Considering the connections between Scandinavia and the southern Baltic coast in the 10th -11th Centuries

English Dissertation: Full Year

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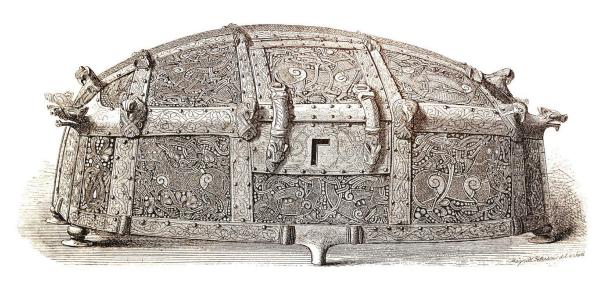**Supervisor: Professor Judith Jesch**

Fig. 1. The Cammin casket. Formerly in the cathedral of Kamień in coastal Pommerania, Poland. Now lost. Drawing Magnus Petersen. After Kornerup 1875, p. 25.

Cammin casket drawing, exhibiting distinctive Scandinavian ornamentation and hogback shape. Illustration: Magnus Petersen[1]

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[1] Else Roesdahl, 'Viking Art in European Churches', in *Viking Trade and Settlement in Continental Western Europe*, ed. by Iben Skibsted Klasoe (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2010), pp. 149–64 (p.150).

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Introduction

According to Adam of Bremen, following the death of Erik Segersäll, Sven Forkbeard married his widow, the daughter of the Polish Mieszko I.[2] Erik was king of Sweden, and his alliance- solidified through marriage- with the Polish ruling family against Sven Forkbeard, the son of Danish king Harald Bluetooth was likely formed prior to Mieszko's death in 992.[3] This union was undoubtedly political in nature, securing bonds between two powerful families, who each understood the complexities of kingship, heirs and public affairs. Adam of Brennan's account of the marriage between Erik and the Polish princess can be doubted since he lived and wrote of the events several decades after the deaths of Erik, Sven and the princess- possibly named Svietoslava.[4] Her marriage to Sven is rather better attested, being mentioned not only by Adam of Bremen but also Thietmar of Merseburg.[5] Such a marriage clearly indicates well-developed communications between Scandinavia and Poland, yet what draws particular attention with regards to this political alliance is that Sven's father Harald escaped to the Jómsborg settlement on the Baltic coast when threatened by his son.[6] This choice of location would support the idea that strong and varied connections existed between Scandinavia and the southern Baltic coast, some being alliances through marriage and some settlements. Where settlements exist, however, it would follow that trade routes and contact would already have been established.

The broad aim of this dissertation is to study the relations between Scandinavian regions and the southern Baltic coast in the 10th-11th Century using literary, historical and archaeological evidence. Although Scandinavia was not unified at this time it would seem necessary to consider all of Scandinavia within this research, as omitting certain countries would give a skewed view of the nature of trade, settlement and the movements of people and ideas. To this end, while events and instances will be considered with regard to individual countries, the level and impact of communications can be referred to as an examination of the links between Scandinavia and the Baltic. Since both regions still held 'pagan' beliefs during this period, this dissertation will also reflect upon any potential links between Norse mythology and contemporaneous 'pagan' religions on the Baltic coast.

The inhabitants of the Scandinavian countries at the time are frequently referred to as Vikings, whether or not they undertook raiding, trading or settlement voyages, however this dissertation will refer to Vikings only as those who embarked on such activities. Similarly it can be difficult to narrow down exactly what is meant by the designation of 'slavic', a term used at times seemingly as an umbrella term and at other times as a specific name for people living in carefully considered areas. The name 'Baltic' with regards to people has similar problems, and it is important to note that peoples living within the southern coastal region of the Baltic sea included Prussians, Lithuanians and Latvians.[7] Indeed, there are challenges in defining which geographic regions should be covered in the investigation of the southern Baltic coast, partly due to the shifting nature of countries, borders and peoples.

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[2] Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. by Francis J. Tschan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), Book 2, Ch.37, p.81

[3] Philip Line, *Kingship and State Formation in Sweden: 1130 - 1290* (Leiden: BRILL, 2007), p.64.

[4] Mats Roslund, *Guests in the House: Cultural Transmission Between Slavs and Scandinavians 900 to 1300 A.D.* (Leiden: BRILL, 2007), p.27.

[5] Thietmar von Merseburg, *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. by David Warner, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), Book.7,Ch.38, p.334.

[6] Roslund, p.27.

[7] Ken Dowden, *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.12.

Trade and Settlements

Amber

The natural abundance of amber in the Baltic region has been recognised for many centuries, with the Amber Road being an important trade artery even in the Roman era.[8] Amber is a resin product which has long been sought after as a semi-precious gem, occurring usually as an orange or yellow stone which has led to links being made between it and gold, as well as with the sun.[9] Continued trade can be evidenced from discoveries of amber in Viking-era contexts in Scandinavia and the British Isles. The so-called 'pagan lady' burial found on the Isle of Man has been dated to the 10th century and includes a necklace with amber beads and a pendant,[10] and although determining whether this amber came directly from the Pomeranian region or through Scandinavia is difficult to tell, it seems probable that the amber trade at this time was negotiated though Anglo-Saxon and Baltic contacts with Scandinavians.[11] This is undoubtedly telling of far-reaching and well-travelled trade sites between the Baltic coast and modern-day north-west Europe.

