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4 Between Tribe and Kingdom – People, Land, and Law in *Scandza* AD 500–1350

The political structure of Scandinavian society underwent radical change between AD 500 and 1350. Through analyses of c. 170,000 sites of single graves and cemeteries, 1,700 hillforts, and 130 royal sites and manors, this article investigates the emergence of larger law areas and their relation to the peoples and kingdoms in Scandza (i.e. Norway and Sweden). In this period the number of kingdoms was reduced from around thirteen to two. We find 29 peoples in the 6th century mentioned in contemporary written sources (Getica and Widtsith), and these are geographically identified through a big data analysis of prehistoric graves and cemeteries (Kernel Density Estimation). In addition, we have identified thirteen clusters of graves representing other unmentioned groups. The emergence of larger legal entities was a prerequisite for the emergence of the Scandinavian kingdoms. In eastern Scandinavia kingship emerged through the control of major lakes connecting various folklands, while in the west control of trade and transport along the major sailing route (leden) was a driving factor for trans-regional kingship.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will suggest that Scandinavian law areas can be understood as an intermediate stage between what often has been labelled a tribal organisation in Jordanes' time (mid-6th century) and the subsequent creation of supra-regional kingdoms in the late Viking Age (800–1050). A law area is a specific geographical unit with a shared customary law. Although significant results concerning identification of pre-Christian regions and social groups in Scandinavia have been obtained on the basis of place names (Malone 1962; Svennung 1967; Brink 2008), archaeological evidence (great mounds and rich finds) (Ringstad 1986, 1991; Myhre 1987; Rahmqvist 1987; Callmer 1991), sagas, and law codices (Brink 2002; Iversen 2015), many questions remain unanswered. Most important among them is this: What was the role of geographically law areas in the development of Scandinavian peoples' ethnogenesis – the process by which a group of people becomes ethnically distinct?

The transition from tribal organisation to kingdoms is a classic research theme, not only in Scandinavian archaeology (Hedeager 1992) but also in European and global history. As pointed out by Walter Pohl (1991), "early medieval peoples were far less homogeneous than often thought" (Pohl 1991:40). Since the 1990s the

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debate has moved away from reductionist concepts of ethnicity and biology when discussing a people's characteristics. Nevertheless, there is ongoing debate around the *propria collectio* of a *gens* – a phrase coined by Isidore of Seville in the 7th century, denoting the common features of a people that separate them from other people. What precisely can be identified as collecting and holding together a *gens*? Recent scholarship on the Scandinavian peoples' ethnogenesis has focused on its social construction (Geary 1983, 1988, 2003; Hedeager 2000; Hedeager and Tvarnø 2001; Pohl 1991, 1993, 1997, 1998; Røstad 2016). Little attention, however, has been devoted to the role played by legal space in defining groups.

We will investigate the area named by Jordanes (AD 551) and Claudius Ptolemy (c. AD 100–170) respectively as *Scandza* and *Scandia*, corresponding to present day Sweden and Norway (Fig. 4.1). The issues under investigation include the identification of tribes, their size, societal organisation, and role in the development of law regions. Previous archaeological research on polities has focused on selected find groups such as rich finds and great mounds, hence focusing on the elite strata of society. By contrast, the archaeological dataset in this study can be characterized as 'big data'. For the first time, all 139,300 single graves and c. 29,600 known cemeteries in Scandinavia are included in one study, as a proxy for population density and settled areas. Furthermore, the chapter will analyse all c. 1,700 known hillforts as a proxy for military organisation. Finally, the study includes 128 royal manors recorded in written sources prior to 1350. Our aim is to understand the long-term growth of polities and identity regions in Scandinavia. We believe this will contribute to contextualisation and understanding of the Avaldsnes site – one the most important for the making of a kingdom.

4.1.1 Research questions and outline

What was the connection between early kingship and the development of the larger law areas? Were royal manors established in central populated areas or in peripheral borderlands between tribal territories, or both? Did new law areas contribute to more peaceful and stable regions where formerly unstable borderlands could flourish and be developed as part of the royal economy?

This chapter will investigate the long-term development of geography-bound identities among the peoples living in Scandinavia AD 500–1350, following a three-fold approach:

1. Identify and estimate the population size of the various peoples of Scandinavia around AD 500–700, based on groups mentioned in written sources – so called *ethnika* – the name of peoples – combined with a quantitative analysis of the distribution of pre-Christian graves, both single graves and cemeteries.
2. Investigate whether systems of mutual defence developed between different groups, and whether this was a driving force in the development of the



Fig. 4.1: The investigation area. The medieval law-areas in Scandinavia c. 1200. A law-area is a specific geographical unit sharing customary law. The law-areas may also represent an intermediate stage between the tribal organisation in the mid-6th century and the subsequent creation of supra-regional kingdoms in the late Viking Age (800–1050). The *lögþing* (Norway)/ *landzþing* (Sweden) was the highest ranked legal assembly within the law-area. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

Scandinavian law areas. This will be carried out by analysing the distribution of hillforts in Scandinavia.

3. Finally, we will investigate the role of the king in the maintenance of the new larger law areas by analysing the distribution and geostrategic location of the early royal manors in Scandinavia.

4.1.2 Background

The new contribution presented in this article does not concern either the onomastic identification of Jordanes' groups, or the historically known lawprovinces, both of which have already been comprehensively studied (Svennung 1967; Sitzmann and Grünzweig 2008; Andersson 2009; Taranger 1898; Iversen 2015a, 2015b). The Scandinavian *ethnika* has not, however, been evaluated in light of the population density and military organisation seen in relation to the formation process of the law areas and kingdoms; it is this gap that this article will address.

In onomastic research, the term *ethnika* refers to the name of a people (Andersson 2009). Some scholars use the term *gentes*, while Jordanes named the groups *nationes*. Rather than considering these as static ethnic groups, this chapter treats the terms *gentes*, *ethnika*, and *nationes* as synonyms for societies with a certain level of governance, rule, and law. A *community* by contrast is subordinated and part of a *society* (Iversen 2015). For lack of a better term, the following will use the term *tribe* for the groups mentioned by Jordanes and in *Widsith* and *tribal confederation* when multiple autonomous tribes forming a mutual military defence – that is, as a response to external threats.

Our point of departure is the *nationes* mentioned by Jordanes and others, and the question is how the lands merged into larger law areas during the Merovingian Period (550–800), Viking Age (800–1050), and early and High Middle Ages (1050–1350). The hypothesis investigated is that the formation of the law areas was a prerequisite for the creation of the emerging Scandinavian kingdoms. This was a complex process in which common defence systems and population size were key factors. Mutual defence alliances between the lands may have been an important catalyst for the emergence of larger political entities; most likely, the emergence of supra-regional kingdoms was closely related to older military confederations between tribes.

The existence of larger war-bands in the early Germanic world is indicated by Tacitus in *Germania* (ch. 2) around AD 98. He claims there were three main larger Germanic *gentes*, namely, the *Ingaevones*, living nearest the sea; the *Herminones* in the middle; and the *Istaevones* beyond them. Apparently, these *gentes* were named after the sons of Mannus (the son of the earth-born god Tuisco), from whom the *gentes* descended. At the time, there was a discussion whether the tribes *Marsos*, *Gembrivios*, *Suebos*, and *Vandilios* also qualified as ancient groups originating from the god Mannus. Within these areas Tacitus mentions numerous

tribes. These origin myths of the three major *gentes* may therefore be interpreted as early examples of some sort of tribal confederation or cultic league (Anderson 1999:26).

A much later Scandinavian example of a ‘tribal confederation’ is found in the early 11th-century skaldic poem *Hofuðlausn* (stanzas 17–19) (Townend 2012:762–3). It was composed by Óttarr svarti, one of King Óláfr Haraldsson’s (1015–30) hird skalds. From this poem we learn that there were five kings (*bragningar*) in the *Upplönd* area of Norway (=Eidsivatinglag and Valdres-Hallingdal). These inland kings formed a defensive alliance against Óláfr, who aimed at expanding his ‘coastal’ kingdom towards the inland. Especially strong opposition came from the kings of Hedmark (*heiðska jofra*) whom Óláfr punished severely for their resistance. In the end, all the kings of *Upplönd* (*hverr konungr*) fled from Óláfr, the confederation was defeated, and the inlands became part of Óláfr’s Norwegian Kingdom. A century later, around 1150, *Upplönd* formed one law area of four lands (*patria*) (= Eidsivatinglag). Most likely, these four lands (plus Valdres-Hallingdal) mirrored the areas of the earlier petty kingdoms that fought against Óláfr (Iversen 2017).

Tribes

In *De origine actibusque Getarum*, the so-called *Getica* (AD 551) Jordanes lists about 25 tribes living in Scandinavia (excluding Denmark). Some of the groups can be identified: *Screrefennae* (*Skridfinner*, Sámi people), *Suehans* (Svear, Swedes), *Grannii*, (Grener, Norway), and the *Rugi* (Ryger, Norway), while the memory of others is lost. The Byzantine author Prokopios (c. 500–554) states in *De Bellis* (c. 545) that there were “thirteen very numerous nations’ (*nationes*) in the settled areas of the island of *Thoulē* – an island ten times the size of Britain, and that there were kings over each of these nations (De Bello Gothico VI:14–15:3). Prokopios’ *Thoulē* equals to our *Scandza* (Nansen 1911; Ellegård 1987:9). Prokopios is also one of the most detailed sources with regard to the much-debated *Eruli* group who dwelt among the Romans. With reference to the historian P. A. Munch (1852:53), the Norwegian zoologist and explorer Fridtjof Nansen regarded the *Eruli* name purely as a generic appellative in use in southern Europe for bands of northern warriors (Nansen 1911:146). After a thorough review of the full corpus of *Eruli* sources, the Swedish linguist Alvar Ellegård (1987) likewise concludes that the *Eruli* were “a Germanic warrior band that organized itself in the third century, probably in the region north of the Roman limes between Passau (Castrata Batava) and Vienna (Vindobona)” (Ellegård 1987:6–7).

Around AD 545 a delegation of *Eruli* notables travelled to *Thoulē* to find a new king for their group. The candidate had to be of “the royal blood”. Prokopios states: “And when these men reached the island, they found many there of the royal blood, but they selected the one man who pleased them most and set out with him

on the return journey” (Prokopios, ch 15). This man fell sick and died near the land of the *Dani*. On their second trip to *Thoulē* they found *Datios*. He returned with them and eventually became their king. He was followed by his brother *Aordos* and 200 youth of the *Eruli* in *Thoulē*. In this context Prokopios names two other group as settling in *Thoulē* at the time: the *Gautoi* (the Geats) described as one of the most numerous (*polucanthrōpon*) nations, whom the “incoming *Eruli*” settled alongside, and the *Scrithiphini* (Sámi) who differed from all the other inhabitants of *Thoulē* (Prokopios, ch. 15). Ellegård suggests that the “incoming *Eruli*” in this context refers to a minor part of the *Eruli* war band – a royal clan and its followers – leaving the main group and migrating to Scandinavia around 512. This hypothetical splinter of the *Eruli* group can be considered as a plausible alternative to the traditional view placing their original home (*Stammsitz*) in Scandinavia.

In the words of Nansen, the description by Prokopios “bears the stamp of certain trustworthiness” (Nansen 1911:141). As Jordanes enumerates twice as many tribal names in *Scandza*, Nansen suggested that several of the tribes “may have belonged to the same kingdom” (Nansen 1911:143). Prokopios’ claim of thirteen 6th-century kingdoms in present-day Norway and Sweden plus several in Denmark has gained support in more recent archaeological research. The Swedish archaeologist Per H. Rahmqvist (1991) considers this number of kingdoms reasonable in the context of the main settled areas in Scandinavia in this period. However, the identification of the settled areas is based on a low-resolution model of the distribution of prehistoric graves, and Rahmqvist in particular considers the results for western Scandinavia as uncertain. The present chapter adheres to the idea of larger kingdoms (Prokopios) comprising several tribes (Jordanes) as initially suggested by Nansen (1911) and later supported by Rahmqvist (1991:27).

Law provinces

By the turn of the first millennium, there were at least 18 law provinces in Scandinavia, most of which have surviving legal codes from the 12th–14th centuries. What was the relation between the tribes documented in the 6th century and the later law regions and kingdoms to come? Much is unclear regarding the processes by which Scandinavian law provinces formed. They appear in written records from the 10th century. In the *Book of Icelanders* (Íslendingabók) c. 1122, the Icelandic historian Are Frode (1067–1148) writes that Ulfjot, the first law speaker of the *Althing*, around 930 brought the Gulathing code from western Norway to Iceland (Holtsmark 1951:17, ch 2). After oversea studies for three years, Ulfjot adapted the code to Icelandic conditions (“Ulfjot’s code”). If these narrative sources are to be believed, orally transmitted law existed then, and most likely had for a long time (Brink 1996:46).

Stefan Brink has pointed out that “written contemporary evidence states that people in a *land* around the year 800, had their *liuprettr*, probably to be understood

as ‘a legal custom in force in that land’ (Brink 2008:106–7). Examples of such lands are for instance found in landscape names such as Rogaland and Hordaland (Norway), and Västmanland, Västergötland, and Östergötland (Sweden). Most likely, each land had its own customary law. Originally, the law-code was transmitted orally by a law-speaker, subsequently committed to writing in the 11–13th centuries (Iceland 1177, Norway 12th century, Denmark and Sweden 13th centuries).

The Finnish cultural geographer Anssi Paasi (1986, 2012) discusses so-called *spatial socialisation*, the processes whereby the people in a given area through unconscious behaviour reproduces a common identity and culture (Paasi 2012:23). Distinct cultural regions are created through social and historical processes and require social institutions (Paasi 1986). An important role in the processes Paasi outlines must have been played by the *thing*, the secular institution for justice in Scandinavia: a ‘multi-functional venue for discussion and determination of any matter of communal concern’ (Vogt and Esmark 2013:152). The *thing* was instrumental to the acceptance of new kings and the regulation of political and economic relations between the king and the people. The *thing* meetings were cyclical and contributed to shaping and maintaining identities on various geographical levels. The meeting was held at given times and places and created social bonds beyond its formal legal role. One imperative of the ethnogenesis theory, as both Reinhard Wenskus (1961) and Herwig Wolfram (1970, 1990) argue is that tribal identity is formed by origin myths told among the tribe’s leading strata (for further discussions, see also Pohl 1994; Goffart 2006; Heather 2009). This chapter holds that geobound identity is also formed through human meetings at the *thing*, in particular among an upper and a mid-stratum of landowners meeting regularly, while upper elite identity also was rooted in supra-regional mobility and a wider economic and political network.

The highest-ranked legal assembly within Scandinavian societies was termed ON *lögþing* (*lawthing*) (Norway)/OSw *landþing* (*landthing*) (Sweden and Denmark) (Sanmark 2018). This was the assembly at the top of hierarchy in each land, and there could be several *law-/landthings* within a law province over which one assembly site held the highest authority (Semple et al. 2019). Through regular assemblies social networks were maintained and information exchanged. These top-ranking legal assemblies were representational, drawing on a fairly large population in vast areas. The Gulathing in western Norway, the best recorded case in Scandinavia, can serve as an example. The earliest record (the so-called *Óláfr* text, 11th century) states that 375 representatives met at the annual lawthing at Gulathing (Helle 2001:65; Iversen 2015a). They came from the areas of Agder (27), Rogaland (102), Hordaland (102), Sogn (64), and Firda (80), in addition to an undetermined number from Sunnmøre. In sharp contrast, local meetings, called *allthings*, were not representational; all householders within the district gathered. According to the Gulathing code, all householders (*bøndr aller*), both landowners and tenants, were obliged to attend local things and would receive penalties for disregarding it. Attendance was voluntary for disabled farmers

and widows with landed property (G 131). This most likely reflects that originally the local things were closely connected to a stratum of landowners (Iversen 2007:172).

Kingdoms

Rural, decentralized governance characterized most European kingdoms prior to and during the early Middle Ages (Bernhardt 1993; Iversen 2008, 2009; Ehlers 2015). ‘Ambulating kingdoms’ were almost a global norm for organizing early kingship in agricultural societies (Skre 1998). Similar systems were in place in Java, Hawaii, Tahiti, and Indonesia during the 14th century, as well as in Morocco and Ethiopia from the 16th to 20th centuries (Bernhardt 2009:45–6). Some of the surplus and resources from these agricultural societies were consumed by the travelling king’s warriors and the elite. The rural royal manors served as residences for ambulating kings and were administered by officials known as *ármaðr* (Krag 1982). The actual presence of the king at certain times of the year helped sustain and sanction both royal power and the law.

None of the Viking Age Scandinavian kingdoms had a single law for the whole kingdom. Such laws appear in 1274 in Norway and 1350 in Sweden. In terms of laws and justice, these kingdoms were heterogeneous, consisting of regions with various level of self-government. Latin sources from the 11th and 12th centuries refer to the Scandinavian laws as *mos provinciae* (provincial usage), *ius terrae* (the law of the province/land), and *regionis consuetudo* (regional customs) (Fenger 2001:68; Vogt 2009:67–71), suggesting that the origin of the laws in pre-existing local customs and regulations.

In Scandinavia, only scant information exists about defensive confederations across the known provincial law territories (Tab. 4.1). However, the commitment made by the various peoples of the Norwegian Kingdom was recorded in the Gulathing code in the mid-12th century. The law states the number and size of the ships that each different region was required to contribute. The law distinguishes among ‘people from’ Viken (*Vikverir*), Grenland (*græna*), Agder (*Egðir*), Rogaland (*Rygir*), Hordaland (*Horðar*), Sogn (*Sygnir*), Firda (*Firðir*), Møre (*Mærer*), Romsdal (*Raumdæler*), Nordmøre (*Norðmærer*), Trøndelag (*Þrænder*), Namdal (*Naumdæler*), and Hålogaland (*Haleygir*) (G 315).

