

**PART I:
LOCALISED PRACTICES
AND RELIGIONS**

1. Place Names and Hostages

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Introduction

In ancient times, the use of hostages was a vital part of peace-processes since it was used as a tool to regulate borders between conflicting parties. These processes are still visible in some old place names in Scandinavia and the Baltics. In this paper, I will present some ideas about these place names in relation to the giving and taking of hostages during the Middle Ages and even earlier. By comparing place names, it is possible to illuminate the use of hostages in different areas but with certain similarities.

As a point of departure, I will mention some conclusions regarding the use of hostages in Scandinavia in my thesis *Gísl: givande och tagande av gisslan som rituell handling i fredsprocesser under vikingatid och tidig medeltid* ('Gísl: giving and taking of hostages as a ritual act in peace processes during the Viking Age and early Middle Ages'):¹

1. The taking and giving of hostages was a ritual act. This could be compared to the social anthropologist Marcel Mauss, who understood the phenomena of hostage as a part of the gift economy system in the Germanic societies he described in *The Gift* (Fr. *Essai sur le Don*, 1925);² it had a similar function to gift giving, marriage and so on, even though Mauss never developed his idea regarding hostages within the gift economy.

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2. Hostages were given rather than taken. A person might be given as a hostage, but without acknowledgment from both sides (the hostage giver and the hostage taker) the hostage could not guarantee that the peace-terms were being fulfilled. Prisoners were taken, but the hostages were given. Thus, it was a matter of agreements.
3. The use of hostages was a part of the regulations of borders (e.g. in Medieval Scandinavian Laws). This has to do with visitations of the King during his ritual journey as a part of his coronation that is described in for example the *Elder Westrogothic Law* (Swe. *Äldre Västgötalagen*).³ In the Norwegian medieval laws the hostage was used to regulate the retinues of the king's brothers – the dukes – during their journeys.
4. Hostages were a third party and used as a security for other persons during and after negotiations.
5. Hostages were not exchanged for ransoms, which was the case for prisoners (of war).⁴

In figure 1.1, there is a sketch of the conflict and conflict solutions in the societies of Scandinavia during the late Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages.⁵

These were societies on the verge of Christianity and in the processes of early state formations. The dominant elite much relied on social networks to maintain their spheres of influence. These networks included the use of so called bounds of 'friendship', which meant that competitive groupings arranged activities within the gift economy such as festivities and marriages. The use of hostages was a part of these activities too.

There were different power constellations with alliances and counter-alliances. This meant that borders were not as fixed as they are today. Borders and boundaries were areas, which had to be upheld communicatively through the social bounds, and I define these borders and boundaries – for the lack of a better word – as 'areas of confrontation'. I then rely on the definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of *confrontation* as 'the bringing of persons face to face; esp. for examination of the truth' or 'the coming of countries, parties, etc., face to face: used to a state of

