Elite milieus and centres in western Norway 200–550 AD

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Preface and acknowledgements

Since I first started studying archaeology, the late Roman and Migration periods have had a special attraction for me. These three and a half centuries have left us a complex archaeological material with surprisingly many rich grave finds and hoards of gold. In addition, the many physical memories in the landscape, such as burial mounds and remains of buildings, are clearly testimonies of periods with extraordinary expansion. I found it fascinating that traces of this 'golden age' existed in most major settlement districts in my home region. In my MA thesis, I decided to investigate one of these 'centres', Avaldsnes. This made me curious to learn more about centres in the region.

With the aim of gaining new knowledge about western Norwegian centres, my PhD project started in the autumn of 2010. While the main theme was established from the start, writing the thesis has been a demanding process. Many thanks go to my supervisor, Knut Andreas Bergsvik, who has always shown confidence in me and been patient if my progress was slow. I had some fine years at the AHKR institute in Bergen with good colleagues and inspiring work with students. When the funding for the PhD ended in 2015, I was fortunate to get a job at the Museum of Archaeology, Stavanger. The thesis really benefitted from a better knowledge of the Rogaland material. It has been inspiring to be part of a small but solid Iron Age research milieu together with Åsa Dahlin Hauken and Siv Kristoffersen. My head of department, Mari Høgestøl, deserves special thanks for encouraging me to finish the thesis. In the finishing process, Oliver Grimm offered some very helpful comments about parts of the manuscript. Thank you very much! Proof-Reading-Service.com, UK proofread the finished text. All remaining grammatical and factual errors, of course, are solely those of my own.

The final thanks go to my family, and above all to my wife, Marianne. You have endured numerous evenings with me sitting in front of the PC. During my PhD years, a lot has happened in our life. We got married, Torstein was born in 2013 and little Sigurd arrived a few weeks ago. With this thesis no longer being a guilty conscience in the back of my mind, I am looking forward to spending more quality time with you!

Stavanger, 15 March 2017.

Abstract

This thesis examines how *elite milieus* organised their *centres c*. 200–550 AD in the counties of Hordaland and Rogaland, western Norway. Here, the archaeological material has many indications of elite organisation, which have been widely debated throughout the history of research. Building on insights from previous research, a general model of centre organisation was sketched. In the model, *elite milieus*, *central functions* and *centre indicators* were seen as interrelated components of the centre. Methodologically, centre organisation was approached through centre indicators – *status objects* and *grand buildings* – interpreted as being closely related to interaction between elite milieus and to the central functions gathered at centres. Previous work by Myhre and Ringstad identified where the centres in western Norway were located. After critically analysing the methods in their studies, their results were validated.

Twelve of the identified centres in the study area were selected for detailed analysis of the local distribution of centre indicators. By using the general model of centre organisation and applying interpretations of the various centre indicators, the contexts for each of the centre localities were individually examined. The data set of all locations was then used to show general trends and variations in the organisation of the western Norwegian centres. The presence of *sociopolitical*, *military*, *judicial* and *ritual central functions* was identified at the examined centres. These functions were closely associated with the *halls*, *retinues*, *thing sites* and *religion* mentioned in contemporary or later written sources. Alliance networks between elite milieus at the centres have also been identified, best illustrated by alliances led by the Avaldsnes milieu in the late Roman period and by the Hauge-Tu milieu at Tinghaug in the Migration period.

This thesis contributes to a better understanding of how societies were organised in the late Roman and Migration periods, and renews our view of elite milieus and centres. It actualises a large number of western Norwegian centres, connecting these localities to the extensive research discourse on Scandinavian centres. Although the western Norwegian centres have special regional characteristics, sites like Avaldsnes, Hove, Etne, Hafrsfjord and Tinghaug clearly resemble contemporary centres in Scandinavia.

Contents

Chapter 1. Research theme and outline

1.1 Theme and delimitations

How were the western Norwegian centres of the late Roman and Migration periods organised? Based on the distribution of centre indicators, is it possible to identify how elite milieus interacted and gathered central functions at certain localities?

This thesis explores various aspects in the organisation of *elite milieus* and *centres* in a part of western Norway *c.* 200–550 AD. Although social changes happened in this span of 350 years, a specific elite way of life seems to have been a conservative, stabilising feature in society. While the physical *centres* in many ways are the overarching category of the thesis, *elite milieus* represent the social collectives of human groups establishing and maintaining activities at these centres. The elite milieus made use of exclusive material categories to communicate their power and negotiate internal relations, and to gather *central functions* at the centres, making these places of special significance. While the human elites are long deceased, some of their associated material categories are still preserved in the archaeological record. These categories of objects and structures might be considered *status objects* and *grand buildings*. In a term more widely applied in centre research, these categories are *centre indicators*. By examining the local context of many localities identified as centres, assemblages of centre indicators might enlighten us about the organisation of centres.

My methodological and theoretical approaches are rooted in a century-long history of research in western Norway and the Scandinavian countries. By examining previous and current perspectives and debates, I establish my own approach to centres. Based on work on Scandinavian *wealth centres* and *central places*, a set of western Norwegian centre indicators is introduced and discussed. The discussion forms a backdrop for the main analysis of 12 centres. Here, a large number of centres are introduced to the Scandinavian discourse. My selection of centres is based on Myhre's and Ringstad's identification of centres in western Norway. While Myhre placed these centres into a regional organisation in chiefdoms ruled by chieftains, the focus here is moved to the local elite milieus and their many centres in Hordaland and Rogaland.

1.1.1 Geography

The geographical delimitation of my study area is set within the borders of the counties of Hordaland and Rogaland (Fig. 1.1, see also Appendix I). This delimitation is a methodological and practical one, and does not reflect any sharply demarcated unit in the period studied. The two modern counties are each divided into four regional landscapes named, from north to south: in Hordaland: Nordhordland, Voss, Hardanger and Sunnhordland; in Rogaland: Nord-Rogaland, Ryfylke, Jæren and Dalane. The study area covers a core of the western Norwegian 'Migration period find complex', defined geographically from the county of Møre og Romsdal in the north to Vest-Agder in the south. The two coastal counties bordering my study area, Sogn og Fjordane and Vest-Agder, are considered close parallels and are used for comparison. In a super-regional context, the study area is compared to other areas in Norway and Scandinavia.

One of the most striking aspects when dealing with societies in western Norway is the very clear framework put forward by topography itself (Fig. 1.2). The study area is geographically diverse. The inner districts have high plateaux with many outfield resources, glaciers and steep mountains, which are followed by fjord and lowland districts with forests and agricultural terraces. The outermost coastal districts have varied landscapes of heathland, agricultural plains, green or rocky islands and sandy beaches bordering the North Sea. With the Gulf Stream warming up the North Sea, temperatures are rather high considering the latitude. Today, the climate in the study area is characterised by much wind and rain, and mild winters in the lowlands.

In western Norway, settlement districts (Norw. *bygder*) are not randomly distributed, but determined by natural settings. Favourable topography, soil quality, pastureland, and the presence of fish and game allowed a resource basis for groups of some size, and the settlement districts often show continuity from initial agricultural settlement in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. While the high plateaux formed great barriers in the landscape locally, as well as regionally towards eastern Norway, the sea provided the main communication route. Nature thus played a vital role in the distribution of settlements and communication routes, allowing contact and movement of resources. This physical framework also enabled certain settlement districts to become centres.

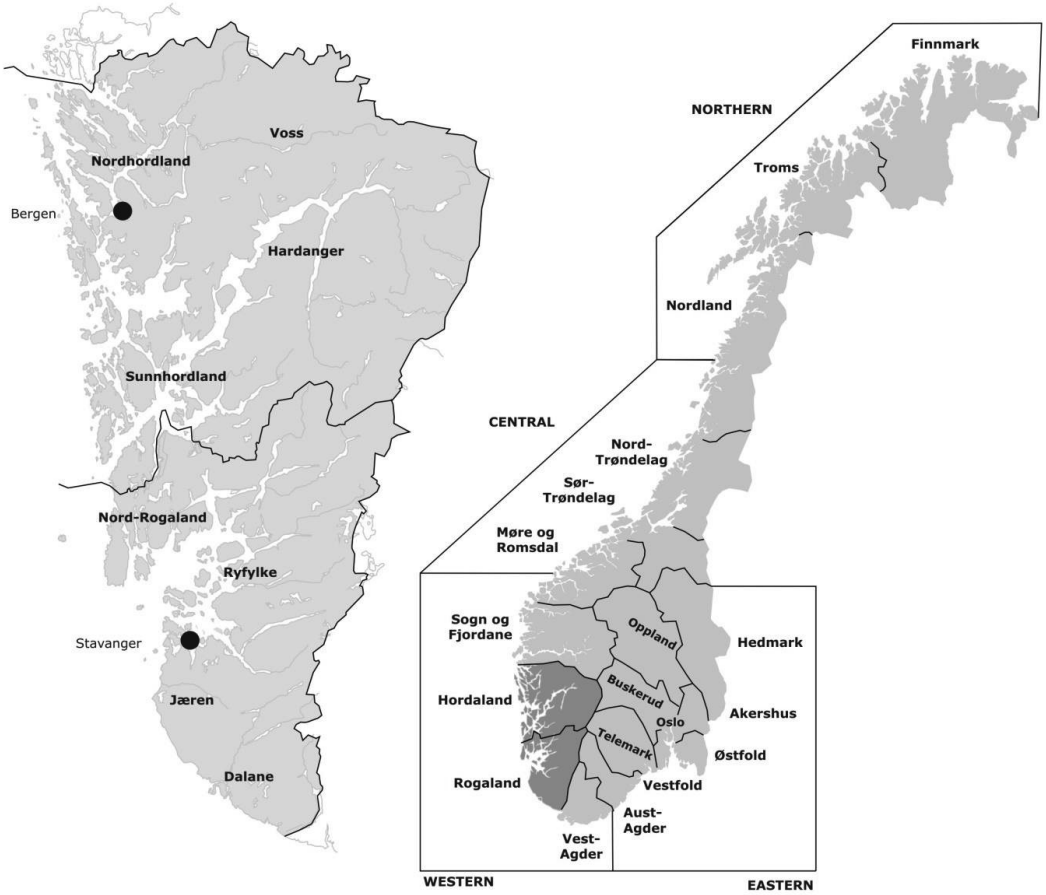


Fig. 1.1. Maps of the landscape districts in Hordaland and Rogaland, and the Norwegian geography with administrative units (counties) and regions. My study area covers the counties of Hordaland and Rogaland, situated within the borders of the museum districts of UM (Bergen) and AM (Stavanger). The division in regions are largely based on the five archaeological districts in Norway. The counties of Rogaland (AM, Stavanger) and Vest-Agder (KHM, Oslo) has been added to the district of UM (Bergen), to form the region of western Norway, from Vest-Agder to Sunnmøre. This area corresponds largely to the geographical core of the so-called 'Migration Period find complex'. Eastern Norway covers the remaining parts of KHM's district, from Aust-Agder to Østfold and the inland counties. Central Norway covers the district of VM (Trondheim) from Romsdal to Helgeland, and northern Norway covers the district of TM (Tromsø), the region from Salten to Finnmark.

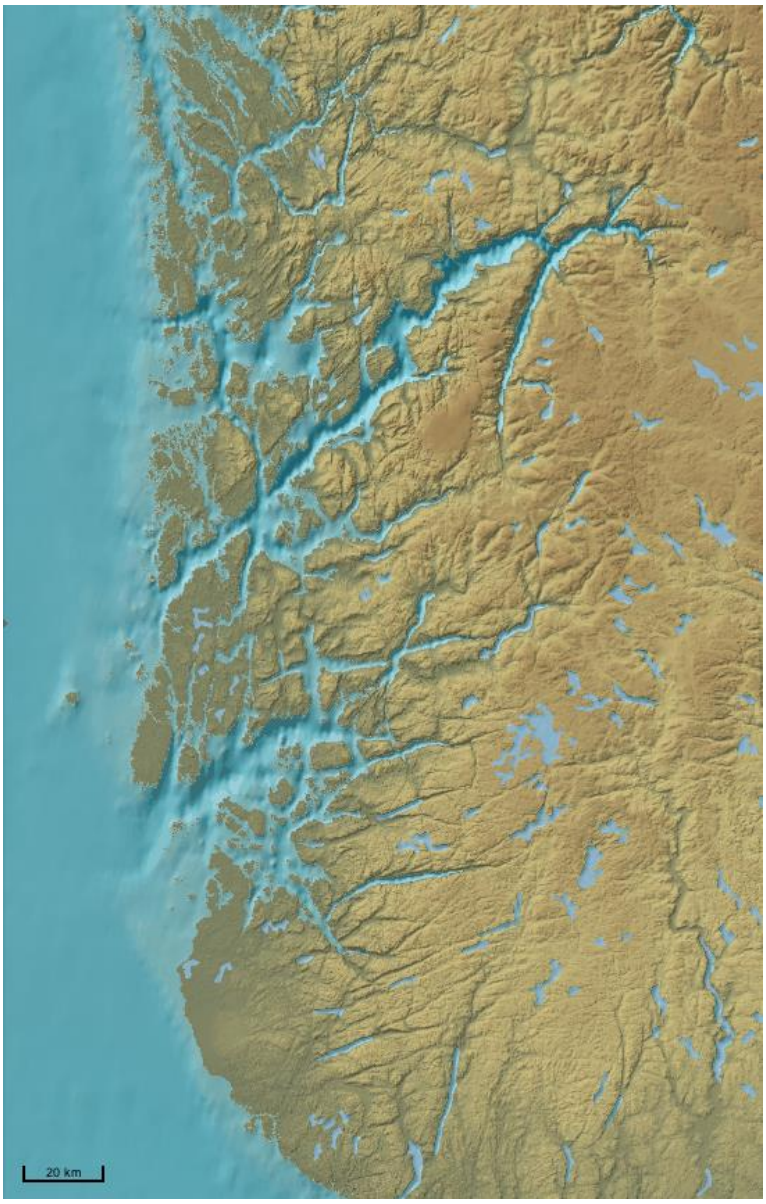


Fig. 1.2. Topographical map of the study area, from the blue sea and the green shaded, costal lowland to the yellow and brown shaded mountains. Situated at one end of the long Hardangerfjord, the top point reaches 1863 metres asl on the Hardangerjøkul glacier. Map from www.norgeskart.no.

The study area covers an area of 25000 km^2, slightly less than the Danish landscape Jutland. Today, less than 6% of the area is agricultural land, and about 2/3 of this land come from Rogaland with the low, fertile Jæren plateau. In both counties, 71% of the area is situated more than 300 metres asl.

1.1.2 Chronology

The chronological delimitations of the thesis cover the late Roman period and the Migration period, defined in Norway as the final part of the early Iron Age. These periods reflect a relatively demarcated unity, with a high degree of continuity. While the Migration period chronology follows work largely based on Norwegian material (Straume, 1987; Kristoffersen, 2000; Kristoffersen & Magnus, 2010), the Roman period chronology relies on Lund Hansen's (1987) Scandinavian chronology, mainly based on a matrix analysis of the Danish material. Her chronology again corresponds to Godlowski's (1970) developments of Eggers' (1951) continental chronology (see Lund Hansen, 1988, Fig. 1). The Norwegian weapon graves were later analysed to define chronological changes. Following Ilkjær's (1990) study of Roman period weapon graves, Bemmann and Hahne (1995) analysed Norwegian weapon graves of the late Roman and Migration periods, defining 12 chronological groups. To sum up, the chronology is mainly based on Lund Hansen (1987), Bemmann and Hahne (1995) and Kristoffersen and Magnus (2010). For simplification purposes, phases C1b–C2 have been adjusted to 50-year groups in a similar way to phases C3a–D2b (Fig. 1.3).

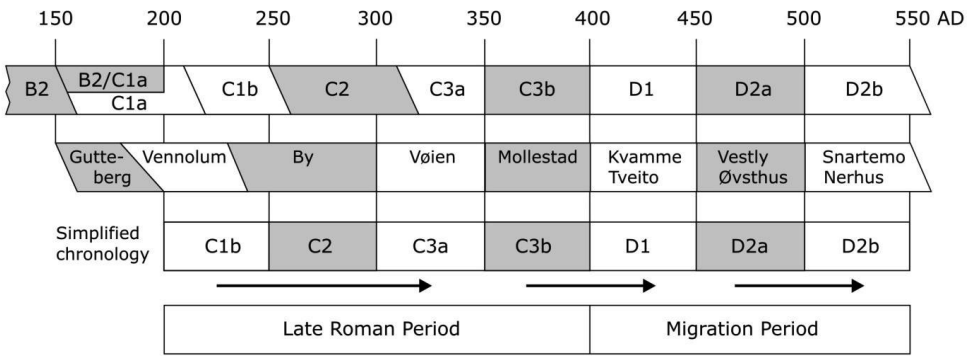


Fig. 1.3. The chronology applied in the thesis. The upper line shows phases B2/C1a–C3 as defined by Lund Hansen (1987), with Rau's (2010) division of C3, and phases D1–D2b as defined by Kristoffersen and Magnus (2010). The middle line shows weapon groups from Gutteberg to Mollestad after Bemmann and Hahne's (1995) own datings, with Migration period groups correlated with phases D1–D2a after Kristoffersen and Magnus (2010). The Danish C1a phase and the Skiaker weapon group have been omitted from this figure, as they are considered regional entities not occurring in the study area. The lower line shows a simplified chronology, with arrows indicating major phases of continuity, in C1b–C2 (with C3a), C3b–D1 and D2a–b.

1.2 Introducing the centres

The material basis of the thesis is a set of object and structure categories defined as western Norwegian centre indicators (Table 4.4). My overviews of these categories were made from existing documentation in museum catalogues, photos, plan drawings, reports and reference literature. In a few cases, artefacts of special importance to the discussion have been examined physically. The majority of the centre indicators are presented in the text as figures and material lists, and are plotted on distribution maps. The categories are grouped and discussed in accordance with the relevant typology, and are then related to interpretations illuminating elite milieus and central functions. My presentation and discussion of these categories form a background for a mapping of centre indicators on the local scale of 12 selected centre localities.

Although the term 'centre indicators' often implies the use of these categories to identify centres (cf. Fabech & Ringtved, 1995), identification is not one of the main aims of the thesis. Instead, the thesis relies on extensive research by Myhre and Ringstad in the 1980s, where the major early Iron Age centres in western Norway were identified (Myhre, 1978, 1984/85, 1987a; Ringstad 1986, 1992). In order to justify my use of their results, a critical analysis of their methods and material has been conducted (Chapter 3). Although some theoretical implications of the studies might be rejected, the methods used to identify major centres in the region seem to be mainly validated.

Myhre and Ringstad defined some 23 localities in Hordaland and Rogaland as centres (Fig. 1.4). In order to delimit the extent of the analysis to a manageable but sufficient data set, about half of these centre localities have been selected for local analysis. The analysis aims to include a representative set of centres from various landscape districts in the study area, where the most clearly defined localities in these areas had priority. As about half of the 23 localities were found in the Jæren district, half of the analysed localities stem from this central area. The other half of the studied centres are located north of Boknafjord, and mainly in Hordaland. In the following, a short introduction is given to the centres defined by Myhre and Ringstad. Several of the centres that are not analysed in detail are mentioned in the text in different parts of the thesis.

Altogether, Ringstad (1992:p.123, Fig. 10) defined eight centres from Nordhordland to Nord-Rogaland. Except for Voss, Myhre (1987a, Fig. 7) identified all these as 'central areas'. In Nordhordland, Ringstad pointed out Lindås and Osterøy as centres. As the finds in Lindås are distributed over a rather large area, Sørheim (2010) did not view Lindås as a centre. Although I consider this a centre, in this district Osterøy was chosen for analysis as it has a better demarcated core. The Osterøy locality is mainly defined as southern Osterøy and the adjacent mainland in Bergen. Based on its cluster of large burial mounds, Ringstad considered Voss in the Voss district a major centre. Myhre (1987a), however, did not consider this a central area. As the only proper inland centre in the study area, Voss has been selected for a detailed analysis. In the analysis of Voss, Myhre's failure to identify this centre is further discussed (cf. Fig. 7.6).

At the border between the landscape districts of Hardanger and Sunnhordland, Ringstad (1992) defined a centre called Kvinnherad. This centre will be analysed in detail, but for simplification purposes I will employ the modern name Rosendal as the locality name. In Mauranger, slightly north of Rosendal, Myhre (1987a) sketched another central area. However, based on Ringstad's (1992) analysis, I do not consider Mauranger a major centre. It was presumably rather a minor, local centre. In Sunnhordland, Ringstad (1992) defined Stord, Halsnøy, Fjelberg/Innbjoa and Etne as centres. The latter two are analysed in detail, as they are considered the most clearly defined centres in the district. Fjelberg and Innbjoa form two clusters at Borgundøy and Bjoa, on both sides of the Bjoafjord. In the thesis, the centre is termed Bjoafjord.

In Nord-Rogaland, Ringstad (1992) identified Karmsund as a major centre. This locality will be studied in detail, but the name is changed to Avaldsnes. In the Ryfylke district, Ringstad identified a centre at Hebnes/Jelsa, at the outlet of Sandsfjord and Sandeidfjord. Although the strategic placement near large outfield areas in Ryfylke and at a communication hub where seaways cross seems interesting, the material from Hebnes/Jelsa was considered limited for an in-depth analysis. In the northern part of the Jæren central area (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 7), Rennesøy was identified as a centre, with an adjacent centre at Randaberg (Myhre, 1978, Fig. 19). Furthermore, in the northern part of the Sandnes peninsula, Riska was defined as a centre in the north-eastern part

of this central area (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 7). Although Riska in particular has a very interesting placement with regard to outfield resources and communications and has rich archaeological material, neither Riska, Randaberg nor Rennesøy was selected for analysis, as other centre locations in Jæren instead were prioritised.

Around the Hafrsfjord, Madla and Joa were defined by Myhre (1978) as centres. I consider these two to be part of one locality, Hafrsfjord, which is studied in detail. In Sandnes, Myhre (1978) identified the centre at Hove (cf. Myhre, 1997a), which is examined here in detail. In Klepp, Myhre (1978) defined Vasshus, Re, Tu/Anda/Hauge and Erga as centres. The two latter are analysed in detail, and the Tu/Anda/Hauge centre is renamed Tinghaug (cf. Kristoffersen et al., 2014). It is possible that Re might be understood as a part of the Tinghaug centre, but although Re is not selected for analysis it is tentatively considered a separate locality. In Time, Myhre (1978) originally defined Vestly and Oma as two centres. In accordance with his later view (Myhre, 2007), I have redefined these as one centre, Lye, which is analysed in detail. Likewise, Myhre (1978) originally outlined Njærheim, Bø and Rimestad as centres in northern Hå, but these were later redefined as one centre, Njærheim/Bø (Myhre, 2013). In southern Hå, Myhre (1978) identified Sør-Varhaug and Stavnheim as centres, which were later renamed Varhaug and Hårr/Vodl (Myhre, 2013). I have simplified Njærheim/Bø and Hårr/Vodl to the modern settlement names Nærbø and Vigrestad. Among the centres in Hå, only Nærbø is analysed in detail.

From north to south, the centres selected for more detailed analysis are the following: *1. Osterøy, 2. Voss, 3. Rosendal, 4. Etne, 5. Avaldsnes, 6. Bjoafjord, 7. Hafrsfjord, 8. Hove, 9. Erga, 10. Tinghaug, 11. Nærbø, 12. Lye*. Finally, it should be noted that Sørheim (2010:pp.156–172) discussed which localities might be termed centres with a high degree of certainty. Although he raised some doubt regarding some of the centres of Myhre and Ringstad, he considered all the centre localities I have selected for detailed study to be certain. In my view, however, the localities depicted in Fig. 1.4 were all among the major centres in Hordaland and Rogaland. To these might be added a large number of unmapped, minor centres of more limited importance.

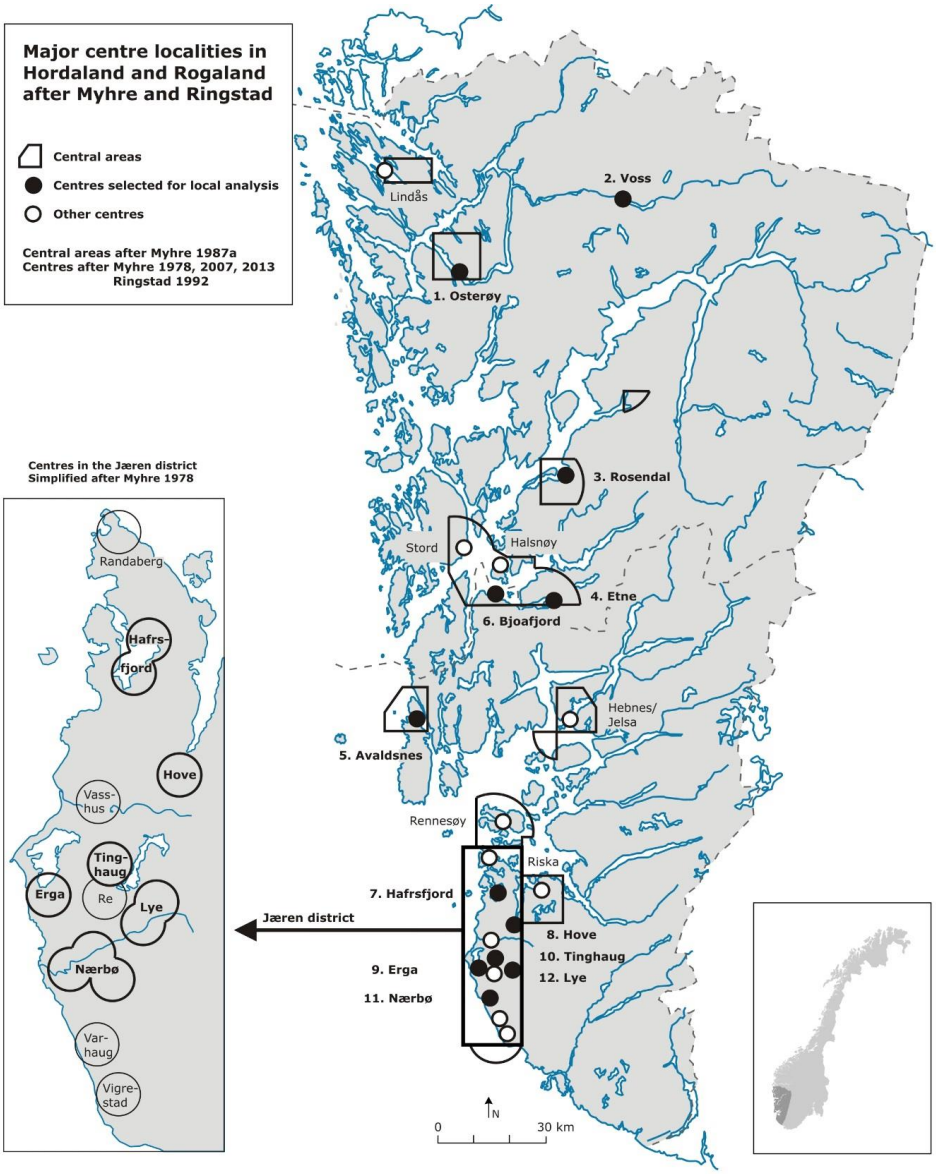


Fig. 1.4. Map of major centres in Hordaland and Rogaland, as identified by Myhre (1987a) and Ringstad (1992) (cf. Figs. 3.2 and 3.6). The localities selected for detailed study in Chapter 7 are indicated as black dots on the main map, the remaining by white dots. The small map gives a more detailed overview of the centres in Jæren, after Myhre (1978 and later, cf. Fig. 3.3). Several minor centres are also introduced during the course of the thesis.

1.3 Thesis outline

Before turning to the analysis, an outline of the structure of the thesis is presented. The thesis seeks to answer the main issue: *How were the western Norwegian centres of the late Roman and Migration periods organised?* In order to answer this, six chapter-specific questions are listed below. The answers are pursued through Chapters 2 to 7.

- How, in general, did the elite milieus of the early Iron Age organise centres?
- Are the methods used by Myhre and Ringstad to identify centres still valid?
- Which 'centre indicators' might be applicable in a western Norwegian context?
- Might 'status objects' point out relations among and between elite milieus?
- Is it possible to link the 'grand buildings' to the central functions of centres?
- By studying a large data set of centre localities with a varying distribution of 'centre indicators', is it possible to identify patterns of general trends and variation in the organisation of centres and relations between elite milieus?

Chapters 2 to 4 deal with the theoretical and methodological approaches. In Chapter 2, theoretical perspectives and debates related to elites and centres are examined throughout the history of research. From this, a basic model and pre-understanding of centre organisation are sketched. The methodological steps from model to material are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. First, the methods of Myhre and Ringstad are critically examined to judge whether their results are still valid, before turning to recent approaches to centres in Scandinavian archaeology. Chapter 4 concludes with a list of centre indicators, forming the basis for the object and structure categories discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6. Here, the status objects and grand buildings, as well as some other categories associated with rituals, are discussed with the aim of better understanding elite relations and central functions. In Chapter 7, interpretations from the foregoing chapters are united in a study of 12 early Iron Age centres. The aim is to identify general trends and variation and to introduce these centres to the Scandinavian discourse. In Chapter 8, results from the thesis are summarised and discussed. Focussing on central functions, the chapter synthesizes how elite milieus in western Norway organised their centres. A few concluding remarks are presented in Chapter 9.

Chapter 2. Approaching elite milieus and centres

As a theoretical starting point for my analysis of elite milieus and centres, it seems necessary to reconstruct a general model of how centres were organised. The model will be used to form a relevant methodology and will work as a framework for the analysis of centre indicators and centres in the study area. My point of departure is that insights from context-specific research history might work as a foundation for my approach. Throughout the history of research, there has been a range of shifting theories and intellectual approaches to the sociopolitical organisation of the Roman and Migration periods in the study area and in Scandinavia. By selecting and combining features related to elite milieus and centres in a *bricolage* model, various relevant approaches might be integrated in a general model of centre organisation.

The debates on the organisation and development of early Iron Age societies has largely followed the international shifts in research paradigms described by Trigger (2006). Early culture-historical archaeology focussed on defining culture groups and widely used migrations as an external factor for explaining cultural change and culture replacement (Trigger, 2006:pp.211–240). For western Norway, Shetelig (1925) is an obvious example. Later, independent development and diffusion became popular explanation models, before the early functional approaches of the 1950s stressed the importance of economical factors (Trigger, 2006:pp.314–325). Slomann (1956) and Odner (1974) followed these lines of research. The matured, processual New Archaeology continued this eco-functionalistic focus, interpreting societies as closed social systems, borrowing inspiration from general models, e.g. from social anthropology (Trigger, 2006:pp.386–443). A prime example is Myhre's study of chiefdom territories (1987a). The later post-processual archaeology instead stressed the specific, historical context. According to Näsman (1991:pp.322–3), in the Scandinavian research discourse, there have been tensions between researchers favouring models and sources from the sister disciplines of anthropology and history. The pendulum shifted from history in culture-historical archaeology to anthropology in the New Archaeology. In the current, post-processual paradigm, historical sources are again perceived as a major inspiration for models of sociopolitical organisation.

Although most of this chapter deals with the Scandinavian discourse after 1978, these approaches, of course, were based on previous research. As Shetelig, Slomann and Odner based their models on material from my study area, their approaches have a special relevance for the thesis. Therefore, the chapter starts with a review of the relevant research history for western Norway in the period 1912–1977 termed 'Immigration versus local expansion'. Here, the 'external' explanations of pre-war archaeology are contrasted with early functionalist approaches favouring economy and 'internal' explanations. I have tried to analyse the value of the different approaches in relation to the research status today. Shifts in research approaches might also be linked with changes in the contemporary society. It seems hardly coincidental that in the post-war period, following the German occupation of Norway, 'Germanic immigration' was largely abandoned as an explanation model. In the second subchapter, termed 'Chiefdoms versus tribes', I review two major approaches in Scandinavian Iron Age archaeology in the last four decades. Here, the two main models of sociopolitical organisation – anthropological 'chiefdoms' and historical 'tribes' – are contrasted and discussed. I conclude by favouring historical sources as the main basis for the model.

In the final subchapter, theoretical insights from research on Scandinavian centres and approaches to human-things relations are utilised to form a model of centre organisation. This model is the basis for a methodology aimed at studying concrete archaeological material. An important issue is how closely the directly observable archaeological remains are related to other entities in the model. Is it actually possible to study elite milieus and centres based on archaeological material? Some guidance on this issue is sought in theories on material agency often associated with the so-called *Symmetrical archaeology*. Theories of material agency stress that human actors often cooperate with material co-actors (e.g. Gell, 1998). Material categories might thus form an integral part of human strategies. Symmetrical archaeology is especially concerned with these human-things relations (e.g. Olsen, 2010). The theories on material agency and human-things relations might contribute to understanding the close relations between the different components of centre organisation. Ultimately, this might validate a study of deceased elite actors and abstract social phenomena through observable material related to these entities.

2.1 Immigration versus local expansion

2.1.1 Germanic immigration of the *Horder* and *Ryger*

Shetelig's (1912a) study of Iron Age graves was the first serious attempt to interpret Iron Age societies in western Norway. Here, he observed a change in the burial practice in the late Roman period, from simple cremations to richly furnished inhumation graves. The earliest and richest of the inhumation graves from this phase were found at Avaldsnes in Rogaland. With this burial, Shetelig claimed, the tradition of unburnt graves with weapons and rich furnishing such as Roman imports was introduced to western Norway (Shetelig, 1912a:p.67). Moreover, within some proximity to Avaldsnes, there was a concentration of graves with Roman imports, and in the larger region similar graves were found in Sunnhordland and Rogaland. According to Shetelig (1912a:pp.58–9), this was the pattern one would suspect if immigrants carrying new traditions had settled at Avaldsnes and spread from this centre to the rest of western Norway (Fig. 2.1). Shetelig called Avaldsnes a *distribution centre* (Norw. 'spredningssentrum'), a term later used by other authors to describe similar localities (Gjessing, 1923; Brøgger, 1925). The immigration theory was greatly influenced by the work of the Swedish archaeologist Salin (1896, 1904), and another Swede, Almgren (1919), in turn used Shetelig's work as evidence of the migrations of the *Rugier* (*Ryger)* tribe. Salin associated the distribution of gilded silver foil with tribal immigration (Shetelig, 1930:p.113). This technique was found in the Avaldsnes grave, suggesting a *limited immigration* (Norw. 'partiel invandring'). Shetelig (1912a:p.68) viewed the migrants as a new group, situated socially above the natives: 'These richly furnished graves (…) seem like an unfamiliar part of the [native] culture, while most of the people still kept to the simpler burial forms' (Shetelig, 1930:p.115, my translation).

According to Shetelig's earliest opinion (1912a:p.63), the western Norwegian grave material showed great changes at the start of the late Roman period in the third century, with a stronger continuity during the transition to the Migration period *c.* 400 AD. However, this view is somewhat contrasted by his later works (Shetelig, 1925, 1930), where he postulated a new wave of immigration during the transition to the Migration

period at the end of the fourth century. Here, he claimed that the immigration of the late Roman period was sporadic and slow and did not seem to change the local conditions to the same degree as the Migration period immigration did (Shetelig, 1925:p. 147). Shetelig now focussed more on the latter immigration wave and its implications for the Migration period's sociopolitical organisation. He thought that the situation in Norway was similar to the processes reported in the rest of western Europe, using England as a model (Shetelig, 1925:p.164, 1930:pp.144–5). 'The most probable is to imagine this immigration as a contemporary parallel to the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England' (Shetelig, 1930:p.145, my translation). He correlated the presence of landscape names such as Hordaland, Rogaland and Grenland with supposed immigrant tribes like the *Horder*, *Ryger* and *Grener* mentioned by sixth century Gothic historian Jordanes. Shetelig (1930:pp.119–146) applied various categories to identify the migrants. The rich inhumation graves with stone cists in southern and western Norway were seen as the graves of an upper class of kin-related colonists, the burial practice revealing their close ties to western Europe (Shetelig, 1912b, 1917; see also Bøe, 1930:pp.4–5). In south-western Norway there were also visual remains of Migration period farm units, of which no predecessors were then identified. The presence of hill forts and hoard finds were seen as signs of times of conflict and movement, and runic inscriptions offered evidence of people with Germanic names and language.