Although it remains unknown as to precisely when these military unions arose, it is likely that they built upon older schemes, scaling up incrementally to cover larger areas and were only made uniform at a national level in the 10th century when the naval defence system known as the *leiðangr* seems to have been introduced in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. These entities and their smaller predecessors were ruled by ‘ambulating’ kings traveling among various royal manors. These different estates together constituted the most important part of the rural and decentralised state apparatus of Viking Age Scandinavia.

Tab. 4.1: Medieval rural laws from Scandza (data modified from Bo Ruthström 2002:8–15; Sanmark 2018; Semple et al. 2019).

Name of Law	The area it applied for	Preserved or based on manuscript from:	Edition from:
1 Gulathinglaw (G)	Western Norway	C. 1250	King Olaf (1015–1030) and King Magnus (1163–1183)
2 Frostathinglaw (F)	Mid- and North Norway	1260–69	Archbishop Øystein (1161–1188)
3 (A) Borgarthinglaw (B) (Chr.) (B) Fragment (Secular)	Eastern Norway, coast	C. 1230	C. 1150
4 Eidsivathinglaw (E) (Chr.)	Eastern Norway, mountains	1300–1350	1067–1111
5 (A) (The Vi-law, the Forsaring) (B) Hälsingelaw (HL)	Hälsingland, Medelpad and Ångermanland	900s (the Forsaring)	900s
6 (A) Early Västgötalaw (ÄVgL) (B) Later Västgötalaw (YVgL)	Västergötland	1250–1280 C. 1350	C. 1220 1290s (1181–1300)
7 Östgötalaw (ÖgL)	Östergötland and parts of Småland	C. 1350	C. 1290
8 Smålandslagens (SmLKr) (Chr)	Värend, Njudung and Finnveden	C. 1350	C. 1300
9 Gutalaw (GtL)	Gotland	C. 1350	C. 1300
10 Södermannalaw (SdL)	Södermanland	C. 1350	C. 1300 (confirmed 1327)
11 Upplandslaw (UL) (replacing earlier laws of the individual lands)	Tiundaland (including Gästrikland), Attundaland, Fjädrundaland, Norra Roden	C. 1350	1296
12 Västmannalaw (VmL) (heavily dependent on UL)	Västmannalagen	1300s	1296–1347

(continued)

Tab. 4.1 (continued)

Name of Law	The area it applied for	Preserved or based on manuscript from:	Edition from:
13 Dalalagen (DL)	Dalarna (without Bergslagen?) and/ or Västmanland	C. 1350	Before 1347
14 (A) Skånelaw (SkL) (B) Andreas Suneson law	Skåne, Halland, Blekinge and Bornholm	C. 1300 C. 1300	End of 1100s 1206–1215
Laws of the realm			
15 Magnus Erikssons law (MELL)	Sweden	1300s	1347
16 Kristoffers law (KrLL) (revision of MELL)	Sweden	C. 1450	1442
17 Magnus the lawmenders law	Norway, Faroes, Shetland	End of 1200s	1274

4.2 Material and methods

This study combines three main elements: (1) *ethnika* recorded in *Getica* and *Widsith*, the main sources for ethnonyms in Scandinavia AD 500–700; (2) the archaeological records, focusing on the distribution of cemeteries, graves, and hill-forts indicating major trends in population, habitation areas, and societal organisation (Figs. 4.2 and 4.3); and (3) the distribution of known rural royal manors recorded c. 900–1350 (Fig. 4.4). These three elements will be analysed in context of the laws areas in Scandinavia.



Fig. 4.2: Example of a cemetery: Hedrum in Larvik, Norway. A typical cemetery contains five to ten graves. This study comprises 29.608 grave cemeteries. Photo: T. A. Brun, Vestfold fylkeskommune.

To estimate population size in the first millennium by graves is a challenging task. After all, what was a population in this period? Clearly there was a huge difference between a free person who in legal terms was regarded as part of the tribe and a slave who was not. The latter was not a legal subject in judicial terms, but rather regarded as an object belonging to a master. Overall, an imperative of this study is that the grave materials' potential first and foremost lies in their ability to differentiate a stratum of landowners and free people, which in principle must have been the defining stratum of the tribe. This is substantiated by various Scandinavian studies focusing on landownership, estates, and the distribution of prehistoric graves (Zachrisson 1994; Skre 1998; Iversen 2008).

The law regions presented in this study have been reconstructed on the basis of various data analysed by *The Assembly Project 2010–3* (for further reading, see Semple, Sanmark, Iversen, and Mehler 2019). In general, the Scandinavian administrative organisation is evident in a surviving group of documents termed the provincial



Fig. 4.3: Example of a hillfort: Broborg in Husby-Långhundra, Sweden. Hillforts served as safe-places for the population in the Roman- and Migration periods. We find 1301 hillforts in Sweden ('Fornborg') and 408 in Norway ('Bygdeborg'). Photo: Avena, 1989. Owner: Upplandsmuseet.

laws and several associated written sources. Around 30 such laws are preserved from Scandinavia and Iceland from 900–1500. The earliest of these manuscripts date to the late 12th and above all the 13th century. In the research area, there are preserved laws (in part or in full) for 14 of the 18 law areas. Some laws applied in several law regions. This is the case for the Frostathing law (c. 1260) that applied for Trøndelag, Hålogaland, and Jämtland, and the Uppland law (c. 1350) that applied for Tiundaland (including Gästrikland), Attundaland, Fjädrundaland, and Norra Roden. Further, the Eidsivathing law applied for four *patriae* in the mountainous region of Norway, mentioned in 1150–75 in *Historia Norwegie*, here counted as one law area. The development of the Eidsivathinglag is rather complex. Sometime between 1223



Fig. 4.4: Example of a royal manor: Utstein kloster in Rennesøy, Norway. Utstein is the first named royal manors in Scandinavia appearing in skaldic poem *Haraldskvæði*, c. 900. Photo: Elisabeth Tønnessen/MUST.

and 1274 the south-western part (Upper Telemark, Numedal, Tverrdalene, and possibly also Ringerike) was reorganised and merged with parts of the Borgartinglag. This resulted in new law areas and lawthings established in the towns of Skien, Tønsberg, and Oslo (Iversen 2017). The borders of Eidsivathing and Borgarthing law areas prior to c. 1250–1300 have only recently been established (Ødegaard 2015; Iversen 2015, 2017). Most likely, Härjedalen was part of the Frostathinglag prior to c. 1150. After Jämtland's integration into the Norwegian realm in 1177, Jämtland and Härjedalen were assigned a joint lawman (recorded in the 15th century).

The size of the law areas presented in this study varies from slightly below 2,000 square kilometres (Fjärdrundaland) to more than 75,000 square kilometres (Gulathingslag) (Tab. 4.2). Most likely, many of the law areas known from medieval written sources were products of earlier merging processes; however, this can be stated with certainty only for the Gulathing law area, where sequential steps of expansion are indirectly recorded in the period 1000–1274 (Iversen 2015a). Furthermore, the Uppland area consisted of various folklands that merged into one law area in 1296. According to Snorri, many of the folklands in Uppland had previously had their own laws (below).

Tab. 4.2: Tribes name in Scandza 6th century. Data from Getica and Widsith. Modified after Svennung (1967) and Malone (1962).

Name, normalised (plural)	No. Getica	Line, Widsith (p. Malone)	Name Mommsen 1882	Name Malone 1962	Identification Svennung / Malone / Brink 2008 People of:
Håløyger	1	85 (128)	Adogit	Amothingum	*(h)alogii (Hålogaland) (S), Omd (M)
Skrifdinner	2	79 (194)	Screrefennae	Scridefinnum	Skrifdinnarna, the skiing finns (SMB)
Svear	3.19	31, 58 (202)	Suehans, suetidi	Swëom	Svearna (SMB)
Tjuster	4		Theutes		Tjustå (by Skålderviken) (S), Tjust, Småland (B)
Goter	5		Uagoth		Våggoterna (by Skålderviken) (S), Gotland (B)
Berger	6		Bergio		Bjäre (SB)
Haller	7		Hallin		Halland (SB)
Luguder	8	22 (158)	Liothida	Hælsingum	Lugude (SB). Dwellers of Øresund (innsnevring, hals) (see RGA 13:280) (M)
Himler	9		Athemil		(at = autem) *heimii, Berg (Himle) (S)
Finnveder	10		Finnaiithae		Finnveden (SB)
Fjärer	11		Feruir		Fjäre (SB)
Västgötar	12	58 (152)	Gauthigoth	Géatum	Göt-goth(æ) (Västergötland)(SB)
Hisinger	13		Mixi		*hixi=fn *hiskir 'Hising' (S)
Ö-gröter	14		Euagre Otingis		Eua-greotings) 'klippbebyggana på öarna', "ögrötarna" = Ö Grötsbacka (S)
Östgötar	15	58 (152)	Ostrogothae	Géatum	Öst-goterna (SB)
Raumer	16		Raumarici		Romerike (SB)

Raner	17	63 (175)	Ragnaricii	Hronum	Ranrike (SMB)
Finner	18	76 (150)	Finni	Finnum	Sami (S), Finland (M)
Vino-finner (Kvener?)	19		Uinouilott		Kvæn people (S)
Grener	20		Granni		Grener (Grenland) (SB)
Egder	21		Augandzi		a[u]lgandzi, Agder (S)
Øyboere ("islanders")	22		Eunixit		Holm-rygir (Ryfylke) (S)
Ryger	23	69 (192)	Aetel Rugi	Rugum	The main rugir (æren) (SB)
Horder	24		Arochi		Horder (Hordaland) (S)
Raumer	25		Ranii		Ranii, Raunii, Romsdal (S)
Hader		63 (165)		Heapóréamum	Haðar, Hadeland (M)
Trøndere		64 (205)		Pröwendum	Prøndr, Trøndelag (M)
Lidvikinger		80 (180)		Lidingum (Lidwicingum)	Viken (M)
Heidner		81-8159)		Hæðnum	Hedmark (M)

4.2.1 The onomastic evidence – ethnika of *Getica* and *Widsith*

There is a long scholarly research tradition on *ethnika* (Andersson 2009 for references). Two books published a half-century ago by the American philologist Kemp Malone (1962) and the Swedish classical philologist Josef Svennung (1967) have been particularly influential within this strand of research, taken here as points of departure. Svennung discussed and identified Scandinavian groups listed in various classical texts, in particular those in *Getica*, while Malone worked on North-European groups and leaders listed in *Widsith*. In 2008 much of the work on *ethnika* was summarized in the handbook for *Die altgermanischen Ethnonyme* by Alexander Sitzmann and Friedrich E. Grünzweig (Andersson 2009), focusing primarily on etymology while unfortunately ignoring geography.

Despite all efforts over two centuries of research, the Swedish linguist Stefan Brink (2008:92) assesses that only half of the groups – the *gentes* mentioned in classical texts such as Pliny's *Natural History* (AD 79), Tacitus' *Germania* (AD 98), Ptolemy's *Geographia* (AD 125–50), and Jordanes' *Getica* (AD 551) so far have been correctly identified. According to Brink (2008), the tribes in Scandinavia identifiable by onomastics are *Screrefennae* (the Finns/Sámi), *Suehans* (the Swedes), *Theutes* (the people of Tjust in Småland), *Bergio* (the people living on the hilly Bjärehalvön in Skåne), *Hallin* (the people living in Halland, originally the southern part of the later province of Halland), *Fervir* (the people living in Fjäre, later a hundred, in the northern part of the later province of Halland), *Finnaithae* (the people living in Finnveden in Småland), *Gautigoth* (evidently 'the västgötar'), *Ostrogothae* (the östgötar), *Raumariciae* (the people living in Romerike), and *Grannii* (the people living in Grenland). Brink provides a tentative identification of *Vagoth* a 'the gutar on Gotland', *Lothida* as 'the people living in Luggude in Skåne', *Rugi* as 'the people living in Rogaland', and *Ranii* as 'the people living in Ranríki' (today's Bohuslän). Brink's placement of the *Vagoth* in Gotland derives from the suggestion put forward by Thorsten Andersson (Valdemarssvik).

Getica

According to Jordanes, *Getica* was written over the course of only three days; a remarkable feat, given that the work contains the first recorded instances of the names of many Scandinavian tribes. *Getica* was an excerpt of a comprehensive work, now lost, on the history of the Goths by Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator (c. 485 – c. 585) (Skard 1932). In it, *Scandza* is described as an island shaped like a lemon-tree leaf. It was located towards the river Vistula (Weichsel) which emptied thrice-folded into the North Ocean (= the Baltic Sea) in front of her. To the east there was a great sea (= Ladoga) from whence the Vagus floods (= Neva). In the west *Scandza* was surrounded by the ocean and in the north by impassable and

endless ocean. In accordance with this idea, the peoples living on ‘the leaf’ were listed in a somewhat reconcilable topographical order, from the *Adogit* in the north, the *Suehans* in the east, to other groups in the south and west.

The natural point of departure for dealing with the groups named in *Getica* (ch. 3) is the work of Josef Svennung (1967). His identifications are still of great value. However, some of them have been questioned as too speculative. Regarding the *Mixi*, the Swedish onomastician Thorsten Andersson (2009:24) states that we simply must accept that some of Jordanes’ *ethnika* cannot be identified or explained. Furthermore, Andersson (2009:27–9) is critical to Svennung’s identification of the *Theutes* with *Tjuteå*, a small bank of the Råån river in Skålderviken, and argues in favour of keeping the traditional interpretation of the *Theutes* being the people of Tjust (a landscape in eastern Småland), in part because they are listed in sequence after the *Suehans*. Andersson (2009:29) suggests identifying the *Uagoth* with OSv *vagher* (*Wagmare* 1383), the present-day Valdemarvik – a fjord/bay named after a village, *Vammar*, and the north-eastern border of Tjust; this interpretation is less certain. Conversely, Brink argues for a tentative identification of the *Uagoth* with Gotland, which seems reasonable as evaluated by archaeology (below). The remaining identifications of Svennung are mostly accepted in modern scholarship, sometime if only due to the lack of more convincing alternatives.

Jordanes was not very impressed by Ptolemy, who he claimed only knew seven groups in *Scandia* – the largest of Ptolemy’s four *Scandiae Insulae* (Σκανδία νῆσοι). By comparison, Jordanes lists 20 groups. The transmission of Ptolemy’s lost manuscripts and his view of the north are so distorted that most of his *Scandia*-groups cannot be identified with certainty. According to Thorsten Andersson (2009:24), only the *Chaideinoi* (Χαιδεινοί) west in *Scandia* and the *Gutae* (Γούται) in the south are likely to be identified respectively with the *Heinir* (Hedmark, Norway) and the *Geats* (Götaland, Sweden =Västergötland and Östergötland). The other four *Scandia*-groups of Ptolemy, the *Phauonai* (Φαυόνας) and *Phiraisoi* (Φιραισοί) (east on *Scandia*), the *Daukiones* (Δαυκιωνες) (south) and the *Levoni* (Λευώνιοι) (in the centre) remain in the dark.

Widsith

The unknown composer(s) of *Widsith* had great knowledge of north European tribes and leaders. The poem consists of three *pulur* (i.e. enumerations of people and persons) recorded in the Exeter book (from shortly after 950). According to Kemp Malone the three *pulur* were all composed (independently) before AD 570 and orally transmitted until they were committed to writing in the latter part of the 7th century, in “the time of Bede” (673–735) (Malone 1962:115–16). Overall *Ælfvne* (d. AD 573) is the latest in dates of the heroes celebrated in the poem (Malone 1962:102, 112). Regarding the dating, caution should be taken, as no manuscripts exist from

before the mid-10th century. Recent work on language style, however, supports Malone's traditional 7th-century dating (Neidorf 2013:179).

The first *pula* (ending on line 33) lists 32 rulers and 31 tribes, of which four potentially are from Scandinavia. The composer's level of knowledge was that of a seafarer; according to Malone, he might have come from *Wrysn* (Vræsen, Denmark) (Malone 1962:86–7, 200). The second *pula* lists 54 tribal names of which twelve potentially are from Scandinavia. The second *pula* was probably brought to England by "Migrants from Sleswick" (Malone 1962:93). The 19 lines of the third *pula* mention no tribes, only 28 or 29 rulers.

In Tab 4.2, I have listed the groups who according to Malone's (1962) "Glossary of proper names" (second edition of *Widsith*) lived in *Scancza* (= Norway and Sweden). Some of Malone's identifications are indeed questionable. In particular, I find the identification of the *Wōingas* with Veierland, a tiny island in Vestfold, Norway, too farfetched to be included here (Malone 1962:211). No traditions of such a group exist, and the identification based on the name of a minor farm seems unreasonable. In addition, the identification of the *Rondingas* with the men of Telemark is doubtful (Malone 1962:191). It is based on two assumptions: that the name of the ruler, *Þilir* of the *Rondingas*, is an eponym for Telemark and that *Rond*, ONo Rand (edge, border) in *Rondingas* alludes to *mark* (borderland) in Telemark.