Examples of amber working have also been found in the form of Thor's hammer pendants at the Jómsborg/Wolin site, alongside miniature spears and carved depictions of wolves on sword scabbards, which have been interpreted as being related to Odin.[12] Further amber Thor's hammers have also been recovered from Gdańsk, one of which was found buried near a cross also made of amber, and it has been speculated that this may have been intended as a ritual deposit.[13] Amber axes have also been discovered, although these are apparently limited to the Truso area.[14] The weapon most frequently associated with Thor is the hammer, however axes have also occupied the place of the hammer for Thor and other European deities (such as the Slavic/Baltic Perkunas), and complex crossing traditions and influences can be traced extensively.[15]

At Primelberg, an island site near the Rostock-Dierkow settlement in modern-day Germany, there appears to be evidence of amber and bone craft. The remains of a wooden bridge linking the island to the formerly wealthy trading site could suggest that during the 10th-11thcenturies Primelberg benefited or took over from some lower-level exchange with other peoples.[16] A variety of crafts appear to have been practised at the Rostock-Dierkow site, with trade seeming likely. These works included amber working, comb manufacturing and the presence of moulds for working silver or bronze. Furthermore, the discovery of fibulas and a sword pommel which were determined to be of Scandinavian origin indicate the presence of either settlers or traders at the coastal site which was evidently experiencing a level of prosperity, producing and exchanging considerable amounts of resources.[17] By the time of Wulfstan's voyage the site seems to have been abandoned,[18] yet the continuation of trade sites across the southern Baltic coastal region does not appear to demonstrate a

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[8] Thomas S. Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C.–A.D. 400* (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), p.213.

[9] Faya Causey, *Amber and the Ancient World* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2011), p.44-45.

[10] Leszek Gardeła, 'Viking Death Rituals on the Isle of Man', in *Viking Myths and Rituals on the Isle of Man, Languages Myths and Finds,* ed. by Leszek Gardeła and Carolyne Larrington (Nottingham: Centre For the Study of the Viking Age, University of Nottingham, 2014), pp. 30–37 (p.33).

[11] Judith Jesch, 'Who Was Wulfstan?', in *Wulfstan's Voyage: The Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard*, ed. by Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 29–36 (p.32).

[12] Jakub Morawiec, *Vikings among the Slavs: Jomsborg and the Jomsvikings in Old Norse Tradition*, Studia Medievalia Septentrionalia (Wien: Fassbaender, 2009), p.206-207.

[13] Leszek Gardeła, *Scandinavian Amulets in Viking Age Poland*, Collectio archaeologica ressoviensis; Tomus 33 (Rzeszów: Instytut Archeologii Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2014), p.131-132.

[14] Gardeła, *Scandinavian Amulets in Viking Age Poland,* p.135.

[15] Frog, 'Circum-Baltic Mythology? The Strange Case of the Theft of the Thunder-Instrument', *Archaeologia Baltica,* 15 (2011), 78–98 (p.79-80).

[16] Hauke Jöns, 'Ports and Emporia of the Southern Coast: From Hedeby to Usedom and Wolin', in *Wulstan's Voyage: The Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard,* ed. by Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 160–81 (p.171).

[17] Jöns, p.170.

[18] Jöns, p.170.

break in communication between peoples, but rather the changeable nature of early settlement sites during an era of mercurial politics.

Trade opportunities

During the 10th-11thcentury, Europe saw an expansion in sea-fishing practices, arising for a variety of reasons, but apparently driven mainly by local demand from growing population centres, with possible ties to an increase in Christian dietary observations.[19] Since both the Baltic and North seas are known to be rich fishing sites and both provided important trade routes, it is prudent to consider whether or not fish may have been traded between Scandinavia and the Southern Baltic coast. This is especially relevant to the areas covered within this dissertation as there is evidence for the trading of fish from Bergen by merchants from within the Hanseatic League in the 13th Century.[20] The increase of demand, however, seems to have been catered to by a swell in local fishing endeavours rather than by the establishment of long-distance trade.[21] As with the trade in fish, the Hanseatic League were responsible for the successful trade in furs across the Baltic region, in this instance from Novgorod to Bergen. Unlike the fish trade, however, the fur trade had been well-established prior to the creation of the Hanseatic guilds, with merchants from Novgorod trading from Gotland to merchants in Germany and Sweden.[22] A desire to trade in furs also increased exploration and further trade opportunities for Scandinavians who travelled to the Rus'. These Scandinavians appear to have journeyed with some intent of negotiating business with native huntsmen who could provide pelts, but such ventures would also have allowed them to better navigate continental trade routes which often relied upon river route-ways.[23]

If Viking traders travelled from Scandinavia to the Rus' to pursue trade opportunities, it is not inconceivable to imagine that the Baltic neighbours of the Rus' may have seized upon similar possibilities. Trade connections between the regions are briefly mentioned in the 12th Century *Gesta principum Polonorum* by Gallus Anonymus, where it is written:

> 'Sed quia regio Polonorum ab itineribus peregrinorum est remota, et nisi transeuntibus in Rusiam pro mercimonio paucis nota... [But as the country of the Poles is far from the routes of travellers, and known to few apart from persons crossing to Russia for the purposes of trade...]'.[24]