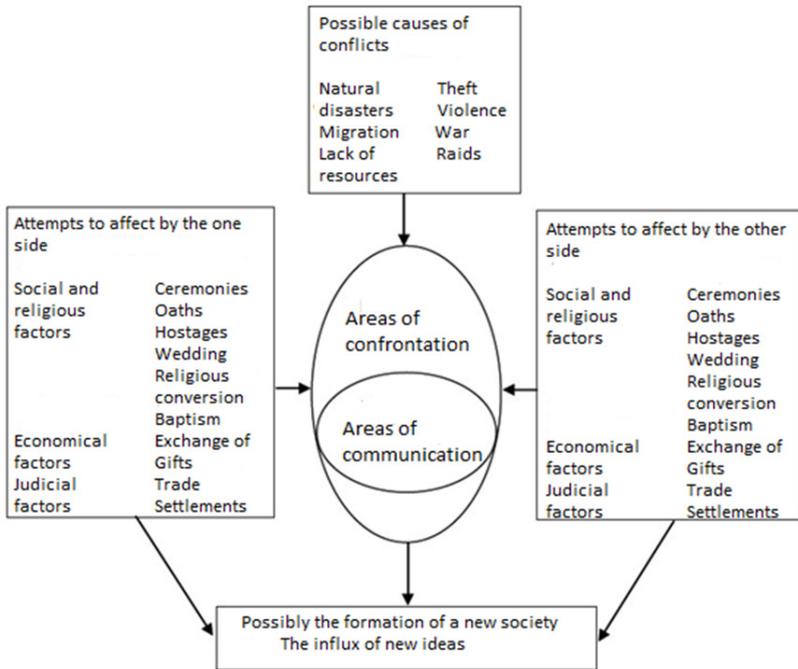


Figure 1.1. A schematic description of conflicts and conflict solutions in the late Viking Age and the early Middle Ages.

political tension with or without actual conflict'.⁶ Thus, the confrontational aspect can be something more than just conflict.

In the areas of confrontation there were certain areas of communication. These were the things (or assemblies) where people could get together to make agreements on peace. Areas of communication could also include other places for peace meetings such as islands, rivers, mountains that separate territories: for example, the river of Junebäcken that runs between the Swedish provinces Västergötland and Östergötland. In the *Elder Westrogothic Law* it is mentioned that when the King should enter the provinces (Sw. *landskap*) he had to accept the hostage that was given by the Geats (or *Götar*). It is also mentioned in the law that a Swedish king called Ragnvald Knaphövde entered Västergötland in 1130 without taking hostages and was then killed by the Geats.⁷ Similar structures may underlie a few place names like Gislamark in Sweden, Kihlakunta in Karelia, Kihelkond in Estonia, and

Airgialla in Ireland. Researchers on hostages have not paid much attention to these place names. There are some problems with these place names: they can be mentioned in only one source, or in a source that is not contemporary to the Viking Age, the etymology can be ambiguous, and the place names can indicate other traditions than the use of hostages. Below, however, I will discuss these place names, and their relationship with the word they have in common: ‘hostage’.⁸

Gummi of Gislamark

In the *Gesta Danorum* (‘the Deeds of the Danes’) by Saxo Grammaticus there is a place name called (Da.) Gislemark (Swe. Gislamark) that without ambiguity can be linked to hostage. The place name is described in Saxo’s list of warriors from Svetjud (or Svealand), i.e. Sweden, in the army of king Ring, or Sigurd Hring, at the battle of Brávalla (OI. *Brávellir*).⁹ The battle – which is mentioned in several texts as the biggest in Scandinavia in ancient times – has attracted interest by many scholars. From being regarded as a historical battle, it is now regarded as legendary, ‘mythical’, or merely devised.¹⁰ Saxo’s list is attributed to, for example, the mythical, or legendary, hero *Starkaðr*, (Lat. *Starcatherus*); and the battle has been perceived to be based on the Ragnarøk theme, or as a part of an Indo-European mythical heritage.¹¹ Nevertheless, it could be a purely fictionalized story.

I do not intend to make a position as to whether the battle took place or not, but just analyse and relate to a list of names of the Swedes who fought in the battle according to Saxo. In the Latin text, it says:

At Sueonum fortissimi hi fuere: Ari, Haki, Keclu-Karll, Croc Agrestis, Guthfast, Gummi e Gyslamarchia.¹²

The most valiant of the Swedes were: Ari, Haki, Keklu-Karl, Krok the Countryman, Guthfast and Gummi of Gislamark.¹³

(Transl. Peter Fisher)

The name Gislamark would refer to a place where hostages would be used in a certain way (see further below). The modifier *Gisla-* would then be derived from the Swedish *gisslan* ‘hostage’; the head *-mark* means ‘woodland, field’.

In the fragmentary Old Icelandic saga *Sögubrot af fornkonungum* (about 1300) there is a list that partially corresponds to Saxo's:

Pessir váru ofan af Svíaveldi: Nori, Haki, Karl kekkja, Krókarr af Akri, Gunnfastr, Glismakr goði.¹⁴

These came from Svetjud above: Nori, Haki, Karl kekkja, Krok of Akri, Gunnfastr, Glismakr goði.