Furthermore, Malone (1962:150) connects the *Finnas*, mentioned twice, to Finland. I have, however, listed the *Finnas* (line 76) as a possible Sámi group together with the *Scridefinnas*. Jordanes draws a distinction between "skiing Sámi" and other Sámi. Malone suggests that the *Lidingas* was a tribe settled in the neighbourhood of present-day Oslo. The MS text has *Lidwicingum* which may refer to the Viken area. Hypothetically, the prefix could refer to a 'lid-system' in this area (*lið*=armed retainers). Of course, the word *lið* for armed retainers was not exclusive to the Viken area; it appears in eastern Scandinavia as well (e.g. the 10th-century Karlevi runestone, Öland). However, as an administrative unit the *liði* is recorded only in the eastern part of the Borgarthinglag (c. 1200, Sverres saga, ch. 162). Here a *liði* (vn) refers to a unit of farms responsible for providing and equipping a man to the *leiðangr* (KLN 10:534–6). It seems likely that the principle of small groups of farms sharing collective responsibility can be traced far back in time, and could potentially also predate the *leiðangr*. For lack of better alternatives, *Lidwicingum* in *Widsith* can be read as the people from Viken with a *liði*-organisation. Apparently the *Wicingas* (*Wicinga cynn*, *Wikingum*) in *Widstih* (line 47, 59), are not related to the Vikings, according to Malone who associates them with the Langobards (Malone 1962:162, 209). Alternatively, they identify with the *Vikverir* the inhabitants of the landscape Viken.

Malone identifies the *Rugum* (line 69) and the *Holmrycum* (in the east) (line 21) as one group. In the poem the *Holmrycum* (line 21) is located "to the east" and have therefore been identified with the (*H*)*ulmrugi* (Rügen, Germany) and not the *Holmryger* (Ryfylke, Norway) (Malone 1962:173). I accept this identification (*Holmrycum* = *Ulmerugi*), which also is preferred by Andersson (RGA 25:454, *Rugier*). However,

since there are two mentions, *Rugum* and *Holmrycum* they may refer to different groups (in Rogaland and Rügen). I identify the *Rugum* with Ryger, Rogaland (also preferred in RGA). Furthermore, I find Malone's identification of the *Lēonas*, *Lēonum* with Ptolemy's *Leuoni* and *Ljónar* (in Ynglingatal) (= Liunar in Östergötland) (Malone 1962:180) too speculative to be included here.

4.2.2 The archaeological evidence – cemeteries, graves, and hillforts

The data for the hillforts, graves, and cemeteries have been collected from the *Fornsøk* database maintained by the Swedish National Heritage Board (Riksantikvarieämbetet) and from the *Askeladden* database operated by the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage (Riksantikvaren). These databases are based on large-scale national surveys 1965–91, and are continuously updated. The Swedish database contains information on more than 1.7 million remains at nearly 600,000 sites, while the Norwegian database contains around 170,000 sites. These include removed, damaged, and preserved archaeological sites. As of 2017 there are entries of c. 1,700 hillforts, 29,000 gravefields, and 139,000 single graves (in addition to those in gravefields) in the area equivalent to Jordanes' *Scandza* (= present-day Norway and Sweden) (Tab. 4.2).

The representativeness of the archaeological record used in this study is difficult to assess. The inclusion of most of the material into the record has occurred at random, which may indicate a reasonable degree of representativeness. The most pressing question is, however, whether there has been a systematic over- or under-reporting in particular areas. Obviously, factors such as land clearance and the time of archaeological surveys are important.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, small networks of humanists and antiquarians emerged in various cities in Norway and Sweden. These early antiquarians and clerics in the 17th and 18th centuries would pick up some information about archaeological sites, but not in a systematic way. In Norway, the first systematic attempt to register archaeological sites occurred in 1743, when the Danish Chancery initiated an extensive survey in Denmark-Norway, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland. The government wanted to obtain a better record of sites and monuments, but the feedback on the questionnaire that was sent out to clerics and officials varied and was partly inadequate (Røgeberg et al. 2003–8). The idea of a systematic record of ancient monuments in Norway encompassing 'farm after farm, parish after parish' was initially promoted by the archaeologist Gabriel Gustafson in 1901 (Fasteland 2000:14). In 1964, it was decided that all visible ancient monuments were to be included in the national land registry maps (Økonomisk Kartverk). This triggered extensive archaeological surveys in Norway until 1991 (Holme 2001:58).

In Sweden, the National Heritage Board was founded in 1630, and the runologist Johannes Bureus was appointed the first National Antiquarian (*Riksantikvar*)

(Lingdén 2019). From the 1720s, there was less public and governmental interest in ancient monuments and their protection, and the funding of the Antiquarian office was reduced. Around 1826 the office was revitalized, and in 1867 new legislation gave protection to ancient monuments in Sweden. Dan Carlsson and Bengt Windelhed (1973) have analysed the removal of archaeological sites in Skaraborgs län in relation to the pace of land-clearance over the centuries. In particular, the transition from medieval grazing land to ploughland in the 18th and early 19th centuries resulted in the eradication of archaeological sites without documentation. The transition to ploughland in Sweden was more intensive in central argicultural areas compared with outskirts and marginal land. This bias in the Swedish record is particularly germane to some of the larger cultivation areas, such as the Skåne and parts of Västergötland where significant land clearance took place in this period.

The legislation protecting ancient monuments, the *Protection and Preservation of Antiquities Act*, was passed by the Norwegian Parliament 13 July 1905 and came into effect 30 June 1906. Monuments older than the Reformation (1536/37) obtained automatic legal protection. It has been demonstrated that this legislation had an unintended negative effect on people's willingness to report new archaeological finds (Iversen 2005). Until 1905, farmers could sell their finds on a 'free' antique market, with museums as buyers. Between 1860 and 1950, reorganisation and major changes took place in the Norwegian countryside, in terms of enclosure, new cultivation techniques, and extensive clearance of new land. In the period 1865–1949 Norwegian ploughland (*fulldyrka mark*) increased by 55.1% from 5,410,274 to 8,393,337 decares (Låg 1973:12). Around 40% of the infields in western Norway were enclosed after 1905. This development, in combination with the new law, engendered a practice whereby monuments were removed secretly. Such newly cleared and enclosed areas might therefore be underrepresented in the archaeological record, since systematic recording began at a later stage (Iversen 2005).

Arguably, the law of large numbers implies that in sufficiently large quantities, archaeological data can be used as a proxy for major historical trends (Edinburgh 2015:196). Clearly, the correlation between the size of the free population increases with the number of *representative* sites. However, as land clearance in Scandinavia took place at different paces in different regions, it seems quite evident that this could lead to a systematic bias in the record. At the same time, it is hard to estimate the level of this bias. In Sweden this applies to areas with substantial land clearance during 1720–1830 when the antiquarian office was weak, and in Norway land was reorganised during 1905–1950 before systematic surveys. To visualize the areas potentially underrepresented/overrepresented in the archaeological record, see Fig. 4.5 for a map of modern cultivated land in Norway and Sweden without recorded graves within a range of 1.5 km. This will be taken into account in the discussion of the results in greater depth towards the end of the chapter.

All sites registered as polygons or polylines in the databases have been converted to points. Furthermore, I have performed kernel density Estimations (KDE) in

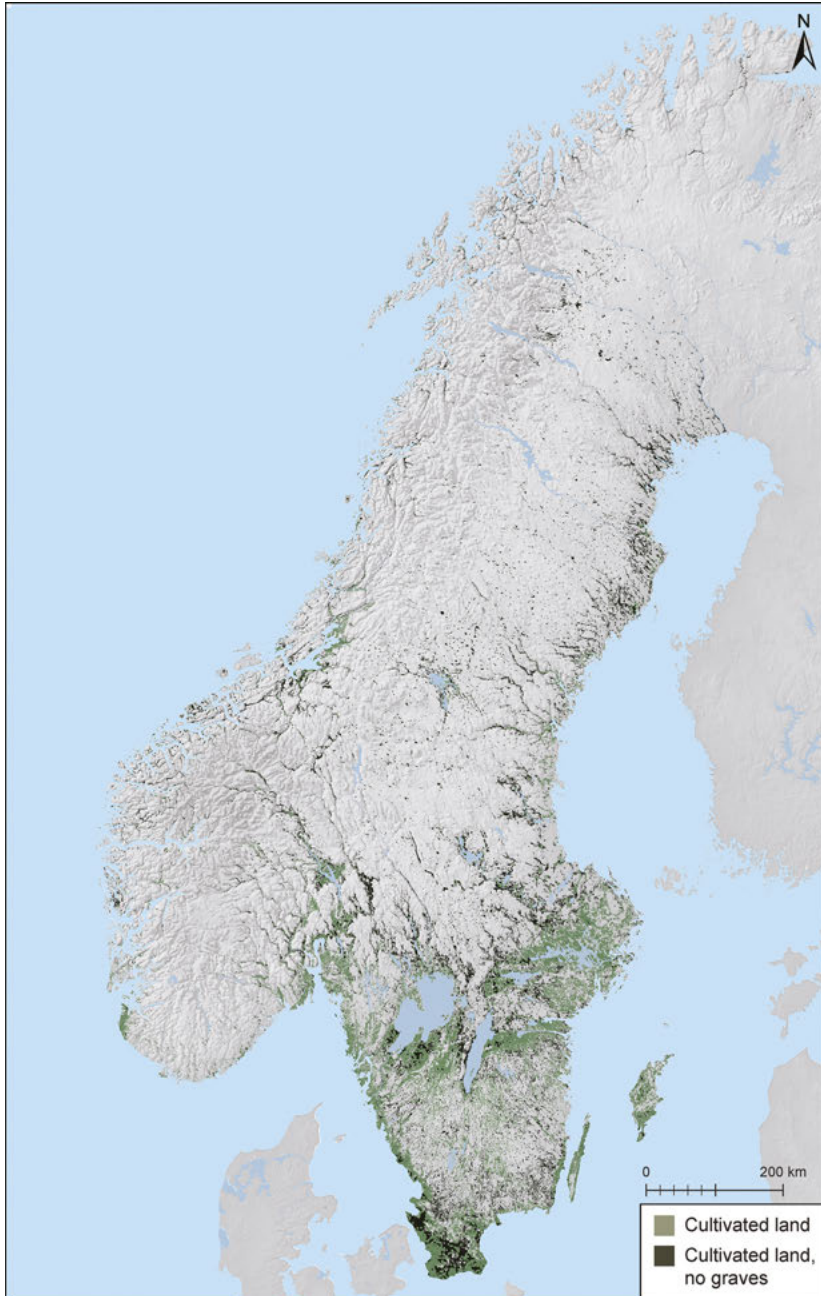


Fig. 4.5: Modern cultivated land in Norway and Sweden and areas without recorded graves within a range of 1.5 km. The darker areas in more populated areas (such as in Skåne) may indicate areas where the archaeological material is underrepresented and removed without documentation due to land clearance in the 18–19th centuries. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

the GIS application ArcMap 10.1. The kernel density tool calculates the density of features. KDE has two known weaknesses: the results depend on the scale of the map, and the visualisation technique in fringe areas can be problematic (*border bias*) (Charpentier and Gallic 2013).

On the maps, kernel density is presented in a scale of 0–30. This serves as a proxy for the size of the free population. Tribe names have been placed at the highest density of graves and cemeteries and it is given a KDE value of 0–30. For example: the *Adogit* – the Håloyger (*Håleygir*) – are placed at the highest density of graves in the relevant area discussed in onomastic research and given a KDE value (= 2). This value is used as a proxy for the density and size of the free population. The KDE value is based on natural breaks (Jenks) and divided into 30 classes. There are of course some difficulties with this method, in particular concerning the Sámi and *Kvenir* groups. The *Finni* and *Uinouilot* (Kvener, *Kvenir*?) of Jordanes are placed in the wooded land north of *Ragnarricii* and south of the *Screrefennae* further north. These three supposed early Sámi and *Kvenir* groups were hunters and gatherers. The material culture associated with them differs from that of the farming communities traceable in this study.

Cemeteries and single graves: The total number of sites included in this study encompasses 29,608 grave fields, 18,485 in Sweden (*gravfält*) and 11,123 in Norway (*gravfelt*), and 139,319 single graves (Fig. 4.6). The category ‘single graves’ includes the following entries in the Swedish database: *Flatmarksgrav* (794), *Grav* (undefined and other) (953 + 93), *Grav markerad av sten/block* (5,160), *Hög* (15,337), *Röse* (16,633), and *Stensättning* (73,151). The Norwegian entries for single graves are *Grav*, *Gravhaug*, *Gravrøys*, *Flatmarksgrav*, *Hellekiste*, *Gravkammer-gravkiste*, *Fotgrøft til gravhaug*, and *Branngrav*.

It is not an easy task to date graves by morphological features alone, for neither the Norwegian nor the Swedish grave-material. In Scandinavian archaeology, there have been many attempts to date certain morphological features to certain periods, with varying degrees of success. However, no grave form seems to be exclusive to a certain period. All categories of single graves included in this study occur in the late Bronze Age and the pre-Roman Iron Age and in later periods (Röst 2016).

In her work on the Mälaren region, Agneta Bennett (1987) has shown how grave forms changed during the Iron Age. The grave customs show great variation before AD 500–600. For Södermanland, Susanne Thedéen (2004) has shown that cairns (*röse*) often were built in the period 1300–700 BC. However, when investigated more closely, many such monuments also contain (secondary) graves and show traces of reuse in the late Iron Age. In the pre-Roman period (500–1 BC) new stone monuments with geometrical forms and the so-called heterogeneous grave-fields (“*varierade gravfälten*”) were introduced (Wangen 2009; Feldt 2005). From this period, gravefields became common.

During the late Iron Age (AD 600–1000) a more homogeneous grave tradition with mounds gradually replaced an older heterogeneous tradition, according to

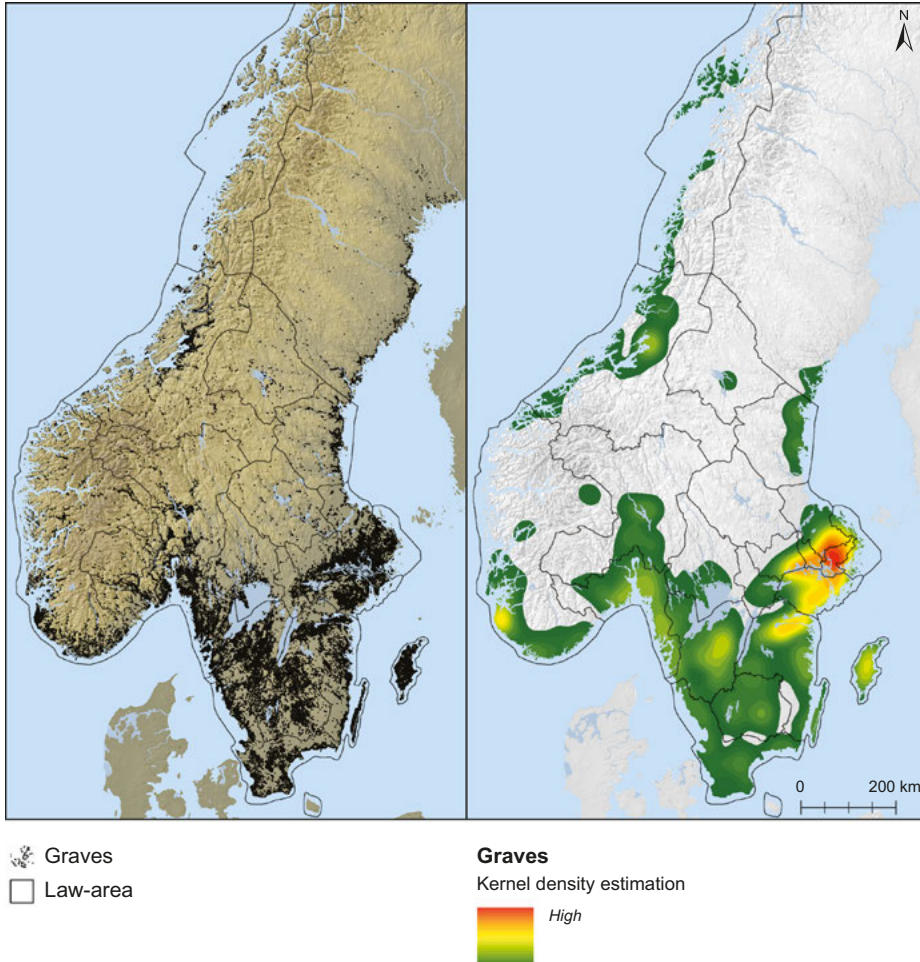


Fig. 4.6: The distribution of cemeteries ($N = 29.608$) and single graves ($N = 139.319$) in Scandinavia. Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) in 30 groups. Each individual gravefield is weighted equal to 5 graves. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

Bennett (1987). The late Iron Age cemeteries are often linked to villages that are traceable to the Middle Ages. There are, however, regional variations in the picture emerging from central Sweden and Norway. In particular, the grave customs in Skåne seem to follow traditions more widespread in Denmark, and many of the mounds here are traditionally set to the Bronze Age (Hyenstrand 1984).

In a big data analysis of this kind, it feels wrong to exclude – purely on morphological grounds – undated graves that potentially contain graves from the late Iron Age (reused cairns and mounds) even if the majority were built in the Bronze and pre-Roman Iron Age. This applies in particular to the categories “*Grav markerad av sten/block*” and single “*rös*”, “*hög*” and “*stensättning*” often associated with the late Bronze Age and pre-Roman

period in central and southern Sweden. These graves existed throughout the researched period and were potentially reused by later generations as both graves and symbols, and are therefore included in this study as a proxy for habitation areas and free population.

