The Heruls in Scandinavia
by Troels Brandt

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15-08-2018
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Abstract

In 553 AD the Byzantine historian Procopius wrote about the dynasty of the East Germanic Heruls and some of their followers arriving to the Scandinavian Peninsula around 512 AD after being defeated by the Lombards. Historically we know the main group and the dynasty from the 3rd century at the Black Sea from where they followed the Huns and settled in a new kingdom in Mähren/Moravia. Here they became famous as Roman mercenaries and terrorized their neighbours until their defeat. A group choose to join the East Roman emperors and we baptized. A smaller group, the Western Heruls at the North Sea coast, were known as Roman mercenaries since 286 AD and later as pirates until they disappeared in 476 AD.

Except for a short contact in 548 AD and some later runic stones the history of the Heruls ended at the Scandinavian borders. The North European poems and sagas contain distant memories of the event, but they cannot be regarded as history. Consequently, the destiny of these trained and frightening mercenaries has been discussed for centuries. Their arrival is certain, but how many and where did they settle?

The hypothesis of this paper is that they first settled in Blekinge/Värend, but before 548 AD most of them were expelled by the Danes – mentioned by Jordanes. Most likely the next target for most of the group was the expanding economy of Uppland which flourished as an international centre in the next centuries. Probably they simply served as mercenaries and military advisors as they did in the Roman empires. When they were integrated in the Nordic societies their name disappeared and became the title earl.

Preface

The work behind this article began in 1995 as a search for a reason behind the Danish traditions regarding the elections of the medieval kings. During the search it became obvious that the history of the Heruls had been misunderstood in Scandinavia.

It is an ambivalent feeling to spend time on a repellent people like the Heruls. Parts of the legends around them have been used by the historical philosophers behind the Nazi-party. It is no coincidence that Ludvig Schmidt in 1934 could write: “Die Heruler waren ein echtes Herrenvolk.”

Especially modern well-meaning Swedish scholars avoid talking about ethnicity and have neglected the Heruls, though several large archaeological excavations are performed regarding the time of the Heruls. The development from the Heruls over the Viking Ages to the democratic Scandinavian monarchies should be interesting to a modern world too, but the scholars have probably been caught in a trap as a reaction against the earlier Nazi-sympathies among Swedish scholars – a veritable Herulphobia. Unfortunately, the idea to suppress material which can be misused in ethnical matters will make the suppressors blind too.
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Only the local historian, Tore Gänholm at Gotland, did maintain in “The origin of Svear” that the Heruls settled in the Mälar Valley in 512 AD. Unfortunately, he claimed that the Heruls with their god, Odin, became the Svear in a hostile takeover, which was not necessarily the case.

I was not aware of that past when my first web-article in June 2000 was provoked by an internationally acknowledged article in Scania by the Swedish linguist Alvar Ellegård. In 1987 he claimed that the Heruls were a warrior band, who left Scandinavia after a short visit in the 6th century. His article became popular among the Swedish scholars, who got an excuse for their neglect of the Heruls, but it was obvious, when reading his sources that the method of Ellegård to reject sources did not follow the usual scholarly criteria of historians.

The purpose of this article written by a third “outsider” is to present the material again and suggest an explanation - in the hope to inspire one day a scholar to find a better basis of assessment.

The first main chapter about the acknowledged history of the Heruls in Southern Europe is as far as possible following the works of Professor Andreas Schwarcz, the University of Vienna, and his student Angelika Lintner-Potz. We have agreed to publish her “Diplomarbeit zur erlangung des Magistergrades” , ”Die Eruler”, at my website (in German). I do not agree in detail in all suggestions being not attested in the scattered sources, but those cases will be mentioned below and will not change the conclusions.

The second main chapter about the settlement in Scandinavia is based on 5 questions about the Heruls asked in 1996 by the late Swedish professor in archaeology, Åke Hyenstrand in his book, ”Lejonet, Korset och Draken” - written to his young students. The questions appear to have been ignored in Sweden, but the chapter is structured as an answer to his questions.

The third main chapter about the Norse literature shall only address that one of the arguments against the presence of Heruls in Scandinavia has been that their name was never found in the Northern Europe. Inspired by the observations of the Danish professor of archaeology in Oslo, Lotte Hedeager, the English linguist Ben Slade and the Danish historian Niels Lukman and the national antiquarian of Iceland, Barði Guðmansson I have searched the Norse literature for traces of the Heruls. The chapter will explain the disappearance of the name and the relevant sagas, but it shall not be regarded as history and a proof of a Herulic presence in Scandinavia.

The research results are organized as a short web-article written in both Danish and English and the comprehensive and detailed paper in pdf below at Academia.edu and my webside. The text from the English web-article is contained in this paper – being spread over the paper in black frames as summaries. The same numbering of chapters is followed in both articles with the purpose to find details, notes and references in the paper when reading the short web-article.

Furthermore, links are found to the separate articles about the runestones in Blekinge and Rök.

Copenhagen, September 24th, 2016
Troels Brandt
The Heruls in Scandinavia

1 The history of the arriving Heruls

1.1 The Roman Sources (history)

1.1.1 The origin of the Heruls

In most Scandinavian history books the Heruls are mentioned as a people of Scandinavian origin. The only historical source for that claim was an interpretation of the work "Getica" from 551 AD by the Gothic historian, Jordanes. But Jordanes never wrote that – and no other historian wrote that they returned, as Procopius is often falsely quoted. Jordanes placed their etymology in the swamps at the Black Sea, where they were first time mentioned by Greek and Roman historians in 267 AD. Consequently, he could not regard them as Scandinavians. First when the news about a Herulian envoy to Scandinavia in 548 AD were circulating in the city of Constantinople both Procopius and Jordanes wrote about Heruls and Danes in 551 and 553 AD – and Procopius also told that they arrived there in the first decade of his own century. Earlier no historians – not even Tacitus nor Ptolemeus – mentioned Heruls in Scandinavia. The idea about the Scandinavian origin of the Heruls was based on 5 bungled words in the geographical introduction of Jordanes, where he wrote about the Danes "expelling the Heruls from their settlements" – words which were misunderstood already in 1783 as an event before 267 AD, when they first time appeared in Greece. Modern linguists read these words in the introduction as a reference to an event of his own time – making it instead an expulsion from a first settlement between Danes and Götes in Scandinavia 510-48 AD.

The Danish archaeologists, however, combined the expulsion of the Heruls with a warrior elite settling in Himlingøje in the Roman Iron Ages. They even believed a wrong translation of Jordanes according to which the Danes should be of the Swedish stock, but he just wrote that they were of the same stock, the Vinoviloth – maybe the Vinnili mentioned as the ancestors of the Lombards too – an unknown people at the Baltic Sea.

In the Migration Ages people changed rapidly all the time in the sources as many constellations consisted of semi-nomads following a successful dynasty and maybe its religion – regardless of family or tribal connections. They were not tied to a specific territory as agriculturists but may have lived in the same territory as these – often as a warrior class. The Eastern Heruls may have been established in this way at the Russian river Dniepr in the third century as an ethnogenesis between Germanic tribes, Sarmatian/Alanic nomads and Bosporanians – with Gothic/East Germanic as their language. Many of these Germanics were probably East Germanic Goths. Later they may have been mixed up with Huns too.

The belief in a Scandinavian origin was probably supported by a group of Western Heruls crossing the Rhine in 286 AD – probably from Frisia – but their origin is still unknown and debated. A migration from Jutland to Ukraine is supported by metal combs and monster brooches, but these could also be remains of migrating Jutes (Eudoses) to the Eastern Black Sea. Also dynasties of Harudes, Harii/Hirri or Scandinavian tribes are guesswork to save the old mistake. A more likely explanation of two names so distant from each other is suggested in next chapter.

Under all circumstances we must conclude that the origin of the Heruls is unknown – just like the origin of the Goths who are today being related to the areas around the mouth of the Polish river
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Vistula – not to Scandinavia.

The routes of the Heruls, which shall be regarded as a general movement of their dynasty – not as one specific migration.

1.1.1.1 The modern interpretation of Jordanes

The former theory of the origin of the Heruls was based on the four words by Jordanes about the Danes "Herulos propriis sedibus expulerunt" ("drove from their homes the Heruli" or more directly “expelling the Heruls from their settlements”). Already the source critical Lauritz Weibull questioned that this sentence could tell anything about their origin. Later linguists and historians like Lönroth, Ellegaard, Goffart and Andreas Schwarcz have regarded the sentence as a description of a recent event due to grammatical reasons and the context in his work. Apparently Jordanes added these four words to a 30 years old description by Cassiodorus, which he used to describe the people of Scandinavia.

The Danes had never been mentioned before and were only mentioned three times by the historians in the 6th century - twice due to a contact between the Danes and the Heruls. It should be a very strange

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1 Jordanes III, 23. Jordanes was the secretary of an Ostrogothic or Rugian family. He wrote “Getica” in Constantinople in the winter 551 (Wolfram 1988), just before the last remains of the Ostrogothic Kingdom broke down. Normally he is supposed to have used information from a lost work of Cassiodorus (Chancellor of Theodoric the Great) finalized around 519 AD, and for some parts also Ablasius, who was possibly the powerful chief of the Pretorians at the court of Constantine the Great (Nordgren 1999). Where nothing is mentioned in chapter 2.1, Jordanes is the source to the Herulian and Gothic history until 480 AD, but Jordanes is normally regarded as a doubtful source, which is discussed further in Chapter 4.4. As the Gothic history is not the subject here, Wolfram's "History of the Goths" is used as a main source to the Gothic part of the history in spite of later research. Works like "Cassiodorus and Jordanes" of Arne Søby Christensen and "The Goths" of Peter Heather have of course been taken in consideration too.
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coincidence if these two stories both told in Constantinople by Jordanes in 551 AD and Procopius in 553 AD were two different contacts separated by more than 300 years. It is nearly impossible, and it will later (in chapter 1.1.4) be explained how the two authors less than three years before got that actual and for Justinian embarrassing story about the Heruls in Scandinavia, which therefore circulated in Constantinople in 548-553 AD.

The Ravenna Cosmography told around 732 AD about the “patria” called “Dania” pervaded by great rivers next to the Saxons. The Ravenna Cosmography referred to the missing works of the learned Aitanaridus, Eldevaldus og Marcomirius at the court of Theodoric as a source – also mentioned by Herwig Wolfram in 1979. There is no doubt that the Danes were mentioned at the court of Theodoric by Cassiodorus due to the Norwegean Roduulf, but just as it is agreed that Jordanes changed the sentence of Cassiodorus due to a new event in 553 AD it is likely that the unknown author of the Ravenna Cosmography 200 years later expanded the information about the Danes with actual knowledge. At that time the Danes had established their rule at Dannevirke and met the Franks. We do not know if the details are describing the 6th or the 8th century, but the referral can be regarded as an independent confirmation of Procopius’ and Jordanes’ knowledge of the Danes at that time. However, it must be regarded as a more secondary source than Jordanes and Procopius.

Later in his work Jordanes used information from Ablasius describing how the Heruls (or Elouroi) got their name at the Sea of Asov, where we first time heard about them in 267 AD. He used an etymology explaining their name as deriving from the swamps (eloi in Greek), where they lived. Even if he is wrong, he clearly used a local etymology from the Black Sea to explain their name. Consequently, it is not likely that it was his intention to describe their origin as Scandinavian in the introduction, and neither is a Scandinavian origin or a return described anywhere else in his or other works.

Therefore we have no reason at all to expect the episode about the Danes and the Heruls in the same work to be connected with a history of an origin in Denmark. It is a reference to a contact in the first half of the 6th century like the earlier reference in the same chapter to the Scandinavian king Roduulf seeking refuge at the court of Theodoric. The Heruls were by the sources in the 5th and 6th century regarded as a Germanic people – Gothic according to some authors – due to language and size. As the Heruls were closely related to the Goths they could as well be a tribe being separated from the Gothic group in the Black Sea Region, where the Heruls were called ‘Elouroi. Neither the Heruls nor the Danes were mentioned anywhere by Tacitus and Ptolemeus in the two first centuries AD – which they should if they existed under that name.

1.1.1.2 The old interpretation of Jordanes

Already in 1783, the Danish historian, G. Schønning, argued based on Jordanes and several other sources that the original Heruls lived in Southern Jutland or Northern Germany. Schønning was fully aware that this was his own construction, but since then the interpretation of Jordanes’ story as a 300 years old event and a Scandinavian origin of the Heruls has been an accepted truth among the Scandinavian historians. Jordanes told more clearly that both the Danes and the Suetidi traced their origin to the unknown Vinoviloth. Later in 899 AD the Danes lived in Scania, Halland and Sealand according to Ottar’s description [Lund, 1983], while the Jutes lived in Jutland, which was earlier populated by Cimbrians and Anglians too [Tacitus] – and Harudes/Charudes [Ptolemeus].

In the first centuries AD contemporary trade centres were established around the Baltic Sea. In Denmark they are found at Stevns (Sealand) and in Gudme (Fyen), but the most important centres were probably the old

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2 In Cassiodorus’ Varia VI, 2 Theodoric wrote in Latin to the Herulian king, but promised that the messenger would speak Gothic to him.

3 [Jordanes III] In general the sentence ”of the same stock as the Suitidi” has been interpreted as a Danish migration from Sweden, but he just wrote that the Dani and Suitidi both descended from the Vinoviloth, which is probably a version of the name Vinili - being mentioned as a former name of the Lombards by Paulus Diaconis. Neither need the Suetidi to be the Swear in the Mälar Valley, as he mentioned the Suehans there. This will open for interesting combinations and explanations outside the topic of this article.
trade centre at Gotland and the Gothic society at the mouth of Vistula in Poland. At that time the Marcomannic Wars along the Roman/German border forced the trading routes to go east of the Alps to the rivers Oder and Vistula – the old Amber Route. Michel Kazanski has later described this route leading the Goths to the Black Sea along the Bug, but in the 5th century especially through the Moravian Gate to Carnuntum along the March/Morava River [Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014, Kazanski 2018]. The first movement is reflected in the change from Elder to Younger Roman Iron Age in Denmark around 160 AD. However, it must be noticed that Gudme had obvious trade connections with South-Western Europe. Also, the mounds of the first chieftains at Stevns indicate a connection to the Elbe-area in Thuringia. Later in the 3rd and 4th century glasses and other items from the Gothic Cernjachov-culture showed increasing contacts against south east [Khrapunov/Stylegar 2011 and 2014].

In this way the Scandinavians had plenty of connections with the Gothic societies at the Black Sea making it difficult to identify a Herulic migration to the Black Sea by using archaeology – if it happened [Kazanski 2018].

The Danish archaeologist Brøndsted was inspired by the old interpretation of Jordanes to work out a theory about a Danish invasion from Sweden. He related the theory to the big mounds of Stevns (Himlingøje and Varpelev) – a peninsula in Sealand into the Baltic Sea – indicating a new civilisation at the coast in the end of the second century AD. This theory does not need to be changed if the old interpretation of Jordanes is wrong, but the Danish invasion has lost its historical support.

The theory about a Herulic origin from Scania and Sealand is still the most accepted due to conservatism, though no Heruls were mentioned by Tacitus or Ptolemeus in the second century AD.

1.1.1.3 Other combinations

The new interpretation of Jordanes will leave us with a problem with the Western Heruls, who were first time mentioned by Mamertinus in Trier - operating there in 286 AD as barbarian attackers 18 years after the emperor defeated a group of the Eastern Heruls in Thrakia. A possibility is that the refugees from that defeat – most likely the later mentioned group of Naulobates joining the Romans – were resettled as mercenaries by the Romans far away from their hostile kinsmen. Already in the 2nd century AD the Romans used Alanic and Sarmatian mercenaries in France and England who were transferred with women and children. They remained in Western Europe.

The problem is, however, that the Western Heruls were described as a barbarian people - not as mercenaries, and that they came from a distant location (“ultima loci”) further away than the Burgundians and the Alemanni. Most likely the Chaibones were the Chauci of Tacitus. As later confirmed below by other sources it must have been as neighbours to the Saxons in Harlingen or Northern Frisia.

This is in the same region as the earlier Harudes/Charudes (Ceasar, Augustus and Ptolemeus), who attacked the Roman Empire in the same way as the Western Heruls 200 years earlier. The name of the Harudes is

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4 The settlement of the Danes was first mentioned by Brøndsted, who also mentioned the northeastern Jutland as a possibility. But the intruders here might be Gauts (from Götaland) or Norwegians (finds in Illerup Ådal). Later on Lotte Hedeager has described the theory in “Danmarks Historie”. Normally the settlement is dated to 175-200 AD. We cannot exclude that these rich graves similar with the graves at the Elbe (Hassleben etc.) should be combined the rich female graves in Badelunda and the Vinoviloth mentioned by Jordanes (Vinili / Longobards).
5 There is still one connection (besides 2.3), as the name Hariso is found at the backside of a fibula in Himlingøje. This is also the name of a Herul at a tombstone in Concordia. As Himlingøje used the trade route along the Vistula where the Harii lived at that time, the Hariri are a possible connection.
6 Panegry of Mamartinus, XI, Trier, 289 AD. In 286 AD Emperor Maximianus sent out a couple of cohortes to defeat the Heruls and the unknown Chaibones, who had attacked Gallia together with Burgunden and Allemanni.
Mamertinus wrote that the Heruls and Chaibones we all killed. They could not bring the messages home to their mothers and wives. He also mentioned that they lived most distantly away. The Chaibones could be the Aviones of Tacitus.
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possibly met as a personal name later among the Heruls as Aruth – maybe originally a name used for people coming from the Western Heruls. The Western Heruls may have got the name Eruli from the Romans, who regarded the two tribes as the same people. The Harudes disappeared at the same time.

Another possibility is that the Western Heruls were the original Heruls forming a group or a part of a dynasty, who followed the Goths to the Black Sea and established the Eastern Heruls there together with Gothic and Sarmatian/Alanic warriors – bringing us back to the old theory by G. Schønning – later supported by von Friesen. Already the Scandinavian Cimbrians followed by other Germanic tribes passed these regions before attacking Italy.

Maybe the two groups of the same name simply were two different people/tribes getting a dynasty in common - coming from one of the two groups or from somewhere else. In that connection we shall not forget that the name Heruli/Eruli is a Greek/Latin version, which can be a misunderstanding or even given by the Romans, when they received Naulobates and his group.

If we look at the archaeological observations by Michel Kazanski [RGA, Black Sea] and the Ukrainian archaeologists, Boris Magomedov [Magomedov 2001] and Maxim Levada [Levada 2000] they are placing the migrated Heruls at Crimea, the Dnepr and in the Moldavian region. Magomedov later wrote about the Chernyakhov Culture "The presence of the Herulians (who came from Jutland) is marked by the existence of the “long houses”, by the presence of monster-brooches, items with runic inscriptions, iron combs and a certain type of pottery" [in Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014]. Earlier he wrote about these finds as ethnical indicators and added “most scholars think that these persons were the Heruls” [in Khrapunov/Stylegar 2011]. In in a concluding article in 2017 Michel Kazanski doubts at the items in the Moldavian region and the monster-broches as Herulian [Kazanski 2018]. They may have been Eudoses.

Combining Tacitus, Ptolemeus and Flavius Arianus it has been claimed that a group of Germanic speaking Eudoses (Jutes) arrived at the Black Sea in the 2nd century AD. Later some of them moved eastwards. The finds of metal combs which are one of the key objects showing the above-mentioned migration of a people to Ukraine are concentrated in Jutland and Fyen – not in Northern Frisia or Harlingen. That may indicate that the migration primarily were the Eudoses, but it does not exclude that a part of a Herulian dynasty followed and established the Eastern Heruls. We shall, however, remember that the name of the Heruls was not mentioned by Tacitus or Ptolemeus as a tribe in any end of the route.

Hervig Wolfram (Wolfram 1988) has proposed that the Heruls were first established as a warrior band with an etymology connected with the word "harjaR/harjiZ" (=army/harrier). This appear to be a reasonable suggestion, if this group operating in the border areas of the Goths later formed a people at the Black Sea - maybe with members of their neighbours joining them by marriage and ethnogenesis. "HarjaR/harjiZ" is a widespread component found also in names like Harigast (Negauer helmet), Hariso (Both in Himlingøje and a Herul in Concordia) and Hariwulf (Scania/Blekinge, 600 AD). An interesting connection between "Hariwulf" and "Herul/Airoloi" is the name of a mad Gothic warrior around 380 AD, "Crioulos’", mentioned by Eunapius (Fragmenta of Eunapius, Dindorf, Historici Graeci Minores, vol. 1, p. 253).

Another theoretical possibility connected with "harjaR" must to be mentioned. Plinius told about Hirri in the first century BC and in the first century AD Tacitus told us our only source about a tribe of the strongest warriors of all, the Harii. Tacitus placed them just south of the Gotones at Upper Vistula. They may have followed the Goths to the Black Sea when the migrating Gothic groups passed. After the Gothic migration we never heard about these strong warriors, but south east of the new Gothic kingdom a new tribe of harrying warriors was met - the Heruli. According to Tacitus the Harii painted their shields and their bodies black and attacked in the night as a ghostly army. Some scholars connect them with the legends about "The wild hunt" in the night – also connected with Odin/Wothan. In French the hunter is called Harlequin/Hellequin (Eorle cyn/Harleking?). Their disappearance could be explained by a change of name at the Sea of Asov caused by the influence of the common Alanic language of the region. This is of course pure guesswork, and it is questioned if the name of the Harii is a misunderstanding by a copyist, though a conglomerate of neighbouring Harii, Goths and Alanes would make sense. The claims that the Heruls were
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black wolf-warriors are based on that kind of suggested connections and are not supported in the sources elsewhere.

If we are following the old interpretation of Jordanes or if we are regarding some of the Heruls as belonging to the Goths we can in both cases assume, that the Heruls in the 6th century falsely regarded Scandinavia as their ancestral home - if they believed Jordanes' origin of the Goths.

In this article the most likely explanation is regarded to be that Goths and Sarmatians/Alans at the Black Sea joined a dynasty from the marshes of the Wadden See (Harlinger Land) - i.e. from a group of Harudes living in the marches – together with people from Jutland. This "compromise" will explain the Western Heruls, the later European spread of the runes, the common Aruth-names among the Heruls, and make sense in most other combinations. Due to the immense uncertainty the explanation of the origin has not been further investigated below, and nothing is finally concluded as the conclusions regarding the later history of the Heruls below are independent of that explanation.

1.1.1.4 The Gothic Migration and migrations in general

In general, the migrating groups were not necessarily formed by one single people. They may often have been smaller groups of different people or tribes following a strong leader or dynasty and probably also their religion – especially those in the migrating ages – opposite those who were tied to a piece of land due to agriculture. Lotte Hedeager has described a society where people had left their original tribal structure and were independent of a specific territory. They could live together with local farmers of another ethnicity as a kind of warrior class and they moved around.

The “nationality” of the leading dynasty would often by observers be regarded as the nationality of whole the migrating group. Often, they were separated again later. The migrations could take place stepwise over several decades, and often when the Germanic tribes were mentioned in the written sources the Romans had only met raiding groups, occupying warriors or mercenaries operating far away from their people.

An EU-financed historical project lead to the “politically correct” conclusion that most movements of people were diffusions of individuals and not migrating groups. That may be true – especially along the Roman borders – but it will not change the fact that the movements of people like the Huns, Goths, Vandals and Lombards etc. were groups of warriors with families travelling far and taking new land in possession by military force – though they may have been of mixed original ethnicity. A study of DNA published in 2018 in two cemetaries in Western Hungary and Northern Italy showed that a group of the same kindred dominating the centres of the cemetaries in both places with high status graves. Their DNA showed an origin “east of the Rhine and north of the Danube” and according to the archaeological attributes they were Lombards.

Around them more local people were found of lower status.

Ingemar Nordgren has in his PhD-assertation described a theory in which the Goths were not originally an ethnic people by birth but a cultic league consisting of different tribes from many regions around Kattegat and the Baltic Sea (Sinus Codanus) with leaders claiming to descend from a god named Gaut. Maybe such people left traditional agriculture to be tradesmen or nomads with cattle while most tribes of Scandinavia

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8 Patric J. Geary et.al. 2018: “Understanding 6t-century barbarian social organization and migration through paleogenomics”
9 “Goterkällan” (PhD-dissertation from 1999 at Odense University) by the Swedish Ingemar Nordgren - published in Swedish in 2000 by Historieforum Västra Götaland. The names Goths, Gau, Gau, Göts, Gutes and Jutes may all have the same origin – most possibly from a cult in Southern Scandinavia and around the Baltic Sea. Most of the Continental Gothic tribes are supposed to come from the south-eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. When the Goths later on went to the Black Sea, Gaut may have changed character from a creator god to a warrior god - being a more Wotan-like god. Jordanes called Mars an important god, but he also mentioned one of their ancestors, “Gapt” - probably being Gaut.
remained agriculturists with a fertility cult worshiping the gods Ing/Nerthus.

By the reasons mentioned above the ethnic and geographic origin of a migration people is in general difficult to determine. As they joined the turbulence of the Migration Ages the importance of their origin is also limited to us in this case. If we want to understand the background of the new societies they formed when they finally settled, it may be more important to know which cultures and religions they had been in touch with in the last centuries before the settlement – but the history of the dynasty could be important to its legal right to kingship in the society – so important that it was often manipulated and mixed up with religion.

According to Jordanes the Goths were originating from Scanza, but in that case archaeology indicates that they could only be very small groups migrating long time before Christ. It is more likely that such small groups of Scandinavian Gauts inspired religiously, when people in the south-eastern corner of the Baltic Sea merged and formed the Goths – creating new burial practices etc. In contemporary sources the Goths were first time met in the first centuries AD, when they lived in the area around lower Vistula and Oder11 with connections to the Romans along the Amber Route. Possibly they formed the above-mentioned trade network with the islands and cities of the Baltic Sea as centres. Most historians are dating the following migration of the Goths from the area of Gdansk12 to Ukraine to the years around 150 AD or later in the century. According to archaeologist groups from the Wielbark culture at Vistula in Poland may have moved stepwise to Ukraine and Upper Moldavia (the Cernjachov-culture) around 200 AD. Here they became one of the dominating groups of people. The true history of the Gothic origin and of Gaut is not the subject here as it is uncertain (Jordanes wrote Getica centuries later based on manipulated explanations and reconstructions by Cassiodorus) and without any importance for the conclusions below. What is regarded as certain is that they were an East Germanic-speaking people.

1.1.1.5 Sarmatians in the ethnogenesis?

Walter Pohl and Andreas Schwarz are probably right that the Heruls were under all circumstances a mixed people (Schwarz 2005). Andreas Schwarz has beside the Goths and a North European element - as those mentioned above - mentioned the Alans, who were a Sarmatian tribe. For 1500 years the Scythian and Sarmatian nomads dominated the Russian Plains north east of the Black Sea. They were a large group of Indo-European people belonging to the Iranian group of languages, though some of the eastern groups may have been Turk speaking too. They expanded from the earlier fertile areas of the Altai-region in Central Asia. First the Scythians dominated the western plains. At a late stage a group of the Aorsi Sarmatians became known as the Alans (later as As) at the Black Sea in the centuries AD, but earlier a group of these people

10 Tacitus.
11 Ptolemeus – Second century AD. They were called Goutones - the name Goths was first met at the Black Sea in the third century. Archaeologists connect them to the Wielbark Culture at the eastern bank of the river Vistula (=Weischel) and regard their origin to be an ethnogenesis taking place there.
12 A smaller group of Goths was supposed to live here at the Lower Vistula until 500-600 AD. Otto von Friesen, Kemp Malone and other scholars have identified these Goths as the Hreidgoths mentioned by the Swedish Rök Stone, Hervararsaga and Widstil, but this is an open question, which is discussed in a later chapter.
13 The Alans were according to Flavius Josephus (c. 100 AD) a Scythian people ravaging Media and Armenia. Later on Procopius called them Goths – probably because they followed the Huns together with the Heruls in a group dominated by Ostrogoths. The correct ethnicity is a group of the Indoeuropean Sarmatians, who arrived to the Russian Plains from a belt from the Altai-region in Central Asia to Iran in the centuries BC expelling the Scythians in the eastern part. Ammianus Marcellinus called in the 4th century the Alans tall and fair haired, and they are sometimes described as blond with grey/green eyes – like the 3000 years old blond mummies found in the Chinese XinXiang Province near the Altai Mountains. Oleg Bubenok and other scholars claim the Alans, Asi (modern Azes), Yas, Osi and Osseten to be different names or variations hereof of the same group of Sarmatians. "As" is the Turko-Mongolean name for Alans and it is supposed to derive from IE "Asu" meaning "swift" (like the Heruls). The Wu-Sun people at the Silk Road in XinXiang north west of China were described by the Han Dynasty in the 2nd century BC. According to Sulimirske these Usuny (in Russian) were identical to the Iazy/Aorsi (Alans) while the more westerly Yen’sai were identical to the Antae (another Alanic group). A change of sound from "ri" to "I" is mentioned in Ossetic (Fridrik Thorodarson) also making a connection between Arian and Alan. These are just possibilities to be mentioned as the Germanic word for god, "ansi/ansuz", is regarded to be the real explanation of
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(Yen'ts'ai/Antae/Alan) were reported by the Chinese historians in the XinXiang Province as neighbours to the Huns. The Alans and other Sarmatian people dominated the area around the Greek colony of Tanais and the Bosporan Kingdom at the Maeotic Sea (later the Sea of Asov) when the Heruls were first time mentioned there. The Sarmatian Roxolani and Iazy settled along the northern bank of Danube in Romania and Hungary. Much later some Alanic people became known as Osseten and their names are still found in the republic Osetinskaya/Alania. Other groups of Alans ended up in Thrakia, Poland and Spain following for a while the Huns. The Alans were by Ammianus Marcellinus described like Huns, but tall and swift with fair hair.

The Heruls were regarded as more primitive than the Goths and some of their names do not have a clear Germanic character – The name of the Herulic leader, Naulobates, was known as a Sarmatian or Bosporanian name. In the north-eastern corner of the Black Sea the peninsula Crimea forms the Sea of Asov, where River Don is flowing out into a swampy area. The Greeks established early their colony Tanais at the north bank of the river mouth – an important place for the trade along the Russian Rivers and one of the China-routes from Europe. Here Asia and Europe met, and the area must have been an ethnic “melting pot”. In the beginning of the first millennium the population in the area appear according to Russian scholars to be ”Iranized”, and D.B. Shelov mentioned that 33% of the names known in Tanais were Sarmatian and only 8% other barbarians. Recent excavations in the town of Asov at the south bank of the mouth of Don opposite Tanais showed that this town prospered at the time of the Alans and Heruls, while Tanais was burned down in 255 AD - according to Schmidt [1933, p. 210, 550] probably by Heruls. The Heruls lived according to Jordanes in the swamps of the Meotic Sea – the antique name of the Sea of Asov – being the most easterly Germanic group living between Goths and Alans14, but that is not supported by the archaeology telling us that the Germanic settlements of that time only reached the Dnepr. They also avoided the small belt of steppes at the coast of the Baltic Sea leaving the mouth of Dnepr for the Bosporanians at Crimea. If the first Heruls had their settlements at the lower Dnepr they could easily be mixed with some of the Sarmatian Alans or in the theory also with the Bosporani, who probably had an Iranian background too though being Hellenised for centuries.

There was probably a grain of truth in Ablasius’ etymology. In 259 AD the first pirate attacks were mentioned when "Scythians" used the Bosporanian navy. The attacking people were called Boradi, but such a people is unknown. Probably this name meant "people from the north” covering the newly arrived Goths and maybe the Heruls. In the same way they may have misunderstood the name of the later attacking Heruls as "Eliouroi” meaning "people from the swamps”, if they believed the Heruls came from the Maotic swamps – a part of the kingdom of the Bosporani, who provided the Heruls with ships in those raids. Probably their settlements were in the Gothic Cernjachov-culture having outposts as far away as south east of the last bend of the Dnepr according to the archaeology, but that does not change the fact that they believed their settlements had been at the Meotic Sea, when Jordanes wrote in the 6th century.

Artificial scull deformations were usual in Central Asia, and both the Huns and the Alans used this custom. The early Sarmatian groups in Europe such as the Roxolani and the Iazy did not use the custom at that time. The Norse "Asir".

Thor Heyerdahl has funded the excavations of Azov revealing a city at the hilltop since the 2nd century BC opposite the city of Tanais already described by Herodot. Here a branch of the old Silk-route was supposed to cross River Don. The name could be related to the As-people. The Alans who did not escape to Caucasus were subdued by the Huns in 350 AD and followed their campaign through Europe. A group of them (Antae) settled in the area of Krakow, where Jens Ulriksen has found similarities to Gudme (in his book “Anløbspladser”). Most of the Alans left the Huns and crossed the Rhine in 406 together with the Vandals heading against Spain. In 1100 the Polovetsians changed the original name Meotic Sea to Sea of Asov. The sea is surrounded by swamps because of the mouths of Don and Donets. According to Jordanes the Heruls lived in these Swamps of Hele, but "Hele" (Eloy) was simply a word for "swamp", and Dexippos called the Heruls Eliouy – maybe a mistake. The language of the Crimean Goths was found at Crimea as late as 1700. According to some scholars there are linguistic similarities to the Western Germanic around Saxony or Frisia (Nordgren), where the Western Heruls lived.

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1.1.2 The migrations of the Heruls

The Eastern Heruls were first time mentioned in 267-269 AD when they attacked Greece and the coasts of Asia Minor as pirates. They were together with the Goths using the navy of the Bosporanians. The most spectacular event was the looting of Athens from where we have our historical sources. Also the defeat at Thessaloniki of their leader, Naulobates, by the Roman emperor Gallianus was mentioned. Afterwards Naulobates was appointed a Roman "consular insignia". Consequently, the Western Heruls mentioned first time in 286 AD may have been his soldiers being resettled as mercenaries at another border as the Romans used to do. In 286 AD they attacked the Romans at the mouth of the Rhine - maybe as an uprise against the resettlement where they joined the Chaibones, who probably were the Chauci being mentioned by Tacitus and Ptolemeus as neighbours to the Saxons. As the Chauci disappeared at that time the Western Herulian warriors, who were mentioned near the Saxons in 325 AD, may have taken over the remains of the tribe and were later described as mercenaries living beyond the Rhine.

According to Jordanes the king of the Eastern Heruls, Alaric, was later defeated by the legendary Gothic king, Ermaneric. From around 375 AD the Heruls joined many other East Germanic and Sarmatian people in the Hunnic campaign throughout Europe, and as most of the other followers they were not mentioned in those years except in the battle at the Catalunian Fields. After the defeat and death of Attila these East Germanic followers raised an rebellion in 454 AD against the sons of Attila at Nedao – except most of the Ostrogoths. Nearly all the Huns were driven back to the Black Sea, but some of them may have followed people like the Heruls, with whom they appear to have many common archaeological features.

Most of the East Germanic and Sarmatian people established their new kingdoms at the northern bank of the Danube, while the Ostrogoths found place in Roman territory in Southern Pannonia. There is no reason to discuss exact borders as these horse-riding nomads were not tied by the local agriculture. For decades the Ostrogoths waged wars against their earlier companions and had problems with the Romans too. In 468 AD the Ostrogoths succeeded in that way to destroy the Sciri. The Eastern Heruls established a strong kingdom in Moravia (Mähren) and Marchfeld (at Brno and Vienna) by subduing and tributing all their neighbours - even the Lombards. At that position it would be natural also to take over the Scandinavian warriors in earlier Hunnic service. The Western Heruls - and from 454 AD also the Eastern Heruls - were feared as Roman mercenaries and sometimes as pirates too. The Roman historians regarded these foot soldiers as "swift on their feet" and light-armed, but they were primarily the Western Heruls. The Eastern Heruls became also cavalry like the Huns and Ostrogoths they followed. They were even told to be the strongest group supporting Odoaker when he replaced the last Emperor of Rome in 476 AD. Odoaker was afterwards elected as king of Italy by his own Germanic soldiers - called Rex Herulicus. Odoaker himself was a prince of the Sciri, but his father was a Thuringian of birth. The rich princely tomb in Blucina, which is from that time, is regarded to be a royal Herulian grave - very similar with the tomb of the Frankish king Childeric in Tournais, who was an allied of Odoaker. Both kings had probably been Roman foederati.

Later the Ostrogothic king, Theodoric, agreed with the East Roman emperor to remove Odoaker. Theodoric had grown up in Constantinople and was an Arian Christian. He besieged Odoaker in Ravenna for several years and when celebrating the following peace in 493 AD he murdered Odoaker by his own hand. Most of the Herulian mercenaries of Odoaker must have returned to Mähren, were Theodoric ten years later proclaimed their king as "his son of arms". The Heruls appear in this way to have ended up as a kind of subjects to Theodoric, who also asked the Heruls,
the Thuringians and the Varni to join an alliance against the Francs.

Our historical sources regarding the Heruls consist of scattered remarks from the Roman and Byzantine historians and authors, as the people did not have their own historians. An exception is the Byzantine historian Procopius, who was the secretary and juridical advisor of the superior East Roman general Bellisarius. He must have known the Herulian mercenary officers personally. He spent two chapters of his work about the Gothic Wars on the Heruls - a work which he finished in 553 AD. He told that the Heruls "were superior all the barbarians who dwell about them both in power and number", but due to arrogance and disregard of their gods their king, Hrodolphos, suffered a serious defeat against the Lombards and was killed himself. The defeat, which is dated to 508 or 509 AD, is also known from much later Lombardic sources in a more anecdotal form.

1.1.2.1 Herulian raiders and mercenaries

The first historical appearance of the Heruls was described in different sources in the third century AD. They were placed at the Black Sea in the neighbourhood of the Goths – as mentioned due to archaeology probably south east of these at the Dnepr (Map).

After 20 years of fighting the Romans returned in 271 AD to the south bank of the Danube leaving their Dacian Province (Romania) for the Goths. The archaeologists regard the Sintana de Mures-culture in Transylvania as a result hereof. In that area the Tervingi Goths and the Gepides were for the first time mentioned as separate tribal names in 291 AD.

In 267-69 AD a fleet of Herulian and Gothic vessels had plundered the coasts of Turkey and Greece – obviously as a part of the above-mentioned war. A group of Heruls and Goths tried to operate on shore in Greece, but these inland groups were destroyed by the Romans. The Herulian group attacked Thessalonica but their survivors had to surrender in Smoesia. Their leader Naulobates became a Roman "consular insignia"15 (Wolfram 1988) indicating that the rest of these Heruls went into Roman service. A big fleet consisting of Heruls and Goths attacked all the time from the sea like the later Nordic Vikings. Especially their looting of Athens is famous, but they were successfully ravaging other places too like Crete, Rhodes and the coasts of Asia Minor. After a year they returned to their homes16.

15 Wolfram 1988, Georgios Synkellos, Chronographia.
16 Already in 251 the Boradi (an unknown people connected with the Goths) conquered the navy of the Bosporani (a Crimian people). First time they sent home the navy operated by Bosporanians after the landing, and were lucky to escape on stolen Roman ships after the attack. Next time they had learned to operate as pirates with their ships ready for escape. The people of the Black Sea were skilled sailors, who were willing to teach the barbarians sailing - which a group from Crimea were punished for in 419. How much the Bosporanians were able to choose in the 260'ies is doubtful as archaeology reveals that their towns at Crimea were spoilt at that time – probably by the newly established Heruls.

In 267 AD a fleet of 500 ships together with an army following at the north-western coasts attacked and ravaged Greece including Athens. At Athens they were finally defeated by Dexippos, who called them Scythes in the few fragments we know from his work. Later authors like Synkellos (8th century) and Stephan of Byzantium (6th century), who based their works on Dexippos, called them Goths, Boradi and Elouroi, while Zosimus (5th century) used the names Goths, Boradi (Borani) and Heruli. Scriptores Historiae Augustae from around 400 AD mentioned in this connection the Eruli as a Scythian group. Most of the Herulian warriors in this campaign attacked afterwards Thessalonica, where they were also defeated. From there they escaped in 268 AD against north into Macedonia and Moesia, where 3000 Heruls were killed at Nestos by the Romans commanded by emperor Gallienus. They were not totally destroyed as their chieftain Naulobates became a Roman "consular insignia" (Wolfram 1988). The name Naulobates was also the name of a Bosporan co-ruler around 233 AD. As the Bosporan kings had often Sarmatian names this may indicate that Alans - rather than Bosporani - were mixed up with the Heruls as they all lived in the same area near Lower Dnepr and the Sea of Asov.

In 269 Byzantine sources persist that 2000 ships were seen at Constantinople. These Goths and Heruls operated with
Around 350 AD a group of Goths in Moesia changed religion to the Christian Arianism, and their bishop Wulfila translated the Bible into Gothic language. At the same time the Greutungi (Ostro-) Gothic king Ermaneric launched an offensive defeating and subduing many tribes – the defeat of the strong Heruls ruled by Alaric was especially emphasised by Jordanes.

After the defeat a group of Alans and Heruls may have escaped against south or east instead of being subdued by the Goths. As did a group of Eudoses settling east of Crimea and Tanais for a while. Such Germanics may have followed the Silk Road to Eastern Turkestan in order to settle there among related Sarmatian/Alanic people like the Wu-Sun, and some of them may have continued their way into China as the mysterious Indo-European Holo-people, who arrived there around 380 AD. This has not been further investigated, but in 1318 Brother Pelligrini, following Marco Polo, reported 30,000 Christian Alans living at the Chinese coast opposite Taiwan, where the Holo-people was supposed to end up.

In Eastern Turkestan the Huns had lived for centuries and terrorized their neighbours. In this period the Chinese Wall was erected. Some of the Huns travelled against west, where they first subdued the Alans and in 370 AD they invaded Europe (crossed the Don) defeating the Goths. The Visigoths and many of the Ostrogoths escaped to the southern bank of the Danube, where they were granted exile by the Roman Emperor in 380 AD. Ermaneric committed suicide and the remaining Ostrogoths, the Alans and other Sarmatians, the Rugians, the Gepides and probably also the Heruls became subjects under Hunnic regime.

From Dacia the Huns and their followers invaded the Central Europe subduing many barbarian tribes. Consequently, the eastern trading routes from the Romans to the Baltic Sea must have been cut off 17. Just at that time the Roman Iron Ages ended in Denmark and the superior civilisation disappeared from the Danish peninsula Stevns.

In the Hunnic period we do only hear about Herulian mercenaries, but it is obvious that the Eastern Heruls followed the Huns as they were under Ostrogothic reign at the Black Sea, when the Huns arrived, and showed up next time in the upraise against the sons of Attila at the Danube, where they got their share of his Empire. At that time, they were still pagans opposite the refugees in the Roman Empire, and their disappearance from history was not unusual as even the history of the Ostrogoths in the Hunnic group is unknown (except for the story of Jordanes). They were obviously assimilated into the Gothic group of Hunnic followers, regarded by Priscus as one community of language 18.

As a parallel the Western Heruls lived in the Frisian area as mercenaries – especially in England. As we are not aware of connections between the two groups the sparse history of the Western Heruls is described in a separate chapter.

Under the leadership of Attila the campaign of the Huns and their followers was intensified until Attila in 451 was defeated in France by a united Roman, Visigothic and Western Germanic army. According to Sidonius Apollinaris the Heruls joined Attila in France 19 - making it probable that they joined the Huns all the time. Shortly after the death of Attila, the Gepides were in 454 AD the leaders of a rebellion against the success by ships along the coasts of Greece, Asia Minor and at the islands. They probably used ships conquered from the Roman supporters.

The historians do not totally agree about the events, but the version compiled by Angelika Lintner-Potz is used here. Under all circumstances the relatively light armed "pirates" were obviously not able to fight against regular Roman forces on shore when these were prepared on the attack, while the last group operating with quick raids from their ships was successful in that way.

17 The effect was probably increased by a Roman ban against trade with the Barbarians from 368 (Maench Haelfen).
18 They must have been assimilated into the group of Hunnic followers. Priscus described in 448 AD the headquarters of Attila in Dacia, where he described the Huns as several tribes talking either Hunnic or Gothic language (Web-version). The Heruls may have joined the Ostrogothic group counting also Gepides and Rugians. At that time some of the Alans had left for Spain.
19 Sidonius Apollinaris 7.12 and 8.15 (7.319-322)
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Huns, where the elder son of Attila was killed at the battle of Nedao. The northern bank of the Danube was divided between the rebels, and according to Jordanes the Heruls joined the Gepides in the rebellion.

This is confirmed by a Herulian kingdom north of Pannonia, where they apparently already had operated decades before the rebellion. Most of the Huns returned to southern Russia and Moesia at the Black Sea, but at that time the Barbarians had already weakened the old Roman Empire from which the East Roman (Byzantine) Empire was separated in 395 AD.

The large migrations of the century brought many of the Germanic tribes against west and south as the Vandals, Burgundians, Lombards, Franks and Anglo-Saxons. In the same period first the Visigoths and later the Ostrogoths headed west. The result was the Visigothic Catalonia (418 AD), the Frankish kingdom (482 AD), the English kingdoms (450 AD) and the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy (493 AD) and the later Lombardy (568 AD). Instead the Slavs dispersed over the North Eastern Europe from where they slowly penetrated the Czech Republic (6th century) and Germany (7th-8th centuries). The general pattern appears to be, that the Christian and Arian kingdoms of Germanic people were established in the old Roman area inside Limes, while the pagan tribes such as Bavarians, Alemanni and Saxons were first accepted outside - probably as they had no strong and threatening kingship. However, in 498 AD the Franks attacked the Alemanni, who thereafter concentrated around the Upper Danube and Lake Boden. Also the Christian Burgundians inside Limes were defeated by the Franks in 494 and 534 AD after their kingdom at the Rhine had been defeated by the Huns in 435 AD – an event which has been mixed up with the wars between Heruls and Goths around 500 AD in the much later German legends.

According to Julius Honorius – writing in the end of the 4th or beginning of the 5th century – the Heruls had already then formed a kingdom between the Quadi and the Marcomanni. We shall realize that a kingdom of horse-riding nomads probably were settlements without borders where they subjugated a remaining population of farmers as far as they could. Actually, Honorius was indicating the same position of the Heruls as the later historians – being the lowlands north of the Danube along Morava (March) River covering in the end most of Moravia and Marchfeld (Eastern Weinviertel in Austria and Zahoria in Slovakia). A group of remaining Suebi (Quadi) lived east of the Heruls, but many of the Quadi probably also lived inside the territory of the Heruls. The Quadi were mentioned by Tacitus (Annales) as living at the Marus River - a name derived from "Mar" meaning swamps and bogs. This is probably the name ending up in March and Mähren in Germanic language and Morava and Moravia in Slavic. It is interesting to notice that also their settlement here was related to swamps as told earlier by Jordanes, and it is realistic to assume that the name Marings was a nickname of these new coming Heruls to distinguish them from the Western Herulian mercenaries. The Gepides settled in Dacia, while the Ostrogoths, who hardly joined the rebellion except a few groups, were allowed to settle in Roman territory in Pannonia south of Danube. West of the Heruls the Rugians settled as neighbours to the Roman province Noricum with a centre in Krems 22.

In 468 AD Jordanes mentioned an alliance between the people at the northern bank of the Danube (Suebi, Sarmatians, Sciri, Gepides and Rugi) against the Ostrogoths. He also mentioned a king Alaric in this alliance, whom he forgot to present by ethnicity following his own principle in the text. As we are missing the Heruls in the alliance and as the first known Herulian chieflain also was called Alaric, this unknown Alaric was probably a Herulian king [Schwarcz 2005, the Slovakian National Museum and Angelica Lintner-Potz 2007]. The leader of the Sciri, Edica, was probably related to the later officer of Herulian mercenaries, Odoaker, but

20 Here I disagree with Angelika Lintner-Potz (Walther Pohl?) regarding their settlements as her unattested theory about different settlements is opposed by both Honorius, Laterculus Veronensis and Procopius. She has based her assumptions on the archaeological remains of the former people, but her remark about the Quadi changing to horse-riders may have been the Heruls who settled in their area subduing the remaining farmers.

21 The name was close to a Germanic word for famous, but if this is a coincidence or a consequence is outside my knowledge. It is however the same as the Old Norse Marika, as -ika as a diminutive parallel to -ing.

22 Eugippius living in Noricum has mentioned the Rugians and the plundering Heruls. Julius Honorius (geographer from the 5th century) has mentioned the Heruls living between Marcomannen and Quadi. Sidonius Apollinaris told that mercenaries from the barbarian group at the Danube joined the Roman Emperor against the Vandals in 458 AD - including Sciri and Eruli.
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his tribe was totally destroyed by the Goths after a battle in 268 AD and the battle of Bolia in 469 AD together with the Suebes and the few remaining Huns.

Jordanes emphasized the powerful support from the Herulian mercenaries when Odoaker became king of Italy by displacing the last Roman Emperor in 476, symbolising the final fall of the Western Roman Empire. This is confirmed by sources calling him "Rex Herulorum", but he was not a Herul himself and his group also consisted of other ethnicities than Heruls.

In 488 AD Odoaker attacked the Rugians, who left the area and joined Theodoric. They were replaced by the Lombards, but according to Procopius these Lombards were subdued by the Heruls. In the next two decades the Herulian kingdom expanded and the town of Pöchlarn/Herilungoburg in Nibelungengau may have been a westerly outpost against the Lombards.

Shortly after the Ostrogoth Theodoric the Great attacked Odoaker after an agreement with the Byzantine Emperor. Odoaker was defeated in several battles, and escaped to Ravenna in 491 AD. The chancellor of Theodoric, Cassiodorus, told later about an event where “Odoaker left Ravenna with the Heruls in the night across the Candidiani Bridge and met my lord Theodoric in a memorable battle.” It became later famous in the Germanic legends as the “Rabenschlacht”, which may be the reason why the stronghold in Ravenna (Raben) was called "Maeringaburg" in the ON-poem Deor – named after the heroically defending Heruls from Mähren. They were never defeated by Theodoric, but Odoaker had no luck to break out and after being sieged in two years in “Maeringaburg” the bishop of Ravenna tried to arrange a peace agreement. Theodoric used the opportunity to murder Odoaker.

The town now became the capital of Theodoric and the Heruls lost the 30% income of their land in Italy to the Gothic soldiers. Theodoric also made an agreement with the Heruls at the Danube, but that was probably later.

For at least 250 years the Heruls kept their separate identity despite a rootless life as pirates, plundering gangs and mercenaries where Heruls even fought against Heruls in different armies. Probably they were kept together by a religious ancestor cult. We shall, however, regard them as a smaller basic group around the royal dynasty in the Hunnic times and then a host of followers around this dynasty in times of success. In this way local Quadi, the remains of the Sciri and others may have joined them.

In Scandinavia a stream of golden solidi in the 5th century indicates that Scandinavian warriors joined the Huns as allied, which is described later in the chapter about the archaeology. They were never mentioned as Roman mercenaries by the Romans. As a similar stream continued all the century, the Scandinavian warriors may have joined an East Germanic people after the Huns. The most likely people were the Heruls who settled in Moravia and controlled the route to Scandinavia. That may explain why the Eastern Heruls became their neighbours “superior in power and number” as Procopius told.

23 Angelika Lintner-Potz can be misunderstood, when she at page 105 writes: “der relativ große Anteil von Erolern in der Gefolgschaft Odowakars auf seinem Weg nach Italien.” Odoaker and his Herulian mercenaries were already serving at the imperial court in Ravenna, while their king and the rest of the people probably stayed in Mähren. Odoaker shared out 1/3 of the land to his army, but it shall probably be regarded as a taxation. It was no migration and Odoaker was not the king of the Herulian people.

24 In Consularia Italica the Heruls were indicated to have the most important role.

25 Auctorium Havniensis ordo prior a. 476. In the same source (a. 487) Odoaker was once more mentioned as Rex Herulicus.

26 Pöchlarn at the Danube in Nibelungengau west of Vienna. Here the region of Herilungoburg was mentioned in a charter of Ludvig the German from 832 (including Pöchlarn, Harlanden and some other towns). Herilungoburg was probably the old Roman camp, Arilapa, which is hidden under Pöchlarn, being earlier an island at an important crossing of the Danube.

27 Ennodius, Consularia Italica and Cassiodorus Mommsen Chronica minora saec. IV.VI.VII vol 2.

28 Valenianus 491 and maybe a letter from Cassiodorus to an unnamed Herulian king.
1.1.2.2 The Western Heruls

The Western Heruls were first time mentioned by the Romans in 286 AD when Heruls attacked Gallia together with the Allemanii, the Burgundians and the unknown Chaibones – 17 years after the Heruls of Naulobates surrendered and became accepted by the Romans. Was it a Herulian protest against the usual Roman relocation? The Chaibones were probably the Chauci (Chaucorum Gens) of Tacitus and Ptolemeus, who placed them as neighbours to the Saxons. These authors never mentioned any Heruls. The Chaibones and the Heruls were according to the Romans destroyed so much that nobody could tell their wives and children at home. The Chauci disappeared at that time, while the Heruls were mentioned as neighbours to the Saxons in 314 AD and 70 years after the defeat they were mentioned as Roman mercenaries in England living beyond the Rhine. With this Herulian replacement of the Chauci as neighbours to the Saxons it is likely that the unknown Chaibones were the Chauci, who dissappeared when the Herulian warrior band took over the remaining tribe after the defeat and became one people. The Heruls may have taken over the coastal areas in Harlingen at the Weser Mouth side by side with the Saxons. The name Harlingen and the river Harle may even be derived from the name Herul. These costal areas were in the 3rd century left by the Frisians due to a raising sea level, but non agriculturists like the Heruls could live at the “Terpen”. We know from the archaeology that Roman mercenaries lived in this area. Of course, this is no certain history, but it is the best explanation we can give. Ammianus Marcellinus told in the 360'ies several times about Herulian mercenaries in England, where they joined the Bataves living in the Rhine Mouth. Later in 409, 455 and 459 AD the Heruls plundered the coasts of Gallia and Spain as pirates.

It is rather obvious from the text that the Herulian mercenaries in the Roman armies until the Hunnic retirement in 454 AD were Western Heruls, who were recruited together with the Bataves. The Herulian mercenaries had their base in Constanza near Venice. Last time we hear about them was in 478 AD when Sidonius Apollinaris met Heruls in Toulouse living at the furthest shore of the ocean – a time when the

29 Jordanes, who is the source to the above description of the Heruls, did not mention the Western Heruls – probably because they had disappeared at his time without being ever involved with his Goths. Panegry of Mamartinus, XI, Trier, 289 AD mentions that Emperor Maximianus sent out a couple of cohorts to defeat the Heruls and the unknown Chaibones, who had attacked Gallia together with Burgunden and Allemanii. Mamertinus wrote that the Heruls and Chaibones we all killed. They could not bring the messages home to their mothers and wives. He also mentioned that they lived most distantly away, “ultima loci”.

30 Their presence is probably confirmed by Laterculus Veronensis (ca. 314 AD), where Heruls were mentioned both in north-west (close to Rugi and Saxons) and in east (between Rugi and Sarmathae) – just like the Rugi who were supposed to be living near the island of Rygen and in the Hunnic area.

31 The Romans mentioned in the 360’ies several times Heruls and Bataves together – especially in England. The Bataves lived according to Plinius (BC) south of the Rhine-mouth, where the Western Heruls later appeared nearby. Ammianus [Ammianus, XX,1/4] told about Herulian mercenaries in the army of Julian in England (before he became an emperor). When Constantine felt threatened by the success of Julian, he demanded the strongest troops of Julian – Heruls, Bataves and Celts – to be sent to the Parthian War. Julian protested arguing, that he had promised these soldiers they could never be send behind the Alps, as they had their homes beyond the Rhine (“laribus transshenamis”). No one would dare to use that argument against the emperor if these Heruls were soldiers living at the Danube as claimed by some scholars.

32 Herwig Wolfram

33 Fallward – see later.

34 In 455 and 459 the Western Heruls were mentioned as pirates at the Spanish coasts attacking with 400 light armed men (Hydacus) and in Gallia in 409 (Hieromnimus).

35 Sidonius Apollinaris told in 478 [Sidonius, VIII,IX] from the court of the Western Gothic king Eurich in Bordaux “Here strolls the Herulian with blue/green (glacious) cheeks, inhabitant of the Ocean’s furthest shore, and same colors as its weedy deeps”. In this description they were mentioned together with Ostrogoths, Burgundians, Sygambrians and Saxons – the latter being mentioned as pirates also in VIII,VI. The Saxons lived north east of the Frisians around the mouth of the Elbe – which is in accordance with Laterculus Veronensis (4th century AD). Sidonius was a Gallic noble being born in Orleans, who should be supposed to know the geography of North Western Europe. These sources appear to be stronger than guesswork based on the name Harlinger Land (Herloga - Adam of Bremen) – the chapter about the ErilaR. A claim about another version of Harlinger Land =
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Heruls had a well-known kingdom in Moravia too. It is obvious from these texts that at least two groups of Heruls existed in those centuries. If we combine the sources the Western Heruls were for 200 years frequently mentioned as living around Oest Frisia and in 478 AD maybe in England – with Harlingen as the likely area due to archaeology, the neighbourhood with the Saxons and the name which may be derived from Heruls.

We do not hear about these Heruls after 478 AD, unless the letter for assistance from Cassiodorus was meant for them as suggested by Wolfram and Goffart – but in that case he should also address the Saxons. It was rather meant for the Eastern Heruls if the Western Heruls lived northwest of the Saxons – but it is not important as we have plenty of evidence for two groups already. The only problem worth to discuss about these Heruls today is if they were a branch of the Heruls or a separate entity.

We have no historical records what happened after 478 AD. A part of them my have left for England together with their Anglian and Saxon neighbours, who firstly were called to England to assist the Brittons in 448 AD, where the Heruls had served the Romans earlier. The Anglosaxon migration probably lasted for several decennies. Another part may have gone to Scandinavia as mercenaries, but that will be discussed in later chapters.

### 1.1.2.3 The Herulian way of fighting

As mentioned the early Herulian mercenaries in England and at the Rhine were Western Heruls. It is most likely that the mercenaries following Odoaker were Eastern Heruls who had been allied with the Sciri against the Goths and Huns since 454 AD, but we cannot exclude that some Western Heruls joined them. The later Herulian mercenaries in the armies of Justinian were Heruls from Moravia – Eastern Heruls – as told by Procopius.

In the early historical sources, the Heruls were famous as swift on their feet and light-armed foot soldiers opposite the Goths and the Alans, who were known as heavy cavalry. We shall be aware that the sources normally described the Western Herulian mercenaries – except Procopius telling on his side about slaves and young warriors of the Eastern Heruls, who had to demonstrate their courage by fighting without protecting armouring. The Heruls living in the marches in the 3rd century were forced to avoid the heaviest armouring. These light armed Heruls must have been foot soldiers being able to fight as Vikings from ships, while the Eastern Heruls when they joined the Huns and the Goths. We have no description of the experienced Eastern Herulian warriors, who had joined Huns and their companions across the plains. Their style was apparently a compromise between Hunnic and Gothic style as horsemen using both sword and bow or lance. Two times the mercenaries of Justinian were mentioned as horsemen by Procopius. The horse became an important characteristic.

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37 Several sources including Jordanes describe the Heruls in this way - opposite the "heavy" Goths and Alans. Probably the arms of these were a light single-edged sword, a shield and a dagger – and maybe in battle formations a lance/spear. The heavier weapons of that time were lances, spears, axes and long double-edged swords. Bows were especially used by the Hunnic horsemen. Together the "light-armed Heruls", the "heavy Gothic horsemen" with lances and the "mounted Hunnic archers" were a terrifying force. Separated they were not able to match the Roman and Byzantine mercenaries in the long run. Procopius later mentioned that the 3000 Herulian mercenaries of Narses were all horsemen, but that happened after the fellowship with the Huns, and in the great battle against Totila they were forced to dismount before the battle as Narses was afraid they would ride away.

Wolfram is guessing a connection between Heruli and the word "fast", which he also connected to the "Rosomoni" wounding Ermanaric in Jordanes Getica. Actually it is not surprising if the Heruls turned against their conqueror when he was attacked by the Huns. In the 8th century the Ravenna-Geographer (Source: The Gothic Marcomir) moved the title "the fastest" from the Heruls to the Danes, whom Jordanes had called "the tallest". Is it a coincidence?
1.1.2.4 The last migration of the Heruls - Procopius

After the death of Theodoric the Byzantine Emperor Justinian began to purge out the barbarians (incl. the Arians) from his area of interest. When the Byzantines finally defeated the Ostrogoths in 553 Procopius finalised his last book about the history of the Gothic Wars. It is quite clear from the descriptions that he met the Heruls personally as a secretary and legal advisor of the great Byzantine general Bellisarius and later he must also have met officers in Byzantium like the Herulian general Suartuas. In a mixture of fascination and despise he dedicated two chapters to a valuable description of the Heruls. These chapters by Procopius, who as a reporter described his own time, are the main source to the history of the Heruls.

Up to the sixth century the Heruls were regarded as one of the most primitive Germanic tribes offering human beings to their "host of gods". This distinctive character indicates that they kept their own religion, and the description could as well be a description of the later Vikings of Scandinavia. Maybe a Gothic worshipping of the war god had been turned more in the direction of the West Germanic Wotan or past members of their own royal family. Probably they were even influenced by Alans and Huns joining the Herulian kings.

Procopius was a Christian and a part of his job was possibly to control if the pagan mercenaries joining Justinian had become Christians as they had promised. It was especially a problem regarding some of the Heruls.

