THE ERVIKA RUNESTONE AND OTHER EVIDENCE FOR THE EARLY CHRISTIANIZATION OF NORTHERN NORWAY

Marte Spangen and Jørn E. Henriksen

Abstract

In the early 1980s, a runestone fragment with a Christian inscription from the early eleventh century was discovered in Harstad town, northern Norway, in masses originating from the farm Ervika. Runestones are very rare archaeological finds in this region, but, despite being included in runological overviews, the Ervika stone has not been studied or published by archaeologists or historians. This reflects a tendency where evidence of early medieval Christian influences and the Christianization processes in northern Norway have been surprisingly little discussed apart from general overviews and some local studies of specific find categories. In this article, we aim to initiate a broader debate about the complexities of the Christianization processes in northern Norway by presenting and evaluating relevant finds. This includes the material that has emerged over the last decade due to increased interest in private metal detecting. We emphasize the particularities of the geopolitical and sociocultural context in the north, where impulses from the Eastern Church and Saami culture and religion may have affected the reception and practice of the new religion. The Ervika runestone fragment serves as a point of departure, and we describe the find and its context in some detail to ensure it is included in future research by runologists, archaeologists, and historians.

Keywords

Runestone, cross symbols, burials, early Christianization, Viking and Early Middle Ages, northern Norway, Eastern church, Saami

Marte Spangen (marte.spangen@khm.uio.no) is Associate Professor at Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo

Jørn Henriksen (jorn.henriksen@uit.no) is an Archaeologist/Senior Research Technician at the Arctic University Museum of Norway, Tromsø

Introduction

In 1977, the farmer on the Ervika farm in Harstad municipality, northern Norway (Fig. 1 and 2), was digging a cellar for his new barn. The masses were left until the next spring, when they were sold to different building sites (pers. comm. D. Killengreen, Ervika, 29 May 2021).

A part of these masses was bought by Karl Andreas Kind in Harstad town and used to level out his house plot. A few years later he discovered a strangely shaped rock in these masses. When he washed the rock, he realized it had a runic inscription. The County conservator in Tromsø, archaeologist Jens Storm Munch, was contacted. He collected and brought the runestone back to Tromsø Museum (*Harstad tidende*, 25 June 1982). Later that same year, runologist Aslak Liestøl interpreted the text on the stone and confirmed it to be an original Christian runic inscription from the eleventh century, though he suggested it had been written by different persons on two occasions and in a somewhat strange 'dialect' (*Harstad Tidende*, 20 July 1982). The relatively unassuming stone fragment (*Runor* N A222, museum no Ts. 8168, unimus.no/portal) was temporarily exhibited in Tromsø Museum in 1983 (Munch 1983), and later included in the (semi-) permanent exhibition on the Iron and Middle Ages that opened in 1994. It was on display until 2005/6, when the exhibitions were changed. Since then, it has been in store in the museum basement. It is described in a relatively recent compilation of Norwegian runic inscriptions, where it is concluded to date from the early eleventh century (Spurkland 2005, 136), but further interpretation has been limited to discussions about certain runic particularities (Larsson 2004; Kornsæther 2013). So far, the runestone fragment has not been discussed or published in an archaeological or historical context, which means it has not been considered in broader discussions about the political and social developments in northern Norway in the Viking and Early Middle Ages.

This is unfortunate, as the runestone find has historical and archaeological significance as an example of early Christianity in northern Norway, and particularly in the Harstad area, where the elites associated with the estates of Bjarkøy and Trondenes played significant roles in the political turbulence of the time. Norway was Christianized in the tenth to eleventh centuries, according to historical sources by kings who were also in the process of unifying previous regional chiefdoms into one Christian kingdom. Based on saga accounts, a common understanding is that the battle of Stiklestad in Trøndelag in 1030, where Tore Hund of Bjarkøy allegedly killed King Olaf Haraldsson, represents a final shift in power and religion and mark the transfer from the Viking Age to the Middle Ages in Norway. This is obviously a simplification, and in current academic discourse, the conversion is frequently discussed as a long-drawn process rather than a sudden change, though with regional and social variations in the manner of how and how fast the Christianization happened (Solli 1996; Nordeide 2011a, 2020, 1639–40). Nevertheless, the early medieval Christianization of the Norse population in northern Norway has been little discussed as a regional phenomenon apart from some studies

were local archaeological and historical sources are employed to suggest tendencies, either in generalized overviews or focusing on specific finds or find categories, which does not do full justice to the complex processes in question. Admittedly, this is also due to the limited amount of relevant archaeological and historical evidence available (e.g. Bertelsen 1998; Sellevold 2004; Trædal 2008; Røskaft 2015).

It should be possible, however, to conduct broader studies of the Christianization in the Far North based on the collective relevant archaeological material, not least considering the increasing amounts of metal finds that are coming to light due to private metal detecting. The planned national celebration of the anniversary of the Stiklestad battle in 2030 could be a perfect occasion to initiate more research on this important topic and material. The present article will introduce and discuss available evidence that can be employed in a broader discussion about the early medieval Christianization process(es) in northern Norway. The Ervika runestone fragment provides a point of departure, while we are also concerned with raising awareness about its existence among researchers. We therefore present the runestone find in more detail, provide more substantial documentation of the stone and its context, and discuss the implications of this Christian runestone in the historically important Harstad area for our understanding of the Christianization of the Far North. Since the expertise of the present authors lie within archaeology, we will focus on contextualising the runestone as an archaeological object related to the early Christian faith and customs in northern Norway. Our understanding of the runic inscription is mainly based on previously published translations and interpretations.

Furthermore, we will present certain other find groups in northern Norway that reflect the Christianization process, and which have not previously been published together or in much detail. Importantly, we believe the conversion processes in northern Norway have to be studied through a different lens than the Christianization of the rest of the emerging Norwegian kingdom, which means we will touch upon a range of archaeological and historical evidence that illustrate the particularities of the geopolitical and sociocultural context of the region during the Viking and Middle Ages. Particularly important to the Christianization processes in the north are the cultural and possibly Christian influences from the east, considering the prevailing contacts between northern Norway, eastern Fennoscandia, and Northwest Russia. Another particularity for the region is the pronounced presence of

another cultural, ethnic, and religious group, the Saami, which may have affected the Christianization efforts and reception in the vast region of northern Norway.

The Ervika runestone fragment

The runestone from Ervika is the top fragment of a larger stone, which in its current state measures 47 x 11,9 x 4.8 cm and weighs 4.85 kg (Fig. 3–4). It is four-sided with an almost trapezoidal cross-section. The broadest side is flat or somewhat convex, while the opposite side is concave. The two remaining sides slants toward the concave side. The inscription has been interpreted to start at the broadest side (line A) and continues over the tip, with line B and D on the narrow sides and line C on the concave side. Lines are read interchangeably from left to right and vice versa. Because of the break in the stone, the end of line B and D and the start of line C are missing. This means that the start of line A may also be missing. The first seven runes have been assumed to have been made with a different tool than the rest of the inscription, as they are shallower and less distinct than the rest (Ts. 8168, Markali 1983). For this study, we arranged for 3D documentation of the runestone that is freely available online in the UiT Open Research Database (Arntzen 2022). A recent study based on the 3D model concludes that certain runes in other lines also appear shallow and slackly written. Even if a closer inspection of the stone itself is necessary to confirm this, it may indicate that all the runes on the stone are contemporaneous (pers. comm. runologist K. Zilmer, 21 September 2021).

Runologist Aslak Liestøl proposed the first reading of the runic inscription, which has been somewhat adjusted by runologist James Knirk in 1992, resulting in the reading that is currently recorded in the Runic Archives of the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo (pers. comm. K. Zilmer, 17 August 2021):

§A **-–bkrain`×´+kul·rast¦i·stn·þin**
§B **afyr·shot·hoksalu:þuriso–**
§C **–{n,r}l{h,n}:anþamanbiþh:hislar**
§D **(u){k,n}þrstatir{h,n}atþosibaþ(i)–**

In the Scandinavian runic database *Runor*, the following interpretation is recorded, though this appears to be suggestions based on Liestøl's notes rather than conclusive readings (pers. comm. K. Zilmer, 17 August 2021):

§A … *Kolr reisti stein þenna*
§B *fyrir ǫnd ok sálu Þóris …*
§C *rún(?) þar(?) standi(?) er(?) ept(?) þessi bæði …*
§D … *en þá man bíða …*

§A … *Koll raised the stone*
§B *for Þórir's spirit and soul …*
§C *rune(?) may stand(?) there(?) in memory of(?) both of them …*
§D … *and then one prays …*

There are many uncertainties attached to this interpretation, both because the stone is a fragment, which means the inscribed lines are cut off, and because the runes themselves are possible to interpret in several ways (pers. comm. K. Zilmer 17 August and 20 September 2021). We will leave to runologists to further debate the interpretation of the runes, though this is obviously a task that would be of great importance for future discussions about the runestone and its context. Here, we will focus on the religious aspect of the inscription, presuming it to be correct that this should be considered a Christian runestone.

According to the available interpretation, the inscription follows a relatively standard formula for memorial runestones. In this context, the mentioned phrase *ǫnd ok sálu* is of particular interest, as this is undoubtedly a Christian expression, though written in an unusual manner as *shot hok salu*. According to historian of religion Gro Steinsland, there are many words in the Norse pre-Christian corpus for the human psyche (Norw.: *sjelskrefter*), while *sál* or *sálu* only occurs with the Christian idea of a dualism between matter and soul (Steinsland 1990, 64). Even so, Christian runestones usually feature the word *ǫnd*, which originally meant ‘breath’ in pre-Christian contexts. Runologist Terje Spurkland dates the Ervika stone to the early eleventh century, which means it possibly features the earliest known use of the word *sál* for spirit or soul on a runestone in Norway. Spurkland further notes that the combination of the two terms *ǫnd* and *sálu* reflects the use of the terms *anima* and *spiritus* for spirit and soul in Christian Latin texts, based on the Christian tripartite understanding of humans as spirit, body, and soul. The combination *ǫnd ok sálu* is only known from eighteen other runestones, all in Sweden (Spurkland 2005, 136–37).

