Roman Imperialism and Runic Literacy
The Westernization of Northern Europe (150-800 AD)

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Abstract


This dissertation discusses Roman imperialism and runic literacy. It employs an interdisciplinary terminology. By means of terms new to archaeology, the growth of a specialized language, a technolect, is traced until it enters the realm of literacy. The author argues that there is more than one way for literacy to appear in prehistoric cultures. The ‘normal’ perception is that literacy grows out of a need to keep records of a growing economic surplus. The ‘other’ way for a culture to become literacy is that someone else forces literacy upon it. This has been the case in many parts of the world subject to Western imperialism. The onslaught of Roman imperialism caused the invention of runic literacy in Northern Europe during the Early Roman Iron Age. The invention of the runic script should thus be seen as a pre-emptive reaction to the threat of Westernization. A comparison is made with a number of Early Modern Period cases of newly invented scripts caused by the arrival of literate westerners in West Africa. The invention and introduction of the runes may well have been a dictated shift in literacy, seeking to break away from Latin. A number of dictated shifts in literacy from Early Modern Period America and Modern Period Asia are studied in comparison.

The role of runic literacy changed in the post-Roman aftermath of the Migration and Vendel Periods as the ruling elite found it increasingly difficult to find the economic means to support a lavish lifestyle that included runic literacy. As a result, there was a decline in runic literacy in Northern Europe until the economic revival of the Viking Period. By then, it was clear that the North was soon to be integrated into the Christian West.

Key words: Rome, Imperialism, Literacy, Runes, Northern Europe, Westernization.

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Introduction

This book is a doctoral dissertation in archaeology. The layout is that of a chronological survey divided into three parts. It seeks to answer the questions as to when, why, and how Germanic people in Northern Europe began to enter the process of becoming literate Westerners. Very little of this is known today. Yet, it remains an undisputed fact that it did happen. Today’s North Europeans are undoubtedly Westerners. Still, there has never been a satisfactory explanation as to what really went on back then when literacy was first introduced. It is known that a runic script was created (perhaps sometime in the 1st century AD), and that it came to be replaced by a new runic script after some 600 years. One does not know exactly when and how the first runic script, Early Runic, came into being, nor does one know why it disappeared. It should be pointed out that this is not a common occurrence on a global scale. As is pointed out in several places in this book, there are some 6,700 languages spoken today. Of these, only some 1,000 are literate. This makes the appearance of runic script a very important sociolinguistic problem.

The traditional perception of how literacy comes into being is that it grows out of a socioeconomic need. Once society has grown sophisticated enough, literacy is likely to be invented. But this is not always the case. Rather, literacy is often introduced by coercion. There is thus an alternate way of encountering literacy. Namely, that of having it forced upon you before the socioeconomic structure you live in is ready for it. To understand how preliterate cultures all over the world have been forced to become literate Westerners, one has to study the psychodynamic process of changing attitudes towards learning and knowledge. To become literate, one has to accept linear patterns of thought, thereby activating previously dormant areas of the brain. This causes change first in culture, then in society. It leads to an increase in social stratification.

The ‘normal’ procedure of creating literacy, as in Central America, China and the Middle East grew out of a need for the ruling hierarchy to keep records. Society had grown sophisticated enough to require inventories to keep track of an economic surplus that could be taxed by a self-conscious political power. It is clear that this was not the case among Germanic peoples in the 1st century AD. Evidence rather suggests that these were mainly preoccupied with cattle-raising and slash-and-burn agriculture. It takes a long time for an entire society to become literate, and even longer to embrace a monotheistic religion or ideology. It usually takes an imperialist state to appear and force its neighbors to assimilate and conform to the imperialist ideology, turning unfortunate neighbors into its own im-
Those among the Germanic peoples who became literate began to imitate the Roman élite. They set out to create a belligerent ideology fixated on notions of hierarchy, but with little consideration for long-term economic growth. This dissertation has sought to examine a number of well-documented Modern Period cases where literacy was introduced just recently in this way, and where the ensuing reaction is quite resemblant. These cases ranging 18th century America to 20th century Africa and Asia will serve as a backdrop to the main question.

Terminology

I have attempted to come to terms with the question of the forced introduction to literacy by employing an interdisciplinary method, a form of comparative prehistoric sociolinguistics. In order to answer the question posed – how the Germanic peoples became literate Westerners– one must first establish a foundation for inquiry. I have done this by using a somewhat new form of terminology. The terms are first explained, and then evaluated in a variety of comparative contexts that serve as a backdrop. The backdrop has the advantage of being a select number of relatively well-known Modern Period contexts where causality is fairly certain. The conclusions from these initial studies then lead up to an attempt to answer a number of questions surrounding the central issue, that of pagan preliterate in Northern Europe eventually becoming Christian literati. I have made extensive use of a number of terms that are normally not employed in traditional archaeology. The terms are commonplace in neighboring disciplines such as linguistics, natural sciences, political science, and sociology. They will be applied to a selected number of case studies from the Modern Period. The point of using these cases is to see how far the application of the terminology is relevant, and if there is something to be gathered from the cases. The definitions of the terms are not finite. This is a good thing. It means that scholars may transform the terms as they see fit. Hence, I would like to use the terms as analytical tools that develop along the way.

Runic

(Ecriture Runique; Runenschrift; Runskrift)

The Proto-Germanic noun *runa has generally been translated as ‘secret’, a whisper of sorts (Düwel 2001). The term ‘Runic’ is here used to describe runic script and runic literacy. Nielsen (2000, 2002) has labeled the earliest language written in runes as ‘Early Runic’. To make things simple, I have therefore employed the terms ‘Continental Runic’ for the runic inscriptions found on the European Continent, and ‘Transitional Runic’ for Vendel Period runic inscriptions in Scandinavia. Beyond the scope of this study are the runic inscriptions in the Anglo-Frisian futhorc rune row (Parsons 1999). For want of a better term, the Anglo-Saxon corpus has been labeled as ‘Insular Runic’.
Affinity
(Affinité, Gemeinschaft, Ömsesidig gemenskap)

The term affinity is frequently employed both in chemistry and sociology. The term describes a minimum of two objects that are mutually attracted to each other. They therefore border on, or stand in a relationship to each other. In chemistry, affinity is seen as an attractive force that causes substances or particles to enter into chemical combinations or form molecules. Indeed, the sub-category ‘elective affinity’ (see below) also exists in the two disciplines mentioned above. In particular, Weber (2001) argued for an elective affinity between the Christian ideology of Protestantism and Capitalism. It was summarized in a set of values, i.e. the work ethic of Capitalism. Weber’s theory has been subject to scholarly scrutiny. Suffice to say that historians have showed it to be exaggerated. My definition of affinity differs considerably from that of Weber, and has less to do with a larger value system than with the description of how individuals choose to associate. I have sought to delineate three more precise definitions of affinity on different levels:

- **Primary Affinity**
  (Affinité familiale, Primäre Gemeinschaft, Familienverband, Primär gemenskap, familjeenhet)

- **Elective Affinity**
  (Affinité elective, Wahlgemeinschaft, Vald gemenskap, upplevd samhörighet)

- **Selective Affinity**
  (Affinité selective, Selektive Gemeinschaft, Utvald gemenskap, korad samhörighet)

Technolect
(Business Lingo, Argot professionel; Sondersprache, Standessprache; Fackspråk, terminologispråk)

The sociolinguistic term technolect describes a cluster of expressions and ways to communicate in language within an intentionally restricted group (Laurén and Nordman 1987). This group is united by virtue of a common practice. A technolect is not a proper language on its own; it exists within the language continuum of other languages. Two or more languages may be combined in a pidgin, and later develop into a Creole that has all the characteristics of a technolect. Laurén and Nordman (1987) claim that it is very difficult to find an intentionally secret technolect. I believe that there are a number of technolects (e.g. Rotwelsch) that do indeed qualify as secret. I also believe that the Early Runic technolect under went relexification to make it more secret. Within a technolect, there are even more specific clusters of words restriced to certain practices. These are labeled minilects. Within these are microlects. Laurén and Nordman (1987) have restricted themselves to scientific technolects, avoiding the interrelated question of social power. By contrast, scholars of Creole employ the terms ‘acrolect’, ‘mesolect’ and ‘basilect’ to describe social hierarchy manifest in language. It follows that many technolects qualify as acrolects by their very definition, notably the technolect of literacy.
The ‘Other’
(‘L’Autre’; ‘Der Andere’; ‘Den andre’)

The ‘other’ represents that which is not normal within a given culture. The presence of the ‘other’ means that there is a power struggle against a perceived threat that is by its very existence a challenge to the norm and status quo. One case is the treatment of women in almost all literate monotheistic cultures. Women are considered unclean, have a dangerous sex-drive and are best left at home tending babies and kitchen, etc. In Western tradition, male Africans have constituted the physical ‘other’, an antithesis to the genital physique and skin pigmentation of Europeans. In American culture, the black male has often been regarded as a major threat to the white woman. Homosexuals have also been castigated as deviant enemies to the norms of society by being different. Moreover, Western tradition has often argued that Jews and Muslims have constituted an ideological ‘other’, those who dare defy the truths of Christian universalism. Later on, Westerners and Marxist-Leninists accused each other of being that ‘other’ during the Cold War. Eventually those intra-Western differences came to pass, and a renewed focus is again on Muslim fundamentalism as the Western ‘other’. More recently, some branches of Western Feminism have described masculinity in all its physical and ideological forms (i.e. the male phallus and patriarchy) as the ‘other’. But these examples from Western intellectual tradition do not translate into a Western monopoly of creating ‘others’. Some Jews disdain gentiles as were they unclean, some Muslims claim the right to indiscriminately kill Westerners as infidels. Many Asians would still agree with the Japanese 1941 slogan ‘Asia for the Asians’ and so on. In this book, it will be argued that preliterates and literates are quick to draw conclusions on each other’s ‘otherness’.

Reification
(Reification; Widerspiegelung, Umbewertung; Omtolkning, omvädering)

The common definition of the term ‘reification’ is to incorrectly regard something that actually is an abstraction as a concrete, material object. My definition of reification follows that of Lukacs’ (1988: 164-172), but also seeks to go beyond it. Lukacs discusses an important process, where a human subject becomes an object. This is done by having to sell one’s own body on the labor market. This process of consciously reducing the own qualitative subject to a quantifiable object in the hands of others is to be understood as reification (Kolakowski 1988: 299-305). If one acknowledges that both these reification processes exist, understanding the abstract as an object, and consciously reducing the human subject to an object, it also becomes clear that one can extend Lukacs’ definition of the various forms of class-consciousness to encompass contacts between different cultures. Here, both forms of reification are inevitable, and the most painful is that of realizing that one is a mere object in the eyes of the ‘other’ beholder. I would further like to argue that there is also a third form of reification, that of attributing a subjective quality to quantitative object. One may attribute a persona or anima to a dead object, an imported idol for instance. This is an even more likely process to occur when two cultures meet. But a reification process does not have to entail submission. It may instead be part of an ideological defense, a stubborn refusal to under-
stand the world of the ‘other’ according the norms dictated by the ‘other’. Cases
in point are some of the ‘cargo cults’ of Melanesia and Micronesia (Trompf 2004:
271-276). These have been caused by the arrival of Westerners on cargo ships and
military transports. In Vanuatu, some affinities worship the United States Army
and an invented god, the American soldier Jon Frum. It should be noted that no
historical person John Frum seems to have existed. This is the divine GI Joe, who
turns out to be a fictitious John Doe. Religious ritual consists of dressing up in
American-style uniforms and hoisting the Star-Spangled Banner. These rites are
meant to cause the United States to send cargo ships full of luxury goods and
weapons, to be used against the neighboring tribes considered copycats.

Literacy
(‘The three r’s’: La maitrise de la communication écrite;
Schriftkompetenz; Läs- och skrivkunnighet, räkne- och sifferkunskap)

There is no single definition of literacy (Banniard 1989, Hines 1997, Barton 2004,
Holme 2004). Rather the technolect of literacy falls into subcategories of
minilects (Laurén and Nordman 1987). There appear to be at least two primary
forms of minilectal literacy: numerical literacy and textual literacy (see ill. 1).
Textual literacy entails the recording of language as opposed to numerical con-
cepts. Textual literacy may entail the ability to read, but not necessarily to write.
This is an important subdivision within the technolect. In this case, one might
distinguish between active and passive literacy. The ability to write is thus an ac-
rolect, whereas reading aloud is a mesolect in that it can convey the message to the
illiterate basilect affinities. Banniard’s (1989) French definition of literacy is im-
portant as it points to the period before being literate that of an apprenticeship
preceding command of literacy. Numerical literacy is easier to learn than textual
literacy. The latter may be ideographic or phonetic. Either way, the acquisition of
textual literacy represents a far greater intellectual achievement than that of nu-
merical literacy. It is thus likely that numerical literacy often preceded textual
literacy when it was introduced from the outside. Hines (1997) makes an impor-
tant distinction. He argues against the use of the term ‘literate society’ as long as
there is no mass literacy. Rather, he argues for the use of the term ‘literate cul-
ture’. Literate cultures may be interpreted as hegemonic ideologies within over-
whelmingly preliterate societies. Early Runic was such a ‘literate culture’ that
existed within the preliterate Germanic society. Literacy in its various forms is
closely related to the construction of social hierarchies, a term often used is ‘scaf-
folding’ where a social construction brings about a new mental one (Holme
2004:198-203). An important case in point is the combined use of chromatic,
ideographic, numerical, and phonetic literacy in Post-Soviet Russian prisons (Bal-
daev and Plutser-Serno 2003). The inmates have ever since the Soviet Period used
a coded system of tattoos to distinguish rank, ethnicity, sexual preferences and
criminal careers. The system has long been so dominant that low-ranking inmates
are tattooed against their will so that everybody can read them and place them
correctly in the social hierarchy.
**Kleptocracy**
(Cleptocratie, governance de voleurs; Raubherrschaft; Tjuvstyre)

The term kleptocracy belongs to political science and current global affaires. It signifies a governance of thieves or an order of thieves. The term was first used to describe the rule of Mobutu in Zaire. Since, it has been used somewhat out of context. For instance, presidential candidate Ralph Nader described the United States as a kleptocracy during the election of 2000. He probably wanted to use the term plutocracy. This is not the same thing. Plutocracy means that wealthy people rule. But this rule does not have to bring about its own destruction, nor does a plutocracy have to steal with the threat of violence to reproduce itself. Similarly, the German term ‘Raubwirtschaft’ is also inaccurate. It rather describes late 19th century colonialism, as in Belgian Congo. But the Europeans responsible for plundering Belgian Congo did not plunder at home. What does seem to be a major factor for a rule to be termed as a kleptocracy is the a priori existence of an imperialist power and an imperialist market economy. The kleptocracy can only exist as a subsidiary development to former. Kleptocracy has an intricate relation to literacy. It is often instrumental in introducing and reproducing literate culture in preliterate society, yet in the end literacy may well suffer from the socioeconomic effects of kleptocracy.

**Imperialism**
(Imperialisme; Imperialismus; Imperialism)

The Latin verb *imperare* means to command. The Romans also used the term *imperium* to describe the geographical area under their command. But the modern term imperialism was first introduced in the 1870’s (Champion and Eckstein 2003: 2-5). There is thus a chronological and semantic discrepancy between the modern term and its Roman origins. Champion and Eckstein (2003) describe three modern analytical views of imperialism. The first is the metrocentric, aiming at the core. The second is the diametrically opposite, it focuses on the periphery and how it is drawn into imperialism. The third is the systemic approach. It seeks a larger holistic approach, combining research on center and periphery. It also allows for a comparative approach with modernity. The systemic approach and its understanding of imperialism is similar to Gramsci’s (1989) use of the term ‘hegemony’. This is the approach used in this book.
PART I

Roman Imperialism and Runic Literacy

1 Literacy and Imperialism

The primary focus of Part I will be on the relationship between Germanic runic literacy and Roman imperialism. A number of parallels and analogies will be used. These have been gathered mainly from the Modern Period that is, 19th century America, and 20th century Africa and Asia. But it will first be necessary to discuss a number of terms and their internal relationship. These will be elaborated upon in a number of sections with somewhat varying chronologies and themes. The discussion centers around seven terms: affinity, technolect, literacy, the ‘other’, reification, imperialism, and kleptocracy. Their internal relationship may be described as that of an imposed linear causality. First, there are varying levels of affinity in society. The affinities act in various ways to separate themselves from other affinities, defining the ‘other’. These acts need to be described in spoken language within a structure known as a technolect. Within certain affinities more or less advanced technolects appear. More advanced technolects describe practices within society related to power. These technolects are used to heighten divisions within society. If it turns out to be successful, a technolect may become sophisticated enough to take a step into a meta-state. It then enters the realm of literacy. This is a step beyond the unspecified oral into a more exact discourse (Ostler 2004). The development of literacy within society eventually causes the creation of imperialist ideas. A fundamental idea within literate imperialism is that illiterates who are the ‘other’ become subordinate to the greater good of literate imperialism. The users of literate technolect often transform this idea into action. They will seek to conquer power over preliterates. It follows that preliterates will seek to imitate the imperialist society in order to avoid subordination. This means adapting the preliterate technolect to literacy, and to emulate imperialist ideas of government.

Given that the ideological development of the preliterate society accelerates to keep up with that of the imperialist aggressor, the economic base does not dovetail the superstructure of the ruling literate elite culture. The preliterate economy lags behind the desires of its ruling elite. To reproduce an imperialist lifestyle, the literate elite will have to become a kleptocracy. It will destroy the preliterate economic base by means of disproportionate theft in order to retain the ideological attributes pertaining to imperialist ideology. In the aftermath, literacy may become superfluous. It runs the risk of becoming an unnecessary attribute of a redundant ideology. This means that literacy is not a given in history. Its continuity is never assured once imperialism has fizzled out, only to be replaced by kleptocracy. A case in point is pre-Columbian cultures in Central America where literacy had
been invented but not transformed into mass literacy. When the Spaniards arrived in the early 16\textsuperscript{th} century, they attacked a preliterate society where a literate culture was easily eradicated and replaced with Latin and Spanish.

It would seem that only an economic upswing combined with increased trade volume might rescue the domestic form of literacy from being overwhelmed by hegemonic forms of literacy. There was such an upswing in the North during the Viking Period. Runic literacy became so engrafted in the hegemonic ideology, that it could resist Christianity to the point where Christian proselytizers simply decided to accept runes per se. This meant concentrating on other expressions of the hegemonic Germanic ideology, albeit with limited success.

Imperialist ideologies such as Christianity, Islam and Marxism-Leninism generally profess universal human values. We are all supposedly created as equals. All victims of crime should have the same right to compensation. That is, if the victim is considered to be the right kind of human. The rules do not always apply to all, as imperialist ideology is subject to constant reification. This is particularly evident in the Germanic periphery in Northern Europe. In Medieval Period Västergötland, the law code stated that ‘Christ is first in the law’. This would suggest that other Christian doctrines, e.g. the Ten Commandments, were included in the law. One would perhaps expect a provision such as ‘thou shalt not kill’. But this is not the case. There was no legal consequence for killing someone from Småland among the Christians in Västergötland. By contrast, killing someone from Uppland was an expensive affaire (Holmbäck and Wessén 1979). This shows that while imperialist ideologies are quite influential, the instigators are often no longer in control of unforeseen events further down the line. This also holds true for what may happen once literacy is forcibly introduced from one culture to the other.

1.1 What is Affinity?

To understand how Germanic peoples eventually came to embrace the idea that they as Christian literati had everything in common with Rome rather than the opposite, one must seek to understand what forms for collective action were available to them. In this section, the term affinity is defined as a group of humans. Within this definition, there are varying degrees of voluntary or coercive collectivity. Affinity may be based on descent, merits, profession, conviction, etc. The term is more applicable to preliterate society than the traditional class definitions of Engels, Marx and Weber, as it can account for professional skills, kinship and ethnicity as well as ideological conviction. In the case of preliterate Germanic society in relation to Roman imperialism, it appears that notions of affinity were redefined and reified over time, as the two societies gradually moved towards the class society of feudalism.

Germanic peoples, like others, were social beings. They sought affinity to fellow humans, but not to just anybody. Humans rarely allot the same importance to others as to themselves. Affinity is measured and evaluated both from within and the outside. Upon contact with anybody outside one’s own affinity, the very notion and value of one’s affinity and that of the ‘other’ is put into question (Huntington 1998). The sudden appearance of an ‘other’ is rarely regarded a good thing. It causes anxiety and deflects from what was past seen as the common weal. Representatives of ‘other’ cultures are generally frowned upon. Their eventual
superiority may be denied and deflected by means of an introspective ideology. This blindfolded value system is quite often opposed to further education and social mobility, although it may be forced to learn and change its social order as a result of its reaction against an ‘other’ ideology.

Multicultural encounters initially cause outward hostility and a need for internal cohesion within any affinity. This leads to subsequent stratification. The definition of affinity is expanded, yet the categories within the affinity are at times mutually exclusive. Fluidity or ascent within the affinity becomes more difficult. Some are forced to adhere and belong but will never be allowed to govern. Others may want to secede from the larger affinity but are instead given disproportionate power. Traditionally respected members of the affinity will try to assume more power over others than was previously the case. Moral codes and obtuse value concepts such as ‘honor’ and ‘decency’ are pushed into the foreground by the ever more powerful moral guardians of tradition. These concepts become more important than decision-making based on realism or consensus. Dissenters will be regarded as traitors or defectors. Their exclusion, voluntary or not, may be too dangerous to accept in the long run. The dissenters are then murdered as a warning to other potential dissenters.

A primary affinity is that of the immediate family and kin. Love and affection between parents and their children is in many ways unconditional, whereas marriage is often a contract on terms. Germanic affinities employed a conscious expansion policy of family relationships of unconditional love. This was done by means of adoption and fostering the children of others. High-ranking leaders could deposit their offspring in the homes of subordinates. In many ways this was a win-win solution. Everybody involved could expect a stronger bond of loyalty. Beyond the extended family, there were further relatives in an ethnic affinity. This definition may be expanded to speakers of the same language. Subordinates did not have to belong to the ethnic affinity. They may have been exiles, captives or born slaves. But as stated below, subordinates outside the ethnic affinity still had the possibility of ascent in two other forms of affinity.

The elective affinity rises to the occasion. One chooses to join a certain enterprise, to which one has to qualify. Relatively few people qualify to join a new elective affinity if they measure up to certain qualifications. They generally belong to the social hierarchy. Those defined as subordinate within an ethnic affinity may be called to join the ranks of an elective affinity by virtue of belonging to the household or extended primary affinity of a pater familias. There is opportunity to advance for the subordinates here.

The selective affinity invites only a few to join its ranks. Its mission is to rule a disproportionate share of society according to its own laws. Examples of selective affinities in the Antique Period are the Roman senatorial and equestrian ranks, and some of the mystery cults (Angus 1975). During Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period, one may point to the Roman officer corps and the Christian clergy. In the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, a few examples are the Knights Templar (Read 2005), the Jesuits (Lacouture 1991), and urban professional guilds. In the Modern and Post-modern Periods, one may mention Masonic lodges, Marxist-Leninist parties (Lenin 1972) and kleptocratic sodalities such as the Sicilian Mafia (Lappalainen 2001), the Democratic and Republican parties in Providence, Rhode Island (M. Stanton 2003), or even biker gangs such as the Hell’s Angels (Thompson 1967, Barger 2001). There are also a number of contemporary sects associated with the Catholic Church that qualify as selective af-
finities, notably the Opus Dei (Shachar 2002: 84-96, Olmedo and Vidal 2002: 101-110), but also pseudo-Christian groups such as the Church of Scientology (Chryssides 2004). The more secretive the affinity is, the more accentuated becomes the demand for qualification. The sensed self-importance or zeal is a crucial factor for the cohesion and reproduction of the selective affinity. Yet selective affinities have great difficulty in lasting longer than a few generations without compromising their initial tenets. This is especially the case if they encounter a new, superior culture, which causes them to dig in, internalize and highlight obtuse moral concepts rather than face the outside world with realism.

1.2 The Creation of Technolect

Scholars of European prehistory have always been fascinated by what kind of social structures cause change in society. As most prehistoric languages are dead, focus has often been on the development of the economy. Less focus has been put on how language, oral and textual, would have played a part in a process in an increased social stratification of the economy. This section seeks to demonstrate how a technolect is first created within an affinity. The technolect will enable occupational differentiation of various elective affinities in society, making both elective affinities and their technolects more complicated and sophisticated. This means a step away from the primordial order that is the ‘idiocy of rural life’ (Marx and Engels 1955).

What causes change in history? The human will to act is the foremost historical determinant. Human action is quite erratic. No single human act is ever an exact copy of that preceding it, nor is the act an immaculate materialization of the thought that caused it to happen. Things will always be done somewhat differently than intended. Hence, change is inevitable in human civilization. The next question is what change brings with it. Only by doing something significantly new does one have the capacity to go beyond subsistence economy and genetic reproduction. This new practice is one of accumulation. It consists of doing bigger, better, faster, and more than previously. The accumulation of goods or knowledge (reason or episteme) by means of human practice (labor) is often labeled ‘advance’, ‘evolution’, or ‘progress’. Intertwined with this development is a growing division of labor. It separates the new practice from the chores pertaining to the old subsistence economy (Rueschemeyer 1986: 1-14). But the prime concern is power, that what Parsons (1964) labels the ‘political function’:

Two evolutionary universals are closely interrelated in the process of ‘breaking out’ of what may be called the primitive stage of social evolution. These are the development of a well-marked system of stratification, and that of a system of explicit cultural legitimation of differentiated functions, preeminently the political function (Parsons 1964: 342).

It would seem that the step from hunting and gathering towards literate statehood may take a very long time – but it will be taken whether you like it or not. If you do not take that step, your neighbor will. Literate statehood steps in without an invitation. It then steps on you.

After the will to act, the production of knowledge is the second most important catalyst in history. Yet the transcendence or reproduction of knowledge from one individual to another, from one generation to next is by no means immaculate. Even if knowledge is passed on from an autocratic teacher to an obedient pupil
with utmost orthopraxy, its essence still changes a little (Benjamin 1988: 220). The significance and meaning given to every single piece of reproduced knowledge is never identical, but similar. The closest thing to a totality, then, is a large mosaic. Different and contradictory pieces of meaning may be placed next to each other. These may give a reflection similar to that of the past.

Modern science rests largely on skepticism. To come up with an explanation that may convince, one generally has to offer a totality – a complete view where every doubt may be assuaged and put to rest. The problem with these kinds of convincing explanations is that they often assume much clarity and a pure transcendence of knowledge. A concept such as Ockham’s razor may throw doubts on any attempt to explain anything beyond the obvious. It is somehow taken for granted that ideas and knowledge have a pure existence outside of the human consciousness and practice. This means that sometimes very mediocre explanations are given precedence because they enable views of totality (Lotter 2003). There is something transcendental to the production and reproduction of knowledge (Benjamin 1988: 218). But ideas and knowledge are subject to constant change, emptied and filled with new meaning whenever taken into account by humans. There rarely is such a thing as an immanent idea still residual in something that has been copied time and time again.

There is a strong tendency in Western thought to see development of human practice and increased division of labor as something inherently good. Those in charge have enabled the others to perform better, and this will eventually benefit all. This view has a long tradition. One can trace it in the Nordic Late Iron Age (Herschend 1998). Development is described as a universal feature. It gives human existence in history a meaning. There is a goal of maximizing the common weal under benevolent leadership. The teleological purpose of human progress stands in contrast to the insular tautology of subsistence economy, which Marx and Engels (1955) labeled the ‘idiocy of rural life’. This term has taken on a derogatory meaning, but this is is mistaken. As pointed out by Draper (1998), the original German term *Idiotismus* rather means ‘isolation’.

Hegel (1989) saw the foundation of the state as an apex in human history. It was the realization of divine providence. The state was the end of history, embodying all hitherto accumulated reason, growing closer to absolute truth. Many of his students had problems with this view. Most troubling was the division of labor that formed the backbone of the state. It was seen as profoundly unjust and de-humanizing, causing alienation from true human nature and the purpose of human civilization (Marx 1971). The forces of production were considered the driving forces in history. Marx was hoping for the abolition of the state by means of a reorganization of labor by the laborers themselves. The dissolution of the state was to be the end of history. But Marxists in state power have never been able to do away with neither division of labor nor the state. Rather, Lenin (1972) argued for a small elite leadership to conquer state power. Just before enjoying state power, Lenin (1970) briefly toyed with the idea of doing away with the state. The fact that this has never happened in any Marxist-Leninist dictatorship suggests that Marxism-Leninism is just another outcrop of the Western imperialist tradition.

The Western positive view of progress by means of an increased division of labor entails a notion of efficiency. The supposed rationale for an increased division of labor is that more gets done in a better way. This is to be taken for granted. Against this optimistic view, Rueschemeyer (1986: 54-70) points out that a more
likely motive for an increased division of labor is a real concern for power and authority. Power has to be maintained no matter what. This means that economic development is not a given nor a priority. An inept division of labor may be maintained for the simple reason of preventing change (especially in Marxist-Leninist dictatorships). Efficiency in the division of labor may also be distracted by the use of very irrational and inefficient contraptions if it fits those in charge. More important is that those at the top control those at the bottom and vice versa. This control needs to be represented in language. What kind of language maintains the division of labor? How does it accentuate the need for control between various affinities in society? As argued below, it is in the descriptive language that follows human action that the technolect is born.

Once a practice related to an elective affinity (e.g. metalworking, horseback-riding, trade, or warfare) becomes more important than others in the division of labor, a need arises for words describing different parts of the practice. One no longer ‘does’ things. One performs the act of creating something that has a new meaning, a new value. It is different from that of others. The new practice changes the meaning of previously well-known and established things – but only for those initiated (Eliade 1998). And this exclusive feat needs specific words to be described in speech. As the newly activated linguistic development of the practice unfolds, a new set of interrelated words and meanings begins to assemble around the speech community, i.e., the practitioners. This causes them to feel pride in their practice. It gives a further sense of affinity with other practitioners. It follows that the use of the new vocabulary separates them from others, even when they are not busy with their new practice. They will therefore make an effort to develop the cluster of words and new meanings into a linguistic entity. They take the step from the elective affinity into that of the selective affinity. They create a technolect (Laurén and Nordman 1987: 33-42). This is still part of the old language, and not yet a new language. Yet, its users have created artificial barriers where all other speakers of the old language have to show themselves qualified to enter. Non-qualified intruders are easily discovered and dismissed.

Beyond the technolect is the even more specialized minilect. This is related to media such as text and radio. Minilects are often characterized by one-way communication. Examples of minilects are seaspeak and aviation English (Laurén and Nordman 1987: 57). These minilects are full of acronyms, signs and symbols. An example from American WW II military minilect is the term ‘SNAFU’. This acronym reflects an attempt to give descriptive order to chaos. It spells out as ‘Situation Normal, All Fucked Up’. The use of acronyms and symbols is an attempt to go beyond orality, where speech or performance is an event (Ong 1982). Any technolect seeks to become a system of signs, achieving a communication as close to atemporality as possible.

Masters of technolect still have to deal with other people in the old language they were brought up with. But they also feel the need to mark their cohesion and power over other people. This leads to the creation of an intermediate technolect. It will develop according to its relation to speech and literacy, but also to the socioeconomic situation. If successful, its initiated speakers stand a lot to gain in terms of social power. The archetypical Marxist-Leninist dictator, Stalin (1976) assessed language as something belonging to an entire people or nation. He dismissed the importance of class-based jargons (Kolakowski 1988: 158-159). This had to do with a static understanding of nationality. Rapid mobility was not a given in the Soviet Union, on the contrary, one needed a permit to move. Excep-
tions were mass deportations of entire ethnic affinities to fictitious republics with labor camps in Siberia. The extreme case of a closed homogenous Marxist-Leninist society such as North Korea (Kim Il Sung 1971), together with the Early Modern development of Atlantic Creoles throw serious doubts on Stalin’s more general theory. Class, race, and the level of mobility in society are factors affecting language far more than someone like Stalin would ever be willing to admit.

1.2.1 Mesolect – Intermediate Technolect

A key question is what the first generations of interacting Germanic and Roman affinities spoke to each other. How did that language develop over time? In this section, it will be argued that although technolects serve to differentiate in society, thus creating social hierarchies in terms of elective affinities and later selective affinities, there is still a need for communication across social boundaries. This is why one needs to create an intermediate technolect, a mesolect.

Specialists still need the services of others to survive in their profession. Others are the objects of manipulation once the special value may be created. They have to be introduced as to why they need the specialist and why his role in speech is so important. Most people at sea understand terms in seaspeak such as GMY (Gott/God Mit You), SOS (Save Our Souls), or mayday (M’aidez) because if in need, one would like to ask a specialist to show up and set things straight. But the rescuer is likely to demand something in return. This is why an intermediate technolect has something of a patron-client character to it. It is very much dictated by socioeconomic circumstances. An obvious case of an influential intermediate technolect is the common Germanic vocabulary in shipbuilding and sailing with derivatives in French. But a technolect may not be all that lexically inventive, especially if unrelated to literacy. One case of a lexically conservative technolect with many elements originally borrowed from Rotwelsch is knoparmoj. Swedish chimney cleaners speak it. Knoparmoj dates at least to the 18th century, and has undergone relatively little change (Bergman 1943).

Coded speech eventually becomes commonplace if its users make an impression on others. If a tight-knit elective affinity uses its own technolect, the latter becomes the envy of others who do not understand or master the secret speech. Eventually, certain phrases or partial ciphers slip through the discursive barrier and into the old language. Words may retain their old meaning but are often given wider significance. A codified word or phrase then grows larger and attains a more universal meaning, before it eventually becomes entirely reified or meaningless. This process may be very rapid. A case in point is clusters of derogative Swedish slang words for Arabs and Africans coined 1960-64 in the Swedish UN contingents in the Middle East and in the Congo (Högstrand 1975, Löfgren 1989). Some 6,332 Swedish soldiers served in the Congo. They introduced a handful of words into Swedish vernacular language after only a few years of foreign military service. Words like ‘yxa’ (initially meaning ‘Arab’ or ‘Mediterranean person’, later ‘African’), ‘yxmage’, (‘diarrhea’), ‘baluba’ (‘African’, after a tribe in Kasai, Congo) spread with the return of the Swedish UN veterans, including later ones from the Swedish UN contingent in Cyprus. The meanings of the Minilect words grew wide and obscure to scholars (Gibson 1978). Soon, an ‘yxa’ or ‘baluba’ was just any stranger or foreigner (e.g. Pirinen 1987). Lately, the plural ‘balubas’ has in Stockholm dialects come to mean money, e.g. ‘Stölen bellar 40 balubas’ that is,
‘The large draft beer costs 40 crowns’. Similarly, words and phrases borrowed from månsing and rommani are plentiful in contemporary Swedish, e.g. knas ‘trouble’. There is a trickle down process to be true. But it remains difficult to determine to what degree the closed affinity eventually dissolves its secrecy or whether outsiders succeed in submerging the discourse.

1.2.2 Social Stratification in Atlantic Creole

In this section, it will be argued that technolects may exist on several levels in society. Once a society expands, it may start to develop an imperialist ideology. If so, it will need to enhance the usage of intermediate technolect. An intermediate technolect may absorb substantial parts of many different languages. Mainly borrowing or replacing words in the vocabulary, a process known as relexification, does this. This is done for the benefit of an elective or selective affinity that wants to reach out to some outside their own ethnic affinity, while shutting all other members of their own ethnic affinity out. Cases in point are månsing and rommani (not to be confused with Gypsy romani). Itinerant merchants and vagrants once spoke these languages in Early Modern and Modern Period Götaland, Sweden (Bergman 1943).

Linguistic development is a conflict between a demand for stability and a demand for change. Language is therefore an open system (Laurén and Nordman 1987: 13). If encountered by an unrelated language, the users of intermediate technolect can employ a partial relexification and go on to use a Pidgin (a non-grammatical two-way oral communication). This may later develop into a Creole, which actually does represent a new language in that it has a grammar. A case in point is the Atlantic Creole Papiamentu, an Early Modern Period mixture of African, Arawak, Dutch, English, Portuguese and Spanish languages. The word Creole supposedly first derives from the Portuguese word Criulu, meaning, ‘enslaved house servant’. Later it came to signify a European born in South America or the Caribbean. In Creole, there are many levels of linguistic competence. These generally reflect the division of labor.

Atlantic Creoles represented the Early Modern Period division of labor (slavery) in language. Millions of Africans were shipped to America by Europeans and were made to work for the Europeans. The latter needed to communicate with their slaves to make them obey. It was in the interest of the African slaves to acquire some of the European language as to improve their situation. A slave who spoke the European language well could be used for other things than menial labor. His/her life would be decidedly different (Alleyene 1996: 136). A simplified historical explanation is that the different sociolects in Atlantic Creoles derive from European slave-owners, those given domestic tasks, and field labor. Within Jamaican English there is wide spectrum of linguistic competence, but three separate sociolects have been identified: acrolect, mesolect and basilect. Performance is very much class-based as the two extreme ends of the spectrum are at times mutually unintelligible. Standard Jamaican English is considered to be the acrolect. It is understood by most, although only a few are fluent speakers. The acrolect is also used to communicate with Americans and Europeans. There is no single mesolect, but a rich variety dependent on the proximity to other social segments. Performance in mesolect may vary according to the social situation. The presence of an acrolect speaker may cause the mesolect speaker to try to speak in
a more European fashion. Similarly, if the situation dictates the need to com-
minate with speakers of basilect, the performance is adjusted to their linguistic com-
petence. Jamaican Creole is the basilect. Illiterate male fieldworkers who have
great difficulty understanding acrolect speak it. But the difficulty in understanding
is mutual and intentional.

Elements of West African languages such as Twi-Asante have survived in
many Creole basilects. This is not only due to the limited contact with the spea-
kers of acrolect. The African syntactic elements serve as a language barrier against
unwanted competence, preventing unwanted intrusive performance (Alleyne
1996). As a result, there is considerable pressure on the mesolect speakers to ad-
just their competence from both above and below. Articulating oneself in the lan-
guage of power does not have to correspond to the exercise of hegemony. Too
much acrolect in the performance of a mesolect speaker may cause basilect speak-
ers to ostracize the person and regard him as an ‘Uncle Tom’, an intruder or trai-
tor. This is evidence of a dual form of control within knowledge production.
There tends to be a strong sentiment in larger affinities that expresses the desire to
prevent social mobility by means of applied knowledge. People do not like the
fact that some can climb pass them by using the acrolect. It is quite likely that the
technolect of literacy (an acrolect by its very definition) was seen as a dangerous
tool in preliterate affinities. Preliterates are likely to have tried to prevent the liter-
ates from getting too much power. The aspirations of literates needed to be con-
trolled from below.

1.2.3 Rotwelsch – A Kleptocratic Technolect

In this section it will be argued that the technolect of a selective affinity may ab-
sorb the language of a different ethnic affinity only to reify and relaxify the voc-
ubulary of the latter. This may be due to the socioeconomic circumstances under
which the technolect is formed. An important case of a technolect dictated by a
socioeconomic context is Rotwelsch, dating to Medieval Period Germany (Land-
mann 1986: 414-466). Rot means ‘beggar’ in Middle High German. Welsch is an
old Germanic term for things Italian or belonging to romanitas, attested in Early
Runic as walha. This language belonged to the German Gauner. Gauner is
probably derived from the Hebrew verb jano, ‘to fool’. A relation to Zigeuner,
‘gypsy’ has also been discussed. Related is also the Jenisch language of vagrant
merchants from Switzerland to Westphalia. Rotwelsch had Middle High German
grammar but used very different words. The vocabulary had large elements of
Hebrew and Yiddish. This was the case even if extremely few of its speakers were
of Jewish descent. The Hebrew and Yiddish vocabulary in Rotwelsch had under-
gone several stages of relaxification. A Yiddish-speaking Jew could not under-
stand Rotwelsch, unless a Gauner explained the inner workings of the Rotwelsch
technolect.

[...] trotz der hebräischen Herkunft vieler Rotwelschausdrücke ist es sogar so, daß auch
ein guter Kenner der hebräischen und jiddischen Sprache diese selbe Ausdrücke im Rot-
welsch nicht ohne weiteres versteht. Sie haben hier nämlich, in dem neuen Milieu, eine
ganz neue Bedeutung angenommen. Allerdings wird der Kenner der hebräischen
Sprache, so bald man ihm die neue Bedeutung der hebräischen Ausdrücke im Rotwelsch
erklärt, ziemlich leicht begreifen, warum und auf welchem Wege und Umwege die Sinn-
wendung vorging (Landmann 1986: 415).
This is an important point to which I will return to later. The origins of Rotwelsch date to the 11th century abolition of slavery in Germany. Instead of slaves, there were now lots of landless proletarians. No longer tied to the land of primary affinities ruled by others, they became mobile and sought elective affinity. Beggars, runaway soldiers, landless aristocrats, and itinerant merchants joined them during the 12th century. Together they created a secret language and became a selective affinity, the Gaunertum. The weak state apparatus of the Holy Roman Empire could not prevent organized crime and vagrancy, and the police of the city-states were unable to do anything against a mobile affinity. This presented the Gauner with a vast scene of action.

The strong position of Rotwelsch in the 12th to 14th centuries caused its leading speakers to congregate and decide on how the language was to be developed. Some of Gauner leaders claimed aristocratic and judicial titles, using seals. In contrast to this conscious manipulative relexification of the language continuum, one may note the derivative meaning in Swedish ‘rotvälska’, ‘gibberish’. Some people obviously never got it. The Rotwelsch congregations made manifest a desire to manipulate language from above. There was a sensed need to control outsiders and stem the growth of intermediate technolect by means of an artificial language barrier.

The use (or theft) of the vocabulary of a marginalized language as the basis for a relexified technolect in order to exclude a larger language belonging to an imperialist ideology is quite an audacious and very creative enterprise. Rotwelsch stands out as an aesthetic creation regardless of the criminal nature of its speakers. The case of Rotwelsch has implications for how one is to evaluate the technolect of the Germanic selective affinities of the Roman Iron Age that eventually enter the highest echelons of executive power within the Roman Empire. It becomes clear that linguistic and behavioral criteria for the entry into various affinities are likely to have altered very rapidly depending on the circumstances. There was one more step to take – that into the realm of literacy. It is likely that the first Germanic literates employed Latin as a technolect to distinguish themselves from other Germanic affinities. Yet, there was no ultimate point in being an inferior Germanic person who happened to be literate in Latin in a preliterate Germanic society. The point was to use Early Runic literacy to create a stronger Germanic hierarchy, capable of shutting out both Roman literates and Germanic illiterates.

1.3 The Technolect of Literacy

What is literacy? Banniard (1989) defines literacy as ‘la maitrise de la communication écrite’. The definition of literacy as belonging within a ‘maitrise’ suggests a period of apprenticeship. Time and thus linearity comes into play. Literacy is a mnemonic system by which an individual can observe and/or produce a certain grapheme, deduce its meaning, and then relate it to other graphemes. Meaning is ordered with mnemonotechnical devices, preferably a graphematic system with an acrophonic structure. The text is written, and then read. This is a one-way communication. It requires a conception and an acceptance of the linear. Any meaningful combination of graphemes beyond the cluster is necessarily ordered in a sequence that has a definite beginning and a definite end. Literacy works to a large degree according to facts. If a chain of graphemes is not accepted for what it actually is, its original intent is no longer meaningful.
In order to acquire literacy, one has to submit oneself to a new mode of thought. This mode of thought structures and rules one’s behavior and relationship to text. Reading a text, one begins by discerning where the text begins. One accepts the linear. This takes time and discipline. One has to reach a certain age. For instance, the CIA only includes people aged 15 years and over in its estimated literacy rates (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook). At this age, one has inevitably acquired more than just literacy. A disciplinary yoke has subdued one in order to enter the literate technolect. This may appear horrific, but it is likely that most readers would have no problem accepting the United States Government definition of literacy as ‘the Framework’ even if it subdues people:

Literacy unites the important skills of reading and writing. It also involves speaking and listening, which, although they are not separately identified in the Framework, are an essential part of it. Good oral work enhances pupils’ understanding of language in both oral and written forms and of the way language can be used to communicate. It is also an important part of the process through which pupils read and compose texts (United States Government definition of literacy, cf. http://www.netz-kasten.de/lesen/information/cult/literacy.php3).

By comparison, the CIA World Factbook has a more advanced definition of literacy in that it is seen as a major factor in establishing the intellectual level of a given nation-state and that the level of mass literacy may be used to measure the likelihood of economic development:

This entry includes a definition of literacy and Census Bureau percentages for the total population, males, and females. There are no universal definitions and standards of literacy. Unless otherwise specified, all rates are based on the most common definition - the ability to read and write at a specified age. Detailing the standards that individual countries use to assess the ability to read and write is beyond the scope of the Factbook. Information on literacy, while not a perfect measure of educational results, is probably the most easily available and valid for international comparisons. Low levels of literacy, and education in general, can impede the economic development of a country in the current rapidly changing, technology-driven world (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/docs).

The invention of textual literacy occurred sometime c. 3500 BC in Sumeria, that is, somewher in present-day Iraq. It reoccurred somewhat later in China, and much later in Central America. This endeavor represents one of the greatest human achievements, with arguable claims to universality. It cannot be said to restricted to a certain ethnicity or part of the world, as various writing systems have been created independently in various places, e.g. in Pre-Columbian Central America sometime 300-200 BC (Jean 1991: 70-71). There is thus a somewhat universal feature in that literacy may arise in any given human society if there is a sensed need for it. There are limited ways to construct a writing system. It has to be either predominantly logographic (ruled by symbols), or phonographic (ruled by sounds). In the latter case it has to be either syllabic (ruled by two combined sounds consisting of a consonant and a vowel), or alphabetic (ruled by single consonants and vowels).

It would seem that logographic writing systems would take a very long time to develop and learn. Symbols are more complex to learn rather than arbitrary signs fixed to sounds that come natural to human speech. Chinese literacy implies the knowledge of thousands of different signs. To become a fluent reader takes considerable practice. Therefore, new writing systems created in reaction to the liter-
acy of others’ generally seem to be phonographic. Examples are the Early Modern syllabaries of the Cherokee and the Cree in North America, the Vai in Sierra Leone and the Bamum in Cameroon. These syllabaries vary in size from 226 to 40 characters. There are also phonetic scripts combining Latin and Arabic such as the Osmanya alphabet, created in 1922.

1.3.1 The Behavioral Effects of Literacy on the Human Brain

There are some 6,700 languages spoken today. Of these, some 1,000 are written languages (Hellman 2003: 23). Gleason (1996:777) argues that Christian missionaries have established writing systems for more than 1,000 languages since the beginning of the 16th century. Two thirds were established in the 20th century and one fourth in the 19th century. No great surprise then, to discover that literacy is considered a good thing in Western thought. The 1948 United Nations’ declaration of human rights includes literacy. Literacy is a vehicle that brings out further potential out of the human brain. It supposedly leads towards democracy and individualism. Be this as it may, it seems to be true that an illiterate person is likely to be less imaginative than someone literate is.

The literate person has been exposed to a different mental process. He or she can therefore more easily conceive of different things. Yet, it is easy for anyone literate to assume that literacy is a state of normality and that illiteracy is a deviant ‘other’ behavior, when in fact, it is natural that humans are born illiterate. Illiteracy is therefore a normal, if primordial state of being. Its understanding of causality is not analytic, but aggregative (Ong 1982: 57). Yet, the very existence of illiteracy is provocative to the literati. According their understanding of normality, there has to be some remedy to the detrimental state of mind that is illiteracy. Literati have by virtue of their superior knowledge a duty to intervene. They must by all means change the behavior of illiterates.

The study of preliterate societies in the present is questionable. Are Western anthropologists and archeologists there to learn or to teach? It would seem that Western scholars searching for Paleolithic and Neolithic societies in Africa, America, Asia and Australia are nothing more than imperialist agents, even if they only claim to be observing a cockfight (Geertz 1973). They may be stalwart and unselfish in their zeal, much like St. Patrick and St. Boniface who once made Westerners out the Irish and the Germans. One may generously offer ballpoint pens, malaria pills, mosquito nets and Swiss army knives to the natives. What if these actions are ultimately caused by ideology, rather than in response to sensed empathy or compassion? Is it any different from Roman slave traders and fiscal administrators, Spanish Jesuits, or American and Soviet military advisors? Given the past, this seems extremely doubtful. In any case, the effects will be the same or worse.

There is little opportunity for preliterate societies to directly reify the incoming knowledge. This is what spelled the military defeat of all resistance to colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th century (Porch 2000). Only after several stages of reification of Western imperialist ideology (i.e. Marxism-Leninism), was national liberation a viable politico-military option. Given the presence of binary written languages expressed by means of GPS, Linux and digital pixels, the imperialist presence may become more synchronic and permanent.
The current situation is very different from when the French were ousted from North Vietnam in 1954, or when the Portuguese were given 24 hours to carry 20 kg of personal belongings before leaving Mozambique for good in 1974. The definition of presence in time and space, and hence that of value, is irrevocably changed. The past becomes pedestalized by means of binary episteme, 1’s and 0’s. Only the ‘other’ may understand this past. This ‘other’ is likely to be a Westerner with his/her laptop. Along comes a single good-natured Western person such as Binford (1978) or Geertz (1973) who knows how to capture the past and hold on to it in way no griot may. One’s own existence has become marginalized. The meaning of life has become irrelevant. It belongs to someone else.

Atterstam (2004) suggests that illiteracy causes such negative behavioral effects. It supposedly damages brain capacity. In her view, Swedish neuroscientists and Portuguese housewives have an important role to play. They can explain why the brains of Third World illiterates are inferior to those of literate Westerners. Atterstam bases this argument on a recent Portuguese-Swedish study of 80 illiterate Portuguese women around the age of 60. They are all living in the fishing port of Faro, Portugal. They were compared to a corresponding literate reference group. The study showed significant results (Gonsalez da Silva, Petersson, Faisca, Ingvar, Reis 2003, Atterstam 2004). First, it was clear that the illiterate women were not physically ill, mentally handicapped, or ostracized. Rather, the traditional division of labor had it that one daughter did not attend school but became the housekeeper.

Ill. 1. Basic Aspects of Literacy (After Hines 1997)

The most telling differences between illiterates and literati were the following: A PET camera showed that the left hemisphere of the brain (which is considered to contain the language center, where Broca’s and Wernicke’s areas are located) was less dominant among illiterates. Different parts of the brain were activated with
different patterns. Illiterates had the same language development as literates, yet were unable to grasp the concept of phonology. The inability to process the same amount of information, and deconstructing long sentences, hampers the ability to think in abstract terms. This means that illiterates have more difficult time understanding complicated oral information. Cases pointed out by Atterstam (2004) are issues such as AIDS prevention, and the introduction of new methods of agriculture:

De negativa beteendeeffekterna på hjärnan av analfabetism måste vägas in i allt bistäds-arbete. Budskapet måste utformas så att också de illitterata förstår (Atterstam 2004).

The ability to identify three-dimensional figures and abstract graphic representations is less developed among illiterates. Mnemonics is also less developed. As a rule, illiterates performed worse than literates in all tests related to the memorization of words and numbers. Finally, illiterates showed themselves less receptive to new data, rather there was a sense of resistance. They were also less able or inclined to criticize authoritarian figures. Illiterates are generally considered to be stupid. They are also thought to be more likely to follow in the lead of manipulative evildoers. But neither educated opinions nor inferior mental states seem to be absolute determinants in history.

Well-educated Westerners like Americans and Germans have proved capable of committing the same racist atrocities as the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda. Indeed, state-sponsored racism and genocide existed in Germany and the United States long before it took full effect in Rwanda. Genocide may well be such a complicated enterprise that it requires a literate culture to come up with a scheme to perform such an abomination. This idea is then diffused by means of imitatio imperii. The most intriguing problem tied to the acquisition of literacy has to do with power. It is an undeniable fact that an illiterate pupil has to stand in a subordinate relationship to a literate teacher. This means accepting his/her authority, statements and actions as objective (rather than factual) truth. The imposition of literacy is for some reason associated with Western values. The neuroscientist M. Ingvar sees the benefits in an improvement of the human brain towards the literate and the linear. This improvement leads towards democracy:

På så sätt underlättar läskunnighet och skolning den demokratiska utvecklingen och skapar mer dynamiska och självständiga individer. […] Det går att förändra hjärnan till det bättre (M. Ingvar, quoted in Atterstam 2004).

This is a highly questionable hypothesis. Two adjacent Latin inscriptions from an early 2nd century Roman villa in Silberberg by Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Kr. Ahrweiler, may illustrate this relationship, perhaps with a tinge of irony. The first is in pentameter, and is probably that of a teacher: Qui non bene didicit, garrulus esse solet, ‘Who doesn’t learn properly, talks too much’. The other, less fluent, in hexameter with two vulgarisms clearly belongs to a pupil: Scribtum me docuit Grati crudilis habena, ‘Oh, Gratus’ crude reins taught me writing’ (Rüger 1998: 364). If the subordinate relationship involved in the process of reproducing and transcending knowledge is unclear or unacceptable to the pupil, (reasons for this may be grounded in a different ethnicity, age, status, gender, etc.), the learning process will become more difficult and painful. In particular, the pupil will have a hard time coming to grips with a new found sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the teacher, who knows more ‘truth’ (i.e., irrefutable facts) than does the pupil. This
can lead to frustration and aggressive behavior, particularly among adult pupils who are less likely to learn rapidly.

A World Bank evaluation of 32 different literacy programs showed that only 56% of adult participants acquired literacy. Of these, only 12-60% were able to retain and employ their knowledge for any longer period (Atterstam 2004). Everything indicates that the three first years of learning are absolutely critical. During this time, a young pupil inevitably acquires (willingly or not) a number of ideas and habits related to the learning process, such as the teacher’s appreciation of order, the use of a note-pad, a desk, a pencil sharpener etc. Education has a given *modus operandi*, and this is absorbed along the way.

In the end, the acquisition of literacy is always tied to the acceptance of a certain mode of behavior, objects and patterns of thought. It is engrained in a number of habits (Bourdieu 1990: 52-66). This is especially true if literacy can only be acquired by means of a foreign language. This means that the literate teacher and his school are very powerful, having to a large extent the capacity to mould the illiterate pupil. Once fully literate, it will take considerable effort on behalf of the young pupil to extricate himself from the teacher’s influence. One problem for the teacher is that he does not know whether the student is going to apply and/or reproduce the acquired knowledge as the teacher once wanted to. Another is whether the teacher really wants a slavish follower or an educated innovator that may replace him one day.

### 1.4 What is Imperialism?

A key argument for the fact that there was such a thing as Early Runic literacy is that it owed its existence to Roman imperialism. But was Roman imperialism really the same thing as what one means by the term today? This section will provide a brief recapitulation for the traditional definition of imperialism during the Modern Period. It will then offer a partly new definition of imperialism that will be employed in this text. The scientific concept of imperialism came to be defined at the turn of the last century by a British Liberal MP, J.A. Hobson. In 1902, he criticized the Boer War (1899-1902), arguing that it was ‘a scam perpetrated on the British people by a clutch of patriotic parasites led by Cecil Rhodes’ (Porch 2000:26). This was by and large a correct assessment, except that Hobson was more concerned for his British constituency than for the war victims in Africa. Based on Hobson’s research, which he uncritically accepted, Lenin (1951) set out in 1916 to enlarge and reify the definition of imperialism. Hobson and Lenin both saw imperialism as a final stage in the development of the 19th century capitalist mode of production (Magnusson 1985). Agrarian and primitive societies were to be developed to provide the industrialized West with raw materials. Western states where willing to go to war to conquer market shares, and eventually, acquire global monopoly. But whereas Hobson argued that the major reason for imperialism was that the industrialized West generated surplus capital that could be invested elsewhere, Lenin (1951) claimed that it was rather the falling profit ratio in the industrialized West that caused states to conquer underdeveloped territories in order to maximize profits there. An African politician, Kwame Nkrumah (1965) later tried to argue that neo-colonialism was the last stage of imperialism. It would seem that they were all wrong.
Critics such as Schumpeter have since pointed out major flaws in both Hobson’s and Lenin’s arguments (Champion and Eckstein 2004: 2). As for Nkrumah, he ruled the Republic of Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast and British Togo) from its independence in 1957, increasingly as an autocrat with divine assumptions until the military toppled him in 1966. Ever since his second coup d’état in 1982, the former air force lieutenant Jerry Rawlings has been in control of political power in Ghana. Rawlings has successfully applied for and received World Bank aid after having experimented with Marxist-Leninist government with meagre results.

It would appear that there never was a large profit margin in the Capitalist economy, which could be invested in the underdeveloped colonies with an extremely high return in the early 20th century. Rather, profits came from the reasonably modern markets in South America (notably Argentina), Australia and New Zealand. Investment in Africa and Asia was made in the urge for global military power and in the hope for future economic gains rather than being caused by an explicit economic determinism (Magnusson 1985, Porch 2000). Schumpeter instead defined imperialism as ‘the objectless disposition on the part of the state to unlimited forcible expansion’ (Champion and Eckstein 2004: 2).

I have taken a different view on imperialism, regarding it as the ultimate result of a supremacist ideology, rather than caused by economic determinism or a single state apparatus. It may be defined as an ideology, which regards those who share its ideas as superior to those that do not. Although racism may well be implicit in this ideology (e.g. the condescending attitude of literate Westerners towards illiterate Africans), it can never be explicit, because racist ideology is antithetical to universalism that is a fundamental part of imperialism. For instance, Africans could become full citizens in Portuguese-ruled Africa, so-called ‘asimilados’, but only if they were literate, educated and ascribed to the idea that Portugal was entitled to rule over illiterate Africans. As most literate and educated Africans realized that the idea of Portuguese rule over Africans was profoundly unjust, very few applied for citizenship.

To sum up: imperialism will be regarded as a literate ideology that sees itself as having a civilizing mission. Imperialism claims to have the right to attack any affinity or territory that refuses to subordinate itself to ideological tenets of one or more imperialist state apparatuses. These tenets are considered universal and applicable to all human life. This definition qualifies not only the current leading powers of the industrialized West as imperialists, but also Pharaonic Egypt, the Roman Empire, and the Habsburg Empire. Furthermore, it qualifies Christianity, Islam, and Marxism-Leninism as causative imperialist ideologies.

1.4.1 Are there Universal Reactions to Imperialism?

This section argues that there may be a universal initial reaction in all social hierarchies of preliterate cultures to the actions of an imperialist state or hegemonic ideology. What do people do in response to being colonialized? They realize the
need to learn from the imperialist colonizers. They will learn, but not as the impe-
rialist teachers had once intended. This is where the universalism seems to end. 
From then on, there are parallels and analogies to be drawn only. To understand 
how the original meaning becomes blurred in the reproduction of knowledge, one 
must also look at notoriously unenthusiastic learners. Coercion makes for under-
achieving students. This was discussed already by Quintilian, arguably the most 
influential of Roman educational scholars. He noted that Studium discendi volun-
tate, quae cogi non potest, constat, that is, ‘learning depends on will, which can-
not be bent to comply’. An ideal topic is the response of the colonialized to impe-
rialism. This may be described as a need for those in the dependent periphery to 
interpret, imitate, and translate the knowledge produced by powerful centers. Take 
Cambodia as an example. It is most unlikely that the terrible years of 1975-1979 
would have looked the same way had not Pol Pot failed to acquire an engineering 
degree in Paris. His failure to become a successful Westerner, and his subsequent 
imitation of Marxism-Leninist dictatorship caused some 3 million Khmer to loose 
their lives.

In the aftermath of most initial confrontations with imperialism, there is a 
rapid realization on behalf of the loser that knowledge is power and a key to vic-
tory. But why is it that the colonialized do not behave any better than the imperi-
alist colonizers when given the prospect of self-determination? It was the enemy 
who taught them. They learned under duress and coercion. Even if taught well on 
ocasion, most learned poorly. Understanding the need for knowledge production 
is one thing. Acquiring and applying reproduced knowledge correctly in a specific 
situation is a vastly different matter. The process in which meaning is altered, 
emptied of meaning and filled with another content is known as reification (Lu-
kacs 1988). The question is what comes after this process. Can one go beyond 
reification? Some do and some do not. When the Romans first came in contact 
with the Greek civilization, they set out to imitate it. Yet, there was also a distinct 
intention to surpass the Greek achievement. The imitative process was hence 
known as emulatio, that is, a competitive imitation meant to outdo the Greeks 
(Janson 2004). The Germanic peoples were unable to transcend the process of 
imitatio. Hence, emulatio would generally remain beyond the Germanic scope.

1.4.2 The Imposition of the Linear

This section discusses the concept of the linear and its importance for the intro-
duction of literacy by means of a technolect pertaining to imperialist ideology. 
Linearity requires a beginning and an end, and this in a meaningful direction. This 
may seem obvious to a 21st century Westerner, but it is by no means clear that this 
was so to Germanic affinities during the Roman Iron Age. On the other hand, it is 
clear that the Roman state apparatus mastered linearity in a variety of forms, nota-
ably in the creation of a road network where ‘all roads lead to Rome’ and a border 
defense from the North Sea to the Black Sea.

A preliterate culture does not need a goal. It does not need a given sense of di-
rection in order to be meaningful. Nor does it have to have a beginning. It may 
well be anchored in a conviction of continuity. It may be defined either as circular 
or inert. It may be engaged in a practice seemingly meant to go on unchanged 
forever. Indeed, it may regard itself as having this as its primary mission. It may 
continuously reactivate that which once was, over and over. This reactivated event
or object may be the creation of the world or a covenant made by allegedly divine ancestors. The opposite is the concept of the linear. It has a finite description of a beginning and an end. It does not equate the notion of ancestral lineage. The latter may well have a vital function in a timeless world. An event or an unforeseen interaction may irrevocably change the order of things so that the linear takes precedence over lineage. This is the ‘event after which…’. Separated from the past by an unknown number of ‘events after which…’ and ideals which have been entirely reified for the umpteenth time; how is one to approach that what has already been? There is a strong ambivalence, if not gloom, in prehistoric Germanic ideology vis-à-vis the past, the present, and the future. There is a blend of nostalgia and pessimism. This whining is a result of the imposition of the linear. The past may be interpreted as golden days of yore or as disastrous episodes of darkness from which one has succeeded to emerge. Sometimes, conflicting messages may relate to exactly the same period.

One may try to emulate and reject a certain prehistorical period at the same time. Prehistoric structures such as Bronze Age mounds and death houses are likely to have been interpreted as manifestations of a lost grandeur during the Iron Age. For instance, the Migration Period mounds in Gamla Uppsala, Sweden are likely to have been modeled on that of nearby Hága. One sought to reactivate the past. Claiming anterior legitimacy within an invented orthopraxy did this. It appears that the most difficult time period to assess and come to terms with was the late Roman Iron Age, particularly that of the North. It entails the rise of a Germanic kleptocracy in the late 4th century and the spread of Latin and Early Runic literacy. This is the time period that was met with the most resistance. It is also the one time period that was seen as a glorious past worth reviving with various attributes. There was no real need to produce Early Runic texts in Alemannia in the late 6th century. There was plenty of Latin at hand. It was important to appear as the North Germanic kleptocracy of the Late Roman Iron Age. This was a fashion ideal that had stepped out of an isolated time warp, only to be reified by another, related but distant culture.

1.4.3 Literate Imperialism

If a part of a given culture is able to invent and then employ literacy, a number of things will happen. First, there is an increased social stratification, where Parsons’ concept of the ‘political function’ becomes accentuated. The selective affinity of literates becomes aloof of the illiterate mass, despite attempts at resistance. The literate technolect is subsequently used to separate people even further. It is employed to prevent any threatening social mobility. There seems to be no known society where only women are literate. Patriarchy is reflected in the intellectual achievement of every society. The more patriarchic a society, the less likely is the chance of women articulating themselves in text. As a rule, the patriarchal models eventually undergo a gradual breakdown. This means that a few women enter the ranks of the literati. Yet, the literate women are seldom given independent credentials. They are not taught literacy because of their gender, but because of their rank and status within patriarchy. There is a niche in the social stratification system that needs to be filled with a handful of literate women. Quite often, one of the first things written in text is a name. Yet, even if the name is undoubtedly female, it is very difficult to identify a female author. This problem begs a number
of questions, particularly in relation to the Danish graves from periods C1b-C2. Are the Early Runic personal names on the female brooches female names? Most likely they are not. Literacy is a secondary intellectual development. Prior to the existence of a technolect of literacy is the creation of a technolect relating to the division of labor and to social hierarchy.

A comparative study of literacy reveals that patriarchy has successfully maintained its rule in the technolect of literacy as well. There are plenty of examples of societies with very long traditions of exclusive male literacy, but none where only women are literate. The male leaders of the literate culture will turn their eyes to illiterate neighbors. Considered intellectually inferior, these are obvious targets for aggression. If the literate society succeeds in conquering an illiterate society, its next goal is to conquer all others. It has developed an imperialist ideology. The ideology becomes engrained in the use of the writing system. A case in point is the earliest text found in Devon in Southwestern England. It was carved with a blunt stick on a tile in a legionary bathhouse in the Roman fort at Exeter: IABCDIIF (Hassall 1979). Semi-literate or illiterate peoples, who have encountered literacy but failed to acquire it, are often fearful or resentful of literati. Most afraid are those status-minded adult males who fail to grasp both foreign languages and literacy altogether, who are constantly reminded of their inability and inferiority when in contact with foreign literati. They will loudly proclaim that foreign languages and literacy are unnecessary. They will state that there is little or no information to be gathered from skills that may diminish their own status. They may attempt to gather other illiterates around them in meetings that stress the importance of orality, and seek to single out literate individuals in order to attack these. In the long run, this strategy will fail.

How did literate imperialism come about in the case of Rome? The idea behind Latin literacy as practiced in Roman society was that it was considered a good thing if many people were literate. There were many possibilities in all echelons of society to acquire literacy. Indeed, social ranks were often reversed in Roman classrooms, where status depended on acquired knowledge. Literate society could be run more effectively and at a more detached level. One fundamental problem remained, though. Literacy represents dispersed capital. The qualitative knowledge cannot be measured on a quantitative material level. It is an investment in people’s brains. Such dispersed capital is easily squandered in a brief moment, the best example being the Khmer Rouge killing anyone with soft hands, glasses, pens and wrist watches after conquering Phnom Penh in 1975. The immense unspecified value of dispersed capital is always at stake whenever there is confrontation with illiterate neighbors, or barbarians. The best way to defend and accumulate that dispersed capital is to transfer it unto the barbarians, if necessary by force. The gains are always much greater in gaining potential literates than losing them to illiterate barbarians. The barbarians must be assimilated into the realm of literacy. If not, literate society may be threatened.

Imperialism teaches literacy to reproduce itself. A simple way to learn and remember the Latin and German vowels a, e, i, o, u is to acknowledge the Habsburg dynasty’s claim to world supremacy through the Holy Roman Empire: Austria Est Imperare Omnium Universo or Alles Erdreich Ist Oesterreich Untertan, ‘All the world is subject to Austria’. Many Austrian schoolchildren have often come to realize that this is claim erroneous. They have thus transformed the acronym in their own dialect: Am Ende Ist Olles Umsonst, that is, ‘In the end, it is all meaningless’. Imperialist ideology entails a worldview that justifies aggression against
preliterate cultures. Aggression is part of a civilizing mission. The mission is to make prelites more like the civilized imperialists and to exploit natural resources in a process of forced modernization. Sometimes the imperialist ideology can be summarized by an acronym or formula, e.g. SPQR, DN PF C AVG, AEIOU, CCCP, CIA. This form of meta-text, mere signs, becomes a very real presence and threat to preliterates. Many preliterate cultures respond to literate aggression by imitating features of the aggressive culture (Daniels 1996). The barbarians create a new ‘wannabe’ ideology as a response to a crisis. They do so to the best of their own ability albeit in their own preliterate ways. This practice has often been described as imitatio imperii. There is a strong sense of urgency, a need for recognition and self-reliance under new circumstances. All of a sudden people yearn for attributes previously considered limited, regulated, unnecessary or unknown. These often include arms, drugs, and literacy. These are regarded as tools of acquisition for a better life. The latter is defined as either as it used to be before the arrival of the literate culture or as in the literate culture. The ‘wannabe’ ideology is very materialistic. It is dependent on the imperialist ideology.

Sometimes the preliterate imitation of imperialist ideology is superficial or erratic. One may highlight the adoption of fancy foreign dress, titles and ritual or the introduction of brutal methods of torture or execution. Here, the first rulers of independent Haiti may be mentioned. The introduction of execution by carronade from behind and the construction of the world’s most impenetrable Early Modern citadel (now a UNESCO World Heritage site) can be attributed to the preliterate and semiliterate Emperors and Kings such Jacques I (1804-1806), Henri-Christophe I (1806-1820), and Faustin I (1849-1859). Rarely does a preliterate culture show itself capable of accurately copying, and not merely imitating, the manufactural process of the imperialist aggressor. Immaculate copying is not possible. The preliterate culture generally does not possess the same mode of production. A rare exception is Samori Touré, the late 19th century charismatic Muslim leader known as the ‘African Napoleon’ who sent his men to spy on a French rifle factory in Dakar, Senegal. His subjects were then capable of producing breech-loading rifles. For 17 years he managed to keep the French at bay in the interior of West Africa (Edgerton 2002: 33, Porch 2000: 143-146). It is not known to what degree Touré was able to use Arabic script in this endeavor, though.

The only way to come close to copying is by means of reification. One creates a writing system. One explains its origin and purpose in a different way. If a preliterate culture comes under attack from literate imperialism, the instigators and inventors of new writing systems often prove to be members of the social hierarchy. If not, they are newcomers and agents of imperialist ideology. The founders of literacy, foreign or not, have had more exposure to imperialist culture. They are as a rule quite fluent in the literate aspects of it. They also understand that it takes extraordinary measures to get their message across amongst preliterates. There were at least two very frequent alphabets in Europe during Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period: Greek and Latin. But the known American and European founders of writing systems often decided not to slavishly copy existent alphabets. They went about and modified them. One reason for this may have been the founders’ awareness of their clients. Adults, normally unable or unwilling to learn foreign language literacy, would be less hostile if the new ideas were presented to them in a more palatable way.

The known founders of literacy within preliterate cultures were often charismatic figures and/or religious missionaries (Gleason 1996:777-780). One can
mention Wulfila, the late 4th century founder of the Gothic alphabet (Ebbinghausen 1996:290-296), the 9th century St. Cyril and his brother Methodius, founders of Glagolithic. In North America, there was the biracial Sequioa or George Guest (c. 1770-1843), founder of written Cherokee (Scavanarelli 1996:589-592), and the Wesleyan missionary James Evans (1801-1846), inventor of the Cree syllabary (Nichols 1996: 599-611). The missionary Samuel A. Worcester is likely to have had a major impact on the introduction of Cherokee literacy. Both Evans and Wulfila were quick to produce Bible translations. The 9th century Greek liturgy was rapidly translated into Church Slavonic by means of Glagolithic and later Cyrillic.

1.4.4 Biliteracy and Digraphic Literacy under Imperialism

How many languages did people speak during the interaction between Germanic and Roman affinities? How many were literate? A Modern Period comparison is in order. As a result of longstanding imperialist policies of the 19th and 20th centuries, educated 21st century Africans and Europeans are often capable of biliteracy. They can read in at least two separate languages. One of these generally tends to be English or French, the other a native language. This means that many Africans and Europeans can distinguish between two different transcription systems and orthographies. But this knowledge has not made their life any easier. Nor has it made the local political decision-making process more rapid or realist in Africa and Europe. Rather, it has made Africans and Europeans alike subservient to the Anglophone hegemony of the largely monolingual United States. Not all Europeans are capable of reading more than one alphabetic script. Exceptions are those biliterate in Greek and Slavic languages, notably Serbo-Croatian. But the Greek and Cyrillic alphabets are not that radically different from the Latin alphabet, save for cursive handwriting. A larger challenge confronts many Asian Americans, Jews, and Middle Eastern immigrants in America and Europe. If they wish to become biliterate in their native, traditional or ideological language and that of their surrounding literate environment. This means that they will have to acquire digraphic literacy. They will have to master two different writing systems.

There is such a thing as a cognitive strategy in the acquisition of literacy (Hellman 2003: 28). Previous learning experience or ideological attitude towards education is crucial here. Monoliterates (including most Americans, Chinese and Russians, i.e. the populations of the three largest contemporary imperialist states) have a severe intellectual disadvantage in comparison with biliterates. Their textual and ideological imagination is more limited. If they cannot grasp a sequence of graphemes by means of their previous knowledge, they are more likely to give up than someone who has had a bilateral learning experience in two very different orthographic systems, e.g. French and Wolof, or English and Finnish. Ignorance is bliss. Everything outside the own reference frame is deemed to be ‘other’.

American analysts studying African independence have in the past argued for the benefit of a narrow ideology even if this implied a lack of knowledge. No surprise to see that the future advisor to the Nixon administration, Apter (1965) argued that a more general semi-education would give the African state-building process momentum without too much hindersome consideration. This means that Americans may have a relative advantage, they do not have to bother with excessive knowledge of the ‘other’. This makes for a potentially very effective kind of
literate imperialism: simple, uniform and universal. But at the same time, the inability of Americans to process knowledge from the ‘other’ has been identified as a major cause behind the failed imperialist ventures of the United States. Stanton (2003: 26) argues that all Vietnamese language courses in 1961-1975 were wasted on US advisors. They could not acquire the syntactically simple, but difficult tonal language. As stated in a 1980 US Military evaluation led General Cao Ky Vien, communication would nearly always be in American English. This clearly affected all relationships between Americans and Vietnamese. The principal benefactors were the uncompromising nationalists in North Vietnam, who by employing Latin literacy had transformed Marxism-Leninism into a nationalist ideology.

1.5 Belated Reactions to Imperialism – Dictated Shifts in Literacy

It is tempting to see the sudden appearance of Early Runic in the 2nd century AD, as caused by a dictated shift in literacy among Germanic affinities that had previously employed Latin literacy. It is a known fact that many adults who acquire literacy and then return to their preliterate life soon forget. Most probably, they simply enter a phase of inactive literacy. There could have been a relatively widespread dormant and passive Latin literacy among Germanic affinities. This would have made things easier for the inventors of the runic script, teaching people to read and think lineally anew. There are a number of Modern Period examples of dictated shifts from one existent writing system to another. Despite the fact that these have to do with the phenomenon of mass literacy, they are very important in order to understand how the runic script was compared to the Latin alphabet, and how their respective positions of power were to shift back and forth from the Late Roman Iron Age to the Early Medieval Period. The Modern examples treated below are: 1) the Deseret Alphabet in the State of Utah (1853-1877), 2) the Republic of Turkey (1928-), 3) North Korea and Vietnam (1945-).

Two trends are discernable here: First, the new writing system tends to be the result of a sensed need for reform in the face of imperialist aggression, or the need to show independence. Note here that the affinity under aggression may also harbor hopes of world domination and postulate claims to universality – the fact that one is persecuted or oppressed does not automatically make one a good-natured anti-imperialist. Second, there would seem to be a trend that one moves from logography to phonography, from syllabic to alphabetic, from alphabetic to phonetic. The stated reasons for such shifts are generally intended ruptures with a past, which is seen as antiquated, foreign, or too elitist. Behind the reforms lurks a blend of anti-colonial nationalism and/or reified interpretations of European imperialist ideology, notably Christianity and Marxism-Leninism. The given social hierarchy has reified the latter ideologies to fit its own needs, often with a strong tinge of militarism.

1.5.1 The State of Utah

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) is an elective affinity with a proselytizing, universalistic ideology (Davies and Arlebrand 2004: 32-36). Only six members founded the first inner selective affinity in Fayette,
New York in 1830. Its first prophet, Joseph Smith (1805-1844) is said to have had an epiphany in 1823. In 1827, Smith claimed to have found a secret cave in Manchester County, New York. It contained golden tablets with inscriptions, written by the angel Moroni. It is interesting to note that Moroni did not use the English language, but ‘Reformed Egyptian’, an unattested language never seen before or since, as Smith failed to produce the tablets as evidence. Although Smith was monolingual and monoliterate, he was apparently able to decipher the inscribed tablets in ‘Reformed Egyptian’. These texts of revelation were to become the Book of Mormon, first published in the English language by Smith in 1830 (Smith 1985).

