ASPECTS OF VIKING SOCIETY IN SHETLAND AND THE FAROE ISLANDS

Steffen Stummann Hansen

There seems to be a strong tradition in Norse archaeology of dealing with the Faroes and Shetland as a more or less defined unity. This tradition of combining and comparing the two groups of islands appears in various fields of research, e.g. environmental studies (Jóhansen 1985), place-name studies (MacGregor 1984, 1986) and human geography and archaeology (Small 1969).

Why should we look at the two archipelagos as though they form a whole? As far as environmental conditions are concerned the differences between the Faroes and Shetland are small as compared to the West Norwegian landscape. As pointed out by Alan Small, the differences from Norway are of such magnitude that they must have presented the Norse with many problems in a new and alien environment (Small 1970:179).

On the other hand, the Faroe Islands and Shetland differ from Orkney and the coasts of Caithness in Scotland to the south, for their landscapes are much more hilly and mountainous and have relatively less room for agriculture.

The Faroes and Shetland have another thing in common, as they both seem to play a rather anonymous role in the Viking Age compared to that of, for instance, Orkney. As Small points out, the political dominance of Orkney has tended to overshadow the importance of Shetland as a major Norse colony (Small 1970:182). An attempt to illustrate the strategic position of the two groups of islands in a North Atlantic context and their role in the amalgam of events and processes that characterized the Viking period was made by Alan Small twenty-five years ago [fig. 1].

The present paper will follow this tradition but it will not try to summarize our present knowledge in all fields of research into the Viking Age in the two groups of islands. Neither will it deal with the question of the place-name evidence and the related discussion about the settlement structure (see for instance MagGregor 1984, 1986; Small 1969; Thorsteinsson 1978, 1981). It will, however, on the basis of the archaeological finds, put the focus on some aspects and perspectives concerning trade and communication links in Viking-Age rural society in Shetland and the Faroes.

Although we have chosen to deal with Shetland and the Faroe Islands as one, there are certainly environmental differences between the two groups of islands. For instance, the mountains of the Faroes rise to a height of approximately 850 m, while the highest mountains in Shetland are only about half this height. At the same time, the space available for agriculture is much more limited and determined by the environment in the Faroes, where settlements are restricted to low-lying coastal areas, than it is in Shetland.

The landscape that met the Norse settlers in Shetland and the Faroes respectively differed markedly. In the Faroes the Norsemen found a virtually uninhabited landscape. Although there might have been some early settlement by Irish monks in the 7-8th centuries, there seems to have been no intensive exploitation of the environment. In Shetland, however, the Norse settlers found a landscape that had been populated for about five thousand years, and this means that the vegetation was quite different.

For instance, juniper was abundant in the Faroe Islands, while it had become extinct thousands of years before the Norsemen's arrival in Shetland.

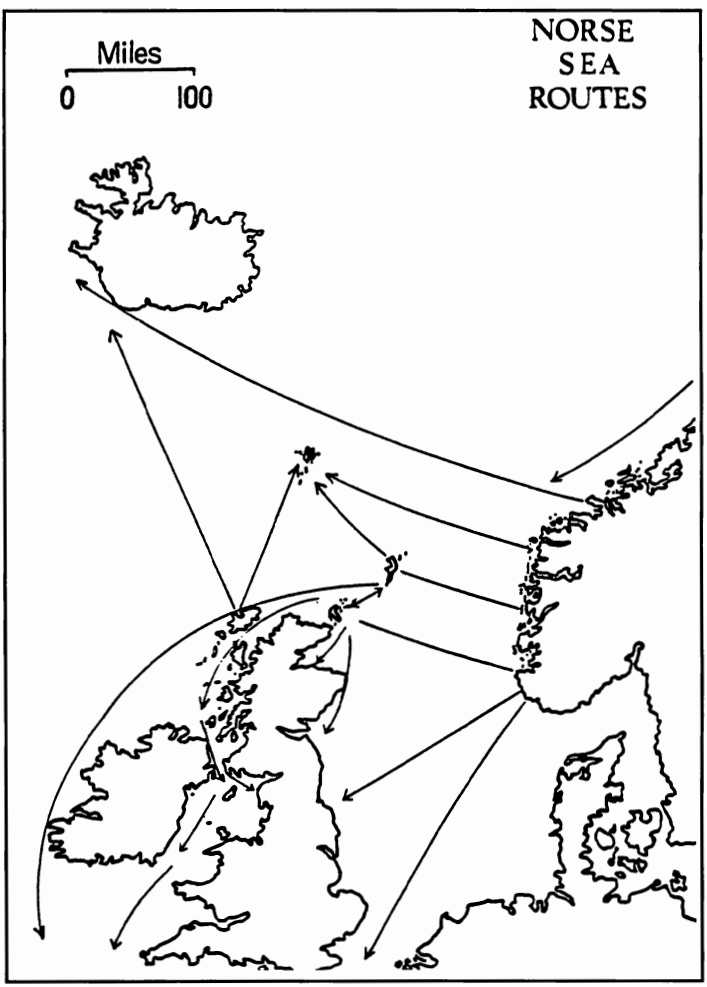

Fig. 1. Norse Sea Routes (after Small 1968A: 2).

The exploitation of juniper for different purposes — wicker-work, repair material etc. — was known in Norway, and was practised by the Norse settlers in the Faroes (Hansen 1988: 72; Larsen 1991). Juniper is a good example of how the Norse settlers changed the landscape of the Faroes, as juniper declined rapidly after their arrival (Jóhansen 1985). The character of the human impact and the reason for the decline of juniper has in recent years become a matter of discussion (Hansen 1988: 77; Jóhansen 1971: 151; Jóhansen 1985: 55, Larsen 1991:54ff; Small 1992: 3ff).

The situation that met the Norse settlers in Shetland was a different one, as the islands had been inhabited since the neolithic period. The vegetation was thus different, as the shrubs had been in decline for a long time before the arrival of the Norsemen. At the same time, juniper had disappeared a long time before the Norse settlement. Birch (betula) was present, although only on a small scale, as was hazel (corylus) (Jóhansen 1985: 81).

Although the Faroe Islands and Shetland share some geographical and environmental features, there are nevertheless important differences in geology. While the only types of stone to be found in the Faroes are basalt and tuf, Shetland is much more favoured, as it yields steatite, schist and sandstone, materials that were very important to the Norse settlers, as they were preferred for hones, querns, net- and line-sinkers, spindle-whorls, loom-weights and cooking and drinking vessels. So while Norse settlers in Shetland were well supplied with these materials, their neighbours in the Faroes had to import them from either Norway, Shetland or somewhere further away.

