

The Kälsta stone, Häggeby socken, Uppland (see p. 15)

SWEDISH VIKINGS IN ENGLAND  
THE EVIDENCE OF THE  
RUNE STONES

By

SVEN B. F. JANSSON

PROFESSOR OF RUNOLOGY,  
KUNGL. VITTERHETS HISTORIE OCH ANTIKVTETS  
AKADEMIEN, STOCKHOLM

*The Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture  
in Northern Studies  
delivered at University College London  
11 March 1965*

PUBLISHED FOR THE COLLEGE  
BY H. K. LEWIS & CO. LTD LONDON

© UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON 1966  
PRINTED BY T. & A. CONSTABLE LTD EDINBURGH

## SWEDISH VIKINGS IN ENGLAND THE EVIDENCE OF THE RUNE STONES

*For hæfila hann til Ænglands*  
Rune stone at Överselö (pl. 15)

ON THE PREVIOUS OCCASION WHEN I WAS IN THIS beautiful room I spoke among other things of the turbulent centuries of the migration age, when Germanic tribes caused havoc on the Continent, when Scandinavia was known as 'the cradle of nations and the matrix of peoples', when the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes invaded Britannia and forced the Britons aside during incessant and protracted combats.

In the lecture I am giving today at the invitation of the Provost of University College and the College Committee, the second lecture in the series to honour the memory of Mrs Dorothea Coke, I am going to dwell a little on that repetition of history which began some centuries later, when the Anglo-Saxon invasion had become a legend, a closed chapter in the book of English history—as far as a historical event can ever be said to have an end. I am going to speak a little about the times when the vikings cast their stern eyes on the land of the Angles and the Saxons. The black ships began to appear in the 790s and their crews made quick and violent landings on the unprotected coasts. On account of these events Alcuin writes in the summer of the year 793 his much quoted letter in which he refers to the Anglo-Saxon invasion: 'Lo, it is nearly 350 years that we and our fathers have inhabited this most lovely land, and never before has such a terror appeared in Britain as we have now suffered from a pagan race, nor was it thought that such an inroad from the sea could be made.'

It is in no way my intention to put all the blame on my Nordic brethren, the Norwegians and the Danes, but it is obvious that *we* were not very active in the west during the ninth century. The Swedes had their attention directed eastward and were at that time busily occupied in harvesting the attractively large proceeds of the transit-trade over Russia between the Orient and the Occident.

This eastward movement of the Swedes ranks, according to T. D. Kendrick, 'as the most important adventure of the vikings in constructive politics and was certainly the most fateful and significant part played by them in the great drama of European history'. Russian scholars are of a different opinion.

Not only during the ninth but also during the tenth century Sweden's external interests were directed eastward. This is the main reason why Sweden or the Swedes are so seldom mentioned in west European sources, while these offer numerous and reliable reports about the Danish-Norwegian ventures.

The only contemporary and reliable sources to tell of Swedish participation in viking raids on England are Swedish runic inscriptions.

The total collection of Swedish rune stones is outstandingly rich, in the true sense of the word. We have a couple of thousand monuments of this kind from the viking age. Because of this wealth of material, the runic inscriptions make an important contribution to our knowledge of the civilisation and society of ancient Sweden, and from them we can often draw significant conclusions for the general history of culture. Even in my great delight in these monuments I cannot deny that they suffer from certain weaknesses, looked at as historical sources. In the first place, the inscriptions are extremely brief. As private documents, memorial inscriptions carved in stone in honour of dead relatives, they are sources necessarily limited both in substance and volume. Moreover, it is impossible to arrive at a precise date for them. We have to content ourselves with saying for example: about the year 500, 800 or 1000, at the beginning of the eleventh century, the first half, etc. But, considered as sources, the runic stones have one great advantage: they are contemporary sources, they are original documents.

In this great collection of runes there are close on two hundred inscriptions that deal with viking expeditions and foreign trade; around one-third of these are concerned with the British Isles and the western route.

All the runic inscriptions that mention Swedish voyages to England belong to the last phase of the viking age, that is to say, principally to the period between 1000 and 1050. No such inscriptions have yet been found prior to the end of the tenth or the beginning

of the eleventh century. In this connexion it is interesting that the great majority of the Anglo-Saxon silver coins that have been dug out of Swedish soil belong to this same time; most of them were struck between 990 and 1050.<sup>1</sup>

The eleventh century was a lively and changeful epoch in our history, an unparalleled time of transition. To quote an affecting and almost too suggestive pronouncement of an old colleague of mine – ‘then the Swedes stood with one foot deep in paganism, with the other they gave a welcome to Christianity’. English missionaries were also active in Sweden at the beginning of the eleventh century. Runic inscriptions can tell us much of interest about Sweden’s conversion to Christianity, but this is a subject I cannot pursue on the present occasion.

As we read the short, often poetically formed inscriptions, we hear an echo of the roaring life of the time. In hundreds of runic stanzas a memorial has been written to men who sailed out never to return.

The long voyages, the trade, piracy, and violence have generally been thought of as the main characteristics of the viking age. As I mentioned before, a great number of our rune stones were raised to commemorate relatives, often men who had died far away from home and whose last resting-place would not be at the home-farm, where their forefathers lay in their mounds. When the great expeditions ceased, when the old trade routes eastward had been closed, when the house-carles of Canute the Great had been slain at Hastings and when the viking ships were no longer made ready each spring, then rune stones were no longer cut and erected.

Although it is correct to consider Sweden’s main interest in those days to have been directed eastwards, the rune stones give clear evidence that westward voyages were also common. It is rather confusing to find that the name of England occurs almost as often as that of Greece on Swedish rune stones. These two names, Greece and England, are the most common geographical names on stones from the eleventh century. A surname such as *Ænglandsfari* ‘the England-farer’ on a couple of runic stones in the province of Uppland is also illustrative. Voyages which led to the award of the cognomen *Ænglandsfari* would most likely be trading expeditions. Other Swedish inscriptions have names of a similar type, such as *Grikkfari* ‘the Greece-farer’, *Æistfari* ‘the Estonia-farer’, and the like.

