

**Mead-halls of the Eastern Geats**  
**Elite Settlements and Political Geography AD 375-1000**  
**in Östergötland, Sweden.**

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## **Mead-halls of the Eastern Geats. Elite Settlements and Political Geography AD 375-1000 in Östergötland, Sweden.**

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Swedish province of Östergötland is one of Scandinavia's bread boxes. Its archaeological and historical record speaks of great wealth through the ages, and its main cities Linköping and Norrköping are currently among the country's ten largest. Two contract archaeology units are based in Linköping. Together they evaluate and excavate over a hundred sites annually, mainly along the E4 motorway and the main railway line. But there is no archaeology department at the University of Linköping, and scholars from the nearest departments in Stockholm and Gothenburg rarely visit the province. For decades, research-driven archaeological work in Östergötland has been far from proportional to the province's population density, either prehistoric or current.

Östergötland has long been recognised as one of the 1st Millennium's political hot spots, for instance by Per H. Ramqvist on his 1991 map of Migration Period petty kingdoms. Within the province, it is clear that the plains belt is where prehistoric magnates resided, not in the forest zones flanking it to the north and south. Splendid single finds, though never surveyed comprehensively, offer a rough idea of where elite settlements might be sought. But little is known about individual elite settlements in 1st Millennium Östergötland. Not one of the beowulfian mead-halls of this book's title, being my shorthand for the ostentatious manorial buildings where the Late Iron Age elite lived their lives and played their roles, has been identified in the field (cf. Herschend 1993; Lönnroth 1997).

This book aims at beginning to remedy that situation, being an investigation of the internal political geography of Östergötland during the period AD 400–1000. (Important previous works on this subject are Nerman 1958; Kaliff 1999; Nielsen 2000a; Lindeblad 2008.) I ask three main questions:

1. Where were the elite settlements?
2. When was each of them an abode of the era's elite?
3. What sort of regional power pattern do they form?

The discussion of these issues in other parts of Scandinavia in recent decades has largely been framed abstractly in terms of “central places” (e.g. Fabech & Ringtved 1995; papers in Larsson & Hårdh 2003). This term originates in studies of the geography of 20th century Germany (Christaller 1933) and was originally brought into archaeology by the Binford/Clarke school. For clarity, and to avoid unintended associations, I instead speak of “elite settlements”. We know that 1st Millennium society in Scandinavia was not egalitarian, and we know that settlement sites vary dramatically in terms of the monumentality of their architecture and the wealth of their small-finds record. This book treats the upper range of this variation. In Ulf Näsman's terms (1991a), we are looking for multifunctional settlements where the elite resided and acted as hosts to craft, trade and cult, and where the era's armed forces were based.

An interesting line of inquiry that is *not* explored in this book concerns the enmities, friendships and vassal-relationships that must at various times have existed between Östergötland's elite settlements. As an archaeologist, I am pessimistic about such inquiries. Indeed, I believe them to be the prerogative of historians, had there only been any written sources, because:

1. Relationships between elite sites most likely shifted faster than archaeological chronology can allow us to track.
2. Elite material culture, as far as it is currently known, is homogeneous across the province, i.e. no political subcultures are visible.

3. Each truly powerful person or group would have controlled more than one place of residence at a time, meaning that individual sites cannot unproblematically be seen as exponents of separate power factions (T.B. Larsson 1993:51; Näsman 1998:10).
4. Each elite site would have changed its political affiliation frequently and violently, as shown by the repeated burning of Uppåkra (Lars Larsson 2009) and the many destruction layers in hill-forts with habitation deposits (Olausson 2008:25).
5. Though of course constrained to some extent by natural geography, past spheres of political influence cannot be assumed to map 1:1 with the *Siedlungskammer*. As Näsman put it (1991b:325), "The reach of power may be greater or smaller than the region".

### **Chronological Terminology**

The six centuries under study are sub-divided into seven typo-chronological phases as set out below (Lund Hansen 1987; Näsman 1984b; Rundkvist 2003a; 2003b; forthcoming; Jansson 1985). Non-Scandinavian readers may find the chronological terminology in this book confusing. In the absence of any Roman colonisation, Sweden's Late Iron Age is reckoned from AD 375 to 1100 and is largely a prehistoric period. Our Middle Ages are telescoped into the period 1100–1520, beginning with the first stone churches and ending with Reformation.

#### **Chronology**

Late Roman Period C1	150-260
Late Roman Period C2	250-320
Late Roman Period C3	310-400
Early Migration Period D1	375-450
Late Migration Period D2	450-540
Early Vendel Period	540-600
Middle Vendel Period	600-700
Late Vendel Period	700-790
Early Viking Period	790-900
Middle Viking Period	900-1000
Late Viking Period	1000-1100
Early Middle Ages	1100-1250
High Middle Ages	1250-1350
Late Middle Ages	1350-1520

#### **Chronological Delimitation and Contemporaneity of Evidence**

This investigation halts at AD 1000, or, in terms of relative chronology, the end of the Middle Viking Period. I thus pay no attention before the book's coda to any churches or Christian grave monuments, any towns, or (with a few early exceptions) any rune stones. A central tenet of this book's methodological approach is that each period should be studied in the light of its own evidence.

This forms a departure from much previous work. One reason for my approach is that social change was more dramatic around AD 1000 (with Christianisation, the onset of proto-urbanisation and the first tentative unification of the Medieval kingdom of Sweden under Olof Eriksson)

than around AD 1100 (when stone architecture and monastic orders appeared; cf. Ersgård 1996). I seek to learn about society before this great change. Another reason is a curious weakness I perceive in much recent research into the 11th and 12th centuries in Östergötland. The results have in some cases been treated as indicative of the state of things during all of the Viking Period (e.g. Lindeblad & Nielsen 2000:170–172) or even the entire Late Iron Age (Nielsen 2002:40–41). In my opinion, the idea that the archaeological record of the 11th and 12th centuries might be representative of the 5th through the 10th centuries too is a speculative hypothesis, not a safe assumption.

In 1992 Anders Kaliff (pp. 111, 114) pointed to the conjectured presence of a 12th century church at Borg manor as evidence that the manor had been a “central place” in the late 1st Millennium. Such chronological imprecision also characterises Fabech & Ringtved's seminal 1995 paper. Here Migration Period and Vendel Period find categories are listed together (fig. 1:1) though they cover a period of 400 years. In a check list (p. 19) we are also encouraged to look for “structural continuity” in the shape of Viking Period and Early Medieval elite indicators up into the 12th century – all under the heading “Central place indicators in the Germanic Iron Age”. Though Fabech & Ringtved state in the caption to the list that the late evidence would *suggest* continuity, the reader easily gets the impression that continuity is the norm: that a gold bracteate and a Romanesque church are somehow interchangeable and might profitably be mapped together (as done by Lindeblad & Nielsen 1997a:34; 2000:172).

Such a timeless perspective is evident in Elfstrand's (1998; 2004) discussions of the political and military geography of Östergötland. He works with two chronological horizons: one represented by hill forts and assumed to date to the Migration Period, and one represented by historically attested royal manors and assumed to cover at least the period AD 800–1300. Elfstrand speaks of kings (in fact, “the king”) during the latter period as if this office had worked consistently in a single way for 500 years. The locations of the royal manors were documented in the 13th century or later and cannot in my opinion be used in this way to model the Viking Period.

To my mind, when studying societies of the past and present, continual change is to be expected. People are usually quite incapable of doing anything twice in exactly the same way. In the face of generation shifts and the simple entropic pressure of the universe, societal constance can only be achieved through directed work. Therefore, this study assumes no continuity, but looks out for signs of it as an interesting observation.

My intention is not to trace the regional roots of Medieval Sweden back through time from the election of king Olof as the first joint king of the Svear and Götar. The perspective here is that the forging of that alliance about AD 1000 is irrelevant to the period under study, as it was still in the future at that time. Things could have turned out differently. The people who wielded power in the late 1st Millennium did not look upon their own time as the run-up to any future goal. Their societies were in no way provisional.

### **Previous Work in Other Regions**

1st Millennium elite settlements and political geography in other Scandinavian regions have been a subject of intensive study and fieldwork for decades. The field may be divided into an entirely prehistoric discussion about the Migration and Vendel Period elite (Myhre 1987; P-O. Nielsen et al 1994; most contributions to the “Excavations at Helgö” and “Uppåkrastudier” anthologies; Adamsen et al. 2008) and a proto-historical one about the early towns and nascent state administrations of the Viking Period (Randsborg 1980; Clarke & Ambrosiani 1991; Iversen et al. 1991; Lihammer 2003). The latter category is less relevant to Östergötland where urbanisation began very late. Some authors cover both periods (e.g. papers in Callmer & Rosengren 1997; Skre

1998; Jørgensen 2001; Helgesson 2002). The generally unpaid work of Danish amateur metal detectorists has been crucial to the recognition and characterisation of elite settlements both in Denmark and Sweden. The absence of any strong detectorist movement in Sweden is due to the country's strict legislation (Rundkvist 2008) and can to some extent account for the far lesser number and variety of identified sites there. Nevertheless, research has progressed far enough that it must now be seen as an anomaly for a province of southern Scandinavia to be without known elite settlements of the later 1st Millennium. Östergötland had none before I set to work with the project reported on in these pages, and as this book is completed we still do not have the floor-plan of a single mead-hall in the province.

If by elite settlement we mean something on the top level along the lines of Gudme, Sorte Muld, Uppåkra or Tissø, then there is barely a single known example in the four provinces adjoining Östergötland: Helgö in Lake Mälaren (see the "Excavations at Helgö" series). This island was at various times in the Middle Ages part either of Södermanland or of Uppland. Also in Lake Mälaren, not far from Helgö but in Uppland, is Björkö with the early island town known from written sources as Birca (treated in a large scholarly literature spanning centuries, most recently at book length by Hedenstierna-Jonson 2006). Tellingly, neither of these sites was identified by detectorists, as they typically have been in Denmark.

For surveys of late 1st Millennium elite indicators in the adjoining provinces, see Bergström 1997 and Lindkvist 1997 for Södermanland, Karlenby 2003 for Närke, Lundqvist 2000 for Västergötland, Hansson 2001 and Nicklasson 2005 for Småland. The most recent addition to the roster of relevant sites in adjoining provinces is a Migration Period settlement at Lunda in Strängnäs parish, Södermanland, which has yielded cult figurines, glassware and the postholes of a feasting hall (Gunnar Andersson 2004; 2006; Andersson & Skyllberg 2008).

Among nearby overseas areas, Öland has several good candidate sites for elite residences, chief among which is Björnhovda (Fabech 1999 w. refs). Gotland's best candidate is Tune in Väte (Fabech 2006 w. refs), while southern Finland appears to lack indications (Schauman-Lönqvist 1999).

Anne Carlie's 2005 study of Iron Age political geography in western Scania is also instructive, not least because it demonstrates how dramatically the level of basic archaeological knowledge varies from province to province within Sweden. Says Carlie about her 60 by 30 km study area (p. 414, and I translate), "The archaeological point of departure is ... excavated and well dated settlements ... all in all about 130 sites at 90 locations, most excavated in the 1980s or later." This kind of fieldwork coverage is not currently available in Östergötland.

Farther afield, the discussion of political geography in the British Isles (e.g. Scull 1999; Story 2003; both w. refs), Francia (Wood 1994) and Saxony (Hässler 1999) during the later 1st Millennium is different in that it has far more written matter to work with. Those societies offer a kind of upper limit to the size and organisational level we may expect of Scandinavian polities.

### **Recognising the Presence of Power**

In order to study where the elite sites were we must have some idea of what they may have been like, or we would not know what to look for. I have taken the model developed for Denmark and Scania by Fabech & Ringtved (1995) as a point of departure (fig. 1:1), discussing the details of its application separately in the context of each period under study.

My main criterion to identify the presence of the elite when processing the documented archaeological record has been to look for evidence of the *control of resources*: goods, skilled labour, unskilled labour, land and the right to unhindered symbolic ostentation. There is good reason to view political power and material wealth as interchangeable currencies in the period under

study. Labour-intensive construction projects such as fortifications and great barrows signal a power over people or a voluntarily pooled surplus that is essentially interchangeable with the wealth necessary to acquire and deposit valuable goods. The slavery of the time, where many people were in fact goods, throws this equation into sharp relief. Slaves were one kind of goods that could be deposited at the era's funerals (Rundkvist 2003b:45, 57–58).

Many of the datable artefacts available for study have been found in graves, which causes source-critical problems for a scholar seeking settlements. Few cemeteries have been completely excavated, the dominant cremation rite has been destructive to a varying extent and osteological analyses are too few to give a good idea of the number of animals killed for each funeral. The number of identifiable artefacts per excavated grave at a cemetery should thus not be seen as significant from the perspective of political geography (*contra* Kaliff 1999:108). It probably tells us more about the mean temperature on the funeral pyres than about the wealth and power of the mourners. Pyre temperature varies with fuel investment and technical know-how, so a grave whose artefactual contents have been entirely obliterated by the heat may represent a greater investment than a grave with several identifiable artefacts. However, the *quality* of recovered grave goods should be indicative of wealth and power: e.g. precious metals, imported goods, weaponry and particularly well-crafted jewellery.

To my knowledge, all participants in the discussion agree that the management of religious cult was an important part of petty kingship in the later 1st Millennium (Fabech 1991). Thus when we find the abodes of the elite, then we can also expect to find traces of the sacred there. However, this relationship does not work both ways, as becomes clear as soon as we start looking at sacral place names and the archaeological remains of cult. Not every Ullevi was a magnate's farm. Not every little sacrifice was presided over by a king. The central presupposes the sacral, but the sacral also largely existed independently of the central (Vikstrand 1999; 2000; 2001:411–413). Thus, in this work, sacral place names and remains of unassuming cult structures (such as the little cult building at Borg, see gazetteer) are not treated as elite indicators in their own right.

## Chapter 2 – Setting

The name “Östergötland” preserves that of a 1st Millennium ethnic entity: it means “Eastern land of the Götar”. The name of those people in turn is believed to mean “emitters of fluid, pourers”; if so, probably referring to semen. This would mean that the ancient Götar spoke of themselves simply as “men” (*Sv.ortn.lex.* p. 103), obviously taking some pride in their fertility.

The province’s roots as a demarcated territorial unit are lost in prehistory, the first written mention dating only from shortly before 1300. Its wooded southernmost districts Ydre and Kinda counted as parts of Småland until about 1600. With these additions, in 1634 the Medieval *landskap* of Östergötland was made a *län* province which (with some minor later alterations) forms this book’s area of study.

The province is located between the Baltic coast and Lake Vättern. It borders on Södermanland to the north, Närke to the north-west, Västergötland to the west across Lake Vättern, and the highlands of Småland to the south (fig. 2:1). Östergötland is distinctly divided into three geographic zones, with hilly woodland to the north and south and a broad ribbon of fertile plains orientated south-south-west to east-north-east between them (fig. 2:2). The plains are 115 km long and at most 27 km wide. Gunnar Elfström (1983) discerned a hillier transitional zone along the plains belt’s southern edge, but here I treat this land simply as part of the plains. Östergötland *län* measures roughly 10,600 square kilometres, forests and all, and the plains belt 3,400 square kilometres. For comparison, note that the largest kingdom of the English Heptarchy, Northumbria, measured about 35,500 square kilometres in AD 800. Östergötland's plains belt would not have been a very large area from the point of view of an English king at the time.

The main routes into and out of the plains before the era of good roads, bridges and canals were natural waterways, with Lake Roxen as the main communications hub. River Motala ström formed a main route from the Bråviken inlet via Lake Roxen to Lake Vättern, punctuated by many smaller lakes along the way. This route marks the northern edge of the plains belt.

Arriving by boat to the eastern end of the plains, a traveller could choose between two deep inlets, Bråviken and Slätbaken, which between them define the Vikbolandet peninsula. Slätbaken led via river Storån and Lake Asplången to Lake Roxen. Bråviken led via the rapids at modern Norrköping to Lake Glan and on via River Motala ström to Lake Roxen. Roxen then offered three main routes: south up River Stångån to Lake Åsunden and the Kinda district, south-west up River Svartån to Lake Sommen and the Ydre district, or onward west up River Motala ström to Lakes Boren and Vättern. Lake Vättern, finally, though most of its shores are hilly woodland, offered access to Närke, Västergötland and Småland. Though the plains of Östergötland are well connected to other fertile areas, these are quite distant, and so the plains form a naturally demarcated area of study, a classic *Siedlungskammer*.

### 1st Millennium Settlement Patterns

The distribution of place names (Franzén 1937; 1982) and ancient monuments (Hyenstrand 1984; Winberg 1986) demonstrates that 1st Millennium settlement was almost exclusively located in the plains where there is good agricultural land. The adjoining forests provided a number of resources but were not settled until the early 2nd Millennium, as shown by the distribution of farmstead names ending in *-säter* and *-boda*.

Arthur Nordén (1925) suggested that the plains had been divided into three territorial units during the Bronze Age. Birger Nerman (1958) pointed to the Linköping area in central Östergötland with its many great barrows as the seat of the area’s Iron Age kings. Åke Hyenstrand (1989) implicitly applied Nordén's three-polity model to the late 1st Millennium as well without offering

any empirical support for the idea. It has proved tenacious and shows up in many later contributions (e.g. Kaliff 1999; M.G. Larsson 2002:18-19; Elfstrand 2004), probably because the province's modern towns (and their attendant developer-funded excavations) are distributed in this way. The archaeological record, however, offers no support for the three polities model during the 1st Millennium.

There are not in fact any empty areas or sharp spatial inhomogeneities in the archaeological record of the 1st Millennium that might demarcate three areas. The era's settlement, as indicated by graves with visible superstructures (Hyenstrand 1984:31–32, 174) and collapsed field walls (Winberg 1986:109; Petersson 2006), simply concentrates in the plains and fills them.

The graves and to a lesser extent the field walls thin out toward the west where large-scale agriculture has largely obliterated them in the flattest and most fertile part of the province. They avoid hilly country that extends locally into the plains from the forests to either side. The ubiquitous later-1st Millennium farmstead names ending in *-stad* have a closely similar distribution without any westward thinning (Franzén 1937; 1982).

### **Territorial Units**

Östergötland was in all likelihood never united under a single ruler during the period under study. We cannot expect to identify any single 1st Millennium “capital” of the province. Judging from areas with a better historical record, however, a gradual agglomeration of many small territorial and social units into fewer and larger ones over this period is likely (cf. Brink 1998; Näsman 1998; Kaliff 1999:122–123).

The oldest known territorial unit in Östergötland is the *härad* district, of which the province had 18 in the High Middle Ages (fig. 6:2). This division is generally taken to have been established in the Viking Period. More on this in chapter 6.

Throughout the book, I refer to sites on the template of Farmstead in Parish, e.g. Sättuna in Kaga. Certain parishes are also pointed out as candidate areas for central places. This is simply a convenient way to talk about places and finds: it is not intended to imply that the parish system would be relevant in itself for the period under study. It was in fact laid out only in the 13th century, for the purposes of the Church. At the end of the Middle Ages, Östergötland had roughly 155 parishes. Since that time, about 20 of them have been merged two by two.

Neither the *härad* nor the *parish* is thus relevant as we move into the prelude of our study with a look at the Late Roman Period.

### **Chapter 3. Prelude: the Late Roman Period (150-400)**

In order to establish a baseline before entering this book's period of study, we shall take a quick look at matters in the preceding period: the Late Roman Iron Age (AD 150-400). Here I rely mainly on surveys by other scholars. The data are given in appendix A at the back of the book.

#### **General Settlement Pattern**

As the field wall systems of the Late Roman Period continued to be used and extended through the following Migration Period, there is no common type of ancient monument that allows us to chart the extent of Late Roman Period settlement. The oldest surviving farmstead names in Östergötland are however likely to date from the Roman Period. This goes for most of the *-inge* names (fig. 3:1; Franzén 1982:35-36; *Sv.ortn.lex.* p. 150), which are quite common. The same period may also have seen the first *-lösa*, *-tuna* and *-hem* names (Franzén 1982:32-35; *Sv.ortn.lex.* pp. 124, 204, 329) which are however more rare. All four name types show the same distribution: almost all of the farmsteads are in the plains belt, avoiding its edges. A small number of exceptions are found along main waterways in the forest zones.

As detailed in the next chapter, hillforts of the Roman and Migration Periods are not generally useful as indicators of an elite presence. Better indicators for the Late Roman Period are finds of precious metals, Roman imports and weapons. At least the latter may be surmised to mark the locations of farmsteads or other district centres quite closely, as all weapons with known find contexts come from graves: no sacrificial weapon deposits are known.

#### **Gold and Silver**

Disregarding a number of typologically and chronologically anonymous spiral gold rods, I know of only seven indigenous Late Roman Period gold objects from Östergötland. Kent Andersson (1993:230) lists a pear-shaped filigree pendant (of phase B2, deposited as an heirloom in a much later grave) and three finger rings. Tim Olsson found yet another finger ring (Andersson's type 11 var Ib, dating from phase C3) at Tuna in Östra Husby in April 2007 during metal detector investigations by myself and the members of the Gothenburg Historical Society (Olsson & Rundkvist 2008). Roman-era coins are extremely rare in Östergötland. I know of only two, both being 3rd century gold coins: an *aureus* of Tetricus from Sya parish and a barbaric imitation of a Probus issue from Kullerstad parish. Unlike, for example, the case of Gotland, the province's Viking Period hoards contain no residual Roman coins.

As for indigenous silver objects such as jewellery and belt mounts, I have found no directed survey in the literature. I am however aware of three graves of this period with silver objects: one has a brooch, one a brooch and a belt mount, and one a shield boss adorned with gilded silver and carnelian.

#### **Imports: Glass and Bronze Vessels**

Lund Hansen (1987:444) lists six finds of Late Roman Period imports from Östergötland, all glass and bronze vessels. Except for some glass from the Gullborg hillfort in Tingstad parish, all finds are from graves. The above-mentioned coins and carnelian inlay on a shield boss are of course also import finds.

A few green glass sherds with ground ovals (Näsman 1984 type 5) from the sacrificial precinct at Abbetorp in Väderstad (Petersson 2004:58-59) may represent a vessel made in the Late Roman Period, but these commonly survived into the Migration Period, and there are no other indications from Abbetorp of an elite presence before that time.

## **Weapons**

Nicklasson's 1997 catalogue lists 21 weapon finds of definite Late Roman Period date from Östergötland. Looking at his distribution map (p. 53), we find that the weapons of this period are found almost exclusively in the western half of the plains belt, with thirteen sites. Only one firmly dated find has been made east of River Stångån: a grave with a shield at Skälv in Borg. (Incidentally, the weapon finds form a complementary distribution when compared to the province's hillforts, which gravitate to the east. As the contemporaneity of these two find categories is uncertain, little can however be read into this.) The northern woods are devoid of finds. In the southern woods are four finds, all along waterways into northern Småland. Nicklasson (p. 56) suggests that the farmsteads marked by these weapon graves may have controlled the distribution of bog iron from the highlands (on the era's iron production in Östergötland, see Räf 2008).

Most weapon finds of the period occur singly and several kilometres from the nearest neighbour. A problem for our present purposes is that the weapon burial custom petered out in the 3rd century, leaving a more than century-long gap in the record before we reach the start of our main period of study. Only two weapon finds can be dated firmly to phase C3. Any 4th-century changes in the political landscape will thus be almost invisible in the weapon finds.

## **Conclusions**

Precious metals, imported vessels and weapons mark twenty-three parishes out as worthy of our attention here (fig. 3:2). Fourteen stand out particularly thanks to the number or quality of their elite indicators.

- Skälv in Borg has eastern Östergötland's only Late Roman Period weapon grave and another grave with an heirloom gold pendant and two Polish bronze arm rings (Kaliff 2001). Both graves date from C1.
- Grebo churchyard has an exceptionally rich weapon grave of C1 including a gold finger ring and two Roman bronze vessels.
- Tingetorp in Gärdserum has an exceptionally rich weapon grave of C2.
- Linneberg in Högby has a rich grave of C1b with a silver rosette fibula and a decorative silver mount (Helander & Zetterlund 1998).
- Täckto in Klockrike has two weapon finds of phase C1, one a grave and the other a stray find.
- Lundby in Kullerstad has a barbaric imitation of a gold coin of Emperor Probus (AD 276-282).
- St. Per parish (Vadstena) has two weapon finds of phase C1, one a stray and the other an exceptionally rich grave from Granby with a Roman bronze vessel.
- Lambohov in Slaka has a cemetery with two graves containing imported glassware: one with a Roman cup of general C date; one with black and translucent gaming pieces and a comb dating from C1-C2 (Nilsson 1975).
- Söräng in Sya has an *aureus* gold coin struck in AD 273, probably in Trier, for the Gallic Emperor Tetricus (Westermarck & Ambrosiani 1983).
- Gullborg in Tingstad is a hillfort with thick culture layers (Nordén 1938:280–284). Finds include a Late Roman Period gold finger ring (no closer dating possible), an imported faceted glass vessel of C3-D1 date (Näsman 1984:59), casting mould fragments and a metal-casting crucible of the Helgö type.
- Östervarv in Varv has an exceptionally rich weapon grave of C1 including a Roman glass vessel and a silver-trimmed profiled fibula.

- Lilla Harg in Vikingstad has an exceptionally rich weapon grave of C1 including a Roman bronze vessel and a shield boss adorned with gilded silver and carnelian.
- The Smörkullen cemetery near Alvastra in Västra Tollstad (Nicklasson 1997:45–48) has produced two or three Late Roman weapon finds, all dating from phase C1. From the Early Roman Period, Smörkullen has seven weapon graves. Much of this remarkable cemetery had been destroyed by land development before it came to the notice of archaeologists.
- Östra Husby parish has two gold finger rings of C2–C3, one from Skälv and one from Tuna. Both are suggestive place names. The modern farmsteads are located 4.5 km apart. The ring from Tuna has been twisted so that it cannot be worn and was found below Roman Period sea level. Thus it appears to have been sacrificed.

On a regional scale, the Late Roman elite indicators do not cluster densely and distinctly anywhere, though there is a large swarm in the second-westernmost quarter of the plains between Vadstena and Linköping. The quantity and quality of the indicators vary from a single stray lance head to an entire fortified settlement with finds of Roman luxuries. Note that this hillfort, Gullborg in Tingstad, is the only case in which we know the exact location of a Late Roman Period elite settlement. The Sya gold coin was found on the slope of a creek and is thus unlikely to mark a settlement site; a 1980–81 investigation of the find spot turned up no further indications. All the other Late Roman Period elite indicators are either stray finds or from graves.

Only eight of the parishes in question have a documented elite presence after phase C1, that is, after the AD 250s at the latest. Nevertheless, as we move on into the Migration Period and beyond, we have reason to keep an eye on all twenty-three. Can we identify any continued elite presence there?

#### **4. The Migration Period (375-540)**

Compared to their neighbours in Västergötland and Södermanland, the Migration Period magnates of Östergötland kept rather a low archaeological profile. Hoards, rich burials and rich settlements are very rare, a tendency that began already before AD 260 as we have seen in the preceding chapter. Yet the plains belt is one of Sweden's richest agricultural districts, and collapsed stone field walls (Winberg 1986; Ericsson & Franzén 2005) together with abundant early-1st Millennium place names (Franzén 1982:30-36) document that it was settled for agriculture and stock breeding from one end to the other. It is unlikely that the area's social structure would have experienced an egalitarian interlude of 300 years starting in the mid-3rd century. Thus the relative modesty of the aristocratic footprint in the archaeological record cannot be taken at face value: there must have been magnates in Migration Period Östergötland, but for reasons unknown they deposited less of their wealth in the ground than did their neighbours. And that complicates the task at hand.

Looking at the upper two tiers of Fabeck & Ringtved's 1995 pyramidal model (fig. 1:1), we find that many of their central-place indicators are not applicable to Migration Period Östergötland. In fact, their topmost super-regional tier cannot be identified at all. This is partly due to the possibly significant absence of Continental display helmets and goldsmith work from Östergötland, but equally to the uncertain meaning of the model's "unusual find combinations" and "artefacts of high artistic quality". Of the indicators on the middle, regional importance tier, the following are relevant here: gold, glass, weapons and fine metalworking debris. I believe that we should also look at occurrences of animal art and runic script: both of these media demanded of their producers and audience an unusual level of expertise and access to controlled knowledge.

#### **Gold and Silver**

To date, Östergötland has not yielded a single *solidus* gold coin. However, the province has produced eleven gold bracteates in three separate finds, two of them also including nondescript gold rings and sheet. (There is some confusion in the literature regarding the two die-identical runic bracteates from Vadstena and Motala, Ög 178a and 178b. Several authors erroneously state that there are two bracteates from Vadstena, when in fact there is only one. And others quote an erroneous museum registration that once put the Motala bracteate's find spot at Mariedamm in southern Närke, cf. S.B.F. Jansson 1975:30.) Three gold finger rings of Migration Period date have been found, two strays and one in a grave at Abbetorp in Väderstad. Part of a golden sword hilt has been found at Ingelstad in Östra Eneby.

Counted by weight, however, most of Östergötland's Migration Period gold is likely made up of typologically and chronologically anonymous spiral rods that cannot really be dated closer than to the Late Roman or Migration Periods. There are six such finds, and also three tiny snip-pets of similar rods from recent settlement excavations. I have allocated all this gold to the Migration Period, as this is the date of the single gold spiral that is part of a datable find combination from Östergötland (the bracteate hoard from Norra Torlunda in Vånga). Also, the Migration Period is the main era of the Eastern Empire's historically documented peace payments to northern barbarians, which are likely to have formed the source material of much Scandinavian goldsmith work.