If the Rus' did conduct trade with other Slavic, Baltic or Prussian groups, it does not seem unreasonable to propose some exchange of goods between them and Viking traders. This would be a convoluted, indirect means of either group acquiring foreign materials, however it would nevertheless provide an avenue of cultural interchange between the different peoples. Adam of Bremen also touched upon the realities of trade and communication when he wrote of Björkö in Sweden, near Uppsala, an area which apparently suffered frequent pirate incursions, but which also served the trade needs of various peoples, including Slavs, Prussians, Scythians and Danes.[25]

Burials

Studying the remains of burials- whether inhumation or cremation- can be beneficial in uncovering information on populations, health and customs. However, while it is frequently held that 'pagan' burials

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[19] James H. Barrett and others, 'Interpreting the Expansion of Sea Fishing in Medieval Europe Using Stable Isotope Analysis of Archaeological Cod Bones', *Journal of Archaeological Science,* (2011), 1–9 (p.2).
[20] Hans Andersson, 'Material Growth (to c.1350) : Urbanisation', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. By Knut Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 312–44 (p.340).
[21] James H. Barrett and others*,* p.6-8.
[22] Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1300 - 1613* (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), p.18.
[23] Peter J Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (London: Pan Books, 2010), p.499.
[24] Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum: The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, ed. by János M. Bak, Urszula Borkowska, Giles Constable, Gerhard Jaritz and Gábor Klaniczay, trans. by Paul W Knoll and Frank Schaer (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2003), p.11.
[25] Adam of Bremen, Book.1, Ch.61-63, p.51-52.

included grave-goods where Christian burials were unfurnished, this has not always been the case.[26] The meanings- if any- behind differences between burials can be difficult to determine, and any information relating to the identity held by the deceased can be even more elusive. On the island of Usedom in the Baltic Sea, a series of burials have been uncovered which made use of boats as part of inhumation practices. The deliberate use of these vessels echoes the Scandinavian tradition of boat-burial, yet while a Scandinavian influence seems all but assured, it is unlikely that these burials were created for Scandinavian individuals.[27] While such burials may exhibit characteristics typically associated with Scandinavian burial practices, examination of an 11thcentury boat-burial in Szczecin concluded that the interred individual was of Baltic or Slavic origin. While Szczecin functioned as an important coastal town with regards to trade, Scandinavian influence may not necessarily be the cause behind a decision to inhume individuals in boat settings,[28] especially if Slavic culture held some notion of water as a liminal space between the living and the dead.[29]

Furthermore, a cemetery site at Menzlin appears to have utilised aspects of Slavic and Scandinavian origins; cremation urns were created in a Slavic style, whereas Scandinavian items appear to have been included in the burials and the urns were placed in stone settings, some of which were boatshaped.[30] While it is almost impossible to conclusively ascertain whether the buried individuals were from Scandinavia or not, the elements utilised in these burials- and also at a cemetery site found near Ralswiek- are evidence of strong, complex relations between the natives of the area and Scandinavians.[31]

Key sites

Prior to excavations in modern-day Wolin, the coast of Usedom was favoured as the location of the proposed 10th trading hub, Jómsborg.[32] Jómsborg is one of the best known Viking sites on the southern Baltic coast, described by Adam of Bremen as 'a most noble city' and a 'widely known trading center', though he names it as Jumne.[33] This settlement also owes some of its fame to the Saga of the Jómsvíkings, although this is a later medieval Icelandic creation and is principally a work of fiction.[34] Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that Wolin reached the pinnacle of its importance from around the 9thcentury, with production of crafts such as pottery expanding into the 11th century,[35]5 and it has been theorised that the remains of boats found utilised in the building of houses were originally from Scandinavia.[36] In addition to archaeological evidence, Adam of Bremen related that Jómsborg is where Harald Bluetooth escaped to, running from the uprising of his son Sven Forkbeard.[37] This helps explain the theory that the Cammin casket from nearby Kamień was a favourable offering- decorated in the Scandinavian Mammen style- from Harald granted to a native prince.[38]

Another key settlement site was Truso, located in an area which can also be referred to as Janów Pomorski. Archaeological remains discovered in the area attest to the significant historic value

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[26] Judith Jesch, 'The Norse Gods in England and the Isle of Man', in *Myths, Legends, and Heroes: Essays on Old Norse and Old English Literature in Honour of John McKinnell*, ed. by Daniel Anlezark (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2011), pp. 11–24 (p.14).

[27] Marcus Gerds, 'Scandinavian Burial Rites on the Southern Baltic Coast: Boat Graves in Cemeteries of Early Medieval Trading Places', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions :An International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3-7, 2004*, ed. by Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert, and Catharina Raudvere, Vägar till Midgard; 8 (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 153–58 (p.156).

[28] Kamil Kajkowski and Piotr Kotowicz, 'Zapomniany wczesnośredniowieczny pochówek łodziowy ze Szczecina', *Materiały Zachodniopomorskie*, Nowa Seria, XI.1 (2015), 123–136 (p.126).

[29] Kamil Kajkowski, 'Slavonic Journeys to the Otherworld. Remarks on the Eschatology of Early Medieval Pomeranians', *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 18 (2015), 15–34 (p.21-23).