Given their industrious and provocative nature, the Mormons were driven from state to state. Their former neighbors looted their property. In 1837, the governor of Missouri ordered the state militia to expel or exterminate the Mormons. In 1839, Smith founded the town of Nauvoo, Illinois. He served as its mayor, general of the local militia, and as university chancellor. He also ran as candidate for the presidency of the United States. But his rapidly growing affinity of armed teetotalers became a threat. They were frequently persecuted by mobs and in conflict with hostile militias. Arrested at the order of the governor of Illinois, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered in their cell. The new leader, Brigham Young (1801-1877), decided in 1846 that the larger elective affinity that now numbered some 17,000 should migrate westward. They settled an area around Salt Lake, Utah. There, the Mormons could exercise a relative control. They set out to expand their membership and to colonize further away as fast as possible, while seeking to keep others out. In 1852, Young declared polygamy legal. On September 11th, 1857, a Mormon militia killed 121 settlers from Arkansas at Mountain Meadows. Federal troops were unable to defeat the Mormon militia 1857-1858, and a settlement was reached with Young in 1858. In 1862, the US troops were withdrawn, which enabled the Mormon militia to wipe out a group of dissenting selective affinities.

In 1853, Brigham Young asked the Board of Regents ‘to cast out from their system of education, the present orthography and written form of our language’. What Young wanted was a new, phonetic alphabet, ‘that when my children are taught the graphic sign for A, it may always represent that individual sound only’. The idea behind this was to use the new alphabet in missionary work. A committee of Church elders invented the 38-character Deseret alphabet in 1854. It has been argued that it was Brigham Young's secretary, the Englishman George D. Watt, who was the mastermind behind the Deseret alphabet. As a model, one has suggested that Watt employed the Pitman English phonotypic alphabet of 1847 (http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/deseretalphabet.htm). Four books were printed. Three were reading primers. The fourth was the Book of Mormon. Converts were often persuaded to move to Utah to expand the gene pool, and some 60,000-70,000 did so in the years of 1847-1868. Many converts needed to be taught English, but Young wanted to control the learning process. Ideally, the Book of Mormon, which had been written in English language, would only be accessible to converts within the Deseret alphabet. This would prevent converts from being distracted by other English language literature (particularly such pamphlets that asked where the golden texts in ‘Reformed Egyptian’ found by Joseph Smith were, or if they had ever existed). The Deseret alphabet was apparently a great success for foreign converts and illiterates, as noted by W. woodruff, a leading Mormon elder:
You put a work into the hands of a Jerman Frenchman Dane or Sweed or any other Nation printed in the Deseret Alphabet and in time they will all read and speak alike much sooner than they could learn another language (Wilford Woodruff, http://www.usu.edu/anthro/origins_of_writing/invented_alphabets/index.html#deseret).

It must have been an annoying contraption for the already converted English-speaking literates. The relative isolation of Utah made it still possible for Young to try to impose the use of the Deseret alphabet on the faithful. Yet, the end of isolation with construction of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, and the death of Brigham Young in 1877, caused the Deseret alphabet to be abandoned. The Book of Mormon was translated into Swedish in 1878, with the first edition printed in Copenhagen that year. In 1896, the Utah territory had a population of 250,000. It then became a full member of the United States of America. The 1979 CIA estimate held the American literacy rate as high as 97% (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook). However, it should be pointed out that the vast majority of all Americans are monolingual and monoliterate. This lack of sophistication is compensated for by means of an immense output in monolingual knowledge production.

1.5.2 The Republic of Turkey

This section discusses the belated extraction of Turkey from what then appeared an outdated imperialist ideology into the realm of Western modernity. A major step in this direction was achieved by a dictated shift in literacy which qualified millions of people to enter into an enlarged elective affinity, that of the literate citizenry. Ever since the Ottoman sultan conquered Constantinople in 1453, Early Modern and Modern Period Europe has harbored two opposing imperialist ideologies, Christianity and Islam. The Spanish Muslim tradition had long been on the defensive when Islam set out to reestablish itself for good in Europe. Islam has since its beginnings had claims to universality. It divides the world into the house of peace, the Muslim sphere, and the house of war, the remainder not yet conquered or converted. There can be peaceful coexistence with other ideologies, notably Christianity, but the ultimate goal is to make all humans Muslims. The methods used to achieve this have been of a military kind. Missionary activities concentrate on the education of poor Muslim males.

Imperialist agents have often translated the Christian Bible and the Communist Manifesto into new writing systems. This meant the production and distribution of new graphematic systems, new printing types, new books, etc. In particular, Marxist-Leninist rule over Central Asia and Southeast Asia has implied capricious changes in literacy. By contrast, Islam has generally held on to the hand-written late 7th century Arabic of the Qur’an. Calligraphy is an important expression of Islamic ideology as anthropomorphic representation has often been banned. Innovation in the adaptation of Islamic literacy has been restricted to new calligraphic forms (Adahl 1989). This form of imperialist ideology has proven a two-edged sword, reducing the number of initiated literates while simultaneously having an ideal way to teach a uniform literacy by means of a single text equal to none.

The house of peace, that is the Muslim world, certainly is a literate culture, but it has had fewer literate members than elsewhere in the house of war, that is the
West. There is written knowledge produced in Muslim societies, but the total output does not measure up with that of a Western society such as America or Europe. Fewer books are read, written and translated. This prevents the influx of new ideas. As a result, Muslims have become a topic for Western knowledge. In the Early Modern Period, European orientalists began to publish on what they saw as their inferiors (Said 1997). The relative backwardness of Muslim societies has in part been due to the limited form of literacy, preventing mass education and subsequent economic development. Christians printed the Qur’an in Europe already in 1530 (Toll 1989:9-10). The Pope banned the book immediately and had the first edition burned. But the Qur’an was still printed here and there in Europe, notably in Hamburg in 1694. The Christian bishop of Aleppo printed the Christian Psalter and the Evangelists in Arabic in 1706. Only in 1727 did a Muslim, the Ottoman sultan Ahmed III, order an Arabic printing shop. An Arabic dictionary was printed in Istanbul the year after. The first Muslim-printed Qur’an appeared in Teheran in 1828.

The Ottoman Empire was unable to keep up with European imperialism. It soon became target for Western military aggression during the 19th century, besides becoming an object of study. Many younger Turkish army officers felt that something needed to be done. In 1908, they curtailed the powers of the Sultan. After a long period of war followed a radical construction of a Turkish nation. It was not a reconstruction of the Ottoman Empire. The new nation marked the end of the Empire. Constantinople was occupied by Christian troops in 1918. In 1924, the Sultan was deposed for good. There no longer was a functioning Caliph. The Republic of Turkey renounced the claim of the Ottoman Empire to have a responsibility for the global Muslim population. No longer did Turkey claim to represent an anti-Western imperialist ideology with universal aspirations. Its step into modernity as a nation was to come with Western style militarism, statism and charismatic leadership.

An army officer, Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) rose to become a national father figure during the Balkan wars, WW 1, and the war against Greece 1919-1922. He would transform the decaying Ottoman Empire known as ‘the sick man of Europe’; into a statist dictatorship centered two things – his personality and his very successful graphematic reform. In 1928, Kemal dictated a shift from Arabic to Latin characters in Turkish written language:

The cornerstone of education is an easy system of reading and writing.
The key to this is the new Turkish alphabet based on the Latin script

Atatürk often posed for photographs equipped with chalk and blackboard. At the same time, Islam was abolished as state religion. This effort served to integrate Turkey within the global sphere of secular Western civilization, distancing modern Turkish literacy from the religious aspect of the Arabic alphabet. In 1933, Kemal renamed himself accordingly, Atatürk, Father of Turks:

There are two Mustafa Kemals. One the flesh-and-blood Mustafa Kemal who now stands before you and who will pass away. The other is you, all of you here who will go to the far corners of our land to spread the ideals that must be defended with your lives if necessary. I stand for the nation’s dreams, and my life’s work is to make them come true.
In 1938, the Turkish government claimed that the literacy rate had gone up to 33% in 1938 from 9% in 1923. The next step was the cleansing of Turkish written language from Arabic, French, and Persian influences. Supposedly, such foreign words made up 80% of the written language in the 1930’s. This figure had reportedly fallen down to 10% in the early 1980’s. The CIA estimates the current Turkish literacy rate to 86.5% (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook). By comparison, Saudi Arabia, which is the core of the house of peace, has an estimated literacy rate of 78.8%. But Turks are more likely to understand a text in a different language, as the majority of all written languages are in the Latin alphabet. And Kemal Atatürk does indeed live on in the official iconography shared by most Turks while his earthly remains rest in a shrine in Ankara.

1.5.3 East Asian Reifications of Western Literate Imperialism

This section seeks to understand the reification of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Asia. This is a necessary digression in that it enables an understanding of how the reification of imperialist literacy is carried out. It will be argued that this process was directly linked to a number of dictated shifts in literacy as well as the imposition of the linear upon preliterate peoples. The decaying 19th century Chinese Empire was an obvious target for European imperialism. On occasion, the export of narcotics was used as a pretext for Western aggression. But Marxism-Leninism transformed China into a new Empire after half a decade of war. China has since acknowledged problems with its complicated writing system. The government has tried to change the logography in order to facilitate mass education in literacy. This includes the introduction of new and simplified characters. A modified Latin alphabet for Mandarin called Pinyin ‘Sound-Script’ was introduced in 1958. It is used as a subsidiary system to teach children the pronunciation of characters and to transcribe addresses and brand names of consumer goods. The two latter features figure especially in contact with Westerners, who only understand alphabetic literacy. The current Chinese knowledge of other literate systems is a question not answered by the CIA. Mandarin has also become more dominant in China since the literacy campaigns (Huntington 1998). The CIA estimates the current Chinese literacy rate to 86% (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook).

The first evidence of written Korean in Han characters stems from 414 AD. In 1446, King Sejong of Korea (1419-1452) gathered the Pavilion of the Assembly of Sages. He dictated the creation of a new writing system. This came to be known as Han’gul (King 1996: 579-586). Han characters did not accurately represent Korean language. King Sejong described the Han writing system as ‘a handle that ill fits the hole’. A book, known as Hunmin Chongum, was written for the future instruction in Han’gul. Han’gul was composed of eleven vowels and seventeen consonants. The vowels were transcribed according to the symbols of heaven (a round dot), earth (a horizontal line), and man (a vertical line). The consonants are represented by three different angles representing alveolars, dentals, and velars, whereas bilabial consonants are squares, and glottal consonants circles. The construction is rather ingenious. Each of the 28 graphemes may be combined into a cluster representing a morpheme. These are then puzzled together in a left-right sequence. The impact of Han’gul has been limited due to the fact that the Chinese and Japanese Empires swallowed up Korea after the Medieval Period. The writing system was associated with the uneducated – women and children –
and was accorded low status (King 1996:218). The use of Chinese logography remained dominant in Korea. After Japan annexed Korea in 1910, Chinese ideographs were combined with Japanese syllabic scripts such as Katakana.

Following liberation from Japanese occupation in 1945, *Han'gul* became an important tool for North Korean dictator Kim Songju (1912-1994) in his ideology *Juche* ‘Self-reliance’, a curious reification of Marxism-Leninism. Kim Songju introduced a personality cult of himself under his new name *Kim Il Sung* ‘the Great Leader’. All foreign ideographs have been eradicated from North Korean literacy, which means that all its literature has a *terminus post quem* of 1971. Kim Il Sung attempted some changes in the 1950’s, but soon stuck to the old version, changing its name to *Cosenkul* ‘Korean script’ or *Wuli cula* ‘Our script’:

> In developing our language, we should not copy from the language of any other country—much less take the Seoul dialect, corrupted by English and Japanese, as the standard. We who are building socialism must take the central role in developing the Korean language, basing ourselves wholly on the pure native words of our country. First of all, we must revise our vocabulary to some extent. It is important to do so at this stage. Only after this is done, should we turn to the form of the letters and spelling. Revising the vocabulary is no easy task. It requires extensive investigation and studies, as well as strict control. […] Some people think that using a great many words borrowed from Chinese ideographs that are incomprehensible to others is a mark of learning, but such people are really nothing but ignoramuses. […] In fact, people who are versed in Marxism-Leninism can explain all theories perfectly well without using difficult words (Kim Il Sung 1971: 11-12).

The North Korean dialect has also undergone significant relexification, dictated from above. It is estimated today that the North Korean dialect has up to 40% different words from the South Korean dialect. This has led North Korea to kidnap South Koreans. The prisoners have been used as teachers to North Korean infiltrators who would otherwise be easily discovered in South Korea. North Korea is bound to collapse one day. One can only hope that this will be a peaceful event. If so, the artificial language barrier will disappear. Much of the North Korean vocabulary, just as the old East German vocabulary, will be meaningless in the new society. South Koreans are likely to assume all important positions of authority. A new process of Korean relexification will occur. The South Korean division of labor is likely to have a major impact on this process. The CIA estimates the current North Korean literacy rate to 99%, and the South Korean literacy rate to 98.1% (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook).

For a long time, the Chinese Han dominated Vietnam, too. Han was the official language and it would take long time before Vietnamese was written with Chinese ideographs. A French Jesuit, Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660) devised a new system of diacritic signs for the Latin alphabet in order to transcribe Vietnamese (Dinh-Hoa 1996:691-699). His work was that of an external agent for Roman Catholicism by virtue of his membership in a powerful selective affinity. And there was quite a number of Catholic converts in Vietnam. In 1858, the French imperialists arrived. They had seized most of the country by 1894, following Gallieni’s ‘oils spot’ strategy (Porch 2000). Rhodes’ graphematic system was employed from 1910 onwards by the French colonial administration. It was named *Quôc-ngu*, ‘National Language’, although it served the French. It enabled the imposition of a standardized written language against a multitude of dialects, previously written with Chinese ideographs. Marxism-Leninism would also reach Vietnamese literates. *Quôc-ngu* became a tool for the national liberation struggle led by Nguyễn Tat Thanh (1890-1969). He changed his name first to *Nguyen Ai*
Quốc ‘the Patriot’ and then to Ho Chi Minh ‘the Enlightened’. His aged persona became known as Bac Ho, ‘Uncle Ho’ to the Vietnamese people. Uncle Ho was welltravelled and spoke many languages. He knew more of Westerners than they of him. To appease the Americans after the August 1945 revolution, the Vietnamese constitution was a copy of the American declaration of independence of 1776. But despite the use of a text sacred to Western imperialism, war with the Western imperialists was inevitable. After Uncle Ho’s death in 1969, the North Vietnamese army ousted the dominant imperialist power in 1975. It is interesting to note that the official Vietnamese stand on Vietnamese literacy begins with the August 1945 Revolution, not the French introduction of it in state bureaucracy in 1910, or Rhodes’ work in the 17th century. The fact than many preliterate ethnic minorities have been cajoled into Vietnamese Marxist-Leninist statehood is considered a good thing:

After the August 1945 Revolution, the Vietnamese language and the National language characters have seized a dominating position and strongly developed and established itself as a multi-functional language that has been used in every field, every educational level and has reflected every reality of life. Today, thanks to the Revolution, some ethnic minority groups have their own writing scripts. […] The Vietnamese language is characterized by mono-phonology with a concrete, abundant, acoustic and imaginary vocabulary and a proportionate, rhythmical, lively, flexible, symbolic and emotional way of expression, which tremendously facilitates artistic and literary creation. The Vietnamese dictionary published by the Center of Lexicography in 1997 consists of 38,410 entries (http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/learn/cul-languages.php3).

After the vicory of 1975, the former South Vietnamese capital of Saigon was renamed after the founding father whose earthly remains may be viewed in a shrine in Hanoi. The CIA estimates the current Vietnamese literacy rate to 92% (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook).

1.6 Manipulative Founding Fathers versus the Language Continuum

It is now time to summarize what has been discussed in the first chapter. It has been argued that specialized affinities may achieve literacy by means of employing a technolect. It was then argued that this might cause the development of an imperialist ideology. It followed that some preliterate affinities may respond to imperialism by imitating it. In the latter case, it is often a single individual male who is credited for introducing the new literacy. But new writing systems generally prove very difficult to maintain for a long period of time in the face of a lengthy imperialist aggression. The individual behind a dictator on literacy often assumes mythical and demi-divine proportions. He/she does so by having his/her persona become reified in ideology. The reification process transforms the dictator into a distant, benevolent parent figure. This figure may well be fused with the identity or icon of another deity or charismatic leader, or even a pantheon. Polygamy may be one way for the future divine leader to demonstrate his supernatural power. To survive after the death of such a demi-god, the social hierarchy must produce text from its onset under the first charismatic leader and simultaneously cling on to his/her new ideological conception. If not, neither the text nor the new writing system represents credible alternatives to the universals of an imperialist ideology. There is little guarantee for the continuous use of
all aspects of a new writing system unless its text production is an integral part of
the overall ideology upholding the former.

The Mormons (who today number some 10 million world wide) have
achieved a compromise of sorts. They have accepted the Latin alphabet and their
state of Utah being part of the United States. In 1890, they abolished the use of
polygamy to expand their gene pool. Yet, in return, Joseph Smith, Brigham
Young, and the current Church president are considered prophets of God. The
Church still has universalistic pretensions, sending out clean-cut male mission-
aries all over the world. And politics in the state of Utah are firmly in the hands of
Mormons. The affinity currently grows with one million people every three years.
By contrast, a committed conversion to Christianity did not mean an end to the
use of the Cherokee syllabary per se, but there would be less incentive for textual
communication with others gods than the Christian one. There were simply more
bibles printed in English. Cherokee was replaced with the Latin alphabet in 1903,
whereas the political systems of North Korea, Turkey and Vietnam remain under
the supervision of the social hierarchy that once implemented the use of new
writing systems. Together with China, they all have their founders mummified in
mausoleums, granting the founders a demi-divine status.

The Germanic divinity known as Odin makes sense within this comparative
perspective: A purported founder or inventor of literacy has in conjunction with a
revelation been given divine status. Odin hangs himself for nine nights as a gift
from himself to himself. After this self-imposed ordeal, he picks up the runes
while screaming, giving the Norse peoples access to literacy. To know even more,
he sacrifices one eye to the well of Mimir. This means that he can only read with
one eye. The explicit nature of his self-sacrifice is a likely loan from the Paleo-
Christian Continent. But there is a distinct difference between Odin on the hand
and King Sejong, Kemal Atatürk, and Brigham Young on the other. The secrecy
surrounding Odin’s runic knowledge shows that Old Norse pagan intellectuals
considered it important to contain runic literacy within a restricted affinity and to
isolate this knowledge from outside influence. They had no revelatory text of their
own. The runes were merely a medium for an oral ideology. Thus they attempted
to restrict access to such texts related to oral revelation. They failed. Runic liter-
acy was a perfect medium for Christian conversion, and the tradition of pagan
rune stones was simply reified to become an expression of Christian ideology.
2 Latin and Early Runic Literacy

The last chapter argued that when a professional technolect is created in society, it becomes related to notions of social power of a certain affinity and to its role in the mode of production. The technolect may become a carrier of literacy. The hegemonic affinity in society may subsequently become a carrier of imperialist ideology. This may cause the introduction to literacy by force in surrounding pre-literate societies. If so, it will be a difficult process as the economic base of the preliterate society is unprepared to support the ideological backdrop necessary for the reproduction of literacy. The imitators of literate imperialism within a preliterate society are therefore likely to go on to create a kleptocracy. They will have to steal the capital necessary for the ideological reproduction.

This chapter seeks to understand the origin of the runic script (see ill.3), and to place it within the larger development as sketched out in chapter 1. I will briefly discuss how scholarly theories have been formulated in relation to the runes. It will be argued that Latin literacy was transmitted by means of Roman imperialism unto the hegemonic affinities within Germanic civilization. This caused the runic script to be invented. The already existing oral Germanic technolect was adapted to accommodate a new form of reactionary literacy, created after having confronted Latin literacy of Roman imperialism.

This chapter is divided into sections with a number of sub-sections. The sections discuss: 1) the origin of the runes, runological methodology, and Early Runic in context (see ill. 3); 2) Latin literacy and Roman text production, textual longevity and quantity of Roman media, Roman numerical literacy and its applications, the acquisition of Latin literacy, the Roman military as a carrier of literacy, and the limitations of Roman literacy; 3) Early Runic literacy, Early Runic technolect, the atemporal power of Early Runic, Early Runic gender construction. It then focuses on innovation in relation to frontier and periphery, and the stone inscriptions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the funeral context of 4th to 6th century Norway.

2.1 The Origin of the Runes

A recent assessment of the theories of the origin of runic writing is that of Düwel (2003: 571-585). He points out that there is a scholarly consensus on three theses. First, the runes were not created ex nihilo, nor are they a purely Germanic invention. Second, a Mediterranean alphabet must have been employed as a model. Third, any discussion of origin in time and space must take the earliest inscriptions into account. Two fundamental considerations may be employed to evaluate the theses. First, the more distant a suggested origin in time and space is from the earliest known inscription, the less is the likelihood of its veracity. Second, the idea that the inventor used several local or regional models is to be criticized as it is conditional and allows for arbitrariness. The basic questions of origin, then are the following: from where (i.e. from what alphabet), when, where, who, why? As to the when and where, I believe that Düwel exaggerates the argument for a close connection between the find place of the earliest inscription and the origin of the
runes. The archaeological context of the earliest inscriptions is that of bog deposits. Each object may have traveled considerable distances prior to the deposit.

It most likely that the runes derive from the Latin literacy of Roman civilization. This assumption follows the conclusions of Askeberg (1944), Moltke (1985), Rausin (1992), and Williams (1996, 1997). The initial development of Germanic literacy may be sketched out as follows: Latin literacy became reified by Germanic ideology. Early Runic literacy was created in response (c. 0-100 AD). A reasonable argument is that this occurred at some distance away from the Roman sphere of influence. A number of areas have been suggested as the place of origin, notably the Weichsel region (Askeberg 1944) and Denmark (Moltke 1985). Substantial archaeological evidence of peer polity contacts between Denmark, Northern Germany, the Weichsel region, and the Black Sea makes the discussion of exact origin rather redundant. As to who did this, I believe that there must have been a burgeoning network between Germanic affinities in the Roman periphery, as evident in the 3rd century Hassleben-Leuna graves. Early Runic literacy is likely to have been employed in these contacts. I have sought to show with a number of analogies that the reason why the runes were invented was a need to imitate Roman imperialist ideology.

There are other scholarly theories of origin besides the Latin theory, notably the Etruscan or Italo-Celtic (Mees 2000), Greek (von Friesen 1933), and, most recently Nabatean (Troeng 2003). The scholarly alternatives to the Latin theory fail to convince in that they all assume an either all too slow or far too rapid chronological development in relation to the earliest known runic inscription. The find from Vimose has been dated to c. 160 AD by means of dendrochronology. The Early Iron Age does have a number of Italic alphabets, yet there is a considerable chronological and geographic void in between these and Vimose. Similarly, the Greek hypothesis argued for a late date for the creation of the runes, c. 200 AD. This has been disproved by the Danish finds. Lastly, the Nabatean theory would give the creation of the runes a period of 35 years to spread from a Nabatean detachment stationed in a Roman auxiliary fort in Straubing, Bavaria in 125 AD to Vimose in 160 AD. This is extremely fast, and therefore improbable. It appears unlikely that a single auxiliary unit had the capacity to influence the entire elite of Germania Libera within a single generation. But it cannot be excluded that alternative graphematic systems employed by auxiliary units from a variety of literate Mediterranean cultures may be the origin of a few runes with phonetic values not represented in the Latin alphabet. Germanic soldiers were aware of various forms of literacy in the Roman army. They could shop around. Eventually they would have graphematic representations of all phonemes present in the Common Germanic language.

As the Latin theory, the alternative scholarly theories assume that alphabetic literacy first originated within the Semitic language group. The runes are ultimately derivative of Mediterranean literate cultures. Germanic intellectual development and its step into literate modernity are thus dependent on the cultural achievements of Semitic, Hellenic, and Latin cultures. This has great consequence for the study of the Germanic shift from orality to literacy, and beyond. It means that many aspects of Germanic prehistory are redundant. Germanic people existed already in the Stone Age and Bronze Ages, but their achievement besides genetic reproduction means very little as to what we are now. The fact that so much effort in the Germanic past has ultimately proved pointless is very hard for some to accept. They will take pride in their genes rather than in what has been accom-
plished in history. Besides the scholarly theories, there are a number of Nazi and/or racist attempts to portray the runes as a purely Germanic script, derivative of Bronze Age carvings (cf. Hunger 1984, Düwel 2001). This would somehow give the otherwise irrelevant Germanic prehistory an improved meaning. These erroneous musings can be disregarded as pathological fantasies. On the flip side of the loony coin are the attempts to interpret runic inscriptions as coded Aramaic messages from the lost tribe of Israel (Svensson 2001). This would bring the Germanic runic tradition in line with the Mormons (Davies and Arlebrand 2004: 32-36), the Nation of Islam (Gabriel 2004: 140-141), and Rastafarianism (Partridge 2004: 62-64). Or, just about any other cult or sect that proclaims to be the sole exponent of truth derived from a sacred text.

2.1.1 Literacy and Language Development

Literacy does not dovetail language development. There is no indication that written language always conforms to changes in speech. A reliance on epigraphic records may obfuscate an understanding of the development of spoken language. Written language may serve as a conservative feature. The obvious example is that of written Latin being preserved in Merovingian Period Ireland. A further case is Modern English spelling that unites a number of very different dialects. If Irish English were to be transcribed according to its exact phonetic values, it would be most difficult to read for West Africans and Americans. Indeed, language acquisition by means of a variety of phonetic English texts would be near impossible for non-English speaking students.

On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence in Modern Swedish that the growth of mass literacy following the school reform of 1842 caused new groups of literate speakers to imitate written language in speech. One would seek to pronounce some very strange spellings to the letter. The new literates perceived written Swedish as fancier than their own dialects. This was a curious development. Written Swedish during the Early Modern Period was a morass of various strange orthographies employed by German scribes in different government cabinets in Stockholm. Eventually a new standard was set, but it showed that written Swedish (i.e. German attempts to transcribe the Stockholm dialect spoken by the aristocracy and functionaries within the state administration) was rather different from spoken Swedish. This problematic has implications for all epigraphic study. In the following section, questions regarding the study of Early Runic, Proto-Norse and Pre-Old High German will be discussed.

2.1.2 Runological Method

Science is branched into different disciplines. The practitioners of each scientific discipline create a technolect. This enables the practitioners to exercise a certain amount of control and power. Foucault (1970) has argued that there is a disciplinary yoke for anyone seeking to enter a scientific discourse. There are a number of rules to be followed in order to qualify as a discursive participant. Those who fail to qualify are excluded. Foucault’s definition of a discourse does resemble that of a technolect to a great extent. Runology is a young scientific discipline. It lacks much in terms of theory and method. Marstrander argued that runology is a
combination of paleography, linguistics, archaeology and mythology (cf. Makaev 1995:13). I agree with this definition of runology as an interdisciplinary discourse. It goes beyond the constraints of linguistics. It should be noted that this is an opinion not shared by all runologists. Williams (1992), Barnes (1994), and Peterson (1995) have addressed the need for positivist norms for a more linguistic runology. A further attempt to some up runological method is to be found in Braumüller (1995).

The current study of runic inscriptions in Scandinavia does very much follow norms of deduction and probability (Barnes 1994, Williams 1992). In particular, there is an emphasis on phonetics and graphematics, along with personal names (Lagman 1989, Williams 1989, Peterson 1994, Larsson 2002). A deductive scientific method (as employed by Scandinavian runologists) would have to follow the theorem known as Ockham’s razor (Lübcke 1988: 404) along with the theorem of probabilism (Lübcke 1988: 448). The former theorem states that one should not assume more things than necessary, and that one should not assume anything as necessary to explain a fact if it is not established by means of distinct experience, clear deduction, or if its demanded by the theorem. The latter theorem holds that certain knowledge cannot be established. Therefore, opinions and actions must be considered in the light of probability.

Modern runologists focusing on Scandinavia stress the importance of fieldwork (Williams 1992, Barnes 1994). It is unacceptable to work only with photographs or drawings. One has to look at the actual inscription. There is no standardized procedure for the scientific interpretation of a runic inscription in the field. I have come to realize that what is taught, as self-evident procedure in one place is not even applied in another place. In Sweden, I was taught was that the first thing a reader has to do with a runic inscription is to establish the direction of lecture. This made sense. I always tried to follow this procedure. The direction may be uncertain especially if several of the graphemes can be read in both directions. One thus has to argue the case why one direction of lecture is better than another. But I soon discovered that runologists sometimes do not bother with such formalities. They want to express their own ideas, regardless which way the inscription actually reads. As long as such procedural mistakes are made by runologists, the positivists still have a valid case for a more rigorous method. I shall therefore explain my method.

First, I have attempted to perform as many runological autopsies as possible. Besides a few hundred Swedish rune stones, I have hence inspected a few dozens of Continental and Frisian runic inscriptions. The term ‘runological autopsy’ may seem pretentious. It has the advantage of actually explaining what one does (Düwel 2001). Carved runes are best read with the index finger tip or fingernail in the carved line, eyes fixed on the finger. Runic inscriptions should be studied as close to their original existence as possible. The splendid illustrated works of the 19th century are relics (e.g. Stephens 1884). Yet this does not equate surrender to the opinio communis offered by some armchair runologist who has never seen the actual inscription in question. There is no guarantee for the correctness of a reading offered by an internet computer base. Williams (1992) criticizes Odenstedt (1990) for not having studied runic inscriptions in situ. Very few runic inscriptions, besides some rune stones remain in situ. Runic inscriptions on portable objects are usually found in museums. What Williams probably wants to get across is that Odenstedt has never seen the inscriptions in question. His scientific results may therefore be unreliable. The only time on can study runes in situ, is at the...
time for their discovery. But this will not do. It is simply not possible for all runologists to climb down into a grave to study a corroded metal object between the legs of a female skeleton in the foothills of Southern Germany. An exception is a number of runic inscriptions on stones integrated in posterior buildings. These are to be studied in loco.

Second, I have examined runic inscriptions chronologically according to criteria for the study of Viking Age rune stones established by Christiansson (1959:43). These criteria are: 1) Runological, 2) Historical, 3) Genealogical, 4) Ornamental, 5) Archaeological. In the first category, there are six separate criteria, as defined by Williams (1990:127-128): 1) Change in Graphematic Form, 2) Change in Phonetic Value, 3) Phonetic Change, 4) Lexical Change, 5) Morphological Change, 6) Syntactic Change. I have used all of the abovementioned criteria. But the archaeological context and the constraints of the runological source material has only allowed for limited use of the criteria. I have therefore laid an emphasis on lexical and syntactic change, which is relatively easy to trace. The linguistic criteria are dead silent re-constructions in the sense that the brain and speech organs of a buried person have ceased to function. I have therefore specified archaeological criteria: 1) Regional and Quantitative Distribution, 2) Taphonomy and Materiality, 3) Visibility, 4) Position on the Human Body. They differ from the other criteria in that they are caused by external, material factors.

Archaeological contexts may be read as composed narratives. All archaeological criteria are not related chronology. Some are related to context, others to the construction of gender. The latter need to be deconstructed. It is questionable whether one can trace the linguistic development in Continental Germanic runic inscriptions in a linear fashion. Should one concentrate on dialects? Ideological and political factors of the Modern Period have had a significant impact on the scientific research on the origins of several different national languages. It has often been inopportune to argue that closely related dialects transcend artificial boundaries of nation-states. Similarly, it has not always paid off to state that there never were any national languages in prehistory. In particular, the Frankish dialects have always been sensitive. Low Frankish dialects form the basis for Dutch and Flemish. The now extinct West Frankish was spoken in what is today France. Central and East Frankish have gone up in High German. There never was a uniform Pre-Old High German.

The runological criteria may well be applicable to Viking Age rune stones, but not always to burial contexts. The use of th or d as onsets may well depend on synchronic differences rather than the diachronic development known as the Old High German sound shift. Not even vowel shifts can be accurately dated. Carvers spell as they see fit. If a carver is confronted with a tricky diphthong, he/she can just ignore it, e.g. lbi (Neuding–Baar, grave 168). Here, one must assume that the reader did understand the inscription, and inserted a diphthong ranging from /eu/ to /iu/:

\[
\begin{align*}
/eu/ &> /eo/ > /io/ > /ie/ \\
/eu/ &> /iu/ > /io/ >
\end{align*}
\]

One will never know which one it was. That w and u have had some form of alphabetic status does not make things any easier (Düwel 1999c). My conclusion, therefore, is that the Continental Runic corpus cannot be dated by means of
runological criteria. Instead, I have focused on questions of taphonomy and regional contexts.

Wood, arguably the most common material for Early Runic inscriptions, only survives in a few cases in the North (e.g. Illeurop, Nydam and Kragehul), Lower Saxony (Fallward footstool), and Alemannia (Neudingen-Baar, grave 168). But many of the Migration Period Early Runic objects made of bone and stone found in Norway and Sweden lack contextual parallels in Alemannia, notably the Nordic bone tools. In these cases, it would seem that one will never find parallels in Alemannia simply because there never were any.

The recognition of the question of taphonomy makes matters more complicated and uncertain. One could hypothetically tip the balance in favor of the Mälar Valley as the densest runic region during the Merovingian and Vendel Periods. The majority of the most valuable portable Early Runic objects in the Mälar Valley have probably gone up in flames on funeral pyres, or rotted away in boat and chamber graves. One can expect to retrieve a substantial part of the total corpus of the Alemannic runic inscriptions on bronze and silver surfaces. These surfaces are likely to be on objects in female graves. One could thus suppose that the majority of runic inscriptions in Alemannia were carved on now lost male objects of iron and wood, such as seaxes with wooden handles.

The odds for finding runic inscriptions in Alemannia are seemingly better than elsewhere on the Continent. This has to do with the fact that the funeral practice involving the deposition of grave goods was abandoned earlier in Gaul and on the Middle Rhine than in Alemannia (Dierkens and Périn 1997, Naumann-Steckner 1997). It also appears that the regional runic taphonomy of Alemannia had much to do with gender. But because of gender, the runic aspect of the taphonomy may easily be misunderstood. From a study of the metal objects found in the row grave cemetery of Marktoberdorf (Lkr. Ostallgäu) it has been shown that Alemannic women of the late 6th and early 7th centuries had more bronze and silver surfaces on their bodies than did the men. But Alemannic men had more iron objects in their graves (Christlein 1978:104).

It is needs to be reiterated that bronze and silver surfaces fare comparatively well in row grave cemeteries, much better than iron surfaces in any case. Bronze and silver objects are also easier to restore and conserve. It is obvious that many inciseled ornaments and casually cut runic inscriptions on iron have corroded beyond recognition. Unfortunately, the majority of these decorations and texts will never be retrieved. An important case in point is a seax from Pleidelsheim (Kr. Ludwigsburg); grave 232, which when discovered had a beautiful interlace ornamentation on its iron blade. The ornamentation was later destroyed during conservation (Koch 2001: 323-324, Abb. 127). By contrast, the 1998 restoration of a silver digitated brooch from Pleidelsheim, grave 20, yielded a previously unknown runic inscription: *inha* (Düwel 1999a, Koch 2001). The case of Pleidelsheim begs further questions: How many seaxes have been found in all row grave cemeteries? How many digitated brooches are known at all? Only when answers are given to such questions can one begin to assess the currently known runic corpus with some degree of objectivity.
2.1.3 Early Runic in Context

In order to explain the rise of Early Runic literacy in the Germanic world, one must also understand the growing power of Germanic elective affinities within the Roman world. Without Germanic power there would have been no need for Early Runic literacy. Germanic self-consciousness was at a rather high level in the late 3rd century. An attack against Roman territory was by all means a viable option. This had to do with what Rome had become, and with how Rome was appreciated by Germanic people in regard to how they saw themselves. The fearsome ‘other’ had become reified into something new. Imer (2003) has summarized some quantitative and chronological data about the Nordic Early Runic inscriptions. She lists 293 inscriptions. Of these, Imer dates the majority to period C1b (27 inscriptions) and period D2a (161 inscriptions). There are discrepancies unaccounted for. There is a shift in burial tradition that has implications for taphonomy. One can still make some conclusions by relating this to a chronology of the Roman Empire and the dating of gold deposits (Andersson 1993). For instance, there is a considerable void in period C2. This period is identical with a strong Roman military revival under the Tetrarchy. This involved a substantial recruitment of Germanic warriors into the new Roman legions, at least 100,000 men (Richardot 1998). It is plausible that the need for Germanic literacy was less accentuated when a substantial part of the most qualified Germanic retinues were hired by the Roman military.

If the Roman state apparatus had become weakened and its currency devaluated, the Germanic conception of the self in relation to what was known of romanitas had grown so much stronger. It became important to make manifest adopted and reified traits of Roman culture together with an accentuated display of Germanic valor. Important Romans practiced literacy on a regular basis. This made an impression on Germanic war leaders. But they wanted to display their own knowledge. It was time to show off Germanic literacy. It was a distinct statement. But it never represented a real alternative. In Germania Libera there may never have been a need to reproduce any larger amounts of text. The preserved texts are laconic. Indeed, if one highlights a context like the rich graves in Himlingøje it becomes evident that Latin texts on imported Roman objects such as coins generally tend to be both more frequent and longer. The cause of this Germanic hubris rested in the new possibilities opened up by the internal divisions of the Roman State apparatus. In other words, Germanic literacy only became a viable option as a secondary result of a larger development that remained beyond Germanic control.

2.2 Latin Literacy and Roman Text Production

This section discusses issues pertaining to the Latin language. The technolect employed will be qualified as Roman, however. Latin was a small dialect of a more general Italic language before it came to dominate the other dialects. With this domination in speech followed domination within literacy. The latter phenomenon was a piecemeal achievement, though. There are a handful of Volcian inscriptions in Pompeii, for instance (Skydsgaard 1982).

The first Latin text dates to c. 600 BC (Jean 1991: 72). But Roman intellectuals were aware that literacy had a long history prior to Rome and the Latin language. They also understood that alphabets were not immune to change. Tacitus
(Annals XI. 11-13) gives a convincing, albeit incorrect, account for the invention of literacy. He argued that the Egyptian hieroglyphs were invented first. Then came the Phoenician alphabet, which was transformed, into the Greek and Latin alphabets. Besides the fact that the Phoenician alphabet derives from a writing system older than the Egyptian hieroglyphs, it is clear that Tacitus had well understood the general development of writing systems. A logical conclusion, he mentions that Emperor Claudius introduced new letters in Latin. These were apparently popular and in use for a while.

There has been considerable debate among scholars as to how literate Roman society was. The trend seems to be rising from the mere 5-10% in the western provinces suggested by Harris (1989: 272). There is a tendency to see the Roman army as more literate than did Bowman (1994). A recent estimate is that some 20% of the population in the Roman Empire was literate (Rüger 1998: 359). This figure seems to give the right proportions for the 11,000 inscriptions and dipinti found in the town of Pompeii (Ingemark 2001: 21), which had a population of c. 6,000-20,000 people (Skydsgaard 1982:181). Note that Pompeii was a relatively small town. Only 44 of the total 66 hectares have been excavated (Laurence 1994: 3). The largest Roman border towns (e.g. Carnuntum, Cologne, Mainz) were ten times the size of Pompeii. The literacy figures for the Roman military along the limes is likely to have been much higher than for the population of an Italian provincial town like Pompeii. The Roman military had an ‘epigraphic consciousness’ (Ingemark 2001:26). It raised epigraphic monuments wherever it was active. At Vindolanda, a fortress along Hadrian’s Wall in Scotland, some 1,900 writing tablets in Roman cursive have so far been found. Most of them were written within a 10-year period (http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk).

Bilingualism, digraphic literacy, and even trigraphic literacy, were frequent in the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Besides the ubiquitous Greek and Latin, official inscriptions in some eastern provinces were occasionally written in Aramaic, Demotic and Hieroglyphic scripts. Many Roman emperors who managed to hold on to power for more than five years were bilingual and digraphic literates, although they preferred to use Latin as an official language (Corcoran 2000). But the parallel between the benevolent Roman acceptance of already existing graphematic systems in its conquered dependencies, and the creation of a new writing system, or the imposition of a writing system upon illiterates is an uneasy one at best. Biliteracy and triliteracy were predominantly urban phenomena, found in cities such as Alexandria, Constantinople and Palmyra. Most Roman literates could only read Latin. Biliterates who had Aramaic or Greek as their primary writing systems, may have been Roman citizens and engulfed by romanitas. But this did not mean that they felt to be akin to Romans from Italy. It would seem that from a Roman point of view, Germanic illiterates north of the limes should have been taught Latin literacy above anything.

2.2.1 Textual Longevity and Quantity of Roman Media

Latin literacy had a long tradition at the time of the early Roman Empire. Despite this, there were limited ways to produce texts that could be transported and read several times (Bischoff 1997). One was to paint or print letters on a surface. Another was to carve letters onto a surface or remove parts of the surface. A third was to stamp or press letters onto a relatively soft surface so that letters stand out
in relief as on a bracteate. A fourth was to strike letters in relief on a surface, e.g. a coin. Most people at the time were probably of physically capable of producing a text, even if they were illiterate. Besides carved and brush painted graffiti and dipinti on street walls, the initials steps towards regular Roman text production were fairly complicated. These involved the production of writing tools and surfaces. Most frequent was the use of papyrus and wooden tablets covered with wax or soot. Both these materials had the advantage that they could be recycled. The ink was simply washed off, and the surface could be employed anew. Wax tablets, tabulae cerata, often bound together as diptychs or triptychs, were also simple to recycle. After the text had been carved into the wax, it could be smeared out again with the spatula-formed rear end of the *stylus*. This meant two things. First, writing tools were not ready at hand. They had to be produced and acquired. Recyclable ones were more expensive. Second, rather few portable texts existed for a very long time. Preserved Roman original texts on materials other than stone, glass, pottery, or metal are far and few in between (Rüger 1998: 361). A number of papyri in Latin are known from Egypt. The Vindolanda tablets contain correspondence of Roman soldiers and their families. A further corpus of wooden tablets from Algeria, dates to c. 493-496 AD. The texts record transfers of land ownership between provincial aristocrats during the Vandal kingdom.

Most Roman text production was intentionally transitional and temporary. As a result, textual permanence was not as commonplace as today. The writing on a wax diptych was not meant to last after it had been read. Less effort was given to its text than to a stone inscription. A similar casual attitude is evident in the large corpus of wooden medieval rune sticks from Bergen, Norway. The same can be discerned today, much effort is given on grammar and spell checks in computerized text production and hand-written correspondence. E-mails and sms messages, on the other hand, are full of acronyms, symbols, and sloppy spelling. Such hasty and easily eradicated texts reflect the need for rapid script. Even if the majority of Roman texts were never meant to last forever, there were a lot of them. In the two Roman provinces of Germania Inferior and Germania Superior, there are today some 5,000 known Latin inscriptions (www.geschichte.uni-osnabrueck.de/ausstell).

*Pergamon charta* ‘drawing surface from Pergamon’ was created in the Eastern half of the Empire in the 1st century. A few centuries later followed the invention of the *codex*, the bound book, which would slowly replace the papyrus scroll. Parchment became more frequent in Europe for three reasons. First, papyrus does not do well in the European climate; second it had to be imported from Egypt. Parchment could be produced where there were domesticated animals. Yet, the most important reason for the use of parchment was a sensed albeit belated need to fixate the order of things. This began under Diocletian. The Eastern Empire systematically began writing down laws and records on parchment during the 5th century (Bischoff 1997). The reign of Justinian made the use of parchment even more important as law codes were fixed beyond possible manipulation. It was more difficult to recycle parchment than wax or papyrus. This recycling was known in Greek as palimpsest. The very presence of erasable surfaces and the testimony of palimpsests lead one to conclude that few texts even on scrolls were preserved for a very long time.
2.2.2 Roman Numerical Literacy and Its Applications

Numerical literacy is foremost about quantitative linearity, first in time and then in space. As it does not involve phonology, numerical literacy is easier to grasp than textual literacy. It is a very helpful aid in acquiring other skills, but also in the acquisition of a different mentality. Numerical literacy changes attitudes. The acceptance of its tenets allows for logical leaps, which are unacceptable within an oral culture:

Numerical Literacy is the ability to make meaning from numbers, to read or tell a story, solve a problem or make a decision (http://www.smate.wwu.edu/teched/num-lit-meaning.html).

A telling example is how Swedish mercenaries trained air force pilots in Ethiopia and Biafra in the 1950’s and 1960’s. (Haglund 1988). The first thing the Swedes taught the fresh students was how to use an ordinary wristwatch. The students would soon be able to fly combat missions at night with no visual aid but their wristwatches and the navigational instruments on the dashboard.

A classic statement within numerical literacy: Six identical numbers may express the number 100. This statement can never be accepted as true within an oral culture. The solution to the problem requires the acceptance of literacy as truth: 99 + 99/99 = 100 (M. Orning, personal comment). The two aspects of literacy are easily combined. If numerical graphemes also have phonetic values, it makes the subsequent learning of textual literacy a lot easier. Both Greek and Hebrew used its letters as numbers. The fact that there were five different graphemes for phonemes in word final position enabled the textual representation of the number 999 with three graphemes.

It would seem most likely that the first systematic meaningful Roman signs Germanic people were taught by Romans were the following: I (1), V (5), X (10), L (50), C (100), D (500), M (1000). Each unit in the Roman army had a number, from the legion to the cohort down to the smallest section. These numbers would reappear on tools, personal belongings, equipment, etc. But Roman numerical literacy was impractical for many reasons. For one, the numerals were not acrophone besides C, centum, and M, mille (Petterson 1996). Therefore, the order of the alphabet was given an important role normally reserved for numerical literacy. There was also a large alphabet calendar on display in every Roman community, the fastes. It was used to mark the days of religious holidays and feasts. The first column of the fastes had its days numbered ABCDEFGH, the next HABCDEFG, etc (Corbier 1994: 102). Assigning meaning to an irregular order within a graphematic system must have been tempting, an intellectual play of the first order. One example is the palindrome order ABCBA ABCBA. In Swedish, one may explain this order with a sexist rhyme: Tar man A:na, får man C:na mellan B:na, that is, if one undresses her, one can look between her legs (M. Orning, personal comment). This rhyme also shows how the ‘other’, in this case the female gender, is consciously excluded from the secret by becoming an object of study.

There was quite an incentive for Germanic people to acquire Roman numerical literacy by means of subordinating themselves to the Roman behavior, as regulated by literacy. The standard of living in the Roman army was generally higher than that of the average people living inside the Roman Empire, and much higher than in any larger Germanic affinity. There was regular distribution of alcohol and meat. Skills in numerical literacy were rewarded in the Roman army.
both with privileges and administrative responsibility. Most Roman soldiers were members of a funeral fund, to which they donated some of their annual salary (225 denari a year for regular soldiers). They often tried to save some of the salary for other purposes, such as the acquisition of arable land or a small business enterprise, knowing that the retirement years were likely to entail a significant decrease in the standard of living. The person who was in charge of the others’ savings and the funeral funds (and thus an accountant) was the signifer, the cohort standard bearer (Junkelmann 1986:122). Not all Roman soldiers showed pecuniary foresight. Many were addicted to gambling. A coin is a perfect device for gambling, given its even odds. All you have to do is to flip it. Will it be heads or tails? Given the great chance of loss, one would prefer to gamble with coins of a debased value. The Roman state apparatus saw to this. Small sums of money in the form of cupper assi were regularly distributed to the soldiers. These were put at stake in a number of dice and board games. Germanic people were quick to pick up these games. Tacitus claims that Germanic people took gambling so seriously that they chose to stay sober when rolling dice (Germania 24). Be that as it may, it appears that numerical literacy and gambling were passed on to Germanic barbarians by the Roman army, who also had plenty of alcohol available. The most important game was ludus latrunculus. The name of the game is significant, latrunculus means ‘robber-soldier’ or ‘mercenary’. This was a board game, in the shape of a square. The play was that of military strategy. The game had a clear objective; victory entailed defeating the enemy by using linear and numerical structures. Together with a drink, this was a perfect device for changing the Germanic mind towards romanitas.

2.2.3 The Acquisition of Latin Literacy

Unlike many Early Runic inscriptions, traditional Latin literacy had little punctuation. This would suggest a relative high degree of fluency or habitual use of literacy. The reader would have to know grammar, metrics and spelling to exclaim the cadences of written Latin. Banniard (1989) has rightfully stressed that fluent literacy within the Roman hemisphere had to be acquired by means of a painstaking, interactive process. Teacher and pupil had to jointly go through a tripartite motion in order to qualify the pupil as a reader, that is, someone who could declaim a written text aloud, understand and subsequently explain its subtle or metaphorical meanings. This practice, albeit difficult, was deeply engrained in Roman society. There was private teaching in households, private and municipal schools, and in all likelihood, an army school of literacy. Textual literacy was a societal necessity to such a degree that slaves were engaged to teach aristocrat youngsters its inner workings. This reversal need not have caused an embarrassment to the pupil. Roman society had rituals in which ranks were reversed from top down and vice versa. There were certain carnavalesque days when generals held the lowest rank and every enlisted man was inebriated, bossing their seniors around. An outlet for frustration, these were nevertheless rare occurrences, on an annual basis at the most, as is the case in the French Foreign Legion today (Bergot 1984). For ambitious Germanic soldiers, the acquisition of romanitas may have mattered more than a self-conscious bickering over rank and status. A Latin literate had to master the following skills: 1) litteratio, 2) grammatica, 3) emendatio, 4) distinctio, 5) enarratio. Mass literacy is impossible without a more widespread
alphabetization, that is, knowledge of a writing system with a given order. Such knowledge may be retained by means of an inscription on a portable object, e.g. the futhark on the KJ 6 Charnay brooch. Alphabetization requires primary teachers. In Latin, these were called *litteratores*. They knew substantial parts of the Latin alphabet, and how to mentally transform graphemes into phonemes. They would also know how to pass this knowledge onto someone else.

As numerical literacy employed seven graphemes, which also had phonetic values, it would be very easy for a numerical literate to learn how to write monosyllabic words like DVX, LVX, VIX, etc. Having acquired the knowledge of how to recognize and reproduce the characters of Latin alphabet, and the workings of a writing system structured according to a phonemic-graphematic structure, the pupil embarked on his/her first journey into real literacy. Reading aloud in front of the teacher did this. The most important subject taught was known as *grammatica*. This entailed correct Latin grammar. Vernacular Latin grammar was undergoing considerable change in daily speech. This is why grammatica should be understood as proper Latin rather than grammar. By contrast, vernacular Latin (and later also Italian) was known as *lingua latina* by scholars as Dante Alighieri in the 13th century. The step beyond grammatica was *rhetorica*. This accentuated oral skills in conjunction with literacy, by means of reading aloud. The process of correcting, of filling in lacunae is known in Latin as *emendatio*. The teacher, slave or not, would have to intervene and correct the pupil as the reading went on. Then, the pupil would have to acknowledge his shortcomings. The goal was that the pupil conformed to esthetic norms. Pronunciation was crucial. It must have been increasingly difficult to maintain the correct standard Latin pronunciation in Northern Gaul. It is likely that the nature of *emendatio* progressively changed over time. It certainly worsened during the late 6th and early 7th centuries.

Distinction within literacy is no easy matter. Where does the flow of knowledge begin, and where does it momentarily cease to exist? This is about finding intentional space within linearity. Despite numerous acronyms, Latin text had almost no punctuation. Reading aloud was thus an a priori necessity. Fluent *Vorlesen* constituted a second level of literacy. Intonation and metric cadence were crucial aids to the oral reproduction of the text. But the correct reading of the text should neither betray it’s meaning nor obscure it. This makes any attempt at a Germanic *emulatio* within Latin literacy most difficult. Only when one is acquainted with Roman ideology (i.e. the mindset of a Latin literate) can one begin to read silently. This would take years of training. Given the military context of Latin literacy, where most texts where read aloud to subordinates or in front of senior officers, silent reading must have been a relatively rare skill. Enter the concept of punctuation. There are more Early Runic inscriptions with punctuation found in the North than there are contemporary Latin ones. Enarratio concerns the nature of narrative. What is stated at face value and what carries a deeper meaning? Now that the pupil could read aloud correctly, it was crucial to make sure that the pupil actually understood the meaning of the text. This meant defining the subject matter. It also meant explaining difficult words. Etymology was used, although it was rarely very scientific. Tied to *enarratio* was *exegesis*. The latter entailed the explanation of various religious topics.
2.2.4 The Roman Military – A Carrier of Literacy

Who, and how many were literate along the *limes* in the Roman province of Germania Inferior in the 2nd century? Estimates suggest that there were some 25,000 soldiers stationed in the province. This number amounted to some 25% of the population. It would take quite a bureaucracy to administrate that number of soldiers. It follows that the army must have been the most important carrier of literacy in the border society (Rüger 1998:359). As with numerical literacy, textual literacy was a reason for rapid advancement in the administration of the Roman military. Each legion had a writing staff under a *cornicularius*. This was the higherranking subaltern officer besides the *aquilifer* (legion standard bearer). In a preserved Egyptian papyrus, dated to March 26th, 107 AD, the Roman recruit Iulius Apollinarius wrote to his father Sabinus. The author explained that he, being literate, had been promoted to *librarius* with light duties, whereas the other recruits were busy working in a quarry (Junkelmann 1986:107). But even in the Roman military, few written things lasted forever. Important texts meant to last a long time were ultimately recycled.

Ill. 2. Roman Cavalry Watching Germanic Prisoners Decapitate Each Other (From the Column of Marcus Aurelius, c. 193 AD)
Every unit of the Roman military regularly sent out patrols, *vigiliae*, which were rotated every 2-3 hours. They and the guards they met were handed out passwords on a small tablet known as a *tessara* (Junkelmann 1986:143). The passwords were changed fairly often, and the text on the *tessara* was erased every time the password changed. This meant that literacy was practiced fairly often and that it was the commanding officer that had to oversee that the written passwords were accurate. Germanic volunteers therefore sought to acquire literacy and then started their ascent into higher ranks of the Roman military, beginning with transfer to another part of the Empire. One letter from Vindolanda was written in c. 110 AD by a Germanic auxiliary soldier. It has been argued that he probably came from somewhere east of the Maas (Rüger 1998:360). The garrison of Vindolanda consisted of Batavian and Tungrian recruits, and this is supposedly evident in their written Latin (Ingemark 2001:26).

The presence of Latin epigraphy on Roman military equipment is crucial to the understanding of the earliest runic inscriptions. They appear in the same contexts, namely the Danish bog finds. There is preserved Latin epigraphy on leather, wood and metals. Bishop and Coulston (1993: 44-47) point out that the inscriptions generally name the owner, and at times his company officer, the centurion (or in the case of cavalry, the decurion). Rarely is the unit mentioned. The inscriptions sometimes indicate that military equipment was recycled. For instance, inscriptions on a helmet from Cologne show that it had several successive owners. Stamped texts on military equipment differ from the more personal inscriptions. The stamps indicate the manufacturer.

2.2.5 The Limitations of Roman Literacy

The Roman Empire had one profound weakness in its ideology and knowledge production. Roman imperialism had no single sacred or revelatory text, which gave it a universalistic creed. There never was an illusion of totality in a given text. There were the Sibylline books, but they were not consulted on a regular basis nor did they give any clear guidelines on how to think of, or run society. They were only resorted to as a last desperate measure. Very few people had access to them. Private copies were illegal. Tacitus (*Annals* IV. 11) describes how Tiberius considered them to be more symbolic value, despite the attempts of Augustus to gather and edit the various copies. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXV, 2, 7) relates how Julian consulted them shortly before his death in 363 AD, apparently to no avail. They were finally burnt by the Roman commander in chief Stilicho in the early 5th century (Scheid 1998:101-103). By contrast, the Bible, the book of Mormon, the Qur’an, the American declaration of independence, and the Communist Manifesto are expressions of universalistic ideologies. These are manifest, sacred texts. They have always been integral parts of aggressive and proselytizing imperialist ideologies. The sacred texts are seen as evidence of totality. There is an answer to everything if one knows how to read the sacred texts properly. Roman citizenship was not a matter of cohesion, but indicative of privilege and rank. Rome had little besides wealth and military power to inspire cohesion (Lintott 1993:193-194). It had neither printing presses nor any large number of uniform, sacred texts. The imperial cult gave some cohesion (Price 1984). It inspired particularly freed slaves, soldiers and provincial social climbers in their desire to ap-
pear more Roman than others. But the imperial cult was only appealing if and when the emperor was qualified to do his job. If something good came out of imperial rule, it felt good to participate in the public rituals of the imperial cult. This was not always the case.

To be a Roman citizen, and more importantly a literate Roman citizen, one had to be an active citizen and a community member (Scheid 1998). One had to regularly participate in public feasts and rituals with rather fixed rules, and with little space for change. These rituals were dated by means of the fastes calendar. It was posted in public spaces in Roman communities. These could have been a perfect way to force a uniform ideology onto the Romans by means of literacy. Alas, each locality used its own calendar. Public ritual was ruled by orthopraxy and innovation was frowned upon. Most Roman religious life was thus a collective civic duty on a local level rather than a universal manifestation or an individual visionary and/or ecstatic experience. This would eventually render the traditional Roman imperialist ideology superfluous following Constantine’s conversion to Christianity in the early 4th century. The only serious Roman attempt to fixate a social order with texts in stone occurred during the Tetrarchy.

2.3 Early Runic Literacy

Early Runic writing was dependent on spoken language and was unable to affect the grammar of spoken language in turn, there being all too few acrolectal literates. Therefore, Early Runic did not have the capacity to change the overall oral Germanic ideology. It would serve as a catalyst for a small, dispersed but well connected acrolectal affinity. Despite Tacitus’ attempts to depict Germanic people as an example of ‘moral’ and ‘decency’, who did not employ secret love letters, a number of aspects Latin literacy (including love letters) may have been widespread among certain Germanic affinities. Regardless of the supposed divine origins, Early Runic literacy shared the same drawback as Latin literacy. It lacked a single revelatory text to shape a uniform ideology. One may ignore the Nazi flirtations that still cloud present-day consciousness of runic text; Early Runic literacy just like the Modern Period West African scripts was never an integral part of imperialist ideology or an imperialist power. They were created in reaction to one. As a result, there was no sensed need to retain a fixed number of graphemes from the onset of runic writing. It was never intended to be a tool with which one could gain world supremacy.

The most important thing to observe within Early Runic is not the exact origin, phonetic or graphematic development, but rather the change in chirographic syntax within a certain affinity. It shows the psychodynamic process that is the shift from orality to literacy (Ong 1982). This is caused by ideology. More precisely, it has do with the impact of Roman imperialism upon Germanic ideology. The change in Early Runic syntax is very clear, whereas it is extremely difficult to date phonetic or graphematic change. A graphematic chronology as suggested by Imer (2003) will always remain unreliable, as it fails to account for regional variation. In contrast to Grønvik (1987b), I believe it impossible to date linguistic change in such short intervals as 20 years. This has to do with the very fundamentals of archaeological dating (Steuer 1998). It is very difficult to say what lies behind a phonetic shift or identify who implemented a graphematic shift. By contrast, every step towards a more complicated chirographic syntax is an ideological
step from the preliterate past in our direction. This is very easy to argue, as runic texts tend to become less ambiguous for us, the closer they are to us in time. Exceptions are the rare texts from a period of intensive phonetic and graphematic change, where narrative belonging to orality suddenly appears in text, e.g. KJ 67 Noleby, KJ 101 Eggja, and Ög 136 Rök.

The first linguistic level achieved by an Early Runic writer is the subject level. Germanic masculine personal names are carved on portable objects. This performance suggests limited competence, but it does by no means reflect the oral culture at all. The point is to enable an atemporal presence of the personal names. These names can be reactivated whenever read, e.g. wagnijo (Illerup, Vimose). There is no telling whether this is the owner, donor, writer or manufacturer. This is a level of exclusive, ambiguous masculine presence. There are two groups of names. The first group consists of names on lance- or spearheads and may refer to their subjective qualities, e.g. gaois (KJ 34 Mos), ranja (KJ Dahmsdorf 32), raunijaR (KJ 31 Øvre Stabu), tilarids (KJ 33 Kowel). The other group consists of names ending with –o, e.g. hariso (KJ 9 Himlingøje), leþro (KJ 42 Strårup). These names can be found on a variety of portable objects. Exceptional is wagnijo, which occurs on three different spearheads from two different sites, Illerup and Vimose. The –o group may represent an older set of names, which later disappear (Grønvik 1987b). They are unrelated to later Continental Germanic personal names such as bobo (Maastricht), bubo (KJ 147 Weimar), dado (KJ 164 Weingarten), etc. At the end of this level comes the introduction of nominal sentences, e.g.: ekuwodR (KJ 12 Gårdlösa). The introduction of the first person singular together with a personal name suggests the presence of a verb: ‘I (am) Unraging’. The next step beyond the masculine atemporality and nominal sentences is the subject-verb level SV. Germanic male personal names appear together with verbs, notably *taujan and *talgian: e.g. bidawarijaR talgidai (KJ 13 Novling), hagiradaR tawide (KJ 30 Garbolle), lamo talgida (Skovårde, grave 209). This means that a literate technolect has been created (c. 100-300 AD). The ending –ai may be a remnant from an earlier linguistic stage (Grønvik 1987b).

The following 4th and 5th centuries show an important rapprochement between orality and literacy. One is actually writing complete sentences, on a subject-object-verb level. The runic texts also begin to shift from matter-of-fact statements into metaphors. Written language grows wider, yet more elusive. This can be traced by the use of certain words and phrases and, not least, by means of alliteration. In Norway and Sweden, new terms and textual objects replace the old Danish ones, *taujan but also *wurkian gradually disappear. Rune stones and bracteates are created. Practices such as *faihian and *writan are introduced as terms in the new media. Entire unambiguous sentences appear, including appositions. The I-formula becomes more frequent, often together with appositions such as erilaR. The concept of tripartite narrative is introduced on the Norwegian Tune-stone: I-formula of the author, the death of a pater familias, his burial and his three daughters’ inheritance. Germanic female personal names appear. Tripartite alliteration appears, e.g. ek hlewagastir holtijaR horna tawido, wate hale hino horna (c. 300-500 AD). It has become meaningful to describe a chain of events in text, and it is equally meaningful to do this in a poetic way. This means that the literate audience has grown larger and more sophisticated. It would also seem that the literate technolect underwent relexification as it moved in a south to north direction. It will take a long time to surpass this level of chirographic syntax, at least a couple of hundred years. A probable reason for this delay was the rebound
of orality within *romanitas*. This rebound had an impact on the leading Germanic affinities. There is ample evidence of Germanic youngsters sent off to acquire skills in rhetoric. In their hall buildings, (copies of imperial aulas) the kleptocrats needed sound, not text, to fill the space with the proper ideological content. Orality allots distinct qualities to narrative protagonists. There are heroes, villains, and so on. This facilitates mnemoics (Ong 1982, Propp 1990).

Nielsen (2000, 2002:26-30) has offered a credible account for how the various Germanic languages branched away from each other during the Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period. The language in which most runic texts were written, c. 200-500 AD, is labeled by Nielsen as ‘Early Runic’. The first Early Runic inscriptions are phonetic inscriptions. The ability to denote phonetic values must have been the grand attraction of Latin literacy. Sound could be transformed into signs, then preserved, and passed on. The sounds could be reactivated at a later point. This brings us to the question of the order of graphemes and their phonetic values. To perform the feat of creating a phonetic script, one does not need an exact order of signs to begin with. Eventually someone will sit down and order the signs. Mnemonics is secondary within the art of memory. The object to be memorized has to be created before it may be integrated into a mnemonic system. Early Runic language broke up into different versions of increasingly separate languages. There are peripheral regions where there seems to be evidence of a more sophisticated runic literacy, such as Lister in Blekinge. There are problems with this region though. The recorded language belongs to the Vendel Period, is somewhat of an anomaly and appears extremely hostile (Nerman 1947, Page 1987, Birkmann 1995, Williams 2000). That such a local use of runes went on longer in the North than elsewhere is indicative of a considerable isolation during the Vendel Period.

### 2.3.1 Early Runic Technolect

Surveys of runic technolect are to be found in Ebel (1963), and Düwel (2001). In Old Icelandic texts, Odin is described as the chief compiler of lore surrounding the runic technolect. Odin’s questions in *Havamál* as to whether one knows of ‘carving’, ‘painting’, and ‘reading’ sounds like those of a master craftsman interrogating an apprentice. It has been argued that there was a form of Early Runic koiné (Makaev 1997). All runic literates supposedly understood the koiné. Meant for a few, it was understood by all its initiated users but not by outsiders. It is difficult to compare the small evidence of Early Runic technolect to other contemporary evidence. Take the Christian texts in Germanic language, e.g. Wulfila’s Gothic Bible translation, or the Old English Caedmon’s Hymn. They were intentionally read aloud and understood by all. The majority remained illiterate. Tools of an imperialist ideology, these texts claim to have universal values. They are proselytizing and inclusive in their nature. They are far from the realms of the introspective or exclusive. It is quite likely that Christian texts are closer to spoken language in terms of explicit meaning than the Early Runic texts. But even so, the Christian use of Germanic vocabulary at times fell prey to mistaken technolect. The meaning appears ambiguous. Germanic non-Christian sacrifice was often carried out with blood that was smeared (Swedish ‘blöta’) unto objects (Näsström 2002). It was hence called *blót* in Old Icelandic. Wulfila uses the
Gothic correspondent to describe Christian worship, e.g.: blotandi fraujam ‘praised the Lord’ (Hermodsson 1993).

A major question regarding the technolect of Early Runic is its relative immunity to linguistic development. Being a synchronic one-way communication meant for a few, it could resist language development to a considerable degree. That is, if one discounts the process of relexification. New ideas could be expressed with the old technolect if the words used were given new meanings. A good example of a conscious relexification process of very basic terms is that from Latin to Christian Latin technolect (Janson 2004:86). The verb to speak is known in Latin as orare, the noun ‘speech’ is known as oratio. But the later Christian term oratio designates prayer. Similarly, gratia in Latin means thanks. The notion of gratia Dea, ‘divine grace’, Swedish ‘nåd’, is a Christian relexification. The Christian relexification process in Latin took place some time 50 AD-400 AD, that is, at the same time as the Early Runic technolect was created. One can thus expect similar developments in written runic, the clearest expression of the ideology of the Germanic hierarchy.

Despite relexification, it is likely that the Early Runic technolect became somewhat static during the 6th century. The Common Germanic koiné (Makaev 1995) appears to have been unable to conform to the development within the Norse language continuum. During the Vendel Period and perhaps even somewhat earlier, the Proto-Norse language began to undergo a period of rapid linguistic change. This development includes syncope. The loss of word-initial w- and j- also occurred in Proto-Norse. As a result, new graphemes were introduced while others disappear. A few attempts were made to reconcile the differences between the graphemes and the Proto-Norse language. One adjusted spelling according to familiar pronunciation on a local level in Lister, Blekinge. The grapheme for w became superfluous. It was re-employed in the 9th century on Ög 136 Rök as u. The Lister stones KJ 95-98 show that j became A. But j was still used as an ideograph in the 7th century. Below are a few practices listed according to their generality in Early Runic technolect.

The Proto Germanic verb *taujan is often translated as ‘to prepare’. Even if one no longer ‘prepares’ things, any new technolect is likely to include the verb ‘to prepare’ into its workings but with a very different meaning. It is obvious that the creation of text by means of rune carving or painting required a new terminology, which drew upon the already existent vocabulary. You can ‘do someone’ and/or ‘do someone in’ but this codified description of your doings with someone is meant for you and an initiated person to discuss, not for someone and his/her relatives to understand. Besides the Roman coins, dices and wax tablets, Germanic people fairly often encountered the Latin 3rd p. S.g past tense fecit, ‘did’. Roman objects with Latin makers’ marks were acquired by means of trade or external appropriation. No great surprise, then, to find that *taujan is the earliest known verb used in runic literacy. It first appears on the Garbølle box (KJ 30) in the SV structure hagiradaR tawide, that is, ‘HagiradaR prepared’. The Garbølle box dates to the mid 2nd century. The text is ambiguous. Did hagiradaR carve the runes or craft the box? Did he ‘prepare’ both? The Early Runic technolect needed to expand its vocabulary to distinguish between different practices. This is why its vocabulary was to undergo relexification. A relatively late Early Runic case of *taujan is the Gallehus horn (KJ 43), which probably dates to the last decades of the 4th century: ek hlewagastiR boltijar horna tawido ‘I, HlewagastiR of Holt, made the horn’. But already here one may detect certain ambivalence towards the
term. The text is already alliterative, and the ‘I’ formula together with the alliterative lines are carved in bold letters, whereas tawido is composed of single strokes.

The Proto Germanic verb *wurkian is the root of the English verb ‘to work’, and the Swedish noun ‘yrke’. To work is slightly more specific than to do. Work is still a far too general term, although it is related to the shaping of things. To work is to create, not to destroy. Caedmon attributes the creation of the world to God. The world is weorc Wuldorfaeder, or, the work of the Gloryfather. Heaven was later made as a roof, æfter tawide. It is most likely that the verb wurkian, which only appears once in the runic corpus nevertheless held a higher, more specific meaning in the literate technolect than did taujan. The SVO structure does include *wurkian.

The verb *talgian most likely denoted exactly what it means today, Swedish ‘tälja’. There are two known Early Runic examples, talgida and talgidai, along with the noun talijo on a plane from Vimose. The fact that the verb denoted carving is probably why it soon disappeared within the Early Runic technolect, although the verb does reappear in a runic context well into the Early Medieval Period on a rune stone in Vallentuna (Jansson 1987:168). This description of the

![Diagram of the Early Runic Language](Image)
practice was too obvious. It could not be reified to have a different meaning. The 
–ai and –a endings are indicative of an earlier stage in Germanic language. The
meaning of to write is to divide a surface into two by means of carving a track in
the middle. This is a distinct act, which leaves a trace behind. The use of this verb
seems to have grown in frequency towards the end of the Early Runic Period.
*wraitan is so far more frequent than the non-existant *taujan in the Continental
Germanic corpus.

The verb *faihian, to paint, is one of the longest surviving terms of the Early
Runic technolect (Jansson 1987:42) outlasting *taujan, and *wurkian. The Rune
Swedish derivative fa was used to denote authorship well into the 12th century.
Along with writing, painting appears as a practice closely related to literacy. Paint
highlights text. Does Early Runic ‘to paint’ therefore include doing all the work
necessary to paint? Does it include glue, brushes etc.? It is most uncertain that the
12th century meaning in Hälsingland dovetailed that of 5th century in Bohuslän.
But the fact that the term was retained for a long time in the periphery could indi-
cate some isolated continuity of sorts there.

2.3.2 The Atemporal Power of Early Runic

There never were ‘neutral’ textual media in a world were only a handful were
capable of producing texts. An inscribed object demands a certain inscription,
according to its role and value. Text is therefore often found on coins. The num-
ismatic text enables a given sum of value to retain a synchronic link to the
monier no matter how many times the coin will change hands. The same cannot
be said for mere ornamentation or symbolism.

The Frisian Toornwerd taxus-wood comb bears the inscription kobu, ‘comb’
(Looijenga 1997). This cannot be satisfactorily explained by facetiously stating
that the inscription’s only purpose was to highlight its function: ‘in case the liter-
ate user did not know what it was’ (Page 1996:144). What Page (perhaps inten-
tionally) ignores is the nature of taxonomy. Cato has summarized it: Rem tene,
verba sequentur, that is, ‘hold on to the thing, and the word for it will follow’. It
would seem that literate people were better educated than others, and therefore
more than capable of correctly identifying instrumentum domestica. There is sim-
ply too much evidence of runic objects bearing their own names or identifying
their origin to disregard this phenomenon. There are by now some 40 runic ob-
jects naming themselves. Among these one may mention: spyti, ‘needle’, rifi,
‘rib’, ksamella, ‘foot stool’ (Düwel 2002). The most plausible interpretation is
that the seemingly tautological nature separates the inscribed object and its owner
from everyone else, despite the supposedly ‘pedestrian’ nature of the inscription.
The runic comb, and thus the owner, is in possession of an anima which the other
comb-owners lack, note Saussure’s semiotic theory of arbitrary signification
where an object is named a certain name simply because no other object bears that
name (Saussure 1966:67-74). The runic comb became even more of a comb.
Someone literate could constantly reactivate its dormant anima. This was knowl-
edge production and hence a source of power.

It may be generally assumed that literate people seek to have texts available
for display at all times, even in the afterlife. Likewise, one often regards the elite
as a carrier of literacy over time. Literate people do have the choice to position
texts in what they regard an appropriate context. One can thus expect that rich
Germanic burials sometimes yield Early Runic texts. There are some two dozens finds of portable Early Runic objects in Nordic graves. Roughly a third of these are the Late Roman Iron Age female inhumations from Denmark and Skåne. It is comparatively rare to find portable Early Runic objects in Nordic cremation graves, see table 1. In Denmark, there is only one known cremation grave with an Early Runic object, Møllegårdsmerken, grave 2118, (Lund-Hansen 1998). In Norway there are four cremation graves with Early Runic objects from the Late Roman Iron Age, KJ 31 Øvre Stabu, KJ 37 Fløksand, KJ 39 Nedre Hov, KJ 44 Fræihov, and four from the ensuing Migration Period and Vendel Period, KJ 18 Strand, KJ 29 Anm 2 Ødemotland, KJ 38 Gjersvik, KJ 50 Strøm. The funeral practice varies here, from the deposit of precious bronze vessels to harbor the cleansed and crushed bones to mere cremation layers. By the same token, it is clear that runes are more frequent in Norwegian cremation graves than in inhumations. There are only three runic inscriptions from Vendel Period inhumations in total: KJ 17 Eikeland, Loftsgård, KJ 18 Strand. In Sweden, there are only three certain cases of Early Runic objects in Migration and Vendel Period cremation graves, Hedenstorp, Rickeby and Älvesta. There are no known inhumations with Early Runic inscriptions in Sweden from this time.

2.3.3 The Early Runic Gender Construction

It is clear that Germanic patriarchy was expressed in textual literacy as soon as Early Runic was invented. Men wrote male personal names on male objects. Current evidence indicates that female textual presence and female authorship were secondary developments in Early Runic, as is usually the case in other writing systems. The oldest male objects with Early Runic texts are easily divided into two groups: arms and non-arms. The arms are usually lance- or spearheads, see table 1. Some of these have subjective names, notably KJ 31-34. The naming of male objects has in this case been tied to the creation of a persona or personification of an anima, with wishful characteristics. These spears are called ranja ‘Runner’, tilarids ‘Goal-rider’, raunijaR ‘Prober’, and gaois ‘Barker’. But these ‘living dead’ objects are exceptional. They are not placed on the human body, they are held at the outer end of an extremity. They do not express the human body; they are bodies of their own. They stand in between the self-referential objects and the male personal names. They qualify as the first literary personae in Early Runic.

The Early Runic context in Late Roman Iron Age Denmark consists of several separate bog deposits of male objects, and seven female inhumations (Lund-Hansen 1998). This may suggest a male dominance in the Early Runic discourse, as there are no indications of female carvers by then. By contrast, four carver signatures have so far been found in the Merovingian Period row grave cemeteries. Three of these belong to women (Düwel 1989, Babucke 1999b). The male signature, boso wraet runa is on a female object, KJ 144 Freilaubersheim, a digitated brooch of Frankish origin, c. 520-560. From this it is clear that runic literacy must have been an overreaching discourse including both genders. Otherwise, one could not explain the many male personal names on female objects. But it was a discourse firmly under male hegemony. It would take a very long time for women to express themselves as individuals. Meanwhile, Germanic affinities began to exhibit more and more extravaganza in relation to the expression of individuality.
Tacitus argued that Germanic men were cremated in the 1st century AD (*Germania*, 27). But one successively finds more extravagant inhumations in Late Roman Iron Age Denmark, in particular those of women. While men tend to become more absent in the burial context, some women belonging to selective affinities were regarded as extremely important in the afterlife, indeed pedestalized. The select few Germanic women presented themselves with long necklaces composed of a variety of hundreds of millefiori glass, amber and crystal beads. Their metal belongings were lavishly adorned during their lifetime. Tremolo etchings on plane silver surfaces are very frequent, the brooches from Skovgårde being a case in point (Ethelberg 1999). Here one can often find Early Runic texts, a distinct production of an acquired knowledge. The first Early Runic texts on female objects are laconic to say the least. Generally, they merely state dithematic male personal names: bidawarijaR, ‘Ready-warrior’ (KJ 13 Nøvling); widuhudaR ‘Forest-hound’ (KJ 10 Himlingøje). Each of these statements ought to mark the presence of a *pater familias* in the afterlife. Their names have become immortal, whereas the bodies and grave goods of their women are very much marked by time. How did this come about?