In spite of such differences Small in 1969 found the similarities to be of such basic substance as to allow him to propose a 'geographical model' for the Norse settlement in Shetland and the Faroe Islands, stressing that the environmental conditions in both groups of islands only allowed settlement in a rather limited number of areas (Small 1969: figs. 1-2). The model was based on the following preconditions for a primary Norse farmstead: 1. access to the sea, with a reasonable site for pulling up a boat; 2. a patch of fairly flat, reasonably well-drained land suitable for the construction of a farmstead and with the potential for some grain cultivation; 3. extensive grazing areas, since the number of animals which the poor vegetation of the islands could support would be rather low (Small 1969:149). Viking-Age sites in the Faroes fit well into this model (Hansen 1988: 78).

The environment provided the framework for the Norse settlement, and it is still very important to investigate the environmental conditions for these Viking-Age communities and the economy that they established. Although environmental studies are important, archaeological finds can actually provide evidence on issues where the value of environmental studies and place-name studies will normally be more limited. One of these issues is that of trade and communication.

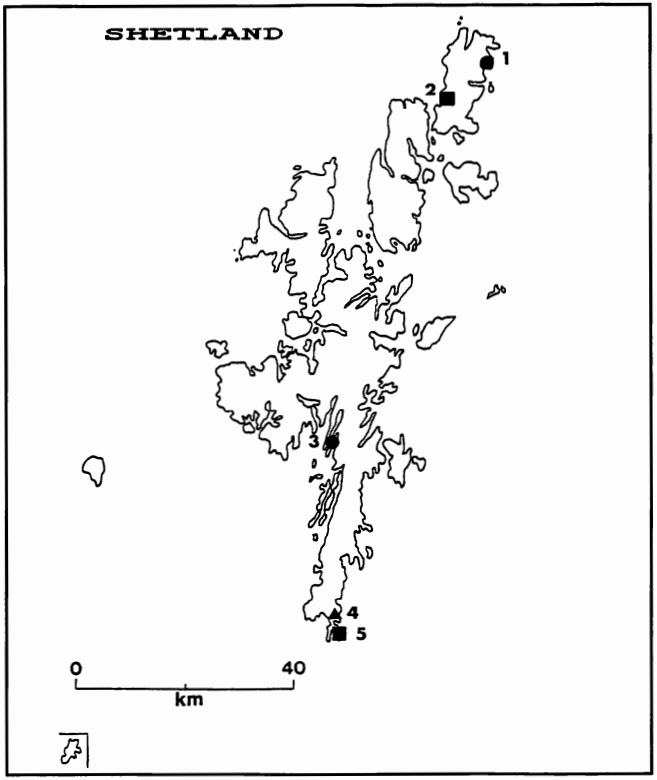

Fig. 2. Map of Shetland showing the archaeological sites mentioned in the text.

Fig. 3. Map of Faroe Islands showing the archaeological sites mentioned in the text.

Norse archaeology in Shetland and Faroe

Archaeological research into the Norse period has a rather short history in both Shetland and the Faroes, which means that any new information will normally contribute essentially to our present knowledge. As new archaeological research has been going on both in Shetland and in the Faroes since Small's paper appeared in 1969, it may therefore be appropriate to give a short presentation of the most important Viking-Age sites in Shetland and Faroe [figs. 2-3].

In Shetland, one of the most famous and well-documented excavations of a Norse settlement in the North Atlantic took place at the site known as Jarlshof on the southern tip of Mainland in the 1930-1950s. The excavator described the settlement as a primary farmstead that was later joined by secondary farmsteads during the Norse period (Hamilton 1956: 5) [fig. 4]. A lot of objects from the Viking Age turned up in stratified layers at the site. J.R.C. Hamilton's publication from 1956 is still the most important publication of any settlement site in the Faroes and Shetland.

Only one other presumed Viking-Age site has been excavated in Shetland and this not on the same scale as Jarlshof. At Underhoull on the west coast of Unst, Small excavated a single Norse building in the 1960s and dated it to the Viking Age (Small 1967, 1968B). Small's dating of Underhoull to the 10th century has been questioned by other archaeologists (Bigelow 1992: 10). The author of the present paper has recently had the opportunity to study the archaeological finds from the site and would on the basis of that preliminarily

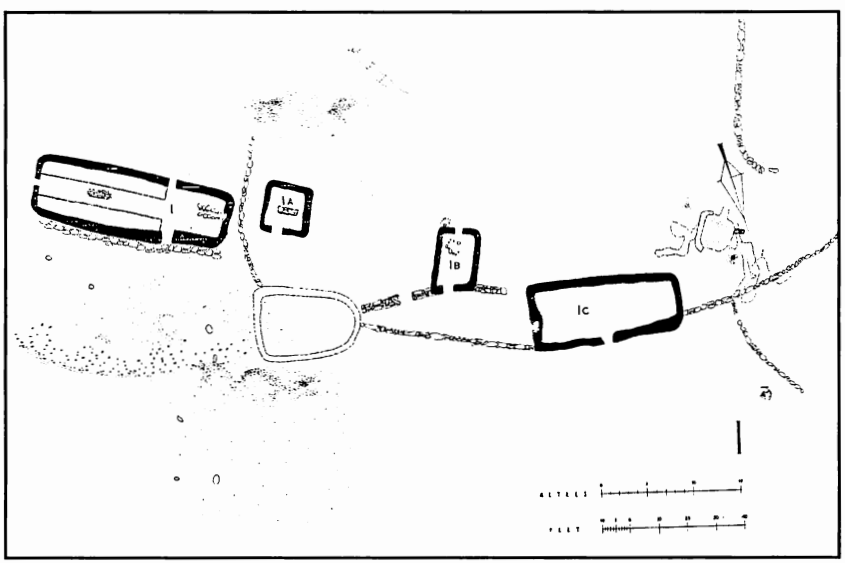

Fig. 4. Jarlshof. The earliest Norse phase at Jarlshof (after Hamilton 1956).

suggest a date within the late 10th to 12th century. While there is no doubt about some of the material being Late Norse, it is more difficult to determine at what time exactly this farmstead was established.[1]

Excavations of Norse settlement sites in the Faroe Islands began in the 1940s, when the late State Antiquary of the Faroe Islands, Sverri Dahl, commenced his pioneer work. Excavations were carried out on a number of sites uncovering parts of ancient settlements (Dahl 1971A, 1971B). The dating of the settlements has caused many problems, as it is difficult to give more than just a rough dating of the excavated structures. However, these investigations gradually began to yield the archaeological evidence for the Norse settlement in the Faroe Islands in the Viking Age, thus supporting in general the information of written sources such as the so-called 'Saga of the Faroe Islanders'.