[30] Jöns, p.175.

[31] Jöns, p.174-175.

[32] N.F. Blake, 'Introduction', in *The Saga of the Jómsvikings* (Edinburgh; London; Melbourne; Johannesburg: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), pp. vii–xxi (p. vii-viii).

[33] Adam of Bremen, Book.2, Ch.18-19, p.66-67.

[34] Blake, p.vii.

[35] Roslund, p.225.

[36] Blake, p.x.

[37] Adam of Bremen, Book.2, Ch.25, p.72.

[38] Roesdahl, p.151-152.

of the site as a trading centre. Recovered items such as combs, clasps and pendants are comparable to many others found along the Baltic coast, in Scandinavia and as far as Rus' regions.[39] At the time of Wulfstan's voyage c.880, Truso had been in operation for at least a century, thus it can be inferred that the material culture uncovered at the site is representative of a well-established settlement, formed of different craftsmen from various places. It is nevertheless important to note that the majority of finds indicate a strong Danish influence in the area, and it seems likely that many Danes were settlers in the area, whether permanently or temporarily.[40]

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[39] Marek F.Jagodziński, 'The Settlement of Truso', in *Wulfstan's Voyage: The Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard*, ed. by Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 182–98 (p.184-186).
[40] Jagodziński, p.193-194.

Language

Those living on the southern Baltic coast were not one people, and it can be difficult to recognise what the term 'Slav' means. The designation could be based upon the study of language, grouping 'Slavs' as people who shared a language or languages with common roots. Adam of Bremen made certain mistakes correctly attributing names to groups of people, but nevertheless categorised those living within the region as one peoples based upon the fact that he perceived them to 'differ neither in appearance nor in language'.[41] Peter Heather contends that by the mid-tenth century this would include the entirety of north-central Europe 'between the Elbe and the Vistula'.[42] Although differences even within broad groupings would have existed, it is likely that people with different local languages would still have been able to communicate with others from those geographic regions at least until around the 11th Century.[43]

It is also important to be discerning when assessing different locations in the study of trade, politics and language; at the site of Truso, for example, the people are though to have spoken a Baltic dialect, yet the settlement is believed to have been located within a borderline zone between Prussians and Slavs, rather than being a Slavic territory.[44] This dissertation cannot give a proper analysis of the sociolinguistic climates of the regions, yet the importance of language cannot be underestimated with regards to not only trade, but political alliances, settlement, and the understanding of world-views and transmutation of ideas.

Place-name evidence can often be useful in the study of language spread and adoption, and can provide valuable insight into who was settling in different areas. However, many such names evolve or are entirely altered over time, as at the Jómsborg settlement, where the area is now known as Wolin. Nonetheless, information can be gathered from the older name Jómsborg; the *borg* generic comes from the Old Norse word meaning 'fort', while the *Jóm* is likely to be derived from Slavic, possibly meaning 'ditch'.[45] When considered alongside other evidence, such as archaeological finds, it seems clear that the settlement at Wolin was a joint venture, created and propagated by both natives and those of Scandinavian descent alike. In addition to this, there is some indication of name transference from Slavs to Scandinavians in cases such as Semgallen (*Zemgale* in Latvian) and Virland (*Virumaa* in Estonian).[46] Similarly, it appears that the names of the Hel peninsula in Poland and a nearby hilltop- formerly known as Revekol- stem from Scandinavian words,[47] with Hel possibly having linguistic links to names such as Helsinki.

The use and development of language is of great significance when considering the interactions between cultures and peoples. Since settlements, trade and political unions were known to occur between the people of Scandinavia and those on the southern Baltic coast there must have been some progression in methods of communication. Both Scandinavian and Slavic languages may have influenced one another- especially for the people who undertook frequent or extended journeys or even settled abroad- yet such effects are difficult to measure. To what extent migration played a role in the development of the Slavic languages is uncertain,[48] yet contact with Slavic speakers likely also impacted the languages spoken by their trade partners. It can therefore be supposed that individuals capable of speaking both languages would have been necessary to act as mediators and translators at least in some situations.

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[41] Adam of Bremen, Book.2, Ch.18, p.64-65.
[42] Heather, p.407.
[43] Paul Bibire, 'The Languages of Europe around the Year 1000AD', in *Europe around the Year 1000*, ed. By Przemysław Urbańczyk (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2001), pp. 69–84 (p.79).
[44] Soren Michael Sindbak, 'Scandinavian Settlement South of the Baltic Sea', in *Vers l'Orient et vers l'Occident: regards croisés sur les dynamiques et les transferts culturels des Vikings à la Rous ancienne*, ed. by Pierre Bauduin and Aleksandr Musin (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2014), pp. 167–76 (p.169).
[45] Blake, p.ix.
[46] Sven B. F. Jansson, *The Runes of Sweden*, trans. by Peter Foote (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1962), p.30.
[47] Christer Westerdahl, 'Transport Zones in Wulfstan's Days', in *Wulfstan's Voyage: The Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard*, ed. by Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 206–19 (p.215).
[48] Heather, p.386.

