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PIOTR P. CHRUSZCZEWSKI, *Cultural patterns in discursive practices of Scandinavian speech communities in the Viking Age: On the basis of runic inscriptions of north-central Jutland*. Krakow: Tertium, 2006. Pp. xiv, 272.

Reviewed by MICHAEL A. LANGE
Champlain College
Burlington, VT 05403
mlange@champlain.edu

Piotr Chruszczewski's book purports to be a discussion of language patterns in Scandinavia during the Viking period. The text is exhaustive in setting up Chruszczewski's argument, with lengthy chapters devoted to different paradigms of investigation within the discipline of anthropological linguistics, the historical background of language spread and diversification in the Scandinavian world, and the history of runic writing systems in general. Each of these introductory chapters contains comprehensive asides as well. In the first chapter, Chruszczewski writes at some length about the various frameworks through which European structural anthropological linguistics can view language use in a group. He terms these different frameworks the language-centered, the language-culture-mind-centered, and the discourse-centered paradigms. This first chapter, almost 50 pages long, firmly establishes Chruszczewski's credibility as a linguist in the tradition of European anthropological linguistics.

The second chapter attempts to situate Chruszczewski's study historically, giving a cultural-historical overview of the evolution and diversification of the Scandinavian languages from Old Norse. Before settling into actual discussing Viking Age languages, however, he dwells on the differences among creoles, pidgins, and mixed languages. While he uses the standard example of Tok Pisin when describing pidgin language, his discussion of Russenorsk is perhaps of more immediate interest to the likely readers of this volume. Russenorsk, a language with roots in both Russian and Norwegian, existed from the middle of the 18th century to the early part of the 20th century, springing up as a common language between Russian and Norwegian fishermen and hunters in the northern part of the Scandinavian peninsula. Although Russenorsk may interest the reader with a Scandinavianist bent, Chruszczewski does not tie it into the overall program of his book; it is merely a geographically appropriate example of language mixing.

The third chapter sees Chruszczewski approaching runic systems, but again he takes some time in setting his stage before discussing Scandinavian runes specifically. After an examination of different writing systems, using several Western Hemisphere examples such as Inuit, Cree, Quechua, and Aymara, he eventually presents the various runic systems (futharks) present in northern Europe during the Viking period. This chapter also sees Chruszczewski presenting the material that gives this work its subtitle: the runestones of north central Jutland in Denmark. After giving the reader his list of rune stones and their inscriptions, Chruszczewski creates a typology of the texts and briefly analyzes those texts as examples of the culture from which they came. A brief fourth chapter summarizes his findings and suggests avenues of further research.

Chruszczewski's book is exhaustive in its approach, perhaps too exhaustive. The title promises an exploration of Viking culture, using their language and their language practices as a window. However, precious little of the book actually deals with the runic inscriptions of the Viking period, and even less with cultural interpretations of those inscriptions. Chruszczewski spends many pages setting up an argument that seems almost anticlimactic when it finally arrives.

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