As to Migration Period silver, there is only one solid object: a relief brooch found near graves at Abbetorp in Väderstad (fig. 4:1). Apart from this brooch, amounts are minuscule: small silver sheet appliquéés on four copper alloy brooches. There is also an undatable small piece of a silver rod from the Boberget hillfort in Konungasund.

For our present geographical purposes, we must note that much Migration Period gold appears to have been deposited far from any settlement in woodland lakes and bogs. Cases in point are the hoard from Norra Torlunda in Vånga and the province's most recent spiral gold find, from Sångartorp in Kvarsebo. Before treating a gold find as a central place indicator, we must study its find context closer.

### **Imports: Glass and Amber**

Apart from metals, imported materials with an at least potential Migration Period date are extremely rare in Östergötland. They are glass and amber. I have not collected data on glass beads as they are difficult to date to this period in the absence of accompanying metalwork.

Several securely dated Migration Period deposits including glass Snartemo type glass vessel sherds and gaming pieces were found at Abbetorp in Väderstad in 1998. The deposits were six graves and two apparently sacrificial deposits, both extending across the boundary between dry ground and wetland. All were located closely together within one excavation trench.

Glass gaming pieces of uncertain Late Roman or Migration Period date have been found at two further sites: a single blue piece in a hillfort in Skönberga and a set of black and colourless ones in a grave in Slaka.

A typologically anonymous edge sherd from a glass vessel has been found in a grave of Migration or Vendel Period date in Västra Husby.

In southernmost Scandinavia, amber beads are found even at unassuming settlement sites (fig. 1:1; Fabech & Ringtved 1995). Rare unburnt female burials across more northerly parts of Scandinavia attest that such beads were widely traded from the southern Baltic and/or south-western Jutland in the Migration Period. One such burial with 110 amber beads has for instance been excavated at Värmynderyd in Vetlanda in north-west Småland (Engman & Nordström 2001). However, in Östergötland cremation is the rule, and so it is no surprise that Migration Period amber graves are entirely lacking there. Amber burns and leaves little residue. The aforementioned elite sacrificial precinct at Abbetorp in Väderstad, whose chronological focus is in the Migration Period, has however yielded a few amber beads. And two hillforts, Boberget in Konungsund and an unspecified one near Norrköping, have each produced a single one. These may or may not date from the Migration Period as detailed stratigraphic information is unavailable.

### **Weaponry**

Including the aforementioned gold mount from a sword hilt, I am aware of only five weapon finds of at least potential Migration Period date whose find spots can be pinpointed on the parish level or better. Orlanda and Slaka parishes have each produced one stray Migration Period lance head. At Lambohov in Slaka, a stone setting in a cemetery contained no identifiable burial, but a poorly preserved javelin head of this period or the preceding one was found among the covering stones (Nilsson 1974). A grave at Göthult in Åtvid contained four sword blades dating from this period or the preceding one – no diagnostic hilt mounts included.

### **Fine Metalworking**

Five sites in Östergötland have yielded copper-alloy casting debris that may concern us here: crucibles of the Helgö type, with a handle and originally a lid (K. Lamm 2008), and/or casting moulds similar to the ones found at Helgö. In none of the cases is it known what object types have been cast. All five finds or none may date from the Migration Period, and so I have not treated them as elite indicators for this era.

Three of the sites are hillforts: Gullborg in Tingstad, Boberget in Konungsund and Braberg in Skönberga (Olausson 2008:31). None of them has yielded any definite Migration Period finds: three fibulae from Gullborg belong to the preceding phase, C3. Other sites are Skamby in Kudby and Linneberga in Å (Rundkvist et al. 2007 w. refs). The Skamby finds were in a culture layer stratigraphically locked between the 2nd century BC and the 9th century AD. The Linneberga debris was found in an 8-shaped hearth of the kind typical for Helgö-style metal casting, though so far lacking a radiocarbon date.

A long-lived settlement site at Domprostehagen in St. Lars near Linköping survived into the Early Migration Period. It has yielded a small crucible and some uncertain fragments of casting moulds, but according to the excavator, the metalworking debris most likely belongs to a habitation phase dating about AD 1 (Hörfors 2001a).

### **Animal Art**

Scandinavian animal art grew out of 4th century provincial Roman metalwork on military apparel such as sword belts. Throughout the Migration and Vendel Periods it was a controlled aristocratic medium, entering wider social strata only with the Early Viking Period proliferation of standardised serial-produced copper-alloy jewellery. Thus it is of prime importance here.

The first animal art style is named for the Nydam bog find in southern Jutland. The style combines decorative panels covered with chip-carved geometrical patterns and stylised animal figures clinging to the edges of the objects. Two very similar copper alloy brooches with D-shaped head plates and partly preserved Nydam-style geometrical panels of embossed silver sheet have been found at Vistena in Allhelgona and Sättuna in Kaga (fig. 4:2; Montelius 1897 fig. 133). A probably coeval stray brooch from Regna parish has decorative silver sheet panels with abstract punch decoration and gilding and thus belongs to the non-animal Sösdala style. A brooch from Stångebro in St. Lars east of Linköping has vestiges of silver sheet panels, but their original style of decoration cannot be determined. None of these four brooches have animals clinging to their edges.

Moving on to the second half of the period and Salin's Style I, the distribution of Migration Period animal art coincides partly with that of the gold bracteates as most of them depict animals in this style. All of Östergötland's bracteates have them. In addition, we have three Style I brooches from Abbetorp in Väderstad (fig. 4:1), Kullerstad parish (a lake find, *Tillväxten* 1898 fig. 70) and Sättuna in Kaga (fig. 9:10). They are made, respectively, from silver, gilded copper alloy and plain copper alloy.

### **Runic Inscriptions**

Östergötland has five inscriptions with the early 24-character futhork. They are in themselves difficult to date to either side of AD 400, but two are on die-identical Migration Period gold bracteates from the vicinity of Vadstena (Ög 178) and Motala respectively (Montelius 1906). One is on a rune stone from Allerstad in Drothem (Ög N269; Nordén 1937a). One is on a rune stone at Skärkind church (Ög 171). One has been added to a Bronze Age rock carving panel at Himmelstalund in Östra Eneby (Ög N250; Krause & Jankuhn 1966 no 121). Only the Allerstad and Skärkind inscriptions are comprehensible as writing, the former saying "I SigimaraR ... of ... erected the stone", the latter simply proclaiming the male name SkiPaleubaR.

### **Hillforts**

A somewhat relevant site type in the search for Migration Period elite settlements is the hillfort, of which Östergötland has many (Nordén 1938). Judging from such excavations as have been

done there and in adjoining provinces, they appear to have about the same date distribution as the field walls: the Late Roman and Migration Periods. But their interpretation is less clear-cut, and they cannot be seen as a single class of commensurable sites (Olausson 2008). Among them we find structures inhabited permanently or visited only intermittently, in central and peripheral locations, and possessing varying degrees of defensibility.

Most hillforts show no sign of habitation, are located away from the best farmland and were probably built as refuges in anticipation of war. Clearly, building one took a respectable amount of labour, but most are simple structures: Nordén (1938:280, and I translate) mentions "... many of Östergötland's hillforts, whose low, irregularly undulating ramparts often may seem to the casual observer as rather haphazardly created natural formations ...". Nothing suggests that that such a project would have demanded top-down elite leadership rather than the voluntary collaboration of a number of unassuming households.

Other forts in densely settled areas such as Boberget in Konungsund and Odensfors in Vreta kloster have thick culture layers, usually with evidence for textile working and other crafts, and should probably be seen as fortified farmsteads with varying social pretensions (Olsén 1965:145; Olausson 1987; 2008). None of them have produced any elite finds of unambiguous Migration Period date. Most of Östergötland's hillforts have seen no excavations, and determining the type and exact use-period of an individual fort is difficult.

The hillforts' overall distribution across the province (Olsén 1965:143; Hyenstrand 1984:88; Kaliff 1987a) reflects their multifaceted character. Almost all of them are in semi-marginal locations in the eastern half of the plains belt, probably because a) the coast's proximity allowed seaborne attackers to pose a greater threat here, b) the eastern half of the plains belt has far more hills. The few hillforts in western Östergötland occupy strongly marginal locations along waterways in the forests to either side of the central plains, with a few apparently having been placed offensively to guard Rivers Motala ström and Svartån. This means that as indicators of an elite presence, the hillforts have severe weaknesses. We have noted previously that the Gullborg fort in Tingstad parish has finds of Late Roman Period gold and glass, casting-mould fragments and a crucible. But this observation cannot be generalised to tell us anything about other hillforts in Östergötland. All we really have is gold and glass and metal-casting at that individual site.

[Side-note: another type of potentially defensive structure is represented by a number of wattle barrages in River Lillån between the farmsteads of Kullerstad and Rökstad in Västra Husby parish. They were found during drainage work in the 1920s and studied by Nordén (1938:262-266). Finds of long-socketed Early Medieval axes suggest that the barrages were built after the period under study here. Another wattle structure in the same river, 2 km upstream from the barrages and right by the Viking Period rampart of Götavirke, was excavated in 1993 and interpreted as part of a ford (Nielsen 1998). It has given a radiocarbon date in the 1st century AD.

The wattle barrages may have served to keep water-borne attackers out, or alternatively they may form the remains of fisheries or mill dams. In any case, they are of little concern here as they neither represent any great labour investment nor appear to date from our period of study.]

### **Signalling Fire Lines**

Medieval and later written sources, and a few place names of uncertain age, document the use of signalling fires on hilltops. By this medium, news of impending attack could be transmitted speedily from the coast inland, giving people breathing room to prepare their defence and send their families and livestock into hiding.

Starting from this historical matter, Nordén (1943) and Kaliff (1987a; 1992) published wide-ranging interpretive models for 1st Millennium Östergötland. They concentrated on the distribu-

tion not of indicative place names but of hillforts, studying lines of intervisibility and suggesting that primed signalling bonfires may have been kept in the forts and on other hilltops in the mid- to later 1st Millennium. Given that such practices would leave scant material traces and that none of the sparse available evidence for them dates from the 1st Millennium, this idea must remain an unproven possibility (cf. the critique in Gahrn 1989:67-71). I have thus disregarded it.

### **Elite Site Distribution**

Before looking at the distribution of elite indicators across the plains belt we should establish what kind of find contexts we are working with. Half of the finds listed in appendix A2 are stray single objects. One fifth are precious-metal hoards with at least two objects. The remaining three tenths are finds from settlement excavations, wetland deposits, one cemetery and one runic inscription on bedrock. For our present purposes, it is a severe weakness that only a small fraction of the data are finds from identified settlements: very few such have been excavated to any great extent, and even fewer have yielded any elite indicators.

Looking at the overall distribution of Migration Period elite indicators across Östergötland (fig. 4:3), we may first note that they stick to the plains belt as expected. Two isolated exceptions are unlikely to tell us much about the area's political centres. One is a Sösdala style brooch from Regna parish on Lake Regnaren, an area where 1st Millennium settlement extended south from around Vingåker in Södermanland across the provincial border of recent centuries. The other is a gold spiral ring from Jordbro in Ringarum near the inner end of the Valdemarsviken inlet, most likely marking a harbour at the end of a land route south-east from the plains past Söderköping, Ringarum and Gusum.

A survey of Late Roman Period elite indicators in chapter 3 produced a list of twenty-three interesting parishes. The Migration Period, though only three quarters as long, has produced similar evidence from twenty-two parishes. Overall there is considerable continuity past the period shift: most of the Late Roman Period indications in the plains belt are only a few kilometres from the nearest Migration Period indication. There is continuity within nine parishes out of twenty-three possible (39%): Borg, Kullerstad, Orlunda, St. Per/Vadstena, Slaka, Vikingstad, Vånga and Ödeshög, to which may be added a few cases of continuity just across a parish border. Note however that despite the continuity, none of the nine parishes in question have produced any indicators dating from phase C3, emphasising that the three elite generations of this phase left a very faint archaeological footprint indeed in Östergötland.

The main change in the Migration Period distribution compared to the preceding period is the near absence of indications in the southern woodlands. This is due to the cessation of weapon burial after phase C2. For three centuries we are unable to see the people interpreted by Nicklasson as controlling traffic from the highlands of Småland.

On a regional scale, the Migration Period evidence forms three distinct clusters with a few outliers. (Note that these clusters have nothing to do with Hyenstrand's oft-quoted 1989 three regions: there is no cluster on Vikbolandet and one Migration Period cluster straddles the boundary between two of his regions.)

- A. Vadstena-Vallerstad: seven sites within a 29 km diameter.
- B. Vikingstad-Landeryd: six sites within a 14 km diameter.
- C. Vånga-Östra Eneby: seven sites within a 24 km diameter.

What do these clusters represent? Migration Period political geography, modern agriculture or modern field archaeology? We might imagine a situation where the elite material is actually

scattered evenly across the plains or clustered in several additional areas but visible to us only due to certain localised types of modern land use. This does not in fact seem to be the case. Agriculture has been intensive all across the plains belt. Only the B cluster (Vikingstad-Landeryd) coincides with one of the province's major towns (Linköping), and of its six indications, only two are due to rescue archaeology.

If we thus accept as most likely that the clustering does have something to do with Migration Period politics, then we are left to ponder what each of them represents. They are certainly not distinct *settlement* clusters: they are discrete groups of elite indicators within an unbroken settlement blanket. And they are the sum of a century and a half of politics. I find it highly likely, though untestable, that each cluster does represent a separate faction at some time during that period. But equally, I believe that we must assume that the situation was volatile, with shifting alliances and wars and negotiations and raids. What those three clusters are certainly not, is a map of a stable situation that lasted throughout the Migration Period. We should be open to an interpretation where for a few decades one petty king might rule a whole elite cluster, half of the next one over, the land between them where no elite indicators have been found, and the resources culled from the forests to either side of that particular stretch of the plains belt. Then he was killed in a raid and the situation changed.

### **Where Were the Mead-Halls?**

Zooming in on individual sites, where more exactly were the mead-halls of Migration Period Östergötland? To my mind, we should look at the *diversity* of elite indicators in each area. And with this perspective, only three parishes offer any clear hint of where to seek the post-holes of elite abodes; one in each of our three clusters.

It is humbling and instructive that the most clear-cut site in this respect was not excavated until 1998, after over a century of competent field archaeology in the province. The cemetery and sacrificial precinct at *Abbetorp in Väderstad* (Pettersson 2001, 2004; Lindeblad & Pettersson 2009) yielded a uniquely rich combination of elite indicators: gold, silver, animal art, abundant glass vessels, glass gaming pieces, glass beads and amber beads. Three possible weights were also found, though in no interpretable context and having no dating characteristics. Suggestively, two of them weigh near the standard weight of a *solidus* coin. Burial and sacrifice took place at Abbetorp in the Late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period and then ceased. None of the elite indicators can be dated to the former period. No settlement remains coeval with the elite finds were found within the excavated highway corridor. But the well-preserved foundation of a building standing until the 3rd century AD was documented, and the wider surrounding area is covered by a well-preserved system of collapsed field walls. A top-level elite settlement site of the Migration Period very likely awaits excavation at Abbetorp, somewhere within a few hundred meters from the excavated cemetery. It marks the southern edge of the A cluster (Vadstena-Vallerstad). The nearest coeval elite indicator is a gold spiral ring from Lundby Norrgård in the same parish. The siting of this manorial farm very likely has something to do with varied natural resource exploitation, as it is on the southern border of the plains belt.

From a diversity point of view, the gold bracteates stand out. They combine a precious imported material with animal art and in some cases runes. However, all of Östergötland's three bracteate finds are from peripheral locations, both in relation to the settled landscape and to the elite clusters identified in this work. Though the people depositing gold bracteates are clearly the ones we want to track here, they did not deposit them at home. And so the bracteate finds known to date are not useful as evidence for the detailed location of elite settlement (cf. the Söderby hoard in Uppland, Rundkvist & Westerholm 2009).

The southern part of *Östra Eneby parish* has a stray part of a golden sword hilt from Ingelstad and an early runic inscription, intriguingly added to a Bronze Age rock-carving panel at Himmelstalund. The two find spots are located closely apart and offer the combination of gold, rare weaponry and runes. The area between Ingelstad and Himmelstalund is however currently occupied by Norrköping's north-western suburbs, suggesting that an elite settlement site here will prove elusive to field survey. The sites are in the C cluster (Vånga-Östra Eneby).

*Sättuna in Kaga* is remarkable in this period for its unique combination of animal-art styles: one brooch fragment each decorated in Nydam style and Salin's Style I, the former with silver sheet decoration. A third fragment represents a simple cruciform brooch, of similar date but without animal art. A pit with a radiocarbon date on spruce-trunk charcoal (Ua-37502) centred in about 380 cal AD shows that the brooches need not have been deposited as scrap during the site's Early Vendel Period main phase. But the three aforementioned copper-alloy brooch fragments are all the Migration Period metalwork the site has yielded, and there is no Late Roman Period at all among the finds. Also, being the province's only known Migration Period metal detector site, Sättuna's role in that era is difficult to gauge. It is located in the B cluster (Vikingstad-Landeryd).

*Narvered in Vallerstad* has the province's largest early gold hoard (weighing a humble 238 g) and a central location on good farmland near the confluence of River Skenaån with River Svartån: not at all like the bracteate finds. A neighbouring farmstead is the much-discussed "Sanctuary of the Götar" (or of Gaut, one of Odin's names), Götevi, that has been ascribed a grandiose role as a central tribal shrine (Elgqvist 1947). However, if the Narvered hoard marks an elite settlement, then no other traces have been found of it: diversity is low here. The nearest Migration Period elite indicator is the Nydam style brooch from Vistena in Allhelgona, five kilometres to the south-west. Also, the hoard's Migration Period date is not entirely evident. Narvered marks the eastern edge of the A cluster (Vadstena-Vallerstad).

### **-Tuna Place Names**

Of the place-name categories in Östergötland suggested as indicating a status above the ordinary, only one is likely to have been productive as early as the Migration Period: the *-tuna* names (Holmberg 1969; Hellberg 1985; Edberg 2008). There are nine of them, and when juxtaposed with the Migration Period's elite indicators they do not correlate well (fig. 4:3). Only one is inside a Migration Period elite cluster, coinciding with one of the period's three best candidates for an elite settlement site: Sättuna in Kaga. But note that the Migration Period is short, only about 160 years. The Late Roman Period is 250 years long, and the *-tuna* names correlate better (but overall not very strongly) with elite indicators of that era, coinciding closely at Tuna in Heda, Luntan/Luntuna in Viby and Tuna in Östra Husby. As we shall see in the next chapter, in the context of political geography the *-tuna* farmsteads of Östergötland are mainly relevant to the Vendel Period, also 250 years long, when four of them coincide closely with elite indicators.

Regardless of their later fate, it appears that four of the nine *-tunas* were already important places before the end of the Migration Period. I would suggest that at least these four were named Tuna at the time, but that the name type remained productive over several centuries. Indeed, Tuna in Stora Åby is out in the Holaveden border woods, an area settled only in the Middle Ages.

In the Viking Period, all nine except the intensively metal-detected Sättuna in Kaga appear unimportant. We should note that four of them do not coincide closely with any elite indicators whatsoever from the period AD 150-1000. But five out of nine over a period of 650 years does support the long-established notion that there is something unusual about Tuna.

## **Conclusion**

The material record of Östergötland's Migration Period elite is not as rich as that of neighbouring Västergötland, Södermanland or Öland. With its comparative paucity of gold, glass and animal art, Östergötland appears to have been somewhat out of the international loop. The absence of *solidi* suggests that the province's magnates were not sending troops to south-eastern Europe to take part in the great extortions there. Nor were the factions in neighbouring provinces that upheld contacts with the Continent apparently willing to redistribute much gold into Östergötland: they stone-walled its rulers. There are currently no indications that Östergötland had anything resembling Helgö, Björnhovda or Uppåkra. Nevertheless, such markers of elite culture as we find distributed across the province are similar in kind to what is known from the rest of southern Scandinavia.

As we shall see in chapter 5, with the Vendel Period the picture changes to one of lively elite contacts. Here we must keep in mind that the period shift entailed an abrupt change of find contexts. The Migration Period has produced hoards and single precious metal sacrifices enough that we can be sure that *solidus* coins were quite rare at the time. But rich graves are almost unknown until the Vendel Period, when they suddenly dominate the elite record. The low elite profile of Migration Period Östergötland is thus partly due to the era's frugal mortuary customs.

I have identified three clusters of elite indicators and three or four individual sites as Östergötland's best candidates for elite settlements of the Migration Period. Note however that those sites were in all likelihood not "capitals" of the three elite clusters. They are simply random elite sites that happen to have become visible to us out of a concealed population numbering in the tens or hundreds. If in the future Östergötland gets a well-organised metal detector hobby these sites will begin to proliferate.

## **5. The Vendel Period (540–790)**

The Vendel Period is long, 250 years, and elite finds from Östergötland bear witness to a rich and ostentatious aristocratic culture. The regional field of study can be said to have been born with a 1941 paper by Holger Arbman, titled (and I translate) "Graves of grandee farmers in 8th century Östergötland". Here he presents three rich cremation graves with animal art, and though we now place at least two of them in the 7th century along with all of Style II:C, they are still crucial evidence for the presence of a well-connected elite in the province at the time.

The much-discussed "Migration Period Crisis" (e.g. Näsman & Lund 1988 w. refs) in fact occurred Post-Migration Period and marks the boundary to the Vendel Period, when many kinds of evidence from pollen diagrams to field walls to hoards suggest a demographic and economic collapse. All of Early Vendel Period culture should in my opinion be seen to some extent as a response to this event, which cannot have been unrelated to a well-documented atmospheric dust cloud that caused failed crops and famine in the 530s (Axboe 2001; Gräslund 2008; Høilund Nielsen 2008). Add to that the severing of the Migration Period's abundant gold supply with the rise of the Merovingians in the West and the Imperial military recovery under Justinian in the East, and it appears clear that the mid-6th century must have been a highly stressful time.

Fabech & Ringtved's 1995 pyramidal model (fig. 1:1) suggests that in order to pin-point elite settlements of the Vendel Period in Östergötland, we should look for the same indicators as in the Migration Period: gold, glass, weapons and fine metalworking debris. The model does not give us much chance of identifying any sites of super-regional importance for this period anywhere in Scandinavia as the era has no Continental display helmets and hardly any Continental goldsmith work. As mentioned in chapter 4, "unusual find combinations" and "artefacts of high artistic quality" are not well defined terms. A check list in the same paper (Fabech & Ringtved 1995:19) suggests a collection of building types, landscape features and place names that might help, but none that would allow us to differentiate between top-level and middle-level settlements.

Nevertheless, to Fabech & Ringtved's South Scandinavian indicators I would again add animal art when discussing Östergötland, and the Vendel Period's intricate and ostentatious disc-on-bow brooches. (These brooches, though not made of precious metal, are the era's most expensive jewellery in terms of the expertise and amount of labour needed to make them.) No runic inscriptions in the province can be dated with certainty to this period.

### **Gold and Silver**

The dawn of the Vendel Period marks an abrupt end to the supply of precious metals in Scandinavia. In Östergötland, there had not been much of them even during the Migration Period. Yet the province has four small Vendel Period gold finds: a gold foil figure found in secondary context among Medieval settlement remains at Bodaviken/Svintuna in Krokek (fig. 5:1), a 7th century Merovingian medal mounted on a finger ring and found beside the great barrow at Ledberg church (Malmer/Alenstam-Pettersson 1951; 1952), a gold cloisonné fragment (still holding a single garnet) probably from a display sword found in a rich weapon grave at Östervarv in Vary, and remains of a composite (wooden?) bead decorated with two gold foil hoops from a 6th century cremation grave at Lårstad in Västra Stenby. The period has produced no datable silver objects.

### **Imports: Glass and Garnets**

As with the preceding period, the main class of imported goods is glass vessels. Six such finds can be dated firmly to the Vendel Period, all of them more or less rich graves: at Asktorpet in

Askeby, Jussberg in Heda, Högby in Högby, Kapellsbacken at Lagerlunda in Kärna, Östervarv in Varv and Heda in Vreta kloster. A typologically anonymous edge sherd from a glass vessel has been found in a grave of Migration or Vendel Period date in Västra Husby.

Three pieces of garnet cloisonné or simpler garnet inlay have been found: disc-on-bow brooches from Ringarum and Skedevi, and the above-mentioned gold fragment from Varv.

An unusual import has been found in a Vendel Period grave in the Paragrafen block in St. Lars, suburban Linköping: a small unadorned Samian vessel that was half a millennium old at the time of burial (Helander 1997). To my mind this find is not much of an elite indicator in the Vendel Period context, most likely being a fruit of grave robbery. I wonder if the mourners building the Paragrafen grave even recognised the little pot as an imported piece. It does carry a discreetly stamped maker's mark, which is an extremely rare example of writing in Vendel Period Östergötland.

### **Weaponry and Horse Gear**

There are twelve finds of Vendel Period weaponry and horse gear. For typology and comparative material see Nørgård Jørgensen's *Waffen und Gräber* (1999). I have disregarded the period's axe heads as their function is difficult to determine and woodworking tools must have been commonplace.

1. From the rich grave at Asktorpet in Askeby, fragments of an embossed-foil helmet.
2. From the metal detector site at Sättuna in Kaga, a punched strap end from a display bridle.
3. From an otherwise unfurnished cremation grave at Vilhelmsberg in Kville, a type SAX2 seax sword with beautiful tinned Style C scabbard mounts.
4. From the rich grave at Kapellsbacken at Lagerlunda in Kärna, possible embossed-foil helmet fragments (Arne 1919).
5. From Freberga in Rogslösa, a stray type L2 lance head.
6. From a destroyed grave at Smedjebacken at Ruda in Skedevi, a seax sword. At 826 mm cm blade length and 67 mm blade width, it does not fit any of the W&G type definitions. It comes closest to type SAX4 and thus most likely dates from the 8th or 9th centuries.
7. From the hillfort of Gullborg in Tingstad, part of an Early Vendel Period shield boss.
8. From the Järnmalmsviken inlet of Lake Åsunden near Håkanstorp in Tjärstad, a type SAX3 seax sword.
9. From the rich grave at Östervarv in Varv, a scabbard mount for a seax sword and gold cloisonné probably from a sword grip.
10. From a settlement layer at Sverkersgården at Alvastra in Västra Tollstad, a loop mount for a seax scabbard, an iron strap end for a bridle and a gilded copper-alloy fragment possibly from a sword hilt (fig. 9:38).
11. From a grave at Viby Bosgård in Viby, a shield-on-tongue buckle from a bandolier.
12. From a grave at Sjögestad in Vreta kloster, punch decorated mounts from a display bridle.

### **Fine Metalworking**

Two settlement sites have produced evidence for fine metalworking in the Vendel Period. Both are described in the gazetteer.

Sverkersgården at Alvastra in Västra Tollstad has crucibles, indeterminate casting-mould fragments, slag, and a metalworking hearth with two radiocarbon dates peaking in the Late Vendel Period. Sättuna in Kaga has a gold foil figure die (fig. 5:2; the only one known north of Zealand

and Scania at the time of writing; Rundkvist 2007), an unfinished small equal-armed brooch and many casting lumps and droplets. Datable metalwork products at both sites clusters in the Early Vendel Period.

### **Animal Art**

Scandinavian Vendel Period art that has come down to us largely consists of panels of miniaturised intricate animal interlace executed in relief on cast copper-alloy metalwork. Motifs and compositions rarely repeat themselves from one object to another: almost every piece is unique. The artists were clearly highly trained specialists.

The period's start is defined i.a. by the abandonment of Salin's Style I and the appearance of his Style II, whose late-6th century version is named II:B and whose 7th-century version is named II:C. Style D flourished in parallel with late Style II:C and early Style III:E from the later 7th century to the period's end, being the dominant style in the early 8th century. Style III:E appeared in the mid-8th century and survived into the Early Viking Period, when it was usually combined with period-defining gripping-beast decoration. (For the research background to this schematic art-style chronology, see Salin 1935; Arwidsson 1942; Ørsnes 1966; Høilund Nielsen 1991; Jørgensen 1997.)

As established by Arbman (1941), Östergötland's Vendel Period animal art is high-quality and displays independent innovation. But we do not have very much of it: confining ourselves to animal interlace we have finds from only fourteen sites, most of which have yielded only one piece.

1. From the rich weapon grave at Asktorpet in Askeby, a number of Style C mounts for a bridle and possibly a bandolier, including one with a unique scene where a fisherman in a boat catches a mermaid wearing the finery of an aristocratic lady on his hook (fig. 5:3).
2. From Långeryd in Fivelstad, a stray part of a Style E disc-on-bow brooch.
3. From Fredrikstorp in Flistad, a stray gilded Style C disc brooch (fig. 5:4).
4. From the grave with glass at Högby in Högby, Style E pendants.
5. From the metal detector site at Sättuna in Kaga, a Style E equal-armed brooch.
6. From a grave at Tångestad in Kimstad, the curious combination of an antique Style C disc brooch and a Final Vendel Period jewellery set.
7. From a cremation grave at Svensksund in Konungsund, badly burned fragments of animal-art jewellery: most likely a Style D domed oval brooch.
8. From another cremation grave at the same cemetery in Konungsund, badly burned fragments of an object decorated in intricate Style III:E, possibly a Transitional Type domed oval brooch.
9. From an otherwise unfurnished cremation grave at Vilhelmsberg in Kvillinge, a seax sword with beautiful tinned Style C scabbard mounts.
10. From a cremation grave at Västra Bökestad in St. Lars, fragments of a Style D (?) disc-on-bow brooch.
11. From a second cremation grave at Västra Bökestad in St. Lars, a large Style E disc-on-bow brooch.
12. From a destroyed grave at Smedjebacken at Ruda in Skedevi, a type N1b domed oval brooch decorated in Style D.
13. From the rich weapon grave at Östervarv in Varv, a number of Style C and D mounts from a bridle and a seax scabbard, including unusual depictions of a man caught up in interlace and of a boar.