Due to the large runestone corpus in Sweden, it is not surprising that certain particularities in runic inscriptions are more frequent there than in the smaller corpuses of Norway and Denmark. However, as the Ervika inscription is placed on a stone fragment, it is relevant to consider whether it was brought here from somewhere else in an already fragmented shape, possibly after several phases of use and reuse, or whether it was carved and raised at or nearby the initial find spot in Ervika. A visual examination by geologist Professor Steffen Bergh concludes that the stone is of a massive metamorphic rock classified as meta-psammite or sandstone, which can be found in the terrain close by the town of Harstad (pers. comm. S. Bergh 16 June 2021).[1] However, such metamorphic sandstones are also present in many other areas of Scandinavia and Europe, so that the correlation does not determine the runestone's provenance. As the stone is compatible with the local bedrock, we still take as our point of departure in this article that the stone was carved in the Harstad area and raised close to its initial find location on the Ervika farm.

The archaeological and historical context of the runestone find

The find spot and exact context of the runestone fragment are difficult to reconstruct apart from the fact that it came from the area that is now the mentioned barn cellar at the historical farmyard of Ervika. This sits on a so-called settlement mound (also called farm mound), a widespread phenomenon in northern Norway, with some 8–900 recorded sites so far (Martens 2016). The distribution of settlement mounds is particularly dense in this coastal region of southern Troms County, with fifty-five registered monuments in Harstad municipality alone (Henriksen 2021). The mounds consist of remains of wood and turf buildings, household implements and trash, food remains like animal bones, and dung that has built up over centuries of habitation in the same spot. The phenomenon is closely associated with the coastline and a regional economic adaptation where fisheries have been combined with particularly sheep, goat, and cow husbandry. Farms were placed at convenient locations with access both to the ocean and good agricultural areas. Cereal growing has been of very limited importance due to climatic and local environmental and topographical conditions, resulting in dung being little used as fertilizer and instead accumulating into mounds along with other

[1] A few white lines and spots are probably scratches inflicted by an excavator grab during the processes that moved the stone from the farm of Ervika to a garden in Harstad in the late 1970s. A few brownish red spots could be residues of some sort, but they could also be clusters of the mineral hematite in the rock, which is an oxidized version of magnetite that is often found in metamorphic sandstones. It is noted in the museum catalogue that the broken end of the stone has been "burnt" (Ts. 8168), and Bergh confirms that the darker colour of the break end could be due to charcoal (pers. comm. S. Bergh 16 June 2021).

remains at the settlement site. Cultural layers in settlement mounds are notoriously complex due to the continuous settlement and reuse of building materials. Few extensive excavations of the site type have been conducted, but the data available suggest that most mounds have bottom layers from the eleventh to thirteenth century, while some go back to the Iron Age or even the Neolithic (Bertelsen 2018a with references). The settlement mound at Ervika has not been investigated or dated, but the farm features recorded stray finds and heritage sites dating from the Stone Age to the Early Modern Period. Minor excavations at Ervika's neighbouring farms to the north, Røkenes and Årnes, have provided evidence of these dating back to the Viking Age (Henriksen 2021, 16). It is likely that the Ervika farm also date back to this time. However, the exact chronological context of the runestone fragment is not possible to reconstruct, due to the extensive intrusions while building the barn cellar and the complex cultural layers.

It is still possible to evaluate the find context on a broader level. An important aspect of the Ervika farm and the runestone find here, is the proximity to Trondenes only 3.2 km farther east (Fig. 2). This was an Iron Age chieftain's farm and later a medieval church site of pivotal importance to northern Norwegian (and Norwegian) history. In Snorre Sturlusson's version of the King's sagas, Asbjørn of Trondenes is instrumental in the series of events that ultimately lead to the killing of King Olaf Haraldsson (later St. Olaf) in the battle of Stiklestad in 1030. At the same time, the narrative about Asbjørn is symptomatic of the transitional times in which he was living, including the religious change. According to Snorre, Asbjørn took over the farm when his father died in the early 1020s. He wanted to keep up his father's tradition of hosting large *blǫt* feasts three times a year (Holtsmark and Seip 1979a, 322). This was an old tradition in honour of the Norse gods, but it was adapted into a Christian custom with the conversion (Steinsland 2005, 275–77). The feasts prerequisited large amounts of grain for beer brewing, and as crops failed and the king forbad export of grain from the south to the north, Asbjørn desperately sought help with relatives in southwest Norway. They agreed to circumvent the king's prohibition and sell him grain. However, on his way back north, he was stopped by the king's administrator at the royal estate Avaldsnes, Tore Sel, and not only bereft of the purchased grain, but humiliated by losing the costly sail of his ship. He later kills Tore Sel, earning the name Asbjørn Selsbane ('Sel-killer'). Asbjørn avoided being killed for the offense but was instead offered to become the king's new administrator at Avaldsnes. Asbjørn agreed but never took up the position, because his uncle, the chieftain Tore Hund at Bjarkøy, an island just 20 km north of Trondenes, made him realize this would be a

degradation from running his own farm. Due to the added offense against King Olaf of not agreeing to become his administrator, Asbjørn was killed with a spear by Olaf's men as revenge. According to the saga, King Olaf was subsequently killed by Tore Hund with the same spear in the battle at Stiklestad in 1030. Afterwards miracles occurred related to the king's remains and he was subsequently sanctified (Holtsmark and Seip 1979a and b), which had great importance for the implementation of a Christian rule in Norway by his son King Magnus the good.

The Ervika farm sits on the west side of the Bergsvågen bay and looks straight onto Altevågen on the other side of the bay. Altevågen is a good natural harbour located on the opposite side of a ca. 300 m wide isthmus from the Trondenes farm. In Altevågen, you can still see the massive turf wall foundations of what used to be two large boathouses belonging to the Trondenes chieftains. The largest boathouse is ca. 30 metres long (Fig. 5) and has been partly excavated, yielding an Otto Adalhaide coin dating to 995–1040. Two charcoal samples from a hearth and another feature were radiocarbon dated to 1210±80 and 910±100 BP respectively (Bolstad and Matland 1996), here calibrated anew to 666–988 and 899–1282 (OxCal 4.4.4, Bronk Ramsey 2009, Reimer et al. 2020). This indicates use in the Late Iron Age and possibly into the early medieval period. The largest boathouse is shaped to give room for a long and narrow boat, which would be characteristic for a Viking Age warships. The other boathouse is shorter and broader and would fit a boat more suited for transportation of goods. If Asbjørn was a historical person and chieftain at Trondenes, it is highly plausible that he stored his ships in these boathouses in Altevågen. Thus, the dramatic events leading up to his killing and the subsequent killing of King Olaf can be said to start there.

Asbjørn's uncle Tore Hund of Bjarkøy features as an important antagonist in Snorre's King's sagas and a representative for the northern elites that opposed the king's expanding power. This political process went hand in hand with the Christianization of Norway, and this may be why it has become a common understanding among the general public that Tore also opposed this change of faith. However, the saga states that Tore Hund was the kings' man (lendman) before any of the dramatic events that culminated with the killing of King Olaf (Figenschow forthcoming). In the *Greater Saga of St. Olaf*, incorporated in the *Flateyar book*, Tore Hund is named among the lendmen who partook in the army that opposed and lost to King Olaf in the battle of Nesjar in 1016. According to this source, the king gave his opponents the choice of becoming his lendmen by swearing an oath of allegiance to him or to face death (Eikill 2016).

Tore Hund evidently swore the oath, since he survived, but it seems he was only granted the promised position during the Christening expedition of King Olaf to northern Norway around 1020 (Holtsmark and Seip 1979a, 310). This would arguably have prerequisited that Tore was a Christian (Bratrein 2018; Figenschow forthcoming), or at least that he agreed to be baptized, whether or not that affected his personal beliefs. The same is true of Asbjørn, who could not have been offered the position as the king's administrator on Avaldsnes, had he not been a Christian. More than representatives for the heathens, Tore and Asbjørn functions in the saga narrative as representatives for the power struggles during the kings' attempts to unify the Norwegian kingdom. As mentioned, these struggles were only overcome St. Olaf's son, King Magnus the Good, well helped by his father's sanctity, which sealed the conversion to Christianity in Norway. In fact, Tore Hund was among the first witnesses to the miracles associated with Olaf's dead body, claiming that Olaf's blood healed his wounds after the battle at Stiklestad. Thus, one might say that, according to Snorre, Asbjørn of Trondenes' actions in the 1020s ultimately resulted in the fact that Olaf was killed, sanctified, and remained Norway's eternal king (Fidjestøl 1987, 48).

While it is hard to know if individuals in the sagas did and said what is described, or indeed if they even existed, the story does testify to the importance of Trondenes as one of several large estates in this area. However, while the neighbouring Bjarkøy estate, where Tore Hund supposedly reigned, remained surprisingly resilient through centuries of both religious and political turbulences, the Trondenes estate appears to have been confiscated by the king early on, possibly after the killing of Asbjørn Selsbane in 1024. The estate was subsequently gifted to various branches of the Church (Andreassen and Bratrein 2011). During the Middle Ages it became an important canonry. A massive stone church was initiated here already in the late twelfth century, probably following one or several phases of wood churches. Even if the still-standing stone church was built in stages and apparently only finalized in the fifteenth century, the extensive foundation wall indicates plans for a church of the current size from the beginning (Bratrein 1970; Hansen 2003; Eide 2005). The church is surprisingly large for an area that must have been relatively sparsely populated in the Early Middle Ages, and it has been suggested that it served as a minster church during the earliest Christian period, housing several priests and alters. Preserved cadastres going back to the High Middle Ages show that the Trondenes church owned parts of farms in an extensive geographical area in the Middle Ages (Hansen 2003; Berg 2013). These cadastres are the first historical sources mentioning

Ervika, listing the farm as landed property belonging to the Trondenes church by the mid- and late fourteenth century (DN VI, 228; DN 6, 346; DN VI, 393; NG XVII, 23).