Dahl excavated settlement structures at the important Viking-Age sites 'niðri á Toft' in Kvívík and 'við Gjógvará' in Fuglafjørður (1971A, 1971B) and at a number of other sites which he dated to the Viking Age. With our present knowledge it is obvious that some of the sites dated by Dahl to the Viking Age or Early Norse period have to be dated to the Medieval or Late Norse period. However, Dahl's excavations demonstrated convincingly that Viking-Age farmsteads could be located and investigated in the Faroes and that they tended to occur close to present-day farms.

In the 1980s some large-scale excavations took place in the Faroes. For the first time since Dahl's investigations Føroya Fornminnissavn got the opportunity to excavate a Viking-Age settlement at the site called 'Toftanes' in the village of Leirvík (Hansen 1988, 1989, 1991, 1993). The excavation uncovered four contemporary buildings, all forming part of the same farmstead. The topographical location fits very well into Small's model for 'primary farmsteads' [fig. 5]. A corroboration of the archaeological dating has been provided by three C-14 datings from floor-layers in Building I, which provide dates ranging from ca. 890-975 AD (Hansen 1988: 75).

Another important site to be excavated in the 1980s was that of 'Argisbrekka' near the northern tip of Eysturoy (Mahler 1991). This site, which comprised some fourteen buildings, was interpreted by the excavator as a shieling or 'sæter' and was dated to the Viking Age and Late Norse period (Mahler 1991). This excavation formed the starting-point for a renewed interest in the whole concept of shielings as a part of Norse economy and settlement structure in Viking-Age Faroe Islands (Mahler 1991).

The three farmsteads in Kvívík, Fuglafjørður and Leirvík all contained rather comprehensive archaeological assemblages which can be compared with that at Jarlshof. Similarly Toftanes in Leirvík can in many respects

1. The author has recently studied the extensive material of steatite from Underhoull stored in the Shetland Museum. The assemblage contains circular rounded as well as oval and square-sided types of vessels. I am grateful to Alan Small for his help and permission to look at the material.

Fig. 5. Aerial view of the excavation of a Viking-Age farmstead at Toftanes, Faroe Islands. The building just above the Viking site is the present day farm at Toftanes. Photo: Steffen Stummann Hansen/Føroya Fornminnissavn.

regarding both artifact assemblage and house structures be compared with the earliest phase at Jarlshof.

Only a few Viking-Age graves are so far known from Shetland and in all cases they were excavated in the last or early in this century by non-professional local people. In 1861 a grave was excavated on Unst. The grave contained a bronze tortoise brooch and a small circular bronze box. The character of the items suggests that it was a female grave but there is no information about the grave itself (Grieg 1940: 103).

Another grave was found when local people in 1863 dug up a farm-yard at Clibberswick on Unst. Seemingly the objects were not all registered in situ but some of the relics were found in a layer of black soil on top of the rock. From this grave came two bronze tortoise brooches, a bronze trefoil brooch, an armlet of silver and two glass beads (Grieg 1940: 103-105). The character of the items indicates that this, too, was a female grave.

In South Whiteness churchyard a grave-digger in 1938 found an iron axe of Viking type in a stone-lined grave [fig. 6].[2] The location is the site of the ancient church dedicated to St. Ola, which may in origin have been pre-Norse.

The axe was found in association with bones but no other artifact. The

2. Shetland Museum. ARC 65381.

axe belongs to Jan Petersen's type E, which he dates mainly to the second half of the 9th or early tenth century, although he mentions that some variants may be dated to later in the 10th century (Petersen 1919: 41-42). It can thus be rather difficult to give a more exact date of the burial itself, but certainly it must be referred to the Viking Age. Viking warrior graves, i.e. graves with weapons as grave-goods, are common throughout the Viking Age in Scandinavia. In Denmark, however, only a few weapon graves are dated to the 9th or the 11th centuries. While low-rank warriors throughout the Viking Age were typically buried in rather poor graves with an axe to announce their warrior status, the political and wealthy elite among the warriors were buried in richly furnished graves until around 970AD, when the Christianisation of the upper stratum of Danish society took place. After that period all warriors, rich or poor, seem to have been buried with the axe as the only weapon (Näsman 1991: 163ff).

If the grave from South Whiteness has to be dated to the late 9th or early 10th century, it probably represents a low rank warrior, but why then was he buried in a Christian burial ground? On the other hand, if the grave has to be dated to the late 10th century, a time where the pagan tradition of richly furnished warrior graves was no more accepted, it may well represent a Christian burial of a rather high ranking warrior. So far the grave is unique in a Shetland and Faroe context, and we can only hope that other weapon graves will turn up soon.

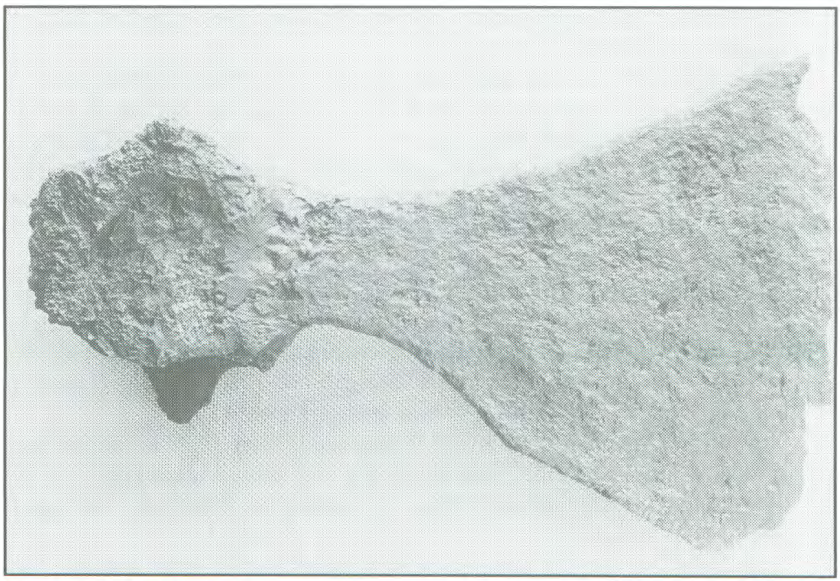

Fig. 6. Iron Axe found in a stonelined grave at the churchyard at South Whiteness, Shetland. Photo: Shetland Museum.