According to Shetelig, the newcomers brought a new type of sociopolitical organisation: 'The different sources contribute to drawing an outline of a Migration period kingdom (Norw. 'folkevandringsrike') along the Norwegian coast, a parallel to that of the Anglo-Saxons in England (…). This was a kingdom founded by immigrating foreign tribes at the end of the fourth century, and which flourished throughout the fifth and sixth centuries' (Shetelig, 1925:pp.164–5, my translation). Shetelig (1930:p.146) underlined that the 'kingdom' should not be regarded as an early state but instead as 'an aristocratic federation, founded by the Horder and Ryger in the Migration period' (Shetelig, 1925:p.177, my translation). 'The Norwegian coastal region at this time had numerous classes of kin groups, who stood above the common man in wealth, and had a strong feeling of kin relations' (Shetelig, 1925:pp.165–6, my translation).

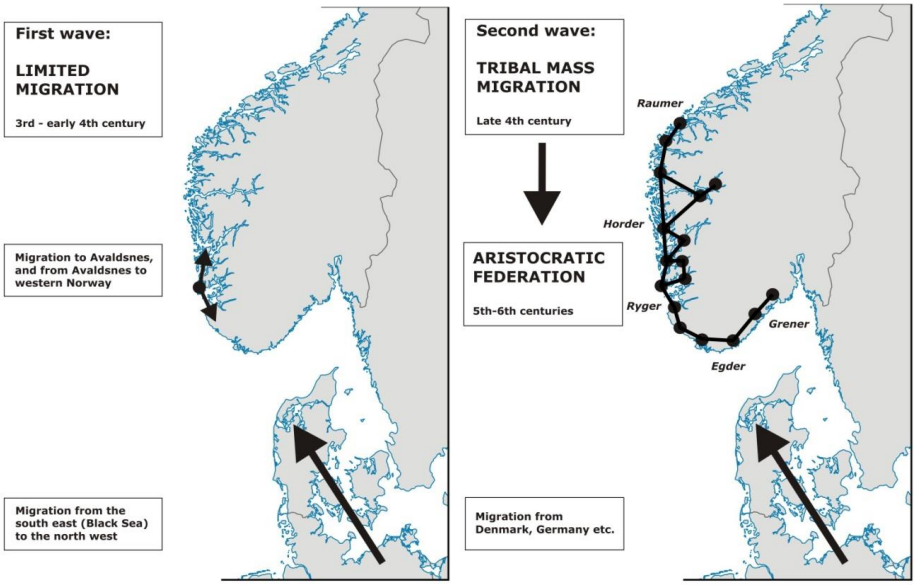


Fig. 2.1. Sketch illustrating Shetelig's hypothetical waves of immigration to western Norway in the late Roman period (left) and the Migration period.

Shetelig's hypotheses of several waves of immigration met some early criticism. When examining a rich female inhumation grave at Mele in Osterøy, Bjørn (1924), in accordance with Shetelig, considered it to be evidence of the immigrants of the late Roman period. However, in a later study of Roman imports, Bjørn (1929:pp.37–46) instead underlined the continuity to the Migration period, criticising Shetelig's interpretation of a second immigration wave in this phase. Nevertheless, he agreed with Shetelig that the similarities in rich graves along the west Norwegian coast bore 'witness of confederations and a more homogenous organisation among the west Norwegian tribes in the Migration period (…) a west Norwegian state formation (…)' (Bjørn, 1929:p.45, my translation). A year later, Bøe (1930) carried out a case study of the Hardanger area (Hardanger: '*fjord of the Horder*') in order to find possible evidence of the *Horder* (or *Haruder)* tribe in the late Roman and Migration periods. He argued that the material revealed close contact with Avaldsnes and Rogaland (the *Ryger*), but that there was no archaeological evidence of tribal immigration (Bøe, 1930:p.16). Instead, Bøe suggested that the observed continuity from the Bronze Age possibly indicated that the *Horder* had immigrated already at this time (Bøe, 1930:pp.23–4).

Published in the same year Shetelig died, an article by Herteig sharply rejected 'the interpretation Shetelig introduced (…) that what happened was immigration parallel to that of the Anglo-Saxons in England' (Herteig, 1955:p.83, my translation). The critique was trigged by Petersen's (1954) article on the Migration period in Rogaland, where the migratory explanation was utilised. Petersen considered many Migration period categories as not being rooted in the Roman period (Herteig, 1955:pp.75–6). This included bucket-shaped pots, cruciform brooches, new farmhouse types and the emergence of new farmsteads with the place name suffix 'land'. There were new burial practices, including inhumations in stone cists, new artefact categories such as bronze or glass vessels, and large amounts of gold in graves and hoards. Petersen considered these categories new, and saw the increase in finds as an expansion from the last half of the fourth century, interpreted as a result of immigration. Herteig (1955:p.76) instead argued that the Roman imports were found in the best agricultural districts, resulting from trade and not immigration. He argued that the late Roman period expansion happened more gradually than previously thought, and that the transition to the Migration period showed continuity in material categories and burial practices. Herteig explained the developments of the Roman and Migration periods as local expansion (Norw. 'indre utvikling'), with some external influences from diffusion and trade.

In research-historical hindsight, the abandoning of migratory explanations was partly rooted in contemporary contexts. The post-war period saw a new generation of archaeologists, favouring new perspectives. Herteig represented a shift in the 1960s, where, according to Hagen (1997:pp.116–7, 2002:pp.193–4), an old explanatory dogma of 'immigration' was replaced by a new dogma of 'local expansion' (see also Magnus Myhre & Myhre, 1972a, 1972b). Herteig (1955:p.73) mentions Kossina's nationalistic work on Germanic migrations, and it seems possible that the experience of a Nazi-German occupation of Norway made the theme of 'Germanic immigration' more problematic, as negative associations were now attached to the term 'Germanic' (Näsman, 1999). The rejection of migration as an explanatyory model might also have been influenced by a Cold War situation with stability within country borders, and with little migration across these borders (Chapman, 1997:pp.17–8; Hagen, 1997:p.116).

The lasting contribution of Shetelig, however, was his interpretation of the changes in the material as a change in sociopolitical organisation and the establishment of a new class of aristocrats. Even if his use of migratory explanations was criticised, this model of society formed the foundation for later work on early Iron Age society. Hagen (1997:pp.116–7) suggested that Shetelig's hypothesis that the aristocracy originated from foreign migrants deserves to be re-examined from a modern perspective. In modern approaches to prehistoric migration, large-scale mass migration is seen as rarely occurring (Anthony, 1990; Burmeister, 2000). While Shetelig's second wave of tribal mass migration in the fourth century in this light seems improbable, his small-scale limited immigration in the third century might still have some validity. Migration, not as large-scale invasions, but instead as small-scale mobility of individuals and small groups, might well have been an important factor during these periods. Mobility over large distances did probably play a vital role in the elite life of the Roman and Migration periods, which might have included a mobility of ambulant specialists, military movements, travels to allied partners and alliances through intermarriages.

Focussing on such topics, mobility and migration have gained a renewed interest as a factor in the research of recent decades. With regard to warfare, the widely discussed possibility of a southern Norwegian contingent in the Illerup bog find from *c*. 200 AD might stand as an example of recent research (Grimm, 2008). In terms of elite intermarriage, researchers have discussed the possibility of elite women migrating from Denmark to Norway during the Roman period (Straume, 1988; Przybyła 2011a), and from Norway to eastern England in the Migration period (Hines 1984, 1992). Small-scale migration of groups from northern Jutland to Rogaland in the late Roman period has also been suggested (Mortensen, 1991, 1992). This might have been associated with a trading centre in the Kvassheim area (Myhre, 2013:pp.280–1). In Sogn og Fjordane, a shift in the burial practices and a runic inscription mentioning a 'foreigner' have been interpreted as evidence of immigration (Mandt, 2005; Dommasnes, 2006). Recently, a Hunnic presence has been suggested in Migration period Scandinavia, possibly including Rogaland (Hedeager, 2011). Together, these studies indicate a renewed interest in prehistoric migration, mirrored also by recent work on DNA.

2.1.2 Local expansion, economy and chieftains

The post-war shift to 'local expansion' and economy as the major factors used to explain social change is rather evident in Slomann's work. Slomann discussed the late Roman and Migration periods of south-western Norway mainly in three publications (Slomann, 1956, 1968, 1972), and also planned a larger work on the topic, which was never finished (Slomann, 1968:p.79, cf. Sjøvold, 1986:p.7). One of her main aims was to refine the chronology in order to track chronological changes (Slomann, 1968). Using Eggers' continental chronology, she published an overview of the Pre-Roman and Roman period material from Sunnhordland to Vest-Agder (Slomann, 1972). Slomann (1956:p.68) also introduced the term 'Migration period complex', defined as an object complex found in graves in the western region from Møre to Vest-Agder. As regards the history of this regional complex, she sketched two main problems:

(1) an increasing amount of finds from C2 to C3 (continuing also in the fifth century), (2) a sharp decline in finds at the end of the Migration period (Slomann, 1972:p.22). Slomann wanted to approach these two problems in the planned study:

> *Starting with the material of the central area, Rogaland and adjacent parts of South Hordaland, one must extend the detailed study to enclose that of the whole area touched by the movements, and compare it with contemporary material from the rest of Norway, from Scandinavia, and from adjacent parts of Northern Europe. Then, and not till then, shall we be in the position to attempt an explanation, or probably more than one, of the reasons behind this development* (Slomann, 1968:p.78).

The increase in the number of finds in the third to fifth centuries in southern Norway was considered, primarily, to be the product of a local settlement expansion. The expansion could be traced both to the *old centres*, at find spots represented by finds from earlier periods, and to some new find spots (Slomann, 1972:p.22). While the expansion reached its widest distribution in *old centres* like Lista and Jæren, there was also an expansion in smaller, local centres in the fourth century (Slomann, 1956:p.68). According to Slomann (1956:p.70), the changes took place well before 400 AD. Like Shetelig, Slomann interpreted the rich grave from Avaldsnes as a key find in these developments (Slomann, 1964, 1968), labelling the end of Eggers' phase C2 'the Avaldsnes phase' (Slomann, 1972). In addition to the local expansion, she suggested an outwards expansion of settlers from southwestern Norway to northern Norway

(Slomann, 1956:p.70). Sjøvold (1962) later elaborated on this theory, and Slomann (1968:p.79) stated that: 'it is reasonable to presume that some kind of connection may have existed between the settling in the North, the wealth of the Avaldsnes find, and the settled areas in the South'. Although Sjøvold's interpretations were strongly criticised in the early 1970s (Magnus Myhre & Myhre, 1972a, 1972b; Simonsen & Stamsø Munch, 1973), Slomann still supported the theory (Slomann, 1972:p.25).

A possible explanation behind the local expansion and wealth in the south, and the external expansion to the north, was economical factors; organised trade was the 'cornerstone' of the western Norwegian wealth (Slomann, 1956:pp.70, 80). Slomann did not imagine the existence of larger regional units, but considered it likely that smaller, local groups organised the local and external expansion (Slomann, 1956:p.75). Within the organisation of the trade, these groups shared some interests but their relationships were both cooperative and competitive. She suggested that the trade was organised at *accumulation centres* (Norw. 'oppsamlingssentre') in areas like Jæren or Lista (Slomann, 1956:p.70). The products of the north were important in this trade, and it was likewise important to maintain a stable demand for these products on the Continent. The establishment of organised trade led to more wealth among the general population, again leading to further settlement expansion. The settlement expansion of the third to fifth centuries was based on this 'snowball effect'. Similarly, the decline of wealth at the end of the Migration period was explained mainly by shifting trade routes, although other factors played a role in this collapse (Slomann, 1956:p.80, 1968:p.78).

While Slomann warned against transferring 'well-defined terminology borrowed, for example, from history, sociology, ethnology or anthropology to problems concerning the early Iron Age settlement of southwestern Norway' (Slomann, 1972:p.28, my translation), Odner (1974:p.111) criticised authors like Slomann for using 'concepts derived from modern capitalistic economy theory when interpreting the archaeological material'. In *Economical Structures in Western Norway in the Early Iron Age*, Odner (1973a, 1974) instead applied substantivist economical approaches, introduced by Polanyi (1944). Where Slomann looked to northern Norway for the resources needed for trade and expansion, Odner explained the expansion as a product of greater local

utilisation of resources in economical structures led by chieftains. Odner's point of departure was the excavation of a rock shelter in Rogaland (1969, 1972). The site was linked to a social model base on studies of anthropological chiefdoms, and on written sources from medieval Iceland and Germanic societies. Odner (1974:p.110) argued that there was a 'functional interrelationship between the emergence of chieftains and the increase in the habitation in caves and rock shelters along the Norwegian coast'.

The *Sagas of Icelanders* portray a society organised by chieftains (*godar*) with followers (*thingmen*) escorting them to annual meetings at the *thing*. 'The chieftains were the political and judicial leaders of the society; they had no central executive power' and the followers could choose which chieftain they supported (Odner, 1974:p.106). The farm was the basic economic unit, and surplus was channelled to a chieftain, who ensured peace and food security by redistributing this surplus. Contributions to the chieftains were justified by socioreligious practices, ensuring bonds between chieftains and followers (Odner, 1974:p.107). Wealth redistributed within the structure made it possible to form a military organisation and to form alliances through generosity. The chieftain's power was communicated internally and externally through a use of prestige goods at feasts and as gifts (Odner, 1974:p.111).

In Iceland, items like fur and cloth were exchanged to obtain prestigious objects (gold rings, weapons, clothes, horses) used as alliance gifts or for the chieftain's personal consumption (Odner, 1974:p.108). The elites in Iceland arranged marriage alliances over large distances (Odner, 1974:p.106). The model of bilateral kinship, which, according to Odner, was a characteristic of Germanic societies, led to 'a wide and mutually adjusted geographical dispersal between high-ranking kinsmen. In this milieu ideas idiomatically related to this social class would easily diffuse, which could explain the similarities of elite weapons and styles within the west European Germanic area' (Odner, 1974:p.110). In western Norway, farms providing surplus to a chieftain were seen as an economic structure, and resources from various ecological niches were exploited, pooled and redistributed within this structure. The settlement expansion, and the use of rock shelters, was explained by Odner as a result of this 'raised level of production'. Odner (1974:p.112) interpreted Roman imports as the prestige goods of

the Migration period. Alliance gifts were used to ensure alliances and avoid attack, but the hill forts of the Migration period indicated additional active measures against attack: 'Alliances might provide temporal security, but basically the group had to defend its territory alone' (Odner, 1974:p.110).

While Slomann's model was based on major trends in the material complex, Odner's approach to a larger degree was driven by analogies related to history and anthropology. Both researchers focussed on economic factors, but from different perspectives. Slomann believed that 'trade' – in the modern, or 'formalist', sense of the word – led to further wealth and a settlement expansion. Odner, on the other hand, promoted the substantivist approach associated with Polanyi (1944). He interpreted the economy as a social practice, organised around principles of reciprocity and redistribution between chieftains, followers and allies. Slomann and Odner both had greater economic wealth in the Migration period as the basis of their interpretations, perhaps mirrored by the Norwegian post-war society with a steadily increasing wealth. It is interesting that Slomann and Odner favoured local organisation, rather than large regional units. The 'Migration period complex' of Slomann was a reinterpretation of Shetelig's 'Migration period kingdom', stripped of his organisational implications.

Among the most important contributions of Slomann were the renewed chronological framework, adjusted in accordance with the Continental chronology, and the definition of a regional south-western Norwegian find complex. Her model of organised trade with *accumulation centres* was already sketched in 1956. The local groups organising the trade, as well as the settlement expansions, both cooperated and competed. This cooperation and competition between local centres is a fruitful addition to the social model. Slomann did not discuss in detail the organisation of trade at the centres, although was presumably hoping to do so in the planned, but unfinished publication. Odner, on the contrary, focussed on the local, social mechanisms behind the redistributive economy. Although an increasing amount of 'wealth' was also important in his model, understanding the social system producing this wealth seems to have been his main objective. Many aspects of his model have survived in the present research. Odner's focus on chieftains forming alliances through reciprocal acts such as feasts and

gifts, and a visualisation of power through the display of prestige objects, are important aspects of the present interpretation of early Iron Age elites. Although Odner's understanding of society was that of a social anthropologist, his application of Norse and Germanic sources parallels the present use of historical analogies. The analogy with Icelandic chieftains with followers resembles the retinue institution integrated in current research. Finally, the suggested economic units of chieftains with dependent followers clearly resemble the more recent debate on manor structures.

Odner's approach was widely debated. His excavation methods and limited material were criticised, along with his use of anthropological and historical sources (Myhre, 1972a, 1973, 1978; Bakka, 1973b; Odner 1973b, 1974 with discussion). Even so, Odner's work proved highly influential for early Iron Age research during the 1970s. This influence is seen, for example, when Magnus (1975:p.155) interpreted the woman in the rich Krosshaug inhumation grave from Hauge at Tinghaug as a local chieftain:

> *[M]any signs point to the Hauge-Tu area as a centre for political and religious power from the 5th century (...) The power must have been based first and foremost on the exceptionally good conditions found here for primitive agriculture (...) Therefore, the woman from Hauge may well have been a local chieftain whose power extended over a large part of Middle-Jæren*.

The late 1970s saw a wider use of approaches similar to those of Odner. Rich graves and large mounds were seen as a new class of chieftains, with *chieftain's centres*, for instance, at Avaldsnes and in Sunnmøre (Magnus & Myhre, 1976:pp.379–80; Hagen, 1977:p.260). These chieftains obtained prestige goods through an international exchange with iron, hides, furs and walrus tusks. From the presence of chieftains' graves, warrior graves, hill forts, boathouses and court sites, a social organisation in *chiefdoms* could be deduced. A population increase led to the establishment of new farms, and the presence of large and small farms, and rich and poor graves, reflected great social inequality. Having fully abandoned the hypothesis of immigration, continuity from the late Roman period through the Migration period was emphasised. In 1976, Magnus and Myhre claimed that it was 'impossible to decide how large the sketched chiefdoms were' (p.387, my translation). However, in the following decade, attempts to do just this were carried out in Norwegian and Scandinavian research.

2.2 Chiefdoms versus tribes

Having followed the research history in my study area to the 1970s, it is time to turn to the wider Scandinavian debate of the last four decades and its two major sources for social models: anthropological chiefdoms and historical tribes. These two social models are sometimes described as largely parallel concepts. Hedeager (1992:p.87) thus writes: 'It follows from this that in *tribal society*, that is, in a *chiefdom*, both production and reproduction are organized through kinship groups' (my emphasis). The 'tribes' in question are mainly the Germanic tribes known from historical sources, while the 'chiefdoms' referred to are a group of societies studied by anthropologists. There are source-critical issues with both types of sources and hence both social models, and some of the general, disciplinary critique is reviewed in the following. I will start by focussing on the social stage of *chiefdoms* as part of a model of sociocultural evolution, and see how this stage has been applied to interpretations of Scandinavian early Iron Age societies. Secondly, I will focus on hierarchies in the Germanic *tribal societies* interpreted from more or less contemporary historical sources, including some later Frankish, Anglo-Saxon and Norse written sources. With regard to the historical sources, only a selection of relevant sources is discussed, and likewise it has only been possible to discuss a selection of the approaches to social organisation applied in Scandinavian Iron Age research during the last 40 years.

A comment might also be made in order to avoid misinterpretations of the various definitions of the terms 'chiefdom' and 'tribe'. The term 'tribe' is especially problematic, as it might indeed also denote the social stage below the chiefdom on the so-called 'evolutionary stepladder' (Yoffee, 1993). However, a 'tribe' is certainly not the same in Germanic historiography as it is in anthropological studies. In historical sources, as well as in our everyday speech, a 'chief' is often considered to be the leader of a 'tribe'. In the discussed anthropological model, 'chiefdoms' are the domains of 'chiefs'. Confusion might thus occur when terminologies from these two disciplines meet, as has deliberately been done in the title of this subchapter. Let us then see how the chiefdoms and tribal societies have been used as a basis for modelling early Iron Age societies in Scandinavia in research from the late 1970s to the present.

2.2.1 Anthropological chiefdoms as a model

The chiefdom stage was part of a larger anthropological model of sociocultural unilinear evolution. Its main principle was that all societies are developing through the same sequence towards increasing complexity in social organisation, from 'simple' hunter-gatherers to 'complex' states. In the 1960s, models based on these thoughts were developed using a wide range of anthropological studies (Sahlins & Service, 1960; Fried, 1967; Service, 1971). Among these, Service's influential model described a sequence of development stages of *bands*, *tribes*, *chiefdoms* and *states*. Service's sociocultural stages represented generalisations of anthropological studies from groups with relevant similar characteristics in terms of social structure. Based on his model with societal stages, the characteristics of a stage in terms of, for example, settlement pattern, subsistence economy, distribution types and social differences could be compared to the material of a defined archaeological complex. With a sufficient fit between the material record and the characteristics of, for instance, a chiefdom, the material could be associated with a society organised like chiefdoms.

According to Beck (2003:p.641), 'The chiefdom is one of the most resilient, if controversial, anthropological concepts of the past forty years'. Introduced as late as 1955, the term gained widespread use through Service's model (Carneiro, 1981). While 'chiefs' in everyday speech had been associated with 'tribes', the domain of a chief now formed a new term. According to Service's (1971:pp.133–169) definition, a key characteristic of chiefdoms was the redistributive economy. It was later pinpointed that the link between chiefdoms and redistribution was based on Sahlins' work in Polynesia. While Sahlins argued that redistribution was the economic basis for chiefdoms in this particular context, Service interpreted redistribution as a general feature of chiefdoms (Carneiro, 1981:p.43; Earle, 1987:p.292; Beck, 2003:p.642). Instead of seeing redistribution as a defining feature of chiefdoms, later research has focussed on the hierarchical, multi-community nature of chiefdoms (Beck, 2003:p.642). This change of focus was reflected already in Carneiro's (1981:p.45) widely used definition of chiefdoms as: 'an autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief'.

Myhre's work from the 1970s and 1980s on southern Norwegian centres was largely inspired by approaches from the New Archaeology. Following the debate on Odner's work, Myhre (1978:p.255) attempted to test Service's (1971) general anthropological characteristics of chiefdoms on larger archaeological material. Myhre attempted to identify the centres of the late Roman and Migration periods in south-western Norway from concentrations of richly furnished graves, and to some extent also from place names, clusters of large farm structures, large mounds and boathouses (Myhre, 1978:pp.255–6), with hill forts seen as marking the boundaries to neighbouring societies (p.259). Listing chiefdom characteristics potentially observable in the archaeological record, he found a good correspondence with the material from the Roman and Migration periods (Table 2.1), concluding that:

> *The interpretation of the archaeological material from this period seems to fit well with important criteria that Service sets up as characteristic for a chiefdom organization. I would emphasize in particular the geographical distribution of rich grave finds, of special antiquities, place names and historically known administrative centres; further the indications from the grave finds and settlement sites of a stratified society, the indications from the settlements of a specialized economy, the noticeable change in quality in art and crafts, the introduction of runic writing, the peaceful internal conditions and the organized external defence as well as the position of women in society* (Myhre, 1978:p.260).

Table 2.1. Chiefdom characteristics and archaeological correlates according to Myhre. Based on Myhre, 1978:pp.255–260

Chiefdom characteristics	**Archaeological material**
Hierarchical society	Rich graves with imports clustered at centres, as well as large farms, large mounds, boathouses
Specialisation of settlements	Farms of different sizes, rock shelters, fishing, hunting and iron production sites
Specialisation of labour	Evidence of fishing, hunting, agriculture, iron production, goldsmiths, runic specialists
Higher quality in arts and crafts	Finer pottery and goldsmith work, development of Germanic art styles, improvement in shipbuilding
Peaceful internal conditions, while conflicts easily arise between neighbouring societies	Hill forts as regional defences in the border areas
Economic, religious and judicial affairs are organised from the centre	Some central farms have sacral place names Court sites might have been religious/judicial places Assumed centres became administrative, judicial and church sites in historical times (continuity)
Bilateral kinship system and inheritance	Rich male and female graves

Subsequent work on settlement size, boathouses, hill forts and large mounds (e.g. Myhre, 1983, 1985; Ringstad, 1986) led to his most influential work on the topic: *Chieftains' graves and chiefdom territories in South Norway in the Migration Period.* Here, the analysis was expanded to southern Norway. By quantifying the chiefdom characteristics, he located possible centres and 'chiefdom territories' (Myhre, 1987a). Though Myhre proposed a redistributive economic relationship between centres and their territory, he criticised Service's use of economic specialisation as a criterion for chiefdom organisation (Myhre, 1987a:pp.183–4; cf. Ringstad, 1986:pp.313–4).

Political centres were traced by the distribution of richly furnished 'chieftains' graves', which formed the central core of larger 'chiefdom territories'. Nine large clusters of Roman imports and gold were found. These clusters were seen as 'central areas', 'wealthy settlements found close to the centres of the social and political leaders' (Myhre, 1987a:p.171). Furthermore, concentrations of hill forts, as well as boathouses, were considered part of the defence systems of the political territories surrounding centres and central areas (Myhre, 1987a:p.182). Myhre used the results to form a social model, combining Odner's redistributive structures with the accumulation centres and organised trade of Slomann. In Myhre's territorial model, resources were brought from the hinterland to centres at the coast (cf. Fig. 3.1):

> *At the mouth of a large river valley or a fiord is found the political centre with the richest grave finds, surrounded by the rich, densely populated farm area and the defence area with hill forts. Resources from the varied ecological zones of the territory were transferred from the outer districts to the centre from where they were redistributed, or converted into chieftain's prestige and authority by gift exchange or administered trade* (Myhre, 1987a:p.185).

The specific methodology of this important study is further discussed in Chapter 3. Although the model seemed somewhat static, Myhre stressed that the centres and territories were continuously competing for power. The proposed centres and their territories were then compared with the distribution of political centres and administrative regions (*fylker*) from the late Viking Age and early medieval period, and Myhre found some correlation. Like Shetelig, he stressed that the historical *fylker* Grenland, Agder, Rogaland and Hordaland could well be correlated with Jordanes' Grannii (*Grener*), Augandzi (*Egder*), Rugi (*Ryger*) and Arochi (*Horder*).

Similarly to Shetelig, and in contrast to the local levels used by Slomann and Odner, Myhre applied the chiefdom model to sketch a situation with large, regional units. Contrary to this, in his study of *large mound centres* in western Norway, Ringstad (1986:p.315) emphasised that he did not associate these centres with regional units.

Alongside Myhre, the Danish archaeologist Jensen (1979, 1982) was among the early propagators on applying the chiefdom stage to early Iron Age Scadinavia. In Jensen's influential study of prehistoric Denmark, he applied Service's four social stages to the different periods (Baudou, 2004:p.294). Jensen made a simplified schema of the characteristics of the different stages, including features of the chiefdom (Table 2.2). Jensen criticised the evolutionary model for being unable to explain the processes between the different stages (Jensen, 1982:p.256). However, with some caution noted, Jensen actively used Service's model in his discussion, applying a similar vocabulary in the text to that in the table. He wrote that the material pointed towards chiefdoms with a central authority covering functions for several settlement units. It was further assumed that there was unequal access to status positions based on rank, and that redistribution was the dominant distribution type (Jensen, 1979:pp.219–21, 231). Jensen also made use of written sources (*Germania*) in order to argue for a redistributive economy in this particular historical context (Jensen, 1979:pp.212–3).

Table 2.2. Chiefdom characteristics according to Jensen. Translated after Jensen, 1979, Fig. 13

Chiefdom characteristics	
Subsistence type	Extensive, sometimes movable, agriculture
Settlement pattern	Coordinating centres for many settlement units
Population density	Higher population density than tribal stage
Social differentiation	Differentiation by rank
Degree of political specialisation	Beginning specialisation of political positions
Access to status positions	Unequal access
Access to economic resources	Equal or unequal access
Dominant distribution type	Redistribution

During the 1980s, the use of Service's model in archaeology met increasing critique (Hodder, 1982; Shanks & Tilley, 1987:p.37; Näsman, 1988, 1999:p.163). As mentioned above, some critique was noted by Myhre and Jensen (Jensen, 1982:p.256; Myhre, 1987a:pp.183–4). Jensen argued that the stage model of Service did not explain developments between the static stages. The only thing the chiefdom stage provided was the identification of a society as a chiefdom in relation to this model. Another issue was that Service viewed redistribution with economic specialisation in niches as a general feature of chiefdoms. Myhre noted this problem, and some general, anthropological critique was noted above. Although being an uncertain part of the model, the specialisation in new niches such as rock shelters, fisheries, iron production and new settlements actually fitted the western Norwegian context rather well. However, this specialisation was not necessarily caused by a redistributive system.

In 1986, Ringstad criticised the chiefdom model and its redistributive economy, which he ironically described as being characterised by 'mutual benefits and harmony' (Ringstad, 1986:p.313, my translation). He argued that when the term 'chiefdom' was used in studies in the 1970s–1980s on societies from the Bronze Age, early Iron Age and Viking Age, the term had become so general that it lost its explanatory value (Ringstad. 1986:p.312 with references). However, in defence of researchers like Odner, Myhre and Jensen, it might be argued that they adjusted the general chiefdom model to the specific historical context. When applying the chiefdom model, they also made use of historical sources more specifically dealing with the context in time and space. In the following decades, the use of contemporary sources describing Germanic tribes would be a primary inspiration for interpreting the sociopolitical organisation. As a prelude to this, in his article on chiefdom territories, Myhre concluded with an appeal for better integration of written sources in the models of early Iron Age society:

> *Time has come for Norwegian archaeologists once again to look for models for the development of social and political organization, in early Anglo-Saxon England as well as among the continental Germanic kingdoms, where the historical sources are more conclusive. The purpose is not to transfer specific events or situations to Norway, but to look for patterns that may be general for many of the early Germanic societies* (Myhre, 1987a:p.187).

2.2.2 Germanic tribal organisation as a model

Having long been associated with an uncritical or nationalistic pre-war archaeology, from the late 1980s historical sources of 'barbarian' and post-Roman societies were again approached with optimism as a potential basis for archaeological interpretations (see, for example, Näsman, 1988, 1991; Herschend, 2009, note 148; Hedeager, 2011). The main reason for the change was a redefinition of 'tribes' in the sources as groups with a socially constructed ethnic identity, rather than as biological groups. Associated with barbarian people living on the periphery of the Roman Empire, the historical term 'tribe' (Latin *gens*, Norw. *stamme*) is hard to define. What did the tribal names of the sources actually mean to the Romans or to the 'barbarians' themselves? In older nationalistic historiography, tribes were viewed as biological-linguistic units of 'peoples' or 'nations', where, for instance, Germanic tribes were seen as an early form of the German nation state (Hedeager, 2011:pp.37ff). After the Second World War, a new influential definition was introduced by the Viennese 'Ethnogenesis School' (Wenskus, 1961; Wolfram, 1988; Pohl, 2002). The concept of *ethnogenesis* (or *tribalisation*) seeks to explain how ethnic identities in the form of tribes were created (Kulikowski, 2002:p.72). In heterogeneous groups of 'barbarians', a small number of elite families or lineages carried a 'traditional core' of ethnic memory. If these elites showed themselves as successful military leaders, the lineages attracted many followers and eventually the traditional core was adopted by these in an ethnogenesis – the formation of a tribal group with shared ethnicity. This definition met little criticism until the mid-1990s (Stahl, 2004), but today there are alternative approaches to barbarian identity (see Gillett, 2002; Kulikowski, 2002; Fernández-Götz, 2013).

In the following I will focus on barbarian groups described as Germanic, Gothic and Frankish. Among influential sources describing tribal organisation in the first half of the first millennium AD are Tacitus' *Germania* (*c*. 100 AD), *The Passion of St. Saba the Goth* (*c*. 400 AD), Procopius' *The Gothic War* and Jordanes' *Getica* (*c*. 550 AD), and Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum* (*c*. 590 AD). In addition, the later Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* and medieval Norse sources are often used retrospectively.

The earliest sources are the accounts of Roman authors. The term 'Germanic' was first used by Caesar to describe his barbarian enemies in the north, and the practices of these societies were dealt with in Tacitus' *Germania*. Although it has been suggested that analogies drawn from Tacitus' work should only be applied to situations within the early Roman period (Tillisch, 2009:p.224), archaeologists have used Tacitus mainly to reconstruct the social and military organisation of the late Roman period. The most prominent examples include a social hierarchy proposed by Ethelberg et al. (2000:p.165) and a military hierarchy postulated by Ilkjær (2000) (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. Model of social and military hierarchies in the late Roman period, based on the accounts of Tacitus, grave finds and bog finds

Social hierarchy (Ethelberg et al., 2000)		**Military hierarchy (Ilkjær, 2000)**	
Grave finds, Zealand	Tacitus	Bog finds, Illerup A	Tacitus/Ammianus
1. Kolben arm ring	(1+2) *Reges (kings)*		
2. Serpent head arm ring	*Duces (army leaders)*		
3. Serpent head finger ring	*Princeps (princes)*	1. Silver shield boss	*Princeps (army leaders)*
4. Simple gold rings and/or Roman imports	*Comites (officers)*	2. Bronze shield boss	*Comites (officers)*
5. Local grave goods	*Ingenui (free farmers)*	3. Iron shield boss	*Pedites (soldiers)*
6. No grave goods	*Liberti/Servus (freed/bound slaves)*		

In recent years, archaeologists arguing for a stronger source criticism have questioned the value of *Germania* (Tillisch, 2006, 2009; Fuglevik, 2007; Fuglevik & Gundersen, 2007; Birch Iversen, 2010b; Gundersen, 2010). The main critique against using the sources of classical authors is that they wrote within a literary genre for a home audience, and that the reports are thus not necessarily factual but often influenced by the author's agenda. According to Lund (1993), most divergences from actual facts are due to analogue interpretations of unfamiliar foreign practices in known Roman terms, *interpretatio Romana*, and the use of *topoi*, literary motifs or stereotypes of a free or warlike 'other' structured by older accounts of uncivilised societies. Thus, the social hierarchy deduced from *Germania* has been seen by many as an *interpretatio Romana*, being a parallel to the organisation of the then contemporary Roman society (Lund, 1993; Tillisch, 2009; Birch Iversen, 2010b:pp.266–7). Similarly, the military and

judicial system described by Tacitus has been seen as mirroring the political system of the early Roman Republic, used by Tacitus as a critique of his own society (Birch Iversen, 2010b:pp.267ff; Gundersen, 2010:p.84). Ilkjær's (2000) military hierarchy model was mainly based on Tacitus, combined with the later source Ammianus Marcellinus' *Rerum gestarum* (fourth century AD). Fuglevik and Gundersen seem to consider the army hierarchy an ad hoc model adjusted to the bog find material (Fuglevik, 2007:pp.228ff; Fuglevik & Gundersen, 2007:pp.9–10). In addition, a more general critique has been raised against relating archaeological categories to specific status groups defined by historical sources, as illustrated by the examples shown in Table 2.3 (Näsman, 1988:p.133; Steuer, 1989:pp.103ff).

