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**RUNESTONE IMAGES AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION
IN VIKING AGE SCANDINAVIA**

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**Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is the visual analysis of the corpus of Viking Age Scandinavian memorial stones that are decorated with figural images. The thesis presents an overview of the different kinds of images and their interpretations. The analysis of the visual relationships between the images, ornamentation, crosses, and runic inscriptions identifies some tendencies in the visual hierarchy between these different design elements. The contents of the inscriptions on runestones with images are also analysed in relation to the type of image and compared to runestone inscriptions in general. The main outcome of this analysis is that there is a correlation between the occurrence of optional elements in the inscription and figural images in the decoration, but that only rarely is a particular type of image connected to specific inscription elements.

In this thesis the carved memorial stones are considered as multimodal media in a communicative context. As such, visual communication theories and parallels in commemoration practices (especially burial customs and commemorative praise poetry) are employed in the second part of the thesis to reconstruct the cognitive and social contexts of the images on the monuments and how they create and display identities in the Viking Age visual communication.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Approaching runestones

1.1 Introduction

It is well known that the design of the Viking Age memorial stones of Scandinavia generally consists of decoration and runic text. On a relatively small group of monuments (6%) this decoration includes figural images. The function of these images in the communicative context of the memorial stone is the subject of this thesis. This first chapter offers a general introduction to the runestones and their general function and perception. The specific corpus of memorial stones with images, the interpretations of these images, and the inscriptions on these monuments are discussed in the following chapters. This introductory chapter further provides an overview of previous research that is relevant to the research questions of this thesis. The theoretical frameworks and the methodologies that are used to answer these questions are also introduced. Alongside this, the structure of this thesis is explained and some terminology is discussed at the end of this chapter.

1.2 Introduction to the material

In Scandinavia, people of considerable economic standing commissioned stones to be carved with runes and decoration in commemoration of mainly deceased family members during the Migration Period, the Viking Age, and the early Middle Ages.¹ These monuments are generally called runestones, named after the runic inscriptions

¹ The Scandinavian Middle Ages are asynchronous with the European Middle Ages. The latter are divided into the early Middle Ages (fifth-tenth century), the high Middle Ages (eleventh and twelfth centuries), and the late Middle Ages (thirteenth-early sixteenth century). The Scandinavian Middle Ages consist of the early Middle Ages (c. 1050-1350) and the late Middle Ages (until the Reformation c. 1530), which are preceded by the Viking Age that began in the late eighth century.

on most of them, but there are also monuments with decoration only.

This thesis is mainly concerned with the memorials that are dated to the Viking Age. The monuments are dated on a combination of their runological, linguistic, and ornamental features, and where possible on their archaeological context.² Approximately three thousand complete and partial stone monuments of this kind have survived in Scandinavia.³ Two fragments were found in the Baltic region and one runestone on the Berezanij island in the Black Sea.⁴ Just over thirty Viking Age stones inscribed with a Scandinavian memorial inscription remain in the British Isles, next to a handful of fragments that may have belonged to similar memorial stones.⁵ In addition to this, carved stones and fragments thereof are still (re-)discovered regularly.

The memorial stones are not distributed evenly over Scandinavia, chronologically or geographically. There are several pre-Viking Age runestones, the oldest of which are in Norway. Tenth-century Denmark saw the start of runestone raising as it was practised during the Viking Age. Currently, approximately 230 monuments are known from this area.⁶ From there, the fashion seems to have spread to Sweden, where it reached its peak in the eleventh century. More than 2700 stones are known from Sweden, while in comparison Norway accounts for roughly fifty Viking Age runestones.

Approximately half of the Swedish stones were raised during the eleventh

² The dating of the monuments is included in the information in the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*. Because this database is regularly updated with new datings, I have followed this database, with a few exceptions.

³ See Chapter 2.3.

⁴ X FiNOR1998;14; X LtRR1987;248; X UaFv1914;47. The monuments and inscriptions in this thesis are referred to by the *sigla* they have in the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*. DR = Denmark; G = Gotland; Gs = Gästrikland; N = Norway; Nä = Närke; Öl = Öland; Ög = Östergötland; Sm = Småland; Sö = Södermanland; U = Uppland; Vg = Västergötland; Vs = Västmanland; BR = British Isles; IR = Ireland; Jä = Jämtland; X = other regions, including the Baltic.

⁵ Roughly twenty-five in the Isle of Man (on grave slabs and crosses), four in Scotland, two in Ireland, two in Shetland, one in London (Page 1983; Holman 1996, 7; *IR*, 1, 53-59; Barnes and Page 2006). The memorials with figural decoration among these are discussed briefly in Chapter 2.2.2 and 2.3.1.

⁶ This includes Skåne, Halland and Blekinge, which today are part of Sweden, but were Danish in the Viking Age.

century in the Mälär valley, making this a region with an extremely high density of such monuments. Roughly 1250 stones are known there from this period. At that time, at least forty thousand people lived in this valley in approximately four thousand farmsteads.⁷ Consequently, there was roughly one stone to every three farmsteads in this region, which means that not every person who owned a farmstead 'had' a memorial stone. In fact, the figure is brought down somewhat more by families that commissioned more than one monument. With so many runestones around, however, the majority of the community living in the Mälär valley might have seen one or more of these monuments regularly.

Throughout the Viking Age, a few other areas in Scandinavia were just as densely populated as the eleventh-century Mälär valley, but most significantly less, and nowhere else were as many monuments carved. Consequently, all other regions of Scandinavia saw fewer memorials per head of population. Even considering that there were more memorial stones in the Viking Age than are known now, many Viking Age Scandinavians in all probability never saw a runestone at all. People who travelled, on the other hand, possibly had the opportunity to see more, provided such monuments were along their chosen route.

The location of a monument dictated largely who its audience was. For some stones this would have been only a small number of people, for example when it was placed in a family burial ground behind a farmstead. A memorial stone that also functioned as a border stone would have been seen mainly by the households of the two adjacent farmsteads. A monument attracted a larger public from all over a certain region when it was placed at an important political, social, or cult place, such as an assembly site or burial mound. Stones situated along much-travelled roads were seen by many passers-by, including possibly people from outside the

⁷ Sawyer and Sawyer 1993, 40.

community and even from abroad when the road led to an important trading place.

The first impression these monuments makes on its audience is shaped by a combination of their location and their dimensions. A tall standing stone in an open field is strikingly visible from afar, as long as it is not surrounded by trees. Even a relatively small stone that is raised in an open field can stand out more from a distance than a much larger carving on a rock wall, unless the latter was more brightly coloured.⁸ When the colour faded, however, a monument such as the latter lost more of its visibility than a standing stone did. Raised stones, on the other hand, are less stable and less durable. Monuments carved on outcrops, especially when rather low to the ground, are the least visible and are also more prone to wear by weather, moss, and traffic. On the other hand, they cannot be transported and used for other purposes as raised stones can and were. Finally, monuments that consisted of two (paired) or more (grouped) stones naturally had a larger visual impact than single stone monuments.

If a carving could not be recognised as a monument from a distance by standing out in the landscape, for instance when it was made on a rock wall or outcrop, it would have to be painted in brightly to attract attention from afar. Colour would have made the monument as a whole more distinctive from a distance. It would also have added to the visibility of the individual carving elements. On approaching the runestone, it would be easier to distinguish the various parts of the text and the decoration if they were coloured in to enhance the contrast with the stone and with each other. A notion of the size and complexity of the carvings is the next impression a memorial stone leaves, even without colours. Some idea about the economic wealth and social importance of the people involved in producing the monument could already be formed on the basis of the elaborateness of the

⁸ For archaeological and textual evidence for colour on runestones, see Jansson 1987, 153-159.

carvings, before the details of the decoration and the contents of the runic writing are visible enough to interpret them.

On approaching most runestones, the decoration can be discerned before the runes can be deciphered. The runes are only very rarely so large that they can be read before the other carvings are appreciated in full detail. Runestones from the early phases of the Viking Age, and from earlier periods, generally lack elaborate ornamentation. Their inscriptions were carved between several straight lines, generally vertically. This developed into bands, which evolved into the well-known serpent ornamentation of the later runestones.⁹ This 'runic serpent' often forms a complex pattern with smaller snakes and/or quadrupeds with serpentine features. On the majority of the later monuments a Christian cross is also part of the design, but only a handful is decorated with a Þórr's hammer. Roughly 6% of the runestones are carved with one or more depictions of human figures, quadrupeds, birds, ships and other objects. These images and their role in the runestone design and in Viking Age visual communication in general are surveyed in detail in the following chapters.

Next, if one could read runes, the names of the people involved and their reasons for commissioning the monument were generally revealed in the inscription. Usually, the names of the initiator and the commemorated person were mentioned, and sometimes that of the carver too. Most inscriptions on Viking Age runestones state that someone had the monument made *aft/æft, at* or *æftir* someone else.¹⁰ Inherent in this act are the two objectives of commemoration: preserving an event or person in memory and at a later moment prompting to recall them to remembrance.

Additional functions of these memorial stones have been explored recently.

The formulas on many of them show that especially the Swedish runestones could

⁹ See Chapter 2.2.2.a.

¹⁰ Although these prepositions may have had different connotations of 'in honour of', 'for', or 'after in a temporal sense', they are all generally interpreted as 'in memory of'. The difference in meaning is difficult to reconstruct and the choice of preposition in the inscriptions seems to have depended on regional and temporal custom, and possibly on stylistic reasons (Peterson 1995).

also have served as 'inheritance documents'. By recording publicly that someone had died, the initiator of the monument, almost always family, showed their relation to the deceased and thus their claim on the inheritance.¹¹ Furthermore, runestones seem to have been used by the initiators to confirm and propagate their new Christian religion.¹² However, whether the inscription on a Viking Age carved stone consists of only a name, or whether it contains an elaborate description of how a person lived and died, it is generally concluded that the primary function of runestones was as memorials.¹³ In fact, it has been argued that an inscription is not necessarily a prerequisite for a stone to be a memorial, but that it merely enhanced the commemorative function of the monument.¹⁴ It can be added to this that recording the commemorative act was another important function of runestones.

The inscriptions do more than just commemorate a deceased person, since not only they, but also the initiator(s) and regularly also the producers of the monument are named. Just over a third of the surviving inscriptions also record more specific information about the, often high-status, activities and the economic and religious background of the people involved. It is mentioned for instance that someone was a steersman on a ship, went on pilgrimage, died on certain expeditions, and how much land they owned. The religious background of the people involved was explicitly referred to by including Christian prayers and invocations to Þórr in the inscription. Occasionally, comments about the function, future, and features of the monument are made.¹⁵

It is clear from the discussion above that the message that is communicated by means of a runestone is not conveyed by the inscription alone. The material of the

¹¹ Sawyer 2000, esp. Ch. 3.

¹² Three runestones explicitly state the conversion to Christianity (DR 42, Jä 1, N 449) and many others are decorated with Christian crosses, contain Christian prayers or other Christian expressions in the inscription.

¹³ e.g. Jesch 2005a, 95; Spurkland 2005, 117; Düwel 2001, 95; Palm 1992, 45-46.

¹⁴ Holman 1996, 289.

¹⁵ The various optional inscription elements are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

memorial, its location, and the overall layout of a runestone reflect different statements the initiator or carver wished to convey to their contemporaries and to posterity. The fact that these monuments were carved in stone shows that they were intended to last for a long time.¹⁶ Whether the carvings were made on a rock wall, outcrop, or boulder, or rather on a raised stone cut especially for this purpose and moved to a particular location, may have been significant too. To situate a monument close to an assembly place or cult site, the burial mound of illustrious ancestors, or a road that already played an important role in the community, further reflected the status and influence of the initiators. The size, complexity, and contents of the carvings likewise expressed and created an identity of the deceased and of those who commissioned the monument.

These factors give an impression of the background of the monument, even before the observer has approached a runestone close enough to see the carvings in good detail and read the runes. How the decorative and textual carving elements then communicate more specific and more elaborate information is explored in this thesis. In the following section, previous research on the function of images on Viking Age memorial stones is reviewed.

1.3 Runestone images in previous research

The attention of scholars has traditionally been directed initially, and regularly practically only, at the inscriptions of runestones. The process of transcribing, normalising, and translating runic inscriptions results in a horizontal linear representation of the text. This disregards information that was communicated through the monument's ornamentation, materiality, and the visual relations between the various carving elements are lost. Focussing primarily or solely on the

¹⁶ Jesch 1998, 464; 2005a, 95.

texts creates an incorrect impression of how the monuments functioned, since reading the runes was one of the last steps in approaching and interpreting a runestone. Also within the inscription some elements are more eye-catching than others as a result of their place on the stone or they may be highlighted visually in other ways. As a consequence, those parts may be read before the memorial formula with which the inscription normally 'begins'.¹⁷ Moreover, the inscription may not always have been read or understood completely by all members of the contemporary audience. If a runestone is reduced to its inscription, the communicative function of the monument for people who could not read runes and of memorials without inscriptions is disregarded.

Initially, the scholars who published on runestones were antiquarians and later mainly philologists and runologists.¹⁸ The descriptions of the monuments in *Sveriges runinskrifter* generally do discuss the monument's setting in the landscape. Where possible, the archaeological features of the surroundings are related to the memorial. Unfortunately, less attention is paid to the decoration on the stones. Some of the older volumes of *Sveriges runinskrifter* contain a paragraph on ornamentation in their introductions, in which mainly the characteristics of the runic serpents and of the crosses are described, often in relation to carvers and regional varieties.¹⁹ Some figural decoration is also mentioned, mostly in an art-historical context. Figural images tend to be discussed especially in relation to Old Norse mythology in the descriptions of the individual stones. Particularly in the older volumes, however, the images are often only mentioned in passing, regarded as a doodle without content and meaning, or are altogether omitted.²⁰ In *Danmarks runeindskrifter*, the different types of decoration that occur on Danish monuments

¹⁷ Spurkland 2012, 233; Bianchi 2010, Ch. 3.

¹⁸ An overview of developments in runestone studies up to the twenty-first century can be found in Zilmer 2005, 38-61 and more succinctly in Andrén 2000, 7-9.

¹⁹ *Sö, Sm, Vg*.

²⁰ Examples of this are given in the course of Chapter 2.2.3.

are listed in the glossary. The images are generally placed in an art-historical context and where possible interpreted in a mythological context. The first volume of *Norges Innskrifter med de yngre Runer* contains a supplement in which images and ornamentation on the six decorated Norwegian runestones are described in detail. This overview focuses on the chronological development of the Scandinavian styles of runestone decoration and less on interpretation.²¹ The separate monument entries refer to this supplement with regard to the decoration and do not go into more detail themselves. Although these corpus editions do not always discuss the decoration in much detail, they do contain photos or other depictions of the monuments which are indispensable for any study of runestone design.

When the corpus editions offer interpretations of images on the monuments, they are generally seen as scenes or symbols from pre-Christian Old Norse myth or legend, as Christian symbols against the background of European art history, or as representations of the commemorated person or aspects of their life. This was also the approach in the monographs of the great runologists of the nineteen-seventies and -eighties. Erik Moltke stated in the mid-seventies that 'Billedfremstillingerne på folkevandringstidens og vikingetidens runesten har intet med indskrifter at gøre, men er alle hentet fra mytternes og mytologiens verden.'²² With this, he seems to have voiced the general attitude towards figural decoration on runestones among runologists of his time. Sven B.F. Jansson, too, focussed on depictions of scenes from myth and legend.²³ Klaus Düwel took an interest in some of the images and was more cautious of interpreting them as scenes or motifs from Old Norse myth and legend, but also he considered images on runestones to be of secondary importance to the

²¹ Hougen 1941.

²² Moltke 1976, 204. 'Pictures on Migration Period and Viking Age rune stones bear no relation to the inscription but are invariably drawn from the world of myth', transl. Peter Foote in Moltke 1985, 252.

²³ Jansson 1987, 144-152. He does mention U 855 with a hunting scene as an exception, but omits other non-mythological motifs.

inscriptions.²⁴

Studies that focus primarily on the decorations on runestones appear from the nineteen-eighties onwards, when art-historians and archaeologists started to participate in runestone studies more substantially. At the same time, a significantly more balanced view of Viking Age pre-Christian religion as a less structured collection of beliefs had developed. The prominent role of major deities was being questioned, and the importance of other spiritual beings and of magic was being considered.²⁵ The significance of mythology in Viking Age iconography is likely also to have been overestimated and consequently the images are better interpreted in light of the commemorative function of the monument and its broader social context.

The traditional runologists separated images from inscriptions and ascribed different functions to these elements. They also tried to interpret most decoration in light of Old Norse myth and legend. In contrast, the focus of the later interdisciplinary approaches to carvings on Viking Age memorial stones has shifted to the social context and the commemorative function of the monuments.

The first to focus on the figural images in runestone decoration was Signe Horn Fuglesang, who has published several art-historical surveys of the most common elements of the iconography on these memorial stones and offers interpretations of their function as well as their meaning. She approaches figural scenes and motifs in the context of the monuments as manifestations of power, fame, and status and interprets them with reference to other Viking Age art, archaeology, and Old Norse literature. Individual images are explained as referring to the social power and/or physical strength of the deceased. Fuglesang further argues that even when the precise meaning of certain images is not clear, a more general

²⁴ Düwel 1986, 229; 2001, 95-152.

²⁵ e.g. DuBois 1999.

function as symbols reflecting status, power, and heroism can be assigned to them.²⁶ Sue Margeson argued that the images on the Manx crosses, on the picture stones of Gotland, and on some runestones with images from the legend of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani ‘contain references to the lives of the commemorated people’ by reflecting their status and wealth or by referring to their deeds by means of a mythological or heroic scene.²⁷ She also proposed that some of the images of human figures may represent the commemorated person. Anders Andrén has interpreted the images from myth and legend on Viking Age picture stones on Gotland similarly as ‘metaphors signifying the honour of dead men and women’, and sometimes as representing the dead man himself.²⁸

An art-historical approach to other aspects of Swedish runestone decoration was taken by the archaeologists Anne-Sofie Gräslund and Linn Lager in their respective surveys of the serpent decoration and the crosses. Gräslund devised a relative chronology based on the details of the serpent ornamentation on the Swedish memorials.²⁹ Lager devised a way of analysing and categorising crosses that is more flexible than the earlier categories that were distinguished by Claiborne Thompson.³⁰

In Sigmund Oehr’s recent overview of animalistic and anthropomorphic figures on runestones, the images are described according to Panofsky’s iconological method.³¹ An overview of previous interpretations is also provided. Although this useful catalogue is not complete and focuses on Sweden, Oehr’s study was the most comprehensive until the corpus for the present thesis was compiled. Oehr includes fragments and despite the primary focus on animals and human figures, other figural

²⁶ Fuglesang 1986, esp. 184, 187 and 2005, esp. 75-79, 81, 84-88.

²⁷ Margeson 1980, 208-209 and 1983, 105.

²⁸ Andrén 1993, 41, 43, 45, 48-49.

²⁹ Gräslund 1991; 1992; 2006a. See Chapter 2.2.2.a for a more detailed discussion.

³⁰ Lager 2002; Thompson 1975, 30-32. The most recent study of crosses on runestones is Zilmer 2011.

³¹ Oehr 2006.

images are also mentioned. Oehrl's doctoral thesis that followed this MA dissertation studies the quadrupeds on Swedish monuments.³² He interprets most quadrupeds and several other images as part of a Christian symbolic language. With this he follows in the footsteps of scholars such as Henrik Williams, Anders Hultgård, and Anne-Sofie Gräslund, who ascribe to (Swedish) runestone images a function in expressing and teaching a Christian world view during the Swedish missionary period.³³

A recent development in the history of medieval art is that the focus has changed from art history to individual images and from the circumstances of their production to their reception.³⁴ This reception or perception is often discussed in terms of 'reading images' and 'visual literacy'.³⁵ Unlike the traditional runestone studies that took text as the starting point and treated images as separate entities of secondary importance, this new approach in Medieval Studies treats images and text as equal and inter-related elements that both have visual and verbal aspects.

Pernille Hermann's relatively recent volume of articles on literacy in medieval and early modern Scandinavia unfortunately lacks a chapter on runestone decoration, despite its aim to focus on the Viking Age and include communication through images and the developments in the study of visibility of runestones.³⁶ Leslie Webster's contribution offers a theoretical approach to the role of images and text in early medieval societies that focuses in more general terms on what information the complex decoration on Anglo-Saxon metalwork conveyed and how that message was constructed, rather than received. Her observations about the role of visual language, its nature of revealing and concealing, and the role of runic inscriptions

³² Oehrl 2010, 16n23 contains some additions to his 2006 catalogue. See Chapter 2.2.3.b for a more detailed discussion of Oehrl's work.

³³ Hultgård 1992; Williams, He 1996a, 298-301. Williams seems to go from identifying Christian imagery on runestones in 1996b to interpreting all images on runestones in a Christian framework in 1996a.

³⁴ See Caviness 2006, 65 with references for an overview.

³⁵ e.g. Mostert 2005 with references.

³⁶ Hermann 2005, 12, 14.

therein are also valuable for Scandinavian Viking Age material.³⁷

Approaching the memorials in an interdisciplinary way allows best for taking the different aspects of these monuments into account. New ways of looking at these memorials that focus on their communicative function have been pioneered by Judith Jesch. She has pursued the implications of the interplay of text in the design of the runic inscription and the materiality of the monument for its meaning as a whole.³⁸ She discussed how information was communicated through the medium of carved stone against the background of the emerging large-scale literacy in a predominantly oral society. Her work focuses more on the inscriptions, however, than on stones with figural images.

Anders Andrén also takes a communicative approach in his study of Viking Age picture stones on Gotland.³⁹ He compares the structure of the images to structures of communication in Viking Age poetry and burial customs. More recently, he argued for a more inclusive, holistic approach to runestone carvings.⁴⁰ Again, comparisons with skaldic poetry are drawn, this time regarding the interpretation of serpent ornamentation and word crossings. Andrén suggests that words were intentionally placed opposite each other in the curving inscription band, at the head or claw of an animal, or touching arms of a cross, to add emphasis and employ another layer of meaning. While the validity of his hypothesis is recognised, Andrén's methods have been criticised for being too speculative.⁴¹ Indeed, when this hypothesis was tested through systematic analysis of a larger corpus, it could not be confirmed that connections between cross arms and certain words were created intentionally nor that the location of the carver signature indicated (family) ties

³⁷ Webster 2005, 21-23, 27, 38-43.

³⁸ Jesch 1998. Spurkland 2012, 229 also stresses the importance of considering the medium stone itself when studying the communicative function of runestones.

³⁹ Andrén 1993, 34, 39-40, 43-46.

⁴⁰ Andrén 2000, 13-22, 26.

⁴¹ Bianchi 2010, 52-53.

between the commissioner and the carver.⁴² Instead, when such seemingly meaningful connections occur, they are more likely to be the result of coincidence and over-interpretation on our part. This is not to say that in individual cases such visual resources were never applied consciously. Furthermore, even though they are not the result of conscious decisions about the design, the results of such coincidences may still have influenced the visual reception of the monument.

Recent studies by Marco Bianchi and Kristel Zilmer follow Jesch's approach and consider the monuments as multi-faceted media of communication.⁴³ This is also the approach that is taken in this thesis. Much of their research was in fact done simultaneously to that presented in this thesis. Bianchi and Zilmer discuss questions of reception, authorship, and various aspects of multimodality, such as the visual qualities of inscriptions. Although figural images are not the primary focus of these works, they are touched upon. Especially Bianchi's study of the connection between particular inscription features and images of mask-like faces and ships, and Zilmer's observations about the visual language that was employed on runestones, are referred to in various places in this thesis.

1.4 Research questions

The above-mentioned recent studies explore how information was communicated through the visibility and materiality of specific groups of Viking Age memorial stones, mainly with regard to the inscription, animal ornamentation, and crosses. This raises the question what role the figural depictions of humanoids, animals, and objects played in this visual communication on the monuments.

There is a range of possible relations between the inscription and the figural

⁴² Respectively Zilmer 2011, 78-80; Källström 2007, 169-175.

⁴³ Bianchi 2010 (see also Spurkland 2012); Zilmer 2010; 2012.

decoration on a runestone and it seems unlikely that they were not related to each other at all. As Spurkland states: 'Man aner [...] at runeinnskrift og bilde(r) inngår i en høyere enhet som samlet uttrykker ristningens betydning som 'tekst'', which illustrates how far runestone studies have progressed.⁴⁴ The choice for carving particular images and inscription elements on the memorial stones must have been made with a certain motivation. That only 6% of the monuments are decorated with figural images also shows that to include these images in the design must have been a conscious decision, because it was not the convention to do so. Although particular images occur more often in certain regions than others, they are still not part of the standard runestone design.⁴⁵ Different combinations of the following motivations may have had a role in the choice of images for a memorial:

- how their meaning interacted with the information in the inscription;
- how they related to the commemorated person(s) and/or the initiators of the monument;
- how they fitted on the stone;
- what was current in the area at the time;
- what the specialty of the producer was.

Generally speaking, however, the choice to include images and what they should depict was ultimately the result of what message the monument should communicate.

The subject of this thesis, then, is both *what* was communicated by carving figural images on memorial stones and *how* this visual communication worked. To answer these questions, the images are categorised and a detailed visual analysis of how various design elements are combined is presented. The results of this analysis indicates that there were certain patterns in the use of images on the memorial

⁴⁴ Spurkland 2012, 234.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 2.3.

stones. Secondly, the monuments are in this thesis considered as part of the wider Viking Age visual culture, which allows a comparison with the visual language of other media in the context of death and commemoration, creating memory, and expressing identity. This approach sheds light on how images communicated part of the monument's message. The theoretical frameworks and methodologies that are used to identify the role of images in this Viking Age visual communication are introduced in the following section.

1.5 Theoretical frameworks

The memorial stones can be regarded as a multimodal text, that is to say that 'its meaning is realised through more than one semiotic code'.⁴⁶ On runestones, these codes are of a linguistic (the verbal text) and a visual (the layout and its decorative element) nature. In addition to this, the act of making the carvings and the material used for the monument are semiotic resources in themselves.⁴⁷ Finally, the location of the memorial adds to its meaning as well.

This thesis focuses on the use of the figural images in the visual communication on runestones and their role as one of the semiotic resources employed on these monuments. The aim is not to provide a conclusive interpretation of individual images in the sense of *what* they mean, but rather discusses *how* figural images in general function in visual communication.⁴⁸ An important aspect of how images mean is how they were seen and perceived. The description of how these multimodal monuments were approached and interpreted in Chapter 1.1 is based on the features and characteristics of the monuments themselves. In order to gain a

⁴⁶ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 182. This approach is also taken by Jesch 1998; Bianchi 2010 and Zilmer 2010; 2012 (see Section 1.3).

⁴⁷ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 230.

⁴⁸ Some new interpretations are nevertheless put forward, e.g. in Chapter 2.2.3, Chapter 5.4, and Chapter 6.2.

more in-depth insight into how visual communication in the Viking Age functioned, evidence from a broad range of disciplines and sources is combined in the rest of this thesis.

Modern theories of visual communication that are concerned with the visual reception of multimodal media that combine image and text, including perception theory and semiotics, can reconstruct *how* an image means without necessarily knowing what it means. Layout and design principles can form the code for interpreting visual elements.⁴⁹ This is explained in more detail and applied in Chapter 2.4-2.10. In addition to design principles, neurological processes govern how multimodal media are perceived. The human brain interprets text and images differently and especially for the latter 'draw[s] on perception, memory, imagination and logic'.⁵⁰

Besides a psychological process, looking is also a cultural practice.⁵¹ This cultural aspect of the cognitive context of Viking Age visual culture is explored in Chapter 4. In addition to modern visual communication theories, early medieval treatises on how vision worked are discussed. They are mainly concerned with the extent to which the viewer played an active role in seeing an object or image. The modern and medieval theories are combined with analysis of textual references to seeing in Viking Age sources. There are no Viking Age theories of vision recorded as such, but a small number of Viking Age skaldic poems contain first-hand accounts of the skald seeing images. These poems form a source for how such images functioned in Viking Age visual culture. The small number of runestone inscriptions that refer to the interpretation of the monument are also taken into account there.

The visual language that is employed on memorial stones has parallels in

⁴⁹ Moriarty 2005, 236 table 15.2; Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 146, 155, 181-182.

⁵⁰ Barry 2005, esp. 54-56; Williams, R. 2005, 194. See also Chapter 4.2.

⁵¹ Biernoff 2002, 4.

funerary performances and in skaldic poetry. Carved stone monuments, burials, and praise poems are all concerned with commemoration, expressing identity, and shaping memory. In this thesis, how the images work in the visual communication on Viking Age memorial stones is studied partly on the basis of the connection with these other two practices and partly on the basis of their role in the runestone design itself.

1.6 Methodologies and structure of the thesis

The next chapter, Chapter 2, explains how the corpus material was collected. An overview of the figural depictions on the monuments follows on that. To facilitate visual analysis, the images are classified in several categories. This classification is done on the basis of the features of the depicted figure, animal, or object. As part of this classification, previous identifications and interpretations of individual images are discussed. The visual analysis, then, focuses on the images as visual elements in relation to the other carvings on the monuments. This analysis identifies patterns in the position, proportion, and discernability of the images, ornamentation, and text.

The relationship between the images and the contents of the inscriptions is analysed in Chapter 3. The elements of the inscriptions on runestones with figural images are explained and discussed. A comparison with the occurrence of these elements in runestone inscriptions in general shows a relation between certain optional inscription elements and the presence of figural decoration. There is, however, no strict one-on-one relation between particular images and specific elements of the inscription. There was not such a close connection between the two that one must be explained by the other and that they cannot function without each other. Yet a connection between a small group of particular textual and figural

carving elements seems to have existed in certain regions.

As mentioned above, a small number of Viking Age texts is analysed in Chapter 4. After a critical evaluation of the Old Norse poems in which the poet is said to refer to images he sees, it is concluded that only four of these poems actually mention images. From the way the skalds describe the images and recount connected stories it is deduced how they might have perceived the images. The eleven runestone inscriptions that mention the act of interpreting are analysed to establish what part(s) of the monuments is/are referred to. The connotations of the expressions that are used in the poems and in the inscriptions are discussed on the basis of their etymology and their use in other Old Norse texts. In combination with modern visual communication theories and with the results of the visual analysis of the monuments, these texts give an impression of how the different carvings on runestones functioned.

Chapter 5 explores how the figural images that are depicted on memorial stones relate to objects and animals that were used in (pre-)Viking Age Scandinavian mortuary practices. Especially the occurrence of weapons in graves and on runestones is analysed. It is also discussed how the objects, stories, and people that played a role in funerary performances and other rituals may be reflected in runestone imagery. Not a trained archaeologist myself, I rely in this section on information from secondary studies of Iron Age archaeological material, rather than from archaeological reports. Several of the studies that have been consulted as background reading on methodology and theory of (Scandinavian) burial archaeology are not referred to directly in the course of this thesis.⁵²

Several studies that discuss aspects of runological methodology have

⁵² Semple and Williams 2007, in particular Devlin's discussion of the concept of memory, which has had a significant impact on early medieval burial studies in recent years and Rundkvist's overview of the current state of research in Scandinavian burial archaeology and its theoretical focal points in this volume; Artelius and Svanberg 2005.

contributed to the runological part of this thesis in Chapter 3, but are not referred to directly.⁵³ The same is true for some of the background reading on Viking Age art styles and ornamentation.⁵⁴ Furthermore, only a few chapters from the *Handbook on Visual Communication* are mentioned in this thesis, but the whole book has provided a relevant introduction and point of reference.⁵⁵ The various chapters in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe* and the editorial entries in the anthology *Reading Medieval Images* have helped to relate these various visual communication theories to medieval art and visual culture.⁵⁶

The variety of sources and disciplines that are employed in this thesis illustrate how broadly visual communication extended throughout Viking Age culture. Elements of the same visual language are found on wall-hangings, armour, weaponry, memorial stones, in burials, and even in poetry. These strands come together in Chapter 6. This concluding chapter presents a case study that illustrates how the combined results of this thesis reflect the function of figural images in the visual communication on runestones and the place of these monuments in the visual culture of Viking Age Scandinavia.

The corpus material for this study comprises 111 stones on which a total of 202 images are carved. This material is presented in a database that consists of two appendices to this thesis. What information the database contains and how it can be used is described and illustrated in Chapter 2.4. A Catalogue with images of the monuments is also included.⁵⁷ The stones are listed in the database and the catalogue by the numbers assigned to them in the national publications of runic inscriptions and picture stones in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, or the reference to

⁵³ Williams, He. 2007; Jesch 1994; Meijer 1992; 1995; 2002.

⁵⁴ Karlsson 1983; Nielsen and Velle 2002.

⁵⁵ Smith and others 2005.

⁵⁶ Conrad 2006; Sears and Thomas 2002. Also Müller 2003.

⁵⁷ The Catalogue can be found printed as thumbnails after the Appendices. The images are included on the DVD in large format and often in colour.

their publication in other sources.⁵⁸ They are arranged in the alphabetical order of the common abbreviations of their regional codes, with the Swedish provinces listed separately.⁵⁹ These *sigla* also correspond to those used in the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*. The catalogue contains images of the memorials that form the corpus material for this thesis (listed in the Appendices and discussed in Chapter 2.2). Images of other monuments or objects are included as illustrations in the text.

1.7 Terminology and language

1.7.1 Runestones

The term ‘runestone’ is, although the most widespread, not necessarily the most appropriate term for the monuments discussed in this thesis. Because ‘runestone’ literally means ‘a stone carved with runes’, this term is technically not accurate for a stone that is carved with decoration only. Moreover, as demonstrated in the following Chapter, when images occur on these monuments, these decorations are generally more prominent than the runic inscription, suggesting that it might be more appropriate to speak of ‘picture stones’ with (or without) inscriptions when discussing runestones that are decorated with images. ‘Carved stone monument’ is a both a neutral and precise term that covers all ‘runestones and picture stones’. It also avoids calling stones without an inscription to state their commemorative function ‘memorial stones’. ‘Carved stone monument’, however, is more a description than a term. For the sake of readability and because of the widespread familiarity of the term ‘runestone’, this term is also used in this thesis. ‘Runestone’,

⁵⁸ See ‘Bibliography: Editions and translations A. Runestones’

⁵⁹ DR = Denmark; G = Gotland; Gs = Gästrikland; N = Norway; Nä = Närke; Öl = Öland; Ög = Östergötland; Sm = Småland; Sö = Södermanland; U = Uppland; Vg = Västergötland; and Vs = Västmanland

then, is used more to denote the genre rather than to describe the phenomenon exactly. As such, it is on occasion used for a collective that may include stones without runic inscriptions. 'Memorial' or 'memorial stone' is also used, but predominantly for carved stone monuments of which the memorial nature is evident from the inscription or other features, or again for a collective. Since the main function of runestones is memorial (see Chapter 1.1), these terms are to a large degree interchangeable.

1.7.2 Surfaces

The memorials come in different shapes, sizes, and materials. When a carving was made on the surface of a large rock wall or on a flat stone in the ground, the memorial naturally has only one surface. Standing stones and boulders, on the other hand, provide more places to carve on. On most raised stones, the carved surface is largely the same as the surface of that side of the stone. This is because the runic band, which is generally the border of the carved surface, mostly follows the contours of the surface. On carvings in the living rock, the surface is often larger than the part of it that is carved. Also in these cases, the space inside and including the runic band is considered the carved surface. On monuments without a band that defines the borders of the carved surface, the whole surface of that side of the stone is taken into account when determining what proportion of it is occupied by the image.⁶⁰

It is not always straightforward which of the carved surfaces is to be regarded as the front, especially when an equal amount of ornamentation and text is carved on them. Traditionally, the surface that contains the majority of the inscription and usually its beginning is seen as the front, but only when this is not the

⁶⁰ Luckily this is not the case for any of the carvings in the living rock in this corpus, for it would be difficult to determine where the surface ends in such cases.

most narrow face. This is also the case for boulders that have several carved surfaces of similar dimensions. Which face of a stone is regarded as the front can also be a result of its position in relation to a nearby road or of the fact that one face was visible to the modern audience for longer, for instance when it was found embedded in a wall.

Several terms are used in this thesis to describe the location of a carving on a stone with more than one surface. The surface opposite to the front face is the back or reverse face of the stone. The other two surfaces are called the sides, whether they are as broad as the front or back or whether they are the narrow sides of a thin standing stone. The top of a stone is the more or less horizontal part between the highest points of the front and back, connecting the sides or edges. Depending on its shape, a boulder or outcrop can also have more or less a front and back face, one or two sides and a top. The contours of a surface or of the stone are referred to as edges. When an inscription band follows the shape of the surface it is carved on, for instance, it follows the contours or is carved along its edges. The terms that are used more specifically to indicate the position of a carving element on the surface are listed in the legends to the Appendices.

1.7.3 Scenes and motifs

If a particular piece of decoration is the only one on a stone or if it occurs isolated from any other decoration, it is regarded as a 'motif'. If there seems to be interaction between that piece of decoration and another, it is considered to be an element in a 'scene'.⁶¹ A spear, for instance, is considered a motif when it appears on its own, but it is an element in a scene when it is held by a warrior. That warrior can be a motif

⁶¹ The definition of 'scene' in the OED is: 'A view or picture presented to the eye (or to the mind) of a place, concourse, incident, series of actions or events, assemblage of objects, etc.' and 'An episode, situation, etc., forming a subject of narration or description.' <<http://oed.com>> [accessed 5 November 2008]. In order to be regarded as a narrative, though, there has to be an element of temporal progression in time in or between scenes (Amory 1980, 391-392).

too and it can be part of a scene when he is combined with other elements. Two or more motifs combined do not necessarily make a scene, however, there has to be a degree of interaction for that.

1.7.4 Language

Because this thesis discusses runic inscriptions from Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and Old Norse poetry, the runic inscriptions are given here in the standardised Old West Norse for the sake of consistency and comparison. Names of carvers, poets, and mythological, literary and historical figures are presented in the same format. Sometimes a transliteration, or part thereof, of a runic inscription is also given (in bold typeface). Generally, the readings, transliterations, transcriptions, normalisations, and translations are taken from the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*, but with additional discussion of alternative readings or interpretations when relevant.

Before proceeding to the visual analysis of runestone design, the following chapter first provides a description of the images that are the subject of this study and of the memorial stones they are carved on. This forms the starting point of the exploration of their role in the wider Viking Age visual culture.

Chapter 2. Runestone images and their visual context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how the research material was collected and which monuments are included in the corpus. The different kinds of images that occur on these memorials are described and their chronological and regional distribution is discussed. The distribution of monuments with images seems to correspond to the distribution of runestones in Scandinavia in general. The individual image types, however, show their own regional and chronological distribution. It is also discussed to what extent images can be linked to specific carvers.

The second part of this chapter presents the results of the analysis of the visual relationships between images and the other carving elements, such as crosses, inscription, and serpent ornamentation. Several tendencies in the use of specific image types are identified. Some of these cannot be linked to regional and chronological fashions or to a carver's personal style. Instead, they indicate patterns that are the result of the interplay between images, crosses, and text in visual communication on runestones.

2.2 Research material

2.2.1 Collection

The research material for this study was collected with help of the depictions and descriptions of the monuments in *Sveriges runinskrifter*, *Norges Innskrifter med de yngre Runer*, and *Danmarks runeindskrifter* and Moltke 1985 as a supplement to the

latter. Also of use was Jan Owe's *Runbibliografi*, which lists all runic carvings found up to 1995 (although the cover says 1880-1993). Where these finds are not published in the corpus editions, references are given to the journals *Fornvännen* and *Nytt om Runer* in which new runic finds are published,⁶² to other relevant publications, or to archival reports. The online version of *Nytt om Runer* for the years 1995-2003 (these are the years published online so far) and Jan Owe's *Svensk Runristningsförteckning* from 2005 have been used to identify new finds after the publication of Owe's *Runbibliografi*.

Of the new finds listed in Owe's *Runbibliografi* and *Svensk Runristningsförteckning* as many of the references given there and in the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* as possible have been followed up to find a satisfying description of the stone and/or a picture.⁶³ When a runestone or fragment is in the collection of the Historiska Museet in Stockholm, digital photos of this material can be accessed online.⁶⁴ The online database of Danish runic inscriptions from the Nationalmuseet includes new finds and the images that are provided are currently being updated.⁶⁵ Most of the new runestone finds, however, I have found to be not relevant for this study, because the stones had no or no relevant decoration. The new finds for which I could not access the report or other literature consist of fragments, and I do not expect to have missed any relevant images there. Finally, the catalogues by Sigmund Oehrl and Birgit Sawyer have also been useful tools for collecting my research material.⁶⁶

⁶² In *Fornvännen*, new finds of (Swedish) runic inscriptions were published from 1966 to 1992, while from 1985 finds of Scandinavian runic inscriptions are published in *Nytt om Runer*.

⁶³ That is to say, without having full access to Scandinavian archival information. During a research visit in September 2008, kindly sponsored by the Viking Society for Northern Research and the Christine Fell Fund, I have been able to consult several reports in the archives of the Riksantikvarieämbetet (then in Stockholm). The main purpose of this trip, however, was to examine runestones with figural decoration that are still in their original position, rather than archival research.

⁶⁴ <http://mis.historiska.se/mis/sok/start.asp>

⁶⁵ <http://runer.ku.dk/Run>

⁶⁶ Oehrl 2006, with additions in Oehrl 2010, esp. 16n23; Sawyer 2000, 191-262.

2.2.2. Selection

This thesis discusses the role of figural images in runestone decoration in the context of Viking Age visual communication. A few stones that predate the Viking Age are decorated with similar images. U 877 from Möjbro was carved around 500 AD. This memorial stone contains a picture of a warrior on horseback, a name, and an uninterpreted sequence of runes. U 1125 in Krogsta, carved during the second half of the sixth century, is decorated with an image of a human figure with its hands spread next to its face. This monument also contains a runic inscription, of which the first part is uninterpreted and the second part possibly reads *stainaz* 'stone.' Other pre-Viking Age monuments with similar images to the Viking Age memorial stones are found on Gotland. The Gotlandic picture stones, of which many are contemporary to the memorials of mainland Scandinavia, are discussed in Section 2.3.1.

Furthermore, monuments in the runestone tradition were carved into the Middle Ages. At this time, they were more often placed over graves in burial grounds and churchyards, whereas the Viking Age memorials are generally not connected to one particular grave.⁶⁷ The earliest medieval recumbent grave slabs are also carved in the runestone style with a runic inscription in a (serpent-shaped) band along the edges and decoration in the centre. They are cut to be more rectangular than the Viking Age runestones. Early Christian grave monuments (previously called Eskilstuna cists) were constructed from several carved stone plates that form a kind of chest to place over the grave and came in use from the mid-eleventh century (Figure 1). These monuments are further removed from the runestones in shape, but they are carved in the same style and sometimes even by the same carvers.⁶⁸ Early medieval grave monuments were often carved in relief and in a more Romanesque style than

⁶⁷ Gräslund 2002, 40-41.

⁶⁸ Ljung 2009, esp. 147-149, 178-180, 195-200; Kitzler Åhfeldt 2012; 2009, 96.

runestones. When only fragments are found, however, it can be difficult to determine of what kind of memorial stone from this transitional period they were part.

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 1. Early Christian grave monument.

The pre-and post-Viking Age memorial stones and grave monuments that are decorated with figural images are not included in the corpus material for the analysis in this chapter, but they are listed in Appendix 1.c. An overview of the images on these monuments is given in Section 2.3.1 and several of the medieval images are also discussed in Chapter 5.4.4.

Several of the Viking Age carved stone monuments in the British Isles and Ireland are inscribed with an Old Norse runic inscription and are considered Scandinavian memorials in the runestone tradition.⁶⁹ From those in England, only Br E2 from St Paul's church in London, which was probably a headstone, is decorated with a figural image: a quadruped in the Ringerike style. In Ireland the fragment IR 2 is decorated with a human figure with spread arms, possibly a crucifixion.⁷⁰

Of the eighteen carved stone monuments on the Isle of Man (crosses and slabs) that are decorated with figural images, ten are also carved with (parts of) an Old Norse memorial inscription.⁷¹ Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian hogbacks,

⁶⁹ See Chapter 1.2 with references.

⁷⁰ For the latter see IR, 53-56.

⁷¹ With inscription: BR Olsen;193B Bride, BR Olsen;184 Andreas 2, BR Olsen;185B Andreas 3, BR

grave slabs, and crosses elsewhere in Britain also display Scandinavian or Hiberno-Norse influence in their decoration. Several of these monuments are decorated with similar images as the Viking Age runestones. Although they are memorial stones in the same tradition, these monuments are not Scandinavian runestones, so the images on these monuments are discussed only in Section 2.3.1.

There are many Viking Age memorial stones with figural images that are damaged or of which only fragments survive and several that are now lost. Detailed and reliable records of the complete stone are available for some and these are included in the main source material for this thesis.⁷² For most of the damaged or lost monuments, however, it is unknown with certainty what other carvings the image was combined with. Often the image is not even preserved completely. Where the visual context of the image cannot be established, the damaged stones and fragments cannot be used in the analysis in this chapter. For this reason, they are not found in the main database in Appendix 1.A, but are listed separately in Appendix 1.B.

2.2.2.a Decoration that is not included

Because this thesis is concerned with figural images, monuments that are decorated only with abstract ornamentation and/or crosses are not taken into account. When a cross is held by a human figure, however, it is simultaneously a figural representation of an object and a symbol. For instance, the rider on U 691 Söderby holds a small cross on a staff. Crosses as individual symbols also occur regularly on monuments with figural images. They are part of the visual context of the images and as such

Olsen;200B Jurby, BR Olsen;205B Maughold 4, BR Olsen;215 Kirk Michael 3, BR Olsen;217A Kirk Michael 4, BR Olsen;217B Kirk Michael 5, BR Olsen;218A Kirk Michael 6, BR Olsen;219 Kirk Michael 8. See *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* or Page 1983 for inscriptions.

Without inscription: Andreas 121 (95), Bride 124 (97), Jurby 119 (93), Jurby 125 (98), Malew 120 (94), Maughold 97 (66), Maughold 98 (72).

⁷² Gs 19, DR 282-286 and ÖI 19.

their occurrence is noted in the database (Appendix 2). How the two elements, image and Christian cross, relate to each other visually is analysed in Table 1 in Appendix 2 and discussed in Section 2.6 below. The combination of a cross and a bird where the bird perches on top of the cross occurs relatively frequently.⁷³ It can be argued that they may be regarded as one motif together, but for the sake of consistency the crosses and images of birds are analysed as separate visual elements. In Appendices 1 and 2 it is noted where this particular combination of bird and cross, with bird sitting on the cross, occurs.

The ornamentation that consist of serpents and snakes is likewise only taken into account when figural images are also part of the design. The rigid bands in which the runic inscriptions were originally carved became curved in the tenth century to follow the shape of the stone. Next, heads began to be carved at one end of the band and the other end became a tail, turning the inscription band into a large snake.

This development was most prominent in Sweden, where different style groups with a relative chronology have been identified by Anne-Sofie Gräslund (Figure 2).⁷⁴ Three different styles of serpents were in use as inscription bands more or less simultaneously during the first half of the eleventh century. In the most basic version, the simple triangular snake's head is seen from a bird's eye perspective. Apart from eyes and sometimes a tongue, there are no additional features on the head, nor limbs on the body. This is Gräslund's style group Fp, *fågelperspektiv* 'bird's eye perspective'. In the other two style groups the heads are carved in profile and have more pronounced features, such as upturned noses and protruding lips and ears (Pr1 and Pr2). The serpents in Pr2 can have a tuft on the neck, an extra thumb at the end of their tails, and in a few cases one or two short legs with round feet. In exceptional cases, smaller snakes accompany the large serpents with the inscription

⁷³ As on Sö 270 and the fragments Sö 245, Sö 247, U 576, U 111.

⁷⁴ Gräslund 1991; 1992; 2006a.

and a quadruped is sometimes carved in the centre of the stone. During the second half of the eleventh century, the serpents developed through style group Pr3, with feet on one or two short legs and occasionally additional smaller snakes, and style group Pr4, with feet on longer, sharply bent legs with clearly pronounced heels and commonly with extra snakes, into style group Pr5. Two different types of stylised heads occur in this last group. The legs are long, with sharp joints and pointed feet. Sometimes a foot also occurs at the end of the tail and there are always additional snakes. This chronology is used to date the Swedish runestones in Appendix 1.a-b.

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

*Figure 2. Details from carvings in Gräslund's style groups.
Left: a-b = Bird's eye view, c-d = Pr1, e-f = Pr2. Right: a-b = Pr3, c-d = Pr4, e-f = Pr5.*

In modern English terminology the words 'serpent' and 'snake' are used in descriptions of runestone decoration. These words have very similar meanings. Also in a wider context, both are used to denote the reptile animal, though 'serpent' is often used as another word for a large snake. Both words also have a rhetorical meaning as a sly or treacherous person, but only 'serpent' is used allegorically for a mythological or symbolic snake such as Satan or Envy.⁷⁵ In this thesis, 'snake' denotes

⁷⁵ OED: 'serpent', 'snake' <<http://oed.com>> [accessed 9 December 2008].

a realistic animal, i.e. a long reptile without legs, while 'serpent' is used to describe an unrealistic animal with a snake-like body shape. Because a serpent is a snake that does not exist in reality, it can have various features that actual snakes do not have, such as feet, protruding ears, a drooping lower lip, and a tuft at the neck.

The serpent ornamentation on Viking Age memorial stones is generally seen as an aesthetic carving element that by the late Viking Age had lost any original meaning it might once have had.⁷⁶ Symbolic meanings that are nevertheless attributed to this aspect of runestone decoration range from the Miðgarðsormr to a symbolic protector of the family involved in the raising of the monument.⁷⁷

Although serpent ornamentation as such is not examined in this study, serpents and snakes that interact with images of human figures or animals are taken into account as part of the figural imagery. On the stones that depict episodes from the legend of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, for instance, the serpent with the inscription is stabbed with a sword by a figure interpreted as Sigurðr and so the serpent represents the dragon Fáfnir.⁷⁸ On other stones human figures seem to be attacked by snakes or serpents or interact with them otherwise.⁷⁹ In these cases it also seems the meaning of the serpents and snakes goes beyond the purely aesthetic. The serpent ornamentation that occurs on stones with figural images is mentioned in Appendix 2. How these types of decoration relate to each other is analysed in Table 2 of Appendix 2 and discussed in Section 2.7.

The quadrupeds that are sometimes part of the serpent ornamentation in style group Pr2 are an element of runestone decoration that is difficult to classify. The heads of these animals are similar to those of the serpents, but their bodies are not long and curving. They are more compact and they have four legs, while the

⁷⁶ E.g. Karlsson 1983, 75.

⁷⁷ Zachrisson 1998, 136-138; Johansen 1997, 224.

⁷⁸ Sigurðr imagery is discussed in Chapter 2.2.3.a.ii.

⁷⁹ See Chapters 2.2.3.a.iii.

serpents have two at most. The distinction between serpents and serpentine quadrupeds lies not in their facial features or the presence of limbs, but in the shape of the body and the number of limbs it has. This difference in appearance coincides with a difference in function. Serpentine quadrupeds do not function as the inscription band, but feature in the centre of the stone. The quadrupeds with serpentine features are here regarded as an extension of the serpent ornamentation.⁸⁰ As such, they are only taken into account when they are combined with a figural image. Considering their frequent occurrence on runestones, especially from late Viking Age central Sweden, they are relatively seldom combined with figural images. They interact with these images even more rarely (only on Sö 190 and U 692).

One reason for not also studying crosses, serpent ornamentation, and quadrupeds with serpentine features as decorative elements in their own right is that they have been quite thoroughly studied as a group, unlike most of the figural decoration.⁸¹ Furthermore, to include all these types of decoration would mean to include almost all runestones, which would be too much for this research project.

2.2.3 Classification and identification

The following are excluded from the corpus: runestones with only an inscription, or with a cross or serpent ornamentation as only decoration, memorials that are lost, damaged, or fragmented, carved stone monuments that do not fit into the runestone tradition, that date from before or after the Viking Age, or that originate outside Scandinavia (or on Gotland). This leaves a corpus of 111 complete Viking Age memorial stones with figural images from Scandinavia that form the source material

⁸⁰ Oehrl 2010, on the other hand ascribes the same function and meaning to the serpentine quadrupeds as to the quadrupeds without serpentine features, see Section 2.2.3.b.

⁸¹ See Chapter 1.3.

for the visual analysis in this chapter.⁸²

Some of these monuments have minor damage to the edges, which does not affect the decoration. On others, a missing part can be reliably filled in. For example, a piece of the cross is missing on U 920 Broholm and on U 969 Bolsta, part of the ship is lost on Vs 17 Råby, and on U 584 Husby-Lyhundra, U 691 Söderby, U 920 Broholm, and Vg 4 Stora Ek a part of the animal's tail is gone. Small parts of the images are missing on Vg 56 Källby ås (the end of the snout, belt and head-tendrils) and on Vg 103 Håle ödekyrkogård (the end of the beak), but without major consequences. The upper parts of the horses on Sö 222 Frölunda and U 746 Hårby are missing, but since no legs are shown on their bodies, it is clear that there was no rider depicted here. The images on two sides of Vg 119 Sparlösa are damaged as well, but a large part of them remains. Since the third side of the monument, which contains the most images, is intact, this stone is included in the survey. Lost stones which are included because there are good enough records of their original carvings are Gs 19 Ockelbo, Öl 19 Hulterstad, and DR 282, DR 285, and DR 286 of the Hunnestad monument.

These 111 monuments contain a total of 202 images. They consist of:

- five images of hammers⁸³
- sixteen of ships⁸⁴
- twenty-five of birds⁸⁵

⁸² Three memorials had initially escaped my attention and are therefore not included in the studies in this thesis: DR 123 Glenstrup, U 951 Säby, and U 989 Funbo k:a. These runestones are listed at the end of Appendix 1.A and photos of them are included in the catalogue. It is my estimation that their inclusion in the visual analysis would not have altered the results significantly. Furthermore, U 529 Sika is counted as a medieval carving, while it should have been included as a late-Viking Age one. Finally, Vg 119 Sparlösa is included here as an early-Viking Age runestone, but recently a dating to the eighth century has been pointed out to me (Norr 1998, 214-216). This dating, according to which the monument should have been considered as pre-Viking Age, seems to be followed by Swedish archaeologists, but not in the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

⁸³ DR 26 (twice), Sö 86, Sö 111, Vg 113. (Also in Þórr's hand on U 1161.) In addition, the damaged DR 120 also has a small Þórr's hammer carved in the runic band.

⁸⁴ DR 77, DR 271, DR 328, DR EM85;523B, Ög 181, Ög 224, Ög MÖLM1960;230, Sö 122, Sö 154, Sö 158, Sö 164, Sö 352, U 1052, Vg 51, Vg 119, Vs 17. (Also Þórr's boat on U 1161.) In addition there are seven fragments or damaged stones with ships: DR 119, DR 220, DR 258b, Sö 351, U 979, U 1001, U Fv1955;222.

- nineteen of mask-like or naturalistic faces⁸⁶
- sixty-six of anthropomorphic (humanoid) figures
- sixty-two of quadruped animals.

Eight images are classified as 'other': the depictions of Otr and the images of the tree on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm; the Nativity/Adoration scene on N 68 Dynna; the building structure on Vg 119 Sparlösa; a spearhead on U 999 Åkerby; and a sword on Vg 124 Ryda.⁸⁷ The human figures and quadrupeds are divided further into subcategories below. All these images can be found in the catalogue.

Some of the images are composite. For example, the images of riders consist of a depiction of a horse and a humanoid figure. This is regarded as one image and the horses in such composite images are not counted separately. The antlered animal being attacked by a bird on U 855 Böksta is also counted as one single image and not as one image of a bird and one of a cervine quadruped. Such composite images are classified under the main element, in this case under cervine quadrupeds and not under birds. Another example is the Sigurðr figure on U 1175 Stora Ramsjö, which is regarded as one image together with the two smaller figures that flank him. These two other figures are smaller than the depicted Sigurðr and do not have attributes of their own. Similar combinations of Sigurðr with two figures occur on U 1163 Drävle, Gs 9 Årsunda and Gs 19 Ockelbo. The figures on U 1175 Stora Ramsjö, however, are placed much closer to the Sigurðr figure than the comparable figures on the other three stones. The figures on these other stones are also larger and depicted with

⁸⁵ Gs 19 (twice), N 61 (also on rider's arm), Sö 101, Sö 270, Sö 327, U 171, U 375, U 448, U 548, U 590, U 599, U 629, U 692, U 746, U 753, U 855 (also attacking antlered animal), U 920, U 1071, U 1161 (also on humanoid's shoulder), U Fv1955;219, Vg 103, Vg 119 (2 pairs), Vg 150. Fourteen fragments or damaged stones also contain an image of a bird: Gs 2, Ög Hov 24, Sö 245, Sö 247, U 31, U 257, U 521, U 574, U 576, U 633, U 694, U 713, U 874, U 1112, and possibly also Sö 290, Sö Sb1965;19, and U 485.

⁸⁶ DR 62, DR 66, DR 81, DR 286, DR 314 (twice), DR 335, DR Aud1996;274, [DR] DK MJy 69, Nä 34, Sö 86, Sö 95, Sö 112, Sö 167, Sö 367, U 508, U 824, U 1034, Vg 119. In addition there are seven fragments or damaged stones with faces/masks: DR 258a, Ög Hov 24, U 78, U 128, U 670, U 1150, Vg 106, and possibly also Sm 103.

⁸⁷ The spurs and stirrups on the damaged U 754 fall in the category 'other' as well.

attributes of their own and are hence seen as separate images. Composite images can also consist of two images of the same type, for instance the dogs on U 855 and both pairs of birds on Vg 119 (two on the mast and two entwined on the other side). Such pairs are also counted as one image. It should be clear from the descriptions in the database if it concerns a composite image.

The handful of images of Þórr's hammers that are carved on runestones are included in this study, even though the Christian crosses are not and the Þórr's hammers are often considered their counterpart. This symbol refers to the god Þórr, whose attribute was the hammer Mjöllnir, but it may also represent the hammer as a ritual object, which is discussed further in Chapter 5.4.1. As an analogy to the Christian crosses, the Þórr's hammer can also be regarded as a reference to the pre-Christian Nordic system of beliefs.⁸⁸ On U 1161 Altuna, the hammer is actually depicted in Þórr's hand.⁸⁹

Textual and archaeological sources show Þórr in different roles.⁹⁰ We see him as mighty protector who kills his opponents straightforwardly with his hammer or uses cunning and wisdom to achieve his goal. He is also the fearsome thunder god and at the same time a trustworthy protector of the people, who would turn to him for favourable wind when at sea. In addition to this, he is an entertaining and sometimes comical character. This variety of roles makes it hard to say why Þórr is referred to on these runestones, but if the images of Þórr's hammers had largely the same function as the textual invocations to him on several other runestones, it is likely this was to call upon a protective power in an apotropaic manner.

The images of ships on are carved with a varying degree of detail. They are

⁸⁸ Hultgård 1992, 94. It has been pointed out that the Þórr's hammers on Sö 111 and Sö 86 resemble T-crosses (Williams, He. 1996a, 301).

⁸⁹ The hammers on Sö 101 and Sö 327 are not Þórr's hammers, but part of the tools that identify the smith Reginn, see Section 2.2.3.a.ii.

⁹⁰ Boyer 1997, 153-156; Bæksted 1984, 76-102; Davidson 1964, 73-91; Ljungberg 1947, 121, 133; Perkins 2001, 1-52.

interpreted in a mythological, Christian, or socio-cultural context and as such their suggested meanings vary from the vessel that transports the dead, to a symbol for Ragnarök, and from a reflection of the importance of ships in society, to a symbol for the Church, depending on what aspect of the monument's context is focussed on.⁹¹ The boat on U 1161 Altuna is different in that it is used by Þórr to go fishing for the Miðgarðsormr. The other images of ships on memorial stones are compared to the use of ships in burials in Chapter 5.4.1.

The faces on the Danish stones and on Sö 122 Skresta, Sö 167 Landshammar, Sö 367 Släbro are carved in the distinct interlacing Mammen style.⁹² The other faces, which occur mainly in Södermanland and Uppland, are more individual and less decorated. Both types of faces are mainly thought to have had an apotropaic function and interpretations range from the face of Christ, Þórr, Óðinn, or demons, to masks that represent especially the latter two.⁹³ The role of masks in a performative context is discussed in Chapter 5.4.3.

The several subcategories that are distinguished among the images of human figures and of quadrupeds are introduced next. The different kinds of birds that are depicted on runestones are also discussed below. The following descriptions focus on the most essential features of the images and only the most relevant interpretations are discussed.

2.2.3.a Human figures

The designations 'humanoid figure', 'human figure' and 'anthropomorphic figure' are used in this thesis for any depiction of a *homo sapiens* (or anatomically modern

⁹¹ e.g. Jesch 2001, 134; Crumlin-Pedersen and Munch Thye 1995.

⁹² Also on the damaged Vg 106.

⁹³ e.g. Snædal Brink and Wachtmeister 1984, 39; Hultgård 1992, 89; see also Oehrl 2006, 16-18 with references. Such faces are also among the decorations on the objects in the Oseberg grave (Hultgård 1992, 85). Also in these cases a protective function is possible. The similar faces in the Mammen style on the late tenth-century Cammin and Bamberg chests of Danish manufacture are part of the Christian 'Bildprogram' of the four evangelists and represent Matthew (Stæcker 2008).

humans). Even when they seem to have superhuman or supernatural features, they are classified under the human figures. This is mainly because a naturalistic-looking human figure can represent a mythological character. This is for instance the case for Þórr, depicted fishing for the Miðgarðsormr with his hammer on U 1161 Altuna and for the possible figure of the hunting god Ullr on U 855 Böksta. These figures are identified as mythological characters by their attributes and the scene they are part of and not by any supernatural features in their appearance. Conversely, the human figures that are depicted with supernatural features (with two heads on Sö 40 Västerljung; with an animal head on Vg 56 Källby ås; and with an animal body on U 860 Måsta) cannot be identified as a mythological god. These images are all discussed in more detail below. A large variety of humanoid figures is depicted on the memorial stones, but many of them can be classified on the basis of their attributes, appearance, or pose.

2.2.3.a.i Horsemen, hunters, and warriors

Among the human figures on horseback, a distinction can be made between armed and unarmed.⁹⁴ The latter category is discussed here first, before moving on to hunting and warrior scenes.

The three unarmed men on horseback on N 68 from Dynna are identified as the three horse-mounted Magi on their way to adore the infant Christ.⁹⁵ The figure with its feet touching the star that is carved above the horsemen is likely to represent the Christ Child. A building with three figures in it is carved vertically on the lower part of the stone.⁹⁶ This image represents the stable or grotto with the holy

⁹⁴ Armed: U 678 (twice), U 691, U 855, U 1161, Vg 119. Unarmed: N 61 (twice), N 68, U 375, U 448, U 599. Riders are depicted on the following fragments and damaged stones: N 66 (possibly armed), Ög Hov 22-23 (with a spear), Sö 239 (upper part is missing so unclear whether armed or not), Sö 272 (damaged so unclear whether armed or not), U 1003 (unarmed), U Fv1973;194 (unarmed).

⁹⁵ Strömbäck 1969, 12-16. The three Magi are one composite image.

⁹⁶ A similar house or grotto with three figures in it is carved on the damaged N 66, among other images.

family; the infant Christ is assumed to be present in the manger. A third and larger figure in the house that bows and offers a horn to the holy family is interpreted as one of the Magi. The kneeling horse that is carved vertically on the other side of the floor of the stable (and thus outside the stable) might belong to the Magi, but is counted as a separate image.

A smaller figure is carved between the top and the middle horse, sitting back to back with the middle rider. This figure is not explained in any reading of the carvings on the monument.⁹⁷ This image is here counted as part of the composite image of a combined Nativity/Adoration scene, which is classified under 'other'. In front of the larger horse on the lower part of the runestone, a human figure with an axe over his shoulder can be made out. Unlike the other images on the stone, the outlines of this figure are only incised shallowly and not carved, rather like a sketch. Martin Blindheim, who discovered the lines, suggests this man represents an unusually active 'Joseph the carpenter' as part of a Nordic version of the Nativity.⁹⁸ The figure matches the style of the other images on the stone, but it has not been dated otherwise to contemporaneous with the rest of the carvings or been identified as a latter addition. Since this figure is not carved as the other images and possibly represents Joseph, it is also counted as part of the composite images of the Nativity/Adoration.

The two unarmed riders on N 61 from Alstad have a different context than those on N 68. The upper one has a bird on its arm, while the lower holds a tapered object. This object is compared to a club in *N*, but it is also stressed that it is not closed at the top. Another possibility is that it represents a horn. It is not clear what

⁹⁷ Strömbäck 1969, 10-11 is the most complete reading. Later discussions, such as Düwel 2001, 152 and Spurkland 2005, 105 do not mention this figure either. It is mentioned in *N*, 162, but not explained. Similar images of a smaller man with spear behind the rider occur on helmet plates from Valsgårde grave 2 and 8 and the Sutton Hoo burial (Sundkvist 2001, 156). On the Sutton Hoo helmet plate the smaller figure holds the same spear as the primary horseman.

⁹⁸ Blindheim 1977, 147-150. This figure is not mentioned in e.g. Düwel 2001, 152 and Spurkland 2005, 105.

the vertical line across the upper rider's body represents (possibly a spear) or how it relates to the rider.⁹⁹ The horsemen are accompanied by dogs and an extra horse without a rider. The hunting bird on the upper horseman's arm shows this is a hunting scene. A larger bird is carved above the other images, which is discussed in Section 2.2.3.c.

Three other unarmed horsemen are found on Upplandic monuments. They are combined with images of a bird, possibly also forming a hunting scene.¹⁰⁰ Although these horsemen are rather stylised, without much detail, there is some variety in their facial features. The only facial features of the figure on U 375 in Vidbo are his beard and an eye indicated by a dot in the stone.¹⁰¹ His horse is depicted with reins and a mane. The rider on U 448 in Harg is similarly stylised, but instead of a round head he has a pointed head and a round eye, which may indicate he is wearing some kind of headgear. The rider on U 599 in Hanunda lacks even these details; no facial features can be discerned on its round head.¹⁰² One arm is depicted which is raised to the horse's neck.

One of the several armed riders is also part of a hunting scene. The horseman on U 855 in Böksta is armed with a spear and his hunting bird is attacking the prey, a large antlered animal. As on N 61 Alstad, dogs accompany the hunter and a larger bird is depicted somewhat separate from the hunting scene.¹⁰³ Another human figure is part of this scene. He is depicted on skis holding a bow and arrow. This image fits the description of Ullr as the god of the hunt, an archer, and a skier, as recorded by Snorri.¹⁰⁴ It is also possible, however, that this figure represents another hunter. In light of the possible identification of the archer as Ullr, it has been

⁹⁹ *N*, 160; Christiansen 1997, 155.

¹⁰⁰ See Section 2.2.3.c

¹⁰¹ The unarmed horsemen on the damaged U Fv1973;194 and the fragment U 1003 are similar to the one on U 375, but even more basic in that their arms are not depicted and there are no reins.

¹⁰² On the photo in *U vol. 2*, pl. 143.

¹⁰³ See Section 2.2.3.c.

¹⁰⁴ *Gylfaginning* 31, *Skáldskaparmál* 14; Silén 1983, 88.

proposed the horseman with his spear might represent Óðinn.¹⁰⁵ There is no necessity for both figures to be mythological, however; the addition of the image of a hunting god to an otherwise secular hunting scene is also appropriate.

How these hunting scenes might have functioned on the monuments is discussed by Christiansen, with N 61 Alstad as starting point. Christiansen argues that because in Scandinavia hunting became an elite sport only later in the Middle Ages (and that it was simply a necessity before that), the depicted hunting scenes cannot have been realistic for that time, but must be the result of a foreign, probably insular, influence on the iconography. If not only the motifs, but also their meaning was transferred from antiquity through Insular iconography into Viking Age Scandinavia, they would have functioned as status markers.¹⁰⁶ Whether the hunting motif also functioned as a motif of transition in early Christian tradition, as it did in the British Isles, is considered less likely for the Scandinavian monuments with this imagery because neither U 855 Böksta nor N 61 Alstad is explicitly Christian.¹⁰⁷ However, these were probably erected in a Christian context, and the combination of a status symbol and a religious motif fits well in the runestone tradition.

One other horseman is armed with a spear, on the back of U 678 in Skokloster. A rider armed with a sword is depicted on the front of the same monument. Riders with swords are further depicted on Vg 119 Sparlösa, on U 1161 Altuna, and on U 691 Söderby. The latter rider also carries a cross on a staff, while the other four hold their horses' reins. The horse on U 691 has no reins, but is depicted with a saddle. The horseman on DR 96 at Ålum church, finally, holds a shield and a triangular object on a stick. In the light of the shield, it is likely that he is

¹⁰⁵ Silén 1983. Wessén (*U vol. 3*, 510-511) suggests that this hunting scene may have related to the commemorated person's life. Jansson (1987, 152) regards this as 'simply' an elk hunt in winter.

¹⁰⁶ Christiansen 1997, 159-167. Åkerström-Hougen 1981, on the contrary sees birds of prey in graves and depictions of falcon hunt on runestones as indications that hunting with birds was already practised in Vendel Period Sweden.

¹⁰⁷ Christiansen 1997, 199-200.

holding a vane.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, this figure represents some kind of warrior. Since he is depicted with a defensive weapon, the shield, he is classified as an armed rather than as an unarmed horseman.

Of these armed riders only those on U 678 Skokloster and the one on DR 96 Ålum are seen as 'just' warriors. For the others, additional meanings have been put forward. The rider on U 1161 Altuna has been called a valkyrie,¹⁰⁹ and, in the light of the figure of Óðinn on the same stone,¹¹⁰ Weber suggests that the rider might be an attacker of the gods in Óðinn's vision of Ragnarök, or a fallen warrior riding to Valhalla as a parallel to such scenes on Gotlandic picture stones (however, there the rider is usually greeted by a woman with a horn).¹¹¹ The rider on Vg 119 Sparlösa has also been compared to the Gotlandic images of horsemen. The image has also been connected to the historic figure of Theoderic the Great and his legendary alter ego Dietrich of Bern in the context of a (mythical) hunt and the images on this monument have also been interpreted, not on all points convincingly, to relate to the god Freyr (and/or Ullr).¹¹² Because of its cross-staff, the horseman on U 691 Söderby is seen as a Christian controller of evil forces, represented by the quadruped with serpentine features that is carved below him.¹¹³ Of all these additional interpretations of the armed riders the one of U 691 has the most basis. Whether any of these additional meanings, even the more plausible ones, can indeed be ascribed to the individual armed riders remains uncertain. In either case, riders with swords (and on U 678 also with a spear) are primarily warrior figures, which is how they are classified in this thesis.

