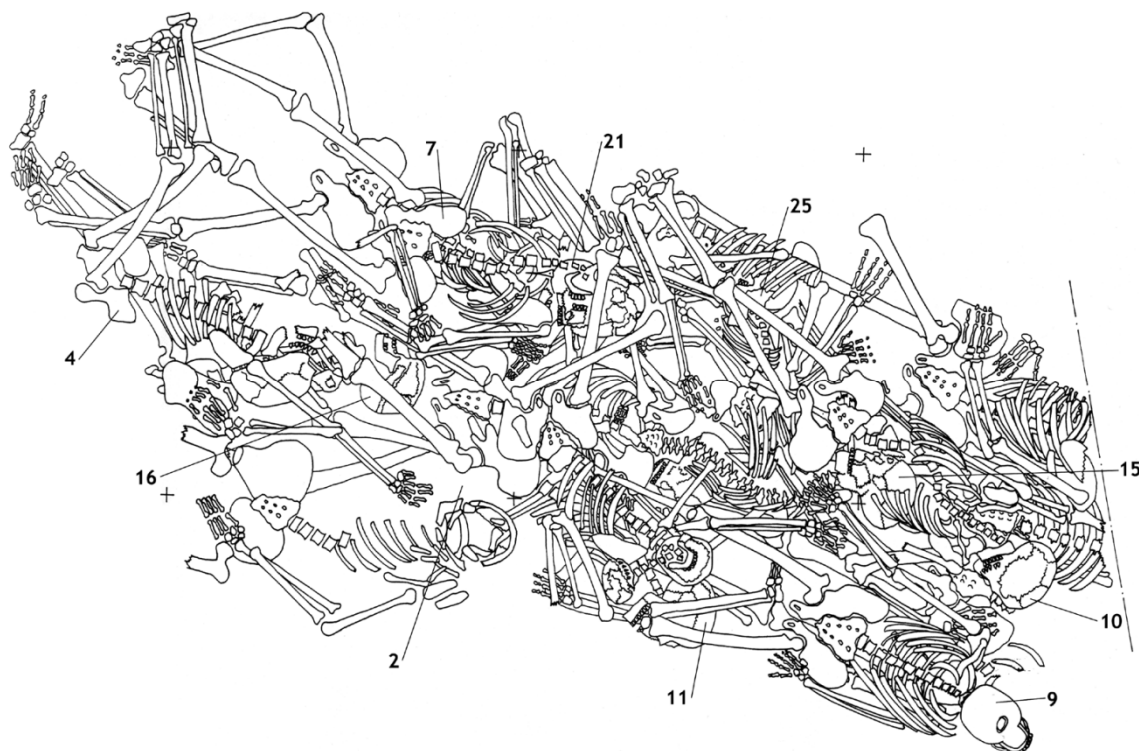




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CONCERNING MASS GRAVES

THE USE, DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITIES WITHIN MASS GRAVES
DURING THE SCANDINAVIAN IRON AGE AND MIDDLE AGES.



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ABSTRACT

Frisk, Mattias 2015. *Concerning Mass Graves: The use, development and identities within mass graves during the Scandinavian Iron Age and Middle Ages.*

This master thesis deals with the subject of mass graves as a result of war and violence; how, where and why they are created, what they represent and how they are used throughout the Scandinavian Iron Age and Middle Ages. To analyze and discuss these questions, I have used nine case studies as well as several literary sources such as Beowulf, Tacitus and Jordanes. To further increase the depth of this discussion and to help us understand the mass graves themselves, I have also included subject of warfare in the form of a walkthrough of violence and social psychology. Together, these pieces have helped me form the basis for an analysis and discussion of the three acts I have created: The Ingroup act of deposition, The Outgroup act of deposition and the Triumph act of deposition.

Keywords: Archaeology, Mass grave, Iron Age, Middle Ages, Weapon deposition, Ingroup, Outgroup, Warfare,

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Cover picture: The Sigtuna mass grave of S:t Laurence.

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FOREWORD

In the field of archaeology and the history of warfare, there are always blind spots. One of these blind spots is what happens after the battle; the creation of a mass grave. What we read in the history books and what we find in the field rarely is rarely the material remains of this practice. Instead we normally find the material culture surrounding war in the form of weapons and items taken as tribute as well what is written down; such as names, years, dates and consequences. We know much about modern mass graves; why and where they are created, their purpose and who the individuals within them are. This can rarely be said for the mass graves dating to the Scandinavian Iron Age and the Middle Ages, and this is what I am trying to shed light on in this master thesis.

Upon completion of this thesis, I would like to thank the following: Frands Herschend, for being my mentor throughout all the work, for all the input and guidance he has given me. To Helena Victor, Svante Fischer, Per Lekberg and all the others on Kalmar County Museum and the Sandby Borg project. The time I spent at the excavation at Sandby Borg gave me an insight into the reality of our history, and all the discussions that helped me to further develop my thesis. And last, to my friends for their support, especially to Erika for all her support and encouragement that helped me across the finish line!

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1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH

Although it is one of our darker side, waging war, killing, conquering, and the glorification of these has always been an intricate part of our society and history, and remains so even to this day. What has changed however is *where* we wage war on each other, *how* we do it and *why*. This also means that the deaths that follows in the wake of the war change in scale and thereby also the practice of dealing with the dead and their war gear.

In this Master thesis, my aim is to investigate, compare and discuss the practice of dealing with the dead and their war gear during the aftermath of a battle or an armed engagement. How the dead are dealt with primarily comes in the form of a mass grave or mass deposition site, but I argue that they during the early Iron Age also come in the form of weapon depositions. The primary time periods on this thesis will focus on, is mainly the Scandinavian Iron Age (ca 500BC-1050AD) and the Scandinavian Middle Ages (ca 1050-1520 AD), this in order to get an overview of the use and development of the mass grave practice. Furthermore, I have also examined different literary sources, both historical and pre-historical. And though brief, I will give an overview of the history of warfare during the Iron Age and Middle Ages in northern Europe and Scandinavia. The purpose of this overview is to further clear up the use and practice of mass graves as the result of violence, since a mass grave or mass deposition is nothing but a direct result of warrior culture in action.

During my work I have divided the various depositions of dead and war gear into three categories, called *acts*, depending on the identity of the individuals or items within the mass grave or deposition itself. These acts are referred to as the *Ingroup deposition act*, the *Outgroup deposition act* and the *Triumph act*. How these three categories are composed and what their qualifications are will be presented in section 1.3. Along these three acts, I have coined one more definition that will help to define and view the practice of dealing with the dead and their war gear: the *Stage*, which is presented in detail in section 1.2. Together with the three acts, these factors will form the basis of my analysis.

The research questions that will help guide this thesis are the following.

- What is the purpose of putting the dead and their war gear on display?
- Can social identities be distinguished in mass graves judging from its characteristics and contents, and how?
- How can weapon depositions be interpreted and connected to the void in mass graves during the first five centuries AD?
- How does the final display of a mass grave or deposition, and its location, differ depending on the identity of those deposited?
- How does the development and scale of warfare affect the use of mass graves throughout the Iron Age and the Middle Ages?

1.1 Method

To analyze and answer these research questions I will use the three forms of deposition acts created for this thesis; *Ingroup deposition*, *Outgroup deposition* and *Triumph deposition*, as well as the *Stage*. To further clarify the purpose and function of these acts and terms, I will describe them in greater detail here below. It is however in sections 6 through 9 these terms and acts will be put into proper context and how they are applied to the archaeological and literary source material.

1.2 The Stage

The *Stage* is the first term used to describe the construction of mass graves, how they were created and where in the landscape they were created. The stage is the act, or part, that takes place after the end of an engagement, such as a battle, a skirmish or a massacre. This aftermath entails for example the rounding up survivors, the taking of prisoners, execution of prisoners and wounded as well as the collection of loot and war gear. The stage is then followed by the three deposition acts. The landscape part of the Stage is what tells us *where* in the landscape the mass grave or mass deposition is created and placed, and the importance of the location itself. Drama is also included into the Stage, detailing if any funeral rites or defiling/honoring practices of the dead can be distinguished at the site as well as the destruction and deposition of weapons. The Drama is then followed by the display that is meant to tell us is *how* and *where* the dead are arranged; if they are displayed in any fashion, if they are meant to be remembered or to be forgotten. The Stage is meant to represent and detail the process of how and where a mass grave or weapon deposition comes to be and how it is meant to be remembered.

1.3 The three acts of Deposition

In the mass grave material, two social identities of those laid to rest can be distinguished. These two identities are known in social psychology as the *Ingroup* and the *Outgroup* (see section 2). The Ingroup is the social unit that can be referred to as *Us*. It is these individuals we consider to belong to our group, sharing the same fundamental ideals or beliefs. The opposite identity is known as the *Outgroup*. This category includes individuals that are considered to stand outside of our shared group identity, to have conflicting or differing values, beliefs; i.e. individuals that can be referred to as *Them*. However, identities and how their members are identified is something that is determined on numerous factors; political, geographical, religious and social. It is therefore important to remember that group identities are always changing (Sociologyencyclopedia.com). In the creation of a mass grave, these two identities are vital and determine the characteristics of the mass grave itself.

The *Ingroup deposition act* describes how remains belonging to the Ingroup are treated and dealt with by others of the Ingroup i.e. commonly surviving brothers-in-arms or allies after an armed engagement or even family members. Simplified, the qualifications of an Ingroup deposition are as follows:

- An order and/or organization of the remains within in the mass grave.
- An obvious care shown to the remains; no looting or defiling.
- Conformity to standard burial practices. I.e. Cremation or inhumation.
- A central location of the mass grave or monument, i.e. near an administrative centre, settlement or construction of strategic importance.

The *Outgroup deposition act* describes the act in which the remains of one group is dealt with and deposited by another. Which of the two identities that takes what role depends on the viewpoint from which a scenario is told. In most cases it is the actors that we as spectators identify as the Ingroup that deals with the remains belonging to members of the Outgroup. For a deposition to qualify as an Outgroup deposition, it needs to meet the following requirements:

- A disorganization of the remains within the mass grave or deposition.
- An obvious carelessness and disrespect shown to the remains.
- A deviation from standard burial practices.
- Obvious signs of looting.
- A peripheral but not necessarily an anonymous location in the landscape.

The *Triumph deposition act* is a part as well as a continuation of one of the aforementioned acts, with the addition of a votive deposition event in which war gear is destroyed and deposited. The *Triumph* was a Roman tradition after a successful campaign where the loot, and sometimes the leader of a vanquished tribe, was taken to Rome to be put on display, destroyed, distributed or taken as trophies (Britannica.com). Paulus Orosius and Jordanes (see section 4) tell us about a similar tradition found among the Germani and the Goths, a tradition that entails the destruction and deposition of weapons and loot in wetlands as a sacrifice to the gods of war. In this thesis, wetland deposits; the Triumph deposition acts, are a form of mass graves in which not only the war gear of the vanquished are deposited, but also the essence of those defeated. Important to note here is that the name and practices of this act during the first five centuries AD, is merely inspired by its Roman counterpart, not based upon it. The Hjortspring find, dated to ca 350BC (Ne.se; Hortspringfyndet) shows us that this practice was present in Germanic culture while the Roman Republic was young. Requirements and qualifications of a Triumph deposition act are as follows:

- The presence of war related materiel; weapons, shields or armor.
- Burning, breaking and/or destruction of said war materiel before deposition.
- Votive deposition; the war gear is not meant to be retrieved.

1.4 Focus and limitations

War is not the only event or situation in which casualties comes to be. Natural disasters, accidents, tragedies, famine, sickness and disease have all been actors through history and have caused the deaths of countless millions. However, the main focus in this thesis is the large scale depositions of dead and gear in mass graves and wetland sacrifices as a result of war and aggression in its various forms during the Iron Age and the Middle Ages. I will not study or discuss the mass graves and deposits of war materiel from modern times and warfare, nor from the gruesome mass murders and genocides that have taken place in the last centuries of our history.

The focus when it comes to time and place are as mentioned the northern European continents during the Iron Age (ca 500BC-1050AD) and the Middle Ages (ca 1050 AD-1520 AD). This is in order to get an overview and an understanding of the development of the mass grave practice. The subject of Scandinavian weapon graves will briefly be addressed below, but not included nor further discussed in this thesis. Regarding the source materials of votive deposition sites, especially the south Scandinavian wetlands; I will only incorporate a small part of the immense archaeological material and theory about wetland depositions. Dry land depositions at for instance Uppåkra in Sweden and Sorte Muld on Bornholm, will be mentioned but otherwise largely omitted. More extensive research and connection between mass graves and these dry and wetland deposits will be conducted in future work.

1.5 Research history and terminology

The main focus in the academic world in the research of mass graves has primarily been on modern mass graves. The Holocaust, the mass murders of Srebrenica, civilian mass graves as a result of the South American drug wars, the mass graves during the Chinese communist regime and the wars and atrocities of the Middle East are just a few events that has yielded an immense mass grave material. To this we can also add the African genocides; the mass murders and civil wars of Rwanda, Somalia and Liberia. Much of the focus has also been put into defining the term itself since it is applied to a wide variety of burials. This becomes complicated in the regard of archaeology, since it is primarily applied to modern mass graves as a result of war, war crimes, natural disasters and disease. Several proposals and attempts on forming a single definition on what a mass grave is have been attempted but no real consensus has been reached. One definition is that a mass grave is a burial that contains at least two individuals that makes physical contact. Another is that a mass grave contains a minimum of two individuals, both sharing a common background of death and reason of deposition or burial (Juhl 2005, 15). These definitions however can also include burial phenomena such as common burials or dual burials containing more than one individual, as well as secondary burials, not necessarily connected to any form of war, accident or disease.

A third definition proposed by Jonas Holm Jæger (2013) has a minimum requirement of three individuals, deposited in an already existing cavity or on the surface and then covered with dirt or rubble. The contents, in order to qualify as a mass grave, should be defined as

unorganized and chaotic (Jæger 2013, 2). This means however, that Holms proposed definition would rule out the mass graves I claim to be a result of an *Ingroup deposition act*, since these cannot be defined as unorganized or chaotic. Although the term *mass grave* already has a clear meaning to a reader but lacks a clear definition, I will not try to create a new definition of the term. Instead, whenever I use the terms *mass deposition* and *mass grave*, I will only refer to the site where a number of individuals have been placed as a result of violence or aggression. I will also use these terms when referring to the war gear deposited at a particular site, since I argue that deposited war materiel and those killed during battle are connected and should therefore be treated as such.

1.6 Academics

Of those mass graves that have been found and excavated, very little research has been done on the social identity of the human remains, or the creation, position, function or purpose of the mass grave. Instead, more focus has been put into researching the health and status of the individuals within the mass graves, evidence of skeletal trauma and possible weapons and armors used, their origin as well as DNA. In short; Focus has been put into putting a face on the individuals found and to the event itself, to make it more real, personal and connect it to our modern situation and history. The Swedish mass grave material from the Battle of Good Friday and the mass grave encountered at the church of S:t Laurence in Sigtuna, has been analyzed and discussed by Anna Kjellström (2005). Here, focus has been placed on skeletal trauma and the condition of the bone material itself. And although results from the excavations are unpublished at this time, other than press releases in media, Sandby Borg (Sandby ring fort) on Öland has shown us to hold a darker secret yet. Under the management of Helena Victor at Kalmar County Museum, the excavations followed after a survey in 2010 which revealed a series of jewelry deposits containing gilded relief brooches. What the excavations also revealed were the more or less articulated skeletons of several males, several showing signs of sharp force trauma. Remains from several other individuals have been encountered; finds that show signs of a massacre taking place within the fort, and where the victims have been left where they fell.

Bengt Thordeman (1931) wrote extensively about the mass graves at Korsbetningen, Gotland, Sweden, from the Battle of Visby 1361. He also researched in detail the political situation and background of the battle, performance of the soldiers participating, the health and skeletal status of the individuals as well as their origins. He also investigated the use and typology of the few weapons and pieces of armor used in the battle, some found with the deposited remains in the mass graves. Similar to the Battle of Wisby, the unearthed mass grave from the Battle of Towton in 1461, England, have gone through the same process; finding and examining the individuals behind the suits of armor, their origin, the trauma they had suffered and so on, as well as the political climate and situation of the War of the Roses, of which Towton was one of its many battles. Timothy Sutherland (2009) is just one of several researchers that have been working with the mass grave of Towton.

In 2009, during a series of road constructions before the Olympic games in England, a mass grave was discovered. It would later be called The Ridgeway Hill Burial Pit, contained several skulls and bodies lying separate from each other, and soon, arguments and discussion of the origins of these bodies ran hot. Together with the recently discovered mass grave in Oxford, England, both mass graves were first linked to the so called St Brice-days massacre of 1002, and that both mass graves contained *Vikings*. Together with historical, written records, radiocarbon dating, different isotope tests, their origin were traced to Scandinavia and are dated to the Viking Age. This of course sparked a new debate of the Vikings involvement and incursions into Anglo-Saxon Britain and the clashes between the British and the Vikings.

Illerup, Nydam, Ejsbøl, Torsbjerg, Vimose and Skedemosse are six of more than 25 separate wetland depositional sites that have received deeper focus. The foremost mentioned, with its four massive weapon deposits, Illerup A-D of the Illerup River Valley in Denmark, is one of the most well documented wetland depositions and has given us a deeper insight into the war machine and society of the Roman Iron Age in Scandinavia. Here, Jørgen Ilkjaer has done extensive research. What these wetland deposit sites have offered us are not only insight into the Iron Age society itself, but also of the composition and division of the rank-and-file. The findings of shield bosses with gold and silver inlay, some shield bosses of bronze, and what appears to be the standard material; iron, has shown us that the early armies consisted not only of common warriors and foot soldiers, but also of officers and commanders/NCOs.

These wetland depositions, and in some cases; depositions on dry land, have in contrast with mass graves, opened up the field of drama and the discussion about cult activity taking place in and around these depositional sites. And in recent years, the newly found mass grave/mass deposition site of Alken Enge has further shed light onto the gruesome practice of the Germani warfare and post battle practices. The largest war offering site in Sweden is Skedemosse. Based off Ulf Hagbergs work (1967), Anne Monikander wrote in her dissertation (2010) about the cult conducted at the bog Skedemosse in Sweden. The depositions themselves as well as the cult around them has also been discussed by Xenia Pauli Jensen (2009), but also by Peter Lindbom (2006), in his work about weapons and warfare during the Iron Age. Extensively about Iron Age warfare has also been written by Ingrid Ystgård (2013), in her dissertation *Krigens Praxis* (The praxis of war), which gives us an important anthropological view and nature of warfare.

1.7 Bogs and weapon deposits

Although the main focus of this thesis are mass graves located in dry land, I argue that some wetland deposit sites, more specifically those containing war materiel, constitute a form of mass grave, thereby meriting an overview in order to be properly discussed further on in this thesis. The tradition of votive wetland deposits has been practiced in Scandinavia since the Neolithic, and the findings of pottery, food and animal bones are believed to be connected to various fertility cults and religions (Jensen 2009, 55). These fertility cult practices, though likely with varying deities, are practiced up until the end of the Iron Age. From the cross periodical perspective is the practice of depositing War gear, i.e. weapons and materiel

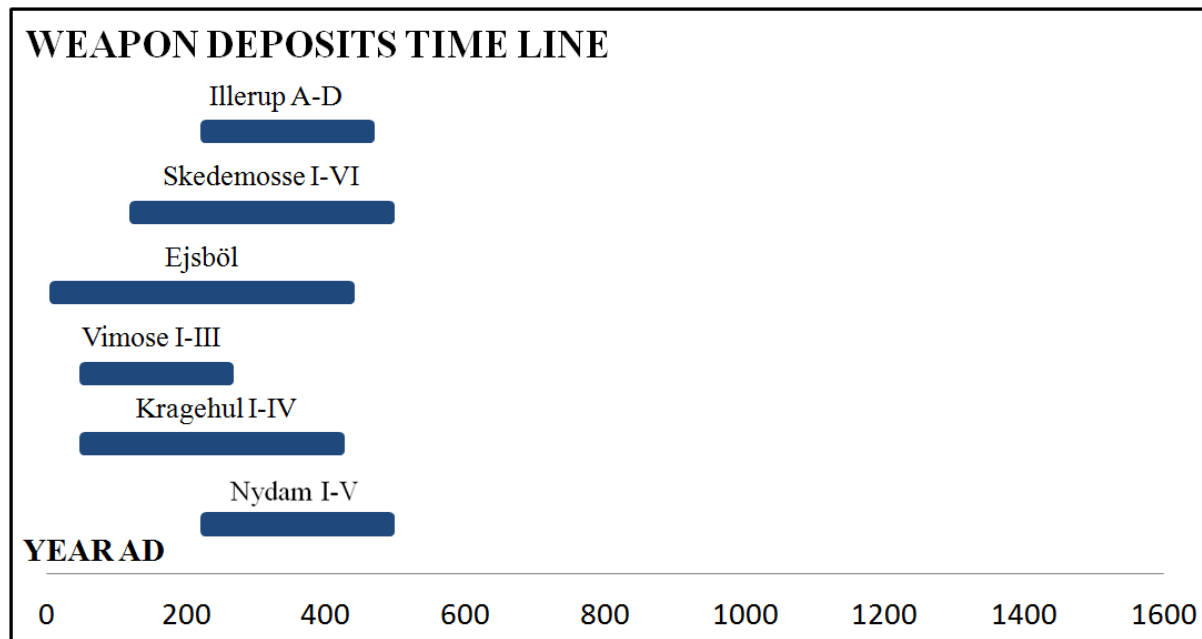
connected to warfare. Materiel such as these is scarce during the Neolithic and Bronze Age, but flourishes during the Iron Age. Today, more than 25 different wetland sites have been recorded, containing large caches of deposited weapons. The purpose of these depositions is believed to be the remains of a defeated intruding army or an army beaten at home. It is also believed that the weapons are conquered loot from campaigns brought hope for destruction and deposition (Lindbom 2006, 191). Lindbom also points out that another reason for the extensive deposited weapons caches in Denmark, apart from destroying loot as a tribute, was the strife for control of weapons and violence. The highly standardized nature and morphology of the weapons would suggest that the weapons were created and distributed by specific agents, and were returned after use, much similar to the Roman war machine. In order to prevent the wrong individuals to get a hold of weapons, there had to be a strict control of these weapons, and destroying the enemy's weapons is thereby an effective method of maintaining control (Lindbom 2006, 191).

The first depositions in wetlands can be dated back as far as the last centuries BC, such as the cache at Hjortspring, Denmark (Lindbom 2006, 179). However, most are dated to the period between the 1st century and the 6th and 7th century AD before ceasing. These weapon depositions are carried out parallel to the fertility depositions and practices in the bogs. Many occur at the same sites, while some bog offering sites are used specifically for weapons and little else. The earliest of these weapon deposits can be found in Denmark, and among the earliest sites, we find Vimose on the island of Funen and Ejsbøl on southern Jutland. The first deposition found in the Vimose wetland, known as Vimose 0, consists of 12 spearheads and a single edged sword. Similar in size is the first Ejsbøl find, consisting of a few spearheads and shield bosses. Both of these depositions are dated to the time of the birth of Christ, but in regard to their size and characteristics, they have not been connected to the later weapon deposits that are greater in scale. Instead, it is possible that they represent the result of a small scale variant and intensity of warfare, or even a local engagement with fewer participants than what we encounter later (Jensen 2009, 58). It is also possible that these smaller, earlier deposits only makes out a fraction of the loot; that after a battle, the victors divided the spoils deposited them in separate locations (Jensen 2009, 59).

Parallel with the wetland deposits of weapons, we find dry land depositions. The first deposits, followed by several more, appear from ca 200 AD at central sites and settlements connected with trade and workshops; Gudme and Sortemuldbornholm in Denmark and Uppåkra in Sweden being the three most well known. Consistent with other weapon deposits, the weapons themselves have been destroyed; most commonly different spear types. In Uppåkra, these depositions have been uncovered near that which has been interpreted as sacred ground near a cult building, while in Sorte Muld, the depositions have been found at the same site as numerous gold foil figures (Jensen 2009, 61). Common for the larger weapon depositions is that they contain hundreds, if not even thousands of weapons, as well as large numbers of shield bosses. Remains of armor are scarce, but some remains have been recovered at a few sites, such as Illerup, and the famous chainmail and helmet from Vimose.

Common for the weapons is that they have been destroyed in a ritualistic, standardized fashion, with most of them either bent out of shape or broken. The more well known sites where large caches of deposited weapons are the following (Lindbom 2006, 178):

- Illerup A-D: 200-450 AD
- Skedemosse I-VI: 100-400/500 AD
- Nydam I-V: 200-450/500 AD
- Vimose I-III: Ca 70-250 AD
- Ejsbøl: 0-450 AD
- Kragehul I-IV: 70-400



Graph 1:2. The distribution and timeline of the six wetland deposition sites. Created by Mattias Frisk 2014.

The morphology of the various weapons has shown that the Scandinavian tribes and states had extensive contacts with the Roman Empire. These contacts are not only shown in the archaeological material, but are also noticed in Roman literary sources. It is during the 4th century AD the Roman writer Flavius Vegetius writes *De Re Militari*; a treatise about the ideal composition and utilization of the Roman army. In it, Vegetius notes how it is diluted the army is with foreign auxiliary forces, and how barbaric and unsophisticated, though effective, these auxiliaries fight in comparison with the Roman ideal that is the heavy infantry (Mads 2001). But not only did Scandinavians and other groups fight as mercenaries in the Roman auxiliaries, but they also adopted both knowledge and tactics from the Roman army which they later utilized in the war at home (Lindbom 2006, 187). It is believed that some of the weapons belonged to various Scandinavian states and factions that waged war on each other. What we for instance can see among the deposited weapons of Ejsbøl depositions, is that a likely invasion attempt from the Mälärvalley region in central Scandinavia was carried out but was repelled (Lindbom 2006, 190). A similar act of aggression can be traced in the deposited weapons of Illerup, weapons and items claimed to be Norwegian in origin (Lindbom 2006, 188).

