

FIRST BOUNDARY STONE AT SUNTRU ASI AND SNUTRU ASE

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The oldest Swedish MS dealing with national border matters is the relation, almost in the form of an anecdote, which gives us some facts regarding the very first documented border line between Sweden and Denmark from the days of the Danish Viking king Svein Forkbeard about the turn of the millenium.

He is called Sven tiuguskiaeg in Old Swedish, and the MS is annexed to the Old Law for Westrogothia, written about the early 1280-ies.

The Swedish king in the relation is named Emund with a nickname added, Slemme, which means the bad one. It points to the 1050-ies, when Emund, even called Amund or Omund was the Swedish king. His name in Old Swedish is Emundaer slemæe.

To be correct, Emund Slemme is the king named first in the MS B59 and as a king of Upsala. That he is mentioned first seems to have guided some Swedish scientists in the past to have Svein Forkbeard replaced by Sven Estridsen in order to explain the fact that the two kings in the MS are not of the same era but are separated by almost half a century.

This is one of the anomalies in the MS, and other points, too, have created some difficulties to understand the relation. Nevertheless, the underlying facts are undoubtedly related to some very old pacts between Sweden and Denmark, the relicts of which have been put together in tradition to form the relation as we know it from MS B59 and from a few other MSS.

In the relation, the border line between Sweden and Denmark is defined by six boundary stones inland and also by some facts told about the Danaholmen, the Dana islet, which lies off the mouth of the southern branch of the River Gota.

The islet was said to have been divided in three parts between the king of Upsala and the kings of Denmark and Norway respectively. Since I have managed to reconstruct the partition, I can state that it consisted of an inner sector of 180 degrees to Sweden and the remaining outer sectors of 90 degrees each to Denmark and Norway.

That the islet is called Danaholmen - Dana holmber in MS B10 and even Danmark litla (little Denmark) from some other old sources - will be due to a Danish dominance, either over Norway only or as a whole over both Sweden and Norway, when these things were once actual.

However, there must also be considered the ceremony mentioned from a meeting of three Northern kings, viz. the Upsala king on horseback being served by the Danish king as to the bridle and by the Norwegian king as to the stirrup. This, instead, is in a line with a Swedish dominance as is also indicated by the large inner sector to Sweden.

Whether this ceremony has taken place on the Dana islet or in some other holy meeting place in the outer border line, or if there is some other reason for mentioning the ceremony, is, however, still an open question.

But the important news in the MS from the days of only two Viking kings is that twelve men named had six boundary stones set between Sweden and Denmark. Six of the men were from provinces in Sweden and six from provinces in Denmark.

The stones were set in the borderlands of the provinces of Westrogothia and Smalandia on the Swedish side and Hallandia, Scania and Blechingia on the Danish side. The sixth and last of the stones was related to Bröms near Kalmar Sound in the Baltic.

I shall here go into no more details regarding the men named or what can be calculated as to names and locations for five of the stones from the somewhat scanty lines of the MS. But in this paper I shall present my solution of the problem related to the first boundary stone at SUNTRU ridge and at SNUTRU ridge and also give a solution of the problem that the kings are not from the same era.

The MS B59 of the Old Law for Westrogothia has the writing A SUNTRU ASI, which means that the first boundary stone was situated on a mountain ridge described as SUNTRU, whereas the Danish MS AM28 in runes has the form of SNUTRU.

When I started my investigation 1973, I accepted that the writing of SUNTRU, the oldest writing, also gave guidance to understand the location and in its connection gave a clue to the historical circumstances, under which the first boundary stone was set.

I made reference to an important stone, which initially I found at Asbräcka, about two kilometers from the River Gota, and I assigned the stone and the place name of RUDET with the word SUNT. It is an adjective, which has dialectically been used in Westsweden (Sörbygdén).

SUNT, usually uninflected, had the meaning broken, so I saw SUNTRU as something partitioned by a boundary in this RUD (clearing), abbreviated RU. So, at this place, hypothetically, there will once have been an enclave of Danish-Norwegian origin on the Westrogothian bank of the River Gota, some six kilometers above the falls of Lilla Edet at Fuxerna.

For the epoch in question I assumed 1027 or shortly after, i.e. the days of Canute in Denmark. Detailed reasons for my theory are given in my study "Landamären och gränsstenar" (1975), and I still maintain the region and the stone as one of the early demarcations between Sweden and Denmark.

But in the years after 1975 I also had to realize that consequences of the alternative writings of the type of SNUTRU instead of SUNTRU must also be considered. The writings of SNUTRU and the similar SNWTRO, SNYTRO etc. in MSS from the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries have usually been looked upon as only corrupt versions of SUNTRU.