Apart from the strong association of Trondenes with Norse and Norwegian culture, it should be noted that the region was also home to Saami groups and individuals in the Viking Age and early medieval period (Johansen 2004). The Saami are stereotypically associated with reindeer herding, but they have had a variation of livelihoods and adaptations depending on local ecology and topography as well as changing contacts and interaction with neighbouring groups. We can see some clear differences in the archaeological material between mainly Norse and mainly Saami settlement areas, but both archaeological and historical sources indicate close and frequent contacts between the two groups, particularly in border zones and on the larger islands on the Atlantic coast, like Hinnøya, where Ervika and Trondenes are located. While maintaining their distinct cultural practices, with a different language and hunting and fishing as their main activities, it has been suggested that Saami groups were in a sense integrated into the Norse reciprocal economy in the Late Iron Age, supplying chieftains along the northern Norwegian coast with valuable goods like furs that were used to build and maintain these elites' power bases (Schanche 1986; Hansen 1990; Storli 1991; Hansen and Olsen 2014). At the same time, the Saami were clearly seen as culturally different from the Norse, and the early medieval missionary activity does not seem to have been aimed at Saami groups. They were mostly left to continue to practice their ethnic religion into the early modern period, though Saami individuals and groups who were in close contact with Norse or Norwegian groups appear to have adopted (some) Christian traditions and beliefs at an early stage (Rydving 1995; Mundal 2012; Rasmussen 2016).

Thus, the runestone fragment is found in an area that was at the centre of the religious and political tug of war in northern Norway at the time when it was carved, as well as an area of mixed cultural and religious influences. This adds to the significance of the Christian inscription on this memorial stone, particularly considering that it is one of only three runestones recorded in the vast geographical area of northern Norway, of which the two others appear to have been carved and raised in pre-Christian contexts.

Other rune finds in northern Norway

The geographically closest example of another runestone is the large Gimsøy stone from the farm Sande in Lofoten, some 115 km southwest of Ervika (Fig. 1). The ca. 700 kg Gimsøy

stone is now in the Arctic University Museum of Norway in Tromsø. Gerd Høst (1958) dates the inscription to the early tenth century and interprets it to read **.uki : asa : b: raisþa : uar : aft : .t.aþ : .i. : nafis : þa : is : asi : ... : þaþan : au..ua : staina : þisa :** (*l.ki, Åse's brother, erected this mound after ... Næfe's ... when Åse fled from hence, and also these conspicuous stones*). Based on the landscape context, other erected stones, and possible hollow roads that have been recorded or are mentioned in older written sources, archaeologist Gerd Stamsø Munch suggests that the Gimsøy runestone was part of a monument leading to a river crossing (Munch 1982a). This is a common placement in the landscape for memorial runestones within a Christian context, as building bridges and providing safe crossings of rivers was considered a pious Christian act, but river crossing also held particular significance in pre-Christian contexts (Sawyer and Sawyer 1993, 198; Lund 2005).

Another runestone called Langsteinen ('the Long Stone', *Runor* N A17) is found on island Lauvøy in Steigen, some 120 km south-southwest of Ervika as the crow flies. The runes on this stone are worn and have not been possible to interpret. The 4,25 m high stone slab has been dated to 200–600 based on its association with four gravemounds, though it is now separated from three of these by a modern road (*Askeladden* Id 37742). The landmark was knocked over by the road service during edge cutting in 2014, leaving it in three parts. In 2021, the stone was resurrected by help of a specially constructed steel framework.

Finds of other runic inscriptions have been few and far between in northern Norway. Apart from the impressive medieval stone church, Trondenes features a ca.16,000 m² settlement mound stretching under the diocese farm and in part the church itself. An early 1960s excavation of 80 m² uncovered eight house foundations, whereof the oldest was assumed to date to the thirteenth century (Ramstad 1964a; Bertelsen 2021). The perhaps most interesting find from the Trondenes excavation in our context is a wood stick with runes stratigraphically dated to the fourteenth century. The runes spell **fuþo^rkhnias(t)bmly** (*Runor* N A15), i.e. the *futhark* (Ramstad 1964b), and may be seen as a practice tool for someone learning to spell. One drinking horn from the island Hammarøy in Nordland County carries the inscription "*rooo*" (N 538, Olsen 1960). In recent years, another two runic inscriptions on spindle whorls have been found through metal detecting, which has also revealed several so-called runic letters (pers. comm. T-K Krokmyrdal, 2 December 2021, see below), but these have not been interpreted so far.

The northernmost find of a runic inscription in Norway is perhaps the most spectacular, as it is inscribed on a silver neckring from a hoard found in Botnhamn on Senja, Troms County. Runologist Magnus Olsen interpreted it to read §A *furu- trikia frislats a* §B *uit auk uiks fotum uir skiftum* (§A *We travelled to meet the valiant men of Frisia* §B *(and) we divided the spoils of the fight*) (N 540, Olsen 1960, 137–38), though Judith Jesch concludes that the runes more likely refer to trade with Frisia than war (Jesch 1997). The writing style and language has been dated to the early eleventh century, and Olsen notes that it could be carved by either a Norwegian or Swedish speaking person (Olsen 1960, 137–38). As mentioned, Aslak Liestøl noted that the runes on the Ervika stone seemed to be written in some 'odd dialect' (Munch 1982b). It would be interesting if further study could compare the language of the two contemporaneous inscriptions, perhaps considering if a particular northern Norwegian tongue may have influenced the runic language.

Returning to the three runestone sites in northern Norway, these are all at or close to what was central places in a wider geographical context in the Iron Age, a significance marked by i.a. remains of so-called courtyard sites at Gimsøy, Bjarkøy (close to Trondenes/Ervika), and at two locations in Steigen. These large structures of multiple rooms around a 'courtyard' are interpreted to have served as regional assembly sites for military, ritual, and legal thing gatherings (Storli 2006a; Iversen 2015a and b). While the courtyard site at Gimsøy and Bø in Steigen appear to have gone out of use in the seventh century, Bjarkøy and the Vollmo site in Steigen were in use into the Late Iron Age. The variation may reflect a centralization of the legal landscape. In the Middle Ages, a common thing for the entire Hálogaland was established at the assembly site of Steigen (Iversen 2015a and b), and the king's lendman for the region also had his seat at Steigen at least from the early twelfth century.

All the three runestone sites are also located nearby early medieval churches. Finds of Christian burials and a King Olaf Kyrre coin from 1065–1080 underneath the standing medieval Early Gothic stone church in Steigen indicate earlier church buildings at the site. There was also a medieval church at Vinje on Gimsøy (*Askeladden* Id 57833-2), though the oldest record of this is from a 1432 written source (Ulseth 1997, 162). As mentioned, the large church at Trondenes probably had earlier predecessors built from wood. Thus, it appears that the pre-Christian legal, administrative, and ritual significance of Steigen, Trondenes/Bjarkøy, and Gimsøy was maintained despite the conversion, establishing these landscapes as early Christian nodes in a form of spatially distributed cult continuity (Andrén 2013). This is further

substantiated by the rare stray finds of early medieval cross pendants from Vinje and Steigen respectively. Such cross-shaped objects may throw further light on the Christianization processes in northern Norway and increasingly so with the new finds that have been added to the museum collections in recent years.

Early medieval objects as expressions of Christianity

The introduction of 'Christian' objects, like crosses and crucifixes, does not necessarily reveal much about the personal beliefs of those who possessed the objects, but the influx of such sacral objects can be argued to reflect some degree of Christian influence (Bratrein 2018, 118). Our survey of finds of late Viking and early medieval (eleventh to twelfth century) crosses and crucifixes in northern Norway, reveals that they are surprisingly scarce. Jörn Staecker (1999a) lists six examples in his extensive overview of cross- and crucifix pendants from this period. The collection of the Arctic University Museum in Tromsø includes an additional seven cross-shaped or cross-related objects from the Early Middle Ages. Only two of these are artefacts missed or omitted by Staecker. The remaining objects have been recovered after 1999, mainly through private metal detecting, which has become increasingly popular. This has resulted in extensive new finds of metal artefacts, of which the finders are legally obligated to submit any finds older than 1537 (the Protestant Reformation in Norway), and coins older than 1650, to the regional university museums (as well as any Saami finds older than 1918). The find type composition may be affected by restrictions on where you are allowed to perform metal detecting, which is mainly in ploughsoil and away from protected heritage like medieval settlement and church sites. However, compared to small objects like coins, buckles, and so on, crosses and crucifixes remain remarkably rare.