Procopius sarcastically described how they earlier, as they became superior in power and in number, made their neighbours in Pannonia subject and tributary to themselves including the Lombards. When finally having no longer anyone in the world to assail they attacked without reason the Lombards in a very careless way. Rodolphus was killed in the battle and the Heruls had to leave their kingdom in Moravia. According to the general translation of Procopius the battle took place in 494 AD 3 years after Anastasius became emperor. A half century later Procopius probably mixed up the time of the defeat of Odoaker with the defeat of Hrodolphus - both being Herulian defeats. The battle most likely took place in 509 AD. Procopius had

38 This expression by Procopius was about the Heruls in old days. The Heruls and Ostrogoths following Attila were without doubt pagans - confirmed by an Ostrogothic human sacrifice in Italy in 407. The Ostrogoths became Arians around 475AD - 100 years later than the other Goths. Later also the Gepides were Arians, but Procopius emphasized the Lombards as Christians opposite the Heruls in the description of the battle - which probably is an overstatement. Justinian persuaded the Illyrian Heruls to be Christians in 529'rd century but Procopius described them with disgusting pagan manners as late as in the 540'ies, which indicates that they had not been Arians by themselves before. The idea that they had to find their king in the distant Scandinavia indicates a pagan ancestor cult, and it is very unlikely that these Heruls in Scandinavia should be Christian or Arians. His description is similar to the way Thietmar of Merseburgs and Adam of Bremen described gods, hangings and sacrifice of human beings in the Danish and Swedish kingdoms at the end of the first millennium. Jordanes had a similar description of the Goths in early times too.

39 Procopius and Paulus Diaconus have their separate versions of the battle, but in both versions the Heruls surprisingly lost the battle because of arrogance – and according to the writers also due to despise of the Christian God. According to note 2.2.8 the Heruls made up an important part of the troops of Odoaker. Procopius told that a part of the deal in 476 was to give away 1/3 of the farming land (should be regarded as 1/3 of the income hereof) to his mercenaries, which Theodoric in 494 transferred to his allies. A part of the Heruls, who did not support Theodoric, may have returned to the kingdom at Danube causing turbulence and a need of expansion there around 494 or later. According to Procopius the Heruls laid down their weapons when Anastasius took over the Roman empire - which was in 491 AD. The battle took place at least 3 years after this ceasefire. Wolfram analysed the alliances of Theodoric against the Franks. According to Wolfram Cassiodorus (Theodoric) with the preserved letters to the Heruls, the Varni and the Thuringians tried to form a northern front line against the Franks - making these Heruls the Western Heruls, but they could as well be the Pannonian Heruls south east of the Thuringians. Wolfram regards Rodolphus as a strong ally to Theodoric at the eastern front line, who was let down when the Franks attacked the Visigoths in 507 in south-west. Accordingly the battle between the Heruls and the Lombards took place shortly after 507. Unfortunately Cassiodorus' letter to Theodoric's Herulian "son in arms" has no name or date, but Andreas Schwarcz has from the order of the letters of Cassiodorus dated the battle to 509 AD (Schwarcz 2005).
obviously his sympathy at the Christian Lombardian side and his explanations regarding this battle in the past are not convincing. Paulus Diaconus told much later a Lombardian version where he on his side "forgot" that the Lombards had been subdued, but he also emphasized that Hrodolphus did not join the battle. He was killed afterwards. Also, Procopius told that the Lombards followed the Heruls afterwards and killed a lot there.

The sources do not appear to be dependent of each other, and they both tell that the Heruls were defeated in two battles. They do not agree about the motive, but we should never expect a motive to be correct – especially not from Paulus. One of the historians are placing the death of Hrodolphus in the wrong battle, but it was no important fact to remember as the two battles were combined. We could wonder why Paulus was so interested in that battle, but he was at that time involved with Scandinavia as an envoy from Charlemagne, and he may have been aware that the Royal family of the Heruls now lived in Scandinavia.

Probably the real explanation behind the events in Pannonia was that Theodoric agreed with the Heruls that they should calm down and just collect the tribute according to the treaties with their neighbours. This most likely took place between 505 AD, when a conflict broke out between Theodoric and Byzantium about Pannonia, and 507 AD, when the Franks attacked the Western Goths. Maybe due to that agreement and an alliance against the Franks Hrodolphus (who was not mentioned by name) was in 507 AD appointed weapon son (adoptoio per arma) of Theodoric - a title Theodoric was earlier given himself by the emperor. He got horse, spears, shield and other equipment from Theodoric, and the Heruls came under Gothic protection. The title explains why the Rök Stone could call Theodorik "the first of Sea warriors and Märinger" (see chapter 2.1.1.3).

A possibility is that an aggressive part of the Heruls on their own initiative in 508/9 AD attacked the Lombards against their agreement with Hrodolphus (even Procopius made it clear that Hrodolphus was against the attack). The Heruls lost and fled to the vast mountains north of the Lombards (Old Rugian territory). The Lombards, who until then had been a smaller tribe, got due to their success support from other tribes being subdued by the Heruls. Afterwards they may have attacked the Heruls in Moravia/Marchfeld killing Hrodolphus and sending the escaping royal family up in the valleys of the Carpathian Mountains. In that way we can read Paulus Diaconus and Procopius. The part of the warriors who did not care about the kingdom and preferred to continue their life as mercenaries and harriers of their neighbours (probably those attacking the Lombards) went south along the Danube - and were later driven away by the Gepides. Most of the family of Hrodolphus probably went north already in 509 AD, and the fact that the royal family did not go to their allied Theodoric (only few Heruls did so) indicate that they had a more convenient alternative. That will explain both the Herulian/Byzantine version of the battle by Procopius and the Lombardian version by Paulus Diaconus adjusted according to their motives. Both authors were against the Heruls, but the Lombards probably didn't want to tell that they had been subdued for years by the Heruls and found another reason for the war. The last section is a guess as we do not know what happened exactly at the battles.

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41 Cassiodorus' Varia V 2 (507-511 AD): From King Theodoric to the King of the Heruli: "It has been always held amongst the nations a great honour to be adopted as "filius per arma." Our children by nature often disappoint our expectations, but to say that we esteem a man worthy to be our son is indeed praise. As such, after the manner of the nations and in manly fashion, do we now beget you. We send you horses, spears, and shields, and the rest of the trappings of the warrior; but above all we send you our judgement that you are worthy to be our son. Highest among the nations will you be considered who are thus approved by the mind of Theodoric. And though the son should die rather than see his father suffer aught of harm, we in adopting you are also throwing round you the shield of our protection. The Heruli have known the value of Gothic help in old times, and that help will now be yours. A and B, the bearers of these letters, will explain to you in Gothic (patrio sermone) the rest of our message to you."
1.1.3 The arrival of the royal family to Scandinavia

According to Procopius many of the Heruls went north to the Scandinavian Peninsula led "by many of the royal blood". First, they went to the Varni living in the Elbe-/Mecklenburg-area. From here they passed the nations of the Danes without violence and crossed the sea. Arriving to the Scandinavian Peninsula they settled "at that time" at the Götes ("Gautoi"). As the Danish expulsion of the Heruls mentioned by Jordanes is regarded to be a contemporary description from the 6th century his information will also be a contemporary confirmation of the story by Procopius about the Herulic presence in Scandinavia.

We shall be careful about the use of the detailed information from Jordanes and Procopius as they had no general idea of the geography of Northern Europe. Furthermore, their sources regarding events 40 years before their own time could be handled uncritical and circumstantial. They had opposite motives to describe the arrival of the Heruls. The interpretation of their way to describe the events may therefore be that the Heruls first settled between the Danes and the Götes from where they were later expelled further north - in two steps. This is maybe confirmed by Procopius' use of the expression "at that time".

As mentioned the rest of the people lead by many of the royal blood earlier left for Thule (the Scandinavian Peninsula) - a journey which probably took place between 509 and 512 42. They passed the Slavs, crossed barren country and came to the Varni. From there they passed the nations of the Dani without suffering violence, and from the shore of the Ocean they were sailing to Thule, where "the arriving Heruls at that time settled at/beside the Gautoi" – one of the most numerous nations there.

The route has often been discussed among historians, but Walther Goffart has stated that we shall not trust this 40 years old narrative – at least not the details. At that time the Slavs had reached Slovakia and Upper Moravia. The text of Procopius can be explained if the Heruls tried to walk through the Moravian Gate the usual way towards the Vistula but were surprised by the new Slavic groups. Therefore, they turned more westerly and crossed the barren East Saxon Moors on their way to the Baltic Sea. The description may indicate that they had planned to follow the old and settle at the mouth of Vistula but were prevented from this purpose by intruding Slavs. Procopius wrote that the Varni lived between the Rhine and the Northern Ocean, but he totally neglected the Saxons in Germany and England. The Varni were generally supposed to live in Mecklenburg and Eastern Holstein 43. As the Varni later became a part of the Thuringians and the Saxons and the Saxons were missing among the potential allies in the letter of Cassiodorus few years earlier (Varni, Thuringians and Heruls) we cannot exclude that the Varnian king represented some of the scattered Saxon tribes at that time.

500 years later Helmold in his "Chronicon Slawones " told about a group of Heruls or Havelins living west of Berlin at the Havel/Dosse rivers, but this is regarded to be a simple mistake for the Havelins. However, as it is the same regions where the Varnies lived it is not impossible that some of the Heruls found an empty isolated pocket in this scattered area of forests, wetlands and agricultural land in this melting pot of Slavic and Germanic people. Procopius called it “barren land”. But this too uncertain to be regarded as history.

The route has been used in order to prove, that the Danes - in spite of later sources - lived in Jutland44 using

42 According to Procopius they went north before the rest of the Heruls crossed the Danube in 512. Since the battle at least some of those going south lived in a barren part of the former Rugian area in Bohemia, but they were starving and tried for a short while a corner of the Gepidian kingdom in Dacia, before they crossed the Danube. The Slavic tribes invaded according to some sources Upper Moravia around 502, which is indirectly confirmed by Procopius. The period for the departure to Scandinavia has to be 509-512. Procopius did not express himself clearly when the two groups separated as he possibly did not know, but probably they left just after the battle.

43 Ptolemeus.

44 In the 9th century Ottar called the Danish islands, Scania (Skaane) and Halland as the country of the Danes, while
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the logical argument, that if the Heruls first crossed an ocean after passing the Danes, they had to walk to Jutland and from there cross Kattegat to the coast near Götaland in Sweden. However, we should never expect Procopius to be exact regarding Scandinavian geography – actually, he did only mention people/nations (or barren country without nations) except for the word Thule which the Romans regarded as the farthest island in the north separated from the Continent by the ocean. Probably the source of Procopius simply told about the Varni as the only German people because the Heruls had to negotiate with their former ally about ships for their travel directly to Scania. It made no sense to cross two Danish islands needing ships three times in order to go to Thule. In Scania they may have passed the Danes settling next to or at the Gautioi at “the island in the farthest north” – the rest of the description might be his own reconstruction based on Ptolemeus, other old geographers and general knowledge. As Thule was regarded as an island he knew they had to sail, but we are not able to read whether they sailed the short way to the Danish Islands or Scania or they passed Jutland and maybe Fyen, and we do not know whether the ocean was Kattegat, the Baltic Sea or the narrow Oeresund. It is relevant to compare with Procopius’ description of Britain/Brittia (Book VIII, xx) – there he demonstrated that he knew nothing about North European geography.

According to Procopius they passed the Danish nations (in pluralise) "without violence" – most likely by passing the Danish islands and maybe even a Danish Scania by ship - and settled at the Götes. It must be noticed that the Gautoi were important to be mentioned by Procopius as they were supposed to be the family of the Goths – a possible target of Germanic people after the Gothic wars. Other Scandinavian tribes may have been closer. Jordanes told about a Danish expulsion of the Heruls. If this expulsion referred to the same group it will probably mean that they had settled in the border areas between the Danes and the Götes - Blekinge/Småland - before the expulsion. This makes sense as it is a neighbouring area to Vätteryd, which will be mentioned later. Also, Procopius indicated, that this was not their final settlement as the settlement at the Götes was "at that time" (when they arrived) and that "they remained there on the island" (Thule) meaning that they possibly were sent north of the Götes by the Danes. Why did Procopius specifically mention that they passed the Danes “without violence? Probably because he knew the second episode mentioned by the contemporary Jordanes. These sources are too short and unspecific in their expressions to be regarded as certain, but this is discussed in a later chapter. The final settlement of the royal family must be identified by archaeology or other kind of information.

Procopius told about 13 kingdoms in Thule and he mentioned the war god Ares as the most important god there – but this remark must refer to the time when Datus returned to Illyria. Regarding the arguments below it is worth noticing that most of Procopius’ description of Scandinavia covered the Scridfennae and the midnight sun north of the Svear. He even mentioned that he had interviewed eyewitnesses to the midnight sun taking place more than 800 kilometres north of Uppsala.

Procopius just mentioned Gautoi as a numerous group in Thule, while Jordanes specifically told about Ostrogoths, Vagoths and Gautigoths at the "island" Scanza, which he in his geographical description confused with Gotland45. The Gautigoths could therefore be the Guter at Gotland, but we must notice, that Tacitus described the Suiones in the way we should expect the people of Gotland to appear. He had Sitones with a female rule next to them, which could mean Svealand seen from the Vistula. The Suetidi or Suehans of Jordanes could be the people of Svealand, but the Suehans could also be the people of Hälsingland/Medelpad. As both Tacitus and Jordanes used pairs of names both groups could alternatively belong to the Mälar Valley with the Sitones connected to the cult in Badelunda, but other possibilities exist too. The explanation of the names is not important regarding the Heruls and the sources are very unreliable.

45 Ptolemeus placed the 4 islands of Scanza with the largest eastern island north of the river Vistula. The Romans regarded the Scandinavian Peninsula as an island in Sinus Codanus (The Gothic Bay). Following Jordanes descriptions of tribes in Scanza, Scanza must be identical to the Scandinavian Peninsula, but in his geographical description he appears to describe Gotland due to the shape and the distance from Vistula. Procopius used the name Thule - meaning the farthest north - but from his description of the tribes and the midnight sun it is quite clear he talked about the Scandinavian Peninsula.
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However, the Suehans of Jordanes with splendid horses like the Thuringians should in any way be noticed, as this may refer to a Germanic people being involved in the southbound fur trade – also mentioned by Jordanes.

1.1.4 The Heruls in Illyria

Their remaining kinsmen at the Danube drifted around until they were received by the East Romans in Illyria, where they settled near Belgrade. Their mercenaries later became an important element in the army of Justinian, but his condition was that they were baptised. Lead by Mundus they assisted Justinian during the Nika-revolt in Constantinople, which resulted in the rebuilding of the current Hagia Sophia church in 537 AD. Procopius emphasized several Herulic officers – Suartuas and especially Phara, who had a leading role in the defeat of the Vandals. Procopius wrote that these Heruls around 548 AD sent an envoy to Scandinavia for a new king - and found "many there of the royal blood" opposite in Illyria. They returned with Datus, Aordus and 200 young Herulian soldiers and sent back the Herulian candidate of Justinian, Suartuas, who was instead restored as a commander of Constantinople by Justinian.

It is obvious that this story was well known in Constantinople 548-553 AD as “hot news”. In 551 AD Jordanes finished his work in Constantinople and in 553 AD also Procopius finished his work at the same place - in other words two independent sources had less than 5 years after the return of the envoy told about Heruls and Danes in Scandinavia for the first time – both mentioning the combination. A small hint like the five words of Jordanes would be understood, and they could not lie about such an event if their works should be taken seriously - they could just let out inconvenient facts. These contemporary stories are decisive for the evaluation of our information about the Heruls in Scandinavia – opposite the narrative about the journey to Scandinavia and the misunderstood origin.

Procopius received from a position close to the Byzantine court information from this Herulian envoy, which had just returned from Scandinavia 38 years after their arrival. He also told that they were much delayed as their first candidate died at their way back at the Danes - telling in this way that they lived far north of the Danes, who lived at Sealand and in Scania. He even told that he had interviewed witnesses from Scandinavia about the midnight sun. Unfortunately, he did not mention the destiny of their royal family in Scandinavia in the first 38 years. His purpose was to "prove" that the new king and his supporters in Illyria were faithless and "utterly abandoned rascals" - a people impossible to rule, as they dismissed the royal candidate of Justinian. Among these words he also indicated that they were homosexuals – raging words used today in connections which this uncertain kind of historical foundation does not support.

Procopius’ explanation of the reason behind the conflict was probably influenced by his own part of the responsibility as juridical secretary for their chief. Apparently, the problem was that a part of the Heruls did not follow the agreement but were still pagans and wanted a king from the pagan Heruls in Scandinavia.

Regarding the number of Heruls, who settled in Scandinavia with the royal family, it is worth to notice that the Illyrian group made up an important unit in the Byzantine army. This despite of a massacre on the people in Illyria after 512 AD. Procopius counted around 548 AD 3.000 soldiers in the army of Datus and 1.500 in the Roman army, and
in 553 AD he counted 3,000 soldiers in the Roman army – covering around 12% of the army against the Goths. Procopius own words were: “some of them, as it is has been told to me … , made their home in the country of Illyricum, but the rest were averse to cross the Ister River, but settled in the very extremity of the world.” How many they went to Thule is difficult to know from this historical record, but if we suggest that 1/3 went north it is equivalent with 2000 males in the soldiers age – corresponding with the 200 returning with Datus.

The position of Datus in opposition to Justinian inside the empire was impossible and he was soon expelled to the Gepides north of the Danube at River Tisza. Both people were in 567 AD destroyed by the Romans and the Avars. A daughter of a Herulic king, Silinga, was married to the Lombardic king Wacho and her son, Valthari, was crowned as king of the Lombards. She was probably killed by a Lombardian arrow [Tejral in Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014], and he died young shortly after. The only Herulian dynasty being mentioned later in Southern Europe was a branch of the descendants of Phara, who were a part of the Agilofingy dynasty of the Bavarians at the upper Danube.

It is worth to notice that the Romans tried to assimilate the Herulian soldiers, as they made up an important part of the Roman army in the next 40 years\(^{46}\). Their king Grepes was baptised in Constantinople in 528 AD\(^{47}\). Later it was a condition from Justinian that they became Christians before they could settle in the area of Singidunum, where they covered an important hole in the Roman fortifications along the Danube. The Herulian soldiers in Africa fighting the Vandals were nevertheless mentioned as Arians.

When the Illyrian Heruls according to Procopius around 547/48 AD murdered their king Ochus (ON Hoch?), they had no new candidates of royal blood - confirming that nearly all the royal family went north as he wrote. An envoy was send to Thule in order to find a new member of the royal family. They found many there of the royal blood, but the first one fell sick and died among the Danes. They went back and chose Datus to go south followed by his brother Aordus (ON Hord?) and 200 young warriors. Procopius emphasized the long delay in this connection, which Justinian took advantage of in Illyria placing his own Herulian general Suartuas as a new king. However, when Datus arrived he was elected by the Heruls as a new king and Suartuas had to take flight to Constantinople\(^{48}\). A furious Justinian decided to reinstall Suartuas and caused once more a split among the Heruls. Many of them joined the Gepides in Dacia Inferior, who were enemies of Byzantium and the Lombards.

The key to the understanding of these conflicts – hereunder the murder of Ochus – might be a general split among the Illyrian Heruls. After the offer from Justinian in 529 AD they appear to be separated into a Christian group of at least 1500-3000 professional soldiers following Justinian and a group of at least 3000 warriors who more and more openly returned to barbarian manners – obviously neither orthodox nor Arian Christians and maybe worshipping the war god and their distant royal ancestors.

At the time of the final split there were already hostilities between the Gepides and Lombards, the latter being supported by Justinian. Under these hostilities Aordus was killed in battle against the troops of Justinian. Obviously, his brother, Datus, became a Herulian king exiled in Dacia - which makes sense as he had caused the split. The defeat of Aordus lead to a short ceasefire, but in 552 AD the Gepides in Dacia were defeated by the Lombards with Byzantine support headed by Suartuas, and in 567 AD under Justin II the Gepides were defeated into oblivion by the Lombards and the Avars. Also, the Heruls disappeared from the history in Dacia now being conquered by the Avars. The Herulian mercenaries of Narses had also disappeared - probably assimilated among the Romans and the Lombards, when these shortly after moved to

\(^{46}\) Sarantis 2011.
\(^{47}\) Malalas Chronographia.
\(^{48}\) Suartuas might be a source of Procopius to the last part of the Herulian history, and he was probably well informed about his northern rivals and the journeys to Thule. Procopius knew the officers from his former job and they were both in Constantinople when Suartuas returned from the Heruls, so it is very unlikely that the historian should write two chapters about the Heruls without questioning Suartuas, as he mentioned, that he asked people coming from there about the midnight sun.
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Italy. Some of the Heruls simply became Christian Roman provincials who marked a distance to their former ethnic identity. The only Heruls we suspect to continue a rule in Southern Europe were the descendants from Bellisarius’ Herulian commander, Phara, who became the royal dynasty of the new established Bavaria, the Agilofingi 49.

Procopius covered without doubt political motives behind his description of the “drunken and treacherous” Illyrian Heruls. First, they denied to follow Bellisarius and preferred the other Byzantine general, Narses, who was competitor of Bellisarius, and later most of them revolted against Justinian and Suartuas before going to the Gepides. On the other hand, Procopius had no obvious motive to twist the description of the journey to Thule - except maybe for the sentence "without suffering any violence" and the settlement "at/between the Gautoi". Procopius could not change the fact that Datius was found in "Thule" and returned in his own time, and somewhere the Heruls had to stay in the meantime. His and his readers' knowledge about Scandinavia and its geography was very limited, but there is no reason to believe that the description of the journey itself was manipulation. His reliability, sources and motives are further discussed in chapter 1.3.1.5.

Many questions have been asked about the Heruls, but most scholars agree in the fact that the Eastern Heruls moved from the Black Sea Region towards west to a kingdom in Moravia. In the theory they could be different groups, but that does not make much sense and their movement is explained as a part of the Hunnic movement. Most scholars also agree that the royal family 494-512 AD migrated to the Scandinavian Peninsula via Eastern Saxony and Danish surroundings settling first as neighbours to or at the Gautoi. They could still be found in Scandinavia 39 years later. Nevertheless, we have never heard about Heruls in Scandinavian history and legends - as Heruls.

How do we imagine this people to disappear in Scandinavia? Was it possible for such an outstanding, individual, feared, powerful and militant people to disappear from all the Nordic narrators, historians and archaeologists, though the Illyrian Heruls 35 years after their arrival were able to find many of royal blood in Scandinavia? Why did they not all follow their prince back to the strong Herulian soldiers in Illyria if things went wrong in Scandinavia? Why only a group of 200 young warriors?

The most - and maybe only - probable explanation is that they appear under another name or are assimilated into another shape in Scandinavia.

Our only contemporary information from Scandinavia is of archaeological character, and therefore the

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49 According to Procopius 3000 Herulian warriors joined the Gepides when Aordus was killed, while 500 Heruls joined the Byzantines send by Justinian in order to help the Lombardian king Audoin. Later 3000 Heruls were together with Lombards an important element in the army of the Byzantine Narses (these Heruls made up 12% of the Roman army), when he defeated the Ostrogoths for ever (Wolfram 1988), but the last time we heard the name Herul in the Roman sources was when Narses around 560 defeated a Herulian king Sindualt of the Brents near Passo de Brennero. According to F. Eckhardt based on chronicles from Wuertsburg and Salzburg the Bavarian duke Garibald (ancestor of the Agilofings) was probably son of the Herulian commander under Bellisarius, Phara, and duke Tassilo I, who followed Garibald as king of the Bavarians, was probably son of his nephew, the Herulian king Sindualt of the Breones. The daughter of Garibald was married with the Lombardian king Authari in 589 and her brother became duke of the Lombardic Asti. This indicates that the Illyrian Heruls were still accepted as a people of importance and took part in the political matrimonial alliances between the Germanic dynasties. Another example was the queen Silinga of Lombardia, who according to Origo Gentis Longobardorum (ca 670 AD) was the daughter of a Herulian king. In the same chapter it is stated that the Heruls (at the Danube) had no king after Rodolphus and consequently Silinga should be the daughter of Rodolphus. These family-branches were not accepted as kings by the Illyrian Heruls in 548, and therefore the examples cannot be used as evidence against the royal family earlier leaving for Scandinavia, but they might indicate connections between Scandinavia, Bavaria, Raetia and Lombardia.

In 554 the Heruls left Narses during a battle because he executed one of their officers, but the last years they had been fighting together with the Lombards, so maybe the last contingent of Herulian mercenaries became a part of the Lombards conquering Italy - making together with Silinga a connection between the Heruls and the Lombardian Style II possible in the late 6th century.
archaeological conclusions and traces have to be analysed and compared independently with the history written by Procopius in order to confirm this history. Afterwards the more unreliable sagas and chronicles from Northern Europe will be compared in order to find possible explanations and to show that the Heruls may have been mentioned in the legends after all.

1.1.5 Their number going to Scandinavia

If we look at the total population in Uppland and surroundings, it was assumed to be around 10,000-30,000 at that time while Hyenstrand in 1974 assumed 40,000 in the whole Lake Mälar Valley excl. Närke (Hyenstrand 1996) in the end of the Iron Ages. This corresponds to 1,500-8,000 men being able to fight in that kind of society. We do have to remember that parts of Uppland were new territory at that time due to the fall of the sea-level.

Procopius told that the Heruls in the Danube-area became their neighbours superior in number and in power. The battle against the Lombards weakened the Heruls perceptibly, but his reference to the interference of God showed us his motive to exaggerate the victory of the Lombards. We do not know the relative difference between the two splitting groups after the battle in 508-09, but since many of royal blood went north and the Illyrian group (“some of the Heruls”) had to send for a king there, it was a substantial group. Later the Romans under Anastasius held a massacre on the Illyrian Heruls, but still they were at least $3,000 + 1,500 = 4,500$ warriors in 548AD\(^50\). They were even more warriors than that as the imperial group consisting of 1,500 members in 548 AD were 3,000 mercenaries in 553AD – being an important unit in the army of Narses. The group was still very interesting to Justinian and Procopius\(^51\), so it is obvious that the Heruls crossing the Ister in 512AD were very powerful – and that must count for the group around the royal family too. The figures of Procopius should in this case be reliable due to his professional role, as they were the actual numbers of soldiers in their own army.

It is difficult to guess their number of warriors in Sweden which could be everything between 500 and 5,000 warriors. We may guess that 1/3 of the surviving people went north based on Procopius’ choice of words. As we had at least 4,500 soldiers in Illyria in 548 they probably had more than 2000 males in the soldiers age in Scandinavia. That makes sense as the number of young men returning with Datius was 200 according to Procopius – 10%, which probably was so many they could spare.

The question is also how much it will tell us as military strength is not just a question of numbers, but also of equipment, training, organisation and leadership - demonstrated by the relatively low numbers of soldiers used by the Romans at Limes (30,000) and by Theodoric (20,000).

It has to be considered that the Heruls were trained by Romans and Huns, and that they had actual experiences from the Danube-region subduing the other migration people 10-20 years before. Furthermore, they had observed or joined Theodoric and Odoaker. Maybe they were joined by followers - a/o Western Heruls, people they met on their way, suppressed people in Scandinavia or refugees from the Alemanni from 498, the Visigothic defeat in Gaul in 507 or the later Byzantine expulsion of Barbarians. In Northern Europe in the 5th century young Scandinavian leaders full of initiative heading south against the warmer climate and the Roman gold or heading to England to get their part of the remains of the Roman Empire might have caused a vacuum in leadership or a lack of young warriors. As mentioned the Heruls must have known the situation in Scandinavia. Did the Heruls get a strategic advantage moving opposite the usual migrations using the Theodoric-model stepwise in the vacuum?

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\(^{50}\) This interpretation of Procopius is confirmed by Alexander Sarantis (Sarantis 2011), who has described the importance of the Heruls in the armies of Justinian.

\(^{51}\) Justinian persuaded the Heruls to be Christians, he used them early against the Nika-revolt, later they were an important element of his army, and he interfered in their election of a king. Procopius seems to be very interested in the Heruls in spite of his disgust and he often emphasized them in the army together with the Lombardian mercenaries. Even the letter from Theodoric and Cassiodorus to the king of the Heruls may have been sent to the Heruls at Danube.
This way of thinking was in 1934 put into a gloomy perspective by the German expert in the Goths, Ludwig Schmidt, who without knowing the destiny of the Heruls – and his own people – presented this evaluation of the Heruls in “Die Ostgermanen”: “Die Heruler waren ein echtes Herrenvolk”!

The evaluation is absurd, and it was not necessarily their intention. They were a defeated people living as mercenaries. In chapter 2.2 is presented the scenario that they simply travelled to the expanding society of Uppland as mercenaries – just as they had been earlier in Italy – and became related to the royal family of the Svear as their earls (jarler).

1.2 Archaelogical connections before 509 AD

The migration of the royal family to Scandinavia was no coincidence, but it had nothing to do with their origin as often claimed. The Heruls had a close connection with Scandinavia due to their role and geographical position in the 5th century, which is obvious if we regard the several independent archaeological tracks:

As mentioned earlier the Moravian kingdom of the Heruls covered in the second part of the 5th century a part of Moravia and of the Marchfeld in Eastern Weinviertel and Zahoria. Moravia is a later Slavic name of Mähren – maybe identical with Maurungani/Mauringa mentioned by Cosmographer of Ravenna and Paulus Diaconus as a Lombardian settlement after they crossed the Elbe going south. In the end of the 5th century the Herulian superiority was expanded into the former Rugiland up along the Danube until around Nibelungengau, where the Lombards soon after settled.

Already Ammianus Marcellinus told in the 380’ies that the Huns and their followers had occupied the land north of the Danube from Rome to the area mentioned above. This is in accordance with Julius Honorius, who already placed Heruls in Moravia in the end of the 4th or beginning of the 5th century. At this early point their settlements were probably scattered camps of horse-riding nomads in the country of the Swebian/Quadi-agriculturists. As half nomads from the swamps of Asov the Heruls were earlier used to live in marches as they found around river Mar/March/Morava.

What made this position important was the Moravian Gate in the Carpathian Mountains, which was a key point at the main route to the Baltic Sea from Rome and the Balkans – the old Amber Route along the Vistula River and another route along the Oder - both rivers having their wells in Upper Moravia close to the Moravian Gate. As earlier mentioned the Marcomannic Wars in this area forced in the 2nd century the trade between the Orient/Rome and Scandinavia along the eastern routes controlled by the Goths. Hoards from that connection are especially found at Fyn (close to Gudme) and in the Götalands. When the Huns arrived, and the Goths moved, these routes were blocked, but the Amber Route was still a route between Scandinavia and the Huns and their allied – used by Scandinavian warriors joining the Huns.

The Amber route was Constantinople/Rome - Aquilaia - Carnuntum - Moravian Gate - Vistula - Oeland/Gotland - Helgö - Högom - Trondheim/Berntnem - Western Norway/Lofoten and with a branch Oder - Bornholm - Scania - Vestergötland - Viken – South Western Norway. It is shown in Chapter 1.1.1.

1.2.1 The Huns and the Eastern Heruls

The Huns were horseriding nomads with their headquarters in Hungary during their last campaigns. The Eastern Heruls probably established their rule in Moravia in the beginning of the 5th century,

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but at least after the Hunnic defeat around 454 AD this became an area they controlled as a warrior elite – not as farmers. It is important to be aware of the mixture of people being initially mentioned. That makes it difficult to separate the Heruls by archaeology from the other East Germanic people following the Huns. Probably the population in the Herulian kingdom included beside Heruls i.e. Sammartian Alans, Huns, Thuringians, Sciri and Swebes. Archaeology has revealed that the earlier population of Swebes were still living in the area as agriculturists. The Heruls became a class of warriors probably defending the farmers if they paid for that service. The Heruls continued the Hunnic behaviour with plunder, protection and tribute of their neighbours and the trade route - or served as Roman mercenaries or soldiers of Odoaker.

1.2.1.1 Sösdala

Remains in Sösdala from a group of horsemen are identical with Hunnic burial rites from the first quarter of the 5th century during the war campaigns of Attila. The princely bridels – in the so-called Sösdala Style – were probably produced at the late Roman workshops at the Danube, where the Huns operated at that time, while the saddles were of a Scandinavian type developed earlier from Roman and nomadic saddles. It is noticed that the sacrifices took place in a new, expanding society around the grave fields of Vätteryd in the secluded forests of the inner Scania – a society with close contacts to the Danubian Basin in the next century, as described by Ulf Näsman and Charlotte Fabech in “The Sösdala Horsemen”. The Scandinavian activities at that place continued for centuries.

A thorough thesis in the book is the participation of the Scandinavian warriors in the South. The golden solidi were payment for such a participation. That appears to be convincing, but as we shall see in the next chapter the first solidi appear to be paid out of the Hunnic tribute from the Romans – not directly by the Romans. A participation in the Hunnic armies may even be confirmed by the Roman author, Priscus, though they misunderstood the message as a Hunnic rule in Scandinavia. Consequently, the warriors, who came back in the beginning of the 5th century, were not Roman mercenaries, but they had joined the Hunnic campaigns - which is in accordance with the Hunnic sacrifices in Sösdala. The most obvious explanation of the burials and finds in Sösdala/Vätteryd, as they are described in the book, is that the society of Vätteryd was established by a band of returned Hunnic allies, who settled at this secluded place, because they were not welcome at home. It is therefore obvious that this place was used as base for a group of Huns recruiting new warriors in Scandinavia for their campaigns - and maybe other Huns seeking new possibilities. That may be the reason why the finds are indicating a society with close contacts to the Barbarians at the Danube throughout the 5th century, after which time it became a more usual Scandinavian society. As the graves in Vätteryd are Scandinavian, it is unlikely that people from Vätteryd would spoil the precious bridles after nomadic Hunnic custom – rather such sacrifices at the ridge of gravel 200 metres from the grave fields were performed by seconded Hunnic representatives.

The ethnicity of these horsemen is irrelevant to the purpose of this paper as the important clue is that the remains under all circumstances show a close connection between such areas in Scandinavia and the Huns at the Danube - and thereby also their fellows, the Heruls.

Maybe horsemen from this society were trying to attack Västergötland – resulting in some of the horses and equipment being found as war booties in Finnestorp and Vännebo.

Initially, we will examine at the findings in Southern Sweden indicating connections with the people in the

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Hunnic campaign in the early 5th century. In Sösdala and Fulltofta in the middle of Scania and in Vännebo and Finnestorp in the borderlands between Halland and Västergötland equipment for horsemen is found quite similar with the finds at the Middle Danube Region called the Untersiebenbrunn and Cosoveni Style [Fabech 1991; Tejral 1997a, Näsmann 2017] – closest is maybe the bridle in Kachin in Ukraine. The finds are unusual in Northern Europe but are according to Tejral known at the mouth of the Elbe, at the mouth of the Vistula and in the south western Scandinavia too. In Vännebo and Finnestorp - being excavated again in 2002-2012 - the findings were in wet or former wet areas covering a longer period until 550 AD - also containing Nydam-style [Nordqvist 2007]. These few isolated places with a large number of foreign equipment indicate that they cannot be a result of general trade or mercenaries returning to their scattered homes but appear to be sacrifices of weapons from warrior groups like the earlier finds in Jutland.

The editors of the latest book, “The Sösdala Horsemen” from 2017, were the Swedish professor emer. at the Linnaeus University, Ulf Näsmann, and his wife, the Danish archaeologist Charlotte Fabech, while other authors where Michel Kazanski, Anna Mastykova, Anna Bitner-Wroblewska and other European and Scandinavian archaeologists – including Bengt Nordquist, the excavator of Finnestorp. The horse bridles in the Sösdala Style in Scandinavia were concluded to be produced most likely in late Roman provincial workshops at the Danube producing according to specific orders to Hunnic and Germanic horsemen. Especially one of the Sösdala-bridles was of an exclusive princely character. They were punched mostly in gilded silver in the style of Untersiebenbrunn and Cosoveni. Both the style of Sösdala and the style of Untersiebenbrunn (Austria) and Cosoveni (Romania) are common Danubian styles of the Barbarians. Tejral has in 2007 [Tejral 2007, 58-60] described this style as connected with East Germanic and Alanic people from the Bosphorian area at the Black Sea – including the Heruls. The famous grave of Untersiebenbrunn was found in their later kingdom and the bridles in Sösdala were probably produced just opposite the Danube. It shall not be questioned here if some later products in Sösdala Style were produced in Scandinavia where the style existed side by side with the carved Nydam Style, all inspired by Roman military equipment. Later these two styles were combined in the Scandinavian Style I.

The saddles, however, were of the Scandinavian model with saddle rings also found in war booties in Jutland, Finnestorp and Vännebo and in the mound in Högom. They were earlier developed as a combination of Roman and nomadic saddles – probably Alanic or Sammartian as they are found before the Huns arrived.

The findings in Sösdala and in Fulltofta 15 kilometres away (north of Ringsjön in the inner Scania) from 1889, 1929 and 1961 do only contain destroyed bridles and saddles buried in ridges of gravel. This is similar with burial rites found in places like Pannonhalma in Hungary. Jordanes told how Attila planned his own burial at the Catalanian Fields if he had to commit suicide. His corps should be cremated in a fire of saddles. Findings like Pannonhalma are therefore connected with the Huns or maybe their companions from the Asian plains. The idea about destroying the signs of dignity and the corpse in an invisible cremation burial was natural for travelling people as their companions did not expect to stay in the area – the place should be hidden and forgotten – just opposite the stones and the mounds in Scandinavia a.e. Vätteryd, which reveal another way of thinking.

In Sösdala and Fulltofta the bridles were spoilt and buried separately, and the saddles were only preserved as metal mounts and rings a few meters away – nothing else was found and there is today no evidence of fire. The two bridles in Sösdala were buried together with 7-11 saddles. The number of saddles and the story about Attila reveal that while the spoilt bridle was a sacrifice – probably regarded as a sign of dignity of a princely horseman – the saddles must have been a customary tool for the cremation of a horseman at the plains. They could not all be his own saddles – if any. These saddles might be scrap.

The finds make sense if some Huns were stationed in Scandinavia for negotiations and recruitment of allies with impressing symbols of dignity and richness, which were spoilt by the kinsmen after Hunnic custom if he died there. Opposite, if he was a returning Scandinavian, it does not make sense that his survivors destroyed such seldom and precious bridles after a foreign nomadic custom – quite opposite the idea behind
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their own monuments in Vätteryd. The ceremony would not radiate the same symbolic value among the Scandinavians as among the Huns – quite opposite they would loose an impressing symbol. The other two bridles in Sösdala a generation later and Fulltofta were not of the same quality but were sacrificed in the same way.

Opposite, in Finnestorp and Vännebo the equipment of the leaders of slain enemies was sacrificed to the god of victory. Maybe some of the attackers were from the warrior society around Sösdala. Here their own equipment would be sacrificed including their saddles – no scrapped saddles. It must have been opposite in Sösdala/Fulltofta, where all the saddles could impossibly belong to the cremated leader. There are found 2-4 saddles of quality while the rest are more simple saddles – but not even the saddles of quality had mounts of the same quality as the bridles. Did they only use old or less expensive saddles for the funeral pyre? The saddles do not tell us the nationality of the cremated person as the book may indicate. We do not know if there were other types than Scandinavian ring saddles among the found equipment, and non-Scandinavians may even have got their saddles with the appropriate rings in Scandinavia as these saddles were hardly difficult to use for Hunnic/East Germanic warriors. In Finnestorp many warriors were probably Scandinavians with their equipment from the Hunnic/Eastgermanic armies, but we simply do not know what to conclude from the saddles.

The sacrificial place at Sösdala was situated at the top of a ridge 200 metres from the grave fields of Vätteryd from 400-900 AD. These grave fields were established contemporary with the sacrifices at the ridge. Still in the 19th century cremation burials, 600 standing stones and 15 stone ships were remaining. The editors of “The Sösdala Horsemen” wrote “The Sösdala area is famous because of a number of unique finds from the 5th century that demonstrate close connections to eastern and central Europe”. Vätteryd appears to have been the centre of a small secluded part of Inner Scania – Göinge Härad – separated from the plains of the rest of Scania by the big forests around Linderöd Äsen and Nävlinge Äsen. There were only very few areas with phosphate in the region on a map from 1934 – one area 2 kilometres north of Vätteryd at Sösdala, one in Göingeholm 4 kilometres from Sjörup, one in Fulltofta at the border of the plains – all with rich East Germanic finds – and St. Melby north of Sösdala. The Fulltofta-bride is found at a ridge a kilometer north of the village. Nevertheless, the small distant area probably has the highest density of East Germanic finds from the 5th century in Sweden with Sösdala, Fulltofta, Sjörup, Tormestorp, Claestorp and Göingeholm.

“The Sösdala Horsemen” does not give a sufficient explanation what happened in that area – as the purpose was the to describe the sacrifices. We should wonder why this society began to expand in these secluded forests of Scania just when the Hunnic sacrifices took place, and why so close connections were maintained to the East Germanic people at the Danube just here in this vast country throughout all the following century. They were hardly the young mercenaries returning home to their families with golden solidi. Jordanes mentioned people in the mountains attacking the people of the fertile plains of Scandinavia (Götic, Scanian and Swedish plains). The group around Vätteryd may have been such a people beginning as a band of homeless returning warriors joined by companions of mixed ethnicity – and therefore with close connections back to the Danube. As both Sjörup and Claestorp are dated later than the Huns, Odoaker and the Heruls at the Moravian Gate and Untersiebenbrunn were probably their last connection. Some Huns may have joined the group in the first decades and the base of the band may have rizen from a Hunnic base used for the representatives recruiting new Scandinavian allies to join their campaigns – using deliberately an impressing representative who could demonstrate the power and richness they could obtain by following the Huns. This is much more likely than a Scandinavian bringing this unusual bridle home just to be sacrificed by his Scandinavian survivors after Hunnic custom in a society following Scandinavian customs. Why should they follow that custom when they at the same time established a traditional Scandinavian burial place in Vätteryd 200 metres away with rather impressing monuments – just the opposite way of thinking than the anonymous offer of the bridle at the ridge. Also regarding the Sandby fortifications at Öland a foreign element among the usual Scandinavian societies is now discussed. In this case the foreign element was destroyed shortly after 476 AD – but the homeless returned mercenaries may have acted as a guard in Sösdala.

Unfortunately, another debate has influenced the discussion of the Hunniv/Herulian issue. The editors of the book were as mentioned Ulf Näsman and Charlotte Fabech. She connected in 1991 these finds in Sösdala
with Huns or East Germanic horsemen. She mentioned that they were probably Heruls by referring to Procopius, but these events were a century later than Sösdala. However, basically she was probably right in her observations in 1991.

In 2008 the Danish professor of archaeology at the University of Oslo, Lotte Hedeager, presented her hypothesis about Hunnic impact in Scandinavia. Based on the iconography, the shamanistic character of Odin, the above-mentioned finds in Sösdala, a mirror in the Uppsala mounds, 10 earrings found in Denmark and Norway and other items, she has suggested that the Scandinavian animal style and the cosmology was inspired by the Huns. A part of her arguments were the theories of Charlotte Fabech above from 1991. Hedeager also mentioned that it might be caused by a Hunnic control in parts of Scandinavia based on information from Priscus, who referred the Italian ambassador at Attila’s court, Romulus: “By no one... had such great things been achieved in such a short time, since he ruled the islands of the Ocean and, in addition to Scythia, held the Romans also to the payment of tribute.” The islands in the Ocean are generally regarded to be the Scandinavian Peninsula and the Baltic islands.

Ulf Näsman had written in his doctoral thesis about Öland in 1984 that the Huns hardly were able to control land north of the Carpathian Mountains. He therefore started heated polemics against the suggestions of Lotte Hedeager in 2008.

The purpose of Attila was to frighten the Romans to pay tribute. Obviously, he could boast that the warriors of “the islands in the Ocean” were under his command if the tracks of the solidi below are interpreted correctly. Nomads as the Huns did not conquer land to control it [Pohl 2001, Hedeager 2011] – they ruled people. Opposite, the Romans ruled territories. If Attila exaggerated or if the Roman ambassador or Priscus misinterpreted a boast about the warriors as a rule over the islands, we will never know, but the Huns hardly established any rule in Scandinavia as Priscus wrote. That does not change the arguments of Lotte Hedeager implying that there had been a close contact between the Scandinavians and the Huns and their companions – quite opposite, the words of Priscus do under all circumstances confirm the close contact between the Huns and the Scandinavians.

The old English poem, Widsith, consists of small fragments of history and names in random order from a period of 700 years. They will never constitute any proof, but in an interesting stanza we are told:

I sought Wulfhere and Wyrmhere; there battle did not abate when the Gothic army with their sharp swords, in the Vistula woods had to defend their ancient seat against Attila’s host

It may have been a little surprising for earlier histoeians to hear from a poem like Widsith that the homeland of the Goths were the forests of Vistula. Today the Wielbark-culture at the Vistula is by the archaeologists regarded to be the homeland of the Goths – opposite the old legends about a Scandinavian origin by Jordanes. The stanza confirms the statement of Näsman that Attila was not regarded to rule land north of the Carpathes. Under all circumstances the target of the Huns after subduing the Gothic tribes in Ukraine and Roumenia, who did not escape to the Romans, became to sack the wealthy Romans, which resulted in the large payments of tribute. The obvious Hunnic strategy after subduing the Goths, Gepides, Heruls and Sarmates must therefore have been to establish peace and corporation at the northern frontier in order to avoid them to support the Romans. Some of the tribes migrated westward as the Burgundians, Swedes, Vandals and Alanes, while other tribes joined the Huns. Attila would therefore be expected to send legacies to Scandinavia too in order to negotiate alliances or recrute warriors – just as it is indicated by Priscus, Sösdala and the later solidi.

Despite of the heated debate both sides accepted that the Huns had such an impact on Scandinavia. Franz

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Herschend has stated that the character of the life of the Huns has caused that only few remains of Huns are recognised in Europe – and the same may be concluded regarding the Heruls, who were their companions – and that is obviously a problem in Sweden, where everything is Swedish unless the opposite is proven.

Later Näsman and Fabech presented in their article in “Inter Ambo Maria” [2014] and in “The Sösdala Horsemen” [2017] their new explanations about Sösdala without mentioning in their research history the earlier theories of Charlotte Fabech about Heruls and without explaining, why they were left. As usual in Sweden the Heruls are not mentioned at all in the new book – except one time in an article by Michel Kazanski. No other possibilities were discussed.

Opposite, a group of Russian/Ukrainian archaeologists did not agree in the Swedish neglect of the Heruls at the two conferences “Inter Ambo Maria” at Crimea. In the 4th century Igor Gavritukhin pointed out that certain types of glass beakers indicate a connection between a group in South Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. He especially pointed out the Eastern group of the Heruls as the bearer [Gavritukhin in Kkrapunov/Stylegar 2011]. In his article about the fibulas he mentioned the same conclusion [Kkrapunov/Stylegar 2014] and added “The way was paved before, when the Herulic group went to Scandinavia”. But that group is not represented in “The Sösdala Horsemen”.

“The Sösdala Horsemen” is an important registration of the archaeological remains in Sösdala and other places like Sösdala – and a chance to let European scholars compare with this “hidden” Swedish world. However, the book has no sufficient final discussion of possible explanations and alternatives combining the briddles with Scandinavians, Huns, Heruls, the solidi at Öland and the society around Vätteryd. Maybe the earlier debates made the editors decide not to discuss alternatives or to conclude at all, but simply to describe the findings in an empirical way, which has been needed for long. Instead of a final conclusion they chose to present Ulf Näsman’s personal suggestions about Scandinavian warriors and a Scandinavian king buried like a Hun as a “biography”! This example does not appear convincing in relation to the discussions in this paper and is not used here. When so much effort is spent on the book, it is because the empirical data and articles of the book are worthy of recognition and because it indirectly is adding several new aspects to the history of the Heruls in Scandinavia too.

Some of the other authors had in their chapters of “The Sösdala Horsemen” kept the door open for other possibilities, which are used in this paper too. Anna Bitner-Wroblevska wrote: “the warrior elites in the Migration Period in Scandinavia and the central and south eastern Europe remained in lively direct contact”. Michel Kazanski wrote in his chapter: “The late example of the Heruli reveals examples of dynastic ties between Scandinavian and Danubian/East Germanic royal houses” and “Since no written sources mention Scandinavian warriors serving Rome during the 5th century, it seems very unlikely that this can be explained by the presence of Scandinavian warriors in the Roman army, as it is sometimes put forward”, but especially the analyses of Svante Fischer of the solidi at Öland, which at the first glance may appear a little off topic, are providing valuable new information regarding the later connections – in spite of his own conclusion.

Unfortunately, the descriptions in the book and at the museum in Lund have given readers the impression that the sacrifices could not be caused by Huns due to the age of a saddle in Fulltofta. This argument has no value as the dating of the items do only tell the earliest possible deposition date. The old saddles may just have been used in the pure. The saddles were placed separately from the signs of dignity, the briddles, which must have been the real sacrifice, while the saddles were just tools in the burial rite. Due to the number of saddles they probably did not belong to the deceased – they may have been scrap. Furthermore the missing saddle-rings in the south may indicate that the warriors did not bring their own saddles across the Baltic Sea – which may also include the Huns going to Scandinavia. Local saddles are probably misused as a sign of ethnicity.

It is irrelevant regarding the purpose of this article if the ethnicity of the horsemen in Sösdala in this phase were Hunnic, Herulic or Scandinavian. The remains in Scandinavia do under all circumstances show a close connection between such areas in Scandinavia and the region of the Heruls and their superior Huns around
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1.2.1.2 Solidi

The solidi and the gold found in Scandinavia were probably mostly payments for warriors, but the Romans never mentioned Scandinavian mercenaries. The explanation is probably given by the composition of solidi hoards hidden at the workshops of the Baltic Islands in the 5th century. In the first half of the century the hoards appear like the hoards of supposed Hunnic tribute in Hungary / Slovakia indicating that the Scandinavian warriors first joined the Huns. The later composition like Italian hoards is indicating that they afterwards joined Odoaker and the Heruls, as the composition reflects the changes in the history of the Huns, the Heruls and Odoaker. They may even have joined the Herulian dynasty as Roman mercenaries – which the Romans would hardly notice. The position of the Heruls at the end of the route from Scandinavia to the Danube makes the Scandinavian choice obvious after the Hunnic defeat and explains the superior power and number of the Heruls mentioned by Procopius. It also explains why they could be defeated by their neighbours when they could not offer attractive jobs in Italy to the Scandinavians anymore, and why the dynasty after their defeat followed their companions to Scandinavia and “disappeared” as integrated.

The analyses were convincingly performed by Svante Fischer, but his conclusion was that the solidi were only earned by warriors from the Baltic Islands. This is extremely unlikely, but understandable due to the uneven spread of the solidi. An obvious distinctiveness of the islands are the workshops where the solidi were stored and used. When the employee is the same, the composition will statistically be the same whatever the solidi are received from warriors of the Baltic Islands or received in the workshops of the islands from warriors all over Scandinavia. The conclusion must be this last possibility.

Under all circumstances a close relation between the Huns/Heruls and Scandinavia is demonstrated.

Lots of solidi are found in the Baltic region of Scandinavia (660 in Sweden – most of them at Helgö, Gotland and Öland – and 150 at Bornholm. Only a few in Norway). They are all from the 5th and the first decades of the 6th century. To present a perspective Theodosius paid Attila 151,200 solidi each year and the salary of a Roman soldier was around 5 solidi per year. The deposed emperor, Romulus Augustus got 6,000 solidi in pension from Odoaker. 77% of the solidi in Scandinavia are Byzantine, but as some of the Byzantine solidi were made in western mints about 40% of the solidi are from the western part of the empire [Fagerlie 1967 (the picture has not changed substantially since then according to Svante Fisher)]. The most intense stream was from Leo I and his contemporaries (458-476) – until the year 476 when barbarian officer in the Roman army, Odoaker, deposed the West Roman emperor and became king of Italy – called sometimes Rex Herulicus as appointet by the Heruls. The stream to Scandinavia began under Theodocius II, and after Anastasius (or rather during his reign) the finds of golden coins decreased dramatically. 82% of the Scandinavian coins are found at the three Baltic islands, but at Öland only 11 coins are minted after 476 AD. Nearly 50% of the coins at Öland were found in hoards – 32% in two hoards with latest coin from 476. We also know, that 400 solidi of the same kind as in Scandinavia in the 5th century were found at the Lower Vistula. Only 4 coins of Odoaker are known here – probably because he did not want to provoke the emperor but used older and Byzantine coins and made some coins in the name of Zeno. It should be noticed that we have very few coins from the Ostrogothic mint of Theodoric. The highest concentration of Theodoric-coins (3-400) was found in South Western Germany. The solidi do not indicate any Ostrogothic connection. [The numbers are from Fagerlie’s and Fisher’s articles]

There are only found few solidi in Scandinavia before Theodosius (406-450), who was the first emperor to pay tribute to the Huns in 423 AD, and there are only found few solidi after Anastasius (491-518). During his reign the Heruls were defeated 508/9 AD. In this way nearly all the solidi in Scandinavia are minted by
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emperors ruling in the years, when the Huns and later the Heruls received payments as tribute or as wages for mercenaries.

How do we interpret that? Recently Svante Fisher has written in “The Sösdala Horsemen” [Näsman 2017]: “The hoards probably reflect active Ölandic participation within the shifting and dangerous politics during the third quarter of the 5th century inside the Empire” and “it is clear that people from Öland and to some extent Bornholm were directly involved in Italy”. However, it is quite improbable that all the mercenaries from Scandinavia receiving solidi as payment should come from these relatively small islands. We need to find other explanations and to look at the use of the data.

The extremely high concentration of solidi at the three Baltic Islands and Helgö and very few in the rest of Scandinavia, where we instead find large hoards of gold, makes only sense if the islands were centres using the solidi in a distinct way different from the rest of Scandinavia. Näsman wrote that the ringfort, Eketorp, contained workshops in the migration ages. Actually, the islands were later regarded as centres of trade and workshops and later Svante Fischer [2011] wrote about Helgö producing the relief fibulas in bronze in the 5th and 6th centuries. Many of the later precious fibulas and the “gold foil figures” are found at these places too. Also dies for the helmet plates in the boat graves in Uppland were found in the parish of Thorslunda at Öland, where also one of the biggest hoards of solidi was found. The warriors seeking their fortune abroad came hardly from these wealthy societies of craftsmen and merchants needing their young warriors to protect their values – a need confirmed by the ringforts – quite opposite the claim of Fischer above.

One of the purposes of the solidi of massive gold was payment from the Romans to the barbarians, who did not use coins. They received them as gold in a practical form, which could be distributed among the warriors and could be remelted at home. Warriors from all over Southern Scandinavia probably brought home these golden solidi. We shall notice that there are found lots of golden treasures in Västergötland – but nearly no solidi. When the warriors arrived home most of the solidi must have been melted down immediately to simple rings, spirals and bars as we know them from the 7 kilos of gold at Timboholm. We know from the literature that golden rings became the reward from Scandinavian chieftains in the next centuries and that bits of them were used as payments. There was no reason to use the skilled craftsmen at the islands to melt down these solidi. Probably the workshops of the islands were specialists in the famous Scandinavian gold filigree works [Fischer 2008] making jewellery and neck rings of solidi ordered by the chieftains from the whole southern Scandinavian region. The chieftains delivered the solidi and the craftsmen got some of them as their profit.

A solidus had a weight of around 4½ grams – making Timboholm more than twice as big as the weight of all the solidi known in Scandinavia. The solidi found in Scandinavia must be a small waste of the solidi flowing into the Scandinavian area, but at the islands the solidi may have been circulating as raw material and profit – often hidden temporarily in depots around the workshops being sometimes forgotten due to attacks. This must be the most reliable way to interpret the extremely uneven spread of the solidi and the gold in Scandinavia.

Svante Fischer is arguing convincingly for the solidi at Öland as payment for Scandinavian warriors in service abroad, but the warriors themselves did not need to come from Öland. As long as the returning Scandinavian warriors got their wages from the same composition of solidi in the South and used some of them at the workshops at Öland, it is irrelevant if the warriors came from Öland, Vätteryd or Västergötland – the final composition would statistically be the same in the partly quantity at Öland as in the South. The unlikelihood that all warriors came from Öland will more than outweigh the statistical deviation in the composition. In an earlier article Fischer states [Fischer 2014a]: “Kyhlberg first suggested that the coin hoards found in Scandinavia had already been assembled in Italy. My research confirms this by showing that die-identities of both East Roman and West Roman coinage appear in several hoards from Belgium, Italy and Scandinavia.” If his accepted deviation is covering so different destinations – which is also

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demonstrated in the tables of his Childeric-article – they will most likely also cover if the solidi were scattered among all the warriors at the Scandinavian Peninsula before at part of them were sent to Öland. It is without any doubt possible from the Central European hoards remaining from tributes used for payment to the Scandinavians to see die-links in the composition of the material in Scandinavia, but we must be aware that the numbers in Scandinavia are too low to provide a statistical certainty so high that it is possible to separate between these different ways to Öland.

The date of a coin will only tell which emperor ruled when the first owner (which may have been the emperor) got the coin – they may have been lost or buried in Scandinavia years later. Especially, it is important to realize that the hoards will only tell us, when the workshops were threatened, and the gold was hidden as the earliest – it is not a measure of the stream of gold as it has been interpreted by many scholars. The reason for a hoard will often be warlike conditions at the finding place creating a snapshot of the stream at a certain minute – but even that is not correct.

The other characteristic feature of Öland is the unusual fortification around more than 15 villages at the island – opposite the rest of Scandinavia, where the ringforts were used for escape. Due to the location close to the Scandinavian Peninsula with its hostile tribes and due to the shape of the island with less than five kilometres to the shores these villages were very exposed for attacks – and we know from Nydam in Denmark that such attacks took place from the Baltic Sea – even before that time. Also in Skedemosse on Öland war booties (around 450 AD) are found like Nydam and Illerup in Jutland. Maybe the gold in the workshops made the ringforts necessary in this situation – just like the Americans protected their gold in Fort Knox in more modern times. Such ringforts are not found in that way at the more isolated Gotland, which may have had a stronger military leadership. The purpose and the use of the ringforts is not a topic of this paper, and the ongoing excavations in Sandby will probably change our knowledge.

The ringfort in Sandby was opposite the others placed a few metres from the shore – with traces of Roman connections like a roman onion. 6 carved fibulas are found in the ruins [Victor 2018]. The ongoing excavations, where only 6% is excavated, may reveal a foreign society like in Vätteryd making the island an unruly place to live. Before the last excavations of Sandby the three biggest hoards of Öland were found in the neighbourhood. Actually, 36% of the solidi at Öland are found in these three hoards within 14 kilometres from Sandby. Sandby Ringfort was destroyed shortly after 476 AD – maybe at a punitive attack.

The latest minted coins in the area are minted in 476, but that does not tell that the stream of gold had ended. It may theoretically have continued if the island became more peaceful. Only a couple of Anastasius coins were found here opposite 74 Anastasius coins at Gotland – 55 in hoards with latest coins during the rule of Anastasius and Justin I. A similar stream may have continued at Öland without further losses, but it is more realistic that the costumers preferred or had to use the workshops of Gotland instead after the massacre – maybe the craftsmen were simply moved to Gotland. In both cases the solidi at Gotland are telling that the stream of solidi to Scandinavia continued until an unknown year during the reign of Anastasius. Since then only a few solidi are found in Scandinavia.

The early hoards at Öland had a structure of coins like two very big Hungarian (Szikancs) and Slovakian (Bina) hoards from 445-450 AD [Fischer p. 320, Näsmann 2017] in an area dominated by the Huns – Szikancs is regarded to be hidden Roman tribute from Constantinople, while Bina appear to be from Italy55. The latest hoard at Öland had die-links in common with a hoard in Samamiliano in Toscany [Fischer p. 322, Näsmann 2017] – the country of Odoaker[56]. Here in San Mamiliano Fisher is also highlighting the seldom Anthemius-coins which are only found outside Italy at Gotland and Öland – indicating both the Italian connection and a spread between the islands. The conclusion of Michel Kazanski in the same book was that we can hardly claim that the Scandinavians were Roman mercenaries as they were never mentioned by the Romans. Both suggestions point at Scandinavian warriors joining the Huns, which is in harmony with an early Hunnic centre of recruitment in Sösdala. However, after the Huns were defeated in 454 AD the Scandinavians may

55 Svante Fischer (2014b), page 167.
56 The San Mamiliano hoard was gathered no earlier than 477 AD and had several die-links in common with Scandinavia [Fischer 2014a] – indicating a payment from the original hoard directly to the Scandinavians.
have joined some of the East Germanic winners.

An obvious choice for the Scandinavians after the Huns were the Heruls who had settled in Moravia at the route to Scandinavia. They supported Odoaker in Ravenna – first as Roman mercenaries in the imperial guard and later as his soldiers. We shall notice the important changes in the Herulian history. In 476 AD Odoaker became king of Italy (sometimes called Rex Herulicus) supported by the Heruls. He distributed land in Italy to his soldiers instead of direct payments. He did not issue coins except a few in his own name and some in the name of Zeno – maybe in order to avoid a provisioning of the Emperor Zeno in Constantinople, but he supported in 484 an uprise against Zeno, and a few years later Zeno encouraged first the Rugians and then Theodoric to remove him. Instead he is supposed to have used old and Byzantine coins. Here we shall notice that we only have few Zeno-coins at Öland and rather few in all Scandinavia and that we instead have found surprisingly many coins of the earlier Leo I, which according to Fischer may bee traced to the areas of the Heruls and the Gepides57. In 493 AD Odoaker and his Heruls were defeated by Theodoric and the Heruls had to go back to Moravia – probably without having any to serve in Italy anymore. Now they got tribute from their neighbours and tradesmen – and maybe salary from Constantinople. The history of the Huns and the Heruls joined by Scandinavians will in this way explain the occurrence of solidi in Scandinavia with a changed pattern of income in 476-493 and probably a decrease in Scandinavians joining the Heruls from 493 until the Heruls were finally defeated in 508/9. Svante Fischer and Helena Victor [2011] have defined an Alpha Horizon at Helgö, where the peaks marked the events with Heruls and Odoaker and Fisher [2014 b, page 170] has mentioned that only few soldi minted in the East were used by Odoaker as king. The proposal is that the Scandinavians joined the Heruls in their legendary plundering and taxation of their neighbours, and they could also join them as mercenaries in Italy being regarded as Heruls by the Romans – and therefore we have no historical records of their presence down there. The joining Scandinavians may explain the rising power of the Heruls after the Huns, where Procopius told that they became their neighbours “superior in power and number” – and the later decrease in joining Scandinavians due to the lost jobs in Italy may at last have given the Lombards and other neighbours the courage to defeat the Heruls.

