Futhark
International Journal of Runic Studies

Main editors
James E. Knirk and Henrik Williams

Assistant editor
Marco Bianchi

Vol. 6 · 2015
Contents

Foreword ................................................................................................................................................. 5

Staffan Fridell. Tendenser i skrifttecknens utveckling: Alfabet och runor ............................... 7
Levi Damsma and Arjen Versloot. Vowel Epenthesis in Early Germanic Runic Inscriptions ................................................................................................................................. 21
Per Holmberg. Svaren på Rökstenens gåtor: En socialsemiotisk analys av meningsskapande och rumslighet .............................................................................................................. 65
Magnus Källström. Gravhällsfragmentet från Tornby i Fornåsa i Östergötland och utvecklingen av några medeltida runformer ............................................................... 107
Michael P. Barnes. Two Recent Runic Finds from Orkney ....................................................... 143
Martin Findell. The Portormin (Dunbeath) Runestone ............................................................... 153

Short Notices

Magnus Källström. Till tolkningen av ristarsignaturen på G 343 från S:t Hans ruin i Visby .................................................................................................................. 171
Magnus Källström. Den målade runtexten i Torpa kyrka (Ög 218) ........................................ 177

Reviews

Lars Magnar Enoksen. Runor: Mästarens handbok. Reviewed by Henrik Williams ........................................................................................................................................... 187

Contributors ......................................................................................................................................... 193
Reviews


Reviewed by James E. Knirk

When Jan Ragnar Hagland, professor of Old Norse philology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU = Noregs teknisk-naturvitskaplege universitet), retired at the age of 70 in March 2013, his colleagues and friends in Trondheim decided to honour him with a Festschrift consisting of a selection of his own articles. It was the celebrant’s desire that the theme for collection be runology.

The book begins with a nine-page sketch of Hagland’s scholarly profile, including a concise summary of his academic career, a general presentation of his diverse scholarly contributions, and in particular a discussion of his runological studies. There follows a table of contents and then twenty-three articles presented chronologically, starting in 1984 and ending in 2010. The collection is completed by a twenty-one page chronological, numbered bibliography with 256 items and finally a three-page Tabula Gratulatoria.

The editors’ overview provides sound insights into the areas of greatest scholarly interest for Hagland, areas which go far beyond Old Norse philology including runology. In addition to manuscript studies of kings’ saga material and charters, he has examined dialects and the question of an Old Norwegian writing norm, personal and place names, and language history, and has even ventured into more purely historical studies. As a popular mediator, he has translated into modern Norwegian several Icelandic family sagas and (together with Jørn Sandnes) the Law of the Frostathing, and written numerous popular-scientific presentations for *inter alia* the periodical publication of NTNU University Museum (Vitenskapsmuseet in Trondheim), *Spor*. Interest in more “modern” times has resulted in the publication of several collections of Norwegian words from the 1700s as well as articles concerning the reception of Old Norse literature during that century and the works of leading intellectuals of the day. More recently there have appeared contributions to literacy studies, in particular runic literacy.


© 2016 James Knirk.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International License and available free of charge at http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-282361.
Hagland’s runological production began with a Festschrift article in 1984 concerning the newly found inscription on a soapstone rock wall (A 232 Esøya; reprinted as no. 1 in the collection here under review). As the editors note, already in this first runic article Hagland shows himself to be an imaginative and daring interpreter. They observe, however, that the reading and interpretation have recently been contested by Jonas Nordby (as yet unpublished). Hagland’s next major runological work, appearing in 1986 under the title *Runefunna*, presented the corpus of runic inscriptions that had been unearthed in Trondheim during the archaeological excavations from 1972 onward. His continued research on these inscriptions resulted in a large number of further publications during the following decades, including both popular presentations and scholarly articles examining specific problems with individual inscriptions. Several articles from the late 1980s argue that an entire sub-corpus, comprising some twenty ownership tags, could represent Icelandic material, as could all the ownership tags from Bryggen in Bergen. A fierce debate ensued, and consensus has modified the claim, or as the editors conclude: it is beyond doubt that some of the tags are Icelandic. The ultimate result of the work with the recently discovered Trondheim inscriptions was a preliminary manuscript for their publication in the next volume of *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer* (vol. 7, still under production; the preliminary manuscript available on the Internet). Hagland’s publications on the N 449 Kuli inscription have had implications for basic understanding of the inscription as well as for the history of the conversion of Norway. In 1998 he presented the first documentation of a Norwegian runestone based on laser technology and a new reading of parts of the Kuli inscription. As the editors comment, although the new interpretations of short sequences have not convinced many, the work demonstrates Hagland’s dedication to applying new technologies to old problems. Interest in the dating of inscriptions led to his taking the initiative for an international conference in Trondheim in 1997 on that topic, with publication of the proceedings (*Dating Inscriptions*) in 1998. There Hagland co-authored with R. I. Page a piece on Scandinavian runes in an English manuscript from around 1100 and the implications the runes there had for understanding the development of medieval runes in Scandinavia. Fruitful co-operation with English scholars led during these years to the publication together with Michael Barnes and R. I. Page of *The Runic Inscriptions of Viking Age Dublin* (1997). Hagland has in addition authored several publications on post-Reformation runic inscriptions in Norway. The editors’ presentation of the main lines of Hagland’s runic research is informative and provides a good framework for viewing the collection of articles.