A 'standard graveyard' (3–15 graves) would normally connect to a rural settlement (Solberg 2000:145). The gravefields in this study vary in size. The number of graves per graveyard is difficult to extract from the available digital data. In Norway (as of 2019) around 34,000 reported graves at gravefields lack individual geometry in the database. Assessed by the 40,455 graves at gravefields with individual geometry (in Askeladden), an average cemetery in Norway contains five graves. However, it might be suspected that many *large* gravefields lack individual geometry, so that the average size is somewhat higher. Concerning Sweden, it is not possible to extract the numbers of graves per graveyard from the digital data without performing a manual registration far too big for the present work. The figures given in Åke Hyenstrand's classic work *Fasta fornlämningar och arkeologiska regioner* (1984) illustrate some of the challenges with using gravefields as a proxy for the free population. Clearly many gravefields contain more than 5 graves, and even more than 50 graves. This can be illustrated by Hyenstrand's figures for Småland. There are 852 cemeteries in the historical area of Småland (= Varend, Finnveden, and Njudung, where the law of 'ten hundreds' [*Tiohäradslagen*] applied). According to Hyenstrand 95 cemeteries here contain more than 50 graves (Varend: 23, Finnveden: 43, Njudung: 29) which equals 11% of the total number of cemeteries. Hyenstrand does not provide the numbers of graves per graveyard for Västergötland and Östergötland, but clearly many cemeteries here also contain more than 50 graves, for instance Dimbo: 295, Nycklabacken: 200, and Hol: 140 in Västergötland and Tift: 300, Lunds backe: 200, Jussberg: 125, and Kungshögen: 125 in Östergötland, to mention a few. The question is whether the choice of methods produces systematic bias between the landscapes or whether the internal variations in graveyard size are negated when comparing all landscapes with the same estimated number of graves per graveyard.

Traditionally, settlements and villages in southern Sweden contain more households than the settlements in the Mälaren region with a higher proportion of single farms and smaller farmsteads. It might be suspected that the nearly 30,000 households (29,609 in AD 1540) in southern Sweden (= Småland, Västergötland, and Östergötland) produced fewer but larger gravefields, in total 5,126, compared to the c. 9,344 households in Svealand's core area (Tiundaland, Attundaland, Fjädrundaland, and Roden) producing 5,420 cemeteries. It might also be expected that regional variation would be found in the regional average size of gravefields in Norway. For instance, the gravefields in the Viken area in eastern Norway in the general trend are larger than in western Norway and Trøndelag. As no precise data for this so far exist, these concerns must be left to future research and suffice it to say here that different average sizes of gravefields in different landscapes may produce some bias in the calculations.

Some of the largest cemeteries in Scandinavia are located by marked places/proto towns (for instance Birka, Kaupang, and potentially Vang in Oppdal), others by

assembly sites (for instance Skei in Trøndelag, Anundshögen in Västmanland). Examples of such gravefields are the Birka gravefield (at least 2300 graves), the Vang-gravefield (c. 1,000 graves), and the large cemeteries (with more than 200 graves) in the inner fjord districts in Norway (Sognnes 1973, 1979). To avoid giving too much weight to Viking Age trading sites and specialised assembly sites in KDE analysis, this study weighs each individual gravefield to five graves; having tested various weightings (3–10 graves per gravefield), the results of the KDE analysis do not differ greatly.

A study from western Norway suggests that c. 70% of the recorded prehistoric graves cannot be dated more precisely to specific chronological sub-periods (Iversen 1997:17). Comparing the chronological distribution of the dated graves, there are approximately twice the numbers dating to AD 600–1000 compared to AD 200–600. Only a few graves date to AD 600–800, while numbers peak in the Viking Age (AD 800–1050) (Stylegar 2010). Many cemeteries show continuous use throughout the first millennium, while others fell out of use around AD 550 (Löwenborg 2012). We also see establishment of new cemeteries in the 9th century connected to division of land and population increase.

The large-scale change in the archaeological record around AD 540–50 may relate to recurring plague outbreaks (AD 541–750) and climate change (the LALIA) caused by volcanic eruptions (AD 536/40) (Gräslund 2007; Gräslund and Price 2012; Harbeck et al. 2013; Tvauri 2014; Büntgen et al. 2016; Iversen 2016a). A recent study indicates a 70–90% decrease of graves from c. AD 400–600 to 600–800 in Rogaland (Vetthus 2017). This probably reflects a dramatic decrease in population comparable to the levels seen during the late medieval plagues. It has been suggested that the crises had great impacts on the social structure of Scandinavia and that both the higher and lower strata in society were reduced in number. Parts of the elite were unable to sustain their estates and lost social status, while others abandoned marginal farms in favour of better land available elsewhere, and thus gained status (Iversen 2016a). However, it is not easy to assess whether the mid-6th-century crises caused changes in the relative proportion of the free population by hitting some tribes stronger than others.

Hillforts served as safe places for the population in the Roman and Migration periods. There are 1,301 hillforts known in Sweden ('Fornborg') and 408 in Norway ('Bygdeborg') (Tab. 4.3, Fig. 4.7). The term *hillforts* is equivalent to German *Höhensiedlungen*. However, compared to Scandinavia many German and English hillforts had the character of large fortified settlements. In Sweden only 40–50 hillforts shows sign of longer occupation phases and in Norway only one or two. In general their distribution reflects areas experiencing societal and political turmoil, for instance areas exposed to frequent raiding for slaves and cattle. For the vast majority of these sites, the defensive function is the common denominator (Ystgaard 2014:30). Hillforts have been interpreted as defensive systems for larger territories and chiefdoms, or for protection of power centres by warlords (Myhre 1987; Steuer 1989; Skre 1998:285–6; Mitlid 2004; Finmark 2009; Olausson 2008, 2009; Steuer

Tab. 4.3: Number of cemeteries, single graves and hillforts, and size of law-areas in square kilometres (landmass includes waters). Numbers of household after Larsson (1985). * In total, there were 9,344 households in the Uppland area in 1540.

Law-area	Size Sq. km	No. of households (gårdar) 1540	No. cemeteries (sites)	No. Single graves (sites)	No. Hillforts
Fjädrundaland	1.992	*	665	2,920	24
Attundaland	2.896	*	2,094	5,864	89
Roden	3.014	*	771	1,571	10
Gotland	3.158		1,053	5,716	83
Närke	7.077	2,501	235	1,061	22
Västmanland	7.261	2,369	875	3,645	51
Södermanland	9.584	4,762	3,435	12,449	388
Tiundaland	10.485	*	1,890	5,761	61
Småland	17.141	11,618	852	6,020	2
Skåne	19.957		577	12,832	41
Borgartingslag	21.826		3,085	11,361	321
Värmland	22.709	1,157	213	3,282	38
Hälsingland	23.177	2,704 (HL)+ 710 (MP) + 1,994 (ÅNG)	298	3,713	16
Västergötland	26.034	11,285	1,318	16,179	71
Dalarna	26.701	3,226	52	456	0
Östergötland	26.975	6,706	2,959	19,572	238
Jämtland	37,690		30	794	1
Hålogaland	45,800		965	2,355	6
Eidsivatingslag	64,489		1,199	2,473	55
Frostatingslag	71,552		1,758	4,957	27
Gulatingslag	76,693		2,492	12,159	150

and Hoeper 2008:249ff.; Ystgaard 2014:30). They indicate a certain level of societal and military organisation. The dated sites, both in Norway and Sweden, indicate use from the late Bronze Age to the early Middle Ages, with a significant peak in the late Roman Period (200–400) and the Migration Period (400–550). It appears that

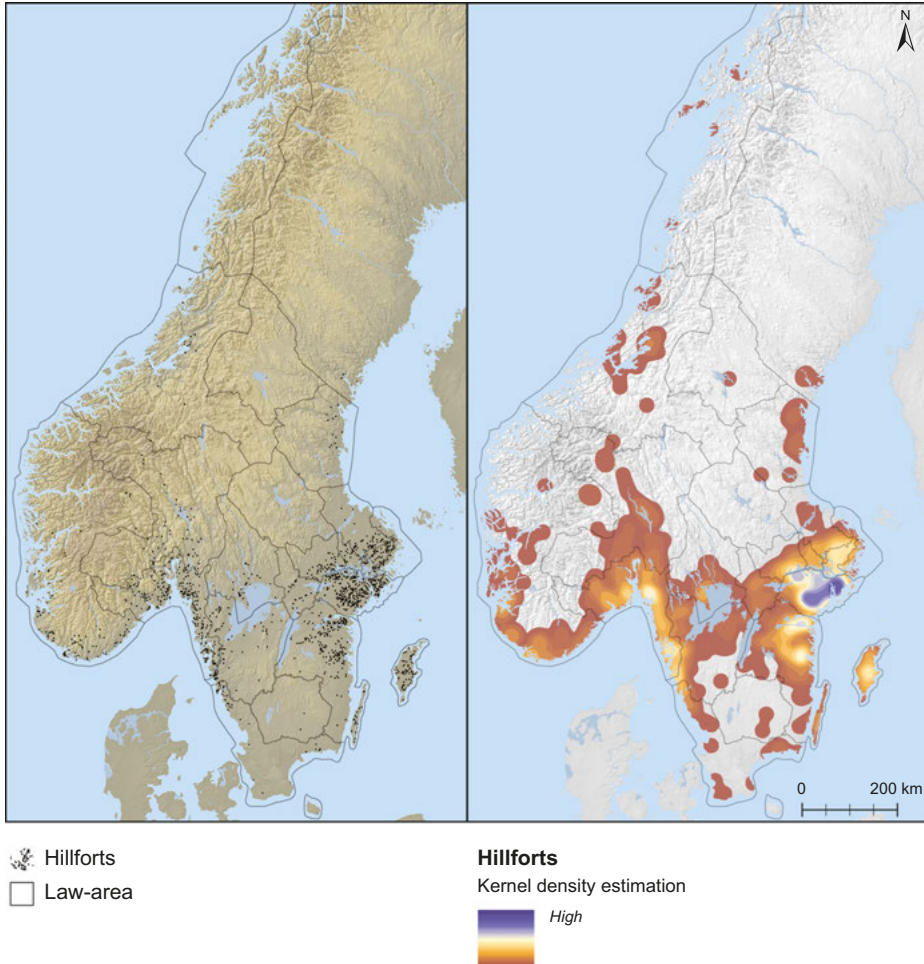


Fig. 4.7: The distribution of Hillforts in Scandinavia. $N = c 1,700$. Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) in 30 groups. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

most sites fell out of use around 550, and only sporadic use is recorded in the Viking and Middle Ages (Olausson 2008, 2009; Ystgaard 2014:29–30).

4.2.3 The royal manors and sites

Systematic cadastres over medieval royal property in Norway and Sweden do not exist anymore. According to the *Hirdskrá*, c. 1270, the King's chancellor was responsible for keeping records of the royal land in a cadastre named *jarðarskrá*, now lost (KLN, 7:647). In Scandinavia, royal manors are first mentioned in skaldic poetry around AD

900. In *Ynglingatal* the skald Tjodolf from Kvine (9–10th centuries) mentions well-known places such as *Fýri* (6:12), *Uppsaliir* (15.2, 22:8, 29:10), and *Ræningr* (27:4), and more uncertainly identified places such as *Skúta* (3:10), *Lófund*, and *Himinfjöll* (26:4) (Zilmer 2005:247). However, their status as royal manors is highly uncertain. In Norway, *Utstein* is the first mention of a royal manor (*Haraldskvæði*, c. 900) (Fig. 4.4).

The Icelandic sagas are important sources to Norwegian history, and many royal manors are named there. My identification of royal manors is based on a review of *Morkinnskinna*, *Fagerskinna*, *Ágrip*, *Egilssaga*, and *Heimskringla*. There are 5,207 diplomas registered in *Regesta Norwegica* prior to 1350. Among these are found c. 30–40 royal charters issued at farms such as *Avaldsnes*, *Buskär* (*Båhuslen*), *Berg* and *Bräcke* (both *Jämtland*), *Fåberg*, *Fana*, *Fitjar*, *Gryting*, *Holøs*, and *Lo*, and at other places such as *Agder*, *Kvitsøy*, *Karmsund*, and *Jersøy*. Some of the places where the kings issued charters were royal manors, while others belonged to magnates, monasteries, or churches. The present author has previously identified 32 royal manors, 50 baronial estates, and 52 huseby farms in Norway dating to before the mid-14th century (Iversen 2008, 2009) (Fig. 4.8).

The record of Swedish royal manors is poor. The earliest existing systematic inventory of Swedish royal land is from the late Middle Ages, and it is not possible to identify the early medieval royal manors from this source (Larsson 1985). In 1684, the antiquarian Johan Hadorph made the first attempt to identify medieval royal manors in Sweden (*Starbäck* and *Bäckström* 1886:752), undertaken on behalf of the Swedish Reduktionskommissionen, whose mission was to restore lost medieval royal land to the Swedish crown. It soon became clear that the task was difficult and that Hadorph's 20-page list had many shortcomings. Still, the list is of some value to contemporary research as it contains a copy of the list of royal manors from the now lost *Skatteboken* from 1413, in addition to a review of medieval charters and the *Erikskrönikan* published by Hadorph himself in 1674.

For lack of better alternatives, this study has registered sites where the Swedish kings issued charters prior to 1350 (Fig. 4.9). The data is compiled from *Diplomatarium Suecanum* and checked against J. B. L. D Strömberg's (2013:107–14) thorough work on medieval Swedish royal itineraries. This has enabled identification of 61 rural sites in Sweden where royal charters were issued prior to 1350. Some 30–40 of these represent royal rural manors; the remainder represent *thing* sites, monasteries, and churches. However, this material only reflects where the kings travelled and issued charters, and the data is not directly comparable to how royal manors are registered in Norway. Another challenge is the alienation of royal lands during the 13th–14th centuries as discussed by Jerker Rosén (1949).

The surviving Swedish royal charters prior to AD 1350 were issued by the kings Johan Sverkersson (1216–22), Eiríkr XI Eriksón (1222–29), Birger Jarl (of *Bjälbo*) (1248–66), Valdemar Birgersson and Magnús Ladulås (1250–90), Birger Magnússon (1290–1318), Magnús Eiríksson (1319–63), and Eiríkr Magnússon (1339–59). Regarding Swedish royal land a distinction is drawn between *bona corona* and *bona regalia*

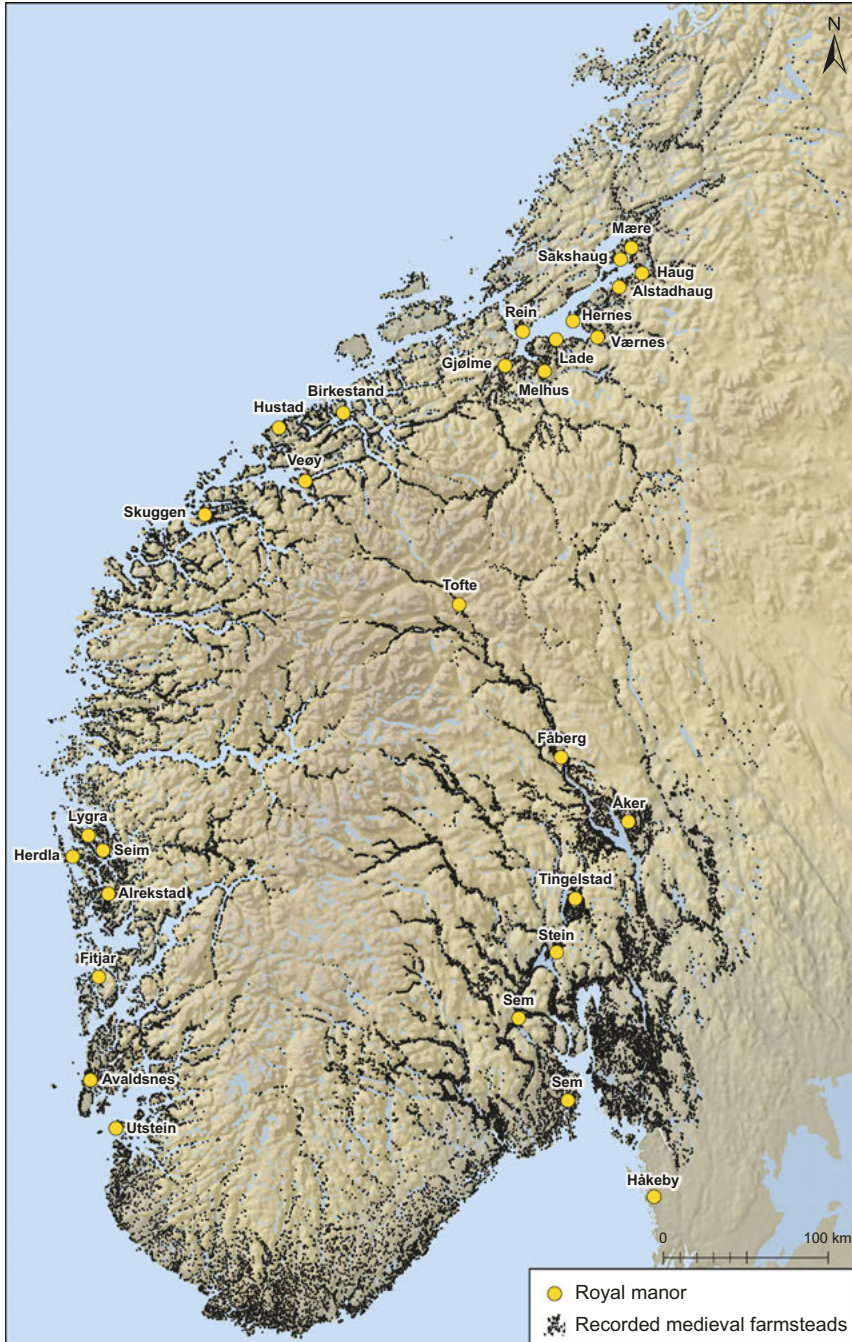


Fig. 4.8: Royal manors in Norway mentioned in Sagas and Diplomas prior to 1350 (N = 32). Black dots are medieval farmsteads recorded from historical maps (N = 49,974). Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