Every object has a certain life span and a history of its own. To understand it, one needs to take part of its narrative. It lies in the self-interest of an individual giving away an object that as much his/her persona is retained within this narrative, e.g. ‘I remember when N.N. gave this to me’ or, even better ‘Every time I put this on, I think of N.N.’. The ultimate situation is when everybody present knows the narrative how the object was passed on, and what relationship this act of transfer signified. This recognition is facilitated when the persona or anima of the donor is included into the object (e.g. a lock of hair, a piece of an umbilical cord, etc.). One easy way of doing this is by placing the donor’s name on the object. If the donor succeeds in doing this, the narrative holds a strong synchronic trait. The donor’s name can always be reactivated from the object irrespective of the donor’s presence. The narrative becomes shortened and atemporal. It is clear from the epigraphic evidence that only a few had access to this privilege.

### 2.3.4 Early Runic Innovation – Frontier and Periphery

During the late 4th and early 5th centuries, there is some innovation in Early Runic text in terms of narrative, space and media. There is a departure from the self-referential naming of objects, single male names, or maker’s marks. Entire subject–verb–object phrases, known as SVO, appear. No longer does one have to content oneself with guessing as to whether the 3rd century N.N merely ‘did’ the runes or the whole object. Instead, the late 4th–early 5th century author first qualifies himself as a member of a selective affinity, and then goes on to state his message. Along these more self-conscious lines, the spatial positioning of text moves from the female body or male arms via the bracteate towards the cultural landscape. Here, the new media is the clearly visible stone surface. The idea of the Early Runic stone epitaph is most likely a loan from the Romans, there were plenty of inscribed Roman epitaphs along the *limes* for Germanic visitors to gawk at. There is little indication that this innovation originated from the 3rd century Early Runic contexts like Himlingøje and Skovgårde in Denmark. Instead, it would seem that much innovation took place in the Nordic periphery, in places like Western Norway, Bohuslän, Västergötland and Blekinge. The texts are placed on surfaces that
are very hard to move even within the vicinity. Norway has by far the largest amount of Early Runic inscriptions in the North. Most of these are stone inscriptions. Some of these have a narrative. Others are evidence of a continued preoccupation with the atemporal that one finds already in 3rd century Denmark, but this time it appears in an external burial context.

Outside of the bracteate horizon, why does the evidence of Early Runic innovation primarily make itself manifest north of Denmark? A first explanation in terms of new media may be a hint at the question of taphonomy, and the increasingly scarce Danish burial context. But there are stone surfaces at hand in Denmark, and the Viking Age context shows that Danes were eventually to enjoy runes on stone surfaces. Instead, one could suggest that the choice of stone surfaces or the inclusion of text in an external burial context was consciously avoided in Denmark.

A second explanation in terms of a shift from simple nouns and makers’ marks to real sentences would suggest something different. Early Runic was still modern in the periphery whereas it was already established in Denmark. The 3rd century had been a time of rapid innovation and manifestation in Denmark. Once things have been accomplished and achieved, let alone made manifest in the burial context, there is little incentive to repeat them over and over again. The dominant families in Denmark moved from rich female graves to the establishment of kleptocratic centers. Early Runic discourse was still in effect there, but had become less important in this enlarged context. The disappearance of rich male graves and the disappearance of the runes seem to be interconnected, they appear to be spent symbloc capital, whereas farmsteads continue to grow in size.

In a fully developed kleptocratic setting, Early Runic was under fierce competition from imported Latin, as evident from the finds at Gudme. The great wars of the mid 4th century had accentuated the demand for Latin literacy among the leading Germanic kleptocrats. The ever dominant Latin provided late 4th century them with a readily available Subject-Object-Verb structure. The step towards SOV within the Early Runic technolect thus came from regions where Early Runic was still an attraction although not a novelty, given that the Danish bog finds originally came from these regions.

In order to fully understand this development, I shall turn things around. The periphery should rather be seen as under the rule of the avant-garde. It is a frontier, and there are fewer rules to inhibit literary expressions. Following the argumentation down its slippery slope, it is likelier that innovation in a relatively new discourse occurs during its spread. When the distribution is consummated in one area, stagnation sets in. This is why there are so few lengthy Early Runic texts in Gudme – there was no longer a need for them there. On the literary frontier, the manifestation of innovation became very important. However, it was not taken for granted that this representation had to be written.

2.3.5 The Early Runic Stone Inscriptions

There are some 40 Early Runic stone inscriptions in Norway and Sweden. The only other certain example of an Early Runic stone inscription is the Breza Fu-thark KJ 5 in distant Bosnia. The vast majority of the Nordic stone inscriptions are in Norway, or in Swedish provinces bordering on Norway: Bohuslän, Västergötland, and Värmland. Five are known from the Målar Valley: KJ 85 Berga, KJ 86
Skåäng, (Södermanland), KJ 99 Möjbro, KJ 100 Krogsta (Uppland), and the recent find of three fragments of a runic picture stone in two separate cremation graves in Tomteboda, Solna Parish (Uppland). There is also a red sandstone fragment of a runic inscription found 1962 in Strängnäs, Södermanland (Schnell 1965:77). It bears the suggestive inscription -\textit{ril\underline{a}R: wod\underline{in}R:} in a left->right direction. If fake, it is still a rather good one. The Strängnäs fragment documents an important, previously unattested intermediate step in the Proto-Norse syncopation process. It would also be the first case of a probable \textit{er\underline{a}R} inscription in the Mälar Valley. Five are found in Blekinge: KJ 95 Gummarp, KJ 96 Stentoft, KJ 97 Björketorp, KJ 98 Istaby, and KJ 98 Annm. Sölvesborg. Three are found on Gotland: KJ 1 Kylver, KJ 99 Martebo, KJ 102 Roes. It is hard to say exactly when the tradition of runic stone monuments began. The first studies on the Norwegian Early Runic texts by Bugge and Olsen were somewhat marred by an unwillingness to contextualize Early Runic objects within Montelius’ chronology. Another later problem was the dating of the onset of the Merovingian Period in Norway, first located to the early 7th century. As in Germany (cf. Roth 1981), this was bogged down by the incorrect dating of the shift from Style I to Style II.

Much effort has instead been placed on linguistic dating (Schulte 1998). A new updated Norwegian corpus with current archaeological dating has yet to see the light. Despite a laconic \textit{ke\underline{z}an} (KJ 83 Belland), most of the Early Runic stone inscriptions nevertheless seem to have a strong tie to the burial rite, words like \textit{hla\underline{i}wa}, ‘grave’, appear in the texts: \textit{hn\underline{a}bud\underline{sh}lai\underline{w}a} (KJ 78 Bø). The graves have in some cases been very elaborate and complicated structures. It is likely that the brief statements seek to capture the very essence of the rite or the passage of the persona. ‘Grave’ or ‘Burial’ may have been a very important word, which made the rite of passage definite. Thus it was chosen to manifest the successful burial. By contrast, the burial context in Himlinghøje required an expert explanation to a passer-by. Who had been given what as they were buried in the mounds? Who were they? An Early Runic burial in Norway, with a stone slab expressing the function of the monument, was sufficient for a literate person to appreciate.

In one Norwegian case (KJ 76 Opedal), the runic inscription explains that the stone marks a burial (\textit{birg}), that the buried individual is a dear relative (\textit{swestaR liubi meR}), and who the undertaker is (\textit{wage}). More structured is the textual monument of KJ 75 Kjølevik. It has three separate inscriptions that nevertheless make up an SVO entity: 1) \textit{hadulaikaR} 2) \textit{ekhagustadaR} 3) \textit{hlaaiwidomagu-}
In nearly all of the Norwegian cases where there was a distinct funeral context belonging to the text, there were remains of cremations. A number of stone inscriptions mark important events, such as new settlements, and post-mortem inheritances. Others qualify authors to claim membership in certain affinities, as *aljamark*R ‘stranger’ (KJ 53 Kårstad) or *erila*R (KJ 69 Rosseland, KJ 70 Järsberg). The event markers differ from the atemporal burials in that they are conceived in a more linear fashion. There require an *a priori* understanding of a before and an after. In between stands an event, which is made manifest in text.

By the 5th century, some of the Early Runic inscriptions are composed in metric language. This has often caused scholars to point at certain runic texts as the first evidence of precursors to Old Norse poetry (Jansson 1987:16). But in these early cases, I would argue that the use of metrics and alliteration is rather to be understood as evidence of a clear yet formal language, a *Hochsichtsprache*. This is likely to have been inspired by the late 4th century Roman oral culture. What has been argued to be poetic periphrases, kennings, do not necessarily have a metaphoric function at all, take the inscription on the Tjurkö bracteate KJ 136: *wurte runoR ana walhakurne heldaR kunimudiu*. This translates as ‘HeldaR worked runes on the foreign grain for Kunimund’. Here, *walhakurne* has often been translated in Swedish as ‘det välska kornet’, that is, the foreign grain, a metaphor for minted or struck gold. But *walh* could be interpreted as meaning ‘Gallo-Roman’, and the smallest coin in the Roman monetary system was called *granum*, or grain in Latin. The latter fact must have been known to a number of people at the time. The Gallehus horn inscription (KJ 43) may have an even more direct meaning: *ek hlewavastig R holtijaR horna tawido*, which translates as ‘I, HlewagastiR of Holt made horn’. Other inscriptions elaborate on the use of certain objects: *wate hali hina horna, maka skari hazu ligi* (KJ 50 Strøm) that translates as ‘The whet-stone sharpened the edge, shorn shall the hay lay’. But there are a few exceptions.

The Tune stone inscription is most unusual. Its author is Wiw. It tells a story with a sequence of events, there is a terminus post quem. The narrative is metric. The author begins the text ‘after Woduride’. Wiw first qualifies the text as being produced after an individual, positioning the text in time and clarifying agency. This suggests that Wodurid has died. It follows that text of Wiw owes its composition due to the death of Wodurid. This is later confirmed in text when we are told of three daughters sharing an inheritance. The death of Wodurid meant an abrupt transition in the life of his three daughters, but also for Wiw. At this point it is likely that one has arrived at the point where the metaphorical usage in oral discourse could be transferred to the textual.

### 2.3.6 The Bone Tools

There are three known bone tools with runic inscriptions in Norway, KJ 37 Fløksand, KJ 38 Gjersvik, KJ 39 Nedre Hov. They have been dated to 300-450 (Krause and Jankuhn 1966, Host 1976). Based on Olsen and Schetelig (1909) and Hagberg (1967), they have been interpreted as ritual slaughter knives (Host 1976:56-61, Magnus 1991:140). The Norwegian bone tools are essentially of the same types as in Sweden, although a sturdier handle-type survives into the Viking Age. Both the early and the Viking types are only found in female graves, often
together with weaving devices, such as loom-weights (Olsen and Schetelig 1909:13).

By comparison, the 15 examples from the Mälar Valley known to me show that the bone tools had a relatively short lifespan in the regional chronology. Bone tools are only found in Migration Period graves (Brynja 1998:110). As in Norway, these are female and infant graves. Cemetery RAÄ 27 Lunda, Ekerö Parish, shows three bone tools in three female graves from c. 450-500 (Petré 1984a:64). The unusual infant grave A9 (Cemetery RAÄ 168 Kymlinge, Spånga Parish, is a late example, carbon dated to 510 and 547 ± 99 (Biuw 1992: 112-125; Waller 1996: 187).

Brynja (1998) suggests that the bone tool may have been used for flax-dressing, Swedish ‘linberedning’, with a tentative relation to the runic sequence linalaukaRf (KJ 37 Floksand). Here the last rune f is inverted. Krause (1971:147) argues that it belongs to a second carver, and that it should thus be interpreted as a noun *fēhu ‘fā’ or ‘Wealth’ as on KJ 95 Gummarp, rather than a verb *fahi or '(I) Paint’. The inscription may perhaps be translated into Swedish as an alliterative formula: ‘Lin, lök, fā!’ or 'Flax, Leek, Wealth’. The ‘Leek’ formula exists in numerous versions, e.g. laukaR (KJ 108 Års), laukaR (KJ 109 Skrydstup) lkaR (KJ 111 Danmark) luo (KJ 113 Älleskär), lauzu laukaR . gakaR alu (KJ 120 Skåne). The latter example may be perhaps be interpreted as another case of formulaic language with two alliterative words and a rhyme, Swedish ‘Inlåtan, lök, gök, öl!’ or 'Invitation, Leek, Cucko, Ale' (Krause 1971:161). KJ 38 Gjersvik has a sequence lllllllll, ‘offenbar Begriffsrunen für laukaR oder lina’ (Krause 1971:147). It should be noted that a Regensburg manuscript containing a runic alphabet derivative of one written down by archbishop Hrabanus Maurus of Mainz (c. 780-850) has the name lin for the rune l (Krause 1971:175). A Viking Period Futhark in a 10th century Leiden manuscript has been used by Krause to argue that the original name of l indeed was laukaR (Krause 1970:27, Källström 1998:49). Krause’s claim that l or even IR is an acronym for lina or laukaR has been questioned (Heizmann 1987:145, Seebold 1998:284-285). The regular ‘Leek’ formula is after all more common, and has been associated with the use of plants as Apotropeion.

A more speculative interpretation offered by Hauck (1985) and Heizmann is the connection between the central Heilsbild or ‘Healing Image’ of the B-bracteate horse motif and the runes, pointing towards horse medicine (Heizmann 1987:148). A further interpretation (Andrén 1991: 248-252) is that the ‘Ale’, ‘Leek’ and ‘Invitation’ formulae are transformations of Latin titles for the Roman emperor on coins: Felix, Pius and Dominus. However, these titles were rarely spelled out on Roman coins, rather we find the combinations PF AVG (Pius Felix Augustus) and DN (Dominus Noster). Andrén also mistakenly identifies Constantine I the Great (305-337) as the first bearer of the title Dominus on Roman coins. Rather it was Diocletian (284-306). It is therefore difficult to discern an explicit contextual relation between the bone tool and the ‘Leek’ formula, as the latter appears mainly but not exclusively on bracteates. Any connection to the titles of the Roman Emperor appears extremely unlikely. Thus, one is forced to return to the primary function of the bone tool and begin the contextualization from there.

Other runic objects which have been connected to textile and weaving production are the wooden stick from Neudingan-Baar, grave 168, and the Letçani spindle-whorl (Looijenga 1997:94). A remarkable find to be mentioned in this context is a mid 5th century bone tool from Cemetery RAÄ 74 Danmarks by,
Danmark Parish. Svärdström deemed its peculiar glyphs as non-runic (Sjöberg 1975: 124). The strange glyphs on the tool may represent various weaving patterns, and the tool in question may well have been a loom-tool. The find proves that the tool was held in esteem also by, for want of a better term, ‘pseudo(?) literate’ carvers of the Migration Period. It would hence be fitting to have a deeper discussion of the status of weaving women and their relation to runic literacy.
3 The Clash of Germanic and Roman Civilizations

In the previous chapter, it was argued that the Germanic runic script was created in reaction to Latin literacy as practiced by the Roman military. The introduction of literacy to the Germanic civilization would thus seem to have been caused by Roman imperialism. This means that it came in from the outside. It was not something that was created in relation to a domestic need. There never was an economic base in Germanic society to support the ideological extravaganza that is literacy. This chapter seeks to understand the confrontation between literate Roman imperialism and preliterate Germanic culture from the age of Augustus until the late 3rd century. It will be argued that by the late 3rd century, Germanic affinities had reached a level of military professionalism that was close to that of the Roman military. In this professionalism, there was a public display of literacy. But this is where similarities end.

The Roman Empire depended on tax revenue (Corcoran 2000). The collection of taxes was carried out by means of literacy. There were literates (not seldom slaves) who kept written fiscal records. This was something that Germanic affinities never quite grasped. It seems unlikely that Germanic people could have accepted a slave-run administration on the same level as the Roman Empire. By contrast, Germanic literacy was often meant for public display and self-gratification. It was often related to a politico-military structure. But the actors within the latter structure found plundering an easier task than employing literacy to run a complicated fiscal authority. The creation of a literate bureaucracy in Germania Libera was never an explicit Germanic aim nor was it ever a realistic option in the face of the Roman Empire.

The chapter is divided into a number of sections. These discuss: 1) the problem of defining the ‘other’ in Germano-Roman relations; 2) the fiscal nature of Roman imperialism, and how Tacitus saw imperialist strategy; 3) the militarization of the Roman Empire under the 12 good Emperors; 4) Germanic methods for appropriation, the definition of Germanic affinities. It concludes with a hypothetical description of a Germanic raid on a Roman vicus in the Agri Decumates c. 230-270 AD.

3.1 Understanding the ‘Other’

This section seeks to find a proper use for the term ‘other’. Before, looking for the ‘other’ has often been about finding excuses. Westerners feel guilty for the fact that the literate Robinson taught the preliterate Friday. This was well after the Roman Iron Age. The Romans were keen to display how they taught Germanic peoples proper Roman manners much earlier. It would seem that the respective goals (even if these were never clearly stated) of Germanic civilization and the Roman Empire were incongruent. This is likely to have led to conflict. As a rule, the Roman Empire ought to have been the primus motor in this relationship. It was the Roman Empire that had a literate state apparatus. It mustered the largest army in the world. It was the Empire that set out to colonize and trade. But one must pause and look at what the causes were:
The Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of Roman political and military genius. That this offspring came in time to replace its creator should not obscure the fact that it owed its very existence to Roman military initiative, to the patient efforts of centuries of Roman emperors, generals, soldiers, landlords, slave traders, and simple merchants to mold the (to Roman eyes) chaos of barbarian reality into forms of political, social and economic activity which they could understand, and, perhaps, control (Geary 1988).

The leading Romans seem to have expanded their Empire more for the sake of expansion rather than seeking to fulfill explicit and clearly stated goals concerning economic growth or bureaucratic efficiency. They were stuck at the helm of a machine going at full speed ahead, regardless of their own desire. Similarly, Germanic reaction was generally partial and at times reluctant. Reaction was expressed only after several stages of imitation and reification. Yet this does not mean that the Germanic reactions may be regarded as passive phenomena. They were to grow in violence every time. It is difficult to point out a winner in this conflict. Nor can one state that the most advanced mode of production or state apparatus emerged victorious. Rather, the Western economy was downsized for a long time. And so was the Western state apparatus. It would seem that neither Hegel (1989) nor Marx and Engels (1955) got it quite right in regards to prehistory. To some extent, historical change in the West seems to have been a matter of serendipity (Eco 2001). Irrational and inefficient phenomena seem quite often to have gained supremacy over reason and rationality. One has to return to the problem of understanding the ‘other’.

The Roman Empire had given itself the onerous task of romanizing all its neighbors. In this it eventually succeeded, but only by making the barbarians worse than before. Rome succeeded in destroying its own economy. It got rid of a substantial part of its own aristocracy, banning the senatorial class from executive military power in the late 3rd century AD (Richardot 1998:62). Getting rid of ‘wannabe’ Emperors meant replacing them with a corps of functionaries, romanized kleptocrats of Germanic origin (Martin 1997a). These eventually preferred stealing from rather than tending a common Roman weal. Although the Roman economy may have grown up to the late 2nd century AD, it was levies in the core provinces that paid for the non-productive defense investments made along the limes. The Roman expansion and subsequent frontier policy did not pay off but was rather expensive, tapping off substantial resources from the economic growth at the core. On the other hand, one may argue that the investments along the limes were necessary to protect the core. But this finer point of the overall financial policy failed to realize after the military reforms of the late 3rd and early 4th centuries.

It has been argued that the Romans actually understood very little of the subtleties of Germanic ideology. They just wanted to exercise control over Germania Libera (Geary 1988). The Romans supposedly engaged in mere brute power politics (Mattern 1999). Mattern argues that Roman foreign policy merely reflected a gut feeling of Roman pride. Any action taken by the ‘other’ that could lessen Roman pride was seen as an insult. It must by all means be punished. Military actions were often of a retaliatory nature rather than aiming at new conquests. They were executed without consideration for rational longterm goals. Against this description of a shortsighted Roman policy, one can argue that the Roman state apparatus ruled with considerable inertia. Time was on side of the imperialism, even if power was to change both in form and content. Rome slowly
enforced its hegemony of *romanitas* over its barbarian successors (Geary 1988). It would appear that Mattern’s argument for Roman incomprehension is correct. It may also be combined with Geary’s argument that Rome had longterm interests vested in controlling what Geary labels as ‘the barbarian chaos’ of Germania Libera. And the Romans were willing to pay a very high price for it. The Romans thought they knew what they wanted from their neighbors. But at the same time the Romans never bothered to understand their neighbors, nor did they care to comprehend the rationale behind Germanic desires or goals. It then becomes clear that a number of sudden Germanic actions and/or reactions would have seemed incomprehensible to the Romans. By contrast, apparently shortsighted raids into Roman territory together with killings and ritual maimings of Romans made perfect sense to the nascent Germanic hierarchy. These actions were necessary in order to reproduce the Germanic hierarchy. But they appeared Pyrrhic and utterly stupid to Romans. Why did the Germanic retinues attack all the time in the mid 3rd century? Why the maiming? Was it not enough to become Roman and enjoy the benefits of being integrated in the immense rhizome that was Rome? If one combines the arguments of Geary and Mattern, the picture becomes easier to understand. But to this synthesis one must also add the Germanic element.

There were things considered to belong to the categories Roman or Germanic in Germanic civilization. Each of these categorical clusters required any user or owner to have a form of competence in order to do an acceptable performance. Dual competence enabled the most impressive performance by a Germanic person. Such competence was limited. Successful performance was thus restricted to a small part of Germanic society. Some luxury goods of high Roman status were pointless in Germany Libera as the new owners simply did not know how to attribute a similar value to an object beyond its metal value. Such objects were chopped up and used as scrap metal, as is amply demonstrated by the finds from Gudme (Thrane 1993: Pl 14).

A main source for scrap metal was Roman coinage. The Germanic import of Roman coinage was a mass phenomenon. Most Germanic people could tell different Roman coins apart, even if illiterate. It is likely that they understood their different value, too. They could therefore acquire, hoard, and circulate monetary capital correctly. This was important, as the Romans were to devaluate their coinage during the late 2nd century. The silver ratio decreased rapidly under Marcus Aurelius (161-180) until it becomes all too blatant under Septimus Severus (193-211). As a result, coins from the best or largest periods (the Flavian dynasty, and the Trajan dynasty) were hoarded (Kromann 1995:351, Fig. 13:5), whereas the heavily devaluated Roman coinage belonging to the Severean dynasty may have been unacceptable as payment within a Germanic context that required a proper metal value rather than an abstract monetary value.

There are c. 600 Roman coins known from Zealand. 70 of these are single stray finds. Some 500 of the coins derive from a single hoard, the Råmose-treasure. This means that the evidence is skewed, and that a substantial amounts of Roman coinage in this region is missing. The onset of the Romanization of the Germanic periphery, beyond Germany and Jutland is manifest in the late 2nd and 3rd century necropoles of Himlingøje and Skovgårde in Zealand, Denmark. There are more graves with Roman coins then there are graves with Early Runic inscriptions during the Late Roman Iron Age. On Zealand, there are nine coin graves from C1b to C3 (Kromann 1995:347, Fig. 13:2). Some of these are Charon coins, and related to ideas of *romanitas*. Others are pendants. They could there-
fore have had an extremely reified, more Germanic meaning. But most graves with Early Runic inscriptions do not contain Roman coins. The fact that there are two graves in Himlingøje and Skovgårde that do shows that there was an intentional display of dual Germano-Roman competence and impressive Germanic performance in these two contexts. As Roman imports became more common in Germanic daily life and ritual, there arose a problem in Germanic culture.

It became increasingly difficult to distinguish competence and performance by means of qualitative and quantitative measurements. Extremely rare Roman objects were hard to come by through trade. As a result, one put more objects of the same kind into the aristocratic Germanic graves. There was a spiral, where Roman status goods had to be amassed to signify social power in Germanic affinities (Lund-Hansen 1987, 1995: 385-419). The problem was that most Germanic affinities lacked the means of production to accumulate a sufficient amount of wealth to acquire sufficient amounts of Roman consumer goods. There was a further problem. The closer a Germanic affinity came into contact with the Romans, the more likely it was that the Romans would try to tax it. Since the Romans were likely to over-tax whenever possible, this would leave even less money for Germanic tax–payers to buy Roman consumer goods. War against the Romans was necessary in order to be like them.

3.2 The Fiscal Nature of Roman Imperialism (c. 31 BC-68 AD)

Rome was its own worst enemy. The state apparatus was always strapped for cash. Its leading functionaries were desperate in finding hard currency to pay for running expenditure. After achieving peace within the Roman Empire in 31 BC, Augustus had drastically reduced the number of Roman legions from 60 to 28. This had to with the immense administration costs for the military. Tax revenue could barely pay for 28 legions, some 140,000 soldiers. Provincial levies were unpopular and dangerous (Mattern 1999:135). Caught in a dilemma, the Romans had to acquire more revenue elsewhere to pay for the military. The military had to be put into action to pay for itself. And more soldiers needed to be recruited to make up for losses and replacing garrisons sent away to conquer. Veterans could not be disposed of, so the military service contracts were prolonged against the will of the soldiers. A spiral movement was set into motion. It was not dictated by the Roman desire to increase economic profits. It was dictated by the lack of funds needed to run the Roman state apparatus, which had come to express a supremacist ideology. The fiscal branch of the state apparatus would improve considerably over time. For instance, Caracalla (212-218 AD) was able to raise four times more tax revenue than Augustus. But Caracalla had a greater military force and a much larger Empire to defend.

In the late 1st century BC, the Roman army had begun to implement the plans for the submission and colonization of Germania Libera south of the Elbe and the Weser Rivers. There were a substantial number of campaigns both on land at sea (Wolfram 1998: 46). The object of the Roman enterprise was exploitation. The Roman state demanded increased fiscal revenue from conquered dependencies. It is an undeniable fact that Roman state apparatus was corrupt from its very onset (Lintott 1993, Mattern 1999). There were some checks and balances, though. This is why there were immune political figureheads such as tribunes, and double consular positions in power. But corruption was only tolerated to a point. Appropria-
tion from newly conquered subjects was acceptable. Excessive taxation of the latter would at times be encouraged. Theft from the Roman state apparatus was a bad thing. Theft from Roman subjects was a different matter.

The appointed Roman governor was expected to acquire a certain sum of capital to be transferred to exchequer of Rome. Beyond that the governor was likely to enrich himself as much as possible during his term, before being transferred elsewhere within the state apparatus. This was a known fact at the time (Lintott 1993: 94). The senior Roman administrators were players in a dangerous game in which various political opponents would seek to strike out each other. A certain Silius served as legate of the Roman province of Germania in 21-14 BC. Silius contacts caused him to have enemies. He was caught embezzling. Silius was fined three quarters of his fortune. He then committed suicide. It has been argued that two silver cups, which were found in a chieftain’s grave in Hoby, Lolland would somehow derive from Silius’ fortune (Herschend 1999). The cups wear a Latin inscription, signed by a certain Silius. It is not inconceivable to interpret the Hoby cups as a bribe from Silius. Maybe he did not distinguish between personal profit and the expansion of the Roman Empire. Silius may have been ready to invest his personal fortune for a much larger gain. This would also have benefited the Roman state apparatus. It is also conceivable that the Roman state decided to use Silius’ confiscated fortune in its administrative trade.

How did Roman imperialism make itself manifest in action? A credible re-enactment of Drusus’ and Tiberius’ field campaign in 15 BC needed some 14 days to leave Verona on the Italian peninsula, cross the Alps, and reach Augsburg on the Lech river, marching some 540 kilometers (Junkelmann 1986). This was done on paved roads through the Brenner Pass. In other words, the geographic distance from Rome to the Germanic frontier did not constitute a logistic problem, although it probably took somewhat longer than two weeks. And one many have crossed a different pass. But this is beside the point. There were other problems. The real issue for the Roman quartermaster and engineering corps was rather to secure forward supply lines into conquered territories. Man-made infrastructure was next to none in Germania Libera. The topography of Germania worked to Roman disadvantage. The largest German rivers save the Danube, flow in the wrong direction, northwest towards the North Sea. This serves to block an intruder coming in from the southwest. Unlike the great rivers of Africa, America, and Asia that enabled the entry of Western imperialists (Porch 2000), the flow of the Rhine could not be used to reach the interior of Germania Libera. The Rhine had to be crossed. This is a rather rapid body of water, with an average width of 500 meters. The Germanic locals were at the time intellectually incapable of building a bridge across the Rhine. They resorted to smaller boats and rafts. A different civilization with a larger intellectual capacity would alter things.

It was Julius Caesar who ordered the construction of the very first bridge over the Rhine in 55 BC. It took his engineering corps 10 days to complete the bridge. The Romans withdrew and destroyed the bridge some 18 days later (Connolly 1977: 28-29). Otherwise, the Germanic enemy could have imitated the construction to their own advantage. Caesar had another bridge constructed in 53 BC, which was also destroyed afterwards. In 12 BC, Drusus’ troops crossed the Rhine. The absence of Germanic infrastructure beyond the Rhine would cause the first backlash in the Roman conquest of Germania, as the Romans had to rely on Germanic guides and pathfinders.
The battle of the Teutoburger Forest in 9 AD was a turning event in the struggle between the Roman and Germanic civilizations. In the age of Augustus, there were a number of Germanic auxiliary troops, chiefly cavalry units. Some of their officers had joined the Roman equestrian ranks and were most likely literate men. They were in charge of pathfinders, advance unit logistics and reconnaissance missions to secure forward supply lines. A large number of these units under the command of a certain Arminius suddenly defected during the fall of 9 AD, as the three Roman legions XVII-XIX consisting of some 16-20,000 men under Governor Quinctilius Varus were returning to winter quarters in Xanten on the Rhine through the Kalkriese in the Osnabrück region. The Romans, walking slowly in a long line, were lured into an ambush on a narrow dirt track leading between a ridge and a marsh. The passage had been made narrower by the Germanic defectors by the erection of a sod wall, a structure usually employed by the Roman army. As the line was cut off, the Roman troops were disoriented. And the soldiers at the end of the line had still no idea of what going on up front, until they were attacked them.

Three legions were slaughtered by a much smaller Germanic force as a result of lacking Roman infrastructure. The Roman prisoners were maimed and killed, their blood and entrails sacrificed to Germanic gods. Some were put in man-sized wicker baskets and burned alive. This was a direct consequence of Roman military education being passed on to Rome’s enemies. The Germanic men trained in literacy and linear warfare were dangerous if they decided to act against Roman interests. This was a catastrophe; some 12% of the entire Roman army was gone due to the fact that barbarians converted to romanitas had defected. Thirty years of concentrated Roman warfare against the Germanic peoples followed. In particular, one can mention Germanicus’ campaigns 14-16 AD (Wolfram 1998: 47). All the Romanized Germanic resistance leaders died, including Arminius who was murdered in 19 AD. The Julio-Claudian Emperors would continue a policy of raids and brutal repression towards Germania Libera while simultaneously recruiting even more Germanic auxiliary units.

3.2.1 Tacitus on Imperialist Strategy

Cornelius Tacitus (c. 56-117 AD) was a late 1st century bureaucrat in the Roman state apparatus. He served as consul and as governor of the province of Asia. He wrote historical works such as the Agricola, Annals, and Histories. Tacitus claimed that he wrote sine ira et studio, that is, ‘without being vengeful or partial’. This was not true. Tacitus held a lot of grudges, particularly against the Julio-Claudians and Flavians. He may have had good reasons for this. His first hand knowledge of the inner workings of the Roman state apparatus led Tacitus to react against dictatorial abuse. Tacitus also produced an ethnographic treatise on his Northern neighbors. It is known today as the Germania. It is a moralizing treatise. It confronts the cultural differences between Western civilization and barbarians. The Romans are depicted as decadent. The Germanic peoples appear naive and virtuous. Tacitus wisely argued that in the long run it would be easier for the Romans to defeat and subdue the Germanic peoples with alcohol than through warfare (Germania, 23):

Their drink is a liquor made from barely or other grain, which is fermented to produce a certain resemblance to wine. Those who dwell nearest to the Rhine or the Danube also
buy wine. Their food is plain – wild fruit, fresh game, and curdled milk. They satisfy their hunger without any elaborate cuisine or appetizers. But they do not show the same selfcontrol in slaking their thirst. If you indulge their intemperance by plying them with as much drink as they desire, they will be as easily conquered by this besetting weakness as by force of arms’ (Tacitus, *Germania* 23).

Pouring booze over the neighbors would be cheaper than the long and costly wars once fought by Drusus, Germanicus and Tiberius. Tacitus also claimed that both Germanic men and women were unaccustomed to secret love letters (*Germania*, 19). This shows that Romans like Tacitus held a distinct opinion of Germanic peoples. The Romans wanted to conquer or at least subdue the Germanic peoples, whom they correctly deemed less developed than themselves. Tacitus adhered to the Roman imperialist agenda. His work was directed to instruct Romans on how to subdue their Germanic inferiors. Tacitus claimed with arguable certitude that Germanic peoples were uncorrupted noble savages (in all likelihood to boost Roman ethics and morale). Tacitus knew quite well that much of the trade with the Germanic people was of administrative nature. It was meant to create some kind of profit, even if this could not instantly be measured in monetary terms. The Roman administrative trade was aimed at the Germanic leadership. It had to be won for romanitas.

Tacitus had a point in that preliterate cultures may rapidly fall victims to the effects of an unprecedented access to drugs, notably alcohol. That intoxication becomes a daily option when it was previously regulated by custom or season generally serves to break down the social order of a preliterate society. If there are no traditional intoxicants prior to the arrival of alcohol and literacy the effects are even more devastating. A quick glance at Danish colonial rule in Greenland will suffice to convince the sceptics. The introduction of a new habit such as daily intoxication is the beginning of the end of a preliterate social order. This is the case even if the new form of daily intoxication is granted only to a small part of society. Germanic peoples used alcohol in the shape of ale, beer and mash. This regulated by season and surplus. Beer could only be made after harvest, and only if there was enough grain to make bread. So intoxication was a bonus, not a given. There may also have been knowledge of hallucinogenics such as amanita and psilocybin mushrooms. Cannabis sativa was known in Europe during the Hallstatt period, and Herodotos described the Scythian use of cannabis as an intoxicant (Seebold 1999b). Cannabis was cultivated to a considerable extent in 4th century Gudme (Thrane 1993). Henbane was used during the Viking Age (Price 2002). However, the use of narcotics is likely to have been restricted to a very small part of the population, who employed it with some form of expertise.

Roman wine was a very different matter from the traditional drugs used by Germanic peoples. To get intoxicated Roman style, one needed imported paraphernalia related to the drug use: a whole kit of Capuan bronze pots, strainers, and glass vessels. There is much display of this type in the Hassleben-Leuna type graves. The uppermost hierarchy as in Gommern would have silver cups and strainers rather than bronze and glass ones as in the more peripheral Himlingøje. The separate parts of the kit were employed in a specific order. The alcohol was poured from one vessel to the other and sifted before it could be consumed (Andersson and Herschend 1999:35-36). Intoxication was given a new grandeur when dependent on an imported drug culture. It is very clear from the inventories of all important Germanic graves from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, notably those in Himlingøje (Lund-Hansen 1987, 1995) that Roman drug paraphernalia was an
important part in the funeral composition. The Romans had succeeded in bringing a trickle of *romanitas* into the homes of the Germanic peoples. They did this by handing over status objects related to the use of a mind-altering substance.

Tacitus seems to glorify the Germanic opponents. They are noble and unbeaten. They have clean spirits. Their kids may run around dirty and naked, although the adults wash themselves. Yet, the adults are nothing but infantile. They gamble away all their belongings and then drink themselves silly whenever they get the chance. They can be fooled by means of drugs and money. By contrast, Tacitus seems very contemptuous of the people who stand in between Germania and *romanitas*. The people who have moved in to settle the *agri decumates*, the border region across the Rhine, appear to be nothing but low-lifes (*Germania* 29). By the same token, they must have been more Romanized since Rome assumed authority over the area. Being independent of Rome entailed being noble but stupid, i.e. being the ‘other’. By being subjugated by Rome while living next to the ‘other’, one was relegated to being a non-entity. The condescending Roman attitude towards the conquered that are neither noble savages nor Romans cannot have passed unnoticed among Germanic affinities.

### 3.3 The Militarization of the Roman Empire

In 69 AD, the Roman Empire had turned into a complex state apparatus. A capable military leader supported by an elite unit, the Praetorian guard, could only hold it together. The various legions suffered from deteriorating morale and had fought each other supporting rival Emperors. The result was that the first non-noble Emperors, the Flavians, rose to power. In 70 AD, the Romans managed to quell a large and potentially disastrous revolt led by a renegade Germanic auxiliary officer, the Batavian Claudius Julius Civilis. This required a yearlong campaign, once the succession to the imperial throne had been settled in favor of Vespasian. Civilis was a dangerous opponent. He knew more about Rome than the Romans knew about his affinity and his intentions. He had forced four Roman legions to surrender inside Roman territory. He had also briefly captured the town of Cologne. The primary reason why the Batavians revolted seems to have been a reaction against an imposed levy. There was also an arbitrary execution of a leading Batavian aristocrat, Paulus, who happened to be the brother of Civilis.

There were many attempts to instigate a permanent dynastic rule after the Flavians, but 2nd century Rome would remain a military rather than hereditary dictatorship. The military had a prerogative on supreme executive power in return for their loyalty. In general, only qualified senior officers would be appointed Emperors. They would then adopt their successors, who also were senior officers. And the very reason for having a Roman state apparatus and a fiscal authority in the first place was to raise levies for the military. Under Vespasian and his sons Titus and Domitian, the borders of the Empire were heavily fortified as a part of a new war doctrine. The role of the *limes* had been altered. It was a broad front (Wolfram 1998: 74), as a single linear intrusion had proved too dangerous. The new Flavian policy was that the Roman army was not advance into Germania Libera save for regular patrols and occasional search-and-destroy missions. Nor were the legions to be stationed in the core of the Empire. This latter concept worked reasonably well.
Border troops were only successful in toppling the Emperor in 193 AD. But the end of the military expansionist phase did not mean an end to the idea of spreading Roman civilization. Roman material culture and ideology would take care of the preliterate cultures beyond the barrier. Mass consumer goods such as wine and beads were passed on to the other side. Although Rome enjoyed peace with its Germanic neighbors, Germania Libera was not a safe place. Tacitus’ *Germania* describes the Germanic affinities as if being constantly at war with each other. These small wars further accelerated the growth of a Germanic military elite. This affinity increased its ability to dominate and alter the Germanic civilization towards *romanitas*.

Eventually, some Germanic affinities on both sides of the *limes* would become so dependent on Roman consumer goods that they would practically beg to become Roman subjects and citizens. But Romans like Tacitus would hold such people in utmost contempt. Their pleas for collective citizenship were generally refused. The Romanized consumers began to work for the Roman market. The strategy of turning barbarians into Roman consumers seems to have worked quite well for a rather long time. So did Trajan’s system of having the senior military leaders adopting the best among their juniors as successors to the imperial throne, even if this often occurred under the watchful eyes of the Praetorian Guard. The Praetorian Guard would sometimes receive hefty bribes from the Emperor but had not yet outgrown its role as a guarantor of political stability. Things were so peaceful that a number of Roman legions were transferred away from the *limes* facing Germania Libera. But despite troop withdrawal, the state apparatus continued to grow and so did costs. The result was a renewed need for aggression. Roman state finances became a bit stretched in the beginning of the 2nd century, but this was partly resolved by Trajan through his conquest of Dacia, a province that was soon to be exploited for its rich resources of gold. But the Germanic and Indo-Iranian tribes were pushing each other around out there on the other side of the *limes*. Things eventually got out of hand well beyond the immediate reach of Roman power. As a result, Marcus Aurelius would fight invaders for most of his reign (161-180 AD). This meant a dislocation of the traditional center of executive military power closer to the *limes*. Hence, Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus spent the years 171-173 AD in Carnuntum, Austria.

Wolfram (1998: 69-72) has argued that the Romans simply did not understand what went on beyond the *limes*. In his view, the incursion of the Longobards across the *limes* in 167 AD came as a complete surprise to the Romans who failed to understand demographic factors behind Germanic political action. I find this hard to believe. Surely the Romans had traders and informers well on the other side of the *limes*. Yet, there was no mobile rapid reaction force to counterbalance a sudden largescale move from Germania at this time. The Romans were not immediately prepared for a shift in Germanic behavior, which they had partly caused themselves. They eventually tried to adjust to it, albeit with limited success. The adjustment meant that executive military power was dislocated from the core of the Empire, the economic heartland. It moved closer to the Germanic affinities, which would eventually qualify to be executive military functionaries within the Rome state apparatus.

In most Germanic affinities, there was a dominant family with a male leader. In Latin, he may be described as a *pater familias*. He controlled the primary division of labor. This person’s household would often have a house larger than that of the others in the village. Similarly, the leader had the power to decide who
would reside on or use what land within the realm of the community. He could also take on more land. This process was considered important enough to highlight in the public display of literacy. One interpretation of the sequence unnam wraitia on the Norwegian Reistad rune stone is to read it as an account of land-taking (Eythorsson 1999). The leader had the last word on who would enjoy what of the ground rent collected by the community. This status as a benevolent patron and overseer would give rise to the title ‘lord’, Old English hlaford, the one with the word of the bread-loaf. A Norwegian parallel is the Tune rune stone, an epitaph for the late woduride who is given the title as witandahalaiban, the one who knows best about the bread-loaf.

There are inevitable temporary setbacks in agriculture, such as crop failures or attacks. Despite all this, Germanic farming communities such as Vorbasse in Denmark grew considerably from the 1st century to the 4th century (Hedager 1992). Enclosures, living quarters and yards became larger. The appearance of adjacent pit houses indicates the rise of secondary practices outside the basic subsistence economy. A division of labor has set in. The collection of ground rent had become more efficient and a part of the community could be relieved from the daily chores to do other things, notably the creation and refinement of a surplus. This secondary practice is likely to have been the manufacture of goods such as hides, leather and wool that could be transported and traded to a large buyer (i.e. the quartermaster corps of the Roman army). Tacitus (Annals IV. 72) mentions Frisians paying Roman tax in hides. More likely than not, the surplus that went into a trading process would benefit the status of the pater familias and his household. It is likely that what was acquired in return from the Romans had little practical use value, but consisted of things like drugs, glass beads, precious metals and textiles.

The step beyond the subsistence economy by means of a surplus had now taken on the role of a colonial relationship, where goods of practical use value where traded for status objects of ideological value. This meant that further resources had to be gathered. Hedeager (1988) argues that Hodde harbored a male leader who could tax his surroundings. The world of power had become larger than life itself. The world of Roman power transcended Germanic life. This meant a change for the Germanic affinities. Traditional authority was no longer taken for granted, it now contained a much larger responsibility. Not just anybody could become pater familias anymore. This person would have to understand diplomacy, trade and small-scale warfare. Yet the specific demands led not to a larger number of prospective candidates. On the contrary, the number of candidates to the role of pater familias became very slim. They were usually picked among direct descendants. The colonial relationship with Rome fostered even stronger hierarchies and would give birth to noble families. As the noble families were always superior on their home ground, the needed to travel to meet their peers. As a result, there was a slow emergence of mobility as a Germanic ideal (Andersson and Herschend 1999).

3.4 Germanic Appropriation, External and Internal

The killing of another human is considered the worst crime possible in most cultures. Yet, some people still commit this crime. There is even such a thing as professional killers. These gain power in society by threatening to kill. They exercise
a regiment of symbolic violence over others (Bourdieu 1990). Every once in a while, they have to actually kill someone to remind others that their power is real. A constant massacre would backfire, though. People would run away from the terror or seek to eliminate the killers. This is how feudal society grew out of the Germanic kingdoms, and before that the primary affinities. There must have been a division of labor within every affinity to make killing more effective, there were specialists who assumed positions of authority. There was a subsequent technoelect of killing, a military terminology. Germanic people who felt that they somehow were better than others would often translate this feeling into practice. This was first done by means of regulating reproduction. By controlling marriage, one rested assured that property to be passed on to a younger generation would stay within the family. Cousins and second cousins would marry each other.

Some families could thus rise to become wealthier than others did. They would then seek to subdue and dominate others. This was done by means of manipulating public agreements or legal assemblies. Taxes and levies were introduced. There was a continuation of manipulative behavior, translated into direct action. Dominant families and their followers would try to attack and steal from their neighbors. The attacks were carried out even if there was no acute need for more foods within the own community. A prime target for theft was livestock. Cattle represented considerable value. An attractive object, it could be transported rather rapidly without bogging down a mobile war party. Small conflicts such as cattle raids would serve to keep up morale in the dominant families and their elective affinities. They made for useful practice for even larger enterprises still to come within new, aggrandized affinities. But the lessons were not only on offensive warfare. A number of pre-Roman Iron Age villages such as Borremose, Lyngsmose, and Priorsløkke were fortified. Punji-traps with sharpened wood sticks in moats measuring up to 150 m in length surrounded them (Nørgård Jørgensen 2003).

Each raid was an important ritual in which the community leader saw who was fit to perform what task. Participation in the ritual was crucial as much was at stake. If the community leader failed to lead the others properly in a cattle raid, their performance would be less effective. Then, the whole community ran the risk of getting killed or chased away from their realm. Success inspired awe towards the leader and made for good stories, reproducing the still oral ideology by means of narrative. The methods for external appropriation were very different, and of a considerable magnitude. They were also to grow considerably over a short period of time. This is evident in the first finds of gold artifacts, and the subsequent increase in the deposition of gold (Andersson 1995: 10-11). The larger an elective affinity was, the larger were also the results of cattle raids or abductions. The growing numbers required increased mobility. The raids were increasing in mobility. They stretched further into Roman territory. They were to change Germano-Roman relationship for good.

Using anthropological terms, a gradual development from Germanic warrior to soldier and conscript has been delineated by Jørgensen (2001: 9-19). He argues that the warrior fights for his own glory. The soldier has less room for personal glory and individual prowess. On this more advanced level, individuality is subordinate to larger strategic objectives. Conscripts are civilians with some basic training who are called into service by a central power. They are more reluctant to fight, particularly in offensive warfare. Jørgensen argues that tribal armies of warriors existed already in the Pre-Roman Iron Age. He claims that there were hier-
archical structures of professional soldiers and mercenaries during the Late Ro-
man Iron Age. This meant that one had entered the stage of a martial society
(James 1997: 9). With the advent of Migration Period, there was already a Ger-
manic military aristocracy and a subordinate peasantry. The former could call on
the latter to provide conscripts. While this development may be applicable to
Denmark and the Continent, it appears less likely to fit the specific conditions of
the Mälar Valley. In particular, it seems doubtful that mass levies of conscripts
were ever used in combat during the Migration Period and the ensuing Vendel
Period.

The cohesive structure of a Germanic retinue entailed a number of leading
members of dominant families united under a warlord. The larger retinue was an
elective affinity. The warlord did not need to coerce other leading families to fol-
low him; it was in their ideological interest to do so. They were rewarded with a
share in the loot. The rewards reproduced the affinity (Hedeager 1991: 204). Co-
hesion generated by means of confidence and trust between a single leader and a
subordinate clique within a tighter, selective affinity. Those selected to follow
made others elect to do likewise. Generational shifts in leadership implied a rup-
ture with past allegiances in between families. They constituted a distraction from
a common goal. This was a very real problem, because if those selected to partici-
pate elected not to do so, the authority of the warlord would soon have to rest on
coercion and direct action. No longer would his select allies show up with their
elective affinities. This meant that it was difficult for a military hierarchy to grow
beyond a constant number of participants over a certain period of time.

The independent Germanic hierarchies capable of external appropriation dur-
ing the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries were rather small with an emphasis on mo-
bility. Ilkjaer (2000) estimates that some 2,000 men at the most have lost their
equipment in the deposit of Illerup A-B. This structure corresponds rather well
with the operational units of the late 3rd century Roman army, light brigades of
a smaller estimate, arguing that no single bog deposit contains more than weapons
for a unit of 800 men, that is, a demi-brigade of two battalions. But Brather rightly
cautions against estimates based on bog deposits, as it is uncertain how many war-
rriors may have fled a battlefield or whether it was an entire unit that was defeated
at all.

Nevertheless, Illerup A and B are both representative of an independent unit
capable of moving very rapidly deep into enemy territory. It is clear that the
weapon deposits in Illerup A-B represent the material part of a military hierarchy.
Metal objects are easily quantified: 2% gold and silver, 9% bronze, 89% iron.
There were 150 Roman swords, but only 14 Roman double-buttoned sheath
mounts and two sword strap mounts compared to 44 Germanic ones. One of the
Roman sword strap mounts is cast bronze, sporting an eagle and a Latin text: Optime maxime omnium militantium conserva, that is, ‘May Jupiter, the foremost,
the greatest protect all fighters’. As there are only two other known cases of this
type of object, from Hadrian’s Wall in Britain and North Africa, a strong connec-
tion between the three objects is very likely. Moreover, it is evident that the Brit-
ish find and that of Illerup were cast in the same mould. The hierarchy of the en-
tire deposit Illerup A-B would ideally have consisted of 1 warlord, 39 senior offi-
cers, 160 subaltern officers and some 1,800 men. The presence of the single
golden necklace with a pear-shaped lock (Andersson 1995) may indicate that a
warlord had been killed. There was a handful runic literati among the owners of
the goods deposited in Illerup, names like *swarta* appear. It would seem that only
the three upper echelons in this hierarchy would have shared the loot from a victorious expedition. They would also enjoy other benefits in the field. Their lives were precious while at risk, more so than the lives of the low-ranking warriors.

Most armed Germanic retinues over a couple of hundred men (that is above the company level) would include a section led by a field surgeon. Some 40 surgical instruments have been found in the bogs of Ejsbøl, Illerup, Thorsbjerg, and Viumose. This is a rather small number. Real medical and surgical expertise must have been extremely rare. Frölich (2003a, 2003b) argues for the presence of a pre-Christian humanism in this context. I think that this is misplaced. The quantitative relationship between the weapons and the surgical tools shows what was the real concern. After all, the men whose weapons ended up the bogs expected resistance. They were out to kill strangers, not to heal them. They had no intention of losing
in battle. And the field surgeon was unlikely to have been a bystander. On the other hand, bravery in combat appeared less risky if one knew that there was a chance that one could be patched up afterwards. Frölich (2003a, 2003b) claims that the presence of surgical detail in a Germanic combat unit may have served to make warfare more cost-effective. It took a long time to train a professional killer. Saving his life meant that one protected a substantial investment in terms of capital and human resources. Such a calculation required a safe backward evacuation route, though. And this was an even more expensive investment. The question is whether the cost of maintaining this evacuation route motivated saving the lives of those wounded deep inside enemy territory. Once again, the hierarchical structure of the unit seems to be the crux. It is more likely that a surgical detail was primarily there to save the lives of officers. Without the hierarchy, the unit was doomed to perish if deep inside enemy territory. Experiences from the French parachutist campaigns in the North Vietnamese highlands in 1952-54 shows that officers were instrumental in motivating soldiers in performing long retreats under extreme duress and against overwhelming odds far inside enemy territory (Roy 1960, Bergot 1990). Losing a capable officer meant death to all.

Germanic retinues engaged in long distance incursions were fragile and ran great risks. To maximize the gain, one needed further experts besides the leading officers and the field surgeon. As evident from the finds in Illerup (Carnap-von Bornheim 2001), a metallurgical detail led by a gold- and blacksmith was attached to the retinue. Its job was that of appraisal, reconfiguration and repair. The repair jobs must have been most frequent and well practiced at home. The difficult and dangerous jobs while abroad were those of appraisal and reconfiguration. These consisted of probing, melting, and re-configuration of precious metals in a very short span of time. This practice was accompanied with considerable brutality. A maximum of violence enabled a maximum appropriation of metal in a short span of time. The Roman response to renewed Germanic attacks was soon to become apparent. It consisted of considerable military reorganization and a re-fortification of the *limes*, but more importantly the fortification of all major urban settlements. The Tetrarchy was a logical result to the growing fragmentation of Roman power. But the Roman fragmentation did not lead to inferiority. Rome was by no means the weaker power vis-à-vis the Germanic neighbors. And the Tetrachy stalled a number of inevitable repercussions for quite some time, notably by recruiting a large number of new army units. This efficiency did impress Germanic war leaders, causing a renewed interest in Roman allegiance and military career opportunities. As the Tetrarchy dissolved in the early 4th century there were a number of Germanic officers with unprecedented responsibilities.

During the late 3rd and 4th century there was a tremendous growth in numbers of invading Germanic armies. Besides a general sentiment that it was possible to get at fast cash, this raises the question as to whether there was an increased Germanic competence in largescale warfare. This would have required either a hierarchical staff or confidence in delegated leadership in the small mobile units. For coherent operational behavior of an entire army, there would have been an immense need for qualified staff members and subaltern officers to combine the operations of several different units. It seems difficult to imagine independent conceptions such as brigades under a joint staff. This staff would often have to function in enemy territory and without continuous communications. With a functioning staff, Germanic invaders could have operated in large surprise movements
as fangs and lure Roman units into ambushes. There is very little to indicate that Germanic retinues were capable of such coordination at this point, though.

The educational process within Germanic culture could not possibly have been able to keep pace with the change in Roman military doctrine. It was therefore imitated piecemeal rather than acquired at its full. There was a sensed need to imitate Roman dona militaria, and these copies were a substitute for experience and habits. Although more literate and merited than others, the Germanic armies’ officer corps and royal courts were still full of illiterates wearing imitations of Roman medallions. Any larger Germanic army was composed of a number of elective affinities, not one single ethnic affinity. Just like its Roman counterpart, it could never become a cohesive genetic entity. It may better be described as an elective meta-affinity, to which people of varied origin had chosen to join as brigades or brigade sub-units unbeknownst to each other. New alliances had to be forged on a grand level. Past family relationships and previous ethnic affinities limited to the brigade structure therefore became less important. The practice of cousin marriage (likely when observing similarities between those buried at Skovgårde and Himlingóje, cf. Ethelberg 1999) for the sake of keeping property together was abandoned. Slowly, interrelated dynasties of war leaders emerged.

3.5 A Germanic Raid on a Roman Vicus

This section discusses the nature of the 3rd century Germanic incursions into Roman territory, and the Roman response. Literacy, being part of elite culture, needs capital to reproduce itself. A Germanic affinity that wanted to employ literacy needed a lot more capital than others. Only Roman civilization had this much capital available. It follows that it would make good economic sense for Germanic consumers to attack Roman civilians. It has been argued that a plethora of misunderstandings helped to cement a mutual distrust between the Germanic affinities and Roman civilization. The mistrust was complicated by the Germanic dependence on Roman status objects and consumer goods. Germanic affinities had always fought and plundered each other. Roman taxation was a heavy burden imposed on Germanic affinities lured into the Roman market by means of gifts. These affinities would become Roman dependents, and loose their old civilization. At a given point, the economic situation demanded a fast acquisition of monetary capital and scrap metal to compensate for the expensive Roman dependency. The years 230-270 AD were in many ways chaotic for the Romans. There were huge numbers of invasions, reaching far into the safe corners of the Empire. It was very difficult for a single Emperor to gain power and maintain a complete control. There is evidence of a decline in written records. The state apparatus had problems in producing the standard documents it would have in a normal situation. Humiliating peace accords were concluded with the invaders. Roman state power was fragmented.

Roman coin hoards in Gaul and Germany indicate substantial Germanic incursions into Roman territory in the 3rd century. Roman civilians hid their money, anticipating an attack. They never recovered their belongings. This suggests that they suffered an unfortunate fate. Even more money than that recovered in depots must have been taken booty. How is one to understand this phenomenon? An analogy is in order. But the analogy of a Germanic attack on a Roman urban settlement to a Modern bank robbery or a Post-modern terrorist attack on a major
city is a limping one at best. This is so, although the affinities behind such misdeeds do very much resemble each other in terms of hierarchy and structure. Postmodern terrorists are not out to plunder. They want attention to their cause in an age of cybernetic and ethereal media. Bank robbers do not take the time to kill and dismember everybody inside the bank, nor do they lay an entire city to waste. They want to get away with cash. Indiscriminate killing combined with massive plunder within an urban area is a different matter. However, it may well become an attractive option to various affinities in a near future. This was something in which Germanic invaders sought to excel. There is plenty of evidence of it. In fact, the Germanic raids were so effective that the Roman Empire had to withdraw from parts of its conquered territories. Rome was giving up urban settlements, farms and infrastructure to the ‘other’.

3.5.1 The Agri Decumates

The best place to look for archaeological and historical evidence for Germanic raids against Roman civilians is in the southwestern parts of Germany. This requires some understanding of the cultural landscape surrounding the two major water routes, the Rhine and the Danube. This is a scenic route of valleys to be true. But one must pay no heed to false ideas of genius loci. There is a necessary step beyond 19th century prints of medieval castles and Wagnerian scenarios. A critique of the Nordic romanticism as described by Notelid (2001) may well be applied onto the Rhine Valley. When devoid of its surreal beauty, the local cultural landscape is one of political strategy and military tactics. Then comes the aspect of the imposition of ideological linearity and literacy, that is, of Roman urbanism. The closer a traveler would get to the limes, the more imperial would things become. The frontier towns were far from common life in Italy but very close to the imperial hierarchy and the officer corps. It was important for the Roman Empire to appear extraordinarily powerful and mighty in the frontier towns. Anything could be bought if the money was there. This served to impress the ogling Germanic neighbors come to trade or enlist. One could not live in shacks, and simply refer to grandiose buildings in urbs Roma, a distant city most Germanic people would never live to see. Thus the frontier towns had to offer the highlights of what was considered to be important Roman matters. Urbanity is a not a Modern idea. But Germanic affinities had to enter the Roman Empire to experience urbanity. In so far, urbanity was a Western structure to which the Germanic civilization had to accustomize itself. This was a vastly different world from the Germanic cultural landscape. Hills (2004) provides an eloquent summary:

Of all the environments in which the military operate, the urban environment is the most complex and challenging, as cities influence the conduct of the operations taking place within them to a greater extent than any other type of terrain. There are many reasons for this of which four are fundamental: 1. Physical terrain. 2. The intellectual and professional limitation of approaches designed for open areas. 3. The presence of non-combatants. 4. The pre-modern nature of urban fighting. […] The physical characteristics and constraint of cities are special. Cities represent a complex multidimensional blend of horizontal, vertical, interior and external forms, superimposed on natural relief. Ground maneuver becomes multidimensional (Hills 2004:9).
To this one may add the polychrome nature of Roman urbanity. This was not a sterile milieu of white marble. Roman houses and statues were painted in bright colors, and there was a lot of dipinti and graffiti on the walls. Moreover, Roman towns were generally not fortified until the late 3rd century. One could just walk into a Roman town full of unarmed civilians, as the Roman military held a largely unopposed monopoly on armed violence inside the Roman Empire at the time.

An area that stands out is the Middle Rhine region. The Romans had conquered and settled sizeable chunk of land on the eastern, ‘other’ side of the Rhine. It was known as the *agri decumates*. The area is difficult to master as a whole. It is a mountainous bend stretching from the northwest to the southeast between the Middle Rhine and the Upper Danube. There are a number of fertile valleys with relatively large waters flowing into the Rhine and the Danube, notably the Kinzig, Main and Wetter Rivers. The Flavians invested quite a lot of money and labor in settling Romans there, although it would seem that Tacitus did not hold a lot of settlers in high regard (*Germania* 29). The *agri decumates* was to serve as a springboard into Germania Libera. Roman pottery manufacture in the area intended for export to Germania Libera was quite successful for a while. The neighborhood was not all too unfamiliar. Some Roman patrols are likely to have descended beyond the Taunus and the Odenwald mountain ridges to the north, east and south. This meant that the Romans had a fair idea of the topography be-
beyond what they could expect to control, even if it could not be held under continuous surveillance. This required reliable information and intelligence. Knowledge from the ‘other’ had to be bought. But what if the purchased knowledge ceased to be accurate? Churchill once argued that ‘the first thing to disappear in war is truth’ (Thompson 2004).

Czyzs (2003) points out that some areas of Roman urban settlements in the *agri decumates* were particularly ill placed from a tactical point of view (see ill. 5). This goes especially for the valley between the Taunus, Odenwald, and Vogelberg mountain ridges. This valley faces the Roman city of Mainz on the western side of the Rhine. This was a perfect place to attack. One could approach it safely from two directions. Attackers would seek to descend from the northern and eastern mountain ranges inside Germania Libera. Any major Roman force stationed in Mainz would first have to cross the Rhine. It would enter valley from the west. To spot the enemy, it had to slowly climb the northern slopes of the Taunus, or the Odenwald in the southeast. What if the Roman garrisons in Mainz was absent? In that case, no one could come to the rescue. The Roman settlements in the valley were doomed. In the early 230’s AD, Emperor Alexander Severus (222-235 AD) withdrew the border troops from Mainz to march off east to fight the Persians. Rumor of the withdrawal spread in Germania Libera. This was an unprecedented opportunity to engage in urban warfare and plunder. Below, I will present a hypothetical reconstruction the events.

Imagine that a composite Germanic retinue assembled on the northern slopes of Taunus for a few weeks. The leaders may have originated from places like Gommern and Hassleben-Leuna to the north (see ill. 6, Brather 2004: 484, Abb. 75). Precautions were made in order not to be noticed by the enemy. The Romans were continuously fed disinformation by an array of double agents and fake scouts. The Germanic retinue would absorb smaller retinues from various parts of Germania Libera during this time, perhaps from Jutland and Himlingøje in Zealand. Definitions of elective and selective affinities were duly clarified. A doctrine was established. Orders were given. It was finally decided to attack. The Taunus was crossed. One passed a given point of the limes structure, striking out the nearest military posts. The retinue was now inside the cultural landscape pertaining to *romanitas*. This was the land of multidimensional linearity and literacy. The invaders were well aware of this. Their tactics went accordingly. What if the composite retinue managed to hold military control over a Roman *vicus* in this valley for a short period, say a couple of hours or a few days? How was this achieved? An initial point to make is that the size of the invading force would depend on the nature of warfare it was expected to perform and the resistance it would encounter.

A large retinue consisting of more than one battalion, such as that of Illerup A-B was used for a long campaign against a distant neighbor, in this case Western Norway against Jutland. Following the logic of Jørgensen (1999), the defenders of Jutland must have had a larger army, consisting mainly of conscripts. A rapid long distance invasion like that of the Franks from the *limes* to the Iberian Peninsula in 257-258 AD was more of an adventure beyond the point of no return. A short campaign with the object of plunder would employ a smaller force and different tactics. It would also rely on a more competent force. A warlord in Western Norway could raise some 2,000 men on a brigade level. This equals four or five battalions. But the force used to attack a single vicus with an urban center is likely to have been a smaller, battalion-sized force. The battalion would still be composed
of four or five companies of the best officers and subordinates from a number of different brigade-level retinues. This was an elite unit, specialized in brief campaigns of external appropriation.

3.5.2 The Crime Scene

A minor nexus within the rhizome-like Roman infrastructure would usually be two main roads crossing each other at an origo in the forum of a vicus. The piece de resistance of the forum would generally be a basilica. This was a rectangular, three-aisled brick- or stone building with a tiled roof. It was surrounded by a rectangular brick- or stonewalls enclosure. This structure is known as a basilica-forum complex (see ill. 7, Künzl and Künzl 2003: 153-158, Abb 24-27). In theory, it could be used as a last defense against an attacker. It was a logical place to defend. It was the place where most precious metals were kept, notably in the shape of statues and ornamentation. This was a well-known fact to anyone who had ever visited a Roman vicus. If the basilica were to be well defended, the attackers would have to put its roof on fire. The supporting beams would collapse on the defenders. This was to be avoided if possible, since the smoke would signal distress to adjacent Roman army posts. It would cause great difficulty in plundering the basilica afterwards.

The ideal solution would be to try to storm the basilica-forum complex right away, even if this would cause great losses. Before this could take place, an advance detail of Germanic scouts on horseback would identify points of Roman resistance along the three other roads leading to the vicus. They would also seek valuable Roman targets such as villas along these routes. This reconnaissance mission had to be accomplished prior to the arrival of the main body of the Germanic retinue. The main points of resistance would then have to be eliminated before these could alert a larger body of Roman military. Resistance would be crushed with utmost ferocity. This is known from a number of destroyed Roman villas along the Danube. In the villas, all Roman males had had their faces crushed. They were then decapitated. Finally their severed heads were thrown into wells. In one villa, all iron objects were thrown into the well, too.

An important case is the vicus of Heldenberg in der Wetterau, right in the middle of the valley mentioned above (see ill. 8). This Roman settlement was completely overrun by Germanic invaders in 233 AD. It never recuperated. The area was left deserted until Alemanni settled it the some 150 years later (Czysz 2003: 200-204). The osteological evidence of Heldenbergen is gruesome. The faces of men lying down were smashed. An excessive number of sword heaves are found on the skulls. These must have been inflicted after the men were already dead. The corpses were left for dogs, foxes and wolves to gnaw on (Czysz 2003: 239-247). Roman army equipment lay scattered. It is interesting to note that the majority of the maimed males turned out to be of Germanic descent. It seems to have been irrelevant whether of they were assimilated a long time ago or merely auxiliaries. They all had to be killed by the plunderers in order to ensure success. After the last defenders of the basilica-forum complex had been eliminated, a defensive perimeter would be established around the vicus. This temporarily isolated the vicus from its surroundings. The commanding officer would then detach a small unit to protect the metallurgical detail while it moved into the basilica-forum complex. There, the metallurgical detail dismantled all metal available, which was to be melted, and transformed it into rings and bars. And there would be lots to plunder. Just the doors of the main entrance to the basilica would hold plenty of metal.
A case in point is the portal of Ladenburg. It was built c. 125-150 AD. It was dismantled and hidden away some time before the Roman evacuation of the Agri Decumates in 260 AD, which is when the Romans must have abandoned Ladenburg. In total, there were 51 different pieces of led-tin-brass alloys weighing some 80 kilos (Künzl and Künzl 2003). Having melted down all precious metals, the Germanic retinue would try to disentangle itself from the vicus. It would make for Germania Libera as fast as it could. Errors in communication between the leading officer and his metallurgical detail could prove detrimental. A case in point would be excessive plunder of non-precious metals. An overload of brass kettles or portico ornamentation would slow the unit down. This made it an easy target for more mobile Roman patrols. If the retinue were to be discovered by a superior military force, the booty must be dumped. Escape was necessary for survival. There is a significant number of these Neupotz Type abandoned or dumped treasure hoards in the region (see ill. 9, after Lund-Hansen 1995).

3.5.3 The Roman Reaction

There would be an immediate Roman counter-strike. There would also be several further repercussions depending on the actual Roman military strength. These counter-offensives could drag on for some time and prove to be very costly. The
Roman vengeance for the sack of Heldenberg and other places in 233 AD was harsh. Emperor Maximinus Thrax (235-238 AD) claimed himself to have devastated all land some 40-50 kilometers deep into Germania Libera. The Romans knew enemy territory reasonably well at this point. They had plenty of more or less assimilated Germanic auxiliaries at hand. These knew what to do. But was there a guarantee that they did not confuse Roman interests with personal motives? All armed persons encountered were killed. All farm buildings were burned. All livestock was confiscated. All unarmed civilians were taken as slaves, regardless of their affinity. This was all nice and well. The Romans were pleased with the picture. But was it real? What if the majority of the Germanic invaders were from some place else, acting on a rumor? Hypothetically, they could have traveled secretly quite a distance through enemy territory inside the mountain ranges before they wiped out the vicus of Heldenberg. The unsuspecting Germanic local affinity on the other side of the limes could have unknowingly served as a decoy and scapegoat. The raiders could have safely returned where they came from. It should be noted that once Maximinus Thrax had concluded his campaign, he withdrew to Italy to fight his new rival Gordian I. There was a new opportunity to strike at the Romans. This time, the attack did not concern the Rhineland and the Agri Decumates. Instead, the Alemanni moved into Bavaria. It would seem that nothing had been gained by the retaliation. The Emperor was soon murdered by his own troops.

Ill. 9. Context of Neupotz Type Bronze Depots (After Lund-Hansen 1995)

The consequence of Germano-Roman warfare was an inevitable heightening of tension, no matter who was to blame. The first Roman counter-strike and the subsequent counter-offensive would bring more general Germanic resentment from those who stood in the way of the Roman Emperor. Meanwhile, the successful
Germanic raiders could celebrate a great victory. They had become richer while the Romans and rival Germanic affinities had grown weaker. Germanic people who had met before and during the raid could now visit and host each other, exchanging gifts and memories. They could arrange long distance marriages. And even more Germanic youngsters would be willing to raid a Roman *vicus*. Survivors of Roman counter-strike and descendants of the successful raiders would all be eager to learn.

It may be argued that the ultimate Germanic goal behind the attacks was to settle the Agri Decumates again. But this was never a primary objective in the valley facing Mainz. It was simply too dangerous to live in the wide open while opposing *romanitas*. The gathered knowledge from the raids dictated a more sophisticated strategy. One had to strike out large Roman urban centers before settlement was possible. First, the Roman military post of Mainz would have to be removed. It was only in 406 AD, some 170 years later, that Germanic retinues could sack this fortified town (see ill.10).
Ill. 10. The Agri Decumates c. 400 AD (After Schach-Dörges 1997)
PART II

The Rise of Kleptocracy

4 The Germanization of the Roman Military

In the last chapter 3 of Part I, it was argued that Germanic affinities had developed a military doctrine and a professionalism that had come close to that of the Latin-speaking Roman military. It was argued that the raids against the Romans were caused by a need to support the expensive elite culture that also employed literacy. Part II seeks to show how an elite of Germanic professional killers eventually became an executive class of Roman state servants. Werner (1998: 193) labels this ‘the fusion of Roman military elites with barbarian elites’. The Germanic elite came to serve as an integral part of the literate Latin administration. This also explains why the runic script never really took off after the great raids of the late 3rd century. Germanic affinities suffered a constant brain drain to the Roman state apparatus that happily accepted many of the best and the brightest. The acquisition of Latin literacy seemed like a career opportunity by comparison to the runic script, at least as long as the Roman Empire was still in business. Yet, many of the ‘other’ attitudes towards literacy were to shift, too.

As the Roman state apparatus started to disintegrate under the new Germanic functionaries, the upper echelons of Roman society turned away from literacy. There was a Roman reaction against the state and its literacy in favor of orality. Slow to react, the literate Germanic affinities initially responded by an increased Early Runic literacy with a public display of power. In the case of Fallward (Schön 1995), a Latin loan word ksamella (scamella) as well as double spelling ll (normally avoided in runic inscriptions) shows Latin influences, (Braunmüller 2003). Then, the Germanic affinities shifted towards more obtuse messages on bracteates, until they also returned to orality. Sections in this chapter will discuss: 1) the old legionary army, its cults, and the split of the Western Empire; 2) the reforms that led to the new mobile army; 3) the Tetrarchy and its attempt at price control; 4) the last imperial dynasties and their Germanic administrators; 5) the Germanic imitators, and finally; 6) the Roman intellectual reaction. The latter entailed a move toward orality and rurality.

4.1 The Old Legionary Army of the 3rd Century

What was it like, the biggest standing army in Europe? In the early 1st century, 28 legions under Augustus numbered some 140,000 soldiers (Connolly 1977). These were mostly Romans or Italians, although there was a section of a few hundred auxiliaries to every Roman legion. This would suggest a few hundred Germanic
warriors for every 5,000 Romans on Germanic frontier. In the mid 3rd century, the number of soldiers had doubled, yet the proportional ratio of Germanic soldiers had skyrocketed. A telling example is a Roman marching column, led by the future Emperor Aurelian (270-275 AD). It was composed of one Roman legion, four Germanic princes and their respective retinues, 300 Iturian archers, 600 Armenians, 200 Saracenes, 400 Mesopotamians and 800 heavily armed cavalry. If one accepts that the legion consisted of some 5-6,000 men, and discounts the other forces, there were some 1,700-2,700 Germanic warriors, roughly a fourth of the force. The Germanic part was divided into four battalion-size detachments, some 400-700 men, each led by a ‘prince’ (or rather a princeps, a senior officer). The Roman military would continue to grow at an alarming rate during the next years. Under Diocletian (284-306 AD), there were some 5-600,000 soldiers and sailors. At this point, the majority of soldiers were no longer Roman but Germanic (Richardot 1998: 73-74). And the navy had become a marginal force, opening up the Black Sea, the English Channel and the Mediterranean for piracy again (Wolfram 1998: 78).

The power structure of the Roman state became more fragmented as more and more Germanic people were hired. The fragmentation of power was a two-edged sword. It enabled Germanic careerists to rise in the ranks, while it also undermined their future prospects. The result was that Germanic administrators increasingly took matters into their own hands. Their rule may be best described as a kleptocracy, a political society where the ruling class has to steal from others in order to perpetuate its rule. This is also the behavior that the more peripheral Germanic peoples sought to imitate. And they would soon make their way towards the Empire, where their cousins had already found career opportunities. How did it begin? The first disastrous wave of invading retinues crossed the limes and reached Italy during the reign of Marcus Aurelius in the 160’s AD. Short of manpower along the Danube, Marcus Aurelius had resorted to a drastic change in the order of things when fighting the Sarmatians. He allowed Germanic tribes to settle inside the Empire, as seen on the Marcus Aurelius column (Wolfram 1998: 87). In return, they would provide military services (Warry 2001: 198). This arrangement set a precedent. In time, this practice would eventually have consequences for the social and ethnic composition of the Roman army. Through an edict from Gallienus, the senatorial class had been banned from becoming officers in the army (Richardot 1998: 62). A serious problem remained, though. People inside the Roman Empire no longer felt an urge to join the Roman army, even if they could reach the highest ranks. This was the case even after general citizenship had been granted to all, following the reform of Caracalla in 212 AD. The millions of new Roman citizens in the Roman provinces still had to be pressed into service and wisely felt little inclination to leave their home region. The Roman middle classes would not rise to the occasion and fill the higher ranks following the ban on Roman nobles in the officer corps. In 277 AD, Probus recruited some 16,000 Alemanni to serve as border troops (Périn and Feffer 1997: 49). The burglar had been hired as night watch.

Many observers, including Tacitus in the late 1st century AD, have pointed to the absence of an overreaching esprit de corps in the Roman army. Tacitus (Annales I. 18) remarked that legionaries from different sectors along the limes regarded each other as strangers. Roman soldiers rather felt an affinity only with fellow members of the same unit (Richardot 1998:63-64). They shared their pension and funerary funds with those next in line. They relied on them to survive on
the battlefield. As argued earlier, those responsible were generally literate. It was good to know the literates in the unit well. By contrast, there was no direct economic interest in befriending soldiers from other units who had their money invested elsewhere, and who could not be fully relied upon in dangerous situations. Bloody quarrels between members of different Roman units were very common in larger camps. Personal ambition in the Roman state apparatus was often thwarted. The Emperor disliked successful military leaders (Mattern 1999: 200-201). This was a military dictatorship with a claim to world supremacy. Yet despite these pretensions, the repressive state apparatus was very fragmented and each unit held on to its own traditions and leadership. The prospect of having one’s aspirations stifled from above causes coup d’états and separatist movements within any army (Decalo 1986). If there is no cohesion, the prospect of success for such an endeavor becomes rather limited. Success is thus dependent on cohesive discipline, surprise movement, and direct action. In time, these factors slowly slipped out of Roman hands, ending up with a Germanic elite in control.

4.1.1 The Failure of Mithraism

How did it come to the fact that the senior officers of the Roman army were mostly Germanic? What about such traditional structures such as the sodalities and pension funds? What about other selective affinities within the Roman army? The Roman army had selective affinities within it. Besides sodalities knit together by vested economic interests in funerary and pension funds, there were the secret societies today known as mystery religions (Angus 1975). These included the worship of various imported deities from Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt and Persia. That the Romans imported such creeds and secluded themselves in their worship may be indicative of a lingering dissatisfaction with the state ideology of romanitas. The mandatory civic duties of the official, public Roman religion still lacked important elements of universalism and revelation (Scheid 1998). It is now evident that Christianity was to assume the ideology of the Roman imperialism, but that was still in the being. Meanwhile, one of the more prominent mystery religions in the Roman army was that of Mithras. However, it never amounted to a proper imperialist ideology.

