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THE RITUAL STRATIGRAPHY OF MONUMENTS THAT MATTER

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Abstract: This article focuses on one of the two big mounds at Haugar in Tønsberg, Norway, and the role they played in the constitution of the Norwegian kingdom. The monument we will discuss is dated to the ninth century AD. We argue that the stratigraphy represents the rituals performed. There are no finds of grave-goods, but the mound contains an enormous layer of charcoal. Our ambiguity towards designating all mounds as 'graves' seeks to open a wider range of explanations of the symbolism in these constructions commonly defined as graves. The monuments look like symbolic charcoal kilns, necessary to the smith's iron-making. Are the symbolic charcoal kilns a materialized association of a ritual transformation of the society, embedding death, monument, charcoal and iron? According to Snorri Sturlason, two of the sons of Harald Hårfagre (Finehair), the first king of Norway, were buried in these mounds in the tenth century AD. An examination of the medieval writer Snorri illuminates the political motives and the ideological use of the mounds in the 1230s among the elite in Norway.

Keywords: iron-making, landscape, metaphors, monuments, rituals, stratigraphy

INTRODUCTION

There are two mounds at Haugar in Tønsberg City, Norway (Figs 1 and 2), and these mounds had a crucial role in the development of the Norwegian kingdom, not because they contained important grave-goods or because of the status of a person interred there, but because of the rituals that took place during the construction of the mounds and the mythmaking in later periods. The place name – Haugar – means 'mounds'. Each mound has a diameter between 35 m and 40 m and they are 3–4 m in height. In one of the mounds there were found a few cremated bones and a massive layer of charcoal, but nothing normally categorized as 'grave-goods'. The mound is not dated. In the other mound neither cremated bones nor grave-goods were found, but an enormous charcoal layer dated to the ninth century AD was documented. If the monuments are graves, we would argue that the ritual construction of the mounds was more important than the people

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who presumably were cremated. A monument is the answer, but what were the questions and the problems it solved (Gren 1994:95)?

Starting with the place, the locale and a focus on the location of the monuments in the landscape from a visual and ritual point of view, we will move towards the inside, to the stratigraphy of the mounds. Our main questions are: Why were the rituals performed, and what kind of power do the stratigraphies metaphorically represent? What role did the construction of these monuments have in Tønsberg as a central place and in the development of the Norwegian kingdom? And why and how were the myths around these mounds created?



Figure 1. Location of Tønsberg in north Europe. Map: T. Oestigaard.



Figure 2. Tønsberg City and the Haugar mounds c. 1870, Norway. The mounds are shown by the two white circles at Haugar. The arrows indicate the lines of vision from the mounds. Courtesy Vestfold Fylkesmuseum. Scanned, restored and modified by T. Gansum.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE HAUGAR MONUMENTS IN HISTORY AND LANDSCAPE: MONUMENTS MATTER

Early in the ninth century AD Vestfold became the arena for events that reached far beyond local politics. The Danish king Gotfred, who moved the craftsmen and

traders in Rerec to the town of Haidabu, probably laid the foundation of the town of Kaupang, the *portus* in southern Vestfold. When Gotfred was killed in 810, by request of Charlemagne, the leaders in Vestfold led a riot against the Danish rulers. The Frankish annals of 813 tell of two Danish kings travelling to Vestfold, the uttermost part of their kingdom, to get things under control. Then, 21 years later the famous Oseberg ship was placed in a spectacular mound 3 km from Haugar (Gansum 2002a, 2002b). The mounds of Haugar were probably built some time during the ninth century, before the mounds of Gokstad, Borre and Tune, which all were raised within the first decade of the tenth century. The Danish kingdom suffered internal conflicts in the second half of the ninth century and these opened the way for King Harald Hårfagre (Finehair), who started the conquest of Norway from his strongholds in south-western Norway (Myhre and Gansum 2003). Vestfold's leaders were under pressure and wanted to be sovereigns, but were defeated by King Harald Hårfagre. It is within this context the Haugar monuments have to be understood and analysed. The monuments built in Vestfold had more than one purpose. There are great differences between Oseberg and Haugar. They look similar from the outside, but they are placed very differently in the landscape and differ greatly in the way they are made. While Oseberg is situated low in a shallow valley, the mound constructions at Haugar are placed as conspicuously as possible in the landscape. Oseberg is known throughout the world for its rich grave-goods, but the story of Haugar is almost unknown since there are no spectacular artefacts or ships connected to it.