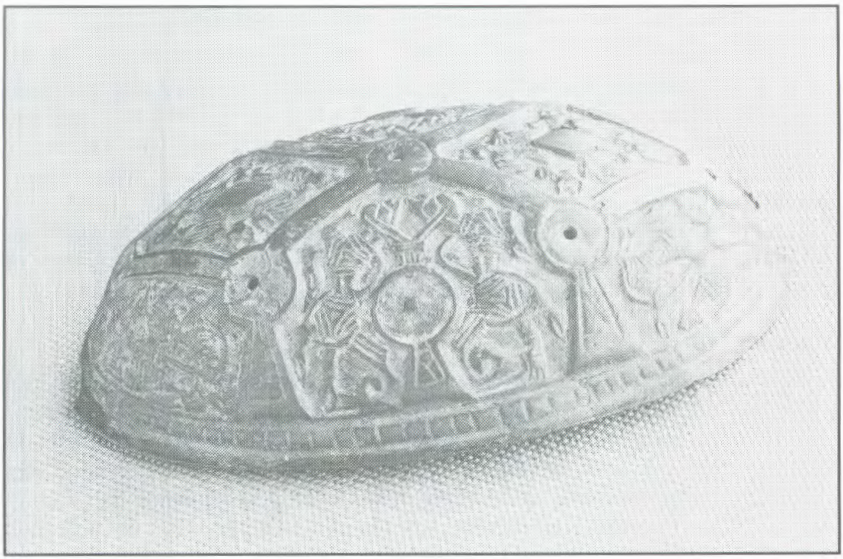

Fig. 7. Bronze tortoise brooch from the Viking period found at Wardhill near Sumburgh. The object measures 102 x 71 x 26 mm. Photo: Shetland Museum.

In the Faroe Islands a Viking graveyard was localized and excavated in the second half of the 1950s at the site known as 'Yviri í Trøð' in Tjørnuvík on Stremoy. Here twelve poorly furnished and sparsely equipped graves were excavated, one of which contained a bronze ringed pin of Hiberno-Norse type. The graves can be dated to the 10th century (Dahl & Rasmussen 1956). These were until a few years ago the only known Viking graves in the Faroes.

In 1989 another Viking graveyard was found at the site 'Við Kirkjugarð' in Sandur on Sandoy (Arge & Hartmann 1992). Here at least twelve east-west orientated graves were excavated. Very little skeleton material was preserved and the graves, like those in Tjørnuvík, were in general rather poorly equipped with grave-goods. The excavators are very reluctant to give any firm date or to venture to say whether the graves represent a Christian or a heathen population (Arge & Hartmann 1992: 20).

Shetland differs from the Faroes in having a rather large collection of stray finds. Some of these certainly indicate settlement sites, while others indicate disturbed graves. One example is a bronze tortoise brooch found at Ward Hill north of Sumburgh on Mainland during the Second World War, when trenches were being dug [fig. 7].[3] The brooch, which has the imprint of cloth on the reverse, can be dated to the 9th century. Objects like these normally occur in female graves, and it might therefore derive from a destroyed burial.

3. Shetland Museum. ARC 81151.

The evidence of archaeological finds in Shetland and Faroe

While the material from burials and stray finds is sparse and thus of limited value at the moment, the archaeological material from settlements is varied and quite extensive. The archaeological material from Faroese and Shetland settlement sites is in many respects of identical character and gives evidence about daily life and the economy. One rather important aspect, which seems to have attracted rather little attention in previous works, is that of communication and trade as reflected in these objects. In the following, focus on this aspect will be based on a presentation of some of the main groups of archaeological assemblages from the settlement sites in Shetland and Faroe.

Stone objects

In both areas sherds of *steatite* vessels are very common on settlement sites from the Viking Age. In fact, the Viking Age in the North Atlantic is considered to be aceramic, as steatite vessels seem to replace clay vessels. In Shetland the Viking-Age phases at Jarlshof as well as Underhoull are characterized by aceramic assemblages and in the Faroe Islands the Viking-Age sites in Kvívík, Fuglafjørður and Leirvík all seem to be aceramic (Crawford 1979: 40; Hansen 1988: 75). It is obvious that the Norse settlers were very fond of steatite and it is very common for sherds from broken vessels to be reused for other purposes — for instance spindle-whorls, net- and line-sinkers, weights etc.

In the Faroe Islands there is no doubt that objects of steatite were imported since steatite is not found here. It has normally been accepted that the steatite in the Faroes was brought from Norway, either as imports obtained by trade or as part of an initial cargo at the time of the original settlement. The situation is different in Shetland, as steatite is part of the geology of that area, and it has been documented through the location of quarries that steatite was exploited for the manufacturing of vessels during the Norse period (Hamilton 1956: 206pp; Buttler 1989).

It is interesting to note that most of the steatite sherds from Toftanes have been secondarily worked; many of them into spindle-whorls. The same feature was characteristic for the earliest Norse phase at Jarlshof (Hamilton 1956: 207), which might indicate that the vessels from this phase were imported (Hamilton 1956: 130). At the same time the equally extensive number of sherds from Underhoull show only to a very limited degree any signs of having been secondarily worked. This might reflect either that steatite was not as easily available to the Norse settlers in the Faroes as it was in Shetland, where natural sources were abundant, or that the Shetland steatite-industry was established by then and could easily provide the rural settlements with all the items that they required.

The exploitation of steatite in Shetland may have been different from that in Norway, as the industry in Norway may have served large markets in the towns of Viking Scandinavia, while Shetland remained a wholly rural

society throughout the Norse period (Buttler 1989: 204). This does not, however, exclude the possibility that the steatite-industry in Shetland may have served other rural societies in the North Atlantic - for instance the Faroe Islands. Unfortunately all attempts so far to determine at which quarry a given object was produced have been fruitless (Buttler 1989: 204).

Another type of stone that was necessary for daily life was *schist*. It was used for hones and quern stones, which occur at all Viking-Age settlement sites. Schist occurs in Shetland but not in the Faroes, which means that without any doubt, as in the case of steatite, the Faroese finds must be imported. The schist used for hones is of at least two different types, since both a light, coarse-grained type and a more fine-grained, dark schist are represented. The resource of the first type has been identified as Eidsborg in Norway (Myrvoll 1985; Mitchell et al. 1984). The origin of the dark schist, however, has not been established yet. Although it cannot be said for certain, there is good reason to suggest that a lot of the hones of the light schist found on North Atlantic sites do originate from Eidsborg, thus reflecting links of communication and exchange between Norway and the colonies in the North Atlantic.