Mithraism was open by invitation only. This meant that only a few were allowed to join in the cult. No known Mithraeum has room for more than two or three dozens of people. No women were allowed into the mystery. This cult has recently received a perhaps disproportionate attention in Nordic archaeology (Lerjeryd 2000, Kaliff and Sundqvist 2004). New theories have not added to a verifiable causality. I have therefore cautioned against attributing too much agency to Mithraism in relation to the North (Fischer 2005a). Knowledge of the Persian god Mithras came to Rome with Roman soldiers returning from campaigns in Asia Minor. This knowledge was transformed into an organized Roman religion. The transformation added many new elements to the original religion, and earlier traits were suppressed, forgotten, or misunderstood (Turcan 1993). The conscious reification of foreign religions into Roman secret societies with widely different interpretations was crucial in the formation of many of the mystery religions. A case in point is the worship of the Serapis bull. This was an amalgamation of the dead god Osiris and the bull deity Apis into one, where Apis would
carry re-born Osiris. Another case in point is the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, combining elements of Mithras and Attis (Fischer 2005a).

Roman Mithraism was structured in hierarchical order (much like modern day freemasonry), but with the advantage that the secret hierarchy of the cult was not identical to that of the army. Even slaves and freed men could join. In one Roman Mithraeum, there were seven ranks: corax, ‘raven’, cryphus, ‘occult’, miles, ‘soldier’, heliodromus, ‘sun-runner’, leo, ‘lion’, perseus, ‘Persian’, and pater, ‘father’. Access to a certain rank was granted by means of a ritual initiation and baptism. One rite involved the sealing of the candidate’s lips with honey. Communal meals were taken. This mystery religion had much to offer besides the allure of the exotic. It was founded on ideological commitment and religious conviction tied to vows of secrecy. It held universalistic beliefs, although the tenets thereof were not meant to be disclosed. It promised victory. Mithras was known as Deus Invictus ‘the undefeated god’. Mithraism had much in common with early Christianity except that its universalism did not apply to others. Eventually, the major disadvantages to the reproduction of this selective affinity would prove to be the self-imposed restrictions, the recruitment chiefly amidst only a handful of professional groups (i.e. the military and the fiscal administration) and the exclusion of women.

Then, there was the ubiquitous Roman problem of not having a sacred universalistic text, even though most Mithraists must have been literate. Initially, Roman Mithraism spread like a wildfire along the limes and in the major urban centers from the Flavian dynasty to the Antonines. It was ideal for ‘modest social climbers’ (Lerjeryd 2000). The oldest votive inscription along the limes, in Budapest, dates to the age of Vespasian (69-79 AD). It was composed by a non-Roman centurion, C. Sacidius Barbarus of Legion XV Appollinaris (Turcan 1993:32). His legion had been stationed on the Danube after having sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD, and was probably responsible for the Mithraeum in Carnuntum as well. Wherever there were army officers and fiscal authorities, there were temples. At the time of Domitian (81-96 AD), a freed slave of the imperial household in Rome paid homage to Mithras in a bilingual inscription (CIL, VI, 732). The oldest Mithraea in Germany may date to the age of Hadrian (117-138 AD), Hedernheim being a case in point. Officers from Legion VIII Augusta were responsible for the Mithraea in Böckingen, Gross-Krotzenburg and Koenigshofen (Strasbourg) along the Rhine. Similarly, Legion V Macedonica and Legion XIII Gemina brought Mithraism to Pannonia and Dacia along the Danube (Turcan 1993:38). Commodus (180-192 AD) is the first Emperor said to have been initiated in the cult. This is not surprising given the presence of Mithraists around him in Carnuntum in 171-173 AD and later in Rome.

The mobility of Roman officers during their professional careers helped the organization of the secret society, the best case being that of a certain M. Valerius Maximianus. Born in Ptuj, Dalmatia, he advanced to command Legion II Augusta in Alba Julia, Dacia, in c. 180 AD. There he also provided the local Mithraeum with an altar. There were three Mithraea in Ptuj alone, so it is safe to assume that he had been initiated there. Valerius Maximianus was then promoted and transferred to become legate of Legion III Augusta in Lambèse, Numidia. There he is mentioned in the consecration of a new Mithraeum. As Turcan (1993:39) points out, all the legions Valerius Maximianus commanded counted Mithraists among their ranks. This was something that enabled him to finally reach the rank of con-
Mithraism gradually disappeared. This was probably related to the great wars of the mid 3rd century. It seems improbable that people quit the cult voluntarily. Rather, the leading Mithraists are likely to have died during the mid- to late 3rd century. A case in point is the Mithraeum of Gelduba, present-day Krefeld-Gellep. Here, Frankish invaders gathered a bunch of prisoners and slaughtered them. The temple was left a tomb. The army units consisting of Mithraists ceased to exist. The largest congregations of Mithraists belonged to Roman infantry legions of the 3rd century, not the subsequent Germanic auxiliary cavalry units of the 4th century. A legion consisted of some 5,000 infantry together with some 120 auxiliary cavalry. Most Roman legions along the Rhine were wiped out during the Alamannic incursions of the late 3rd century. If the 'Männerbund' had been killed in action, it could no longer accept new applicants.

The old infantry legions were disbanded. New Roman military contexts were established in the late 3rd and early 4th century. There was a distinction between limitanei, fixed border troops often of Germanic stock, and comitatenses, mobile Roman elite troops of some 1,000 men, which gradually became more Germanic. New army units were stationed in new, smaller forts as the military strategy was shifted to a more flexible defense, where limitanei simply tried to delay Germanic incursions until comitatenses could mobilize and counter-attack. This was a move away from the large legionary garrisons where Mithraism once had flourished. There was an enlarged new military hierarchy and masses of new recruits to the expanding cavalry units. These units were of Germanic stock. They did not practice Mithraism. But they were very much attached to the imperial cult. The new army raised by Diocletian would be closer to the emperor as a person rather than to the internal hierarchy of traditional army units. The supreme Emperor Diocletian ruled the East. His new elite troops were appropriately known as joviani, ‘those belonging to Jupiter’. Emperor Maximianus who controlled the Western Empire was known as Hercules. His new elite units were known as herculiani. By contrast, no Roman army unit ever openly adhered to Mithras. Mithraism failed to establish a strong, horizontal bond across the organizational divisions within the Roman state apparatus. By the late 3rd century, there no longer was a kind of embracing Rotary or Lions lodge sign when entering a new army garrison upon transfer to a new unit. Nor was there a spontaneous ideological alignment towards Mithraism outside of the society. In a cult without widespread sacred texts, the role of orthopraxy in the reproduction of doctrine is very important. If there no longer are any teachers, no adepts may advance in the ranks. This is especially true if recruitment is carried out within a specific military unit, which is disbanded after suffering extensive losses. The Mithraea that continued to be active into the late 4th century (such as that of Martigny, Switzerland) show a strong local tie to local politicians (Wiblé 2001: 197-199). They are therefore unlikely to have had any connections to senior ranking members from the outside. The cosmic doctrine (Ulansey 1989) remained an abstraction to outsiders. Had Mithraism remained a powerful factor to reckon with, it is likely that the Germanic careerists would have acquiesced, and accepted a greater dose of romanitas. By means of the hierarchic structure of Mithraism, which would have been omnipresent on a horizontal level, the relative Germanic influence could have been kept at bay in a gridlock, even if Germanic officers were transferred. Instead, executive power was to be decentralized even further under the Tetrachs, whose half-hearted attempts to revive
Mithraism would remain just that. This must be one reason why Germanic affinities were capable of assuming all leading positions within the Roman army of the 4th century.

4.1.2 The Gallic Kingdom

During the campaigns against barbarians along the Upper Rhine 254-260 AD, a part of the Roman military came to control Britain, Gaul and Germania, and for a while, Spain (Wolfram 1998: 78-79). Success was undeniable. Coin deposits show that the Franks were pushed back momentarily from Northern Gaul, but that Alemannic incursions from the Agri Decumates continued in the Moselle and Rhine regions (Périn and Feffer 1997: 46). The provincial population was grateful for the return to peace and order. The affluent and well-educated provincial aristocracy was to form a close bond with this part of the army and the fiscal administration. The victorious soldiers primarily felt an allegiance to their own officers and not to some other officer who by chance had risen above his peers, just to proclaim himself Emperor elsewhere in the Empire. This victorious army felt justified when it proclaimed an Emperor of its own. Their candidate, the usurper Postumus (260-269 AD) could also count on support from the provincial aristocracy. Residing mainly in Trier and Cologne, he never sought the central power and never took his troops far way from where they had been victorious. Following brief interim reigns of Laelius and Marius, Postumus was replaced by his chief of the guard, Victorinus (269-271 AD) who was then murdered.

The two brief successors, Tetricus I and Tetricus II contacted the successful Emperor Aurelianus and they surrendered to him in 274 AD. It would seem easy to dismiss the Gallic Empire as something brief and irrelevant. But this not the case, considering the archaeological finds at the 18,000 sqm villa of Chiragan at Martes-Tolosane (Haute-Garonne). The spectacular marble sculptures in this immense villa suggest a strong ideological continuity with a display of traditional mythological motives from the 4th century. But there are also 3rd century depictions of Tetricus I and II, triumphant in a chariot, and Tetricus facing Claudius II (268-270 AD), not as a adversary but as a friend. It is telling that some sources argue Aurelianus did not execute Tetricus I and II. The former was supposedly hired as an administrator in Italy and the latter was allowed to retire. Regardless of what really happened, it is clear that Aurelianus needed the acceptance of Tetricus’ supporters, as they owned substantial parts of Gallic kingdom.

The Gallic kingdom and the Roman Empire both came to depend on Germanic war leaders to defend themselves from each other and from the subsequent Germanic incursions that always accompanied internal Roman strife at this point. This was an unprecedented opportunity for Germanic peoples to have access to Roman capital in all its forms. It has been argued that the Gallic kingdom forms the contextual backdrop to the high status graves of Hassleben-Leuna type (Lund-Hansen 1995, Storgaard 2001a, 2001b). The split of the western part of the Roman Empire and the subsequent Roman dependency on Germanic troops, diplomacy, and truces with more distant Germanic political configurations was devastating for the Romans. It proved to be immensely profitable for a few Germanic political players who could move their households closer to the Roman border and act inside Roman territory. The Alemanni, in particular, would move into the Agri Decumates and play an important role for the next halfcentury to come. From the
Breisgau hilltops on the edge of the Agri Decumates, the Alemanni could now look down on the Roman Rhine Valley. Their slipshod attempts to settle in abandoned Roman living quarters, such as in the Roman bath of Wurmlingen (Fingerlin 1997, Reuter 2003: 107-109) showed considerable unwillingness to wholeheartedly embrace everything pertaining to *romanitas*.

### 4.2 The Hired Hands and the 4th Century Military Doctrine of Mobility

Three trends are discernable in Germano-Roman relations from the late 3rd century to the 5th century: First, there was the introduction of a new Roman defense doctrine (Richardot 1998:95-98). It allowed invaders to enter inside the own territory between immobile urban garrisons and highly mobile cavalry units. Only then could there be a counter-strike. Second, the invaders had heightened their competence in warfare. Third, the ever-increasing numbers of Germanic soldiers in Roman service as allied cavalry meant that the change of doctrine was irreversible. Forming a general development, these interrelated factors would together increasingly prevent the Roman army from going into large-scale battles in the 5th century Western Empire. This caused further fragmentation of power and, eventually, a parochialization of knowledge production. This enabled peripheral actors to enter the center stage for a while. Judging from the Roman coin hoards in the North, it would seem that the rulers of Gudme, Denmark, took part in the Roman civil wars of the 350’s. It is also apparent that a substantial number of retinues from Sweden took an active part in Roman political affairs in the 5th century.

A recent study shows rapidly growing numbers of Germanic senior officers in the 4th century Roman army (Martin 1997a). This gives a good picture of how the Alemanni began to dominate the West Roman army under the Tetrarchy. This lasted throughout the Constantine dynasty. During the late 4th century, the Alemanni were to be replaced with others, just as they had replaced other Germanic peoples before them. Franks, in particular, commanded a disproportionate share of Roman army in the late 4th and 5th centuries. Already in 351 AD did the *magister militum* Magnentius, a *laetus* of Frankish origin, feel confident enough to proclaim himself Emperor in the West. By then, Arabs, Africans, Illyrians and other ethnic groups within the Empire had already provided Rome with Emperors. They had all intermarried with the senatorial class. Germanic administrators would follow suit. This pattern makes sense in that it is the most peripheral areas that are engaged as political actors and administrators in the final stages of the transformation of the Roman Empire into Germanic kleptocracies. The peripheral regions are the last to accept immediate Roman cultural loans, but are the most likely to further reification. They will innovate and modify ideas that originally were secondary and reactionary to Roman advances.

For every Germanic warrior who left home to join the Roman military there was a larger number that stayed home, or engaged in brief expeditions against the Romans. The role of the non-Roman Germanic warriors was that of a filter. They were responsible for much of the reification of all that ‘other’ stuff which would otherwise have been brought home by the full-fledged Roman administrators. The eventual intellectual gain the Nordic retinues made was often rather pointless in the long run. A significant amount of the cultural innovations brought back home failed to have any major impact. Little by little, the scale tipped over in favor of things pertaining to *romanitas*, even if heavily reified.
A military hierarchy needs rather explicit goals to function, such as concert military campaigns or the dispersion into extensive emplacements. These goals are generally referred to as a doctrine. A military doctrine is a set of norms, which governs practical action, but also ideas and concepts, which affect the function of leadership (Smedberg 2001: 16). Such a set of norms takes time to develop, implement and evaluate. Education is necessary for the doctrine to be accepted by its users, leaders and subordinates alike. Change in doctrine is usually the result of previous failure or the correct assessment of inevitable development. A new doctrine may have serious and unforeseen consequences, which go beyond the intended change. This may have to do with the educational process, but also with external factors, termed ‘friction’ by von Clausewitz (Smedberg 2001).

It is generally accepted that the mid 3rd century Roman army abandoned its defensive doctrine of confronting the invaders directly at the *limes* to a new doctrine of mobile warfare (Richardot 1998: 95-112; Wolfram 1998: 73-77; Warry 2001: 200-201). This was a result of the acceptance that Germanic invaders employed a smaller form of warfare to which the Roman military needed time to adjust itself (Nicolle 1996:26). From a Roman perspective this meant accepting initial losses of civilians before a counterstrike could be organized. It meant allowing incursions and plundering on Roman territory and then attacking retreating booty-laden columns. This led to two things. First, Roman civilians on the frontier could not trust on the military to be protected. Second, it gave Roman military commanders an opportunity to enrich themselves with Germanic war booty taken from Roman civilians. The latter phenomenon may have been a further reason for Roman commanders to delay action against Germanic invaders, allowing them even deeper into Roman territory before striking back. If one recalls the background of many Roman administrators it becomes clear that the incursions and the punitive counter-attacks were part of a cynical game.

The traditional Roman military structure consisted of the infantry legion, some 5,500 soldiers. A squadron of 120 auxiliary cavalry generally carried out forward reconnaissance (Connolly 1977: 40-41). The cavalry would see more and in advance. Examples from World War I show that cavalry units can move extremely fast even under the most difficult conditions. During the very hot summer in August 1914, the 8th German cavalry division advanced 1,150 kilometers in 21 days, averaging some 55 kilometers a day. (This is roughly equivalent of the distance between Denmark and Italy in three weeks). The French Sordet cavalry corps retreated some 82 kilometers on August 12th 1914. During the Dobruscha campaign in Romania, September 2nd – 13th 1916, the Bulgarian Kolev cavalry detachment marched some 400 kilometers. Two days were used for rest. Seven days saw fighting. The unit was not relieved until November that year. The Prussian cuirassier regiment Graf Wrangel retreated from the Ukraine to East Prussia some 1,400 kilometers in 75 days during the harsh winter of 1918-1919. This was done without reinforcements or supply lines. The retreat was through enemy territory devastated from the long war, leaving little to plunder or feed on (Ekman 2002:331-333). Ekman points out that the rapid movements during World War I were only possible with horseshoes. There was often a forward supply line of new horseshoes and most soldiers knew how to replace horseshoes and take care of hoofs. As Migration Period cavalry horses rarely were shod, it would seem that the Roman infrastructure of stone-clad roads would have slowed down marches, damaging the hoofs. Movement outside the infrastructure would have been much faster. Unshod hoofs are better suited for open terrain. This was a major change.
from the slow infantry columns marching down the Roman roads. Mobility meant access to new space. This was a move beyond the inert and linear Roman infrastructure at an increased speed.

Contrary to common opinion, the late Roman military never experienced a decline in its ability to win battles. The new mobile units proved rather effective in the small-scale battles they were trained for. Most small groups of Germanic invaders were generally chased out of the Empire after a while, an Alemannic invasion force was routed from Italy by Roman troops under the future Western Emperor Majorian as late as 455 AD. The problem lay elsewhere. Despite their professionalism, the small mobile units were prone to desertion and would only act if well paid or under the influence of a charismatic leader. This was a problem, which had not been solved with the new doctrine. Rather it was accentuated. Charismatic leaders with access to larger army units were dangerous potential usurpers and rival Emperors. The *Notitia Dignitatum* reveals that the West Roman military of the 4th and 5th centuries was fragmented. Battle-ready units increasingly consisted of Germanic soldiers under Germanic officers, often in Roman service as *auxiliarii* and *foederati*, mercenaries and allies only. One of the Germanic recruits, a Heruli bearing the double name of Flavius Hariso, rose to become *primus magister* in the Roman army (Mees 2003). A merger of sorts: Flavius was the family name of a Roman officer who rose from the Roman middle class in Italy to become the divine Emperor Vespasian, The Early Runic personal name *hariso* is attested on a female brooch from a Hassleben-Leuna type grave in Himlingøje (Stoklund 1995).

Emperor Gallienus (253-268 AD) was an educated man and a friend of the philosopher Plotinus. He succeeded in raising and educating a number of competent Roman cavalry officers. He successfully fought Heruli on the Balkans with these men. Ironically, the former pupils gathered together against their master and murdered him in a coup d’état in Milano. The Emperors succeeding Gallienus would be cavalry commanders. In the power struggle after Gallienus emerged the cavalry general Aurelianus (270-275 AD). He managed to unite the Western Empire and set out to fortify the city of Rome. This meant that Rome was no longer capable of blocking its enemies at the border but had to allow incursions deep inland in order to strike back. This doctrine was further developed by Aurelian’s successors. The tetrarchy under Diocletian established some new order in the Roman Empire with further stubborn reforms. Constantine I, arguably Diocletian’s most worthy successor, upheld this direction.

Following Gallienus’ and Aurelianus’ ideas of highly mobile fighting units, Diocletian and Constantine continued to decentralize the army. A case in point, Legion III Italica in Regensburg originally consisted of some 6,000 men. These were divided up into five or six units of some 1,000 – 1,200 men stationed from Kempten to Zirl. New units were recruited and named after the new Emperors. Cohorts and alae stationed along the limes were cut down from 500 to 1,000 men to 100-200 men. The army was also divided into an inland army, the *comitatenses*, and border troops, the *limitanei*. The small, mobile cavalry units of the Roman army, *alae* and *vexillationes*, became increasingly Germanic as the Roman Emperors rightly feared the ambitions of disgruntled Roman cavalry officers capable of starting a rebellion in a province only to rapidly move towards one of the imperial capitals. Effective military units were often on a level of c. 2-5,000 men, that is a combination of two infantry units and two cavalry unit (Richardot 1998: 81-84). Considering that the Roman military may have numbered nearly 500,000
soldiers during the reign of Diocletian, one can imagine the chaos that would emerge if some 100-250 independent brigade staff leaders started to follow their own rules and leaders and move around as they pleased. Yet this is to a large extent just what happened in the 5th century. The change in doctrine and its passing on to Germanic soldiers by means of education is likely to have caused a substantial part of this development.

Another important factor was the abolition of the once so omnipotent Praetorian Guard. During the 2nd century it had become an executive state apparatus within the state itself. It was very dangerous to have an elite unit of skilled Roman soldiers at center of power. Septimus Severus disbanded the unit in 194 AD, and reformed a new Praetorian Guard open to all legions. This meant that he filled it with soldiers from the Illyrian legions, loyal to him as a person (Warry 2001:198). But this was only effective for a while. Once at the center, the Praetorian Guard would grow cocky. It would see itself as the guarantor at the epicenter. The Praetorian commanders would still seek to become Emperors, the last one being Philip the Arab. The last Roman elite infantry unit was replaced with a retinue of Germanic warriors, more loyal to the Emperor as a person and source of revenue, and increasingly less as a symbol or official. The personal bodyguard was now devoid of political authority, and was finally disbanded by Constantine I. Instead, there was a recruitment of entire Germanic retinues, scholae palataniae. These were probably battalion-sized units. Their ethnic epithets and unit shield markings (Heruli, Batavi, etc) are debatable. A tentative guess is that the choice of an epithet depended on the origin of the retinue leader rather than his troops. The unit may have been recruited from a large number of different Germanic ethnic affinities to ensure a maximum efficacy in combat.

4.3 The Price Edict and the Last Rite of the Tetrarchy

The Tetrarchy under Diocletian tried to resurrect many things. This was a concentrated attempt at a complete reform of the Roman Empire. It divided the Empire into new provinces. Supreme executive power was divided. A new currency was introduced following a fixed gold standard. The senior Emperor sought to reform and resuscitate what had already gone foul, albeit with mixed results. This was done by means of a written edict, fixing prices of certain goods. A second move was to force Roman citizens to inherit the professions of their parents. An obtuse analogy would be to label this a corporative society before fascism. This analogy is flawed because what was sought after by imposing the edict did not hold true for a very long time. More labor was imported instead. Forced economic policies and reforms proved fruitless and inflation could not be held at bay. The tetrarchy shows a distinct relationship between the role of literacy, social power and economic change. This is the case even if these interrelated factors were never correctly understood at the time. First, it is evident that Diocletian sought to fix prices with the edict, and by banning contraventions such as the removal of goods from the market or the shipping of the goods to a more distant market (Corcoran 2000:217).

The written edict would serve as a guarantor, fixing things for good. It was engraved on large stone slabs for all to see (Corcoran 2000: 218, ill. 7). But at the core of the matter lay the problem of social power. It appears likely that it was the Emperor himself and his entourage that caused considerable disturbances in the
market. Wherever the Emperor went to tax or to fight, prices sky-rocketed. If he were to settle down for a few years, the market would wipe out a number of weak actors. The imperial capitals on the border such as Carnuntum, Trier, and Sirmium were expensive, parasitical towns. There was abundance but the cost of living was very high. The soldiers would complain, and the Emperor would be forced to do something. Warfare and plunder became expedient as a shortterm solution. If things dragged on, one had a real problem though.

Greed seems to have been a major problem at the time of the Tetrarchy. Corcoran (2000: 207-213) shows that both Diocletian and his later critic Lacantius saw greed as the major problem within Roman government. It was also a major cause for barbarian aggression. Diocletian’s preamble to the price edict employs a beautiful term in bureaucratic technolect. The term *avaritia* occurs no less than eight times. As to be expected, *avaritia* is confronted against rare virtues such as *ratio*, *humanitas* and *providentia*. As shown below, these are virtues traditionally attributed to scholarly education, including literacy. The long wars against Postumus and the Alemanni, Vandali and Goths caused terrible losses to the Roman army. Some units had been killed to the last man, their fortresses stormed and plundered by Germanic invaders. Much experience and knowledge would now be gone forever.

The power of the Roman secret societies such as the Mithraists had diminished as its hierarchy, lost in battles simply could not be replaced in a short period of time. Despite this, the three emperors Diocletian, Maximianus and Galerius would convene at Carnuntum in 308 AD for an emergency meeting to save the tetrarchy. The intended outcome of the meeting was expressed in a collective ritual, trying to revive the lost power of the Roman officer corps. A Mithraeaum was restored and reopened. The magnitude of this occasion was probably not lost on the new Germanic recruits: there were three emperors at once united, all paying homage to the invincible Mithras, god of the sun. The three Emperors were presented in text as DDDNNNN, that is three times *Dominus Noster* ‘Our Lord’. A junior Emperor, Constantine I, was notably absent. While Christianity became a state religion following the conversion of Constantine I, Theodosius only banned pagan worship in 391 AD. This probably meant very little to Germanic affinities living outside the Roman Empire. The Emperor, not God or Jesus, was still portrayed as before on the Roman coins. Nor had the imperial iconography changed much from the time the Emperor was considered a living deity. But the imperial aura, although heightened by Constantine I, would not remain effective forever.

**4.4 The Constantine and Valentine Emperors**

One may observe that while the Tetrarchy had one of its administrative capitals in Trier, the previously coveted realms of the textual and martial were flooded by what from Roman standpoint may have been considered Germanic underachievers. When Constantius I Chlorus died in York in 306 AD, one of the first to congratulate the young Constantine I to his ascension to Augustus was the Alemannic King Crocus. The latter was the tribune of a special detachment, a *scholae*. He and others were soon rewarded for their loyalty. They received golden finger rings with the inscription *Fidem Constantino* on them, one of which has reportedly been found near Augsburg (Martin 1997a: 120). It is safe to assume
that Crocus was able to read the Latin text and that he and other Alemanni understood its meaning. Men like Crocus were not about to leave the Roman army voluntarily. This was an elective affinity from which the previous Roman masters had been expelled (note Gallienus’ late 3rd century edict banning the senatorial class from becoming army officers).

Only a serious conflict would dissuade the nascent Alemannic kleptocracy from standing as close to the Emperor as possible and imitate everything that he stood for. Back in Trier, Constantine erected the aula palatina, a space of power measuring some 67 x 27 x 30 m on the outside. This was the ultimate hall building (cf. Herschend 1997). Inside, men like Crocus surrounded Constantine I. These felt that they owed their loyalty to Constantine’s persona, and not to the Empire. The personification of Germanic ethnic affinities in text on Roman coins (e.g. Francia, Alamannia) during Constantine’s successors made their presence even more inevitable, even if their submission and service was described in text as gaudium romanorum, ‘to the delight of the Romans’. Eventually, the Constantine dynasty would fall out with the Alemanni as an ethnic affinity. Constans and Constantius II would both assume the title Alamannicus in text as a sign of supremacy over the ethnic affinity. The latter must have found it very difficult to accept much of the Roman civilization, in particular the capricious leadership and its brutal policies. And this regardless if a substantial part of the Alemannic hierarchy had lived longer periods on Roman soil as hostages, cult initiates or decorated officers. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXX) argued that there were only two Emperors that could instill fear in the Alemanni, namely Constans and Julian. The Alemanni were incited by Constantius II to attack Gaul under the usurper Magnentius 351-353 AD. Constantius II would then attack them in 354 AD, concluding a victorious peace. Then, his nephew Julian fought them anew in 355-357, 359-361, only this time Constantius II would urge the Alemanni to attack his nephew. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXI, 3-4-6) relates how the Alemannic king Vadomar even engaged in secret correspondence with Constantius II.

A full-scale battle between two rival Emperors could prove very costly. It meant that normally immobile forces had to be transported very long distances under the protective cover of the mobile units, only to be sacrificed on the battlefield. Two rivals, Constantius II and the usurper Magnentius clashed in battle of Mursa near the limes in Pannonia in 351 AD. It is claimed that the battle may have cost Constantius II 30,000 dead out of his total force of 80,000 soldiers. Magnentius is said to have lost two thirds of his 36,000 men (Richardot 1998: 85). Such full-scale battles were relatively rare. Yet they always caused irreplaceable losses. And the Germanic borders along the Rhine were wide open, leaving Gaul unprotected. More Alemanni were to come during the 350’s. Foes could become friends under a leader they had chosen or been coerced to join. This included an element of uncertainty and unreliability.

An invading Germanic army composed of sub-units without effective leadership could easily decompose into dispersed flocks of panick-stricken rabble when the push came to shove. It would seem that Germanic competence in warfare meant imitating certain aspects of the Roman doctrine on warfare, which in turn, was formulated on experience with Germanic warfare. Given the immense task of educating illiterates, it seems most likely that the Germanic invaders would elect to keep command structure at company, battalion and regimental levels as long as possible. Larger Germanic forces on a division level were subject to confusion and lack of discipline when a qualitatively equivalent Roman army confronted
them. The literate Roman administrators, even if of Germanic origin, generally won such large battles. The creation of an interrelated cadre of literate Germanic military leaders outside of *romanitas* would still take some time. Ammianus Marcellinus (XVI 11, 15) claims that he in 357 AD witnessed an army of 35,000 Alemanni under Chnodomarius and his son Serapio being routed and massacred by Julian. This took place outside Argentorate (Strasbourg). Numbers were not decisive at this juncture. Fortune in war was largely dependent on discipline and intelligence. Julian’s victorious army consisted of merely 13,000 Roman soldiers, some four or five brigades (Warry 2001: 206). His army was able to defeat a much larger Germanic force. This was mainly because his soldiers felt they were under the competent leadership and subject to the discipline of an Emperor harboring divine pretensions. The presence of the emperor on the battlefield was no guarantee for Roman victory, though. Germanic armies had no trouble killing the living god when they caught him (e.g. Decius in 251 AD, Valens in 378 AD).

Emperors of the mid 4th century had to perform live in public on a regular basis. Live shows meant a lot to Germanic and other barbaric peoples for whom most textual aspects of the imperial persona must have been an abstraction. The performer had no easy task before him. He had to have competence. His audience was fickle, greedy and merciless. If something went wrong, the Emperor could get killed. This was apparently an inevitable and unavoidable risk. The spectacle of the imperial persona did not convince for time eternal, but was always worth a try for a competent player.

Ammianus Marcellinus (XVII, 13, 5) describes how Constantius II wanted to make a public display of his power in front of the defeated Sarmatians in 358 AD. He had decided to be lenient and merely reproach them for invading Roman territory in Pannonia, as he wanted to go east and fight off the invading Persians. The latter was something, which the Sarmatians must have been well aware of, and they were very unwilling to move across the Danube. Constantius II, with a few aide-de-camps, stood on a mound overseeing the Sarmatians as they were slowly making their way over an island where the Theiss and the Danube meet. He had hidden his troops in a half circle behind him. Awe was replaced with anger. The armed mob charged towards the mound. The Sarmatians were driven away by the imperial bodyguard in the last minute and Constantius II escaped unharmed. The Roman troops then responded with a fierce attack, slaughtering the fleeing Sarmatians. This botched attempt at further charismatic power nearly cost the emperor his life, but resulted in another successful massacre of barbarians. The Emperor subsequently accepted the title *Sarmaticus* from his troops for a second time. Regardless of Constantius’ II cold-bloodedness, the situation had grown complicated by the late 350’s. A barbarian ethnic affinity could not be duped into something it disliked by means of a colorful Roman spectacle. Nor could the Roman state apparatus disregard the need for the Germanic administrators.

Ammianus Marcellinus (XXI, 10.7, XXI 12.24) twice points out that Julian reproached his grandfather Constantine’s policies for having entrusted far too many Germanic soldiers with high offices. Ammianus calls this a ‘tasteless and irresponsible act’ since Julian did the same thing. The controversial Germanic administrators had become indispensable. A telling example is the Alemannic king of Breisgau, Vadomar, who was granted safe passage by Constantius II in 354 AD. After this peace, the Alemanni took up arms again, murdering Vadomar’s brother Gundomar. Vadomar had wisely chosen to stay away from the dis-
astrous defeat at Strasbourg in 357 AD, in which other kings like Chnodomarius and his nephew Serapio participated. Instead, Vadomar sided with Constantius II, after that Julian had proclaimed himself Augustus in Paris in 356 AD. Here was a skilled political actor sitting on a fortified hilltop in Breisgau overlooking the Roman border, hoping to pick up the spoils after both Romans and rival Alamanni. Vadomar inevitably got into conflict with Julian in the late 350’s. Vadomar corresponded with both emperors, but Julian’s men intercepted his mail to Constantius II. Julian had Vadomar kidnapped in 361 AD. This deprived the Alamanni of an effective leader, and Constantius II of an important ally. One would think that Vadomar was rapidly disposed of. But instead Julian, without reproaches, merely deported Vadomar to Spain. Despite a reputation for being unreliable, Vadomar went on to advance as administrator in Roman service. Under Valens, Vadomar defeated the Sasanids in 371 AD. He was later appointed duke of Phoenicia and lived at least until 373 AD. But his later career always kept Vadomar far away from Breisgau. His son Vithicab succeeded him as king there. Valentinian I, who had no other means to control him, ordered Vithicab murdered in 368 AD.

When Valentinian I took power in 364 AD in Milano, the auspicious reception in York did not repeat itself. The host of congratulating Alamannic army officers was dismissed and sent home. Franks and Burgundians replaced them. War soon followed between the Emperor and his former officers and their Alamannic relatives. Valentinian I defeated the attacking Alamanni and celebrated his triumph in Trier. A Frankish general under Gratian would later defeat the disaffected Alamanni in Alsace in 378 AD (Martin 1997a:122, Taf. 119). Ammianus Marcellinus (XXXI, 10, 9) relates how Gratian himself would not hesitate to attack the Alamanni in their hilltop forts in Breisgau on the other side of the Rhine.

The Valentinians would continue the quarrels with another Germanic affinity, the Goths. Meanwhile, the Gothic kingdom in Dacia proved unable to defend itself against what must have been several smaller units of Huns. Goths fled in panic into the Roman Empire. The Gothic cavalry under King Fritigern that defeated the Romans under Emperor Valens outside Adrianople in 378 AD had learned from the Huns. The Goths were under competent leadership, whereas it is strongly argued by Ammianus Marcellinus (XXXI, 14) that Valens was an uneducated and ineffective leader. The estimated 40,000 men who fought under Valens are likely to have been ill-trained mass-conscripts. The Roman cavalry on the wings is supposed to have fled, leaving the infantry wide open to flanking and circling attacks (Macdowell 2001). The Goths killed the Emperor and continued their flight into the Balkans and towards the city of Rome.

### 4.5 The Roman Navy and Its Imitators

In this section it will be argued that the deposits of 4th century Roman coins near Nordic central place complexes and war booties in bogs are the result of Germanic naval interaction with the Roman Empire. Germanic intervention was to be expected at all times when the Roman Empire was in trouble. The Nordic finds are the spoils of scavengers in the periphery. They were willing to attack Romans and Germanic objects alike. Romans would often employ Germanic mercenaries, notably Batavii and Heruli, for amphibious operations (Ammianus Marcellinus XX, 2). Some veterans would return home again. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXXI,
10, 1) clearly regarded this as a serious threat to Roman security interests. The veterans would tell of the riches and the lack of defense along the Roman borders. Their relatives would seize the opportunity. This eventually caused a lot of rowdy interaction along the Rhine and the North Sea. This was something that Valentinian I, in particular, sought to control with a renewed emphasis on barrier defense. The construction followed of a *lites saxonum*, an anti-Saxon defense line of fortresses along the shores of Britain and Northern Gaul. As usual, the Romans hired the next-door burglars to guard the entrance to the treasure trove.

Large numbers of North Sea mercenaries were enrolled to guard the defense line in Southeastern Britain, Saxons in particular. They knew were to expect the enemy, sharing upbringing and ideology with the invaders. Imperialist powers sometime disappear from an area by handing over formerly subjugated territories to other, usually but not necessarily, indigenous or congruous ethnic groups. Examples are the Roman ceding of the Agri Decumates in c. 260 AD to the Alamanni, the ceding of Dacia to the Goths in 275 AD, and the unilateral Roman withdrawal from Britain in the early 5th century. The British handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997 is a contemporary case. The rationale behind these withdrawals varies. In the case of Rome, it seems that expediency in relation to internal friction (such as wars between rival Emperors) was usually the main reason. After the imperialist withdrawal, the formerly dependent or subordinated peoples seek to shape their own destiny by the creation of a new hierarchy. This is generally expressed by means of *imitatio imperii*. The display of symbols mimicking the former hegemonic ideology and rule now appears in a new context. The dependent ideology’s development is therefore to large extent dictated by the former hegemonic ideology, despite the fact that they may be rooted in very different ethnic cultures. It follows that the new hierarchy rarely is anything but a replacement of the old order by an often mediocre and therefore assertive cadre under a charismatic leader, doing his best to imitate the old masters. But the imitative practice on former imperial grounds can prove to be very dangerous for the imperialist power, as it is seen as the origin of all wealth and splendor.

From having initially been viewed as a feared enemy and necessary ally, the imperialist power may be reified as an object to become a hapless victim in the eyes of its imitative beholders. A new greed is born out of imitative behavior. Kleptocracy thrives on this; it can only survive if it proves flexible. In some situations, this means that the need for mobility becomes even more accentuated. It requires new forms of vehicles and transportation routes. The best case in point, as related by Procopius may be the exodus of the Vandals from Spain, followed by the rapid creation of the Vandal pirate kingdom in the Mediterranean. But the need for kleptocratic flexibility can also be seen in other aspects, one may be the capacity to uphold an important role in two different situations. The naval kleptocracies in the North seem to have been able to both work for Romans and against them whenever convenient. Literacy was part of the kleptocratic life style. Digraphic literacy may have been held in high regard in the late 4th century, given that Latin texts are predominant in the archaeological contexts of Fallward, Gotland, Gudme and Nydam. Some of the most important Early Runic texts in the context of naval kleptocracy show a distinct Latin influence (Braunmüller 2003).

Much of Northern Germany and Southern Scandinavia is a water world. Boating has often been a necessity, and has become part of the local life style. Tacitus argued that the 1st century *Suiones* were skilled with boats (*Germania* 44). The proximity to the open seas has in many areas been decisive for the attitude
towards of the cultural landscape. It could be both very profitable and dangerous to live in great splendor next to an unguarded coast. This living on the edge was made manifest in the burial tradition and in deposits of material objects of a specific ideological nature. It is accepted that the 3rd century weapons of those deposited in the Danish bogs sometimes came from Norway and Sweden (Ilkjaer 2000). The weapons obviously got there by boat. There is a long continuity of boat graves in the Slusegård cemetery on Bornholm. By the early 5th century, there are boat graves in Saxony. Renewed focus has since been aimed at the Norwegian boathouses (Myhre 1997, Grimm 2001). Jørgensen (2003) and Storgaard (2003) have taken a different turn. They do not regard the weapon deposits as a result of failed Nordic invasions on Jutland. Rather, they see the deposits as triumphal statements of the Danish aristocracy based in Zealand, Himlingøje. The argument is that the weapons were conquered elsewhere. One brought the weapons home, to sacrifice these in the bogs. Herschend (2003) has criticized this view for missing the point as to what the Roman conception of a triumph entailed. The bogs contain elements of war. They do not contain the conquered female sphere of the ‘other’, something the Romans were usually keen on displaying. Therefore, it thus seems better to go beyond an insular attempt to seek past grandeur for oneself, and attempt to construct a larger over view in which written sources and material objects may compliment each other.

The Franks, Frisians and Saxons were on the move in the late 3rd century and throughout the 4th century (Périn and Feffer 1997:45). And they no longer attempted to go on land alone. The Saxons raided the coasts of Britain in 367 AD. Eventually, the future emperor Theodosius restored order in Britain. The Saxons moved on. But their raids on Roman territory could sometimes end very badly. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVIII, 5) points out how Valentinian I intercepted a large Saxon raiding party in the coastal region of Northern Gaul, c. 369-372 AD. He had them surrounded but promised to be lenient. As a tribute, he demanded that all young men stay behind to enter the ranks of the Roman army. Here it is obvious that both Romans and Germanic affinities alike seem to agree on the existence of a variety of male categories as social constructions. The social condition calling for their construction is the war-like nature of patriarchy where age, combat-value and virility are important factors. The Saxons saw no other option but to agree, and the older men began their withdrawal. Then Valentinian I ordered a massacre of all the young Saxon men. His troops then intercepted the easier target of the older Saxon men, and killed them too. Even Ammianus is compelled to call this ‘a treacherous act’, although he goes on argue that Valentinian I was both shrewd and justified in his behavior. Indeed, he later points out this episode as one of Valentinian’s I major victories. But this single feat of dubious ethical nature could not stop the inevitable collapse of the Roman frontier along the North Sea shores. Naval central places like Gudme would engage in warfare, and a great number of Germanic people along the North Sea shore were set in motion. Franks would settle the coast of Gaul as far as Brittany. Angles, Jutes and Saxons would settle Britain in the late 4th and early 5th centuries.

The organization behind naval voyages appears on 5th century picture stones on Gotland (Lamm and Nylén 1976), but also in the Mälar Valley (Ahlberg 1978). The 5th century picture stones have been placed in the middle of graves (Nerman 1935). The imagery depicts the hierarchical organization of naval warfare. One man looks forward, guiding the others who row with their backs facing the goal. Their eyes are on their leader. In this, the 5th century iconography differs from
later Viking Age picture stones where the entire boat crew looks forward. The pine tree boat from Nydam sported a wooden back support with two suns or compass roses on it, very much like those on the Gotlandic picture stones (Rieck 2003, Nylén and Lamm 1976). The back support probably belonged to the steersman or captain, facing the rowers. It may well be that the Gotlandic picture stone graves are those of former captains or pilots. The Gotlanders may have been naval mercenaries both within the Baltic and the North Sea. Employers need not have been Romans alone. Gotlanders were probably willing to freight any well-paying army to any destination desired, as long as the price was right. This practice brought pride and prestige, expressed in the iconography of the burial monuments.

4.5.1 Gudme

Gudme lies on the east coast of Funen, Denmark. Some 500,000 sqm of dwelling area has been excavated here (Randsborg and Thrane 1993). The results show continuous use of various areas from c. 200-550 AD, including a seasonal market on the shoreline in Lundeborg. There is an adjacent cemetery on Møllegårdsmarken with some 3,300 graves from c. 100-425 AD. Then, there is a change in the burial rite. Human remains are no longer found in the archaeological context after this point. Much can be said about the Gudme area and its role as a kleptocratic center. Three naval barriers on Funen, Jutland and Zealand have all been dendrochronologically dated to the 4th century (Daly 2001). The first barrier, Jungshoved Nor, has been dated to just after 337 AD, the year Constantine died. Gudme is likely to have been in a close relationship with those who constructed a naval barrier in Nakkebølle on southern Funen, dated to c. 370 AD. The barrier must have been constructed in response to a very real naval threat posed not against Gudme itself, but against the inland of Funen (Nørgård Jørgensen 2001: 84). People who know naval defense probably understand naval offense, too. The latter form of warfare requires a lot of material. The substantial amount of cannabis that was cultivated in Gudme was probably used for hemp ropes on ships, much like the ones found in Nydam (Thrane 1993).

Hundreds of Roman Iron Age and Migration Period texts in three scripts have been found around Gudme. The vast majority of these are Latin, on gold and silver coins. There is one runic inscription on iron (a highly corrosive material), found in the 4th century male cremation grave Møllegårdsmarken 2118, and 13 runic gold bracteates (Thrane 1998:223). On one bracteate is part of a Futhark, *futar*. It is often argued that a substantial part of all Early Runic bracteates were manufactured in Gudme. This must have been a major distribution center for runic bracteates. Recent bracteate finds in Sievern on the Weser estuary in Germany suggests a link between the rulers of Gudme and other hegemonic primary affinities along the North Sea coast.

The absence of Greek texts in Gudme is conspicuous. The closest Greek textual object to Gudme is quite sensational. It was found in an extremely rich female grave in Årslev from period C3, some 20 km northwest of Gudme (Storgaard 1990, 1994). It is a rock crystal ball with a palindrome spell on it: ABAANA@ANAABA. This may be a gematrical sequence of numbers (1 2 1 1 50 1 9 1 50 1 1 2 1) and not meant to be read as phonetic text. Still, it is most doubtful whether its Gnostic meaning was understood in Årslev at all. Be that as it may, the Årslev grave, along with the near by Brangstrup hoard, is indicative of
important contacts between the dominant families of Funen and the Goths in Southeastern Europe.

The recently discovered gold hoard from Boltinggård on Funen contained 172.8 g of gold (Henriksen and Horsnæs 2005). Some 15 coins were found of which the majority were struck for Constantine I. Six of the coins had been struck in 335-336 AD, providing a very distinct terminus post quem, which dates the hoard to the time for the construction of the sea barrier at Jungshoved Nor. A fragment of a Kolbenarmring weighed some 41.57 g. Its estimated weight original would have been 80-85 g. The ring had a punctuated Latin inscription: P-III. This could be interpreted as a pondo tres, that is three out of twelve ounces that make up the Roman libra. This would correspond well with the estimated weight of the ring. It also shows that Latin numerical literacy was very much present on Funen in the 4th century.

In total, some 9,000 g gold has been found in the Gudme area alone. This puts Gudme in third rank after Timboholm (9,500 g) and Tureholm (c. 12,500 g). Four golden ring sword knobs belong to the finds. The owners of gold in Gudme claimed considerable military leadership. Gudme has an unusual amount of Roman coin deposits from the second half of the 4th century. Out of some 607 Roman coins found in Lundeborg I-II and Gudme I-IV, 322 coins date to 340-370 AD (Kromann 1994:65). This puts Gudme in the same category as Jutland and the southernmost parts of Scandinavia where coin hoards antedate those of Bornholm, Gotland, Öland and the Mälar valley (Herschend 1991).

It has been asked as to why Gudme had access to such considerable amounts of late 4th century Roman gold and coinage. The best explanation is that despite the naval threat at home, men from Gudme actively participated in overseas extortion campaigns and warfare. It is evident that they were well paid. Of particular interest is a hoard from Gudme III. It is composed of solidi minted for Constans, Constantius II, and the Frankish usurper Magnentius in 341-353 AD. It must have been composed after the battle of Mura in 351 AD, perhaps in the aftermath of the Alemannic war 355-357 AD and the Frankish war 357-359 AD. Bursche (2002:73) connects this Gudme hoard with other finds from the lower Elbe and Lower Saxony. He sees them as evidence for participation on the side of Magnentius against Constantius II. The opposite seems more likely given the presence of Imperial medallions in Allesø, Fakse, Gudme and Trunderup (Bursche 2001:84).

During the late 350’s, Emperor Julian employed large-scale naval warfare on several occasions. Ammianus Marcellinus (XX, 2) relates how Julian sent his Gothic general Lupicinus to cross the Channel at Boulogne to fight off the threat from the Picts and Scots against Roman Britain in 359 AD. But Julian only dispatched the most lightly armed auxiliaries, notably the Aeruli and Batavii. These must have been selected for their experience with boats. By constructing a new large fleet on the Old Rhine estuary and installing the Frankish tribe on the island of Toxandria, Julian also changed the outcome of the Alemannic war. His navy relieved the besieged Roman cities on the Rhine and caught the Alemannic invaders on the wrong side of the Rhine inside Gaul. To judge from the coin hoards, the Gudme affinity participated and emerged unscathed from these wars of the mid 4th century. It is most likely that it went on to participate in the wars between Romans and Goths. A hoard from Gudme contained 265 siliquae, silver coins struck for the ill-fated Emperor Valens who died at the battle of Adrianople in 378 AD. After that, the power of Gudme may have waned. Instead, one must look at the bogs
of Vimose and Kragehul where the weapons of runic literati, including an erilaR, were sacrificed.

4.5.2 Nydam

Nydam lies on the western shore of Jutland, Denmark. Its importance as a sacrificial deposit has been known since the Christian Engelhardt’s excavations in the late 18th century. In 1989-1999, the Nydam project excavated some 600 sqm (Rieck 2003). This yielded some 15,000 finds. Rather than a slavish copy of a Roman triumph with all its civilian attributes, the Nydam sacrifices represent a developing Germanic notion of what war stands for, what objects are representative in such a Darstellung. It is obvious that ships were most important in this context. Today, one can establish that the sacrifices belong six different periods, including at least three ships.

The first ship was the largest, measuring more than 24 meters from stern to bow. It was made of oak, dendrodated to 190 AD. It was vandalized and chopped to pieces prior to the deposit. Given a use period of the boat, the deposit is likely to have occurred c. 220-240 AD. This was a time of unrest in the western part of the Roman Empire. The period 217-240 AD saw no less than 19 Emperors and usurpers come and go. But the wars extracted a heavy toll in Germania Libera as well, especially Maximinus Thrax (235-238 AD) carried out long raids on the other side of the Rhine.

The second Nydam ship was made of pine, measuring some 18.8m from stern to bow. Aboard was a shield, dendrodated to 296 AD. This puts the deposition date to c. 300-320 AD, that is, at the time for the dissolution of the Tetrachy and the ascension of Constantine I. The third ship is known as the Nydam ship. Made of oak, it measured 23.7 m. It has been dendrodated to 310-320 AD. This suggests that it was deposited c. 340-360. Again, this was a time of unrest in the Roman Empire with civil wars between Constantine Emperors, usurpations, and several invasions by the Alemanni and the Franks.

The fourth Nydam deposit, c. 350-380, includes a number of Bronze fibulae. This was a time of concentrated war against Roman enemies, notably the Alemanni and the Goths. Most of the later part of this period, Rome was ruled by the competent but ruthless Valentinian I in the West and his infamous brother Valens in the East. The fifth sacrifice dates to c. 380-420, including objects in the Sösdala style. Then the sacrifices around the ships are discontinued.

4.5.3 Fallward

Fallward lies near Wremen on the North Sea shore in Saxony, Germany, a few kilometers south of the excavated settlement of Feddersen Wierde. At Fallward, there was a cemetery consisting of mostly cremation urns. Further excavations yielded some inhumation graves (Schön 1995). One of these turned out to be a boat grave with a wooden cover in the shape of a tiled roof. Next to the western end of the covered boat was a 65 cm tall throne, made of an oak tree trunk. It has been dendrodated to 431 AD. It was neatly decorated in the Roman army style known as Militärkerbschnitt. This is a unique find for one simple reason. Thrones are generally inherited or usurped, not buried. Even an outside conqueror of a
Kingdom would like to use a throne as a tool for legitimacy (The Scots stone throne and the Ashanti gold stool are examples conquered by the English). This leads to the conclusion that the man in the boat was the last leading member of his primary affinity, and that his selective affinity disbanded with his own death. Something unexpected had happened in the line of succession.

To the throne belonged a footstool; only it was placed inside the boat as a substitute for the throne. Another female inhumation grave revealed more Roman style furniture: low tables, stools, and caskets. On the edge of the footstool were two early runic inscriptions, separated by an inch or so: ksamella and lguska/g652i. Underneath was a carving depicting a hound jumping the back of a red deer stag, linking the picture to the latter inscription. The Fallward inscription shows considerable Latin influence not only in the choice of words but also in its orthography. ksamella is nothing but a direct loan of the Latin word scamella which means footstool (Braunmüller 2003). The use of intervocalic ll is previously unattested in the Early Runic corpus. But intervocalic ll is quite common in Latin.

4.6 The late 4th century Roman Reaction – A Return to Rhetoric and Space

In this chapter it will be argued that Diocletian’s emphasis on fixed rules in text, of linear order, met with some disapproval amongst Romans. There has been much research on Roman intellectual history and educational institutions in Gaul (Riché 1962, 1995, Geary 1988, Banniard 1989, Werner 1998). This research has revealed a remarkable continuity, indicating the strength and resilience of certain Roman ideological structures. Roman intellectuals were capable of change if necessary, but they still upheld a rigid tradition of knowledge production. By comparison, relatively little is known of the education of the increasingly Germanic officer corps (Bachrach 1995). Even less is certain about the relationship between this group and the traditional Roman grammar schools, especially those outside Gaul that failed to survive.

The ascent of the literate Alemannic officers within the Roman state apparatus was displeasing to the traditional Roman elite. Besides becoming textual entities on portable objects, Germanic affinities could now place other catchy slogans in Latin text on their belongings. A typical Roman Iron Age example of a Latin text on a portable object would be Útere felix, ‘Use happily!’ During the later Merovingian Period, Latin texts on strap ends in Germanic burial contexts become even more catchy: Gaudeat quem ere, qui cinceSer(it,) ‘Delight at the peace shall the one who straps this on!’ (Donzdorf, grave 75); Q(u) (a)vet me mirare. Qui non aves tale quere quere que, ‘Who owns me shall marvel at me. Who does not, seek to procure one like me!’ (Nördlingen) (Düwel 1997:495-497). These texts were generally visible (Düwel 1995, 1997:498).

It would seem that such inane public displays of Latin literacy would probably have failed to impress the Roman senatorial class. But there would come a time when leaders of Germanic affinities would learn how to acquire senatorial lands simply by means of transferring written documents. New measures were needed to keep them at bay. All Germanic ethnic affinities had oral cultures prior to the contacts with the literate Roman civilization. As has been repeatedly argued above, some Germanic elective affinities are likely to have encountered literacy during the inevitable acquaintance with the Roman army. The Romans personified Germanic ethnic affinities in imagery and text on portable objects.
As the two phenomena of literacy and military skills became more frequent within some selective Germanic affinities, there was a noticeable reaction within the Roman intellectual elite. This entailed a movement away from text towards orality, and from the linear to the spatial. Some Germanic affinities would try to fit in this new development only to get severely disappointed. They were not meant to be benefactors from the relationship with the Roman Empire. Yet some people do not give up easily. A number of Germanic kleptocrats sent their offspring to train Roman rhetoric in Latin grammar schools. If the Romans turned back to orality, so would Germanic people. Only, it would take some time, just as with literacy.

4.6.1 The Intellectuals of the Late Roman Empire

The Roman intellectuals of the 4th and 5th centuries were not predominantly writers but rather highly acclaimed oral talents: poets, preachers and lawyers. To appear educated was to be able to present one’s case in a standup act. Inside an imperial aula, the senatorial class could still outperform men like Crocus in front of the emperor. The standup intellectuals came from the traditional state-funded Roman grammar schools and ignored foreign traditions such as the academy in Athens or the thinkers of 4th century Alexandria. The Roman intellectual tradition was that of humanitas, the raising of men. And despite everything, there was an amazing continuity in this practice, at least in Gaul (Riché 1995). When the Roman state disappeared in the 470’s, the grammar schools continued to be run the Roman municipalities, and eventually, the Church. There was a slip in the finer points of grammar during the 6th and 7th centuries, showing the importance of the spoken language over text.

Merovingian Period writers such as Gregory of Tours wrote as they spoke, and would on occasion apologize for their lack of style (Gesta Francorum V, 6). This would soon pick up again – proof of the strong resilience of the senatorial class, which outlasted the various kleptocratic Germanic dynasties and ethnic affinities. Decimus Magnus Ausonius (c. 310-394 AD) became a teacher in 337 AD. In 367 AD, Valentinian I asked him to become a tutor to Gratian. Later he served as governor of Gaul, residing in Trier. After Valentinian’s I death in 375 AD, he became one of Gratian’s chief advisors. The usurper Magnus Maximus dismissed him in 384 AD. During his office tenure, Ausonius composed Mosella, a poem of 483 lines of hexameter praising the heritage and beauty of the Mosel Valley surrounding Trier. One would think that there were more important matters to take care of so close to the border, considering that Trier would repeatedly come under attack a few years later. But Ausonius was part of the imperial propaganda machine and his poem became widespread. Upon his retirement, Ausonius returned to his lands near Bordeaux. Another grammatician and former magister scrinorum, Eugenius, would reach even farther. He was proclaimed Western emperor by the Frankish commander in chief Arbogastes in 392 AD, but was caught and killed by the Eastern emperor Theodosius’ troops on the Wippach River in 394 AD.

A well-versed and eloquent Roman aristocrat garbed as the representative of God and Law would often prove able to subjugate a plundering Germanic retinue, at least temporarily. A charismatic Church leader and former Roman general, St. Germain of Auxerre (c. 380-448 AD) would at the behest of his parish approach
Germanic warlords in person. He convinced them to lower levies and taxes (Geary 1988). The skills and public persona of St. Germain clearly made an impression on Germanic peoples. Still having more than one foot in the Germanic oral tradition, the upper echelons of Germanic selective affinities were quick to catch on the new Roman trend and sent their sons to train in that new fashionable Roman rhetoric. Those who were not able to do so, sought to surround themselves with Roman experts who could benefit from their privileged situation and enter the highest order of selective affinities. But the barbarians also used the Roman scholars for other purposes. The royal Gothic budget was in the hands of Latin grammaticians. Flavius Magnus Cassidorius Senator (c. 490-583 AD) served at the court of Theoderic in Ravenna combining statesmanship with panegyric writing. Of Syrian ancestry, his ancestors had fought the Vandals in Africa and served both under Valentinian III and Aëtius. Yet, Cassiodorus owed his patrician rank to a barbarian. It was Theoderic, not the Emperor, who had ennobled his father. Cassiodorus was significant in that he upon his retirement made a concentrated effort to produce text in a monastery, a closed space belonging to a new form of selective affinity of learned Christianity.

The intellectual proponents of Roman imperialist ideology would have to seek continued exclusive dominance in a specific sphere, in a new world they now had to share with so many others who were dissimilar to themselves. They did so by reentering the realms of the oral and spiritual. The most selective affinity of them all, the senatorial class moved away from text and literacy on the hand and from military matters on the other. This may appear as an irrational move during such a troubled time, but it would work out for the best of interest of the selective affinity. The Roman nobility eventually transformed itself into the Christian clergy. Prelates of senatorial descent (e.g. Gregory of Tours) became supreme messengers between the spiritual and worldly realms of the afterlife, the present and the future. They were rulers of sacred spaces such as churches and monasteries, which were to replace the imperial aulas. Germanic hall buildings would always represent poor substitutes in the eyes of Roman intellectuals.

The Church had universal aspirations. Its spaces were not merely about assimilating Germanic religion into Roman deities and civic cults. Its creed and mores applied to all. Besides the concentrated political effort on landholding in larger self-sufficient estates further away from the economic pitfalls of urban centers, a new focus of the senatorial class was on legal and rhetorical mastery, and leadership within the Church. This focus on the spoken Latin language meant that previously important discourses, mainly in Greek language, such as philosophy, became less urgent and eventually of diminutive significance (Riché 1995:12). Idealism, logic and sophism were considered superfluous matters. This was the good old oratory discourse of Quintilianus (c. 35-95 AD), not the worldview of Plotinus (204-270 AD).
5 The Emergence of a Germanic Kleptocracy

The last chapter sought to show how Germanic affinities entered the echelons of Roman executive military power. This chapter seeks to understand the political system that emerged after the failed reforms of the Tetrarchy. It will be argued that Germanic attempts at continuous statebuilding were bleak imitations of what Germanic peoples saw in Rome. An uneven continuity in knowledge production followed, as other matters were perceived as being more urgent. Kleptocracy initially suffers from an overload of knowledge production. At its onset, it has all the necessary intellectual ingredients to reproduce a fairly complicated state apparatus. But this is not considered a top priority in relation to the harsh economic and political realities. Given the clumsy approach to economic development, knowledge production inevitably suffers. This means that literacy becomes less important when the economic surplus to support such a luxury disappears. This chapter is divided into sections that discuss: 1) the Roman roots of Germanic kleptocracy; 2) how society suffers a regression from this criminal social order; 3) how Germanic literates sought to express themselves in a kleptocratic technolect. Finally, there will be a comparison of Modern Period Africa to the Germanic kleptocracy.

5.1 The Roman Roots of Germanic Kleptocracy

By the mid 4th century, something had happened to the Roman Empire. There was no turning back to the old form of the Tetrarchy. Scholars have generally labeled the new era of government as the Christian Dominate. Yet, this is only true description of the highest echelon of power. In Western Europe, the Tetrarchy was to be replaced with a new form of social hierarchy, namely kleptocracy. Germanic kleptocracy was a curious blend of Roman imperialism and Germanic *imitatio imperii*. Its roots lay in the Roman policies of the late 2nd and 3rd centuries, and the subsequent Germanic response. The short-lived Gallic kingdom and the subsequent reforms of Gallienus, Aurelianus, Probus, and Diocletian had served to make way for this development. Already by the mid 4th century, military usurpers were of Germanic descent. There was no reason to think that a Germanic officer was incapable of becoming a successful Roman emperor. Germanic kleptocracy was to emerge in full bloom during the late 4th and 5th centuries. Especially in the late 5th century, Germanic retinues could expect rich rewards from threats of violence against Roman civilians.

A major opponent of most things Germanic, Valentinian I had once banned intermarriage between Germanic soldiers and Roman women. This meant little or nothing once he was gone. As stated many times earlier, genes were not a decisive factor in the dissolution of the Roman Empire. Rather, ideological and cultural affinities were. A case in point, Bauto was a Frank who served as *magister militum* under Gratian in the 380’s AD. He reached the rank of consul in 385 AD. Bauto had a daughter named Aelia Eudoxia. She would later marry the Eastern Emperor Arcadius. She also received the rare title *Augusta*. Aelia Eudoxia bore Arcadius five children, including the future Emperor Theodosius II, before dying in childbed in 402 AD. In 396 AD, the West Roman *magister militum*, a Vandal named Stilicho, married the sister of the Western Emperor Honorius. The descen-
dants of Bauto would form an imperial dynasty in the 5th century, marrying the Western Emperors Valentinian III and Anthemius. Anthemius’ daughter later married Ricimer, an Ostrogothic warlord. Despite that the socioeconomic factors upholding the two Empires were vastly different, dynastic links of Germanic origin forged a symbolic nexus between the two. Everybody was game regardless of his or her ethnicity. A form of selective universalism had momentarily entered the highest echelons of power.

Although generally superior to any other military force, the Roman legions and their auxiliaries were no longer omnipotent. Germanic war leaders acting against Roman interests were not necessarily less educated than their Roman counterparts. Instead, leading Roman officers were of Germanic descent. Ethnic affinities had come to mean less within Germanic ideology. Brothers were indeed fighting brothers. It was better to marry the daughter of the Emperor and rule the Empire for him than to associate with one’s preliterate kith and kin. The rare punitive expeditions into Germanic territory grew more seldom after a number of setbacks and ambushes in the 380’s AD. The Roman officer corps under men like Bauto knew that it was dangerous and foolish to venture back whence they had come from. War was increasingly carried out on Roman territory only. This was a somewhat more unfamiliar territory for the invaders. They were quick to learn, though. In particular, the multi-dimensional aspects of urban warfare no longer constituted a problem for the invaders. Urban fortifications were soon within reach of the Germanic invaders, and thus ultimately, the city of Rome. During the Alemannic wars (355-357 AD) towns like Arles, Mainz, Strasbourg, and Tournai were stormed and sacked. In 410 AD, the turn had come to the city of Rome itself. Then followed a brief period of Hunnish domination, which temporarily curtailed and subordinated the Germanic kleptocrats, notably the aristocracy of the Gepids and the Ostrogoths. When the Huns were gone, the Germanic kleptocrats could set about to transform their power towards romanitas and, eventually, Christianity.

The West Roman administrators who survived for a longer period in the late 5th century AD were often adept in the customs of the barbarians, and knew how to manipulate them towards romanitas. Some had like Aetius lived as hostages in an aristocratic barbarian milieu. There were a number of effective West Roman administrators and generals on a local level, e.g. Ambrosius Aurelianus (c. 437-480 AD?) in Britain, Aegidius (456/457-464/465 AD), Paulus (d. 469 AD), and Syagrius (464/465-486/487 AD) in Northern Gaul. There was also an isolated military unit in Brittany, with all the trappings of romanitas. But these actors eventually became all too isolated from the Eastern Empire. They and their fiefs were brought down one after the other. Following a defeat against the Franks, Syagrius fled to the Goths. The Goths delivered him to the Franks, and Syagrius was murdered by Clovis. The most successful Roman with first hand knowledge of barbarian ideology, Aëtius, was murdered in 454 AD by the Western emperor Valentinian III.

It is clear that some Romans simply gave up their pretensions of being Roman kleptocrats and adapted Germanic names and dress (Halsall 1992). Yet this was a rather dwindling number compared to the barbarians wanting to become Romans or go beyond romanitas. The point is that the Roman administrators who became Germanic kleptocrats assimilated into a powerful affinity with growing powers, not the other way around. It is undeniable that the inclusion into the Early Medieval kleptocracy in the West was by and large a Germanic affaire. The Romans were already there. An important lesson taught by the Roman Empire to its literate
Germanic employees was that powerful administrators could enrich themselves by means of their position within the repressive state apparatus. Might made right. Even Nordic retinues could now exercise a considerable influence on the Continent. They would embark on military expeditions and return home, loaded with booty. The impressions and booty gathered on these expeditions gave the foundation to a reorganization of Scandinavian society from minor autonomous units to early kingdoms.

5.2 Kleptocracy – The Regression of Society under a Criminal Social Order

There have been earlier attempts to define the socioeconomic order of the Migration Period by the term ‘Plünderungsökonomie’ (cf. Wenskus 1961, Steuer 1982, 1997b). While this a correct description of an economic situation, it does not trace the knowledge production that ultimately caused the situation. Nor does it provide an explanation towards the falling trend of monetary value in the market periphery. Kleptocracy does not arise out of a vacuum – it is a socioeconomic structure that has an origin in the hegemonic ideology of an imperialist state. This ideology is expressed linguistically in a technolect adapted to fit a given situation. The technolect is summarized in a doctrine, a simplified mode of behavior. The doctrine is then passed on by means of education and imitation onto a dependent territory. It gives rise to a different, but equally dependent ideology. Kleptocratic behavior is reproduced and passed on by means of a professional practice of an even more crude imitative nature. Kleptocrats have been taught and trained to behave in a certain way, usually in an imperialist repressive state apparatus dedicated to the exploitation of a distant geographic area. The kleptocratic ideology may often claim to be an independent creation but has its roots in the former hegemonic ideology. This is something it actively seeks to deny. It looks back to the past while rejecting it.

The definition of Germanic kleptocracy in the North does to some degree dovetail the Continental concept of the martial society, c. 400-800 AD (Højrup 1995, James 1997, Nørgård Jørgensen 1999: 174). In particular, Højlund’s definition of virtual warfare in the martial society is important. That is to say that there is always war going on, even if it is never carried out in practice. The threat of an attack or a raid always looms above like the sword of Damocles. Threats and counter-threats are necessary to keep the inevitable conflict at bay for some time. But the definition of the martial society does not take a number of economic and ideological considerations into account, in particular the idea that deliberate destruction serves to aggrandize the intact. Therefore, it may give an exaggerated image of just how militarized society was. There were mass levies on occasion. But the majority of all welfare in the North following the Migration Period is likely to have been small-scale with specific targets and clearly stated goals, such as the destruction of a single hall building or the murder of a single family. Nørgård-Jørgensen (1999: 164) draws the conclusion that similarities in Nordic weapon graves is indicative of a supraregional military organization. I believe that this is mistaken. Rather, the omnipresence of conflict in the Baltic caused people to draw similar conclusions in regard to military tactics. This is a case of contextual contemporarity. Battles were no longer fought at a battalion level as once on the Continent, but rather on platoon and squad levels. This meant that an emphasis was placed on a larger number of offensive weapons for a few, rather than mass
armament. Thus one finds the addition of the seax to a warrior who already carried lance, shield and spatha in weapon graves.

The political system of kleptocracy is not a perpetuum mobile. It falls on its own grip. The question is rather what replaces it. Very few kleptocracies survive the death of a first generation charismatic leader at its forefront (Weber 1968, Sylla 1986). In the worst-case scenarios, this may lead to the eradication of an entire elective affinity. This is why ephemeral Germanic peoples and kingdoms come and go in the annals of history. Continuity therefore represents an incredible achievement. Very few Germanic kingdoms were capable of perpetuating themselves for more than a couple of generations. The ones that did were both more preliterate and peripheral in their social structure than more evolved kleptocracies, or they were even more advanced and capable of absorbing sufficient parts of the Roman economic base along with remains of the Roman state apparatus. The latter case scenario does involve considerable proximity to Rome and the intact parts of the Roman market. In the latter case, literacy would also play a greater role supporting the rest of the superstructure.

In a benevolent interpretation, kleptocracy works as a form of redistribution system (Hedeager 1991: 204). It needs something to live off and pass on to others. In general, a kleptocracy has to acquire and then redistribute manufactured goods or at least something refined. This means that it is inextricably tied to an original imperialist economy where such goods are mass-produced as a result of extraction and exploitation of underdeveloped areas. Once a kleptocracy is unable to feed on the surplus of an imperialist economy, the raison d'être of the former disappears. In other words, a kleptocracy can only exist on the fringe of an imperialist economy. Once it becomes too distant from the imperialist economy or gets too close it will inevitably dissolve. Worse, if the imperialist economy were to collapse, geographic distance would matter little.

Due to the changing nature of imperialist economies, single kleptocracies cannot exist as such forever. Nor is it generally the wish of kleptocrats to continue within a social hierarchy unchanged for many generations. There is a need to move away from imitation, towards a translatio imperii, in which the old Empire is substituted by its successors. A frequent first step away from the general extortion campaigns is the resort to some form of manufacture for redistribution purposes, yet still along the lines of the old reward system. In most cases, the first form of manufacture consists of the reshaping of refined metals, procured by means of external appropriation. These are transformed into new status objects. The problem for the Germanic kleptocracies was that nearly all metal manufacture, with the exception of iron ore export from Northern Sweden, was dependent on scrap metal. Germanic people did not have a lot of scrap metal at hand. It had to be acquired from Roman civilization.

Manufacture would become established wherever there were relatively permanent kleptocratic settlements. Gudme saw the production of vast quantities of bracteates. In Sorte Muld on Bornholm, there was a vast production of figural gold foils. On Helgö, manufacture focused on clasp buttons and brooches. Helgö style clasps became an important feature in Finland as well (Schaumann-Lönnquist 1991). An inland central place combining manufacture and redistribution, Uppåkra produced a variety of objects. Facing the limes were a number of 4th century Alemannic hilltop settlements (Steuer 1997a). On Breisgau hilltops such as the Zähringer Burgberg, Alemannic chieftains gathered scrap metal to initialize a domestic manufacture. There was some emphasis on recasting bronze utensils
such as Vestland kettles into Roman style army belts (Hoeper et al. 2001). The rulers of Runde Berg am Urach produced digitated brooches, ceasing its production after having been raided sometime around 500 AD (Koch 1997a).

A key issue in the process of kleptocratic transformation is that of the size of the peripheral market and the level of competition. Marxist economic concepts such as the tendency of the falling profit ratio under capitalism generally apply to an expanding market (Dencik, Herlitz and Lundevall 1969: 149-154). There, the increased demand causes overproduction and thus a loss in profit. This causes the need to conquer more market shares. Not so in kleptocracy. Here, one has the ability to regulate the market supply by making the output smaller, especially in the periphery of the total market. This is done by physically eliminating market distributors and by removing their supply from the market by force. The inflation of the gold value in an increasingly isolated periphery can only be temporarily halted by means of increased violence. One steals the gold of others after one has killed them. Or, the threat of theft and plunder causes gold owners to bury their gold hoards, removing themselves from the market. A case in point are the many precious metal objects belonging to a certain Aurelius Ursicinus and the 15,000 coins in the Hoxne hoard from 407-408 AD, cf. Webster 2001. If the economy fails to recover in the next generations, the hoards are forgotten for good. This causes gold to become scarce. Value will thus have to be measured differently. Marxist economic theorists have hitherto failed to account for non-progressive economic behavior, relying on a deterministic faith that things will always improve in revolutionary leaps. This is because Marxist economics attribute far too much agency to the forces of production rather than to human action itself. Destructive and counter-productive behavior, that is plain irrationality and stupidity, is just as viable an option as economic rationalism and development. The present socioeconomic order may just as well collapse one day, and one will have to return to the barter society and mere subsistence agriculture.

Steuer (1982: 54, 1997b) has argued that Germanic elites could finance their rule by means of conquering and taxation. This may well be the case in Gaul or other heavily Romanized areas of the Continent. One would expect a great deal of administrative continuity from Roman times. But kleptocracy has an unsophisticated approach to business. It is extremely doubtful that Nordic kleptocrats were able to carry out taxation or hold on to conquered areas in order to exploit them. The contrary seems a lot more likely. The immediate logic thus separates the Continent from the North. Based on the research presented by Wicker (1994) one could open up for a hypothetical scenario: If a given Nordic kleptocratic bracteate distribution center X is under competition from a rival Y, this means that the products redistributed by X may become less valuable. The price demanded for an X bracteate may appear unreasonable in relation to that of Y. The best remedy for X is to attack Y, destroying Y’s means of production. As a result, the supply of Y bracteates decreases, eventually leaving only a small supply of X bracteates, which have increased in value. Import channels are subsequently restricted to only the strongest kleptocratic centers capable of both offensive and defensive warfare. The list of sacked manufacturing places is long. It includes Helgö and Uppåkra, but also Runder Berg am Urach in Alemania. Abandoned hoards, destroyed luxury weapons, and glass shards allover hall building floors give testimony to sudden, wanton destruction. With only a small amount of domestic manufacture to redistribute, even less imported luxury goods will trickle into the hands of the last standing kleptocrats.
The term kleptocracy is quite applicable to the part of the late Migration Period hierarchy that actively organized extortion campaigns and warfare. Germanic aristocrats had been trained to rule by the Roman Empire and were then on their own, especially in the late 5th century. The unharnessed development of the Nordic kleptocracies caused inflation at first. This caused hoarding of monetary capital. Then gold became very scarce, forcing a return to ground rent economy. That the majority of the Germanic warlords at the time never amounted to anything more than kleptocrats is quite evident in what followed at home after the overseas extortion. What was brought back was easily spent. There was no larger trickle down effect in society from the imported splendors. This was followed by violence and further cultural isolation until the surviving kleptocrats had to give up the idea of external appropriation altogether and return to the exploitation of ground rent.

An inevitable third step after the scrap metal resources have been exhausted, is a renewed focus on the land. This implies moving down from hilltops or away from shorelines towards more arable land. It means establishing central farmsteads that can tax its surroundings to support a continuous lavish lifestyle. These central farmsteads do not have to be on arable lands; the point is that they can control the surrounding farms. Examples of such new kleptocratic farmsteads are Valsgärde in Sweden and Tissø in Denmark, which both lie on lands that could not have supported the lifestyle of its denizens. The last kleptocratic step was carried out with an immense amount of labor, the primary resource obtained by means of coercion. New settlements such as Vendel and a new agrarian structure followed as a result (Seiler 2001). The dissolution of Migration Period kleptocracy into an agrarian expansion during the Vendel Period raised the means for the Viking Period. Yet, at least three decades must be described as quite a haul in an era of cultural depression. The changing economy had no material surplus to feed a secondary ideological spin-off such as runic literacy.

5.3 Symbols of Germanic Kleptocracy – Supraregional or Local?

In the previous chapters, I have sought to show that the creation of a literate Germanic kleptocracy was a very slow process. To ensure ideological continuity among the few Germanic literates one needed steady access to Roman monetary capital. An expansion of the pool of literates would thus require a massive amount of capital, even if this was not perceived as an explicit need among Germanic affinities. But to get at such amounts, extraordinary measures were needed. One had to go to war, and one needed to convince many non-literate to fight the war. An early indication of this is the runic KJ Pietrosa gold ring that may date to the late 3rd or 4th century. It originally weighed 676.1 g. This roughly corresponds to two large Roman lbs (2 x 337.8 g). The runic inscription on it reads *gutanio wi hailag*. This is important, as the gold ring carries a text that names a Germanic ethnic affinity, the Goths, and two abstract ideological concepts, *wi* and *hailag*. It appears unlikely that all Goths enjoyed the gold or the text. This gold ring was an exclusive piece of property, it gave legitimacy to a small literate affinity’s hegemony over a vast preliterate ethnic affinity on the move across the Continent. Other Germanic affinities would soon follow suit. They would get their hands on the Roman gold by any means necessary.
The real breakthrough for the kleptocracy in the Mälar Valley appears to have been later, during the 5th century. There is a new cluster of ideological attributes illustrated by the runic picture stone KJ 99 Möjbro: crested cavalry helmets, aristocratic horse keeping, and hunting with dogs. The origin of the Nordic crested helmet, and much more besides point to the 5th century when Swedish retinues were successful military entrepreneurs in Southeastern Europe. The Roman style attributes become more numerous in the early boat graves in Valsgärde and Vendel. By contrast, the Continental Spangenhelme are absent in the archaeological context of the Vendel Period Mälar Valley. There are only two fragmentary 5th century Spangenhelme known from Sweden. One belongs to a deposit in Tuna, Väte Parish, Gotland (SHM 3740). The other from Broåsen, Grimeton Parish, Halland (SHM 14843), may be part of a larger arms deposit.

