

Allbo härad, Aringsås och fgutn. Gutnal þing s.15–21

Summary

Allbo härad, Aringsås and Old Gutnish Gutnal þing

By Lennart Elmevik

The Småland *härad* (district) name *Allbo*, OSw. *Albo(a)hæradh*, contains an inhabitant designation *alboar*. The element *al* has generally been regarded as a word cognate with Gothic *alhs* ‘temple’. The present author (2004) has suggested, rather, that in names such as *Allbo*, *al* referred to a sheltered, enclosed place set aside for certain purposes, perhaps above all for legal and cultic practices. Most recently, Thorsten Andersson (2011) has explained this district name as containing a well-attested place-name element *ål* (OSw. **āl*) ‘elongated elevation’, referring to what is now the Aringsåsen ridge, which gave rise to the church-village and former parish name *Aringsås*. The author comes to the conclusion that his own and Andersson’s interpretations are to be regarded as equally valid.

What is new here is the present author’s interpretation of the name *Aringsås*, which he derives from an Old Swedish form **Arinsās*, meaning ‘gravel ridge’. He mentions the possibility of the Västergötland town name *Alingsås* having the same origin.

Old Gutnish *Gutnal*, which is attested only once, in combination with *þing* ‘thing, assembly’, was interpreted by the author in his 2004 study as a compound of a form **gutn* ‘flow, spring’, shown to occur in Gotland place-names for example, and the word **al* ‘sheltered place’, mentioned above. In a publication from 2014, Evert Melefors regarded *al*, rather, as cognate with OWS scand. *áll* ‘deep channel in the bed of a river or sound’, in the Gotland case referring to a long depression in the terrain. In the author’s view, both interpretations should be taken into account in future discussions of *Gutnal*.