14. From a grave at Vetavallen at Spångsholm in Veta, a Style D disc-on-bow brooch and a Style D cast copper-alloy bead.
15. From a destroyed grave at Vistgården in Vist, a Style E equal-armed brooch.
16. From a grave at Leonardsberg in Östra Eneby, a curious little Style B decorative disc.

### **Disc-On-Bow Brooches**

Disc-on-bow brooches are the Vendel Period's most ostentatious class of jewellery, being reserved for elite ladies. As shown by inhumation graves and depictions on gold foil figures, women wore them as a third brooch under the chin. This is also shown on the foil figure die from Sättuna in Kaga.

The brooches are cast out of the same copper alloy as the era's more humble metalwork. But disc-on-bow brooches were cast in multiple parts, and usually adorned with a number of other materials and decoration in various techniques. In Östergötland these include garnet inlay, glass inlay, bone inlay, mercury gilding, tin-coating, soldered wire decoration, punch decoration, animal art, abstract relief interlace and waffle relief. The cremation rite has seen to it that most of the brooches survive only as fragments.

I know of 13 disc-on-bow brooches from Östergötland from 10 sites. Unless noted otherwise, all find contexts are cremation graves.

1. Långeryd in Fivelstad. A stray bow-disc from a brooch with Style E interlace.
2. Flytthem in Horn. A fragment of a large Late Vendel Period brooch.
3. Högby in Högby. Characteristic fragments of the pin from a large Late Vendel Period brooch, not from the same burial as the glass and animal art pendants.
4. Sättuna in Kaga. A foot fragment of a small Early Vendel Period brooch with partial tin-coating, found in the ploughsoil.
5. Rullerum in Ringarum. Five fragments of a brooch with garnet inlay, soldered wire decoration and abstract relief interlace.
6. Berga in St. Lars. From different graves, fragments of two large Late Vendel Period brooches with waffle relief.
7. Berga in St. Lars. See above.
8. Västra Bökestad in St. Lars. Two fragments of a brooch with Style D (?) animal art and waffle relief.
9. Västra Bökestad in St. Lars. Fragments of a large gilded brooch with Style E animal art and waffle relief.
10. Västra Bökestad in St. Lars. Two small fragments of a brooch with waffle relief.
11. Smedjebacken at Ruda in Skedevi. A completely preserved large Late Vendel Period brooch, gilded and silvered/tinned, with glass or garnet cloisonné and abstract relief interlace, from a destroyed grave, apparently an inhumation.
12. Vetavallen at Spångsholm in Veta. Fragments of a brooch with Style D animal art.
13. Ringstad in Östra Eneby. A gilded brooch with soldered wire decoration and an empty inlay socket on the head.

### **Monumental Structures**

There is no evidence that new hillforts were built in the Vendel Period, and only scant finds to suggest that old ones were still visited and used. For our present purposes, the only notable find is the shield boss from Gullborg in Tingstad, dating from the beginning of the period. (This is in

fact the only Vendel Period shield boss known from the entire province.)

Nor can any other kinds of monumental structure unequivocally be dated to this period. The barrow covering the rich grave at Asktorpet in Askeby may once have measured over 20 meters in diameter and more than three meters in height, but when excavated there was little left of it and its original dimensions were not made a subject of closer investigation. Two radiocarbon dates from elsewhere, however, merit some discussion.

The great oblong barrow at Aska in Hagebyhöga has yielded a shin bone from a horse with a radiocarbon date in 660-870 cal AD (68% likelihood; Claréus & Fernholm 1999). The bone was found inside the barrow's central cairn along with other bones from the animal's rear leg, suggesting that a whole articulated part of the horse had been deposited. Though the earthen fabric of the mound covering the cairn contains re-deposited material from the Early Iron Age, the bone thus most likely dates the erection of the barrow, whose central contents have not been investigated. Most of the date's probability distribution falls in the Late Vendel Period. But it is not unlikely that the horse may in fact have died after 790, in the following period. While Aska is one of Viking Period Östergötland's best candidates for an elite residence, there is not one unequivocal Vendel Period elite indicator from Hagebyhöga parish. Thus it appears most parsimonious to group the barrow with Aska's many Viking Period elite indicators.

At Borg manor in Borg, a 1649 map shows a U-shaped defensive earthwork on the bank of the River Motåla (Kaliff 1999:118-119). Though most of it was levelled in the post-war decades without the attention of archaeologists, a 1994 trial trench through the surviving part yielded a charcoal sample from a stratigraphical position pre-dating the earthen bank. This was dated to 600-660 cal AD. The sample's functional relationship to the earthwork is however obscure. The main period of lowland fortifications in Sweden is the Middle Ages, and so we cannot allow the fortifications at Borg any important role in the discussion of Vendel Period matters. To my mind it seems more relevant to the origins of Ringstadholm castle, first mentioned in the 14th century and located on an island in the river upstream from the Borg earthworks, 1.8 km distant as the crow flies.

### **Elite Site Distribution**

As with the preceding period, the elite find contexts of the Vendel Period are not ideal for settlement studies: two thirds are graves, a fifth are stray single objects, and the remaining tenth are from settlement excavations and one lake find. The situation is however better than with the Migration Period: instead of indeterminate stray finds we are now dealing largely with graves, which are known to stick near the settlements in this period. Chronologically, the indicators are quite evenly distributed over the period's phases.

As usual, Vendel Period elite indicators prefer the plains belt. Looking at the off-plains outliers (fig. 5:5), as with the preceding period we see one in the extreme north on the Södermanland border: the rich Smedjebacken cemetery at Ruda in Skedevi. As in the late Roman Period, we now yet again have a visible elite presence along the waterways south into Småland: a seax sword deposited in Lake Åsunden's northern end at Håkantorpet in Tjärstad, and a grave with a large disc-on-bow brooch at Flytthem in Horn near the lake's southern end. And as with the preceding period, there is an indication at the inner end of the Valdemarsviken inlet: a grave with a garnet-embellished disc-on-bow brooch from Rullerum in Ringarum.

The 230 years of the Late Roman Period produced elite indicators in twenty-three parishes. The 150 years of the Migration Period produced elite indicators in twenty-two parishes. For the Vendel Period, the figures are 260 years and twenty-seven parishes. In only four parishes (18%, half of the Migration Period's ratio of continuity from its preceding period) is there continuity

from the Migration Period: Kaga, Ringarum, St. Lars and Östra Eneby (though there are several cases of continuity across a parish border). This tallies well with the great pan-Scandinavian changes in material culture, landscape organisation and agricultural intensity at the start of the Vendel Period that I alluded to at the beginning of this chapter. Vendel Period elite families most likely did not inherit power from their Migration Period forebears in an undramatic fashion.

As for clustering, the three Migration Period clusters still persist in recognisable shape (fig. 5:5), though all three have shifted their centres of gravity several kilometres:

- A. Fivelstad-Viby: six sites within a 20 km diameter.
- B. Flistad-Vist: nine sites within a 24 km diameter.
- C. Kimstad-Kvillinge: four sites within an 18 km diameter.

Two new smaller clusters join them:

- D. Västra Tollstad-Rogslösa: three sites within a 10 km diameter.
- E. Tingstad-Krokek: three sites within a 15 km diameter.

### **Where Were the Mead-Halls?**

As with the Migration Period, we should in my opinion look for sites with many qualitatively diverse indicators. Two settlement sites stand out: *Sättuna in Kaga* (cluster B) and *Sverkersgården at Alvastra in Västra Tollstad* (cluster D). Both have fine metalworking and weaponry/horse gear. *Sättuna* also has animal art and a disc-on-bow brooch. The securely dated elite finds from *Sättuna* belong to the Early and Late Vendel Period, while *Sverkersgården's* indicators date from the Early/Middle and Late phases. Both sites have seen excavations, but no house foundations have as yet been found. In *Sättuna's* case our 1000 sqm trench in 2008 was not in the most promising part of the metal finds scatter. At *Sverkersgården*, the Vendel Period remains have been severely disturbed by an Early Medieval cemetery and the excavation trenches have been small.

Moving on to indirect evidence for the location of settlements, the most diverse non-settlement finds are, as indicated above, from cemeteries. The rich Middle Vendel Period grave at *Östervarv in Varv* (cluster A) leads the field with gold, glass, garnet, animal art and weaponry. A group of ruined graves at *Smedjebacken at Ruda in Skedevi* (unclustered) have collectively yielded animal art, weaponry, a disc-on-bow brooch and glass or garnet, but peripheral *Skedevi* is more relevant to the political situation in Södermanland than in Östergötland. Somewhat less diverse are the rich Middle Vendel Period grave at *Asktorpet in Askeby* (unclustered) with glass, animal art and weaponry; and a cemetery at *Högby in Högby* (cluster A) where one Late Vendel Period grave has yielded glass and animal art, another a disc-on-bow brooch. All of these grave furnishings were likely kept and used at settlements nearby before being buried.

As in the preceding period, the best candidate for an elite settlement site in cluster C appears to be located in *Östra Eneby parish*, though the evidence is rather weak. The farmsteads of *Leonardsberg* and *Ringstad*, located three kilometres apart, have yielded graves with animal art and a disc-on-bow brooch respectively, both from the Early Vendel Period. There is selection bias here due to the proximity of Norrköping.

The new elite cluster E, straddling the *Bråviken* inlet, has no strong candidate for an elite settlement of the Vendel Period unless we are willing to afford the re-deposited gold-foil figure from *Bodaviken/Svintuna in Krokek* a special status. Similar figures were made at *Sättuna in Kaga* as shown by the die found there. The nearest find spots for gold-foil figures (cf. J.P. Lamm 2004) are at *Eskilstuna* near Lake *Mälaren* (Södermanland province) and *Brahekyrkan/Ströja* on

the island of Visingsö in Lake Vättern (Småland province).

Referring to the area's great barrows (Ledberg and Sättuna in Kaga, plus the far smaller one at Alguvi in Kaga) and the Ledberg gold finger ring, M.G. Larsson (1998:119-121; 2002:85) points out the south-western shores of Lake Roxen (my cluster B) as the Late Iron Age's most prominent power centre. I cannot see it as qualitatively more prominent than any of the other two large Vendel Period clusters. Only one of the three barrows has a firm date – in the Viking Period.

### **Place Names and the Distributed Central Place**

The *distributed central place* is a concept among place name scholars that originated with Lars Hellberg (1975; 1979; 1984a; 1984b; 1985) and was developed further by Stefan Brink (e.g. 1996). Here the various functions of a societal centre are seen as distributed across the landscape and possible to identify in place names. Thus, in Brink's illustration (1996:242) of a generalised East Swedish centre, we find a Sätuna at in the middle, surrounded by six sacral place names, a Karlaby where the warriors lived, a Smedby where the smiths lived and a Gillberga whose function is unknown but which belonged to the complex.

Integrating this model with the archaeology poses several problems. To begin with, the illustration has no scale bar, and so we do not know how far to go in our search for the components of the distributed central place before we should consider a place an isolated outlier. Then there is the question of sacrality vs. centrality, where not every place name mentioning e.g. Frey can be assumed to mark the abode of a powerful family. But most importantly, the top-level archaeological centres of the Migration and Vendel Period that have been excavated (Gudme, Uppåkra, Helgö) do not conform to the model. They are not spread out across the landscape and divided into discrete, functionally specialised settlements with individual ancient place names. The hills around Gudme has suggestive names, but its cemetery Møllegårdsmarken bears a modern land-parcel name referring to a farm with a mill, and its port-of-trade is named Lundeborg after a modern-era summer retreat. And if we would argue that weighty original names have been replaced in these cases, then the model becomes unsinkable and thus unscientific.

Looking at Östergötland's place names, the best candidate for a Hellberg-Brinkian distributed central place is the Linköping area (Per Vikstrand, e-mail 21 April 2009). Within a seven-kilometre diameter are Sättuna, Alguvi, Ullevi, Mjärdevi and Gillberga. Hellberg argued that the Ljunga that became Linköping also belongs to the group, but this has not been accepted by his colleagues. No military place names like Tegneby, Rinkeby, Karleby or Svenneby are in the area.

This cluster of place names is not very impressive from an archaeological point of view. As sacrality does not equal centrality, we must disregard three of the six names. Indeed, we are fortunate enough that vast surfaces have been stripped and excavated by archaeologists at Ullevi in St. Lars outside Linköping. Apart from a tiny snippet of gold rod that may date from the Late Roman Period, they found nothing indicating an elite presence in the period under study here (Karlenby 1996; T. Carlsson et al. 2001; Nielsen 2005; Lindeblad & Tagesson 2005; Rolöf & Lindeblad 2007). In fact, from an archaeological point of view only one of the six farmsteads appears to have been an exceptional settlement in the mid-1st Millennium. And so the distributed central place shrinks back to a single site at Sättuna in Kaga.

As we saw in the preceding chapter, four of Östergötland's nine *-tuna* sites correlate spatially with elite indicators of the four pre-Vendel Period centuries. With the Vendel Period's two-and-a-half centuries the name type reaches its period of most intensive importance, with elite indications on or near four *-tuna* sites. Only one of them has no earlier indications, which suggests that though *-tuna* sites were in general most important to the elite during the Vendel Period, that is not the period when the name type was most productive. The unique continuity known at Sättuna in

Kaga is probably due to the fact that of the nine, only Sättuna and Tuna in Östra Husby have seen any metal detecting.

<i>-tuna</i>	x	y	Lrom	Mig	Ven	Vik
Tuna in Heda	1434353	6462015	1		1	
Sättuna in Kaga	1486672	6481229		1	1	1
Svintuna in Krokek	1534005	6504661			1	
Sjötuna in Kumla	1445301	6468566				
Tuna in Nykil	1481615	6464110				
Tuna in Rystad	1492808	6484126				
Tuna in Stora Åby	1433068	6443800				
Luntan (Luntuna) in Viby	1472472	6473447	1		1	
Tuna in Östra Husby	1543286	6497544	1			

### Conclusion

Östergötland has a respectable elite record for the Vendel Period, largely thanks to the era's re-adoption of expensive furnished burial. The Merovingian medal-ring from Ledberg suggests long-distance diplomacy. The gold-foil figure die from Sättuna in Kaga indicates an intimate relationship with rulers in southernmost Scandinavia.

Relative to the preceding period, the Vendel Period elite does move around a little within the three existing clusters and two new ones appear, but there is no territorial expansion to speak of. On a regional scale, the two periods' elite indicators correlate well with each other, keeping to the plains belt.

The qualitatively leading sites of the Vendel Period elite record correlate fairly well with the clustering of all indicators across the province: of the six strongest candidates, all but one are in clusters. But two of the six clusters have no such diverse find milieux as far as the record is known today. It is of course easier to overlook a site, or certain find categories at a site, than the very existence of a cluster of sites. This suggests that better candidates will one day be found in clusters C and E, perhaps through fieldwork in Östra Eneby parish and at Bodaviken/Svintuna in Krokek.

The Vendel Period appears to mark both the apex and the end of the power wielded from *-tuna* farmsteads in Östergötland. The ones in Heda, Kaga, Krokek and Viby parishes enjoy their *floruit* in these centuries.

## Chapter 6 – the Early and Middle Viking Period (790-1000)

With the Viking Period, our means of studying elite settlement in Östergötland improve dramatically. For the period AD 150-790, I have been able to identify elite indicators in eleven parishes per century on average. For AD 790-1000, the figure per century is twenty-four. This is largely due to the large-scale reappearance of coinage, hoards and rune stones. But novel classes of find also appear: river deposits and ostentatious grave monuments. The indicators I have chosen to look at are silver and gold, imported luxury goods, weaponry and horse gear, fine crafts debris, weights, short-twig runic inscriptions, dated great barrows, great stone ships and boat burials. And as we approach the historical period, the oldest written sources become relevant at least to some extent. Animal art, however, becomes ubiquitous and mass-produced with the Viking Period, and is thus not a good indicator of an elite presence in that era.

### Silver and Gold

The Viking Period is, famously, Scandinavia's Silver Age. Judging from coin dates, however, precious-metal hoarding in Östergötland began very late and was never widespread (Forsberg 1968; Malmer & Wiséhn 1982 and a few subsequent finds). There are single coins from tpq AD 749 onward (grave finds and strays), and a grave find with five coins at tpq AD 626 through 880, but the earliest (and largest) hoard is tpq AD 951.

<b>Coin finds from Östergötland</b>				
<b>Tpq dates</b>	<b>8th C</b>	<b>9th C</b>	<b>10th C</b>	<b>11th C</b>
<b>Graves w coins</b>	2	3	1	-
<b>Stray coins</b>	1	3	2	5
<b>Hoards w coins</b>	-	-	8 (+2?)	5

In addition to the coin-dated finds, there are fifteen finds (hoards plus stray single pieces) of gold and silver jewellery from the entire Viking Period and one silver-decorated lance head. Fourteen graves, all of the Early and Middle Viking Period, have yielded silver coins and/or pendants, and one grave a piece of gold foil. The two graves with 8th century coin dates in the above table reflect Islamic issues buried or copied in the 9th century.

Finds of precious metals are always interesting to plot on a map, as each one marks a spot where a powerful person has been. However, as we saw with the peripheral siting of the Migration Period's bracteate finds, we cannot assume that each precious metal find represents the same kind of event. The objects were most likely not all buried for the same single reason. Most scholars at the very least make a distinction between retrievable dry-land finds (hoards), irretrievable wetland finds (sacrifices), and semi-retrievable finds in graves. This distinction may not be entirely relevant to the Viking Period way of thinking, as we shall see below. Precious-metal finds of this era from wetland and water are rather rare in Östergötland (four unambiguous ones, one uncertain and one from an island in Lake Åsunden). Nor are any large amounts of precious metal known from the province's graves.

The retrievable finds most likely did not all remain in the ground for the same single reason. A perennial question is whether a retrievable find was left in the ground voluntarily or if its owner was somehow prevented from coming back to it. And if there is any one part of Östergötland where we may expect that unusually many hoard owners might have fallen victim to sudden attacks from abroad, then it is Vikbolandet. But hoards are not more common in Vikbolandet than anywhere else, nor do their dates there deviate from the norm.

Location (parish, farm)	tpq	Type	Silver (g)	Gold (g)	Year
Allhelgona, Skänninge, Allhelgonakyrkan	1014	Stray coin: German silver coin	X	0	1960-61
Askeby, Solberga		Graves rich: grave 78 silver pendant, chain, edge mount, molten lumps; grave 78a 75 clench nails + 12 nails. Boat?	X	0	1914, 1935
Björkeberg psh	906	Stray coin: Islamic silver coin AD 906	X	0	1928
Drothem (Söderköping), Bleckstad		Gold armlet frag	0	19	1907
Ekeby, Sandliden		Silver annular brooch	X	0	1935
Ekebyborna, Nässja		Grave rich: silver filigree frag	X	0	1927-28
Flistad, Maspelösa	1066	Hoard: German / English silver coins c 550, silver jewellery	X	0	1869
Fornåsa, Bobergs Skattegård	1029	Hoard: German / English silver coins 125	135	0	1865
Fornåsa, Borringe Frälsegård		Gold finger ring	0	X	1998?
Hagebyhöga, Aska, Raä 36	?	Grave rich: silver jewellery, 1 Islamic silver coin, imported bronze vase, horse gear, iron wand i.a.	X	0	1920
Hagebyhöga, Aska, Raä 79		Silver filigree bead	X	0	2006
Heda, Norrö, Raä 7	729	Grave rich: 7 bronze pendants with embossed Ag foil copying early 8th century Islamic silver coins. 120 beads, P37 tortoise brooches and more	X		1954
Horn, Prästgården, Skötholmen island	?	Hoard: silver chain with Islamic coins	X	0	1752
Hov church	1002	Stray silver: 2 German coins, 1 Urnes style fragment	X	0	2008
Hycklinge, Sillstad		Lake deposit: gold arm ring	0	54	1925
Hällestad psh	?	Hoard: Islamic silver coins 36	X	0	1930s
Häradshammar, Hestad	961	Hoard: Islamic silver coins 58 & silver bar	112	0	1837
Kuddby, Skamby, Raä 158		Silver cross pendant	X		2003
Kuddby, Skamby, Raä 345:1	814	Stray coin: Abbasid silver coin AD 814-815	X	0	2003
Kvillinge, Bådorp 1:11, Raä 12a		Graves rich: A18 silver filigree pendants, A20 silver frag	X	0	1959, 1975
Landeryd, Hackefors		Silver neck ring	323	0	1914
Landeryd, Lund	965	Hoard: Islamic silver coins >270 & jewellery	>282	0	1879
Ljung, Mörstorp	961	Hoard: Islamic silver coins 68 & silver brooch	91	0	1860
Mjölby, Bockarp bog	1039	Hoard: German & English silver coins 85, silver jewellery	112	0	1844
Mogata, Varsten		Gold arm ring	0	78	1900
Motala, Motala ström, Paper mill		River deposit: silver penannular brooch	X	0	1911
S:t Lars (Linköping), Lilla Ullevi, Raä 325	978	Coin: English silver coin Ethelred II 978-1016 found at settlement site	<1	0	2004
S:t Per (Vadstena)	780	Stray coin: Frankish gold dinar	0	X	<1686
S:t Per (Vadstena), Kvarnbacken	880	Grave rich: cremation with 5 silver coin pendants, 6 other silver pendants, 3 silver beads, bone crucifix i.a.	X	0	2005
S:t Per (Vadstena), nunnery	c. 1000	Coin: English silver coin Ethelred II 978-1016	X	0	1957-59
Skedevi, Byle Östergård 1		Hoard: 3 gold arm rings	0	139	1914
Skärkind, Kvästad	1016	Hoard: German & English silver coins 162	176	0	1734
Strå, Åbylund, Heden		Grave rich: silver wire bead pendant, bronze pendants, dress pin, many beads	X	0	
Styrstad, Dörestad		Hoard: 2 gold arm rings	0	299	1987, 1997
Tingstad, Smedby	964	Hoard: Islamic silver coins 553, silver jewellery	645	0	1967-68
Tjärstad, Tävelstad & Rimforsa, Högabacken, Raä 60	814	Grave rich: Frankish silver coin pendant i.a.	X	0	1887

Tjärstad, Tåvelstad & Rimforsa, Högabacken, Raä 60	871	Grave rich: A) gold sheet frag, B) silver pendants, C) English silver coin	X	X	1903, 1914, 1915
Tåby, parish school		Settlement: silver sheet finger ring, open, tapered ends, punched	X	0	1994
Törnevalla, Asptorpet	882	Stray coin: Islamic silver coin	X	0	1920
Törnevalla, Lingham, Raä 66	749	Graves rich: 2 graves w Islamic silver coins, one tpq 749	X	0	1982
Viby church	1040	Stray coin: Danish silver coin	X	0	1962
Vårdnäs, Skillberga, Kinda canal		River deposit: gold torque w filigree head terminals + gold spiral ring	0	X	1858
Vårdsberg, Vimarka	c. 995	Hoard: Islamic & German silver coins 164, silver jewellery	465	0	1834
Väderstad, Valby Södergård	951	Hoard: Islamic silver coins 28, silver jewellery & ingots, gold ingot	1977	30	1847
Västra Harg, Helgslätt		Weapon: slender lance head, short socket with silver inlay	X		
Västra Stenby, Stens Prästgård	991	Hoard: silver jewellery & ingots, 4 German silver coins, 2 Islamic	1470	0	1894
Västra Stenby, Stens Rusthåll		Hoard: 4 gold arm rings	0	260	1894
Älvestad, Borringe	1016	Hoard: German & English silver coins c. 300, small silver ring	329	0	1725
Ödeshög, Erikstorp, edge of bog	956	Hoard: Islamic silver coins 330, gold & silver jewellery, hammer pendant	1250	785	1875
Östra Eneby, Fiskeby, Raä 14:1		Grave rich: silver cross pendant	X	0	
Östra Eneby, Prästgården		Hoard: gold finger ring	0	X	1926
Östra Ny, Örtomta	879	Stray coin: Abbasid silver coin AD 879-883	X	0	<1965

### Imported Luxury Goods

Apart from precious metals, the Viking Period's imported luxury goods in Östergötland are as follows.

1. From the famed Middle Viking Period female grave discovered in 1920 at Aska in Hagebyhöga, an Islamic copper alloy pitcher (Arne 1932).
2. From an Early Viking Period boat inhumation at Skamby in Kuddby, a set of 23 amber gaming pieces (Rundkvist & Williams 2008).
3. From a craft site at Herrebro in Borg, two opaque white mosaic tesserae found in association with a small deposit of bead-making debris (Lindeblad et al. 1994).

As detailed below, at least one sword is a Continental import, and additional imported weapons may be identified through specialist study. Amber beads are rare or absent, probably due to cremation. Though they are clearly imports, I have collected no data on carnelian, amethyst or rock crystal beads as they are common enough that they cannot have been restricted to the elite.

There are also four copper-alloy brooches whose design marks them as imports from Gotland (from Lagmansberga in Allhelgona, Stångebro in St. Lars, Västra Bökestad in St. Lars, Mem in Tåby). These pieces were not elite markers in their areas of origin. They are probably evidence for marriages between men from Östergötland and women from Gotland, relationships that would not have been an elite prerogative either. Among Östergötland's neighbouring provinces, only Gotland has distinct enough material culture in the Viking Period that we can identify its craft products positively. We cannot detect the many people who undoubtedly married into Östergötland from elsewhere on the Swedish mainland.

## **Weaponry and Horse Gear**

1. From one or more destroyed Middle Viking Period graves at Boberg in Fornåsa, a stirrup, a spur and an axe head.
2. From a rich Early Viking Period male grave discovered in 1885 at Aska in Hagebyhöga, two swords, a 40.6 cm *stridskniv* type seax sword, a Petersen type E spear head, an axe head, three horse bits, bridle mounts, two yoke finials, three wagon hooks and a sleigh rattle.
3. From the famed Middle Viking Period female grave discovered in 1920 at Aska in Hagebyhöga, four yoke finials, four or five horse bits, a sleigh rattle, three wagon hooks and a curry comb.
4. From Aspegården in Herrberga, a stray sword of Petersen's type H.
5. From the edge of a fen at Ullevi in Kimstad, an Early Viking Period Continental sword of the Mannheim type (cf. Petersen 1919, fig. 72) found with bones.
6. From an Early Viking Period boat inhumation at Skamby in Kuddby, a horse bit and a wagon hook.
7. From Nybygget at Ljungsbro in Ljung, a stray lance head, socket damaged, probably Petersen type D, Middle Viking Period.
8. From a garden patch on the north shore of River Motala ström in Motala, a lance head (Carlsson 2004a:119; 2004b).
9. From Stångebro in St. Lars, a stray sword pommel of Petersen's type H.
10. From an Early Viking Period grave at Fridhem/Hagalund in St. Per/Vadstena, a Petersen type H sword stuck through the cremation layer and into the natural subsoil.
11. From another grave at Fridhem/Hagalund in St. Per/Vadstena, a poorly preserved lance head, also stuck through the cremation layer and into the natural subsoil.
12. From Huvudstad in St. Per/Vadstena, a stray lance head, long and slender, with copper-alloy inlay on socket.
13. From destroyed graves in the rich Smedjebacken cemetery at Ruda in Skedevi, three swords and a Petersen type E lance head.
14. From Skänninge in Allhelgona, a stray Petersen type C lance head, Early Viking Period.
15. From Svanshals parish, a stray lance head of Petersen's type E, Early Viking Period.
16. From Mem in Tåby, a stray battle axe head with a finely wrought trapezoid hammer butt.
17. From Kungsbro in Vreta kloster, a stray sword, pommel missing, lower hilt straight, decorated with copper alloy sheet.
18. From Helgslätt in Västra Harg, a stray Early Viking Period lance head with silver encrusted socket.
19. From River Svartån at Hulterstad in Åsbo, a sword and three axe heads (Tagesson 1989).
20. From Ödeshög parish, a stray lance head, socket missing, probably Petersen's type E, Early Viking Period.
21. From a small island in River Motala ström at Fiskeby in Östra Eneby, a sword, pommel missing, both hilts straight.

## **Fine Crafts**

Early 11th century copper alloy casting has been documented at Skänninge (Lindeblad ms.), but prior to that the evidence for Viking Period fine crafts is meagre: it consists of a small deposit of bead making debris from Herrebro in Borg (Lindeblad et al. 1994), indicating a few visits by a travelling craftsman.

## **Weights**

During the Viking Period, small weights are used to weigh silver on delicate balances. In the Early and Middle Viking Period, they are polyhedral or spheroid with flat polar surfaces. In the Late Viking Period, a new type gradually replaces the two former and then survives up until about AD 1200: spheroid with flat polar surfaces and a tendency to biconical shape, characterised by an equatorial ridge. I am aware of four weights of the earlier types, three of which have surfaced during the metal detecting campaign undertaken for this book.