The big number of similar coins in the Vistula-area indicate that the connection was established along the Vistula, but when the Slavs expanded, Procopius told that the Heruls had to go more westerly to the Varni (in Mecklenburg). The spread 60%/40% indicates maybe a collecting position between Rome and Constantinople, and therefore an income from a people operating from the Danubian area in the second part of the 5th century is likely. A smaller part of the stream of gold to Gotland and Helgö may have been due to the fur trade from Högom, but Öland and Bornholm were closer to the people of Southern and Western Scandinavia and the possible centre of recruitment in Sösdala.

Svante Fisher has in an article about the solidus pendants found in the Serbian Uдовицe [2008] proposed that the Heruls brought back to Illyria a jewelry produced at Öland in the 5th century with solidi like the Ölandic hoards. From Ulpiana, the Byzantine military headquarters of Illyria, 2 disc-on-bow fibulas are mentioned in a female grave from after 538 arranged as in the graves at Bornholm. 23 CIIa1 bracteates are found in Eastern Europe – all emphasizing together with the solidi the importance of these connections both ways.

The verified history of the Huns, the Heruls and Odoaker is explaining the spread of solidi in Scandinavia, if Scandinavian warriors joined the Huns and the Heruls in the 5th century in the way the observations indicate in the articles of “The Sösdala Horsemen” edited by Ulf Näsmann and Charlotte Fabech. This contact between the Hunnic/Herulian culture and the Scandinavian culture for more than a century since 400 AD would get the impact on Scandinavia as described by Lotte Hedeager in her “Iron Age myth and materiality”.

Ulf Näsmann, Charlotte Fabech and Svante Fischer got in 2018 the opportunity to review and correct the chapters 1.2.1.1 and 1.2.1.2, but no objections were received.

The Sösdala-activities and the solidi are not necessary if we want to explain, why the Heruls chose to go to Scandinavia after their defeat, which is the primary purpose with these archaeological chapters.

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57 Fisher refers Budaj and Prohaszka to have tracked these Leo I coins to areas being according to Fischer usually regarded as Herulian or Gepidian [Fischer 2014a p. 157].
Nevertheless, this chapter is indicating that they simply followed their companions through more than 50 years to Scandinavia.

### 1.2.1.3 Fibulas

Independent of the theories regarding the solidi several other types of archaeological finds indicate this connection both ways between Scandinavia and the East Germanic people in South Eastern Europe. The Scandinavian relief fibulas in the region of the Baltic Sea are influenced by East Germanic stylistic elements like rosettes, animal heads and curved heads with three knobs. A model is the curve headed so-called Sokolnice fibula (Moravia), but the Scandinavian fibulas are bigger and of a finer quality. In the rest of Scandinavia the fibulas had rectangular heads. Opposite, the similar fibulas with more than three knobs from the Allemani and the Franks never reached Scandinavia.

The fibulas are often indicating trade connections and/or movements of people. In the old Herulian kingdom covering Moravia and Marchfeld many curve headed relief-fibulas with 3 knobs are found being called the Sokolnice-type [Tejral 1997a] – a modern village in the area of the Heruls. Tejral dated these fibulas to the period just after 450 AD while Bierbrauer has placed them in the last quarter of the 5th century. They are found all over the area – with 5 knobs also in the female grave in Ladendorf, which according to Helmuth Windl [Tejral 1997a] was Herulian. Two versions of identical fibulas are found in Melsted near Gudhjem [Anke, 1998] and a similar in Rutsker - all at Bornholm. Further locally developed types are found at Öland, Gotland, Östertälje near Helgö, Falster and Dalshøj/Sorte Muld at Bornholm 59.

58 A fibula from Sokolnice, grave 5, near the mound Zuran Hill at Brno is by Jaroslav Tejral [“Neue beiträge zur erforschung in Mittler Donauraum”, Tejral 1997a] called a forerunner of several East Germanic “dreiknopf” relief fibulas with “spiralkranke”. The end of them all was the head of an animal, which more stylized became an important motive in Style II. Identical fibulas are found over all Moravia”Mittler Donauraum” and examples are found single in France, South Germany, Italy, Kerch at the Sea of Asov and Bornholm. At Bornholm two quite identical fibulas are found in Gudhjem and one in Rutsker. Further developed they are found at Oeland and Lake Målar near Helgö. In Ladendorf near Rothenseehof north of Vienna two nearly identical fibulas (but “funfknopf”) are found in a female grave by Helmuth Windl called Herulian [Article in Tejral 1997a].

59 Since the excavations of Vendel in the 19th century several graveyards have been excavated between Gudhjem, Kobbeaa and Oesterlars. The latest description used from South Eastern Bornholm is by Lars Jørgensen and Anne Norgaard Jørgensen [Lars Jørgensen 1997] mentioning, that the area had been inhabited by a rich family of chieftains in several family branches from around 500 AD until 800. Especially in the beginning the grave goods were very impressive, but later this changed to standard equipment – probably not because the richness decreased, but because the power was so consolidated that waste and boasting was superfluous. Some chieftains got their horses with them in the grave, and the graves were often low mounds – sometimes covered with stones. The Sokolnice-fibulas are found south of Gudhjem in a female grave in Melsted and one similar in Rutsker. The larger cemeteries are in the hills near the coast a.o. Glesergaard, Bækkegaard and at Kobbeaa. At Norre Sandegaard the women wear their biggest fibula across the chest in a high position between the shoulders and two smaller fibulas lower at the chest. Here several disc-on-bow fibulas of the Style II type with cloisomné are found – a common type at the Scandinavian coasts and islands at the Baltic Sea – including Vendel.

In the hills behind Svanekke 10 kilometres south of Gudhjem there was since the Roman Iron Ages a big settlement consisting of i.e. Sorte Muld and Dalshøj. According the archaeologists the old settlement was destroyed around 500AD, but a new settlement was established with an important market place. Dalshøj is famous for the hoard with a fibula and 10 solidi with Anastasius as the latest. He was emperor since 492 and when the Heruls left Pannonia. Several of the hoards with the big fibulas and coins are known in Denmark, but only the hordes at Dalshøj and Elsehoved (Fyen near Gudme) contained solidi – normally they contained bracteates. The most impressive are the finds of 2350 gold foil figures at Sorte Muld. They are normally found at marketplaces like Lundeborg at Gudme. The gold foil figures are thin stamped plates like the plates at the helmets, but very small. The stamped style was first met in Scandinavia as the Sösdala-style similar to the Untersiebenbrun-style. The purpose is unknown, but the motives and the low volume of gold indicate religious purposes. Probably they symbolic plates were sold as...
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Most of these places are known as trade centres with central workshops on the Baltic trade route, but 2 items in Medelpad and in Steigen at Lofoten [Sjøvold 1993] point further north too. The Sokolnice-type is also found at the Upper Rhine, in Burgundy, in Kerch at the Sea of Asov and in Northern Italy, but they are all by the French archaeologist Michel Kazanski [Tejral 1997a] characterized as Danubian of origin and by the Czechish Jaroslav Tejral [Tejral 1997a] characterized as East Germanic. Both the Heruls and the Ostrogoths had operated in all these areas - but opposite the Heruls the Ostrogoths lived in the area south of the largest concentration of these fibulas.

Already the Untersiebenbrunn-/Sösdala-style was found at the coasts around the mouth of the river Vistula, and in the Olsztyn region east of the mouth is found a local version of the curved relief fibulas with 3 knobs (Masur-Germanen) [Kleeman 1956] like the Sokolnice fibula above. Linguists emphasize that the Olsztyń region was the old borderland between the Germanic people and the Aesti of Tacitus in the first centuries AD, but later a decrease in population took place. Tacitus called the Aesti Germanics, but they were Balts and so are the local Galindas normally regarded too. The Germanics at the mouth of Vistula probably lived by trade with furs, amber and beewax\(^\text{60}\) from the tribes around the Baltic Sea. Where the former eastern branch of the Vistula was flowing out into the lagoons the highest concentration of solidi was found around Elblag until the Pasleka River in the east. This was an obvious landingplace for reloading and distribution of goods when using the trade route. The relief fibulas were found in the more isolated lake district of Olsztyn behind the coast – the kind of wet landscapes the Heruls used to live in. Due to finds of similar artefacts as above at places like Öland, Gotland, Helgö and Bornholm this area appears to have been involved in the corporation between the Scandinavian warriors, the Heruls and earlier the Huns as described in the two former chapters. Even a Frankish glass beaker of the type known from Snar tempo and south eastern cicada-fibulas are found here.

Wojciech Nowakowski [Curta 2011, p31-52] has in “Neglected Barbarians” suggested that the culture in the Masurian Lakelands around Olsztyń probably belonged to a group of foreign germanicx “returning” to this region 450-500AD. He suggested Galindians, Ostrogoths or Heruls (The Heruls were earlier mentioned here by Niels Aaber in 1919 and Herbert Kühn in 1956). If the Heruls were a Gothic people, it may have been a return, but under all circumstances the Heruls are the obvious choice following his arguments about cremation etc, as the Heruls were pagan except the Heruls going to Illyria. The Ostrogoths were now Christian Arians and the Galindians were supposed to be a local population, where those who did not follow the Goths may have remained in the Olsztyn region, while the Heruls acted like a warrior class as in Moravia. Their settlement will correspond with the period when the Heruls settled in Moravia, where they controlled the Vistula-route and probably hired Scandinavian warriors – first together with the Huns. Maybe the Heruls also established a “colony” in the opposite end of the trade- and mercenary route for control-, “protection”- and recruitment-purposes. When their dynasty escaped to Scandinavia in 509 AD some of them may instead have escaped to the Olsztyn-group, which remained and may have functioned as a connection between the Heruls in Scandinavia and in Byzans until the latter were destroyed in 567 AD. The region obviously changed later in the 7th century due to the expansion of the Slavs to an ethnical melting pot, but if the Germanic Heruls were integrated here, if they went to their Scandinavian kinsmen or if they moved to their Lithuanian neighbours is still an open question. It shall only be evaluated as a part of the much later chronicles (chapter 3.4.4). Their destiny is uncertain, just like the ethnicity of the Olsztyn region is generally discussed among the archaeologists – a resistance against a foreign orijion may even be “caused by political tendencies”\(^\text{61}\) like in Sweden.

The Heruls of Olsztyń shall be distinguished from the dynasty and their companions going north in 509AD, as this group according to Procopius had to go more westerly through the empty land of Brandenburg as the sacrifices for the gods giving the principal of the temple a solid income. At Rutsker a die is found used for some of the gold foil figures in Sorte Muld. In the settlement iron from the Lake Mälar-area is found. In 2001 a new goldhoard was found at Sorte Muld containing Roman coins from the 5th century and bracteates from 500 being contained in a Roman silver plate. The hoard is for the moment regarded as a sacrifice.

\(^{60}\) Herbert Kühn: Geschichte der Vorgeschichtsforschung, page 598.

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Slavs (Avars) now blocked the route in the south. The earlier role of the Heruls was not realized before the new articles in “The Sösdala Horsemen”.

In the second part of the 5th century simple versions of the Sokolnice-fibula were also found around Paris and the Rhine, but afterwards all relief fibulas in the Frankish region got 5 knobs and even more knobs in the Alemannic and Lombardian regions. It is important to notice that these common Alemannic and Frankish curved fibulas with 5 or more knobs are never found in Scandinavia, while curved relief fibulas with 3 knobs are found in 16 cases [comparing Koch 1998 and Sjøvold 1993]. In a late phase also 5 knobs were met in the Olczyn area.

The dating of the finds and of the development at Bornholm does not fit in with the description of the Heruls by Procopius and the finds may as well be produced by East Germanic inspired craftsmen at Bornholm. Among the 130 Scandinavian relief-fibulas [the maps of Sjøvold 1993] 18% had curved head plates, but in the districts up to the Baltic Sea south of Gotland these made up 80% against 50% at Gotland and 3% in the rest of Scandinavia. Of course, the analyses of the shape do not cover all aspects of these fibulas, but the geographical spread of a fashion should not be neglected - especially as Kuhn has paid much attention to the symbolic importance of shape and ornamentation [Kuhn 1973]. The significant number of these fibulas in South Eastern Scandinavia prove that this part of Scandinavia had some very strong connections being absent in the rest of Scandinavia, and this total absence in the neighbourhood also indicates that the distribution was not due to normal trade - the skilled craftsmen of the islands probably changed their products due to the presence of people with other symbols in Scania/Blekinge and the Baltic Islands. The character of the head plates (including the three buttons) and the geographical position point at a connection with the East Germanic people in the Carpathian Basin.

However, the fibulas at Bornholm are based on a Sokolnice style at a stage earlier than the Heruls arriving around 509-12, and according to the text of Procopius the Heruls did hardly choose Bornholm as their destination. It has to be stressed that the nomadic Heruls of Procopius and their possible followers from Western Europe may have brought styles with them from many corners of Europe forming a new mixed style – being possibly later a part of the Vendel style.

A important stylistic element of the Sokolnice fibula was the row of spirals which was also a part of the special Sjörup-style found close to Sösdala in Scania 50 years later than the Sösdala finds. This style was according to Birgit Arrhenius closely related to East Germanic style in the Roman border areas around 500 AD, and also these elements became a part of Style I. [Arrhenius 1985; Tejral 1997b]

Obviously the relief-fibulas spread from the beginning of the sixth century all over Scandinavia in the upper level of the society were a combination of the style from Sokolnice and the traditional Scandinavian square-headed fibula. Therefore, the Scandinavian fibulas are much more varied than the square-headed relief fibulas in Kent/Mercia/East Anglia, where only one curve headed fibula is found from around 450 AD - regarded as Jutish. The Scandinavian fibulas appear more expensive than the small Sokolnice-fibulas – probably with the purpose to demonstrate power and richness. The archaeologist Jutta Waller from Uppsala has in her dissertation wondered which connections from outside lead to the changes of fibulas and dress-pins in the Mälar Valley just before the Vendel Period, but she primarily looked in the direction of England - not of Pannonia [Waller 1996]. One of her reasons was that the richest of the later Scandinavian fibulas got a disc on the bow (i.e. the Kitnaes and Skodborg findings), and they are also found in England. In Uppland surprisingly few relief fibulas are found, but later disc-on-bow fibulas with cloisonné were common there as in most of Scandinavia. The cloisonné-inlay in Scandinavia is described as Merovingian, but the method was Byzantine, and it was already used by the East Germanic people at the Danube before the Merovingian kingdom was established.

Igor Gavritukhin has written an interesting article about the brooches of the Levice-Tokari Sub-group which
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is not yet involved here as it appears to represent an earlier stage [Kkrapunov/Stylegar 2011].

1.2.1.4 Bracteates

The bracteates were made in Scandinavia – spreading from the south western corner in the 5th century. The common C-bracteate is by many scholars interpreted as a symbol of Wothen. The many CII1a-bracteates are found in Southern Scandinavia and Western Norway. But 23 are found in Eastern Europe, 12 of these South Eastern Europe, probably lost by the Scandinavian warriors or gifts.

See chapter 2.1.3.1.1

1.2.1.5 Burials

The grave in Blucina in Moravia is regarded as the grave of a Herulian king. It is a typical princely grave of a Germanic Roman foederate like the grave of Childeric in Tournais – but with a Hunnic bow. A special sword pommel in this grave with animal heads in Scandinavian Style I is in the South only found similar in the tomb of Childeric, but several such pommels are found in graves and sacrifices in Scandinavia near the trade routes.

Especially the chieftain in the mound in Högom in Norrland had close relation to the East Germanic people. It was that region Jordanes praised for its precious furs, which appear to have been one of the most important export articles of Scandinavia at that time. He was probably a part of a network of chieftains along the trade routes at both sides of the Scandinavian Peninsula, extending the old Amber Route from Carnuntum. Apparently, the rich dynasty in Högom disappeared from that area around 500 AD, when the Vendel culture expanded. The most famous mounds at the Norwegian coast were Evebø and Snartemo. Both had East Germanic traces like glass and weapons and both Evebø, Högom and Blucina contained arrow heads of the Hunnic tree-winged type - probably made in Scandinavia.

1.2.1.5.1 Burials - Moravia

First, we shall examine the finds in Southern Europe where the Heruls had lived. In that region there are no cremations at all found from the time when the Heruls lived there. As we know from Procopius that the pagan Heruls burned their dead, he must have referred to the Heruls in Sweden or in Olcztyn. Due to such a change, we will waste our time by looking for similarities regarding the royal family arriving in 509 AD. Probably they followed the local customs which at the same time shifted to flat cremation graves, but we can still find connections in the 5th century. In Moravia all tribes may have used similar skeleton-burials, Heruls as well as other tribes – especially for the aristocracy, who followed the rules of the roman mercenary officers in the princely burials.

The Czechish professor, Jaroslav Tejral, has both in 1987 (Menghin 1987), 1988, 1997 and 2014 (Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014) mentioned what he regarded as Herulian burials due to the history north of the Danube in the 5th century. In the 6th century they were replaced by Lombardic burials with Elbe-Germanic pottery. But the area had also burials by other ethnicities, which is in accordance with our expectations, both regarding mixed population and historical information (based on Procopius', Eugippius' and Lucius Honorius' remarks)\[62\].

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62 In the area of Vienna and Moravia finds from 450-550 AD indicate a very mixed population with Lombards, Suebes, Eastern Germanics, Sarmatians/Alans and Huns. Many of these are of course Herulic, but the pattern will be complicated, and the artefacts brought to Scandinavia may sometimes have been used for many years because of
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He found also burials of Germanic looking women with Hunnic scull-deformations in the Danube-region in the 5th century. In his early works he guessed these to be Heruls, but later he has indicated that they probably were Huns or Sarmatian Alans following the Herulian group or mixed people. Also, in the Bavarian Erding, where a woman with Scandinavian jewellery was found, 10 women were buried with such scull-deformations. Even if some of the Heruls may have used scull-deformation, they probably left this custom after the uprise against the Huns in 454 AD and neither was the habit ever mentioned by Procopius. Therefore, there is no reason to expect scull-deformations in Scandinavia when the Heruls went there in the 6th century. In the Volga-region 70% of the Alanic male burials showed scull deformations. Scull-deformations have been used by other people in other times too, but the spread in Europe in the Migration Ages is similar with the probable spread of a habit of the Huns among their Eastgermanic and Sarmation companions, which had been used as a custom in Asia for centuries. It was no ethnic feature⁶³.

This is only one of the many examples of the uncertainty when we attempt to separate the tribes in this turbulent period of Pannonia and surroundings. It is difficult to combine archaeology and ethnicity in an area with a very mixed population, but Tejral has tried and his conclusion is that the Heruls due to history were the leading of the mixed tribes until the Lombards took over shortly after 500 AD. He also quoted Paulus Diaconus that the Lombards “took on many warriors from subjugated nations”, which probably were the tribes subjugated by the Heruls as told by Procopius.

Anyhow the archaeologists of the Czechish Republic and Austria have pointed out some princely burials from the second half of the 5th century in Moravia/Marchfeld to be Herulian - primarily burials with attributes of East Germanic horsemen in the area regarded to be the Herulian kingdom. The Blucina-Cezavy tomb 64 south of Brno is of a standard close to the famous Childeric's mound in Tournai - they even wear fibulas and identical arm rings as signs of military rank among the Roman foederati. We shall notice that Childeric had an alliance with Odoaker, who was supported by the Heruls. The archaeologists agree that his reflex bow, arrowheads and horse equipment show that he was belonging to the East Germanic people earlier following the Huns. The richness of the Blucina tomb, the attributes of an officer, the dating around 466-85 AD, the bow, the horse-equipment and the central location in this part of Moravia makes it almost certain that this grave in Blucina is a part of the Herulian or Lombardian kings, but also other Herulian graves are probably found there.

However, at Brno (Blucina and Zuran Hill (Austerlitz)) and at Rothenseehof (Mistelbach north of Vienna) royal burials from the second half of the 5th century are found - some of them in combination with large mounds. They are supposed to be graves of Herulian or Lombardian kings, but also other Herulian graves are probably found there.

Astrid Schmölder 2015: Völkerwanderungszeithiche Grabfunde mit künstlicher Schädeldeformation (Masterarbeit)⁶³

The low mound in Blucina contained the skeleton of a chieftain at 30-40 years from 450-485 AD with a spatha, a sax, a bow, a shield and precious horse equipment including a saddle. At the shoulder he wore a "buegelfibula" - generally accepted as a sign of high military rank in the Roman army according to Tejral [Article in Menghin 1987]. A part of the equipment was cloisonné similar to the Merovingian Childeric-tomb (482 AD) and the later Sutton Hoo. A similar buckle in Gudme is by the Danish National Museum used as an example of the connection between Denmark and the Franks though the cloisonné appears nearly identical with the buckle in Blucina possibly being buried before the Merovingian Empire was established. In Jaroslav Tejral's article "Archaeologischer Beitrag zur Kenntnis der völkerwanderungszeitlichen Ethnostrukturen nördlich der Donau", chapter II.2 [in Friesinger 1990], the chieftain in Blucina is regarded to be a Herulian and connected with Procopius, Ottars Mound, the Uppsala Mounds and Zuran Hill. He mentioned that the top of the golden handle of the spatha appear to be a type known as Scandinavian. Other scholars call the burial Herulian or at least East Germanic in the literature [Windl in Tejral 1997a, Karel Tihelka, Parmatky Arch. 54, 1963 and RGA (Blucina)]. According to Birgit Arrhenius [Arrhenius 1985] the cloisonné of that time were Byzantine modules used in local workshops – not Frankish or Alemannic craft as often referred to in Scandinavia.

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⁶⁴
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the burial of one of the Herulian leaders, who at that time began to subdue and tribute all their neighbours and to follow Odoaker. Maybe this was the tomb of Alaric – the king mentioned by Jordanes in 467 AD, when he forgot to mention the Heruls.

Tejral and Windl do agree that the oldest tomb in the nearby Zhuran Hill must be a royal Herulian tomb too, as already the excavator Paulic suggested. Under a gigantic Lombardian mausoleum at the top of the battlefield of Austerlitz the remains were found of the burial of a horseman with several horses like Childeric – but in a way also used by Eurasian people at the steppes (Tejral in Khrapunov/Styleragar 2014). The tomb was dated around 500 AD, but like the tomb of a Christian woman beside it and like the mausoleum this grave was totally plundered. Only two fragments were found: Iron pieces of a character of horse riding nomads from the Russian Plains (maybe a holder for standards like Sutton Hoo) and a piece of wood with a pattern only known at that time from Nydam (spear shaft) and Scandinavian bracteates from the Scania-region. The combination with the later gigantic Lombardian mausoleum - which the excavator Josef Paulic regarded to belong to Waccho - might indicate that the other tombs contained Wacho's Herulian wife Silinga and her father - who is often supposed to be Hrodolphus. However, this is guesswork, and it was rather Waltari than his father Waccho who was buried in the mausoleum. She died – probably after being hurt by a Lombadian arrow in the cheek – in an age of 38 years and had in her grave several old artefacts – some of the glasses often found in Scandinavia too. If we follow Quast she was buried together with an old royal treasure, which was later stolen (Quast 2011, p. 135). If she was the daughter of Hrodolphus, she was only a child, when he was killed. According Tejral we can “not exclude that the female was Silinga, daughter of the defeated Herulian king Rodulf”.

In the southern region of this kingdom around Mistelbach in Weinviertel Windl has referred to mounds in

65 In Zhuran Hill 3 plundered burials from the Herulian/Lombardian Period were registered at 3 mounds from the Stone Ages. At the east side of the old central mound a man from the second part of the 5th century was buried with many horses as Childeric. It is not registered if a separate mound was erected over him, but there is no doubt that they used visual effect of the top of the plains and the row of 3 existing mounds. Only some Hunnic/East Germanic iron pieces and a piece of wood with strap work of "Scandinavian" Style I "bandfletwerk" were found. The burial appears in a way indicating hurry with the burial, but this is difficult to determine due to the later destruction.

Poulic searched for the 3-band strap work but found it only in a similar strap work of metal at a Lombardian cross in Italy from around 600 AD. Tejral however referred to the Erlar-bracteot from Esketorp but this must be confused with the Aasum-bracteot from Scania with identical strap work – both 2 and 3 bands identical with the Lombardian cross - but nearly a century older. The same strap work is found on bracteates at Bornholm and Oeland, and at a spear shaft in Nydam. The Aasum-bracteot is of a type with a horseman which Malmer called CIIa2 found mostly in Scania and at the Danish islands, but the similar CIIa1 is the type of bracteet found in most of Scandinavia and 12 in Eastern Europe too. As the bracteates are of Nordic origin the general spread of the CIIa1 type in Scandinavia makes it impossible to tell from where the East european bracteates arrived, but it is likely that the strap work in Zhuran was influenced from the coasts of the Baltic Sea. Strap work with exactly the same bands but other patterns can be found at the helmet in Vendel XIV, at the shield boss in Vendel XII and as a fragment in the eastern Uppsala Mound. This kind of strap work was generally used by the Vikings later on. Tejral has later [RGA Zhuran] changed the dating of the grave based on the strap work, but he has missed that this kind of strap work was already used in Nydam.

At the north side of the central mound in Zhuran a woman was buried in the first part of the 6th century. The grave contained several pieces of glass of a kind also known from Uppsala/Vendel and the East Germanic area and two fragments of a small relief of ivory, where one figure carried a cross. The beads in the grave could be dated to the fourth century – maybe from Denmark – but they could be ancient family jewellery. At the top of the central mound a new mound and mausoleum was erected covering the two earlier graves. The mausoleum dated to before 567 AD was of a type like Augustus' and Hadrian's in Rome with a radius of 30 meters. It was destroyed early when the stones were used - including the grave chamber. The excavator Poulic regarded the horseman as East Germanic and the two in the other tombs as royal Lombards - due to the unusual nature he guessed the mausoleum contained the famous king Wacho. Another possibility which fits the combination of an East Germanic horseman and Christian Lombards in the same mound is Wacho's third queen Silinga (Tejral), their son Waltari, who died as a young king in 547 AD, and one of her Herulian ancestors - as example Hrodolphus. This would also explain the character of the first burial, as the Heruls had just been defeated in this region.
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Rothenseehof and female graves in Ladenhoff as Herulian – the same has Tejral regarding Tesany and Schmalzberg near La Thaya (Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014). Though the mounds in Uppsala are now dated later, it is important to notice, that K. Hauch in 1954, Menghin in 1987 and Tejral in 1990 in articles combined the Blucina tomb and Zhuran Hill with Procopius, Ottars Mound in Vendel and the mounds in Uppsala, and Tejral also mentioned similar artefacts in Moravia and Scandinavia - including the top of the golden sword-handle in Lucian and the strap work in Zurani I, which is found similar in Scania and the Vendee boat graves66. It has however to be stressed, that the burial mounds in Uppsala are not like Blucina and Zhuran I – or any other earlier burial. They contain cremations – like Procopius told about the pagan Heruls.

Under all circumstances Tejral and his archaeologists in Brno have confirmed the claims of Procopius regarding this area of settlement.

1.2.1.5.2 Burials - Högom/ Norway

In Scandinavia we have rich chieftain burials in the 5th century with connections along the trade route – especially in Högom, Norway and Gotland. Around 500AD the custom with flat cremations in the field was introduced in large numbers all over Eastern Scandinavia, but also earlier a majority of the people had been cremated.

The burial in Scandinavia most similar to Blucina is the grave in Mound II in Högom. In Sundsvall in the Swedish Norrland (just north of Hälsingland) the largest of the 12 Högom mounds contained a very rich inhumation burial of a chieftain with obvious connections to Southern Europe – i.e. Blucina. These were the only mounds in Scandinavia of that time except for some mounds in South Western Norway. While the sword in Högom points in the direction of Southern Norway and England [Menghin, 1986] and a bridle points at Finnestorp [Nordqvist, 2007], 13 three-winged arrowheads point at a close contact to people following the Huns [Anke, 1998]. As the arrowheads were more identical with the Norwegian arrowheads than with the Hunnic arrowheads Anke wrote that the arrows in the tomb could be due to fashion, but the Norwegians apparently had the same connection. Also in the Blucina tomb three-winged arrowheads were found. The saddle was one of the Scandinavian ring saddles discussed in chapter 1.2.1. under Sösdala.

Finally, two antique glasses from the Black Sea region with a position indicating a cultic purpose [Ramqvist 1990] were found in the mound. As the signs of high rank like rings, fibulas, swords and equipment with cloisonné were common among all Germanic chieftains serving the Romans at that time, they do not reveal the ethnic origin of the man in the grave.

The other mounds contain earlier cremation burials, but in Mound 3 was only a globe stone buried like the one at Inglingeheog in Värend - without any ornaments, however. The mounds in Högom are dated around 350-500 AD with Mound II dated in the end of the 5th century - the time between the Sösdala finds and the Heruls of Procopius.

It should be mentioned, that Högom is placed at the earlier mentioned trade route to Halogaland. This was probably the centre of the people trading with furs as mentioned by Jordanes. Bridles with similar-looking eagle heads are found in Högom, Stockholm and the sacrifice in Finnestorp in Götaland. Regarded isolated in the light of the finds of southern Sösdala-equipment in Finnestorp and Venebo this could indicate that losers from Western Götaland also tried their luck in the cultures of Högom/Svealand, but the attackers could of course originate from these regions. Also, an example of the East Germanic inspired fibula-type with curved heads mentioned above is found in the Högom-region and Lofoten – indicating a connection between the Atlantic route along the Norwegian coast to Lofoten and the Botnic route along the Swedish coast from Helge/Uppsala crossing the mountain range at the lowest place between Högom and Bertnem. This may be the way Procopius got his information about the midnight sun and the Scridfennae brought south by Heruls

66 Pictures of the Blucina and Zhuran mounds including the finds can be found in Germanische Museum's "Germanen, Hunnen und Awaren" [Menghin 1987], where Birgit Arrhenius describes connections between Scandinavia and South Eastern Europe and Menghin describes like Tejral connections between Zhuran, Blucina and the Uppsala mounds. The report about Zhuran is found in Slovenska Arkeologia 1995 [Poulic 1995].
The mound excavated in Högom constitutes the centre of a row of 3 big mounds like the mounds in Uppsala, Vada and Bertnem in Namsdal north of Trondheim - all found on the trade route. There are no signs of this activity later than Mound II indicating that this society disappeared contemporary with the emerge of the society raising Ottars Mound and the 3 mounds in Uppsala.

In Evebø (Eide) at Nordfjord in Western Norway a similar mound was found - also with three-winged arrowheads and a Syrian glass - and at Barshalderhed at Gotland such a grave without a mound was found too - with identical arrowheads and a glass from the Danube-region. The only other three-winged arrowheads of iron are found at the western coast of Norway as Evebo (at least 17 places) from Jæren to Trøndelag indicating this as the origin of these Nordic arrows inspired by East Germanic horsemen - but also indicating a connection with Högom as mentioned above. In the mound at Evebo was also found a geometrical toy of kind only known from Iran and Afghanistan, and at Barshalderhed a clasp was of Slovakian origin. All three chieftains were buried without cremation in the end of the 5th century, and together with the contemporary grave at Snartemo in Southern Norway these burials constitute the four richest burials in Scandinavia in the 5th century.

In Snartemo grave near the south coast of Norway a chieftain was buried in a small mound with his famous sword in Style I from the second half of the 5th century [Menghin 1983]. The sword pommel is of the same type as in Blucina with two animal heads – which were originally inspired from South Eastern Europe. Such sword pommels are found in Brøa (Grimeton-Hunnestad in Halland), Sjörup (Scania) and Finnestorp, but these find places were no graves. As the style is Scandinavian Style I, the sword pommel in Blucina should be expected to be Scandinavian – but as Childeric's sword pommel in Tournais as one of the only Continental pommels (in more expensive materials) had these animal heads too we cannot be sure of the background. Under all circumstances the sword pommels show a connection between Blucina and Scandinavia, and especially the sword pommels in Blucina and Finnestorp are very similar. The golden handle from Blucina is found in Tournais and Snartemo too. The guard of the sword from Blucina is found in Snartemo, Scania, Gotland (4), Södermanland and Sutton Hoo. Most of these finds are dated in the second part of the 5th century. The sword type in Blucina is regarded as a transition from Hunnic to Germanic swords.

There is no doubt that the chieftains in Scandinavia were connected in a way which involved the East Germanic people in the Danubian area. If they were Scandinavian allies/mercenaries or East Germanics, we are not able to decide - making Scandinavians the most probable answer. Their locations could together with the other finds indicate that they at that time formed a network extending the old Amber Route from the workshops at Gotland over Högom to Northern and Western Norway.

These finds all show a connection between the Heruls and the Norse chieftains along the routes in the second part of the 5th century, when the Huns had redrawn and the Ostrogoths had settled in Pannonia at the other side of the Danube.

1.2.1.6 Odin in Finnestorp

The war booties in Finnestorp represent several groups of warriors of different ethnicity being defeated in Västergötland from 350-550 AD. One of the late sacrifices is a belt buckle with a face with leaning eyes, beard and three circular tattoos. It is convincingly interpreted as Odin drinking of the well of Mimer. In this connection a group of earlier belt buckles spread from Crimea to Normandy call for special attention. Apparently, they are produced in the middle of the 5th century by one artist – or at least one workshop in the Roman border areas with the typical stamped ornaments. The one from Yalta has a face with leaning eyes, beard and three circular tattoos as the one in Finnestorp – but in an earlier version. As another of the buckles has the runic inscription Marings, which means Goth or Herul, the buckles are probably made for one of these two East Germanic people. The buckle in Finnestorp is made later, but with the characteristic features at the
The face of Odin in Finnestorp also the Crimean buckle must relate to a group worshipping a person with these facial characteristics across geography and time – and therefore most likely also the Marings. The buckle in Finnestorp may theoretically be Scandinavian, but when these three buckles are combined with the rune stone in Strängnäs showing the inscription “erilaR . wodinR” it is irresponsible to ignore a connection between Odin of Tanais, Attila, the Heruls of Asov, the ErilaR and Scandinavia – especially as it is also known from the myths.

We do not know if the event, at which the owner of the buckle in Finnestorp was defeated, took place before or after the Herulian royal family arrived according to Procopius. Odin and the runes will be addressed in the next main chapters.

The excavations in Finnestorp are being examined for the moment. The finds are war booties belonging to people who were defeated by the local population around this central place in Falbygden. They show obvious traces of horse equipment from the Danubian area. There are many rings from the Nordic ring saddle type, which was developed earlier from Roman and nomadic saddles. We do not know if other types of saddles were used, while many of the bridles were of the type from Sösödala, which showed up to be made in Roman workshops at the Danube. Huns and Heruls are some of the possibilities, but most of them were probably returning mercenaries or warriors from Hunnic campaigns. Both Sösödala, Nydam and Sjörup style are found.

In chapter 1.2.1.1 the Sösödala style and the society around Vätteryd in the inner Scania were mentioned - probably established by returning Scandinavian warriors from the armies of Attila followed by Huns and maybe Heruls. Possibly some of the attackers in Finnestorp came from this society, but some of the attackers may also have been the arriving Heruls after 508 AD.

A very interesting find in Finnestorp is a buckle showing the head of a man (left below) at the root of the lash. Bengt Nordqvist has convincingly argued for an interpretation as Odin drinking of the well of Mimer [Nordqvist 2010]. Interesting too are the three circles at his cheeks – appearing to be tattoos. Sidonius Apollinaris described in 478 AD the many different people in Toulouse: “Here strolls the Herulian with his glaucious cheeks”. This is by the scholars interpreted as blue/green tattoos at the cheeks, but though it is mentioned by Sidonius as a special mark of the Heruls also other people probably used tattoos – ae. in the Hunnic campaign. The circles, however, are quite similar with the red shield mark of the “Heruler Seniores” in Notitia Dignitatum from around 410 AD (copy from 1400 AD). In this way the two only visible signs known from descriptions of the Heruls are found at this head in Finnestorp.

A similar face turned opposite at the lash of a buckle is found in Yalta, Crimea. It was compared with Finnestorp by Maxim Levada [in Khrapunov 2011]. The face has the same characteristic features: Leaning eyes, moustache and three circular tattoos at each cheek. Earlier Joachim Werner found parallels between the Yalta buckle and finds from the Danubian Basin [Annibaldi, Werner 1963]. Both in 2011 and 2013 Maxim Levada wrote that the Yalta buckle appears to be produced by the same artist as the buckle in Bar and the buckle in Szabadbattyan with the inscription “Marings” [in Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014]. Marings is translated “Goth”, but does most likely mean “Herul”. It is also known from the Swedish rune stone, Rökstenen (see chapter 2.1.1.3). At the backside of the two other buckles he drew a pentagram instead (Pythagoras' symbol for eternity). The other buckles are Sago and Aran/Moult (both had lost the rear plate) and maybe Baled. The spread corresponds with the operational area of the Goths and especially of the Heruls, who also operated as pirates at the French coasts. Crimea is too far away to justify that it was lost by a Scandinavian warrior. As the leaf ornaments at some of the buckles are unknown in Scandinavia but common in Southern Europe and as “Marings” is spelled in Gothic language (used also by the Heruls) the buckles are probably produced in the middle of the 5th century for a Gothic/Herulic culture somewhere around the Danube i.e. Paeonia Inferior (with Szabadbattyan) – close to the Roman borders as suggested by Näsman/Fabech [in Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014].

The “circle on triangle”-ornaments and other ornaments on the buckles in Szabadbattyan and Bar are also later found on the Odin-buckle and several other items in Finnestorp, at the mausoleum of Theodoric (died
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526 AD) and at later Scandinavian fibulas. They are typical stamps from the late Roman workshops used by the Germanic officers.

It is therefore possible that some of the Scandinavian war booties could be remains from raids of Huns and their Gothic/Herulic companions – but most of them would rather be from returning Scandinavian mercenaries. Some of them could, with the combinations mentioned above, be Heruls who ended their lives in Västergötland.

The two buckles with the head may support the theory of Lotte Hedeager that one of the shapes of Odin was inspired by the Hunnic Attila [Hedeager 2011], who supposedly had such an Asiatic look. According to Jordanes the Heruls lived around the swamps of Asov, while Odin according to Snorri arrived from the region of Tanais – both places next to Crimea where the eldest buckle was found.

It can be discussed where the late war booties in the bogs (originally lakes) of Finnestorp and Ejsbøl are produced – as the only certain regarding the origin is that the intruders were no locals. The most remarkable, however, is that out of 5-6 known buckles from the same workshop both the face and the name “Marings” are later met in a princely environment in Scandinavia. It is improbable that two oriental-looking faces (faces are unusual in this connection67) should get three circular tattoos with marked centres at each check by a coincidence – the buckles must have belonged to members of a group of the same ethnicity or religion acting both at Crimea and in Scandinavia – confirming the connections presented by Lotte Hedeager.

67 Such heads at buckles are very unusual. It shall be mentioned that a small fragment from a buckle at a sword with a head with the same hair (helmet?) as Finnestorp – but without punched tattoos – is found at a hill top at Lærkefryd near Jørlunde in North Zeeland. 7 kilometres away, near the old roads to Sweden, a fragmentary cicada-fibula from the Black Sea is found together with a piece of a buckle – regarded as metal scrap. Here at the other side of a bog a rosette fibula with runes and the green glass from Khrapunov/Stylegar 2011 page 143 fig. 9 are found. Lærkefryd is mentioned in Journal of Danish Archaeology [Søren A. Sørensen, Vol 14, 2006], but unfortunately the details regarding this find from 2008 are still unpublished. Further excavations in 2012 appear to have been disappointing due to plowing, and it is unclear if this find is from ritual meals as most of the finds there are told to be from the Viking Ages. http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/artikel/309665:Historie--Offerplads-gennem-1000-aar
1.2.1.7 The “Amber Route” and the Heruls

Above, Sösdala told about the first contacts between the Huns and the Scandinavians. The solidi told about the traffic of Scandinavian warriors the rest of the 5th century serving the Huns and the Heruls. The traffic was supported by the South West Scandinavian ClIIa bracteats in Central Europe and roundheaded carved fibulas in South Eastern Scandinavia. The burials confirmed the history regarding the Herulian supremacy at the Amber Route in Moravia, where they according to Procopius controlled their region. The burials also confirmed that the uniform customs of the princely barbarian mercenary officers and foederati spread out from Central Europe to Scandinavia. These strong indications were independent of each other and provided together with the historical records a basis for the theories of Lotte Hedeager about the Hunnic and Eastgermanic impact on Scandinavian culture and religion, and they told why the Heruls followed their pagan North Germanic companions to Scandinavia, when they were defeated by their neighbours, who chose the Christianity.

A common feature was the traffic along the old Amber Route, where the trade had emerged again after the Hunnic campaigns. The Heruls probably used their knowledge from their early connections as Hunnic allied and decided to keep control with the Amber Route through the Moravian Gate in the Carpathian Mountains which passed their kingdom – rather by plundering, protection and taxation than as merchants. According to Procopius that was the way they treated their neighbours. Some of the Heruls may in that case like the earlier Huns be expected to ride north to inspect the possibilities and negotiate recruitment and deals about trade and protection - or after the defeat of Odoaker also as mercenary officers in Scandinavian service.

Ostrogoths and Rugians have often been expected to take part in the traffic, but their own dynasties waged war on the Heruls and other East Germanics until sometimes after 493 AD, and all Gothic attention was turned against the Romans. We must therefore expect the Heruls to block the Gothic and Rugian access to the trade route through the Moravian Gate and we do not finde the usual Theodoric coins in Scandinavia.

We cannot be certain that the Scandinavians joined the Heruls and the archaeology cannot tell us with certainty if the style and items were brought to or from Scandinavia by Heruls, by Huns, by Scandinavians or by trade, but the history is telling that the Heruls controlled the key region passed by the route along which the spread took place – giving in one way or the other the contact against north, which will explain their expectations regarding Scandinavia and the later events, when their pagan dynasty lost its position at the
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Due to the independent indices we have more than sufficient confirmation of our purpose, which is to investigate if it was possible that the Herulian dynasty would decide to go to Scandinavia – a confirmation of the history. The archaeology shall only be used for that purpose in this chapter.

It is obvious from the many similarities that the connections along the old trade route were used – and after the Huns left normal trade connections to Rome and Constantinople could be re-established along the route. Except for a few finds such as Blucina the archaeology cannot tell us about the ethnicity of these connections, but due to their key position in Mähren together with Blucina the Heruls are the obvious choice to follow the Huns in their earlier contact with the Scandinavians and their warriors.

The Ostrogoths have been proposed too, but as the Ostrogoths waged war against their earlier companions from 454 to sometime after 494 the Heruls probably blocked the trade route for supporters of the dynasty of the Ostrogoths. That is confirmed by the fact that no Theodoric coins are found in Scandinavia, but 3-400 in the southern Germany – indicating that the Arian Goths had no interest in Scandinavia at that time.

There is no reason to believe that the Heruls were merchants at the route themselves as Procopius described their way of income as tributing and looting of their neighbours. Probably this was the way they treated those passing by at the trade route too, though taxation and protection probably their method was rather than looting – just like the Danes later used their position in Øresund.

The archaeology - both the Untersiebenbrunn-style, the round headed 3-knob-fibulas [Curta 2011], the CII1a bracteates, the military equipment and the solidi – tell us about a lively traffic along the route between the Danubian Basin and the southern Scandinavia. Some of the items moved north and some of them moved south. The most likely explanation is as mentioned that warriors from southern Scandinavia and maybe from the Norwegian coasts joined first the Huns and later the Herulian dynasty, who subdued and plundered their neighbours as they had learned by the Huns.

It is impossible to say how often the Heruls went to Scandinavia themselves. Probably they went north for negotiation, reconnaissance and recruitment, and maybe some of the Heruls went into Scandinavian service as advisers and mercenaries, but at the time of Odoacer they probably rather headed south. However, it is likely that the Huns and Heruls established positions for representation in Scandinavia like their use of Vätteryd. After the defeat of Odoaker some of them may have tried to be military advisors or officers in the small Scandinavian kingdoms – as Erilar, which will be mentioned in the next main chapter.

The archaeology indicates that a Germanic people (Galindians, Goths or Heruls ("Mazur-Germanen")) at the mouth of Vistula were important partners at the route as both the Untersiebenbrunn-style, the round headed 3-knob-fibulas [Curta 2011] and the solidi are found there too. In the beginning of the 6th century the Slavs penetrated the area around the river Vistula, but the Oder-route was probably used until around 567 AD, when all Scandinavian connections turned against the Elbe and the Rhine due to the destruction of the Illyrian Heruls.

The finds in the wet areas of Finnestorp and Vennebo contain Nydam-, Ejsbøl-, Sjörup- and Sösdala-style from 400 AD up to around 550 AD, indicating that these artefacts were brought up by attackers being defeated by the Götes. Some of them could have been the Heruls of Procopius, but we have not been able to separate them from returning Scandinavian warriors.

1.2.2 The Western Heruls 286-509

We first time heard about the Western Heruls in 286 AD when they attacked the Romans together with the unknown Chaibones – probably the Chauci, who were neighbours to the Saxons and shortly after disappeared. In the 4th century these Heruls became famous Roman mercenaries.
together with the Batavi – especially in England. They lived somewhere at the Frisian coasts – possibly between the Frisian areas and the Saxons in Harlingerland in a region with archaeological tracks of Roman mercenaries. From there they could rage the Gallian and Spanish coasts, when the Romans gave up in England, and they were in this way used to operate in the Atlantic Sea and the North Sea. Consequently they could also operate along the English and the south westerly Scandinavian coasts. It would have been obvious to follow their Saxon neighbours back to England before the last part of the coast was left around 500 AD. Some of them may even have been a part of the Anglo-Saxons being called to England by the Brittons in 448 AD – as the Heruls had been called by the Romans 75 years earlier to protect against the Picts. Another part of these Heruls may have turned against Scandinavia instead as mercenaries. However, this qualified guessing will be discussed in a later main chapter.

Due to this mixture of fragmentary history, archaeology and guesswork with names they have sometimes been regarded as a warrior band, but even if they arrived as a warrior band, they had for 200 years several times been mentioned as warriors bound to people living north of the Rhine – refuting Alvar Ellegaard. They were mentioned for the last time in the historical sources in 478 AD.

In 286 AD the Heruls were mentioned together with Chaibones far away north of the Rhine. This was described in chapter 1.1.2.2. Probably they ended up in the area of the earlier Chauci between the Weser and the Elms – the later Harlingen / Harlingergau (1060). The archaeology and the geology are showing how the sealevel raised in the Wadden See, where people lived at terpen – an obvious place making their inhabitants to pirates and mercenaries as the Heruls and Saxons were known in France. However, around 500 AD most of the area was left – including Federsen Wierke just opposite the Weser Bay. Here two boatgraves were found Fallward with the remains of a Roman mercenarie officer from around 449 AD. See also chapter 2.1.3.2 or the article http://www.gedevasen.dk/lister.pdf

Hundred years after the AngloSaxon migration to England the Celtic monk; Gilda\(^68\), wrote that the Saxons were invited to England by the Brittons as a defence against the Picts and Scots. The same wrote the clerical historian Bede in the beginning of the 8\(^{th}\) century. He added that the Anglo-Saxons were led by Hengist and Horsa\(^69\). The Anglo-Saxons first tried to call the Romans as they did in 366 AD when the Romans sent the Heruls and the Batavi, but now 75 years later the Romans had left England and were busy with Attila. What was more natural than to call the Western Heruls back again to fight the Picts and the Scots once more?

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\(^68\) Gilda ca. 548 AD, 23: “At that time all members of the assembly, along with the proud tyrant, are blinded; such is the protection they find for their country (it was, in fact, its destruction) that those wild Saxons, of accursed name, hated by God and men, should be admitted into the island, like wolves into folds, in order to repel the northern nations. Nothing more hurtful, certainly, nothing more bitterly, happened to the island than this.”

\(^69\) Bede, 731 AD: “In the year of our Lord 449 ... the nation of the Angles, or Saxons, being invited by the aforesaid king [Vortigern], arrived in Britain with three long ships, and had a place assigned them to reside in by the same king, in the eastern part of the island, that they might thus appear to be fighting for their country, whilst their real intentions were to enslave it. Accordingly they engaged with the enemy, who were come from the north to give battle, and obtained the victory; which, being known at home in their own country, as also the fertility of the country, and the cowardice of the Britons, a more considerable fleet was quickly sent over, bringing a still greater number of men, which, being added to the former, made up an invincible army. The newcomers received of the Britons a place to inhabit, upon condition that they should wage war against their enemies for the peace and security of the country, whilst the Britons agreed to furnish them with pay. Those who came over were of the three most powerful nations of Germany Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. From the Jutes are descended the people of Kent. The two first commanders are said to have been Hengist and Horsa. Of whom Horsa, being afterwards slain in battle by the Britons, was buried in the eastern parts of Kent, where a monument, bearing his name, is still in existence. They were the sons of Viciaes, whose father was Vecta, son of Woden; from whose stock the royal race of many provinces deduce their original. In a short time, swarms of the aforesaid nations came over into the island, and they began to increase so much, that they became terrible to the natives themselves who had invited them.”
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This shield painting is known from the West Herulian mercenaries in the Italian infantry unit "Heruli". It was found in a medieval copy of Notitia Dignitatum from the beginning of the 5th century AD. Consequently, we cannot be sure of this picture - and we do not know which symbol is behind the circles. The circle was ao. a symbol of the sun in the soldiers' Mithras Cult - worshipped in temples along the Wall of Hadrian in England, where the Heruls were posted together with the Bataves. It is unknown whether the Eastern Heruls used the same symbols, but circles and half circles are recognised at many artefacts found in their tracks.

Gilda and Bede did not know the details of the past, and together with Procopius they mentioned Frisians, Saxons, Angles and Jutes70 – or just barbarians. Procopius mentioned Frisians, Angles and Britons in England, but not Saxons and Heruls. Had they disappeared as Frisians? We cannot put much value into names of people they mentioned so much later. At that time all pirates in the South were simply called Saxons if their Germanic tribal name was unknown. We must assume that members from all the tribes along the coast from Normandy to Jutland joined the migration, including the Western Heruls. Especially for the Western Heruls this was a return to their earlier area of operations – and the expression of Sidonius Apollinaris from 478 AD "inhabitant of the Ocean's furthest shore" may even be interpreted as England at that time.

Archaeologists believe they have traced the Jutes by some big fibulas found in Jutland and in Kent, and at the Lake Flevo in Netherland a settlement points at the Jutes too. All these people were probably mixed up in the Migration Ages.

A branch of the Western Heruls remaining at the peninsula of Jutland could be the later Myrgingas in Northern Frisia mentioned only in Widsith. Their name may have an etymology similar with the twisted etymology mentioned by Jordanes: Eloi = "The people from the swamps" which in West Germanic could be Myrings (Swedish "myr" - ON "myr" - German "moor" - Old-Frisian "mor"), just like the later mentioned "Marings" in Moravia (Chapter 2.1.1.3), but it is a play with words and old poems.

We cannot reach any historical conclusion about the fate of the Western Heruls as they probably were split up between Scandinavia, England and the Frisian Coast – hypothesis being mentioned or used in the following chapters.

1.3 History – Sources, discussions and conclusion

1.3.1 Sources and critics

The official North Germanic history of the 3-6th centuries has not been a scientific conclusion based on facts, but mostly a "decided truth" based on conservatism – including in the scholarly networks.

Originally it was accepted as the truth that the Heruls were expelled by the Danes in the 3rd century, and returned around 500AD. Ivar Lindquist and von Friesen assumed they settled south of the Götes, while Lukman, Gudmundsson and in 1969 Wessén assumed they brought some East Germanic legends to Scandinavia. Already in 1925 Lauritz Weibull raised doubt the story about their Scandinavian origin, and later the interpretation of all the sources has been questioned.

70 Procopius 553 AD, VIII, xxx: “The island of Brittia is inhabited by three very numerous nations, each having one king over it. And the names of these nations are Angili, Frissones and Brittones ... And so great appears to be the population of these nations that every year they emigrate thence in large companies ... and go to the land of the Franks. And the Franks allow them to settle”. Procopius mixed up the Northern geography and he never mentioned any Western Heruls who had disappeared 75 years before his time – and the Saxon for that sake. Were they both his Frissons?
1.3.1.1 Jordanes' sources

Jordanes' Getica is based on a lost 12-volume work by Cassiodorus. Cassiodorus was the chancellor of Theodorich and finished his final version of "History of the Goths" before 533 AD (probably around 519 AD), where one of the purposes was to show that the Amal-family of Theodoric according to the tradition had the legal rights to the Ostrogothic throne. Jordanes had lived in an Alanic/Gothic environment in Moesia and finished his Getica in Constantinople in 551 AD. His purpose appears to have been to support the falling Gothic Kingdom. He told that his work was based on Cassiodorus' work, but that these books had not been available for him in three days. While Jordanes obviously had his own sources for the time after Cassiodorus, the Getica before this time is regarded as an abbreviation of Cassiodorus' work, where he accordingly had to concentrate on the Goths and to let out the descriptions (being irrelevant at the time of Jordanes) of the political landscape around Theodoric, which a politician like Cassiodorus without doubt would pay much attention to in his work.

Walther Goffart doubted Jordanes purpose and has suggested that he wrote in Constantinople in order to make a short version of the Gothic work which could be acceptable to the victors in Constantinople.

Arne Søby Christensen ("Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths", 2002) is among the scholars claiming that the works of Cassiodorus and Jordanes cannot be regarded as history. His arguments, however, are based on irregularities in the royal genealogies of Cassiodorus, which had a clearly manipulating purpose - and which are irrelevant regarding the questions being discussed here. As another example he demonstrates that the episode presenting the word "Ansis" is not historically correct and concludes by using this argument that Ansis "cannot be part of a long Gothic tradition" (p. 127) - notwithstanding his observation regarding a single king does not lead to such a firm conclusion as Ansis probably was a general custom. The discussion if some of the Getae ended up as a part of Goths is also avoided by him - though this would explain some of the problems he points out. There is no doubt that a great part of the early history of the Goths and the Amal family lines were collected or maybe even constructed by Cassiodorus for political purposes - which was what caused Arne Søby Christensen's examples - but which Roman or medieval historian (or modern?) was not influenced by politics?

It appears to be popular in certain schools of historians when writing their doctoral theses to reject a whole classical source by demonstrating inconsistency or unreliability in a few cases in that or others works of the author. This is especially a problem if they use descriptions of earlier events to conclude about episodes contemporary with the author. Not even a serious classical author used old sources after our scholarly criteria, but that does not influence his own contemporary observations. As we have too few sources to provide us with the necessary confirmation, when analysing Germanic history before 750 AD and Nordic history before 1250AD, there is no reason to spend time on history of that time at all if all the information from a historian can be rejected in that way - especially if the comparison with archaeology is avoided because it is another scholarly branch.

As we know from the letters of Cassiodorus the Heruls had played a role in Gothic politics, and they could still at his time be expected to play a future role - indicated by political marriages like Silinga's and the way Justinian treated them. Therefore, their expansion, defeat and split must have been mentioned in his voluminous work - including the story of the group of Heruls migrating against north. As Jordanes mentioned a Scandinavian king Rodulf at the court of Theodoric Cassiodorus was probably well informed, and the chapter about the people of Scanza in Jordanes' Getica is by most scholars regarded as a copy of Cassiodorus' text - except probably the short sentence about the Heruls.

Jordanes was not interested in the Heruls. When he finished his work in 553 AD they could not support the Goths, as the Heruls were now Roman soldiers, Gepidian subjects or a distant Scandinavian people - except for the few being assimilated among the Goths 40 years earlier. But not even these Heruls were mentioned. He just mentioned the Heruls as participants in the stories of Ermaneric, Odoaker and Attila - probably being important stories in Cassiodorus' Gothic history - but nothing about the Heruls around the Gothic Kingdom

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and the Roman Empire in his own 6th century and nothing about the Western Heruls at all. The only other remark is the small sentence put into the chapter he copied from Cassiodorus about Scanza - "Herulos propriis sedibus expulerunt".

As mentioned Cassiodorus probably wrote a story about the Heruls going to Scandinavia beside the chapter describing the original people living in Scandinavia. In that case it was natural to Jordanes to let out the description of the Heruls in the abbreviation process. In order to keep a correct listing of the people in Scandinavia he may simply have put a short sentence into the existing text with their name related to one of the other people - causing the clumsy grammar. How did he choose that remark? The most natural choice was the same source as Procopius – but as he had another purpose he brought the information that they were later expelled by the Danes, while Procopius told about their first settlement without violence. That was exactly what Goffart told us they would do.

If we assume that Jordanes did not refer to a Herulian origin in Scandinavia since he described an etymology from the Black Sea (Chapter 2) this expulsion must have taken place after the Heruls had left the Black Sea and before 551 AD. In this way we have two independent contemporary sources reporting about Heruls and Danes after the Hunnic campaign – but of course both based on returning Heruls. The probable time of this expulsion is between 509 AD and 548 AD – and the different explanations of Procopius and Jordanes will in this way fit totally into each other. The expression "propriis sedibus" will make sense even at an expulsion shortly after the Heruls of Procopius arrived.

1.3.1.2 Procopius’ sources

As all historians of his time Procopius was not critical when using old sources, and furthermore he had no clear picture of the geography outside the Roman Empire of his time. Therefore, his geographical descriptions, the legends and the numbers of warriors from the past were often unreliable (as his description of England in Book VIII, xxx). When it comes to his own time he can probably be regarded as our modern politically biased journalists. We do need to be aware of his political purpose before we can use his information. The most important part of his work covers the wars which he had been very close to as the secretary and legal advisor (assessor) of Bellisarius – at least until around 540 AD when he settled in Constantinople with close connection to the court of Justinian. His task was the description of the wars and not the earlier history, which he just often used as a background serving his purpose. Therefore, his details from the past may be invented or distorted by himself or his sources in order to make a colourful story, but he probably knew only the general headlines from the beginning of the 6th century. Therefore his description of the defeat by the Lombards in 509 AD and their route to Scandinavia must be regarded as uncertain - but comparing with other sources and his general way to write there is no doubt that this kind of events took place in one way or the other.

Neither is there any doubt that Procopius sometimes manipulated the text, but his possibilities were limited regarding events in his own neighbourhood and time as he would lose reliability among his readers if his descriptions were outside the limits of their own knowledge. In such cases suppression and distortion were the tools. Procopius had definitely been close to the Illyrian Heruls, and he regarded them with a disgust and curiosity, which is obvious from his text (Extracts of his text). In case of the midnight sun in the chapter about the returning Heruls he specifically stressed that he "made inquiry from those who come to us from the island", and the description has the correct details which are not found at earlier authors and Jordanes, who also wrote about the midnight sun. There is no doubt that he also used Suartuas and other Herulian officers as sources when following Bellisarius and living in Constantinople afterwards at the same time as Suartuas. Neither is there any doubt that he after 540 AD met several participants in the events involving the Illyrian Heruls and that he at the imperial court or at a journey talked with at least one person coming from Scandinavia knowing where the Heruls had settled. Unfortunately, he did not tell us because he end his readers did not care.

From the text of Procopius it is also obvious that Justinian, Bellisarius, Suartuas - or maybe even Procopius himself as an earlier assessor – wanted to justify the political change or mistake which took place regarding
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the Heruls. Some of the Heruls were more loyal to their own royal family than to Justinian in spite of the Roman "generosity" giving this totally defeated people a chance to get a civilized life against Christianisation. Procopius therefore called them "the basest of all men" and used all kinds of abusive language. Probably in order to smear them he indicated homosexuality among them, which is showing how homosexuals were regarded at that time rather than showing that the Heruls were different than other groups of mercenaries in that way. They had to be described as uncivilized, ungrateful, unreliable and disloyal to explain to the Romans, their allies and themselves, why the politics of Justinian in that case were unsuccessful and why a major part of these brilliant soldiers were forced to leave the empire and join the hostile Gepides - making it necessary for Suartuas and two other generals to attack them. This is a strong motive to be considered when interpreting Procopius' descriptions of the Heruls.

Especially Procopius' former chief Bellisarius - now also close to him in Constantinople - had the problem that he had not been able to rule, Christianize and socialize his Herulian soldiers - and Procopius may even as the secretary or assessor of Bellisarius have been personally involved in this process. Therefore, it was important for Procopius to emphasize that the Heruls could not be ruled at all - and therefore he made a long story out of the destiny of Ochus and of Suartuas. Despite of his words it is obvious that they wanted a king, but he had to come from the group 1600 kilometres away in the pagan Scandinavia. About this Scandinavian Datius Procopius just indicated, that he was a second choice they had to make in a hurry among the numerous royal family. Procopius could in no way tell in his books if they had a successful ruler in the Scandinavian group - but his silence about the position of the dynasty in Scandinavia is speaking too.

A more traditional motive also mentioned above is the description of the Christian Lombardian forces destroying the pagans by the help of God 40 years earlier - an event which was now a part of the past which could be "painted" a little without creating uncertainty among the readers. It must be noticed, that Paulus Diaconus told another version pleasing his people better, while the earlier Origi Gentis Longobardorum was more neutral.