The Haugar monuments are located on the top of a small hill, rising above the surrounding landscape (Fig. 3). The locations of monuments are never coincidental. The Haugar monuments are seen from all over the inner fjord and the natural harbour area. The choice of location contains information of strategic considerations and relations of power. The choice of place as a visual sign is thus invested with meaning, and it is therefore possible to decode some of the strategies and choices implied in the location of the mounds. 'First we shape our buildings', Winston Churchill once said, 'and afterwards our buildings shape us', referring to the way the layout of the House of Commons in England actively encourages political confrontations rather than consensus (Pearman 1998:33). The monuments can be seen as arguments in the landscape; they are metaphors of power and a materialization of domination. The spots in the landscape control the mind. The main motif for the positioning seems to be visualizing power, but what kind of power? The mounds are expressing hierarchies; they are superior, the humans are inferior.

The central methodological concept in visual analysis is the position of the monument in the landscape (Gansum et al. 1997), and there are some general characteristics and concepts. In order to analyse places where mounds are erected, it is possible to code the qualities of the place. This analysis uses three code dichotomies: extrovert/introvert, public/private and exclusive/inclusive for addressing qualities of the chosen place in the landscape. The extrovert/introvert dichotomy describes whether or not it is possible to look out over the surrounding landscape from that particular spot. Public/private describes the degree of



Figure 3. *The mounds at Haugar in Tønsberg City, Norway, photograph from c. 1862. The Haugar monuments are located on the top of a small hill; they are elevated above the surrounding landscape. Courtesy Vestfold Fylkesmuseum. Scanned, restored and modified by T. Gansum*

visibility of a particular spot. If the place is clearly seen from higher or lower land around it, that particular spot is coded public. A location described as private means that its visibility from the surrounding area is very limited. The terms exclusive/inclusive are useful in landscape position analysis because the limitations of a place may exclude or include elements (Gansum et al. 1997). With these methodological concepts as a point of departure, it is possible to code qualities of places and hold this information against the qualities of the monuments and describe the visual effects in the landscape:

1. The place on the top of the small hill can be characterized and coded as extrovert, public and exclusive. Thus, the monuments express dominance, superiority, and visualizations of power. Those who built the monuments materialized their position in society by the choice of the location.
2. The exposure of the grave-mound is connected to the visual qualities of the superior position. The north-eastern mound on Haugar has two dominant qualities: it is seen from all over the fjord, and from the mound it is possible to see the entire inner fairway. Hence, the exposure of the monuments strengthens the materialized hierarchies in society.
3. The mound has minimal potential space for its position. Since it is located on the top of a peak, there is not much available place left. The place is exclusive because the landscape allows only a limited set of constructions on the rounded hill-top.

THE CHARCOAL LAYER IN NORTH-WESTERN MOUND ON HAUGAR

The south-eastern mound, which was excavated by Nicolaysen in 1900, had a diameter of approximately 41×37 m and a height of 3–4 m. The dimensions of the north-eastern mound, located only 20 m away, were approximately 38×30 m with a height of 3–4 m. We will lay the emphasis on the north-eastern mound because there has been recent additional documentation of the stratigraphy (Gansum 1995). The south-eastern mound will be incorporated in the analysis as comparative material because it reveals structural variables which illuminate our approach to the stratigraphy of mounds as rituals. During Nicolaysen's excavation of the south-eastern mound he found masses of charcoal covering a central cairn in the mound. In the charcoal layer he found a few cremated bones of a human burnt at a high temperature (Nicolaysen 1901:79). Despite the massive investigation (Fig. 4), no artefacts were found, and the bones were never put into the stores in Oslo.

The extension of the charcoal layer in the north-western mound was documented in 1943 (Sjøvold 1943), and in 1994 a small trench investigation was undertaken and parts of the stratigraphy were documented (Gansum 1995). The thickness of the charcoal layer varies between 15 cm and 33 cm, and the average thickness was around 20 cm. The layer contained almost nothing but pure charcoal, although some sand and pebbles were found (Fig. 5). Some of the pebbles were fire-cracked whereas others were not, and surprisingly, no traces of ashes were found. Parts of the charcoal were just slightly burnt, and in some places it was possible to see the original structure of the wood. Directly under the charcoal layer a layer of turf was found, deposited on the top of a construction of stones (Fig. 6). The layers beneath the charcoal layer had not been heated. The charcoal layer seems

homogeneous and it is likely that the deposition of charcoal happened as a single event (Gansum 1995). The mound is dated to the ninth century based on three accelerator datings: see Table 1.