1. Hov church. A punch-decorated polyhedral weight. The site has yielded several 11th century marketplace finds, and the weight is most parsimoniously dated with them (see gazetteer).
2. Sättuna in Kaga. A punch-decorated spheroid weight found beside the Sättuna barrow. The site has yielded several other 10th and 11th century objects.
3. Skamby in Kuddby. A spheroid weight found in a field near the boat grave cemetery but far from any coeval object.
4. Mem in Tåby. A stray spheroid weight submitted to the museum along with an 8th/9th century Gotlandic animal-head brooch.

## **Short-Twig Runic Inscriptions**

Most of Östergötland's numerous runestones date from the early 11th century and are not treated here. But prior to that phase, there was a period of runic literacy characterised by the use of short-twig runes, a version of the younger futhark used for instance on the famous runestone from Rök parish church. Absolute chronology is unclear, but it would appear that this body of runic writing mainly belongs to the 9th century. It is far less formulaic than the standardised memorial inscriptions of the 11th century. Östergötland has seven short-twig inscriptions. One was also found on the island of Visingsö in Lake Vättern (Småland province) in 2000 (Gustavson 2002).

Three of the stones are now at churches, in all likelihood because of a widespread custom where runestones of any kind were moved to church sites when stone edifices were erected there in the Middle Ages. A case in point is Skärkind church, where we find the province's oldest runestone from the Migration Period (Ög 171), a short-twig runestone (Ög 174) and finally an 11th century runestone (Ög 172) that may be coeval with the first church on the site.

1. At Boberg in Fornåsa, a runestone with the inscription "Ingvar set the stone" (Ög 38).
2. At Örminge in Kuddby, a runestone with a damaged inscription, "... after Raif" (Ög 24).
3. At Rök church, a runestone with the world's longest prehistoric runic inscription, partly enciphered, with enigmatic legendary content, erected by Varin in memory of his deceased son Vamod and invoking the god Thor (Ög 136).
4. At Skärkind church, a fragment of a runestone with an inscription that appears to refer to a memorial, that is to the stone itself (Ög 174).
5. At Slaka church, a fragment of a runestone with the inscription "... had the stone made ..." (Ög 117).
6. On bedrock at Ingelstad in Östra Eneby, a rock carving depicting a sword, a cross and a wheel, and the inscription "Salsi made the sun. Dag carved this on the outcrop." (Ög 43).
7. On bedrock at Oklunda in Östra Husby, the inscription "Gunnar carved these runes, and he fled when due for punishment. He sought out this sanctuary. And he fled into this clearing. And he made an agreement to settle the case (or marked out the boundary of his asylum?). Vifinn carved this (as confirmation)." (Ög N288; Gustavson 2003).

## Great Barrows

Great barrows are one of the most labour-consuming and symbolically loud monument types of prehistoric Östergötland. From the perspective of political geography, it is thus a problem that few of them have been dated, and that those that have belong to two widely separated periods: the Bronze Age and the Late Iron Age. Östergötland forms a border zone between a south-westerly area where great barrows generally date from the 2nd Millennium BC (T.B. Larsson 1993) and a north-easterly one where they almost exclusively date from the 1st Millennium AD (Bratt 2008).

Available dates for the great barrows of Östergötland are collected in a table below. There are 24 great barrows with a diameter of at least 20 meters in the province, and only three of them have been dated to the 1st Millennium: the Aska barrow, the Ledberg barrow and Sjögestad Raä 16. All three have radiocarbon dates in the 8th-10th centuries, but in none of them has the central burial been excavated. Five great barrows, on the other hand, have been finds-dated to the Bronze Age.

Small mounds are extremely common at the cemeteries of the later 1st Millennium in Östergötland. However, not all Bronze Age barrows are particularly large either. One excavated in Vreta kloster parish in 1973 measured only 10 metres in diameter (Östmark 1979).

Nerman (1936; 1958) suggested that the great barrows of the two periods clustered in two different areas: Bronze Age great barrows in the western third of the plains and Late Iron Age ones in the middle third. The currently available evidence, eight dated barrows of at least 20 meters' diameter, does not support this view. The western third has five of both periods, the middle third has two Viking Period great barrows, and the eastern third has a single one dating from the Bronze Age. As more barrows are dated, the middle third will most likely receive Bronze Age examples and the eastern third Viking Period ones.

Summing up, it appears that we cannot safely use undated great barrows as elite indicators for the period under study here. The numbers rather suggest that undated great barrows anywhere in Östergötland are more likely to date from the Bronze Age, and that they are thus irrelevant here. We are left with the three dated Vendel/Viking Period ones.

Great Barrows				
Location	Date	Diam	H	Ref
Hagebyhöga, Aska, Askahögen, Raä 3	VEN2-VIK1	80 x 55	3	Claréus & Fernholm 1999
Heda, Stora Jussberg, Raä 37:3	BA	>40	4-5	
Ledberg church, Ledbergs kulle, Raä 5	VIK1-2	40	7	
Kaga, Sättuna		35-40	5.5	
Sjögestad, Stora Tollstad, Lustigkullen, Raä 26		37	4	
Sjögestad, Stora Tollstad, Raä 16	VIK1	35	4-4,5	See gazetteer
Furingstad, Stora Söd, Raä 15		25	1.8	
Heda, Disevids kulle		25	4	
Heda, Tjugby kulle, Raä 2 (SHM 6013)	BA4	25	3	Montelius 1905:289
Rinna, Kimme, Raä 261		25	3-4	
Väversunda, Lundtorp, Kyrkröret	BA2	25	1.5	
Ödeshög, Gummsberg & Lyckan		20-25	2	
Tåby, Almstad/Skvorstad, Ljungens backe	BA5-6	23	>2	
Norrköping, Vrinnevi, Raä 17		23 x 16	1.6	Nordén 1937b:85
Kumla, Åsby Skattegård		20-23	3-3.5	

Svanshals, Svanshals Västergård		>20	>2	
Kuddby, Björklund, Raä 91		20	2,75	
Bankekind, Unnerstad, Raä 30 barrow B		20	<=3	
Heda, Stora Jussberg		20	3-4	
Appuna, Utterstad, Raä 2	BA3	20	2	
Svanshals, Lund		20	1.3	
Bankekind, Unnerstad, Raä 30 barrow A		20	<=3	
Rök, Hagalund, Raä 37		20	1.3-1.6	
Rogslösa, Åsbyttun		20	1.5	
Sjögestad, Stora Tollstad, Raä 14:1		18	1.1	
Kaga, Alguvi		17.5	2.4	
Hagebyhöga, Hagebyhöga Västergård	BA2	16.3	?	
Vreta kloster, Berg, Gullbergshögen, Raä 89		10	0.6	
Vreta kloster, Kungsbro, Raä 55	BA	10	0.8	Östmark 1979
Rök, Eweboda (SHM 5560)	BA1	?	?	Montelius 1905:289

### **Stone Ships and Boat Burials**

Two rare types of ostentatious boat-themed burial monument have given Viking Period dates. The great stone ships consist of standing stones placed pairwise in the outline of a ship, as if each pair marked the ends of the frames in a clinker-built hull. Östergötland has two: one well-preserved and undated at Nässja in Nässja; the other at Stångebro in St. Lars (Linköping) obliterated, identified in excavation and dated with radiocarbon to the 9th century (Elfstrand 1998). The ships measure 44 by 17 metres and 50 by 11.6 metres respectively. Neither has yielded any burial, and so their original function is somewhat uncertain.

Five cemeteries are known to contain burials with real small boats. Cremated ones, identified by large numbers of clench nails, have been excavated at Solberga in Askeby (undated) and Vetavallen at Spångsholm in Veta (Middle Vendel Period). Characteristic oblong depressions signifying boat inhumations are known from Skamby in Kuddby (ten boat burials), Norra Berga in Mjölby (two boat burials) and Malm in Styrstad (three boat burials). Only at Skamby has a boat inhumation been excavated, yielding amber gaming pieces and simple horse gear, the gaming pieces dating the burial to the Early Viking Period (Rundkvist & Williams 2008).

In the following I treat the stone ships and boat inhumation cemeteries as elite indicators for the Early and Middle Viking Period.

### **Elite Site Distribution**

Compared to the Vendel Period distribution, the elite indicators of the Early and Middle Viking Period are far more numerous and spatially expansive (fig. 6:1). They now enter parts of the plains belt where there was formerly nothing, they move the belt's borders outward and they form tendrils out into the woodland to either side of the plains. Particularly dramatic expansion is seen at the ends of the plains belt, in the adjoining parishes of St. Per/Vadstena and Hagebyhöga in the west and around Kuddby parish in the east. We are now probably dealing both with a markedly greater population and with more archaeologically visible elite customs than before. Within the overall carpet of rather evenly spaced indications, there are particularly dense concentrations centred on St. Per/Vadstena and Hagebyhöga, Landeryd and Kuddby parishes.

Outliers north of the plains show a continued elite presence in Skedevi on the Södermanland border, and hoards from Mörstorp in Ljung and Hällestad parish are both on roads leading

through the woods northwest to Närke. South of the plains, the elite presence seen in the Vendel Period at either end of the long Lake Åsunden persists, with silver and gold sacrificial finds in Horn and Hycklinge parishes in the south and rich graves in the Högabacken cemetery at Tävelstad/Rimforsa in Tjärstad in the north (Almgren 1903). Further north along the waterway toward Lake Roxen is another traffic-indicating outlier, a gold jewellery river find from Skillberga in Vårdnäs. Finally, a silver annular brooch from Sandliden in Ekeby marks the northern end of another important traffic route into Småland, Lake Sommen.

Continuity on the parish level is less interesting here as the absolute number of data points is so much larger in this period than in the preceding one. Suffice to say that the Middle and Late Viking Period distribution is generally a superset of the Vendel Period one.

Nor is clustering across the plains a very interesting issue now: instead of a largely empty map of the plains belt with clusters of data points, we now see the plains belt filled with data points with one surviving discontinuity: the one between the old B and C clusters. The area has a higher proportion of woodland than most of the plains belt, but was certainly settled as shown by place names and ancient monuments. This is the area in which the rich weapon burial at Asktorpet in Askeby was sitting on its own in the preceding period. The almost empty space is now occupied only by a short-twig runestone at Skärkind church, which is food for thought as we do not know how far it was moved from its original site when the church was built.

### **Sacrifices in Water and Wetland Along Traffic Routes**

As we have seen, Östergötland's elite occasionally sacrificed precious things in water and wetland during the Late Roman Period, the Migration Period and the Vendel Period. In the Early and Middle Viking Period this custom became so common that I wish to draw attention to it separately. Below I list only finds of weapons and precious metal made in water or wetland or very near their edges, disregarding such deposited on dry land some ways from lakes and rivers. These were retrievable: the wetland and water deposits were not. But the tendency for both classes of finds to cluster along the same water routes suggests that in many cases the dry-land deposits were not actually intended to be retrieved either.

Consider the deposits along one of the the waterways discussed above, south from Lake Roxen into Småland up River Stångån and across Lake Åsunden. Counting from Lake Roxen, there are two dry-land silver finds within view of the river in Landeryd parish, a gold find in the river in Vårdnäs parish, a gold find in the lake in Hycklinge parish and a silver find on a small island in Horn parish. To my mind, the finds' locations suggest that all were sacrifices having something to do with the traffic route. In fact, of the eleven water and wetland finds listed below, only the sword from Ullevi in Kimstad and the hoard from Bockarp in Mjölby lack an immediate relationship with major roads or water routes.

1. From Skötholmen island in Lake Åsunden under Horn vicarage, a silver chain with Islamic coins.
2. From Lake Åsunden at Sillstad in Hycklinge, a gold arm ring
3. From Ullevi in Kimstad, a sword found with bones at the edge of a fen.
4. From “a cultivated and swidden-burnt bog” at Bockarp in Mjölby, an apparently quite normal hoard of German and English silver coins (tpq 1039) and silver jewellery.
5. From a garden patch on the north shore of River Motala ström in Motala, a lance head (Carlsson 2004a:119; 2004b).
6. From River Motala ström near the paper mill in Motala, a silver penannular brooch.

7. From Byle Östergård in Skedevi, three gold arm rings found hanging from a set of harrows during work in a field on the shore of Lake Tisnaren.
8. From River Stångån at Skillberga in Vårdnäs, a gold torque with filigree head terminals and a gold spiral ring.
9. From River Svartån at Hulterstad in Åsbo, a sword and three axe heads (Tagesson 1989).
10. From the edge of a bog at Erikstorp in Ödeshög, a silver and gold hoard. Assuming a 12:1 value relationship by weight between the two metals, the hoard has the highest metal value of all in the province from this era. It was found near the road south between Lake Vättern and the Holaveden border woods.
11. From a small island in River Motala ström at Fiskeby in Östra Eneby, a sword.

### **Where Were the Mead-Halls?**

From the perspective of qualitative diversity in elite indicators that has guided us in the preceding chapters, Early and Middle Viking Period Östergötland offers a number of strong candidates for elite settlements.

The strongest area of all consists of St. Per/Vadstena and Hagebyhöga parishes, which we have already identified quantitatively as an unusually dense part of the spatial distribution of elite indicators. Here we also find most of the era's qualitative types of elite indicators: silver, gold, imports, weaponry, horse gear and monumental construction. Four exceptionally rich graves have been excavated in the area, to which comes the great barrow at *Aska in Hagebyhöga* whose contents remain uninvestigated. *Aska* is Östergötland's best single candidate for an elite settlement in the Viking Period. Referring to the barrow, the grave finds and the size of the historical village, Nordén (1943:123-124) pointed the village out as a "9th and 10th century ... seat of a farmer aristocracy". Metal detecting around the great barrow has produced no direct evidence for an elite settlement, only jewellery apparently from a ploughed-out Middle Viking Period inhumation cemetery and a stray iron padlock of the same date. But the nearby site of the rich 1885 and 1920 burials has not been re-investigated, and an elite settlement can be anywhere in the vicinity, including beneath the historical-era village plot. Indeed, the unusually shaped barrow may have functioned as a platform for a great hall. Given the unusually large number of separate small precious-metal finds in St. Per and Hagebyhöga, it is a little surprising that the two parishes have yet to produce any hoards.

The second-strongest candidate area, also unusually dense in indicators, consists of Kudby and Täby parishes. Together they offer all categories of elite indicator except gold. Indeed, Kudby is the single parish in the province that has the most diverse elite record for the Viking Period, but this is mostly due to the excavation of one grave and metal detecting in the fields surrounding it through the project on which this book reports. The site in question, *Skamby in Kudby*, is second only to *Aska* in its diversity. It has a monumental boat inhumation cemetery, one of whose graves has yielded horse gear and amber gaming pieces, and the surrounding fields have yielded a silver coin, a silver cross pendant and a weight. The coin (an Abbasid *dirham* struck in AD 814/15) was found near a Middle Viking Period dress pin c. 150 m from the cemetery. These finds may indicate the location of the settlement it served.

When searching for the mead-halls of the Migration Period, we looked briefly at Narvered in Vallerstad, the find-spot of the period's largest gold hoard. Although it is in a central geographical location, it has few coeval indications nearby. The Viking Period's largest hoard by weight is from *Valby Södergård in Väderstad*. It contains 1977 g of silver (tpq 951) and a 30 g gold ingot. Valby's location is much like that of Narvered: excellent from the perspective of agriculture, being in the plains on a small stream emptying into Lake Tåkern, but isolated from coeval elite in-

dications. Despite the wealth of its inhabitants, Valby thus does not appear to be a good candidate as the diversity of the area's elite indicators is low.

Ödeshög parish has a stray lance head and the province's richest hoard measured by its metal value: *Erikstorp*, tpq 956, which in addition to its silver content is also the province's largest gold find. However, the hoard was found in a highly peripheral location on the edge of a bog near the road past the Holaveden border woods, and so it is unlikely to mark the environs of any elite settlement.

Aska has one of the province's three dated Late Iron Age great barrows. All three represent a great labour investment. At *Ledberg* and *Stora Tollstad in Sjögestad*, however, metal detecting has failed to produce additional indicators on site, and indicators in the vicinity are neither numerous nor diverse. M.G. Larsson (1998:119-121; 2002:85) points out the south-western shores of Lake Roxen including Ledberg as the Late Iron Age's most distinct power centre. His opinion does not find support in the Early and Middle Viking Period material I have gathered.

*Östra Eneby parish*, currently largely occupied by the city of Norrköping, has a river-found sword, a grave with a silver cross pendant (excavated for land development) and a runic inscription on bedrock. Though diverse, this is not a strong candidate.

*St. Lars parish*, currently largely occupied by the city of Linköping, has a great stone ship, a stray sword probably from a grave and a silver coin fragment from a settlement. The coin is an issue of Ethelred II and so may post-date AD 1000. Both the coin and the stone ship were discovered during contract excavations occasioned by the city's expansion, which constitutes a bias. Though diverse, this is not a strong candidate either.

### Place Names

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the *-tuna* names of Östergötland no longer appear politically significant in the Viking Period. Their distinct tendency to avoid Viking Period elite indicators is quite remarkable considering how many and widespread those indicators are in the plains belt. Instead two other name types come into focus: *Tegneby* and *Hus(a)by*. The latter is commonly accepted as an expression of royal power in the 11th and 12th centuries and is thus discussed in chapter 8.

Looking at *Tegneby*, its etymology has to do with *thegn* which is a cognate of *thane* in Shakespearean English. In Old Norse sources it denotes a "warrior", a "free man" (*Sv.ortn.lex.* p. 316). On Danish runestones, however, it appears to refer more specifically to an elite male just below the royal level. In Old English, *thegn* denotes the societal level between the common free-man and royalty.

1. Tegneby in Kuddby
2. Tegneby in Rystad
3. Tegneby in Västra Tollstad
4. Tegneby in Vist (not extant)
5. Tegneby in Älvestad

Östergötland has five Tegneby names (fig. 6:1). All are in the plains belt. One is near an Early or Middle Viking Period elite indication and none from the Vendel Period. Two are near both Vendel and Viking Period ones, and two Tegneby are not located near either class of evidence. This is not very helpful to us in determining the date of the name type's main era of political significance. As we have seen, the Vendel and Viking Period distributions are rather similar, and Viking Period indications are far more common than Vendel Period ones. The locations of the

five Tegneby farmsteads is equally consistent with a date in either period. But on the strength of the textual evidence, and the generally late date of the *-by* names, I have allocated the name type to the Viking Period.

Wladyslaw Duczko (1995) offers a far-reaching interpretation of the name type in relationship to exclusive late-10th century metalwork, involving the expansive Danish state. I shall only discuss his ideas regarding Östergötland. (M.G. Larsson 2002:81–82, 136, 138 offers a more general critique.)

Duczko suggests that aristocrats in Östergötland were part of an interregional "thane system" loyal to the Danish king, and that they ruled the Lake Mälaren area in the late 10th century. "Denmark's political influence in Sweden from 950–1000 ... manifested itself through the *thegn*-system. ... Six [!] Tegneby farmsteads were established in Östergötland, whose local rulers submitted to Harald Bluetooth's power. The royal family of Östergötland gains a foothold in the Lake Mälaren area where it founds Sigtuna and establishes three Tegneby farmsteads." (Duczko 1995:658). Duczko supports this hypothesis with the following observations.

1. On a pan-Scandinavian scale, there is a cluster of Tegneby sites in Östergötland.
2. In 9–10th century English written sources and on 10th century Danish rune stones, *thane* and *thegn* means high-ranking royal vassal or officer.
3. Adam of Bremen states that Birka belonged to the Götar and that Östergötland extended all the way to Birka, implying tacitly that Södermanland would have been part of Östergötland.
4. Four precious metal hoards from Östergötland contain Terslev style filigree jewellery and other exclusive metalwork with Danish parallels, as well as Danish coins of the late 10th century.
5. None of these hoards have been found more than a few kilometres from a Tegneby site.

In my opinion, Duczko's hypothesis is weakly founded.

1. The distribution of Tegneby names across Scandinavia probably does not map anything beyond the presence of aristocrats (thanes), with various and shifting allegiances. It would be anachronistic to interpret all Tegneby names as traces of a single large-scale political process or network. (cf. M.G. Larsson's critique, 2002:136-140.)
2. The word *thegn* was common to the entire area of the Scandinavian languages. As Duczko himself notes, there is no reason to believe that it had specifically Danish connotations everywhere.
3. Adam of Bremen wrote in the 1070s, a century after Birka had been laid waste. Rimbert, who wrote in AD 865–867 while the town still flourished, reports that Birka belonged to the Svear. The Florence list from c. AD 1120 explicitly treats Östergötland and Södermanland as separate entities. Adam was probably not interested in the precise affiliation of Södermanland as much of it was densely wooded and politically less important (cf. Gahrn 1988:65–66).
4. The Hiddensee-style gold jewellery may, as Duczko argues, reasonably be linked to the Danish royal court. This is not however apparent for the silver Terslev-style jewellery or the non-Hiddensee gold brooch found in hoards in Östergötland. Nor must every find of Danish coins or jewellery with Danish parallels indicate Danish political influence over the find spot, particularly when the jewellery occurs as hack silver.
5. The Tegneby names of Östergötland are evenly distributed across the plains belt. This means that any randomly selected point in the plains is likely to be located near a Tegneby. Furthermore, the precious metal hoards are unlikely to have been deposited at randomly selected points: they can be expected to mark aristocratic residences. Tegneby means "thane's farmstead". It would

thus be highly surprising if the hoards avoided the Tegneby sites.

A few other place names in Östergötland incorporate elements hinting at power: Herseberga and Hărădshammar speak of *herse* military leaders, Järstad of a *jarl* leader and Fornåsa of a *Husar* settlement with some nebulous central function (Franzén 1982). As these three types are so rare in Östergötland, I will not discuss them further. Any correlation or non-correlation with the archaeological record can only be anecdotal here.

### **M.G Larsson on Svear Infiltration**

Mats G. Larsson's finely written popular book *Götarnas riken* (2002) has been with me throughout my work in Östergötland and I have read it repeatedly. However, I have arrived at quite different conclusions regarding the title's "Realms of the Götar". Overall I find much of what Larsson says speculative and poorly anchored in both the archaeological and the historical record.

Discussing the genesis of Medieval Sweden and the eventual union of Götar and Svear, Larsson envisions a long period of armed infiltration where the Svear established bridgeheads in Götaland starting in the 7th century or earlier. This, he argues, was possible because the people of Uppland had achieved political unity under the Kings of Uppsala already in the 5th century. To Larsson's mind, the early might of the Svear is shown by colony-like settlements east of the Baltic, and he argues that since they could settle there, they could probably settle anywhere (p. 67-68). The Svear and Götar are unfortunately impossible to tell apart on the basis of their material culture, and so Larsson decides explicitly (p. 69) to use place names instead to track the movements of the Svear. This he does by deciding which name types are typical of Svealand and then looking at their distribution across southern Scandinavia. This is the motivation behind his well-argued critique of Duczko's 1995 paper: Larsson in fact competes with Duczko for whose interpretation of the place names is more likely to be correct. In my opinion, neither is.

To begin with Larsson's powerful united 6th century Svear, he misdates the great barrows of Uppsala, holding on to Sune Lindqvist's erroneous Migration Period date. The two barrows that have been excavated in fact date from the Early Vendel Period on either side of AD 600 (Duczko 1996; Ljungkvist 2005; Bratt 2008). Furthermore, the presence of these barrows certainly does not allow us to assume that the Svear were politically united at the time. Moving on to the Vendel and Viking Period settlement east of the Baltic, it neither presupposes any high degree of central organisation at home, nor does it allow us to assume *ex silentio* that the Svear were free to do as they pleased in other regions where their material culture was not distinctive from that of the locals.

Larsson prefers to see all place names of a certain type as having the same political significance. "... the *by* farmsteads of the *rinkar*, *tegnar*, *karlar* and *svenner* were part of the same system, whose centre should primarily be tied to the Lake Mälaren area and particularly Uppland." (p. 81, my translation). In my opinion, the scatter of similar names is far more likely to be an effect of the common language spoken across Scandinavia in the 1st Millennium. There is indeed a system joining all Rinkeby, Tegneby, Karleby and Svenneby farmsteads, but it is an onomastic system, not a political one. As argued above in relation to Duczko's interpretation of Tegneby, a farmstead named e.g. Rinkeby should in my opinion be seen simply as the abode of a Vendel Period family that cultivated a warrior ideology – and Larsson (p. 136-140) makes this very argument for Tegneby! Of course they had political allegiances, but these were fluctuating and local or regional, not steady and national. Nothing suggests that these names operated on a high scale level, nor that there were any inherent Svear associations to them. The oldest name type meriting that kind of treatment is Hus(a)by, as discussed in chapter 8. Larsson's suggestion that even the

ubiquitous *-by* names in general would indicate Svear infiltration (e.g. p. 92) strikes me as quite absurd.

Most scholars today including Larsson agree that Sweden became a unified and centrally organised kingdom very late, the reign of Magnus Birgersson Barnlock (1275-1290) forming a kind of watershed when the tax-exempt status of the nobility became formally established. Some controversy remains as to how long the unification process was. Larsson favours a long one beginning in the mid-1st Millennium. In my opinion, the source material prior to AD 1000 gives no indication of larger political units than a High Medieval *landskap* province or two. The process that ended with Magnus in the 13th century had begun with Olof less than three centuries before. Prior to him, during the period treated in this book, we are dealing with qualitatively different, pre-Christian, pre-urban societies showing very little hint of any directed development towards a Medieval kingdom.

In this context I should say that I find Anna Lihammer's (2007) insistence that there was no process of kingdom formation in Denmark difficult to understand. Her argument is that various areas within the future Danish realm did not all follow the same political trajectory during the centuries in question. I agree that the process was complicated, but that does not forbid us to call it a process. When we are dealing with change, the alternative to process is an instantaneous flip of states, and to my knowledge neither Lihammer nor any other commentator favours such an interpretation.

## Härad

The oldest known territorial unit in Östergötland is the *härad* district, of which the province had 18 in the High Middle Ages (fig. 6:2; Nordén 1943; T. Andersson 1965). Etymologically speaking, the word *härad* means “army power” and should probably be understood as “area of power over armed men” (*Sv.ortn.lex.* p. 143). The *härad* division of Östergötland is generally taken to have been established through a single event in the Viking Period. There is little evidence to allow us to date that event closer, and it may have taken place after AD 1000. Most likely the *härad* division event had something to do with the military duties of the Östgötar to a king – of Östergötland, of Sweden, even of Denmark, we cannot tell. We should most likely not envision any individual *härad* as ever having been politically independent. Rather, each *härad* was an area whose inhabitants had commensurable common duties to a superordinate power.

The *härad* division follows a neat baseline down the middle of the plains belt and generally does not correlate with topographic features. The names of the individual *härad* in Östergötland are variously “primary” ones (e.g. Hanekind), that is, such that appear to have been coined originally for their purpose as *härad* names; variously secondarily used names of earlier territories or groups (e.g. Åkerbo). All in all, the *härad* system appears unlikely to preserve vestiges of earlier formal territorial divisions. When parishes were laid out across the province in the 13th century, they were not made congruent with the *härad* system, though the judiciary continued to use it (with some modifications) as an organisational backbone throughout the Middle Ages and later. Thus it seems that the *härad* system was used as originally intended only for a short period after its establishment, and that it is not relevant to earlier periods.

Each *härad* had a central judicial assembly site in the Middle Ages, though their locations are not known in every case and there is some evidence for assembly sites moving or competing. In fact, most of Östergötland's *härad* names appear to consist of words descriptive not of areas, but of assembly sites (e.g. Boberg *härad*, referring to the farmstead of Boberg in Fornåsa). These names are not documented until the Middle Ages, and when the names of documented Late Medieval assembly sites are compared to the *härad* names, we find that few appear identical to the

assembly sites used at the time of the *härad* division event. But some of the original sites can be identified, more or less tentatively, as suggested by Nordén (1943). Now, we know from e.g. 11th century Uppland (Norr & Sanmark 2008) that aristocrats would sometimes construct and sponsor assembly sites, most likely on their own land. Thus there is reason, albeit no strong reason, to keep Nordén's hypothetical original *härad* assembly sites in mind when looking at 9th and 10th century political geography. Their number is eighteen, though two are along the lines of "somewhere in Viby parish", and they are given below.

<i>Härad</i>	First documented assembly site	Nordén's hypothetical original assembly site
Aska	Sjökumla church 1370	Ask church
Bankekind	?Ryslathinge 1361	Banka in Bankekind
Björkekind	Kuddby church 1386	Björklund in Kuddby
Boberg	Boberg in Fornåsa 1384	Boberg in Fornåsa
Bråbo	?Slättamo 1381	Skärlöta in Kvillinge
Dal	?Harakir 1453	Herrestad church
Gullberg	?Gulbergh	Sjögestad in Vreta kloster
Göstring	Hogstad church	Hogstad church
Hammarkind	?Stalberg 1371	No suggestion
Hanekind	Haninge in S:t Lars 1390	Haninge in S:t Lars
Kinda	?Skerlunde 1353	No suggestion
Lysing	Hästholmen in Västra Tollstad 1383	Västra Tollstad church
Lösing	Norrköping 1414	Norrköping
Memming	Skattna in Kullerstad 1360s	Skattna in Kullerstad
Skärkind	?Scurusæter 1368	Skärkind church
Vifolka	Ljunga in Veta 1441	Viby parish, somewhere
Valkebo	Gammalkil church 1353	Gammalkil church
Ydre	Sund church	Sund church
Åkerbo	Skavestad in Törnevalla	Rystad parish, somewhere
Östkind	Lytisberg at Östra Husby church 1380	Lytisberg at Östra Husby church

As seen in fig. 6:3, Nordén's sites do not correlate very well with the Early and Middle Viking Period elite evidence. The hypothetical assemblies tend to be in openings in the swarm of elite indicators. Only a third of them are close. This result is difficult to evaluate: it may mean that the assembly sites are later than the finds, or that the sites are coeval with them but were generally sited far from elite residences, or that Nordén misidentified many sites. I for one find his suggestions quite sensible.