During the 6th and 7th century we see a decline of the deposition of vast weapon caches and the introduction of single-weapon deposits. The last deposition at Vimose consists of a seax; a single edged sword, and is part of a new practice that continues through the Vendel period and Viking Age where weapons are sacrificed in the same context as bridges and/or roads (Jensen 2009, 60). The reason for the shift from huge weapon deposits to single weapon contexts is unknown, but the Vendel period itself not only marks the beginning of a new time, a time of high status individuals and burials, but also of low intensity endemic warfare.

1.8 The weapon grave phenomena

The standard form of burial throughout the Iron Age in Scandinavia is by cremation of the body followed by a memorial in the form of a stone setting or mound. Only a small portion of the Scandinavians was interred instead of being cremated, such as in chamber graves or a boat graves. Interring a body becomes more of a standard practice as the Iron Age shifts into the Middle Ages and Christianity becomes the standard religion. However, a phenomenon in the archeological burial contexts during the Iron Age that needs addressing is what is commonly referred to as *weapon graves*. In contrast to a common grave, a weapon grave is a burial form that contains weapons, usually rendered useless by bending or breaking them (Stylegar 2011, 221). Apart from the weapon, war gear is also commonly found with the owner. Remains of an owner is however not always present, and in several weapon graves, both containing a singular weapon, or several, no remains of any owner have been found (Stylegar 2011, 227). In some instances, enough weapons to supply a smaller unit have been uncovered on grave fields (Herschend 2009, 337). Traditionally, these weapons are buried on cemeteries, either in connection with a grave or in a bundle, and have been destroyed (Jensen 2009, 60). The context in which these weapons are found during the Viking Age; without their owner(s), they are believed to have been destroyed and deposited ritually.

During the same time we find numerous miniature weapons and amulets of weapons, showing us that the weapon as a symbol was important, even in everyday life (Pedersen 2008, 208). But if we compare the scale of warfare during the Viking Age to the first five centuries AD, we find the scale of warfare to be very similar. As we can see in both sagas and in material culture, many practices from the first centuries are recurring during the Viking Age. This reoccurrence can be seen in the several weapon depositions and weapon graves dating to the Viking Age, indicating that although far smaller in scale, the weapon deposition practice sees a brief renaissance during the Viking Age (Pedersen 2014). If we look at some of the weapon graves where we also find remains of the weapons owner, we find a wide variety in status. Some weapon graves have been richly furnished while others are simpler in nature, and are commonly dated throughout the Scandinavian Iron Age. The earliest weapon graves appear in Denmark and in the south-eastern Norway in the last century BC, but are practiced throughout Scandinavia up until the first millennium AD (Stylegar 2011, 217).

In opposite to the standard form of graves, weapon graves are quite uncommon and in some instances and regions only seem to appear once or twice every generation, while being more common in other regions. What they are generally assumed to represent are the members of

the warrior and soldiers social strata of the Iron Age society. It is also assumed that the grave itself and the weapons can show differences in rank and status among these men themselves (Pedersen 2008, 205). This division of rank within the weapon burials; commanders, officers and common soldiers, can also be distinguished with many similarities in the wetland deposit material. Little appears to have been investigated regarding the cause of death of these individuals, but what their graves can tell us are that the warriors' caste of the Iron Age society, throughout Europe, was prominent and gives us an indication of the warlike state that Europe was in during the Iron Age (Stylegar 2011, 227).

2 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

2.1 Soldaten, and the psychology of violence

Aside from the research on the artifacts from mass graves and deposit sites, very little research has been put into the use of violence or the social and psychological mechanisms behind the creation of the mass graves. Social psychology and the science regarding mass violence has, as mentioned above, instead been applied to cases regarding the Holocaust, genocides, war criminals and war crime tribunals, i.e. on modern and contemporary cases. I however argue that social psychology and the social mechanisms and culture plays a vital part in the backdrops of the various ways of setting a stage; what leads up to the creation of a mass grave and its characteristics, especially in the case of the Iron Age and Medieval case studies presented in this thesis.

In the book *Soldaten* (2011), written and compiled by Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer we get an insight into the mind of the Wehrmacht soldier during World War 2. In this book, the authors have compiled a series of statements and recordings from German POW's, both during and after the 2nd World War. The prisoners themselves were unaware of that everything they said and shared with their cellmate was recorded. This in turn revealed stories and secrets that would never be revealed in an interrogation room. And what they actually reveal to each other is as mentioned, a previous unknown side of the common German soldier. Personally, I consider this to be an important piece in understanding the frame of reference when it comes to violence against others, even further back in our history. What Neitzel and Welzer present and discuss, and what is relevant to this thesis, can be divided into three aspects, which are described in greater detail below.

2.2 A frame of reference to violence

One could imagine that the violence and horrors of war should brutalize any participant, turning them numb to violence, allowing the brutalized soldiers to take on and to perform even more violent acts during battle. This though, is only the case when not taking the soldiers frame of reference for violence into account. Civilian and soldier alike during the 1930s and 1940s had quite the different view regarding violence and killing than for instance present day Swedes. Violence was during this time a standard part of a person's upbringing in

the Weimar republic. Physical punishments and beatings at home, at school or at the workplace were not only normal but also encouraged in order to properly raise a child.

At political rallies and events, violence often ensued when different political groups clashed with one another (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 52). Also add the fact that World War 1 ended 21 years before the outbreak of World War 2, meaning that memories and repercussions of the war was still fresh in the collective memory, and that many veterans from the First World War would help to lay the foundation for the coming generation and help create the state that would lead them into the second war. In other words, violence was already a firmly rooted component of society. Society itself plays an important role to help form its citizens with norms and rules, and exposing them to violence from an early age thereby, in a way, prepared them for the horrors of war (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 50-53).

Social psychologists have shown time and time again that ideology plays a small part in the forming of society. It might help to guide how a society will develop, as well as its norms and functions. Ideology can also be what leads a state into war but it plays a small part when it comes to the common person (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 238). As I will present further below in the section of warfare throughout the Iron Age, we can see that violence is an intricate part of society, and this is something that can be found throughout history. A country not actively participating or experiencing violence other than on a low scale; war, aggression and violence in other large scale forms would of course appear as something aberrant. But for a society where it is already rooted, and where it is expected of its soldiers, it is not considered aberrant, and must therefore not be treated as such.

What also is important here is to establish the role of the leader and the role of the soldier. In order to uphold a society in conflict, at war or actively engaging in violent acts, a strong leader is required. To this, soldiers or warriors need to be ensured that what they are doing is right, something that can only be accomplished by a strong leader. During the time of the Weimar republic, Germany was a broken nation, but it was also a nation in a deep economic depression. With the introduction of National Socialism, times changed. By claiming that their previous leaders during the First World War had failed them and thereby lost them the war and by placing blame on other ethnic groups, promoting German superiority and getting the people itself to rebuild the nation anew; to create a Reich together, Germany got back on its feet by the help of its leader, Adolf Hitler. His quick rise to power, as well as the quick advances and victories in the beginning of World War 2, made Hitler an almost semi-religious character who demanded the total trust and sacrifice of the people of the Third Reich (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 187-188). Hitler is of course not the only leader in modern history to achieve this, neither is it difficult to find similar characters of power throughout history; e.g. Ramses II, Akhenaton, Alexander III, Xerxes I and Julius Caesar and his Successor Octavian. Neither is it difficult to find traces of this power and ability in the sagas and accounts of the Iron Age chieftains and warlords or kings of the Middle Ages. The role of a leader with an almost divine or supernatural origin and support is essential in times of violence as well as the trust placed in him to lead his followers, as well as that he is able to lead them to victory. This also brings us onto the next factor of war and violence.

2.3 The promoting of merit and action

To help the process between the leader and his soldiers, no matter if the leader is the head of the state, a general or a squad leader, the duties of a subject needs to be fulfilled. After all, serving as a soldier or as a warrior is nothing more than a job, a profession; it has specific qualifications, demands the completion of a task and an end result. Not only is a good job, the accomplishment of a task or service demanded from a soldier, but it must also be rewarded in order to further ensure that it is performed and is considered correct. To maintain the idea of what a soldier or warrior is doing is right, is fundamental and it falls to the leader to promote the actions of soldiers and warriors in various ways (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 238). Service not only merits an income, but exceptional performance and service merits ranks and commendations, such as medals and badges. Commendations have been awarded to soldiers throughout modern history and World War 2 was not an exception. During World War 2 however, the German war machine saw a renaissance of new medals and badges. During the previous wars, some awards had been reserved to a select few, often depending on their status and rank. Now however, status and rank rarely mattered and every fighting man was eligible for any form of commendation. Several new commendations of varying degrees and status were introduced and were awarded to soldiers for showing bravery, service in specific theatres or battles as well as feats on the battlefield itself (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 277). Killing and bravery was glorified, not only in the army, but at home as well. This new influence with commendations and demands also brought with it a social pressure; to be awarded a commendation for feats in battle merited social privileges in civilian life, and to return home without any commendation was a terrible social stigma.

In the Sagas, there is a clear focus on the acts of war and violence, the bravery and courage shown in war and combat as well as the focus revolving around the death scenes of the various characters. The warrior culture of the Iron Age bear many similarities with the one Neitzel discusses in glorifying and awarding those who distinguish themselves in combat, but also the social need and pressure to do just that. From the Iron Age, we find stories and accounts regarding the use of bracteates as medals, the giving of rings, weapons, armor and treasure to warriors that have proven themselves in battle and on raids in order to ensure future loyalty and service (Ystgård 2014, 45-46).

2.4 Us and Them

Earlier in this thesis the terms *Ingroup* and *Outgroup* and their function was explained, although briefly. It is in *Soldaten* we encounter them once again, this time in a World War 2 context. The separation and diffusion among people of different political ideologies and ethnicities are an important factor along with the frame of reference for violence when discussing the use and reason for the three acts, as well as the setting of the stage in this thesis. During the greater part of the 19th and 20th century, eugenics, phrenology and the *science* of the human races; their inferiority to the Germanic, Aryan master race was considered to be true and entirely based in science (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 32-35).

This also laid the foundation for the separation and creation of the specific groups, or social identities *Us* and *Them*. Deciding on who belongs to which identity has been done time and time again throughout our history, and the case in Germany or any other country during World War 2 was no exception. Important to note that the frame of reference regarding these identities are always changing, but what we see in Soldaten, is that the Ingroup is played by the German people and the German soldiers and allies. The Outgroup on the other hand is played by the Communist or British soldiers, as well as the partisans, soldiers and civilian of the various occupied countries.

It is this distinction between these two prime identities that plays a vital part in the job a soldier or warrior has; killing. In World War 2 Germany, other ethnicities, other *species*, were considered to be inferior to the German *race*, they were considered to be sub-human. The same principle goes for opposing ideologies; Communism was for instance considered to be the enemy of the German way of life. To provide these characteristics or merits of a *dangerous* or conflicting ideology or race, propaganda was used. Propaganda conveyed through all forms of media played a vital part during the 1930s-1940s and was used to mock, dehumanize, accuse and to demonize enemy soldiers, races and ideologies, firmly rooting them in German society (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 27-34). Here, there was a clear distinction on who belonged to what identity, why they did and how they were to be treated if encountered.

In several of the recordings Neitzel presents to us, German soldiers appear to put little thought into the execution and massacre of Russian soldiers, civilians or partisans. The reasons for this are because that these individuals are members of the Outgroup, they belong to *them*. The Outgroup which these people belong to is placed so far off in the German soldiers frame of reference, so far from their own Ingroup, that the killing of one or several members of the Outgroups not only an act that is considered good, it is also demanded. The German soldiers are not only killing enemy soldiers, they are killing and massacring inferior sub-humans and the Germans are defending their own values and way of life. They are doing their duty (Neitzel & Welzer 2011, 238-241).

Adapting these theories to an Iron Age setting does not take us that far away from the situation that Neitzel describes in Soldaten. As will be discussed further below, we learn that the Scandinavian Iron Age and Middle Ages were unstable and war was a constant part of life, culture and society. The frame of reference when it comes to killing was therefore likely well established. Like the situation during World War 2, killing was not only required in order to defend oneself, but it demanded it. The prominent warrior cultures of the Iron Age and Middle Ages shows us that killing was an important part of society, that it was not only demanded, but also heavily promoted. This walkthrough of the aspects presented in Soldaten also leaves me with the conclusion that the various Iron Age peoples had a clear and firmly rooted frame of reference of who belonged to the Ingroup and who belonged to the Outgroup. It is also important to note that the ones who played these parts were not set in stone, but ever shifting. As history went on and times changed, new alliances were made and the political climate changed, so did the members of these identities.

3 A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE

3.1 A brief look on the history of violence in Scandinavia

The process and evolution of warfare throughout the Iron Age and Middle Ages is a factor that must be taken into account in order to help giving a complete picture of how and why mass graves are created. In many ways, warfare in Scandinavia during prehistory was conducted at a low, endemic scale. This means that skirmishes or clashes of armies at battlefields were not only rare, but would also have traumatic repercussions for the Scandinavian society. Dozens or even hundreds of dead and wounded after a battle would create a void in the population of a parish or region, affecting labor, viability as well as the ability to protect a community. What we learn from medieval accounts of battles is that an estimated 30% loss of men on the losing side, sometimes even upwards 50%, would merit a crushing defeat. In comparison, what we see in the archaeological material from both the Iron Age and the Middle Ages, as well as written records, shows us that the size of warring units vary from only a few dozen fighters, upwards several thousands (Mortimer 2011, 189). Below is a brief overview on the use and scale of warfare in Scandinavia, beginning during the Roman Iron Age and continues to the 16th century.

3.2 Warfare during the years 0-550 AD

The welfare and climate in Scandinavia during the Roman Iron Age and Migration Period (ca 0-550 AD) brought with it a demographic surplus, a surplus that brought with it a social pressure. This not only means that there were increased demands on resources and arable lands, but also available manpower to send away on expeditions. The import of Solidus coins during the Migration Period, as well as luxury items from the Roman Empire suggests that war and trading was very lucrative ways of life (Fischer 2011, 193). More and more frequent, war bands and groups of warriors would travel down to the unruly Central and Southern Europe to offer their services as mercenaries, returning with wealth and battlefield knowledge and experience. These unruly times initiated the construction of the numerous *fornborgar*; ring forts. Commonly built in defensible locations, the purpose of these ring forts is believed to serve as fortified villages for the people of a specific area, as well as both an important culture site and administrative centre (Erlandsson 2010, 20-23; Herschend 2009, 362). The construction of these forts shows us that there was a domestic need for protection and shelter, and the numerous weapon deposits shows that violence of varying degree was common.

In the 5th century, Europe is invaded by Huns from Asia, effectively triggering the Migration Period. This unruly period is now followed with Germanic tribes crossing the Rhine, Danube and Elbe and into the Roman Empire; events that eventually leads to the downfall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD. In Scandinavia, this surplus mentioned allowed the numerous Scandinavian chiefdoms to expand and compete with one another. Goods and luxury items taken home from the continent came to play an important factor in the power play and gift giving culture of the Scandinavian chiefdoms (Ystgård 2014, 45-46).

During the early Scandinavian Iron Age, the sizes of warring armies appear to be large in scale. The Roman Empire was able to muster vast armies; legions numbering in the tens of thousands, consisting of both citizens and auxiliary forces, but also as the enemies of Rome. The weapon deposits of several Scandinavian bogs show us that weapons were created and shaped in a very standardized way, indicating a system consisting of soldiers as well as officers; a system highly influenced by the Roman war machine (Ystgård 2014, 255). Shield bosses of bronze and silver as well as horse gear, gives us a hint of the division of the Scandinavian armies (Ystgård 2014, 64). The amount of weapons deposited in the bogs proves that considerable numbers of soldiers could be mustered, numbering between several hundred up to ca 1500 (Mortimer 2011, 190).

During this time, not counting the battles taking place in and around the Roman Empire, battles between armies also took place in Scandinavia. The bog deposits of Denmark alone prove that more than fifty great clashes, clashes involving a few thousand soldiers, occurred every decade or so (Mortimer 2011, 189). Compared to the later part of the Iron Age however, it would appear that ideals were not centered on heroes or warriors, but instead centers on ideals and war itself. It is the weapons, the loot, the achievements and the feats on the battlefield that is of importance; Scandinavian soldiers are used tools of war to achieve a strategic goal, much like their Roman counterparts (Carey 2012, 4-7). The soldiers themselves much remain faceless. What makes this part of the Iron Age and all the evidence of violence important is because that this is likely the time when parts of Scandinavia cross the *military threshold*. This threshold marks the point where a state or society dedicates and apparent share of its resources for military purposes (Levy, Jack S & Williams, Thompson R 2011, 23).

3.3 Warfare during the years 550-800 AD

The shift from the Migration Period into the Vendel period (ca 550-800 AD), is symbolized by a period of decline in climate, but also what appears to be a shift in ownership of land, culture and change in burial practices. The weather anomalies of 535-536 AD likely brought with it a drop in temperature, leading to a colder climate and famine. Great amounts of votive sacrifices of gold in wetlands throughout Scandinavia have been connected to this event (Ystgård 2014, 52. Axboe 2009). The famine, and the following Plague of Justinian a few years after, put a stop for the mercenaries' activities in Europe. The gift giving culture was still in practice and just as important as ever, but since there was no longer a domestic demographical surplus. This diminished the ability to send people on expeditions abroad in order to claim riches and wealth, and expeditions were instead conducted at a domestic, low scale. However, there was still a need for goods and gifts, as was as the quest for status and influence that it brought with it. Now, a kleptocratic society with its roots in the Migration period, blossoms. With generations of mercenaries before them, the influx of tactical expertise and knowledge, as well as fighting expertise, was retained. Instead of fighting as mercenaries in the Roman auxiliary forces, chieftains, warlords and warriors now instead targets each other in a more intense frequency than before in order to claim dominance, resources as well as goods and luxury items (Fischer 2003, 56). And with the lower scale of fighting and violence, we see a lower number of casualties.

What we also see during the Vendel period is that the use of ring forts declines during the 7th century, and many ring forts are abandoned (Herschend 2009, 271) as the violence of Vendel period shifts from large scale battlefields and becomes more endemic (Hedenstierna 2009, 14). A ring fort is best defended when enough manpower is available, but as the size of warring units decrease, the ring forts become more and more difficult to defend. Instead, new sites for war and power are utilized; the Hall buildings, the prime symbols of status, strength and power of the Vendel period (Mortimer 2011, 181). Warring units now consist of bands of warriors instead of armies with soldiers, and these warriors serve in exchange of loot and gifts awarded to them by their warlord or chieftain. Although in the sagas we are told of a few greater battles during this time, e.g. the battle of Finnsburg battles involving a great number of warriors. This is also the reason why they are told of in the sagas; due to their size and scale.

The time of the faceless soldier of the early Iron Age has passed and it is now we see that a new form of warrior culture is born; a culture that focus on the bravery and feats of the individual warriors. The famous high status helmets from Vendel and Valsgärde, just north of Uppsala, Sweden, shows us that war and warrior culture was heavily promoted and was a deeply rooted part of life and society during the mid part of the Iron Age. The helmet itself had been, and would continue to be, a symbol of power and status for hundreds of years to come. The helmets from Vendel and Valsgärde, adorned with semi-mythological figures and imagery, are no exceptions (Frisk 2012). As stated, the need for status, to gain renown and the exchange of goods and gifts was still an important cog and part of society. But apart from the more peaceful way of gaining these items by trading; it is through war, raiding, shows of strength and bravery these items and actions were gained and expressed. In many ways, the new kleptocratic form of society turns the Vendel period into an archaeological void, where we more often than not only find the top of the social pyramid; the elite; the ruling caste and top warrior strata. It is their high status graves and mounds, gilded weapons, horse equipment and luxury goods we find (Ystgård 2014, 263). It is likely that the parts of Scandinavia saw a great change in society where only allowed people of certain status or owned land were entitled to certain forms of burial. It is also during this time we see the abandonment of the chamber grave in Sweden and introduction of the high status boat grave.

3.4 Warfare during the years 800-1050 AD

From the Vendel Period, the warrior culture of the Viking Age (ca AD 800-1050) blooms. It is also during the Viking Age the scale of warfare and the size of warring units increase. Kings and chieftains unite and expand regions, allowing them to prosper and expand further, and soon also allowing them to shift focus outwards. The end of the Viking Age is very similar to the Vendel Period. The culture of exchanging gifts and goods as well as the quest for status and renown is still an important and a prominent part of the societal function. Domestic war, disputes, unrest and power struggles are still common, but it is during this time the Scandinavians once again gains the ability to send people on expeditions abroad in greater scale and frequency. The Viking Age is characterized by a rapid expansion by the Scandinavian territories through colonization, trade and raids (Harrison 2009, 92).

Domestic political pressure and demographic increase, as well as technological advances in boat building and metallurgy makes it possible for professional warriors, but also more and more people from all levels of the social strata, to join these expeditions and to become “Vikings”. These trading and raiding expeditions offered warriors a chance to distinguish themselves abroad by risking their lives to earn a part of the plunder and thralls from a successful raid. To make risky and long journeys in order to trade goods for luxury items and to return home wealthy and with status and honor was important (Hedenstierna 2009, 53). Though smaller raiding parties and bands of raiders, consisting of a few dozen warriors upwards a few hundred was standard, there are accounts of vast armies of professional warriors, even soldiers, fighting together during massive raids or invasion attempts. Examples of these are the large scale raids and invasions of England in the 10th and 11th century, as well as the campaigns in France in the 9th and 10th centuries. This increase also brings with it increased administrative requirements and we see the construction of several fortifications, such as the Trelleborgs in Denmark and the garrison at Birka (Hedenstierna 2006, 48-52, Lynnerup *et al* 2010, 478). Their primary function was to function as a garrison and house soldier, but also held administrative functions. However, as kings and rulers around Europe united, forming new kingdoms and alliances under the banner of Christianity, conditions for the Scandinavians changed. Europe, that previously lay open and vulnerable to the raids and settling expeditions of the Scandinavians, now become stronger and united. And now, Christianity makes its real push into Scandinavia, introducing new ideas, systems and cultural influences (Harrison 2009, 135).

3.5 Warfare during the years 1050-1550 AD

Along with the slow but steady rise of the state and the increased foothold of Christianity, more and more regions of Scandinavia became united. As the influence of the church, as well as the kings became more powerful, society itself formed into the feudal form and system of ruling. During his reign, Birger Jarl and his sons Valdemar and Magnus “Barnlock” laid much of the foundation of the state formation (Harrison 2009, 254). What they also laid the foundation of is a new generation of fortifications; the medieval castles, walled cities and defense churches, inspired and influenced by European fortifications. Contrary to the Iron Age ring forts and garrisons, the strategic location of the medieval fortified sites are not only meant to provide protection, but also meant to provide dominance and control of an area in the means of war, taxes, tolls, administration and logistics. Control over these strategic positions meant that access to vital sites within a territory were choked off, forcing an invader to engage in battle with the garrison of a fortification before being able to continue (Harrison 2009, 356-360). Administration also included ties and increased influence of the Catholic Church, trading contacts with German Hansa trading towns as well as taxes and laws for the people of Sweden. The social ladder crystallized, with the kings and the aristocracy on the top. Towns and early cities are founded, churches and cathedrals are built, and more frequent contacts with European countries are assumed.

During the Middle Ages, Scandinavia sees a second wave of expansion; During the 12th and 13th century, Swedish campaigns were directed into modern day Finland and Russia, expanding and increasing the nation's borders, gaining dominance over much of the Baltic Sea (Harrison 2009, 219).

Up until the late 13th century, not much had changed since the Viking Age when it comes to warfare and technology. Much of Scandinavia still consisted of small kingdoms with peasant militia defending these, as well as a small number of professional warriors and soldiers. But as the battlefields now evolves from small and medium scale skirmishes, battles and raids into larger scale conflicts, the dependence of the militia is decreased. The strength of the militia much depended on the seasons, the sow and harvest (Nicholson 2004, 124). With the evolving battlefield, the militia is once again, and in greater scale, replaced with the professional soldier. It is during the 12th and 13th century we see the decline and disappearance of the war fleet (Harrison 2009, 285) and a new taxation system. Instead of demanding both taxes and support during war, the common people were now only demanded to pay taxes. Of course, laws dictated that if called upon, common men could be called into service.

Increased taxes meant that instead of summoning a fleet of militia men, tax money and goods could be spent on professional mercenaries and warboats, as well as building modern castles and forts. And although the mounted soldier was an important weapon system on the battlefield, the reformation of taxes and the army led to the birth of the professional mounted knight. This system built upon the principle that a nobleman or clergyman with enough wealth would be spared from taxation if he supplied his services to the king, as well as war horses and armaments (Harrison 2009, 397). Therefore, going to war became very profitable for the aristocracy in which they had the opportunity to take hostages and to loot, thereby increasing his family's political influence. Important to note here is that the knights and the mercenaries were important weapon systems in the war between states. Domestically however, and up until the 16th century, it is the peasant militia in Sweden and Denmark that plays part in internal power struggles, politics and disputes over taxes; as we can see in the Dacke war, the Engelbrekt rebellion, the battle of Brunkeberg and Uppsala. Although it is the great wars that have passed to the history books, the militia's role in the birth of the Scandinavian countries must not be forgotten.

Denmark had lost its foothold in England during the mid 11th century, but was still a formidable force and a constant opponent to Sweden. Land battles and the might of the mounted knight led to the struggle to control castles since these held important tactical function in the landscape, as well as an administrative function. As the Danish-Swedish border shifted during the 14th and 15th century, dominion (Sundberg 2010, 293) of the Baltic Sea was claimed by Denmark, now ruling it unchallenged up until the 16th century. Parallel to the events of Scandinavia, several wars ravage Europe. To mention a few; between 1096 and 1285, nine Crusades are fought for control of the Holy Land. During the 13th century, Scotland fights for its independence and during the 14th-15th century, England and France are locked in the Hundred years war (Sundberg 2010, 282). In ca 1350, the Black Death ravages the world, as well as Scandinavia, decimating its population.