Querns of schist have been found both at Jarlshof and at Toftanes. One of the two intact pieces from Toftanes was furnished with a groove for the insertion of iron-bars in the undersurface and a collar around the central hole on the uppersurface [fig. 8]. This feature seems to be common in the western part of the Viking world, as it occurs in for instance Shetland (Hamilton 1956: pl. XXXV:10-11) and Greenland (Krogh 1982: 105). To the author's knowledge it is not evidenced in Scandinavia during the Viking Age. The origin of this object therefore is probably to be sought for in the south. The best parallel so far identified actually derives from Dunadd in Argyll [fig. 9][4].

At Toftanes a fragment of an armlet of *jet* or *lignite* was found [fig. 10]. Similar armlets have previously been found in Viking-Age graves in Iceland (Eldjarn 1956: 332, fig. 148), Orkney (Grieg 1940: 86, fig. 47) and Castletown, Caithness on the Scottish Mainland (Grieg 1940: 24, fig. 8). Fragments of armlets were found at the settlement sites Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Curle 1982: 66f) and possibly at Jarlshof, Shetland (Hamilton 1956: fig. 56:7). Huge amounts of jet armlets, finger-rings and raw material have been unearthed during the excavations in Viking Dublin (Wallace & Ó Floinn 1988: 22f)[5]. Although jet originates from deposits in Whitby near York, there is good reason to suggest that these armlets turning up at different sites in the North Atlantic were actually produced in Dublin (Hansen 1993: 481ff). Jet

4. National Museum, Edinburgh. GP 324. I am grateful to Dr. Alison Sheridan for her kind assistance during my visits to the National Museum.

5. The author had the opportunity to study the unpublished jet-material in the National Museum of Ireland during a visit in 1990. I am grateful to Dr. Patrick F. Wallace and Debbie Caulfield for help and assistance during my visit.

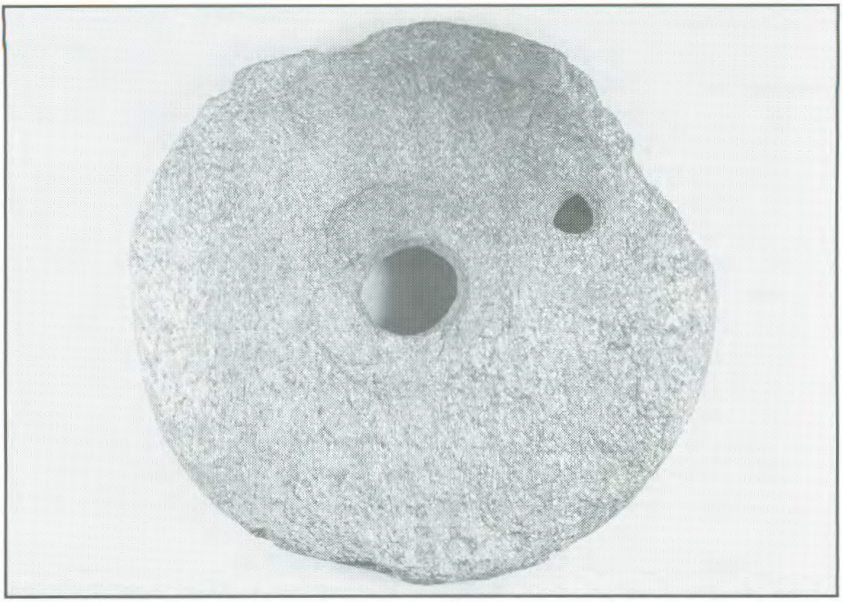

Fig. 8. Quern-stone of schist from Toftanes, Faroe Islands. Photo: Føroya Fornminnissavn.

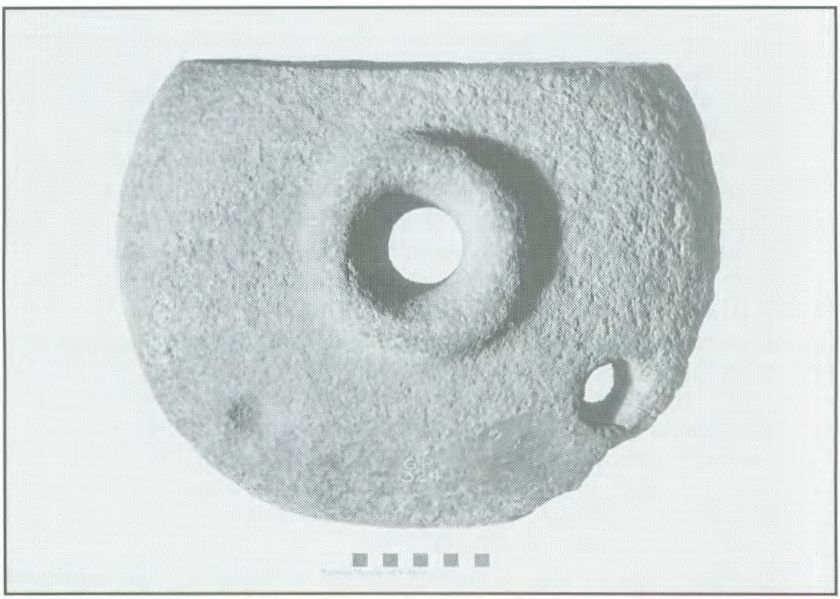

Fig. 9. Quern-stone of schist from Dunadd, Argyll. Photo: National Museum, Edinburgh.