It is interesting to note that several men who had participated in eastward voyages were also on board the ships when they turned their stems to the west. A certain *Asgautr* has this memorial on an Uppland rune stone set up at the beginning of the eleventh century (U 504): ×*sar*×*uas*×*uistr*×*uk*×*ustr* *Sar vas vestr ok austr* 'He was out west and east' (see pl. 1).

Sometimes young men of the same family went in opposite directions, as can be seen from a rune stone (Vg 197) in the province of Västergötland, raised in memory of two brothers; the inscription ends: *ER varð dauðr vestr en annan austr* 'One died in the west, the other in the east'. At Berga in the parish of Skultuna in the province of Västmanland Gunnvald erected two rune stones (Vs 18 and 19), one in memory of his son Gerfast, *dræng goðan ok vas farinn til Ænglands* 'a daring young man and he had gone to England' (pl. 2). The other stone on the same spot was raised by Gunnvald in memory of his stepson Orm, *dræng goðan ok vas farinn austr með Ingvari* 'a daring young man and he had gone eastward with Ingvar'.

I should perhaps mention, although it falls rather outside the scope of my subject, that the Ingvar whom Orm accompanied was Ingvar the Far-travelled. His disastrous expedition to 'the Saracens' land' is mentioned on nearly thirty rune stones in the central Swedish districts. The fame of Ingvar spread far and wide. He is the hero of the Icelandic *Yngvars saga víðförla*, where his expedition is described in the romantic style of the so-called legendary sagas. The saga, which was written about 300 years after the end of the expedition, must as a whole be characterized as a romantic story woven around a kernel of historical fact. And this historical kernel could not possibly have been discerned, if it were not for the positive and contemporary evidence of the rune stones. Without them the greatest of all the Swedish viking enterprises would, like so much else, have been lost to history.

Of Holmsten from Tystberga in the province of Södermanland we know that 'first he had been a long time westward', then he had returned to his farm, and later, together with one of his sons, Roger, he sailed away with Ingvar the Far-travelled and never returned. This can be learnt from the stanza in *fornyrðislag* which concludes the inscription of the Tystberga stone (Sö 173):

*Hann hafði vestarla  
um vaRit længi.  
Dou austarla  
með Ingvari.*

These men who lived at the beginning of the eleventh century and had been both 'westward and eastward' had seen two very different worlds. It is not difficult to imagine the astonishment of these men from Södermanland, Uppland and Småland at what they saw on their first voyages. There can be no doubt that they felt more at home in the western Germanic world than in the Byzantine-Oriental atmosphere, with its gardens and oases, its desert towns quivering in the heat-haze and its motley crowds. But also in the west they saw much that was novel and strange and incomprehensible. They encountered a highly developed Christian culture and they seized the fruits of Western civilization with rough hands, hands used to the plough and wood-axe as well as to the sail-sheet, steering-oar, and sword-hilt.

One must not forget that many of these voyages were undertaken by men whose everyday work was that of a farmer or farmhand. The responsibility for running the farm fell to the housewife when it happened, as it might, that her husband in the busy times of sowing and harvesting found himself in Russia, Greece, Saxland, or England, or in a ship held up by calms or contrary winds on the North Sea, the Aegean, or the Sea of Marmara. Runic inscriptions pay homage to many women for their good work. A fine testimony is given to the housewife at Hassmyra in Västmanland (Vs 24):

*Boandi goðr Holmgautr let ræisa æftiR Oðindisu, kunu sina.  
KumBR hifrøya  
til Hasvimyra  
æigi bætri,  
þan byi raðr.  
Rauð-BallIR risti  
runiR þessar  
Sigmundar var Oðindis  
systiR goð.*



SWEDISH VIKINGS IN ENGLAND

In poor prosaic translation the inscription reads: 'The good farmer Holmgöt had the stone erected in memory of Odendis, his wife. Never will there be a better housewife at Hassmyra to take care of the farm. Balle the red cut these runes. To Sigmund Odendis was a good sister.'

I mentioned earlier that the name of England appears nearly as often in the runic inscriptions as that of Greece. On several occasions, however, the countries visited in the west are not defined by name. All that is said about the dead chieftain Spjut (Sö 106), for example, is that 'he had been in the west, township taken and attacked' (pl. 3):

*SaR vestarla  
um veRit hafði  
borg um brutna  
ok um barða*

A couple of other inscriptions from Södermanland have formulations of a similar character: Österberga (Sö 159):

**han uaistr hafn uf uarit leki**

*Hann vestr hafR  
of vaRit længi.*

Tystberga (Sö 173):

**han hafpi · ystarla<sup>2</sup> um : uarit · lenki**

*Hann hafði vestarla  
um vaRit længi.*

A stanza on the Spånga-stone (Sö 164) in which Gudmar is given his testimony should also be quoted:

**stup : triki : la : i : stafn skibi : likn uistarla . . .**

*Stoð drængila*

Stood like a man

*i stafn skipi.*

in the stem of the ship.

*LiggR vestarla . . .*

He lies westward . . .

The Härlingtorp-stone (Vg 61) is erected to a man 'who died on western ways in viking':

**sa × uarp : tuþr : q : uastr : uakm : i : uikiku :**

*Sa varð dauðr a vestrvegum i vikingu.*

*England* is directly mentioned on more than twenty-five stones, and it may be appropriate to begin by saying a few words about them.

