

## Summary

Place-names I keep coming back to

By Lennart Elmevik

This article essentially reproduces the lecture given by the author at the annual meeting of the Place-Name Society of Uppsala in April 2013. It describes his research on Swedish sacred place-names, actual or, as he sees it in some cases, supposed. He dwells at greatest length on his view that the goddess name *Fröja* (OWScand. *Freyja*, OSw. \**Frøia*) cannot be shown to occur in Swedish place-names. He gives several examples of names for which he believes other interpretations are to be preferred, including the parish names *Friel*, *Fryele* and *Fröjel*. These contain as their final element an Old Swedish word \**al*, which in his opinion does not mean ‘sacred place, shrine’, as has commonly been assumed, but refers to a ‘protected, enclosed place’, intended for various purposes. The village and parish name *Friggeråker* in Västergötland, he suggests, contains a counterpart of OWScand. *friðgerð* ‘conclusion of peace, settlement’, Norw. dial. *fredgjerd*, rather than, as previously supposed, the goddess name OWScand. *Frigg*. He questions the existence of a goddess OSw. \**Niærdh* and argues that, where place-names have been seen as referring to such a deity, we are concerned rather with a counterpart of the god’s name OWScand. *Njǫrðr*. As for the name *Härnevi/Ärnevi*, which occurs in four places in Uppland and which earlier scholars have assumed to contain a goddess name OSw. \**Hærn* as its specific, he prefers to interpret the first element as a word for ‘vegetation god’, OSw. \**ærin* or \**æri* m. In his view, a word with the same meaning also forms the first element of *Luggude härad* (Skåne), *Ludgo* (a parish name in Södermanland) and *Luggavi* (a village name in Närke). According to the author, the final element of *Locknevi* (the name of a parish in Småland) was not originally *vi* ‘sacred place, cult site’, but OSw. *-vidhi* ‘wood, forest’; as the first element he posits a word OSw. \**ludhkona*, \**lodhkona* ‘sorceress, witch’.

In a handful of names, among them OSw. *Lytislund*, modern-day *Janslunda*, on Selaön in Lake Mälaren, he interprets the first element as a word for ‘pagan priest’, OSw. \**lytir* ‘lot teller, soothsayer’. Of the other names discussed, mention may be made of the village name *Disevid* in Östergötland, which the author does not regard as an original *-vi* name, but as compounded with *-vidhi* ‘wood, forest’; a group consisting of *Åsaka* (in six places in Västergötland), *Asige* (in Halland), and *Asak* and *Åsåker* in Norway; and finally *Gödåker* in Uppland.