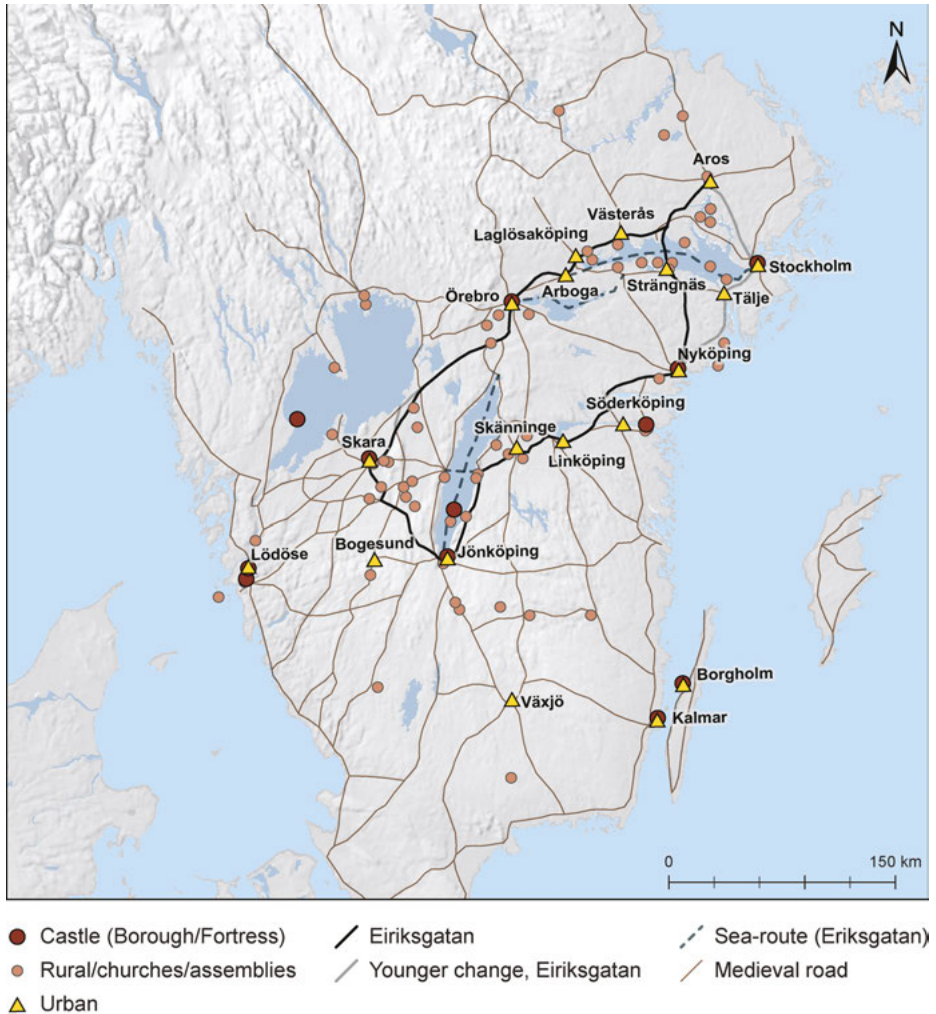


Fig. 4.9: Sweden. Royal sites were Swedish kings issued charters prior to 1350 and medieval roads (data roads: from Schück 1934 and Brink 2000a). Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

denoting crown lands on the one hand, and *bona acquisita* – the king’s family property – on the other (Rosén 1949:22; Line 2007:284; Iversen 2011). In practice, it is difficult to determine whether a royal site was a king’s private land (*patrimonalia*) or crown land (*regalia*), with the exception of the c. 30 *bona regalia* manors (*Kungalev*) in Skåne recorded in the cadastre of King Valdemar (c. 1231) (Aakjær 1926–42; Andrén 1983; Iversen 2011), which is included in this study. In a few cases, different kings have issued charters at the same farm, indicating some sort of *bona regalia* (i.e. at Dåvö, Alsnö, Kungs-Husby, and Tynnelsö).

Since Henrik Schück's (1914) classic work on *Uppsala öd huseby* farms, the latter have been central to the academic discussion on early royal power, particularly in Sweden and Norway (Olausson 2000; Iversen 2011, 2016; Pedersen et al. 2016). Nearly 140 *huseby* farms are known from the Nordic countries, Schleswig, and the Orkney Islands (Steinnes 1955, 1959; Brink 2000a, 2000b; Crawford 2006; Westerdahl and Stylegar 2004). These can be regarded as part of a royal system for the storage of tax paid in kind (Iversen 2016c; see also Brink 2000). This seems to apply not only for the *huseby* farms in Norway and Sweden but also the *bo* farms in Västergötland, the *Uppsala öd* in Norrland, sometimes called Huseby and sometimes *Hög* (Grundberg 2000), and the 'Sveabod' in Öland (Brink 2000b). The case of Västergötland supports an interpretation of the *bo* farms as royal storage places for payment in kind. According to the early Vestgötalagen (c. 1220), Västergötland was divided into eight *thing* districts. The law stipulates that (collective) fines (or taxes?) (*bo*) paid to the king by the people of Västergötland was to be collected among the eight *thing* districts (*a aldræmannæ þingi*) in proportion to their size. Both the *herreds* constituting the eight larger districts and the centres are specified: *Vað*, *Kynda*,¹ *Guðem*, *Lung*, *As*, *Holæsio*, *Skalandæ*, and *Vartoptæ* (Collin and Schlyter 1827:69). The later Vestgötalagen (c. 1330) states that all these centres were part of the *Uppsala öd* and forbidden to alienate (*sköta*) (read: to sell) or grant as *veitsle*-land (*veta*) (read: to rent out or give for royal service). "They were all *Uppsala öd*" (*Þer æru allir upsala öþer*) and owned (*Þem atti*) by the reigning king (YVG II XLVI § 8, Collin and Schlyter 1827:194).

Traditionally *Uppsala öd* – meaning 'the wealth of Uppsala' – has been treated as royal manors (Rosén 1949:70; Bjørkvik 1968:44; Grundberg 2000:77). However, only a handful of royal charters were issued at the *huseby* and *bo* farms (only at Kungs-Husby (Trøgd) and Husby (Dalarna), and the *bo* farms Vad and Gudhem). Most likely, the *Uppsala öd* was of greater importance to the royal economy than to the royal itinerary. With a few exceptions, there is nothing to indicate that the *Uppsala öd* farms were the preferred places in royal itineraries. The following analysis therefore focuses primarily on royal sites appearing in the context of royal itineraries, and not the *Uppsala öd* farms.

Turning to the question of urban and rural itinerary places: as most towns were established in the 11th–14th centuries, only the rural sites where the king issued charters should be regarded as potentially old places in the royal itinerary. In total, c. 450 of 872 royal charters registered in the *Diplomatarium Suecanum* have a known provenance to a rural or urban site. Of these, 296 charters were issued at 19 urban sites, and 157 charters at 61 rural sites. The sites issuing the most charters were Alsnö in Uppland (15 charters), Dåvö in Västmanland (8 charters), and Kungs-Husby in Uppland (6 charters). During the period 1200–1350, the rural sites gradually lost significance as administrative royal centres (Rosén 1949). In the period

¹ In 1330 *Kynda* is replaced with *Ökull* (see Rosén 1949: 70).

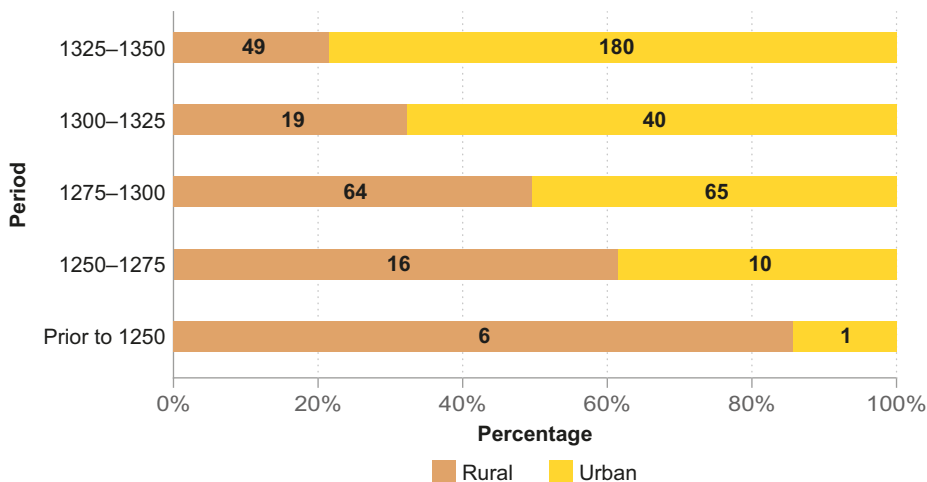


Fig. 4.10: Swedish royal charters with provenience issued prior to 1350. Distribution per 25 years/urban and rural sites, N = 450. Data from *Diplomatarium Suecanum*. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

1325–1350 c. 80% of royal charters were issued at urban sites, a reversal from the previous century when charters mainly were issued at rural sites (Fig. 4.10).

Additionally, this survey has included one royal manor mentioned in *Erikskrönikan*: Håtuna in Uppland (granted Uppsala cathedral in 1311). The others royal manors of *Erikskrönikan* (Lena, Ettak, and Sanda) are counted among the sites where royal charters had been issued. Furthermore, a few farms have been included that are explicitly mentioned as ‘kungsgård’ in the abstracts of *Diplomatarium Suecanum*: Stång (DS 2681), Husby (Tierp) (DS 3803 and 3568), Barkarö (DS 4194), and Vadstena gård (DS 4794).

To summarize: the study includes 32 royal manors in medieval Norway (including Jämtland and Bohuslän), 61 rural sites where royal charters were issued in medieval Sweden, plus 5 other manors – in total 66 royal sites – in addition to 30 *bona regalia* farms registered in AD 1231 in Skåne, which was part of medieval Denmark.

4.3 Results

The results of the survey will be presented below in three cumulative steps. First, the major free population in Scandinavia based on a kernel density estimation of graves and cemeteries will be identified and compared with the onomastic identification of the tribe names in *Getica* and *Widsith*. Second, the distribution of hillforts will be analysed in relation to the areas identified in step 1. Third, in order to clarify

how larger territories grew together, the spatial pattern of the royal manors known from later periods will be investigated in relation to steps 1 and 2.

4.3.1 Location and size of the early tribes in *Scandza*

Getica lists 25 tribes (Denmark excluded), and *Widsith* 13 tribes, four of which are not found in *Getica*, making a total of 29 distinct tribe names. In addition, 13 areas have been identified as containing concentrations of graves representing groups unmentioned in the early classical accounts.

In **Hålogaland** the *Adogit* (G-1)/*Amopinum* (W-3) have been associated with the *Håleygir* of northern Norway. The distribution of graves indicates two core areas in Hålogaland: (1) Lofoten, Vesterålen, and Senja, and (2) Helgeland. It has been argued that the law province Hålogaland encompassed three *fylkir* (shires) in the Viking Age (Iversen 2015). The *Qmð*-district has been considered as the northern shire, equivalent to northern Nordland (including Vesterålen) and southern Troms including the island Andøya where the prefix *And-* linguistically relates to *Qmð* (Guttormsen 1994:84; Bertelsen 2014; Iversen 2015). The central shire consisted of Salten and Lofoten, while the third was Helgeland (Iversen 2015). In both Helgeland and Omd KDE values of 2 appear, indicating a relatively small population of free people.

The Hälsingland consisted of three lands (Hälsingland, Medelpad, and Ängermanland). There are no tribes mentioned here, but archaeology shows two kernels of graves at a KDE value of 4 (Hälsingland and Medelpad).

The Uppland area spanned several law areas (Tiundaland including Gästrikland, Attundaland, Fjärdrundaland, and Norra Roden). The main tribe living here, the Svear, was among the larger groups in *Scandza* estimating by its KDE value of 29. The kernel was in Attundaland and Tiundaland. High KDE values are also found in Fjärdrundaland (23) and Södermanland (19). According to these values, the Svear area seems to have had one of the largest free populations in *Scandza*. The Svear (*Suiones*) are together with the Finnas the only Scandinavian groups mentioned by Tacitus in AD 98 (ch. 44) (the Finnas in ch 46).

In **Östergötland** the names of at least two tribes appear in the classical texts, the Tjust (KDE 8) and the East-Geats (KDE 19). Both can be identified by the distribution of graves and relatively high KDE values. In addition an unnamed group appears in the south-western borderland of the Östergötland law province, in the Tveta district (KDE 5). In the south-eastern part of the historically known law province, the *Eowum* of the *Widtsith* may be identified with the people of Öland appearing in the archaeological record with a KDE value of 6. The East-Geats were the major group in the area appearing with a KDE value of 19.

This study places the *Vagoth* in **Gotland**, with a KDE value of 12, indicating a fairly large free population. Moving on to **Skåne**, there are surprisingly few finds of graves and hillforts. The law area consisted of three major lands: Halland, Skåne,

and Blekinge, in addition to Bornholm. As discussed above, the large ‘empty areas’ without graves in the Skåne law province may indicate a bias in the archaeological record caused by early intensive land clearance. The area was described by Jordanes as flat and fertile and often disturbed by enemy tribes. It seems he included the Tjust and Gotland (Vagoth) areas in his general description, which fits rather well with the topography of the coastal lands and islands of southern Sweden (apart from Tjust, which is a somewhat more hilly landscape). At least five tribal names appear in the Skåne law area: the Berger (KDE 4), Hallin (KDE 5), Luguder (KDE 2), Himler (uncertain), and Fjärer (KDE 5), most of them with low KDE value, certainly lower than expected in such a heavily populated area. Only the Hallin group (in southern Hallland) and the Fjärer reach a KDE value of 5. In addition, two areas stand out for their concentrations of graves, Blekinge (KDE 4) and Göninge (KDE 4), but cannot be identified with any tribal names. According to Wulfstan’s report (c. 890), Skåne belonged to the Danes, Bornholm was an independent kingdom, while Blekinge, Møre, Öland, and Gotland were politically subordinated to the Swedes. This may indicate that Blekinge and Bornholm were subsequently incorporated into the Skåne law province at a later stage. If so, the law province may have expanded towards the east and possibly the north from a core in Skåne.

In **Småland**, the named tribe Finnveder appears with a KDE value of 4. The law province consisted of three small lands: Varend, Njudung, and Finnveden. In terms of graves, Varend shows a higher KDE value (6) compared with Finnveden, but no tribe is mentioned here in the classical texts. It is safe to disregard the speculative theory of Otto von Friesen (1918) placing the Eruli in Varend on the basis of their matrilineal inheritance rules, which stand in contrast to those in other regions of Sweden (Ellegård 1987:6).

The West-Geats in **Västergötland** have a somewhat lower KDE value (12) compared with the East-Geats (19). Svennung’s identification of the *Mixi* with Hising, located in western Västergötland, is uncertain and excluded from analysis here. Compared with Östergötland, Västergötland has less than half the number of cemeteries (1,318 versus 2,959) and only a third of the hillforts (71 versus 238), while their respective numbers of single graves do not differ so widely: 16,179 (west) versus 19,572 (east). There were c. 515 medieval parishes in Västergötland alone, and 150 in Östergötland. The number of households in 1540 was 11,285 (west) versus 6,706 (east). This may indicate that one of the largest prehistoric populations in *Scandza* should be expected in Västergötland. By comparison, the entire Svear area had in total 355 medieval parishes – Uppland (170), Västmanland (60), Södermanland (85), and Närke (40) – far below the numbers in Västergötland alone. In total there are registered 33,271 single graves and 9,965 cemeteries in the Svea-area and c. 35,750/4,277 in the Göta area. Hence, the above figures could indicate that graves are underrepresented in Västergötland. This is also partially suggested by the map showing cultivation areas without graves.

It should however be noted that in the late Middle Ages the Göta areas had low levels of freeholders (*Skattebønder*), which may reflect major trends in earlier

landownership. Only 3,243 households (28.7%) were held by freeholders in Västergötland and 1,026 (15.3%) in Östergötland, compared with 4,193 in Uppland (44.9%), 1,275 (51%) in Närke, 931 (19.6%) in Södermanland, and 1,165 (50.2%) in Västmanland (Larsson 1985). The ratio of freeholders to non-freeholders in the entire Svear area in 1540 (7,564 out of 18,976 = 39.9%) and the Göta area (4,269 out of 17,991 = 23.7%) show clear differences in landownership which could be of significance for earlier periods as well. In the KDE analysis, each graveyard was weighted as equal to 5 graves; graves are taken as a proxy for free population, as earlier discussed. It is therefore interesting to compare the proportion of freeholders with the proportion of graves in these two larger landscapes.

- Number of freeholder households AD 1540: **7,563** (Svear)/**4,269** (Götar). This gives a distribution for the total number of freeholder in these to major landscapes as 63.9% (Svear) versus 36.1% (Götar)
- 33,271 single graves and 9,965 (x 5) cemeteries = **83,096** graves (Svear)/35,750 single graves and 4,277 (x 5) cemeteries = **55,135** graves (Götar). This gives a distribution for the total number of graves in the two landscapes as 60.1% (Svear) versus 39.9% (Götar).

