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Sommario/riassunto	<p>There are over 3000 runic inscriptions on stone made in Scandinavia in the late Viking Age. This book is the first attempt by a historian to study the material as a whole. The analysis reveals significant regional variations that reflect different stages in the process of conversion, and the growth of royal power. Many monuments were declarations of faith or manifestations of status; but virtually all reflect inheritance claims, and cast unexpected light on the prehistory of the inheritance customs found in later Scandinavian law codes. The results of this analysis make a significant contribution to understanding developments in other parts of the Germanic world, as well as Scandinavia. The inclusion of a digest of the data-base on which this book is based will facilitate further study of this rich vein of evidence.</p>