1.3.1.3 Alvar Ellegaard

In 1987 the sources of the Herulian history were eliminated by Alvar Ellegaard72 - who was no historian, but a former professor in English - except Procopius and some brief Roman reports of Herulian mercenaries. With help from the inexact Latin of Jordanes Ellegaard in this way made room for alternative theories.

The searching and criticism of the sources carried out by Ellegaard is mostly a careful work, which with modifications has been used here too. On the other hand, his final theory looks like a provocation73. When Ellegaard wrote in 1987, he was not the first, but he is here used as the most recent representative for the actual scholarly attitude to the Heruls in Scandinavia, as many historians supported similar theories or elements hereof.

In most Scandinavian history books the Heruls still have their origin in Scandinavia - dating the expulsion in the 3rd century as Brøndsted and von Friesen, but in the last decades most scholars have accepted the interpretation maintained by i.e. Ellegaard, Goffart and Andreas Schwarz that it was a recent event when Jordanes wrote, as already described in Chapter 2 above. This shall not be repeated here as that claim of Ellegaard is accepted in this article too – though the arguments are not identical.

The next claims by Ellegaard are improbable. He claimed that Procopius' telling about the Heruls in Scandinavia was only covering some hundred individuals for a period of 35 years – or in other words: The expulsion described by Jordanes might be the same story as the return of two princes followed by 200 young warriors being described by Procopius.

72 The articles in Scandia 1987 (53) – Götiska Minnen nr 113, 1992 are unfortunately by many regarded as the latest Scandinavian research concerning the Heruls.

73 Alvar Ellegaard, who was earlier a professor in English language, provoked later in Scandia 1993 the historians and the theologians with a very hard criticism of their sources and with theories in opposition to the accepted theories regarding the Bible.
Ellegaard accepted as a source Procopius, who in 553 AD told that the royal family was still numerous in Scandinavia and that the Heruls remained on the "island". He also told that the envoy went back to the Scandinavian Heruls, when the first candidate died on his way to Illyria. Therefore, the information that Datus the second time left for Illyria followed by his brother and 200 young warriors gives Ellegaard no basis at all for his claim that all the Heruls returned – quite opposite the words implicate that the rest remained. It is even in this way indicated that they were a rather large group in Sweden since they could send these warriors away. His claim does not make any sense.

Many scholars regard like Ellegaard the number of Heruls going to Scandinavia to be very low, but this is not due to the information in the historical sources.

Moreover Ellegaard claimed that the Heruls were not a tribe or a people but a group of warriors formed by the Romans around 300 AD in Castra Batava. This claim stands in contradiction to the rest of my description above supported by most European historians and the sources he referred to himself74, and he forgot both the Western Heruls and Ablasius. However his explanation may cover the much earlier establishment of the Heruls in the 3rd century as mentioned in Chapter 2. In the 5th and 6th century there had to be a people behind the Herulian warrior groups operating in so many places over so many years - as told i.e. Procopius of the Gepides at the court of Justinian: "...Indeed thou hast bestowed upon the Franks and the nation of the Eruli and these Lombards such generous gifts of both cities and lands, O Emperor, that no one could enumerate them. ...".

Ellegaard developed with reference to Wenskus the theory that all migration people in fact were vagrant groups of warriors – including the Heruls. He forgot to distinguish between simple robber bands, military expansion into the neighbour countries, vagrant nomads and a real migration of a people to a new country. First of all Procopius mentioned the Heruls as a numerous superior people with its own king, secondly, he mentioned their different religion (with a "host of gods" which could not be Arian) and curios family habits, and thirdly he mentioned how the Gepides raped their women and stole their cattle. Ammianus mentioned the Heruls among other independent people, and Jordanes called them a nation. The historical evidence of that time is therefore against Ellegaard and apart from this, a group of warriors was not able to exist separately in 200 years – still less to arise in the Roman army with a separate religion. There must have been a people behind, which did not interest other Romans than Procopius. The Heruls were probably a half nomadic people from the border area between the Goths and the nomads at the Russian plains. Some of their young men formed warrior bands serving as mercenaries or acting like robbers. These warrior bands were often mixed up with the people by the written sources, as these groups were everywhere in the front line.

Ellegaard's theory about the Heruls starting as a German warrior group in Castra Batava (Passau at Danube 250 west of Vienna) in the 4th century is based on a hypothetical fellowship with the Bataves in Castra Batava. However the only common stamps between Heruls and Bataves are the reports of mercenaries from Ammianus about campaigns in England and at the Rhine. Probably the Roman use of the two people together was due to their living places in Frisia near the Rhine, where the Bataves were mentioned from around year 0 and the Heruls from 286 AD. As mentioned in note 2.2.5 the historian Ammianus told the Heruls were living "beyond the Rhine", which is maybe a little diffuse, as he also mentioned Celts, but this could never describe the area north of Passau, where it also was difficult to argue why they never should cross the Alps (note 2.2.5). Laterculus Veronensis, mentioning Heruls in northwest and east, is rejected as "corrupt" by Ellegaard without mentioning other reasons than it was contradicting his claim. It is correct, that the Romans as a defence against the barbarians stationed some Batavian cohorts in Castra Batava, who were still mentioned by Eugippius in 480, but contrary hereto Eugippius mentioned the Heruls as plundering barbarians – coming from their kingdom at the northern bank of Danube a little more east in the old Hunnic Empire. Normally the Herulian mercenaries are supposed to be stationed in Concordia near Triest due to grave stones. The Bataves later became a part of the Francs. The information used by Ellegaard to indicate, that the Heruls arose as a group of warriors at Passau, could indicate several other explanations. Therefore there is no reason to choose an explanation which contradicts all other information.

Furthermore the theory depends on a mistake by Jordanes mixing up “Heruli” with some hypothetical “Heluri”, supposed by Ellegaard to operate together with the Goths at the Black Sea in 267AD. Finally the story by Jordanes about Ermaneric defeating Alaric in 350 had to be free fantasy. As many Heruls lived around Jordanes in Italy and Byzantium such a signal mistake of their home only 150 years before is possible in the theory but very unlikely. But even in this case, the Heruls might believe what Jordanes believed.
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Theoretically his claims are possible, but his two last claims are very unlikely – especially as his conclusions do not follow Procopius, although he has proclaimed Procopius to be his only reliable source. Ellegaard went too far in order to provoke and find an alternative to the Scandinavian origin – and unfortunately many Swedish scholars uncritically followed him – due to national pride?.

It has to be emphasized, that Ellegaard – as the linguist he was – regarded the connection between Edulis and Early/Jarl as "very probable" – which in a way even contradicts his own claims too.

1.3.1.4 “Neglected Barbarians” (Steinacher and Sarantis)

As an editor the archaeologist Florin Curta in 2010/2011 published the composite work, “Neglected Barbarians”, which has been rather neglected itself. Today some of the articles can be found free at the internet.

Two chapters are dedicated to the Heruls: Roland Steinacher’s “The Herules. Fragments of a History” and Alexander Sarantis’ “The Justinianic Herules. From Barbarian Allies to Roman Provincials”.

Roland Steinacher

Roland Steinacher, who at that time was a junior scientist – now researcher at the University of Tübingen – wrote the other article in “Neglected Barbarians” about the Heruls. Later in 2017 he has written a book “Rom und die Barbaren”, but regarding the Herulian journey to Scandinavia he has never been able to separate Procopius’ propaganda against the Heruls from the actual information, though he has several times referred to Walther Goffart. First time it was obvious that he believed that all the story was a lie, which was rather self-contradicting as he also referred about the envoy ad from the Heruls in Scandinavia in 548 – which should be a result of the journey, as Steinacher also maintained that their origin was from the Black Sea. In his new book it is difficult to read his own opinion as he is hiding behind a young student who also wants to demonstrate his abilities for conspiracy theories and literary allusions, which are far from the earthbound and reporting style of Procopius. Of course, Procopius painted the Heruls in a disadvantageous light due to their disobedient and unholy manners in order to explain the failure of Bellesarius with the Heruls, and of course Procopius did not want to tell that the Heruls were later expelled north in Scandinavia, as it may have been his opinion that the Goths should go up there too – opposite Jordanes. Procopius did not tell anything about their life in Scandinavia, thus he did not need to mention the expulsion, but as noticed under the chapter with Walther Goffart Procopius could not lie in this case.

Steinacher is also dismissing the Western Heruls as a separate group living at the coasts of the North Sea. His first argument is that the letter from Theodoric to three barbarian kings may have been sent to the Herulian king in Moravia instead of the Western Heruls. This is probably correct, but it is no argument against the Western Heruls as the letter in no way shall be regarded as a proof of their existence – it has just by Goffart and Wolfram earlier been combined with the Western Heruls because they were already regarded to exist. He is also arguing that the statement of Sidonius Apollinaris about their living at the furthest sea may be a possible mistake based on a 200 years old story from Greece – again the same easy way of removing inconvenient sources by declaring them corrupt as used by the linguist Ellegaard. He even has to forget the rest of the arguments Ammianus Marcellinus’ “beyond the Rhine”, Mamartinus’ “ultima loci” and two groups in Laterculus Veronensis (Chapter 1.1.2.2). Among the more general arguments against Steinacher it appears rather unlikely that mercenaries from Moravia should suddenly operate several times as pirates in the Atlantic Ocean. It can be agreed that they were mentioned in that way in the Aegean Sea two hundred years earlier – but as warriors joining a Bosporanian fleet.75

Unfortunately, Steinacher was so haunted by political fear that right wings might misuse the migration history of the Heruls76, when reading my article, that he did not care about my arguments. Maybe he

75 The arguments regarding the Western Heruls are described in Chapter 1.1.2.2.
76 In his first book Steinacher quoted in his note 44 a part of a discussion of the Wicingas of Widsith – found in chapter 3.4.1 of this website – completely out of its context. The purpose was here to explain that the author of Widsith may
therefore missed the arguments regarding Ammianus Marcellinus, Laterculus Veronensis, Mamertinus and Goffart? It is a dangerous way to write history – instead of the truth.

Steinacher claimed in his final section (page 359) of his article that the Heruls did not originate from Scandinavia and did not return. I could agree in that statement, but it is ambiguous, and he is still rather foggy in his statements. After his first article he explained in a letter that he followed Walther Goffart, but that must apply his reservation. Consequently, it is recommended regarding this question just to read “Barbarian Tides” from 2006 by the experienced scholar, Walther Goffart, as he tells the coherent story – together with the comments in the following historical chapters.

Alexander Sarantis
Alexander Sarantis – presented in the book as PhD from Oxford University, now the University of Tübingen – had been asked to write about the Heruls in Illyria serving Justinian. My present article (which he has referred to in his introduction) is in accordance with his article – and he has given a valuable record of the importance of the Herulic armies in East Roman service in the 6th century. He has seen through the attitude of Procopius regarding the Heruls and is concluding that they must have consisted of two different political groups in Singidunum. One group submitting to Justinian, while the other was more pagan than baptised. He is therefore also aware why the envoys from the second group went to Thule to find a new pagan royal candidate – and in that way he has recognized their presence in Scandinavia in the 6th century, which he has also later directly confirmed by letter. The journeys are well attested, and the later disappearance of the Heruls in Thule is explained by the main conclusion of Alexander Sarantis: “The integrated barbarians tend to be neglected barbarians”.

1.3.1.5 Andreas Schwarcz
Andreas Schwarcz, professor at the University of Vienna, wrote in 2005 the essay "Die Heruler an der Donau" describing the history of the Heruls until they left March/Morava. Nearly all the content of that essay is accepted above as the most probable explanations. However, he also wrote in the essay that “at any rate, there is no talk of long-lasting after-effects in Central Europe, and in Northern Europe it falls into the realm of speculation”. He has earlier called the Scandinavian sources literature – but their migration is not a part of that speculation. The conclusion in the article is a little unspecific at that point as it was not the purpose of the essay, but he has earlier emphasized his view in letters confirming that Procopius is reliable regarding the arrival of a group of the royal family of the Heruls and their settlement at "Thule". He has reconfirmed that statement as late as 2018.

In 2005 Andreas Schwarcz accepted the traditional German opinion since Much, that the Heruls had their origin in Scandinavia, but as several others he changed his mind and stated later that the Eastern Heruls probably were an ethnogenesis at the Black Sea.

In his view the settlement in Scandinavia probably became an example of integration. He also suggested that an interpretation of Procopius’ use of the word "para” can be that the Heruls settled among the Gôtes and were integrated as a part of the Gôtes. The general translation of ”para” is "by" – normally in the meaning "beside" or "along" – but here regarded from Constantinople. Schwarcz has argued that Procopius also used "para” describing the settlement of the Heruls at Singidunum, which became a part of the Byzantine Empire. These Heruls, however, settled at the southern bank of Danube at the very border of the Roman Empire, they remained Heruls with their own king, and a part of them separated from the Romans again by going north to the Gepides after nearly 40 years - they were never integrated.

It makes sense that the Heruls were attracted by the Gothic legends to settle in the area of Götaland, but have known the story about the Danes and Heruls told by Jordanes – but without using their original name. But Steinacher has explained his mistake later as a fear that their migration history in that case could be used by right wings – in which I doubt – but I have received his apology. In the next book he did not refer to my website at all – and made the same mistakes.
nothing in the archaeology and myths indicates changes or new settlers in Götaland in that period, and it does not make much sense that these unruly warriors should totally disappear. The Rök Stone is the only written Norse source which may connect the royal family with Götaland - but that was 300 years later after the expansion of the Vendel Culture. But as this also is speculate, it will be discussed later. Andreas Schwarcz is probably right that the mentioning of the Gautoi is no coincidence, and that the Heruls at their arrival intended to settle in or beside the widespread territory of the Götes.

This, however, does not mean that they stayed there. Andreas Schwarcz has also mentioned that Procopius' use of the word "tote" (meaning "of/at that time") about the settlement might indicate a later change of settlement – and in that case they could not have been integrated first time.

According to Andreas Schwarcz, Walther Pohl and other scholars a successful migration could normally only end up as a settlement where the former inhabitants were expelled or as an integration. This is probably correct, but the word “integration” must have very wide limits - from the intruders placing themselves in the top of the society to joining mercenaries accepting of the existing kingship. The lower groups of the society should in all cases be integrated over time. If both royal families survived the future cooperation could be secured by marriage.

Andreas Schwarcz has earlier expressed doubt if they had a king after Hrodolphus, as Origo Genti Longobardorum later told that they had no kingly office after the fallen Hrodolphus. But "Origo" probably referred to the Heruls remaining in the region of the Lombards - not to the Scandinavian Heruls who were not mentioned in this source at all as they had lost any importance for the Lombards. Procopius however told that the trek against north was led by many of royal blood though he did not mention a name of the king. We know that there was a king in the Illyrian group at the time of Justinian, and we know that they still found many of royal blood in Scandinavia, when there were no candidates back in Illyria. This strongly indicates that most of the family went north and it is obvious that a group at such a mission had a leader among them, who had superiority over the royal family - a king. All Procopius' talk about royal blood indicates that the kingly office was important for the Heruls, and it should be so for a people of warriors.

1.3.1.6 Walter Goffart

Walther Goffart was educated at Harvard and for many years a professor at Toronto University before he wrote his last book about the Barbarians as retired at Yale. He is one of the most esteemed historical experts on the barbarians together with Peter Heather and the professors from the University of Vienna. Walther Goffart focussed on Jordanes in his book from 1988 and even in the first part of his book, Barbarian Tides, 2006, he focussed on the role of Jordanes.

According to Goffart Jordanes described a recent event by telling “The Heruls had been driven from their homes by the Dani”. In his opinion no sources had ever mentioned that the Heruls had an origin in Scandinavia. Therefore, the warning from Lauritz Weibull, 1925, regarding the former dating of Jordanes’ expulsion is replaced by scholars like Walther Goffart, Walter Pohl, Andreas Schwarcz and Alvar Ellegaard stating this to be a recent event, whereby the origin of the Heruls should most likely be found near the Black Sea. Nevertheless, only very few Scandinavian scholars want to face this growing international consensus.

Regarding the Western Heruls Walther Goffart concluded that “the evidence divides rather clearly into western and eastern clumps”. He acknowledged the usual arguments for the existence of the Western Heruls, but like Wolfram he also used the letter from Cassiodorus opposite other scholars as Western Herulian. The last reference may be wrong, but that does not change the conclusion that they had existed (Chapter 1.1.2.2).

In 1988 Goffart did not pay much attention to the journey of the Heruls as Jordanes was his topic. That may be the reason why he in 2006 referred the above-mentioned expulsion to the Western Heruls, which has

77 Goffart 1988 note 366 and again Goffart 2006 p. 205
78 Goffart 2006 p. 205
confused his view of the Scandinavian adventure, where he wrote “This arresting but unverifiable narrative is perplexing especially if one mistrust Procopius as an ethnographer. Does this account bear on the question of the eastern and (north)western Heruls?” In the notes he emphasized his scepticism regarding the long narratives about battle and journey (Procopius VI xiv). Walther Goffart was right in his scepticism about the long narratives of Procopius being 40 years old, but his confusion regarding the Western Heruls is discussed in next chapter. Nevertheless, he told in his book in 2006 the headlines of the battle with the Lombards, the journey to Scandinavia, the envoy in 548 and the other main events as a coherent history. The specific problems regarding the presence in Scanza and the Western Heruls will be discussed.

In 1988 Goffart developed theories about the motives of Jordanes and presented also a note with a motive of the Byzantine Procopius. Procopius mentioned that the Heruls passed the Danes without fight and settled near the Goths in order to show that the Goths could be sent back to their “ancestral” homes safely 79 – opposite Jordanes who told about the expulsion as he probably as a Goth was against that idea.

Walther Goffart confirmed under all circumstances with his history three topics:

- The existence of the Western Heruls
- The recent dating of the expulsion by the Danes
- A group of the Herulian dynasty was present in Scandinavia in 548 – but with a sceptical view, which will be addressed in next chapter, and reservations for the narratives

In “Barbarian Tides” Walther Goffart was going through all the main events regarding the Heruls, and except for his referral of the Cassiodorus-letter to the Western Heruls and a Danish expulsion of the Western Heruls, this paper intends to follow his course of events. We shall combine this evaluation with the comments from Andreas Schwarcz in the next chapter 1.3.1.7

1.3.1.7 Discussion of the sources

The two experienced professors in barbarian history above, Andreas Schwarcz in chapter 1.3.1.5 and Walther Goffart in chapter 1.3.1.6, both included in their history of the Heruls a journey of the Heruls to Scandinavia, but especially Goffart was sceptical. They both agreed with the linguists that Jordanes described a recent event, but Goffart suggested that they could be Western Heruls.

Therefore, we do first need to look at Jordanes’ sentence “Dani … Herulos propriis sedibus expulerunt, qui inter omnes Scandiae nations” (the Danes…drove from their homes the Heruli). This is now by linguists regarded as a sentence inserted later in a text of Cassiodorus, which was formed as a list of the people of Scanza – probably with the purpose to show the Gaudi there as Goths. The Heruli appear as a grammatical object – not a subject in the list of Scandinavian people – rather a characterisation of the Danes. The sentence did only have a purpose worth writing it if the reader already knew the Heruls, but Jordanes never mentioned the Western Heruls, who had disappeared 50 years earlier - and neither did Procopius. The object must be the Heruls known by the readers in Constantinople at the time, when Jordanes wrote – not the Western Heruls living far from Scanza far earlier. This point of view is strengthened by the fact that both Procopius and Jordanes told about the same combination Danes/Heruls as we shall see below. Goffart probably got his “perplexing” view of the Heruls in Northern Europe, when he touched the Heruls peripherally in 1988, which created an unnecessary scepticism at this point due to the old narratives.

The Western Heruls had probably disappeared at least 50 years earlier joining their Anglian and Saxon neighbours to England, where they had earlier worked as Roman mercenaries. This may have been due to the rise of the sea level in the Wadden See, where they obviously lived 80. Some of them may have worked in Scandinavia as officers (EriLaR) or mercenaries, and some of them may even have helped the Eastern Heruls to sail to Scandinavia – probably Jordanes and Procopius did never know.

79 Goffart 1988 – which indirectly acknowledges the presence of Heruls in the North.
80 They may have lived in Harlingerland. Opposite the mouth of the Weser the settlement Feddersen Wirde was left around 500 AD. Close to that a grave is found with runes and a typical roman mercenarie officer.
It is obvious that both Procopius and Jordanes got information about Danes and Heruls at the Scandinavian Peninsula from the envoy visiting Thule in 548 AD, as they both within 5 years finished their works in Constantinople including obvious information from the North – Procopius told about this contemporary source and he even mentioned that he spoke with eyewitnesses. The story about the commander of Constantinople, Suartas, who was pushed aside as a Herulian king inside the borders of the empire against the wishes of Justinian must have been spread throughout all the city – it was simply “hot news”. An author could not lie about the story regarding these returning Heruls in those years, if he wanted to be respected by his readers, but as another journalist he could be silent about Bellisarius’ failed Christianisation of the Heruls and blacken them instead. The last problem which probably was caused by different religious groups is supported by Alexander Sarantis who also agreed in the journey. The defeat by the Lombards as such is assumed in several historical sources of the following years and the Lombardian version was later told by Paulus Diaconis. The target of the envoy was obviously the defeated Herulian royal family. The envoy travelled undoubtedly to the pagan Thule/Scanza bringing back Datus81 – no matter how sceptical one can be about the details told by Procopius in his old narratives. Procopius simply had to write what his readers already knew.

Procopius was very determined and specific regarding Thule mentioning even important people who still are recognized there today. Jordanes mentioned the Danes expelling the Heruls in his chapter about the people of Scanza too – he was only interested in Scanza due to the Gothic question – not at all in people from Jutland and Frisia at the North Sea, where the Western Heruls had lived, or elsewhere. Both sources wrote clearly about the Scandinavian Peninsula. If we want to evaluate the certainty of the story, it is highly improbable that Jordanes under those circumstances should mention the combination Heruls/Danes and Procopius should mention exactly the same combination within two years in the same city in the opposite corner of Europe if the people were not identical. The two sources must simply talk about the same two groups of people as information through the same channel. They must be some of the Heruls from Scandinavia – especially in an ancient history with very few facts like here it was nearly impossible for the Danes by a coincidence to interfere with exactly these to different groups with the same name far from each other.

Walther Goffart suggested in 1988 in a note that Procopius wanted to tell that the Goths could go to Thule without problems while Jordanes opposite told that they might risk to be expelled. Thus, Procopius and Jordanes are two contemporary sources both describing with different purpose Heruls in Scandinavia in 548 AD. Considering the quality of the other sources of that time Jordanes and Procopius are giving a sufficient certainty for a Herulian presence in Scandinavia. As solid evidence we must disregard the 40 years old narratives by Procopius, but together with doubts like the “perplexing” Western Heruls all these uncertainties were hiding the important arguments regarding the later key story about the envoy in Thule - known by all potential readers of that time. Whatever the historians believe regarding the narratives of Procopius it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that many members of the defeated royal Herulian family escaping in 509 AD were found present at the Scandinavian Peninsula in 548 AD when the envoy arrived – consequently a journey took place in one way or another 509-548 AD.

It is obvious from a description of England that Procopius did not understand Northern European geography – he was thinking of mutual grouping of people. His row of people, Slavs, barren country, Varni, Dani and Gautoi may sound likely – but this may be a reconstruction too.

It may weaken the evidence if one of the authors told a plain lie – but did they? Procopius told they passed the Danes peacefully when they arrived, while Jordanes told they were expelled from their homes by the Danes. As mentioned Andreas Schwarcz has analysed the Greek text of Procopius regarding the settlement at Thule – which could be later. The conclusion was that Procopius in English wrote: “And one of the most numerous nations there are the Gautoi, and it was at/next to them the incoming Eruli settled at the time of question.” If we follow these texts and their different purpose presented by Walther Goffart, the two authors picked up different episodes suiting their own purpose. Jordanes wrote about a later event where they were driven from their first settlements (must be further away from the Danes), while Procopius wrote about their

81 We have even Scandinavian items in graves where Datus ended at the Gepides
arrival to the first settlements in a way indicating in the text that they had other settlements later, but he did not tell anything between the arrival and 548 AD – and avoided in that way by silence the expulsion without lying. The two explanations fit perfectly together, and they are in that way telling a little about what to be searched for in Scandinavia.

A likely scenario may be that they first passed the Danes along the coasts of the southern isles and Scania with help from their former allied, the Varni in Mecklenburg (River Warne/-münde)\(^\text{82}\). They most likely went ashore at the beaches of Listerland and settled down in Blekinge/Värend or the area around Vätteryd between Danes and Götes. Later they probably began to plunder their neighbours as usual and were at last expelled by the Danes, who therefore became famous for the first time in the history by expelling the frightening Herulian mercenaries. As the Heruls were described in 548, their excuse for the delay of the envoy was that the first candidate died at the Danes. They went back to choose the next candidate and came too late back to Illyria. Consequently, they must have been expelled far against the north.

This was a way to explain the difference in statements and the given information, but we shall still remember that we cannot trust Procopius’ long narratives from 40 years earlier. Except for the few hints above, we do not know what happened in Scandinavia – this must be a question of archaeology.

Sometimes it is claimed that the Heruls were a Scandinavian people all the time and that the envoy just was sent back to the old group, but neither Tacitus nor Ptolemeus ever mentioned Heruls in Scandinavia, and it is obvious that Procopius knew they send for royal members, who they had been separated from in 508 AD. Procopius mentioned a past beyond the Danube and Jordanes an origin at the Black Sea and no of them wrote anything about a return as many believe. No historical sources point at a Scandinavian origin, which is also emphasized by Walther Goffart and RGA.

This rejection does not exclude that the Heruls were followed by some earlier Scandinavian allies of the Huns making the Heruls stronger than their neighbours and explaining the stream of solidi against Scandinavia and the CI1a1 bracteates along the Amber route – and in the end this will also explain why the royal family of the Heruls went to Scandinavia. It was not due to any former origin from Scandinaia.

We do not need such an explanation for the escape. As demonstrated in all chapter 1.2 they had the last century many connections with Scandinavia, when they lived in Moravia at the important routes for trade and mercenaries along the Vistula and the Oder – and they were the pagans who did want to be Christianized by force as their kinsmen going to Illyria. They must have known the possibilities. To use the words of the Ukrainian archaeologist, Igor Gavritchukin [in Khrapunov 2011]: “The way was paved before, when the Herulic group” went to Scanza. They knew what they did, and they did not want to join the expanding Christians.

### 1.3.1.8 The Swedish archaeologists

Von Friesen and Ivar Lindquist suggested before WW2 that the Heruls settled in Lister, Blekinge or Värend, when they “returned” – basically based on the Lister rune stones and the Inglinge stone, but also Birgit Arrhenius and Lotte Hedeager have later pointed out many East Germanic finds from around 500 AD in that area. Even today locals defend that theory\(^\text{83}\).

Today no official Swedish archaeologists are describing theories about the Heruls of Procopius – their arrival is not even mentioned in the ”Vendel Period” from the Historical Museum of Sweden, where they instead mentioned the old mistake about Heruls originating and being expelled from Scandinavia. Since World War II Scandinavian archaeologists are in general sceptical or at least cautious when archaeology is used to explain ethnicity - as this is done now in many other countries combined with other disciplines. Swedish

\(^{82}\) According to Procopius, VIII xxx, they “lived beyond the Ister … as far as to the northern ocean”, which must be north of the Thuringians, where they probably later became a part of the Saxons, when the Slavs moved westwards.

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scholars reject that archaeology gives any reason to believe that an East Germanic people settled in Sweden, but is it investigated? Most of them are arguing that the Vendel Culture was a natural local development by the tribe of Svear (Suiones) influenced 50-70 years later by the Merovings. This is not surprising as already Olof Rudbeck in the 17th century tried to prove that the Uppsala-society was the lost Atlantis from where European culture was spread out. Of course, that is not the attitude of the scholars, but apparently public expectations and politics have paralyzed any discussion of the topic. It is easy to ignore everything about Herulian immigrants and their impact, but then you do not learn what to be aware of – or solutions.

The Heruls are not easy to identify in Southern Europe, where we know that they lived, worked and were buried. First in the last decades a pattern was found in Moravia – just the princely Bluchina grave and some graves at Belgrave were recognized earlier. As they primarily were mercenaries with foreign employers as the Huns and Romans they did not necessarily have craftsmen or their own style – at least we do not know them. The prince in Bluchina was a high ranking mercenary officer of the Germanic group like the Frankish Childeric, but with an East Germanic/Hunnic bow with a type of Hunnic arrows also known fra Scandinavia. If they first settled in Blekinge/Värend and ae. 20 years later went north, they had already lived at the Scandinavian Peninsula in decades and plundered their neighbours. If they later were integrated as mercenaries in one or several societies, they would be a minority with remains difficult to separate from trade and the returning Nordic mercenaries following these Heruls to the Roman Empire – a problem today if you want to find them. Even the Swedish “The Sösdala Horsemen” (2017) has become an example of that problem as it totally avoided to mention the Heruls – except in a separate article of Michel Kazanski / Anna Mastykova – though the co-author, Svante Fischer, had mentioned them in his more international analyses and in this way provided a possible solution (1.2.1.2). Sösdala and Sandby are both dated earlier than the Heruls of Procopius and shall just give a possible explanation of the past in this paper.

We shall see in the following main chapter that the necessary indices are found, but they are ignored. An integration into an existing local people of a small number of immigrants does not appear to be analysed either. Goffart and especially Ellegaard, are referred to support the view that there is no reason to search, but none of these scholars have tried to deny that the Heruls had been present in Sweden. Everything is Swedish until the opposite is proven, and nobody apparently dare to prove such things or just to learn about it. Consequently, the golden eagle from Claestorp in Scania and the Inglinge Stone in Värend have not been examined for 50 years though they are obviously not Swedish. The ErilaR-Wotthen rune stone from Strängnäs in the Mälar Valley was hidden in a museum storage for 50 years as a “fake” in order to avoid inappropriate ideas according to Räa. The “fake-label” is now proved to be wrong regarding the exiting word combination from Strängnäs “.rilar , WodinR”. It is described further in chapter 2.1.1.2.

In 1980 in the book “Vendeltid” from the Historical Museum of Sweden Bertil Almgren told about the helmets in Vendel and Sutton Hoo. According to him they were locally manufactured, but were clearly made as copies of the helmets of the Roman imperial guard in the 5th century – he especially mentioned the famous Herulian guard of the emperor, though he had misunderstood their origin as his colleagues. He probably referred to the soldiers of Odoaker. He emphasized the obvious symbolic importance of these helmets since they were used as parade helmets in the boat graves by the regional leaders (earls?) of Uppland for centuries until the Viking Ages. This tradition must have been a very strong family tradition making these nobles proud of the history of their family – maybe like at the Rökstone – not just a Scandinavian whose grandgrandgrandfather had been in Rome (See 2.1.3.3.2.2). How could the Swedish archaeologists ignore his analyses of the famous helmets without serious arguments against them in a published discussion? It can only be regarded as another example of the suppression of foreign impact mentioned above.

Scholars have tried to argue that there are no similarities between the Nordic power centres and the archaeology at the Danube. However scholars like Jaroslav Tejral, Wilfried Menghin, Igor Gaurithukin, Maxim Levada, Boris Magomedov, Michel Kazanski, Anna Mastykova and others have been able to find and

describe such tracks. One kind of connection has been accepted in Sweden: Impact from France. However this was first after the East Germanic people were annihilated in South Eastern Europe in 567 and the connection was rather Allemannic than Frankish.

Of course, we can always find exceptions. In all fairness against the Swedish archaeologists shall be mentioned the head of the excavations in Finnestorp, Bengt Nordqvist, and to a certain degree, professor Birgit Arrhenius, the late professor Åke Hyenstrand and associated professor Svante Fischer have been aware of the possibility. Åke Hyenstrand's questions about the Heruls in his book "Lejonet, draken och korset" (Hyenstrand 1996) will even be the basis for the next chapter.

1.3.2 Conclusion regarding the history

The archaeology of the 5th century is showing an obvious corporation between the Heruls and the Scandinavian warriors. In this chapter it is only used to explain why the Heruls, who did not want asylum at the East Roman or Gothic Christians, went north with their pagan royal family. The Ukrainian archaeologist, Igor Gavrithukin, wrote: “The way was paved before, when the Herulic group went” against this pagan world from where Jordanes/Cassiodorus told about expensive furs traded to the Romans and splendid horses. They knew where to go – but not due to the old mistake about a Scandinavian origin, which is without any evidence due to international scholars today.

Normally we hear about the defeat 508/9 AD and the journey of the Heruls from 40 years old narratives. However, the historical evidence regarding their settlement is based on reports about their presence in Scandinavia from a returning envoy in 548 AD – published within 5 year in Constantinople by Jordanes and Procopius with opposite motives. At least Procopius had even met some of the Heruls returning from Scandinavia that year. This will lead us to the simple conclusion:

A group of high-ranking Heruls with their family and supporters settled without doubt somewhere at the Scandinavian Peninsula around 510 AD. The open question is just: How many and where?

The international specialists in barbarian history, professor Walther Goffart, Toronto/Yale, and professor Andreas Schwarcz, Vienna, have both due to the contemporary reports about the envoy written about the history of the Heruls, which included that a part of the Herulian dynasty had settled in Scandinavia. Schwarcz has as a specialist in Heruls suggested that they were integrated in a Scandinavian people, but he has left that question open for the archaeologists or speculation in Norse literature. The Oxford/Berlin-historian Alexander Sarantis too has confirmed the settlement and added: “The integrated barbarians tend to be neglected barbarians”.

Could the leading dynasty of this strong and feared people of warriors just disappear in Scandinavia without a trace in archaeology or legends? These are some of the many neglected questions which the following investigations will try to provide answers to.
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2 Their proposed settlements in Scandinavia

2.1 Five questions by Åke Hyenstrand

Scandinavian historians and archaeologists have - with a few exceptions - ignored the arrival of the Heruls. They have only been interested in the claim about their "Scandinavian origin" - that in spite of the fact that only their arrival in the 6th century is confirmed by history. Instead the substantial development in Scandinavian culture in the end of the Migration Ages (especially in Sweden) has been regarded as an internal expansion - in spite of its obviously international character. In modern times first of all Birgit Arrhenius has pointed out the clear East Germanic influences on the first stages of the Vendel Culture, which probably made Åke Hyenstrand ask his five questions about the Heruls in 1996 (both professors in archaeology at the University of Stockholm):

Which connections exist
- Between Heruls and Svear?
- Between Heruls and the god Eric?
- Between Heruls and the powerful elite later called Earls?
- Between Heruls and Boat graves?
- Between Heruls and Runes?

In 2007 Lotte Hedeager (professor of archaeology at the University of Oslo) first time presented her hypothesis that the Huns got a strong influence on Scandinavian cosmology and iconography - which does not conflict with this article. Quite opposite she is confirming that the Scandinavian archaeologists have neglected the strong South East European influence on Scandinavia in those turbulent years, and that a nomadic people would leave very few direct traces. Her Attila-quote about Hunnic rule was exaggerated by Priscus and was criticized, but the basical message of Attila is sufficiant for her claim, and her archaeological arguments are convincing and will also cover the history of their Herulic companions. Jaroslav Tejral and Igor Gavritukhin have pointed at the Heruls as a bearer of East Germanic and Hunnic culture to Scandinavia - which must be seen together with the Scandinavian warriors in the Hunnic armies.

Of course the questions about the Scandinavian hypotheses being asked here may not be fully answered. However, we cannot avoid the Heruls if we want to describe the development in Scandinavia at this time of change towards the famous Vendel Era. Obviously Hyenstrand found that question enevitable, but no official answers have ever been published – the appear to be ignored too. Below the intention is to answer the questions as well as possible - but in another order due to the dependence in the answers. Afterwards the question about the settlement of the Heruls will be answered as an example using the most likely scenario as a final conclusion is not reached.

2.1.1 Heruls and Runes?

2.1.1.1 The first runes

The first inscription in runes, "HarjaR", was from around 160 AD. It was at a comb, probably from Northern Germany, but it was found in a war booty in Viemose at Fyen. Most of the runes in the Roman Iron Ages until 375 AD are concentrated around South Western Norway, Fyen and Eastern Seeland - if we ignore the war booties in Jutland having a foreign origin. Maybe this pattern indicates a connection with the Western part of the culture connecting Himlingoeje at Eastern
The runes in South Eastern Europe are spread where the Eastern Heruls earlier operated, but the finds are so few that the 24 sign Futhark-alphabet was hardly invented here. In a grave from the end of the second century AD in Oevra Stabu, Oppland in Norway a spear point of South Eastern European type was found with the inscription "Raunijar" (ON Reynir). According to most scholars the runes were invented in Denmark or North Western Germany, which could rather point at the Western Heruls. The first North European letters - probably being an early version of the runes - from the first century AD (Bernard Mees in Stoklund 2006) were found in Dithmarschen (Meldorph and Osterroenfeld am Eider), and the first runes from a century later were found at the war booties in Viemose and Thorsberg. But the appearance is too weak to claim a connection.

2.1.1.2 The ErilaR inscriptions and the name Herul

Turned primarily against the south westerly coasts of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 11 runic inscriptions with "ek erilaR" ("I the Eril") are found from around 450-550 AD. Earlier there was no doubt that "erilaR" was identical with "Herul" – and with this kind of spread of the inscriptions it may originally be related to a seaborne people. Later that connection was opposed by dogmatic linguists using the rules of development of the different languages – without addressing the problems with translation to a foreign language. However, they still accepted that Erilar could have been the background for the title "earl"/"jarl".

The rejection of the connection between Herul and ErilaR is according to the Russian runologist, Makaev, done by using wrong premises as the transferral of names between different language groups does not follow the rules of linguistic development. "The missing link" with the the Germanic “H” is found in the old kingdom of the Heruls at the Danube in shape of the place name "Herilungoburg" (832 AD). Furthermore, the name Heroluestuna (1086 AD) – now Harleton – is found in East Anglia near Sutton Hoo confirming that the development Herul – Harle – erl/earl/jarl was possible, though the name itself was Heruwulf. The runic "eril(aR)" was probably a translation of the written Latin “Erul(i)” as the mercenary officers must have known their name in Latin scripture.

An exception from the geographical spread is the fragment of a stone found in a church wall at the southern shore of the Maelar (Strängnäs). The find has been hidden for the public for 50 years as it was expected by the national Swedish antiquarian, Sven Janson, to give the scholars inconvenient ideas - it was instead claimed to be a fake, which is now refuted after several examinations. The reason was the clear and inconvenient text ".rilaR . wodinR". The carving indicates that it could be a little younger than the other inscriptions. The connection between the ErilaR and the Woden cult is obvious - and it also indicates a connection between the Maelar region and Southern Germany, where the other early Woden-inscription was found in Nordendorf.

What was an Erilar? Runologists have often followed the critical linguists and interpreted ErilaR as "rune master", but that is not consistent with the WodinR-inscription and the spread along the coasts with very different techniques. Rather the ErilaR was the man ordering the inscription at an item like the magnate Varin in Rök - using local runemasters. The Heruls were at the time of the inscriptions used in the Western and later the Eastern Roman Empire as experienced generals and mercenaries. It is therefore obvious that the Heruls going north – Eastern or Western Heruls – got
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The name “ErilaR” in 12 runic inscriptions was earlier with certainty interpreted as “Herul”, but later the connection has been rejected by several linguists following dogmatically the Indo-European idea. They were playing with a fictive Protogermanic "*erlaz" (jarl) and criticized the missing "H".

Nevertheless, works like the RGA-lexicon confirm the connection between ErilaR and Herul, and basically the linguistic arguments against the development is a false scenario. The Russian scholar E.A. Makaev has claimed that problems with a development from Roman Herul to Erilar have no value as arguments. The Greek/Latin “Erouloi” and “Eruli” must have been formed in early translations hearing the Germanic name - not the opposite way.

The H still existed in their own Germanic languages. This is confirmed by the German name from 832AD, Herilungoburg and Herilungoweld, at the Danube in the earlier Eastern Herulian territory – Niebelungen Gau. Today we know that the present East Anglian town “Harleton” in 1086 was called “Heroluestuna” in Domesday Book. The name was probably based on the personal name Heruwulf, but this fact is confirming that a development from Herul to Herle is possible and from here the development to West German erl/eorl/earl and the Scandinavian “jarl” is natural. The “j” in jarl is possibly a remain from a sound represented by the Germanic “h". The problem is probably also that some linguists have mixed up the Germanic development of Herul to jarl with the translation from Latin eruli to the runic ErilaR. They are two different developments.

The runic Erilar may be a separate translation from the latin Eru(l)i to the runic Erl(aR) caused by the Western Heruls, who attacked France and Spain as sea warriors in 409, 451 and 459 AD. Living probably in Harlingerland west of the Saxons it was therefore obvious for them to operate in Western Scandinavia too as shown on the map below. The Western Heruls had been in Roman service for centuries as mercenaries – their officers knew how their name was spelled in written Latin (Eruli) while a Herulian scripture did not exist. Eril(aR) may have been the translation to Runic by a Scandinavian rune master based on the Latin writing of their name.

It is difficult to find any good reason why a runologist should choose “erilaR” as a rune master - except that it was easy to use as a short “fabrication stamp” like the earlier war booties. But it was not just used as a stamp – it was a part of longer sentences. The article regarding the find of an “Ek erilaR”-bracteat from Trollhättan by Magnus Källström in Fornvännen 2013 was probably showing the earlier state of the art. It has for a long time been regarded as a consensus among runologists that it is no personal name, but a “title”. He was mentioning the possibilities Heruls, jarl, warrior and rune magician. Many runologists tend to support rune master, but only the late West Swedish inscriptions are mentioning that the Eril did or carved it. When we read the similar sentence at the Rökstone, “Varin fa ϖ”, it must be obvious for us all that the magnate, Varin, did not carve that stone himself. The meaning must be that he ordered a runemaker to carve the text – and maybe told him what to carve.
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The latest stone found in 2018 in Överby south of Rakkestad containing a.o. the word IrilaR is found in the region of the old Raumarike and Ranrike from where Roduluf left his people around 500 AD for the court of Theodoric according to Cassiodorus/Jordanes. It is situated close to the river Glommen – probably near an old cross way. It is dated to the 5th century, but not fully translated. One line is regarded to say “ek iril ar

raskaR runoR”, while two other lines are unreadable. Michael Schulte has in 2019 written an article where he claims that the word raskaR like the stone in By in Buskerud indicates a military context – not a runemaster. The runic “raskaR” is a personal name or refers to a swift man, which in the Roman world was used earlier by authors like Ammianus Marcellinus to characterize the light armed Heruls. Frode Iversen and colleagues have later in 2019 interpreted the eril as an earl or military specialist.

When we look at the spread of the identical expressions “ek erilaR” along all the western and southern coasts in the 5th century and the beginning of the 6th century it is obvious that it was spread by people working along these coastal areas. As the inscriptions are found in very different context, style and media, local rune masters were hardly the reason for that spread along the coasts in different times. The foreign Herulian officers and military advisors may have been known as “the Herul” in the hall of the king or chieftain. Apparently, it became a fashion among them to order the local runemasters to write incantations with their name at weapons, bracteates and stones. Later, when they disappeared as a people, their name, Herul, may have remained as the title, earl/jarl and may have been used by other ethnicities too. In Ireland a transitional version of earl is found as “cërill” in the 9th century.

Nearly all the 12 known “IrilaR”-inscriptions use the formula “Eek erilaR” but except for two of the bracteates they are all very different. The two southern inscriptions, Kragehul and Lindholm, are from 400-550 AD and both contain the 3 repeated letters being found later at stones like Lister and Rök – probably an incantation. The next 3 inscriptions, Väby, Esketorp and Trollhättan, along the coastal areas of Kattegat are all bracteates from 500-550 AD. In the Trollhättian inscription found in 2009 we can also read the name “MarlþéubunR”, which also points at Herul as we will see in the next chapter. Järnsberg is a stone in Kristinehamn at the lake Vånmern dated to the 6th century – probably also this place was accessible for sailors. Bysteinen, Buskerud is a stone near Oslo, which is dated to 550-600, while the basis for the other inscription in the region, Bratsberg, is a fibula dated to 400-500 AD. A fibula may be carved in another place and the late dating of the stone appears to be wrong. The Rosse-inscription near Hardanger is at a stone, dated to 400-500 AD, and Veblungsnes in Møre is another stone dated to 500-550 AD.

The datings of these 11 inscriptions appear to be very uncertain, but as the formula, ek erilaR, appears to have been a fashion, they are probably all carved around 450-550 AD. They do not all need to belong to the Western Heruls as the corporation between the Scandinavian mercenaries and the Huns and later Heruls in the 5th century (chapter 1.2.1.1 and 1.2.1.2) may have attracted Eastern Heruls to the new Scandinavian kingdoms too as the Norwegean chieftain graves along the coasts in the 5th century indicate.

The latest “erilaR”-inscription is the fragment of a stone found in a church wall in Strängnäs at the southern shore of the Lake Mälar 40 kilometres from Uppsala. The find has been hidden for the public for 50 years - claiming it was a fake, which is now refuted after four examinations by laser, X-ray and 3D scanning. According to Sven Janson, the former head of Runverket, it was regarded as a fake because it was very well conserved and he concluded that the inconvenient text ”:rilaR. WodinR" would give the scholars puzzles for years “Sette myror I huvudet” – a typical paternalistic reaction in Sweden. The carving indicates that it could be a little younger than the other ErilaR-inscriptions as similarities with Rök and Sparlösa were found in the

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38 Maybe we know some other Erilar-inscriptions. At Gotland we have the spelling ErlaR and in Norway we also have the inscription ArlingR - probably meaning Erling.

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runes, but the alphabet was still the old Futhark. The inscription proves a connection between the ErilaR and the Woden cult – and it confirms a connection between the Målar region and Upper Danube-region, where the other early runic Woden-inscription was found in Nordendorf – spelling the name “Wodan”. The controversial connection between ErilaR and Odin, though being a fragment, makes it very improbable that the ErilaR was a rune master – it would hardly be accepted – it must have been the position of a jarl or a king.

While the name Harleton is regarded to be derived from Herewulf, the name Harlington is regarded to derive from the Herelingas of Widsith. If we look at the name Herelingas in RGA it is assumed to be related to the Harlungen Twins being hanged by Ermaneric in the old Germanic legends. Herwig Wolfram suggests these twins to be Heruls. Wolfram has as earlier suggested (Götiska Minnen 1992) that the name Herul was derived from the Protogermanic "*harjaZ" (army) - being maybe even in this way connected with the earlier Roman versions of Hirri/Harii. However, Tacitus' Harii are sometimes mentioned as a later misunderstanding by a writer. The name in Himlingoeje, "Hariso", could be derived from this word. Also the Gothic name "Erioulphos" (Blekinge: Hariwulf/Hærulf), mentioned by Eunapius (Fragmenta of Eunapius, Dindorf, Historici Graeci Minores, vol. 1, p. 253), could form a bridge between Greek/Latin "Erul" and Runic "ErilaR".

Other earlier historians claimed that the name Herul was derived from the Gotic "hairus" (sword) where "ai" would be pronounced "ae", but that did not explain the "l". A reader of this website, Richard Paulsson, has suggested, that "hairus" was used together with the diminutive suffix "-ila" as the Heruls were described as swift and lightly armed - which might indicate small swords opposite the heavy Gothic weapons. If we follow his suggestion, we will end at a name being pronounced "Haruila" or "Haerula" following the development from Gothic "magus" to "magula". As the Heruls had no written language it is obvious that a Greek or Roman listening to the Goths and Heruls around 268 AD in pluralise could write that name as "Heruli" or "Eruli". This would be frozen by the Romans in written language - used as the name of the mercenaries, who were primarily Western Heruls in the 4th and 5th centuries.

The Eastern Heruls, who followed the Huns, did not use written language and in their East Germanic word the name would still be "Haerula", which might become the personal name "Herila" used by a "comes" in Rome in 462 AD. Among the Alamanni the name "Herilo" was known. The king in the “wild hunt” is known as King Herla. A lot of speculations exist regarding the name, but there is no consensus. We shall just continue with the traces of the written name in Scandinavia.

2.1.1.3 The Marings and the Rök Stone

From the 5th century two runic inscriptions are known from the Danubian region where the Eastern Heruls were operating. Totally 6 runic inscriptions have been ascribed to the Ostrogoths due to the syllable "s" and words used by Wulfila. Probably also the Heruls spoke Gothic, and at that time the Goths had developed their own alphabet - making it more likely that the runes are Herulic. The Pietrossa Ring mentioned the name Goths, but may have been a gift or written by a Herul. The other find - a buckle in Pannonia opposite the mouth of River March - has the inscription "Marings". According to Maxim Levada buckles by the same artist appear to be spread from Crimea to Normandy – two of them with pentagrams instead of the inscription and one of these at Crimea with an Odin-like head like Finnestorp. Levada regarded Marings to be written by the artist, but "The Sösдалa Horsemen" mentioned a close connection between the Roman workshops and the customers ordering the work - and actually it looks more like graffiti. According to the simple logics of naming the Marings should be the people from Mar, which was the name of later river March according to Tacitus. That region was the kingdom of the Heruls with the later Germanic name Maehren / Slavic Moravia. Both names ment marsh areas like the "Eloi" of Jordanes. The scholars have combined Marings with the Old English poem "Deor" which is telling: "Theodoric held for 30 winters Maeringa Burg". It is agreed that Maeringa Burg must be the stronghold in Ravenna,
where the Heruls and Odoaker were besieged for two years by Theodoric. Accordingly, there is no reason to believe that the name meant "Goths" as many scholars have done without being able to explain the origin of "Mar" in that case. On the contrary Mar- was found again as "MariþeubaR" in 2009 at the latest found ErilaR-inscription - without any reaction from the scholars.

The scholars could have used the name as a key to the interpretation of the Rök Stone in Östergötland, which according to the official reading by Riksantikvarämbetet is mentioning Theodoric as "chief of sea warriors" (which is unknown as a Gothic label) and "first of Marika" – the last being a runic diminutive form af Marings. In the stanza before we find the riddle “who 9 generations ago lost his life with the Hreidgoths, and died at them for his guilt.” The riddle appears to be answered in the next stanza with “Radulf”, which is the same as “Hrodolphus”, the king of the Heruls, who 9 generations before the stone was appointed "weapon son" under the protection of Theodoric and died when he sustained the anger of the Gods - which also Paulus Diaconis wrote 772 AD. Theodoric could in this way be superior chief of two groups – the Western Heruls (who were known as sea warrios and maybe were the Wicinga of Widsith) and the Eastern Heruls (who were probably the Marika). The name combinations correspond in all directions. In the first numbered riddles at the stone Varin simply traced his family back to the weapon son of the Germanic hero, Theodoric, and his family going to Scandinavia. In that way the stone became a traditional memorial for a dead son. The inscription was set up according to the cultural renaissance which a few decades earlier had emerged at the court of Charlemagne.

It is all very simple in that way. The pieces of the puzzle have been wrongly combined - with the result that the scholars nowhere were able to explain names and connections. When the Eastern Heruls arrived to River Mar(us) they may have got the byname Marings/Marika to distinguish them in the West from their kinsmen - the Western Heruls, who in Scandinavia and England may have been known as Wicinga. Both groups may have been known as ErilaR. In Scandinavia names and legends indicate that the Eastern Heruls were also confused with the Huns they had followed earlier.

It has to be mentioned that the interpretation of the Rök Stone is still eagerly discussed among the runologists. Consequently, it can not be used here as a proof of the presence of the Heruls - which should neither be necessary.

It is likely that the remarkable Rök Stone (Rökstenen) in Östergötland was raised by descendants of the royal family of the Heruls around 800 AD. The scholars have worked with the stone for 150 years and nearly all runes and words can now be read - but there is no generally accepted interpretation. The text consisting of 750 runes is very complicated with a lot of information which should be expected to have a meaning since a man used all this effort to write it. A very simple structure in the text, however, is indicated by "sakum" ("I say/tell") followed by who/where/which. Probably the text of the stone consists of riddles and answers as many other texts of the Viking Ages - where the answers here are hidden in the next riddle. The text and the riddles are described in a separate article to which the reader is referred (Rök Stone).

Here it shall only be mentioned that one of the conclusions of that article is that Varin probably regarded his ancestors to derive from the Herulian king Hrodolphus, being weapon son of the Germanic hero, Theodoric the Great. Hrodolphus was known for his mistake provoking the anger of the Gods – mentioned both by Procopius and Paulus Diaconis. This family was according to the text ruling the Marika/Marings, which may as earlier mentioned be a name of the Eastern Heruls - also met as a runic inscription at a Hungarian buckle (1.2.1.1) and in OE Deor. The sea warriors mentioned in the same stanza may be the Western Heruls (Wicingas - 3.4.1)

In the former chapter we met MariþeubaR as an ErilaR. Maybe the prefix Mar indicated that he was an Eastern Herulian jarl. The Eastern Heruls lived in the region of Tacitus’ river Mar (later March/Mähren and
Slavic Morava/Moravia). Now we find MariþeubaR together with ErilaR in Trollhättan, Mariki together with Theodoric in Rök, Marings at the Danube and Maeringaburg together with Theodoric in England, where the final syllables -iki/-ings/-inga are the same runic/Eastgermanic/ON syllable as the final syllable -inge in the name of a people – the people of Mar. Was it their way to separate the Eastern Heruls from the Western Herulian sea warriors who probably were regarded as Wicinga in Widsith?

He also told that his son was lying dead between the family of the "jgOldiga" – a family with Thor as one of the ancestors. The runic "jgOld(i)ga" is normally translated as Ingwaldings with the root "IngvaldR" – and sometimes even as Ynglings, which is unlikely. The most obvious reading is Ingeldings, who could be the family of the Scylding Ingeld being famous all over Europe around 800 AD – a family regarding themselves to be descendants of Odin. The son of Varin may have assisted this family in Denmark in the wars 812-815 AD and died there together with several members of that family.

A runic text of that age will always be uncertain and of course such an interpretation will be criticized - at least by scholars fighting for their own interpretations or who just want to keep their old mysteries alive. As long as the interpretation is not generally accepted the Rök Stone shall not be used as a proof of the presence of the Heruls in Scandinavia – it was not necessary in the first chapter.

Under all circumstances a connection between the Heruls and the family of Varin in Eastern Götaland in the 9th century will not rule out the possibility that the Heruls settled in Uppsala in the 6th century. According to the sagas the royal family in Uppsala spread out later, and this is supported by the contemporary Sparlösa Stone in Western Götaland referring to a father sitting in Uppsala and royal names similar with the names in Ynglingasaga.

It shall also be noticed that the stone was placed in an area from where members of the Götic jarle family and a branch of the royal families 300 years later lived.

### 2.1.1.4 Rune stones in Blekinge

In Blekinge the three rune stones at Lister and the Björketorp-stone have traditionally been combined with the Heruls. They are from the transition period between the 24- and 16-sign futharks, and they are consequently dated to the time 550-700 AD. The connection with the Heruls has primarily been based on the repeated combinations of the names Hariwulf - Hathuwulf - Heruwulf. In that way we do not get the same certainty as on the Rök Stone, but the odd sentence "put staves 3 fff" at the Gummarp Stone – three "staves" we already met in the ErilaR-inscriptions, Kragehul and Lindholmen – will explain a sign at the Rök Stone, which according to the runologists is unexplained though they agree it should be a "þ". The sign is combined by fff and a reverse fff, which can mean "þ" (3,3 in ciphercode). "fff" must be a religious incantation like the word "futhark" where the "f" is the first sign - and will in that way be a common cultic feature between the stones in Blekinge and Rök and the ErilaR-inscriptions. An explanation may be the seaborne Western Heruls. We will analyze their arrival further in the later chapter 2.1.3.2.

It is often claimed (since von Friesen and Ivar Lindqvist) that the rune stones around Listerland in Blekinge (Istaby, Stentoften and Gummarp) with the names "Hariwulf", "Haþuwulf" and "Hæruwulf" were Herulic. That is not possible to prove in this way, but the names of the family members are constructed in the same way as the names at the Rök Stone, "Rahulf", "Hraþulf" and "Rukulf". As earlier mentioned "Hariwulf" was probably the Gothic name in Greek, "Erioulphos". Furthermore the Gummarp-inscription contains 3 "f"s as a possible parallel to the 6 "f"s in line 21 at the Rök Stone as described above – but while the Lister stones are written in the old futhark, the Rök Stone is mostly written in the new futhark as it is younger.
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The stone in Björketorp is located 50 kilometres east of Listerland at the southern end of the long civilisation of Johannishusåsen and Västra Vång from 0-1100 AD. Västra Vång is now regarded as the Iron Age center of Blekinge with fertile land and iron production. At this stone is used exactly the same long incantation formula as the Stentoftten Stone in Listerland and they are both a part of a monument of 3-5 erected stones. No names are mentioned in Björketorp, but they are definitely carved by the same dynasty.

The location of the three rune stones in Listerland is interesting as “lister” according to linguists probably is originating from the Frisian or Lower Saxon word “lista”, which is translated as “edge/beach”. It is probably derived from Latin “litus” meaning beach. It is characteristic when visiting Listerland that the last sand beaches are found here, when travelling from Scania against the east. The Istaby runestone was placed close to the impressive beach, Sandviken – but Istaby itself is given another local explanation though it may sound as Listerby.

The stone in Björketorp is located at the southern end of the 6 kilometres long civilisation. A kilometre against east we find the name Listerby close to a beach and two kilometres against south west we have a coastal village named Sandviken – just like in Lister. The beaches are not sandy any more – maybe due to houses and harbours – but at least Sandviken must have been sandy earlier.

The most likely reason for this spread of the rune stones is that the family from Lister tried to control or serve this rich and old society. Actually, we have also a qualified guess who these people were - carving the rune stones of Lister. As mentioned the Lister-name was Frisian/Low Saxon. The Western Heruls came from the Frisian coasts where they had operated as pirates along the coasts of France and Spain – and probably against north too. They must have been used to operate from sandy beaches, where they could also build and repair their ships. They brought with them their name of beaches, “lista”, and found here a Listerland the only sandy beaches east of the Danes, they were used of.

It has often been a German suggestion that the Heruls in Frisia had their settlements in Harlingerland in East Frisia – as neighbours to the Saxons as indicated by their order in Laterculus Veronensis from the 5th century AD. This is the district mentioned as Herlo-ga(gau) by Adam of Bremen 1070. With the modern name Harleton - “Heroluestuna” - in England derived from the name Herewulf/Harwulf it will be obvious to accept the German suggestion that Harlingerland with the river Harle is derived from Heruls / Herelingas. It may be confirmed by two boat graves – one with Scandinavian/Latin runes from 431 AD belonging to a Roman mercenary chieftain. They are found in Fallward, Wremen at the Weser mouth just opposite Harlingerland. Probably the Heruls lived 286-476 AD in these marsh areas, where we find the small rivers, Harle and Neuharlinger Tief – and maybe also at the other side of the Weser-mouth together with the Chauci. Earlier the Frisian area was bigger than today, but the old Frisians left in the 3rd century the Frisian coasts due to the rise of the sea level which in 400 AD became like today. Tineke Looienga has in 2013 described a development in the 4th century where the more easterly people from the Ems to the Eider (including Harlingerland) under the common name Saxons filtered out the area against west. The Western Heruls were earlier mentioned as attacking the Romans together with the Chauci (probably the Chauci) – both must have become members of the Saxons group. She wrote about these Saxons: “One of the typical features these Anglo-Saxons brought with them was the knowledge of runes. Even if we have very few attestations left, the evidence is clear. Runic objects from the 5th century onwards are found in the eastern and southern parts of England.” The conclusion must be that the Western Heruls knew both runes and boat graves, and they may even have been a part of the people in Fallward, Wremen. The Heruls lived in the swamps of Asov in the 3rd century, and the Eastern Heruls later settled around the swamps of River March – they were used of marshes.

The abovementioned Harleton is situated as a town around 30 kilometres north of Sutton Hoo. Another village of the same name is found in the same distance north west of Sutton Hoo. The boat grave here and the boat graves in Sweden are 150 years later than the Oestfrisian boat graves in Fallward, but Sutton Hoo (from the beginning of the 7th century) is famous for its richness and its archaeological similarities with the boat graves in Uppland, where the boat graves were often placed in towns with the syllable “tuna”. Beowulf is usually regarded as a part of that culture, but is compiled on basis of legends from ao. the Danish royal court of Lejre. The Heruls were unknown as a people at the time of the Domesday Book and their name was so
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unusual that it is difficult to find another explanation of the old name Heroluestuna than the town of the Heruls. Of course, we cannot be 100% sure that the town was called after the Heruls, but under all circumstances the name has documented that a name over 1000 years could change from Heruli to Harle in Western Germanic.

Harle- and Harling-names are especially common in East Anglia – confirming in that way that a part of the Western Heruls may have joined the Anglians, Saxons and Frisians to their old working place as mercenaries in England, when their people was splitted up in the end of the 5th century – as suggested in the earlier chapters.

In Blekinge several scholars have mentioned a Herulian settlement. This was probably the Eastern Heruls arriving from the Varnies in Mecklenburg according to Procopius. Maybe they were assisted by the Varnies and some of the Western Herulian sea warriors – being later mentioned at the Rök Stone. Some of them may have remained in Listerland when the Eastern Heruls went north. They may have raised the Lister Stones using the same incantations as the ErilawR-inscriptions in Kragehul and Lindholmen. They may also have brought the name Lista to Listerland – a name which according to Svensk Etymologiordbog derive from the old Saxon/Frisian word Lista for beach. They came from the sandy beaches of Harlingerland and met the sandy beaches, which are typical for Listerland – opposite for the rest of Blekinge, where we only find a Sandvik near the eastern Listerby, where the last of the group of runestone, Björketorp, is raised. Also at the south-western coast of Norway we find Lista-strendene, which are some of the only sandy beaches in Norway. Nearby we find the famous Snartemo Sword from the 5th century – a sword like those we know from the mercenary-kings in Europe.

