning of the Viking Age in Finland (ca. 750–1250). Although this mythology and elements associated with it are relevant when situating Åland on the language/dialect continuum of the Baltic Sea region, there were multiple Finnic polities in the area of Southwest Finland that were potentially ethnically distinct (Ahola & Frog 2014). The mythologies of some Finnic groups may not have undergone the same transformative processes and could have been quite different (cf. Frog 2014b). Third, the indigenous population of Åland in the first half of the Iron Age remains a mystery (Ahola et al.); if indigenous traditions were assimilated into the symbolic matrix of Ålandic mythology, these might not be either Germanic or Finnic, presenting an unknown.

15 On the development and spread of Finno-Karelian Kalevalaic mythology, see Siikala 2002a; 2012; Frog 2012a; 2013b; 2014b; for a discussion of the dating of the Viking Age in Finland to ca. 750–1250, see Ahola & Frog 2014.

16 It is uncertain whether this process might have involved the assimilation of Finno-Karelian traditions associated with Väinämöinen (a god particularly associated with water and seafaring, although not worshipped or addressed in fishing rituals), or whether corresponded Norse mythological narrative traditions about seafaring that could, hypothetically, have provided models for these Finno-Karelian mythological traditions but are only found reflected in a mytho-heroic narrative pattern in the preserved Old Norse corpus (cf. Frog 2012a: 237–240). The latter possibility is tantalizing, but remains only speculation, nor is it supported by evidence of Ålandic culture constructing a self-image in relation to seafaring (see below).
The significant changes in culture associated with immigration also appear connected to pursuing agrarian and pastoral livelihoods (cf. Alenius). The Åland Islands were not conducive to this type of livelihood: life there required greater reliance on a mixed-subistence economy that seems to have assimilated indigenous practices in relation to changing settlement patterns and (presumably) social organization (Gustavsson et al.). Nevertheless, Ålandic burial practices suggest that inhabitants constructed images of themselves and their communities in relation to agriculture and animal husbandry rather than as seafarers and fishermen (Lucenius 2012). Although certain images, motifs and narratives associable with the sea or an insular environment may have been popular and compelling, this construction and projection of identities through burial practices increases the probability that the imaginal worlds of mythological narratives maintained a center more similar to that of Iceland.

3. Approaching Rituals and Mythology

3.1. Centralized and Decentralized Symbols in the Matrix

Most approaches to mythology have been dominated by a focus on narratives. Stories about gods and the organization of the world stand in many respects at the center of the symbolic matrix of a mythology precisely because they are verbalized or ‘told’: they function as informational resources that can be communicated and known independent of one’s own experience. Defining mythology in terms of such stories results in an image of the mythology as a narrative world inhabited by gods and their adversaries, where their adventures take place according to its narrative logic. A consequence of this approach is that the image of the mythology inclines toward systematization while much remains outside of that image. For example, gods and the otherworld topography addressed in ritual but not otherwise narrated are excluded. Examples of such are the Finno-Karelian fertility being and ‘blind shooter’ called Jumi (Harva 1948: 472–477; Oinas 1980; 1981), mythic images associated with the journey to the otherworld and the ancestral dead of Karelian laments (E. Stepanova 2012) or still other mythic images, beings and topography of Finno-Karelian incantations (see also Frog 2014). Narrative-dominated images of mythology belong to the long-standing inclination to formulate monolithic images of a united and systematic ‘mythology’. Such approaches have viewed mythology

17 Cf. also Peterson 2000 on Norse cultural ideology in the colonization of Greenland, where Inuit populations were more unambiguously culturally ‘other’.
as somehow remote from cultural practices rather than interfaced with them, communicated through them, and made meaningful by their social patterns of use. Such monolithic images are not equipped to handle Jumi’s isolation in the mythology: Jumi lacks any connection to other gods or their narratives and in a sense does not have a clear place in a broader ‘system’. Such monolithic images are also contradicted by variation of mythology according to genre. The otherworld topography represented in Karelian laments, for example, is inconsistent with certain key features prominent in Kalevalic epic and incantations, such as a river as a boundary separating the world of the dead (E. Stepanova 2012: 262). Even within narrative traditions it can be observed that Väinämöinen but not the thunder-god Ukko was narrated in Kalevalic epic whereas Ukko but not Väinämöinen was narrated in legends and mythology narrated in prose (Frog 2013b: 80–83). Consequently, the genre(s) or type of data in focus can produce very different images of the mythology of a culture.

When the multimodality of many practices is recognized, narrative-based approaches become further isolated from many traditions. In this case, movements, acts, artefacts or attributes, and even features of the immediate landscape can become perceived as of mythic quality and they may even be seen as immediately realizing powers, beings and features of the otherworld topography (Frog 2009; 2014d: 202–204). Dislocating such diversity and pluralism from a ‘mythology’ is particularly problematic when turning to direct evidence of Ålandic mythologies. This evidence is only accessible through the archaeological record as synchronic outcomes of cultural practices.18 Where this evidence engages mythology, it most frequently engages areas of the symbolic matrix that remain outside definitions oriented to narrative, which are also not equipped to discuss how these engagements may vary by practice.

The tendency to dislocate diversity from a mythology’s symbolic matrix has begun to change as emphasis in research shifts to the functioning of mythology as a modelling system in a culture and its relationship to meanings and meaningfulness (e.g. Doty 2000: 49). This shift in focus provides greater attention to how mythology is used and functions beyond narratives in practice (cf. Malinowski 1926; Barthes 1972; Lotman & Uspenskij 1976), now often addressed in terms of **mythic discourse** (e.g. Siikala 1992; 2002a; Goodman 1993; Schjødt 2013). This is complementary to (rather than exclusive of) attention to the continuity of formal elements such as names of gods, images, motifs and

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18 For a discussion on relating evidence from the archaeological record as synchronic outcomes of cultural practices to evidence of intangible heritage as outcomes of diachronic processes extending to the Viking Age, see Ahola & Frog 2014.
narratives. The result is a much more dynamic approach to mythology that allows for variation and diversification of the symbolic matrix:

Mythic expression is characterized on the one hand by the persistence and long history of the fundamental symbolism, and on the other by the kaleidoscope, in perpetual motion, of images deriving their force from the implicit significance of these symbols. (Siikala 2002a: 19.)

For clarification, it is useful to distinguish ‘centralized symbols’ from ‘decentralized symbols’ in the symbolic matrix (see further also Frog 2014c). Gods, narratives and mythic images and the narratives associated with them can be approached as centralized symbols in the sense of symbols representing unique and exclusive identities. In other words, ‘Thor’ is not ‘Odin’; the role of thunder-god is exclusive and thus only characteristic of a single god; narrative cores as centralized symbols would characterize a single mythological narrative rather than a group of mythological narratives or mythological narratives more generally – and so forth. This does not mean that the particular element cannot occur in other contexts, but where it is adapted into, for example, a heroic narrative, it functions as a reference to the mythological prototype that informs its meaning – much as references to the life and death of Jesus did (and do) in medieval saints’ lives, and how crucifixion in modern cinema today cannot avoid interpretation through the Crucifixion of Jesus (cf. Munz 1979; Coupe 1997: 106–115). Many mythic images and motifs can be considered decentralized symbols in the sense that they are characterized by patterns of use and associations without each being bound up with a uniquely identified narrative or attached to a single god or monster. Engagements of mythology through ritual practice frequently engage mythic images, motifs and full narrative patterns as decentralized symbols that may appear in diverse contexts and uses or that may be recurrently realized with different identities filling conventionalized roles and functions. In some cases, these decentralized symbols may have once been referential to a centralized mythological model. This is likely the case for some magical power-gathering rituals like symbolically drinking a potion beneath a world-tree image in Karelia (Frog 2008a: 151–153; 2009: 15–18) or sacrificing an eye at a sacred spring in Lithuania (Gumbitas 1974: 89). Both of these directly parallel portions of the Old Norse mythological narrative describing Odin’s acquisition of mythic knowledge as power by sacrificing his eye for a drink from the spring beneath the world-tree (Faulkes 1982: 17; cf. Simpson 1963). The parallels make it probable that the Karelian and Lithuanian rituals took shape with reference to a centralized narrative about the mythological model of a magical practitioner acquiring numinous knowledge that – like
so much mythological material – must have circulated cross-culturally in the Baltic Sea region in connection with particular cultural practices (in this case magic). However, decentralized symbols do not need to be directly associated with ‘gods’ or their ‘stories’. These Karelian and Lithuanian rituals are accessible because we can construe a narrative about a god somewhere in their historical background. However, there is no reason to suspect that the performers of these rites correlated their actions directly with a specific, symbolically centralized narrative about Väinämöinen in the former or Lithuanian Velnias in the latter – at least not in the period when they were documented. Many mythic images, motifs and narrative patterns actualized in incantations and ritual can be completely decentralized resources in the symbolic matrix: it need not be a ‘story’ exclusive to any individual but it is nonetheless an integer of the symbolic matrix emotionally invested with mythic power and interfaced with models of the unseen world and interactions with it.

