

Finnvid Storgård, Granby

In front of you, in the sloping wooded pasture, are some well-preserved settlement remains, a beautiful burial ground and the biggest rock carving in Uppland. Together they make up an interesting archaeological site from the Late Iron Age and early medieval period which is also connected with the names and boundaries of the villages.

A large Viking settlement

At the top of the slope is a plateau-shaped house foundation terrace, the clear structure of which includes a stone revetment round the edges. Investigations have revealed the former presence here of a longhouse, 33 metres in length and 8 metres across, with splayed walls. A steep-pitched roof, possibly reed-thatched, rested on two lines of poles. Several finds, including a couple of coins, show the place to have been inhabited during the Viking and early medieval periods.

In front of the large house is a courtyard, bounded to the east by a line of stones and surrounded by four terraces which are lower and supported smaller buildings. These can be dated to the same period as the big house. All these houses formed part of a magnate's farmstead. We do not know when the place was first settled, because there may be traces of earlier settlement underneath those now visible.

The Finnvid rune carving

In the courtyard between the buildings, in a position guaranteed to catch the eye of people arriving here, a large and richly ornate runic carving has been hammered into a slab of rock. In terms of area, this is the largest rock carving in Uppland, and its inscription is one of the longest. A small signboard to one side offers a translation. The carving is signed by Visäte, a famous rune carver during the second half of the 11th century. A cross and a prayer show the family to have been Christian at the time.

The carving was commissioned by three brothers in memory of their father, Finnvid, and two step-siblings, children of the same mother. Three more kinsmen are named without specifying how they were related. The inscription carefully records that "Finnvid alone owned everything first", meaning either the entire farmstead or the village. It could be that the inscription records a settlement between heirs.

The burial ground

On the other side of the modern houses, in the eastern part of the slope, is an Iron Age burial ground with about 85 graves visible (see map). There are one or two humped mounds, but the majority of graves are flat, round, turf-covered stone settings, and there are ten or more rectangular graves as well. Many of the graves are edged with stone kerbs. This burial ground has not been investigated, but its appearance is mostly typical of the Late Iron Age.