It must be noted that the local Nordic versions of Germanic kleptocracy appear to have been in place during the middle of the Migration Period, around 450 AD. At this time, affinities on Öland were capable of constructing a Roman style fortress with a drop gate (Herschend 1985). Note that this was prior to the ascent of the Merovingian Kingdom, which during the late 5th century merely constituted one among many Frankish affinities.

Recent arcaeological research has attributed much agency to the Merovingian Kingdoms, but at a closer look, this seems a premature conclusion given the small sphere of Merovingian influence. The Merovingians were in control of parts of the old Roman provinces Belgica Prima, Belgica Secunda, Germania Prima, and Germania Secunda (Dierkens and Périn 2003). The leading Merovingians (Chlodio (44?-4??), Merovech (4??-4??), Childeric (45?-481/482 AD), and Clovis (481/482-511 AD) had traditionally been entrusted with Roman titles. They would continue to call themselves Roman generals and consuls well into the 6th century. Clovis had draped himself in purple and crowned himself with a diadem upon his reception of a consular title from Emperor Anastasius I. He was henceforth called Augustus (Historia Francorum II, 38). But at the time for the death of Childeric in 481/482 AD, the Merovingians did not control the other Frankish affinities to the east, nor could they claim to control the local Roman bureaucrats and Visigoths to the south. Dierkens and Périn (2003: 182-183) have explained the splendor of Childeric’s grave as an attempt to imitate the Germanic kleptocrats of Southeastern Europe, with whom the Nordic kleptocrats were already familiar. In other words, one should look in the same direction as Clovis once did.

Steuer (1982, 1987, 1989) has produced an influential theory on the role of regalia, notably helmets and ring swords. These, he argues, are attributes pertaining to a social organization of warrior aristocrats. The social organization was caused by a growing Frankish influence over the Continent. This has inspired Danish archaeologists (Hedeager 1992a, 1992b, Jørgensen 1991, Nørgård-Jørgensen 1999: 197) to argue for a supraregional military organization in the North c. 520/530-670/690 AD, based on an imported Merovingian model. There are some problems with accepting Steuer’s argument at face value. Subsequently the derivative Danish model cannot be accepted. First, the finest objects one would like to see in the hands of Frankish vassals, such as Krefeld-Gellep, grave 1782, are rarely found on the Continent at all. The prime pieces of 6th century Frankish garnet jewelry on weapons do not derive from archaeological contexts in say Alemannia or Thuringia. They have been found in Sweden. But the presence of Frankish regalia in two early Vendel Period graves in Södermanland such as Landshammar and Skrävsta does not have to indicate direct Frankish supremacy.
anymore than the presence of Russian or American small arms in Africa or Central Asia represents direct political dominion over Liberia, Sierra Leone, or Somalia. Rather it probably represents genuine Frankish concern with the unreliable and unpredictable political leadership to their immediate north (i.e. Frisia, Saxony and Jutland). This may have been countered by luscious gifts to selective affinities further north in Sweden.

The two Spangenhelme found in Sweden also date to the Migration Period. There is no indication of a local typological continuity, whereas there is a clear continuity of Roman style crested helmets and cavalry which dates to before the time of Clovis. The argument goes vice versa: there appear to be no crested helmets on the Continent after the 4th century (Bishop and Coulston 1993: 167-172). There are only Spangenhelme. Other important Frankish arms, typical of Krefeld-Gellep, grave 1782, are missing in the North. There are no franciscas, nor are there any angos. This suggests that the 5th century Nordic military tradition had to with Southeastern Europe, and not with the Merovingians in Gaul. Nor is there any evidence that Frankish military tactics had an impact in the North, besides the imported 6th-century regalia, that consisted of a few sword pommels.

It is clear that the content of the largest weapon graves in the Mälaren Valley underwent a change from Roman, Sasanid and Byzantine regalia in the late 5th century, to Frankish objects during the 6th century, to inferior Nordic objects during the late 7th century. By the same token, the gold import from the Continent appears to have ceased by the early 6th century. Frankish regalia seemingly disappeared altogether by the mid 7th century both in hoards and burials. Contacts with the Merovingian kingdom hence appear to have become rather limited, whereas the design of helmets from the 5th century until the 9th century suggests a Late Roman origin with considerable continuity (Almgren 1980). There were no Frankish regalia placed in the later boat graves at all. This makes the arguments for a continuous supraregional social organization stemming from Merovingian Gaul very unlikely.

The chorology of Nordic helmets together with that of imported garnet regalia rather indicates rival claims to power in the Mälaren Valley. Fragments of first rate Byzantine style and Merovingian garnet jeweler, of superior quality to that found in Gamla Upplands, has been found in cremation barrows elsewhere in the Mälaren Valley (J P Lamm 1962, Särlvik 1962, Arrhenius 1985, M Sundquist 1993, Duczko 1993, 1996, Bratt 1997, Ljungkvist 2000). Similarly, it must be stated that Lindqvist (1926, 1936, 1945) and Nerman (1960, 1961, 1963) despite their overly enthusiastic willingness to identify (or even confuse) funeral contexts with remnants of ancient saga heroes, had developed a considerable understanding of this power struggle. The same can be said for the less romantic Åberg (1947, 1953), whose strictly typological chronology for these events eventually proved incorrect, though. The one major flaw in Åberg’s typological chronology was the unequivocal assumption that Style II was created in Longobard Italy, after 569.

An important context is the unpublished mid- or late 6th century cremation barrow of RAÄ 107 Brunnshögen, Husby-Långhundra Parish (partially excavated 1977-81). This is undoubtedly the richest Vendel Period burial of the Mälaren Valley. The stratigraphy of Brunnshögen shows that it contained at least four separate burials. The last and largest, was a cremation. It contained c. 50 liters of bone fragments, suggesting a number of horses and dogs on the funeral pyre, which must have been located somewhere else. Grave goods included 5th-century Byzantine style garnet jewelry, some 50 garnets, including two 25 mm long A-stepped
garnets similar to the garnet seax pommel of Apahida II (Arrhenius 1985: 118-119), 10 gold clasped turquoises, Roman ivory game pieces, and Vendel styles A-B of Style II on silver. Melted gold and silver droplets were dispersed throughout the c. 40 cm deep cremation layer, ‘as if having been fired from a shotgun’ (Kent Andersson, personal communication). It is most likely that the cremated man was the son or grandson of a late 5th century veteran from the successful extortion campaigns in Southeastern Europe. All other almandine garnets larger than 25 mm have been found in princely graves in the Carpathian basin. The origin of the Nordic kleptocracy is thus most likely to be found there, as it not only influenced the North but also the Merovingians.

Lately, the question of the transition from the Migration Period to the Vendel Period, and the shift from Style I to Style II has been discussed by Høilund-Nielsen (1991, 1998). She concludes that most Vendel Period female jewelry and weapons found in Sweden were manufactured in South Scandinavia (i.e. Denmark). Once again, a Danish scholar proposes a hypothesis that suggests the growing dominance of a nascent Danish nation-state. In this case, the hypothesis is partly based on the perceived absence of sheath-metal dies from a Vendel Period workshop in Sweden along the same lines as Migration Period Helgö. But the current absence of a known Vendel Period factory in the Mälar Valley does not entail Danish political supremacy in the 7th and 8th centuries at all. Nor does it entail Danish cultural or economic hegemony.

I find it very hard to believe that South Scandinavian products covered the ideological demand for imported regalia needed in the Mälar Valley during the most competitive part of the Vendel Period. There are a number of reasons: First, it is hard to see the demise of Helgö after the mid-6th century and the growth of Birka during the late 8th century as two separate phenomena without an intermittent link elsewhere in Färentuna or Södermanland. Various finds of moulds from Vendel Period brooches in Husby in Glanshammar (Närke) and Kumla, Härad Parish (Södermanland) suffice to contradict the hypothesis (Drotz and Ekman 1995). But these are not included in Høilund-Nielsen’s survey (1991). The proof speaks for itself. Vendel Period moulds are known from the Mälar Valley. There is thus some form of local continuity between Helgö and Birka. Second, it is easy to forget that the boat graves, despite the presence of crested helmets and sword pommels (although some of these may have well been cast in Denmark), do not represent the highest echelon of the social hierarchy, rather cremation graves do. As pointed out above, the rich cremation graves contain imported regalia well beyond the capacity of the Danish factories. Third, it would seem that the population in the Mälar Valley was relatively well off economically. On Lovö, there are no explicit signs of starvation despite a considerable population growth and expansion into new settlements (Petré 1997).

5.3.1 Kleptocratic Burials in the Mälar Valley

The social hierarchy in the Vendel Period Mälar Valley may described as ideologically backward, if not entirely retrograde in its inclination when compared to the Merovingian dynasty which engaged in romanitas to a considerable degree. Living in the periphery, the Ynglingar and their contemporaries were rather immune to new ideas from South Scandinavia, but persisted in yearning for their own golden days of glory. A different funeral practice separated the Swedish
kleptocracy from its Merovingian counterpart, just as a significant number of Swedish affinities always sought to separate themselves from the rest of the Mälar Valley. From the second half of the 5th to the first half of the 6th century, there are three significant shifts in the funeral practice of the leading primary affinities in the Mälar Valley. That people consciously decide to change an inherited funeral practice implies a shift also in their everyday political practice. It would seem that once gold became scarce in the North, an increased political conflict followed between elite families who now had less booty to share.

Only a few rich individuals received chamber grave burials during the first half of the 5th century. When people died in Migration Period Mälar Valley, they were generally placed on funeral pyres and cremated. Then parts of the rests of the funeral pyre were moved for the subsequent burial inside funeral monuments. The free adult part of the population would receive monuments in the shape of round cairns, sometimes with enclosures surrounding them (Bennett 1987). Originating from a variety of burial forms (urns, layers, pits, etc.) and the geometric stone structures that were common during the late Roman Iron Age, Migration Period grave structures and contents became more uniform. From a large flat stone layer, there was a general development towards a narrower, rounder and somewhat taller cairn. Cremation layers with animal bones also became more common (Lagerlöf 1991: 128). For some reason, weapons were rarely included in the Migration Period funeral practice at all, but weapons became more common during the Vendel Period (Ljungkvist 2000). This suggests an increasing need to represent men as warriors in the afterlife. The smoke from princely funeral pyres must have been clearly visible in the cultural landscape. It is conceivable that unrelated neighbors were invited to look or even assisted at the funeral pyres of dominant families. These may have provided some form of communion with sacrificial meals, where parts were placed on the pyre. It would seem that the raking after grave goods and bones, the crushing and cleaning of the bones, and the final closing of the central cairns, were funeral practices unlikely to have been open to untrustworthy non-family members.

There are few cremation cemeteries in Sweden from the Migration and Vendel Periods that exceed 200 burials, that of Gamla Uppsala being a notable exception (Duczko 1993, 1996). The Mälar Valley cremation cemeteries generally belong to anything from a single household to some three or four related households (Petré 1984a, 1984b). It is often possible to distinguish men and women from each other by observing the external structure of a grave (Bennett 1987, Petré 1997). This leads one to conclude that the last step on this side of the passage into the afterlife was to a large extent a private family matter in the Mälar Valley, concerning the fate of a single individual. The dead human body somehow became too unclean for the afterlife, although the reasons behind this may have varied in different Nordic regions. Bereft of life, the body was a transitory husk trapping the anima. This suggests a Nordic belief that the individual anima of a free adult rested inside the skeleton, and that material objects needed a passage through fire in order to enter the afterlife. In the North, the individual anima of a human must be liberated from its dead body by means of energy, fire and manual labor.

The overlapping three shifts in the funeral practice include the reactivation and reinvention of some older funeral practices that have so far never been found in the archaeological context of Merovingian Kingdoms. The shifts are obviously interrelated and should be understood together as the result of both ideological regression and economic recession in the wake of the Late Roman Iron Age and
the first two thirds of the Migration Period. Lindquist (1945) once chauvinistically labeled these earlier years of affluence and economic growth ‘the Golden Age of Sweden’. The term ‘Golden Age’ is still a useful one if stripped of its original ideological content, simply because there is more gold from the ‘Golden Age’ than from any other period in Sweden. However, it would be a gross error to also simplify the three shifts into a mere sequence, followed exactly in the same fashion by all dominant families in the Mälar Valley. Rather, there was considerable room for strategies that sought to single out individual families as unique and exceptional.

During the ‘Golden Age’, some Swedish elite families buried prominent members in chamber graves, particularly rich are the female grave X in Tuna in Badelunda, Badelunda Parish (Västmanland), and the male grave in Lilla Jored, Kville Parish (Bohuslän). The female grave X in Tuna in Badelunda contained 337.65 grams of gold (Nylén and Schönback 1994). This roughly corresponds to the silver libra. The male grave in Lilla Jored contained 202.52 grams of gold. This roughly corresponds to 3/5 of that in Tuna in Badelunda. The ideological origin of the Swedish chamber graves ought to be the Hassleben-Leuna group via Himlingøje (Steuer 1982). The Nordic elite of the ‘Golden Age’ sought to emulate splendor of the leading Roman auxiliari and foederati along the limes. Then there was a sharp rupture, perhaps connected to a failing respect for inherited rules (Arwidsson 1980:64). A number of chamber graves in Uppland were opened and/or plundered some time in the second half of the 5th century. Cases in point are Cemetery RAÄ 74 Danmarksby, Danmark Parish; Fullerö and Valsgärde, Gamla Uppsala Parish; Cemetery RAÄ 57 Lovö, Ekerö Parish. (J P Lamm 1973a, 1973b, Sjöberg 1975, Wexell 1993). The graves were entered by means of excavating the corner of one of the walls, where the boards were lifted off at the seam.

A recent interpretation suggests that a number of unpublished chamber graves on top of the cemetery ridge in Valsgärde were not plundered, but rather ‘opened’ (Groop 2000, Herschend 2001a: 92-93). Had plunder been the ulterior motive for opening the chamber graves, so the argumentation goes, it would have been easier to break in from above through the roof. The dead bodies, but not all the grave goods may have been removed from the graves to be cremated. Human skeletons, as opposed to those of animals, are very badly preserved in Valsgärde. In some cases only human tooth enamel remains. Animals are usually placed along the outsides of the boat graves. As early as 1970, Bruce-Mitford suggested that rainwater seeping into the Sutton Hoo boat would have served as an ‘acid bath’, slowly desintegrating the dead body (Carver 1998:30-31). Both the chambers and boats could have served as ‘acid baths’ in Valsgärde. The evidence in favor of this interpretation is thus still inconclusive, but it cannot be denied that the chamber graves Valsgärde 20 and 29 have been opened for some reason. Two possibilities then appear.

Either the family of Valsgärde decided to reevaluate its own funeral practice and correct the immediate past by switching from chambers (perhaps via a brief period of retroactive cremation) to boats (this shift would have included the ‘openings’), or the old chamber grave family was annihilated or displaced. In that case, a new family may have moved in, plundering the old graves and introducing boat graves to mark its claim to supremacy. The latter scenario is very tempting to accept. The cemetery was largely untouched when S. Lindquist arrived in the 1920’s (Arwidsson 1980). Nobody ever dared to plunder the Valsgärde boat...
graves. This has probably to do with the fact that a grave robber could not move as he pleased in Valsgärde. The necropole is in direct view from the partially excavated hall building (Norr and Sundkvist 1995).

5.4 ek erilaR – Early Runic Self-Expression in the Kleptocratic Technolect

This section seeks to understand the new form of Early Runic literacy that briefly flourished after Germanic kleptocracy had come to be an established norm in Northwestern Europe. In particular, it seeks to understand the role of the erilaR. It will be argued that the erilaR as a group ought be seen as an affinity rather than single individuals. In all likelihood, they shared a common background. Their common past may have been connected to military service where literacy was a requirement. The graduation from a military academy, the initiation to a secret society, the completion of an overseas journey, or the reception of arms are all signs of adulthood (Eliade 1959). Such events mark the end of an education and a rite of passage. A newly qualified individual is likely to make his achievement manifest, and is usually encouraged to do so. What better way to mark this than by showing off the newly acquired powers and skills? Some people may go overboard, but such exaggerations are important in that they show what is at stake. A case in point is the late dictator of Equatorial Guinea, Macias Nguema (1924-1979):

(I am) president for life, major general of the army, chief educator of the nation, supreme scientist, master of traditional culture, chairman of the Parti Unique National des Travailleurs as well as the only miracle that Equatorial Guinea ever produced (Macias Nguema, quoted in Sylla 1986: 127).

During the change from the Roman Iron Age one-liners and maker’s marks into the individual statements belonging to the Migration Period, a new masculine noun, erilaR, appears. It can be found carved in stone, on weapons, female brooches, and stamped on a bracteate. (There are numerous corrupt erilaR texts on bracteates). The first runic inscriptions of this kind have been dated to the c. 400 AD and the last belong to graves from the late 6th century. The distribution of the eight inscriptions points to Norway and Western Sweden as a certain area where there were runic literate erilaR. The bracteates, especially the ones with a corrupt legend are common in Gotland. The Kragelshul spear shaft cannot be said to have a certain Danish origin, the contrary would seem quite more likely. The bracteates may have traveled a long way. The Etelhem brooch with a possibly corrupt inscription mk mrla wrta belongs to a small, albeit widespread group of late 5th century brooches (Näsman 1984, Lorren 2001, Rundkvist 2003). This brooch was found reasonably near the great Botes solidus hoard (Andersson, and should be indicative with contacts with Germanic affinities in the Danube area such as the Gepids and the Goths.

There are four main interpretations of the word erilaR (cf. Makaev 1995:104, Düwel 2001, Mees 2003): 1) ‘Magician, wizard, shaman’ 2) ‘Aeruli, Heruli’ 3) ‘Earl’ (Old Norse jarl) 4) ‘Rune-master’. Needless to say, none of these interpretations have gained a universal acceptance among runologists. The interpretations share a feature though. They allude to a powerful function. In most cases it is one with access to the supernatural by means of secret knowledge. Mees (2003) suggests that three terms; Heruli, earl, and erilaR, originally had the same meaning in
Proto-Germanic. This more or less puts the onset of the whole disagreement to an end. The question remains as to what the term really signified since it lacks an exact descendant in modern Germanic languages. In the eight certain cases, an ek, or ‘I’ always precedes the noun. Another feature that must have been important to the respective authors is the amount of qualitative modifiers attached onto the epithet, e.g. KJ 69 Rosseland: ek wagigar irilR agilamudon, ‘I, WagigaR, erilaR of Agilamund’, KJ 27 Kragehul: ek erilR asugisalas, ‘I, erilaR of Ansugisalas’. Elgqvist (1952:114) was the first scholar to propose an interpretation of erilaR as a specific denotation of a member of a ruling class in Scandinavia. To this he added that there may have followed a subsequent attribution of the epithet to various ethnic groups active in the military theater in Southeastern Europe. This argument is supported by Mees (2003). Elgqvist’s is a rather reasonable approach given what is now accepted under the term ‘ethnogenesis’. Ethnogenesis means that ethnic designations do not accurately reflect any genetic reality (Ewig 1991, Wolfram 1997, 1998, Brather 2004). It is a very tempting idea that those who do the same things together must be related by blood, that it is not mere division of labor and social hierarchy that unites, but rather kinship. Self-styled ethnic epithets are there to make an illusion of cohesion, when, in fact, the Migration Period military structures were elective and selective and not ethnic affinities.

In his study on the meaning of erilaR, Mees (2003) delineates a neatly structured early Germanic social hierarchy. Much like Constantine’s ideal vision of Roman society, it has a strict division of spiritual and martial affairs. Functionaries of the former include the gudija, whereas the erilaR and the ðewaR sort under the latter. But there is little certainty that there were such distinct ideological and repressive functionaries at the time. And there is only one known individual who describes himself as a gudija, against eight erilaR and at least three ðewaR (Stoklund 2004). It cannot be excluded that some erilaR possessed a persona that exceeded the boundaries of a mere charismatic leader but assumed magico-religious dimensions. Mees’ attempt to equate the term erilaR with the Latin comes is daring. Even if the two terms were meant to designate the same thing, a Nordic erilaR could not exactly have had what his Roman or Frankish comes counterpart had in terms of material possessions. Périn (1998) rightly cautions against the use of Roman titles when describing ‘princely’ Germanic graves. This should probably extend to the discourse of Early Runic text as well. The Early Runic erilaR ought to be an expression of a distinguished and literate leader of a cavalry or marine unit with access to gold – a self-conscious kleptocrat. Besides the isolated 3rd century Gårdlösa inscription ekunwodz, the later erilaR inscriptions are important in that they so clearly identify the agent in the first person singular, ek. This is a step beyond the mere infatuation with atemporality in the Early Runic of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The role of literacy has changed. The text is different. It has gone beyond the mere technolect of literacy. In their encyclopedic work on reading Russian criminal tattoos, Baldaev and Plutser-Serno (2003) state that:

The language of thieves is becoming the language of the reader, linguistic self-awareness is becoming criminalized. Language is turned inside out in the reader’s mind, reinterpreted, it is mutating into ‘newspeech’. The world of thieves is attempting to absorb and subjugate all social space. Meanwhile the guardians of linguistic purity have long been complaining about the rapid infiltration of ‘bad’ words in particular from thieves’ jargon. But the actual scale of the infiltration of thieves’ culture into life is greater than anyone can imagine. And this infiltration occurs via a different route. It is not the penetration of
culture by mafia practices that is expanding and growing, it is our awareness of this infil-
tration. It is the mind that is infiltrated, not life. And then we begin to see our life in terms
of thieves’ culture (Baldaev and Plutser-Serno 2003: 51).

This assessment is quite applicable to the literate kleptocratic technolect. No
longer is a male name on a female object sufficient to mark that man’s presence
synchronically. The erilaR has an individual textual message to convey. It goes
beyond his mere personal name. Other people’s names are added in the genitive
case as to validate the man’s claim to be an erilaR. The man does so by virtue of
belonging to a group of literate functionaries within a social hierarchy. His text
now belongs to a selective affinity, beyond elective and ethnic affinities. As a
group, the erilaR fit the description of a secret society. It is therefore most
unlikely that they would have allowed themselves to be separated from the realms
of the spiritual and supernatural. Similarly, they would have sought to steal as
much monetary capital as possible.

5.5 African Developments towards Literacy and Kleptocracy

This chapter discusses the development of literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa during
the Early Modern and Modern Periods. This discussion serves as backdrop to the
main question of how the Germanic became literate Westerners. It must be
pointed out that no argument is made to point at an identical development on a
global scale. There is no single, universal explanation, but all different contexts
must be considered to understand a single one, even if it happens to be one of the
most obscure to current scholarship. By contrast, the development of literacy in
some regions of Africa is relatively well known and makes for a very interesting
comparison.

5.5.1 The West African Syllabaries

This section will discuss the invention of a number of writing systems in West
Africa following the establishment of Western Imperialism in the early 19th cen-
tury. The similarities between the West African experience and the Latin theory of
the invention of Early Runic are striking. In particular, one can highlight the con-
lict between those who have allowed themselves to be assimilated by literate
imperialism against those who are on the defensive, attempting to withstand the
tsunami of linear thought patterns. It will be shown that the invention of such re-
actionary writing systems is a very rapid event, and that the writing systems are
generally discontinued after a while. This is the case as they are unable to lean
against a viable ideological structure capable of withstanding literate imperialism.
Instead, administrative and repressive structures of the West have been introduced
and imitated, even if reified later on. The result has been that Western forms of
literacy have come to dominate while the societies are controlled by military
kleptocracies or are occupied by African or Western intervention forces.

There is a quite a number of syllabaries known from West Africa, chiefly from
Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (Singler 1996). A good resource for an intro-
duction to these scripts is www.omniglot.com. The syllabaries include Bassa,
Kpelle, Loma, Mende, and Vai. These have been used to denote languages of the
Mande group of Niger-Congo languages. The syllabaries were invented c. 1820-
The stated causes for the inventions vary. In general, the inventor claims to have had a dream or divine inspiration prior to his invention. Note here that none of the known inventors have been women. What really seems to lurk behind these inventions is a genuine fear of an encroaching literate imperialism either in the shape of Islam or the West. It is also clear that the introduction of literacy is seen as very disruptive. It will irrevocably change things forever. Gelb (1969) points to the case of the Toma affinity in Liberia and Guinea, where a certain Wido invented a writing system in the 1930’s. There are numerous such records purported divine inspirations leading to new writing systems in West Africa. The inventor claimed divine inspiration as the origin of the writing system. The record of Wido’s alleged conversation with God is archetypical:

Wido: God takes no be pity on the Tomas? Other races know writing. Only the Tomas remain in their ignorance.
God: I fear that when you are able to express yourselves you shall have no more respect for the beliefs and customs of your race.
Wido: Not at all, we shall still keep as in past days. I promise it.
God: If such is the case, I am willing to grant you the knowledge, but take care never to show anything of it to woman. (After Gelb 1969:234).

There was a long buildup to these divine encounters with literacy in West Africa. Western slave trade began early along the West African coast with the Portuguese fleets of the Early Modern Period. The fortress of Sao Jorge da Mina in Ghana was an early infiltration point, founded already in 1482. Muslim slave traders had made earlier inroads from the north. But there was also a Western reaction to this behavior beginning in the late 18th century. Many enlightened Westerners felt that slavery was wrong and that there were universal values. Africans were thus not considered inferior because of their genes, or what one could read about Noah’s sons in the Bible, but because of their lack of learning and literacy. As a result, colonies for freed and educated African slaves were set up.

Freetown and the Province of Freedom were founded in Sierra Leone in 1787, only to be taken over by the British in 1792. The region became a crown colony in 1808. The American Colonization Society started shipping former American slaves the coast south of Sierra Leone in 1820. There, the town of Monrovia was founded in 1824. The first printed newspaper, Liberia Herald, appeared in 1830. The Republic of Liberia was founded in 1847. In total, some 16,400 former slaves and some 5,700 Africans freed by the English Navy from captured slave ships settled in Liberia. What soon followed after the colonies had been established was that the educated Anglophone freedmen began to behave just like their former Western masters. They began to exploit and abuse the preliterate Africans who were considered inferiors.

As a result, a number of writing systems were invented by indigenous ethnic affinities in various African languages in an effort to defend themselves against the literate Anglophone aggression. The Mende syllabary is known as *ki-ka-ku*. Kisimi Kamara (c. 1890-1962) from Bari, Sierra Leone invented it in 1921. It has 195 graphemes. Kamara was acquainted with Vai. He ran a school during the 1930’s to promote his writing system. Kamara seems to have had an explicit political agenda directed against British colonialism. Coulmas (1999:335) claims that the use of this writing system was limited to personal correspondence but failed to compete with Arabic literacy that had been known to the Mende affinity since the 18th century. The real cause that Mende language now is written in the
Latin alphabet is more likely to relate to a conscious effort to stymie the alternative literacy. The British colonial administration in Sierra Leone set up a Protectorate Literacy Bureau in the early 1940’s. The Loma syllabary with 185 graphemes was invented in the 1930’s by Wido Zibo of Bonoketa, Liberia. The Kpelle syllabary has 88 graphemes. Chief Gbili of Sanoyea, Liberia invented it during the 1930’s. Latin script replaced both Mende and Kpelle in the 1940’s.

The oldest known West African writing system in this region is the Vai syllabary in Liberia with some 226 graphemes. Momolu Dualu Bukele invented it sometime 1820-1833, supposedly after having been inspired by a dream. A more likely scenario is that the appearance of former American slaves on the coast caused Bukele to draw some quick conclusions. The fact that scholars (Singler 1996:593-599; Coulmas 1999:537) claim that Bukele shaped the syllabary together with five others suggests a clear domestic definition of hierarchy and a familiarity with other scripts (in all likelihood Arabic). Vai was an apparent success and mid 19th century Western traders reported that most of the Vai speakers were using it. It was soon co-opted by Christian missionaries. It came to inspire many of the other short-lived syllabaries. It has managed to co-exist with Latin and Arabic scripts. A reason for the relative success of Vai, is that the linguistic group of speaking the language is relatively small, some 75,000 people only. In 1962, the University of Liberia standardized the Vai syllabary. Yet, the seemingly inevitable happened.

In 1980, a Liberian army sergeant, Samuel Doe toppled the old Anglophone regime (which pertained to a mere 5% of the population). Those who live by the sword also die by the sword. Doe was toppled in 1989, but only after having appointed himself a five star general. He ran an erratic rule where his own ethnic affinity, the Krahn, was allowed to terrorize its neighbors. Doe is reported to have enjoyed watching his captured enemies be devoured by his pet lions. Liberia has ever since been a very chaotic area run by various kleptocrats ruling over armies of intoxicated teenagers. As of 2003, Western powers including Sweden are required to keep a substantial number of troops to maintain a fragile peace. Hence, the days seem numbered for the Vai syllabary.

5.5.2 The Birth of an African Kleptocracy

This section will argue that there is are a number of relevant comparisons between Modern African governments and the Late Roman and early Migration Period Germanic kleptocracy. It will discuss the officer corps of the Nigerian military and a belated African Imperial usurper, Bokassa. This is not because their behavior during the late 20th century was any better or worse than that of Europeans, past or present. Rather, their education and careers highlight a number of important issues of imperialism and the subsequent aspects of reification process led by future kleptocrats. It is carried out by means of interpretatio, imitatio imperii, translatio imperii, and emerges in full bloom in kleptocracy.

While there was an end of sorts to the West Roman Empire, it seems premature to state what will happen in Africa. The first time Africans were truly recruited and educated en masse to become Western soldiers was only in 1939, some 65 years ago. By comparison, it took Germanic affinities many centuries to take over what was once Roman. Most Sub-Saharan African states gained a globally recognized political independence only in 1960-1975, with the notable ex-
ceptions of Liberia and Ethiopia. The case of Somalia shows that newly invented forms of literacy no longer seem to be an option against the encroaching Arabic and Latin scripts. A case in point is the Osmany alphabet, invented in 1922, which is unlikely to spread any further.

The fact that there are good contemporary records of their deeds has made Early Modern and Modern African kleptocrats archetypical. They enable an anachronistic understanding of the Migration Period Germanic hierarchy. The first black rulers of Haiti made themselves kings and emperors. These titles were symbols of the supreme power they had been instructed to respect. It is interesting to note that the current South African president, Thabo Mbeki has pointed out that the trappings of Western democracy used by African leaders today are insufficient or inaccurate representations of what their rule actually entails.

Perhaps instead of treating this episode as a matter of derision and dismissive comment, we should ask ourselves whether Bokassa was not, in fact, giving a more precise and honest form to the content of his rule as leader of the Central African Republic. It may very well be that many of us are projecting ourselves as presidents and prime ministers, with the assumptions about democracy that attach to these posts, whereas, in practice, we are little more than feudal lords who rule by decree over our kingdoms or principalities (Thabo Mbeki, cf. [link](http://www.bozize.info/comments.php?op=articleandaid=1665)).

Mbeki argues that one should not condemn kleptocratic imitations such as the Napoleonic Emperor Bokassa. These are more truthful representations of how power is perceived by the rulers themselves. In this sense, the honest kleptocrat becomes more appealing than the corrupt democrat. The problem with this view, however, is that the kleptocrat is more likely to cause starvation and genocide than the democrat. This is why benevolent rulers like Nelson Mandela are to be preferred over kleptocrats like Macias Nguema.

5.5.3 The War Veterans

Who are the ones first to cross the bridge from the preliterate affinity over to the aggressive, literate ‘other’? It is likely that they are males. In the case of the Germanic affinities, it is certain that hundreds of thousands of males were recruited as soldiers in the Roman military and that the literates were promoted faster than others. This behavior has consequences for the spread of literacy. Writing becomes tied to an aggressive male mentality and to notions of organized warfare. Some 188,000 Africans fought for France in World War 1. These were mainly recruited in West Africa and shipped to the European war theater. By contrast, the war theater in East Africa saw relatively small forces. These were engaged in guerilla tactics. Belgium, Britain, Germany, and Portugal all employed Africans as carriers and infantry (cavalry being out of the question due to tsetse flies). The highest-ranking Africans were non-commissioned officers. Beyond this, only minor commanding responsibilities were given to Africans in the imperialist armies (Abbott 2002).

It was World War 2 and the ensuing colonial wars in Southeast Asia that were instrumental in the shaping of a social strata of African veterans. In May 1940, France had some 80,000 African soldiers on the Western front. Some 30,000 were reported missing at the June 1940 armistice (Davidson 1978: 200). For the survivors, many long years in POW camps awaited. The British army alone enrolled
470,000 Africans during World War 2. Of these some 100,000 went to Burma (Foltz 1985: 7). The African war veterans who returned home were men who had seen the outside world. They owned eyeglasses, wristwatches, books, fountain-pens and pencils. They knew the modus operandi of an imperialist repressive state apparatus. They had also witnessed it fail to perform on occasion. Notable experiences were the French surrender in 1940, and the British-Japanese struggle over Burma in 1941-44. However, the most crucial single event was the French defeat in North Vietnam following the 1954 battle of Dien Bien Phu (Roy 1960). In July 1953, there were some 18,000 Africans and 30,000 North Africans serving in the French expeditionary force. The equivalent of 54 battalions of Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians served in Vietnam from 1947 to 1955 (Héduy 1989:94, 95). In the Vietnamese prisoner camps were thousands of Africans. The Vietnamese consciously separated the Africans from the French. The Africans were instructed that they were victims of imperialism, and that there was a universal struggle against imperialism in which they had an important role to play.

Many African veterans would assume a leading role in the ensuing struggle for political independence. Their experience would be fundamental in the creation of new nation-states, Algeria and Nigeria in particular. In the former case, there was a direct relation between Algerian World War 2 and Vietnam veterans and the establishment of FLN, Algerian armed resistance against French colonial rule. African soldiers in the British and French armies were in many ways similar to the Germanic soldiers of the Roman army. The same can be said for the Marxist-Leninist guerillas of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique (Abbott 1988, De Matos Gomes 2002). These people generally came from preliterate or semiliterate cultures and were then suddenly required to rapidly learn an immense amount of knowledge.

The reproduction of specialized knowledge was often crucial to survival, giving it an important role over previous learning experiences. The education, aspirations and actions of African and Germanic veterans show reminiscent traits. The subsequent results were also quite similar. Back at home, the veterans proved unwilling or unable to reproduce the old political structures, or create new, viable indigenous ones. They set out to imitate or translate those of their imperialist masters (Davidson 2001). This had to do with the kind of doctrines they had been educated to follow, and with what kind of ‘other’ ideological alternatives they were aware of (e.g. Islam and Marxism-Leninism). But African political independence in the first part of the second half of the 20th century did not mean an end to ideological or economic dependence on the imperialist powers.

5.5.4 The Teacher and his Students

A relatively large share of the African soldiers in the British army in World War 2 came from West Africa. Regiments such as The Royal Cameroonians and The Queen’s Own Nigerian Regiment had distinguished themselves in both world wars, fighting the Germans, Italians and Japanese in Africa, Asia and Europe. During the overseas service, many African soldiers began considering political independence. Some West African soldiers studied nationalist tracts during their Asian service (Davidson 2001b: 85). They would join the small group nationalist intellectuals to form the cadre in large political movements.
There was a British military school for West Africans in Teshi, Gold Coast. One of its teachers was Dim Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu (1933–). He was an Igbo and a Christian, and came from an affluent background. His father, Sir Louis Ojukwu, was an assimilated businessman who had received a British knighthood. The later lieutenant colonel Ojukwu was also the first member of the Nigerian army to have a Master’s degree in modern history from King’s College Lagos and Oxford University (Adegbamigbe 2003). Most other Nigerians officers did not share this privileged background and were not as well educated. Ojukwu’s students included a Muslim Hausa, the future general Murtala Mohammad (President of Nigeria, 1975-1976).

When the British colonial administration hurriedly departed in 1960, a handful educated West Africans were left to rule Nigeria. Davidson (2001b: 138) claims that there were 114 lawyers, 38 doctors, 32 journalists, 435 clergymen and a number of businessmen after World War 2 in this region. Nigeria was an artificial political structure conceived by the British colonial administration. It encompassed a vast group of different ethnic affinities, notably Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. The British had traditionally favored the Igbo. They tended to be more Christian and educated than the other ethnic affinities were. Sensitive to vox populi, the Nigerian officer corps soon relented to ethnic factionalism. The officers proved unable to distance themselves from the riots, particularly aimed against the more affluent and Europeanized Igbos living in the northern Muslim Hausa areas. This caused military involvement in political life. It was made manifest by an aborted Igbo military coup in 1965. It was followed by a successful non-Igbo coup in 1966 (which were to be followed by dozens of others).

The most educated Nigerian officer belonged to an ethnic affinity comprising only 18% of the population. Hence, Ojukwu saw his prospects of success stifled. He was now governor of his predominantly Igbo home province in the Southeast, the one with almost all oil industry. Less educated junior officers, belonging to larger Muslim ethnic affinities to the West and North had bypassed him in the 1966 military coup. Many of these had participated as UN troops during the Congo crisis 1960-1964, substituting formal education with practical experience. A Congo veteran and a compromise candidate from one of the smallest ethnic affinities, lieutenant colonel Yakubu Gowon headed the supreme military council. Gowon held only a secondary school certificate (although his education included a sejour at Sandhurst). At a grand meeting in Aburi, Ojukwu played the trick of English language rhetoric on his juniors. With long-winding acrolectal syntax in a foreign language, he fooled the mesolectal supreme military council into signing a written agreement they simply did not understand:

I, in all sincerity, in order to avoid further and further killing, do submit that the only realistic form of government today until tempers can cool is such that will move people slightly apart and a government that controls the various entities through people of their areas. It is better that we move slightly apart and survive, it is much worse that we move closer and perish in the collusion. Therefore, I say no single one person today in Nigeria can command loyalties of various groups and, therefore, to save the suspicion, to enable us to settle down, it is essential that whatever form of government we have in the centre must be limited and controlled by a consensus to which we all agree (After Adegbamigbe 2003).

The agreement loosened the Nigerian federation into a confederacy. When subsequently informed of their mistake by their legal advisors, the younger officers under Gowon nullified the agreement (Adegbamigbe 2003).
Ojukwu decided to secede. He proclaimed himself president of the Republic of Biafra. It had an administration consisting of Igbo officers. Nigeria was in a state of war 1967-70. Both sides employed Western advisors and mercenaries, pilots in particular (Haglund 1988, Draper 1999). Cut off from the outside world, the vastly outnumbered and outgunned Biafran army held out for a very long time against the former students of its commander in chief. Nigeria received support from Britain and the Soviet Union. Both imperialist powers ultimately stood little to gain from the war. The victorious ruler of a unified Nigeria, Gowon, would increasingly maintain an autocratic rule, fearful of the factional politics he once relied on. He was toppled in a military coup in 1975. Gowon took time to edify himself in British exile, receiving his Ph.D from the University of Warwick in 1984.

Later military rulers belonging to larger ethnic groups such as the Yoruba brigadier Olusegun Obasanjo (President of Nigeria 1976-1979, 1999–) desperately tried to include more of the officer corps in the decision-making process. Many generals actually did want to prepare Nigeria for a participatory civilian rule, albeit with limited success. Five former generals who at one time have held supreme executive power, including the incumbent Obasanjo and the rebel teacher Ojukwu ran for the Nigerian presidency in 2003. Ojukwu has since changed his name to Eze Ndigbo Gburugburu, ‘Head of all Igbo everywhere’. Ojukwu made a pertinent comment in regards to his political rivals:

The other parties are wheeling their generals to the battlefield. I am a modest man and I am a general too, but I think it may do them good to learn that I am not only senior to them, but I trained them (Ojukwu, quoted in Adegbamigbe 2003).

Obasanjo was reelected. The Nigerian example shows that imperialist education and overseas military service was crucial to the formation of a military kleptocracy. But it was by no means certain that the most educated officers would be able to hold on to the top positions once the imperialists were gone. Nor was this ultimately their goal.

Ethnic affinity came to be a crucial factor within the Nigerian officer corps, enabling the rapid ascent of someone from a very small group to a dominant position in the military hierarchy. Similarly, it is unlikely that the all too Romanized Germanic veterans belonging to large ethnic affinities were always given absolute control. There was continuous suspicion and resistance to their political actions within larger elective affinities. This could explain the murder of Gundomar after the peace with Constantius II in 354 AD. With their acquired Roman knowledge, some Germanic veterans could fool and impress other less educated Germanic war leaders for some time, but not forever.

5.5.5 The Emperor of Central Africa

Migration Period leaders like Attila and Clovis have often been labeled irrational psychopaths and madmen. They are sometimes included in books on the most evil men in history and the like. I believe this is mistaken. They were probably no different from anybody else in their position. They had been trained to act in certain ways within specific structures, to lead selective affinities of professional Germanic officers. These were commanding vast elective affinities of ill-disciplined warriors. Clovis and Theoderic would see themselves as saviors of romanitas and
defenders of Christianity (Périn 1992). As long as 20th century European imperialism was in effect, there never was a credible African alternative to European imperialist ideology. Likewise, there never was a credible Germanic alternative to the ideology of Roman imperialism, despite all its shortcomings. Regardless of all grandiose intentions, political rule boiled down to theft, murder and corruption.

It is most likely that the early Germanic kingdoms entailed a political practice quite similar to the nation-states of late 20th century Africa. Despite their rather differently paced careers, Bokassa, Mengistu and Mobutu were archetypical for the kleptocratic behavior of late 20th century Africa – an alleged Marxist-Leninist in the hands of Cuban and Russian agents, a self-proclaimed living deity, and an imitation of the Early Modern autocrats of Europe who stayed in power by means of personal bribes to the French political élite. Africans and Europeans alike cannot deny the fact that the Marxist-Leninist Mengistu, the living god Mobutu and the Napoleonic Emperor Bokassa could not have come into existence without their old masters. They were utterly dependent. The disturbing fact of continued dependency was explicitly denied by the new African rulers by means of the official renaming of place names, currencies and repressive state apparatuses to fit improved ethnic standards. An obvious imperialist place name like Rhodesia (after British business man and politician Cecil Rhodes, 1853-1902) was replaced with that of an archaeological site, Zimbabwe. From the 1950’s and onwards some 35 flags of new African states were hoisted outside the United Nations Building. The new African iconography varied greatly. There was the display of imported European status symbols such as a Soviet AK-47 assault rifle and a book on the flag of Mozambique. There was an African archaeological artefact on the flag of Zimbabwe. Others pointed to the exploitation of mineral resources, such as the copper crosses on the flag of the secessionist state of Katanga. But that flag was never hoisted outside the UN.

Jean-Bédel Bokassa (1921-1996) served more than two decades in the French foreign legion. He advanced from sergeant to captain, retiring from service in 1961. He saw action in many war theaters during World War 2 and the French colonial wars during the 1950’s. He was awarded with numerous military citations. Bokassa was an obvious choice as the first commanding chief of the army in the Central African Republic following independence in 1963. He then staged a coup d’état in 1966 against his own cousin, President David Dacko. After a meeting with the Pope in 1970, Bokassa later claimed to have been annointed as the 13th apostle of Christ (this was something that also Constantine I claimed himself to be). In 1972, Bokassa appointed himself President for life. This was not enough. The President crowned himself Emperor Bokassa I during an elaborate (and in all likelihood inebriated) ceremony in 1977. The French government subsidized some 28,000 bottles of champagne for the occasion (Orizio 2004:37). Bokassa wore a crown, ermine fur and and had a bronze throne modeled on that of Napoleon. His reign soon became erratic and ruthless without clearly stated goals besides his own gloire (cf. Keohane 1962). Bokassa wanted all schoolchildren to wear his picture on their uniform. Riots followed. Thereafter he was accused of cannibalism by foreign observers, supposedly having eaten the flesh of murdered schoolchildren.

The French naturally grew wary with their crony. During Bokassa’s visit to Libya, the French staged a new coup d’état with 400 French paratroopers who reinstallad his exiled cousin to the presidency. Audacious as ever, the ancien légionnaire Bokassa claimed his lawful right to become a French citizen and flew
from directly from Libya to France. The French detained him for 56 hours and then passed him on to the Ivory Coast. Broke, he returned to Central Africa in 1987 to serve a brief prison sentence. He died of a heart attack in Bangui in 1996.

Bokassa is reported to have had 17 wives and fathered more than 50 children. The Central African Empire was a case of *imitatio imperii* at its worst, even surpassing much Germanic prehistoric evidence. After having mimicked de Gaulle for a number of years, Bokassa was very keen on appearing like the greatest French warlord in history, Napoleon Bonaparte. He was no longer not interested in imitating a modern French statesman like the predecessor of his main supporter and benefactor, Giscard d’Estaing. It is interesting to note that Bokassa portrayed himself as a victim of imperialism, ready to perform a public sacrifice where he would deposit all his decorations, a kind of *abrenuntiatio imperii*:

I even fought for France in Indo-China, after enrolling here in Africa. […] I fought against the Nazis with the forces of the Free French. I sacrificed my youth to France. And that despite the fact that the French killed my father before my very eyes, right in front M’Baiki’s police headquarters. My father was a chief who opposed the colonial occupation. My mother killed herself shortly afterward, in desperation. I was six years old. And yet I fought for France for twenty-two years. They decorated me, giving me the Croix de Guerre, two Croix de la Résistance, the Légion d’honneur and an officer’s pension. When they wanted diamonds, the politicians in Paris hinted at a second Croix de Guerre. […] But I’m so anti-French now that if I still had those decorations, I’d throw them in a dustbin in front of the television cameras (Jean-Bédel Bokassa, quoted in Orizio, 2004:39).

Victim suffering from a childhood trauma or not, Bokassa exemplifies the recruit who acquires his knowledge by means of military service in an imperialist army. Upon his return, he typically sets out to imitate his masters. This imitative behavior is likely to have been the case among Germanic hierarchies of the Late Roman and Migration Periods. One wanted to appear as the strong divine Roman Emperors of the past and not like the short-lived usurpers or boy puppets. The 4th century Constantine I was rightly feared and respected by Alemanni like Crocus, whereas the later Vadomar would distrust his successor Constantius II. It is unlikely that Nordic retinues held Romulus Augustus or Basiliscus in very high regard once they had been payed. But the Romans who always had Germanic volunteers and hostages at hand, are likely to have played kingmakers much like the French did in Central Africa. A Germanic troublemaker could always be replaced with a trusted Roman veteran. If that veteran turned out to be a megalomanic liability (e.g. Arminius), one could always recycle the old troublemaker held hostage when the opportunity arose.

5.5.6 Literacy in the Ethiopian Empire

There is one truly exceptional African writing system, known as Amharic or Ethiopic. Even though it is exceptional, it still has an important similarity with the central theme of this book. The ideological nature of the literate acrolect, Ge’ez, that upheld the social hierarchy gave rise to a myth surrounding the political leadership of a primary affinity. This myth was so persuasive that it was entirely reified elsewhere and turned into a full-fledged religion. This is probably how the image of the Roman Emperor was worshipped, and how the cult of the imperial
affinity was reified into that of a pantheon under a Germanic war god, Odin, the alleged inventor of runic literacy and his primary affinity, the Aesir.

The Amharic languages belong to South Semitic language family. The Amharic script consists of 182 graphemes ordered in seven columns of 26 graphemes each (Haile 1996). The Amharic syllabic alphabet is considered a derivate of the Sabean/Minean consonant alphabet from Yemen. The numerals, however, are of Greek origin, possibly via a Coptic influence. Amharic literacy has maintained itself for over a millenium and a half. In c. 340-350 AD, Ethiopian rulers converted to Christianity. There was an influx of Syrian missionaries. Ethiopia is a large country with a long tradition of independence and its own brand of Christian imperialism, subdued and coercing neighboring Cushitic affinities such as the Muslim Oromo into using Amharic script. The Ethiopian Emperor waged war against Muslim infidels as far away as Yemen in the 6th century.

Ge’ez literacy has preserved important Judeo-Christian texts in the liturgical while these have long been lost in other Semitic and Western writing traditions. One case in point is the Book of the prophet Enoch (Laurence 1995). Ethiopia has also withstood repeated literate aggression from the outside, although its saw many of its possessions within the Cushitic language area become Muslim and begin using the Arabic alphabet. Tied to the strong religious connotation of the Amharic script is the establishment of an Ethiopian Christian feudal state that during 19th century once again labeled itself an Empire. Political power in Ethiopia became fragmented during the 18th century and central authority only began picking up in the 1830’s and 1840’s. Trade with India and Arabs ports in the Red Sea enabled the re-arming of the feudal levies with firearms. The self-styled Empire could set out to conquer again. Oliver and Atmore (2004:47-51) describe this as a most remarkable development in that the reunification of Ethiopia 1855-1889 under Tewodoros and Menelik II meant that the Empire could not only resist the imperialist partition of Africa, but also partake in it.

The particular nature of Ethiopian imperialism has undoubtedly been a factor for the continued use of the Amharic script. A Christian feudal state surrounded by animistic or Muslim neighbors created an introspective ideology centered on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Emperor. The titles given to Ras Tafari Makonen (1891-1975) upon his coronation in 1930 were quite presumptious. He was ‘King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God and Light of the World’ (Chevannes 1994: 42). Moreover, he claimed to be the 225th direct descendant of King Salomon and Queen Sheba. In 1955, he also offered land in Shashemane, Ethiopia to anyone of African descent who wanted to return to Africa. Paradoxically, this introspection turned world propaganda has given rise to a new religion far away from Ethiopia.

During his own lifetime, Haile Selassie I was attributed divine status in the Afro-messianic cult known as Rastafarianism (Chevannes 1994, Alleyene 1996, Partridge 2004). This peculiar ideology was first recorded on Jamaica in the 1930’s, shortly after the coronation of Haile Selassie. But there were sectarian precursors with a Christian undercurrent already in the 1920’s, notably the various organizations of Marcus Garvey. The Emperor visited Jamaica in 1966 and was met on the tarmac of Kingston Airport by hundreds of thousands of worshippers greeting a person they saw as an incarnation of the Biblical god Jah. After having stayed one hour inside his airplane, Selassie’s subsequently stepped out and denied being Jah. The delay and the ensuing denial were interpreted by the faithful as a proof of Jah’s everdivine modesty. The visit caused many more Jamaicans to
convert to Rastafarianism. The Ethiopian Orthodox church picked up on this and has sent missionaries to Jamaica since 1969. It should be noted that Rastafarianism was given consultative status as a world religion by the United Nations in 1996. However, little has become of Marcus Garvey’s grand repatriation plans from Babylon in Jamaica to Zion in Shashemane, Ethiopia. Rather, Rastafarianism just like the John Frum cargo cult in Vanuatu highlights the importance of the reification process when new forms of hierarchical value systems are being introduced from the outside, something that must have taken place in the contacts between the Roman Empire and the Germanic affinities.

Ethiopia had initially little of value to offer the burgeoning European imperialist economy. Mineral resources had not been exploited and Ethiopia was therefore left alone. But this was to change in the Modern Period, especially after the Ethiopian-Italian territorial agreement of 1891. The Ethiopian army acquired a unique tradition of fighting European imperialists in 1868, 1896, 1935-36 and 1940-41. The British failed to do much progress in 1868. The Italian invaders had effectively been defeated in 1896 by Emperor Menelik II. The battle of Adowa left some 6,000 soldiers dead on the Italian side (Porch 2000:146). The Italians were ousted again in 1941 with British, Free French, and South African aid. The restored Empire embarked on arming itself. The officer corps and police received its training in the 1950’s and 60’s by American, British and Swedish military advisors. Sweden also provided fighter planes and pilot training (Haglund 1988).

In 1974, Mengistu Haile Mariam (1937-) participated in a Marxist-Leninist coup d’état against the Emperor and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Both the Emperor and the archbishop were murdered. Purges of dissident Marxist-Leninists followed and hundreds of civilian intellectuals were sent to the firing squads. A military council of some 100 officers known as the Derge was to rule Ethiopia. But it was Mengistu who would supersede the others (Orizio 2004). After the coup, Mengistu rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel and would soon dominate the Derge. Causing an interesting turn of the tables, Mengistu provoked two rival imperialist powers to suddenly switch sides. This was no small feat for a peripheral kleptocrat. The United States would support the former ‘Marxist Muslim’ Siad Barre and the Soviet Union would hinge its bet on the officer corps of the former imperial Ethiopian army. In 1977, Somalia attacked the Ogaden area (sparsely populated by Somali ethnic affinities). The invading Somali forces were defeated with the aid of Cuban soldiers. Following the advice of imperialist agents, Mengistu did two things: First, he created the largest indigenous African army in the Modern Period, estimated at some 250-430,000 men in Soviet arms (Sarris 1985, Oliver and Atmore 2005). This was done by means of some 1,600 Soviet and 12,000 Cuban advisors. The Cubans would eventually increase to number some 17-18,000 men. Some 2,095 Ethiopians were sent to train in the Communist bloc (Sarris 1985: 46-47). Despite the magnitude of this endeavor, there was little consideration for logistics or the longterm use value of Soviet arms. Second, Mengistu attempted to industrialize Ethiopia. Meanwhile, the Soviet military-industrial complex was collapsing in Europe.

Severe draughts and famines struck Ethiopia in the 1980’s. The population was shoved around in relocation programmes. Millions starved to death in 1984, arousing the pity of the popular icons of American and European cultural imperi-
alism. Famous musicians engaged in mass-consumer fund raising campaigns. Mengistu, who was elected president in 1987, promptly diverted these funds. Despite his ruthless Soviet military tactics with air assaults, artillery barrages and front attacks spearheaded by tank formations, the Ethiopian Stalin found his ground forces unable to gain the upper hand in Eritrea and Tigre. In 1989-1990, the Ethiopian war machine collapsed. In 1991, Mengistu fled to his good friend Mugabe in Zimbabwe. Mengistu is currently wanted for genocide and was expelled from South Africa during a medical visit in 1994. Meanwhile, thousands of useless tanks and cannons are rusting away outside Addis Ababa.

The downfall of the Marxist-Leninist kleptocracy has had immediate consequences for the development of literacy in the region. In 1991, the Oromo Liberation Front came to abandon the Amharic script in the Cushitic Oromo language in favor of Latin script. The survival of Amharic script is thus closely linked to the territorial integrity of Ethiopia as a nation-state, and may well be unable to transcend the language barrier between Semitic and Cushitic. As evident in the section below, a fictitious territorial or ethnic integrity upheld by a peculiar form of literacy is unlikely to last very long. The CIA estimates the 2003 Ethiopian literacy rate to c. 42.7%, with a 50.3% male rate and a 35.1% female rate (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook).

5.5.7 Osmanya Literacy and Somali Kleptocracy

This section seeks to understand the rationale behind an East African reactionary graphematic system. Its story may give a few hints as to why Early Runic never spread beyond a rather small group of people. Understanding too many things does not help the few literates in a preliterate culture getting things done. This explains the plight of the handful Somali intellectuals who took over the newly independent Republic of Somalia in 1960. Somali is a Cushitic language of the Afro-asiatic family (Ostler 2004:36). Somali is not particularly well fitted for transcription into either the Arabic or the Latin alphabet. Somalia had an oral culture in 1960. At the same time, its state apparatus was required to perform on the same level as Western nations.

The administration of the state apparatus required English/Italian biliteracy, as all prior state documents had been written in these languages under two different colonial rules. An in-depth understanding of the predominant ideology, Islam, required digraphic literacy and fluency in a third non-native language, Arabic. There was a major problem with Arabic, though. Even if a Somali could read and recite the Q’uran according to the ideological norms of local Islamic leaders, did this not equate a fluency in spoken or written Arabic. The liturgical Arabic used in Somalia was simply too distant from modern Arabic (Hellman 2003:24). There had been an attempt to create an independent Somali literacy, the Osmanya alphabet. In 1922, Cisman Kenadiid, brother of the Sultan of Obbia, created a new Somali alphabet known as Osmanya in reaction to Arabic and Western influences. Yet the alphabet had a very limited success (Coulmas 1999: 474-475). The situation soon grew too complicated.

In 1969, a military coup d’état signed an end to the difficult demands for Somali state servants. Literacy was stated as one of the problems to be resolved in the ensuing radio address to the nation. There is a quite possibly ficticious story of how Siad Barre, a Somali army officer, held a press conference following the
coup d’État. Behind Barre on the daïs were advisors or imperialist agents, in this case Russians. Barre went on to announce that Somalia now was a ‘Marxist Muslim’ state. A reporter in the audience asked as to how Barre would fit the part-Jewish Karl Marx into a Muslim state. Barre turned around to the imperialist agents and asked with a tone of irritation as to why they had not informed him of Marx’ ethnic affinity.

In 1972, the Osmany alphabet was abolished in an effort to involve more people in government and to heighten the intellectual standard. It did not work out. Barre gave up the idea of Marxism when the Soviet Union unceremoniously dumped him in favor of Mengistu and Ethiopia in the 1970’s. In 1977, Barre attacked Ethiopia in Ogaden and lost. Barre initially banned the Somali clans, an important structure of ethnic affinities. As he grew more unpopular, he played out the clans against each other. The clans eventually toppled him in 1989. Unrest and starvation followed. In 1992, the military regime was toppled. Chaos prevailed.

In 1993, the Americans invaded in ‘Operation Restore Hope’. The Mogadishu clans united to defeat and oust the American troops in 1993. Ironically, clan leader Mohamed Farah Aidid (who was the prime target for American aggression) had enlisted his son in the United States Marine Corps. It was only later that the Americans realized that the son of their sworn enemy was actually present in the invading force as an interpreter. Aidid, jr. was rotated back to the United States. Ten years later, there is still no functioning central government in Somalia, and little hope. The United States, once promising Western democracy and financial aid, has since disentangled itself. Most of the few Somali intellectuals have migrated to America or Europe. This does not bother most Americans as much as the humiliation American imperialism suffered in the ‘Black Hawk Down incident’. A major reason for this may be that Americans, much like the Romans, have never been educated to understand the world from any other perspective than their own. Only 8% of the American people have been outside North America. In general, Americans do not own passports, nor do they master foreign languages or cultures. This is why it was possible for Aidid, jr. to be sent to fight his father back home.

There was an attempt to create an indigenous Somali literacy in the aftermath of Muslim and European imperialism. It was rendered futile by the intervention of American imperialism. Somali literacy has little function in the absence of an independent Somali state apparatus and educational system. It would seem more important to Americans that Somalis are educated in English, to cater to American needs. This monumental bias was also typical of the Roman state apparatus and its educational system. Digraphic literacy was important in the case of the Greek-speaking Eastern hemisphere, but Roman interest in digraphic literacy did not include Arameic, Demotic, hieroglyphs, or runes. That barbarians could have legitimate grievances or problems was largely irrelevant to the interests of Rome. This caused a barbarian reaction. But there never was a credible alternative to Rome.

By contrast, it is most likely that a new generation of aspiring Somali intellectuals will find solace in learning Arabic literacy by means of Islamic fundamentalism. Terrorism appears a viable option, too. These literate ideologies provide an alternative to American imperialism, a fact most Somalis now know from first hand experience. The CIA estimates the current Somali literacy rate to 37.8%, with a 49.7% male rate and a 25.8% female rate (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook). The CIA does not specify what
percentages are literate in Arabic, English, Italian, or Somali. And, as pointed above, there is no indication as to how relevant these various forms of literacy are in relation to the competence and performance of native speakers and literates.


III. 11. Roman Imperial Medallions found in Barbaricum (After Bursche 2001)
6 The Germanic Reification of Roman Monetary Capital

The preceding chapter sought to show how a Germanic kleptocracy emerged out of the remains of the Western Empire. It argued that comparisons with case studies from Modern Period Africa could perhaps explain the Germanic refusal to simply continue as once did the Romans. This chapter seeks to explain how Germanic affinities perceived Rome and *romanitas* – how they slowly came to embrace certain aspects of it, notably the concept of monetary capital. Note here that Roman monetary capital had a very strong connection to literacy. The public display of literacy was an important feature of every coin, giving it a formulaic legitimacy. As shown in this chapter, Germanic affinities had a number of strategies to come to terms with the display of literacy in relation to monetary capital. There was a Latin path, were Roman expressions of power were reified into Germanic ones, although one would still use a corrupt Latin (the Merovingian context being a case in point). The other was to write in Germanic language, but with runes. The latter path represented quite a rupture. It is thus to be considered as a secondary development. Behind this secondary Germanic development lurks the obvious idea to skip that bothersome hurdle of literacy altogether. In the end, this is what happened when the figural gold foils appeared.

How was the gradual acceptance of *romanitas* expressed in Germanic culture? It is clear that there was a considerable delay in this process. To understand the development of Germanic consciousness, how it was affected by Roman imperialism, one must look at the time span between when Germanic people were first introduced to, or acquired certain Roman objects or values. Second, one must establish when Germanic peoples were capable of producing similar Roman objects or values themselves. Personal experience must have been a key factor in order for imitative behavior to become a legitimate expression of power. There is quite a chronological discrepancy. The learning curve appears to have been steep. The chief Roman object to be transformed by Germanic hands was minted gold. It was also the primary target for all Barbarian incursions into Roman territory. This chapter is divided into sections that discuss: 1) the nature of Roman triumphs, imperial medallions, *multipla*, and gold coins, *solidi*. Here, emphasis is on how these were perceived and reified by Germanic affinities; 2) the Nordic gold import from the mid-4th century to the late 5th century AD; 3) the development of the Germanic gold bracteates, and the figural gold foils.

6.1 To the Victor Belongs the Spoils of War

Imperial gold medallions and other rewards in the shape of *dona militaria* were handed out only to a select few. The Emperor himself probably did this in public during imperial triumphs. This was considered an important expression of *romanitas*. The imperialist ideology stood vindicated. A grandiose ritual served to underline this sentiment. What was the nature of an imperial triumph in the eyes of the Germanic beholder? Bull sacrifices pertaining to Jupiter (and the Romanized Baal, Jupiter Dolichenus) were part of the imperial triumphs. After military victories, the Emperor led triumphal rituals in front of an audience. In the city of Rome, a number of bulls were generally sacrificed in front of Jupiter’s temple on
the Capitolium. In Carnuntum, there was a similar temple mount with an adjacent arena. On the arch of Septimus Severus (193-211 AD) in Leptis Magna, there is a vivid depiction of a bull sacrifice in front of the Emperor and his wife, Julia Domna (Ramage and Ramage 1995: 241, fig. 9.12). During the 3rd and 4th centuries, imperial triumphs would be celebrated in provincial towns such as Trier. Trier was larger and closer to the *limes* than most other towns. Trier also held more Germanic spectators. Prominent Germanic soldiers may well have been recipients of imperial awards, and initiated as Mithraic ‘ravens’, ‘occults’ and ‘soldiers’ (Kaliff and Sundquist 2004).

The Emperor’s handing out of selective gifts and the celebrations of triumphs with bull sacrifices were ideas extremely appealing to Germanic selective affinities. These set out to imitate the medallions. It is likely that ritual surrounding the triumphs and the mystery religions was imitated and reinterpreted. Stages of a reification process set in, an *interpretatio germana*. Roman objects were given a new meaning. This was clear to those who constructed it, but obscured the original meaning given to the objects. Thompson (1984: 176) describes how Christian iconography may be understood in a completely different way if there is an established process where all new iconographic representations may be interpreted as something within the own culture. This mode thought becomes more palatable rather than accepting a direct loan from another culture, which may be seen as an act of submission.

The reification process (Lukacs 1988) enabled 20th century Haitians to see Damballah, a West African serpent god, in a 19th Catholic chromolithograph depicting St. Patrick’s banishment of all snakes in 6th century Ireland (Thompson 1984). Iconography similar to that of the taurochtony, the Mithraic bull sacrifice, appeared on Germanic bracteates in the early 5th century (Kaliff and Sundquist 2004). It has been argued that C-bracteates depict a human figure in profile (clearly inspired by the image of the Roman Emperor) on top of a horned animal in the presence of a raven. This human figure, depending on what bracteate it appears, represents a Germanic King (Seebold 1998). Lerjeryd (2000) has a different opinion. He accepts Hauck’s (1985) identification of Odin on the bracteates while stating that bracteate iconography is derivative of Roman imperial iconography. Seemingly oblivious to long stages of reification, Lerjeryd dismisses the link between Odin and bulls in Nordic mythology. Nor does he mention the story of Audhumla and the petrogenesis of Bure and the obvious similarity to Mithraism. A further argument offered is that there is considerable distance between find concentrations of bracteates and the Mithraea along the *limes*. But there is no mention of diachronic versus synchronic analysis. It seems unreasonable to claim that the link goes directly between Mithraea and bracteates. There has to be an intermittent reification period. It will have an iconography linking the two extremes. But at this point it is difficult to identify the original causality. If Lerjeryd (2000) goes to far in his refusal, Kaliff and Sundqvist (2004) certainly go to far in overemphasizing the role of Mithraism, rather than the more general traits of Roman imperialism (cf. Fischer 2005a).

It is not certain that the figure on the C-bracteates actually represents the Roman Emperor, Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithras, a Germanic King, or Odin. Nor is this really important. What is clear is that the *imitatio* has via *interpretatio* become part of a subsequent *translatio*. Note here that the Germanic iconographic imitation of Roman triumphal coins and medallions, and a number of Germanic bull statues predate the use of runes on bracteates. But this does not mean that there is
no preoccupation with cattle and wealth in other parts of Germanic ideology. The very first rune of the Futhark, *f*, denotes *fehu*, a synonym for cattle and variable capital. The counterpart is the last rune of the Futhark, *o*. It denotes fixed capital in the form of inherited landownership. This shows that iconographic imitation and the invention of a new writing system need not be directly related to each other, although they follow similar patterns of transformation from one culture to another. When the two amalgamate into a single type of object, one must ascertain which part originated where and what the consequences of the amalgamation were to be.

6.2 The *multiplum* and the *solidus*

The Germanic inventors of bracteates did not want to imitate just any Roman coin that happened to be in circulation. The imitated object was to be the most rare of all Roman coinage, the imperial medallion, the *multiplum*. The Latin term *multiplum* gathers sums into one. There was more to this coin than to others. Only very few of these ever reached Germanic hands. But since the distribution ceremonies of medallions are likely to have been public, rumor of their presence and importance must have spread fast. It is also likely that the Germanic recipients sought to display their medallions as much as possible, and there probably were Germanic reenactments of the Roman ceremony.

There are only 33 known *multipla* from Germania Libera (see ill. 11, Bursche 2001:84, Fig. 1). They date from the early 3rd century to 426 AD. Out of a 100 known types of *multipla*, 85 were produced 306-363 AD by the Constantine dynasty (Constantine, Constantine II, Constans, Gallus, Constantius II, Julian) and 364-392 AD by the Valentinian dynasty (Valentinian I, Valens, Gratian, Valentinian II). Seven were made for Gallienus (253-268 AD). Their weight varies from c. 15 g to 250 g. An important point is that the heaviest gold medallions were produced 330-380 AD, whereas the period of the Tetrarchy, c. 285-305 AD, shows very few known medallions (Bursche 2001:88, Fig.5). The largest medallions have been found in Poland and the Carpathian Basin. These belong to a group of treasure hoards gathered over at least a hundred years. The time span and the location of these hoards suggest a Gothic context, considering that king Ermanarec ruled all Goths c. 350-376 AD (Bursche 2001: 87, Kiss 2001).

The largest Roman medallion ever found in a Germanic context weighed well over 250 g. It was struck for Emperor Gratian. It was probably given as a direct gift to the Gepid royal family, belonging the medallion hoard of Szilágy Somlyó. Many of the *multipla* in this hoard and in others were cast with the same die. They also have the same kind of loops fastened on them. This suggests that the emperor had handed out the medallions to a single power, which then had them reworked and redistributed (Bursche 2001: 94-95). The redistribution is likely to have imitated the primary distribution at great length. Among the most peripheral *multipla*, four have been found in Denmark (of which one comes from Gudme), and two in Norway. None of these exceeded 50 g. By contrast, there are later bracteates from Skåne weighing up to 100 g. What one could not earn in Roman and/or Gothic service one had to manufacture at home. This speeded up the reification process, and Germanic interpretation could express itself in text, even in Latin. A case in point is an imitation of a *multiplum* from the Zagórsyn hoard, depicting the brothers Valens and Valentinian I. But the legend is quite an anomaly: REGIS
ROMANORVM, a misspelled *reges romanorum*: ‘Kings of Rome’. The Romans reserved the title *rex* for barbarians. But self-conscious Germanic literates of the late 4th century had no problem equaling the imperial rule to that of their own (Bursche 2001:89). As Werner (1998) points out, the Roman term for statehood was *regnum*.

The *solidus* is a small gold coin, weighing c. 4.45 g. Constantine I first introduced it in 309 AD. The Latin term for this coin has since extended to such Modern concepts as ‘solidity’, ‘soldier’, ‘money’, and ‘salary’ in a number of Western languages. The term represents a proper value. The *solidus* was meant to supersede the debased coins of the past soldier Emperors. There was an obvious need for it. The Roman Empire did not have access to gold mines in the late 4th and 5th century (Ørstedt 2001). To establish a material foundation for the solidus, gold from pagan temples was recycled. This is a strong indication of the economic stagnation inside the Western Roman Empire, on the one hand, and of the financial solidity of the Eastern Empire on the other. There must have been quite a lot of gold invested in the pagan past, although the Western coinage was to ebb out long before the Eastern coinage.

Millions of *solidi* were struck, in particular by the Eastern Empire. Large hoards soon found their way into barbarian hands. One may note that the Huns required an annual tribute of 151,200 *solidi* in 443 AD, together with a lump sum of 432,000 *solidi* (Kyhlberg 1986). In c. 315 AD, Constantine I appears on a silver coin in one of the first images of the Roman emperor in full harness, but this time as seen from the front (Hauck 1985). But its only after Valentinian I that a drastic change occurs in the iconography of Roman coinage. The image of the harnessed emperor becomes redundant and meaningless, his iconographic persona steps into anonymity. Instead, the legend becomes all the more important. One may note that the more powerful the emperor, the more acronyms such as DN, IMP, PF AVG, are likely to appear. By contrast, a puppet emperor like Valentinian II (375-392 AD) would have his whole named spelled out by the powerful co-emperor Theodosius I (378-395 AD): VALENTINIANUS. This reduced him to junior status, which had not been the case in the beginning. After the death of Theodosius I, the Roman Empire was to be perennially divided. The following Emperors proved to be inept. Bereft of real power, they were in the hands of Germanic generals or holed up in the imperial courts; Ravenna in the West, and Constantinople in the East. How long did an Emperor rule? How many solidi did he mint? How many were distributed on what occasions? My argument is that a lot of Roman monetary capital (struck for a number of Emperors in dire straits) were directly distributed to Germanic kleptocrats. This is evident from Nordic gold hoards.

6.3 The Nordic Gold Import

The find of a South Germanic gold ring (SHM 4708) from Period C3 in Frustuna Parish, Södermanland suggests a long tradition of importing regalia from Southeastern Europe, imitations of Roman military insignias (Andersson 1995). One is compelled to ask how the ring got there, and what function a late 3rd century Germanic imitation of a Roman military insignia may have had in an area with a communal central place dedicated to Frej. The answer is likely to point to the Germanic attacks against the *limes* in Southeastern Europe. The internal Roman strife during the 3rd and 4th centuries made the Germanic peoples rather confident
and bellicose. Yet despite the disturbances, contacts between Germania Libera and Rome were ever increasing. By the early 5th century, Rome was in serious trouble. Even people in the faraway Mälar Valley knew that there was unprecedented opportunity on the Continent.

The extraordinary feat of organizing an overseas extortion campaign could only have been possible if there was a sense of a super-regional cohesion among hegemonic affinities under capable military leaders. The leaders would have had use for men with intellectual skills such as military strategy, literacy, and fluency in foreign languages. Some leaders may well have claimed divine descent, some form of messianic calling, or were thought of has having ‘dumb luck’. The charismatic aura of such personae (e.g. Attila, Clovis, Theoderic) would have enabled the organization of a retinue, prepared to make the long journey from the Mälar Valley to Pannonia and back again. A bellicose ideology bred within regional male affinities would have enabled cohesion and discipline for a larger enterprise.

The existence of Sasanid sardonyxes in Gamla Uppsala and Byzantine garnet cloisonné in Brunnshögen shows that there were rich rewards for loyal service to foreign warlords in southeastern Europe. Furthermore, two ringgold treasures from Södermanland, Tuna i Västerljung (c. 12, 500 g) and Skarpan in Sköldinge Parish (550.98 g), would suggest that enormous amounts of gold were brought back to the Mälar Valley during the late 5th century. But it was not to be buried with its owners. The North is devoid of solidus hoards in burial contexts like that of king Childeric (c. 481/482 AD).

Some 60 kg of non-minted gold has been found in the North. The minted Roman gold adds up to only 4.4 kg. The proportionally low number of solidi means that these were generally recast prior to kleptocratic redistribution, even if some of the other gold may have had a different provenance, dating even as far back as the Bronze Age with its gold nugget metal work. They were the raw material for Germanic ideological innovation and political ambition. They did not have the same ideological value as the old multipla. The more reproduced and simplified the image of the emperor, the lesser his value. A case in point, the Timboholm hoard had a weight equivalent to c. 1,800 solidi. By contrast, it is the harmony between to different weight standards that is being sought in this hoard (Herschend 2001b). Similarly, one may wonder if the absence of solidi in Gudme (cf. Kromann 1994) is indicative of decline, or simply related to the fact that it was all redistributed by a kleptocracy in the shape of sword rings, spirals and bracteates?

6.3.1 Pannonia and Beyond

It is evident that most minted Roman gold found in the North comes from the Eastern Empire. There is a 3:1 ratio against the West. This suggests that the late 5th century Nordic kleptocracy had more in common with Goths, Gepids and Heruli than with Alemanni, Franks and Thuringians. It further implies that Nordic retinues rarely moved westward at any longer distance after the late 4th century, when Gudme seems to have been involved. One must look elsewhere. Lotter (2003) has studied the administrative and demographic change in the space between the Eastern Alps and the Danube during Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages (375-600). He touches on some very pertinent subjects. The key issue is that the Roman provinces of Illyria, Noricum, and Pannonia I-II were the centerpiece
for the conflict between the Eastern and Western Empires, and the barbarian affinities.

Pannonia was exceptional in that it was handed over to Barbarian foederatii on several occasions, the first time in 380 AD. This led to a disruption in agriculture as the Roman farmers fled to the fortified towns. This caused a break in tax revenue. But the imperial administration also regained control of Pannonia afterwards for brief periods of time, notably after the demise of the Huns in the 450’s. Even before that, the region produced more regular troops and emperors than did any other Roman province. Starting with Aurelianus (270-275 AD) and Probus (276-282 AD), cavalry commanders from the region would rise to the highest echelons of power. Among the more able rulers one may note Valentinian I (364-375 AD), among the less fortunate his brother Valens (364-378 AD). Even the last West Roman Emperor Romulus (475-476 AD) was a Pannonian. How is this relevant to the Nordic periphery and its intellectual development? Herschend (1980: 260-262, fig. 38) suggests three entry points into the Roman Empire for Baltic traders, whereas Jobst and Hiller (2000: 56) suggest a direct line from the Weichsel to Carnuntum. Be this as it may, Pannonia seems to have been the gateway into the Roman Empire for Nordic traders and mercenaries. Their services brought gold in return. Administrative centers such as Aquileia, Carnuntum, and Sirmium were the end stops for the amber route up to the Southern shores of the Baltic. The two latter towns were also important coordination points for all military action in the region.

The northbound stream of minted gold takes off under the Western emperors Honorius (393-423 AD) with 29 known solidi, and Valentinian III (425-455 AD) with 79. This is not surprising as Honorius experienced serious problems of legitimacy (Lejdegård 2002). The import reaches its apex under the Eastern emperor Theodosius II (408-450 AD) with 165 solidi and Leo I (457-474 AD) with 166. A small peak occurs again under Zeno (474-491 AD) with 77 solidi, and Anastasius I (491-518 AD) with 99. Any assessment of the late 5th century solidus deposits on Bornholm, Gotland, Öland and Helgö leads to a number of further conclusions. The solidi must have been hoarded on the Continent and brought back in lump sums, as many solidi have been struck with same mint stamps. Such hoards could not have been accumulated by means of trade. Rather, there must have been a steady return of Nordic retinues from Southeastern Europe before and after the demise of the Huns, the fall of the West Roman Empire, and the Ostrogothic conquest of Italy. The majority of all Swedish solidus deposits are found on Gotland (Andersson 1995) and Öland (Herschend 1980). Similarly, the majority of all Danish solidi have been found on Bornholm and Funen (Fagerlie 1967).