As a rule, all we are told of the dead man is that he had been killed in England. *ER vas (vaR, varð)*<sup>3</sup> *dreþinn a Ænglandi, Hann vas dauðr a Ænglandi* 'He died in England'. The last words can also run: *sar · etapis · q · eklanti SaR ændaðis a Ænglandi* 'He ended his days in England'.

Sometimes the obituary is given with rather more detail. Thus on the Transjö-stone (Sm 5) we find this about a dead son:

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Hann vaR manna</i>  | He was among men       |
| <i>mæstr oniðingR.</i> | the most 'un-dastard'. |
| <i>ER a Ænglandi</i>   | He in England          |
| <i>aldri tyndi.</i>    | lost his life.         |

This stanza consists of a half-strophe in *fornyrðislag*. The two last verses correspond exactly with the end of an inscription in Västergötland (pl. 4):

+ giri · sati · stin · þana · eftir · kuþa · bruþur · sin · er ·  
a qk · lanti · altri · tynþi ×

*Gæiri satti stæin þenna æftir Guða, broður sinn.*  
*ER a Ænglandi*  
*aldri tyndi.*

The verse-pair with vowel alliteration (*Ænglandi, aldri*) evidently had a formulaic character, so far only known from these two inscriptions, one from Småland, the other from Västergötland.

An unusually detailed piece of information regarding a member of an expedition to England is to be found on the Nävleljö stone (Sm 101):

: kunkel : sati : sten : þansi : eftir : kunar : faþur : sin :  
sun : hrupa : halgi : lagþi : han : i : sten : þr :  
bruþur : sin : a : haklati : i : baþum

*Gunnkell satti stæin þenssi æftir Gunnar, faður*  
*sinn, sun Hroða. Hælggi lagði hann i stæin þro,*  
*broður sinn, a Ænglandi i Baðum*

'Gunnkel set this stone in memory of Gunnar, his father, Rode's

son. Helgi laid him, his brother, in a stone coffin in England in Bath' (see pl. 5).

(It is perhaps worth noting that *in England* on the runic stones is always worded *a Ænglandi* ('on England'). That is the old usage of the preposition in connexion with geographical names ending in *-land*: **a** × **griklanti** 'in Greece' (modern Swedish 'i Grekland'; cf. **i** × **krikium**); **a** · **lank** · **barþa** · **lanti** *a Langbarðalandi* 'in Italy'; **g** · **fin** · **lant** 'in Finland'; **a** + **uirlanti** 'in Virland'; **a** **lf** : **lanti** *a Liflandi*; **a** **tafstalanti** 'in Tavastland'; **a** **sirkanti** 'in the Saracens' land'; **a** : **sahks** : **lanti** 'in Saxland'; **a** × **iutlati** 'in Jutland' (modern Swedish 'på Jylland'); **a** **kutlanti** 'in Gotland' (modern Swedish 'på Gotland'). An interesting case is to be found on a rune stone in Västergötland (Vg 181): **hn** · **uarþ** · **trbin** · **i** · **estlatum** *Hann varð drepinn i Estlandum* (plural) 'He was killed in Estonia'.)

The name London occurs on the Valleberga stone (Skåne):

: **suen** : **auk** : **þurgutr** : **kiaurþu** : **kuml** : **þisi eftir** :  
**mana auk** · **suina kup** : **hialbi** : **siaul** : **þera** : **uel** :  
**ian** : **þer** : **likia** : **i** : **luntunum**

'Sven and Thorgöt made this memorial to Manne and Svenne. God help their souls well. And they lie in London' (pl. 6).

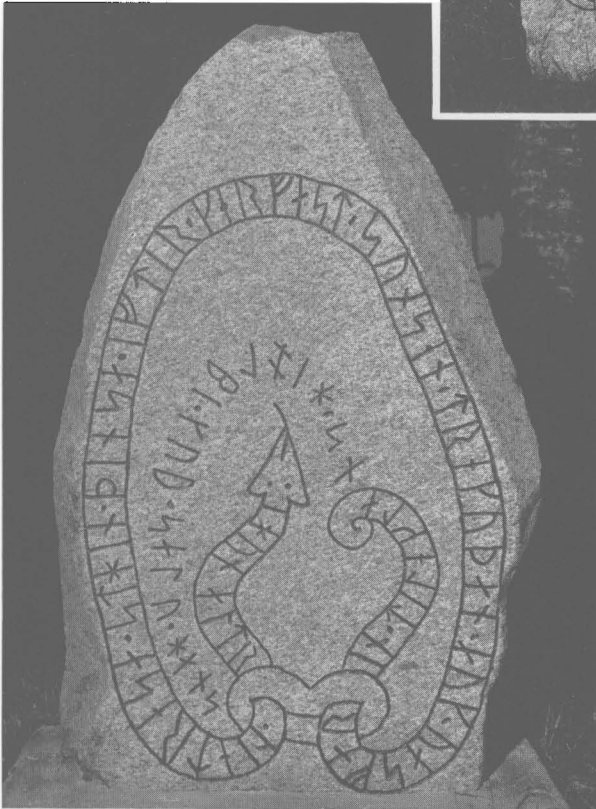
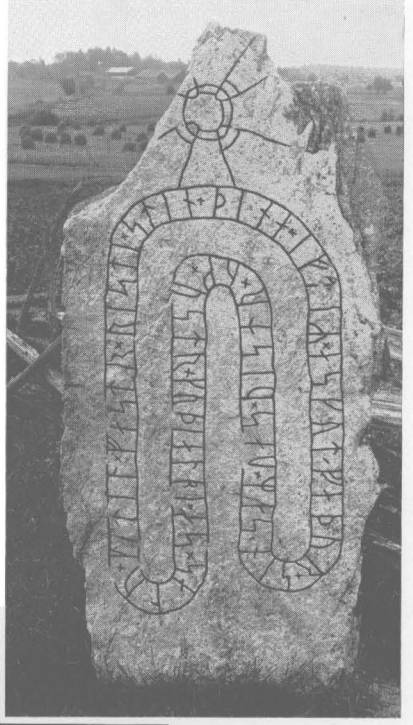
The runic inscriptions also show that many Swedes in the eleventh century might have had the same memorial as the son of Thorsten in Bjudby (Sö 55):

|                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Var til Ænglands</i>    | To England had        |
| <i>ungR drængR farinn.</i> | the young man sailed. |
| <i>Varð þa hæima</i>       | At home he then       |
| <i>at harmi dauðr.</i>     | lamented died.        |