The absence of ash is striking, and the charcoal must have been transported to the location. Thus it seems that the charcoal was produced in charcoal kilns or pits, at low temperatures. Sjøvold reported that the charcoal layer covered the entire mound (Sjøvold 1943). If the thickness of the layer varies between 15 cm and 30 cm for the majority of the central parts of the mound, this will represent a huge amount of firewood. The excavation in 1994 was close to the

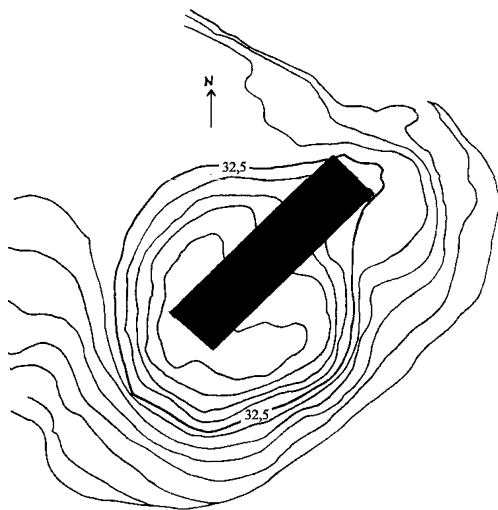


Figure 4. Despite the massive investigation in the southern mound, Nicolaysen did not find any artefacts. Illustration: T. Gansum.



Figure 5. The charcoal layer is part of the construction, and the layer of turf beneath the charcoal has not been heated. Photo: T. Gansum.

centre of the mound (Fig. 7), and the estimate of charcoal is based on the evidence there and must be considered as an absolute minimum.

If one estimates the size of the charcoal layer to cover a circular area with a radius of 10 m, the thickness of the layer of the outermost 5 m to be 15 cm and the thickness of the innermost 5 m to be 30 cm, the total amount of charcoal is approximately 59 m³! An ethno-archaeological analysis from Nepal (Rijal 1998:81) documented that the charcoal-making process for iron melting required more wood if it was done at a low temperature or in a charcoal kiln (ratio 15:1), compared with the charcoal-making process at a high temperature (ratio 10:1). An estimate of the total amount of wood needed to produce the charcoal will be around 885 m³. This estimate is based on a charcoal layer that covers a minimum diameter of 20 m, but considering that the mound is almost 40 m in diameter, the actual amount of charcoal and wood used in the ritual is probably much larger. Nevertheless, the amount of charcoal and



Figure 6. The excavation stopped on top of a construction of stones. Photo: T. Gansum.

Table 1. Dates from the north-western mound at Haugar, Tønsberg (Determinations at the National Laboratory for Radiocarbon dating, Trondheim.)

Lab. Ref.	Material	¹⁴ C BP	Calibrated 1 sigma	13-C‰
Tua-975	Burnt nutshell	1205 ± 60	AD775-895	-26.1
Tua-976	Burnt nutshell	1175 ± 65	AD780-965	-29.8
Tua-1016	Burnt birch	1140 ± 70	AD810-990	-30.1



Figure 7. The 1994 excavation was limited to the central area of the mound. Illustration: T. Gansum.

wood is enormous even though we have used the lowest estimate. Similar charcoal layers are found in Gullhøgen in Sweden (Sundqvist 1993:156). Comparatively, a normal Hindu cremation requires approximately 2 m³ of wood for the funeral pyre in order to cremate the corpse completely (Oestigaard 2000). Thus, we will argue that the charcoal in the Haugar mound had a symbolic function. This was not an ordinary funeral pyre.

THE STRATIGRAPHY OF RITUALS

Stratigraphy is one of the core concepts in archaeology. The basic axiom is that strata are superimposed one on another, and that the bottom series was laid down

earliest and those above it successively through time from the bottom to the top (Harris 1989:12–13).