Individual symbols of the mythology may remain ambiguous, without necessary resolution according to strict interpretations. This ambiguity may in many cases have been current among the users themselves (cf. Frog 2009: 13–15, 18–20). In fact, it is precisely the ambiguity of many symbols in mythology and ritual that enable the flex and adaptability through which they remain compelling in spite of significant changes in social and semiotic environments (Bell 1992, chapter 8). Recognizing the potential for ambiguity and flexibility of symbols in a matrix of cultural mythology is particularly important owing to the considerable variation in their use within conventional systems constitutive of mythologies in the Circum-Baltic cultural arena (cf. also Price 2010).

3.2. Ritual and the Symbolic Matrix of Mythology

Rituals engage the symbolic matrix of a mythology without necessarily ‘telling’ stories about gods and the organization of the world. They will not even necessarily engage such stories, although they might be directly concerned with contacting or even manipulating gods and other supernatural beings that are characterized through narratives. Rituals are not informational resources that are ‘told’; they are actualized as practice. They can nonetheless be approached in terms of narrative (cf. Piela 2005). The performance of a ritual is the actualization of a narrative pattern with its coherent systems of images and motifs. In Karelian funerary rituals, for example, the deceased member of the community becomes the protagonist in a narrative of a dangerous journey to the otherworld and successful integration into the community of the ancestors, a narrative actualized through the verbal art of the Karelian lamenter (E. Stepanova 2014).
The term ‘rite’ is not infrequently used to designate “the minimum significant unit of ritual behaviour” (Rydving 2010a: 37). Within the present discussion, a ‘rite’ is thereby a motif specific to particular genre(s) and mode(s) of expression. However, the term ‘rite’ can be useful, as in the case of the so-called clay paw ‘rite’ discussed below, where the relevant motif can only be identified through its outcome – i.e. we only find the clay paw artefact in the grave with no indication of the act(s) associated with its production and placement. Rather than communicating information about imaginal worlds and their mythic inhabitants, rituals construct and regulate (or prevent) changes in the natural, social or unseen world. A ritual provides a potentially necessary paradigm for actualizing imaginal experience – at the outcome of which, something is perceived as changed (cf. van Gennep 1960; Andrén 2005: 113–117; Frog 2010c).

Rituals which are oriented toward the inhabitants and forces of unseen worlds engage and manipulate the symbolic matrix of a mythology. It is therefore unsurprising that rituals not infrequently accompany action with the verbalization of images and motifs belonging to the unseen world: the verbal art can simultaneously direct and construct imagination in the actualization of events and experiences beyond the phenomenal world of the senses (Siikala 1978: 330–341; Frog 2010c). ‘Stories’ may have an extremely important role in the social construction and negotiation of imaginal worlds of a mythology, although they are not exclusive to it. Mythology is also engaged much more directly through practice, including, for example, magic and the social behaviors conditioned by taboos. Many of these engagements also involve genres which verbalize the mythic world in conventionalized ways for the actualization of imaginal events and experiences. This may include functionally specific adaptations of mythic images and motifs familiar from mythological narratives (cf. the power-gathering rituals in §3.1 above), but also additional images and motifs characteristic of the particular genre and the accomplishment of its goals in use, as in the lament tradition mentioned above (cf. also E. Stepanova 2012).

At the same time that practices engage mythology, they symbolically en-register and construct objects, images, motifs, the landscape and environment with a potentially mythic status (Frog 2014c). This enables or even demands that these be perceived through the lens of the broader mythology. Consequently, mythic images and mythic motifs are not exclusive of empirical or phenomenal experience. Burial mounds and burial grounds become constituted as mythic images in the immediate landscape. These are sites where ritual narratives have actualized a connection with the realm of the dead in the mythological sphere, and these sites could simultaneously be seen as an immediate location of the
dead and as a point of access to a remote otherworld location. In the Circum-Baltic region, burial grounds can be presumed to have been socially constructed sites at intersections between the seen and unseen worlds, where communities of the living and the dead could potentially interact, exchanging or transferring goods and power or luck, as well as forming a significant symbolic center for the living community and its ritual life (cf. Sundqvist 2002; E. Stepanova 2014). Cremation can correspondingly be considered a mythic motif that can be a central constituent of the 'story' of a funeral ritual – i.e. it is not simply an 'action' like eating lunch or mending a button; it is the implementation of

19 Such apparently contradictory conceptions were simultaneously upheld by Karelian and Lithuanian ritual lamenters. In Karelian funerary rituals, for example, the mythic journey narrative actualized by these specialists upheld that the deceased travels (on foot) to a remote otherworld location where the dead ancestors open their gates, prevent their dog from barking, and receive the deceased into their community (E. Stepanova 2011: 136–138). At the same time, the grave was constructed as a dwelling for the deceased over which a house-like structure could be built (referred to as e.g. an 'eternal home' in the register of this poetry: A. Stepanova 2012: 76); the construction of coffins also traditionally included the installation of a small glass window through which visitors to the grave could be seen from the otherworld (E. Stepanova 2014: 137–138, 150; cf. Germanic graves modelled on a house or hall discussed by Herschend 1997; 2001: 61–94). The burial ground thus manifested a village of the dead in the immediate landscape where the lamenters would visit the deceased, 'waking' him or her as though the individual were asleep in the grave itself (E. Stepanova 2011: 138; 2014: 133–135) that in some sense could be simultaneously correlated with a remote otherworld village of the dead. Old Norse literature similarly suggests that humans could only open contact with the dead at physical sites of their burial (although the dead could visit them in dreams, as in Finnic and Baltic traditions), which existed alongside conceptions and symbols of the deceased physically journeying to a remote otherworld location (cf. the survey in Ellis 1968). These may not have been wholly exclusive models or seen as contradictory any more than when it appears that a community of the ancestral dead seems to be present in a mountain of newly-settled Iceland (Eyrbyggja saga 4, 9; cf. Ellis 1968: 87–88) or the potential mythic (rather than simply symbolic) identification of the high seat of a hall with the seat of an ancestor inside a burial mound (Sundqvist 2002: 268–275). Apparent contradictions of this type may simply reflect established patterns of mythological thinking (cf. Frog 2009), through which identification becomes identity (cf. Lotman & Uspenskij 1976).

20 Although a deceased individual would not simply become a 'god', that person's personality would be maintained as a conventional image that could be addressed and interacted with. That personality could function as a representative of the mythological otherworld community much as a ritual specialist lamenters could be a representative of the living community. Thus, the individual deceased could carry messages and requests from the living community to the otherworld including to specific members of the kin group who were already deceased (E. Stepanova 2011: 138–139). In Karelia and elsewhere, the collective otherworld community of dead ancestors could be functionally equivalent to a god for some ritual specialists. The same terms might be used for this collective and 'divine powers' or 'gods' (E. Stepanova 2012), while in Karelia, the supernatural being Tuoni, who has authority over the realm of the dead, generally remains little more than a name. Similar concepts were no doubt also to some degree current in some Germanic traditions, although there were also traditions elevating the image of the deceased individual's personality to an increasingly supernatural status (e.g. as a founder of a farmstead, lineage or as a king). It is unclear how the potential supernatural agency of the ancestral dead may have interrelated with (or been subordinated to) a god ruling the associated otherworld realm of the dead, such as Hel ['Death'] or Odin in Valhöll. In practice, it seems probable that the role and potential of dead ancestors varied by ritual specialist, who engaged the symbolic matrix from different perspectives (on which, see below).
a symbolic event with implications and consequences for both the seen and unseen worlds as well as for the communities that inhabit them. Similarly, cremated human remains are not ‘just ashes’. On the one hand, they become constituted as a centralized mythic image bound up with the identity of a member of the living community – they are the ashes of a particular person – and they are treated in accordance with the conceptual models bound up with that image. At the same time, they are bound up with the decentralized mythic image of ‘ashes of a corpse’. This means that the ashes take on an identity shared by all such cremated remains, including their relation to the soul of the deceased and potential magical power or danger inherent in that identity, which might include, for example, an ability to ‘infect’ the living (irrespective of whose ashes they are).

Here, again, mythology can be considered a constitutive aspect of cultural competence that is interesting and relevant for us to access if we are interested in seeing the world even as it was seen in Viking Age Åland. The symbolic matrix of the mythology thus extends from centralized symbols of gods, narratives and otherworld locations, such as the realm of the dead, to decentralized symbols of the soul of a deceased individual and the narrative journey of that soul to the realm of the dead. Every individual for which the ritual is performed becomes imaginally understood through these symbols. In other words, the individual may not belong to the symbolic matrix of the mythology per se, but at an abstract level, the mythic conceptions of the body, soul, grave, and so forth are decentralized mythic images as symbols through which the processes are understood no less than actual lightning would be understood through a mythic image ascribing agency to a being in the sky. These elements along with the motifs and narrative pattern of the otherworld journey actualized through the ritual are all constituents in the symbolic matrix, even if they are not associated with a narrative about a god. In such rituals, decentralized symbols are actualized as experience for the individuals and forces involved (both seen and unseen).