(My free translation)

Instead of Gummi of Gislamark, *Glismakr goði* is mentioned. One can imagine that it is a matter of a rewriting by Saxo from Glismakr to Gislamark, which has been Latinized to *Gyslamarchia*.¹⁵ However, this may not be the only possible explanation. Runic inscriptions or other text sources cannot confirm the personal name Glismakr. Perhaps Glismakr may be a misconception or rewriting of the place name Glimåkra, the name of an old church town in the province of Scania? If this is the case it is a matter of an entirely different region than Svetjud.¹⁶ The philologist Axel Olrik pointed out in an article that the author of *Sögubrot* in his list must have perceived *goði* as a by-name to Glismakr, but Olrik thought that it was an 'unfortunate' corruption in the text of the name Gunni (Gummi) by the Icelandic scribe.¹⁷

Gesta Danorum was perhaps completed around 1208, while *Sögubrot* was fixed in writing about 1300. However, *Sögubrot* can build on the *Skjöldunga saga* (from about 1180), which is now only found in some fragments and is considered to be based on the even older manuscript by Ari Þorgilsson: *conunga ævi*.¹⁸

Both texts do not appear to have had the same prerequisites when it comes to the sources. Saxo's list of King Harold Wartooth and King Ring's warriors is more detailed and could therefore have been manipulated, and embroidered, to a greater degree than *Sögubrot's* version. Some elements can be explained as literary contributions, such as the presence of amazons. Names like the alliterative Skale Scanius may have been additions by Saxo just to include all the parts of the Danish realm of his time.¹⁹ There are names of Jomsvikings (OI. *Jomsvikingr*) which belong to the eleventh century and not the eight century.²⁰ As a medieval writer, Saxo may have had an interest in allegorically depicting the battle against the Vices: the Swedes are described as idolaters. At the same time, Saxo has generally been reassessed by some

researchers, for example in the recent *Saxo og Snorre*.²¹ Not everything in his writings is the result of literary inspiration and learned interpretations.

The historian Inge Skovgaard-Petersen considers the version of *Gesta Danorum* to be closer to the original than the list of *Sogubrot*.²² The historian Nils Blomkvist believes that the list of Saxo – in addition to having more names than *Sogubrot* – latinizes the names in order to ‘improve them’, but when it comes to the names of the Swedes, ‘he makes hardly any adjustments at all.’²³

However, there are no other evidence of Gummi of Gislamark in either Old East Norse or Old West Norse text sources. The personal name Gunni (or Gunne) appears on 21 rune stones in the province of Uppland, but the name form Gummi (or Gumme) only in two cases.²⁴ Gislamark (or Gislemark) does not exist as a place name in Uppland or in the lake Mälaren region. Gisslemark and Gilmark, on the other hand, are surnames in Sweden today. But the Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore (Sw. *Institutet för språk och folkminnen*) has no further information about these names.²⁵ The theoretical possibility that remains is that the sixteenth-century editors of the *Gesta Danorum* manipulated the list. In my opinion, however, this is not very likely.

Thus, it is not possible to determine – with certainty – whether the personal name of Gummi, and the place name Gislamark, have been inserted at a later stage, or if they stem from a possible older version. Nevertheless, it is possible to relate to hypotheses about the origin of other place names with a similar meaning based on another source material.

Gislamark and gisslalog

In the *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (*A Description of the Northern Peoples*) from 1555, by the Archbishop (in exile) Olaus Magnus, there is a list of the most important areas in the Nordic region. In this list, Olaus Magnus mentions the place name Gislalagen (Lat. *Gislemarchia*).²⁶ Attempts have been made to find the origin of the place name Gislalagen in text sources, linked to Finland and the Baltics.