With the treaty of the Kalmar Union in 1397, Scandinavia stabilizes until the 16th century and the war effort is instead focused to stop the influence of the Hansa trading organization. In Scandinavia however, as mentioned, between the wars over influence in the Baltic Sea; domestic feuds and wars are fought over the high taxes demanded to fund the war against the Hansa (Sundberg 2010, 346).

The size of these militia armies ranges from a few hundred up to a few thousand. During times of unrest, it is these bands and armies of peasant militia that takes up arms in order to defend their homes and way of life (Sundberg 2010, 335). And as pointed out, it is the peasant militia that holds the real power in Scandinavia during this part of the Middle Ages, making short work of kings and aristocrats in uprisings. It is not until the 16th century, during the war of Liberation, after the collapse of the Kalmar Union treaty, when the king Gustav Vasa defeats the Danish king Kristian II and is crowned the new king of Sweden, that the modern state of Sweden, as well as Scandinavia is founded.

4 LITERARY SOURCES

As a complement to the archaeological case studies in this thesis, and to further shed light on the practice of dealing with the dead *en masse*, I will use the following literary sources presented below. War, violence and aggression are a frequent element of most literary sources and sagas that are set in either the Scandinavian Iron Age or Middle Ages. Kings are fighting each other for power, families are waging feuds, mass battles and single combat are common elements, as well as the dark humor and poetic final words and skaldic verses right before a main characters death. Frequent is also how the remains of an important character, such as a king or important family member, are dealt with. The general rule of thumb is that whenever an individual of high status or main character falls in battle or dies, his or her remains are either retrieved for burial with full honors, or is defiled by his or her enemies. The same cannot be said for the common fighting man. What most literary sources lack is the descriptions on how the large mass of dead warriors or soldiers are dealt with after a battle.

Common for most of these literary sources is how the battle is prepared and what happens afterward; looting, taking of prisoners, negotiating of terms and so forth. The battles themselves are more often than not only briefly addressed, and more focus is instead placed on the bravery of those engaging in it, skaldic poetry when someone is about to die or clever lines when somebody kills. The killing itself is similar to what Neitzel & Welzer (2011) tells us from modern accounts, mentioning it only briefly and matter-of-factly, and only in greater detail when the kill is extraordinary in some way. In other words, what we learn from most written accounts is that the result of violence, i.e. the digging of mass graves and the work of the burial detail, is of little interest and importance in the sagas and stories. The examples we do find that can tell us about how remains and war gear after a battle are dealt with, as well as the culture and beliefs surrounding it, will be presented here.

4.1 The works of Tacitus

From the time around the 1st century AD, Cornelius Tacitus presents us with two of his most important works; *Germania* and the *Annales*. Important to notice with Tacitus however is that his works are based on earlier accounts; meaning that Tacitus accounts for events that has taken place decades before his time. In *Germania* however, Tacitus gives a general description of the Germani as well as their way of living, fighting, customs and finishes with a more detailed description of the major Germani. Within this work, we there are two relevant passages. The two passages from *Germania* were translated from Latin into Swedish by Per Persson in 1931. To this translation, I have also given my own translation from Swedish into English (Tacitus.nu; *Annales*).

“They collect the bodies of their fallen, no matter the outcome of battle. To have left the shield behind is a disgrace, and the dishonored neither has a right to participate in the sacrifices nor to enter the Thing, and many that survived the battle have finished off their dishonor by the noose.”

”De sinas kroppar upphämta de även i ovissa strider. Att ha lämnat skölden i sticket är en synnerlig skam, och den sålunda vanfrejdade har varken rätt att deltaga i offren eller inträda på tinget, och många som överlevat striderna ha gjort slut på sin vanära medelst snaran.”

(Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 6)

Although described briefly, here we are told that the bodies of the fallen Germani warriors are retrieved after battle, even though the outcome of the battle might not been in ones favor. What makes this passage is important is the fact that Tacitus claims that the fallen are collected and not just left on the battlefield. What also shows is the importance of the warrior culture and bravery, indicating that it might have been considered better to have fallen in battle than to have fled from it.

“At funerals there is no flair. Only is it ensured, that honored men’s corpses are burned with a special kind of wood. On the pyre they neither place beautiful fabrics nor incenses. Everyone brings with them their weapons and with some cremations even their horse. The grave is marked out by a mound of turf, a grave or tomb greater than that is only considered a burden to the dead.”

”Vid begravningar förekommer ingen flärd: blott det iakttages, att frejdade mäns lik bränns med ett visst slags ved. På det uppstaplade bålet hopa de varken mattor eller vällukter. Var och en får med sig sina vapen, vid någras förbränning medföljer även hästen. Graven reses av torv; den ärebetygelse, som består i höga och med stor möda förfärdigade gravvårdar, försmå de såsom tyngande för de avlidna.”

(Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 27)

Here in chapter 27, Tacitus tells us that cremation is standard form of burial during the Iron Age. To mark out the grave by the use of a mound also tells us that this is a tradition that is maintained throughout the Iron Age. This part further supports the first account; that it is necessary to bring the dead home from the battle to receive proper burial.

The Annals details the life, death and accomplishments of several Roman emperors, namely emperor Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero and spans between the years 14-66 AD. What is relevant from these scriptures are however not the emperors themselves, but what Tacitus tells us about the practices of the Germani when encountering and clashing with the might of the Roman Empire. The translation from Latin into Swedish was done by Olof Kolmodin during 1833-1835, and to his translation, I have added my own translation in English.

“In the first camp, judging from its size and its main road, held a total of three legions; beyond that, the remains of a destroyed rampart and a shallow moat, where they, though now only scattered remains were left, had made a stand; in the middle of the field, white bones, scattered or in heaps, as if they had fled or defended themselves; beside these, remains of weapons, remains of horses and on the trees, skulls had been nailed; in the nearby meadows were barbarian altars upon which Tribunes and Centurions had been slaughtered.”

”Vari första läger rörde, genom vidden af sin omkrets och den utstakade hufvudgatan, antalet af tre legioner; längre fram syntes af en till hälften förstörd vall och en låg graf, att de nu förminskade kvarlevorna der fattat stånd; midt på fältet hvitnade ben, spridda eller hopade, såsom de flytt eller satt sig till motvärn; bredvid dessa, spilor af vapen, benrangel af hästar och på trädstammarna fastnaglade hufvudskallar; i närmaste lunder de barbariska altaren på hvilka man slagat tribuner och öfvercenturioner.”

(Tacitus, Annales Book 1, Chapter 61)

When the Romans returned to the site of the Battle of Teutoburg forest, some six years after the battle itself, they encountered the unburied remains of their fellow roman soldiers. According to Roman customs (see the next passage from Pliny the Elder), remains of soldiers are to be cremated and buried in the earth, not left for desecration above it. Therefore, the Romans proceeded to dig several mass graves and buried their fallen brothers-in-arms. In contrast with what Tacitus tells us about how the Germani deal with their fallen, this is an apparent case of how the Germani deals with non-Germani.

4.2 Pliny the Elder

Gaius Plinius Secundus, ca 23-79 AD, or Pliny as he is more commonly known. Little is known about his background, other than he comes from a wealthy family. Pliny himself studied in Rome and during his lifetime he wrote his encyclopedic work known as the *Naturalis Historia*, in which he discuss various topics such as geography, nature but also anthropology (Livius.org). From the many Roman historians, we learn that the Roman Empire was an intricate and highly evolved military society and a war machine. Its military influences can, as mentioned, be seen in the numerous archaeological findings, such as weapon deposits. The empires military influence on the warrior cultures of Scandinavia can therefore not be denied, which makes Plinys anthropological accounts in *Naturalis Historia* about Roman military funeral practices very relevant. The following passage was translated from latin by John Bostock (1855).

“The burning of the body after death, among the Romans, is not a very ancient usage; for formerly, they interred it. After it had been ascertained, however, in the foreign wars, that bodies which had been buried were sometimes disinterred, the custom of burning them was adopted. Many families, however, still observed the ancient rites, as, for example, the Cornelian family, no member of which had his body burnt before Sylla, the Dictator; who directed this to be done, because, having previously disinterred the dead body of Caius Marius, he was afraid that others might retaliate on his own. The term "sepultus" applies to any mode whatever of disposing of the dead body; while, on the other hand, the word "humatus" is applicable solely when it is deposited in the earth.”

(Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, Book 7, Chapter 54)

The practice of cremation here appears to be fairly new among the Romans. In the Roman army however, cremating soldiers appear to be increasingly more standard in the field to prevent the exhumation and desecration of Roman soldier's remains, or any other deceased individual for that matter. As is tradition with individuals of higher status, their funeral is described in greater detail than the common soldiers. In some cases, the body of a high status individual is returned home to Rome after falling in battle. There, the body is put on display and given a funeral with full honors and a tomb stone or a stele as a memorial or monument. Out in the field, among soldiers in the army, the case appears to be different. Monuments for common soldiers are rare and the deposition itself were likely surrounded by little ceremony or drama. Instead, Roman soldiers would most likely use the helmet or weapons belonging to their fallen comrades and inscribe them with the users name before passing them on to a new soldier. It is very likely that a fallen soldier in close proximity to his station or home would be carried there to be buried instead of the battlefield. The standard practice is instead, as Pliny tells us, that the bodies are collected, interred in the ground, or cremated *en masse* before being buried (Olson, 2008).

4.3 Paulus Orosius

Paulus Orosius, ca 375-418 AD, was a Gallaecian Christian priest and historian. One of his works, *Historiae Adversus Paganos*, details the interactions and encounters between the Roman Empire, as well as several Germani (Mark 2009). In the following passage from Book 5, Orosius gives us an account of the aftermath of the battle of Arausio where the Roman forces sent out to counter the Cimbri and Teutoni advances. However, the Romans were defeated by the Germani, causing fear and panic among the Romans that they would cross the alps into Rome itself. Written down some 400 years after the event, we must be aware that the description of the account is based on previous works, and that the account is meant to portray the barbarism of the Germani. However, the description Orosius gives us is similar to other accounts and must not be entirely dismissed.

“They completely destroyed everything they had captured; clothing was cut to pieces and strewn about, gold and silver were thrown into the river, the breastplates of the men were hacked to pieces, the trappings of the horses were ruined, the horses themselves were drowned in whirlpools, and men, with nooses fastened around their necks, were hanged from trees. Thus the conqueror realized no booty, while the conquered obtained no mercy. At Rome there was not only very great sorrow, but also the fear that the Cimbri would immediately cross the Alps and destroy Italy.”

(Paulus Orosius, *Historiae Adversus Pagaons*, Book 5, Chapter 16)

The passages can best be described as a Germanic version of a Roman Triumph. The practices of destroying wealth and depositing it, as well as killing and sacrifice horses and men appears to be an standard part of war, as well as a part of the cult practiced at and around wetlands and in groves during the Iron Age. Of course, this practice appears more than appalling for the Romans, but for the Germani it was the way of culture and war. Further discussed below in the analysis, the accounts above are a perfect example of the act of Triumph as a part of war.

4.4 Jordanes

Jordanes, a notary of gothic origins, living in Constantinople during the mid 6th century writes, just like Tacitus and Orosius about the history and origins of a specific people; the Goths in his work called *Getica*. Basing his work on both Tacitus and Orosius, but also on Cassiodorus and several others, Jordanes writes from a colonial, pro-Byzantine empire point of view, giving us an exotic and mixed perspective on the Goths (Vanderspoel1997). Why Jordanes is of importance is that not only does he describe various Gothic tribes, but also Scandinavian ones as well. The following passage was translated by Charles C.

“Now Mars has always been worboatped by the Goths with cruel rites, and captives were slain as his victims. They thought that he who is the lord of war ought to be appeased by the shedding of human blood. To him they devoted the first share of the spoil, and in his honor arms stripped from the foe were suspended from trees. And they had more than all other races a deep spirit of religion, since the worboat of this god seemed to be really bestowed upon their ancestor.”

(Jordanes, *Getica*, Chapter 5, Passage 41)

Similar to the scene described to us by Orosius, Jordanes gives us a glimpse of the post-battle rituals of the Goths. We learn that the captives are executed as a tribute to the war god along with a large portion of the war booty and conquered weapons. From archaeological sources we know very little of instances in which weapons are sacrificed and suspended in trees, but are instead sacrificed into wetlands. How common this practice was at the time when Jordanes wrote *Getica* is unknown, but since it is based on earlier sources it is likely that weapon sacrifices were still in practice; something that the last lines of text tells us; that religion and worboat of the war god was very important to the Goths.

4.5 The epic of Beowulf

Based on oral story and written down by an unknown poet sometime during the 8th and 11th century, the epic of Beowulf is based in Denmark, likely in the 6th or 7th century. The epic consists of 3182 lines of texts and details the story of how the monster Grendel haunts the Danish royal hall of Heoroth (Frisk 2012). The Danish king Hrothgar pleas for help and a young warrior comes to his aid, named Beowulf from Geatland in modern day Sweden. Beowulf and Grendel battle each other in the Hall and the battle ends when Beowulf tears Grendels arm off and Grendel escapes. Beowulf follows Grendel to the nearby lake where he encounters Grendels mother; a lake troll. After killing Grendels mother, Beowulf returns to Heoroth to celebrate victory.

This first part of the story is, apart from being a semi-fantasy tale, is also a form of clash of culture and religion, a clash between the old ways and the new. First, we have the old ways, the Nerthus cult with its wetland sacrifices, in the epic represented by Grendel and his mother. Then we have the new ways; the feasting and mead hall culture of the Vendel period which is represented by the hall Heoroth. The role which Beowulf and his men play is the defenders of the new ways; the mead hall culture and the symbols of power. By battling and defeating both Grendel and his mother, Beowulf drives off the old ways, defeats the old foe and becomes king (Herschend 2009, 379). Three excerpts from the Epic of Beowulf are presented below. Their focus is on the battle with Grendels mother, as well as a tale about the renowned battle of Finnsburg. The passages were translated by Rudolf Wickberg in 1889 (Tacitus.nu; Beowulf), and with it, I have provided my own translation in English. In chapter 21, long after Beowulfs arrival to the Hall and after the battle with Grendel, Beowulf prepares himself to go to the lake and face Grendels mother. Before setting off however, Hrothgars advisor Unferd presents his sword Hrunting to Beowulf.

*The adorned with rings sword named
Hrunting
And was the highest of old treasures.
The edge was of iron, gleaming with veins,
¹⁴⁶⁰Hardened in warblood: never had it in
battle
Failed any man, that wielded it with his
hands
And dared the perilous journey
Over the enemies battlefield; nor was it the
first time
It would carry out heroic deeds.*

¹⁴⁶⁵*Not did Eeglafts son think,
The strong man, when he lent his weapon
To a better swordfighter, about what he
had said,
Drunk from wine: He dared not
Risk his live below the roaring waves,
¹⁴⁷⁰Show bravery. Then he lost
His reputation of a hero.”*

(Beowulf, 1454-1471)

Detta häftprydda svärd hette Hrunting
Och var ypperst bland gamla skatter.
 Eggen var af jern, skimrande af
giftstrimmor,
¹⁴⁶⁰ *Härdad i stridsblod: aldrig hade det i*
striden
Svikit någon man, som svängde det med
händerna
Och vågade gå den fasansfulla färden
Öfver fiendernas slagfält; ej var det första
gången

Som det skulle utföra hjeltedåd.
¹⁴⁶⁵ *Ej tänkte då Eeglafs son,*
Den kraftige mannen, när han lånade
vapnet
Åt en bättre svärds-kämpe, på hvad han
förut sagt,
Drucken af vin: sjelf tordes han ej
Våga sitt lif under de brusande vågorna,
¹⁴⁷⁰ *Öfva mannamod. Då miste han*
Sitt hjelterykte.”

What we can extract from these passages is that the sword presented to Beowulf is of exquisite quality and has a long and violent history. We are also given a short description of Unferd himself; with a drunken coward that does not dare to risk his life and has lost his reputation as hero. In chapter 22, as well as the following chapter, Beowulf descends into the waters of the lake where he encounters Grendels mother and other sea monsters that tries to kill him. Beowulf however is wearing his helmet adorned with boar pictures and figures and his finely crafted chainmail; and he survives the teeth and claws of Grendels mother and the other monsters. She finally drags him down to the bottom of the waters and into her den, where they fight.

“The brave one then became aware of the
shewolf of the deep,
The strong seas spirit; put force
¹⁵²⁰ *into the sword. The hand did not fail*
the blow, so the sword adorned with rings
sang over her head
A lustful song of battle. Then the stranger
noticed,
That the splendor of battle did not bite
nor damaged body; the edge failed
¹⁵²⁵ *the Lord in need.”*

”Den gode blef då varse hafsbottnens
varginna,
Det starka sjörået; lade hjeltekraft
¹⁵²⁰ *I slagsvärdet. Handen svek ej slaget,*
Så att det ringprydda svärdet sjöng på
hennes hufvud
En lysten stridssång. Då märkte
främlingen,
Att stridens glans ej ville bita
Och skada lifvet; utan eggen svek
¹⁵²⁵ *Fursten i nöden.”*

(Beowulf, 1518-1525)

Beowulf then throws Hrunting on the ground and instead tries to kill Grendels mother with his hands. After once again surviving her attacks, he finds himself a new sword. What is the key to this passage is the term *Giant*. I believe that this does not refer to the mythological creature, but is instead a metaphor for *Foe* (Kellogg 2000, 31), which means that the ancient sword did not belong to a giant, but an old enemy. In short, a sword that was once deposited into the sacrificial wetland in which Grendels mother now dwells. The following passages tell us that the sword Hrunting Beowulf received from Unferd is unable to bite into Grendels mother. Instead, Beowulf picks the new sword from the ground using that one to kill her.

*"He then saw amongst armors, the giants
 ancient
 Sword of many victories with strong edges,
 A symbol for fighters: The highest of
 weapons,
¹⁵⁶⁰ A fine and magnificent work of the
 giants; -
 Though that it was too mighty for any
 other man
 To carry it to the swordplay.
 Fierce from the battle, fearing for his life,
 The Scyldings fighter grabbed the
 decorated hilt,
¹⁵⁶⁵ Swung the ringsword and struck fierce,
 So that it hit hard in her neck,
 Crushed the vertebrae; the sword slashed
 The doomed body, and she fell to the
 ground.
 The sword was blooded; the man pleased
 with his work."*

(Beowulf, 1557-1569)

If we were to go back a bit in the Epic, right after the battle with Grendel, there is a feast in the Hall of Heoroth. The victory over Grendel is celebrated with feasting and songs and the giving of gifts and other items to Beowulf and his men. In chapter 16, during this feast, a scald recites the memory and story of the battle of Finnsburg, a conflict between what is believed to be Danes and Frisians. After a fierce battle, the two sides broker a truce and cremate their dead. The conflict is mentioned in other sources such as the Finnsburg Fragment, Widsith and Skaldskaparmal, as well as in the epic of Beowulf (Herschend 2009, 334). Relevant here is the cremation scene of the Danish prince Hnaef after the battle, and along him on the funeral pyre the fallen Frisians and Danes are placed.

*"The oath was made and gold was taken
 out of the treasure. The war-Scyldings Best
 fighter was ready for the pyre.
¹¹¹⁰ Easily discernible on this pyre was
 The bloodied chainmail, a golden boar
 Hard as iron, along with many noble,
 Dead of their wounds: not few fell on the
 assembly site. Then Hildeburh committed
 to the flame,
¹¹¹⁵ On the pyre of Hnaef, her own sons,
 Their bodies to burn, placed on the Pyre
 With arm around shoulder; mothers*

*"Han fick då ibland rustningar se jättars
 gamla
 Segerrika svärd med säkra egggar,
 En prydnad för kämpar: det var det
 yppersta vapen,
¹⁵⁶⁰ Ett godt och präktigt verk af
 giganterna; -
 Blott att det var för stort för att någon
 annan man
 Skulle kunna bära det till svärdsleken.
 Vild af striden, förtviftande om sitt lif,
 Fattade Scyldingarnes kämpe det
 länkprydda fästet,
¹⁵⁶⁵ Svängde ringsvärdet och slog till vildt,
 Så att det tog hårdt i hennes hals,
 Krossade kotorna; svärdet genomskar helt
 Den dödskorade kroppen, och hon föll på
 golvet.
 Svärdet var blodigt; mannen gladdes åt sitt
 verk."*

*grieved. With words of lament. The fighter
 climbed the pyre.
 Towards the clouds whirled the greatest of
 all flames,
¹¹²⁰ Roaring in front of the mounds; heads
 were melting,
 The wound gates would burst when blood
 would rush out
 Of the wounded body. The greediest of
 spirits
 The flames swallowed all those that the*

battle had taken, Of both peoples, their time had passed.”

*”Eden aflades, och glänsande guld
Lyftes ur skatten. Här-scyldingarnes
Bäste kämpe var redo för bålet.
¹¹¹⁰Lätt skönjbar var på detta bål
Den blodbestänkt brynjan, ett gyllene
vildsvin,
Hårt som jern, samt mången ädling,
Död af sina sår: ej få föllo på valplatsen.
Då lät Hildeburh åt lågan öfverlemna
¹¹¹⁵På Hnäfs bål sina egna söner,
Bränna deras kroppar, lägga dem på bålet*

*Med arm om axel; modern sörjde
Med klagande ord. Kämpen besteg bålet.
Mot molnen hvirflade den största bland
liklågor,
¹¹²⁰Susade framför högen; hufvudena
smälte,
Sårens portar brusto, då blodet sprang ut
Ur leda bett på kroppen. Den glupskaste af
andar,
Lågan svalde alla, som striden der
borttryckt
Af båda folken; deras kraft var förbi.”*

(Beowulf, 1107-1124)

The poet gives us quite the graphic description of how the flames eat away at the bodies of those placed on the funeral pyre, but also that some of the fallen brings with them their war gear. Most important of all is that they are cremated *en masse*. Cremation has been considered to be the standard form of burials during the Iron Age, but this is one of the few instances in the literary sources where we can find a cremation that involves several people at the same time. What we also must take into account is the fact that those placed on the pyre belong to different sides of the conflict, but they are still cremated together. An explanation for this is that they are for the moment all considered to belong to the Ingroup, and are therefore treated with equal respect and care.

4.6 Heimskringla

The Sagas of the Kings, as presented by Snorri Sturluson, recites the life stories of several Norwegian kings, but also includes their alleged ancestors known as the Ynglings, and the early history of Scandinavia. Heimskringla was written down around 1230 and bares a clear Christian touch, and is based on older oral stories. The following passages from the various Heimskringla sagas were translated to Swedish by Emil Olson between 1919 and 1926, and I have included my own translation in English. The first part of Heimskringla, known as The Ynglinga saga, is said to be the stories of the Yngling family line; the first royal blood line of Sweden and other parts of Scandinavia during the Migration and Vendel period, and preceding the Viking Age and Middle Age kings (Tactitus.nu; Heimskringla).

In chapter 23 we find the story about king Gundlaug. Two mighty warriors and brothers, Jorund and Erik capture the king in battle and proceed to hang him. This made them renowned and when they had heard that King Hake, a king of Svithod no longer had any warriors, they gathered an army and set course for Svithod, believing that King Hakes domains would be easy pickings. However, the king had gathered an army to face the two brothers. In the ensuing battle, Erik was cut down, Jorund fled and King Hake were mortally wounded.

“Then king Jorund and all his men retreated back to the boats. King Hake received such a wound that he understood that his days were coming to an end. He then took one of his longboats, loaded it with fallen men and weapons, brought it out to sea, locked the rudder, raised the sail and lit a fire for a big pyre on the boat. The wind came from land. Hake was either dead or near death when he was placed on the pyre. The boat then sailed, set aflame out to sea, and this event became a story that was told and shared for long after.”

”Då flydde konung Jorund och allt hans folk till skeppen. Konung Hake fick så stora sår, att han förstod att hans levnadsdagar icke skulle bliva många. Han lät då taga ett långskepp som han ägde, lasta det med fallna män och vapen, föra det ut på havet, lägga rodret i lag och hissa seglet, tända eld i töreved och göra ett bål på skeppet. Vinden var från land. Hake var död eller nära döden, då han lades på bålet. Skeppet seglade sedan brinnande ut på havet, och denna händelse blev mycket omtalad länge därefter.”

(Heimskringla, Ynglinga saga, Chapter 23)

Like the aftermath of the battle of Finnsburg as recited in Beowulf, we can here find a similar passage. What is important to note is not that the longboat was set aflame and brought out to sea, but that after the battle, King Hake ensures that he and his fallen warriors are buried *en masse* in a longboat along with their weapons and likely cremated together.

In chapter 27 we are told about the fall of King Ottar, also known as Ottar Vendelcrow. After sailing south and attacking parts of Denmark, King Ottar hears tales that a great army has gathered to confront him. Ottar tries to evade them, but is ambushed at sea.

“The battle ended as such, that King Ottar and most of his band of warriors fell. The Danes took his corpse, carried it ashore and placed it on a mound, where they allowed scavengers and carrion birds to tear it to pieces.”

”Striden slöt så, att konung Ottar och största delen av hans här föll. Danerna togo hans lik, förde det i land och lade det på en hög, där de läto rovdjur och fåglar slita sönder det.”

(Heimskringla, Ynglinga Saga, Chapter 27)

Within the passages we get an insight about how the losing side is dealt with, and how the King is treated by his opponent after falling in battle. However, we get no description about how his fallen comrades are treated, but it is likely that, unless they sink to the bottom of the sea, they are either left washed up on to shore or dragged up on land along with Ottar. Of this practice we find a closer description in the passages from the story of Magnus Gode in Heimskringla. In chapter 34, after conquering Skåne, Magnus heads for the Danish island of Falster. Not only does it instead include the common warrior, but it also gives us a clear description of how to deal with the fallen warriors of the Outgroup. After his successful campaign there, Arnor “Jarlaskald” (Scald for the Jarl) gives us the following account.