A source-critical problem is that Nordén may have been influenced by his knowledge of Viking Period finds when identifying the assembly sites. If so, he clearly did not let such information decide in the case of Aska *härad*. Here he preferred Ask church as the original site, while also considering Aska in Hagebyhöga. The extremely rich Early and Middle Viking Period finds from that village might make it a stronger candidate. Still, many assemblies convened at churches, and no church is known ever to have been built at Aska. Hagebyhöga parish church is 2 km north of the great barrow, the Klosterstad church ruin 1.4 km to the south-west and Fivelstad church 1.7 km to the south-east. In the end, we do not really know what considerations decided the locations

of the first *härad* assembly sites and whether they are at all relevant to the search for elite settlements.

Seven *härad* districts in the eastern and southern part of the province have names incorporating the element *kind*, meaning “kindred”. Place-name scholar Thorsten Andersson (1965) interpreted this area as a pre-*härad* territorial unit (cf. Kaliff 1999:130). Andersson did not suggest at the time that this “Greater Kind” area would have been politically unified. But he did speculate that Greater Kind would have been ethnically separate from Östergötland. That name would only have referred to the western half of the current province, and so the kindred of Greater Kind would not have seen themselves as Götar. The hypothesis appears untestable, though it still enjoys considerable acceptance among place-name scholars including Andersson himself (*Sv.ort-n.lex.* p. 166). *Kind* forms part of the names of four far-off *härad* in Västergötland as well, demonstrating that this word for “we, the people” was once in common use.

### **The Götavirke and the Stegeborg Barrage**

A development toward centralised power is illustrated by the rampart-and-moat of Götavirke, a 3.4 km long strategic structure between Lakes Asplången and Lillsjön in Västra Husby parish (Nordén 1938:240-255; Stjerna 1999). The rampart's name is a modern invention by analogy to the Danevirke, the ramparts defending the southern border of Viking Period Denmark against the Franks. The Götavirke was designed to keep out seaborne invaders entering Östergötland by way of the long, narrow inlet of Slätbaken and Rivers Storån/Lillån. The inlet was also closed with a barrage of wooden posts in the seabed at the Stegeborg narrows around the same time (Westerdahl 1986; Högmer 1988; 1989; 1999). There is no archaeological evidence for any Viking Period fortifications in the Bråviken inlet north of Vikbolandet: all we have here is a place name of uncertain age on the southern shore indicating a barrage near the inner end of the inlet.

The Götavirke was, according to two combinable radiocarbon dates from inside the rampart, erected some time in the interval 780–890 cal AD. It must have taken great manpower and resources to build, maintain and defend. For how long it remained in use is uncertain, but a radiocarbon date from a stick found in the upper layers of the moat's fill indicates that the structure had fallen into disrepair long before 1200. Four early radiocarbon dates from the Stegeborg barrage are centred in the later 9th century cal AD. (Before the excavations of the late 1990s, there was some confusion about the Götavirke's date, and it was often discussed in the context of hill-forts and other early-1st Millennium material, e.g. Nordén 1938; Kaliff 1999:122–123; Nielsen 2000b.)

We may assume that the potentate who caused the Götavirke and the barrage to be built was the most powerful ruler in the history of Östergötland up to his day. No earlier structure or monument exists that suggests control over comparable labour resources. The Götavirke is located in such a way as to defend the central part of the plains belt. Its builders did not expect to be able to defend the easternmost quarter of the plains, the Vikbolandet peninsula (J. Jansson 1997; Kaliff 1999:122-123), and most likely did not have much in the way of a defensive navy. This tells us something about the size of Late Iron Age political units, though the rampart need not necessarily mark the eastern limit of its builder's power. Its placement was probably partly due to topography and strategic considerations: the edge of a ruler's sphere of political influence is not necessarily located in a defensible position. Yet Vikbolandet did lay open to seaborne attack and may have been impossible to defend; perhaps it had independent rulers or indeed lay under the permanent control of a polity in another province. The erection of the Götavirke was a great show of strength, but also an admission of limitations. The rampart and barrage demonstrate that over time there was a succession of kings in Östergötland with an area to defend, someone they

needed to defend it against, and the means to defend it. But it is also clear that they did not trust their naval power nor the military might of Vikbolandet's inhabitants to keep invaders out. The dates of the structures support the historical sources' suggestion that no king successfully claimed overlordship (however tenuous) over both Svealand and Götaland until about AD 1000 (Gahrn 1988).

[Side note: in the forest of Alsveden, 2 km west of the Götavirke, is a parallel structure extending 2.3 km northward from the vicinity of the Svinsätter hillfort with several interruptions (Raä V. Husby 125 & 182). It has been discussed (e.g. Nordén 1937b:10, 88-89; 1938:242-243) as a possible earlier version of the Götavirke or a coeval second line of defence. The Alsveden wall is undated and looks in part like a collapsed field wall of the ubiquitous type, in part more like a hillfort rampart, being up to 5 m wide. Jesper Jansson (1997) considers the Alsveden wall to be rather useless as a defensive structure. Much of it is too weakly built to deter anyone but the livestock, and over long stretches it runs below sheer cliff faces where there is little need for fortifications. All in all, the Alsveden wall appears to have more to do with animal husbandry than with defence.]

Structure	Context	Sample ID	Date BP	Calibrated date
Götavirke	Charcoal inside rampart	Ua-15396	1210±50 BP	720-890 cal AD
Götavirke	Charcoal inside rampart	Ua-15395	1175±55 BP	790-960 cal AD
Götavirke	Pinewood stick near top of moat fill	Ua-15658	915±55 BP	1040-1180 cal AD
Barrage	'86. Ste 43	St-10670	1110±75 BP	780-1020 cal AD
Barrage	'86. Ste 40	St-10671	1100±75 BP	780-1020 cal AD
Barrage	'86. Ste 41	St-10672	1145±75 BP	780-990 cal AD
Barrage	'86. Ste 42	St-10673	1190±75 BP	720-960 cal AD
Barrage	'97. Ste 100	GrN-23668	1220±15 BP	720-880 cal AD (2 s)
Barrage	'97. Ste 101	GrN-23669	905±15 BP	1040-1190 cal AD (2 s)

### Jarl Haakon's Attack on Götaland

There are no good written sources for military events in 9th or 10th century Östergötland. But there is one coeval piece of poetry that furnishes a glimpse of what sort of threats the Götavirke was built to stave off. Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* preserves fragments of the poem *Vellekla*, "Dearth of Gold", by Icelandic Einar Helgason (dated late 10th century). It is a panegyric to Jarl Haakon Sigurdsson of Trøndelag (c. 935-995).

"The foe of the fleeing  
Went to offer on the meadow  
And got answer that day  
All would go well in fight.  
Then the battle guider

Saw the stark ravens.  
The chief of the temple would  
Take the life of the Gauts.

A sword thing now the jarl held  
Where (before him) no man  
With shield on his arm  
Had been able to harry.  
No man from the sea  
Had on so long a way borne  
The golden shield: through  
All Gautland he went."

*Heimskringla*, trans. Monsen & Smith 1932:134

30.

*Flóttu gekk til fréttar  
fellingjörðr á velli,  
draugr gat dolga Ságu  
dagráð Heðins váða,  
ok haldboði hildar  
hrægamma sá ramma;  
Týr vildi sá týna  
teinlautar fjör Gauta.*

31.

*Háði jarl, þars áðan  
engi mannr, und ranni  
hyrjar þing, at herja,  
hjörlautar, kom, Sörla.  
Bara maðr lyngs in lengra  
loptvarðaðar barða  
(alt vann gramr of gengit  
Gautland) frá sæ randir.*

Einarr says only that Haakon and his men attacked Götaland and penetrated far inland. The 13th century historical works *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* each offer a similar context for the poem, both probably being based on the lost Saga of the Jarls of Hlaðir. Being late and depending on a single lost work, they are not good sources for the events in question. What they say, at any rate, is that in the 960s Jarl Haakon received summons to muster an army and help King Harold Bluetooth defend the Danevirke ramparts in southern Jutland against the forces of Emperor Otto II. When Haakon arrived, Harold had already come to terms with Otto and accepted Christianity. Haakon did likewise, but then almost immediately renounced the new faith and sailed east into the Baltic on a raiding expedition along the coast of present-day Sweden. Reaching Östergötland, he defeated a local Jarl Ottar, left his ships and marched his army through Götaland home to Norway, plundering along the way.

To my mind, Haakon's overland trek to Norway smacks strongly of the legendary, particularly as Snorri has him burning his fleet before beginning the long march home. (F-X. Dillman, however, apparently lends the episode credence in a 2008 paper.) Indeed, looking only at the fragments of *Vellekla*, we find that Einarr does not specify what part of Götaland Haakon attacked and does not say that he walked home to Norway from there. Haakon may in fact have entered Västergötland by way of the Göta river valley, in which case the poem is irrelevant to the present discussion. Be that as it may; the Götavirke was not thrown together in a hurry because any one Viking leader was on his way up the coast. Like the Danevirke, it was a well-organised response to a long-term problem. Expeditions like Haakon's were probably not uncommon in the Baltic though the historical sources are poor.

### **Prehistoric Land Estates**

Historical geographers (Tollin 2002; Berg 2003) envision large multi-*härad* land estates in 11th century Östergötland, and suggest that they were established some time in the preceding centuries. Johan Berg (2003:232) argues that the Late Medieval land holding pattern in five *härad* districts east and south of Linköping indicates that in the 12th century, much of the area was included in a single very large estate owned by members of the Sverker family (about which more is said in chapter 8). Note that this is not just an issue of political rulership, but of actually owning the land in question, an area measuring tens of kilometres across. At any rate, this means that unless the ancestors of Sverker I ascended abruptly to power in the 11th century, then the 9th or 10th century builder of the Götavirke was most likely one of them. In other words, several of the kings of Sweden in the 12–13th centuries were probably lineal descendants of a Viking Period petty king that controlled at least the western two thirds of Östergötland.

Writes Berg (2003:251): “Already in the late Iron Age and Viking Age there may well have existed a king or a royal house (family) in Östergötland that claimed sovereignty over the land in the investigation area. At the local level the local aristocrats and the gentry also claimed rights of ownership to the land. This means that the ownership of land was vertically divided between several layers in the society, as is generally known to have been the case for later periods.”

It is commonly asserted that Late Iron Age political power entailed power over people, not power over an area (e.g. Andrén 1987). This is to my mind (as to Mats Widgren's, 1998:292) a redundant distinction. Late Iron Age aristocrats owned, controlled and inherited land. Any personal alliance between a petty king and such a magnate would thus automatically entail power over an area. It is true that these alliances were probably not very long-lived, and that there was little a king could do beyond occasional raiding with his retinue to control an area with recalcitrant inhabitants. But at any given time, a Viking Period ruler had allies who controlled a certain area, and thus his power had a certain geographic extent. According to Berg, he very likely also owned vast areas of land where his power was great no matter what his relationship with other magnates were like at any given time.

I agree with Andrén that prehistoric people most likely defined settlement areas with reference to their centres, not their borders. Hills and woodland were outland and did not belong to any particular settlement at all, though the right to use their resources may have been regulated. But the plains of Östergötland are characterised by the absence of such outland, and so the entire extent of the plains must have been divided between land owners with various political affiliations.

### **Vikbolandet: Accessibility and Vulnerability**

A number of facts hint that the Vikbolandet peninsula, forming the easternmost quarter of the plains belt, had a distinct political status in the Viking Period. Briefly put, it seems that its inhab-

itants by choice and topographical necessity cultivated a much closer relationship with the Svear of Lake Mälaren than did the inland Östgötar. In the 11th century, Vikbolandet became the main bridgehead in Östergötland of Swedish royal-federal power.

We have already noted in connection with the Götavirke rampart that in the Early and Middle Viking Period the kings of Östergötland despaired of defending Vikbolandet from seaborne attack. Yet precious-metal hoards are not more common in Vikbolandet than elsewhere, as might be expected if a) the untimely death of their owners were a common reason for them to remain in the ground, b) the peninsula suffered more attacks from the sea than the rest of the province. When enemies struck, the people of Vikbolandet basically had the choice of fending for themselves or siding with the attackers. There is no evidence for Viking Period re-use of the hillforts abandoned at the end of the Migration Period.

People on the peninsula were able and willing to commit greater *sums* in precious metals than most to the earth. Looking at the contents of Viking Period precious-metal hoards from the plains belt (and disregarding objects found singly, the size of a finger ring or smaller), we are dealing with nineteen sites evenly distributed across the plains, four of which are on or near Vikbolandet. Dividing the plains belt into four equally wide slices, the hoards contain progressively less silver on average as we move east from Lake Vättern to the Baltic, sinking from 1000 grams of silver per hoard at Lake Vättern to 189 on Vikbolandet. But two of Vikbolandet's hoards contain gold, which means that the average metal value of the area's hoards is actually the second highest in the province. This may be interpreted to mean either that Vikbolandet was an unusually affluent area, or that there was a raised level of perceived threat there, or both.

Like other Östgötar of this era, people from Vikbolandet travelled overseas themselves, possibly on lucrative raids. Rune stones of the early eleventh century in Tåby, Dagsberg and Styrstad parishes (Ög 30, Ög 145, Ög 155) commemorate men who died in the East. The Styrstad man met his fate on the Svear nobleman Ingvar's ill-fated expedition about 1040, and is thus unlikely to have contributed much to local wealth accumulation. But his participation emphasises Vikbolandet's cordial relationship with Svealand at the time.

Two boat inhumation cemeteries on Vikbolandet suggest that the area's inhabitants had detailed knowledge of life in Svealand, specifically north of Lake Mälaren. Such cemeteries are a famous feature of the archaeological record in Uppland and Västmanland. For simple reasons of preservation, the boat graves of sites such as Vendel and Valsgärde are among the most well-known Vendel and Viking Period burials in all of Sweden (Lidén et al. 2001), despite the fact that they were extremely rare at the time.

The boat grave excavated at Skamby in Kuddby in 2005 was not exactly like any one of the Svealand examples. There was no feasting gear and no weaponry, the horse gear was minimal, most likely symbolic – and then there was a set of 23 large amber gaming pieces (fig. 6:4). The last time anything similar was found in a Swedish burial was when Hjalmar Stolpe excavated the chamber graves of Birka in the 1870s: one of them had 15 amber gaming pieces (grave Bj 524, Arbman 1940-43:160-161, Taf. 149). As for the Skamby graves' superstructures, they are typical for cremation graves both in Svealand and Östergötland at the time, but there is nothing quite like them at the boat inhumation cemeteries of Svealand. In addition to a covering stone pavement, the Skamby grave originally had a large standing stone at its centre, and possibly further ones at the edge of the superstructure.

So at Skamby, we see ritual customs clearly inspired by those of Svealand, but not copying them slavishly. The people of Vikbolandet were cautiously appropriating customs that might mark them as Svealand affiliates, but at the same time keeping a distinct symbolic distance.

As further discussed in chapter 8, most of the 11th century *Hus(a)by* administrative centres of

the nascent Swedish kingdom in Östergötland are on Vikbolandet. Problematic further hints that the peninsula was an early foothold of Swedish royal power in Götaland are afforded by written evidence from the 13th century onward (Styffe 1911:239-240; *Östgötalagen* B28, p. 241, note 135; M.G. Larsson 1987:49). At the time of the first written laws, the taxation system in the Svealand provinces was partly based on *ledungslame*, originally being a fine having to do with the *leding* naval organisation. A man had once paid *ledungslame* only if he failed to uphold his military duties to the king. But about AD 1300, all landowners in Svealand paid an annual *ledungslame* tax. And so did the inhabitants of Vikbolandet, or "Östergötland east of the Aspveden woods". Meanwhile, the rest of Götaland paid a tax based on *gästning*, originally the duty to house and feed the king and his entourage when they travelled in the area.

For our present purposes regarding the political situation before AD 1000, this later evidence is difficult to evaluate. Though the *leding* naval organisation had clearly ceased to operate by the early 13th century, we do not know when it started. It may very well have been established in Svealand before Götaland joined the kingdom. And it may have been extended to Vikbolandet only after the unification of the kingdom. The peninsula is after all the only part of Götaland from which war ships could join the royal fleet when it set out from Lake Mälaren (which was still an inlet of the sea at the time). Before or after the unification, it would likely have been futile to demand of magnates in inland Östergötland that they take part in the *leding* when no large ship could pass the river rapids between Lake Glan and the Baltic.

## **Conclusion**

The archaeological record of Östergötland's Early and Middle Viking Period elite is rich and extensive to such a degree that it is hard to find its core or cores. Above we have identified Aska in Hagebyhöga and Skamby in Kuddby as the best candidates for elite settlements. They represent unusually dense, rich and diverse concentrations of elite indicators. But as with the elite sites of earlier periods discussed here, that fact that we can see Aska and Skamby at all is probably due to accidents of data availability. They should be treated as two currently known members of a larger group of top-level elite sites.

The Götavirke and Stegeborg defences, and the great labour expenditure they represent, demonstrate that there were kings of at least large parts of Östergötland in the 9th and 10th centuries. This is supported by Johan Berg's work on 12th century land-holding patterns, which indicate that vast tracts of land were not only ruled, but indeed *owned* by one family in the Viking Period. Very likely they resided at least part-time at Aska. But Aska is in the north-western corner of the plains belt. And Skamby is *outside* the defences. Surely there must have been at least one, and probably several, royal residences somewhere between these two end points. Where to seek those sites depends on what a scholar judges to be the single most regal data category. Great barrows? Search in Ledberg or Sjögestad, and date the Sättuna barrow. Great stone ships? Search in St. Lars, the greater Linköping urban area. Great hoards? Search in Landeryd and upstream along River Stångån. In the end it may turn out that Viking Period Östergötland has no Jelling, no Old Uppsala, but that the ambulatory habits of its kings have dispersed their finery across the province.

## Chapter 7 – Conclusions: Power Patterns Over Time

It is time to return to the questions posed in the book's introduction. Figures 3:2, 4:3, 5:5 and 6:1 group elite indicators from AD 150 to 1000 into four horizons, each compressing evidence laid down over a period of 160-250 years. No historian would ever content herself with such poor chronological resolution, where we are unable to tell the deeds of one king apart from those of his great grandfather. But such is prehistory. To avoid the myopic study of individual sites and finds, archaeologists are forced to study the generalities of the *longue durée*. But we take heart in the fact that historians can say nothing whatsoever about our prehistoric areas and millennia.

*Where were Östergötland's elite settlements in the period 375-1000?* As noted in chapter 1, we still do not have the floor-plan of a single mead-hall in the province. Looking at the best (most diverse) candidates for such sites in each period, however, we are dealing with only nine parishes out of about 155 existing at the end of the Middle Ages. This does narrow the search down.

	<b>LROM</b>	<b>MIG</b>	<b>VEN</b>	<b>VIK1-2</b>
Väderstad psh	-	Abbetorp	-	(silver hoard)
Östra Eneby psh	-	Southern part	(2 indications)	(3 indications)
Kaga psh	-	Sättuna	Sättuna	(a weight)
Västra Tollstad psh	Alvastra	-	Alvastra	-
Varv psh	Östervarv	-	Östervarv	-
Askeby psh	-	-	Asktorpet	(grave w silver)
Högby psh	Linneberg	-	Högby	-
Kuddby psh	-	(stray gold ring)	-	Skamby
Hagebyhöga psh	-	-	-	Aska

*When was each site an abode of the era's elite?* Apparently they were occupied only rather briefly by magnates, and there is little sign of continuity anywhere. Sättuna in Kaga is the only site suggested by current evidence to have survived as an elite settlement past one of the period boundaries involved. Furthermore, it survived the shift to the Vendel Period, which was marked by great upheavals. From a source-critical perspective, however, we must remember that Sättuna is also the only site in Östergötland where we have probably located (but not machine-stripped) the central building remains of an elite manor, and it has seen uniquely intensive metal detecting. The apparent Migration Period hiatus at Alvastra in Västra Tollstad and Östervarv in Varv may simply be due to our incomplete knowledge of what is in the ground at those sites. Likewise in Högby parish, where the rich Vendel Period burials were only a few hundred meters from the even richer Late Roman Period burial. The appearance of less impressive elite indicators in Östra Eneby parish both in the Vendel and Viking Periods, however, is probably due to the modern city of Norrköping and the concomitant excavation bias.

*What sort of regional power pattern do the elite sites form?* The general development over the four consecutive horizons is from a pattern of thinly and rather evenly dispersed elite indicators during the Late Roman Period, over spatial clustering in the Migration Period, over an increased number of spatially expanded clusters in the Vendel Period, to a dramatic increase in the number of indicators per century in the Early and Middle Viking Period, when few empty areas remain to define any clusters.

### **Regional Rulership**

Most of Östergötland was in all likelihood ruled by a single king in the Middle Viking Period. The Götavirke rampart need not mark the eastern limit of his power, as its placement was probably partly due to topography. I see no good reason to envision any Svear political dominance in Östergötland prior to AD 1000. But neither do I wish to side with those who dream of glorious Geatish roots to Medieval Sweden. As laid out by Lars Gahrn (1988:105 ff) and Mats G. Larsson (2002:174-180), the Early Medieval kingdom was clearly dominated by the Lake Mälaren provinces, though the regional distribution of power became more even in the following centuries. Thus the still surviving names of the old federation: Sweden (from *Svithiudh*, "Svear people") and Sverige (from *Svearike*, "Svear realm").

As discussed in chapter 6, the Vikbolandet peninsula is a separate case. This densely populated area was outside the Viking Period defences, had a highly vulnerable position and received five of the province's eight Husby royal manors in the 11th century. It cannot have been entirely independent of the Lake Mälaren kings in the 9th and 10th centuries (cf. M.G. Larsson 2002:146-148). As recorded in the Old English translation of Paulus Orosius's *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, Wulfstan the tradesman informed King Alfred that in the late 9th century several coastal areas south of Östergötland – Öland, Møre, Blekinge and Gotland – were subject (in some undefined sense) to the Svear, whose home was of course located *north* of our area of interest (Valtonen 2008).

### **Future Work**

I hope that this book will prove useful to those who wish to continue the chase for the province's elite. It can only be a question of time before someone uncovers the postholes of one of those mead-halls. And I believe that a more widespread use of the metal detector, among contract archaeologists and local historians alike, is the most efficient way to search. We are still very far from the Danish situation where not only have entire elite residences been excavated, but there are several well-studied coeval ones that allow comparison. As hinted in the introduction, however, a sustained archaeological research program beyond the vicinity of the province's highways and railroads is unlikely to see the light of day before the University of Linköping gains an archaeology department.

## **8. Coda: Later Developments (AD 1000-1400)**

What happened to the elite settlements of the 9th and 10th centuries after the end of our period of study? As we have seen, the strongest and densest indicators of Early and Middle Viking Period elite presence are found in the St. Per/Hagebyhöga and Kuddby regions at either end of the plains belt. At least Aska and Skamby were active elite residences in the 10th century. In the 11th and 12th centuries, however, neither has much to distinguish it unless we speculate about an early *härads* assembly site at Aska. Neither Aska nor Skamby received a *Husby* royal manor or a church or even a rune stone. This of course does not have to mean that power changed hands: we may simply see the effect of long-lived ruling families emphasising different seats among their extensive land holdings at various times. Vadstena is not too far from Aska.

Turning to the province's best candidates for *pre*-Viking Period elite settlements, we do in fact see some of them being revisited by power after AD 1000. Most ostentatiously so at Alvastra in Västra Tollstad with its curiously large early Christian cemetery and dynastic monastery, but also in Kaga judging from early and brittle written evidence, in Högby where a remarkable rune stone (Ög 81) indicates the seat of a powerful family in the early 11th century, and in Askeby where we find another early monastery.

But generally speaking the political hot spots of the early 2nd Millennium in Östergötland appear to be established on virgin soil. (For general comments on Early Medieval politics in Östergötland, see Nordanskog 1997.) Before turning to the book's gazetteer, what follows in this chapter is a brief survey of these hot spots.

### **Christianisation and Early Churches**

Östergötland appears to have become thoroughly Christianised about AD 1000. This is shown by the absence of identifiable Late Viking Period burials in the province's pagan cemeteries and by the early-11th century wave of rune stone erection. The inscriptions, crosses and occasional imagery on the stones convey a Christian message, particularly forcefully at Ledberg church where one face of the great late-10th century rune stone shows a cross, and the others a "comic strip" where Odin fights the wolf Fenrir and loses (fig. 8:1; Ög 181; Petersson 1982:73-74; Rosborn 2004:126-130).

The province's first churches were small wooden structures, probably erected on the premises of magnate farms in the 11th century. Well-preserved foundations of such churches have been excavated at the 12th century stone church sites of Klosterstad in St. Per (Hedvall & Gustavson 2001; Hedvall 2007) and Bjälbo (Gustin 2007). Furthermore, anomalous early dendro dates from structural timbers in the stone churches of Herrestad, Rogslösa and Örberga indicate building material re-used from earlier wooden buildings (Eriksson 2006:43-45, 61-66; 83-84). At Herrestad, the re-used timber dates from shortly before 1050 and the first stone church from about 1112. At Rogslösa, the two structures date from after 1050 and shortly before 1150 respectively. At Örberga, the dates are about 1080 and 1117. Whether the timber buildings had been churches or something else is not known.

A more common indicator of the earliest church sites are Eskilstuna-type early Christian burial monuments from around 1100, consisting of several parts and often sporting late Urnes style decoration (Neill & Lundberg 1994; Hedvall & Menander 2003). These high-status monuments usually survive as single decorated limestone slabs in and around later stone churches such as Hov and Vretakloster, and occur on all the five aforementioned sites of 11th century wooden structures.

### **The Stenkil, Sverker and Bjälbo Royal Dynasties**

Prior to the election of Olof Eriksson *skotkonungr* in c. AD 1000 the historical sources offer no reason to believe that any kings were accepted in both Svealand and Götaland. Olof's line died out already with his son Emund, who was succeeded about 1060 by his son-in-law Stenkil. To the extent that Stenkil's geographical roots are known at all, he would seem to have been a Västergötland man. But when his son Inge I founded a family monastery, he did so in Vreta. And thus begins a period of almost three centuries during which most kings of Sweden have family ties to Östergötland.

The Stenkil family held the crown for less than 70 years, from c. 1060 and into the 1120s. After the election of Sverker I, the Sverker and Erik dynasties then contended for power for less than a century, representing factions in Östergötland and Västergötland respectively. Johan Sverkersson, the last Sverker king, died in 1222. The earliest known power base of Sverker's dynasty was in Kaga parish (see gazetteer).

Neither the Stenkil nor the Sverker family can be followed back into Östergötland's runestone genealogies of the early 11th century. The former family's presence in the province is known from Inge I's foundation of Vreta nunnery about AD 1100. The father of Sverker I, Cornube, is that family's first historically documented member and would have belonged to the same generation as Inge I, having been born most probably in the third quarter of the 11th century. There may thus be one undocumented generation between the main runestone era in Östergötland and the documented royal dynasties. There were most likely not any radical power shifts during the *lucina*.

Around 1200, the Sverker family was joined with another Östergötland family from Bjälbo through a number of documented marriages, the earliest one being the union of the Bjälbo magnate Magnus minnesköld and Ingrid Ylva, granddaughter of Sverker I (Ahnlund 1945:347 ff; S. Carlsson 1953:104 f). When Sverker's line became extinct in the mid-13th century it left much of its land holdings in the hands of the Bjälbo family, whose genealogy is poorly documented (and thus probably not very illustrious) before the 13th century. It went on to spawn kings of all three Scandinavian countries into the late 14th century.

### **11th/12th Century Land Estates**

According to historical geography (Tollin 2002; Berg 2003), land-holding in the plains belt was dominated by a few large estates in the 11th and 12th centuries and possibly earlier as well. These estates then became increasingly fragmented through the High Middle Ages.

Johan Berg (2003) argues that the 14–16th century land holding pattern in five *härad* districts east and south of Linköping indicates that in the 12th century, much of the area was included in a single very large estate. It appears to have been owned by members of the Sverker family (Berg 2003:232).

The estate that Berg has reconstructed does not respect *härad* boundaries, but includes large parts of his studied area and clearly extends outside it, measuring tens of kilometres across. Members of the Sverker family also owned much land in westernmost Östergötland, which leaves little room for any other significant power factor in the province in the 11th century. Yet the Swedish crown was held by the Stenkil dynasty until the 1120s, proving that Östergötland was not the sole key to the realm.

### **12th Century Monasteries**

A probably Benedictine nunnery was founded at *Vreta* (modern *Vreta kloster*) about 1100 under the patronage of Inge I and his queen Helena, and was used as a dynastic burial site (Lindberg

2004). It is the first known monastery in Medieval Sweden. Though the nunnery and later parish church site is rich in Eskilstuna-type burial monuments, the parish has little to distinguish it before the 11th century (see Vallby in Vretakloster in the gazetteer). It was however the first documented power base of the Stenkil royal dynasty to which Inge belonged.

*Alvastra* in Västra Tollstad is extremely rich in archaeology and has an entry of its own in the gazetteer. A Cistercian friary was founded here in 1143 with Sverker I and his queen Ulvhild as sponsors, and was like Vreta a dynastic burial site.