4. The Clay Paw Rite

The clay paw rite emerges in Åland already in the seventh century. Outside of Åland, there appears to be only one documented attestation of the rite in the Baltic Sea region, in today’s Södermanland, Sweden, to the west of Birka.21

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21 The clay paw is fragmented and incomplete (Kivikoski 1934: 390 and fig. 12 on 387; cf. Callmer 1994: 17). This example is isolated rather than reflecting local social practices and is most
This rite appears to be a distinctly Ålandic innovation. Variation in Ålandic burial practices is not to be denied, but as observed above, the immigration processes leading up to the Viking Age produced a synthesis and stabilization in these practices that nevertheless seems to suggest a distinct and relatively tight symbolic matrix (Callmer 1994: 19). This implies the formation of either a new, shared identity as ‘Ålandic’, or the formation of multiple distinct identities networking in relation to one another (cf. Barth 1969: 18). The social reality was most likely somewhere in between, with the multiple identities in primary focus the majority of the time for the greater part of the population. Focus would then shift contextually to a more generalized identity of broader scope when conducting trade with foreigners or travelling abroad (even if we cannot say the relative scopes of identities that would have been involved; see also Ahola et al.). The clay paw rite appears to be one of the variations that is likely to be in some way connected to social identities and their differentiation within and across Ålandic communities (see also Callmer 1994; Tarsala 1998; Gustavsson et al.; Heininen et al.).

Gustavsson, Tomtlund, Kennebjörk and Storå address the distribution and variation of examples of the clay paw rite from more than 100 Ålandic burials. The rite is also attested at the trade center of Timerëvo (seven kilometers from today’s Jaroslavl’) in the Jaroslavl’ Oblast of Russia, and then assimilated by the local population (more than 150 identified examples), spreading considerably and only disappearing with the transition to inhumation practices in the eleventh century (see Callmer 1994: 17, 30–40). Timerëvo was founded in the ninth century in connection with an opening of one branch of the Eastern Route in the cultural area of the Merya by groups or networks with a pronounced Scandinavian constituent according to the archaeological record. The networks first came to the established center of Meryan territory now known as Sarskoe Gorodishche near Lake Nero, later founding Timerëvo as a separate center followed by additional centers in the immediate vicinity. (See e.g. Duczko 2004: 190ff.). The Meryans are a West Uralic/Finno-Ugric linguistic-cultural group whose language and culture are now extinct, but their language was comparatively close to that of the Finnic language family probably attributable to the mobility of Ålanders, much as the clay paw rite was carried into the Meryan cultural area.

The example from Södermanland has been dated to the sixth or seventh century, which would be the earliest phase of the tradition in Åland (Kivikoski 1934: 390). As an isolated example, this does not appear to reflect a local conventional practice and thus can be more reasonably viewed as an indicator of immigrant communities maintaining connections with the social networks that they had left behind surrounding the period of immigration to Åland.
The earliest Ålandic examples of clay paws appear to predate the establishment of these trade centers by centuries and the appearance of the clay paw rite only here has been considered to show “that at least some part of the Norse population here had its roots in different areas from the Norse people in other regions of Eastern Europe” (Duczko 2004: 193). It therefore seems probable that the clay paw rite was carried by Ålanders to the Meryan cultural area in conjunction with the development of trade settlements with the opening of the Eastern Route. The practice in the east was not static: it began to appear in with different constellations of items than were characteristic in Åland and developed new, complementary clay symbols (Callmer 1994: 17, 30–40; Tarsala 1998: 115ff.). Concentration here is on the symbolic object and its relationship to mythology.

The so-called clay paws are small objects of low-fired clay. The objects appear generally to range in size from about 5 to 11 centimeters in length with five short digits and normally formed with a narrower or tapering ‘wrist’ that can account for roughly half the length. They were produced specifically for the burial ritual, highlighting their symbolic significance and specific relevance to the rite. Zoological interpretations of the objects identify them variously with bear or beaver, in addition to a few exceptional examples (Kivikoski 1934: 390–391; 1965: 30–31; Callmer 1994: 24–25; ). The objects are roughly the size of the paw of a beaver, and must be regarded as miniature relative to a bear.
Their use in a significant number of burials over roughly four centuries indicates their enduring social symbolic significance.

4.1. The Zoological Riddle

The paw symbol can be considered metonymic of a bear and/or a beaver (following the zoological interpretations of the objects). However, it is unlikely that either the bear or the beaver had a presence in the ecology of Åland during the period when this rite was practiced (Callmer 1994: 26–27). Use of these artefacts is a relevant indicator of the symbolic significance of the referent animal(s) or of a special symbolic significance specific to its paw. As the animal was not part of the natural environment, this symbolic significance must have been connected with cultural heritage, much as bears, wolves and snakes remained vital symbols in Iceland although they were not present in Iceland’s ecology.

The symbolic significance was therefore very possibly carried to Åland by immigrant groups, which could be Germanic. One hypothesis has been that the clay artefact may have initially entered into ritual use to accommodate the absence of the relevant animal from the ecology (Edgren 2008: 479) – and thus the practical accessibility of a paw of that animal when the rite should be performed. Evidence of the rite prior to the Viking Age appears concentrated in the north-eastern part of Åland (Saltvik and Sund), predominantly in graves identified as male, and later becomes more prominent in central and southeast parts of Åland (Finström and Jomala), predominantly in graves identified as female (Callmer 1994: 23). The distribution of the rite could relate it to Finnic groups or at least to contact with Finnic groups (cf. Gustavsson et al.).

The absence of the bear and beaver from Åland’s ecology problematizes attempts to identify the species of animal according to the degree of anatomically correct representation in these symbolic, rough, clay objects. Without the presence of the living animal in the environment, the image of the paw would advance increasingly into the imaginal sphere as a mythic image rendered with a conventional strategy of representation. This could be grounded in the exposure to furs of the relevant animals to which paws were still attached, observing that there are several cases of bears or bear skins with paws attached being included in burials as grave goods (Gustavsson et al.). It is also possible that mobile portions of the community could also encounter the living animals and learn to identify their tracks. However, it is hazardous to presume that such mobile portions of the community were also the ones producing these

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23 I would like to thank Joonas Ahola for bringing the analogy of Icelandic symbolic fauna to my attention.
The symbolic significance of the clay paws could either engage the symbolic matrix of the mythology or it could be a secular symbol. If the symbol were of mythological significance, it would engage a mythological aspect of the identity of the deceased (e.g. totemic ancestry) or it would realize a mythic image or motif in the imaginal narrative actualized through the ritual. In either case, the interpretation of the animal would almost certainly be conventional and consistent rather than vary between ‘bear’ and ‘beaver’. However, if the symbol were secular, it likely marked the economic status, social position or role of the deceased within the living community. In this case, it would presumably be related to hunting and trade, and the species could remain secondary: the clay paw symbol could be ambiguously connected to game or marketable skins without necessarily distinguishing the particular animal. A purely secular interpretation is less probable because the symbolic image was created for the rite rather than having uses outside of it: there is no evidence that it was either carried or worn by members of the living community. It is significantly more likely that this represents a mythic image in the imaginal narrative actualized through the ritual. The species of animal behind this symbol and its relationship to the ritual as practice can be explored by placing the possible interpretations of the symbol in dialogue with the position of Åland in the dialect continuum of Circum-Baltic mythologies.

24 Alternately, there does seem to be a contrastive presence of clay paws and swords, which seems pronounced in north-eastern Åland (Tarsala 1998: 116–118), which would seem to suggest a clear symbolic differentiation of identities in those communities, although the nature of that difference remains ambiguous (e.g. ethnicity, phratry, social role, status, age, religious alignment, etc.).
4.2. The Beaver-Paw Interpretation

Interpretation of the clay paw in terms of beaver has led to comparison with the beaver’s position in mythologies of Northern Eurasia and North America. This has included meditations on general similarities between beavers and human beings that are presumed to be generally recognizable, such as the fact that beavers build dwellings from wood much as people build houses (Callmer 1994) as well as potential symbolic significance related to the beaver’s liminal status as an animal living between land and water (Tarsala 1998). On the other hand, the beaver was economically quite important in trade, although it could not be hunted for such in Åland. In burials in Estonia, beavers’ astragali (ankle bones), as well as those of martins, have been found used as pendants. The astragali pendants were found with women while corresponding claw pendants were found with men. In these cases, the parts of the animals are probable indicators of the buried individual’s status and associated with hunting or trade. (Jonuks 2005: 48–49.) The gender distribution of different parts of animals was no doubt connected to cultural symbolism (e.g. associating claws with men in contrast to women). More speculatively, there could even be some connection to mythic images and conceptions of the properties of these parts of the animals (e.g. healing, protection or stimulating libido). These objects present a potential parallel to the clay paw rite, if the paw symbol is identified with the beaver. Although the pendants have been interpreted as religiously motivated totemic symbols, there is no foundation for this interpretation in Estonia (Jonuks 2005: 48–49). However, noteworthy differences from the clay paw rite are that the pendants are bones and claws of animals that also appear potentially appropriate to adorn members of the living community and these are not necessarily specific to the rite. There appears to be variation by gender according to which part of the animal is worn. The clay paw rite appears specific to deceased members of the community and is found across genders. The animal from which the bones derive varies between two fairly similar types of economically significant game, unlike beaver and bear, which are quite different both as game and for trade. Comparison with the bone and claw pendants begs the question: if the clay paw signifies economic or social status, then why should only beaver or beaver and bear be represented? The conscious fabrication of the image highlights that the beaver would be symbolically significant.