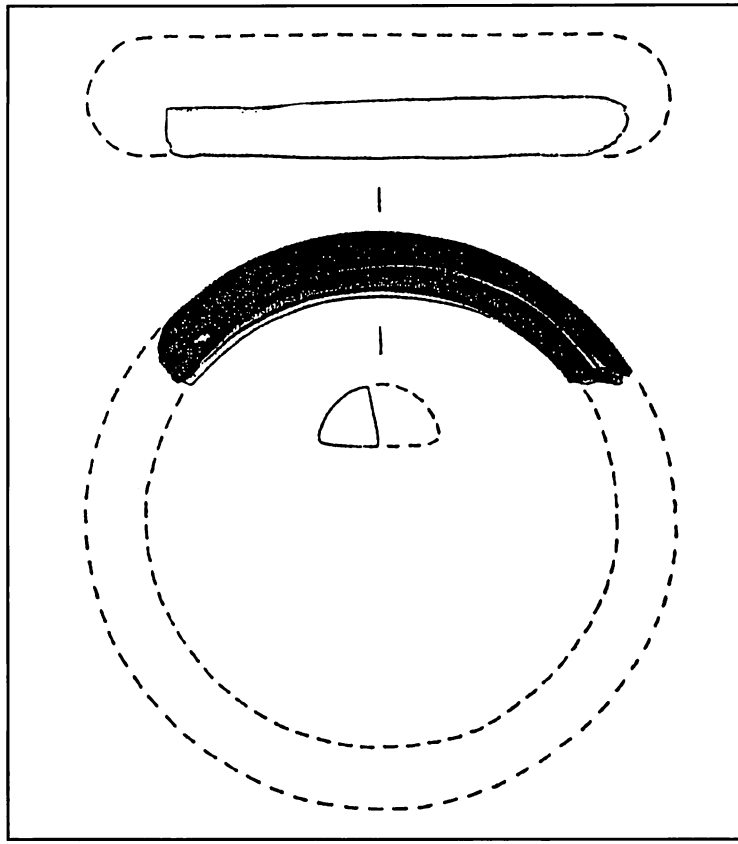

Fig. 10. Fragment of jet or lignite armlet from Toftanes, Faroe Islands (drawing Aa. Andersen).

objects have also been found in Norway, where they concentrate in the south-western parts (Shetelig 1946: 9). The Norwegian finds seem in general to be earlier than the finds in the North Atlantic.

Another interesting object from Toftanes is a rather big block of *sandstone* that was found standing on the floor in the hall of the farmstead [fig. 11]. The stone, which had probably been used as a hone, possibly originates from an area to the south of the Faroes, for instance Shetland.[6] It could have been brought to the Faroes as ballast in a ship, but on the other hand the real reason for its import to the Faroes is probably that it was required as a hone.

6. Personal communication from Dr. Lars Clemmensen, Institute of Geology, University of Copenhagen.

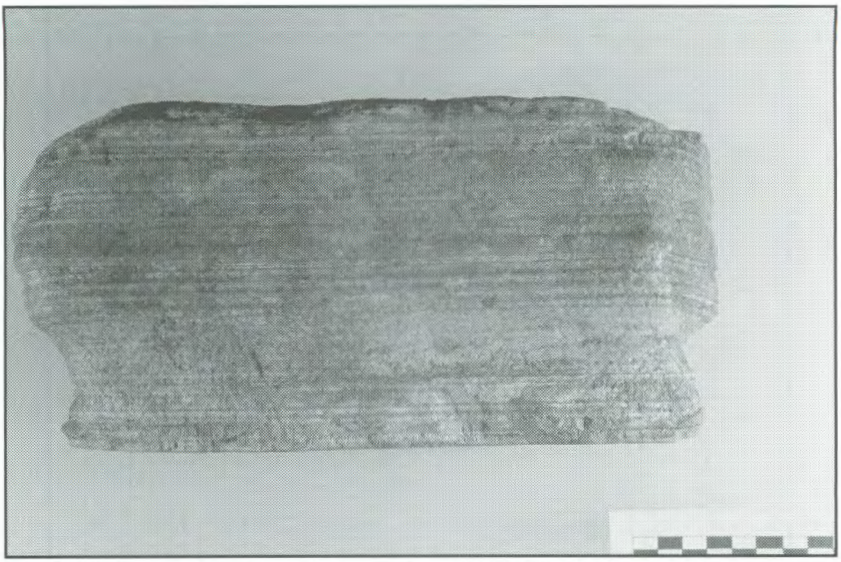

Fig. 11. Block of sandstone (hone?) from Toftanes, Faroe Islands. Photo: Steffen Stummann Hansen/Føroya Fornminnissavn.

Metalwork

The amount and variety of metalwork is rather poor in general. As mentioned above, the graves in the Faroes are poorly equipped with grave-goods, and except at Jarlshof metalwork only occurs in small quantities on settlement sites. One type, however, is represented on several sites and this is ringed pins of Hiberno-Norse type. These have been found at Jarlshof in Shetland (Hamilton 1956: Pl. XXIX:4), at Toftanes, Faroe Islands (Hansen 1988: 69f, fig. 9; Hansen 1991: 49, fig. 9; Hansen 1993: 479f), Argisbrekka, Faroe Islands (Mahler 1991: 66) and Tjørnuvík in the Faroes (Dahl & Rasmussen 1956: 162ff). Most of these pins belong to the polyhedral headed type, whose distribution is linked to the western part of the Viking world, as they have virtually only been found in Ireland, the Isle of Man, Scotland, the Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Newfoundland (Fanning 1983, 1988). Their distribution seems to be identical to that of the jet objects [fig. 12].

Glass

Beads are rather common in graves and settlements from the Viking-Age. They have been found in Jarlshof and they are also represented at Viking-Age sites such as niðri á Toft and Toftanes in the Faroes. These beads, which are mostly made of glass, must be regarded as imports. Some of the beads from the Faroes are of a type (Callmer's type E) that is regarded as originating from the Mediterranean (Callmer 1977: 94ff). In the case of many of them,

however, it is impossible to say whether they have entered the North Atlantic via the eastern part of the Viking world (i.e. for instance via Viking towns in Scandinavia, Northern Germany or Eastern England), or whether they entered from the western part of the Viking world (for instance Ireland), since many of them have a Pan-European distribution (Callmer 1977: 94ff).

Wood

One very important body of material is wood. While the conditions for survival of wooden objects seem to be very bad in Shetland, they seem on the other hand to be optimal in the Faroes. The Viking-Age sites in niðri á Toft,