*“The Danes were soon to pay
in full for their betrayal against the Lord:
The brave king slew
In wrath the fighters of Falster.
The young warrior, generously
Gathered the corpses for the eagle;
The men of the Hird loyally helped
Their lord to satisfy the ravens.”*

*”Danerna snart fingo gälda
till fullo sitt svek mot fursten:
den tappre kungen fällde
i vrede Falsters kämpar.
Den unge krigaren givmildt
hopade liken åt örnen;
hirdmännen hulpo trofast
sin herre att korparna mätta.”*

(Heimskringla, The story of Magnus Gode,
Chapter 34)

4.7 The Sagas of Icelanders

Written down during the late 12th century, the Jomsvikingasaga is an Icelandic saga, but does not belong to the works of Snorri Sturlasson, but is at the same time a part of Heimskringla since it reflects the early political history of Scandinavia. At the end of this saga, a group of Jomsvikings are taken prisoner and are executed. The same execution scene can also be found in Olav Tryggvesson's saga, Heimskringla (Tacitus.nu). Relevant here are the passages where the captured Jomsvikings are executed, since it gives us an insight in how a beaten but not fallen enemy is dealt with after a battle.

*“They wandered over to the Vikings, where
they were fettered by the rope. Torkel Lera
was chosen to give them the coup d’grace.
First, they spoke with them. They wanted to
know if they really were the brave men as
the reputation said; but, as it is told, the
Jomsvikings gave them no answer. Some of
them, those too badly wounded, were
released from the rope, and the thralls tied
their hair to canes. Then three were
brought forth to be beheaded. Torkel Lera
beheaded them all.”*

*”De vandrade bort till vikingarna, där de
sutto fängslade vid repet. Torkel lera vart
utsedd att giva dem alla banehugget. Först
gav man sig i samtal med dem. Man ville
veta, om de verkligen voro så karska män,
som ryktet sagt; men jomsvikingarna gävo
dem intet svar, såvitt man känner. Några
av dem, som voro svårt sårade, löstes från
repet, och trälarna snodde upp deras hår
på käppar. Sedan leddes trenne fram för
att halshuggas. Torkel lera högg huvudet
av dem alla.”*

(Jomsvikingasaga, Chapter 15)

As the story goes on, the remaining warriors are brought forth to the executioner, Torkel Lera, a few at the time, and one by one, the warriors are asked what they think about death, if they embrace it or if they will plead for mercy. A few of them agree to switch sides and are welcomed into their new ranks, while others ask for death. A few Jomsvikings request permission to show their bravery by facing the executioner during the final blow. One even attempts to escape. If this scenario can be considered the general treatment of prisoners is unknown. What we learn from modern snuff videos is that if the executioner can benefit for sparing one or more of the prisoners, e.g. as leverage or monetary gain, it is done. More

common is that the victim is spoken to before the execution, interrogated, forced to say things and recognize the dominion of his or her executioners before made an example out of. In this case, the Jomsvikings are a legendary brotherhood of warriors, likely considered equal to the stature and status of their captures, and are therefore allowed to ask for mercy and ask for favors. But as with present executions, they are made aware of who their executioner is and their leader; recognizing his might and dominion. Had it been a different group of captives, the process would likely follow the same procedure, but not the humane treatment.

To summarize; There is no one way to deal with the dead. Tacitus tells us that the Germani brings their fallen back home for proper burial, a practice that appear to remain standard after an engagement, and for both sides of an engagement as long as the situation allows it. What Tacitus also tells us about common burials of fallen warriors, that they bring with them their weapons in death, a phenomena we know as *weapon graves*. These graves might represent a portion of those fallen in battle and also explain the lack of mass graves during the Iron Age. As told by Pliny the Elder, the Roman Legion would cremate their fallen soldiers in mass graves, or as seen in Tacitus upon returning to Kalkriese; gather the bones of their fallen and bury them together. Common for all sources however, is that individuals of higher status, the elite, are reserved a proper burial and often a monument.

Tacitus accounts for the Germani practice of desecrating and leaving their fallen enemy on the battlefield are very similar with the passages of both Jordanes and Orosius. While Tacitus describes the aftermath of a Triumph act, Jordanes and Orosius gives us an insight of the act itself, showing us the gruesome post-battle practice of both the Germani and the Goths. This act also shows that in certain instances, an enemy can be of such a social identity that the identity itself must be desecrated, left on the battlefield or be destroyed. The desecration of the fallen enemies, the members of the Outgroup, can also be found in Heimskringla. The Ynglinga Saga tells us about how King Ottar was brought ashore and left to rot on a hill, and in the saga of Magnus Gode, we see the same thing, though in a bit greater scale.

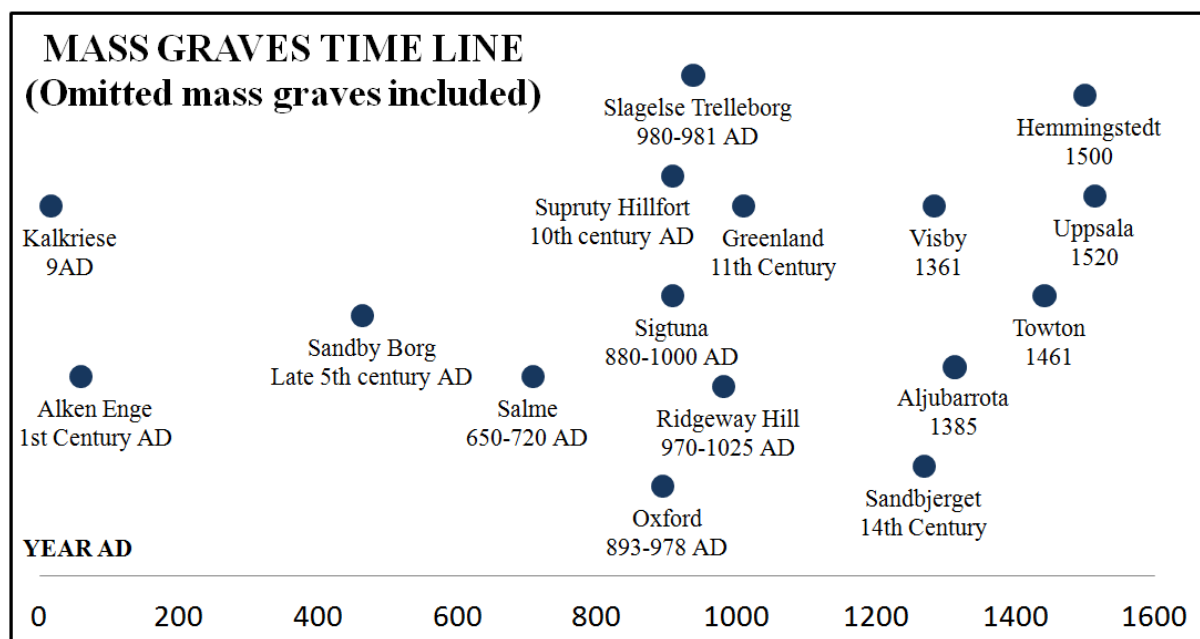
What we learn here is that leaving the dead where they fall, piling, looting and even desecrating the bodies of a defeated enemy is nothing but standard practice post battle.

Beowulf offers us the practices of the mid Iron Age. In the Battle of Finnsburg and the similar case in the Ynglinga saga, mass cremation is the standard practice when dealing with the remains of the fallen belonging to the Ingroup after a battle. Beowulf also sheds light on the wetland depositions and their meaning. First, the sword Hrunting that Beowulf receives from Unferd can in this context be considered a bad and cowardly sword, just as its owner, and is therefore unable to hurt Grendels mother. The weapon Beowulf picks up during the battle with Grendels mother, a sword of ancient foes which only Beowulf is able to wield, is powerful, negative, even tainted. Its previous owner, judging from the description of the swords quality, was not a coward like Unferd, but a mighty individual, yet a foe. This leads us to the assumption that the weapon of an old mighty foe, which only the hero Beowulf can wield, is able to bite into Grendels mother in the same manner as one would use the phrase *fight fire with fire*.

5 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

Important to mention regarding the mass graves and depositions of war gear is that many of the graves and depot sites are still unaccounted for. As is typical for archaeology, discoveries are often made by chance and coincidence and the frequency of archaeological excavations much depend on the development of infrastructure. The discovery of the numerous wetland deposits, bog bodies and sacrificial sites in Denmark is a direct result of the Danish extraction of peat and turf for fuel. Many of the pre-historical and historical mass graves have been discovered thanks to the construction of new roads and urban expansion, as well as renovation of churches and church grounds. The dead found in mass graves only represents a small fraction of all the dead from battles. It is therefore likely that regions still untouched by urban expansion and construction still hides both mass graves and deposited weapons.

Another factor is that even though violence seems to have been a common part of the Iron Age and Middle Ages, not everyone would die in a confrontation. We must remember that the standard funerary practice of the Iron Age; cremation, is responsible of ridding most traces of casualties after a battle. During the Middle Ages, due to an urban expansion, fortifications, churches and cemeteries likely holds the majority of the dead after a battle.



Graph 2:2 The distribution of mass graves between the years 0-1520. Note the void during 9-880 AD, where we only find the three sites in Scandinavia; Alken enge, Sandby and Salme. Created by Mattias Frisk 2014.

For this thesis I will use nine case studies. In these case studies, I have compiled data from ten different mass graves and depositional sites, this in order to provide an overview, similarities and differences as well as an evolution of their use. Although these case studies are distributed over more than 1500 years, they are all unique and brings a faceted picture of how the dead are disposed. Due to the lack of sources and material, eight sites have been omitted. However, from these sites, Sandby Borg, Slagelse and Sandbjerget will be noted further on in this thesis due to their characteristics.

INCLUDED SITES	DATING
Kalkriese, Germany	9 AD
Alken Enge, Denmark	1st century AD
Skedemosse, Sweden	200-500 AD
Salme, Estonia	650-720 AD
Oxford, England	893-978 AD
Ridgeway Hill, England	970-1025 AD
Sigtuna, Sweden	880-1000 AD
Visby, Sweden	1361
Uppsala, Sweden	1520
OMITTED SITES	DATING
Heldenbergen, Germany	1 st century AD
Sandby Borg, Sweden	Late 5th century AD
Slagelse, Denmark	980-981 AD
Supruty Hillfort, Russia	Mid 10 th century AD
Greenland, Greenland/Denmark	11 th century
Sandbjerget, Denmark	14th century
Aljubarrota, Portugal	1385
Towton, England	1461
Hemmingstedt, Germany	1500

5.1 The Battle of the Teutoburger Forest. Kalkriese, Germany.

Background and Event



Since 1987, archaeological investigations of the remains from the battle of the Teutoburg forest have been conducted in the area surrounding the village of Kalkriese in Germany. More than 5000 fragments of roman military equipment has been recovered scattered over an area of more than 30 square kilometers (Rost & Wilbers-Rost 2010, 118). The events of the battle dates back to the year 9 AD, and up until that point, roman expansion into Germania had steadily increased. Alike any other provinces of the Roman Empire, Germania were to have a governor. A man called Publius Quntilius Varus was elected, a man with experience from unruly regions such as Syria, and he was considered perfect for the position. As a governor, Varus made sure to establish new “roman” contacts with the Germani, and for several years, the situation was shaky, but somewhat peaceful. While heading for his legions to their winter camp along the river Rhine, Varus heard reports about a rebellion among the tribes, and diverted his troops to put a stop to it.

Varus advisor, Arminius, a Germani that had been sent to Rome at a young age as tribute, had in secret forged an alliance with several tribes. His exact motives are unknown, but the reports of a rebellion had been fabricated, and Varus and his legions, auxiliaries and followers walked into a trap. The cross country detour took several days, far from any reinforcements, the Germani sprung the trap. With the roman legionnaires tired from the march and with their lines stretched thin, they stood little chance against the Germani (Carey 2009, 125-126).

The battle was fought for several days over a wide area during which the Germani harried the outstretched and thin Roman columns time and time again, and in the area surrounding Kalkriese Hill, Arminius forces slaughtered the remaining Romans. Varus himself committed suicide. Out of the three Legions and an unknown number of auxiliary units, an estimated total of 23,500 soldiers, the majority was killed or taken into captivity (Carey 2009, 127).

Deposition

Some six years would pass before Gaius Germanicus led the legions back to Germania for a penal expedition. What they encountered, as Tacitus tells us, was the bones of thousands of dead men and animals, strewn out. In nearby groves, the Germani had sacrificed captured legionnaires, built altars of skulls and bones, nailed skulls to trees and destroyed weapons. The Romans had these bones buried. In recent excavations of the area, eight bone pits have been discovered; mass graves for Varus' fallen legions. In these pits, the human bone material is mixed with animal bones. No complete skeletons have been recorded, and much of the material is severely fragmented. The bones are estimated to have been exposed on the surface for ca 2-10 years before finally being deposited (Rosts & Wilbers-Rost 2010, 122-123). Many of the skulls examined, show clear signs of sharp force trauma; likely caused by Germani swords and axes. Sex and age analysis of the bones uncovered in the mass graves show that they all belong to males, ca 20 to 40 years of age.

1,500 roman coins of gold, silver and copper, has been found and recovered along with more than 5000 fragments of Roman military gear; all spread out over an area, ca 30km² wide. Concentrations, and thereby the possible locations of the battles and engagements are found between the Kalkriese hill and the bog (Rosts & Wilbers-Rost 2010, 123). What the archaeological artifacts show is that the legions were also compromised by a large baggage train, including everything from luxury items to standard field items. Weapons in the form of spears, pila, lance heads, swords and daggers has been recovered, along with arrow heads, sling shots and catapult bolts for long range warfare. For defensive purposes, war gear such as helmets, shields and bits and pieces of both lamellar and chainmail armor has been found. It is assumed that the ca 5000 fragmented artifacts are only a small portion of what the Romans brought with them, leading to the conclusion that much were taken as loot.

Landscape and Monument

The area itself is situated between the edge of the northern German uplands and the lowlands; between the Kalkriese Hill and a great bog. The site itself was most likely chosen for its tactical advantage, where the Germani warriors could effectively engage the Romans and gain the upper hand. What remained after the battle; the altars of skulls and bones, the heads nailed to trees and piles of bones as well as scattered war gear, was a clear signal and statement to the Romans of what had happened there, and a show of power and Germani strength (Carey 2009). Although it is unknown how much activity the site have seen after the battle, except for actions taken when Germanicus arrived at the site, it was most likely a well known site, important due to its role as a warning and a statement against the Romans.

5.2 The Sunken Mass Grave of Alken Enge. Lake Mossö, Denmark.

Background and Event



Aside from the large weapon deposit, the Illerup River valley has revealed a second secret; a sunken mass grave at Alken Enge (Meadows of Alken), near the river mouth where the Illerup River meet Lake Mossö. This sunken mass grave was first encountered during ditch diggings in 1944-1945. Later, archaeological surveys in connection with the digging of a canal between 1956 and 1962, revealed more bones, and peat miners are said to have found ca 50 to 70 skulls (Skandeborgmuseum.dk; Historik). In 2008-2009, new archaeological surveys were conducted at the same site as those in 1956-1962 to further reveal what was lurking beneath the peat (Skanderborgmuseum.dk; Alken Enge). In 2011, a project called “The army and post-war rituals in the Iron Age – Warriors sacrificed in the bog at Alken Enge in Illerup Ådal”, was initiated and is a joint project between Aarhus University and the Museum of Skandeborg. Further archaeological and geological investigations at the site were made in 2014, with a smaller, finishing dig in 2015 before wrapping up the project in 2015 and beyond.

For the time being, few results have been made public. The results so far reveal that the Illerup Ådal is a very complex sacrificial site and that the Iron Age depositions were made over vast areas. The site and the human bone material of Alken Enge has been C-14 dated to the birth of Christ and the early first century AD, more than a hundred years prior the earliest depositions at the infamous Illerup. More than 1700 bones have been documented, indicating the presence of more than 200 individuals; remains believed to be the result of at least one large and violent engagement. The casualties from that engagement have then been left on the field of battle for months, years even, before finally being deposited in the water (Skanderborgmuseum.dk; Pressmeddelelser).

Deposition

Important to note is that the skeletal material lay scattered throughout the bottom of the moss, ca 2m below the peat. As of 2013, more than 1700 bones had been documented. Besides a few concentrations of bones, such as a collection of four pelvic bones strung up on a stick, the material does not appear to be organized in any way. The archaeological investigation has revealed the bone material to consist mainly of larger bones; scapula, pelvis, cranium fragments as well as limbs. Few bones originating from hands, feet, ribs and vertebrae, and it is likely that parts like these, being smaller in size, were not deposited in the water. Analysis of the bones have also revealed signs of the bones being gnawed upon by scavengers and carrion birds, further supporting the theory that the bodies were left to rot before being deposited. Only in one instance were complete limbs encountered in anatomical position.

Most of the ca 200 individuals appear to be young males, several of which also bore marks from suffering blunt and sharp force trauma; i.e. battlefield related injuries (Sciencenordic.com). Investigating and analyzing the DNA and strontium of these individuals are planned and will hopefully give some more insight to the background and origin of these sacrificed individuals.

Aside from the bone material itself, half of an elongated shield and three lance heads of iron were found during the excavations. During the excavations of 2008-2012, a 75cm axe with its wooden handle intact has been uncovered, as well as a club made of oak. In 2013, a knife and the tip of a sword were encountered. The weapons found at Alken Enge however are so few that they are not believed to have been a part of a specific weapon deposit. Finds of several wooden, pottery and animal bones indicate that the site was of importance in several cultural and religious aspects (Skanderborgmuseum.dk; Status 2012-2013).

Landscape and Monument

At the time of the deposition of the human bones in the water, Lake Mossö was greater than what it is today (ca 600x600m), and it is likely that Alken Enge was a part of the lake itself. Like many of the other sites around Illerup Ådal, the site was well known. However, the excavations so far has yielded few archaeological artifacts other than the skeletal material, showing that the site saw little sacrificial activity after the deposition of the dead. If it was monumentalized in any way to remind visitors of those deposited in the water, is unknown.

5.3 The Skedemosse Depositional Area. Öland, Sweden.

Background and Event



Since a large percentage of the Swedish wetlands were drained and ditched out during the 19th century to make way for an agricultural expansion, several also revealed to hold Iron Age sacrificial and deposition sites, Skedemosse among them. Being situated on the central part on the island of Öland, Sweden, Skedemosse and the wetlands of Finnestorp and Falköping, are some of the few wetlands that can rival their Danish counterparts in size and scale. The excavations of Skedemosse area took place between 1959 and 1962 and were conducted by Ulf Erik Hagberg.

As any other wetland where we also find deposited items, the depositions at Skedemosse were not a single occurrence, but contain war gear from six or more separate events (Monikander 2010, 15-16).

- The first deposition is fairly small and occurs during the 1st century AD.
- The second deposition is substantial, occurring ca 240-280 AD.
- The third deposition includes horse gear and occurs in the early 4th century AD.
- The fourth deposition is fairly small, occurring in the mid 4th century AD.
- The fifth deposition is small but rich, occurring in early-mid 5th century AD.
- The sixth deposition is the smallest, occurring at the late 5th century or early 6th century AD.

Although weapon depositions appear fairly brief in the history of Skedemosse, the area has been in use for centuries. The first signs of activity at this site date to the Pre-Roman Iron Age and the last centuries BC, while the last signs of activity at the site date to the end of the Viking Age before the site are abandoned. A gap of activity occurs at the beginning of the Vendel period and stretch through it, during which no new items are deposited into the wetland. The sacrifices in Skedemosse are connected to many aspects and facets of society and cult, including both war and fertility. The first part of the name itself: *Skede*- possibly derives from the word *Skeid*, a form of ritualistic horse race that is assumed to have taken place around the wetland (Monikander 2010, 70-71).

Deposition

What scenes and acts of sacrifice and cult activity that has taken place at Skedemosse throughout the centuries are impossible to account for. The disorder of the war materiel and the skeletal remains and their often poor state of preservation make it difficult to give a complete picture of all the votive sacrifices. But what is certain is that many of them have a clear and distinct connection, not only to horses and human sacrifices, but to the sphere of war and war materiel. Six separate deposition events of war gear are assumed to have taken place at Skedemosse, with a peak between the 2nd and 4th century AD (Monikander 15-16), resulting in a vast votive materiel.

It is impossible to say exactly how many swords, spear heads etc. that has been disposed in Skedemosse, but the weapon details such as pommels, hilts and other fittings, gives us a clue. The amount of war materiel found is equal to that of the Danish bog finds from the same era. Much of which has undergone X-Ray analysis, but has yielded little result. What has been determined is the presence of hundreds of swords, all of which were deposited. Many were broken or bent out of shape to prevent further use prior to deposition and all but two of the examined blades were double edged (Hagberg 1967, 38). Three of the swords found are of roman origin and are dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD while the other fragments and details are more generally dated to the Roman Iron Age and Migration Period. The most common weapon found in Skedemosse is the spear; consisting of ca 1000-1500 fragments, although the exact number of deposited spears are unknown. Wood analysis from several of the spear sockets revealed burnt and unburned ash wood and the shapes of the spear heads reveal that they originate from the Roman Iron Age and Migration period, ca 0-500 AD (Hagberg 1967, 46).

The various forms of axes found in Skedemosse also dates to the Migration and Vendel period, and are assumed to have been used both as tools and as weapons. Aside from the weapons found, 50 iron shield bosses were recovered; many of which were funnel shaped or conical, fitted with a spike. No wood from the shields had survived. The typology of many of these shields put them as well in the Roman Iron Age and Migration period (Hagberg 1967, 53). A few shield bosses of bronze were uncovered in the western part of the wetland, making them unique since only a few bronze shield bosses have been found in Sweden. The bronze bosses are dated to the Roman Iron Age and/or Migration Period (Hagberg 1967, 51). Their origin are also believed to be that of Roman shields, indicating Scandinavian/Germanic contacts with the Romans in the form of mercenaries.

Their poor conditions of the shield bosses have led to the assumption that the bosses only represent a portion of the shields that were once deposited in Skedemosse. One of the bronze bosses and many of the iron bosses shows signs to have been destroyed, either ritually or in battle (Hagberg 1967, 52). Together with the war materiel, several combs, glass beads and glass smelts, pottery, belt buckles of various forms and types were uncovered. Four sets of horse equipment of iron were recovered together with several ones made of bronze, similar to the finds of Thorsbjerg, further indicating the importance and use of horses (Monikander 2010, 16). The most intriguing find however are the nine gold rings of various origin and design, none of which bears signs of use.

Though the deposited war material is substantial, the deposited bone material is even more so. More than a metric ton of bone material has been uncovered and brought up for examination. The human and animal bone material is most likely only a fraction of what has once been deposited at Skedemosse, and much has been destroyed or removed due to agricultural activity. Of the animal bone material, 35% was of horses and 28% of cattle, with the remaining percentages consisting of sheep, goat, pigs and dogs. A few concentrations of bones were observed, but in none of the cases were bones found in anatomically correct positions. There are many reasons for this, for instance that the remains have been affected by the water and its currents, and by dismemberment of the animal prior to deposition. It is also likely that parts of a sacrificed animal were taken out for a sacrificial meal and later deposited. Other parts of the animals were likely put on display or were used in profane rites, such as the skull, spine, legs, tail and skin, while other animals were dismembered before being deposited in heaps (Hagberg 1967, 55). These concentrations however were few in number and much of the skeletal material lay separate from each other, creating a blanket of bones that covered the bottom of Skedemosse.

Human skeletal remains uncovered at Skedemosse shows us that not only war materiel played a part in post-combat rites. It is however important to mention that out of the skeletal material, the remains of 38 individuals were identified. Although no individual were intact and the exact number of individuals is unknown, C-14 dating shows that they were likely not deposited as a result of a post war rite. Instead, bog-bodies have been interpreted as individuals guilty of crime, treason and cowardice (Monikander 2010, 77).

Others have been sacrificed as a part of a fertility cult rite, and it is likely that this was also the case at Skedemosse. Of the 38 individuals, 16 have been determined to be men, along with 5 possible additional men. 5 female individuals along with 4 possible females have been determined. Of the 9 remaining, none with its sex determined, 3 are sub adults and 5 are children (4 of whom are infants). The wounds sustained on several of these individuals, men, women and children alike, are that of head trauma and what has been interpreted as defensive wounds on extremities. The C14 dating shows a clear pattern that several of the female and infant individuals were deposited in the Pre-Roman Iron Age , ca 500-0 BC. To the period of ca 0-500 AD, only one deposited male individual have been dated, while several others were deposited during ca 500-1000 AD i.e. after the end of the great weapon depositions (Monikander 2010, 86).

Landscape and monument

In comparison to the Danish wet land deposit of for instance Illerup, Skedemosse differs and plays a dual role in the Öland society. The focus and role of Illerup with its immense weapon depositions seems to be that of war and rites connected to war and violence. The prime use and purpose of Skedemosse however is that of rites involving animals in different ways, most prominently horses and cattle, not war and violence. It cannot however be denied that the large scale depositions of war materiel in Skedemosse suggests that violence was a well known piece of Ölands history and way of life for some 500 years. The people of the region must have taken part in several greater skirmishes and battles, emerging victorious and were therefore able to make these sacrificial depositions. The dual role of Skedemosse may also be a result of its position in the landscape, and therefore not limiting it to be the stage of merely one form of activity but several, and with a continuity stretching back for millennia.

The models and regions of activity presented by Karl Oskar in his thesis (Erlandsson 2010) suggest the wetland of Skedemosse is a vital part of the *Skedemosse region* of the upper central of Öland. The wetland itself lies in the periphery of several central places, ring forts and settlements. Paradoxically, this position in the landscape turns the site into a central cult area for the entire region, though at the same time being situated in the periphery. The site itself was not anonymous in any way, but saw much activity during certain seasons throughout the year. A geological survey executed at the site during the excavations by Hagberg, was presented in 1968 by Lars-König Königsson. In his analysis he concluded that the sacrificed materiel had been deposited in water, but that the edges of the wetland was thick with reed, creating small basins of open water surrounded by vegetation (Hagberg 1987, 88). Boats and smaller platforms and bridges were probably created for the spectators as well as those performing the rites, as well as boats to access parts of the wetland.

