



**Mittuniversitetet**  
MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

## **Austmarr workshop in Härnösand April 5-6th 2013**

List of participants

*Sirpa Aalto*

*Maths Bertell*

*Wladyslav Duzcko*

*Frog*

*Remigiusz Gogosz*

*Lauri Harvilahti*

*Eldar Heide*

*Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson*

*Tatjana N. Jackson*

*Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt*

*Marge Konsa*

*Karolina Kouvola*

*Alexander Podossinov*

*Janne Saarikivi*

*Leszek Ślupecki*

*Daniel Sävborg*

*Kendra Willson*

*Kristel Zilmer*

## **Abstracts**

*Sirpa Aalto*

### **Changing alliances – Jómsvikings, Danes and Wends**

According to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, that was presumably written down around year 1200, a group of Vikings was hired to protect the lands of a Wendish prince. These Vikings had their base on the island of Jóm which was situated in a river estuary leading to the Baltic Sea, and thus they got their name, the Jómsvikings. The setting of the saga takes place in the last decades of the 10th century. The Jómsvikings became famous and praised after the battle of Hjörungavágr which took place *ca* 987 in the west coast of Norway in which Danes and the Jómsvikings fought against Norwegians.

Historicity of the Jómsvikings has been debated, and the debate is closely intertwined with the question, how reliable *Jómsvíkinga saga* is as a source. The saga has been difficult to place under one saga genre and it has not been seen as part of Old Norse historiography. In my opinion, *Jómsvíkinga saga* can be seen as part of Old Norse historiography (Aalto 2014 forthcoming), if the concept of historiography is not confined only to kings' sagas, but is given a broader definition. This does not mean that

the information in the saga should be taken without critique. It is evident that even though the saga would have a historical core it is also a literary work.

The literary and historical sides of the saga are conceivable: on the one hand, the gap between the depicted time and the time of writing down *Jómsvíkinga saga* means that the saga must have acquired features as a literary work. The literary side of the Jómsvíking is undeniable and comparative analysis can reveal how their image may have been affected, for instance, by the idea of *Männerbund*, or loyal *hirðmenn* as they are presented in Danish and Norwegian royal *hirð*-laws from the 12th and 13th centuries. Also contemporary crusading activity in the Baltic Sea area may have affected *Jómsvíkinga saga's* content (Gelting 2007).

On the other hand, archaeological excavations support the view that the saga has historical background. They show Scandinavian presence in the Northern Poland in the end of the 10th century and in the beginning of the 11th century. The island of Wolin in the Oder estuary is assumed to have been the island of Jóm (Stanislawski 2003), although the discussion concerning the toponyms in that area is still debated (Petrulevich 2009). Thus, the historical background of the Jómsvíking – for instance, individual characters mentioned in the saga – has been studied, the big picture remains undefined. Were the Jómsvíking an anomaly or reflection of a larger phenomenon? Evidence from other sources suggests that Scandinavian warriors were hired as mercenaries by princes or kings both in Western and Eastern Europe, not to mention the Varangian guard of the Emperor of Byzantium. In light of this information, the historicity of Jómsvíking does not seem unconvincing. The Jómsvíking are described in the Old Norse tradition as a group of heroic warriors *par excellence* but they are just the peak of the iceberg, when looking at the mercenary activity in the Viking Age and early Middle Ages in the Baltic Sea area.

If the activity of the Jómsvíking is taken as an example (or reflection) of general Viking or mercenary activity in the Baltic Sea, what does it tell us? It seems that the Jómsvíking were part of the political game between Danish kings and West-Slavic (Wendish) princes, which can be described as a game of changing alliances. In the 10th century the Danes and the Wends allied and fought against each other. The Saxons were their common enemy who were expanding towards West-Slavic and Danish territories. Alliances were confirmed with marriages between princely houses, which are also mentioned in *Jómsvíkinga saga*.