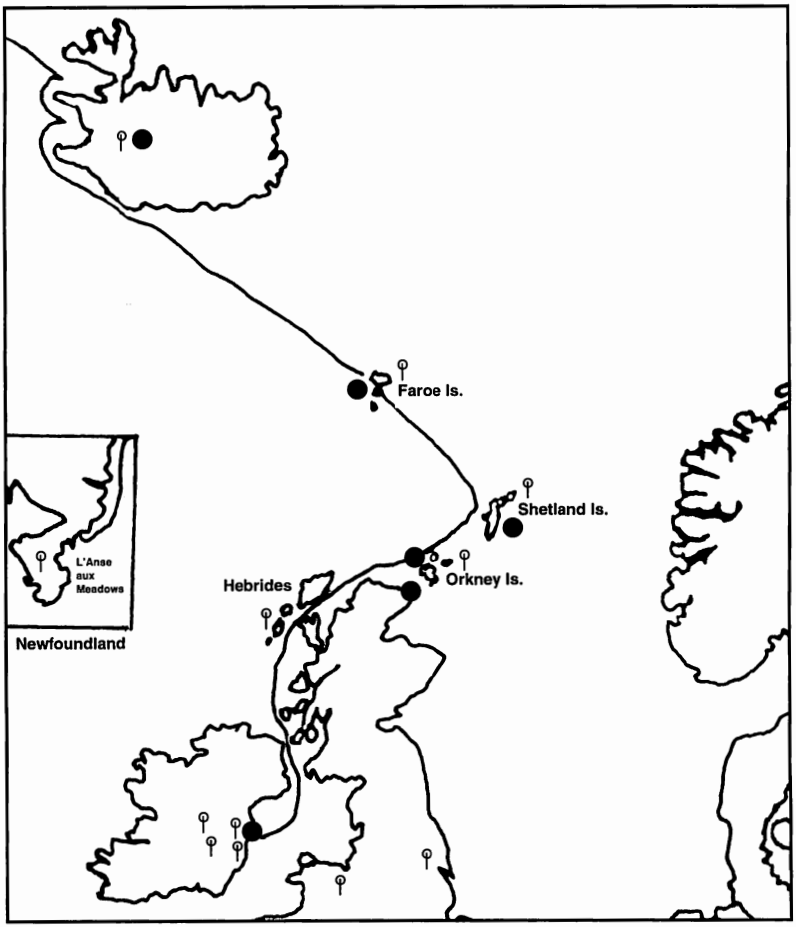

Fig. 12. The distribution of polyhedral headed ringed pins and armlets of jet or lignite in the North Atlantic area. Thomas Fanning 1983 and Steffen Stummann Hansen.

við Gjogvará, Argisbrekka and Toftanes have all yielded large amounts of wooden objects. Much of this wood is normally accepted as being driftwood from Siberia, but at the same time there is no doubt that timber and wooden objects were imported and traded in the North Atlantic. Normally one would think that timber came from Norway. On the other hand, however, saga-sources actually suggest, as already mentioned by Small, that timber was imported from Scotland and the Western Isles (Small 1970: 181).

The recent fortunate development of dendrochronology has led to the establishment of chronologies for not only the areas around the Baltic Sea but also Belfast, Dublin, Exeter, London and the East Midlands, as well as one master-chronology for England and South-Central Scotland (Bonde & Crumlin-Pedersen 1990: 5). It was this fact that made it possible not only to determine that Wreck 2 from Skuldelev in Denmark was built in the second half of the 11th century but also that it had been built in the region of the Irish Sea, and probably Dublin (Bonde & Crumlin-Pedersen 1990: 5).

The establishing of the regional curves for dendrochronology provides us with new perspectives on the wooden material from the Faroese sites from the Viking Age. It is thus hoped that the Faroese material will be of such a quality that determinations of planks and other objects of oak may fit into the already established curves. In this case it is hoped that in due time we shall be able to say whether timber and wooden objects were imported from Norway or from areas to the south, thus again reflecting lines of communication and trade.

Shetland and Faroe in a North Atlantic context

There are very strong traditions in Norse archaeology about the origins of the Norse settlers. One tradition has it that the settlers of the Faroe Islands and Shetland came from southwestern Norway during the reign of Harald Fairhair in the late 9th century. This could be termed the 'Norwegian link' (MacGregor 1986: 84; Small 1970: 179). The other tradition has it that a significant part of the settlers came from the south — i.e. the Western Isles. This tradition is largely based on the evidence from written sources such as the Ulster Annals and the Norse sagas, as well as place- and personal names that Norse settlers in Scotland and the Western Isles were forced up into the North Atlantic in the late 9th century. These Hiberno-Norse people — the Gall Gaedhil — thus represent a southern, Scottish influence to the Viking-Age rural communities further up in the North Atlantic. (Crawford 1987: 127; Smyth 1984: 161ff). This tradition could be termed the 'Scottish link'.

Interpretations based on slender archaeological and historical evidence can be very dangerous. Concerning the archaeological finds we still have a rather limited material which needs further investigation and is difficult to quantify. Thus we cannot say whether the distribution of artifacts reflects lines of communication, exchange and trade or actually reflects the movement of people and families. It is still generally accepted that the

Viking-Age history of the North Atlantic reflects an amalgam of processes and events and that the sea was carrying a great deal of traffic.

There is no doubt that the excavations in Viking Dublin and the subsequent studies of the material have already indicated that Dublin must have played a rather important role in the development of the Viking-Age communities in the North Atlantic. On the basis of our present knowledge it is very hard to say to what extent the rural Norse communities in the Faroe Islands and Shetland became integrated links in trading systems and networks or how their cultural identities were established. It is, however, interesting to note that quite a few groups of finds seem to enter the rural communities of the North Atlantic from the south — i.e. jet armlets, ringed pins, quernstones. Other items probably came from Norway, but we still have problems about the origin of steatite, schist and wood, and in all cases there is the possibility that at least some of them, too, came from the south.

What is badly needed today when dealing with the Norse settlement in the Faroes and Shetland is, of course, large-scale excavations on primarily Viking-Age settlements. Excavations of Viking burials would certainly be valuable too, as they normally contain objects whose origin can be determined. A detailed study of the archaeological objects from earlier excavations in both Shetland and the Faroe Islands may also be able to yield information that can help us to understand the patterns of trade and communication.

On the environmental side, a major project is badly needed on the steatite outcrops of the whole Viking world so that steatite objects from farm sites can be analysed and traced back to the appropriate geological outcrop. This could, as already pointed out by Small, in turn lead to a statistical determination of trade patterns in the North Atlantic Norse area (Small 1970:183).

Also, as indicated above, developments in dendrochronology may now give us important information on the origins of wooden objects and timbers.

Another problem is that very few and hardly published Viking-Age sites are known from the Western Isles and North-Western Scotland. Although some Viking graves are known from these areas, we still badly need the settlements. Localization and excavations of Viking-Age settlements on the north- and west-coast of Scotland and in the Western Isles would undoubtedly shed new light on the importance of the 'Scottish link' in the North Atlantic.

Acknowledgements

The author wants to thank Shetland Museum for help and information during my visits there and for kindly providing me with photographs of objects. Further I want to thank Gillian Fellows-Jensen, Institute of Name Research, University of Copenhagen, for her critical comments on this paper.

Bibliography

Arge, S.V. & Hartmann, N., 1992: 'The burial site of við Kirkjugarð in the village of Sandur, Sandoy'. *Fróðskaparrit* 38-39 (1989-90), 5-21.

Bigelow, G.F., 1992: 'Issues and Prospects in Shetland Norse Archaeology'. In: C.D. Morris & D.J. Rackham (eds.), *Norse and later Settlement and Subsistence in the North Atlantic*, Glasgow, 9 -32.