In addition to these armed figures on horseback, there are six images of

¹⁰⁸ DR, 132.

¹⁰⁹ By von Friesen and Lundberg as quoted in *U vol. 4*, 619.

¹¹⁰ Section 2.2.3.a.iii.

¹¹¹ Weber 1972, 331. He stresses that these are just suggestions, however, and that the identity of the rider is most uncertain.

¹¹² Hyenstrand 1991, 207-208; Nordgren 2009, 164-165; Nielsen 1969, 122-125.

¹¹³ *U vol. 3*, 207.

standing warriors.¹¹⁴ Four appear on Ög 181 at Ledberg church. The upper man on the front of the stone is armed with a sword, a spear, and a shield, the lower one only with a shield and a sword, and the two depicted on the back do not carry any weapons. The upper one of these two unarmed figures is being bitten in the foot by a wolf-like animal and the lower seems to collapse. Two other standing men are depicted with a long-shafted axe, on Sö 190 in Ytterenhörna and DR 282 of the Hunnestad monument. The first man uses his axe as weapon to strike the opposing quadruped, while on the second monument the axe is carried over the man's shoulder.

These images have also been interpreted in a mythological context.¹¹⁵ The scene on Sö 190 Ytterenhörna has been interpreted as the god Týr or Óðinn fighting Garmr or Fenrir at Ragnarök. The same scene is reconstructed on two stones of the Hunnestad monument, by considering DR 282 and DR 285 together. The scene on the back of Ög 181 Ledberg is often regarded as Óðinn being devoured by Fenrir at Ragnarök, or as Viðarr avenging him.

This thesis, however, considers the memorial stones in the wider context of the Viking Age commemoration and praise tradition. The human figures on Sö 190 Ytterenhörna, DR 282 Hunnestad, and Ög 181 Ledberg lack attributes or features that identify them as specific mythological characters (unlike for instance Þórr on U 1161 Altuna and the various images of Sigurðr, which are discussed further below). They can, however, be identified as warriors, by the weapons they carry and their headgear.

In the same light, the wolf that is biting the warrior on Ög 181 Ledberg can be seen as a visual reference to the motif of a beast of battle feeding off the fallen

¹¹⁴ DR 282, Ög 181 (four times), Sö 190. The human arms that hold a sword on the fragment of Nä 21 may also be remains of a warrior.

¹¹⁵ See e.g. Oehrl 2006, *passim* for an overview as well as Oehrl 2010, 216-221, 227-230 with references.

warriors. In the Old Norse poetic tradition, especially in skaldic praise poems, these animals, the wolf, the raven and the eagle, are present on the battlefield to feed off the fallen warriors.¹¹⁶ Although the association between Óðinn and wolves is clear, his connection with Fenrir specifically seems only to have taken shape fully in the thirteenth century with Snorri's writings.¹¹⁷ The kennings in which wolves function as beasts of battle that feed off the fallen warriors, on the other hand, are dated to the tenth-twelfth centuries,¹¹⁸ which shows that this concept was defined earlier. For Ög 181, this interpretation fits the gradual loss of weapons of the warrior figures on the front of the memorial and the final collapse of the warrior after he is bitten by the wolf on the back. It also does not sit uneasily with the cross that is carved on the side of the monument, which a Ragnarök-scene would.¹¹⁹ The image of the ship on this runestone fits in with either interpretation, whether it is taken literally as visual information about the life or death of the commemorated man, or as a symbol in a context of Christianity, Old Norse mythology and/or Viking Age culture in general.

This social context of runestone images is discussed further in Chapter 5 and this thesis comes back to their interpretation as Christian symbols in Chapter 6.3. Images that have been considered as suitable vehicles for the message of Christianity in the Swedish missionary period are for example those on Ög 181 Ledberg (in the Ragnarök interpretation), Þórr's fishing on U 1161 Altuna, and images from the stories about Sigurðr Fáfnisbani.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ This also occurs in Eddic heroic and praise poems, while in more mythological Eddic poems, the wolf, raven and eagle appear as mythological animals rather than beasts of battle. These roles can also overlap. See Jesch 2002, comp. also Beck 1970.

¹¹⁷ Pluskowski 2006b, 155.

¹¹⁸ Pluskowski 2006b, 139.

¹¹⁹ Such a combination does occur on the Anglo-Scandinavian Gosforth cross. Several of its images are commonly interpreted as Ragnarök scenes, although only Viðarr avenging Óðinn on Fenrir can be identified with some degree of certainty (see e.g. Kopár 2012, xix, 75-77, 90-94). The cross is decorated with a crucifixion scene on the same side and other scenes (warrior and/or hunting and mythological) on the other sides. The pairing of Christian and pre-Christian mythological imagery on this cross provides a context of an iconographical program of which there is no evidence on the Ledberg stone.

¹²⁰ e.g. Hultgård 1992; Williams, He. 1996a, 69-70.

2.2.3.a.ii Images from the stories about Sigurðr Fáfnisbani

The corpus material includes ten images of Sigurðr.¹²¹ This legendary hero is recognised by his stabbing of the serpent with his sword and on Sö 101 on Ramsundsberget also by his sucking his thumb which he burned while roasting Fáfnir's heart.¹²² A raised stone in Uppland, U 1163 in Drävle, is decorated with an image of Sigurðr stabbing the runic serpent Fáfnir at the top and a depiction of a pair of human figures facing each other. The male carries a ring and the female a drinking horn. These figures can be identified in light of the stories from the *Völsung* cycle as Sigurðr presenting the ring Andvaranaut to the valkyrie Brynhildr (or Sigdrífa) who offers him a drink and shares various kinds of wisdom with him.¹²³ On Gs 9 Årsunda the figures of Sigurðr with his sword and with the ring are depicted, but not the valkyrie. Two figures also flank Sigurðr on U 1175 in Stora Ramsjö, but here without attributes that identify them as Sigurðr and the valkyrie.¹²⁴

The pair of Sigurðr with the ring and the valkyrie with the horn, as well as Sigurðr stabbing the runic serpent, are also among the images on Gs 19 from Ockelbo. This stone was lost in a fire, but there are relatively reliable nineteenth-century illustrations. The monument was also decorated with the following images: a large peacock-like bird, two drinking humanoids playing a board game, a humanoid bowing with a small stick-like object, a figure seated in a wagon drawn by an animal, a figure holding a stick or spear, a much larger figure of whom now only the legs are visible, and a quadruped. There is also a smaller bird on top of the tree-like

¹²¹ Gs 9 (twice), Gs 19 (twice), Sö 101 (twice), Sö 327, U 1163 (twice), U 1175. On incomplete stones: Gs 2 (Sigurðr with ring and possibly valkyrie) and the N Tanberg fragment (a sword in a serpent, but no Sigurðr). For a detailed overview of the Viking Age and Medieval Scandinavian depictions of scenes from the legend of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, its literary tradition, and cultural significance, see Blindheim 1973; Düwel 1986; Margeson 1980; Nordanskog 2006; Liepe 1989; Staecker 2004, 61-70.

¹²² Stories about Sigurðr Fáfnisbani are recorded in the *Völsungasaga*, several poems in the *Codex Regius* (The *Poetic Edda*) and the Old High German *Nibelungenlied*.

¹²³ Düwel 1986, 239, 243 discusses this interpretation as a possibility, but prefers to see the figure with the ring as the dwarf Andvari who made it, even though this gives a less satisfactory interpretation of the woman with the horn.

¹²⁴ As explained in Section 2.2.3, they are counted here as a composite image.

structure.¹²⁵ There have been various attempts to interpret all the images on this monument in the context of the Sigurðr or Vǫlsung material, none of which are very convincing.¹²⁶

The story of Sigurðr is depicted more fully on a rock wall and an erratic block in Södermanland, Sö 101 on Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Göksten at Näsbyholm. Both show Sigurðr stabbing Fáfnir, who is represented by the runic serpent, from below. Sö 101 also contains an image of Sigurðr roasting Fáfnir's heart and putting his burnt finger in his mouth. We know from literary tradition that as a consequence he imbibes some of the dragon's blood, which gives him the ability to understand the birds in the tree. This way he learns that Reginn, his foster father who told him to kill Fáfnir, now intends to murder Sigurðr too, so he can have the treasure to himself. As a result, Sigurðr kills Reginn, who is depicted beheaded and surrounded by his smith's tools.¹²⁷ This treasure was the gold that was given in compensation for the killing of Reginn and Fáfnir's brother Otr, who is depicted as a small quadruped. The gold is now Sigurðr's, and it is represented by the pack on his horse Grani's back.

The images on Sö 327 Näsbyholm vary slightly from those on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget. Here, the roasting of Fáfnir's heart is not depicted as such, but a figure with a hammer holds an object that is identical to what Sigurðr is roasting over the fire on Sö 101. Instead of Sigurðr, however, this person more likely represents Reginn, identified by his smith's hammer, after he has cut the heart from the slain

¹²⁵ Gs 2 is often seen as a possible Sigurðr stone too. Only a small part of this stone has survived and there are records for not more than the bottom half, so it is not included in the corpus here. The records of this stone show that it was similar to Gs 19 and probably also contained an image of Sigurðr with the ring and his partner (who seems to have been empty-handed here). It is unknown, however, whether there ever was a depiction of Sigurðr stabbing the runic band (Fáfnir) at the top. This monument also seems to have been decorated with a large bird and three figures with spears or sticks. The records of this stone also show what looks like a pair of crossed legs and a small quadruped.

¹²⁶ See Gs, 35-38, 205-217 for an overview. There are only a few interpretations of individual images, e.g. the large bird as pelican, the tree as Yggdrasil, and the figure in the wagon as Þórr (Oehrl 2006, 50-51).

¹²⁷ A head, maybe also decapitated, was also depicted on the lost fragment of U 521, together with an image of a humanoid sitting or lying with drawn-up knees at the top where a crouching Sigurðr is depicted on the standing Sigurðr stones. There was also a large bird bound by or gripping a snake on this monument.

Fáfnir's breast.¹²⁸ The headless figure on this monument is also ambiguous. It is uncertain whether the round object close to the body (above the bird) or the object that resembles a combination of a head and a hand represents the 'missing' head. Unlike on Sö 101, the headless figure is not identified by the smith's tools, which are placed closer to the figure Reginn with the heart. Instead, it more likely represents Hreiðmarr, the father of Reginn, Fáfnir, and Otr.¹²⁹ In the stories that are known to us, Hreiðmarr was killed by his two sons for the treasure he received in compensation for the death of Otr. Part of this treasure was the ring *Andvaranaut*, which he wears around his wrist in this carving. That Sigurðr is also depicted with this ring as he is stabbing Fáfnir could refer to his future possession of the treasure, which is again present as the pack on Grani's back.

In the trees on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm, to which Sigurðr's horse Grani is tied, snakes are coiling down from between the branches. Interpretations of these images vary from another depiction of Fáfnir to a reference to the Fall of man in a Christian context.¹³⁰ The trees are classified under 'other images' in this thesis and on Sö 101 the birds are considered to be part of the tree in a composite image. The images of Otr also fall into this category. The human figures on these monuments that are not Sigurðr himself are classified as 'other human figures'.

The monuments with Sigurðr imagery were carved against a Christian background. The standing runestones with images of Sigurðr (U 1163, U 1175, Gs 9, and Gs 19) are decorated with a (tree-like) cross. Sö 327 is also decorated with a cross and the inscription on Sö 101 contains a reference to the good Christian deed

¹²⁸ Liepe 1989, 8-9.

¹²⁹ Liepe 1989, 9. According to Christiansson 1974, 67 the decapitated figure on Sö 101 is also Hreiðmarr, but this is not generally followed.

¹³⁰ Liepe 1989, 10-11; Düwel 1986, 271n189 with references.

of constructing a bridge for the soul of the deceased.¹³¹ These two monuments also seem to contain a Christian reference to the tree of knowledge with the serpent.

Still, the images of the stories about Sigurðr on these memorials do not necessarily have to be interpreted as pre-figurations of Christ or St Michael. The Sigurðr and Vǫlsung narratives that were carved on late-twelfth- and thirteenth-century Norwegian stave churches had a function in the context of Christian doctrines, church organization, and secular politics.¹³² This interpretation, however, is also applied to the decoration on the earlier memorial stones.¹³³ I would argue, with Nordanskog, that these monuments differ too much in function from the later portals and that they are a product of a different cultural context.¹³⁴ Chapter 4.6.1 illustrates how these images functioned in the commemorative tradition on runestones without necessarily having to pre-figure a Christian being.

2.2.3.a.iii Humanoid figures with spread arms and/or interacting with snakes

Eight humanoid figures are depicted on a runestone standing with their arms spread.¹³⁵ Two of them clearly represent Christ, at the top of N 68 Dynna, above the three Magi and the Nativity/Adoration scene, and in a crucified position on DR 42 in Jelling.

The human figure with spread arms on U 1161 Altuna is positioned on a structure that may be best described as resembling a large ladder. The figure's feet are on the lowest horizontal line. The next horizontal line is at hip-height and coincides with the hemline of its short tunic. The third and highest horizontal line

¹³¹ See Chapter 3.2.3.

¹³² Blindheim 1973, 24-26; Byock 1990; Nordanskog 2006, 221-306; Staecker 2004, 68-70.

¹³³ Düwel 1986, 264-270.

¹³⁴ Nordanskog 2006.

¹³⁵ DR 42, Gs 7, N 68, Sö 40 (with two heads), U 313 (twice), U 1161 (on a ladder with a bird), U Fv1946;258. Humanoids in similar pose were depicted on the lost U 588, the damaged U Fv1955;222, and the medieval U 370. Drawings of the lost fragment of the medieval Vg 147 depict an image of a humanoid with its arms bent down instead of upward, so the hands are on its waist or chest.

runs right below the figure's chin. Its arms are stretched out to either side with the elbows slightly bent. A bird sits on the figure's right shoulder (his perspective), with its beak touching the side of the human figure's head.

None of the interpretations of this figure, which vary from Heimdallr with his horn (a misinterpretation of the bird) to St Óláfr on Jacob's ladder, is conclusive.¹³⁶ Weber's interpretation of this figure as Óðinn is the most promising. This interpretation is supported by two visual elements. Firstly, the structure he is positioned on could represent the *Hliðskjálf* that Óðinn is associated with. This *Hliðskjálf*, which allows the occupant to see into all corners of the world, is interpreted by Snorri as Óðinn's high-seat. The high-seat (*hásæti, öndvegi*) was not a seat in the sense of a chair or bench or any other piece of furniture, but a part of the set-platform that was marked off as a higher-status area. It was framed by the high-seat pillars, which were probably part of the structural pillars of the main room.¹³⁷ Etymologically *Hliðskjálf* means a 'frame over a (door)opening'.¹³⁸ Thus, whether or not with high-seat connotations, the frame on U 1161 can be identified as Óðinn's *Hliðskjálf*. Secondly, the bird on the figure's shoulder seems to be a raven since it has a straight beak. Therefore it could be one of Óðinn's ravens, which also points towards the figure being Óðinn.

The identification of the other five humanoid figures that have their arms in a similar position is much less certain. The figure with his arms spread on Sö 40 at Västerlång church has two relatively small bearded heads, one facing left and the other right. He is wearing a short tunic with something wrapped around his waist that bulges out in two loops on both sides. The interpretations of this figure vary from two men holding each other, possibly wrestling, to the god Heimdallr with

¹³⁶ For an overview of interpretations, see *U vol. 4*, 618-619; Weber 1972, 326-327; or Oehrl 2006, 125-126.

¹³⁷ Teva Vidal, pers. comm. 22 October 2012.

¹³⁸ Weber 1972, 328-329 (my translation).

snakes around his waist, to possibly a giant.¹³⁹

The arms of the figure on Gs 7 in Torsåkers church are spread widely. This person lacks facial features other than two dots for eyes and seems to be wearing a pleated skirt. Interpretations vary from a representation of the mother of the drowned commemorated man, who is mentioned in the inscription, to the Virgin Mary. None of these readings is very convincing. This is also Jansson's opinion, but he is certain that the figure represents a woman, on the basis of the pleats in the skirt.¹⁴⁰ However, when this garment is compared to the pleated skirts of the warrior figures on the above-mentioned Ög 181 Ledberg, the identification of the figure on Gs 7 as female also becomes uncertain.

The figure on U Fv1946;258 in Fällbro has its arms spread too, but they are bent at the elbows so that the hands, which are disproportionately large, are slightly higher than the head. This humanoid seems to be dressed in a short tunic. The figure is not discussed in Jansson's report of his investigation after the discovery of the carvings.¹⁴¹ Oehrl sees this position as an *Adorationsgestus* and suggests an apotropaic function of the image.¹⁴² Apart from the pre-Viking Age U 1125 in Krogsta, however, the parallels he offers are removed far from Viking Age Scandinavia in time and place. He also does not consider this image together with the figures that are depicted in similar poses on the other runestones.

The two figures on U 313 in Harg are depicted without details of clothing and their only facial features are their eyes, which are indicated by dots. They are seen *en face* with their feet pointing to the (viewer's) right. Their left arms are stretched out

¹³⁹ Sö, 30; Christiansson 1974, 70; Oehrl 2006, 107. The latter lists other figures with multiple heads as parallels: the tenth-century Gotlandic picture stone Ardre VIII, the twelfth-century weave from Skog, and one of the fifth-century Gallehus horns (DR 12). All these figures have three heads instead of two, however, and the one on Ardre VIII is kneeling. The other two have a similar pose to the figure on Sö 40, but their arms are bent and the figure on the Gallehus horn holds an axe and a horned animal on a leash.

¹⁴⁰ See Gs, 70-71 for an overview.

¹⁴¹ Fv 1946, 258-260.

¹⁴² Oehrl 2006, 81-82.

at an angle to one side, while their right arms are bent at the elbows so their hands are next to their faces. The band that circles their upper bodies in a horizontal 8-shape might have had a serpent head on the now badly-worn top of the stone.¹⁴³

Three runestones are decorated with humanoid figures that are holding snakes, also with spread arms.¹⁴⁴ The figure on U 1065 in Rångsta is grabbing the upper two loops that are formed by the runic serpents. The serpents overlap the figure, which gives the impression it is carved behind them. This figure has a pronounced nose and round eyes.¹⁴⁵

The figure on Sö 175 at Lagnö in Aspö socken is depicted in the centre of two runic serpents, which he holds just behind their heads. The serpents' heads are on either side of his face and their mouths are touching his ears. The serpents are connected by a union knot above his head and a similar union knot connects his spread legs around which the bodies of the serpents curl. This man also has round eyes and a long nose. The eyes are further accentuated by lines above and below them and he has a luxurious moustache.

Öl 19 from Hulterstad church is lost, but Bautil's illustration shows clearly that it was decorated with a figure sitting in a similar position, with spread legs and the arms bent upwards. The serpents' heads are also positioned next to the face, though not touching it as on Sö 175. The figure does not grip these serpents, but rather holds what seems to be its own long hair that comes down on either side of its head, ending in snakes that curl around its arms.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Although they are painted in on the photos, these figures are not mentioned in *U vol. 2*, 27-28. Oehrl (2006, 133) also lists no previous interpretations.

¹⁴⁴ The fragment Ög Hov 27 contains an image of a human figure with serpent heads biting the sides of his head. The one arm that is visible does not seem to hold the serpent, but to be bound by (serpent) ornamentation.

¹⁴⁵ Wessén (*U vol. 4*, 344) does not offer an interpretation of this figure, but suggests the shape of the stone surface may have inspired the carver to carve it. That is a possibility, but not a reason to exclude it from interpretation.

¹⁴⁶ The figure on DR 284, which is discussed below in the category 'other humanoid figures', is also holding snakes.

In contrast to the figures who are holding serpents or snakes, the heads of the two human figures on U 629 at Grynsta backe in Svarsta are trapped in the claws of the runic serpents. One of the figures is wearing a dress or a tunic, while the other one lacks details of clothing. Both figures touch the claw around their neck, the lower with both hands and the other with one.¹⁴⁷

A small human figure is carved horizontally in the serpent decoration on Sö 322 from Stora Väsby. Its lower body is held in the loop of a serpent's tail. The figure's eye is indicated by a dot and one of its arms is stretched out forwards. In its hand seems to be a stick with possibly a triangle at the end (an axe?), but this is hard to make out on the photo in *Södermanlands runinskrifter* and I have not been able to examine the stone in person yet.¹⁴⁸

U 241 in Lingsberg also contains a human figure amidst its serpent decoration, this time with a clearly pronounced beard.¹⁴⁹ He has his knees drawn up and his arms are bent downwards on either side of his body. The man is enclosed by the runic serpent on three sides. Although not currently painted in, traces of a line from the knee up to the hand above it and another line across the lower waist can be observed on the stone.¹⁵⁰ This might have indicated a belt, something that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.4.3.

In addition to the two-headed figure with spread arms described above, Sö 40 at Västerljung church is decorated with another image of a human figure. This figure is depicted in profile, seated on a low chair with snakes wound around one leg and at least one arm, which are stretched out in front of him. One snake's head is

¹⁴⁷ Wessén is of the opinion that the two figures have no particular meaning but are only an artistic game of the carver (*U vol. 3*, 66). The same is said of the bird above them that carries the cross on its back.

¹⁴⁸ This figure is not mentioned in the description of the ornamentation in *Sö*, 302. Also Oerhl seems to have overlooked it as it does not feature in 2006 nor in 2010.

¹⁴⁹ The figure and the accompanying quadruped are mentioned in *U vol. 1*, 404 and Oerhl 2006, 86, but are not further commented on.

¹⁵⁰ Visit 6 September 2008.

touching the figure's hip. The eye is clearly marked with an oval, there is no pronounced beard, and the hair is at shoulder-length and ends in a curl. The person seems to be holding a square object in its outstretched hand(s) on the picture in Jansson's report of the stone,¹⁵¹ but because the surface of the stone is damaged at the place of the hands, it is not clear whether these lines are part of the design and they are now no longer painted in on the stone.

This image has often been regarded as a depiction of Gunnar in the snake-pit.¹⁵² According to the literary sources of the *Völsung* material, King Atli kept Gunnar there while interrogating his brother Högni about Sigurðr's treasure.¹⁵³ The depictions on Sö 175 Lagnö and Öl 19 Hulterstad have on occasion also been linked to this scene from the *Völsung* stories, but strangely not the other images of human figures surrounded by snakes. The figure on Sö 175, however, is holding the snakes, while on Sö 40 Västerljung the snakes seem to bind the figure. In either case, it does not seem to be a pit of snakes that the figures are in.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, these depictions lack a detail from the narratives that is included in the medieval representations of this scene: the harp that Gunnar plays to soothe the serpents.¹⁵⁵ In addition, the figure on Sö 40 is sitting on a chair. As an alternative approach, this figure is considered in a ritualistic context in Chapter 5.4.3, together with the other runestone images of human figures that are interacting with serpents or snakes.¹⁵⁶ As part of a general alternative interpretation of runestone images in the context of (burial) practices, the two-headed figure on Sö 40 and the possible Óðinn figure on U 1161 Altuna are also discussed there.

¹⁵¹ Jansson 1968, fig 1.

¹⁵² Jansson 1968; Oehrl 2006, 107-111 with references.

¹⁵³ Various poems in the Codex Regius (The Poetic Edda): *Oddrúnargrátr*, *Atlamál*, *Atlakviða*; *Völsungasaga* 39; *Skaldskaparmál* 42 of Snorri's Edda.

¹⁵⁴ There are (mostly medieval) images that do seem to depict an enclosure filled with snakes, see Oehrl 2006, 108-109.

¹⁵⁵ Jansson 1968, 117 identifies the badly weathered object he observed as this harp.

¹⁵⁶ Christiansson 1974, 71 suggested such an interpretation for the figure in the chair on Sö 40.

2.2.3.a.iv Other humanoid figures

Twenty-one individual images of human figures that do not fit into any of the above subcategories remain. Together they form the subcategory ‘other humanoid figures’.

Five of these figures are identified as characters from the stories about Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, that are not Sigurðr himself. (He occurs so often that he has his own category.) These characters are Reginn on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm, Hreiðmarr (or Reginn again) on Sö 327, and the valkyries on Gs 19 Ockelbo and U 1163 Drävle.¹⁵⁷ The other human figures on Gs 19 that are not identified as figures from the Völsung narratives also fall into this category: the two figures playing a board game, the bowing figure with a small stick-like object, the figure in the wagon, the lower part of a figure holding a long thin object, and the large legs in front of him.¹⁵⁸

Another image in this category is identified with certainty as a mythological god: Þórr in the boat on U 1161 at Altuna church. He is holding his hammer, but that is not the only ground for his identification. He is also depicted in a boat, fishing for a creature that is curled up underneath. One or both feet have gone through the bottom of the boat. Especially this last aspect identifies this image as the scene from the story of Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr in which his feet go through the boat in his struggle with the serpent.¹⁵⁹ The archer on skis on U 855 in Böksta also falls into

¹⁵⁷ See Section 2.2.3.a.ii.

¹⁵⁸ Images of humanoids in this category also occur on incomplete, lost, or medieval monuments: Gs 2 (three humanoids with stick-like objects, legs), U 901 (three humanoids, of which one consecrates the second, who is holding a third person, with a cross), Gs 20 (human hands stabbing a foot with a knife), Vg 27 (human feet), U 1147 (a hand holding a pointed object with a cross on top), Gs 18c (a humanoid with a cross-staff in a wagon), U 631 (an embracing couple of which one holds a cross-staff), U Fv1955;222 (two stick-figures holding a contraption from which a cross is suspended), and U 6 (possibly human legs).

¹⁵⁹ As told e.g. in Snorri’s *Edda*, *Gylfaginning* 47-48 and *Hymiskviða* in the *Codex Regius* (The *Poetic Edda*). The same scene is depicted slightly differently on the eroded DR EM1985;275. Here Þórr, again with his feet through the bottom of the boat, is accompanied by the giant Hymir who prepares to cut Þórr’s line to save them.

Meulengracht Sørensen (1986, 265-274) shows how this scene refers to the themes of liminality,

this category. As discussed above in Section 2.2.3.a.i this figure is likely to be a depiction of the hunting god Ullr, but this is a less conclusive identification than for instance Þórr on U 1161.

Several other figures in this category have supernatural features or wear masks and or special belts. As the figures that interact with serpents, they are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.4.3, where they are examined in connection with funerary practices and other rituals. One of these figures, the humanoid riding a beastly quadruped on DR 284 of the Hunnestad monument, has often been interpreted as a mythological character. Snorri recounts how the giantess Hyrrokkin came to Baldr's funeral to push the boat offshore riding a wolf with a snake for reins.¹⁶⁰ The image on DR 284 fits this description quite well as the beast has wolf-like features and the snake that goes through the animal's mouth might indeed function as a rein. Consequently, the connection between this image and Snorri's description is often accepted.¹⁶¹ Several details of this image, however, make this interpretation less certain, however. The figure seems to wear male clothing, for instance, and the animal is not conclusively a wolf.¹⁶² It has also been pointed out that the wolf-steed and snake-reins were attributes of giantesses and troll-women in general.¹⁶³ The figure has a shorter snake in the other hand and the longer snake is not actually fastened around the wolf's snout or neck as reins, but it runs between its open jaws. On the images of reined horses, the reins go around the closed mouth.¹⁶⁴ Less certain interpretations, e.g. as a valkyrie and as Óðinn, have also been put forward.¹⁶⁵

transformation, struggle between forces and cosmic balance. Later he added that this interpretation is mainly for DR EM1985;275, while Þórr U 1161, without the mediating giant Hymir, can also represent a Christ figure (Meulengracht Sørensen 2006, 32). This is also the approach Oehrl takes (2006, 131-133).

¹⁶⁰ Snorri's *Edda*, *Gylfaginning* 49.

¹⁶¹ See Oehrl 2010, 50 with references.

¹⁶² Roesdahl 1991, 297-298; Meulengracht Sørensen 2006, 27.

¹⁶³ Moltke 1985, 282n1.

¹⁶⁴ Only on N 61 the reins seem attached at the neck of the bridle. On Sö 40, N 66, and Sö 272 it is not visible where the reins go exactly.

¹⁶⁵ See Oehrl 2010, 66 with references.

Vg 56 in Källby ås is decorated with a standing figure with an animal head or mask and a snake-belt around its waist. Interpretations of this figure vary from a giant, to a warrior, to a devil, and an apotropaic function has been assigned to it. More recently it has been suggested that this might be a person in deer guise or a warrior wearing an animal skin, possibly connected to rituals.¹⁶⁶ Salberger's interpretation of this image as Sigurðr can be dismissed as being too speculative.¹⁶⁷

Sö 324 on an outcrop in Åsby in Helgarö socken is decorated with an image of a kneeling archer with an elaborate headdress and possibly a mask and a small axe. No interpretation is offered for this figure in *Södermanlands runinskrifter*. The interpretations of this figure as a 'Nordic Medusa' and as Þórr, mentioned by Oehrl, are both based on only a few features of the figure and are therefore not convincing.¹⁶⁸

A human head is combined with an animal body on U 860 from Måsta. This image and the three other quadrupeds on this runestone (which do not have human features) are regarded by Wessén as fantasy animals that were carved to fill up the space. It is also suggested that the human head may have been inspired by images of a centaur.¹⁶⁹ Staecker's interpretation of these four animals as 'misförstådda' representations of the four evangelists is based on their number (four) and on his, in my opinion mistaken, view that the quadruped with the human face has wings and can therefore be an ox representing Luke.¹⁷⁰ Since the figure's wings are in fact the tendrils of its tail and nothing in the other quadrupeds suggests they were intended to represent the man, lion, and eagle symbols, this interpretation is not convincing.

The category of 'other humanoid figures' further contains several standing figures. The man on DR 290 from Krageholm in Sövestad socken holds a cross staff.

¹⁶⁶ Vg, 82; Oehrl 2006, 85; Price 2002, 373.

¹⁶⁷ Salberger 1991, 75-79.

¹⁶⁸ Oehrl 2006, 78 with references.

¹⁶⁹ *U vol. 3*, 521.

¹⁷⁰ Staecker 2010, 214-217.

His clothes are described as a cap or helmet and a cloak or cape fastened on the shoulder with a round brooch.¹⁷¹ It has been doubted whether this cross bearing person should be seen in a mythological light or whether he represents a contemporary (clerical) person.¹⁷² The man's over-garment resembles a chasuble because of the split in the side, which makes it likely in my opinion that the cross on the staff represents a processional cross.

The male and female figures on N 228 from Tu are considered to be 'mytisk, et gudepar', without a direct connection to the inscription.¹⁷³ There is no reason, however, why they should not be legendary or secular figures.

The figure with an emphasised belt on Vg 32, now at Kållands-Åsaka church, has been interpreted as an unarmed farmer (*bonde*), who might represent the commemorated man, on the basis of his clothes not being a warrior outfit.¹⁷⁴ It is unclear, however, whether the figure held something in its raised hand and his pointed headgear does resemble the caps or helmets worn by the armed figures discussed above. It has been suggested that the figure is knocking on a door, based on the position of the hand and the supposed doorframe shape of the runic band.¹⁷⁵ This is largely unfounded since this shape of the runic band is rather standard on runestones and the figure may have held something in its hand. The figure's most distinctive feature, his belt, is not commented on in these interpretations.

Finally, the horizontally depicted couple on U 1043 in Onslunda falls in this category of 'other human figures' too. The position of the couple, one horizontally on top of the other with their legs entwined, suggests they are making love. It is stated by Wessén that this couple was carved for the carver Ásmundr's entertainment and to fill up the space and we are warned not to read any meaning into them, but a link

¹⁷¹ Moltke 1985, 266.

¹⁷² DR, 343.

¹⁷³ N, 157-158.

¹⁷⁴ Vg, 49-50.

¹⁷⁵ Oehrl 2006, 83 with references.

to fertility rites has also been suggested.¹⁷⁶

This survey of previous interpretations shows that it is difficult to interpret all human figures convincingly in the framework of for instance pre-Christian mythology or Christian doctrine. In Chapter 5, the social context of the stone monuments, i.e. their commemorative function and their relation to other and older commemorative practices, is taken into account. This approach will provide a more fruitful and coherent background for many of the images on memorial stones, including various animals and birds.

2.2.3.b Quadrupeds

Animals feature prominently in runestone decoration. Different types of quadrupeds can be distinguished among them. There are seven rather realistic horses (in addition to those with riders, which are discussed above).¹⁷⁷ Of these, those on Sö 101 at Ramsundsberget and the Göksten in Näsbyholm (Sö 327) represent Sigurðr's horse Grani. There is an extra horse on N 61 from Alstad that accompanies the two horsemen in the hunting scene. On N 68 from Dynna, a horse kneels at the grotto or stable with the Nativity/Adoration scene. The horse on Sö 40 in Västerljung has no close relation to the other images on this stone. Those on Sö 222 in Frölunda and Sö 226 in Norra Stutby are the only images on the stones.

There are five relatively realistically proportioned quadrupeds with antlers or horns, which are classified as cervine animals.¹⁷⁸ The cervine animals on U 548 at Husby-Lyhundra church and U 1004 in Frötuna have been interpreted as sheep and

¹⁷⁶ *U vol. 4*, 302; see Oehrl 2006, 124 with references.

¹⁷⁷ In addition, damaged stones and fragments with a horse are Sö 235 (possibly twice), and possibly U 6 and U Fv1959;260.

¹⁷⁸ In addition, three damaged stones/fragments are decorated with what probably were cervine quadrupeds: Sö 303, U 8, Vg 14 (attacked by predatory quadruped).

consequently as *Agnus Dei* depictions.¹⁷⁹ In *Upplands runinskrifter*, however, the first is considered to be probably a deer and the second a similar animal, but then in motion.¹⁸⁰ In particular the latter feature argues against an interpretation as *Agnus Dei*. DR 264 from Vissmarlöv, on the other hand, is interpreted with certainty as a Christian symbol.¹⁸¹ The antlered animal on U 855 in Böksta is the prey in a hunting scene and the one on U 548 is possibly also the prey of the bird that is depicted above it.

Other realistic-looking quadrupeds on runestones have dog-like (canine) or wolf-like (lupine) characteristics.¹⁸² Dogs and wolves both belong to the family of canidae and the distinction between them is not easily made. It seems that canine quadrupeds in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian art may represent either.¹⁸³ The only biological characteristics on the basis of which the two can be told apart with certainty are a longer snout in wolves and the shape of the tail. This is straight on wolves and always hangs down, while it can range from sickle shaped to curled and from hanging to pointing upwards on dogs.¹⁸⁴ These differences, especially the shape of the skull, may be difficult to render clearly in stone carving. There are, however, some other characteristics and the visual context of the images helps to distinguish between lupine quadrupeds and canines.

Ög 181 at Ledberg church presents a unique opportunity to compare these two kinds of animals on one monument. There are three of them carved on it with different characteristics. The two quadrupeds on the front are depicted horizontally

¹⁷⁹ Oehrl 2010, 30-31,42, 222n601, 244.

¹⁸⁰ *U* vol. 2, 434; vol. 4, 186. The horned animal on Sö 304 (and on the fragment Sö 303) are not mentioned in *Sö*, 278-280.

¹⁸¹ DR Saglexikon, 781.

¹⁸² The noun 'canine' means 'a dog' and the adjective 'canine' 'of, belonging to, or characteristic of, a dog; having the nature or qualities of a dog', i.e. dog-like. 'Lupine' only occurs as an adjective and is used in the meaning of 'having the nature or qualities of a wolf', i.e. wolf-like. OED <<http://oed.com>> [accessed 14 October 2011].

¹⁸³ Pluskowski 2006b, 4, 87.

¹⁸⁴ Miklósi 2007, 90-92.

at the feet of the two warriors and are smaller than the one on the back. This larger canide is carved vertically and bites the foot of the warrior above it. The animal on the back also has 'beastly' features, such as manes and claws, which the smaller quadrupeds on the front lack. Also, this beast is further differentiated from the other two by its wide open mouth, long pointed ears, and round eye.

These differences in appearance already encourage an interpretation of the two animals on the front as dogs, and the one on the back as a more beastly variety, i.e. a wolf. The positions of the animals support this interpretation. The dogs on the front walk or stand at the feet of their masters, while the wolf on the back bites the warrior. As discussed above in Section 2.2.3.a.i, in my opinion an interpretation of this scene as a literal depiction of a wolf of battle feeding off a fallen warrior is to be preferred over one as Óðinn being devoured by Fenrir or Viðarr avenging him at Ragnarök. Two opposing quadrupeds on DR 314 from Lund and one on the lost DR 286 of the Hunnestad monument have/had the same features and posture as the Ledberg wolf. Consequently, it is safe to say wolves are depicted on these monuments too.

Further realistic-looking quadrupeds that also have wolf-like features are carved on Sm 133 in Sunneränga, Sö 313 along Gamla Turingevägen in Södertälje, and U Fv1978;226 from Ösby. These characteristics are less pronounced, however, and there is no visual context to further confirm an interpretation of these images as a wolf. The quadruped on U Fv1978;226 has a very similar head to the wolves described above, but its tail curves upwards which means it cannot biologically be a wolf. This animal has been interpreted as a lion.¹⁸⁵ The image has more in common, however, with the realistic depictions of canidae than with the animals with leonine features, which display fantastic non-realistic features. All of these three images have

¹⁸⁵ Oehrl 2006, 138.

more in common with images of wolves than with other types of quadrupeds (e.g. the smaller images of dogs or the larger images of leonine beasts with fantastic features which are both described next) and they are therefore classified as lupine quadrupeds.¹⁸⁶

Small realistic quadrupeds on eight stones can be identified as dogs rather than wolves, based on a combination of their features and their context. These are the dogs that accompany the warriors on the front of Ög 181 Ledberg and the horsemen on U 855 Böksta, N 61 Alstad, and Vg 119 Sparlösa. Several of these animals have a short or cropped tail. Other, similar-looking quadrupeds seem to be depicted lying down, slightly curled-up. Those on U 860 Måsta, on U 904 Västerby, and on U 969 Bolsta are combined with other quadrupeds instead of with warriors or hunters, but the dog-like animal on U 241 Lingsberg accompanies a man in a similar lying-down position. In particular because of this last combination, these quadrupeds are likely to represent dogs.

The small quadrupeds in the Sigurðr carvings at Ramsundsberget (Sö 101) and on the Göksten (Sö 327) represent otters.¹⁸⁷ These images share some characteristics with the dogs on Ög 181 in Ledberg, but at the same time they have an open mouth with teeth, pointed ears, and eyes similar to those of the wolf on that stone. They lack the manes, however. Maybe such small, relatively realistic-looking quadrupeds were to a certain extent generic and multi-employable. It seems that within this group of similar-looking animals their individual context plays a more important role in their identification than details of their appearance.

The horses and canines that are discussed so far are all rather realistic. Images of more fantastic animals with leonine features in the Mammen or Ringerike

¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the giantess's steed on DR 284 is most likely a wolf. It is not counted under lupine animals, however, but the image as a whole is counted under 'other human figures'. Damaged stones with a lupine quadruped are: Vg 14 and possibly Ög 106.

¹⁸⁷ These two otters are classified as 'other' images.

style occur on eight memorial stones.¹⁸⁸ These quadrupeds have long, sometimes thin and feline, tails that point upwards. They combine leonine and lupine features with fantastically knotted manes that can resemble antlers. Many of these animals have open mouths, some with teeth showing, claw-like feet, and several have their legs bound or crossed. Some of these animals are seen as lions,¹⁸⁹ but they have also been interpreted as wolves, mostly specifically as Fenrir.¹⁹⁰ The beast on DR 271 at Tullstorp church is regularly interpreted as the wolf Fenrir and the animal on DR 42 in Jelling as a lion, yet they have very similar features. It has been suggested that the animal on Sö 82 at Tumbo church is a 'beast of battle' wolf, because the inscription probably refers to a violent death abroad.¹⁹¹ This animal, however, does not have a realistic wolf-like appearance, but head tendrils and an upward pointing tail that interlace. Its legs are also bound. Consequently, it is here regarded as a fantastic, lion-like animal rather than a lupine quadruped.

Nine serpentine quadrupeds are included in the survey because they are combined with other images.¹⁹² This image type was described in more detail above in Section 2.2.2.a.

Nineteen quadrupeds that do not have distinctive enough features to place them in any of the above categories remain.¹⁹³ These animals are quite uniform and fall between the serpentine quadrupeds and the realistically carved animals. They do not have a serpent head and they are not incorporated in the serpent ornamentation as the serpentine quadrupeds often are. These animals also lack detailed

¹⁸⁸ DR 42, DR 271, DR 280, DR 285, N 84, Sö 82, Vg 4, Vg 181. Fragments, damaged and/or lost stones with such images are Ög 122, Sö 80, and possibly Vs 4.

¹⁸⁹ e.g. Vg, 7.

¹⁹⁰ e.g. Oehrl 2010, esp. 42-44 and 201-202.

¹⁹¹ Andrén, 2000, 19.

¹⁹² Nä 34, Sö 40, Sö 190, U 240, U 691, U 692, U 753, U 860, U Fv1955;219. Also attacked by a bird on U 1161.

¹⁹³ Gs 19, Sö 237, Sö 301 (twice), U 35 (twice), U 79, U 160, U 193, U 240 (twice), U 590, U 598 (twice), U 746, U 860, U 904, U 969, Vg 119. Fragmented, damaged and/or lost stones with such quadrupeds are Gs 2, Ög 96, U 51 (twice), U 176, U 901, U 980, U 1123 (possibly twice), U 1144 (twice) and possibly also on Ög 196 (body only), Sö 155 (legs only), U 714 (legs only).

characteristics that identify them as for instance a horse or dog, nor do they possess predatory features such as claws and sharp teeth, or interlaced antler-like manes and tails as the more fantastic beasts.¹⁹⁴ These animals are classified in this survey under the denominator 'non-specific quadrupeds'.

Sigmund Oehrl employs a different classification of the various quadrupeds that are carved on runestones than I do.¹⁹⁵ He identifies predatory features, mainly claws or fangs, in most of the different types of animals and takes them as representations of the same beast. The animals among these that have bound or crossed legs are identified as the mythological wolf Fenrir, representing (constrained) evil and the end of times. This interpretation is then extended to include also the unbound quadrupeds with a predatory feature regardless of their other features and context. I, on the other hand, rely heavily on the features and context for the classification of the quadrupeds, as is clear from the survey above. The visual analysis in the second part of this Chapter shows a difference in visual context between the various types, confirming the distinctions I made above. It should also be noted that none of the realistic wolves have bound or crossed legs. The possibility remains that those less realistic animals, especially the bound ones, represent the mythological Fenrir with the range of meanings described by Oehrl, while the quadrupeds classified in this thesis as lupines of a more realistic kind represent the wolf, possibly as beast of battle. In Domeij Lundborg's interpretation that bound bodies were also symbols of warrior culture, these animals would fit in a secular or pre-Christian context as well as in a Christian visual language.¹⁹⁶ The comparison between the realistic animal depictions on stone monuments and the use of animals in burials in

¹⁹⁴ Weber (1972, 332) sees the animal on U 160 as a sheep and interprets this as Christ as *Agnus Dei*. This would be a parallel the medieval grave monument DR 27, now lost, which was decorated with a lamb holding a cross on staff. However, unlike *Agnus Dei*, the animal on U 160 is not depicted with a cross-staff.

¹⁹⁵ Oehrl 2010.

¹⁹⁶ Domeij Lundborg 2006.

Chapter 5.4.2 provides possibilities for interpreting especially horses and dogs in the context of Viking Age commemorative culture.

2.2.3.c Birds

Finally, birds also occur in various shapes and sizes in runestone decoration. They are part of a hunting scene or carved as an isolated motif. Identifying especially the birds in the latter group is a challenging task. Many resemble game birds and their meaning is not clear.¹⁹⁷ Birds that sit on crosses, as on Sö 270 in Tyresta, can be interpreted as doves, roosters, or peacocks on the grounds of their features and their close visual relation with the Christian cross.¹⁹⁸ This is also the case for the bird on U 629 at Grynsta backe, with a cross on its back, and for the one on U 753 in Litslena prästgård, that sits on the runic band.

Two birds in a hunting scene are part of composite images and are as such not counted here but under the main element of those images. These are the smaller bird on the upper horseman's arm on N 61 from Alstad (a composite image classified under riders) and the bird that attacks the antlered animal in front of the hunter on U 855 in Böksta (a composite image of a cervine quadruped). Other birds may also be part of a hunting scene because they accompany unarmed riders (on U 599 Hanunda, U 375 Vidbo, and possibly U 448 Harg) or attack a prey (on U 548 Husby-Lyhundra). These birds can be identified as birds of prey, a falcon or a hawk.¹⁹⁹

A few birds that are not part of a hunting scene or sitting on a cross are depicted with pronounced beaks and claws. These images might be visual references to the birds of battle, the eagle and the raven.²⁰⁰ The most notable visual difference

¹⁹⁷ See Gräslund 2006b, 128.

¹⁹⁸ See also Lager 2002, 188. Fragmented, damaged, or lost runestones with birds on crosses are: Sö 245, Sö 247, Sö Sb1965;19, U 576, and U 1112.

¹⁹⁹ The use of birds in the hunt in medieval Scandinavia is discussed in Christiansen 1997, 159-163 with references and Åkerström-Hougen 1981.

²⁰⁰ See Section 2.2.3.a.i.

between the two is that the raven has a straight beak and the eagle a hooked one.

A raven can be identified by its straight beak on U 920 in Broholm, where it is depicted without a mythological or hunting context.²⁰¹ Eagles can be recognised by their hooked beak. Because hunting birds have hooked beaks as well, the lack of a hunting context is important here too. This is the case for the bird on the side of U 692 in Vätteby, which is seen from below with its head in profile. This bird could consequently represent the eagle as a bird of battle. The same is true for the images at the top end of the inscription bands on Vg 150 in Skattegården and Vg 103 in Håle Ödekyrkogård, which probably represent eagle heads.²⁰²

It is mentioned above that the hunting birds on N 61 from Alstad and U 855 in Böksta are depicted in close visual relation to respectively the hunter and the prey. Both stones are also decorated with images of another, much larger bird. On U 855 this larger predatory bird is carved above the inscription band and on N 61 it is placed above the other images. The latter is also depicted in a different perspective than the other images on the stone. It is seen from below like the predatory bird on U 692. These larger predatory birds on N 61 and U 855 have a similar appearance and/or position to the birds of battle described above. Another bird fulfils the role of the hunting bird in the hunting scenes on these monuments, therefore the larger birds can represent the eagle as a bird of battle. In parallel to the wolf as beast of battle eating a fallen warrior on Ög 181 in Ledberg and the praising of warriors by mentioning how they, by being victorious, provided food for the beasts of battle, these birds of battle would add a heroic symbol to the hunting decoration on these monuments.

Other birds with predatory beaks and claws hold the runic serpent or are

²⁰¹ A raven can also be identified on the shoulder of the figure on U 1161 that probably represents Óðinn.

²⁰² The end of the beak on Vg 103 is not visible, but the head is so similar to that on Vg 150 that it most likely also was hooked.

gripping, biting or struggling with another animal, embedded in the serpent ornamentation.²⁰³ While Åkerström-Hougen sees the birds that grip serpents as hunting birds too, Oehrl proposes an interpretation of such scenes as a symbol of the battle between good and evil.²⁰⁴

A few birds seem to combine aspects of a bird of battle and of a hunting bird. A bird in flight with its claws out is carved behind an animal with a short curled up tail, possibly a dog on U 590. It is positioned lower, however, and is not attacking the animal from above as on U 855. Instead, it seems to aim for the head of the runic serpent. The bird on U Fv1955;219 from Rydbylund is depicted with its claws out above a quadruped, but its straight beak identifies it as a raven. Consequently, it is more likely to be a bird of battle than a hunting bird. Finally, the bird on U 1071 in Sylta is standing on the inscription band as the large bird on U 855 is, but the shape of its beak is not discernible.

Although several birds can be interpreted as a Christian symbol, as a hunting bird, or possibly as a bird of battle, this distinction will not be made for the purpose of the visual analysis, because not all birds can be identified. Furthermore, identifications that are made on the basis of the birds' features alone are not as reliable as those that are based on the features of the birds as well as the images they are combined with. The possible birds of battle, however, will be taken up again in the case study of heroic images in Chapter 6.2. The birds on Sö 101 at Ramsundsberget and the Göksten (Sö 327) illustrate the importance of the visual context for the interpretation.²⁰⁵ They have features of predatory or carrion-eating birds, and thus of hunting birds or birds of battle, while the context in which they are

²⁰³ e.g. on Vg 119, U 1161, U 171 and the fragment U 574.

²⁰⁴ Åkerström-Hougen 1981, 276-289 (except for U 171, U 629, U 692 and U 920, which she does not mention); Oehrl 2010, 223-227, 260.

²⁰⁵ Those on Sö 101 are part of a composite image with the tree.

depicted shows they are neither.²⁰⁶

2.3 Regional and chronological distribution and carvers

The 111 complete memorial stones on which these images are carved come in different shapes and sizes. Eight are carved in the living rock, of which six on rock walls and two on outcrops.²⁰⁷ One memorial is carved on a boulder and another on an erratic block.²⁰⁸ The remaining 101 monuments are raised stones. On average, the monuments that are decorated with images tend to be larger than runestones in general, especially in Denmark and Västergötland.

The total number of carved memorial stones is difficult to establish. The size of the corpus varies per scholar and study. For instance, Sawyer works with a corpus of 2307 runestones with a 'minimum of textual information' out of more than 3000 known monuments.²⁰⁹ Palm, on the other hand, counts 2386 'traditional memorial inscriptions from Viking Age Scandinavia,' which includes fragments.²¹⁰ He excludes 263 Scandinavian monuments, because they are carved only with decoration, with a non-lexical inscriptions, and/or with a different kind of memorial inscription. Jesch describes how searching the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* results in a corpus of c. 3000 runestones.²¹¹ The difficulties with regard to terminology, material, condition of the monuments, and new finds are explained and 3000 seems an inclusive yet cautious approximation of the current total. Hence, this is used as the total number of

²⁰⁶ Silén 1983, 90 also noticed this, but his suggestion that '*för runristarna 'fågel' var ett stereotyp begrepp...och att ingen naturalistisk återgivning av arten eftersträvdes eller i varje fall uppnåddes*' goes too far in my opinion. As illustrated above, many of the birds are carved with individual features that point to a specific type.

²⁰⁷ Sö 86, Sö 101, Sö 175, Sö 222, Sö 313, U 598, Sö 32, U Fv1946;258.

²⁰⁸ DR 42, Sö 327.

²⁰⁹ Sawyer 2000, 7, 24, 35. Her sub-corpus consists of 1776 inscriptions that specify both the commissioner of the monument and the commemorated.

²¹⁰ Palm 1992, 47-49, 66-67. In addition, he counts thirty-three pre-Viking Age, 518 medieval and 218 monuments with insecure dating.

²¹¹ Jesch 2001, 12-13.

memorials for the calculations in this thesis.

If fragments, lost, and damaged stones are included, the total number of monuments that were decorated with figural images amounts to 179 (111+68). Thus at least 6% of the currently known 3000 carved stones are decorated with figural images.²¹² Figural decoration occurs more often than average in some regions and less in others. Especially Skåne, Gästrikland and Norway have relatively many monuments with images compared to the total number of memorial stones there. Östergötland, Öland, Småland, and also Uppland have relatively few.²¹³ Despite this variation in regional distribution, the chronological distribution of the stones decorated with images is similar to that of runestones in general. This distribution is based on the complete monuments, but including the fragments and damaged stones would not alter it. For the regional distribution of the images themselves, the fragments, damaged, and lost stones are taken into account. Although they cannot be used for the visual analysis, they bear witness to the occurrence of a particular image in an area.

Twenty-four of the runestones with images contain carver formulae in their inscriptions. These signatures play an important role in the identification of the producers of the monuments. Runestones without carver signatures can often also be attributed to known carvers on the basis of linguistic, runological, artistic, and technical features.²¹⁴ None of the Norwegian monuments with images and only three Danish ones are signed. The Swedish carvers that are named, on the other hand, are

²¹² This is lower than the percentage of 10% that Sawyer 2000, 26 gives, partly because her main corpus is smaller and she includes the serpentine quadrupeds, which are excluded from the present study.

²¹³ Skåne and Gs: 20% (the latter only 3 of 15). Norway's Oppland: 33% (but only 3 of 9). Norway's Rogaland: 5.6% (1 of 18). Ög: 1.4%, 4.7% including fragments, etc. Ö: 1.1% (1 of 87). Sm: 0.8% (1 of 116). U: 3.9%, 7.3% including fragments, etc. North Jutland: 12.5%. Sö: 7.4%, Vg: 6.4%, Vs: 4% (1 out of 25), 8.3% incl. fragments, etc. Nä: 5.3% (1 of 19), 10.5% with damaged. These percentages are calculated with the help of the totals for each region from Sawyer 2002, Appendix 1, taking her 'main corpus' as middle ground between the broad 3000 and the narrow 2776.

²¹⁴ The following information about signed and attributed monuments is largely based on the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*. Unless another source is mentioned, the reader is referred to this database for further references.

regularly known from several monuments. Even when the name of a carver is known, however, many aspects of the production of runestones are unknown, including to what extent the carver of the text also carved the images. While some carvers produced only one or a few monuments for one household, others seem to have travelled around and possibly worked together in an organisation that also provided training.

The earliest decorated stones in the Viking Age, from the late tenth and early eleventh century, are found in Denmark (incl. Skåne, Halland and Blekinge) and south-west Sweden (south of the lakes Vänern and Vättern: Västergötland and Småland). The Norwegian monuments with images are also dated to the late tenth and first half of the eleventh century. Some runestones with images from this period also occur in central Sweden, while the memorials with images in central-east Sweden (around and east of lake Mälaren: Södermanland, Uppland, Gästrikland, Närke) are also from later in the eleventh century. An occasional early-twelfth-century monument with figural imagery also occurs in this area.

The images in present-day Denmark, which are from the early runestone period, consist mainly of masks and ships. They also include the occasional hammer, leonine quadruped, and human figure (one of Christ and one of a rider). There are more leonine quadrupeds in Skåne, and also lupine quadrupeds, which are combined with masks. Several images of ships are also found in this region, as well as various human figures (the wolf-rider, a man with an axe, and a man with a cross-staff).

Of the three Danish carvers that are named, Hrafnunga-Tófi (DR 26), Þórðr (DR 264), and Tófi Smiðr (DR Aud1996;274), only the first is known from two other inscriptions (DR 29, DR 34) in which he is said to have made a mound. The inscriptions make clear that Hrafnunga-Tófi and Tófi Smiðr had a personal relationship with the commemorated. DR 280 Skårby, with a leonine quadruped, was

probably carved by the carver of the Hunnestad monument (DR 282-DR 286).

The images on Norwegian runestones consist mainly of human figures in various scenes and settings (hunters on horseback, the Magi, the Nativity/Adoration scene, a standing couple, a figure with possibly a snake-belt).

The monuments with images in Västergötland and Småland are from the same early period and consist of several leonine and lupine quadrupeds, birds' heads, standing human figures (one with an animal head and a belt, the other with only a belt), and faces or masks, as well as a ship, a hammer and a sword. Vg 119 in Sparlösa is especially early.²¹⁵ This runestone is also decorated with a ship, a rider, a house, a face and various birds and quadrupeds. Vg 119 and Vg 181 Frugården mention the carver: *svát Alríkr <lubu> fáði* (Vg 119) and *Hávarðr(?) hjó s[tein]* (Vg 181).²¹⁶ The fragment with human feet from Häggesled churchyard (Vg 27) is dated to around 1100. It is later than the rest of the decorated memorial stones in this area and it is possibly from an early Christian grave monument rather than from a runestone.

The images on the complete monuments in Östergötland consist of a ship, warriors, dogs, and a wolf on Ög 181 in Ledberg and ships on two more stones. The fragments from this region contain other human figures, a rider with possibly a spear and a figure between serpents, a face between two birds, and more quadrupeds (some non-specific quadrupeds and possibly a leonine and lupine animal). The Östergötland monuments cannot be dated more precisely than to the eleventh century and no carver is known. The fragments Ög Hov 22-23 and 24 were probably part of the same (early Christian grave) monument.

The images in the southern region of Södermanland and along the south coast of lake Mälaren consist of ships and masks. Most of them are found on the

²¹⁵ See Section 2.2.3 note 21.

²¹⁶ However, they are both not listed in *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* as carver signatures

eight monuments that are attributed to the same anonymous carver, who was previously called Træn.²¹⁷ This name is based on a previous reading of Sö 158 Österberga. The current interpretation of this inscription, however, reads the phrase *þróttar þegn*, instead of a carver signature, which leaves the carver anonymous.²¹⁸ Images of various faces, hammers, and leonine quadrupeds are also found in this region. The three leonine beasts from this area are all probably carved by the same carver, **Pulir** (Sö 82, the lost Sö 80, and the fragment Vs 4).

The large Sigurðr carvings at Ramsundsberget (Sö 101) and the Göksten (Sö 327), are from this region too, as well as other monuments decorated with various human figures: a kneeling archer (carved by the same carver as Sö 327, who is nameless and otherwise unknown), a figure holding serpents (Sö 175, attributed to Balli, see below), a humanoid surrounded by snakes (Sö 322), and a warrior with axe opposite a serpentine quadruped (Sö 190).

The monuments with images in Gästrikland were carved in roughly the same period. They all contain images of scenes with human figures, among which are several of Sigurðr and one with spread arms, but also depictions of birds and quadrupeds. The lost Gs 19 Ockelbo and the fragment Gs 2 Österfärnebo, that both probably contain Sigurðr-figures among various other images, were probably carved by the same anonymous artist(s).

The monuments with images in the regions south-east, east, and north of Mälaren are more from the second half of the eleventh century. There are also several runestones with ships and faces (though less mask-like) here, but the majority of images in this area consists of various combinations of birds, horses with or without riders, and other quadrupeds. The quadrupeds on the earlier monuments

²¹⁷ Sö 112, Sö 122 (though signed *Ásgautr gerði <tre>*), Sö 154, Sö 164, Sö 158, Sö 167, Sö 352 and the damaged Sö 35.

²¹⁸ In Axelson 1993, 74-75 the carver is referred to as 'Traen', in quotation marks.

are mostly leonine and lupine beasts, but the later (Upplandic) monuments also contain (bound) serpentine quadrupeds and non-specific ones. Many of the images of birds, riders, horses, and non-specific quadrupeds south-east of lake Mälaren occur on nine runestones that are attributed to the carver Hálfdan.²¹⁹ Of these monuments, only Sö 270 Tyresta is signed by him, with *Hálfdan hjó rúnar*. Sö 304 Oxelby and the fragment Sö 303 Bornö, that are decorated with similar-looking cervine quadrupeds, are both attributed to Ásgautr.

Various known carvers were active in the same period further to the north, where a similar range of images is found. One of the most productive of these carvers was Ásmundr Kárasonr.²²⁰ U 969 Bolsta, with a non-specific quadruped, and U 824 Holms church, with a face surrounded by tendrils, are signed by him, although the inscription of the latter probably was not carved by Ásmundr himself. The damaged U 1144 Tierps church, with two non-specific quadrupeds, was also signed by him, together with another carver called *Herjarr*. A dozen other memorials with images are attributed to Ásmundr, including several from Gästrikland.²²¹ There are good grounds to attribute U Fv1973;194 in Uppsala to Ásmundr as well.²²² These monuments are decorated with various human figures, horses, birds, canine, cervine, and non-specific quadrupeds.

The same kind of images are found on the monuments that are attributed to Ásmundr together with Þórfastr: a non-specific quadruped on U 193 Svista, a canine- and a non-specific quadruped on U 904, and a Christian funeral on the damaged U 901 Håmö. Ten of the eleven runestones that are attributed to Þórfastr could also

²¹⁹ Sö 237, Sö 301, and the damaged/lost/fragmented Sö 235, Sö 239, Sö 245, Sö 247, Sö 272, Sö 290.

²²⁰ See Thompon 1975, 82-167 for a discussion of this carver and an overview of his work.

²²¹ Gs 7, U 240, U 241, U 375, U 548, U 860, U 1004, U 1043, and the fragmented/damaged/lost Gs 18c, U 1003, U 1112, and U Fv1959;260. Jansson (*Gs*, 71), doubts that Gs 7 was carved by Ásmundr and argues it may only have been influenced by his style.

²²² There is no space in this thesis to go into this matter here, but I am currently preparing an article for publication on this (Stern in preparation). In this article I will also discuss the attribution of U 1003 and U 375 to Ásmundr in more detail.

(partly) have been carved by Ásmundr. Þórfastr has signed U 599 Hanunda, with a rider and bird, and U 629 Grynsta backe, with a bird and two human figures in the serpents' claws, as single carver with *Þórfastr risti rúnar*. Þórfastr's work is dated to the 1040s on runological grounds,²²³ so he is thought to have worked in a somewhat later timeframe than Ásmundr. The latter still carved in that period, but he produced more monuments earlier in the eleventh century.²²⁴ The stylistic and runological similarities between the two carvers' work and the proximity of their stones suggests that Þórfastr may not have been an independent carver who was influenced by Ásmundr's work, but that he rather was his student or assistant.²²⁵

Moving west, to the area north of lake Mälaren, we come to where U 1161 Altuna was found, which is decorated with a rider, Þórr, Óðinn and a large bird attacking a serpentine quadruped. The inscription contains the names of several carvers: *...[þei]r Balli, Freysteinn, lið Lífstein[s ristu]*. Apparently, the work on the monument was divided between Freysteinn, Balli, Lífsteinn, and possibly another unnamed carver. Balli also has Sö 175 Lagnö (decorated with a man holding snakes to his ears) and the lost U 713 and U 714 Skeberga (decorated resp. with a bird and an animal's legs) attributed to him. Two Sigurðr carvings are from this area too. The images of Sigurðr on U 1163 in Drävle is partly by the same carvers as U 1161 in Altuna, and the design of U 1175 in Stora Ramsjö is most likely influenced by U 1163.

The damaged U 694 Veckholms kyrka, decorated with a bird, shows stylistic similarities with monuments carved by Balli, Lífsteinn, Auðbiörn and Þorgautr Fótsarfi.²²⁶ Þorgautr Fótsarfi called himself this in the signature on U 308. That he was indeed a son or an apprentice of the runestone carver Fótr fits with the chronology of their work and it is supported by the fact that their style is very similar.

²²³ *U vol. 2*, 513.

²²⁴ Thompson 1975, 154-161.

²²⁵ Thompson 1975, 151.

²²⁶ Axelson 1993, 73.

Fótr himself (or his workshop) was also productive, but his work does not include many images.²²⁷ The only surviving monument signed by Fótr with figural decoration is U 678 Skokloster. The armed riders on this stone are carved in a seventh- or eighth-century style with Ringerike and Mammen features, but the inscription is dated to the second half of the eleventh century. This has led to speculations that Fótr had re-used an older monument that was decorated with images. A technical examination could not confirm this theory, however. The use of the older style, which differs from the style of the other monuments by Fótr, may instead be a result of a revival of pre-Viking Age art styles.²²⁸ Monuments with images that are attributed to Fótr are U 448 Harg, decorated with a rider and bird, and U Fv1955;219 Rydbylund, with a bird and a serpentine quadruped. In addition, four fragmented or lost stones with non-specific quadrupeds or birds are also attributed to Fótr (U 176, U 980, U 874 and U 257). The latter is signed by Þorgautr Fótsarfi, however.

A few other carvers are identified as the producers of one or two of the stones decorated with images. U 692 Väfteby (with an eagle and serpentine quadruped) is signed by Auðbjörn with *Auðbjörn risti*. There has, however, been a debate about the extent to which this monument has (partly) been carved by Tíðkumi and about the extent to which U 691 Söderby (with a rider and serpentine quadruped) can be attributed to either of these carvers.²²⁹ U 598 Borggärde, which is signed by *Auðmundr(?)*, and the damaged U 1123 Tuna kyrka, which is attributed to the same carver, are both decorated with non-specific quadrupeds. U 508 Gillberga (with a face) and U 160 Risbyle (with a non-specific quadruped) have both been

²²⁷ The Upplandic Fótr discussed here is called Fot 2 in *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* and Axelson 1993 to distinguish him from the Fótr who signed Sö 341. This stone differs in ornamental and runologic style from the Upplandic stones that are signed by or attributed to Fótr (Sö, 342). Since Fótr 1 is not mentioned further in this thesis, Fótr2 will be referred to as Fótr.

²²⁸ Fuglesang 1980, 89-92; *U vol. 3.1*, 179-180.

²²⁹ Stille 1999, 164 ff.; *U 3.1*, 207; Williams, He. 2000; 113-115.

attributed to Gunnarr, but the latter also to Úlfr i Borresta. The fragments U 574 and U 576 Estuna are both attributed to Viðbjörn. The first is decorated with a bird that grips a snake and the second with a bird on a cross.

The other images of human figures in this area include armed riders, among which a hunter, figures with snakes or serpents, and humanoids standing with spread arms.

U 79 Skesta is signed by Arnfastr and the lost U 51 Drottningholm is attributed to this carver too. The decoration on both monuments consists of non-specific quadrupeds. No carver has been identified for U 855 Böksta, but there is a recurring suggestion that this was Arnfastr (or Ærnfastr), too. One of the brothers who raised this monument with their parents is named Arnfastr. The image of the large bird on the runic band is seen as a visual carver signature to indicate that Arnfastr carved the runestone himself. The argument is that the bird is an eagle (*arn*) that grips or is attached to something (*fastr*). It is further suggested that the large bird that grips the quadruped on U 1161 Altuna likewise refers to this name.²³⁰ A survey of the material shows, however, that this unlikely for a number of reasons.

It is chronologically possible that the Arnfastrs on these stones were the same person, as Weber suggests. U 855, however, mentions Eist as Arnfastr's brother and U 1161 lists Véfastr, Folkaðr, and Guðvarr as sons of the same father as Arnfastr, who is called Holmfastr. These three brothers are not named on U 855, and the father of Eist, Arnfastr's brother, is not called Holmfastr, but a name that starts with Ingi-.... Arnfastr on U 855 and on U 1161 can only be the same person was if he was Eist's halfbrother through his mother and of Véfastr, Folkaðr, Guðvarr through his father.

²³⁰ Von Friesen, as quoted in *U vol. 3.1*, 510; Weber 1972, 333.

Furthermore, the name Arnfastr occurs on five, possibly six other stones.²³¹

Of these, only U 31 Väntholmen also is decorated with a large bird. The stone is damaged, but it is possible that the bird originally gripped or touched part of the runic serpent. Following Weber and von Friesen's logic, this Arnfastr should be the same as that on U 855 and/or U 1161. The Arnfastr on U 31 is commemorated together with Björn, who is the brother of the initiator Steinfastr. If this was the same Arnfastr, Björn would have had to have been part of the unfortunate burning of Arnfastr and his father that is recorded on U 1161. Such a connection is not indicated on either of the monuments.

Moreover, birds such as those on U 1161 Altuna and U 855 Böksta are depicted also on stones where the name Arnfastr is absent and that are in fact by other carvers. This makes it unlikely that the birds symbolise the name Arnfastr.

Finally, stylistic and runological features argue against the attribution of U 855 Böksta to Arnfastr. The four Upplandic stones that are signed by a carver named Arnfastr are very similar in design (U 41, U 43, U 79, U 123).²³² They are all decorated with crosses and a runic serpent biting its tail, but birds are absent. Furthermore, the two small quadrupeds on U 79 Skesta are not similar to any of the animals on U 855. The **b**-rune on U 855 also differs significantly from how Arnfastr carved it on the monuments signed by him. The two pockets do not meet each other in the middle of the staff but reach the staff separately, whereas the pockets of Arnfastr's **b**-runes normally do reach each other, not on the staff but a little in front of it. The shape of the runes gives sufficient ground not to attribute U 855 to the known carver Arnfastr.

Of the many monuments signed by the famous late-eleventh-century Upplandic carver **Æpir**, only the complete U 1034 Tensta and the damaged U 485

²³¹ Peterson 2007, 25. On U 41, U 43, U 79 and U 123 the name occurs in the signature by the same carver.

²³² An Arnfastr is also mentioned as the carver on Sm 148, which is lost. On the basis of the drawings it does not look like this is the same carver as the Upplandic Arnfastr, but this cannot be determined with certainty.

Marma are decorated with images, the former with a face and the latter possibly with a bird. Two of the damaged runestones that are also attributed to him are also decorated with faces (and upper body).²³³ Apparently, these two or three faces form the only figural decoration that Æpir or his workshop added to elaborate serpent-patterns that became his trademark. These late monuments are all from just northwest of lake Mälaren.

From the same region are the late-eleventh-century U 1052 Axlunda (with a ship) that is signed by Ingólfr and U 1065 Rångsta (with a humanoid holding a serpent) that is attributed to him. An early-twelfth-century runestone with an image of a ship, attributed to the carver Litli, is from the region just north of lake Mälaren (Vs 17).

Twelve of the runestones with images are the only monument with such decoration that is signed by or attributed to a specific carver. As can be seen in Table 1, for three carvers these stones are their only known monument. Of two carvers another runestone without images has survived, while of the other carvers the single decorated monument is one in a corpus of five to thirteen known runestones (and in the exceptional case of Véseti *c.* thirty).

Of the carvers of whom a larger corpus is known it is clear that some used figural decoration more often than others; compare for instance Ásmundr, Hálfðan, and the carver formerly known as Træn on the one hand to Æpir, Gunnarr, and Véseti on the other hand. Carvers such as Balli and Fótr seem to be somewhere in the middle.