Callmer (1994: 16) observes that “A totemistic connection is also agreed upon by most scholars, but the argumentation for it is vague.” The totemic beaver cult interpretation not infrequently appears taken up without question (e.g. Duczko 2004: 193 etc.), but it is linked to the interpretive approach that
was equally inclined to interpret the astragali in Estonia in the same way. If the beaver were thus totemically or otherwise significant to the mythology, indications of its significance can be expected to manifest in the symbolic matrix of neighboring cultures, especially if this significance is identified with immigration or contacts with one of those cultures. However, the beaver lacks a position in both Germanic and Finnic mythologies. In fact, it does not appear to have been mythologically significant in the Circum-Baltic area more generally.

The burial practices which provide a context for the clay paws appear centrally dependent on Germanic models. The beaver is not attested as having any connection with Germanic mythology, and Erik Henrik Lind (1905–15) did not find an example of the Old Norse term for beaver (björ) amid the many terms for animals used as a personal name or name-element. The hypothesis that the clay paws were included because of the lack of the animal in the local ecology is not paralleled by presence of the beaver in Late Iron Age cremation burials in Sweden, where it appears very uncommon (Sigvallius 1998). Rather remarkably, the beaver appears to be almost completely absent from Germanic folklore: its place seems exclusive to medicinal lore (associated with its economic value). The only exception is a widespread tradition (established already in Classical Antiquity) that beavers would castrate themselves when attempting to escape hunters—a peculiar belief directly connected to ideas that a valuable medicine could be prepared from beavers’ testicles. There is nothing to support a mythic status of the beaver as an animal or category of being in Germanic culture. On the Finno-Karelian side, the beaver is still more conspicuous in its absence from the symbolic and metaphorical systems of all

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25 Interpreting the Ålandic material has been complicated by first interpreting the Meryan examples through this frame and then transposing this interpretation onto Åland. The relationship may be further blurred by also identifying the indigenous population around Timerëvo as “Finnish” (e.g. Edgren 2008: 479), as though they were the same culture as the groups in Finland Proper, Satakunta or Karelia, rather than being linguistically and culturally remote.

26 These include, for example, bear (björn), wolf (ulfr), fox (refr), otter (otr), marten (mqrdr) and hedgehog (igull), stag (hjerr), aurochs (jr), reindeer (breinn), ram (hrtr), young bull (kuige), calf (half), ox (exi [rare]), eagle (orn), raven (hrafn), hawk (haukr), falcon (valr), swan (svan), thrush (protr), seagull (ntr), cuckoo (gaukr), serpent (ormr), cf. neuter lamb ['lamb'] > Lambi; archaic jor ['stallion'] only found in compounds (Lind 1905–15; see also Müller 1970). Müller (1970: 86–87) observes that some examples are found in East Norse, including on runic inscriptions, although in West Norse it is was not found as more than an epithet, nor does it seem to have been used as a name element in West Germanic languages. This does not, however, indicate that the beaver held an exceptionally prominent position in East Norse cultural areas nor is there any reason to associate these name-elements with animal totemism.

27 I am thankful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing my attention to this fact.

genres of kalevalaic poetry: the beaver was not a conventional object of hunting charms or connected with hunting magic generally;\(^\text{29}\) it was not amid the range of animals used metaphorically and symbolically in lyric poetry nor even had a place in poetic parallelism. The beaver appears almost completely devoid of symbolic significance in both cultures. This does not mean that it had \textit{no} symbolic significance, but it makes it improbable that the beaver would advance to symbolic centrality and a profound mythic status connected with identities on Åland, where beavers were probably familiar first and foremost through their pelts as a marketable commodity. If the clay paw were symbolically identified with the beaver, it is improbable that this symbol was mythologically significant. This identification would also be somewhat surprising owing to the beaver’s absence from the systems of symbols in early Germanic and Finnic cultures more generally.

4.3. Bear Ceremonialism: Perspectives from Finno-Karelian and Sámi Cultures

Bear ceremonialism, and by implication the bear’s establishment in the symbolic matrix of mythologies, may have incredibly deep historical roots (Janhunen 2003; Germonpré & Hämäläinen 2007; Witzel 2012: 243–244, 399–400). This is in itself unsurprising. On the one hand, the bear was among the most powerful land animals in much of the northern hemisphere. On the other hand, the bear has certain physiological characteristics that make it more identifiable with human beings, including nursing its young from the chest rather than from the belly (Frank 2008: 59), its ability to walk upright and weep tears (Honko 1993: 120), and the bear’s striking similarity to a human being once the skin is removed (Ingold 1986: 257–258). Evidence of bear ceremonialism among Finno-Karelian and Sámi cultures in later periods allows the inference that the bear was well established already in the Viking Age and earlier with a highly probability of long-term continuities from an Uralic/Finno-Ugric cultural heritage (Kuusi 1963: 41–51; Honko 1993; Pentikäinen 2007).

The present section does not set out to ‘reconstruct’ Viking Age bear ceremonialism among either Finnic or Sámi cultures. There was a lot of variation in specific rite-motifs in both cultures. For the present discussion, specific rite-motifs are secondary to the presence of ceremonialism, the relationship between bears and humans and its general implications for the symbolic matrix of the mythology. In dialogue with comparative evidence, the ritual practices

\(^{29}\) The published corpus of more than 86,000 items of kalevalaic poetry includes only a single beaver-hunting charm, which is probably from Lapland and which is otherwise somewhat peculiar (SKVR XII, 6580).
surrounding the bear are identifiable with a mythological tradition of the bear’s origin in the celestial sphere and a close relationship with human beings. The rites surrounding the slaying of the bear in the hunt were organized especially to insure the safety and security of the human community from potential retribution and to ensure that the bear’s spirit would successfully return to the celestial sphere. (Siikala 2002c: 25–26.) The bear was considered to understand human language, although it was not capable of speech itself. In both Finno-Karelian and Sámi traditions, the mythology and/or rites established the particular hunted bear (in some traditions) or the first bear ever hunted (in other traditions) as an integrated member of the human community. This was either accomplished through the ritual marriage of the slain bear with a member of that community or that integration was already established as the foundation of the ritual through a kinship relation of decent of the group from a primal marriage of the bear with a human woman (Honko 1993: 126; Janhunen 2003: 13–14; cf. Pentikäinen 2007: 43–129).

The history of practices surrounding the bear remains vague and in many respects ambiguous behind the scattered and often fragmentary evidence available. However, it seems possible to generalize that, in Finno-Karelian and Sámi cultures, the bear’s position in the symbolic matrix of mythology led it to be conceptualized as a category of being or as an ethnos that was otherwise grouped with anthropomorphic beings. Put another way, although the bear normally ‘crawls’ rather than walking on two legs, and ‘growls’ or ‘grumbles’ rather than articulating speech (cf. the Khanty explanation for this in Siikala & Ulyashev 2011: 91–96), it is nonetheless attributed with a form of ‘personhood’ (Ingold 1986: 258). Sámi cultures maintained traditions of shape-shifting between bear and human form or of human beings simply ‘becoming’ bears (e.g. to avoid conscription into military service) (Pentikäinen 2007: 110–111; Tolley 2007). Such traditions highlight the fluidity of these categories. The various traditions also allow a bear to assume the roles and status of a human member of the community, literally or symbolically taking a human mate. This elevates the bear to a status comparable to human beings and appears to have regulated the circumstances under which humans could kill bears: a bear was hunted by seeking it in its den (identified in advance) during its hibernation, but it was necessary to wake the bear before it could be killed (Honko 1993: 136). This status also seems to have been imagined as simultaneously regulating conditions under which bears could kill humans. There is evidence that bears which committed such crimes or were otherwise interpreted as guilty of such crimes (e.g. because they were unable to sleep when they should be hibernating) could be hunted
and killed at any time (cf. Itkonen 1946: 218). In these cultures, bear hunting and its outcomes comprised a complex event sequence that involved a whole community. This event sequence constructed and reinforced the identity of the community and its relationship to the bear.

4.4. Bear Ceremonialism and Hunting from Åland

Callmer (1994: 28, 30) has proposed that the inhabitants of Åland were involved in long-distance bear-hunting practices that were connected with the mythic significance of the clay paw symbol. Callmer’s hypothesis implies that the ritual significance of the bear extended to a totemic status and thus that bear hunting should be correspondingly ritualized. The bear’s economic significance to the fur trade and trading its hide for profit are not contradictory to bear hunting rites. On the contrary, sale of the skin could readily be integrated into the tradition (cf. Rydving 2010a: 39, 42). However, long-distance hunting would not be practically compatible with hunting hibernating bears in their dens, while long-distance hunting under other conditions would not be consistent with conventions of later documented Finno-Karelian and Sámi bear-hunting rituals. It is possible that the rites could have been adapted somehow to the practicalities of Åland, or that the practice of bear ceremonialism was enabled through networking and joint activities with communities in mainland territories. Although the practice of bear ceremonialism in Åland remains an open question, the bear was a prominent and significant mythic image in Finno-Karelian cultures and mythologies, from its mythological origins and relationship to human beings to being perceived as a literal or symbolic embodiment of the forest, the forest’s power or as the forest’s ruler (cf. Tarkka 2002). Callmer has implied that the clay paw rite may be connected in some way with Finno-Karelian culture. He draws attention to pottery finds indicative of contacts with the culture of Southwest Finland, and also points out a gender difference that males are initially associated with the rite in northeast parishes.