Of course the names are very weak as a proof, but they are supported by the find of two boat graves and runes in the neighbourhood which will be explained in chapter 2.1.3.2. Se also www.gedevasen.dk/lister.pdf. In general the hypotheses in this chapter 2.1.1 are based on runes and names, where the names will be weak as a proof, but together they are presenting an interesting picture of that time.

2.1.1.5 Other runes after 509 AD

After the Heruls arrived to Scandinavia the spread of the runes changed. They were now spread in Scandinavia, England, Frisia and north of the upper Danube - correlating the areas where the Eastern and Western Herulian dynasties established after the defeats in Southern Europe. From that time the first runes are also found mentioning Wodin in the Maelar Valley and at the Upper Danube.

From 500 AD to 800 AD the old runic inscriptions with 24 characters were slowly substituted by the 16 sign Futhark - a change which is contemporary with a change in the Scandinavian languages, as some linguists called the 6th century the most stormy century of Nordic language. It should be noticed that the only high concentration of runes outside Scandinavia increased as late as in the 6th and 7th century around the Upper Danube among the Alemanni and Bavarians – probably when these pagan people broke their ties with their Frankish sovereigns in 638 AD and struggled for independence. During the 8th century they were reduced to provinces of Francia again and were baptised90. This was the time when also Style II was found in

90 Early finds of runes are known from Jutland, but their place of origin is unknown, though many scholars point at Southern Scandinavia, where most of the early runes are found. The other high concentration is found in Alemannic and Bavarian territory at the Upper Danube (Primarily in the Swabian Alps), but this isolated group was from 550-800 AD. The 16-sign Futhark of the Vikings was first seen in Scandinavia around 500, and in the next 200 years it totally succeeded the old 24 sign Futhark. The Pietrossa-ring and the runes of Eastern Europe - including the few runes at the Black Sea - are found concentrated near the early Gothic centres. In Germany there is a concentration of runes in the Upper Danubian area, but they are later than the Migration Period. A tribe travelling as a part of the Goths might be the best explanation. Even as the runes are found near the route of the Heruls, there is no clear connection, but the new 16-sign form might have been developed by the Heruls. The history of the runes is too uncertain to be used here, but more about runes can be read at Arilds runes and the links found there.
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Allemania, Lombardia and England and members of the Herulian families ruled in Bavaria and Lombardia. Also the English and Frisian runes belong to that time. We may wonder why the more efficient written languages from the South and from England did not reach Scandinavia for 500 years, but the explanation may be found in Rigsthula, where the runes were described as magic runes controlled by the earls - maybe confirmed by the Sparlösa-stone and the many incantations on weapons. Nevertheless the background for the runes was probably very prosaic as messages carved in wood (Venantius Fortinatus in the 6th century), but we cannot exclude that the pagan Nordic earls did not want to give up the exclusive power provided by a written language - especially as general reading supported the Christian belief.

Under all circumstances a common language, "Danish Tongue", was said to be used in the Viking Ages and the simplification of the runes from 24 to 16 characters may support that.

2.1.1.6 The personal names

Other names from the Herulian history should be noticed too. Ochus is probably a Latinized Hoch (Beowulf/Widsith) or Hauk/Hake. Aordu.s is a Latinized Hord - being maybe derived from the Harudes in Jutland and Norway. This name is probably also found in Procopius’ Herulic names Aruth and Aruphus – being under all circumstances the same name as the runic Haruth at the Rök Stone.

The royal Herulian names Hrodolphus, Alaric and Haruth and the Gothic Theodoric and Eric are all found at the two runestones in Rök and Sparlösa from around 800 AD. These runestones are found in the Götalands, but as Sparlösa refers to their father sitting in Uppsala this does not point at the Götalands as the place of the final Herulian settlement 300 years earlier. Also the Gothic Eríoulphos as Hariwulf in Blekinge and the Herulian Herila as Erilar are as mentioned pointing that way, while the earlier Hariso in Himlingoje and Constanza can only be a relevant connection if it was caused by the Western Heruls. We shall, however, be aware that Germanic names were often based on the same roots.

2.1.1.7 The answer

Based on the arguments above we must conclude that there is no proof that the Heruls invented the runes, but the spread indicates that the Heruls were some of the later users, who spread the runes 500-800 AD.

2.1.2 Heruls and Earls?

2.1.2.1 Niels Lukman and Barði Guðmundsson

The Danish scholar, Niels Lukman, elaborated in 1943 in his doctoral thesis on the theory that the Heruls became earls in the Scandinavian kingdoms. As already mentioned based on the title in chapter 2.1.1.2 he was probably right. He further suggested that their families brought legends from Central and South Eastern Europe to Scandinavia, which is also likely. However he exaggerated and claimed with very thin arguments that all the legendary kings of Denmark were Danubian kings. He wrote in German during the German occupation of Denmark in WW2 leaving no of his theories any future in Denmark. We can forget his Danubian kings, but his basic idea was supported by Elias

The language connected to the runes in Scandinavia demonstrate a development similar to the runes. The 6th century is by Scandinavian linguists called "the stormy century in the history of the Scandinavian languages" introducing the syncope, the vowel mutations and the break. However this also happened in other Germanic languages - somewhere a little earlier (Vemund Skard).
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Wessén, and in 1959 he was also supported by the national Icelandic antiquarian, Barði Guðmundsson, who claimed that the Norse and Herulic legends were transferred to the Icelandic sagas with the East Scandinavian settlers going to Western Iceland. The folklorists claim that legends cannot be remembered for so many years, which is disapproved by the myths at the bracteats. As we are talking about distorted fragments their arguments will only work as a rejection of the sagas as historical sources, and Lotte Hedeager has pointed out the similarity between many of these myths and the archaeology.

Some of the theories of Niels Lukman are discussed in chapter 3.1.3.

2.1.2.2 A likely explanation

Without using the legends as an argument it must be a fact that the East and West Herulian officers and mercenaries lost important sources of income due to the fall of the Roman domination of England, later the fall of the West Roman Empire and Odoaker and at last their own defeat. They had to find work elsewhere. We know that the Western Heruls in the 450'ies AD performed as Vikings along the Spanish and Frankish coasts, but of course the ships could even more likely bring them north. At that time the Scandinavian kingdoms emerged with an obvious market for the experienced Herulic officers as military advisers and army commanders. Those, who did not join the Anglo-Saxons to England in the same role, would hardly leave out that possibility - and neither would the Eastern Heruls who had been officers for the Scandinavian mercenaries in the South. Probably the "ek erilaR" inscriptions shall be regarded as their "carte de visite". This began nearly a century before the Herulian dynasty went North around 510 AD, and they may have been an important player in the change of religion and culture penetrating from South West in the 5th century – first Western Heruls and then some Eastern Heruls and their Scandinavian mercenaries. Their role led as mentioned to the titles "jarl" in Scandinavia and "eorl" in England - and in this way also the well known cultural connection between the courts in East Anglia, Lejre and Uppsala were established until the second Christianisation of the court in East Anglia around 625 AD. An example of such a role model in the old legends could be the legendary Starkad figure - Sterkedius was even the name of an East Germanic officer in Rome. In the Vendel Era in Uppland a more formalized structure of earls was apparently established – maybe symbolized by the ring swords (an earlier Frankish tradition) and the golden rings, as shown above at the helmet plate (die) from Thorslunda.

2.1.2.3 The answer

It is very likely that the title jarl/earl has a background in the Herulian mercenary officers - even without using the linguistic background as an argument. It is the logical explanation - but it is not possible to prove it by history today.

2.1.3 Heruls and Svear?

2.1.3.1 The general development in Scandinavia 400-600 AD

In most of the 5th century Europe was dominated by kings from a uniform aristocracy of horseriding mercenary officers like Childeric, Odoaker and Theodorik using animal style I. When they became Christians and settled in the 5th century the style also changed to the more abstract style II, where the symbolic animals were decomposed. It is impossible to see where the style came from as it was still spread by the same aristocracy from Italy to Scandinavia – just as the Heruls.
Already in the first half of the 5th century the golden bracteates appeared in Southern Scandinavia based on Roman medails. Later most of the sacrifices disappeared from the bogs and the burial customs were changed to flat burials and especially cremations directly in the field - after Hunnic costumes. Together these changes could indicate a change in religion. There are several theories about Odin, who often is regarded to develop from the Roman Mercurius and a celtic god with one eye to a Germanic Wotan/Wothen. However he also has obvious shamanistic characteristics originating from the Huns and Heruls, whom the Scandinavians had joined in the 5th century. The C-bracteate with a warrior’s head at a horse - like the buckle from Finnestorp with Odin and the hoof of a horse at the needle - is interpreted as a shamanistic Odin - half warrior, half horse. Several elements may be added to this shape ending as the god of the warrior elite in Scandinavia together with his Ases - including legends of Attila and a Herulian king. He displaced the old Vanes at the courts - probably in the beginning as a son of the old god of the elements, Thor, if we shall follow the riddles of the Roek Stone.

In the 6th century new greater kingdoms emerged – i.e. the Danes were now mentioned for the first time by Southern historians in 3 cases. The military equipment became more uniform and was more rapidly and contemporary changed. The burial mounds had in a few cases been used in Norway and Högom, but now the big royal mounds were raised in Sweden - with the mounds in Uppsala as the greatest. The burials of the kings were clearly separated from the people. Also Lejre was established in the 6th century as a small copy of Uppsala. Uppaakre, Lejre and Gudme were now the most important centres we know of the Danes. Also the first boat graves appeared in the second part of the 6th century - especially in Uppland, where they are supposed to represent a new structure of vassals or earls. According to the latest archaeology the boat graves are a symbol of the Vendel Culture, where Uppland emerged as the power centre with old Uppsala as the strongest concentration of houses and ceremonial constructions in Scandinaia from the 6th century – but they are also known elsewhere.

In this period of change Europe was also hit by a climatic catastrophe with "the three dark years" 536-538 AD followed by "the disease of Justinian". In those years especially the Scandinavian famine must have weakened the old dynasties connected with the failing fertility gods - being an advantage to new Odinistic warrior dynasties like the Heruls.

Archaeology indicates a connection between the Vendel Culture, the Anglian part of England, Southern Germany and Lombardia - such as identical pictorial motives at the helmetplates, Animal Style II, runes and the name Woden (no runes and Woden-names in Lombardia). That spread is identical with the last places where we heard about Herulic dynasties outside Scandinavia. The spread could indicate dynastic network between these places. Opposite, the military equipment was nearly the same in all the Germanic societies.

The movements and the split-up of the army of the Hunnic Attila and the Germanic migrations to England were followed by significant changes and formations of new people. This has without doubt caused a more diffuse archaeological pattern in Europe in the years after 450 AD – especially in the region where the Heruls had their kingdom. Moreover, the Germanic people along the Roman borders and the mercenaries working closely together in the Roman armies got a more homogeneous character, making it even more difficult to identify the individual people – especially when analysing royal graves as they were also influenced by political marriages. Language, economy, the earlier Iron Curtain and different educational and scholarly traditions may earlier have caused many Scandinavian links to point at the well documented western reference group, the Merovings. The finds in the mound of Childeric in the Belgian Tournai from 482 AD are regarded as a model for the royal equipment n the following generations, but the new empire of the Merovings was first established with the baptism of Clodeweg in 496 AD. Childeric should be regarded as one of the Germanic mercenary-kings – the Roman foederati. The Christian Frankish society became during
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The 6th century a cultural centre, but before the Herulian settlement in Sweden the Heruls had the same characteristics as the other Germanic people following the Huns. As example the finds made in the Czechish Blucina tomb in the former Herulian territory are both similar with and contemporary with the tomb of Childeric. Jaroslav Tejral described in 2012 this pattern and called the Heruls a royal elite leading a people consisting of many ethnicities – with Blucina and Thuran in Moravia as possible royal burials with connections to Scandinavia. He also mentioned Bešěnov in Slovakia and the female graves in Smolin and la Thaya. Furthermore, a group of warrior burials around Vienna as Leopoldau, Sigmundsherberg, Velatice, Držovice – but spread in Central and Eastern Europe from Poland to Bulgaria.

The Western Heruls were close to the Bataves in England in the 4th century, but the Bataves joined the Franks later in the 5th century. We do not know for sure what happened to the Western Heruls but it is obvious that new blocks were formed with the Christian Franks and the people they subdued along the Rhine at one side and at the other side the pagan people ending up in the bigger groups of Frisians, Saxons and Danes. The way the Thuringians, Alemann and Burgundians were treated must have influenced the northern people. They we no friends, but it is obvious that the pagans had to follow and copy their strong enemy in their development of weapons and military organisation.

The Eastern Heruls could not according to Tejral be separated by archaeological characteristics at their known living places in the 5th century, but the East Germanic people did of course have certain other characteristics than the Scandinavians. It is, however, important to realize that the migration of the Heruls of Procopius should not be expected to cause a significant East Germanic impact on Scandinavian archaeology. They were a military force – not a cultural trend setter.

In Denmark the significant votive gifts ceased in the moors, and both in Denmark and Sweden numerous golden treasures from the previous period were deposited in the dry soil - including destructed cultic objects. This may be the background for the invention of some legends of dragons defending golden treasures. Nearly all the gold disappeared except gilded silver and the thin gold foil figures (guldgubber) normally found close to the market places. In 1996 Åke Hyenstrand summarized these general changes in Sweden.

The richness of a society, however, will not necessarily be revealed by the finds in the ground as a Scandinavian society would never waste the imported metals except due to accidents, hiding for enemies, religious reasons or a special need for a manifestation of power.

The Danish archaeologist Morten Axboe has recently suggested that some of the Danish hoards were sacrifices to the gods due to a bad harvest in 536-538, which is the latest date of these hoards (especially the expensive fibulas with bracteates like Kitnæs) [Axboe 2007]. The purpose could also be hiding due to

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91 Article by Jaroslav Tejral in /Stylegar 2014.
92 This supernatural protection is described in e.g. Beowulf.
93 At page 119 in "Lejonet, draken and korset" Hyenstrand wrote that in the Migration Ages - primarily in the 6th century - several important changes took place, which should be regarded in connection with the changes in Europe (he quoted especially Jordanes and Procopius regarding the Heruls):
Changes in the settlements (especially in the Mälar Valley and on Gotland)
Defended workshop areas (especially in the Mälar Valley and Östergötland).
Culmination of Helgö.
Chamber burials.
Burial mounds (a.e. Uppsala and Högom.)
Changes in burial customs.
Boat graves.
Symbols regarding horsemen.
Sacrifices of gold (especially Västergötland).
Golden bracteates.
Iron production.
War booties (Swedish a.e. Finnestorp and Vennebo).
Animal style I & II.
Rune stones.
Burials with horses.
plunderings following the bad harvest, which is supposed to be caused by dust in the air from a volcanic eruption in the Far East, but the combination of fibulas and bracteates is in that case too uniform. Under all circumstances some of the general changes shall be regarded in connection with the famine caused by this event, which would support a war-like people like the Heruls. If the latest dating of the mounds in Uppland [Ljungkvist 2005] is correct this may even explain such a Herulic take-over in Uppsala. The dark years were followed by a plague raging Europe just before 550 AD, but many archaeologists doubt it had any impact in Scandinavia as no signs of the black rats spreading the disease are found in the excavations.

2.1.3.1 Bracteates and gold foil figures

Most of the bracteates are Scandinavian. They were inspired by Roman coins, but in the middle of the 5th century they appeared in South Western Scandinavia with abstract pictures - probably connected with the new Wothan Cult. Standard types of ornamentation cover most of the bracteates being called A- to F-bracteates. According to statistics presented by Mats Malmer [Malmer 1963] especially one type called CIIa1 can be found in South Eastern Europe (12 out of the 23 items in Eastern Europe), but this type is also widespread all over Scandinavia (77 items in 1963) with a rather high concentration in Southern Norway. As the bracteates are of Scandinavian origin and not a usual trading object the flow has probably followed Scandinavian warriors assisting Huns and Heruls in South Eastern Europe. Because of the spread we cannot tell from where in Scandinavia these bracteates and their carriers origined. If we regard the similar CIIa2 bracteates a 3-band strap work used at some of these bracteates and at spear shafts in Kragehul and Nydam was also found in the Czekish Zhuran-mound (Chapter 5.4) indicating maybe a Scandinavian connection. These bracteates were found in Eastern Scania, Bornholm and Oeland around the Hanoe Bay.

The motive at the C-bracteates is by some scholars [latest Jensen 2004] regarded to be a picture of a shamanistic Odin leaving his body (contradicted by a human foot at some bracteates) while other scholars interpret it as the story about Odin and the horse of Balder (The Merseburg charm) [Axboe 2007]. The A bracteate shows a head like an emperor and B shows the head at the C-bracteates. Also the D-bracteats could be a symbolic picture of Odin at a shamanistic stage (animals and a few human parts (the ear)) - just like it was described by Snorri in Ynglingasaga. The two most obvious motives show Tyr and Balder being disabled and killed - their exit as ruling gods. It is remarkable that these myths could be told 700 years later without a written language, but we should also notice, that these are the only known myths about these gods losing their importance due to these stories. No of the gods being important at the late stage are recognised at bracteates and guldgubber except maybe Odin and Balders horse. Their stories may have been currently changed. These bracteates may be the first indication of a change of the religion - probably the presentation of the West Germanic Woden as a Norse Odin.

Later, when the stream of gold ceased, the bracteates were substituted by the small gold foil figures (guldgubber) also wearing stamped religious motives, which have not been interpreted.

Lotte Hedeager (2011 p. 203/204) has mentioned that the persons at the helmet plates and the gold foil figures wear ceremonial dress similar to the Caucasian caftans of the 7th century. Also the short belted tunic, which was introduced in Scandinavia in the 5th and early 6th century, was the traditional garment of the steppe nomads (short or long). Later the caftan has been ascribed to direct Asiatic influence in Scandinavia (Mannering 2006) just like the military organisation towards eastern steppe cultures.

2.1.3.2 The place of arrival – Blekinge/Värend?

As mentioned the Eastern Heruls arrived to the Scandinavian Peninsula – the island Thule – from the Varni. According to Procopius they passed the Danes without fight and crossed the sea, but we shall be careful with older interpretations of such descriptions. We shall probably notice the word “passed” as it makes no sense that they should cross the Danish belts three times – it was too risky. They had their allied, the Varnies, and their kinsmen, the Western Heruls, who could assist them by passing the Danes sailing directly to Blekinge. We cannot trust Procopius’ order of the Danes and
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the sea as he had a very limited geographical knowledge about Northern Europe – he just knew the
order of the people they passed. The text could imply that they simply passed the Danes by boat on
their way to Blekinge.

First of all the connection between the incantations at two southern ErilaR-inscriptions, the
Blekinge rune stones in Lister and Rök was earlier mentioned – and at the last the name Sea
Warriors (Wicinga) was mentioned together with the Marika. Also the Frisian/Saxon name Lista for
beach, which is characteristic for Lister, may indicate that the Western Heruls were involved. There
are, however, some other indices supporting that. In 1993 two boat graves were found in Fallward at
the eastern side of the Weser Mouth – just opposite Harlingerland. The graves were 2 kilometres
from the famous settlement, Feddersen Wierde, which was left around 500 AD. The most famous
boat grave dates to 431 AD due to dendrology. In the grave a chieftain was found with a belt
belonging to a roman mercenary officer and a spatha – a colleague to the Western Heruls – or
simply a Western Herul. Also a chair and a footstool (schamel) made of wood were found – the last
containing a short runic inscription in usual North Germanic runes. We do not know if he was a
Herul, but the Heruls were apparently living in the area around the mouth of the Weser – regarded
as a part of the Saxons migrating to England in the 5th century. This may explain the connection
between Sutton Hoo and Scandinavia. Under all circumstances the Western Heruls knew in this way
the customs with graves and runes, which we also find in Lister and Augerum – though these finds
are separated with 50-150 years. As the female boat grave in Augerum was excavated in the 19th
century it is difficult to compare with the new German boat grave, but Augerum was one of the first
boat graves in Scandinavia together with Uppland since the boat graves at Bornholm in the Roman
Iron Ages several hundred years earlier. Consequently the six separate indices support that some
western Heruls joined the Eastern Heruls at the transfer to the Scandinavian Peninsula and the first
interim settlement in Blekinge for less than 38 years.

Both Birgit Arrhenius and Lotte Hedeager and now also “The Sösdala Horsemen” have described a
society around Vätteryd which must have been well known by the Herulian dynasty, but there are
only few signs of a new development after 500 AD and they were probably now Scandinavians
being accepted by the Danes. However already von Friesen and Ivar Lindqvist pointed out the
neighbouring region, Lister and Värend, as the settlement of the Heruls - first of all due to the rune
stones in Lister and the boat grave in Augerum. The boat grave is far more easterly than the
runestones, and the runestones are dated 550-700 AD – after the Heruls were expelled. This has
weakened their arguments – especially as they referred to the Eastern Heruls. More important as a
track of the Eastern Heruls is probably the unusual globe stone on Inlingehoeg at Thorsjö, as the
ornamentation appear as a combination of the East Germanic fibulas, the bracteates and lilies. A
similar stone is found in a mound beside the chieftain in the Högom-mound with the East Germanic
tracks – without ornamentation. The way to cut the hard stone was hardly done by Scandinavians as
no similar work is known at that time in Scandinavia (the Gotlandic stones were of another
hardness). Close to Inlingehoeg the legendary Blotberg (blot=sacrifice) is found with 12 mounds
from the Iron Ages at the small location "Odensjö".

It is likely that the Heruls had a temporary settlement in Blekinge/Värend, but as they were no
farmers they had no chance to live there - except if they began looting and tributing the Danes in
Scania and the Götes. This may be the reason why the Sjörup Style was found as war booties in
Finnestorp, and the Danes formed a stronger alliance expelling the Heruls – which made them
known for the first time in the South. Such an event is possibly even reflected in Beowulf (Eorlas),
Widsith (Wicinga) and Saxo (Huns) – which will be elaborated in chapter 3. The names, people and
kings were mixed up so many years later when the Heruls had disappeared as integrated, but it is
possible to explain them as the Heruls. These stories shall not be regarded as history, but the reason
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why these Scandinavian archaeological tracks and legends are found around Sutton Hoo in East Anglia is probably explained by the Western Heruls as the connection.

Jordanes told about the expulsion, and Procopius indicated that their settlement at the Gauts (seen from Constantinople) was only their first settlement. According to Procopius we shall look for their next settlement far north of the Danes where the development indicates the arrival of such a strong people in the middle of the 6th century.

The Lister stones may indicate that some of the Western Herulian sailors preferred not to leave the coast and were allowed to settle more permanently at Lister between the Danes and the society in Västra Vång – maybe due to a marriage treaty or a job as mercenaries/earls.

2.1.3.2.1 The arrival of the Heruls

Procopius told that the Heruls peacefully passed the Danes around 512 AD, but Jordanes told that the Heruls were expelled – which must have been a later event. As earlier mentioned the authors had different purpose – Procopius wanted the Goths to go to Scandinavia two, while Jordanes wanted them to stay (Goffart). In the meantime the Heruls settled near the Gauts as Procopius mentioned their first settlement in that way. As they were later driven away by the Danes, they probably settled between the Gauts and the Danes in Blekinge/Värend as told by the archaeologists Ivar Lindquist and Otto von Friesen. The expulsion must have taken place before 548 AD as the Heruls according to Procopius found their royal candidates far north of the Danes.

The Lister stones cannot be carved by the arriving Heruls as they are dated later. At that time most of the Heruls were driven north by the Danes. However, some of the Heruls may have remained in Blekinge – most likely some of the seaborne Western Heruls if they had assisted in the transfer from the Varnies to the Scandinavian Peninsula. They had no interest in leaving the coast and as mentioned in chapter the tracks in Blekinge point at these Heruls.

Strategic marriages were known from Southern Europe, but such marriages probably also took place between the Herulian dynasty and the Scandinavian dynasties – the Erilar-inscriptions indicate that there already existed relations between the people. A legend by Saxo points at such an arrangement between Frode and the Huns, and the linguist Elias Wessén has suggested that the royal Danish name Halfdan may have been a child between a Danish king and a Herulian princess – due to the name. Some of the Heruls may therefore have preferred to stay in Blekinge and were accepted by the Danes.

If we read Widsith and Beowulf - written maybe centuries later - we will also read how the Danish kings expelled the Wicingas and Eorlas exactly as Jordanes told about the Heruls. That event was probably famous all over Europe and the scalds may even have known the telling by Jordanes about it as they all tell about an unusual expulsion – not a victory. The Heruls, however, had at the time of these Anglo Saxon works disappeared as integrated in one or several Scandinavian people. Their name had been changed to the title jarl/earl instead. That will explain the name Eorlas of Beowulf, but not the Wicingas of Widsith – written before the Vikings were known in Scandinavia. The English people who wrote Widsith knew the Western Heruls, who had operated in the Channel and England – if they distinguished between the two groups at all. In the 5th century the Western Heruls may have had the nickname Vikings in England – a word which still existed, when the Heruls disappeared. The word was later used about these and similar people in Scandinavia.

94 Modern investigations regarding the word Wikinga/Vikings point at the verb “vikja” (to turn) in the meaning “one shift of oarsmen changing places with another at the oars” – maybe used about rowing boats on long trips. Bertil Daggfeldt 1983 - Anatoly Liebermann 2009. The Western Heruls were known as pirates and long distance rowers in the Atlantic Ocean in the 5th century – and probably known as such by Widsith.
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At the Rök Stone we find the riddle about Theodoric and his weapon son, the Herulian king Hrodolphus. Hrodolphus died according to the text at the Goths as chief of sea warriors and of Mariki. The first group were probably the Western Heruls – called Vikings by Widsith – and Mariki/Mährings were probably the people from the kingdom in Mähren – the Eastern Heruls. Theodorik was probably at that time regarded as the superior chief of both groups and in this way we are able to understand all the riddle.

We shall notice that in 547-8 AD the royal Herulian candidate fell sick and died at the Danes at his way back to Illyria. That incident delayed the envoy so much that Justinian according to Procopius appointed his own candidate instead. Their finally settlement must have been located far north of the Danes. At that time, they could have passed Denmark by boat, but obviously they were not enemies anymore. We may also wonder, why the Heruls, who were professional soldiers, just left Blekinge – apparently even leaving some Heruls in Blekinge. Had the Herulian dynasty found a more important target than Värend? How could they live as mercenaries in Värend? That answer we will investigate later.

Except Procopius and Jordanes these sources can not be regarded as historical sources as they are written later, but we have explained several names and words, which we have never been able to understand before, as everything suddenly appear to be connected. These statements are supporting the historical sources, but we cannot regard the rest as history – just as a likely explanation.

Another event took place in these years. The "dark sun" 536-538 may have weakened many Nordic societies at that time – probably causing famine and illness. Several contemporary hoards with fibulas and bracteates indicate a threat. The archaeology shows dramatical archaeologic changes in the following time. This would support the progress af a warlike people as the Heruls.

We do not observe remains of wars at that time except for the short attack on the fortress of Sandby and the war booties in Finnestorp, which may be caused by Herulian attacks, but we shall remember that most Heruls probably preferred claim of tribute and the job as mercenaries as in Moravia.

2.1.3.2.2 Traces of the arrival

What precisely happened in the 5th century will be assumptions as this is not explained by the historical sources, but it is obvious that the Heruls from the kingdom in Moravia were under all circumstances fully aware of the situation in Scandinavia, when their royal family joined by a part of the people in 512 AD or three years earlier set out for Sweden after their great defeat. If we follow the explanation above the migration mentioned by Procopius was only the culmination of a long development building up a network - originally for trade purposes.

Procopius did only describe the route by mentioning the most important people they passed – except for the final goal Thule. As they passed the Varni (who later became Saxons) and the Danes they probably followed a more westerly route than the Lower Oder - surprised by many groups of the expanding Slavs in the East. It is likely that they established contact with some of the people, whom Cassiodorus before 507 AD tried to gather in an alliance against the Francs – Heruls, Thuringians and Varni. The passage of the Varni was even mentioned by Procopius. He emphasized the surprisingly peaceful passage of the Danes, which indicates that they did not thread Danish territory directly when they passed - also indicating that the hostilities mentioned by Jordanes, but not by Procopius, took place at another time. The later remark of Procopius appearing independent of the earlier description of geographical route "it was at/beside the Gärts the arriving Eruli settled at that time" does not tell if they settled beside or among the Götés. However "at that time" indicates that they later moved away from the Götés and if this is combined with a peaceful arrival and Jordanes' expulsion by the Danes, the Heruls must have settled a first time between these two people.

The place for the first settlement was probably somewhere in the area between Ringsjön, Bolmen, Växjö and Augerum. Most likely they first settled in open areas of the forests north of the plains of Scania, which
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would not upset the Danes. At the northern side of the forests they had the Götes. The Sjörup finds may origin from these new Heruls, and so could Ingingehoej, the boat grave in Augerum, the Lister-stones, the necklace in Ravlund, the Bosjö-eagle - just to mention some possibilities in the surroundings of Sösdala pointing at East Germanic connections around 500 AD. This is the same region where the bracteates with the Zuran-pattern were found and the Sokolnice-style was spread.

The most impressive mound in southern Sweden is Inginge Hoeg in Värend with the remarkable "globe"-stone at the top. These stones are not found elsewhere with ornaments of that character, but a similar stone was as mentioned buried in one of the other mounds in Högom without ornamentation. Birger Nermann regarded the stone as a bronze age stone because of the ornaments, but similar ornaments are found at the bracteates and the style earlier mentioned as Sjörup Style connected with South Eastern Europe along the Danube. It is known from the curve headed fibulas - like the Scandinavian Dalshoej - and the Anastasius dish from Sutton Hoo.

In the centre of the stone there is a figure with four corners and around this a circle with "beams" - maybe symbolizing the four corners of the world and the sun. In the next circle 19 lilies are found – unknown in Scandinavia at that time but common in Ravenna - and at the side of the stone the 12 above mentioned spirals are placed. The mound is not excavated, but it is by other archaeologists dated around 500 AD - as are some of the graves around. Sune Lindquist regarded the mound to belong to the Uppsala-dynasty. West of Ingingehoeg an Odensjö is situated and here a cliff can be found called "Blotterget" (Offering Mountain) with 12 mounds from the younger Iron Ages on the top (unexcavated). An old legend about women defeating the Danes while their husbands were in warfare elsewhere is related to this cliff (a similar Czechish legend about the female warrior Zarka is known from the 6th century).

As the Heruls "remained there on the island" they settled next time further away from the Danes and the way it is expressed probably also apart from the Götes at Thule - pointing north of the Götes with Viken, the Mälar Valley or Högom as the most likely possibilities. This northern position makes sense as Procopius through the envoy met people who were able to give a precise description of the Saami and of the midnight sun, which begins 700 kilometres north of Uppsala and which was not described so detailed by any other author though the midnight sun was already known by Pytheas 300 years BC. Also the delay of the envoy due to the return to the Heruls (because of the death of the first candidate at the Danes) indicates such a position far north of the Danes.

Procopius' focusing on the Gauts might indicate that these Gauts were

95 Local Swedish historians are talking about Herulian finds consisting of inheritance rules, runic inscriptions and coins in Värend and Listerland (Småland/Blekinge). These theories were earlier presented by Ivar Lindquist and Otto von Friesen. In Värend women had the same rights as men in the inheritance rule like in Roman rules until the 13th century. Värend means place with many men (earlier called Virdar), while Väksjö once was Vesjoe probably deriving from "vi" (holy place) and the big lake is called "Helgasnö" with the island "Helgö" where "helg" is "holy" too. In the neighbourhood we can find these names and Inges Hög, Ingelstad at Torsjö, Odensjö, Odenlanda, Borlanda, Salen, Skäggelösa, Rinkaby, Tunatorp, Hovtorp, Huseby, Lidhem, Vikensved, Vikensjö and Dansjö with Bråvalla. Also an unrecorded boat grave should be found in Värend long time ago. The only strong indications of Heruls in this area are however the finds in Sösdala, but dated before 450 AD they must be forerunners long time before the Heruls of Procopius. Snorri mentioned a stop of Odin in Odensey, which he regarded as Odense, but the old legend he used may as well have mentioned a place like Odensjö in Värend. Hyenstrand has mentioned Hovshage - a northern suburb to Växjö - as the place with most finds in the area (Hyenstrand 1996, page 28).
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in some way involved as a target of the migration. Assuming there was a religious community between the Gauts and the Goths until the Arianism, as proposed by Ingemar Nordgreen, it is likely that the Heruls, who had followed the pagan Ostrogoths until 453 AD were attracted to settle in their neighbourhood after all their problems with the Christian Germanic tribes. The Western Gauts on their side, however, appear to have had troubles already with the East Germanic "forerunners" (Finnestorp and Vennebo). When the Heruls took up their old way of living (plundering and tribute) - which they had to do when living in Smaaland/Blekinge - they provoked the Danes to expel them, and the Gauts would probably support the Danes. Therefore the next choice of the Heruls most likely was the Mälar Valley with its increasing richness due to the trade routes with the Helgoe-centre and the new methods of metal-winning in Bergslagen - especially if the northern outpost of the same trade route in Högom was already ruled by their allies. From Uppland they could control the trade with furs described as valuable by Jordanes. This position was similar to Moravia.

In Smaaland they do not appear to have been integrated since they were expelled and they may therefore have expelled or subdued a smaller people there unless they found barren country. In the Mälar Valley they obviously found a rather peaceful solution - as example by offering the Svear military assistance as Gilda's description (545 AD) of the Saxons and the Britains in 450 AD (later Bede's Hengist-tales) - with unclear archaeological consequences. When this second settlement took place we do not know, but as mentioned in Chapter 6.4 it probably took place in the decades after 509 AD. This is confirmed by the missing significant archaeological signs of a settlement south of the Götes.

The only place found by the archaeologists north of the Danes at Thule, where a society arose of the kind we should expect being influenced by the Heruls, was at Upssala. Gudhjem and Gotland do not fit his description of Thule, which obviously was the Scandinavian Peninsula north of the Danes. Högom was probably too far away and the culture of the society began and ended up too early. The dating and the character indicates that the mounds in Upssala could be connected with the first members of the royal family of the Heruls in Scandinavia, and just this place was by Adam of Bremen described as the religious centre of the Odin Cult around 1000AD. Some may wonder why the boat graves are also found in Vendel, Valsgärde and the "-tuna"-villages, but probably Upssala became the holy temple area for superior priest kings, while the local vassals or rulers of Svealand (jarls) lived at strategic and convenient places in the neighbourhood - maybe Tuna-villages. In the beginning these earls may have been a part of the royal family in Upssala, but the very few DNA-tests do not indicate that the position as earl in a certain district was inherited.

2.1.3.3 The final settlement?

According to the historical sources a final settlement shall be found at the Scandinavian Peninsula and we shall according to Procopius' explanation about the Herulian delegation look for a place far north of the Danes. The place shall fulfil three conditions:
1. It shall be a place generating values which could be picked up by the Heruls, who according to Procopius had lived of warfare as mercenaries, looting and payment for protection.
2. It shall be a place where changes in the 6th century showed strong international influence.
3. We shall find there the necessary traces of a nomadic people of mercenaries - but as in Southern Europe these traces will be very few.

2.1.3.3.1 Norway, Götaland and the islands

The Norwegian west coast could have been a target due to the connections in the 5th century, but these small isolated societies flourished already in the 5th century and no substantial expansion is realised in the beginning of the 6th century pointing at an arrival of the Herulian dynasty.

Also Vestergötland flourished already in the 5th century with rich golden treasures and the famous golden neck rings. The finds of war booties in the bogs are indicating that the local people there were able to keep out the intruders, because these people at the Swedish plains according to
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Jordanes were used of a pressure on their borders. Just like the Gudme area they had contacts with the Black Sea in the beginning of the Migration Ages. The later sacrifices in Finnestorp have a clear Herulic / East Germanic touch, but that may be indirectly as war booties from loosing intruders from the society around Sösdala. Still the culture in the area appears to be local – but some of the young men may have been warriors joining the Huns.

A few scholars do now attempt to date the The Sparlösa Stone in the 6th century, but that interpretation does hardly work as both the runic text, the house and the ship indicate a dating in the late 8th century. Therefore, the stone cannot be used as a proof of an early dating of a connection.

Neither in Halland nor Östergötland we know centres indicating the arrival of such a people. Even though the Rök Stone is found there it may be caused by a branch of the royal family moving there some time in the following 300 years - and the text of the Sparlösa Stone even indicate an earlier movement from Uppsala.

At Öland the impressing and unusual strongholds of stone were erected, but that too was in the 5th century and we have already mentioned the background in chapter 1.2. With a stream of golden solidi to the workshops from the warriors joining the Huns and later the East Germanic people the small island was a target of attacks from neighbours and pirates. The society in Sandby appear to be foreigners – maybe like the people in Vätteryd – which apparently forced the people to protect themselves with fortifications around the villages and workshops with gold. This unruly picture lasted most of the 5th century and does not indicate the expected development in the 6th century – and Procopius wrote Thule. We are not yet able to explain the spectacular attack on Sandby, but it took place 30 years before the Heruls of Procopius arrived. It may be a punitive attack by the neighbours on a society of former foreign warriors trying to establish control over the production.

All the places mentioned above may have received Herulian mercenaries. This may be one of the reasons behind the uniform military development in the 6th century.

The reasons for leaving out Norway and Götaland are already mentioned. The elite centres in Norway 200-550 AD are especially found in Rogaland with the many C-bracteats, but there were no solidi and the golden hoards were earlier.96 The richness and the golden bracteates could indicate a connection with the South East Scandinavian warriors joining the Huns, but the indication is weak and there was no obvious expansion in the beginning of the 6th century, which could be caused by the Heruls of Procopius. In some Norwegian firths DNA-traces might indicate Eastgermanic people, but they may be caused by Heruls in the 5th century og a smaller group of the Heruls of Procopius travelling that way as there are no signs similar with Uppsala.

Neither in Götaland there are any traces of expansion in the beginning of the 6th century – the richness of gold existed earlier – maybe caused by warriors going south. An exception is Finnestorp and Vännebo, but these finds are war booties telling about attackers, who might be Heruls of Procopius attacking from Värendor Sösdala. They did not settle. (See chapter 1.2.1.1 and 1.2.1.6)

Öland, flourishing like Gotland in the previous period, was characterised by a big threat in the 5th century, where the people concentrated inside big stone walls living there until the 7th century.97 These castles

96 Håkon Reirsen 2017, Elite milieus and centres in western Norway 200-550 AD
97 Coins and fibulas in a/o Eketorpi indicats a directly or indirectly connection to the Ostrogoths [The museum at Eketorp] – or theoretically to the Heruls. Ulf Näsman has demonstrated (Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society) the ring walls to be spread in eleven districts all over the island of Öland with the farmers cottages inside the walls. This indicates, that the walls are ideas of local earlier mercenaries from the island and not caused by an occupying army. Earlier scholars (a.o. Werner) claim that Öland was attacked 480-500 causing a lot of hoards with solidi. As a reaction against a possible overinterpretation this is rejected by modern scholars (a.o. Herschend).
appear to be constructed by people having been south in Europe. As mentioned the stream of solidi ceased earlier at Öland than at the other marketplaces in the Baltic Sea - around 476 AD – where we also have the massacre on intruders in Sandby, who may have been Heruls, but again earlier than the Heruls of Procopius. Öland must have been situated too close to people at the Scandinavian Peninsula plundering their houses and spoiling their trade.

While Öland appear to be weakened around 470 AD - as earlier mentioned - Gotland still received solidi and the change is primarily indicated in the end of the 6th century, when Uppland and Gotland got more finds in common. Gutesaga from Gotland indicates that the people of Gotland always were independent, but that they once made a peace treaty with the kings of Svealand. This may be a political manifestation like the manipulations of Saxo, but according to Karen Høilund such a development is probable in the end of the 6th century.

At Bornholm around Gudhjem and Svanneke a new wealthy kingdom was established around 500 AD. Later the inspiration apparently became Merovingian, but until then there was also an obvious connection to the East Germanic people living at the wells of the River Oder and Vistula. Like a nomadic people these chieftains around Gudhjem primarily kept cattle opposite the agriculturists dominating the island until then. 10 kilometres against south the settlement Sorte Muld with the famous gold foil figures flourished as a market place. Also hill forts are found at Bornholm – one of them in the hills behind Gudhjem – and the first Scandinavian boat graves from the Roman Iron Ages are excavated at Slusegaard at the south coast of the island. The archaeologists have recognised many similarities between Bornholm and the Vendel-culture, and also the similarity with the names around Uppsala should be noticed: Gudhjem (Gudium 1547), which means “Home/place of the Gods” at “Salene Bay” north of “Saltuna”. In every second of the towns with boat graves in the Vendel-culture “tuna” or “sala” is a part of the name, but no boat graves or helmets are found until now though the people at Bornholm were some of the first to use boat graves at an earlier stage. Bornholm was still a separate kingdom in 899 according to Wulfstan. Just north of Bornholm in Augerum in Blekinge the oldest boat grave was found.

2.1.3.3.2 The Mälar Valley

It is obvious that the Maelar region fulfilled the two first conditions above. It was placed near the trade route from north (Hoegom) mentioned by Jordanes - the same route the Heruls had controlled in Moravia - and the iron in Bergslagen was another source of growing wealth. Furthermore the changing level of the sea caused an increase of arable land in the region for cattle and agriculture, while other societies had exhausted their land. The mounds and especially the content of the boat graves indicate a new structure of the society. Here we find an expansion which the Heruls could make use of according to their historical record and we are in the Vendel Culture able to find the changes they would cause after having already lived a generation in Sweden.

The helm from Vendel XIV Shield boss from Vendel XIV Uppsala and the Vendel Culture was archaeologically characterized as the power center of the Scandinavian Peninsula from the 6th century - a culture being initially strongly influenced by an East Germanic culture with contact to the regions where the Herulian dynasties still appeared to live. Here Birgit Arrhenius emphasized especially the shield boss, a buckle and a mount from the Vendel boat grave XIV, which is regarded to be the first of the boat graves. Identical items are found at River Tizsa in Romenia, to where Datius escaped to the Gepides. The shield boss is of a type which is typical for Vendel in those years. Another identical shield boss is found in a tomb at the Rhine containing also items of Gepidic character. The time connections may indicate that it belonged to the Datius-group where the survivors probably may have escaped towards the north west after the destruction of the Gepides and the Illyrian Heruls in 565 AD. Vendel XIV also contained one of the famous helmets for parades. They were made in Scandinavia but looked like Roman cavalry helmets from the 5th century - belonging to people who played on and had a strong veneration for a past as Roman
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The Ottars Mound at Vendel - click The content and character of the Ottars' Mound in Vendel and maybe the so-called Sami-DNA in a boat grave may indicate a connection with the society of Hoegom in Norrland being influenced by East Germanic culture. This society appears to have been left in the beginning of the 6th century. Opposite Hoegom the mound in Vendel contained a cremation. In the ashes was found a very seldom coin from the East Roman emperor Basiliscus ruling only in the year 476 AD, when Odoaker dismissed West Roman Emperor. This coin is also known from the tomb of Childeric. Maybe the dynasty from Hoegom met their Herulic allies in Uppland and joined them. Here in Uppland a new center of richness emerged based on the fur trade route via Helgoe and the new iron extraction in Bergslagen - activities which without any doubt would attract the Herulian warrior kings. This was exactly what they needed.

The three royal mounds in Uppsala are dated inside the interval 500-625 AD - which was the time when the Heruls established in the area - for the moment in the later part. The eldest mound in the middle is not excavated, but it is known to contain a cremation packed with stones as the two other mounds. The East Mound contains a woman and maybe also a boy burned at temperatures so high that nearly everything in the mound was destroyed. Among the fragments was a helmet for a woman or a child with a helmet plate identical with some of the plates in Sutton Hoo in East Anglia. The motive is two dancing warriors with horned helmets - probably depicting the Germanic mercenaries, Cornuti, in the Roman army. In the mound also two simple female articles for daily use were found - a makeup palette and a mirror with an eye to be hanging in the belt. Both normally belong to the women of the nomads in South Eastern Europe, and the mirror is found in 100 examples at the Danube and at the Black Sea. North of the Danubian Basin only two such mirrors are found - one in Thuringia and the one in Uppsala. Therefore the East Mound of Uppsala may contain a woman of East Germanic/Sarmatian family - the Herulic mixture of people. The West Mound is the youngest containing fragments of glass from the Black Sea, ivory gaming pieces from South Eastern Europe and Sassanidian camees.

The new cremation customs in the Maelar region are quite opposite the old burial customs of the Heruls as no cremations are found where they operated in Southern Europe. As Procopius could tell about pagan Heruls burning their dead in big fires, he must have described the habits of the Heruls in Scandinavia being referred by followers of Datius. The Heruls must have changed their burial customs, when they were integrated in Scandinavia, which may have been a part of the general changes of the burial customs in Scandinavia being observed at that time by archaeology.

No characteristics of the Heruls are known in the areas where they lived in South Eastern Europe - except maybe the burial mounds from the 5th century in Moravia/Marchfeld being connected with Uppsala by Czechish archaeologists and some other East Germanic graves between the Swebes. The Heruls were ethnically so mixed and had joined so many other people that they cannot be separated from other East Germanic people following the Huns. Taking into consideration the very limited material being left from the cremations in Uppland we must conclude that we have found all the traces we could expect to find after a Herulian dynasty and their followers being integrated as a minority in the local people. Most of the mounds and boat graves being excavated were carried out more than 50 years after they left Moravia. We shall find their first left items in Blekinge/Värend.

Even when the contacts after the destruction of the East Germanic people turned against the Franks - or rather their pagan easterly neighbours - the content of the boat graves are still of the same character as the other rich European princely graves. Only local patriots - or people caught by the promising ideas of Olof Rudbeck - can claim that the warrior-level of Vendel Culture was based on
an internal Swedish development.

Of course the flourishing of Uppsala is not an argument which can stand alone, as such a people in the theory could arise as a reaction on the arriving Heruls - as the Danes. Opposite no places are found with a development substantial enough to match the consequences of this dominating East Germanic people. If this was the case too much East Germanic influence is found in Uppsala and the boat graves.

As late as in the 11th century this center in Uppsala was described by Adam of Bremen as the centre of Odin, where Odin, Thor and the old Vane-god Frej were worshipped side by side.

The question about the settlement can only be answered by analysing the archaeology. In the following chapters each kind of finds will be described separately. The new finds in Uppsala are not yet incorporated in the description as they are not documented yet, but the new finds of cultic constructions will only support the choice of Uppsala as the Herulian target.

2.1.3.3.2.1 Burials - Mounds in Uppland (6th c.)

Around 500-625 AD the 3 big royal mounds were erected in Uppsala. The content of the two youngest mounds excavated until now are small fragments burned at a pile of wood at very high temperatures. In the eastern mound was probably buried a young prince and/or a woman in the twenties. In the western mound a warrior king was buried. The chamber in the third and earliest mound is not excavated, but the type of the inside chamber of stone indicates a cremation too. Some of the small mounds at the hill in Uppsala are supposed to be erected earlier, but the cremation in the 3 big mounds of a size not seen before in Scandinavia totally deviate from usual burial practise and cremation in the region. Except for the size of the mounds and the type of burial/cremation the mounds in Uppsala were most likely inspired by the earlier mounds in Högom (and maybe Norway) – or maybe also in Moravia.

Due to the high temperatures nearly all artefacts in Uppsala were spoilt, but we know that the cremated persons were supplied with rich gifts, horses and other animals. Like in Högom prestigious weapons like swords do not point at the specific origin of the buried man, as these weapons were made in special workshops available for all the Germanic chieftains and mercenary officers. They were probably often used as an object of gifts. Among the less prestigious items were in both mounds some items pointing against South Eastern Europe and Persia.

Most of the big mounds and especially the later boat graves are found near the small river Fyris Aan an its tributaries in Gl. Uppsala, Valsgärde (3 km away from Uppsala) and Vendel (30 km away). Uppsala was obviously the religious centre with 1000-2000 mounds and own boat graves, while Vendel and Valsgärde may have been the seats of local kings/earls. The eastern mound in Uppsala is from 525-75, the western from 560-600, and the mound in the middle is undated [Arrhenius 1993; Dutzco 1996; Norr 1998 (mail)]. Recently John Ljungkvist has suggested these two intervals to be 550-600 and 575-625 [Ljungkvist 2005]. The other mounds in the area are younger, but in the western part of Högaasen at least one of the mounds is older. The mounds here contain cremations. Some of the settlements are older than the royal mounds confirming that the Suiones had lived here long time before the Vendel Age began in 550-570 with a period of transition defined from 520 - according to the archaeologists.

Around 500 chemical tests show an increase in organic material around Sigtuna supposed to be horse dung in the area - but this might as well be from cattle like in Gudhjem at Bornholm. Procopius described a situation where the Southern Herulian mercenaries used horses in battle. Possibly they had learned to use horses from the Huns and the Alans, but it was impossible to use the horses in fight in this way in the Nordic forests like at the open plains of Southern Europe. In Scandinavia the first known battle of cavalry was at Fodevig in the 12th century, but we have much earlier pictures of soldiers fighting by horse and the chieftains used horses for transportation already before 500 AD. The warrior was buried with a horse in several of the boat graves of the Vendel period, but also in Gudhjem at Bornholm horses are found in the graves. The horse was often used in sacrifices in the Norse religion and was regarded as an animal close to the gods.

In the youngest western Uppsala mound are found 4 camees of sardonyx of Sassanidian origin, a gaming piece of
In 1993 the German archaeologist Bodo Anke analysed the horse riding nomads of the Migration Period in his PhD-dissertation. One of the important items in his investigation was a mirror with an eye (öenspiegel) being originally Sarmatian. The mirror was made for hanging in the belt of a horse riding woman. Totally he found 94 mirrors west of the Black Sea and 87 of these were found in rich female tombs at the lower and middle Danube and its tributary rivers - especially Tisza and Morava. 5 were found west of Moravia in regions where the Huns and Alans had operated around the Alps, and the last 2 were found north of Moravia. Of these two the first one was found in Thuringia in the tomb of a woman with a deformed skull, which as mentioned earlier is a clear indication of Sarmatian Alans, Huns or maybe their East Germanic followers. The last fragment of such a mirror was found in the eastern mound of Uppsala as the only one in Northern Europe. The mirror was not prestigious but antique when the mound was raised. A slightly different type of these mirrors is often found in the same context as the Sokolnice-fibulas from Moravia. In the mound was also found a make-up palette. There is probably only one reason to find such a mirror for daily use in Uppsala: A young woman cremated in the eastern mound had ancestors among the people earlier following Attila. At that time she was with high probability one of the Heruls – maybe one of Sarmatian origin.

Earlier she was regarded to be an old woman being cremated together with her son or master. At that time a small jaw with colour from metal like a helmet was regarded to belong to a teenage prince. However preliminary DNA-tests from other bones showed in 2000 a young woman in the twenties. Because of the fragments of a sword and a helmet plate a man is still assumed to be cremated too, but in 2003 the tomb from the 6th century of a tall female warrior wearing shield and dagger was found in Lincolnshire. As the helmet plate in the same mound in Uppsala has a picture identical with the one in Sutton Hoo south of Lincolnshire a connection existed between the customs in the two regions. Consequently, we cannot exclude that the mound was raised to honour a warrior queen - which should not surprise the readers of Saxo as he mentioned such a queen.

A few kilometres south of the boat graves in Vendel Ottar’s Mound was erected. The mound has been excavated showing a cremation burial where the ashes were collected in a wooden bucket. This kind of bucket is only known from the inhumation burial in the before mentioned Evebø, where the bucket had another purpose. The bucket contained a Basiliscus coin from 475/76 which will be commented later. The tomb is dated around 500 AD, and Birgit Arrhenius mentioned [RGA Ottar’s Mound] that the tomb probably belonged to the founder of this new society (indicated by pollen-analyses to be a new settlement). In this mound a man and a woman were cremated together. She suggested as a possibility that he could be a Norwegian vassal of the kings in Uppsala, but as the similarity in buckets can be explained by the connection Evebo - Högom - Gotland mentioned above, it is more likely that the connection was Högom, as the dynasty left Högom at that time. Consequently a movement from Högom to Vendel will explain the new society in Vendel and the custom with mounds in Uppland – but not the society in Uppsala.

Big mounds from the Vendel- and Viking ages are found all over Scandinavia. Some of the most impressive are Skalundahoeg from the 7th century in Västergötland and the before mentioned Inglingehög in Värend, but they are not connected with rich finds and an obvious civilisation like Uppsala.

Big mounds are found over the most of Europe too including at the mouth of River Don and in the later
Frankish territory - and of course including the later Sutton Hoo boat grave in England from around 625 AD. Thus the first new kings in Uppsala used a well-known effect known from Southern Europe, but the custom was known in Scandinavia too and was used in Norway and Högom and even in a few examples in Uppsala. What was new was the size and the cremation in the mound inspired by the customs of the local people. When being transferred to Uppsala cremation was used according to the description of Procopius, and the later increase of the first mound in the middle indicates, that the big size was a new idea. The first mound has a very big centre of stone, but later they filled more sand on the top to make it similar to the two later mounds with smaller centres of stone. Now the mounds got nearly the same size as the contemporary Lombardian mausoleum in Zhuran covering the earlier Herulian grave there.

The cremations in the 3 Uppsala-mounds may appear to deviate from the logic if the new dynasty were Heruls, but here the description by Procopius support the explanation. Procopius described as mentioned the death of an old Herul – killed by a dagger and burned at a pile of wood. This is by Procopius described as the old burial habit of the Heruls, but in the last 25 years before he wrote these Illyrian Heruls had been Christians and in the regions of Moravia/Weinviertel and Belgrade where they had lived since 100-150 years ago there were as mentioned no cremations at all - nor in the rest of the region. He may of course have described a very old habit, but comparing with his usual detailed style and his other descriptions this does not appear to be something from a distant past - and would they know that? Neither the Goths had used cremation funerals for centuries since their time in Poland. According to the archaeology the custom described by Procopius did never existed in Moravia and Illyria, when the Heruls lived there. Opposite we know for certain that the custom at the time of Procopius existed in Uppsala and the rest of Sweden. Procopius told that the bones afterwards were gathered and buried, and this was exactly what happened in Uppsala and Ottar’s Mound were the bones from the fire were placed in a vessel at the place of the fire and covered by stones. He probably believed, that the customs he heard from the Heruls returning from the pagan Sweden, were also the old habits of the pagan Heruls - and this is for the moment the only way to explain, why Procopius combined such a description with the Heruls. The only Heruls Procopius knew worshipping openly the old gods were the Heruls arriving from Sweden. Furthermore Procopius mentioned with surprise that the wife of the dead man was expected to take her own life - and in Ottars Mound and maybe in Uppsala women are found in the ashes too.

2.1.3.3.2.2 Helmets, shield marks, helmet plates and weapons

While the grave goods (excl. Bornholm) and the finds of gold generally disappeared, it is already described how the impressing royal burials took a beginning in the Uppsala area (Uppland). After 500 AD or rather 550 AD the big mounds were erected – especially the Uppsala Mounds, Anunds Hög and Ottar’s Hög. The spoilt Grydehøj in Lejre from around 550-650 AD was a cremation mound too, and close to that in Genvinge a part of a "Vendel-helmet" was found. Unfortunately the grave goods are nearly totally spoilt due to the high temperatures of the fire at the burial in both Uppsala and Lejre.

Around 567 AD the first boat graves of the Vendel Period were established in the settlements around Uppsala – later also recognised in Sutton Hoo in East Anglia. The equipment in these burials is connected with the special "Style II" with heads of beasts and birds which flourished in Scandinavia - just like at the Lombards in Italy100. Normally the style is attributed to the Alemanni, but this is not clear at all. The style is not

100 According to most archaeologists the expansion of the so called Style II accelerated in the middle of the 6th century – maybe from the Alemanni.

According to Johan Engström in "The Vendel Chieftains" (Anne Nørgaard Jørgensen 1997) pictures in the Vendel graves and equipment often looks like Iranian armouring – and especially the cloaks of the horned warriors found both in Vendel, the Uppsala Mounds and Sutton Hoo. The Heruls had at the Black Sea and as mercenaries been in contact with the Iranian tribes, who were related to the Alans - companions with the Heruls in the 4th century.

The Lombards, who also adapted Style II, had lived in the area of the Elb in Germany, but later they fought several times against Herulian kings. In spite of this, marriages and fellowship in the Byzantine army seem to have caused a reconciliation between groups of these two tribes - at least with the Illyrian Heruls.
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identical in the different regions, but the local styles had several similar elements and structures in common. Especially in Uppland and East Anglia the armouring had sometimes an Iranian touch – maybe because the company of mercenaries, Cornuti, used that style.

The famous helmets found in the ship burials of Uppland are probably local work, but appear to be copies of the Roman helmets from the 5th century – the face protection was also found in the Imperial Palace in Constantinople. They were already described as an old tradition in chapter 1.3.1.8 which shall be repeated here. In 1980 in the book “Vendeltid” from the Historical Museum of Sweden page 164 -166 Bertil Almgren told about the helmets in Vendel and Sutton Hoo101. According to him they were locally manufactured, but were clearly made as copies of the helmets of the Roman imperial guard in the 5th century – he especially mentioned the famous Herulian guard of the emperor – which must be the soldiers of Odoaker. He emphasized the obvious symbolic importance of these helmets since they were used as parade helmets in the boatgraves by the earls of Uppland for centuries until the Viking Ages. It must have been a very strong historical tradition of these earls. It may now theoretically be possible to refer to the new conclusions of chapter 1.2 about the Scandinavians joining the Heruls, but an interim participation in the South would hardly create this tradition for centuries – it must have been an old family tradition about a glorious past – and Uppland does not show early Eastgermanic signs like in Southern Scandinavia. Just like his colleagues he had misunderstood the history of origin of the Heruls, but how could the archaeologists, who did not know the conclusions in chapter 1.2, ignore these analyses of the famous helmets without serious arguments against them – just like they ignored Åke Hyenstrand – in a published discussion?

The helmets in the boat grave of Uppland and Sutton Hoo were adorned with helmet plates102. Some of the pictures at the helmet plates show boar crests at the helmets, where Roman helmets earlier had eagles103. These boar crests had both a real and a symbolic protecting function. Similar boar crested helmets were already found as pictures at the much earlier Gundestrup Vessel, but this is regarded to be a Celtic vessel originating from Dacia/Thracia. The boar crested helmet of Roar is mentioned in Beowulf and Ynglingesaga


102 In Thorslunde, Oeland, a die for metal foils is found showing a picture of a column of warriors with boar helmets from around 600 AD, where the first warrior has a ring button on his sword – probably an officer/chieftain - and the next wearing armrings, which according to Beowulf were the reward for the warriors. The boat graves of Uppland contain several of these metal foils showing warriors with crested helmets looking like boar heads. Snorri told that Rolf conquered a boar-helmet from Adils of Uppsala, and as mentioned Beowulf told about the golden helmet with the boar crest belonging to the “Skyldings”, but none of the excavated helmets wear at the first view this crest – only found as pictures on the metal foil plates of the helmets. The difference between the crests of the real helmets and the crests pictured at the helmet plates forced Greta Arwidon (Vendeltid) to consider if these helmet plates were Roman - but probably this is contradicted by the die from Oeland, the Sparlösa runestone (note 10.3.3) and finds in Mercia (Nottingham area) of two helmets with boar crests - Benty Grange (1867) and as late as in 1997 a "Spangenhelmet" in Northamptonshire <a href="http://www.angelcynn.org.uk/history_helmet.html" target="rute">(Homepage Angelcynn)</a>. Many helmet plates are found, but the same motives of animals and old-fashioned warriors are repeated again and again – pointing into the past. Some of the helmets in Vendel are also identified as the Spangenhelmet-type. Looking at the boars from Mercia combined with the Oeland die it is obvious that the crests of the later Vendel helmets and the one of Sutton Hoo are also stylized animals – probably snakes or dragons.

We know that the boar was a sacred animal connected with Frey in Norse mythology, and possibly also earlier connected with the fertility cult and Ing. A very early example of two boar helmets and one with a bird were shown at the Gundestrup Vessel 500 years earlier. This could indicate, that the helmets had nothing to do with the arriving Heruls, but the Gundestrup Vessel is now regarded as a Thracian work from 0–100BC originating from Thracian/Celtic tribes in the Lower Danube area near the Black Sea - possibly brought home by Cimbrians. Also a coin with a boar helmet was found at the Danube and other finds indicate that the boar was a common symbol among the Celts. Therefore the boar crested helmets could be brought from the Danube area to Scandinavia by the Heruls. Before the Goths left the Baltic Sea Tacitus mentioned the boar in relation to the Aestis as a devine weapon and protection connected to the mother of gods, so probably also these boar crested helmets symbolized a divine protection of the warrior. 103 Viemose at Fyen.
and two contemporary examples like the helmet plates in Sweden are found in the English kingdom of Mercia (Examples), but in Scandinavia the real crests are more stylized. The poems and works - written down much later and therefore doubted - are in this way confirmed by the archaeology.