The material for the man-made layer is transported by people and its deposition is regulated by human planning and actions ... the man-made layer tends to accumulate in a normal pattern of superposition, one layer upon the other. These layers will have horizontal surfaces to the degree required by their function. (Harris 1989:48)

The construction of a mound is a series of intentional actions, and thus it should be possible to analyse the purposes of the different strata. In fact it ought to influence excavation method and the theoretical framework in the study of funeral practices, especially the way excavations of grave-mounds are carried out (Gansum 2002a, 2004). A ritual in general, and especially a funeral, is a religious performance done within a time sequence. If we divide a grave-mound into different rituals performed as different actions and events in a chronological time sequence, one may get a better understanding of what happened (Gansum and Oestigaard 1999; Gansum and Risan 1999). Similar approaches are used on other mounds, either without concern for rituals, or *because of* rich equipment or grave-gifts.

According to Bourdieu:

rites are practices that are ends in themselves, that are justified by their very performance; things that one does because they are 'the done thing', 'the right thing to do', but also because one cannot do otherwise, without needing to know why or for whom one does them, or what they mean, such as act of funeral piety. (Bourdieu 1995:18)

A funeral is more than just a mere happening where the society expresses social inequalities. Rituals are a medium of integration or synthesis for opposing social as well as cultural forces (Bell 1992:19–21). The enactment of a rite is implicitly constructed as an effective integration for participants between the supposed conceptual totality and the practical needs of a particular time and place or the dispositions within the ritual context. A monument will then be a manifestation as a symbolic legislation document in the landscape. The construction of a monument represents a creation and a re-creation of the society.

A ritual takes time. The stratigraphy of a grave-mound may tell us the story of these rituals: it may be possible to deconstruct the ritual scenario and trace rituals through sequences in the stratigraphy. By a deconstruction of a mound into different rituals or actions within stratigraphic sequences, faces and time-sequences, it is possible to illuminate some of the practices and religious perceptions of the past. Each stratigraphic unit from the bottom to the top of the mound represents a distinctive and special ritual practice with its own meanings, prescriptions and performances. A mound and/or grave-construction analysed as a ritual sequence will give answers different from an analysis of grave-goods:

1. A mound and/or grave-construction may represent the rituals performed, and

may in itself be the grave-gift from the society (collective) to the deceased. Grave-gifts may have an individual relation to the deceased's life and the life he/she lived.

2. The performance of rituals takes time. Exclusion and inclusion of ritual participants in the construction of the monuments will have a structuring function in the society. The ritual mobilization or activation may reflect the structure of the society, conflicts or oppositions within a unit. By a massive ritual participation or mobilization, the different power institutions in the society will be visible and official, and thus, the rituals will either confirm or change the current social order. Some have an obligation to participate whereas others are denied access to the ritual scene.
3. Various religious and cosmological ideas related to the deceased and the society may be illuminated by deconstruction of a monument into a series of different ritual sequences.
4. The location of the monument in the landscape has a structuring function in the resurrection of the contemporary society as well as giving premises to the future creation of power relations. The monument's structuring function in the landscape may give rise to mythmaking, and the myths will then confirm how the monumentality of the mound controls us even today.

THE RITUAL CONSTRUCTION OF A MONUMENT

Obeyesekere distinguishes between personal and cultural symbols (Obeyesekere 1990:22). A symbol is both personal *and* cultural. A symbol provides a basis for self-reflection (the personal dimension) as well as communication with others (the cultural dimension). Personal symbols are cultural symbols that are related to the individual motivation and make sense only in relation to the life history of the individual and the larger institutional context in which they are embedded (Obeyesekere 1990:25). Thus the symbols both enable and constrain the possibility of cultural change. Subjective imagery is often proto-culture, or culture in the making. But even though all forms of subjective imagery are innovative, not all of them end up as culture. They have to be legitimated by the group in terms of the larger culture (Obeyesekere 1981:169).

This implies that there are many considerations to be made within a society regarding how the funeral rites are to be performed. It is possible to extend these personal and cultural dimensions of symbols to include corresponding dimensions in the performance of rituals (Oestigaard 2000:49–50), because 'the symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context' (Turner 1991:19). The funeral rites are both personal *and* public rituals, the family mourns the dead and the villagers pay their respects to the deceased and the descendants through participation in the funeral procession. In the construction of the Haugar monument, the focus was on the collective or cultural dimensions of the rituals. The personal aspects of the rituals were suppressed; the aim of the ritual was unifying participation. The descendants' performance of the funeral rite includes a

concern for the spiritual world and the ancestors as well as the society in general. The death of a member of a society threatens the society, and thus, death is something contra-social (Hertz 1960:78).