Within the research project *From Tribe to State in Denmark*, Näsman proposed a development in Denmark in the first half of the first millennium AD from 'tribes' to 'tribal confederations', an ethnogenesis led by the *Danes* tribe (Näsman, 1998, 2006). This was partly based on analogies with written sources describing the Goths, mainly *The Passion of St. Saba the Goth* (Näsman, 1988, cf. Heather & Matthews, 1991), in addition to sources describing the formation of a Frankish kingdom (Näsman, 1998). According to Thompson (1966:p.64): 'The Passion does what the works of Caesar and Tacitus never do – it brings us for the first time into a Germanic village and enables us to see something of how the villagers managed their own affairs.' Näsman summarises Thompson's interpretation of the source in terms of social organisation: 'Village affairs were settled at meetings in the village square, where all free Goths could state their case. The executive power was vested in a village council that also represented the village in its relations with the central power, the tribal council and its chiefs' (Näsman, 1988:p.138). The organisation above the regional level was described by Näsman based on the interpretation of historians using other sources (mainly Wolfram, 1988, cf. Norr 1998:pp.30–1; Birch Iversen, 2010b, note 22; Näsman, 2012).[1] Six Visigothic tribes formed a tribal confederation covering the Gutthiuda area (Näsman, 1988:pp.138–9). The tribes were governed by councils of aristocrats on both a tribal level and on a tribal

[1] For a discussion of Wolfram, see, for example, Murray (2002) with a reply by Pohl (2002). For a critique of Thompson's reading of 'meetings' and representation of 'all free Goths', see notes 22–24, 31 in Heather and Matthews (1991:pp.102ff). Critical notes are also added to a new edition of Thompson (1966) from 2008.

confederation level. Tribal councils elected their tribal chiefs (*reiks*), accompanied by a retinue. In times of stress, the tribes formed a confederation, where the tribal confederation council selected a temporary leader (*kindis*). Tacitus was also a major source for this social model, mentioning reiks (*reges*) and kindis (*duces*), as well as retinues (*comitatus*) and councils (*consilium*).

The mythical origins of the Goths were described by the mid sixth century historians Procopius and Jordanes as the Scandinavian island Thule or Scandza, inhabited by many tribes (see Hedeager, 2011). Researchers arguing for very strict source criticism view these accounts of an ancient Scandinavian origin recorded in Gothic and Frankish sources as fully literally fiction without any source value (cf. Pohl, 2002:p.227). Others have interpreted the tribes mentioned by Jordanes as the product of a traveller's account along the coast of southern Norway and western Sweden (Skoglund, 2007). As we have already seen, there have been attempts to correlate Scandinavian landscape names, so-called 'folklands', with the account of Jordanes (see, for example, Shetelig, 1925; Myhre, 1987a; Callmer, 1991; Krag, 1995; Skre, 1998; Solberg, 2000; Brink, 2008). Ramqvist (1991) applied Näsman's description of the Gothic tribal organisation to six such 'folklands' in northern Sweden. He underlined that Procopius speaks of 13 large tribes with kings in Thule (located beyond the land of the *Danes*), while Jordanes mentions 30 tribes in Scandza (Lindqvist & Ramqvist, 1993:p.16). Ramqvist interpreted the highest number as 'folkland' units, forming a lower number of folkland confederations or 'petty kingdoms'. These units were organised like the Visigoths and could be identified from a hierarchy of settlements and graves (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4. Ramqvist's model of social organisation in the Roman and Migration periods, based on an analogy between Gothic sources and archaeology. Based on Ramqvist, 1991

Unit level	Social level	Archaeological material
Petty kingdom/ Folkland confederation	Warrior king (*kindis*)	Aristocratic estates and monumental barrows
	Council of all folkland leaders and councils	Aristocratic estates and ordinary barrows
Folklands	Folkland leader (*reiks*) with retinue	
	Folkland council (aristocracy)	
	Single farms and villages	Ordinary settlement and no visible grave markers

Based on Frankish sources, another influential model of social organisation was introduced by Steuer (1989). He described the model of the *Personenverbandstaat* – an early 'state' not based on territorial units with fixed borders but on shifting personal relations between the king and his close warrior followers. The state was the 'community of king and his followers', and it 'existed wherever the king resided with his band of warriors and his royal wealth' (Steuer, 1989:p.100). As a reward for their personal allegiance to the king, in their lifetime the followers were given land and wealth. Thus, in this pre-feudal system, there were no inheritable property rights and the manor structures and power were all temporal and based on personal relations (Steuer, 1989:p.103). Steuer argued that this type of organisation directly influenced Scandinavia: 'the Frankish kingdom was a Personenverbandstaat. As such, it exerted an influence on the North, and caused similar political structures to emerge in the Scandinavian area from the beginning of the 6th century' (Steuer, 1989:pp.102–3).

In a more recent work, Steuer (2006) discussed societies preceding the Frankish Personenverbandstaat, by redefining the entities called by tribal names in the classical sources. In this new definition, a 'tribe' was the collective of a specific warlord and his associated warrior band. Tribes of warriors existed in different sizes, had different motifs for their warfare and could form allied units together with other tribes. According to Steuer, the classical authors wrongfully associated mobile warrior bands with permanent settlers in the areas where warrior bands and Romans fought. This is supposed to explain all misconceptions about mobile tribes of men and their families.

This redefinition of the term 'tribe' seems compatible with the Ethnogenesis school, and the roots of the Personenverbandstaat are thus found in the early Roman period. The model with a leader and warrior followers seems to be a reoccurring model from the early Roman source Tacitus to the Frankish sources. A similar situation is also seen later in the *godar* and *thingmen* of the *Sagas of the Icelanders*, inspiring Odner's (1974) approach. The close personal ties between leaders and followers seem to be a rather general model for early Iron Age societies, as Germanic variations of the client-patron systems known from the Roman Empire, and preceding the feudal society.

So far, I have mostly considered models based on written sources from 100 to 600 AD. In recent decades, later sources have proven to be important for shedding light on early Iron Age society, and above all the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*. Although written down in England between the eighth and eleventh centuries AD, it refers to legendary events in Scandinavia several centuries earlier. Although this source gained importance in post-processual research, it was also used in the earlier, culture-historical paradigm. Shetelig (1912a:pp.49–50), for instance, used the description of Beowulf's burial to interpret Roman period graves. The poem carefully describes the relations between a king and his followers in the hall. Based on Beowulf and the *Finnesburg fragment*, Herschend discussed the role of the hall. The hall was introduced in the late Roman period as a closed space where elite power was communicated (Herschend, 1997).

Based mainly on *Beowulf*, Enright (1996) discussed the social role of elite women. In the hall, the king's wife had an important role in the establishment of alliances between the leader, his followers and their allies. The bilateral kinship system, documented in Norse sources, indicates that women had the power to create lasting kinship bonds. Daughters and unfree women might thus have been offered as alliance gifts from leaders to followers or allies (Enright, 2011). Elite women also achieved power in the role as 'lady of the house', leading the household (Kristoffersen, 2000). Although the written sources do not mention female political leaders, cult leaders are known, in some cases as prophetesses on the battlefield (Enright, 2011:p.175). While the above-mentioned woman from Hauge at Tinghaug was termed a female 'chieftain' in the 1970s, she has recently been reinterpreted as a 'cult leader' (Sundqvist, 2014).

Another point might also be made about the relation between religion and leadership. In the Norse sources, the royal lineages had mythological origins (Steinsland, 2005). From this, Hedeager (2011) stressed the importance of the Viking Age main god Odin. Odin has been interpreted as the role model for a new warrior aristocracy in the Migration period, emphasising their godly descent (cf. Skre, 1998). However, this was a non-uniform, polytheist religion and we know little of its earliest roots. While it seems likely that the elites' power was legitimated by religion, it is not certain that the Viking Age main god at this time was the 'dominant' god in all the Scandinavian regions.

At the end of this subchapter we might return to the propagators of the chiefdom model in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and see that the model is largely abandoned. Twenty years after his *Prehistory of Denmark*, in *Danmarks Oldtid*, Jensen (2003) did not use the term 'chiefdom' when examining the early Iron Age. The formation of a network of Scandinavian centres in the late Roman period was, for instance, rather seen as parallel to the Germanic tribal confederations (Jensen, 2003:pp.446–7). Myhre, on the other hand, applied the term 'chiefdom' in later works. In these works, however, the term seems mostly detached from the meanings attributed to it by Service. In *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, Myhre (2003:pp.69–77) defined the Scandinavian societies of the first five centuries AD as 'chiefdoms' (preceded by 'tribal societies' and followed by 'petty kingdoms'). However, what Myhre termed 'chiefdoms' are, in fact, historical tribes. With reference to, for instance, Ramqvist, he described the societies as tribes and tribal confederations (Myhre, 2003:pp.72–3, 76). Furthermore, in *Norges landbrukshistorie*, Myhre (2002:pp.160–1) used 'chiefdom' and 'tribe' as parallel terms, but mainly referred to Steuer's model. Though Jensen and Myhre used written sources in their early approaches, historical parallels dominate in their later works. As even the original spokesmen of the 'chiefdom' have mainly stopped using the model, this term should preferably be abandoned to avoid confusing terminology.

This suggests that the use of tribal societies as models, fronted especially by the project *From Tribe to State in Denmark* in the late 1980s and 1990s, has had an enduring effect (Näsman, 2006:pp.210–11). However, though widely used in recent research, I would argue that the content of the term 'tribe' is even more ambiguous and shifting than that of the term 'chiefdom'. The meaning of 'tribes' ranges from the large biological groups of peoples of pre-war research, via Service's tribal stage, the tribal federations formed by ethnogenesis, to Steuer's latest definition of smaller groups of warlords and warriors. To avoid confusion, it would seem best to omit 'tribe' as a key term. Instead, I will now try to put together a model fitting the local societies to be studied, based on the relevant essence of the different approaches reviewed in this chapter. Using a *bricolage* of valuable insights from culture-historical, processual and post-processual research, I sketch up a model of how elite milieus organised their centres.

2.3 Towards a model of centre organisation

Through the above review of the research history, we have seen a range of approaches to social organisation in the early Iron Age. It is now time to combine the most relevant insights in a model with the aim of answering the research question: How, in general, did the elite milieus organise their centres? As is evident from the question, the presence of one or more *elite milieus* is seen here as a basic component in the formation of a centre. These elite milieus probably dwelled at the spatial core of the centres. The reviewed research provides important interpretations regarding the elites.

If we are to understand the organisation of centres, we further have to introduce perspectives from the last few decades' research on Scandinavian early Iron Age centres. Although this field of research is reviewed in more detail in Chapter 4, some relevant basic terms are introduced here. From the centre research, two terms are borrowed for our model: *central functions* and *centre indicators*. At a very general level, a 'centre' is a site with special importance in a wider area. This importance might be viewed as the gathering of certain functions at these sites, and hints as to what these functions were might be found in the historical sources. Physically, the centres could be manifested in the landscape through an active use of status-laden objects and structures. These centre indicators helped in defining the sites as centres, and were probably used as parts of active strategies when elite milieus established central functions at the sites. The close association between this archaeological material and other components of the centre will be discussed borrowing perspectives from theories concerning human-things relations, where humans and material are seen as interdependent actors. This insight might justify the use of the preserved material of centre indicators to enlighten the other two, more abstract components of the centre.

The three main components of the model of the organisation of centres are hence the *elite milieus*, the *central functions* and the *centre indicators*. In the following, my understanding of these components and their interplay is discussed and elaborated on. This model forms a starting point for understanding the western Norwegian centres.

Elite milieus of leaders and followers

While some of the previously reviewed approaches focussed on regional 'chieftains' ruling chiefdoms, tribes or tribal confederations, my focus here is rather on local elite milieus at centres. Above the local level, these milieus did probably engage in loosely organised and person-dependent regional or supra-regional alliance networks. The interpretation of a presence of elite milieus is based on an assumed social inequality, inferred from the grave and settlement material and historical sources. Although it is hard to reconstruct a detailed social hierarchy, a simple twofold division might be sufficient here. Elite milieus of various sizes formed a social top level, vertically separated from a larger group of other people (cf. Fabech, 1999b, Fig. 2). The focus of the thesis is not on the vertical relations, but rather horizontal relations between elites.

The elite milieus were collectives of leaders and followers, probably also including their households. According to written sources from Tacitus to Frankish and Norse sources, this collective was ultimately based on a male leader as warlord and male warriors as his retinue (cf. Steuer, 2006). I also assume that the elite milieus were major landowners, and that their manor structures formed the core of the centres (Skre, 1999; Stylegar, 2001). The milieu probably had internal social and military hierarchies based on ascribed kinship status or status achieved, for example, through warfare, perhaps best illustrated by the Illerup and Himlingøje hierarchies (Lund Hansen et al., 1995; Ilkjær, 1997). The followers accompanied their leader in his hall and into battles, on travels to allies and to gatherings at the thing sites (Odner, 1974; Herschend, 1998).

Social bonds were made within the milieu through gift exchange and through kinship and warrior fellowships (Odner, 1974; Steuer, 2006). According to written sources, women had a leading role in the elite households, and women might also have held positions as ritual leaders (Kristoffersen, 2000; Enright, 2011). Elite women had a special importance in the creation of alliances, both as hostesses at feasts and through alliance intermarriage creating kinship bonds both internally and with other elite milieus (Enright, 2011). Elite milieus might have existed geographically close to each other, and the borders between the milieus might often be difficult to draw. While some elite milieus were linked through alliance bonds, others were certainly enemies.

Centres and central functions

In western Norwegian Iron Age research, the term 'centre' was used by Shetelig (1912a) and Slomann (1956) to describe focal points in the landscape. Their terms *accumulation centres* and *distribution centres* mirrored a focus on the economic basis of centres. Likewise, Myhre (1984/85) and Ringstad (1992) viewed their centres as *economic and political centres*. Inspired by the recent research on *central places*, the main subject here is rather the social organisation among elite milieus at centres, and not so much on the economic structures allowing some people to become elites.

At the heart of the definition of a centre is an assumption that it played a special role for a larger area. In an attempt to define what a central place was, Helgesson (1998:p.40) listed several 'phenomena of central character' that might be linked to centres: local/regional/supra-regional rule; crafts/production/exchange/distribution; cult/religion; defence/military dominance; judicial organisation; communications. These phenomena might be grouped in terms of which key functions the centres could cover for a wider area, such as sociopolitical functions, economic functions, ritual functions, military functions and judicial functions. In addition, Helgesson stressed the importance of a strategic placement in relation to communications.

Many researchers have argued that centres administered what we might term *central functions* for a wider area (e.g. Näsman, 1991, 2006; Fabech, 1999b; Helgesson, 2002, 2008; Grimm, 2006, 2010; Skre, 2007, 2010). Although the researchers have slightly varying definitions of which functions the centres integrated, Helgesson's (1998) list might be used as a point of departure. In addition to the economic basis of the centre, the central functions characterising centres were the sociopolitical, military, judicial and ritual functions. Although source-critical issues regarding the use of written sources have been noted, the established view is that the historical sources might illuminate early Iron Age societies if used with caution (Näsman, 1988; Lund, 1993). These written sources seem to be our best chance to understand how central functions worked in society. Compared with relevant historical sources, the central functions correspond well with four important 'institutions' mentioned in sources related to early Iron Age societies: the *hall*, the *retinue*, the *thing site* and the *religion* (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5. A list of central functions that might be reflected at the centres, compared with the main social institutions mentioned in the written sources

Central functions	Institutions known from written sources
Sociopolitical functions	The hall as a the headquarters of elites
Military functions	The retinue organisation
Judicial functions	The thing site
Ritual functions	The religious rituals and beliefs

The central functions were closely linked to the different roles of elite milieus. The halls of the elites were the political heart of the centre. Here, followers and allies met and regulated their relationships through feasts and meetings (Herschend, 1998). The military functions were also organised by the elite milieus, with the leader as warlord and with warriors from his group of followers (Steuer, 2006). Based on Germanic and Norse sources, Näsman (1988) and Ramqvist (1991) suggested that meetings at councils, or thing sites, were an important part of the social organisation. Tacitus for instance claimed that leaders were elected at the thing sites, and the account of St. Saba could indicate a presence of local village councils in Germanic areas (Näsman, 1988). With this as a background, I will explore the possibility of local thing sites in the study area. The possible presence of elected leaders at the sites will also be investigated.

In the Iron Age, religious activities were probably far less 'centralised' than after the conversion to Christianity (cf. Fabech, 1999b:pp.469–470). Even so, the suggested link between religion and leadership opens up the possibility of linking elites to rituals of special significance (e.g. Skre, 1998). Such 'official' or 'central' rituals might have had a rather different character to more 'private' or 'local' rituals in a normal household (cf. Steinsland, 2005:p.264). Although the identification of ritual central functions might be a challenge, it has been suggested that religious aspects were so crucial to major centres like Gudme and Helgö that the layout of the centre mirrored the world view (Hedeager, 2001; Zachrisson, 2004). Interestingly, written sources on Norse religion mention ritual leaders of both genders (Steinsland, 2005:p.264). As various Germanic and Norse sources indicate that this was one of the domains where women could retain important societal positions (Enright, 2011), I have chosen to focus my search for ritual specialists on possible indications of female ritual leaders.

Centre indicators: Status objects and grand buildings

Archaeological material indicates that prestige goods and monumental buildings were the hallmark of the early Iron Age elites. When these categories occur in clusters, they might rightfully be considered *centre indicators* (Fabech & Ringtved, 1995), material characteristics of a centre. These centre indicators were carefully chosen and significant material categories used in active strategies to establish and maintain centres. By using these specific types of objects and constructions, the elite milieus could claim their position as a leading stratum and establish their settlement districts as focal sites in the regional landscape. My hypothesis is that centre indicators were so intimately linked to the elite milieus and the central functions that this material is a key in understanding the organisation of centres. If we wish to study the interaction between elite milieus and the organisation of various centres, this would then be accessible through an analysis of centre indicators found at the localities.

The hypothesis of close relations between these material traces and the other components of the centre might be justified using perspectives from recent theories concerning human-things relations. The art historian Gell (1998) introduced the theoretical possibility of material agency. While human agency might be considered a primary (or conscious) agency, material agency could be interpreted as a secondary (or effective) agency, collaborating with human agents (cf. Robb, 2004:p.133, 2010). Recently, these perspectives have been incorporated in symmetrical archaeology, where the archaeological material is seen as non-human actors, playing a role in cooperation with the human actors (e.g. Olsen, 2010, 2012; Hodder, 2011, 2012).

These theoretical insights concerning material agency thus provide us with an important link between the observable material and the other entities of a centre. At each centre, certain human primary agents (elite milieus) collaborated with certain material secondary agents (centre indicators) to establish sites of high social importance (central functions). In this perspective, elite milieus and centres could not have been established without the help of the effective material qualities of the centre indicators. From the qualities they possess, the centre indicators studied might be divided into two categories: the portable object categories are characterised as shiny *status objects*, and the more permanent construction categories as *grand buildings*.

Most of the portable objects associated with elites had a special, 'shiny' visual effect. These shiny status objects were made of gold or they were gilded, they were made of silver, of gold-like copper alloys like brass and bronze, they were coloured, made of see-through glass, or weapon blades of shiny iron or steel. The majority of these shiny materials were exclusive and brought from abroad. Being small and portable, these objects could travel from hand to hand. Status objects were an integral part of elite life, being used and displayed at feasts, offered as alliance gifts or carried as status markers visualising elite hierarchies. These status objects are the main tool for understanding relations among elite milieus. Status objects might illuminate relations within the elite milieus, either as status markers for political, military or ritual leadership, or as gifts establishing hierarchies and alliances. The grand buildings, on the other hand, had the material quality of being visually effective structures based on their grand scale. They were exclusive in terms of who had the resources to raise these buildings, and who had the opportunity to gather inside them. Whether these were large burial mounds or hall buildings, they were exclusive with regard to the few selected people they housed.

From model to methodology and analysis

This chapter concludes with a basic model of how centres were organised. Three interrelated components in the organisation of centres were introduced: *elite milieus*, *central functions* and *centre indicators* (Fig. 2.2). These components of the centre are viewed as intertwined and their dynamic interplay guides my understanding of elite milieus and centres in their local context. While the textual sources enable an understanding of the elite milieus and the central functions, the centre indicators are the only centre component still preserved as a contemporary, primary material. Theoretical perspectives suggest that the archaeological material might be interpreted as material secondary agents contributing with effective agency in the strategies and actions of human primary agents. In the following parts of the thesis, this theoretical insight will form an implicit link between centre indicators and other components of the centre, establishing the archaeological material as our key for studying centres.

The archaeological material of centre indicators has been divided into two major groups: *status objects* and *grand buildings*. A working hypothesis is that the status objects might especially illuminate aspects of elite organisation and that the grand buildings could provide insights into the central functions. In the following chapters, 3 and 4, I will explore the methodological basis of Myhre and Ringstad's studies and more recent research on Scandinavian centres, ending in a set of centre indicators that are relevant for the study of western Norwegian centres. In Chapters 5 and 6, the selected set of centre indicators are analysed, linking specific material categories to the establishment of elite milieus and central functions. Brought together, the components in my model of centre organisation form a tool kit aimed at illuminating the variation and general trends among the 12 centre localities studied in Chapter 7.

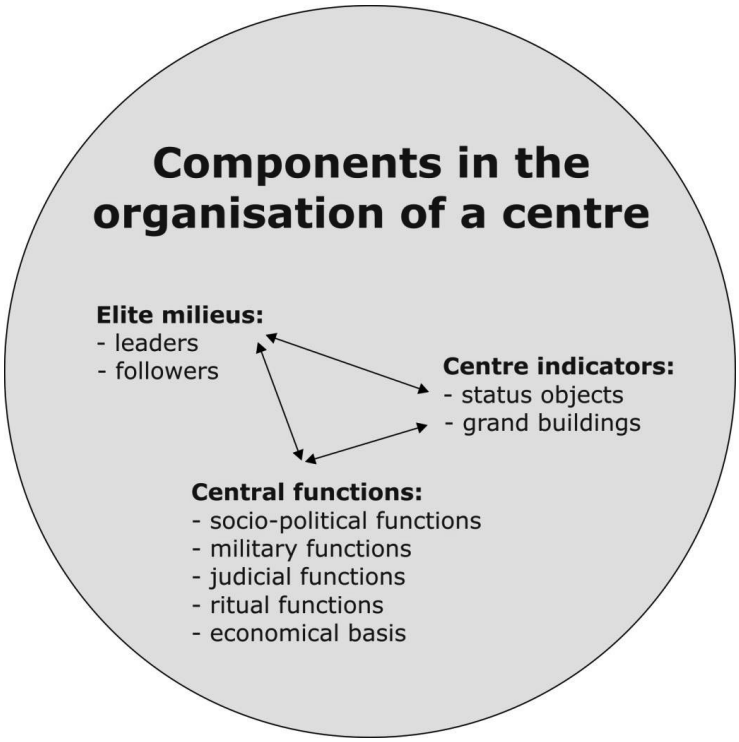


Fig. 2.2. Basic model of the interrelated and overlapping human, material and functional components integrated in the organisation of a centre.

Chapter 3. The methods of Myhre and Ringstad

The main starting point for my analysis of western Norwegian centres was the work of Myhre and Ringstad, identifying the major early Iron Age centres in my study area. Their definitions of centre localities in the study area will form the basis in Chapters 5 and 6 for judging whether material categories are situated near centres, and a selection of these centres are studied in detail in Chapter 7. However, in order to make use of Myhre's and Ringstad's results, it seems necessary to first conduct a critical analysis of their methodological basis. Based on an examination of their methods, I will evaluate whether their results are still valid and might justly be utilised in the thesis.

The studies of Myhre and Ringstad were among the early modern studies of centres in Scandinavian Iron Age archaeology. Myhre's work was very influential. His article *Chieftains' graves and chiefdom territories in South Norway in the Migration Period* (1987a) is a modern classic in literature dealing with the Norwegian Iron Age. Due to the importance of this article – and as its methodology is not easily accessed – a major part of this chapter is devoted to deconstructing the methodology of his article. Ringstad's article *Økonomiske og politiske senter på Vestlandet ca. 400-1000 e.Kr.* (1992) was based on results from his magister thesis *Vestlandests største gravminner. Et forsøk på lokalisering av forhistoriske maktsentra* (1986). In contrast to Myhre's article, Ringstad's work focussed more on the centres than on chiefdom territories.

After examining their methods, I discuss the validity of the results for my own study. I draw the conclusion that their methods and results are still mainly valid. However, the theoretical basis for their studies was rooted in the approaches of the early 1980s. As seen in the review of the research history in Chapter 2, this was on the transition from anthropological models to historical models. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the chiefdom model used by Myhre to reconstruct hypothetical territories surrounding the centres seems less relevant in the present discourse. This means that Myhre's model might be stripped of its territorial implications, while keeping centres as a basic unit.

3.1 Chieftains' graves and chiefdom territories

Although three decades have passed since Myhre (1987a) published his article on chieftains' graves, ten years ago Grimm (2006:p.210) described the study as still 'groundbreaking', yet being 'the most well-known Norwegian central place study'. With some adjustments, the social implications drawn from patterns on his distribution maps have been regarded as an adequate model for south-western Norwegian societies in the Migration period (e.g. Myhre, 1991; Kristoffersen, 2000; Grimm, 2006:p. 27, 2010:p.19; Skre, 2010:p.222). In the short article, Myhre did not describe his methods and material in detail. Grimm (2006:pp.210–211, 2010:p.19) has noted the lack of a catalogue, the lack of discussions on the representativity of the graves and a lack of chronological differentiation within the various find groups. As a consequence of this, it is not straightforward to judge the methodological basis of Myhre's model.

While Myhre's chiefdom model has been critically discussed (Stylegar, 2001; Olsen, 2003), his concrete methodology has never been analysed in any detail. Given that his distribution maps form the basis for his model of south-western Norwegian societies, a review of his mapping principles might provide us with some basis for judging which parts of this model might still be valid. Even if he only provided some brief remarks on his methods and material in the short article, Myhre (1987a, note 4) does refer to a longer, unpublished manuscript with additional information on finds and distribution (see also references to this manuscript in Myhre, 1985; Ringstad, 1986, 1992).[2] While the article was the end product, the 1984/85 manuscript better illustrates how he came to these methods, results and conclusions. To gain a better understanding of Myhre's methodology, in the following I will critically review his mapping methods in light of the manuscript. I mainly follow the structure of Myhre's article, from the 'chieftains' graves' at 'centres' and other rich finds in wider 'central areas', via hill forts marking 'defence areas', to 'chiefdom territories' constructed as *Theissen polygons*.

[2] Since two versions are known, the manuscript is referred to here as Myhre 1984/85. The 1984 version I have access to is titled *Økonomiske sentra, territorieinndeling og samfunnsorganisasjon i Sør- og Vest-Norge i romertid - folkevandringstid; et forsøk*, while the final 1985 version was titled *Politisk organisasjon i SV Norge i yngre romertid og folkevandringstid*.

Myhre's chiefdom model was discussed in Chapter 2, but it seems necessary to recapture it. To clarify the different terms used in this model, the territorial model Myhre ended up with is depicted below (Fig. 3.1). Here, centres with surrounding central areas are found on the coast, surrounded by defence areas and wider chiefdom territories consisting of near and more distant influence areas. The model was influenced by Swedish Iron Age research, corresponding largely to a model proposed by Selinge (1977) for societies along the Ljungan river in Norrland (Myhre, 1984/85:p.53; see also Ljungan on the map in Fig. 4.1). In the following, I wish to illuminate how Myhre methodologically attempted to adopt this model to south-western Norway. As we have already seen in the research history, in recent works Myhre (2002, 2003) seems to have taken a step away from the chiefdom model. Based on this observation, I find the territorial units sketched by Myhre based on models from the early 1980s of little relevance to the present research. Throughout this chapter, I will attempt to ground my view in a critical study of his methods. Another hypothesis that I will attempt to clarify through the study of Myhre's empirical basis is that the core of his model – centres and central areas – is still relevant for Iron Age research.

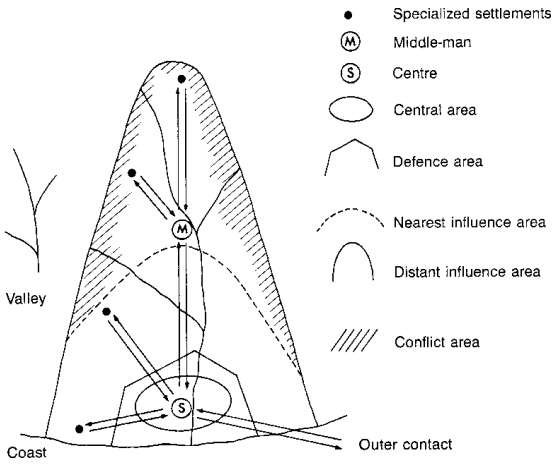


Fig. 3.1. Original figure caption: 'Model of a centre's territory with a central area, a defense area and with settlements in different ecological zones. The exchange and redistribution of commodities and services are indicated by arrows'. After Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 13.

Centres indicated by 'chieftains' graves'

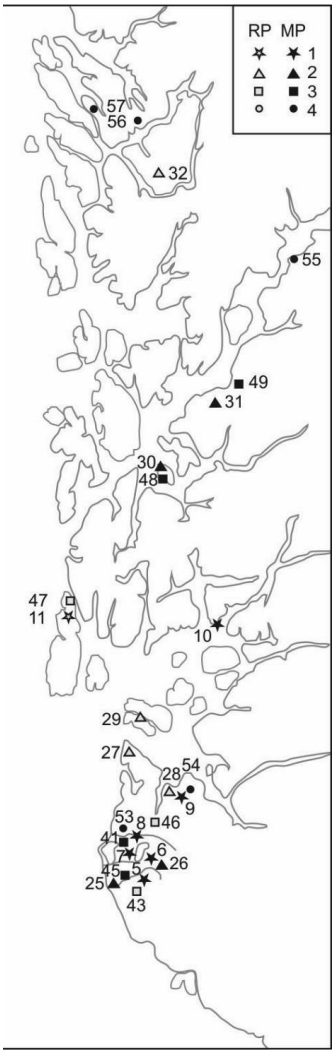
In order to point out the main political centres, Myhre identified 60 *chieftains' graves*, defined as richly furnished graves with combinations of at least two of the three categories indicating economic surplus: gold items and imports of glass and bronze (Myhre, 1987a, Figs. 1 and 2). The chieftains' graves were not internally arranged according to any hierarchy. They were seen as a selection of the richest graves of the time, situated at the wealthiest farms in the political centres. The three categories of gold, bronze and glass were chosen partly for practical reasons, as catalogues of these categories were available at the time (Myhre, 1984/85:p.2). In a study covering only Jæren, Myhre similarly applied combinations of these three categories in order to identify centres (Myhre, 1978, Fig. 19). However, here four groups of gold weight were used as an adjusting criterion, with the heaviest group representing large hoard finds. As regards the definition of 'chieftains' graves', Myhre (1987a:p.112) writes:

> *Other definitions may as well have been chosen, e.g. the number of objects or object types in the graves, the weight of gold or silver, the quality of the objects and so on. The conclusions would have been similar, but because we have to take into consideration both cremations and inhumations, such criteria are not as conclusive as the simple definition.*

Among alternative criteria mentioned were objects decorated in animal style, objects with runic inscriptions, the size of the burial chamber, the size of the mound and the overall number of mounds in a district (Myhre, 1984/85:pp.2, 14, 1987a:p.112). Myhre also noted that a weakness of the simple definition was the exclusion of graves with multiple objects of the same category (Myhre, 1984/85:pp.14–5). The definition omits, for instance, a grave with two glass beakers from Hebnes, Suldal or a grave from Innbjoa, Vindafjord with three gold items. Myhre writes: 'I am fully aware that these [60 graves] represent only a part of the richest graves from this period. There are interesting possibilities in the [wider] material for further analyses of social relations in the early Iron Age' (Myhre, 1984/85:p.15, my translation). As noted by Grimm (2006:p.211), in the article Myhre did not provide a list of the chieftains' graves. To allow a transparent view of the material in my study area, the relevant graves are listed here, based on a catalogue in the 1984/85 manuscript (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. 'Chieftains' graves' from Hordaland and Rogaland, after a catalogue in Myhre's 1984/85 manuscript. The grave numbers refers to distribution maps in the article (Myhre, 1987a, Figs.1–2), which is summarised here to the right. Captions for the map: Star (1): Gold, glass and bronze vessel. Triangle (2): Gold and glass. Square (3): Gold and bronze vessel. Circle (4): Glass and bronze vessel. RP: Roman period, MP: Migration period. I have found a few possible discrepancies, indicated by parahtheses. First, the Vasshus grave (#53) seems to have had 3 categories rather than 2. Secondly, the Haugland grave (#31) contained melted gold, indicating a Roman period date, rather than the Migration period date given by Myhre. The centres are listed in relation to the definitions of this thesis

#	Find-spot	Mus. no.	Au	Gl.	Br.	Date	Centre
56	Eikenes, Lindås	B3990		X	X	MP	Lindås
57	Skardet, Lindås	B4003		X	X	MP	Lindås
32	Mele, Osterøy	B6981	X	X		RP	Osterøy
55	Prestegården, Jondal	B4207		X	X	MP	-
49	Seglheim, Kvinnherad	B308+	X		X	MP	Rosendal
31	Haugland, Kvinnherad	B6103	X	X		(MP)	Rosendal
30	Øvsthus, Kvinnherad	B3731	X	X		MP	Bjoafjord
48	Sæbø, Kvinnherad	B3358	X		X	MP	Bjoafjord
11	Avaldsnes I, Karmøy	B606+	X	X	X	RP	Avaldsnes
47	Avaldsnes II, Karmøy	B314	X		X	RP	Avaldsnes
10	Foldøy, Suldal	S8200	X	X	X	MP	Hebnes
29	Haugvallstad, Rennesøy	S3820	X	X		RP	Rennesøy
27	Randaberg, Randaberg	S2240	X	X		RP	Randaberg
9	N. Hogstad, Sandnes	S1520+	X	X	X	MP	Riska
54	S. Hogstad, Sandnes	S3552		X	X	MP	Riska
28	Li, Sandnes	S2448	X	X		RP	Riska
46	Hove, Sandnes	C1101+	X		X	RP	Hove
53	Vasshus, Klepp	C3300+	(X)	X	X	MP	Vasshus
44	Sør-Braut, Klepp	S4058		X	X	MP	Tinghaug
7	Hauge, Klepp	B2269+	X	X	X	MP	Tinghaug
8	Tu, Klepp	S1476+	X	X	X	MP	Tinghaug
45	Midt-Salte, Klepp	S7990	X	X		MP	Erga
6	Vestly, Time	S8635	X	X	X	MP	Lye
26	Vestly, Time	B1849+	X	X		MP	Lye
43	Bø, Hå	S4355	X		X	RP	Nærbø
25	Nærland, Hå	S1466+	X	X		MP	Nærbø
5	Rimestad, Hå	B2132+	X	X	X	MP	Nærbø



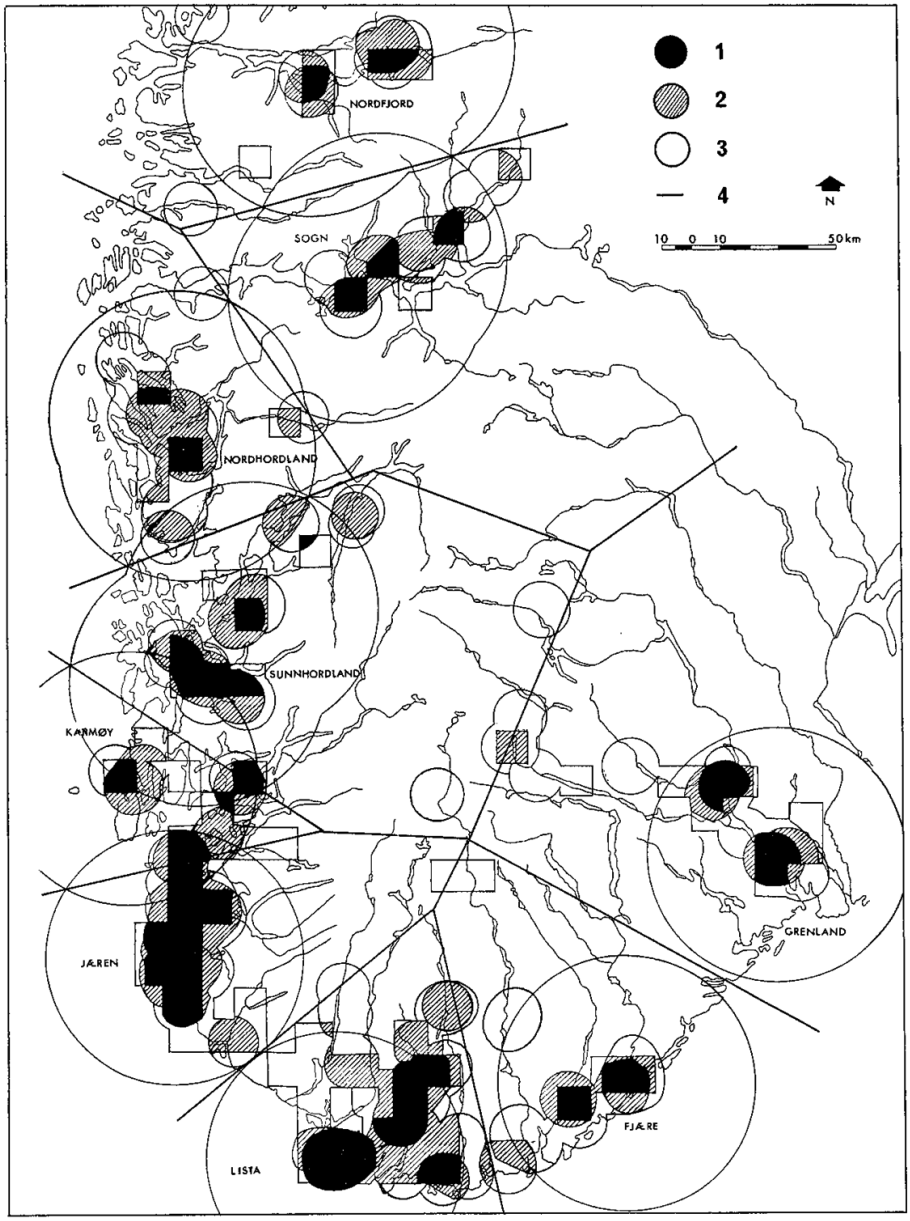


Fig. 3.2. Myhre's map of chiefdom territories (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 7; cf. the unfinished sketch in Fig. 3.5.). Hill forts are not depiced in this figure. Original caption: 'Centres with finds of bronze vessels, glasses and items of gold. 1. Three categories of objects. 2. Two categories of objects. 3. One category of objects. Hypothetical territories of centres indicated by mid-lines (4)'.