6.3.2 The Five Jackpots

From the chronological grouping of the Nordic solidus deposits, it is clear that at least five very successful expeditions must have taken place c. 425-435, 450-455, 461-467, 474-480, and 490-495 AD (Fagerlie 1967, Herschend 1980, 1991, Kyhlberg 1986, Andersson 1995). The Gotlandic hoards often have a different source than do the others. There is a chronological void between the first and the later expeditions, see table 5. The void may be identical with the brief Hunnish Empire. Fagerlie (1967) used approximate years to show which coins were the most frequent. Herschend (1980) and Andersson (1995) used five-year intervals to
indicate when payments must have taken place. Many attempts have also been made to identify the events and locations where the hoarded sums were gathered (Fagerlie 1967). The drawback to these methods is that they have not taken into account the movements of the actors involved. I believe it possible to get an even closer scope. It is of utmost importance to point out that the successful extortions or raids were not so much dependent on Germanic initiative as on opportunity whenever the Roman state apparatus had problems in the line of succession or with a large share of its employees. To get a certain job done, it was willing to hand out money on the spot unto any willing entrepreneur.

The composition of Nordic hoards can be scrutinized even harder, distinguishing different coins belonging to the same emperor. Björnhovda and Åby are the two largest *solidus* hoards on Öland. They are not very far away from each other, nor are they far apart in time from each other. Yet the composition of the two hoards differs to a considerable degree (Herschend 1980). This means that they derive from two different expeditions, one against the Western Empire, and another against the Eastern Empire. Given the relatively small size of Öland and its population this appears rather daring. One can only conclude that it only took a small group of professionals to get at the gold, and that the Ölanders knew what they were doing.

The years 473-477 AD saw five emperors in the East; Leo I, Leo II, Zeno, Basiliscus, and Marcus. There were four in the West at the same time; Olybrius, Glycerius, Julius Nepos and Romulus. Besides Leo I, all emperors were to experience severe problems of legitimacy at one time or another. On more than one occasion would they have to pay rebellious troops and/or cantankerous allies. Coins were also minted at various places by various emperors on the run, notably Julius Nepos, and by Roman or Germanic kleptocrats acting on their own, such as Syagrius in Gaul and Odoaucar in Italy. There are a number of Gothic imitations among the Roman solidi. The emperor may have had different motives for different mintings, issuing coins depicting a rival, for instance. He may have been in a tight spot or even on the run, only to come back in full swing later (as was the case of Zeno).

Roman accounts for how much a given emperor left behind must be compared to the number of coins bearing his name, and the number of months he reigned. It is clear that some emperors were very affluent, others wasteful and some financially troubled. Marcianus (450-457 AD) was the first eastern emperor who refused to pay Attila. The Emperor left behind 100,000 lbs of gold. This is not surprising, as only 31 *solidi* minted for Marcianus have been found in the North, although this is a relatively high ratio. His successor, Leo I, spent a lot of Marcianus’ money. Among other things, he bribed Valamir, a Gothic war leader in the Balkans, c. 459 AD. He also wasted enormous sums on a fruitless expedition led by Basiliscus against the Vandals in 469 AD. Leo’s successor Zeno appears to have had financial troubles, as did the usurper Basiliscus. By contrast, Anastasius I is said to have left behind 320,000 lbs of gold. Given that Anastasius was wealthy and ruled for a long time, one should not be surprised to see a relatively high number of his *solidi* on Gotland and in Elsehoved near Gudme.

Two conclusions are apparent. First, the Roman *solidi* in the North are clearly related to the imperial administration of a given region, Pannonia. After the demise of the Huns, only those Emperors are present in the Nordic hoards that held some control over Illyricum, Italy and Pannonia. It does not seem to matter whether they were Western or Eastern. Notably absent are the usurpers who used
Gaul or Turkey as a base of power. For instance, Avitus (455-457 AD) who minted in Arles is not represented. The usurper Leontius of Antioch (484-488 AD) is a rare exception, with a single *solidus* known from Bornholm. Second, a number of relatively short-lived Western Emperors with very brief reigns are clearly overrepresented in the Nordic *solidus* material, notably Anthemius, Libius Severus, and Majorian, see table 5. They had less time to mint, and less tax revenue at hand. Some of them would on occasion resort to minting coins depicting rival emperors. This suggests that Nordic retinues were directly engaged in imperial service for these Emperors. Or, rather, in the service of the Germanic kleptocrat who controlled the two, in this case, the Goth Ricimer. Libius Severus and Leo I have the greatest number of die identities among the Nordic solidi (Fagerlie 1967: 112-113). Their reigns coincide, and they have the highest find/month ratio in tables 2 and 5. It is thus likely that solidi struck for both Emperors were handed out in a lump sum to the same people in the mid 460’s.
For the West, the most frequent month/find ratio is to be found in the group of Emperors in Italy who ruled in the aftermath of the Vandal sack of Rome in 455. They were under the influence of Ricimer, Anthemius' Ostrogothic son-in-law. Missing altogether are the British and Spanish usurpers from the first part of the 5th century. The British usurpers lasted for a while, yet seemed to have had a more restricted access to gold. But also the usurpers from Gaul with Visigothic support are absent, e.g. Avitus who ruled from Arles. Absent is also Olybrius, who ruled from Rome under the influence of the Vandals. The Nordic coins all have to do with the area northeast of Italy. Note here that the coins from 455-472 were rarely imitated. The Ostrogoths in Italy rather imitated coins of long-lasting Eastern Emperors, notably Anastasius I and Justinian I. Surprising is the frequent ratio of Marcianus, a reputed miser. He is said to have refused the Huns a tribute. Considering Marcianus’ brief reign, it appears that a round sum of his coinage still wound up in Nordic hands.

6.3.3 A Common Weal?

There are some rare types of *solidi* in the Nordic hoards, and among the stray finds, see tables 2-3 and 5. Rare types may be defined as those deriving from a short period related to a specific individual or mint. The unexpected high frequency of a rare type in a given area indicates that an elective affinity based there had immediate access to Roman gold at some point. There are only 10 known examples of *solidi* minted for Basiliscus (475-476 AD) and Basiliscus and Marcus (476-477 AD) in the North. This places them among the most rare issues.

The only known genuine *solidus* in a ‘royal’ barrow was found in Ottarshögen, Vendel Parish (Uppland). It was indeed struck for Basiliscus. The eight *solidi* depicting Basiliscus alone should be held in relation to his brief nine-month reign. One may compare this to the 17 coins from Justinian’s I 28-year reign. It would seem that the unfortunate and short-lived Basiliscus was forced to pay a lot during his failed rebellion against Zeno. But how did one of his coins end up in Uttershögen? Lindquist (1936) once dated Ottarshögen to c. 500 AD. Lindquist based his assumption on the fact that the *solidus* (SHM 15847) was rather heavily worn and had been pierced. It is likely to have been used for some time as a pendant. He also identified one of the two cremated men in the barrow as King Ottar, based on the fact that the barrow had been known as Uttershögen since at least 1675. Nerman (1942) argues for a later date, c. 525-550 AD.

At least one of the mysteries surrounding Uttershögen and the early days of Vendel parish may be solved. It is fairly certain from what mint and what central hoard the Basiliscus *solidus* in Ottarshögen came (Arrhenius 2001, 2004). Fagerlie (1967: 59-61) lists five examples from the mint in Constantinople (including the example from Ottarshögen), and two from the mint in Milan. There are only two hoards in the Mälar Valley, both from Helgö, Ekerö Parish (LUHM 19672, SHM 26683). The larger hoard consisted of some 47 *solidi*, of which three were struck for Basiliscus. Two examples were struck in Constantinople, and one in Milan. The Björnhovda hoard on Öland (36 *solidi*) and the Botes hoard on Gotland (82 *solidi*) contained one Constantine example each. The only other example from Milan was found in the Soldatergård hoard on Bornholm (36 *solidi*). Fagerlie (1967) has argued that the composition of the larger Helgö hoard makes it quite similar to those on Gotland, having a tpq of 491 AD. She even goes as far as
to suggest that a retinue from the Mälar Valley has taken the hoard from Gotland as a warbooty in the early 6th century. Kyhlberg (1986) argues against this by showing the presence of die identities between Helgö, Bornholm and Öland. It is evident that secondary or even tertiary political actors like the dominant affinities on Helgö and in Vendel Parish could have profited from such an action, although it is more likely that they collaborated with retinues from the three Baltic Islands during a few extortion expeditions. The latter theory is much more appealing when one starts to look for hoards where Basiliscus is represented within a wider area. The Mrzezino hoard in Wejherowo on the Polish coast contained approximately 150 solidi, including Basiliscus.

In table 5, I have made a comparison between the certain Swedish solidi and those found in the tomb of Childeric in Tournai, Belgium. The point is to show that the contexts are very different. They are indicative of how separate the respective paths to monetary capital were for the Merovingians and the Nordic kleptocrats. This difference is important in order to understand the subsequent isolation of the North. By the 6th century, it would seem that it was no longer possible for Nordic kleptocrats to actively participate in Continental politics. On Gotland, there are some 81 known solidi struck for Anastasius but only 15 for Justinian I (527-565 AD). A single Frankish coin (Théodebert I, 534-548 AD) is the final coin in the Botes hoard. The tomb of Childeric, by contrast, contains a lump sum of current capital. It is likely to be a direct payment from the Eastern Emperor to Childeric personally. A number of solidi otherwise indicative of extortion campaigns in Pannonia and Italy are missing, notably Libius Severus (461-465 AD). The latter did mint in Arles. Three Nordic examples struck in Arles are listed by Fagerlie (1967). Arles is reasonably close to Tournai, but the gold was not within Childeric’s reach. It seems quite likely that this was due to the Roman bureaucrats in Gaul, Aegidius and Paulus, and their Visigoth allies. These effectively blocked a Merovingian advance to southern Gaul and Italy.

6.3.4 Distribution and Circulation

There is quite a lot of unminted gold in the Mälar Valley, some 16,380 g, see table 6. A fourth of all the gold in Sweden has been found in Södermanland alone. The finds in Uppland have been partially mapped by Zachrisson (1998), and I have greatly benefited from her unpublished records. Yet, the Upplandic hoards simply do not compare to the wealth of the southern neighbor. It should be noted that there are very few cases of distinct Roman Iron Age gold artifacts in Södermanland compared to Uppland (Andersson 1993: 236-239). There are also less solidi, if one adds Färntuna hundare to Uppland rather than Södermanland. The typical form of gold in Södermanland is in the shape of necklaces, spiral rods and bars weighing anything from 985 g to 7 g. These large amounts of gold should not be seen as evidence of a developed monetary economy. On the contrary, only few people qualified as owners of gold. It is true that spiral gold does not allow for accurate dating. It is thus inevitable that gold from the Roman Iron Age and the Viking Period has slipped into the sample. There is an inherent error in the sample.

By the same token, it is clear that the vast majority of all spiral gold belongs to the Migration Period. The lead artifacts accompanying gold spirals in hoards are generally typical of Style I and thus date to the late 5th and early 6th century. Gold
in Vendel Period graves is very scarce. It is often imported regalia in the case of male graves. Gold in female graves appears only in the vicinity of larger hoards. The distribution channels for gold within the social structure were rather limited. Gold was hard currency in a brief and turbulent proto-monetary economy with few market actors. Besides the hoards on Helgö, solidi seem very rare to find in Södermanland. However, a solidus from Västerbröta, Grödinge Parish (SHM 1521) was struck for Zeno (474-491) and thus matches the coinage from Helgö, Öland and Bornholm from the third expedition of the very late 5th century. It seems unlikely that the hoards came from gold exports from the southern Baltic coast, as argued by Kyhlberg (1986: 72).

The gold hoards in Gästrikland, Södermanland and Uppland with the omission of obvious Roman Iron Age and Viking Period objects and figural gold foils may be classified into six groups, see table 6. This is the case despite the fact that the exact original weight of a hoard at the time for its deposition will never be fully known.

Group 1 is a single hoard. The largest hoard (SHM 21, 28-29) belongs to an unbelievably wealthy affinity residing in a Tuna. This affinity must have had claims to royal and religious power, evident in the deposit of a necklace weighing 985 g and sword fittings. This hoard defines the number and sizes of other hoards in groups 2-6. There are no coins in this hoard.

Group 2 consists of two hoards that together make up 1/12 of the gold in group 1. The individual ratio in group 2 is thus 1/24 of group 1. Group 2 consists of ‘royal’ or ‘sacred’ hoards, necklaces, and sword rings. The necklace from Fagernäss and the ring gold from Sköldinge may be best described as collective or temple treasures. There are no coins in this group.

Group 3 consists of eight hoards that together have approximately the same amount of gold as group 2. The individual ratio between a group 3 hoard to group 1 is thus 1/96, and 1/4 to group 2. This group is clearly related to workshops and vasalls in the hierarchy of a regional kleptocracy. Thus one may find a larger sum of solidi The Kvicksta sword ring alone weighs nearly 250 g, and was found together with a gilded bronze ring. There is a considerable number of hoarded old solidi in this group.

Group 4 consists of 22 hoards where the average size is 1/3 of that of group 3, 1/12 to group 2 and 1/288 of group 1. This group of hoards is likely to have belonged to subordinate retainers, such as warriors, overseers, and goldsmiths. There are no coins in this group.

Group 5 consists of nine hoards. The average size of a group 5 hoard is 2/5 of a group 4 hoard. Group 6 consists of stray finds, anything from a decent spiral to a single solidus. The stray coins stretch over the entire solidus horizon 395-565 AD. The small hoards of groups 5-6 are indicative of a certain circulation of spiral gold, showing that most of the larger hoards in groups 1-4 were eventually divided and redistributed. What is more important, the many smaller hoards show that it was gold that carried meaning and importance, not a specific artifact. The image of the Roman Emperor, be it on a solidus or a bracteate, was not a perennially sacred object in the Germanic periphery.

A hierarchical ownership is evident distribution of gold in groups 1-6. But if one groups the gold regionally, it becomes clear that there are distribution centers in certain regions, notably the central parts of Lake Mälaren and Southern Södermanland. The central region of Uppland around Gamla Uppsala is notably absent. The presence of a distribution center is indicated by multiple finds of hoards be-
longing to groups 1-2. A single find in group 2 without a corresponding sub group in groups 3-6, may be an indication that the hoard is isolated and more of a temple treasure than monetary capital. It may well be that the peripheral parts of the Mälar Valley could never attain a secure top position in groups 1-2, but had to contend themselves with a local monopoly. The regional distribution indicates that hundare represented in groups 3-6 only may have been subordinate to distribution centers in groups 1-2. Daga and Rönö are therefore likely sub units of Hölebo, as are Svartlösa and Selebo of Färentuna.

6.4 The Germanic Gold Bracteate

The Latin term *bractea* denotes a thin metal sheet. The bracteate was stamped on one side only. We do not know what Germanic kleptocrats called their bracteates, except perhaps for *walhakurne*. The rationale behind the rejection of an exact imitation may have been a Germanic dissatisfaction with the new Roman *solidus* iconography. Some may have preferred a return to old values, albeit in a more Germanic guise. In 1999, there were some 933 known gold and bronze bracteates from 587 moulds (Düwel 2001: 44-55). There are 216 bracteates with text from 166 moulds. On 186 bracteates from 130 moulds, there are imitations of Latin capitals and/or runes. Proper Early Runic texts appear on 158 bracteates from 108 moulds.

![Fig. 1. Finds of Scandinavian gold bracteates (Gaimster 1992). Triangle = hoard; filled circle = grave find.](image)

Ill. 13. The Distribution of Bracteates (After Gaimster 2001)
The majority of the bracteates are found in larger hoards in Denmark and Skåne (see ill. 13). But there are also significant numbers of very small deposits. This is not surprising given the general absence of a burial context in that region at the time (Axboe 2001: 126-127). The 70+ known graves with bracteates are nearly all female and located to Western Norway or Gotland (Hauck 1985: 14-15, Gaimster 2001: 143-144, Fig. 1.). Most graves date to c. 500-550 AD. Bracteate types have a rather limited distribution area, and the epicenter should thus be regarded as rather close to a production and distribution centers (Axboe 1991, Wicker 1994, Imer 2003: 58). In the time span of some hundred years, the Germanic bracteate context underwent considerable change, shifting from the male gender to the other. From the single multiplu m out of the Roman emperor’s hand, via masses of plundered solidi, a new iconography, sometimes accompanied by Early Runic text, moved from the Germanic male gender to the female. Yet, this transfer was still a matter of male control over the female. Men acquired the gold by means of warfare, and the personal names on bracteates are all male. Certain women were given a heightened role within the female genus by means of wearing bracteates. Ideally, the early 6th century bracteate carriers were meant to be to the leading fertile women in every important household.

The Early Runic texts are when at all linguistically meaningful predominantly male personal names or epithets, makers’ marks and formulas. There are occasional exceptions. A case in point is KJ 130 Trollhättan: tawo la/azodu ‘I make an invitation’. Another case is KJ 105 Skodborghus: auja alawin auja alawin auja alawin j alawid. This entangles as a thrice repeated vocative of the male name alawin, a formulaic word auja ‘Protection, Health, Joy’, together with a single rune j ‘Good harvest’ followed by alawid, another vocative of a male personal name.

The first bracteates are known as the M-type, an outright imitation of the late 4th century Roman imperial medallions. There are some 17 known examples of this type. The M-bracteates are sometimes provided with an imitation of Latin capitals. This, together with the overwhelming number of non-textual bracteates or textual imitations suggests that the production of correct and narrative text was quite a secondary matter. The emphasis was rather on the Germanic imitation, interpretation and translation of Roman imperial iconography. M-bracteates and medallions are most often found in rich graves in Western Norway, Western Sweden and Gotland. These graves include both male and female burials and date to c. 400 AD (Gaimster 2001).

The next type to appear is the A-bracteate. There are some 87 known examples of this type. Its centerpiece is a human head, derived from the image of the Roman emperor. The iconography has slowly departed from the dependent imitation of the M-type, the imperial diadems have become more abstract. But it is also possible that some of the early A-bracteates may still seek to depict distinct Roman personae, a case in point are the bracteates from Broholm and Elmelund which ought to depict the Emperors Valens and Valentinian I.

There are some 85 known examples of the B-type. A whole human figure appears on the B-Bracteate. This would suggest an interest in the whole body and of practice. The Emperor was seldom depicted as a whole figure on coins, a notable exception being members of the Valentinian dynasty (364-392 AD). Rather, female deities or personifications of ethnic affinities and virtues appear on the reverse side of the imperial portrait. The earliest B-bracteates clearly imitate the reverse sides of Valentinian and other Roman coins. But the B-type is so far an
innovation that some very unique motifs eventually appear, with a strong flavor of Germanic mythology. One may recognize mythological scenes such as Tyr’s struggle with the Fenris wolf. One of the so-called Dreigötterbrakteaten may depict Balder’s death. The process of reification has reached very far, and will find its complete expression in the D- and F-types.

There are some 385 known examples of the C-type. It is the most numerous bracteate. It is another subsequent iconographic innovation, combined with a strong inclination towards Early Runic. There are as many as 105 Early Runic examples of the C-type from 73 different moulds. This type depicts a human riding an animal sometimes provided with horns and ears, or horns. The rider and his animal
are sometimes surrounded by one or two birds with curved beaks (possibly ravens or eagles). The C-type provides the longest and most sophisticated Early Runic texts within the bracteate corpus.

One of the rare C-bracteate issues is that of the Vadstena. It has the entire Early Runic Futhark and the sequential repetition formula tuwatuwa on it. The three finds are reasonably close to each other with one in Östergötland and two in Närke. They may have been distributed in the area, much like the pattern of ewu bracteates. It would seem that somebody with access in 5th century Östergötland cared about retaining a form of runic literacy. A hypothetical interpretation of these bracteates is that the issuer desired the spread of a visible graphematic system unto a few. There must have been a sensed need to do this rather than spreading a name, a title, or a word on a bracteate. It is difficult to say how much this was in vain as the 9th century urin still knows x of the old runes together with four other derivative runic graphematic systems. Two identical bracteates found on Zealand have the text hariuhahaitk : farauis : gibauja : ttt ‘I am called harihuha, knowledgable of danger, I give auja : ttt’. The Tjurkö bracteate has a metric text: wurte runor ana wahnakurne helde kunimudi ‘HeldaR worked runes on the foreign grain for Kunimund’. Within the C-type, one can discern differences in the distribution of certain Early Runic formulas (Wicker 1994:62-64, Fig 1.). It is clear that the ewu formula belongs to a group of C-bracteates chiefly distributed on Gotland, whereas alu is a widespread formula, although concentrated to Denmark. This can only be explained as the result of different bracteate workshops working under different ideological conditions. For whatever reason, ewu obviously meant more to the early 6th century kleptocracy distributing bracteates on Gotland than it did elsewhere.

There are some 334 known D-bracteates. These never have runes on them. The D-bracteate is the last type to appear, emerging during the shift from Style I to Style II in the first half of the 6th century. The fact that it does not have runes on it shows that the role of text has diminished. The distribution pattern is much wider than the other types, copies of D-bracteates found in Västergötland have been found in Schretzheim, Bavaria (Koch 1977). There are some 13 known F-type bracteates. Four of these have runes on them, including one from Gudme. The F-type is comparatively rare as it only depicts four-legged animals in full figure, and no humans.

6.5 The Figural Gold Foils

The figural gold foils known in Swedish as ‘guldgubbar’ are the last type of flat gold surfaces with imprints to appear in the North (see ill. 15, Lamm 2004). They are usually small rectangular figural gold foils, with the average surface of c. 10x10 mm. They generally have anthropomorphic depictions. There are a few pigs, too (Watt 2002). There are some 35 to 40 findplaces in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden with a total of around 3,000 objects. Sorte Muld on Bornholm is the obvious epicenter with 2,400 finds, and c. 50 different motifs. The find of a patrix in Järrestad (Skåne) does suggest that the production of figural gold foils could have been mobile, however. Their place in the chronology is definitely after the Roman medallions, the solidus horizon, and the bracteates, stretching c. 500-800 AD.
The context of figural gold foils reveals that there is quite a distance to romanitas and its notion of a monetary economy. Indeed, the figural gold foils are unrelated to the latter ideology. Nor can the iconography of the figural gold foils be described as a reified loan from romanitas. The figural gold foil has, via the solidus and the bracteate, taken on a contextual dimension of its own. As seen earlier, it was men who acquired the solidi. The solidi that were not melted and reemployed ended up in hoards. There are extremely few burials with solidi, but it would seem possible for both men and women to be buried with solidi in Sweden and Norway (Arrhenius 2001). When bracteates appear in burial contexts, they are generally found in female graves. Bracteates are rarely found in houses. By contrast, the figural gold foils are with only a few exceptions found inside large houses. In particular, they are found in postholes. This suggests that the figural gold foil is a reflection of a desired stability, of domestic wealth and happiness. A very common motif is that of an embracing couple, a man and a woman. It has often been interpreted as Freyr and Gerd. When the woman is depicted with jewelry, she is seen as Freya carrying brisingamen, a precious heirloom. Thus, it would seem that what is represented in the last days of kleptocratic gold iconography is the unity of a divine couple.

6.6 Conclusion

Germanic goldsmiths used Roman coins to make imprints on metal already in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Cases in point are the shield buckle masks from Illerup made from a commemorative coin struck for Faustina in 141 AD (Ilkjaer 2000: 131), and the golden laurel wreath from Kertch, Ukraine (Koch et al. 2002: 98-99). The latter dates to c. 375-400 AD, but has the imprint from a coin struck for Emperor Commodus (180-192 AD). Still, it took Germanic affinities at least 300 years to produce portable objects resembling Roman coins. There are several reasons for this delay.

It is known that the Eastern Empire always objected to Germanic imitations of Roman coinage. Most importantly, it seems that Germanic affinities were never able to disentangle themselves from an ideological dependency. The fact that romanitas could retain such power even as the Empire went down in the West shows how fragmented the Germanic kleptocracy was in terms of its supraregional ideology, and to the absence of permanent institutions outside the Roman Empire. When the figural gold foils appear, they show that the idea of a monetary economy is no longer meaningful. The idea that one prints an image on a piece of gold was still there but the ideological content was vastly different from that of the Mediterranean monetary market economies.
Ill. 15. Chorology of Figurine Gold Foils (After Lamm 2004)
PART III

The Rupture of Early Runic Literacy

7 Continental Runic Literacy in the Merovingian Kleptocracies

In the previous Parts I-II, it has been argued that a lengthy process of imitation and reification of Roman imperialist ideology gave rise to a literate Germanic kleptocracy. As pointed out, the most prominent of Germanic selective affinities were quick to follow the fashionable Roman trends, at least as long as it was politically expedient. The 4th and 5th century context of an increasing Germanic knowledge of Latin literacy on the one hand, and a Roman ideological return to the oral on the other, is one of a series of regionalized reactions and responses, not of a far-reaching mutual understanding. For instance, it has been argued that the conspicuous absence of runic inscriptions in the Trier area is likely testimony to the strong imprint of Roman oral culture (Rüger 1998: 374-375). Similarly, Gaul retained a large number of Latin language institutions well into the 7th century (Banniard 1989, Riché 1995).

It is clear that there was a substantial break between Northern Europe on the one hand and Gaul and Alemannia on the other during the beginning of the second half of the 6th century. As far as the horizon of runic inscriptions in the Merovingian kleptocracies goes, it is clear that it was already present in Austrasia c. 520/530-560/570, that is, well before the later runic horizon in Alemannia of 565-600, see table 7. Nothing prevents the latter from having been influenced from either Austrasia or Pannonia. This may well be the case rather than the old theories focusing on Thuringia and the North. What is clear is that the Merovingians kleptocracies of Austrasia and Neustria were a step ahead of the surrounding areas in term of Westernization, having surpassed the implications of ideological reactions such as the continental runic revival and the introduction of Style II.

This chapter 7 will discuss the literate context of the Merovingian Period row grave culture that emerged out of the Continental Germanic kleptocracies. The c. 80 Pre-Old High German runic inscriptions found on the European Continent belong to contexts so different from those of the North, as to merit a comparative study with an onset of its own. This section will have also to address somewhat different problems. It will be argued that there is no distinct contextual runic lineage connecting Migration Period Sweden and Merovingian Period Alemannia. Instead, one can distinguish two vastly different and increasingly diverging runic and funeral traditions: one Continental, the other Nordic. The Alemanni ought to be closer to the late 4th and early 5th century runic graves of Liebenau (Düwel 2001) and Fallward (Schön 1995) in Lower Saxony than to 3rd century runic graves of Gårdlösa, Himlingøje, and Skovgårde (Lund-Hansen 1995, 1998, Ethelberg 1999).
7.1 Latin Conversion and Runic Reaction

It would seem that some leading Merovingians in Gaul would go further in their urge to enter the sphere of sublime Latin rhetoric than most, albeit with mixed results. Gregory of Tours relates how King Chilperic I wrote a number of books of poetry in the style of Sedulius (c. 400-460 AD?), but that Chilperic’s works failed to observe the accepted rules of prosody (*Gesta Francorum* V, 44).

A more eloquent example of Latin meter is found in the richly furnished princely tomb of Krefeld-Gellep, grave 1782, from c. 520-530 AD (see ill. 16). On a bronze vase, there is a Latin inscription in dactylic meter: Arp(v)ar erat *œflex undique praecelsus* or ‘Arpvar was happy, transcending all’ (Rüger 1998: 374). The grave also contained a solidus struck for Anastasius I, so there is also mention of the Emperor in text. There was an aristocratic preoccupation with Continental Runic and Christian ideology expressed in Latin capitals as evident in Chéhéry, France (Düwel 1991, 1994, Fischer 1999b, Fischer 2000, Fischer and Lémant 2003). But this did not prevent the Merovingians from extending their hegemony over other Germanic affinities to the east and north. It is against this backdrop that one must situate and understand the sudden 6th century revival of runes in the southeastern parts of the Merovingian kingdom, Alemannia.

There was an ideological need to appear ‘Nordic’ in southern Germany during the last two thirds of the 6th century. This phenomenon may have been related to what Ostler (2004) labels the ‘charisma of a language’. In this case it encompassed aspects of art in Styles I-II (Høiland-Nielsen 1998) and runic literacy, rather than the adoption of Proto-Norse as a spoken language. This fashion trend involved the use of replicated ‘Nordic type’ brooches, and the use of Continental Runic. It did not correspond to a more North Germanic ethnicity among the carriers of runic objects. It would seem that in the late 20th century, German-speaking archaeologists and runologists created a fictitious narrative where a Thuringian ethnicity was identified as a causative factor behind this ideology. Similarly, it would seem that German-speaking runologists have sought to maximize the possible interpretations of longer runic inscriptions found in Germany, seeking to find proof of a heroic Germanic culture. It is likely that these fictitious narratives were constructed in response to a sensed ideological need. Such primary considerations within prehistoric sciences are very dangerous and may well lead to unscientific results.

7.2 Archaeological Method

Merovingian Period runic objects are generally found in graves, see table 7. The graves are located in row grave cemeteries. The method of archaeological contextualization of a Merovingian Period row grave cemetery may be described in five steps. Below, I will sketch these out in reference to the later section 7.5 on Pforzen.

First, one must establish the internal chronology of the cemetery. Dividing find combinations in different graves into different phases does this. A comparative serialization is employed to place artifacts within their proper sequence within the life span of a given artifact. One also considers the relative frequency
of lead artifacts. Given the number of published row grave cemeteries from France to Hungary, there are local chronologies as well as supra-regional chronologies (Siegmund 2000). The phasing shows when people first arrive in a given area, how many they are, and if there is subsequent demographic growth or decline (Christlein 1978). It also shows family- or hierarchical relationships, but not always ethnicity. In Schretzheim, Koch (1977) argued that she saw subordinate families settling around a dominant family, but she would also label the former Thuringian and the latter Frankish. In the case of Niederstotzingen, grave 3a-c, it was clear that the young man was superior in rank compared to the two other men in the grave (Paulsen 1967). In the case of Pforzen, this procedure may indicate a family relationship if the two runic graves 239 and 255 fall into the same chronological phase as opposed to other graves surrounding or separating them.
Second, one must establish a hierarchical order for the material goods in the graves by means of Christlein’s (1973, 1975, 1978) notion of ‘quality groups’, see table 10. This serves as a framework for the interpretation of how social status was represented in the burial custom. The criteria for male and female graves differ from each other, as the gender-based material culture demands this. There are many inherent flaws in Christleins’s method. For instance, it does not take the combination of age and gender into account when discussing the basic premises for the quality groups.

As far as male graves with Continental Runic objects are concerned, I have shown elsewhere (Fischer 2004: 310) that the ownership of a male runic object is not restricted to a single quality group, see table 10. Rather it should be interpreted as a sign of affinity. In the case of Pforzen, it is clear that the man in Pforzen grave 239 was relatively wealthy, but not a ‘prince’. The woman in grave 255 ranks slightly below the man in grave 239. But this is what we know of their individual wealth. It only becomes meaningful when the social status of all graves in the Pforzen cemetery has been established. Someone in quality group B may be extremely rich in comparison to a bunch of paupers who rank below quality group A, but the same man may appear as a low-life amidst large affinities belonging to quality group C. The two runic objects in Pforzen are quite unusual as artifacts within the Southwest German row gave cemetery context as a whole.

Third, by means of osteological research one may determine the skull shape and the length of a skeleton (Czarnetski, Uhlig and Wolf 1989; Wahl, Wittwer-Backofen and Kunter 1997). If two skeletons were to be profoundly different with one extreme brachycephalic skull and the other an extreme dolichocephalic skull, it would suggest that the two persons with runic objects were unrelated by descent. This is so, although they may have belonged to the same family unit as a married couple, in-laws, or as a landlord with a concubine. If they were to show strong resemblance, it is likely that they were related by descent.

Fourth, comparative research on C12 and C13 ratios may give clues to the diet. If the two skeletons have showed similar results, it is likely that the persons shared the same diet; it is likely that they belonged to the same rank within a household. The frequency of strontium in the skeleton may also give a clue as to the geographic origin. For instance, it is clear that people living near the Alps and the Danube have a different amount of strontium in their skeleton than do people from Denmark.

Fifth, DNA and ratios of strontium isotopes may give clues to the genetic descent and the geographic origin of an individual. Should the two individuals be very different from each other, the same considerations as in 3) and 4) come into play. Should they be related, the probability of a family relationship becomes accentuated. Then, one would have to compare them to the skeletons from other runic graves. Then, these as a group must be cross-referenced against larger samples of non-runic graves from Northeastern Gaul, the Rhineland, Saxony and Thuringia. To my knowledge the latter forms of research has yet to be carried out in Pforzen.

7.2.1 The Row Grave Cemetery – An Unequal and Differentiated Affinity

Alemanni of the 6th century did not have a number of choices available to them when entering the afterlife. Rather, there was considerable peer pressure to con-
form. The shared row grave cemetery served the Alemanni as a cohesive ideological structure. This idea was a cultural loan from the Paleo-Christian Romans. This started in Gaul in the early 5th century and spread with the ascent of Merovingian kleptocrats, sometimes claiming to hold Roman administrative offices (Dierkens and Pépin 1997). But Latin titles for social rank (such as *regulus*, *comes*, *dominus* etc.) do not necessarily apply to the archaeological context (Pépin 1998). One is thus forced to deal with the more general idea of quality groups A-D (Christlein 1973, 1978), which is a functional tool for interpretation, although it is unable to differentiate between separate categories of the two respective genders, notably age factors.

It would seem that Alemanni consciously decided to represent themselves in a fashion that separated them from their neighbors, despite the rather uniform idea of the row grave cemetery that began to spread from Gaul in the early 5th century. It has been shown that Alemanni were buried with some particular goods different from those of Franks, Saxons, or Thuringians – pottery and belts in particular (Siegmund 2000). One may conclude, therefore, that there certainly was a larger ideological belief in a collective resurrection shared by all these Continental Germanic peoples, although individual cemeteries seem to have ethnic tags attached to them. It is true that every single row grave cemetery tells its own subjective story and must be evaluated on its own merits in its particular setting, be it on the Rhine, the Danube, the Wertach, etc.

Many farm units assembled in a village usually shared the same row grave cemetery, founded by the first settlers. Other subordinate settlers, often from other regions recently put under Frankish dominion, followed suit and a new social report was established. The surviving relatives dressed up dead Alemanni with ideological symbols signifying aspirations towards rank and ethnic affinity, if not always accurately reflecting reality. Their respective graves positioned them in chronological order within the larger social structure of the afterlife. One did not destroy status objects during the funeral practice as was the practice in some areas of the Vendel Period North.

As in the Mälar Valley, dominant families in Alemannia eventually tried to break out of the common popular mould, be it cremation, chamber graves, or collective inhumation. Some of the first settlers in row grave cemeteries such as Lauchheim and Schretzheim were usually also identical with the dominant family of the 6th century, although this is not always the case in the 7th century. A dominant family that fails to hold on will be annihilated or displaced by another one. In these two seemingly archetypical row grave cemeteries, the rich and powerful families being the founders of the cemetery are buried at the epicenter with more fashionable grave goods than the poorer newcomers or subordinates on the periphery. Yet, it would also seem that some newcomers in the 7th century eventually acquired a dominant rank in Schretzheim, indicated by their horse burials. In a longer perspective this meant that the dominant family simultaneously portrayed itself as the most assimilated yet well connected part of the regional population (Siegmund 2000).

For a few, it became more important to appear differently when entering the afterlife. By having separate or separated cemeteries, and new forms of burials, they marked their claim to power. In Fridingen, an early 7th century noble family seeks to set themselves apart from others by building a half dozen of inhumation barrows on the outskirts of the row grave cemetery. There is a similar set of barrows in Lauchheim during the second third of the 7th century. The dominant fami-
lies can be considered the cosmopolitan locals being the most mobile residents of a community. The early 7th century family of Niederstotzingen (Lkr. Heidenheim) is likely to have had several households and private burial grounds. In Niederstotzingen, a group of male nobles and some of their closest followers are buried in a small separate cemetery (Paulsen 1967). There are a few highly unusual multiple burials. Peculiar grave goods include an imported Central Asian cavalry helmet and a bodyarmor (grave 12), a ring sword with a garnet ornament and a Style II silver pommel (grave 9), and a coincidental runic inscription on a recycled silver surface (grave 3a).

Such a breakaway in the 7th century would eventually include the construction of chapels, and the burial of the leading nobles inside these (Müller-Wille 1993). These were often dedicated to St Martin. What Siegmund labels as the ‘normal population’ seems to have been a fairly conservative lot as far as one can judge from the funeral practice. The ‘normals’ responded to general fashion statements such as the idea of the row grave cemetery, but were not quick to pick up the specific funeral practices of the dominant families, or were prevented from doing so within the burial collective. These inventive and nonconformist forms of burials were different from the cremation barrows in the Mälar Valley, and should rather be interpreted as re-inventions of earlier funeral practices on the Continent, not in the North. There are cases of Merovingian Period secondary burials in Hallstatt barrows.

Only by the second half of the 7th century does the popular custom of dressing up the bodies in parade gear for their future resurrection slowly begin to disappear. People were from then on buried in their linen only. But at the same time, the Alemanni began to plunder the old row grave cemeteries on a large and unprecedented scale. This practice represents a further rupture with the old tradition, something one may recognize from openings of the chamber graves in the Mälar Valley. The buried bodies, awaiting the collective resurrection into the afterlife, were no longer considered sacred by those still living in the present. The concept of resurrection had thus taken a further step away from the pagan past towards Early Medieval Christianity. This suggests a general ideological transformation, unparalleled in the Vendel Period North. It was complete by the late 8th century when only the Carolingians were buried in full regalia.

7.3 Continental Runic Literacy

There are some 350 known runic inscriptions in the Older Futhark (Düwel 2001: 11). Of these, some 80 belong to the Merovingian Period Continent, and are composed in a Pre-old High German, that one along the lines of Nielsen’s definition of Early Runic simply may label as Continental Runic. These objects in table 7 must be contextualized within a corpus of 100,000 known graves, a small portion of the total estimate of 50,000,000 graves (Steuer 1982: 68). A comparison of the 80 Continental runic objects, 200 angos and 700 zierscheiben, and their estimated frequency (Steuer 1982: 352), shows that the original number of all Continental runic inscriptions was considerably larger than the minimum runological estimate of 40,000, that is 10 individuals making 10 runic inscriptions every year for 400 years (Derolez 1981).

With the archaeological estimate, one would arrive at some 80,000 Early Runic objects only in the context of Merovingian Period row grave cemeteries. By
contrast, the minimum runological estimate for the last third of the 6th century suggests that only c. 3,500 runic inscriptions were produced during this time. This appears a plausible figure for Early Runic inscriptions on even bronze and silver surfaces on Merovingian brooches, but certainly not for the estimated other 76,500 early runic objects. These may hypothetically be dispersed in some 50,000,000 unexcavated graves. An arbitrary combination of archaeological and runological estimates would suggest a steady group of something like 200–1,600 active runic literati on the Continent, with a substantial peak during the ‘runic horizon’ of 565-600. The number of passive literati is difficult to estimate, although it must have reached its apex during the last third of the 6th century.

One must further examine the dozen of row grave cemeteries with multiple runic finds listed in tables 8-9. I have already argued this point (Fischer 2001b), but it needs to be stressed anew. The burial context of the Merovingian Period Continent allows for a number of far-reaching conclusions, which can be employed for a comparison with the peripheral North. The proximity in time and space between the runic graves are crucial to the understanding of the relationship between active runic literati and their passive audience. The proximity of multiple runic graves tells something about the frequency of literacy in the Merovingian society. For one, there is no known cemetery with multiple runic graves in Hesse or the Rhineland. This allows for two conclusions.

First, the cemeteries where one finds several Continental Runic inscriptions are usually in Alemannia. These generally tend to be much larger than the average row grave cemetery. The largest excavated row grave cemetery in Baden-Württemberg is the Wasserfurche in Lauchheim (Stork 1995, 1997). It contained 1,308 known burials (probably as many as 1,400), closely aligned to each other. Wasserfurche served some 250-300 inhabitants of ‘Mittelhofen’ for some 200 years. This was a village community next to the estate of a dominant family, the ‘Herrenhof’ with quality group C burials, dating to the 7th century. In total, some 53 graves belonged to quality group C. The dominant family of Lauchheim and their followers were given to ostentatious display of foreign contacts and/or ethnic origin. Thus we find women dressed up with ethnic markers of Longobard, Thuringian and Ostrogoth origin, along with a woman in grave 911 with a ‘Nordic type’ relief brooch sporting the runic inscription **aonofada**.

Second, there is an increased statistical likelihood to find more runic graves once one or two have been found. A case in point is the cemetery of Schretzheim (Koch 1977). This clearly enhances the importance of Alemannia. There, most of the runic graves in identical cemeteries are at some distance away from each other. This suggests that there were at least two literate families using the cemetery at the time. When there are more than two runic graves, it appears that even if two graves are very close and indicate a close relationship, the third will be further away. This means that there is always a minimal form of literate bipolarity.

### 7.3.1 The Merovingian Period Male – A Continental Runic Literate?

It would seem that the Early Runic gender construction surrounding literacy in places like Himlingøje and Gudme also involved Latin texts, notably on coins. Most Roman anthropomorphic representations in conjunction with Latin literacy were male. This is also the case of the Merovingian Period continent. Meanwhile, there is yet no definite conclusion that runic literacy was a typically male dis-
course in the Vendel Period North. Nor is it certain that the female runic objects of ‘Nordic type’ derive from a predominantly female discourse in Alemannia (cf. Düwel 1989, 1991, 1994, 1996c, 1997, Martin 1997b). All such suggestions are generally based on the currently known source material, far too scarce to allow objective conclusions. Düwel has also noticed a tendency for men to wear visible Latin inscriptions whereas women tend to wear hidden runic ones. A question is whether this is intentional or not. For instance, the large relief brooch from Wittislingen sports a Latin inscription on the flat backside surface. Before more general conclusions are drawn, one must first ascertain which runic objects may survive in what archaeological context. What kind of runic taphonomy may one expect in Alemannia as opposed to the North? Is the regional runic taphonomy related to the overall question of descent, gender construction, and social rank at all?

There are only 11 known Continental Germanic male graves with runic objects from the Merovingian Period, out of some 50,000 excavated male contexts (see table 10). Only one grave (Gräfeling, grave 40) was excluded out of the sample due to insufficient documentation. But this sum exceeds by far the total number of male runic graves from the same time in the North. The Continental male runic graves range from the Meuse estuary to Bavaria, and do not have the same distinct concentration to the Danube Valley as the female graves. To these 10 graves, one may add two further male graves from the Migration Period: Fallward and Liebenau in Lower Saxony, along with a stray find of a male runic object from Bergakker, Netherlands (Looijenga 2003). Due to the lack of detailed chorological studies of the number of runic objects in relation to identical, but non-runic objects, no convincing attempt has been made to contrast the male runic context against the female. One has not sought to estimate how many runic objects are absent in the funeral context as a result of plundering. Here, one would expect that brooches, spathas and zierscheiben have disappeared, (e.g. in affluent but partially plundered contexts like Gammertingen and the graves around the ‘Herrenhof’ in Lauchheim). In short, there is still very much to be done before one may safely say that women characterize the Alemannic runic culture.

A preliminary contextualization (Fischer 2004a) of nine male runic graves in comparison with the rich chamber grave of Gammertingen yielded some interesting, albeit tentative or subjective results. As evident in table 10, Continental Runic objects may be found in all quality groups. This suggests that runic literacy was not inevitably dependent on social rank, but perhaps rather related to descent and/or the individual role within the social rank. One may note that Schretzheim, grave 79, is by no means the most well equipped male grave there during the late 6th century. Second, there is a wide chronological spread, stretching at least four generations. Some male runic graves, notably that of the old-timer in Eichstetten (Sasse 2000), are much earlier than the bulk of runic graves. His time was that of the sons of Clovis. Others, such as Pforzen, grave 239 (Babucke 1999a), and Schretzheim, grave 79, are contemporary with the ‘runic horizon’. Third, some male runic graves, notably Wurmlingen, grave 2, are later than most of the female runic graves. The earliest and the very last male runic graves would seem to have less and different goods in them than the middle-ranging ones from the late 6th century. This suggests that during certain parts of the Merovingian Period, there was less likelihood that one deposited runic objects, simply because one deposited less grave goods in general.
There is perhaps more certitude regarding this affinity of male runic graves than of the ethnicity of female runic graves in general. The ‘princely’ grave in Gammertingen contains an ango and a francisca, two weapons generally considered to be Frankish. These weapons are not indicative of ethnic origin but of political or ideological affinity. The earliest 6th century male graves with runic objects, Saint-Dizier, Eichstetten (Sasse 2000) and Borgharen (Looijenga 2000, 2003, Dijkman 2003) ought to belong to a Frankish affinity, in the sense that these literate men may have been given military tasks as settlers. It appears probable from the context of the Eichstetten row grave cemetery and the recent finds from Bad Krozingen that even low ranking warriors in Frankish service brought a heightened sense of runic literacy to Breisgau in the first third of the 6th century. Buried women carrying runic objects (sometimes with male personal names on them) on their bodies are a later phenomenon, belonging chiefly to the shift between the second and last third of the 6th century. Thus the half dozen later runic finds in Breisgau and Schwarzwald: Bad Krozingen, grave 172, Hüfingen, grave 318, Neudingen-Baar, graves 168, 319, Stetten, grave 133.

The case of KJ 161 Gammertingen is a telling example of how the interpretative horizons may be broadened by means of contextualization. The discovery of an ivory pyxis with the runic inscription ado a-o in a grave (dated to c. 570-590) of a 10-year old girl was somewhat surprising. The girl was too young to be married, and the pyxis with a male name Ado on it thus has a different story to it than those of runic brooches belonging to fertile women. The most likely explanation is thus to be found right next to the girl. Only two meters away was the chamber grave of a c. 55 year-old man, dated to c. 570 (Stein 1996). This unusually well equipped grave, including a helmet, is the richest single case of a burial belonging to quality group D in Alemannia. The pyxis ought to belong to the combined context of the two mentioned graves (Düwel 1996). The funeral context of Gammertingen must be regarded as evidence of a runic literate family – perhaps the most dominant family of Alemannia during the second half of the 6th century and for a generation or two onwards.

7.4 The ‘Thuringian Narrative’

German-speaking archaeologists and runologists have often explained the ‘runic horizon’ in Southern Germany as a result of the Frankish expansion from Austrasia into Thuringia. It is argued that it caused a subsequent resettlement of a large number of Thuringians in Alemannia and Bavaria. This supposedly enabled contacts between Alemannia and the North. The problem with this view is that it does not considered the issue of reciprocity. It does not systematically employ congruent Nordic evidence to argue its case. This may be due to the fact that a comparison of evidence in the North and in South Germany does not lend support to this view. On the contrary, runic contexts in the North point to a decrease in Continental contacts during the 6th century. The phenomenon of Continental Runic in Southern Germany must hence be explained anew.

The topos of the ‘Thuringian Narrative’ is the forced migration of the Thuringians from their native region, Thuringia, to a new land in the south, Alemannia. This supposedly took place after the Franks had entered the scene from the west. The Franks conquered Thuringia in the first third of the 6th century, winning a battle in 531 AD. Three years later, the Franks murdered the Thuringian King
Hermanafrid (Koch 1977: 189-190). A large southbound migration is subsequently blamed on the new Frankish rulers who implemented a large-scale resettlement policy of Alemannia and parts of Bavaria. From where stems this narrative? The ‘Thuringian Narrative’ appears to have been invented after the publication of the Schretzheim cemetery by the archaeologist Koch (1977). She continued to build on the narrative some twenty years later (Koch 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2001, 2004). The narrative was given new input and credentials by the runologist Düwel (1996a, 1997) and the archaeologist Martin (1997b).

The ‘Thuringian Narrative’ was relatively easy to construct and accept, but at a closer inspection it seems very hard to verify as scientific truth. There are some easily recognized narrative components (cf. Propp 1990). A post-processual critique would be to offer a deconstruction of these components compared to other narratives within ideologies that may have been hegemonic or influential when Modern archaeology was only in its infancy. The structure of the ‘Thuringian Narrative’ certainly parallels the biblical Exodus, and historical events such as the 1835-1838 Groote Trek of the Afrikaners from the Cape to Transvaal, the Cherokee Trail of Tears of 1838-39 from Georgia to Oklahoma, and the 1846-47 Mormon wagon trail from Omaha, Nebraska to Salt Lake, Utah. Jooss (1997: 34-35, Abb. 12, 13) shows that this topos had been residual in German historicizing narrative for quite a while. It was depicted in various ways, depending on the prevailing ideology. An illustration could be made erotic or decent depending on the occasion or the political situation. An 1890 illustration entitled ‘Germanen auf der Wanderung’ depicts nude women in ox-carts, nude boys hugging each other while riding the oxen, warriors with horned helmets on horseback, and skulls hanging from the beams of the ox-carts (see ill. 17). A more politically correct 1970 German schoolbook illustration shows neatly dressed Germanic farmers, leading their wagon trail past the burning ruins of urban Roman civilization.
Along the lines of Kossina (1911), the ‘Thuringian Narrative’ considered a distinct ethnic group, a Germanic people, as a carrier of culture. It argues for a genetic consideration rather than accepting a more general diffusion of ideas and trends. The ‘Thuringian Narrative’ had the distinct advantage that it could appropriate a lot of different topoi from other historicizing narratives and reify them into a totality that put a lot of unresolved issues at rest, including the distribution of pottery and brooches (Siegmund 2004: 152). For instance, the notion of a ‘Kulturstrom aus dem Norden’ was incorporated rather than separated from the ethnic narrative. An important reason why the ‘Thuringian Narrative’ was so attractive to runologists was the problem of proving a continuity of runic literacy in Germany. Why was it that Germany had a void of some 100 years from its last Migration Period inscription, KJ 139 Liebenau in Saxony, to the sudden boom in Merovingian Period Alemannia? The answer to this problem was to argue for a north to south diffusion of runic literacy inside Germany. Further to the north, Scandinavia would provide suitable inspiration and ideological backdrop for the literate Thuringian migrants.

The pattern of settlement as reflected in the row grave cemetery of Schretzheim and elsewhere appeared clear enough. First, Franks enter the scene as settlers in Alemannia. They are buried in the first phases in a lot of cemeteries in the early 6th century. Then, Thuringians with characteristic attributes follow in the first third of the 6th century. At this point, questions start to amass (Brather 2004: . Did the Thuringians all arrive after 531-534 AD? How many out of the total number back in Thuringia migrated to Alemannia? What if they came earlier? Could there have been another impetus for the arrival of Thuringians in Alemannia besides the Frankish conquest of Thuringia? If there was a conflict, why did Thuringians and Franks so often live next to each other in the new settlements in Alemannia?

The fact that contemporary runic inscriptions besides the four from Weimar-Nordfriedhof were found to the east of Alemannia was generally overlooked, with the notable exception of Roth (1994, 1998). Roth argued for an eastern connection, particularly after 568 AD, when there is very strong archaeological and historical evidence of a substantial Longobard migration into Southeastern Germany and Italy. Similarly, the fact that some of the earliest 6th century inscriptions (KJ 143 Engers, KJ 144 Freilaubersheim) belong to typical Frankish contexts in the Rhineland was not brought up. The subsequent find of an early 5th century inscription in Bergakker, Netherlands, made the north-south diffusion even more debatable. There were runes to the west, north, and east of Alemannia. The western and eastern contexts were a lot more similar and numerous to those of Alemannia than were those to the north.

In Schretzheim, Thuringian graves all belong to phases 1-2 (ca. 525-545/550 AD). Then, runic inscriptions appear. The three runic graves 26, 79, and 509 all belong to phase 3 of Schretzheim (ca. 565-590/600 AD). By then, it is very hard to find any significant Thuringian ethnic markers among the buried. And the runic inscriptions appear on objects that are fairly general within all cemeteries in Southwestern Germany, although not in Thuringia. But to maintain the ‘Thuringian Narrative’ and its purported Nordic runic connection, a number of objects in various graves in Schretzheim have time and time again been identified as Nordic. The silver runic ring sword in grave 79 may be of Frankish origin, rather than Thuringian or Nordic. The D-bracteates in grave 33 are secondary copies, and do not have the same weight as Nordic bracteates do.
The best case for a Nordic connection is the Helgö-type dress pin in grave 177 from phase 1. This was a mass-produced object (Waller 1996) found in a relatively poor female grave in Bavaria. One is left with an odd explanation for this context. Koch (1977) makes a case for this (Swedish?) woman having been a maid in a wagon train led by a Thuringian trader. Images such as the 1890 ‘Germanen auf der Wanderung’ and the televised stories of William F. Cody (1846-1917) and Laura Ingalls Wilder (1867-1957) come to mind, but the presence of the genuine Nordic object remains as baffling as before. By comparison, one can mention Magnus’ (2004) discussion of a find in the female grave 421 at Alten erding, Bavaria of two dress pins and a crossbow brooch that were all similar to mould fragments from the workshop at Helgö. But Magnus makes a convincing case for a much closer south Baltic origin, adding an acerbic comment:

Origin myths current in the Migration Period among a number of Germanic gentes taught that their mythical forebears had once emigrated from the island of Scandza. This idea seems to have a modern archaeological counterpart (Magnus 2004: 281).

To end this section in a deductive fashion, beyond a post-processual critique based on disturbingly conspicuous narrative parallels, one may return to archaeological statistics. Siegmund (2004: 152-154) adds further fuel to the critique of the ‘Thuringian Narrative’. He points out that if there was a Thuringian exodus in the early 530’s AD, one would find that the number of buried would decrease in the second third of 6th century row grave cemeteries in Thuringia. The research of Hansen (2003) shows that this is not the case (Siegmund 2004: 164 Abb. 9, 10). On the contrary, the number of burials in Thuringia increases considerably after 531-534 AD. What about all these people with Thuringian objects? Siegmund suggests a brief fashion trend among the Franks and Alemanni, making a case for cultural diffusion by means of ideology.

7.4.1 The ‘Nordic type’ Runic Objects in Alemannia

On a superficial level, it may seem that Alemannic relief brooches of the ‘Nordic type’ with runic inscriptions are a clear indication of contacts between Alemannia and the North. But a closer look reveals that the overwhelming majority of the ‘Nordic type’ relief brooches are mere copies of copies, i.e. imitations. The few Nordic originals found in Alemannia have generally been handed down for a long time, the principal case being Donzdorf, grave 78 (Steuer 1998). It would also seem that the artistic language of the Nordic Style I was no longer understood by the smiths after the second or third copying (Babucke and Düwel 2000: 167-168). Nordic archaeologists have argued that the mid 6th century ‘Nordic type’ imitations did not hold the same cultural content as the Nordic originals in Style I from the second half of the 5th century (Hedeager 1997: 84-92). There are thousands of welldocumented 6th century funeral contexts containing Alemannic relief brooches. These brooches were not worn as once in the mid 5th century North. They did not express the same meaning in body language. Originally, Nordic relief brooches were placed on the shoulder to fasten a cloak or blanket (Bennett 1987). The imitations that appear in Alemannia in the early to mid 6th century were placed either on the hip or between the thighs just above knee height, often suspended from a leather belt around the waist together with other amulets, pendants and trinkets. In a few cases like Aschheim, graves 166 and 167, the relief
brooches were carried inside small leather pouches or satchels (Reimann, Düwel and Bartel 1999: 85). Here, the relief brooches may also have been covered with thin sheets of intestines, possibly to avoid any oxidation of the silver surface.

Another much cited example of a possible Nordic connection is the ring sword from Schretzheim, grave 79 (Koch 1977). An x-ray examination in 1972 revealed that it had runic cross on it: arab (Düwel 2001). The Style II ornaments and the pommel do indeed have close parallels on a sword from Endre, Gotland (Behmer 1939, Menghin 1983). But the rune sword is not Nordic just because there is a similar piece on Gotland. Moreover, the inciseled runic cross from Schretzheim is on the blade and not on the pommel. Pommels can be altered, copied, removed, and passed on, and updated. The best example of Merovingian manufacture successive Nordic update would be the Merovingian/Nordic hybrid ring sword from Vallstena rum, Gotland (Arrhenius 1970). A similar although unique sequence of update from Style I to Style II, and more importantly from runes to Latin, may be traced in the chronology of the inscriptions on the garnet brooches from Chéhéry (dép. Ardennes) (Düwel 1991, 1994, Fischer 2000, Fischer and Lémant 2003).

There are no Vendel Period runic crosses known in the North, whereas KJ 140 Soest is a perfectly good example of a runic cross on the backside of a high class Frankish garnet brooch, which lacks parallels in Sweden (Arrhenius 1985). The runic cross on the sword blade and the Style II pommel are by no means to be lumped together as evidence of runic contacts with the North. It has been argued that Schretzheim had its share of Nordic heritage via Thuringian settlers. But there is no evident relationship between grave 79 and the two other runic graves 26 and 509 in Schretzheim, or the woman with a D-bracteate in grave 33. The three runic objects, from grave 26 (Longobard bow brooch, garnet brooch), and grave 509 (Frankish cylindrical bronze capsule, along with a non-runic garnet brooch), rather suggest a non-Nordic origin (Arrhenius 1985:188-193).

7.4.2 The Nordic Runic Connection to Alemannia
– Graphematic Fact or Fiction?

The Continental Runic Futharks are dispersed from Bosnia in the east to Burgundy in the west. KJ 6 Charnay (dép. Saône-et-Loire), KJ 8 Beuchte (Kr. Goslar), KJ 7 Aquincum (Budapest) and KJ 5 Breza (Sarajevo) all show closer geographic and graphematic resemblance to Alemannic runic inscriptions than the very distant Early Runic Futharks KJ 1 Kylver, KJ 2 Vadstena, KJ 3 Grumpan found in Gotland and Sweden. There are very few Alemannic cases where the graphematic traits of runic inscriptions on relief brooches would suggest that they were genuinely Nordic. Donzdorf, grave 78 is a case in point (Düwel and Roth 1977, Arrhenius 1981). This suggests that literate Aleman ni had not communicated in runic writing with their Nordic counterparts for a very long time, but drew on a more regional tradition.

A limited survey of the graphematic frequency within the Early Runic corpus (Odenstedt 1990) shows that there is very little to connect Continental Runic inscriptions with the new Transitional Runic of the Proto-Norse spoken in the Vendel Period. On the contrary, a diverging Nordic discourse is evident in the use of A, the Transitional Runic grapheme replacing Early Runic j. The tilted k rune that appears in both male and female funeral contexts in Alemannia may be a graphematic trait indicative of contacts between Alemannic and East Germanic runic
literati. Cases in point are Bad Krozingen, grave 172, Mertingen, grave 26 (Lkr. Donau-Ries), Pforzen, grave 239 (Lkr. Ostallgäu). An important exception is the Nordic form of k on the brooches from Griesheim, grave 43, and KJ 152 Nordendorf II (Looijenga 1997:140, 145).

As evident from the contexts of Eichstetten, Wremen and Liebenau, Franks and Saxons had runic inscriptions prior to the Alemannic ‘runic horizon’ of the late 6th century. And there is little or nothing to indicate a Nordic connection in the Alemannic contexts. Roth (1994, 1998) suggested a later East Germanic settlement of runic literati into Eastern Alemannia and Bavaria, following the Avaric invasions of Pannonia in the late 560’s. This seems more probable than sporadic Nordic runic contacts in the early 6th century is a longer tie to an East Germanic runic discourse by means of contacts with neighboring Bavaria, Pannonia, and Italy. There one also finds more general similarities to Alemannic grave goods and funeral practice than in the North. Cases in point for such a connection are the late 6th century graves of Longobard women, including such runic objects as the square-headed brooch KJ 154 Herbrechtingen (Quast 1999), the KJ 166 Bezenye pair of brooches, the coin imitations from Hüfingen, grave 318 (Fingerlin, Fischer and Düwel 1998), Neudingen-Baar, grave 318, and the s-brooch from Szentendre, grave 33 (Düwel 1994). One may also note the late 5th century inscriptions of KJ 7 Aquincum (kñia), KJ 167 Szabattayan (mariñsd).

7.4.3 Nordic Gods on the Nordendorf I Brooch?

The Nordendorf I brooch KJ 151 sports a well known runic inscription: logazore wodan wigidonar awa leubwini ȳ. This may be interpreted something like: ‘Tricksters: Wodan, Battle-Donar. I, Leubwini (gave unto) Awa’ (cf. Düwel 1982, 2001, Grønvik 1987a). The brooch itself is a rather clumsy ‘Nordic’ type imitation. It was found on a row grave field of some 443 graves in Nordendorf (Lkr. Augsburg) and should cause no surprise. The runic inscription is quite another problem. It is clear that the language of the Nordendorf I brooch is Pre-Old High German and not Proto-Norse. One should not confuse the Alemannic mention of wigidonar with the Rune Swedish phrase uiki zur (Marold 1974).

But could the runic inscription still represent a conformation of inherited allegiance to Nordic gods, or is it an Alemannic denunciation of the own Continental Germanic gods of old? The latter interpretation appears more plausible (cf. Düwel 1982), but it also throws further doubt on a widespread Nordic connection within the realm of Pre-Christian religion. The only Germanic gods one may recognize by name in the 6th century row grave cemeteries, then, are Wodan and Wigidonar, and possibly also AnsuR (ansuz) on the KJ 160 Balingen round brooch.

7.5 Pforzen

The row grave cemetery of Pforzen lies in Allgäu, Bavarian Suebia, Bavaria (see ill. 18). Allgäu is best described as a highland east of the Bodensee, and south of the Danube leading up to the Alps of Vorarlberg. Two main rivers, Iller and Lech flow through Allgäu in a south to north direction, eventually meeting up with the Danube. Given recent research, this region has become a heartland of intricate archeological and runological contexts. Pforzen is situated on a smaller river
known as the Wertach. It is reasonable to believe that the 5th century settlement was established at a river crossing, where the road from Augsburg leads towards the Altdorf basin. The place name Pforzen may derive from the Latin \textit{portus}, German ‘Furt’, English ‘ford’. The earliest written record of it is in 897 AD where it appears as \textit{Forzheim} (Babucke 1999a: 15). Pforzen is the southernmost known cemetery within the Germanic land-taking process of the western part of the old Roman province Raetia Secunda.

In 1991-1992 and 1996, excavations led by Wolfgang Czysz were carried out at the Pforzen cemetery. Some 442 graves were excavated out of a total of 600-700 graves. Babucke (1999a: 16) argues that the first graves belong to a founding Frankish family from the Rhineland or Northeastern Gaul, with characteristic grave goods. The earliest grave is an unpublished male grave with a typical 5th century iron strike-a-light with two loops (Babucke 1999a: 15). The female grave 59, which dates to c. 525-550, contains a complete Frankish set of brooches (two bird brooches and two bow brooches of Concevreux-type), and a claw beaker. Then, other families started to bury within the cemetery. These families were probably Alemannic, or from other parts of Southwestern Germany.

Grave 239 is that of a man. The grave goods would date the burial to the last third of the 6th century. In table 10, the man ranks within quality group B with a subjective addition of a plus. Among other things, the man was found to wear a silver belt buckle, which although broken was still functioning (see ill. 19). This type of belt buckle is most unusual in the row grave cemetery context of Southwestern Germany. It does have parallels in Hungary and Italy, though. This would suggest a Longobard or Gepid origin for the buckle type. On the front side of the belt buckle was a runic inscription consisting of some 25 runes in two sections of 13 and 13 runes respectively.
Grave 255 is that of a woman. The grave goods date the burial to c. 600 AD. This means that the graves 239 and 255 harbored the earthly remains of two persons who lived at the same time, although the woman is likely to have survived the man (Babucke 1999b). Among her belongings was a perforated bronze-disc. It was rare in that the ivory ring-setting that surround the bronze disc was preserved, which is very rare indeed. On the ivory ring were two runic inscriptions, consisting of 17 and 12 runes respectively (Düwel 1999c). It is likely that the inscriptions were longer as the ivory surface is damaged.

Ill. 19. Runic Buckle from Pforzen, Grave 239 (After Babucke 1999a)

7.5.1 The Runological Context

The two runic inscriptions from Pforzen soon gathered attention after their discovery. This attention does in retrospect appear to have been motivated. These were by German standards very long runic inscriptions, the longest being Neudingen-Baar, grave 319 with 32 runes. They both had complete and legible sentence structures (grave 255: SVO, grave 239: SOV), which is also quite rare. It was apparent that the runic carvers had been competent and focused when carving, which is not always the case. This was particularly evident in the runic inscription from grave 255, which contained the fourth known carver’s signature from Germany (the third German female carver’s signature): aodliŋ urait runa. Most scholars understandably opted to focus on the more legible inscription from the male grave 239.

Six different German-speaking runologists have provided six different interpretations. These are different narratives around the same topos. They do have something in common, though. Positivist notions such as deduction and probability are avoided to complete the rather fantastic narratives. The results are fascinating. One enters a supernatural world full of saga-heroes, water snakes, power belts, pagan rituals with deer antlers, and demonic water gods. These are either to be denounced by means of becoming Christian (Düwel 1999b) or to be incorpo-
rated in a motto that also represents the rediscovery of the oldest German heroic lay (Nedoma 1999). All this has been extrapolated from two sequences of 13 and 12 runes respectively. A major breakthrough occurred when Pieper (1999) could show that there were a number of word dividers. His reading was the following: 
\[\text{ai-gil.andi.all.run. elahu.gasokun}\]. This made it clear that one had to accept \textit{andi} as a conjunction and that a reading \textit{aigiland} was improbable. Instead, scholars decided to focus on the construction of a narrative related to alliterative personal names. Nedoma (2004a: 344) has listed the subsequent interpretations.

Düwel (1994, 1999b):
\[\text{aigil.andi.ai\lrun. elahu.gasokun} = \text{Aigil andi Aïlrun elahu(n) gasokun}\]

Schwab (1999):
\[\text{aigilandiaïlrun elahugasokun} = \text{Aigila (a)ndi Aïlrun ela(a)hu gasokun}\]

Seebold (1999a):
\[\text{aigilandihalrun ltahugasokun} = \text{Aigil andi Halrun l(agu)t(iwa-) ahu gasokun}\]
‘Aigil und Halrun haben mit gedacht den Gott des Sees verworfen – eine Abschwörung (keine weiteren Angaben zum Sitz im Leben )’.

Wagner (1999):
\[\text{aigilandihalrunani ltahugasokun} = \text{Aigil andi Aïlrun Angiltahu gasokun}\]
‘Aigil und Aïlrun haben die Angiltah gescholten, haben die Angiltah gedroht’
Keine Angaben zur äußeren Deutung’.

Nedoma (1999, 2004a):
\[\text{aigil(.)andi(.)ai\lrun itahu(.)gasokun} = \text{Aigil andi Aïlrun Itahu gasokun}\]
‘Aigil and Aïlrun kämpften, stritten an der Ilzach – eine Art Motto des Schnallenbesitzers das auf eine Vorbildhandlung aus der Heldensage Bezug nimmt’.

Eichner (1999):
\[\text{aigil(.)andi(.)ai\lrun itahu(.)gasokun} = \text{Aigil andi Aïlrun Itahu gasokun}\]
‘Aigil and Aïlrun kämpften, stritten an der Ilzach – (Zitat der Stichzeile aus einem Zauberspruch, dessen stoffliche Grundlage der Heldensage entstammt’.

Following the theorem ‘Skriv som det låter och läs som det står’ (Lagman 1989:28, Williams 1989:14) one must consider the readings and transliterations that have to use emendations, or assume ‘Begriffsrunden’, non-existent bind-runes, and ‘inskrivna runor’ (Elmevik 1978) as less probable than those that do not. This means that the readings and interpretations of Düwel and Seebold are improbable. Similarly, an interpretation that assumes the text to represent anything else than Pre-Old High German is less likely than those that do. Highly improbable is the
interpretation of Schwab (1999), who has to argue for a case of East Germanic from Düwel’s improbable 1994 reading, especially in the light of Pieper’s 1999 reading. Eichner and Nedoma’s attempts to argue for an ‘inskriven runa’ in their reading are not convincing. Then, it could be explained by the two being unfamiliar with current rules for runic transliteration, as the two are closer to a probable reading than are the others. The case of Fallward footstool with the sequence \( \text{lguska/g652i} \) shows that one does not need a vowel in front of \( I \) to denote a vocalic sound at the onset. In my opinion, it would seem that the most probable reading of Pforzen 239 is that of Eichner and Nedoma minus their ‘inskrivna runor’, i.e, \( \text{aïgïl.} \text{andi.} \text{ailrun ltahu.} \text{gasokun} \). As to an interpretation, it would be more probable than not that \( \text{Aigil} \) and \( \text{Ailrun} \) are perfectly normal personal names of non-fictitious persons.

7.5.2 Deductive Method and Scientific Probability outside Runology

Of the six runologists mentioned above, it is Nedoma (1999, 2004a) who has argued most forcefully for the interpretation of the runic inscription on the belt buckle in grave 239 as the opening line of the oldest known Germanic heroic lay. This may well be due to the fact that his runological reading and transliteration are the most probable of the six presented above. I have labeled this theory the ‘Heroic Narrative’.

Nedoma does not present any argument that would contradict his theory outside the realm of runological interpretation. I have already voiced my criticism against this (Fischer 2001). In particular, Nedoma appears unwilling to confront the archaeological fact that there was another runic grave, 255, only 9 meters away. He argues that one can draw no conclusion about this circumstance whatsoever. He argues that one can draw no conclusion about this circumstance whatsoever.

Facts show that the opposite holds true. It is clear that Nedoma does not know what was inside all other graves in Pforzen. He is therefore neither qualified to exclude the possibility of further conclusions about the context nor to generalize about it. A hypothetical future discovery of a Continental Runic inscription, e.g. \( \text{aigil wrait runa} \) or \( \text{halrun wrait runa} \) would render the entire exercise of inventing the first German heroic lay superfluous. Caution is thus called for.

Four other graves separate graves 239 and 255 from each other (Babucke 1999a). The presence of two runic objects in such proximity is highly unusual, but not unique within the context of a Merovingian Period row grave cemetery. A glance at tables 8-9 shows that the Pforzen context may not be due to coincidence. It appears that the two graves may well belong to the same chronological phase of the cemetery. More likely, it is Nedoma who does not want to open up a discursive space for the theory that there could be a relationship between the two graves. Why is this?

My suggestion is that the acceptance of a probable relationship between graves 239 and 255 means that one inevitably has to resort to a deductive scientific method outside the scientific realm of runological interpretation. This means that the runological interpretation is subordinated to an a priori archaeological interpretation. The former has to comply with the primary deduction of the latter.
This means that the runological invention of a ‘Heroic Narrative’ ought to wait until archaeologists have published all graves in Pforzen.

At a given point, a claim can assume the guise of a beacon of scientific truth. That is, if it is referred to uncritically as if it were fact. This is to a great extent what is understood by the term *opinio communis*, which translates as ‘what the scientific community currently holds to be true’. It would seem that the ‘Heroic Narrative’ and its topos are on the verge of being accepted as *opinio communis* in the German-speaking academic world. This has been achieved with surprising ease. There are two probable reasons for this.

First, the ‘Heroic Narrative’ is seductive and its invention corresponds to a need for finding something new and unique within the German-speaking field of runology. Most speakers of German would probably be pleased when told that ‘their’ earliest heroic lay has been discovered. Therefore, they will feel pride and accept rather than criticize the ‘Heroic Narrative’.

Second, the entire Pforzen row grave cemetery has yet to be published. This latter fact is very important. To use a metaphor, it means that runologists have taken off to invent theories about what was said at a dinner party without knowing what were all the dishes served at the table and who all the invited guests were. Moreover, they are able to convince the archaeologists cleaning up after the dinner party that their reconstruction of the conversation is true, mainly because the cleaners would like it to be true. This is the case even if the cleaners understand that some of the fundamental premises of the reconstruction are false.

It will take a while before one can grasp what is a possible narrative and what is not from an archaeological study of the Pforzen context. The five-abovementioned archaeological methods should give rather good results when applied to the Pforzen row grave cemetery. In the meantime, it seems that a rapprochement between the two disciplines of linguistics and archaeology will still have to wait as long as the ideological urge to create new narratives overrides the need for scientific rigor.

If one employed a deductive method such as that of Ockham’s razor to the ‘Heroic Narrative’ and its topos one would run into severe difficulties. The narrative topos of heroic lay simply cannot be supported by means of deductive method. It would have to make room for the more likely possibility that one is dealing with common personal names of a family. Nedoma (2004a) has to separate the other grave 255 from the new narrative by any means necessary (gleich welcher Art). This is questionable. In many ways, Pforzen may be comparable to the context of Schretzheim, from whence grandiose theories once emanated, that now appear to be false.

To be fair, one has to ask if there is anything to support Nedoma’s claim that may be deduced from the archaeological contexts in the immediate region. The unusual but closely located Nordendorf inscription does have two alliterative names as well. These are names of Germanic gods: wodan wigi/g652onar. Alternatively, it is the name of a god wodan, followed by an apposition wigi/g652onar. Be this as it may, the Nordendorf inscription shows that it was possible to write the personal name of someone who was not among the living in runes on an object and then be buried with that object. In so far, aigil and ailrun may be the names of fictitious persons. Yet, this is one inscription out of a total of 82 in table 3. The other runic inscription from Nordendorf does not lend support to Nedoma’s theory.
Nedoma does not want be bogged down by such methodological constraints. Rather he wants to be free to construct a narrative around a newly discovered topos: the recovery of a fragment of the oldest known Germanic heroic lay. Ascertainning the veracity behind the ‘Heroic Narrative’ and its topos seems to be of minor interest. Nor does it seem to be of importance to question the ideological motive for inventing the narrative and its topos in the first place. By the same token, Nedoma (2004a) is eager to criticize other runologists for not providing a ‘Sitz im Leben’. A reasonable place to start the search for the ‘Sitz im Leben’ is the ‘Sitz im Tod’, that is within the Pforzen cemetery. This may be done with an archaeological deductive method.

The easiest thing to prove is that the two runic graves 239 and 255 in Pforzen have more in common than the other 440 excavated graves that do not have runes in them, the odds being 221 to 1. From this it follows that the total of 33 graves from 13 different row grave cemeteries in Germany with multiple runic finds share something that the other 6,712 graves in these cemeteries do not. In conjunction with this, it must be stated that grave 255 contained a carver’s signature. There are only four known carver’s signatures of which three are female. Given that there are some 80 runic graves from the Merovingian Period out of a total of c. 100,000 excavated graves (Steuer 1982), this suggests that grave 255 is very special. The female carver had something in common with the other two female carvers, which the other c. 50,000 females did not.

Given the geographic location of a number of cemeteries with multiple runic finds, including Pforzen, Nordendorf, and Schretzheim (Babucke and Düwel 2000: 162, Abb 1) it is likely that the personal names on the runic objects were those of people living reasonably close to each other. It would seem likely that these people were interrelated. The archaeologist Martin (2004: 190-191) does make a case for the probable relationship between graves 239 and 255. He does so from the empirical evidence present in the context of the adjacent graves in Weimar-Nordfriedhof. Moreover, Martin makes a deductive assumption as well. He suggests that this context may extend over a smaller region. He argues that the practice of runic literacy has spread from a family living in one place to a new place.

Aus der räumlichen Nachbarschaft, die zwischen runenführenden Bestattungen eines Friedhofs beobachtet wurde, in Weimar-Nordfriedhof und Pforzen im Allgäu, darf man vielleicht auf eine engere Bindung zwischen den mit runenbeschriebenen Gegenständen bestatteten Personen am betreffenden Ort schließen, z.B. innerhalb einer Familie; derartige Personengruppen könnten sich in der Folge mitgesamt ihrem Schriftgebrauch innerhalb einer Kleinregion weiter ausgebreitet haben (Martin 2004: 190-191).