To summarize: comparing the two main Swedish landscapes, the distribution of households held by freeholders (63.9/36.1%) in the late Middle Ages is about the same as the distribution of prehistoric graves (60.1%/39.9%). The significance of this will be treated in greater detail below. Clearly, landownership and levels of unfree/free people are important factors in the distribution of graves and the social stratum that defined the tribe.

In **Värmland** only one unmentioned group can be identified (KDE 3). Within the later **Borgarthing area** at least four groups are reported: the Ö-gröter (KDE 7) and Raner (KDE 9) in Ranrike and the Lidvikinger (KDE 9) and Grener (KDE 6) further west. The Lidvikinger in present-day Østfold and Vestfold were the larger group here. In the **Eidsivathing-area** three groups are recorded, the Raumer (KDE 3), Hader (KDE 4), and Heider (KDE 6), the latter with a higher KDE value than the others.

Concerning the **Gulathing area** four groups have been identified: the Egder (KDE 4), *Eunixit* (KDE 5), Ryger (KDE 15), and Horder (KDE 2). The survey has included Hardanger (KDE 1), which is not mentioned as a tribe in the classical texts, and also Valdres (KDE 1) in the mountainous area. Concerning the *Augandzi*, *Eunixit*, and *Aetel Rugi* the identification indicated by archaeology is somewhat different from the traditional identification of *Eunixit* with the Ryfylke, northern Rogaland. However, both the sequence of the groups in *Getica* and the KDE values indicate a likely identification of *Augandzi* with East Agder, the *Eunixit* ('Øyboere', islanders) with the Lista-Spangereid area and *Aetel Rugi* with southern Rogaland. Regardless of this, the Ryger were the dominant group with a KDE value of 15.

Finally, in the **Frostathing area**, the Trønder group shows a KDE value of 10, with a kernel in Inn-Trøndelag. The *Ranii* in Romsdal can be identified by archaeology (KDE 2). In addition, Jämtland (KDE 1) and Namdalen (KDE 3) appear in the grave material as small tribes though passing unmentioned in *Getica* and *Widsith*.

To summarize: the material suggests that the tribes with the largest *free* population in *Scandza* were the Svears (29), the Geats (East-Geats 19/West-Geats 12), and the Ryger (15), followed by Gotere (Gotland) (12), Trøndere (10), the people of Viken (9), Raner (9), and the people of Tjust (8) (Fig. 4.11). These areas have the highest density of graves and cemeteries. The area of Skåne is underrepresented in the grave material, and the tribes there were probably larger than this study can demonstrate.

4.3.2 Hillforts and tribes

The following section will focus on the defence systems of the larger tribes identified above. Hillforts were organised in the landscape in three major ways: (1) central to the populated areas, (2) in the border areas between main populated areas, and (3) defending 'weak' points in the landscapes vulnerable to attack, for instance by the sea, fjord mouths, or valleys (Fig. 4.12).

The Svear area. The highest density of hillforts in the Svear landscape is found in the surroundings of the Himmerfjord, the main entrance to Lake Mälaren through Södermanland. In Södermanland three clusters of hillforts stand out with KDE values of 29, 25, and 20, the latter in the western part of Lake Mälaren bordering Västmanland. By comparison, KDE 13 is the highest value in the Uppland area. The distribution of graves and hillforts in the Svear area is somewhat reversed. Södermanland, the southern landscape bordering the East-Geats and the Baltic Sea, has the highest density of hillforts, while the area north-east of Lake Mälaren has the highest density of graves. This indicates the strategic importance of the waterways leading to Lake Mälaren, and the need for defence against the East-Geats. There seems to have been a larger military commitment on the part of the people of Södermanland than on the folklands in Uppland, assessed by the density of hillforts. It is difficult to assess whether the Svear groups (the folklands) collaborated across the folklands in operating these defence systems. **Gotland** has a kernel with a KDE value of 13 indicating a well-fortified island.

There are two main kernels of hillforts in the law province of **Östergötland**. The classical texts mention three tribes settling in the area of the later law province, namely the *Ostrogothae*, the *Theutes*, and more uncertainly the *Eowum* (Øland), in addition to an unnamed group in Tveta identified by archaeology. The highest density of hillforts (KDE 19) is found at the Vikbolandet, a peninsula between the fjords Bråviken and Släbaken. Obviously this area was of great strategic importance for defending the main habitation areas of the East-Geats against attacks from the sea and the Svears. The other kernel locates to the Tjust area (KDE 15), which was

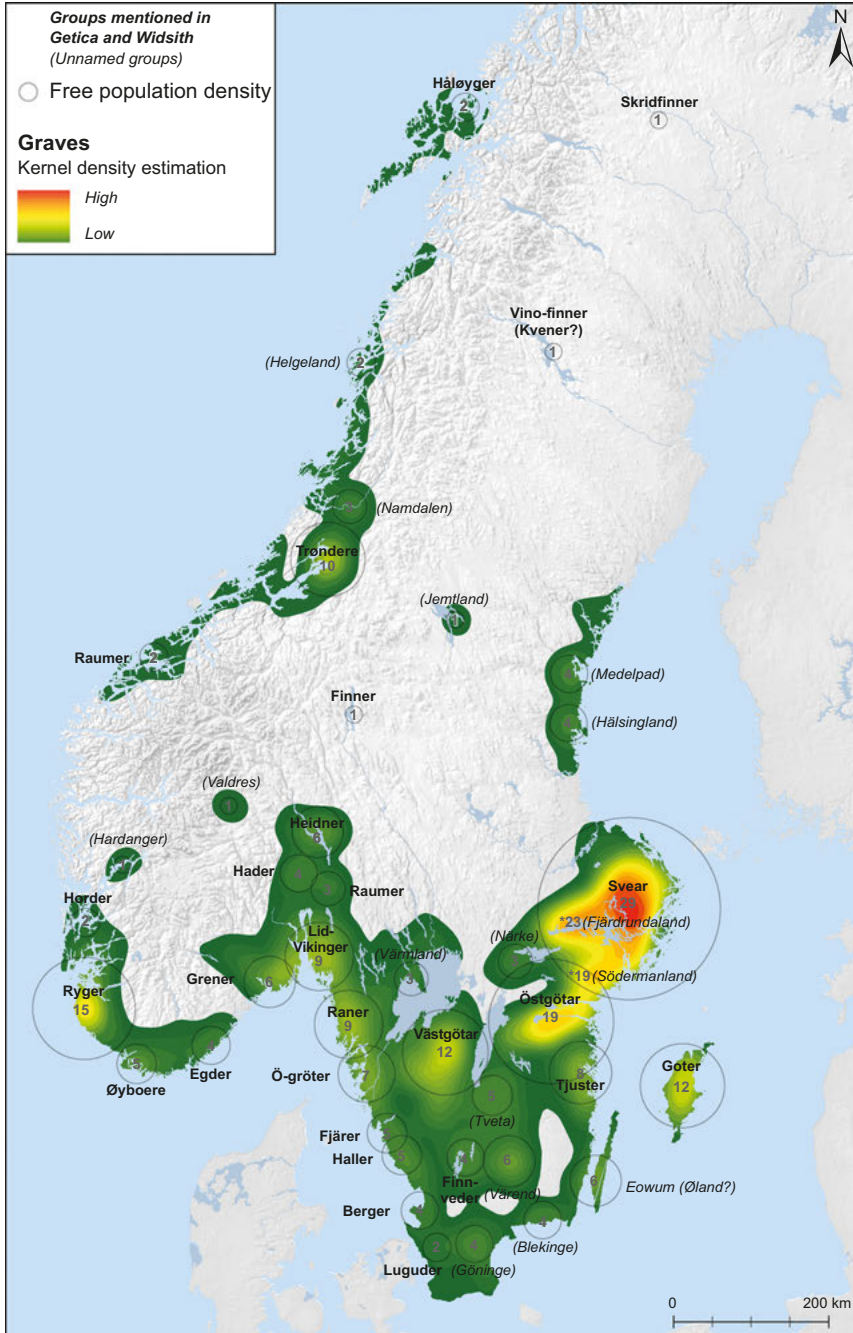


Fig. 4.11: The tribes of Scandinavia placed at the highest density of single graves and cemeteries. Each cemetery equals five graves. The size of the ring indicates group size (free population). Only KDE values from 2–30 (and single kernels of KDE value 1) are displayed on the map. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

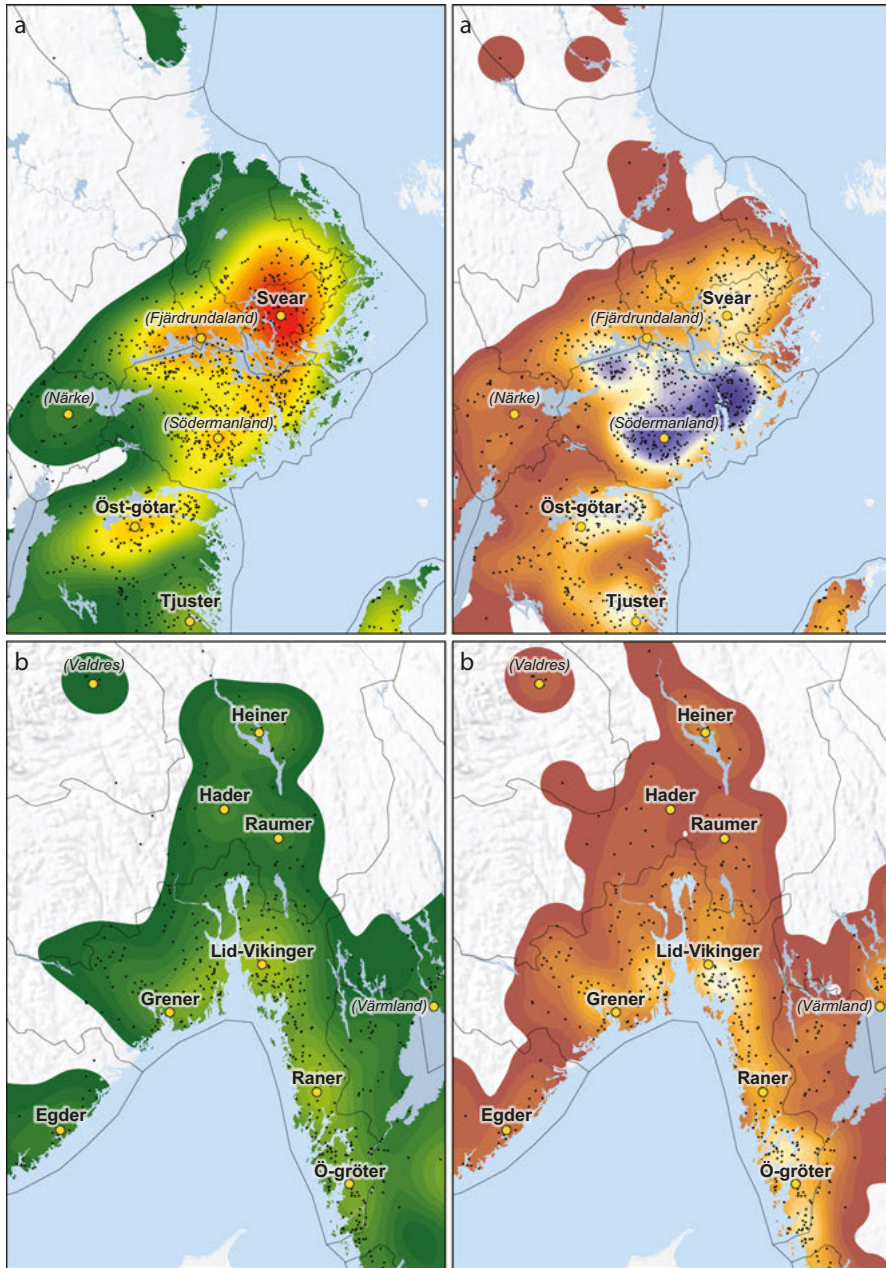


Fig. 4.12: Hillforts and KDE values. Illustration: I. T. Böckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

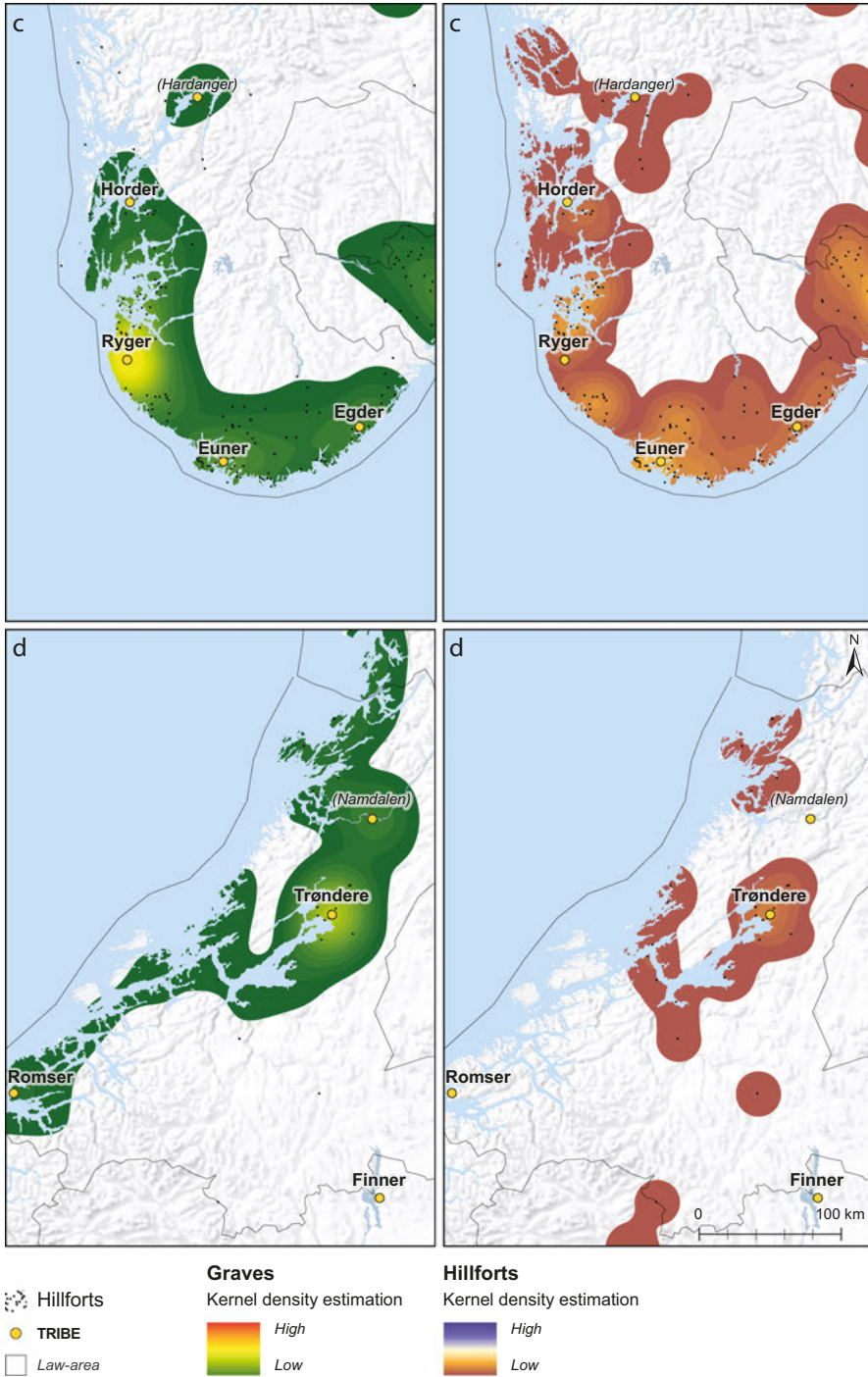


Fig. 4.12 (continued)

vulnerable from the sea and the East-Geats. At Öland there is a KDE value of 5, but only low values in the Tveta area. The recent excavation of the Sandby borg at Öland demonstrates the level of aggression that could take place at hillforts. The Sandby borg is a hillfort of the ringfort type, typical for Öland, and the only one of the 15–7 hillforts at Öland located by the sea on the eastern side of the island. The Sandby borg was attacked sometime in the late 5th century and thereafter sealed off for a long period. The people killed (the defenders) and animals starved to death were left to rot, and the site was undisturbed until the archaeological excavations began in 2011 covering 300 m² (6% of the total area) (Alfsson et al. 2018). As of 2018, remains of minimum 26 individuals, including three children (2–5 years) and an infant (1.5–3 months) have been identified as part of what is believed to be a massacre of several hundred people. So far no women have been identified among the deceased. The attack happened during summer (between late spring and early autumn). The identity of the attackers remains a matter of speculation. The site was abandoned and the deceased remained unburied by their community or by survivors of the battle, suggesting that the attackers besieged the Borgby area for a long period, and even perhaps the whole island of Öland. Öland was later subordinated to the Östergötland law province.

There are six kernels of hillforts in the **Borgarthing area** reaching KDE values from 9 to 16. The highest density is found on the eastern side of the Oslofjord (Østfold) (KDE 16) and in southern part of Ränrike (KDE 14 and KDE 12), while there is KDE 11 in Vestfold and KDE 9 in Grenland. Within the Borgarthing area Jordanes mentions the *Granni*-people (Grener), the *Ragnarricci* (Ranrike), and the *Euagre Otingisis* (Ö-gröter) and *Widsith* adds the larger group *Lidwicingum*. In general, the density of hillforts is highest on both sides of the entrance of the fjord (the Viken area) and along important waterways to the south in Ranrike. The major kernels are found central to the medieval counties of Grenland, Vestfold, Vingulmark, and the southern half of Ranrike.