30 In this connection, it is interesting to note that a human who would hibernate the winter with a bear would conversely be considered innocent of his or her crime (Edsman 1956: 40–41, who interprets this as an ‘ordeal’).

31 Long-distance bear hunting could potentially be compatible with the traditions surrounding the bear among Ob-Ugrians in Siberia. In this cultural area, the bear could be hunted at different times during the year rather than only in hibernation and taboos could even prohibit knowing the location of the bear before the hunt began; when the hunters returned, the ritual sequence would produce a carnival-like atmosphere for the entertainment of the bear and participants. However, these cultures are far removed from the Circum-Baltic cultural arena – far more remote geographically, linguistically and (presumably) culturally than, for example, the Meryan culture with which Ålanders established intimate contacts in the Viking Age.
and later female graves in parishes to the south and southwest (interpreted as resulting from exogamy). (Callmer 1994: 21–23, 31; cf. Tarsala 1998; Gustavsson et al.) If the clay paw rite is rooted in North Finnic traditions, the bear is so symbolically central in North Finnic that, even if the symbol were identified with trade, it would be impossible to disentangle it from the mythic image of the bear and mythology.

4.5. The Bear from the Perspective of Germanic Cultures

The bear seems to have still been integrated into the symbolic matrix of Indo-European mythologies at an early period (cf. West 2007: 351–352). However, it has been proposed that special traditions surrounding the bear and bear hunting were not established in the Scandinavian Viking Age milieu (Tolley 2009, I: 563–580). Bears are absent from what is known of the centralized Germanic mythology (i.e. the gods, stories about them, stories about the creation and destruction of the world) and ‘bear’ receives no entry at all in otherwise extensive dictionaries of Old Norse mythology (e.g. Orchard 1997; Simek 1996). ‘Bear’ is attested as a by-name for both the gods Thor and Odin (de Vries 1956–57, I: 363). It is also a symbolic image as the form taken by supernatural beings (e.g. *fylgjas*) and represents powerful lone warriors in dreams (Turville-Petre 1964: 229). Such examples indicate that the bear was symbolically significant, but this may only be the natural animal as an icon of strength or power rather than an indicator of mythological modelling. The position of the bear in Germanic culture has become controversial, and this has been problematized by interpretations of highly ambiguous evidence through comparisons as far-reaching as the Americas (e.g. Müller 1970: 201–202, 207). For example, the Germanic term for ‘bear’ replaced the inherited Indo-European term and may mean ‘brown-one’. This has been interpreted as evidence of the sacred status of the bear (e.g. de Vries 1956–57, I: 362–363; DuBois 1999: 47–48). However, the lexical change is obscure, historically remote and ambiguous: this interpretation may become probable in light of significant evidence of ritual activity and beliefs surrounding the bear, but it cannot be taken as independent evidence of the bear’s earlier sacred status (Tolley 2009, I: 563–564).

The bear also appears in narratives as a real-world adversary of mythic quality against which heroes prove themselves, sometimes interchangeable

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32 The bear is also potentially connected with the warriors called *berserker* (Price 2002: 366–394; but see also Tolley 2009, I: 565–571), while the female bear may have held distinct symbolic significance, appearing somewhat mysteriously in early heraldry (Müller 1970: 208).
with a dragon or otherworldly monster which suggests symbolic equivalence.\(^{33}\) Although not necessarily indicative of a sacred status, this complements other symbolic uses of the bear to suggest a potentially significant position in the decentralized mythology, while the bear’s otherworldly associations may have been highlighted by its ability to hibernate.\(^{34}\) Evidence of the position of the bear in Germanic cultures is also found in the archaeological record. Bear skins were used in Viking Age funerary practices, identifiable through phalanx bones (i.e. indicating the presence of bear paws). The removal of the claws of the bear was a ritualized action finalizing the killing for some North Finnic communities (Honko 1993: 137), and the removal of paws seems to have been symbolically significant among some Sámi groups (Itkonen 1946: 218).\(^{35}\) It is quite probable that skins were also used without the paws attached, in which case the use of bear skins in burials may be under-represented because the method of identifying their presence will not detect such skins (Sigvallius 1994: 76). These practices are interesting to observe in relation to the Ålandic clay paw rite. These skins are artefacts rather than sacrifices. Their frequency and prominence can be correlated with connections to the fur trade, and they have been viewed in terms of symbols of status (Petré 1980), but this could also be a more direct consequence of the availability of a luxury item for honouring the deceased (Sigvallius 1994: 76). These uses are not necessarily ritually symbolic and remain ambiguous for the present discussion. The presence of bear claws in Iron Age cremation burials in Denmark (where there were no bears in the ecology) can be associated with trade. From the number of claws, Ulrik Möhl (1977) infers that the deceased was cremated on a bear skin. In these cases, the number of claws included with

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\(^{33}\) For example, Saxo Grammaticus presents a bear and wolf in the place of the dragon combated by Ragnar lodbrokr ['hair-breeches'] in Ragnars saga Lodbrokar ch. 3 (Gesta Danorum IX) and similarly presents a bear where a monster appears as the adversary of Æðvar bjarki in Hrolfs saga Kraka ch. 35 (Gesta Danorum II). A single-handed slaying of a bear is presented as a feat establishing the quality of a hero from outside the kin group or household in, for example, Víga Glúms saga ch. 3, Grettis saga ch. 21, and Færeyings saga ch. 12, among others. On this alternation as an indicator of symbolic equivalence, see Dundes 1986.

\(^{34}\) Poetic expressions of bjarnar nótt ['bear’s night'] for ‘winter’ connect bears symbolically with cycles of time, and anticipate waking with the alternation of the cycle of the year: bersinótt (Málsháttakvæði 6.8) ['bear-night']; húns nótt (Rekstefja 13.1) ['cub’s night']. The same correlation of cycles is also found between days and the cycle of the creation and destruction of the world where it appears reflected in the origin of Gotland (cf. §2.2.4).

\(^{35}\) Ahola (2005) has also highlighted the symbolic significance of removing the ‘paw’ of the bear that forms a thematic link through Grettis saga in Old Norse, beginning with the cutting off of the paw of a living bear, which the eponymous hero produces as an unequivocal indication that he has killed the animal, to cutting off the hands of brothers named Bjørn ['Bear'] and finally with Grettir having his own hand cut off.
cremated remains is indicative of a conscious selection of or even seeking for these items from the remains of the pyre. This is a potential relevant indicator of symbolic significance beyond honouring the deceased with luxury items. It is potentially suggestive of some degree of symbolic centrality in the rite. (Møhl 1977.) It is therefore worth observing that the bear’s pattern of hibernation (linguistically connected with death in Old Norse36) may have complemented the bear or bearskin as a symbol of power or prestige. It could thus – at least potentially – have indexed e.g. resurrection (a motif fundamental to the Finno-Ugric bear-hunt rituals).37 On the other hand, the skins have only been inferred from these cremations on the basis of indications of the presence of bear paws, yet the Ålandic rite suggests that the paws could potentially function symbolically in a rite independent of the skin. It may equally be noted that bronze artefacts are found in Finland representing the teeth or claws of (presumably) a bear made into pendants (Kivikoski 1965), and such parts of the bear continue to be used e.g. in Karelia as protective talismans or charms. The possibility should therefore not be excluded that paws and claws of bears could have had a distinct symbolic relevance.38 The significance of these artefacts remains ambiguous, but these bear skins cannot therefore be assumed to be purely secular.

Although it is clear that Germanic peoples hunted bears, medieval Scandinavian sources provide very little information on bear-hunting practices. Descriptions of bears being hunted and killed generally concern bears as marauding beasts (which Sámi or Finnic groups might hunt outside ritual contexts, potentially exempting those bears from ceremonial treatment). These are adventure narratives and anecdotes that characterize heroes and offer no information on hunting bears in other contexts. Although bear-slaying rituals are not themselves presented, certain motifs in some of these accounts nevertheless parallel symbolic rite-motifs connected with rituals surrounding...
bear hunts in neighboring cultures.\textsuperscript{39} However, if these motifs in saga literature were associated with ritual practices, their symbolic significance has been left wholly implicit or they are only reflections of ritual practices long since abandoned. It may be noted that the relevant written sources were documented 200 years or more after official social conversions to Christianity, and the majority of these were written in Iceland about heroes and ancestors – written at that time when, in all likelihood, the majority of the Icelandic population had never seen a living bear. In addition, Iceland and Åland can be considered at opposite extremes of the dialect continuum of Norse mythology.\textsuperscript{40}

Indicators of historical change in the symbolic significance of the bear may be reflected in the archaeological record. Berit Sigvallius (1994: 75) observes that the claws of the bear are found in Scandinavian graves already in the Bronze Age, and the sacrifice of bears and their inclusion as grave goods should be seen as having historical continuity from that period through the Iron Age. Her data, from the Uppland district of Sweden, reveals the gradual increase of including animals in burials during the Iron Age, among which the bear stands out sharply because of a marked decrease in this role from evidence of Early Iron Age practices (500 BC – AD 550) to Late Iron Age practices (AD 550–1050) (Sigvallius 1994: 75, 147, 151–153). This suggests changes in the ritual significance of the bear from the Migration Period. The scope of the cultural area to which this change was relevant remains obscure, but a corresponding change would be consistent with later representations of the bear in Scandinavian evidence post-dating the Viking Age (e.g. from Iceland). More immediately, it raises questions concerning what conceptions of the bear early immigrants carried to Åland. Elsewhere in this volume, Gustavsson, Tomtlund, Kennebjörk & Storå observe that the appearance of the bear in Ålandic graves increases during the Viking Age, which suggests that the symbolic significance of the animal developed differently there.