²³³ e.g U 128 and U 78. The latter is not by Æpir, however, according to Åhlén 1997.

	runestones with images		total corpus	
	signed	attributed	signed	attributed
Æpir	2	1	46	66
Balli	2	6	13	58 + c.10?
Fótr	1	6	8	68
Gunnarr	0	2 (1 with Úlfr i Borresta)	2	41 (many with Úlfr i Borresta)
Ásmundr	2	12	21	15 + 16?
Véseti	1	0	11	19
'Træn'	-	8	-	23
Lífsteinn	0	3 (with others)	7 (several with others)	21 (several with others)
Þorgautr Fótsarfi	2	1	4	18 (many with others)
Tíðkumi	0	poss. 2 (1 poss. with Auðbjörn)	9 (several with others)	16 (many with others)
Hálfðan	1	8	1	17
Þórfastr	2	4 (with Ásmundr)	3	12 (often with Ásmundr)
Arnfastr	1	1	5	8
Ámundi	0	1	4	9
Ingólfr	1 (with Þjálfi)	1	5	5
Viðbjörn	0	2	2	8
Þorbjörn skald	1	0	5	4
Lítli	0	1	3	4
Úlfr i Borresta	0	1 (with Gunnarr)	1	5 (with others, Gunnarr)
Ásgautr	0	2	2	3
-fastr	0	1	1	4
þulir	2	1	3	1
Eysteinn	1	0	1	3
Auðmundr	1	1	2	1
Auðbjörn	1	0	2 (1 with	1

			Tíðkumi)	
Fasti/Fastulfr	1	-	2	-
Sóni	0	1	1	1
carver of Sö 324 & Sö 327	-	2	-	2
Carver of Gs 19 & Gs 2	-	2	-	2
hiriar	1 (with Ásmundr)	-	1	-
Freysteinn	1	-	1	-
Þjálfi	1 (with Ingólfr)	-	1	-
carver	signed	attributed	signed	attributed
	runestones with images		total corpus	

Table 1. Swedish carvers and the number of runestones with images in their corpus

The images on monuments by the same carver are often similar, for instance on those by the carver of Gs 19 and Gs 2, Ásgautr, **þulir**, Auðmundr, Arnfastr, Hálfðan, Þorgautr Fótsarfi, Træn, and Fótr. Only the images on the stones by Æpir, Gunnarr, Tíðkumi, Ingólfr, and the carver of Sö 324 and Sö 327 are not of the same type. However, there is also an overlap in image-types between carvers, especially on monuments by Hálfðan, Ásmundr, Balli, Fótr, Lífsteinn, Þorgautr Fótsarfi, and Þórfastr. By far the most depictions of especially birds, horses, riders, combined with each other or with other types of quadrupeds were carved by Ásmundr and carvers associated with him. The broad occurrence of these images, however, suggests this was more a regional eleventh-century fashion than a speciality of a specific carver.

When a runestone is signed by or attributed to more than one carver, it is not certain whether the images should be associated with all of them. This forms a complicating factor in trying to establish whether particular images can be linked to specific carvers. To avoid circular reasoning it should also be addressed to what extent unsigned monuments are attributed to these carvers on the basis of their

images. Both these issues require examination of rune-forms and ideally also technical research into carving techniques, which, due to time restraints, has not been possible to do within the scope of this thesis.

2.3.1 Medieval monuments and parallels from Gotland and the British Isles

The medieval runestones and grave monuments that are decorated with figural images are listed in Appendix 1.c. The images on these monuments consist of several human figures and a quadruped with cross staffs. The quadruped on DR 27 in Vamdrup is an *Agnus Dei* depiction and the human figure on DR 184 from Bregninge probably represents Christ.²³⁴ The humanoid couple with a snake on Vg 129 from Skärvums kyrkogård possibly represents Adam and Eve with the Serpent.²³⁵ In parallel to the layout of U Fv1955;222 from Långtora church, the human figure on U 370 in Herrestad is depicted with spread arms below a ship. The head of the figure is carved with double contours, as the double ring on the mast of the ship above it is.²³⁶ This may represent a halo, which, in combination with the figure's posture gives grounds to identify him as Christ. The medieval runestone from Hargs skog (U 595) is decorated with a bell-tower, with possibly an altar inside.²³⁷ Other images on the medieval monuments are leonine quadrupeds, a warrior or knight, and a human figure with bend arms.

The Gotlandic picture stones are not included in the visual analysis, so a brief overview of the ones with figural images is given here.²³⁸ This list may be not fully complete, as the focus of this thesis was on the memorial stones on mainland Scandinavia when the corpus was constructed. The images on the Gotlandic stones are the subject of various recent and ongoing studies that, among other things, aim

²³⁴ DR, 53, 218.

²³⁵ Vg, 248.

²³⁶ Visit 9 September 2008.

²³⁷ See Chapter 5.4.4 for a more elaborate discussion.

²³⁸ Based on G; Nylén and Lamm 2003; Widerström and Norderäng 2004.

to rectify older readings and consequently their interpretations.²³⁹

The earliest surviving memorial stone with images on the island of Gotland, the fragment of G 264 Martebo kyrka, is dated between the late-fourth and mid-sixth century.²⁴⁰ On this monument, small images of horsemen with spears are carved below a larger sun-wheel. The figure with snakes on the fifth- or sixth-century Smiss III stone at När is in a similar position as those on ÖI 19 from Hulterstads church and Sö 175 at Lagnö in Aspö socken.²⁴¹ The snakes on Smiss III are not twisted around the figure's limbs, however, and they look over the person's head rather than face it.

The eighth- and ninth-century Gotlandic picture stones are decorated with large ships.²⁴² Sometimes additional images of human figures and horses in for instance fighting-, procession-, or *adventus*-scenes are carved above the ship. These kinds of images also decorate the picture stones that are contemporary to the eleventh- and early-twelfth-century runestones of mainland Scandinavia.²⁴³ Most of these are fragments with only a few images or parts thereof, but it is clear that in this period ships seem to feature less on the monuments than human figures with or without weapons, on horses, or in wagons. The few picture stones that have survived more fully illustrate what kind of scenes the images on the fragments may have been part of.

G 181 from Sanda is decorated with a scene in a house or room and a procession scene below it. It has been suggested that this might represent a similar scene with the three Magi as on N 68 from Dynna.²⁴⁴ The scenes on this stone are more often interpreted in a pre-Christian context, however, as is discussed in

²³⁹ e.g. Kitzler Åhfeldt *in press*.

²⁴⁰ Imer 2007 *Tekst*, 26, 289, *Katalog*, 257.

²⁴¹ See Section 2.2.3.a.iii.

²⁴² G 40, G 109, G 157, G 248, G 252, G 268.

²⁴³ G 52, G 57, G 59, G 77, G 87, G 92, G 93, G Ardre, G 110, G 113, G 114, G 181, G 373. Most of the over new finds are fragments, but a few have survived more fully. Those that are most lavishly decorated with images are: G Eskelhem 52:2, G Fröjel 187, G Väte 4:5, G Stenbro in Silte sn, G Botvatte in Fröjel sn (Nylén and Lamm 2003).

²⁴⁴ Staecker 2004, 41-55.

Chapter 5.4.3, note 149.

The stones from Tjängvide (G 110) and Ardre (G Ardre 3, G 113, and two fragments and the head- and foot-stones of G 114) are decorated with images of fighting and drinking warriors, possible valkyries, as well as Óðinn's eight-legged horse Sleipnir, and two ships. Scenes from the Sigurðr and Völsung stories have been identified among these images.²⁴⁵ In addition, images on G Ardre 3 have been interpreted as depicting the story about Weland the Smith and Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr.²⁴⁶

The medieval Gotlandic grave slabs are decorated with leonine quadrupeds, a Christ-figure, and other quadrupeds and human figures. One of these figures is holding a crosier and another is holding an axe and is surrounded by serpent ornamentation.²⁴⁷

A brief overview of the images on stone monuments in the British Isles that are similar to those on Scandinavian runestones is given here, as these monuments are also not included in the main corpus of this thesis.²⁴⁸ There are again armed warrior figures,²⁴⁹ female figures that may represent valkyries,²⁵⁰ riders on horseback,²⁵¹ and manned ships.²⁵² Possible depictions of Christ also occur.²⁵³ Legendary and mythological figures that are depicted include Sigurðr and other characters from the Völsung stories,²⁵⁴ Weland the smith,²⁵⁵ Þórr and the Miðgarðsormr.²⁵⁶ The Ragnarök-imagery on the Gosforth cross was mentioned in Chapter 2.2.3.a.i, note 57. The human figures and quadrupeds surrounded by snakes

²⁴⁵ Andén 1989.

²⁴⁶ Bailey 2000, 16-18; Meulengracht Sørensen 1986, 262.

²⁴⁷ G 21, G 34, G 46, G 137, G 199, G 226, G 250, G 334.

²⁴⁸ See Section 2.2.2.

²⁴⁹ e.g. on the cross at St Andrews Church in Middleton, North Yorkshire.

²⁵⁰ e.g. on Sockburn 3A, County Durham and BR Olsen; 219 Kirk Michael 8 on the Isle of Man.

²⁵¹ e.g. also on Sockburn 3A, County Durham and BR Olsen; 185B Andreas 3 on the Isle of Man.

²⁵² e.g. the fragment of a cross-shaft from Iona, now in the Abbey museum (Fisher 2001, 134-135).

²⁵³ e.g. on BR Olsen; 218A Kirk Michael 6 on the Isle of Man and IR 2.

²⁵⁴ e.g. the cross at Halton in Lancashire and Malew 120 (94) and Jurby (93) on the Isle of Man.

²⁵⁵ e.g. Leeds 1 and 2, Western Yorkshire.

²⁵⁶ e.g. Gosforth 6, also called the Fishing stone, in Cumbria.

that are carved on various of these Anglo-Scandinavian monuments are interpreted as Loki or Fenrir representing bound evil.²⁵⁷

One of the scenes that is generally interpreted as Óðinn and Fenrir at the moment of their fight at Ragnarök should be discussed in more detail here. This concerns the depiction of a human figure with its foot in the mouth of a wolf-like quadruped on the Thorwald's cross on the Isle of Man (BR Olsen;185B Andreas III), similar to that on Ög 181 from Ledberg.

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 3. Thorwald's Cross.

The figure's spear and the bird at his shoulder seem to support an identification as Óðinn. On the other hand, although the bird has a straight beak, and as such is probably a raven, it does not seem to sit on the figure's shoulder to tell him news as Óðinn's Huginn and Muninn would do (and as for instance on U 1161 Altuna). Instead, its claws are directed at the figure's throat and the beak at the top of his head. Furthermore, the figure has two clearly defined eyes, even the pupils are visible, whereas Óðinn tends to be depicted with one. This leaves only the spear, and although a spear is Óðinn's attribute, not all figures with a spear are necessarily Óðinn. The raven, as the wolf, is one of the beasts of battle who feed off the fallen warriors, which might be exactly what is depicted in this scene. This further supports my argument for seeing the images on Ög 181 Ledberg as a warrior falling in battle instead of a Ragnarök scene.

²⁵⁷ An extensive study of the images on early medieval (commemorative) stone sculpture in the British Isles with Scandinavian influence can be found in Kopár 2012. The most up-to-date overview before that for England is Bailey 2000, with more information in Cramp 1984-. See Wilson 1970 and Kermodé 1994 (1907) for the images on the Manx stones (listed in Section 2.2.2, note 10).

Pictish symbol stones, carved cross slabs, and free standing stone crosses, which largely pre-date the Viking Age, and early medieval recumbent sculptured grave covers and shrines also contain images like those on runestones. There are for instance wolves, stags, and armed men, standing or on horseback, in hunting- or warrior-scenes.²⁵⁸ Many of these monuments also contain specific symbols and images that seem to be part of a visual language in the context of (warrior) aristocracy and networks.²⁵⁹ The most striking parallels with runestone imagery are the animal-headed figures on for instance the incised stone from Mail on Shetland and the relief panel of a box shrine from Murthly, Perthshire. The latter also shows a human figure with a bird's head. Further to these similarities, Pictish symbol stones have in common with the Scandinavian memorial stones that they were raised in the landscape to be clearly visible monuments, that they could be carved with Christian crosses and/or inscriptions (in Ogham) and might have commemorated the dead.²⁶⁰

2.4 Visual analysis and the database

The different figural images on the Viking Age memorial stones that are described above are only one of several semiotic resources that are employed on the monuments. There is generally also the inscription and often other ornamentation, including crosses. In addition, the monument's material, size, location, and its production process are semiotic resources too.²⁶¹ In the following visual analysis, the focus is on the design of the carvings. This is in most cases a composite design, built up from images, text, and decoration. It has been studied how elements of the design are placed in relation to each other for individual monuments or a small group

²⁵⁸ See Henderson and Henderson 2011.

²⁵⁹ Henderson and Henderson 2011, 168-172.

²⁶⁰ Henderson and Henderson 2011, 159-160.

²⁶¹ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 230-232; Jesch 1998, 465-466; Zilmer 2010, 142-143.

of them.²⁶² The comprehensive analysis of this aspect of runestone design in this thesis is the first to take a larger corpus into account.

The positions of the visual elements of a design influence how they are perceived and some sort of sequence can be indicated.²⁶³ The shape of a composite design and the place of the elements in the composition holds meaning according to a system that can be traced back in western semiotics to the Middle Ages.²⁶⁴ Whether a carving element is placed at the eye-level of the viewer, or instead higher or lower than that influences the power balance between the depicted and the viewer.²⁶⁵ Composition can also establish a hierarchy between the design elements. Especially in vertical structures, which is the design on most runestones, the distinction between top and bottom is used to express a hierarchy of importance. The most important or most dominant element is placed higher than what is considered less important, which is placed at the bottom.²⁶⁶ The relation between the elements in the design is furthermore realised through their degree of ‘salience’, i.e. how eye-catching they are. This is realised through for instance their relative size.²⁶⁷

The total of these aspects, the ‘visual weight’ of a design element, cannot easily be measured objectively. One of these aspects might for instance be felt to add more salience to an element than others, and culturally images of human figures or particular potent symbols have more visual weight than other images.²⁶⁸ It is possible, however, to make a comparison on the different points of the visual prominence. This is done in this thesis for the various carving elements of the

²⁶² e.g. Bianchi 2010; Zilmer 2011; Bertelsen 2006.

²⁶³ Dake 2005, 6, 16-18.

²⁶⁴ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 198.

²⁶⁵ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 146.

²⁶⁶ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 155.

²⁶⁷ In media that allow for this, also their contrast, their colour (intensity), and whether they are placed in the fore- or background are used for this (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 181-182).

²⁶⁸ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 212.

memorial stones, because their prominence reflects their role on the monument.

The three factors that shape the prominence of images in relation to the other carved elements of the design are discernability, position, and size.²⁶⁹ For instance, an image that is placed above the other carvings is usually more eye-catching than a carving close to the ground, especially from a distance. Whether images are embedded in other ornamentation such as serpents and snakes or carved isolated also influences how noticeable they are. The use of colour could play a role in this as well, but because it is usually not known how the carvings were originally emphasised by colour, this factor cannot be taken into account.

Information about the three factors that shape the visual prominence of the 202 images in the corpus is listed in the second part of the database (Appendix 2). The discernability of the images is recorded by indicating whether they are carved isolated from the other carvings, touch the inscription, a cross, serpent ornamentation, or other figural decoration, and whether they are embedded in the ornamentation or the inscription band.²⁷⁰ Appendix 2 furthermore provides information about the position of the images on the monument. It is indicated whether they are carved at the centre, bottom, or top of the carved space enclosed by the runic band. If they occur outside the band, it is noted whether that is on top of the band or somewhere else. The same terminology is used to indicate the place of images on monuments without an (inscription) band. Finally, the relative size of an image is indicated. Instead of actual measurements, it is marked how much of the (carved) surface of the relevant side of the stone is occupied by the image and whether it is larger than, smaller than, or of equal size to the other carving elements on the same stone. The proportion of the images and other carving elements is more

²⁶⁹ 'Discernability' and 'size' fall under Kress and van Leeuwen's 'saliency', while 'position' corresponds to what they call 'composition'.

²⁷⁰ Whether or not a monument contains a cross is noted in a separate column. If an inscription or serpent ornamentation also occurs, this is indicated in the 'relation to other carvings' column. A blank there means these carving elements are not present on the stone.

useful than actual measurements for a comparison of the relation between carving elements on monuments of different sizes. Based on the analysis of these factors, patterns in the visual prominence of individual image types can be discerned.

When a certain type of image is commonly the only figural decoration on a stone, this naturally influences the average prominence of that image type. To illustrate this, an overview of what particular images decorate a monument on their own and the combinations of images on the other monuments is given next. After this, the visual relations between the image types and other carving elements, i.e. crosses, serpent ornamentation, and the inscription, are discussed in separate sections.

2.5 Single images and common combinations

Of the 202 figural images in the corpus, seventy are the only images on the monument. Twenty-six memorials are decorated with two images. Fifteen monuments are decorated with more than two images, together accounting for eighty images (see Table 2.a-c).

Image	Monument
Warrior	DR 96 (with vane), DR 282 (with axe)
Sigurðr	U 1175 (including 2 humanoids)
Humanoid with spread arms	Gs 7, U Fv1946;258
Humanoid holding snakes	Öl 19, Sö 175, U 1065
Humanoid in snakes	Sö 322
Other humanoid	DR 284 (wolf-rider), DR 290 (with cross-staff), Sö 324 (kneeling archer), U 1043 (horizontal couple), Vg 32 (with belt), Vg 56 (with animal head and snake-belt)
Face/mask	DR 62, DR 66, DR 81, DR 335, DR Aud1996;274, [DR]

	DK MJy 69, Sö 95, Sö 112, Sö 167, Sö 367, U 508, U 824, U 1034
Horse	Sö 222, Sö 226
Cervine quadruped	DR 264, Sö 304, U 1004
Lupine quadrupeds	Sm 133, Sö 313, U Fv1978;226
Leonine quadruped	DR 280, DR 285, N 84, Sö 82, Vg 4, Vg 181
Non-specific quadruped	Sö 237, U 79, U 160, U 193, U 696
Bird	Sö 270, U 171, U 920, U 1071, Vg 103 (only bird's head), Vg 150 (only bird's head)
Ship	DR 77, DR 238, DR EM85;523B, Ög 224, Ög MÖLM1960;30, Sö 122, Sö 154, Sö 158, Sö 164, Sö 352, U 1052, Vg 51, Vs 17
Hammer	Sö 111, Vg 113
Weapon (from the category 'other images')	U 999 (spearhead), Vg 124 (sword)

Table 2.a Single images on runestones

Images and their relative size	Monument
armed rider = armed rider	U 678
armed rider < serpentine quadruped	U 691
standing warrior with axe < serpentine quadruped	Sö 190
unarmed rider > bird	U 375
unarmed rider < bird	U 448
unarmed rider = bird	U 599
Sigurðr with sword < Sigurðr with ring	Gs 9
Christ = leonine quadruped	DR 42
humanoid with spread arms = humanoid with spread arms	U 313
humanoid in snakes > canine quadruped	U 241
standing humanoid = standing humanoid	N 228
face < serpentine quadruped	Nä 34
face < hammer	Sö 86
leonine quadruped > ship	DR 271

lupine quadruped > face	DR 286
canine = non-specific quadruped	U 904
non-specific quadruped = non-specific quadruped	Sö 301
non-specific quadruped = non-specific quadruped	U 598
non-specific quadruped > non-specific quadruped	U 35
bird < cervine quadruped	U 548
bird < non-specific quadruped	U 590
bird = non-specific quadruped	U 746
bird < serpentine quadruped	U 692
bird < serpentine quadruped	U Fv1955;219
bird < 2 serpentine quadrupeds	U 753
hammer = hammer	DR 26

Table 2.b Combinations of two images and their relative size

Images and their relative size	Monument
dogs < warriors = ship = wolf	Ög 181
hunter on horse with spear > cervine quadruped attacked by bird > archer on skis = second bird > dogs	U 855
riders with bird > larger bird > dogs	N 61
armed horseman with dog, non-specific quadrupeds, ship, birds, building (most same size, birds are smallest); larger face on adjacent side; two larger birds on third side	Vg 119
scenes from Sigurðr stories (most same size; tree and horse are largest, otter is smallest)	Sö 101
scenes from Sigurðr stories (most same size; horse and tree are largest, otter is smallest)	Sö 327
Sigurðr figures (same size)	U 1163
Sigurðr figures and other images (most same size; figure with twig and bird are smaller than rest)	Gs 19
Christ in star < Magi on horseback = Nativity/Adoration = horse	N 68
humanoid with spread arms and 2 heads < humanoid on chair with snakes < serpentine quadruped = horse	Sö 40

humanoid with spread arms = armed horseman = Þórr fishing; larger bird and serpent on adjacent side	U 1161
bird > 2 humanoids in serpents' claws	U 629
face with 2 lupine quadrupeds > face	DR 314
serpentine quadruped > human head on animal body > canine and non-specific quadrupeds	U 860
2 non-specific quadrupeds < serpentine quadruped	U 240

Table 2.c Multiple combined images and their relative size

Faces and ships are in the majority on the monuments with single images.

The images on the twenty-six stones with two images are mainly comprised of depictions of birds, various kinds of quadrupeds (especially serpentine and non-specific) and unarmed horsemen. These image types are also combined with armed men and dogs. Human figures are the main subject of the monuments that are decorated with more than two images. Common combinations among these are Sigurðr with the sword and Sigurðr with the ring, sometimes accompanied by the valkyrie.²⁷¹

The majority of the images of ships and faces/masks are the only figural decoration on the monument (resp. 13 out of 16 and 13 out of 19).²⁷² When depictions of ships are combined with other images, they are not the dominant feature. Masks tend to be smaller than images they are combined with, but in a higher position. Of the images that mask-like faces are combined with, wolves are in the majority. The two wolves on DR 314 from Lund touch the smaller mask in the centre of the stone with their open mouths, one from above and one from underneath. A second mask-like face is carved at the top of the adjacent side of this stone. On DR 286 of the Hunnestad monument, the beast also approaches the mask from underneath and appears to be licking it.

²⁷¹ On Gs 9, Gs 19, Sö 327, U 1163.

²⁷² A boat is also part of the image of Þórr fishing on U 1161.

Leonine animals with fantastic features are also most often carved as single images (6 out of 8). For wolves, on the other hand, this is not the case. They are combined with masks and a wolf is part of the warrior imagery on Ög 181 Ledberg.²⁷³ Three less certain depictions of lupine quadrupeds are the only images on the stone, but the images of the certain wolves do not occur as single image. This confirms to some extent the difference in image type.

None of the unarmed horsemen are carved as a single image. They are mainly combined with depictions of birds.²⁷⁴ The armed horsemen are also generally combined with other images. Only the standard-bearer on horseback on DR 96 at Ålum church is a single image. Both armed and unarmed horsemen are sometimes, but not always, more prominent than the other images. Finally, one of the two standing warriors with a long-shafted axe is the only decoration on the monument. The other is combined with a serpentine quadruped.

Two out of eight depictions of humanoids with spread arms are the only decoration on the monument.²⁷⁵ On U 313 in Harg two of such images are combined. The image of the crucified Christ on the large Jelling stone (DR 42) is the same size as the leonine quadruped on the adjacent side. The Christ figure on N 68 from Dynna is depicted above the other images, but it is smaller. The standing humanoids with spread arms on U 1161 in Altuna (on a ladder with a bird on its shoulder) and on Sö 40 at Västerljung church (with two heads and a type of belt) are also combined with various other images. On both these monuments, they are carved in the top position and they are the same size as the other images on the same side, thus being visually dominant.

All three images of human figures holding snakes are the only decoration on

²⁷³ A wolf is also part of the image of the rider with snakes on DR 284.

²⁷⁴ On U 375, U 448, U 599 and in the more elaborate hunting scene on N 61.

²⁷⁵ A further figure with spread arms is combined with a ship on the damaged U Fv1955;222 and on the medieval U 370.

the monument. Conversely, four of the five depictions of humanoids that are held by serpents are combined with other images. Of these, only the figure on U 241 in Lingsberg is larger than the other image, which is a canine quadruped. The two figures in the serpents' claws on U 629 at Grynsta backe are smaller and lower than the bird they are combined with. The figure on the chair with snakes around its limbs on Sö 40 is combined with images of a humanoid with spread arms, and a horse and a serpentine quadruped on the adjacent side of the stone.

Of the seven horses without riders, two are the only image on the monument (Sö 222 and Sö 226). Two others are part of scenes from the stories about Sigurðr (Sö 101 and Sö 327). The fifth horse accompanies the hunters on N 61 from Alstad and the sixth is kneeling below the Nativity scene on N 68 from Dynna. The final horse can be found among the images on Sö 40. The two Granis and the horses on N 68 and Sö 40 are relatively prominent compared to the other images on these stones, while the one on N 61 blends in. Three of the five cervine quadrupeds occur alone on a memorial and one is depicted together with a bird. The cervine animal that forms the prey in the hunting scene on U 855 Böksta is also attacked by a bird.

Of the nineteen images of non-specific quadrupeds, five occur as single images. Ten others occur in pairs. When they face each other, these non-specific quadrupeds are of equal size and position (on Sö 301, U 240, U 598), while those on U 35 in Svartsjö and Vg 119 in Sparlösa face right, with one smaller than the other. Non-specific quadrupeds are further combined with birds (on U 590 and U 746) and with canine quadrupeds (on U 904 and U 860). The latter is also decorated with a serpentine quadruped and a quadruped with a human head. The serpentine quadrupeds tend to be larger than the various images they are combined with.

Twenty-five images of birds occur in the runestone decoration in this corpus. Only six of them are the only image on the monument. The others are combined with

unarmed riders, and serpentine, cervine, or non-specific quadrupeds. These birds are all smaller than the other images. The birds in the elaborate Sigurðr carvings on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm are also relatively small.²⁷⁶ Birds furthermore occur as part of the more elaborate hunting scenes on N 61 Alstad and U 855 Böksta. They are again smaller than the other images, but both stones are also decorated with another, larger bird. A large bird is also depicted above the two small human figures in the claws of the serpents on U 629 Grynsta backe. The design of U 1161 Altuna and Vg 119 Sparlösa contains images of birds that are larger than the other decorations on these stones. They are carved on a separate side and fight with respectively a serpent and another bird.

Two of the five Þórr's hammers are the only image on the monument and a pair of them is carved on DR 26 from Laeborg. The other hammer is combined with a face, on Sö 86 at S. Åby ägor. The weapons that are carved as a motif, on U 999 in Åkerby and Vg 124 at Ryda church, are both the only image on the monument. Other weapons are all attributes of various human figures.

The following sections discuss how many images of the various types are combined with crosses, serpent ornamentation, and inscriptions and how they relate visually to these other carving elements.

2.6 Compared to crosses

Fifty-eight of the 111 stones with figural images are also decorated with a cross. This corresponds to the general occurrence of crosses on runestones, which is half.²⁷⁷

These fifty-eight monuments contain a total of ninety-three images, which means

²⁷⁶ The birds on Sö 101 are counted as part of the composite image of the tree.

²⁷⁷ Lager 2002, 95-96.

that of the 202 figural images 46% are combined with crosses.²⁷⁸

A few monuments are decorated with more than one cross. DR 264 Vissmarlöv and U 920 Broholm are decorated with two crosses. The deer on DR 264 and the raven on U 920 are the same size as one of the crosses and respectively larger and smaller than the other. Small crosses are carved at the four ends of the inscription bands on DR 314 Lund, but they do not dominate the design. The stones with figural images in the Hunnestad monument (DR 282, DR 284-286) in contrast, only have a cross on their pair stone DR 283.

All the different image types are represented among those combined with crosses, except for the Þórr's hammer. Some image types are more often combined with crosses than the average of 46% and others less. Only the most conspicuous deviations from this average are discussed here.²⁷⁹

The category of birds is the most notable. Only just over a fifth of these images (6 out of 25) are combined with a cross. Two of these stones also contain other images; Sö 327 in Näsbyholm with Sigurðr imagery and U 629 at Grynsta backe with two human figures held by serpents.²⁸⁰ In contrast, all five figures trapped in snakes are combined with a cross. (Two of these occur on the same stone, on U 629.) Six of the seven wolf-like animals appear on monuments decorated with crosses (two on DR 314). Also relatively often combined with crosses are standing humanoids with spread arms (five of the eight). Of these, only the one on N 68 Dynna is certainly a depiction of Christ.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Table 1 in Appendix 2 shows how many images in the different groups occur on stones that are also decorated with a cross and whether the image, or total of images when there are more than one on the stone, is larger or smaller than the cross or (roughly) the same size. It is indicated if more than one of the same kind of image occurs on a stone.

²⁷⁹ Because of the small number of monuments involved, a margin of one stone is observed in determining the noteworthiness of the discrepancy.

²⁸⁰ Half of the fragments and damaged or lost stones with birds are with a cross and the other half without. Of the latter group, however, several runestones may originally have been decorated with a cross too.

²⁸¹ The figure of Christ on DR 42 Jelling is in a crucified position, but the cross is not in fact depicted.

The visual relation between image and cross reflects their importance on the monuments. The cross is smaller in size than the images on thirty-three monuments. Eighteen of these monuments are decorated with a single image that is larger than the cross.²⁸² On the other fifteen stones, the total of the images dominates over the cross in size. Some of these images are also individually larger than the cross. These are the images of the wolves and the masks on DR 286 of the Hunnestad monument and on DR 314 in Lund, both armed horsemen on U 678 in Skokloster; the Magi and the Adoration/Nativity scene on N 68; and the different figures on Sö 40 at Västerlång church.

Among the single images that are combined with a cross, four of the five leonine quadrupeds are larger, six of the nine human figures, and the single lupine quadruped (Sö 313).²⁸³ Twenty-one memorial stones are decorated with a single image that is smaller than the cross. Of ships, faces, and cervine animals that are combined with crosses as the only image, roughly the same number is larger than the cross as smaller.²⁸⁴

Not only the size of the cross and the images, but also their position on the stone is a factor in how prominent they are. Table 3 shows how the images and crosses that are combined relate to each other visually in these aspects.

Since visual dominance implies a hierarchy of importance, it seems that for the most part, the cross and the images were given equal notice (on half of the 58 stones in the corpus with crosses). The Christian message was given priority over the figural images on twelve runestones, however, while the images dominate over the visual Christian message on roughly the same number (ten).

²⁸² This the Hunnestad monument, where the cross is on a separate stone, DR 283.

²⁸³ The leonine quadrupeds on DR 280, DR 285, Sö 82, and Vg 181; the warrior with axe on DR 282, the rider with snakes on DR 284, the kneeling archer on Sö 324, the humanoid holding the runic serpent on U 1065, and the man with a belt on Vg 32.

²⁸⁴ Ships: 4 compared to 3. Faces: 2 compared to 3. Cervine quadrupeds; 2 compared to 1.

<i>In order of dominance</i>		<i>nr. of stones</i>
↓	Cross dominates over imagery in size and position	12
	Cross dominates over imagery in position, but equal in size	1
↓	Cross dominates over imagery in position, but subordinate in size	22 ²⁸⁵
	Cross dominates over imagery in size, but subordinate in position	8
↓	Cross is equal to imagery in position, but subordinate in size	9 ²⁸⁶
	Cross is equal to imagery in size, but subordinate in position	1
↓	Cross is subordinate to imagery in size and position	5
total		58

Table 3. Visual prominence of crosses compared to imagery

Neither group consists of a particular type of image only. Crosses are visually dominant in both size and position over ships, quadrupeds, and most of the human figures. The same images occur on stones where the cross is dominant over the images in only one of these factors. On a third of the thirty-three stones that are decorated with a cross that is smaller than the (total of) images. The crosses are placed higher than (most) of the images. Among these images are ships and armed riders. On eight stones this is the other way round: the cross is larger than the image, but placed lower. These stones contain images of faces/masks, birds, various human figures, and some quadrupeds.

However, some patterns in the visual relation between crosses and certain image types can be discerned. On five of the six monuments with birds and crosses,

²⁸⁵ This includes the cross on the adjacent side of some of the images on Sö 40, the small crosses at the end of the inscription on the adjacent side of the wolves and masks on DR 314, and the cross on the opposite side of the rider with spear on U 678.

²⁸⁶ This includes two crosses on the side adjacent to that with the image (on DR 264 and Sö 324) and four on a pair stone or -carving (DR 282, DR 284, DR 285, DR 286, Sö 313).

the cross is larger.²⁸⁷ The smaller birds tend to be placed higher than the cross.²⁸⁸

When the bird is larger, this is the other way round. Then, the cross has a more dominant position.²⁸⁹ Consequently, the birds and crosses are of roughly equal visual weight, except for on U 920 in Broholm. There, the bird is also placed higher than the larger cross, but there is another cross of the same size as the bird next to it, so ultimately the cross ornamentation dominates.²⁹⁰

In contrast to the canine and non-specific quadrupeds, there are no images of leonine or lupine quadrupeds that are smaller than a cross; they are all larger or equal in size. Only one of the five leonine quadrupeds, however, is also carved in a prominent position (on N 84 Vang).²⁹¹ In contrast, the lupine animals tend to visually dominate over the cross.²⁹²

Heroic and warrior imagery was also given more visual prominence than the crosses they are combined with, both when size and position of the carvings are taken into account.²⁹³ The Sigurðr carvings on U 1163 in Drävle and Gs 9 in Årsunda also dominate over the cross. Those on U 1175 in Stora Ramsjö are smaller than the cross (in total), but they are placed in a higher position. This is the other way around for those on the Göksten (Sö 327), where the cross is carved in the prominent top position but the scenes of the Sigurðr stories together occupy a larger part of the surface.

²⁸⁷ This makes this the only image type that is more often than average combined with a larger cross.

²⁸⁸ On Sö 270 and U 1071 as well as on the fragments Sö 245, Sö 247, U 576 and on the damaged U 485 and Sö Sb1965;19.

²⁸⁹ On U 629, the bird is larger, but the cross carved higher. This is also the case with the bird's head on Vg 103.

²⁹⁰ Birds and a cross are also combined on Sö 327, There the cross is both larger and in a more prominent position, but the birds are part of elaborate Sigurðr imagery that as a whole is more prominent than the cross.

²⁹¹ Three leonine quadrupeds are larger than the crosses, but placed lower on the stone (Vg 181, Sö 82, DR 280). The leonine quadruped on DR 285 is placed roughly on the same height as the cross that is however on its pair stone DR 283.

²⁹² The lupine animal Sö 313 is carved slightly lower than the cross in Sö 312, but because it is placed outside the inscription band it is visually more prominent. The crosses at the top and bottom of the inscription on DR 314 are much smaller and on a different side of the stone than the wolves. This overrides the fact that one of the crosses is carved higher than the figural decoration. The lupine quadruped on Sm 133: roughly the same size as the cross, but carved lower on the stone.

²⁹³ On DR 282, Ög 181, U 678, U 691.

To summarise: 46% of the figural images are combined with crosses (some on the same monument), only Þórr's hammers are not. Relatively few images of birds and of unarmed men are combined with crosses and in contrast all human figures that are held by serpents or snakes occur on runestones decorated with crosses. Many of the lupine quadrupeds are also combined with crosses; they are all larger. The same is true for the leonine animals, but not for canine and serpentine quadrupeds. On average, images and crosses occupy an equally important role in the design, judging from their relative size and position. This is not true for all runestones with images and crosses, however. Especially heroic imagery is given more visual weight than the crosses. That the same is true for lupine beasts, in contrast to leonine quadrupeds, supports the suggestion that wolves may be seen as beasts of battle in a warrior context.

2.7. Compared to the serpent ornamentation

Serpent ornamentation occurs frequently on runestones and this type of decoration is especially common on runestones from central Sweden.²⁹⁴ In addition to the snakes and serpents that decorate the surface of the stone, the heads, tails, and limbs of the runic serpent are also counted as serpent ornamentation in this study. These features are often ornamentally enhanced with tendrils, lip-lappets, and thumbs, and they can blend in with the smaller snakes. The ornamental union knots that frequently connect the ends of inscription bands (e.g. as on Sö 175) and other ornamental decoration (e.g. as on U 678) are also classed under this denomination.

Sixty-nine out of 111 stones (62%) are carved with (serpent) ornamentation. As a consequence, 134 out of 202 figural images are combined with (serpent)

²⁹⁴ See also Section 2.2.2.a.

ornamentation (66%). The images that are combined with serpent ornamentation include almost all armed riders (but only one of the standing warriors), all figures of Sigurðr, almost all standing figures with spread arms and all humanoids holding and being held by snakes. Almost all serpentine quadrupeds and non-specific quadrupeds also fall in this group. These kinds of images are indeed combined more often with serpent ornamentation than the other images. Conversely, only one of five cervine and two of seven lupine quadrupeds are combined with this type of ornamentation. Of faces and masks just under a third is combined with serpent ornamentation.

An impression of the degree of elaborateness of the serpent ornamentation on a particular monument can be gained from the information in the database in Appendix 2. For instance, if an image is embedded, the serpent ornamentation is normally quite substantial. The database also indicates how much of the stone is occupied by the image and whether the serpent ornamentation is larger or smaller than this. In Table 2 in Appendix 2, the size of the ornamentation is compared to the (total) of figural images on the same monument.²⁹⁵

The images occupy more space on just over half (51%) of the monuments that combine figural decoration with other ornamentation. On almost a fifth (19%) of the runestones both types of decoration take up roughly the same amount of space and on just under a third (30%) the serpent ornamentation dominates over the images with regard to size. To a large extent it seems to be related to an image type's chronological and regional distribution whether they are combined with serpent ornamentation and what amount rather than to the kind of image.²⁹⁶

Most of the images on monuments with multiple images that together occupy more space than the serpent ornamentation are individually smaller than this

²⁹⁵ It is indicated when more images of the same kind occur on the same stone. It is also mentioned if the ornamentation is carved on another side of the stone than the image.

²⁹⁶ Comp. Section 2.3.

ornamentation, but in particular (single) images of ships, leonine, and lupine quadrupeds are individually larger or approximately the same size as any serpent ornamentation they are combined with. Whatever the symbolic function of the serpent decoration was,²⁹⁷ it seems to have been of secondary importance to the figural decoration, because the serpent ornamentation tends to occupy less space on the stone than the images. However, a few human figures and quadrupeds are embedded in the ornamentation, which compromises their prominence.²⁹⁸

2.8. Compared to the inscription

This section discusses the visual relation between the images and the inscription as visual design element. The contents of the inscriptions are discussed in the next chapter. Ten of the 111 monuments with figural images in this corpus do not contain an inscription.²⁹⁹ Three of these stones are part of the Hunnestad monument, which also includes DR 282 and DR 283 that are inscribed with memorial inscriptions. The inscriptions Sö 311 and Sö 312 on the rock wall along the Gamla Turingevägen in Södertälje accompany the carved animal that is numbered separately as Sö 313 and the three are seen as one carving.

The inscriptions on several other monuments are non-runic or non-lexical.³⁰⁰ These carvings, though not, or not fully, lexical, are also considered as inscriptions in the following discussion of the visual relations between the carving elements, since they function visually and semiotically in the same way as lexical inscriptions.³⁰¹

The inscription occupies a larger part of the surface than the images on three-quarters of the monuments (76 out of 101). Six of the twenty-five monuments

²⁹⁷ See Section 2.2.2.a.

²⁹⁸ Depending on the use of colour.

²⁹⁹ DR 284, DR 285, DR 286, DR 290, [DR] DK MJy 69, Sö 95, Sö 322, U 548, U 1004, U Fv1955;219.

³⁰⁰ On U 1175, Sö 324, Sö 327, and on the medieval U 370 and U 529. See also Chapter 3.2.

³⁰¹ See also Bianchi 2010, 170, 210, 222.

on which the images take up more space are carved with a single image: a leonine quadruped on N 84 Vang and on Sö 82 Tumbo, a ship on Vs 17 Råby and on Sö 158 Österberga (when the sail, which also carries part of the inscription, is included), the human figure holding the runic serpents on Sö 175 Lagnö and the human figure with the animal head on Vg 56 Källby ås.³⁰² A further seventeen stones are carved with multiple images, which taken together occupy more space than the inscription band. Of these images, those on seven monuments are individually also larger than the inscription.³⁰³

There are two runestones on which the image and the inscription are roughly the same size. The sword on Vg 124 Ryda is the inscription band and they are thus equally large. The two human figures on N 228 from Tu together occupy roughly the same space as the inscription on the adjacent side. The ship on Ög 224 Stratömta, finally, is the same size as the inscription on the same side, but it is smaller than that on the opposite side.

Although the inscription band takes up more space than the figural decoration on 75% of stones, the location of the inscription band is generally less eye-catching than that of the image(s). As a frame for the other carvings, it is less prominent than images that are placed centrally on the stone or on top of the inscription band. While elaborate serpent ornamentation can overpower the images on a runestone, this also makes the inscription less prominent, especially on later monuments.

Although the inscription as a whole in most cases takes up more space than the figural images, the individual images are normally several times larger than the individual runes. This varies from twice to over ten times the size of the runes, but is

³⁰² The images of Christ and the lion on DR 42 are both larger than the parts of the inscription on the same sides of the stone, but there is a larger section of the inscription on the third side. The mask/face on DR 66 is also larger than the inscription on the same side, but smaller than the inscription on the adjacent side and thus than the inscription in total.

³⁰³ DR 271, N 61, N 68, Ög 181, U 692, U 753 and U 1161.

mostly between four to seven times. There are only a few exceptions to this. The human figures on N 68 Dynna are not much taller than the runes (but together they occupy a larger surface). The hammer-head on Vg 113 at Lärkegapet in Töfta, on the other hand, is only slightly larger than the runes and it takes up much less space than the complete inscription. The sword on Vg 124 Ryda, furthermore, is not wider than the runes, because it is also the inscription band. Still, its shape stands out more than that of the individual runes. Finally, the bodies of the animals on U 160 Risbyle, U 904 in Västerby in Läby, and Sm 133 in Sunneränga as well as the birds on U 746 in Hårby and U 1071 in Sylta are not much thicker than the inscription band or higher than the runes. The contours of these images, however, are all larger than the individual runes. The three quadrupeds are embedded in the inscription band or enclosed by the inscriptions and the crosses. The two birds, on the other hand, are placed on top of the band, which makes them more eye-catching.

This means that in the process of perception and interpretation of the carvings on runestones, although the runic inscription as a whole may be more prominent in size than the image, the figural decoration can generally be discerned before the individual runes can be read.

2.9. Patterns in prominence

As discussed above, the prominence of an image is shaped by its place on the stone, the proportion of the surface it occupies and its discernability among the other carving elements. This information is extracted from the database in Appendix 2 and presented there per image type in Table 3. It is listed how many images of each type are carved isolated; how many touch either a cross, the serpent ornamentation, another image or inscription; how many touch two or more of these other carving

elements; and how many are carved embedded in other carvings. It is also indicated how many images of each type are located where on the stone. Finally, this table lists how many images of each group occupy a certain amount of space on the (carved) surface of the stone.

The bottom rows of Table 3 in Appendix 2 show the total number of images for each degree of discernability, the total that occurs on each position on the stone and the total of images of each size. These numbers are then converted into percentages of the total of 202 images in the corpus. As a result, the degrees to which the three factors shape the prominence of the images within each type can be compared to the general pattern among the total of images.

Of the image groups with human figures, only the depictions of unarmed riders adhere roughly to the overall pattern on all three aspects, discernability, position, and proportion. Among the quadrupeds, only the group of cervine animals follows the average tendency. The same is true for the images of hammers.³⁰⁴ The other image types stand out from the general pattern, mostly with regard to either the discernability of the carving, their position on the stone, or the proportion of the stone they occupy. For the smaller image groups, one monument more or less with such an image would make a disproportionate difference. Therefore only the most conspicuous discrepancies between tendencies of the larger individual image groups and the average pattern are relevant.

2.9.1 Discernability

Nearly a quarter of the 202 images (44 or 22%) are carved isolated from the other carvings or are the only carvings on the stone or their side of the stone. Eighty-nine

³⁰⁴ This is also the case for the images that fall in the category 'other', but since this group consists of diverse images, the characteristics of them as a group are not relevant. They do contribute to the general pattern, however, and have as such been included in the calculation.

images (44%) touch either the inscription, the (serpent) ornamentation, a cross or the other figural decoration, while thirty-six images (18%) touch two or more of those other carving elements. Thirty-three images (16%) are fully embedded in the other carvings, i.e. they are fully enclosed by them.

The images of standing warriors deviate from this pattern in that they do not occur isolated or embedded. Instead, most of these images more often touch two or more other carving elements. A few touch one other carving element. Lupine quadrupeds do not occur isolated or embedded either and they also more often than average touch more than one other carving element. The number of images that touch two or more other carvings is also higher than average among the non-specific quadrupeds. In contrast, a relatively high proportion of the (fantastic) leonine animals occurs isolated.

The serpentine quadrupeds that are included in the corpus because they are combined with other figural images are more often than other images carved embedded in serpent ornamentation. This, of course, has to do with the fact that they are often a part of the serpent ornamentation. Similarly, human figures who hold snakes or those that are held by snakes are almost exclusively embedded in the serpent ornamentation. This affects their discernability and consequently their prominence negatively, something which could have been compensated to some extent by painting the humanoids in a different colour than the serpent ornamentation.

2.9.2. Position

Almost half of the images in this corpus are carved in the centre of the space surrounded by the runic band on the runestones, or of the surface of the stone if there is no runic band (91 images or 45%). Forty-two images (21%) are carved at the

bottom of this surface, and forty-four images (22%) at the top. Mostly another image or images occupy the centre in these cases, but almost just as often this position is taken up by a cross, the inscription and/or serpent ornamentation.³⁰⁵ Only very rarely is the centre left empty if there is a figural image somewhere else on the stone (whereas this occurs regularly on runestones without figural decoration). The position of the two images on DR 286 of the Hunnestad monument is uncertain, since already at the time of Ole Worm's drawing it was unclear which way up the stone originally stood.

Twenty-three images (12%) are carved outside the runic band. Eighteen of these are placed on top of or above the band. The space within the band is only empty on Ög MÖLM1960;230 at Törnevalla church, which is decorated with a ship on top of the runic band.

On stones with images outside the runic band, the space within it is (partly) filled with other carvings. Most of the images outside the runic band are depictions of birds. On two runestones with such a bird, the position within the runic band is taken up by a serpentine quadruped,³⁰⁶ on two by a large cross,³⁰⁷ on U 599 Hanunda by a unarmed horseman; and on U 746 Hårby by serpent ornamentation which also contains a part of the inscription (next to the bird on top of the carvings is a pair of legs, possibly of a horse). On Sö 101 on Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 on the Göksten, a figure of Sigurðr is carved outside the runic band which doubles as Fáfnir, not on top of it, but below. On these two monuments, the space enclosed by the band is filled with other scenes from the stories about this hero. On the other stones with an image outside the inscription band, the centre of the stone contains inscription

³⁰⁵ On the Danish runestones, because they are earlier, the centre is occupied by other images or the inscription, not by crosses.

³⁰⁶ On U 692 on the adjacent side and on U 753 embedded in the serpent ornamentation in the runic band.

³⁰⁷ U 1071 and U 920.

bands, crosses, and serpent ornamentation.³⁰⁸

21% of the figural images in this study are carved at the bottom of the surface. Ten out of the sixteen depictions of ships are found in this position. That this is the most popular position for this kind of image may have to do with their shape. They are especially suitable as a base for a cross, with which eight of them are combined. They also form a useful bridge between the ends of the inscription band which are often found at the bottom corners of the carved surface.³⁰⁹ Five images of ships are carved in the centre and of these only the one on Sö 112 in Kolunda serves as a base for a cross. Ships rarely occur in other positions; only on Ög MÖLM1960;230 at Törnevalla church, where it is placed on top of the inscription band with a crossed mast.³¹⁰

Human figures who are held by snakes occur almost invariably in the bottom position (4 out of 5, with one in the centre). Consequently, there may be a connection between the bottom position of the figures and the fact that they are constrained by snakes. A less prominent and lower hierarchical place might be fitting for figures that are subdued by the serpents and whatever force or powers they represent.

A top position would then be fitting for the hero who conquers Fáfnir, represented as a serpent, and the evil he symbolises. Indeed, six images of Sigurðr are carved at a high position within the inscription band. He also occurs at other positions, however. Once he is placed in the centre, when he is roasting the heart on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget, and once at the bottom within the inscription band,

³⁰⁸ Sö 86 (with a face on top of the runic band) has a large hammer in the centre of the stone. The centre of the monument is occupied by inscription bands on U 508 (with a face above the inscription), on DR 26 (with hammers on either end of it), and Vg 103 and Vg 150 (with bird's heads on top). U 313 and U Fv1946;258 both have ornamentation and inscriptions in the centre and humanoids with spread arms on top of that. On U 1034 (with a face), U 1065 (with a humanoid holding a serpent) and Sö 312-313 (with a lupine quadruped), the centre contains a combination of serpent ornamentation, crosses, and inscription. (The top half of the space within the band is empty on Sö 311).

³⁰⁹ See Bianchi 2010, 73-78 about where the inscription tends to start.

³¹⁰ The ship on the medieval U 370 is also carved in the highest position within the band.

carrying the ring on Gs 19 Ockelbo. To a certain extent the high number of depictions of Sigurðr at the top can be assigned to the nature of the image; the top position within the runic band is a convenient location for Sigurðr to stab the runic serpent/Fáfnir from below. He is also depicted performing that heroic deed from underneath the whole carving on Sö 101 and Sö 327 Näsbyholm. On both these monuments however, this location cannot be regarded as 'low', because even the bottom of the carvings are several metres above the ground on respectively a sloping rock wall and a very large erratic block.

Human figures with spread arms also occur more often than average on top of the runic band (3 out of 8) or in the top position within the band (also 3 out of 8). It is tempting to use this hierarchically high position to interpret the spread arms of the figures, for instance as a victorious gesture or as a (crucified) Christ, but this would only be speculative.

Other images that occur more often than average in the highest position within the inscription band (or of the carved surface if there is no band) are faces/masks (8) and birds (8). Birds are also found much more often than the average of 9% on top of the runic band (8 out of 25, or 32%).

2.9.3. Proportion of the surface occupied

132 (65%) of the total of 202 images in the corpus occupy less than a quarter of the (carved) surface of the stone. Thirty-nine images (20%) take up between a quarter and half of this space and nineteen images (9%) occupy between half and three-quarters of it. Twelve images (6%) are larger than three-quarters of the surface. Some image groups deviate from this average pattern.

Small images are overrepresented compared to the average 65% in the image groups of horses, canine animals, and non-specific quadrupeds. These images

all occupy less than a quarter of the carved space. Most of the images of birds fall in this smallest category too (21 out of 25).

The largest images are mainly human figures that fall in the category 'other humanoids'³¹¹ as well as three masks.³¹² This makes for a disproportionately high number of images of this size in these two groups. Two leonine quadrupeds also occupy over three-quarters of the carved surface.³¹³ This image group furthermore stands out by lacking images that are smaller than a quarter of the carved surface, which normally is the largest percentage.³¹⁴ Images in the largest category tend to be the only one on the stone. The only two that are combined with other images are carved on a different side of the monument.³¹⁵

The sizes of images of men with weapons also deviates from the average. Almost all of the armed horsemen take up between a quarter and half of the surface of the stone (5 out of 6) and only one occupies less than a quarter.³¹⁶ Standing warriors display roughly the same deviation. In contrast, all ten images of Sigurðr occupy less than a quarter of the carved space. This is possibly related to the high number of other images on same monument for Sö 101, Sö 327 and Gs 19, but the Sigurðr carvings on U 1163 and U 1175 consist of a few images only.

³¹¹ The wolf-rider on DR 284, the man with cross-staff on DR 290, the figure holding snakes on Sö 175, the kneeling archer on Sö 324, and the humanoid with animal head on Vg 56,

³¹² DR 66, [DR] DK MJy 69, and Sö 95.

³¹³ Sö 82 and DR 285.

³¹⁴ The number of small images is also very low among the eleven serpentine quadrupeds that are included in this survey. Only one of them occupies less than a quarter of the stone, while most fall in the $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ categories.

³¹⁵ A serpentine quadruped takes up over three-quarters of the surface one side of U 692 and the adjacent side of the stone is decorated with a large bird. One of the sides of Vg 119 is for over three-quarters occupied by an image of two fighting birds, while there are more images on the other sides.

³¹⁶ The images of unarmed riders, in contrast, do follow the general pattern with regard to image size as well as position and discernability.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has classified the various images that occur on Viking Age Scandinavian memorial stones and identified indicators of patterns in the visual relations between the images and the other carvings. The most common runestone design that includes figural images is a single image (or scene) located somewhere within the runic band. On roughly half of the monuments with figural images, a cross is added, and serpent ornamentation occurs on 62% of these memorials. 90% of all monuments that are decorated with images are also inscribed with runes.

Nearly a quarter of the images on the stones are carved isolated, while 16% are fully embedded in other carvings. The rest touch one or more of the other carving elements. When images are carved outside the area that is enclosed by the runic band, they are mostly placed on top of it. The images generally occupy less space on the stone than the inscription. They tend to have more prominent positions, however, and are moreover earlier discernable than the individual runes in almost all cases.

It seems there are preferred positions on the stone for some image types. This is the case for ships and birds, of which there are enough depictions to validate such an observation. Ships are generally carved in the lower part of the stone, while the majority of birds are located in the upper regions of the monument, either within the runic band or on top of it. It should be noted, however, that these images do occur in other positions too.

While images of birds tend to occur in a hierarchically high position, they are generally quite small. For ships this is the other way round, albeit rather less pronounced. This might be related to the nature of actual ships and birds, with birds being small and able to fly. The images also occur in non-realistic proportions and positions, however. A bird is larger than the horseman on U 599 in Hanunda, a ship is

depicted above a human figure, of roughly the same size on Vg 119 in Sparlösa.³¹⁷ A bird is carved with a cross on its back instead of perched on it on U 629 at Grynsta backe in Svarsta. Most of the ships are attributed to 'Traen', but the birds were carved by several carvers.³¹⁸ Although the runestones on which the birds are larger than the other images are both carved by Þórfastr, he has also carved U 375 in Vidbo on which the bird is smaller than the rider.

The images of Sigurðr are also relatively small and occur often in the top position too. Figures with spread arms occur similarly often in this high position, but they moreover occupy a larger part of the carved space, as do many other human figures. Maybe Sigurðr was not depicted larger because he is generally combined with other figures from his story, often including a second depiction of him.

Another convention with regard to size for some images can be detected when the depictions of horsemen and other warrior figures are compared. Most of the unarmed riders fall in the smallest category, while armed horsemen and standing warriors generally occupy more space.

Some image types are more often combined with serpent ornamentation than others. The amount of serpent ornamentation on the monuments varies, but on average, the serpent ornamentation is less prominent in size than the figural carvings. This is especially the case for images of armed riders, scenes from the Sigurðr stories, standing figures with spread arms, human figures with snakes, serpentine animals, and non-specific quadrupeds. Of standing warriors, cervine animals, and lupine quadrupeds, on the other hand, only a small proportion occurs in combination with such ornamentation. Especially for the different types of quadrupeds this may be more the result of the chronological and regional distribution than of the type of image itself.

³¹⁷ Also on the damaged U Fv1955;222 and the medieval U 370.

³¹⁸ See Section 2.3.

One might expect the larger images to be more likely to touch the other carvings than smaller images. Most of the larger images, however, occur isolated or touch the inscription only on one or two points. There is no inscription at all combined with the large images on DR 284 and DR 285 of the Hunnestad monument, DR 290 in Krageholm in Sövestad socken and [DR] DK MJy 69 from Sjellebro. The other larger images are less often combined with a circular runic band that surrounds the carvings than the smaller ones. Instead, the inscription is carved in a vertical band next to the image on Vg 56 at Källby ås, or (mostly) on a different side of the stone on Sö 324 in Åsby in Helgarö socken and DR 66 in Århus. Two other large images are framed by the inscription on three sides: the wrestling birds on the Sparlösa stone (Vg 119) and the leonine quadruped on Sö 82 at Tumbo church. There is also less often serpent ornamentation on the stones with the largest images. Only two of the largest images are embedded in serpent ornamentation and in both cases this is inherent to the image type: the bodies of the serpents that are held by the man on Sö 175 in Aspö are wound around his limbs, and the serpentine quadruped on U 692 in Värpeby is surrounded by small snakes.³¹⁹ These images, however, are unequivocally the dominant and most prominent feature of the monument. They occupy most of the carved surface, even when embedded in other carvings, and are positioned centrally on the stone.

As was discussed in Section 2.2.3.b, it can be complicated to identify leonine, lupine, and canine animals among the images of quadrupeds. In the light of this, it is noteworthy that the groups that I have distinguished on the basis of the animals' features seem to have had different roles in runestone design. A relatively high proportion of the (fantastic) leonine animals occurs isolated, while none of the animals that I classify as lupine occur isolated or embedded. They always touch one

³¹⁹ This motif occurs more often, especially on Upplandic runestones, also of a similar size. These are not included here, however, when they are not combined with another figural image.

or more other carving elements. The fantastic beasts with lion-like features also occur significantly more often in the centre than the realistic wolf-like animals. Moreover, the lupine quadrupeds tend to occupy less space on the surface than the leonine animals. This is related to the fact that the leonine animals are also generally the only image on the stone.³²⁰ Conversely, quadrupeds with lupine characteristics only occur as a single image on Sm 133 in Sunneränga and U Fv1978;226 from Ösby, while they are combined with masks on DR 286 Hunnestad and DR 314 from Lund and with warrior imagery and a ship on Ög 181 in Ledberg. Whether images are combined with serpent ornamentation or are carved isolated is related to the chronological and regional fashions. Leonine quadrupeds occur mostly on early memorials in Denmark, Norway and Västergötland. However, lupine quadrupeds were also carved in this early period and leonine animals are also found on later monuments in Södermanland and Västmanland. Especially the differences in size, position, and discernability between (realistic) animals with lupine characteristics and those with (fantastic) leonine features, and whether they are a single image or combined with e.g. masks, confirms the distinction between the two types of quadrupeds that can be made on the basis of their appearance.³²¹

All kinds of images are combined with crosses, except for the Þórr's hammer. Unarmed riders and birds occur less frequently than other images on stones with crosses, while human figures held by snakes are more often combined with a cross. On average, the various images are roughly equally prominent in the design as the

³²⁰ On DR 42, such an animal is combined with an image of Christ, but he is carved on a different side. Only the leonine quadruped on DR 271 is carved together with another image, a ship.

³²¹ There is not such a clear difference between the patterns of canine and lupine animals (or dogs and wolves). The canine animals generally follow the average pattern and they overlap to some extent with lupine quadrupeds on how they are carved on the runestones, but there are some minor differences. Canine animals do occur isolated and embedded, but the majority touches one or more other carving elements, like all lupine quadrupeds do. Only one wolf-like animal is carved in the centre and the majority of the dogs has that position. None of the canine quadrupeds takes up more than a quarter of the stone, but over half the lupine animals occupy more space, with one taking up between half and three-quarters of the stone.

cross. However, the Sigurðr carvings mostly dominate over the crosses when they occur on the same monument. Similarly, in the small number of instances when warrior imagery is combined with a cross, the visual reference to heroism is given visual prominence over the Christian message, in both size and position.³²²

This chapter has classified the various images that were carved on memorial stones in Viking Age Scandinavia. The visual analysis has identified several tendencies in the design of these monuments and in how images were used in relation to crosses, serpent ornamentation, and runic inscription. The next chapter examines whether there is a connection between the choice of image and the contents of the inscriptions.

³²² On DR 282, Ög 181, U 678, U 691.

Chapter 3. Images and the contents of the accompanying inscriptions

3.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the combination of figural images and the information given in the accompanying inscriptions. Through this analysis, certain correlations between the choice of image and the contents of the inscription are identified. There are many aspects of the runestone inscriptions that could be discussed, such as onomastics, genealogy, and inheritance implications. For the purposes of this chapter, however, the focus is limited to the optional inscription elements that were added to the basic memorial formula 'X raised this stone in memory of Y, their brother/mother/etc'³²³.

Such additions consist of denominations and adjectives for the people mentioned in the inscription, statements about ownership of e.g. land and ships, information about events from the life or death of the commemorated person, and spells and invocations. Parts of some of the inscriptions are in verse and/or in a different runic script. The most common additions to the memorial formula are Christian prayers for the soul. Carver signatures, too, are common, but still optional additions. These inscription elements and features are discussed in more detail in Section 3.2 and 3.3 below.

Henrik Williams explains how formulaic words in runestone inscriptions, such as the terms for the monument and its establishment, were probably perceived differently from non-formulaic words such as names.³²⁴ This distinction between

³²³ For a discussion of the alternative vocabulary used in this formula, see Palm 1992, 177-229.

³²⁴ Williams, He. 2010, 36.

formulaic and non-formulaic can also be applied to inscription elements. Although optional, the Christian prayers are formulaic additions. The carver signatures are generally formulaic in their structure and vocabulary too, but of course they also contain the name(s) of the carver(s), which are non-formulaic. The carver signatures and prayers are thus optional additions to the basic formula, but they are less individual than the other optional features of the inscriptions.

It is generally unknown to what extent the commissioners and the producer(s) of the monument influenced the choice of the inscription elements, but a choice for these features was made. Especially the uncommon additions make the memorial more exclusive and multi-faceted, much like the inclusion of figural images in the decoration. The versification of parts of the inscription and the use of different runic scripts have a similar function.³²⁵ This chapter identifies what connections there are between the use of textual and visual optional carving elements.

3.2. The contents and features of the inscriptions

On ten of the monuments with figural images, no inscription is carved.³²⁶ Other stones are carved with an inscription that is not or only partly made up of runes. The inscription band on U 1071 in Sylta only contains an **m**-rune. Most of the signs in the inscription band on U 1175 from Stora Ramsjö are small crosses. A few of the symbols resemble runes, but this inscription is non-runic to such an extent that no linguistic meaning can be discerned (i.e. non-lexical).³²⁷ The inscriptions on Sö 324 in Åsby in Helgarö and Sö 327 on the Göksten in Näsbyholm, which are probably by the

³²⁵ Bianchi 2010, 161, 163; Wulf 2003, 986.

³²⁶ DR 284, DR 285, DR 286, DR 290, [DR] DK MJy 69, Sö 95, Sö 322, U 548, U 1004, U Fv1955;219.

³²⁷ Bianchi 2010, 191-193. The inscription on U 529 and the medieval U 370 are also non-lexical, but the symbols in the band of the former are proper runes which seem to be arranged according to a particular structure (Bianchi 2010, 176-178). Furthermore, one of the runes on U 370 is inverted and several form bind-runes, which are both uncommon in Uppland (Thompson 1972, 526).

same cover, are only partly lexical. Words from standard memorial formulas can be recognised on both monuments, but it is unclear how the remaining parts of these inscriptions should be read.³²⁸

Of the ninety-eight inscriptions on the remaining monuments with images, thirty consist of the memorial formula only. This formula generally consists of the following elements in a set order: name(s) + verb for establishing the monument + terms denoting the monument + 'in memory of' + name(s) + their relationship.

The vocabulary in the different elements can vary. The verb, for instance, can be any of the following: *reisti/reistu* 'raised (sg/pl)'; *gerði/gerðu* 'made (sg/pl)'; *lét/létu reisa, rétta, hoggva*, or *gera* 'had (sg/pl)' ... 'raised', 'erected', 'carved' or 'made'. The nouns that most frequently indicate the memorial are: *steinn* 'stone', *merki* and *kumbl*. The physical features of the monuments that are called *merki* or *kumbl* and their setting in the landscape suggest that these words may indicate monuments with specific features, for instance that they consist of multiple elements. These features are not yet clearly identified, however. At the same time these words may refer to the function of the monument as memorial or to an additional function as marker (of for instance roads or boundaries).³²⁹ Three prepositions were used that are translated into English with 'in memory of': *æft/ept*, *at* and *æftir/eptir*. They all mean the same, and the choice for one of these prepositions over the others seems to have been influenced by a combination of regional and chronological fashion and possibly length.³³⁰ The variety in verbs, nouns, and prepositions in this formula shows that this strictly structured standard memorial formula allowed for some optional contents.

³²⁸ See also Bianchi 2010, 176.

³²⁹ Källström 2007, 91; See also Section 3.2.4 with notes.

³³⁰ Peterson 1995. She shows that interpretations by other scholars of the variety in their use as only a regional variety or the result of variety in linguistic meanings are not feasible.

DR 26: carver signature	Sö 154: prayer verse varied script	U 678: carver signature
DR 33: ownership		U 691: prayer cause of death
DR 42: <i>kunungr</i>	Sö 164: varied script verse place of death sailed on ship <i>drengila</i>	U 692: carver signature <i>góðr</i>
DR 66: cause of death		U 753: <i>góðr (bóndi)</i>
DR 77: <i>góðr drengr</i>		U 824: carver signature
DR 81: <i>dýrr ok dróttinfastr</i> disturber curse	Sö 167: varied script <i>góðr drengr</i>	U 860: prayer
DR 96: prayer	Sö 175: spell	U 920: prayer
DR 264: carver signature ownership	Sö 190: carver signature prayer	U 969: carver signature
DR 280: ownership		U 999: <i>góðr bóndi</i>
DR 314: <i>góðr landmaðr</i>	Sö 270: carver signature	U 1034: carver signature
DR 335: ownership	Sö 311: <i>góðr</i>	U 1043: prayer
DR Aud1996;274: carver signature dwelling place monument's role	Sö 311-312: bridge/path Sö 312: carver signature prayer dwelling place	U 1052: carver signature U 1161: carver signature cause of death
Gs 7: cause of death	Sö 352: varied script cause of death	U 1163: <i>snjallr</i>
N 61: monument's role and origin verse	Sö 367: varied script ownership <i>þróttar þegn</i>	U Fv1946;258: carver signature sailed on ship?
N 68: bridge/path <i>mær hǫnnurst</i> verse	U 35: <i>bóndi</i>	U Fv1978;226: prayer bridge/path
Nä 34: <i>nýtr</i>	U 79: carver signature <i>góðr</i>	Vg 4: bridge/path ownership
Ög 181: <i>þistill mistill kistill</i>	U 160: prayer <i>góðr</i> dwelling place	Vg 32: <i>góðr drengr</i> verse
Öl 19: prayer	U 171: carver signature	Vg 103: <i>góðr drengr</i>
Sö 40: carver signature place of death	U 241: prayer ownership	Vg 113: <i>góðr drengr</i>
Sö 82: carver signature place of death	U 375: place of death	Vg 119: carver signature monument's role other
Sö 86: <i>merki sírún</i>	U 508: <i>góðr</i> dwelling place	Vg 150: Þórr-invocation <i>góðr drengr</i>
Sö 101: bridge/path	U 598: carver signature	Vg 181: carver signature place of death <i>góðr drengr</i> verse
Sö 111: <i>merki sírún</i>	U 599: carver signature	
Sö 112: varied script verse <i>þróttar þegn</i>	U 629: carver signature prayer	
Sö 122: carver signature verse		

Table 4. Optional inscription elements and features on stones with images

Sixty-eight of the memorials with figural decoration, which is an optional element in the design, also contain optional elements in the inscription. Some of these inscriptions also display additional features of verse or the use of more than one runic script. Table 4 lists these sixty-eight stones and shows which optional elements or features are present in the inscriptions.³³¹

Before the connection between these inscription elements and the images on runestones can be examined, the meaning of these optional elements and features in inscriptions is described in the following section. Their occurrence on runestones in the corpus is compared to their distribution on runestones in general.

3.2.1 Denominations and epithets

The noun that is used most frequently to indicate the relationship between the commissioner(s) and a commemorated man, other than ‘father’, ‘son’ and ‘brother,’ is *bóndi*. This word has connotations of landownership in general, but it can also refer specifically to a husband. Its various meanings may largely be covered under ‘head of household’.³³²

On U 35 in Svartsjö (with two non-specific quadrupeds), for instance, it is given as additional information that the father of the three sons who commissioned the monument was *Ernfríðr’s bóndi*. In this inscription, it seems the word is used with the meaning of husband. This is not the case on U 860 in Mårsta (with various quadrupeds of which one has a human head), because the man commemorated on this stone is said to have been the *bóndi* of the man and woman who together

³³¹ This list excludes the instances where a denomination that can otherwise be regarded as an optional addition primarily indicates the relationship between the commemorated and the commissioner(s): *Lagsmaðr* on DR 62, *verr* on DR Aud1996;274, *gildi* on Ög MÖLM1960;230, and *bóndi* on ÖI 19, Ög 224, Sö 101, Sö 367, U 193, U 240, U 860 and Vg 119. Because they function as part of the memorial formula’s ‘relation’ element, they cannot be regarded an optional element, see also Section 3.2.1.

³³² Comp. e.g. Sawyer 2000, 108-110; Düwel 1975, 185-191.

commissioned the monument. Here the word is more likely to refer to his role as head of the household. On U 999 from Åkerby in Funbo socken (with a spearhead), it may even refer to a position as landholder. The family-ties are identified first and the commemorated father is additionally called the *góðr bóndi* of a place called Funnir or Fúnir (the adjective *góðr* is described below). In this last example the inscription states that the commemorated man and the commissioners were father and sons and the epithet *bóndi* is an optional addition.

In the example of U 860 Mårsta, however, *bóndi* specifies the relationship between the deceased and the commissioners of the monument. Here, the epithet is used where normally the family ties are identified. As such it is a non-optional element in the memorial formula. The same is true for *verr* (on DR Aud1996;274 at Bjerring church, with a mask-like face),³³³ which is another term for husband/man, and also for *frændi* and *mágr*, which signify male relatives, resp. ‘kinsman, male relative’ and ‘father-, brother-, son-in-law’.

Gildi denoted a member of a gild and occurs apart from on Ög MÖLM1960;230 from Törnevalla church (with a ship) on one other stone from Östergötland and two from Uppland. DR 62 from Sjelle (with a mask/face) is the only certain attestation of a commemorated *lagsmaðr*, a comrade in an organisation of which it is not conclusive whether it had a military or mercantile nature.³³⁴ These two denominations specify the trade of the commemorated man, but in these inscriptions their main function is to identify the relationship between the people mentioned on the stone. This is why, as most instances of *bóndi*, they cannot be regarded an optional element.