The ethnologist John Granlund identified Gislalagen with the medieval district called *gisslalog* (OSw. *gisslalogh*), thus ascribing

the area to Finland, a part of the Swedish realm 1249–1809.²⁷ The *gisslslag* was a district where the inhabitants were obliged to pay taxes and a hostage was used as a security. The inhabitants were also obliged to treat and accommodate the king and his retinue on visit. However, the records from Finland are few for this territorial division. The earliest record is in the *Eric Chronicle* (Sw. *Erikskrönikan*, c. 1320), which mentions how the Swedes gave 14 *gisslslags* to Novgorod (Russia) in the 1290s.²⁸ According to the treaty of Nöteborg (1323), Novgorod surrendered three *gisslslags* to Sweden.²⁹

This place name may not only occur in Finland. The ethnologist Kustaa Vilkuna ascribed the *gisslslag* (Fi. *kihlakunta*), as a place name, to Karelia, and suggested that there should have been a similar division of districts in both Finland and Karelia.³⁰ There was no permanent country organisation, but according to Vilkuna, the Swedes could receive a tax from some areas secured by the hostage.³¹

Vilkuna's hypothesis that the hostage may earlier have had its roots in an elderly institution in Finland has been questioned by other researchers. According to the historian Philip Line, there are no sustainable evidence before 1323 that these districts ever existed in Finland and Karelia.³² But Line ignores the information of the *Erikskrönikan*, which can confirm that the *gisslslags* functioned as an organisational form in Finland in the 1290s. Saxo's information about Gislamark from about 1200 can provide further support for the existence of this organisation in his own time, around 1200 (or possibly earlier?).

Vilkuna's statement that a 'king' would take hostages during his journey to the *gisslslags* with the implied threat that they would be executed – unless the king and his men received the food and drink they expected – must also be considered. The hostage was primarily used as a third party to ensure the safety of a person or a group of people. In this case, it seems more probable that it was the king's person that should be secured. Food and other necessities were something that could be taken by violence. Vilkuuna also makes no difference between Finland, Karelia, Ingria, Estonia and Courland. Different kinds of ruling powers have had varying degrees of influence over these lands in different times, which also

means that hostages may have been used with different purposes. Despite medieval Finnish evidence, it is unclear whether an organisational form of a *gisslilag*, or equivalents, ever existed in the eight to eleventh centuries. However, the Estonian word *kihelkond* is of interest because it is possible to relate it to earlier times. There have been hypotheses that it had a Scandinavian origin. I will summarize these hypotheses and interpretations of the meaning of the word.

Kihelkond and syssel

Vilkuna also believed that the hostage institution could have existed even before the Middle Ages, something that could be seen by an example from Estonia.³³ On the island of Saaremaa, there is a place called Kihelkonna, which can be deduced to the Estonian *kihelkond*, ‘parish’, a word that indicates a territory where the head *-kond* means ‘area’ and the modifier *kihla-* is a Nordic loan word (< ON. *gísl*, ‘hostage’).³⁴

The historian Arvi Korhonen argued that small tax districts in Estonia already existed in the Viking Age before the German conquest in the thirteenth century. The philologist Paul Johansen made a hypothesis of a territorial division in Estonia organised by Scandinavians. At *Saaremaa* (OI. *Eysýsla*, OGt. *Oysl*, Fi. *Saarenmaa*), a tax collection system would have been organised by Scandinavians already in the ninth century.³⁵ A model of the Estonian *maa*-names may also have originated in Scandinavian medieval names of districts, the *sysseles* (ODan. *sysæl*, OSwe. *ysel*) which were administrative units in the Middle Ages in Scandinavia.

These interpretations have been questioned by the philologist Enn Tarvel. The modifier *kihla-* may be a Nordic loan word, but the meaning of the word in Estonian is according to Tarvel ‘engagement’, ‘wooing quest’ or ‘engagement gift’.³⁶ Only in the Livonian language there is a word that can be translated as ‘pledge’ or ‘hostage’ without ambiguity: *kīl*. Tarvel mentions several reasons why a territorial division with the hostage as security could not have existed during the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages. The text sources are not convincing. The *Ynglinga saga* mentions Ivar Vidfamne (ON. *Ívarr inn víðfaðmi*), or Erik

