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Medieval Christian invocation inscriptions on sword blades

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The Fyris Sword Project

Over the past few centuries several high quality medieval weapons have been dredged up from the bottom of the River Fyris in Central Uppsala. The Fyris Swords Project is a comparative and multidisciplinary venture, the goal of which is to contextualize these weapons as much as possible. Particular attention is being paid to a few special swords that have intricate inscriptions along the blades, a few of which belong to the Museum Gustavianum's collection of antiquities. The main areas of interest within the project are medieval history, archaeology, epigraphy and linguistics.

The Fyris Swords Project was started in February of 2006 by the Archaeologist John Worley who was soon joined by fellow Archaeologist/ Museologist Gunilla Beckholmen. Thomas Gregor Wagner, Medievalist, joined the team during the summer of 2007. Anna Holst Blennow, Latinist/Epigrapher, joined the group during September of 2008.

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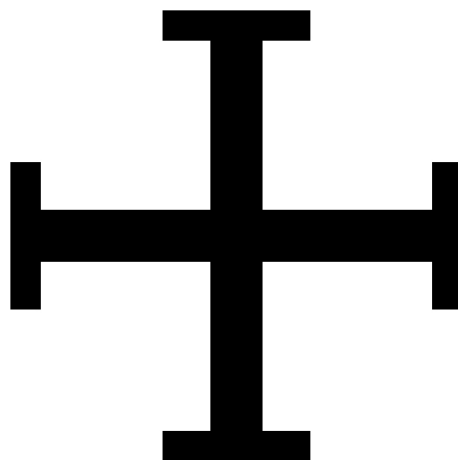
Medieval sword inscriptions: Introduction and previous research

Interpreting medieval sword inscriptions is like trying to crack a mysterious code. Most of the specimens, dating from between the 11th and the 13th centuries, seem to consist of random letter sequences, in a senseless arrangement, at least in the eyes of a modern interpreter. What's more, epigraphic publications concerning weapon inscriptions are quite rare. The most extensive compilation and interpretation of sword blade inscriptions is a Swiss dissertation from 1904 by Rudolph Wegeli¹. In the "Zeitschrift für historische Waffen- und Kostümkunde" his ideas were discussed critically²; some other articles published in the same journal put forth interpretations and readings of particular sword inscriptions³. Further articles or later monographs deal with regional collections⁴. In more recent publications about medieval arms and armor, sword inscriptions play only a minor role, and all interpretations given are repeating Wegeli's fundamental work⁵. A recent Polish dissertation, which focused on early medieval swords from Central and Eastern Europe, discussed the inscriptions on not more than nine pages⁶.

There are no satisfying explanations as to why most blade inscriptions are incomprehensible. Of course, it is likely that the sword smiths who did the metal work for the inscriptions were illiterate; however, the craftsmen could not have failed so regularly and ruined so many valuable blades with illegible inscriptions. Most epigraphic scholars suggest an initial-based abbreviation system; however, this thesis is only to be proved, if the inscrutable alignments of letters could be assigned to a common prayer, psalm or bible quote. This was hitherto only possible, if the inscriptions consisted of (at least some) full Latin words and not only initial sequences⁷. Wegeli himself and Erben tried to relate the suspected initials with a prayer or a sentence spoken in conjunction with the sword presentation ceremony or in German "Schwertleite"⁸. This was a ritual, probably of Germanic origin, in which the father handed down the sword to his grown-up son as a sign that he can defend himself and the tribe. During the Middle Ages the "sword presentation ceremony", performed by the liege lord or a cleric, put the warrior into service of the former, as a vassal in the first case or as a "*miles Christi ad servitium Iesu Christi*" ("soldier of Christ in service of Christ") in the second⁹. Unfortunately, as yet it has not been possible to identify such a traditional type of ceremonial *dicta latina* that was carved on a sword blade. Moreover, this theory presupposes that the inscriptions were generalized¹⁰. However, quite conversely, the inscriptions (even though sometimes showing a constancy of letters) are extremely variable and appear to be very personal. One might say the individual secret of every sword bearer. It must have been a special *dictum* so obvious and so self-evident to him that it was not necessary to spell out its significant meaning.

In Germanic tribes runic inscriptions on swords, axes or even pieces of armor were considered to endow the items with magical powers¹¹, and it is imaginable that this traditional thinking (after an ambivalent period of transition) was transferred to Christian times. Hence the *dicta* on the sword blades were probably supposed to invoke God's holy name and his grace to gain support and protection in battle. Religious rituals or prayers for divine assistance before combat must have been prevalent, particularly in the age of the crusades throughout the 12th and 13th centuries¹². The itineraries of the crusades and the chronicles of the Holy Land often describe this kind of spiritual preparation for battle, mainly guided by bishops, monks or priests. In times of desperation and deprivation God was worshipped by long periods of faste-

ning and sexual abstinence, through pious chants and processions. The latter were performed barefooted, often aggrieved with heavy crosses and in the humble vesture of penitence, for example during the siege of Antioch 1098 or the capture of Jerusalem 1099¹³. There are no hints in the crusader chronicles that the sword played a certain role in this respect. Nevertheless, these cross-shaped weapons were both, symbols of royal and divine power (*“potestas gladii”*), items that were holy and indispensable to the noble warrior class. Swords were treasured status symbols that represented the so called *“cingulum militare”* (“knighthood”)¹⁴, in a manner of speaking: they were a tangible token of knightly awareness. A knight, awaiting the clash of arms, surely prayed with his dear sword in his hands. The chronicler Albert of Aix mentioned religious combat preparations in his *“Historia Hierosolymitana”*. After the defeat of the Christians at Ramla 1102, some knights took shelter in the tower of the urban fortification. Among them was Conrad, the stabularius of Emperor Henry III of Germany, a valiant and fierce champion with his sword (*“...audacia et viribus incomparabilis, gladio precipuas Saracenorum strages exercuit...”*). For three days they held out. Only then, they dared a desperate excursion “after the name of Jesus was invoked and his grace” (*“...invocato nomine Iesu et eius gratia...”*)¹⁵.



Picture 1: A cross potent.

Invocation inscriptions

Wegeli classified the various inscription types for the first time, arranging several groups according to occurring “master names” (for instance ULFBREHT and INGELRED) sometimes endowed with the suffix ME FECIT, – and obvious religious content (IN NOMINE DOMINI or HOMO DEI) as well as recurrent letter combinations such as DIC or NED. However, it is not possible to separate exactly profane from religious content. Often those elements appear combined like on the GICELIN ME FECIT-swords, which have IN NOMINE DOMINI on the other side.

As was mentioned earlier, most of the unidentified medieval sword inscriptions could be invocations. This type is basically characterized by a Christian cross at the beginning and sometimes at the end of the inscription. In most cases it was a so called “cross potent” or “Jerusalem cross” with t-shaped crossbars which was both a heraldic as well as religious symbol. Of course, there are other forms as well. Some variations appear more elaborate, maybe included in a circle or decorated with fine ornaments¹⁶. Others are contorted, for instance with an extremely long horizontal crossbar¹⁷, others again are disfigured, for example in a decorative combination of several crosses or a mixture with other symbolic elements or even letters¹⁸.

Another distinctive attribute is the usage of so called “holy words” or “holy names”, especially the names of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, Virgin Mary or other saints. These invocations had a special abbreviation system which applied both Roman and Greek letters, for example IHS for Jesus or XPS for Christus¹⁹. Frequently these names appear in combination with describing attributes such as *DOMINUS* (lord), *SANCTUS* or *BEATUS* (holy). In some sword inscriptions the identification of the “*nomina sacra*” is of course speculative; however, their usage is documented through some specimens already deriving from the 11th to the 13th centuries, for they were written in full length, for instance BENEDICAT (“he may bless”)²⁰ or (like on the Fyris sword UMF/B 74 presented in this article) SCS for “*SANCTUS*”. The appliance of more extensive inscriptions (in Latin or already in the vernacular) is more frequent in later centuries. Therefore, it is reasonable to interpret, at least the characteristic and obvious “holy names” as religious invocations.

Inscriptions of the DIC- or NED-group are probably also invocations, even though Wegeli did not give a conclusive interpretation. This type consists of mostly long sequences of letters exhibiting the constant elements DIC and NED, which are sometimes repeated several times²¹. Those recurrent parts could be interpreted as invocation- or incantation-*formulae*, i.e. ejaculatory prayers, based upon initial abbreviation, for instance *DOMINUS IESUS CHRISTUS* for DIC or *NOMEN ETERNUM DEI* for NED. Even an interpretation as fragments of beNEDICat is possible.

Four Swedish swords

All the swords presented in this article probably belong to the invocation type, however, they stand for varying subcategories differed by age, manufacturing process and inscription style as well as symbolism and occurring letter types and sequences, as will be shown.

The swords discussed in this article are primarily from the 11th and 13th centuries and thus very worn and eroded. In the case of highly eroded weapons, what some may think is a portion of an inscription; others may think is a part of the patina or some other sort of damage. It is primarily for this reason that the authors of this article would like to emphasize that when attempting to interpret a sword inscription it is always best to see the sword with your own eyes. Only then can you be certain of what is actually inscribed on the blade and only then can you begin to make worthwhile deductions. Unfortunately, it was not always possible for us to follow our own advice due to restraints in funding. In those cases we have been forced to rely on published images or drawings.

As regards the archaeological evidence of the four weapons, three out of the four swords are archaeologically classified as *stray finds*. That is to say, the objects were discovered as the result of processes other than an archaeological excavation and thus their exact find context can not be completely reconstructed. The fourth did come to light as the result of an archaeological excavation, however because of the style of excavation and the nature of the report, we unfortunately can not reconstruct a detailed find context here either²². After discussing archaeological conditions in which the swords came to light, the focus will shift to the individual swords, their typological and technical details. Certain important measurements of the swords will be given and discussed²³.

Rådhus sword

Archaeological background and technical details

The Rådhus sword SHM 34525 is currently in the care of the Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm Sweden²⁴. It was found during an archaeological excavation in 1976 in a block named *Rådhuset*, in central Uppsala²⁵. There are two important facts regarding this particular excavation that are relevant. Firstly, the method of excavation is of the utmost importance and will be discussed in greater detail below. Secondly, the fact that the archaeological report was not written by the people who actually conducted the excavation. The report came out 24 years later.

If we are to construct a find context we must know how the individual finds and the structures relate to one another stratigraphically. This is why the method of excavation is so important. The problem is that when the excavation was conducted this important contextual relationship was not taken into account. During the excavation the finds were gathered together in artificial layers of 10 cm each, from within a grid system with each square measuring 2x2 m²⁶. The layers in the different trenches were not dug at the same time and the finds were not related to the different structural levels²⁷. The report writers did what they could to relate the artificial layers to the structural layers and thus built some sort of context. However, this information must not be taken uncritically²⁸.

