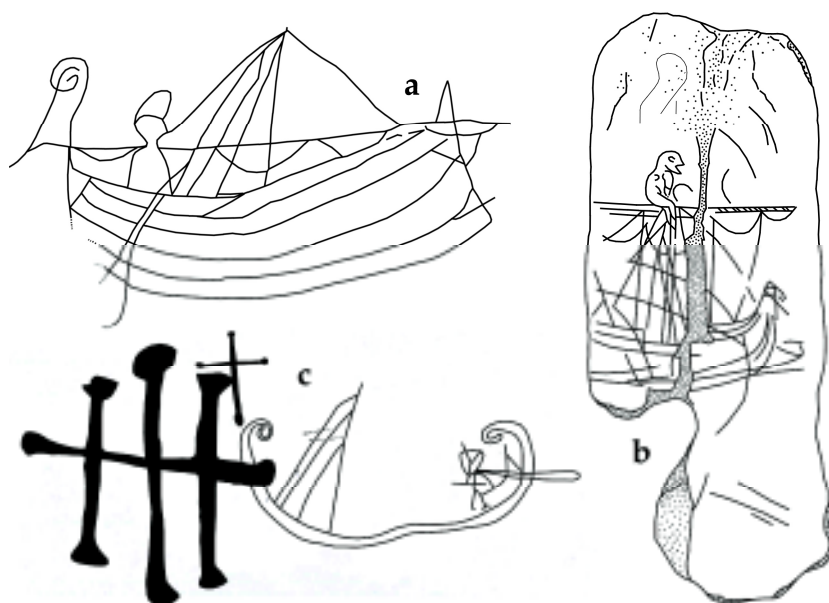


VLADIMIR AGRIGOROEI

**Once again about the so-called  
Viking ship at Basarabi-Murfatlar**

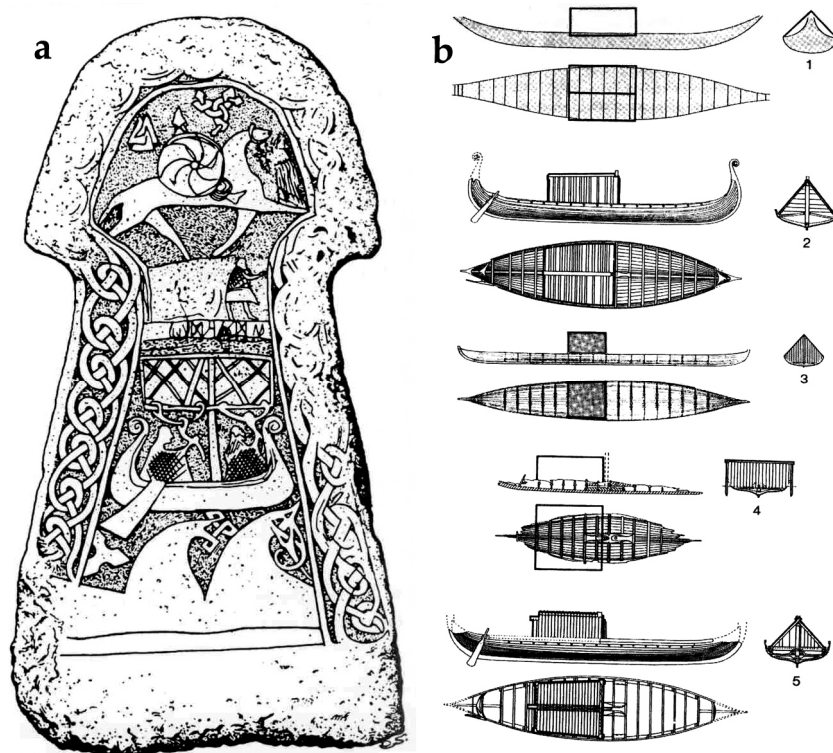


a) Viking boat graffito incised on a IX-X<sup>th</sup> c. stone from Lödenköpinge (Sweden); drawing by Vladimir Agrigoroaei after a photo of the Lund Universitets Historiska Museum; b) Viking boat graffito from Christchurch Place, Dublin (Ireland); drawing by Vladimir Agrigoroaei after a photo of the National Museum of Ireland; c) The Basarabi graffito; drawing by Vladimir Agrigoroaei after a photo of the National Institute of Historical Monuments, Bucharest.