Within the later **Gulathing area** three kernels with KDE values of 6, 7, and 8 have been identified. The classical texts name four groups here: the *Augandzi*, the *Eunixit*, the *Aetel Rugi*, and the *Arochi*. There are two kernels respectively to the north and south of the main area of the *Rugi* (KDE 6 and 9). This may indicate a need for defence against the neighbouring tribes. In the area identified with the *Eunixit* (the Lista area) the hillforts are co-located with the kernels of graves, by the fjords and waterways. However, some hillforts in the inland valleys and waterways indicate a need for defence in the north. Apart from a handful of hillforts in Etne (Sunnhordland) there are no larger kernels among the *Arochi* (Hordaland).

Within the **Frostathing area** there is only one kernel of hillforts with a KDE value of 4. Within the law area two tribes are mentioned here: the *Prōwendas* and the *Ranii* (Romsdal). The hillforts are located in the Inn-Trøndelag close to the kernel of graves. The few hillforts (KDE 2) in Namdalen are located centrally to sailing routes and the fjordmouth. In Jämtland, only one hillfort is known.

4.3.3 Royal sites and manors

This section will examine the distribution of royal manors in the medieval Norwegian and Swedish kingdoms (plus Skåne, which became part the Danish kingdom) in tandem with the results concerning population and military organisation.

In medieval Norway, four major clusters of royal manors have been identified (Fig. 4.13):

- (1) **Eastern Norway:** the Royal manors, Håkeby, Sem (Tønsberg), Sem (Eiker), Stein, Tingelstad, Åker, and Fåberg are located within a day's journey from each other. The four latter are located by the mouth of important valleys, Sem (Eiker) by Numedal and Sigdal, Stein by Hallingdal, Tingelstad by Dokka, and Valdres and Åker by Gudbrandsdalen and Østerdalen. They were located centrally to the routes in and out of the valleys, controlling the bottlenecks of these landscapes and were well suited for royal visits to the Inland. Håkeby (Bohuslän) and Sem (Tønsberg) are located on either side of the Viken Bay. In general, the royal manors in eastern Norway are situated centrally to important travel routes at some distance from the most populated areas of Vingulmark and Ranrike.
- (2) **Western Norway:** The information about *Haraldr hárfagri's* five farms in Hordaland and Rogaland is considered among the most credible in the uncertain tradition of *Haraldr* (Helle 1993:149f). The manors mentioned are Seim, Alrekstad, and Fitjar in Hordaland and Utstein and Avaldsnes in Rogaland (Egs 36; Hkr, *Haralds saga ins hárfagra*, Ch. 38, bd. 1:74). In *Haraldskvæði* (c. 900) the Utstein manor is mentioned as a royal residence (verse 9). In addition, others sources mention two royal manors in Nordhordland (Lygra, Herdla). A cluster of four royal manors is found in Nord-Hordaland, which was an important gateway for overseas travel to Hjaltland (Shetland), the Orkneys, the Faroes, Iceland, and Greenland. In general, royal manors appear more frequently in areas north of the large populated area Jæren. The seven manors – Utstein, Avaldsnes, Fitjar, Alrekstad, Seim, Herdla, and Lygra – are clearly associated with the main sailing route along the coast ('leden') controlling both the fjord mouth and overseas travels (Iversen 2008; Mundal 2018; Skre 2018).
- (3) The **Sunnmøre and Romsdalen region:** A cluster of four royal manors is found in the borderland of the Gulathingsslag and Frostathingsslag areas. These were Skuggen, Veøy, Hustad, and Bjerkestrand, all central to fjords and sailing-routes. Prominent grave monuments (cairns) are found at farms close to Hustad (Sunde, Male, Malefeten, Nerland, Storholmen, and Breivik); however, their relevance for this study is limited, as all are dated to the early Iron Age. Nearby Bjerkestrand, at the farm Frei, 'Egil Ullserk's' grave (22 diameters x 1.5 meter high, cairn) has been found and dated to AD 700–850, the only great grave-monument dating to this chapter's investigation period that is located close to a royal manor in this cluster. The royal manors are located to an area with graves with a KDE value of 2 representing the small *Getica* group named *Ranii* (Raumser).

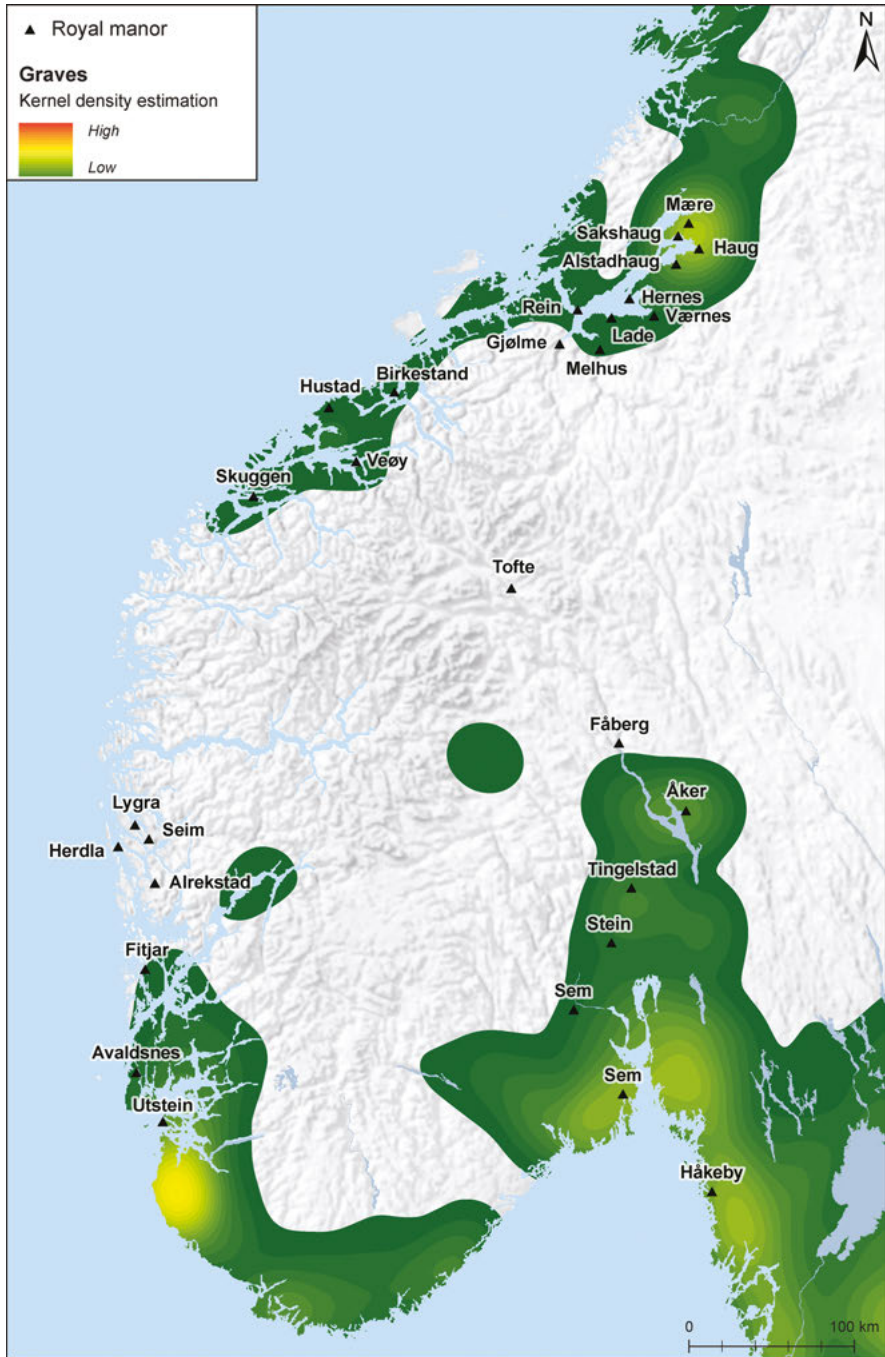


Fig. 4.13: Norway. Royal manors and graves (KDE values). Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

- (4) **Trøndelag:** The Norwegian king and his followers travelled among a limited number of royal manors, located in the coastal areas or by central rivers and important routes. This was also the case in Trøndelag. However, it was not until the early 11th century that royal power asserted itself in the Trøndelag region; previously the identified royal manors may have been controlled by the Lade jarls.

In central Trøndelag 10 royal manors are known. There was at least one manor in each of the eight shires in Trøndelag (Iversen 2016b). There were two manors in the Strinda shire: Lade – the most prominent royal manor – in addition to Hernes located close to the important Frostathing site. At a short distance from the Trøndelag core area is situated the manor Rein, Stadsbygd (Rissa)(Nordmøre shire). In 1354 King Magnús Eiríksson (1319–55) tried to exchange (*makeskifte*) six royal manors in Trøndelag for the estate held by Archbishop Óláfr in southern Norway. The Pope failed to give his approval, and the exchange was not completed (DN II, 326).

The jarls' main seat at Lade and five other royal manors are located in areas around the central Trondheimsfjord, south-west of the most populated area in Trøndelag. Four royal manors are located in the densely populated areas of inner Trøndelag, including the site Mære, which according to the sagas was an important pre-Christian cult site, in addition to Sakshaug, Haug, and Alstadhaug.

In medieval Sweden, two major and two minor clusters of royal manors have been identified by focusing on sites central to royal itineraries and royal manors closer than 30 km (Figs. 4.14 and 4.15, upper).

- (5) **Svealand:** The royal sites cluster around Lake Mälaren and connected waterways. In total a string of 16 sites are located within less than 30 km from the next manor, among them prominent manors such as Dävö, Kungs-Huseby, Alsnö, and Uppsala. The cluster is located slightly to the west of the area with the highest density of graves. Lake Mälaren was the key to controlling these landscapes; the many royal sites here should be understood in this light.
- (6) **Geats:** In the area east of Gökhem and Götala (the main *thing* site for Vest-Geats) to Boberg in Östergötland, there is a cluster of 18 royal sites set less than 30 km from each other. These manors are located on each side of Lake Vättern, among them prominent places such as Gudhem, Dimbo, Ettak, Fågelås, Visingsö, Vadstena, and Bjälbo. The latter was a royal *patromonialia*, while the others were probably *regalia* manors. The western sites are located in the central areas of the Västergötland while the eastern sites are located to the west of the area in which the main bulk of the free people in Östergötland have been identified to have been located.
- (7) **Småland:** In Njudung, to the north there is a cluster of four royal manors – Hok, Svenarum, Sandsjö, and Vetlanda – all located close to the northern border of Småland and major medieval roads crossing through these landscapes both north–south and east–west.

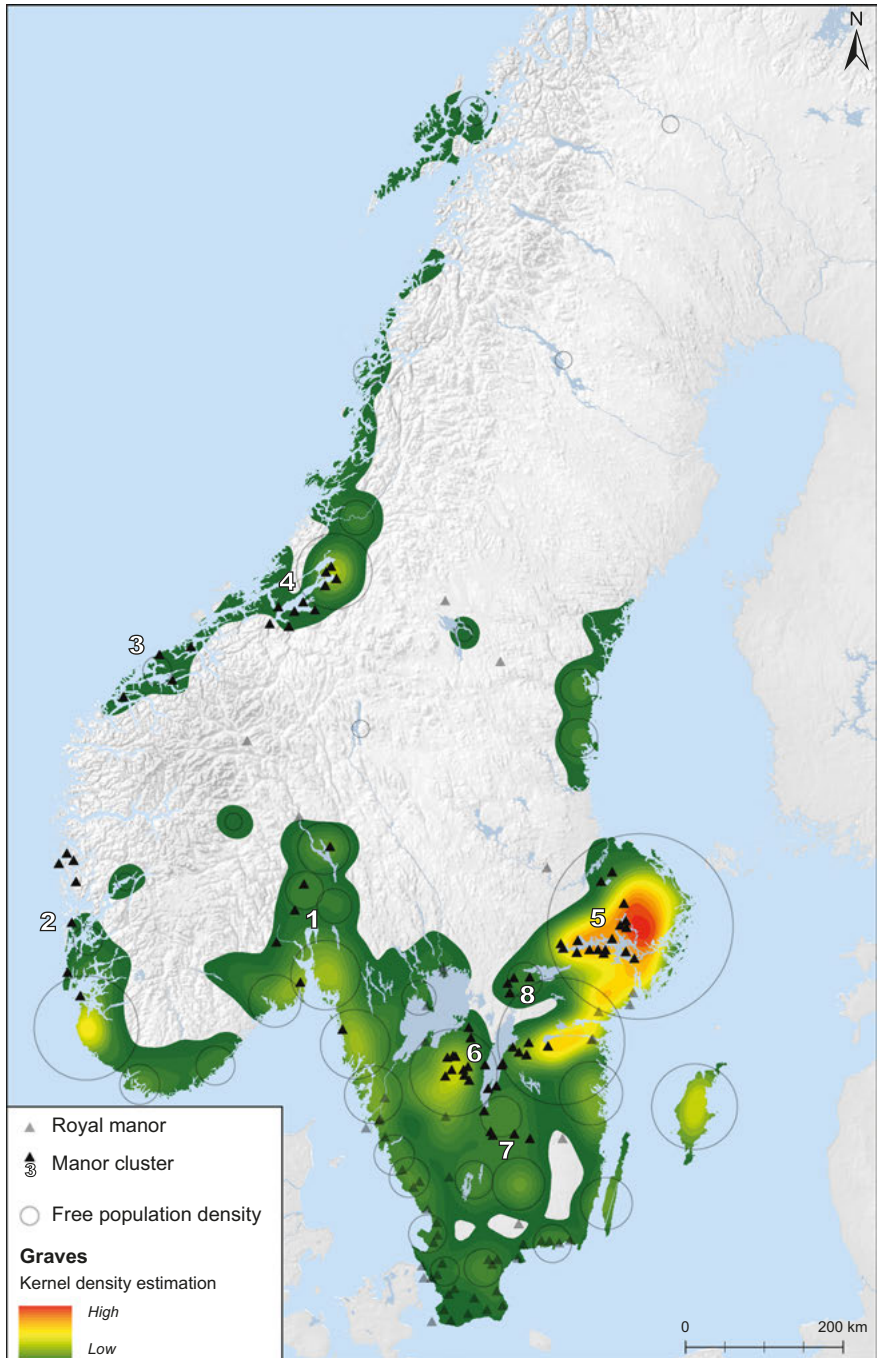


Fig. 4.14: Royal manors and sites in Scandinavia and graves (KDE). Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

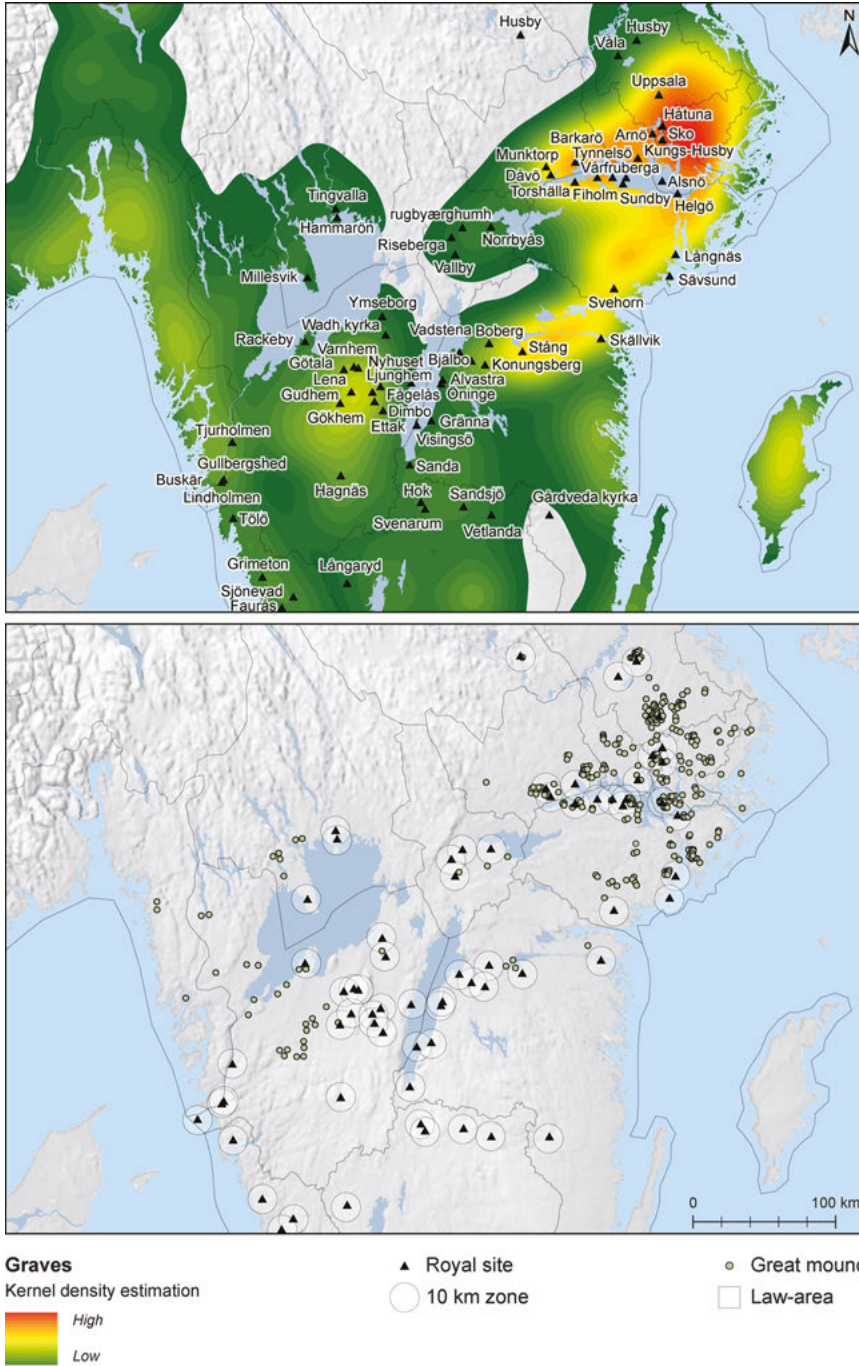


Fig. 4.15: Royal sites in Sweden recorded 1200–1350. Upper: Royal sites and populated areas (free population) (= KDE of graves. Lower: Royal sites and great mounds over 25 diameters (data mounds: from Müller-Wille 1992, Bratt 2008). Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

- (8) **Närke: In the centre of this region** there is a cluster of four royal sites – Valby, Riseberga, *Rugbyærghumg**, and Nordbyås.