With that having been said, the sword was found at a level that had been dated to the mid-13th or early 14th century²⁹. The sword on the other hand most likely dates to the later 11th or 12th century (more on this below). It is not uncommon to find older items in younger layers. Add to this the problems involved with the methods used during excavation and the 24 year delay in reporting the excavation and it is easy to see why this information can not be taken without caution.



Picture 2: The Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm, the Rådhus sword (SHM 34525; fn. 10264), photo, J. Worley.



Picture 3: The Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm, inscription on obverse of the Rådhus sword, photo, J. Worley.

To have an archaeological date for a sword to help calibrate the typologies would be nice; however, this is unfortunately not the sword with which this can be achieved. The best way to date this sword is via the inscription as the find context is untrustworthy and a typological date is near impossible to establish as the weapon is not complete.

Measurements:

Overall length:	365 mm	Weight:	0.298 kg
Blade length (fr. crossguard):	195 mm	Blade width (at crossguard):	50 mm
Blade thickness (at crossguard):	5.2 mm	Fuller width (at crossguard):	11.5 mm
Fuller depth (at crossguard):	0.8 mm	Tang Length:	170 mm

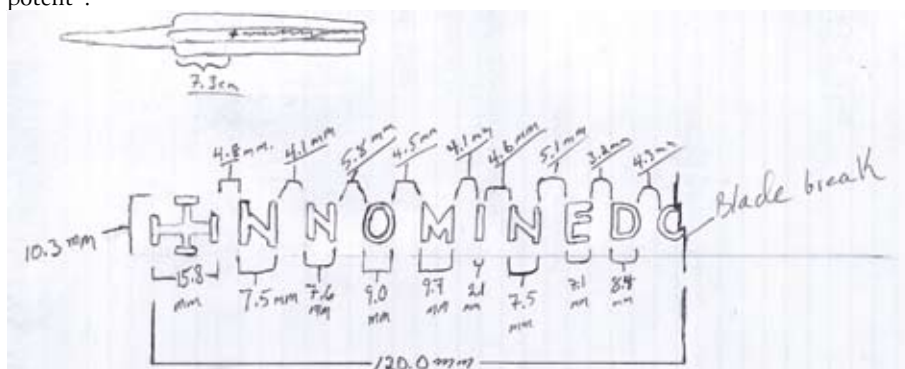
As can be seen from the picture above the Rådhus sword is not a complete specimen. This is unfortunate as what remains of the weapon is, archaeologically speaking, in fair condition. With an overall length of 365 mm and a blade length of 195 mm, at least as much as 1/3 of the blade is missing. The blade has a slight taper towards the break, with a width of 50 mm at the blades shoulders, 47.3 mm 10 cm further down the blade and finally 46 mm just before the break. The fuller does not however taper with the blade, is not well defined and also not very deep with a depth of less than a millimeter in places. The tang seems long with a measurement of 170 mm, but this is so because at least 50-60 mm of the tang length would have been taken up by the now missing pommel. The tang does taper slightly towards the pommel end, its width going from 28 mm at the blade's shoulders to 22 mm 10 cm further down the tang.

It is pointless to discuss typologies when so much of the sword is missing. The only thing typologically that can be stated about this blade is in regards to the inscription. If the inscription on this sword is a variation of a "+GICELINMEFECIT+" inlay, then according to Oakeshott it could be classified as a type XI as the other known "Gicelin" swords are all of this

type³⁰. If indeed this is the case, then perhaps the sword could date from the later 11th to the 12th century as that is the case with the other “Gicelin” swords³¹. This obviously creates a problem as regards the archaeological circumstances surrounding this sword. However, as was stated earlier, it is not uncommon for older items to be found in younger levels.

Symbols, text and letter style

The inscription (consisting of metal inlays) of the obverse begins with a traditional “cross potent”.



Picture 4: Drawing of inscription on obverse of the Rådbus sword, drawing by J. Worley.

Text:

Obverse:

NNOMINEDO

Reverse:

CICELIMINE [- - -]

The inscription is done in roughly carved, broad roman majuscule letters. The letters stand up straight and have regular sizes. The first N (on the obverse) has to be read as a ligature of I and N (with the I as the first stroke of the following N)³².

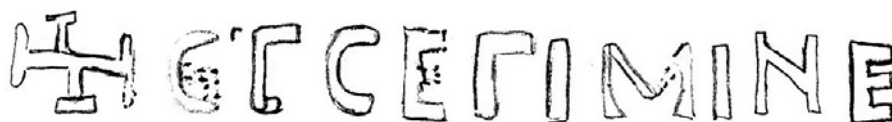
Interpretation, classification and dating

The inscription on the obverse must be read *IN NOMINE DOMINI*, and is thus to be classified as an invocation, moreover a very common one which was used in all kinds of ecclesiastical benedictions³³.

For the inscription on the reverse, it can be assumed that the sequence is to be read as a maker's name, CICELIN, presumably a form of the French name Joscelin³⁴ or the Germanic Gidfrid and its affectionate forms Gizo, Gizelo and Gizelin³⁵. The NE at the end could be a misspelled ME [FECIT], thus the fragmentary inscription could be categorized as a maker's inscription.



Picture 5: The Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm, inscription on reverse of the Rådbus sword, photo, J. Worley.



Picture 6: Drawing of inscription on reverse of the Rådbus sword, drawing by G. Beckholmen.

These types of sword inscriptions were examined by Schwietering in the “*Zeitschrift für historische Waffen- und Kostümkunde*” (Fig. 1-9)³⁶. The author discusses the Gicelin-type as being of German origin, probably *Niederdeutschland* due to their find contexts. However, specimens of this type were also found in Denmark, Finland and Poland. Since the two Gicelin-swords kept in the *Zeughaus* in Berlin disappeared during the Second World War (old catalogue numbers 00.196 and 03.55), the Swedish *Rådbus* sword is thus one of a very few number of extant specimens in Europe. Swords of this kind were probably misdated by Wegeli to the 14th century³⁷. However, the style of writing would imply a date in the 11th or 12th century.

The mixture of invocation and maker’s name could indicate that swords of this kind derive from a period of transition where religious and profane elements were combined. Thus, they stand for an early invocation type.

Fyris sword UMF/B 78

Archaeological background and technical details

Currently this sword is in the care of the Uppsala University museum, the Museum Gustavianum. UMF/B 78 (henceforth referred to as 78) is a stray find, but a fairly straightforward paper trail has been found. The museum’s acquisition diary places the weapon’s date of entry

into the museum's collection as April 30, 1896. According to the museum catalogue the weapon was found during the rebuilding of a dock along the banks of the River Fyris in central Uppsala in an area referred to as Hamnplanen. Sources confirming the information given in the museum catalogue were found in a note in *Upplands Fornminnesförenings Tidskrift*, a small article in *Uppsala-Posten* February 1, 1896 and also in the records of the Royal Armory in Stockholm³⁸.

From all of the above mentioned sources the following information can be concluded regarding the acquisition of the Fyris sword 78. On April 30, 1896 the University of Uppsala's collection of antiquities acquired two medieval swords (one of these was 78). That same year and from the same find context The Royal Armory in Stockholm acquired one medieval sword and a wooden club during February and June respectively. It is stated in the museums' catalogues that three swords and a wooden club were found during dock work in the area of *Islandsbron* in 1896.

From *Uppsalas tekniska historia* it has been learned that the wooden docks, measuring c. 420 meters, were replaced by stone docks at the rate of about 50 meters a year starting in 1895³⁹. It was, presumably, during this work that the swords and the club were found. From a tag on the club and the catalogue entry it can perhaps be assumed that the swords and the club were found on the 16th of January, 1896. Two of these swords were left in the care of the University's collection of antiquities and the third sword and the wooden club was acquired by an A. Matsson, who then sold them to the Royal Armory for 40 and 20 *kronor* respectively. These items were later traded by the Royal Armory to Uppsala University in exchange for two other items in January of 1912⁴⁰.

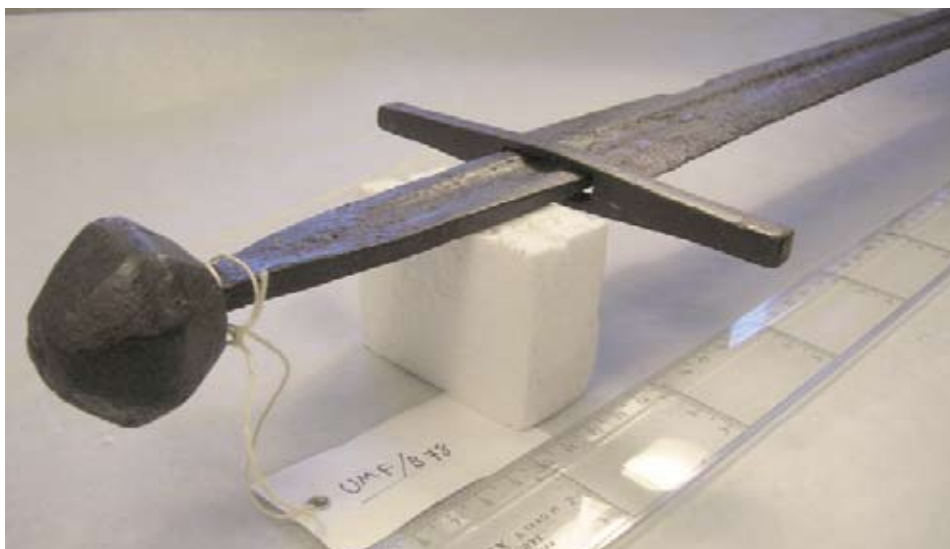


Picture 7: Museum Gustavianum UMF/B 78, photo M. Paomees.

Measurements:

Overall length:	893 mm	Fuller width (at crossguard):	14.5 mm
Weight:	957 g	Fuller depth (at crossguard):	2 mm
Blade length (fr. crossguard):	737 mm	Tang Length:	150 mm
Blade width (at crossguard):	51 mm	Crossguard Width:	140 mm
Blade thickness (at crossguard):	5.5 mm	Pommel Height:	38 mm
Fuller length (fr. crossguard):	560 mm	Pommel Width:	41 mm

As can be seen from the measurements above 78 is somewhat small, with an overall length of 893 mm. The fuller length is approximately 76% of the blade length measured from the crossguard to the tip. The fuller is fairly visible on account of its depth and tapers slightly



Picture 8: Museum Gustavianum, handle assembly on UMF/B 78, photo J. Worley.

with the blade. The fuller runs up into the tang above the crossguard some 65 mm. The tang tapers slightly at first then more dramatically closer the pommel. The pommel is possibly unique for the period. It is in the form of an eight-sided diamond measuring 38 mm in height and 41 mm in width.

