Öpir's Teacher
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Perhaps the most productive and least problematical of the rune-carvers we know from eleventh-century Uppland is Öpir. More than forty runic monuments have been preserved which bear his name (ubiR, ybiR, ybir, now normalized as Rune-Swedish 0piR), and a study of Öpir's distinctive style as exhibited in these signed works permits scholars to attribute to him about forty additional (unsigned) monuments. Chronologically Öpir's production seems to occupy a position near the end of Upplands' great runic development; this appears evident both on stylistic-typological grounds and from a study of the internal relationships of the Upplandic runic monuments and the families that erected them. (It was, for example, Öpir who executed the memorial to Jarlabanki, to whose family pride and personal egotism runology owes so much.) Erik Bråte dated Öpir's activity ca. 1070-85 and Otto von Friesen from about 1070 to the end of the century.¹

According to von Friesen, the name Öpir was originally a nickname ("skrikhals", cf. äpa 'cry, shout') which the carver adopted and preferred to his given name Ofsi2gR. Evidence of this is found, argued von Friesen, on the stone at Marma in Lägga parish (U 485) which bears the signature in ofsi2g ybiR risti En Ofsi2gR ÖpiR risti. This knowledge in turn allowed von Friesen to link Öpir with another Upplandic runecarver by the name of Viseti, since both names occur in the signature on a rune-stone (now lost) at Kålsta in Häggeby parish (U 669): uisti nuk · ufaih · peiR hieku Viseti ok Ofsi2gR peiR hioggu. The relationship between the two, maintained von Friesen, is one of teacher and pupil; Viseti is the master ("läromästare, lärare") and Öpir his apprentice ("lärjunge").²

Such a theory is impressive by virtue of its neatness and ingenuity, and is a tribute to von Friesen's brilliant if speculative treatment of the Upplandic runes. What is troubling is the relative absence of any similarity in the styles of Viseti and Öpir, despite von Friesen's claims to the contrary. Both carvers have highly distinctive styles, and yet very few traits in common. The connection between the two would therefore seem to depend solely on the assumption that the Ofsi2gR and ÖpiR on U 485 are one and the same person and that this person is identical with the Ofsi2gR on U 669. Even if one discounts the objections raised by Erik Bråte (pp. 98–99), these assumptions are not without risk, as may be illustrated by citing a presumably unrelated inscription from Ramsjö, Björklinge parish (U 1056): Viseti ok Jofurr hetu ræisa stæin æftiR Ofsi2g, sahr simn. Who are the Viseti and Ofsi2gR of this inscription? It would be bold indeed

² Upplands runstenar (Uppsala, 1913), pp. 64, 69; Runorna pp. 221–24.
to identify them with our two carvers (always assuming that Öpir’s given name was OfæigR), and in fact one would hesitate to identify even the two persons bearing the relatively rare name Viseti.\(^3\) It may therefore be permissible to search elsewhere for Öpir’s teacher.

Although runologists have long employed the concepts of “master and apprentice” or “teacher and pupil” and spoken of “schools” or “workshops” of carvers, it is fair to say that we have very little specific information on these matters from the eleventh-century runic monuments themselves. Carvers are generally grouped together under the notion of a “school” on the basis of stylistic similarity; it is assumed, for example, that the carver Thorfast learned his art under the influence of Asmund Karasun, since he shares many of Asmund’s characteristic features of design and orthography. In a few cases supporting evidence can be gained from the inscriptions: on U 308 a carver named Thorgaut calls himself Fots arfi, indicating that he is the son of the well-known master Fot, from whom he no doubt learned his trade and whose stylistic influence is apparent.

When two or more carvers have appended their names to a runic inscription, one is probably justified in assuming the existence of a school or a teacher-pupil relationship, though it is not always clear who is to be deemed the master and who the apprentice. In general, scholars are in the habit of designating the least familiar one an assistant; thus the Ingiald whose name appears with Asmund’s on U 932 is called a “biträande ristare” (assistant carver) by Erik Brate (p. 33), and the Svein who signed U 1149 with Asmund is “en medhjälpare till honom” (his collaborator) according to Elias Wessén.

Explicit testimony concerning the actual division of labor among the carvers of a single monument is rare indeed; an example is the Eskilstuna sarcophagus (Sö 356): Tofi risti runar a; Nasbiorn hiogg stxina. Nevertheless, the trained runologist can occasionally distinguish between the efforts of co-carvers by virtue of differences in style, technique, or form. Thus a careful examination of the rune-forms on the above-mentioned U 1149 (Fleräng, Älvarleby parish) reveals that Svein has carved the runes on the left and Asmund those on the right side of the stone.\(^4\)

It is possible that in the runic tradition of eleventh-century Uppland the notion of a school was designated by the term līð ‘troop, retinue, body of men’. Such appears to be the meaning of lībj on the interesting rune-stone at Altuna Church (U 1161), which bears a somewhat damaged signature, presumably reading: En (jæiR) Balli, Frøystein, līð Lifstæin (s ristu). In this inscription, then, the carver Balli (as well as the otherwise unknown Frøystein) would be bearing witness to an association with the master Lifstæin.\(^5\)

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\(^3\) An attractive speculation might be that the Viseti on U 1056 is identical with the carver of U 669, and that the Ofæig of U 669 is Viseti’s son and therefore the grandson and namesake of the Ofæig on U 1056.

\(^4\) That Svein’s name appears first in this signature (as well as in the one on the Söderby-stone, L 1049) could indicate that he was Asmund’s teacher, though less well-known than his famous pupil.