In medieval versions of Notitia Dignitatum from around 400 AD we can find lists of the Roman military units and their shield marks. The “Heruli Seniores” are found in a group of auxiliary troops under Magistri Peditum in the western part of the Empire. The shield mark of the Heruli Seniores consists of white and red concentric circles. At that time the Eastern Heruli still joined the campaign of the Huns, but the circles may be connected with the sun and Mithras - being worshipped among the Roman soldiers. The Heruli are found beside the Batavi whom they joined at the wall of Hadrian in England in the 4th century, where such temples are found. In the group we also find the Cornuti and their fellows, the Brachiai. The Cornuti, which means “horns”, became famous in the battle at Milvian Bridge in 312 AD, where Constantine I won his great victory – and their horned helmets can be found at the Arch of Constantine in Rome [Aldöfi 1953]. Ammianus Marcellinus told about their dancing before the battles and their war cry. The horns are the shield mark of i.e. the Cornuti, the Brachiai, the Celtae, the Marcommannae and the Batavi Juniores, while we do not know a shield mark of the Heruli Juniores. The interesting is that these horns are similar with the horned helmets at the helmet plates found in Vendel, Uppsala, Sutton Hoo and Allemannia. Probably the Western Heruli were members of a brotherhood or cult among the mercenaries, but the connection between the helmet plates in Uppland and the horns is not strong enough to prove that the Heruli caused the Vendel Helmets. Except for an eyebrow at the landing place of Lejre and in Upplåka these helmets are not found in Scandinavia outside Uppland.

What is even more interesting is that the shield mark of the Heruli has the same circles being found at the cheeks of the Asiatic head of “Odin drinking of Mimer’s Well” at the buckle in Finnestorp – and at the earlier buckle at Crimea, which hardly was Scandinavian, chapter 1.2.1.61.2.1.6. According to Sidonius Appollinaris tattoos at the cheeks were characteristic for the Western Heruli he met at the court of the Visigoths in 478 AD.

The double-edged ring button swords, known from the belt Ravenna-Saxony-Northern Frankia, were also found in chieftain burials in Scandinavia and England, while a simple copy of the light single-edged scramasax was found all over Scandinavia. The ring button is regarded as a symbol of an officer's oat to the king – used in many Germanic societies. The Danish archaeologist Anne Nørgaard Jørgensen describes a change in military systems around 500 against international uniform weapon sets changing fast all over Scandinavia – but most significantly in the eastern parts104. Primarily she refers to similar weapon burials in

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104 Anne Nørgaard Jørgensen expressed in another connection following in “Warrior and retinue in Germanic Iron Age” (Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 1996): “Against the background of the Continental inspiration, a military elite arose in Denmark as early as 500 AD”. In “Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society” (1997) she wrote, that around 500 AD the military system changed from regionally-differentiated arms to an international arming - a so-called Pan-European horizon with uniform sets of weapons. At the same time the weapon-sacrifices were followed by a few rich weapon-graves, according to which she in “Nørre Sandegaard Vest” primarily referred to burials in Southwestern Germany (Reihengräber), but also referred to Franks in general and to weapon burials in Austria and Hungary. In 1999 she has in “Waffen und Gräber” by analyzing the Scandinavian burials with weapon sets demonstrated that the weapons were changed often and over all Scandinavia at the same time – especially in the south eastern part.

The distribution of the double-edged ring button sword in Europe is similar to the route of the Heruli and the people mentioned in Nibelungenlied (note 2.2.9) and the south eastern England. In Sutton Hoo there was also a ring button on the shield. In Scandinavia they are found in Sealand, Blekinge, Götaland, Svealand, Viken (Oslo), Gotland and the south-western Finland from 500-750. From an earlier phase around 450-500 another ring button type of pure gold is found in Gudme, Norway and the northern part of the Frankish kingdom, which was just then under formation (The four in Gudme were without sword – probably merchandise). The ring button is supposed to symbolize the oath the chieftain has sworn to his king, and was probably in Scandinavia and England the sign of dignity to the officers of the royal army – obviously inspired by an earlier Merovingian use.
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Southern Germany, but Merovingian weapon burials as a general term are mentioned to include burials in Austria/Hungary too. Opposite the development in the south eastern part of the Baltic Sea now differs from Scandinavia – the old connection with the Goths in that region had probably ceased when the Slavs settled there.

Under all circumstances the boar crest helmet in the Beowulf poem indicate together with symbols of power as the ringbutton swords and the golden rings common knowledge or traditions between the courts of Mercia/East Anglia, the Vendel dynasty and Roar of Lejre - and especially the Helmets show a glorious past as mercenaries for the last emperors of Rome.

2.1.3.3.2.3 Later fibulas and Style II (6th c.)

In Vendel tomb XIV containing one of the most famous helmets (with a Zhuran-like strap work) a shield-boss is found being identical with a boss from Hodmezovasarhely-Kishomok at the Tisza River 180 km north of Beograd, where also 2 of the 5 solidi mentioned above were found. As the Gepides were expelled by the Avars in 567 AD, this boss in Vendel must according to Birgit Arrhenius be dated to 560-570 AD. In both graves also identical mounts and buckles were found. An identical shield-boss was found in Morken-Harff in Frankish territory near Aachen with Gepidic items too. More advanced types of that shield boss were later developed both at the Rhine and in Vendel. The Tisza region was probably the area where the Herulian king Datussett after his escape from Illyria around 550, and here his warriors must have been defeated in 567. Birgit Arrhenius primarily used the similarities between these tombs for dating purposes, but she also mentioned in 1983 that important elements of the Vendel-style appear to come from Eastern Europe. The shield boss in Vendel XIV indicate a connection between Vendel and the region were the Heruls of Datus disappeared, and the one at the Rhine may be due to refugees from the Gepidic defeat.

Precious "disc-on-bow"-fibulas of the Skodborg/Kitnæs type are primarily based on the Scandinavian square-headed fibula without the East Germanic elements, and such Danish fibulas are normally found in hoards with solidi or bracteates being hidden before 540 AD. These fibulas possibly belonged to people being attacked and subdued by other chieftains - but as mentioned they could also be sacrifices due to the bad harvest 536-38.

At the Continent the Scandinavian fibulas are found at the river Tisza [a.e. Szolnok-Szandaszollos 124] and at the coast of Frisia, where the Western Heruls earlier lived. Furthermore two "disc on bow"-fibulas are found in Ulpiana in Kosovo (the military headquarters of Illyria) in a female grave younger than 538. The fibulas were placed in the grave in a way similar to the position of the fibulas in Gudhjem [Mihailo Milinkovic, University of Beograd]. In Ganløse, North Eastern Seeland near a principal road to Sweden a piece of a cicada-fibula of South East Europe an 6th century origin was found - possibly as metal-scrap. These fibulas were often Hunnic.

Earlier Nils Aaberg claimed a trading route to exist between the early Vendel Culture and the Carpathian Basin without being able to identify it. Haseloff has later asked for an explanation, when he identified 15 examples of Scandinavian Animal-style I from the beginning of the 6th century around the middle and lower Danube and Tisza [a.e. Szentes-Nagyhegy 84 and Gyala]. He wrote in 1982 that he was unable to compare because of the lack of Scandinavian analyzes. He connected the finds with the Lombards, but also Gepides and Herulian mercenaries were operating in that area of the withdrawing Goths. Datius arrived around 546 from Scandinavia to the Heruls in Singidunum (Belgrade) and he escaped later to the Gepides north of the Danube/Sava-line – possibly to the area with the highest concentration of Scandinavian finds at Tisza 180

The scramasax became the principal weapon found in drastically increasing numbers from the end of the 6th century. Maybe the Huns brought it to Europe. In another version (very few examples) they also existed in Denmark 0-200 AD.
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km north of Singidunum. It is also obvious that the Herulian mercenaries had connection with the Byzantine military headquarters in Ulpiana, where the female burial with 2 disc-on-bow fibulas was found. South of the Danube in the area of Singidunum Germanic graves are found, hereunder 2 so called Herulian graves in Kamenovo at the river Morava (in Dacia Ripenses), but the fibulas and other artefacts in these graves point both at Lombards, Gepides and Byzantium. Even though this historically is known as a Herulian area the graves are Germanic in general and do not reveal any special characteristics [Attila Kiss, 1984] – a view which is later confirmed by Jaroslav Tejral [in Khrapunov/Stylegar 2014].

These finds are confirming the historical information about Datius and his group of young warriors leaving Sweden around 548 AD. There is no reason to wonder about this attested connection between Scandinavia and the Illyrian/Dacian region. The interesting is that some of them point so directly at the items in Vendel XIV.

2.1.3.3.2.4 Halls and marketplaces

The big halls appear to have an important function at the royal courts of the Scandinavian kingdoms - “mead halls” as Beowulf called them. The inner of the big hall in Lejre was according to Frands Herschend [Herschend 1998] arranged to function like the basilica of Theodoric in Mljet, but the excavations may have changed that. These halls have now been found in Uppsala, Skiringssal, Upplåker, Järrestad, Lejre, Tisso and Gudme a.o.. Most of the known halls are dated later around 800 AD, but the first hall in Lejre is from the beginning of the 6th century – the temple and a hall in Upplåker for a longer period.

The theories are rapidly changing in these years. Small temple like buildings - probably in more than one stock - from the 6th century are found in Uppaakre and Lejre and later at Tisso. Close to the halls in Sealand hoards of stones are found. In Upplåker and Sortemuld sacrifices of spearheads are found at an early stage around 500 AD. In the end of the Iron Ages and in the Viking Ages a more standardized pattern is found in Scania and Sealand with a hall and outside the south western door a fence around a temple like building. In Lejre a grave was found inside such a hall being rebuild twice – being first time interpreted as a grave of a founder or rather a king being divined like the Swedish Erik as told by Rimbert. The dating now shows that he was buried where his parents had lived, but his own hall was erected 100 meters against south. Probably these groups of buildings with few finds and without agricultural functions were in Lejre the local representative and religious centres of a travelling king of the Danes, where meed and bear was brewed and the offerings eaten at religios feasts.

Another kind of centres were connected with craft and market places. Trading activities are obvious at the 3 islands in the Baltic Sea and religious ceremonies too at Bornholm. Uppsala, Old Sigtuna and the Vendel Culture at Fyrisaan are closely related to the trade centre excavated in Lake Mälar - Helgoe/Birka - where Ansgar visited the king of the Swear around 830AD and 854 AD. His biographer, Rimbert, also mentioned another “thing” in the kingdom of the Swear, which must be Uppsala being mentioned as the religious centre of Scandinavia by Adam of Bremen, Snorri and Saxo. According to the archaeology Uppsala and the Vendel culture appear as a significantly stronger power centre than any other known cultures at the Scandinavian Peninsula in the 6th century. The centre kept its religious and commercial position until Christianity. No other Scandinavian centres of this character are mentioned except Thietmar of Merseburg's words about Lejre.

The centres and marketplaces will tell us something about how the society was organized, but they do not tell much about were the Heruls settled. If they brought something with them it was probably soon used in all societies.

We shall also notice the tuna-centres in Uppland, which appear to be connected with the boat graves. They are regarded to represent a structure with earls under the kings of Uppsala – like the organisation of the kingdoms of Odoaker and Theodorik in Italy. They are not documented and will only be an indication.
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2.1.3.3.2.5 Ships

The first pictures of ships using sails in Scandinavia are dated around 600 AD – earlier the picture-stones at Gotland shewed rowing boats. A few picture stones dated around 600 AD show a simple sail. The ships were the flexible and seaworthy Scandinavian boat types. In the Roman Iron Ages they had been constructed for rowing (The Nydam Boat), and they did not have the stem and keel necessary for an efficient sail. According to Procopius the invaders of England did not use sails in the 5th century [Procopius 553, VIII, xxx] and also Sidonius Apollinaris wrote about the Saxons oarsmen in Gallia [Sidonius VIII, vi, 480]. In the 6-7th century the ships were changed and equipped with sails like the Roman sails. The new ships became an important factor, when Scandinavia was established as a great power in the Viking Ages.

There is no sign of that the Heruls brought the sail or other elements of the ship to Scandinavia. What is learned may be learned by the Scandinavians directly from the south.

2.1.3.3.2.6 A summary of the archaeology

In the areas at the Black Sea-region, Moravia and Singidunum/Belgrade, where we know with certainty that the Heruls lived, it has until now been difficult to find signs separating the Heruls with certainty from their neighbours, and no archaeologists have found common tracks of that kind between these southern regions though we know the Heruls lived there. First in 2007 and especially in 2013 Jaroslav Tejral has pointed out the possible Herulian graves in Moravia partly based on history – and the buckles in Szabadbattyan and Yalta have strongly indicated that a group the Heruls at least reached Västergötland as Procopius told. The archaeology combined with history indicates that the Heruls appeared as a Germanic people with signs common with the other East Germanic people in the region north of the Alps from France to Slovakia and Hungary. They are even confused with West Germanic Quadri. The rich Herulian graves after Attila were even heavily influenced by the connection with the other Germanic mercenaries in the West. Therefore an absence of significant tracks of Heruls in Scandinavia should not be an argument against a Herulian integration there – however, the answer is often that East Germanic traces are caused by Scandinavian mercenaries or gifts – but nobody knows.

In Scandinavia the archaeological finds indicate a general change taking place around 500 AD with the first signs coming from south in the first half of the 5th century. One branch penetrated through Jutland and spread first around Kattegat and the North Sea, while the other branch affected the Baltic coasts and islands with an obvious East Germanic stamp – possibly via Scania, Bornholm and Gotland. A connection with the Roman Empire had been obvious for centuries and the local armies had even been equipped with Roman weapons, but around 500 AD the earlier differences between the regions disappeared, a few strong power centres arose - a.o. Uppsala - the gold was replaced by silver and a change of the religion was traced. Normally these changes are regarded to be due to the expanding Merovingian Empire, but the style-elements from the South West primarily appeared later in the century, while the connections around 500 AD could point at the Middle Danubian area as well, as there was no significant difference between Tourna, Blucina and the Gepidic-Lombardian finds – all being inspired by the Byzantines. We may even expect to find typical West Germanic signs caused by earlier Western Herulian mercenaries. Furthermore the coins point against a more easterly connection than Franks, Alemann and Goths. Nothing contradicts the changes in the first part of the 6th century to be a mixture of East Germanic influence as in the 5th century, adaption of general military systems from the earlier mercenaries and influence from the nearest neighbours in south.

The above mentioned burial traditions with new types of graves either in mounds, boats or plain in the field, the cease of the votive gifts in wetlands and the increase of and the motives on bracteates/guldgubber indicate a change of religion around 450-550 AD. The parallel inhumation and cremation could indicate that two religious philosophies of life continued side by side in the same settlements, but as the inhumation was only connected with one person per generation per centre this custom was probably connected with a separate religious status of the king/earl. It has to be noticed that normally there has never been found a consequent chiose of cremation or inhumation in the societies of Scandinavia - even when they were supposed to share the same religion. Looking at the C-bracteates an Odin-shape appear to have been
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introduced at latest in the second part of the 5th century AD, and these bracteates indicate a Wotan expanding from southwest105. Except for bracteates and guldgubber and a few earlier wooden statues with a big phallus, we do not know many pictures of the Norse gods for certain. Already in 864 AD the pope in a letter to Horik II criticized that his gods were made by human hands – being statues or even figurines like the one newly found in Lejre. Adam of Bremen later told about in the temple of Uppsala. Such statues were probably spoiled by the Christians as Saxo described the destruction of Svantevit, the god of the Wends. Maybe other pictures were not allowed, just like the name of Odin was taboo. Neither were statues allowed in Islam – developed in the same centuries.

Strong impulses from outside formed without doubt the changes 500-570AD around Uppsala. Under all circumstances the big mounds with the unique cremation burials and the boat graves prove a change in the traditions of the ruling dynasties in Scandinavia in the first half of the century, and the inhumated kings/chieftains - maybe together with the flat cremations in the field - a change of the religion. It is difficult to explain these fast contemporary changes of both religious, stylistic, economic and dynastic character to be a local development so far north as the character is international with too many East Germanic stains in the beginning to be a coincidence. Such signs can never be used to point out a specific ethnicity by archaeology alone, which is the usual problem for the archaeologists, but that is not our situation this time. We are searching the other way round looking for the settlement of a people, we know arrived somewhere at a certain time – a settlement which we should expect to have a boasting character of soldiers who had seen much stronger monumental manifestations of royal power than we know in Scandinavia.

The only manifestations of power centres being still visible in the landscape are the big royal mounds being raised at that time and the stone forts. We know that the halls were used in that way too. The mounds were already common among the Scandinavians and they had a short life. That means that the places should not be hidden, but we cannot be sure of that.

Öland can probably be ruled out as other islands and a dating being too early. Norway is too isolated for the Herulian way of life, except the Viken-area where there are no signs of such emerging cultures at that time. In the same way the centres in the Götalands were flourishing too early. The Danish areas in Denmark and Scania can be ruled out due to the basic historical sources.

Högom attracts attention with the mounds and the royal tomb being a typically princely weapon grave among the Germanic tribes of that time with elements pointing at a close connection with people following the Huns. We cannot let out that the colonisation of Vendel was caused by the dynasty from Högom going south, but we should not expect the Vendel Culture as a whole to be developed by that small northern society alone. If they were a part of that they rather they met their old Herulian partners in Uppland due to a renewal of their old alliance.

For a century some archaeologists have pointed at Blekinge and Värend as the settlement of the Heruls. According to early works of Birgit Arrhenius East Germanic finds exist in the triangle Augerum - Sösdala - Växjö, and the finds like Inglingehoeg, the runestones and the boatgrave are mentioned above, but no permanent culture of that kind is registered. Hyenstrand has pointed at Hov in Växjö and Bolmen as a possible centre in the Iron Ages - especially around the lake Bolmen and Ljunby - and he mentioned that an area north of Stora Mosse indicated substantial changes in population in the Iron Ages [Hyenstrand 1996, page 28-29].

That leads us back to the impressive mounds in Uppland, which also had the best strategic position to the Heruls placed as it was at the old trade route with access to the iron extraction. Here we have the signs of an international mercenary dynasty with clear East Germanic traces in the first generations – most directly confirmed by the presence of a Herulian or Sarmatian woman in the East Mound and the shield boss in

105 The bracteates are found before the Heruls arrived, which can be explained by the expansion of the Wotan-cult - also leaving names like Vojens and Vonsild in Southern Jutland, while the normal Danish form is “Oden-“ and “Ons-“ The bracteates were succeeded by the guldgubber (gold foil figures) being found concentrated at market places from 600 AD and later.
Vendel XIV. Unfortunately the cremations at high temperatures do not leave us with many traces – especially as the number of Herulian graves has to be small due to the minority. With the datings of the mounds presented by John Lundqvist the variations of the first general changes in Scandinavia are up to 40 years later than the arrival according to Procopius, but that can be due to the natural intervals in royal burials, a first settlement between the Danes and the Goetes or a connection with changes provoked by the atmospheric darkening 536-538 AD.

We can, however, pay much attention to impressive royal monuments in the Herulian kingdom of Moravia and in Uppsala, to similarities between the descriptions of death, and to explanations about the changing burial habits just when the relatively few Heruls arrived. We can conclude that the burial traditions do not contradict the hypothesis that some Heruls settled in Uppsala - but neither is the rest of Sweden excluded, though the indications there are much weaker. If the royal family of the Heruls arrived to Sweden, we should according to the Czechish and Austrian finds expect royal tombs with gifts and inhumation burials - maybe in mounds. The original burial type of their people is primarily recognised in Högom and later at Bornholm, but if the explanation of the change of burial habits by Procopius above is accepted, the mounds and boat graves point at the Uppsala region as the only other probable location known today.

While the indications in the 5th century pointed against connections between Scandinavia and Moravia/Marchfeld this changed in the first half of the 6th century to the Danube/Tisza area in Hungary, Pannonia and the old Yugoslavia. From the Vendel-period (beginning 560/70) it is obvious that the cultural connections were between Scandinavia and the Western Germanic people - especially in Mercia/Anglia and around the Upper Danube/Rhine in Southern Germany indicated by Style II and runes. They are even so strong that they indicate a dynastical connection – maybe between a dynasty of Western Heruls and the Herulian dynasties of Phara's family or refugees from the Illyrian Heruls. At the Eastern Bornholm also traces of refugees from the Frankish expansion - a.e. Alemanni or Burgundians – are found in chamber graves.

What should also be noticed is the cremation at high temperatures in Grydehøj in Lejre - contemporary (but not identical) with the mounds in Uppsala. Maybe just a short style-intermezzo separated by 600 km, but the excavated halls and the shared religious cults [Thietmar/Adam of Bremen/Snorre] indicate a later religious community between these places. Karen Højgaard Nielsen has demonstrated that the artefacts were not identical in Uppland and Southern Scandinavia at that time - they were not a part of the same society or a close trade network.

It is not possible to expound the archaeology in an unequivocal way by using only the archaeology, but if a “take over” took place without a total substitution of the people the archaeological signs would appear in the successive way described above.

Lotte Hedeager has used several of these arguments to prove that the Huns arrived in Scandinavia, but as the Huns disappeared from Europe around 453 AD and the Heruls are attested historically in Scandinavia it is much more likely that the traces are Herulian as they were similar.

2.1.3.4 The answer

The fact is that no other places are found with substantial changes matching this strong people of warriors. In the theory the Vendel culture may have arisen as an alliance against the Herulian dynasty supported by other Herulian earls – like the alliance of Danes. We cannot exclude that such a place has existed, but it is rather unlikely that such a counterpart to Uppsala should not have left any tracks or legends.

The most probable explanation regarding Heruls and Svear must be that a great part of the Eastern Heruls settled in the Uppsala region and became mercenaries before they were integrated as a part of the Svear. Their dynasty became as earls a part of the dynasty of the Svear. The archaeology is
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showing the necessary tracks of that development – the merger simply caused the new Vendel culture.

2.1.4 Heruls and boat graves?

Boat graves are unknown in the areas where the Eastern Heruls lived in the South and they do not make much practical or symbolic sense regarding the Eastern Heruls. We know boat graves at Bornholm from the Roman Iron Ages, but they are too early. However, the boat grave, Fallward, in Wremen was found in 1993 at the mouth of the Weser opposite Harlinger Land in East Frisia. At a schedel, which is dated by dendrology to 431 AD, a runic inscription was placed. A belt-set indicate that he was a mercenary serving the Romans – probably in England. He must have been a Western Herul or one of their Saxon neighbours, indicating that the western Heruls under all circumstances knew the habit of the boat graves and runes when they left Frisia. We do not know if there were other boat graves in the area, as most of the area has been flooded. In Augerum, Blekinge, we have found one of the first Swedish boat graves and rune stones indicating that the western Heruls may have joined the Eastern Heruls in Blekinge – especially with regard to the other indications in Listerland.

The content of the boat graves in Uppland is similar with the content of the other pagan princely graves in Europe. These customs were probably in Scandinavia combined with the boats as a mixed burial custom of Eastern and Western Herulian Habits. As mentioned Birgit Arrhenius has emphasized the East Germanic connection on the early Vendel Culture - hereunder Vendel XIV - where the spread of the boat graves appears to be connected with a structure of earls - a structure which the Heruls had learned from Odoaker and Theodoric.

2.1.4.1 The boat graves

Around 565-600 the boat graves spread in the region - nearly all containing inhumation of bodies, weapons and rich equipment. Most of these boat graves are found in places containing burials since the end of the Roman Iron Ages and these graveyards were used until the Viking Ages.

Birgit Arrhenius [Tuna och Husby i Vendel, 2000] has based on the excavations around Vendel demonstrated that new settlements took place in Vendel around 540 AD. According to her these settlements appear like Valsgärde to be ruled by to the king in Uppsala and possibly the Tuna-name too (a Tuna has existed in Vendel too).

Both in Vendel and Valsgärde there was in average only one boat grave per generation with the skeleton of a man – all other graves at these places were simple cremations. In the later Ulltuna and Tuna in Alsike this was not so consequently done and the boat graves of Tuna in Badelunda contained only women and no men. This place is however usually regarded as a cultic place since the 2nd century.

In Tuna in Alsike DNA tests have shown kinship in the male line among two of the buried, but not with the third. The third had according to articles a male Saami among his ancestors due to an Y-chromosomal allele of the marker DYS388 known from a grave in Norrland. However reading the PhD-dissertation of Anders Götherström this conclusion was very uncertain as the Swedish reference sample missing this allele was too small (n=37), while the allele was found in a German sample. It was not mentioned if this allele exists among people of Mongolian origin, and even if he had a male Saami among his ancestors this does not exclude the Heruls as they had been in contact with the people of Northern Sweden. In later books published in 2001 and 2003 the archaeologists from the SIV-project made conclusions which cannot be covered statistically by

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these small samples mentioned by Anders Götherström - maybe because the books were based on seminars earlier than his dissertation was published. Thus the background of the third man is uncertain, but even the very limited number of tests does indicate that there was not just one ruling family. The position was not necessarily inherited which indicates that the boat graves contained vassals or military commanders - as suggested by Birgit Arrhenius regarding the earlier Ottars Mound too.

Procopius description of the envoy and the returning Datus around 548 AD shows that the royal family was visibly and numerous represented in Scandinavia 35 years after their arrival, that they may have had a peaceful relationship to the rulers of the Danes at that time, and that they had a kind of ancestor cult stabilizing the power of the royal family. The reason for the last statement is that this is the best reason why some of the Illyrian Heruls would go so far for a king, and it corresponds with the cult of Gaut/Wothan/Odin. The find in Kosovo of fibulas like the one in Skodborg (placed in the grave like the fibulas at Bornholm), the finds of several Scandinavian artefacts in the Danube/Tisza-area and the identical shield-bosses, could be a confirmation of this part of the description of Procopius - though these finds could theoretically also be due to trade.

2.1.4.2 Creations after 565 AD

Besides the royal burials in big mounds and nearly invisible boat mounds a new habit was as mentioned introduced with flat cremations in the field in large numbers all over Eastern Scandinavia around 500 AD. It was primarily the type of the grave which changed, as a majority of the people had all the time been cremated. Earlier some of the rich people had been buried in chamber graves without cremation. So it was also in Northern Jutland (Lindholm Høje) and Norway, but in the Gudhjem-area at Bornholm they began to use similar flat burials without cremation – sometimes with a low mound of stone. In the rest of Denmark, where cremation and rich inhumation burials were earlier found, tombs are simply missing after 500 AD except for Lejre’s Grydehøj106 of Uppsalatype, and a few examples with spatha and inhumation (Kyndby) - indicating cremation directly in the field as the new tradition here too. Where the soil was suited for agriculture and where stones for building materials were sparse - as in Denmark - such graves were probably spoiled later by agriculture if they were not protected by several stone ships like at Lindholm Høje. In Birka a group of graves showed inhumation in chambers, but they are supposed to be Christians or foreign merchants/craftsmen. Among the boat graves a similar number of chamber graves existed with the same kind of burial as the boat graves.

Taking only the above mentioned archaeological observations in consideration the conclusion must be that the people of the Mälar Valley continued their old – but earlier not consequent - cremation customs. The way they were cremated was normally changed from 500 AD, when also the burials of the kings became clearly separated from the people by raising very big mounds. After 2-3 generations the king/earl was buried unburned with full equipment as the only person in the society. These heads of the society obviously existed in at least 2-4 parallel places in the region being local kings or earls.

The royal mounds could indicate that the change was initiated by a new dynasty accepting the general traditions of the existing people but marking the importance of the king with a big mound. First, they totally accepted the old cremation traditions of the people though the burial concept was changed, but when a new

106 In Grydehøj remains of golden clothe were found (also found in Uppsala), and the cremation resulted in the same high temperatures as in Uppsala. The grave is by C14 dated around 550-650 AD, and a fibula is found in the area from the same time. None of the other mounds are excavated except the ”Mound of Harald Hildetand” – from the Stone Ages. This example shows us, that we cannot rely on the old names of the mounds, which should be noticed in Uppland too. The ”stone ships” of Lejre are still dated to the Viking Ages because of graves from the iron ages underneath.

In the last decades the big halls from around 550-950 AD have been excavated, but only small parts of Lejre have been systematically excavated until now. Down-streams in Gevninge an eyebrow of a helmet being of the same kind as the helmets in Vendel was found in 1999.
balance was established (obvious due to the wealth of the society) the chieftain/priest was buried as a person going to a new life - probably in Odin's Valhalla (Birgit Arrhenius has suggested the theoretical alternatives that this was a cult of Freja (Schönbeck 1994) or a sacrifice, but the purpose of the burial ritual was well described in Beowulf and the sagas. This difference continued for 400 years until Christianity and must therefore have been due to a stable status of the king and the religion. Except for the boats these royal graves were similar to the earlier royal pagan Germanic weapon graves along the Roman border in Central Europe, but there his different status is not so obvious to observe today as neither his people were cremated there. In Scandinavia the difference indicates a special religious role of the dead chieftain - indicating that the southern ancestor cult based on Wothan/Gaut was now established around Uppsala.

The change of burial practice has been used as an argument against the hypotheses of this article, but inhumation and cremation has existed side by side in Scandinavia all the time indicating that one religion did not necessarily afford one single burial practice. Procopius description of the cremation demonstrates that the Heruls cannot be indentified in Sweden by their inhumation burial custom from Moravia as they could now use cremation too. Later they may have found it necessary to give the king/chieftain in Sweden a separate status in death symbolizing an eternal life of a divine person - using their old habits from Moravia and the symbolic Scandinavian boat. In the last 10 years boat graves are found at Sealand as the Roman Iron Age boat graves at Slusegaard, Bornholm. What is found in the Uppsala region may be a mixture of the old Herulian inhumation burials, the royal mounds used both in Central Europe and Uppsala, and the Nordic cremation burials caused by the integration of two people different habits – not finding the final balance in the first round. Also when the Goths were earlier gathered as a new group at Vistula a new burial practice was established. This will be further discussed in Chapter 11.5 as Snorri may have explained this problem. We shall not forget however, that this could also be a more consequent organisation of the old mixed customs before the Uppsala Mounds – as archaeology leaves both possibilities open.

Danish archaeologists have mentioned similarities between the Alemannic "reihengräber" and Bornholm, where horses are found in the tombs like in Vendel/Valsgärde/Tuna, but also these tombs are from the later Vendel-period. E-W oriented "reihengräber" were under development in Moravia already in the 5th century, but the graves at Bornholm could be connected with other people along the Roman and Frankish borders.

In general Scandinavian archaeologists have referred to similar royal Merovingian graves, but after Childeric's burial in 482 AD the graves in France were church burials and of those only the grave of Arnegunde in St Denis around 570 AD is known today - containing only personal jewellery as burial gifts. The graves with precious gifts and weapons referred to as Merovingian are situated in Köln and Morken at the Rhine, Beckum in Westfalen and Niederstotzingen at the Upper Danube – all in the eastern border-areas of the Frankish kingdom and with many artefacts of an Eastern European character. Merovingian shall in this case refer to the period and not to the Christian Frankish people and their dynasty.

2.1.4.3 The answer

The connection between Heruls and boat graves is likely to be regarded as a Westgermanic knowledge being combined with the East Germanic chamber graves of the European mercenary-kings.

In the old settlements of the Uppsala-area (Vendel, Valsgärde and the "-tuna"-villages) the boat graves and Style II first appeared 25-75 years after the first Scandinavian change of civilisation in Uppsala. Probably this demonstration of wealth was the result of a consolidation of the royal power and the "earl-structure". The new style points was as mentioned influenced by East Germanic style, but spread primarily in the Lombardian, Alemannic, Bavarian and Anglo Saxon regions too. In the two last regions also the Scandinavian runes were spread. This could simply be due to the change in Europe when the East Germanic kinsmen of the Heruls disappeared from South Eastern Europe – some of them to Lombardia/Italia and the Rhine. The Franks became dominating in the trade centres along the Rhine, where former allies of the Heruls and the Western Heruls lived at the eastern bank of the river. A small part could in the theory be due to pagan
The development in Scandinavia indicates that the Danes and the people at the islands in the Baltic Sea had better craftsmen than the Heruls, who probably had another focus in the turbulent years. Besides an original style of Herulic equipment and craft was washed out by the vagrant life together with other tribes as nomads, mercenaries and thieves. It was only natural that the new mixed society used the impulses coming from the successful Merovings and their later supporters, the Alemanni after the destruction of the East Germanic people in 567.

There is especially an obvious connection regarding the symbolism of power between Uppsala and East Anglia/Mercia until the beginning of the 7th century. Because of the character it was hardly due to trade, but because of a common dynastic connection. This topic will be discussed separately as a whole in chapter 3.

2.1.5 Heruls and Eric – the god?

2.1.5.1 The god Eric

This question by Aake Hyenstrand referred to the biography of Ansgar by Rimbert who in the second part of the 9th century visited Birca and mentioned the considerations about raising a dead king Eric to a god. Hyenstrand referred to the royal names Eric, Alric and Rolf as Herulic, but no Herul is known by the name Eric and all these royal names are formed by general Germanic words. Therefore the name itself cannot be used to identify any Heruls, but it is relevant to discuss the more general connection between the ancestor gods and the pagan Germanic people like the Heruls – or the general change of religion as Lotte Hedeager has done with focus on the Huns.

The Germanic ending ":-ric" is the same as the Latin "rex" and indicated that the name was royal. Åke Hyenstrand had noticed that according to Rimbert the gods of the Svear had announced through a man listening to their meeting: "We will agree to summon your former King Eric to join us so that he may be one of the gods" [Rimbert/Robinson 1921, Chapter XXVI]. Hyenstrand compared with Jordanes mentioning the names Erik and Alrik, which were also found in Ynglingatal. Jordanes, however did not mention any Herulic king of that name (her referred to a Visigoth) and Ynglingatal referred to much older legends. The problem is not that we do not know a Herul of that name as they probably used it. The problem is that it was a generally used Germanic name. Consequently the use of it in Sweden was not necessarily caused by a Herulic presence there. Unfortunately Hyenstrand focussed on the name instead of the principle. He should have asked: Heruls and ancestor gods?

2.1.5.2 Heruls and ancestor gods?

Procopius told about the Illyrian Heruls that these reckless barbarians worshipped a host of gods. It shall be noticed that the barbarians had no problem with worshipping the Christian God between their other gods – it is just a Christian problem. Jordanes on his side told that the migrating Goths earlier - before they were baptised as Arian Christians - worshipped the heroes among their ancestors. He told that the Gothic word for ancestor gods was "ansis", which appear to be the background for the rune name "ansuZ" (God) and the divine group of "Ases". One of the first ancestors in "Getica" was Gapt. In the early royal genealogies in England from the 7th century Geat and Wothen were placed in front - indicating a similar connection between the gods and the royal ancestors there. Gapt and Geat were possibly identical with the god named Gaut, who in the ON poem Grimmismal was mentioned as an earlier name for Odin - the main god of the Ases.

In spite of the mentioning of ancestor gods Jordanes also told that the war god of the Goths was
earlier Mars, just as Procopius told that the main god in Scandinavia was a wargod (Ares/Mars). A war god as main god was probably Odin - though he was not a real wargod in his later shape.

Earlier the gods in Scandinavia were Mercurius, Tyr, Nerthus and Ing according to Tacitus. The two last gods may have been fertility gods of the old society of independent farmers - the Vanes.

When the warrior elite emerged the importance of the gods changed too. The main god of the Scandinavian warrior elite, Odin, probably first arrived as the Westgermanic or Hunnic inspired god Woden/Wothan in the 5th century. Maybe he had a parallel in a North- or East Scandinavian cousin Gaut. Some of his shamanistic features could even together with the animal styles point back against the Hunnic/Scythic/Sarmatic nomads. The Heruls may have brought with them some of these elements of the maingod, but he existed in Scandinavia before their royal family arrived as pointed out by Lotte Hedeager.

The mixed Pantheon is mainly known from the Norse literature and will be discussed in a later chapter, as it cannot be used as arguments regarding the Heruls.

Jordanes wrote about the Goths: “And because of the great victory they had won in this region, they thereafter called their leaders, by whose good fortune they seemed to have conquered, not mere men, but demigods, that is Ansis. Their genealogy I shall run through briefly, telling the lineage of each ... Now the first of these heroes, as they themselves relate in their legends, was Gapf” [Jordanes/Mierow 1921; Chapter XIII/XIV]. Arne Søby Christensen has denied that Ansis was a Gothic tradition, but his arguments do not lead to that conclusion – just that the king 400 years earlier was not historical, which is no surprise (see chapter 1.3.1.4.). It is quite obvious that Jordanes referred to a usual ancestor religion as a parallel to the maingods, where he mentioned that their war god was Mars: “highly were the Getae praised that Mars, whom the fables of poets call the god of war, was reputed to have been born among them....Now Mars has always been worshipped by the Goths with cruel rites, and captives were slain as his victims” [Jordanes/Mierow 1921, Chapter V]. When Jordanes wrote the Goths were Arian Christians, but he referred to earlier customs at a time when the Heruls and Goths were closely related East Germanic people, whom we should expect to have the same kind of religion. We have no details about the gods of the Heruls, but Procopius wrote they were “worshipping a great host of gods, whom it seemed to them holy to appease even by human sacrifices.” [Procopius/Dewing 1921, Book VI, XIV]. About the religion in Scandinavia he further wrote about their first captive in war: “for they sacrifice him to Ares whom they regard as the greatest god” and he mentioned that they had gods for all elements [Procopius/Dewing 1921, Book VI, XV].

Maybe the two historians could not distinguish between the religions of these people, but the same kind of religion appears to have been used by all the other Germanic people led by their warrior elite.

The Gothic expression “ansis” is very close to the rune “ansuZ”, which meant “god” as a rune name. This linguistic connection indicates a Scandinavian relation between gods and ancestors, which is further supported by the divine name “Ases”, which is regarded to derive from AnsuZ.

This is of course far from our way to regard a god, but it is in accordance with the Germanic way to regard the royal family. When the Germanic people were baptized and got a written language one of their first tasks regarding history was to set up a royal genealogy. Among the first kings in these lists were always found some of their earlier main gods such as Gaut, Geat, Wothan, Odin, Ing and Thor. This was not in order to throw suspicion on the old religion, as claimed by some scholars, but in order not to throw out the traditions which placed the right to the throne on the royal family. All these royal lists must have been manipulated for that purpose.

This was not possible in a religion worshipping as example the sun as a god. Here the king could be a
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representative or a reincarnation of the god\textsuperscript{107}. This is maybe the original difference between the so-called Vanes from the old societies of farmers and the Ases of the warrior elite.

In this way the same society could operate with more than one level of gods – as also Jordanes indicated above. Gods, where some of them could be placed in the royal genealogies, and ancestors being raised as gods.

It is obvious that the Heruls had such a family since Procopius told about “royal blood” and the Illyrian Heruls searched for a king from the family 1000 km away.

Above we have one example of the royal lists where Gapt is normally being regarded as a misspelling of Gaut [Wolfram], the Scandinavian god of the Götes, as Jordanes regarded the Goths to be Swedish Gautoi (Göter). He was probably the same as Geat in the English lists, but more examples will be mentioned in a later chapter.

Both Jordanes, Rimbert and the royal genealogies tell us that ancestor cults were a part of the Germanic religions. That is not controversial at all, as they also were a part of the Roman religion before Christianity, the cult around the Roman emperors being raised as god after their death – and the cult around the earlier Scandinavian burial mounds.

In that way we should expect a kind of ancestor cult among the Svear independently of a Herulic settlement in the Mälar Valley.

2.1.5.3 The answer

Apparently, the Germanic people regarded their royal families as descendants of the gods - at least when the Ases were introduced. Obviously they used to raise heroes to gods as Jordanes and Rimbert told, but they also manipulated the royal lists by putting existing main gods in front of their royal genealogies - maybe a part of the change of religion.

Under all circumstances the development of the pagan religion with its mixture of ancestors, Ases and Vanes and shamanism appear to be a mixture of Germanic and Hunnic religion. Lotte Hedeager told how the Attila and the religion of the Huns had a great impact on the Scandinavians. It is obvious that the direct contact between the Huns and the young Scandinavian warriors and the later contact through the Heruls had the influence at the Scandinavian religions described by Lotte Hedeager in her book "Iron Age Myth and Materiality", 2011.

2.2 A possible scenario

As the necessary evidence to an unqiual conclusion is not presented the most reliable scenario is set

\textsuperscript{107}According to Tacitus already the old fertility cult of the Ingviones had sacral kings or kings, who were reincarnations of gods. The name Suiones may indicate a worshipping of the sun, as the first part of the name derive from Svi, and therefore the Svear possibly also had a fertility cult. Later these kings became descendants of the divine ancestor Gaut, and the same is supposed to be the background of the Southern Germanic god Wothan, who was probably "born" in the turbulent border areas between Germania and the Roman Empire. Both Gaut and Wothan were primarily gods of the warriors and nomads. This change of religion may be caused by a change from agriculture to cattle/nomadic life as the climate changed or as the farmers were attacked by enemies. The Heruls lived side by side with Goths and Alans, whom they probably were influenced by. There are also obvious Scythian remains in the Norse myths. Later most of the Goths became Christians (Arians), when they met the Romans.
up. Based on the most probable answers the scenario can be that the Eastern Heruls sailed from the Varni to Blekinge and passed the Danes without suffering any violence. They were here assisted by the Varni and the Western Heruls, who had ships and had lived close to the sea at the borders between the Saxons and the Frisians. At the arrival they settled in Blekinge/Värend - maybe the Eastern Heruls around Thorsjö/Odinsjö, while the Western Heruls remained at the coast. As described in chapter 1.2.1 there was already a settlement in Vätteryd of former allied horsemen to whom they had already contact. Apparently, this society had found a way to live as neighbours to the Danes in Scania since they were allowed to continue. As the Heruls were no farmers and the local farmers were few they had to take up their usual plundering and threat of their neighbours. Consequently the "Danish Nations" made an alliance and threatened to do like the Lombards. Some of the Heruls may have made an alliance with the Danes like the people in Vätteryd - maybe the seaborne Heruls - and remained in Lister, where they raised the runestones a century later as mentioned in the paper about the Lister Stones.

The Heruls had to find a people generating a sufficient income to defend. It was natural if they focused on the economic and strategic position of the Swedes - if this was not the final target from the very start. The Swedes were the obvious choice for the Heruls when we look at the expanding economy of the Swedes at the old trade route, which the Heruls had followed from the Moravian Gate as written in Chapter 2.1.3.3.2.

Many combinations of possible agreements will now lead to the same result. The king of the Svear may have called on the Heruls as professional advisers and mercenaries against neighbours threatening their expanding wealth - a problem at that time for the people on the Swedish plains according to Jordanes. It is impossible to say if the Heruls took power or simply became military commanders (earls.jarler) in the layer next to the king as they used to do. It would be usual to make an alliance by marriage, which would place the Heruls in the top of the society. They could also later use their power as the Continental barbarians did in England according to Gilda and Bede. Alternatively the Heruls and their allied from Högom simply attacked the Svear and took power, but that was hardly their plan.

Together the two people established a new structure of earls at the Tuna-centres and planned an efficient integration of the two people, where burial customs, religion etc. were harmonized. They had learned that model for a successful establishment of power from Theodoric 10 years earlier and Odoaker, and they had themselves been used to change customs after the people they served or followed.

The difference between the fiasco in Illyria and a possible success in Scandinavia was probably the monotheistic character of the Christian religion. It is obvious by reading Procopius that the Heruls in Illyria could not be accepted as true Christians as a part of them did not want to follow the monotheism. Opposite told the Saxon historian, Widukind, much later that the Scandinavians accepted foreign gods side by side with their own gods. The gods of the warrior elite, the Ases, could in that way be mixed up with the old fertility gods of the Svear, the Vanes - a development which had already started in Scandinavia before the Heruls arrived. As in the other Germanic people Woden and Frej were placed in front of the royal genealogy to secure the family's exclusive right to the throne - and at a later time the god Woden/Odin found his way into fragments of their old legends about the migrations of the people. Maybe we shall notice that the Swedish kings were not claimed to be descendants of Odin as the Danish kings - but descendants of Yngve-Frej - the Ynglings.

Centuries later the dynasty spread their power to other kingdoms - or married or escaped that way -
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where the rune stones in Sparlösa and Rök were raised 300 years later. In the same way Ynglingetal and Ynglingesaga were later written.

It is possible to put more details into the scenario above by reading Ynglingasaga by Snorre and the legends about Frode and Gylfe. This shall, however, be regarded as literature and not as historical sources as described below.

We know that the Heruls were living in Scandinavia – at least in the 6th century – but the historical sources fail to describe the settlement in Scandinavia. Several scenarios can be set up explaining what happened based on the information and hypotheses above. In order to show how likely it may be, a single one is chosen here out of several possibilities.

2.2.1 The journey and the motives behind

Procopius indicated that the Heruls were among the last Eastgermanics worshipping the old gods, and probably their royal family even based their power on an ancestor-cult worshipping also the war god – being Gaut, Wothan or another name. The general political situation in 507-09 AD was that the alliances of Theodoric against the Franks failed. The Visigoths were defeated, the Alemanni were pressed up against the Alps and the Heruls suffered a disastrous defeat. Now the Christian Franks and the Lombards began to dominate the Germanic people. As Theodoric had received the Heruls under his protection and regarded Hrodolhus as his "son in arms", the Heruls should be expected to go into exile in Italy at Theodoric, but only a small group went there according to the scholars – probably because the Heruls were pagan while the Goths were Arian Christians. The homeless royal family of the Heruls probably needed to settle in an area where their old religion and their own “divine” position was still accepted. The legendary "homelands" of the Gauts in Scandia (accepted as true by the Gothic historians of that time) were of course an obvious possibility, and later Procopius even stressed that here “the Gautoi were numerous”.

As described in the main chapter 1 groups of Heruls were already present in Scandinavia in the 5th century. Under all circumstances a trade route existed – as did a connection of warriors bringing the solidi to the Scandinavian workshops and market places.

Of course, the Heruls could find religious freedom elsewhere, but their natural choice would be to follow their Scandinavian companions and the trade route which had provided them with a part of their income by taxation until now. This should also be possible further north.

First they tried to follow the Vistula, but here the Slaws were expanding. Therefore, they turned against the North West, but they did not settle in the empty areas west of the Slavs. Maybe they instead visited some of the people whom Theodoric/Cassiodorus had tried to gather against the Merovingian kings – as they passed near to the regions where the Thuringians and the Varni (later a part of the Saxons) lived. Maybe groups of these people even followed a charismatic king of the Heruls towards their dream of a religious sanctuary.

Their knowledge about Scandinavia from their partners up there may have caused a plan after which they negotiated with the Danes from an interim base at their allied, the Varni. They may have passed the Danes on ships sailed by the Varni (as the Bosporanians had sailed them earlier). Therefore, Procopius could tell that they “passed the Nations of the Danes without suffering violence”.

Helmet from the boatgraves and the Uppsala Mounds. They were made like Roman cavallery helmets from the 5th century, but they were produced in Scandinavia – probably by people with veneration for that time. (Bertil Almgren).
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In that case they probably went ashore at the eastern coasts of Scania or in Blekinge – with Listerland is a likely possibility. Here and up along the rivers of Värend in a scarcely populated area they could stay for a while waiting to be gathered and reconsolidated inside the reach of Scania and the trade centres at Bornholm and Oeland. They were probably able to buy some cattle for their golden treasures, but they had to take up their old way of living too.

Maybe they even knew by themselves that it was only a matter of time before the Danes had to stop them. Procopius mentioned the Dani “nations” in pluralis – maybe at least Scania, Sealand and Halland as separate nations, but they consisted more likely of many local chieftains. Probably one of the Danish chieftains took the lead at that time and formed an alliance as a king. That was probably what also the Lombards did. The Heruls did not find the poor area worth fighting for – at least the scattered information indicate that the Danes just frightened or expelled the Heruls, which is even reflected in the Norse legends (Chapter 3.4).

Which place they had planned for their final destination, we do not know, but they had now the opportunity to search for and analyse the possibilities. The Danes had become too strong, the Norwegian places were too small and isolated – even more than Värend – the Götes at the plains had been used to keep out the intruders for centuries. These Götes had earlier defeated the horse riders, and the finds in Finnestorp may indicate that the Heruls had tried again. The fur trade route was probably still the most interesting, but the Eastern Heruls were not used of islands – they were horse riders. Their allies from Högom had possibly at that time found a new living place in the Målar Valley – Birgit Arrhenius has suggested the areas around Vendel. The Målar Valley had possibly now been the place where the fur trade was gathered. This was new open and fertile land due to the general raising from the sea-level, in the nearby Bergslagen they had found a lot of iron, and the trade route passed the area with Helgö in the mouth of the Målar (at that time a firth) as a rich trade centre for centuries. The Målar Valley was the obvious choice – a flourishing economy was exactly what the former mercenaries needed.

2.2.2 The take over and the integration

They had two main possibilities. They could negotiate an alliance regarding military protection as mercenaries or they could conquer the area.

The alliance is not unrealistic. The Svear were probably threatened as Jordanes described that the tribes at the fertile plains of Scanza were attacked all the time by the surrounding tribes – probably especially intensified by the dark years 536-538. The Svear needed protection from trained Roman mercenaries. Bede told108 that

108 Bede’s “Historia Ecclesiastica” (c. 730) and the Celtic Gilda from around 550 AD. Gilda called them all Barbarians or Saxons, and according to Gudmund Schytte Bede was not 250 years later able to distinguish the different people and tribes. As Gilda mentioned, that these wild beasts were feared as they had been there before, and that they defended their coasts against them, it is therefore more likely, that they first called for assistance in the nearby Frisian area, where groups of Herulian mercenaries were supposed to live. Earlier the Britains called Roman Legions for help, with the result that Western Herulian mercenaries in the 360’ies twice assisted at the Scottish
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the Angles, Saxons and Jutes 50 years earlier were called to England to help the Britons against the Picts – a group probably containing Western Heruls too. Later these protectors turned their weapons against the same Britons, but there are no signs of that in Sweden.

An alliance of that kind would probably imply marriage between members of the royal dynasties, which could later lead to an integration of the dynasties. Political marriages were usual among the Germanic dynasties.

Maybe the Heruls were experienced soldiers, but we must under all circumstances regard them as a minority. If it was a military take over together with the allied from Högom, they may have subdued some of the local tribes one by one instead of expelling them. 10-20 years earlier the war-experienced Heruls subdued their neighbours around the Danube – and lost the power again. They had probably learned by their mistakes using now the same tactics as their ally Theodoric did in Italy 5-15 years before they left.

Theodoric had occupied Italy with a Gothic/Rugian army after the war against Odoaker, but he let the civilian Roman society work without interference – to his own economic advantage. Already Odoaker had followed such tactics by use of these Heruls. The people of Northern Italy were probably happy to pay 1/3 of their harvest in tax as they for the first time in many years could live in peace. Theodoric was an Arian though growing up in Constantinople, but he accepted the Catholics in Italy. Theodoric is even mentioned at the Rök Stone and he is supposed to be a model for the Danish mythical king Frode Fredegod (the German Dietrich of Bern) about whom is told, that he under his "Frode Peace" could place a golden ring at the road without any one touching it - just like Theodoric under his "Gothic Peace". If Theodoric could end up in the Danish legends as the great ideal – maybe through the narratives of the Heruls – he could also be a role model to the people of his “son in arms”.

It is not so important if a member of the Herulian dynasty became king or they remained earls as the dynasties just may have melted together. Maybe we shall notice that in the Swedish legends the Ynglings do not descend from Odin as the Danish Scyldings. The Ynglings were descending from the old fertility god, Frey. The the Herulic minority was probably integrated with the Svear.

How it could be done we can only guess. They both spoke a Germanic language, being at that time closer to each other than today. In that way the initial problem was easily solved. In general, the Heruls were probably eager to support the integration process in order to follow the ideas of Theodoric.

They probably build up a structure of smaller units controlled and protected by an earl and his soldiers as Theodoric did in Italy. The structure is indicated by the Tuna-settlements and the boat graves with one graves in each generation.

Scandinavia must have been severely hit by the “dark years” 536-38, where the sun disappeared in a cloud of dust all over the world. It was a catastrophe being described by many historians as a great famine. The king of a society of pagan farmers would normally be held responsible for that, but hardly the earls and their soldiers who would profit of that situation. The warlike Heruls would without doubt strengthen their position at that time.

border (Ammianus).

109 Theodoric is supposed to have used 20.000 soldiers to defeat Odoaker and cover Rome and Italy.

110 In Danish history we find many kings under the name Frode, who might have Theodoric as their model. Some scholars regard Frode as a general nickname “The wise”, others regard Frode as Frey, but in Old English “Freothu” means “Peace”. Probably Frithu (peace in Gothic) is the link between Theodoric - famous for his Gothic peace - and the name Frode, where the most famous Frode later on got the nickname Fredegod consisting of the elements “peace” and "good/gode/Goth" in Danish. The description of the death and funeral of Frode Fredegod, where his body was transported around in the whole country, has according Niels Lukman similarities to ancient Gothic habit of royal funerals.

111 This may be the reason why the name of the Heruls could disappear imperceptibly. They wanted to be identified with their new people as their ruling class.
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The religion was obviously a great problem between Justinian and the Heruls as indicated by Procopius. The reason here was the monotheistic character of the Christian religion. That is the reason why Angelika Lintner-Potz could call her thesis “The Heruls – a failed ethnogenesis”.

Among the pagan religions the problems did not need to be so heavy - especially if the religions had the same character as described above. They probably had different gods, but it is no coincidence that the Roman authors could translate them with their own names. The Saxon historian Widukind told much later that the Danes could accept Christ as a god side by side with their own gods. In that case it was just a question about merging the two Pantheons – and that was exactly what appear to have happened in Scandinavia – the Ases and the Vanes. The final result were the three main gods Odin, Thor and Frej side by side in Uppsala as told by Adam of Bremen.

The change of the religion was a process, which went on for centuries, but as mentioned a radical change happened 450-550112. This was the introduction of Wothen/Odin in Scandinavia – and that was without doubt used by the Heruls too.

The Heruls had probably been used to many burial customs when travelling around and serving other people. As semi nomads they had probably not felt it necessary to raise impressing monuments before Mähren. The change of religion made it also possible to change the burial rites of Scandinavia. The result was the anonymous cremations placed flatly in the field – inexpensive without difference between ordinary people. Only the kings got monuments, but they were burned as the rest as also Procopius told. Later the earls wanted to show their position in the society and the religion. They found a combination of the European princely chamber graves with a boat grave earlier found in the eastern Frisian region, where the Western Heruls had lived (Fallwzrd 431AD).

In order to tie the throne to the family they had to make the god a part of the family as described earlier, but how this was done we can only guess. Maybe Odin became the head of the Herulic dynasty and Frej of the dynasty of the Svear.

A consequence may have been that the high-priest-function (the "gode") was exercised by or controlled by the king. Maybe the "gode"-function in Uppsala was the only official justification of the superior king - except for the superiority inside the family. The superior royal courts (thing) may have been combined with sacrifice, feast and market - maybe, if the kingdom covered wide areas, combined by an astronomical calendar being used in every corner of the kingdom. Narratives and archaeology may indicate such a combination, but this will never allow us to conclude the opposite way.

2.2.3 The consolidation

The new society and its official religion were probably formed over a period of at least 50 years – though being continuously changed afterwards. Most of the small Scandinavian kingdoms probably continued, but some of the neighbouring kingdoms were in the Vendel Period subdued and maybe sometimes ruled by the "Earls" - and even the islands in the Baltic Sea showed around 600AD a uniform style.

In the middle of the 6th century the Heruls lost their old connections with the area of Dacia and Pannonia, when the Avars replaced the Lombards, Gepides and Heruls. Therefore, the connections with the Western Germanic cultural centres became the most important, which inevitably affected the cultural development in Scandinavia, when the dynasty had to manifest its power and wealth imitating their victorious former

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112 Maybe the timing was perfect after the fifth century, as the cult of Wotan already had expanded from south displacing the old fertility cult of the Ingviones in many regions – a.o. Jutland. Especially the bracteates of the 5th century may indicate that expansion. The Danes at Sealand and Scania "were of the same stock as the Suiones" according to Jordanes - maybe just meaning original worshippers of the sun - which corresponds with Tacitus.
enemies, the Franks and the Lombards.

The archaeological signs of a contemporary military and religious change all over Scandinavia to a homogeneous area with a new strong concentration of power around Uppsala – and with some less significant centres in Gotland, Gudhjem, Lejre and Gudme – could indicate that the kings in Uppsala expanded their power with Uppsala as the base of the superior king. This was probably only the case in the Middle and Northern Sweden - and first at a later stage - as the trade connections between the centres appear to be low most of the time (Karen Høilund Nielsen) and as the uniformity can be explained as above with Heruls working as "earls" in the other kingdoms or just as their symbols and weapons may be copied.

Later the dynasty appears to have been spread to other places which the rune stones in Rök and Sparlösa indicate around 800 AD. The same was even indicated in the Norwegian Ynglingatal in the 10th century. We do not know if this was due to superiority or if the family were now refugees due to a new dynasty.

The Sparlösa-stone could indicate an Uppsala-superiority over Götaland around 800 (unless it referred earlier events) - making these kings a part of an old dynasty from Uppsala. Such a rule shall not be regarded as an Uppsala-empire, but subjugation for a short period of time with payment of tribute. Maybe Uppsala had a kind of a religious superiority with Heruls placed in some of the other kingdoms or married into the royal families - just as in Southern Europe.

### 2.3 DNA

The suggested Y-haplogroup Q1a2 of the Huns has a subgroup Q1a2b1 found in high-intensity (5%) in parts of Scandinavia - especially Götaland - and in Burgundy, which in the legends is combined with the Heruls and the Huns. As a part of the Herulian royal family's companions presumably may have had Hunnic blood in their veins there may be a correlation. At least the concentration on this map is interesting. High intensity is found on places where we know the Heruls settled (Dnepr, Moravia, Belgrade and Sweden). When the intensity in Sweden is high a reason may be that regions of Götaland have been isolated. On the website also the question "Huns in Sweden?" is asked. In addition the question is whether the Sarmatians had a similar type of DNA. There are no published correlations between 500-century chieftain graves in Scandinavia and Central Europe. Present DNA studies of the character above are very uncertain. For the moment DNA shall not be part of the arguments regarding the Heruls, but the theories about DNA do not contradict the hypotheses of this article.

### 2.4 Conclusions regarding the settlement

The questions by Aake Hyenstrand could not be answered without any doubt, but the main question about Heruls and Svear combined with the presence of the Western Heruls lead to the most probable explanation, which also indirectly answered most of the other questions. The answer based on a combination of history and archaeology without any use of legends leads to the following conclusion about Scandinavia:

There is no doubt that the Herulian dynasty was operating in Scandinavia in the 6th century and that this was due to connections between the Heruls and Scandinavia in the 5th century. The most probable explanation is that most of the Moravian Heruls settled in the Uppsala region and that their dynasty as earls became a part of the dynasty of the Svear. The archaeology does show the necessary tracks of that, but archaeology will probably never constitute a proof.

The usual attitude has been that Uppsala and Vendel is only an internal development until the
opposite is proven - with an article by the professor in English, Alvar Ellegaard, as the historical alibi. This attitude is - like the Straengnaes-episode - irresponsible as the risk is that the most likely explanation regarding the Heruls will be left out of most archaeological research and examinations - simply because they are hardly mentioned in the Swedish literature.

2.4.1 Conclusion about history compared with archaeology

The very concrete information from Procopius that the Heruls settled at the Scandinavian Peninsula – first time at or beside the Gauts - and that their dynasty still possessed power in Sweden 39 years later, should be regarded as reliable as this was a contemporary information – obviously even passed to him by eyewitnesses. He was not able to manipulate the description of the return of Datus from Scandinavia as this was already well-known by his relevant contemporary readers. He would only lose his credibility by manipulating that information. Further a Herulic presence in Scandinavia after the defeat of the Huns should be regarded as confirmed by Jordanes and 300 years later probably also by the Rök Stone. It will even be demonstrated in the next chapter that the earlier argument against the Heruls that they left no trace in the Norse legends is no longer valid – though it can neither be used as an evidence for their presence. Their arrival cannot be neglected as already concluded in Chapter 1.

The combination of the indications in the wording by Procopius and Jordanes points at an interim settlement between Danes and Götes. This should be followed by a later integration with a Scandinavian people further north, where their royal dynasty was still active, but that part of the historical conclusion is not unequivocal as statements in the sources used for the purpose are very short and unclear. Though Jordanes in this way may confirm Procopius this is too uncertain to be a historical proof of a settlement in Uppsala, but we have a clear historical indication of a settlement so far north. Furthermore we should in the opposite case find international archaeological traces from the 6th century in one of the former countries of the Götes stronger than in Svealand – which is not the case.

The theoretical possibility that also the royal family disappeared is rejected by the Rök Stone. Maybe they were integrated by intermarriage, but they did not forget the origin of the family. This would also be totally against their earlier behaviour, their military background, the determination bringing them all the way to Sweden and especially the fact that they were worth sending for, when the Illyrian Heruls wanted a new king of the royal bloodline 39 years later.

The archaeological recognition in the Uppsala area of a new kind of royal manifestation with a touch of Roman mercenary culture should be regarded as certain - and independent of Procopius. The area was since then - and according to some legends and the archaeology also before - the residence of the kings of Svealand. The East Germanic fibulas and the Scandinavian bracteates from the 5th century confirm that the Heruls in Moravia had heard about the Scandinavian destination, but they do not specifically point at the Mälar-region. Neither does the more general change in sacrifices and burial traditions in the first part of the 6th century. What does point against the Mälar Region is the archaeology from the 6th century as summarized in Chapter 2.1.3.3.2.6, which shall not be repeated here. As also concluded in that chapter the founders of the civilisation will never be identified unequivocally by archaeology with the usual technology.

The conclusion that Uppsala is the most likely explanation is based on the combination of history and archaeology, as we know their tracks shall be found. We cannot exclude that Uppsala was a local development, which would mean that two similar international societies of former mercenaries with East Germanic connections grew up contemporarily near the Götes, but it is rather unlikely – especially as we have no tracks of such a second society.

The last question in Chapter 1 was: “How could the leading dynasty of this strong and feared people of warriors disappear in Scandinavia without a trace in archaeology or legends?” The answer to the first part of the question is that we have such traces in Uppland matching this former allied with
Odoaker, Childeric and Theodoric, but it is not possible to identify them with certainty.