Typologically speaking, the sword fits into the Oakeshott system, the only problematic issue being the relatively short blade length⁴¹. However, on account of the length of the fuller relative to the rest of the blade, the narrow fuller and to a far lesser extent the crossguard, perhaps the weapon could be classified as an Oakeshott XIa with a style 1 crossguard and an unclassified pommel⁴². It is of course important to note here that it is possible that the sword has been re-pommel⁴². If indeed the sword is classified as an Oakeshott XIa, then typologically, and this is disregarding any possible date that can be gathered from the lettering of the inscription, this weapon is likely to date to the later half of the 12th or the early 13th century⁴³.

Archaeologically speaking this weapon is in good condition. It has been preserved in the past and the wax can still be seen in places as small white patches. The overall impression of this weapon is that it is a relatively small yet elegant blade.

Symbols, text and letter style

The reverse contains an encircled “cross potent” on the left and a kind of circle or ellipse on the right side. The letters of the obverse are framed by two symbols: again the encircled “cross potent” on the left and a leaf-shaped symbol on the right side. The latter is most likely a lily i.e. a heraldic symbol known as a “fleur-de-lis”. However, the identification of this sign is not definite. It could also symbolize a clover leaf or even a simplified form of a tree-of-life.



Picture 9: *Museum Gustavianum*, inscription on obverse of UMF/B 78, photo J. Worley.



Picture 10: *Museum Gustavianum*, inscription on reverse of UMF/B 78, photo J. Worley.

Text:

Obverse:

N I A (or N L A)

Reverse:

F N C R (or E N C R)

The inscription on the obverse is done in gold letters. Especially noticeable are the long horizontal strokes at the top and at the bottom of a character (serifs) and the square-cut and pointless form of A. The reverse is rather corroded; hence the reading is unclear, potentially F or E followed by a round N, an incomplete capital C and an R with majuscule character.

Interpretation, classification and dating

The sword inscription of the Fyris-sword 78 can easily be classified in the DIC-group hypothesized by Wegeli⁴⁴, even though there is no DIC included. The sequence NIA (or NLA as Wegeli and Glosek read it on similar specimens)⁴⁵ appears frequently on blades of the afore-said class, for example Wegeli, p. 27, Fig. 40/41 is read: DICNIACDICNIA or DICNLAC-DICNLA; moreover, the style of the characters is astounding similar, particularly the extremely long serifs and the flat, square-cut A (with or without a center stroke). This variation of

a is very seldom found on specimens of other groups. For example on a specimen, which Wegeli assigned to the anagram group (with anagrammatic adjustment, often with upside-down characters) repeats the letter combination twice (once read the other way round, once in the correct way) divided by an upside-down A⁴⁶.

Also significant is the ornament interpreted as a lily. In Christian symbolism the lily was the sign of Virgin Mary⁴⁷. In the 13th century the “*fleur-de-lis*” became an essential part of the French kings’ coat of arms; however it is also to be found on relics of the Teutonic Order in the Holy Land⁴⁸. This hint is of particular interest, because a sword of similar type presented by Wegeli (p. 27) exhibits the “*fleur-de-lis*” together with an eagle and a lion on the reverse⁴⁹, and according to Nickel (pp. 38-41) these are typical signs or emblems of the Teutonic order⁵⁰ – perhaps representing the evangelists John and Mark⁵¹.

Because of the unclear reading (NIA or NLA), a plausible interpretation of the inscription can not be given. The encircled “cross potent” and also the lily indicates, of course, an invocation. The prayer was either addressed to the Virgin Mary (as the lily would let us assume) or to Jesus himself, if we would tend to interpret the inscription as NIA (with IN-ligature) standing for “*in nomine Iesu, amen*” (“In the name of Jesus, amen”). This is, of course, very daring and speculative, even though INIA is one of the more common *sigla latina*. The reverse is hardly legible due to corrosion and Wegeli’s psalm-based interpretation of EN (appearing on another inscription) as “*eripe nos*” goes without any proof. The CR at the end could mean “Christus”, but mostly the holy names were traditionally written in Greek letters, for instance XPS (for “*Christus*”). The letter combination MENER (interpreted by Wegeli 1904, 20, as MENCR) to be seen on a sword of the *Zeughaus* collection in Berlin (W 882) appears to show a similar wording; however, the letter style and the symbolism are completely different. Wegeli dated this inscription type to the late 13th or 14th century⁵³. But again, his dating seems to be too late. Typologically speaking (letter style as well as sword typology), it is to be dated around 1200.

The Karlstad-sword

Archaeological background and technical details



Picture 11: Värmlands Museum, the Karlstad-sword (17001-34945), photo Lars Thorén.

The Karlstad-sword is currently in the care of the Värmlands Museum in Karlstad Sweden. It is also a stray find. According to Martin Karlsson, currently head of the department for the Environment for Culture (*Enheten för kulturmiljö*) at the museum, the sword was found during dredging operations in August of 1948. This information is confirmed by a newspaper article (*Värmlands Folkblad* 14-08-48) according to which the sword was found by a worker named B. Andersson. The sword is believed to have been at the bottom of an area now known as Tullholmsviken, near Kanikenäset, in Karlstad Sweden. It was dredged from the bottom and remained in the dredged-up mud on land until it was later found and reported to the dock supervisor, who then notified the Värmland museum.

Measurements:

Overall length:	850 mm	Blade thickness (at crossguard):	4 mm
Weight:	0.842 kg	Fuller length (fr crossguard):	600 mm
Blade length (fr crossguard):	775 mm	Fuller width (at crossguard):	20 mm
Blade width (at crossguard):	60.5 mm	Fuller depth (at crossguard):	2 mm

Neither time nor the dredging machine that found it was very kind to the Karlstad-Sword. As regards the overall length the sword is missing at least 6 to 8 cm from the hilt as well as a few cm from the tip. As it is, the weapon's overall length is 850 mm, with a blade length of 775 mm. The fuller is not well defined and due to the ravages of time it was nearly impossible to measure with any amount of accuracy. That having been said, the measurements that were taken show a fuller that takes up 77.4% of the blade's length and is approximately 20 mm in width measured at the crossguard. According to the measurements taken, the fuller seems to taper very slightly with the taper of the blade. That which is left of the tang tapers towards the now missing pommel.

Typologies are difficult enough as they are and the task is made even worse given the current condition of the weapon. However, taking into account the length of the blade relative to the fuller, the fullers' lack of definition, even given the corrosion, and the style-2 crossguard, it is possible that the Karlstad-sword is an Oakeshott XIa, the only problem being the relatively short blade length⁵⁵. This sword can date to anywhere in the 12th or early 13th centuries⁵⁶.

When documenting a complete sword, i.e. a sword with a pommel, crossguard and at least most of the blade, approximately 90 different measurements are taken. The Karlstad-sword may not be in very good condition today, but from the measurements it can be said with some certainty that, when this sword was new it was a fine weapon indeed. The uniformity in blade's rate of taper for example is astonishing. At the crossguard the blade width is 60.5 mm, at 10 cm along the blade the width measures 59 mm, at 20 cm the width is 57 mm, at 30 cm it is 55 mm, at 40 cm it is 52 mm at 50 cm it is 50 mm and at 60 cm the width measures at 48 mm. Such uniform numerical relations are repeated all over the blade, another example being blade thickness. The fuller would no doubt have presented us with the same sort of evidence of the sword smith's skill had not time and the elements, not to mention the dredging machine, done so much damage.

Symbols, text and letter style

The inscriptions on both the obverse and the reverse begin and end with crosses adorned with rhombs, leaf-shaped symbols and concentric circles.



Picture 12: Drawing of inscription on obverse of the Karlstad sword, drawing by G. Beckholmen.



Picture 13: Värmlands Museum, inscription details of the Karlstad-sword, photo Lars Thorén.

Text:

Obverse:

ERTISSDXCNERTISSDX

Reverse:

ERTISSDXCNERTISSDX

The inscriptions are laid out in silver. The letter style on both sides of the blade are alike, although the letter forms as well as the letter size appear to be more regular on the obverse. The characters of the reverse, however, tend to become smaller and more cramped in the center.

The inscription uses the letters C, D, E, I, N, R, S, T, X.

The C has two short parallel vertical strokes in its opening. The D encloses an extra vertical stroke close to the stem. The I appears (in our interpretation) in ligature with S; when S stands alone, it is broken up into two overlapping half-circles. Small, horizontal strokes appear on the I in the IS-ligature; this is perhaps to be interpreted as ornamentation, if not abbreviation strokes, marking the IS-ligature. The E and N appear angled and acute; the leg of R is attached to the bowl, not to the stem, and is almost vertical; the strokes of the X are rounded. The T is sickle-shaped with a double stem.

The letter forms are to be classified as late Romanic/ early Gothic, 12th-13th centuries⁵⁷, due to the typical forms of T and X, and are further analyzed in the section Discussion below.

Interpretation, classification and dating

The elements of the two identical inscriptions on the obverse and the reverse respectively – using nine variations of letters only – consist of the recurring letter combinations ERT/NERT, IS, and SDX.

On the one hand, as has been suggested by other scholars for these types of inscriptions, it is imaginable that here we are dealing with an initial abbreviation system, with each single letter standing for a word. For example, the abbreviation NERTIS could be solved: “N(OMEN) E(TERNUM) R(EGIS) T(RINI) I(ESU)S” (“Jesus, eternal name of the triune king”), abbreviations which have been suggested for another inscription by Paul Post⁵⁸.

On the other hand, the letter sequences ERT/NERT could be in a language other than Latin. Both ER(E)T and NER(E)T are medieval German words, or to be more precise imperatives (plural)⁵⁹. In an English translation these words would mean “venerate” and “protect”. If one would read the letter sequence SDX as a monogram⁶⁰ for “*SANCTUS DOMINUS XRISTUS*” (“Holy Lord Christ”), and the sequence IS as an abbreviation for “*IESUS*”⁶¹, the inscription could be read: “Venerate Jesus, the Holy Lord Christ, protect Jesus, the Holy Lord Christ”.

Wegeli⁶² interpreted a similar inscription, preserved in Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin (W 897, see picture 14) (including the words EHR and NEHR, as well as the monogram SDX) as a veneration of Virgin Mary („*ir Ehr, ich nehr...*” in English “her honor I protect...”); however, his interpretation was challenged by Erben⁶³, with conclusive epigraphic evidence and the argument that, in his opinion, an inscription in popular tongue would not have been very likely even in the 14th century. Although inscriptions in vernacular appear not to have been in use during the 12th and 13th century, the wording would make perfect sense on the blade as a religious “motto” (For our reading of the inscription, see Discussion.).

The position of the C in the center of the Karlstad-sword inscription is remarkable, similar to an inscription mentioned in Wegeli (Fig. 40/41, p. 27). The central position could mark the division in terms of meaning or in terms of a repetition. The C was also used in charters as a form “symbol of Christ”, comparable to a chrismon (usually consisting of X and P, but also as capital C), to invoke God’s grace for an act of legal significance⁶⁴.