\(^5\) See also von Friesen in UFTb. 39 (1924), pp. 339 f. There is a similar occurrence of the word līð on a rune-stone at the parsonage (Prästgården) of Alsike parish (U 479), in the signature Ulfkell hiogg ru(naR), Lofa līði. Nothing prevents us from maintaining here that the carver
A far more interesting term which appears in the runic inscriptions and which bears enormously on the question of teacher–pupil relationships among the carvers is the verb rada. It is to Elias Wessén that we owe the most insightful terminological discussion of the occurrence of this word in the Swedish inscriptions. Wessén notes that the signature red runaR Øpir on U 940 can scarcely be equivalent to Øpir risti runaR, since it is out of the question that Øpir himself carved the rather poorly-executed U 940. It is more fruitful, says Wessén, to interpret the verb rada here in the sense 'compose, formulate, supervise'. Øpir was then responsible for the general conception of the monument and the formulation of the inscription; the actual carving, however, was carried out by another, less experienced man.

The notion that the verb rada can indicate the activity of the master not only clarifies some lexical difficulties of Old Scandinavian poetry (see Wessén under U 940, Genzmer in ANF 67 (1952), 39 f.) but also explains the signatures red runaR Øpir on U 896 and Svinn red jetta on U 913. It is surprising, therefore, to observe that Wessén neglects to interpret a further occurrence of this word, on a stone at Vaksala Church, in the same manner. The inscription in question (U 961) reads, in its entirety:

**hul-a + lit + raisa stain + þina at kitilbiarn rafur sin + auk runfrìp at bonta auk ihulfastr rip in ubiR**

Although Wessén is of course aware of the relevance of his discussion of rada under U 940, he declares that the expression Ægulfastr red “i detta sammanhang måste innebära, att Ægulfast har ombesörjt arbetet å de båda kvinnornas vägnar” (in this context must imply that Ægulf caused the work to be done on behalf of the two women). It is assumed that the name concealed in the damaged runic series hul-a is a feminine one. Wessén goes on to note that “det omtalas icke, huruvida Ægulfast stod i något släktskapsförhållande till dem eller till den döde. Vad man närmast skulle kunna tänka är att han har varit Kättilbjörns måg, gift med hans dotter hul-a” (it is not revealed whether Ægulfast was related by kinship to them or to the deceased. He may have been married to Kättilbjörns daughter hul-a).

It is of course clear that U 961 is one of Øpir’s works, and would doubtless be attributed to him even if his abbreviated signature en Øpir did not appear. (Øpir often abruptly terminates an inscription with little regard for missing syntactic units.) What I would like to suggest is that the sense of the expression Ægulfastr red on U 961 is completely analogous to the similar instances of rada on U 896, U 913, and U 940, and that we have in U 961 the name of Øpir’s teacher.

Such an assertion appears on the surface to be merely a case of name-speculation similar to von Friesen’s identification of Øpir as Viseti’s pupil Ofaeig. Although I am aware of this, I believe there is sufficient corroborative evidence to render my sugges-

Ulfkell was a pupil of the otherwise unknown Lafi; it is not necessary to assume with Wessén that Ulfkell “har tillhört Loves lið, ett krigarfölje vars anförare har varit en man vid namn Love.”

* For the meaning of the word red cf. U 940.
tion at least probable, and perhaps more plausible than von Friesen’s. For while the alleged connection of Öpir with Viseti is unsupported by any stylistic similarities in their works, we know of a carver named Igulfast whose work bears an obvious affinity with Öpir’s.

Until 1953 (and at the time Wessén was writing his treatment of U 961) the carver Igulfast was unknown. Only with the discovery of a rune-stone at Helnelund (Kummelby) in Sollentuna parish did explicit evidence of his authorship appear:

elka | lit raisa stain | eftiR | suārtik | b ... eystain | uk | at | emink | suni | sina | in | ikulfastr

Hélga let raisa stain æftiR Sværti̇ng, b(oanda sin ok a)t Óystain ok at Hæming, syni sina. En Igulfastr.

The resemblances to the work of Öpir which this monument reveals are evident in carving technique, artistic design, rune-forms, orthography, and formulation. Note for example the abbreviated signature en Igulfastr, as on Öpir’s U 961 (en Öpir). Indeed, Sven B. F. Jansson has noted in his report of the discovery of the Kummelby-stone⁷ that “Igulfast, som är en hittills okänd ristare, är som konstnär i släkt med Öpir” (Igulfast, a hitherto unknown carver is artistically related to Öpir).

Clearly the claim that the Igulfast on this stone is identical with the one on U 961, and that this Igulfast is therefore the master under whose direction Öpir learned to carve is subject to some uncertainties. The name Igulfast is not uncommon in the Upplandic inscriptions (cf. U 279, 378, 624, 665, 909, 939, 1019), and it would be more conventional to assume that the Igulfast who carved the Kummelby-stone is merely another late eleventh-century carver whose works attest to the widespread influence of the highly productive Öpir. Nevertheless, the suggestion that it was Igulfast who influenced Öpir, rather than the reverse, merits serious consideration.

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Helgeands i Visby — St Jakob?

Måndagen den 14 augusti 1967 på eftermiddagen befunno sig ett antal herrar i övre planet av Visby Helgeandskyrkas berömda oktogon. Det var deltagarna i Visby-symposiet för historiska vetenskaper, som under landsantikvarie Gunnar Svanströms samt professorerna Sten Karlings och Armin Tuulles ledning vero stadda på rundvandring bland stadens medeltida minnesmärken. Symposiets tema var detta år »Kyrka och samhälle i Östersjöområdet och i Norden före mitten av det 15:de århundradet.«¹ Det är begripligt att kyrkorna tilldrogo sig