Our main emphasis is that within a ritual's time sequence, there is a hierarchy that regulates when and how it is possible to express different social statuses. The main focus in archaeology has been the description of status, reconstructed from the grave-goods deposited together with the corpse. But this is only one of many possibilities, and we are therefore focusing on the funeral practices as rituals in a time sequence rather than a burial analysis emphasizing only the grave-goods. The construction of the Haugar monument is a complicated and time-consuming ritual.

A monument is a technological construction. Pierre Lemmonier has focused on the social representations of technology, emphasizing that technological activities:

always bring into play a combination of four elements: matter on which an action is directed; objects ('tools' or 'means of work', including the human body itself); gestures and movements organized in operational sequences; and a specific 'knowledge', conscious or unconscious, that may be expressed or not. (Lemmonier 1989:156)

This is a technological system. With this point of departure, seen from a ritual point of view, the construction of the Haugar mound involves four elements:

1. The action and the aim to construct the monument. It is an advanced technological construction where the location and the materials it is made of are of the utmost importance.
2. Many objects and tools were at work during the preparation and construction of the mound. It was a time-consuming process. Many social segments of the society were probably involved. During the construction of the monument, the participation in the ritual was probably the most important aspect; because by visualizing social hierarchies in the rituals the social order is recreated and manifested.
3. The gestures and movements organized in operational sequences are often perceived to be the 'ritual' aspects of a technological activity, and misunderstood as all the extra 'things' done which are not necessary to get a practical 'thing' done. It is, however, often impossible to distinguish 'pragmatic' from 'other-worldly' goals (Parry 1994:70).
4. Specific 'knowledge', conscious or unconscious, expressed or not, is often what 'religion' is perceived to be. But this knowledge is manifested in the construction of the mound, because it is 'the done thing' and 'the right thing to do' (Bourdieu 1995:18). Thus it is impossible to separate the technological construction of the mound from the ideas that structure the actions, and thereby technological activities will be ritual processes.

In the following ritual scenario we anticipate that it is a monumental grave. Based on the stratigraphy it is possible to reconstruct parts of the ritual scenario. Within a given political situation, a person dies who either had an important significance in the contemporary society or his/her death became important for the community.

The absence of grave-goods may indicate that the death itself may have provoked a political mobilization. The deceased must have had an important position or social status alive. However, the most important role in the society was achieved after death: the greatest status was as 'the deceased', as a means to an end in the funeral and in the construction of the Haugar monument (see Figs 4–7).

The participation in the funeral and the construction of the monument had a unifying and identifying function for the members in the society. The question is then: who participated in the funeral? The charcoal layer is probably one key to the answer. As mentioned, the turf layer beneath the charcoal has not been affected by heat, and therefore the hypothetical cremation and the charcoal-making must have been done somewhere else. The location of the cremation-site away from the grave is a common pattern in the Iron Age in Scandinavia, and indeed Sigvallius claims that the normal pattern is that both bones and charcoal are secondarily deposited after the cremation (Sigvallius 1994:28).

Where, if anywhere, the pyre was burned in the Haugar case, is an open question. Based on the bone remains from the south-eastern mound, the bones were burnt at a high temperature whereas the charcoal was made at a low temperature. They have been mixed after different technological processes. Regarding the enormous masses of charcoal made at a low temperature, different 'units' or social segments may have performed 'symbolic' cremations, or in some or another way produced charcoal. Thereafter, they transported the charcoal to the small hill where the mound was under construction. If these units represent households, the death-rituals will then have been performed at a decentralized level of families performing rituals at home. The funeral may have been an incorporative ritual.

After the charcoal was deposited on top of the inverted turf, over the stone construction, the layer of charcoal would have appeared as a huge, black and cultic open platform. Such a place and setting would have been perfect for performances of various rituals emphasizing social hierarchies, distinctions and taboos. The cremation of the deceased may have been performed in relation to this platform, or the deceased may have been cremated elsewhere but the bones, or parts of them, deposited on the platform.