The epithets *landmaðr*, *þegn* and *drengr* do not primarily indicate the

³³³ *Wær* occurs in eight Danish runestone inscriptions and *verr* seven times in Södermanland, Västergötland, Östergötland, Uppland together.

³³⁴ DR, 679.

relationship between the commemorated and the commissioner(s) of the monument, but are optional elements that signify social roles.

In runestone inscriptions, *þegn* implies a wealthy landowner or magnate.³³⁵ Runestones that commemorate a man who was given *þegn* as epithet tend to be especially concerned with ancestry and family and they regularly form a larger monument with other stones, ship settings or mounds, and contain vocabulary that indicates power.³³⁶ The noun *þróttar* occurs combined with *þegn* on runestones in Södermanland, forming the optional epithet ‘*þegn* of strength’.

The meaning of *landmaðr* could range from inhabitant of a region to farmer to landowner, but is in the context of monumental memorial inscriptions likely to be closer to the latter.³³⁷ Because the three monuments on which this word occurs stand out from the average runestone in size and the unusual contents of the textual and decorative carvings, they were more likely raised by powerful, wealthy landowners than by farmers.

Drengr was used in runestone inscriptions as a term of praise for men, who were usually young. *Drengr* was used predominantly for warriors, with strong associations of members of a war-band, but the interpretation that the word was a title denoting a rank or membership of an organised warrior band is not supported by evidence in the runic inscriptions. It could also be used among bands of merchants.³³⁸ These groups could overlap and the distinction between raiding and trading expeditions might not always have been clear-cut. The men commemorated in the inscriptions on Sö 164 in Spånga (with a ship) and Sö 179 Gripsholm are said to have travelled *drengliga* ‘in a *drengr*-like fashion’ and on Nä 29 Apelboda even

³³⁵ Jesch 2001, 226-227.

³³⁶ Jesch 2012, 41-42.

³³⁷ Jesch 2012, 39-40; Düwel 1975, 195-199. See also An English Dictionary of Runic Inscriptions in the Younger Futhark, ‘landmaðr’.

³³⁸ Comp. Sawyer 2000, 103-107; Jesch 2001, 102, 130, 217-225, 229-232, 247. See also ‘*drengr*’ in An English Dictionary of Runic Inscriptions in the Younger Futhark with references.

fulldrengliga.³³⁹ On Sö 113 Kolunda and Sö 130 in Hagstugan, Sparsta ägor, on the other hand, the adverb *drengliga* qualifies the act of putting up of the monument. *Drengir* and *þegnar* occur mostly and in roughly equal amounts in Denmark and Västergötland and less often in other regions (see Table 5 in Chapter 3.3).

Various adjectives were used to qualify such denominations. They are always optional, even when the noun they qualify indicates the (family) relations and is therefore not optional. *Góðr* ‘good, able’ is the most common adjective to qualify most of the denominations, including those that indicate family relations such as ‘son’, ‘father’ and ‘mother’. Because *góðr* is also often used in combination with *þegn* and especially *drengr*, which are by some scholars considered to be titles that indicate rank, it has been suggested that the word indicated a specific social role in its own right.³⁴⁰ The wider applicability of *góðr*, however, including to women, suggests it is better regarded as a general term of approbation.³⁴¹ This adjective can be qualified further by adding the adverbs *mjök* and *harða*, both meaning ‘very’, or the prefix *all-*, ‘most’. Of the eight Sörmlandic runestone *drengir*, only the one on Sö 167 Landshammar (with a mask-like face) is called *góðr*. That the *drengir* on DR 77 Hjermind (with a ship), Vg 32 Kållands-Åsaka (with a standing man) and Vg 181 Frugården (with a leonine quadruped) are also *góðr* is not surprising, on the other hand, since this is the case for most of the *drengir* in areas other than Södermanland (see Table 5).

The adjectives *snjallr* ‘able, valiant, quick, good’ and *nýtr* ‘useful, bold’ that are found on runestones with figural images are only used for fathers and sons. On runestones in general the word *snjallr* occurs in sixteen inscriptions, mainly from Södermanland. Especially fathers and sons are called *snjallr*, but in addition three

³³⁹ On Sö 164 it is specified that the deceased stood *drengliga* in the stern of a ship. This phrase is in verse and on Nä 29 the adverb is part of an alliterative pair.

³⁴⁰ See Düwel 1975, 187-188; Sawyer 2000, 107-111 for examples.

³⁴¹ See also An English Dictionary of Runic Inscriptions in the Younger Futhark, ‘góðr’.

drengir occur and once *sveinar* ‘young men, lads’.³⁴² Three of the inscriptions with *snjallr* refer to travels, battles and gold,³⁴³ and one to the possession of lands.³⁴⁴ U 1163 Drävle, with images of Sigurðr, is the only complete stone with *snjallr* and decoration (since Gs 2 is mostly lost), but many others contain crosses.³⁴⁵ Sö 11 and Gs 2 also contain (or contained) a Christian prayer for the soul. Consequently, this adjective was mainly used on stones with a Christian background. Between six and ten of the inscriptions with *snjallr* contain a versified element³⁴⁶ and the last part of the inscription on one stone is carved in a rune-cross.³⁴⁷

Dýrr ok dróttinfastr, ‘valued and loyal to his lord’ on DR 81 Skern (with a mask/face) and *hønnurst* ‘handiest’ on N 68 Dynna (with the Magi and Nativity/Adoration) are the only occurrences of these epithets for the commemorated person in the runestone corpus.

3.2.2 Other information about the deceased

Three runestones with a figural image state the dwelling place of the deceased (or their family): Sö 312 Södertälje and U 160 Risbyle with quadrupeds and U 508 Gillberga with a face. There are twenty-six runestone inscriptions in total that mention this information and twenty-two monuments tell us about the possession of lands and other wealth (see Table 5). The difference between *eiga* ‘to own’ a place and *bóa* ‘to live, dwell’ in it may not have been very strict. The latter also has a

³⁴² On Sö 88 *snjallr* refers to the makers of the monument rather than to the commemorated person. Of Gs 2, which was possibly decorated with a Sigurðr image, only a fragment survives. The incomplete inscription, supplemented from older records, reads: ‘Illugi and Fullugi and Thorgeirr ... their able ... May God help (his) spirit.’ It is likely that these three men were brothers who had a monument made for their father or brother, since the adjective *snjallan* is in the sg. ac. m. and tends to be used for male relatives, but there are other possibilities, for instance a group of men commemorating their companion or guild-brother as on Ög 54, Ög Mölm1950;230, U 379, U 391.

³⁴³ Sö 163, Sö 166, Sö 320.

³⁴⁴ Sö 145.

³⁴⁵ Sö 11, Sö 70, Sö 144, Sö 145, Sö 147, Sö 163, Sö 166, U 225, and Sö 136 with *hugsnjallr*.

³⁴⁶ Sö 145, Sö 166, Sö Fv1948;289, Sö 320, U 225, Sö 136, as well as possibly Sö 11, Sö 88, Sö 70, U 960. (These fall in Hübler 1996’s category A).

³⁴⁷ Sö 140. This part, previously read as a possible invocation, *siði Þórr*, is more likely to be a prepositional phrase *í Svéþíúðu* (Bianchi 2010, 124-125).

meaning of ‘to have one’s own household’ and when this word collocates with a place-name it is likely that if the commemorated person was not the owner of the farm, estate, etc, they were at least in charge of it.³⁴⁸

Ownership is mentioned more often on stones decorated with figural images than on runestones in general.³⁴⁹ Most of the inscriptions that mention possessions concern lands, estates, or villages.³⁵⁰ Only a few runestones concern other goods or wealth in this context. For instance, the men mentioned on DR 335 Västra Strö (with a mask/face) owned ships as well, be it jointly. Vg 4 in Stora Ek (with a leonine quadruped) states the deceased had *þrjá tigu marka at Eiríki* ‘30 marks (deposit) with Eiríkr’ in addition to the *býja í hamri* ‘three estates in Hamarr-partition’ he owned. U 241 Lingsberg (with a man and a quadruped) also refers to monetary wealth, mentioning payments Ulfríkr had taken in England.

Four or five runestones that are decorated with figural images specify how someone died. The partner of the three men who commissioned DR 66 Århus (with a mask/face) *varð ... dauðr, þá konungar bǫrðusk* (died when kings fought), which is a reference to battle. The father and son that are commemorated by three other sons on U 1161 Altuna (with a variety of images) were both burned, probably a reference to death through arson.³⁵¹ The son on U 691 Söderby (with an armed rider) was *myrðan*, ‘murdered’. Finally, Gs 7 Torsåkers kyrka mentions that Guðmundr drowned (this Guðmundr, however, is not the primary commemorated person). In total, there are almost two hundred runestones with this kind of information in the inscription (see Table 5). This occurs much more often in Södermanland and Västmanland than

³⁴⁸ Jesch 2012, 37.

³⁴⁹ 6 out of 98 compared to 22 out of 3000.

³⁵⁰ Jesch 2012, 36 lists the type of place-names the verb *eiga* collocates with. See also Table 5.

³⁵¹ *Brenna inni* indicates death by arson. There are examples of this in Old Norse sagas and poetry (e.g. *Njáls saga*, Chapter 128-129; *Sigrdrífumál*, stanza 31). The reading of *inni* on U 1161, however, is uncertain so whether the burning of the men was an accident or happened on purpose is not clear (*SRI* 9, 613). *Brenna* or *brinna*, which only occurs on this stone, is not mentioned among causes of death listed in Jesch 2001. It is included by Thedéen 2009, 63, but not explained any further.

in other regions, but the monuments with figural images among them are mainly from areas other than Södermanland and Västmanland.

In addition, 130 monuments mention the place or region where the deceased died (see Table 5). Although the manner of death in these places is not specified, these memorials generally seem to refer to a violent death, most likely during a military or possibly a mercantile undertaking. This is also the case for the few stones that mention that the deceased had died on a ship or that their deaths are otherwise linked to maritime activities. The five of these monuments that are decorated with images follow the general regional distribution of this inscription element (mostly in Uppland, but also in Södermanland and Västergötland). Geirmarr, commemorated on Sö 40 Västerljung (with various images) *er endaðr á Þjústi* 'met his end in Thjústr'. Freysteinn died in Greece (Sö 82 Tumbo, with a leonine quadruped). Guðmarr, who *stóð drengila í stafn skipi* 'stood like a *drengr* in the stern of the ship', now *liggr vestarla of hulinn(?)* 'lies inhumed in the west' (Sö 164 Spånga, with a ship). Vinaman, commemorated by his parents on U 375 Vidbo (with a rider and a bird), died in a place possibly called Bógi. And finally Óláfr, a very good *drengr*, was killed in Estonia (Vg 181 Frugården, with a leonine quadruped). Another small number of memorials informs us the deceased owned a ship or travelled on one, but without this being the cause of death (see Table 5). Of these, Sö 164 Spånga is the only one that is decorated with an image, a ship.

3.2.3 Prayers, protection, and spells

The construction of a road or bridge in connection to a memorial stone is recorded on five monuments that are decorated with figural images. To have a communication structure made adds to the grandness of the memorial, but improving infrastructure

was also considered a good Christian deed.³⁵² Hence the addition that the bridge was made *fyrir sálu* (for the soul of) the commemorated Holmgeirr on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget. Such a reference is made on roughly 5% of all memorial stones, mostly in Uppland, Södermanland and Östergötland, and also relatively often in Småland and Västmanland. Thus, the fact that one of the five decorated stones that mention bridges/pathways is from Norway and one is from Västergötland, does not correspond to this distribution pattern.

Christian prayers for the soul of the deceased are a common addition to the memorial formula. The corpus of runestone inscriptions contains 413 Christian prayers, which is 14% of 3000 (see Table 5). Consequently, such prayers occur slightly less often than average on memorial stones with images (13 out of 111, or 11,7%). More than half of the monuments with images and prayers are from Uppland, whereas of all runestones with prayers just under half are Upplandic stones. Also more than average are from Södermanland.³⁵³

Invocations and curses are much rarer. Of the five runestones with invocations to Þórr, only one is decorated with a figural image (Vg 150 Skattegården, with a bird's head). Three others are from Denmark and one from Södermanland. Curses against monument disturbers occur seven times in the runestone corpus, twice in Västergötland and five times in Denmark. Again one of these stones is decorated with an image (DR 81 Skern, with a mask/face). Unlike the curses against disturbers of the monument, the *Þórr vígi* formulas do not state what should be hallowed – was this the monument or perhaps the deceased? Although these invocations may have functioned in various ways, some sort of power was invoked, which may have involved an element of protection comparable to the apotropaic

³⁵² Williams, He. 1996a, 308.

³⁵³ For Uppland: 8 out of 13 compared to 196 out of 413. For Södermanland: 3 out of 13 compared to 70 out of 413.

Pórr's hammers and masks discussed in Chapter 2.2.3.

Another kind of spell is encountered on Ög 181 Ledberg (with warrior imagery). This *pistill/mistill/kistill* formula occurs on only one other runestone, the undecorated Gørlev stone (DR 239). It is not known what this spell, if that is what it is, was for. Moltke sees this as another type of curse against disturbance of the monument.³⁵⁴ Similar formulas occur in medieval inscriptions on a piece of bone (Vg Fv1992;170), in Borgund stavechurch (N 364), and on two sticks (N A39 and N B391). These seem to indicate the formulas were carved to execute some sort of (magical?) power directed at someone or to make something happen, rather than to protect whatever it was carved on.

The phrase *satt er þat sem sagt var ok sem hugat var þat* 'It is true that which was said and which was intended', which ends the inscription on Sö 175 Langö (with a man holding serpents to his ears), does not occur as such on another runestone and is rather mysterious. It has been suggested that it refers to the intention to create the monument, which was clearly fulfilled.³⁵⁵ The inscriptions on only a few other runestones contain a construction to announce and record a similar speech-act: *Nú er sál sagt svá: hjalpi Guð* 'This is now said for his soul: may God help' on U 947 in Berga, Fälebro, and possibly *Heit inni'k ent* 'I proclaim the promise fulfilled' on Ög 66 Bjälbo.³⁵⁶ A mid-twelfth-century inscription in the Maeshowe chamber cairn on Orkney uses a similar construction: 'That which I say will be true, that wealth was brought away. Wealth was brought away three nights before they broke this mound.' (Br Barnes4).³⁵⁷ A quick survey of Harris' concordance to proverbs in the sagas does not yield a proverb that is similar to the formula in Sö 175. Instead,

³⁵⁴ Moltke 1985, 168, 223.

³⁵⁵ Sö, 139.

³⁵⁶ An alternative reading of the end of this inscription is: *en ek enai* 'and I ended (it)'.

³⁵⁷ Two further inscriptions, one pre- and one post-Viking Age begin with stating something has been said, but the rest of these inscriptions is now lost: 'Ormhildr said this/that ...' on a fragment of horn comb, archaeologically dated to ca 800 (DR MLUHM1983-84;131) and 'It is said that ...' on a flat wooden stake from Medieval Bergen (N B123).

it shows that this phrase is remarkably close to what is often said to introduce a proverb: *Satt er þat, sem mælt er at [...]* / *þat er þó satt at segja, at [...]*, 'It is true, what is said, that [...]' / It is then true to say, that [...].³⁵⁸ An interpretation as a ritualistic or magical expression of the formula in Sö 175 is also possible, especially in the light of the image of the man holding the (runic) snakes to his ears.³⁵⁹

3.2.4 Comments about the monument

Six stones with images contain comments about aspects of the role of the monument. The inscription on N 61 Alstad (with hunting horsemen) refers to the function of the monument by saying that the *myndasteinn [mæt]ir þessi* 'the picture-stone venerates them (the people mentioned on the stone)'. Several other runestone inscriptions mention explicitly that the stone shall stand, sometimes with reference to the immediate surroundings, and a few express the hope that the monument lasts a long time. The damaged last part of the inscription on DR Aud1996;274 Bjerring (with a mask/face) may have stated something similar: *Steinn ... óiltr/viltr(?) ór stað, en(?) ...* (... [May this] stone ... from this place, and(?) ...). This kind of remark about the monument occurs twenty-three times in the total runestone corpus, mainly in Södermanland.

Another way in which runestone inscriptions refer to the role of the monument is by explicitly inviting the reader(s) to interpret (*ráð*), the carvings. *Ráða* phrases are found on ten Viking Age runestones (and one early Christian grave monument), but only one (Vg 119) is decorated with images. In addition, the inscription on Sö 158 Österberga, which is decorated with a ship, contains the imperative *vít!* (know!), which probably functioned in the same way.³⁶⁰ These

³⁵⁸ Harris, *Concordance*.

³⁵⁹ This is discussed further in Chapter 5.4.3.

³⁶⁰ Bianchi 2010, 131; Gustavson and Snædal Brink 1981, 197.

formulas are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.4.

Only two inscriptions in the whole runic corpus call the monument a *merki sírún* and both are decorated with a large hammer (Sö 86 and Sö 111). *Merki* does occur more often and is used as monument-marker in the commemoration formula as well as in carver signatures. Translations of this word vary from *minnesmärke* and ‘memorial’ to ‘landmark’ and it is uncertain to what extent it refers to the stone, the carvings or the monuments as a whole.³⁶¹ The *merki* is called *sírún* only on these two stones, both in the commissioner formula. These two inscriptions are also the only occurrences of *sírún* in the runic corpus. *Sírún* is usually translated as ‘covered in runes’, but the meaning of this word is not completely clear.³⁶² In combination with *merki*, however, *sírún* refers to a specific feature of the monument.

Carver signatures are the most common references to the monument. They generally consist of a name, a verb for ‘carving’ or ‘making’, and mostly also an object such as the ‘runes’ or ‘stone’. These signatures play an important role in the identification of the producers of the monuments. Signatures do not occur on all runestones, in fact the majority is unsigned. Twenty-four of the runestones with images contain carver formulae in their inscriptions.³⁶³ Consequently, they are found more often on monuments with figural images than on runestones in general.³⁶⁴ Carver signatures were carved relatively often in Uppland and Södermanland and more rarely in other regions. The decorated monuments with carver signatures are

³⁶¹ *Samnordisk runtextdatabas; An English Dictionary of Runic Inscriptions in the Younger Futhark*; Peterson 2006b; Källström 2007, 159 and refs there. Magnus Källström gave a paper at ‘The use of carved stone monuments in Scandinavia and the Insular area, First workshop of the International Research Network Runes, Monuments and Memorial Carvings’ (Uppsala 1-2 September 2011), titled ‘The runic Swedish noun *merki* and its denotations in time and space’. In this, he evaluated the meaning of this word on the basis of its linguistic context and the specific features of the monuments that it denotes. It seems that *merki* was used to denote different kinds of monuments during a long period of time and that these monuments must be something more than a stone alone. Alternatively the word might refer to another function of the stone(s), e.g. as a boundary marker, or a road marker.

³⁶² See e.g. Williams, He. 1996a, 301. Magnus Källström has informed me that he is going to do further research on *sírún* (pers. comm. 22 September 2011).

³⁶³ See also Chapter 2.3.

³⁶⁴ 24 of 98 (24.5%) compared to c. 300 of 3000 (10%).

from Denmark (three), Södermanland (six), Uppland (thirteen) and Västergötland (two), so they adhere to the general distribution pattern.³⁶⁵

It is uncertain why carvers signed some of their monuments but not others. Presumably, various factors lie behind the choice to add a signature to an inscription and depending on what words were used in them they might have had (slightly) different functions.³⁶⁶ Although the function(s) of the carver signatures are not quite known, one effect of these formulas is that not only the producer(s) of the memorial, but also the monument itself and the act of its production are emphasised. Depending on their formulation, the carver signatures can also emphasise the memorial function of the monument.³⁶⁷

3.2.5 Features of the inscription

Parts of approximately two hundred runestone inscriptions are versified. Södermanland is the province with the largest share of (partly) versified inscriptions in general (20%), while this is much less common in Västergötland (7,4%).³⁶⁸ Of the inscriptions on decorated stones that are (partly) in verse, indeed three are from Södermanland, but also two from Västergötland and two from Norway. Seven inscriptions on stones with images are (partly) versified through the use of alliteration, metre, or other poetic devices. The word order in the memorial formula on Sö 122 Skresta (with a ship) and Vg 32 Kållands-Åsaka (with a standing man) is restructured to allow for an alliterated verse: *Steinn stendr at Hástein. Reisti sjalfir faðir at son dauðan* (Sö 122) and *Þórðr ok Þórunnr þenna reistu stein eptir Erra, allgóðan dreng* (Vg 32). The alliteration between the two optional elements in the

³⁶⁵ It is not surprising there are the most from Uppland, since most of the runestones are from that area and carver signatures are relatively common there too. They are slightly less common in Södermanland, and even more unusual in Denmark and Västergötland (Saywer 2000, 27; Palm 1992, 155, 162).

³⁶⁶ See Källström 2007 for a discussion of these and other questions.

³⁶⁷ Zilmer 2012, 410-411.

³⁶⁸ Hübler 1996, 165-168.

inscription on Vg 181 – *dreng harða góðan* and *Hann varð drepinn í Eistlondum* – might not have been intentional.³⁶⁹ The memorial formulas on N 61 from Alstad and N 68 from Dynna are both followed by a metrical addition:³⁷⁰

Jórunnr reisti stein þenna eptir <au-aun-> er hana [á]tti, ok

færði af Hringaríki útan ór Ulfeyj[u].

Ok myndasteinn

[mæt]ir þessi.

‘Jórunnr raised this stone in memory of <au-aun-> who owned her (i.e. was her husband), and (she) brought (it) out of Hringaríki, from Ulfey. And the picture-stone venerates them.’ (N 61)³⁷¹

Gunnvǫr gerði brú, Þryðríks dóttir, eptir Ástríði, dóttur sína.

Sú var mæð hǫnnurst

á Haðalandi.

‘Gunnvǫr, Þryðríkr’s daughter, made the bridge in memory of her daughter Ástríðr. She was the handiest maiden in Haðaland.’ (N 68)

Only circa twenty-six inscriptions in the runestone corpus are carved with more than one runic script and eighteen to twenty of these monuments are from Södermanland (See Table 5). The inscriptions on eight memorial stones with images are carved in various runic scripts. Consequently, this feature occurs more often than average on runestones with figural decoration. That they are all from Södermanland

³⁶⁹ Hübler 1996, 90.

³⁷⁰ *N*, 149-150.

³⁷¹ The secondary inscription N 62, by Engli in memory of his son, mentions where the son died. Although the images may have played a role in Engli’s choice to re-use this monument, that is not the kind of relationship between images and inscription that this chapter is looking at.

fits the regional distribution of this feature. The epithet *bróttar þegn* in the inscription on Sö 158 Österberga (with a ship) is carved as bind-runes (*samstavsrúnor*) along the mast of the ship (the sail contains the name of the deceased in normal runes). On Sö 112 Kolunda (with a mask/face), only the last word of the same epithet, *þegn*, is carved in different runes from the rest of the inscription, in this case in coordinate-runes.³⁷² *Bróttar þegnar* on Sö 367 Släbro (with a mask/face), which here refers to the commissioners rather than to the deceased, and *góðr drengr* on Sö 167 Landshammar (with a mask/face) are also carved largely in coordinate-runes. The *samstavsrúnor* along the shaft of a cross on Sö 352 Linga (with a ship) form *bróður sinn*.³⁷³ The relationship between the deceased and the commemorated woman in the inscription on U 313 Harg (with two humanoids with spread arms) is partly coded by the use of bind-runes and the insertion of extra runes in the word *stjúpa* ‘stepdaughter’ and in the last part of the name *Jöfurfastr*. Additionally, Sö 324 Åsby (with the kneeling archer) has two possible coordinate-runes in its non-lexical inscription.³⁷⁴

The inscriptions on Sö 154 Skarpåker (with a ship) and Sö 164 Spånga (with a ship) are both partly versified and partly in different runic scripts.³⁷⁵ An alliterative verse follows on the memorial formula on Sö 164: *Stóð drengila í stafn skipi*. After two words in normal runes, *liggr vestarla*, follow coordinate-runes that when decoded read **u f h u l**, *of huli[nn]*, ‘inhumed’.³⁷⁶ The last part of the inscription on Sö

³⁷² I use ‘coordinate-runes’ as a translation for *koordinatrúnor*, a term employed by Marco Bianchi (2010, 117-118), because this is a more neutral and precise term than ‘secret runes’ or ‘coded runes’. See also there for a brief explanation of how the different systems of coordinate-runes are deciphered.

³⁷³ According to older illustrations, a part of the stone that is now damaged contained four runes, three of which were coordinate-runes. Their reading is uncertain however, as is the reading of the runes that once were carved on the top, Bianchi 2010, 139-140. See also Bianchi 2010, 129-141 for a recent discussion of the inscriptions in more than one runic script from Södermanland.

³⁷⁴ Bianchi 2010, 141.

³⁷⁵ In addition, *bróttar þegn* on Sö 112 alliterates with the name of the commemorated þorkell. Since the other six instances of this formula do not alliterate with another part of the inscription, however, this does not seem to have been an intentional versification on Sö 112 (Hübler 1996, 54). This is not to say, of course, that the alliterative result would not have been appreciated as such.

³⁷⁶ The reading of the staveless runes that follow this is uncertain: **nsartu**, *sar dó*, ‘he who died’ or **n**

154, *jorð skal rifna ok upphiminn* ‘earth shall be riven and High Heaven’, is carved mostly in staveless runes. This is the only memorial on which this phrase occurs, but it is known from other Old Germanic literary sources and is therefore considered ‘poetic language’.³⁷⁷

The use of various runic scripts as well as poetic devices presumes a certain knowledge of these on the part of the audience and these more advanced communication methods seem to be aimed at that specific part of the audience who are ‘in the know’.

3.2.6 Other information

In addition to the *ráða rúnar*-formula the inscription on Vg 119 Sparlösa contains other information that is too individual for comparison with patterns in the corpus of runestone inscriptions:

§A *Eivísl gaf, Eiríks sonr, gaf Alrík[r] ...* §B ... *gaf <rau-> at gjaldi [p]á(?) sa[t] faðir Upsal(?), faðir svát nætr ok dagar. Alríkr <lu--R> ugð[i]t(?) Eivísl §C ... þat Sigmarr heiti mōgr Eiríks. Meginjōru(?) <þuno> ept Eivísl. Ok ráð rúnar þar regi[n]kunu <iu> þar, svát Alríkr <lubu> fáði. §D <uiu-am> §E Gísli gerði eptir Gunnar, bróður, kuml þessi.*

‘§A Eivísl, Eiríkr's son gave, Alríkr gave ... §B ... gave ... as payment. Then(?) the father sat(?) (in) Uppsala(?), the father that nights and days. Alríkr <lu--r> feared(?) not Eivísl. §C ... that Eiríkr's boy is called Sigmarr/celebrated-for-victories. Mighty battle(?) ... in memory of Eivísl. And interpret the runes of divine origin there ... , that Alríkr <lubu> coloured. §D §E Gísli made this monument in memory of Gunnarr, (his) brother.’

bar..., *barð*, ‘stem’ (Bianchi 2010, 134).

³⁷⁷ Hübler 1996, 155; Williams, He. 1996a, 297-298 with references. For this reason, this reading is preferred above the alternative *Jarðsalr hifna ok upphiminn*, ‘the earthly hall of heaven and high heaven’, cf. Hübler 1996, 156; Bianchi 2010, 129-130 with references.

The memorial inscription on side E was added to the memorial in the eleventh century. Such re-use of an older memorial stone happened occasionally, including on N 61 from Alstad. This monument was elaborated with the following inscription fifty to seventy-five years after the initial monument was carved:³⁷⁸ *Engli reisti stein þenna eptir Þórald, son sinn, er varð dauð í Vitaholmi, miðli Ustaholms ok Garða* ‘Engli raised this stone in memory of Þóraldr, his son, who died in Vitaholmr - between Ustaholmr and Garðar (Russia)’ (N 62).

3.3. The occurrence of optional inscription elements and features

It was mentioned in some of the descriptions of the inscription elements and features above that they occur relatively often on runestones with images. In Table 5 the inscription elements and features are listed again and their occurrence on monuments with images is set off against their presence in runestone inscriptions in general.

optional additions	on runestones with images	on runestones in general ³⁷⁹
denominations and adjectives³⁸⁰		
<i>landmaðr góðr</i>	DR 314	DR 314 + 2 x <i>landmaðr beztr</i> (DR 133, Sö 338)
<i>góðr bóndi</i>	U 753, U 999	26 <i>góðr/beztr bóndi</i> (3 in DK, 2 in

³⁷⁸ Spurkland 2005, 103.

³⁷⁹ The total of 3000 runestones is used, see Chapter 2.3. Numbers for denominations and epithets are extracted from Sawyer 2000, 99-102, 106-107, Appendices 6-9, with a control search in the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*. Although I do not always agree with Sawyer’s interpretation of various denominations, her study of the distribution of these words is still relevant. Sawyer does not list all terms, so several numbers are based on a search in *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* only: *nýtr*, *már hǫnnurst*, *kunungr*, ownership, dwelling place, path, role of monument. The sources for other additions are listed in footnotes.

³⁸⁰ Other denominations that occur on runestones with images are *bóndi* without adjective, *verr* (DR Aud1996;274), *lagsmaðr* (DR 62), *gildi* (Ög MÖLM1960;230), *frændi* (U 1052, Vg 113) and *mágr* (Sö 352). Because they are used (primarily) to indicate the relationship between commissioner and deceased they are not regarded as optional elements here, see Section 3.2.1.

		Vg, 7 in Ög, 6 in Sö, 8 in U, 1 in ÖI, 1 in Vs)
<i>góðr</i> father, son, mother	U 79, U 160, U 508, U 692, Sö 311	75 (2 mothers, both in Sö; mostly fathers and sons in U)
<i>snjallr</i>	U 1163 (father)	11 ³⁸¹ + 3 <i>snjallr drengr</i> (Sö) ³⁸² + <i>snjallr sveinn</i> (U 225) + <i>snjallr</i> [...] (Gs 2) + <i>hugsnjallr</i> (quick-thinking) (Sö 136)
<i>nýtr</i>	Nä 34 (son)	3-4 <i>nýtr son</i> ³⁸³ + <i>nýtr drengr</i> (U 166) + <i>nýtr</i> father (Sö 7) + <i>nýtr</i> brother (Sm 157) + 2-3 <i>nýtr bóndi</i> ³⁸⁴ + <i>nýtr maðr</i> (U 56) + <i>nýtr</i> [...] (G 373)
<i>(mjök/harða) góðr þegn</i>	Vg 103, Vg 113, Vg 150	24 (mostly DR and Vg)
<i>bróttar þegn</i>	Sö 112, Sö 158, Sö 367	7 (all in Sö)
<i>(mjök/harða/all-) góðr drengr</i>	DR 77, Sö 167, Vg 32, Vg 181	31 (mostly DR and Vg)
<i>drengila</i>	Sö 164	5 ³⁸⁵
<i>dýrr ok dróttinfastr</i>	DR 81	1 ³⁸⁶
<i>már hǫnnurst</i>	N 68	1
<i>kunungr</i>	DR 42	5 as commissioner or commemorated ³⁸⁷ + 2 'died...when kings fought' (DR 66, Vg 40) + 'was King Haraldr's seaman' (Sm 42) + 'twenty kings' (Ög 136)
ownership	DR 264, DR 280, DR 335, Sö	22 of land/estate/village ³⁸⁸ + 3 of

³⁸¹ U 960, Sö Fv1948;289, Sö 11, Sö 70, U 1163, Sö 88, Sö 140, Sö 144, Sö 145, Sö 147, Sö 166.

³⁸² Sö 320, Sö 155, Sö 163.

³⁸³ Ög 21, Nä 34, Nä 23 (*sun sin, drengr nýtr*), possibly Vg 162 (alternative reading: *harða góðr drengr*).

³⁸⁴ Ög 105, Sö 314, possibly Ög 15.

³⁸⁵ Nä 29 (travelled *fulldrengliga*), Sö 164 (stood *drengliga* in stern of ship), Sö 179 (travelled *drengliga*), Sö 113 and Sö 130 (made the monument *drengliga*).

³⁸⁶ Plus a *dýrr* ship on Sö 198.

³⁸⁷ DR 3, DR 4, DR 41, DR 42, + 'carved for the king' (U 11).

³⁸⁸ ÖI 37, Ög 82, Sö 145, Sö 202, Sö 367, Vg 4 (also of 30 marks deposit), U 114, U 127, U 164, U 165, U 212, U 261, U 331, U 348 (also of a ship's retinue), DR 264, DR 280. (U 127, U 164, U 165, U 212 and U

	367, U 241, Vg 4	a ship ³⁸⁹ + of a bridge (U 316) + of payments (U 241) + 3 uncertain of what ³⁹⁰
dwelling place	Sö 312, U 160, U 508	26 (16 in U, 1 in G, 5 in Ög, 4 in Sö)
(sailed on) a ship	Sö 164, U Fv1946;258?	3 'died on a ship' ³⁹¹ + 5 'owned a ship' or 'travelled on one' was cause of death ³⁹² + 4 'owned a ship' or 'travelled on one' without it being the cause of death ³⁹³
place of death	Sö 40, Sö 82, Sö 164, Sö 352?, U 375, Vg 181	130 (mostly in U, but also many in Sö and in Vg) ³⁹⁴
cause of death	DR 66, Gs 7, U 691, U 1161, Sö 352?	almost 200 how and where someone died ³⁹⁵
had bridge made / path cleared	N 68, Sö 101, Sö 311-312, U Fv1978;226, Vg 4	145 bridge (mostly in U, Sö and Ög, relatively often in Sm, Vs) ³⁹⁶ + 4 path ³⁹⁷
God/Christ/God's mother help soul/spirit / other Christian prayer	DR 96, Öl 19, Sö 154, Sö 190, Sö 312, U 160, U 241, U 629, U 691, U 860, U 920, U 1043, U Fv1978;226	413 ³⁹⁸
invocation to Þórr	Vg 150	6 (4 in DR, 1 in Vg, 1 in Sö) ³⁹⁹
cursing monument-disturbers	DR 81	7 (5 in DR, 2 in Vg) ⁴⁰⁰
other kind of spell	Ög 181, Sö 175	2 <i>pistill/mistill/kistill</i> (DR 239, Ög

261 were erected by Jarlabanki.)

³⁸⁹ DR 68, DR 335, U 778.

³⁹⁰ U 337, U 414, U 973.

³⁹¹ Sö 49, U 214, U 258.

³⁹² DR 68, Sö 171, Sö Fv1948;291, U 439, U 778.

³⁹³ Sö 164, Sö 198, U 654, U 1016 (Jesch 2001, 120-130). Ships are also mentioned as possessions.

³⁹⁴ Jesch 2001, 57-60.

³⁹⁵ Thedéen 2009, 62-63. This also includes the place of death. It should be noted that Gs 7, which mentions Guðmundr drowned, is not listed by Thedéen. The cause of death is mentioned much more often in Sö (15%) and Vs (18.1%) than in other regions, e.g. DR (4.3%) and U (6.1%).

³⁹⁶ Sawyer 2000, 135.

³⁹⁷ Sö 311-312, Sö 101, U 149 (2 of which also mention a bridge).

³⁹⁸ Olsen 2004.

³⁹⁹ Sawyer 2000, 128.

⁴⁰⁰ Sawyer 2000, 128.

		181). The phrase on Sö 175 is unique on runestones.
mention of (future) role of monument	DR Aud1996;274, N 61 (<i>her (mun) standa steinn</i>), Vg 119 (<i>ráð</i>), Sö 158 (<i>vit!</i>) 2 <i>merki sírún</i> : Sö 86, Sö 111 ⁴⁰¹	42: 23 <i>her (mun) standa steinn</i> (8 in Sö and U, 2 in DR, 1 in Vs and ÖI) ⁴⁰² + 8 'the monument/runes will stand/live long/for ever' ⁴⁰³ + 10 'ráð-formula' (7 in U, 1 in Sö, Vg and ÖI)
carver formula	DR 26, DR 264, DR Aud1996;274, Sö 40, Sö 82, Sö 122, Sö 190, Sö 270, Sö 312, U 79, U 171, U 598, U 599, U 629, U 678, U 692, U 824, U 969, U 1034, U 1052, U 1161, U Fv1946;258, Vg 119, Vg 181	c. 300 ⁴⁰⁴
other information	Vg 119	too individual to compare
versification	Sö 122, Sö 154, Sö 164, Vg 32, Vg 181, N 61, N 68	roughly 200 ⁴⁰⁵ (much more often in Sö than in other regions, incl. in U) ⁴⁰⁶
variety in runic script	Sö 112, Sö 154, Sö 158, Sö 164, Sö 167, Sö 367, Sö 352, U 313 ⁴⁰⁷	roughly 26 (of which 18 +2? in Sö) ⁴⁰⁸

Table 5. Optional inscription elements and features on runestones with images and on runestones in general

Compared to their presence on memorial stones in general, optional elements and features occur more often in inscriptions on runestones that are decorated with

⁴⁰¹ Two other stones decorated with images are called 'just' *merki*: U Fv1946;258 and Vs 17.

⁴⁰² Jesch 1998, 472n46-47.

⁴⁰³ Sm 16, U 114, U 323, DR 40, DR 119, DR 212, DR 324, G 203.

⁴⁰⁴ Källström 2007, 299.

⁴⁰⁵ Wulf 2003, 969. Comp. Hübler 1996, 165-166, who has a more restricted list of 119 Swedish examples, with Wulf 1998's argument for a more inclusive approach. See also Nauman 1994.

⁴⁰⁶ Hübler 1996, 165-168.

⁴⁰⁷ Sö 324 has two possible coordinate-runes (*kvistrunor*) in its non-lexical inscription (Bianchi 2010, 141).

⁴⁰⁸ Bianchi 2010, 114-118, 141-152.

images. Rune Palm has calculated that roughly every other inscription in the main runestone areas of his study contains an optional element, while in some other areas of Sweden this percentage is higher.⁴⁰⁹ The averages of all areas taken together comes to 59%. Sixty-seven of the ninety-eight monuments with figural images and text contain optional elements or features in the inscription, which is 68%. This average is 9% higher than that of runestones in general with optional elements in the inscription.⁴¹⁰ Sixty-one memorial stones decorated with images are from Palm's 'main runestone areas'. When only these areas are compared, the discrepancy between the proportion of optional inscription elements on monuments with images (and text) and that of runestones in general is even higher: two thirds compared to a half.⁴¹¹

Especially ownership is mentioned more often on stones with figural decoration than on runestones in general.⁴¹² Also six stones with images contain comments about aspects of the role of the monument. This is significantly more often than in the whole runestone corpus. This number includes the only two inscriptions in the runestone corpus that call the monument a *merki sírún*, which are both decorated with a large hammer (Sö 86 and Sö 111). Over a fifth of the twenty-six runestones with inscriptions in various runic scripts are decorated with figural images. Consequently, this feature occurs also more often than average on monuments with figural decoration and text. Finally, carver signatures are also found more often than average on monuments that combine figural images and text.

⁴⁰⁹ Palm 1992, 154-167. The main areas are DK, NO, Sm, Vg, Ög, Sö, U. The other regions are ÖI, G, Nä, Vs, Gs, Hs, M.

⁴¹⁰ Palm does not include spells, invitations addressed to the reader to decipher (parts of) the monument, the use of more than one runic script and versification of (parts of) the inscription as optional elements. My study does include these inscription elements and features. Since they occur on stones that also contain optional inscription elements that are counted by Palm, except for Ög 181 and Sö 175, this has no effect on the comparison to Palm's material.

⁴¹¹ Conversely, it seems the other way round for the areas in which the inscriptions generally contain a high number of additions (Palm's 'other regions', see note 87 above). Of the six stones decorated with images from these regions, half contain optional inscription elements. This is only a very small number of stones, however, so it is just an observation.

⁴¹² See Section 3.2.2.

Although these elements and features occur more often than general, their regional distribution on runestones with images matches the distribution of runestones with these inscription elements in general (see Table 5).

The other inscription elements and features of which more substantial numbers are found in the runestone corpus occur roughly equally often on runestones with figural images as on runestones in general, or a little less often. This is the case for inscriptions that are partly versified, that specify how or where someone died. References to the construction of bridges and paths are made roughly as often as average, while Christian prayers occur slightly less often than average on stones with images.

The regional distribution of the monuments with images and these inscription elements and features often deviates from the average distribution of monuments with such inscriptions. There are also several discrepancies between the regional distribution of memorials with images and certain denominations and adjectives in the inscription and that of runestones in general that contain these words. *Bóndi* is slightly underrepresented in Uppland and *þegn* occurs mostly in Denmark and Västergötland, but they are overrepresented on runestones with images in Södermanland in the phrase *þróttar þegn*.⁴¹³

Such a comparison cannot be made for inscription elements that occur only a few times in the runestone corpus in general (even if this is relatively often on stones with images), such as certain denominations as well as invocations and curses. These inscription elements do, however, contribute to the higher presence of optional inscription elements on runestones with images compared to on runestones in general.

⁴¹³ See Section 3.2.1 and Table 5.

3.3.1 Combinations of prayers, carver signatures, and other optional inscription elements

It is unusual for runestone inscriptions to contain a prayer as well as another optional element.⁴¹⁴ On five of the memorial stones with figural images, however, the Christian prayer is the only addition to the standard memorial formula, while they are combined with other optional inscription elements or features on eight monuments.⁴¹⁵ On two of these the other addition is a carver signature and the inscription on Sö 312 Södertälje combines these two common optional elements with the more uncommon additional information about the commissioning of a bridge or path and mentioning a dwelling place. It seems that prayers on stones with figural images are more often than average combined with other optional information in the inscription than on runestones in general.

In eight inscriptions on monuments with figural images, a carver signature is the only optional inscription element, while twelve inscriptions contain a carver signature combined with more unusual additional elements or features.⁴¹⁶ While it is quite common for carver signatures to be combined with uncommon optional elements on monuments in Södermanland and Uppland,⁴¹⁷ there are more runestones with images that contain these textual elements from Uppland than from Södermanland. Almost all the monuments with images that have signatures as the only addition to the memorial formula are from Uppland, on the other hand, which fits the general distribution.

In other words, five of the fifty-one monuments with figural images that have

⁴¹⁴ Palm 1992, 166-167.

⁴¹⁵ Prayers as only addition: DR 96, Öl 19, U 860, U 920, U 1043. Prayers and uncommon elements/features: Sö 153, Sö 312, U 160, U 421, U 691, U Fv1978;226. Prayers and carver signatures: Sö 190, U 629.

⁴¹⁶ Only carver signatures: Sö 270, U 171, U 598, U 678, U 824, U 969, U 1034, U 1052. Carver signatures and uncommon elements/features: DR 264, DR Aud1996;274, Sö 40, Sö 82, Sö 122, Sö 312, U 79, U 692, U 1161, U Fv1946;258, Vg 119, Vg 181.

⁴¹⁷ Palm 1992, 167-168.

an inscription with more unusual additional elements or features, also contain prayer and twelve a carver signature. Both of these common optional inscription elements, but especially prayers, are more often combined with other optional inscription elements on monuments with figural images than on runestones in general. This could be a result of the fact that on average the inscriptions on monuments with such decoration contain more additional elements than runestone inscriptions in general.⁴¹⁸ The following section explores to what extent there is a correlation between particular images and inscription elements and features.

3.4. Inscriptions per image type

Additional elements or features of the inscription appear more often on memorials with figural images and several discrepancies between the occurrence of certain inscription elements on memorials that are decorated with figural images and on runestones in general have been identified above. Whether these variations are in any way connected to the kind of image on the stone is queried in this section. For this purpose, certain monuments have to be left out of consideration. Only stones with single images or scenes can be used and these images have to belong to a group with a more or less homogeneous character. As a result, not all image types are part of this survey.

First of all, the serpentine quadrupeds are excluded, because they are only included in the corpus material when they are combined with other figural images.⁴¹⁹ Consequently, they are never the only image on the monuments in the corpus of this thesis. Canine quadrupeds are also never depicted alone on runestones.⁴²⁰ There are

⁴¹⁸ See Section 3.3.

⁴¹⁹ See Chapter 2.2.2.

⁴²⁰ They accompany hunters on N 61 and U 855 and warriors on Ög 181 and Vg 119. Small curled-up (canine) animals are combined with other images, mainly other types of quadrupeds on U 860, U 904 and the pairstones U 240-U 241. Among these, U 240-U 241 and U 860, both in memory of a *bóndi*, had a female co-commissioner and a prayer for the soul in the inscription. U 241 is also decorated with an

only two monuments with cervine quadrupeds as the only images.⁴²¹ Likewise just two memorials are decorated with solely an image of a horse.⁴²² Another image group that cannot be studied in this way are the human figures that are surrounded by snakes, because the only stone on which such an image is the only decoration has no inscription (Sö 322). Furthermore, the twenty-one images of ‘other human figures’ are no homogeneous group. Consequently, they cannot be studied for a connection between image and inscription either. Of the images in this group, only the Sigurðr imagery on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget, U 1163 Drävle, and Gs 19 Ockelbo is included in the following survey.⁴²³ The ‘other human figures’ that are the only image on the stone are all different and the accompanying inscriptions do not show any common traits.⁴²⁴ This is also the case for Gs 19 Ockelbo, U 1161 Altuna, Vg 119 Sparlösa, on which a large number of images of different kinds are depicted.⁴²⁵

The types of images that occur often enough as single image or scene on the stone and that form a sufficiently homogeneous group are the following:

- images of weapons, warriors, and the hero Sigurðr
- hunting scenes: combinations of horsemen, dogs, birds and prey
- various types of birds
- quadrupeds, especially lupine, leonine, and non-specific

image of a human figure embedded in snakes and mentions two payments that were taken in England by the deceased.

⁴²¹ Sö 304, with only the memorial formula, and DR 264. The inscription on the latter is incomplete, but even so it contains a carver signature and additional information about ownership of Haugbýr.

⁴²² Sö 222 and Sö 226, both with only the basic memorial formula.

⁴²³ The inscription on U 1175 is non-runic and the one on Sö 327 non-lexical. The images of Sigurðr on Gs 19 are combined with images of other figures.

⁴²⁴ Sö 324 has a non-lexical inscription and DR 290 has no inscription. N 228 was raised by a man to commemorate his brother and Vg 56 by a man in memory of his father. Vg 32 was raised by a man and a woman in memory of an *allgóðr drengr*. The inscription on U 1043, by three men to commemorate their father, ends with a prayer.

⁴²⁵ The inscription on Gs 19 refers to multiple stone monuments that were raised by a father for his son, whose mother is also named. (The carvings on this stone were badly worn in places at the time of the nineteenth-century photographs and drawings and even though several words can be supplemented from other records, the latter part of the inscription cannot be interpreted convincingly. See Gs, 200-204 for an overview of attempts.) The inscription on U 1161 Altuna mentions that *báðir feðrgaR brunnu* ‘both father and son(s) were burned (inside)’.

- faces/masks
- ships
- humanoid figures with spread arms and holding snakes
- and hammers

The monuments with these images can be used to compare the contents of the inscriptions that they are combined with.

3.4.1 Weapons, warriors, and heroes

Two stones have images of weapons as the only decoration. The inscription on Vg 124 Ryda, which is shaped as a sword, consists of only a simple memorial formula by a man in memory of his father. U 999 Åkerby, with an image of a spearhead, was raised by two men to commemorate their father, the *góðr bóndi* of Fun(n)ir.

Weapons are also depicted as an attribute in the images of armed men.

Almost all inscriptions on these stones contain a variety of additional elements. Only the inscription on DR 282 Hunnestad consists of the memorial formula alone. This monument was raised by two men after two other men, who were probably all brothers. U 678 Skokloster, raised by five men to commemorate their father, contains a carver signature by Fótr. U 691 Söderby, commissioned by a man in memory of his *myrðan* 'murdered' son, adds a prayer to Christ to 'help his spirit' (*hjalpi anda hans*). The inscription on Sö 190 Ytterenhörna ends with a similar prayer to God and a carver signature by Þorbjörn. This memorial was commissioned by three men and their uncle in memory of their father and brother and the decoration on this stone also includes a serpentine quadruped. DR 96 Ålum, decorated with the standard-bearing horseman, was raised by a father to commemorate his son. The inscription ends also in a prayer: *Guð hjalpi hans sálu vel* 'May God well help his soul'.

Unlike these monuments, Ög 181 Ledberg, with warrior imagery, was commissioned by a woman together with a man to commemorate his father. This inscription concludes with the rare *pistill/mistill/kistill*-formula. The elaborate warrior imagery on this memorial consists of armed men with dogs and a ship on the front and a wolf biting one of the collapsing unarmed warriors on the back of the stone (see Chapter 2.2.3.a.i for a more detailed interpretation of these images).

Three memorials that are decorated only with images from the stories about the legendary Sigurðr have a lexical inscription. The inscriptions on the three stones are all different, but they have female involvement in common. Sö 101 Ramsundsberget tells us Sigríðr had the accompanying bridge made for the soul of her *bóndi*. U 1163 Drävle was commissioned by four siblings for their *snjallr* father. One of these commissioners might have been female, depending on the reading of their name as ÆringæiR or Æringærðr.⁴²⁶ Approximately a quarter of the inscription on Gs 9 Årsunda is missing and not all the names can be recognised with certainty, but it seems a man had the monument commissioned to commemorate a group of four or five people, including his brother and mother.⁴²⁷

Certainly two (and maybe also Gs 9) of the inscribed stones decorated with images of weapons and armed men contain no textual additions to the memorial formula. The most common optional elements in the rest of the inscriptions in this group are carver signatures and prayers for the soul. The denomination *bóndi* and epithet *góðr* also occur. One monument mentions bridge-building and one other contains the more uncommon adjective *snjallr*, both are decorated with Sigurðr imagery. Practically unique additions are found in the inscriptions on Ög 181 Ledberg and U 691 Söderby. The number of women mentioned on the monuments decorated

⁴²⁶ Larsson 2002, 71-72.

⁴²⁷ The runic inscription is damaged on the right edge and upper corner and the heavily worn runes on the surviving part of the stone are where possible supplemented from older drawings in the transcription (Gs, 82).

with Sigurðr is high, also when compared to the other memorials decorated with armed men in a heroic (warrior) context, of which only Ög 181 involved a woman.

3.4.2 Combinations of horsemen, mostly unarmed, birds, dogs, and prey

Of the stones in Sweden that are decorated with unarmed horsemen, only U 448 Harg, which is also decorated with a bird, does not contain additional elements in the inscription. This stone was raised by two men to commemorate their father.

The riders and birds on U 599 Hanunda and U 375 Vidbo relate to each other visually in a way that seems to indicate they are involved in a hunting activity. The first was raised by three men to commemorate their father and contains a carver signature by Porfastr. Only the inscription on U 375 includes more exclusive information. It was commissioned by a man and a woman in memory of their son, who died in a place possibly called Bógi.

The image of a rider with a spear and dogs on U 855 Böksta is part of a more elaborate hunting scene, which includes an image that possibly represents the hunting god Ullr. The prey is also depicted: a large animal with antlers that is attacked by a hunting bird. This stone was raised in memory of Eist by his parents and two brothers.⁴²⁸ The inscription contains no optional elements or features. As U 855, N 61 Alstad is decorated with hunting imagery and commissioned by a woman. Both are also decorated with a second larger bird set apart from the hunting scenes. These are discussed further in Section 3.4.3. The unarmed riders on N 68 Dynna are not part of a hunting scene, but represent the three Magi as part of a combined Nativity-Adoration scene. This monument is commissioned by a woman, as is N 61 Alstad. Both these stones have unusual inscriptions, of which the last parts are metrical and make use of alliteration. The inscription on N 68 also includes a

⁴²⁸ See Chapter 2.3 for a discussion of Arnfastr as carver.

hyperbole.⁴²⁹

The combination of birds and quadrupeds on three monuments could also be seen as a type of hunting scene. The hunters themselves are not depicted, though, and none of the birds actually attacks the animal as for instance on U 855 Böksta.⁴³⁰ Of these stones, U 590 Burvik, by a man in memory of his stepfather and two other men, has no additional information in the inscription. U 753 Litslena was raised by a woman for her *góðr bóndi* and two other men. U 746 Hårby, finally, raised by a father to commemorate his son, contains a carver signature.

Of the four stones with hunters and the additional three with possible hunting imagery, two of each group contain inscriptions with optional elements. These additions are all of a different nature, except for the carver signatures. Three stones with a hunting image and one with possible hunting imagery are (co-)commissioned by women.⁴³¹

3.4.3 Birds

The bird on U 920 Broholm most likely represents a raven.⁴³² This is the only stone with such a bird as the only decoration. It was raised by an unidentified commissioner together with a man in memory of two men and their father. The inscription ends with *Guð hjalpi sálu þei[ra]* ‘May God help their souls’. The large bird on the side of U 692 Våppeby may represent an eagle. A serpentine quadruped decorates the front of this monument. The inscription on this stone, commissioned by two sons in memory of their *góðr* father, ends with a carver signature.

Vg 150 Skattegården and Vg 103 Håle ödekyrkogård are decorated with predatory birds’ heads, possibly also eagles. The first was commissioned by a woman

⁴²⁹ See Section 3.2.5.

⁴³⁰ See also Chapter 2.2.3.a.i.

⁴³¹ The images of riders and various animals on Br Olsen;184 (Andreas (II), MM 131) on the Isle of Man also represent a hunting scene. The Old Norse runic inscription tells us this stone commemorates a woman.

⁴³² See Chapter 2.2.3.c for more detailed discussion of the birds on runestones.

in memory of her *bóndi* and the inscription ends with the invocation *þórr vígi*. The commemorated man is called a *mjök góðr þegn*. The father who is commemorated by his two sons on Vg 103 is also given the denomination *góðr þegn*. Where Vg 150 mentions *þórr*, however, the decoration on Vg 103 includes a cross.

As mentioned above, the hunting images on U 855 Böksta and N 61 Alstad, both (co-)commissioned by women, are combined with a larger bird that is depicted above the hunting imagery (which includes smaller hunting birds). The large birds have pronounced hooked beaks and claws and their position and size (and on N 61 also the view-point) sets them apart from the other images. An interpretation of these birds as beasts of battle symbol was suggested in Chapter 2.2.3.c.

Two other monuments are decorated with birds as the only image. These birds are very different and the inscriptions on these stones share no significant contents or features.⁴³³

3.4.4 Quadrupeds

Three monuments are carved with a lupine animal as the only decoration. Sm 133 Sunneränga only gives the basic information that it was raised by a man for his son. The inscription on U Fv1978;226 Ösby is damaged, but the stone was set up to commemorate two men. It also mentions that a bridge was made in their memory and the inscription seems to have included a Christian prayer for the soul. The two inscriptions on the rock wall in Södertälje, numbered Sö 311 and Sö 312, are carved next to a depiction of a lupine quadruped, Sö 313. They inform us that Holmfastr had the path cleared in memory of his *góðr* mother as well as the path cleared and the bridge made in memory of his father, who lived in Nesbýr. Sö 312 ends with a prayer

⁴³³ The bird on Sö 270 sits on a cross and seems to be dove or a cock. This stone was raised by a man to commemorate his son and, according to the signature, cut by Hálfðan. U 171, with two birds attacking(?) each other, was commissioned by a man in memory of his son and himself. This stone is signed by Fasti. (The inscription band on U 1071, with a bird on top, contains only a **m**-rune.)

for the father's soul and is signed by Eysteinn.

Five inscribed stones are decorated with a single image of an animal with (fantastic) leonine features. Only the inscription on N 84 Vang, which was raised by the sons of Gasi in memory of their nephew, consists of the basic formula. The inscriptions on the other stones with such animals give additional information. DR 280 Gusnava in Skårby was raised by two men to commemorate their brother, who is said to have owned Guðissnapi. Þorstæin, in whose memory Vg 4 Stora Ek was raised by his father, together with the stone bridge that is mentioned in the inscription, *átti þrjá býja í hamri ok þrjá tigu marka at Eiríki* 'owned three estates in Hamarr partition and thirty marks (deposit) with Eiríkr'. The inscriptions on Sö 82 Tumbo and Vg 181 Frugården contain a carver signature and both mention the place the commemorated men died. The man commemorated by his brother on Sö 82 died in Greece and the *harða góðr drengr* who is commemorated by his father on Vg 181 was killed in Estonia. That last addition is versified. There were no women involved in the establishment of these monuments.⁴³⁴

Eight runestones with an inscription are decorated with images of non-specific quadrupeds only.⁴³⁵ Much of the inscription on Sö 301 Ågesta bro is missing since the edges of the stone are badly damaged. Only a male name in the place of the commissioners and the words for 'stone' and 'father' can be read. The relations between the four men mentioned on Sö 237 Fors are not very clearly formulated. It seems the stone was commissioned by two men to commemorate the father of one of them and the son of either of them. U 969 Bolsta was also raised by a man in

⁴³⁴ DR 285 is decorated with a similar animal, but has no inscription. Two other stones with such animals, both from Denmark, do have women mentioned in the inscription, but they also contain other images. DR 271 is also decorated with a ship and was co-commissioned by Asa to commemorate Ulf. DR 42 was raised by King Haraldr to commemorate his father and mother, and also himself by adding *sá Haraldr er sér vann Danmørk alla ok Norveg ok dani gerði kristna* (Haraldr who won for himself all of Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christian). This monument is decorated with a figure of Christ as well as with a leonine quadruped.

⁴³⁵ The stones with non-specific quadrupeds combined with birds (U 590, U 753 and U 746) are discussed above. Vg 119 and Gs 19 also contain such quadrupeds among their many images.

memory of his father and it contains a carver signature by Ásmundr. The inscription on U 598 Borggärde is incomplete. At least two male commissioners are identified who had the monument made in memory of their brothers. A carver, possibly named Auðmundr, is mentioned as well. Of the father who is commemorated by his three sons on U 35 Svartsjö it is stated he was the *bóndi* of Ernfríðr. The wife and the mother of the man who is commemorated by his two sons on U 79 Skesta are named and he is called a *góðr* son. The carver Arnfastr is also identified. U 193 Svista is raised by Gunna, together with two men, in memory of Gunna's *bóndi*. The men's relationship with the commemorated Sigfastr is not specified. Gunna is either mentioned twice, or the first Gunna is a daughter by the same name, i.e. named after her mother.⁴³⁶ The most elaborate inscription in this group is on U 160 Risbyle, raised by three men to commemorate their *góðr* father. It is stated that he lived in Skolhamarr and the inscription ends with an elaborate prayer for his soul: *Guð hjalpi hans ond ok sálu ok Guðs móðir, lé honum ljós ok paradís* 'May God and God's mother help his spirit and soul; grant him light and paradise'.

Summarising, there are two inscriptions in the group with non-specific quadrupeds without additions. The optional elements on the other stones with such quadrupeds as the only decoration are generally restricted to carver signatures, *bóndi* and *góðr*, except for U 160 Risbyle, which gives more information in addition to an elaborate prayer. One of these monuments was commissioned by a woman, but almost half of the stones with such images (as the only decoration) mention women as relatives. The five monuments with leonine quadrupeds as the only image, on the other hand, do not mention women at all, but most of them mention possession of land or monetary wealth or the place where the commemorated man died. Two of the three inscriptions on monuments with lupine quadrupeds as only figural

⁴³⁶ This is the same on Ög 224 except it is there mentioned that the commemorated man is the father of (some of) the commissioners as well as the *bóndi* of the woman.

decoration mention the construction of a bridge or path and a Christian prayer.

3.4.5 Faces/Masks

The inscriptions on U 1034 Tensta kyrka, by three men to commemorate their father, and on U 824 Holms kyrka, which was co-commissioned by a woman and in memory of a woman too, contain only carver signatures as optional information. All the other stones with mask-like and naturalistic faces contain inscriptions with denominations, more elaborate information, or other optional phrases or features. Some of the inscriptions contain even more than one such element.

Sö 167 Landshammar was raised by a man in memory of his son, who is called a *góðr drengr*. The father who is commemorated by his sons on Sö 112 Kolunda is called a *þróttar þegn*. Both epithets are carved in a different runic script than the rest of the inscriptions: *drengr góðan* on Sö 167 is carved largely in coordinate-runes and *þegn* on Sö 112 is also carved in coordinate-runes while *þróttar* is carved in normal runes as the rest of the inscription. Sö 367 Släbro was commissioned by two men in memory of their father and by a woman for her *bóndi*. It is added that Freysteinn and Hrólfur, the latter of whom is the commemorated man, were *þróttar þegnar* and that they owned the estate of Sleðabrú. This *þróttar þegn*-formula is again carved in coordinate-runes.

The main commissioners of U 508 Gillberga are two women, who had the stone raised in memory of their *góðr* father. A male co-commissioner is only mentioned later in the inscription. The inscription also mentioned where these people lived, but the name of the place is damaged. DR 335 Västra Strö was raised by a man in memory for another man, who he owned a ship with. In addition to the image of a mask-like face, this stone also contains carving traces of possibly two

human figures.

DR 66 Århus contains a textual reference to a battle; it was commissioned by four men in memory of their partner, who died *þa kunungar bǫrðusk* ‘when kings fought’. The inscription on DR 81 Skern, by Sasgerðr for the *dýrr ok dróttinfastr* (valued and loyal to his lord) Óðinkárr, ends with the curse *Síði sá maðr er þessi kuml of brjóti* ‘A sorcerer (be) the man who breaks this monument!’.

The last part of the inscription on DR 62 Sjelle is damaged, but it seems to have contained information about the *lagsmaðr* (comrade) this monument was raised in memory of, possibly where he died.⁴³⁷ Several parts of the inscription on DR Aud1996;274 Bjerring, which was raised by a woman in memory of her *verr* (husband) are missing and others are badly worn. It seems, however, that in addition to the memorial formula and carver signature the inscriptions contained information about the commemorated man’s lineage and dwelling place as well as possibly an expression about the future role of the memorial stone.

The two inscriptions on Upplandic runestones with faces/masks as the only decoration contain only a carver signature as optional element. The other nine inscriptions all contain denominations and adjectives or other information about the deceased. Additionally, the epithets *góðr drengr* and *þróttar þegn* on the three Sörmlandic monuments with mask-like faces are carved (partly) in a different runic script than the rest of the inscriptions. This connection is important and will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.5. With five out of nine of these monuments being (co-) commissioned by women, the female involvement in this group is quite high.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁷ DR, 99.

⁴³⁸ Nâ 34 is decorated with a face and a serpentine quadruped. This monument was also commissioned by a woman, to commemorate her *nýtr son*. On DR 314 and Sö 86, the faces are combined with wolves and a hammer respectively. [DR] DK MJy 69, Sö 95 and DR 286 are also decorated with faces/masks (and the latter also with a lupine quadruped), but have no inscription. There is a face among the many images on Vg 119 as well.

3.4.6 Ships

There were fewer women involved in the establishment of memorials that are decorated with images of ships. Also fewer uncommon optional inscription elements are found on these monuments.

Five simple inscriptions in this group consist of a memorial formula only: DR 328 Holmby by a son after his father, Vg 51 by a father after his son, DR EM85;523B Farsø kirke by two men after their brother and Ög MÖLM1960;230 Törnevalla kyrka by a man after his *gildi* (guild-brother). Ög 224 Stratomta was commissioned by one woman, Ástríðr, and two men to commemorate their father and by a woman of the same name as the first for her *bóndi*.⁴³⁹ In addition, the *merki* Vs 17 Råby was raised by Holmsteinn in memory of his wife and himself.⁴⁴⁰

Two inscriptions have carver signatures as the only addition to the memorial formula. A double carver signature, by Ingólfr and Þjálfi, concludes the inscription on U 1052 Råby, which was commissioned by four men in memory of their *frændi* (kinsman). The memorial formula on Sö 122 Skresta, raised by a father to commemorate his son, is versified. The word order in the formula is slightly different from usual to accommodate for the alliteration.⁴⁴¹ The inscription ends with a carver signature by Ásgautr.

The inscriptions on six other runestones in this group contain more uncommon optional elements and features. The man commemorated by his brother on DR 77 Hjermind is called a *harða góðr drengr* and the father commemorated by

⁴³⁹ Both Ástríðrs could be the same woman, the wife of the commemorated Hálfðan and possibly the mother of his two sons, who are the two male co-commissioners. It could also be that only the second Ástríðr is Hálfðan's wife and that the first is his daughter, maybe named after her mother. The first time the name is spelled **estriþ** and the second time **astriþ**. It is unusual, however, that a daughter would be named first, before her brothers.

⁴⁴⁰ There are thirty-three such self-commemorative monuments, which almost all occur in the Swedish Mälars region (Sawyer 2000, 136).

⁴⁴¹ Cf. Hübler 1996, 76.

his two sons on Sö 158 Österberga is given the epithet *þróttar þegn*, carved in bind-runes like the corresponding phrases on the Sörmlandic mask-stones. This inscription ends with **uit**, carved in alternating long- and short-twig runes. This word is probably an imperative of *vita* (to know), used to invite or stimulate the reader to decipher the monument in the same way as the *ráða*-formulas (see also Chapter 4.4).⁴⁴² The inscription on Sö 154 Skarpåker ends with a rare poetic phrase that is carved mostly in staveless runes: *jörð skal rifna ok upphiminn* ‘earth shall be riven and High Heaven’. It is said of the father that is commemorated by his two sons on Sö 164 Spånga that he *stóð drengila í stafn skipi, liggr vestarla of hulinn(?)*, ‘stood *drengila* in the stern of the ship [and] (now) lies inhumed in the west’. This addition is versified and the last part of it is also carved in coordinate-runes and one staveless rune.⁴⁴³ There is clearly a correspondence with Sö 158 and the Sörmlandic mask-stones with these inscription elements/features, which will be discussed in Section 3.5. It seems that Sö 352 Linga, commissioned by a man and a woman in memory of Porfastr, who was his *mágr* (kinsman-by-marriage) and her brother, also gave information about how he died. Unfortunately the inscription is damaged, with four coordinate-runes missing. These runes would have come after the part of the memorial formula in bind-runes.

3.4.7 Hammers

The runestones that are decorated only with Þórr’s hammers have inscriptions with unusual elements, except for DR 26 Læborg. This monument was carved in memory of a woman. Vg 113 Lärkegapet, Töfta was raised by a man in memory of (his) *frændi*, a *harða góðr þegn*. Sö 111 Stenkvista, raised by three sons after their father, is called a *merki sírún*. Sö 86 is also called a *merki sírún*. This monument is decorated with a

⁴⁴² Bianchi 2010, 130-131.

⁴⁴³ See Hübler 1996, 110 and Bianchi 2010, 133-134 with references for interpretation difficulties.

face over the hammer and it was commissioned by two sons in memory of their father.

3.4.8 Human figures with spread arms and/or holding snakes

The inscription on two stones with figures with spread arms and on two with figures holding snakes contain optional elements, but the additions are all different. Also two monuments of both groups mention women.

The inscription on U 313 Harg, with a depiction of two figures standing with spread arms, contains only the memorial formula, but it is one of the few stones that commemorates a woman. It was commissioned by a man in memory of his stepdaughter and by her mother too.⁴⁴⁴ The inscription contains some extra runes and bind-runes in the name of the commemorated Jǫfurfastr and in the word *stjúpa* ‘stepdaughter’. The inscriptions on the other two memorials with such an image are now incomplete. Gs 7 Torsåkers kyrka mentions the mother of a man who drowned and a brother too, but it is not clear who of these people was commemorating whom by commissioning this monument. The *merki* U Fv1946;258 Fällbro was raised by three men in memory of their father. A ship is mentioned twice and possibly also that Véseti carved the stone.⁴⁴⁵

U 1065 Rångsta is decorated with a figure that holds the runic serpent. It was commissioned by a man in memory of his father Sveinn as well as by two other men to commemorate their father Kári. The two stones with human figures that hold two (runic) serpents on either side of them with their heads towards their ears were commissioned by women. ÖI 19 Hulterstad, by Ástríðr in memory of her *bóndi*, ends with *Guð hjalpi hans sál* (May God help his soul). The inscription on Sö 175 Lagnö

⁴⁴⁴ U 312, U 314 and U 315 are raised by various members of the same family.

⁴⁴⁵ Other figures with spread arms are carved on DR 42, which in addition to Christ is decorated with a leonine quadruped, N 68 on which Christ is combined with a Nativity/Adoration scene. Sö 40, on which the figure with spread arms has two heads, and U 1161, on which the figure stands on a ladder-like structure with a bird on its shoulder, are both decorated with several other images.

mentions a secondary male commissioner and ends with the rare phrase *Satt er þat sem sagt var ok sem hugat var þat*, 'It is true that which was said and which was intended.'

3.5 Conclusion

3.5.1 Connections between optional carving elements

This chapter has analysed the relation between the use of figural images in the decoration and the content of the inscription on Viking Age runestones. One important outcome is that while 59% of all runestones have optional elements or features in the inscription, this is 68% for runestones with figural images. When only the 'main runestone areas' are compared, the discrepancy is even larger: two thirds of runestones with images have optional elements in their inscriptions compared to half of runestones in general.⁴⁴⁶

Of the optional inscription elements, those in half of the inscriptions on monuments with figural images are unusual, i.e. other than carving signatures and Christian prayers. This is just under 40% in general and only a third in the main runestone areas, where almost all runestones with images and unusual inscription elements or features are found. The elements and features that occur significantly more often on stones with figural images than on runestones in general are especially comments about the (future) role and features of the monument, carver signatures, invocations, curses and spells, statements about ownership, and the use of multiple runic scripts

The image types were taken as a starting point to see if there are tendencies

⁴⁴⁶ Palm's (1992, 154-167) main areas are DK, NO, Sm, Vg, Ög, Sö, U. The other regions are Öl, G, Nä, Vs, Gs, Hs, M, see Chapter 3.3, note 87.

in their combination with the contents and features of the inscription (within the general distribution pattern of these elements). Tendencies can indeed be observed in how often the inscriptions on monuments with certain image types contain unusual information or common additions. This is illustrated in Table 6, which shows how many of the inscriptions on runestones with certain types of images contain optional elements and features. It is indicated in parentheses how many of these are an 'unusual' type of optional addition, i.e. other than prayers or carver signatures. The information is given as absolute numbers and as relative percentages.

image type	optional elements/total (unusual additions)	as perc. of the total (unusual additions)
birds: raven, eagles	4/4 (3)	100% (75%)
faces	11/11 (7)	100% (64%)
birds: other	2/2	100%
leonine quadrupeds	4/5 (4)	80%
weapons and warriors	6/8 (3)	75% (38%)
neutral quadrupeds	6/8 (1)	75% (13%)
hammers	3/4 (3)	75%
lupine quadrupeds	2/3 (2)	67%
Sigurðr	2/3 (1)	67% (33%)
hunters	2/3 (1)	67% (33%)
birds and (possible) prey	2/3 (1)	67% (33%)
figures with spread arms	2/3 (1)	67% (33%)
figures holding snakes	2/3 (1)	67% (33%)
ships	8/13 (6)	62% (46%)
cervine quadrupeds	1/2 (1)	50%
horses	0/2	0%
<i>The average for optional inscription elements on runestones in general is 50% and 33% for uncommon additions</i>		

Table 6. Optional inscription elements

Nearly all the image types are combined with inscriptions that have a higher

content of optional information than average. On the stones decorated with leonine quadrupeds and hammers practically all of these additional inscription elements are of the uncommon types. A lower proportion of unusual additions, but still above average, is found in the inscriptions on memorials with faces and ships. The inscriptions that are combined with images of weapons and warriors or of neutral quadrupeds often contain optional elements, but these are seldom of the uncommon type.