Among the finds currently in the collections in Tromsø, there are many impressive and striking objects. Notably, the earliest cross and crucifix pendants originate east of the find places in northern Norway, or they are inspired by objects and ornamentation from the Eastern Church. Of the thirteen crosses and crucifixes recorded (Table 1, Fig. 1), there are four encolpia, of which only one, from Kjøpsvik, Tysfjord, is discussed by Staecker. He defines it as type 3.3.2, a subgroup only found in the Nordic countries and dated to ca. 1075–1125. It is considered a local copy of encolpia with the motive of Christ on one side and Mary praying in an antique manner with her hands stretched in the air on the other. The latter type of encolpia are widespread in Northwest Russia and down to the Black Sea, but the Nordic type has variations in the iconography indicating that the Maria orans motive has been

misunderstood as another crucified figure (Kielland 1927, 60–61; Staecker 1999, 164–72). In 2005, another encolpium of the same shape was found in a hoard at Workinnmarka in Tromsø, but here the Mary figure is correctly portrayed (Storli 2006b), possibly suggesting an eastern import. Half of yet another encolpium of a similar shape has been found in a Saami scree burial in Vatnan, Fauske, east of Bodø (Holberg 2019). This is decorated with a wheel cross and palmettes on the side that is preserved and has its closest parallel in the encolpium from the so-called bishop's hoard from Halikko, Joensuu, Finland, which is dated to the twelfth century (Schanche 2000, 404). The find context could indicate early Christian impulses in the coastal Saami communities. A fourth encolpium (Ts. 15395.1) found at Vinje in Lofoten in 2016, close to the medieval church site and about one kilometre west of the site of the Gimsøy runestone described above, belongs to Staecker's group 3.4.3. The type is dated to ca. 1050–1100. It is considered to be inspired by eastern or Byzantine crosses encolpia, though the distribution in Mid-Norway and East Sweden and the find of a mould in Trondheim suggests they were produced in Scandinavia (Staecker 1999, 184–91). In addition, a silver chain with zoomorphic fittings typical of the Early Middle Ages has been found in Jarfjord, Finnmark. According to the finder, this was originally attached to what appears to have been an encolpium that was removed and sold to a Russian captain (Ts. 1018).

The cross-shaped silver sheet pendant (Ts. 733) from a hoard from Flatvollen in the Lyngen fjord, Troms, is defined by Staecker as a cross of type 1.2.6 and dated to the eleventh century. He interprets this as inspired by sixth century Byzantine crosses. The type has only been found at two other sites, in Finland and on Gotland respectively, apart from a fourth similar find (Ts. 1652) in the hoard from Botnhamn (Staecker 1999, 103–05). In the latter hoard, three smaller cross pendants of the same type were hanging from the largest cross-shaped sheet pendant, and separated fragments of a neck-chain, possibly the same as the cross-shapes were attached to, carried several smaller axe-shaped silver sheet pendants. Furthermore, the hoard contained a crucifix of Staecker's type 2.1.3, which is dated to the eleventh century and frequently found in southeastern Europe as well as in Denmark, with dispersed finds in the Baltics and Northwest Russia. Some examples portray Maria orans in the fashion of the Eastern Church rather than Christ (Staecker 1999, 134–43). A Byzantine inspired crucifix of Staecker's type 2.1.2 was part of the lost silver hoard from the island Haukøy in Skjervøy, northern Troms. The type dates to the eleventh century and is usually found east of the Baltic Sea and in eastern and northern Sweden (Kielland 127, 61; Staecker 1999, 127–32). Another cross from Steigen (Ts. 4223) has no known find context. The type is dated to ca. 1000–1125

and commonly found in Northwest Russia, as well as in eastern and northern Sweden (Staecker 1999, 110–15). A Christ figure from the Haukøy hoard, which Staecker omits, has no known parallels, but it has been assumed to be from the eleventh century (Brøgger 1928, 28; Spangen 2005, 52–53). A somewhat younger find is a Christ figure found at Ankenes in Ofoten, Nordland, which has been dated to the late twelfth century (Kielland 1927, Fig. 48). A gilded bronze head of the crucified Christ was found close to the medieval church site in Steigen in 2019. It has been identified as Limoges art and stylistically dated to ca. 1200 (Ts. 15863).

There has been a long discussion within history and archaeology as to whether imports and objects of Christian importance are to be interpreted as signs of Christian influence and early Christianization (e.g. Mikkelsen 2002, 2019; Nordeide 2011a, 2020, 1645 with references). Things may change both functional and symbolic importance when introduced into new geographical, social, and cultural contexts, and they must be interpreted accordingly. Hence, it is interesting that, of the finds with known find contexts, only two early medieval crosses in northern Norway are associated with churches. One encolpium was found in a Saami grave, while seven of the 13 finds of cross-symbols have been made in the context of rich silver hoards. Such hoarding is widespread in areas of Norse influence during the Viking Age and has been interpreted in various ways, e.g. as treasures, wealth saved for the afterlife, bridewealth, or cenotaph burials (e.g. Grieg 1929; Burström 1993, Hårdh 1996, Myrberg 2009). Based on *Svarfdæla saga*, archaeologist Torun Zachrisson has proposed that the hoards demarcate borders (Zachrisson 1998). In northern Norway, the silver hoards feature a combination of jewellery of southwestern and eastern origins. Eastern jewellery is otherwise most commonly found in Saami contexts in northern Norway. The hoards also seem to be located in border zones between the Norse/Norwegian and the Saami population, and possibly also in symbolic and physical liminal zones in the local landscape (Olsen 2000; Spangen 2005, 2009, 2010). One interpretation is that ‘in-between’ groups with combined Norse and Saami affiliations were under pressure during the early medieval Christianization of the Norse population and thus sought towards a Saami identity, expressed through eastern jewellery, while also prolonging ritual practices related to a pre-Christian Norse identity, such as the hoarding (Spangen 2005, 2009, 2010).

However, the eastern origin or inspiration of the early encolpia and other crosses could indicate more direct eastern Christian influences, especially as they are largely found in

hoards in the border areas of the emerging Norwegian kingdom. Throughout the Middle Ages, Norwegian and Swedish kings and the rulers of Novgorod, and later Moscow, claimed and disputed each other's authority and rights to trade with and tax the Saami in large areas of today's Troms and Finnmark County, with reciprocal attacks between Russian/Karelian and Norwegian agents recorded in historical sources between 1250 and 1444 (Hansen and Olsen 2014, 160–62). Church building and presence through religion were key aspects of this power struggle. This is illustrated by the late 12th century Norse poem *Rimbegla*, which associates the border of the settled Norwegian land with the fjord Malangen in Troms and the world's northernmost church in Lenvik on the south side of this fjord (KLNM 4, 281). According to a written source, the church was burnt by the Russians sometime in the late 14th century (Bratrein 1977, 9), which insinuates the importance of religion in the ongoing conflicts. Ten kilometres farther west along this fjord we find the Botnhamn hoard, containing several 11th century cross symbols of eastern origin and the neckring with the Norse runic inscription, possibly suggesting a religious and political rivalry in the area earlier than the written sources attest to.

Apart from cross symbol pendants, we have few certain Christian symbols from the tenth and eleventh centuries in northern Norway. There are many examples of raised stone crosses from the Middle Ages in southern Norway, but this is not known north of Trøndelag (Nordeide 2011b). In northern Norway, the so-called Trollsteinen (*Askeladden* Id. 8417-1), "the Troll Boulder", is, to our knowledge, a unique (surviving) example of this sort of Christian demarcation in the landscape. A 75 cm tall cross has been carved into a large boulder. The cross was defined as Normannic by sculptor Arthur Gustavson in 1935 and thus dated to the Early Middle Ages (Rist-Anderssen 1966). A recent investigation of the carving comparing it to updated art historical typology suggests that it may date from somewhat later in the Middle Ages (Bertelsen 2018b). The boulder has been moved several times but is now situated close to its original location in the inner part of Kjerkvågen, "the Church Bay", in Lofoten, not far from the excavated medieval urbanized fishing village of Vágar in Storvågan. It is uncertain if Kjerkvågen is the location of the twelfth century church allegedly raised in Vágar by King Eystein Magnusson (1103–1123). The cross-marked boulder has been suggested to have been used as an altar in early Christian ceremonies or an offering stone for the local Saami population that was "Christianized" by carving the cross. Another possibility is that the cross marked the Christianization of the whole area and the takeover of this from local non-Christian Saami groups (Bertelsen 1998; Bertelsen 2008; Røskaft 2015, 254). However, there

is no other evidence for either a Christian or Saami ritual use of the stone, and the age and original meaning of the carved cross remains obscure.

Despite some variation in find circumstances, the quality, rarity, and find contexts of the early medieval Christian symbols in northern Norway, we find that they all point towards Christian expressions in elite contexts. Religious expressions of common people are more difficult to identify, but over the last few years, metal detecting has brought to light at least ten lead amulets (lead strips, usually bent or rolled up) with runic inscriptions in northern Norway (pers. comm. T-K Krokmyrdal, 2 December 2021). The individual inscriptions have not yet been interpreted, but these lead amulets usually contain Christian prayers and protective spells. They are thought to be expressions of the Christian faith of "ordinary" people. As they are usually found in ploughed fields, where metal detecting is allowed, and thus are without specific contexts, they are generally dated to the twelfth to the fifteenth century based on the characteristics of the runes carved on them (Steen 2017). Hence, until the individual inscriptions are interpreted and dated, it is difficult to know whether the northern Norwegian finds are expressions of early Christianization or the established Christian faith of the High Middle Ages.