5.4 The Salme Boat Graves. Saaremaa, Estonia.

Background and Event



While digging a trench for electrical cables in the fall of 2008 near the village of Salme on the island of Saaremaa, workers came across several artifacts of a prehistoric nature. These artifacts were soon dated soon to the Vendel Period, and during the archaeological investigation that followed, more artifacts turned up. Aside from several World War 2 artifacts, the site yielded the outlines of an 11,5m long boat, containing iron rivets, gaming pieces, sword fragments and both human and animal bones, all of which were Scandinavian in origin. It was now clear that this was a boat grave, and within it, the remains of seven individuals (Allmäe *et al* 2011, 109) were recovered; a number all too high for a standard boat grave, making it a very interesting find indeed. The boat grave was dubbed Salme I, since a second, larger boat was found two years later, in 2010. The second boat was dubbed Salme II, placed 30m away from Salme I. The excavation of Salme II in 2010 revealed the outline of a 17m long boat/boat, numerous artifacts and all in all, the remains of 35 individuals (Peets *et al* 2012, 48). C-14 dating of planks, animal bones and human bones places the event at Salme at somewhere around 650-720 AD (Peets *et al* 2012, 43).

The contents within the boats themselves are in many ways consistent with the boat graves of eastern Sweden, where the dead are given items for their journey into their afterlife; such as war gear, provisions, weapons, whetstones, combs and gaming pieces. Several animals were also placed alongside the dead. However, there is not any indication of a grave field in the vicinity of the boats, suggesting that Salme I and II do not belong to an established burial site. Instead, these boat graves were most likely created out of necessity; mass graves contained within boats. The numerous arrowheads found in and around the boats been fired at the boats. It is also evident that some of the individuals buried within the boats had been hit by arrows. This indicated that a battle had taken place before the boats were dragged onto shore.

From here, the scene seems fairly clear. A band of Norsemen, either en route home or on an expedition to the east, are ambushed by (for us) unknown assailants. Violence ensues, after which, the Norsemen takes shelter in the small bay near Salme (Peets *et al* 2010, 44) where they drag two of their boats onto land, turning them into graves where they lay their fallen comrades to rest along with their belongings. However, there is no time to raise a mound over them as tradition would dictate in Scandinavia. Instead the dead are covered with shields, sand and gravel, allowing nature to slowly cover the boat (Allmäe, Raili *et al* 2011, 121).

Deposition

The excavation and investigation of the Salme I boat revealed that the stern held the most artifacts, most likely due to the fact that the prow had been demolished when the cable trench was dug. Of the seven individuals buried in the boat, none were found intact and the remains of the seven individuals were fragmented, with bones broken and disturbed. When brought in for analysis it was determined that they were all men.

Two of these individuals had been placed in a sitting position in the stern by the steering oar. Osteological analysis showed that these two individuals were older than the others, ca 35-45 years of age. The other five individuals had been positioned around the center of the boat (Allmäe *et al* 2011, 118).

Fragments from several weapons were found, including two spear heads, fragments of sword details, fragments of two sword blades (one double edged, the other single edged) and a series of knives. Fragments and remains of everyday equipment such as combs, dice made of antler and gaming pieces, but an absence of household equipment, horse equipment and horses. The animal bones found were determined to originate from cattle, pigs, sheep and birds of prey (Allmäe *et al* 2011, 114). The sparse grave goods suggests that the seven individuals laid to rest within the Salme I boat were part of the crew, but due to the nature of the artifacts, they likely held some form of status and were not common warriors (Allmäe *et al* 2011, 120).

The excavation and investigation of the Salme II boat further revealed that the entire site had been disturbed during World War 2. The artifacts uncovered during the excavation are similar to the ones found in Salme I, though in a greater quantity. The gaming pieces were of similar character to the ones found in Salme I, a few of which were carved out of walrus tusks and whale bones. The same applies to the dice made of antler, comb fragments and a number of beads. A total of six single edge swords were found intact, all with the tip pointed up against the jaw of its owner (Peets *et al* 2010, 35). The double edged swords, all of spatha model, had been bent and broken into pieces. The exact number of spathas is unknown, but four hilts found were of gilt bronze and richly ornamented (Peets *et al* 2010, 36). All the hilt parts bear sign of exposure to fire. 12 shield bosses were found with the skeletons, all deliberately flattened. These shields have once covered the individuals (Peets *et al* 2010, 38).

Aside from the richer grave goods in Salme II, the deposition of the 28 individuals differs from those of Salme I. Here, the individuals have been laid to rest in four layers, tightly packed together with one another, shoulder to shoulder. Of these 28 individuals, several have undergone osteological analysis. The individuals examined are all men, all of good health. However, several of which had suffered perimortem sharp force trauma to skulls and extremities (Peets *et al* 2010, 39-41). Of the animal bone material recovered and analyzed, the remains of domesticated animals (food) were encountered, as was expected. At least three dogs were confirmed along with ten birds of prey. A claw and two canines originating from a bear, most likely in the form of a pendant (Peets *et al* 2010, 42) was recovered as well, and further supports the idea that the individuals of the Salme II boat are of higher status.

Landscape and Monument

The boats themselves are both facing north east, and the site of the Salme I and II boats is today located ca 200m north of the Salme river, and 230m away from the modern coastline. What is now a river were during the Iron Age a lake and a river mouth, with a small strip of land jutting out into a lake (Peets *et al* 2010, 30). Reconstructions of the prehistoric sea level show a ca 2,7m difference, placing the boats only ca 1,2m over sea level, i.e. very close to the water. The water however most likely only reached the boats during high tides.

The absence of mounds over the two boats, only being covered by sand, stones and the force of nature, the boats high sterns must have clear land mark that was easy to spot by anyone travelling by the site by water. Placing boat graves along water is also typical for their Scandinavian counterparts.

5.5 The Oxford Mass Grave. Oxford, England.

Background and Event



In 2008 a team of Archaeologists from the Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS), excavated a possible mass grave at St John's College, Oxford, England, that had been encountered during the construction of a new collage building. Several layers of archeological artifacts were uncovered at the site, among them human skeletal remains located in a mass grave. The remains consisted of 34-38 individuals with ages ranging from 16 to 25 years (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 8). All were of men and of robust physique and all skeletons showed signs of trauma. Several also showed signs of antemortem injuries, indicating that they had experienced battle before. The C-14 dating of three of the skeletons placed them at ca 893-978 AD; which coincides with the large first wave of Viking attacks directed at England which stretch from 835-954 AD, incorporating both raids and colonization (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 16). Strontium isotope analysis showed similarities with the isotope analysis from the victims in Ridgeway Hill, pointing toward a similar origin.

How these individuals met their fate has been debated. Since a few of the skeletons showed signs of having been exposed to fire, early theories connected the victims to the S:t Brice day massacre of 1002 AD and the story of the burning of S:t Frideswides church in which everyone trapped inside were killed. The C-14 dating however disproves this theory and instead places the victims during the first wave of raiding. It is thereby more likely that the victims were warriors or raiders that were ambushed and killed by the local populace, a common treatment for raiders and invaders in a hostile land (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 13).

Deposition

The bodies were deposited in a disorganized fashion, more of a pile than an actual burial. No weapons or war gear nor grave goods of any kind were found in the same context as the victims. Although pottery and artifacts from both the Bronze Age and the Roman period were found alongside the skeletons they are of a different context. The ditch and site itself where the mass grave was uncovered is a part of a Neolithic henge and is overlapped by a 13th century yard area and buildings, giving the mass grave more the impression of a dumping site, than an actual grave (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 8). Nor is the site is not in any way connected to the cemetery grounds.

A few of the victims showed signs of charring from fire, and all of the victims had suffered trauma wounds from weapons, including severe blade and puncture wounds to the head, pelvis and ribs, many of which had been dealt from behind. Only one of the victims had been decapitated while five others showed signs where attempts of decapitations had been made (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 9). The method and brutality of the massacre and execution of these victims sets them apart from the similar case of Ridgeway Hill.

Oxford paints a picture of a frenzied mob-attack carried. The reason for the decapitation and decapitation attempts are likely a final insult and desecration of the victims and to deny them entry to Heaven. However, the act of decapitation might have proved too difficult, further suggesting attackers of limited knowledge of how to properly dismember a human body.

Landscape and Monument

Unlike the later attack and mass grave of Ridgeway Hill, it is possible that the victims in the Oxford mass grave were not meant to be remembered. The site itself is as mentioned a ditch and Neolithic henge with features and depositions from the Bronze, Roman and Middle Ages. The long continuity of the site shows that it has been used as a dumping ground and that the victims in the mass grave were disposed of rather than deposited. The Middle Ages remains over these remains also show that the site did not become a monument of any kind, and were meant to have been cast aside and to be forgotten.

5.6 The Ridgeway Hill Burial Pit. Weymouth, England.

Background and Event



In June of 2009, human skeletal remains were encountered during the construction of a road near Weymouth in Dorset. An archaeological team from Oxford was called in to investigate and they uncovered the remains of 54 individuals, all deposited in a burial pit at the Ridgeway. What made the mass grave special was the fact that all the bodies had been beheaded, and upon deposition in the mass grave, heads had been placed in one separate pile, and bodies in another. The pile of heads contained 51 skulls (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 10), and the whereabouts of three missing heads are unknown, but it is likely these were either taken from the scene, or put on spikes at the scene.

Initially, evidence and theories suggested that these individuals were executed during the Roman conquest of Britain in the first century AD. C14-datings on the skeletal remains however placed the event and deposition of the bodies at between 970-1025 AD (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 11). Together with the mass grave at Oxford, The Ridgeway Hill burial pit was assumed to have been connected to the S:t Brice's day massacre of 1002 AD. But as with the Oxford mass grave, this is not the case. Why that is, is because of the origin of these individuals. Strontium, oxygen, carbon and nitrogen isotope analysis revealed that these

individuals were of Scandinavian origins, although from different regions (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 12).

These men hailed from the western and southern parts of Norway, western and eastern part of Sweden and some even from north of the Arctic Circle. The widespread origin of these men suggests that they were mercenaries and part of a raiding party, not innocent descendants from Norse settlers' that had settled centuries earlier, which would have different levels of isotopes. The C-14 dating of the remains places them within the time span of a second wave of Norsemen raiding and invading the southern coast of England during the reign of king Aethelred (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 19). The fact that all of the victims are men in the upper twenties, with only a few older individuals, all were well built and robust, support the theory that these victims were raiders or mercenaries coming to England with entirely different purposes than settling. During this second wave and the Danish campaign to dominate England (ca 980-1035 AD), violence against Anglo Saxons was commonplace and vice versa, which means that this was the standard treatment for an invader. The events that led up to the massacre itself is unknown, other than that the band of 54 Norsemen were captured and subsequently executed; beheaded methodically before being stacked in a mass grave.

Deposition

Forensic analysis of the upper cervical vertebrae showed that all the victims had suffered sharp force trauma, most likely caused by a sword used for beheading the Norsemen. Trauma like this is not consistent with wounds sustained during battle, where trauma to the head and extremities would be more common. Instead, the wounds are consistent with those sustained during a controlled and methodical execution. For many of the individuals executed, the cuts were not always clean and in several instances, it took several cuts to sever the head from the body, turning the event into a gruesome spectacle. A few of the victims had suffered other wounds in addition to the cervical trauma, including wounds on pelvis, hands and torso (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 11).

The bodies themselves were deposited separately from the heads in a most disorganized fashion, and though 54 bodies were recorded, only 51 heads were found. One explanation of the missing heads is that they were put on display, either at the site or a nearby town as a warning to other raiders. A second explanation is that the heads were removed and taken by the Anglo Saxons as a punishment and insult to the victims, to deny them entrance to Heaven and resurrection on the Final day (TheReadingRest).

No artifacts that would otherwise help to determine origin or shed light on the massacre event were uncovered in the mass grave. Nor were any textiles found which indicates that the victims were stripped naked before execution (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 11). If their hands were bound in any way is unknown, but the passages from the Jomsvikingasaga tells us of the captured Norsemen being tied up together and brought one by one to the executioner. The theory that these victims would have *faced* their executioner would suggest that they were either praying before the blow fell or that they, as in the Jomsvikingasaga, wanted to face their executioner and to show him that they held no fear.

In which case, the event also suggests that their executioner was not a trained warrior like the one the Norsemen faced in the Jomsvikingasaga, but a person of limited experience in the use of a sword, although not as inexperienced and disrespectful as in Oxford.

Landscape and Monument

Founded by the Romans, the road at Ridgeway Hill, just as the name tells us, is positioned along a ridgeline and was an important highway through the countryside. The burial pit itself is located next to the road and would have been seen by any and all traveling by the road. It is possible that the missing heads from the burial pit was placed on pikes or in some other fashion adorned the mass grave. If the Norsemen were caught at the site or brought to the Ridgeway from somewhere else is unclear. A site such as the Ridgeway was not an uncommon place for executions to take place; peripheral at the edge of a parish boundary, along a main road and in close proximity to the prehistoric barrows/burial mounds which would have been an unchristian site (Bernhardsdotter 2012, 26). Executions were often witnessed by a crowd, and it is likely that an act such as this had attracted a large crowd that had come there to witness the execution of the raiders.

5.7 The Mass Grave of S:t Laurence. Sigtuna, Sweden.

Background and Event



Between 1997 and 1998, an archaeological investigation was conducted at the medieval cemetery of S:t Laurence (S:t Lars) prior to the installation of sewage plumbing. As was expected during the investigation near the south eastern corner of the cemetery, a total of 86 single and dual graves were encountered. What was not expected however was the unearthing of a mass grave containing a total of 19 individuals (Kjellström 2005, 59). A part of the mass grave had been damaged due to the construction of a path and it is therefore likely that the mass grave was once larger. The mass grave was placed ca 20m away from the church in the S-E corner of the cemetery wall, 4 x 2,5m in size. The dating of the mass grave has been troublesome due to the condition of the skeletal material, and none of the individuals were buried in a casket. Nor could arm positions be used as an indicator, but C-14 dating shows a calibrated date to ca 880-1000 AD (Kjellström 2005, 59-60). This dating becomes somewhat problematic since the cemetery and the church were in use between ca 1100-1527, which means that the mass grave is older than the rest of the cemetery and church (Kjellström 2000, 265). Although, it is likely that the site was used as a burial ground before the church was built, and that some form of sacral construction was there before the present church.

The town of Sigtuna dates back to ca 900-1000 AD and held important administrative and clerical functions at the time of birth of the early Swedish nations. Its function and position by the water in the Mälars-valley also made it a target and has therefore likely seen its fair share of violence and attacks since its foundation. Theories of the deposition of the 19 individuals ranged from the individuals being plague victims to being executed criminals, since many of the individuals had suffered sharp force trauma to the cervical vertebrae. It is however more likely that these individuals were common men and women that fell victims to an unknown assailant during a violent episode in the early history of Sigtuna (Kjellström 2005, 82).

Deposition

Although the individuals are all deposited in an unorganized fashion on top of each other, with little effort put into actually arranging the remains, the mass grave itself is positioned in a traditional Christian east-western direction. The fact that the mass grave is claimed to be Christian and buried in consecrated ground rules out the presence of grave goods. Important to note however is the disorder in the mass grave. Although the grave can be considered Christian, the remains have been stacked on top of each other, instead of receiving a proper treatment. Several of the individuals had been placed on their stomach, instead of resting on their back (Kjellström 2005, 59). Of the 19 individuals found, thirteen are male and five are female, along with a child. Ages range from ca 7-60 years and all of the individuals display a good osteological health, i.e. few signs of disease, deficiencies or degeneration (Kjellström 2005, 60). Eleven of the 19 individuals show clear signs of perimortem sharp force trauma in quantities more than necessary to be considered fatal. Out of these eleven, three are female.

A majority of the individuals show signs of excessive cranial and cervical trauma while three shows trauma to arms and back. The characteristics of the trauma suggest the use of swords during the event. Signs of blunt force trauma were not distinguishable on any of the individuals due to the taphonomy in the mass grave (Kjellström 2005, 33). The lack of trauma on legs further indicates that these victims were common men and women massacred in an attack, not soldiers killed in a battle. Important to mention is that these 19 individuals were not the only individuals in Sigtuna that had suffered sharp force trauma. Two male individuals found in single graves at the same cemetery and six male individuals from Biskopskyrkan nearby, further shows that violence with deadly outcome occurred (Kjellström 2005, 82).

Landscape and Monument

It is not known if or how the mass grave was marked above ground, but the fact that the mass grave doesn't appear to have been disturbed since its creation could indicate that it was in some way. This is further supported by the fact that it was not disturbed by more recent burials or by construction, which makes it more likely that the mass grave was well known to the people of Sigtuna, as well as the event that spawned it, by the populace and was marked or monumentalized above ground in some manner (Kjellström 2005, 59).

5.8 The Mass Grave at Korsbetingen. Visby, Sweden.

Background and Event



Situated between the mainland of Sweden and the Baltic States to the east, the island of Gotland has due to its geographical location been of key importance in trade and warfare in the Baltic Sea. During the 12th century, the town of Visby became increasingly more important as well as an international point of trade and after the civil war of 1288, Visby became sovereign. Increasing tension in the mid 14th century between the Danish king Valdemar IV, commonly known as Valdemar Atterdag, and the Swedish king Magnus Eriksson, sparked a campaign where Valdemar reclaimed the previously lost provinces of Skåne and Blekinge (Sundberg 2010, 240). In 1361 Valdemar moved north, raiding his way through Öland and continued to Gotland to claim taxes and wealth, but also to incorporate it into the Danish kingdom (Sundberg 2010, 243; Thordeman 1939, 14).

In July of the same year, a Danish army consisting of mercenaries and soldiers from Denmark and Germany landed at Västergarn on Gotland (Lingström 2008, 34; Thordeman 1939, 19). Before reaching the Visby however, the Gutes summoned a militia in an attempt to stop the invader from reaching further, engaging the Danish forces at Fjäle marsh near Mästerby. The militia intended to use the tactical advantage of the marsh but the warm summer had dried it out, and without this advantage, the militia were routed by the Danish forces after two days of hard battles (Lingström 2008, 39). Upon arrival at Visby, the Danish campaign culminated in the bloodiest of the battles. At its gates, the militia attempted to get the help of the townsfolk, but none would be given. In a futile attempt, the militia put up a final stand against the invader. If Visby would fall, the rest of Gotland would follow with it, leading to looting, ransacking and heavy taxation of the free Gutes, as well as Danish rule. The Battle of Visby took place on the 27 of July, and without the support from the townsfolk of Visby itself, the battle ended with the total defeat of the militia (Sundberg 2010, 243).

The Danish forces suffered few casualties during the invasion of Gotland since they were trained and professional soldiers. What they faced was a militia, consisting of farmers from the many parishes of Gotland that had banded together to stop the invaders. The militia likely had several experienced soldiers, although not in sufficient numbers enough to make a difference. The estimated death toll for the militia at the battle of Visby is estimated to be around 1800-2000 and an unknown number of wounded; an unimaginable high death toll of the time. The Danish forces likely suffered few casualties (Thordeman 1939, 23). As was the praxis and the prize of war and victory, the mercenaries were allowed to raid the farms and villages of the countryside for several weeks. In the beginning of the 20th century, the mass graves from the battle were located next to the ruins of a Cistercian monastery, and excavations started (Thordeman 1939, 47). The first mass grave revealed a mass of entangled bodies, making it impossible to separate them from each other. After the revelation of the first mass grave, approximately six mass graves have been confirmed; Three have been excavated,

one remains unexcavated and two mass graves are assumed to have been destroyed due to construction work during the 19th and 20th century (Lingström 2008, 34).

Deposition

What makes the mass graves of Visby relevant is its sheer scale the manner in which the remains were deposited, or more accurately; disposed off. The disorder in the mass graves themselves, the chaos of comingled and intertwined bodies laying on top of each other, further shows that burial was done in haste. Within these mass graves, the remains of more than 1200 individuals have been recorded. The mass graves location next to a monastery was chosen since the grounds there were consecrated and since there was little time for a proper Christian burial. Not all individuals in the mass graves had been disposed in the same manner however. Individuals buried in the upper layers in mass grave number III (Thordeman 1939, 60) and IV (Thordeman 1939, 67) differ, instead being buried in rows next to each other. Their position in the upper layers of the mass grave context shows that they were among the last to be buried. If they died after the battle due to wounds sustained during the battle or if they received special treatment because of rank, status or origin is unknown.

A thick layer of lime and mortar had sealed the mass grave in order to prevent the spreading of disease (Thordeman 1982, 18). During the past decades, the mass graves of Visby have been excavated, shedding more light on the battle itself. The efficiency and training of the mercenaries against the militia can clearly be seen when examining the victims and the amount of skeletal trauma show us that the battle was more of a massacre than a battle. 70% of the individuals had suffered leg trauma and 50% cranial trauma, showing that many of the victims had met their end sustaining more than enough trauma to die in a most brutal manner. 1/3 of the individuals excavated consisted of males younger than 20 (22%) and males older than 50 (16%) (Thordeman 1982, 32).

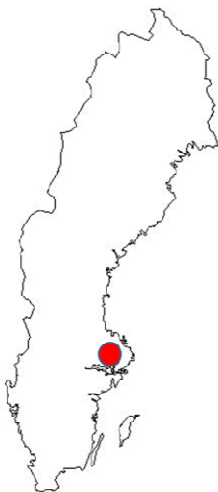
The battle took place at the height of summer, and after the battle, the smell of death and decay must have been overwhelming. More than 450 buckles have been recovered (Thordeman 1939, 117), indicating that the majority of the individuals were still fully dressed upon deposition, instead of being wrapped in a burial shroud. The presence of a few individuals, militia and mercenary alike, still dressed in armor; mainly chainmail and what has been dubbed as the “Visby armor”; a form of coat-of-plates, shows that little effort was put into retrieving the armors, as would otherwise have been standard practice (Thordeman 1982, 23; Thordeman 1939, 98). The presence of armor and clothing also suggest that deposition was done in haste. No weapons, aside from a few knives, arrows and crossbow bolts were found, indicating that items not fastened to an individual; i.e. helmets, shields and weapons were retrieved for re-distribution as praxis dictated.

Landscape and monument

The mass graves from the battle of Visby were placed a few hundred meters outside of the city walls at Korsbetningen, next to the modern day cemetery and the ruins of Solberga monastery. Since there was no time, nor the possibility to give each victim a proper burial, the consecrated grounds at the monastery would have to suffice (Thordeman 1982, 34). The lack of effort and the disorganization in the mass graves not only show that haste was of importance, but also that it was likely was the mercenaries and the townsfolk that were tasked with burying the dead. The properly ordered and buried bodies at the top of mass graves III and IV shows the opposite; that those individuals were buried by the clergy and their caretakers some time after the battle, and not by the mercenaries. As a monument for the fallen, and to commemorate what happened, a stone cross was placed at the site of the mass graves, carrying the inscription: *“In the year of our Lord in 1361, on July 27, fell in front of Visby gates in Danish hands, these buried Gotlanders. Pray for them.”* (Thordeman 1982, 6)

5.9 The Remnants of the Battle of Good Friday. Uppsala, Sweden.

Background and Event



In May of 2001, skeletal remains were uncovered during the construction of a graveled road, near the Castle in Uppsala, Sweden. The site has been investigated during the 1970's and though skeletal remains were unearthed then as well, they were never recovered. C-14 dating placed the skeletal remains at an interval of 1440-1650 and it was soon concluded that these remains must belong to some of the individuals that were killed during the Battle of Good Friday that took place in 1520 (Kjellström 2005b, 24).

The roots and reasons of the conflict of which the battle was a part of, dates back to when the Kalmar Union of 1397 began to dissolve during the early 16th century. This dissolve led to open rebellion when the Swedish administrator Sten Sture the Younger opposed the Union and the Danish king Kristian II, also known as Kristian the Tyrant in Sweden, who claimed the Swedish crown, as was his right according to the treaty of the Kalmar Union. For decades, Swedish militia opposed the Danes and their claims to the crown, engaging each other on several occasions in attempts to drive the Danes out of Sweden (Syse et al 2003, 15). At the time however, the Archbishop of Uppsala; Gustav Trolle, was allied with the Danish king, and with the support from the Pope, Gustav Trolle had Sten Sture and his followers excommunicated (Kjellström 2005b, 23-24). Although Sten Sture died in March of 1520 during battle with Danish forces, his forces continued their opposition. On Good Friday in April of the same year, Swedish militia engaged Danish forces stationed in Uppsala in an attempt to drive them out.

The battle started well for the militia but did not end so. Though it is estimated that the Danish forces suffered some 2000 casualties, the militia suffered even greater numbers when they were routed (Syse et al 2003, 17). Contemporary sources say that the weather was cold and snowy (Syse et al 2003, 16), making it next to impossible to use firearms, and the weather turned the ground into mud and sleet, making it difficult to efficiently use horses for both sides. Training and experience among those involved differed greatly; The Danish forces consisted of trained soldiers and mercenaries, while the militia consisted of armed peasants. Although some of these had experience, it was not sufficient to withstand the trained Danish forces in close quarter combat (Syse et al 2003, 50). Little is known about the events of the battle itself, but a contemporary source written by Olaus Petri states that many militia men went through the ice of the of Fyris river and drowned. Petri also mentions how some soldiers were trapped and killed inside a brick barn that was set on fire. The site of the battle is believed to have taken place outside of the contemporary city, in the area of what today is known as the city gardens (Kjellström 2005b, 24).

Deposition

What makes this mass grave stand out from all the others is its taphonomy. The Danish forces that died during the battle are thought to have been buried at Uppsala Cathedral and surrounding parish churches (Syse et al 2003, 34), although no precise site has been documented. The treatment and deposition of the militia tells us a different story. Very little is known about the burial of these men, other than that Archbishop Trolle issued an order that the dead militia men were to be left in the bogs and marshlands in which they fell, left to carrion birds and dogs (Syse et al 2003, 34; Kjellström 2005b, 24). This fact has been suggested to explain condition of the skeletal remains. The mass grave must therefore be considered as a secondary burial since the skeletal material shows signs of being exposed above ground and beset by scavengers before being deposited (Kjellström 2005b, 39). The difference between the amount of articulated and disarticulated skeletons is explained that some of the individuals were covered or protected from exposure during the process of decay. It is also a possibility that the more or less intact individuals at the top of the mass grave were individuals that were executed some time after the battle for being associated with the militia, but was buried at the same time as the remains of the dead militia men.