Scandinavian rune-stones also attest to frequent Viking missions- whether for trade or conflict- to the east, however it seems as though the majority of those which make reference to Baltic regions are concerned with journeys to the eastern Baltic shores, in modern-day Estonia, Latvia and Russia. The Mervalla stone from Södermanland, for example, mention both Semgallen and Domesnäs in Latvia,[49] and many rune-stones mention travels from Scandinavia to the east (*austr*), such as Vg 197,[50] U 283[51] and U 605,[52] while others record those who perished on eastern routes (*austrvegi*), such as Sö 34[53] and Sö 126.[54] Although these mentions of travels to the east could easily allude to journeys to Russia or Greece,[55] they may still include contact with Eastern Europe.

The presence of runic inscriptions on the southern Baltic coast appears to further corroborate information on the presence of Scandinavian traders and settlers. It seems unlikely that they would have been carved by native persons, and there is no evidence to support that they did. While bone items with runic inscriptions can be supposed to have been created at the site of their discovery- due to the nature of carving runes into softened bone[56]- it is still more likely that Scandinavian individuals were responsible for their creation. This can be inferred from analysis of the carvings; firstly, the nature of some personal names, which relay more commonly Norse names than Baltic or Slavic ones;[57] then a potential familiarity with Scandinavian-origin obscene terms, such as in instances where *fuþ* is carved, (which could arguably relate to the beginning of the futhark, but may also refer to a woman's genitals);[58] lastly from inspection of rune-types utilised, considered alongside dialectal adaptations over time in different places. Linguistic study has been particularly useful in analysing a find from Oldenburg, in which the words display certain linguistic hallmarks known to originate from southern Scandinavia.[59] In these instances it may be that the native population living with or close to Viking settlers would not have understood the runic forms, although this is difficult to confirm with any certainty.

The names of individuals are often lost to history. In many cases it is the name of rulers or clergymen which survive, rather than names of the laity or even lower nobility, as is the case with the daughter of Mieszko I, whose name may have been Svietoslava,[60] Sigrid,[61] or even Gunnhild.[62]2 This gives rise to debate on whether sources which provide these names are referring to the same woman, although it now seems likely that Sigrid Storrada was a later literary invention.[63] Nevertheless, even well-attested names can cause uncertainties. Mieszko I is referred to as Dagome in the 11thcentury reproduction of the original 10thcentury manuscript, the *Dagome iudex.* This anomaly created much scholarly speculation, leading to proposals that Mieszko was in fact a Scandinavian, or had Scandinavian forefathers, since the root *Dago* has been interpreted as being of Germanic -possibly

[49] Jansson, p.28.

[50] 'Runic Dictionary: Inscription: Vg197', *Nottingham Rune Dictionary*, 2008
<http://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=16727&if=runic&table=mss> [accessed 10 May 2017].

[51] 'Runic Dictionary: Inscription: U283', *Nottingham Rune Dictionary*, 2008
<http://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=17110&if=runic&table=mss> [accessed 10 May 2017].

[52] 'Runic Dictionary: Inscription: U605', *Nottingham Rune Dictionary*, 2008
<http://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=15336&if=runic&table=mss> [accessed 10 May 2017].

[53] 'Runic Dictionary: Inscription: Sö34', *Nottingham Rune Dictionary*, 2008
<http://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=15230&if=runic&table=mss> [accessed 10 May 2017].

[54] 'Runic Dictionary: Inscription: Sö126', *Nottingham Rune Dictionary*, 2008
<http://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=15200&if=runic&table=mss> [accessed 10 May 2017].

[55] Jansson, p.25.

[56] Michael Lerche Nielsen, 'Runic Inscriptions Reflecting Linguistic Contacts between West Slav Lands and Southern Scandinavia', *Scripta Islandica*, 65 (2014), 153–72 (p.157).

[57] Lerche Nielsen, p.159.

[58] Lerche Nielsen, p.160.

[59] Lerche Nielsen, p.157.

[60] Roslund, p.27.

[61] Line, p.481.

[62] Łukasz Malinowski, 'Świętosława - Legendarna Córka Mieszka I I Królowa Wikingów', *Historia.wp.pl*, 2016
<http://historia.wp.pl/title,Swietoslawa-legendarna-corka-Mieszka-I-i-krolowawikingow,
wid,18192736,wiadomosc.html> [accessed 13 April 2017].

[63] Ian Howard, *Swein Forkbeard's Invasions and the Danish Conquest of England, 991-1017* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p.67.

Frankish or Scandinavian- origin.[64] This theory has been widely criticized,[65] yet it highlights the complexities involved when considering linguistic elements.

The constant development of languages results in complex shifts and relationships between dialects and peoples. The evolution of Slavic and Baltic languages may be traceable to a proto-language, Balto-Slavic, however there are uncertainties surrounding the realities of such a language.[66] While it seems evident that the languages of the area influenced one another, other linguistic interactions, although sometimes possible to detect- as with Greek and middle-Eastern-[67] remain more unclear. Adaptations to the Scandinavian pronoun *ek* can be observed in the Viking Age when linguistic splits began occurring between East and West Scandinavian regions; at this time *ek* was altered to *jak* in both Denmark and Sweden, and this word has become the present-day words *jeg* and *jag* respectively.[68] Both the original *ek* form and the later *jak, jeg* and *jag* forms bear similarities to words utilised by languages on the southern Baltic coast. The *ek* resembles the West Germanic *ich,* with the *ek* form was still being used in Middle Low German,[69] whereas the *jak*-type variations bear some semblance to the Slavic *ja/jaz/já/Я.* Old Norse words in which one element meant 'dead', such as *Valkyrja* and *Valhalla* could be related to the Slavic name for the deity, Veles,[70] and may appear in the similar modern-day Polish word for a battle or fight, *walka.*

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[64] Przemysław Urbańczyk, 'Origins of the Piast Dynasty', *Studia Slavica Et Balcanica Petropolitana*, (2013), 56–66 (p.59).