Emundsson (ON. *Eiríkr Eymundsson*) and the Danish Canute the Great as conquerors of Estonia which cannot be confirmed by other sources.³⁷

It may not be totally convincing that the concept of ‘hostage’ in the sense that Tarvel interpreted it really contradicts a hostage giving.³⁸ The *kunda*-areas may have had this function in addition to those described by Tarvel. The philologist Urmas Sutrop believes that the head *-kunta* is a loan word from the Germanic *hunta* (*hunda*) and may have occurred as early as in the second century, while the modifier *kihl-* may be (a younger?) loan word.³⁹ *Kihl-* had several meanings: *kihlosed*, ‘wedding arrangement’, and *kihivedu*, ‘bet’; *kihlkonnad* also had the meaning of hostage giving. Tarvel claims that an over-rule was required for the establishment of an administrative unit. In my view, a supremacy is not necessarily the prerequisite for an organisation around hostages. In Estonia and Courland, it has not been the question of a Scandinavian over-rule, but rather there have been different spheres of interest.

Regarding the development of a possible tax district organisation in Estonia, it may initially have emerged without Scandinavian influence. According to Line, it could be the reason for the emergence of special fortresses called (Est.) *Maalinnad* during the late Iron Age.⁴⁰ These fortresses could dominate a territory – i.e. the *maa*-districts – which eventually became a *kihelkond*. Such fortresses belonged to a local elite. At the same time, these areas may occasionally have been in the spheres of interest of Novgorod and Kiev. The evidence for this to occur earlier than the 1100s is vague,⁴¹ but the presence of the fortresses could indicate that these areas have periodically been subject to taxation (tributes) – and perhaps hostage-takings – from an external power. The establishment of fortresses in Estonia could also have been local defense measures against these charges, and the *Kihelkond* became an area subject to a local warrior elite. One possibility is that these districts were already organised when Scandinavians or other peoples carried out Viking raids, and later the crusades.

Perhaps the Scandinavians perceived these areas as *sýsla*. If the word *sýsla* (‘county’, ‘district’) is older than the Middle Ages, it can be related to the text sources that mention Scandinavian activities in the Baltic areas and on Saaremaa. The historian Jarl

Gallén described the sources for where the ON. word *sýsla* is used as the designation of Saaremaa (ON. *Aðalsýsla*) and Läänemaa (ON. *Wiek*).⁴²

The presence of plundering (and trading?) Scandinavians in Estonia can be confirmed by several direct sources. Two boat graves dated to the eight century have been found at Saaremaa near the village Salme (1–2) with much grave goods.⁴³ Runic inscriptions also mention Scandinavians in Estonia, Livonia and Courland.⁴⁴ Rimbert describes in his biography of Ansgar (*Vita Ansgari*) how the Swedes received a hostage from the village of Apuolē in Courland 854.

The above may suggest that Scandinavians had a knowledge of taxation and hostages that they imposed on the Estonians and Curonians. Whether or not the organisational form originated from Scandinavians or Germans, was based on a domestic organisation, or was established under the influence of powers like Novgorod and Kiev, we can only speculate. Perhaps it was a combination of these forms.

During the peace negotiations between the inhabitants of Saaremaa and the invading armies that occurred during the crusades, the terms was dictated by the side that had the upper hand. For example, Valdemar II ‘the Victorious’ of Denmark tried to build a castle on Saaremaa in 1222.⁴⁵ The Saaremaa islanders allied themselves with the Estonians and besieged the castle. The Danes gave up, a hostage was given, including a brother of the bishop of Riga, to consolidate the peace.⁴⁶ A similar unilateral way of using hostages occurred several times after Christian victories over islanders as well as Livonians and Estonians.⁴⁷

The Estonian word *kibelkond* is certainly ambiguous, but it cannot be denied that the activity of the taking and giving of hostages as well as plundering took place. If the hostage was the result of a permanent organisational form during the Viking Age in the eastern part of the country, where Scandinavians carried out plundering, it could give more weight to the argument that the place name Gislamark can be derived from the Viking Age or earlier.