Burials as evidence for religious change

As mentioned, saga stories about northern chieftains in opposition to the king has been conflated with a prevailing idea of consistent defiance against the early Christianization efforts in northern Norway. In line with this notion, it has been claimed that pre-Christian burial traditions were maintained in northern Norway well into the eleventh century, though the archaeological material has not been systematically studied to answer this question (Solberg 2000, 315; Røskaft 2015, 245). In a seminal overview of Iron Age finds in northern Norway, archaeologist Thorleif Sjøvold maintains that the burials he includes indicate persistent pre-Christian traditions in the region into the eleventh century. However, this is based on a definition of stray finds of weapons and jewellery as remains of destroyed burials, arguing that since similar stray finds are rare from the medieval period, when (Christian) burials did not contain gravegoods, stray finds of such objects from the previous centuries are likely to represent overplown or otherwise disturbed graves (Sjøvold 1974; see also Solberg 1985, 65). This can be discussed, as archaeological investigations of the find circumstances for singular weapons in southern Norway have indicated them to be deposits rather than burial goods (Lund 2005, 120), and metal detecting in later years is changing our understanding of both types of stray finds and their contexts (Fredriksen 2023). Yet, even if we accept

Sjøvold's argument and include stray finds of weapons and jewellery in an overview of Norse burials in northern Norway, very few non-Christian burials from the eleventh century can be identified with any certainty. Either the typological dating of the relevant objects is uncertain, or it covers both the tenth and the eleventh century (Table 2, see also Bratrein 2018, 118). In the vast study area of northern Norway, stretching some 1200 km from the south to the north and featuring a total of 737 Norse Iron Age graves (Sjøvold 1974), only nine graves, as defined above, are unanimously dated to the eleventh century, while another twentytwo may date to this century (Table 2). A thorough investigation of the content and context of these (presumed) graves is beyond the scope of this article, but it would be beneficial to future discussions about how long pre-Christian burial rites were maintained in different regions of the Far North.

Interestingly, the nine typologically dated eleventh century pre-Christian graves included by Sjøvold do not seem to be found in remote regions but in central Norse areas in the vicinity of early Christian nodes, for instance not far from the early Christian burials at Haug in Hadsel (see below), close to the medieval church and churchyard at the famous farm Borg in Lofoten, and on the farm Berg in Trondenes Parish, where a stray find of an eleventh century axe (Ts. 5665) has been interpreted as gravegoods. This was found ca. 1 km southwest of Ervika and 2 km southeast of the Trondenes medieval church (Sjøvold 1974, 137). In Romsdal in western Norway a similar "parallelism" in Christian and pre-Christian burial customs has been noted in the tenth century. It has been interpreted as an expression for a "symbolic warfare" in a time of cultural stress due to the Christianization process and related regional power struggles that included proving one's divine support (Solli 1996, 96, 111). When put in writing in the eleventh century, the Gulathing Law for western Norway strictly forbids burials in mounds, which suggests that this was a practice that still had to be actively opposed. In contrast, in the Rus empire, in today's Ukraine and Russia, which was officially Christianized in 988, burials continued to have pre-Christian traits, including gravegoods and mounds, into the eleventh and twelfth century, even in Christian burial grounds and in Christian urban environments. A similar tendency to preserve pre-Christian burial traits is evident in eastern Sweden. This underlines how morphology does not always reveal the religious affiliation of a burial (Jansson 2005, 38, 56–67). In Denmark too there seems to have been a high degree of religious tolerance around 1000, as Thor's hammers and barrow burials were made, even if the kings were all buried as Christians (Nordeide 2011a, 310). Such local variations and regional differences are not associated with the present national borders and must have

depended on the power balance between proponents for the new and the old faith, impulses from relevant contact networks, as well as pre-existing local and regional traditions.

Northern Norway covers a vast area and there was likely substantial variation in morphological traits in the Late Iron Age pre-Christian burial customs, which may have resulted in similar variations in early Christian graves (Nordeide 2011a, 287, 292–95). As mentioned, another factor was the presence of Saami groups who continued their ethnic religious and ritual practices, including specific burial rites. This may have affected the burial practices at the farm Haug in Hadsel, some 80 km southwest of Trondenes, where, underneath a large settlement mound, there are traces of possible Christian graves dating back to the tenth century, of which around thirty burials were discovered and excavated in the 1980s due to road construction work. Most of the graves in question show great variation in orientation and placement of the skeletons. Only a few of the deceased are placed in coffins on their back with their head to the west, as usually prescribed for Christian burials, but all the burials have very little gravegoods, and graves and coffins are dug into the ground and placed adjacently and sometimes on top of each other, which would be unusual for pre-Christian burials. Thus, the early radiocarbon dates of the burials came as a surprise. One skeleton of a biological female buried in a coffin (grave H, Ts. 8818) in the prescribed east-west direction, was dated to cal AD 955–1020. In grave HP2 (Ts. 8809) a male dated to cal AD 995–1110 was buried on his back with his hands on his chest. No coffin was found, and the direction of the grave is not recorded in the report. Another early coffin burial, grave A, was oriented east-southeast–west-northwest, though it contained the skeleton of a female positioned on her right side with the knees drawn up, a position not usually associated with Christian burials. The coffin wood was dated to cal AD 985–1165, but this could be due to reuse of old wood, which was documented for the coffin in grave H. Unit 46 (Ts. 8821) contained the burial of an 8–10 years old child dated to cal AD 980–1025, but specifics of the burial are not given in the report. The rest of the excavated burials are of later dates, morphologically diverse, and oriented in various directions (Sellevold 1996).

Studies in other regions suggest that medieval graves and churches did not always have an east-west direction but could be oriented according to the sunrise on Easter day, the solstices, the equinoxes and possibly also a range of other factors. However, once a church building was established, the surrounding burials would normally align with this (Kräuchi 2021; Ridderstad 2013). The excavations at Haug also revealed the foundations of two small houses with

flagstone floors that have been considered possible remains of small churches related to the graveyard. The find of a wood plank decorated in animal style has been suggested to be part of a church bench or other church furnishing (Sandmo 1990; Munch 1991; Sellevold 1996). The finds cannot be seen as conclusive, but they obviously add to the understanding of the site. If the building remains are old church or chapel houses, the variation in orientation of the graves at Haug could suggest that these are from a time before the building of a church house. Despite these quite ambiguous results, the Haug site is frequently quoted as the oldest example of Christian burials in northern Norway. In favour of that interpretation, one might note that early Christian burial sites were likely used by Christian congregations settled in a wider region, and these may have brought with them various ritual preferences. Despite some investigations of the morphology of Norse Iron Age grave monuments in the region (e.g. Holand 1989; Evensen 2003), we have limited knowledge about how the bodies were positioned in pre-Christian burials, making it difficult to establish if the variation in the burials at Haug could be related to such previous traditions. The burials may also have been influenced by Saami burial rituals mixing with early Christian impulses (Sellevold 1996). This interpretation has been presented for a well-preserved eleventh century burial in the unusual context of a bog at Skjoldehamn on Andøya, 44 km west of Ervika (Svestad 2021). The fact that early Christian burial sites and churches would be meeting places for congregations from a wider region, regularly attracted other activity such as trade and created Christian footholds for the king in strategic places (Nordeide 2011a, 305, 312–14). Recent metal detecting finds at Haug may indeed indicate trading activity here in the tenth century (Krokmyrdal 2021, 22–23), fitting well with this general pattern of early Christian influence.

Discussion

We have limited historical and archaeological sources to the local and regional Christianization processes in northern Norway, which makes the find of an early eleventh century Christian runestone in the Trondenes area all the more interesting. We have no way at present to know exactly where in the landscape this runestone was originally placed, but, in general, runestones with inscriptions containing the verb for standing, *standa*, such as the Ervika inscription, seem to have been deliberately placed in already defined contexts or by physical installations that would contribute to the cultural structuring of the landscape. Thus, such runestones tend to emphasize constructed places on the farm property, such as bridges, roads, burials, and even assembly (thing) sites (Zachrisson 1998, 168–169, 173). Another effect of raising a runestone with a Christian text may have been to Christianize important

places in a previously pagan landscape (Lund 2005), or, in this case, a landscape where non-Christian beliefs and rituals were still actively present. The cross in the Trollsteinen may be understood the same way. This need to mark parts of the landscape with Christian symbols can be said to reflect the medieval Christian belief that *all matter* was literally possessed by the devil and other evil forces. This could only be expelled through exorcism, i.e. by making present good counterforces. Still, sacredness was not securely embedded in matter, which could be profaned again (Nilsson 2021, 56, 59), making this an ongoing battle between good and evil. The consecration of Christian cemeteries, for instance, was of vital importance to drive evil spirits away so that the bodies could rest in peace, away from the heathen, unfaithful and excommunicated. At the same time, this provided the cemetery with the same legal immunity and privilege as a church (Nilsson 2021, 67). This can perhaps be transferred to wider landscapes, resulting in a need to physically mark the Christianization of the surroundings, and thereby marking the inclusion of the inhabitants in a specific social and legal order, such as the Christianization of the regional law communities previously associated with the courtyard sites. While silver hoards, as far as we know, were buried without visible signs overground, the placement of hoards containing Christian symbols in border areas towards the main Saami settlement area, and more locally in natural or cognitive liminal zones of the landscape, would also fit with a cosmology where there was a constant need for protection against the inherent evil of the surroundings.

The variation in the tenth to eleventh centuries burial practices in northern Norway may reflect a similar ambiguity as well as a power struggle through symbolic material expressions. It may also be related to the social status of different groups and individuals. The eleventh to twelfth century cross symbols appear to be related to elite contexts. On the other hand, the eleventh century pre-Christian burials are known because they are represented by finds of weapons such as spears and axes, suggesting that these too are related to high-status individuals. This could reflect a similar tendency as in Denmark, eastern Sweden, and Rus, with a degree of religious tolerance in the period of Christianization. To some extent this probably depended on group or individual access to knowledge about the appropriate Christian rituals. Leaders in society that were supporting and working for the Christian kings had priests brought in and ritual objects procured for the correct performance of the new faith, initially in proprietary churches on private farms. Still, Christian ways may have had many local variations, perhaps especially among those not in contact with priests on a daily basis. This may be what is expressed in the varied positioning of the dead in the burials at Haug.

However, Christian expressions among the wider population in northern Norway is difficult to identify as long as we only have evidence from one limited excavation of a possible early Christian burial site.