The articles in the collection are printed as photographic facsimiles of the original publications. Thus the original page numbers are preserved, whereas page numbers for the Festschrift are placed in the outer margin somewhat below the top of the text area. Reference to where and when the contributions appeared can be found by using the table of contents on pp. 15–16 where the individual items are identified with their respective numbers in the compiled bibliography at the back of the Festschrift.

*Futhark* 6 (2015)

The selection is in general good, and more or less all areas of Hagland’s runological interest are represented. The items include two popular-scientific presentations, nos. 2 and 13, the latter of which is so elementary that it probably should have been omitted. Of special interest are the contributions relating to Iceland and runic literacy there, namely nos. 5 (controversial), 12, 18 and 20, and in particular the one concerning the First Grammatical Treatise, no. 8. Norwegian runic literacy, particularly in Trondheim, is somewhat overrepresented, with nos. 13, 17, 21 and 23. The examples of more purely linguistic treatments are judiciously chosen, nos. 11 and 19, and also the onomastic choices are illustrative, nos. 4 (controversial) and 10, as is the entertaining article on post-Reformation inscriptions from Hagland’s home district, no. 6. Other onomastic contributions would, however, have been more illustrative of his good scholarly groundwork, specifically for example “Kva tid vart þorgísl til þorgils i nordiske språk?” (1990, no. 83 in the compiled bibliography). The editors evidently felt that they could not include any co-authored articles, and thus the best article about the inscription on the bridge of a stringed instrument (written together with the music historian Bjørn Akksdal, no. 57 in the compiled bibliography) was passed over, and a shorter and less exciting work included as the representation of Hagland’s fascinating cultural-historical research on this particular item (no. 3).
This is not the place to make extensive comments on articles that were originally published between five and thirty years ago. But a few observations are perhaps in order, in addition to the editors’ comments referred to above in the review of their presentation. It must be mentioned that the inclusion of no. 9 concerning two inscriptions from Orphir, Orkney, is baffling. The presentation of the second of these simply summarizes the first publication of the runic bone by John McKinnell in *Nytt om runer* (but with a photograph), and both inscriptions have since been published by Michael Barnes in *The Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions of Britain* (2006), where neither of Hagland’s interpretations was accepted.

There are, unfortunately, many errors in the compiled bibliography of Hagland’s works. For instance, his first publication of the newly found inscriptions from Trondheim, *Runefunna*, is given the subtitle of the second edition (1990: *handelshistoria* instead of *handelen si historie*) and an incorrect year of appearance (1987 for 1986). Regarding the twenty-three articles reprinted in the Festschrift, the following mistakes were noted: (2) the title is not “Runer i tabloidform” but “på tabloidformat”, (5) the title is not finds from “Bergen og Trondheim” but “Trondheim og Bergen”, (8) there is a question mark after the title/before the subtitle, not a period, (12) “Þorgeirsson” in the title has a capital Þ, not þ (this is also incorrect in the table of contents for the Festschrift), (18) the last word in the title reads “merknad” not “randmerknad”. In addition, in ten instances the final page number of an article is incorrect, being increased by one, and no. 23 extends only to p. 187, not p. 189 as listed in the compiled bibliography. Random checks revealed similar problems in many other items. Mistakes in the wording of titles, the year of publication, and page numbers greatly impair the usefulness of the bibliography. In the *Tabula Gratulatoria* the Oslo Runic Archives is listed as being at the ”Kunsthistorisk museum”, not ”Kulturhistorisk museum”.

The publisher’s work also deserves comment. The cover illustration consists of an Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet taken from an encyclopedic lexicon of the English language published in 1889 and available on the Internet. It has nothing to do with Hagland’s runic production. Finally, after only brief use of the volume, the last pages have already partially loosened from the binding.

One can only lament that Jan Ragnar Hagland did not receive a Festschrift with better workmanship on the part of the publisher—and with a bibliography that was not so ridden with mistakes. He definitely deserved something better.