One of the graffiti of the Basarabi-Murfatlar complex (X-XI<sup>th</sup> c., Romania) is the drawing of a ship, which has been considered a Viking boat representation<sup>5</sup>. In an earlier article, we have rejected this hypothesis<sup>6</sup>, but we wish to reconsider certain

<sup>5</sup> Ion Barnea, *Din istoria Dobrogei*, vol. 3, *Bizantini, români și bulgari la Dunărea de Jos*, coll. "Bibliotheca Historiae Romaniae", 9, București, 1971, p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> Vladimir Agrigoroaei, *Vikingi sau ruși. Noi cercetări asupra comple-*



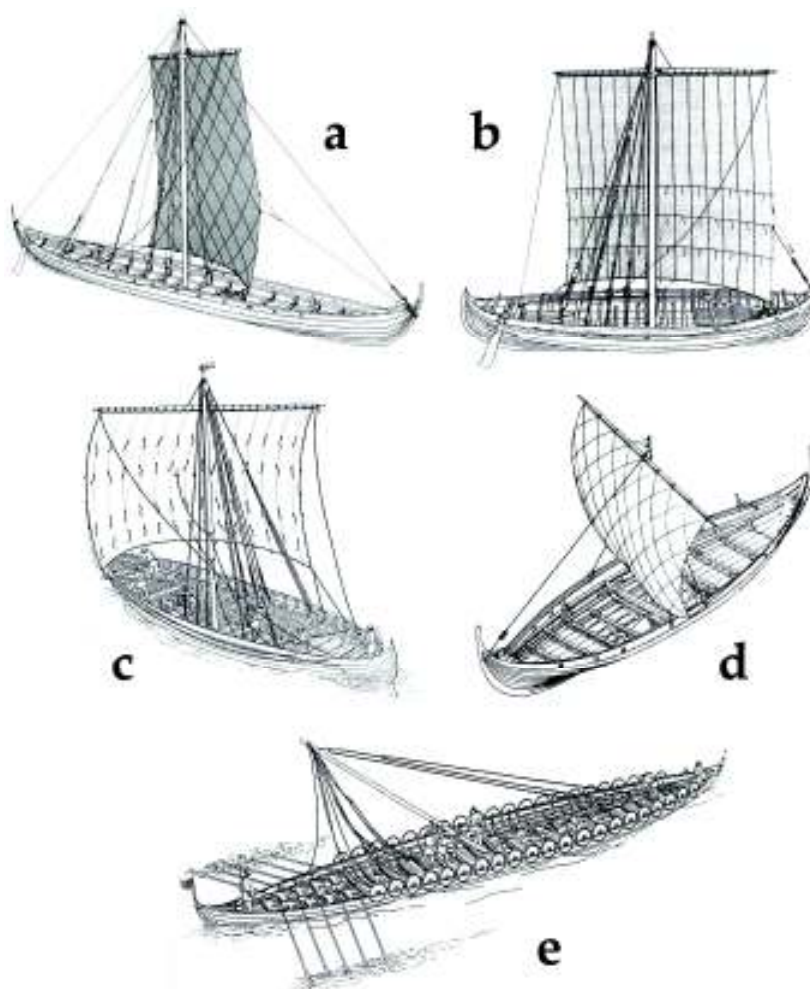
a) Picture Stone from the Lillbjärs III cemetery (after Durand 1996, p. 16); b) Various funerary Viking ships, to a 1/300m scale (after Durand 1996, p. 26): 1) *Sutton Hoo* ship; 2) *Oseberg* ship; 3) *Ladby* ship; 4) *Tune* ship; 5) *Gokstad* ship.

aspects in view of new studies found meanwhile. In case the Basarabi ship were a Viking type one, its end spirals and the ropes tied to the mast are attested also by a graffito found in Lödenköpings. This Scandinavian graffito proves to be nonetheless unique, for all other Viking ship graffiti follow a different pattern by carefully rendering the large transversal sails<sup>7</sup>. Still, we compared our graffito to different Viking ships that resemble its features: the *Gokstad* type one (c. 23,5 x 5 m), the *knørr* (c.

*xului de la Basarabi-Murfatlar*, in *Apulum*, XLIII/2, 2006, p. 27-29.

<sup>7</sup> For the Viking ship features missing from the Basarabi graffito: *Ibidem*, p. 28.

16,5x2 m), and the *langskip* (c. 28x4,5 m)<sup>8</sup>.



Various types of Viking ships (after Durand 1996, p. 51, 57, 61):  
 a) The *Gokstad*, the great merchant ship; b) Different view of a *Gokstad*;  
 c) The *knørr*, the small merchant ship; d) Different view of a *knørr*;  
 e) The *langskip*, the battle ship.

<sup>8</sup> Frédéric Durand, *Les Vikings et la mer*, préface de François-Xavier Dillmann, coll. des Hesperides, éditions Errance, Paris, 2006, p. 49-68.

By taking into account the human/boat proportion in the Basarabi graffito, one may presume that it could represent the cross-section of a Viking *knørr* type ship<sup>9</sup>, having nonetheless the reversed end spirals of certain *langskips* (the Lödenköpinge graffito, the Lillbjärs III stone and the Oseberg ship<sup>10</sup> – see the plates), and no sails. The disposition of the mast-tied ropes proves identical to that in the Lödenköpinge drawing, but, in spite of the new materials discovered, no clear conclusions can be drawn. The Basarabi graffito remains a *possible but not probable* representation of a Viking ship.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56-58.

<sup>10</sup> Anders Hagen, *Les Bateaux Vikings*, Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo, 1961, p. 6-18.