'Central areas' indicated by rich finds

Myhre then showed that these chieftains' graves coincided with the combined total distribution of the three categories. It should be noted that the mapped find spots also included finds from the chieftains' graves. 'To achieve a more general picture of the distribution of these three groups of objects, a map has been constructed where black shading indicates areas with all three categories of finds, striped areas have two of the three categories, while only one of the categories has been found within the white areas [see my Fig. 3.2]' (Myhre, 1987a:p.113). The black-shaded areas indicated on the map were interpreted as reflecting 'central areas' surrounding the 'centres'.

A few remarks might be made on the lack of chronology on this distribution map. In order to visualise chronological shifts between centres in a simple manner, Myhre depicted the chieftains' graves from the late Roman and Migration periods on two different maps (Myhre, 1987a, Figs. 1 and 2, cf. Table 3.1). Other than this, the material was not chronologically differentiated on the main distributional maps showing concentrations of rich finds (cf. Fig. 3.2). In the manuscript, Myhre (1984/85, Ch. 3) explained the lack of a finer chronological distribution as partly due to the lack of an updated, general chronology at the time of his data analysis in 1984. As works refining the chronology had not been published (e.g. Straume, 1987; Lund Hansen, 1987), Myhre decided to deal with the material of the Roman and Migration periods mostly as one mass. Myhre (1984/85:p.6) claimed that most of the material was later than 300 AD. This was based on a dating of the Avaldsnes find and associated finds to 300 AD following Slomann's (1972) dating to the last part of Eggers' phase C2. With an updated chronology, several of the oldest chieftains' graves and gold finds, for example from Avaldsnes, Hove, Bringsvær, Nes and Innbjoa, could be dated to Lund Hansen's (1987) phases C1b or C1b/C2 – the first half and middle of the third century.

The gold finds were first grouped in 12.5 x 12.5 km squares (1 cm^2 on Myhre's map), showing a total weight of grave gold and gold hoards within each square (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 3). On the final distribution maps (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 7, my Fig. 3.2) the squares reflected solely a presence of gold, without regard to weight. However, an important point not stated in the article, only in the manuscript (Myhre, 1984/85:p.13),

is that the squares on the latter map only represented grave gold. This is highly significant, as Myhre (1987a, Fig. 4) shows that among the gold finds in his study area, hoards make up 4.4 kg (65%), while only 2.3 kg (35%) were grave gold. Myhre (1987a:p.171) claimed that grave gold and hoards had a similar distribution. If this is true, it seems like an odd methodological choice to leave 65% of the gold unmapped. To this might be added that hoards (> 100 g) was one of the major categories used to identify centres in Jæren in his study from 1978 (cf. Fig. 3.3, Table 3.2). Looking at the distribution maps of Myhre (1987a), among the 99 squares shown in his Fig. 3, 20 squares with hoard finds are omitted from his Fig. 7, while one new square was added to the Ryfylke area. Several of the unmapped hoard finds occur outside the proposed central areas. Among the gold not mapped are some of the largest gold finds in my study area, including a neck ring from Vasshus, Lund (360 g), a payment ring from Vårå, Tysvær (158 g), a sword mounting from Rakne, Voss (86 g), and large gold finds from Nordfjord, inland Agder and inland Telemark. If the Voss mounting and a few other objects not mapped by Myhre are included, Voss is a clearly defined 'central area' alongside the other centres in my study area (see Chapter 7 and Fig. 7.6).

We then have the bronze and glass vessel imports. These were grouped by category within circles with a 10 km radius (i.e. 20 km diameter), so that all glass imports within this area were represented solely as one circle and all bronze imports as another circle. The value of this principle is that it is possible to compare areas with a high frequency of finds (e.g. Jæren, Lista) to areas with fewer finds. One problem, however, is that the preference for one of the categories in some regions might give these a lower status on the map. While glass dominates the imports of Grenland (Myhre, 1984/85:p.10), the Westland cauldrons dominate in Nordhordland (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 5). Although not highly significant, it might also be noted that the numbers of bronze and glass imports mapped were 136/96 (Myhre, 1987b:p.116), and not 131/93 as stated in the article (Myhre, 1984/85, 1987a). As few burial sites have been excavated in the last few decades, the number of imported vessels is still largely the same as in the mid 1980s. With regard to the gold, a few finds were unearthed in Rogaland after Myhre's study. As seen in Table 3.3, these new finds mainly stem from areas with previous gold finds, and are therefore compatible with the spatial patterns observed by Myhre.

Table 3.2. Major categories used to identify centres in Myhre, 1978, Fig. 19. Chieftains' graves with at least 2 of the 3 categories (gold, glass, bronze) and gold hoards over 100 grams. Grave numbers refer to the list in Table 3.1

Fig. 3.3. Map of centres in Jæren, showing the correspondance between the identified centres and chieftains' graves as well as gold hoards over 100 g. Based on Myhre, 1978, Fig. 19, with modifications after my Fig. 1.4.

Centre	Chieftain's grave	Gold hoard >100 g
Randaberg	#27: Randaberg	
Hafrsfjord		305 g: Øvre Madla 185 g: Joa
Hove	#46: Hove	
Vasshus	#53: Vasshus	108 g: Bore
Tinghaug	#7: Hauge #8: Tu #44: Sør-Braut	170 g: Anda
Erga		172 g: Erga
Re		186 g: Re
Lye	#6: Vestly #26: Vestly	637 g: Store Oma
Nærbø	#5: Rimestad #25: Nærland #43: Bø	

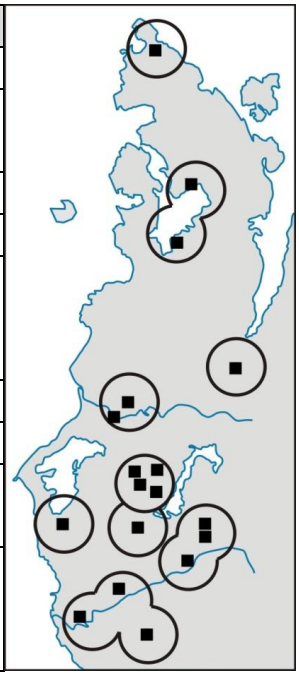


Table 3.3. Early Iron Age gold items from Rogaland, found after 1987. The melted gold was found during the excavation of a large mound (diam. 20 m) together with melted parts of a glass beaker, thus representing a new 'chieftain grave' from the same area as Myhre's chieftains grave #29. The D-bracteates were stray finds, from farms with previous bracteate finds (see Kristoffersen, 2003). The payment ring from Hove/Sørbø was found in a grave. The remaining gold finds are metal detector finds from well-known sites, several of these unearthed in connection with excavation projects

Find-spot	Closest centre	Object type	Museum no.	Year found
Nordbø, Rennesøy	Rennesøy	Melted gold	S10455	1990
Teig, Sauda	-	D-bracteate	S11049	1989
Skjørestad, Sandnes	Riska	D-bracteate	S11648	1997
Avaldsnes, Karmøy	Avaldsnes	Gold ingot	S12222	2005
Hove/Sørbø, Sandnes	Hove	Ring fragment	S12523	2009
Utstein kloster, Rennesøy	Rennesøy	Payment rings	S12596	2010
Hå prestegard, Hå	Nærbø	Bracteate loop	S12625	2011
Hove/Sørbø, Sandnes	Hove	Payment ring	S12901	2012
Husabø, Stavanger	Hafrsfjord	Finger ring	S13233	2013

Hill forts and 'defence areas'

While the mapping of chieftains' graves and central areas might be accepted as one method of identifying elite milieus at centres, the defined 'chiefdom territories' with defence areas and influence areas are more open to criticism. A hypothesis in Myhre's article was the suggestion that a large number of mostly undated hill forts belonged to the defensive systems for larger regions, with the most peripheral forts marking the borders of the 'defence area' of a chiefdom territory. In the manuscript, Myhre (1984/85:pp.21–30) discussed the functions, dating and distribution of hill forts thoroughly with source-critical remarks. However, as a conclusion he embraced the controversial theory of large regional defensive systems (Myhre, 1984/85, 1987a). This interpretative model was partly based on a small survey covering a few selected hill forts in Sunnhordland, with radiocarbon dates mainly confirming the common dating of forts to the Roman and Migration periods (Ystgaard, 2014:p.155). Secondly, Munch's (1962) interpretation of the forts in Telemark as an organised defensive system proved influential on Myhre's hypothesis. Recent research on the hill forts in Norway has mainly abandoned the hypothesis of large, regional defensive systems (Ystgaard, 2014:pp.155–7, cf. e.g. Skre, 1998; Stylegar, 2001; Finmark, 2011).

In the following, I will focus on Myhre's grouping of forts in my study area to define the 'defence areas' of distinct chiefdom territories. First, the distances between each fort was measured, grouping the forts with an internal distance of less than 20 or 25 km (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 9). Originally, a 20 km distance was applied, similar to the circle diameter for glass and bronze vessels. 'However, in this case it proved possible to gather most of the hill forts within fewer units if the distance between them was increased to 25 km, and both distance alternatives were plotted on the map' (Myhre, 1984/85:p.35, my translation). Lines were drawn between the most peripheral hill forts in the groups to define the borders of 'defence areas'. On the map combining hill forts and find clusters, a selection of either 20 km or 25 km groups was mapped (Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 10). As the find spots and distances were drawn by pencil and measured using a compass, this method was not without errors. This is evident today when exact distances between GIS points in the Askeladden database are measured. Errors on Myhre's maps (1987a, Figs. 9–10) might thus be identified with certainty.

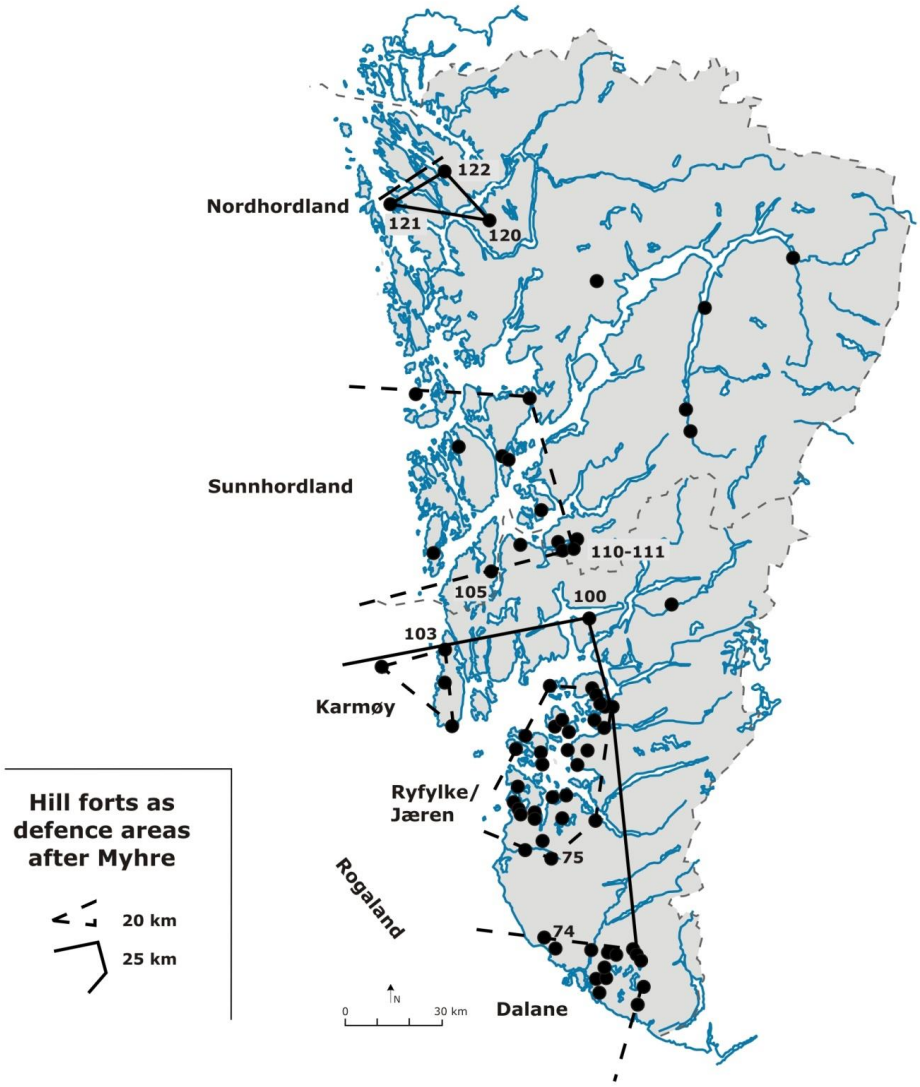


Fig. 3.4. Map of hill forts with Myhre's grouping of defence areas. Redrawn after Myhre, 1987a, Figs. 9–10. This updated distribution of hill fort was based on a search in the online Askeladden database, 4 september 2013, with the hill forts Åslandsnuten in Time and Storaborg in Karmøy added. The numbers refer to identification number on Myhre's map (1987a, Fig. 9), and show forts specifically mentioned in the discussion below. The 20 km and 25 km groupings are based on Myhre's map. As in discussed below, several of these are incorrect. The patterns visible on the map show clusters of forts in Sunnhordland, Karmøy, outer Ryfylke and north Jæren, and Dalane, with forts more scattered in Nordhordland, Hardangerfjord and inner Ryfylke.

Myhre divided my study area into three 'defence areas' (1987a, Fig. 10): Nordhordland, Sunnhordland and Rogaland (compare in the following with Fig. 3.4). However, a somewhat gliding definition of the 25 km criterion seems to have been applied. In Nordhordland, forts #120 (Osterøy) and #121 (Askøy) are clearly more than 25 km apart (29.5 km), but they are grouped together with #122 (Lindås) to form a shared defence area (see Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 10). Furthermore, the distance between a hill fort in Nord-Rogaland (#100, Suldal) and two forts in Sunnhordland (#110–111, Etne) is less than 25 km. The distance between a hill fort north-west in Rogaland (#103, Karmøy) and a hill fort south in Sunnhordland (#105, Sveio) is 29.5 km, similar to the distance used to group the Nordhordland forts. In contrast to the sharp border drawn at the county border between Etne and Suldal, the Dalane and north Jæren areas are grouped together, with a distance just below 25 km between forts #74 (Hå) and #75 (Time). If the distances used in Nordhordland, and between Hå and Time, are used as a general rule, Rogaland and Sunnhordland might be grouped as one 'defence area'. This indicates that *c*. 25 km is a rather unfitting criterion grouping too many hill forts.

If any grouping of forts is meaningful, the 20 km criterion reflects actual clusters on the map, in Sunnhordland, Karmøy, outer Ryfylke and north Jæren, and in Dalane. Within these clusters, some forts might have cooperated, while others might instead reflect a large degree of local conflicts and war. I would argue that forts should be examined mainly in their local context, rather than as larger units on a regional scale. We might, for instance, take a look at a few of the forts supposedly forming the south border of the Sunnhordland 'defence area'. The hill forts in Etne (e.g. #110–111) are confined to a closed landscape room in central Etne, and are probably functionally connected to this settlement district alone. To the west, fort #105 (Sveio) should likewise be seen mainly in a local context, probably being a local hideout fort. In a fjord mostly lacking early Iron Age finds, it seems hardly coincidental that two weapon graves are found at Alna, Vindafjord, just on the other side of the fjord from where the hill fort is situated. I find it highly unlikely that these local forts had any regional importance as defence borders of territories. In Chapter 6, I return to the hill forts of Sunnhordland. Here, the functional variation among hill forts is illustrated in the local context of three forts radiocarbon dated by Myhre to the early Iron Age.

Influence areas and chiefdom territories defined by midlines

We might finally take a closer look at how Myhre reconstructed chiefdom territories fitting the general model (Fig. 3.1). An unfinished map sketch from his manuscript (Fig. 3.5) provides important insights into the methodology behind the finished map (Fig. 3.2). The method might be described as a process of four steps. First, the centres were defined as single points based on the chieftains' graves. Secondly, from these points, circles with a 50 km radius (100 km diameter) were constructed with a compass. Thirdly, lines were drawn between the centres. Fourth, along the line, at the midpoint between the centres, a 90-degree midline was constructed. Although this methodology might seem straightforward, it was open to several possible subjective choices, and the finished map was thus not necessarily the outcome of the analysis.

The centre points chosen for the circles were not neutral selections. While the complex cluster of centres was first illustrated by black central areas (see Fig. 3.2), this complexity was now reduced to a single point around selected chieftains' graves (cf. Table 3.1). In some areas, two centres were used to create double 50 km circles, while in other areas only one centre was chosen. Examples of double circles were the Nordfjord, Sogn, Nordhordland and Sunnhordland circles (Fig. 3.2). South Rogaland and Vest-Agder had many candidates for centre points, but for some reason, in both cases a single centre point was chosen. In Vest-Agder, there were several candidates for centre points outside the defined centre at Lista (Fig. 3.5, cf. also Fig. 4.2).

In south Rogaland, chieftains' graves in Klepp likewise formed the sole centre point of the Jæren circle, while many other candidates might have been added. If chieftains' graves outside central Jæren had been added as multiple centre points, the surrounding circle would have looked different. By adding graves from Riska and Rennesøy/Randaberg as additional centre points, the circle would even have covered Karmøy and Hebnes. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that Hebnes, despite being a clearly demarcated centre with a chieftains' grave and a central area, was not given a role as a centre point in a circle of its own. As an experiment, we could see what would happen if one of the areas with a double circle were instead constructed as a single circle, as in Jæren and Vest-Agder. In Sunnhordland, the two Borgundøy graves along

Bjoafjord (Table 3.1) might have been selected as the sole centre point, at the centre of a circle, including then also Karmøy and Rosendal. Methodologically, the finished version of the 50 km circles was thus not the only possible outcome.

With the circles defined, Myhre writes: 'The distance between [the centres] are surprisingly equal, as shown by the map where circles with a radius of 50 km have been drawn around each of them [Fig. 3.2]' (1987a:p.125). Solberg (2000:p.167), on the other hand, interpreted the same figure as centres with quite varying distance in between. The manuscript gives some more information about the distances between centres: 'Between the four southernmost centres and the centres in Nordhordland and Sogn there are 100–110 km, while there are about 75 km between the rest [i.e. between the centres in Rogaland and Hordaland]' (Myhre, 1984/85:p.20, my translation). Thus, 100 km was seen as a mean distance between centres, each encircled by a 50 km radius. On the map sketch (Fig. 3.5), Myhre also seems to have tested an alternative radius of 40 km, closer to the lesser distance of 75 km between the Rogaland and Hordaland centres. The results seem to have been quite similar, and the 50 km radius, applicable for the majority of the centres, was chosen. The circles were used to illustrate the even distance between the centres, and they also seem to correlate with the 'closest influence areas' in the theoretical model (Fig. 3.1). Finally, it should be stressed that if Voss, contrary to Myhre's analysis, is seen as a 'central area' (Fig. 7.6), a territory circle drawn around Voss alters the seemingly 'even' distribution of centres and territories.

Together, the chieftains' graves and the rest of the material were identified as a series of clusters, more or less evenly distributed along the south-western Norwegian coast. In the original manuscript (1984/85), the mentioned number of clusters or units was nine – reflecting the number of 50 km circles on the map. However, in the published article (1987a:p.124) one additional inland centre in Vest-Agder was mentioned in the text while the map remained the same. In yet another article, Myhre (1992:p.165) indicated that there were eight to nine clusters, implying that two of the territories might actually be counted as one. It is possible that the varying numbers of eight to ten clusters reflect the above-mentioned uncertainties with the definition of 50 km circles seen especially in the counties of Vest-Agder, Rogaland, as well as in Sunnhordland.

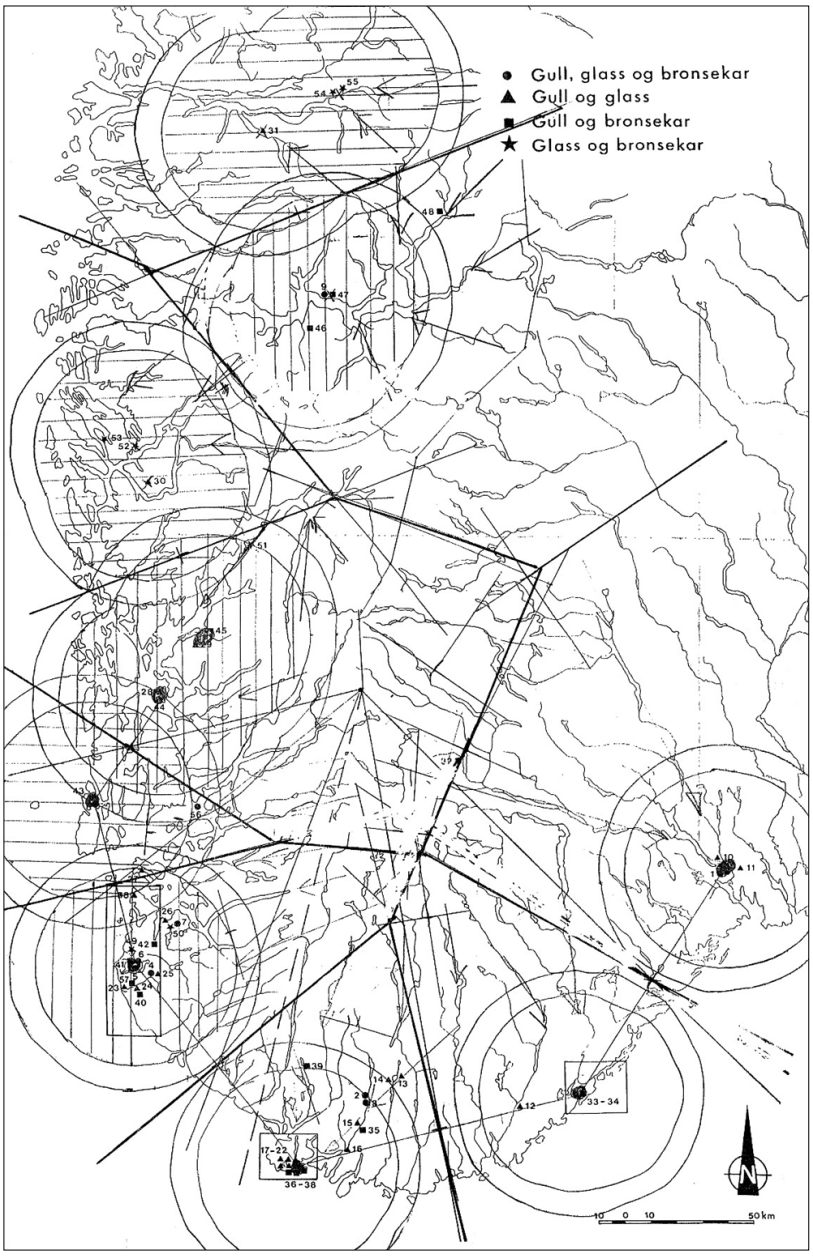


Fig. 3.5. Map sketch from Myhre's 1984/85 manuscript. The sketch shows how manual trial-and-error was applied when defining the territories, using pencil, ruler, compass and rubber. The background map depicts the chieftains' graves. Clusters of graves are marked as points, single graves as crosses, at the midpoints of circles with 40 and 50 km radius, with lines drawn between six southern centres, and with thick midlines drawn in straight angle from these lines. Watershed lines are sketched by thin lines, with a midpoint at Haukelisæter. Note that the Sogn territory circle has been modified.

Stating that centres were relatively evenly distributed, hypothetical territorial borders were drawn as midlines between the centres by means of so-called *Theissen polygons*. Myhre had employed similar mapping methods in his earlier work (1978, 1981), but according to his own references (1987a, note 3), the main inspirational sources for the methodology of this particular article were spatial analyses in Anglo-American studies from the proponents of New Archaeology (Hodder & Orton, 1976; Renfrew, 1984). These studies might in turn be traced to earlier attempts of Hodder (1972) and Renfrew (1973), borrowing the polygon method from models used in geography (Grimm, 2010:p.14). However, as seen in references from Myhre's earlier work (1978:pp.244–5), a parallel inspiration seems to have been a similar method of *nearest neighbour-testing*, which was applied, for example, by Lindqvist (1968:pp.140–142) mapping the agricultural expansion in Östergötland. Grimm (2010:p.14) writes how the Theissen polygon method was used in Anglo-American archaeology: 'In this method, each centre is connected with the bordering centres by a line, and subsequently a point is made at its half and from there a line is drawn in a right angle.' This is exactly how Myhre created his territorial borders on the coast (see Fig. 3.5). In the inland, borders were then constructed as midlines between the centres in Grenland and Sunnhordland, and between the centres in Grenland and Sogn.

Myhre stressed that the territorial borders were 'theoretical' or 'hypothetical' borders. From my reconstruction of his methods, the hypothetical nature of the territories is evident. While the centres and central areas showed relevant clusters of gold and imports, the defence areas, influence areas and territories were all methodological constructions based on an assumed organisation in chiefdoms. As I have shown in my review of the methods, the constructions were not always the necessary outcome. The distance criterion (20 km or 25 km) used to group hill forts as defence areas was not used in a strict fashion, and the functional interpretation of hill fort clusters as the defensive system of a region is no longer an accepted interpretation. The points used as the centre of 50 km circles were selected among several possible points. Forming a basis for the midlines and polygons, these points were not a neutral data set. In this methodological review, certain issues with Myhre's model have thus been identified.

3.2 Ringstad's 'large mound centres'

The methods used by Ringstad are far easier to trace than those of Myhre, as these are explicitly described, and as his catalogues are more easily available (Ringstad, 1986). His final, revised work on the *large mound centres* is reviewed here (Ringstad, 1992), focussing on his criteria for identifying centres of the Roman and Migration periods. The main basis for Ringstad's work was the plausible idea that especially large mounds were the product of economic surplus and elites powerful enough to engage a number of people in the building of such monuments. His definition of a *large mound* was a volume of over 400 m^3, corresponding to a circular mound at least 20 metres in diameter and more than 2.5 metres high. Ringstad did not differentiate between earthen mounds and cairns of stone, and long mounds were not included in his analysis.

Altogether Ringstad found close to 300 mounds of this volume in his study area from Nord-Rogaland to Møre, dating from the early Bronze Age to the Viking Age, with a marked peak in the Migration period (Ringstad, 1992, Fig. 5). About 50% of the dated mounds had an oldest date to the Roman and Migration periods, 17% were dated to the Iron Age in general, while the rest were dated mainly to the Bronze Age or to the Viking Age. As only 40% of the total number of large mounds were dated, Ringstad mapped clusters of large mounds regardless of dating, distinguishing so-called *large mound centres*. The criteria for such centres were (Ringstad, 1992:p.110, my translation):

- areas being naturally demarcated districts
- that the distance between the closest large mounds was less than 5 km
- that the total volume of large mounds in an area was more than 2800 m^3

From this quantitative analysis, he identified 26 large mound centres of three ranks, grouped by the total volume of large mounds. Large mound centres of the first rank had a mound volume over 9000 m^3, centres of the second rank a volume of 4200–6300 m^3, centres of the third rank had a volume of 2800–3550 m^3 (Ringstad, 1992:p.113). Districts with a total mound volume below this were not considered as centres.

Ringstad then went on to more specifically identify economic centres of the different periods, here exemplified by the time span covered by my thesis. In order to do this he mapped the large mounds dated to the Roman and Migration periods, and in addition a selection of special finds indicating economic surplus: gold, glass and bronze. These three so-called *wealth criteria* were mainly the same as those used by Myhre, but finds of all three categories were equally mapped as find spots side by side, either as single find spots or as concentrations of finds. It is interesting to note that Ringstad actually made use of Myhre's (1984/85) unpublished catalogue, which is one of the reasons why there is large correspondence between their results. Ringstad found that 75% of the rich finds from the early Iron Age coincided with a presence of large mounds. Two levels of centres were identified using the criteria:

1. Major centres with a) dated large mounds *and* b) rich finds
2. Minor centres with a) dated large mounds *or* b) concentrations of rich finds

In the 1986 analysis, only areas with large mounds were used to identify centres (criterion 1 and 2a). The last criterion (2b) was introduced in the 1992 article, establishing clusters of rich finds as a criterion of the same strength as the presence of dated large mounds. Altogether, 26 centres from the Roman and Migration periods were identified (Fig. 3.6). In a later article, Ringstad (2004) interpreted the many mounds of the early Iron Age as the result of competition and the struggle for power in a period of instability and great changes in the social structures. In the late Iron Age, the number of centres identified with similar criteria decreased to 14–18 centres, interpreted by Ringstad (1992) as a result of the process of power centralisation.

Comparing Ringstad's centres (Fig. 3.6) with the central areas of Myhre (Fig. 3.2), there is a large degree of agreement. In the overlapping areas of their studies, only Voss in Hordaland and Aurland, Sogn og Fjordane stand out as centres identified only by Ringstad. An important reason for the conformity in their results is the use of similar wealth criteria (glass, bronze, gold) mainly based on the same catalogue, and that 75% of these rich finds coincide with areas with large mounds. Ringstad's map, however, provides a far better overview of single centres than Myhre's 'central areas'.

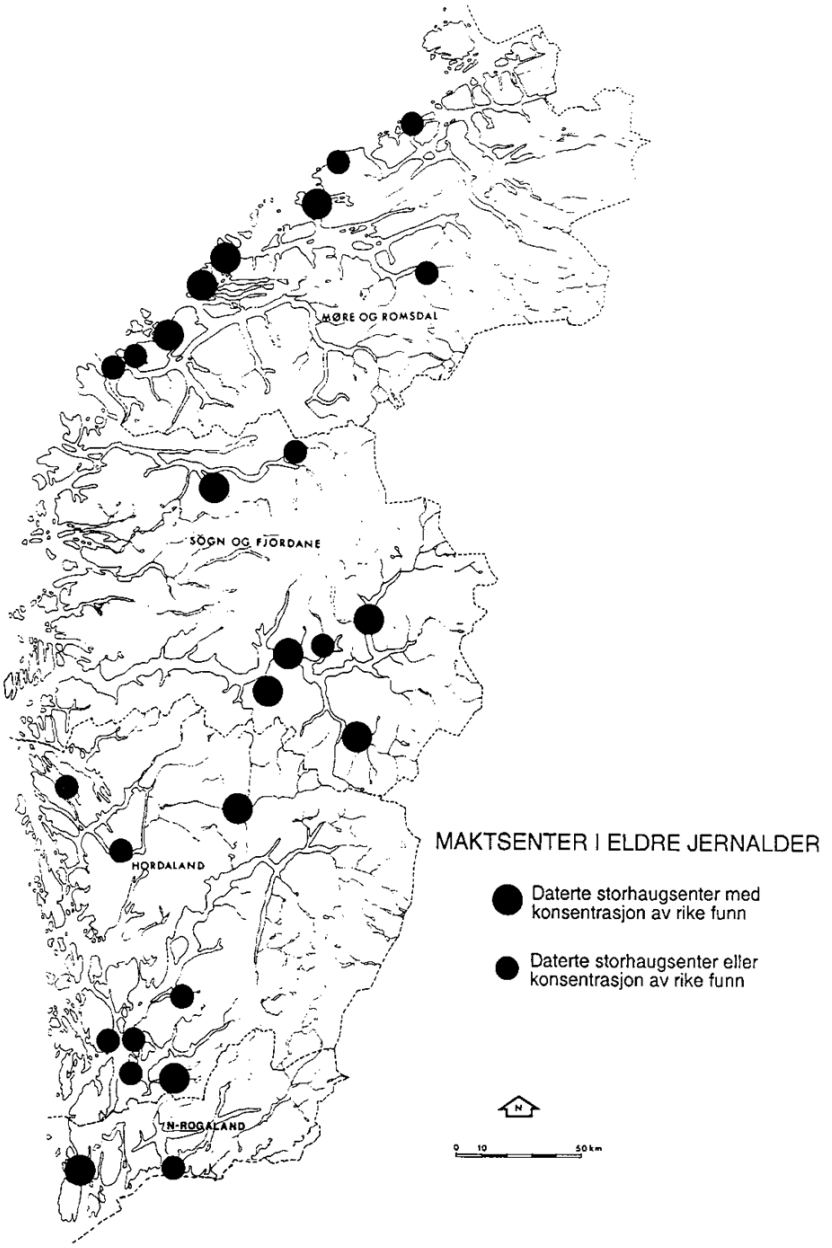


Fig. 3.6. Map of centres in western Norway in the early Iron Age, after Ringstad, 1992. Translated caption: 'Large circles: Dated large mound centres with concentrations of rich finds. Small circles: Dated large mound centres or concentrations of rich finds.'

Defining a large mound

Although Ringstad clearly showed how his centres were defined, his quite strict definition of large mounds from volume makes it hard to compare his results with studies from other regions applying the more common definition by mound diameter. His analysis only included mounds with a known, preserved height and diameter indicating a volume over 400 m^3, and only these mounds were used to measure the relative sizes of the centres. The choice of a strict volume definition was mainly rooted in his attempts at estimating work effort from volume (Ringstad, 2004:p.240). His volume calculations were necessarily approximations, in that they were based on a hypothetical perfectly spherical mound, a shape that of course is never found in reality. As the original height and diameter of a mound are unknown, and as it might more often than not have been secondarily modified by nature and people, the present volume is generally lower than the original volume. The formula used is also ripe for some criticism. According to Kildedal (2013:p.54, note 7), this formula is similar to that of a shortened 'paraboloid of revolution', only working if the height is close to half the radius to the top of the mound. Kildedal suggested that the formula for a shortened 'ellipsoid of revolution' seems better fitted for mound volume estimates.