Picture 14: Drawing of the inscription on obverse and reverse of W 897 first published by Wegeli in 1904, p. 21.

The letter C appears after a SDX-sequence in two other inscriptions, the German sword mentioned above (W 897) and on UMF B/74 (see next section). Perhaps it could also be interpreted as a Greek sigma, forming the common abbreviation XC together with the preceding X.

An alternative reading “ERICVSD(V)XCNERICVSD(V)X” (“Ericus, duke of Närke”) would be possible, if one interprets the sickle-shaped T as an IC ligature and the IS as U⁶⁵. In this case, the C in the center of the inscription could be a *chrismon* such as mentioned above. This interpretation would connect the Karlstad-sword to the previously mentioned specimen found in Germany (W 897), which was read “HENRICVSD(V)XCNERICVSD(V)X” by Erben⁶⁶. Since Eric is just a variation of Henry, the relationship between the aforesaid swords would be obvious and very close. However, the essential IC ligature is not to be detected in other inscriptions (the letter-form appears in other inscriptions, for example UMF/B 74, which is discussed in the next section, but the reading IC is less possible in these cases). Neither do we agree on Erben’s reading of the inscription (see further in Discussion).

Paul Post, in his article from 1918–20, defined a “SDX”-group where the recurrent formula SDX was interpreted as “*S(ALVATOR) D(OMINUS) I(ESUS) X(RISTUS)*” (“Liberator Jesus Christ”)⁶⁷; due to the recurring sequence SDX in the Karlstad-sword, this is to be assigned to that group. By reason of composition, symbolism and inscription style, the specimen is to be dated to the 12th or 13th century.

Fyris sword UMF/B 74

Archaeological background and technical details

Currently this sword is in the care of the Uppsala University museum, the Museum Gustavianum. UMF/B 74 (henceforth referred to as 74) is a stray find the archaeological background of which is somewhat problematic. According to the museum’s catalogue the weapon was found during dock work, just downstream from the Islandsbron and was acquired on April 30th, 1896. That is to say, this weapon is supposed to come from the same find context as 78 discussed above.

An important note here is that there is a question mark directly after 74’s catalogue entry implying some uncertainty as to the sword’s origins. Another problem is that while the catalogue mentions the diary entry and states that the date of acquisition as being April 30th, 1896, the diary entry itself could not be found in the original hand written acquisitions diary. Yet another problem is that in all of the sources discussed for 78, i.e. the *Upplands Fornminnesförenings Tidskrift* article, the article in *Uppsala-Posten* or the Records of the Royal Armory in Stockholm, none of these sources mention a fourth sword having been found during January or February or for that matter during the rest of 1896. If indeed this is the case, then the first time that 74 is listed in the museum collections is in the catalogue and that with a question mark after the entry. 74 simply appears in the catalogue and there has apparently always been at least slight confusion over its origin. This could of course simply be a case of confusion over the amount of swords that were originally found. It would certainly not be the first time that a museum’s records have been lost.

A letter dated 6 July 1950 has been found that discusses the origins of 74. It was from Sune Lindquist, head of the University's antiquities collection, to Bengt Thordeman, curator for The Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm and was an answer to a previous letter. Thordeman had written about medieval weapons and warfare and specifically asked Lindquist about the origins of 74. In the letter Lindquist states that the provenance of the weapon is unclear as there is a question mark after the catalogue entry. The letter further states that it was listed in the catalogue as having been found with another item and tells that that item was found during dock work in the Fyris River just downstream from the Islandsbron. He concludes that there is a similar group of swords, all of which have come from the Fyris River and that 74 is so similar to them as regards patina and other aspects that he feels that there is no reason to question the weapons' origins and that the question mark can likely be disregarded.



Picture 15: *Museum Gustavianum, UMF/B 74, photo M. Paomees.*

Measurements:

Overall length:	1020 mm	Fuller width (at crossguard):	18 mm
Weight:	1601 g	Fuller depth (at crossguard):	1.8 mm
Blade length (fr crossguard):	845 mm	Tang Length:	110 mm
Blade width (at crossguard):	51 mm	Crossguard Width:	220 mm
Blade thickness (at crossguard):	5 mm	Pommel Height:	53 mm
Fuller length (fr crossguard):	730 mm	Pommel Width:	60 mm

74 looks quite large when compared to 78, but in reality it is closer in size to the average medieval sword. It has an overall length of 1020 mm and a blade length of 845 mm. The tip of the sword has been broken off and while it is impossible to tell exactly how much is missing, it is unlikely to be more than a few centimeters. The fuller takes up about 86.4% of the blades length. It is narrow, taking up about a third of the blade width, and tapers slightly with the taper of the blade. The fuller does not have well defined ridges and runs about 31 mm up the tang. The tang itself is 110 mm long and tapers towards the pommel. The crossguard is long and slender and tapers slightly from the middle out towards the ends. The pommel of this sword is massive measuring 53 mm in height, 60 mm in width and is 50 mm thick.

If one takes into account the blade length, the fuller length relative to the blade length, the width of the blade relative to its length and to a lesser extent the crossguard and pommel, this sword can perhaps be classified as an Oakeshott XI or XIa, with a style-1 crossguard and a



Picture 16: Museum Gustavianum, handle assembly on UMF/B 74, photo J. Worley.

heavily modified type-H pommel⁶⁸. It should be noted that the craftsmanship of the blade stands in dire contrast to that of the pommel and crossguard. Add to this the fact that the pommel is inordinately large when compared to other swords from roughly the same period, and perhaps the conclusion can be drawn that the sword has been re-pommeled. Small marks and scratches on the blade indicate that the sword may well have been in circulation for some time and perhaps has had more than one owner. Perhaps the new owner wanted to drastically change the handling characteristics of the sword and for this reason changed to a much heavier pommel⁶⁹. If indeed the sword can be typologically classified as has been done here then it could be roughly contemporary to 78, perhaps a generation or two older dating to the later half of the 12th century⁷⁰.

Archaeologically speaking this weapon is in good condition. It is covered by a dark patina and has been preserved in the past. The weight of the pommel mentioned above does not translate into a heavy and unwieldy weapon. On the contrary, this sword feels very good in the hand and was no doubt a formidable weapon.

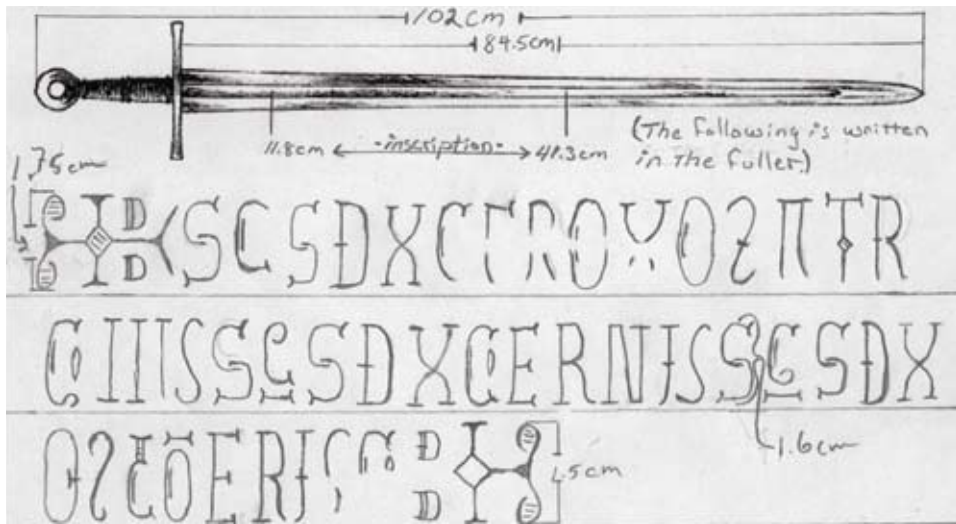
Symbols, text and letter style

The elaborated cross variations framing the letter sequence on the obverse are very similar to those on the Karlstad-sword (for detailed pictures of the complete inscription on both the obverse and reverse of the Fyris sword 74 see pictures 27 and 28 at the end of the article). They include two capital D-shaped letters standing one on top of the other, whereas the Karlstad-sword has two concentric circles.

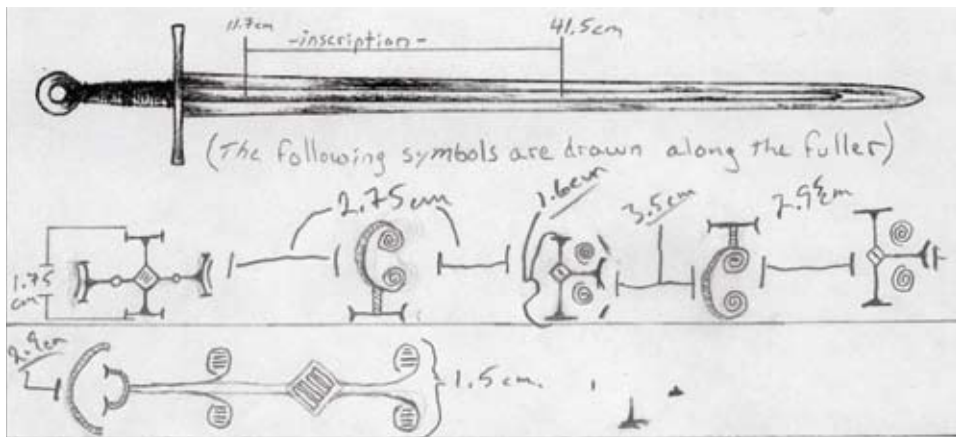
The symbols on the reverse are unclear. The cross on the left side could be another “cross potent” variant. The long, branch-shaped ornament with leafs seems to point to the simple, hardly visible “cross potent” on the right side. The spiral-adorned ornaments between are reminiscent of letters, namely sickle-shaped Ts (the same type as in the inscription, standing both straight and upside down) and maybe a randomly twisted, rare form of A also used on a

so called “crusader ring” or “*Inscripfenring von Pausnitz*” from around 1150⁷¹. Such a reading would result in TATA (?); however the symbols, even though seemingly being alienated letters, might also have a purely ornamental function.

The start- or end-crosses, including the two capital Ds, might be interpreted as a form of chrismon, a certain sign or monogram that invokes the name of God, for instance on charters⁷². The letters are possibly supposed to address God as “*DOMINUS DEUS*” (“Lord God”). The arrangement, one upon the other, appears also on a blade found in Poland⁷³. On that specimen the Ds are closed about a sequence of NININ... which might be read as “*NOMEN IESU*” or “*IN NOMINE IESU*” (“name of Jesus” or “in the name of Jesus”).



Picture 17: Drawings of inscription on the obverse of UMF/B 74, drawing by J. Worley.



Picture 18: Drawings of inscription on the reverse of UMF/B 74, drawing by J. Worley.

