

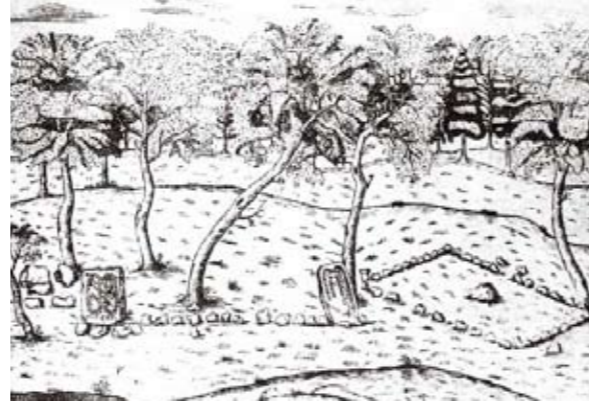


8. Vallentuna Church

Here you can see several examples of rune carvings: stone-cutters who carved their names in runes when the church was being built in the late 12th century, a rune stone telling of a shipwreck mortared into the wall, and one of Jarlabanke's own rune stones. This last stone must have cracked at some point and new carving was made on the back. On the stone, Jarlabanke tells us that he built an assize place and that he alone made all the decisions in the region. Half of a rune stone stands by the eastern wall of the cemetery.

9. Arkil's Assize Place

On two rune stones, the sons of Ulf from Skålhamra tell how they raised the stones, made a large staff, and built an assize place in memory of their father. On the ground, an intriguing four-sided stone formation can be seen. Exactly what people did during assize assemblies is not known. Visitors came by water and docked their boats nearby.



1. Jarlabanke's Causeway

The causeway is well-known, erected by a well-to-do landowner named Jarlabanke around 1050 A.D., who had the causeway built across a 150-m stretch of otherwise impassable wetland. Jarlabanke had the rune stones erected as well. Archaeologists have made studies but the causeway's exact appearance in Jarlabanke's day is not known. A third of the stretch has been restored to what it is known to have looked like around 1700. In the surrounding area, you can learn more about rune stones and life around Lake Vallentuna in the 11th century. The park, which is open to the public all day year round, presents history and art in a playful way.



7. Gullbron

Documents from the 17th century describe four raised stones by the Gullbron causeway. One of them still stands here, while another is not far away, by the road to Lindönäs, and the third stands two km to the north, at the Lindö estate. The fourth is missing. The writing on the stones says that heirs to Ulf of Lindö erected the stones and made the causeway. There is a fifth rune stone by the road, but it has no known connection to the other four.



6. Gällsta

In Gällsta, there are three rune stones that mention four generations of the same clan. There is a fourth stone as well, but it has no inscription, only a cross. One of the stones has been signed by Öpir, one of the most common rune carvers of the late 11th century. On another stone, you can clearly see the repair marks that were made after it had been cut in two in the 19th century to be used as gateposts at a nearby farm.



5. Risbyle

Two rune stones present us with the Skålhamra clan, the founders of Arkil's assize place on the other side of the lake. One of the stones was raised by a man who plundered England, Ulf of Bårresta, in honor of his friend, Ulf of Skålhamra. The cross on the stone, which is of an unusual shape, has been used as the model for the coat of arms for the municipality of Täby. The stones now stand next to what was once the edge of the water. From here, the country road led to the Skålhamra estate.



4. Fällbro

We can tell that people crossed the river at this same spot a thousand years ago because of the writing on two rock surfaces next to the road, south of the river. Further to the north is a rune stone erected in memory of Jarlabanke. North of that is a burial field that indicates that there was a farm here during the Viking Age. On the burial field, facing the road, is another rock surface with runic writing, which was not discovered until 1946.



2. Täby Church

In the 15th century, two sections of a rune stone were mortared into a wall of the church vestibule. Carved in the 11th century, they tell of Holme, who died in Italy. On the site of today's stone church from the 13th century, a wooden church probably once stood. The site may have been property owned by Jarlabanke. Inside the church are ceiling paintings made in the 1480s by a famous Swedish church painter, Albertus Pictor.