But this deductive scheme fits the narrative that Martin (1997, 2004) wants to tell. Together with Koch, he would like to see that Thuringian settlers brought runic literacy to Alemannia. As becomes evident later on, there is room for the new ‘Heroic Narrative’ within the ‘Thuringian Narrative’. The Thuringians were supposedly not only migrant rune-masters, they were also knowledgable in heroic lay. This conclusion is not a problem for Martin, because as an archaeologist he does not have to bother with interpreting the two runic inscriptions from Pforzen unless he wants to. It is a lot easier to accept the ‘Heroic Narrative’ at face value than to go through the pains to criticize it. The archaeologist Martin (2004) uncritically accepts Nedoma’s interpretation of the runic inscription in grave 239, praising it as an important discovery.
As Martin does not claim to be a runologist, he is free to accept Nedoma’s narrative without criticism. By the same token, the archaeologist Martin cannot accept Nedoma’s founding premise that graves 239 and 255 are unrelated and that one cannot draw any conclusions from the fact that they are 9 meters away from each other. This is because just about any trained archaeologist would regard this premise as highly improbable, if not false. Martin is unlikely to miss on such an easy deductive matter relating to one out of the hundreds of row grave cemeteries he has studied over the years. Thus, he sees evidence for runic diffusion where Nedoma claims that everyone has to be blind. But diverging opinion does not seem to be a problem for Martin here. Martin has simply incorporated Nedoma’s ‘Heroic Narrative’ into the larger ‘Thuringian Narrative’, which has thus taken on an even more grandiose aura.

What becomes evident is that the lack of insight in the other discipline, archaeology or runology, gives individual scholars a carte blanche to skip deductive scientific method and simply invent historicizing narrative as they go along. Inconsistencies in borrowed arguments or theories are either not understood or overlooked. Meanwhile, the irrefutable fact that it is most probable that these personal names represent those of two probably related non-Thuringian mortals buried in Pforzen has been completely ignored.
8 The Demise of Literacy in the Nordic Periphery

In the last chapter, it was argued that the brief runic revival in parts of the Merovingian Kingdoms was in part a reactionary ideological move. The Continental Germanic affinities were confronted with the new ideological and political realities of an increasingly Christian society. Latin literacy was becoming scarce and elitist on the Continent. There, runic literacy could serve to bolster Germanic self-confidence to some degree. Continental Runic was employed to uphold the fiction of a vivid continuity from an aristocratic past, that of the Germanic kleptocracy of the early Migration Period.

The three following chapters discuss two more peripheral parts of the Germanic world, the Mälar Valley and Blekinge in Sweden. The archaeological contexts of the late Migration Period and early Vendel Period show the beginning an increased cultural and material isolation. This is evident in the changed influx of status goods. There was a steady import of glass throughout the Vendel Period, most likely of Anglo-Saxon origin (Näsmann 1986). But there is little evidence of Byzantine or Frankish regalia reaching the north after the 6th century. The selective affinities in the North soon found their contacts to their Continental peers very limited. The solidus hoards show that traditional extortion expeditions were no longer possible. The limited historical evidence of the Geatish/Danish king Hygelac/Chlochilaich rather shows that at least one Nordic expedition was severely beaten by a superior Continental retinue (Historia Francorum, III, 3; Beowulf, st 2911 ff.). This occurred sometime 510-525 AD.

The traditional basis for social power in the Mälar Valley during the Late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period must have been landholding. Yet, a scholarly fixation with landholding as the key regulator of social stratification cannot explain the power of independent factors. One must seek to widen the interpretative perspective of the Nordic region not only by estimating the size of the prehistoric social hierarchy, but more importantly, one must attempt to account for the width of its ideological scope. There is little reason to believe that people in the prehistoric North were more open minded and receptive to new ideas from the outside than today. Rather, there was a new form of diffusion of material culture and ideology. But for the two phenomena to diffuse effectively, they need more or less conscious carriers from the center away into the periphery. It is by no means certain though, that the peripheral receptors were thrilled about the novelties that were to reach them from afar. In particular, chances for women to acquire literacy must have become increasingly slim. Their material sphere came to consist of heavily reified objects, without any tenable connection to the outside world. This was certainly the case in mid-20th century Africa, too:

The crude literacy figures draw attention to the patchy, and often very shallow impact of the European occupation of tropical Africa. For very large numbers of rural inhabitants, women more than men, the cultural impact was slight. Untouched by literacy and the visions it might conjure up, hardly marked by the teaching of the Christian gospels, aware only peripherally of the overarching authority of the district commissioner and caught up but slightly in the monetized economy, they came to independence with their cultural roots largely intact (Hodder-Williams 1984: 62).
The only way the late 5th century Continental culture could possibly have reached the North on such an unprecedented scale was that people from the North personally went down to the Continent and brought the new culture with them back home again. Such a cultural diffusion cannot possibly have been without consequences for the regional society at large. But what happened back home? With the return of professional military units and monetary capital c. 450-520, it may have been that the previous social order in the North was not immediately taken for granted anymore. That is to say, that a number of younger or distant members of dominant families may have considered themselves more worthy or capable of managing the family domains after returning home. They had qualified to enter a selective affinity abroad, which they thought entitled them a higher ranking in ethnic and elective affinities at home. In the end, this meant trouble. One cannot therefore exclude the possibility that some elite graves with imported regalia belong to landless kleptocrats, and the question of continuity in elite burials becomes even more important. The realm of interpretation of elite graves thus widens: does a lot of topsoil or turf indicate a claim to longterm land ownership? Or is it an indication of the lack of land, or the hunger for more land?

This chapter further seeks to explain what happened in the peripheral North after the West Roman Empire had ceased to be an independent state in the late 5th century. It will be argued that Continental events eventually caused considerable economic and intellectual regression in the North. In the previous chapters, I have discussed how Germanic knowledge production changed as a result of the contacts with the Roman Empire. I have pointed to a subsequent Roman reaction within some Roman selective affinities. The situation eventually led to the creation of a literate Germanic kleptocracy and a Christian Roman clergy. But what would happen if the situation were to change in the other direction? In the North, Christianity had yet to have an impact. The North was left to its own devices.

8.1 The Rejection of Knowledge

Knowledge production is always related to a given socioeconomic situation. There needs to be capital allocated to support an ideology for it to fully realize itself. This is so, even if the produced knowledge is completely irrelevant to what really ought to be done. A second problem is that people who do not master certain technolects (e.g. foreign language skills, electricity or plumbing) or applied ideological theories (e.g. cosmology, diplomacy, doctrines of warfare) very often have a tendency to dismiss the unknown or unfamiliar. It becomes irrelevant, worthless, or even dangerous. This is due to the own inability to perceive or grasp the new experience entailed in such an unknown practice or theory. The new becomes the uncanny, a representation of the ‘other’. Moreover, there is a distinct tendency for people to act out of fear or jealousy in regard to the actions of others rather than on their own initiative.

It is quite plausible that too many novelties eventually became all too provocative for the old fashioned Germanic landowners who had stayed at home and wanted to preserve old manners and habits. These people still had the practice of internal appropriation at hand and were thus capable of fighting small-scale battles against all too abrasive Romanized home comers. I believe that this reaction was an instrumental factor in the shaping of a regressive Nordic kleptocracy (Fischer 2003). It meant that many important lessons from Roman civilization...
brought home during the Migration Period (including wider and more useful applications of literacy) came to mean next to nothing during the ensuing Vendel Period. Foucault (1980) has discussed the distribution of knowledge in the terms of geography of power:

> Once knowledge can be analyzed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to catch the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power. There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass through knowledge and which, if one tries to transcribe them lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory (Foucault 1980: 69).

With this in mind, I shall turn to the Northern periphery. Cut off from the outside literate world, there would have been less need for the development of literacy in the North. Other matters were given priority. The painstaking effort to keep up and advance literate knowledge production therefore became futile or unnecessary given the new situation. It appears that the Nordic knowledge production was cut off from the socioeconomic situation to which it had grown accustomed. Hence, it had to change. Cultural isolation increased the reification process of imported knowledge. This caused confusion. It was no longer certain how the imported knowledge once reached the periphery, or what purpose it once had. Narratives relating past experiences on the Continent would become less related to the fostering of new selective affinities capable of going overseas. Instead, the narratives would assume epic and mythical proportions. The story of Sigurd and the Volsungs is indicative of such a trend. The narrative meshes fairy tale dragons with hagiographic accounts of the 5th century Burgundians in Worms, and the Austrasian Merovingian court of the late 6th century. But the change in knowledge production also meant an opportunity for some. Those who never grasped foreign languages and literacy were no longer as disqualified from entering the inner circles of power as before. Similarly, those with limited access to coinage could now again point to landownership and descent as chief criteria for the leadership within the leading selective affinities. In many ways, this was a move towards a very much-downsized mediocracy, with fewer members in the selective affinities possessing a smaller range of skills.

All good things must come to an end. It would seem that some two-three generations after the late 5th century extortion campaigns there would be little or nothing left of the old bonds that once had tied a given dominant family to the lordship of the descendants of a warlord. This could imply the dissolution of selective and elective affinities. The by now quasi-divine ancestors had, when united, formed a formidable retinue in the late 5th century. Divided, the descendant war bands were only capable of patrolling their own turfs and carrying out occasional raids against central places in neighbors. The booty had been shared and the turfs etched out in the past. The new leaders still needed more for themselves and their growing families to survive on the political arena. Conflict was thus inevitable. At the same time, such a conflict would go beyond the resources of the small kingdoms.

Home rule became a more complicated and ideologically charged affaire, and the sudden death of a leader could mean a direct change in politics. A number of leading members of primary affinities possessed imported regalia, first Roman, briefly Byzantine, then of Frankish origin (e.g. Brunnhögen, Gamla Uppsala, Landshammar, Väsbö). These regalia were eventually replaced with inferior Nor-
dic artifacts, as in Valsgärde and Vendel. The Nordic version of the Roman cavalry helmet was once distinct as on the Möjbro stone, U 877. The helmet shifted form, losing much of its crest. It also became a far more common attribute, reflecting the inevitability that a larger staff was needed to rule than before. But this did not correspond to an increasing numbers of literates or professional warriors as was once needed for the past extortion campaigns. Rather it became evident that the local rulers had never been more than squad leaders. Instead, a vast staff of farm keepers and shepherds was needed.

An increasing number of participants, albeit of insignificant rank, required a corresponding living space. Territorial expansion was not always at the expense of others, though. Much of northern Uppland and western Södermanland must have been uninhabited prior to the population growth of the Vendel Period. The cohesion of the late 5th century was no longer present as the descendants of the returning kleptocrats found that they had increasingly limited monetary resources. Instead, the petty kingdom consisting of a few hundare became an increasingly independent and isolated unit. Ambrosiani (1964), Arrhenius (1999, 2004), and Seiler (2001) have pointed to expanded settlement in Uppland along the Fyris River and Långhundraleden, evident in the first boat graves along the Fyris and rich cremation graves along Långhundraleden. This was the case, even if these places harbored older settlements. A parallel to Alemannia is in order here. It is evident that much of Alemannia was settled prior to the arrival of the Merovingian warriors. Yet, it is equally clear who was to rule henceforth. The new denizens were soon to dominate. During the final stage of this period, the first rinkers are allocated to settlements on the outskirts of the rival petty kingdoms in Attundal. This settlement was related to the extensive economy that relied on grazing livestock.

8.2 Historical Research – Ynglingatal and Heimskringla

This section will discuss the main historical source for the late Migration Period and early Vendel period Málar Valley. Ynglingatal is the name given to an Old Norse poem that survives as fragments in Old Icelandic written records from the Medieval Period. The poem has been attributed to an early 10th century Norwegian poet named Tjodolf from Hvina. The subject of the poem is a Swedish primary affinity, the Ynglingar. They are described as the rulers of Gamla Uppsala in Tiundaland, and as Swedish kings. The last King Olof migrates westward. His offspring then become the kings of Norway during the Viking Period. Snorri uses the poem in his Heimskringla to describe historical events in Sweden. Ynglingatal and Heimskringla have often been used as comparative evidence together with place names and archaeological finds. Neither Ynglingatal nor Heimskringla ever mention the use of runes in Sweden. There was no apparent reason to include such a matter in the oral tradition of Germanic genealogy.

Based on their appearance in Beowulf, it would seem that there are real historical persons in Ynglingatal, e.g. Egil, Ottar, and Adils (Lindquist 1945: 60-61). But it is also clear that there are a number of fictitious characters. Moreover, the genealogical link between the Swedish primary affinity and the Norwegian Viking Period kings is likely to be fictitious (Wessén 1952). There is no historical certitude surrounding the characters Yngvar, Ingiald, and Olof. The barrow named Ingjaldshögen, for instance, contained Viking Period grave goods (Nerman 1941:
Incidentally, this latter case shows that one should not trust Lindquist’s (1936, 1945) and Nerman’s (1941, 1943, 1955, 1960, 1961, 1963) generous attributions of various barrows to different kings in Ynglingatal. It also means that one cannot trust their chronologies for the various kings. The latter also tend to vary much according to what Nerman would have liked to prove at a given time. A more reasonable approach is Nerman (1945) where he develops an understanding for the fact that some of the artifacts belonging to the Ynglingar may have been a lot older than the owners. But Nerman does not dwell on this problematic for very long, presumably because it would discredit his other artifact datings of the burial monuments of saga heroes.

Much like Nerman (1943: 42-43) before him, Vikstrand (2004: 384) has recently argued that one should still see the Viking Period Ynglingatal as derivative of Swedish oral sources from the Vendel Period. One of Vikstrand’s arguments is that a number of place names appear in the story that cannot have been known to Tjodolf, notably Skuta and Vendel. Indeed, there are other important place names that correspond to central place complexes with important archaeological finds. The question is what to do with the narrative. Should one regard it as artificial, but sprinkled with proper place names? Or, does it (in spite of fictitious characters) reflect a political landscape in a state of virtual war, where it is impossible for a single primary affinity (fictitious or not) to assume hegemonic dominance for any longer period? I am inclined to argue the latter case.

An important testimony of the conflict between those who went abroad and those who stayed at home is found in the story of two brothers Yngvi and Alf. Snorri’s laconic narrative seems like a case of domestic violence typically found in a police academy textbook. King Yngvi is described as a person who engages in overseas extortion expeditions. He is a great athlete, a warrior, and a generous spender. Yngvi is a happy camper and a loyal friend. King Alf sits at home on the lands, and does not go abroad to plunder. He is stingy, quiet and unfriendly. One fall, Yngvi returns to Uppsala from a successful summer campaign. He spends the nights drinking in the hall, while Alf usually goes to bed early. Bera, the wife of Alf, does not want to go to bed. She wants to stay up drinking with Yngvi. Bera keeps telling Alf that she would rather be married to a real man like Yngvi. Alf keeps pleading her to go to bed, saying he does not want to wait for her. Eventually, Alf gets angry. He goes out of bed and into the hall. There he finds his wife sitting in the lap of his brother Yngvi in the high seat. Alf attacks Yngvi with a sword hidden under his cloak. But Yngvi is quick to respond and pulls out his sword, too. They fatally stab each other, falling dead to the floor. The episode has been dated to c. 450 (Nerman 1943: 45).

The most impressive, albeit fictitious character in Ynglingatal is King Ingiald the Evil-spirited. His rule over Tiundaland has been dated to the mid-7th century (Nerman 1941: 144, 1943: 46). During his reign, Snorri argues, power was fragmented. There were many petty kings (váru margir heraðs-konungar) in Tiundaland. Ingiald thus appears to have started out as primus inter pares. This was to change. Snorri claims that Ingiald killed 12 rival kings during his reign. This stands out as quite an achievement. The story of Ingiald has been employed to describe the transformation of a number of petty kingdoms of the Migration and Vendel Period into the future monarchies of the late Viking and Medieval periods. It has also been used to describe contrasting Germanic and Christian notions of kingship (Norr 1998).
The main plot unfolds as follows: First, Ingiald constructs a large hall building with seven high seats in Gamla Uppsala. The hall building is aptly named Upsal. This is obviously nonsense, but it enables a narrator who has never been to Gamla Uppsala to offer a handy etymology for the place name. The number of high seats roughly corresponds to the number of leading political actors in Sweden. Ingiald issues an invitation to the petty kings of Attundaland, Fjadryndaland, Götaland, Närke, and Södermanland to attend a funeral celebration for his father. The petty kings and some of their sons all show up, except for King Granmar of Södermanland. The latter suspects foul play and stays at home. Ingiald drinks a toast, promising to expand his kingdom with 50% in every direction. The ambitions behind this expansionist scheme appear to be strikingly modest, but may give a clue as to how limited Ingiald’s resources were at the time. While the petty kings are seated with drinks, Ingiald leaves Upsal and has it surrounded. The petty kings are then burned to death inside. Ingiald subsequently embarks on his attempt to expand his rule over the entire Mälar Valley.

Meanwhile, an outsider king named Hjörvard Ylving appears with his fleet in Mörköfjärden. This is a major inlet to Lake Mälaren, and could thus have been well known outside of Sweden. Hjörvard forges an alliance with the Granmar by marrying his daughter. They also add the neighboring King Högne of Östergötland to their partnership. They defeat Ingiald in a large battle. Ingiald loses because the men from the conquered kingdoms flee. Ingiald returns to Gamla Uppsala. He is then forced into a brokered marriage deal with the daughter of Högne. There is a promise of peace during the lifetimes of Ingiald, Granmar and Högne. Granmar goes to attend a sacrifice in Gamla Uppsala. During the voyage, Granmar realizes that he is fated to die soon. He returns home to Södermanland. Ingiald breaks the peace and burns Granmar to death in a house on the island of Sili. This island has been identified as Selaön in Lake Mälaren (Södermanland). Selaön has a combined Husby-Tuna central place complex, where a later Husby has taken over the role of an earlier Tuna (Ambrosiani 1985: 112, Fig. 3; Brink 1999: 44-46, 2000: 427-428). It must be noted that Tuna, Ytterselö Parish also has one of the two known Migration Period graves with imported gold coins in them (SHM 9435). Fagerlie (1967: 178) argues that it is an uncertain imitation of a solidus struck for Theodosius II (408-450 AD). In Valla, Ytterselö Parish, there were two gold spirals weighing 20 and 28,05 g, respectively found in the same field. In Toresund Parish, across the strait from Selaön, there is the Kvicksta hoard with its two ring sword knobs (SHM 3007), one consisting of 249 g gold. Ambrosiani (1985) notes graves from the 7th century in Tuna, and that the legal assembly in Kolhöga was situated in between the Husby and the Tuna. It is thus reasonable to assume that the central place on Selaön was indeed active during the early Vendel Period, and that there may be continuity from the Migration Period into the Viking Period.

Ingiald finally conquers Södermanland. But Högne successfully puts pressure on Ingiald with constant raids into the Mälar Valley from Östergötland. In the meantime, Ivar Vidfamne rules over Denmark and Skåne after the death of his uncle Gudröd, who was married to Ingiald’s daughter Åsa. Ivar eventually attacks the Mälar Valley, surrounding Ingiald and his daughter who is there to visit. At this point, Ingiald and Åsa choose to burn themselves to death inside a house in Ræningi / Rauningi / Reiningi. This place name would seem to be of the settler type (Swedish inbyggarnamn). But it is likely to correspond to a central place complex spread out over Lid, Ludgo, Runtuna and Spelvik Parishes, Rönö härad.
(Södermanland). The Eriksgata leads through here. The Eriksgata, first mentioned in 1296, was a route through the Mälar Valley, Östergötland, and Västergötland that had to be travelled by the newly elected king from Uppsala through the various lands. At each border, there was an exchange of hostages. It is likely that there was a stop in the Rönö central place complex. On the early 11th century rune stone Sö Fv 1948; 389, the place name first appears in Rune Swedish as rauniki (Jansson 1987: 105). Nodal points in the central place complex include a legal assembly, Aspa hög, and a sacred place in the adjacent Ludgo Parish, Liuthgudhuwi (Vikstrand 2001: 310-315). In Landshammar, Spelvik Parish, there is a large cemetery named Trossbobacken (Lamm 1962). Two of the excavated graves were from the Vendel Period. The rich weapon grave A/1944 dates to the first half of the 7th century and is thus contemporary with Nerman’s dating of Ingiald’s rule. The large number of graves on Trossbobacken and the variety of their external dimensions suggest a continuity lasting from the Migration Period into the Viking Period.

Ivar conquers the entire Mälar Valley. He then expands his kingdom to encompass all of Sweden, Denmark, parts of Saxony, and a fifth of England. The latter kingdom dovetails well with the ideas of Danish archaeologists who desire an increasing Danish domination over the North in the late Vendel period. The only problem is that it would seem that Ivar’s kingdom (if it ever existed) failed to become permanent. It would seem likely that even if Ivar existed, things in the Mälar Valley would have reverted back to normal fairly soon after his death (which according to Nerman (1941) would have been in the late 7th century). Normality was a state of virtual war, interrupted time and time again by real acts of warfare carried out by small mobile units. The hall building on Helgö is burned down c. 800 AD (Herschend 1995). When Ansgar arrives in Birka in 829 AD, the local king is not very powerful, and raiders successfully attack the town. The virtual war was not conducive to an extensive spread of runic literacy. On the contrary, it would seem to have had a less prominent rule during the late Vendel Period. Only when the upswing in the economy is there to stay do the first rune inscriptions appear on Birka.

8.3 Onomastic Research – Central Places and Place Names

The framework for the discussion in the three following chapters is an attempted reconstruction of a social hierarchy in a given cultural landscape with a set of place names indicative of social power or function. Hellberg (1942, 1967, 1975, 1979, 1984-1985) stands out as a pioneer in discussing the role of the central place in the Mälar Valley from an onomastic perspective. Place names discussed by Hellberg are Husa, Tuna, Rinkeby, Karlaby, and Smedby. The place name Husa, from *HusaR, e.g. Oppusa (Upp-husa), Runtuna Parish (Södermanland), and Husa in Vada Parish (Uppland), is quite likely to antedate the Viking Period (Hellberg 1975, 1979). By contrast, there is much to indicate that the place name Husby only came to imply a royal estate during the late 11th century, that is, at the onset of the Medieval Period monarchy (Brink 2000: 70).

The many place names Husa- and Tuna should not be regarded a priori as indicative of a single central power during the Viking Period, but rather of a multitude of Migration Period and Vendel Period affinities living next to various regional central places, some of which were eventually absorbed into a more uni-
form structure during the Medieval Period. It would seem plausible that a handful rival Vendel Period kleptocracies each had its own Husa in the vicinity of a Tuna. It was surrounded by selective affinities living in adjacent Karlabyar and Rinkebyar. This would have constituted the hierarchy of a central place.

A much simplified description of a Vendel Period kleptocracy in the Mälar Valley would be to have the hegemonic primary ‘royal’ affinity reside in Husa, rule the elective affinity at the legal assembly in Tuna, and have the selective affinity, specialists in hunting, metallurgy and warfare, reside in Smedby, Karlaby and Rinkeby. Among the more recent interdisciplinary works on the role of central places, sacral place names, Germanic religion and cult one can mention the works of Brink (1996, 1997, 1999, 2000), Fabech (1997, 2001), O. Sundqvist (2002), and Vikstrand (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004). The latter suggests three typical locations for sacral place names:

Typical location 1: The Normal Iron Age Settlement. Here the sacral place-names denote a prehistoric settlement with no signs of centrality or high status, an apparently ‘normal’ Iron Age Settlement.

Typical location 2: The centre of the community. In this typical location the sacral place-names indicate (but does not necessarily designate) a place that has central ritual significance in an egalitarian community.

Typical location 3: The aristocratic centre. This location is based to a large extent on Lars Hellberg’s mapping of place-names settings in connection with the Iron Age aristocratic centers. At the centre of location of this kind there is often a settlement with a tuna-name. Grouped around this core, there are certain recurrent names such as Gillberga, Karlaby and Smedby, which all indicate different functions in relation to the central site. Sacral names of various kinds are also regular features of such places (Vikstrand 2001: 428).

Much of this hypothesis remains to be empirically verified. Scholars of onomastics (notably Hellberg and Brink) have assumed a lot when constructing their synchronic models. In particular, it is very difficult to secure a chronology for the introduction of certain place names. Another major question is that of diachronic continuity. Only by means of empirical studies can one estimate the activity of the central place, that is, the ideological significance of the place name in relation to what it represented at a given time in terms of a material context. A place name may be active at the onset (Vikstrand 2002). It may then be emptied of significance if its denizens fail to fill it with real meaning. A later upsurge in ideological activity may reactivate the significance of the place name. While this is an entirely possible situation, it is also a lengthy process that is extremely difficult to trace except in a few cases, e.g. Tuna in Badelunda (Nylén and Schönback 1994, Vikstrand 2000:214-216). One should not attempt to connect an unusual archaeological find belonging to one period to a place name of a different period, merely because they could hypothetically fit well together in a wishful continuity.

A final objection to the model is that its rigidity does not allow for individual strategies. There is nothing to exclude the possibility that a hegemonic primary affinity ruled from a location with a ‘normal’ place name. Or, the affinity may have usurped a nearby settlement with a strong connection to a sacral place name. In this case, the primary affinity could have designated its leading members as new cult functionaries. More likely, there was a mixture of the three types. For all the shortcomings and the implicit methodological pitfalls, I still believe that the central place models are quite applicable to a larger interdisciplinary perspective. Hence, it will be tried out in comparison with other criteria below. In particular,
the presence of runic literacy, hall buildings, gold, and imported regalia will be considered as indicative of a type 3 location, regardless of place names.

8.4 Macro-archaeological Research – Centers and Spheres of Power

Among the first archaeologists to describe a relationship between the place name of Husby and large barrows were Almgren (1920) and Nerman (1932: 101). There have been a number of macro-archaeological surveys of the Mälar Valley since then, e.g. Ambrosiani (1964), Hyenstrand (1974), and Wijkander (1983). These show that there are ‘royal’ barrows (i.e. cremation graves extending over 30 m diameter, cf. Hyenstrand 1974) close to Medieval Period royal estates and legal assemblies that may have existed already in the Vendel Period. This fact was then put into the perspective of legal and military administrative units, hundare (or härad). In his study on Södermanland, Wijkander suggested that the original hundare were somewhat different from today, and that they were divided into sub-units, tolfter, with minor Tuna places. Ambrosiani (1985) brought up the issue again. He identified a number of Husbyar with aristocratic graves that were likely allocations for important Early Medieval manors or estates. The claim (Ambrosiani 1985: 115) that the sample of eight examples was taken at random is highly dubious. It includes some of the most conspicuous environments related to the formation of a Medieval Period monarchy (e.g. Hovgården on Adelsö, Hundhamra in Botkyrka, Husa in Vada). Many of these places will be discussed below.

The macro-archaeological surveys did achieve a few things. It was established that some of the hundare might be as old as the Vendel Period. Some of the hypothetical hundare and their internal hierarchies mapped out by Wijkander (1983) do indeed dovetail archaeological finds from the Migration Period and Vendel Period. This is certainly the case in Hölebo, Rönö and Övre Tör. However, the macro-archaeological studies do have their drawbacks. The method initially developed by Hyenstrand (1974), later employed by Wijkander (1983), uses the distribution pattern of ‘royal’ barrows in Södermanland as a normative criterion for the allocation of central places during the Vendel Period. This is problematic, as this normative descriptive behavior fails to account for the obvious presence of individual strategy in the case of ‘royal’ burials. It would be very nice to accept any structure with the dimensions of a ‘royal’ barrow at face value, but this is rather unscientific behavior.

A large barrow or a central place named Husby or Tuna is not necessarily indicative of Vendel Period ‘royal’ power unless it has been scientifically excavated and shown to contain imported regalia from that period. This means that Black-stahögen and Uppsala Kulle in Rönö represent uncertain evidence of Vendel Period central places tied to Husbyar. Eventually, it may turn out that some of the currently non-excavated cremation barrows were constructed quite early in the Migration Period, well before the oldest one in Gamla Uppsala. Unexcavated and larger than the mounds in Gamla Uppsala are Anundshög, Badelunda Parish (Västmanland); Nordians hög, Norrsunda Parish (Uppland); Uppsala kulle, Runtuna Parish (Södermanland). Other ‘royal’ barrows like Ingjaldshögen in Husby, Vansö Parish (SHM 16340), and Skopintull by Hovgården, Adelsö Parish (SHM 16171), were found to contain goods from the 9th and 10th centuries and are therefore unrelated to this study. By contrast, it would seem that rather small and damaged barrows in Södermanland, such as Husby in Vagnhärad, A/1944 Landshammar,
and A 53 Skrävsta, constitute reliable proof of a social hierarchy tied to central places in the Vendel Period. A much-needed contrast to the macro-archaeological surveys is surveys that study minor localities over a long period. They are relevant in order to explain the ubiquitous cremations.

There has been considerable micro-archaeological research in the Mälar Valley (Lamm 1973, Petré 1984 a, 1984b, 1997). Cases in point are the lengthy Helgö project (1954-) and the seminar excavations on Lovö, Ekerö Parish (1958-). One can also mention the exploitation excavations in Spånga Parish (Biuw 1992). In addition, there has been research carried out in Vendel Parish (Arrhenius 1999, 2001, 2004, Seiler 2001). These research projects have given much information of colonization and settlement, family structure, burial tradition and more general trading contacts. However, the micro-archaeological studies are problematic in so far that very few Vendel Period settlements have been excavated in explicit relation to adjacent cemeteries. The situation is deplorable, particularly in Spånga Parish, where a long continuity of a number of settlements are gone forever, leaving the graves detached from their origin.

8.5 Locating Early Runic and Transitional Runic Literacy

This section employs an interdisciplinary approach to the Mälar Valley. A number of criteria are presented as tools needed to identify how, when, and where runic literacy was practiced. The hypothesis is that one can identify literate affinities in the same places where onomastic scholars have identified central place complexes, and where archaeologists have excavated weapon graves, hall buildings or manufacturing centers. But it appears that literacy was often employed as a marker in the outskirts of affinities, and not at the central nodal points.

A synchronic perspective of the few historical sources, archaeological finds, and place names in Mälar Valley suggests a fragmented power structure. There were always parallel institutions of power in the form of collective assembly places and the individual display of regalia, and the vis-à-vis relationship between political leadership and collective order was subject to considerable variation. There were several local legal assemblies that stood for some form of ideological continuity over generations. Against this synchronic multitude of fixed points in the cultural landscape, one can diachronically trace the brief attempts of various dominant families to manipulate or control the subjects of the legal assemblies. This was done by means of introducing innovative structures such as new cemeteries, hall buildings, and assembly places.

Having considered the advantages and limitations of previous attempts to delineate regional social hierarchy and central places, notably Fabech (1997: fig. 3), I have chosen to establish a number of criteria for the identification and evaluation of regional centers. These are rather rigid criteria, but only because a relative certainty is required in an overview thesis such as this one. More than half of the criteria listed below need to be met in the center of a given region to qualify as a likely seat of a runic literate social hierarchy.

First, there ought to be gold hoards in the vicinity. This is irrefutable evidence of the pre-monetary economy that is kleptocracy. The chorological distribution of gold hoards in the cultural landscape must be emphasized here to give an idea of how vast a kleptocratic network may have been at the time.
Second, there ought to be a hall building. The hall building has only recently become an artifact to reckon with in Swedish Iron Age archaeology. The reason for this is simple. These days, an archaeologist knows where to look for a hall building, whereas earlier excavations of living quarters were more dependent on chance, e.g. Darsgärde (Ambrosiani 1964). As a result of applied knowledge, a number of hall buildings in the Mälar Valley have appeared right next to important cemeteries such as Gamla Uppsala (Duczko 1993), Valsgärde (Norr and Sundkvist 1995) and Skrävsta (Bratt 1997, Bratt and Wærthwein 1999). Other hall buildings appear near central place complexes such as Husby in Glanshammar in Närke (Drott and Ekman 1995) and Slöinge in Halland (Callmer and Lundquist 1994). Moreover, there has been stress on the importance of the hall building as a spatial structure regulating social stratification (Herschend 1997, 1998, 2001a). The fact that the hall building came to highlight and concentrate events that had implications for the larger cultural landscape would also lead to the demise of many a hall building. For instance, it is evident that the hall in building group 3 on Helgö was vandalized and torched in the early 9th century.

Third, there ought be at least one weapon grave containing imported regalia (i.e. Byzantine or Merovingian garnet jewelry). The majority of the weapon graves date to the late 6th century and the early 7th century (Ljungkvist 2000). There are rather few weapon graves in the Mälar Valley cremation cemeteries compared to Alemannia. It must be said though, that this scarcity has occasionally been all too exaggerated (Nørgård-Jørgensen 1999), whereas others would like to see patterns of social differentiation, rooted in ideology. For the most part, relatives have not put everything of the deceased’s armory on the pyre. It is tempting to accept the general explanation for the absence of rich graves before and after, so often employed to explain the dearth of finds in Vendel Period Denmark. There was no longer any need for grandeur in the burial rite as the question as to who ruled what had previously been settled. However, there are central place complexes with rather late Vendel Period graves that obviously contradict this trend; Hundhamra in Botkyrka and Karlaby, Östertälje Parish, being cases in point.

Fourth, in this grave, there ought to be raptors, horses, dogs, and cats (rather than just goat/sheep). There should also be board games, preferably imported ivory pieces. Numerical literacy is a prerequisite for every board game, just as competition is its very nature. The board game pawns and dices, found in nearly all the rich weapon graves, belonged to a two-dimensional table. The table defines competition (Swedish tävlan).

Additional factors are ornate grave balls and/or picture stones. During the Late Roman Iron Age, it was customary to provide the flat and wide cremation graves with rather elaborate stone enclosures, the cemeteries of Jordbro and Åby, Västervånga Parish, being cases in point. The change from natural boulders or grave balls to ornate balls has been dated to the 5th and 6th centuries. There has been relatively little research on the presence and meaning of ornate grave balls and picture stones in the Mälar Valley (JB Schnell 1960, Ahlberg 1978). The later phenomenon has often been considered typical for Gotland (Nylén and Lamm 2003). I would like to try the hypothesis that there have been a considerable amount of these artifacts in the Mälar Valley, and that they have been consciously destroyed. The reason for this destruction may have been that the artifacts were seen as controversial, or even defiant against a social order that was undergoing stress. Early Runic inscriptions are obviously of greatest importance. Still, younger Viking Period inscriptions may still be indicative of earlier literacy. But
the indications must be very strong, showing a high degree of literacy along with powerful symbols, as is the case in Rönö. A Viking Period rune stone indicative of an earlier tradition of literacy ought therefore to contain either ciphers or the epithets ‘thegn’ or ‘dreng’, alternately an anthropomorphic mask.
9 The Rinkebyar

There are 10 Rinkeby/Rickeby place names in Uppland (Hellberg 1967: 252). The etymology of the place name appears clear enough. ‘Rinker’ means ‘warrior’. ‘By’ means ‘settlement’. To a contemporary person, then, Rinkeby, ought to be where a warrior once lived. This realization begs a number of questions. When does the place name first appear? Does it reflect a reality? If so, for how long is it meaningful? No place name Rinkeby is ever mentioned in either Ynglingatal or Heimskringla. Nor is the term ‘rinker’ ever employed by Snorri to describe a military function. By contrast, Beowulf, st. 399-400 uses the term ‘rine’ as a synonym for ‘thegn’. Strid (1987: Fig. 2) has shown that there are significant regional differences in the distribution of place names *RinkabyR and *PaegnabyR. Rinkebyar are represented in Uppland but much less so in Södermanland, where the other place name dominates while it is missing entirely in Uppland (see ill. 20).

One cannot with any certainty connect the place name Rinkeby with a nearby central place such as a Husby unless they appear to be contemporary. For instance, it appears very dubious as to whether Rinkeby in Glanshammar Parish (Närke) stands in a direct relationship to the Viking Period finds in Husby in Glanshammar as suggested by Ekman (1999). Similarly, the find of a rare solidus issue of Romulus Augustus (SHM 1606) in Rinkaby in Hosmo Parish in Småland is insufficient evidence for a late Migration Period ‘rinker’, even if the place name Hosmo apparently derives from *Husa (Brink 2000: 70). Fabech (1997, 2001) has also made a very strong case for a larger connection between Rinkaby in Hosmo and the gold hoards on Öland. Still, to be absolutely sure one has to actually find the ‘rinker’ in question.

Ill. 20. The Context of Rinkebyar (After Strid 1987)
There must be an excavated weapon grave with imported goods and animal sacrifices. There are only two such excavated ‘rinker’ graves, Rickeby in Vallentuna, and Rinkeby in Spånga. It has often been argued that the Rinkeby place names and the two known ‘rinker’ graves are indicative of a Vendel Period military organization with warriors in royal service posted in specific settlements (Sjösvärd 1989, 1993, Biuw 1992). A problem is that the preserved place names do not seem to show large tracts of land connected to them. On the contrary, there appears to be variety in size (Sjösvärd 1993). This suggests that the landownership has undergone a lot of change since the place name was first introduced. Early Modern maps are therefore likely to be irrelevant. Below, I will attempt to contextualize the two sites.

9.1 Rinkeby in Spånga

Spånga Parish in the City of Stockholm has traditionally belonged to the hundare of Sollentuna (Hyenstrand 1974: Fig 18). The most recent summary of the 1,000 graves that were excavated in North Spånga 1964-1975 is Biuw (1992). Her hypothesis is that the larger settlements Årvinge and Hjulsta with many cemeteries were dominant in relation to the smaller farms with a few or single cemeteries. But Biuw seems unable to fit the local Rinkeby well into this context. The subsequent osteological research of Sigvallius (1994) is also somewhat misleading. Her sample of graves notably excluded or ignored a number of double burials that will be discussed below. Biuw and Sigvallius concluded that North Spånga contained a normal, farming population. They saw little change over time except for the ubiquitous increase in grave goods and animal bones in the shift from the Migration Period to the Vendel Period. They did not reflect over the fact that rare phenomena such as weapon graves and double burials coincide in one single cemetery, even if the graves in question did not seem to be indicative of elite status.

It appears that the place name Rinkeby in Spånga, related to the settlement and cemetery RAÄ 178, was introduced in the first half of the 7th century. There are no weapon graves prior to the large grave A 5, and none afterwards. The closest weapon graves in space and time are in cemetery RAÄ 168 in the neighboring settlement Kymlinge (Biuw 1992: 112-138). This cemetery was started in the late Migration Period. The graves are not necessarily indicative of elite status, but four graves certainly stand out from the rest of the late Migration Period to early Vendel Period graves in North Spånga.

In all, there were three weapon graves containing sword gear. This is highly unusual in the Migration period, where spears are more common than swords. Moreover, there is nothing that prevents the three graves from delineating a continuous sequence: grave 10 (c. 475-525 AD) > grave 45 (c. 500-550 AD) > grave 52 (c. 525-575 AD). Judging by the grave goods (Biuw 1992: Fig. 84), grave 10 appears to have been a double burial of two adults. Osteological research confirmed the presence of a woman aged 35-64 years and another human, aged 18-64 years (Sigvallius 1994: 131). Both individuals seem to have been well to do, something that is even more unusual in a multiple burial. Grave goods indicating female gender are two bronze pins. A bronze sword knob (cf. Nerman 1935: Taf. 55: 586-588) is indicative of male gender. Gender neutral are a number of clasps,
which may have belonged to both individuals. Animal finds include uncremated teeth from a pig and a cow. Grave 8 was that of a child, 0-7 years old. Finds included a bone tool, and a claw from a goshawk that had been worn as a pendant. Grave 45 (Biuw 1992: Fig. 86) contained bronze fragments of the sidelining from a sword sheath (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 51: 519). But it was also a double burial containing a man aged 18-44 years, and an individual aged 35-64 years (Sigvaldius 1994: 132, 233). Animal remains include a hen, and an uncremated tooth from a cow. Grave 52 (Biuw 1992: Fig. 87) contained belt mounts, harness strap ends, bronze fragments of a sword knob (cf. Nerman 1935: Taf. 21: 269), and the upper part of a sword sheath (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 51: 519).

Biuw (1992: 269) asked as to what happened to the people who used cemetery RAÄ 168 Kymlinge. She concluded that they moved elsewhere. My suggestion is that they did not move very far at all. They simply moved to the next settlement. More likely, they first had the occupants of that settlement evacuate the premises dead or alive, and then they moved in. If one observes the three cemeteries RAÄ 175, 176, and 178 around the settlement Rinkeby, it is clear that cemetery 176, closest to the modern farm buildings, was used during the Migration Period. Then there was a hiatus throughout the Vendel Period. Burials resumed again during the Viking Period.

Some 150 m away from the farm buildings was cemetery RAÄ 178. It lied on top of on a knoll known as ‘Kinnekulle’, measuring 200 x 75 m. It was clearly visible in the landscape (Biuw 1992: Fig. 100). The 20 graves (SHM 231151, SHM 31138) were constructed on top of a demolished Migration Period settlement. Biuw (1992: 147) suggests that a house foundation was destroyed and re-employed as filling material in grave 5. Finds from the building include loom weights and a bronze pin from the early Migration Period (cf. Nerman 1935: Taf. 10: 82). The rinker grave A 5 had a diameter of 15 m. It was two m tall. It contained the remains of one adult, an infant younger than 12 months, three horses, three dogs, two cows, two pigs, two geese, a hen, a pigeon, and an eagle owl. Weapons included helmet, shield (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 75: 659) and spear. A blue claw beaker (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 84: 737), game pieces and dices provided leisure. The later grave A 9 contained a double burial of a man and a woman. Finds included segmented gold foil beads and a bronze pendant in the shape of a ram’s head.

9.1.1 Conclusion

The presence of a possible continuity of late Migration Period weapon graves in RAÄ 168 Kymlinge lasting into the earliest Vendel Period together with the introduction of a rinker in RAÄ 178 Rinkeby in the early 7th century suggest that the political power in North Spånga never rested within the larger settlements Ärvinge and Hjulsta. On the contrary, it is more likely that political power from the late Migration period into the Vendel Period was represented by single sword-carriers on smaller farms. These people differed from the others. They were buried with swords. And they were often buried together with other humans. It is likely that they were in the service of someone else, given the small size of their farms.

The apparent move from Kymlinge to nearby Rinkeby suggests an increased professionalization in the step from a Migration Period sword-carrier (who may
be buried with another human) to a Vendel Period helmeted ‘rinker’ (who is buried with another human and a menagerie of animals). With the professionalization came increased burial costs. The grandiose burial in RAÅ 178 lacks parallels in North Spånga. It was to be the most expensive burial ever in the area. It was also never repeated. It therefore appears unlikely that it was denizens of the Rinkeby farm that paid for the funeral of the ‘rinker’. Yet, the denizens of Rinkeby achieved one more double burial after the ‘rinker’ grave. Considering the fact that the women in the double burials in Kymlinge and Rinkeby were c. 35-64 years old and well to do, one may perhaps exclude the idea of human sacrifice. Instead, it may be probable that the women ‘voluntarily’ chose to die, as the life as a widow of a bygone sword-carrier/rinker may have appeared unpalatable. That is to say, that ritual suicide and infanticide cannot be excluded as explanations for the presence of the women and children in these weapon graves.

Ill. 21. Reconstruction of Rickeby, Grave A 1 (After Bratt 1997)
9.2 Rickeby in Vallentuna

Vallentuna parish is the traditional center of the Vallentuna hundare (Hyenstrand 1974: Fig. 21). It seems more difficult to arrive at an exact date for the introduction of the place name Rickeby in Vallentuna. There are other Rickebyar in the vicinity, notably Rickeby in the adjacent parish of Kårsta. There are also a number of other criteria that could qualify the Vallentuna area as a central place that may have harbored runic literacy. First, it would seem that the adjacent settlement Prästgården was the site of the Tuna in Valand. Second, there was at least one Migration Period picture stone of red sand stone in nearby Bällsta (SHM 26590). As is often the case, it had been smashed to pieces at some point. The fragments were found in a stone setting excavated in 1960. The stone setting contained a piece of corroded iron, a horse-tooth and 0.2 l of cremated bones (Ahlberg 1978: 20-23). Third, there were important burial contexts that predate the Vendel Period.

![Ill. 22. The Rickeby Dice (After Gustavson 1989)](image)

The cemetery RAÄ 27 was a mere part of what had once been a rather large cemetery. It originally contained c. 150-200 graves. It had a long use period, stretching from the Late Bronze Age into the Viking Period. There were two older weapon graves of monumental proportions in the western part of cemetery. One of these was 15 m in diameter and 1.5 m tall. It contained a glass gambling piece, an amber bead, a knife, and pottery. A second large grave measured 12 m in diameter and was 1.5 m tall. It contained a skeleton burial. Weapons included two lance- or spearheads, a bronze sword garniture. The graves were dated to c. 200-550 AD (Sjösvärd 1989: 14). It is difficult to state as to whether these can be related to the large Vendel Period grave in continuity.

There were two weapon graves from the Vendel Period. The larger grave 1 had one calibrated $^{14}$C date 655 AD $\pm 85$, St 8047, (Sjösvärd 1989:31). It was quite well equipped by Vendel Period standards, including Nordic garnet jewelry in Vendel style B of Style II. In total there were 2,000 fragmented finds in the grave.
Weapons included helmet, body armor, and sword (see ill. 21, Bratt 1997). The structure was 13.5 m in diameter, and was 1.5 m tall. The cremation layer contained a total of 321 of bones. These included the remains of a 40-50 year old man and a vast number of animals of 12 different species (Sten and Vretemark 1988). The most important find in grave 1 was a bone dice (see ill. 22, Gustavson 1989). It had a transitional runic inscription. The runic inscription reads *h-AhAhAukRAlb-. This suggests an alliterative runic sequence *h-AhAhAukR, *hlaha-haukR, ‘Laugh-Hawk’, where hAukR < habukaR. This shows that syncopation had already occurred. Gustavson (1989: 41-48) has offered a convincing transliteration and interpretation. He suggests that the text read something like: ‘Laugh-Hawk, all prepared’. Gustavson argues that the first part of the text was likely to be the personal name of the owner, that is, the 40-50 year old man buried in grave 1. His name thus reflected the substantial number of raptors in the grave, including three hawks.

The second Vendel Period weapon grave 2 was less well equipped. It contained bronze fragments of a sword sheath. The structure was merely 6 m in diameter and 1 meter tall. The bones found in the cremation layer do not make it an exceptional grave at all. Since the grave was not carbon dated, the only way to date it is by comparing the comb to others. The clearly comb belongs to the 8th century, and may be as late as c. 800 AD (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 292: 2316). This suggests that there are at least two to four generations separating graves 1 and 2. In all, grave 2 appears to have been a rather regular grave. Its more central position in the cemetery also separates it from grave 1 that was positioned at the very end of the cemetery. Grave 2 is therefore unlikely to contain a ‘rinker’. Rather, it is posterior to the ‘rinker’ phenomenon as a whole.

9.2.1 Conclusion

The combined archaeological evidence from Rickeby, grave 1, and Rinkeby, grave A 5 suggests that the Vendel Period ‘rinker’ burial rite was an innovation in the Mälar Valley. There are a few animals in the earlier ‘royal’ barrows, such as Ottarshögen from c. 525-550. But during the late 6th and first half of the 7th century there is a sudden boom of animals related to sophisticated methods of hunting. Thus, there seems to have been an intended rupture with the local burial traditions. There is also little evidence for continuity afterwards. Therefore, the two ‘rinkers’ are likely to have ranked below both the group of ‘royal’ barrows such as Brunnhögen and Skrävsta, and the boat graves of Vendel and Valsgärde. It is quite clear that the rinkers could rarely reproduce their own power into the next generation. There are no other graves of similar dimension or wealth in the cemeteries. That the place name Rinkeby in these two cases probably dates to the first half of the 7th century suggests that a growing number of ‘royal’ estate managers were hired to collect ground rent and manage game reserves at that time. Likely candidates for the overlordship of Rickeby in Vallentuna are the unexcavated barrows in Sjökullarna by Husa in Vada (Ambrosiani 1985, Sjösvärd 1989). Precurors may have been the recently excavated Migration Period chamber graves in Fresta Parish, and the stray find of a garnet sword knob from Väsby, Hammarby Parish (SHM 10348). For Rinkeby in Spånga, it is conceivable that the unexcavated Hersbyhögen in nearby Sollentuna would have harbored the overlord.
There appears to have been another important dimension to the role of the two known ‘rinkers’. It is symptomatic that the costs for keeping a ‘rinker’ were tantamount to the upkeep of literacy. There is no evidence of runic literacy in Vallentuna for the next 250-300 years. Then there is the Viking Period ‘runic horizon’ with more than 165 rune stones (Gustavson 1991). The estate of Husa in Vada was later under the ownership of the Folkungar affinity in the Medieval Period.

The combined evidence suggests that the ‘rinkers’ served as pet breeders, gamekeepers, and forest rangers. They had to provide leisure and diversion for their overlords. The imported claw beakers, the game pieces and the dices add to the idea of interpreting the Rinkeby settlements not only as points of control, but also as prestigious hunting lodges. Transitional literacy still had a limited role to play within such an environment. The runic die in Rickeby was held in the hand when playing the board game and its significance could not have escaped the player. A good way to keep the lord entertained outside of the hall do was to provide lighthearted killing. This was mainly done with animals that killed and retrieved booty in front of the owner.

There were many different kinds of dogs. Some (Swedish ‘stövare’) were trained to hunt hare and roe deer; others (Swedish ‘jämtar, gråhundar’) were used to track and ‘position’ (Swedish ‘ställa’) hoofed big game such as boar, moose and red deer. It must have been an exclusive attraction, as the dogs required a long period of training by an experienced dog-keeper. A further case in point is the presence of cats in the graves. They are not endemic to Sweden. Cats had first to be imported during the Roman Iron Age to the North as luxury goods from Rome. There are many cats in the two graves. The earliest known cat found in a grave in Sweden dates to the 2nd century AD (Welinder, Pedersen and Widgren 1998: 376). Still, cats must have been relatively precious at the time, Ottarshögen being one of the earliest known cases of a cat grave in the Mälar Valley, c. 525-550. The denizens of Eketorp II ate dogs but not cats. They may simply have been too valuable (Welinder, Pedersen and Widgren 1998: 377). Polite cats offer booty to their masters. They also play with their prey. It is likely that this was regarded as enjoyable to watch.

Another diversion was to watch a fettered animal attract natural enemies that were then killed. The fact that eagle owls were found in both rinker graves, suggests that the rinkers were responsible for arranging hunts on crows and ravens with the eagle owls as live bait. After the crows gathered to harass the eagle owl, one dispatched goshawks to kill the crows or shot at them with bow and arrow. The latter hunting method is still practiced by hunters in Sweden, albeit with plastic copies of eagle owls and with the modern addition of shotguns (Karlsson 2005).

There is wide variety of wild edible birds in the two ‘rinker’ graves. Some of these birds are very difficult to hunt. For instance, to shoot a black grouse with bow and arrow requires expert marksmanship. It also requires a dog trained to track and bark at the fowl (Swedish ‘trädkällare’) during summer and fall. In winter one needs to be a good skier to reach feeding areas to get within shooting range. It is therefore likely that the hawks and falcons were used to hunt black grouse and hazelhen. This kind of hunt is extremely expensive and rare today. A case in point, a large falcon hunt for houbara bustard was held in 1999 in Helmand Province, Afghanistan by the Emirs of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Among the
invited guests was a certain Osama bin Laden, known for his skills as a hunter on horseback (Coll 2004: 446-450).

It must have been very expensive for a Vendel Period kleptocrat to support a selective affinity of ‘rinkers’. The archaeological evidence suggests that the ‘rinkers’ were runic literates, expert warriors, breeders, and hunters. It would seem that the need to invest in the funerals of such armed overseers lessened with time, as one cannot find a longer sequence of warrior graves in the two excavated Rinkeby cemeteries. It is quite unlikely that the people in the surrounding subsequent burials in Rinkeby could afford such extravaganz. In the case of Rinkeby in Vallentuna, it is more probable that Hlaha-Haukr’s overlord paid for the funeral, and later replaced him with an unrelated person of lesser status than that the surviving relatives ruined themselves on a single event. The new place name remained, however. It would thus be a gross error to equate the single ‘rinker’ settler epitaphs to a necropole such as Valsgärde, which has 15 consecutive boat graves.
10 Three Runic Contexts in Södermanland

This chapter will discuss three type 3 locations in Södermanland where runic literacy is likely to have been practiced from the Early Runic Period into at least a part of the Transitional Period. The locations are: 1) Rönö hundare, mentioned in Ynglingatal; 2) Hölebo hundare together with Daga hundare along the Lake Sillen route; 3) Övre Tör with Botkyrka Parish at its center. Locations 1) and 2) are in southern Södermanland. A characteristic feature of a central place complex in southern Södermanland is its relative topographical isolation from its neighbors by forested mountain ridges broken up here and there by marshes. Location 3) lies close to major communication routes.

In all the three locations are a number of important excavated graves. One can mention the barrows RAÄ 177:1 and 177:3 Husby, Vagnhärad Parish (excavated 1959), grave A/1944 Landshammar, Spelvik Parish (excavated 1944), and grave A 53, RAÄ 36 Skrävsta, Botkyrka Parish (excavated 1940). These barrows all date from the late 6th to the first half of the 7th century. Despite damages, they were still found to contain Nordic helmets (Husby, Skrävsta), and Merovingian garnet sword pommels (Landshammar, Skrävsta). Despite its rather modest external dimensions, the Landshammar barrow contained c. 100 l of bone fragments, suggesting something like a menagerie on the original funeral pyre. The Skrävsta sword pommel stands out as a superb piece of Merovingian garnet art, unparalleled in the contemporary male funeral context in Alemannia, but comparable to that of Sutton Hoo, grave 1.

10.1 Rönö

Rönö is an inland hundare (see ill. 23, Vikstrand 2001, Wijkander 1983: 58, XII). Rönö is first mentioned in Ynglingatal in relation to the downfall of King Ingiald, and what Nerman (1941) claims to have been an unruly reign during the second quarter of the 7th century. There is a lot of prehistory in Rönö that remains to be explored. Its rich archaeological and runological past has yet to be assessed in a multidisciplinary fashion. The central parish is that of Spelvik. In the case of Spelvik and the neighboring parish of Ludgo there is essentially only one rapid entrance into the area. One has to come from the southeast by the water route along Runnviken passing by the hilltop fort by Lövsund and the possible Husby of Uppsala kulle (Vikstrand 2000: 218-220).

Then, there is the Eriksgata. It leads south from Strängnäs past Frustuna and Axala to Aspa hög. This means that it was relatively easy for the hegemonic affinities to reach the Baltic Sea over Eknaren and Runnviken. By contrast, any journey by foot or horseback outside or along the Eriksgata was a comparatively difficult undertaking. Rönö has its fair share of gold. In 1837, there was an important stray find of two gold pieces weighing a total of 49.7 grams on a meadow near the Spelvik Church (Lamm 1960: 50). Although now lost, as it was never acquired by SHM, the gold shows that just like in Tuna in Västerljung and Sköldinge, the local kleptocracy in Spelvik had participated in the overseas extortion campaigns, and distributed a treasure to their cronies in small pieces.
The most important farm in Rönö with a partially excavated Vendel Period cemetery is that of Landshammar. The place name means something like ‘protruding rock over arable land’. The largest farm in Spelvik Parish, it is first mentioned in 1233, as Lanshamar, then belonging to the Vårfrubergera monastery on Fogdön (Lamm 1960). Later it became a royal estate. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Swedish state allotted Landshammar as living quarters for the lieutenant colonel of the Södermanland infantry regiment. The closest farm to Landshammar is named Viby, meaning ‘sacral settlement’ (Vikstrand 2001: 335-345).

On a ridge called ‘Trossbobacken’, leading south–north right onto the settlement grounds of Landshammar lies Cemetery RAÄ 26 Landshammar. According to the inventory carried out by I. Schnell in 1935, the cemetery consisted of some 150 graves (70 barrows, 77 cairns, one ship-setting). On the northern side of the settlement, just west of the corps-de-logis, lies ‘Groggbacken’. This is an unexcavated ‘royal’ barrow, with a diameter of c. 30 m, and a height of 5 m. A large Migration Period ornamented grave boulder (SHM 4462) is likely to come from the
cemetery that may well have extended over the area now covered by the present-day farm buildings. Only two graves have been excavated, both of rather modest dimensions. The reason for this was that they were close to some small cottages next to the main knoll of Trossbobacken. The tenants living in the cottages had been collecting the topsoil from the graves for their garden plots, until the graves had become exposed.

Grave 26:33 (SHM 22814) was excavated by Schnell in 1941. It had a diameter of c. 10 m and a height of c. 0.5 m. The cremation layer had a diameter of c. 3 m. It contained bones from a man, a horse, and unknown number of dogs. Finds included two belt buckles, three dice, and 17 game pieces. There was a rather well preserved comb with interlaced ornaments on its base and back. There were four large iron nails from a large coffin or chest, and 16 slightly smaller ones. The grave also contained a bone fragment from a sword hilt. The comb dates the grave to the late Vendel Period, perhaps as late as the second half of the 8th century.

Grave A/1944 (SHM 23243) was excavated by Schnell in 1944. Again, this was a damaged grave of a rather miniscule dimension. Its importance was not highlighted until Lamm (1960) produced an archaeological survey of Spelvik Parish. Then followed a description of the grave (Lamm 1962), concentrating on the grave goods. These consisted among other things of a Merovingian garnet sword hilt, gold filigree work, a helmet, a shield with an animal-decorated handle much like that of Sutton Hoo (cf. Bruce-Mitford 1979: 39, Fig. 23), three glass vessels, including a claw beaker of green glass (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 84: 737), and domestic strap mounts in Style B. Sten and Vretemark (1988) found that the grave A /1944 contained 43 different animals of 14 species. The osteological inventory also revealed further gold and cloisonné fragments.

An important consideration is that the many livestock in grave A/1944 to some extent reflect the economic base for the primary affinity of Landshammar. The farm needed much land for its livestock, and thus also mounted shepherds and dogs to supervise its holdings. One may therefore assume that the farm had many inhabitants, far more than the general estimate of 6-8 people per settlement unit (Petré 1997). This separates the richest Landshammar grave from that of the rinkers in Uppland. This is not the grave of a subordinate individual or game-keeper. It is the grave of an independent landowner, a ‘lord’.

At the northern edge of Trossbobacken stand the Viking Period rune stones Sö 167 and the fragmentary Sö 168. The former is an early 11th century rune stone, complete with anthropomorphic mask, cipher and the epithet ‘dreng’. The inscription transliterates from Rune Swedish as follows: ‘Vinjut raised this stone for Gudmund’. The centerpiece of the text is in runic cipher: ‘a good ‘dreng’. The interesting thing about the stone is that although it clearly belongs to a style characteristic of ‘Järna-gruppen’ (cf. Axelson 1995, Fischer 1999a), it differs considerably from the nearby stones in Aspa, Grinda, Lövsund, and Viby. Ciphers are more common in Rönö than elsewhere in Sweden, suggesting a high and proficient literacy rate during the 11th century. The mask, by contrast, appears more often in South Scandinavia.
10.1.1 Conclusion

There is every reason to believe that runic literacy was present at Landshammar in Spelvik during the Migration Period and Vendel Period. Landshammar qualifies as an important estate close to the core of a central place. The fact that only two graves have been excavated, and that they are separated in time by at least two or three generations shows that little is known of Landshammar. Still, the find of an ornamented grave ball from the Migration Period, along with two weapon graves, one from the Vendel period and the other from the late Vendel Period or earliest Viking Period, strongly suggests continuity. It would be difficult to meet the criterion of presenting a hall building, as it probably lies underneath the present farm buildings. It is quite likely that the primary affinity residing here was able to dominate the central parts of Rönö for many generations. The Viking Period rune stones Sö 167 and Sö 168 suggest that Landshammar was quick to catch on to the new use of runes during the economic upsurge of the Viking Period. That Landshammar came under the ownership of a powerful monastery and later became a royal estate is equally significant. This is a place where literacy is likely to have survived by going into an isolated hibernation, only to emerge in full bloom when the socioeconomic situation made it possible.

10.2 Hölebo and Daga

Hölebo lies on both sides of a major water route leading north to south from Lake Mälaren to the Baltic Sea to via the Lake Sillen route, Marvikarna-Klämmingen-Sigtunaan-Sillen-Trosaän. Just like in Övre Tör there is substantial evidence of powerful women within a literate social hierarchy. But Hölebo stands out for its Early Runic inscriptions, huge amounts of gold, and important cremation graves. In all, it is quite likely that the area formed a petty kingdom under a very affluent primary affinity living in present-day Husby in Vagnhärad (see ill. 24, Brink 2000). Its ability to dominate the kingdom from the assembly of Tuna in Västerljung appears to have been dependent on controlling the waterways leading from the Baltic Sea into the inland of what today is Daga härad. East-west movement must have been relatively difficult, though.

There are two Early Runic stones in the region, KJ 85 Berga and KJ 86 Skåäng. The Berga stone stands next to a cemetery, that consists of some 40 graves. The cemetery was partially excavated by Arne in 1915-1916. The cemetery extends from the late Roman Iron Age into the late Vendel Period (SHM 15485, SHM 15757). In particular, grave 4 was a large flat cairn, typical of the late Roman Iron Age. There had been three posterior burials in the cairn. Two of these contained sufficient amount of artifacts to allow a dating. Grave 4D contained five bronze wire beads, two blue glass beads with yellow patterns and a white eye with a red pupil, and a red glass bead. This suggests a 7th century date. An iron polyedric head needle listed as A 4 is likely to belong to grave 4D as well. Grave 4F is likely to be of a younger date, containing 30 iron rivets and 20 iron nails, and crystal beads.

There is nothing to exclude continuity around the Berga stone, people continued to use the cemetery for a long period of time. By contrast, very little is known of the original position of the Skåäng stone. As to the runological chronology, it is clear that the inscriptions on both stones show unsyncopated forms.
Moreover, the Skåäng inscription still retains the grapheme \( j \) for /j/, using \( a \) to denote the open vowel /a/. This suggests that both inscriptions were carved prior to the 6th century syncopation period. A late 5th century date is therefore most likely. Berga is interesting in that it has two personal names placed in different positions on the stone, the male saligastiR and the female fino. Skåäng has two male personal names, harija and leugaR. The choice of stone material, the direction of lecture, and carving techniques differ. This suggests at least two separate carvers. It cannot be excluded that different people may have carved the two different names on the Berga stone on different occasions.


There is also a known picture stone (SHM 18855) in the area. It was found on the grounds of Valsborg 1, c. 200 m from the church in Västerljung (Ahlberg 1978: 29, Fig. 20). It was buried c. 0.5 m below ground on top of a ridge, elevated c. 10 m above sea level. It is likely that the sheer weight of the stone served to bury it. It has not been damaged. The stone is a crystalline calcite, which besides red sandstone is the most common material for picture stones in the Mälar Valley. No other archaeological finds were detected around the stone. The nearest Iron Age cemeteries are c. 500 further away. The stone is ornamented on three sides and has thus been standing upright. It is also likely that it was painted. The ornamentation suggests a Migration Period date.

10.2.1 The Gold in Tuna in Västerljung

The gold hoard from Tuna in Västerljung (SHM 21, 28-29) has been known as the Tureholm treasure ever since find was found the domains of this estate in 1774. The actual find place appears to have been inside what used to be a house or
building. It cannot be excluded that the building was constructed on top of a prehistoric building foundation. The original weight of the hoard has been estimated to c. 12,500 g. There are no reports indicating any coins in the hoard. The Swedish state was poor at the time, and only bought the ornamented gold. Preserved at the SHM are thus a number of gold filigree ornaments (SHM 28, 29). These belong to at least two different swords. The sword mounts are similar to the finds from Hoxla in Sorunda parish (SHM 27023), and Lejde in Skultuna Parish (SHM 19225). The piece de resistance is a necklace weighing 985 g (SHM 21).

It is likely that the hoard was deposited some time in the first half of the 6th century. Chronologically, it fills the void in between the rune stones and the grave complex in Husby. The weight and chronological distribution of other gold finds in the vicinity suggest that Tuna was a distribution center for gold, being the only hoard belonging to gold group 1. The other finds fit neatly into gold groups 3 (Hejsta, Lundby) and 4 (Sille, Silleby Mellangårds).

Who lived in Tureholm? The closest one may come to an answer is to observe the few preserved finds from the estate of a certain hovintendent Schröder who died in 1787. Among his belongings acquired by the SHM were a few objects in a box (SHM 699). It was said that these were found in a barrow on the grounds of the Tureholm estate. Indeed, it is likely that more than one barrow was plundered on the grounds of Tureholm in the late 18th century, especially after the find of the gold treasure in 1774. The finds seem to belong to a well-to-do female grave from the earliest Vendel Period, that is the late 6th century. First, there are two fragments of a small, gilded bronze button-on-bow brooch of an early type (cf. Norman 1969: Taf. 6-7) and two well-preserved polyedric-headed needles, one in silver and one in bronze (Waller 1998: 194). Missing in Waller’s presentation is the main button of the brooch, a red glass bead, a whetstone, and a bronze knife hilt button. The latter has a close parallel in grave A 27 in RAÄ 27 Lunda, Lovö Parish (Petré 1984b: 274).

10.2.2 The Graves in Husby in Vagnhärad

Husby in Trosa-Vagnhärad Parish has attracted the interest of scholars of prehistory ever since 1853. Unfortunately, very little is known of the contexts behind the oldest registered archaeological finds SHM 2025 and SHM 4407 besides that they were handed in by Dybeck and Hägerflycht respectively after some sort of digging had taken place. What remains of SHM 2025 is a Vendel Period bead spreader from a female grave.

It is clear that Husby was a royal estate during the Medieval Period (Brink 2000: 71-72, Fig. 2). An important question to answer is just how old the estate and the place name may be. How much continuity is there? A major problem is the amount of destruction. Ambrosiani (1985: 115) notes that the original settlement will never be found due to the expansion of present-day village of Vagnhärad. There once were two separate grave complexes around Husby and Södra Husby in Vagnhärad, on each side of Trosaån, the river that connects the inland lake system with the Baltic Sea. They are no longer visible at all. It is hard to date the onset of these cemeteries. There is a very large ornamented grave ball from the Migration Period (SHM 26419). Its interlaced ornaments would suggest a late Migration Period date, that is, sometime in the first half of the 6th century.
The first complex (SHM 19224) was partially excavated by Crown Prince Gustav Adolf in 1898-1904 (Nerman 1932). As always, Nerman generously attributed the burials to members of the Ynglingar affinity. In this case, Nerman followed Snorri closely and argued that the mid 7th century Bröt-Anund was the instigator of a network of royal estates (i.e. Husbyar) in the largest hundare (stór-hera). Anund constructed roads in between these, thus his Old Norse epithet ‘braut’, meaning ‘road’ or ‘cleared path’. The graves of the first grave complex appear well equipped but not extremely opulent. Nerman noted that female and male graves were of the same dimensions, and that weapons, with one possible exception, were missing in the male graves. It was clear however, that the graves dated from the late 6th century into the early 8th century. A closer look at the finds reveals the presence of fragments from seaxes and swords. Most important is a gilded bronze animal in Style II from grave 27 (Nerman 1932: 99: Fig 9). It has probably served as a knob on the lower hilt of a seax (cf. Kivikoski 1973: Taf. 55: 507, 508). The second find in grave 19 is a number of bone fragments from either a sword sheath mouth, or a sword hilt. This grave contained blue glass fragments, too.

The second complex (SHM 26423) around Södra Husby was partially excavated by Särlvik in 1959. Dybeck had already excavated five graves in 1853, and Gustav Adolf had excavated another in 1904. Särlvik focused on two damaged barrows. These had originally been of rather large dimensions. The first grave 177:1 had a diameter of 22 m and an approximate height of 0.7 m. It turned out to be a female grave. The other, 177:3, was a male grave. It had a diameter of 18 m and an approximate height of 2 m. In her description of the cemetery, Särlvik (1962) did not know how to date the female grave, hesitating between the Vendel Period and the Viking period. It does seem clear, however, that the grave dates to the late 6th century. The finds in the cremation layer do not indicate a Viking Period burial at all. One of the finger rings has a typical early Vendel Period ornamentation (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 35: 379). There is a claw beaker of green glass (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 84: 737). It should be duly noted that this is unquestionably the single richest female burial in the entire Vendel Period Mälar Valley.

The second grave 177:3, had received secondary monumental adornment. On top of it, someone had placed the lower part of the Viking Period rune stone Sö 27. The cremation layer contained fragments of a crested helmet, similar to those from the boatgraves of Vendel XII and Lackalänga in Skåne (SHM 2110). There was also a gold ring similar to those from Skrävsta, and two finds in Västmanland, Tibble in Badelunda and Lejde in Skultuna (Åberg 1953: 111, 121; Särlvik 1962: 48-49). The ring is likely to have served to fasten a nail on a sword hilt. The crested helmet type is usually dated to the 7th century, and Skrävsta and Lejde to c. 600 AD. This suggests that grave 177:1 may date to the first half of the 7th century.

10.2.3 Conclusion

The larger area of the hundare of Hölebo and Daga is likely to have been a kleptocratic stronghold during the late Migration Period and Vendel Period. In Sille, some x km to the north along Trosaån, where the river flows in from Lake Sillen, there is at least one Vendel period weapon grave (SHM 33106) (Ljungkvist 2000). This, along with finds of spiral gold (SHM 17053), and a C-bracteate (SHM 389)
suggest a more permanent place of residency for a trusted member of a selective affinity. It is quite likely that Sille has served as a control post, guarding the entrance from the north into the core of the petty kingdom, where there was an immense hoard of gold.

**III. 25. Reconstruction of Land Ownership in North Botkyrka (After Ambrosiani 1964)**

![Map of Botkyrka Parish](image-url)

**Fig. 56. Den samnolika, radiella delningen inom analysermålade VII, jfr karnan fig. 57. Skala 1:59 000.**

- ---- gränser mellan modernenheter, ------ arealgränser, ○ - gravfält med varierad sammansättning från äldre järnåldern, ● - yngre gravfält med inslag av fornämningar från slutet av äldre järnåldern och övergångstiden till yngre järnåldern.

### 10.3 Övre Tör

The hundare of Övre Tör (Wijkander 1983: 54) includes Botkyrka Parish. This section will focus on Botkyrka. Wijkander’s reconstruction of the rest of the hundare is more doubtful, though, as it encompasses two parishes in Järna on the other side of Mörköfjärden. Botkyrka is one of the northernmost parishes of Södermanland. It faces Lake Mälaren to the north. Its southern parts lead towards Salem and Södertälje kanal and the Mörköfjärden, one of the main entrances to Lake Mälaren. The original place name of the Botkyrka vicinity is not known. The current place name derives from the fact that a Viking Period missionary, Botvid is supposed to have been active there.
It was Ambrosiani (1964) who first pointed out the area between the Bronze Age settlements ‘Aspen’ and ‘Salem’ as an important place. His studies showed that a central unit of land centered on Tuna in Botkyrka during the Early Iron Age had been chopped to pieces at a later date, most likely during the Viking Period (see ill. 25). From 1969 and onwards, some 40 archaeological excavations were carried out in North Botkyrka for the construction of the residential townships of Alby, Fittja and Hallunda, the so-called ‘Botkyrkastaden’. South of the E 4 highway lies a relatively forgotten central place complex from Migration and late Vendel Period. In its middle are a series of hilltop fortresses. To the south and southwest lie the farms Skrävsta, Hägelby and Tuna. To the east lie the farms Alby and Älvesta. To the northeast lies the farm Slagsta. North of this central place complex lies its probable successor, Hundhamra. Some of the central place complex was to be completely excavated, but the totality of the area was not fully grasped until many years later.

In 1970-1971 Bennett and Hemmendorff excavated undisturbed cremation graves from the Migration Period and Vendel Period in cemetery RAÄ 120 Älvesta. On July 20th, 1971, runes on bone or antler fragments were found in the cremation layer (find 213), of grave A 24 in cemetery RAÄ 120 Älvesta. An anonymous drawing was made of the runic fragments, dated to the very same day. Then, the runic fragments from Älvesta disappeared. On December 28th, 1971, about half a year after the runic fragments had disappeared, Gustavson of Runverket, the Bureau for Runic Inscriptions, wrote a commentary on the first anonymous drawing (Gustavson 1971). A new drawing of the fragments by Lögdin later appeared in Bennett (1972), a short report on cemeteries RAÄ 115, RAÄ 116, RAÄ 119, RAÄ 120 in Alby and Älvesta. A slightly edited commentary and the new drawing appeared four years later as an appendix in the excavation report (see ill. 26, Hemmendorff 1976) presented to RAÄ:

Grave 24 has been carbon dated to ad 530 ± 70 (Bennett 1987). The disappearance of the runic fragments shortly after the discovery is rather sad, as the grave contained important lead artifacts such as clasps manufactured on Helgö (K Lamm 1972, Hines 1993, Brynja 1998) and a Style I relief brooch.

10.3.1 Grave A 24, Cemetery RAÄ 120 Älvesta

What kind of a grave was A 24, and what can be said about in a larger context? Cemetery RAÄ 120 was included in the research project ‘Projektet Mälardalens folkvandringstid’ (Ambrosiani, Bennett, Brynja and Ferenius 1981). The project sought to compile data gathered from 400 excavations of 7,500 graves in Södermanland, Uppland and Västmanland 1960-1980. For her dissertation on Migration Period grave structures, Bennett (1987) compiled 228 Migration Period graves in a Unix database. This material was then used by Brynja (1998) for her typological study of 270 combs from the period 350-600 AD. A 24 looked like a female Mi-
Migration Period grave when it was de-turfed, and subsequently proved to be so after it had been excavated. The structure was a rounded cairn c. 3.6 x 4.3 m with an estimated height of c. 0.2 m, topped by an egg-shaped grave ball, 0.4 x 0.5 m. In the southern part of the cairn was a 0.1 m deep, 1.1 x 1.9 m wide cremation layer (find 213). According to the excavation report (Hemmendorff 1976), find 213 consisted of melted glass, a glass bead, fragments of two relief brooches, a clasp button, iron fragments, bone or antler fragments of a tool with a runic inscription, bone fragments, burnt bones, and charcoal, and a wooden vessel (see below). In the southern part of the cremation layer, inside a 0.17 x 0.2 m resin ring, were burnt human bones, which had been cleaned, the glass bead and the bronze fragment.

From the grave’s structure, one may draw the conclusion that the people who constructed the grave wanted it to look like a female grave. They constructed a small cairn with small stones, topped with a grave ball. Most importantly, they did not construct an enclosure around it or raise a middle-stone in the middle of it, as this more phallic feature is indicative of a male burial. From what is known about Swedish cremation cemeteries from the Migration and Vendel Periods, osteological analysis usually renders the same answer as that gathered by looking at the grave structure, given that there are enclosures, grave balls or middle stones, resin rings or cremation urns (Petré 1984a, Bennett 1987). There are rarely any resin rings in graves after the Migration Period (Ambrosiani 1964: 22f, 55, Biuw 1992: 252). The $^{14}$C dates, 530 ±70 (charcoal) and 440 ±145 (resin) show that the objects in A 24 were deposited in the first third of the 6th century.

Subsequent osteological analysis during the ‘Mälardalens folkvandringstid’ project revealed the presence of animal bones in A 24, in the shape of the ubiquitous sheep/goat but there were also bear phalanxes (Bennett 1987: 219, 224). This means that the funeral pyre contained gifts of animals or meat and at least one bear fur, where the claws remained. Bear phalanxes seem to be indicative of high social status, e.g. the finds in the mounds of Old Uppsala and Otтаршоген, Vendel Parish. In her study of 558 cremation graves in nine cemeteries in Spånga Parish, Sigvallius (1994: 147) shows that there are 11 graves with bear phalanxes out of a total 113 from the Migration Period, and 2 out of 80 in the Vendel Period. Petré (1980) has suggested that bear furs were placed on funeral pyres as status symbols within an upper stratum of Migration and Vendel Period society engaged in fur trade.