A voyage that came to an end before the alluring coasts of England were reached is mentioned on a rune stone at Husby-Lyhundra (U 539):

**tiarfr** × **uki** × **urika** × **uk** × **uiki** × **uk** × **iukin** × **uk** ×  
**kiri** **almr** × **þir** **bryþr** × **alir** × **litu** × **risa** × **stin** **þina** ×  
**iftir** × **suin** × **brupur** × **sin** × **sar** × **uarþ** × **tuþr** **a** ×  
**iutlati** × **gn** × **skulti** **fara** × **til** × **eklanþs** × **kup** × **ialbi** ×  
**gns** × **at uk** **salu** × **uk** × **us** **mupir** × **betr** × **þan an** **karþi** **til**  
*Diarfr ok Orøkia ok Vigi ok Iogæirr ok*  
*Gæirhialmr, þæir brøðr allir letu ræisa stæin þenna*

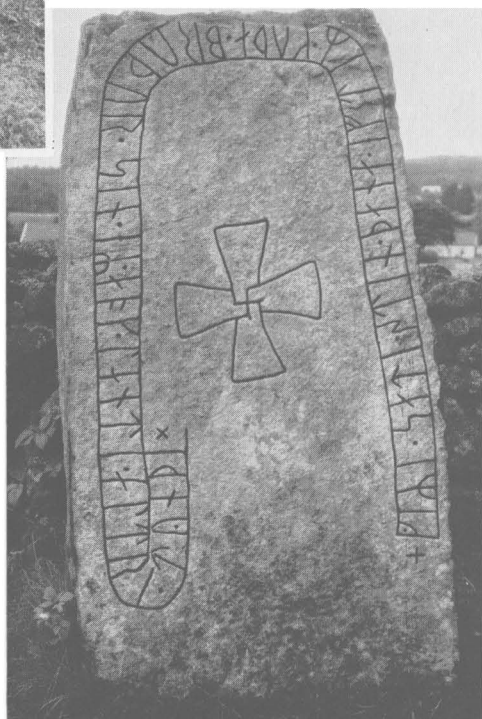
Pl. 1 The Ubbby stone (see p. 6)



Pl. 2 The Berga stone  
(see p. 6)

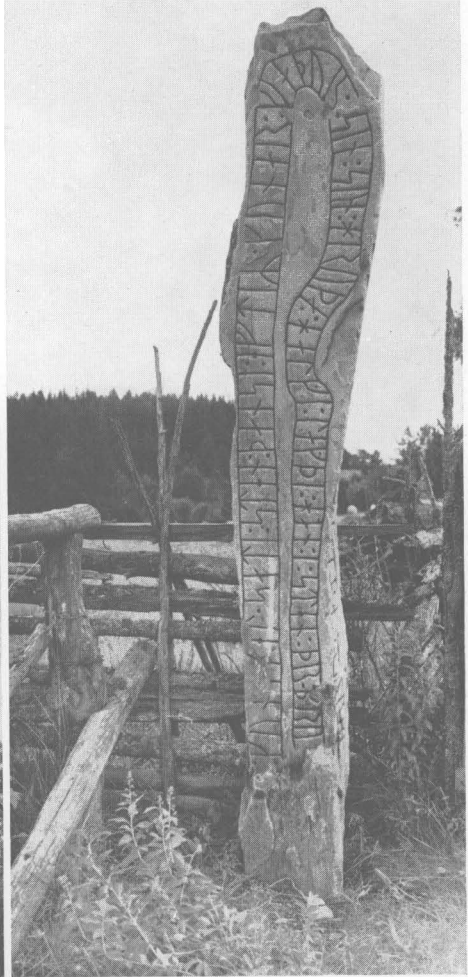


Pl. 3 The Kjulaås stone  
(see p. 8)



Pl. 4 The Vist stone  
(see p. 9)

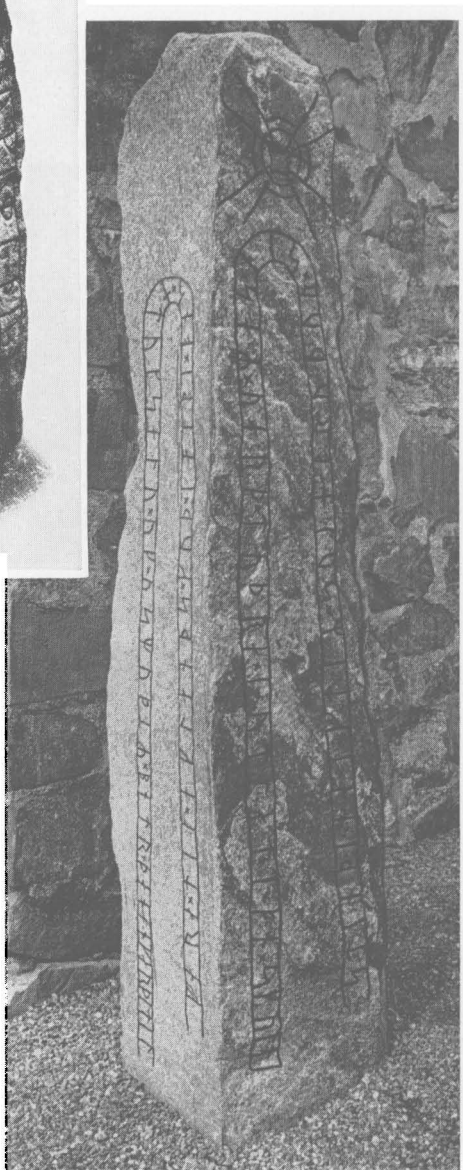
Pl. 5a The Nävelsjö stone;  
front (see p. 10)