Gender may be another reason for variation. Two of the oldest Christian graves at Haug contain biologically female individuals, while the eleventh century finds Sjøvold (1974) believes are remnants of graves consist almost exclusively of weapons, which are usually, though not exclusively, associated with males (Table 2). The general picture in Norway does not imply that women were forerunners of the Christian faith, yet this may have been the case in some areas and social groups. The presence and influence of the Saami is a related complication in understanding the conversion process in northern Norway. The pre-Christian beliefs and religious customs of the Norse and the Saami have abundant overlap and have clearly affected each other (e.g. Mundal 1996, Price 2002, Solli 2003). While Christianization of the Norse population may have created a more antagonistic relationship with the generally non-Christian Saami population, there are also indications of some early Christian Saami individuals and communities (Mundal 2012, Rasmussen 2016). The local and regional variations in these inter-ethnic and multi-cultural contexts needs to be studied further to reveal how this influenced the local practices of the new Christian faith in different areas of northern Norway.

The eastern (-inspired) encolpia and cross symbols found in hoards in northern Norway indicate an eastern Christian influence that has been little discussed. Byzantine influence in the Nordic countries has been generally downplayed by researchers (Lind 2012), perhaps particularly for western Scandinavia, while the impulses from the east have been far more visible in the Baltic area, including eastern Sweden (Jansson 2005). Northern Norway stretches as far to the east as to the north, and historical and archaeological sources underline the constant contact and communication east-west. Yet, eastern influences have mainly been discussed concerning the Saami population and the Eastern church only concerning the Christianization of the eastern Saami groups in the sixteenth century (Hansen and Olsen 2014, 316). However, the Russian Orthodox Christianity has been suggested to have been influential in eastern parts of the Bothnian Bay before the Roman Catholic church was established here, only being repressed following the Russian-Swedish peace treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 (Widén 1964, 17-18, as referenced in Rasmussen 2016, 43–44). The eastern(-inspired) cross symbols in the hoards in northern Norway are evidently results of early medieval eastward contacts.

Looking beyond the Saami connection to these areas, they could potentially be the result of missionary attempts from the Eastern church. Another possibility is that they are the result of a more individual approach, where representatives for the Northern Norwegian elite adopted the type of Christianity they were exposed to on travels or through their networks. Perhaps this was the Christianity they implemented in their early proprietary churches, installing priests that could perform the rituals they had observed in churches in the east (Lind 2012, 351). This may not have been direct contacts to Russian areas, as very similar content is found in hoards in eastern Sweden, including encolpia and crosses associated with Byzantium (Hårdh 1996, 150–151; Zachrisson 1998, 210–211, 214–215; Storli 2006b, 187). On the other hand, eastern (-inspired) encolpia were not necessarily part of a particularly liturgic context, as encolpia were carried by Byzantine clergy and secular dignitaries alike (Staecker 1999, 59). Encolpia are fairly common in settlement contexts in North-West Russia (Makarov 2009, 548). In Scandinavia, they occur mainly as single finds or in hoards. The former could be related to settlements or defined as depositions, depending on the context (Staecker 1999, Table 4, Spangen 2005, 2010). In any case, the influx of eastern-inspired crosses and cross-shaped encolpia in northern Norway does hint at contact with Eastern Christianity, whether directly or through Swedish contacts. The variations in the burials at Haug, Hadsel, could potentially be related to such influences, since the Eastern Church was less strict in the ecclesiastical regulation of burial practices than in the Western Church (Lind 2012, 350).

If anything, both historical and archaeological evidence suggests that the eleventh century was a time of transition. From the evidence available so far, the position of the wealthy is most visible. It is clear from the sagas that the northern Norwegian chieftains at the turn of the last millennium were not necessarily opposed to becoming Christians. Taking the Christian faith would be a prerequisite for maintaining a good relationship with the Christian kings, which again would ensure the chieftains' social and economic position in a changed social order. A runestone like the one from Ervika is likely to have been commissioned by someone of means, which would fit well with the fact that the elite in this area seems to have allied with Christian kings at a relatively early stage. This underlines that the conflict between King Olaf Haraldsson and the Hålogaland chieftains was not primarily a religious conflict, but a power struggle. This is further emphasized by the king's apparent confiscation of the Trondenes estate, including Ervika, possible already after the death of Asbjørn, and its consequent transfer to the Church, which is likely to have happened soon after. It would be of importance

to the king to place a large church institution just here, making a point of the new order of the world; the power was now with one god and one king (Hansen 2000, 135).

The establishment of a large church at Trondenes may also have served as a counterweight to the powerful Tore Hund, who resided on the island Bjarkøy only 20 km farther north, and any subsequent leaders of the Bjarkøy family. The owners here kept their massive estate through several phases of opposition to the Norwegian kings in the Middle Ages (Andreassen and Bratrein 2011). As the name Tore (Thorir) occurs on the runestone from Ervika, it may be tempting to relate the inscription directly to the saga character Tore Hund, who is described as the king's man and thus implicitly a Christian. Presuming Tore was a living historical person, it appears that he became a more devote Christian with the death of Olaf Haraldsson. Tore exits the sagas by leaving for a pilgrimage to the Holy land (Holtsmark and Seip 1979b, 131) and we are not told when, where, or how he died. It is known that runestones were erected in memory of relatives that went away on raids, trade, or crusade never to come back. If the commissioner of the stone, Koll, had been known from the sagas as someone close to Tore, such a connection and motive behind the stone could perhaps have been discussed. However, the name Koll is not mentioned in the sagas concerning Tore Hund. Tore was a common name, and thus an association of the runestone with Tore Hund would be pure speculation.

The conversion process of the elite may have been relatively swift, but this does not rule out a more long-drawn process of general Christianization in the region, with many religious and cultural impulses shaping the ritual and material expressions over time. Further archaeological investigations of relevant object and sites are necessary to illuminate this question.

Conclusion

In this article, we have presented and discussed a runestone fragment found in Ervika in Harstad, northern Norway, in the early 1980s. The eleventh century Christian inscription on this top part of a larger runestone inspired a wider survey of Christian symbols and burial customs in northern Norway to explore what we know about the Christianization in this part of the country. Both runestones and Christian symbols are not surprisingly related to elite environments, but pre-Christian customs also seem to have been maintained in these milieus into the tenth and possibly the eleventh century. On the other hand, the great variation in morphological traits of the tenth and eleventh century graves at a probable early Christian cemetery at Haug, Hadsel, suggest that the buried individuals were from a variety of

backgrounds or had a variety of interpretations of the Christian ways. This could be due to the dual cultural context, as northern Norway was settled by two main ethnic and cultural groups, the Norse and the Saami or to contacts with eastern Sweden, the Baltics, and today's northwest Russia, which brought impulses from Eastern Christianity. Christian objects are not, however, necessarily indicative of conversion or personal faith, and the material is somewhat skewed due to the particular find contexts of the crosses and crucifixes we are aware of so far. More systematic archaeological investigation of medieval Christian burial grounds and church sites are needed to understand the Christianization of northern Norway. This should be particularly interesting as we are fast approaching the national celebration of the millennial anniversary for the battle of Stiklestad in 1030, popularly understood as the turning point for the Christianization in Norway and largely associated with conflicts with chieftains in the north and particularly those of the neighbouring estates to Ervika. To summarize, early medieval northern Norway presents a complex conversion situation that has not been systematically explored. What appears evident is that the Christian conversion in this region cannot be understood as a blueprint of the processes farther south.

Acknowledgements

This article was mainly researched and written while Marte Spangen was employed at UiT – the Arctic University of Norway.

Works cited

Primary sources

Arntzen, Johan E. 2022. *High resolution 3D-scan of the runestone from Ervik (Ts. 8168), Harstad municipality*, DataverseNO, V1, https://doi.org/10.18710/LICDPT, DataverseNO, V1 [last visited 26 May 2023]

Askeladden = Norwegian online digital heritage site database (password restricted). askeladden.ra.no [last visited 23 May 2023]

DN = *Diplomatarium Norvegicum. Oldbreve til kundskab om Norges indre og ydre forhold, sprog, slægter, sæder, lovgivning og rettergang i middelalderen*, 1874-2001, 23 volumes (ed. C.C.A. Lange, C.R. Unger et al.), Christiania/Oslo, available online at: https://www.dokpro.uio.no/dipl_norv/diplom_felt.html [last visited 29 March 2022]

Eikill, Edvard, trans. (ed. Torgrim Titlestad and Elisabeth A. Rowe). 2016. *Flatøybok*, volume 3, Stavanger: Saga bok

Holtsmark, Anne, and Didrik Arup Seip, trans. 1979a (ed. Hødnebø, Finn, and Hallvard Magerøy). *Norges kongesagaer*, volume 1, Oslo: Gyldendal

Holtsmark, Anne, and Didrik Arup Seip, trans. 1979b (ed. Hødnebø, Finn, and Hallvard Magerøy). *Norges kongesagaer*, volume 2, Oslo: Gyldendal

Markali, Kjersti. 1983. 'Ad. runesteinen fra Ervik, Harstad', letter of 27 June 1983, the Runic Archives, Oslo: Museum of Cultural History.