In addition to the examples from Nordic areas, a comparison can be made with an Irish place name that also occurs in – and may be the result of – various peace agreements: Airgialla.

Airgíalla in Ireland

In Ireland, hostages have had functions within peace processes and are mentioned in several sources. There is a place name, Airgíalla, that can be linked to the word for ‘hostage’ in Old Irish traditions. According to one interpretation, this place name might be understood as ‘those who give hostages’.⁴⁸ Airgíalla was a federation of nine different peoples.

Ireland traditionally consisted of five major areas, ‘fifths’, or provinces, which were ruled by a provincial king (OIr. *rí ruirech*). The High King (*ard-rí*), had his seat in Tara, but this position was weak since no supremacy could be consolidated.⁴⁹

The most powerful clan between the seventh and the tenth centuries in Ireland was Uí Néill. The clan claimed its relationship with Niall Noigíallach (‘of the nine hostages’).⁵⁰ Another influential clan was Connachta. According to the *Book of Rights*, Airgíalla would have matched the five major provinces and may have existed already in the fourth century.⁵¹

According to the historian Edel Bhreatnach, Airgíalla was probably a military federation. This is confirmed by a further list of dead from a settlement between two warlords.⁵² In 743, Domnall Midi defeated the clan Chlomain Áed Allán of the Cenél federation who were allied with Airgíalla. They were, from time to time, allied with the Uí Néill. Thus, there were alliances and counter alliances over an area of confrontation.

The Airgíalla Charter Poem

The earliest written source, which gives information about the foundation Airgíalla, is *The Airgíalla Charter Poem*. According to Bhreathnach, there were two main events underlying the creation of the document: (a) the relationship between the dynasties that founded or formed Airgíalla; and (b) the formal definition of the relationship between the dynasties called Airgíalla and Uí Néill.⁵³

According to the Celtologist Thomas M. Charles-Edwards, the agreement was a way of defining the relationship to Uí Néill, and should have been to Airgíalla’s advantage.⁵⁴ In *The Airgíalla Charter Poem*, § 11, there is a reference to Áed Allán, which is

interpreted by Bhreathnach as an alliance that had existed between the Cenél-federation and Airgíalla between 722 and 743 and the poem might have been composed by then.⁵⁵

The poem is divided into four sections with amendments. The first section consists of a historical prologue that deals with the land areas and genealogical relationships between Airgíalla and Uí Néill. In the second section, article 14, there is a case with hostages.

14. Ar-dlegat iarara co neuch ar-da-gíalla
ar-dlegat fiadnaise it clethe for fiadna.

14. They are entitled to demands together
with anyone who gives them hostages.⁵⁶

(Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

Article 14 is about the rights of the Five Kindreds of Uí Néill vis-à-vis Airgíalla. The same rights they according to Charles Edwards against all used their subject territories.⁵⁷ The hostage, which Airgíalla gave the Five Kindreds, is not specified in this context. The article may be interpreted as an evidence that Airgíalla had certain rights (demands) in the same way as other territories; they were subordinated to Uí Néill and hostage givers.

18. Ar-dlegat a forbanda a suidiu fhlathe acht ma ar-da-gíallatar
i rroí chatho.

18. They are entitled to their extra exactions from the seat of a ruler unless hostages are given to them on the field of battle.⁵⁸

(Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

§ 18 belongs to the same section of *The Airgíalla Charter Poem* as § 14.⁵⁹ Airgíalla could share the requirements (*exactions*), or privileges, that a ruler (of the *Five Kindreds*) could put on a defeated enemy unless they could take hostage themselves on the battlefield.