Several narrative sources reveal a special, near-human status of the bear. Saga literature includes examples of bears able to understand human speech and responding to it accordingly (e.g. Gunnars saga Keldungnulsfífls ch. 5), even negotiating through pantomime dialogue (Finnboga saga ch. 11). Near-human

\textsuperscript{39} Especially those indicating responsibility for the kill by the symbol of the bear’s severed snout (Víga Glúms saga 3; cf. Pentikäinen 2007: 89) or paw (Grettis saga 21; cf. Itkonen 1946: 218; Honko 1993: 137); cf. also Frog 2008b: 20, 22, and also 27–29.

\textsuperscript{40} Carl-Martin Edsman (1954: 37ff.) draws attention to motifs that are connected to bear hunts in certain more recent legend traditions from Sweden and Norway. These motifs reflect conceptions of the bear that parallel some conceptions behind ceremonial practices of Finno-Karelians, although these are not indicative of corresponding bear ceremonialism per se.
status is significant because it establishes a precondition of rituals surrounding bear hunting in other cultures, according to which the bear is acknowledged not as an animal, but as an ethnos. Other indicators of concepts and beliefs about the bear must be considered in this light.

The Germanic cultural arena is characterized by a widespread legend tradition of the so-called Bear's Son Tale (Panzer 1910). This tradition describes the origin of a hero through the union of a young woman and a bear (cf. tale-type ATU 650a). This tradition appears associated with the mythic hero Böðvarr bjarki ['little bear'] and it is also ascribed to other heroes (e.g. Gesta Danorum X.xv; cf. E. Christiansen 1980: 190). This is directly comparable to the motif of the union with the bear producing an ancestor in, for example, Sámi traditions (Honko 1993: 126), where the outcome is also the death of the patriarchal bear. Whereas in Sámi traditions this manifests as a mythological narrative of the origin of bear-hunting rites, the sources from medieval Scandinavia appear to situate the bear as an adversary to the human community, who hunt him, kill him, and reintegrate the (pregnant) woman. Although this largely conforms to the pattern of totemic bear ancestry myths that establish essential features of social order and ritual practice (cf. Honko 1993: 126; Janhunen 2003), the Germanic narrative ascribes a supernatural origin to a single hero. The bear is ascribed anthropomorphic qualities as a special category of being or ethnos, but it is not integrated into the human society (which could reflect a broader cultural ideology of exclusion): the bear is portrayed as decisively ‘other’. Carl-

41 Clive Tolley (2009, I: 565) suggests that “the Norse picture of the bear as an almost human warrior” may either be influenced by Sámi traditions or possibly result from “a desire to personify one’s opponent.” Irrespective of the origins of these motifs, they are relevant indicators that conceptual models concerning the bear as a human-like category of being were potentially quite familiar in the Norse cultural arena.

42 Different versions appear in Hrólfs saga Kraka and in Saxo Grammaticus's Gesta Danorum (see further Tolley 2007).

43 Later Germanic folktale traditions exhibit widespread conceptions of the ability for a woman to marry or cohabit with a male bear. These traditions may focus on the maiden and not her offspring, while the bear can be revealed as a human prince rather than remaining a bear and being killed (e.g. ATU 426; also af Klintberg 2010: 316, type R21). More recent Swedish legends seem to avoid attributing decent from a bear through the union of a male bear with a human woman (as in ATU 650a) by describing a she-bear that kills a pregnant woman, tears open her womb and suckles the baby boy, who consequently becomes famed for supernatural strength (af Klintberg 2010: 453, type Z14; N.B. – these legends nevertheless humanize the bear as a category of being).

44 Old Norse mythology is characterized by the exogamous integration of women from other groups into the community of the gods while a significant number of myths are concerned with the prevention of women from the community of gods from leaving in exogamous sexual unions or marriages (see Clunies Ross 1994). The position of the bear in the legends addressed here would situate it in the category of a sexually threatening outsider desirous of women belonging to the in-group community (quite prominently in e.g. Gesta Danorum X.xv). This should not
Martin Edsman has reviewed additional Swedish and Norwegian examples of this legend and variant uses of the motif of an individual being abducted by a bear or otherwise wintering with one through the cycle of hibernation. They generally seem to follow the pattern that either the individual only returns to her or his community with the slaying of the bear or that the protagonist only imitates the bear’s existence during the period of hibernation, which comes to a natural end and the bear has no additional contact with the human community (remaining decisively ‘other’). (Edsman 1956.) Later evidence also reveals traditions of bear-weddings in Sweden and even in northern Germany. These may be prefaced by a symbolic bear-slaying or other symbolic play, the bride and/or groom may be referred to as ‘bears’ and (perhaps referencing the above traditions) the courtship or betrothal may be referred to as a ‘bear wedding’.

Indications that ‘bear’ was considered a near-human category markedly increase the probability that there were special rites associated with bear hunting at some point, even if the ritual practices had long since been abandoned when written histories and sagas began being produced.

A detail noteworthy for this discussion, and especially relevant when considering the Ålandic clay paw rite, is that Old Norse language contains a special word for the paw of a bear (hrammr). This is more striking because animal-specific terms for ‘paw’ seem to be unique to the bear in this language. The symbolic significance of the bear’s paw is widespread across northern Eurasia (Mathieu 1984: 9–10). More specifically, it is among the most sacred parts of the bear for Uralic/Finno-Ugric cultures and identified by special avoidance terms for magical protection (Honko 1993: 120–121). The bear’s paw also appears to be identified as a concentrated site of the bear’s power in various Sámi and

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45 Hoffmann-Krayer & Bachtold-Staubli 1927, s.v. Bär 8; Edsman 1956: 53; de Vries 1956–57, I: 363. The Swedish traditions may be connected to more recent interactions with Sámi populations and immigrations from Finland and thus be resultant from more recent cultural exchange; see also §4.6.

46 Cleasby & Vigfússon 1897, s.v. hrammr; the term is also found in later saga literature with reference to the (fore-)paws of mythic animals, such as a dream-creature in Mirrants saga B ch. 20 (capable of speech and picking things up with its hrammar), and of foreign animals such as lions belonging to a mythic, imaginal sphere (noting that the term appears connected to a motif of cutting off the paw in combat) as in Viktors saga ok Blávus ch. 10 (see DONP, s.v. hrammr). Rather than evidence of hrammr being a term for animal paws in general, these additional uses associated with foreign literature seem to be extensions of hrammr as a term particularly associated with the paws of bears. (On a similar adaptation of a vernacular noa term to foreign beasts, see Úspenskij 2012; note also that hrammr appears etymologically independent of rammr ['strong, powerful'].)
Finno-Karelian traditions.47 Germanic populations of Scandinavia undoubtedly encountered the principle conceptions and symbolism associated with the bear repeatedly across a few thousand years of contact with West Uralic/Finno-Ugric cultures. The special term for the paw of a bear in Old Norse supports the identification of the paw as a mythic image at some point in history.

Overall, the Germanic material reveals indications of a fundamental set of images and motifs and even narrative patterns connected with the bear that are consistent with a bear mythology and with bear-hunt rituals having been integrated into the symbolic matrix of Germanic mythology in Scandinavia in some period. This was not necessarily current in the milieux where written sources were produced: the symbols of hunting practices appear divorced from ritual, which would account for the diffusion of their mythic significance. If the union of a woman and a bear ever had totemic significance in Germanic culture, this seems to have been transferred from the identity of a community to the origins of exceptional individuals. In conjunction with these processes, the bear appears to have maintained a near-human status as an ethnos. However, that ethnos appears be divorced from a relationship to human communities: the bear ethnos did not receive reciprocal respect (which is at the foundation of bear ceremonialism) from the Scandinavian community. Instead, the bear appears in written sources as identified with the category of monsters.48

Germanic mythologies in Scandinavia were undergoing great transformations around the period when immigrations to Åland were taking place (cf. Andrén 2005: 129–130; Gunnell 2013). Across that time, the bear seems to have been changing its significance or status as reflected in some Swedish burial practices. It is quite possible that the bear had a mythological status among immigrant Germanic groups settling in Åland, and that the significance of the bear developed differently in the Ålandic dialect of mythology, potentially owing to the significance of the bear for neighboring Finnic cultures. Although the significance and form of the Ålandic traditions can scarcely be estimated, the Old Norse term hrammr suggests that the bear’s paw may have been a particularly loaded mythic image.

