

Summary

Lössnan and Lössnaren

By Lennart Elmevik

The two names in the title of this essay refer to Swedish lakes, the first in Hälsingland, the second in Gästrikland. The Hälsingland name has been interpreted as formed from an Old Swedish word **løst* ‘woodless terrain, glade’ etc., while up to now no interpretation of the Gästrikland name has been offered. The present author, however, traces both names back to an OSw. **Løsne*, which he derives from an OSw. **løsn* – originally meaning ‘brightening, clearing’, hence ‘open place, glade’ etc. – which has been assumed to form the basis for a number of Swedish and Danish place-names. According to the author, the appearance of *Lössnan* in the forms *Löstna* and *Löstnan* in 17th- and 18th-century sources (maps) is due to an epenthetic *t* – later lost – between *s* and *n*. Good parallels to this type of epenthesis exist and are cited by the author. The names are assumed to refer to the lakes having been perceived as bright patches in a forested, and hence dark, landscape.