23. Dlegair donaib Airgíallaib córus a ngíallnae slóged trí cóicthig-
es dia téora blíadnae.

23. There is due to from the Airgíalla the proper arrangement of their hostageship, a hosting of three fortnights every three years.⁶⁰

(Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

The next section of *The Airgíalla Charter Poem* is about the obligations regarding military service. § 23 is difficult to interpret, but in the edition of Bhreathnach and the philologist Kevin Murray, there is a word, *ngíallnae*, which they interpret as ‘hostageship’.⁶¹ The article is about the obligation to accommodate troops, but what is meant by ‘hostageship’ is unclear in this case. If Airgíalla were to make war together with other federations, it would be necessary with what we today refer to as ‘diplomacy’.⁶² If an army, in allegiance with Airgíalla, passed through their territory, they would travel via pre-selected roads and would camp at certain places as specified in § 28.

28. Cumal cachá forbaise fessar co slógib acht manis túissed eolach dia ndúnaib córib.

28. A *cumal* for every camp which spends the night with hosts, unless a knowledgeable person should conduct them to their proper encampments.⁶³

(Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

A representative of the visiting army would stay with the hosts over the night at every place they camped, unless a person well-known in Airgíalla was responsible for their conduct. This person, who represented an area, would probably be valued after his rank.

The last section of the poem leans towards two agreements between Airgíalla and Uí Néill. In this section, mythical elements are included in the text which would guarantee peace. § 40 claims that authorities – which might be perceived as deities – like the ‘sea and land with the sky, sun and moon’ will guarantee the peace.⁶⁴ The next article (41) mentions ‘Dew and light, God’s apostles from heaven, aged men, prophets, patriarchs and bright angles’.⁶⁵ Several researchers argue that these are examples of how Christian and pre-Christian traditions occur side by side.⁶⁶

Another article (46) mentions hostages as a security for the agreement. They are called *aitiri*, ‘hostage sureties’.

46. It sruithi a n-aitiri do-chuitchetar már [...]

46. Their hostage sureties are venerable men who have sworn mightily, [...].⁶⁷

(Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

According to Charles Edwards, *aitiri* was a guarantee for major public agreements between two or more of the political and jurisdictional units called *túathas*. The article also shows that the hostage could swear oaths; thus, they had a ‘legal capacity’.

Although the proposed etymologies of the place name *Airgíalla* (or *Airgíallnae*) are uncertain, Bhreathnach and Murray believe that the word forms the basis for the federation’s relationship to Uí Néill: ‘*airgíallnae* suggests the tentative translations “additional hostageship” or additional service.’⁶⁸ Certainly, *Airgíalla* was subordinated to Uí Néill, but they were – in their turn – so strong that they could not be totally subjected to other dynasties. Different types of agreements were made because of peace settlements where hostages served as a security, or regulatory factor, in the areas of confrontation, but in different ways. The hostage was therefore not only linked to warlike activities but also peace times. In this settlement, legal, religious and economic aspects pre-suppose each other.

Concluding remarks

I have showed that several place names from Sweden and Finland, with modifiers such as OSw. *gisl-* and Fi. *kíhl-*, have some structural similarities. Although it may be uncertain in the Swedish case – since only Saxo mentions it in a dubious tale – it cannot be denied that the Finnish examples clearly show that the place name designates an organisational form during the Middle Ages even if the function of the *gisslalahs* is unclear. The Estonian example reveals an even older organisational form that must be seen in the context of the region with altering power constellations. The example from Ireland shows that complex relations between competitive groupings underlie the formation of an agreement on hostages, which in turn could be related to the place name *Airgíalla*. Thus, the place names could confirm that these were once areas where social networks played a crucial role and the use of hostages was a vital part and functioned as a regulating factor between competitive groupings. These examples could therefore be related to the original ideas of Marcel Mauss about the phenomena of hostage as part of a gift economy and my earlier conclusion that the taking and giving of hostages were ritual acts.