In my paper I intend to look at the Jómsvíking as a political factor in changing alliances between Danes and Wends. Even though it is questionable how reliable *Jómsvíkinga saga* is when it comes to historical events that took place in the end of the 10th century, I argue that the saga may reflect the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages in the southern Baltic Sea: it reveals how supraregional relations between elites were created and maintained. This was to change when Christianity was introduced and at the same time the balance of power began to change in Scandinavia. Independent chieftains with their retinues were incorporated into royal *hirðs*. In this process that took few hundred years political power was taken over by kings, and former elite networks lost their significance.

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*Frog*

## From Masts to Mythic Images: Indicators of Infrastructure Exhibited in Kalevalaic Epic

Kalevalaic or Kalevala-meter epic poetry exhibits remarkable verbal stability in reproduction and historical transmission. Images in this poetry are represented through complex verbal systems that can be easily thought of as stanza-like passages. A number of images and motifs embedded in this oral-poetic tradition have been thought to be rooted in the Iron Age or even earlier. Some sort of history behind the use of this poetry seems to underlie the centrality of epic songs describing adventures in ships at sea within the forested inland regions of Karelia.

This presentation will offer a 'crash course' in kalevalaic epic poetry, addressing these verbal units of composition in terms of 'multiforms'. This introduction will address some basic aspects of the historical spread of this tradition of poetry in connection with language spread and its implication for approaching individual epic narratives. Attention will then turn to indicators of historical infrastructures potentially embedded in these poems through three examples.

The first example will be taken from *The Song of Lemminkäinen*. The relevant image holds a semiotically central position in the narrative and is found especially in Ingria and in Viena (White Sea) Karelia, and can be considered among the most powerful and compelling mythic images in the tradition – especially from the perspective of modern cultures. This image occurs in a multiform at the conclusion of the hero's adventures on an island of women describing his departure and the sadness of the maidens at watching him leave. The narrative and rhetoric of the representation are built around the image of the sail of a departing ship. Put simply, the image is dependent on a specific technology which allowed mobility across the Baltic Sea. The image presents a question to scholars of relevant fields of knowledge concerning the earliest that such an image might be possible.

The second example will be taken from the sea-raid described in the kalevalaic epic Sampo-Cycle. This will offer a look at the indicators of seafaring technology embedded in this poem. Particular attention will be given to the image of climbing the mast as a lookout. Problems of local and regional variation will be addressed. This again raises questions regarding possible (or impossible?) relationships to actual seafaring technologies.

The third example will return to *The Song of Lemminkäinen* and the fateful event that compelled the hero to flee, but attention will be shifted to cultural practice. This is the account of a sword duel. This issue of duelling as practice will be considered in relation to Germanic duelling practices. The relevant multiform(s) in kalevalaic poetry will be considered in relation to regional variation, and changing contexts into which it appears

to have been transferred. This raises the question of how this representation of a structured social practice may relate to similar practices in other cultures in the Circum-Baltic region or perhaps even common cross-cultural social conventions related to settling disputes among men.

The three cases raise different issues about the history of the poetry on the one hand and offer the possibility for fruitful cross-disciplinary discussion on the other.

*Remigiusz Gogosz*

### **Baltic sea and the Northern Crusades. A case study and main problems.**

In 1147 Pope Eugenius issued a bull, the *Quantum Praedecessores*, which became a major factor in European Crusading. This bull provided Crusaders new opportunities in the northern and north-eastern parts of Europe, as well as giving them equal status with Crusaders operating in the Holy Land. The

Baltic Sea, while not a major factor in the northern Crusades against the Polabian Slavs, eventually became for the northern Crusaders what the Mediterranean was to their brethren in the Levant. Its west coast provided suitable bases of operation and resupply for incursions against the remaining pagan groups in Europe: the Prussians, Livonians, Estonians, and Finns. Beyond that, the harbours and cities built by the Crusaders became major trading and transportation hubs, as well as providing centres of government for the region. My paper will discuss the role played by the Baltic settlements during the northern Crusades. I will examine their uses as trading and transportation hubs, as well as their uses as political centres. I will also discuss the roles played by the Danes, Germans, Swedes, and Poles in the Baltic region during the XII and XIII centuries, as well as the ramifications of their political and military actions in the region.