Pl. 5b The Nävelsjö stone;  
right side

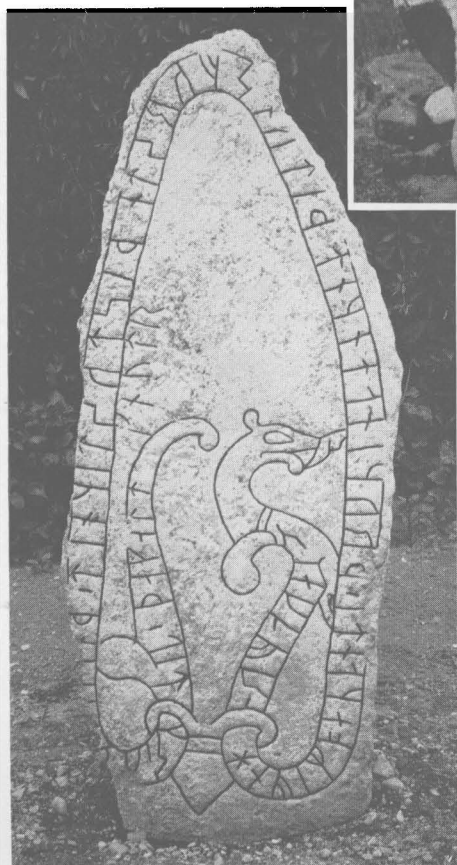


Pl. 6 The Valleberga stone, DR 337  
(see p. 10)



Pl. 7 The Husby-Lyhundra stone,  
inscribed on three sides (see p. 11)

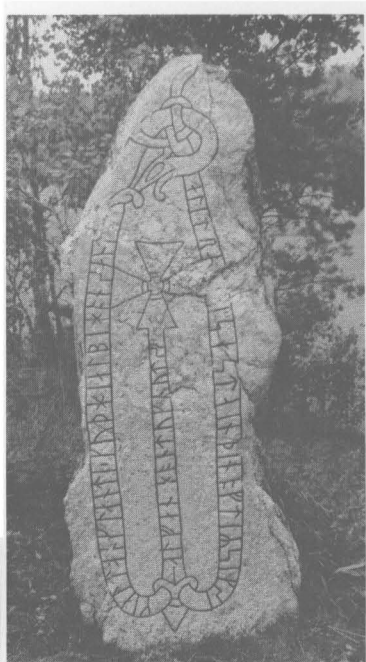
Pl. 8 One of the Lingsberg stones (see p. 11)



Pl. 9 One of the rune stones at Yttergårde (see p. 12)



Pl. 10 The Väsby stone (see p. 14)



Pl. 11 The Simrishamn stone, DR 345  
(see p. 15)





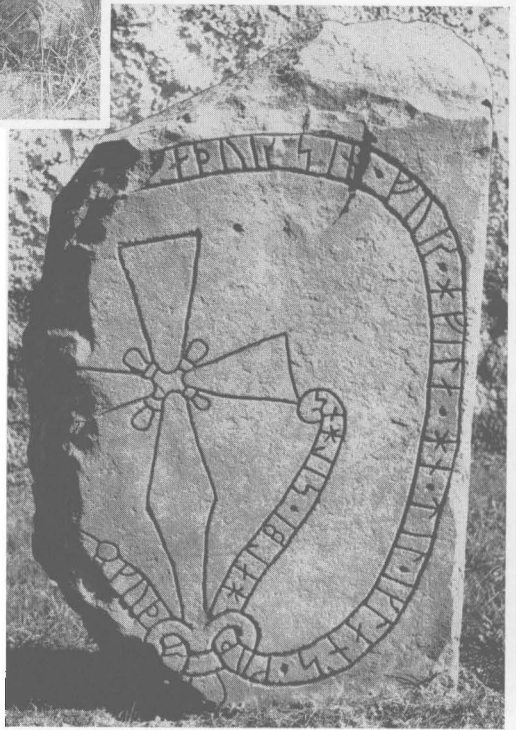
Pl. 12 The Landeryd stone  
(see p. 15)



Pl. 13 The Råby stone (see p. 16)



Pl. 14 The Tuna stone (see p. 17)



Pl. 15 The Överselö stone,  
erected to the memory of  
a man, who 'sailed  
stout-hearted to England';  
*For hæfila ham til Ænglands*

*æftiR Svæin, broður sinn. SAR varð dauðr a  
Iutlandi, hann skuldi fara til Ænglands. Guð hialpi  
hans and ok salu ok Guðs moðir bætr þan hann gærði til*

'Djärv and Orökja and Vige and Joger and Gerhjälrm, all these brothers had this stone raised in memory of Sven, their brother. He died in Jutland when he was on his way to England. May God and God's mother help his spirit and soul better than he deserved' (pl. 7).

The sentence that is of particular interest in this connexion reads: *SAR varð dauðr a Iutlandi, hann skuldi fara til Ænglands.*<sup>4</sup>

Some archeological discoveries made in recent years throw light upon these words. Two large permanent camps from the viking age have been uncovered in Jutland, one at Aggersborg on the north side of the Limfjord, the other at Fyrkat at the head of the Mariagerfjord. These mighty establishments are evidently military bases, built in the tenth century and in use until the middle of the eleventh. Ships' crews from the whole of Scandinavia foregathered in these camps; here the vikings had their quarters, received training and were initiated into the great fraternity of the sea, until under strong and resolute captains they sailed out into the North Sea towards France and England. We know that viking attacks against England started out from Jutland. Canute's great invasion fleet collected in the calm and sheltered waters of the Limfjord in 1015. Like so many others, Sven of the Husby-Lyhundra stone had sailed out to join some foray against England early in the eleventh century. He was, we can easily imagine, tempted by many reports of the *Danegeld*.