3. Broby

Archaeologists have studied a grave here that they believe is the burial place of a woman named Estrid. She erected many of the rune stones in the region. Three of them stand here in a field a short distance from the road. The inscriptions on the stones tell of dramatic events in the life of a local clan.



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Travels abroad and deceased family members

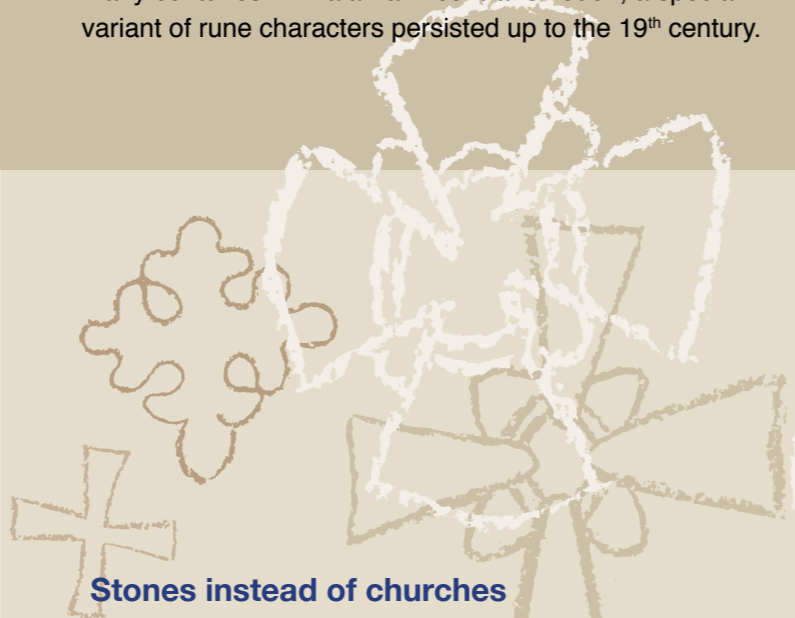
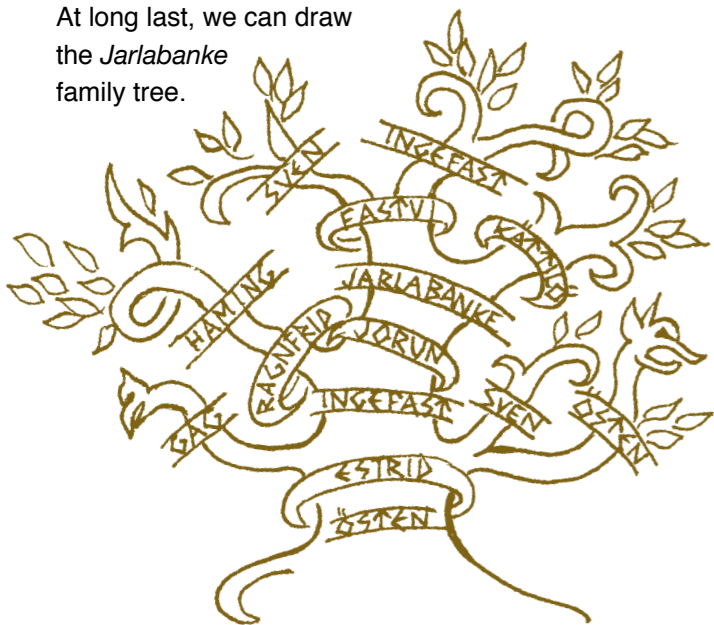
The earliest rune inscriptions are from the 3rd century A.D. and were carved on pieces of wood or bone, sometimes also on metal. Stone carving was not especially common. During the Viking Age, however, the older rune alphabet with 24 characters was replaced with one that only had 16, making it easier to carve in stone. By the end of the period, that is, by the 11th century, the practice of raising rune stones had become widespread. During the course of only a few generations, the upper social stratum of society raised most of all known rune stones in Sweden. The inscriptions often follow a given pattern. One or several members of a clan tell of how they had the stone raised in memory of a dead member of