A thin layer of clay covers the charcoal layer, and then turf and soil make up the mound. Again, the collective aspects of participation are emphasized because the turf has been collected and transported probably from different places in the Tønsberg region. Participation in the ritual was a collective act. The deceased was a means to something else; the aim was the collective construction of the mound. The fact that there are two mounds strengthens the hypothesis that these rituals functioned as a political mobilization in the contemporary society. By deconstructing a construction and thereby focusing on the time depth and the actors that performed the rituals and built the monument, it is possible to gain deeper insights into the monumentality of monuments. The stratigraphy is the key to the understanding of mounds as ritual constructions. Monumentality matters and each stratigraphic unit represent different rituals.

HAUGAR AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NORWEGIAN KINGDOM IN RELATION TO DENMARK

Tønsberg was a central place in the Viking age, but as Ulf Näsman said; a central place, yes, but central to what? And in what way? (Näsman 1998:1). We will argue that the Haugar monument had a central role both in mythology, rituals, and the constitution of the Norwegian kingdom. There are no contradictions between these different realms, rather the contrary. Common for all mythological systems is that the most important stories and narratives reoccur in several different versions. Regardless of whether the myths refer to historical facts or not, the myths that are the least probable often have the greatest importance (Leach 1969:7). Myths often express untamed dangers and rituals tend to tame these dangers. However, there are differences between myths and rituals, and turning myth into ritual does not solve any problems because it creates a new problem: what happens if the ritual itself does not work? (O'Flaherty 1987:18–19). Lévi-Strauss sees myths as meta-text, and as such, a myth cannot be reduced and resolved into the images of the ritual narrative:

Myth and ritual do not always correspond to each other. Nevertheless, they complete each other in domains already presenting a complementary character. The value of the ritual as meaning resides in the instruments and gestures: It is a *para-language*. The myth, on the other hand, manifests itself as *meta-language*: it makes full use of discourse, but does so by situating its own significant oppositions at a higher level of complexity than required by language operating for profane ends. (Lévi-Strauss 1976:66)

We will therefore argue that the construction of the Haugar monuments worked at different levels, both mythologically and ritually, and together these different levels strengthened the role Haugar had in the constitution of the Norwegian kingdom in people's minds.

We want, therefore, to put forward an interpretation based on metaphors linking the making of iron to the constitution of society. In many ways these processes share numerous features, and it is a fact that iron was an important material in weapons and symbols connected to the rulers' ideology. If we start with a simple fact: charcoal and turf were pre-conditions for making iron. These materials are intimately linked to transformation and change at an artefactual level (from raw materials to weapons). Therefore, at another level, charcoal and turf may become metaphors for the constitutive outcomes of iron-making, that is, swords and the structuration of society. Thus, such metaphors may have been included and employed in rituals performed on a larger scale. The Haugar monuments focus on the collective participation in the transformation of the society. The monuments were probably raised to make a statement; they represent a manifestation of structural changes in society, and they were just as much promises for the future as symbols of the past. The rituals and performances conducted while constructing the mound symbolized societal change on a larger scale. The outcome of the rituals did not necessitate a burial or a cremation of a deceased, and hence, there may

never have been corpses in either of the Haugar mounds. The constructions filled other purposes, which we may trace in the myths connected to the monuments.

THE MYTHS OF NORWEGIAN KINGS AND MOUNDS IN THE WRITTEN SOURCES

In *Harald Hårfagres Saga* (Chapter 13) it is recorded that King Harald came with his fleet from Viken in the east to a 'merchant place' in Tønsberg. *Kaupstaðr* is the word that is translated as 'merchant place', but the meaning of the word is highly debated. The written source is from the 1230s and it is therefore difficult to use as a source for what happened in the Viking Age. The development of Tønsberg as a town gains momentum in the second half of the eleventh century. In 1130 Ordericus Vitalis mentioned Tønsberg as one of six towns in Norway. The town played a crucial role in the development of the medieval kingdom in Norway. We will argue that the location and the construction of the Haugar monuments were important in the development and making of medieval Tønsberg as a major centre, which needed a history, legitimating the late urban development.