The archaeological investigation of the mass grave, oriented in a Christian E-W direction (Syse et al 2003, 20) revealed, aside from the skeletal remains, few artifacts. Only six complete intact were recorded, likely individuals that were executed some time after the battle. The remainder of the skeletal remains consists of commingled bones from several individuals. An estimated number of 60 individuals have been found in the partially excavated mass grave (Kjellström 2005b, 30). 82% of the bone material has been determined to originate from males, possibly even a few females, between the ages of 14-34 together with only a few both younger and older individuals (Kjellström 2005b, 31). Although the bones lay commingled, they are in no way disorganized and it is apparent that a deliberate attempt has been made to organize them. Analysis and closer examination of the skeletal remains reveal

that sharp force trauma is existent with all of the individuals, although it is difficult to give an exact estimation due to the varying condition of the skeletal material.

On the skull fragments examined, a total of 92 blade wounds were recorded, many of which sustained to the parietal and occipital bone; the back and sides of the skull. 11 postcranial wounds were recorded on tibia, femur, pelvis, ulna and femur. Six of these wounds were sustained on the left side. The sharp force trauma has a V-cross section with smooth edges, all of them of perimortem nature (Kjellström 2005b, 32). A few individuals also showed signs of antemortem skeletal injuries from earlier events (Kjellström 2005b, 36). The distribution of sharp force trauma to the skull is attributed to the men fighting face to face during the battle, but also of being attacked from behind and from an elevated position. The lack of trauma to the ribs shows that armor was likely used by the militia, possibly even shields. The use of helmets however appears non-existent, making the head the prime target. The lack of postcranial trauma also shows that the individuals examined had little chance to defend themselves before being killed. It is here we see that the militia was routed by the Danish forces, many of which likely fought on horseback (Syse et al 2003, 133).

Landscape and Monument

It is estimated that the battle took place in the outskirts of the contemporary city of Uppsala. After the battle, the remains of the militia were left to rot on the battlefields while the Danish forces and mercenaries were buried by the Cathedral and its cemetery. It is not unlikely that most of Uppsalas inhabitants knew where the dead were lying and where the battle had taken place. It is also likely that since the militia was associated with opponents of the Kalmar Union and to the excommunicated Sten Sture, it was forbidden to deal with or to retrieve the remains of the dead militia. When the bodies finally were retrieved and buried, they were not placed in any known consecrated grounds, but instead by the eastern slopes of what was to become Uppsala Castle, home to several brick barns and factories (Syse et al 2003, 26-28). If the mass grave was ever marked out by a memorial or monument is unknown.

6 THE SETTING OF THE STAGE

6.1 The role of the landscape

The position of modern mass graves is chosen with care, no matter if they are created due to war, disease or natural disasters. The time and effort to choose a location is due to numerous factors, such as proximity to a settlement, contact with groundwater, risk of contamination and soil composition (Williams et. al 2009). However, this only applies during controlled circumstances and rarely for random acts of violence, ethnic cleansing or sudden massacres. A similar care however can be seen with ancient mass graves of war, but here are factors of soil composition or the risk of contaminating groundwater not taken into account. Instead, it is how the mass grave is seen and what it represents that is of prime importance, a similar idea we also see with common graves. Little is ever mentioned in any of the Roman, Iron Age nor Middle Ages sources of how a mass burial site is chosen.

What they do argue however, Vegetius among them, is the role of the landscape and where to choose the battle field (Mads 2001). The site of the mass grave is not chosen, it is determined by the location of the battlefield, and the location of the battlefield itself; is determined by the shape of the landscape; the presence of strategic positions and constructions that can be utilized (Luttwak 1976, 133-134). It is in the landscape the tactical role of the terrain can be used and battle formations can be utilized.

After a battle have been fought and the landscape has provided its tactical services, the next challenge appears; logistics. Retrieving weapons and armor is a simple task since they do not rot and can easily be carried in great numbers. Transporting dozens, hundreds or even thousands of corpses over a certain distance for burial however is an unimaginable challenge even with modern vehicles. Tacitus tells us that the fallen Germani are retrieved from the battlefield. This is only a likely task if the battle is fought close to home, not on foreign soil. Transporting a corpse over a greater distance is reserved for the King or a person of importance. Hence, after the battle, the choosing of a site to place a mass grave is not a matter of cult or religion, it is simply battlefield logistics. Therefore, mass graves and/or cremation sites can, and are, commonly found in close proximity to a battlefield or strategic building throughout both the Iron Age and the Middle Ages, as we can see in the most of the case studies presented here.

SITE	DATING	ORGANISATION	LANDSCAPE	IDENTITY
Kalkriese	AD 9	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Alken Enge	1st cent. AD	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Skedemosse	AD 200-500	Disorganized	Peripheral	Triumph
Salme	AD 750	Organized	Not applicable	Ingroup
Oxford	AD 893-978	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Ridgeway Hill	AD 970-1025	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Sigtuna	AD 880-1000	Disorganized	Central	Outgroup
Visby	1361	Combination	Central	Combination
Uppsala	1520	Organized	Central	Combination

OMITTED				
SITE	DATING	ORGANIZATION	LANDSCAPE	IDENTITY
Heldenbergen	1 st century AD	Disorganized	Central	Outgroup
Sandby Borg	Late 5 th century	Disorganized	Central	Outgroup
Slagelse	AD 980-981	Organized	Central	Ingroup
Supruty Hillfort	10 th century	Disorganized	Central	Outgroup
Sandbjerget	14 th century	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Greenland	11 th century	Organized	Central	Ingroup
Aljubarrota	1385	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Towton	1461	Organized	Central	Ingroup
Hemmingstedt	1500	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Looking at the table above, we can see the various factors in contrast to one another. What is relevant here is the time in history a certain event or battle takes place in contrast to its position in the landscape. What we learn from the ways of warfare during the Iron Age and Middle Ages is that battles can be large in scale. The mobility and sizes of bands and armies in Scandinavian and Germanic territories demand the utilization of the landscape in order to fully utilize the strength of its numbers and tactical skill (Luttwak 1976, 131). A territory is defended by the use of an elastic defense, meaning that although an intruder penetrates its borders, a resistance force is mustered in order to counter it. The aim of the invading forces is either to raid or to seize control of a settlement or administrative center.

The defense of that site is done in situ; e.g. by its walls in order to repel the invaders. However, in order to prevent the invader from reaching that site, the resisting forces must as pointed out, be mustered and counter the invader in the field; the landscape (Luttwak 1976, 133). This is most effective with units of larger scale, not with smaller units. With smaller units, fighting in or at defensible positions are the most cost effective (Luttwak 1976, 159). This resistance and counter of an intruder can be seen in the following cases:

- Kalkriese
- Alken Enge
- Oxford (Likely)
- Ridgeway Hill
- Visby (More notably the preceding battle at Mästerby)

The common denominator for these five mass graves is their peripheral placement in the landscape, since it was in the periphery these battles were fought that resulted in the mass grave. In the Teutoburger forest, near Kalkriese, three Roman legions were defeated during a march between two camps. The surrounding landscape consists of wetlands and a long ridgeline that gave the Germani forces a tactical advantage during their ambush. What we learn from Tacitus is that the mass graves there were constructed by the returning roman soldiers some six years after the battle. At Alken Enge, the unfortunate souls were beaten out in the field. If they had already attacked a site or were aiming to, is unknown, but what is obvious is that they were stopped dead in their tracks.

The Ridgeway hill mass grave is positioned along a road at the edge of a parish border. It is likely that the Vikings from the mass grave were captured and brought to the site where they were executed. If the Vikings were ambushed by the Englishmen before they could reach their target, or if the two parties engaged each other, it is likely that the battlefield is found nearby. What we learn from the Jomsvikingasaga is that the captured Jomsvikings are brought to the encampment of Jarl Håkan which is situated nearby the battle site; negating the necessity to spend time and resources on the logistical task of transporting prisoners over a distance. Thus, the parish border near the ridge was a well traveled road and likely not far from where the Vikings had come ashore and had their camp, making the location ideal.

We must also note that smaller unit action, such as during the Vendel Period, and when smaller war bands are utilized in the articulated skirmish tactics during the Viking Age and in parts of the Middle Ages, battles can be fought at or near settlements and administrative centers. Therefore, endemic warfare and smaller unit action can spawn mass graves near settlements and strategic constructions, as we can see in the cases of:

- Sandby Borg
- Slagelse Trelleborg
- Sandbjerget
- Visby
- Uppsala

Sandby Borg on Öland is the first example where we see warfare being executed in or around a settlement or strategic construction. The fort itself dates back to the late 5th century and excavations at the site have been conducted since 2011. The position of the ring fort is right by the coast line, deviating from the other ring forts of Öland that are all situated inland. It is exposed on the seaside, but protected on the landside by rocks positioned to form an obstacle. Though the ring fort might have been considered a sound defensive position, it was not enough to keep the intruders at bay, and the alleged massacre of the forts inhabitants that followed (Sandbyborg.se).

The Slagelse Trelleborg (see section 8.2) in Denmark functioned as a garrison and the soldiers stationed there were used for the defense of that specific region. Where the battle or event took place that resulted in three mass graves is unknown, but logistics dictate that it was either at, or in close proximity to the Trelleborg since obvious effort was made to bring those belonging to the Trelleborg back for burial.

Of the likely scenarios for the events that spawned the mass grave found at Sandbjerget, outside of town of Naestved in Denmark, an attack on the town itself is the most probable. Here, the defenders were able to repel and rout the attackers. The remains of these attackers were later laid to rest at the sandy hill outside of town (Jørgensen 1994, 4).

In the case of Visby in 1361 we find both the utilization of the landscape and the fighting in close proximity to an administrative center. The utilization of the landscapes tactical role can primarily be seen at the battle of Mästerby and Fjäle marsh. Here however, the dry marsh offered little advantage to the militia when trying to stop the advancing Danish forces. During the second battle outside the town of Visby, the militia was routed. Control of Visby was of highest importance and the loss of the town would mean that the rest of Gotland would mean that an intruder would be left unchallenged. Due to the battles close proximity to the town, the mass graves can also be found here.

During the battle of Good Friday at Uppsala, the militia assaulted the Danish forces stationed in Uppsala. The battle took place in and around the city and after the routing of the militia, their remains were left on the battlefields outside the city. The reason why we find this mass grave so close to the city is that the remains were gathered and buried some time after the battle at the base of Uppsala castle.

Concerning the great amount of weapon depositions in wetlands, I find it unlikely that this is tied into any tactical function. Wetlands have been used as deposition sites since the Neolithic period and though the deposition of war gear appears fairly brief, it is clear that this appearance of votive depositions connected to the sphere of war is of importance. The use of wetlands would seem obvious since these locations can be seen as natural barriers between territories, but also as spiritual barriers as well. Since it is in the periphery we find the battlefields during the early centuries of the Iron Age, it is only natural that any weapons gathered from a defeated invader is sacrificed and deposited there as well. In the wetlands of Alken Enge, we find the remains of a sacrificed army. Being found in a wetland, far out in the periphery, tells us that the battle were likely fought nearby, and that some time after the battle, the remains were gathered and deposited into the wetlands. Further discussion about the act of sacrificing weapons and remains is found in the “*Triumph victory act*” and “*Outgroup deposition act*” section below.

The dry land depositions of the mid Iron Age and their central location in or next to a settlement can be tied together with the fact that the settlement functions as an administrative centre of trade and crafts. During the Vendel period, we see an early centralization process where chieftains tie institutions of crafts, religious importance and warrior culture to their seats of power, be it within their halls or within their walls (Jensen 2009, 60-61). With it, as we learn from the history of warfare, there is a decline in the scale of warfare, leading to smaller units and aggression in and around settlements and centers. Since the battlefields change location; from the periphery to the centers, it is only natural that we find depositions and even remains within settlements during this process.

In short, the function of the landscape can be summarized as follows:

- Territorial and spiritual borders.
- Tactical advantage to counter enemy incursions.
- Control is maintained by the use of strategic constructions.
- To help enhance the effect of the *final display*.

6.2 The role of drama

When it comes to setting the stage, the literary sources and the archaeological material seem to be lacking the use and involvement of drama. We can find clear evidence of its importance surrounding war and death, but very little when it comes to mass deaths. Parts of a pre-battle ritual is found in chapter 3 of Germania, Tacitus tells us how the Germani would use a song known as a *Barditus*. This song would help to terrify the enemy, but would also help the warriors to get the blood and adrenaline rushing, to harden them and allow them to foresee the outcome of battle (Tacitus.nu; Annales). Neil Price tells us about how the Norse warriors would use the magic of the *sejd* to curse and to hurt an enemy, but also to protect one's own warriors from evil *sejd* (Price 2002, 352) showing us the belief in superstition and magic was important for these cults, as well as for the common soldier or warrior.

During the Vendel period and the Viking age, we find a warrior cult devoted to the worship of war-related animals, such as the boar, the bear and the wolf, showing us the importance of certain beasts of war. Animals and spiritism was an important part of this drama and magic surrounding war and warriors, as well as the mythic ability to take the shape of a wolf, bear or a boar and gain their abilities and strengths. Many of these animals can therefore be found in the form of kennings and metaphors in the same context as battles and of warriors, further showing us their importance in warrior culture (Price 2002, 372-373). Wulfhednar and Berserkers are two of the more well known examples of this animal magic. We also have accounts from literary sources that list ravens and eagles as animals of war, although more connected to the aftermath where they are come in the form of scavengers, feeding on the dead. We also know that by the use of drugs, alcohol, sacrifices, magic and incantations, and later prayers (Price 2002, 354) were an important part of the battle related drama, allowing warriors to believe that they could become invulnerable

During the aftermath of a battle, we know that survivors are rounded up and dead members of the Ingroup are retrieved for burial. At this point, the remains of the Outgroup are gathered to facilitate the looting. Valuables, weapons and war gear are taken either for sacrifice or for redistribution (Herschend 2009, 335; Nicholson 2004, 143). Prisoners are taken, some are raped. Other defiling acts also include dismembering of bodies; placing heads on pikes, burying them between the legs of the dead or removing them completely. Upon the victors return home, either to the hall or the camp they are greeted and celebrated. Alcohol is drunk and both the gods, or God, and the dead are honored. In many ways is the post-battle celebration a part of the funeral act, as the funeral act is a part of the celebration. What we learn from the literary sources is that this funeral is primarily reserved for the elite and high status individuals due to logistics, in which the elite are prioritized. Little is mentioned about common warriors.

From the epic of Beowulf, we learn of the battle of Finnsburg and its aftermath. Not only do we learn what happens to a body when it is consumed by flames, but we also learn that this mass-funeral pyre is reserved for those that fell in battle, even though they fought on opposite sides. But as mentioned, acts like these are only reserved for the elite.

Both Orosius and Jordanes provides us with vivid descriptions of how the Germani warriors drowns horses, breaks armor and hang surviving roman soldiers in the trees; a short glimpse in the drama surrounding the act of Triumph. However, accounts where we can find mentioning of acts like these are rare and offer us little insight into the sacrificial aftermath of a battle. It is possible that post-war rituals in the form of burying the dead and sacrificing weapons have passed the chroniclers by simply because this happened so few times. When it did, it is instead the fierce battle and the main characters that are in focus; generals, warlords or kings, since everyone already knows of what its aftermath entails. Common warriors or soldiers hold little status in memory or history and the drama is reserved for those who are to be remembered, not simple warriors dead in the field.

Practices however change somewhat however as Europe becomes Christian. From historical records we learn that public executions became spectacles, drawing large crowds that came to

watch the execution. At these executions however, more room is left to the drama; hymns and psalms are sung, prayers are said for the condemned and the condemned is presented to the crowd and through the execution, he or she is made an example of and turned into a warning symbol (Lithander 2013, 6). Unlike a public execution however, it is unlikely that any form of spectacle or drama, other than a sermon for the dead, took place after battle during the Middle Ages. The sermon was recited for the dead since it is required by canon.

What was more important during the Middle Ages, since these individuals had not been given a chance to ponder and reconcile with their fate before being killed on the battlefield, was to be buried in the ground to rest, whether it was consecrated or not. Leaving a body unburied was a very unchristian thing to do which means that what we see in Uppsala must have been a horrible fate for these individuals, as well for their families.

What we also know of Christian practices is that it is important to be buried intact, and not missing a head or other part of the body. An act like that can be found in the tale of the life of S:t Edmund (OnTheReadingRest) from around 980 AD. In this tale, Ivar the Boneless kills S:t Edmund, the king of East Anglia. After desecrating the Kings body, Ivar and his men takes the head of the king with them and hides it, thereby denying him entrance to Heaven but also resurrection on the Final day.

To summarize the role of drama:

- Primarily centers on pre- and post-war rituals in the form of drinking, sacrificing, the use of magic and animals as well as honoring the dead.
- Mass burials of faceless soldiers or warriors are of little importance in sagas.
- Primary focus on the burial of the elite and high status individuals.
- The burial act is likely a part of the post-war celebration, and vice versa.
- With Christianity, drama becomes less important and is replaced by a sermon. More important for the body to rest, as well as to be intact.

6.3 The final display

The final display; the monument, or the memory of an event is the last part of *Setting the stage*. Monumentalizing an event is a common and a natural method of coping and remembering the event. Tombstones on a cemetery are one way, while a slab of stone with names at the site of a tragedy is another. The same principle of monumentalizing events is found throughout history and when it comes to war, one form of *monument* comes in the form of the mass graves. Aside from being the place where the remains of a battle is deposited, the mass graves are also important reminders of the event itself that spawned them.

Why a mass grave would serve as a monument can be seen in their position in the landscape and how that mass grave have been preserved and presented for those visiting the site. If we look at the case studies: In Kalkriese, and the aftermath of the defeat of three Roman legions, Tacitus tells us that white bones lay strewn throughout the area, that the Germani had nailed skulls to trees and erected altars. What is obvious here is that the Germani victory was meant to be remembered and that the carnage should be seen and known by anyone passing by. A

display of that magnitude would not go by unnoticed and the reaction of the returning Roman soldiers also tells us that there were no doubt that they had found the remains of their fallen brothers in arms, and what gruesome acts a victor was capable of in order to instill fear and to show dominance.

The osteological analysis of the skeletal material from the army at Alken Enge shows us that these individuals had been left on the surface for some time before being deposited into the bog. Tacitus may claim that the Germani retrieve their dead after battle, but since these individuals instead ended up on the bottom of a bog, it is clear not all of them were. Instead, they served as a rotting reminder of the might of the defenders of this region and that the bones of an invader will later be sacrificed into their sacred bog near Alken.

The massacre at Sandby borg and its role as a monument should also be mentioned. Unlike the other ring forts on Öland, Sandby borg have remained more or less untouched for more than 1500 years. After the alleged massacre, the victims and the animals were left to rot, and the houses were left unattended, slowly crumbling as time went by. Though no real “monument” was created at the site, the fact that both animals and humans were left in the fort (Sandbyborg.se) and that no one seems to have used it since is a monument and a symbol in itself. Massacring the forts inhabitants and leaving the dead where they fall is not only a powerful statement, but also a show of strength and dominance.

After the battle that spawned the two boat graves on Saaremaa, the shore and the small peninsula on which the two boats were placed on came to serve as a monument. Unlike Scandinavian boat graves, the two boats at Salme were not covered with a mound, but with rocks and sand. This means that the boats, more notably the sterns, were clearly visible to anyone passing by the small peninsula. Placing two boats along with those who died during the engagement this close to Baltic territory might also have been an important way to show and claim dominance and strength, since they appear to have been left untouched up until the point when they were discovered.

The mass grave of Ridgeway Hill is another important way to monumentalize an event, and in this case a perfect example of how to make an example of raiders that trespassed and harassed this parish. What we learn from the Jomsvikingsaga is that the execution of the Jomsvikings after their capture was a violent and bloody episode. It was a theatrical show where the executioner spoke to each man, allowing each man decides to either join the warriors on winning side, or to join their brothers in arms on the *other* side. If a show like this actually took place at the road at Ridgeway Hill is unknown, but the neat stacks of skulls and bodies would suggest that this episode was not in any way rushed, but that it was important to execute each the invaders and then stack their heads and bodies so that everyone could see and learn how invaders are dealt with. The position itself; at the parish border and close to a road, indicates that anyone passing this monument, be it a new group of invaders or Anglo-Saxons, would be sure to see the remains and skulls stacked in neat piles. The same effort cannot be seen in the Oxford mass grave, and the nature of this monument is appears rushed and halfhearted, indicating the work of an angry mob rather than a group of people making a

statement. The location suggests that the purpose was to dump those that had died during the massacre. Although they were buried, they were not buried in consecrated ground but instead were only interred in the earth and forgotten.

Looking to Sweden and Sigtuna, both men and women and even younger individuals were encountered within the mass grave, many of which bear signs of sharp force trauma, making it apparent that these individuals fell victims to a massacre. They were later buried at the cemetery, possibly even before the church itself was built. If the grave however were marked out in any way is unknown, but since it has not been disturbed by any later graves, it is possible that some form of monument was placed on the mass grave, and that the location of the mass grave was known to the inhabitants of Sigtuna. How and why these individuals were meant to be remembered is unknown.

Valdermar Atterdags campaign and invasion of Gotland 1361 resulted in deep scars of the islands population for decades to come. From the two main engagements between the Danish forces and that of the militia, two stone crosses were erected to remind us of the defenders of the island and for us to pray for them. Although the mass graves were situated near the monastery and in consecrated ground, they are not part of any known cemetery. Due to the presence of the stone cross placed at the site of the mass graves, the Visby mass grave is one of the few mass graves that have remained in memory up until our days.

Last, we have the remains of the Battle of Good Friday. Unlike their Danish mercenary counterparts, the Swedish militia was not allowed to be buried in consecrated earth, as dictated and demanded by the Swedish Archbishop Gustav Trolle. At the time, Uppsala was a fairly large and important town at the end of the Middle Ages, and the engagement between the militia and the mercenaries is unlikely to have passed anyone by unnoticed. After the routing and massacre of the militia, the bodies were subjected to looting, as was tradition. With the church's order to leave the bodies of the fallen militia men in the field, the memory and monument of the battle comes in the form of rotting corpses left to carrion birds. Although the remains were not buried immediately, they were, after some time, gathered and laid to rest at the foot of Uppsala Castle at the outskirts of the town.

To summarize the final display:

- A way to remind you of an event, either as an honoring or a discouragement.
- The monument itself is often enhanced by the help of the landscape.
- Members of the Ingroup are commonly situated at a central position.
- Members of the Outgroup are commonly situated at a peripheral position.

The Stage in summary: the use of the landscape from a military point of view is due to its tactic advantages and functions where further incursions can be prevented and where settlements or administrative positions can be defended before an intruder reach them. During the Iron Age, farms and villages are scattered through the landscape and the fortifications of the era, the ring forts are used for defense and refuge, and the fort itself can be attacked since it is of value and importance for an intruder. Failure to stop an invader either in the field or at

the walls will result in a massacre and looting. During the middle part and at the end of the Iron Age, violence is conducted at an endemic scale and with smaller units. With smaller units, it becomes more expensive and more difficult to counter an intruder in the landscape. Instead, fighting is as mentioned centered around ring forts and Halls, since these are more defensible locations when fighting in smaller numbers. As units grew during the end of the Iron Age and the Middle Ages, so did the scale of the violence. Skirmishes between smaller bands were common, but so are also greater battles in the field and sieges on the fortified sites of the Middle Ages.

As for the drama connected to mass graves and depositions, little is known. The main focus throughout history appears to be centered on pre-battle rituals, such as drinking, drugs, sacrificing, praying or the use of magic and incantations. After the battle, focus is shifted to loot the battlefield and the corpses of their enemies before celebrating victory and honoring the dead. What we learn from literary sources is that this post-battle drama also includes the burial of high status individuals, since little is ever mentioned about the mass burial of the common warriors. The reasons for this may be many, but I find it likely that the drama and depiction surrounding low status individuals were not considered relevant. Focus of the sagas and sources are instead directed toward the upper stratas of society, depicting the bravery and feats of the elite on the field of battle, not the name- and faceless common warriors.

The final display of the mass graves comes in various forms. Some are clearly meant to be remembered and to serve as strong symbols of whatever event that spawned the mass grave. And while some last until our days, some only last for a short time. In an attempt to summarize the final display of these mass graves, we can see a tendency to place mass graves containing members of the Outgroup in the periphery. Here, they are meant to be seen and displayed to those passing by, to serve as symbols and reminders of how and why they ended up here; *Kalkriese*, *Alken Enge*, *Sandby borg*, *Ridgeway Hill*, *Oxford*, *Sigtuna* and in a way *Uppsala*. A similar tendency as with many execution sites during the Middle Ages.

Members of the Ingroup commonly have a central position, where they are meant to be remembered and honored by the members of the Ingroup and to serve as symbols for an event that involved them. These central mass graves first and foremost include the *Slagelse Trelleborg*, *Visby* and *Uppsala*, but also the *Salme boats*. Though not mentioned above, the final display of the Iron Age weapon deposits are difficult to fit in. The main focus of these sites is likely the sacrificial act of weapons itself, and that the site itself held a specific meaning and memory; that everyone knew that the tainted weapons of an invader lies on the bottom of that particular wetland. However, though their position in the landscape often is in the periphery between settlements and central places, they at the same time hold a central position and function.

7 THE OUTGROUP DEPOSITION ACT

As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, the *Outgroup deposition act* describes the act in which the remains of members of one group is dealt with and deposited by another, more specifically; the deposition of members considered to belong to an Outgroup. As mentioned in the Stage section, logistics is always a factor in the post-battle equation. Not only is it difficult and time consuming to retrieve and bury the fallen from *our* side. Even less effort is put into retrieving and burying individuals of low status or wrong identity at a different site than the battlefield. Therefore, the mathematics of defeat dictates that the remains of members belonging to *them*; the Outgroup, receive even less effort after the battle, other than looting. Exactly what is required to belong to one group or another is irrelevant since this is something that constantly changes through time. When examining the identities within and the function of a mass grave, the qualifications below, together with the function of the *stage*, are important to take into consideration when analyzing the identity of the individuals within the mass graves and during its creation.