### 2.4.2 Certainty and further possibilities

Wanting more certainty we do have to wait for further archaeological finds or investigations, including more detailed analyses of weapons, burial traditions and fibulas. DNA-analyses of human bones and maybe horses in the graves comparing the countries along the Danube with the Scandinavian centres around 500AD will be very important. In this connection DNA-analyses of the Norwegian queen in the Oseberg ship burial (being regarded as a descendant of the Ynglinga-family by Norwegian scholars) show that she probably had an ancestor in the Black Sea region - but that may have been centuries or millenniums back in time. A planned excavation of the Eastern Mound in Uppsala could be a step in the right direction if the DNA-profiles are compared also with DNA samples from the tombs around Blucina. However the archaeological characteristics of the Heruls were blurred by 75 years of fellowship with Huns and Ostrogoths ending only 50 years before the migration, and by the role as mercenaries in armies of mixed Germanic nationality. As they were a relatively small part of the population in Scandinavia we shall never expect many such finds, but something should be found.

Another group of sources is found among the Frankish historians and the Scandinavian and English storytellers, where the single information does not have any historical value because of a late recording. However the total impression might give us some headlines of the historical development in Scandinavia. Snorri Sturlasson clearly tells us, that the kings of Uppsala originated from the area around Don – just like the Heruls – without mentioning the Heruls at all. Actually this was the missing link, if we wanted to present a convincing evidence of the Hypothesis of the Heruls using only history, but the source is not reliable for this purpose. However if we regard this "literature" from a higher perspective we will in a surprising way get an explanation of the hypothesis described in the following chapter.

### 3 The Norse myths and legends

It has often been used as an argument against the Heruls in Scandinavia that they were never mentioned in the rich literature found in Northern Europe about the Scandinavian past. It is therefore necessary to evaluate this part of the literature too, though it is common for nearly all these works that they were written down 1000-1300 AD – long time after the events. Accordingly they can never be regarded as historical sources as such though they contain invaluable information about the Viking Culture.

We have already touched the East Anglian poems of Beowulf and Widsith which are older than the manipulated Scandinavian legends and had a knowledge to Scandinavia due to the Western Heruls. The interesting is, that they both mention a Danish expulsion of a foreign people called Eorla or Wicinga. The event has not been noticed due to the unknown names, but probably pirates like the Western Herul were called Wicinga in England long time before we meet that name in Scandinavia. If they also knew Jordanes, who told exactly the same, we do not know. At least it became a reputation for the Danish kings in Europe which made them famous from Constantinople to England. Probably it was the same expulsion Saxo referred to, when he wrote about Frode and the Huns. As their name had become earl the later scalds probably believed they were a part of the Huns they followed earlier. Saxo even described Starkad and Erik like foreign mercenary advisors. It is not history, but nevertheless a Northeuropean acceptance of Jordanes. The Heruls were mentioned in Northern European legends!

Lotte Hedeager has as a part of her theories about the Huns suggested that the myth about Odin's journey in Ynglingesaga was inspired by Attila. In Iceland Snorri Sturlasson wrote in the Edda a
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dialog between the Svea-king Gylfe and the god Odin, but initially he told the traditional story about the origin of the gods and the royal family in Troy – a late Christian version. After travelling around in Scandinavia Snorri 10 years later told in Ynglingesaga another legend about a king, Odin, and his "men from Asia", who came from the surroundings of Tanais (River Don). This "Odin" first time settled at one of the several places called "Odinsey" – which could as well be an Odensjö in Sweden as at the Danish Odense as Snorre believed. From here the king negotiated with Gylfe. Later he moved to Sigtuna and got a temple in the town of Gylfe – Uppsala. Snorri told about Odin assimilating the Ases and the Vanes – the Wothan cult of the warriors and the old Scandinavian fertility cult, where Tacitus' Nerthus and Ing were succeeded by Njord and Frej. He told how the king “Odin” was raised as a god – in accordance with the stories by Jordanes and Rimbert – a natural process in the history of religions. Then he told about a successful Scandinavian integration project, including new burial customs with cremation (except for Frej – the ancestor of the Ynglings).

Rather than the history of Attila alone this narrative may also remind us of the history of his companions, the Eastern Heruls, who also according to Jordanes believed their origin to be Tanais like Odin. Though Snorri’s description of the route was based on the geographical understanding and the travel routes of the Mediaval Ages it is possible to recognize elements of the history of the Heruls and partly of their Hunnic kahn, Attila – though many of the old narratives probably had melted together over the long span of years. A settlement in two stages like the Heruls’ – ending finally up in Uppsala.

We are not able to decide today how much of the works by Snorri are reconstructions and how much are fragments of old legends about the kings with gods placed as ancestors in order to legitimize their right to the throne. Rabid scholars have accused Snorri for inventing it all as a Christian in the 13th century in order to throw suspicion on the pagan religion as euhemeristic. The case is that he did not need to invent that. The Germanic ancestor cult and the cult around the Roman emperors were by nature euhemeristic. Quite opposite a lot of the material used by Snorri is known from earlier historians and poems.

In 2011 Lotte Hedeager presented in the end of her book a rehabilitation of the Danish scholar Niels Lukman – mentioned in chapter 2.1.2.1 – who claimed that the Heruls brought their old myths about their companionship with the Huns in Central Europe to Scandinavia and became known there as "Jarls". If we combine these two hypotheses – considering that the Heruls probably were regarded as a part of the Huns in Northern Europe and influenced by these Huns – her ideas will be in accordance with the history in the former chapters. This will apply regardless of Lotte Hedeager or Ulf Naesmann were right in their discussions about the history, and regardless of Niels Lukmann probably exaggerated how many Scandinavian mythical kings had an East Germanic or Hunnic origin. Later in 2011 the publication of the Strängnäs inscription "rilAR . WodinR" has even proved a connection between Wothan and ErilaR – an inscription which would have supported Lukman if it had been published in 1962 when it was found.

The journey in Ynglingesaga was just one example of possible traces of the Heruls in the North European literature, where the Roman name Herul had disappeared – maybe because it was now understood as the title “jarl”/”earl”.

There is no doubt that the sources behind the sagas have been changed over the years – which the Icelanders were not able to see through. The Pantheon of Snorri is as example a frozen picture which only indirectly reflects the many differences locally and over time in a dynamic process – but most religious people regard their religion in that way too. Snorri told i.e. about the changes in
burial customs in the 6th century which the archaeologists reveal in our time – just as Beowulf (and Snorri) described the boar helmets of the 6th century, which are now excavated. It is more likely that Snorri got this information from old poems than he invented such information. Neither could the Scandinavians have invented the East Germanic touch in many of the legends.

Maybe the manipulated and unreliable Scandinavian sagas and chronicles do in this way contain fragments of the history of this vagrant royal family and their superior Huns. It is of course interesting to search for the hidden tracks, which may put a new content into the legends and may explain how the Heruls could disappear in Scandinavia – but they will never be regarded as historical evidence.

The conclusions in the two first main chapters are in no way dependent of the Norse literature, but due to the arguments and examples referred from the main article above the Norse literature will be analysed with focus on these topics. In the following chapter the relevant information will be emphasized in:

1. Sagas, chronicles and legends
2. The Norse religion
   as the background for
3. The journey of Odin.

Afterwards two other examples of parallels between classical history and Norse literature will be mentioned:

4. The expulsion of the Heruls – Norse parallels to Jordanes
5. Burial customs – Parallels between Snorri, Procopius and the archaeology

3.1 Sagas, chronicles and legends

The Nordic myths and legends were written down several hundred years after the events. They contain a lot of contradictions and obvious mistakes, and accordingly most scholars reject them as sources at all - just like they have been neglected in the chapters and the conclusion above. Even the most ingenious philological interpretation of these legends can be rejected by critique, and many of the legends are of course pure fairy tales or narratives combined from different places or times.

Among scholars it is popular in a thesis to demonstrate knowledge about historical source criticism by showing parallels between these medieval works and the classical works. Scholars like Curt Weibull, Niels Lukman, Karsten Friis-Jensen, Inge Skovgaard-Petersen, Heinz Klingenberg, Claus Krag and Arne Søby Christensen have demonstrated that single stylistic elements, names or general story lines may have been copied from classical works. There is no doubt that a writer like Saxo used his classical knowledge when he manipulated the legends. However several scholars exaggerate the consequences of these observations - but not necessarily the above-mentioned scholars themselves.

Karsten Friis-Jensen has as example observed that Saxo must have used a work by Valerius Maximus owned by Absalon, which he quoted 1862 times, but Karsten Friis-Jensen has explained that Saxo used these sentences to make his language more sophisticated in the classical style. He did not use the content – except for the use of Vergil in parts of Bjarkemaal.

Obvious presence of classical stylistic elements in a poem implicates that the poem was created, changed or written down by a writer educated in Romanesque style, but that does not tell anything about the content - except that such a Nordic source must be a secondary story if the events took place earlier than the 11th century.

Similarities between names from the Migration Ages and names from the Norse Sagas and Myths do not prove that such stories are late transferred legends as Curt Weibull and Niels Lukman have claimed. The East Germanic names from the Migration Ages were common at the Nordic rune stones already in the 9th century and earlier. The same is the case regarding similar events. It is normally possible somewhere to find a general
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line of history appearing similar with the one being analysed, but only elements of a classical story identified with certainty by several details and names may prove, that the Nordic source is unreliable. Even in such cases the work may still have a substantial Nordic content, as the problem may be a mix up caused by the compiling by later authors.

Even though stylistic elements, names and elements of action in the story in this way can be proven to originate from a classical work, this will not prove that the total work is made up or has a classical background.

The Norse poems and legends cannot in general be brushed aside by the above mentioned kind of arguments, but on the other hand they can never be claimed as reliable and convincing. Basically they are literature, but literature is a mirror of the knowledge at the time it was written - including the existing earlier sources at that time. We will never get any knowledge of the events and the way of thinking in the Nordic Iron and Viking Ages if we do not carefully try to find the headlines in the superior structures and courses of events in those sources – if possible combined with archaeological or external historical information.

Especially the basic religious myths with their headlines and laws are supposed to be better preserved until Christian times than the normal legends - if political considerations did not contradict.

Below we will go through the most relevant chronicles and sagas. The connection between Vendel, Lejre and East Anglia will be discussed based on Beowulf, Widsith, the history of the East Germanic people and the problems with the name Geat. The connection between South East Europe, the Huns, the Heruls and the sagas will be discussed based on Hervararsaga and the theories of Lukman. The last works we will go through are Dudo mentioning the mysterious Danish/Dacian connection, the purpose behind the Danish chronicle of Saxo, where the Heruls can be traced and then of course the works of Snorri. Finally a short discussion of the confusion of names being probably the reason why the Heruls have never been identified in the Norse myths and legends.

3.1.1 Beowulf and Widsith

Initially the Old English poems, Beowulf and Widsith, shall be discussed as they may illustrate the problems with the identification of the various Germanic people.

Beowulf is known in only one version from the 10th century, but it is by many scholars supposed to origin from a Christian English court in the 8th century. It was based on old pagan legends (many of them usually regarded as Danish as they tell about Danes and Swedes) put into a fairy tale about the dragon killer, Beowulf – just like the use of historical persons in poems i.e. Nibelungenlied.

3.1.1.1 Geat and the Geats

Maybe we should notice that Beowulf was a Geat - a name which is known as a personal name from the royal genealogies and the poem Deor, but unknown as the name of a people. The English bishop Asser told around 887 AD in "The life of King Alfred" that Alfred's ancestor Geat was worshipped as a pagan god for a long time. To support that he referred to the Irish/Roman poet Sedililius, who in 455 AD mentioned the "ridiculoque Geta" - obviously the ancestor god of the pagans. At that time "Getae" was according to

Link to “The life of King Alfred”. Sedililius or Sedulus was probably of Irish birth and studied pagan religions before he settled as a poet in Italy and Greece, where he wrote this verse in Carmen Paschale. He shall not be confused with the later Irish monk of the same name. The OE name "Geot" (which was used as a parallel to "Geat") may according to Ben Slade (Slade 2003, Deor-notes) be derived from "yeotan", which meant "to pour". Similarly Ingemar Nordgren (Nordgren 2004, page 173-178) has referred to the scholars discussing "Gaut" being derived from an old ON version of this verb "to pour" (Du: "gyde", Sw: "gjuta", OSw: "giota", OWN: "giota") (ao. Th. Andersson 1998, page 5). Several connections from the water being connected with the god of birth from old over the spread of sperm by the phallus-dominated idols to the meaning "man" have been proposed.
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both Procopius (553 AD) and Dudo (1020 AD) a common name for the "Gothic people" - Goths, Gepides, Vandals, Alans, Sarmatians a.o. - and probably also the Heruls, who were often regarded as a Gothic people. Since the 5th century this name had been generally used, though it was mixed up with an old non Germanic people of Thracia114 - neighbours of these new “Dacians”. Of course Asser could be mistaken, but as he combined the English Geat with the Latin Geta115 he and his contemporaries probably regarded the Geats as the Getae. Jordanes called his own work about the Goths "Getica", where he referred the claim by Cassiodorus that the Goths were originally Guts from Sweden. Consequently, the Gatts/Götes of Sweden would to an Englishman knowing Jordanes be a part of the Geats – if they regarded the ethnic manipulation by Cassiodorus as the Gothic origin. That may explain why English poets combined Gotic (the fights against the Swedes) and Gothic legends as that of Ermaneric in Beowulf. The attempts by the Church to identify the Goths/Getae with Gog and Magog of the Bible (Isodor de Seville, I) cannot be used to question the reasoning above. A background for the confusion may have been that Gaut, Gapt (misspelling by Jordanes), Geta, Geat and Geot were all names in different languages covering the same Germanic ancestor god of old times, who in Scandinavia according to Grimmismal was later substituted by Odin. It could be a part of that substitution, when Origo Genti Langobardorum and Paulus Diaconus used Godan for Woden, and when Frau Gauden in the folklore of Mecklenburg was known as a female Woden in the "wild hunt" – but the change could also been a usual change between Latin and Germanic. Ingemar Nordgren's suggestion about a common cultic league worshipping Gaut around the Baltic Sea (Nordgren 2004) may be one of the ways to explain that, but less will do regarding the explanation of Beowulf.

In the 9th century a wave of Gothism influenced the writing in the Frankish Empire and in the English Wessex. Probably due to this wave Geat and the Geats became popular elements of the past, but both Geat and the people Geats must be regarded as fictionary consisting af both Gothic people, Goetes, Getae, Jutes and sometimes even Danes. It was probably used as a way to form a trans-ethnic identity in order to include as many ethnicities as possible in their building of a nation and the new name Anglecynn from Alfred's Orosius translation.

The actual Beowulf may be a result of this process, where the fictive hero, Beowulf, may be an invention in a late Christian version of many earlier layers of scaldic poems – with the name Bear-Wulf referring to the old Scandinavian berserks. One of them was probably developed over centuries based on the marriage of an Eastanglian princess of the Wulfings to the Danish king Roar. That will explain the sympathy for Roar in the English version and the invention of the nickname Heathobeards to he hide that he was fighting against another branch of his family – opposite most of the Danish scaldic poems.

The confusion will explain why the Gothic king Ermaneric had a role to play in Beowulf and will explain from where the death of the Geatic king Higelac (the uncle of Beowulf) was copied. The latter was called king Hyglaco of the Getorum in Liber Monstrorum from the 6th century. The death of this king was by Gregory of Tours described as the death of a Danish king Chochillaicus - killed in Southern Frisia 515-530 by the Franks116. Why he 50 years later was called a Dane by Gregory is unknown, but at that time also Venantius used "Saxones et Dani" as the names of the pirates in France. He was rather the king of a group of Getae – i.e. Gothic refugees or remaining Western Herulian pirates from Harlingen or Northern Frisia (Southern Denmark), who at that time disappeared from the sources.

3.1.1.2 Beowulf and the “Dane” Chochillaicus

In connection with the mentioning of Dani in France we shall notice that the Ravenna Cosmography around

114 Both Claudian, Marcellinus Comes, Jordanes, Procopius, Isodor of Seville and Orosius made that mistake.
115 As did Nennius in spelling, while the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle used the combined people name "Geata" and the Anglian royal lists of Lindisfarna used Geat/Eat with the son Godwulf.
116 The event in the description by Gregory is normally dated to 516, but at that time Theodoberth, the killer of Chochillaicus, was very young. Therefore Chochillaicus may have died some years later. Venantius described a similar event in the middle of the 6th century where Saxons joined the Danes as pirates. Liber Monstrorum mentioned "Hyglaco" as king of "Getorum".
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730 AD told that next to the Serdifinni (Scridfenni/Sami) was situated "a country called Dania. In this country people derived, according to the learned Goths, Aihanarius, Eldevaldus and Marcomirius, being faster than all other people [as the Heruls were earlier described]. This Dania is now called the country of the Nordomans (Normans)." [Ravenna Cosmography, IV, 12]. As known the name Normanni was later used to cover all the people from Scandinavia, which may indicate that the name Dani, which first appeared around 550 AD, was used by the early Franks as a general name of all Germanic people coming from Scandinavia.

Among Danish historians, however, it was accepted as a consequence of Gregory of Tours and Beowulf that a friend of Beowulf, King Rolf (Hrodwulf) in Lejre, should be dated to the time around 500 AD. However the dating does neither correspond with the archaeology of Lejre nor with the range of the Scandinavian warships in the beginning of the 6th century. Rather should the founder of Lejre live in the middle of the 6th century. The death of Hugleik is mentioned 3-4 times in Beowulf poem without motivation and sometimes in a wrong place in the chronology – probably a result of a Christian break-up of the original pagan environment.

The only link between the Danish Roar (Hrodgar) and the death of Hyglaco in Frisia was limited to the mythical figure, Beowulf, in a poem several hundred years later – unknown from all other sources and with the only role to fight against supernatural dragons. It is difficult to regard the claimed link as convincing. Years after my first publishing of my statement above also the Danish historian, Arne Søby Christensen, claimed in Historisk Tidsskrift 2005-1 that Chocillaicus was not a Dane - after I had asked him some questions in that regard. However, he also wrote that the Chocillaicus of Gregor of Tours could not be Higelac of Beowulf due to differences in spelling. Unfortunately, that conclusion is typical for the scholarly reactions against the poem. Higelac could easily be “Hyglaco” of Liber Monstrorum, who without doubt was the same as the later Chocillaicus of Gregory of Tours as they described the similar event.

No Goths nor Geats were mentioned by Bede, but when he listed up the pagan Germanic people around Britain (Frisians, Danes, Rugians, Old Saxons and Bruchters (Bede V,ix)) he also included the Huns – the same mistake as Saxo did as the Eastern Heruls had followed the Huns. The Heruls had been forgotten as a people for years when Bede wrote. The Hugleik-story of Beowulf has probably an origin among these East Germanic (Getic) groups without any connection with the history of Roar and his Danes.

What is interesting, however, is that the kings known from the Danish legends, i.e. Roar and Rolf, who due to a combination of Procopius, Jordanes and Saxo can be dated to the second part of the 6th century, were key figures in Beowulf. As were the Swedish kings of Uppsala being mentioned in Ynglingatal – Ongentheow, Onela and Adils – the last name also mentioned at the Sparlösa-stone from around 800 AD.

Roar, Rolf and Ongentheow – but not Hugleik and Beowulf – are also mentioned in the English poem Widsith, but that poem mixed up heroes from 300-600 AD119.

117 Rolf was the second generation in Lejre, and he probably lived around 600 AD (This is explained in "Danernes Sagnhistorie" by Troels Brandt).
118 Opposite the style of the poem, the first episode describes a future event and as an explanation of the importance of the necklace Brisingemien it has without doubt contained the pagan story of Freja and Brisingemien. The episode about Beowulf swimming home looks like a repetition of the earlier Breka swimming, and it indicates that his home was England or Frisia. The two other episodes are a part of the historical framework like in Widsith and Nibelungenlied, where the framework was a mixture of events from different times and places.
119 The poem, which 3 separate parts probably originate from the time around 700 AD, had obviously the same sources as Beowulf. Of the kings from the later Denmark Widsith "met" Roar and Rolf, the Seadane Siger, the mighty Danish king Ahlewli (who lived at the same time as the Anglian king Uffe (5th century)), the Hoching (the Halfdane Hnaef's father in Beowulf was Hoch) Hnaef, the Eute (Jute) Gefwulf and some small Danish kingdoms. Also tribes with the names Herefarer (King Hringwald) and Herelingas are mentioned. Notice the similarity between Herelingas, Herilunge-(veld – earlier note) and ErlirA. However Herelingas is normally connected to the Harlungen Twins, who according to Malone are again connected to "The wild Hunt" and Wothan (Harjan) - but by Wolffram mentioned as possible Heruls.
3.1.1.3 England, Scandinavian archaeology and Beowulf

The names in the Beowulf poem and the fact that it was found in England indicate a link between Lejre and Mercia/East Anglia. In the poem also the boar crested helmets are mentioned, though they disappeared in the graves around 700 AD. These helmets are now found in graves in England and on helmet plates in Sweden indicating that these old Celtic symbols were used again as signs of social rank in both the Scandinavian countries and the kingdoms of Mercia/East Anglia – even though the new kind of boar helmets first appear after the Angles had left Jutland. Also some of the helmet plates are identical in Uppsala and Sutton Hoo. In the Anglian countries the kings all claimed to descend from Odin/Woden – here the members of the dynasties had later the same title, eorl/ jarl – and here in both areas the ring button swords were found (earlier a Frankish symbol). The Style II found in Vendel is also found in the Sutton Hoo grave in East Anglia from about 625 AD among artefacts of Roman or Byzantine origin.120 Also the runes were used in England, but as England had been Roman with a written language they were not used in the same way. These connections between the dynasties of Scandinavia and England were apparently lost, when the kings of East Anglia and Mercia were baptised in the beginning of the 7th century.

There are too many common signs between East Anglia and Scandinavia and they are too closely connected with legends and the symbols of royal power to be caused by the trade connection, which also existed between the countries. The Danish myths in England were probably caused by family connections between the Danes and the so called Wuffingas in East Anglia – also indicated by Norse myths about Roar describing him as exiled and grown up in England with an English wife.

Already in the 5th century we know big Jutish square headed fibulas and bracteates in Kent confirming that a people from the peninsula of Jutland were involved in the migrations as Bede told. It is more difficult to observe migrations between England and Vendel. The Vendel Era was later than the migration to England and the kings of Uppsala have nearly always concentrated their actions in Sweden, the Baltic Area and Russia. Accordingly, a jump to a country 1400 kilometres south-west of Uppsala sounds unrealistic in the period before the Viking ships got sails. In the beginning of the 6th century there were signs of retreat among the invaders of England, but the refugees joined the Francs – none are mentioned going north, and if so they would probably have settled in the "empty" Angel.121 Also the Vendel dynasty might theoretically come from Southern Jutland (Angel), but we have no archaeological indications of the same culture there (except maybe the Nydam Style in Finnestorpe), neither do we have any historical indications of a connection to Vendel and in this case we would not be able to explain the connections to the South Eastern Europe.

If we focus on a connection due to a migration to England from Denmark, Frisia and Saxony we should maybe notice the mythical Hengist, who was both the leader of the first group of invaders arriving to Thanet and later the leader of immigrants fighting against the Brittons. Gildas told in 542 AD (Gildas II,23) that the "fierce and impious" Saxon mercenaries were invited by the Briton Gurthrigern (Vortigern) - probably covering all the ethnicities of the immigrants. Snorre called much later Hengest a Saxon, while he was called a Dane joining the battle of Finsburh in Beowulf122. The English sources like Bede and Nennius

120 It is possibly the grave of king Readwald of East Anglia. He was the third generation of Wuffingas (After Wuffa (Uffe) and Tytillus (the Gothic name Totila?). He wavered between Christianity and paganism (Bede II,XV). The Helnings of Beowulf may be a branch of these Wuffingas where also a Wilhelm is found as ancestor.

There are many similarities between weapons and equipment in Uppland and Sutton Hoo, and the two Iranian inspired dancing warriors with horns from the Sutton Hoo helmet are also found at the helmet in Valsgärde 7 and as a fragment in the eastern mound of Uppsala. Coins and bracteates in Sutton Hoo are also found at Gotland, but the presence of these artefacts at Gotland might easily be caused by a trade connection.

121 The sources for the people returning to the Continent around 530 are Nennius (they went for assistance in Germany), Procopius (every year many left England to join the Francs) and Adam of Bremen (many Saxons left England going to the Francs to fight against the Thuringians). Bede mentioned Angel as an area which became empty, but it is more likely if he had heard about the moors and marches of the western region of Schlesvig than the modern peninsula Angel.

122 The Finsbourgh Battle was mentioned in two different poems, where it in Beowulf was used as a legend from the Danish past. Hengest, who in some translations was called a “Half Dane”, might be identical with the first king in
emphasized that Hengist arrived early. First later he got help from an increasing group of Anglians and Saxons when he defeated the Britons ruled by Vortigern and Vortimer. Bede mentioned that the gravestone of the brother Horsa still existed at his time with the name on it - but many scholars have rejected Hengest and Horsa as phantasy names. Hengist's nationality is described as confusing as the invaders of England mentioned in an earlier chapter. Bede, Nennius and the royal genealogies did all place his descendants in Kent, which should have been invaded by people from Jutland according to the archaeology and the English historians. According to Nennius and the genealogies Hengist descended from the godlike Geat/Geta – but these problems are mentioned in a former chapter. Asser emphasized a connection with Sedilium's pagan god, Geta, which indicated that they regarded themselves as descendants of the Getae of Jordanes/Procopius as well. As the Western Heruls (Bede's Huns and Procopius' Frisians?) could be regarded as Getae and they possibly lived in Harlingen or Northern Frisia at the peninsula of Jutland, they could be the Geates of Hengest and Beowulf.

Of course these relations cannot be regarded as history. They are mythical tracks. The old Frisian language was very close to the OE-language, fibulas of the Scandinavian/Anglo-Saxon type were found in the coastal region of Frisia, and Procopius mentioned Frisians as an important member of the invasion of England. Did Geatic Western Heruls (some of Bede's Huns?) from Frisia join the Anglo-Saxon migrations to England? Were western members of the Herulian royal family the first link between Vendel and Sutton Hoo? Was this link creating the connection East Anglia - Lejre, which was later used by Rolf as a refugee? The king erecting the first hall in Lejre (Roar according to the legends) was probably cremated in Grydehøj in a new style – close to the style of the Uppsala mounds.

There may also be a connection between the symbolic Skjold in the prologue of the Beowulf-poem and the stories of the legendary Danish king, Frode Fredegod – a king who expelled an unknown people from the country of the Danes (described even by Saxo calling them Huns). A part of the "historical frame" in Beowulf is the legend about the feud of the Scyldings described by the family of Roar – or rather the family of his English wife. When analysing the legends it is obvious that the Heathobeards of Beowulf were not an independent people but the nickname of the descendants of the legendary Frode Fredegod – a part of the Danish royal dynasty, the Scyldings. The story about the Scylding (Skjold, Frode or Roar) establishing a strong Danish kingdom may be legendary fragments of the Danish king expelling the Heruls according to Jordanes [Troels Brandt, 2004].

It is likely that some Western Heruls joined their surrounding neighbours, the Angles, Saxons, Frisians and Jutes in the migration to England – and the membership of a single one of the new royal families in England is sufficient to explain the above mentioned rather confusing tracks. As earlier explained it is even possible that they were known as the Myrgings - the people of Widsith. Gudmund Schytte simply assumed that Bede had mixed up Jutes and Western Heruls.

All this confusion just to tell that the old myths did not care much about ethnicity and names of the different people – and we should not pay so much attention to their attempts to separation either.

It has to be stressed that the English / West Herulian link is uncertain and without influence on the Hypothesis of the Heruls.

### 3.1.2 Hervararsaga and the Hreidgoths

Hervararsaga, which was based on an older poem from where only fragments are known, appear to be legends of Swedish origin, but the text possibly reflects fragmentary memories from the Migration Ages. In
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the saga a legend is told about the Hreidgothic king Heidrik fighting the Huns victoriously – the Huns who disappeared in the fifth century from Europe. An early version of that legend may be connected with the first riddle of the Rök Stone.

Earlier scholars paid much interest in the names from the saga - especially Otto von Friesen, [Friesen 1920], who made the following observations regarding personal and geographical names. First of all it is very interesting that Heidrik with his "wife" Sifka and their sons Angantyr and Hloed – all met in Hervararsaga – are mentioned just after Theodric in the OE Widsith too (115): "Seccan sohte ic ond Beccan, Seafolan ond Theodric, Heathoric ond Sifeca, Ingentheow ond Hlithe." Widsith also told that the "Hraed" often with their swords had to defend their old homes against Attila in the forests of Vistula (Wistlawudu), where Widsith visited Wulfhere and Wyrmhere.

According to Hervararsaga "Hunland" was situated east of the Hreidgothic royal seat "Arheimar" at "Danparstadum". It also told that the forest "Myrkvirth" separated the Huns from the Hreidgoths living at the plains of "Dunheidi". The battle between the Hreidgoths and the Huns took place at "Dunheidi" below the "Iassarfiallum" and the Hreidgothic king Heidrik died at "Harfada Fiall".

Some of these places are probably identified. "Danparstadum" were "the beaches of Dniepr". "Iassarfiallum" were the "Eastern Carpathian Mountains" (meaning the mountains with ash-trees in Slavic). "Harfada Fiall" were the "Western Carpathian Mountains" (The mountains of the Chorvates) against Mähren, where the wells of the Vistula and the Oder were situated at the northern slopes close to the wells of river March. "Myrkvirth" is normally interpreted as the dark Germanic forests (Hercynia silva) north of the Carpathian Mountains (Aristoteles: Arcuina ore) and east of the Rhine, but according to Plinius and Julius Caesar these forests covered the northern banks of the Danube from Helvetia to Dacia – including the forests of the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvania. "Dunheidi" could be the region where the "Lougioi Dounoi" of Ptolemeus stayed (von Friesen), but it could also be the "Marchfeld" or other plains at the Danube - or the Russian plains between the rivers Dnepr and Don. The rest of the names are nearly all Scandinavian.

It is today agreed by the archaeologists that a part of the Goths originated from the mouth of Vistula. The Dnepr-region (Danparstadum with Arheimer) probably became a centre of the Greuthungi Goths (Cherniakow culture) with the Huns east of River Don (Tanais), when the Gothic kingdom according to Jordanes reached the Baltic Sea at the time of Ermaneric. At that time the Tervingi Goths lived in Transylvania surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains (Sintana de Mures culture). Ermaneric was defeated by the Huns and a century later the Hunnic Attila and his Gothic followers had their headquarters in Hungary, south of the Western Carpathian Mountains and Myrkwirth. Attila and his followers were defeated by Romans, Franks and Visigoths in France and two years later his sons were defeated by the followers (Gepides, Heruls etc.) - but the Ostrogoths living now west of Hungary did not join any of these victors.

Otto von Friesen claimed that Widsith placed the Hreidgoths at the mouth of the Vistula (Wistlawudu), but the forests of Vistula would rather be the big forest, Myrkwirth, at the wells of the Vistula - if a poem of that character could be used for geographical purposes at all. The Huns may have fought at the Vistula against a group of "Hraed" headed by Wulfhere and Wyrmhere of Widsith (Ormar in the Hervararsaga and Saxo?). If these Goths were Tervingi Goths from the group around the Carpathian Mountains, Mazur-Germanen in the Vielbark area or another group is historically unknown.

Hermann Reichert has proposed "Hreid" being connected with the Adriatic Sea as Ravenna was the Gothic capital in the 6th century. Other scholars claim that the "Hreidgoths" were the "Famous" Goths (OE "Hraed" / ON "HróðR") or the "Nest" Goths (ON "HreidR") living at the Vistula as indicated by Widsith. However the name was only used in Norse writing. In a Norse mind of the ninth century the kingdom or the "nest" of their hero, Theodoric, was probably what they believed to be the kingdom of the legendary Ermaneric (if not Götaland). This continental kingdom was surrounded by the Mediterranean-, Black- and Baltic Sea - and all these oceans could be "Hreidmar" as the geography of earlier times was mixed totally up in the 9th century. At that time even Jutland was in Alfred's version of Orosius called "Gotland" - a misunderstanding later met in Iceland, where Jutland was called "Hreidgotland" - opposite "Eygotaland" being the Danish islands and
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the Scandinavian Peninsula.

It is characteristically for the names above that they are all connected with places where the East Germanic followers of Huns operated - but at different times - and outside the range of the later Vikings except the Dnepr. Possibly Hervararsaga reflects legends from different stages of the history of the East Germanic people, at a time when the Goths were more or less joined by the Heruls – making both people possible sources for the names though the legends are totally mixed up.

3.1.3 The East Germanic legends

The similarities between the legends in various countries were observed i.o. by Curt Weibull and Niels Lukman. Latest in 1995 Lars Hemmingsen showed that the background for a part of the Danish legends may be found among Heruls, Huns, Lombards and Ostrogoths in Dacia/Pannonia – just like the Battle of Tanais by Snorri. Already Lukman concluded by similar reasons that our legends are foreign narratives and therefore without any historical value. But it is just as legitimate to conclude that some of these legends were brought to Scandinavia by immigrants moving around in Europe with name traditions and legends of the earlier people of their family as a part of their identity and history.

Actually Niels Lukman regarded the Heruls of Procopius as mercenary officers of the Scandinavian kings bringing these legends to Scandinavia. Lukman was later supported by the Icelandic scholar Bardi Gudmundsson, who in 1959 accepted the possibility that the Heruls were a leading dynasty - the Earls. He suggested that some of their descendants brought their skaldic traditions to Iceland from East Scandinavia. The Rök Stone confirmed that there may be a truth behind that, but we have to remember that the Heruls were a small minority in Scandinavia, who were probably fully integrated when Iceland was colonised 400 years after their arrival. The Icelandic versions are more a question of a skaldic tradition than an ethnic and dynastic question.

It should be noticed that most of these foreign legends follow a geographical belt from Huns, Ostrogoths and Heruls over Thuringians and Saxons to the Scandinavian nations and maybe England. The Heruls followed that belt and later both the Dacians and Odin were in the sagas claimed to follow the same belt.

The confusion of names along this belt was already mentioned above in relation to the Hervararsaga, but the confusion is also found in a group of Icelandic Edda-poems about Sigurd Fafnersbane and the Völsungs. In

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124 The weakness in the arguments of Lukman and Weibull can be illustrated by regarding Rolf Krake as an example. Also Lars Hemmingsen has analysed this example, which was relevant in note 2.2.9 too.

Lukman maintained the battle and death of Rolf Krake to be an adaptation of the battle between Rodolphus and the Lombards. The argumentation was a comparing of structural elements in the stories, but these elements have a very elementary character - just like good stories often have. We have to notice that our source Paulus Diaconus also told another legend about the same Rodolphus using exactly the same unique point as used in a later legend about the Danish king Gorm and the death of his son Knud. Nobody will deny that Gorm was a Dane and that Diaconus wrote two centuries before Gorm was born. Consequently the same chain of reasoning used on Rolf Krake will lead to a wrong conclusion used on Gorm. The use of stolen elements or fairy tales from Southern Europe in the legends of a Danish king do not prove that he was not a historical Danish person. They do only indicate a certain influence or a mixture of legends - the later narrators of the legends of Rolf Krake and Gorm knew the legends of Rodolphus, but they were not able to identify him and mixed therefore the legends up.

Lars Hemmingsen even tried to support theories about a late introduction in Denmark explaining that these legends might have been brought to Denmark by the Danish Hvide-family in the 13th century. He later admitted that this explanation made it impossible to explain how the English poems like Widsith could mention these kings as Danes in the 10th century or earlier. In Beowulf Roar and Rolf were related to boar crested helmets (note 3.11.2). These helmets are now found by modern archaeologists in Mercia and as pictures on helmets in Vendel from the 6-7th century. This indicates that Roar and Rolf were Scandinavian kings as told in the Nordic legends although Saxo or earlier authors may have used elements of the Pannonian Rodolphus too.
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these poems about the fall of the Burgundian kingdom at the Rhine in 437 AD Huns and Goths were clearly mixed up in different ways in different versions - even with the death of Attila and the much earlier revenge of the Rosomoni on Ermaneric. As followers of the Huns the Heruls had probably been involved here too, but the name of the Heruls was not mentioned at all - maybe because they were regarded as a part of these groups. It is here quite obvious that fragments of real history (being already known from Jordanes and other authors) were mixed up in the Iceländic poems and the later sagas. No of these fragments appear to be of younger origin than the time when the Heruls disappeared from Southern Europe. The same happened with exactly the same story around 1200 AD in the German Nibelungenlied where the Heruls/Goths as the original allies of Attila became Danes/Saxons125. In that connection we shall notice that the names used in Iceland were historically more correct.

Earlier the Old-English poems Beowulf and Widsith also had – as mentioned - the Gothic king Ermaneric in an important role, though operating in the area of the Black Sea centuries before. We may wonder why this in the long run unsuccessful hero is mentioned so many times in connection with the past of the Scandinavian kings, if the Scandinavian kings had no dynastic connections with the Goths and Heruls at the Black Sea. If such legends were changed into Nordic surroundings they were possibly borrowed, but these obviously distant kings and locations were handled as a natural part of the Scandinavian history indicating that the Scandinavians knew about such far connections in the past.

Consequently it is natural to explain some of the foreign legends by regarding them as a confirmation of the theory that a part of the history of the North European dynasties has to be searched for among the East Germanic nomads126. Maybe the descendants of the Heruls regarded their ancestors as Gothic "Earls" serving the famous Theodoric, who became the hero of Charlemagne and the Scandinavian Vikings.

Of course this does not change the fact that other legends may have been transferred due to a general spread of legends, but the coincidences pointed out by Lukman, Weibull and Hemningsen together with the coincidences above do not indicate a general spread but a certain pattern – an early connection with the East Germanic tribes causing a Scandinavian mix of Herulian and local legends. In spite of the problems with the exact identifications the connections between the names in South Eastern Europe, the sagas, the ON poems and the archaeology may confirm Lukman's theory about an early origin of the legends behind the Norse poems (though extremely exaggerated).

3.1.4 The Dacian kings - Dudo

When the French historians Dudo and Guillaume de Jumièges mentioned the Danes they claimed them to be Goths originating from Dacia at Danube, and 880-1240 AD Dania was in general often mixed up with Dacia – even in official Danish documents.

125 German scholars regard the Herul Rodolphus as identical with Rydeger von Bechlarn, where Bechlarn is the town Pöchlarn (with the earlier mentioned Herilungburg) at the Danube in Nibelungengau west of Vienna. Rydeger has an important role in Nibelungenlied written down around 1200 (Web-version). He was also mentioned in the Norse Tiedrich-saga as a count under Attila with the name Rodolf of Bekelar. The same role in Niebelungenlied has Dietrich of Bern, who is supposed to be identical with Theodoric. These two kings were together with Iring von Denemark and Imfrif von Thuringia described as sub-kings under Attila. Only Dietrich survived the final battle of Ragnarok. It has to be noticed, that the allies of Attila against the Burgundians were called Danes and Saxons – the original allies beside the Thuringians were the Heruls and the Ostrogoths (the people of Rodolphus and Theodoric) and they were not mentioned in this later written version at all. Historically Attila died when Rodolphus and Theodoric were babies, so the legend about dragons and hidden treasures seem to be framed by historically well-known persons in very unhistorical connections.

126 This may be the reason for the many stories about Huns in the legends and in Gesta Danorum (Saxo). The royal names of the Heruls and their rulers from Southern Europe – including the superior Hunnic kings – can therefore be found all over Scandinavia. Today we will often use names of popular persons from other countries for our children. If similarity in names between two people is totally missing it is a strong indication of two separated people, but similarity in names will not prove they are the same people.
Dudo wrote around 1000AD: "The Dacians now call themselves Danais or Dani and boast that they are descended from Anthenor, he who once raided the lands around Troy and escaped the Achaians and later reached the Illyrian borders with his people. These Dacians who, according to traditional tale, had been expelled from their homes...". Although Anthenor was a prince of Troy and the last sentence refer to a later event, the explanation obviously contains elements of the Herulian history – and we do not even need to erase the eternal myth of Troy, as the Heruls actually had harried the areas around Troy. Like Procopius and Adam of Bremen also Dudo mentioned Dacian sacrifices of human beings – but to the god Thur.

In Flandern Lambert in 1125 wrote a short Danish history with a list of kings containing Gothic kings followed by Odoaker (somewhere called Rex Herulorum) and Danish/Norman earls.

The legends about this connection are much older as "Gesta Regum Francorum" already in 720 mentioned people from Troy building the city Sicambria near the mouth of Tanais River. Maybe the Heruls from Tanais of this reason regarded the people of Troy as a part of their past. However the author and Fredegar probably mixed up a lot of names as Gregory placed the origin of the Salian Franks in Pannonia, where Sicambria was a name for Budapest.

It was usual for the historians of the monasteries in northern Europe to describe the origin of their people – most of them used pagan gods, but some of them combined them with classical legends. In 965 AD Widukind in this way mentioned the former Macedonian army of Alexander as the ancestors of the Saxons, but he also mentioned the Goths and Jordanes. Bede mentioned in 710 AD Wothen as an ancestor to several of the Germanic kings invading England and later also the name Geat – probably referring to the Goths - was mentioned.

The similarities between the names Danais, Tanais (Don), Danubis, Dani and Daci are coincidences without any doubt, but we do have to notice: When the French historians wrote about the Danish history before the first official Danish historians, it was from unknown sources obvious to them, that the Danes, who claimed to be relatives to the earls of Normandy, had a background connected with the Danubian surroundings, with the Goths and with Odoaker – just like the Heruls!! This is rather confusing as the Danes expelled the Heruls, but according to Saxo the Danish king Sigfred was a descendent of the Ynglinga-family.

Dudo is often regarded as an unreliable historian, and several Germanic tribes told about Roman or Greek ancestors. The legends about Troy are false – and actually they were also rejected by Dudo himself, although he is normally regarded as an idealisation maker. However the monasteries of northern Europe form the only link between the antique history and the local, written medieval history of Scandinavia, and they are all consequently mentioning a relation to the countries around the Danube and the Black Sea. This will never make a proof but the general relation is worth to notice. They assumed in their version of the history a rough parallel to the migration described by Procopius, but none of them mentioned the Heruls - they wrote about Danes, Goths, Macedonians and the people of Troy.

3.1.5 Saxo and his manipulations

Saxo finished his work, “Gesta Danorum”, around 1220. He had without doubt the political purpose to support the rule of Valdemar the Great and his family. Some of the sagas might have the purpose to legitimate that the right to be king always belonged to the “divine” family of Odin. In this way the old Germanic system of elections was overruled. This overruling was obviously continued in Christian times

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127 Dudo wrote his history of the Dukes of Normandy around 1000 AD, de Jumieges wrote in 1060 and Lambert wrote about the Danes in 1125 in Liber Floridus. Lambert was supposed to have a connection to Carl the Dane of Flandern (son of the Danish king St. Knud)

128 According to the manipulated interpretation of Tacitus the Germanic people elected their chieftains in a “democratic” way, but he also mentioned that the Goths at Vistula had a stronger kingship than the other Germans. This may be due to the old Gaut-religion, which might have been the most important reason for the dominating position of the Goths in the Migration Ages. He also mentioned the Suiones, who are normally interpreted as Svear,
in the traditions of the royal elections at the 3-5 Danish “landsting”. The paradox is that in spite of the Danish kings until only 300 years ago were told to be elected, they always came from the same family. In the old Danish law of inheritance the eldest son had no first priority. A consequence was that they had to elect one king among several candidates from the royal family.

The negative consequences were frequent fights between brothers and cousins and the risk, when Christianity took over, that other families would claim the power of kingship too. It is probably from that point of view we shall regard some of the manipulations by Saxo, when he combined the old legends. As late as 1170, when Valdemar the Great by a coup got his son Knud anointed by the archbishop, the dilemma was the choice between the elected monarchy and the religiously based hereditary monarchy. Maybe a purpose when Absalon financed the work of Saxo was to convert the “divine right of Odin” to the juridical term “custom from ancient times” in a united Danish kingdom. In that way the archbishop could explain why the church should make great efforts to secure the power of the royal family.

Under all circumstances his royal genealogy had a main purpose, which is now generally accepted by Danish scholars. He wanted to demonstrate a historical Danish independence from the Roman Empire, which was now succeeded by the German Emperor. This was the reason why Saxo – maybe with earlier genealogies as sources – mentioned royal legends and names in a number reaching back to the time before Augustus.

Probably Tjodolf of Hvini, the supposed author of Ynglingetal, had the same purpose when he earlier "invented" the first group of kings in Ynglingatal supporting Harald Haarfager as a king with rights older than the Danes, who since the 8th century usually claimed superiority over Southern Norway and Western Sweden.

A past of some of the Nordic royal families as Herulian mercenaries serving the emperor would be a catastrophe for the politics of the Nordic countries in the 12th and the 13th centuries.

It is surprising that Snorri did not follow that line. Snorri's Scandinavian kings left according to himself Tanais when the Roman emperors arrived. With this story in Ynglingasaga Snorri simply shot down the arguments of Saxo ordered by the Danish church and royal family. We do not know any political motive behind that – maybe he just wrote what he knew to be the truth.

Unfortunately the cover stories of the church and royal families with efficiency have hidden the manipulations and the real history for us all in Scandinavia. Actually the historian Sven Aggesen indicated that Absalon and Saxo were manipulating the history as he referred that Absalon had ordered him to leave certain periods of the history only to be covered by Saxo. He also mentioned that liars had written false royal lists. Neither were they nor their predecessors, however, able to change the old French tradition, so already in

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129 The only exception in historical times was “Magnus the Good”, but as Yngve was among his ancestors, he would have been accepted in pagan ages.
130 Examples: The descendants of Roar, the battle of Braavalla, the descendants of Godfred and the cousins Sven, Knud and Valdemar.
131 Valdemar the Great was the last king to be elected at a “landsting” (because of the civil war only at the thing of Jutland). He got his son Knud anointed already as a child by the archbishop Eskil, but archbishop Absalon later on send Knud at the traditional tour to the “landstings”, where the function now was to acclaim and taking oath. Reading Saxo it is tempting to conclude, that Saxo personally had the opinion, that the Danish king should be elected at the “landstings” by the whole people.
132 In his manipulations Saxo always made the following king son of his predecessor. He also told about “the false god Odin”, but in accordance to his purpose he did not combine Odin with the royal family as Ynglingesaga did. Saxo was maybe aware of the problems he caused later on as he did not call his books “The history of Denmark”. He attached importance to independent episodes – Gesta Danorum - the exploits of the Danes. His own sophisticated composition of the work is described by Inge Skovgaard-Petersen and later on by Karsten Friis-Jensen, who also like Axel Oltlik mentioned his purpose letting the royal family reach back before Augustus, in order to make the kingdom historically independent of the German/(Roman) emperor.
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line 2 the sly fox Saxo dissociated himself from Dudo by denying a connection with the “Danais” without mentioning at all the Dacian connection, which was the real problem for the Danish kings. How much Saxo really knew will probably never be revealed.

3.1.6 Snorri Sturlusson

The narrator Snorri Sturlusson wrote his version of the Icelandic sagas c. 1220-1230 AD based on old poems and tales. His description of the old religion133 and Scandinavian history was written with a more neutral curiosity than the manipulated version by Saxo, but still the content was of course old legends given a touch of Christian moral. We have to notice that he was a political leader in Iceland, that he between writing Edda and Heimskringla was in exile at the Norwegian royal court, and that he later on was killed by supporters of the Norwegian king. He was not an apolitical person, and he was a Christian writing about a pagan religion he should not be expected to defend.

Snorri's background, however, does not support that he did not tell the myths about the religion and the Swedish kings correctly as he knew them - it should just warn us to be careful about his explanations. If the myths do not give us a coherent impression of the former kingdom and religion another reason could be that royal and divine myths were mixed up earlier.

Scholars often use his description of Odin as a human Asian king in order to prove that his descriptions are false, as the church often used that kind of descriptions to tell about pagan religions. Even if he had such motives it can never be used in reverse as a proof of his unreliability. His king Odin could have been a human being.

In Ynglingesaga Snorri based his genealogy on the old poem Ynglingatal, which he quoted and kept to later times in this way. His own genealogy, however, began with the three gods, Odin, Njord and Frey, but in these three cases he did not quote Ynglingatal. The genealogy is treated below.

3.1.7 The confusing Scandinavian names

We could suspect that the names/words Erila, Eorl, Jarl, Hun, Märing and maybe even Viking did all originally refer to the people, who in the latinised form were called Heruli. How could they get so many names? Probably because the arriving Heruls got different nicknames in the different countries.

Dudo mentioned that the Getaes were also known as Goths, Alans, Sarmatians etc. – in other words also the As-people - but neither Snorri, Saxo, Lambert nor Dudo ever mentioned the name of the Heruls although they possibly used different elements of the Herulian history. The Eastern Heruls were probably never called Heruls in Scandinavia because of the Western Heruls – the ErilaR. Around 550 AD the Dani were mentioned for the first time among the historians in the South – the first two times because they resisted the Heruls – and in the next centuries a common name for Scandinavians as pirates together with the Saxons.

It is also possible to understand the confusion “Dani” - “Heruls” - “Daci” – “Ases”, if the Heruls from Danube were a part of the Geats, who became Earls (~Eruli/jarler) of the Swedes and some of these were later related to the Danish dynasty. Therefore the Earls from Moravia, Dacia Ripensis and Dacia Inferior were now identified with the people they ruled, and the old name sank into oblivion (maybe hidden behind their lies about kings from Asia or Troy) - or the name became a title. The ancestors of the Earls were at the same time raised to divine Ases using myths inspired from religions earlier met by or worshipped by the

133 The beginning of Ynglingesaga in Heimskringla (1230). In the preface of Edda (1220) he also mixed King Priamos of Troy into the story, while “Upphaf allra frasagna” from the 14th century, which is supposed to be an abstract from “Skjoldungesaga”, mentioned Turks and people from Asia. As later mentioned his first versions are similar to the myths of the French historians using the general Germanic myth of origin connected to Troy opposite the later Heimskringla.
Heruls. This simple explanation is in harmony with the personal comments or conclusions from Dudo, Saxo and Snorri, and with the divine appointment of the Earls in Rigsthula. We may brush aside their comments as religious propaganda, but after all they are our best sources, who tried to explain events, looking peculiar also to themselves - and it is important to realize, that they must have known sources now lost.

3.2 The Norse religions

3.2.1 Dumezil and the Indo-European theories

Dumezil has founded a school of the religious history describing a general development based on an Indo-European structure. He used the religion described by the Indian RgVeda and other poems, where an earlier fertility cult originally based on a "Mother Earth" changed into a religion of functional gods, where several details and structural elements looked like the Norse religion. It was therefore obvious to compare the Indian and the Norse religions - especially as also the languages were related.

The early societies were totally dependent of the conditions given by nature and environment and the religion should always be expected to reflect that. Nearly all societies have followed a development from hunters via "independent" farmers to societies of complicated functions coordinated by an elite supported by soldiers. Chieftains leading soldiers and armies were known since the Bronze Ages, but during the first millennium AD some of the Nordic villages were changed and also influenced indirectly by the Romans. They became a part of stronger societies - the so called warrior societies. This evidently had to result in warlike conditions and the following change of religion indicated by the archaeology.

If Dumezil's theories are used without breaking this general rule his observations may be useful, but his theory was that the gods and the myths were the same in India and in Europe - a theory which is still accepted by many scholars. RgVeda was written down around 1200 AD (as Snorri's work) but the functional gods should exist when the warrior-like Aryans arrived around 1700 BC in India. Some of the names of their gods were confirmed around 1300 BC by the Hettites. Dumezil believed that the religion was spread together with the Indo-European languages in the Bronze Ages, but today it is eagerly discussed if the IE languages were spread much earlier together with agriculture - long time before warrior societies like the Aryans. Under all circumstances the societies compared by Dumezil in India, Southern Europe and Northern Europe did not follow each other in their development of society contemporary. Therefore they should not at the same time follow each other in the development of religion either - making it rather difficult to learn the convenient stage from a society which had left the stage centuries or millenniums ago. It is not possible to copy such a dynamic process over a time space of several centuries without copying the "environment" too. Of course they used elements from each other - supported by the similarity in languages - but as the religions existed at different stages the development would never be identical due to mutual influence. The religion had primarily to follow the stage and development of the society - and the natural development may as described above have taken place in identical order.

Most of Dumezil's observations are probably correct. His three-levelled mythology was a result of the functional society being divided into priests/kings, warriors and farmers as described in RgVeda - though we have to add a fourth class of slaves. The classes were differently described in Rigsthula, where the third class were the slaves, but nevertheless his basic way to divide society and religion in the same way was probably fitting the situation well in both places. Also the counterparts of the nature sun/moon, day/night, summer/winter, life/dead, man/woman and goodness/evilness may demand these pairs of opposite gods everywhere - which he observed. The basic elements of nature are in classical philosophy water, earth, air (sky) and fire. The gods representing the sky he often divided into sky, sun and weather. These gods he placed at the first level as the original masters of the pantheon. Later the god of the warriors at the second level took over as the king of the gods - as the king became stronger in a warrior society. The fertility gods at the third level were on their side often a pair of twins - sometimes followed by one of their parents representing the former fertility cult - originally connected with the above mentioned three elements. Also
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the mythical war between the old and the new gods is a description, which could always be expected where a warrior elite seized power in a society of agriculturists. The similarities are often unclear, but Dumezil was an expert in finding an explanation. Consequently some of his parallels are not convincing. However Dumezil was probably right that some fragments of the myths and some gods were borrowed from the same basic religion as the Indian religions - spreading slowly like rings in the water. He just forgot that the names of similar gods did not need to spread together with the IE-languages, but could easily spread because of the already existing common IE-languages or simply be constructed from the same words.

The first two regions where our civilisation was developed to a specialised society were Egypt and Sumer (Iraq) - but this took place long time after agriculture spread from the same region to Europe. The Indo-European and Semitic cultures and religions probably spread from Sumer. If we observe the development in the Near East from Sumer to Anatolia (Turkey) via the Hurries and Hettites to the Urartu and Luwian people, we can find the same similarities with the Norse religion as Dumezil described with the RgVeda - some of the names are even more likely. In this line of development - parallel with the Vedic religion - we can find the god of weather and thunder, Tarchunt / Taru / Tesheba and his partner, the god of sun and light, Tiwaz / Siwini. The third main god among the Urartu in Turkey was (C)hamdi - the ruler and god of heaven. In the other societies the weather god was the ruler. Earlier in this structure the weather god was called Ishkur (Hettites and Sumer), who was described like the Norse Thor. His wife was normally a sun-goddess like Arinna and Shala - similar with Thor's Sif with the golden hair. It is tempting to recognise Thor, Sif and Tir in this pantheon instead of the Vedic pantheon - and actually Snorri told that Thor arrived from these regions.

3.2.2 The Norse religions

Many poems have described the old Norse religion with its different worlds, the old gods and the tree of life.

The Scandinavian religions of the Bronze Ages - after the spread of the Indo-European languages and contemporary with the Aryans - appear from their rock carvings to be a nature religion of a people of agriculturists based on the sun and fertility. The axe is the only sign of a warrior cult, but these axes (always appearing in pairs in the finds) must have been used for sacrificing. We are not in these rock carvings able to identify the warrior gods of the Migration Ages, and this kind of carvings are not known from any other regions of the IE-people. Later in the early Iron Ages wooden idols appeared in the bogs - a sign of personified gods as a continuation of the few figures with male attributes and maybe the marks of hands and footsteps in the rock carvings.

In 99 AD Tacitus told about the main gods Nerthus (Earth), Tuisto and Ingui worshipped in different areas around the Western Baltic Sea. The religions in Asia Minor and in India had a father being god of the Heavens and a mother being goddess of the Earth. They were probably gods from the old fertility cults of the agricultural society, who should still explain the mysteries about creation and birth. Statues of this mother are known elsewhere 25,000 years back in time. These gods may represent the earlier stage of the personified gods - marking the continuity from the Bronze Ages to Yngve-Frey, who was probably the last "merged" stage of that branch before Christianity. Also the Romans spoke of a great mother, where the father became Jupiter/Juvé.

The role of Tiustu (Dyas in RgVeda / Zeus in Greek) in Scandinavia at that time is uncertain. The story of Thor in Snorri's Edda and his role as a Norse Jupiter may indicate that he was Tuistu, but normally Tyr/Tir is regarded to have been Tuistu. According to Tacitus the Ingaviones were the descendants of Tuistu in Northern Europe. There is no doubt that Ingui and Yngve is the same name. Ingui was also known as an ancestor of the Anglian kings in England and in Historia Norwegie134 Yngve was the ancestor of the kings of Svealand – later Snorri called him Yngve-Frey. He even had a rune and according to the OE rune poem he first appeared among the East Danes. In Beowulf the Scylings were called Ingwina. According to many scholars there is also an obvious connection between Tacitus' Nerthus and Njord – the father of Yngve-Frey

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134 Historia Norwegie is written by a Norwegian monk in the 12th century (before Snorri) and probably based on Ari's Islændingabok.
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according to Snorri.

That means that the medieval genealogies of both the Anglian, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian kings can be traced back to the two gods Tacitus claimed to be worshipped in the Nordic countries in the first century AD. Both gods were fertility gods - at least at the late stage. We do of course not know if a part of this is a result of later writer knowing Tacitus.

Tyr has a very resigned role in the Norse Myths. Actually he is primarily known for his weekday and for his loss of a hand to the Fenris Wolf - the latter already known from a bracteate around 500 AD. This may indicate that he was pushed aside by Thor and Odin and left as a disabled god of justice before or during the general change of religion around 500 AD.

Tacitus wrote that Tuistu was earthborn and we shall remember that Thor at the late stage was son of the Norse goddess Jord (Earth), who was probably identical with Nerthus. It is uncertain when a god like Thor arrived to Scandinavia, but he probably spread among the Celts, where we know a similar god under the name Taranis - the later Germanic Donar. As mentioned he had parallels in Asia Minor too.

Also Balder was killed at the bracteates around 500 AD - but he did not need to be a son of Odin at that time. Some scholars suspect him to be Baal.

In Southern Europe Mercury and Hercules were mentioned by Tacitus as the gods of the warlike Germanics, when the migrations in Eastern Europe began and the wars were starting at the Roman borders. At that time the warrior-society in India must have been 1800 years old - making it impossible to copy a dynamic development. In these more complicated societies the specialized functional gods became a necessity. In the vagrant or fighting groups the leader got a central importance so strong that the religion had to be combined with his power and functions. In an uncomplicated agricultural society the king could be a descendent of a fertility god or a reincarnation of the Sun, which for them represented the fundamental divine power. For warriors and nomads like the Goths, however, the most important ideal to be worshipped were strong kings and heroes being successful in battles. This was confirmed by Jordanes' talk about the Gothic ancestor gods, "Ansis" - the Norse "AnsuZ" or "Asir". For these people (or their leaders) an ancestor cult with a divine ancestor as the war god and a religious reward to the warriors fallen at the battlefield must have been the most important element of the religion.

Already when reading place names it is obvious that the gods were not worshipped in the same way in different regions of Scandinavia, just as the religion changed over time. The Scandinavians probably knew several gods and chose some of them as their personal and tribal protectors. In that way even Christ could be a god among others to them as being described by Widukind [Widukind III, L.XV].

The Norse religion of the warrior society was described as a whole by Snorri in Heimskringla and especially in the Prose Edda. Fragments however can be read in the earlier poems, which probably were a part of his sources too. This should be a picture of the religion as it was, when Christianity took over, and Snorri was probably one of the best to tell - if he wanted to tell the truth. The hierarchy of these gods, as he described it, was without doubt a reconstruction influenced by knowledge of the classical religions.

As already mentioned the odd construction of the Northern mythology split up between Ases and Vanes must be a mixed religion of a warrior society and a people of agriculturists. Both the old fertility gods and the cult around the warrior god Wothan/Odin could be found in the reconstructed pantheons - and Snorri even told about the reconciliation of the old Vanes and the Asir coming from the Black Sea. Adam of Bremen told that Frey and Odin around 1000 AD were standing in Uppsala with Thor as Jupiter in the middle - even if the temple (or rather the hall) did not exist at the time of Adam himself - this was the official picture.

3.2.3 The god Odin

The confusion among the Christian authors in the 11-13th centuries may have been caused by a dynamic
process which could still be traced in the myths when Christianity took over. A problem was that Odin's final role as father of the gods and leader was not reflected in all the myths. Thor appeared in the old sources as the highest of all gods and Njord and his son Frey as the ancestors of the kings of Uppsala.

Tacitus told - as mentioned - that Mercurius was the most important god in Germania. He also mentioned Hercules. Of course this was based on the closest tribes east and north of Limes, and in the Heidelberger region we know 6 inscriptions with Mercurius Cimbricus – some of them at alters at hill-tops. This name was of course a Roman name, but he is regarded to be a Germanic og Celtic Woden in the surroundings of Odenwald. This similarity is attested both in Columan-Vita of Jonas (640AD) regarding the Suevians around Bregenz and by Paulus Diaconus around 790 AD regarding the Lombards. Mercurius was primarily the god of merchants and travellers, but also of death. In Scandinavia Odin was later the god of battle and death, but one of his shapes was the old wandering god with the broad brimmed hat and the black clothes - a shape deriving from an old Celtic god. He was not described as a traditional war god – Thor was the warrior fighting against the Giants. Later Snorri told us that Odin was able to change his shape being a man, an animal and a god. He was described as a superior king, a shaman-like “gode” (priest), the god of “skjaldblaskab” and runes and the god of the dead warriors. In England and Germany he was called Woten or Wotan. There is no doubt that he became the Norse Odin (known first time in Scandinavia mentioned as Wodin at the Strängnäs Stone), though this Norse Odin may have received elements from other kinds of deities too – including shamanistic features and myths from the Heruls, who were also inspired by Huns and Sarmaths. Linguistically the names are identical - even according to Snorri.