Müller-Wille (1992) has identified 44 great mounds of over 25 diameters in the areas of Närke, Värmland, Bohuslän, Västergötland, Östgötland, and Småland (Fig. 4.15, lower). The great mounds of the Geats appear in areas other than the royal sites. Only four of 44 great mounds lie within 10 km proximity from a royal manor, of which there are 40 in the above-mentioned region. Great mounds are found in the vicinity of Valby in Närke and Rackeby, Gökhem, and Ymseborg in Västergötland. Notably, Rackeby was *bona patrimonium* and hence not part of the *regalia* manors (Rosèn 1949:166).

Concerning great mounds and royal sites, the situation in the Svear area is quite different from that of the Göta landscape. In Uppland, Västermanland, and Södermanland, Peter Bratt (2008:128–34) identifies 268 great mounds of over 20 diameters, of which 122 are over 25 diameters and hence comparable to Müller-Willes data. 15 of 18 royal manors in this landscape (all except Svehorn, Sävsund, and Våla) have great mounds in the vicinity, closer than 10 km.

To summarize: compared with Norway, Sweden had few royal sites by the coast; in fact, only two of 58 royal sites are in such locations (Långnäs and Sävsund). Royal sites in the Svear landscape were tightly connected to Lake Mälaren, the key to controlling this area. In the landscapes of the Geats the royal sites are located at important population centres. This may indicate that direct control over land was important to the rulers here (Fig. 4.14). In western Norway the royal sites are located at the coast and must have played an important role in securing the western trade routes (Baug et al. 2019). In eastern Norway the royal manors are located in topographic ‘bottlenecks’ important to controlling the inland valleys. Put simply, the keys for royal power in *Scandza* varied: in the Svear districts it was based on control of the *major lakes*, in the Götar area it was *landed estates*, in western Norway it was controlling and securing trade and transport along the *major sailing route (leden)*, and in eastern Norway it was controlling the resources from *the valleys*.

4.4 Discussion – between tribe and kingdom

Returning to the question set out above: what was the role of geographically bound law areas in the development of Scandinavian peoples’s *ethnogenesis*? And what was the connection between early kingship and the development of the larger law areas?

By combining different trajectories of onomastic, historical, and archaeological data, 25 groups have been identified in *Getica* and *Widsith*, in addition to 13 unmentioned groups identified by archaeological data. Analysis of the role and position of these groups within the emerging Viking kingdoms, based on an integrated triangulated approach utilizing written, archaeological, and onomastic sources, shows a different picture from earlier archaeological identification of political units, chiefdoms, and

power centres. For the first time, an attempt has been made to estimate the size of the tribes (the free population) of *Scandza* and to trace their relation to the later law regions (Tab. 4.4, Fig. 4.16).

Tab. 4.4: Scandinavia: tribes, law areas and kingdoms AD 500–1350.

Kingdoms c. 1100–1350	Law-area c. 800–1100	Tribes c. 500–800	Relative size. Kernel Density Estimation (KDE)
Norway	Borgartingslag (extended with Ranrike c. 1016)	Lidvikinger	9
		Raner	9
		Grener	6
		Ö-gröter	7
	Gulatingsslag	Ryger	15
		Egder	4
		Øyboere	5
		Horder	2
	Frostatingslag	Trøndere	10
		Raumer	2
		Namdalen	3
	Hålogaland	Håløyger	2
	Eidsivatingsslag	Heidner	6
		Raumer	3
		Hader	4
Sweden	Hälsingland	Medelpad	4
		Hälsingland	4
	Uppland (Tiundal., Attundal., Fjädrundal.) (Merged in 1296)	Svear	29
		Södermanland	
	Västmanland		
	Roden (Sjåland)		
	Närke		

Tab. 4.4 (continued)

Kingdoms c. 1100–1350	Law-area c. 800–1100	Tribes c 500–800	Relative size. Kernel Density Estimation (KDE)
	Östergötland	Östgötar	19
		Tjuster	8
		Øland	6
		Tveta	5
	Gotland	Goter	12
	Småland	Finnveder	4
	Västergötland	Västgötar	12
		Hisinger	
	Värmland	Värmland	3
Denmark	Skåne	Haller	5
		Berger	4
		Fjärer	5
		Luguder	2
		Göninge	4
		Blekinge	4
Areas of Tribute	Sámi and Kvener	Skridfinner	1
		Finner	1
		Vino-finner (Kvener?)	1

The distribution of prehistoric graves presumably indicates the free population and landowners; however, caution should be taken concerning the representativeness of the data used in this analysis, given its limitations and bias due to land clearance in periods when there was little systematic recording of archaeological findspots and sites. This applies in particular to Skåne and parts of Västergötland. On the other hand, landownership is an important factor to consider when



Fig. 4.16: Map Scandinavia. Tribes, Law Areas and Kingdoms AD 500–1350. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman and F. Iversen, MCH.

discussing the distribution of graves. In fact, the larger picture indicates that the relative quantity of graves in Svealand and Götaland is representative of the relative size of the free populations in those two regions. We found that the distribution of households held by freeholders in these two landscapes in 1540 (63.9% in Svealand and 36.1% in Götaland) resembles the distribution of prehistoric graves rather well (60.1%/39.9%). Despite both groups evidently experiencing contractions in population over the course of history, the ratios strongly indicate that the level of freeholders in the Middle Ages is predictive and crucial to the level of prehistoric graves. The larger share of the graves analysed here were visible in the landscape and may secondarily have served as symbols of landownership.

Archaeological methodologies have identified 38 groups of a certain size in the area discussed; each of Prokopios' 13 kingdoms around 545 therefore likely consisted of several tribes. This 'king of multiple tribes' model was initially suggested by Fridtjof Nansen in 1911, and the results of this study support this idea. In the investigation area there are preserved fourteen provincial laws (partially or fully). Is there is a connection between the early kingdoms and the law regions identified in the 11–14th centuries?

The Svear area held one of the largest *free* populations in *Scandza*, judging by the high numbers of prehistoric graves found here. The highest levels are found in Attundaland and Tiundaland. The distribution of hillforts shows both the strategic importance of the waterways to Lake Mälaren and the need of defence against the East-Geats.

According to Snorri Sturluson (1178–1241), the 'Law of Uppsala' in the 11th century had the highest authority in the kingdom of *Svíþjóð* (ON), where many law provinces had their own laws and their own assembly (*Óláfs saga helga*, ch. 77). Snorri's description is of great importance, not least for the fact that he was himself the main law-speaker in Iceland for 12 years (1215–18 and 1222–31) and highly skilled in law and legal procedures. He states that the Uppsala law was what would be called today *Lex Superior* (a supreme law) within the kingdom of the Svears. Even in Snorri's time, where local laws were contradictory, the Uppsala law and the decision of the Uppsala law man took precedence. Only later in 1296 were the individual laws of the lands of Uppland ("vigaers flokkum oc laghum opplenskum") merged and superseded by the Uppland law, a process described in the prologue of the Uppland law. To compile the new law, the law man of Tiundaland appointed a royal commission of 12 skilled men from the three main lands, plus three royal knights (the 15 men listed by name in the prologue). This echoes processes described in the prologue of *Lex Salica* 700 years earlier, where commissions of skilled men revised and transformed customary law to meet the requirements, standards, and even kingdoms of their time (Iversen 2013).

The example above shows the complexity of the kingdom-formation process. Several folklands had their own laws and law-speakers representing the interest of the people when negotiating with the king. However, one law within a kingdom

took precedence when law stood against law. Almost all the folklands bordered Lake Mälaren. Controlling this lake was the key to power within the Svear lands. The royal sites and manors included in this study were all located in the surroundings of Lake Mälaren. Narrative sources and skaldic poetry such as the *Ynglingatal* place the origin of the dynastic house of the *Ynglingar* in the Svear landscape. *Ongendþeow* – a late 6th-century king is the first named ruler of the tribe (*Widsith* line 31). By the time of Wulfstan (late 9th century) the realm of this kingdom encompassed most of eastern Sweden and Gotland. The *Uppsala öd* represents the tribute and tax collected from the Svear folklands, the bordering lands of the Götár, and other folklands. From this a Swedish kingdom emerged. The origin of the power of the Svear kings is thus closely related to the control of Lake Mälaren.

The Geats were one of the largest tribes of *Scandza*. Thomas Lindkvist (1989) has convincingly argued that Sweden in the early Middle Ages was divided into various ‘fiscal regions’ defined by types of taxes: collective taxes assessed per area (e.g. hundred) and individual taxes assessed per household and/or register (*mantall*) (Lindkvist 1989:173). Individual taxes are found in the west (Västergötland, parts of Närke, northern Småland), collective taxes in the east (Uppland, eastern Västmanland, and Södermanland); a middle zone features both types of taxes (Östergötland). In Västergötland individual taxes dominated completely. They had their origin in the *servitium regis*, the king’s right to provision (*gjesting*) (*gengärden*) and the ‘all men’ tax (*allmänningssöret*). In Östergötland there were additional taxes based on the king’s right to commons, and collective taxes were also known in coastal areas in the east (*leidangsskatt*). In the areas around Mälaren collective taxes dominated completely in the 13th and 14th century (*leidangsskatt*). According to Lindkvist, individual taxes require a high degree of direct control over the producers. He also argues that collective taxes are more ‘primitive’ because the individual’s contribution was beyond the king’s direct control. The implication is that direct royal presence to a large degree triggered individual taxes, while more indirect royal presence triggered collective taxes.

The distribution of the royal sites and manors in Sweden supports Lindkvist’s view. The sites in Västergötland are located centrally to the main ‘tribe area’ indicating direct control of land, people, and estates. This is contradicted by the ‘Svear pattern’ where the royal sites were scattered around Lake Mälaren and not located centrally to the main habitation areas north-east of Mälaren.

Compared with previous research, we have identified the tribes of *Scandza* with higher precision and have been able to evaluate the size of the defining stratum of the tribe (indicated on a scale from 1 to 30). The other ‘numerous tribes’ in Sweden, apart from the Svear (29), were the East-Geats (19), the West-Geats (12), and the Gotland people (12). The Tjust people were also a substantial tribe (8). Furthermore, some large tribes should be expected in the Skåne area, but the archaeology here is not representative. As discussed, clearance of new land and the transformation of grazing land into ploughland in the 18th century led to the removal of archaeological

sites and monuments across vast areas. The largest tribes in Norway were the Ryger (15), Trøndere (10), the people of Ranrike (9), and the people of Viken (9). The Horder appear surprisingly modest in the archaeological material, possibly a reflection of problems with the representativeness of the archaeological material, in particular in the areas close to Bergen. On the other hand, in-depth study of this area's distribution of graves and landownership (Iversen 2008) reveals a clear lack of both freeholders and marked graves in the vicinity of the royal manors found here, such as Alrekstad, Seim, and Herdla, where large estates of 50–70 subordinated minor farms are indicated in younger land registers and cadastres.

In the Viking Age, Viken was a cultural and political melting pot that switched sides between the emerging kingdoms of Norway and Denmark, and possibly Sweden. According to the historian Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Norwegian royal power began asserting itself in Viken during the reigns of King Óláfr Tryggvason (AD 995–1000) and King Óláfr Haraldsson (AD 1015–1030). It was not until the kings of western Norway had managed to defeat the jarls of Lade and incorporated Trøndelag and northern Norway into their kingdom that they turned their attention to eastern Norway (Sigurðsson 2008:13). Even in the 12th century, Viken was a disputed area due to claims of supremacy by Danish kings.

Within the later Borgarthing law area, the *Vikverir* of Vingulmark and Vestfold and the Grener may have cooperated from an early time in terms of law and *thing*. After negotiations between King Óláfr Haraldsson and the *thing* in Ranrike, the people of *Ragnaricii* (Ranrike) and the *Euagre Otingis* (Ö-gröter south in Ranrike) were merged into what became the new Borgarthing law province around AD 1016. According to skaldic poetry, there were four or five petty kingdoms in *Upplönd* in the early 11th century, in the later Eidsivathing law area. Judging by the distribution of graves, the *Hæðnum* (the *Heinir* of Hedmark) were the largest inland tribe of southern Norway. The location of the royal manors in the inland of eastern Norway indicates a location central to the routes in and out of the valleys, the bottlenecks of these landscapes, while in the Borgarthing area the manors are located by the sea.

The distribution of graves indicates that the Ryger were the dominant group within the Gulathing law area. From Jordanes we learn about *Roduulf rex* who allegedly escaped his south-western Norwegian kingdom and went into the service of the Ostrogoth King Theodoric the Great (454–526) (*Getica* 22). It is not clear whether Roduulf's kingdom included all the tribes from the *Ranii* (Romsdalen) in north to the *Granni* in south-east, or only the northern tribe (Hedeager and Tvarnø 2001:267, 271–3; Krag 2003:58). It has been suggested that Roduulf was exiled from his kingdom by the Danes, whom Gregor of Tours describes as powerful enough to attack the Franks between 511 and 533, under the leadership of *Ch(1)ochilaicus rex* (Gregory 1951:34). The historian Carl Edlund Anderson suggests that the political situation in Scandinavia in the 6th century did not differ much from the situation in the Viking Period when various rival 'Danish' and 'Norwegian' kings competed for the overlordship of western Scandinavia (Anderson 1999:54–5).

Recently it has been suggested that securing the transport of goods for trade along the sailing route of western Scandinavia was a priority of the elite and the kings already in the early 8th century. This theory is supported by recent geological analyses of whetstones found in cultural deposits in Ribe, Denmark, dated to 8th and early 9th century. The analysis demonstrates that the majority of the whetstones were quarried at Mostadmarka near the aristocratic/royal manor Lade ('loading/storing place') in Trøndelag (Baug et al. 2019). This clearly demonstrates the existence of an important trade route between Trøndelag and Ribe in south-western Jylland in the early 8th century. The earliest whetstone from Mostadmarka found in Ribe is from 710 to 725. The trade increased during the 8th century. In this period major changes in the judicial system also seem to have taken place in Rogaland, when the so-called courtyard sites (major elite-controlled *thing* sites) fell out of use, and military command may have come under royal jurisdiction (Iversen 2017).

According to written sources, Norwegian kings had manors in western Norway in the 10th century, which provided important strongholds for kings such as Haraldr hárfagri (8c. 85/900–928) and Hákon inn góði (933–61), as well as Eiríkr blóðøx (928–33) and his sons (961–70). The dates provided here follow the chronology suggested by Ólafía Einarsdóttir (1964). Also, for King Haraldr gráfeldr (961–70), often referred to as 'the king of Hordaland' (Koht 1931:454), and other kings based in western Norway in the 10th century, the royal estates may have been important for securing territorial control and sustenance for the hird. Claus Krag has argued that the names of places and regions in skaldic poetry referring to Óláfr Tryggvason (995–1000) indicate that his short rule at the end of the 10th century was confined to western Norway and Trøndelag (Krag 1995:102), and that all of these kings probably used the same manors as centres for their rule and control of trade. The identified royal manors are located between the *Aetel Rugi* (Rogaland) and the *Þröwendas* (Trøndelag). The distribution indicates the importance of control of shipping and trade. The recent analyses of whetstones and courtyard sites suggest that the rise of kingship by the southern end of the *Norðvegr* should be sought in the early 8th century (Iversen 2017; Baug et al. 2019). Presumably, this entity was strong enough to guarantee safe sailing through these waters.

Some of the Scandinavian law areas may reflect the geographical extent of the tribal confederations at the time they were formed. However, tribal confederations were flexible, as were political alliances. The role of the king in the initial phase may have been limited and connected to the tribe area. In general, it is hard to believe that early kings with access to a limited military force would be able to usurp power in a given area and establish enduring power structures. The *thing* must have played an important role in these processes from an early phase. Long-term supra-regional kings depended on the establishment of physical systems and institutions to consolidate their domination, in particular the command of military defence systems. The classic view of governmental structures during the Middle Ages holds that the king arrives, make laws, and takes control. Nonetheless, real supra-regional royal power only comes later. From this study it

is evident that Scandinavian kings strengthened their position on the basis of different resources connected to tribute, tax, and trade. The number of kingdoms was reduced from thirteen in the mid-6th century to two in the 12th century. The provincial law areas may reflect the geographical extent of some of the early kingdoms, but clearly the law areas were expanded and changed following the establishment of new polities. During the Viking Period two ‘maritime-based’ kingdoms in the west and east through a long-lasting back-and-forth process expanded their realms into the ‘land-based’ kingdoms in central parts of *Scandza*.

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