As there are so many uncertainties concerning the calculation of mound volume, it seems more appropriate to rather use the mound diameter as a simplified criterion for large mounds. Many mounds that are almost removed have an observable diameter, and older archaeological surveys often documented solely the diameter of monuments now removed. As a consequence of these limitations in the source material, the majority of studies of large mounds in other parts of Norway have mainly made use of diameter as the defining criterion (see, for example, Brøgger, 1939; Møllerop, 1957; Hagen, 1977; Myhre 1978, 1991; Stenvik, 1996; Skre, 1998; Stylegar, 2001; Gansum, 2004; Storli, 2006). The diameter definition used for 'large mounds' in these studies might range from 20, 25, 30, or even 40 or 50 metres for the largest 'royal mounds' (Brøgger, 1939). In addition, long mounds are sometimes included in the analysis of large mounds, often applying a length definition of 30 or 40 metres. The most common definition of a large mound is, however, a circular mound with a diameter of over 20 metres. Both for practical reasons and due to means of comparison, this simple criterion

seems highly applicable. However, like the other suggested criteria, 20 metres is admittedly a quite arbitrary, rounded demarcation number based on modern measurements. Some source-critical remarks should also be noted on the diameter given in older sources. For instance, in his surveys in southern Jæren, A. Myhre (1955, 1957) remarked that he measured length using paces of at least 1 metre, a method probably also reflected in most older surveys, meaning that mounds listed as 20 metres might perhaps have measured in the range of 18–22 metres.

One might also comment on Ringstad's total volume criterion of over 2800 m^3 for large mound centres, only counting mounds over 400 m^3. An alternative is to use the total number of large mounds to distinguish different levels of centres. As mentioned, 75% of the richest finds come from areas with large burial mounds. Among the remaining 25% of such finds, Ringstad mentioned Bjoafjord (named 'Innbjoa/Borgundøy') as one cluster of rich finds outside the large mound centres (Ringstad, 1992:p.121). Although this area is included as a minor centre in the early Iron Age (after criterion 2b), at least Innbjoa might be termed a minor large mound centre if the volume criteria for single mounds and totals are lowered. At Innbjoa, we find the two largest mounds in a wide district (Indrelid, 1991), both about 20 metres in diameter (Ringstad, 1986, Appendix 2; Reiersen, 2012a). Although Ringstad's definition of a large mound centre was confined to those with a mound volume over 2800 m^3, clusters of a few large mounds might also have been places where power dwelled for some time.

To sum up, the methods of Ringstad's studies are well explained, and his map provides a more detailed view on the distribution of single centres. His studies did not imply an organisation in territorial units (Ringstad, 1986:p.315). However, the volume criteria used both for defining a large mound and for defining the large mound centres might be criticised. If modified to a mound diameter of 20 metres, his results are more comparable with studies in other areas using a diameter definition. The diameter definition makes it possible to give an overview of the large mounds in Jæren, which were not included in Ringstad's analysis. The implications in my study area regarding the suggested simplified definition of large mounds are discussed in Chapter 6.

3.3 Keeping the centres, leaving the territories

In this chapter, I have shed further light on the methods and material used by Myhre and Ringstad to identify centres. While Ringstad explicitly described his methods, the unpublished manuscript of Myhre has proven to be an important source for evaluating Myhre's methodological choices. In this concluding subchapter, I will evaluate if their methods and results may be utilised as a foundation for the present study. As stated at the start of the chapter, the main question is whether the centres and central areas of Myhre and Ringstad might be kept, while omitting the outdated territories of Myhre.

The mapping of Myhre's centres and central areas was based on the distribution of gold items, bronze and glass vessel imports. This was the material core of the study, and Myhre identified a number of material clusters along the south-western Norwegian coast. The 'chieftains' graves' were well-equipped graves selected on the basis of specific quantifiable criteria. As the material from these graves was included in the total material defining the central areas, the central areas give the best view of where the broader elite milieus were situated. However, an important issue with Myhre's definition of 'central areas' was the exclusion of hoard finds, representing 65% of the gold weight. In accordance with Myhre's analysis from 1978, the large gold hoards might instead be equivalents to the richest graves. With these changes, the empirical basis of Myhre's 'central areas' seems like a well-founded identification of centres. Gold items found after Myhre's analysis largely confirm the patterns he uncovered. Likewise, Ringstad's study of large mound centres confirmed the patterns of Myhre, with 75% of the large mounds occurring in areas with finds from Myhre's catalogue.

A problem with the 'central areas' was that the black shading on the map masked the complexity within these areas, ultimately reducing it to only one centre within one corresponding territory. While Myhre pointed out Lista and Klepp as the single centre points in Vest-Agder and Jæren, the high number of chieftains' graves in these regions rather suggests a situation with a number of centres (cf. Stylegar, 2001). In central areas with many centres, such as in Jæren and Sunnhordland, Myhre's 1978 map (Fig. 3.3) and Ringstad's map (Fig. 3.6) better illustrate the centre distribution.

The main problem with Myhre's study was its theoretical reliance on the chiefdom stage from the anthropological model of unilinear evolution (see Chapter 2). The 'defence areas', 'influence areas' and 'chiefdom territories' were all methodological constructions used to associate the material with the assumed chiefdom stage. In my review of the methods, I showed that Myhre's methodological choices were not neutral, but one of several possible outcomes. With regard to the 'defence areas', the distance criterion (20 or 25 km) used to group hill forts as defence areas was not used in a strict fashion. In addition, the functional interpretation of hill fort clusters as the defensive system of a region was a daring hypothesis, which is no longer an accepted interpretation. The points used as the centre of the 50 km circles were selected from among several possible points. As these points formed the basis for the midline polygons, the sketched 'chiefdom territories' were just one of several possible results.

As we have seen in the research history in Chapter 2, the chiefdom model was largely replaced in the late 1980s and 1990s by historical models. An example is Steuer's model, which focussed on labile social structures rather than on stabile territories: 'Regional chiefdom territories, as suggested for southern Norway in the immediate post-Roman period (…), are – in my opinion – not so obvious' (Steuer, 1989:p.102). In 1989, Myhre problematised the use of Theissen polygons to reconstruct territories (Näsman, 1991:p.323), and in later works, the territorial focus was toned down in favour of labile structures (Myhre, 1991, 2000, 2002, 2003). Today, few researchers would favour the territorial chiefdom model. Expressing the dominant view in recent research, Storli writes that the anthropological chiefdom model today 'has a limited value for studies of the Nordic Iron Age society' (Storli, 2006:p.126, my translation).

From this I conclude that the hypothetical territories of Myhre might be discarded. With Myhre's model stripped of its territorial implications, we might apply Myhre's and Ringstad's 'central areas' and centres as a valid foundation for further studies of western Norwegian centres. However, while their analysis only pointed out where the centres were located, my analysis will study the local context in detail. In order to broaden the basis of my analysis, in the next chapter I will examine recent research on Scandinavian centres to establish a broader list of applicable centre indicators.

Chapter 4. Defining the centre indicators

Myhre's and Ringstad's studies identified centres in western Norway, but did little more than this. Their material foundation was an undifferentiated mass of gold items, bronze and glass vessels, which were quantitatively analysed in order to trace centres. In relation to these rich finds, they also discussed the structure categories of hill forts and large burial mounds. I aim in my thesis to go beyond this identification, and to study the various centre localities in more detail. To achieve this aim, important object and structure categories must be defined and also qualitatively differentiated. In accordance with my centre model (Chapter 2), I need to distinguish which specific centre indicators might illuminate the elite milieus and central functions of centres. The centre indicators should shed light on leadership, hierarchies and alliance networks among elite milieus, and provide insights into central functions gathered at the centres. My selection of status objects and grand buildings applicable as centre indicators in western Norway is mainly based on a review of research on Scandinavian centres.

In Scandinavia, the interest in centres seems to have gained momentum from the late 1980s, and this topic has since played a vital role in early and late Iron Age research. In this chapter, I will review the morphology of a selection of the most important Scandinavian centres of the Roman and Migration periods, exploring which features characterised these centres. Among the reviewed Scandinavian localities are studies of the Danish centres of Himlingøje, Gudme and Sorte Muld and the Swedish centres of Högom, Helgö and Uppåkra (Fig. 4.1). From the late 1990s, these Scandinavian studies influenced a new phase of Norwegian centre research, focussing rather on specific qualitative categories and centre localities than on large chiefdom territories. Among these studies, the most illuminating example is Spangereid in Vest-Agder. Based on insights from these studies, a list of centre indicators appropriate for the western Norwegian context is presented. It is a priori assumed that many of the Scandinavian object categories might also be applicable within my study area, while some specifically Norwegian structure categories might be added to the list based mainly on the Spangereid study. This list of status objects and grand buildings will form the basis of my detailed discussion of these categories in Chapters 5 and 6.

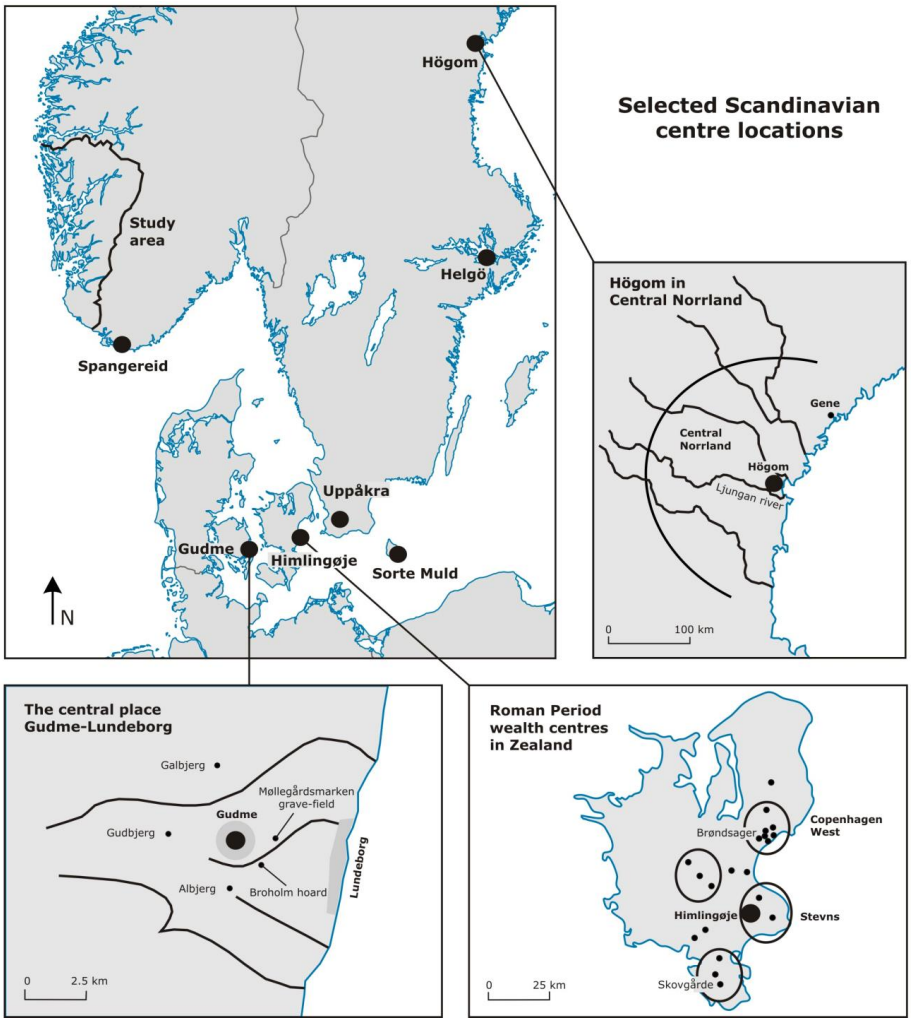


Fig. 4.1. Map of selected Scandinavian centre localities discussed in the text. The three maps of the areas surrounding Högom, Gudme-Lundeborg and Himglingøje show sites mentioned in the text. Based on Ramqvist, 1990, Figs. 1, 8, Hedeager, 2011, Fig. 6.2, Boye & Lund Hansen, 2011,Fig. 3. Apart for Himlingøje (1st rank), the ranks of the various centres in the Himlingøje network are not indicated on the Zealand map. Note that societies living along the Lungan river, next to Högom, were used as foundation for Myhre's model of the southwest Norwegian territories (cf. Fig. 3.1). See also Fig. 4.3 for a detailed map of the Spangereid centre. Helgö, Uppåkra and Sorte Muld are mentioned as examples in the text, but are not mapped in detail here.

4.1 Scandinavian research on centres

Roman period wealth centres in Zealand

The distribution of Roman imports in Scandinavia shows a dense concentration around Himlingøje and the Stevns region in south-eastern Zealand (Lund Hansen, 1987). From this distribution pattern Lund Hansen interpreted Himlingøje as a *wealth centre* from phase C1a to the middle of C2, with a peak in C1b. Her hypothesis was that Roman imports were channelled through this centre, which had a 'filter function' with regard to areas in the rest of Scandinavia (Lund Hansen, 1987, 1988). In order to test the hypothesis, she examined locally produced status objects in the grave material from Himlingøje and Zealand (Lund Hansen et al., 1995). Among these, special gold rings were interpreted as the insignia of elites at centres of various rank. The richest graves were characterised by Kolben arm rings, arm and finger rings of serpent head types, as well as silver cups and many Roman imports (Lund Hansen et al., 1995:pp.375–77, cf. Table 4.1). With a basis in the composition of graves in the Stevns region, she defined status graves numbered from 1 to 3, which in turn were used to identify a hierarchy of centres of first to third rank. In addition, other locally produced objects were recognised as elite insignia, including rosette and swastika fibulas with gilded silver foil, bronze spindle whorls and other gold rings (Lund Hansen et al., 1995:pp.212–41).

In the following decades, Ethelberg and Boye elaborated the hypothesis of how the Zealandish society was organised, based on studies of burial sites and settlements (Ethelberg et al., 2000; Boye et al., 2009). When dealing with the grave field Skovgårde, Ethelberg et al. (2000:pp.148ff) simplified Lund Hansen's criteria for status graves and centres of ranks 1–3 by basing them on Kolben arm rings, serpent head arm and finger rings. The serpent head finger rings were thought to reflect an object type controlled by the Himlingøje elite, and distributed to its allies. The lower part of the hierarchy was extended to include graves of status 4 with fewer prestige goods, and also simpler graves of status 5–6. Furthermore, a study of grave fields and settlements in Copenhagen West suggested a correlation between graves of status 3–5 and different types of houses (Boye et al., 2009:p.261). Using these criteria, Himlingøje

was interpreted as a centre of first rank with Kolben arm rings and serpent head arm rings; furthermore, Brøndsager in Copenhagen West was defined as a centre of third rank on the basis of a grave with serpent head finger ring and a Stuvehøj-type house, while the lowest centres of fourth rank had Ragnesminde-type houses (Table 4.1).

The Himlingøje model has met some critique. Firstly, it has been problematised that grave material was its primary foundation (Näsman, 1991:p.326, 2002:pp.355-–6). As an answer to the critique, Boye et al. (2009) integrated settlement material into their model (Table 4.1). Herschend also noted that the model did not take regional variation in burial practices into consideration, and he argues that a super-regional ranking system did not exist (Herschend, 2009:p.42). Furthermore, the nature of Himlingøje has been debated. While Lund Hansen et al. (1995) seem to have considered Himlingøje as the main centre in a wider network of centres, later studies have termed the network an 'early state formation' or even an 'empire' (Ethelberg et al., 2000; Storgaard, 2001, 2003; Boye et al., 2009). The latter has been regarded as exaggerations of Himlingøje's importance (Näsman, 2002:pp.355–6; Mogren, 2005:p.13; Herschend, 2009, note 37). Boye later clarified that the 'early state formation' did not imply the common denotations of the term 'state' (see definition in Boye et al. 2009:pp.256–7).

Table 4.1. Model of 'wealth centres' and social hierarchy in late Roman period Zealand. The evolution of the model through three publications is suggested, with suggested correlations with graves of different status and house types. See also Table 2.3 for correlations with Tacitus' social levels

Centre rank	**Lund Hansen et al., 1995**	**Ethelberg et al., 2000**	**Boye et al., 2009**
	Graves of status 1–3	**Graves of status 1–6**	**Corresponding house types**
1	Kolben arm ring	Kolben arm ring	
2	Serpent head arm ring + simple gold finger ring	Serpent head arm ring	
	Serpent head arm ring + serpent head finger ring		
	Serpent head arm/finger ring + set of 2 silver cups		
3	Serpent head finger ring and/or 1 silver cup	Serpent head finger ring	Stuvehøj houses
	>5 Roman imports		
(4)		Simple gold rings and/or Roman imports	Ragnesminde houses
		Local grave goods	Høje-Taastrup houses
		No grave goods	

The Migration period centre at Högom, Norrland

Based on excavations of burial sites and settlements, Högom was identified as a major centre in Norrland (e.g. Ramqvist, 1990, 1992, 2012; Lindqvist & Ramqvist, 1993). Ramqvist's analysis was largely influenced by the work of Myhre and Ringstad. Similarly to Himlingøje, Högom was first recognised as a centre on the basis of rich grave material and large mounds. The grave field at Högom had four large mounds (30–40 metres in diameter) and one of these revealed a richly furnished Migration period grave. In the layers beneath the mounds, three large buildings from the Roman period were found. At Gene in the same region, a large excavated settlement was interpreted as an aristocratic estate (Lindqvist & Ramqvist, 1993). Similarities between the Högom buildings and the Gene estate suggested that Högom had also been an important site in the Roman period, but that there had not been any use of monumental mounds and richly furnished graves before the Migration period. The new burial rituals were linked to Högom's status as the centre of a 'petty kingdom' (Table 2.4). While there was a political consolidation in the area during the Roman period, in the Migration period there was a further centralisation of power. According to Ramqvist (1990:p.20), the background for this centralisation was a conflict between the Mälar area and central Norrland for the economic resources in the northern areas.

Table 4.2. Material basis for Ramqvist's model of early Iron Age societies in Norrland (cf. Lindqvist & Ramqvist, 1993; Ramqvist, 2012)

	Social level	**Mound size**	**Weapons**	**Settlement**
1	Warrior king	>40 m		Aristocratic estates
2	Folkland leader	20–30 m	X	
	Aristocracy	20–30 m		
	Retinue	10–20 m	X	
3	Single farms and villages	0–10 m		Ordinary settlement

Although Ramqvist's model has been modified through decades of research, an attempt has been made to summarise it in Table 4.2. According to the model (1990, 2012), three major social levels were represented. The lowest social level had small mounds,

and was associated with ordinary settlements. Mounds of 20–30 metres in diameter and aristocratic estates reflected an aristocratic level, and associated retinues had mounds of 10–20 metres and weapons. Finally, monumental mounds over 30–40 metres were raised over warrior kings in central parts of the region. In addition, hill forts in the region were seen as defensive forts for settlement districts (Ramqvist, 1990:p.20).

The four major central places: Gudme, Sorte Muld, Uppåkra and Helgö

While the centres in Zealand and Norrland were mainly identified by rich graves, shown later to correlate also with aristocratic estates, a different type of centre became known as *central places*. The term 'central place' was introduced following a symposium in 1989, in order to describe a type of settlement previously unknown (Fabech, 1999b:pp.455–6). Näsman (2011:p.188–9) clarified that the term was introduced as a new concept without any association with the *Central Place Theory* of Christaller (1966). Metal detector surveys and settlement excavations revealed traces of settlements with many finds of precious metal and workshop material, showing long continuity. Näsman (2006:p.214) considers these sites a different type of centre to the older Himlingøje type, reflecting a new economic system. Among the most important central places so far identified, the following four localities are commonly listed: Gudme-Lundeborg on Funen, Sorte Muld on Bornholm, Uppåkra in Scania and Helgö along Lake Mälaren (Jørgensen, 2009:p.332). These were supra-regional central places, often with continuity from the late Roman period to the Viking Age.

Gudme is the prime example of a major central place (Fig. 4.1). The structure of the Gudme-Lundeborg complex was revealed by comprehensive metal-detecting surveys and settlement excavations (Thrane, 1987, 1988; Nielsen et al., 1994). Lundeborg was a coastal landing site with numerous finds of precious metal from workshops. The main village was located at Gudme, some kilometres from the coast. Situated between these two was the large grave field at Møllegårdsmarken, with rich late Roman period graves. At Gudme, several large gold hoards are known, as well as a sequence of large hall buildings. Sacral place names include the name Gudme ('gods' home'), encircled by hills with sacral names: Gudbjerg, Albjerg, Galbjerg (Thrane, 1992; Hedeager, 2001).

Based especially on Sorte Muld, Gudme and Uppåkra, attempts have been made to sort out which find categories and structures characterised supra-regional central places (Watt, 1991; Fabech & Ringtved, 1995; Helgesson 1998). The list of centre indicators from Gudme includes archaeological finds, archaeological structures, a favourable position in the cultural landscape and special place names, as well as signs of structural continuity to later periods. Simplifying the list to just 'archaeological finds' mainly from the Migration period (Ringtved, 1999, Fig. 5), and adding new material from the ongoing Uppåkra project (e.g. Hårdh & Larsson, 2007; Lenntorp & Hårdh, 2009), the object categories found at these four localities might be compared. All four sites have yielded finds of continental gold objects, gold bracteates, precious metal from workshops, finds of weapons, as well as gold-foil figures from the subsequent Merovingian period. However, Migration period sword mouthpieces of gold are, as far as I know, only found at Gudme. In terms of structures, only the inland site Uppåkra has no landing site nearby, and grave fields like Møllegårdsmarken are not found at Uppåkra or Sorte Muld. Among buildings of special interest are large halls at Gudme (Sørensen, 1994) and the small cult house at Uppåkra (Larsson & Lenntorp, 2004).

On the commonly used list of centre indicators presented by Fabech and Ringtvedt (1995), the 'archaeological finds' were mainly confined to rich settlement remains and hoard finds. As the main phase of the central places (Migration and Merovingian periods) coincides with a general lack of graves in southern Scandinavia, grave finds are not included among these categories. Helgesson (2002:p.20), however, suggested that the model should be expanded to also include rich grave finds (with, for example, weapons, imports and precious metal), in addition to other 'archaeological structures' (e.g. rune stones, large mounds and special monuments). Rundkvist (2011:pp.11–13) further questioned the use of later structures (such as Viking Age finds, medieval manors and church sites) as evidence of a 'structural continuity' to later periods. His view is that one should mainly deal with contemporary finds and structures, avoiding an a priori assumption of any continuity of power structures to later periods. While I agree with Rundkvist that the contemporary finds and structures should have key priority, archaeological and historical structures from later use phases on these sites might nevertheless have some relevance for our interpretations of the centres.

4.2 Recent centre research in Norway

> *One might wonder why Norwegian archaeology, with its large and rich Iron Age material, its fossil settlement material and written sources, has not proceeded from Bjørn Myhre's results and investigated some of the postulated central places and estate farms in his models. It is striking that the 'hunt' for central places has not yet started in western and southern Norway* (Fabech, 1999a:p.239, my translation).

As is expressed in Fabech's quoted article from 1999, quite a few years went by before the Scandinavian focus on wealth centres and central places reached Norway. Seven years later, Grimm (2006:pp.209–10) observed a similar research situation: 'Today, the highly impressive southern Scandinavian central place research is methodologically well advanced, but it seems that Norway no longer plays any prominent role in the Scandinavian discourse.' However, while it is clear that the recent research on centres has been less intensive in Norway than in Denmark and Sweden, since the late 1990s there have in fact been a number of Norwegian studies focussing on early Iron Age centres. Some could mainly be seen as further developments of the research of Myhre, while others brought aspects of the wider Scandinavian centre research into a Norwegian context. In the following, I will review some approaches to Norwegian centres since the turn of the millennium. This includes firstly the studies of Solberg and Kristoffersen, using specific status-laden find categories to identify centres and elite milieus in the Roman and Migration periods. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, there has been a shift in research focus from Myhre's large territories to a focus rather on the various single centres. Here, this shift is illustrated with Stylegar's study of centres in Vest-Agder and his important case study of the centre Spangereid.

Roman period serpent head rings and status weapons

While the studies of Myhre and Ringstad focussed on the Migration period, Solberg (2000) carried out a study of late Roman period centres. Her study of the Norwegian centres was based on results from research on the Himlingøje and Illerup complexes (Lund Hansen et al., 1995; Ilkjær, 1997). As the main centre indicators, Solberg focussed on the distribution of neck and arm rings of gold in general, specifically arm and finger rings of serpent head types known from Himlingøje, as well as weapon gear

characteristic of the officer levels in the Illerup A bog offering (Solberg, 2000:p.94, cf. the hierarchies in Table 2.3). She also discussed clusters of imports, weapon graves, boathouses, hill forts and court sites. Status rings and status weapons, however, seem to have been used as the main centre indicators in this study, reflecting the presence of elite leaders. A summary of the results of Solberg's study is shown in Table 4.3.

The earliest identified centres were found in eastern Norway in phase B2, a region also producing centres in phases C1b–C2. These centres were considered to be of third rank, and Solberg suggested that Danish centres on Zealand and Jutland were their superior centres of higher rank. In western Norway, Solberg found centres of first to third rank from phases C1b to C2 and also centres of second rank in C3. The Himlingøje model focussed on phases C1b–C2. My study area seems to be the most compatible with the model, with centres of all three ranks represented (cf. Reiersen, 2010, 2011a). Without going into details on Solberg's discussion of the centres in my study area, I will briefly comment on the Bjoafjord centre. As the serpent head arm ring from Innbjoa (of second rank) is not mentioned, it was considered a part of a Sunnhordland centre of third rank, together with Rosendal (with serpent head finger ring). It might also be observed that some major centres in eastern, central and northern Norway are lacking in this model, although the regions were discussed in the text. These regions all have concentrations of important object and structure categories. However, as they lack the status gold rings – Solberg's main centre indicator – they are not explicitly termed 'centres'.

Table 4.3. Centres of ranks 1–3 in Norway throughout the Roman period, according to Solberg (2000:p.122). The list sums up a broader discussion. As arm rings were only found in western Norway, centres of rank 1–2 were only identified there. Although important grave finds and sites in central and northern Norway were discussed, these were not explicitly termed 'centres'

Rank	B2	C1b–C2			C3
1	Eastern Zealand (DK)		Jutland (DK)	**Avaldsnes**	
2	↑	↑	↑	Jæren **(Hove)** Sogn (Sogndal)	Sunnmøre Nordmøre Sogn (Vik)
3	South Østfold	Bringsvær/Fjære	Grenland Vestfold ↑ Kongsberg Ringerike	Sunnhordland **(Bjoafjord/Rosendal)**	
	Eastern Norway			Western Norway	

Animal style, elite milieus and goldsmiths

Another study relevant for the discussion of how specific categories relate to centres is Kristoffersen's (2000) analysis of objects decorated with Migration period animal style. Within her study area in southern and western Norway, she analysed 93 finds with 137 objects decorated in Nydam style and Salin's style I. The main category was relief brooches, but the material also included other brooches, buttons and clasps, sword parts and fittings for glass beakers. Myhre's models (1987a, 1991) provided a basis for her analysis of the political context. Kristoffersen adopted his models, with his later modifications focussing more on leaders and retinues and less on territories (Kristoffersen, 2000:pp.38–9, cf. Steuer, 1989; Myhre, 1991). Kristoffersen's main hypothesis was that the production of objects with animal style was controlled by elite milieus, i.e. the 'political leaders' and 'wealthy families' (2000:pp.143–7).

Kristoffersen found major concentrations of animal style in Jæren and Vest-Agder, with minor clusters in areas like Etne, Borgundøy (i.e. Bjoafjord) and Voss (Kristoffersen, 2000:pp.173–96, 2002a:p.145). She then compared the distribution of animal style-decorated objects with quantitative and qualitative features in weapon graves and gold finds. Kristoffersen found that concentrations and special finds of these categories correlated with animal style in Vest-Agder and Rogaland, and also in areas such as Etne, Borgundøy (Bjoafjord) and Voss (Kristoffersen, 2002a:pp.158–9).

In southern and western Norway, the animal style revealed greater regional variation than elsewhere in Scandinavia. Kristoffersen identified local goldsmith traditions in Jæren, Vest-Agder, Sogn and to some extent in Vestfold, while local traits were less visible in the Hordaland finds. Finds from the area around Tinghaug in Jæren indicated a production centre. Similarities in the styles within areas such as Jæren were thought to originate in processes of elite contacts and alliances, where variations in style were used intentionally to signify bonds between the elite milieus. Recently, Kristoffersen has continued the search for goldsmith milieus in Rogaland. Goldsmiths seem to have been associated for example with centres like Lye and Tinghaug (Kristoffersen, 2012; Kristoffersen et al., 2014), and recently a close link was identified between goldsmiths and the production of special pottery: bucket-shaped pots (Fredriksen et al., 2014).

From territories to single centres

In the early 2000s, a few studies challenged Myhre's (1987a) widely accepted model of chiefdom territories in the Migration period. The criticism was partly based on inspiration from the Scandinavian centre discource, and partly on the less territory-based social models from historical sources then gaining popularity (see Chapters 2 and 3). Many critical points were recognised in two studies remapping find categories firstly from Myhre's Lista territory – Vest-Agder county (Stylegar, 2001), and secondly from the centre core of Myhre's Jæren territory: Klepp municipality (M. Olsen, 2003). Both these studies suggested a pattern of multiple sites identified as potential centres, rather than the model with large territorial units formed around only one major centre.

Stylegar's (2001) study of Vest-Agder provided the most extensive evidence of this new 'polycentric' model. In Vest-Agder, he remapped the material from this county using other methods than that of Myhre. Plotting the finds and structures as single points, and also adding other find categories, Stylegar revealed an alternative distributional pattern (Fig. 4.2). Among the centre indicators used by Stylegar in this study were continental imports of bronze and glass, gold and silver finds grouped by quality, objects decorated with animal style, large mounds > 25 metres in diameter, hill forts and sacral place names. Instead of seeing Vest-Agder as one territorial chiefdom unit with Lista as the sole centre, Stylegar interpreted the distribution map as a region divided into a number of smaller central places or manorial estates. Inspired by Skre's (1998) study of Romerike in eastern Norway, Stylegar interpreted the centres as manors consisting of major farms and dependent farms. These manors were seen as a major building block of Migration period society, as they were the resource basis of centres. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, this view has been integrated into my understanding of the economic basis of centres. Stylegar concluded (2001:p.63, my translation):

> *With regard to southernmost Norway, there seem to be no empirical foundations to support the interpretation of an almighty 'central committee' at Lista; a chieftain or group of chieftains who, throughout a period of several hundred years, by force upheld their will and power from the high mountains in the north to the North Sea in the south. It is further my view that an examination of the archaeological material in other coastal regions in Norway would lead to similar results*.

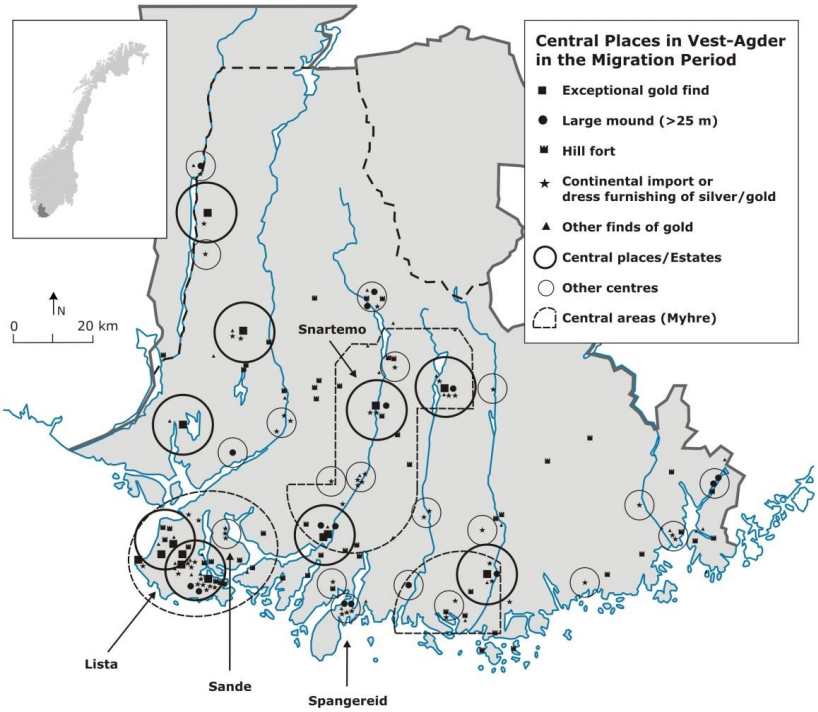


Fig. 4.2. Map of centres in Vest-Agder in the Migration period. The three large central areas identified by Myhre are here compared to the situation of many smaller centres suggested by Stylegar's alternative analysis. A few centre localities mentioned in the text are indicated with name. Map modified after Stylegar (2001), with additions from Myhre (1987a, Fig. 7) and Lund (2008).

The dissolution of territories into a polycentric model of single centres led to a number of studies of defined centre localities. Besides Myhre's (1991) discussion of his major centre at Lista, other centre localities in Vest-Agder that have later been discussed include Snartemo/Hægebostad (Stylegar, 1998; Rolfsen & Stylegar, 2003), Spangereid (Stylegar & Grimm, 2005) and Sande (Lund, 2008). The study of Spangereid might stand as a prominent example of the shift in research focus to single centres (Fig. 4.3). At Spangereid, Stylegar and Grimm (2005) found a high concentration of various centre indicators. The long list of early Iron Age finds includes 10 richly furnished graves (gold, silver, glass or bronze), five large burial mounds (> 20 metres in diameter), structures like a court site, seven large boathouses, several hill forts, a large 'hall' building of at least 45 x 8 metres, special place names, a unique canal structure and a possible harbour. Several finds and structures also speak of long structural

continuity, including important late Iron Age finds and medieval structures. In Myhre's (1987a) model, Spangereid was not included in the Vest-Agder 'central areas', and in Stylegar's (2001) regional study, it was considered only a minor centre. The in-depth study of this site seems to testifiy the validity of the polycentric model, indicating that even seemingly 'minor' centres might provide extensive evidence of elite milieus and central functions when the local context is further explored.

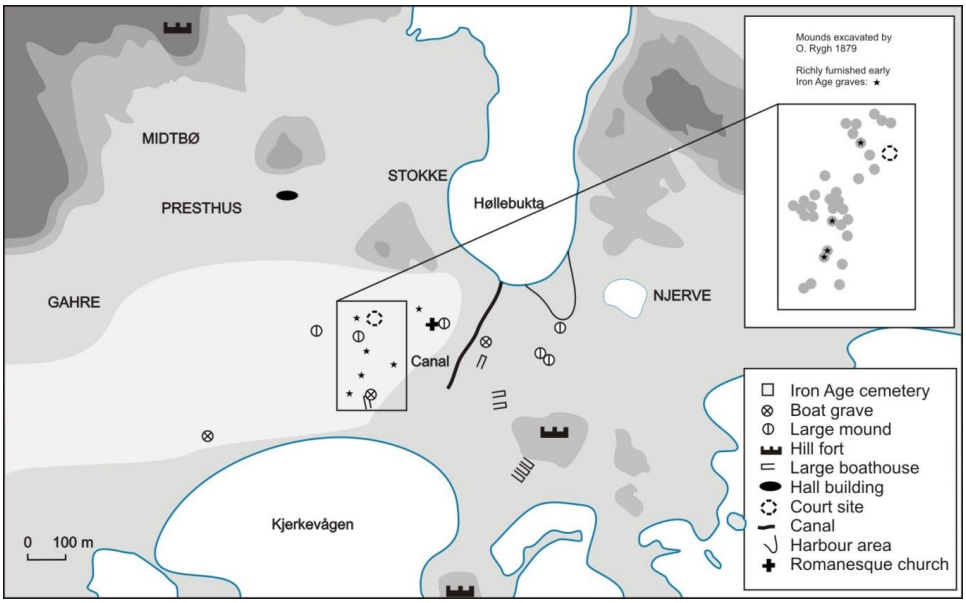


Fig. 4.3. Map of the centre Spangereid Modified after Stylegar, 2006b.

The Spangereid study was an important contribution introducing Norwegian centres into the Scandinavian centre research. My own study is largely inspired by the study of Spangereid, and the trend of stepping backwards from a territory scale, focussing rather on the local scale of centre localities. As we have seen, as early as 1978, Myhre identified multiple smaller centres in Jæren. Following the new research shift towards single centres, Myhre studied some of these localities in detail. This includes a rather early study of Hove and more recent studies of Lye and various centres in Hå (Myhre, 1997a, 2007, 2013). To this might be added my studies of Avaldsnes, Bjoafjord and Hove (Reiersen, 2010, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a), as well as recent research projects at Avaldsnes, Hove and Tinghaug (Skre, 2012; Bjørdal, 2014; Kristoffersen et al., 2014).