Text:

Obverse:

SCSDXCEROXMATRCHIISSCSDXCERNISSCSDXMTOERISC

Reverse:

T T (or T A T A)

The inscription on the obverse is inlaid in silver. The slightly elongated and relatively cramped letter-forms are almost identical to those on the aforementioned Karlstad-sword.

The inscription uses the letters A, C, D, E, I, M, N, O, R, S, T, X. The A has a flat top and almost vertical legs. C appears in several shapes, using either serifs or curls as stroke terminations, and often encloses an extra vertical stroke close to the line⁷⁴. An almond-shaped ornament sometimes appears in its opening. In three occasions, the C is elevated, with an abbreviation stroke beneath it at the base-line. The D has a short horizontal stroke on the stem, to be interpreted as ornamental. The angular E and N are identical to the ones on the Karlstad-sword, as are the R, S and X. As in the Karlstad-sword, the I appears connected with S in a ligature, but also standing alone. The M shows the form developed from the uncial during the 12th century, where the left bowl is closed⁷⁵. The right leg shaped as a reversed S, and is not attached to the left bowl. O encloses an extra vertical stroke parallel to the left part of the letter, and appears in one instance with a supra-scribed abbreviation stroke. The T is sickle-shaped with a double stem, as on the Karlstad-sword, but appears once in the classical form, showing an ornamental rhomb-shape on the middle of the stem.

The delicate, closely arranged letters are reminiscent of the invocation line of medieval charters⁷⁶; however, the characters are not interlocked and less elongated. The style of the letters, in particular M, T and X, is to be classified as late Romanic/early Gothic, and is further analyzed in the section Discussion below.

Interpretation, classification and dating

The assortment of letters (in accordance with our reading) consists of 12 different letters. The main characteristic of the inscription on the obverse is the recurring letter sequence SCSDX(C). The letters SCS are marked with an abbreviation stroke. If we read the SDX-sequence as *S(ANCTUS) D(OMINUS) X(RISTUS)*, as was done in the Karlstad-sword (see above), the reading of SANCTUS would here be further confirmed. If so, it becomes obvious that the S in all SDX-sequences should be read out as SCS = SANCTUS (“holy”).

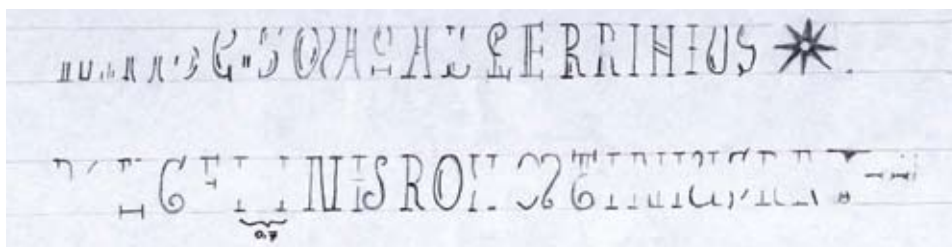
Thus, we can get a little further in an interpretation of this type of invocative inscription. Beginning with “SANCTUS”, the next part of the salutary address is DX (and maybe the subsequent C) with the possible meaning “*DOMINUS XRISTUS*” (“Lord Christ”). This sequence appears three times on the blade, probably marking three varying sections of the invocation. The letters in between seem at first sight to form Latin words, for example ERO, MAT(E)R (or the name MATR(I)CIVS), CERNIS or ERIS (“I will be”, “mother”, “you see” or “you will be”); however they are more or less senseless together or in combination with the following letters.

It should, however, be noted that the letter sequence ER appears three times in the inscription, a fact which perhaps could be connected with the ERT-sequence in the Karlstad-sword. Thus, there would be a possibility of reading the first part of the inscription as SCS D XC ER O X – ER as singular of ERT, O as an invocative O (for parallels in German swords, see Discussion) and X for *CHRISTUS*; the mid part of the inscription SCS D XC ER N IS – where N could stand for *NOMEN* or something similar, followed by the IS-abbreviation for Iesus – and the final part O ER IS C – invocative O, then ER, then again the IS for *IESUS*. The final C could perhaps be interpreted as a possible monogram for Christ, as also in the first sequence after the SCS DX.

What remains in between these parts is the sequence MATRCIIS, which could be read as a misspelled MATRICIVS or MAVRICIVS, and a MT, perhaps representing a further abbreviation of the MATRCIIS -sequence, or even M(AR)TINIVS, like on the sword W 1830 in the collection of the *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, formerly belonging to the Gay collection in Paris⁷⁷ (see pictures 19-20). It was previously published in Wegeli⁷⁸.

As regards content, the 74 inscription bears a resemblance to this (probably French) specimen. It was examined by the authors of this article in October 2008 as reading:
[- - -] SCSMAOAUTERRINIUS (symbol) R [...] CEIINISROXMTINIUSRN¹

Here for example we have an occurrence of the “*SANCTUS*”-abbreviation (SCS), the round gothic M twice combined with the sickle-shaped T, the letter sequences ROX and ER. Like 74, it includes possible names such as TERRINIVS⁷⁹ or M(AR)TINIVS, albeit the preceding SCS (in both cases) reminds of an invocation of a saint. The variety of letters in W 1830 is also 12 or more (depending on the reading).



Picture 19: Drawings of inscription on the obverse of W 1830, drawings by A. Holst Blennow.



Picture 20: Drawings of inscription on the reverse of W 1830, drawings by A. Holst Blennow.



Picture 21: *Deutsches Historisches Museum, detail of inscription on obverse of W 1830, photo J. Worley.*

We have already determined a close relationship between the Karlstad-sword and the Fyris sword 74 in terms of lettering, symbolism and style. As regards the European comparative material, a very close relation in terms of letter style can be assumed in connection with the St. Omer-inscription presented by Wegeli⁸⁰ (see picture 22 below). Particularly the C with a curled upper termination of the stroke, the D and I with a horizontal ornamental strokes, the capital N with flattened cusp and finally the X with rolling angular stems are almost identical to the letters on 74. These facts may denote propinquity of both blades, potentially even originating from the same workshop⁸¹. Another parallel between the St. Omer-sword and the Fyris sword 74 is the exceptionally high number of different letters, namely 13 or even more, depending on the reading. The parallel usage of the IS-ligature and the U (or upside down round N) on the St. Omer sword blade indicates that the IS-reading would be more likely in the case of 74 (and also the Karlstad-sword).

In terms of letter style and symbolism, also one specimen found in Oldenburg in the 1920ies appears to be closely related⁸². The cross-like symbols at the beginning and the end of the inscription are almost the same compared to the Fyris sword 74, only instead of capital Ds it includes the Roman number II, i.e. two capital Is, both above and beneath the horizontal crossbar. On the reverse there are six flowers and (more important) two Cs of the 74-type.



Picture 22: *Drawings of obverse and reverse on St. Omer sword first published by Wegeli in 1904, p. 24.*

A paleographic analysis made by Monica Hedlund (Institute for linguistics and philology, Uppsala university), and confirmed independantly by Franz Borschle and Walter Koch (Institute for Epigraphic, Munich university) has dated the inscription to the High Middle Ages (12th or 13th centuries): „Obgleich sich die in Gravur ausgeführten Schwertinschriften in ihrem Duktus mit einheitlicher Strichstärke gegenüber Inschriften in anderen Ausführungstechniken mit flächigeren und oftmals mit Bogenverstärkungen versehenen Buchstaben deutlich absetzen, weisen die kräftigen, strichartigen Sporen und die in das überwiegend kapitale Alphabet eingestreuten Formen des unzialen M und des sichelförmigen T in die Zeit des 12. bis 13. Jahrhunderts“⁸³.

Discussion: The Karlstad-sword and Fyris UMF/B 74 in a European context

As has been previously shown, the Karlstad-sword and the Fyris-sword 74 are so similar in writing style and symbolism that they were possibly related in some way, even though they differ in the number of different letters used (12 or 9). Both belong to the SDX-type defined by Paul Post; however, this letter-sequence, interpreted by Post as “S(ALVATOR) D(OMINUS) I(ESUS) X(RISTUS)” (“Liberator Jesus Christ”)⁸⁴, should in fact be read out as SCSDX (as was shown in the case of the Fyris-sword), by us interpreted as “SANCTUS DOMINUS CHRISTUS”.

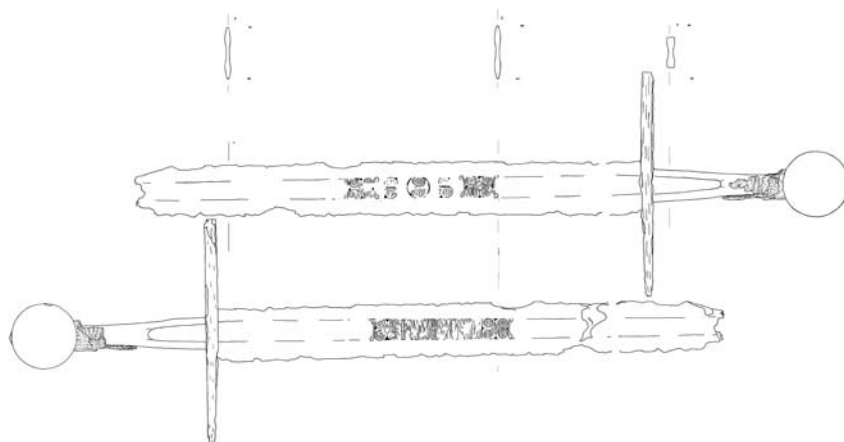


Picture 23: Deutsches Historisches Museum, inscription on obverse of W 879, picture first published by P. Post in 1918–1920, p. 248f.

However, the amount of letters used could divide this group further into one using more letters, one using less. In the Karlstad-sword, only nine letters were applied (E, R, T, I, S, D, X, C, N). This assortment of letters is almost identical to the content of the inscriptions on the sword W 897 of the *Deutsches Historisches Museum* collection in Berlin (see picture 14), read by us NREHRISDXCIC + NEHRISDXCNERISS, as well as the inscriptions on two more German swords, namely W 879 (see picture below) in the same collection⁸⁷, and a sword found in Marburg⁸⁶ (see pictures 24 and 25). W 879 reads on the obverse, in our interpretation, NEHDXOEHRNISSDX + NEHDXOEHRNISSDX⁸⁷, on the reverse (with basically the same letter shapes, but carried out in a more ornamental way⁸⁸) NRISSDVIX + SBENIS +; the Marburg sword reads NEHDXOEHRNISSDXOEHRNISS on the obverse and SOS + SOS on the reverse.

The inscriptions on the obverse of W 879 and on the Marburg sword thus prove to be almost identical in regards to content and letter-forms; they differ in the ornaments used and also in the inscriptions on the reverse⁸⁹. The inscription on W 897 is very similar to the two other

German specimens – its ornaments, shaped as a cross inside a circle, are practically identical to the ones on W 879 – however, it lacks the O, and includes the isolated C also seen on the Karlstad-sword.