*Lauri Harvilahti*

### **Ethnocultural Poetics, Etymologies and Mythical Models. Pre-1500 contacts around the Baltic Sea**

The national Romanticism had a strong impact on the history of the so called "Teutonic" peoples, as can be seen in the ideas promoted by Leopold Ranke. He was influenced by Schelling, Schlegel, Hegel, and the Classical studies of his time, and the romantic trends also played a significant role in re-interpreting old sources, including the medieval chronicles, Old Norse Sagas, or ancient epics and mythological texts. In the period of Modernity ancient sources have been used for various political and ideological purposes. There are many examples of literary works, in which diverse Old Norse mythological materials representing the pagan world-view have been gathered in one large volume in order to form a kind of general, overall impression of the pre-Christian religion, as if that religion would have formed a concise whole in the minds of the people. Examples of this approach include, in addition to Jacob Grimm's mythologies, a large number of works such as *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie* by Wolfgang Golther (1895). However, the sources may also prove something that the representatives of dominant research currents have been reluctant to acknowledge. For example, there is a need to regard

contacts between pagan folk belief systems and Christianity as a continuous variety of mutual influences, as interplay between antagonism and syncretistic coexistence.

*Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson*

### **Alliances across the Baltic: Sword chapes as indicators of military and political alliances in the Baltic region.**

It is a well-known fact that archaeological objects, through style and iconography, can reflect networks and contacts. The character of these contacts differs and some objects are more apt than others when it comes to discerning contacts of a power-political or military character. Sword chapes form a particularly interesting group of artefacts in this respect as they are clearly connected to the martial sphere. Swords were weapons reserved for warriors of a certain category, and among these only a small group had chapes. The number of chapes is extremely limited and strikingly homogeneous with only a handful of designs. The distribution pattern of chapes is not equivalent to that of swords. The contexts vary between the different types of chapes, with particular groups primarily occurring in burials while others are predominantly found in settlement-contexts.

This paper concentrates on two different types of sword chapes. One type, adorned with a stylised falcon, interpreted as the mark of a military group or following. The other, depicting an anthropomorphic figure parallel to the image of Christ on the Jelling stone, seen as a symbol of office used by the officary or minister of the Danish (?) court. Finds of sword-chapes with stylised falcons are concentrated on the Eastern trade routes along the Baltic and Eastern rivers. Significantly, their pattern of distribution is identical to the distribution of the sites and regions, which played key roles in the general economic, political and social development of Ancient Russia. They are usually found as part of the grave-goods of a male buried with weaponry – a warrior.

The chapes with the anthropomorphic figure are spread over an even more extensive geographical area from Northern to Eastern Europe. They are found in places of some local, regional or even inter-regional importance such as town-like settlements and court sites. Several of them were depositions or stray finds in the settlement contexts, not grave-goods.

The differences in context and distribution indicate the function and symbolic value of these particular objects. It is probable that the function of the chape was partly to display affiliation to a group and/or to a leader. As such they provide an overview of the power-political situation around the Baltic during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century.

*Tatjana N. Jackson*

### **Austmarr on the 'mental map' of medieval Scandinavians**

*Austmarr*, according to the sagas, belonged to the *Austrhálf* 'the Eastern quarter' of the oecumene of medieval Scandinavians. The paper deals with the 'mental map' of medieval Scandinavians as it is reflected in Old Norse-Icelandic texts, primarily sagas. *Physical* space, in the process of land development, turned into *geographical* space (reflected in periples, itineraries, on maps, etc.), while the latter turned into *social* space