However, if hypothetically we take the standpoint that they were not corrupt forms but instead originally used on account of some important reason, unknown since at least seven centuries back, the following can be reached on linguistic bases:

The writing A SNUTRU ASE will mean on a mountain ridge described by SNUTRU. It is also to be said that the MS AM28 with this form is primarily the Danish Law for Scania, which included also Hallandia and Blechingia as to jurisdiction.

The particular part of the MS, which includes the border can be traced back to the year of 1319 from other contents of the MS. This is a list of Danish kings, immediately preceding the border list, and it ends by king Erik Menved, who died 1319.

As SNUTRU is in runes, the reading of the text is quite undisputed, contrary to what can appear as to stems in gothic style. But what about a misunderstanding of stems already in about 1319 from an earlier source? My answer is that similar SNUTRU forms in not only one MS but in also a few other MSS will speak for some other cause than corruption for the form as compared to MS B59.

My thesis is that two different political situations and thence very early two different locations of the first boundary stone have existed and caused the varying forms.

And now the word analysis on the linguistic bases of Old Norse and Old Icelandic grammars:

Snú is a form of the verb snúa, which means to turn.

Trú is a form of the substantive trúa, which means faith, religious faith.

Snú is imperative and thus means a call to turn or to convert.

Trú is an oblique case, and as the verb is in imperativ for the one or those who are called to convert, so the faith is in accusative and is thus an oblique case.

There is in Old Icelandic the substantive snúning, which means conversion: Snúning Páls postola means the conversion of St Paul.

The writing of SNUTRU has proved to be of importance, which in turn must have consequences as to the situation of another first boundary stone and to its seniority in comparison to what I found at Asbräcka.

The name of the location of the first boundary stone proves to point out a very special mountain ridge, where obviously some declaration regarding a general conversion to Christianity will have taken place.

So, the question is raised: Can anything of this sense be documentary traced from another early source? And the answer is: Yes, it can, because in Book II:39 (37) Adam of Bremen has stated that king Suein (of Denmark) and king Olaph (of Sweden) concluded a pact to maintain Christianity planted in their realms and also extend it to foreign nations.

This is mentioned after his statement that Suein was married to Olaph's mother and that Olaph's daughter Ingigerd was married to Jaroslaw in Russia. The Russian wedding occurred in 1019, and as king Suein had deceased already in 1014, the pact must have been concluded not later than 1013.

And 1013 is also the year when a statement on Thurgat, the first bishop at Skara in Sweden is made by bishop Thietmar of Merseburg in his chronicle. Thurgat was present, when the new Hamburg-Bremen archbishop Unwan was enthroned in February 1013.

So, even the pact mentioned by Adam was probably concluded in 1013, the more as he also mentioned another pact, concluded by Chnud/Canute and his half-brother Olaph in Book II:52(50). It is related to the years 1014/1016 and the circumstances after Suein's death and the Danish retreat from England.

Supported by his pact Chnud/Canute decided to conquer England, and later on also Norway, which in turn will presuppose that there will have existed also a later pact and then with king Anund.

Obviously, the pact between Suein and Olaph will have had Suein's great military expedition against England in the summer of 1013 also as an urgent subject. However, it can documentarily be indicated only by Adam's understatement, "foreign nations". But the historical scenario is underlining such an impression.

Furthermore, as a third subject, the pact will inevitably have had also an agreement regarding the border line between Sweden and Denmark.

As is obvious from MS AM28, where the third boundary stone is called KIRKIU STEN (Church stone), this agreement will have defined the first Christian border line, which simultaneously will have been an outer link to maintain Christianity in each country.

That, in brief, is the background to the saga or tradition regarding the border line agreement, as I see it, where Suein Forkbeard is the Danish king. The Swedish royal partner in his agreement will thus have been Olof Skotking, not mentioned in the MS, and the year for this remarkable event 1013.

There will have been other following agreements regarding the border line and partly with modifications as to the provinces in question: One agreement between Canute and king Anund of Sweden as said before, which will have been concluded in about 1027/1028 as a consequence of the battle at the Holy river in Scania and linked to Canute's following interference in Norway.

There will also have been an agreement in about 1050 between Sven Estridsen and king Emund of Sweden as indicated by the mentioning of Emund Slemme in MSS like B59. That means in an over all view that all three of them, Olof Skotking and his two sons reigning after him, will have dealt with the border line agreement to Denmark.

As we know from Snorre Sturlasson, Olof Skotking had to deal with the border line to Norway also, viz. on the island of Hising. It was the famous game where the die broke into a seven in favour of king Olav Haraldsson.

The River Gota is mentioned by Snorre Sturlasson in the same saga as a boundary between the kings of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. But still there is no statement from him on boundary facts as we know them from MS B59.

The fact that the relations in MS B59 and the other MSS do not mention Olof Skotking but Svein Forkbeard and as the Swedish king have Emund Slemme of Upsala must depend on a compression through centuries of the underlying pacts.