The common optional addition to the memorial formula of Christian prayers occurs on thirteen of the ninety-eight inscribed stones with images. This is slightly less than average, and Uppland and Södermanland are overrepresented compared to the general distribution of this inscription element. The images on these stones vary. Consequently, there does not seem to be a connection between the type of image and the higher occurrence of prayers on decorated stones from Uppland and Södermanland. There are also no common images on the five decorated stones that mention bridges or pathways.

Carver signatures form the other regular addition to the memorial formula. In contrast to prayers, they occur significantly more often than average on runestones with figural decoration. This higher occurrence of carver signatures on memorials decorated with figural images and the deviating regional distribution does not seem to be linked to any particular image type. Instead, it seems there is a connection between the presence of figural imagery in itself and the occurrence of carver signatures.

The role of carvers is relevant to consider. Some of them are known to use certain features more than others. For instance Balli often used the phrase *hér mun standa steinn*.⁴⁴⁷ Another example is that some carvers produce more versified

⁴⁴⁷ Jesch 1998, 472.

inscriptions than others and the kind of poetic devices also vary. Balli, again, for instance included the most verses in his inscriptions. The carver Þórkell even seems to have included verses in his inscriptions that may have been composed especially for that monument, possibly by himself.⁴⁴⁸ We have seen in Chapter 2.3 that it is difficult to link particular image types to certain carvers, although it seems that some carvers used figural imagery in their design more often than others. In general, however, we may never know what the commissioner's influence on what was carved was, be it direct or indirect (i.e. for example if a carver's use of specific elements was the reason for a commissioner to employ them).⁴⁴⁹

There are some inscription elements/features that seem to have a connection to specific image types in certain regions. Firstly, there might have been a correlation between an image of a large Þórr's hammer and calling the monument a *merki sírún* in Södermanland. Only two such monuments survive, Sö 86 S. Åby ägor and Sö 111 Stenkvista, but this phrase only occurs on these stones. Two other runestones are decorated with Þórr's hammers without being called a *merki sírún*, but not in Södermanland (DR 26, Vg 113).

Another, larger group of images, phrases, and features of the inscription also seem to be connected. Only roughly twenty-six inscriptions in the runestone corpus are carved in more than one runic script. Over a fifth of these stones are decorated with a mask-like face or a ship, all from Södermanland. Inscription elements on monuments with various runic scripts, both with and without figural decoration, are the epithets (*þróttar þegn*, *góðr drengr* and *drengliga*). A connection between the use of the *þróttar þegn* denomination, multiple runic scripts, and images of faces and ships in Södermanland has also been recognised by Bianchi.⁴⁵⁰ The versification of

⁴⁴⁸ Wulf 2003, esp. 982-991.

⁴⁴⁹ See also Zilmer 2012, 397-409.

⁴⁵⁰ Bianchi 2010, 156-161. He suggests that these carvings express that individuals or families belong to

parts of the inscriptions, which Bianchi does not mention, and the epithet *drengr* can be added to this. Partly versified inscriptions occur on three of the Sörmlandic stones decorated with ships that make use of more than one runic script (Sö 122, Sö 154, Sö 164) and also on three or four of those without figural decoration.⁴⁵¹ There are also two stones from Västergötland with versified inscriptions. They are decorated with different images, Vg 32 Kållands-Åsaka with a standing man and Vg 181 Frugården with quadrupeds, but they both commemorate a *drengr*.⁴⁵² Also among the Sörmlandic runestones that use more than one runic script are those that mention a *góðr drengr* (Sö 167) and a man who behaves *drengliga* (Sö 130 and Sö 164). Sö 167 Landshammar and Sö 164 Spånga are again decorated with figural imagery, respectively with a face and a ship.⁴⁵³

3.5.2 Female involvement

The female involvement in the establishment of the monuments with figural images can also be compared to that in runestones in general (see Table 7). Although some female runestone carvers are known from the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages,⁴⁵⁴ the carvers of the monuments in this thesis' corpus that are named or otherwise known are men. There are, however, women among the commissioners and the commemorated of these memorial stones. In addition, some women are mentioned that are neither the commissioner nor the commemorated. These inscriptions seem to display a specific concern with family ties and ancestry.

Roughly a third of the memorials with figural images contain female names in

a particular social elite and further suggests there might also be connection to undertakings abroad.

⁴⁵¹ Sö 130, Sö 137, Sö 148 and possibly Sö 159, see Hübler 1996.

⁴⁵² Two stones in Västergötland that mention a *þegn* are decorated with birds and one with a hammer. None of them contains multiple runic script, however.

⁴⁵³ The Norwegian N 68 and N 61 with a partly versified inscription and hunting, resp. Nativity/Adoration imagery do not fit in this pattern.

⁴⁵⁴ Källström 2007, 213-216. Consider also that the runes on the Överhögdal weave were most likely also embroidered by a woman.

the inscription. This corresponds to the female involvement in runestone-raising in general.⁴⁵⁵ As demonstrated in Table 7, the regional distribution of monuments with images that mention women differs slightly from that of runestones with female names in general for two of the relationship patterns.

	runestones with figural images	runestones in general ⁴⁵⁶
m → m ⁴⁵⁷	61	66.6%
m → f + m	4: DR 42, Gs 9, Sö 311-313, Vs 17	2.7%, not in N
m → f	DR 26	3.6% (<2% in U, Sö; 7% in DR; 8.5% in Vg)
f + m → m	13: DR 271, Ög 181, Ög 224, Sö 175, Sö 352, Sö 367, U 193, U 240, U 375, U 508, U 855, U 860, Vg 32	14.6% (unusual outside Sö, U, Öl; none in N)
f → m	8: DR 81, DR Aud1996;274, N 61, Nä 34, Öl 19, Sö 101, U 753, Vg 150	10.5%-15.5% (few in N, Sm, G, Öl)
f + m → f	U 313, U 824 (possibly also → m.)	0.2% (4, in U, Sö)
f → f	N 68	0.4 % (7, in N, DR, U, Sö)
f → m + f	-	0.2% (4, in U)
f + m → m + f	-	0.5% (9, in U, Sö, M, Ög)
m → m + mention f. relative	4: Gs 7, Gs 19, U 35, U 79	<i>Not mentioned in Sawyer</i>
uncertain	3: U 920, U 1163, U Fv1978;226	
total	97 ⁴⁵⁸	

Table 7. Gender of commissioners and commemorated persons

The percentage of runestones with images that are raised by men and women together in memory of men corresponds roughly to the average of 14.6%. Since this relationship pattern is unusual outside Södermanland, Uppland and Öland, however,

⁴⁵⁵ According to Sawyer 2000, 38, there was no chronological development in the female involvement, but rather regional variation.

⁴⁵⁶ Percentages and numbers in this column are after Sawyer 2000, 38-41.

⁴⁵⁷ M = male; f = female.

⁴⁵⁸ This is the number of runestones with figural decoration and lexical inscriptions (see Section 3.2).

it is remarkable that four of these monuments are from Denmark, Östergötland and Västergötland (the other nine are from Uppland and Södermanland). That eight runestones with figural images are commissioned by women to commemorate men is below the average of this relationship pattern. One of these stones, however, is from Norway and one from Öland, which are both areas in which this commemoration pattern is uncommon.

In addition to this, monuments with certain images are more often commissioned by or to commemorate a woman. Table 8 shows how many of the inscriptions on the runestones with various images mention women. The information is given as absolute numbers and as relative percentages.

image type	female involvement/total	as perc. of total
Sigurðr	2 or 3/3	67-100%
hunters	3/4 or 5	60-80%
figures with spread arms	2/3	67%
figures holding snakes	2/3	67%
faces	5/11	45%
non-specific quadrupeds	3/8	38%
lupine quadrupeds	1-2/3	33-67%
birds and prey	1/3	33%
birds: raven, eagles	1-2/4	25-50%
hammers	1/4	25%
ships	2/13	15%
weapons and warriors	1/8	13%
leonine quadrupeds	0/5 ⁴⁵⁹	0%
cervine quadrupeds	0/2	0%
horses	0/2	0%
birds: other	0/2	0%

⁴⁵⁹ The only two stones with such animals that mention women also contain other images (DR 42 and DR 271).

<i>The average female involvement in runestones in general is 33%</i>

Table 8. Female involvement

The images of Sigurðr, hunters, figures with spread arms, and figures holding snakes occur more often on monuments raised by or for women than not. Other images, most notably of weapons, warriors and leonine quadrupeds generally decorate stones without female involvement. An exception to this is Ög 181 Ledberg, raised by Gunna, which is decorated with warrior imagery, including a wolf and a ship. Female involvement is also rather uncommon for monuments decorated with ships, except when they are combined with other images.

Four monuments raised by men and women together in memory of men do not fit the regional distribution of this commemoration pattern because they were raised in Denmark, Östergötland and Västergötland. They are, however, decorated with different images.⁴⁶⁰ Two stones, N 61 Alstad and Öl 19 Hulterstad, do not conform to the general distribution of monuments raised by women to commemorate men. Only very few monuments with comparable images exist for these runestones. Öl 19 has Sö 175 Lagnö as a parallel, which also has a female commissioner (with a secondary male co-commissioner). N 61 is comparable to U 855 Böksta and N 68 Dynna (for different reasons), both of which are commissioned by women (U 855 together with a man). These stones stand out from the prevailing commemoration patterns in their regions. Although there might have been a connection between the choice of images and the female involvement in the commissioning of these monuments, the variation on the general distribution cannot be explained on the basis of this.

⁴⁶⁰ DR 271, Ög 181, and Ög 224 contain images of a ship, but the first two are also carved with other images. Vg 32 Kållands-Åsaka is decorated only with a large image of a standing man. Furthermore, the stones that are decorated with ships that involve women are all from outside Södermanland.

3.5.3 Visual communication

The images of faces and ships offer the opportunity to compare two image types that were used in more or less the same context to see if they were used according to different 'rules'. Faces and ships form the two largest groups of images that occur as single decoration. They occur largely in the same areas and are connected to the use of the words *þegn* and *drengr* in the inscriptions and the employment of various runic scripts and poetic devices. The differences between the use of these two types of images are highlighted by Tables 6 and 8 above. Of all image types, faces are the most often combined with optional elements in the inscriptions, while ships, though still (just) above average, are at the bottom of the list. This discrepancy is less pronounced for the use of uncommon additional inscription elements and features, but they still occur significantly more often with faces than with ships. Furthermore, where almost half of the runestones decorated with faces record female involvement in the inscription, this is below average for ships (with only 2 out of 13).

These differences between the two image types show that although faces and ships were part of the same group of textual and decorative carving elements that were used in various combinations to communicate a certain message (at least in Södermanland and possibly also in Västergötland and Denmark), they were employed in different ways within this system. Although studies such as this can approximate how these and other verbal and visual carvings were used, exactly what meaning was communicated through this might never be known.

Other than possibly with hammers, faces and ships, no distinct correlation between particular images and inscription elements emerges from the survey in this chapter. In fact, it seems it is mostly the other way round, since images are very rarely combined with explicit textual references to the same thing.

There is only one runestone with both a ship mentioned in the inscription

and a ship in the decoration (Sö 164). The runestones with heroic imagery contain only very few textual references to heroism, and these are not very specific (see also Chapter 6.2.1). The *dróttkvætt* stanza on the Karlevi stone (Öl 1) is another example of the same principle. Normally the commemorative message is fixed and preserved for posterity either orally in the *dróttkvætt* metre in skaldic poetry or visually and physically carved in stone, but the Karlevi stone uses both.⁴⁶¹

The only visual and verbal expressions of the same concept that regularly occur together are crosses and Christian expressions in the inscription. In Västergötland, fifty-seven runic stone monuments are decorated with cross ornamentation and twelve inscriptions contain prayers or other Christian references. Eight of these monuments combine the two (5.3% of the Vg monuments). In Södermanland and Uppland more than half of the runestones are decorated with a cross (resp. 216 and 655) and 18% contain verbal Christian expressions (resp. 72 and 212). In Södermanland 43 monuments are carved with both and in Uppland 146 (resp. 10.8% and 12.2%).⁴⁶² On nine runestones with images, crosses and prayers are combined.⁴⁶³ For Södermanland this is 8% (2 out of 25), so slightly less than average. In Uppland, on the other hand, visual and verbal Christian references are more often combined on runestones with images than average (17.9% or 7 out of 39).

A monument that combines an image, which in itself is an uncommon optional type of decoration, with inscription elements or phrases that are uncommon for their particular region, may be regarded as more individual and more exclusive.

Sö 167 Landshammar, for example, is decorated with a face and in addition to *drengir* occurring less often in inscriptions on Sörmlandic runestones than in several

⁴⁶¹ Jesch 2005a, 96. Jesch (1998, 467) makes a connection between visual and verbal carvings too and states that on runestones without versified inscription, the verbal message is instead ornamented by the use of carved decoration. There is, however, quite an overlap between verse and figural decoration on runestones.

⁴⁶² Based on numbers kindly provided by Kristel Zilmer (pers. comm. 5 January 2012). She includes runic Christian grave monuments with text and not runestones without inscriptions.

⁴⁶³ On Sö 154, Sö 312, U 160, U 241, U 629, U 691, U 860, U 920, U 1043.

other regions, this is the only Sörmlandic *drengr* who is called *góðr*. Another example is Vg 150 Skattegården, which is the only runestone with an invocation to Þórr in Västergötland, while they are more common in Denmark. This monument is also one of only two runestones that are decorated with a bird's head.

The two common scenarios in visual communication on multimodal media are that the text offers commentary or an explanation to the image or that the image illustrates the text, but Kress and van Leeuwen show that 'In a multimodal text the writings can carry one set of meanings and the images another.'⁴⁶⁴ It is clear from the studies in this chapter that the first two views do not apply to the combination of images and text on memorial stones. The inscriptions should not be seen as captions to the images, nor should the decoration be regarded as illustration to the text. Instead, the optional textual and visual additional carving elements appear to have functioned rather independently of each other. Even the visual and textual elements of faces, ships, different runic scripts, versification, *þegn* and *drengr* that seem to be connected (in Södermanland and possibly in Västergötland and Denmark as well) occur in different combinations.

Although the linguistic and visual elements on runestones functioned quite independently, they are not completely separate either. This corresponds to Kress and van Leeuwen's view on visual communication: 'in multimodal or composite texts, the meanings of the whole should be not be treated as the sum of the meanings of the parts, but the parts should be looked upon as interacting with and affecting one another.'⁴⁶⁵ Inscriptions on stones with images contain a significantly higher percentage of additional information than usual, which heightens the exclusiveness of these monuments. This also shows that these monuments aimed to convey more information than usual and did so both textually and through the decoration. The

⁴⁶⁴ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 18, 38.

⁴⁶⁵ Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 182.

type of optional textual elements or features that especially occur relatively often on stones with images - comments about the (future) role and features of the memorial, carver signatures, and the use of multiple runic scripts - place a specific emphasis on the monument and its various types of carvings. A similar concern is expressed by curses that explicitly protect the monument and the various spells and the invocations that probably had a similar aim.

Statements about ownership also occur more often than average on stones that are decorated with images. As the individual images, this kind of information contributes to the creation and display of a more specific identity. Features such as multiple runic scripts, versification, and (particular) figural images express belonging to certain elites or in-groups and at the same time display a high level of individuality. How this can be related to expressing identity and shaping memory is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Why a certain image was carved on a memorial stone depended on two main aspects. The particular *meaning* of an image was important, because it communicates certain information. The discussion of the interpretations of images in Chapter 2.2.3 illustrated that it can be difficult to reconstruct what an image represents and what its connotations were. Secondly, the *function* of figural images in the commemoration on the memorials plays a role.

Figural images add an extra layer of meaning to the monument and heighten its exclusiveness. This seems to be important for many of the runestones with figural images, since they generally also contain more optional elements in the inscription than usual. However, there are also monuments that are carved with images only and no inscription at all. Figural decoration employs another level or means of communication in addition to the inscription, ornamental decoration, and the size, material, and location of the monument. How the images subsequently may have

been perceived is explored in the following chapter as the next step in placing the use of images on runestone in the wider context of Viking Age visual culture.

Chapter 4. The cognitive context of images: Runestones and poetry

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the cognitive context of the images on Viking Age memorial stones. For this purpose, contemporary accounts of seeing are analysed and related to visual communication theories and to the results of the visual analysis of the monuments from the previous two chapters, adding the cognitive context to the reconstruction of the visual communication on runestones.

The references in runestone inscriptions to the interpretation of the monument or its carvings that were discussed in the previous chapter are analysed further in Section 4.4. This analysis shows that not all of the invitations to ‘interpret’ necessarily refer to the inscription alone, as is often assumed. Instead it is likely that other aspects of the monument, or indeed the memorial as a whole, are referred to as something that needs to be interpreted by the viewer.

The contemporary accounts of seeing and interpreting images in poetry give the impression that it was a function of the images to prompt the viewer to recall and in some circumstances recount the related narratives. A number of images on memorial stones could likewise have had the purpose of evoking particular narratives in the observer's mind and the recounting of mythological and legendary stories may have played a role in the interpretation of runestone decoration.

Like memorial stones, commemorative praise poetry is an exponent of the Viking Age culture of commemoration and status-display. This chapter explores how the use of certain imagery in poetry illustrates how their visual parallels functioned in the communication on the carved stones. How images, also combined with text,

then, are perceived is also the subject of various visual communication theories that have been developed in modern research.

4.2 Modern theories of visual communication

Modern visual communication theory is an umbrella for a multitude of sub-theories that are concerned with the various aspects of this process. Visual communication is a complex process which can be studied from different angles and with various purposes.⁴⁶⁶ Aesthetics and semiotics are the most important for runestone studies, and perception, cognition, representation and reception theories are relevant too.

How aesthetics theory can be applied to runestone design was illustrated in Chapter 2.4. The combined factors of proportion, position, and discernability of the carving elements influence how prominent they are. This gives an impression of their importance in relation to each other. In addition to this, some sort of sequence can be indicated, which will be discussed in Section 4.6.2.a. This section briefly introduces the other visual communication theories that are relevant to runestone studies.

Semiotics studies the use of signs and symbols in visual communication. In order for a message to be successfully communicated through symbols, the receiver of the message has to know what the symbols refer to. Unlike abstract images, figural images visually resemble the object they represent, but they can also represent an abstract concept through the connotations that the depicted object invokes. These connotations are shaped by the cultural and social significance of the object, for instance by its role in mythologies and ideologies.⁴⁶⁷ Runestone decoration, both figural and abstract, is commonly interpreted in a semiotic

⁴⁶⁶ See Smith and others 2005; Kress and van Leeuwen 1996.

⁴⁶⁷ Moriarty 2005, 228-231.

framework.⁴⁶⁸

A strictly semiotic approach to runestone decoration has its difficulties. In many images on memorial stones we can recognise the item it represents, for instance the realistic-looking horse on Sö 226 Norra Stutby or a ship on DR 271 Tullstorp. As illustrated in Chapter 2.2.3, it is more complicated to reconstruct what concept the object or animal may symbolise, despite our knowledge of their significance in Viking Age myths and legends and material culture. It becomes even more problematic when we fail to identify the object an image represents. If a depicted animal cannot be identified as, for example, representing a dog or a wolf, this can be a problem for the interpretation of the images, because dogs and wolves have different sets of connotations.

Perception theory studies how meaning is derived from what we see, focussing on the neurological processes involved. Most of this happens subconsciously in the emotional system of the human brain and body.⁴⁶⁹ Perception theory has particular relevance for the study of runestone design, especially when it concerns the combination of images and text, yet it has not been applied systematically in this field. Bertelsen remarks about the combination of text and images on runestones that images communicate quicker than text because they can be 'easy to understand'.⁴⁷⁰ Although this statement seems to be based on principles of perception theory, she gives no further explanation of this.

Neurological studies show how image and text are processed differently. Images appeal to the right side of the brain, while text is processed by the left. As a result of how these parts of the brain function, pictures make an earlier and stronger

⁴⁶⁸ This theoretical approach is generally adopted silently, with the exception of Bianchi's recent doctoral thesis, in which he studied the carvings on Upplandic and Sörmlandic runestones as semiotic resources (Bianchi 2010).

⁴⁶⁹ Barry 2005, 46-47.

⁴⁷⁰ Bertelsen 2006, 31.

impression on viewers than text.⁴⁷¹ This universal neurological process would also have applied to the contemporary audiences of Viking Age memorial stones with text and image. When the viewer could not read the runes, however, the inscription presumably became more like a part of the ornamentation, a symbolic element of the decoration rather than a verbal text. Also if the runes could be read, an inscription that is integrated in the serpent ornamentation can be regarded both as a decorative element and as text.

Representation theory is concerned with the various ways in which an image or symbol can represent an object or concept and cognitive theory tries to further explain how images are related to the real world in the interpretation process.⁴⁷² The latter focuses on how 'memory, imagination and logic' are used to recognise the object(s) an image represents.

Reception theory has much in common with theories of perception and cognition. They all focus on how meaning is derived from an image, instead of trying to reconstruct that meaning. Reception theories can also take the role of the creator of the image into account. They can be concerned with how the creator and the viewer interact with and through the image, and thus how the image is the medium of communication between them.⁴⁷³ This approach can be relevant for runestone studies, but a complicating factor is that much is unknown about the process of creating a memorial stone and the agents involved, despite the substantial number of monuments with a carver signature (see also Chapter 2.3).

These visual communication theories, especially aesthetics, perception theory, and semiotics, are relevant to the study of runestone design, because they help to reconstruct *how* an image means without us knowing what it means. Layout

⁴⁷¹ Barry 2005, esp. 54-56.

⁴⁷² Kenney 2005; Williams, R. 2005, 194.

⁴⁷³ Barbatsis 2005, 271, 273-274.

and design principles form the 'code' for interpreting visual elements.⁴⁷⁴ The 'complex and multifaceted cognitive processes' that are used in visual communication 'draw on perception, memory, imagination and logic'.⁴⁷⁵ The result is an open system of meaning and 'because of the openness of visual communication structures, there are also more opportunities for chains and shifts.'⁴⁷⁶

Relatively recently, perception and reception theories have been given a place in the studies of medieval art. These theories are, for instance, used to explain how various kinds of later medieval devotional (church) art and manuscript illustrations functioned.⁴⁷⁷ With the exception of Bianchi's semiotic study and Zilmer's aesthetic approach, visual communication theory is not normally applied, at least not explicitly, to the elements of runestone design.⁴⁷⁸ Nevertheless, as long as the limitations of a semiotic approach and our limited knowledge of the production of the monuments are observed, knowledge of the processes involved in interpreting images and text can be used in the study of visual communication on Viking Age memorial stones. It is important, however, not to assume that these processes were employed by runestone producers and experienced by contemporary viewers any more consciously than is the case now for their modern counterparts.

4.3 Early medieval theories of vision

Looking is not only a psychological process, but also a cultural practice.⁴⁷⁹ The cultural attitude to images and the perception of their function is reflected in the (theoretical) writings of early medieval scholars about how images were seen and

⁴⁷⁴ Moriarty 2005, 236 table 15.2

⁴⁷⁵ Williams, R. 2005, 194.

⁴⁷⁶ Moriarty 2005, 239.

⁴⁷⁷ See for example overviews in Caviness 2006, 65, 69-78 and Lewis 2006, 91-98.

⁴⁷⁸ Bianchi 2010, Zilmer 2011.

⁴⁷⁹ Biernoff 2002, 4.

interpreted. The theories concerning vision and optics that circulated in medieval Europe have received scholarly attention from different points of view. Lindberg traces the development in a context of philosophy and history of science.⁴⁸⁰ The following overview is largely based on information from this work. Hahn takes a similar approach, but with regard to the history of art.⁴⁸¹ Specific research projects have focussed on ideas about vision expressed in individual textual and visual sources from Christian Antiquity, the Late Middle Ages, the Gothic period and Byzantium.⁴⁸² Not much research has been done, however, on thought about vision in the early medieval period, especially not in Northern Europe, and Viking Age or even medieval Scandinavia has not been given any attention in this context.

For want of recorded Viking Age theories of vision, the early medieval treatises on how vision worked that circulated in Europe are briefly considered instead in this section. These theories are mainly concerned with the extent to which the viewer played an active role in seeing an object or image. This medieval material is complemented in the following sections with a discussion of late Viking Age references to the process of seeing, in poetry as well as in several runestone inscriptions.

The early medieval knowledge of optics in Europe was limited to what was transmitted in versions of writings of the classical thinkers. There were no attempts to discuss critically the Platonic line of thought. In the fourth century Chalcidius defended Plato's extramission theory using anatomical information and it was mainly through his writings that Plato's notion of seeing was distributed through medieval Europe. When St Augustine of Hippo (354-430) refers to vision in various of his works on other subjects, which were often consulted by medieval scholars, he also explains

⁴⁸⁰ Lindberg 1976, esp. chapters 4-7.

⁴⁸¹ Hahn 2006.

⁴⁸² E.g. the various chapters in Nelson 2000.

it through a process of extramission.⁴⁸³ In the extramission theories of vision, seeing takes place on the initiative of the eye, while in the later (in medieval European terms) intromission theories it happens as a result of the object. In the first theory the process is instigated by the one who sees, not the seen. The viewer has a more active role in this theory than in the intromission idea. In the early medieval mind, an object or image could only be seen and have effect on the person who sees it after it is activated by the viewer.⁴⁸⁴

When classical thought on vision became available in Arabic in the ninth and tenth centuries, Persian scholars adopted a critical attitude towards the prevailing extramission theory. The notion that seeing constituted of rays of light leaving the eyes to extract light to make an object seen was combined by the Arabic scholars with the intromission theory, which explained seeing as the result of rays of light coming out of the object and entering the eye.

In Europe, however, the extramission theory prevailed until the writings of the Arabic scholars became available in Latin there in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Before that, in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, there were only a few new sources. Among these was William of Conches who argued that a ray of light leaves the eye, mixes with the natural light, and reaches the object to assume its shape and colour. The ray returns through the eye back into the soul where this information about the object is processed. Abelard of Bath, who translated Arabic writings in the twelfth century, also extended his theory of vision to include how the soul processes the information that is brought in by the eye.⁴⁸⁵ Biernoff describes a late medieval definition of vision in which 'the eye was simultaneously receptive, passive, vulnerable to sensations; and active, roaming, grasping or piercing objects.

⁴⁸³ Lindberg 1976, 87-90.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Camille 2000, 205-206.

⁴⁸⁵ Lindberg 1976, 90-92.

Sight was extension of the sensitive soul towards an object, and the passage of sensible forms through the eye and into the brain.’⁴⁸⁶

The extramission theory was spread widely throughout early medieval Europe, mainly through the St Augustine’s works and Chalcidius’ translation of Plato’s *Timaeus*. The chance that these ideas about seeing and vision had also made their way to Scandinavia in the late Viking Age and early Middle Ages, however, is slim. The works of these writers were not available there until the late twelfth century. If at all, these ideas would have most likely been known in an ecclesiastical or monastic context through the writings of St Augustine. Manuscripts with his work were common in Scandinavian church libraries, but probably not before the thirteenth century.⁴⁸⁷ There would not have been any influence from England before this time either.

Because there is not enough evidence for points of contact, the theories about vision that were current in early medieval Europe are not directly relevant for a study of visuality in Viking Age and early medieval Scandinavia. The modern visual communication theories are more useful and there are Viking Age sources that refer to seeing, albeit not in a theoretical way, that can be used. The small number of skaldic poems that contain first-hand accounts of people seeing images will be discussed below, after the following section that analyses the runestone inscriptions that refer to the act of interpreting the monument and/or its carvings.

4.4 *Ráða sá kunnir*: Interpret who can!

Unfortunately, there are no contemporary accounts of how a Viking Age memorial stone was perceived and interpreted. None of the late Viking Age descriptions of

⁴⁸⁶ Biernoff 2002, 3-4.

⁴⁸⁷ Karker and Odelman 1977, 264-271.

journeys through Scandinavia record the travellers seeing runestones.⁴⁸⁸ The eleventh-century Sigvatr Þórðarson has in all probability seen one or more on his journey from Sarpsborg in Norway east through the forests into Swedish Götaland. He describes how his party went by boat to Eið and travelled through the forest from there.⁴⁸⁹ East of Eiðaskóg they went on foot through Götaland to Earl Rognvaldr, who probably resided in Skara.⁴⁹⁰ Whether they went around or across lake Vänern, Viking Age runestones were situated along the way.⁴⁹¹

The fact that Sigvatr does not mention them in his account in *Austrfararvísur* could indicate that he considered them not important enough to comment on. However, in stanza 16 about King Óláfr's hall, he does mention his splendid wall-hangings. That the monuments are not mentioned may have been because of the aim of the poem. Sigvatr portrays the people of Götaland as heathen, barbaric, and hostile, and mentioning sophisticated carved monuments would not be in keeping with the image of that region he creates.

The only medieval literature that contains references to runestones are the writings by the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus (c. 1150-1220). He mentions large stones carved with runic texts as a form of written historical sources and he recounts that they were commissioned to commemorate the dead.⁴⁹² Saxo also describes how in the twelfth century King Waldemar I of Denmark had an investigation carried out on carvings in a rock in Blekinge, which travellers would visit but which no one could interpret. Saxo blamed this on the fact that they were *partim cæno interlita, partim*

⁴⁸⁸ There is nothing in Þórarinn Loftunga's *Tøggdrápa*, Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Knútsdrápa* and Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Austrfararvísur*. References to editions and translations of the texts in this Chapter are listed in the Bibliography. The texts are listed by author when known, and otherwise by title.

⁴⁸⁹ Snorri repeatedly refers to Eiðaskóg in *Heimskringla*, usually when describing a route from Norway to Sweden. He tells us this forest was situated between the Swedish Värmland and the Norwegian Raumaríki (tr. Hollander 1964, 414).

⁴⁹⁰ According to Snorri in *Óláfs saga Helga* (tr. Hollander 1964, 304).

⁴⁹¹ Compare the map of medieval routes in Schück 1933, after p 240, with the distribution map of runestones in *Västergötlands runinskrifter*. Of the stones along the possible routes Vg 7, Vg 11, Vg 14, Vg 15, Vg 16, Vg 35, Vg 55, Vg 127 and Vg 128 definitely are in their original place (Vg XXVII).

⁴⁹² *Saxonis Gesta Danorum Prefatio* 1.3, *Liber Septimus* X.3, *Liber Nonus* IV.25 (tr. Davidson and Fisher 1996, 5, 228, 287).

commeantium adesa vestigiis ‘partly smeared up with mud and partly worn by the feet of travellers’.⁴⁹³ In the nineteenth century this *Runamo* was demonstrated not to be a runic carving at all, but a cracked dolerite dike.⁴⁹⁴ Saxo’s account shows a great fascination with (what was thought to be) a runic monument that could not be interpreted. This may explain why he does not go into much detail about runic memorials that could be deciphered.

No such record of how the public tried to interpret runestones exists from the Viking Age, but the process is referred to on a number of runestones themselves. The inscriptions on Viking Age runestones that invite the viewers to *ráða*, to ‘interpret’, or to *vit!*, ‘know (about)!’, that were discussed in Chapter 3.2.4 are analysed here in more detail, because they mention the act of interpreting or deciphering aspects of the monument by the viewers.

In four of these inscriptions it is specified that it is the runes that need deciphering. The inscription on U 11 Hovgården begins with the imperative **raþ| þu** : **runar** :, *Ráð þú rúnar*, ‘Interpret the runes!’, after which more information follows about the runes and the monument. It is uncertain whether the commemoration formula *Tólr ok Gylla létu ris[ta] ...* should be supplemented with *rúnar (þisar)*: ‘Tólr and Gylla had [the(se) runes] carved’. No runes that indicate these words are left. Even if this is left open, *ráða* in the opening phrase explicitly refers to the runes. Similarly, the *ráða*-phrase on U 847 Västeråkers kyrka refers to the runes: *Ásmundr hjó rúnar réttar þeim ráða skal. En Ásmundr ... risti...* ‘Ásmundr cut the right runes, for those who will interpret’. The standard memorial formula on U 729 Ågersta is followed by *Ráði drengr/tækr sá rýnn sé rúnum þeim, sem Balli risti*, ‘May the valiant man / the adept who is rune-skilled interpret those runes which Balli carved’. As discussed in the previous chapter, the long inscription on Vg 119 Sparlösa also ends

⁴⁹³ *Saxonis Gesta Danorum Prefatio II.5* (tr. Davidson and Fisher 1996, 7).

⁴⁹⁴ DR, Saglexikon, 924.

with a *ráð rúnar*-formula. The inscription on U Fv1959;196 Hammarby, which is an early Christian grave monument, contains a variation on this: *Hverr sem rúnum ráðr hafi bænit fyrir Ála/Alla sál* 'Everyone who interprets the runes, have prayers for Áli's/Alli's soul'.⁴⁹⁵

In two of the runestone inscriptions with *ráða*, it is uncertain what its object refers back to. The memorial formula on U 328 Lundby is followed by **rap| |þisi, Ráð þessi!** 'Interpret these!'. This cannot refer back to the stone that is mentioned in the first part of the inscription, since that is in the singular. Therefore, the plural *þessi* is more likely to refer to the runes, or possibly to the carvings in general. The inscription on U 1167 Ekeby has survived incompletely and what is left of it has not been interpreted fully either. The inscription ended with **þm ' rapa ' kan '**, *þeim ráða kann*, 'who can interpret it/them', which possibly refers to the **runm, rúnum**, 'runes' two words earlier. *Rúnum* is plural feminine dative and *þeim* can be both the masculine singular and the dative plural of all genders. Peterson chooses the masculine singular, but the *Samnordisk textdatabas* follows *Upplands runinskrifter* and translates it with the plural, 'them', allowing it to refer to the feminine dative plural *rúnum*.⁴⁹⁶

The *ráða*-phrase on U 887 is without an object at all. The inscription ends with *ráði sá kunni* 'Interpret, who can!'. Although the runes are mentioned in the preceding part of the inscription, it is not definite that *ráða* refers back to that aspect of the memorial alone. The *ráða sá kunni*-formula on Sö 213 can also refer to more than the runic inscription. The producer of the monument, the stone itself, its design, and its runes are all mentioned earlier in this inscription, so this invitation could refer back to any of these elements or even the whole monument with all its carvings. Due

⁴⁹⁵ Similar inscriptions are found in medieval churches, but in Norway *sér* was mostly used in those formulas instead of *ráða*.

⁴⁹⁶ Peterson 2006b, 'sá(R)', *U vol. 3*, 643.

to how the inscription is laid out in the runic serpent *ráða sá kunni* is followed by the first word of the inscription: *steinn*.

The inscription on ÖI 28 (58) Gårdby kyrkogård ends with *Brandr rétt [i] hjó, því ráða kann* ‘Brandr cut rightly, for whomever can interpret’ in the shaft of the cross in the centre. Even though it appears at the end of the inscription in transcription and translation, due to its central and separate place on the stone, there is a good chance the phrase was regularly read first.⁴⁹⁷ If the *ráða*-formula is indeed read first, it can refer to the raised stone mentioned in the first part of the inscription. If, however, this part is read last, which is less likely, *ráða* more seems to refer to the carvings. These carvings which do not have to be the runes alone, but can also include the serpent and the cross.⁴⁹⁸

On U 29 Hillersjö the imperative **rap | þu, Ráð þú!**, ‘Interpret!’ is also probably read first, since it is carved slightly separated from the rest of the inscription in the eye of the first runic animal. The inscription continues with an explanation of the family relations through which Geirlaug came to inherit from her children and grandchildren and concludes with the carver signature: *Þorbjörn Skald risti rúnar* ‘Þorbjörn Skald carved the runes’. No link between *Ráð þú* in the beginning of the inscription and *rúnar* in the carver signature at the end is indicated by the design of the carvings or in the inscription itself. The invitation to interpret could refer to the monument itself with its intricate patterns of the runic serpents and possibly also to the family relations that are explained on the stone.⁴⁹⁹

Vit! on Sö 158 Österberga also has no specific object and can consequently refer to the information in the inscription, but also to the message communicated by

⁴⁹⁷ Although these runes are smaller and less deeply carved compared to other parts of the inscription, their central position makes them stand out nonetheless (Zilmer 2010, 157).

⁴⁹⁸ Zilmer 2010, 157 also thinks that in this inscription the public is most likely invited to decode the message of the whole monument rather than only to read the runes.

⁴⁹⁹ Andrén 2000, 10 argues that when a text is not difficult to interpret the *ráða*-formula extended to ‘the broader meaning of the stone’. I would not make this distinction on the basis of complexity of the inscription, but rather on whether its object is specified or not.

the other features of the monument. The word is carved next to the part of the inscription that is in bind-runes along the ship's mast, which reads *próttar þegn*. This visual proximity possibly indicates that especially this part required deciphering.

Two of these inscriptions address the audience through a second-person imperative, *ráð þu!* on U 11 and U 29. The first of these inscriptions refers specifically to the runes. The *ráða*-formulas with a more impersonal construction mostly address explicitly only those who 'can' and those who 'will' interpret.⁵⁰⁰ On only Vg 119 and U 328 is no audience is specified and the object of both is (probably) the runes.

There is no difference between the kind of decoration on the runestones on which the object of *ráða* is specified and on the monuments on which it is not. Both groups contain monuments decorated with complex serpent patterns and with more simple runic serpents. Christian crosses also occur on both. Vg 119, in the first group, is decorated with various figural images and Sö 213 Nybble, of the second group, with one quadruped. In two (U 11, U 729), possibly three (U 847) of these inscriptions the *ráða rúnar*-formula is in verse. Parts of the inscription are in metrical form on Sö 213, but this does not include the part with *ráða. Vit!* on Sö 158 Österberga is in bind-runes.

It is possible that in the inscriptions where the object of *ráða* is not specified and the two in which it is not clear what the demonstrative pronoun refers to this was implied to be the inscription. It is also likely, however, that the inscriptions meant different things than those that specify the runes as the object of interpretation, especially because both kinds of inscriptions occur roughly equally often. Considering the multimodality of the runestone medium, the unspecified objects of *ráða* could include the other modes of communication such as the decorative carvings or the whole memorial.

⁵⁰⁰ *Kunni*: U 729 (object is runes), ÖI 28 (58) (object is 'carvings'), U 1167 (object is unspecified demonstrative pronoun), U 887 (no object), Sö 213 (no object). *Skal*: U 847 (object is the runes).

Ráða was in other contexts also not confined to the interpretation of (runic) text. It was used to refer to various kinds of oral, artistic and spiritual phenomena that needed interpretation. Although in the examples in *Lexicon Poeticum* the word is only used to refer to runes and *stafir* ‘rune-sticks or rune-signs’, it was also used to denote the interpreting of poetry, riddles, and dreams. In connection with written or carved text its meaning can vary from ‘to read’, to ‘to decipher’, or ‘to interpret’ on the reader’s side, and ‘to master’ or ‘to be proficient in handling’ on the side of the carver.⁵⁰¹ *Ráða* in carver or commissioner formulas also takes various objects: *Gillaug réð gera merki* (U 838); *Réð rúnar Æpir* (U 896, U 940); *Ígulfastr réð, en Æpir* (U 961); *Sveinn réð þat*, with that referring to the stone that the commissioners had erected (U 913). The phrase used by Æpir states that he ‘arranged the runes’, but in the other cases it was the making or the erection of the monuments that was arranged.⁵⁰²

This broad use of the word makes it feasible that *ráða* in inscriptions on memorial stones was also not restricted to denote only one kind of object, but that it could be applied to further aspects of the memorial, such as the serpent decoration, symbols and figural images as something to be unravelled and decoded in the process of interpretation.

4.5 *Hlaut innan svá minnum*: Textual evidence for the reception and function of pictorial art in Late-Viking Age Scandinavia

A large number of skaldic poems can be dated to the Viking Age with the most certainty of all the Old Scandinavian poetry and prose.⁵⁰³ These poems are mainly

⁵⁰¹ Egilsson and Jónsson 1931, 459; Fritzner 1954 *vol.* 3, 9-16; Falk and Torp 1960, 865; Jóhannesson 1956, 33; Spurkland 1994, 8-12 (English from Spurkland 2001, 125-126).

⁵⁰² This matches the fact that roughly half of the carver signatures explicitly refer to the ‘runes’, while in the other half the various verbs that were used have no specific object (Källström 1997, 182).

⁵⁰³ Frank 2005, 161. For a brief critical discussion of the division between Eddic and Skaldic poetry see *ibid.*, 159-160.

praise poems and eulogies. The commemorative function of especially the latter is close to that of runestones. The ways in which the message is communicated on memorial stones and in certain poems is similar. As Jesch wrote: 'The separate media of picture stone, rune stone and skaldic eulogy all use varying degrees of, or combinations of, factual statement and symbolic or mythological language or iconography in their commemorative function.'⁵⁰⁴

The function of memorial stones and skaldic praise poems was not much further apart. The commemorated or praised persons are sometimes named in the poems, as on the stones. Just as the initiator(s) and sometimes also the producers are named on runestones, the composers of skaldic poems are often known (although generally not named in the poems themselves⁵⁰⁵). Sometimes, skalds refer to themselves in their poems through first-person intrusions. They also occasionally comment on their art and the process of producing it,⁵⁰⁶ which is again like the carvers of runestones. Another similarity between runestones and skaldic poetry is their aim to record events and preserve themselves, which is sometimes explicitly mentioned. This recording is realised in poems through their structure and on memorial stones through their material.⁵⁰⁷

A few of these skaldic poems were inspired by images. Bragi Boddasons' *Ragnarsdrápa* and Þórr's fishing, *Haustlǫng* by Þjóðólfr ór Hvíni, Úlfr Uggason's *Húsdrápa*, and *Lausavísur* by Þorfinnr munnr, Rǫgnvaldr Jarl, and Oddi lítli Glúmsson suggest that the rooms in high-status buildings where guests were received and feasts were held could be adorned with images on the walls, on wall-hangings and on shields.⁵⁰⁸ This corresponds to archaeological evidence for the existence of

⁵⁰⁴ Jesch 2002, 253. See also Jesch 2005a.

⁵⁰⁵ See Jesch 2005a, 98.

⁵⁰⁶ Clover 1978, 64.

⁵⁰⁷ Jesch 2005b, 190-192.

⁵⁰⁸ See also Franzén and Nockert 1992, 87-89 for a short overview of other types of written sources for the use of wall-hangings in Viking Age Scandinavia.

ornamentally carved furniture, smaller household items, weaponry, and indeed woven or embroidered decorative wall-hangings.⁵⁰⁹

The poems that describe images have preserved some of the interaction between the poet and this decoration. In the following analysis of these poems, the focus is placed less on reconstructing what the images and objects that feature in the poetry looked like, and more on establishing whether the poems contain words that indicate they are indeed descriptions of images and whether this can give insight into how the poet perceived them. The survey shows that of the many poems that are often considered to be image-describing poetry, only a few can reliably be identified as such. Even fewer mention interaction between the poet and the image.

Two stanzas that are attributed to the famous tenth-century Icelandic skald Egill Skallagrímsson have also on occasion been regarded as image-describing poetry.⁵¹⁰ These stanzas are thought to have been fragments of two poems called *Berudrápa* and *Skjaldardrápa* that were composed to praise a shield and its generous giver. It is unknown if or how Egill described scenes that were possibly depicted on this shield, so these stanzas do not provide any evidence for the reception of pictorial art.

Another tenth-century skald from Iceland, Tjorvi inn háðsami, recounts in his *Lausavísa* how he painted an image of his lover and her husband on a wall. Later, he also carved her depiction in his knife handle. This differs from the references to images by the other skalds, both regarding the nature of the picture and of the poem. Tjorvi describes the images and how he made them but he does not use expressions that show how they might have been perceived.

The *Lausavísur* by Þorfinnr munnr, an eleventh-century Icelandic skald,

⁵⁰⁹ See examples in Graham-Campbell 1980 and Wilson and Klindt-Jensen 1966. For wall-hangings: Horneij 1991; Franzén and Nockert 1992; Hougen 2006.

⁵¹⁰ Lie (1956) lists them among the poetry that describes images, but neither Fuglesang (2002, 113, 138; 2007, 194) nor Clunies Ross (2007, 165) agree.

consist of two stanzas in praise of King Óláfr in which the story of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani is paralleled with a battle scene. According to the prose in the *Legendary Óláfs saga helga* the King requested of Þorfinnr a poem about his wall hangings, on which this scene was depicted.⁵¹¹ In the first stanza Þorfinnr describes the hero Sigurðr after he has killed the serpent Fáfnir and prepares to roast his heart. In the second stanza the skald calls on the audience to fight for the King and to defend him in the battle that is about to commence. There is no indication that the second stanza is a description of images, but the former seems to be just that. This is not mentioned in the poem itself, but in the accompanying prose. Furthermore, the description of the scene and its aftermath is in the present tense, vivid, and detailed. The poem contains no idiom, however, that shows the poet observing and reacting to the pictures.

A similar setting is portrayed in chapter 85 of *Orkneyinga Saga*, where Rognvaldr jarl kali Kolsson (d. 1158) invites the Icelandic skald Oddi lítli Glúmsson to compose a verse about an image on a wall-hanging in his hall.⁵¹² Oddi is to compose the verse as fast as Rognvaldr composes his, without using any of the words the jarl uses. Both men then speak their verse describing a warrior standing in a doorway (Oddi's *Lausavísa* 1) or further out (Rognvaldr's *Lausavísa* 13) on the tapestry, ready to strike with his sword.⁵¹³ Again, it is clear from the prose context that these stanzas describe an image, but both poets also mention in their stanzas that the warrior is situated *á tjaldi* 'on the wall-hanging'. However, neither of the verses contain idiom describing the act of seeing and interpreting these images.

It has been argued that Illugi bryndælaskáld and Kormákr Qgmundarson saw depictions of the myths they refer to in their praise poems *Digt om Haraldr harðráði*

⁵¹¹ Tr. Heinrichs and others 1982, 138-139.

⁵¹² Tr. Pálsson and Edwards 1981, 160-161.

⁵¹³ Tr. Jesch 2009, 590.

and *Sigurðardrápa*.⁵¹⁴ There is no indication for this in the poems, however, nor in the prose contexts. Consequently, these poems are of no further significance for this section. That heroic deeds of the commemorated leaders are associated with episodes from mythological and legendary narratives is significant in another context, however, and this will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.6.

Fragmentary poems by Qlvir hnúfa (Norway, ninth century), Eysteinn Valdason (Iceland, c. tenth century), and Gamli gnævaðarskáld (Iceland, c. tenth century) also relate scenes from the myth of Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr. Lie lists these among the image-describing poems, but I see no cause for that and neither does Fuglesang. Clunies Ross does include them in her overview of stylistics in the poems, but they score very low on the criteria she established.⁵¹⁵ Since nothing in these poems, nor in the prose context indicates that the skalds were describing depictions of these scenes, they are of no further relevance here.

The ninth-century Norwegian poet Bragi Boddason composed *Ragnarsdrápa* in praise of a shield that he was given by the legendary Ragnarr Loðbrók. He mentions implicitly in the *stef*, the refrain, that the shield was decorated with pictures: *Ræs gofumk reiðar mána Ragnarr ok fjǫlð saga* ‘Ragnarr gave me the Ræ’s chariot [ship] moon [shield] and a multitude of stories with it’.⁵¹⁶ It is made more explicit in stanza 7, where Bragi says the attack on King Jǫrmunrekk by the brothers Hamðir and Sǫrli can actually be seen on the shield:⁵¹⁷ *þat segik...* ‘I see that [...on the shield]’.⁵¹⁸ The translation of *segik* in this stanza varies. It can be read as *seg-ek* ‘I

⁵¹⁴ e.g. Lie 1956.

⁵¹⁵ Lie 1956; Fuglesang 2002, 113, 128; 2007, 194; Clunies Ross 2007, esp. 173-177.

⁵¹⁶ In stanza 7 and stanza 12 (tr. Faulkes 1987, 106, 123).

⁵¹⁷ This is an episode from the cycle of Germanic heroic stories concerning Burgundian, Hun, and Gothic kings, to which also the stories of Sigurðr belong. These narratives are recorded in the *Vǫlsungasaga*, several poems in the *Codex Regius* (The *Poetic Edda*) and the Old High German *Nibelungenlied*.

⁵¹⁸ Different shield-kennings are used in these poems. Since they are not relevant for the argument here, I will simply translate them as ‘shield’ for the sake of brevity.

relate', from *segja*, but in most translations it is rendered as *se ek* 'I see', from *sjá*.⁵¹⁹

Two of the manuscripts that contain this poem have *segik*, while a third has *se eg*, which is *sék* 'I see'.⁵²⁰ The latter fits better with the context of the rest of the verse.

Likewise, in stanza 12 it is clear that the scene of Hildr inciting a battle between her husband and her father is a depiction on the shield too:⁵²¹ *þá má [...] kenna* 'That [...] can be recognised/perceived [on the shield]'

Six other stanzas by Bragi describe Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr and one stanza relates how the goddess Gefjun created lake Mälaren by ploughing Själland out of Sweden towards Denmark.⁵²² These stanzas were considered to be part of *Ragnarsdrápa*, but this has recently been challenged.⁵²³ Although the stanza about the ploughing of Gefjun describes a mythological scene, there is no indication that this is a description of a *depiction* of that scene. This is also the case for several fragmentary verses by Bragi, which consist of a verse addressed to Þórr, a couplet mentioning Sleipnir and a verse about the giant Þjazi. *Þórr's fishing*, on the other hand, begins with *þat erum sýnt...* 'It is sent (shown/conveyed) to me [...]'. This conveys that the skald is looking at one or more depictions of scenes from the story he describes.

Þjóðólfr ór Hvíni, another ninth-century poet from Norway, used similar formulations in his poem *Haustlǫng*. He too described a shield that was given to him,

⁵¹⁹ E.g. Hollander 1945; Faulkes 1987, 106; but not in Clunies Ross 2007, 177-178 and in Faulkes 1998 vol. 2 *segik* is listed in the glossary under *segja* (199, 51 line 25 verse 158). Jónsson (FJ 1912-15 A.I, 2n7) gives the option of reading *segik* it as *sé-g ek* 'I see'.

⁵²⁰ Clunies Ross 2007, 177n11.

⁵²¹ This is a scene from *The battle of the Hiadnings*, which is described in ch. 50 of *Skáldskaparmál* in Snorri's *Edda*.

⁵²² The story of Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr can be found in *Hymiskviða* in the *Codex Regius* (The *Poetic Edda*) and in ch. 48 of *Gylfaginning* in Snorri's *Edda*. The myth of Gefjun's ploughing is explained by Snorri at the beginning of *Gylfaginning* in his *Edda* and ch. 5 of *Ynglinga saga* in *Heimskringla*.

⁵²³ Clunies Ross 2007, 168 does not regard these stanzas to be part of *Ragnarsdrápa*. It is clear why when the structure of the poem is considered. It is edited in the *Skaldic Project* to consist of 2 x 4 introductory verses, followed by 4 x 8 verses about the attack on Jǫrmunrekkr, concluded by a stanza of 4 verses with the *stef* which refer to this scene on the shield and Ragnarr. Then follow 4 x 8 verses about Hildr, again concluded by a stanza of 4 verses with the *stef*. *Þórr's fishing* does not fit this structure since it is 6 x 4 verses and it does not contain a concluding stanza.

which apparently was decorated with scenes from the myth of Iðunn's abduction from Ásgarðr and the battle between Þórr and Hrungnir.⁵²⁴ In the first stanza Þjóðólfr says ...*sék*... 'I see'. Ten stanzas follow on why Loki brought Iðunn to the giant Þjazi and how he brought her back. In the twelfth stanza the skald refers to the fact that he already knew the story by saying: *Heyrðak svá, at...* 'I heard this, that...', and not 'I saw'. Stanza 13 ends with the *stef*:

pats of fátt á fjalla finns ilja brú minni

baugs þák bifum fáða bifkleif at Þorleifi

'That is depicted on my bridge of the soles of the mountain-Finn

[=shield]⁵²⁵

I got the moving cliff of the shield-boss [=shield],

coloured with pictures, from Þorleifr'.⁵²⁶

Minni can mean 'memorial/memory', but it can also be the feminine dative singular possessive adjective 'my' to go with *brú*. Finnur Jónsson translates *minni* as 'my', and so does Faulkes in the glossary to his edition of Snorri's *Edda*.⁵²⁷ North translates *minni* once as 'my' to go with 'shield' in his edition, but also once as 'memorial'.⁵²⁸ This word is used in *Húsdrápa* with the meaning 'memorial/memory' (see below), but because of how the sentence is constructed in *Haustlǫng* the meaning 'my' is to be preferred.

The remaining seven stanzas of this poem relate the battle between Þórr and Hrungnir. This is introduced in stanza 14 with *sér*... 'one can see [...on the shield]'. In

⁵²⁴ The story of Iðunn's abduction is told in the beginning of *Skáldskaparmál* (also referred too as ch. 55-56 of Gylfninging, see Faulkes 1987, xxiii) and Þórr's battle with Hrungnir in ch. 17 of *Skáldskaparmál* in Snorri's *Edda*.

⁵²⁵ The mountain-Finns are the giants; the bridge of the giant's soles is a shield. This kenning refers to the story in which the giant Hrungnir stood on his shield in preparation for a fight with Þórr, see Snorri's *Edda*, *Skáldskaparmál* 17.

⁵²⁶ My translation, with reference to Faulkes 1998, vol. 2. This poem is not yet edited in the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages Project.

⁵²⁷ Jónsson, 1912-15 B.I, 17n13; Faulkes 1998 vol. 2, 252.

⁵²⁸ North 1997, 8, 56n13/5-6.

stanza 16 Þjóðólfr interjects *frák* ‘I have learned’. This could refer to the shield again as the source of this poem or to the poet having previously learned knowledge of the story. The poem ends with *lítk...* ‘I see [...on the shield]’, followed by the rest of the *stef* that mentions that Þorleifr gave Þjóðólfr the shield decorated with stories.

In the tenth-century *Húsdrápa*, the Icelandic skald Úlfr Uggason also recounts several myths. One stanza mentions a struggle between Heimdallr and Loki for Freyja’s necklace, then five half-stanzas tell of Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr, and another five describe Baldr’s funeral.⁵²⁹ It is told in Chapter 29 of *Laxdæla Saga* that Úlfr composed this poem to praise Óláfr pá and the images from tales with which the woodwork of his magnificent house was decorated. In stanza 10 Úlfr uses *þar hykk...* to refer to the sources of these stories. *Hyggja* has various meanings: ‘consider’, ‘think’, and in an accusative and infinitive construction also ‘perceive’, which is the case here.⁵³⁰

Stanzas 7 and 12 of *Húsdrápa* contain an unusual and significant *stef*: *Hlaut innan svá minnum*. There is no consensus among scholars about the meaning of this phrase.⁵³¹ Hollander renders the phrase very loosely, once as ‘Olden tales are shown here’ and once as ‘Olden tales are told here’.⁵³² Jónsson translates it as: ‘Thus [the hall] was decorated inside with [ancient] memories.’⁵³³ Turville-Petre stays close to Jónsson, but argues that this phrase was the beginning of a refrain of which the other line is lost and suggests this meaning: ‘Thus the hall was adorned with pictures (on the inside)’.⁵³⁴ Clunies Ross also sees this phrase as an incomplete *stef* and translates

⁵²⁹ The necklace *Brisingamen* is also referred to in *Prymskviða* in *Codex Regius* (The Poetic Edda), in ch. 35 of *Gylfaginning*, and on several occasions in *Skáldskaparmál* in Snorri’s *Edda*. Baldr’s funeral is described by Snorri in ch. 49 of *Gylfaginning*.

⁵³⁰ Fritzner 1954 vol. 2, 147; Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957, 303; Faulkes 1998 vol. 2, 325.

⁵³¹ This poem is not yet edited in the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages Project.

⁵³² Hollander 1945, 53-54.

⁵³³ FJ 1912-15 B.I, 129n6, 9: [*Hallen*] *blev således invendig [prydet] med [gamle] minder*. My translation.

⁵³⁴ Turville-Petre 1976, 69n4.

it as: 'Inside [i.e. in the hall] it is decorated with memorable images'.⁵³⁵ These scholars have supplied 'the hall' as subject or following the preposition *innan* 'inside'.

Faulkes translates this *stef* as follows: 'Within have appeared these motifs', with *minnum* is translated as 'motifs'.⁵³⁶ In the glossary to his later edition, Faulkes gives an additional meaning for *minni*, only for to this specific poem: 'picture intended to call something to mind'.⁵³⁷ The meaning of 'mytiske og sagnhistoriske billeder' that is provided for *minni* in *Lexicon Poeticum* is, again, given only with reference to this poem.⁵³⁸ Whether it is translated as 'memories', 'pictures', or the combination 'memorable images', its dative case indicates *minnum* is grammatically an object rather than the subject. It is evident from the overview above that this (half?) *stef* is complicated to translate and we have to conclude that indeed part of the refrain is missing. Another option is to suggest alternative meanings for some of the vocabulary. The suggestions for *minni* and some for verb *hlaut* (from *hljóta*) are mentioned above.

Faulkes translates *hljóta* as 'to appear' and, only with reference to this poem, as 'to come to be decorated (with)'.⁵³⁹ The more common meaning for *hljóta* is 'to get, to undergo, to be obliged to'.⁵⁴⁰ Because *hlaut* is the past tense 1st and 3rd person singular of *hljóta*, we would expect a singular subject. If this was intended to be the first person, however, it would most likely have been *hlautk*. For this reason, either the subject 'it' can be supplied or the subject was mentioned in the possibly missing part of the *stef*.

The dative case of *minnum*, the object of the verb *hljóta*, may be explained

⁵³⁵ Clunies Ross 2007, 177, 180.

⁵³⁶ Tr. Faulkes 1987, 74, 67.

⁵³⁷ Faulkes 1998 *vol. 2*, 356.

⁵³⁸ Egilsson and Jónsson 1931, 407; Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957, 429. It does not occur with this meaning in Fritzner 1954 *vol. 2*, 701-703.

⁵³⁹ Tr. Faulkes 1987, 74, 67; Faulkes 1998 *vol. 2*, 313. A similar meaning, albeit more cautious, is given in Egilsson and Jónsson 1931, 264: '[hallen] blev således [prydet?] med minder'.

⁵⁴⁰ Fritzner 1954 *vol. 2*, 15; Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957, 272.

in the following two ways. The verb *hljóta* is not an ‘action’-verb such as the kind that can take the dative to indicate instrumental objects in Old Norse.⁵⁴¹ The dative case of *minnum* may however still express that they were the instrument of the verb. Such an instrumental dative is common in Old Norse poetry, but it generally follows a past participle of a verb that means ‘embellished, decorated, equipped, surrounded’.⁵⁴² *Hlaut* is not a past participle but the preterite tense, and although a meaning as ‘to come to be decorated (+ dative = with)’ has been suggested (see above), this would only apply to this individual case. The other, more likely, possibility is that *minnum* is the direct object. There are several other occurrences in Old Norse where objects in the dative seem to function as a direct rather than an indirect or instrumental object.⁵⁴³

The most common meaning of *minni* is ‘memories’.⁵⁴⁴ Although alternative meanings with reference to this individual poem have been suggested (see above), the more widely attested meaning of *minni* also makes sense in this poem, especially when *innan* is read as ‘inwardly’ in the sense of inside a person’s mind, rather than ‘inside’ in the sense of in a physical structure.⁵⁴⁵ It is, however, not possible to translate *Hlaut innan svá minnum* as a complete sentence without taking liberties in rendering either the grammatical structure or the meaning of individual words. For the sentence to be meaningful while maintaining the more common meaning of *hljóta* as ‘to get’ or ‘to undergo’, we have to accept part of it is probably missing. In such a sentence, *Hlaut innan svá minnum* could be read as expressing that the poet ‘Thus got/underwent memories within/internally’, reflecting a process that happened within the poet when he saw the decorated hall.

The poetic rendering of how one individual skald (possibly) experienced the

⁵⁴¹ e.g. They shoot the arrows, in which ‘arrows’ in the dative means ‘with the arrows’.

⁵⁴² Nygaard 1905, 106-109, 113-116: ‘besat, prydet, udrustet, omgivit, etc’.

⁵⁴³ Holland 1993, 23-25.

⁵⁴⁴ Faulkes 1998 vol. 2, 356; Fritzner 1954 vol. 2, 701-703.

⁵⁴⁵ Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957, 314; Fritzner 1954 vol. 2, 209.

process of seeing and interpreting images naturally cannot be taken as evidence for a clearly defined idea of how vision worked among the intellectual elite in Viking Age Scandinavia (or in even tenth-century Iceland). It may nevertheless be assumed that his notion of perception was to some extent a shared one, since skalds tend to be part of an established tradition and a select elite.

The principles of this experience also match descriptions in modern visual communication theories. Úlfr implies that he knew the stories he recounts in *Húsdrápa*, that they were in his memory, and that they were brought to his mind, by seeing the decorations in the hall. This fits the reception theory that ‘meaning is not something that one extracts, but an experience that one has in the course of seeing’ remarkably well.⁵⁴⁶ The ‘seeing-in’ model of representation theory proposes that when we see a picture ‘we perceive the picture and then think about a scene, and our perceptions and thoughts become mixed’.⁵⁴⁷ This is also illustrated by Úlfr, if he indeed means that he underwent memories of stories prompted by images he sees in the hall.

Out of all the poems in which the skalds refer explicitly to seeing an image, only *Húsdrápa* possibly refers to how these pictures were interpreted by the poet. Úlfr Uggason seems to express that he ‘underwent’ the memory of the stories by looking at the decorations. Consequently, what he describes is not what he actually sees before him, but rather what it brings to mind within him. The poems by Bragi Boddason and Þjóðólfr ór Hvíni also refer to seeing images through expressions such as *þá má kenna, sér, and hykk*. The stories in *Ragnarsdrápa*, Bragi’s *Þórr’s fishing*, and *Haustlǫng* are furthermore described more elaborately than they could have been depicted, certainly on part of a shield. Extensive consecutive action is described, in some instances the motivation of characters is also explained, and *Haustlǫng* even

⁵⁴⁶ Barbatis 2005, 278 with references.

⁵⁴⁷ Kenney 2005, 111.

includes dialogue. What these poets probably saw were depictions of scenes or motifs from myths and legends, which stimulated them to recite these tales more fully, drawing on their previous knowledge of the material. The recalling and recounting of the narratives connected to the depicted scenes was how the skalds interacted with the images.

Húsdrápa (even in its more conventional translation), *Ragnarsdrápa*, Bragi's *Pórr's fishing*, and *Haustlong* show an important aspect of the reception of images: that they served as provocation to recount the (mythological) stories they depict scenes of, or at least refer to them. Naturally, such 'images can only evoke a story the viewer already knows'.⁵⁴⁸ These three poems are from the ninth and tenth centuries. This does not necessarily indicate a change in the attitude towards pictorial art or in the way its was interpreted after the tenth century. It can also have been the result of other developments, for instance changing poetic conventions. Later skalds still refer to images as the inspiration for their poems, only without using these first-person forms.

4.6 *Bifum fáða*: Images in poems and on stones

This section discusses how the above impression of the perception and function of images can be applied to runestone decoration. Parallels between the images described in the poems and those found on stone monuments are discussed, as well as the connection between images on memorial stones and the contents of other commemorative praise poems. A subsection is dedicated to verbal and visual references to narratives about Sigurðr Fáfnisbani. Finally poems and memorial stones that refer to several different stories are discussed.

⁵⁴⁸ Lewis 2006, 93.

Shields that are decorated with images and walls that are carved with narrative scenes such as those described in the poetry that is discussed above have not survived.⁵⁴⁹ The carved portals of some Norwegian stave churches can possibly be seen as a parallel, but although they may have originated from a similar artistic tradition, these images functioned in a very different context. Wall-hangings are closer to the sort of objects that may have inspired these poems. The most complete, though still fragmentary, Viking Age wall-hangings were found in Överhogdal in the Swedish province of Härjedalen and in the famous ninth-century Oseberg grave in Norway. These wall-hangings are decorated with images of animals, human figures, building structures, trees, ships, and carriages.

The Oseberg textiles probably hung from the rafters in the richly furnished burial chamber, but it is unlikely that they were made especially for the funeral. It is unknown how and for how long the wall-hangings were used before they were placed in the grave, but it is possible they previously decorated the walls of a building. These fragments seem to lack Christian motifs and have thus been interpreted largely in a pre-Christian context, mostly as illustrating cultic or ritual practices such as an offering and a procession.⁵⁵⁰

The Överhogdal wall-hangings were found in an outbuilding at Överhogdal church, but their provenance is uncertain. The decoration on these weaves is similar to the Oseberg material in structure, style and images. The wall-hangings contain motifs that could come from pagan or Christian tradition and they have been interpreted as depictions of anything from Ragnarök to missionary activities among the Sámi.⁵⁵¹ A reading of part of the tapestries as depictions of scenes from the

⁵⁴⁹ There are two pre-Viking Age shields with traces of paint from Jutland and literary evidence suggests Germanic tribes coloured their shields (Clunies Ross 2007, 161-162).

⁵⁵⁰ Hougen 2006.

⁵⁵¹ Horneij 1991, esp. ch. 4 and 6; Franzén and Nockert 1992, 33-50. Note that since these publications the dating of the weaves has been updated to the tenth to eleventh century, see Peterson 2006a, 148-149 with references.

Völsung stories has also been suggested.⁵⁵² It depends largely on the interpretation of the images whether the wall-hangings are likely to have been produced for church usage or for decoration of a secular building.

The structure of the decoration on the Oseberg and the Överhogdal wall-hangings is similar to that of the images on the objects described in the poems in that they combine visual references to several different stories.⁵⁵³ The poetry that mentions such decorated shields and walls, then, is largely contemporary with the custom of runestone raising in Scandinavia. It is clear that in this Viking Age visual culture images were used on memorial stones and to decorate rooms and objects. The Viking Age wall-hangings from Överhogdal and Oseberg are the sort of objects that are referred to in the poems. Geographically, they link west Scandinavia, where the image-describing poems were composed, to east Scandinavia, where most memorial stones were raised. Similar-looking ships, human figures, birds, and buildings are depicted on both visual media.

One of the Överhogdal wall-hangings, part Ia, is the only one of the surviving Viking Age Scandinavian tapestries to have runes embroidered on it. Below the image of a building the runes **kupbu** can be read, preceded by x. This word has been interpreted as 'Gúðrun' (in light of the possible Völsung scenes on the wall-hanging) or as *gubú*, 'dwelling of god(s)' (in light of the interpretation of the building as Valhalla or a church). The small cross in front of the word is a division mark and there are traces of two preceding runes. It is uncertain what runes they were, but a likely suggestion is that they read: **si, sé!** (imp. 'see!'). This construction with imperative see! + an object occurs in a few other early medieval runic inscriptions, also once combined with depicted (Christian) scenes.⁵⁵⁴ It can also be compared to the *ráða-*

⁵⁵² Most recently in Norrman 2005, 147-158.

⁵⁵³ See also Fuglesang 2007, 208, 212.

⁵⁵⁴ See Peterson 2006a for a discussion of readings and interpretations.

formulas in some runestone inscriptions.⁵⁵⁵ Rather than a caption to the image, the words below the house on the Överhogdal weave are a textual invitation or stimulation to observe the image.⁵⁵⁶

Some of the stories of which episodes are recounted in the image describing poetry are also (possibly) represented visually on memorial stones.⁵⁵⁷ As described in more detail in Chapter 2.2.3.a.iv, the god Þórr is depicted fishing for the Miðgarðsormr on U 1161 Altuna and DR EM1985;275 Hørdum. The myth of Þórr's fishing trip is also recounted in Úlfr Uggason's *Húsdrápa* (stanzas 3-6) and in more detail in Bragi's *Þórr's fishing*. Both poems describe a scene in which Þórr and the serpent stare at each other during their struggle. Bragi tells how Þórr wants to strike the monster with his hammer and that the giant Hymir cuts the line. Úlfr focuses on Þórr hitting Hymir with his hammer. Baldr's funeral procession is also described in *Húsdrápa* (stanzas 7-10). As discussed in Chapter 2.2.3.a.iv, the figure riding a four-legged beast holding a snake as a rein on DR 284 Hunnestad is often interpreted as the giantess Hyrrokkin, who came to Baldr's funeral to push the boat offshore.⁵⁵⁸ The structure of the visual processions such as on the Oseberg hangings and Gotlandic picture stones can be compared to that of Úlfr's verses about Baldr's funeral procession.⁵⁵⁹ These parallels in subject matter and in compositional structure indicate that the images on memorial stones and those that decorated wall-hangings and shields were part of the same visual tradition.

4.6.1 *Menskerðir stakk sverði myrkaurriða markar: Sigurðr Fáfnisbani in verbal and*

⁵⁵⁵ See Section 4.4.

⁵⁵⁶ The images on the Bayeux tapestry are also accompanied by text. That text, however, consists of proper *tituli* that identify the persons and actions in the depicted scenes and that elaborate on the events.

⁵⁵⁷ See for an extensive overview of other images related to this kind of poetry: Clunies Ross 2007, 166-167, 170; Fuglesang 2007, 194-203.