[65] Urbańczyk, 'Origins of the Piast Dynasty', p.59-60

[66] S Young, 'Balto-Slavic Languages', in *Concise Encyclopedia of Languages of the World* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), pp. 135–36.

[67] Vyacheslav Vsevolodovich Ivanov and Wayles Browne, 'Slavic Languages - Linguistic Characteristics', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2014 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Slavic-languages> [accessed 2 May 2017].

[68] Jan Terje Faarlund and Einar Haugen, 'Scandinavian Languages', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2007 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Scandinavian-languages> [accessed 2 May 2017].

[69] Stephen Howe, *The Personal Pronouns in the Germanic Languages: A Study of Personal Pronoun Morphology and Change in the Germanic Languages from the First Records to the Present Day* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), p.260.

[70] Вячеслав Всеволодович Иванов and Владимир Николаевич Топоров, 'A Comparative Study of the Group of Baltic Mythological Terms from the Root *vel-', *Baltistica*, 9/1 (2012), 15–27 (p.21).

Religion

Little literary evidence survives regarding the pre-Christian religion(s) of the southern Baltic coast, and attempting to conclusively state that traditions, rituals or stories are indicative of a belief system is fraught with difficulties. However, a lack of archival evidence should not be taken as an indicator of an absence of faith, legends or influence; while the evidence for 'pagan' tradition is scarce in the area of modern-day Poland, there is also a marked absence of Christian records prior to 960.[71] This undoubtedly reflects upon religious conventions and adoption over time, but also reveals information about society across the coastal region, relating details of language- whether oral or written-, politics- both national and regional- and faith, unfolding what importance was placed on spiritual beliefs, and whether or not this importance was manifested in any theologically-linked rituals.

The legends of Scandinavia are well-attested in sources such as the Prose and Poetic Eddas and a multitude of Icelandic sagas, however such literary material is lacking from the southern Baltic coastal region. Although many of the Scandinavian sources date from some centuries after the time in which their action is set- and are therefore recorded by individuals with different outlooks and beliefs, living in a society which has undoubtedly changed- their Christian authors still felt compelled to write of their pre-Christian ancestors.[72] This does not seem to be the case south of the Baltic, where, in spite of the fact that literacy was ushered in as part of the conversions to Christianity,[73] there appears to have been little desire to transcribe past practices or beliefs. Czesław Miłosz believed that this is due to the nature of the writers themselves- who differed from Icelandic compilers and wealthy lawyers such as Snorri Sturluson[74]- and were instead clergymen unsupportive of any 'pagan' elements persevering, whether in literature or in action.[75]

While many writers appear to have been reticent to discuss the 'pagan' past, Saxo Grammaticus provides information on the lands south of the Baltic in spite of or perhaps partly because of their ties with 'paganism'. Saxo's interest in Baltic areas extended to the political climate of Denmark at the time, with their desire for independence but also their development of foreign relations,[76] yet his personal and religious feelings towards the Slavs are made clear, mistrusting them as pirates[77] and heathens. His invaluable description of the temple site of Rugen, however, lacks political motivation. Similar accounts are made by Adam of Bremen and Thietmar of Merseburg regarding another sacred 'pagan' site, that of Rhetra/Rethra/Riedegost.[78]

Smaller finds, such as those uncovered at Jómsborg/Wolin, can be indicative not only of trade or the character of a settlement, but also of religious alignments. Thor's hammers, eagles and wolves may be expected in a settlement ostensibly assigned a heavy military presence- both Thor and Odin were linked with notions of strength and war respectively- however the lack of representation of other, native, deities is notable. Parker Pearson has suggested that Norse beliefs were a 'regional variant' of a pan-European religion, and further claims that it is possible to consider a 'network of shared belief'

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[71] A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.114.

[72] Anders Andrén, 'Behind "Heathendom": Archaeological Studies of Old Norse Religion', *Scottish Archaeological Journal*, 27/2 (2005), 105–38 (p.106).

[73] Heather, p.407.

[74] Kevin J. Wanner, *Snorri Sturluson and the Edda: The Conversion of Cultural Capital in Medieval Scandinavia* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p.20.

[75] Czesław Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 2nd edn. (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1983), p.4.

[76] 'Introduction: Important Themes', in *Gesta Danorum*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen, trans. by Peter Fisher (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015), xl–xlvi. (p.xliii).

[77] Saxo Grammaticus, *The History of the Danes: Books I-IX*, ed. by Hilda Roderick Ellis Davidson, trans. by Peter Fisher (Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1980), p.138.