Picture 24: Drawings of the inscriptions on the Marburg sword by S. Steinmetz. As we could not see the inscription personally, this illustration (along with others) provided the basis for our comparative studies.

The Karlstad-sword in its turn is similar to the three German specimens as regards literary content and letter-forms; however, it lacks the NEH- and NR-sequences seen on the German blades (the H is probably to be read as silent⁹⁰). It also stands out by repeating the same inscription on the reverse as on the obverse. (NEH/NR-sequences could perhaps be connected with the so-called NED-group discerned by Wegeli; also, the NEH on W 879 and the Marburg sword is actually followed by a D. This fact would dissolve the border between the two Wegeli groups DIC and NED, and form a new group including the two Wegeli-groups as well as the SDX-group discussed by Post.

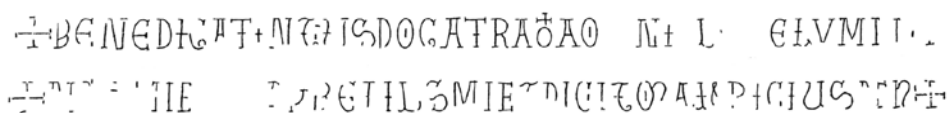
Thus, regarding literary content, we can discern a homogenous group consisting of the three German swords mentioned and the Karlstad-sword. It should be noted, however, that the German swords are somewhat more similar to each other than to the Karlstad-sword.



Picture 25: An interpretation by Anna Holst Blennow of a drawing of the inscription on the Marburg sword by S. Steinmetz.

If we look at the Fyris sword 74, then, we have already established that in using at least 12 letter variations, it belongs to the SDX-group with more letters, as does the W 1830 sword in *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, and also the St. Omer-sword presented by Wegeli, and discussed above. There is also, a sword from Finland⁹¹ (see picture 26) that can be included in this group and is tentatively read by us as follows:

+ BENEDICATNTVSDOCATRAOAO [---] NI [---] L [---] ELVMII +
+ N [...] IE [---] [...] ETIVSMIETDICITMAVRICIVSBEN +²



Picture 26: Drawings of obverse and reverse on the Finnish sword first published in Läppäaho 1964, tab. 28, p. 61.

We have seen that the same abbreviations that are found on 74, SDX and IS, as well as the presumed German words EHR/ER, can also be found on the Karlstad-sword, W 897, 879 and the Marburg sword.

The inscription on sword W 879 reads NEHDXO at the beginning of the obverse, whereas the following part of the inscription, EHRNISSDX, would be similar to the middle part of 74, namely “ERNISSCSDX” – excluding the possibly silent H, but also including the more extensive SCS abbreviation.

As was previously discussed, the letters MATR(I)CIIS and MT on the Fyris sword 74 could perhaps be read as names, a theory which seems to be confirmed by the occurrences on the W 1830 sword by the possible names Terrinius and Martinus. Also in the Finnish specimen, it is imaginable to read MAURITIVS at the end. The mentioning of Saint Maurice would make sense on a blade, because he was a Roman soldier himself and was, after his canonization, patron of soldiers and sword smiths⁹².

Erben suggested a name-based interpretation for blade inscriptions of this kind⁹³. He saw the ER- and SDX-sequences not as a religious monogram, but rather as name and title of the liege lord who handed out the sword to his vassal. As we already mentioned, he read the inscription on W 897 as ENRICVS D(V)X NERICVS. Erben thought of NERICVS as a variation of HENRICVS, speculating that it could be Henry the Lion, a famous noble from Saxony in the 12th century. As was already argued, we do not agree with Erben’s reading of W 897; yet, as was previously mentioned, the Karlstad-sword potentially could affirm Erben’s original theory. This would be the case, if the sickle-shaped T was reinterpreted as a seldom IC ligature and the IS as U. If so, the *dictum* would read: “ERICVSD(V)XCNERICVSD(V)X” – “Duke Ericus of (the Swedish province) Närke”. In this case, NERICVS would be interpreted as “from Närke”, and not a variant of HENRICVS. This interpretation is, as was previously discussed, very tempting from a

contextual standpoint, but not very likely from the paleographic analysis. According to us, SDX must be an invocation, rather than a title (dux), unless we are dealing with a “holy duke”.

On another specimen Erben identified the name “MAGNVS” arguing that Wegeli had not been able to detect it, because he read the round gothic M as an OR ligature⁹⁴. Again on another blade⁹⁵ Erben assumed the reading “NORWEGIAE” for “NRCAE” which would lead us to an interpretation not only of names, but also of locations or geographic areas⁹⁶. But as Erben himself stated, he could not give a proper solution for his name theory.

The “name approach” was doubted by Post who offered further examples of the ER- or SDX-inscriptions type that could not be accommodated with Erben’s reading⁹⁷. Yet, the possible reading of names on 74, W 1830 and the Finnish example shows that the idea of reading names in the inscriptions, be it names of persons, saints or places, should not be rejected altogether.

The second group that we could discern concerning literary content, then, would consist of 74, W 1830 and the sword from Finland. This group uses the same letter-sequences as the previous group, but more freely and also adds what could be interpreted as names.

Regarding the amount of letters used (and above all regarding the letter-forms, as will be discussed below), the St. Omer sword is also to be included in this group; however, its literary content differs from the other specimens, and cannot be solved properly. It should be noted, though, that a DX occurs in this inscription, as well as NED (Wegeli categorized the inscription as belonging to his NED-group), which could be compared to the German specimens previously discussed.

Could, then, the letter-forms used in the inscriptions further confirm the tentative division into two groups? If we look at the group defined above, with the Fyris sword 74, W 1830, St. Omer and the sword from Finland, the connection between these four swords is evidently seen also in the letter-forms. (See the Paleographical type alphabets table at the end of this article) It is important to notice that they all use variations of the same letter-forms, so that many letters appear in several forms. Also, letters turned upside-down can be found. This creative treatment of letter-forms is very typical for Romanic inscriptions, and fit well into the tentative dating of the inscriptions.

However, another sword must be added to this group, namely the Karlstad-sword, whose letter-forms are almost identical to the ones of 74, even if several letters used in 74 (and also the Finnish, St. Omer and W 1830 swords), for example A, round gothic M and O, are lacking. Characteristic forms in the Swedish swords are particularly the sickle-shaped T (occurring also in the St. Omer and W 1830 swords) and the S made out of two overlapping bows (while the Omer, W 1830 and also the Finnish sword draws the S in one line).

Thus, for paleographical reasons, the Finnish, St. Omer and W 1830 swords could perhaps be dated somewhat earlier than the two Swedish swords, given that the letters in the Swedish swords are somewhat narrower, and that the S has been broken up in two halves, a development which, as we shall see, is continued in the German swords belonging to the SDX-group with less letters.

If we turn, then, to the three German swords W 897, W 879 and Marburg, we find that the resemblance concerning letter-forms is almost total in the three specimens: the few letters that are used have no variant forms, and the letters are very narrow and elongated, just like the invocation line of solemn imperial or royal charters. The letters on the Karlstad-sword and the Fyris sword 74, on the other hand, are not as narrow, but are showing more or less the same forms, except for the N, which in the German swords has turned into three vertical strokes, and the H, which does not appear in the Karlstad-sword and 74.

The less varied, narrower and more closed letter-forms of the three German swords seem to date them a little later than the previously defined group (the Finnish, St. Omer and W 1830 swords). The Karlstad-sword and 74, on the other hand, are in this respect taking an interesting middle position, showing similarities to both groups.

Finally, some comments should be made concerning the ornaments used on the swords discussed. And also in this case, our tentative grouping of the swords seems to be confirmed. On the Finnish and St. Omer swords, a very simple cross is used, while on W 1830, a somewhat more elaborated cross with prolonged arms to the left and right are found. This shape is found also on the reverse of 74, while the obverse shows a cross with a rhombic center, prolonged and more ornate arms, which is very similar to the cross on the Karlstad-sword.

On the three remaining German swords, the cross-ornament used on the Swedish swords shows even more elaborated – the crosses on W 897 and the Marburg sword are practically identical, while W 879 shows a cross inscribed into a circle, a rhomb and a lily-shape.

The rhomb-shape as a decorative element in fact occurs in both groups – as center of the cross-symbols, as mentioned above, but also as an ornament on single letters. On the reverse of W 1830, it occurs in the N, and in the reverse of W 879, the very same letter-form is found. 74 shows a classically shaped T with a rhomb attached to the middle of the stem.

In sum, it should be noticed that the two groups tentatively discerned by us should not be regarded as absolute. As we have seen, elements characteristic of one group are sometimes found in the other group; the Karlstad-sword shows great likeness to the three later German specimens concerning literary content, while it paleographically is very similar to 74 of the other group.

Conclusion

The examination of the four Swedish swords illustrates the great variety of invocation type blade inscriptions. All of them are influenced by the Christian faith, its cult and its symbolism.

The interpretation of the inscriptions as a whole still remains a problem, although the solutions suggested by us could perhaps be a step in the right direction.

As discussed earlier, reading the sword inscriptions as consisting only of an initial or a partly-initial abbreviation system does not provide a satisfying solution; nor does Wegeli's proposition of a purely German reading for W 897 (*„ir Ebr, ich nebr...“*).

Our reading of the sword inscriptions, on the other hand, presumes a mixture of Latin words in abbreviated form and German words. German was a common language in medieval Sweden, for it was imported by merchants from the northern part of the German empire⁹⁸. Considering the amount of German influences in medieval Sweden at that time a great number of these blades may have derived from German forges. Maybe, these inscriptions are early examples of a mixture between vernacular and Latin elements; (for example as an imitation or reinterpretation of older sword blades who's strongly abbreviated inscriptions were incomprehensible to the contemporaries. The Fyris-sword 74, the W 1830 sword and the Finnish sword could have been such archetypes⁹⁹).

To sum up, based on the aforementioned facts we tend to interpret the inscriptions of the (S) DX-group as Christian invocations to Jesus Christ. The recurrent ER (with variants such as EHR, ERT), which appears always as often as the SDX (most often prior to the SDX, but on 74 after) could be a German insertion marking an imperative (singular) "honor". (This is even more likely in case of the Karlstad-sword, if the latter is in fact an imitation of 74, potentially rearranged in a more understandable popular tongue). However, we refrain from giving a further interpretation (if we have not gone too far already). This reluctance might leave space for other ideas or new theories that lead to a better understanding of medieval sword inscriptions.

The intense study of the sword inscriptions of the SDX-type brought to light that we need to distinguish between two main groups: the (probably younger and more generalized) SDX-inscription type with about nine varying letters and the SCSDX-type with sometimes more than 13 different characters. Within the SDX-inscription group the overall appearance is quite cramped, the characters are more or less elongated and an HENRICVS or ERICVS reading is sometimes possible. In contrast, the SCSDX-type does not allow for the latter interpretation. The SCS rather indicates an invocation.