Bonde, N. & Crumlin-Pedersen, O., 1990: 'The dating of Wreck 2, the Longship, from Skuldelev, Denmark. A preliminary announcement'. *NewsWarp* 1990:7, 3-6.

Buttler, S., 1989: 'Steatite in Norse Shetland'. *Hikuin* 15, 193-206.

Callmer, J., 1977: 'Trade Beads and Bead Trade in Scandinavia ca. 800-1000 A.D'. *Acta Archaeologica Lundensia* 11. Lund.

Crawford, B., 1987: *Scandinavian Scotland. Scotland in the Early Middle Ages 2*. Leicester.

Curle, C.L., 1982: 'Pictish and Norse Finds from the Brough of Birsay'. *Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Monograph Series 1*. Edinburgh.

Dahl, S., 1971A: 'The Norse settlement of the Faroe Islands'. *Medieval Archaeology* 14, 60-73.

Dahl, S., 1971B: 'Recent Excavations on Viking Age Sites in the Faroes'. In: P. Foote & D. Strömbäck (eds.), *Proceedings of the Sixth Viking Congress*, Uppsala, 45-56.

Dahl, S.& Rasmussen, J., 1956: 'Víkingaaldargrøv í Tjørnuvík'. *Fróðskaparrit 5, 153-167.*

Eldjárn, K., 1956: *Kuml og haugfé úr heiðnum sið á Islandi.* Akureyri.

Fanning, T., 1983: 'Some Aspects of the Bronze Ringed Pin in Scotland'. In: A. O'Connor & D.V. Clarke (eds.), *From the Stone Age to the Forty-Five*, Edinburgh, 324-42.

Fanning, T., 1988: 'Three Ringed Pins from Viking Dublin and their Significance'. In: J. Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and Society in Medieval Ireland*, Kilkenny, 161-75.

Grieg, S. (ed.), 1940: 'Viking Antiquities in Scotland'. In: H. Shetelig, *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland* II. Oslo.

Hamilton, J.R.C., 1956: *Excavations at Jarlshof, Shetland.* Edinburgh.

Hansen, S. Stummann, 1988: 'The Norse Landnam in the Faroe Islands in the Light of recent Excavations at Toftanes, Leirvík'. *Northern Studies* 25, 58-84.

Hansen, S. Stummann, 1989: 'Toftanes - en færøsk landnamsgård fra 9.-10. århundrede'. *Hikuin* 15, 129-146.

Hansen, S. Stummann, 1991: 'Toftanes: A Faroese Viking Age Farmstead from the 9-10th Centuries AD'. *Acta Archaeologica* 61, 44-53.

Hansen, S. Stummann, 1993: 'Viking Age Faroe Islands and their Southern Links. In the Light of Recent Finds at Toftanes, Leirvík'. In: C. Batey, J. Jesch & C.D. Morris (eds.), *Proceedings of the Eleventh Viking Congress*, Edinburgh, 473-486.

Jóhansen, J., 1971: 'A Palaeobotanical Study Indicating a Previking Settlement in Tjørnuvík, Faroe Islands". *Fróðskaparrit* 19: 147-157.

Jóhansen, J., 1985: 'Studies in the vegetational history of the Faroe and Shetland Islands'. *Annales societatis scientiarum Færøensis supplementum* XI. Tórshavn.

Krogh, K.J., 1982: *Erik den Rødes Grønland.* København.

Larsen, A-C., 1991: 'Norsemen's Use of Juniper in Viking Age Faroe Islands'. *Acta Archaeologica* 61, 54-59.

MacGregor, L., 1984: 'Sources for a Study of Norse Settlement in Shetland and Faroe'. In: B.E. Crawford (ed.), *Essays in Shetland History*, Lerwick, 1-17.

MacGregor, L., 1986: 'Norse naming elements in Shetland and Faroe. A comparative study'. *Northern Studies* 23, 84-101.

Mahler, D.L.D., 1991: 'Argisbrekka: New Evidence of Shielings in the Faroe Islands'. *Acta Archaeologica* 61, 60-72.

Mitchell, J.G., Askvik, H. & Resi, H.G., 1984: 'Potassium-argon Ages of Schist Honestones from the Viking Sites at Kaupang (Norway), Aggersborg (Denmark), Hedeby (West Germany) and Wollin (Poland), and their archaeological Implications'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 11, 171-176.

Myrvoll, S., 1985: 'The Trade of Eidsborg hones over Skien in the Medieval Period'. *ISKOS* 5, 31-47.
Näsmann, U., 1991: 'Grav og økse. Mammen og den danske vikingetids våbengrave (English summary: Grave and axe. Mammen and the weapon graves of the Danish Viking Age)'. In: M. Iversen (ed.), *Mammen. Grav, kunst og samfund i vikingetid*, Højbjerg, 163-180.
Petersen, J., 1919: De norske Vikingsverd. *En typologisk-kronologisk Studie over Vikingetidens Vaaben*. Kristania.
Shetelig, H., 1946: 'Smykker av jet I norske vikingefunn'. *Bergens Museums Årbok* 1944, 3-14.
Small, A., 1967: 'Excavations at Underhoull, Unst, Shetland'. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* XCVIII, 225-248.
Small, A., 1968A: 'The Historical Geography of the Norse Viking Colonization of the Scottish Highlands'. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift* 22, 1-16.
Small, A., 1968B: 'A Viking Longhouse in Unst, Shetland'. In B. Niclasen (ed.), *The Fifth Viking Congress*, Tórshavn, 62-70.
Small, A., 1969: 'The distribution of settlement in Shetland and Faroe in Viking times'. *Saga-book of the Viking Society* 1967-1968, 145-155.
Small, A., 1970: 'Viking Shetland. A Review'. *Inter Nord. Revue internationale d'études arctiques et nordiques* 1970:11, 178-183.
Small, A., 1992: 'The Juniper decline during the Norse landnam in the Faroe Islands'. *Acta Borealia* 1992:1, 3-7.
Smyth, A.P., 1984: *Warlords and Holy Men. Scotland AD 80-1000*. London.
Thorsteinsson, A., 1978: 'Forn búseting í Føroyum'. *Fróðskaparrit* 26, 54-80.
Thorsteinsson, A., 1981: 'On the development of Faroese settlements'. In: H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. (eds.), Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress, *Medieval Scandinavia Supplements* 2, Odense, 189-202.
Wallace, P.F. & Ó Floinn, R., 1988: Dublin 1000. *Discovery and Excavation in Dublin, 1842-1981*. Dublin.