4.3 Centre indicators in a western Norwegian context

My review of centre research introduced various approaches to centres in Scandinavia and Norway. These studies all have some relevance for my approach, either with regard to which status objects might occur at Scandinavian centres of the Roman and Migration periods (Himlingøje, Gudme, Helgö) or which grand buildings one should specifically expect at a centre along the south-west Norwegian coast (Spangereid). The Himlingøje model suggests that elite insignia might be used to reconstruct elite hierarchies and alliances, and the Gudme central place shows that central functions might have been spread over the landscape. The Vest-Agder and Spangereid studies have special relevance, located close to the study area and with similar material. Combining both some general Scandinavian and specific Norwegian categories, the Vest-Agder studies showed that such categories might be used as centre indicators at Norwegian centres. The western Norwegian centres share features with both wealth centres and central places. As with wealth centres, the grave material is important, and similarly to the central places, objects and structures are spread over the landscape.

Based on these studies, below I present a list of centre indicators that might be applied to the western Norwegian context (Table 4.4). I separate this material into different types according to their nature and dating. I wish to distinguish between object categories from the late Roman and Migration periods, and to include categories associated with both genders, and from various find contexts. The basic inspiration is Fabech and Ringtved's (1995) influential list of centre indicators. My status objects and grand buildings correspond to their archaeological finds and structures, and sacral place names are also included. As my main focus is the Roman and Migration period material, I have chosen not to include their point 'structural continuity' in my list. Although important, the 'position in the cultural landscape' is not included in the list.

For the late Roman period, I mainly apply Lund Hansen et al.'s (1995) elite insignia as centre indicators. Solberg's (2000) study and adaptation of these criteria has shown that serpent head rings and other special arm and finger rings might be used as Norwegian centre indicators. Likewise, female elite insignia from Himlingøje, like the gilded rosette and swastika fibulas and bronze spindle whorls, might also be applied as

centre indicators (cf. Reiersen, 2011a). In accordance with Solberg, weapon gear characteristic of the officer levels found in Illerup A is also added as a possible indicator of a military organisation in retinues. This includes shield bosses of bronze or silver, and sword gear of bronze, silver or gilded metal (Grimm, 2008). In addition, the categories of gold medallions and medallion imitations are added, as well as Roman coins. Gold coins were the most status-laden, but silver and bronze coins are also rare in Norway. In Illerup A, silver coins were associated with officers (Bursche, 2011).

A similar selection of object categories might be included among the status objects of the Migration period. At major central places like Gudme, arm or neck rings of gold, gold bracteates and gold sword mouthpieces were among the most splendid object categories. Skre's (1998) study of the Romerike region in eastern Norway confirms that these were also status objects in Norwegian areas. I have added large gilded silver rings to the rings. In a similar manner to the Roman period weapons, sword fittings of silver and bronze might be listed alongside gold mouthpieces as a male category. As a female status object category, gilded brooches and other objects decorated in animal style are included (Kristoffersen, 2000). Among the more general categories covering both the periods are concentrations of weapon graves, imported vessels of glass or bronze, gold hoards of various sizes and simple gold finger rings primarily from graves.

While finds from metal detector surveys have been of vital importance in identifying the Danish central places, the use of detectors is more restricted in Norway and Sweden (Rundkvist, 2011; Rasmussen, 2014). This poses methodological and representative problems, making it harder to identify centres from stray finds. In recent years, there has been an increased use of metal detectors in my study area, leading to new finds of gold items, coins and brooches. Although metal detecting remains controversial among parts of the archaeological research community in Norway, used with caution, this method is ideal for identifying and investigating metal-rich settlements. A study from the centre at Missingen in Østfold has underlined the method's potential in Norway (Maixner, 2015). In my study area, the most notable site uncovered by metal detectorists in recent years is a concentration of Iron Age finds at the strategic point of Tungenes, which were probably an important site in the centre Randaberg (Fig. 1.4).

We then have the structure categories, consisting mainly of grand buildings that might be associated with the functions of centres. At Scandinavian centres in Zealand and at Gudme, Högom and Spangereid, exceptionally large buildings are associated with elite settlements and halls, interpreted as the sociopolitical heart of the centre. The large settlement material in Rogaland seems well fitted to examine the presence of buildings with comparable dimensions and importance. In a similar manner, large mounds have been associated with elite settlements, and have therefore been used as a centre indicator, for example, in western Norway, in Vest-Agder and in Norrland (Ringstad, 1992; Stylegar & Grimm, 2005; Ramqvist, 2012). Although many large mounds might stem from the periods in question, it is problematic that few of these are dated.

Hill forts and large boathouses have been linked to centres on a regional scale, as well as to centre localities (Myhre, 1987a; Stylegar, 2001; Stylegar & Grimm, 2005). Both these categories are commonly associated with military functions, which will be my working hypothesis. The court sites is a category mainly found in Norway. As we have seen at Spangereid, these are sometimes found at centres (Stylegar & Grimm, 2005). A recent consensus suggests that the court sites might be associated especially with judicial functions, as thing sites (e.g. Storli, 2010; Grimm, 2010; Brink et al., 2011). As regards the possibility of ritual functions at centres, I will focus on sacral place names, found, for example, at Helgö, Gudme and at Spangereid. These place names are discussed in relation to other categories associated with cult and religion.

This list of centre indicators provides us with a toolbox both for how to identify and to interpret the western Norwegian centres. Some of the categories occur both outside centres and in direct relation to centres. Together they have the potential to allow us further insights into the organisation of centres than the simpler wealth criteria of Myhre and Ringstad could do. In accordance with my basic model of centres, the available centre indicators preserved might be related to elite milieus and central functions. In the following chapters, Chapter 5 and 6, a range of different categories of status objects, grand buildings and sacral place names will be further examined in order to shed light on elite milieus and central functions. The various centre indicators will then be mapped in the local context of 12 selected centre localities in Chapter 7.

Table 4.4. List of western Norwegian centre indicators for early Iron Age centres: status objects, grand buildings and sacral place names

Western Norwegian centre indicators
Status objects
Late Roman period
Serpent head rings / other status arm/finger rings
Roman gold medallions / imitations / coins
Status fibulae / spindle whorls of bronze
Sword fittings / shield bosses of bronze/silver
Migration period
Arm/neck rings of gold/gilded silver
Gold bracteates
Gilded brooches / other objects with animal style
Sword fittings / mountings of gold/silver/bronze
Both periods
Continental vessels of glass/bronze
Gold hoards, stray finds of payment gold / ingots
Simple finger rings of gold
Concentrations of weapon graves
Grand buildings
Both periods
Large longhouses and hall buildings
Large burial mounds
Large boathouses
Hill forts
Court sites
Onomastic sources
Sacral place names

Chapter 5. Status objects of the elite milieus

In this chapter, most of the material categories listed as 'status objects' are examined. The status objects are seen as important features of the centres, and I wish to bring these artefact categories to the forefront of the analysis. These small and portable centre indicators were closely associated with the human actors in the elite milieus. Most of the categories of status objects were carried on the body as parts of the dress, visible to all seeing its carrier. In certain cases, there seems to have been such a close link between the carried object and the individuals carrying it that it seems fitting to speak of objects as part of a 'distributed personhood' (cf. Olsen, 2010:pp.135–6), with object and human as an inseparable whole. With this in mind, the aim of this chapter is to investigate how status objects might shed light on the organisation among elite milieus, both within these milieus and in interaction between the elite milieus in the study area.

When the model of centre organisation was assembled, some theoretical thoughts associated with material agency and symmetrical archaeology were briefly mentioned. Here, objects were viewed as potential agents contributing with effective agency in cooperation with people. Olsen (2010:p.35) interpreted the objects' potential for agency as resting in their 'thingly qualities', that is, 'their capacities to make a difference through the unique and complementary qualities they have to offer to our shared world'. The particular 'thingly qualities' making important differences in the lives of early Iron Age elites were the aesthetic qualities offered by objects made by skilled artisans using raw materials with a shiny effect. These shiny materials, made available through contact with the Roman world, became a matter of vital importance for the elites. Being a member of the elite seems to have implied an engagement in, and merging with, status objects. In a very immediate way, shiny rings and pendants, brooches, weapons and drinking vessels separated the elites from other people with less imposing objects. Often, the wanted effect seems to have been a wish to make objects appear golden, as Magnus (2001:p.279) observed for the relief brooches:

> *'All that glitters is not gold', says an old proverb of unknown origin. But the grand relief brooches from the Migration period were meant to look as if they were made of pure gold. Whether made of silver or a copper alloy they are embellished with a thick coating of gold on the front.*

How, then, might the shiny status objects provide an insight into elite organisation? It seems plausible that status objects might have been associated with social status and elite lifestyle, and that attaining such objects could have been part of a strategy to achieve elite status. Even if not all members of the elites were buried with such objects, or indeed needed to be, they probably interacted with them in life as part of their elite lifestyle. The categories that are still present in our archaeological record have the potential to shed light on various aspects of elite organisation. This includes aspects such as social hierarchies and the display of status symbols, shifting elite contacts and alliances, socio-economic processes such as gift exchange, the occurrence of regional practices in rituals, object tastes or workshop traditions, and the identification of ritual leaders and military leaders, as well as the associated retinue organisation.

The majority of status object categories introduced in Chapter 4 as part of the centre indicators are discussed here. This includes status rings of gold, coins, medallions and bracteates, imported vessels mostly of Roman origin, female elite dress accessories such as bronze spindle whorls and status brooches, and splendid weapon gear associated with elite warriors. All these categories will be put into interpretative frameworks to suggest potential ways in which the status objects might illuminate elite organisation. If possible, the categories are followed chronologically through phases C1b–D2b. In some cases, I will focus on material from the establishment phases in C1b–C2. This is partly because I consider this initial phase to be particularly important, and partly because Migration period categories have been widely discussed by others.

Although the material presentation is largely based on previous research dealing with these categories, special objects in each category have also been studied physically by the author. The status objects are not at all a homogenous group of artefacts. Because of the great variation with regard to the functions, meanings and visual effects of the different material categories, they are examined and discussed individually and not by any set standard. I have chosen to focus on interpretive frameworks that might be interesting for the particular categories discussed, and which might best illuminate the elite milieus in my study area. The relations between status objects and elite milieus suggested in this chapter are used in Chapter 7 to interpret specific centre localities.

5.1 Status rings of gold

Gold rings of high quality and large sizes were certainly among the clearest visual markers of high social status in the Roman and Migration periods. Worn around the neck or the arm, the largest gold rings seem to be closely associated with elite leaders. The largest early Iron Age neck ring found in Norway, from Avaldsnes, weighed 590 grams. Here, the importance of the ring as a status marker was underlined by the huge amount of gold the owner was willing to invest in one object. Apart from neck and arm rings, large finger rings played a special role for the elite milieus of the late Roman period. In the Migration period, finger rings were of simpler types, and in my study area only a few neck rings from this period might justly be considered status rings. The main focus of this subchapter is thus the status rings of the late Roman period.

A special group of gold rings that has been at the forefront of Roman period research is the finger, arm and neck rings of the so-called serpent head type. These rings have plates with terminals in the form of stylised heads, pear-shaped and sometimes with eyes, resembling the heads of serpents or birds. I will here examine the Norwegian rings of this and related types, with a main focus on western Norway. The ring types are listed in Table 5.1 in accordance with Andersson's work (1993a, 1993b, 1995), with finger ring types after Beckmann (1969; B = Beckmann), and arm and neck ring types after Hildebrand (1874; serpent head types A–C) and Rygh (1885; R = Rygh).

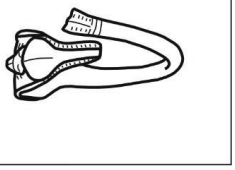
Two serpent head arm rings and 11 finger rings of serpent head types B39–42 are known in Norway, as well as at least one lost finger ring probably of type B39. Based on associations with serpent head finger or arm rings in grave contexts, finger rings of types B17–18 are included here, as well as other arm and neck rings listed as types R300–301 by Andersson (1995:pp.94–7). This includes five finger rings of type B18, five of type B17, one neck ring of type R300 and five arm rings of types R300–301. The latter arm rings have a later date than most of the other rings, but they are listed here to show that arm rings occurred mainly in western Norway in the Roman period.

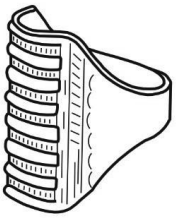
First of all, we have the rings from phases C1b–C2 (Figs. 5.1 to 5.3). Among these, the B39 rings are considered 'classical' serpent head finger rings. The only Norwegian

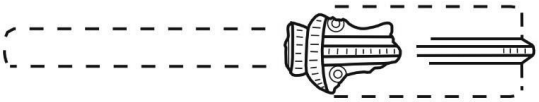
finger rings of types 39a and 39b were found in Naustdal and Kvinnherad, respectively. Type 39c rings with a diagonal plate on the back were found at Karmøy and Efteløt, while rings with a straight plate were found at Bringsvær and Kjorstad. A lost 'pretty snake finger ring' (Norw. 'smuk slangefingerring af guld') is documented from Sola (Helliesen, 1901:p.83). The description probably refers to a B39 ring with naturalistic terminals. Serpent head finger rings of types B40–42 are smaller than the B39 rings. Of type 40 rings, one was found in Vik, one in Løddesøl and two in Veien. The ring from Vik was found together with two gilded silver arm rings (Rygh, 1885, Fig. 302), similar to the serpent head arm rings. The only B42 ring comes from Skien in Telemark.

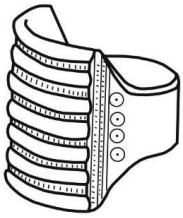
Table 5.1. List of selected types of Roman period gold rings in Norway, listed in geographical order from the north. Rings from my study area in grey

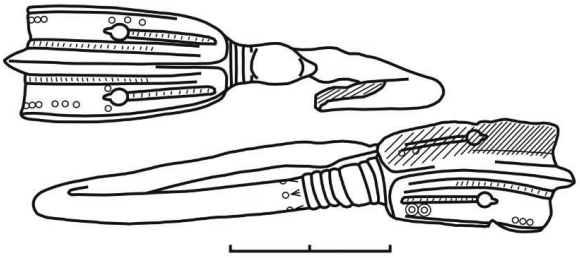
Find spot	**Ring type**	**Mus. no.**
Homnes, Steinkjer, Nord-Trøndelag	Finger ring B18	Lost
Myr, Verdal, Nord-Trøndelag	Finger ring B17b var. III	T 332
Bremsnes, Bremsnes, Møre og Romsdal	Arm ring R301	NM 8507
Haram, Haram, Møre og Romsdal	Arm ring R301	B 12048
Osnes, Ulstein, Møre og Romsdal	Finger ring B17b var. IV	B 1902
Naustdal, Naustdal, Sogn og Fjordane	Finger ring B39a	B 2161
Stadheim, Vik, Sogn og Fjordane	Finger ring B40	C 6101
Rutlin, Sogndal, Sogn og Fjordane	Arm ring R300–301?	B 8452
'Bergens stift', Western Norway	Arm ring R300	NM 6665
Nes, Kvinnherad, Hordaland	Finger ring B39b (fragment)	B 5931
Innbjoa, Vindafjord, Rogaland	Serpent head arm ring type B? (fragment); Finger ring B18	B 4045
Avaldsnes, Karmøy, Rogaland	Neck ring R300; Finger ring B18	C718, B614
Kolstø, Karmøy, Rogaland	Finger ring B39c	B 2774
Hove, Sandnes, Rogaland	Serpent head arm ring type C (fragments); Finger ring B18	C 1106–07, C 1101
Joa, Sola, Rogaland	'Pretty snake finger ring' (B39?)	Lost
Erga, Klepp, Rogaland	Finger ring B17b var. III	S 1911
Eikeland, Lund, Rogaland	Arm ring R300	C 4563
Bringsvær, Grimstad, Aust-Agder	Finger ring B39c	C 7331
Løddesøl, Øyestad, Aust-Agder	Finger ring B40	AAKS new
Lille Gjerpen, Skien, Telemark	Finger ring B42 (copy)	C 11727
Kjorstad, Sør-Fron, Oppland	Finger ring B39c; Finger ring B18; Finger ring B17b var. I	C 4163–65
Efteløt Kirke, Efteløt, Buskerud	Finger ring B39c	C 779
Veien, Norderhov, Buskerud	Finger ring B40; Finger ring B40 (fragment)	C 2878–79
Nordre Rør, Rygge, Østfold	Finger ring B17b var. III	C 12226

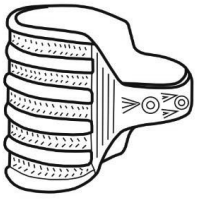


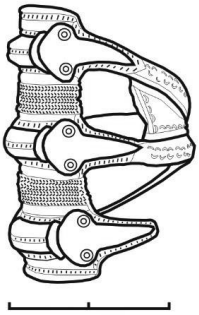












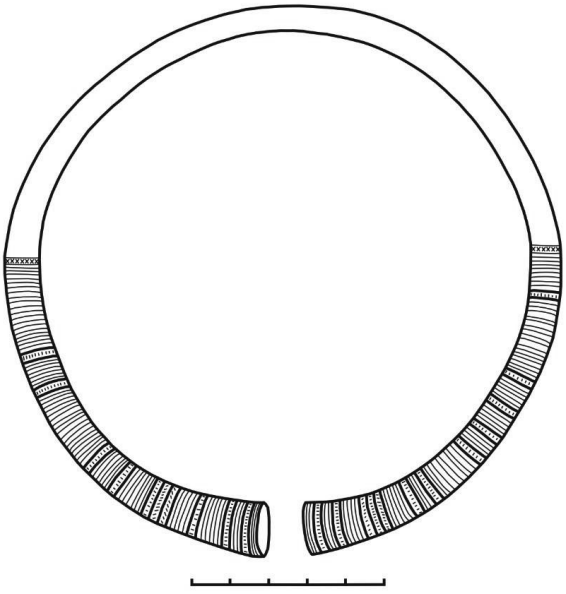


Fig. 5.1. Gold rings of serpent head types and related types in the study area. Finger ring B39b (fragment) from Nes, Kvinnherad; Finger ring B18 and serpent head arm ring type B? (fragment) from Innbjoa, Vindafjord; Finger ring B18 and serpent head arm ring type C (fragments) from Hove, Finger ring B18 and neck ring type R300 from Avaldsnes, Karmøy, as well as finger ring B39c from Kolstø, Karmøy. Note that three of the serpent head rings in my study area are fragmented (see discussion below).

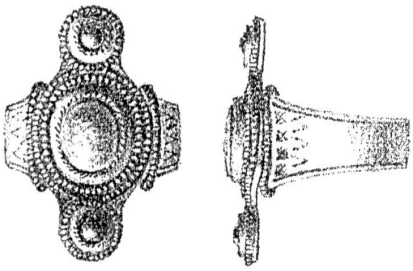


Fig. 5.2. The finger ring B17 var. III from Erga, Klepp. After Helliesen, 1896.

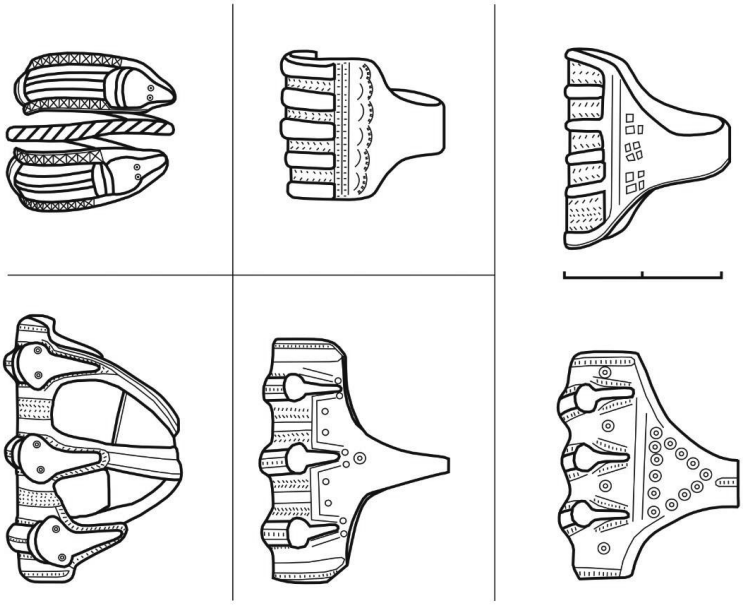


Fig. 5.3. Gold finger rings of types B39 and B18 from other parts of Norway. Finger ring B39a from Naustdal, Naustdal (stray find); Finger ring B18 from Homnes, Steinkjer (stray find); Finger ring B39c from Efteløt, Efteløt; Finger ring B39c from Bringsvær, Grimstad; Finger ring B18 and finger ring B39c from Kjorstad, Sør-Fron.

Serpent head arm rings are known solely from Innbjoa and Hove, both in Rogaland. The Hove ring is of type C, consisting of two fragments (151.35 g, but see below), with parts of the ring missing. Only a small fragment (2.025 g) is known of the Innbjoa ring. Shetelig (1912a:p.60) considered it to be type A or B, and Bøe (1926:p.52, no. 243) type B. The peculiar treatments of the fragmented Hove and Innbjoa serpent head arm rings are discussed in more detail in a case study below. Interestingly, both arm rings occur together with finger rings of type B18. Despite lacking the serpent head terminals, Bøe (1926:p.74) and Lund Hansen et al. (1995) considered this type of finger ring to be closely related to the serpent head type. Another B18 ring was found in the Avaldsnes I grave, in combination with a very heavy neck ring of type R300. The association between B18 rings and arm or neck rings is confined to Rogaland.

Two other B18 rings are known in Norway, one stray find from Steinkjer in Nord-Trøndelag (Marstrander, 1983, pl. XIX, Figs. 9-10), and one found together with a B39c ring and a B17 (var. I) ring in a rich double grave from Kjorstad in Oppland (Straume, 1999, Abb. 7). B17 rings are large finger rings with one to three stones inlaid. The four other B17 rings come from Verdal, Klepp and Rygge (var. III) and one from Ulstein (var. IV). While B17 rings var. I and III occur in C1b and C2, the var. IV rings seem to belong to phase C3 (Andersson, 1993b:p.65). From phase C3, five arm rings of types R300–301 are known. These occur in graves along the coast of western Norway from Bremsnes in the north to Lund in the south. It is possible that a coiled neck ring from Godøy should also be added to the list (cf. Kyhlberg, 1986:p.67).

While all known Roman period gold arm rings come from western Norway, none are known from eastern Norway. In the Migration period, the pattern is reversed, with many neck or arm rings in eastern Norway and few in western Norway (Bøe, 1922; Appendix II). Neck rings are found at two sites in the study area (Fig. 5.4). Both are hoard finds and come from areas that also had arm rings in the Roman period. The neck ring from Vasshus, Lund is among the largest in Norway, weighing 361 grams (Rygh, 1885, Fig. 297). The other neck ring from Austrått in the Hove centre is of gilded silver, type R299. Parts of two similar neck rings were found at the hoard site, and they are all probably of Migration period date (Myhre, 1997a; Martens, 2011:pp.188–190).

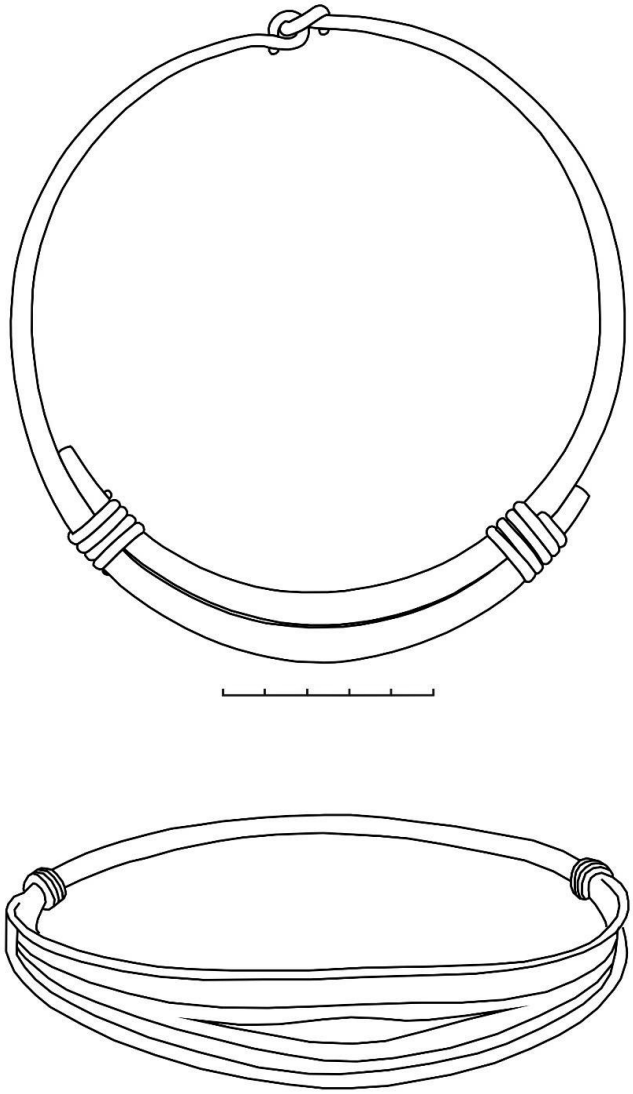


Fig. 5.4. Gold or gilded Migration period neck rings from the study area. On the top, the golden neck ring from Vasshus, Lund, and at the bottom, the preserved gilded silver neck ring from Austrått, Sandnes.

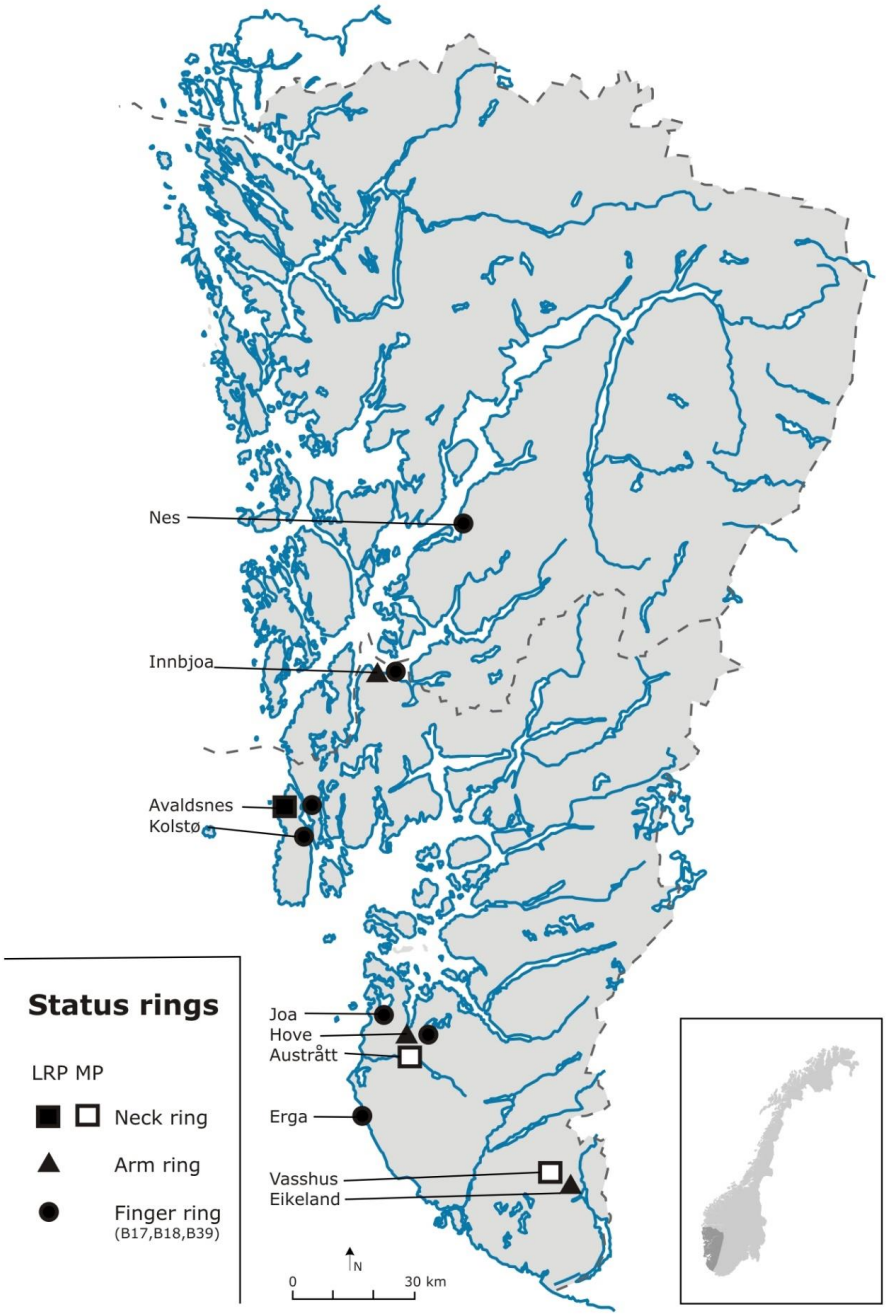


Fig. 5.5. Map of status rings in Hordaland and Rogaland.

In my study area, the two arm rings and one finger ring of the serpent head type have been treated in a manner that deserves special attention. Similarly to the cremation rite for weapon graves, the rings were ritually destroyed in the cremation ritual. This practice is relatively rare in Scandinavian graves. Fragmented serpent head arm rings are known from a grave in Katajamäki, Finland and from a stray find at the large cremation grave field in Møllegårdsmarken, Denmark (Europaeus, 1914; Thrane, 1992:pp.315–6). The rings in my study area, and those in Katajamäki and Møllegårdsmarken, were both cut and melted. In addition, cut fragments of serpent head arm rings are known from the Thorsbjerg offering, Germany, and Kolben rings with cut marks were found in the Illerup A offering, Denmark (Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær, 1996; Blankenfeldt, 2013). Instead of being burnt, these were sunken in water.

A visual analysis of the Hove arm ring was conducted by the author, illuminating the process of destruction (cf. Fig. 7.27). It is assumed that the arm ring was first cut into two large fragments, as the cut marks at the end of these fragments had a similar angle and size. The two cut marks were melted, indicating that the ring fragments were afterwards burnt on the pyre. On both of the large ring fragments, parts of the gold had bubbles and other traces of melting, and both fragments had melted silver on top of the gold. Gold melts at 1050 °C and silver at 950 °C, which would indicate a pyre temperature well above 1000 °C. The silver probably originates from another object from the burial, probably a fibula. If this was the case, the ring parts were located on the upper part of the corpse on the pyre. There were cracks on burnt areas of the ring, stemming from stress in the metal after bending. Thus, at some time after the burning, the two ring fragments were bent to appear as two ‘closed’ rings. I find it likely that this happened just after the ring was found in 1843. We know that two different people bought the fragments (Reiersen, 2013a), and it is possible that the bending was done by the vendor hoping to get a higher prize for two rings instead of one fragmented. Due to unequal bending of the two fragments, the two plates on the arm ring appear to be of different length, but this is not the case. In 2009, a small fragment of gold was uncovered in the area where the grave was found. By comparison with the arm ring fragments, it is likely that this is the melted-off end of the largest ring half. If the weight of the fragment (2.3 g) is added to the ring, the total weight is 153.65 grams.

Although gold is often found in graves, melted gold is rare. While personal belongings were burnt on the pyre, this was seldom done with gold (Bøe, 1926:pp.80–1). According to Bøe, this indicates that gold was perceived as something more than personal belongings. In Norway, melted gold is found only in a few Roman period graves, with no certain Migration period instances (Table 5.2). In phases C1b–C2, the only certain dated graves with melted gold are the three graves with fragmented serpent head rings. The fact that the three rings were ritually destroyed by cutting, before joining their owners on the funeral pyre, underlines the special role attributed to serpent head rings in my study area. The association between the Hove and Innbjoa graves, which both had serpent head arm rings and B18 finger rings, is confirmed by this special, shared ritual practice. This observation of shared traditions between elite milieus with similar ring types seems highly important. It indicates that the alliance networks sketched from the distribution of ring types reflect actual relationships.

Table 5.2. List of melted gold in early Iron Age graves in Norway. The practice is confined to Roman period graves, and is mainly a western Norwegian phenomenon. Based on Bøe (1926), with later supplements. Dates mainly after Andersson (1993a, 2001). It should be noted that the gold drop that Bøe (1926:p.81, note 1) relates to Nes is not mentioned by Shetelig (1912a)

Mus.no.	**Find spot**	**Object type melted**	**Date**
C 18011	Lund, Larvik, Vestfold	Gold berlock	B2
C 9260	Bruland, Sandnes, Rogaland	Gold berlock	B2
B 5931	Nes, Kvinnherad, Hordaland	Finger ring B39b; Drop of gold	C1b
B 4045	Innbjoa, Vindafjord, Rogaland	Serpent head arm ring	C1b
C 1102, 06,07, S 12523	Hove, Sandnes, Rogaland	Serpent head arm ring; Small gold ring; Gold fragment	C1b-C2
B 11546	Godøy, Giske, Møre og Romsdal	Medallion	C3
B 7634	Grindheim, Etne, Hordaland	Finger ring B11 var. Ib	C3
C 6300	Stadheim, Vik, Sogn og Fjordane	Finger ring B13	C3
C 11562	Reme, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder	Finger ring B12 var. A	C
C 3816	Seim, Vik, Sogn og Fjordane	Finger ring B12 var. B	C
B 10790	Jangarden, Giske, Møre og Romsdal	Drops of gold	C3
B 6103	Haugland, Kvinnherad, Hordaland	Drop of gold	C
C 52083	Ås, Sande, Vestfold	Drops of gold	C
S 10455	Nordbø, Rennesøy, Rogaland	Gold fragment	C3-D

5.2 Imported vessels of copper alloys and glass

By means of processes such as gift exchange and redistribution, a large number of Roman-produced vessels arrived in western Norway in the late Roman and Migration periods (Figs. 5.6 and 5.7). Among these were metal vessels for preparing and serving food or drink, as well as glass beakers or horns used for drinking. Such vessels are usually interpreted as reflecting the introduction of a new drinking culture, in which locally produced clay pots played an integral role (Solberg, 2004; Rødsrud, 2010, 2012). Ritual feasting with consumption of food and alcohol probably played a vital role in establishing social relations among the elite milieus, where the display of imported vessels provided an effect as 'conspicuous consumption' (Veblen, 1899; Solberg, 2004). Most imported vessels have been found in graves, where many vessels were used secondarily as cremation urns. In recent years, the increased frequency of settlement excavations has led to finds especially of glass beakers within their primary context in rich settlements, where these vessels were kept, used, displayed and exchanged. One prominent example is the two Migration period vessels deposited inside the cult house at Uppåkra in Sweden (Larsson, 2007; Hårdh & Larsson, 2007). At Lille Børke in Hedmark, eastern Norway, two glass beakers had been deposited in the ground next to a large longhouse (Lislerud & Stene, 2007). Similarly, in Jæren, sherds from glass beakers have been found in three excavated large longhouses at the centres Hafrsfjord (Ullandhaug), Nærbø (Ullaland) and Hove (Espeland).

In the last few decades, imported metal and glass vessels have been thoroughly examined (Lund Hansen, 1987; Straume, 1987, 2015; Holand, 2001; Hauken, 2005). The vessels in my study area include *Hemmoor buckets* (R344, E58–59), *Eastland buckets* (R352, E37–43), *Westland cauldrons* (R353, E11–14), glass beakers – either facetted (R335) or with applied threads (R337–8) – and a smaller number of strainers, dishes and unique vessels (types after Rygh, 1885 and Eggers, 1951). Several of these vessel types show a regional distribution. The Eastland buckets are mainly found in late Roman period graves in eastern Norway, the Westland cauldrons in western Norwegian Migration period graves. A similar trend is also seen in the distribution of the late Roman period Hemmoor buckets, which is mainly confined to Rogaland.

