Buttle och Rute s. 19–21

Summary

Buttle and Rute

By Lennart Elmevik

Buttle and Rute are the names of parishes on the Swedish island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea. They are examples of plural place-names, having the forms Butlar and Rutar, respectively, in Old Gutnish times. Neither name has previously been interpreted. According to the author, Buttle contains either an Old Gutnish form *būtul m., derived with the suffix -ul from a Gotland word corresponding to and with the same meaning as a word but ‘clod of earth’, known from several mainland Swedish dialects; or an OGutn. *buttol m., derived with the same suffix from Gotland dialect butt(e) m. ‘small bush’, ‘small (cut-down) spruce or pine’, and with the same meaning as that word. With the support of evidence from Gotland and Norwegian dialects, Rute is interpreted as containing a word OGutn. *rūt neut. ‘strong wind, gale’, which in the place-name has the concretised sense of ‘place or area where there are strong winds, that is windswept’, originally referring to a part of the parish that was exposed to easterly winds from the sea.