In 99 AD Tacitus regarded the people of Northern Europe as worshippers of Nerthus and the ancestor god Ingui – a parallel to the earlier mentioned Gaut. This was the time when the warrior elite took over in the continental Jutland – registered both in the structure of the villages and in the war booties. The Hjortespring boat and the Cimbrian migration caused by flood and bad agricultural conditions was probably some of the first indications. By that reason a war god must have existed in Jutland in the first half of the millennium, but he could be Tyr, Thor, Tuisto, Ull or another god. The development spread successively to the rest of Scandinavia, but first in the 5th and 6th centuries the general change to a new religion took place as earlier told. The introduction of Wotan in Scandinavia was according to several archaeologists represented by the riding head at the C-bracteates in the 5th century [Jørgen Jensen, 2004]. Also the symbolic animals must have been a part of the pagan religion from that time, and it has to be considered that such symbols were often combined with shamanism - just as Odin was himself in the myths. That is an important element used by Lotte Hedeager.

Jordanes mentioned Mars and Gapt/Gaut (Geat/Geta – see Chapter 3.1.1.1) as Gothic gods – Gaut in a few later sources also a Götic god. The contemporary Procopius mentioned Ares, the war god, as the greatest god in Scandinavia around 550 AD, but that does not need to cover all Scandinavia. Maybe he just referred to the Heruls there and their main god does not need to be Odin – at least not in the role of a father. In runes Odin was first attested at the Strängnäs Stone (WodinR), which is not finally dated (old Futhark), and in the 7th century at the South German Nordendorpher fibula (Woden) and at a Danish scull in Ribe. In 782 AD a poem of Paulus Diaconis mentioned “Wuten” and “Thur” protecting king Siegfried of Denmark. In the 8th century Woten was attested by Bede in English genealogies too, and Origo Gentis Longobardorum and Paulus mentioned a battle where Guoden and Frea in the past were gods of the Lombards, who back in the time of Tacitus worshipped Nerthus.

Some scholars claim that the one-eyed god was found much earlier as a few wooden statues and ceramics in

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135 Odin is difficult to identify as a god. He was the god of battle, but also of death and poetry. He was described as the clever wanderer, but also the king of the warriors from Valhalla. Odin lied in periods dormant (was he secretly abroad?), and scholars calls him shaman-like. He was handsome to his friends but the sight of him scared his enemies. The shaman-like Odin is i.e. described by Lotte Hedeager in “Skygger fra en anden virkelighed”. According to Wolfram the name Odin was first met after 550. Odin is because of the linguistic similarity normally regarded as a Nordic version of the continental Wotan (English: Woten). Gaut is told to be much older – maybe from the first migrations of Goths – but he is only known from a few Nordic fragments and maybe as Gapt of Jordanes.
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Jutland. If these “blind” eyes are not just questions of bad quality this feature may have belonged to a local god before it was used when the Norse Odin was shaped. It can neither be excluded that these idols represented the predecessor of Odin, Gaut.

It is rather obvious that Odin in some of the Norse societies was advancing and passing Thor and Ingui-Frey in importance. This was not an unusual process regarding the gods of warlike kings as the Viking kings - especially if they regarded the god as their ancestor. Actually Dumezil [Dumezil 1962] told about the war god Indra advancing among Vedic gods in nearly the same way, when the warriors took over - though he believed Thor was Indra!!

At the time of Snorri Odin was known as the superior god of ancient times and in some stories also as the ancestor to the kings, but apparently he had only been the most important god to the kings, earls and warriors. The place names show that the farmers worshipped Frej, who was called one of the Vanes from the old fertility cult, and Snorre even told that Frej was identical with Yngve, who was ancestor to the Ynglings. Popular among the people was also Thor136, who at the late stage was mentioned as one of the Asir and a son of Odin. The name Odin is found in remarkably few place names.

The Poetic Edda and Gylfaginning told that Odin at their time was the ruler and father of the Pantheon. Earlier Dudo and Adam of Bremen told that Thur was the main god. Skjoldungesaga and the introduction to Gylfaginning told that Thor was the father of Odin. Saxo and Aelfried wondered why the names of the weekdays indicated that Thor was Jupiter, who was the father of Mercury being regarded as Odin.

Did the son of Thor (Jupiter), Odin (Mercurius), originally marry the daughter of Njord, Freya? This would make sense as Odin's wife Frigga is only connected with a couple of stories, and as Freya's husband in the late myths was called Od – a husband who had disappeared. Frea is often regarded as the background of "frau", which was the role of Frigga, and in the old Origo Gentis Longobardorum from the 7th century Frea was the wife of Wodan.

The Rök Stone indicated around 815 AD a stage where Odin was a late son of Thor and Sif, which would be the most natural way to let a “new” god join the divine genealogy. He may have been introduced by using a myth borrowed from the Christians - the myth of Abraham, Sara and Isaac. He may have taken over roles from Tyr and Ull - even pushing Ull out to be an illegitimate son of Sif.

As a part of the following process the old introduction myth as a son of Thor and Sif had to be left. Also the taboo around his name, Odin, and the use of many other names (including Gaut and Skilfing according to Grimnismal) may have been a cover of that process.

Maybe the myths about the arrival of the gods can tell about that problem too. It is important to notice that Snorri told two different stories about the origin of the gods separated by around 10 years.

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136 Adam of Bremen regarded Thor as a Jupiter from his attributes and his position in the temple of Uppsala between Odin and Yngve-Frey. So did Saxo later by comparing with the names of the weekdays. This is further discussed in chapter 9.1.

The last stanza of the Rök Stone could be interpreted as "Thor, husband of Sif (Sibi at the stone), protector of the temples, was born a child by a ninety year old" – an event identical with that of Abraham and Sara giving birth to Isaac - the first ancestor of the Jews. Maybe a Christian myth was used when introducing Wotan in the Scandinavian pantheon. Later he was regarded as the first ancestor of the kings.

There is a general agreement about the runes and the words of the stone, but there is no official interpretation of the text. I found the missing statements indicated by the stanza-numbers and a system explaining the stanzas except the last one mentioned above. In the end of 2003 I wrote an article with my personal explanation of nearly all the text of the stone, its purpose and the historical background. Details were discussed with some of the specialists studying these topics and the article was afterwards circulated among a few scholars and editors. The article was presented in "Danernes Sagnhistorie" in 2004 and at a separate website in 2005.
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In the first version, Edda (1220), the god Thor left Troy in Tyrkland (Turkey) in accordance with the traditional stories of the origin of the Germanic people and went to Thrakia137. As Dudo laughed of that story 200 years earlier, Snorri cannot be blamed for the story. He probably referred it correctly, but we have to be aware that Troy was believed to have a position at the mouth of River Don (Tanais) at that time. Neither was the real Troy placed in the T yrkland of Snorri as the Turks had not reached the Western Turkey at that time.

In the last version in Heimskringla (1230) he told about the “Ases” (Men from Asia), who came from Asia and at the river Tanais (Don) and met the old “Vanes”. According to Jordanes the Heruls lived there near the old Greek colony Tanais at the mouth of river Don138 between the Goths and the Iranian Alans139, and here they were later subjugated by the Huns. Snorri told that Ases and Vanes fought and reconciled140. Later on Odin as their leader led them from Tanais (Don) through Gardarike (Russia) to "Saxland" – according to Snorri in order to avoid the Romans. All the 12 chieftain-priests followed Odin, while his two brothers stayed behind with a part of the people.

A common feature in his two old legends is that Odin went from the countries around the Black Sea to Saxony, where 3 of his chieftains settled. Passing north he settled for a while at Odinsey (by Snorre regarded as Odense) before the journey ended in Old Sigtuna in Uppland - the region of Lake Mälar.

The king of Suithiod, Gylfi, reconciled with Odin and offered him a part of his kingdom around Uppsala141, where the central "temple" of Odin was established142. The sons or chieftains of Odin were placed as sub-kings in the Nordic countries143 – e.g. Skjold144 in Lejre at Sealand, Yngve in Uppsala and Säming in Norway. While Odin stayed in Odinsey Skjold became the first king of Lejre, as his wife Gefion ploughed Sealand out of the soil of Svealand after a deal with Gylfi leaving a big hole – the Lake Mälar.

In his reconstruction Snorri used a story about Odin and his Ases at a place in the genealogies, which according to earlier myths like Historia Northwegie belonged to Ingui/Yngve. Ari even mentioned an

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137 Ludwig Schmidt believed the Illyrian Heruls lived in Dacia Ripenses (a part of the old Thrakia) before Justinian gave them Singidunum, and Datus lived at the Gepides in Dacia after his escape from Singidunum. Some of the Heruls could be regarded as Dacians. Thor himself may be identified in the Celtic Taranthus and in the Hurrian Taru being identical with the Hettittian Ishkur - making him much older than the Norse Odin and the Ases. It is difficult to see if any of these elements were known or used by later writers.

138 Snorri describes the border between Europe and Asia as Tanaqvisl (Don) – the river at the Greek colony Tanais were the Heruls according to Jordanes settled in the swamps. Note 2.1.10.

139 Maybe the Heruls first became worshippers of Wothan or Gaut at the Black Sea, but here they also met the Iranian influenced Alan/As-people (Chapter 2.1). Theoretically there may have been fights and a following religious influence between Heruls and Alans. Iranian influence is traced both in the Norse religion and in the military equipment in Vendel, but there might be other reasons. The name of the Asi could easily evoke associations to the Ases - and the tribe could have inspired to the Ases, but the name Ases probably derive from “ansu” (ancestral god). Also the Huns may have had such an influence on the Heruls.

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The recent theory developed by Thor Heyerdahl (Jagten paa Odin, 2001) could have the same background. Thor Heyerdahl had in excavations at Asov and the surroundings found traces of a connection between the people living there in the 2nd century BC and the Scandinavian Vikings. He assumed Asov to be Asgaard, the old castle of Odin. He also assumed this was a direct connection before Christ, but this is contradicted by the strong archaeological indications of a change of religion coming to Scandinavia from south in the 6th century AD – unless the Asov-connection was carried through later by the Alans and Heruls. Heyerdal was primarily attacked by scholars because of the long span of years making archaeology useless, and because he had used the names too far. Gro Steinsland has probably correctly argued that Ases derive from the word Ansu (God/Ancestral god) existing much later than the time when Odin should have left with the Asi according to Heyerdahl.

140 The beginning of Heimskringla.

141 Gylfi is mentioned in Edda.

142 Adam of Bremen. Snorri also mentioned Sigtuna, which was the big city of his time near Uppsala.

143 The beginning of Heimskringla.

144 He is mentioned as a son – not only a chieftain – in Edda. Also in the late Christian version of Beowulf the arrival of Skjold has a supernatural character.
"Yngve of Troy". The story is unknown elsewhere though the divine Troy-connection was a part of the late tradition. The story about the king Odin is a separate story which may be a fragment of a legend about a human king as Snorri claimed himself.

An odd character of a god is connected with Odin. Odin was characterized by periods of absence. This is also the case with the “later” king Aun/Audun in Ynglingatal, when other rulers took over. Earlier also Saxo145 wrote about a “false god Odin” still often travelling between Uppsala and Byzantium, where Odin according to Snorri had substantial possessions. Later the king Svegder in Ynglingasaga left for Great Svitjod/Tyrkland to find Odin, but he returned after 5 years. All this sounds more like a human king with several points of interest than a god.

In general the historical sagas and chronologies were reconstructions by the Christian authors who had only fragmentary information in poems and tales at their disposal. They were not aware that the religion changed both geographically and successively over the years - and sometimes their job was to manipulate the past. We have to regard the tales as consisting of fragments about gods or kings put together in different ways – based on the old religion with its different worlds and the tree of life.

Snorri was a serious politician. When he wrote Heimskringla ordered by the Norwegian kings he had already described the general Troy-story 10 years before, which probably was a well-known final stage of the religion at his time – already told by Dudo. He did not want to use that origin of a living royal dynasty and chose instead a human legend. He could not just invent a new story but had to use another legend which he could defend – just like Saxo combined existing legends suiting his purpose in the old genealogies. The story of King Odin existed as indicated in Skjoldungesaga as an alternative story of origin with strong parallels to the classical story of the Christian clerks. Probably the story in Heimskringla was an older version – maybe consisting of fragments from a real royal legend of the past. We will never know how much was reconstructed by Snorri and his predecessors.

### 3.3 Odin and the king of the Heruls

#### 3.3.1 The men of Asia and the Heruls

The similarities between the migrations of the Heruls (described in the earlier scenario) and the story of King Odin and his men are rather obvious.

The area of Tanais (Don) in Ynglingesaga is close to the Swamps of Hele at the Sea of Asov into which the Don is flowing. From there the Heruls joined the raid of the Huns – the men of Asia. The route is not the same, which will be examined in the next chapter, but they are met again in Northern Germany where the Varni, whom the Heruls visited, were a part of the Saxons, when Snorri wrote.

King Odin and his 12 chieftain-priests left back two of his brothers with a part of the people – a parallel to the separation of the Heruls in 509.

Probably the Heruls sailed directly from the Varni to Blekinge/Värend and stayed in the surroundings of the local Odinsjö – while Snorri wrote Odinsey (Odense) at Fyen. From Odinsey Odin sent his daughter Gefion to Gylfe in Uppsala. In her negotiations her father got a part of the kingdom of Gylfe and she herself became queen of Denmark – inspiring to the explanation about a deal à la Hengist in the scenario in Chapter 2.2.2. Odin settled in Sigtuna and got his temple in Uppsala, where the mounds with traces of Central European mercenaries are found.

Snorri told that the Ases and the Vanes fought at the Tanais and were reconciled. It was here the Heruls

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145 The chapter of Haddig, Odin and Midodin in Book 1.
fought the Goths and the Huns before joining them, while the reconciliation between the war- and fertility-gods found its more prosaic place and reason in Uppsala.

Snorri told that Odin changed the burial customs of both people to cremation by law. Later Frej, the ancestor of the Ynglings, was buried without cremation to honour his divine character – and he was placed in a mound. It is correct that the burial customs changed to cremation in general, when the Heruls arrived – this is described by archaeology and even indirectly by Procopius regarding the Heruls. The first kings in the mounds were cremated too, but afterwards most of the earls in the boat graves were buried. Snorri failed regarding the mounds, but how did he get the idea about the complicated change between burial and cremation? Did the telling already exist?

The invading Herulian king may in the sagas be identical with Audun/Aun146 – a name which according to Snorri was identical with the Wothan-like name Odin. The same Aun from Ynglingesaga connects the Odin cult in Uppsala with a calendar related to Rome and the year 476 AD when Odoaker took over. In the theory Audun could be the name of the arriving king as similar names are found among the Germanic people in the South. An Auduin with a mother from Thuringia and an unknown father became king of the Lombards in 545, when he as former guardian followed the young Waltari (ON Valdar) at the throne. Waltari was dying young as a son of Silinga (Wacho’s third wife) being the daughter of a Herulian king – probably Hrodolphus147. Moreover an Ostrogothic noble Odoin was executed in the year 500 AD. Such a coincidence could explain why the myth of the king was mixed up with the religious myths - or maybe misused in the past.

We shall probably disregard an original connection between the king and the god. In that case other names are possible. The first Herulian king mentioned around 350 AD was called Alaric, and also Jordanes told about a king Alaric in 468 AD, who could have been the father or grandfather of the Herulian king Rodolphus. One of Rodolphus’ sons or brothers was probably leading the migration to Scandinavia around 512 AD. We do not know the name of this king, but if we read Ynglingatals a horse-riding king Alrik without any history was father to king Yngve – also being the name of the founder of the new dynasty in Svealand. If we assume that the invading king used the usual royal name of the Heruls, Alaric (=Alrik meaning king of all), the new god Odin (=a Norse version of Wothan) probably later absorbed his “history” and was put in front of Ynglingatals.

Snorri told in Edda that Odin and his men on their way from Asia to Uppsala were celebrated as gods, but his explanation in the beginning of Ynglingesaga was that the divine dignity of Odin was caused by the warriors, who began to call upon the famous warrior king before a battle. That explanation is probably more likely – but that could happen to him as an “ansis” too long time after his death.

Saxo maybe even indirectly explained to us how “the men of Odin” could become superior in Scandinavia, when he described the battle formation “Svinefylkingen” as a divine idea of Odin. The Romans and their mercenaries like the Heruls used the battle formation called “Porcinum Capet” or the “Swine Head” to split a primitive row formation148. At least it is an example how experienced soldiers like the Heruls could win

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146 “King Auns Calendar”, which according to Göran Henriksson (TOR 27) is connected to the sight lines at the mounds of Uppsala, seems to begin in the year 476 AD (the year where the Heruls assisted Odoaker to put an end to the Roman Empire) with a cycle of 304 years. The calendar might be established in Southern Europe as its structure is Roman/Julian, and Aun may have brought it to Scandinavia. The calendar was connected to the new 8 (9) years cycle at the Disething in Uppsala – known from Adam of Bremen and local reports from the 18th century (read also about Aun in note 8.3.13). The Icelandic scholar Einar Palsson presented more complicated theories about the use of geometric figures and numbers in the landscape, but this shall not be used as an argument here. Einar Birgisson has in his new book “Egyptian influence and sacred geometry in ancient and medieval Scandinavia” [Link] shown how these theories can be used around Uppsala using some interesting examples.

147 Origo Gentis Longobardorum and Paulus Diaconus.

148 Saxo (VII,10) made a detailed description of this triple wedge formation, which “an old man called Odin” learned the Danish hero, king Harald Hildetand. Saxo did not give it a name, but the sagas mentioned the name “Svinefylkingen” (Swine group) for a formation more simple than the complicated Saxo-formation. The Romans
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though being a minority. It could of course be brought to Scandinavia by other reasons - but if so, why was it combined with Odin?

Snorri told in Ynglingesaga that Odin knew were to go and settle when they felt threatened. Snorri wrote about a Roman threat, but a similar claim in "Chronicon Lethrenses" about Augustus will probably show up to be later events caused by the Frankish Kings around 700 AD, when comparing with archaeology [Troels Brandt, 2004: Danernes Sagnhistorie]. The threat against Odin could as well be Huns or Christian Lombards or East Romans as Snorri did not mention any details. Therefore there is no reason to place the departure of Odin in the Roman period.

If we continue with the example above mentioning the names Alrik and the shaman-like Aun, Alrik may be the man at the divine throne in shape of a Germanic Wothan figure using the Norse version of the name Odin/Audun/Aun – four versions of the same name. Alternatively the royal priests of Uppsala later placed the former warrior kings Alrik (Aun), Yngve and maybe Jorund149 under the godlike names Odin/Wothan, Frej and Njord in the new world of gods mixed by Ases and Vanes, where the shapes changed and took new positions during the years - just like Grimnismal told. We will probably never be able to tell what happened, but under all circumstances some historical myths of Scandinavia became the myth of the divine family of Odin and the Ases – the Ynglings, Skjoldungs etc. The descendants were therefore able to use the relation to Ases to legitimate a family-right to the throne – a right met in many societies, probably including the Heruls as earlier mentioned.

The remains of this process from man to god does not exist only in Jordanes' and Rimberts works, but also in the Norse legends. Saxo mentioned both an Odin and a Midodin – the last just like Snorri’s Odin being a man calling himself a god. As mentioned also Ynglingesaga described these stages between man and god - i.e. Aun.

The North Germanics kept their pagan belief 400 years longer than their southern kinsmen. Maybe the ancestor-cult preserved the power of the royal dynasties and vice versa until the pressure from Christianity undermined its functions - but obviously this way of stabilising the political regimes in Scandinavia based on

149 These names were based on the poem Ynglingatal from the ninth and tenth century, which was used by Historia Northwegiae and later by Snorri. The dating of Ynglingatal was provocingly criticized by Claus Krag in 1991 as described at page 120, but he has later been opposed.

The kings Agne (In Danish pronounced Aune) – Alrik (Overlord/King of all) – Ingjald (Yngve-Frey/Ongentheow) – Jorund (Njord?) – Aun (Audun/Odin) are placed in different order in Historia Northwegia and Ynglingatal, and they may be regarded as a mixture of doubles in different stages of the process from king to god, when the family of Odin was put into the sequence of the old Inglinge-dynasty. Odin became a god in front of the list as the new ancestor together with Njord and his son Yngve-Frey (Heimskringla) – maybe instead of Ing and his reincarnations.

In this part of the list we also find Alaric - a name of Herulian and Gothic kings. The Nordic form Alrik is – just like his brother Erik – the name of a Visigothic king at the same time. The name might be the title "Overlord"=Odin. In Ynglingatal he and his brother seem like empty shells. Like Attila Agne died in the bed at his wedding night. Probably some of the kings were a result of “foreign legends”.

The author has in "Danernes Sagnhistorie" proposed the line of kings Alrik/Aun - Yngve/Ongentheow - Ottar - Onela/Hunding - Adils.

The names from Ynglingatal - Adils, Alrik and Erik - were found at the rune stone from 750-850 in Sparlösa near the later centre of the church in Vestergötland, Skara (just as some of the names were mentioned in Beowulf and Widsith). We may expect this similarity in royal names to be a coincidence due to the difference in time. However the stone is interesting due to the mentioning of magic runes and Uppsala, where Aulis is mentioned as king while his son Alrik probably was king in Götaland. The pictures show a hall, a ship with sails and a mounted warrior with sword and a boar(?)crested helmet - probably the symbols of power in the Vendel Dynasty. Was this a demonstration of the power of Uppsala in Götaland?
inheristance was able to function all the next millennium.

A part of the religion was in that way a result of politics – manipulated as the royal genealogies. That does not mean that the general rules of Dumezil shall be totally neglected when analysing the Norse religions. The explanation will not be perfect according to religious philosophy and in relation to the normal Indo-European structures as described by Dumezil, but neither is the merged Norse pantheon - marked as it is by a compromise with a background in political power. Actually this was precisely what Snorri described in 1230 - only he did not link them to any historically known people - he did not mention the Heruls of Procopius or the Dacians of Dudo.

It is important to emphasize that an Odin as a king from old Herulian myths does not implicate that the god Odin just was a divined ancestor. In Scandinavia the god Odin probably became a Herulian shaman-like ancestor inspired by Attila mixed up with the Westgermanic god Wothen, who in the 5th century began to spread into Scandinavia from South West.

3.3.2 The route of Odin

On a superficial view the three parts of migration history mentioned in the chapters above look very separated from each other. Snorri had even two versions of the route to Saxony - one along the Danube and one along the Russian Rivers and across the Baltic Sea. First we have to look at these discrepancies.

The first unclear description from the Edda of Snorri was very similar to Dudo’s description of an origin from Troy and a later route from “Tyrkland” against north west, but at the time of Snorri Tyrkland was not the Turkey we know today, and the lost Troy was in a contemporary description placed near Tanais. Actually Snorri’s purpose to present the old myths correctly is confirmed by this use of a story which was presented 200 years earlier by Dudo - Snorri did not invent or manipulate that story as claimed. He just referred Dudo. Therefore there should be a reason why Snorri ten years later rejected the Troy-legend choosing instead the more distinct description with a fictive “Asgaard” behind Don/Tanais. Today we still know the city of Asov at that position. This change may be caused by knowledge unknown to us – i.e. by lost Nordic legends – as he rejected the old clerical historians and the general glamorous Troy-myth preferring instead the barbarian neighbourhood of an unknown easterly colony of Greece.

Snorri may have found a new source, but unfortunately the explanation appears to be reconstructed by Snorri or his source - maybe because they only knew fragments. Angrimir Jonsson indicated that parts of the story already existed in the later disappeared Skjoldungesaga, which was written before Snorri. In the new version of Ynglingesaga Odin went from Tanais against west to Gardarige (Russia), which appear a little too similar to the much later route of the Vikings between the Eastern Baltic Sea and Byzantium – except for the contradiction between the direction “west” and the place “Gardarige” against north. From there he went to Saxony, Fyen and Uppsala. It seems, however, illogical to follow a route from the Black Sea via nowadays Russia and Latvia to Saxony before going back to Uppsala – the detour is absurd. Snorri was caught up in the same trap as his contemporaries when he tried to make up the puzzle – he was not able to make the legends fit as his picture of the world was wrong.150

150 Snorri told in his second version of the legend in Heimskringla that Odin after going westward from Tanais to Gardarike (Russia) went south to the Saxons. The consequence of that explanation is that he went north along River Don and against west to the Baltic Sea turning south west against Saxony. From there he went back north east again. Gardarike is only mentioned as an area he passed from Don, but in both versions Odin subdued Saxland. In Edda they originate from Troy, but the geographer al-Idrisi placed at a map in 1154 Troy at River Don - a map Snorri may have known as al-Idrisi served a Normannic duke Roger of Sicily. In Edda he went north from Tyrkland to Saxland, and out of 12 sons, who followed Odin, 3 (Vegdeg, Beldeg (Balder) and Seggi) already settled in Germany (Austr-Saxlandi, Vestfal (where the grave in Beckum was found) and Frakland). If Snorri had not involved Gardarige and the trip against south (Great Svitjod or Dacia/Pannonia would have fit), the initial western direction can be regarded as a connection to all the other descriptions following the Danube/Elbe-route. The possible combinations are Oder/Weischel (never mentioned in this connection), west – north west (Danube - Elbe) or north - west – south west (Baltic Sea). None of the descriptions told in northern Europe sounds reliable except for the last part from Saxony to
We shall notice that Odin in both legends settled in Saxony – Odinsey – Old Sigtuna (close to Uppsala). If we leave out the contradictory Gardarige, which was an area they just passed like the Vikings coming from the Black Sea, the “Men from Asia” travelled against west and arrived to Saxony from South East. This is the same route as the old myth about Troy, and even the Dacian kings of Dudo followed that route. The combined result will look like this: From Tanais the ancestors of the Nordic kings had followed the Danube/Elbe-route over Dacia and Saxony (in north east earlier called Varni) to the Danes, Gautoi and Svear. That is exactly the route of the Huns and Heruls, and as earlier mentioned Snorri even told about a split of the royal family and old properties in Byzantium.

An objection should be that the Heruls probably never lived at Tanais, but that does not change anything as they believed so, when Ablasius and Jordanes wrote. Probably they later mixed up Tanais (Don) with Dnepr (ON Danpr), which in the 3rd century was the border between the Germanic tribes and the Sarmatian Alans. If the Alanes were integrated they may even have brought legends from Tanais and Asov with them into the Herulian group.

This very natural combination of the migrating kings described by Snorri and Dudo, who both wrote in North Western Europe, will be identical with a combination of the South-European Procopius and Jordanes describing the route and living places of the Heruls.

A combination seen from this point of view will indicate that the myths of origin of Odin and the legends of some of the royal dynasties in Scandinavia could be the missing Nordic history of the Heruls. Unfortunately events from the 300 years of migration are totally mixed up – but such a mess should be expected as Dudo wrote 500 years later and Snorri wrote 700 years later.

Making a kind of summary we can ask the question: How did Snorri get that idea? We have 3 possibilities:
1. He invented a route himself - and hit by a coincidence the travel route of the Heruls.
2. He found fragments of one or more Nordic legends or poems describing a route of some nameless Heruls.
3. He knew the route of Procopius.

Reading these possible answers the last answer appears at the first glance to be most realistic while the first is nearly impossible. However, if he knew Procopius there was no reason to follow the Viking route through Russia letting them go from Latvia to Saxony and back to Uppsala. This is also an argument against the first possibility. Furthermore it is as earlier mentioned difficult to explain why he did not refer to Procopius if he knew him - in order to support the Christian argument that Odin was a human being. This leads us back to one or more Norse myths containing fragments of the Herulian history as the background for his final reconstruction. As we do not expect to find Procopius-readers in the early pagan Scandinavia, the Heruls themselves appear to be the most probable source for such Norse myths. However this alone can never constitute a convincing proof.

### 3.3.3 The later kings of Ynglingesaga

Both in Heimskringla and Historia Norwegie the description of the gods was instantly followed by the genealogy of the kings descending from Yngve-Frey - known from the much earlier poem Ynglingetal. They are normally divided into four groups.

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Scandinavia – just opposite Procopius, who was not able to describe the last part in a way to be trusted. The lacking ability to reflect the round shape of the Earth in the maps and the Christian church’s unwillingness to accept it caused a confusing impression of the world - unless Pytheas and scientists like Pythagoras very early had recognised the round shape. If a man as an example went 1400 km eastwards from Vestfold in Norway and then 1400 km southwards (along the Russian rivers) he reached Tanais, but if he went from Vestfold 1400 km southwards and then 1400 km eastwards (along the Danube) he reached Dacia. Therefore Christian writers, who regarded the Earth to be a disc as described by Snorri, had serious problems with directions and location of the countries at a flat map or the cylindrical map used by some scientists.
The kings in the first group covering Dag and his “ancestors” have obviously no connection with the rest. They appear to be fantasy figures or maybe mythical kings from the earlier kingdom. Probably the purpose was to prolong the list of kings and connect them with the gods.

The next group from Agne to the shaman-like Aun151 were mentioned in different order in the two versions of Ynglingatal and seem to contain doubles. Some of them appear with elements of gods or of Hunnic and Visigothic kings. Maybe they were used as a fill up to make the family older than the Danish kings – being elements of other kings or gods. It cannot be excluded that the story of Aun and the human Odin were constructed by elements of the same legendary king.

The kings of third group are known as the "Skilfings" from Beowulf too - the name may be derived from skjalf (Highseat). Skilfing was in Grimnismaal told to be an earlier name of Odin – just like Geat. These kings are normally regarded as more reliable figures – if we can talk about reliable in that connection.

The fourth and last group became Norwegian kings as the family had to escape, when Ivar Vidfadme of Scania was told to conquer most of Sweden around 700 AD.

The similar saga of the kings from the Danish Lejre – Skjoldungesaga – is unfortunately only known from small fragments. Maybe Ivar Vidfadme was identical with the symbolic figure Dan known from the Cronical of Lejre and from Saxo. Snorri knew and used Skjoldungesaga, when he wrote Ynglingesaga.

The names of the kings in Ynglingasaga were based on the poem Ynglingatal from the ninth or tenth century, which was used by Snorri and probably also earlier by Historia Northwegiae. The dating of Ynglingatal was provocingly criticized by Claus Krag in 1991, but though he has later been opposed in a convincing way in a doctoral thesis by Gro Steinsland, Svante Norr and especially Olof Sundqvist many scholars prefer to refer to his critical comments supporting their general view. In note152 is described that his conclusions do not

151 According to Ynglingesaga Aun/Audun ruled over several periods through 200 years indicating a superior king between gods and human beings – an Odin-shape. The superior king possibly corresponds with Jarl from the poem Rgesthula explaining the background for the classes of the society – slaves, free farmers and earls. The god Heimdal here points out the descendants to Jarl – son of Heimdal and Mother – to become kings and “Godes” with the title “Rig” (=king). He taught him the magic language of the runes. Jarl was followed by his son Kon (konung=king). The last part of the work is missing, but Kon was told, that Dan and Danp were better Vikings. Danp is elsewhere presented as a brother to Yngve (Skjold?). (Danp was also the Norse name of Donpr, where the Heruls earlier lived.) The Viking-rumour indicates that the survived version is connected to the take-over by the later Danish king Dan (as in the Lethre (Lejre) Chronicle) even though it explains the earlier formation of the supreme kingdom.

152 Claus Krag stated that the information in the genealogy of Are and Historia Northwegiae was one version of the past and Ynglingatal and Snorri's Ynglingesaga another version due to different spelling of personal names, chronological order and the kingdoms ruled by the Norwegian kings. As Ynglingasaga was the youngest he concluded that Ynglingatal was younger than Historia Northwegiae!! He forgot the most likely possibility that Ynglingatal as Snorri told was the oldest version existing together with one or more other lost poems or sagas with a different content - just as HN and Ynglingasaga were different. Accordingly the authors had to pick up what they personally believed, which could cause the discrepancies he observed. He emphasized that both Ynglingatal and Snorri had Agne - Alrik in the opposite order than Historia Northwegiae, which made him conclude that Are and the author of Historia Northwegiae did not know Ynglingatal. But he forgot that the only version of Ynglingatal is known from Ynglingasaga, where Snorri may have changed the order of these kings due to other sources. Furthermore he claimed that the author of Ynglingatal knew the “four elements”. That may be correct, but that will not prove that the author was a Christian as the pagan philosophy was influenced by Christian thinking as mentioned by Claus Kragh himself in another connection. In that case he referred to FornjotR, but he ignored that FornjotR's three sons did only cover three elements. His best argument could be that the Norwegian Ynglinga kings in Historia Northwegiae were kings of "Opplandene" while they in Ynglingatal and Ynglingasaga were kings of Vestfold too. Historia Northwegiae does not tell that they did not rule Vestfold too, and the only remark about Vestfold in Ynglingatal was that Harald Hvitebeine was buried in Siringssal. His argument about euhemerism was the usual that euhemerism was used by the Christians as an argument and accordingly gods with a human past must have been invented by the Christians - a common mistake among scholars forgetting that religion based on ancestors was common in the past – even described by the pagan Romans. The argument simply does not work both ways.
follow simple logics as he has ruled out the most likely explanations.

Counting generations from the death of Harald Blåtand back to Harald Hildetand via his grandfather Ivar Vidfådme to the members of Ynglingatal Aun should be expected to die in 510 AD using the average length of generations from the historical part of the Danish royal family through 1000 years. Nearly the same result is reached by using the Swedish list from Erik Sejersäl. The uncertainty around the length of generations (average from birth to birth) and the lists of kings will make this dating useless, but at least the following theories are not destroyed by such a calculation.

Odin became one of their Ansis - an Anszu - and in that way the name of the Asir may have been formed. In Götaland Wothan as Odin possibly replaced their version of Gaut as the oldest ancestor of the royal family, while the Ynglings in Uppland were combined with the Skilfings (Herulian/Swedish dynasty) by the kings in Ynglingatal's group 2 - and therefore Grimnismal told that Gaut and Skilfing were earlier names of Odin.

We shall, however, notice that (opposite in the Edda) Odin was not an ancestor of the Ynglings in Ynglingesaga. The ancestor to Yngve (Frej) and Aun was the Vane Njord. Did Snorri know that the “men of Asia” became earls without conquering the throne or was it due to another myth letting the original royal line of the Svear continue in order to legitimate the dynasty?

Snorri wrote about Ases, Vanes, Earls, Danes, Swedes and people from Troy and Tanais, but he never mentioned the Heruls.

3.3.4 Independent sources?

The similarities above will immediately bring up the question: Did Snorri and Dudo use the works of Jordanes and Procopius?

Procopius was mentioned in connection with the Apostle of Germany, Bonifatius around 700 AD, but Procopius is not traced in the later sources from northern Europe. Jordanes, however, was mentioned by Widukind - confirming that he was known in the northern monasteries around 1000 AD. Dudo seems to have read Jordanes, but he did not mention the part of the Herulian history reminding us about the history told by Snorri. The use of Priamos of Troy is showing that Snorri knew the Danish tradition of a background in antique history already mentioned by Dudo 200 years earlier, when the first people from Iceland were studying in Paris.

It is obvious that Snorri may have known the same source as Roger Bacon, who in 1250 AD mentioned the As-people in the area of Asov, and this could have been Snorri's inspiration to Asgaard – especially as Troy appears to have been placed in this area at a map from 1154 AD. However the only connection between the people around Asov and Scandinavia were the Heruls, but Snorri never mentioned the Heruls.

Close to the Azes in Azerbaijan Thor Heyerdahl also claimed to find a Van-people at the other side of Ararat in Eastern Turkey. The existence of this people was confirmed by local scholars, and we can find the town and the Lake Van at modern maps. He also found an Udin-people (pronounced Odin) in Azerbaijan. The method by comparing names used by Heyerdahl may lead to totally wrong conclusions because of coincidences, but there are several other possibilities. Snorri may have been inspired by legends from Caucasus, or he may have reconstructed certain elements because of similarities in names he knew. Some of Heyerdahl's observations may be right, but the Udin-connection is contradicted by the connection between the Norse Odin and the earlier German Wothen even mentioned by Snorri. Also the more likely As-connection is contradicted by the generally accepted linguistic development from "Ansi" and "Ansu" to "Ases". As "Ansu" meant "God" or "Ancestral god" this chain of development seems very logical, but this may be a coincidence as well or the development may have happened the opposite way. This is not written to defend Heyerdahl's theories, but Snorri may have made some of the same mistakes, including the combination of the name Ases and Men from Asia. However such a mistake does not mean that the basic theory, which Snorri believed his Asia-mistake would strengthen, is wrong. That kind of arguments are often
misused.

Snorri's Tanais-legend using a route through Gardarige could never be a result of Snorri reading Procopius, and Snorri also used other names - he mentioned Tanais and Saxony but not Procopius' Ister (Danube) and the Varni. Without a combination with Procopius or without Nordic legends about the Heruls the few remarks of Jordanes covering the Heruls should never bring associations to a reader leading to the migration of Odin. Dudo probably used elements of Jordanes, but Snorri used remarkably few elements of Dudo, Jordanes and Procopius in his stories - if any. Probably Snorri reconstructed a part of the geographical description using routes from the Black Sea and place names he knew from the Vikings, but if he was deliberately manipulating the whole geographical story based on Procopius, this was extremely clever done and his motives are not even obvious.

If Snorri knew Procopius and in any way connected his history with "The men from Asia", we should expect the Christian historian to uncover and use a connection between the pagan gods and the Heruls in his warning against paganism in Skaldskapermal - unless he was forced to suppress the connection between Heruls and gods. But this suppression should only be expected to take place if the Hypotheses of the Heruls were true. Alternatively he did not combine Odin and the Heruls or he did not know Procopius. In the first case he had no reason to use the story, but if he nevertheless was inspired by Procopius he had no reason to reconstruct a (wrong) route and he had no motive to invent a brand new myth about Nordic gods behind Tanais centuries after Odin was given up as a god - as he did not use it for any purpose. Consequently his story about the "Men from Asia" appears in both cases independent of Procopius.

Finally the basic myths of the religion are supposed to be developed in a much older pagan environment, where no one would be expected to read antique historians and combine them in that way. The picture-stones at Gotland indicate that antique legends were known early, but not necessarily from books. Dudo confirmed only 40 years after Denmark was officially baptised that the Danes boasted of Greek ancestors. Therefore the Dacian tradition was already well established at that time without any connection with Procopius and his Heruls. Thus Snorri did not invent the south eastern connection. On the contrary his explanations and different versions show doubt in his mind about the Troy-legend, but not about men from the region of Tanais becoming kings of Scandinavia. If the "Men from Asia" had not already used the Greek Troy-legend as Snorri maintained, the Danish boasting was probably caused by the first Christians converting a pagan Tanais-legend of the royal family to "civilised" antique "history".

The outstanding similarities regarding Tanais and the routes - looking at a modern map - indicate in spite of the uncertainty that the Norse myths are independent descriptions of the same events, which were never combined later because of different names, dating and approach. As one version is a migration history surviving in separate parts from a Byzantine and a Gothic historian, while the other version survived as a central Nordic religious myth and as some parallel legends of kings in an antique shape, this will only strengthen the assumption of totally different sources – but it will never constitute a proof of any historical event.

3.3.5 A possible source

Maybe Procopius description of the migration is in this way confirmed by one or two apparently independent descriptions, but unfortunately they are not known as contemporary descriptions.

The three stories do not only contain similarities making it possible to combine them, but after the combination they will supply each other in a way explaining many historical, archaeological and religious matters in the Iron and Viking Ages.

We may wonder why Snorri told two versions of the south eastern connection. Looking at works like the Hervarar-saga primarily operating in the areas around Danube and the Black Sea, it does not seem unlikely that Snorri in his investigation looking for an explanation behind the Troy-legend found a legend pointing at the Greek Tanais. One possibility is that he found an old legend of a war between As- and Van-people in
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Caucasus (mentioned by Heyerdahl) inspiring to the names, as we know Roger Bacon some years later knew the As-people, but such a past of the Van-people is unknown today. The etymology behind the "Ases" might be a reconstruction by Snorri reading the above mentioned source about the As-people and maybe the town Asov. However these theories by Heyerdahl do not appear to be likely.

A more likely possibility may be that the source of Snorri was a Nordic legend about a battle at Danpr – namely the battle he described as the battle between Ases and Vanes though this “divine war” took place later in Scandinavia. We may suspect this to be an Attila-legend as Lotte Hedeager, but Attila first became leader when they reached Dacia/Pannonia and a story about the Huns should have lead Snorri to the Danube-route. Apparently, Snorri never realized that his distant battle probably was a battle between the Heruls and Ermaneric or the Huns – both parties often mentioned in Nordic legends. The defeat forced the Heruls to follow the victorious leaders – Attila was the last of them – towards west to Moravia, from where the head of their own royal family brought some of them to Sweden. Snorri never realized that the narrators may have repressed a complicated and humiliating history of 150 years. Maybe Snorri when he found these Tanais-legends in good faith mixed them up and chose the best route he and his contemporaries knew – the Viking route from Don to Scandinavia and not the Gothic route from the Dnepr. Maybe the Tanais-legend was later converted into a Troy-legend. Snorri did under no circumstances invent the story himself as the headlines were mentioned in the earlier Skjoldungesaga (Fragmenta rerum Danicarum).

The long travels of Odin and his possessions in Byzantium, mentioned by Snorri and Saxo, may be due to a religious dynastic superiority of the Scandinavian dynasty over the other Herulian kings - including over some of the Heruls in Illyria, although they were a part of the Byzantine rule. As Datus was sent from Sweden he must have been a pagan – probably like the group asking him to come. Later on Datus had to escape with the men loyal to the royal family to a new kingdom in Dacia under protection of the Gothic Gepides. Snorri/Saxo in combination with Procopius indicates a continuous connection between Scandinavia and these Heruls, who may even have returned from Dacia to Scandinavia after the defeats of the Gepides. This explains why they had to send for Datus in Scandinavia, why Justinian opposed these pagan kings by using Suartuas, why Procopius criticized the character of the Heruls, why the royal party of the Heruls let this conflict be the end of the advantageous collaboration with Justinian, and why the Danes could regard some of the members of these earls as Gothic Dacians as Dudo told.

3.4 The expulsion of the Heruls - Norse parallels

Snorri is not the only Norse or Northern European sources where traces of the arriving Heruls can be found. Both Widsith, Beowulf and Gesta Danorum of Saxo contain such elements, but the earlier mentioned confusion of names has made it impossible to identify with certainty.

3.4.1 Widsith, Wicinga and Vikings

In Widsith we can read that the Danish kings, Roar and Rolf, drove off the tribe of the Wicinga cynn (cynn was a tribe or a family), which is usually translated in this way:

Hrothwulf and Hrothgar, nephew and uncle,
held peace together for many years
after they had driven off the “wicinga cynn”
and beaten down Ingeld's line of battle,
cut down at Heorote the “Heaðobeardna” forces.

The English linguist, Christine Fell, has suggested that the verb “wician” meant to stay temporarily opposite to stay permanently (“buan”)\(^1\) – based on Ottar’s journey in Alfred the Great’s Orosius-translation. There Ottar was sailing in the day and “wician” at beaches or in inlets at night. The translator of Beowulf at www.heorot.dk, Benjamin Slade, has confirmed that difference between the two words – mentioning too by

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\(^1\) Christine Fell in Lund 1983.
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referring to the word “wic” in the Oxford English Dictionary that both words probably had the same IE-root found in the Latin “vicus” (“village”). The name “Wicinga” may at that time have described a tribe of nomads or half nomads as the Heruls. Later the word may have been used to describe the Scandinavian pirates attacking the English coasts – often with camps and colonies at English ground – the Vikings. In that way the word Viking may have ended up in ON as a loan word from OE. Another loan word may be “vik” (inlet) where the Viking ships were “wician” - but that has no influence on the discussion of the Heruls. A Frisian/Anglo-Saxon parallel based on “vicus” is the syllable for camp/town “wic/wich/wick”, which may also have been used on some of the camps of the Vikings.

The name Wicinga in Widsith is often combined with the Heathobeards later in the sentence, but the two parts of the sentence appear to describe different events. Normally the third line in the Widsith quote above is translated "after they had driven off the Heathobard tribe", but in the original OE text the name was "wicinga cynn" as here. This line and the two next lines about the Heathobeards are describing two different events. This first mentioning of the Wicingas may correspond with the expulsion of the Heruls mentioned by Jordanes. The next line about the Heathobeards shall probably be regarded in relation to the events in Beowulf between Roar and the Heathobeards, Frode and Ingeld - the latter being defeated at Heorot (the Hall of Lejre) in Widsith. The Heruls were hardly the Heathobards as that name did not cover a people but a branch of the legendary Danish dynasty - the Scyldings. The English sources mentioning king Roar and an English queen were written before the Danish legends were manipulated by Saxo and the other clerical authors. The Danish legends apparently preferred the line of Frode154 being placed as the ancestors to the later Skjoldunger (Scyldings) og the Ingoldings at the Rök Stone after the confusion caused by the killing of Rolf Krake155. Though Skjold in some works is called a son of Odin there is no reason to regard the Danish dynasty as a part of the Heruls, but they may have been influenced by marriage and mercenary officers (earls).

We do not any tribe called Wicinga and the word Viking is not known in any Norse sources before the Viking Ages. According to an article by the English linguist Antoly Libermann [Libermann 2009] “Wiking” probably originated from the expression “shifting of oarsmen”, which described a people rowing fast and far. The word is found in Frisia in a form which due to the palatination of the “k” probably origin from before 500 AD. This is the time and area where the Western Heruls operated as vikings and were mentioned in Spain and France. It is possible that the Anglo Saxons used this nickname for the Heruls as they only knew these Heruls. When later Widsith and Beowulf should mention the Danish expulsion of the Heruls – when erilaR had become the word earl/jarl – they could both use Wicingas and Eorlas as they did. Later the Rökstone could in the same way use both Chieftain of the Sea Warriors (stilar flutna) and the first of Marika (the first of Mährings) in the riddle about the Herulian king Hrodolphus. If the “Wicinga cynn” meant the Heruls in this case Widsith used exactly the same wording as Jordanes. It is characteristic that this people neither in Jordanes’ Getica, Widsith nor Beowulf was beaten by the Danes which is the usual victory.

In the later Viking Ages this “shifting of oarsmen” simply became the name of the sailors.

Widsith also used the Herul-like "Herelingas" – maybe covering a personal name at that position in Widsith and therefore unchanged by the authors of Widsith. The personal name is normally regarded to cover the Harlungens Twins, who may have been Heruls too [Wolfram 1988].

3.4.2 Beowulf and Eorl

The interpretation of Widsith above may be confirmed by line 6 in Beowulf where "Scyld ... egode eorl" maybe should be interpreted as "Scyld (or rather the Scyldings) ... terrified the Heruli", which was suggested

154 The kings of the Heathobeads were in Beowulf called Frode and Ingjald. The manipulation of the legends is not the topic of this website and is explained in "Danernes Sagnhistorie" by Troels Brandt, 2004.
155 The “foreigner” Fredlejf being in other sources called a son of a Frode was in “Lethre Chronicle” a Danish king married with a daughter of Hrodwulf (Rolf Krake).
3.4.3 Saxo and Huns

Among the many legends of Saxo we also find some information, which could reflect the arrival of the Heruls. In his chapter about Frode Fredegod Saxo has 3 descriptions of the Huns, who were probably never in contact with the Danes as a major group. The Scandinavians may have mixed up the Huns with their followers, the Heruls, which is confirmed by the Dietrich-saga where the ancestor of the family in Rök, the Herulian king Hrodolphus, is called Rodolf of Bekelar as an earl of the Hunnic Attila. The “Huns” arrived in the neighbourhood together with a Russian fleet lead by Olimar, but the Russians did not exist at that time. The fleet may have belonged to the Varini as suggested earlier based on Procopius. According to Saxo Frode married a Hunnic princess, but after 3 years they were separated. At last a battle took place between Frode and the Huns and the Huns disappeared from the stories of Saxo. It is obvious that this story of Saxo may be the combined story we have heard from Procopius, Jordanes, Beowulf and Widsith. Frode was the Scylding who in the Danish legends tried to get a peaceful relationship with the arriving Heruls, but had to expel them afterwards - which made him the strong and famous king of the Danes [Troels Brandt, 2004].

The method used by the “Huns” was in this way an occupation with initial plunderings, fightings or thread followed by integration.

As demonstrated above both Widsith, Beowulf and Saxo mentioned events like Jordanes' expulsion of the Heruls, but Widsith and Saxo used more general names which could refer to the Heruls. But we still have to be aware, that neither Widsith, Beowulf nor Saxo can be regarded as historical sources regarding the 6th century.

3.4.4 The Lithuanian connection

Saxo told us as our only source in a parodic tone that an unknown son of Harald Bluetooth, Hákon, around 970 AD defeated the people of Samland (between Preussia and Lithuania) and remained there with his men – maybe he wanted to escape the Christianity of his father. Saxo wrote around 1200-1220 that the Sembali therefore regarded their ancestry to be Danish [Book 10 chapter 5]. This remark shall be seen in relation to the letters from the pope and other sources about the Danish King Valdemar II starting in 1210 a crusade against Preussia and Samland. He conquered the Baltic Coasts, where the landscapes from Preussia to Kurland (Latvia) had to pay tax to the Danes. Already in 1227 after a defeat by the Germans he was forced to leave the Baltic coasts open for the Teutonian Knights, who settled in most of the area. However they tried during centuries to conquer Lithuania, where a foreign nobility had established the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, who later ruled Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine.

It is easy to associate their origin with the Danes of Saxo, but the Lithuanian chronicles are rather confused about the background of the dynasty of the Grand Dukes and mention both the Heruls, the Cimbri and even the Gepides, who once lived in Dacia from where some old legends told that the Danes arrived (Dudo). The Belarussian linguist, Alex Doylidov, has written that the nobility of Lithuania appears to be Germanic because of names etc., and quotes the “Chronicle of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Samogitia” compiled in the 16th century about the past of their “Herulian” nobility: “...the four most noble families sailed on ships [from Rome] <...> to the north, they passed France and England, and entered the kingdom of Denmark, and
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then sailed to the Ocean Sea [Baltic sea], and then to the mouth of the Nemuna/Memel river; <...> and settled there”.

The motive behind these traditional old myths of origin was according to Encyklopedia Lithuania the internal and German threat against the dynasty – just like Saxo manipulated the Danish history to show the old rights of the Danish dynasty. At that time a Danish dynasty was no strong argument for independence as the Danes had lately been defeated by the Germans. Therefore, they may some time in the 13th -15th century have found other old legends of origin, but it is worth to notice that they had all connection to the Danes and at that time also Listerland, where the Heruls landed, was a part of Denmark. Maybe the original background of the nobility of Lithuania was the warrior-aristocracy from the Germanic Heruls in Masuria tempting the Danish Håkon to join them as a new dynasty after his victory. That may explain the confusing elements about Danmark and the Heruls in the chronicles of the Lithuanian dynasty, but this is not an issue of this paper.

The interesting point is that we here find another version of the Scandinavian myths of origin, which appears to involve the Heruls of Procopius and Denmark – maybe because the Herulian name was well known in that region without being mixed up with the later word earls as it was in Scandinavia and England.

3.5 Burial customs – Snorri and Procopius

Procopius description of the death of an old sick Herul was mentioned earlier – killed by a dagger and burned at a pile of wood as he should not be a burden to his family. His wife should hang herself. Snorri told in Ynglingesaga that an old king should not die sick in his bed, and he told that the king Odin was wounded by a spear and burned at a pile of wood, when he wanted to die – in another story he hanged himself. These may be two versions of the same theme confirming that Procopius had this story from the pagan Scandinavian Heruls, but Snorri explained much further. He described the reconciliation between the religion of the Svear of Gylfi and the religion of the migrating “Asian” warriors of Odin. He told about the "Cremation Ages" and the "Mound Ages", and in Ynglingesaga he told, that Odin and Njord were burned, while Yngve was the first to be buried in a big mound in Uppsala. He told that all dead men should be burned with their belongings, and their ashes should be buried or cast into the sea. The higher the smoke arose the higher he was raised in the next life (which affords a high temperature of the fire as observed in Uppsala and Lejre). For men of consequence a mound should be raised in his memory. In this way there is nearly total correspondence between the stories of Snorri and Procopius and the development told by the archaeologists in the Uppsala-district – especially the content of the three Uppsala mounds, which he had no chance to interpret from an archaeological point of view in 1230 AD.

However, as mentioned the cremations and especially the three Uppsala-mounds constitute a problem if the leaders in Uppsala were Heruls. Also Snorri’s descriptions are incorrect if he just described the Svear. Here the reconciliation between religions or people mentioned by Snorri is an important explanation - especially as Odin according to Snorri also made a new law demanding his own people to be cremated as mentioned above. We shall not forget that the laws probably were remembered better than other texts and that law was Snorri's official job. Neither shall we forget that some people in the Scandinavian societies were able to write and that the runes were made for carving in wood - which probably caused the Swedish juridical term "balk". Even if Snorri knew the content of the royal Swedish mounds, which he hardly did, he or his sources could not have constructed this well-fitting old law explaining everything. The real archaeological combinations found in the Swedish and Moravian graves are simply too complicated. A majority of the people in Sweden and nearly all along Fyrisåen except for the ruling families in chamber graves were already cremated. It made only sense to make such rules if the purpose was to change the customs of an integrated people who were not cremated until now – namely the Heruls. The invading Herulian king must according to European archaeology combined with Procopius have forced his own people to follow the customs of their new people.

156 Encyklopedia Lithuania: Lithuanian Chronicles, Juozas Kapočius. pp. 519–521
That was what Snorri explained as a part of the above mentioned reconciliation, where Odin even ordered them to cremate himself. Later, when the kings and earls consolidated their position with a demonstration of power known as the Vendel Culture, the Heruls used their own and the local leaders former traditions in order to make the king immortal and the family divine – maybe also inspired by experiences from the society in Högom. Snorri's story about Odin, who consequently followed his own new rules for the people, is logically connected with the short period of royal cremation customs in Uppland as demonstrated by the archaeology – just before the Vendel Ages, when the divine royal family got their own burial customs separating them from the ordinary people. In this connection we shall not forget that Snorri did not make Odin an ancestor of Yngve-Frey, who was the son of Vane, Njord. If we shall believe the content of the myth as told by Snorri the Ynglinge-family were Svear in their male lineage – not Heruls.

Snorri told exactly what would happen if a king called Odin really had arrived from Moravia. Snorri could tell what was hidden in the earth of Sweden and Moravia 700 years before he wrote – and excavated 700 years after his death. Of course the modern scholars shall focus on the long span of years. They do also focus on the medieval writers’ general use of classical elements, which does not prove anything. They forget that the Scandinavian kings had a language written in wood and a tradition of law, which make Snorri's and Procopius' story about the burial practice more likely.

3.6 Conclusions - Norse literature

Due to the uncertainty of the legends most scholars prefer to avoid these as historical sources - calling them literature. Though they basically are so and though many of them were even manipulated, they may provide us with a valuable picture of society, kingship and religion filling up some of the holes in the historical pattern. In his PhD-dissertation at the University of Uppsala Svante Norr described indications of the establishing of a superior level of kingship in Scandinavia - based primarily on Norse legends and English poems and chronicles, which he had to defend to a certain degree. He described the kingship as appearing similar with the structures of power and kingship among the Anglo-Saxon and East Germanic people - especially the Goths - in which structures the Heruls earlier tried to reach a higher level.

The many examples leading to a general similarity between the headlines of the Nordic legends, the history of the Heruls and archaeology are striking and cannot be a coincidence. Many of the elements in the history of Procopius can be recognised as fragments in the sagas, and furthermore the legends simply fill out holes and explain the background behind the Hypothesis of the Heruls as it was described in chapter 2. That does not imply that the story about Odin’s men from Asia in Ynglingesaga was the accepted myth of that time as Snorri in that case would have mentioned it earlier. The story as it was told in Ynglingesaga must have been a late reconstruction by Snorri based on fragments in old Norse poems and sagas and maybe even fragments of ancient classical knowledge. Already in the missing Skjoldungesaga a part of that story was known according to Arngrimur Jonsson.

We shall never expect to find surviving sources telling about a ruling Norse dynasty with a past as mercenaries serving the Romans. That would be totally against the politics of the Nordic kings and bishops of the time, when these tales and poems were written down. The only author moving against those limits was Snorri - and he was in fact murdered, though that could be a coincidence as he did not cross the limits.

Apparently independent of Procopius and archaeology these legends have located the centre of this kingship and the religion to the Uppsala area - which was later historically confirmed by Adam of Bremen, when he tried to describe the religious centre (even though his description of the temple itself probably was based on an old rumour). To a certain extend this was also confirmed by Ansgar/Rimbert in Birka mentioning another court, where people listening to the gods were heard. As earlier mentioned these legends point at kings from the countries in the South East as founders of a superior kingship in Uppsala. In that way the legends provide us with the missing link in the accumulating historical evidence in chapter 2 above - without being scholarly acceptable because of the general unreliability of the sources. It is important to notice that no legends tell
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about people settling among the Götes. The location in Uppland and the described burial practices corresponds with the archaeological conclusions, which with a few decades uncertainty date the establishing of the later expanding centre to the arrival of the Heruls. The legends indicate this new religion or culture of Uppsala to arrive from south covering most of Scandinavia - just like the archaeology and the history.

The most important conclusion in this chapter is that there is no lack of traces of the Heruls in the Norse myths and legends though the missing name has been mentioned as an argument against Heruls in Scandinavia. Quite opposite the probability of the Hypothesis of the Heruls is strengthened by the clear connections between history, archaeology and myths – in spite of the unreliability of these legends which exclude them as historical evidence.

4 Scandinavian perspectives

Under all circumstances the Heruls arrived to Scandinavia where they together with the earlier impact of the Huns in Northern Europe must have been an important catalyst in the development process leading to the greater kingdoms of the Vendel Culture and the much later Viking Culture. They are most likely the explanation of the earls of Uppland, but we shall not regard them as the only reason for the Viking Culture as the looting, which made them famous, was a general backside of the culture around the warrior elite in the Iron and Viking Ages until a new combination of kingship and church changed this way of life in the Medieval Ages.

These hypotheses cover an area where it is normally impossible to prove anything according to usual scholarly criteria - except if new techniques as DNA-analyses can help us. Unfortunately the historians have not (like other scholarly areas) found a method of reporting uncertainty - though all historical reports and analyzes contain uncertainty. The Scandinavian historians therefore avoid the Iron Ages. Some historians also avoid the Heruls as they are afraid to support right wing philosophies, but there is no such support in a people from South Eastern Europe being succesfully integrated in Scandinavia. The purpose of this article by an outsider is to combine the fragmentary historical and archaeological information in a more probable and coherent way - in the hope one day to inspire a scholar to find a convincing way out of the deadlock.

Half nomads and mercenaries like the Herulian earls may be a part of the explanation, why the basis of kingship in Scandinavia was the distribution of loot and tribute characteristic for the kings of warriors and migration people (Widsith called this "eorlscipe" in the 8th century). Distribution of precious rings as salary and reward was according to the English poems essential for the reputation of the king - and in this way also for the warrior's incentive and respect for his leader. As the basic farming-, trading- and tax-income of a superior warrior king in Scandinavia was normally limited, most of the distributed treasures had to come from plundering, tribute, protection, custom, market fee and sacrifices. The need of extravagant reward to housecarls and navy may have tempted chieftains and kings to carry out the large Viking raids - an occupation for the Heruls since the 3rd century. But they were not the only reason. The war sacrifices in Jutland tell us that the Iron Ages were no peaceful time before the Heruls arrived, but a part of the culture around the Odin Cult must have been initiated by a nomadic culture or migration people - it is not likely to be initiated by agriculturists.

The expansion of the Franks and a trading route from Frisia/England crossing Southern Jutland to the Baltic Sea (later following the rivers of Russia to Byzantium) moved around 700 AD the military power centre of Scandinavia towards the “border region of the Danes” (=Denmark in Germanic language). That was the time of the king with the symbolic name Dan establishing a royal superiority in an area, which became the Danish "lände". Therefore, the traditions from the past are most obvious in early history of Denmark, from where also a part of the scaldic tradition of Iceland came according to the Icelandic scholar Bardi Gudmundsson. When Christianity prevented the
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Danes from plundering their neighbours - a plunder which at last could not be covered behind crusades and "defensive" raids against the Slavic robbers - this became an important reason for the change in power structure and for the total economic collapse of the Danish kings in the later Medieval Ages.

As mentioned this work was started years ago by the search for the origin of the Danish Kingdom and the election procedure. The thread mentioned above from the pagan and vagrant warrior king to the Christian medieval king could be said to form together with the earlier mentioned election and inheritance traditions manipulated by Saxo the sixth main track of indices supporting the Hypothesis of the Heruls. It corresponds with the other five: Procopius/Jordanes, Snorri, Dudo, the East Germanic legends and the archaeology. As the rows of indices are mostly independent, the Hypothesis of the Heruls will not fall, if one or more of the indices are false. In this connection it has to be noticed, that the most important of all the indices is the combination of archaeology and Procopius' description of a royal Herulian settlement in Scandinavia - a settlement which has never been seriously contradicted by historians although their number and the place of settlement has been discussed.

There is no reason to expect to find historical sources from the Scandinavian Iron Ages meeting the historical assessment criteria of our time, but this hypothesis may give us an explanation of the mystery of the Heruls, which is far more probable than a trackless disappearance. The hypothesis is worth a consideration, as it may give an explanation of the archaeology, the Viking culture and the structure and evolution of Scandinavian kingship.

5 Literature

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### The Heruls in Scandinavia

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