- Disorganization of the remains within the mass grave or deposition.
- An obvious carelessness and disrespect shown to the remains.
- A deviation from standard burial practices.
- Obvious signs of looting.
- A peripheral but not necessarily an anonymous location in the landscape.

From the table, five case studies have been highlighted, constituting mass graves dedicated to the members of the Outgroup. Sandby borg and Sandbjerget will also be included.

SITE	DATING	ORGANISATION	LANDSCAPE	IDENTITY
Kalkriese	AD 9	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Alken Enge	1st cent. AD	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Skedemosse	AD 200-500	Disorganized	Peripheral	Triumph
Salme	AD 750	Organized	Not applicable	Ingroup
Oxford	AD 893-978	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Ridgeway Hill	AD 970-1025	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Sigtuna	AD 880-1000	Disorganized	Central	Outgroup
Visby	1361	Combination	Central	Combination
Uppsala	1520	Organized	Central	Combination

7.1 Kalkriese and the Teutoburger forest

Due to its sheer size, Kalkriese and the remains of the battle of the Teutoburger forest is a monument in its own. Three Roman legions were annihilated, leaving a gruesome memory and warning behind for the Romans when they returned to the site six years later. It is this return to the site Tacitus describes to us in his *Annals*, giving us a picture of bones of men and animals laying strewn throughout the forest. It is the Romans that bury the bones, not the Germani. Similar to the pre-deposition fields of Alken Enge, the Romans were left to rot, and clearly deviates from the standard burial practice for both Romans and Germani; cremation.

Before the Romans buried the remains of their brothers in arms, we know that skulls had been nailed to trees and that officers had been sacrificed on altars, and it is likely that bodies had been piled and collected in order to facilitate looting. Not only did the Germani defile and loot the dead, they also dishonored their remains by denying them a proper burial, which for a Roman soldier must have been a horrible fate. The location of the battle itself is situated between two Roman military camps, fairly far out in the periphery. It was perfect for Arminius' ambush, making it an example of how to deal with one's enemies, making a powerful statement out of them and showing the Romans the might of the Germani.

7.2 The sunken army of Alken Enge

When examining the remains of the site of Alken Enge, we find an apparent disorganization. We know that these individuals have been left on the field of battle for some time before being deposited into the wetland, making it difficult for them to be organized anatomically correct. As already mentioned, Tacitus tells us that the Germani retrieve their dead after battle. Here at Alken Enge it is more likely that only the fallen defenders were retrieved, leaving the intruders, i.e. members of the Outgroup on the battlefield to rot, thereby deviating from the standard burial practice. The standard of which during the Iron Age is cremation. During the deposition act itself, more or less exclusively larger bones were collected, and signs of disrespect can be seen in the case of the four pelvic bones strung up on a stick, as well as loose extremities and heads. Few artifacts have been recovered during the excavation, indicating that the bodies had been looted before being deposited. The location itself is a part of the Illerup Valley, a place known for its weapon deposits, and is as tradition dictates situated peripherally. It is therefore likely that it was expected that the remains would be collected by the surviving intruders, but since this didn't happen, the locals cleansed their lands from the dead, depositing their remains in the wetlands of Alken Enge.

7.3 The Sandby Borg massacre

Sandby Borg has already proved itself to be a gruesomely intriguing context, and in the future further results will provide us with more interpretations of what happened in the fort. Giving it a brief look in this thesis however with the data presented, we can make the following conclusions: Out of the human remains, comprising of at least ten individuals, none have been buried as practices would have demanded. They are in no way organized, nor are they disorganized. Instead, they are simply left where they fell. The skeletal trauma that has been analyzed so far indicates that they met a violent end in a massacre during a massacre (Sandbyborg.se). It is difficult to see if the skeletal material has been defiled in any way postmortem. This however does not exclude defiling acts antemortem. So far, the excavation has yielded few signs of looting, but it is possible that only specific, personal items were taken such as belts and weapons. The location of the fort, as has been discussed above, deviates from the other ring forts in the manner of its location by the coastline and this location can be seen as peripheral. An important fact is that the individuals found in the fort were all left there to rot; neither buried or disturbed afterwards, would suggest that no one had

the intention or will to give them a proper burial. After the massacre, the fort would serve as a warning of what awaits unwanted settlers, similar to the fields of Alken Enge and the killing fields of Kalkriese.

7.4 The Ridgeway Hill and Oxford burial pits

The mass graves of Ridgeway Hill and Oxford also constitute mass graves dedicated to members of the Outgroup. At both sites can a clear disorganization within the mass graves be seen and little effort, other than piling the bodies in the mass graves was made. Although buried in the ground, the mass graves differ slightly from the standard form of burial. If the victims were considered Christian, they ought to have been buried in consecrated ground, instead of simply dumped in the ground. If still pagan, they would likely have been cremated. At Ridgeway hill, at least three skulls are missing, indicating that three skulls were taken from the site, or maybe placed near it as a symbol. Defiling the bodies and taking their heads can be seen as a final punishment, is in itself a statement that they were unwanted.

Neither textiles nor any artifacts were recovered during excavation, indicating that the individuals at Ridgeway Hill might have been stripped naked before being executed, and that any belongings were taken from them. At Oxford, many of the individuals showed signs of trauma, five of which showed signs of decapitation attempts. If these wounds were inflicted peri- or postmortem is unknown, but could signify an attempt by an angry mob to take the heads from the victims as an act of disrespect.

Neither was there any artifacts connected to the victims recovered at the Oxford mass grave, indicating that these individuals were looted before being deposited. The location of the Ridgeway Hill mass grave is peripheral; situated near a road at the parish border, making it an ideal site to stage an execution and a mass grave since anyone traveling the road would have to pass by it. Thereby, capturing a group of invading Norsemen, executing them and staging their bodies by the road would serve as an effective deterrent and warning to other Norsemen passing by, as well as a symbol of Anglo-Saxon resistance against invaders. The site of the Oxford mass grave indicates that it was not meant to be remembered, but still serve as a fitting final unchristian resting place for a group of unwanted people for an angry mob.

7.5 The Sigtuna cemetery mass grave

Sigtuna makes for an interesting case study, since little is known about this mass grave, but its position, contents and its arrangement gives us some clues. I argue that the mass grave at Sigtuna constitutes an Outgroup deposition, despite the fact that several requirements for an Ingroup deposition is met. I believe that these individuals were locals, cut down in a massacre. Not by foreigners, but by other locals. Although the victims received a Christian burial; in consecrated ground and in an E-W direction, it is the disorganization that leads me to the Outgroup verdict.

The victims have simply been placed on top of each other, some on their back, some on their stomach; indicating that little effort and respect shown to them other than giving them a burial at the early cemetery.

Located in the S-E corner of the cemetery, a location which could be seen as peripheral, it is apparent that the only effort placed in the making of this mass grave is that it had to be within the confines of the church grounds. It is therefore possible to consider the thought that these individuals might not have considered themselves Christian, a fact which resulted in their demise. Due to their non-Christian nature, it is possible that whoever buried them considered the act to have been the only right thing to do, to in a way save them and allow them to rest. This assumption is further supported by the location of the mass grave itself; despite hundreds of years of burials at the cemetery, no recent graves have disturbed the mass grave. This means that the grave's location, its victims and the reasons for their demise was known.

7.6 Sandbjerget mass grave

What we know of the mass grave encountered as Sandbjerget near Naestved is that a total of ca 90 individuals have been recovered during two separate instances; during 1994 and during the 19th century. Several of these individuals have suffered sharp force trauma (Jørgensen 1994; 6). The likely scenario that spawned this mass grave is an alleged attack on the town where the defenders were able to routed the attackers after which they deposited the bodies in the sandy hills of Sandbjerget (Jørgensen 1994; 4). There is no apparent organization in the mass grave and little care has been shown to the remains. The standard form of burial of the time; apart from being buried in the ground, is not adhered to, since the ground is not consecrated, nor are the victims dressed in shrouds as would be standard for a Christian grave. Aside from a few metal artifacts, no further artifacts belonging to the victims were recovered, indicating that the bodies were looted before being deposited into the mass grave. The sandy hills are also the site where several late Iron Age graves (Jørgensen 1994; 3) have been encountered, which means that similar to both Ridgeway Hill and Oxford, the site was a fitting, yet unchristian resting place, well visible from the town.

7.7 The literary sources

Four of the literary sources presented in this thesis can be considered to depict an Outgroup deposition act, or an act connected to an Outgroup, the first of which being the story of King Ottar in the Ynglinga saga. In it we learn that the dead king is brought ashore by his enemies, placed atop of a hill and left to rot. Further on, the story of Magnus Gode gives us a tale of vengeance, how the bodies after the battle are piled together and fed to the eagles. Tacitus gives us in his Annals the description of the aftermath and how the Germani have staged the remains at the battlefield, six years after the battle of Teutoburger Forest.

Common for all of these is that they all describe the Outgroup deposition act. From the Ynglinga saga and the story of Magnus Gode, bodies are gathered and left to rot on the battlefield. This is the stage before someone decides to deposit the bodies in a mass grave; if that happens at all, as described in the Annals of Tacitus accounts of Kalkriese, and what we also see at both Alken Enge and Sandby Borg.

The Jomsvikingasaga is in a way the closest account and portrayal of what we see at Ridgeway Hill, although its prelude. It is a portrayal that might even have inspired the act of how to dispose of the invading Norsemen. In neither of the cases is any effort put into giving the remains a dignifying treatment and in none of the sources is a proper burial given, as common practice would dictate. Remains are instead collected, likely looted and left to rot on a nameless battlefield, somewhere far off in the landscape. In other words, these sources recount the events that we later find in the form of mass graves; how members of an Outgroup are dealt with before being deposited into the ground. Needless to say, a fate like this must have been a horrible one, for a soldier or warrior, forgotten and left to rot.

8 THE INGROUP DEPOSITION ACT

The *Ingroup deposition act* describes how the remains of members of the Ingroup are dealt with by other members of the Ingroup, e.g. surviving brothers-in-arms, family or allies. As with the Outgroup deposition act, logistics are always a factor regarding on how much effort, time and manpower is spent on burial and retrieving remains. Contrary to the logistic matter of members of an Outgroup, members of an Ingroup will always be prioritized and more time and logistical effort will always be put into them. Similar to the question on who belongs to the Outgroup, the qualifications to be counted as a member of the Ingroup are irrelevant since this definition always change through history. As with the previous act I argue that certain mass graves carry certain qualifications. These qualifications (together with the *stage* presented above) shall be taken into consideration when uncovering and discussing the identity of the individuals in a mass grave and its use and purpose.

- Order and/or organization of the remains within in the mass grave.
- An obvious care shown to the remains; no looting or defiling.
- Conformity to standard burial practice. I.e. Cremation or inhumation.
- A central location of the mass grave or monument, i.e. near an administrative centre, settlement or construction of strategic importance.

From the table, the three highlighted case studies constitute as mass graves created through the Ingroup deposition act. The Slagelse Trelleborg will also be included

SITE	DATING	ORGANISATION	LANDSCAPE	IDENTITY
Kalkriese	AD 9	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Alken Enge	1st cent. AD	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Skedemosse	AD 200-500	Disorganized	Peripheral	Triumph
Salme	AD 750	Organized	Not applicable	Ingroup
Oxford	AD 893-978	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Ridgeway Hill	AD 970-1025	Disorganized	Peripheral	Outgroup
Sigtuna	AD 880-1000	Disorganized	Central	Outgroup
Visby	1361	Combination	Central	Combination
Uppsala	1520	Organized	Central	Combination

8.1 The Salme boats

The two boat graves at Salme are the first Ingroup deposition act. The graves themselves mirror a common Scandinavian boat grave from the same time, with the exception that together, the two boats contain some 35 individuals. In Salme I, the remains of seven individuals are all buried in an organized manner. Although not organized in the same way as Salme II, the individuals in Salme I are arranged at their stations; at the helm and the mast. Some effort and care was put into their arrangements but little other than placing them at their stations was done. Salme II contains 28 individuals. However they are not placed at their stations, instead they are stacked together, arranged in three layers on top of each other, shoulder to shoulder. Both Salme I and II have remained undisturbed since their creation.

In order to protect these individuals from the elements, their shields have been placed on top of them along with sand and stones from the beach. The common form of burial during the Vendel period is cremation, but from high status boat graves we know that in many cases the body has simply been laid to rest within it, thereby maintaining the standard burial practice of the Vendel period. The location of the boat grave cannot be classified as either central or peripheral since it is placed at a beach on the island of Saaremaa.

Instead, the displays and location of the two boats take on the role of a monument and are meant to be seen by boats passing by the small peninsula. If the battle that preceded these two mass graves took place at sea, it is likely that the Norsemen retreated back to the peninsula, dragged two of their boats onto shore and arranged their dead in the boats before covering them with sand and rocks. Had it been at home, some of these individuals would have been given separate burials and mounds, but it is likely that there was not time to do this here; instead burying them *en masse* like brothers-in-arms.

8.2 The Trelleborg at Slagelse

Within the confines of the Trelleborg at Slagelse, Denmark, three mass graves have been recorded, containing a total of 20 individuals, both men and women. If the site has ever been attacked remains unknown but cannot be ruled out. In grave 23, we find the first ten individuals, buried shoulder to shoulder. A few signs of skeletal trauma have been recorded on some of these individuals. Grave 47 consists of five individuals placed shoulder to shoulder. In grave 87 however, the last five individuals have been placed in two layers, with three at the bottom and two placed on top but in reverse (Lynnerup *et al* 2010, 480). The arrangement of the grave are organized and has been done with care. Although no artifacts were found in any of the mass graves, it is important to note that this time period is still in a transitional phase between two religions.

Not only do the three mass graves conform to the Christian burial practice with a typical lack of artifacts. These 20 individuals have also turned out to have varying origins, consisting of Danes, but also individuals from Slavic regions of Europe (Lynnerup *et al* 2010, 487). As mentioned before, the location of these mass graves is at the cemetery within the confines of the Trelleborgs battlements. The function of a garrison is to provide security to an area, and it is not impossible that on at least one occasion, the soldiers of the garrison were engaged in combat, after which the fallen stationed at the Trelleborg garrison were brought back there for burial. However, due to the presence of female individuals within these mass graves and at the burial ground, and that we do not know if they held an active military role, we must also assume that the Trelleborg housed soldier's families (Lynnerup *et al* 2010, 482). In either case, they were, according to the care shown them upon burial, considered part of the Ingroup.

8.3 Mass graves of Visby

Some 400 years later, we reach the battle of Visby in 1361. As mentioned, one of the first engagements between the peasant militia and the Danish forces stood at Fjäle marsh near Mästerby. The casualties from this engagement have never been found, but are likely buried by adjacent parish churches. The second, larger engagement stood outside the city of Visby where the militia was cut down by the Danish forces and were interred at a Christian Cistercian monastery just outside of town.

In the excavated mass graves we find the remains of both sides of the conflict; a vast majority of militia men, but also a small number of Danish soldiers and German mercenaries, all buried together. As tradition dictates, the winners would loot the bodies of the defeated; leading to few finds of war materiel other than a few armors in the mass graves. It is though likely that looting was not prioritized since the real price was the looting of the town of Visby and the countryside. Little care and respect have been shown to the majority of these remains since they have been deposited in a most disorganized fashion. In mass grave number 3 and 4 however we find the upper layer of remains to be organized, with the victims lying shoulder to shoulder to one another. Situated in the upper layer mean that these individuals were the last to be buried before the mass grave were sealed with lime and dirt.

Why these individuals have been laid to rest with care and respect while the rest clearly haven't, is unknown. That these individuals were people of status is unlikely since little respect have been shown to any of the 1700 others in the mass graves. More likely is that these individuals were wounded in the battle, only to die hours or a few days after it and thereby being the last ones to be buried. It is also possible that mass graves 3 and 4 were the last graves to be closed. That when the last casualties from the battle had perished and been placed in the mass graves, the monks, nuns and priests arranged them as they would during a regular burial and then conduct a general funeral sermon for all the dead before sealing the last two mass graves. The burial itself, though it being a mass grave and that much of the remains have been handled with little care and respect, it can be considered Christian, since the burial site itself lies on the grounds of a Cistercian monastery, thereby adhering to the standard burial practice.

What we can see so far is that the Visby mass graves are a combination between both an Ingroup as well as an Outgroup deposition act. Since the mass graves of Visby contain the remains from both sides of the battle, we must look to a third party. Due to the disorganization we know that little care and effort has been shown to the dead. Looting has taken place, claiming weapons, some pieces of armor and a few personal affects but some items were left with and on the victims. The fact that all of the victims have been deposited in consecrated grounds at the monastery points that they were deposited by a burial detail most likely consisting of mercenaries, townspeople from Visby along with priests, monks and nuns, more eager of ridding the fields outside of the walls of bodies rotting in the sun and laying them to rest, rather than trying to make a statement or a symbol out of the them.

8.4 Uppsala and the battle of Good Friday

Although little is known about the actual battle, it would appear as the militia had the initiative and were successful against the Danish forces at the beginning of the battle. This soon changed though, leading to the point where the Danish forces routed the militia. How many casualties the opposing sides suffered is unknown and the contemporary sources are likely exaggerated. The casualties from the Danish side were likely buried at or near the Cathedral and the various churches around Uppsala. The militia however is said to have been left to the crows on the battlefield, forbidden to be buried in consecrated ground by the bishop himself. The mass grave could be viewed as an Outgroup deposition in a number of ways but I argue, similar to Visby, that it is instead two stages that can be seen in the mass grave; beginning with an Outgroup deposition, but ends in an Ingroup deposition.

After the battle the bodies appear to have been looted since few artifacts were recovered in the mass grave. Here at this stage, we see a tendency of this deposition to be an Outgroup deposition. The reason for why these individuals were to serve as symbols and warnings was likely because that the treaty of the Kalmar Union of 1397 was still in effect.

King Kristian II had legitimate claims to the crown, a claim even supported by the bishop Gustav Trolle in Uppsala. This would mean that Sten Sture and his followers would have been seen as rebels trying to oppose the legitimate claims by Kristian II, and should thereby also be treated as such in death.

How long they were left on the battlefields to serve as warnings for others is uncertain, other than it was for some time. However, as time passed, the remains of the militia were moved from the fields and deposited at a different site, likely thanks to the dissolve of the Kalmar Union and a shift in regime when Gustav Vasa was crowned king in 1523. At the new burial site located at the foot of the castle, loose limbs, skulls and relatively intact bodies were gathered and arranged in a more organized fashion than before. Now, there is instead an apparent will to give these individuals and their remains a decent final resting place and respect. Though the bones and remains were not buried in consecrated ground, their proximity to the town would indicate that these individuals were no longer meant to be forgotten or to serve as warnings, but were now instead allowed to rest.

8.5 Literary sources

From the literary sources, two instances fall within the qualifications of describing an Ingroup deposition act, both however describe a very similar situation. In chapter 23 of the Ynglinga saga we see how Hake is placed in a boat that is set on fire along with his fallen brothers-in-arms. An almost identical description is found in Beowulf and the recount of the Battle of Finnsburg. Here, the nobleman Hnaef is placed on the funeral pyre along with brothers in arms from both sides of the conflict (see section 4.5). What we see here is how an individual takes the remains of the fallen for cremation, though in both cases, only the fallen heroes; Hake and Hnaef is of importance. The two instances are also very similar to what we find at Salme; the two boats, where entire crews have been buried *en masse*.

The difference being that the individuals at Salme were not cremated. What we also learn from the two sources is that members of the Ingroup were buried together instead of individually, and that the practice of cremation could explain the lack of mass graves. However, the frequency of which the hero, the main character or a person of status actually joined his brothers in arms in death is unknown.

9 THE TRIUMPH DEPOSITION ACT

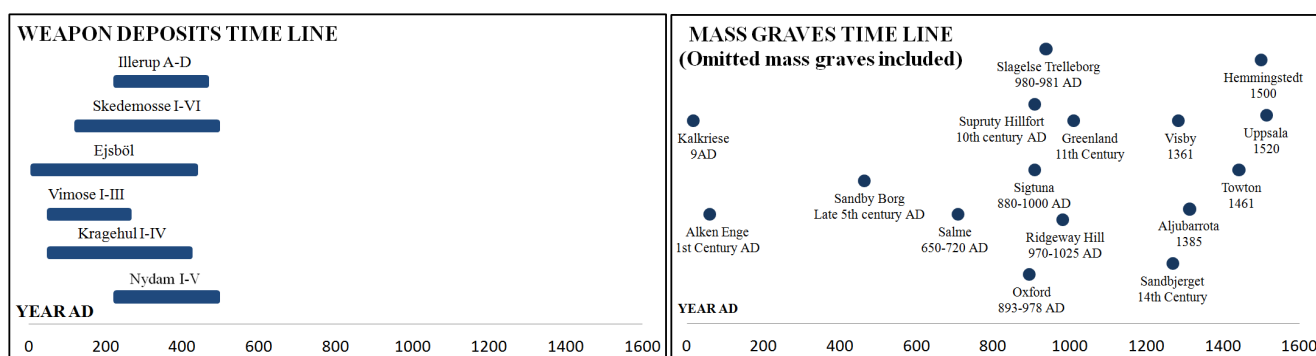
There are few mass graves during the 1st and 7th century, and though the Vendel period shows a decline in the scale and intensity of warfare, the periods prior to the Vendel period, does not. High scale and intensity of warfare should entail higher number of casualties, leading to an increased number of mass graves. The problem is that we do not seem to find them, at least not on land. Since Scandinavia cross the military threshold during the early Iron Age we should also be able to see this in the archaeological material.

I argue that evidence of this crossing during the early Iron Age comes in the form of wetland weapon deposits. These weapon depositions not only fill the void of mass graves during the first five centuries AD, they also serve as the mass graves for the symbols of war and dead men, instead of their corporeal remains. We know that these weapon caches were deposited after battles, and I argue that the deposition itself was a dramatized act, a *Triumph*. The Roman Triumph was the act where enemy hostages, prisoners and war materiel were brought back to Rome for display, distribution and destruction. What we learn from both Orosius and Jordanes is that both the Germani and the Goths had similar traditions; here referred to as the *Triumph deposition act*. The Triumph deposition act is a part of the early Iron Age warfare as well as a continuation of the acts mentioned above, with the addition of a votive deposition and destruction of war gear.

Requirements and qualifications of a Triumph deposition act are as follows:

- The presence of war related materiel; weapons, shields or armor.
- Burning, breaking and/or destruction of said war materiel before deposition.
- Votive deposition; the war gear is not meant to be retrieved.

The common denominator for most wetland depositions of weapons are that they begin in the 1st century AD and most of them cease in the 6th century. Wetland depositions see a short renaissance during the Viking Age where we also see the reintroduction of larger warring units. These depositions however, are smaller in size. Other objects used in sacrificial rituals; items, animals and humans, appear throughout the Iron Age, and does not cease until the end of the Iron Age. Clearly, these objects are a part of a different sphere; fertility, not war and violence as the weapons.



Graph 1:2, 2:2. If we look to these graphs, we can see that it is the *Triumph*; the weapon depositions of the first five centuries that fills the void of mass graves.

9.1 Skedemosse

Throughout Scandinavia, more than 25 separate sites containing war materiel has been recorded, with each site often holding more than one separate deposition. Among these sites, Skedemosse on Öland, Sweden, was chosen as a case study. The bog itself holds the deposited war materiel from at least six separate engagements, consisting of spears and swords as well as a few axes and shield bosses.

Many of the swords had been both broken and bent out of shape before being deposited in bundles along with loose sword fittings. The approximately 1500 recovered spear fragments show that also they were destroyed before deposition in order to prevent retrieval and further use. The site was in use long before the weapons were sacrificed there, and continued to be in use up until the late Iron Age, giving us a hint of the importance of this particular site in the Öland societies. Aside from the weapons, Skedemosse contain a large amount skeletal material of humans and animals; a material connected to fertility rituals, human sacrifices as well as horse related rituals, as the name of the site implies. Not only has Öland shown that its inhabitants had contacts with the Roman Empire, but it is also very possible that they shared many of the Roman war-influences we also see in Denmark; Illerup, Nydam, Ejsbøl, Vimose and Kragehul. Some of these sites appear to have been used solely for the purpose of depositing weapons, while other appears to have had multifunctional use. Therefore, it is difficult to analyze and discuss the role of their location in the landscape. As mentioned earlier, many of them lies in the periphery but at the same time has a central role since they are placed between settlements.

9.2 Orosius, Jordanes and Beowulf

What is also difficult to analyze is the wetlands connection to religion. What we know of religion during the Vendel period and the Viking Age is that it is, although still a young, a more crystallized belief system than what we see during the early Iron Age. The Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period appear in many ways as a transitional proto-phase with a mix of Roman and Germani culture. If we take a look at the literary sources; Orosius, Jordanes and Beowulf, we can shed more light on this practice of deposition of weapons.

Orosius describes the practices of the Cimbri and the Teutones and how they sacrifice everything they had captured after routing the Roman forces after an engagement. Clothing were cut to shreds, silver and gold were thrown into the river, armor was destroyed, Roman horses were drowned and captured Romans were hung up in trees. Jordanes provides us with a similar event. However, they differ in the manner of describing names, and in his work Jordanes gives us more of treatise of the Gothic tribes, than a recollection of events. What he tells us is that the Goths executed those they had captured in order to pay tribute and to appease their war god, here named Mars. To Mars they also devoted part of the loot taken, and conquered armors are hung up in trees. The acts we see here is also what Tacitus tells us that the Roman forces encounter, though its aftermath, upon their return to the Teutoburger forest. Why Jordanes would name the Gothic war god Mars is understandable since it is

written from an Eastern Roman Empire point of view. What we learn from these two authors is that after a successful battle, Goths and Germani warriors sacrifice not only animals and captives, but also part of conquered war gear, and I believe it is safe to assume that this practice was also conducted after a victorious engagement against other Gothic and Germani. Captives, loot and more important; war gear are simply dedicated items to the war god, a tribute and a way to appease him after a successful battle.