[78] Leszek Słupecki, 'The Temple in Rhetra-Riedegost', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions : An International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3-7, 2004*, ed. by Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert, and Catharina Raudvere, Vägar till Midgard; 8 (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 224–28 (p.227).

throughout parts of Europe.[79] If true then it may be possible to contend that beliefs in figures such as Thor and Odin were similar enough in nature to native beliefs that they were not considered vastly different or worthy of express delineation even at the time. It is also plausible that such ornamentation reflected more of a cultural norm or perhaps even superstition, rather than any solidly held religious belief. Such theories are wholly speculative, however scant evidence demands carefully considered yet wider hypotheses.

Another important find from Wolin was a small figurine with four faces. This object, which likely dates to the later part of the 9thcentury, has been identified as a representation of the 'pagan' god, Svantevit.[80] This 'pagan' Slavic item is not, however, unique and it has been likened to similar figures found in Sweden and Denmark; one find, dated to the 10thcentury and discovered in Väsby, may even have been created in Wolin before somehow being transported to Sweden.[81] The Väsby figure differs in many ways from the 9thcentury Wolin figure, having been found in an entirely different context and being constructed from different materials. However, there is some evident importance attached to creating these small representations of this being, whether or not true belief was being expressed or superstition, otherwise there would be little need for such a figurine to be included in burial contexts, as was the case with the Väsby carving and also with another comparable find from Tunby in Sweden.[82] The locations chosen for sacred sites are not fully understood, however there is some consensus that pre-Christian sites of Slavic/Baltic origin were chosen in areas which could be viewed as liminal zones between the temporal world and the supernatural, often settled in places enclosed by water or in mountainous regions.[83] One theory holds that certain sites were linked with religious authority due to the fact that they were islands, and as such they echoed metaphysical and material aspects of creation.[84] Such a creation myth in Slavic-paganism is not entirely dissimilar to the view portrayed in Norse mythology, where the world is located in the centre of a vast ocean.[85] Sites located on mountains may have been viewed as islands of their own, rising up from the ground, surrounded by walls of stone, as at Ślęża.[86]

A lack of archaeological evidence makes it difficult to truly ascertain to what extent such sites may have been utilised as sanctuaries or holy sites,[87] yet attestations by writers such as Thietmar of Merseburg lend some credence to the idea that sacred spaces existed for pre-Christian believers. Thietmar recounts the Redarii temple of Riedegost,[88] and corroborating details are mentioned by Adam of Bremen,[89] while Saxo Grammaticus writes of the temple at Arkona, describing the impressive idol there and the way in which the complex was fortified.[90] The figure he describes is likely to be of the Slavic/Baltic god Svantevit, and there are similarities in the form of this figure and one pulled from the

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[79] Mike Parker Pearson, 'The Origins of Old Norse Ritual and Religion in European Perspective', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions : An International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3-7, 2004*, ed. by Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert, and Catharina Raudvere, Vägar till Midgard; 8 (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 86–92. p.86-87

[80] Kamil Kajkowski and Paweł Szczepanik, 'The Multi-Faced so-called Miniature Idols from the Baltic Sea Area', *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 16 (2013), 55–68 (p.55-56).

[81] Kajkowski and Szczepanik, p.57.

[82] 82 Kajkowski and Szczepanik, p.57.

[83] Przemysław Urbańczyk, 'The Politics of Conversion in North Central Europe', in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, ed. by M.O.H. Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), pp.15–28 (p.18).

[84] Kamil Kajkowski, 'Islands as Symbolic Centres of the Early Medieval Settlement Patterns in Middle Pomerania (Northern Poland)', *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 19 (2016), 41–59 (p.42).

[85] Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, trans. by Jesse L. Byock (London: Penguin Group, 2005), Ch.8, p.17.

[86] Urbańczyk, 'The Politics of Conversion', p.18.

[87] Przemysław Urbańczyk, 'Slavic and Christian Identities During the Transition to Polish Statehood', in *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov, Patrick J. Geary, and Przemysław Urbańczyk (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), V.205–22, p.216-217.

[88] Thietmar von Merseburg, Book.6,Ch.23-25, p.252-254.

[89] Adam of Bremen, Book.2, Ch.18-19, p.66.

[90] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen, trans. by Peter Fisher (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015), Ch.39.2-39.3, p.1275-1277.

river Zbrucz[91], which in turn shows evident parallels to the Svantevit figure found in Wolin. Interestingly, the temple of Riedegost has some associations with boars, notably with regards to divination, where a boar 'whose teeth are white and glistening with foam will emerge from that...lake'[92]. Słupecki theorises that the digging actions- somewhat typical of boar behaviour- also associated with divination at the site may have been connected with the god Veles.[93] This may be to do with the idea of Veles/Weles as a chthonic deity, or one associated with water, but may go as far as being an association based upon hair if one considers the similarities between the name Weles (which could also be written as Wołos[94]) and the word *włos,* meaning 'hair', a fact which may also link to his being associated with the earth and grass.[95] Indeed, boars and boar-hair in particular may be alluded to in the name of another city which is known to have had 'pagan' temples, Szczecin.[96] Since the words *szczeciniasty* and *szczecina* mean 'bristly' and 'bristles' respectively this is conceivable but far from certain. Kajkowski, however, adds support to this theory by asserting that the Scandinavian name for Szczecin was Brustaborg, a name which also bases itself upon bristles.[97] Boars are also noted in Norse mythology as being spiritual animals associated with the Vanir, exemplified by the personal boars of Frey and Freya; *Gullinbursti* ('gold bristle'[98]) and *Hilldesuine*[99] ('battle swine').[100]

Similarities between pre-Christian religions- especially in terms of how societies found ways of understanding the otherworldly and the creation of rituals or sacred spaces- should not, however, be viewed as the trappings of more primitive systems, but rather as the shared fundamental organisational needs of all cultures.[101] These structures could then go through adaptations and alterations based around local and external politics. During an era when kingdoms were being formed, this would seem to be particularly relevant.