⁵⁵⁸ A different interpretation, which also takes into account the snake-tongue of the figure and the smaller snake in its other hand is presented in Chapter 5.4.3.

⁵⁵⁹ Clunies Ross 2007, 171.

visual memorials

A few commemorative praise poems refer to the same mythological stories from which scenes are depicted on memorial stones. These monuments are in that way also connected to skaldic poems other than those that mention images. Like commemorative praise poetry, stone memorials seek to preserve the memory of a (prominent) person by creating a lasting memorial that expresses their social and cultural identity. Both media may also refer to the people that were involved in producing them. Finally, particular features of the poems and of the memorial stones were aimed at specific contemporary (elitist) audiences, while at the same time preserving information for a future public. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.2.

The legendary hero Sigurðr is depicted on half a dozen Swedish memorial stones. A set element is the scene in which he thrusts his sword into Fáfnir, who doubles as the runic serpent. This is combined with various other scenes from the cycle of stories about Sigurðr and the Völsungs, which emphasise different themes.⁵⁶⁰ The stones that are also decorated with the pair of Sigurðr with the ring Andvaranaut and the valkyrie who offers him a drinking horn refer to heroism (Sigurðr killing Fáfnir) and also to the themes of wealth (the ring was a vital part of the treasure) and wisdom (which Sigurðr gained from the valkyrie). In other Sigurðr carvings the treasure is present as pack on the back of Sigurðr's horse Grani and referred to by Ótr, and as the ring Andvaranaut on the wrist of several protagonists. The gaining of wisdom is illustrated by Fáfnir's heart, cut from his breast by Reginn or being roasted by Sigurðr. The depiction of the birds which Sigurðr can understand after tasting the dragon blood, and from whom he learns that Reginn plans to kill him, also refer to the acquisition of knowledge. The beheaded figures on these stones illustrate the ill-

⁵⁶⁰ See Chapter 2.2.3.a.ii.

fatedness of the treasure.

It was mentioned above that a *Lausavísa* by Þorfinnr munnr (d. 1030) in praise of King Óláfr Haraldsson, the later St Óláfr, describes a depiction of Sigurðr who has killed Fáfnir and prepares to roast his heart. Scenes from the legend of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani are also described in several other skaldic praise poems without necessarily referring to actual depictions of these scenes.

In each of the four surviving stanzas of Illugi bryndælaskáld's *Poem about Haraldr hárfórði* (first half of the eleventh century) heroic events from King Haraldr's life are mentioned in combination with episodes from the legend of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani. The King's battles are linked to Sigurðr stabbing Fáfnir, his journey to the east is paired with Sigurðr roasting Fáfnir's heart, Haraldr's undertakings in Frankia are mentioned alongside Sigurðr's quest for Brynhildr, and Haraldr's victory in Saxony is paired with King Atli's invitation to Hǫgni and Gunnar. The reference to Brynhildr is ambiguous and it is largely interpreted in light of the two more unambiguous references to Sigurðr. The scenes with Sigurðr himself that are referred to in these poems are the same as those that are depicted on the runestones. Only the wider *Vǫlsung* material involving King Atli, Hǫgni and Gunnar is not depicted as such on the stone monuments.

In the late-tenth-century *Sigurðardrápa*, Kormákr Ögmundarson praises Sigurðr Hákonarson Hlaðajarl's generosity and skills in battle and concludes stanzas 3-7 (in stanza 6 twice) with a *stef* briefly mentioning a mythological scene:

- *seið Yggir til Rindar* 'Ygg [Óðinn] won Rind by spells'
- *komsk Urðr ór brunni* 'Urðr rose from the well'
- *sitr Þórr í reiðu* 'Þórr sits in his chariot'
- *veltu goð Þjatsa* 'The gods tricked Þjázi'
- *vá gramr til menja* 'Gramr won treasure'

- *fór Hroptr með Gungni* ‘Hropt [Oðinn] took Gungnir’

Gramr is the name of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani’s sword, so in this poem the reference may be to Sigurðr’s sword instead of to the hero himself.⁵⁶¹

4.6.2 *Fjölð sagna*: Multiple images, a multitude of stories?

The depictions of Sigurðr and the valkyrie on Gs 19 Ockelbo and Gs 2 Österfärnebo are combined with other figural images that, unlike the other images on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm cannot be interpreted convincingly in the context of the Völsung stories.⁵⁶² These images may instead refer to other narratives, in the manner of the praise poem *Sigurðardrápa* by Kormákr Qgmundarson mentioned above.

For instance, the animal that draws the wagon on Gs 19 Ockelbo possibly represents a goat, which makes this image a possible parallel to the *stef* in stanza 5 of *Sigurðardrápa*: *sitr Þórr í reiðu* ‘Þórr sits in his chariot’. Some of the images on Gs 19 bear resemblance to the processions that are depicted on wall-hangings and on Gotlandic picture stones. The motif may be connected to the mythological funeral procession of Baldr, which is also mentioned in Úlfr Uggason’s *Húsdrápa*.

The connection between the different (mythological) scenes that are mentioned may not be clear, but Kormákr shows that they all relate to the subject of the poem: the commemorated leader. This principle is also applied in Illugi bryndælaskáld’s *Poem about Haraldr hárdráði*, as discussed above, but here the different scenes are all from the legendary narrative about Sigurðr. The same principle was practised on the Viking Age wall-hangings and on several Gotlandic picture stones. Some of them even also contain images that (may) refer to the Völsung stories combined with scenes, motifs, or symbols that refer to other

⁵⁶¹ *Gramr* can also mean ‘ruler’, e.g. ‘prince’ or ‘king’.

⁵⁶² See Chapter 2.2.3.a.ii.

narrative material.⁵⁶³

The Altuna stone (U 1161) is also decorated with multiple images that do not form a consecutive story. The images of Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr, the horseman, and the figure on the ladder-like structure with a bird on its shoulder (probably Óðinn on *Hliðskjálf*) are carved on a narrow side of the stone. The broader adjacent side is decorated with a large depiction of a bird sinking its claws and beak into the neck of a quadruped with serpentine features. The images on the Västerljug stone (Sö 40) also cannot be interpreted as part of one narrative. The two-headed figure with the looping belt is carved above a large stylised quadruped that is intertwined with smaller snakes and a smaller quadruped that resembles a horse. The image of another human figure, who sits on a chair with snakes wrapped around its limbs, is carved at the bottom of the adjacent side with an interlace pattern with animal heads and small snakes above it. At the far top of this side is a modest cross. Images and scenes that do not seem to refer to one story are also combined on the Sparlösa stone (Vg 119) and on the Hunnestad monument as a whole (DR 282-286).⁵⁶⁴

These narratives can be mythological or legendary and they may also refer to historical events or cultural practices. The inscription on the early Viking Age runestone at Rök (Ög 136) illustrates this. After the memorial formula, this inscription refers to several narratives (rather than telling the stories in full), in the form of what may be seen as a question-and-answer routine.⁵⁶⁵ The references to the stories are 'spoken' by a first person singular and there are chronological markers used within this section. The references are not placed in chronological relation to the establishment of the memorial that is mentioned in the first part of the

⁵⁶³ On Gotlandic picture stones: Lärbro St Hammars I and Lärbro Tängelgårda I (Andrén 1989, 298-299); possible Gunnarr in snake-pit: Klinte Hunninge I (Fuglesang 2007, 204); on Överhogdal wall-hanging (Norrman 2005, 147-158).

⁵⁶⁴ See Chapter 2.2.3 and some of the human figures are also discussed further in Chapter 5.4.3.

⁵⁶⁵ Harris 2006.

inscription, however. Consequently it is unknown what role any actual telling of the stories played in the process of commemoration.

4.6.2.a The order

The decorated memorial stones illustrate two types of visual communication. The images of Sigurðr on U 1163 Drävle and Gs 9 Årsunda and Þórr on U 1161 Altuna and DR EM1985;275 Hørdum are visual narratives in symbolic form: a single scene represents a whole story. In contrast, the story of Sigurðr on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm, the nativity on the Norwegian Dynna stone (N 68), and the falling warrior on Ög 181 Ledberg, are ‘told’ through multiple images that represent different consecutive stages in the same story.⁵⁶⁶

On Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm, a number of images depict various events from the narratives of how Sigurðr Fáfnisbani gained the illustrious Niebelung treasure. When the images on these monuments, however, are ‘read’ from left to right or from top to bottom, they are not arranged in the order of the events in the story. So the audience has to know the story to be able to ‘read’ the images in chronological order.

The Norwegian Dynna stone (N 68) tells the story of the three Magi visiting the infant Christ (in a combination of the Nativity and Adoration). Here there seems to be a chronological order from top to bottom. At the top, below the cross, is the star (with the Christ child) that leads the Magi, who are depicted below that on their way. At the bottom, finally, one of them presents a gift to the holy family in the grotto.

Also on the Swedish Ledberg stone (Ög 181), the images depict a sequence of

⁵⁶⁶ A similar distinction has been observed among the design structures of Gotlandic picture stones and this has been compared to ‘epic’ and ‘wisdom’ poetry by Andrén 1989, 296-297.

events when 'read' top-down starting on the front. We see how the warrior loses more and more of his weapons, falls victim to 'a beast of battle, the wolf', and collapses. The ship forms an interruption in this sequence, unless it is seen as another stage in the story of this warrior's fall.

For those monuments that contain multiple images that do not form a sequential narrative, the order in which they are perceived does not have to follow the set course of a particular narrative. Consequently it might not matter too much in which order they are interpreted. In the praise poems that are constructed according to this principle the references to stories are communicated to the public in a pre-arranged order. On memorial stones, the images that represent narratives or symbolise concepts might be put in 'order' by the carver though the use of visual clues, position, and size.

A larger image will be seen before a smaller one and the position on the stone can only to a lesser extent influence the prominence of an image. The visual analysis in Chapter 2.5 and 2.9 has shown that most images on monuments with more than two pieces of figural decoration are the same size and also those on just under half of the stones that are decorated with two images. Among the images that do have different sizes, however, this can only be discerned with some consistency among a few image types. Furthermore, ornamentation is used sparingly as signifying visual aid. The position of the images in relation to each other, finally, does not seem to indicate an order in which the images should be 'read'. It does nevertheless indicate a hierarchy of meaning for individual cases.⁵⁶⁷ Consequently, it seems that for most memorial stones, unlike in commemorative poems, the order in which images were perceived was not something that the carvers aimed to prescribe.

This is not the case for the visual relation between figural images and

⁵⁶⁷ See Chapters 2.5, 2.9-2.10.

crosses. It seems a hierarchy of visual prominence was created between these kinds of carving elements.⁵⁶⁸ In particular when warrior imagery is combined with a cross, visual reference to heroism is visually more prominent than the Christian message.

4.7 Conclusion

A small number of runestone inscriptions explicitly invite the audience to 'interpret'. Analysis of these inscriptions shows that they may refer to one aspect of the monument, such as the inscription or the decoration, but possibly also to the memorial as a whole. As a result of how the carvings were arranged on the stone, the images were perceived before the runic text could be read. On the majority of monuments the individual images are also several times larger than the runes. Moreover, through neurological processes pictures make an earlier and stronger impression on the viewer than text. As a consequence, the process of interpreting the images will have begun before the viewer has started to decipher the runic text.

The different optional visual and textual elements of runestone design functioned quite independently from each other, even when a certain relation between them seems to have existed.⁵⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the presence of the one influences the perception of the other and their combination has implications for the interpretation of the monument. For instance, stones that are decorated with figural images tend to contain more optional elements in the inscription too. As a result, the presence of an image together with the length of the inscription could have created an expectation that more than the standard memorial formula would be found in the runic text. This could have functioned as a sort of signposting: here is a monument with unusual decoration, you can also expect to find more elaborate information

⁵⁶⁸ See Chapter 2.6.

⁵⁶⁹ See Chapter 3.

than usual in the inscription.

It can generally not be predicted, however, on the basis of the type of images what kind of optional elements the inscription might contain. Only when it is an image of a ship or a mask-like face, especially in Södermanland, one could expect to find the commemorated man was called a *þegn* or a *drengr*. The viewer of such a monument might also be aware that the chances were the inscription was partly in verse and that more than one runic script would be found. Of course, the viewer would have to be rather familiar with memorial stones and the communication strategies that were employed on them to recognise such visual clues.

The interpretation of the images on these monuments, then, is likely to have been a similar process to what is described in contemporary accounts of seeing and interpreting images in poetry. From how Úlfr Uggason, Bragi Boddason, and Þjóðólfr ór Hvini refer to images in their poems, it seems they saw depictions of a figure or scene from mythological or legendary tales that stimulated them to recite the stories in more detail. Images on memorial stones may similarly have evoked particular narratives in the observer's mind and have prompted the viewer to recall and in some circumstances recount related narratives. The 'seeing-in' model of representation theory further supports this approach.

There is regularly no common theme between the images on on stone. When one image on a monument is identified, the other images are often assumed to refer to the same narrative or theme. For instance, U 1161 Altuna is decorated with an image of Þórr's fishing and probably one of Óðinn on *Hliðskjálf*. The interpretations of the armed rider on the same monument as another god or possibly a valkyrie that have been put forward in the light of this to match the other two mythological figures are not very convincing. The same is the case for the horseman on U 855 Böksta. It has been suggested that he might be Óðinn, because the other human

figure that is depicted on the stone is likely to represent the hunting god Ullr. A third example is Gs 19 Ockelbo. Several attempts have been made to interpret all the images on this runestone as figures from the Völsung stories, because Sigurðr Fáfnisbani is/was also depicted on it.⁵⁷⁰

Such interpretations are often not satisfactory, and they are also not necessary. As in Illugi bryndælaskáld's *Digt om Haraldr harðráði*, Kormákr Ögmundarson's *Sigurðardrápa*, and Þorfinnr munnr's *Lausavísur*, in which the different legendary and mythological narratives are linked to the person who is praised, the connection between these stories or motifs would have been the commemorated person. An example of the same principle in a runestone inscription is the early Viking Age runestone at Rök (Ög 136). The various narratives and concepts that are represented visually on a memorial stone were probably connected in some way to the commemorated person's identity and the memory their family wanted to create.

No systematic way of indicating an order among a combination of scenes or motifs on the memorial stones can be discerned. Visual hierarchy is indicated in some cases, however, especially in the combination with Christian crosses. Also when several images together represent various stages of a sequential narrative, the order in which they are to be read is not always indicated through visual means. Only on Ög 181 Ledberg and possibly N 68 Dynna is there possibly a chronological order from top to bottom, but not on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm. The order of the various scenes from the Sigurðr narratives may not have been relevant, because, as in the poems by Illugi bryndælaskáld and Kormákr Ögmundarson, the images refer to various themes (heroism, gaining wisdom and wealth), only from the same story.

The narratives that are represented by images on the monuments are

⁵⁷⁰ See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of the images and their interpretations.

legendary and mythological. In parallel to some of the inscription elements discussed in Chapter 3.2, narratives represented by images can hypothetically also be about the commemorated person. Other runestone images do not represent a narrative as such, but are symbols for abstract concepts through which an ideology or world view is expressed. Semiotics and representation theories explain that figural images can denote the real object they resemble and simultaneously be symbolic for an abstract concept. The images in question need not have been restricted to only one of these functions. An image can be an element in a visual narrative, e.g. the sword of Sigurðr, and simultaneously represent a concept, e.g. power.

In reconstructing the cognitive aspect of Viking Age visual communication, this chapter touched upon poetry as a commemorative tool that expresses identity and creates memories. Funerary practices were another medium with similar functions. The actions that were performed during a burial and/or later at the grave as part of the commemorative act were another exponent of Viking Age visual culture. The next chapter will show that the visual language that was employed during (older) mortuary practices was to a large extent the same as that which we encounter on Viking Age memorial stones.

Chapter 5. The social context of images: Runestones, burials, and rituals

5.1 Introduction

Various cultural and political changes that took place in Scandinavia during the Viking Age have influenced the regional and chronological distribution of memorial stones and indeed the general development of the custom. One of these factors is the introduction of Christianity, and as discussed in earlier chapters, most runestones are explicitly Christian monuments. That these memorial stones became a way to express social and economic status and to honour the dead instead of grave goods, which under Christian influence should be used instead as payment for prayers for the soul of the deceased,⁵⁷¹ is, however, too simplistic. It seems that runestones were not only a reaction to Christianity, but often played an active role in the establishment and advocating of the new religion.⁵⁷² In eleventh-century Uppland, for instance, runestones may have had a specific function as a substitute for a church building to consecrate a burial ground.⁵⁷³ The Swedish runestones with prayers may also have had a function in the Christian practice of intercession, indulgence, and redemption.⁵⁷⁴

It is often argued that the process of state formation in Viking Age Scandinavia has also influenced the distribution pattern of runestones, especially in Denmark.⁵⁷⁵ This approach has also been criticised for not taking into account the

⁵⁷¹ e.g. Sawyer and Sawyer 2002, 93.

⁵⁷² e.g. Gräslund and Lager 2008, 634-637.

⁵⁷³ Gräslund 1987, 256-258.

⁵⁷⁴ Williams 1996a, 294-296.

⁵⁷⁵ e.g. Randsborg 1981, 108-111.

complicated chronology of (Danish) runestones.⁵⁷⁶ These monuments do seem to reflect the need for expression of status and power due to changes in the social structure.⁵⁷⁷ It has been stated that the religious and political forces and the new needs that came with them, among which the need to replace burial customs, cannot be the only explanation for the runestone distribution, but that specific needs in commemoration practices were at play too.⁵⁷⁸ The impact of Christianisation and changing political organisation, resulting in cultural and social changes, also varied from region to region and from early to late Viking Age.⁵⁷⁹

As a product of the transitional period in which substantial political and religious changes took place, the Viking Age memorial stones of Scandinavia as a collective show traits of both the old and the new cultures. For instance, expressions of the old system of beliefs and the new Christian religion are both found on the monuments. As discussed in Chapter 3.2.3, the handful of invocations to Þórr in the memorial inscriptions are overshadowed by the number of short Christian prayers for the soul. Mention is also made of the construction of bridges and roads and occasionally of baptismal clothes and pilgrimage. Again a handful of memorial stones are decorated with Þórr's hammers, but Christian crosses are carved on the majority.

In addition to expressing an individual's or family's position in a changing religious and social/political situation, memorial stones also had a role in the context of death and commemoration. The first may have been a more public function, with a message aimed at society, and the second a more personal, private one. In this social context, runestones are a prolongation of the earlier burial and

⁵⁷⁶ Stoklund 1991, 295-296.

⁵⁷⁷ Wason 1994, 93-94.

⁵⁷⁸ Williams 1996a, 294-296; Zilmer 2010, 141; Sawyer 2000, 19. Sawyer 2000, 20 also remarks that runestones do not seem to have been an actual replacement for richly furnished graves, since the ratio of memorials for men and women does not correspond to the ratio of male and female in rich burials.

⁵⁷⁹ A current research project that hopes to answer precisely such questions is the Jellingprojektet 'Runesten i kontekst', in which Lisbeth Imer places the Danish runestones in relation to Christianity and the Jelling dynasty. <<http://jelling.natmus.dk/om-projektet/delprojekter/runesten-i-kontekst>>

commemoration customs. This, and how the practices of (pre-Christian) burials and runestones relate to each other chronologically and conceptually, is discussed in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

In addition, memorial stones and burials function in the same context of death, commemoration, and display of identity, and they are part of the same Viking Age visual culture. The burial event itself was a highly visual experience and the grave that was the result of this performance and that contained its remains was often marked in the landscape.

The shared visual language of burials and carved stones is explored in this chapter. There are many parallels between objects and animals that were used in burial ceremonies and those that are depicted on runestones. The weapons on memorial stones and in burials are studied in more detail to illustrate how the function of images of such objects on runestones may be reconstructed by comparing this to their use in burials. After this, several depictions of human figures on memorial stones are discussed in the context of ritual practices and religious performance. As background to these comparisons between the visual culture of burials and memorial stones, their chronologies and (shared) functions are discussed in more detail first.

5.2 Chronology

Although runestones are typical for the Viking Age and went through significant developments in this period, the custom of raising them was not new. There are a number of pre-Viking Age runestones, of which both the majority and the earliest ones were raised in Norway. The early runic monuments of the Migration period were mostly connected to burial mounds or grave fields, but only ever one such

stone was found per burial ground.⁵⁸⁰ Of these early runic monuments, only U 1125 in Krogsta and U 877 in Möjbro are decorated with figural images. The tradition of raising runestones was for a long time simultaneous with the Iron Age custom of creating large burial monuments shaped as mounds or stone settings and costly furnished burials. As the latter custom diminished, however, the raising of memorial stones became more popular and in a way started to function as a prolongation of these burial and commemoration practices.

In the late Iron Age, grave goods had become richer and more diverse than in previous times.⁵⁸¹ The objects found in the graves, whether cremation or inhumation, are often interpreted as the personal belongings of the deceased and equipment for the journey to a realm of the dead and the afterlife.⁵⁸² Since they simultaneously indicate social and economic status,⁵⁸³ grave goods also had a function for the living. Not all items found in burials need to have had the same functions, however. It is more likely that different objects and animals served various purposes in the burial practices, which were aimed at influencing remembrance and commemoration.⁵⁸⁴ This may have involved referring to the historical and legendary past and stories of origin myths.⁵⁸⁵

Many late Iron Age Scandinavian burials, especially the position of the body, animals, and objects or their burnt remains, as well as the construction and final shape of the grave, show that they must have been created during rather elaborate events, possibly on multiple occasions.⁵⁸⁶ From archaeological excavations of the remains, it is clear that these practices varied greatly, even in the same phase of one burial ground. In some burials many different animals were involved, while others

⁵⁸⁰ Imer 2011.

⁵⁸¹ Müller-Wille 1993a, 58.

⁵⁸² Gräslund 2002, 47; Roesdahl 1982, 166.

⁵⁸³ Jesch 1991, 27-28; Wason 1994, 93-94.

⁵⁸⁴ Härke 2003.

⁵⁸⁵ Andrén 1989, 209-310; Price 2010, 137-148.

⁵⁸⁶ Herschend 2001, 68-71 for Valsgårde; Gansum and Risan 1999 for Oseberg.

seem to have focused more on weapons. Ships and wagons could be part of the construction of the grave or cremation pyre. There is also a great variety in the use of fire, stones and earth to transform and/or cover the body of the deceased, the assortment of animals and objects and their container. Possible descriptions of the sort of practices that were performed at such occasions refer to drinking, sex, violence, and music.⁵⁸⁷

Furnished graves as the end-result of such burial rites became less common from the late tenth century onwards.⁵⁸⁸ This is the time in the Viking Age when the runestone tradition took root in Denmark.⁵⁸⁹ When Christian burial customs gradually replaced the older practices, memorial stones were given a place in the new tradition. There is usually no more than one runestone per burial ground, and they do not seem to have been connected to any grave in particular.⁵⁹⁰ Thus, although often associated with burial grounds, memorial stones did generally not function as grave markers. In this they differ from the early-Iron Age uncarved *bauta*-stones, mounds and stone settings, and from medieval gravestones, which were all directly associated with individual graves.

The chronology of both carved memorial stones and burials can be difficult to determine.⁵⁹¹ However, it is clear that pre-Christian burial practices and the erection of runestones overlapped chronologically for some time during the transition period of the late Viking Age and early Middle Ages. In eleventh-century Gotland pagan and Christian burials occurred simultaneously.⁵⁹² Due to a general scarcity of grave goods, it is difficult to identify late-Viking Age burials in Denmark as

⁵⁸⁷ Price 2008b, with references; 2010; Nielsen 2009.

⁵⁸⁸ Müller-Wille 1993b, 237.

⁵⁸⁹ Comp. Chapter 2.3.

⁵⁹⁰ Klos 2009, 301.

⁵⁹¹ e.g. Stoklund 1991.

⁵⁹² e.g. Gräslund 2000, 85.

pagan or Christian.⁵⁹³ Another example of such an overlap is Uppland, where a number of pre-Christian burials were created in the eleventh century and even a few in the early twelfth century.⁵⁹⁴ This development coincides with the peak of the runestone carving fashion in this area and continues even after this. By that time the raising of memorial stones was certainly a largely Christian tradition. Nevertheless, even a burial ground where a Christian runestone was erected, possibly to consecrate it, could contain both older pre-Christian graves and pagan or early Christian burials that were more or less contemporary with the runestone.⁵⁹⁵

In addition to a chronological overlap between the two practices, there was also a geographical one. Many Swedish Viking Age memorial stones were erected on or close to older burial grounds, more than at other landscape features such as roads or waterways.⁵⁹⁶ They seem to have been placed particularly with grave mounds and (round) stone settings, which are Vendel Period and Viking Age burial types.⁵⁹⁷ The factors for deciding the location for a burial and the location for a runestone seem to have been similar and both include the re-use of older burial sites.⁵⁹⁸

This geographical connection between memorial stones and (older) burials allowed the new tradition still to be linked to the old burial places and through this to the old traditions.⁵⁹⁹ Earlier, this principle also occurred the other way round, as an example from Tomtebodå illustrates. Here, older carved stones were demolished and parts of them were integrated in the cairns and stone settings that were put up over Vendel Period cremation burials.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹³ Nilsson 2010, 387.

⁵⁹⁴ Broberg 1991, 49-62.

⁵⁹⁵ Gräslund 1987, 255-259.

⁵⁹⁶ Gräslund 1987, 250-256; Klos 2009, 83, 114-118.

⁵⁹⁷ Klos 2009, 85-87; Müller-Wille 1993a, 59, figure 4.

⁵⁹⁸ Thäte 2009.

⁵⁹⁹ Gräslund 2000, 89.

⁶⁰⁰ Gustavson and others 2006, 262-263.

5.3 The shared function of runestones and burials

The complex of mortuary practices as described above functioned in a social context to create and publicly display identities, among other things by referring back to the past, and to deal with inheritance issues.⁶⁰¹ This accounts for runestones as well, insomuch as the genealogies and occasional mentions of property in the inscriptions are taken as indications of inheritance practices.⁶⁰² Also the 'fragmentary, incomplete, partial, conceptual and selective'⁶⁰³ nature of the remains of burial practices can be recognised in the textual and decorative carvings on memorial stones. Especially the latter, with its intricate patterns of loops and knots, also combines aspects of 'display and concealment' just as the objects and bodies in a grave.⁶⁰⁴ Whereas 'graves afforded a context of brief display',⁶⁰⁵ however, the carvings on memorial stones are long-lasting. That is, unless the original paint was not re-applied, but allowed to fade and vanish. In that case, a memorial stone would slowly transform from a medium with a highly visual display of carvings via a monument with un-painted carvings that were only visible up-close to eventually a marking in the landscape on which the carvings can only be found when moss and dirt is removed. Although the inclusion of runestones in later churchwalls was unlikely to be anticipated by the original commissioners of the monuments, this can have prolonged their commemorative function. At the same time the memorial stones functioned as a more general link to the past.

⁶⁰¹ Williams and Sayer 2009, 3 with references; Härke 2003. Although the background of these authors, esp. Howard Williams, lies in Anglo-Saxon material culture, the studies that I refer to here and below discuss Viking Age Scandinavian material in its own right and as parallels to strengthen the argument about Anglo-Saxon material.

⁶⁰² Sawyer 2000.

⁶⁰³ Williams and Sayer 2009, 21.

⁶⁰⁴ Williams, Ho. 2007, 108.

⁶⁰⁵ Williams, Ho. 2007, 113.

It seems logical that actions of some kind were also performed as part of the process of putting up a memorial stone.⁶⁰⁶ Commemoration practices may also have been carried out at the monument later. The immediate surroundings of only a few runestones have been excavated, but with some of these the remains of structures and of offerings of food or animals have been found.⁶⁰⁷ More archaeological work in this field has been done on Gotland. Remains of constructions, and also deposits and burials, were identified at the sites of various of the picture stones there.⁶⁰⁸

There is not enough (archaeological) information to reconstruct general practices that were carried out around memorial stones at the time of the carving and erection or at a later stage in the commemoration process. Since several individual cases of this are known, especially with some Gotlandic picture stones and at a few runestones, it seems likely that similar actions would have taken place in other places too.

A counterpart of such traditions may be the practices that some runestone inscriptions refer to. For example, the inscriptions on half a dozen monuments seem to invoke protection against practices by workers of *seiðr*, a complex of sorcery, divination, and magic. The memorial inscriptions on these monuments end with variations on *At ræta(?) sá verði er stein þenna elti(?) eða ept annan dragi*, ‘A warlock be he who damages(?) this stone or drags it (to stand) in memory of another’ (DR 209).⁶⁰⁹

The carvings on memorial stones generally include text, while the performance of burial rites presumably included an oral component. The runestone inscriptions, however, also contain various oral influences. The prayers and

⁶⁰⁶ Zilmer (2011, 74-78) discusses this with reference to the hypothesis that carving of (multiple) crosses on runestones was part of a blessings ceremony. She shows that the material does not support the idea of such a standard blessing practice, although it remains a possibility this happened occasionally.

⁶⁰⁷ Ljung and Thedéen *in press*.

⁶⁰⁸ Ljung and Thedéen *in press*; Andrén 1989, 291, 303.

⁶⁰⁹ Vg 67, DR 81, DR 83, DR 209, DR 230, DR 338.

alliterative verse in runestone inscriptions possibly go back to oral commemorative traditions and funerary texts.⁶¹⁰ As such, the runic band serves as a representation of the commemorative speech-act.⁶¹¹ Also the spelling in runestone inscriptions can reflect an oral aspect of the carvings.⁶¹² On a cultural and cognitive level, the written commemoration of the runic inscription also functions similarly to the oral commemoration of skaldic verse and the recording of the commemorative act.⁶¹³

The physical interaction with the deceased and the transformation of the dead body were important aspects of the funerary practices, because the strong emotion this evokes helps to create memories, both of the deceased and of the funeral itself.⁶¹⁴ This interaction was most likely not part of any practices related to the memorial stones, because they are generally not connected to the graves of the people that are commemorated on them.⁶¹⁵ These aspects seem to be separated more in the later Viking Age when the mnemonic function is taken over by the memorials. The inhumation of the dead bodies still involved performances and practices, but objects and animals played a much less prominent role, especially animals, and were soon absent. The only material traces of Christian burial traditions, apart from the dress and position of the body in the grave, is formed by wax candles that are found exceptionally in a few burials.⁶¹⁶ Burial rods or knives also occur sometimes in 'otherwise' Christian graves.⁶¹⁷ Perhaps a less intense action was needed to ensure embedding of the event in personal and communal memory, because of the longer lasting nature of carvings in stone compared to the relatively

⁶¹⁰ Zilmer 2012, 407-408; Zilmer 2010, 145-146.

⁶¹¹ Jesch 1998, 467-468.

⁶¹² Jesch 1998, 470-471; Lagman 1989, 29-31

⁶¹³ Jesch 2005a.

⁶¹⁴ Williams, Ho. 2007.

⁶¹⁵ Also, on a large number of runestones the inscription states or implies that the commemorated died abroad or under other circumstances that resulted in there not being a body 'at home' to bury (Williams, He. 1996a, 308-309).

⁶¹⁶ Gräslund 2002, 49-50.

⁶¹⁷ Ljung and Thedéen *in press*.

brief display during the funeral.

Burials and memorial stones are both concerned with the public commemoration of the dead and display of the social and economic status of the living through actions and their physical, visual remains. That runestones were also erected at locations other than burial grounds suggests that in the later Viking Age commemoration and status display could be carried out more and more away from the grave and be connected to memorial stones instead.

5.4 A shared visual language: Objects, animals, and performance

The visual language that was employed on memorial stones and in burials in the context of commemoration and communication was to a large extent a shared one. The burial event was a visual performance, involving animals and objects as 'props', as well as the dead body, the physical landscape, and possibly also the living. Most of the items that are found in ninth- to early-eleventh-century burials as remains of the funerary practices were also depicted on memorial stones. These objects are listed briefly below and the weapons are discussed in more detail. Next, the animals in burials and on runestones are compared. Finally, images of particular human figures that also could be visual references to (burial) practices and (ritual) performances are discussed. Together, the following sections illustrate that not only the runestones as a phenomenon echo the older burial and memorial traditions, but also the various carvings on them.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁸ A different, yet related, view is held by Klos 2009, 318-320. She argues that grave goods reflect both literal aspects of the deceased's life as well as an ideal image with regard to status and regards the references in runestone inscriptions to the commemorated person's 'occupation' or skills as replacement for this.

5.4.1 Objects in graves and on runestones

Ships are one of the most common figurative images on memorial stones and they are also prominent markers of Viking Age burials. Boats were used in graves as a container for the body and (cremation) burials could be topped by stones arranged as the outline of a ship. Such ship settings also occur without burials. The use of ships, or ship-shapes, in burials has been associated with an idea of the ship of the dead as transport to the afterlife, and it is also commonly seen as a worldly status symbol with possibly an additional function of representing the deceased person's occupation, since they are found mostly in coastal areas.⁶¹⁹

Ships on memorial stones are interpreted as Naglfar (and as such as a symbol for Ragnarök); as Freyr's magical ship Skíðbladnir; and as the ship of the dead; but also as a symbol for the Christian church.⁶²⁰ Many of the pre-Viking Age and Viking Age Gotlandic picture stones also contain images of ships. These have been interpreted by Andrén as the Gotlandic equivalent of the ship burials of the Scandinavian mainland, which are not found on Gotland. There is also a further correspondence between the contents of these ship burials and the images on the picture stones of Gotland.⁶²¹

It was predominantly men who were buried in ships or whose burials were shaped as one, but certainly not exclusively so. One of the richest ship burials in Scandinavia, at Oseberg, was of a woman. The Viking Age boat burial at Scar on the Orcadian island of Sanday contained three bodies, a man in his thirties, a child, and a woman in her seventies.⁶²² The memorial stones that are decorated with ships also commemorate men, with the partial exception of Vs 17 Råby, which is erected by a

⁶¹⁹ DuBois 1999,74; Crumlin-Pedersen 1995, 93; Capelle 1986, 33-35.

⁶²⁰ See Chapter 2.2.3.

⁶²¹ Andrén 1989, 306-310. Based on their form, it seems these picture stones are indeed connected to the commemoration of men, see Andrén 1989, 291. Spurkland 2005, 71 also discusses the images of ships on Gotlandic picture stones in the context of the cult of the dead and grave rituals as a symbol for 'the transition from this world to the next, or possibly the soul's journey to the land of the dead'.

⁶²² Owen and Dalland 1999.

man to commemorate his wife and himself. Because ships occur on runestones with and without a Christian cross as mast, with and without shields along the edges, and with and without people in them, they may not all have had the same meaning. Just as with ships in the burial context, the possibility of multiple meanings of depictions of them should not be excluded.

Wagons are less commonly found in graves and they seem to have been reserved for high-status women.⁶²³ Wagons are depicted on only very few memorial stones. On the now lost Gs 19 from Ockelbo, a wagon with a human figure seated in it was drawn by a small quadruped. On the surviving drawings of this stone the figure seems to be holding something, but it is not visible what. On a fragment, also from Gästrikland (Gs 18c), half of what seems to have been a wagon is visible and a man with a cross is sitting in it. Because the figure is male and carries a cross-staff, the wagon on Gs 18c does not have the same context as those used in high-status female burials. The image on Gs 19, on the other hand may have had a parallel in the drawn wagons with seated figures that seem to have been depicted on the weaves found in the Oseberg ship burial.

This burial, in which two women were accompanied by extraordinarily rich grave goods, must have been an impressive and dramatic event. The weaves in the burial seem to have been decorated with a depiction of a procession. Other scenes on the weaves also seem to have depicted ritualistic practices, for example the female figures that are walking with raised swords underneath a tree from which bodies hang.⁶²⁴ It has been proposed that there may have been a connection between the images on the wall-hangings and the practices with which the burial was carried out, or that they had a connection to the deceased woman's role in the

⁶²³ Staecker 2003, 479-472. Some of these have been interpreted as cult leaders or performers of rituals in either pagan or Christian religion (Price 2002, 149-157).

⁶²⁴ Most parts of the textiles are badly worn, but many of the images can still be recognised. Nevertheless, it may be that they were in better condition at the time the older, more detailed descriptions and drawings were made (Hougen 2006, 132 Appendix by Nockert)

community, which, judging by the objects and grandeur she was buried with, must have been important.⁶²⁵

The handful of Þórr's hammers that are carved on memorial stones can be regarded as a parallel to the small metal hammers that are found in graves. Often hammer-shaped pendants that occur in graves were worn as jewellery or amulets by the deceased person. In the Mälär valley small iron hammers attached to a large ring had a role in some funerary traditions. These hammers might be closer in function to those on memorials than to the hammer-jewellery in that they had a more visual role in the commemorative practice. The rings were placed on top of or inside the urn with the cremated remains. This occurred in ninth- to tenth-century burials, and possibly into the eleventh century. The function of these Þórr's hammer-rings might be sought in a combination of protection (the hammer) and rebirth or fertility (the ring), possibly more for the living than the dead.⁶²⁶ The combination of a hammer and a circle is also found on Sö 86 S. Åby ägor, where the inscription band is circle-shaped, with a Þórr's hammer in the centre.

The hammer might have had other cultic functions too. The myths recorded by Snorri about Þórr using his hammer to restore a dead goat to life and to hallow the boat at Baldr's funeral, as well as the reference in *Þrymskviða* to Mjöllnir being used during a wedding ceremony might be echoes of this.⁶²⁷ The most common interpretation of the other images of Þórr's hammers on memorial stones is as a symbolic reference to the god Þórr, with an apotropaic function.⁶²⁸ The possibility that they are visual representations of hammers as ritual objects should also be considered.

⁶²⁵ Ingstad 1995; Price 2002, 159-160.

⁶²⁶ Andersson 2005.

⁶²⁷ Snorri's *Edda*, *Gylfaginning* 44, 49; *Þrymskviða*, str. 30. Mees (2009, 684), goes even further and suggests that the verbal and visual references to Þórr's hammers on runestones reflect an established practice of oral invocations to that god during older burial rites as another connection of Þórr with memorial practices.

⁶²⁸ See Chapter 2.2.3.

The carving on Sö 86 S. Åby ägor also contains a face, placed above the hammer. It has been interpreted as that of Þórr in light of the large hammer, as well as (independently) in relation to literary descriptions of the god's features and possible other visual representations of him.⁶²⁹ The combination of a Þórr's hammer and a face is known from hammer pendants such as the tenth-century Scanian example (Figure 4). There, the shaft of the hammer is topped by two eyes with eyebrows and a nose.

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 4. Hammer pendant, Skåne.

Figure 5. Figurine from Aska.

The carvings on Sö 86 S. Åby ägor also have a compositional parallel in the Aska figurine (Figure 5). The female figure is interpreted as Freyja, possibly pregnant, or a *völva* (sorceress), and is surrounded by a ring that is seen as a fertility symbol.⁶³⁰ It was found in a grave that also contained a staff and an other unusual pendant of a man's face. It has been suggested the pendant of the face might have functioned as a symbol for the head of Mímir, Óðinn's oracle.⁶³¹ In light of especially the pursed lips, an interpretation as the face of Þórr is also a possibility.⁶³² The face on Sö 86 has the same position as Freyja's head in the Aska pendant. Where Freyja's body is in the pendant, a large Þórr's hammer is carved on the memorial stone. The composition of the pendant and the runestone design is the same, but the god that is represented or

⁶²⁹ Perkins 2001, 101-102, 123.

⁶³⁰ Andersson 2005, 57-58; Price 2002, 158, with references.

⁶³¹ Price 2002, 158.

⁶³² See Perkins 2001 on this feature of Þórr. Perkins does not mention this pendant, however.

referred to is different. Maybe Þórr (or the combination of his hammer and a ring) was more suitable in the memorial stone's context of death and commemoration, as the use of the Þórr's hammer rings in older burial rites suggests.

Gaming pieces are also among the objects widely found in graves.⁶³³ They refer to the leisurely pastimes of the privileged. The depiction of two figures playing a board game on Gs 19 Ockelbo can be seen as a parallel to this. Personal items, such as combs, scissors, keys, clothing, and jewellery, are often found in graves, but do not seem to be carved on memorial stones, with the exception of the headgear of warrior figures. Human figures on the monuments are mainly depicted dressed in simple knee-length tunics, but a few images contain more details of clothing, such as layers, folds, pleats, wrist and ankle cuffs or accessories such as headgear and belts. Tools are commonly found in Norwegian graves, but they are rare in burials in Denmark.⁶³⁴ They are depicted on the two Sörmlandic Sigurðr carvings (Sö 101 and Sö 327), where hammers, tongs and bellows identify the human figure carved in their vicinity as the smith Reginn, Sigurðr's foster father. Vessels with food and drink are commonly found in graves, but notably they do not seem to be depicted on runestones. A reason for this might be that commemorative meals were still held, also in the Christian tradition.⁶³⁵ Part of the reason why the most conspicuous contents of pre-Christian burials – ships, horses, dogs, weapons – were transferred onto the Viking Age memorial stones, might have been that they were no longer used in burials.

Weapons are also a common grave good and images of these objects also occur relatively frequently on memorial stones. The following case study looks in more detail at the relationship between weapons depicted on runestones and those

⁶³³ Roesdahl 1982, 132.

⁶³⁴ Roesdahl 1982, 165.

⁶³⁵ Ljung and Thedéen, *in press*; comp. Lee 2007, 114-115, 122-123 (this study is mostly about Anglo-Saxon material, but the sections referred to here concern Viking Age Scandinavia).

deposited in graves.

5.4.1.a Weapons on runestones

Weapons are carved on memorial stones in various contexts. They occur as a single motif on two stones,⁶³⁶ held as an attribute by a human figure on eight⁶³⁷ and used in action on five to eight monuments.⁶³⁸ These swords, spears, axes and bows are the subject of this section. The hammer is only once presented as a weapon, and then it is of mythological nature: the attribute of the god Þórr in his struggle with the Miðgarðsormr on U 1161 Altuna. Otherwise the Þórr's hammer is only depicted as a symbol.⁶³⁹ The hammer is generally more a tool than a weapon and it is depicted as such as part of the smith's tools on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Gök. This sets the hammer apart from how the other weapons were depicted on runestones and it will not be taken into account in the following overview.

Half of the swords that are depicted as an attribute on memorial stones represent the mythological weapon of Sigurðr's sword Gramr, forged from the fragments of his father's sword which in turn came from Óðinn. A further four swords are held by figures on horseback,⁶⁴⁰ and two by standing warriors on Ög 181 Ledberg. Three of the equestrians' swords are raised, while the one on U 678 Skokloster is tucked under the rider's arm. The upper figure on the front of Ög 181 Ledberg holds his sword almost horizontally at waist-height and the sword of the figure below him points vertically downward; both seem to be suspended from their

⁶³⁶ On Vg 124, the vertical inscription band is shaped like a sword. The inscription band on U 999 follows the contours of the stone, ending in the centre in a spearhead.

⁶³⁷ Swords on Ög 181 (twice), Vg 119, U 678, U 691, U 1161; spears on Ög 181, U 678, U 855; an axe on DR 282 and possibly Sö 324; bows and arrows on Sö 324, U 855.

⁶³⁸ 'In action' here means that the weapon interacts with another element of the decoration, other than the figure holding it. The axe on Sö 190 is raised to strike the opposing quadruped and swords are used by Sigurðr to penetrate the runic serpent, alias Fáfnir, on Sö 101, Sö 327, U 1163, Gs 9, probably on U 1175, Gs 19, and possibly on Gs 2.

⁶³⁹ Sö 86, Sö 111, Vg 113, DR 26 (twice), DR 120.

⁶⁴⁰ Vg 119, U 678, U 691, and U 1161.

bearers' waists.

Only the figures on Ög 181 Ledberg and U 691 Söderby can be identified as male by their beards, but this does not mean the other riders are female. The heads of all the equestrians with swords and those of the standing men on Ög 181 Ledberg are without exception pointed, though they vary strongly in shape. These contours suggest the figures wear some sort of headgear, presumably helmets or possibly conical leather caps.⁶⁴¹ In contrast, Sigurðr is depicted with a shape that suggests headgear only on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget (also when he is roasting the heart) and U 1175 Stora Ramsjö. The Sigurðrs on the other monuments seem to be bare-headed.

Two spears on runestones are combined with swords: the upper figure on the front of Ög 181 Ledberg carries both weapons and U 678 Skokloster is decorated with an equestrian with a sword on one side, while the horseman carved on the other side is holding a spear. This man is also depicted with headgear, as the sword-wielders. The hunter on U 855 Böksta is also armed with a spear. That the horseman with spear on this monument does not seem to wear any headgear, at least not pointed as the other figures with swords and spears, might be because this is a hunting scene rather than a battle-related image.⁶⁴²

Long-shafted axes are depicted on two runestones, once carried over the shoulder by the man on DR 282 Hunnestad and once used by the man on Sö 190 Ytterenhörna to strike(?) the opposing quadruped on the head. Both men are presented with strongly pronounced beards, tunics, and pointed headgear. The latter might indicate that they represent warriors.

Only two figures have bows and arrows as attributes. One of these is the

⁶⁴¹ Graham-Campbell 1980, 68.

⁶⁴² Von Friesen described the horseman as '*hjälmprydd*' (but still sees this as a hunting scene) (as quoted in *U vol. 3*, 510). No headgear is currently indicated by how the lines of the man's head are painted in on the stone, but there is on some of the older depictions of the monument. Especially on Dybeck's drawing (as reproduced in *U vol. 3*, 509) the figure seems to be wearing headgear similar to that of the horseman on U 691. If the horseman was originally depicted wearing a helmet, this seems to have been of a different shape than the conical headgear of the accompanying archer on skis.

skier, who possibly represents the god Ullr, that accompanies the hunter on U 855 Böksta. The skier's head-shape is pointed, in contrast to that of the horseman. The other bow and arrow are held by a kneeling figure on Sö 324 Åsby. Tendrils protrude from its head (or come from behind it) and the traces of an interlace pattern on its face combined with the round eyes and long nose give the impression of a Mammen-style face or mask. The kneeling figure holds the bow and arrow in its stretched-out left arm and it had a small axe in the other. This can be seen on a photo from 1928-36.⁶⁴³ Traces of the axe are still visible on the stone, though they are no longer painted in.⁶⁴⁴

5.4.1.b A comparison with weapons in burials

Vg 119 Sparlösa is an eighth- or early-ninth-century runestone (except for the eleventh-century inscription on side E).⁶⁴⁵ The other memorial stones decorated with human figures with weapons are all monuments from the eleventh century and most can be placed in chronology relative to each other according to the details of their ornament.⁶⁴⁶

DR 282 Hunnestad was carved in the first half of the eleventh century; Sö 190 Ytterenhörna and Sö 324 Åsby in the second quarter; U 855 Böksta in the second to third quarters; U 1161 Altuna in the third quarter; and U 691 Söderby during the mid- to late eleventh century. U 678 Skokloster was carved in the same century, but in a seventh- or eighth-century style with Ringerike and Mammen features.⁶⁴⁷ The carvings on Vg 124 Ryda and U 999 Funbo are also Viking Age, but have no stylistic features that allow a more specific dating. Ög 181 Ledberg cannot be placed more

⁶⁴³ Sö, pl. 16.

⁶⁴⁴ Visit 11 September 2008.

⁶⁴⁵ See Section 2.2.3 note 21.

⁶⁴⁶ With help of the relative chronology of serpent ornamentation in Gräslund 2006a, see Chapter 2.2.2.a and Appendix 1.a-b.

⁶⁴⁷ See Chapter 2.3.

precisely within the eleventh century. The images of Sigurðr are all part of eleventh-century carvings too, with Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Gök from the first half and the second quarter of the century, respectively, and the Upplandic and Gästrikland monuments from the late eleventh century. Consequently, these monuments were raised within a generation or so after it became less common to furnish burials with grave goods, with the exception of Vg 119 Sparlösa. This runestone dates from before that development and was carved contemporary with such burial customs.

Since, leaving aside the mythological swords on Sigurðr-stones, most swords and spears on runestones are held by horsemen, two groups of elaborate graves with horses from tenth-century central Sweden can serve as a comparison. This is also where these monuments originate, except for DR 282 Hunnestad from Skåne. The twenty-four chamber burials on Birka and fourteen boat graves from Vendel, Valsgärde, and Tuna have been examined with respect to the weapons they contain.⁶⁴⁸ Approximately three-quarters of these burials contained spears, roughly half included swords and arrow-heads, a third contained large knives, and axes were found in just under a tenth of them. Finally, 90% of the chamber burials and two-thirds of the boat graves included shields.

The ratio between the various weapons on memorial stones clearly does not correspond to that of the weapons found in these graves. Large knives are not depicted as such on known memorial stones⁶⁴⁹ and swords are depicted two to three times as often as spears, axes, and bows and arrows, also when not counting the six instances where it is Sigurðr's mythological sword. It should be noted that due to the small number of stones under discussion, not too much value can be attached to this.

⁶⁴⁸ Sundkvist 2001, 194-195.

⁶⁴⁹ The fragment Gs 20, on which an object that stabs a foot is depicted, survives only partly and can therefore not be identified with certainty.

If for instance two more stones with spears came to light, these proportions would alter considerably.

That axes are found rarely in graves with horses, however, does correspond to how they are depicted on runestones. They are never the attribute of an equestrian, but always of a standing man. Conversely, the swords and spears on runestones are held mostly by horsemen (apart from on the Sigurðr-stones) and these are also the most common weapons in the graves with horses.

Something similar was customary in tenth-century Denmark, where swords and spearheads are also found mostly in graves with riding equipment. Two burial types with distinct grave goods can be observed on Jutland. One combined riding equipment and sometimes horses with swords and spears, while another group without horses or equestrian objects contained axes instead. Moreover, when grave goods included more than one weapon, these were swords, spears and axes in approximately equal numbers, but when only one weapon was deposited in a burial this was almost exclusively an axe.⁶⁵⁰ Late-Viking Age graves with an axe as single weapon are also found on Gotland.⁶⁵¹ This tendency to combine swords and spears with equestrian equipment and/or horses on the one hand and have axes be the only weapon of a horseless man on the other is also present on the runestones.

As mentioned above, the majority of the burials with horses from central Sweden contained shields, of which there is a notable lack on the Viking Age memorials with armed horsemen.⁶⁵² The depictions of horsemen with weapons might better fit the Danish equestrian graves. There is a strong presence of swords and spears in these graves and a less prominent occurrence of shields than in non-

⁶⁵⁰ Näsman 1991, 167-169.

⁶⁵¹ Trotzig 1985.

⁶⁵² The rider on the back of DR 96 carries a shield, but instead of a weapon he seems to be holding a triangular vane. The horseman on the pre-Viking Age U 877 is also equipped with a shield and with a stick-like object, which might be a kind of short spear.

equestrian burials with more than weapon.⁶⁵³ The depiction of the warrior on Ög 181 Ledberg is more in accordance with this latter type of burial, in that he is equipped with both sword, spear and shield.

These different types of burials, as distinguished by the grave goods, are seen as graves of people from various social groups. The Viking Age graves with horses and riding equipment that occur particularly in central Sweden, on Gotland and in Denmark have been interpreted as burials of men fighting for or otherwise connected to the leading dynasties in those areas.⁶⁵⁴ An interpretation that opposes this literal interpretation of especially the equestrian graves is that the burials express (regional) identities and that the contents function as status symbol rather than showing the deceased was cavalry, partly because they are such a regional phenomenon.⁶⁵⁵

The axes in burials are also seen as indicators of the deceased's rank and social role, which is thought to have been different from that of the men in equestrian graves.⁶⁵⁶ Like the contents of the horsemen burials, however, the axes are likely to be a more complicated symbol of status and identity.⁶⁵⁷ On the one hand axes are cheaper and since they are generally not combined with other, more expensive weapons they might indicate a lower financial status. They are also, unlike swords and spears, rarely mentioned in skaldic poetry. Because these poems were generally composed at the courts of highly-placed leaders, and indeed about those leaders, they reflect that elitist milieu. The fact that axes rarely feature in this poetry might indicate that they were less prestigious weapons.⁶⁵⁸ On the other hand, axes could also be costly showpieces, splendidly ornamented as the one in the high-status

⁶⁵³ Näsman 1991, 169 figure 5.

⁶⁵⁴ For Birka, see Gräslund 1989, 162; for Central Sweden and Gotland: Burenholt 1991, 147; for Denmark: Näsman 1991, 171-172.

⁶⁵⁵ Roesdahl 2006, 171-172, 177; see also the discussion of Härke 1990 in Williams and Sayer 2009, 4-6.

⁶⁵⁶ Näsman 1991, 171-174; Trotzig 1985.

⁶⁵⁷ Pedersen 2012, esp. 49-53; Roesdahl 1982, 136.

⁶⁵⁸ Jesch 2013, 342-343

Mammen grave.⁶⁵⁹

The fact that the weapons on runestones occur in combinations that seem to mirror the contents of these burial types suggests that the same types of identity were expressed by the images of armed men on memorial stones.⁶⁶⁰ Should the axe of the man on DR 282 Hunnestad, however, be seen as the only weapon a lower-rank warrior could afford or as a luxury showpiece, created for symbolic display? The fact that there are only two runestones with such depictions, DR 282 and Sö 190 Ytterenhörna, can argue for either. If the axes indicate lower financial and social status than sword bearing equestrians, it seems logical that fewer runic monuments would have been put up by families in that situation (these might then have been for instance at the top of that particular social stratum). If, on the other hand, these axes represent weapons of the kind in the Mammen burial, it is also logical that there would be only very few memorial stones decorated with an axe that represented such a rare weapon of high material and symbolic value. Because of the size and impact of the Hunnestad monument as a whole, the latter of the two possibilities seems to be the most likely.

Part of the symbolic function of weapons in burials as markers of identity is formed by their role in ritual practices and their mythological connotations.⁶⁶¹ Weapons, especially spears and swords, are often placed on or next to the dead body. It is likely that they were put there with some form of meaningful action, but it is unknown what form that might have taken. In several burials, however, it is clear that the weapons were used actively in a dramatic ritual performance. There are examples of spears being thrown into chambergraves over the bodies, of swords being broken or bent with great force before they were placed in the grave, and of

⁶⁵⁹ See Iversen and others 1991.

⁶⁶⁰ As proposed by Näsman 1991, 172-173 for the axe carrying man on DR 282.

⁶⁶¹ Williams, Ho. 2005, 264-266; Williams, Ho. 2007, 112.

the burial being pierced by multiple spears.⁶⁶²

Miniature weapons are also found in burials. The distinction between use as jewellery and a function as amulet or cult object is difficult to establish and the symbolic function of miniature weapons is largely unknown. They are likely to have been amulets, but this interpretation is mainly based on European parallels. Because they also occur made of iron, and not only in precious metal, it is less likely their main function was as jewellery.⁶⁶³ Images on early-seventh-century high-status metalwork show weapons as the attributes of figures that seem to perform some kind of ritual practices, for example on the helmet plates that are mentioned below.⁶⁶⁴ Like the Þórr's hammers on runestones, single images of weapons may have referred to the function of weapons in such practices. The depiction of the sword on Vg 124 Ryda and the spear on U 999 Åkerby are not part of an image of a hunter or a warrior as the other swords and spears on memorial stones. Instead of heroic, status-affirming attributes of male figures, they may be visual references to this other, ritualistic function of weapons.

5.4.2 Animals in graves and on runestones

Horses are found mostly in male burials, but also in female ones. They occur in elaborately furnished graves, but also in simple, less well-equipped ones.⁶⁶⁵

Sometimes a horse was buried together with the deceased, while in other cases only a part of the animal was interred. In again other, more exceptional cases multiple horses were slaughtered and chopped up during the funeral practices before they were deposited in the grave. Archaeological research has shown that it was not

⁶⁶² Resp. Bj. 834 on Birka (Gräslund 1981, 30-31; Price 2002, 132-139); e.g. Bj. 823a on Hemlanden, Birka or Grue, Vold k., Hedmark (Oslo UIO, inv. no. C15888); and a burial at lake Dalstorp in Västergötland (Artelius 2005).

⁶⁶³ Fuglesang 1989, 15-16.

⁶⁶⁴ Williams, Ho. 2005, 264.

⁶⁶⁵ Müller-Wille 1970/71, 160-169; Sundkvist 2001, 66-70, 194-197.

necessarily the best horses that were sacrificed, but also for instance crippled ones.⁶⁶⁶ This practice indicates that the symbolic meaning of the horse was more important than its physical value. A horse is depicted on its own on only a few monuments. They are mostly combined with images of armed or unarmed riders, dogs, and birds in scenes that refer to hunting or warrior activities.⁶⁶⁷

Dogs also occur in male and female Viking Age burials. They are found in richly furnished as well as in simple burials and occur in a large variety, ranging from lapdogs to hunting dogs.⁶⁶⁸ Their companionship or status may not have been the only reason for their interment, however. There is a close physical and conceptual relationship between dogs and wolves, and it has been suggested that dogs were sacrificed at burials as a symbolic substitute for wolves.⁶⁶⁹ It is true that other features of graves can be taken to symbolise what they resemble in a similar fashion, such as topping a grave with a stone ship setting instead of burying an actual ship, or offering a crippled horse rather than the best one. However, in these examples, the objects and animals that were represented by the 'lesser' substitute were actually used in burial practices as well. This is not the case for wolves, of whom no remains are found in burials. It would certainly have been possible to get hold of a wolf in Viking Age Scandinavia.⁶⁷⁰ If wolves were something to aspire to include in burials but were substituted by dogs, one would expect to find them at least occasionally in for instance very rich or otherwise high-status burials.

As was discussed in Chapter 2.2.3.b, it can be difficult to identify dogs among the quadrupeds on runestones. On the basis of their features and their context, some

⁶⁶⁶ Sundkvist 2001, 67.

⁶⁶⁷ See Chapters 2.2.3.a.ii and 2.2.3.b.

⁶⁶⁸ Knol and others 1996, 326; Gräslund 2004; Roesdahl 1982, 132.

⁶⁶⁹ Gräslund 2004, 171-173; Pluskowski 2006b, 87.

⁶⁷⁰ Pluskowski 2006a, 289-290; 2006b, 23-24, 106-107. Although the difficulty in distinguishing between the remains of wolves and (certain types of) dogs may have led to some wolves being interpreted as dogs, the scarcity of wolves in the archaeological record also has socio-cultural and bio-geographical reasons.

of the animals can be identified as dogs. The curled-up quadruped with a cropped tail that lies next to a man in a lying position on U 241 Lingsberg is likely to represent a dog. The images on this runestone provide a parallel to dogs in burials, not only in species, but also in posture. There are a few similar-looking quadrupeds with roughly the same posture, but without a human companion. Other dogs accompany armed riders, in hunting or warrior contexts, as well as the standing warriors on Ög 181 Ledberg.

In addition to their function as hunting dog, guard dog, or pet, the dogs that are depicted on memorial stones may also have had connotations of their use in burial tradition. It is less likely that these canine quadrupeds represent wolves, however, because wolves are also depicted as such on runestones. On Ög 181 Ledberg, for instance, there is a clear distinction between the dogs that accompany the armed men on the front, and the wolf on the back as a symbolic-mythological beast of battle. If one accepts Gräslund's suggestion that dogs in graves might symbolise wolves, which I am hesitant about, this would have implications for the interpretation of the canine animals that cannot be identified as dog or wolf on the basis of their visual context. It becomes almost irrelevant what animal is depicted, if the one is taken to represent the other, because in that case these images represent wolves either way. Pluskowski maintains that when canine quadrupeds in Anglo-Saxon and Viking visual arts cannot be identified as either dog or wolf, they might represent both at the same time.⁶⁷¹

Wolves do not occur as species in burials, but they are often depicted on items that were interred with the deceased. The significance of wolves in burials (as depictions on objects and possibly represented by dogs) is, again, multilayered. Their connotations of myth and magic, for instance as Óðinn's animals, as Fenrir, and as

⁶⁷¹ Gräslund 2004; Pluskowski 2006b, 87.

the steeds of sorceresses may have played a role here, as well as their role in the ideology of battle. The references to wolves in personal names and in the animal ornamentation on weapons, on armour, and on elite objects such as decorated drinking horns and lyres, are expressions of an elite martial identity.⁶⁷²

This function of shaping and expressing identity encompasses and utilises the range of mythological and ideological connotations of the wolf, and it is in this context that any references to these animals in burial practices should be seen. This is the same for the depictions of wolf-like animals on runestones. Ög 181 Ledberg is again illustrative of this. The memorial is decorated with images of a warrior. To start with he is fully-armed, which includes bearing the high-status weapon of sword, and accompanied by a dog. A ship is carved at the bottom of this side. On the back of the monument the warrior has lost his weapons and is depicted with the wolf as symbolic beast of battle. For reasons explained in Chapter 2.2.3.a.i, an interpretation of this scene as a beast of battle feeding off the fallen warrior is preferred over one as Óðinn and Fenrir at Ragnarök. This image might nevertheless have alluded to the mythological context of the wolf and its connections to Óðinn, especially in the context of warrior and battle ideology.

Wolves were not only connected to the battlefield and heroic ideology, but lupine qualities were also attributed to people in the context of shamanism and it seems that animal disguises in ritualistic mimicry were not only used by warriors but also by sorcerers.⁶⁷³

Birds that are found in graves vary from chickens, to hawks, to even a peacock in the famous Gokstad ship burial.⁶⁷⁴ Again, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.3.c, it is not always possible to identify the birds that are carved on memorial stones on

⁶⁷² Pluskowski 2006b, 134-139.

⁶⁷³ Pluskowski 2006b, 143, 174, 182-183.

⁶⁷⁴ Price 2008b, *passim*.

the basis of their features or the images they are combined with. Nevertheless, a distinction can often be made between birds of prey or carrion-eaters on the one hand and birds such as doves or cocks on the other. Additionally, an image of possibly a peacock can be seen on Gs 2 Österfärnebo. Especially when a predatory bird is combined with an image of a horseman, the images provide a parallel to the hunting birds that are found in graves together with horses and dogs. The birds on weapons, amulets, etc. that are identified as eagles are seen as symbols of power.⁶⁷⁵ As for the wolves, this elitist connotation complements the meaning of the eagles on memorial stones as beast of battle in the expression of social identity.

Other animals that were deposited whole or in part in graves are pigs or wild boars, cattle, sheep or goats, cats, and bears. These animals, and those discussed above, were used in a wider range of practices than only the funerary performances that are focused on here.⁶⁷⁶ Cervine quadrupeds on runestones are recognised by their horns or antlers. Some of the smaller quadrupeds on runestones have the posture or appearance of a bear or maybe a boar, but otherwise these animals do not seem to be represented on memorial stones.⁶⁷⁷

The objects and animals that are found in burials are the remains of mortuary practices. The studies of dogs, horses, ships, animals in general, or the general contents and structures of burials, that are mentioned above, all stress the importance of these animals as items with which the funeral practices were performed. As is demonstrated in this overview, many of these physical remains can also be recognised in the images on memorial stones. Analogous to this, the next sections of this thesis explore other images on these monuments that also seem to refer to traditional practices and performances.

⁶⁷⁵ Gräslund 2006b, 127-128; Ambrosiani 1983.

⁶⁷⁶ See Jennbert 2002.

⁶⁷⁷ A boar is depicted among the various animals on Br Olsen;184 (Andreas (II), MM 131) on the Isle of Man.

5.4.3 Ritual performance on runestones

A recent and exciting suggestion in early medieval burial archaeology is that the elaborateness of the funerary practices, judging by the contents and shape of the graves, may have involved acting out stories.⁶⁷⁸ This idea can be developed further with reference to other visual and verbal media concerned with commemoration and status display that also refer to mythological, legendary, and historical narratives. The images and inscriptions on memorial stones and skaldic praise poems that refer to stories to commemorate and praise the deceased were discussed in Chapter 4.6. These sources support the idea that similar narratives also played a role in the expression of identity and the creation of memories during the funerary performance. That this was not only done verbally, but also visually with the use of objects and animals that are found in burials seems logical.

Andrén argues that the images on Gotlandic picture stones are also related to burial customs. Since several of these images can be interpreted in light of the *Völsung* narratives (some with more certainty than others), he further suggests that the stories that were performed as part of the burial included those about Sigurðr Fáfnisbani.⁶⁷⁹ The depictions of the hero Sigurðr and related figures on stone memorials refer to narratives with themes of treasure, death, deceit, and wisdom.⁶⁸⁰ In addition, that the Sigurðr stories were depicted on runestones can also have echoed the use of those stories in burial customs.

A performative aspect in the context of burials can also be attributed to other stories of which scenes or characters are depicted on memorial stones. The narrative of Þórr fishing for the *Miðgarðsormr*, to which the images on U 1161 Altuna

⁶⁷⁸ Andrén 1989, 209-310; Price 2010, 137-148. On the dramatic aspect of rituals in general and the role of drama and ritual in Eddic poems, see Gunnell 1995.

⁶⁷⁹ Andrén 1989, 297-303, 310.

⁶⁸⁰ See Chapter 4.6.1.

and on the damaged DR EM1985;275 Hørdum refer, deals with the themes of struggle, liminality, and transition between life and death, this world and the otherworld.⁶⁸¹ Such a meaning would be suitable in the context of burials, death and commemoration. The image on DR 284 Hunnestad is often interpreted as Hyrrokkin.⁶⁸² This giantess plays an important role in the myth of the funeral of the god Baldr.⁶⁸³ One can imagine that burial performances could include references to this story.⁶⁸⁴ A wolf-steed and snake-reins, however, are not the attributes of Hyrrokkin alone, but are connected to giantesses and troll-women in general.⁶⁸⁵ These supernatural creatures also had connotations of death, though maybe not as specifically as Hyrrokkin for her connection to Baldr's funeral. A third alternative interpretation of the figure on this runestone is put forward in the following discussion.

So far this chapter has discussed images on memorial stones that depict objects or animals that also featured in burial practices and show scenes from stories that might have been connected to those performances. This section looks at a group of images that possibly represent people who performed rituals, be it at funerals or in other aspects of life.

The Old Norse terms for various kinds of performers of magic and sorcery and related spirits are manifold. Two main terms are *seiðmaðr* (pl. *seiðmenn*) for men and women and *vǫlva* (pl. *vǫlur*) for women, which also includes seeresses.⁶⁸⁶ These terms covered various kinds of sorcerers or sorceresses with shamanic traits, such as trance, guardian spirits, and an important role in the community.⁶⁸⁷ It is not within the scope of this chapter to pinpoint the exact rituals of the Old Norse *seiðr*-

⁶⁸¹ Meulengracht Sørensen 1986, 265-274.

⁶⁸² See Chapter 2.2.3.a.iv.

⁶⁸³ Snorri's *Edda*, *Gylfaginning* 49.

⁶⁸⁴ The funeral procession at this occasion is also described in stanza 7-10 of Úlfr Uggason's *Húsdrápa*.

⁶⁸⁵ Moltke 1985, 282n1.

⁶⁸⁶ Fritzner 1954 *vol.* 3, 198, 984.

⁶⁸⁷ See Price 2002, 63-66, 111-127 for an overview of the other terms.

complex and the variety of people who perform them, therefore the broad term ‘ritual performers’ is employed here.⁶⁸⁸ This seems more appropriate here, because the nature of the practices of which archaeological remains are found and those that may be referred to in runestone inscriptions is very elusive. It is clear that there was a broad variety among these rituals and among the people who performed them.

These people are very difficult to identify in the archaeological record. For the following discussion, I have had to rely mainly on Neil Price’s study of this material. Although I do not always follow his interpretations, his collection of source material is most useful.⁶⁸⁹

Various burials with specific contents are identified by Price as those of performers of magic, with reference to Viking Age and medieval written sources, Scandinavian Iron Age imagery, and ethnographic studies of shamanism in Sámi and other circumpolar cultures. These burials contain particular attributes such as staffs, specific amulets, (tool)belts, and possibly narcotics. Some of them also display a complex gender identity.

The images in Viking Age and pre-Viking Age visual arts that are given as possible examples of ritual performers in action show a specific outfit and headdress, often with parts of animals. They also hold specific attributes such as snakes, staffs or certain weapons. Their posture often suggests that they perform a kind of dance or it has a sexual overtone. Price also lists written sources that record or refer to the practising of magic and related rituals. Some of these comment on the appearance of the performers and give information about the spatial circumstances and the actions that are part of the performance.

These sources, especially the textual ones, need to be considered with

⁶⁸⁸ For recent studies of Old Norse *seiðr*, its performers and the shamanic aspects of this see e.g. Price 2002; 2001; Williams, Ho. 2001, 204-205; and references in these studies.

⁶⁸⁹ Price 2002.

caution, and may not be taken at face value as representative of pre-Christian Norse rituals in general. Nevertheless, the evidence collected by Price shows that people who performed rituals of various kinds and with different purposes had an important place in pre-Christian Scandinavian culture. Just as the material culture of burials shows that there was a very large variety in funerary practices, the performers of these and other rituals were very individual and differ from one to the next.⁶⁹⁰

It is only logical to assume that such specialist performers of (ritual) practices were also involved in or were leading the funerary events that accompanied a burial.⁶⁹¹ That this was indeed the case, at least sometimes, is supported by some archaeological evidence. The uniformity of the complex cremation graves at Lindholm Høje suggests the burials were carried out by a specialist.⁶⁹² That the cremation funeral of a Rūs chieftain, as described by Ibn Fadlan, is overseen by a designated person confirms this to some extent. This woman, who is called the Angel of Death, also executes (part of) the rituals involved.⁶⁹³

Three pre-Viking Age archaeological examples show that rune- or picture stones could also be involved in burials. The re-use of parts of carved stones from the Vendel Period in burial cairns at Tomtebodå was mentioned in Section 5.2. Because this happened not long after the memorials were carved, it has been suggested that the same person who carved the stones was involved in the funeral ceremony in which the stones were re-used.⁶⁹⁴ The rune-inscribed slab that was found in the Kylvær grave on Gotland (G 88) probably formed the side of the stone coffin. The

⁶⁹⁰ Price 2008a, 147, 156.

⁶⁹¹ The brief exploration of shamanic involvement in funerals in Viking Age Scandinavian and other cultures in Williams 2001, 202-205 also suggests this.

⁶⁹² Nielsen 2009, 97-98.