Notes

1. An English version has been published as *The Hostages of the Northmen* (Olsson 2019).
2. Mauss 1925; Mauss (1925) 2002.
3. See Olsson 2016.
4. See Olsson 2019: Index, on these issues.
5. See Olsson 2019: 1–50 for a further description of the methods and theories.
6. *OED* 1989: 719.
7. See Olsson 2016: 366–369.
8. A more detailed version of the following analysis is found in Olsson 2019: 225–249.
9. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum = Danmarkshistorien I* ([ed.] Friis-Jensen): 511–517 (book 8, ch. 1, 1–3, 13).
10. See Blomkvist 2005: 240 ff.
11. See Skovgaard-Petersen 1987: 179–181.
12. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum = Danmarkshistorien I* ([ed.] Friis-Jensen): 516 (text), (book 8, ch. 3, 11).
13. Saxo Grammaticus, *The History of the Danes* (ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson): 240 (Book 8).
14. *Sögubrot af fornkonungum* ([ed.] Bjarni Guðnasson): 64 (ch. 8)).
15. See Müller 1823: 122.
16. According to *Svenskt ortnamnslexikon* (2016: 98), the place name Glimåkra can be traced to the late 14th century. The head, **Glima-*, is probably aimed at the river Glimån.
17. Olrik 1894: 253.
18. Finnur Jónsson 1920–24: 828; Friis-Jensen 1987: 23; Blomkvist 2005: 240–243.
19. Skovgaard-Petersen 1987: 262.
20. Blomkvist 2005: 242.
21. See Saxo og Snorre (2010).

22. Skovgaard-Petersen 1987: 262.
23. Blomkvist 2005: 249.
24. Peterson 2007: 90–92.
25. E-mail Agneta Sundström, research archivist, the Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore (*Institutet för språk och folkminnen*).
26. Olaus Magnus, *Historia* [...] (transl. Granlund): 315.
27. Granlund 1976: 543.
28. *Erikskrönikan* ([ed.] Jansson): 73.
29. Gallén & Lind 1991: 314; Tarvel 1998: 193, 198, n. 1; Blomkvist 2005: 264.
30. Vilkuna 1964: 9–30.
31. Vilkuna 1960: 328.
32. Line 2009: 79.
33. Vilkuna 1960: 328.
34. de Vries 1977: 168; Tarvel 1998: 193; cf. Sutrop 2004: 52.
35. Vilkuna 1960: 328.
36. Tarvel 1998: 193.
37. Tarvel 1998: 193 f.
38. Tarvel 1998: 194.
39. Sutrop 2004: 51.
40. Line 2009: 79.
41. See Line 2009: 79.
42. Gallén 1972: 650–651.
43. Curry 2013: 24–26.
44. See Peterson 2007: 311, 317, 321, 323.
45. *Livländische Chronik / Chronicon Livoniae* ([ed.] Alb. Bauer): 280 b. (text), 281 b. (ch. 26, 2))
46. *Livländische Chronik / Chronicon Livoniae* ([ed.] Alb. Bauer): 280 f. (text), 281 f. (transl.) (ch. 26, 2)).

47. See Kala 2009: 169–190.
48. J. F. Byrne 1973: 73; Cróinín 2004: 202.
49. Jaski 2005: 253.
50. P. Byrne 2005: 489–490.
51. See Byrne 1973: 47.
52. Bhreathnach 2005: 98.
53. Bhreathnach 2005: 96.
54. Charles-Edwards 2005: 100.
55. Bhreathnach 2005: 98.
56. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 130 (text), 131 (transl.).
57. Cf. Charles-Edwards 2005: 101, 117.
58. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 132 (text), 133 (transl.).
59. Charles-Edwards 2005: 101.
60. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 132 (text), 131 (transl.).
61. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 132 (text), 132 (transl.).
62. Charles-Edwards 2005: 100.
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65. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 138 (text), 139 (transl.).
66. See Charles-Edwards 2005: 122; Bhreathnach & Murray 2005: 155, n. 41.
67. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 138 (text), 139 (transl.).
68. Bhreathnach & Murray 2005: 140, n. 1b.

Abbreviations

Da.	Danish
Est.	Estonian
Fi.	Finnish
Fr.	French
Lat.	Latin
OGt.	Old Gutnish
OI.	Old Icelandic
OIr.	Old Irish
ON.	Old Norse
OSw.	Old Swedish
Sw.	Swedish

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