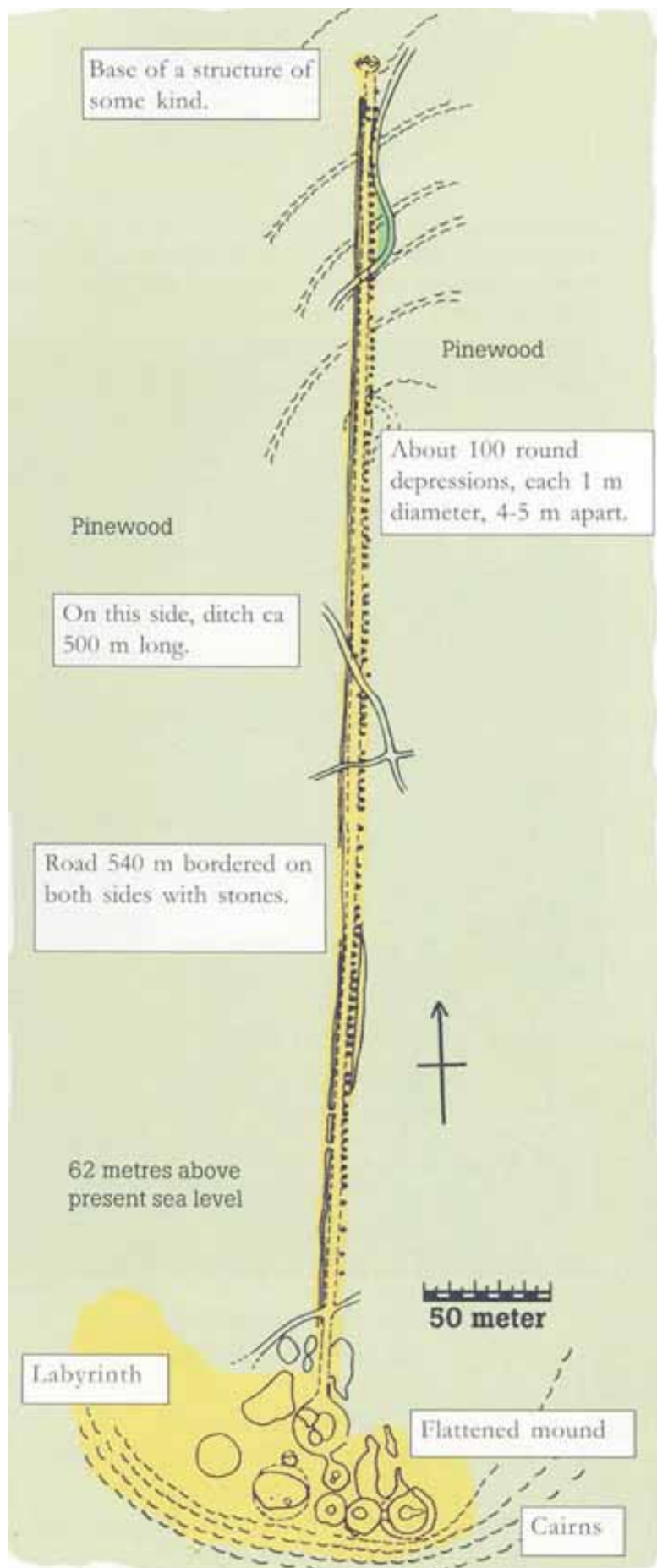


Rösaring — Cult site

Ceremonial road from the early Viking Age,

Bronze age barrows

and a Labyrinth thought to be one of the oldest in Sweden



- Cairns from the Bronze age, not yet excavated, on top of a glacial ridge about 62 m above present sea level.
- Labyrinth, thought to be one of the oldest I Sweden.
- Ceremonial road dated by C 14 to early Viking Age, first excavated by amateur archeologists in 1981-82.
- Iron Age cemetery, level 25 m, some mounds
- more than 20 m diameter, a few with raised stones.
- Firecracked stones - indicating settlements.
- Local place names refer to ancient gods.

Rösa: meaning cairn

Ring: alluding to the labyrinth

The Rösaring cult site has attracted many people through the ages, and has been reported by scholars since the 1670s. Yet it is still not a major tourist site, and no signposts lead from the main roads to this marvellous place - marvellous in many aspects, geological, archeological, historical.

It is situated on one of the largest glacial ridges in Scandinavia, at its highest part in the Mälars region. In the Stone Age, the site of future Stockholm was just seabed, and the Rösaring site was a small island far out in the archipelago, not suitable for settlement. By the Bronze Age, due to land rising, people could establish themselves at the foot of the ridge, using the ridge itself for burials and ceremonies. The Roman Tacitus wrote 2000 years ago *"They worshipped the gods in the open air, not hiding them behind walls"*.

The Labyrinth

Rösaring was noticed in 1684 by Hadorph, known as the "father" of Swedish antiquarian research. He wrote: *"... a high hill called Röra backe, where there is a Trojenborg ... there has been much sacrifice to the gods in olden days"*. In other old annals the place is described as *"very monumental"*.