This brings us to the rune stones which mention the *giald*, taken in England.

On one of the Lingsberg stones (U 241), erected in a district north of Stockholm where rune stones are found more frequently than anywhere else, we read of Ulvrik, who had taken two gelds in England: *han hafpi ankianti tuh kialtakit + Hann hafði a Ænglandi tu giald takit* (pl. 8). Unfortunately no mention is made of the man or the men who paid these gelds. Neither does the inscription on the Grinda stone (Sö 166) tell us the name of the viking leader who paid Gudve his share of the tribute money:

SWEDISH VIKINGS IN ENGLAND

**kuþuir : uar uastr : a : aklati : kialti : skifti :**

**burkir : a : sahs : lanti : suti : karla :**

*Guðver var vestr a Ænglandi, Gudve was west in England,  
gialdi skifti.<sup>5</sup> had his share in the geld.*

*Borgir a Saxlandi Townships in Saxland  
sotti karla. he attacked like a man.*

Stones of especial historical interest are those which mention the names of the men who paid the gelds in England.

To this group belong the Yttergårde stones in Uppland (U 343, 344), inscribed at the beginning of the eleventh century. They were erected by Karse and Karlbjörn in memory of their father, Ulv of Borresta, a great yeoman-farmer of Uppland. The last part of the inscription reads:

**in ulfr hafir anklati · þru kialtakat þit uas fursta  
þis tusti kalt · þa [kalt] þurktil · þa kalt knutr**

*En UlfR hafir a Ænglandi þry giald takit. Det vas fyrsta  
þet's Tosti galt. Ða galt Þorkætill. Ða galt Knutr*

'And Ulv has in England taken three gelds. That was the first which Tosti paid. Then Thorkel paid. Then Canute paid' (pl. 9).

This very terse statement with which the sons commemorate their dead father was full of sense to their contemporaries. An adventurous career and no doubt a profitable one is traced here in phrases that could hardly be more laconic.

'That was the first that Tosti paid.' Who was Tosti?

It is obvious that he must have been a famous man, well known in Sweden at the time when the Yttergårde stones were erected. But his name does not appear in other runic inscriptions nor is he mentioned in Anglo-Saxon sources. It can however hardly be doubted that it is this man who meets us a few times in *Heimskringla*<sup>6</sup>. In the separate *Óláfs saga helga*<sup>7</sup> Snorri Sturluson tells us that Harald grenski, Olaf's father, fled to Sweden for help. Snorri writes:

Haraldr grenski fór þá austr til Svíþjóðar ok leitaði sér skipunar ok at koma sér í sveit með þeim monnum, er fóru í hernað at fá sér fjár. Haraldr var inn gørviligsti maðr. Tósti hét maðr í Svíþjóð, er einn var ríkastr ok gøfgastr í landinu, þeira er eigi bæri tígarnafn. Hann var inn mesti hermaðr ok var

lǫngum í hernaði. Hann var kallaðr Sköglar-Tósti. Haraldr grenski kom sér þar í sveit ok var með Tósta um sumarit í viking . . . Haraldr var eptir um vetrinn með Tósta. Haraldr hafði verit tvá vetr á Upplöndum, en fimm með Sköglar-Tósta. Sigríðr hét dóttir Tósta, ung ok fríð ok svarkr mikill.

(. . . Tosti was the name of a man in Sweden, the mightiest and most respected man in that land of those who had no title of rank. He was a very great warrior and spent long periods on raids abroad. He was called Sköglar-Tosti . . .<sup>8</sup>)

According to Snorri, who had obviously learnt a good deal about Sweden, Tosti was the father of Sigrid the Ambitious, and he was thus the father-in-law of two of the most renowned men in this rather obscure period of Scandinavian history towards the end of the tenth century: the Swedish king Eric the Victorious and the Danish king Sven Forkbeard.

*Da galt Þorkætill.* 'Then Thorkel paid.' Unlike Sköglar-Tosti, the second leader who distributed payment to Ulv is well known in Anglo-Saxon and Norse sources. He is *Þorkell Strút-Haraldsson inn hávi*, Thorkel the Tall. His activities in England are fully described by the chronicles; he is also a figure swathed in legend. He was repeatedly involved in battles in England at the beginning of the eleventh century, or, more precisely, in the years 1009-1012. At the end of his tremendous campaign during these years he paid a large tribute to his viking troops. 'In this year, before Easter, there came to London ealdorman Eadric and all the chief councillors of England, spiritual and temporal. In this year Easter was on 13 April. And they remained there until after Easter, until all the tribute was paid, amounting to forty-eight thousand pounds.' It is likely that the rune stone's second *geld* was this payment of tribute in the spring of 1012.

Thorkel the Tall became earl of East Anglia in 1017; after that his career is hard to trace.

*Da galt Knutr.* 'Then Canute paid.' The third and last is Canute, Sven Forkbeard's son. He became ruler of England at the beginning of 1017, and in 1018 he paid the last and biggest Danegeld to his northern warriors returning to Scandinavia. In time he could justify his cognomen 'the Great'. He could style himself 'Cnuto rex totius Anglie et Denemarcie et Norreganorum et partis Suanorum'.<sup>9</sup> In *Knúts drápa* it goes like this: 'The wind filled the

canvas above your head. You turned all your prows westward out to sea. Where you went you made your name renowned.'