48 Cf. Alaric Hall’s (2007: 32) semantic field diagram of terms for categories of being, which he uses in his discussion of the historical shift of the category of ‘elves’ from association with the human(-like) in-group to the category of monstrous other.
4.6. Approaching the Clay Paw Rite

The cultural encounters in Åland and establishment of new community identities were the conditions for the emergence of the clay paw rite. Within that environment, the inherited symbolic matrices of Finnic and/or Germanic mythologies can be assumed to have maintained the essential elements for producing such a rite that would engage the bear as a mythic image. In either case, it seems improbable that the clay paw images were independent of an engagement with mythology. This is also not inconsistent with their production in and later spread through Meryan cultural areas specifically for use in burial rites. The assimilation of symbols and symbolic action from economically, politically, socially or culturally valorized ethnic ‘other’s has historically marked interaction between Germanic Scandinavia and West Uralic cultures to the north and east (which does not exclude the possibility that the engagement with the vernacular symbolic matrix may have been different than in the model practice). At the same time, it is highly improbable that either Finnic or Germanic culture would advance the symbol of the beaver or its paw to symbolic centrality in such a specialized and symbolic rite in Åland, where the animal was absent from the ecology and presumably known primarily through marketable hides. In addition, Meryans were a West Uralic linguistic-cultural group among whom bear ceremonialism is probable. In this case, their vernacular symbolic matrix may have been predisposed to the assimilation of the ritual, stories and imaginal narrative connected to the clay paw rite – if this were connected to a bear mythology – whereas grounds for its adaptation and spread as a foreign beaver-symbol would be mysterious.

If Callmer’s (1994) inference is correct, the emergence of this rite is connected to contacts between Finnic and Germanic groups. The emergence of this ritual in the proximity to Finland is unlikely to be wholly accidental when the bear seems to have been decreasing in mythic significance elsewhere in Scandinavia. Interactions between Finnic and Germanic groups, involving the comparison, contrast and negotiation of traditions, symbols and mythologies, could enhance the significance of central symbols such as the bear. Even if the bear’s significance were waning or transforming across Germanic cultural areas at that time, contacts with Finnic groups could stimulate or revive its potential for meanings. For the present discussion, it is not relevant to determine whether the bear wedding traditions in later Swedish traditions have a historical continuity from the Early Iron Age or have been adapted from or influenced by later medieval immigrant Finnic groups. If these rites do not reflect an earlier tradition
that could be carried by Germanic immigrants to Åland, then it provides an example of Finnic bear rites being assimilated into the symbolic matrix of a Germanic community. In either case, there are grounds to consider that the bear and the bear’s paw could correspondingly have or develop a significant position in the symbolic matrix of Ålandic mythology. The most probable interpretation of the artefact is a rendering of a mythic image significant or central to the imaginal narrative actualized through the performance of the overall burial ritual.

Identifying the mythic image behind the rite and connecting it to mythology does not resolve the interpretation of the presence of the bear-paw symbol. Made specifically to be interred with the remains in the burial ritual, it can be assumed that the mythic image had a functional role in the narrative of the burial. In other words, if it marked the identity of the deceased in some way, this was not purely ornamental or for the satisfaction of an audience. The object could, for example, be intended to symbolically supply the deceased with the ability to walk, ride or even change form to travel to the otherworld (cf. Ellis 1968: 63–64). It could signify the power of a bear helper-spirit to protect or guide the deceased on that journey, or qualify the deceased with a bear-attribute, enabling him or her to be recognized and accepted by the community of ancestral dead. Perhaps the bear’s paw was symbolic of making a track or footprint, which might be essential to opening the path to the otherworld. The mark of the paw might also be apotropaic, preventing the dead from returning to the world of the living, or perhaps protecting the grave from being disturbed. This variety of potential interpretations reflects the fact that it is uncertain how the paw-symbol connected with the mythology rather than simply whether it engaged the symbolic matrix. The symbol might be connected to some sort of clan totem myth, yet the example possibilities listed above highlight that

49 Edsman (1956: 41) mentions a variant of a legend in which a man who has wintered with the bear must (?!), when the bear is slain, hold onto its paw to be dragged with it from the den and in this way he will return to the world alive. This example is quite interesting because it seems to place the bear in an essential role in the successful transition between worlds of life and death (?! = hibernation, i dái [‘in dái.DAT’] in Old Norse; cf. notes 36–37 above). Although it is presently unclear whether these features have any historical basis in the wider tradition, it presents an interesting motif to think about how the bear-paw image might be relevant to a transition between life and death in the narrative of the ritual.

50 Bôðvar Bjarki was said to have a bear’s claw on his toe as visible evidence of his bear ancestry in the Bjarkarímur, which also parallels a motif associated with the Bear’s Son found in later Swedish legends, although the mark there is not a claw or paw (af Klintberg 2010: 316, type R21).

51 Cf. Karelian incantations of the Origin of Iron in which iron emerges from the footprints of a bear or wolf (Krohn 1924: 82).
this is not only ambiguous, but also that if the mythic image is interpreted in connection with totemism, this alone does not explain the role of the clay paw in the imaginal narrative actualized through the burial ritual.

The identification of the clay paw as a symbol related to animal totemism has a romantic appeal. However, this interpretation easily leads to losing sight of the use of the symbol in the context of the funerary ritual, leaving it in the shadow of bear ceremonialism and the most central and interesting traditions surrounding the bear more generally. Callmer’s (1994: 40) observation that the clay paw rite was not adapted to inhumation practices even among Meryans suggests that it did not make the deceased recognizable on arrival to the otherworld community nor only somehow magically seal the grave as an access to the otherworld (to which use of the symbol could easily adapt). Use of this symbol appears to have been bundled with other aspects of ritual practice, and this whole bundle was together interfaced with the mythology, whereby it was not readily transferable into the new practice nor adapted to a new equivalent symbol (e.g. a clay cross). The change to inhumation suggests changes in conceptions of the otherworld and/or how the deceased made the transition to that otherworld. The clay paw image was most probably linked somehow to the imaginal narrative of the transition itself. How it might relate to this transition remains obscure, but this observation significantly decreases the probability that the symbol is specifically associated with totemic ancestry, although its connection with the mythology of the bear remains equitable.

5. Icons of Identity and Perspectives in the Symbolic Matrix

The clay paw rite is not attested throughout the Åland Islands with an even distribution: it exhibits clear concentrations in certain areas which seem to have changed over time, both in terms of where it was used and its potential association with gender (Callmer 1998; see also Gustavsson et al.; Tarsala 1998). As was observed above, even minor differences in cultural practices could become enregistered as meaningful distinctions between groups of users. The conventions of using and engaging a symbolic matrix of cultural mythology can not only mark distinctions of dialectal groups of users but also reciprocally become emblematic of ideologies, value systems and the social identities with which these are associated. Such emblematic identifications were central in confrontations between vernacular practices and Christianity, for example. A central strategy of early conversion processes in the North was not concerned with subjective conviction to Christian doctrine; it focused instead on the
regulation of central, public social practices, the strategies that were employed in engagements with the unseen world, the symbols and systems of symbols that were engaged, and how these were regarded or interpreted from the perspective of the particular practice. The clay paw rite was just such an engagement with the symbolic matrix of the mythology and eventually disappears along with cremation practices. However, even without opposition to Christianity, variation within Åland suggests that the clay paw symbol was already at least to some degree emblematic of groups among which it was used as opposed to those among whom it was not. This is still more pronounced in the Meryan cultural territories where this symbol most likely began with distinct associations of ‘foreign other’ and its spread can be considered no less symbolically marked than the spread of the cross in relation to Christianity. The popular black-and-white image of an ‘ideal Christian doctrine’ versus ‘uniform pagan religion’ is misrepresentative of both actual social diversity and of conversion processes. However, it nevertheless provides a useful sounding board and point of departure for opening questions about diversity in Ålandic mythology, how this can be approached, and as a frame of reference in the development of a more well-rounded perspective on the transition to Christianity that could have been already underway in Åland by the end of the Viking Age.\footnote{Changes in ritual practices of burial with the disappearance of grave-goods seem to have become general in western territories inhabited by North Finnic language groups across the period ca. 1000–1150 \cite[e.g.][]{Huurre1979}. There are problematic issues surrounding the processes that took place in Åland during this period, which has in some contexts been considered at the forefront of this process, but is problematized by questions of a potentially comprehensive break in settlement continuity across the same time \cite[Sjöstrand; Ahola et al.].}

5.1. Perspectives within and across the Symbolic Matrix

Scholarship has long been inclined to separate ‘Christian’ from ‘non-Christian’ mythology, and even discussions of ‘syncretism’ tend to presume an ideal separation of alternative systems rather than considering how these may function in a cultural environment as a broader whole. This division is extremely artificial and in many cases might be compared to separating the milk from the coffee in a cheerful latte, not only destroying the reality, but also the complexity which is precisely what makes the phenomenon most interesting and valued. This inclination to separation is historically rooted in the origins of research on mythology \cite[see further Csaro 2004]{Csapo2004}. In a social environment, however, the recognition of ‘difference’ does not mean a lack of awareness – or even a lack of competence in the traditions of others. In other words, a Christian priest and members of a Christian community would not simply be oblivious to Odin and
Thor, Väinämöinen and Ukko or whoever the equivalent figures may have been. Similarly, a non-Christian ritual specialist engaging an Odin/Väinämöinen image as an identity model while reliant on the thunder-god for power and support would not simply remain oblivious to Christianity and its symbols if that religion were becoming established in local social networks (especially if this were in the wake of proselytizing). Similarly, if Norse and Finnic languages and traditions co-existed in Viking Age Åland, it is likely that the Norse groups would recognize Väinämöinen as distinct from Odin, as well as, for example, the local god Ilmarinen, for whom there is no clear correspondent in Norse mythology. Although different social groups might have different relationships to these images as identity models and rituals or stories associated with them, that does not mean that they would be unaware of them – on the contrary, they would likely become powerful symbols owing precisely to their significance and use by other groups.