Considering the European context, it seems that 74 as well as the sword from Värmland take center stage, because they show or even combine elements of both subgroups within the SDX-type.

This exhaustive comparison showed a close relationship between the swords of the two (SC) SDX-groups. These similarities (even though quite obvious) have never been noticed or discussed before. The slight differences in style, letter assortment and content even lead to a tentative chronology. According to that, the longer, broader and possibly name-containing inscriptions could be interpreted as archetypes of later blade inscriptions. The Swedish specimens (the Fyris sword 74 and the Karlstad-sword) mark a crucial stage of inscription development with characteristics of both groups; the specimens of the "German" comparative material on the other hand seem to be more elaborated (also in terms of symbolism and ornaments) and generalized. Therefore, we tend to date them later.

The Uppsala and the Karlstad-swords could be considered as a kind of "Rosetta stone" of the new discipline of sword epigraphy. If those intricate inscriptions can eventually be solved definitely, the result could play a key role in the understanding of further sword *enigmata*.



Picture 27: *Museum Gustavianum*, picture of full inscription on the obverse of UMF/B 74 beginning on the left and continuing on the right, photo J. Worley.






































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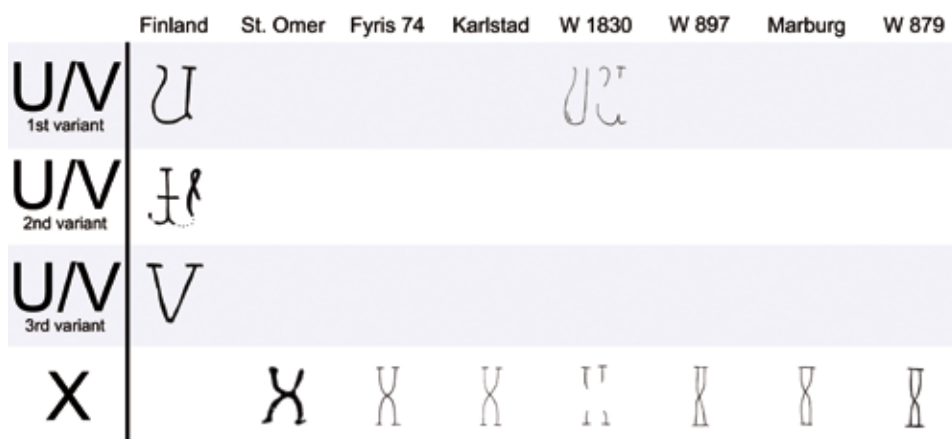
Picture 28: Museum Gustavianum, picture of full inscription on the reverse of UMF/B 74 beginning on the left and continuing on the right, photo J. Worley.

PALAEOGRAPHICAL TYPE ALPHABETS

By Anna Holst Blennow

	Finland	St. Omer	Fyris 74	Karlstad	W 1830	W 897	Marburg	W 879
A								
B								
C 1st variant								
C 2nd variant								
C 3rd variant								
D 1st variant								
D 2nd variant								
E								
F								
H								

	Finland	St. Omer	Fyris 74	Karlstad	W 1830	W 897	Marburg	W 879
I	I	I			II			
IS Ligature		U	ISIS	IS	IS	U	U	U
L	L							
M 1st variant	02	02	0202		0202			
M 2nd variant	M							
N 1st variant	N	HN	N	N	HN	III	III	III
N 2nd variant	N							
O	00		00		O		00	00
R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
S	S	S	S	S	SS	S	S	S
T	TE	E	ET	E	ET			



Picture 29: Paleographical type alphabets of the swords compared in the discussion. The letters are drawn directly from the respective swords, with the exception of the Finland, St. Omer and Marburg swords (see pictures 26, 22 and 25), which were drawn from earlier publications. The swords W 897 and W 879 (see pictures 23 and 14) are on display in the Deutsches Historisches Museum, and were not possible to study close-up so again earlier published pictures and drawings were used.

Acknowledgments

This article has been almost three years in the making and has changed form at least a dozen times. We knew well the work of our predecessors as well as the need for work such as this. Thus we were aware of the weight that would be placed upon any project. We could however not have produced this article without help. For their financial assistance we of the Fyris Swords Group would like to thank the E Helgren Foundation, Helge Ax:son Johnsons Foundation, the Knut Stjärna Foundation, the Sven and Dagmar Salén Foundation and the Gunvor and Josef Anérs Foundation.

For their expertise we would like to thank Peter Johnson (swordsmith par excellence), Monica Hedlund (Uppsala University), Franz Bornschlegel (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich), Walter Koch (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich), Wolfgang Beck (Friedrich Schiller University of Jena), Horst Brunner, (Julius Maximilian University Würzburg). We would also like to thank Ola Kyhlberg and Kjel Knutsson at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, Ing-Marie Munktel and the staff of the Museum Gustavianum in Uppsala Sweden, Annika Ewing and the staff of the Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm Sweden, Nils Drejholt and the staff of the Royal Armoury in Stockholm, Martin Karlsson and the staff of the Värmlands Museum in Karlstad-Sweden. We would like to offer a special thanks to Rainer Atzbach and the representative general director and head of department collections at the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, Dieter Vorsteher and especially the departmental manager of Militaria I, Sven Lüken.

Footnotes and remarks

- 1 Wegeli 1904.
- 2 Erben 1918–1920, 105–168.
- 3 Böheim 1897–1899, 262f; Schmid, W. M. 1918–1920, 244–246; Post 1918–1920, 246–250.
- 4 Anteins 1966, 111–125; Läppäaho 1964; Glosek 1973.
- 5 Oakeshott 1960, 212ff; Oakeshott 1964; Oakeshott 1991; Geibig 1991, 114ff.
- 6 Marek 2005, S. 49–57.
- 7 Glosek and Kajzer 1977, 117–129. The authors identified the relation of the inscription (BENEDICTUS DOMINUS DEUS MEUS...) with psalm 143: “*Benedictus deus meus qui docet manus meas ad praelium et digitos meos ad bellum*” (“Blessed be God who teaches my hands to battle and my fingers to war”); see also Glosek and Makiewicz 2007, 137–148.
- 8 Wegeli 1904, 17f; Erben 1918–1920, 121ff; the ceremony, Franz 1909, 289ff.
- 9 Kocher 2002, 1644–1645.
- 10 Schwietering 1918–1920, 209ff.
- 11 Davidson 1962, 44 & 102
- 12 Erdmann 1935, especially appendix I, 326ff.
- 13 William of Tyre 1986, 264f: “...indictum est triduanum ieiunium, ut afflictis corporibus, anime ad orationem possent consurgere fortiores”; and 350ff: “...Die igitur statuta, de publico decreto indite sunt universo populo Litanie, et assumptis crucibus et sanctorum patrociniis, episcopi et clerus universus induti sacerdotalibus et leviticis indumentis, nudis pedibus et cum multa devotione populum subsequentem, usque ad montem Oliveti precesserunt”.
- 14 Marek 2005, 59ff; Schuckelt 2002, 1893–1903; Nilgen 2002, 1645.
- 15 Albert of Aix 2007, 644: “...invocato nomine Iesu et eius gratia...”.
- 16 Oakeshott 1996, 80; Läppäaho 1964, 49, 54 and 61.
- 17 Oakeshott 1996, 55.
- 18 Wegeli 1904, 22; Oakeshott 1991, 83.
- 19 Traube 1907; Rudberg 1915; Lüders 1971, 375f; Ladner, 2002, 1227f.
- 20 A sword from the Danish National Museum, Inv. nr. D8801. It reads on the obverse: SCSPETRNNNS; on the reverse BENEDICATNTIUSETMAT.
- 21 Wegeli 1904, 24ff.
- 22 Jörpeland 2000
- 23 Here the authors would like to thank Peter Johnsson for his guidance and assistance in the finer points of proper sword documentation. It was from his theories and ideas that our measurement system was developed.
- 24 This sword can be viewed over the internet. The address is www.historiska.se. Once you are at the page, scroll down and at the lower right side you will see a box “Sök i samlingarna” with a link at the bottom of the box. Click on the link. This will bring you to the database. Unfortunately the whole database is in Swedish, however all that is needed is to enter the museum number in the correct box. Now find the link near the top that says “Inventarienummer” and click on it. This will bring you to the search engine for the database. Now, in the box under the word “Inventarienummer”, enter the museum number of the sword, “34525”. This will bring you to a page with search results. Now click on the icon under the word “Katalog”. This will bring up another page. The new page is a viewer with pictures of other items found in the same place. Now at the top right

center of the screen you will see a box under the words “Aktuell sida” and in the box it should say “1 av 88” simply enter a 20 in the box and press enter. A rather large picture of the sword should come up. Picture number 20, 21 and 22 are all of the Rådhus sword. Unfortunately the “+CICELIMINE” side of the sword is not depicted on this site.

- 25 Jörpeland 2000, 64
- 26 Jörpeland 2000, 39
- 27 Jörpeland 2000, 64
- 28 Jörpeland 2000, 65
- 29 Jörpeland 2000, 20
- 30 Oakeshott; 1996, 213
- 31 Ibid
- 32 A similar specimen is described by Geibig 1991, 353, fig. 143.
- 33 Franz 1909.
- 34 Oakeshott 1996, 212f.
- 35 Schwietering 1915–1917, 211–215.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Wegeli 1904, 20.
- 38 Here the authors would like to thank Nils Drejholt for his assistance with the records at the Royal Armoury in Stockholm; Arpi 1896, 344f; Uppsala-Posten 1-02-1896
- 39 Flygt, 1995; 215
- 40 Almgren 1913, 152
- 41 Oakeshott 1997
- 42 Oakeshott 1997, 31ff, 113, 80ff
- 43 Oakeshott 1997, 31f, Here the authors would like to thank Peter Johnsson for his help in dating this weapon.
- 44 Wegeli 1904, 26ff.
- 45 Glosek 1973, 39; the sword was found around 1905 and is kept in Stettin (Szczecinic, Poland).
- 46 Wegeli 1904, S. 23f.
- 47 Dictionary of Christian Antiquity 1875, 998f.
- 48 Nickel 1989, 35–46; according to a certain tradition, Saint Louis granted the usage of the “fleur-de-lis” in the order emblems around 1250. However, H. Nickel showed in his article (p. 43) that the “*cross fleurettée*” was in use in the order even before that time; a similar symbol is on a Polish sword discussed by Glosek and Makiewicz 2007, 139f.
- 49 Ibidem, pp. 38–41, fig. 5, 12, 14 and 16 showing the black eagle; fig. 17 and 18 depicting grandmaster shields from the middle of the 13th century with a lion.
- 50 On another similar specimen – with a “fleur-de-lis” and a “cross pattée” on the con- and reverse of the pommel – the usual cross potent is replaced by an icon called by R. Wegeli “*eigentümliches Ornament*” (“peculiar ornament”). This symbolic element could have been influenced by the coinage in the Holy Land under King Henry I of Cyprus (1218–1253) where similar symbols were in use, see Nickel 1989, 37; thus a certain relation to the Teutonic order is at least imaginable.
- 51 For an early example of the depiction of the evangelists see Campbell 1991, 156.
- 52 Ibid, 19; he quotes Psalm 6,6; 63, 2; 16, 13; 30, 16; 58, 2; 142, 9; 70, 2; 70, 4; 143, 7 and 143, 11.
- 53 Wegeli 1904, 25f.