What we learn from the epic of Beowulf gives us a different point of view to the purpose of sacrificing war gear. In Beowulf, there are three important passages; the first where he receives the sword Hrunting from Unferd in chapter 21, and the two passages from chapter 22 when Beowulf battles Grendels mother in her den. The sword Hrunting is described as a beautiful sword adorned with ring, a type we are familiar with during the late Migration and Vendel period. The owner however, Unferd, is not described as a fitting wielder but instead as a cowardly man, a man not brave enough to risk his life for adventure. In chapter 22, when Beowulf descends into the lake to bring back the remains of Grendel, he encounters Grendels mother. Upon reaching her den, Beowulf and the mother fight each other. Beowulf uses Hrunting when trying to give her the killing blow, but it does not hurt her. He throws the sword away and picks up an old sword from the ground.

The reason why the sword Hrunting does not bite has been a topic of much debate (Hughes, Geoffrey 1977, 58). In the context of this thesis however, I find the likely explanation for this to be that Unferd is described to be a drunken coward. Though his sword and heirloom has a long history of blood and violence, Hrunting is only as good as its owner. Unferd is a cowardly character in this epic, a character that use drunken words when fighting instead of a weapon, and has lost his epithet as a hero. Ergo, his sword can also be considered cowardly and is therefore unable to cause damage. The sword which Beowulf now uses to kill Grendels mother is described as a sturdy sword, made of *giants*. However, it is unlikely that the sword is made by giants and that it is magical. Instead, I argue that the word *giant* is a metaphor for *enemy* or *foe*. This would mean that the sword Beowulf picks up from the ground, a sword which only he is able to wield, is a sword that once belonged to an old and mighty foe; a Danish warlord or rivaling chieftain that was defeated in battle and whose sword was sacrificed in a wetland along with the rest of the weapons of the defeated army.

This theory is further supported by the fact that the den of Grendels mother is at the bottom of a stormy lake; i.e. at the bottom of one of the sacred wetlands of Denmark, wetlands where we find the majority of all weapons deposited during the first five centuries AD. Although Beowulf is written a few centuries after the act of depositing weapons had fell out of practice, it is still apparent that although this practice had ceased, it had not been forgotten.

9.3 Into the bog we go

So what does the Triumph act represent? What does it mean? From Orosius, Jordanes and Tacitus we are given an insight into the Gothic and the Germanic form and practice of the Triumph deposition act. Contrary to the Roman form of Triumph, the purpose of the Germani and Gothic was to pay tribute and to appease the god of war for luck in battle. From Beowulf, written down centuries later, we learn that the practice of depositing weapons has not been forgotten, but has merely ceased. It was known that the deposited weapons were once wielded by ancient foes. They are not meant to be wielded by men, whereas only Beowulf was strong enough to do so due to his epithet as a hero.

What we also learn that a weapon is only as good as its owner. Unferd was a coward, thereby rendering Hrunding useless against the monster which is Grendel's mother; one of the foes it ought to have killed if Unferd had not been a coward. I therefore find it likely that the idea that weapons are colored, even tainted by their owners, played a vital part in both Gothic and Germanic warrior culture, but also in the Triumph act. The owners of these weapons were considered enemies and members of an Outgroup, so instead of claiming and using conquered weapons, many of them were instead destroyed and deposited to prevent further use. As these weapons were considered tainted and therefore dedicated to the war god so they would not be used again by mortal men. At the same, depositing swords not only denied an enemy to bring their symbols of their trade with them in death, but also maintained the control and flow of weapons in the early south Scandinavian societies.

To summarize this; I argue that from the literary sources and from the archaeological material, such as Skedemosse, that depositing weapons is an important part of warfare during the first five centuries AD. The reason for this is that weapons conquered from a defeated enemy are dedicated to the war god, a tribute. We also know that the earliest weapon deposits can be found during the last centuries BC, e.g. the Hjortspring find, which means that the Triumph act is based off an already existing practice.

We also learn that weapons and other war gear might have been considered to be tainted by their users and were therefore not meant to be used again; therefore they are destroyed before deposition. This also denied an enemy a powerful symbol in death and limited the amounts of weapons in circulation. The weapons found in many wetlands are highly standardized in the first centuries AD, giving us an indication that, similar to the Roman Empire, focus is placed on weapons, tactics and military ideals, not on individual warriors, prestige and status as we see in Beowulf during the Vendel period. It is not soldiers that are of importance during these centuries; they are rendered faceless in history.

It is their deeds and the symbol of war and warfare that is of prime importance. It is these symbols that are retrieved from the battlefield and later destroyed and sacrificed, thereby in a way, also serving as a mass grave; not for dead men, but for the symbols of men at war.

The practice of retrieving weapons from a battlefield and subsequently destroying and depositing them, lasts for some 500 years before ceasing. Why this practice begins and why it ends, can best be explained by the crossing of the military threshold and later, the fall of the

Western Roman Empire. Crossing the military threshold is done when more and more resources are dedicated to the military sphere. This happens when small “states” in modern day Denmark, northern Germany and Southern Sweden see an increase in the scale of violence, technological advances in metallurgy and extensive contacts with the Roman Empire. This crossing gives birth to a larger social stratum of professional soldiers/mercenaries and a warrior culture, a culture that is intertwined with the sacrificial wetland cult we see during this time period.

At the fall of the Western Roman Empire and when Scandinavia steps into the Vendel Period, the weapon deposition-practice dies out. This is not only due to a decline in temperature, the collapse of the western civilization and the plague of Justinian, but also a decline in violence. In the epic of Beowulf, this wetland culture is represented by Grendel and his mother. The new culture that is born during the decline of the 6th century; the centralization of power around halls and, is represented by the hall of Heorot, the king Hrothgar and the hero Beowulf. The attacks on the hall by Grendel represent how the old ways comes to haunt the new, with Beowulf prevailing; thus ending the old ways. The time of the great weapon depositions has passed; they see a short renaissance again during the Viking age when warring units once again increase in numbers, and the faceless soldier reemerges, creating the need to destroy not only him, but the symbol of him.

10 THE MASS GRAVE EVOLUTION

10.1 Mass graves during the years 0-550 AD

Although this part of the Iron Age is rife with war gear and military materiel, we can only find three mass graves during this period; Kalkriese, Alken Enge and Sandby Borg. As stated in the history of violence further back, this is the period in which Scandinavia crosses the military threshold, a fact supported by the tremendous amounts of deposited weapons throughout the Scandinavian wetlands. These weapons have always been assumed to derive from defeated armies, but where are they? We know that from the early Iron Age, Scandinavia sees many of its military influences from the Roman Empire, such as fighting technique, weaponry and military organization. The weapons deposited in the wetlands show a clear standardization of the era’s weapons, but apart from Alken Enge, there are almost no traces of their users.

If we look to the Roman legionnaires; The Marian reforms during the last century BC allowed landless men to join the Legion, thereby increasing the size of the Roman army. With an increased amount of individuals owning no land however, their war gear instead became their most important possession. And it is very likely that the same principle applied the Scandinavian warriors and soldiers of the early Iron Age. War gear, though standardized, was something personal. War gear can also be used to store memories, for example by inscribing them with a users name or a mark. This also means that soldiers, both in the Legion, but also the Scandinavian armies, were little more than faceless soldiers, leaving behind nothing more than maybe an inscribed piece of armor or weapon after death. In large scale warfare, focus

and history centers on individuals of status and on war gear and its utilization in the various weapon systems found on the battlefield, and of course; the ideals of war and warrior culture.

With this in mind, we get a better understanding of the lack of mass graves during the early Iron Age in Scandinavia: After a battle, skirmish or other form of engagement; the winner would be able to claim his fallen. Therefore, during the early Iron Age, we should be able to find mass graves that hold the result of an Ingroup deposition act, but clearly we don't. Instead we must assume that this act took place at the battlefield, where fallen members of the Ingroup were cremated as burial customs would dictate. Some individuals might have been retrieved to receive burial at home as we learn from Tacitus, making it likely that some weapon graves from this time period represents those fallen warriors that were brought home.

Parallel to the Ingroup act, the battlefield is looted. As tradition would dictate, the winner would have the honor to loot the defeated, to claim spoils from the dead and their camp or even settlement before leaving the remains of the defeated enemy to rot. This is also where we should see the Outgroup deposition act, but apart from Kalkriese, Alken Enge and Sandby Borg, there are no archaeological records of mass graves dedicated to members of the Outgroup. This could be explained in the following way: After having their remains left behind on the battlefield by the victors, arranged or left to rot, the remains are retrieved by surviving members of the defeated Ingroup. What Tacitus tells us of course works both ways. In the same way as the Romans return to the Teutoburger forest, the remains of their fellow brothers-in-arms are cremated or buried at the battlefield, or if logistics allow; brought home. It is of course also likely that surviving members of a defeated Ingroup never returns to the battlefield or the site of a massacre as we see at Sandby Borg. Instead, they are instead left to rot and to be scattered by scavengers and carrion birds until nature has taken its course and buried the remains, or that the locals rid the site of remains, as is the case at Alken Enge.

Though the remains are dealt with in two out of these three cases, little focus and priority is placed on these individual warriors. In a way, casualties are viewed as slag-of-war, a byproduct necessary to reach a strategic goal. Therein lay the gains of war; new war gear, luxury items, territory, resources, increased influence, power and dominance as well as a fueled warrior ideal. What is of importance is not the In- or Outgroup deposition acts, but the Triumph act. Conquered weapons and loot after a battle are, as Jordanes and Orosius tells us, dedicated to specific deities. They are destroyed and sacrificed into wetlands (and in some cases on dry land) to appease a deity as a tribute and an offering for the victory on the battlefield. This however is not the only function of the Triumph. They are meant to destroy and seal off the memory and power of a defeated enemy. The destruction and deposition of war gear not only denies the Outgroup warriors the prime symbols of their trade. They also represent the prime mass graves of the early Iron Age; where tainted war gear, memories and symbols of a defeated foe are buried.

10.2 Mass graves during the years 550-800 AD

The two boats at Salme are the only mass graves found from this period. This is not because of the times being more peaceful than the one prior to it, but because of the scale of Scandinavian warfare has decreased. The Western Roman Empire has fallen and Europe lives through not only a short drop in global temperature but also the Plague of Justinian. The time of the faceless soldiers, warriors and standardized war gear is over. Instead, we see the continuation of a social elite with roots in the Migration period, a time of heroes and gold fitted weaponry, helmets and shields. It is during this and the previous period the epic of Beowulf and the Ynglinga sagas takes place, and as we learn from Beowulf; the wetland cult and warfare from the early Iron Age is still fresh in memory. Warfare in Scandinavia is now conducted at a small endemic scale with small war bands. The warfare itself is centered on Hall buildings and settlements, more of an internal power struggle between various Scandinavian kings over territories, status and influence, than incursion into Europe.

As tradition would dictate, the winning side would have the opportunity after a battle to loot the battlefield or area in which they fought, but also to retrieve the fallen brothers-in-arms. High status individuals are given a proper burial in the form of a mound or boat grave, as those we find in for instance central Sweden. Common soldiers would most likely have been cremated as common burial tradition would demand. Examples of this can be found in the Ynglinga saga and in Beowulf. After the battle, the fallen are gathered and cremated together. The defeated Outgroup members are left on the battlefield, examples of which we can find in the Ynglinga sagas.

However, since the scale of warfare is lower than earlier and war has become more centralized, it is possible that even the defeated Outgroup members were more often than not, retrieved after battle. Weapon graves are also likely to contain a certain number of individuals that fell in battle but were later retrieved. In short, the void of mass graves during the mid part of the Iron Age can best be explained with that warfare was conducted in such low scale that casualties were few. Those who fell were likely more often than not retrieved or cremated at the site of the battle. Though the sagas mention bodies being left to the crows and eagles at the battlefield, it is unlikely that they remained there for long before being buried. The reason why the two Salme boats are an anomaly is likely because there was no time to cremate the bodies or to give them individual burials as would have been the case at home.

10.3 Mass graves during the years 800-1050 AD

Scandinavia and Europe more and more adapts the feudal system at the end of the Iron Age, further centralizing and uniting territories, forcing warring states to once again increase the scale and intensity of warfare. For about 300 years, England, together with North and East Europe, sees several waves of Norse expansion, some more peaceful than others. The increased scale and intensity of violence brings with it an increased number of casualties but there are still few mass graves to be found. Like earlier, individuals of status are always retrieved as long as the situation allows. The golden age of heroes is over. A short renaissance

of weapon depositions in wetlands follows, along with the birth of semi-heroic characters, and as armies once again increase in size, the reintroduction of the faceless warriors and nameless cannon fodder. What we also see during this period is an increased rise of Christianity, replacing much of the heathendom and along with it; burial practices where interring a body instead of cremating it becomes the norm. This change in practice should mean that late Iron Age mass graves should be easier to find, but that does not seem to be the case.

Warfare still follows the tradition where the winners are allowed to retrieve the remains of their brothers-in-arms to loot the fallen enemy and the area in where they fought. We could assume that the fallen foe is still left to rot on the battlefield, but we find little evidence of this. The lack of mass graves could be explained by that cremation is still very much in practice in Scandinavia. Another explanation is that the scale of warfare has increased, and with it small armies. Together with the increased number of settlements, fortifications and administrative centers, it becomes more and more logistically possible to retrieve remains after battles and bury them near these, as we can see at the Slagelse Trelleborg.

The two English mass graves however do not follow this pattern. At Ridgeway Hill, the attackers have been defeated and subsequently executed. Since there are no survivors, and that they do not belong to any English Ingroups, there are no one to retrieve and properly bury the bodies. Instead, due to the ongoing Norse invasion of England, they are made an example off and given a makeshift final resting place. Oxford is very much similar to Ridgeway hill, and though little care is shown to the remains, they are not left to rot above ground but are made an example of before buried.

10.4 Mass graves during the years 1050-1550 AD

With the Middle Ages, the feudal society takes on a more fundamental form and Christianity becomes the standard religion. Settlements evolve into town and cities, and new fortifications and churches are built. Technological progress is made in the field of warfare and sizes of armies are steadily increased. Armies are organized in a slightly more evolved and professional form than during the Iron Age. Large parts of armies however still consist of armed peasants. The time of the semi-heroic characters are now over and are instead replaced by knights, generals and a myriad of faceless soldiers. Between the first millennium and up until the 16th century, only a few mass graves have been found.

We know that Christian burial practices demand the remains to be interred instead of being cremated, but as during the latter part of the Iron Age, mass graves are just as rare. People of importance and status such as noblemen and royalties are as a rule retrieved if killed at the battlefield, and buried in churches, cathedrals or cemeteries. Common, faceless soldiers and mercenaries however are either buried at the battlefield, or at a local cemetery.

What we have learned from the late Iron Age, and the rise of Christianity, is that the burial is becoming increasingly more important. The idea that a body should be interred in the ground, consecrated or not, is fundamental since the deceased must be allowed to rest until Judgment

Day. It is this idea that we find in the few Medieval mass graves presented in this thesis; Sigtuna, Slagelse, Sandbjerget, Visby and Uppsala. We know that the grounds at Sigtuna and Visby were consecrated, but if the burial grounds at the Slagelse Trelleborg were so, is unknown. It is though probable since they adhere to standard Christiana burial practices. Sandbjerget and Uppsala however are likely not consecrated. However, despite that these individuals were deposited as Outgroups, they still required an earthly tomb while awaiting Judgment day.

Medieval mass graves are few in number, though greater than those of the Iron Age, and we know that the period itself consisted of numerous wars. The lack of mass graves can therefore best be explained that medieval wars were an evolved form of those during the late Iron Age. Battles, sieges and skirmishes more often than not, took place near fortifications and settlements, thereby effectively solving the logistical task of retrieving bodies. As churches and cemeteries became more common, their grounds were chosen to house soldiers that fell in battle; here the grounds are consecrated and the bodies can be given a final resting place.

11 SAMMANFATTNING

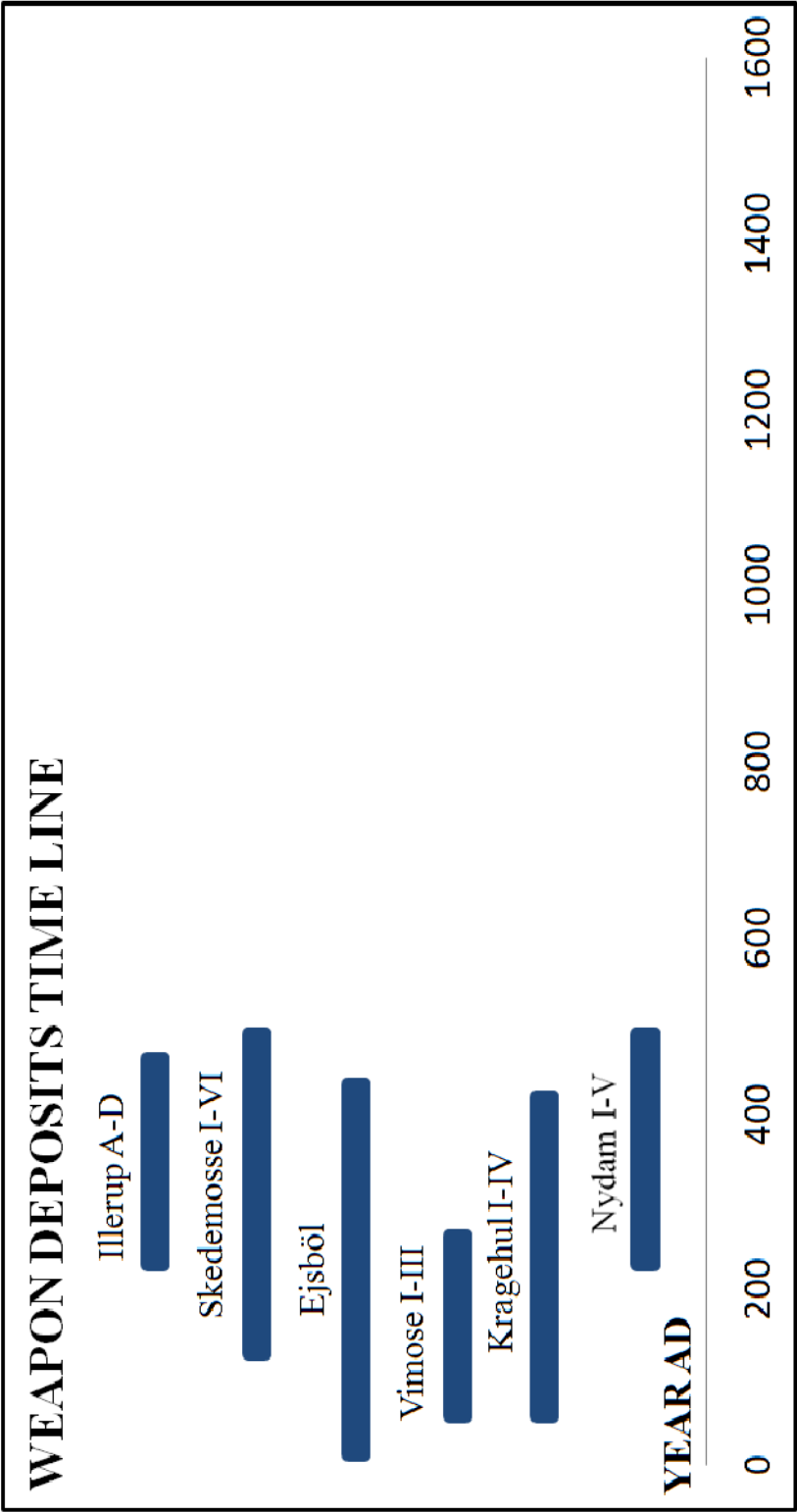
I denna masteruppsats har mitt syfte varit att belysa identiteter i, samt användandet och utvecklingen av massgravar, under järnåldern samt medeltiden. Massgravarnas tillkomst begränsades i denna uppsats till de som tillkommit på grund av våld och krig, och till mitt förfogande hade jag ett arkeologiskt material bestående av nio fallstudier av massgravar och depåer. För att förstå de bakomliggande tankarna och mekanismerna bakom våld mellan de två identiteterna; ingruppen och utgruppen gav jag en inblick i socialpsykologi, och för att förstå utvecklingen och användandet av våld och krig gav jag en överblick över krigets under järnålder och medeltid. För att djupare förstå användandet av massgravar och deponier använde jag mig av historiska källor såsom Beowulf, Jordanes, Tacitus samt Heimskringla. Resultatet av dessa källor i kombination med fallstudierna och socialpsykologin blev följande:

- Syftet med att visa upp de döda och deras krigsutrustning är helt enkelt för att hantera minnet av en viss händelse. Syftet kan även vara att avskräcka eller visa dominans gentemot en annan, helt enkelt genom att göra massgraven till en symbol.
- Sociala identiteter kan urskiljas i massgravar, något som görs genom att analysera statusen på massgraven i sig. Faktorer såsom organisation, respekt, varsamhet vid nedläggning, tecken på plundring eller annan respektlös hantering samt konformitet till begravningspraxis måste alla diskuteras för att kunna avgöra om det är en ingrupp eller en utgrupp som lagts till vila i en massgrav.
- Syftet med vapendeponier under de första århundradena efter Kristi födelse är att tjäna som massgravar. Få massgravar har hittats från denna tid. Att förstöra och deponera en fiendes vapen istället för dennes kropp är praxis då det är vapnet som är symbolen för krig och makt. Individens roll i storskalig krigföring är helt enkelt att bruka vapnet för att uppnå ett mål, och därmed är det av större vikt att förstöra den symbol och det verktyg som brukats mot en.
- Det slutgiltiga monumentet och dess placering varierar beroende på vilken identitet den är gjort för. Placeringen av en utgrupp sker oftast i landskapets periferi och kan ses som en varning eller en maktdemonstration. Ingruppen däremot placeras ofta central för att på så sätt kunna hedras och påminna om en specifik händelse.
- De faktorer som spelar in vid skapandet och användandet av massgravar är dels skalan på krigföringen men även socialpsykologins inverkan. Ju större skala krig utkämpas på, desto fler kommer behöva begravas. Socialpsykologin dikterar sedan hur och varför dessa ska begravas, men även vart och hur massbegravningen sedan ska monumentaliseras.

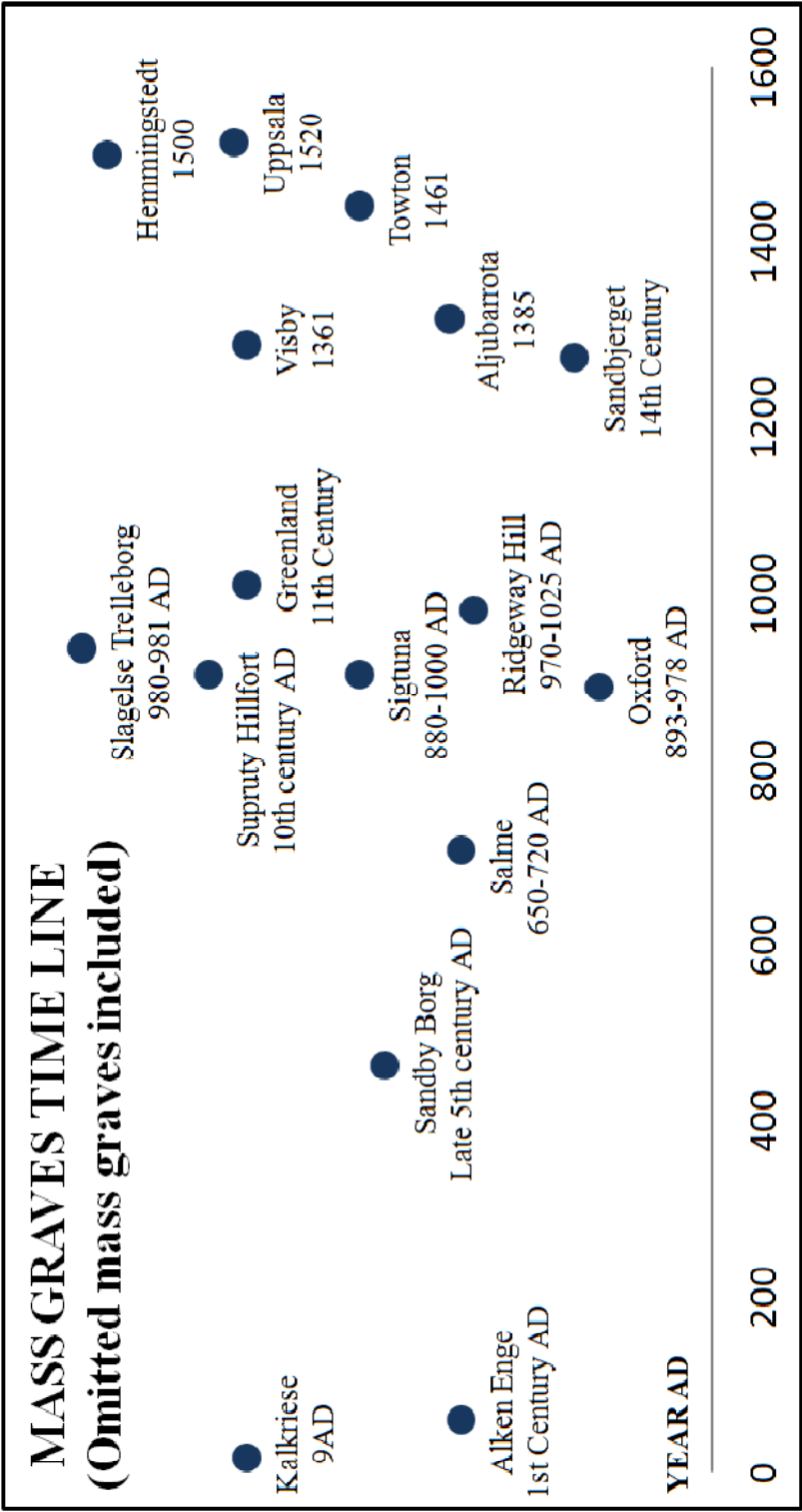
12 APPENDIX

12.1 Graphs

Graph 1:2



Graph 2:2



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