Rather than remaining isolated from one another, the encounter of these various traditions would stimulate and enrich the respective system of symbols available to each group. The symbolic matrix of a mythology in the cultural arena – “the kaleidoscope, in perpetual motion” (Siikala 2002a: 19) – will open to diversity and expand with potentially transformative effects on all of the traditions involved, both centralized and decentralized. A Christian priest could have a markedly different conception of Odin from that of a local healer and charm-specialist. However, this does not mean that the mythic image of Odin would be perceived as any less emotionally invested and compelling, although it might be negatively rather than positively valuated and different characteristics of that image might be foregrounded.

This is not unique to encounters between ‘Christianity’ and ‘Paganism’. For example, the Baltic thunder-god equating to Lithuanian Perkūnas shows up in Finnic cultures as the adversary to the thunder-god equating to Finnish perkele ['devil'] (Ajkhenvald et al. 1989: 157), whereas in Mordvin (another West Uralic culture), the Baltic thunder-god was assimilated as Pur'gine-paz ['Perkunas-god']. Similarly, the Finno-Karelian smith and sky-god Ilmari(nen) shows up in Sámi as Ilmaris, apparently a destructive counterpart to the thunder-god (Rydving 2010b: 48, 95; cf. Haavio 1967: 130–132), while to the west where Germanic contacts predominated, the thunder-god appears as Hovengaellies ['Thor-carl'] rather than ‘thunder’ (e.g. Skolt Sámi Tiermas). These examples are easy to bring forward because

the exchange manifests at the surface of names, but it does not mean that the images are identical (cf. Perkūnas and perkele). The same processes also occur with other mythic images, motifs and narrative patterns and are precisely what gave rise to a broad cross-cultural continuum of Circum-Baltic mythology. The immediate and on-going interactions of different groups enable and necessitate an expansion of ranges of cultural competence that extend to the other groups; some degree of ‘foreign’ competence becomes fundamental to interactions with those groups. Even if awareness as ‘other’ becomes contrastive, oppositional and exclusive, the symbols can still be powerfully loaded and emotionally charged resources while oppositions and exclusivity become negotiated through the shared symbolic matrix that develops in that diversified cultural arena.35

Diversity is most observable in contacts between very different cultures precisely because it presents an extreme circumstance in which unrelated systems of symbols are brought together and negotiated across different groups. However, this same process could occur within a cultural mythology with different perspectives on the relative authority and role of, for example, Odin in relation to Thor or Ilmarinen in relation to Väinämöinen. Perspectives within the symbolic matrix of a mythology centrally develop in relation to the ritual life of the communities in which an individual participates. For example, the uneven distribution of the bear-paw rite suggests that it was only practiced by part of the population in Åland rather uniformly by all individuals and communities. In this case, the bear as a mythic image may have been engaged differently by different groups according to their perspectives on these practices. A tradition of animal totemism would be an extreme example: the story and events of the divine origin of the bear and founding of a kin group through a bear–human union would likely be quite central to the particular kin group. Centrality to social identity would also make those traditions intimately familiar, relevant and prominent to members of that kin group. This would be characteristic of the perspective of members of that particular group within the symbolic matrix of the mythology. Members of other kin groups would also have access to these resources. The relationship of those resources to origins of one social group would most likely lead them to be invested with mythic quality – but from other perspectives within the shared symbolic matrix. It is not improbable that, for example, the so-called Bear’s Son Tale has roots in precisely this sort of difference in perspective – i.e. a powerfully loaded totemic ancestry narrative

35 Cf. the purported myth/legend of Thor challenging Christ to a fight (Njáls saga 102), which juxtaposes symbols from different religions in order to assert a relationship between them.
adapted to a new function from the perspective of a kin group with a different relationship to the bear to produce a single hero rather than the origin of a clan.

5.2. Perspectives on Practices and (Imaginal) Identities

The symbolic matrix of the mythology provides fundamental resources for the formation of individual and collective identities. Rather than being a free process, the resources and their use are conditioned by cultural practices within the cultural environment as they are valued and interrelated in relation to perspectives. In spite of the near-complete lack of evidence of mythology in Viking Age Åland, the preceding discussion has shown that quite rich information can nevertheless be inferred with a degree of probability. The inferences are largely restricted to abstractions and to the identification of symbols rather than their significance. This might be compared to identifying words in a language without being able to unravel their particular meanings. Although these inferences offer insights into elements and features in the symbolic matrix of the mythology, it does not, for the most part, enable insight into their relationships or how the pieces fit together. Nevertheless, the perspectives that develop can fruitfully be placed in dialogue with particular symbolic acts reflected in the archaeological record, such as the clay paw rite, and also enable a richer perspective on historical variation and change, such as indications of a conversion process that appears to antedate organized missionary activity.

One of the interesting features of the clay paw rite is precisely that it appears somehow associated with social networks and the identities linked to those networks as well as to how different groups distinguished themselves from one another (cf. Callmer 1994; Tarsala 1998; Gustavsson et al.). On the one hand, this rite’s mysterious interface with mythology may have reciprocally informed identities. On the other hand, some familiarity with the rite was probably relatively widespread in Åland. People from different groups would presumably recognize both the rite and the associated mythology as emblematic of the network or kin groups practicing it and as emblematic of their different relationship to and perspective in the symbolic matrix of the mythology. In other words, although the symbol might be correctly interpreted and mean the same thing to members of different groups (with varying degrees of sensitivity), they would have different relationships to it and perceive it with different connotations – i.e. as a mythic image bound up with one’s own identity and with those of close relation, or as identified with an ‘other’, perhaps indexing what differentiates that group from one’s own.
It is impossible to know what specialist institution may have been behind the clay paw rite—whether a wielder of incantations, a ritual lamentor, a shaman, or perhaps a category of which nothing is known. However, the act of use would construct the social meaningfulness of the symbol, presumably carry with it implicit and explicit justifications and explanations, and it would also stimulate the value and relevance of the network of interconnected symbols for individuals and for the community as a whole (e.g. the clay paw, the bear’s paw, the bear, relevant narratives associated with the bear and the action of depositing the paw, the imaginal narrative of the rite, etc.). The rite involved the actualization or manipulation of numinous power in a socially orchestrated event. It may therefore be inferred that there were conventional constraints on who could perform the rite (e.g. not children or pregnant women, if only for their safety). Most likely this was performed by a specialist or someone with specialist competence that might converge with other roles of social authority, and most likely these agents shaped the social image of the rite and how that related to community identity.

The construction of identities in relationship to the symbolic matrix informs them with an imaginal aspect. Today, we tend to differentiate ‘human’ from ‘non-human’ as unambiguous, empirically defined categories. However, the image of ‘human’ in the Viking Age was not so clear-cut. Gods and other supernatural beings were also conceptualized as different ethnic groups of human-like beings that we would distinguish as ‘non-human’. The position of the bear as a human-like ethnos might seem to us quite surprising. However, these are imaginal constructions engaging the symbolic matrix of the mythology. Constructions of this sort extend to the human sphere. For example, North Finnic and Swedish legends of more recent centuries generally reject conceptual models of a separable soul—for Finnic and Germanic peoples. Sámi, however, are attributed with the potential for soul-journeys independent of the body.56 This is a correlation of an otherwise human ethnos characterized by an imaginal conception of the soul that is inconsistent with the in-group culture. This distinction of Sámi is already apparent in Old Norse literature. Old Norse culture was not unfamiliar with the concept of the separable soul and imaginal journeys that such souls could make. However, Norsemen did not have this type of soul, in contrast to the Sámi, and this differentiation was a characteristic of their ‘otherness’. The ethnos was constructed in relation to imaginal con-

ceptions engaging the symbolic matrix of the mythology. This is not unlike ideas encountered today that members of a family may be ‘psychic’, ‘crazy’, ‘evil’, or characterized by ‘luck’, without clearly differentiating the transmission of these qualities from inherited size, strength, attractiveness or other qualities identified with physicality. Today, we justify such attributes in modern terms of genetics, inherited mental illness, etc. Prior to the modern era, these types of identification would be imaginarily construed in the mythic sphere. Rather than ‘human’ versus ‘non-human’, there was a range of diversity extending from empirical realities to the unseen world. The potential fluidity between these is highlighted by variation between and the mixing of categories, as when ‘Sámi’ blur with ‘giants’ in the saga literature (Mundal 2000; Aalto). Whereas we are inclined to presume that social identities of groups are more or less simply a question of social differentiation, imaginal engagements of identities in the Viking Age may have constructed identities quite differently. Thus, the social groups identified with, for example, the clay paw rite, may not have regarded themselves or been regarded by others simply as a social group differentiated by certain characteristic practices and beliefs. They may have been imagined, not as a distinct ethnos of human being, but conceived at the mythic level as a category of being among other categories, such as gods, bears, giants and Swedes.

Acknowledgements

This chapter is based on research completed within the framework of the Academy of Finland project “Oral Poetry, Mythic Knowledge and Vernacular Imagination: Interfaces of Individual Expression and Collective Traditions in Pre-modern Northeast Europe” of Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki.

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Abbreviations

ATU = Aarne–Thompson–Uther international tale-type according to Uther 2004.

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