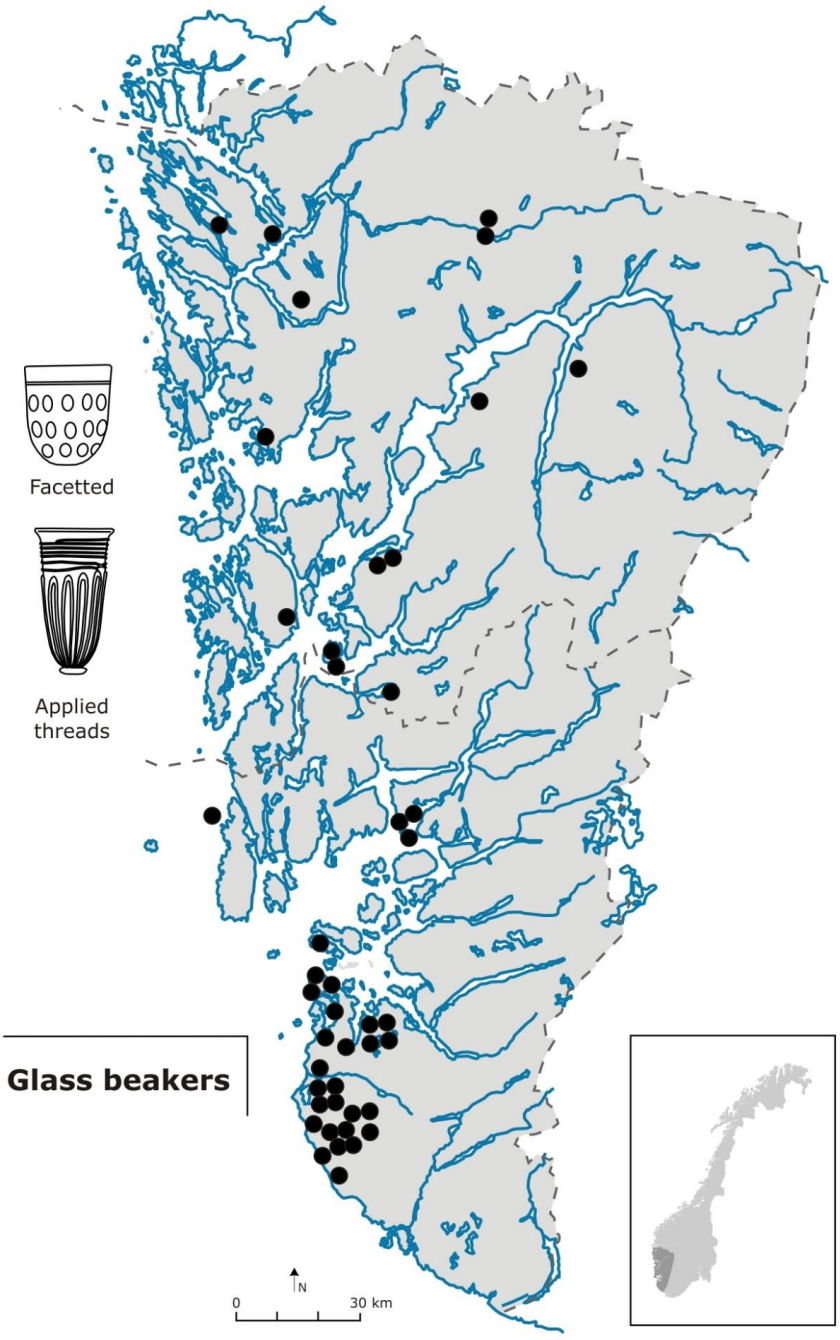


Fig. 5.6. Glass beakers in Hordaland and Rogaland. After Myhre, 1987a.

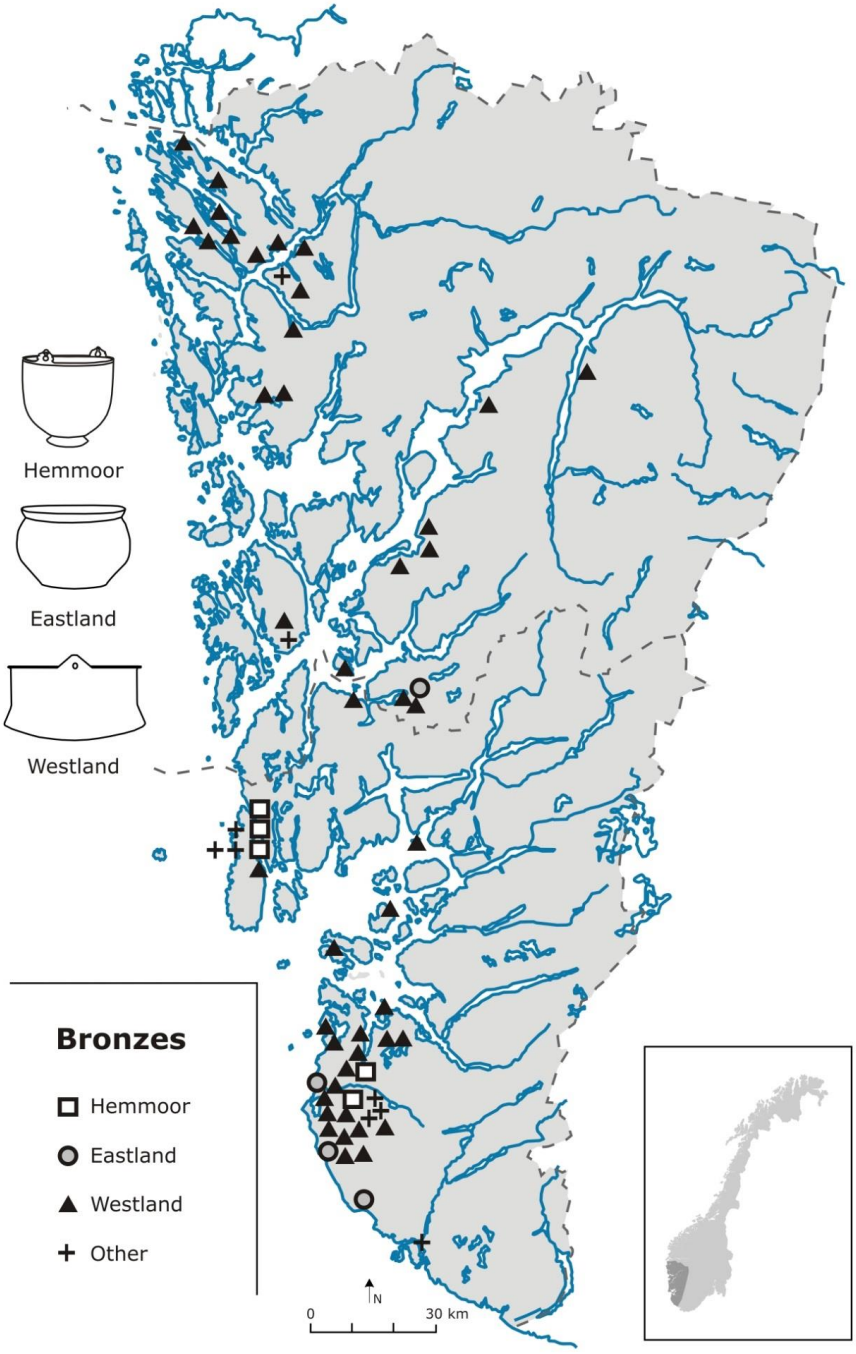


Fig. 5.7. Bronze vessels in Hordaland and Rogaland. After Myhre, 1987a.

5.2.1 The Hemmoor buckets

While all the imported vessels are seen here as centre indicators, I will delimit the rest of my discussion of imported vessels by using the Hemmoor buckets of my study area as a case study. In Norway, this vessel type clusters in Rogaland and it might provide an insight into how local elite milieus utilised selected types of imported vessels to establish their status. The Hemmoor buckets are named after a find spot in Lower Saxony, Germany, where a number of such buckets were found at a grave field (Willers, 1901). Hemmoor buckets are frequently found in the *Fürstengräber* of northern Europe, and many of the buckets show signs of long use before deposition. It is generally accepted that these buckets were produced in the Rhine area from the late second century until the middle of the third century (Erdrich, 1995; Steuer, 1999). There is a great individual variation within the category, as each bucket was separately cast using the *cire perdue* technique and then individually finished. Most buckets were cast in brass, a lower number in bronze and just a few in silver. The buckets are typologically divided into types E52–66 after Eggers (1951). The common type E58 might be used to describe the category. The bucket body is bell-shaped, and it has a low foot. The handle is locked by two handle attachments, which often have a rounded triangular shape with volutes. Under the rim, most buckets have a linear decoration.

Altogether eight Hemmoor buckets are known from Norway. Outside my study area, one bucket is of the atypical type E54 without a handle and foot (C959, Buskerud), a second is of an uncertain type (B4285, Vest-Agder) and the third is an atypical E58–59 bucket (C7340, Aust-Agder). The remaining five buckets come from Rogaland. This includes the four Norwegian buckets of type E58, and a unique type E59 bucket. A few notes should be given on the dating of the Hemmoor buckets from Rogaland. While Lund Hansen dates the Danish buckets to C1b, the Rogaland buckets are set to C2 (Lund Hansen et al., 1995:p.72). As few of the Rogaland buckets have good find contexts or find combinations, I consider this a hypothetical and late dating. The rich Avaldsnes weapon grave and the Hove grave with Hemmoor bucket and serpent head arm ring have close parallels in the graves from Gommern (Germany) and Tuna (Sweden), dated to C1b/C2 and to C1b (Andersson, 2001:p.222; Becker, 2010).

The Rogaland buckets of type E58

The four E58 buckets from Rogaland are found at three major centres in Rogaland (Fig. 5.8). Two buckets come from the Avaldsnes centre (Avaldsnes II and Norheim), one from Hove and the last from Anda in the Tinghaug centre. Bøe (1957) estimated the volume capacity of the Avaldsnes II bucket to be 10 litres, which is also representative of the other three buckets. In a study of eastern Norwegian and Danish graves with wine drinking sets, it was observed that Hemmoor buckets and Gile-type vessels (E44–46) of similar sizes did not appear together in graves. One interpretation was that both types might have been used as mixing buckets, and that only one bucket of this volume was needed as part of the drinking set (Kjos, 2003:p.90). The presence in Rogaland only of Hemmoor buckets, with no documented Gile vessels, suggests an intentional favouring of this type of imported mixing bucket. What was special, then, about the Hemmoor buckets that made these buckets preferred among the Rogaland elites?

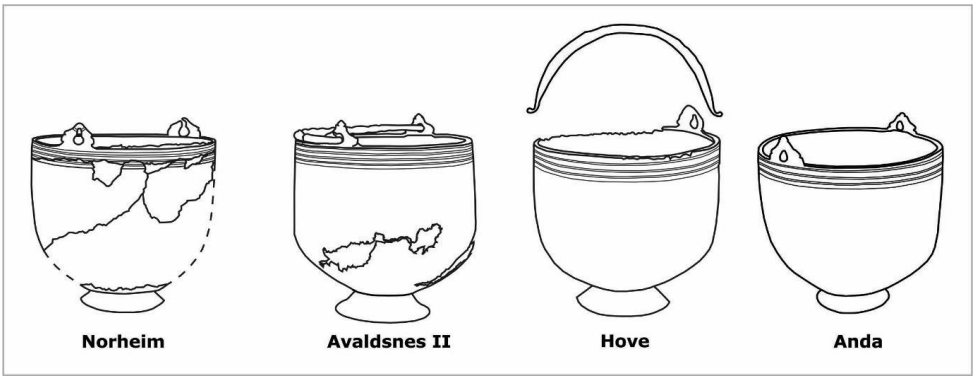


Fig. 5.8. The four known Norwegian Hemmoor buckets of type E58, all found at major Roman and Migration period centres in Rogaland.

A clue to the answer is found in the find information accompanying the fragmented bucket from Eiken, Vest-Agder. The account gives an impression of the visual effect of the Hemmoor buckets: '(…) the people on the farm had heard that large pieces of the bucket were originally found, but these were later lost as they showed a golden colour if one scratched on them' (Rygh, 1884, my translation). To people not knowing what metal these vessels were made of, the golden colour made them highly desirable.

Unlike other Roman metal vessels, such as Eastland buckets and Westland cauldrons, the Hemmoor buckets were normally cast in brass, an alloy of copper mixed with more than 10% zinc. Copper alloyed with 10–20 % zinc has a yellow colour resembling gold (Caspers, 2010:p.18). According to Erdrich (1995:p.72), the main components of analysed Hemmoor buckets are 77–83 % copper and 13–18 % zinc. However, some buckets also have a low zinc percentage, being regular bronze alloys of copper and tin. An example of a bronze Hemmoor bucket is the atypical E54 bucket from Fossnes, Buskerud (Bollingberg, 1995). Among the Rogaland buckets, the two buckets from Avaldsnes have been analysed, both consisting of brass alloys (Bollingberg, 1995; Stylegar & Reiersen, in prep.). The other Rogaland buckets were probably also of brass. The Anda bucket, for instance, has the typical golden brass colour (Fig. 5.9). These gold-like buckets probably made a very special impression on people in the late Roman period. By displaying the buckets during feasts, their elite owners appeared to mix the alcohol in golden bowls. Thus, the possible reason why the elites of Rogaland seem to have actively sought this bucket type was that it helped them appear as elites possessing unique qualities among their contemporaries.

Fig. 5.9. Hemmoor bucket from Anda, Klepp. Photo: Terje Tveit, AM, UiS.

The exclusive Avaldsnes I bucket, its parallels and origin

The four buckets of type E58 form a regional group confirming a tendency also seen in the C1b–C2 status rings of gold, that some important elite milieus in Rogaland had a shared material complex. The final Hemmoor bucket in the study area comes from the richly furnished Avaldsnes I grave (Fig. 7.20). Under the rim, this brass bucket had an ornamental silver frieze with an entrelac pattern. The special spiral twined handle was fastened in semicircular attachments with spiral-shaped ends. These features provided the Avaldsnes I bucket with a more luxurious appearance than the other Rogaland buckets. The bucket was part of a Roman wine drinking set, including also a strainer (E161) and a unique hanging dish with lion head attachments (E86). Holand (2001:p.83) interpreted this drinking set as the possible result of a single event of gift exchange. In order to explore the exclusive character of the Avaldsnes I bucket, we might examine its closest continental parallels and their original Roman context.

As the Avaldsnes I bucket is poorly preserved, its shape and size must be deduced by comparison with its parallels. The bucket was previously classified by Eggers (1951:p.165) as his type E59 and by Ekholm (1942) as the 'Barnstorf-Avaldsnes type'. Unfortunately, the shapes of the buckets from Avaldsnes and Barnstorf in Germany, attributed to the type by both Eggers and Ekholm, were poorly preserved. While Ekholm (1942, Fig. 9-6) based his type drawing on a hypothetical reconstruction of the Barnstorf bucket (Hahne, 1912, Tafel V-6b), Eggers used the shape of an atypical E58–59 bucket from Bringsvær (grave IV), Norway for his E59 type drawing. After Eggers' study, two new specimens of type E59 were found in Oberweis and Wederath, both in the Trier region in Germany (Bienert, 1995, 2007a, 2007b). The Oberweis bucket is the first fully preserved E59 bucket, and it testifies that the Bringsvær bucket does not belong to the type. The semispherical body of the Oberweis bucket comes close to Shetelig's (1912a, Fig. 128) drawing of the Avaldsnes I bucket. If the diameter-height proportion from the Oberweis bucket were applied to the Avaldsnes I bucket, its original height would be 19.5 cm. The size of the Avaldsnes I bucket might be compared to the other E59 buckets by rim diameter. Measuring 22 cm in diameter, it was larger than the other three buckets, which were 17–19 cm in diameter.

The second new E59 bucket, from Wederath, provides a close parallel to the decoration on the Avaldsnes I bucket. Considering the strong variation among the Hemmoor buckets, the close to identical ornaments on these buckets suggest that they were made in the same workshop. The two new type E59 buckets from the area surrounding the Roman city of Trier might further suggest the provenance origin of the Avaldsnes I and Barnstorf VI buckets, and they might in addition give us some information about the original Roman context of such buckets. The Oberweis bucket was found in a large, high-status Roman villa, with marble columns and a bath covered with a mosaic floor (Bienert, 1995, 2007a), and the Wederath bucket comes from the Roman village of Belginum (Bienert, 2007b). While the E58 brass buckets arriving in Rogaland were useful high-status objects for their new elite owners, in their original provincial Roman context they were probably used as regular kitchen vessels (Erdrich, 1995:pp.74–76). The find context of the Oberweis bucket, on the other hand, indicates that the E59 Hemmoor buckets were also considered status objects within the Roman provinces.

If the E59 buckets are mapped together with the associated E60 Hemmoor buckets of silver, the hypothesis of an origin in Trier is strengthened (Fig. 5.10, Table 5.3). North of the Roman Limes, E59 and E60 buckets were found in four graves, of which at least three are considered Fürstengräber. Just south of the Limes, a cluster of four buckets were found in the Trier region. One bucket stems from the city and the other three buckets were found along each of the three Roman roads going from Trier. The Oberweis villa was situated along the north-western road, Belginum with the Wederath bucket on the eastern road, and along the southern road, a bucket was found at the site of a Roman settlement in Buding, France. Following the same southern road just past the city of Lyon, another bucket was found at a Roman settlement in Revel-Tourdan, France. South-west of Trier, the final find spot for two buckets was in Chaource, France. This distribution of the E59–60 buckets indicates a shared origin in Trier, with a limited distribution in the Roman provinces and to a few Germanic elite graves. The E59 buckets were Roman high-status objects and the Avaldsnes I bucket is the only one of the type in Scandinavia. If the Avaldsnes I drinking set was a single gift, as Holand (2001) suggested, this was a precious gift even from a Roman perspective.

Table 5.3. List of E59 and E60 buckets in northern Europe, based on Künzl (2010), with the Wederath bucket added and the Bringsvær bucket omitted

Bucket type	Site	Context	Reference
E59	Avaldsnes I, Norway	Unburnt Fürstengrab	Shetelig, 1912a
E59	Barnstorf VI, Germany	Burnt grave in cemetery	Hahne, 1912
E60	Gommern, Germany	Unburnt Fürstengrab	Künzl, 2010
E60	Sacrau I, Poland	Unburnt Fürstengrab	Wielowiejski, 1989
E59	Oberweis, Germany	Roman settlement (villa)	Bienert, 1995, 2007a
E59	Wederath, Germany	Roman settlement (vicus)	Bienert, 2007a, 2007b
E60	Trier, Germany	Silver hoard (lost)	Willers, 1901
E60	Buding, France	Roman settlement	Willers, 1901
E60	Revel-Tourdan, France	Roman settlement	Baratte & Painter, 1989
E60	Chaource, France	Silver hoard	Baratte & Painter, 1989
E60	Chaource, France	Silver hoard	Baratte & Painter, 1989

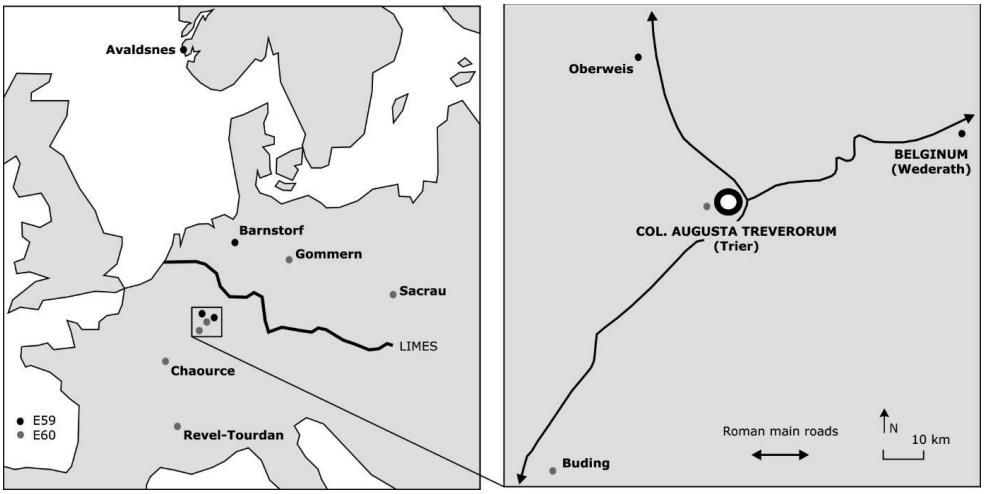


Fig. 5.10. Map of the distribution of type E59–60 buckets in Europe. Detailed map of finds in the Trier area situated along the Roman main roads from Trier. Roads based on 'Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire' (Åhlfeldt, 2015).

5.3 From Roman coins to Germanic bracteates

The Roman Empire produced coins and medallions of different weight and materials, which would have a significant effect on Scandinavian societies in the Roman and Migration periods. The main importance of Roman coins was as raw materials for new objects such as rings, pendants or brooches. According to researchers like Brøgger (1921), the Scandinavian weight system was rooted in the use of Roman gold. However, the number of Roman coins is much lower in Norway than in Denmark and Sweden (Skaare, 1976; Horsnæs, 2010; Fischer, 2011). In Denmark and Sweden, coins are found in hoards, the dominant Scandinavian depositional practice in the Migration period. In contrast, the Norwegian coins either come from grave finds or are single finds that presumably reflect a settlement context. As no larger hoards of silver or gold coins are known in Norway, this might reflect not only the depositional practices in general but also the fact that such valuable metals were a limited resource, and were quickly melted and transformed into new objects (Magnus & Myhre, 1976:p.345).

As decorated objects, the motifs from Roman coins and medallions made a lasting impression in north Germanic areas, as they were not only the material for new objects but also iconographical models for these. The coins and medallions were reinterpreted and recast in a new Germanic context, first in the shape of medallion imitations in C3–D1, and later as bracteates in the D2 phases. In the following, I will focus on the motifs, find distribution and depositional practices of Roman coins, medallion imitations and bracteates within the study area and in comparison with other areas. With regard to the bracteates, a special western Norwegian practice is seen in the deposition of bracteates mainly in graves, and rarely as hoards. It is my hypothesis that this practice of placing bracteates in graves might be seen as a continuation of older depositional practices associated with coins and medallions. This hypothesis is approached by examining the contexts of these associated categories through the late Roman and Migration periods. If this explanation is found to be valid for the bracteates, it might also have an implication for the depositional practices in general. It is thus possible that a strong continuity of Roman period practices is the reason why there are so many graves in Migration period western Norway, in contrast to most other Scandinavian regions.

5.3.1 Roman coins from settlements

At least 11 Roman coins from various contexts are known from the study area (Table 5.4). In recent years, the number of coins not found in association with graves has increased, especially due to an intensified use of metal detectors. This is particularly true in eastern Norway, but recent detectorist finds also include the *denarii* from Grannes, Sola, Rogaland (2008), from Gjerde, Etne, Hordaland (2013) and from Utne, Ullensvang, Hordaland (2014). The context of the Etne coin is the best documented, as it was found during the excavation of an area of Iron Age settlement (Diinhoff, 2013; Flognfeldt & Diinhoff, 2014). Roman coins are previously known from early Iron Age settlement contexts at Modvo, Luster Sogn og Fjordane, excavated in the 1960s (one denarius, Marc Aurel, Bakka et al., 1993), and more recently, for example, in Østfold at Missingen, Råde (two denarii, Marc Aurel and Faustina II, Bårdseth, 2009) and at Hærland, Eidsberg (two coins found in 2010, A. Solberg pers. comm.).

Apart from Gjerde, the remaining single finds from the study area with some context information were reported as stray finds from the ploughed soil. Since the only excavated non-grave coin find comes from a settlement context, the rest of the single stray finds are tentatively also assumed to stem from settlements. Four of the seven single finds in the area are coins minted around the Marcomanni Wars in the second half of the second century AD, although their deposition in the soil might of course have happened significantly later. It should then be noted that the around 200 silver denarii from 64 to 188 AD found in the Illerup A sacrifice (C1b) were interpreted as the personal belongings of higher-level officers (Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær, 1996; Bursche, 2011:p.11). This is especially interesting for the silver denarius from Gjerde, as the settlement site it was found at was situated just 500 metres from the find spot of an officer-level sword from the late Roman period (C1b–C2). In addition, the Raknes denarius comes from a farm with a status sword pommel of bronze from the Migration period. Coins found in settlement contexts might have played a role as raw materials used for exchange or to produce new objects, or they might alternatively have been displayed foreign exotica – the visual evidence of travels to distant lands.

Fig. 5.11. The medallion imitations from Mjelde (top) and Mauland (below), depicted after Christie (1837) and Helliesen (1899a).

Table 5.4. List of Roman coins and medallion imitations found in Hordaland and Rogaland. Coins from the medieval town of Bergen have been omitted

Mus. No.	Find-spot	Type (date of minting)	Context
Lost	Stavanger, Rogaland	Denarius (Roman Republic 93-1 BC)	Unknown
S 12432	Grannes, Sola, Rogaland	Denarius (Hadrian, 118 AD)	Stray find
B 6186	Raknes, Osterøy, Hordaland	Denarius (Antoninus Pius, 149-150 AD)	Stray find
B 13390	Økland, Sveio, Hordaland	Sestertius (Marc Aurel 161-180 AD)	Stray find
S 7710	Revheim, Stavanger, Rogaland	Denarius (Marc Aurel 163-164 AD)	Stray find
B new	Gjerde, Etne, Hordaland	Denarius (Commodus 177-192 AD)	Settlement
B 13397	Hagebø, Osterøy, Hordaland	Tetradrachm (Aurelian 274-275 AD)	Grave?
B new	Utne, Ullensvang, Hordaland	Denarius (Constantin 307-337 AD)	Stray find
B 1876	Mjelde, Osterøy, Hordaland	Medallion imitation, with loop	Grave, C3?
S 2245	Mauland, Time, Rogaland	Medallion imitation, with loop	Stray find
S 4100	Ånestad, Hå, Rogaland	Solidus copy (Constantin 335-336 AD)	Grave, C3
B 3358	Sæbø, Kvinnherad, Hordaland	Solidus (Gratian 375-383 AD), with loop	Grave, D1
B 8791	Kolle, Voss, Hordaland	Siliqua (Valentinian II 375-392 AD)	Grave, D1

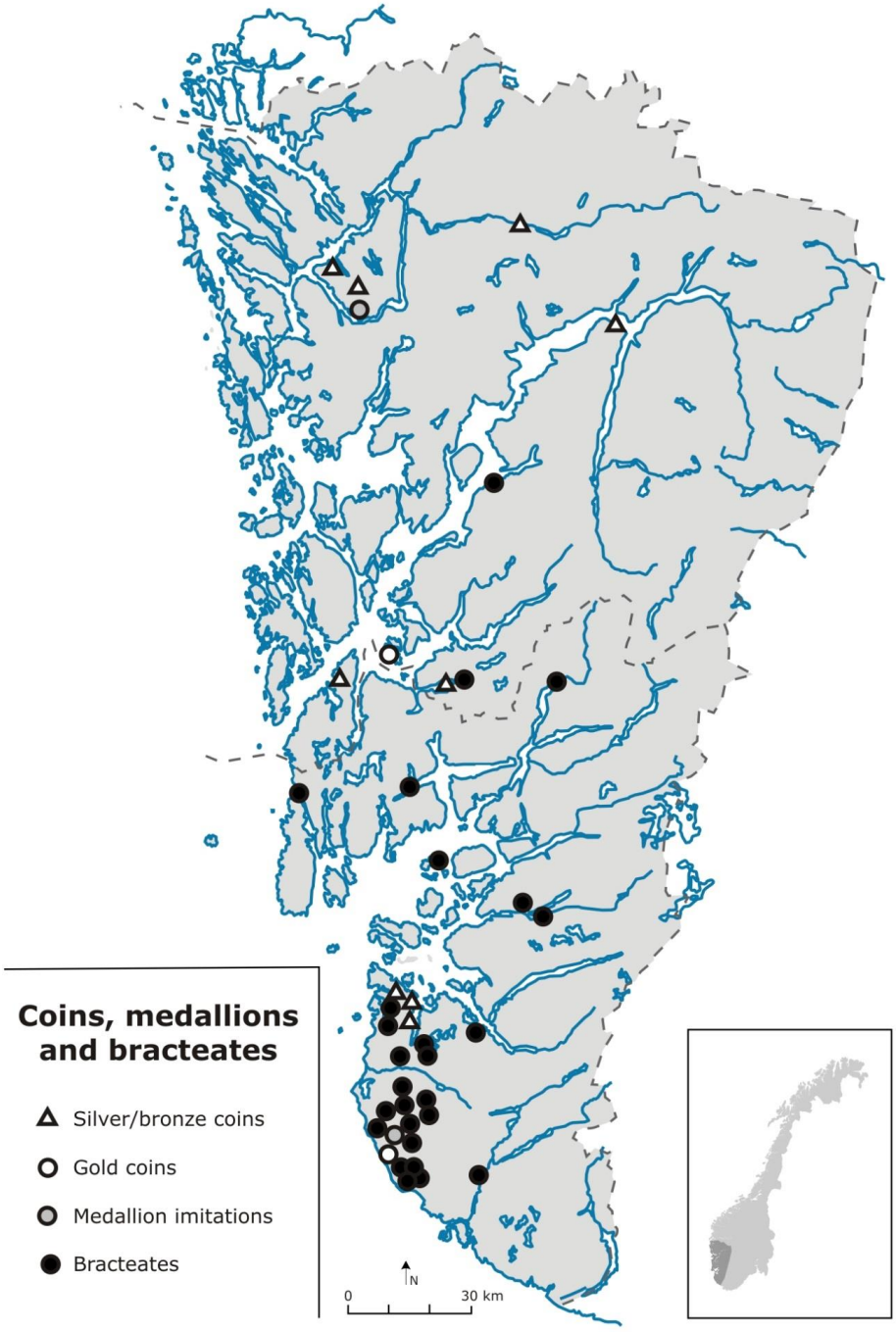


Fig. 5.12. Map of Roman coins, medallion imitations and bracteates in Hordaland and Rogaland. See also Fig. 6.19 (bracteate contexts).

5.3.2 Coins and medallion imitations in graves

The remaining coins found in the study area presumably come from graves from C3 and D1. Some of these coins are of similar types to those found at settlements. A silver *siliqua* from the late fourth century was found at Voss as part of a cremation grave from a chamber in a cairn. The late third century bronze *tetradrachm* from Hagebø in Osterøy was also said to come from a cairn, although the information is uncertain and it might alternatively be a stray find from a settlement. These two coins do not have any loops or perforation, and were thus probably not used as pendants. The presence of coins of low metal value in graves might have been inspired by the Greco-Roman burial rite of Charon's obol, known from the Roman areas (Dyhrfjeld-Johnsen, 2011).

The most common types of coins found in Norwegian and Swedish graves from C3 and D1, however, are gold coins (*solidi*) (e.g. Fischer, 2011; Appendix II). These have been used as pendants, and are most often found with a loop attached, in a similar way to the medallions and bracteates. Two gold coins are known from graves in the study area: one solidus copy of gilded silver from C3 at Ånestad in the Varhaug centre and one solidus with a loop in a D1 grave from Sæbø, Borgundøy in the Bjoafjord centre. In Denmark, the fashion of carrying gold coins with loops was known already in C2 (Dyhrfjeld-Johnsen, 2011). Here, graves with coins with a loop or perforation occur in wealthy graves, with coins without a loop or perforation occurring in less rich graves.

Finally, we have the medallions (*multipla*) or Germanic imitations of such medallions (see Andersson, 1995:pp.43–48, 2011; Pesch, 2007, Abb. 22; Axboe, 2007; Appendix II). While medallions are rare in Scandinavia and mostly occur in Denmark, a larger number of medallion imitations are found in Norway and Sweden. The imitations are copies of medallions of the Constantin dynasty (Axboe, 2007:p.96). Two medallion imitations are known from the study area, from Midt-Mjelde in the Osterøy centre and from Mauland in the Nærbø centre (Fig. 5.11). The first stem from a cremation grave, the second was a stray find. However, as other medallions and imitations from Norway were found in graves, and as the single bracteates from Rogaland stem from graves, the Mauland imitation probably comes from a grave. Outside the study area, medallion imitations occur in wealthy graves in north-western Norway, as well as in Sweden.

Andersson views the medallion imitations as being produced in Scandinavia, depicting the face of local elites as the emperor on the *obvers* and often as a rider on the *reverse* (Andersson, 1995:pp.44–46, 2011:pp.70–77; Axboe, 2007:pp.94–95). The same might be assumed for the two medallion imitations in the study area, and Myhre (2007) previously suggested that the Mauland imitation was locally produced. Both imitations were found in areas that also have finds of Roman coins. Medallion imitations might be divided into two groups (Pesch, 2007:p.55). The Midt-Mjelde and Mauland medallion imitations belong to a group with the reverse showing a rider. Among the seven imitations with riders, five are depicted with weapons, while the two from my study area are depicted holding rings or triumphal wreaths (Larssen, 2010:pp.57–59).

Although the motifs were inspired by the Roman prototypes, they were altered to their new context. The medallion imitations might thus give us some impression of the 'self-representation' of the elite milieus (Andersson, 2011). Andersson (2011) notes that the depicted faces are individually designed as caricatures underlining certain traits. The Mauland face is accompanied by an open hand, perhaps raised in a greeting. In the catalogue entry, Helliesen (1899a) noted that the horse on the reverse seemed 'national', by which he was probably alluding to the erect mane similar to that of the Norwegian fjord horse. Similarly, the mane on the Midt-Mjelde horse is also emphasised. While the horse on the Midt-Mjelde imitation seems to be in motion, the Mauland horse has stopped in front of a person holding an object up as a greeting. Both of the riders are holding up a circular object in their right hand, interpreted as a ring or a triumphal wreath (Larssen, 2010:pp.59, 62). The original Roman motif was probably the Roman emperor greeting the goddess of victory, Victoria (Hedeager, 1999:p.67).

Although both medallion imitations and bracteates were inspired by Roman coins and medallions, the production of imitations is not directly linked to the later bracteate production (Axboe, 2007). The older depositional practices associated with looped coins and medallion imitations, however, seem to have had implications for later practices associated with bracteates. In south-western Norway and in parts of Sweden, bracteates continued to be mainly deposited in graves like the looped coins and imitations, while in the rest of Scandinavia bracteates were mainly placed in hoards.

5.3.3 Bracteates in graves and hoards

At least 163 bracteates from D2 are known from Norway (Table 5.5). Half of these come from western Norway, with as many as 52 bracteates found in Rogaland and seven from Hordaland (Table 5.7). Another core area is found in eastern Norway. Most of the bracteates produced in Norway might be identified as such by a special production technique where the beaded wire was placed on the front of the planchet. Bracteates are mainly found in the same region in which they were made (Axboe, 2007:p.91). It is therefore reasonable to assume that many of the bracteates in the study area were locally produced. Pesch (2007) grouped the bracteates into 'formula families' with a strong motif similarity. In the study area, 40 bracteates have been attributed to a formula family. The formula families C11, D1, D3, D4, D6 and D18 are thought to originate in the region, indicating that at least 33 of these bracteates were 'local' (Table 5.6). Of the seven remaining bracteates, only two (type D8 and D10,a) are of types with a clear non-local distribution. Among the bracteates that were not discussed by Pesch, Axboe (2007) viewed the C-bracteate from Raunes, Vindafjord and the A-bracteate from Selvik, Sandnes as being of clear non-local types.