which was comprehensible to a certain group of people (socium) and which was common to the representatives of one and the same culture. I will try to show that the early Scandinavians imagined the inhabited world (or the world visited by them) as consisting of four segments, in accordance with the four routes, corresponding to the four cardinal directions. The quadripartite division of the oecumene has found its reflection, among other things, in a number of place-names with cardinal points as their main component. Saga authors seem to have had a general idea of the surrounding world where they oriented themselves with the help of a 'mental map' that was quite concrete and permanent. The set of lands in each segment of this 'mental map' was invariable. The *Northern* quarter was formed by Norway and Finmark. The *Southern* lands were Denmark and Saxony, Flanders and Rome. The *Western* quarter included all the Atlantic lands such as England, Iceland, the Orkney and Shetland Islands, France, Spain, and even Africa. The *Eastern* lands were the Baltic lands (Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Karelia, etc.) and the territories far beyond the Baltic Sea (*Austmarr*, *Eystrasalt*), such as Russia and Byzantium. Cf. Adam of Bremen's description of this sea as extending 'a long distance through the Scythian regions even to Greece' (IV: 10). I will also discuss travels within, to and from the Eastern quarter, as they are described by saga authors.

*Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt*

### Runestones on Gotland and the Swedish mainland

In the 11<sup>th</sup> C AD, a local picture stone tradition with a strong local character on Gotland is replaced by a rune stone tradition similar to that in the Mälars valley of the Swedish mainland. Gotland maintains some special traits, such as the mushroom or door like shape of the monument, but the runic ornament harmonizes with the rune stones in the Mälars valley. The runic inscriptions, too, are similar to those on the mainland (Snædal 2002).

Of old, a discussion is going on concerning the relationship between the Mälars valley and Gotland and how this affected the missionary situation. This specific study has been influenced by a runological dissertation about the language and ideology of the Gotlandic runic inscriptions (Snædal 2002). My interest aroused out of Snædal's conclusion that the Gotlandic runestones are rooted in the Swedish influence on Gotland that can be traced in the treaty between the Gotlanders and the Svear that probably was agreed upon in c.1030 AD (Snædal 2002:67, 230). Since the runestone tradition continues longer on Gotland, Snædal has suggested that rune carvers from the mainland find a new arena on Gotland even after the runestone tradition has ended in the Mälars valley. This implies that in the Gotlandic runestone material, we might find some rune carvers earlier active in e.g. the province Uppland, which is very interesting in the perspective of literacy and mobility.

This investigation is a part of the research project *The Dynamics of Rune*

*Carving;*

*Relations between rune carvers in a regional and chronological perspective.* The point of departure is that the constellations of rune carvers, as members of households and in possess of special skills (literacy), may reflect power relations, territorial limits, centra for literacy and social relations. In order to investigate the rune carvers' constellations, I use a method to analyze the carving technique by 3D-scanning and multivariate statistical analyses (see e.g. Kitzler Åhfeldt 2012). The results can indicate co-operation,

areas of mutual exchange and in favourable cases even connections at an individual level.

To identify relations between rune carvers on Gotland and the mainland at an individual level is probably not to be expected, but Gotland may possibly share its handicraft tradition with some particular area or with an identifiable carver group or workshop in the Mälars valley. I am very interested in how other disciplines from different perspectives regard the relation between Gotland and other countries or areas in the Viking period and the Early Middle Age.

#### References

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- Snaedal, T. 2002. *Medan världen vakar. Studier i de gotländska runinskrifternas språk och kronologi*. Runrön 16. Uppsala.

*Karolina Kouvola*

### **How and why should Kalevalaic epic poetry and Old Norse poetry be compared?**

This paper seeks to answer the question is it valid to compare the Kalevalaic epic poetry with Old Norse poetry in order to understand the pre-Christian world view and the progresses which shaped mythic poems in both cultures. Similarities between mythic poem traditions are remarkable. The Kalevalaic poems contain themselves several layers of tradition, which can date back to the Viking Age or at least to the medieval times. However, difficulties arise with methodological questions.