⁶⁹³ Ibn Fadlan's *Risāla* in Lunde and Stone 2012, 52-53. See Montgomery 2000 for an introduction and annotated translation of the part involving the Rūs and Lunde and Stone 2012 for translation of the full report of Ibn Fadlan as well as writing of other 'Arab travellers in the far North'. It is often claimed that that the Rūs in this passage designate a group of Scandinavian Vikings, e.g. Price 2010, 132-133; Lunde and Stone 2012, xiii, 204-205. Although this seems to be the current prevailing view, it is not certain that they were Scandinavian Vikings, and if indeed they were, how much they had been influenced by the Khazar or Slavic cultures (Montgomery 2000, *Introduction*; see also Lunde and Stone 2012, 204-206).

⁶⁹⁴ Gustavson and others 2006, 266.

burial is dated to c. 350-475 and the inscription, an almost complete futhark and a palindrome, is dated largely contemporary to this.⁶⁹⁵ The stone consequently seems to have been carved for the burial rather than being a re-used older runestone.

Another example is the seventh-century Eggja stone (N KJ101), which was the cover stone of a small burial chamber, probably a cenotaph. There are various readings and even more interpretations of this runestone's long inscription. Most scholars agree that line C contains an invocation for protection of the monument against people with magical powers. In addition, some have identified a description of sprinkling of blood in other parts of the inscription and an alternative reading provides an account of a shipwreck and references to spirits that guide the souls of the lost crew to the other world.⁶⁹⁶ A connection between the inscription and burial practice is formed by the references to the journey of souls and to the rituals with which the monument is to be treated/protected. The image of the horse might have been a further link between the carvings and execution of practices, for instance horse-offerings, especially since horses seem to have had a special purpose in myth and in a funerary context in relation to transformation and transport of the deceased or their soul.⁶⁹⁷

This connection between memorial stones and ritual practices also brings to mind the ritual performers that are mentioned on half a dozen Viking Age runestones in relation to practices that involve altering and protecting the monument.⁶⁹⁸ Could the figures mentioned in those inscriptions be related to those that were involved in the shamanic burial practices and maybe also in the construction of memorials (including carved stones) in the earlier traditions?

⁶⁹⁵ Imer 2011, 176; Imer 2007 *Katalog*, 225; *G* 135-137.

⁶⁹⁶ See Spurkland 2005, 56-69 and Magnus 1988, 346-350 for an overview of interpretations.

⁶⁹⁷ Grønvik 2000, 14-15; Williams, Ho. 2001, 200-201, 204. The references to shamanic practices in the inscription identified by Bente Magnus (1988, 349-354) are more speculative, as is her hypothesis that the rune carvers of the early Iron Age were shamans.

⁶⁹⁸ See Section 5.3.

So far, this section has discussed the evidence for the material culture that is possibly connected to specialist performers of (ritual) practices, their possible role in pre-Christian Viking Age burial customs, their possible connection to the creation and (re-)use of carved stones in Pre-Viking Age Scandinavia, and the warning against them on Viking Age runestones. Now the possible depictions of performers of practices on Viking Age memorial stones will be explored. The anthropomorphic figures in these images have distinct, sometimes supernatural features that can sometimes be linked to archaeological counterparts.

Firstly, there is the masked figure on Vg 56 Källby ås. A snake is wrapped like a belt around the figure's waist. The figure is holding the belt in way that may suggest a phallic overtone. The face has a snout and droopy ears and looks similar to the tenth-century felt masks that were found in Hedeby (Figure 6). There is no indication for what their function was in the find context of these masks. However, the use of animal masks in rituals is attested in various literary, iconographical, and socio-cultural sources.⁶⁹⁹

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 6. Felt masks from Hedeby.

Price's interpretation of the figure on Vg 56 Källby ås should briefly be mentioned. He discusses this image as a possible depiction of a *berserkr*, mainly because in his opinion it is wearing an animal skin (because there is no neckline

⁶⁹⁹ Gunnell 1995, 36-91; Price 2002, 171-174, 295, 370-376.

between the mask and the bodysuit).⁷⁰⁰ Although the animal mask is obvious, however, it is difficult to see an animal skin in what covers the body, especially compared to the various depictions of figures that are clearly wearing such items, such as the Ekhammar figurine (Figure 7), various images on the Oseberg textiles (Figures 8-9), the Torslunda helmet plate die (Figure 10), and the pressed mounts from Gutenstein and Obrigheim figures (Figure 11). Moreover, the antler-like structure on the head and the snake belt also do not fit with an interpretation as a *berserkr*.

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 7. Cast figure, Ekhammar. Figure 8-9. Oseberg tapestry: figure dressed as bird on Fragment 7B and figure with boar skin on Fragment 16.

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 10. Die, Torslunda Figure 11. Pressed mounts, Gutenstein and Obrigheim

I would argue instead that this figure is either wearing a tight body suit, or that it is depicted naked, with a belt and rings or cuffs at the wrists and knees (and maybe ankles). This apparent nakedness with a belt fits with how the 'weapon-dancer' is depicted on e.g. the seventh-century Torslunda helmet plate die (Figure 10). Although there are no Viking Age parallels in written sources, there are later

⁷⁰⁰ Price 2002, 373.

records of antlers being used in mimicry and dramatic performances, sometimes with a ritualistic purpose.⁷⁰¹

The kneeling archer on Sö 324 Åsby is depicted with similar clothing, or lack thereof, and with rings or cuffs around arms and legs. Similar tendrils to those on Vg 56 Källby ås are depicted on this figure's head or coming from behind it. Finally, the figure seems to have been depicted with a mask too. This mask was not shaped as an animal head, but as the interlaced Mammen masks that are carved on memorial stones and other objects. The round eyes and long nose of the figure on Sö 324 are the same as on those masks and traces of the interlace pattern can be seen on the stone.⁷⁰² The images of Mammen-masks are generally assigned an apotropaic function as the face of a mythological god. It is also possible that these interlace masks were depictions of actual masks that may have been worn during (shamanistic) practices, but this cannot be confirmed with a reasonable degree of certainty.⁷⁰³ An intersection between these two interpretations is formed by Óðinn's mask-names in kennings, such as Grímr, and by the myth of Mímr's head that was used by Óðinn in divination rituals. Masks and mask-depictions may refer to this.

If the images of Mammen-style masks do indeed represent actual masks, then the figure on Sö 324 Åsby would be a unique depiction of such a mask in context. This interpretation would fit with the use of antlers as described above. An interpretation of this figure as ritual performer is supported by archaeological parallels for its posture and its attributes. The kneeling position of the legs and the stretched-out arms are reminiscent of the posture of the some of the 'weapon dancers' on the helmet plates mentioned above (Figures 10-11). In the light of these indications that this figure represents a performer of ritual, could the small bow and

⁷⁰¹ Price 2002, 374. Price does not make a connection between this and the structure on the figure's head on Vg 56.

⁷⁰² See Chapter 2.2.3.

⁷⁰³ Price 2002, 173-174.

arrow in the figure's hand, and the small axe that possibly was in the other, be seen as parallels to the miniature weapons that are found in graves?

Belts resembling that of the figure on Vg 56 Källby ås can possibly also be seen in a few other images of human figures on memorials. The carving traces that can be seen on the figure on U 241 Lingsberg are especially relevant in this respect. Although this is not painted in on the stone now, a line can be seen across the lower waist and from the knee up to the hand above it.⁷⁰⁴ These lines may have depicted a belt that was held in a similar way to the one on Vg 56.⁷⁰⁵ The phallic protrusion from the lower body on the damaged N 66 Gran that ends in a snake head and the bulge from or slightly below the waist of the possible figure of Ullr on U 855 Böksta may also be the remains of similar (snake-)belts.⁷⁰⁶ Since no lines across the waist are visible, however, these protrusions can also represent a phallus.

The situation on Sö 40 Västerljung is the other way round. Here a snake is not protruding *from* the lower body, but pointing towards the loins of the seated figure. Texts like *Völsa þáttr* and Ibn Fadlan's *Risala* (both discussed in more detail below) and archaeological material suggest that ritual practices and performances could involve actual actions of a sexual nature or direct references to this.⁷⁰⁷

Ethnographic research into shamanism among circumpolar cultures and the association of *seiðr* with *ergi* support the view that sexual overtones were a common aspect of ritual performance.⁷⁰⁸ Vg 56 Källby ås and Sö 40 are mentioned briefly in

⁷⁰⁴ Visit 6 September 2008.

⁷⁰⁵ The belt of the man on Vg 32 is reminiscent of the snake-belt on Vg 56 in the way it crosses at the front of the man's body with the ends sticking forward, but the ends look different.

⁷⁰⁶ The protrusion on U 855 is never explicitly commented on in the descriptions of the images.

Presumably, it is tacitly seen as the other arm of the archer (e.g. von Friesen describes the figure as holding the bow in his *händerna* 'hands', as quoted in *U vol.3*, 510). Not only its position, but also the fact that it does not reach all the way up to the bow, speaks against this interpretation. It may be that Silén is not only referring to the figure's beard, but also has recognised a phallus when he states that the skier is 'tillräckligt naturalistiskt återgiven som en man' (1983, 89).

⁷⁰⁷ Price 2002, 216-223.

⁷⁰⁸ Price 2002, 304-306.

this context by Christiansson.⁷⁰⁹ I would not concur that ‘det är uppenbart att en omfattande sexualsymbolik döljer sig i runstenskonsten’, but the figures on these monuments seem to share a phallic feature. Although Christiansson does not mention them, he might also have been thinking of the figures with spread legs on Sö 175 Lagnö, Öl 19 Hulterstad, and the fifth- to sixth-century picture stone Smiss III in När parish on Gotland, and the couple that are possibly having intercourse on U 1043 Onslunda.

The figures on Sö 175, Öl 19, and Smiss III are depicted frontally, sitting with spread legs and seemingly without clothes. The union knot between the legs of the man on Sö 175 may represent or emphasise his scrotum. These figures belong to the small group of images of human figures that are in close physical contact with snakes.⁷¹⁰ Serpents and snakes are a prominent feature of runestone decoration, especially on those from eleventh-century Sweden. It is a general view that the serpent ornamentation on memorial stones has (had) a symbolic meaning. These interpretations vary widely, but they have in common that serpents and snakes are seen as symbolic representations of an otherworldly power or entity.⁷¹¹

The fact that the figure on Sö 175 Lagnö holds snakes to his ears may thus represent a kind of communication with another world or a supernatural being. The snakes’ heads are in a similar place in relation to the human figure on Öl 19 Hulterstad, although this figure does not hold these serpents, but strands of hair that end in snakes. The figure on Smiss III also holds a snake on either side with their heads facing towards, but not touching the head.⁷¹²

Snakes also occur as attributes in depictions of figures that are interpreted in a magical or shamanic context on other materials. The Viking Age figurine from grave

⁷⁰⁹ Christiansson 1974, 70-71.

⁷¹⁰ See Chapter 2.2.3.a.iii.

⁷¹¹ See Chapter 2.2.2.a.

⁷¹² Price 2002, 222 refers to this figure as a ‘snake-witch’.

6 at Ekhammar, for instance, is holding a long snake as a staff (Figure 7). There are no material or literary traces of rituals being performed with actual snakes, so it may be more likely that the serpents in the images of human figures interacting with them represent supernatural or otherworldly forces or entities they interacted with during performances.

The anthropomorphic figures on U 629 Grynasya backe and Sö 322 Stora Väsby are interacting with serpents in a different way. On these stones, the human figures are the ones being held by the serpent(s) instead. They are respectively depicted diagonally and horizontally, so they are possibly in a lying position. The heads of the two humanoids on U 629 are trapped in the claws of the two runic serpents. The small figure on Sö 322 is embedded in serpent ornamentation and held around the waist by the loop of a snake's tail. One of its arms is stretched out, holding a stick with a triangle at the end, possibly an axe. It seems that they are not in control of whatever force is represented by the serpents. They are also much smaller than the serpents, which also indicates a different power balance between these human figures and the serpents than in the images on Sö 175 Lagnö and Öl 19 Hulterstad.

The wolf-rider on DR 284 Hunnestad also interacts with snakes. This figure has a snake as rein, which together with the wolf-steed is the attribute of Hyrrokkin and other giantesses and she-trolls. The figure also holds a small snake in the other hand. The posture of the arms is the same as of the figures on Sö 175, Öl 19, and Smiss III, but the figure's head is turned to one side so the small snake is facing the back of the head. The ear is clearly marked as protruding though the hair or head cover, which is tied in a knot on top of the head. A snake is also coming from the figure's mouth. This snake could be a tongue, but a parallel on the fifth- or sixth-century gold bracteate from Tjurkö (DR IK 183 (BR 77)) gives rise to an alternative

interpretation (Figure 12).

The depictions on bracteates are generally thought to be of mythological-magical nature. It is argued that the majority of the images represent Óðinn himself, involved in various ritualistic practices. A specific group seems to depict the god, often accompanied by a bird, healing a lame horse by blowing into or in the general direction of its ear. This healing breath is indicated by lines in various shapes coming out of the figure's mouth.⁷¹³ These lines can be straight or curved, point upwards or downwards, and on the gold bracteates IK 183 from Tjurkö it is shaped almost exactly like the snake coming out of the mouth of the rider on DR 284 Hunnestad.⁷¹⁴

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 12. Gold bracteate, Tjurkö.

Although the bracteates show this feature as part of depictions of Óðinn, this does not have to mean the rider on DR 284 represents Óðinn as well. In the centuries between the two depictions, this visual element that represents a (healing) spell or power can have been extricated from Óðinn and became available to apply to other mythological figures or performers of similar practices. Consequently, a human practitioner of Óðinn's *seiðr*, male or female, could very well be perceived as emanating similar powers as the god that were visually represented in the same way.

The wolf-steed and snake-reins are linked to the mythological creatures of

⁷¹³ Kolstrup 1991, 191-194. Heizmann 2001, 334 suggests that in addition to breath these features may represent a speech-act as part of the ritual.

⁷¹⁴ The horse is not depicted on this bracteate, but the bird is.

troll-women and giantesses.⁷¹⁵ However, riding the wolf can also be connected to the ‘witch-ride’, a practice that Price suggests was part of the *seiðr*-complex.⁷¹⁶ There is a relation between this practice and troll-women and giantesses, but it likewise seems to have been performed by human women, female *seiðr*-workers. This witch-ride was conceived of as the action of a nightmare-like shape-changer, as part of the practitioner’s soul that was sent out, or as a witch riding a supernatural steed.

One of the arguments against the wolf-rider on DR 284 Hunnestad representing the giantess Hyrrokkin is that it seems to wear a male tunic.⁷¹⁷ Because the figure is depicted without facial hair, it can represent a beardless man, or alternatively a woman wearing a masculine item of clothing. This brings us into the domain of gender-identity, which for some practitioners of magic or shamanism seems to have been ambiguous and could involve cross-dressing.⁷¹⁸ In the light of the other features of this figure that point towards its ritualistic context, the uncertainty about its gender on the one hand strengthens this interpretation and on the other hand becomes irrelevant. One feature of this figure that is not mentioned in the descriptions I have read is that its cheek is clearly accentuated by a carved circle. This feature is not found on the other humanoid figures in runestone decoration. One explanation is that this mark represents some kind of facial paint, maybe in lieu of a mask, as part of the mimicry/mumming aspect of ritualistic or shamanic practices.

The last figure to be discussed in the context of interacting with snakes is that in the low chair on Sö 40 Västerlång. This person has two snakes wound around their limbs and one points its head towards the figure’s waist. No details of clothing are depicted and the shoulder-length hair style make it unclear whether this figure

⁷¹⁵ See Chapter 2.2.3.a.iv.

⁷¹⁶ Price 2002, 119-121.

⁷¹⁷ See Chapter 2.2.3.a.iv.

⁷¹⁸ Price 2002, 212-216, 271-272, 277-278. Price 2002, 114 mentions possible depictions of men (with beards and possibly helmets) in female dress and some with the female attribute of drinking horns on the Gotlandic picture stones I and IV from Läbro Tängelgård. Incidentally, Price 2002, 121 describes the clothes and body of the Hunnestad rider as ‘androgynous’.

represents a man or a woman. Chair-pendants of a similar shape have been found in female burials that on the basis of other features seem to have had links to the practise of sorcery (Figure 13). Although their precise function is uncertain, the miniature chairs may have had a supernatural context and are likely to have played a role in performances of practitioners of magic and shamanism. Because it is depicted with short legs, the chair on Sö 40 is not a *kubbstol* of the kind most of the miniature chairs seem to represent. The miniature chairs vary highly in their details, though. Some are round, while others are square, and the square Hedeby chair even has arm rests in the shape of a wolf or dog and birds on either side of the sculpted backrest. Clearly, variety was possible in the shape of these chairs. Consequently, and in relation to the handling of snakes this image may represent a similar ritual involving a such a special chair. The miniature chairs, as well as the one on the Sanda picture stone, are all connected to women.⁷¹⁹ Life-size chairs (or other types of seating support) occur in burials too, most notably in some of the Birka chamber graves.⁷²⁰ The connection of the figure on Sö 40 with a chair that was used in ritualistic practices, then, would point to a female performer of *seiðr*. In the light of the often complex gender identity of sorcerers and shamans, to some extent it may be irrelevant whether this image represents a male or female figure.

⁷¹⁹ See Price 2002, 155, 164-167 with references. The Sanda chair does resemble the miniature *kubbstolar* in shape. A woman is sitting on it, facing a sitting man. Another figure stands between them, also facing the seated man. They are holding one spear together. The scene that is carved below the frame with these three figures is interpreted as figures walking away from a sacrificial altar and the two men with the spear as Óðinn receiving a sacrifice. Price tentatively suggests that the female figure on the *kubbstol* might be a *vǫlva*, because of the link to Óðinn. He does not mention the object on the woman's lap, which has a phallic shape and position. This may be an arm reaching up to the mouth, but arms are generally (and also on this stone) only depicted when they hold something. If this indeed is a phallus, the figure could represent a male figure in female dress (and thus probably a *seiðr*-worker) and with an female *seiðr*-attribute, the chair. Alternatively, this could be a depiction of a female *seiðr*-worker, performing a ritual that involves using a phallus.

⁷²⁰ Gräslund 1981, 37-38.

The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.

Figure 13. Miniature chairs from hoards in Gravlev, Jylland (top left), Eketorp, Närke (top), Föhlagen, Gotland (bottom row), and a grave in Hedeby (top right)

It has been suggested that the (miniature) chairs that seem to have played a role in the performances by *vǫlur* had a connection to Óðinn's mythological seat *Hliðskjálf*.⁷²¹ As discussed in Chapter 2.2.3.a.iii, however, *Hliðskjálf* refers to a frame, possibly with high-seat connotations, rather than a piece of furniture. Furthermore, other than the Hedeby miniature chair described above, the simple form and technique of real *kubbstolar* do not seem to match the concept of a special seat for particular persons, unless they were placed in the particular high-seat area of the *set*-platform. The silver chair of the figurine that was found in 2009 in Lejre is similar to the miniature chairs discussed above, but more elaborately ornamented with animal heads and birds. The figure that is seated on this chair has been interpreted as Óðinn by the leader of the excavation Tom Christensen, but the figure's female dress and neck-rings (that resemble those of the Aska figurine) give more ground to interpret it as a woman.⁷²² The goddess Freyja seems the most likely candidate, but the figure might equally well represent an otherwise important female figure (compare the woman buried at Oseberg).

Textual sources about *seiðr*-performances refer to the use of special

⁷²¹ Price 2002, 163.

⁷²² Christensen 2010; Mannering 2010.

platforms and doorframes. The first, the *seiðhjallr*-structure, is described in half a dozen sagas as some kind of platform that was put up in preparation for a *vǫlva*'s visit.⁷²³ In Ibn Fadlan's *Rīsāla* and in *Vǫlsa þáttr* the structure that is used during a ritual is described more precisely as a doorframe or something that resembles one. The prose text of *Vǫlsa þáttr* describes how the Christian King Óláfr of Norway witnesses a ritual in a remote household that involves a preserved horse phallus, which he throws to the dog in disgust.⁷²⁴ Ibn Fadlan's account of his travels along the Volga in 922 includes record of a Rūs chieftain's cremation ship burial. In both sources women are lifted up by men to look over the doorframe. In the first, the slave girl who is going to be sacrificed at her master's funeral is reported to apparently see into a different world where she sees her deceased relatives and master.⁷²⁵ In *Vǫlsa þáttr* the woman of the household wants to find the ritual horse phallus that was thrown away by King Óláfr:

Hefi mik of hjarra

ok á hurðása,

vita ef ek borgit fæ

blætinu helga.

Lift me over doorhinges

and over doorframes

to see if I can save

the holy sacrifice.⁷²⁶

How the holy sacrifice could be saved by looking over the doorframe, cannot be deduced from this poem. Maybe she is trying to cast spells, or perhaps just wants to be up higher to see more clearly what the dog is doing with the ritual object. Price

⁷²³ Price 2002, 162-163.

⁷²⁴ See also Joseph 1972; Turville-Petre 1964, 256-258 for description and some analysis of the story.

⁷²⁵ Ibn Fadlan's *Rīsāla* in Lunde and Stone 2012, 52.

⁷²⁶ *Vǫlsa þáttr* str. 13, my translation with reference to Faulkes 2007, 86, 110-111.

links this practice to the passage from Ibn Fadlan's *Rīsala*, and argues that also in *Vǫlsa þáttr* the wife wants to employ clairvoyance to retrieve the phallus by looking over the doorframe into another world.⁷²⁷

The structure on U 1161 Altuna can be identified as Óðinn's *Hliðskjálf*.⁷²⁸ Because a raven is perched on the shoulder of the figure who is looking over the frame, it is likely that he represents Óðinn himself. He is not identified by any other attributes in this image, however, and the figure is not decisively male either. Consequently, there is also a possibility that this image represents a human performing a (shamanic) ritual. Either way, the passages from *Vǫlsa þáttr* and *Rīsala* explain why the figure on U 1161 is looking over the frame and they strengthen the interpretation of this image as a ritualistic scene.⁷²⁹ That a figure who is likely to represent Óðinn would perform a ritual that in these two texts is performed by women is not a problem for this interpretation. In Old Norse myth Óðinn is strongly associated with *seiðr* and its female sphere.

The human figure with an animal body on U 860 Måsta and the one with two heads on Sö 40 Västerljug, may also be explained in the context of ritual performance. When looking at the quadruped with the human head on U 860 in a ritualistic context, the possibility arises that this image represents a shape-shifter. The emphasis on transformation during burial rites has been pointed out in various archaeological studies⁷³⁰ and this has been tentatively connected to shape-changing beliefs.⁷³¹ It seems that various kinds of transformation were conceived of in the *seiðr*-complex, with a distinction between physical change and spiritual

⁷²⁷ Price 2002, 168.

⁷²⁸ See Chapter 2.2.3.a.iii.

⁷²⁹ Price does not make the connection between these texts and the structure on U 1161. Oehrl (2006, 126-127), on the other hand, discusses other textual and iconographical examples of such structures in relation to U 1161 and adds, following Lindqvist, the ladder-like frame on the Gotlandic Picture stone Låbro, St Hammars I, which is shorter than that on U 1161 and on which a human figure is lying, to the possible images of a *seiðhjallr*.

⁷³⁰ Nielsen 2009; Williams, Ho 2007.

⁷³¹ Price 2010, 129; Williams, Ho. 2001.

manifestation in animal form.⁷³²

There are images on a variety of objects that have been suggested to represent such shape-changers. The women dressed up as a bird and a boar on one of the wall-hangings from the Oseberg burial and various half-man, half-bird figurines and mounts have been mentioned above (Figures 8-11). These images all show an animal upper body on human legs (and so does Vg 56), while U 860 is decorated with a figure that has a human head on an animal body. There seems to have been a special relation between horses and transformation in shamanic traditions.⁷³³ In light of this, could the image on U 860 be a visual representation of a variety of shape-shifter or witch-ride? It is not certain that those other images represent transformation, and if so what kind and for which purpose. Maybe these half-animal, half-human figures depict ritual practitioners dressed up or performing animal mimicry, while the figure on U 860 represents another kind of transformation, possibly more related to death and burial. In this respect, the two-headed figure on Sö 40 Västerljung may also be a visual rendering of the spiritual shape of a performer during a shamanic ritual. The different, individual ways that shamans seem to have had of communicating with the spirit world may have given rise to a variety of visualisations of their spiritual form.

Although much supports the above interpretations of these various figures on runestones as (ritual) performers, a few problems should be discussed. Firstly, the majority of the *seiðr*-workers that are identified in both literary and archaeological sources are female. On memorial stones, there are more possible depictions of ritual performers that can be identified as male (on Sö 175, U 860, and the two-headed figure on Sö 40) than as female (Öl 19), but the majority has no conclusive visual gender identity (on DR 384, Vg 56, Sö 324, and the seated figure on Sö 40). As

⁷³² Price 2002, 364.

⁷³³ Williams, Ho. 2001, 200-201, 204.

discussed above, however, an ambiguous gender-identity is not a problem.

A larger problem with identifying these figures as ritual performers is that a special kind of staff, that apparently was an attribute of (in particular female?) practitioners of shamanism and sorcery seems to be missing in these images. In analogy to the depictions on runestones of objects that might have had a specific function in the performing of magic or shamanism, such as the doorframe structures and masks, it is tempting to look for images that might represent the *seiðr* staffs known from textual and archaeological material.⁷³⁴ These staffs tend to have a large, basket-shaped bulge at one end (which resembles a handle, but is often too big to hold comfortably) and several smaller ones along the shaft. Items with these features are not depicted as such on memorial stones. On two of the monuments from Gästrikland, however, there are some human figures who hold long thin vertical objects of which it is not clear whether they represent sticks, spears or, for instance, staffs, because the parts of both stones which contained these images are now missing and the upper parts of the figures could not be recorded. On Gs 19 Ockelbo, the figure with this object stands in front of the wagon and behind a much larger anthropomorphic figure (of which only the back and legs are recorded in the drawings). The records for the bottom half of Gs 2 Österfärnebo show three figures with such objects. Both stones are carved with many other images that depict objects and animals that were used as grave goods, e.g. the wagon and game board on Gs 19 and the peacock on Gs 2.

Although none of the human figures that are suggested above to represent performers in the *seiðr*-framework carry staffs, they are depicted with other attributes or characteristics that point in that direction: (snake-like) belts, a place on a special chair or frame, miniature weapons, interaction with serpents that possibly

⁷³⁴ As listed by Price 2002, 175-204, with references.

representing otherworldly forces or beings, supernatural features that may visualise the power of the performer (snake-shaped tongue, animal body, two heads), masks and possibly antlers.

Finally, in relation to the sexual overtones of certain shamanic or cultic practices, the couple on U 1043 Onslunda can tentatively be considered in this respect. Their horizontal position, one on top of the other with their legs entwined, suggests they are making love and a link to fertility rites has been suggested.⁷³⁵ As discussed above, however, sexual actions or references to it could also be part of the rituals performed at burials (as described by Ibn Fadlan), or for the purpose of domestic divination (as in *Volsa þáttr*). In the monument's context of death and commemoration, it is tempting to associate this image with the former. It has been possible in a few cases to establish with certainty that one person was killed to follow the other into the grave.⁷³⁶ In Ibn Fadlan's records of such an event, several instances of sexual intercourse were involved in this. Consequently, in continuation of the correspondences between the items deposited in burials and depicted on memorial stones as discussed above, some of the human figures might refer to the practise of human sacrifice as part of funerary practices. U 1043 Onslunda is also decorated with a large cross and the inscription contains a prayer to God to help the commemorated father's spirit. Could it be that his two sons nonetheless felt they wanted to honour their father also by visually referring to the grand burials of the past on the stone that commemorates him?

The interpretations of these runestone images in a ritual framework fit in with the fact that other objects and animals that are depicted on memorial stones were used during mortuary practices, and that the mythological or legendary stories of which scenes or figures are depicted on runestones may have played a role in

⁷³⁵ See Oehrl 2006, 124 with references.

⁷³⁶ Jesch 1991, 24-27; Price 2008b, 266-267 lists more.

some funerary dramas. Irrespective of their decoration, runestones are clearly connected to burials. They are both visual and physical remains of commemoration practices and serve much the same functions. This chapter has shown that many of the monuments refer through their images to these older burial practices or to performance of sorcery or cultic practices in general.

Some of the images that seem to refer to pre-Christian (funeral) traditions are combined with crosses or textual Christian references. The animals and objects that are depicted on explicitly Christian stones vary.⁷³⁷ Birds and ships are particularly often visually integrated with a Christian cross. The stones that are decorated with images of the pre-Christian mythological figure of Þórr or of his hammer, on the other hand do not contain any visual or textual Christian references. Two of the runestones with human figures that with some certainty can be seen as performers of rituals on the basis of their features, attributes or posture, do not contain Christian carving elements (Sö 175 and Vg 56). Two monuments with such images are decorated with a cross (Sö 324 and Sö 40), two contain both visual and textual Christian references (U 860, U 629) and Öl 19 only the latter. None of the inscriptions on stones with faces contain a Christian reference, but three of the twelve interlace mask-like faces are combined with a cross (Sö 112, Sö 167, Sö 367, all from Södermanland), and two of the seven other faces (Sö 95 and U 1034).⁷³⁸ The monuments that are carved with images from the Sigurðr stories, on the other hand, are mostly decorated with a cross.⁷³⁹ The one that is not, Sö 101 Ramsundsberget, has Christian elements in the inscription.

In the period when memorial stones to some extent came to replace certain burial practices, the two traditions overlapped. The visual references to older

⁷³⁷ See Chapters 2.6 and 3.2.

⁷³⁸ Without Christian carvings: DR 62, DR 66, DR 81, DR 286 (but cross on pairstone DR 283), DR 314 (also wolves; 4 small crosses at the ends of the inscription band), DR 335, DR Aud1996;274, [DR] DK MJy 69, Sö 86 (also hammer), Nä 34, U 508, U 824 and Vg 119.

⁷³⁹ Sö 327, U 1163, U 1175, Gs 9, Gs 19.

practices fits in with the links that were made to the old locations of commemoration. Furthermore, *seiðr* did not disappear with the introduction of Christianity, but remained part of the Viking Age culture.⁷⁴⁰ Grave 4 at Fyrkat is an example of this. In the late tenth century, when Denmark was already officially Christian, a woman was buried in the cemetery of the fortress at Fyrkat, that in all likelihood had connections to the Christian king. The woman's burial was the richest of the whole cemetery and the contents of the grave, e.g. a staff and narcotics, suggest she may have been a *seiðr*-worker.⁷⁴¹

The visual language of referring to the performance of rituals on memorial stones continues into the Middle Ages. In this time, some stone monuments are decorated with images that represent clergy or liturgy of the Christian religion.

5.4.4 Christian performance on runestones and early Christian grave monuments

Visual references on memorial stones to practices in the pre-Christian *seiðr*-framework and their performers have been identified above. Christian ceremonies and performers of Christian practices (liturgy) are also depicted on runestones, as well as on early medieval grave monuments.

Firstly, there are depictions of human figures with cross-staffs, some of which seem to perform Christian practices. Such a staff is the liturgical attribute of the man on the eleventh-century DR 290 Krageholm, who is also wearing liturgical robes.⁷⁴² Two human figures are carved on the back of the late Viking Age runestone U 631 at Kalmar church, which was probably raised over a grave.⁷⁴³ They stand next to each other in a frame with their arms around each other's shoulders and one of them holds a small cross in the other arm outside the frame. Because the figures are

⁷⁴⁰ Price 2002, 394.

⁷⁴¹ Price 2002, 149-157.

⁷⁴² See Chapter 2.2.3.a.iv.

⁷⁴³ U vol. 3, 69.

both wearing hoods and they seem to follow the cross out of the frame, which may represent a door, it has been suggested this image is a pilgrimage scene.⁷⁴⁴ An older drawing of the now lost twelfth-century grave-slab Vg 80 Härlunda shows an image of a human figure with a similar hood who is holding a large cross on a staff.⁷⁴⁵ The cross-staff that is held by the man in the wagon on the fragment Gs 18c Björke is very similar to the cross on U 631. There was possibly another person sitting in front of him in the wagon and it seems the shaft of the staff touched that person's back, but the stone is damaged there.⁷⁴⁶

One of the human figures on the damaged U 901 Håmö holds a cross with which he touches a second person on the back. This second person is bending over and holds the upper body of a third man, who seems to be lying down. They are depicted without details of clothing, but all three of them have beards. This scene has often been interpreted as a fight,⁷⁴⁷ but more recently it has been demonstrated convincingly that it is likely that a Christian funeral was depicted here, with the priest consecrating the grave and the burial.⁷⁴⁸ This interpretation is now widely accepted and it is of particular relevance to the argument in this chapter as a visual reference to funerary practices, in this case Christian.⁷⁴⁹

The runestone U 595 at Harg, carved in the second half of the twelfth century, is decorated with an image of a bell-tower with a large cross on top. Inside the tower, a human figure is ringing the bell. An object is carved in the centre of the tower with next to it carving traces of probably another person who was facing the object with its arms(s) stretched out upwards. This scene is interpreted as a priest

⁷⁴⁴ *U vol. 3*, 70. The rider with sword and cross-staff on U 691 has also been suggested to be a depiction of a pilgrim, but this interpretation is not followed widely, see Chapter 2.2.3.a.i.

⁷⁴⁵ *Vg*, 137, fig. 119.

⁷⁴⁶ *Gs*, 185.

⁷⁴⁷ See e.g. *U vol. 3*, 621.

⁷⁴⁸ Hult 1992.

⁷⁴⁹ e.g. *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

celebrating mass over the altar.⁷⁵⁰ The depiction of the bell-ringing may represent the custom of bell-ringing for the soul at Christian funerals.⁷⁵¹ For time- and place restraints of this thesis, an exploration of whether this depiction indicates a formal relationship to a church (e.g. sponsorship) or instead possibly replaced actual bell-ringing because there was no church remains a topic for a separate study. The carvings on a rock wall at Sika (U 529) seem to depict a church procession with a similar mass celebration at the altar.⁷⁵² A convincing, though not conclusive, case has also been made for interpreting the images as a depiction of the Nativity and Adoration of the Magi, as on N 68 Dynna.⁷⁵³

In addition to these depictions of Christian (church) practices, there are images that refer to aspects of the Christian religion itself, or its scripture. The Nativity/Adoration scene with the three Magi on N 68 Dynna is an example of this. The figure on the medieval grave monument DR 184 Bregninge, carved 1200-1250, is holding a similar cross-staff as some of the figures mentioned above. The rectangular object he holds horizontally in front of his chest is possibly a book or a scroll. The figure is depicted with a cruciform halo, so it seems that he represents Christ.⁷⁵⁴ The Christ in crucified posture on DR 42 Jelling also refers to a crucial moment in Christian scripture. The quadruped on DR 27 Vamdrup, a lost fragment of a medieval grave-slab, was, according to older records, holding a cross-staff and has consequently been interpreted as an *Agnus Dei* image.⁷⁵⁵

These images show that references to rituals, whether connected to burial or

⁷⁵⁰ See descriptions and older illustrations in *U vol. 2*, 499.

⁷⁵¹ Salvén 1923, 73 ff., as reproduced in *U vol. 2*, 497-498.

⁷⁵² *U vol. 2*, 402-403. This carving is generally dated to late eleventh to early twelfth centuries, and is as such excluded from the Viking Age corpus in this thesis. However, it came to my attention after the analysis was completed that this carving should be seen as a late-Viking Age and should have been included there (see e.g. Bianchi 2010, 215-216). As such, it is listed in the Database after Appendix 1.A and its image is included in the catalogue, but it could not be taken into account in the visual analysis in Appendix 2 and Chapter 2.

⁷⁵³ Strömbäck 1969, 16-18; Marchand 1976, 113-117; Williams 1996b, 56.

⁷⁵⁴ *DR*, 218.

⁷⁵⁵ *DR*, 53.

commemoration practices or not, in the visual communication on memorial stones also occur in a Christian context during late Viking Age and that this was extended into the Middle Ages. Reciprocally these examples support the idea that many of the Viking Age runestone images refer to (pre-Christian) practices too. There is a small number of images on memorial stones of a simple cross with half a dome as foot.⁷⁵⁶ It has been suggested for Vg 186 Timmele and U 989 Funbo that this type of cross-foot represents a small mound, and for the latter that this depicts a grave.⁷⁵⁷ This interpretation would correspond well with the practice of visually referring to burial practices on memorial stones and could also be applied to the crosses on mounds on the other monuments.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, runestone imagery was put in the context of (mortuary and commemoration) practices and (ritual) performance. This has demonstrated that many of the images can be related to older practices.

Tradition and rituals are an important aspect of dealing with death and remembrance. In the pre-Christian Viking Age this happened at the grave and possibly also in other places before and after the funeral. In the later Viking Age, the erecting of a memorial stone took over part of the function of the creation of furnished graves in the commemoration practices and the expression of identity. There was a material and spatial interaction between the two media when the memorial stone was placed at the location of an older burial monument and in some places their use overlapped chronologically. Presumably specific actions also

⁷⁵⁶ Vg 186, Sö 14, Sö 350, Sö 351, Sö 352 (on which the mound/foot of the cross is formed by a horizontal **b**-rune), and the gravestone U 989.

⁷⁵⁷ Widéen 1955, 147; *U vol.* 4, 152.

accompanied the establishing of these memorial stones and (commemorative) practices sometimes took place at them. In the shared visual language of funerary performance and memorial stones, selective, symbolic elements were used to create identity, shape memory, and record the commemorative act in public communication. In burials, one thing could be symbolic for another: a ship-shaped stone setting might refer to an actual ship, and the sacrifice of a sick horse might symbolise sacrificing the best horse. In addition, miniature objects deposited in graves possibly represented the 'actual' object.⁷⁵⁸ Objects and animals that were deposited in graves during funerary practices can be recognised in the decoration on runestones. Such images represent the thing itself and could through that refer to its role in e.g. older traditions.⁷⁵⁹

Visual references to the stories that may have been part of burial traditions are also depicted on memorial stones. This chapter furthermore identifies that some of the human figures depicted on these monuments represent a kind of performer of sorcery or cult practices. Whether they were connected specifically to the practices that were performed in a funerary context, at putting up memorial stones, or represent or echo more generally aspects of the pre-Christian system of beliefs, is hard to say. The references to ritual practices or their performers in some of the runic inscriptions form to some extent a textual equivalent to these visual references.

Expressing a link to the past was an important element of creating identity and memory in this context. Runestones could be placed on pagan burial grounds to establish such a connection to the old burial traditions. And just as ship settings and exceptionally large mounds were re-invented in tenth-century Denmark to recall and echo Bronze Age monuments,⁷⁶⁰ the older pre-Christian (burial) traditions seem to

⁷⁵⁸ Härke 2003, 109.

⁷⁵⁹ Semiotics and representation theories support this view, see Chapters 4.2 and 4.7.

⁷⁶⁰ Roesdahl 2006, 175-176.

have been recalled in runestone decoration.

Seiðr and, more practically, burial customs were an important part of (pre-Christian) Viking Age world view and culture.⁷⁶¹ Consequently, it seems logical that visual references to the practices of this complex were sometimes carved on the memorial stones that partly took over the role of some of the aspects of burial traditions. This world view did not disappear as Christianity was introduced, but continued to play a role in how people saw the world. As such it remained part of the visual language that was used in the context of death and commemoration. By the end of the Viking Age, when Scandinavia in its new political entities joined Christian Europe, this world view had changed, but the practice of visually referring to rituals and their performers on memorial stones remained. In the late Viking Age and early Middle Age, this also came to include depictions of Christian liturgy, scripture narratives around which such liturgy evolves, and dignitaries that would perform it. That the visual language on memorial stones was consistent into the Christian Middle Ages is also shown by the fact that the use of crosses did not change from the Viking Age runestones to the early medieval grave monuments.⁷⁶²

For most of the images discussed in this chapter, an interpretation as a reference to ritual performance has to remain one of several plausible suggestions.⁷⁶³ The correspondence between images of objects and animals on memorial stones and grave goods, the link between depictions of mythological and legendary characters and the possible use of their stories in (funerary) performances, and finally the depictions of ritualistic performers are nevertheless rather strong cases of visual references to ritual practices. This is a context into which most images on memorial stones can be fitted, because they can be linked to (burial) traditions in various ways.

⁷⁶¹ Price 2002, esp. Chapter 3 and 6.

⁷⁶² Zilmer 2011, 87.

⁷⁶³ See also Chapter 2.2.3.

This visual language is partly a continuation of that of funerary displays and continued to be used in a Christian form as well.

The identity-affirming and memory-shaping message that was communicated through various media in the context of commemoration combined information of practical (or factual) and ideological nature. Examples of this are the skaldic poem that mentions how and where a leader died (fact) and refers to mythological stories (ideological) or the grave goods that collectively reflect material wealth (practical), but which can also form a link to the ancestors or refer to a concept of the afterlife. Runestone inscriptions mention, for instance, family relations or landownership, which is practical/factual information that at the same time bears witness to certain social values. That the images on memorial stones could have worked in the same dual way is illustrated in the next chapter. The case study that follows explores the function of a group of images as expressions of the social and economic status of the commemorated person and as allusions to a warrior ideology.

Chapter 6. Runestones and Viking Age visual communication:

Case study and conclusion

6.1 Summary

The Viking Age memorial stones of Scandinavia are monuments that were meant to convey publicly a message through a visual way of communication. They were often made to stand out in the landscape through size, shape and colour. On the stone, the message can be communicated through a combination of carvings of a textual, abstract, and figural nature. The overall research question of this thesis has been how this visual communication worked. To answer this question, the practical, cognitive, and social contexts of the runestone images have been studied.

The visual relations between the different carving elements (images, ornamentation, crosses, and inscription) were analysed in Chapter 2. Tendencies in how the various image types were used in the Viking Age runestone design were identified with regard to the other carving elements they were combined with and the visual hierarchy between them. The relation between images in the runestone design and the contents of the inscriptions was analysed in Chapter 3. From the results of these analyses, the role of images in the visual communication on memorial stones can be summarised as follows:

- Images are an optional carving element, just as several different elements of the inscription and ornamental carvings.
- There was no strict one-on-one connection between image and inscription, and the few patterns in the combination of particular images and the

contents and/or features of the textual additional elements that can be identified were regional conventions.

- The tendency that textual additions to the standard memorial inscription occur more often on runestones that are also decorated with figural images, however, is observed throughout Viking Age Scandinavia.
- Since images are generally perceived earlier than text, their presence can signal the presence of optional textual elements.

The cognitive and social contexts of runestone images were reconstructed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, based on parallels in the wider Viking Age visual language of commemoration and of creating and displaying identity. One function of the images was to bring to mind related narratives. In the case of multiple images, the order in which they were perceived was not necessarily important, because the narratives were not related to each other in a chronological way. Instead, the historical, legendary, or mythological narratives all related to the commemorated person in a more abstract way to create an identity. Images on memorial stones can also refer to the physical performative aspect of pre-Christian rituals. They represent items that were used in burial rituals, possibly depict ritualistic performers, or refer to mythological and legendary stories that also had a connection with ritual performances. As an echo of these practices, the images provide a continuing link to the past. Runestones themselves are also a continuation of older monuments connected to burials and commemoration and often a physical connection was created by placing a memorial stone close to older burials. Although runestone inscriptions may also contain remainders of oral funerary texts, this continuation is created and communicated mainly through a visual language. This visual language was flexible both in what elements were combined and in what was communicated.

It tied closely into a wider Viking Age visual culture and was adapted over time.

The following case study of monuments with heroic imagery draws together the results of the previous chapters to illustrate how statements about death, commemoration, and identity were communicated in the visual language of the Viking Age. It illustrates how the verbal and visual elements of the monument tap into different sets of references and complement each other in the visual communication that was employed on Viking Age memorial stones. That they functioned on various levels is illustrated by the fact that the decoration and the inscriptions on these runestones seldom communicate the same explicit message, whether about heroism, ships, circumstances of death, or Christianity. On a more abstract level the inscription and the decoration do contribute to the same, implicit, message of the monument about the wealth and status of the people involved. Images add to the elaborateness and exclusivity of the memorial, which gives an impression of the economic and social identity of the people involved. In addition to making the monument visually more striking, the use of images engages another means of communicating than the runestone's spatial, material, and textual message, which could be used to reach a wider audience or in contrast to add a message for a more select audience.

6.2 Case study. Runestones with heroic images: Visual communication in a commemorative context

One can become a hero by performing a deed that requires and attests to extreme courage, surpassing that of others. Characters in myth or legend often do this with the help of a special skill or attribute. Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, for example, killed a monster with an ancestral sword. An heroic deed of a real person can be doing

something dangerous, for instance fighting in a battle or partaking in a distant expedition. The Viking Age offered ample opportunity for such hazardous undertakings, which is reflected in how heroes are portrayed in the sources of the day.

In skaldic verse ‘successful and heroic’ warriors are praised mainly by mentioning that they did not flee from the battlefield and how they, by being victorious, provided food for the beasts of battle.⁷⁶⁴ In the Old Norse poetic tradition, these animals, the wolf, the raven and the eagle, are present on the battlefield to feed off the fallen warriors.⁷⁶⁵ Four memorial inscriptions on runestones express the heroic qualities of the commemorated person also in terms of this warrior ideal by using the same motif of not-fleeing or by mentioning the feeding of a beast of battle, in these cases the eagle.⁷⁶⁶

Runestone inscriptions contain further, less poetic, statements about a deceased person’s heroic warrior past. Several monuments state clearly that they fell in a battle. The verbs that indicate a violent death also seem to refer to warfare, certainly when a location is also given. The more neutral verbs that are used to express the fact that someone died seem to point to a less peaceful death too when the death occurred abroad or on a ship.⁷⁶⁷

Thus the heroic character of a man could be conveyed on a memorial stone by mentioning what he did or how he died, but also by what he was called in the memorial inscription. On Sö 164 Spångå, the commemorated man is given ‘a heroic cast’ by writing that he *stóð drengila í stafn skipi*, ‘stood like a *drengr* in the stern of the ship’.⁷⁶⁸ *Drengr* was predominantly used for warriors, with the associations of a war-band. Another word that was also used in runic inscriptions for a ‘partner’ in the

⁷⁶⁴ Jesch 2010, 166-167.

⁷⁶⁵ See Chapter 2.2.3.a.i for more details and references.

⁷⁶⁶ On DR 295, DR 279, Sö 174 and Sö 179.

⁷⁶⁷ See Chapter 3.2.2. with references.

⁷⁶⁸ Jesch 2001, 120.

context of fighting and battles is *félagi*. Both words could also be used for partners on expeditions that concerned raiding or trading or both.⁷⁶⁹ *Heimþegi*, which occurs in a few runestone inscriptions, seems to have been applicable for the ‘closest and highest-ranking followers of a war-leader or king’.⁷⁷⁰

In short, mentioning (heroic) achievements of the deceased, which are often also the cause of death, was the most common way of expressing heroism in inscriptions on monuments that commemorate men. Sometimes denominations with martial connotations and a heroic tinge were employed and a few inscriptions refer to the Viking Age warrior ideal by using the poetic motifs of not-fleeing on the battle field and feeding the beasts of battle.

These references to heroic deeds and characteristics of the commemorated are textual, but memorial stones can also contain allusions to heroism in the decoration. Scenes featuring the legendary hero Sigurðr are depicted on some monuments, other runestones contain an image of a warrior figure or a single weapon, and a third group may refer to the late Viking Age heroic warrior ideal through images that might represent a beast of battle.⁷⁷¹

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, commemorative skaldic poetry and burial practices are Viking Age commemoration practices that use similar expressions, imagery, and objects to what is represented on runestones. These parallels can help to reconstruct the complex, multi-faceted way in which the heroic images on runestones communicated part of the memorial’s message.

In poetry, the motif of ‘not fleeing on the battlefield’ is applicable to the defeated warrior to indicate he died a heroic death.⁷⁷² ‘Feeding the beasts of battle’ is also mostly used to praise victorious warriors, but it can be used as well in a way

⁷⁶⁹ Jesch 2001, 130, 217-225, 229-233.

⁷⁷⁰ Jesch 2001, 235-236.

⁷⁷¹ See Chapters 2.2.3.a.i-ii and 2.2.3.b-c.

⁷⁷² Jesch 2010, 168.

that is 'specific, describing the warrior's action in a particular battle, or general, praising the warrior for his prowess in a campaign or in the whole of his career'.⁷⁷³

The various visual references to heroism on memorial stones served a similar range of functions. If the images are taken to communicate information about the deceased person's identity, battle imagery may have indicated the cause of death of the commemorated man, instead of this being mentioned in the inscription. Despite not being victorious, dying in battle was heroic. Alternatively, heroic images could refer to battles the man fought during his life in which he was victorious, and not to the cause of death.

The latter possibility is supported by a similar textual construction in two runestone inscriptions. On Sö 55 Bjudby it is said of Hefnir that he travelled to England, but died at home: *Var til Englands ungr drengr farinn, varð þá heima at harmi dauðr.* U 1016 Fjuckby was raised in memory of Ljót's two sons, of whom Áki perished abroad and the other died at home. Depending on the reading, the addition *Stýrði [k]nerri, kvam hann Grikkhafnir* 'steered a ship, came to Greece (or Greek harbours)' can apply to the first or to the second son.⁷⁷⁴ Thus in certainly one and possibly two out of the three inscriptions that mention home as place of death this is compensated by statements about heroic events that are clearly not related to the death of the commemorated men, but to activities during their life. Presumably, many of the stones on which the manner of death is not specified commemorate someone who died at home of old age, disease or an accident.⁷⁷⁵ The depictions of warriors, weapons, and beasts of battle could function in the same way as the inscription elements on Sö 55 and on U 1016, i.e. to 'mention' the deceased's heroic qualities in general or to indicate that he fought successful battles during his life

⁷⁷³ Jesch 2002, 254.

⁷⁷⁴ Wulf 1997; Jesch 2001, 100; Thedéen 2009, 68.

⁷⁷⁵ Jesch 2001, 57; Thedéen 2009, 63.

before dying peacefully at home. Only two of the inscriptions on stones with heroic imagery specify the manner of death (through arson on U 1161 Altuna and murder on U 691 Söderby), which fits in with the tendency that the same information is not expressed in both image and text.⁷⁷⁶

The images of warriors may also have had a further, more specific function. The comparison of the armed figures on runestones with weapons that were deposited in burials has shown a tendency to combine swords (and spears) with horses (or riding equipment) on the one hand and have axes be the weapon of a non-equestrian warrior on the other, both in runestone decoration and in early Viking Age burial customs in various Scandinavian regions.⁷⁷⁷ These burials, and so possibly also the corresponding images, represent different kinds of warriors with probably varying social standing. The additional visual and textual information on memorial stones may be regarded as an extension of what was previously contained in the grave. Consequently, the visual representations of warriors on these monuments may have communicated a combined message about the heroic character of the commemorated men and their social identity.

Part of this message could be communicated through the size of the monuments, and there may have been a connection between the use of heroic images and the size of the memorials in Uppland. It is not possible to observe a difference between the contents of inscriptions on Upplandic monuments with images of armed horsemen and on those with unarmed riders, but the size of the memorials are different in the two groups. The four monuments that are decorated with images of armed riders are distinctly taller than the three with images of unarmed horsemen.⁷⁷⁸ Furthermore, the majority of the runestones with armed

⁷⁷⁶ See Chapter 3.5.

⁷⁷⁷ See Chapters 5.4.1.a-b.

⁷⁷⁸ Between 2-3 metres tall compared to approximately 1.85 metres.

equestrians are also taller than the two monuments with standing men that carry axes, especially in relation to the average in their regions.⁷⁷⁹ This discrepancy in size of the monuments with various types of warriors underlines the distinction between them, and might point to a difference in status of the commemorated persons and their families.

Analogies with skaldic praise poems provide further information about the role of heroic images on memorial stones. In skaldic praise poetry, the heroic warrior ideal is referred to as part of the glorification of the commemorated leader. The specific motifs of not-fleeing and beasts of battle through which this was done seem to have been chosen in order to inspire young warriors and prepare them for the horrors of the battlefield.⁷⁸⁰ The corresponding images on runestones of warriors and beasts of battle may have been aimed at a similar audience. Since the depictions are less detailed and less bloody than the verbal poetic references to the battlefield, the effect on young warriors or warriors-to-be would not have been quite the same, but the images might have resonated especially with this subgroup of the runestone's audience.

The audience of memorial stones is difficult to reconstruct,⁷⁸¹ but it seems that the monuments were aimed at a wider target group than specifically (young) warriors of the type that would be familiar with skaldic praise poems. The runestones with heroic imagery were all carved in honour of deceased men, but not exclusively so. Gs 9 in Årsunda commemorates three or four men and one woman. Furthermore, a woman called Sigríðr commissioned the bridge and Sö 101 on Ramsundsberget, Þyrvé raised Vg 150 in Skattegården, and Gunna co-commissioned Ög 181 in Ledberg. This female involvement shows that women had a role in the commemorative

⁷⁷⁹ Because Sö 190 and DR 96 are not from Uppland, they are compared to the average in their respective regions rather than to each other.

⁷⁸⁰ Jesch 2010, 171-172.

⁷⁸¹ See e.g. Bianchi 2010, esp. Ch. 4 and 5.

practice of runestones and it implicates that they were also included as audience. The use of various means of communication on memorial stones, textual, visual and material, further suggests an inclusive rather than an exclusive approach to audiences. Specific aspects of the inscription, such as the occasional coded runes, however, could be aimed at a specific in-group. Similarly, the choice of particular heroic imagery, such as images of warriors or beasts of battle, could have been aimed at a specific subgroup of the runestone's general audience.

Like the images of beasts of battle, the depictions of Sigurðr also have counterparts in skaldic verse. The runestone images from the stories about Sigurðr refer to three themes. The otter represents the treasure that lies at the root of the dramatic events. This compensation gold is also present as the pack on Grani's back and as the ring *Andvaranaut*. Sigurðr gains knowledge from the birds after the blood of Fáfñir enables him to understand them and from the valkyrie when they exchange the toast and the ring. Thus the runestones show Sigurðr performing his heroic deed of killing Fáfñir, the treasure in various forms, and two kinds of scenes in which the hero acquires certain knowledge and wisdom. In some late-tenth- and eleventh-century poems by Icelandic skalds that were composed in praise and commemoration of Norwegian rulers, reference is made to largely the same scenes and the same themes of heroism, wealth and wisdom.⁷⁸² A reference to Sigurðr in verbal and visual expressions of late Viking Age commemoration and glorification was not only a reference to heroism, but also to the acquiring of wisdom and wealth.

The various heroic images, then, each seem to have slightly different functions. The depictions of Sigurðr refer not only to heroism, but also to wealth and wisdom. The details of the heroic warrior images reflect ideology and identity and possibly also indicate social (or military) standing. Carvings of the beasts of battle

⁷⁸² See Chapter 4.6.1.

refer to the heroic warrior ideal, and may have resonated specifically with young warriors.

The inscriptions on the monuments with heroic imagery seldom refer to heroism. Only Vg 119 Sparlösa seems to mention a battle. The deaths that are mentioned on U 1161 Altuna (arson) and U 691 Söderby (murder) are violent, but not necessarily heroic. Many, however, refer to the commemorated person's status and social role through the use of the epithets *þegn*, 'magnate', *bóndi*, 'head of household', and *landmennr*, 'landowner' and some of these men are called *góðr* 'good, able' and *snjallr* 'able, valiant, good'.⁷⁸³ In addition, prayers for the soul or spirit of the deceased are included in the inscriptions on four of the monuments with heroic imagery.⁷⁸⁴ Sö 101 Ramsundsberget records the construction of a bridge, which adds to the grandness of the memorial and was a good Christian deed. Hence the addition that the bridge was made *for salu* 'for the soul' of the commemorated Holmgeirr. The inscription on Vg 150 in Skattegården, in contrast, contains an invocation to Þórr and the text on Ög 181 Ledberg includes the spell **þmk:iii:sss:ttt:iii:!(l)l**, *þistill/mistill/kistill*, 'thistle, mistletoe, casket'.⁷⁸⁵ Several of the monuments with heroic imagery are furthermore decorated with a cross. A cross is the dominant decoration on three standing Sigurðr stones (U 1161, U 1175, Gs 9) and on two runestones with birds (U 920, Vg 103), but it is of secondary importance to the images of warriors and wolves on U 678 Skokloster, Ög 181, and the Hunnestad monument (DR 282-286), and to the Sigurðr images on Sö 327 Näsbyholm.

On most memorial stones with heroic images and crosses the Christian

⁷⁸³ On Vg 103, Vg 150, U 999, DR 314, U 692, U 1163 and Gs 2. See Chapter 3.2.1 for a discussion of these terms.

⁷⁸⁴ Sö 190, U 691, U 920 and DR 96. The inscriptions on Vg 124, U 692, DR 282 and the remains of Gs 9 and Gs 19 consist of the memorial formula only. On Vg 119, Sö 190, U 678 and U 1161 the carvers have identified themselves at the end of the inscriptions, on the latter two this is the only addition to the memorial formula.

⁷⁸⁵ See Chapter 3.2.3.

message is only communicated visually and not also in the inscription,⁷⁸⁶ but U 920 in Broholm is carved with both. This monument contains two crosses as well as a prayer for the soul. Furthermore, on U 691 Söderby, which has a Christian prayer in the inscription, a small cross on a staff is held by the horseman. In Uppland, where these memorials are found, only 12% of the runestones are carved with a combination of visual and textual Christian markings.⁷⁸⁷ It seems it was especially important that the Christian message on U 920 was understood, since it is communicated through both media. On the monuments with either a verbal or a visual Christian reference these references are much less prominent, and regularly secondary to the heroic imagery. Apparently, it was sometimes decided to give the visual reference to heroism prominence over the display of the Christian message. This seems to be the case especially when it concerns a warrior image, as on U 678 Skokloster, Ög 181 Ledberg and the Hunnestad monument. Conversely, the crosses that are combined with images of Sigurðr on raised stones and with the possible eagles are prioritised over the images. Although these heroic references clearly function against a Christian background, the Christian message of the monument is generally secondary to the display of heroism.

This analysis could be done for monuments with imagery that refers to heroism, because it can be identified with a reasonable degree of certainty for a large enough group of images that this is the theme, or at least one of the themes, they refer to. At the same time these 'heroic' images are not all of the same type, but for instance depict the legendary hero Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, armed warriors, or weapons on their own, which allows for a comparative study within this thematic group. This

⁷⁸⁶ None of those that contain neither visual nor textual Christian expressions are in their original location (Vg 119, Vg 124, Vg 150, U 692, U 999, U 1161, Gs 19 and DR 314). Consequently, any spatial relation to for instance a Christian burial ground or church they might have had cannot be taken into account. The lack of an explicit Christian message, however, does not necessarily mean the stones were not raised in a Christian context.

⁷⁸⁷ See Chapter 3.5.

approach may be applied fruitfully to other image types that can be linked thematically, for instance Christian imagery. It will not be possible, however, to follow this approach through for the complete corpus of runestone images because of two reasons. Firstly, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, several image types cannot be interpreted unambiguously. For instance, although ships and birds both form a substantial enough group to study in their own right, some may be seen as references to pre-Christian mythology or burial practices, while others might be part of a Christian visual programme. However, bridging this interpretation-impasse to some extent, ships can naturally also have heroic connotations and several birds may represent the beasts of battle. Thus it seems that many of the cultural references that are connected to runestone imagery can be linked to a general heroic ideology. As a general statement then, the memorial stones, through their visual language, may refer back to older (burial) practices and plug into a heroic ideology espoused by the elites, even if this did not necessarily represent their daily lives.

6.3 The visual culture of Viking Age Scandinavia and further directions

Runestones and early Christian grave monuments, which are closely related with regard to function, material, and chronology, are only a small part of the visual culture of Viking Age Scandinavia. This thesis has touched upon other exponents of this wider complex, such as decorations in buildings, on armour and on jewellery, and funerary performances. In addition, there were images and abstract ornamentation on for instance clothing, weapons, ships, and coins. Figurative language in poetry can also be seen as a manifestation of Viking Age visual culture. A broader study of Viking Age visual communication as a whole would also take these aspects into account.

The visual language that was employed in Viking Age Scandinavia was

versatile and flexible. Visual elements from this language (images, symbols, etc.) had not one strict place in the visual communication, but a flexible attitude was held towards them.⁷⁸⁸ Decorations could also be combined and adapted to emphasise different aspects of a cultural and religious identity. For instance, when displaying their identity as Christian Scandinavians, the focus would be on the Christian aspect in Scandinavia, but on the Scandinavian aspect in the Christian British Isles.⁷⁸⁹

This flexibility of the visual language is further illustrated by how it developed towards and into the Middle Ages. With the coming of Christianity, new visual elements were introduced and adopted into the 'old' style and on the same material to add to the language of visual communication.⁷⁹⁰ Furthermore, similarities between the layout of (Christian) manuscripts and the design of a few runestones can be seen, most conspicuously on the Jelling stone (DR 42).⁷⁹¹ The Bamberg casket, that is decorated with mask-like faces, quadrupeds and birds in Viking Age style, is also an example of this adoption of new elements into the old visual language. It has been suggested that the images represent the four evangelists in the same structure as an Irish manuscript.⁷⁹²

Similarly, elements from the Viking Age visual language were transferred to new media. Chapter 2.3.1 and Appendix 1.c showed that several of the runestone images and sometimes also the runestone layout were used on the early Christian grave monuments.⁷⁹³ The Viking Age visual language can also be recognised in the thirteenth-century tapestry from Skog, with e.g. a bell-tower and the three Magi, and the images from the Sigurðr stories that decorate portals of a few late-twelfth- and

⁷⁸⁸ This was shown for images on runestones in Chapters 2 and 3 and for crosses on runestones by Zilmer 2011.

⁷⁸⁹ Lager 2004, 150-152.

⁷⁹⁰ The Christian imagery on runestones was discussed in Chapter 2.2.3 and Chapter 5.4.4.

⁷⁹¹ Roesdahl 1999.

⁷⁹² Staecker 2003.

⁷⁹³ See also Chapter 2.2.2.

thirteenth-century Norwegian stave churches.⁷⁹⁴

The latter is an example of an element that was retained in the visual language, but with a new meaning. In the Christian theology, stories from the Old Testament could be interpreted as pre-figurations to the story of Christ in the New Testament and the Christian Church. In the medieval Scandinavian visual language, figures from traditional Scandinavian myth and legend could be used for the same purpose. For example, the Sigurðr scenes on the Norwegian churches prefigure a Christ or St Michael figure, who similarly defeat Evil in the shape of a monster.

The approach in this thesis has been that the Viking Age visual language is flexible enough to combine heroic imagery (e.g. Sigurðr, warriors, and possibly beasts of battle) with expressions of a Christian identity such as crosses and prayers. The memorials with other mythological figures, e.g. Óðinn and Þórr on U 1161 Altuna, do not propagate a Christian identity. Consequently these scenes can be appreciated as referring to the transition between life and death and the connection between these two. Þórr is in physical contact with the forces of another world and Óðinn on his *Hliðskjálf* spiritually.

That the Viking Age Scandinavian visual language interacted with other visual cultures also is clear from the Insular material that was briefly discussed in Chapter 2.3.1. This interaction, which further illustrates the visual languages' flexibility could in the future be studied in more detail, based on for instance, the Norse influenced stone memorials in the British Isles, but also 'native' parallels such as Anglo-Saxon and Pictish carved memorial stones or grave monuments. Some of these monuments that are decorated with images similar to those on runestones have been mentioned in this thesis, but to include them in a more systematic way would place the visual language of the Viking Age in a broader context.

⁷⁹⁴ For Skog see Franzén and Nockert 1992, 51-61; for stave churches see Nordanskog 2006.

An example of how elements in this visual language changed is shown by the fragment Nä 21 from Glanshammar church. Of the decoration, only serpent ornamentation, a hand with sword and second 'sword' with three rings remains. It has been suggested on occasion that this was another Sigurðr carving, based on the hand with the sword. Because the sword is not penetrating the serpent, this argument is not very strong. The part of the image that has often been seen as a second sword, however, gives more ground to identify the arms as belonging to Sigurðr after all. The three rings around this 'sword' are exact parallels to how Fáfnir's heart is depicted on twelfth- and thirteenth-century Norwegian stave churches: in three slices on a sword or stick. On the eleventh-century Swedish Sigurðr carvings on Sö 101 Ramsundsberget and Sö 327 Näsbyholm, the heart is represented by an open triangle on a stick. Nä 21 was most likely an early Christian grave monument, but may be dated only slightly later than the Sörmlandic Sigurðr carvings and contemporary to Sörmlandic runestones in general.⁷⁹⁵ It represents a step in a changing Sigurðr imagery on a monument that is still very close to runestones with regard to function, material, and technique, but already with some changed visual elements.

The research in this thesis could also be expanded with a more detailed study of the individual runestone carvers and the place that the figural images hold in their oeuvre. Such a study should critically evaluate the attribution of unsigned monuments to carvers, especially when this was done on the basis of the image. A technical component in the form of groove-analysis through laser-scanning would have to be part of such a project. This can establish for instance how many different carvers worked on a particular stone and, especially relevant in this context, which

⁷⁹⁵ Cecilia Ljung, pers. comm. 15 October 2012.

parts of the design they carved.⁷⁹⁶ More knowledge about the role of the carvers and the influence of the commissioners in the process of creating a memorial stone can provide more information about the reasons behind the choice of imagery for a monument.

Another aspect of the visual communication with Viking Age runestones that can be investigated further are practices and actions that were part of the establishment of the memorials and the role of the monument in subsequent commemorative actions. Traces of the performative aspects of a monuments may be identified through archaeological excavations around memorial stones that are in their original position. This is one of the most elusive aspects of runestones, but it is important for our understanding of how these memorial stones functioned, how their meaning was enhanced and expressed visually and orally, and how a multi-layered message was communicated through the use of different visual media.

⁷⁹⁶ Kitzler Åhfeldt 2002.

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Appendices and Catalogue

APPENDIX 1. DATABASE: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH MATERIAL

APPENDIX 1.A. COMPLETE VIKING AGE RUNESTONES WITH IMAGES

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE ¹	PERIOD ²	CARVER ³	IMAGE	STONE ⁴
1.	DR 26 Læborg, Læborg sn	Malt hd, Nørrejylland	RAK	900-1000	Hrafnunga- Tófi	2 hammers	2.36 x 0.64 x 0.76
2.	DR 42 Jelling, Jelling sn	Tørrild hd, Nørrejylland	Fp, Pr1? = 1010-1050	965-970 (dendro- chronology; Christian)	?	Christ; leonine quadruped	2.43 x 2.90 x 1.62 x 1.58 on boulder
3.	DR 62 Sjelle, Sjelle sn	Framlev hd, Nørrejylland	Mammen RAK	950-1000; 970- 1020 (language, runes)	?	mask	1.63 x 0.53
4.	DR 66 Århus, Århus sn,	Hasle hd,	Mammen	970-1020	?	mask	1.60 x 0.85 x

¹ See Chapter 2.2.2.a for explanation of the style groups and Gräslund's chronology for Swedish runestones. Although this system can be used to describe the style of serpent ornamentation or shape of the runic band on Danish and Norwegian material, it cannot be used to date these monuments, because the relative chronology was developed on the basis of material from (central) Sweden.

² Information for DR from runer.ku.dk, for Norwegian and Swedish monuments from *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

³ (S) behind a carver's name = the runestone is signed by that carver; (A) = the stone is attributed to them on the basis of other features.

⁴ (f) = front; (b) = back

	now in Moesgard museum	Nørrejylland	RAK				0.47 x 0.75
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
5.	DR 77 Hjermind, Hjermind sn	Middelsom hd, Nørrejylland	RAK	970-1020 (language, runes)	?	ship	1.65 x 0.50-0.85 x 0.52
6.	DR 81 Skern, Skjern sn	Middelsom hd, Nørrejylland	Mammen RAK	970-1020	?	mask	1.93 (b)-1.77 (f) x 0.93
7.	DR 96 Ålum, Ålum sn	Sønderlyng hd, Nørrejylland	RAK	970-1020 (Christian)	possibly same carver as DR 97	rider with vane	2.05 x 1.37
8.	DR 264 Vissmarlöv, Hyby sn (1)	Bara hd, Skåne	RAK?	970-1020 (language, runes, Christian)	Þórðr	cervine quadruped	1.18 x 0.78 x 0.33
9.	DR 271 Tullstorps k:a, Tullstorps sn	Vemmenhögs hd, Skåne	Mammen- Ringerike	970-1020	?	ship; leonine quadruped	2.04 x 1.85 x 0.50
10.	DR 280 Gusnava, Skårby sn (1), now in Lunds historiska museum	Ljunits hd, Skåne	RAK	970-1020; c. 1000 (style)	probably 'Hunnestad	leonine quadruped	2.40 x 1.30

					carver'		
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
11.	DR 282 Hunnestad (1), Skårby sn	Ljunits hd, Skåne	Mammen RAK	970-1020	'Hunnestad carver'	standing man with axe	1.53 x 1.70
12.	DR 284 Hunnestad (3), Skårby sn	Ljunits hd, Skåne	Mammen- Ringerike	970-1020	'Hunnestad carver'	wolf-rider with snakes	1.79 x 1.06
13.	DR 285 □ Hunnestad (4), Skårby sn	Ljunits hd, Skåne	Mammen- Ringerike	970-1020	'Hunnestad carver'	leonine quadruped	was 1.72 x 0.78
14.	DR 286 □ Hunnestad, Skårby sn	Ljunits hd, Skåne	Ringerike	970-1020	"Hunnestad carver"	mask; lupine quadruped	was 1.57 x 0.94
15.	DR 290 Krageholm, Sövestad sn (1)	Herrestads hd, Skåne	?	11 th C (arch.); 970-1020 (style)	?	humanoid with cross-staff	1.65 x 0.98
16.	DR 314 Allhelgonakyrkan, Lund, now in University Library	Skåne	RAK	970-1020 (style)	?	2 masks; 2 lupine quadrupeds	3.96 x 0.48 x 0.31 x 0.52
17.	DR 328 Holmby k:a, Holmby sn	Frosta hd, Skåne	RAK	970-1020 (runes, language)	?	ship	1.13 x 1.27 x 0.30

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
18.	DR 335 Västra Strö, Västra Strö sn	Onsjö hd, Skåne	RAK	970-1020 (style)	?	mask	2.05 x 1.00 x 0.85
19.	DR Aud1996;274 Bjerring kirke, Bjerring sn	Middelsom hd, Nørrejylland	Mammen	end 10 th C; 970- 1020 (language, runes)	Tófi Smiðr	mask	2.25 x 0.85 x 1.35
20.	DR EM85;523B Farsø kirke, Farsø sn	Gislum hd, Nørrejylland	?	970-1020	?	ship	1.80 x 0.72 x 0.40
21.	[DR] DK MJy 69 ⁵ Sjellebro, Lime sn	Sønderhald hd, Randers amt	Mammen	950-1050	?	mask	1.70 x 1.00
22.	Gs 7 Torsåkers k:a, Torsåkers sn	Gästriklands västra tingslag	RAK	= 980?-1015	Ásmundr (A) ⁶	humanoid with spread arms	2.10 x 1.20 x 0.12
23.	Gs 9 Årsunda k:a, Årsunda sn	Gästriklands östra tingslag	Pr2	= 1020-1050; late 11 th C	Balli (A), Lífsteinn (A)	Sigurðr	2.10 x 0.85 (was c. 0.18 wider)
24.	Gs 19 □ Ockelbo k:a, Ockelbo sn	Gästriklands	Pr2?	= 1020-1050;	same carver as	Sigurðr; other	was c. 2.30 x

⁵ Since this stone is not listed in *DR* nor the *Samnordisk runetextdatabas*, the DK signum is used following the Danish National Museum and the Kulturhistoriske Centralregister. MJy in this signum indicates the region Midtjylland.