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the family. Some inscriptions end with a short Christian prayer. On rare occasions, we get a glimpse into society of the times, when the texts mention travel to foreign countries, building of causeways, burial mounds, farms or ownership relations. The carvings were often commissioned by private people and carried out by rune masters. One of them, *Öpir*, appears to have been the head of a small traveling group of stonemasons. During the Middle Ages, the educated class began to use the Latin alphabet, while common people seem to have held on to a preference for runes. Farmers and artisans continued to use runes for many centuries. In Dalarna in central Sweden, a special variant of rune characters persisted up to the 19th century.

Family trees after puzzle research

The names of many family members have been recorded on rune stones. These were most likely the people who were entitled to inherit the deceased, which probably explains why so few daughters are mentioned. The sons often had the same name as their fathers and paternal grandparents, which is confusing to us today. But in recent years, researchers have discovered a way to date rune stones, based on the style and ornamentation of the inscriptions. This makes it possible to fit the pieces of the puzzle regarding the names on the stones. At long last, we can draw the *Jarlabanke* family tree.



Stones instead of churches

Ordinary people believed in the Norse gods for a long time, but by the 11th century, the Christian mission had increased its presence in the country, backed by a number of affluent families who welcomed the new social order. It was these people who erected most of Sweden's rune stones, which are often adorned with at least one cross. Sometimes the inscription ends with a prayer, such as "May God help his soul." Researchers now regard all rune stones from the 11th century as monuments of Christianity, even the stones that do not have pronounced Christian symbols. In a time when there were no churches, the first Christians had rune stones raised on their property as a proclamation of their faith. Surrounded by a land of pagans, it was important to place the stones so that as many as possible could see them.

Täby and Vallentuna –record holders in rune stones

In the area around Lake Vallentuna there are unusually many rune stones from the late Viking Age. In fact, in no other place in the world are there as many rune stones as right here. The inscriptions tell moving stories of the lives and fates of people in ancient times. The events took place a thousand years ago, often exactly where the stone now stands. We call this area "The Rune Kingdom." Here you can wander in the beautiful landscape and explore history on your own. The entranceway to the Rune Kingdom is easy to find, and around the lake are eight more points to discover. Several municipalities, museums, and local organizations work together in the maintenance of the Rune Kingdom. The grounds are tended to by each municipality and cemetery administration, while the Stockholm County Museum is responsible for general information and expertise.

Täby Municipality: phone +46 (0)8-5555 9000. www.taby.se
 Vallentuna Municipality: phone +46 (0)8-587 850 00.
www.vallentuna.se
 Stockholm County Museum: phone +46 (0)8-586 194 00.
lansmuseum.a.se
stockholms.lans.museum/start/homepage.html

www.runriket.se

Come Along to the Rune Kingdom!



RUNRIKET
 TÄBY-VALLENTUNA



The same place but a long time ago...

A thousand years ago, the well-to-do landowner Jarlabanke had a causeway built as a monumental entranceway to his property, lined with rune stones. In 2005, the Stockholm County Museum restored the causeway to how it looked in the early 18th century. Jarlabanke's causeway is now once more an entranceway, this time to "The Rune Kingdom." How about that, an ancient relic still in use!



Springkivödet

Bright colours in the landscape

Rune stones were lavish works of art, meant to be clearly visible in the landscape. For this reason, they were painted in bright colours, which we know because the rune stones mortared into the walls of churches and monasteries still have distinct residues of paint. It is hard to say exactly what colours were used, however, since pigment changes over time. But it is still possible to see that the inscriptions were filled with one colour, while the other surfaces were painted using others. Today's rune stones have often been filled in to make them easier to read. In the picture to the right, you can see how a rune stone may have been painted.