- 54 Here the authors would like to thank Martin Karlsson and the staff of the Värmlands Museum in Karlstad Sweden for their assistance and for making us feel at home.
- 55 Oakeshott 1997, 114, 36
- 56 Oakeshott 1997, 31f
- 57 Kloos 1980, Abb. 6-7
- 58 Post 1925–1927, 220f, interpreted „NEDRCNEDRUSDRCNEDRUI“ as: *N(omine) E(terni) D(ei) R(egis) C(aeli) N(omine) E(terni) D(ei) R(egis) U(niversi) S(ancti) D(ei) R(egis) C(aeli) N(omine) E(terni) D(ei) R(egis) U(niversi) I(nitiatus)*. However, the U seems to be more likely an IS-ligature.
- 59 Wolfgang Beck held the same view in personal correspondence with Horst Brunner from the 18th of November 2008: *“Rein formal gesehen sind er(ett) und ner(ett) natürlich als mbd. Imperative der 2. Person Plural erklärbar – man könnte sich nun fragen, ob man auf einem Schwert nicht auch oder besser die 2. Person Singular erwarten sollte. Die 2. Person Singular Imperativ der schwachen Verben wird normalerweise mit -E gebildet, jedoch kann das auch schwinden, so daß theoretisch auch er und ner als Imperative denkbar wären”*, see Paul 1998, § M 69 und § M 70, footnote 10.
- 60 For different types of Christian monograms see: Dictionary of Christian Antiquity 1875, 1311ff.
- 61 Post 1918–1920, 247, understands IS (with an abbreviation stroke) as the Latin word “ius” (“right, law”).
- 62 Wegeli 1904, fig. 24 and 25, 21.
- 63 Erben 1918–1920, 129ff.
- 64 Herde 1996, 173ff.
- 65 In Swedish medieval history there was a “Duke of Närke” called Erik, son of Birger Jarl Magnusson (he died in 1275), see Theutenberg 2006, 167f; considering the typology and the inscription style of the Karlstad sword, which led to a dating around 1200, it would be possible, even though problematic, to attribute the piece to him. The reading as name and title is for epigraphical reasons unlikely.
- 66 Erben 1918–1920, 130–132.
- 67 Post 1918–1920, 248, interprets the ornamental stroke included in the D as an I; he put forward the creation of a new inscription group, the “DX-group”. He also stated that the DX-inscriptions were related to Wegeli’s DIC-group in respect of content; however the style of writing of the aforesaid groups is completely different.
- 68 Oakeshott 1997, 31ff, 113, 95
- 69 This idea was originally put forward Peter Johnsson during a conversation.
- 70 Oakeshott 1997, 31f; Here the authors would like to thank Peter Johnsson for his help in dating this weapon.
- 71 Muhl et al. 2003, 81–139, considered the derivation of the A from the medieval Irish display type (101, fig. 14 and 116).
- 72 Wattenbach 1886, 94ff; Dictionnaire d’archéologie Chrétiénne et liturgie 1914, vol. 3,1, 1481ff.
- 73 Glosek 1973, 62.
- 74 It should be observed that the shape of what we read as a C sometimes looks like a very typical medieval G, with its lower termination forming a curl. However, comparing with the other inscriptions discussed in this article (see Appendix with letter-forms) we cannot establish a reading as G – for example, as in the Fyris 74 inscription, both forms are used in the recurring SCSDX-sequence – and thus, we tentatively interpret it as a form variant of C.

- 75 Kloos 1980, 127; Franz Bornschlegel (in personal correspondence from 11. October 2007) distinguished the round M from the similar OR-ligature.
- 76 Erben 1918–1920, 130; he calls it „verlängerte Schrift“.
- 77 Zeughaus 1911, 76–88.
- 78 Wegeli 1904, fig. 50, 29.
- 79 The sequence MAOAUTERRINIUS could perhaps be interpreted as a misspelled MAURITIUS. The letter sequence AOA has a parallel in the Finland sword (Läppäaho 1964, fig. 28, 61), mentioned in Discussion below; in this sword, the letter sequence AOA occurs, perhaps to be taken as a symbol of Christ referring to alpha / omega.
- 80 Wegeli 1904, 24. The inscription was read by Wegeli as NEDRINFNSDRNFNCGD-XOSANSDRIFNSDRIH / NEDRIATNGDRINFNRCGDRINCDRINFNSDRINEN; we would however like to read it NEDRINFISSDRNFISCCDXMAISSDRIFISSDRIN / NEDRIATNGDRINFISRCDDRINCDRINFISSDRINEN.
- 81 Franz Bornschlegel in personal correspondence from 11. October 2007: “In einzelnen Buchstabenformen bestehen Gemeinsamkeiten mit der von Wegeli unter Fig. 32 gebotenen Nachzeichnung der Schwertschrift von St. Omer (Nr. 3 der NED-Gruppe). Das C mit stark eingebogenem oberem Bogenausläufer, D und I mit kurzem wagrechten Zierstrich durch den Schaft, kapitales N mit abgeflachten Spitzen, X mit geschwungenen Schrägschäften sowie die auffällige Form des sichelförmigen T könnten sogar auf eine gemeinsame Werkstätte hinweisen”.
- 82 Post 1926–1928, 220–221. The inscription reads NEDRCNEDRUSDRCNEDRUI. The inscription is to be classified to Wegeli’s NED-type.
- 83 Quoted from the personal correspondence with Franz Bornschlegel from 3. August 2007.
- 84 He interprets the ornamental stroke included in the D as an I.
- 85 Published in Post 1918–1920, fig. 2 and 3, 248.
- 86 Atzbach 2007, 52–53; Meiborg 1996, 477–478. In regards to the Marburg sword we have not seen it in person but rather relied on drawings of the inscription made by S. Steinmetz during communication with R. Atzbach.
- 87 P. Post reads the H as a N, but in our opinion, the horizontal bar of the H does not incline angularly (as in Wegeli 1904, fig. 24 and 25, p. 21) which would allow for a reading as N, although the double cross-bar is more common in N or A.
- 88 The main differences are that S on the reverse is not cut in two halves as on the obverse, and that uncial E occurs on the reverse, and not on the obverse.
- 89 In the inscription on the reverse of W 879, “NRISSDVIX+SBENIS”, the IS-sequence is included twice and furthermore, the SDX might be detected here in a varying form “SD(VI)X”.
- 90 This would also explain the difference between EHR (on the German specimens) and ER (on the Värmland sword). A silent variant of H in the 12th and 13th centuries is possible (however rare) according to Weinhold’s *“Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik”*, § 245, pp. 245f, and Ebert’s *“Frühneuzeitliche Grammatik”*, § L 7, p. 34; mainly in the region *“Mitteldeutschland”*. Many thanks appertain to Wolfgang Beck (*Institut für Germanistische Literaturwissenschaft, Germanistische Mediävistik, Jena University*) for pointing this out.
- 91 Läppäaho 1964, fig. 28, 61, and Oakeshott 1991, 62.
- 92 Lexikon des Mittelalters. Vol. 6, col. 412
- 93 Erben 1918–1920, 130–132.
- 94 Wegeli 1918–1920, fig. 37, p. 26.

- 95 Wegeli, fig. 35, p. 26.
- 96 A sword in the Historical Museum in Stockholm (SHM 13671) shows the inscription "SVNDTHVES" which could refer to a town or a region, for example the medieval "Sunthus" or "Sunthusa" representing the modern term "Sundhausen" which are villages in the Southern part of Germany (Baden Württemberg) and Alsace; see Grässe 1909.
- 97 Post 1918–1920, fig. 2 and 3, 248, *ibid.* fig. 4, p. 249; pictures of better quality are to be found in Müller 1981, 166; the sword nr. 1017 in the German Historical Museum in Berlin is (according to P. Post) different in respect of the content; however, it shows the typical long-stretched charter-style.
- 98 Wessén 1992, 4–5; the Swedish King entered a commercial treaty with Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Lord of Lübeck; Anund (unpublished), 357–358, states that the coinage in Östra Aros (Uppsala) was influenced by Lübeckian standards and the town even had a partly German population.
- 99 Karlsson 2006, 18ff; according to the author parts of Karlstad (*Tingsvalla*) belonged to the Domkyrka of Östra Aros (Uppsala). This means, that there were close connections between those places.

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Zusammenfassung

Der folgende Artikel präsentiert und analysiert vier hochmittelalterliche Schwerter (11.-13. Jh.), die aus dem schwedischen Uppland (Uppsala) oder Värmland (Karlstad) stammen. Zwei der Schwerter aus Uppsala waren die Prunkstücke der Ausstellung „Schwerter aus Schwedens turbulenter Kindheit“, die von Juli 2007 bis Januar 2008 im Museum Gustavianum in Uppsala zu sehen war (UMF/B 74 and 78). Das Värmland-Schwert (Nr. 17001-34945) wird im Värmland-Museum in Karlstad aufbewahrt. Das vierte Schwert wurde im Stadtzentrum von Uppsala gefunden, in einem Bezirk, der Rådhuset genannt wird. Heute befindet es sich im Historiska Museet in Stockholm (SHM 34525). Die archäologischen und typologischen Daten aller Schwerter werden in diesem Aufsatz zum ersten Mal dargestellt.

Hauptanliegen des Artikels ist die Untersuchung des bisher nicht publizierten epigraphischen Materials auf den Schwertklingen, das Metall-Inlay-, Gold- und Silberinschriften beinhaltet. Ein Vergleich der schwedischen Schwerter mit Exemplaren aus Deutschland (Deutsches Historisches Museum, Zeughaussammlung Berlin) offenbarte eine enge Verwandtschaft des Inschriftenstils, möglicherweise sogar eine Herkunft aus der gleichen Werkstatt. Durch eine Analyse der Buchstabenfolgen konnten die Inschriften in drei Untergruppen eingeteilt werden: Die DIC-, die SDX- und die INNOMINEDOMINI-Gruppe. Obwohl nicht möglich war, eine endgültige Lesung herauszuarbeiten, brachte die Untersuchung Argumente ans Licht, die uns die Inschriften als religiöse Invokationen deuten lassen, die möglicherweise an Jesus Christus selbst gerichtet waren.