Comparison between tradition which has been recorded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and tradition written down mainly in 13<sup>th</sup> century requires careful assessment of the source material. Accumulating the corresponding traits around e.g. mythical figures such as Óðinn and Väinämöinen and placing these traits in a dialogue with each other can show that the similar characteristics between mythic themes which at first seemed superficial can in fact be understood as a part of a wider picture. Understanding these similarities something new can be found concerning the Old Norse mythological world view and the themes which have influenced mythological concepts from surrounding cultures.

The paper aims to argue the valid use of Kalevalaic epic poetry in Old Norse studies and Kalevalaic poetry's place as part of influence on Old Norse poetry and myth.

Topics for multidisciplinary discussions would include the linguistic approach to comparative model as well as the archaeological evidence which might imply to a shared world view in mythological aspects.

*Alexander Podossinov*

### **The northern part of the Ocean in the eyes of ancient geographers**

The paper is devoted to ancient ideas concerning the Ocean, its origin, location, functions and especially its navigability. From archaic times till late antiquity we find a

belief in the possibility of navigation through the Ocean that was thought to surround the habitable world. While the Southern and Western (Atlantic) parts of the Ocean were at an early stage explored and traversed by Phoenician, Greek and Roman sailors from India to Britain (with the exception of the Southern African seas), the Eastern part of the Ocean remained unknown till the end of ancient times. The situation with the Northern Ocean was still more complicated. The heroes of epic poetry (Odysseus, Heracles, the Argonauts) were supposed to sail through the Northern Ocean during their fantastic wanderings. The possibility of navigation there was supported by cosmological and pseudo-scientific theories about the location of the Ocean (Pytheas, Poseidonius, Pomponius Mela, Plinius the Elder). The same can be said about ancient utopian and adventure novels (by Theopompos, Euhemeros, Hecataios of Abdera, Jambulos, Herodorus, Antonius Diogenes) the heroes of which in search of the unknown and remote islands and lands, sail through all the seas of the. Only in Augustean epoch the Roman navy could get as far as Jutland, and it was the remotest point reached in antiquity in the Northern Ocean, which they identified with the Baltic Sea.

*Leszek Śtupecki*

**Polish noble families and noble men of Scandinavian origin in 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century. The case of Awdańcy family. By which way they did come, why, and what consequences it caused?**

In the proposed paper I would like to start with an overview of known contacts of Poland to Scandinavia and to Scandinavians in 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century (merchants and travel roads, question of Scandinavian warriors and sailors in royal army of Piast's, Scandinavian or Scandinavian style artifacts found in Poland). The focus of the paper will be however put on written sources. I would like to show first of all why Polish historiography accepted the theory about Scandinavian origins of Awdańcy family (one of the most powerful noble families in the first part of 12<sup>th</sup> century in Poland) and who they are. Those facts since almost hundred years are well known for Polish medievalists, but remains almost neglected by Scandinavian scholars. After presenting this hypothesis I would like to speculate about possible roads Awdańcy comes to Poland (via Rus' in early 11<sup>th</sup> century?) and their possible original role, before they become to be on the top of power. I would like to show also that Awdańcy were not totally unique case informing about efforts to clear the origins of some Magnus (a noble man having a very unusual name) and hypothesis about Scandinavian (or Anglosaxon!) roots of this powerful person.

*Kendra Willson*

**Ahti in Nydam?**

Several items bearing runic inscriptions in the elder futhark were discovered in the 1990s in the course of excavations at the Nydam bog site in the southwestern corner of Jutland, including a bronze strapring for a swordsheath, dated to A.D. 300, reading **harkil(a)z • ahti** (Stoklund 1996: 275-276) and a silver belt-tip, dated to ca. A.D. 400, bearing the text **rawsijo** (Stoklund 1998: 259-260). **harkilaz** and **rawsijo** look like types of early Germanic names attested in other inscriptions (though the gender and