At *Askeby* Östergötland's third monastery, a small Cistercian nunnery, was founded most probably in the 1160s or 1170s (Lejon 2008:77). Vreta was its mother convent.

### **Husby and the Kings of Sweden**

Olof Eriksson's position as king of both the Götar and the Svear may have been precarious, but during his 27-year reign (c. 995-1022) he appears to have begun attempts to stitch his united kingdom together. In the 11th century, royal administrative centres appeared in the form of manors named Hus(a)by. This is the oldest surviving type of farmstead name indicative of an administrative territorial division of Sweden (Rahmqvist 1994:108), as seen particularly clearly in Uppland. In that province there appears to be one Husby manor owned by the Crown in every *hundare* district, the Lake Mälaren region's equivalent of the *härad*.

The *husby* appellation was usually tacked onto manorial farms that had borne quite different names before, and which had often been elite settlements already in preceding centuries (Hyenstrand 1974; Olausson 2000). The relationship between Östergötland's Husby manors and its *härad* districts is quite different from the pattern in Uppland. The distribution of Östergötland's eight Husby manors (fig. 8:2) shows plainly where the kings of the 11th century had their main points of support: closest to the Lake Mälaren provinces, Svealand. One is on the province's northern border with Södermanland, five are on Vikbolandet, and only the remaining two are near the middle of the plains belt. Suggestively, one of these royal manors was sited immediately *outside* the defunct Götavirke rampart in Västra Husby parish.

### **Bosgård**

In discussions of power in Medieval rural Sweden, the place-names *Bo* and *Bosgården* are often mentioned. The name type was productive throughout the Middle Ages. *Bosgården* occurs in Östergötland as a designation for a farmstead within a village: only one farmstead in each village may carry this name, and most villages have none. Historians and place-name scholars agree that as an appellative, a *bo* or *bosgård* was a manorial farm and functioned as the administrative centre of a land estate (Rahmqvist 1994:109 f; *Sv.Ortn.Lex.* p. 39). The word denoted any such manor regardless of who owned it: king, bishop or nobleman. This means that the distribution of *Bosgården* farmstead names does not map royal or ecclesiastical administrative district centres. Indeed, it appears likely that manors owned by the Crown (as opposed to by whatever family possessed the crown at any one time), which clearly did have an administrative function within the realm, were usually not known as *Bosgården* at all but as *Hus(a)by*, at least in the 11th and 12th centuries.

The 13th century first edition of the Provincial Law of neighbouring Västergötland demonstrates that the province was divided into administrative districts called *bo*. However, the royal manors indicated as centres of these districts are not named *Bosgården*, while that name is instead common in Västergötland among farmsteads that were not royal manors. The discussion of this issue is clouded by a tendency among scholars to call Västergötland's *bo* district centres "bosgårdar" despite the fact that they are not named *Bosgården* (e.g. Lundqvist 2000:126-128). In

any case, the situation in Västergötland supports the notion that at a farmstead named Bosgården we may expect to find Medieval elite settlement, though generally not a royal one.

### **Market Sites and Medieval Towns**

The first full-featured towns of Östergötland were founded only in the 13th century (Ersgård 2002:10). Before that time we see a number of market sites, not all of which ever developed into towns (cf. Hasselmo 1992).

As detailed in the gazetteer, my metal detector team has discovered an 11th century market site at *Hov church* with silver coins, scrap silver, weights and undated copper alloy casting debris. The earliest coin was struck in Mainz for Heinrich II during his time as King of Germany, 1002–1014. In and around the church have been found fragments of at least twenty Eskilstuna-type burial monuments, but no direct evidence for an early wooden church is known from Hov. The first stone church dates from the early 12th century. Clas Tollin (2002:224; forthcoming) suggests that there was a manor house nearby in the Early Middle Ages, being the administrative centre of a large estate. Judging from the earliest written evidence, Tollin writes, the village of Hov was an old royal possession, once probably part of the *patrimonium* of the Sverker family or another one of the dynasties that fought for the Swedish crown in the 11th through the 13th centuries (cf. Berg 2003). The marketplace at Hov never grew into a town: Vadstena and Skänninge are nearby.

*Skänninge* was also a market site, and a craft production site to boot, from the early 11th century onward. The earliest coin found there as of early 2009 is an issue of the German Emperor Heinrich IV, type Dbg 1075, struck in 1009-1014 (Lindeblad forthcoming). Weights of the 11th or 12th century have also been found. Episodic specialised craft production in bone, iron and copper alloy is documented from the early 11th century onward, as shown by one copper-alloy Ringerike style dragon's-head fitting of A-S. Gräslund's type Pr1-2 (pre-1050) and another one of her Urnes style type Pr3-4 (post-1050; A-S. Gräslund 1990; 1992). This period on what would later become the town site is characterised by pit houses interpreted as outbuildings on a manorial farm (Feldt 2004). Two small churches were built a few hundred meters apart on either side of the Skenaån stream, a tributary of River Svartån, about AD 1100 (Nielsen 2002). This emphasised that the site was no longer a typical rural location. Both church sites have yielded many Eskilstuna-type burial monuments. The first of two Dominican monasteries in Skänninge was established in the early 13th century. Full urbanisation is known from the later 13th century onward (Ersgård 2002:10-11; Hedvall 2008).

At *Linköping*, an apparently unremarkable wooden church was built in the mid-11th century on the current site of St. Lars (Zachrisson 2007:112), most likely on land belonging to a farmstead named Ljunga. It was followed from about AD 1100 by the construction nearby of something highly remarkable: the Cathedral of Linköping, marking the establishment of the see of Linköping. St. Lars was then rebuilt in stone. The resulting pair of churches may be compared to those in other towns of the time, though one structure here was much larger than most. Eskilstuna-type burial monuments have been found at both church sites. Full urbanisation is known in Linköping from the 14th century onward (Ersgård 2002:11).

In *Söderköping*, there is evidence from the 12th century for a few sparsely placed buildings where craft production in bone, antler, leather and metal took place. The town has the typical paired early churches. Carved fragments from the Franciscan friary site and Hospitalsgatan may represent Eskilstuna-type monuments, though unusually executed in granite and not found at the earliest church sites (S.B.F. Jansson 1959; Neill & Lundberg 1994:152). Full urbanisation is

known from the early 13th century onward, from which time the friary also operated (Hasselmo & Tesch 1987; Hasselmo 1992; Ersgård 2002:10).

*Norrköping* also has two Medieval churches, but the second one is not attested before the 15th century, and neither of the two has any Eskilstuna-type monuments. Full but weak urbanisation is known from the mid-14th century onward (Ersgård 2002:11; Lindeblad 2008:25-48), when many fisheries and mills are mentioned in the sources. *Norrköping* did not come quite into its own until the waning of *Söderköping*. Nothing indicates an important role for the town site in the Early Middle Ages, though the name of a nearby farmstead, *Ledungshammar*, suggests that it had something to do with royal naval organisation at that time. The main difference between the "town" of *Norrköping* and the "village" of *Motala* in the Late Middle Ages may in fact be simply that one managed to secure a formal town charter and the other did not (Lindeblad 2008:69).

In the Early Middle Ages, *Vadstena* was a village with a single church, much like nearby *Hov*. Part of an Eskilstuna-type grave monument was found in 2006 on the site of St. Per's church (finder Anders Lundberg, e-mail 16 April 2009). In the High Middle Ages the town area was a rural manor of the *Bjälbo* royal dynasty with a brick-built palace. A town then accreted around the Bridgetine order's mother monastery established in 1368 in the former manor buildings (Ersgård 2002:11-12).

*Hästholmen* enjoyed a brief town-like *floruit* as a harbour of *Alvastra* monastery during the 14th century (Klackenberg 1984; Ersgård 2002:13-14). It had a royal stronghold and the *Lysing härad* assembly site, but little else. As with *Norrköping*, *Hästholmen*'s status as a true Medieval town rests heavily on written matter while the physical reality of the place seems to have been very modest.

In the High and Late Middle Ages, *Motala*, though only a single-church village, had an important bridge, mills and fisheries on River *Motala ström*, and the *Aska härad* assembly convened there. Written evidence documents the presence of numerous specialised craftsmen who settled on land allotments and used the abundant water power. As shown by Lindeblad (2001a; 2008:69-92) the case for *Motala* as a Medieval town, albeit an unchartered one, is no weaker than that of *Hästholmen* or indeed *Norrköping*.

## **9. Gazetteer of Elite Settlement Candidates 375-1000**

### **Askeby Parish: Asktorpet/Solberga**

In Askeby parish, north-east of the church near the parish boundary towards Örtomta, is a gravel ridge that was quarried for rail road construction during the 20th century. One of the farmsteads owning land on the ridge is Solberga, and the largest gravel pit bears its name. A number of large prehistoric cemeteries on the ridge have been damaged or obliterated by gravel extraction, to some extent after archaeological rescue excavations (Silvén 1957).

To avoid confusion with a boat inhumation cemetery in Mjölby parish, I have chosen to refer to the southern part of the ridge with the name of the nearest croft, Asktorpet, instead of Solberga which appears in the literature. Here, at the end of the ridge, are two small cemetery remnants, Raä Askeby 8 (Silvén's area E) and Örtomta 175. In 1937 a threatened barrow at Raä 8 was excavated. Its greatest preserved diameter was 13 meters, but if the internal cairn covering the burial was originally at the barrow's centre, then the original diameter would have been c. 21 metres, which is exceptionally large for the period. Inside was a cremation deposit representing one of the province's richest Vendel Period burials ever (Arbman 1941). Among the finds are fragments of a Vendel helmet with embossed sheet metal decoration, glass vessel(s), decorated animal art strap mounts and bone gaming pieces. One of the strap mounts depicts a unique scene where a bearded fisherman in a boat catches a mermaid in aristocratic garb on his hook (fig. 5:3). The animal art is Arwidsson's (1942) Style II:C and dates from the 7th century.

Higher up on the gravel ridge to the north-west was once a cemetery (Askeby Raä 7, Silvén's area C) where a Middle Viking Period grave has yielded elite finds. In 1933-35 Ingemar Atterman and Jan Erik Anderbjörk excavated a 14-meter cremation mound (SHM 21052 grave 78) containing, among other things, a damaged silver pendant of indeterminable type, a piece of silver chain, a silver edge mount, molten silver lumps and beads of carnelian and rock crystal. Nearby was grave 78a, a small stone setting with a cremation layer containing, among other less interesting things, 75 clench nails and 12 nails that may represent a burned boat.

On 11 April 2007 I directed 12.5 man-hours of metal detecting in the fields within a radius of 200 meters from the cemetery remnant Raä 8 with the excavated Vendel Period barrow. We found that the fields were apparently established on surfaces that had previously been quarried. The soil cover was thin and we found very few metal objects. The only find of any significant antiquity was a domed lump of slag from the collection pit of a small iron smelting furnace, found on a clearance cairn.

### **Borg Parish: Borg Manor**

Borg parish is on the right-hand bank of River Motala ström near Norrköping. Skälv in Borg has yielded two rich graves of the Late Roman Period: one with a shield boss and a shield handle dating from phase C1b, and one with an heirloom pear-shaped gold pendant and Polish bronze arm rings (Kaliff 2001). The weapon burial is the only Late Roman Period one known east of River Stångån. A gold spiral ring of probable Migration Period date has been found in the Ekhagen pasture of Klinga in Borg.

Borg was one of Östergötland's smallest parishes before it was joined with neighbouring Löt in 1783. Small parishes generally indicate the presence of a wealthy family in the 12th and 13th centuries, while large ones indicate the cooperation of several less wealthy families in funding the erection of the parish church. Historical sources document a royal manor at Borg in the 14th century. Kaliff (1992:111–114) suggested that the manor had been a “central place” already in the late 1st Millennium. His arguments were a) that there are defensive earthworks (undated at the

time, later dated with radiocarbon to *tpq* AD 600) 1 km east of the manor, b) that late-1st Millennium specialised craft production had been documented at Herrebro, 2 km south-west of the manor, and c) that there may hypothetically have been a private church at Borg manor in the 12th century.

In 1992 excavations at Borg manor uncovered remains of a Viking Period farmstead, including a 10th century cult building, and ample evidence of an aristocratic residence from the 13th and 14th centuries (Lindeblad & Nielsen 1997b). Fabech (1991) had suggested that late 1st Millennium cult took place at elite residences. Thus, Lindeblad & Nielsen (1997b:44) hypothesised that Borg was such a residence already in the Viking Period (followed by e.g. Nielsen 1997:375, 378; 2006; Fabech 1998:153; Kaliff 1999:116; Lindeblad 2008:54-56).

This interpretation is weakly founded. Its tenacity appears largely to be the result of a wish to view the finds from Borg as support for Fabech's interpretive model. Such support has been found elsewhere at sites with a combination of coeval 1st Millennium cult buildings and elite finds. But there is no evidence of any elite presence at Borg manor before the 13th century.

Viking Period cult at Borg involved a small building and affordable sacrifices: mainly the heads and other poor cuts of livestock (possibly accumulated over decades) and about a hundred small iron amulet rings. Neither of these findings indicate any great investment or the participation of any large number of people. To my mind, they rather suggest household cult at a farmstead of middling means. As Per Vikstrand (1999; 2000; 2001:411-413) notes, cult was most likely not confined to the top-level aristocracy.

The fact that this site has no known parallels in Östergötland most likely has to do with preservation conditions. The cult site at Borg manor had been covered with a thick layer of gravel after the buildings were demolished, and was thus preserved. But little is known at all about late 1st Millennium farmsteads in the province.

Returning to the aforementioned defensive earthworks at Borg, all that is really known about them is that the structure was built after the 6th century and abandoned before the 17th (Lundqvist et al. 1996). Allowing it any important place in the discussion of, say, Viking Period political geography is thus highly daring, especially since the main period of lowland fortifications in Sweden is the Middle Ages.

As discussed below, evidence of transient Viking Period bead making has been excavated at Herrebro, 2 km from the cult site at Borg manor. These findings indicate an elite presence somewhere in the parish, but there is currently no reason to look for it near the historical manor house.

### **Borg Parish: Herrebro**

Near Herrebro in Borg, on the one-time border with Löt parish, is a modest Viking Period craft site that has been misinterpreted as a marketplace (Nielsen & Lindeblad 1992; Lindeblad et al. 1994). This idea was later abandoned (Lindeblad & Nielsen 1996; Lindeblad 2008:57-60). Bead-making debris has been found here: the evidence consists of two opaque white mosaic tesserae, two small molten glass lumps (one of which bears the imprint of pliers) and 23 beads of which about half are defective. No bead types dating exclusively from the Vendel Period are represented, the most common type being barrel-shaped opaque orange beads. A clay-lined hearth with traces of a bellows entry was found. Together, these observations suggest a few bead-making episodes, probably in the 9th or 10th century. No other bead-making site of such an early date is known in the province.

Radiocarbon dates for charcoal suggest that fires were lit at the site already in the 8th century. Finds and structures attest to iron smithing and woodworking (possibly boat repairs). Craft in bone and antler is less clearly indicated. The bone finds are quite voluminous and seem mainly to

represent food waste (cattle, horse, ovicaprids, pig), but also include pieces of two human skulls. Tim Olsson and I did twelve man-hours of metal detecting of the site and its surroundings on 24 April 2005. We initially concentrated on covering the area marked as unexcavated culture layer on the plan in the 1994 excavation report, but found only two Medieval horse shoes and the head of a sledge hammer. (These finds are interesting in relation to a winter road across the fen marked on Early Modern maps.)

The bead-making episodes indicate visits by a specialised craftsman, and thus indirectly an elite presence. There is however currently no reason to look for these Viking Period magnates at Borg manor. The employers of the craftsmen at Herrebro would in my opinion have resided at close quarters, most probably at nearby Högby farmstead to the north-east. Herrebro itself is a small farmstead and unknown before 1642. Excavations on its land have however documented settlement remains from about AD 1.

The craft site itself cannot have been an elite settlement site, as it was on a peripheral promontory at the edge of a fen and has produced neither exclusive metalwork nor traces of any building larger than a shed. The scarcity of copper alloy objects and the absence of coins, weights, scales and precious metals at the site refute Nielsen & Lindeblad's (1992; Lindeblad et al. 1994) original interpretation of Herrebro as a marketplace. A spiral-shaped copper-alloy fragment without surface relief does not belong to a Vendel Period eagle mount, as stated by Lindeblad (1996; 2008:58). An iron spur and a small annular brooch date from the Early Middle Ages, and thus the site was not abandoned in the 11th century (*contra* Lindeblad et al. 1994; Lindeblad & Nielsen 1996; Lindeblad 2008:59, 67).

To my mind, the site at Herrebro is best interpreted as a workshop area belonging to Högby farmstead but located at the fen's edge a bit less than a kilometre from the main settlement. This placement may have been due to the fire risk involved in smithwork, or to convenience during boat repairs, or possibly to some supernatural idea of the liminal nature of smithwork. The only identifiable product that would appear suitable for elite redistribution is the beads. They most likely changed hands elsewhere, or may indeed, considering the modest scale of the production, never have left the possession of the family that employed the bead maker.

Stora Herrebro was the assembly site of Memming *härad* in the Late Middle Ages, when it was an apparently uninhabited location beside a bridge on the parish boundary between Löt and Borg (*Nationalencyklopedin* 2000). The relevance of this later development to the Viking Period craft production site on the edge of the fen is however uncertain, as the *härad* division is unlikely and the parish division inconceivable to have been in place at that early date.

### **Hagebyhöga Parish: Aska**

Aska is a large village of the regulated High Medieval type through which a road runs with perpendicular farm plots lined up to either side. At the northern end of the village the road makes a sharp turn to the left, avoiding an enormous barrow or long-house platform located on the village's central line. The Aska barrow measures 80 by 55 by 3,5 metres, and its uncommon oval shape and flat top surface makes its functional interpretation slightly uncertain. Test-trenching has nevertheless demonstrated that the barrow has a central cairn, as would be expected of a Late Iron Age burial mound. A shin bone from an articulated horse leg found among the cairn's peripheral stones has been radiocarbon dated to 660-880 cal AD (St-11326, 1270±100 BP; Claréus & Fernholm 1999), thus dating the construction of the barrow to the Middle/Late Vendel or Early Viking Periods. It is one of only three great barrows in Östergötland dated later than the Bronze Age. The contents of the interior cairn have however not been investigated. The barrow's soil mantle contains re-deposited Early Iron Age material, probably from a cemetery.

I directed a total of 30 person-hours of metal detecting within 200 meters of the barrow in April of 2006 and 2007. We found only one object that might have something to do with a settlement coeval with the barrow: a Viking Period padlock. The topography does however offer several other good locations for a manorial farm of that era in the vicinity. Viking Period Aska is currently only known as a largely ploughed-out burial landscape, where three mounds up to 15 meters in diameter survive in the fields west of the village.

At two sites to either side of the village, rich burials of the Early and Middle Viking Period have been found in 1885, 1920 and 2006. In the former two cases, local farmers did all or most of the excavation. The 2006 burials are currently known only as a scatter of well-preserved jewellery in the plough soil.

The 1885 burial was under a cairn, and judging from the state of the finds it was an inhumation. According to a letter from G. Olsson (dated Aska, 7 April 1885, and bound into the SHM inventory ledger) the cairn was due east of the Aska barrow. Olsson does not indicate the distance, which may mean that it was rather short. The cairn was most likely part of the ploughed-out cemetery discovered in 2006 south-east of the barrow (Raä 79). A person's idea of the cardinal points at Aska are easily skewed by the fact that the village road is orientated east-north-east. The 1885 grave contained among other things two swords, a 40.6 cm *stridskniv* type seax sword, a Petersen type E spear head, an axe head, three horse bits, bridle mounts, two yoke finials, three wagon hooks, a sleigh rattle, an iron-hafted hammer, a Borre style annular brooch, a meat fork and a knife. It dates from the Early Viking Period.

The famous 1920 burial (Raä 36) is the subject of a long 1932 paper by its rescue-excavator Ture J. Arne, bearing what is probably the least informative title in the history of the province's archaeology: "Ein bemerkenswerter Fund in Östergötland". A cremation deposit covered by a 6.4-meter cairn contained a silver trefoil brooch, nine silver pendants, four or five small beaded-wire silver rings, an Islamic silver coin (*Myntfynd* 24), a pair of type P52 tortoise brooches, a fragmentary third tortoise brooch, glass and rock crystal beads, an iron wand, an Islamic copper alloy vase, an iron cauldron, a cauldron chain, a meat fork, four yoke finials, four or five horse bits, a sleigh rattle, three wagon hooks, a curry comb, a decorated bone plaque (ironing board?), various iron harness mounts and box mounts and other lesser things. Among these grave goods are several late-8th century antiques although the tortoise brooches date the burial to the early/middle 10th century, the Middle Viking Period. The coin's date cannot be accurately determined.

The finds from this exceptional burial that have most often been commented on are the pendants. Five are latter-day re-interpretations of the Early Roman Iron Age's inverted-pear gold-filigree pendants. One is disc-shaped with a filigree cross motif made up of four circles. One is square with an openwork gripping-beast motif. One depicts the head of a man wearing a moustache and a Style E bird-shaped helmet. The ninth pendant takes pride of place: it forms a round-sculpture version of the common relief motif of an aristocratic lady wearing a disc-on-bow brooch, a bead necklace and a dress with a train (seen centuries earlier on the foil figure die from Sättuna in Kaga). She is surrounded by a crescent-shaped ring with the plastic beaded appearance typical of fine metalwork from the decades on either side of the Vendel/Viking Period shift. On the strength of the wand and two latter pendants' symbolism, Neil Price (2002:157-158) interprets the burial as "that of a woman in contact with the supernatural", a *volva*.

The 2006 finds were made along a 60-meter stretch of the cultivated ridge top south-east of the Aska barrow (Raä 79). They consist of a silver filigree bead (fig. 9:1), two disc-shaped brooches (fig. 9:2), seven fragments of double-shelled tortoise brooches (fig. 9:3) and a copper alloy jewellery chain. None are fire-damaged, no other objects coeval with the jewellery were

found, and so the site is most likely a ploughed-out inhumation cemetery of the Middle Viking Period.

### **Heda and Rök Parishes**

Heda and Rök parishes comprise a small area in the south-western plains belt with an unusual density of elite finds and sites of the Iron Age and Middle Ages. To the west is Västra Tollstad parish with Alvastra.

The Late Iron Age elite record in the area begins with a Late Vendel Period grave excavated at Jussberg in Heda by Arthur Nordén in 1928. A cremation grave under a stone setting yielded a blue glass vessel and a set of bone gaming pieces, among other things.

Another rich grave was excavated at Norrö in Heda (Raä 7) by Andreas Lindahl in 1954 (Lindahl 1961). Dated to the Early Viking Period by a set of P37 tortoise brooches, the inhumation among other things also contained seven bronze pendants with embossed silver foil decoration that copies early 8th century Islamic coins. The copied issues are tpq 729 (*Myntfynd* 27).

The most famous piece of archaeology in these two parishes is of course the Early Viking Period rune stone from Rök. Indeed, the church site most likely takes its name from the rune stone, *rök* being a cognate of "rock" and dialectal Gotlandic *rauk*, "towering limestone formation". The stone bears the world's longest prehistoric runic inscription, an obscure and artfully encrypted message mentioning the god Thor with allusions to Theodoric the Great and other heroes, all in memory of one Vamod Varinson. Being large, the rune stone is unlikely to have been moved very far before it was made part of the church's Medieval storage building for tithes. Thus on 14 April 2006 I directed 9.5 person-hours of metal detecting within a 200 meter radius of Rök church. The only prehistoric find was a piece of knapped quartz.

There is a concentration of great barrows in Heda and Rök: none are however dated to the Late Iron Age. At Hagalund is an undated barrow with a 20-meter diameter (Rök Raä 37). At Stora Jussberg are two: one with a diameter of more than 40 meters (Raä Heda 37:3) that has been dated to the Bronze Age, and one with a 20-meter diameter whose date is unknown. At Tjugby is a 25-meter barrow that has yielded a rich burial of the Bronze Age's fourth period (Raä Heda 2, SHM 6013). And 700 meters west of the Tjugby barrow across a little stream is the Disevid barrow (Raä Heda 5), whose date is unknown. It measures 25 meters in diameter, is four meters high and has great hoary oaks growing on its flanks.

With a view to the Vendel Period finds made beside the Ledberg and Sättuna barrows, I reasoned that it would be worthwhile to investigate the fields and wetland around the Disevid barrow as well, regardless of its original erection date. On 13 April 2007 I directed 13 person-hours of metal detecting within a 200 meter radius around the barrow. We found nothing dating from before 1750.

### **Hov Church**

Hov church and village are located on a prominent ridge in the rich agricultural land east of Lake Tåkern. Ample evidence points to Hov being an elite settlement in the centuries after AD 1000. However, there is no good indication of any elite presence there during this book's period of study. The place name denoted "a building with sacral functions" in the later 1st Millennium (*Sv.ortn.lex.* p. 131), but sacrality is not synonymous with elite status.

The earliest elite indicators at Hov date from the 11th century. Having no other good candidate sites in this part of the province, I departed from my usual guiding principles and selected Hov for surveying. On 9 April 2008 I directed 20 man-hours of metal detecting in fields within a 200 meter radius of the church. We found a silver coin type Dbg 785 struck in Mainz for Heinrich II

during his time as King of Germany, 1002-1014. Another silver coin surfaced 45 meters from the aforementioned; type Dbg 690, struck in Gittelde in the Harz mountains for one of the Counts of Katlenburg Dietrich II or III, 1056-1106. Farther off, we found a piece of a silver Urnes brooch dating from the decades around 1100. Two small brass-and-iron weights, one a cubooctahedron weighing c. 4 g and one a flattened spheroid with a slightly biconical shape, attest that small amounts of precious matter (most likely silver) were weighed at Hov in the same era. The finds seem to indicate a marketplace (fig. 9:4; cf. Pestell & Ulmschneider 2003). The silver objects are too few and too sparsely distributed in time and space to represent a ploughed-out hoard. And there is no indication of ordinary settlement. A number of fragments, lumps and droplets attest to copper-alloy casting on the site, but its date and duration is uncertain. Hov lived on as an elite settlement in the Middle Ages.

In and around the church have been found over 150 fragments of at least twenty Eskilstuna-type early Christian burial monuments from around 1100 (S.B.F. Jansson 1962), some sporting Urnes style decoration like that of the aforementioned silver brooch. Such monuments are elite indicators taken to reveal the presence of a wooden church in the 11th century, though no other evidence for such a building is known from Hov. The first stone church at Hov dates from the early 12th century and apparently became, after a number of decades, the object of a rather grand reconstruction program. This was however halted mid-way, possibly due to the death of King Karl Sverkersson in 1167 (Lovén 1990).

Clas Tollin (2002:224-225; forthcoming) suggests that there was a manor house near the church in the Early Middle Ages, being the administrative centre of a large estate. Judging from the earliest written evidence, Tollin writes, the village of Hov was an old royal possession and once probably part of the *patrimonium* of the Sverker family or another one of the dynasties that vied for the Swedish crown in the 11th through the 13th centuries (cf. Berg 2003). The juxtaposition of Hov church with a farmstead named Hovgården is most likely fortuitous: the latter is a Medieval name denoting the headquarters of an aristocratic estate (Per Vikstrand, e-mail 1 April 2008). A farmstead name with a similar meaning at the time is Bosgården, cf. chapter 8.

Among our metal detector finds are three dating from the High and Late Middle Ages (fig. 9:5): a small strap buckle, a pentagonal punch-decorated dress spangle (Sw. *ströning*) and an unusual pewter cross datable to the 15th or 16th centuries (Jörn Staecker, e-mail 23 April 2008).

Dukes Erik and Valdemar of the Bjälbo royal dynasty, who were brothers of King Birger Magnusson and would die in 1318 while imprisoned by him in Nyköping, jointly dated a letter at Hov in 1310 (*Diplomatarium Suecanum* no 1663). In cadastral records of the 16th century, Hov is Östergötland's largest village with 23 *hemman* units, each equalling a self-supporting farmstead. Tollin (2002:224) compares it to Old Uppsala, Uppland's largest village in the same era. Neither of the two is likely to have been much smaller during the Middle Ages.

### **Kaga Parish: Sättuna and Alguvi**

Kaga parish is mainly known in the literature for two things: its well-preserved little Romanesque stone church and early written sources indicating that the first church on the site was built by the father of King Sverker I, a man named Cornube (of obscure etymology, possibly *Korn-Ubbe*, "Ubbe of the grain"). Göran Tagesson (2007) has shown that the fine modern preservation state of the church is actually due to organisational happenstance in the High Middle Ages, when the absentee high clergymen in Linköping who received the parish tithes had little motivation to improve and modernise the building. But the written mention of Cornube marks Kaga as the earliest known power base of Sverker's family. In the neighbouring parish of Vreta kloster, the preceding Stenkil dynasty had had its family monastery and burial site in the decades around AD 1100.

Sverker and his queen, however, founded their family monastery at Alvastra in Västra Tollstad on Lake Vättern. Which of the two properties was more important to Cornube's father and grandfather in the 11th century is unknown.

In the eastern part of the parish is the village of Sättuna. On the northern edge of the village territory, in a monumental location near the shore of Lake Roxen between the mouths of rivers Svartån and Stångån, is a great barrow (figs 9:6-7). Measuring 40 by 35 by 5.5 meters, it is one of the province's largest. The date of its construction is unknown. Its base is located >40 m a.s.l. which means that the site was not under water during either of the two periods of barrow building in Östergötland (cf. chapter 6). Having been artificially lowered, the lake's surface is currently at about 33.5 m a.s.l. (in relation to the Rh00 benchmark), but during the Bronze and Iron Ages it was at about 35 m a.s.l. The barrow was thus even closer to the lake shore during prehistory.