The mounds at Haugar never cease to have an impact on people. Who were the receivers of the messages? Or to put it in another way: who was the reference group for the Norse aristocracy (Fuglestad 1997:46), and what impact did the monuments have on the local community? We argue that the emphasis must not stress what had been, but what was to become. Therefore the deceased was a means to an end, the end being the unifying effects of the construction of the monuments. They represent a creative power where the focus is on transformation and ritual participation in a time of conflict. The incorporative function of these rituals in the process where the Norwegian kingdom was created, emphasizes the unifying political mobilization in a time of war and conflict. Later, in the medieval period, the regional centre for jurisdiction, the *Haugathing*, was located at these mounds at Haugar. The visual qualities of the monuments structured the future.

The traditional presentations of the development of the Norwegian kingdom have their starting point in Vestfold (Andersen 1977). These narratives are based on Ynglingatal and the Ynglinge saga. These sources were not, however, critically evaluated before the 1990s. The point of departure in our case is that in *Harald Hårfagres Saga*, Snorri Sturlason connects two of Harald's sons, Olav and Sigrød, with the grave-mounds in Tønsberg. Snorri wrote his sagas in the 1230s or approximately 300 years after the monuments were built. Snorri does not mention Haugar by name, but those who have written histories of Tønsberg have always connected Snorri's narratives to the two mounds at Haugar. Although Snorri does not mention the two mounds at Haugar, it is reasonable to think that these are the monuments he is referring to. The question is then why did Snorri place two of Harald's sons in Tønsberg? What kind of mythological connections are there between Harald Hårfagre and the monuments at Haugar?

According to the myths, Harald Hårfagre was the first Norwegian king. He was a conqueror and used military force to create the kingdom. In written sources he is portrayed as a 'non-heathen' king, and that 'label' is built upon a negation which requires a concept of what it is to be a Christian (Fidjestøl 1991:115). Another

striking moment that is pointed out by Claus Krag takes the form of a maxim: the younger the source, the more incorporated Vestfold seems to be as Harald's starting point for the conquest of Norway (Krag 1991). Looking to the older written sources, another scenario is more convincing. Recent research has pointed out that it was most likely that Harald came from the south-western part of Norway (Krag 1993, 1995; Opedal 1998). Harald was not from Vestfold or the Tønsberg-region, but why then are two of his sons allegedly buried on Haugar?

Harald Hårfagre, and especially the kings Olav Tryggvasson and Olav Haraldsson, are presented and perceived in Norwegian mythology as the kings who introduced Christianity and created and developed the Norwegian Christian kingdom. Harald founded a Hårfagre dynasty, which monopolized the right to the throne. The only way to become king the proper way was to be able to justify a connection to the Hårfagre dynasty, and links to Olav Tryggvasson and Olav Haraldsson were of great importance. The two sons who are allegedly buried at Haugar, Olav Digerbein Haraldsson (allusion to Olav Digre Haraldsson, 'St Olav') and Sigrød Haraldsson connect monument, dynasty, legitimacy and history. Who needed that history, and when was it needed?

A common feature in the younger written sources is that they set the national history events in Viken and eastern Norway and have a strong anti-Danish flavour. Snorri Sturlason is one representative of the younger sources, and he connects different saga characters to grave monuments (Myhre 1992:280). Did he do that out of pure coincidence, or are there clues to be found by looking at Snorri 'the politician' and his struggle for leadership on Iceland? Snorri was not only a historian as he is often presented. It is more accurate to regard him as a medieval politician. He was one of the most powerful men on Iceland in a time of conflict and civil war in Norway. The capital in Norway was Bergen where King Håkon Håkonsen reigned (1217–1263). The earl Skule Jarl was the leader of a revolt against the king in 1239, and the earl was killed the year after, on Håkon's request. Snorri was an ally of Skule Jarl against King Håkon Håkonsen, and the king was even involved in the assassination of Snorri (Gansum 1996:4).

This illuminates the aristocratic milieu Snorri was a part of, and therefore it is reasonable to argue that Snorri wrote his sagas based on the political situation and personal motivation. He made Vestfold and Viken more 'Norwegian' than originally (Krag 1991) because then Bergen (and thereby King Håkon) would lose part of its political power. In this regard it seems natural that Snorri was an ally of Skule Jarl. The revolts against King Håkon Håkonsen could have secured Iceland's independence from the Norwegian kingdom. But the Norwegian kingdom was under pressure from Danish kings, and political historians such as Snorri argued against this outer pressure. The political situation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was held in a kind of equilibrium. Placing the development of the kingdom in Vestfold was done because of the contemporary political situation in the medieval period. In order to succeed with this myth-making, Snorri and his allies connected different people in the sagas to various grave-mounds. Then the history of the development of the Norwegian kingdom became 'once and for all' materialized and manifested as monuments in Vestfold. Oslo was made capital in 1294.