language stage of *-o* names has been debated, cf. Antonsen 2002: 261-273, 2003, Stoklund 1985); Antonsen (2002) glosses **harkilaz** as 'scrapper, fighter, pugnacious person' (cf. OIce. *hark* 'tumult') (113) and **rawsijo** as 'eager one' (269) (Stoklund 1998: 260 connects it with ODa. *ruse* 'rush'), presumably a masculine personal name despite the *-o* ending. The difficulties of interpreting **ahti** as an early Norse form and its intriguing resemblance to the name of a Finnish warrior-hero and sea-god, mentioned by Agricola as one of the Häme gods and conflated with Lemminkäinen in Lönnrot's *Kalevala*, led Jørgen Ilkjær (p.c., cited by Antonsen 2002: 214) to suggest that all three names might be Finnish or Estonian, cf. modern Finnish names *Rausio* and *Harkkila*. The name Ahti has no established etymology, despite many suggestions (*SSA 1*: 55-56). Antonsen writes, "This suggestion deserves a serious follow-up investigation" (2002: 214). I do not find compelling evidence for Ilkjær's interpretation; the *lectio facillior* is to interpret **ahti** as a past tense form of Gmc. *\*aigan* 'to own', ON *átti*, despite Stoklund's concerns that such a form would be anachronistic and the preterite anomalous (1996: 276). **harkilaz** and **rawsijo** are most likely Germanic personal names. Questions for others: What archaeological, historical or onomastic indications are there of a Finnic ethnic presence near Nydam and the nature of the contacts? How would the hypothetical presence of a Finnic divine name in Migration Period Jutland relate to the reconstructed history of mythology and religion in the region? What evidence is needed to support a non-Germanic interpretation of a runic inscription found in Scandinavia?

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#### Preliminary Schedule: 5 April

Time	Speaker	Subject
8.30-9.30	Keynote: Lauri Harvilahti	Ethnocultural Poetics, Etymologies and Mythical Models. Pre-1500 contacts around the Baltic Sea
9.30-10.30	<i>Kendra Willson</i>	Ahti in Nydam?
10.30-11.30	<i>Karolina Kouvola</i>	How and why should Kalevalaic epic poetry and Old Norse poetry be compared?
11.30-13.00	Lunch	Food
13.00-14.00	Keynote: Eldar Heide	Finno-Ugric and Scandinavian notions about the world axis and the cosmic quern
14.00-15.00	<i>Frog</i>	From Masts to Mythic Images: Indicators of Infrastructure Exhibited in Kalevalaic Epic

15.00-15.15	<i>Break</i>	Coffee
15.15-16.15	<i>Remigiusz Gogosz</i>	Baltic sea and the Northern Crusades. A case study and main problems.
16.15-17.15	<i>Tatjana N. Jackson</i>	Austmarr on the 'mental map' of medieval Scandinavians
17.15-18.15	<i>Keynote: Wladyslaw Duczko</i>	TBA

19.00 Dinner

#### Preliminary Schedule 6 April

Time	Speaker	Subject
8.30-9.30	<i>Keynote: Kristel Zilmer</i>	TBA
9.30-10.30	<i>Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt</i>	Runestones on Gotland and the Swedish mainland
10.30-11.30	<i>Keynote: Marge Konsa</i>	TBA
11.30-13.00	Lunch	Food
13.00-14.00	<i>Charlotte Hedenstierna- Jonson</i>	Alliances across the Baltic: Sword chapes as indicators of military and political alliances in the Baltic region.
14.00-15.00	<i>Sirpa Aalto</i>	Changing alliances – Jómsvikings, Danes and Wends
15.00-15.15	Break	Coffee
15.15-16.15	<i>Leszek Śtupecki</i>	Polish noble families and noble men of Scandinavian origin in 11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> century. The case of Awdańcy family. By which way they did come, why, and what consequences it caused?
16.15-17.15	<i>Alexander Podossinov</i>	The northern part of the Ocean in the eyes of ancient geographers