In the case of A 24, it can be discerned that only part of the human bones and grave goods were raked together after the cremation. The human bones were then crushed and cleaned before being put in the wooden vessel of which only the bottom ring of resin remained. A common estimate is that only some 10-20% of the human bone material on the funeral pyre actually ends up in the cremation grave (Sigvallius 1994). Furthermore, bones shrink when they are cremated (Iregren and Jonsson 1973). This means that artifacts made of bone change in shape and weight when cremated. Petré estimates the average weight of the Migration and Vendel Period combs from Cemetery RAÅ 27 Lunda, Ekerö Parish, to c. 30 g. The average weight of the comb fragments found in each grave is c. 4.5 g (Petré 1984b: 205-207). The room for variation in cremation graves is considerable, with only a comb-tooth in one grave and a 90 % intact comb in another. As a result, Petré suggests that all graves on Cemetery RAÅ 27 Lunda may originally have contained combs. When I inspected SHM 30980, that is, the remains from Cemetery RAÅ 120, I used an electric scale to weigh and identify the grave goods from graves A 23 and A 24 in particular. The black glass bead in A 24 was quite heavy by comparison, weighing 3.7 g. A 23 contained comb fragments of Brynja’s type IIB, weighing some 3.3 g. Four fragments of a bone tool in A 23 weighed 2.27 g. These results are likely to be quite disproportional to the original weight of the grave goods. Any attempt to estimate the original weight or quantity of grave goods in cremation graves will thus remain highly speculative. Third, the non-human finds need to be reconfigured within a framework of typology. The aim is to establish the lead artifacts, objects that enable the dating of the grave. In the case of A 24, the composite comb fragments, the clasp button and the fragments of two Style I square-headed relief brooches are lead artifacts belonging to the late Migration Period and the early Vendel Period. The comb fragments belong to Brynja’s group IIIB, where 12 calibrated $^{14}$C estimates span over a long period but have a concentration to after 500 AD (Brynja 1998: 68-72). The clasp button belongs to Hines’ group B1iv with 48 entries, concentrated to Eastern Scandinavia. Hines (1993: 28f) dates the group to VWZIII/IV, that is, c. 475-575 AD.

A chorological study of the quantitative distribution of clasp buttons and relief brooches may determine the possibility of exogamy. Of interest is the fact that an identical clasp button was found during excavations in Vårby Gård/Vårberg, Huddinge Parish, just across Alby sjö (Ferenius 1971). It would seem that the Älvesta woman shared the fashion ideals of her next-door neighbor. K Lamm shows that moulds for clasp buttons of this type have been found on Helgö. There
is a clear distribution pattern of clasp buttons surrounding Helgö, with a few stray finds in Finland (K Lamm 1972:80f).

In contrast to Bennett (1972: 245) and Hemmendorff (1976: 16), I believe that the fragments of two relief brooches cannot be traced to any mould fragments found on Helgö. Händel’s reconstruction in Hemmendorff (1976) would suggest that the larger brooch was quite different from those produced on Helgö, but not atypical for Svealand. The relief brooches can be no later than the early 6th century, considering the fact that brooches were generally old when buried. Hence, the brooches rather date to the late 5th century. As to the origin, a qualified guess is that the Style I square-headed brooch was cast somewhere between the coasts of Medelpad and Trøndelag. All in all, it seems that the grave goods in A 24 may have been used c. 480-530, and that the woman wore a stylish outfit in local fashion (Ferenius 1971, K Lamm 1972, Biuw 1992, Brynja 1998). Besides the tentatively northern provenance of the relief brooches, there is very little to suggest exogamy.

10.3.2 The Relationship between Grave A 24 and Cemetery RAÄ 120

Bennett (1972: 244) suggests that the adjacent Cemeteries RAÄ 115, RAÄ 116 and RAÄ 167 Alby and RAÄ 119, RAÄ 120 Älvesta belong to a sequence of cemeteries from the Bronze Age Period V (900-600 BC) into the Viking Period. Bennet argues that they were probably used by one or two farmsteads (the original Alby and Älvesta?), which moved their burial grounds from time to time within the immediate area. Hemmendorff (1975) also excavated Building/Cemetery RAÄ 177 Alby, and dated the building area, which lies across a field from Cemetery RAÄ 116 to the Early Iron Age (600 BC-0), with some Bronze Age graves. Cemeteries RAÄ 115, RAÄ 116 and RAÄ 120 are given a central role for the period 400-600 AD by Bennett (1972). What was the relationship between A 24 and the other 32 graves excavated in Cemetery RAÄ 120? The first response is that only the northern part of the cemetery was excavated, the southernmost part being left behind.

I have divided the excavated graves into four phases: The founding phase 1 in the mid to second half of the 5th century consists of the large graves A1-3 and A 54. These consist of larger boulders and do not contain a lot finds. Phase 2 belongs to the early 6th century. It consists of an expansion of the cemetery to the north, including the larger graves A 6–A 7, A 12–A 13, A 23–A 24. Finds are more frequent in these three pairs of graves. Phase 3 overlaps with phases 2 and 4 and is thus the longest phase, from c. 500 lasting two or three generations. This is a shift to small graves, which contain more grave goods, iron fragments in particular, than in phase 2. Phase 3 graves often contain iron fragments, are dispersed around the northwestern and northern parts of the ridge and often lie in between the larger graves of Phase 2. Two particular cases in point are the relatively rich female graves A 35 and A 52, the former with late Migration Period bronze clothing needles and clasp buttons, the latter’s eagle pin belonging to the early Vendel Period. Phase 4 represents the mid to late 6th century, as graves A 14–A16, A 55–A 57 contain blue and orange glass beads, iron nails, and rough red-brownish pottery. By now, one is firmly within the Vendel Period. It would seem that Cemetery RAÄ 120 was abandoned after this phase, at least in its northern direction. The excavated part of Cemetery RAÄ 120 begins in the mid south
around a small ridge, varying between 2 and 10 m in width, which continues c. 25 m to the northeast. To the southeast of the ridge are the large graves A 1-3. North across the ridge of A 1 lies the large grave A 54, fitted in along the northwestern side of the center ridge. Above A 54 are the small female graves A 35 and A 52, two of the few graves with lead artifacts. A 35 has three clasp buttons and three clothing pins made on Helgö (Waller 1996: 182). The miniscule grave A 52 has a beautiful Vendel Period clothing pin. At the northeastern tip of the ridge are graves A 6-11 in a northeastern trajectory. Of these, only graves A 6-A 7 do qualify as large. To the north of A 6 is A 26 –27, two relatively small graves. To the north of these, finally, are the large female graves A 23-24.

The following graves were found to have animal bones in them: A 6 (bear phalanx, unidentified), A 22 (bear phalanx, goat/sheep, unidentified), A 23 (bear phalanx), A 24 (bear phalanx, goat/sheep), A 32 (bird) (Bennett 1987: 219, 223-224). Now, given the ratio of graves with bear phalaxxes in Spånga Parish (see above), it would seem that the people buried in Cemetery RAÄ 120 had a high social status. There are few lead artifacts to start with, so a combined overview of grave goods and stratigraphy is helpful. It then becomes clear that the larger graves, with the exception of the male grave A 6 and the female A 24, and the peripheral A 15, do not contain as many grave goods as do some of the smaller graves in the center. These are A 9, A 29, A 35, A 52, and A 22 in the southwest. Iron fragments (nails from caskets?) are primarily found in the smaller graves such as A 16, A 17, A 18, and A 22. A 17 is exceptional in that it has a square enclosure. Three graves, A 17, A 23, A 29, have fire pits in their southern perimeters, whereas A 13 has one in the north. It would seem that the adjacent grave 23 stands in a meaningful relation to A 24, just as A 6 and A 7, A12 and A 13 appear to belong together. The question is how A 23 and A 24 belong together, besides being right next to each other and both containing the relatively rare bone tools. The c. 5 x 5.8 m wide grave A 23 has a semi-detached enclosure around the cairn and a large uneven stone on top. The rocks in the cairn are also generally larger than in A 24, just as A 6 has a rougher appearance than A 7. The excavation of Cemetery RAÄ 27 Lunda showed that the tight enclosure is a male feature during the Vendel period, whereas the detached enclosure is exclusively female (Pétré 1984a: 33-43). It is also a general feature that men have larger stones in their cairns than do women. It is conceivable that the person in A 23 was cremated in the fire pit A 101, and that A 23 or A 24 was built next to the other one at some distance from the other graves, just as graves A 6–A 7, A 12–A 13. The comb fragments in A 23 belong to Brynja’s group II of handle-combs, which has 9 calibrated 14C estimates gathered around 500 AD, but with a majority after 500 AD (Brynja 1998:32-54).

It would seem that the woman in A 24 was cremated c. 10-20 years later than the woman in A 23. Given the prominence of the grave goods in A 24 in comparison with all other c. 120 graves in Alby and Ålvesta from 400-575, the woman in A 24 is quite likely to have been the landlady of a farmstead during the early 6th century. That husband and wife are buried next to each other is common enough, and there is no a priori reason to believe that the residents of Ålvesta should have been any different from the contemporary married couples on Cemetery RAÄ 27 Lunda. However, I would suggest that male grave A 6 and A 7 make up a couple as do the female graves A 23-24. One plausible explanation for this binary structure A 6–A 7 would be that the landowning males, fathers and sons, were originally buried in large graves closer to the central ridge of the cemetery, indicating
their lineage from A 1–A 3. At some distance away were their wives, who by inheritance did not have a primary claim to the landownership.

10.3.3 The Runic Inscription

Was there a linguistically meaningful runic inscription in A 24, and if so, what did it say? This question can never be fully answered, even if the fragments were to miraculously re-appear. From the two drawings and Gustavson’s commentary, I have drawn the following conclusions: 1) There were at least five legible fragments: 1 anu, 2 igR, 3 ak, 4 a, 5 a. Fragments 1 and 2 show that the inscription was fitted along two parallel lines, with at least two strokes below in fragment 2, and one above on fragment 1. 2) Parts of the inscription once read in a left->right direction. The published inscriptions in the older Futhark in the Mälar valley are not uniform in this respect: KJ 86 Berga and KJ 99 Möjbro read in a right->left direction whereas KJ 85 Skåång, KJ 100 Krogsta, the Dragby shard (Schönbäck 1994) and the Rickeby dice (Sjösvärd, Vretemark and Gustavson 1983, Sjösvärd 1989) read in a left->right direction. Two fragments show rests of ornamentation as well as runes. It thus seems that the runes were fitted in along parallel lines, with at least two lines on the bottom and two at the top. 3) The inscription contains a previously unknown bind-rune an, with three branches. The previously only known example of the bind-rune an, (KJ 50 Strøm whet-stone), differs by having only two branches. 4) Fragments 1-2, anu and igR (or Rgi), may be proof that the inscription in all likelihood was linguistically meaningful.

The first sequence appears to have been isolated with no other runes next to it. A carver’s error for alu seems unlikely. The latter sequence igR could represent a radical nomina -igR or -ingR. As their are no punctuation marks, a reversed reading Rgi, representing an ending -R, followed by a new sequence gi-, cannot be entirely excluded. The latter possibility opens up a number of plausible interpretations: a verb (gibu Sjælland 2 bracteate), a proper name (gisali Pforzen, grave 255), or an adjective (gino KJ 96 Stentoften, KJ 97 Björketorp, ginuga KJ 27 Kragehul). 5) If one prefers to read the sequence as igR (-igR or -ingR), it would seem that the radical noun of the masculine a-stem has undergone syncopation, that is, the deletion of a weak final vowel. The process of syncopation is generally dated by linguists to 550-800 AD, which more or less coincides with the archaeological chronology for the Vendel Period (Wessén 1958: 7-24, Gustavson 1991). One may note the unsyncopated forms on Norwegian Migration Period rune-stones: hiwigaR (KJ 58 Årstad), iuringaR (KJ 74 Reistad), lairingaR (KJ 88 Møgedal), wagigaR (KJ 69 Rosseland). However, KJ 94 Tveito shows syncopation in tAitR, None of these stone inscriptions can be accurately dated (Barnes 1994, Makaev 1995). By comparison, the Rickeby inscription shows that the syncopation process was in effect in the mid 7th century. The Älvesta fragments may show that it had begun already in the first third of the 6th century. The early 6th century woman from Älvesta certainly merits a more central place in the discussion of Early Runic literacy and the local social structure of North Botkyrka (Fischer 2001a),
10.3.4 Conclusion

Tuna in Botkyrka area was clearly a central place complex where literacy was present during the late Migration Period and early Vendel Period. There are a number of unusual finds in the Late Migration Period cemeteries of Slagsta, Älvesta and Alby, notably an Early Runic bone tool, Style 1 relief brooches in RAÄ 120 Älvesta, Provincial Roman drinking glasses in Slagsta and a gold fingerring in RAÄ 116 Alby. It is also clear that there was a powerful affinity living in Skrävsta during the early Vendel Period, considering the rich weapon grave there (SHM 22586). The cremation layer contained spear, shield, helmet, and a Frankish garnet sword pommel (see ill. 27). Bone fragments included remains from human, horse, dog and birds. The later excavation in 1997 of the over 50 m long hall building in Skrävsta suggests that this part of Botkyrka may have belonged to a runic literate elite for a longer period, lasting throughout the late Migration Period and early Vendel Period. Indeed, the farmstead between Skrävsta and Älvesta is aptly called Tuna. There, some four Vendel Period graves have been excavated (SHM 20071). Two graves contained bronze strap mounts, but there is nothing to indicate any splendor. There is no sign of further continuity following the rich weapon grave in Skrävsta.

Ill. 27. Sample of Objects Found in Skrävsta, Grave A 53 (After Bratt and Werthwein 1999)

It is plausible that the primary affinity in Skrävsta-Tuna-Älvesta was annihilated or displaced by the late 7th–8th century affinity living on the nearby Hundhamra estate on the grounds of the present-day manor of Norsborg (Nerman 1961, Ambrosiani 1964: 168, 1985; Bratt and Werthwein 1999: 27). Hundhamra has the second largest barrow in Södermanland. Half a dozen of the barrows in Hundhamra containing multiple burials were excavated by Åberg in 1934-39, but have never been published. It is clear that the graves date from the late Vendel Period.
into Christian Viking Period, given the presence of a silver crucifix in a female inhumation from c. 1000 AD. The largest barrow is the second largest in Södermanland, surpassed only by Uppsala kulle in Rönnör. The Hundhamra primary affinity lived close to both Helgö and Birka, and may well have exercised some control over Helgö, Ekerö and Färentuna hundare as well as Övre Tör. It is also clear that some of its male members were to participate in the failed Ingvar-expedition in the mid 11th century, given the evidence of the now lost rune stone Sö 287† (Fischer 1999a). Similarly, Adelsö with the 10th century Skopintull barrow across the strait from Birka, remained an undivided ‘royal’ estate well into the 14th century with a Medieval Period fortress, Alsnö Hus. This is where one of the first Swedish constitutions was written, the 1280 Alsnö statute.

Hundhamra would last long enough to see the construction of a Medieval Period fortress tower. Hundhamra is mentioned as a ‘gardh’ owned by the Dukes Erik and Valdemar in Erikskrönikan, the Medieval Period chronicle of the Kings of Sweden, of which the earliest copy dates to c. 1450. The Dukes go to Hundhamra in c. 1309 AD on their secret march from Bjälbo in Östergötland to Uppland. The arrival of Erik and Valdemar in Hundhamra occurs right before their capture of their brother King Birger at the Håtuna estate on September 29th 1309 AD. Erikskrönikan describes Hundhamra as a departing point where one switches from horse to boat. It thus becomes an important transitory stop on the communication route from Östergötland that leads through Södermanland to Uppland.

Ambrosiani (1985) argues that Hundhamra had the local legal assembly for the Övre Tör (later Svartlösa) hundare on its premises, as the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period ‘lagman’ or provincial chief justice had his residence there. It is quite plausible that the Hundhamra affinity was able to move the Tuna function from the old assembly place in Tuna in Botkyrka, once the predominant affinity in Skrävsta was gone. There are such instances in what used to be areas with literate activity during the Vendel period where powerful actors during the Viking Period moved legal assemblies and erected monuments to themselves commemorating such feats, e.g. Arnkil tingstad in Vallentuna from the 11th century. The conscious de-activation of the ideological meaning of the place name of a Tuna may have occurred as early as the mid-Vendel Period, and Tuna in Botkyrka is a likely candidate.
11 Early Runic and Transitional Runic Literacy in Blekinge

This chapter will discuss a specific region, Blekinge, in order to provide a counterbalance to the Mälar Valley, which often assumes a disproportional position when discussing the Vendel Period. Blekinge lies on the southeastern Swedish shore. To the southwest lies Bornholm. To the northeast lies Öland and Gotland. Blekinge appears to be a cohesive unit when it is first mentioned by the Anglo-Saxon voyager Wulfstan in c. 870 AD. The place name probably describes the inhabitants ‘blekingar’ of the calm (Swedish ‘bleke’) waters between the islands of eastern and central Blekinge and the mainland (Benson 1990). By this definition, the region ends in the west where the Listerland peninsula juts out into the Hanö Bay.

In this chapter it will be argued that although the nature of kleptocratic conflict in Blekinge was quite similar to that of the Mälar Valley, it seems that the outcome was somewhat different from that of Södermanland and Uppland. This further opens up for a local perspective with minor kleptocrats in Skåne, Blekinge, Bornholm, Öland and Gotland acting in competition against each other but with a variety of outcomes. The local perspective has been employed when discussing Viking Period Blekinge (Fabech 2001, Lihammer 2003, Svanberg 2003a: 180-186). Keeping the contextual scope in the vicinity arguably makes for better scrutiny, rather than the sometimes desperate desire to find the earliest possible evidence for a supraregional adherence to the future nation-state of Denmark (e.g. Hedeager 1992b, Hoiland-Nielsen 1991, 1998, Jørgensen 1991, Nørgård Jørgensen 1999, Storgaard 2001a, 2001b, 2003).

11.1 Eastern Blekinge – An Early Runic Turnpike

Eastern and Central Blekinge is an archipelago landscape with the mainland linked to the inner parts of Småland by a number of bays, e.g. the Hallarum Bay, which then led up into rivers and creeks. The larger islands, notably Aspö, Hasslö, Senoren, Sturkö, and Tjurkö block the mainland from the Baltic Sea. The calmer waters inside are known as ‘fjärdar’ or basins. At the southeastern tip of the archipelago facing the Baltic Sea lies the island of Utlängan. From here begins the so-called ‘Sailing Route of King Valdemar’ (see ill. 28, Fabech 2001). It goes north along the Swedish mainland coast, east across the Sea of Åland, and into the Gulf of Finland along the archipelagoes of Åboland and Nyland.

The archipelago stretching from Central Blekinge to the eastern tip of Utlängan must have been subject to foreign attacks. Naval barrages in the Hallarum Bay have been dated to the Viking Period and the Medieval Period (Lihammer 2003: 246, fig. 10). That is to say that people constructed and maintained the same naval barrages for hundreds of years. Granted that tradition has a role to play in such an endeavor, but the risks of being overrun by a raiding party must have been very real. The people of Eastern Blekinge lived under the constant threat of warfare for many centuries.

During the late 5th and early 6th century, Eastern Blekinge was under the overlordship of a powerful and well-connected kleptocracy. This is demonstrated by the find of a first rate Frankish garnet pommel (SHM 11317) at Stora Sand-
viken on Sturkö, an island that used to belong to Augerum Parish. It probably had a ring similar to that of the pommel from Väsby, Hammarby Parish (SHM 10348). The original Frankish ring was rather small, not exceeding 2 cm in diameter (Arrhenius 1985: 145). Frankish rings were often made of silver. Nordic swordrings from the first half of the 6th century tend to be made of solid gold, however. They are usually twice the size of the Frankish rings. Väsby is no exception. Later on, most gold rings have been detached from the sword pommels, as in the case of Sturkö. It has been suggested by Steuer (1987) that this signaled the end of a vassalship. If so, very few seem to have lasted. Their value also appears to have been devalued at a considerably fast rate. The sword pommels that still have rings by the late 6th and early 7th centuries tend to have gilded bronze rings only, Vallstena-rum (SHM 6295) being a case in point. This shows a clear desire to reify imported regalia to fit local needs. Frankish regalia were not static in their appearance in the North. They could be modified by locals if need be. It is clear that the initial addition of gold rings made from Eastern solidi was discontinued and that cheaper local variations with gilded bronze rings were introduced.

A further important testimony is the female boat grave from Augerum (SHM 10037). The buried woman was approximately 60 years old (Arrhenius 1960: 172). Four brooches and an equal number of polyedric pins held her dress of wool and linen together. The three equal-armed brooches are typical for the earliest Vendel Period. Arrhenius (1960: 176) argues that the single disc brooch shows similarities to Migration Period Anglo-Saxon finds. Suffice to say that similar types for all the abovementioned fasteners appear on Gotland during the earliest Vendel Period (cf. Nerman 1969: Taf. 4, Taf. 12). The woman carried 58 beads, of which eight were of bronze. The latter have parallels both in the Mälar Valley and on Bornholm in Melsted, grave 18. The mosaic glass beads are unusual in the North at the time. They may derive from the Rhine area, and only become common on Gotland during the 8th century.

More indicative of foreign connections is the fact that Augerum, Ramdala and Torhamn parishes have one A and four C bracteates, and five solidi from the period 408-518 AD. Torp, on the island of Senoren in Ramdala parish has a large A-bracteate with an imitation of Latin capitals (SHM 21468). It is likely to be of an early date, perhaps the late 4th century or the earliest part of the 5th century. The most important hoard is that of Målen on Tjurkö (SHM 1453, LUHM 6600-6602). Weighing c. 70 g, it contains three bracteates and two solidi struck for Theodosius II (408-450 AD), of which one has a loop added to it. Another of the C-bracteates, KJ 136 has already been discussed, as it was composed with alliteration and employs possible loan words that may describe romanitas (walha) and Roman coin-age (kurne).

The bracteates from Blekinge derive from the same dies as bracteates in Halland, Skåne, Öland and Gotland (Andrén 1991: 253, fig. 8). There is no indication of identical dies from bracteate finds from Denmark. On the contrary, the Danish bracteates tend to group on Jutland and Zealand respectively. A solidus struck for Anastasius I (SHM 11326) is known from Ramdala parish, and one for Julius Nepos (SHM 3377) is known from Attanäs, Torhamn parish. Neither of these have loops. It is thus unlikely that they have been worn as pendants. Solidi struck for Anastasius are quite common on Gotland and Öland, but not in mainland Denmark. Given the Emperor’s long reign (491-518 AD) they are to be expected in Blekinge. By contrast, solidi struck for Julius Nepos are very rare given his short reign in the mid 470’s AD. There are only nine known examples
from Sweden, and three from Denmark. The regional distribution is very clear: Bornholm, Gotland, Skåne, Öland have two each. Blekinge, Funen, Småland and Uppland have one each. The small numbers and their distribution suggest direct participation in an extortion campaign involving a retinue with elements of people mainly from the larger Baltic islands and southern Sweden.

It is interesting to note that the rare solidi and the die identities of the bracteates suggest the same alliance connecting Blekinge to the southern Swedish mainland, Öland and Gotland. Andrén (1991: 254) points out that none of the distribution patterns of the bracteate die identities corresponds to the borders of a later nation-state at all. The evidence suggests local and temporary alliances rather than continuity, supraregional hegemony, and lengthy connections.

11.1.1 Conclusion

There was a literate kleptocracy ruling parts of eastern Blekinge during the late Migration Period and early Vendel Period. Some had developed a taste for an unusual burial form, the boat grave. This rite had been practiced before elsewhere during the Roman Iron Age, notably in Slusegård on Bornholm (Klindt-Jensen 1991) and Fallward in Saxony (Schön 1995). But Augerum stands out as the earliest known female boat grave during the transition from the late Migration Period to the early Vendel Period. There are later female boat graves in Sweden (Nabberöör on nearby Öland dates to the 8th century, and Tuna in Badelunda in Västmanland dates to the first half of the 9th century (Nylén and Schönläback 1994). It has been argued by Ödman (1983) that the main source of wealth for a local elite in eastern Blekinge was the control over an iron ore transportation route from inland Småland, ‘Lyckåleden’. Lihammer (2003: 233) argues against this, suggesting that one should see the good arable lands in the region as the base of wealth for the local elite.

The fact that the numismatic tpq 491 AD with an end date 518 AD and the archaeological dating to c. 530 AD for the Sturkö pommel suggest that by the mid 6th century, the Augerum elite was unable to travel on the Continent in coordinated extortion campaigns. The unprecedented wealth of the late 5th century was slowly slipping out of their hands. Herschend (1991: 40-41) has argued that a substantial number of market players in the region were unable to profit from the circulation of solidi. They were slowly impoverished. But this did not make the poor unable to engage in warfare. On the contrary, there were plenty of well armed, if poor, neighbors that had to be dealt with. A case in point is Eketorp II on Öland and its denizens. This made contacts between different regions rather complicated as time went on.

11.2 Bornholm and Gotland – Friends or Foes?

The island of Bornholm stands out as a likely counterpart to Blekinge. It merits a study of its own as an Early Runic context being transformed by a local kleptocracy, that also briefly came to employ transitional literacy. A longer study falls outside the scope of this work, however. Obvious foci are: 1) the 43 boat graves of Slusegård (c. 100 BC-400 AD), 2) the 176 Migration Period solidi (Fagerlie 1967), 3) the settlement of Sorte Muld with finds of figural gold foils and a gold
spear ring (Watt 1991, 2002), 4) the substantial number of Vendel period weapon graves (Nørgård-Jørgensen 1999), 5) stray finds and grave finds of Migration and Vendel period runic objects, including an inscription with the interesting sequence –ewaR from Sorte Muld (Stoklund 2004), and a transitional inscription from Loftsgård (Stoklund 2001).

It is clear is that a kleptocratic center was established at Sorte Muld towards the end of the Migration Period. The local elective affinity collaborated on continental extortion campaigns with its counterparts on the Swedish mainland and the islands of Gotland and Öland during the late 5th century. It practiced Early Runic literacy, employing one of the titles discussed by Mees (2003). This seems to have been quite successful, and enabled Sorte Muld to flourish in the first half of the 6th century. Here, solidi and larger necklaces were recast into figural gold foils, of which some 2,300 have been found in Sorte Muld. But the wealth of Sorte Muld seems to have ebbed out by the second half of 6th century (Watt 1991: 89-107, 2002). Instead, a large number of weapon graves appear in various places on Bornholm. This suggests an extensive settlement of small groups of professional warriors meant to expand political control. The Loftsgård transitional inscription belongs to this horizon. The weapon graves span from the late 6th to the 8th century. Their appearance has been viewed as a reflection of political centralization. This was a process that supposedly gave rise to a late Vendel period kingdom on Bornholm (Jørgensen 1991: 109-125, Nørgård Jørgensen 1999). But the royal graves have yet to be found within this model where graves are given great significance. A major question is whether the Bornholm model really applies to the rest of the North. In particular, the multitude of later graves that show strong traits of standardization of a relatively low quality does not seem to correspond to other regions in Sweden at all.

Gotland is another interesting counterpart in the discussion of the Southern Baltic and the Mälar Valley. Here, there is a very different display of hegemonic ideology that combines iconography and literacy. There are some 446 known picture stones in Gotland. The only other place with a remotely similar tradition is the Mälar Valley. The Gotlandic stones have been ordered by size and shape into types A-D. Type A, the first picture-stones have wind roses and rowing-ships on them. These seem to be contemporary with the find from Nydam (Rieck 2003: 302-303). This is the age of early kleptocracy, when the inflow of Roman capital appears to shift away from Gudme on Funen to Bornholm, Öland and Gotland (Herschend 1980, 1991). Early Runic appears on the traditional picture stones (e.g. KJ 99 Martebo).

During the Vendel period the stones shrink in size and start to depict ducks among other things. Then, in the 8th century the stones grow in size and assume a mushroom-like shape. The stones show a growing concern with graphic representation of oral mythology, narrative and ideological stereotypes. At this point ships with sails first appear. As pointed out earlier, these differ from those of the rowboat scenes in that all humans are looking forward in the sailingboats, whereas this privilege was restricted to the oarsman on the earlier stones. There is an overlapping phase with less skilled graphic representation in conjunction with older runes (e.g. Lillbjärs III). Then, the younger runes take over (e.g. Tjängvide).

The most interesting fact related to the Gotlandic phenomenon is that very few picture stones have been found outside Gotland. Early cases with representations of ships, and anthropomorphic representations belong to the Mälar Valley (Ahlberg 1978). Why is it that Gotlandic iconography of the earliest type is only found
in Nydam and in the Mälar valley only? Why are there no other cases of the Vendel Period type outside Gotland and Latvia? A reasonable suggestion is that this kind of display was not the chosen option in other local theaters. The introduction of iconography and runic literacy on stone monuments was clearly attempted in several places in the Mälar Valley. But success appears to have been limited.

11.3 The Transitional Runic of the Listerland and Listerby

This section discusses the Transitional Runic inscriptions of a given region. This approach undoubtedly facilitates the contextualization of some very pertinent evidence while leaving potentially very difficult evidence out. Yet, the purpose of this section is not to give a full account of how Transitional Runic came about. There have been some theories that have closely followed the argumentation discussed in the first part of this book. A case in point, Moltke (1985:182) suggested a dictated shift in runic literacy. This is not an unreasonable claim given what is known from other writing systems, in particular those of Korea, Turkey, and Utah. Yet, the purpose of this section is rather to point at the larger implications of how literacy is reproduced in a specific region.

The Listerland lies in Mjällby parish. The region has traditionally been considered to be part of Skåne. It was only added to the province of Blekinge in fairly recent times. The origin of the place name Lister has not been properly clarified, whereas the suffix –landet probably denotes the peninsula surrounded by water. The Listerland does have a significant amount of good arable soil. The surrounding Hanö Bay used to be dry land until it sunk back into the Baltic Sea after the Paleolithic Era (there are tree stumps on the sea floor at eight meters depth in the bay). The Listerland could thus be expected to yield the same amount of archaeological finds as in other areas. This is not the case, however. With all due caution in relation to the hazardous use of negative evidence, I would still like to emphasize the void surrounding the Listerland. The Southern Baltic region is rich in finds of solidi, for instance. Blekinge is no exception. But the five finds are all from eastern Blekinge. The same goes for boat graves, bracteates and imported weapons.

By contrast, the Listerland is rich in evidence of a peculiar form of transitional literacy. It is of a kind that lures amateur esotericists into going haywire (Svensson 2001) and causes positivist runologists to squirm (Page 1987). There are five transitional stones in Blekinge: KJ 95 Gummarp, KJ 96 Stentoften, KJ 97 Björketorp, KJ 98 Istaby, KJ 98 Anm. Sölvesborg. KJ 95, 96, 98, and 98 Anm. belong to an epicenter in the Listerland. It is clear that Björketorp and Stentoften were part of larger monuments with raised stones. The stones cannot be avoided. They arguably carry the most important transitional texts in Sweden (Jansson 1987). Yet, most runologists prove unable to put to rest questions as to what the texts really mean or what kind of knowledge production, and ultimately, what kind of ideology caused such texts to be carved (cf. Jacobsen 1935, Nielsen 1968, 1983, Santesson 1989). Nor can the stones be dated with any accuracy. Lindquist (1923) proposes an early date, c. 500-550 AD. Krause (1966: 204) suggests the following chronological order: KJ 95, 97, 98, 98 Anm. He dates KJ 95 to c. 600 AD, KJ 96 to c. 625 AD, and KJ 98 to c. 650 AD. Grønvik (1987b: 184-187) dates KJ 96 to 560-580 AD, KJ 97 and KJ 98 to c. 580-600/620 AD, KJ 95 to
600/620-700 and KJ 98 Anm. to 700-750 AD. Birkmann (1995: 139) criticizes Krause’s dating, also arguing for an earlier date. He puts KJ 98 first, c. 575 AD, with KJ 95 and 96 around or shortly after 600 AD. Antonsen (2002: 305) has since pointed out the difficulty in dating the stones, KJ 96 and KJ 97 in particular. He makes strong case for the presence of both innovations and traditional forms in these inscriptions and sees them as contemporary to each other. A few linguistic facts may be concluded, though.

First, it is clear that KJ 98 shows that the first steps of syncope have occurred (note the spelling \textit{hAeruwulafiR} rather than \textit{hAeruwulfijaR}). The onset of syncope in Proto-Norse is usually dated to c. 550 AD (Wessén 1958: 10-12). The problem with this dating is that the runologist Wessén employs the archaeological dates for the Vendel Period of Gotland (Nerman 1935). Nerman’s Gotlandic chronology along with that of Lindquist for Ottarshögen and Gamla Uppsala in Uppland (cf. Åberg 1947, Nerman 1941, 1942, 1943, 1947: 109) becomes tantamount to the linguistic void between the Early Runic language of the Migration Period and the Rune Swedish of the Viking Period. This void is meant to entail the transitional language known as Proto-Norse. An objective linguistic judgment is thus clouded by the subjective opinion of archaeologists. There is no firm evidence to support the dating of the onset of the syncope, besides the fact that Wessén found it convenient to use the archaeological chronology. It seems likely that the syncope may have occurred during the 6th century, but there is nothing to prove when and where it happened, as some regions may have changed their language faster than others.

Second, KJ 98 shows that what used to be the grapheme \textit{j} has already come to denote an open vowel, often transliterated \textit{A}, as opposed to the nasal \textit{a}, which is also used to denote svarabhakti. The only reliable dating to both processes is the Rickeby grave, AD 655± 85. This is so, as the Älvesta bone-tool and the Loftsgård bead are too fragmentary. The latter is made from an older object that carried a transitional runic inscription. The burial context for both texts is quite good, though. Älvesta, grave 24 is carbon dated to AD 530±70, Loftsgård grave 10 is well dated to c. 660-700 AD (Stoklund 2001).

Nerman (1953) attempts an archaeological dating of the stone monuments of Björketorp and Stentoft. Based on a number of excavated standing stone circles in provinces such as Västergötland and Närke, which date to the late Migration Period (475-550 AD), Nerman makes a case for the mid 6th century as a likely date for Stentoft and Björketorp. This argument is quite problematic. In 1914, Arne carried out a number of excavations around the Björketorp monument. There is no doubt that Nerman was aware of this (Nerman 1953: 196). The excavations did not yield any artifacts at all. This is not surprising. ‘Domarringar’ do not have to be graves. There is thus no reliable archaeological date for this type of monument. Nothing speaks against the assumption that the carvers wrote on already existing monuments that were a few generations old at the time. This may be a good field of research for laboratory archaeologists discussing carver’s techniques (cf. Kitzler 2002). Hopefully, a laserscanning could determine as to whether the runes were carved when the stone was lying down or standing up.

After having presented what he believed to be a strong archaeological case for an early date, Nerman (1955) decided to press his theories even further. Following von Friesen (1933: 32) he argued that the primary affinity behind the Lister-stones descended from Rogaland in southwestern Norway. von Friesen claimed that a migrant flock conquered this part of Blekinge in the early 7th century, and that this
was evident from the shape of the k-rune. Nerman then reconstructs the genealogy of a primary affinity from Rogaland, c. 535-620 AD. To its ancestors, Nerman generously adds hadulaikaR and hagustaldaR from the Kjølevik stone in Rogaland, and King Rodulf, mentioned by Jordanes. He then argues that the Norwegian primary affinity in Halfs saga named its leading members after the migrants. The only strongpoint in the argument is that the names Hjörulv and Hådulv always seem to appear together, both in Halfs saga and on the Lister-stones. Moreover, there plenty of other people one could include in such a genealogy. A case in point is the Rök-stone Óg 136 that mentions the twenty kings who sat on Zealand. Of these, the sons of Raðulf, the five Hraiðulfs, and the sons of Rugulf appear to be promising candidates.

Williams (2001: 510) has summarized what may be concluded about the Listerland context from a positivist runological perspective. Below, I have further simplified this point of view to highlight the issues that are considered uncontroversial. First, Hådulv is the acting agent in the KJ 96 and 98 inscriptions. It is thus likely that he has executed KJ 95, too. This means that Hådulv performed cultic acts on at least two occasions. Hådulv has to be the highest local leader (Williams labels him ‘a king or chieftain’). Second, these conclusions lend support to the concept that the local leader is the protector of the cult and the commissioner of sacrifice. Hådulv claims that the numerical concepts 3 and 9, and the ideographic value of individual runes f and j have something to do with this. Third, the runic monuments are of an official character. They are likely to have been carved by different people. This means that the local leader could order a number of monuments that were intended to have different functions.

Williams’ conclusions open up for a very important hypothesis. Four of the stones may be more or less contemporary. Different people who were not members of the primary affinity may have carved these, and they all serve different official purposes. The ‘Hjörylvingar’ and their wider affinities used literacy from time to time to mark important events such as deaths and sacrifices, but also to delineate monumental sacred places or sanctuaries. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that they were the builders of the monuments. That the carvers employed a transitional runic literacy suggests a break with the koiné of the Early Runic tradition and an increasing reliance on the individual capacity to master literacy in many forms. These were runic literati during a period of rapid linguistic change. And they seem to have been aware of this themselves. There are significant orthographic and graphematic differences between the stones. In some instances, they employ one grapheme as an old runic symbol j, yet employ a derive grapheme A to denote phonetic change. Williams (2001) suggests that A denotes /aː/ and /aː/, whereas a denotes /æ:/ and /ā/. Schulte (2004: 50) argues that the rune j or A in its various forms is used by the Lister affinity to denote five different phonetic values: /a( : )/, /æ( : )/ from the i-umlaut of /a( : )/, the corresponding u-umlaut, and svarabhakti. Finally, it denoted the phoneme [j], an allophone to /i/.

The author of Istaby is arguably Hådulv. He claims to be a hAeruwulfiR, that is a descendant of Hjörulv. This text has a distinct emphasis on genealogy. Indeed, it is because of the Istaby stone that one has been able to argue that the group of stones belongs to the male members of the same family, the ‘Hjörylvingar’. Their names are all dithematic. The first part always has to do with armed conflict: hAeru ‘sword’, hAri ‘warrior’, hA/g652u ‘battle’. The last part is always -wolf. The wolf is the most versatile and dangerous predator of the North. The peculiar names have caused Sundqvist and Hultgård (2004) to argue for a case of lyco-
phoric naming tradition. This is seen as related to a religious selective affinity of warriors, a ‘wolf-brotherhood’ of sorts. This may be related to the notion of people capable of shapeshifting into werewolves. No one besides v. Friesen (1933) and Nerman (1955) has dared to pose the question as to whether the carvers had a different origin than that of Lister. If one were to accept that the stones are more or less contemporary, the vast orthographic and graphematic differences in between them could perhaps be explained by the fact that individual literate members of professional retinues indeed came from different places. It is likely that that they would have spelled as it sounded, using the runic graphemes with which they were familiar.

If one returns to the ideological context of the local political agenda, it is clear that the transitional runic discourse contained dual standards of ethics, encompassing benevolence and belligerence. The ‘Hjörylvingar’ could set staves of wealth (KJ 95 Gummarp: sAt(e) sAtA bAtA) or give good harvest (KJ 98 Stentoften: gAf j). It is generally agreed that the central KJ 96 inscription explains that Hädulv, the current family leader had performed a ritual sacrifice of nine rams and nine stallions, thereby giving j (*Jara) or good harvest (Santesson 1989, O Sundqvist 1997). This course of action seems to be quite in line with ideals of generous Germanic kingship (Herschend 1997, 1998, Norr 1998). But for those who dared to disobey the messages on the rune stones, there was bad news (KJ 97: urArAbA sbA). The ‘Hjörylvingar’ foretold of something meaning ‘perversion, basedness’ or ‘sodomy’ (KJ 97: ArAgeu). There was no protection to be had.

II. 28. Southern Sweden (After Fabech 2001)
at home from a death for the individual who would break the runic monuments (KJ 97: *HāermAlAusz utiAR welAdAude sAR πat bArutR*).

These texts are not intended as jokes. There must have been a very strong link between the local hegemonic ideology and its expression in text on large monuments in the cultural landscape. It then becomes clear that these are not empty wellwishings or threats. These men did sacrifice and were convinced that they achieved wealth and good harvest in the area by doing so. If they suspected that someone had somehow desecrated what they saw as beacons of their literate ideology, they would probably have had no problem raping an unarmed man before they dragged him away from his house to kill him.

11.3.1 Conclusion

Regardless of the chronological inaccuracy in terms of runology, it seems safe to say that the Listerland is unique. This is where the Transitional Runic comes to express a rapidly changing literate acrolect. The ‘Hjörulvingar’ was the primary affinity in charge. This single family was dominant in the Listerland and in Listerby parish for some three generations by virtue of some form of inherited religious leadership. Three generations are necessary to commemorate Härjulv, to point out the descent from Hjörulv, and for the descendants of Hådulv to prevent the neighbors from breaking down the monuments after his death (as opposed to what must have happened in Tomteboda in Uppland). This is particularly relevant in the case of KJ 97, which does not have a personal name on it.

Of the women nothing is known. Indeed, the female gender appears to have been unimportant in the local transitional runic discourse. The context that may be elucidated from preserved texts seem to be one of virile and sexually potent masculinity. Rams and stallions, not goats or mares, are sacrificed. Twice one may notice a predisposition to acting as the dominant part in homosexual intercourse. Men give fertility (*j*). Men set staves of wealth (*fff*). Male members of the direct affinity are commemorated only. This contrasts against the females graves of Älvesta and Loftsgård, which contained portable objects belonging to the female gender. The public display of a masculine literacy and a bellicose ideology appears to have been important ingredients in the political practice of the ‘Hjörulvingar’. It will remain uncertain whether the 7th and 8th century ‘Hjörulvingar’were related to the late 5th century *heldaR* or *kunimud* on the Tjürkö bracteate, or the anonymous 6th century owner of the Sturkö sword pom- mel. Rather, there is every reason to believe that there may have been rival affini- ties employing various forms of runic discourse in their political practice during the shift from the Migration Period to the Vendel Period. This could perhaps also explain the coarse transitional language of the Listerland, which seems to differ from the Early Runic of eastern Blekinge, Bornholm, Gotland and Skåne.

An important question is the location of KJ 97 on the Björketorp cemetery on the edge of Listerby parish, inland eastern Blekinge. The stone stands in the acute angle of a triangle. It faces two other stones. In total there are some 11 visible structures; two standing stone circles, one round stone setting, one square stone setting, and a few raised stones. In the first written record from the 15th century they are known as ‘Galta stene’. They mark the border point between Listerby, Edestad and Hjortsberga parishes. Why is KJ 97 as far away as 60 kilometers from the Listerland? A guess is that the Listerland affinity may have successfully
expanded its rule to eastern Blekinge during the late 6th or early 7th century. It was decided to appropriate certain areas for good. This had to be marked out in the cultural landscape. At this point, the affinity may have chosen to employ already existing structures from the Migration Period, such as standing stone circles that marked old borders. These were then given a new content.

The place name Listerby in eastern Blekinge could thus be indicative of political domination from a small group of settlers from the Listerland. But one should not exaggerate here. The settlers were probably no more than one professional warrior with his primary affinity (family and servants), much like the Upplandic ‘rinkers’ (Sjösvärd 1989) or the Frankish ‘gendarmes locaux’ (Périn 1981). Even if Nerman (1955) exaggerated when he argued that the ‘Hjörylvingar’ were Norwegian settlers, he was still right about one thing. The closest parallel to the Listerland stones are indeed Norwegian examples such as the Reistad stone (Eythorsson 1999), rather than the Gotlandic picture stones. The Lister affinity, just like a number of Norwegian counterparts, wanted text on monuments of an older type to be used for public display in the cultural landscape. This was chosen rather than a distinct form of iconography. Neither form was a viable strategy on Bornholm.

The marked regional difference between Blekinge, Gotland and Bornholm, together with the slow demise of Sorte Muld during the later Vendel period suggests that the areas came to drift apart around the time when the Lister affinity is likely to have made an inroad into eastern Blekinge. The grand children of one’s former allies during the late Migration Period may have become dangerous enemies. This is a strong argument for a continuous fragmentation of power rather than seeing a buildup of supraregional (i.e. Danish) hegemony.

11.4 The Arrival of Danish Hegemony

The disappearance of the ‘Hjörylvingar’ away from the regional political limelight during the late Vendel Period and early Viking Period may be related to the Anglo-Saxon Wulfstan’s claim that Blekinge supposedly belonged to Sweden around 870 AD. By the same token it is clear that parts of their runic literacy was retained in the region even into the early Viking Period. In 1997 a further rune stone, possibly be related to the Björketorp-Stentoften group, was found in Färlöv, Skåne, c. 30 km away from Sölvesborg. The Färlöv stone may date to c. 800 (Gustavson 1998:20-22). Some 15 km away from Färlöv is the rune stone from Elleköping, dated to the 10th century, bearing a transitional inscription of a later date. It is evident that burial rites in Blekinge were different from those of neighboring regions throughout the Viking Period (Svanberg 2003a, 2003b). The network of sea defenses makes for a patchwork of local potentates resisting central control. This suggests continuity in the local ideology. One may argue that local Viking retinues such as the Jomsvikings were able to keep the Danish crown at bay for quite a while. In the end, the Christian Danish kingdom was able to establish itself as a landowner by the late 11th century (Lihammer 2003). This came to spell an end to local rule in Blekinge. The northern periphery had now become an inextricable part of the West.
12 Summary

This study concludes that the preliterates of Northern Europe were forced into the process of Westernization by the Roman Empire beginning in the 1st century AD. From then on, the fates of the Germanic preliterates and Roman imperialism became irrevocably intertwined. It is thus necessary to discuss what kind of literacy was practiced in Roman society. Having showed the limitations of Roman literacy, it is argued that an increasing number of Germanic males joined the Roman army until they came to dominate the state apparatus of the Roman Empire. This had a number of important consequences for the subsequent spread of literacy and development of the European nation-states.

What has been accomplished with this study of literacy and imperialism? I have sought to delineate a slow process in which people living on the North-western European Continent were slowly drawn into the literate and linear culture known as Western civilization. A number of causal phenomena were identified, in particular the ‘call and response’ interaction between the Roman Empire and its inferior Germanic neighbors.

The study introduced a number of new terms. These were subsequently employed not only within the context of prehistoric Europe, but they allowed for a comparative approach where similar developments from Early Modern and Modern Period Africa, America and Asia were discussed. The comparisons showed that the terms were indeed applicable to several periods although the contexts remained similar and not identical. Of particular importance was the terminological definition of the technolec, its rise and its causality, increasing social stratification and accelerating the more sophisticated use of language, an important step towards literacy. Literacy was defined and its various aspects were discussed. The study then focused on the introduction of Latin literacy to the Germanic affinities living in the periphery of the Roman Empire.

Numerical literacy in its Latin form was a useful aid in acquiring textual literacy. Yet the Romanization of the Germanic neighbors during the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors was not entirely successful. A fundamental fact is that Germanic literacy was not invented in the periphery. Rather, it was called for. The concept of literacy was introduced by force from the Roman center. The ensuing response was that a new Germanic graphematic system, Early Runic, was created. This was preferred to the slavish adoption of Latin literacy. This is not a unique reaction; it has many parallels in the Early Modern and Modern Periods. What is unique, however, is the longevity of the runic experiment, at least in the North. There was a great potential use value for the runic graphematic system, but it was never employed to a great extent. Gender played a crucial role here. One ought to reflect over the fact why there is no known literate culture ruled by matriarchy. Women were next in line in terms of runic literacy. The first known female runic authors to appear belong to the late 6th century.

Early Runic never represented a credible alternative to Latin literacy as long as Roman imperialism was in effect. Rather, it would seem that a substantial part of the potential users of Early Runic, that is Germanic males skilled in warfare and languages, increasingly sought employment in the Roman army. Here, they engaged in acquiring Roman ideology and Latin literacy. Yet, the Germanic affinities never accepted it all, instead a substantial amount of knowledge was
reified to suit the sensed needs of the Germanic officer corps and their families. Kleptocracies emerged in Western and Northern Europe. The West European ones were often under the nominal lordship of the Roman Emperor. Here, the new real leadership reproduced its position not by accumulation based on written records as much as by deliberate theft and wanton destruction.

Early Runic literacy was an integral part of an immense reification process in which Roman material culture and ideology was transformed to become more palatable to the Germanic affinities. Gender played a substantial part in this process. Latin literacy and many Roman material attributes such as medallions, finger rings and brooches belonged to a potent, male gender – the decorated Roman officer. These phenomena were transformed over time. Early Runic bracteates, Style 1 relief brooches and massive gold bracelets were heavily reified regalia reserved to the idealized representative of a fertile, female gender within an exogamic and arranged marriage – the Germanic princess, key-bearer and mistress over a large household.

By contrast, the Roman aristocratic response to the Germanization of the Roman army was to divert its focus from literate fiscal and military administration towards oral rhetoric. This may appear an unsophisticated regression at first, but it was to come in handy. The Roman senatorial class would eventually assert considerable authority in the unstable kleptocracies, as Church prelates while the use of literacy became increasingly scarce in post-Roman Europe. In the meantime, the spread of Latin literacy, or rather, Latin text, to the Northern periphery coincided with the 5th century extortion raids against the crumbling authority on the outskirts of the Empire. Germanic raiders were paid off with gold coins, known as solidi. To tell the solidi apart, they had to read the texts upon them. The number of such Latin texts by far exceeds the number of preserved Early Runic texts. But as the Northern periphery was a premonetary economy with few market players, the minted gold soon became useless for anything but as a source of strife. Much gold was kept buried and remained in the ground as little could be bought with it.

Runic literacy came to diverge in the post-Roman eras, that is the Merovingian Period and the Vendel Period. In Britain and Frisia, outside the scheme of this book there was a substantial graphematic reform and an expansion of graphemes. This insular runic is likely to have been influenced by the Church (Parsons 1999). In Alemannia, Continental Runic literacy saw a brief revival during the late 6th century. This revival remained detached from the runic literacy of the North that underwent considerable linguistic and graphematic change as Early Runic transformed into Transitional Runic. Eventually, runic literacy fizzled out on the Continent. There, the remaining kleptocracies could transform into Christian feudal states operating with a minimum of Latin literacy.

In the Northern periphery, the Vendel Period kleptocracies were too distant from the old center to transform themselves into Christian feudal states. What followed after the golden days of plunder in the late 5th century was a return to the land. It is clear that this meant an expansion of settlements in parts of the Mälar Valley, notably around Vendel itself. But other areas such as Öland and Gotland saw many farms being abandoned for good. Literacy had become superfluous in this situation, and there is also possible evidence of an iconoclastic reaction against runic monuments in the Mälar Valley. Other areas, such as Lister in Blekinge sought to reproduce an aggressive brand of Transitional Runic for at least three generations.
As the Northern periphery slipped away from the center again, Latin literacy slowly came to reestablish a strong position on the Continent. The general economic upswing from late 8th century and onwards enabled a revival of runic literacy in the Northern periphery. Transitional Runic then transformed into Late Runic. For the first time in the North, there was a form of literacy that was relevant to the economy and not just to the domestic ideology reacting to imperialist aggression. Expanding trade volume and the need for communication required literacy and a concept of the linear. An important step towards the inevitable westernization had been achieved. This was a perfect opportunity for imperialist ideology to gain a foothold in the trading posts and small urban settlements of the North. Christian missionaries soon followed.
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Abbreviations:

AVG = Augustus.
C = Caesar.
CCCP = The Soviet Union.
CIA= Central Intelligence Agency.
DN = Dominus Noster.
IMP = Imperator.
KVHAA = Kungliga Vitterhets, Historie och Antikvitets Akademin (The Royal Swedish
Academy of Letters).
MIA = Missing In Action
NOWELE – North-Western European Language Evolution. ??
PF = Pius Felix.
PNA = ??
RAÅ = Riksantikvarieämbetet (The Swedish National Board of Antiquities).
RAÅ UV = Byrån för arkeologiska undersökningar (The Swedish National Board
of Antiquities, Bureau of Archaeological Investigations).
RGA = Hoops’ Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde.
H. Beck, et al. ed., 1973-
RGA-E = Ergänzungsbände zum RGA.
Ög + number = Runic inscription published in E. Brate, ed. Östergötlands run-inskrifter.
Stockholm. 1911-18.
SHM + number = Inventory Number of Statens historiska museum (The Swedish Na-
tional Museum of Antiquities).
SLM = Stockholms läns museum (The Stockholm County Museum).
Sö + number = Runic inscription published in E. Brate and E. Wessén, eds. Söder-
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U + number = Runic inscription published in E. Wessén, and SBF. Jansson, ed.
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**Table 1**

**Early Runic Inscriptions in Nordic Graves (150-800 AD)**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cat. Nr. and Site</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Burial</th>
<th>Gender, Age</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Chronology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KJ 44 Frøihov</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>C1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 31 Øvre Stabu</td>
<td>Fe</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1a-C1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 34 Mos</td>
<td>Ag, Fe</td>
<td>Inhumation?</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 12 Gårdlösa</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 10 Himlingøje 1949: 2</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Fem, 50</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1b, tpq 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 13a Lundegårde, grave 4</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 13 Næsbjerg, grave Ah</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>C1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skovgårde, grave 209</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Fem, 20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1b, tpq 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 11 Værløse, grave 1</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Fem, 15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 9 Himlingøje 1835</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C1b-C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Møllegårdsøm, grave 2118</td>
<td>Fe</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>C1b-C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 39 Nedre Hov, grave 7</td>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 37 Fløksand</td>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>Cr. Layer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragby, grave 86</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>c. 200-400?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 38 Gjersvik</td>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>Cr. Urn</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>c. 400-450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 16 Bratsberg</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>c. 475-485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setvet</td>
<td>Au</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>c. 490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedenstorp</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>c. 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ågedal</td>
<td>Au</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>c. 500-550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Älvesta</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Cr. Vessel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>530 AD±70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 29 Anm 2 Ødemotland</td>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>c. 525-575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 50 Strom</td>
<td>Whetstone</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>c. 550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 17a Eikeland</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>c. 550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rickeby, grave 1</td>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>Cr. Layer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>655 AD±85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loftsgård, grave 10</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>c. 660-700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 18 Strand</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>Inhumation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>c. 700-750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ag ≈ Silver
Au = Gold
Bo = Bone
Br = Bronze
Fe = Iron
C1a = 150/160-210/220
C1b = 210/220-250/260
C2 = 250/260-310/320
C3 = 310/320-375/400
Tpq = 81-139
Tables 2-6
The Solidus Horizon of Denmark and Sweden (395-565 AD)

Table 2
Western Emperors (395-476 AD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type, Emperor</th>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>M/F Ratio</th>
<th>Mint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Honorius* (395-423)</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>Mil, Rav, (The)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marcus (406-407)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gratian (407)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(W Eur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Constantine III* (407-411)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(Tri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Constans II (409-411)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(Gaul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maximus (409-411)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(Bar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Priscus Attalus (409-410, 414-415)?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(W Eur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jovinus (411-413)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(Arl, Lyo, Tri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sebastianus (412-413)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(Arl, Tri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Constantius III* (421)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(Rav)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Valentinian III* (423-455)</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>Mil, Rav, Rom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Honoria* (430-455)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(Rav, Rom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- John (423-425)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>(Rom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Petronius Maximus (455)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(Rav, Rom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Vacant, May-Jul 455]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Avitus (455-456)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(Arl, Rav)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Vacant Oct 456-Apr 457]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Majorian* (457-461)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Arl, Mil, Rav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Vacant, Aug-Nov 461]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Libius Severus (461-465)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>Rav, Mil, Rav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Vacant, Fall 465-466]</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Anthemius* (467-472)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mil, Rom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Olybrius (472-473)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(Mil, Rom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Glycerius (473-474)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Rav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Julius Nepos (474-475, 477-480)?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(Arl, Rav, Rom, Sal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Romulus (475-476)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>Mil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: c. 962 221 c. 4.35

Table 3
Eastern Emperors (395-565 AD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type, Emperor</th>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>M/F Ratio</th>
<th>Mint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Arcadius* (395-408)</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Theodosius II* (408-450)</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eudoxia* (400-404)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[2]</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pulcheria* (412-453)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[2]</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Marcianus* (450-457)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Leo I* (457-474)</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>Con, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Leo II/Zeno* (474-476)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Zeno (476-491)</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adriane* (474-514)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[1]</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Basil, Marc (474-477)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Con, Mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Leontius (484-488)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Anastasius* (491-518)</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>Con, Rav, Rom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Finds</td>
<td>Top 3 Unminted Hoards</td>
<td>Unminted Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Öland</td>
<td>327</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotland</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bornholm</td>
<td>176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uppland</td>
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<td>Skåne</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Småland</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funen</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gudme area total = c. 9 kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jutland</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zealand</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blekinge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medelpad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Södermanland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tureholm = c. 12.5 kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Västergötland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Timboholm = 9.5 kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Västmanland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gästrikland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>c. 31 kg</td>
<td>c. 60 kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate:</td>
<td>(c. 4.4 kg)</td>
<td>(c. 7,500 solidi)</td>
<td>(c. 13,650 solidi)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5
The Solidus Types of Sweden (395-565 AD)
and the Hoard in the Tomb of Childeric (c. 481/482 AD).

| Region          | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | Q | R | S | T |
| Öland           | 327| 14| 45| 12| 26 | 17| 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 17| 81| 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | – |
| Gotland         | 289| 9 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 12 | 1 |
| Childeric       | 91 | – | 2 | – | 2 | – | 1 | – | 2 | 8 | 58| 1 | 15| 4 | – | – | – | – | – |
| Uppland         | 74 | – | 2 | – | 1 | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | – | 6 | 7 | 5 | 3 | – | – |
| Skåne           | 48 | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | – | 2 | – | 6 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | – |
| Småland         | 23 | 2 | 2 | – | – | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | – | – | 1 | – |
| Blekinge        | 5  | – | – | – | – | – | – | 2 | – | – | 1 | – |
| Södermanland    | 4  | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Västergötland   | 3  | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Medelpad        | 3  | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Gästrikland     | 1  | – | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |

Type, Emperor | Months | Finds | M/F Ratio
---|---|---|---
L Leo I* (457-474) | 216 | 212 | 1.02
O Basiliscus, Marcus (474-477) | 20 | 13 | 1.54
D Libius Severus (461-465) | 48 | 31 | 1.55
H Romulus (475-476) | 9 | 5 | 1.8
K Marcianus* (450-457) | 77 | 34 | 2.26
N Zeno* (476-491) | 192 | 85 | 2.26
E Anthemius* (467-472) | 62 | 24 | 2.58
M Leo II/Zeno* (474-476) | 24 | 9 | 2.66
C Majorian* (457-461) | 52 | 18 | 2.88
J Theodosius II* (408-450) | 504 | 130 | 3.88
F Glycerius (473-474) | 14 | 3 | 4.66
Q Anastasius* (491-518) | 348 | 57 | 6.1
B Valentinian III* (423-455) | 372 | 60 | 6.2
A Honorius* (395-423) | 345 | 25 | 13.8
R Justin I* (518-527) | 120 | 6 | 20
I Arcadius* (395-408) | 168 | 6 | 28
S Justinian I* (527-565) | 384 | 13 | 29.5
G Julius Nepos (474-475, 477-480)? | ? | 9 | ?
T Théodebert | ? | 1 | ?

Total: 868

* = Recognized as legitimate by another Emperor

Table 6
Gold Hoards of Gästrikland, Södermanland and Uppland

Sum total: c. 16, 380.00 g

Group 1

Site | Weight
---|---
Tuna, Västerljung Parish, Hölebo hd (SHM 21, 28-29) | c. 12, 500.00 g
### Group 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fagernäs, Nåshulta Parish, Österrekarne hd (SHM 12060)</td>
<td>634.20 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skarpan, Skölöinge Parish, Oppunda hd (SHM 14)</td>
<td>550.98 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1185.18 g</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average:</strong></td>
<td><strong>592.59 g</strong></td>
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### Group 3

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Numismatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaggeholm 7:23, Ekerö Parish, Färentuna hd (SHM 26683)</td>
<td>281.22+ g</td>
<td>tpq 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kvicksta, Torelund Parish, Selebo hd (SHM 3007)</td>
<td>249.90 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurön, Adelsö Parish, Färentuna hd (SHM 4522)</td>
<td>159.80 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettna Parish, Oppunda hd (SHM 19006)</td>
<td>149.70 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedesunda by, Hedesunda Parish (SHM 15937)</td>
<td>148.94 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaggeholm, Ekerö Parish, Färentuna hd (LUHM 19672)</td>
<td>130.00+ g</td>
<td>tpq 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Väsby, Hammarby Parish, Vallentuna hd (SHM 10348)</td>
<td>130.00 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rågsta, Hedesunda Parish (SHM 14045)</td>
<td>119.72 g</td>
<td>tpq 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1239.28 g</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average:</strong></td>
<td><strong>154.91 g</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tpq:</strong></td>
<td><strong>457-491</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Group 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Numismatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryssjö, Österunda Parish (SHM 7695)</td>
<td>85.42 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nykvarn, Härnevi Parish (SHM 24)</td>
<td>70.86 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopen, Bogsta Parish, Rönö hd (SHM 2513)</td>
<td>32.90 g</td>
<td>67.45 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogsta sn, Rönö hd (SHM 1880)</td>
<td>+27.97 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopen, Bogsta Parish, Rönö hd (SHM 2392)</td>
<td>+6.58 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekbacken, Salem Parish, Svtlösa hd (SHM 17770)</td>
<td>51.70 g</td>
<td>62.75 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekbacken, Salem Parish, Svtlösa hd (SHM 19832)+11.05 g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valsjö, Ösma Parish, Sotholms hd (SHM 23909)</td>
<td>61.50 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolp-Ekeby, Frösunda Parish, Seminghundra hd (SHM 21132)</td>
<td>61.24 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stjärnholm, Estuna Parish, Lyhundra hd (SHM 13620)</td>
<td>60.62 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vällingby, Spånga Parish, Solllentuna hd (SHM 18510)</td>
<td>58.05 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hejsta, Höö Parish, Hölebo hd (SHM 24581)</td>
<td>53.90 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Örby, Brännkyrka sn, Svtlösa hd (SHM 17897)</td>
<td>51.01 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vistavägen 23, Huddinge Parish (SHM 24520)</td>
<td>50.84 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bona 4:62, Ekerö Parish, Färentuna hd (SHM 23568)</td>
<td>45.35 g</td>
<td>49.77 g tpq 461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bona 4:43, Ekerö Parish, Färentuna hd (SHM 26142)</td>
<td>+4.42 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelvik Parish, Rönö hd (J P Lamm 1960: 50)</td>
<td>49.70 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lundby, Vagnhärad Parish, Hölebo hd (SHM 1605)</td>
<td>49.35 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valla, Ytterselö Parish, Selebo hd (SHM 2726)</td>
<td>48.05 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torp, Husby-Oppunda Parish, Oppunda hd (SHM 14871)</td>
<td>46.00 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ulvsunda, Bromma Parish, Solllentuna hd (SHM 23374)</td>
<td>44.15 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Östra Sonkarby, Österunda Parish (SHM 10830)</td>
<td>43.77 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenby, Adelsö Parish, Färentuna hd (SHM 15934)</td>
<td>36.75 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammarby Parish, Österrekarne hd (SHM 2922)</td>
<td>33.35 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vreta gårde, Sättersta Parish, Rönö hd (SHM 25)</td>
<td>24.70 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ålpoppe, Nysättra Parish, Lagunda hd (SHM 7951)</td>
<td>22.27 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sillevy Mellangård, Västerljung Parish, Hölebo hd (SHM 389)</td>
<td>20.60 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eklundstorp, Toresund Parish, Selebo hd (SHM 1612)</td>
<td>20.53 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergby, Skepptuna Parish, Seminghundra hd (SHM 10457)</td>
<td>18.38 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norryby, Lågga Parish, Långhundra hd (SHM 15883)</td>
<td>15.20 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grillby, Lillkyrka Parish, Trögds hd (SHM 16379)</td>
<td>14.98 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hogsby by, Sorunda Parish, Sotholms hd (SHM 2444)</td>
<td>14.80 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ista by, Skepptuna Parish, Seminghundra hd (SHM 2595)</td>
<td>13.87 g</td>
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Total: 188.15 g  
Average: 20.91 g

Group 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Numismatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brokind, Södertälje, Öknebo hd (SHM 10619)</td>
<td>11.70 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekstol, Björnlunda Parish, Daga hd (SHM 1282)</td>
<td>11.40 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sillen, Västerljung Parish, Hölebo hd (SHM 17053)</td>
<td>11.11 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Västra Vingåker Parish, Oppunda hd (SHM 2954)</td>
<td>7.90 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kv Cepheus 9, Domkyrko Parish (SHM 21606)</td>
<td>7.60 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotbrunna, Härnevi Parish (SHM 6223)</td>
<td>7.36 g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karlby, Fogdö Parish, Åkers hd (SHM 24521)</td>
<td>7.17 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torsvi Parish, Trögds hd (SHM19153)</td>
<td>6.17 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tureberg, Sollentuna Parish, Sollentuna hd (SHM 19438)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tibble, Torstuna Parish (SHM 11957)</td>
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<td>Brunsta, Övergran Parish, Håbo hd (SHM 17051)</td>
<td>4.58 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Group 3, Ekerö Parish, Färentuna hd (SHM 28480)</td>
<td>4.47 g</td>
<td>tpq 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitsand, Salem Parish, Svartlösa hd (Fagerlie 1967:178)</td>
<td>c. 4.40 g</td>
<td>tpq 408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Västra Söby, Torpa Parish, Västerrekarne hd (SHM 3507)</td>
<td>c. 4.40 g</td>
<td>tpq 527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Västerbröta, Grödinge Parish, Svartlösa hd (SHM 1521)</td>
<td>c. 4.40 g</td>
<td>tpq 476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigeby, Norrsunda Parish, Arlinghundra hd (SHM 13774)</td>
<td>c. 4.40 g</td>
<td>tpq 395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jortslunda, Alunda Parish, Olands hd (SHM 1692)</td>
<td>4.32 g</td>
<td>tpq 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenkälla, Allhelgona Parish, Jönäker hd (SHM 2514)</td>
<td>4.20 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lillkyrka Parish, Trögds hd (SHM 19144)</td>
<td>3.24 g</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 120.61 g  
Average: 6.35 g

Tpq: 395-527  
hd = hundare
Tables 7-10
Chronology and Typology of Continental Runic Inscriptions

Table 7
The Continental Runic Corpus of the Migration and Merovingian Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Grave or Cat. Nr.</th>
<th>Brooch Type or Object, Inscribed Material</th>
<th>Visible Surface</th>
<th>Approx. Date</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aalen</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Necklace, Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>400-450</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquincum (KJ 7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>500-550</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlon (KJ 146)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ca 1, Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>600-650</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschheim (KJ 146)</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>D 3, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-575</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschheim (KJ 146)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>I, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschheim</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>E, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Ems (KJ 142)</td>
<td>B 6</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Krozingen</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>E, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balingen (KJ 160)</td>
<td>F 1</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergakker (KJ 8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wa (Sc sh.), Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>375-425</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beuchte (KJ 146)</td>
<td></td>
<td>D 2, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>500-535</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bezenye I (KJ 166A)</td>
<td>B 4a</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>535-568</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bezenye II (KJ 166B)</td>
<td>B 4b</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>535-568</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borgharen (KJ 4)</td>
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<td>Gü (Bu), Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>575-625</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breza (KJ 146)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pillar, St x</td>
<td></td>
<td>450-650</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bopfingen (O 7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>G 1, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-575</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bülach (KJ 165)</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>E 6, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>610-640</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charnay (KJ 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>D 1, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chéhéry (KJ 146)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>K 1, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>600-630</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dischingen I</td>
<td>(O 11)</td>
<td>C 1a, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>600-650</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dischingen II</td>
<td>(O 12)</td>
<td>C 1b, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>600-650</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dittigheim</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>E, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>500-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donzdorf (O 13)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>D 4, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>500-550</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eichstetten (KJ 143)</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>Wa 3 (Sc sh.), Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>520-560</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empfling (KJ 144)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>C 4, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallward</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>B 1, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>520-560</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freialbersheim (KJ 144)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>B 1, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>520-560</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedberg (KJ 141)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>E 2, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gammertingen (KJ 155)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ca 3, Iv x</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomadingen (KJ 154)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>E 1, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>525-565</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gräfelfing (O 19)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Wa 5 (Seax), Fè x</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griesheim (O 20)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>C 2, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailfingen (KJ 159)</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>Wa 6 (Seax), Fè x</td>
<td></td>
<td>560-600</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailfingen (O 22)</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>I 3, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>535-565</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heilbronn/Böckingen (KJ 153)</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>Gü 2, Br x</td>
<td></td>
<td>600-700</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbrechtingen (KJ 154)</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>C 3, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-575</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüfingen I</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>Bracteate, Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>570-590</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüfingen II</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>Bracteate, Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>570-590</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hüfingen</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>B, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igling/Unterling</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>A, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>500-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirchheim/Teck (O 27)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>D 5, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirchheim/Teck (O 27)</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>E, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirchheim/Teck (NyR 2002)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>E?, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liebenau (KJ 139)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wa (Sw str m), Ag x</td>
<td></td>
<td>450-500</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauchheim (KJ 139)</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>1a, Ag</td>
<td></td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lauchheim</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>Comb</td>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>550-600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maisach</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Gü</td>
<td>(Str m)</td>
<td>600-650</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Ag</td>
<td>600</td>
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<td>München/Aubing II 303 (O 31) A 1b</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>600</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>München/Aubing 383 K 3</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>600</td>
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<td>Neudingen/Baar 168 D 8</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>600-625</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dend. 568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neudingen/Baar 319 D 8</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>600-625</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Niederstotzingen 3a (O 32)</td>
<td>Gü 4</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>600-650</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nordendorf (KJ 151) B 5</td>
<td>Ag</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nordendorf (KJ 152) D 7</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peigen</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>550-600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pforzen</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>Gü</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>565-600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pforzen</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>Zierscheibe</td>
<td>Iv</td>
<td>565-600</td>
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<td>Pleidelsheim</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>555-580</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberflacht</td>
<td>(O 35)</td>
<td>Spoon</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>565-600</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthofen (KJ 145) H 1</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>585-615</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Dizier</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Wa</td>
<td>(Ri sw)</td>
<td>525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scher METHOD I (O 157) 2 Ca 2</td>
<td>Br</td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>pq 565</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scher METHOD II (O 156) 2 B 3</td>
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<td>565-600</td>
<td>pq 565</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fe, Ag</td>
<td>565-600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scher METHOD 509 (O 156) E 3</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwangau</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>575-625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soest</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td>pq 565</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steindorf</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Wa 7</td>
<td>(Seax)</td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stetten</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Needle head</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>600-625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szabattayan (KJ 167) Gü</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>400-450</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Szentendre</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>555-580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tannheim (O 44)</td>
<td>Hinge</td>
<td>Fe, Br</td>
<td></td>
<td>500-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trossingen I</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5a</td>
<td>500-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trossingen II</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Gü</td>
<td>5a</td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trossingen II</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Gü</td>
<td>5b</td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weimar I</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>525-550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weimar II</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>525-550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weimar</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Gü</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>500-550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weimar</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Bead</td>
<td>Am</td>
<td>500-565</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weingarten</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>Gü</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weingarten</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>Bead</td>
<td>Am</td>
<td>565-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weißenburg</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>Bead</td>
<td>Am</td>
<td>500-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weißenburg</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>550-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wurmlingen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wa 1</td>
<td>(Sph)</td>
<td>565-615?</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-K= Brooch types in Martin (2004)
Ag = Silver
Am = Amber
Au = Gold
Bo = Bone
Bu = Buckle
Br = Bronze
Dend. = Dendrochronological dating
Fe = Iron
Gü = Belt part
Iv = Ivory
Ri sw = Ring sword
Sc sh = Scabbard sheath
Sph = Spearhead
Str m = Strap mount
Sw str m = Sword strap mount
Wa = Weapon
**Table 8**
Cemeteries with Multiple Finds of Continental Runic Inscriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cemetery</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Graves</th>
<th>Runic Object/Grave</th>
<th>Grave/Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schretzheim</td>
<td>Bav</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>4: 3 (26=2 obj., 79, 509)</td>
<td>1: 210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weimar-Nordfriedhof</td>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4: 2 (56=2 obj., 57=2 obj.)</td>
<td>1: 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>München-Aubing</td>
<td>Bav</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>3: 2 (303=2 obj., 383)</td>
<td>1: 420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trossingen</td>
<td>B-W</td>
<td>82*</td>
<td>3: 2 (22=2 obj., 11)</td>
<td>1: 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüfingen</td>
<td>B-W</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>3: 2 (318=2 obj. 336)</td>
<td>1: 325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kircheim/Teck</td>
<td>B-W</td>
<td>137*</td>
<td>3: 3 (85, 166, ?)</td>
<td>1: 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschheim</td>
<td>Bav</td>
<td>450*</td>
<td>3: 3 (49, 166, 221)</td>
<td>1: 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailfingen</td>
<td>B-W</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>2: 2 (381, 406)</td>
<td>1: 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauchheim</td>
<td>B-W</td>
<td>1308</td>
<td>2: 2 (911, 1007)</td>
<td>1: 654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neudingen-Baar</td>
<td>B-W</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>2: 2 (168, 319)</td>
<td>1: 165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordendorf</td>
<td>Bav</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>2: 2 (KJ 151, 152)</td>
<td>1: 222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pforzen</td>
<td>Bav</td>
<td>442*</td>
<td>2: 2 (239, 255)</td>
<td>1: 221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 6792 36: 30

Average: 1: 236

Runic Object/Grave Total = 1: 189

Bav = Bavaria
B-W = Baden-Württemberg
Thu = Thuringia

* = Partially excavated. (Trossingen is now an urban area. The Pforzen cemetery may encompass as many as 6-700 graves. The Aschheim cemetery has some 250 destroyed graves to the west).

**Table 9**
Distance in Time and Space between Multiple Continental Runic Graves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cemetery</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weimar-Nordfriedh</td>
<td>Adjacent</td>
<td>Related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschheim</td>
<td>7, 17 m</td>
<td>Possible relation between 166 and 221, but not 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pforzen</td>
<td>9 m</td>
<td>Possible relation (Fischer 2001, Martin 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüfingen</td>
<td>10 m</td>
<td>Possible relation (Close but not parallel).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailfingen</td>
<td>15 m</td>
<td>Possible relation (Martin 2004, but see also Sigmund 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kircheim/Teck</td>
<td>20 m</td>
<td>Unrelated (Graves seem to belong to two different groups).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neudingen-Baar</td>
<td>20 m</td>
<td>Unrelated (Graves seem to belong to two different groups).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schretzheim</td>
<td>30-45 m</td>
<td>Unrelated (Same burial phase 3, but in three different groups).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weingarten</td>
<td>45-50 m</td>
<td>Unrelated (Considerable distance in a large cemetery).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trossingen</td>
<td>65 m</td>
<td>Unrelated (Considerable distance in once large cemetery).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>München-Aubing</td>
<td>70 m</td>
<td>Unrelated (Considerable distance in a large cemetery).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauchheim</td>
<td>75 m</td>
<td>Unrelated (Considerable distance in a large cemetery).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordendorf</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Insufficient documentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10
Male Continental Runic Graves Compared to the Gammertingen Chamber Grave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grave</th>
<th>Grave Goods</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Chronology</th>
<th>Quality Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gammertingen</td>
<td>xxxxxxxxxx x x x x</td>
<td>c. 55</td>
<td>c. 570</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Dizier, grave 11</td>
<td>-xx-xxxxxx x x - -</td>
<td>c. 15</td>
<td>c. 525</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niederstotzingen, grave 3a</td>
<td>xxxxxxxxx-- x - --</td>
<td>c. 20-30</td>
<td>c. 600-620</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borgharen, grave 7</td>
<td>xxx--xxx-- - --</td>
<td>c. 50-60</td>
<td>c. 550-590</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pforzen, grave 239</td>
<td>xxxxxxxxxx-- - --</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>c. 570-590</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schretzheim, grave 79</td>
<td>-xxxxxxxxxx-- - --</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 560-590</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ 153 Heilbronn-Böckingen</td>
<td>xx-xxxxxx-- - --</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 600-630</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eichstetten, grave 186</td>
<td>-xxxxxx-xx-- - --</td>
<td>c. 50-60</td>
<td>c. 535</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wurmlingen, grave 2</td>
<td>xx-x-xxxxxx-- - --</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 565-615</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailfingen, grave 381</td>
<td>x-xxxxxx--xx-- - --</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 565-600</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steindorf, grave 8</td>
<td>x-xxxxxx--xx-- - --</td>
<td></td>
<td>c.565-600</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Seax
2 Spatha
3 Shield
4 Lance
5 Decorated Belt Buckle
6 Bits, Strap Mounts
7 Bronze Vessel
8 Glass Vessel
9 Gold Object
10 Francisca
11 Ango/Second Spear
12 Mail Coat
13 Helmet