Munch, Gerd Stamsø. 1982b. 'Vedr. runestenen fra Ervik, Harstad kommune, Troms', note 775/82/57214, farm no. 79/1, topographic archive, farm no. 79/1, Harstad municipality, Tromsø: The Arctic University Museum of Norway

Munch, Gerd Stamsø. 1983. 'Vedrørende runestenen fra Ervik, Harstad kommune', letter 993/83/57214/GSM/so, topographic archive, farm no. 79/1, Harstad municipality, Tromsø: The Arctic University Museum of Norway

NG = *Norske Gaardnavne*, 1897-1936, 17 volumes (ed. Oluf Rygh), Cristiania/Oslo, available online at: https://www.dokpro.uio.no/rygh_ng/rygh_felt.html [last visited 29 Mar 2022]

Runor = Scandinavian runic text database. Available at https://app.raa.se/open/runor/search [last visited 29 March 2022]

Ulseth, Tor, trans. 1997 (ed. Jørgensen, Jon Gunnar). *Aslak Bolts jordebok*, Oslo: Riksarkivet

Secondary sources

Andreassen, Reidun L., and Håvard D. Bratrein. 2011. 'Finnmark, Bjarkøy and the Norwegian kingdom', in *Hybrid spaces. Medieval Finnmark and the archaology of multi-room houses*, ed. Bjørnar Olsen, Przemysław Urbanczyk, and Colin Amundsen, Oslo: Novus Press, 315–328

Andrén, Anders. 2013. 'The significance of places: the Christianization of Scandinavia from a spatial point of view', *World Archaeology*, 45(1), 27–45

Berg, Sigrun H. 2013. 'Trondenes kannikgjeld - makt og rikdom gjennom seinmellomalder og reformasjon', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Tromsø)

Bertelsen, Reidar. 1998. 'Vågan kirkested fra tusenårsskiftet til 1300-tallet', in *Fra kong Øysteins kirke til Lofotkatedralen. Vågan kirke 100 år*, ed. Håkon Brun, Kabelvåg: Vågan menighetsråd, 12–23

Bertelsen, Reidar. 2008. 'Vágar i de første to hundreårene: en annerledes bydannelse', in *De første 200 årene. Nytt blikk på 27 skandinaviske middelalderbyer*, ed. Hans Andersson, Gitte Hansen, and Ingvild Øye, Bergen: University of Bergen, 125–134

Bertelsen, Reidar. 2018a. 'The origin and development of the fisher-farmer economy in Hálogaland', in *Gruel, Bread, Ale and Fish. Changes in the Material Culture Related to Food Production in the North Atlantic 800-1300 AD*, ed. Ditlev L. Mahler, Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 107–118

Bertelsen, Reidar. 2018b. 'Trollsteinen i Kjerkvågen', manuscript for Nordland fylkesleksikon

Bertelsen, Reidar. 2021. ‘Nesten usynlig, men viktig kulturminne på Trondenes’, *Årbok for Harstad*, Harstad: Harstad historielag, 72–81

Bolstad, Magne, and Susan Matland. 1996. ‘Stornaustet på Trondenes’, *Ottar* 212, 38–41

Bratrein, Håvard D. 1970. ‘Befolkningsforhold og kirkebygging nord for Malangen i eldre middelalder’, *Håløygminne* 51(3), 68–87

Bratrein, Håvard D. 1977. ‘Russesagn i Nord-Norge’, *Ottar* 94-95, 5–12.

Bratrein, Håvard D. 2018. *Høvding, jarl, konge. Nord-Norges politiske historie i vikingtid. Ei annerledes fortelling*, Stamsund: Orkana

Bronk Ramsey, Christopher. 2009: ‘Bayesian analysis of radiocarbon dates’, *Radiocarbon* 51(1), 337–360

Brøgger, Anton W. 1928. ‘Håløygenes bjarmelandsferder’, in *Festskrift til rektor J. Qvigstad*, (no eds.), Tromsø museums skrifter 2, Tromsø: Tromsø Museum

Burström, Mats. 1993. ‘Silver as Bridewealth. An Interpretation of Viking Age Silver Hoards on Gotland, Sweden’, *Current Swedish Archaeology* l, 33–37

Eide, Ole E. 2005. *Trondenes kirke: fra 1200-tallet eller fra senmiddelalderen?* Harstad: Trondarnes distriktsmuseum

Evensen, Børge. 2003. ‘Gravholmer. Gravlokalisering og samfunn i jernalder i Vesterålen’ (unpublished hovedfag thesis, University of Tromsø)

Fidjestøl, B. 1987. ‘Legenda om Tore Hund’, in *Festskrift til Alfred Jakobsen*, ed. Jan Ragnar Hagland, Jan Terje Faarlund, and Jarle Rønhovd, Trondheim: Tapir, 38–51

Figenschow, Stefan. Forthcoming. ‘Her skal du få kjenne en bjarkøying! Om Tore Hunds ettermæle’, manuscript

Fredriksen, Caroline. 2023. ‘‘Funnet med metallsøker i dyrket mark’. En relasjonell studie av norsk praksis overfor privat metallsøking og pløyelagsfunn som vitenskapelig kildemateriale’, (unpubished PhD thesis, NTNU)

Grieg, Sigurd. 1929. *Vikingetidens skattefund*, Universitetets, Oldsaksamlings Skrifter 2, Oslo: University of Oslo

Hansen, Lars Ivar. 1990. *Samisk fangstsamfunn og norsk høvdingeøkonomi*, Oslo: Novus

Hansen, Lars Ivar. 2000. *Astafjord bygdebok. Historie 1. Fra eldre jernalder til ca. 1570*, Lavangen: Lavangen kommune

Hansen, Lars Ivar. 2003. Trondenes kannikgjeld, in *Ecclesia Nidrosiensis 1153-1537. Søkelys på Nidaroskirkens og Nidarosprovinsens historie*, ed. Steinar Imsen, Sentre for middelalderstudier, Skrifter 15, Trondheim: Tapir forlag, 255–277

Hansen, Lars Ivar, and Bjørnar Olsen. 2014. *Hunters in Transition. An Outline of Early Sámi History*, Leiden: Brill

Henriksen, Jørn E. 2021. *Røkenes gård. Arkeologisk overvåking, gnr./bnr. 81/1, Harstad kommune, Troms og Finnmark fylke*, Tromura rapportserie 61, Tromsø: The Arctic University Museum of Norway

Holand, Ingjerd. 1989. Graver og samfunn. Samfunnsutvikling og -organisasjon i Nord-Hålogaland i jernalderen, basert på endringer og variasjon i gravskikk, (unpublished magister thesis, Tromsø: University of Tromsø)

Holberg, Eirin. 2019. 'Samisk busetnad i endring, Kulturmiljø og etnisitet i vikingtid og tidlig mellomalder i Sør-Salten, Nordland', in *Arkeologi og kulturhistorie fra norskekysten til Østersjøen. Festskrift til professor Birgitta Berglund*, Vitark vol. 11, ed. Ragnhild Berge and Merete Moe Henriksen, Trondheim: NTNU Vitenskapsmuseet/Museumsforlaget, 116–132

Høst, Gerd. 1958. 'Innskriften på Gimsøystenen', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap* XVIII

Hårdh, Birgitta. 1996. *Silver in the Viking Age. A Regional-Economic Study*, Acta archaeologica Lundensia 8(25), Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell International

Iversen, Frode. 2015a. 'Community and Society: The Thing at the Edge of Europe', *Journal of the North Atlantic* 8, 1–17

Iversen, Frode. 2015b. 'Hålogaland blir en rettskrets', *Heimen* 52(2), 01–116

Jansson, Ingmar. 2005. 'Situationen i Norden och Österuropa för 1000 år sedan. En arkeologs synpunkter på frågan om östkristna inflytanden under missionstiden', in *Från Bysans till Norden. Östliga kyrkoinfluenser under vikingatid och tidig medeltid*, ed. Henrik Janson, Skellefteå: Artos, 37–95

Jesch, Judith. 1997. The Senja Neck-ring and Viking Activity in the Eleventh Century, *Blandade runstudier* 2, 7–12

Kielland, Thor. 1927. *Norsk guldsmedkunst i middelalderen*, Oslo: Steenske Forlag

Kräuchi, Kurt. 2021. 'How has a Christian church been aligned towards the East? Conclusions from statistical analyses of churches built between 300 and 1300', *Archaeometry* 63(3), 668–683

Krokmyrdal, T.-K. 2021. 'Sandtorg. En vareutvekslingsplass gjennom 1100 år', *Primitive Tider* (23), 7–26.

KLNM. 1956–1978. *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, Oslo: Gyldendal

Kornsæther, C. 2013. 'Fra angelsaksisk [y-run] til skandinavisk [y-run]? En undersøkelse av teorien om angelsaksisk forelegg for de skandinaviske punkterte runene' (unpublished master thesis, University of Oslo)

Larsson, Patrik. 2004. 'Personnamnstolkning och läsordning. Till tolkningen av runföljden anasuiþr på Norralastenen (Hs 2)', *Blandade Runstudier* 3, 43–56

Lind, John. 2012. 'Darkness in the East? Scandinavian Scholars on the Question of Eastern Influence in Scandinavia during the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages', in *From Goths to Varangians. Communication and Cultural Exchange between the Baltic and the Black Sea*, ed. Line Bjerg, John Lind, and Søren Sindbæk, Black Sea Studies 15, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 341–367

Lund, Julie 2005. 'Thresholds and Passages: The Meanings of Bridges and Crossings in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 1, 109–135

Makarov, Nikolai A. 2009. ‘Archeological research into Northeastern Rus’: Colonization and cultural traditions’, *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences* 79(6), 541–553

Martens, Vibeke V. 2016. ‘North Norwegian Farm Mounds - economic resources and landscape conditions’, in *Agrarian technology in the medieval landscape*, ed. Jan Klápště, Ruralia 10, Turnhout: Brepols, 173–183

Mikkelsen, Egil. 2002. ‘Handel - misjon - religionsmøter : impulser fra buddisme, islam og kristendom i Norden 500-100 e.Kr.’, *Viking* 65, 91–136

Mikkelsen, Egil. 2019. *Looting or missioning. Insular and continental sacred objects in Viking age contexts in Norway*, Oxford: Oxbow books