The barrow's edge is supported by a crumbling drystone wall consisting of the kind of stones that make up clearance cairns and 1st Millennium grave superstructures in the area. Early archaeological surveyor Carl Fredrik Nordenskjöld (1875:19) wrote about the barrow (and I translate), "In praise of the late landowner should be mentioned that he has had it enclosed by a wide 4 feet high stone wall, protecting it from damage ... 136 paces in circumference with a slope height of 26 paces. The depression in the upper part has a diameter of 16 paces. Not far off to the east are 2 round stone settings, one measuring 14 steps in diameter". The top and eastern face of the barrow show damage from digging in recent centuries. A more serious threat to the monument, however, is a vast warren with many exits that appears to fill the entire south-east quadrant of the barrow. According to the locals, this warren has at turns been occupied and enlarged by foxes and badgers.

Attracted originally by the barrow and the *-tuna* place name, I have directed 101 person-hours of metal detecting and a partial magnetometer survey of the fields within 200 meters of the Sättuna barrow. This work took place in instalments from April 2006 to April 2008. (We did no dedicated fieldwalking.) Finally in September 2008 I directed the stripping of 1047 square meters in the field due north of the barrow and the sectioning of all 174 sunken features in that trench (figs 9:8-9). The position of the trench was adequate in relation to the metalwork scatter, being inside its northern periphery. But it was not ideal, due to the demands of farming. I was also unable to secure a permit to trial-trench the barrow's periphery and sample its interior for radiocarbon analysis in the manner that proved successful at Stora Tollstad in Sjögestad.

During all our metal detecting we did not notice that in addition to 1st Millennium remains, the field in question holds a Late Mesolithic shore site. We identified it only while opening the trench, when I spotted a ground basalt axe on the surface of the ploughsoil, and some sunken features beneath proved to contain quartz and other knapped materials. Radiocarbon analysis of rotten-oakwood charcoal from a hearth pointed to the interval 4460-4340 cal BC (95% prob., Ua-37499, 5560±40 BP). But apart from a radiocarbon date in the 3rd Millennium cal BC that corresponds to none of our finds, activity on site appears to resume only with the Migration Period.

First there are radiocarbon dates of spruce-trunk charcoal from a pit at 320-440 cal AD (86% prob., Ua-37502, 1660±30 BP) and maple charcoal from a hearth at 410-550 cal AD (95% prob., Ua-37501, 1585±30 BP). In the earlier D1 phase of the Migration Period we find part of a copper-alloy brooch with Nydam Style embossed silver sheet decoration (fig. 4:2). In phase D2 we have part of an equal-armed Style I copper-alloy relief brooch that is closely similar to a fine silver specimen from Gillberga in Svennevad, Närke province (figs 9:10-11; Magnus 2008; SHM 3445). It was found in the ploughsoil within the limits of the 2008 trench but cannot be associated with any sunken feature deep enough to have survived under plough depth. A small fragment of a

cruciform brooch (fig. 9:12) cannot be dated closely within the Migration Period but is interesting as the type is generally south-west Scandinavian.

With the Vendel Period, the finds become numerous. Foremost is a die for the making of gold foil figures (fig. 5:2; Rundkvist 2007). It was the 13th of these dies to become known to scholarship, and by far the northernmost when all the previously known ones came from Bornholm, Scania and Zealand. It belongs to a fairly rare type depicting a single woman seen in profile (Watt 1999 fig. 3). To one looking at the die, she is facing right, chin held high. The woman's eye is large and round, her mouth open as if she were singing or speaking loudly. Unusually, an ear is depicted. Her hair forms a large knot at the back of her head and then cascades down her back. Her right hand is held close to her chest, thumb and fingers orientated upward in a gesture suggestive of public performance, her elbow at her waist. She is wearing a long obliquely cross-hatched dress, a shawl over her shoulders, a featureless belt at her waist, and an over-sized disc-on-bow brooch under the side of her jaw. Her pointed shoes, visible under the hem of the dress, are placed off-centre to the right, leaving space to the left for a rectangular feature adorned with three circles. This suggests that the woman is sitting on a low stool (as pointed out by Mats Wessling). The figure is edged by a beaded rim forming a straight lower edge and an arch over the woman's head, leaving the die's top corners blank.

The die measures 29.0 by 15.0 by 2.9 mm, a rectangular piece of cast copper alloy. The back side is pitted and worn and shows no sign of any decoration. From an art-technical viewpoint, the image resembles a line drawing rather than a piece of sculpture: the relief is shallow with little plasticity and none of the chip-carved effect seen in many other dies. This technique is also seen on a few foil figures found on Bornholm (Watt 2004:193).

Single women seen in profile is a foil-figure motif known exclusively from Denmark and Scania. According to Margrethe Watt (e-mail 19 April 2007), none of the currently known gold foil figures has been made with the Sättuna die. The closest known parallel to its motif is a foil figure from Sylten on Bornholm (Klindt-Jensen 1957 fig. 134; Watt 1999 fig. 3:13), a site located a few hundred meters from the famous Sorte Muld where over 2500 figures have been found. One of two dies from Neble on Zealand (Watt 1999 fig. 3:4; NMK C30884) shows a woman with a similar cross-hatched hem on her dress, but the upper half of this die is missing.

We found five small equal-armed brooches (fig. 9:13), a diagnostic type of the Early Vendel Period. One is an unfinished piece: its pin holder has not been perforated for the axis and its pin catch not bent into the hook-shape needed if the brooch were to be wearable. This indicates jewellery production on site. All the brooches are individual designs: one has a hole at the apex at the bow, another is partly tin-plated. Likewise tin-plated is a piece of a small disc-on-bow brooch of Early or Middle Vendel Period date (fig. 9:14). A small disc brooch has originally held an embossed copper alloy foil panel, probably depicting an animal-headed Style II triskele or swastika. A sculpted fragment may be the end of a wide armlet, indistinctly shaped and thus possibly fire-damaged.

The male-gender small-finds repertoire is less richly represented by part of a punch-ornamented strap end from a display bridle (fig. 9:15) and a decorative rivet of the kind adorning Vendel Period display shields.

Only one find can be dated to the Late Vendel Period: part of a Style E equal-armed brooch (fig. 9:16) of the final era of unique jewellery design before the start of Viking Period serial production. Tortoise brooches such as the P25 type still feature Style E though hundreds of copies survive of each design.

With the Viking Period, we are back at a low find frequency again at Sättuna. A cross-shaped brooch with originally four animal heads (fig. 9:17) is a fine example of the Early/Middle Viking

Period Borre style and represents a type known from Denmark. A small weight has been used for pre-monetary silver transactions. An openwork handle from a key or cosmetic implement is decorated in the schematised gripping-beast style so common on the metalwork of the Middle Viking Period. A palmetto-shaped strap mount belongs to an "Oriental" belt of the Late Viking Period, commonly found in male inhumations on Gotland, which would originally have been studded with tens or hundreds of such mounts. A spool-shaped lead handle with an iron-rod core and indistinct relief decoration is similar to a Late Viking Period key handle and may be a model for the making of such.

From the Viking Period or later is a disc brooch that has been crumpled up (fig. 9:18), about 3/4 complete, original diameter 71 mm, copper-alloy pin extant and folded into the brooch, pin-catch extant on back, apparently soldered on. On the surface of the brooch are a central large boss with mock-filigree, surrounded by five identical ones, and outside those five are another five smaller bosses. All in all eleven bosses. The surface of the brooch is divided into petal-like fields by lines of tiny bumps. All decoration is visible on the back side too: most of the piece is just 0.6 mm thick. I have found no good parallels to this piece.

The Middle Ages are poorly represented at Sättuna. An annular brooch and a leg fragment from a brass tripod cooking pot (fig. 9:19) may be Late Medieval or Early Modern. The Early Modern Period is mainly represented by seven *fyrk* copper coins of Queen Christina, all struck during the regency while she was a minor and dating from 1633 to 1641 in four cases where the year is legible. These large copper coins were issued in enormous numbers and are particularly easy to find with a metal detector.

There are also undatable finds, many with general Late Iron Age or Medieval affinities and such that speak of copper alloy casting: a little cast and hammered copper-alloy bar (fig. 9:20), 15 shapeless lumps of molten copper alloy, various sheet-metal fragments, a lump of blue slag, a lump of burgundy slag, a little bell, a punch-decorated fragment, a fragment with cast decoration, a mount for a knife handle, a slate whetstone, a *svartgods* potsherd, three possible weights of lead (fig. 9:21) and a piece of strike-a-light flint. We found no garnets or beads like those from Slöinge, where an exceptional field walker worked for many weeks and where large volumes of ploughsoil were wet-sieved (Lundqvist & Arcini 2000).

Written sources on the later fate of Sättuna have been collected by Arthur Nordén (1943:170, 179). The place name is first mentioned in 1251 as that of a piece of Crown property donated by King Valdemar to a canonicate at Linköping Cathedral. In the mid-16th century, Sättuna's Bosgård farmstead was the centre of an episcopal land estate, a *rättaredöme*, with 26 tenant farms in five parishes. In 1657, Sättuna village consisted of ten farmsteads. On a detailed *arealavmätning* map of 1710 (LMA 05-KAG-9), the settlement pattern is the same dispersed one as today, without any regulated village plot of the Medieval type. The barrow is shown as a clump of greenery surrounded by fields.

As mentioned, my team and I have put in 101 person-hours of metal detecting around the barrow. We have collected 66 datable objects from the 5th through the 17th centuries, 17 of which certainly date from the 5th through the 10th centuries. To any would-be nighthawk detectorist, I should point out that these figures suggest that you would need to do six hours of illicit metal detecting around the Sättuna barrow to find one piece of datable 1st Millennium metalwork. The object would almost certainly be a copper-alloy fragment. The calculation also presupposes that your skill level is considerably above average and that the work of the Gothenburg Historical Society's members on site has not appreciably depleted the finds density in the ploughsoil.

The geophysics, troubled by the growing pains of an experimental set-up, could not help identify any overarching structures around the barrow. But they established that at least the north-

ern part of the field is full of archaeology under the ploughsoil, the magnetic anomalies forming a dense carpet. The 2008 trench verified this with an average density of nearly 17 sunken features per 100 square meters. Though the excavation of those features on the part of the site we had access to proved largely disappointing, our fieldwork did establish one fact that is important when evaluating Sättuna on an interregional level. The site is not stratified beneath the ploughsoil in the manner of e.g. Uppåkra and Sorte Muld. Removing the plough layer, we came immediately upon the surface of the natural. The metalwork spans a millennium and a half starting in the 5th century, but activities on the site have not produced cultural layers thick enough to survive under plough depth.

I will leave Sättuna with two guesses. Firstly, my guess is that the posthole foundations of a 5th-6th century manor complex are in the fields we metal-detected but due east, south-east and south of the barrow – and underneath it. Secondly, my guess is that the barrow is a 9th or 10th century structure that capped the settlement remains after abandonment. The main reasons for this dating suggestion is that there are no Bronze Age finds or radiocarbon dates from the site, the 1st Millennium metalwork scatter curves around the barrow in a manner inconvenient for a cohesive settlement, and the nearby Ledberg and Stora Tollstad great barrows date from the Viking Period.

Thanks to Nordenskjöld, quoted above, we know that there were once other graves on the site besides the barrow. Hardly any of the finds however show fire damage as they would if they had been cremated, and none of the brooches retain their iron pins as they would if placed in inhumation graves. Such rusty pins might break off due to ploughing, but the Sättuna pieces are not generally very abraded, and iron pins survive on other metal detector finds from my investigations in Östergötland. Thus none of our metal detector finds stands out as originating from a ploughed-out grave.

A full archive report of the Sättuna excavation in September 2008 can be had at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

The Alguvi barrow in Kaga is located 1.2 km to the south-west of the Sättuna barrow. It has often been mentioned in discussions of the province's late-1st Millennium political geography (e.g. Nerman 1958). This has had more to do with the place-name than with the barrow itself: at 17.5 meters' diameter and 2.4 meter's height, it is not a very imposing structure. "Alguvi", however, means "the sanctuary of all gods / the sanctuary-god / the fertility god" (Wessén 1921; 1922; Nerman 1958; Vikstrand 2001:307, 315 w. refs), which has conjured up images of a Pantheon-like temple in the minds of scholars.

The date of the Alguvi barrow is effectively unknown despite excavations by Bengt Cnattingius in 1927. The barrow had been severely damaged, which prompted the fieldwork. Cnattingius discovered that it contained several disused potato cellars of recent centuries, all backfilled with garbage and animal cadavers. He found a metre-long wooden pole in a horizontal position, with four iron nails driven into it. Interpreting this as part of an original burial chamber, he suggested that the destroyed burial must have dated from the Iron Age. As shown on excavation photographs in the ATA archives, however, Cnattingius's trench was small and the pole suspiciously well preserved in the sandy barrow fill. It is thus more likely to have been a structural part of a potato cellar.

### **Kimstad Parish: Ullevi**

At Tångestad in Kimstad, Andreas Lindahl (1950) excavated a Late Vendel Period grave with animal-art jewellery in 1948. 3.8 kilometres east-north-east across River Motala ström is the farmstead of Ullevi. In 1934 a pattern-welded Early Viking Period sword was found there. It is a

Frankish weapon of the Mannheim type (Petersen 1919 fig. 72), which is uncommon in Sweden, and has an unusual double-omega design on the blade. Fedir Androshchuk (2007) states that the type makes up only 2% of the country's Viking Period swords but is more common in Germany with 11%.

The sword was found during the digging of field drains on the edge of a fen, a little less than a meter below the ground surface. This suggests an interpretation as a sacrificial wetland deposit. The museum's inventory notes also mention poorly preserved bones, "black, soft, a pair of shins and vertebrae", found along with the sword. They were not collected, no mention was made at the time of the animal species involved, and no skull was found. This suggests that their later identification as *human* bones in the museum's published acquisition list should be disregarded.

Weaponry of this era is very rare in Östergötland. Therefore I chose Ullevi as a promising site for metal detecting. The name of the farmstead means "Sanctuary of Ullr", but that need not indicate any unusual wealth or power. Vast areas at Stora Ullevi in St. Lars parish near Linköping have been excavated for land development in recent decades, without any certain elite indicators of the period 375-1000 being found (see the gazetteer entry for St. Lars parish).

The sword was found about 200 m north of Ullevi farmstead's main building. Drained wetland is unlikely to harbour the kind of elite settlement remains this study has sought. Instead my team and I targeted fields surrounding a prominent hill 400 m east of the farmstead. On its summit is a 1st Millennium cemetery (Raä 5), and the flanks of the hill seemed well suited to settlement. Several clearance-stone islets may indicate demolished stone structures. 13 man-hours of detector work on 11 April 2008, however, turned up no settlement indications. The earliest find was a fragment of a Late Medieval or Early Modern copper-alloy strap buckle.

### **Kuddby Parish: Skamby and Örminge**

Kuddby church is near the central point of the Vikbolandet peninsula. Through our period of study the parish exhibits a number of elite indicators. Starting in the Migration Period, there is a gold finger ring from Örminge. The same farmstead then offers a short-twig rune-stone (Ög 24) of the Early Viking Period. The Viking Period also sees a concentration of elite indicators associated with the boat inhumation cemetery at Skamby (Raä 158). In a 1941 paper Holger Arbman pointed out the absence in Östergötland of boat inhumation cemeteries like those of Uppland: "But no-one has for that reason doubted that the province in that era, as today, bore rich harvests and that powerful magnate farmers resided on fertile inherited farms" (p. 58). The Skamby cemetery was then identified and mapped in 1947. It has ten large oval stone settings with boat-shaped depressions, and a smaller group of flat round stone settings at the north-western end (fig. 9:22).

On 5-6 April 2003 I directed 55 person-hours of metal detecting and 30 person-hours of field walking within a 200 meter radius of the cemetery, mainly to search for settlement remains. We found a Late Bronze Age bronze button and knapped flint near some cup marks and an Early Roman Period brooch near a fallen orthostat known locally as the Stone of the Woman of Dalecarlia. (The latter probably marks a ploughed-out cemetery.) Later, project supporter Arne Danielsson found part of an Early Neolithic thin-butted axe in the field south of the cemetery ridge. But most of the prehistoric finds date from the Viking Period.

Along the edges of the cemetery we found objects that may come from ploughed-out inhumation graves. A silver sheet pendant cross (fig. 9:23) belongs to Staecker's (1999) type 1.1.1, "simple sheet metal crosses", variant A. Its design however finds no close parallel among the representatives of variant A in Staecker's catalogue. The most similar cross is no. 113a, which is part of a hoard from Östjädra in Dingtuna, Västmanland province, dated tpq 991. Part of a Ljøn-

type equal-armed brooch dates from the Early Viking Period. A crown-shaped finial belongs to a Middle Viking Period P52 tortoise or equal-armed brooch. A hemispherical Middle Viking Period caftan button has close parallels from Birka grave 716 (cf. Arberman 1940-43 Taf. 93:3).

Roughly 150 meters west of the boat inhumation cemetery, beside a small straightened stream, we made two Viking Period finds: a quarter of an Islamic silver coin (fig. 9:24) and the copper-alloy head of a dress pin (fig. 9:25). These may mark the settlement served by the cemetery. In September 2003, Gert Rispling identified the coin as an Abbasid issue from Baghdad: Caliph al-Ma'mun, Madinat al-Salam, 199 a.H. (AD 814/5). The fragment weighs 0,35 g. The coin's original diameter was c. 20 mm. The dress pin once had an iron stalk of which only a rusty stump remains. It belongs to Waller's (1984) type C16 of the Middle Viking Period. Close parallels have been found in Birka graves 639 and 860 B.

In an isolated spot south-east of the cemetery we found a Viking Period weight (fig. 9:26) of the larger flattened spheroid shape, diameter 23,7 mm, without any equatorial ridge. It consists of an iron core with a copper-alloy shell. The polar surfaces do not survive. After conservation, it weighs 32 g.

Of the post-Viking period metal detector finds, mention should be made of a 38 g weight of the larger flattened spheroid shape *with* an equatorial ridge (Early Middle Ages), a lead seal with an owner's mark (fig. 9:27) of High Medieval or later date (State Herald Henrik Klackenborg, e-mail 16 September 2003), and one of the ubiquitous legs from a brass tripod cooking pot.

In the summer of 2005 myself and Howard Williams directed the excavation of a 149 square meter trench covering the smallest of the boat graves (Rundkvist & Williams 2008). Its superstructure was an irregular turf-covered oval pavement of stone blocks measuring 11,5 x 9 m (fig. 9:28). As with the other boat graves on site, the boat depression was orientated north-east – south-west, perpendicular to the cemetery ridge. An orthostat had been standing at the north-western side of the grave cut but had toppled down into it. Three large stone blocks outside the edges of the stone pavement may also originally have been standing up. The edge stones of the pavement did not form a kerb contrasting against the interior. The grave's central depression had clearly come into being when a perishable roof over the grave cut containing the boat had collapsed. The grave cut was filled with stones from the superstructure, slumped inward. They showed no sign of any disturbance since the collapse. Preservation conditions in the grave cut proved to have been very poor despite the fact that the grave selected for excavation was one whose central depression was covered by turf. No unburnt bone and little iron was preserved in the grave. Judging from rust stains, preserved clenched nails and sections through the cut, however, a boat measuring c. 5 m by c. 1.7 m had once been there (fig. 9:29).

Just south-west of the mid-ship was a cluster of 23 well-preserved amber gaming pieces (fig. 6:4), some located on top of collapsed stones. The gaming set had thus probably originally been placed on top of the grave's roof. Beneath the gaming piece cluster, a group of iron rivets and nails was found on the bottom of the cut. A small spherical stone was also found here. Other artefact finds attributable to the burial are few and modest, belonging to two functional spheres: personal items and horse gear.

Personal items are a red glass paste bead and a small slate pendant whetstone, both found beneath the gaming piece cluster. There is also part of a small iron knife, found in a superficial part of the grave fill mid-ship. This is possibly a residual piece re-deposited from an underlying culture layer. A highly incomplete set of horse gear (fig. 9:30) was found in the SW half of the cut. There is a very finely wrought hook from one of the shafts of a sleigh or small wagon, five frost-nails used to keep the horse from slipping when you ride or drive a sleigh in wintertime, and two

iron rings of identical and rather small size, one of them with a straight iron bar looped onto it, looking like pieces of a bridle bit.

The surest indication of the grave's date is the design of the gaming pieces. Pre-Christian amber gaming pieces are only known from Viking Period contexts in Sweden. The only known grave find before Skamby was Birka 524, a Middle Viking Period weapon inhumation with 15 amber gaming pieces. The pieces from the Björkö grave however have a narrowed base, unlike the ones from Skamby that are widest at the base. This trait along with their size connects them to Vendel Period gaming pieces. The likeliest date for the Skamby gaming pieces is thus the Early Viking Period.

A dark gravelly settlement deposit, c. 30 cm thick, stratigraphically pre-dating the boat grave, covered the de-turfed surface except for the grave cut and beneath the largest stones in its pavement. We excavated and sieved c. 43 square meters of this layer, finding small fragments of crucibles used for copper alloy casting, small fragments of casting moulds that do not permit identification of the objects produced, iron fragments, pottery, burnt daub, burnt bone, herbivore teeth, a piece of worked antler (?) and knapped quartz. Near the layer's surface was also an intrusive 18th/19th silver lacing pin for a bodice. The date of the culture layer is not entirely clear. Stratigraphically, it post-dates sunken features of the 2nd century BC and pre-dates a boat burial of the 9th century AD. The pottery and the burnt daub recovered from the settlement layer fit well with a 2nd century BC date. But the crucibles are of the so-called Helgö type, lidless, with a little handle for the pliers, previously known only from mid-1st millennium AD contexts. For a discussion of these and other Early Iron Age metalworking finds from Östergötland, see Rundkvist et al. 2007.

Cut into the natural beneath the settlement layer were hearths, a post hole charred to the bottom and pits with dark fill. One of the larger pits was filled with burnt daub, and thus probably the result of site cleaning efforts after a violent house fire. Of about 18.1 kg of burnt daub collected from the entire site, 13.5 kg were found in that pit, despite the fact that a quarter of its fill was left unexcavated. Judging from the homogeneity of the finds and fills, most of the sunken features were dug and backfilled while the settlement layer was forming. Lime wood charcoal from a pit and young pine wood charcoal from a hearth gave closely similar radiocarbon dates that can be combined with great statistical confidence. If they represent the same event, then this event occurred in the interval 190-40 cal BC (95.4% prob.; Poz-13535, 2110±40 BP and Poz-13532, 2075±35 BP).

Alder wood charcoal from a pit gave an Early Bronze Age radiocarbon date in 1320-1190 cal BC (60% prob., Poz-13534, 3000±40 BP). This may be linked to the find of a portable cupmark stone in the boat grave's superstructure, but is too early to coincide with the aforementioned Late Bronze Age bronze button found during metal detecting.

A full archive report of the Skamby excavation in 2005 can be had at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

### **Ledberg church and Odensfors in Vreta kloster**

Ledberg church is on a prominent ridge on the right-hand bank of River Svartån, just at the upstream end of a series of rapids that stretches for four kilometres down to Kaga church and Vallby in Vreta kloster. The river, which breaks through the ridge at this point, was once fordable here (Berggren 1993). Near the church and ford is one of Östergötland's largest barrows, measuring 40 by 7 meters.

Early archaeological surveyor Carl Fredrik Nordenskjöld reports (1875:45-46, and I translate), "Ledberg's imposing mound ... 220 paces' circumference and 40 paces' slope height. At a depth of 4 feet – as can be seen on the south-eastern side in the old potato cellars – a charcoal layer com-

mences, of which a blacksmith is said to have made use for his trade, but had to desist, when there was inexplicable noise in the smithy and his wife fell ill.”

A cable trench through the barrow's periphery was examined by Jan Eriksson in 1982. It touched upon a 10-centimetre charcoal layer near the original ground surface. A sample from this layer was dated to 780-990 cal AD (intrinsic age unknown, St-8656, 1140±80 BP,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  26,4‰; Elfström 1983:118; excavation report in ATA). The barrow thus dates from the Early or Middle Viking Period and is one of only three great barrows in Östergötland dated later than the Bronze Age.

About 1900 a gold finger ring was found in a field near the barrow. The monument's radiocarbon date speaks against speculations that the ring might have come from inside it. According to Brita Malmer/Alenstam-Pettersson (1951), the piece consists of a small Merovingian royal medal of the 7th century that has been fitted onto a finger ring.

On 23-25 April 2005, myself and Tim Olsson performed 13 man-hours of metal detecting within 200 meters of the barrow. We found nothing that could be dated before 1750.

In Ledberg church has been found a rune stone of the late 10th century (Ög 181; Rosborn 2004:126-130), now erected in the churchyard. Written in standard Late Viking Period runes, it bears a cross and comic-strip imagery of Odin's death in combat against the wolf Fenrir (fig. 8:1).

Across the river from the church is the continuation of the ridge on land belonging to Odensfors manor in Vreta kloster. This suggestive name translates as “Rapids of Odin”. But judging from the earliest recorded mentions, is not a true sacral name but most likely commemorates a more mundane person named Audun or Edwin (Strid 1987). On the height above the river is a hillfort (Raä 1) which is unusual in that its rampart consists largely of earth, not being a collapsed drystone structure like most hillforts in Östergötland. It has largely been destroyed by gravel extraction. Excavations in the 1930s failed to unearth any elite indicators. Nevertheless it figures prominently in works by Anders Kaliff (1987a; 1987b; 1992; 1999) as an end-point of a hypothetical signalling-fire line.

## **Motala**

Lake Vättern drains into the Baltic through River Motala ström, which is punctuated by several large lakes and thus exists as a river only for a few short stretches. The modern town of Motala is located on the uppermost of these river stretches, which forms a boundary line between the fertile plains belt and the northern woods which were uninhabited during the 1st Millennium. Motala emerges into the historical record as a large High Medieval church village with many mills and fisheries and an important bridge on a main road to Närke. The Aska *härads* assembly convened there at the time. High and Late Medieval Motala may be seen as an unchartered town (Lindeblad 2001a; 2008:69-92). For our present purposes, Motala parish is noteworthy for a series of finds that suggest 1st Millennium ancestry for the river crossing.

One of Östergötland's rare Migration Period gold bracteates has been found some ways outside the northern, woodland side of town along the rail road. It carries a runic inscription and is die-identical to the famous Vadstena bracteate (Montelius 1906).

Motala parish has yielded a stray Early or Middle Vendel Period axe head (Nørgård Jørgensen 1999 type AX2). In a garden patch on the northern river bank near the site of the later bridge a Viking Period lance head has been collected (T. Carlsson 2004:119). A nearby iron smithing hearth on the southern bank has given a radiocarbon date in 670-860 cal AD. In the river, near the town's paper mill, a Viking Period silver penannular brooch has been found.

Close by the smithing hearth, a well-preserved casting mould was found, interpreted as having produced a Viking Period tortoise brooch (T. Carlsson 2004a:119; 2004b; Lindeblad 2008:86).

This was however a misinterpretation: the object in question has a shape and a geometrical decoration style that is quite alien to the Viking Period, and must belong with the considerable amount of High Medieval material also found on the site.

### **Östra Eneby Parish**

Östra Eneby parish is partly delimited by the final stretch of river rapids before River Motala ström empties into the Bråviken inlet of the Baltic sea. Much of the parish's southern part is currently occupied by the city of Norrköping, and so the area has received a disproportionate amount of archaeological attention (cf. the gazetteer sections on nearby Borg parish and on St. Lars parish where much of greater Linköping is located).

The Migration Period elite is visible in Östra Eneby through a stray golden hilt mount from a display sword found at Ingelstad and a six-rune inscription added to a Bronze Age rock-carving panel at Himmelstalund. The Early Vendel Period has two elite-indicator graves: one excavated at Leonardsberg by Arthur Nordén in 1927 and containing a little Style II:B decorative disc, the other excavated at Ringstad by Andreas Lindahl in 1959 and containing a gilded and inlaid disc-on-bow brooch.

From the Viking Period, we have a sword found on a small island in the river off Fiskeby, a simple silver sheet cross pendant from a grave in a nearby cemetery, and an illustrated short-twig runic inscription (Ög 43; Raä 62) at Ingelstad. After our period of study there is a Late Viking Period golden finger ring from the vicarage.

Two fully excavated cemeteries at Fiskeby (Lundström 1965-70) form a case in point for the source-critical aspects of Östra Eneby. Per Lundström's team excavated a large number of graves of which a single one yielded an elite indicator: the aforementioned silver cross pendant. Thus Fiskeby shows up as a dot on this book's distribution map for the Viking Period (fig. 6:1). But fully investigated cemeteries are extremely rare in Östergötland's archaeology. It may be surmised that anywhere in the province, if we were to excavate a comparable number of graves at one site, we would most likely find some indication of an elite presence simply through the unwonted intensity of our fieldwork. Statistically speaking, the find-spot of a silver pendant is much more interesting if it comes to light without much work.

Nordén (1929; 1937b:7-35) interpreted a complex of cemeteries and well-preserved settlement remains at Ringstad in Östra Eneby as evidence of an important fortified manor of the 1st Millennium. He relied heavily on legendary matter involving the Battle of Bråvellir. This is a classic case of fanciful over-assessment by an excavator. Indeed, Nordén had published the main lines of his final interpretation already in 1917, when he had barely broken turf at Ringstad.