So, relicts from three early border line agreements will have been compressed into the statement of only one agreement and with its two kings from different eras.

Finally: A certain stone with Christian symbols and a message concentrated in 15 latin capital letters has led me to the year of 1013 and to some of the thoughts in this paper. The stone is near the border of the old hundreds (häradar) of Sävedal and Askim. Border lines could partly be reconstructed here inland; also in the outer regions, based on some antiquarian facts from the Dana islet.

This has made me convinced that the first boundary stone of SNUTRU ASE is still in existence, viz. here on a mountain ridge about 115 meters above sea level in the old parish of Fässberg.

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As an appendix I shall now also state a few things as a complement of some points in the paper and also give my view on two rune texts, as I believe these texts were made for boundary reasons, though earlier and in other regions.

But first a note that the ceremony of three Northern kings is omitted in MS AM28, though this MS is otherwise much influenced by Westrogothian tradition. In late editions of other Danish law transcriptions, however, the ceremony is included, but with the Danish king on horseback.

Such a ceremony is generally called officium stratoris and officium marescalci, and it has been shown in Germany that the ceremony will have been used there earliest in 1131. The ceremony of three Northern kings with services as to bridle and stirrup will thus probably have been in use not earlier than around 1200.

So, it is to be questioned, whether the ceremony has occurred in some meeting in the 13th century, or if the ceremony is to be interpreted as an expression in the 12th or 13th centuries for an ancient situation, when the once mighty Olof Skotking supported Danish dominance against England and Norway.

The Danish dominance over Norway was completely attained, when Olav Haraldsson was defeated by king Canute of Denmark. But Swedish policy then was an alliance with Norway against Denmark.

In oldest Swedish history by Ericus Olai, who lived until 1486, there has been described that a boundary agreement was actual in the days of a certain Amundus and that it was followed by a war against king Canute of Denmark. In my view it could be applied to an agreement in 1027/1028 followed by Swedish support to Olav Haraldsson in 1030.

So, we have learnt that national border matters were dealt with in Scandinavia already in the first half of the 11th century and that stones were used as demarcations. Foremost

I refer to the first boundary stone mentioned in MS AM28 and to my interpretation of SNUTRU on linguistic bases, and to the pact mentioned by Adam of Bremen in Book II:39 (37).

After this review of 11th century national boundary agreements of Sweden I shall now point at two rune inscriptions from the 6th century, where the runes are of the old futhark; the wellknown stones of Mōjebro in Upland and of Tanum in Bohuslän.

My short interpretations are free essays, but I still hope they will contribute to explain these texts, because I consider these stones were probably once used as demarcations of small realms, which were later parts of the national states.

So, these pagan landmarks will give a background and also a contrast to what was attained by the first boundary stone of the First Christian boundary agreement between Sweden and Denmark.

The texts of the Mōjebro and Tanum stones are both reversed and must be read in a mirror to get the right appearance of ordinary runes. There is no punctuation or division of the texts with the exception of two lines and a single rune (Mōjebro stone); an interval (Tanum stone).

The text of the Mōjebro stone is the following:

FRAWARADARANAHANAISLAGINAR

The text of the Tanum stone is the following:

þRAWIJAN HAITINARWAS

I make the following divisions of the texts:

Mōjebro: FRA WA RADARAN A HANA IS LAGINAR

Tanum: þRAWIJAN HAITINAR WAS

The texts contain auxiliary verb forms of IS and WAS respectively, which points to a common background and to an Anglo-Saxon influence. I postulate the prepositions of FRA and A (used later in Viking Ages), present participle verb forms ending in -AN, and WA as a place to wade over a stream. I refer to Swedish trave or kast (stack of wood) to explain my interpretation of þRAWIJAN.

The Mōjebro text will be the following in my interpretation:

FROM (the) FORD MAKING BOUNDARY TO HAGA IS LAID (boundary)

The Tanum text will be the following in my interpretation:

THROWING CALLED WAS

And the stones will have made the following demarcations:

Mōjebro: The stone has probably defined an area by one boundary leg in the stream to Lake Maelar from a ford, where later a bridge (Mōjebro), and the other boundary leg inland from the ford to the Bronze Age mound of Håga (SW from Upsala). Håga, now about five kilometers inland, then near a bay of Lake Maelar.

Tanum: The stone has probably defined a boundary to the South of Tanum from an inland district near Kalleby Västergård, where the stone was found, and Trätteleland. The boundary then in a near stream to the sea.

I refer the stone's inscription to mean a giant's throw or throwing, viz. as a demarcation of a boundary as old as already set by a giant.

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Finally, as a summing up I wish to point again at the first boundary stone of the first Christian boundary agreement between Sweden and Denmark, where instead for the first time Christian views will have been used for settlements among the Northern peoples.

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