Munch, Gerd Stamsø. 1982a. ‘Bautastener og vei. Et forsøk på nytolkning av reiste sten på Gimsøy i Lofoten’, *Viking* 45, 105-116

Munch, Gerd S. 1991. ‘Den dekorerte planken fra Haug i Hadsel’, *Årbok for Foreningen til norske fortidsminnesmerkers bevaring* 1991, 247–252

Mundal, Else. 1996. ‘The Perception of the Saamis and Their Religion in Old Norse Sources’, in Shamanism and Northern Ecology, ed. Juha Pentikäinen, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 97–116

Mundal, Else. 2012, ‘Kong Håkon Magnussons rettarbot for Hålogaland av 1313 og andre kjelder til kristninga av samane i mellomalderen’, in *Fjǫld veit hon fræða: Utvalde arbeid av Else Mundal*, ed. Odd Einar Haugen, Bernt Øyvind Thorvaldsen and Jonas Wellendorf, Oslo: Novus, 339–58

Myrberg, Nanouschka. 2009. ‘The hoarded dead. Late Iron Age silver hoards as graves’, in *On the threshold. Burial archaeology in the twenty-first century*, ed. Ing-Marie Back Danielsson, Stockholm: Stockholm University

Nilsson, Bertil. 2021. ‘Materiality in Medieval Episcopal Rites: Some Examples’, in *Materiality and religious practice in medieval Denmark*.Acta Scandinavica, ed. Sarah Croix and Michael V. Heilskov, Turnhout: Brepols, 51–70

Nordeide, Sæbjørg W. 2011a. *The Viking Age as a Period of Religious Transformation: The Christianization of Norway from AD 560–1150/1200*, Studies in Viking and Medieval Scandinavia 2, Turnhout: Brepols

Nordeide, Sæbjørg W. 2011b. Steinkors og korssteiner i nordvestre Europa, *Collegium medievale* 24, 127–148

Nordeide, Sæbjørg W. 2020. ‘The Christianization of Norway’, in *The pre-Christian religions of the North. History and structures* 4, ed. Jens Petter Schjødt, John Lindow and Anders Andrén, Turnhout: Brepols, 1623–1647

Olsen, Magnus. 1960. *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer* 5, Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt

Olsen, Bjørnar. 2000. ‘Belligerent Chieftains and Oppressed Hunters? Changing Conceptions of Inter- Ethnic Relationships in Northern Norway during the Iron Age and Early Medieval Period’, in Identities and cultural contacts in the Arctic, eds. Martin Appelt, Joel Berglund, and Hans Christian Gulløv, Danish polar Center Publication 8, 28–42, Copenhagen: Danish Polar Center

Price, Neil. 2002. *The Viking Way. Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*, Uppsala: Uppsala University

Ramstad, Yngvar. 1964a. 'Runepinnen fra Trondenes prestegård', *Ottar 17*, 5–6

Ramstad, Yngvar. 1964b. 'Utgravningene på Trondenes', *Ottar 17*: 3–4

Rasmussen, Siv. 2016. 'Samisk integrering i norsk og svensk kirke i tidlig nytid. En komparasjon mellom Finnmark og Torne lappmark', (unpublished PhD thesis, UiT – the Arctic University of Norway)

Reimer, P. J., W. E. N. Austin, E. Bard, A. Bayliss, P. G. Blackwell, C. Bronk Ramsey, M. Butzin, H. Cheng, R. Lawrence Edwards, M. Friedrich, P. M. Grootes, T. P. Guilderson, I. Hajdas, T.H. Heaton, A. G. Hogg, K. A. Hughen, B. Kromer, S. W. Manning, R. Muscheler, J. G. Palmer, C. Pearson, J. van der Plicht, R. W. Reimer, D. A. Richards, E. Marian Scott, J. R. Southon, C. S. M. Turney, L. Wacker, F. Adolphi, U. Büntgen, M. Capano, S. M. Harni, A. Fogtmann-Schulz, R. Friedrich, P. Köhler, S. Kudsk, F. Miyake, J. Olsen, F. Reinig, M. Sakamoto, A. Sookdeo, S. Talamo. 2020. 'The IntCal20 Northern Hemisphere Radiocarbon Age Calibration Curve (0–55 cal kBP)', *Radiocarbon* 62(4), 2020, 725–757

Ridderstad, M. 2013. 'Orientations of the Medieval Stone Churches in Finland', *Suomen Museo* 119, 5–44.

Rist-Anderssen, Cecilie. 1966. *Trekk av Vågans historie*, Bergen: J. W. Eides boktrykkeri

Rydving, Håkan. 1995. *The end of drum-time. Religious change among the Lule Saami, 1670s-1740s*, Uppsala: Uppsala university

Røskaft, Merethe. 2015. Religionsskifte i ei brytningstid, in *Nordlands historie* 1. *Håløygriket. Før 1600*, ed. Holberg, Eirin and Merete Røskaft, Bergen: Fagbokforlaget Vigmostad og Bjørke, 241–263

Sandmo, Anne-Karine. 1990. 'Haug i Hadsel. Gårdshaug med graver og mulige kirkerester', *Arkeologisk feltarbeid i Nord-Norge og på Svalbard 1987*, ed. Ericka Engelstad and Inger-Marie Holm Olsen, Tromura 17, 51–78.

Sawyer, Birgit, and Peter Sawyer. 1993. *Medieval Scandinavia. From Conversion to Reformation circa 800—1500*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Schanche, Audhild. 1986. 'Nordnorsk jernalderarkeologi. Et sosialgeografisk perspektiv', (unpublished magister thesis, University of Tromsø)

Schanche, Audhild. 2000. *Graver i ur og berg. Samisk gravskikk og religion fra forhistorisk til nyere tid*, Davvi Girji OS, Karasjok

Sellevold, Berit J. 1996. *Haug på Hadseløya: en gravplass fra kristningstiden. Antropologiske undersøkelser av skjelettmaterialet*, Oslo: Norsk institutt for kulturminneforskning

Sellevold, Berit J. 2004. Trosskiftet og gravskikken i Norge: et spørsmål om kontinuitet, in *Religionsskiftet i Norden. Brytinger mellom nordisk og europeisk kultur 800-1200 e.Kr.*, ed. Magnus Rindal, Oslo: Senter for studier i vikingtid og nordisk middelalder, 139–158

Sjøvold, Thorleif. 1974. *The Iron Age settlement of Arctic Norway. A study in the expansion of European Iron Age culture within the Arctic Circle* 2: *Late Iron Age (Merovingian and Viking periods)*, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget

Solberg, Bergljot. 1985. 'Social status in the Merovingian and Viking periods in Norway from archaeological and historical sources', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 18(1–2), 61–76

Solberg, Bergljot. 2000. *Jernalderen i Norge; ca. 500 f.Kr.-1030 e.Kr*, Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk

Solli, Brit. 1996. 'Narratives of encountering religions: On the Christianization of the Norse around AD 900-1000', *Norwegian archaeological review* 29(2), 89–114.

Solli, Brit. 2003. *Seid. Myter, sjamanisme og kjønn i vikingenes tid*, Oslo: Pax

Spangen, Marte. 2005. 'Edelmetalldepotene i Nord-Norge. Komplekse identiteter i vikingtid og tidlig middelalder', (unpublished MA thesis in archaeology, University of Tromsø)

Spangen, Marte. 2009. 'Silver hoards in Sami areas', in *Recent perspectives on Sámi archaeology in Fennoscandia and North-West Russia*, eds. Petri Halinen, Mika Lavento, and Mervi Suhonen, Iskos 17, Helsinki: Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistys, 94–106

Spangen, Marte. 2010. 'Guder-makter-mennesker-ting. Om deponering av sølv som offer', *Viking* 73, 61–80

Spurkland, Terje. 2005. *Norwegian runes and runic inscriptions*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press

Staecker, Jörn. 1999a. *Rex regum et dominus dominorum. Die wikingerzeitlichen Kreuz- und Kruzifixanhänger als Ausdruck der Mission in Altdänemark und Schweden*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International

Staecker, Jörn. 1999b. 'Thor's Hammer - Symbol of Christianization and Political Delusion', *Lund Archaeological Review* 5, 89-104

Steen, Ida-Desiré. 2017. 'Rituelle deponeringer i middelalder Norge - En undersøkelse av blyamuletters kontekst og inskripsjon' (unpublished master thesis, University of Oslo)

Steinsland, Gro. 1990. 'Antropologiske og eskatologiske ideer i førkristen nordisk religion', *Collegium medievale* 3(1), 59–72

Steinsland, Gro. 2005. *Norrøn religion. Myter, riter, samfunn*, Oslo: Pax

Storli, Inger. 1991. 'De østlige smykkene fra vikingtid og tidlig middelalder', *Viking* 54, 89–104

Storli, Inger. 2006a. *Hålogaland før rikssamlingen. Politiske prosesser i perioden 200-900 e.Kr.*, Oslo: Novus

Storli, Inger. 2006b. 'Sølvskatten fra Tromsø: en symbolsk forening av tid, rom og kosmologi?', *Viking* 69, 169–164

Svestad, Asgeir. 2021. 'Buried in Between: Re-interpreting the Skjoldehamn Medieval Bog Burial of Arctic Norway', *Medieval Archaeology* 65(2), 286–321

Trædal, Vidar. 2008. ‘Kirkesteder og kirkebygninger i Troms og Finnmark før 1800’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Tromsø)

Widén, Bill. 1964. *Det lapska prästerskapet under 1600-talet. Uppkomst, ekonomi samt levnads och arbetsvillkor*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi

Zachrisson, Torun. 1998. *Gård, gräns, gravfält. Sammanhang kring ädelmetalldepåer och runstenar från vikingatid och tidig medeltid i Uppland och Gästrikland*, Stockholm Studies in Archaeology 15, Stockholm: Stockholm University