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[91] R. A Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity, 371-1386 AD* (London: Fontana, 1998), p.440, Plate 34.

[92] Thietmar von Merseburg, Book.6,Ch.24, p.253.

[93] Słupecki, p.225.

[94] Michał Łuczyński, 'Kognitywna Definicja Welesa~Wołosa: Etnolingwistyczna Próba Rekonstrukcji Fragmentu Słowiańskiego Tradycyjnego Mitologicznego Obrazu Świata', *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 15 (2012), 169–78.

[95] Stanisław Rosik, *Interpretacja chrzescijanska religii poganskich Slowian w swietle kronik niemieckich 11-12 wieku: (Thietmar, Adam z Bremy, Helmold)* (Wrocław: Wydawn. Uniwersytet Wrocławskiego, 2000), p.132.

[96] Kamil Kajkowski, 'The Boar in the Symbolic and Religious System of Baltic Slavs in the Early Middle Ages', *Studia Mythologica Slavica,* 15 (2012), 201-215 (p.204).

[97] *Kajkowski, 'The Boar in the Symbolic and Religious System of Baltic Slavs',* p.204.

[98] Sturluson, Ch.49, p.67.

[99] *Flateyjarbók.*, ed. by Sigur.ur Nordal, 4 vols (Akranes: Flateyjarútgáfan, 1944), p.11.

[100] Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick, *A History of Pagan Europe* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.155.

[101] Kamil Kajkowski, 'Wczesnośredniowieczne Przekazy Pisane O Religii Słowian Nadbałtyckich. Między Literacką a Rzeczywistą Wizją Niszczenia Pogańskich Idoli.', *Koszalińskie Zeszyty Muzealne*, 37/1 (2016), 7–20 (p.8-9).

Conclusion

Much of the way in which Vikings are commonly thought of is the result of a resurgence in interest in the Victorian era, during which time the Viking Age was dramatised and romanticised. It seems that while people may be familiar with the fact that the Vikings travelled to and had connections with the Rus', Scandinavian activity concerning the southern Baltic coast is often overlooked, yielding little knowledge of Scandinavian ties with the southern Baltic region. This may be due, in part, to the late 19th-early 20thcentury views of Slavs as being 'culturally inferior'[102], a notion further hindered by an uncertainty surrounding what the term 'slav' encompasses. While many slavic tribes indeed combined during the 10th-11thcentury[103], categorising all tribes together can lead to an obliteration of important distinctions.[104]

Literary evidence of the 10th-11thcentury on the southern Baltic coast is almost non-existent from contemporaries, and sources written in subsequent centuries, while invaluable, have certain shortcomings. The *Gesta principum Polonorum*, for example, offers a unique insight into the history of Poland, yet fails to mention such critical information as dates.[105] Cross-referencing available information is crucial and when studied alongside other sources such as annals or chronicles- for example Thietmar's chronicle- a more detailed account of events is possible.[106] Furthermore, studying literary sources alongside archaeological material and linguistics provides a better developed overview of the political, trade and religious situation north and south of the Baltic sea in this era.

While there appears to be some tendency to initially assume Scandinavian dominance in the Pomeranian region with regards to influence, this is not substantiated by any evidence. Influences are likely to have been shared, with those on the southern Baltic coast imparting ideas, notions, beliefs and practices to Scandinavian visitors and vice versa. The evidence is varied and substantial; from the spread of 'Baltic ware' pottery in Sweden[107], to the similarities found in certain religious figures and the obvious and well-documented travels of both Vikings and other pirates.

Attempting to assess the connections between Scandinavia and the southern Baltic coast during the 10th-11th century would require further, more in-depth study, as there is no one line of investigation which could hope to fully account for the complexities involved in the contact between these two cultures. Some of the principal aspects concerning these northern and southern Baltic relations have been assessed in this dissertation, however many other elements have undoubtedly been left out. A greater analysis of the 'pagan' mythologies would have been desirable, with further consideration of belief systems and ideologies, such as whether the Slavic peoples had an understanding of a soul prior to Christianity. Furthermore, communication between these peoples did not begin nor end during the 10th-11th century, therefore examination of certain sites or finds dated to this period can only highlight the circumstances of a relatively brief timespan within what was a recognised yet evolving framework of contact.

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[102] 102 Roslund, p.43.

[103] Roslund, p.20.

[104] Roslund, p.65.

[105] 'Editors' Introduction', in *Gesta Principum Polonorum: The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, ed. by János M. Bak, Urszula Borkowska, Giles Constable, Gerhard Jaritz and Gábor Klaniczay, trans. by Paul W Knoll and Frank Schaer, Central European Medieval Texts (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, 2003), xix lxv, (p.xlvii-xlviii).

[106] Gallus Anonymus, 'Gesta Principum Polonorum', p.li.

[107] Roslund, p.132, 139, 151, 337-9, 469.

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