Tosti, Thorkel and Canute were the names of the chieftains in whose wake Ulv of Borresta had sailed to England. Three names recorded on the stone. More was not required. They added lustre to the Uppland farmer and his family. The sons thanked their father for the inheritance he had left them of wealth and honour with an inscription laden with great history. Their contemporaries could not read these runes without hearing the tempting jingle of good English silver and feeling the pull of the heaving waves of the English Sea, of *Ænglands haf*.

'Knut's geld' is also mentioned on the Väsby stone (U 194). Alle in Väsby saw to the preparation of his own runic monument when he came back to his farm in Uppland. He records there his proud exploit:

**alit raisa stain þingftir sik sialfan · hān tuknuts  
kialt anklanti · kuþ hialbi hāns ant**

*Alli let ræisa stæin þenna æftir sik sialfan. Hann tok Knuts  
giald a Ænglandi. Guð hialpi hans and*

'Alle had this stone raised to his own memory. He took Canute's payment in England. God help his soul' (pl. 10).

The name of Canute the Great is not only found on the rune stones in connexion with the payment of tribute. Some inscriptions speak of men who had had the honour of serving in his forces. Thus the Gåsinge stone (Sö 14) reads: *Ragna ræisti stæin þannsi at Svæin, bonda sinn, ok Sefa ok Ragnborg at sinn faður. Guð hialpi and hans.*

*Væit iak  
þæt var Svæinn  
vestr með K(n)uti.*

I know  
that Sven was  
westward with Canute.

To this group belongs the Galteland stone (NIyr 184), erected by a father in memory of his son: *Sa var dauðr i liði, þa es Knutr sotti Ængland* 'He fell in the host when Knut attacked England'.

In Simrishamn in southern Sweden a stone was raised to the memory of a man of whom it is recorded that he was the father of one of Canute's men: 'Sigrev had this stone raised after Forkunn ...

father to Asulv, Canute's warrior (*drængR Knuts*)' (pl. 11). Such an inscription shows better than many words the credit of Canute.

A rune stone from Landeryd (Ög 111) also deserves to be quoted here:

• uirikr : resti : stan : eftir : þialfa : brupur : sin :  
 trak : þan : ar · uar · mir · knuti :

*VæringR ræisti stæin æftir Þialfa, broður sinn,  
 dræng þann, er var meðR Knuti.*

'Väring raised the stone in memory of Tjälve, his brother, the warrior who served with Canute' (pl. 12).

It is of some interest to note that the man who raised the stone, the dead man's brother, is called *VæringR*, i.e. Varangian. In this way the inscription carries the reader's thoughts both to the Varangian Guard of the Byzantine emperors and to the body-guard of Canute the Great.

The westward ventures, 'the west viking', had on the whole a different character from the voyages to the east, but we find, in one respect at least, a striking external similarity. The Varangian Guard (*væringja-lið*, n.) in Constantinople, Miklegard, had its parallel institution in the famous body of retainers of Canute the Great, the body-guard called *þingalið* in runic Swedish and known as the 'house-carles' in English sources. In *Compendiosa historia regum Daniæ*,<sup>10</sup> Sven Aggeson's Danish chronicle, it is said that King Canute organized a select body of 3000 warriors, 'which he named *Tinglith* in his tongue'—*quam suo idiomate Tinglith placuit nuncupari*.

Membership of this renowned corps of distinguished and well-trained warriors was an honour eagerly sought after. Gere from Kålsta in Håggeby parish in Uppland was a member of this guard, and his sons did not omit to mention it on the stone bearing his memorial inscription (U 668):

• sterkar · auk · hioruarþr · letu · reisa · þensa ·  
 stein · at · faþur sin keira · sum · uestr · sat ·  
 i þikalipi · kuþ hialbi salu

*Stærkarr ok Hiorvarðr letu ræisa þenna  
 stæin at faður sinn Gæira, sum vestr sat  
 i þingaliði. Guð hialpi salu*



'Stärkar and Hjorvard had this stone raised in memory of their father Gere, who in the west served in the thingalith. God help his soul'. (A picture of this stone appears as the frontispiece.)

This runic inscription, cut by two of the most famous rune masters of Uppland, gives us the oldest piece of evidence relating to the English 'hird' and the only contemporary one.

It seems very likely that the *lið* in the inscription on the Råby stone (Sö 160) also refers to the 'tinglith':

**: aybirn : raispi : stain : þansi : at [s]karþi :  
han uarþ : tauþr : aklati i liþi**

*Öybiorn ræisti stæin þanssi at Skærði.  
Hann varð dauðr a Ænglandi i liði*

'Öbjörn raised this stone in memory of Skärde. He died in England in the host (the tinglith?)' (pl. 13).

Personal names such as *Liðsman* and *Lið-Bofi*, which appear in Swedish runic inscriptions, perhaps also refer to the 'tinglith'. In these instances, however, we know nothing for sure. It is at least equally probable that these men got their names because they were or had been retainers of the Swedish king or of some nobleman.

The inscriptions on Swedish rune stones mention several chieftains who are otherwise entirely unknown. The Vändle stone (Vs 5) is erected to a man who *vas farinn til Ænglands. Do i Spjallboda. . .* 'had gone to England. He died in Spjallbodi's . . .' The following word is damaged. The context makes it probable that the sentence ended 'Spjallbodi's host' or something similar; cf. . . . *ændaðis i Ingvars hælfningi* 'died in Ingvar's host', etc.

Another chieftain who had gone westward and whom we know only through a runic inscription is *UlfR, sunR Hakonar*. In Betby in Södermanland a stone (Sö 260) is raised in memory of *Iarund*:

**ar · uar : uestþr : meþ : ulfi : suni · hakunar ·**

*ER var vestr með Ulfi, syni Hakonar.*

'He was westward with Ulv, son of Hakon.' (At the very same place, Betby, a large silver treasure was found some years ago; it contained many English coins.)