Labyrinths in Sweden have long been called "Trojeborg", indicating a relationship to the city of Troy, as it is found in old nordic literature. The labyrinth at Rösaring is one of the largest ones and owing to other objects in the neighbourhood it is regarded as one of the most interesting and oldest in Scandinavia in the catalogue of labyrinths published by the Historical Museum in Stockholm 1994

Ceremonial Road

Though the place has been investigated by professionals for centuries it was a local amateur archaeologist who found the ceremonial road that was excavated by amateurs in 1981-82. This road is unique. It stretches almost exactly north-south from a point 540 m north of a flattened mound into which it leads. We don't know for certain what is inside the mound. A main aim of coming excavations is to find out whether it is a grave or a ceremonial platform.

Fertility rites

Arguments for the latter are based on three factors, all indicating fertility cult: labyrinths are mostly connected with fertility cult; so are wagon-gods using roads, the ceremony described by Tacitus; place names in the neighbourhood also call attention to fertility cult, we find both male and female gods from the period before the Viking Age. The same pattern is to be found near all labyrinths lying on ridges crossing Lake Mälaren. All this is brought forward by John Kraft in a book soon being published.

New theories

To these ideas we may now add theories from astronomers and many others. Some have even claimed to find unusual earth magnetism by divining at the Rösaring site.

Part of the Baltic Sea

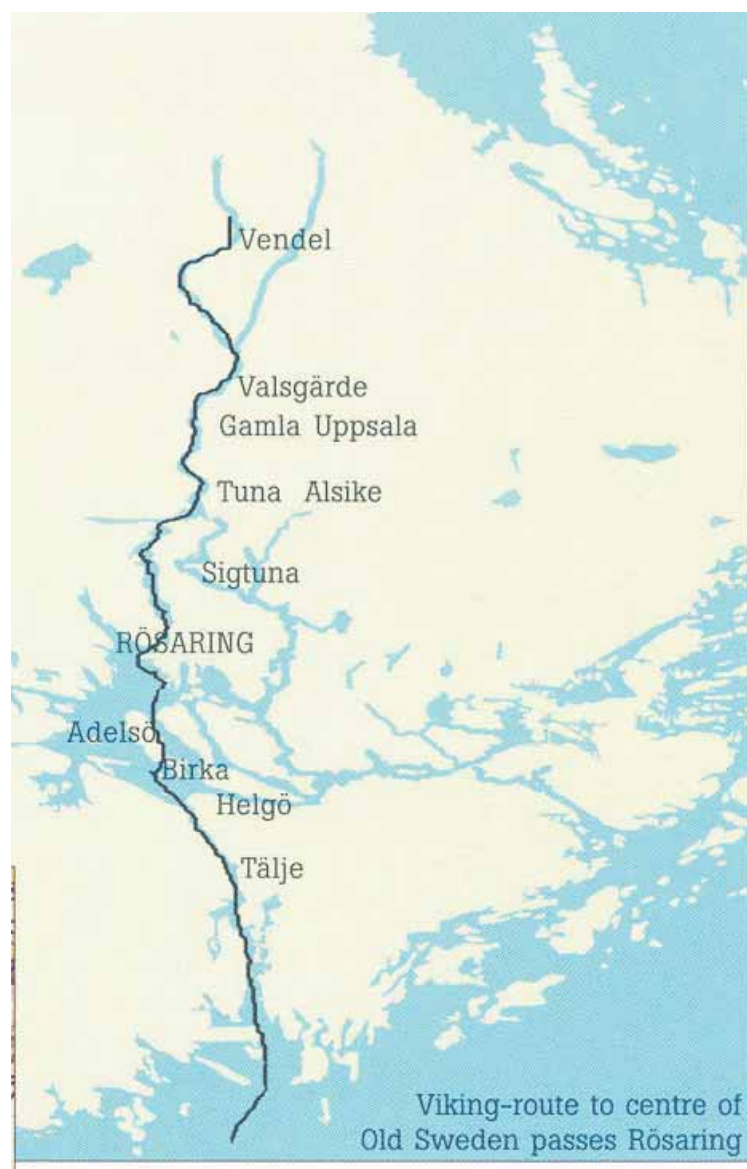
Rösaring is indeed a fascinating place. Even for those unfamiliar with its history and archeology, its natural beauty is a great attraction.

Up to the thirteenth century Lake Mälaren was a bay of the Baltic Sea. One of the main sea routes passed Rösaring via Södertälje - Birka - Rösaring - Uppsala - Valsgärde - Vendel. When going to Rösaring you pass close to a famous runestone using the very word "vikings", the only complete runetext naming them. Vikings from the east were often a problem in this area according to old tales.

Not far from Rösaring, along the old Viking route, you will find hillforts, one of them among the largest in the county of Uppland.



Rösaring Labyrinth. A stone labyrinth 15.9 x 14.5 metres 15 circles - 16 walls. A report from 1672 says: "...on the big esker, close to the wind-mill, a Tröyenborgh built of stones to fifteen circles. Very monumental".



Scandinavia. On this map drawn by Willem Blaeuw and engraved in 1598 Rösaring would be situated between Stockholm and Uppsala, "on an island in the ocean", as said by the Roman Tacitus. Sailors at that time still regarded Lake Mälaren as a bay of the Baltic Sea.

Upplands-Bro Research Institute
for History of Culture
Börje Sandén, Målarvägen 19, S.197 30 Bro
ukf@ukforsk.se; <http://www.ukforsk.se>

Design-IT Lars Axelsson 6-97