Hå och hamna

Ordhistoriska och ordgeografiska studier av paddlingens och roddens äldsta terminologi i Norden

Åke Sandström

Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt förvar i Hörsal C, Samhällsvetarhuset, fredagen den 5 juni, kl. 10.00.

Avhandlingen kommer att förvaras på svenska.

Fakultetsopponent: Professor Gunnstein Akselberg, Institutt for lingvistiske, litterære og estetiske studier, Universitetet i Bergen, Norge.
Abstract
In Old West Norse there is mention of an Arctic skin and osier boat, which was paddled with Old West Norse (húð-)keipr, diminutive keipull, formed on Germanic *kaip- ‘bend, unfold’ according to the construction method. In East Norse there was a corresponding wooden boat, e.g. Swedish själ-myndrick, formed on mynda verb ‘paddle’ (< Primitive Norse *mundian ‘aim at a certain goal, take aim’). In the provinces south of this verb’s area of distribution there occurs instead svepa verb ‘paddle’ (< Primitive Germanic *swaipōn ‘swing’).

The earliest instances of Nordic rowing navigation are found in Norway and Denmark. Instances of rowing in the Baltic area are found on some picture stones from about the 6th century. But oar locks with a grommet were probably used already for the steering oar in the paddled boats of the Bronze Age. An early oarlock (with a grommet) is that made of a goose-necked piece of wood, Old Swedish hār, Old West Norse hár (< *hanhu-, *hanha- ‘branching, fork of a branch’) and Old West Norse keipr (< *kaip- ‘something with a crooked or bent (back) shape’. The word hår exists as a first element in Old Swedish hā-band ‘oar-loop’, Old West Norse há-bora ‘oar-port’ etc. Old West Norse keipr ‘oarlock’ has no ancient compounds.

East Nordic hamna (> Finnish hamina), Old Danish hafnæ (Old Frisian hevene) and West Nordic hamla (Faroese homla, Old English hamele, hamule) ‘oar-loop’ occurred early on the oarlock with a grommet; hamna may be a derivation of the stem in Primitive Norse *haban verb ‘hold (fast)’, alternatively *hafna- ‘clasp something’; hamla derives from a Germanic *hamilōn with the meaning ‘bridling band’.

Centrally in the Nordic area hamna (Danish havne) and hamla ‘oar-loop’ were also used denominatively with the meaning ‘row pushing in a hamna/hamla (oar-loop)’. In addition there is the Swedish dialectal svāva (~ sveva, svāvja) ‘row (back, break etc.) with pushing rowing’ and in the group of older verbs for rowing there is East Swedish hopa < Primitive Norse *hōƀian ‘fix one’s eyes upon a certain goal (in the distance)’.

With word formations on Germanic *þulna- ‘wooden plug’ there arose from the Middle Ages and in the North Sea countries a new terminology for the oarlock: Norse tull, toll ‘oarlock with a thole pin’. Even younger concepts are tullgång ‘oarlock with two thole pins’, ärklyka, årgaffel ‘oar crutch’. A distinctive trait of Old Swedish hār and hamna, Old West Norse hår and hamla and keipr and other common words for the oarlock is in these words the shift of meaning ‘oarlock of a specific kind’ > ‘almost any kind of oarlock’.

Finally, the question arises whether or not the word swear of a tribe by Lake Mälaren could be tied to the paddling through a connection to the stem of the verbs svepa and svāva.

Keywords
North Germanic languages, North Germanic dialects, Scandinavia, dialectology, geolinguistics, language history, etymology, paddling, rowing methods, back water rowing, oar grommet, oarlock, thole, paddle, steering oar, thrust oar, traditional wooden boats, skin boats.