⁶ Jansson (*Gs*, 71), doubts that Gs 7 was carved by Ásmundr and argues it may only have been influenced by his style.

		västra tingslag		late 11 th C	Gs 2	humanoids; various quadrupeds; birds	1.20
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
25.	N 61 Alstad, Hof sn, now in Oldsaksamlingen (22007)	Oppland fylke	RAK	towards 1000 (style)	?	riders/hunters; horse; bird	2.50 x 0.47
26.	N 68 Dynna, Gran sn, now in Oldsaksamlingen (9909)	Oppland fylke	RAK?	c. 1025-1050	?	Christ; Magi; Nativity /Adoration; horse	2.82 x 0.16 x 0.54
27.	N 84 Vang, Vang sn	Oppland fylke	Ringerike	1 st half 11 th C	?	leonine quadruped	2.15 x 1.25
28.	N 228 Tu, Klepp sn	Rogaland fylke	RAK	Viking Age	?	male and female humanoids	2.15 x 0.40 x 0.17
29.	Nä 34 Nästa, Rinkaby sn	Glanshammers hd	Pr3?	= 1045-1075	?	face; serpentine quadruped	1.93 x 1.31
30.	Ög 181 Ledbergs kyrkogård, Ledbergs sn	Valkebo hd	Ringerike-elements	Viking Age	?	warriors; dogs; ship; wolf	2.75 x 0.80-0.46 x 0.32
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
31.	Ög 224 Stratomtå, Törnevalla sn	Åkerbo hd	Fp (RAK)	= 1010-1050	?	ship	1.85 x 1.06
32.	Ög MÖLM1960;230 Törnevalla k:a,	Åkerbo hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	ship	[??]

	Törnevalla sn						
1.	Öl 19 □ Hulterstads k:a, Hulterstads sn	Möckleby hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100	?	humanoid in snakes	was 1.85 (1.78) x 1.09, probably grave monument
2.	Sm 133 Sunneränga, Flisby sn	S. Vedbo hd	RAK?	= 980-1015	?	lupine quadruped	2.15 x 0.80
3.	Sö 40 Västerljungs k:a, Västerljungs sn	Hölebo hd	Pr2	= 1020-1050	Skammhals 2 (S)	humanoid with spread arms and belt; horse; humanoid with snakes in chair	3.42 x 0.70
4.	Sö 82 Tumbo k:a, Tumbo sn	Västerrekarne hd	Pr1-Pr2?	= 1010-1050	Pulir (S) (possibly also Vs 4)	leonine quadruped	1.18 (is visible) x 1.30
5.	Sö 86 S. Åby ägor, Västermo sn	Västerrekarne hd	Fp?	= 1010-1050	?	face; hammer	1.77 x 1.56 on rock wall
6.	Sö 95 Berga, Husby-Rekarne sn	Österrekarne hd	?	Viking Age	?	face	measurements

							not given in Sö
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
7.	Sö 101 Ramsundsberget, Mora, Jäders sn	Österrekarne hd	Pr1	= 1010-1040	?	Sigurðr scenes	4.70 wide, on rock wall, 0.70-3.40 above ground
8.	Sö 111 Stenkvista kyrkogard, Stenkvista sn	Österrekarne hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	?	hammer	2.20 x 1.00-0.59
9.	Sö 112 Kolunda, Stenkvista sn	Österrekarne hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	'Træn' (A)	mask	1.90 x 0.57-0.80
10.	Sö 122 Skresta, Allhelgona sn (now Helgona)	Rönö hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	'Træn' (A)	ship	1.94 x 1.00-0.75 (pairstone Sö 123)
11.	Sö 154 Skarpåker, Runtuna sn	Rönö hd	Pr1	= 1010-1040	'Træn' (A)	ship	1.90 (now) x 1.18-0.52
12.	Sö 158 Österberga, Runtuna sn	Rönö hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	'Træn' (A)	ship	1.60 x 1.02 x 0.60
13.	Sö 164 Spånga, Råby-Rönö sn	Rönö hd	RAK	= 980-1015	'Træn' (A)	ship	1.96 x 1.98-0.38

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
14.	Sö 167 Landshammar, Spelviks sn	Rönö hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	'Træn' (A)	mask	1.57 x 0.42-0.52 x 0.58
15.	Sö 175 Lagnö, Aspö sn	Selebo hd	Pr3	= 1045-1075	Balli (A)	humanoid holding serpents	c. 2.00 x 1.50 on rock wall, c. 1 m above Viking Age water level
16.	Sö 190 Ytterenhörna k:a, Ytterenhörna sn	Selebo hd	Pr2	= 1020-1050	Þorbjörn skald (S) Þorbjörn 4	warrior with axe; serpentine quadruped	1.94 (now) x 2.06-1.23
17.	Sö 222 Frölunda, Sorunda sn	Sotholms hd	Pr3	= 1045-1075	?	horse	1.35 x 1.17 on rock wall ⁷
18.	Sö 226 N. Stutby, Sorunda sn	Sotholms hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	Ámundi (A)	horse	1.60 x 1.55-1.40
19.	Sö 237 Fors, Västerhaninge sn	Sotholms hd	Pr2-Pr3	= 1020-1075	Hálfðan (A)	horse?; serpentine quadruped	1.79 x 1.25-0.91
20.	Sö 270 Tyresta, Österhaninge sn	Sotholms hd	Pr3-Pr4	= 1045-1100	Hálfðan (S)	bird on cross	1.68 x 1.00 in

⁷ Measurements given in Sö are: 1.60 x 1.55.

							living rock
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
21.	Sö 301 Ågesta bro, Huddinge sn	Svartlösa hd	Pr2-Pr3	= 1020-1075	Hálfdan (A)	2 non-specific quadrupeds	1.86 x 0.73 (damaged edges)
22.	Sö 304 Oxelby, Salems sm	Svartlösa hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	Ásgautr (A)	cervine quadruped	1.62 x 1.07
23.	Sö 311-313 Södertälje, G:a Turingevägen		Pr2 and Pr3	= 1020-1075	Eysteinn 1 (S)	lupine quadruped	whole carving is 2.30 x 1.55 on rock wall, Sö 313 is 0.46 wide
24.	Sö 322 Stora Väsby, Fogdö sn	Åkers hd	Pr2?	= 1020-1050	?	humanoid in snakes	3.00 x 0.45 x 0.50
25.	Sö 324 Åsby, Helgarö sn	Åkers hd	Fp	= 1010-1050; 2 nd quarter 11 th C	probably same carver as Sö 327	kneeling archer	1.53 x 1.46 on outcrop ⁸ (also carved on two other sides)

⁸ Measurements given in Sö are: 1.60 x 1.28.

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
26.	Sö 327 Göksten (Näsbyholm), Härads sn	Åkers hd	Pr1-Pr2	= 1010-1050	probably same carver as Sö 324	Sigurðr scenes	2.50 x 1.65 on erratic block 5.00 x 3.00
27.	Sö 352 Linga, Överjärna sn, now in Skansen	Öknebo hd	Fp	= 1010-1050	'Træn' (A)	ship	1.48 (incl. top) x 0.66
28.	Sö 367 Släbro, S:t Nicolai sn (now Nyköping)	Jönåkers hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	mask	1.74 x 0.62
29.	U 35 Svartsjö, Sånga sn	Färentuna hd	Pr2	= 1020-1050	?	2 non-specific quadrupeds	3.00 x 1.83
30.	U 79 Skesta, Spånga sn, Hasselby slot	Sollentuna hd	Pr3	= 1045-1075	Arnfastr (S)	non-specific quadruped	2.40 x 0.72 x 0.53
31.	U 160 Risbyle, Täby sn	Danderyds skeppslag	Pr1	= 1010-1040	Gunnarr (A), Úlfr i Borresta (A)	non-specific quadruped	1.85 x 0.81 on stone 2.75 x 1.00
32.	U 171 Söderby, Ö. Ryds sn	Danderyds skeppslag	Pr4	= 1070-1100	Fasti/Fastulfr (S)	2 birds in snakes	1.55 x 1.70

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
33.	U 193 Svista, Össeby-Garns sn	Vallentuna hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100	Þórfastr (A), Ásmundr (A)	non-specific quadruped	1.76 x 1.32
34.	U 240 Lingsberg, Vallentuns sn	Vallentuna hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Ásmundr (A)	2 non-specific quadrupeds	2.60 x 1.35
35.	U 241 Lingsberg, Vallentuns sn	Vallentuna hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Ásmundr (A)	humanoid in serpent; canine quadruped	1.72 x 1.06
36.	U 313 Harg, Skånela sn	Semíngundra hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	-fastr (A), also U 312 and U 314	2 humanoids with spread arms	1.43 (1.33) x 0.66 x 0.31
37.	U 375 Vidbo k:a, Vidbo sn	Semíngundra hd	Pr 2	= 1020-1050	Ásmundr (A), Þórfastr (A)	rider; bird	1.90 x 1.12
38.	U 448 Harg, Odensala sn	Ärlíngundra hd	Pr3?	= 1045-1070	Fótr (A)	rider; bird	1.80 x 1.20
39.	U 508 Gillberga, Lövstalund, Kårsta sn	Långundra hd	RAK	= 980-1015	Gunnarr (A)	face	1.64 (1.57) x 1.15
40.	U 548 Husby-Lyhundra k:a Husby-	Lyhundra hd	?	2 nd half 11 th C	Ásmundr (A)	bird; cervine	1.50 x 0.59

	Lyhundra sn (now Husby-Sjuhundra)			(based on carver)		quadruped	
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
41.	U 590 Burvik, Knutby sn	Närdinghundra hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Eysteinn 2 (S)	bird; non-specific quadruped	1.61 x 1.22
42.	U 598 Borggårde [Borggårde], Hökhuvud sn	Frösåkers hd	Pr 3??	= 1045-1070	Auðmundr (S) (Ásmundr's influence)	2 non-specific quadrupeds	1.42 x 1.37 on 2.06 m high rock wall
43.	U 599 Hanunda, Hökhuvud sn	Frösåkers hd	Pr3?-Pr4?	= 1045-1100	Þórfastr (S)	rider; bird	1.85 x 1.50
44.	U 629 Grynsta backe, Svarsta, Håbo-Tibble sn	Håbo hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Þórfastr (S)	2 humanoids in serpents; bird	2.25 x 1.17
45.	U 678 Skoklosters k:a, Skoklosters sn	Håbo hd	RAK, in 7 th -8 th -C Mammen-Ringerike style	2 nd half 11 th C	Fótr (S)	rider with sword; rider with spear	2.50 (2.20) x 1.05-1.15
46.	U 691 Söderby, Arnö sn (now Aspö)	Trögds hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100;	previously	rider with sword;	3.10 x 1.05

				mid-11 th C	Auðbiörn (A), now Tíðkumi (A)	serpentine quadraped	
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
47.	U 692 Väfteby, Arnö sn (now Aspö)	Trögds hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100	Auðbiörn (S), also poss. Tíðkumi (A)	bird (eagle); serpentine quadraped	1.37 x 0.80
48.	U 746 Hårby, Husby-Sjutolfts sn	Trögds hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100	Þorgautr (S), Þorgautr Fótsarfi (S)	bird; legs	1.60 x 1.50 (top is damaged)
49.	U 753 Litslena prästgård, Litslena sn	Trögds hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Balli (S)	bird; serpentine quadraped	2.30 x 1.27
50.	U 824 Holms k:a, Holms sn	Lagunda hd	Pr3-Pr4?	= 1045-1100	Ásmundr (S), but probably not carved himself (technique)	face with tendrils	2.22 x 1.60

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
51.	U 855 Prästgården, Ballingsta sn, now at Böksta backe	Hagunda hd	Pr2?	= 1020-1050	?	rider with spear hunting cervine quadruped with bird; skiing archer; bird	2.75 x 2.12
52.	U 860 Måsta, Ballingsta sn, at Ballingsta by	Hagunda hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Ásmundr (A)	human head on animal body; canine quadruped; non- specific quadruped; serpentine quadruped	1.70 x 1.43
53.	U 904 Västerby, Läby vad, Läby sn	Ulleråkers hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Ásmundr (A), Þórfastr (A)	canine quadruped; non-specific quadruped	1.55 x 1.02
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
54.	U 920 Broholm, Jumkils sn	Ulleråkers hd	Korsband ⁹	?	?	bird (raven)	2.25 (1.97) x

⁹ The runic band develops into a cross, rather than a serpent. This motif is often considered to be indicative of the first half of the eleventh century, but it also occurs on monuments that are dated to the late eleventh century (Källström 2007, 66-67).

							1.40
55.	U 969 Bolsta, Vaksala sn (now Uppsala)	Vaksala hd	Pr3-Pr4?	= 1045-1100	Ásmundr (S)	non-specific quadruped	1.33 x 1.25-0.65
56.	U 999 Åkerby, Funbo sn	Rasbo hd	RAK? ¹⁰	= 980-1015	?	spearhead	2.38 x 0.65
57.	U 1004 Frötuna, Rasbo sn	Rasbo hd	Pr3??	= 1045-1075	Ásmundr (A)	cervine quadruped	0.84 x 0.95 (carving: 0.45 x 0.58)
58.	U 1034 Tensta k:a, Tensta sn	Norunda hd	Pr5	= 1100-1030	Æpir 1 (S)	face	2.00 x 1.07
59.	U 1043 Onslunda, Tensta sn	Norunda hd	Pr3-Pr4	= 1045-1100	Ásmundr (A)	couple	1.63 x 1.60
60.	U 1052 Axlunda, Björklinge sn	Norunda hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100	Ingólfr (S), Þjálfri 2 (S)	ship	1.36 x 0.79
61.	U 1065 Rångsta, Viksta sn	Norunda hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100	Ingólfr (A)	humanoid holding serpent	1.83 x 0.83
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
62.	U 1071 Sylta, Söderby, Åkerby sn	Bälinge hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	?	bird	1.78 x 1.26

¹⁰ *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* lists this stone as carved in Fp, but the runic band ends in a spearhead and not a snake head in bird's eye perspective.

63.	U 1161 Altuna k:a, Altuna sn	Simtuna hd	Pr 3	= 1045-1070	Freysteinn (S), Balli (S), Lífsteinn (A), unknown	humanoid with spread arms and bird (raven) on structure; rider with sword; Þórr fishing; bird attacking serpentine quadruped	2.42-1.96 x 0.60 x 0.31 x 0.31 (top is missing)
64.	U 1163 Drävle, Altuna sn	Simtuna hd	Pr 2	= 1020-1050; late 11 th C	Balli (A), Lífsteinn (A)	Sigurðr	1.85 x 0.86
65.	U 1175 Stora Ramsjö, Vittinge sn	Torstuna hd	Pr 2	= 1020-1050	probably influenced by U 1163	Sigurðr	1.37 x 0.85
66.	U Fv1946;258 Fällbro, Täby sn	Danderyds skeppslag	Pr4	= 1070-1100	Véseti (S)	humanoid with spread arms	2.23 x 1.14 on outcrop
67.	U Fv1955;219 Rydbylund, Kungs- Husby sn	Trögds hd	Pr 2	= 1020-1050	Fótr (A)	bird (raven); serpentine quadruped	2.10 x 0.88

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
68.	U Fv1978;226 Ösby, Lunda sn	Semingshundra hd	Pr1	= 1010-1040	Sóni 1 (A)	lupine quadruped	1.30 x 0.75
69.	Vg 4 Stora Ek, Eks sn	Vadsbo hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	leonine quadruped	1.65 x 1.25
70.	Vg 32 Kållands-Åsaka k:a (kyrkogård), Kållands-Åsaka sn	Kållands hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	humanoid with belt	1.73 x 0.55
71.	Vg 51 Husaby kyrkogård, Husaby sn, now in SHM(11645)	Kinnefjärdings hd	RAK?	= 980-1015	?	ship	2.10 x 1.00
72.	Vg 56 Källby ås, Källby sn	Kinnefjärdings hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	humanoid with animal head and snake-belt	3.10 x 1.43
73.	Vg 103 Håle ödekyrkogård, Håle sn	Åse hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	bird's head	1.57 x 0.41 x 0.37
74.	Vg 113 Lärkegapet, Töfta, Bjärby sn	Viste hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	hammer	2.50 x 0.55
75.	Vg 119 Sparlösa k:a, Sparlösa sn	Viste hd		c. 775-825 (style: 750-825,	<i>AlrikR?</i> ¹²	rider with sword; dogs; quadrupeds;	1.77 x 0.69

¹² Not listed as carver in *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

				runes: 775-900 ¹¹). + 11 th -C inscr. on side E.		ship; birds; building; face; wrestling birds	
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
76.	Vg 124 Ryda k:a, Ryda sn	Barne hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	sword	2.20 x 0.80
77.	Vg 150 Skattegården, Veland, Väne-Åsaka sn	Väne hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	bird's head	1.90 x 0.50
78.	Vg 181 Frugården, N. Åsarps sn	Redvägs hd	Pr1	= 1010-1040	Hávarðr? ¹³	leonine quadruped	2.10 x 1.60
79.	Vs 17 Råby, Tortuna sn	Yttertjurbo hd	Pr5?	= 1100-1130	Lítli (A)	ship	1.42 x 0.86 (was 4 x 2 fot)

¹¹ Imer 2007, *Tekst 77-80, Katalog 367*. Norr 1998 214-216 dates Vg 119 to the eighth century. This dating seems to be followed by Swedish archaeologists, but not in the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*. Based on this dating, this monument should not have been included in this thesis' corpus of Viking Age runestones, but considered as a pre-Viking Age parallel. This was, however, brought to my attention after the analysis had already been completed, therefore Vg 119 is still listed here and also in Appendix 2. The exclusion of this monument from the analysis would not alter the overall results.

¹³ Not listed as carver in *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

The following memorials should also have been included in the database, but had initially escaped my attention, or in the case of U 529 was counted as a medieval carving (see also Chapter 2.2.3 note 20). These runestones are included in the Image Catalogue.

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STONE
1.	DR 123 Glenstrup, Glenstrup sn	Nørhald hd, Nørrejylland	RAK	Viking Age, post-Jelling	?	2 quadrupeds on back, at least one with antlers	1.47 x 0.54 x 0.47
2.	U 529 Sika, Frötuna sn	Frötuna och Länna skeppslag	?	late 11 th -early 12 th C	?	church building with people	0.62 x 0.68 on rock wall
3.	U 951 Säby, Danmarks sn	Vaksala hd	Pr 2	= 1020-1050	Grímr skald (S)	3 church roofs with crosses	1.31 x 0.59 (face A), 0.69 (face B)
4.	U 989 Funbo k:a, Funbo sn	Rasbo hd	not runestone layout	late 11 th -early 12 th C	?	knife, cross (on mound), pestle?	gravestone 1.60 x 0.63-0.52

APPENDIX 1.B. DAMAGED, FRAGMENTARY, AND/OR LOST VIKING AGE RUNESTONES OR EARLY CHRISTIAN GRAVE MONUMENTS WITH IMAGES

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD ¹⁴	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
1.	DR 119 Spentrup 1, Spentrup sn	Nørhald hd, Nørrejylland	RAK	970-1020	?	ship	fragment
2.	DR 120 Spentrup 2, Spentrup sn, now in Randers museum	Nørhald hd, Nørrejylland	RAK	970-1020	?	small hammer	damaged
3.	DR 220 Sønder Kirkeby, Sønder Kirkeby sn, now in Nationalmuseet	Falsters Sønder hd, Lolland- Falster	RAK	950-1000 (runes, language)	?	ship	fragment
4.	DR 258a & DR 258b Börsarp, Börsarp sn, now in Lunds historiska museum	Skytts hd, Skåne	RAK	970-1020	?	mask; ship	fragments
5.	DR EM1985;275 Hørdum sn	Thisted (Amt), Hassing (Herred)	?	800-1250	?	þórr fishing	damaged
6.	Gs 2 Österfärnebo k:a, Österfärnebo sn	Västra Tingslag	Pr2	= 1020-1050 /late 11 th C	same carver as Gs 19	Sigurðr and other images	fragment, record for c. half

¹⁴ Information for DR from runer.ku.dk, for Norwegian and Swedish monuments from *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
7.	Gs 18c Björke, Hille sn, now in Hille hembygdsgård	Östra Tingslag	?	Viking Age	Ásmundr (A)	humanoid in wagon with cross-staff	fragment
8.	Gs 20 Ockelbo prästgård, Ockelbo sn, now in "Pålsgården", Ockelbo hembygdsförenings samlingar	Västra Tingslag	?	Viking Age	?	hand stabbing foot	fragment
9.	N 66 Gran kirke, Gran sn, now in Oldsaksamlingen (17793)	Oppland fylke	RAK	= 980-1015	?	armed? rider; grotto with holy family; legs with snake-belt/phallus	damaged
10.	N Tanberg, Norderhov sn	Buskerud fylke	?	c. 900	?	sword in serpent	fragment
11.	Nä 21 Glanshammars k:a, Glanshammars sn, now in Örebro läns museum (5556)	Glanshammars hd	?	late 11 th C	?	arms with sword; Fáfnir's heart	fragment of grave monument
12.	Ög 96 Karleby, Väderstads sn	Göstrings hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	non-specific (or cervine?) quadruped	damaged, lost
13.	Ög 106 Kärna kyrkogård, Kärna sn	Hanekinds hd	?	Viking Age	?	body of lupine? quadruped	damaged

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
14.	Ög 122 Lambohov, Slaka sn	Hanekinds hd	Fp?	= 1010-1050	?	leonine? quadruped with cross	lost
15.	Ög 196 Hultestad, Mjölby sn	Vifolka hd	RAK?	= 980-1015	?	body of non-specific quadruped	lost damaged
16.	Ög Hov 22-23 Hovs k:a, Hovs sn	Göstrings hd	?	Viking Age	same carver as Hov 24	rider with spear?	fragments of grave monument
17.	Ög Hov 24 Hovs k:a, Hovs sn	Göstrings hd	?	Viking Age	same carver as Hov 22-23	face with 2 birds	fragment of grave- monument
18.	Ög Hov 27 Hovs k:a, Hovs sn	Göstrings hd	?	Viking Age	?	humanoid between serpents	fragment of grave monument
19.	Sm 103 Rösa, Skede sn	Östra hd	?	Viking Age	?	face?	lost fragment
20.	Sö 80 Rambron, Torshälla sn	Västerrekarne hd	Fp, Pr1?	= 1010-1050	pulir (S)	leonine quadruped	damaged and lost

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
21.	Sö 155 Söderby, Runtuna sn	Rönö hd	Pr2?	= 1020-1050	?	legs quadruped	damaged and lost
22.	Sö 235 Västerby, Sorunda sn	Sotholms hd	Pr3	= 1045-1070	Hálfdan (A)	horse; hooves	damaged
23.	Sö 239 Häringe, Västerhaninge sn	Sotholms hd	Pr3	= 1045-1070	Hálfdan (A)	rider	damaged
24.	Sö 245 Tungelsta, Västerhaninge sn	Sotholms hd	?	Viking Age	Hálfdan (A)	bird on cross	fragment
25.	Sö 247 Ålsta, Västerhaninge sn	Sotholms hd	?	Viking Age	Hálfdan (A)	bird on cross	fragment
26.	Sö 272 Upp-Norrby, Österhaninge sn	Sotholms hd	Pr1-Pr2	= 1010-1050	Hálfdan (A)	rider	damaged
27.	Sö 290 Farsta, Brännkyrka sn	Svartlösa hd	Pr2	= 1020-1050	Hálfdan (A)	bird?	damaged
28.	Sö 303 Bornö, Salems sn	Svartlösa hd	?	Viking Age	Ásgautr (A)	cervine quadruped	fragment
29.	Sö 351 Överjärna k:a, Överjärna sn	Öknebo hd	?	Viking Age	'Træn' (A)	ship	damaged
30.	Sö Sb1965;19 Runmarsvreten, Berga, Österhaninge sn	Sotholms hd	Pr2	= 1020-1050	?	bird? on cross	damaged
31.	U 6 Björkö, Adelsö sn, now in SHM (5208)	Färentuna hd	Pr3?	= 1045-1070	?	human? legs; hooves?	fragment

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
32.	U 8 Björkö, Adelsö sn, now in SHM (30574)	Färentuna hd	?	Viking Age	?	part of cervine? quadruped	damaged
33.	U 31 Väntholmen, Hilleshögs sn	Färentuna hd	?	Viking Age	?	bird	damaged
34.	U 51 Drottningholm, Lovö sn	Färentuna hd	Pr3	= 1045-1070	Arnfastr (A)	2 non-specific quadrupeds	lost
35.	U 78 Råsta, Spånga sn, now in Sundbybergs hembygds museum	Sollentuna hd	Pr5	= 1100-1130	Æpir 1 (A), not by Æpir acc. to Åhlén 1997	face	damaged, image of rest
36.	U 128 Danderyds k:a, Danderyds sn	Danderyds skeppslag	Pr5	= 1100-1130	Æpir 1 (A)	face and upper body	damaged
37.	U 176 Berga, Österåkers sn	Åkers skeppslag	Pr3?	= 1045-1070	Fótr (A)	non-specific quadruped	lost
38.	U 257 Fresta k:a, Fresta sn	Vallentuna hd	?	Viking Age	Fótr (A); Þorgautr Fótsarfi (S)	bird	fragment
39.	U 485 Marma, Lagga sn	Långhundra hd	Pr5	= 1100-1130	Ófeigr (S), Æpir 1 (S)	bird?	damaged edges

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
40.	U 521 Länna k:a, Länna sn	Frötuna och Länna skeppslag	?	Viking Age	?	sitting humanoid; head; bird gripping snakes	lost fragment
41.	U 574 Estuna k:a, Estuna sn	Lyhundra hd	Pr2	= 1020-1050	Viðbjörn (A)	bird gripping snakes	fragment
42.	U 576 Estuna k:a, Estuna sn	Lyhundra hd	?	Viking Age	Viðbjörn (A)	bird on cross	fragment
43.	U 588 Gärsta, Edsbro sn	Närðinghundra hd	Pr4?	= 1070-1100	?	humanoid with spread arms	lost
44.	U 631 Kalmar k:a, Kalmar sn, now in SHM (24372)	Håbo hd	Pr4?	= 1070-1100	?	embracing couple with cross-staff	damaged
45.	U 633 Broby, Kalmar sn	Håbo hd	?	Viking Age	?	bird	damaged
46.	U 670 Rölunda, Häggeby sn	Håbo hd	?	Viking Age	?	face	damaged
47.	U 694 Veckholms k:a, Veckholms sn	Trögds hd	?	Viking Age	Balli (A)?; Þorgautr Fótsarfi (A)	bird	lost fragment
48.	U 713 Skeberga, Kungs-Husby sn	Trögds hd	?	Viking Age	Balli (A)	bird	lost fragment
49.	U 714 Skeberga, Kungs-Husby sn	Trögds hd	?	Viking Age	Balli (A)?	legs quadruped	damaged, lost
50.	U 754 Hällby, Litslena sn	Trögds hd	?	Viking Age	?	stirrups; spurs	damaged

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
51.	U 874 Hagby k:a, Hagby sn	Hagunda hd	Pr3?	= 1045-1070	Fótr (A)	bird	damaged, lost
52.	U 901 Håmö, Läby sn, now in SHM (22437)	Ulleråkers hd	Pr3-Pr4?	= 1045-1100	Ásmundr (A); Þórfastr (A)	3 humanoids, 1consecrating the others with cross; non-specific quadruped	2 fragments
53.	U 979 Gamla Uppsala k:a, Gamla Uppsala sn (now Uppsala)	Vaksala hd	?	Viking Age	?	ship	damaged
54.	U 980 Prästgården, Gamla Uppsala sn (now Uppsala)	Vaksala hd	Pr4?	= 1070-1100	Fótr (A)	non-specific quadruped	fragment, image of rest
55.	U 1001 Rasbo k:a, Rasbo sn	Rasbo hd	?	possibly 9 th C	?	ship	lost fragment
56.	U 1003 Frötuna, Rasbo hd	Rasbo hd	Pr4?	= 1070-1100	Ásmundr (A)	rider	fragment
57.	U 1112 Rasbokils k:a, Rasbokils sn	Rasbo hd	Pr3-Pr4	= 1045-1070	Ásmundr (A)	bird on cross	lost fragment
58.	U 1123 Tuna k:a, Tuna sn	Olands hd	Pr4?	= 1070-1100	Auðmundr (A)	2 non-specific quadrupeds	damaged
59.	U 1144 Tierps k:a, Tierps sn	Örbyhus hd	Pr3	= 1045-1070	hiriar (Herjarr?) (S),	2 non-specific quadrupeds	damaged

					Ásmundr (S)		
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
60.	U 1147 Västlands k:a, Västlands sn	Örbyhus hd	Pr1-Pr2?	= 1010-1050	?	hand with object with cross on top	lost fragment (drawing upside-down?)
61.	U 1150 Gårdskär, Västerboda, Älvkarleby sn	Örbyhus hd	Pr1-Pr2	= 1010-1050	?	face/mask	damaged
62.	U Fv1955;222 Långtora k:a, Långtora sn	Lagunda hd	Pr4	= 1070-1100	?	ship; humanoid with spread arms; 2 humanoids carrying cross-contraption	damaged
63.	U Fv1959;260 Österlisa, Länna sn	Frötuna och Länna skeppslag	?	Viking Age	Ásmundr (A)	horse?	damaged
64.	U Fv1973;194 Uppsala domkyrka, Uppsala		Pr4	= 1070-1100	?	rider	under pillar
65.	Vg 14 Rogstorp, Lyrestads sn	Vadsbo hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	lupine? quadruped attacking cervine quadruped	damaged

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD	CARVER	IMAGE	STATUS
66.	Vg 27 Häggesleds kyrkogård, Häggesleds sn	Kållands hd	?	c. 1100	?	human feet	fragment of head- or footstone
67.	Vg 106 Lassegården, Karleby, Leksberg sn	Vadsbo hd	RAK	= 980-1015	?	mask	damaged
68.	Vs 4 Vändle, Norrgården, Dingtuna sn	Tuhundra hd	Pr1-Pr2	= 1010-1050 poss. 12 th C	possibly same carver as Sö 82	head of leonine? quadruped	fragment

APPENDIX 1.C PRE- AND POST-VIKING AGE SCANDINAVIAN MEMORIAL OR GRAVE STONES WITH IMAGES

	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD ¹⁵	IMAGE	MONUMENT TYPE AND STATUS
1.	DR 23 Åstrup, Åstrup sn (3), in wall in chancel in Åstrups k:a.	Gørding hd, Nørrejylland	medieval	1150-1200	warrior/knight with shield and raised arm	ashlar ¹⁶
2.	DR 27 Vamdrup, Vamdrup sn (1)	Anst hd, Nørrejylland	medieval	medieval	quadruped with cross-staff (<i>Agnus Dei</i>)	lost fragment of grave-slab
3.	DR 184 Bregninge, Bregninge sn	Sunds hd, Fyn	medieval	1200-1250	humanoid with crossed halo (Christ?) with cross-staff and rectangular object	grave-slab
4.	DR 187 Sørup, Sørup sn, now in Nationalmuseet	Sunds hd, Fyn	romanesque	medieval	leonine quadruped	runestone
5.	Sm 83 Vrigstads kyrkogård, Vrigstads sn, now in SHM (3450)	Västra hd	medieval	12 th C	roof/house structure	cist with head and foot stones
6.	U 370 Herresta, Skeptuna sn	Semingshundra hd	medieval (cross style)	medieval	cross; ship with mast and bird on top; humanoid with spread arms and possibly a halo	runestone
7.	U 595 Hargs skog, Hargs sn	Frösåkers hd	Pr3?	1100-1150	bell-tower (with altar?), humanoid	runestone

¹⁵ Information for DR after runer.ku.dk, for Norwegian and Swedish monuments after *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

¹⁶ The inscription on pairstone DR 22 is uninterpreted.

			medieval		bell-ringing; humanoid in circle; humanoids with round object over fire	
	SIGLUM AND PLACE	REGION	STYLE	PERIOD ¹⁷	IMAGE	MONUMENT TYPE AND STATUS
8.	U 877 Möjbro, Hagby sn, now in SHM (24203)	Hagunda hd	pre-Viking Age	375/400- 560/570 ¹⁸	rider with shield and stick, dogs	runestone
9.	U 1125 Krogsta, Tuna hd	Olands hd	pre-Viking Age	after mid-6 th C	humanoid with spread arms next to face	runestone
10.	Vg 80 Härlunda k:a, Bjärka sn (now Härlunda sn)	Gudhems hd	medieval	12 th C	humanoid holding large cross on staff	lost grave-slab
11.	Vg 129 Skärvums kyrkogård, Grolanda sn, now in Västergötlands museum, Skara	Vilske hd	medieval	c. 1200	humanoid couple, one of which faces serpent	grave-slab or lid-stone
12.	Vg 147 Slöta k:a, Slöta sn	Vartofta hd	medieval	12 th C	humanoid with arms at chest or waist	lost fragment of grave-slab
13.	Vg 196 Älvsborg, Göteborg (Västra Frölunda), now in Göteborgs museum (GM 367)	Göteborgs och Bohus län	medieval	1 st half 13 th C,	leonine quadruped	grave-slab

¹⁷ Information for DR after runer.ku.dk, for Norwegian and Swedish monuments after *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

¹⁸ Imer 2007, *Katalog* 266.

APPENDIX 2. DATABASE: VISUAL ANALYSIS OF VIKING AGE RUNESTONES WITH IMAGES

i = isolated

t = touching

e = embedded

c = central

t = top

b = bottom

t = top within band

o = outside band

r = right

l = left

cr = cross

(s)o = (serpent) ornamentation

in = inscription

od = other decoration

or = other ornamentation

< = smaller

> = larger

= = equal

f = on front

b = on back

os = on the opposite side

as = on an adjacent side

APPENDIX 2.A COMPLETE VIKING AGE RUNESTONES WITH IMAGES (INCL. LOST OR DAMAGED MONUMENTS FOR WHICH THERE ARE GOOD RECORDS)

(key in note ¹⁹)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>					<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ²⁰		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ²¹	<i>i</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>o</i>	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	<i>o</i> ²²	<i>in</i> ²³	<i>od</i>	
DR 26	hammer			in					t	x					<	=	
	hammer		x						b	x					<	=	
DR 42	Christ				so	x						x		=	ss >	=	
	leonine quadruped				so	x						x		=	ss >	=	
DR 62	face/mask			in				x		x					<		
DR 66	face/mask			in		x							x		> ss,		
															< as		
DR 77	ship		x			x				x					os, <		
DR 81	face/mask				in	x				x					<		

¹⁹ i = isolated, t = touching, e = embedded, c = central, t = top, b = bottom, t = top within band, o = outside band, r = right, l = left, cr = cross, (s)o = (serpent) ornamentation, in = inscription
od = other decoration, or = other ornamentation, < = smaller, > = larger, = = equal, f = on front, b = on back, os = on the opposite side, as = on an adjacent side.

²⁰ > Or < indicates whether the images are larger or smaller than the other carving elements (and not the other way round).

²¹ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

²² Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

²³ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ²⁴)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ²⁵		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ²⁶	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ²⁷	in ²⁸	od
DR 96	rider with vane		x			x					?				< os	
DR 264	cervine quadruped	t, =, as b,>	x				x				x				<	
DR 271	leonine quadruped			in				x				x		>	>	>
	ship		x				x			x				>	<	<
	total images												x			
DR 280	leonine quadruped	2 small, t, >	x				x				x				<	
DR 282	warrior with axe	DR 283 >		in		x				x					<	
DR 284	rider on wolf	DR 283 >		so		x							x	>		
DR 285 □	leonine quadruped	DR 283 >	x			x							x			
DR 286 □	lupine quadruped (wolf)	DR 283 >		od			l?	l?			x					>
	face/mask	DR 283 >		od		r?		x?			x					<

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od = other decoration, or = other ornamentation, < = smaller, > = larger, = = equal, f = on front, b = on back, os = on the opposite side, as = on an adjacent side.

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²⁶ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

²⁷ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

²⁸ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ²⁹)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ³⁰		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ³¹	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ³²	in ³³	od
DR 290	humanoid: cross staff	> on staff	x			x							x			
DR 314	face/mask	4 small, as, t+b	x					x		x					< as	>
	lupine quadruped (wolf)			od, in as			x				x				= as	>, =
	face/mask			od, in as		x				x					< as	<
	lupine quadruped (wolf)			od, in as				x			x				= as	>, =
	images total												x		>	
DR 328	ship			in			x				x				<	
DR 335 ³⁴	face/mask		x					x				x			<, os	
DR Aud1996;274	face/mask (damaged)		x			x						x			os, <	
DR EM85;523B	ship			in			x			x					<	
[DR] DK MJy 69	face/mask		x			x							x			

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³¹ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

³² Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

³³ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

³⁴ The traces of a humanoid couple are not taken into account.

(key in note ³⁵)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ³⁶		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ³⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ³⁸	in ³⁹	od
Gs 7	humanoid with spread arms	<, c	x				l			x					<	
Gs 9	Sigurðr with sword?	<, c		in, or				x		x				<	<	<
	Sigurðr with ring	<		or				r		x				<	<	>
	total images	>								x				=	<	
Gs 19	Sigurðr with sword in Fafnir			in				c		x				=	<	=
	humanoid in drawn cart			od		t l				x				<	<	=
	standing humanoid			od		t r				x				<	<	=
	legs of large standing humanoid			od		t r				x				<	<	=
	bowing humanoid with twig?			od		l				x				<	<	<

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od = other decoration, or = other ornamentation, < = smaller, > = larger, = = equal, f = on front, b = on back, os = on the opposite side, as = on an adjacent side.

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³⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

³⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

³⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	2 humanoids with board game			od			l				x				<	<	=
	small bird on ornamented tree			or			x				x				<	<	<
	non-specific quadruped with bound legs			or			r				x				<	<	=
	large bird walking			in			l				x				<	<	=
	Valkyrie with horn			in			l				x				<	<	=
	Sigurðr with ring			or			r				x				<	<	=
	total images												x		>	>	
(key in note ⁴⁰)				prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings⁴¹		
stone	image	cross⁴²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o⁴³	in⁴⁴	od	
N 61	bird		x					x			x				> ss, < as	>	

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⁴² > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

⁴³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

⁴⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	canine quadruped (dog)		od		x				x					= ss, < as	<	
	rider with bird		od		x					x				> ss, < as	=, >	
	canine quadruped (dog)		od		x				x					< ss, < as	<	
	quadruped (horse)		od			x			x					= ss, < as	<, >	
	rider with object		od			x			x					= ss, < as	<, >	
	total images											x		>, OS		
(key in note ⁴⁵)			prominence			location			surface occupied				rel. to carvings⁴⁶			
stone	image	cross⁴⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o⁴⁸	in⁴⁹	od
N 68	Christ	(star) >, t	cr					x		x				=	<, as	<

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⁴⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

⁴⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

⁴⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	3 riders (Magi)	>		od		x					x		>	>, as	>	
	Nativity & Adoration	>	x				x			x			>	>, as	>	
	horse	>		od			x			x			>	>, as	=	
	total images	>										x	>	>, as		
(key in note ⁵⁰)			prominence			location				surface occupied			rel. to carvings⁵¹			
stone	image	cross⁵²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o⁵³	in⁵⁴	od
N 84	leonine quadruped	= c	x					x			x			=	as, >	
N 228	humanoid: long hair, dress		x					x			x				as, <	=
	humanoid: helmet?, cloak		x			x					x				as, <	=
	total images												x		as, =	
Nä 34	face				x			x		x				<	<	<
	bound serpentine quadruped				x		x				x			<	<	>
Ög 181	f: warrior with sword,	=, as		in, od				x			x				>	=, >

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⁵³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

⁵⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	spear & shield																
	f: canine quadruped	<, as		in, od		x				x					<	<, =	
	f: warrior with sword, shield	=, as		in, od		x					x				>	>, =	
	f: canine quadruped	<, as		in, od			x			x					<	<, =	
	f: ship	=, as		in, od			x				x				>	=, >	
	b: unarmed warrior	>, as		in, od				x			x				>	>	
	b: lupine quadruped	=, as		in, od		x				x					>	=, >, <	
	b: collapsed warrior	=, as		in, od			x				x				>	=, >	
	total images	>											x		>		
(key in note ⁵⁵)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ⁵⁶			
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ⁵⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ⁵⁸	in ⁵⁹	od	
Ög 224	ship with sail	os, to, <		in		x						x		>	ss =		os <

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od = other decoration, or = other ornamentation, < = smaller, > = larger, = = equal, f = on front, b = on back, os = on the opposite side, as = on an adjacent side.

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⁵⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

⁵⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

⁵⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ⁶⁰)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ⁶¹		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ⁶²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ⁶³	in ⁶⁴	od
Ög MÖLM1960;230	ship with crossed mast (damaged)			in					t			x			=/<	
Öl 19	humanoid in snakes				x			x			x			<	<	
Sm 133	lupine quadruped	t, =		in			x			x				=	<	
Sö 40	humanoid with spread arms, 2 heads & belt (b)	as, t, >	x					x		x				as, c,<	os, <	<
	serpentine quadruped (b)	as, t, >	x			x					x			as, c,=	os, <	>
	quadruped (horse) (b)	as, t, >	x				x			x				as,c, <	os, <	> (<)
	humanoid on chair with snakes	t, >	x				x			x				<	as, <	>, <

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⁶² > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

⁶³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

⁶⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	total images both sides	>										x		>	>	
(key in note ⁶⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings⁶⁶		
stone	image	cross⁶⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o⁶⁸	in⁶⁹	od
Sö 82	bound leonine quadruped	tl, >		cr, in, so		x							x	>	>	
Sö 86	face			in, od					t	x				>	<	<
	hammer			od, or		x						x		>	<	>
Sö 95	face	>, t		cr		x							x			
Sö 101	Sigurðr, sword in Fafnir			in					b r	x				<	<	=, <
	2 birds in tree with serpent			od		r				x				=	<	>
	quadruped (Grani)			od		x				x				<	<	<, >
	Sigurðr roasting heart, sucking thumb		x			cl				x				<	<	=, <
	quadruped (otter)			od				l		x				<	<	<
	decapitated Reginn with			in			l			x				<	<	=, <

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⁶⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

⁶⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

⁶⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	tools																
	total images												x	>	>		
(key in note ⁷⁰)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ⁷¹			
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ⁷²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ⁷³	in ⁷⁴	od	
Sö 111	hammer			in, or		x					x			>	<		
Sö 112	face/mask	<, c			x			x		x				>	<		
Sö 122	ship	c, <		cr		x				x				=	<		
Sö 154	ship	c, <		in, cr			x			x				>	<		
Sö 158	ship with runic sail			in			x				x			>	>		
Sö 164	ship	c, >		cr			x			x					<		
Sö 167	face/mask	<, as			in			x			x			>	<		
Sö 175	humanoid holding snakes				x	x							x	>	>		
Sö 190	warrior with axe			od		l				x				>	<	<	
	serpentine quadruped			od		r					x			>	=	>	

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⁷⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ⁷⁵)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ⁷⁶		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ⁷⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ⁷⁸	in ⁷⁹	od
Sö 222	quadruped (horse) (damaged)		x					x		x				<	<	
Sö 226	quadruped (horse) with crossed legs & phallus		x					x		x				<	<	
Sö 237	non-specific quadruped (with hooves?)			so		x				x				< so	<	
Sö 270	bird on cross	c, <		cr				x		x				<	<	
Sö 301	non-specific quadruped			od, in?		l				x				=	<	=
	non-specific quadruped			od, in		r				x				=	<	=
	total images										x			>	<	
Sö 304	cervine quadruped	c, <	x				l			x					<	
Sö 311-313	lupine quadruped	a, t, >		in					r	x				=	<	

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⁷⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ⁸⁰)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ⁸¹		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ⁸²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ⁸³	in ⁸⁴	od
Sö 322	horizontal humanoid in snakes	<, c			x		x			x				<		
Sö 324	kneeling archer	>, as c	x			x							x		<, os	
Sö 327	Sigurðr with sword in Fafnir	c t, =		in					b	x				=	<	=,<,>
	quadruped (horse Grani)	>		cr, od		x				x				=	<	=
	tree with serpent	>		od, in			r			x				>	<	>
	Reginn with tools & heart	=	x					l		x				=	<	=,<,>
	quadruped (otter)	<		in				l		x				<	<	<
	decapitated humanoid	=		so				l		x				=	<	=,<,>
	bird	<		od				c		x				<	<	<
Sö 352	ship	small, t, >		in			x			x				=	<	

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⁸⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ⁸⁵)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ⁸⁶		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ⁸⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ⁸⁸	in ⁸⁹	od
Sö 367	face/mask	small, b			in			x		x					<	
U 35	non-specific quadruped, crossed legs			in, od		x				x				<	<	>
	non-specific quadruped, crossed legs, no tail			od		x				x				<	<	<
	total images										x			=	<	
U 79	non-specific quadruped with cross on its back	t, <		cr, in, so		x				x				<	<	
U 160	non-specific quadruped	t o, <			x	x				x				< so	<	
U 171	2 birds in snakes				in			x		x				<	<	
U 193	non-specific quadruped	t c, <		in				l		x				<	<	
	carving traces?							r								

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(key in note ⁹⁰)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ⁹¹		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ⁹²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ⁹³	in ⁹⁴	od
U 240	non-specific quadruped	t, <		in, so		l				x				=	<	<
	non-specific quadruped	<	x			r				x				=	<	<
	serpentine quadruped	>		od			x				x			>	<	>
U 241	curled up humanoid in snakes	=, ot			x	r				x				=	<	>
	canine quadruped (dog)	<			x	l				x				<	<	<
U 313	humanoid with spread arms	<, as c			x				t r	x				>	<	=
	humanoid with spread arms	<, as c			x				t l	x				>	<	=
	total images	> as c									x				<	
U 375	rider			so		x				x				=	<	>

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	bird		x					x		x				<	<	<
(key in note ⁹⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings⁹⁶		
stone	image	cross⁹⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o⁹⁸	in⁹⁹	od
U 448	rider			so, od		r				x				=	<	<
	bird			od				l			x			=	<	>
U 508	face			in					t	x					<	
U 548	bird		x					x		x						<
	cervine quadruped		x			x					x					>
	total images											x				
U 590	non-specific quadruped		x					x		x				=	<	>
	bird			in		l				x				< so	<	<
	total images										x				<	
U 598	non-specific quadruped	t, =		cr, in		l				x				<	<	=
	non-specific quadruped	=		cr, in		r				x				<	<	=

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⁹⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	total images	>								x			>	<		
(key in note ¹⁰⁰)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ¹⁰¹		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ¹⁰²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ¹⁰³	in ¹⁰⁴	od
U 599	rider		x			x				x				<	<	=
	bird			so					t	x				<	<	=
U 629	bird	>, t		in, cr, so		x				x				=	<	>
	humanoid held by serpent	=			x		x			x				<	<	<, =
	humanoid held by serpent	=			x		x			x				<	<	<, =
U 678	rider with sword (f)	>, t		cr, in		x					x			>	<	=
	rider with spear (b)			band		x					x			>	os <	=
	total images	>											x		>	
U 691	rider with sword	on staff, >		od, in		x					x			=	<	<
	bound serpentine quadruped	>		so, in, od			x					x		>	=	>

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¹⁰⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	total images												x		>	
(key in note ¹⁰⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁰⁶		
stone	image	cross¹⁰⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁰⁸	in¹⁰⁹	od
U 692	bird (eagle)		x						asc	x				as, <	as, <	<
	bound serpentine quadruped				x	x							x	=	>	>
U 746	bird			so					t r	x				<	<	=
	legs non-specific quadruped (damaged)			so					t l	x				<	<	=
U 753	bird			in					t	x				<	<	<
	2 bound serpentine quadrupeds				x	x						x		=	>	>
U 824	face with tendrils			in, so				x		x				<	<	
U 855	bird			in					t	x				=	<	<,,>

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¹⁰⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	rider with spear		od		x					x			>	=	>		
	2 canine quadrupeds (dogs)		od		x				x				<	<	<		
	cervine quadruped attacked by bird		od			r			x				=	<	<,,>		
	archer on skis		od			l			x				<	<	<,,>		
(key in note ¹¹⁰)			<i>prominence</i>				<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ¹¹¹		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ¹¹²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ¹¹³	in ¹¹⁴	od	
U 860	canine quadruped	t, <	x			l				x				<	<	<	
	non-specific quadruped	<		in, od		r				x				<	<	<	
	serpentine quadruped	=		cr		l				x				=	<	>	
	human head on animal body	<		in, od		r				x				<	<	<, >	
	total images	>										x		>	>		
U 904	curled canine quadruped	c, <			x			l		x				<	<	=	

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¹¹⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	non-specific quadruped	<			x			r		x				<	<	=
(key in note ¹¹⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹¹⁶		
stone	image	cross¹¹⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹¹⁸	in¹¹⁹	od
U 920	bird (raven)	t o, =, c <	x						t r	x				=	<	
U 969	non-specific quadruped	t, < (dam)			x	r				x				<	<	
U 999	spearhead			in		x				x					<	
U 1004	cervine quadruped with split tail	t, >		cr		x						x				
U 1034	face	< t		in					t	x				<	<	
U 1043	humanoid couple	<, t		so		r				x				<	<	
U 1052	ship with sail	v small c, > small ct, >			in		x				x			<	<	
U 1065	humanoid holding serpent	>, t + c		in					t	x				=	<	

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¹¹⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ¹²⁰)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ¹²¹		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ¹²²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ¹²³	in ¹²⁴	od
U 1071	bird	c, <		in					t	x				< so	<	
U 1161	bird attacking serpentine quadruped				x	x						x		=	>, as <	ss >, as >
	humanoid with spread arms on ladder with bird (s)			od				x			x			as, <	<	ss =, as <
	rider with sword (s)			od		x					x			as, <	<	ss =, as <
	Pórr's fishing (s)		x				x				x			as, =	<	ss =, as <
	total images on side comp to other carvings											x		>	as > os >	as >
U 1163	Sigurðr with sword	c, <			x			x		x				<	<	=

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¹²⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	Sigurðr with ring	<			x			l		x				<	<	=
	Valkyrie with horn	<			x			r		x				<	<	=
	total images	=									x			=	<	
(key in note ¹²⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹²⁶		
stone	image	cross¹²⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹²⁸	in¹²⁹	od
U 1175	Sigurðr with sword flanked by 2 humanoids	<, c			x			x		x				<	<	
	total images	=									x			=	<	
U Fv1946;258	humanoid with spread arms			in					t	x				<	<	
U Fv1955;219	bird (raven?)		x					x		x						<
	serpentine quadruped, crossed front legs		x			x						x				>

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(key in note ¹³⁵)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ¹³⁶		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ¹³⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ¹³⁸	in ¹³⁹	od
Vg 119	building		x					x		x					<	=, >
	2 birds			od				x		x					<	<
	ship with sail			od		x				x					<	= >
	large and small non-specific quadrupeds			od		x				x					<	= <
	rider with sword, dogs			od			x			x					<	= >
	total images												x		as >	>
	face and shoulders (as)			or			x			x					<	<, =
	birds in struggle (os)			in	x	x							x		ss >	>
														as >		
														tot <		

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¹³⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

¹³⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

¹³⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

(key in note ¹⁴⁰)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ¹⁴¹		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ¹⁴²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ¹⁴³	in ¹⁴⁴	od
Vg 124	sword			in		x						x			=	
Vg 150	bird's head			in					t	x					<	
Vg 181	bound leonine quadruped	t, >			x	x					x			>	<	
Vs 17	ship with sail (damaged)			in		x						x		>	>	

¹⁴⁰ i = isolated, t = touching, e = embedded, c = central, t = top, b = bottom, t = top within band, o = outside band, r = right, l = left, cr = cross, (s)o = (serpent) ornamentation, in = inscription
od = other decoration, or = other ornamentation, < = smaller, > = larger, = = equal, f = on front, b = on back, os = on the opposite side, as = on an adjacent side.

¹⁴¹ > Or < indicates whether the images are larger or smaller than the other carving elements (and not the other way round).

¹⁴² > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (and not the other way round).

¹⁴³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails, and -tendrils, incl. union knot.

¹⁴⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

APPENDIX 2.B DAMAGED, FRAGMENTARY, AND/OR LOST VIKING AGE RUNESTONES OR EARLY CHRISTIAN GRAVE MONUMENTS WITH IMAGES

(key in note ¹⁴⁵)			<i>prominence</i>			<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ¹⁴⁶		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ¹⁴⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ¹⁴⁸	in ¹⁴⁹	od
DR 119	ship with sail			i	?										<	
DR 120	hammer (within inscription band same size as runes)				i					x					<	
DR 220	ship			i					x	x					<	
DR 258a	face			i, ?												
DR 258b	ship															
DR EM1985; 275	Þórr's fishing		x			x		x			x					
Gs 2	3 humanoids standing with sticks	<, b		od		?		?		x					<	= (each)
	bird	<		i, od		?				x					<	<

¹⁴⁵ i = isolated, t = touching, e = embedded, c = central, t = top, b = bottom, t = top within band, o = outside band, r = right, l = left, cr = cross, (s)o = (serpent) ornamentation, in = inscription
od = other decoration, or = other ornamentation, < = smaller, > = larger, = = equal, f = on front, b = on back, os = on the opposite side, as = on an adjacent side.

¹⁴⁶ > Or < indicates whether the images are larger or smaller than the other carving elements (and not the other way round).

¹⁴⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (not the other way round).

¹⁴⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁴⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	Sigurðr with ring	<		cr, od			l			x					<	=	
	humanoid with stretched arm	<		od		?r				x					<	=	
	non-specific quadruped	<		i		?r				x					<	<	
	crossed legs	<	?				r			x					<	=	
	total images	>										?			>?		
(key in note ¹⁵⁰)				prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁵¹		
stone	image	cross¹⁵²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁵³	in¹⁵⁴	od	
Gs 18c	humanoid with cross staff in wagon	on staff,>		so													
Gs 20	human hands stabbing foot																
N 66	armed? rider			i				x		x					<	<,,>	
	house/grotto with holy family?			i		x				x					<	>	

¹⁵⁰ i = isolated, t = touching, e = embedded, c = central, t = top, b = bottom, t = top within band, o = outside band, r = right, l = left, cr = cross, (s)o = (serpent) ornamentation, in = inscription
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¹⁵¹ > Or < indicates whether the images are larger or smaller than the other carving elements (and not the other way round).

¹⁵² > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (not the other way round).

¹⁵³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁵⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	legs with snake-belt/phallus		?							x						<	<
(key in note ¹⁵⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁵⁶			
stone	image	cross¹⁵⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁵⁸	in¹⁵⁹	od	
N Tanberg	sword in serpent		x								x						
Nä 21	human arms with sword				?												
Ög 96	non-specific quadruped			i		x						x				<	
Ög 106	lupine? quadruped																
Ög 122	leonine? quadruped	t, >		cr		x						x				<	
Ög 196	body non-specific? quadruped								t	x						<	
Ög Hov 22	upper body humanoid with			od/(s)o													
Ög Hov 23	spear/stick																
	lower body rider																

¹⁵⁵ i = isolated, t = touching, e = embedded, c = central, t = top, b = bottom, t = top within band, o = outside band, r = right, l = left, cr = cross, (s)o = (serpent) ornamentation, in = inscription
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¹⁵⁶ > Or < indicates whether the images are larger or smaller than the other carving elements (and not the other way round).

¹⁵⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (not the other way round).

¹⁵⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁵⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

Ög Hov 24	face with 2 birds			od?													
Ög Hov 27	humanoid in snakes			so													
Sm 103	face/mask?					x											
(key in note ¹⁶⁰)				prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁶¹		
stone	image	cross¹⁶²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁶³	in¹⁶⁴	od	
Sö 80	leonine quadruped			i		c						x		>	<		
Sö 155	legs quadruped			i				?			?			>?	<		
Sö 235	1 horse + hooves?			i			x			x				=?x	<		
Sö 239	rider		?			?		?			x			<	<		
Sö 245	bird on cross	c? <		cr				x		x					<		
Sö 247	bird on cross	c <		cr				x		x					<		
Sö 272	rider		x					x		x				<	<		
Sö 290	bird?	t =	x				x			x				<	<		
Sö 303	cervine? quadruped									x					<		

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¹⁶² > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (not the other way round).

¹⁶³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁶⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

Sö 351	ship	c, >		in				x			x				<	<	
Sö Sb1965;19	bird? on cross	c <		cr				x			x				<	<	
U 6	human? legs			od/so											<		
	legs (hooves?)			i,od /so											<		
(key in note ¹⁶⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁶⁶			
stone	image	cross¹⁶⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁶⁸	in¹⁶⁹	od	
U 8	back part, horns? cervine? quadruped	=															
U 31	bird				x	?		?		x					>		
U 51	non-specific quadruped		x					t		x					<	<	=
	non-specific quadruped		x					x		x					<	<	=
	total										x				>	<	
U 78	face/mask	t <	x				r			x					<	<	
U 128	face/mask, upper body			so			l			x					<	<	

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¹⁶⁷ > Or < indicates that the images are larger or smaller than the cross (not the other way round).

¹⁶⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁶⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

U 176	non-specific quadruped		x			x					x				>	<	
U 257	bird		?													>?	
U 485	bird?	tc, <		i					t	x					<	<	
U 521	sitting humanoid			od, so				x		x					<?	<	=
	bird gripping snakes			i, so, od				r		x					<?	<	=
	(decapitated?) head			so				l		x					<	<	<
(key in note ¹⁷⁰)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁷¹			
stone	image	cross¹⁷²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁷³	in¹⁷⁴	od	
U 574	bird gripping snake	os, =?		so, cr					x						=?	<	
U 576	bird on cross	<		cr, i	?					x					<	<	
U 588	standing humanoid with spread arms			so					t	x					<	<	
U 631	embracing couple with cross staff	on staff >	x			x					x				os	os	

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¹⁷³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁷⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

U 633	bird, see Fv1955;224	?				x				x				=?	<		
U 670	face/mask		i					t			x			=	<		
U 694	bound bird																
U 714	quadruped legs		i														
U 713	bird		so				x			<				<	<		
U 754	stirrups & spurs		x			?	x						?				
(key in note ¹⁷⁵)			<i>prominence</i>				<i>location</i>				<i>surface occupied</i>				<i>rel. to carvings</i> ¹⁷⁶		
<i>stone</i>	<i>image</i>	<i>cross</i> ¹⁷⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o ¹⁷⁸	in ¹⁷⁹	od	
U 874	bird					x				x				=?	<		
U 901	non-specific quadruped	<, t?		i, cr, so				?l		<				<?	<	=	
	3 humanoids, 1 with cross striking 2 nd who holds 3 rd	<		i, cr				?r		<				=?	<	=	
U 979	ship	>, c?		cr			?										
U 980	non-specific quadruped		x					x		x				=	<		

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od = other decoration, or = other ornamentation, < = smaller, > = larger, = = equal, f = on front, b = on back, os = on the opposite side, as = on an adjacent side.

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¹⁷⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁷⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

U 1001	ship with sail		?													
U 1003	rider			in					x	x				<	<	
U 1112	bird on cross	=		cr												
U 1123	1 +1? non-specific quadruped(s)	to		c, i			x			x				<	<	
U 1144	2 non-specific quadrupeds	c >		i, c, o			x				x			=	<	=
U 1147	hand holding pointed object with cross on top?									?				<		
(key in note ¹⁸⁰)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁸¹		
stone	image	cross¹⁸²	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁸³	in¹⁸⁴	od
U 1150	face/mask				x			?		?				<		
U Fv1955;222	2 humanoids carrying suspended cross	t <, os t <		cr				x		x				<		<

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¹⁸³ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁸⁴ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

	ship with sail & 3 humanoids	>, >				x					x			>		>
	humanoid with spread arms	>, >	or				?			x				=		<, >
U Fv1959;260	quadruped (horse?)		i, so					?		x				<?	?	
U Fv1973;194	rider	c <							x	x				<		
Vg 14	lupine? quadruped attacking cervine quadruped?	os, >			x	x							x	>	>	
(key in note ¹⁸⁵)			prominence			location				surface occupied				rel. to carvings¹⁸⁶		
stone	image	cross¹⁸⁷	i	t	e	c	b	t	o	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾	o¹⁸⁸	in¹⁸⁹	od
Vg 27	human feet			or												
Vg 106	face/mask			i, od?				x							as	
Vs 4	head leonine? quadruped			i				?		>						

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¹⁸⁸ Especially compared to the serpent-heads, -tails and tendrils, including union knot.

¹⁸⁹ Compared to space taken up by inscription as a whole.

TABLE 1. FIGURAL IMAGES COMBINED WITH CROSSES

image type	total	combined with cross	image(s) > cross	c. same size	image(s) < cross
armed rider	7	3	3 (2 on same stone)		0
unarmed rider	6	1 (Magi) ¹⁹⁰	1		0
standing warrior	6	5 (4 on same stone; 1 on pair stone)	5 (4 on same stone)		0
Sigurðr	10	6 (2 x 2 on same stone)	3 (2 on same stone)	2	1
humanoid with spread arms ¹⁹¹	9	6 (1 Christ)	5 (2 on same stone; 1 Christ)		1
humanoid holding snakes	3	1	1		0
humanoid held by snakes	5	5 (2 on same stone)	4 (2 on same stone)		1
other humanoid	21	9	7	1	1
face/mask	19	8 (2 on same stone)	5 (2 on same stone)		3
horse	7	3	3		0
cervine quadruped	5	3 (1 with 2 crosses)	2	2 nd cross	1
canine quadruped	8	5 (2 on same stone)	4 (2 on same stone)		1
lupine quadruped	7	6 (2 on same stone)	5 (2 on same stone)	1	0

¹⁹⁰ As composite image on N 68.

¹⁹¹ Incl. Christ.

leonine quadruped	8	5	4	1	0
serpentine quadruped	9	4	4		0
non-specific quadruped	19	8	4 (2 x 2 on same stone)		4
bird	25	6 (incl. 1 head)	2	<i>2nd cross</i>	4 (incl. 1 head)
ship	16	8	4		4
hammer	5	0	0		0
other	8	2	3 (also individually larger)		0
	202	94	68	5	21

TABLE 2. FIGURAL IMAGES COMPARED TO (SERPENT) ORNAMENTATION

image type	total	with serpent ornamentation	image(s) > ornamentation		image(s) c. same size as orn.		image(s) < orn
			individual	total	individual	total	
armed rider	7	5	3 (2 on same stone)	2 (1 on a.s.)	0	0	0
unarmed rider ¹⁹²	6	4	1 (Magi)	3	0	0	0
standing warrior	6	1	1	0	0	0	0
Sigurðr	10	10	0	5 (2 x 2 on same stone)	1 ¹⁹³	4 (2 x 2 on same stone)	0
humanoid with spread arms ¹⁹⁴	8	7	2 (both on U 313)	3 (Christ on N 68; on a.s. on Sö 40, U 1161)	1 (Christ on DR 42)	0	1
humanoid holding snakes	3	3	1	0	1	0	1
humanoid held by snakes	5	5	0	4 (2 on same stone; 1 on adjacent side)	0	0	1
other humanoid	21	15	1	12 (1 on adjacent side; 2 + 6 on same stone)	0	1	1
face/mask	19	6	3	0	0	0	3
horse	7	5	0	2	0	0	2

¹⁹² Incl. the Magi on N 68.

¹⁹³ This is on U 1175, on which Sigurðr forms one image with the two smaller figures.

¹⁹⁴ Incl. Christ.

cervine quadruped	5	1	0	1	0	0	0
canine quadruped	8	4	0	3	0	0	1
lupine quadruped	7	2	0	0	2	0	0
leonine quadruped	8	5	3	0	2	0	0
serpentine quadruped	9	8	3	3 (1 on adjacent side)	1	0	1
non-specific quadruped	19	18	0	10 (3 x 2 on same stone)	0	2 (on same stone)	6
bird	25	18	0	12 (2 on same stone; 1 on adjacent side)	1	0	5
ship	16	10	6	0	3	0	1
hammer	5	2	2	0	0	0	0
other	8	5	1	3	1	0	0
	202	134	28	65	12	7	23
			21%	47%	9%	5%	
		100%		68%		14%	18%

TABLE 3. PROMINENCE OF THE IMAGE TYPES

i = isolated

t 1 = touching one other carving element

t ≥ 2 = touching 2 or more other carving elements

e = embedded in other carvings

c = central

t = top

b = bottom

t = top within band

o t = on top of the runic band

o o = other position outside the band

discernability						position on the stone						proportion of the stone occupied				
tot.	image	i	t 1	t ≥ 2	e	image	c	b	t	o t	o o	image	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾
7 ¹⁹⁵	armed rider	1	4	2	0	armed rider	6	1	0	0	0	armed rider	1	6	0	0
6 ¹⁹⁶	unarmed rider	1	4	1	0	unarmed rider	5	1	0	0	0	unarmed rider	4	1	1	0
6	standing warrior	0	2	4	0	standing warrior	3	1	2	0	0	standing warrior	2	4	0	0
10	Sigurðr	1	5	1	3	Sigurðr	1	1	6	0	2	Sigurðr	10	0	0	0
8	humanoid with spread arms	2	3	0	3	humanoid with spread arms	1	1	3	3	0	humanoid with spread arms	6	1	1	0

¹⁹⁵ Incl. with vane on DR 96.

¹⁹⁶ Incl. the Magi on N 68.

discernability						position on the stone						proportion of the stone occupied				
tot.	image	i	t 1	t ≥ 2	e	image	c	b	t	o t	o o	image	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾
3	humanoid holding snakes	0	1	0	2	humanoid holding snakes	1	0	1	1	0	humanoid holding snakes	1	1	0	1
5	humanoid held by snakes	1	0	0	4	humanoid held by snakes	1	4	0	0	0	humanoid held by snakes	5	0	0	0
21	other humanoid	7	12	1	1	other humanoid	13	5	3	0	0	other humanoid	13	3	1	4
19	face/mask	4	7	3	5	face/mask ¹⁹⁷	6	1	8	3	0	face/mask	11	3	2	3
7	horse	3	3	1	0	horse	2	3	2	0	0	horse	7	0	0	0
5	cervine quadruped	3	2	0	0	cervine quadruped	2	3	0	0	0	cervine quadruped	2	2	1	0
8	canine quadruped	1	3	2	2	canine quadruped	6	1	1	0	0	canine quadruped	8	0	0	0
7	lupine quadruped	0	4	3	0	lupine quadruped ¹⁹⁸	1	2	2	0	1	lupine quadruped	3	3	1	0
8	leonine	4	1	1	2	leonine	6	1	1	0	0	leonine	0	4	2	2

¹⁹⁷ Plus 1 in an uncertain position on DR 286.

¹⁹⁸ Plus 1 in an uncertain position on DR 286.

	quadruped					quadruped						quadruped				
discernability						position on the stone						proportion of the stone occupied				
tot.	image	i	t 1	t ≥ 2	e	image	c	b	t	o t	o o	image	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾
9	serpentine quadruped	2	3	1	3	serpentine quadruped	6	3	0	0	0	serpentine quadruped	1	3	4 ¹⁹⁹	1
19	non-specific quadruped	2	6	8	3	non-specific quadruped	15	0	3	1	0	non-specific quadruped	19	0	0	0
25	bird	6	14	2	3	bird	6	2	8	8	1	bird	21	2	1 ²⁰⁰	1 ²⁰¹
16	ship	2	10	3	1	ship	5	10	0	1	0	ship	9	4	3	0
5	hammer	1	2	2	0	hammer	2	0	1	1	1	hammer	3	1	1	0
8	other	4	3	1	1	other	3	2	3	0	0	other	5	1	1	0
2	total	44	89	36	33	total + 2	91	42	44	18	5	total	132	39	19	12
	100%	22%	44%	18%	16%	100%	45%	21%	22%	9%	3%	100%	65%	20%	9%	6%
	image	i	t 1	t ≥ 2	e	image	c	b	t	o t	o o	image	<¼	¼-½	½-¾	>¾

¹⁹⁹ 1 Of these consist of a pair of quadrupeds.

²⁰⁰ Incl. the quadruped on U 855.

²⁰¹ This image consists of a pair of birds.

Catalogue

This catalogue contains images of the monuments that are listed in Appendix 1.A-C.

The monuments are presented here in alphabetical order of their *siglum*, i.e. they are not divided into different image categories or types of monuments.

Full-size images, often in colour, are provided on the enclosed disk.

The source of the photo is indicated in its caption (and on the disk in the file-name). Where only a page-, figure-, or plate-number is given, this refers to the figure or plate (*planche*) in the volume of *Sveriges runinskrifter* or *Norges Innskrifter med de yngre Runer* that corresponds to the *siglum* of the monument.

In addition, the following abbreviations occur: DR = *Danmarks runeindskrifter*; MS = Photo by Marjolein Stern; RAÄ = Riksantikvarieämbete.

Please note: *The images have been removed from the online version of this thesis. A hard-bound copy is available in Nottingham University Library, or contact the author.*