CONCLUSION

The Haugar monuments had a crucial role in the development of the Norwegian kingdom. Massive public rituals took place in this formative period as a means to mobilize and unite one petty kingdom against another. Rituals united the inhabitants of a local kingdom, and the participation in these rituals was collectively important for the society regardless of the deceased's status as an individual. However, as seen from the later written sources, both the roles of the public rituals and the alleged individual status of the deceased were used in contemporary and later mythmaking. Snorri did not succeed with his politics, but the myths of various saga heroes are still connected to monuments; the monuments became Monumental Memories. The role and the function of the monuments worked in the past as they still do in the present. Thus, by analysing the construction of mounds as rituals, it is possible to gain an insight into how a collective participation and the symbolism in a funeral created the society in the past. But this advantageous knowledge production necessitates an excavation method of grave-mounds focusing on the stratigraphy, not just the artefacts.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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ABSTRACTS

La stratigraphie rituelle des monuments d'une importance certaine

Terje Gansum et Terje Oestigaard

Cet article porte sur un des deux grands tumuli de Haugar (Tonsberg, Norvège) et sur le rôle que ces tumuli ont joué dans la constitution du royaume norvégien. Le monument en question date du 9^e siècle ap. JC. Nous avançons la thèse que la stratigraphie reflète les rites performés. On n'a pas trouvé d'objets funéraires, mais le tumulus contient une énorme couche de charbon. Notre ambivalence à désigner tous les tumuli de «tombes» vise à permettre plus d'explications différentes du symbolisme de ces constructions définies couramment comme tombes. Ces monuments ressemblent à des fours à charbon symboliques, nécessaires au forgeron à la fabrication du fer. Peut-être ces fours symboliques sont l'association matérialisée d'une transformation rituelle de la société, à savoir la mort, le monument, le charbon et le fer? D'après Snorri Sturlason, deux des fils de Harald H^oarfagre, le premier roi de Norvège, furent ensevelis dans ces tumuli au cours du 10^e siècle. L'étude de l'écrivain médiéval Snorri éclaire les motifs politiques de l'élite norvégienne et l'usage idéologique des tumuli dans les années 1230 ap. JC.

Mot-clés: fabrication du fer, métaphore, monuments, paysage, rites, stratigraphie

Die rituelle Stratigraphie von bedeutsamen Monumenten

Terje Gansum und Terje Oestigaard

Dieser Artikel beschäftigt sich mit einem der beiden großen Hügel von Haugar in Tønsberg, Norwegen, und der Rolle, die sie in der Herausbildung des Norwegischen Königreiches gespielt haben. Das hier diskutierte Bodendenkmal wird in das 9. Jahrhundert AD datiert. Wir behaupten, dass die Stratigraphie die ausgeübten Rituale widerspiegelt. Es wurden keine Funde von Grabinventaren gemacht, jedoch enthält der Hügel eine enorme Holzkohleschicht. Unsere Zweifel, alle Hügel als „Gräber“ zu bezeichnen, machen es notwendig, einen weiteren Erklärungsrahmen zu diesen Konstruktionen – die gewöhnlich als Gräber definiert werden – zu eröffnen: Diese Befundgattung ähnelt in ihrem Erscheinungsbild symbolischen Holzkohleöfen, die zur Eisenproduktion der Schmiede notwendig sind. Sind diese symbolischen Schmelzöfen eine materialisierte Assoziation einer rituellen Transformation der Gesellschaft, die Tod, Monument, Holzkohle und Eisen einschließt?

Nach der Überlieferung von Snorri Sturlason wurden im 10. Jh. zwei Söhne von Harald Härfagre („Feinhaar“), dem ersten König von Norwegen, in diesen Hügeln bestattet. Eine Untersuchung des mittelalterlichen Autors Snorri beleuchtet die politischen Motive und die ideologische Nutzung der Hügel durch die norwegische Elite in den 1230er Jahren.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Eisenproduktion, Landschaft, Metaphern, Monumente, Rituale, Stratigraphie