

Summary

Scanian place-names in Scandinavian perspective

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This article explores various aspects of place-name interpretation arising from a study of the place-names of Gärds härad in Skåne, southern Sweden, which attempts to see the names in a wider Scandinavian perspective. The transfer of Skåne from Denmark to Sweden in 1658 involved a language shift that also affected the spelling of place-names. For instance, Swedish spellings reflected the dialectal range of vowels in unstressed position, whereas dialectal voiced stops were normally replaced by the unvoiced equivalents found in Standard Swedish.

Looking beyond one's own borders can be helpful when interpreting place-names. The specific of the famous rune-inscribed mound *Maeshowe* can be identified as *mad(e)* 'meadow'. That word is found in Danish and Swedish, but not in Old Norse – the language spoken by the settlers in Orkney. In the case of *Vittskövle*, the opposite is true: we need to look to Old Norse to establish the most likely interpretation of *skövla*, namely 'to overexploit'.

The remaining sections of the article deal with name classes formed from the common Germanic elements *stad* and *-ing(e)*. The former is assumed to have been obsolete in southern Scandinavia by the Viking Age. The Scanian name stock, however, seems to include some more recent *stad* names, indicating that the element may have remained productive for longer in the place-names of the province (with obvious implications for its use in place-name chronologies). As for *-ing(e)* names, the author questions whether it is possible to maintain the strict distinction between a suffix *-ingi* < **ingia*, originally denoting the area of a specific people and used solely to form habitation names, and *-ing*, used for all kinds of formations. A survey of northern Europe seems to indicate, rather, that *-ing(e)* embraces a number of suffixes of different genders, used for different types of formation.