Pär Olsén (1965:148f; cf. Johansson 1997) re-evaluated the Ringstad complex dramatically. Nordén's two alleged early-1st Millennium farmsteads actually date from the Middle Ages. There were never in fact any fortifications, only the usual low field walls. The 1st Millennium artefacts are unremarkable grave finds, many of them redeposited when farm buildings were erected on top of graves (as Nordén actually suggested himself, 1929:10).

Looking for signs of an elite presence at Ringstad, at best we may note two graves with copper-alloy disc-on-bow brooches; one from the Early Vendel Period as mentioned previously, the other from the Early Viking Period. They demonstrate respectable but unsensational burial investment, but they were excavated in 1959, decades after Nordén's fieldwork. The evidence from Ringstad is quite incapable of bearing the weight of a designation as an elite settlement.

## **Östra Husby Parish**

As noted in chapter 3, Östra Husby parish on the Vikbolandet peninsula has two of Östergötland's very rare gold finds from the Late Roman Period, both of them phase C2-C3 finger rings. One was found in 1874 at Skälv. The other was found in 2007 at *Tuna* (fig. 9:31; Olsson & Rundkvist 2008). I directed a total of 37 man-hours of metal-detecting there in April of 2007 and April of 2008. The ring's find spot is beneath the era's shoreline, near the mouth of what was at the time a long narrow inlet of the Baltic and is now the valley of the little stream *Varaån*. As noted by Klas-Göran Selinge (1986:100), this inlet appears to have been decisive for the local landscape structure in the 1st Millennium. Along the former shores of the inlet cemeteries line up, clearly seeking visibility from passing seaborne traffic. The burials would otherwise be expected to co-reside with their farms' historically known locations. Around the inner end of the inlet as it would have extended c. AD 600 (five meters above current sea level), we find five important sites of the Viking Period and Middle Ages: the Oklunda runic inscription, a Husby farmstead, a Bosgården farmstead, the parish church and the High Medieval *häräd* thing site of Lytisberg, "Hill of the Judicial Diviner" (cf. Brink 2004). But the evidence for an elite presence in the intervening 5th through 9th centuries is scant.

Neither the Migration Period nor the Vendel Period offers any elite indicators in Östra Husby parish. Another of our metal detector finds from *Tuna*, near the find spot of the gold ring, may date from the Vendel Period, but I have been unable to find any good parallels. It is a domed oval mount (fig. 9:32) for a piece of strapwork or furniture, made of copper alloy with bevelled edges and mercury gilding. The latter two traits would fit a Vendel Period date but are not chronologically diagnostic. Ann-Lili Nielsen (1996:92) suggests that *Tuna* was a craft or trade site in the later 1st Millennium, but she offers no evidence in support of the idea. Our earliest datable finds after the 4th century gold ring are two mounts from the handles of High Medieval table knives.

At *Oklunda*, carved into the top of a small rocky hill, is an inscription in short-twig runes (Ög N288). It is remarkable both for its early date and for its unusual content. The Oklunda inscription ranks with the Forsa ring as one of a very few pieces of contemporaneous written evidence for Viking Period judicial practice. It also makes Oklunda the only place in the world where the location of a *vi*, a 1st Millennium sanctuary, is known to an accuracy of a few meters. The inscription is treated comprehensively by Helmer Gustavson (2003) who offers a critical appraisal of earlier work based on an examination of the rock surface with a laser scanner. His interpretation largely concurs with that of Arthur Nordén (1931; 1945). I translate from Gustavson's translation into modern Swedish:

"Gunnar carved these runes, and he fled when due for punishment. He sought out this sanctuary. And he fled into this clearing. And he made an agreement to settle the case (or marked out the boundary of his asylum?). Vifinn carved this (as confirmation)."

Apparently Gunnar fled to Oklunda because the sanctuary offered judicial immunity. The name *Vifinn* means "the Saami man of the sanctuary". Later written sources commonly paint the Saami of northern Sweden as uncanny sorcerers (Price 2002). The name of course says nothing of the man's actual ancestry, just as not everyone named Frank is a Frank. Gustavson, placing the Oklunda inscription in a palaeographical category with Ög 8 Kälvesten, Ög 38 Boberg and Ög 43 Ingelstad, dates the inscription to about AD 800.

On 17-18 April 2006 I did twelve hours of metal detecting in the fields within 200 meters of the hill with the inscription. East-north-east of the hill I found a small equal-armed copper alloy brooch, which is a very common diagnostic type of the Early Vendel Period, 200-250 years before the date of the inscription. This casts some doubt on the reading that suggests that, at the time, the sanctuary was in a recent clearing in the woods. Can the site have reverted to woodland

by AD 800 after having been settled until about AD 600? Or was the brooch dropped in the woods by an early visitor to the sanctuary?

South of the hill I found four pieces of early copper alloy metalwork, including a double-plate joint rivet from a belt strap or wooden vessel and a small gilded Borre style disc brooch dating from the Middle Viking Period, c. 900-950 AD (fig. 9:33). The brooch type is well known, e.g. from Björkö. The brooch retains its pin and a ring to which a bead string could be fastened, suggesting that it comes from a ploughed-out inhumation burial. The joint rivet would also fit such a context.

Finally, I collected eight pieces of knapped quartz along the south-west edge of the hill. Roger Wikell commented on a photograph, "... typical Iron Age quartz. Coarsely fractured. Not a flaking industry." (e-mail 27 April 2006). The level is only 10 m a.s.l. which would, assuming a constant shore displacement of 0.35 m per century, represent a shoreline about 900 BC, in the Late Bronze Age.

When evaluating the 2006 finds from Oklunda, it is important to know that this is the only site in Östergötland where I worked alone without the participation of skilled amateur metal detectorists. At most of our sites, I personally made no interesting finds, while my detectorist friends picked up many good ones. The fields around Oklunda hill thus retain an unrealised potential for fieldwork.

### **Regna and Skedevi parishes**

In northernmost Östergötland, far from the plains belt, is Lake Regnaren whose surface is 60 meters above current seal level. It empties through a short stream northward into Lake Tisnaren (44 m a.s.l.), through which the province boundary runs. The southern and western shores of Regnaren are a fertile enclave forming the core of Regna parish. Between Regnaren and Tisnaren is Skedevi parish. On the northern shore of Tisnaren are the fertile parishes of Västra and Östra Vingåker in Södermanland province.

Before the construction of modern roads, Regna and Skedevi had much better communication with Södermanland than with central Östergötland. Throughout our period of study the two parishes display a series of elite indicators.

Starting in phase D1 of the Migration Period, Regna parish has a stray copper-alloy brooch with punch decorated and gilded Sösdala-style silver sheet panels. With the Vendel Period, the destroyed cemetery of Smedjebacken at Ruda in Skedevi very near the province border becomes productive. We now see a seax sword of type ?SAX4, a gilded disc-on-bow brooch with cloisonné and a small domed oval brooch with animal art, all of the Late Vendel Period. From the Viking Period, Smedjebacken has three swords and a type Petersen E lance head. In 1914 Byle Östergård in Skedevi near Ruda yielded a hoard consisting of three gold arm rings, weighing 139 g. Finally, Skedevi parish has a Husby royal manor of the 11th/12th centuries next to the church. The parish name was once probably an appellative: a *skedevi* was a pagan sanctuary where ritual horse races were staged (*Sv.ortn.lex.* p. 277).

Meanwhile in Västra Vingåker parish, we see e.g. a Migration Period openwork bracteate-like gold pendant from Skonäs and from graves at Sävsstholm a Vendel Period display bridle and a garnet-studded Husby type brooch. Östra Vingåker has not to my knowledge produced anything comparable.

### **St. Lars Parish**

Starting in 1328, written sources document a farmstead named Stång in St. Lars parish, just east of Linköping across River Stångån (Nordén 1930; 1943:177-178; Helander 1998a). Until 1381 it

was owned by the Crown and functioned as an administrative centre for surrounding parts of the royal demesne. In the 17th century, before the first detailed map was drawn, the property was divided up and Stång vanished. Thus, the farmstead's Medieval location is currently unknown. It may have been identical to that of a small later farmstead named Gumpekulla (Borna Ahlkvist & Tollin 1994:51).

From an archaeological point of view, the Stång area is to Linköping as Borg manor to Norrköping. Both are places with a documented royal presence in the 14th century, both have seen intensive large-scale excavations in recent decades (Helander & Zetterlund 1995; Hedvall 1996), both have yielded interesting late-1st Millennium material, and both have in my opinion been given overstated and anachronistic interpretations as elite settlements in the period under study here.

Wrote Annika Helander (1998b:43): “In the Late Iron Age, probably the Vendel Period, the site developed into a centre which appears to have played a political role for the rest of the Iron Age and probably the shift to the Middle Ages as well. This can be seen through the Samian vessel, the ship setting, the barrow, the mound cemetery and the many stray finds, the high way/*eriksgatan* with the ford and the bridge across the river, the rune stones and not least the royal manor of Stång.”

Disregarding the anachronistic evidence of later centuries, we are left with:

- An imported Provincial Roman undecorated pottery vessel deposited as an antique in a modestly furnished Vendel Period grave, more than half a millennium after it was made.
- A large 9th century ship setting.
- A destroyed barrow of unknown size and date.
- A destroyed mound cemetery that has produced stray finds, including a Migration Period brooch with small silver sheet appliquéés, a Gotlandic animal-head brooch and a 9th or 10th century sword pommel, though none of the finds are securely provenanced.
- A ford.

This evidence is quite unremarkable in the context of the late 1st Millennium in Östergötland's plains belt, with two exceptions. Viking Period weapon burials are rare, and the ship setting was once a respectable monument, measuring 50 by 11.6 meters. It inspired Elfstrand (1998) to a highly fanciful interpretation, and I agree that the labour involved and the symbolic ostentation of such a structure do point to the presence of powerful people. To pinpoint a Viking Period political centre, however, a stone ship and a sword pommel are in my opinion not enough.

Moving south-southwest across the river 1.1 km from the stone ship, we find the church of St. Lars, and then 0.4 km westward the Cathedral of Linköping. Both were most likely built on land belonging to a long-obliterated farmstead named Ljunga, whose name survives in an abraded form in “Lin-köping”. St. Lars is the older site of the two, its first wooden church having been built most likely in the mid-11th century (Arcini & Tagesson 2005:293; Zachrisson 2007:112), apparently to serve a normal rural congregation. Bonnier (1996:211-212) and Ersgård (2006c:64) suggest that the churchyard of St. Lars might be comparable to the great 11th century Christian minster-like cemetery at Alvastra. The evidence for this is weak: really only the perceived size of the churchyard judging from small rescue excavations. Ersgård's reconstructed measurements for the churchyard thus rest on a very small sample, and its actual extent is not known: we may be dealing with a number of separate burial sites. Though St. Lars has many fragments of Eskilstuna-type grave monuments, they are more common elsewhere, and the wooden coffins of St. Lars are in my opinion best seen as a fluke of the preservation conditions.

One of two Eskilstuna-type grave monuments known from the cathedral dates from the early 11th century Ringerike era (Arcini & Tagesson 2005:293), but it was found built into the structure and may have been collected for that purpose elsewhere. On present evidence, Linköping's still ongoing era of centrality thus appears to have begun with the foundation of the Cathedral about AD 1100.

St. Lars parish, being largely occupied by a major modern city, presents the same source-critical problems as Östra Eneby and Borg parishes to either side of Norrköping. Rounding out the potential elite record for St. Lars are a number of further finds from rescue excavations. A tiny snippet of gold rod was found on top of a stone pavement during the 1998 excavation of an otherwise unremarkable settlement at Stora Ullevi (Lindeblad 2001b; T. Carlsson et al 2001; Nielsen 2005:230). The gold most likely dates from the Late Roman or Migration Period. At Berga (Raä 60) and Västra Bökestad (Raä 117; Helander & Zetterlund 1997) cemetery investigations have uncovered 2 + 3 graves with Vendel Period disc-on-bow brooches and in one case animal-art jewellery as well. From the Viking Period, we may note a coin of Ethelred II from a settlement excavation at Lilla Ullevi (Raä 325; Rolöf & Lindeblad 2007:24). Gotlandic copper-alloy brooches of this period, finally, have been found at Stångebro and Västra Bökestad.

### **St. Per Parish**

In the High Middle Ages, St. Per's church in Vadstena on the shore of Lake Vättern was part of a highly ostentatious rural manor of the Bjälbo royal dynasty. Vadstena then grew into a town following the establishment of the Bridgetine order's mother convent there in 1368. In later centuries the parish has also come to encompass the farmsteads of former Klosterstad parish, the foundations of whose Medieval round church and its 11th century forebear have been excavated (Hedvall & Gustavson 2001; Hedvall 2007). St. Per parish has produced an unusual number of finds relevant to the present study.

In phase C1b of the Late Roman Period we find one of Östergötland's richest burials at Granby in St. Per (Nicklasson 1997:51-53). In addition to a full set of weaponry, the grave contained a type E41 imported bronze vessel (Eggers 1951; Lund Hansen 1987). Also from phase C1b or C2 is a stray lance head from the same parish. The Migration Period is represented by a small gold hoard containing one of the province's rare gold bracteates (carrying a runic inscription; Montelius 1906), a ring and a piece of gold sheet. The hoard lacks closer provenance. The Vendel Period offers no indications beyond coins imported and deposited at much later dates.

A Carolingian gold coin (*Myntfynd* 142; Ilisch 2004) struck in 780 was found in St. Per parish before 1686. No closer provenance is available for this extremely rare find that effectively marks the beginning of sustained coin availability in Östergötland. Only six earlier ones have been found there. Two most likely date from the 270s (see chapter 3). The third is an Islamic issue struck tpq 749 but deposited after 790 in a grave at Linghem in Törnevalla, excavated in 1982. Three *dirhams* of the 7th and 8th centuries, finally, have been found in a late-9th century grave in St. Per.

Three rich Viking Period graves have been excavated in St. Per. Two in 1934 in the Hollmanska jorden field at Fridhem/Hagalund (Lindqvist 2000:24): one contained a Petersen type H sword, the other a poorly preserved lance head. Both weapons had been used to pierce the cremation layer (cf. Nordberg 2002), ending up point downward in the sterile subsoil. The third and most ostentatious one was excavated by Emma Karlsson in 2005 at Kvarnbacken (Karlsson 2008). It was a cremation containing five silver coin pendants tpq AD 626 through 880 (a uniquely large number for pre-Medieval graves in Östergötland, and including the province's oldest post-Roman coin), six silver pendants, two of which appear to be re-purposed box fittings of

foreign origin, three silver beads, fragments of a unique incised bone crucifix, four tortoise brooches and other things. Curiously, the cemetery had then been re-used as an execution site in the Late Middle Ages, which can hardly have been a coincidence bearing in mind e.g. Sutton Hoo (Carver 2005).

Among the stray finds from St. Per are a slender copper-inlaid Viking Period lance head from Huvudstad and a coin of Ethelred II from the Bridgetine nunnery (*Myntfynd* 134).

### **Sjögestad Parish: Stora Tollstad**

Near Stora Tollstad in Sjögestad is a group of great barrows, 400 meters across. Lustigkullen (Raä 26) measures 37 meters in diameter and 4 meters in height, barrow Raä 16 measures 35 by 4.5 meters, and barrow Raä 14:1 measures 18 by 1.1 meters. In the area between the barrows, graves and settlement remains of the Early Iron Age have been excavated. Though Lustigkullen has been repaired (Elfstrand 1996), none of the three barrows was dated until recently.

On 11-13 September 2006, myself and Howard Williams directed a trial excavation of barrow Raä 16. We opened a radially orientated 2.5 by 1.5 meter trench with its outer end located three meters inside the barrow's northern periphery. Beneath the earthen mound fill we encountered a central cairn consisting of boulders up to a meter in diameter. In view of the cairn's unusually large diameter, it is more of a basal than a central one. Under three layers of boulders we encountered a half-meter-thick layer of charcoal without any bones or artefacts. Two carbonised twigs from this layer gave the following radiocarbon dates:

- Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*, Sw. *gran*). Poz-18592. 1265±30 BP. 685-775 cal AD (1 s).
- Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*, Sw. *sälg*). Poz-18593. 1210±30 BP. 775-875 cal AD (1 s).

The barrow Raä 16 was clearly erected in the late 8th or the 9th century AD, that is, probably the Early Viking Period. It is one of only three great barrows in Östergötland dated later than the Bronze Age.

In the mound fill, not far above the surface of the cairn, were four splotches of charcoal, at least two of them clearly the remains of small fires lit on the spot while the barrow was being built. Archaeobotanist Jens Heimdahl classified flotation material from these contexts: "The hearth appears to have been fed fresh spruce twigs that very likely made a lot of smoke and crackling sounds. ... The sample ... contained remains of a few juniper berries, a few wheat grains and a seed of Sun Spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*, Sw. *revormstörel*). The absence of juniper needles allows us to interpret the berries as a grave gift, not as part of juniper twigs put on the fire. The same applies to the wheat grains.

The Sun Spurge is harder to interpret. It is probably a field weed that has come in with the wheat ... But perhaps it may have been deposited intentionally for ritual purposes. Sun Spurge is known from recent folk medicine (17th and 18th centuries) when it was used to treat diseases of the skin such as warts." The plant's Swedish name means Ringworm Spurge, thus hinting at its uses.

On 10-11 April of 2006, prior to the trial excavation in the barrow, I directed 20 person-hours of metal detecting within 200 meters of barrow Raä 16. Only one prehistoric object surfaced: the head of a Viking Period copper-alloy dress pin (fig. 9:34). A leg from a Late Medieval or Early Modern brass tripod cooking pot was our second-oldest find. A full archive report of the Stora Tollstad excavation in 2006 with specialist analyses is available in the file Sjögestad2006rapport at archive.org.

### **Tingstad Parish: Gullborg**

As discussed in chapter 3, the fortified hilltop settlement of Gullborg is Östergötland's richest known elite settlement site of the Late Roman Period (Nordén 1929; 1938; Olausson 1987). Though settlement is likely to have continued there through the Migration Period, excavations so far have not turned up datable evidence for any elite presence during that time. A piece of an Early Vendel Period shield boss does indicate such a presence during our period of study, but it is very early in that period and appears to mark the site's abandonment.

On 10 April 2008 I directed 20 man-hours of metal detecting in the fields surrounding Gullborg hill (Borgklinten in local parlance). Our only find from the period under study was part of an equal-armed copper alloy Ljønes brooch of the early 9th century (fig. 9:35), found near the south-west foot of the hill. An interesting more recent find was half a decorative copper alloy mount depicting a heraldic lion, designed in a manner typical of the 15th through 17th centuries. Neither find is an elite indicator.

At Smedby in Tingstad a silver hoard containing 553 Islamic coins (tpq 964) and silver jewellery was found in 1967-68 (*Myntfynd* 125). Smedby is located 2.2 km north-west of the Gullborg hillfort.

### **Väderstad Parish: Abbetorp**

At Abbetorp in Väderstad parish is found one of Östergötland's richest and most diverse Migration Period elite sites: a cemetery and sacrificial precinct excavated in 1997-98 (Petersson 2001; 2004; Lindeblad & Petersson 2009). Located on the plains belt's southern edge, the *-torp* name identifies Abbetorp as the fruit of Medieval re-expansion into an area turned over to woodland pasture at the end of the Migration Period. The farmstead's earlier name is lost. An extensive and well-preserved system of collapsed Iron Age field walls document pre-abandonment land use as fields and meadows (Ericsson & Franzén 2005). The last-standing building documented within the investigated highway corridor was however demolished in the 3rd century AD.

The finds that mark Abbetorp as an elite settlement candidate were all made in excavation area 7, a de-turfed surface 150 meters long with a width between 12 and 84 meters. On a low rise near the middle of the trench was a small cremation cemetery with round stone pavements and a standing-stone circle. To the west of the cemetery was a slope ending in a small bog, an area apparently used for sacrificial deposits, wet and dry.

Of the graves, six contained glass sherds, Snartemo type where determinable, along with some glass beads and objects of humbler materials such as copper alloy, iron and pottery. One of the six, the burial under the standing-stone circle, also had a plain gold spiral finger ring (Kent Andersson 1993b, type 30 var). Dispersed among the graves but with no clear association to any of them was found a silver relief brooch decorated in Salin's Style I (fig. 4:1) and two small metal objects that may have functioned as weights. A third more uncertain weight was found c. 25 meters east of the cemetery's edge.

The drier parts of the western slope had many hearths and two groups of sacrificial finds, each centred upon a glacial erratic boulder near the bog's edge. They include further glass sherds of various types, a glass gaming piece, glass and amber beads, pottery, bones and other materials. Sacrificial finds were also made in the bog as an extension of the scatters around the two boulders, but apparently no distinction was made in what materials were deposited where.

Radiocarbon dates document intense activity on site during the Late Roman Period and Migration Period, but apart from some glass sherds that may represent antiques all elite finds date from the latter period.

In 1877 a stray gold spiral ring of probable Migration Period date was found at Lundby Nor-

rgård in Väderstad, 2.2 km north-east of the Abbetorp cemetery. A Middle Viking Period hoard (tpq 951), Östergötland's largest of that period (*Myntfynd* 154), was found at Valby Södergård in Väderstad in 1847. It contains 1977 g of silver – 28 Islamic coins, jewellery and ingots – and a 30 g gold ingot. Valby is in the plains on a small stream emptying into Lake Tåkern, 3.1 km north of the Abbetorp cemetery.

### **Varv Parish: Östervarv**

As noted in chapter 3, a hilltop at Östervarv in Varv is the site of Östergötland's richest Late Roman Period burial. It was discovered in 1890 and contained a large set of weaponry, a silver-trimmed profiled fibula, a glass drinking horn and more. After most of the grave goods had been lifted by the locals, Hjalmar Stolpe performed a rescue excavation and reported on the totality of the find. During his visit to the site, he also appears to have excavated at least three further burial mounds on the same hill. He never wrote them up or published them: all that remains are some enigmatic fieldwork notes and a collection of unlabelled finds. They demonstrate that one of the mounds contained the richest Vendel Period burial found so far in Östergötland, a cremation with gold cloisonné, glass vessel(s), a seax sword, relief-decorated animal art strap mounts and bone gaming pieces (Arbman 1941). The animal art is Arwidsson's Style II:C and dates from the 7th century.

No visible ancient monuments remain on the hilltop, it being currently the site of houses and gardens. The cemetery is only delimited approximately, as a rectangular area, in the sites and monument register. In May of 2007 I directed 20 man-hours of metal detecting in the fields within 200 m of this rectangle. We found nothing from our period of study, but we did collect three Medieval cast copper alloy objects on the slope north and north-west of the cemetery (fig. 9:36). A flat openwork fragment with faint interlace relief is probably from an early 12th century Urnes brooch. A pear-shaped pendant with a rope-like cuff is unusual but may have a similar date. A piece of a brass tripod cooking pot would in an urban context be dated to the 14th through the 17th centuries, but occurs already from the 12th century onward on the continent. Lars Lundqvist, who participated in the fieldwork, suggested in conversation that these finds may mark the spot of an Early Medieval farmstead.

Östervarv has also yielded a fine stray find that was part of district veterinary Dr. Fredrik A. Nordeman's collection in Vadstena until 1894. It is a copper-alloy mount decorated in intricate Urnes style (SHM 9170:1216). Dating from about AD 1100, it may originate from the same site as the 2007 finds.

### **Västra Tollstad Parish: Sverkersgården at Alvastra**

The Alvastra area around the southern end of Mount Omberg at the shore of Lake Vättern is exceptionally rich in unusual archaeological sites (Browall 2003). Among the most well known are Östergötland's only megalithic tomb, a unique and well-preserved Middle Neolithic pile dwelling, a fine Bronze Age rock art site, the province's largest and richest inhumation cemetery of the Roman Period (briefly mentioned in chapter 3), an extremely large 11th century Christian cemetery with a very early little crypt church, and finally Alvastra monastery with surrounding installations.

The crypt church site is of particular interest within the context of this book. It is located on the higher of two natural terraces on the southern flank of Omberg. The site is known as “Sverkersgården”, a name coined by archaeologist Otto Frödin (1918a; 1918b) who believed that this had been the site of the Sverker family's ancestral manor in the later 1st Millennium. That is in my opinion not unlikely, but certainly not established with the kind of rigour that would make

“Sverkersgården” a good name. Still, there is no other name for the site unless you wish to use its number in the sites and monuments register, Raä 2.

Excavations at Sverkersgården were directed by Otto Frödin in 1917-21 and Lars Ersgård in 1992-95 (Ersgård 2006b). I directed 19 person-hours of metal detecting there in 2006. Sverkersgården is a multiperiod site with thick stratigraphy. The earliest known phase is represented by a black settlement layer where six charcoal samples have given radiocarbon dates in the interval 90-640 cal AD (Ersgård 2006c). The intrinsic age of the dated samples is unknown, but it appears safe to place the start of stratigraphy-producing activities no earlier than the Late Roman Iron Age. Some perforated sieve pottery would date from this period or the Migration Period. The site has also yielded large amounts of undated habitation and craft debris, demonstrating work in antler (Frödin 1918a:119-120; 1918b:46), copper alloy casting (Ersgård 2006c) and the production and/or use of edged steel tools judging from the unusual number of whetstones. There are several Helgö type crucibles, but no casting moulds representing identifiable object types have been found.

Sverkersgården becomes interesting for our current purposes with the Early Vendel Period. This is the first phase that has yielded datable metalwork: two small equal-armed brooches and a little fish-head sheet-metal pendant of the type endemic to Gotland (fig. 9:37). Here or in the Middle Vendel Period we also have two small items of military equipment: an iron suspension mount for the scabbard of a seax sword (fig. 9:38) and a profiled iron strap end for a bridle. A gilded fragment of a finely sculpted copper-alloy object probably also belongs in this time frame and may be part of the hilt of a display sword.

Ersgård excavated a clay-lined hearth that had been used for copper-alloy casting. Charcoal from the hearth lining dates from 660-860 cal AD (Lu-3998, 1290±80 BP, 1 sigma). Charcoal from a layer associated with the hearth dates from 690-880 cal AD (Lu-4000, 1240±60 BP, 1 sigma). The samples' intrinsic ages are unknown. This places the use of that hearth in the Late Vendel or Early Viking Period, though the amount of debris recovered suggests that the metal-working may have gone on for quite some time before that date.

On the terrace below the crypt church is a ploughed-out cemetery identified by Frödin (1919a:2; 1919b:44), who could date it no closer than the Late Iron Age. My metal-detecting team found a key, a disc brooch and a trefoil brooch in this area, all dating from the Middle Viking Period (fig. 9:39). Our finds bear no trace of fire damage though the grave Frödin found was a cremation. We thus appear to be dealing with a mixed-rite cemetery.

From about 1040 cal AD a very large Christian inhumation cemetery began to cover the former settlement and craft site (Ersgård 2006c:47-48). It is large enough to have been a regional “minster-like” cemetery and has yielded Eskilstuna-type grave monuments. Clas Tollin (2002:223) suggests that some great landowner or other powerful person may have centralised the burials of his subjects to this site. Some time about AD 1100 the little crypt church was added to the site, incorporating older Eskilstuna monuments into its structure. In his 2006 book about Alvastra, “The Saint's Dwelling”, Lars Ersgård suggests that the church may have been built in a failed attempt to establish a deceased member of the Sverker family as a dynastic saint along the lines of St. Canute and St. Erik.

### **Vreta kloster Parish**

At Sjögestad in Vreta kloster (not to be confused with Sjögestad parish), Otto Janse excavated a cremation burial in 1924 that yielded a set of fine punch-decorated mounts from an Early Vendel Period display bridle. Ragnhild Fernholm excavated a cremation grave of similar date in 1982 at Heda in Vreta kloster (not to be confused with Heda parish): it yielded a copper-alloy

*vendelkråka* eagle brooch and remains of a glass vessel (Fernholm 1987; Molin 2000). A stray Viking Period sword has been found at Kungsbro in Vreta kloster near where River Svartån empties into Lake Roxen.

1.6 km upstream from its mouth the river comes out of a stretch of rapids where it has been divided into two channels on either side of a series of islets. Here, on the left-hand bank and within sight of Kaga church on the opposite bank, is the farmstead of Vallby. Its name was once Vadeby, “ford farmstead”, and it marks an early river crossing.

Vallby may have been a transit point where people and goods arriving by boat across Lake Roxen switched to a land road past the rapids to a ford at Odensfors-Ledberg where the river journey could be resumed (Berggren 1993:8; Holmström 2006:222). Berggren suggested that the transit point at Vallby may have attracted trade and craft work. The site has graves (three round stone settings, Raä Vreta kloster 24) and some vague earthworks to the north and north-east of them.

On 9 april 2008 I directed 11 man-hours of metal detecting in the fields and pasture along the river between Vallby Aspegården and Rusthållet north-east of the graves, covering an area of c. 400 by 70 m. A fragmentary copper-alloy disc-brooch bearing a cross design in relief (fig. 9:40) was the only find relevant to this study. Though I have been unable to find any good parallels, the decoration makes a 9th or 10th century date likely. Other finds were a Late Medieval strap buckle and a silver coin struck in 1663 in Osnabrück for Duke Ernest Augustus of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the father of King George I of Britain. The finds do not indicate any 1st Millennium trade or craft work.

For a discussion of the hillfort at Odensfors in Vreta kloster, see the gazetteer's section on Ledberg.

## Chapter 10 – Bibliography

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