Canute the Great is not the only ruler of England named on Swedish rune stones. It is, to all appearances, his son and successor,

Harald Harefoot, who is referred to on the Tuna stone in Småland (Sm 42):

**tumi × risti : stin : þansi : iftir × asur : brupur × sin ×  
 þan : ar : uar : skibari : hrhls : kunuks**  
*Tummi ræisti stæin þanssi æftir Assur, broður sinn,  
 þann er var skipari Haralds konungs*

‘Tumme raised this stone in memory of Assur, his brother, who was King Harald’s sea-warrior’ (pl. 14).

One of the Sävsjö stones (Sm 76) commemorates a man who held the important post of *stallari* (‘stabularius, marshal’) under Håkon jarl:

**tufa : risti : stin : þina : eftir : ura : faður : sin :  
 stalara : hkunar : iarls**  
*Tofa ræisti stæin þenna æftir Vraa, faður sin,  
 stallara Hakonar iarls*

‘Tova raised this stone in memory of Vrae, her father, Håkon jarl’s marshal’.

It seems very likely that this Jarl Håkon was Canute the Great’s nephew and comrade in arms, a member of the famous dynasty of the Lade-jarls of Norway. When he left England for Norway in 1029 he was drowned in the Pentland Firth. Tova, daughter of his marshal from Sweden, erected the stone in memory of her father. And she was proudly conscious of the fact that he had held one of the highest offices at Håkon jarl’s court. In her family there were other voyagers to England. Tova’s father, Vrae, raised a stone in memory of his brother who died in England:

**: urai : sati : stin : þansi : eftir : kuna : brupur :  
 sin : han : uar taupr : q : iklati**  
*Vrai satti stæin þanssi æftir Gunna, broður  
 sinn. Hann var dauðr a Ænglandi.*

The terse inscriptions of the rune stones establish beyond all doubt that many Swedish yeomen and yeomen’s sons sailed on the expeditions to England at the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh. They played their parts in the great historical drama of that significant age. They sailed ‘stout-hearted to England’ (cf. pl. 15).

#### SWEDISH VIKINGS IN ENGLAND

To many Swedes the connexions with England did not merely bring wealth and prosperity. The crews of the ships that sailed back from English shores had not only Danegeld with them. In their minds they also bore the seeds of change that their new contact with a high culture had implanted. The men who voyaged *hæfila til Ænglands* returned with a lively awareness of new people and places, new techniques, new ideas, and a new religion, and this awareness betokened the change that the next few decades were to bring, when the Swedish nation was wrested out of its long pre-history to join the Christian civilization of medieval Europe.

## REFERENCES

The following abbreviations are used in the text above:

- U *Upplands runinskrifter* (ed. Elias Wessén och Sven B. F. Jansson)  
 Sö *Södermanlands runinskrifter* (ed. Erik Brate och Elias Wessén)  
 Ög *Östergötlands runinskrifter* (ed. Erik Brate)  
 Sm *Smålands runinskrifter* (ed. Ragnar Kinander)  
 Vg *Västergötlands runinskrifter* (ed. Hugo Jungner och Elisabeth Svärdström)  
 Vs *Västmanlands runinskrifter* (ed. Sven B. F. Jansson)  
 DR *Danmarks Runeindskrifter* (ed. Lis Jacobsen og Erik Moltke)  
 NIyr *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer* (ed. Magnus Olsen)

1 Nowhere have so many Anglo-Saxon coins of the Viking period been found as in Sweden. The National Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm has the biggest collection in the world. The Igelösa hoard, discovered in 1924, may be mentioned as an example. It chiefly contains Anglo-Saxon coins, including nearly 2000 minted for Ethelred II (978-1016). Mints in London, Winchester, York, Canterbury, Exeter, and Lincoln are represented.

2 There is no reason to doubt that this should be interpreted *vestarla* 'westward', since the word alliterates with *v-*: *vestarla—varit*.

3 The periphrasis with *vara* is the oldest. The younger type, *verða* + past part., occurs however already in runic Swedish, as the examples here show.

4 We find here a late example of the archaic paratactic word-order—no temporal conjunction is used.

5 Rune Swedish *giald*, n., is used in connexion with the viking raids to England. The meaning of the word is 'tribute, pay'. When it is a question of Greece the word *gull*, n., 'gold', is used. Beside the above-mentioned Grinda stone stands another rune stone, erected to the memory of a man who gets the following obituary:

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Var hann i Grikkium</i> | He was in Greece,      |
| <i>gulli skifti.</i>       | had his share of gold. |

The same expression is found on the Rycksta stone (Sö 163):

|                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>For Olæifr i Grikkium</i> | Fared Olev to Greece,  |
| <i>gulli skifti.</i>         | had his share of gold. |

The inscription on the Gripsholm stone (Sö 179) ends with this stanza:

|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>þæiR foru drængila</i> | They fared like men  |
| <i>fari at gulli</i>      | far after gold       |
| <i>ok austarla</i>        | and in the east      |
| <i>ærni gafu.</i>         | gave the eagle food. |

6 Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla* (Íslenzk fornrit xxvi-xxviii, 1941-51), I, 215, 287, 341.

7 *ibid.*, II, 433

## SWEDISH VIKINGS IN ENGLAND

8 *Skoglar* is gen. of the valkyrie name *Skogul*. The name must mean that he was regarded as pugnacious, warlike.

9 I need do no more than refer readers to Professor G. N. Garmonsway's admirable survey, *Canute and his Empire*, which so happily inaugurated the Dorothea Coke Memorial Lectures in Northern Studies.

10 *Scriptores minores historiæ Danicæ*, ed. M.Cl. Gertz (1917-22), I, 68.