Axboe's (2007) seriation of bracteates indicates a late start for the production in Norway, although his seriations seem to be mainly concerned with bracteates from hoards. Three of the centre localities examined in this thesis have been suggested as major sites of bracteate production: Tinghaug, Hafrsfjord and Lye. Pesch (2007) suggested a connection either to the Tinghaug area or alternatively to Hafrsfjord, with the large Madla hoard. Myhre (2007) further connected the goldsmith's grave from Vestly and a gold hoard from Store Oma with bracteates produced in the area surrounding Lye. Stamp-identical bracteates might also be interpreted as alliance gifts between elites (Andrén, 1991). As previously mentioned, Pesch's C11 family are assumed to be of local origin. The decorations of these bracteates are quite distinctive in their simplicity, depicting a rider on a horse, almost lacking surrounding symbols (Figs. 6.20 and 6.21). One C11 bracteate from Madla has several stamp-identical bracteates in Sweden (Axboe, 2007:p.91). In the study area, the A bracteates from Madla in Hafrsfjord and Hauge in Tinghaug indicate contact between these centres.

Within my study area, bracteates were predominantly found in graves. Although some bracteates are stray finds where the context is hard to determine, 23 of the bracteate finds from my study area are considered as grave finds and six as hoard finds (Table 5.7). The practice of placing bracteates in graves is also known from the Continent and in Britain, but Pesch (2011) assumes that the practice was not a consequence of contact between these areas. Instead, this practice is interpreted mainly as a local tradition. In contrast, I consider the hoarding practice as mainly a non-local, southern Scandinavian tradition that occurred rarely in western Norway in the preceding Roman period.

It is, however, interesting that most bracteates found in hoards in the study area are of local types. Pesch (2007) attributes all the bracteates from the hoards in Etne, Holta, Teig and Opstad to local formula families. Among the 14 bracteates from Madla, only one (C16,a) is considered non-local, although it is a unique specimen among the C16 bracteates. In the Selvik hoard, two D2 bracteates might be interpreted as non-local, as the D2 formula family probably had an eastern Norwegian origin (Pesch, 2007). In addition, the A-bracteate from Selvik is considered by Axboe (2007:pp.54–56) to be non-local. In sum, most bracteates from hoards in the study area are of local origin. All six hoards included D-bracteates, and the local family D4 bracteates occur only in the four largest hoards: in Grindheim (3), Holta (2), Madla (6) and in Selvik (1). The presence of D-bracteates in all these hoards indicates that the south-western Norwegian hoards were deposited rather late in the Migration period (Axboe, 2007:p.62). From Madla, the C11 (IK 118) and C16,a (IK 119) bracteates are from Axboe's late series H3/4 and H4 (Axboe, 2007:p.117), assumed to represent a deposition in D2b.

As has been suggested, the regional practice of placing bracteates mainly in graves might be explained as a continuation of practices rooted in the late Roman period. In general, this relates to most types of status objects. The continuity in western Norway of late Roman period burial practices in the Migration period made the region special in relation to practices in other Scandinavian regions. For many centuries, graves, not hoards, were the proper ritual context for displaying wealth. When bracteate hoards did occur in western Norway, this happened late in the Migration period. What, then, was the reason why the southern hoarding practice gained importance here in D2b?

To answer this question, we shall review two scenarios that have been used to explain the sharp decline in finds at the end of the Migration period. The traditional explanation of a *Migration period crisis* has gained renewed recognition in recent years, as the decline corresponds well with the documented catastrophic events in 536 AD, leading to plague, food shortage and starvation (Axboe, 2007; Gräslund & Price, 2012). The changes have alternatively been explained by a scenario where new social structures and power centralisation fundamentally changed society (Skre, 1998; Myhre, 2005c). The new practice of depositing large hoards could then indicate that power was now gathered in the hands of a few elites who communicated with the gods in these rituals. The two scenarios might both have validity. If the events in 536 AD were indeed the background for a starvation catastrophy, some of the surviving elites might have been in a position to gather more power. The hoards might thus have been both a ritual response to a time of crisis and an instrument for restructuring the society. Even so, the stamp-identical bracteates in a grave at Tinghaug and in the Madla hoard at Hafrsfjord show that both bracteate deposition strategies were practised among elites in D2b.

Table 5.5. List with number of bracteates in Norway by county and region. Based on Pesch (2007) with modifications (see details in Appendix II)

County	**Central Norway**	**Western Norway**	**Eastern Norway**	**Norway**	**Total**
Nordland	1				
Nord-Trøndelag	4				
Sør-Trøndelag	7				
Møre og Romsdal	1				
Sogn og Fjordane		8			
Hordaland		7			
Rogaland		52			
Vest-Agder		16			
Telemark			8		
Vestfold			3		
Buskerud			2		
Akershus			46		
Østfold			4		
Western Norway		1			
Norway				3	
Total	**13 (8%)**	**84 (51%)**	**63 (39%)**	**3 (2%)**	**163 (100%)**

Table 5.6. Frequency of local and non-local formula families among the 40 bracteates from Hordaland and Rogaland classified by Pesch, 2007

Pesch Family	A1	C11+a	C16,a	D1	D2	D3+a	D4+a	D6	D8	D10,a	D18+a	Total
Local		7		4		4	12	3			3	33 (82%)
Non-local	1		1		3				1	1		7 (18%)
Total												**40 (100%)**

Table 5.7. List of bracteates found in Hordaland and Rogaland (after Bakka, 1973a; Pesch, 2007; Axboe 2007, details in Appendix II). IK numbers after Hauck & Axboe, 1985-89. Only rather certain hoard finds are indicated, in accordance with Axboe (2007:pp.117–8). One D-bracteate withouth find context from western Norway probably also stems from the region. As a rule, single finds of bracteates stem from graves. Kristoffersen (2003:p.29), however, has suggested that the single bracteates found in Vinningsland, Kydland and Raunes might instead be interpreted as hoards

Find-spot	A	B	C	D	?	Tot	Gr.	Ho.	IK no.	Pesch	Axboe
Ænes, Kvinnherad, Hordaland					1	1	X		212		
Grindheim, Etne, Hordaland				6		6		X	435-437	D3 (2), D4 (3), D18	
Gard, Haugesund, Rogaland			1			1	X		252		
Raunes, Vindafjord, Rogaland			1			1	X		146		
Teig, Sauda, Rogaland				2		2		X	536	D18,a (2)	
Fora, Finnøy, Rogaland	2					2	X		250		
Rivjaland, Hjemlemand, Rogaland				1		1	X		487	D8	
Holta, Strand, Rogaland				3		3		X	446-447	D3, D4,a (2)	
Madla, Stavanger, Rogaland	1		3	10		14		X	117,1, 118-119, 283,3, 463-466	C11 (2), C16,a, D1, D4,a (6), D6 (3)	H3/4, H3, H4
Joa, Sola, Rogaland	1					1	X		316		
Vatne, Sandnes, Rogaland			1			1	X		207		
Åse, Sandnes, Rogaland				1		1	X		403		
Skjørestad, Sandnes, Rogaland				1		1	X		605	D10,a	
Selvik, Sandnes, Rogaland	1		1	4		6		X	331-332, 501-504	A1, C11, D1, D2 (2), D4	H2, H3
Store Salte, Klepp, Rogaland	1					1	X		345		
Hauge, Klepp, Rogaland	1		1			2	X		72, 117,2		H2, H4
Norheim, Time, Rogaland				1		1	X		474	D2	
Vestly, Time, Rogaland	1					1	X		380		
Garpestad, Time, Rogaland			1			1	X		253,1	C11,a	
Rimestad, Hå, Rogaland			2			2	X		314-315	C11 (2)	H3, H3
Opstad, Hå, Rogaland			1	1		2		X	139, 480	D1	H4
Voll, Hå, Rogaland				1		1	X		563	D1	
Vigrestad, Hå, Rogaland	1					1	X		382		
Hå gamle prestegard, Rogaland			1			1	X		253,2	C11,a	
Kydland, Hå, Rogaland				1		1	X		460	D3,a	
Sør-Varhaug, Hå, Rogaland			1			1	X		342		
Kvassheim, Hå, Rogaland						1	X		459		
Vinningsland, Bjerkreim, Rog.			1	1		1	X		209		
Årstad, Eigersund, Rogaland						1	X		403		
Total	**9**	**0**	**15**	**34**	**1**	**59**	**23**	**6**		**40**	**10**

5.4 Shiny accessories to the female dress

In this subchapter, I wish to discuss two categories of female elite objects: bronze spindle whorls and status brooches. These categories were associated with the production and display of the female elite dress. The spindle whorls were carried more or less as an integral part of the female dress and the brooches held the dress together and visualised the status of the carrier. While status brooches such as rosette fibulas and relief brooches have gained much attention in Scandinavian research (Straume, 1988; Lund Hansen et al., 1995; Lund Hansen & Przybyla, 2010; Kristoffersen, 2000, 2015), the Norwegian bronze spindle whorls have attracted limited attention. In an attempt to fill this research gap, a special focus is given here to the bronze whorls.

Great improvements in textile technology formed the background for the presence of dress-related status symbols in the Roman and Migration periods. When the quality was markedly improved, textile production might have gained a higher status. While the textile technology of the Pre-Roman Iron Age was based on the tubular loom and a whorl-less spindle, in the late Roman period warp-weighted looms and spindles with whorls were introduced (Bender Jørgensen, 1992:p.126). These changes led to the production of finer clothes using z-spun thread, the type of thread also used in the Roman areas (Bender Jørgensen, 1992:p.128). A Roman period spindle (Norw. *håndtein*) had a hook at the top and a whorl as weight at the lower end (Ethelberg, 2000), and the spindle could be used in combination with a distaff (Norw. *håndrokk*) (Stylegar, 2010:p.165). The whorl provided the spindle with speed and a steady rotation, and the weight of the spindle influenced the thread thickness (Kristoffersen & Nedrehagen, 2002:p.13; Andersson Strand & Mannering, 2011:pp.79–80). The presence of production tools in female early Iron Age graves indicates that textiles were made by women. In other contemporary societies, the activity of spinning, spindles and distaffs were symbolically linked to the female sphere. In Etruscan graves, bronze distaffs were deposited as signs of female elite identity (Gleba, 2011), and in Roman marriage rituals, the bride carried spindles as a female symbol (Cottica, 2007:p.221). Frankish, Norse and later North European sources associate spinning with the female line of the family – the *spinning side* or *distaff side* (Hofseth, 1985a; Stylegar, 2010).

5.4.1 Spindle whorls of bronze

The spindle whorl was a part of the new technology entering Scandinavian textile production on the eve of the third century. In this early phase, various materials were used to make spindle whorls. While steatite and serpentine were the most common materials, amber, glass, lead and bronze whorls also occurred (Hofseth, 1985b). Spindle whorls are solely found in female graves, reflecting an activity and role closely associated with women. In Roman period Denmark, spindle whorls made of bronze represented status objects (Lund Hansen, 1995; Ethelberg, 2000). It is possible that the spindle with bronze whorl was a part of the high-status role set of the 'lady of the house', similar to that of the weaver's battens and bronze keys of the Migration period (cf. Kristoffersen, 2000). Previously, a few attempts have been made to give an overview of the Norwegian bronze spindle whorls. While Myhre (2007) listed eight finds of bronze whorls, Stylegar (2013) listed 26 bronze whorls. In the online museum catalogues, 55 whorls are mentioned (Fig. 5.13; Appendix II). As the Danish Roman period material is far richer than the Norwegian, it is rather surprising that the total for Denmark is only 45 bronze whorls (Lund Hansen, 1995:p.228; Ethelberg, 2000:p.112).

While the majority of Norwegian bronze spindle whorls date to the late Roman period, a few might also be dated to the Migration period. About half of the bronze whorls were found in graves with one or more objects of glass, gold, silver or imported vessels. This seems to confirm the pattern observed in Denmark, where the bronze whorls are associated with high social status. Early grave finds from phases C1b and C2 include richly furnished female graves from Innbjoa (with serpent head arm ring), two from Bringsvær (one with a rosette fibula and one with a Hemmoor bucket) and the double grave from Kjorstad (serpent head finger ring). The bronze whorl in the rich Sætrang double grave shows that this category was also considered a status object in phase C3. The Norwegian bronze whorls are distributed along the coast and the inland waterways, and half of these are found concentrated in Rogaland (33%) and Vestfold (16%) (Table 5.8). This distribution correlates well with areas that have clusters of other centre indicators in the late Roman period (cf. Figs. 8.1 and 8.2). Bronze whorls are found in six of my centre localities: in Osterøy, Innbjoa, Avaldsnes, Hove, Nærbø and Lye.

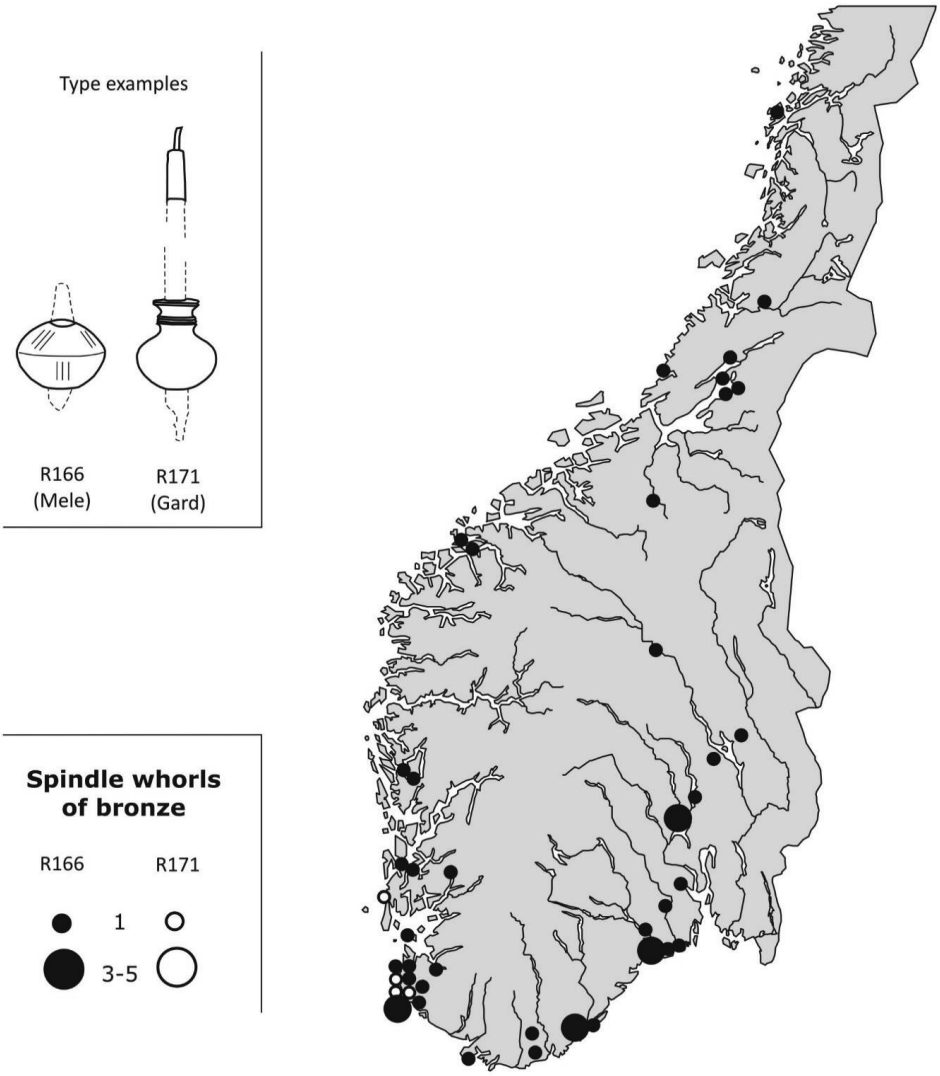


Fig. 5.13. Map of bronze spindle whorls in Norway, with examples of types R166 and R171 illustrated with whorls from the study area. The larger dots indicate local concentrations with more than 3 spindle whorls. The distribution of bronze spindle whorls largely corresponds with the areas with clusters of centre indicators in the Roman and Migration periods (cf. Fig. 8.1). Note that the R171 whorls of other materials are not mapped (cf. Table 5.9).

From the Innbjoa grave with a type R166 bronze whorl and a type R171 silver whorl, we know that these types were in use at the same time (Fig. 5.14). The distribution of bronze spindle whorls shows that the type R171 bronze spindle whorls occur only in Rogaland. If Stylegar's (2013) suggestion that the bronze whorls are imported is correct, this supports the same tendency as with the Hemmoor buckets of type E58: specific types of objects were imported to this region. The type R171 is a special kind of spindle whorl, which also existed in other materials. The only known silver and amber whorls of type R171 are also found in Rogaland (Table 5.9). The Innbjoa whorl of silver with an ornamented golden string is the only whorl of silver known in Norway. The amber whorl from Erga has its closest parallel in berloque-shaped amber beads. Stylegar (2013) assumes that the berloque-shaped amber beads directly inspired the R171 whorls. In Norway, such amber beads only occur in Rogaland, and it is likely that the berloque-shaped beads belong to the same milieu as the R171 whorls. At Hove, an amber bead was found in a longhouse of over 60 metres, suggesting what kind of milieus were associated with amber beads and type R171 whorls. It is possible that the large house at Hove (Old Norse '*temple*') was part of a ritual complex (see Chapter 7).

The possible link between whorls of valuable materials and ritual leaders should be investigated, as it could provide a tool for identifying ritual leaders. In addition to the close symbolic link with the female sphere, the spinning spindle and the thread are in fact also well-known symbols of destiny and divination. In Greco-Roman and Norse religions, and in Germanic tradition, spindles and other kinds of textile equipment were associated with fate, destiny and cult (Kristoffersen, 2000:p.137; Cottica, 2007; Stylegar, 2010). In line with this, Heide (2006a:pp.238–240, 2006b) argues that the Norse divination terms *ganðr* and *seiðr* etymologically are directly associated with thread and spinning. In a similar manner and based on various historical sources, Enright (2011:p.152) interprets the wooden spindle staffs as an early Iron Age symbol of female diviners – the 'staff bearers'. Enright's interpretation is interesting, especially with regard to the status spindle whorls of bronze, silver and amber. The interpretation opens up the possibility that women carrying spindle staffs with whorls of an outstanding character could in fact have had a position as ritual leaders.

Table 5.8. Number of bronze spindle whorls in Norway per county

Nordland	Nord-Trøndelag	Sør-Trøndelag	Møre og Romsdal	Hordaland	Rogaland	Vest-Agder	Aust-Agder	Telemark	Vestfold	Oppland	Buskerud	Hedmark	Total
1	5	2	2	3	18	3	4	1	9	3	3	1	55

Table 5.9. List of spindle whorls type R171 in Norway, all materials included. The only known berloque-shaped amber beads is also listed

Mus. no.	Material	Find-spot	Centre
B 4208	Silver/gold	Innbjoa, Vindafjord Rogaland	Bjoafjord
C 2211	Bronze	Gard, Haugesund, Rogaland	Avaldsnes
S 1290	Bronze	Høyland, Hå, Rogaland	Nærbø
S 8513	Bronze	Obrestad, Hå, Rogaland	Nærbø
S 8520	Bronze	Nord-Varhaug, Hå, Rogaland	Varhaug
S 4446	Amber	Erga, Klepp, Rogaland	Erga
S 12756	Amber (1 bead)	Hove, Sandnes, Rogaland	Hove
B 5290	Amber (5 beads)	Kvassheim, Hå, Rogaland	Vigrestad
C 24698	Porphyry	Bjørnestad, Lyngdal, Vest-Agder	Lista area
C 4277	Lead	Huseby, Larvik, Vestfold	Huseby

Fig. 5.14. The two spindle whorls from Innbjoa attached to wooden remains of the spindle. On top a bronze whorl R166 of ellipsoid shape and below a silver whorl of type R171 with a gold string around its neck. The silver whorl is a unique status object. Photo: Dias archive, archaeology, AHKR, UiB.

5.4.2 Rosette fibulas and relief brooches

The female dress of the late Roman and Migration periods was held together with brooches. Even if such brooches are not always gender-specific, certain status brooches seem to be associated with women of high social status. Similarly to the regional variations of the modern Norwegian national dress (Norw. *bunad*), the fine dress with jewellery often had regional features. Based on this regional variation, it is sometimes possible to identify elite interaction between different regions. Therefore, both the Roman period rosette fibulas and the Migration period relief brooches have been interpreted in terms of alliances and elite contact through gifts and intermarriage.

The rosette fibulas are silver fibulas with a high needle holder and with one or more gold-foil rosettes attached (Lund Hansen & Przybyla, 2010). Chronologically, the fibulas seem to be confined to phase C1b. The identified regional types originate in the Danish regions of Jutland and Zealand, as well as around the Baltic Sea and in eastern Europe. Six graves with rosette fibulas are known from Norwegian areas. They are all found in defined early Iron Age centres, and all seem to originate in Denmark. Based on the female grave from Rygge in Østfold, Straume (1988) introduced the hypothesis that the rosette fibula indicated a marriage alliance with Danish elites. The hypothesis has had great influence in Danish research, using the fibula distribution to map alliance networks (Lund Hansen, 1995; Ethelberg, 2000; Przybyla, 2011a, 2011b).

The only fibula from western Norway was found in a grave at Våråå, just south of Avaldsnes (Fig. 5.15). It was classified by Lund Hansen and Przybyla (2010) as type 4 A, a type of Zealandish origin (Table 5.10). The fibula belonged to a woman either carrying it as a visual marker of her regional origin, or wearing it as part of an imported fine dress obtained as a gift. Either way, the fibula might point towards contact between the Avaldsnes centre and elite milieus in Zealand. Herschend (2009:p.352) suggests an alternative scenario, where the fibula belonged to a Jutish princess taken as hostage after a Norwegian attack. This is, however, less likely as it is actually not of a Jutish type. Interestingly, in Norway the Jutish fibula types are all found in the eastern regions, while the Zealandish types instead seem to have a western focus.

Table 5.10. The Norwegian rosette fibulas as classified by Lund Hansen & Przybyla, 2010. Note that both Zealandish and Jutish fibulas are found in Bringsvær, a centre near the border between western and eastern Norway

Date	Museum number	Find-spot	Type	Origin
C1b	C 12229	Nordre Rør, Rygge, Østfold	1 A	Jutland
C1b	C 21352	Hamre, Vang, Oppland	1 A	Jutland
C1b	C 7773	Bringsvær, Grimstad, Aust-Agder	1 A	Jutland
C1b	C 8212	Bringsvær, Grimstad, Aust-Agder	3 B	Zealand
C1b	S 3196	Vårå, Karmøy, Rogaland	4 A	Zealand
C1b	T 471	Gjeite, Levanger, Nord-Trøndelag	3 A	Zealand

Fig. 5.15. A rosette fibula from Vårå, Karmøy (left) and a relief brooch from Garpestad, Time. Drawings by Helliesen (1909) and B. Odner, UM, Bergen.

Table 5.11. List of finds in the study area associated by Kristoffersen (2000:pp.154–160) with local and regional brooch traditions. This include a possible local D1-tradition in Klepp/Jæren, the D2b "Hauge master", as well as the associated D2b 'Rogaland group'. Two of the three burials found outside the major centres defined by this study, stem from Sandeid and Os. These might both be considered minor local centres based on local clusters of large burial mounds (see Chapter 6). The find from Hovland is situated along a route connecting the production regions Jæren and Vest-Agder. Another fragmented relief brooch from Hæve in Voss might be added to the 'Rogaland group', as the museum record claims that the ornaments were originally identical to the Garpestad brooch (Kristoffersen, 2000:p.342)

Date	Museum number	Find-spot	Centre
D1	B 2271, 2292	Krosshaug, Hauge, Klepp, Rogaland	Tinghaug
D1	B 2973	Anda, Klepp, Rogaland	Tinghaug
D1	C 21407	Ådnehaugen, Tu, Klepp, Rogaland	Tinghaug
D1	S 7131	Erga, Klepp, Rogaland	Erga
D2b	B 4000	Revehushaugen, Hauge, Klepp, Rogaland	Tinghaug
D2b	S 2451	Nord-Braut, Klepp, Rogaland	Tinghaug
D2b	B 1784	Garpestad, Time, Rogaland	Lye
D2b	C 1638	Lunde, Sandnes, Rogaland	Hove
D2b	S 440	Torland, Hå, Rogaland	Nærbø
D2b	S 2276	Hovland, Helleland, Eigersund, Rogaland	-
D2b	S 2695	Østbø, Vindafjord, Rogaland	(Sandeid)
D2b	B 6090	Døsen, Os, Hordaland	(Os)

As was discussed in Chapter 4, clusters of objects ornamented with animal style might point out many of the Migration period centres. The basis for this interpretation is the assumption that the production and spread of such objects were controlled by elites. Relief brooches make up the largest category of ornamented objects and these are mainly found in clusters with other ornamented objects in the centres (Figs. 5.15 and 5.16). The relief brooches comprise a wide category of ornamented brooches, showing variation in size, composition and style (Sjøvold, 1993; Kristoffersen, 2000). Magnus (2001) pointed out that while the relief brooches were made of silver or bronze, these status brooches were often gilt to give the impression that they were golden.

Similarities in such status brooches may indicate possible links between elite milieus. Based partly on previous work by Nissen Meyer (1934), Kristoffersen (2000) identified local and regional traditions in the production of relief brooches (Table 5.11). In phase D1, ornamented objects from three graves within the Tinghaug centre seem to indicate the presence of a local tradition, where a brooch found at Erga might also be included (Kristoffersen, 2000:p.154). In D2b, a regional tradition can be distinguished: the 'Rogaland group'. A brooch from Tinghaug (Hauge) is associated with the so-called 'Hauge master', who might have played an important initial role in the development of the 'Rogaland group' (Kristoffersen, 2000:pp.157–8). The regional tradition was also known outside the Jæren origin: in Rogaland, Hordaland and eastern Norway (Kristoffersen, 2000:p.166). The outwards spread of this regional tradition might indicate the wide influences of the Jæren elites at this time (Kristoffersen, 2000:p.193).

If the local and regional traditions are interpreted in terms of contact and alliances between different centres, where variations in style were used intentionally to signify bonds between elite milieus, then the Tinghaug centre seems to have played a key role. In D1, a possible local tradition is identified in the Tinghaug centre, with a link to the Erga centre, a short distance to the west of Tinghaug. In D2b, Tinghaug seems to retain its special position in the production and spread of relief brooches. Apart for the brooches from Tinghaug, 'Rogaland group' brooches are found in nearby centres such as Nærbø, Lye and Hove, in addition to a handful of other finds in and outside the study area. In this way, goldsmith traditions seem to link the various centres of Jæren.

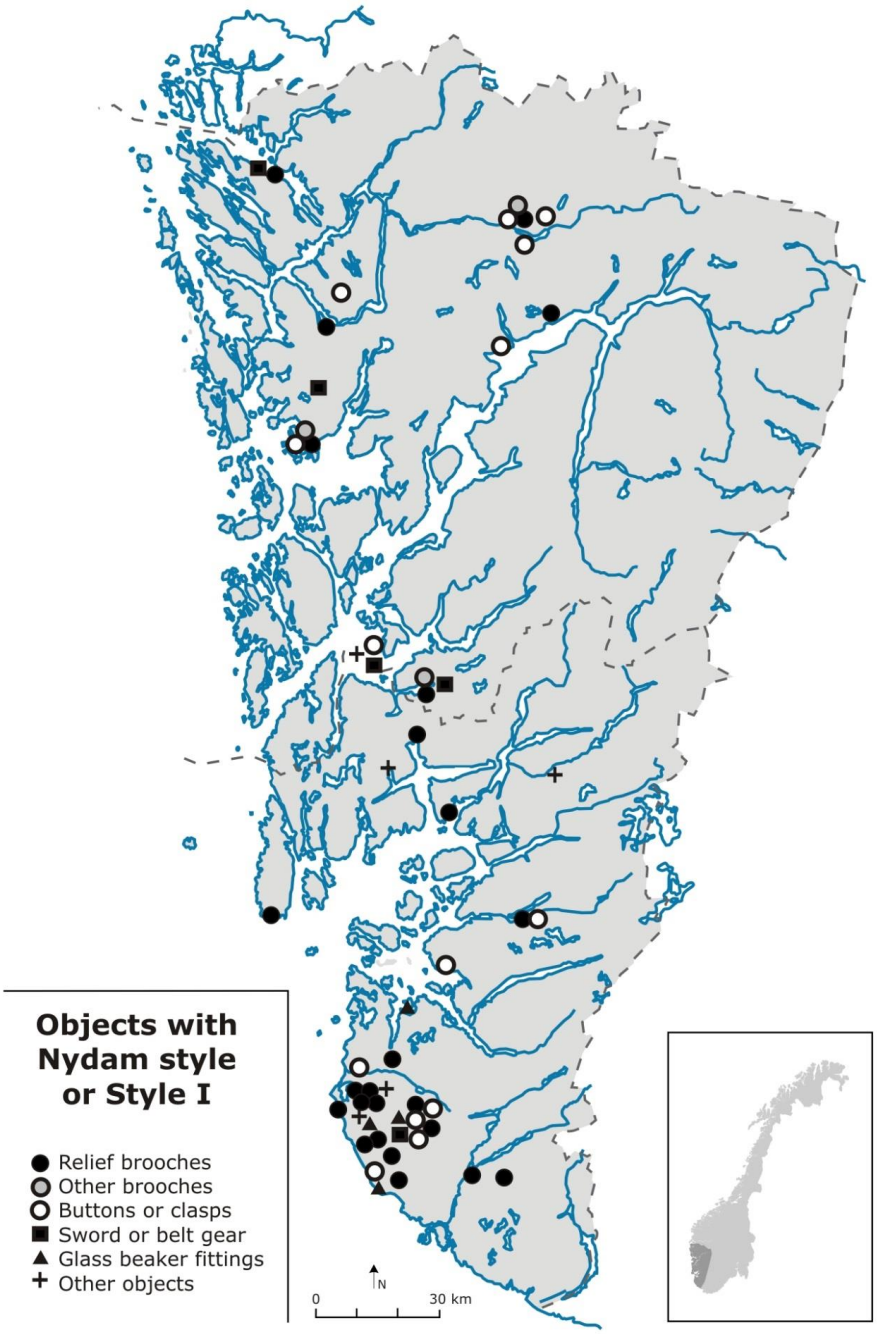


Fig. 5.16. Map of objects decorated with Nydam style or Salin's Style I in Hordaland and Rogaland. Based on Kristoffersen, 2000, 2002b.

5.5 Status weapon gear

Weapon gear occurs in certain male graves and is closely linked to the male sphere. In this subchapter, in an attempt to trace military hierarchies, I will examine weapon graves, focussing mainly on status weapon gear associated with retinue leaders. My approach is based on the results from research on the Illerup A bog find, dated to C1b (Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær, 1996; Ilkjær, 1997, 2001). In what has been interpreted as the sacrificed weapon gear of a defeated army, a military hierarchy was identified based on variation in the material quality of the deposited weapons. While custom-made sword and shield gear with fittings of silver, bronze or gold reflected a few officers of levels 1 and 2, the many ordinary warriors of level 3 had standardised, mass-produced weapons (Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær, 1996:pp.484–5). It has been assumed that the officers controlled the weapon gear and distributed weapons to their warriors. A similar hierarchy is observable in Norwegian weapon graves of the late Roman period (see, for example, Solberg, 2000, 2009; Grimm, 2008; Stylegar, 2008, 2011).

I will attempt to see whether weapon gear of high material quality might be connected to army hierarchies in my study area in the late Roman period and also in the Migration period. The patterns observed will be compared to other Norwegian and Scandinavian studies. In Norway, the distribution of weapon graves in these periods shows clear chronological and regional variation (Solberg, 2009; Stylegar, 2011; Ystgaard, 2014). The regional variation in the number of weapon graves coincides with the regional distribution of belt stones, both categories associated with men (Solberg, 2009). Solberg therefore argues that the distribution of weapon graves shows a valid pattern of regional variation, reflecting regional proportions of weapon graves. Härke (1992) problematized the association of weapons with warriors in a study of Anglo-Saxon weapon graves. Instead, he suggested that weapons in graves reflected various social variables such as status, ethnicity, gender and warrior ideology. Although this is an important reminder that our interpretations are simplifications of a complex past, my study examines weapons in graves mainly as possible traces of various levels of fighting warriors. Based on the evidence from Illerup A, there seems to be little doubt that the weapons found in the graves were meant for actual warfare.

The weapon burial rite of the Roman and Migration periods seems to testify to a particularly strong link between weapon gear and the buried person. The deceased person and the weapons were either both buried unburnt and whole, or both burnt and transformed from their original shapes. These peculiar treatments associated mainly with weapons seem to imply that weapons were perceived as object categories intimately connected to their carrier, and they were put to rest together with their carrier with a similar treatment (cf. Grinsell, 1960). The parallel treatment in death of the warrior and his weapons indicates that the weapons played a role as a material part of the warrior's identity; in other words, a 'distributed personhood' (cf. Olsen, 2010).

In my examination of status weapon gear of bronze, silver and gold, the main focus is on the sword gear. Much training was needed to handle the sword properly in battle, and swords are interpreted as a weapon type associated with elites (Ystgaard, 2014). The Illerup hierarchy furthermore indicates that high-quality shield gear was similarly an important part of the elite weaponry in phases C1b–C2. While the use of status shield gear was confined to this phase, status sword gear is found in the whole of the period 200–550 AD. As the weapon grave material of phases C3-D2b is not directly chronologically comparable to the Illerup finds, the ranking of these weapon graves is rather judged in terms of similarities to other Scandinavian high-status weapon graves, or by association with Myhre's 'chieftains' graves' and major centre localities.

The status weapons were objects that were not only lethal and frightening in a pure functional sense; their aesthetical qualities provided their carriers with extraordinary qualities – visually marking the leaders in command on the battlefield, perhaps also in society. By mapping the distribution of status weapon gear in my study area, it is my aim to identify the distribution of retinues at the various centres. The patterns observed in my study area will be compared to other regional studies in Norway and Scandinavia, focussing on the ratio between graves with status weapons and graves with ordinary weapon gear. Finally, I will examine whether the long-term development in western Norway is similar to that of central Norway, from elite control of weapons in the Roman period to a wider weapon ownership in the Migration period (Ystgaard, 2014).

5.5.1 Weapon graves of the Vennolum and By groups (C1b–C2)

Several studies have indicated that the three-level hierarchy from Illerup, with army leaders, officers and warriors, is observable in the Norwegian weapon grave material (Gansum, 2000; Solberg, 2000, 2009; Stylegar, 2008, 2011; Grimm, 2008). In Norway, the distribution of weapon graves in the third century shows a clear focus on inland eastern Norway (Bemmann & Hahne, 1995, Figs. 29-31), with few weapon graves in my study area. However, although rather few weapon graves in the study area are dated with any certainty to the first part of the late Roman period (C1b–C2), a surprisingly high percentage of these graves contained status weapons supposedly connected to the two highest levels of the military hierarchy. This might support the hypothesis that weapons were at this time controlled by the elites (Ystgaard, 2014:pp.140–41). Weapon gear of the officer levels was characterised by shield bosses of silver and bronze and sword sheaths with gilt silver foil. In the study area, such shield bosses are found at Sjo in Kvinnherad, Utbjoa in Vindafjord and Avaldsnes I in Karmøy, with splendid swords from Avaldsnes I, Erga in Klepp and Gjerde in Etne (Fig. 5.18).

One silver shield boss and ten bronze bosses are known from Norway (Appendix II). While all the shield bosses of bronze from the rest of Norway have been discussed in connection with the Illerup finds, the bronze bosses from my study area are rarely discussed (but see Solberg, 2000, 2009; Joki, 2006). The bronze shield bosses from Sjo and Utbjoa are of different types. While the Sjo shield boss is of a heavy bronze alloy with thick plates, the Utbjoa boss is much lighter. The shield boss from Sjo was a single find, found in the top of a large burial mound. Other parts of the grave might yet be unearthed, as the mound was not fully excavated (Ringstad, 1986:p.169). This shield boss has been repaired by adding a small plate on the inside, and it is likely that this robust shield boss has actually been used in battle. In its present state, the top of the shield boss is badly damaged. This might either be due to preservation issues, battle damage or a destruction of the shield boss in the burial ritual. Ringstad judges the shield boss from Sjo as being mostly similar to type R217. Of the other shield bosses from Utbjoa, only a fourth is preserved. It was part of a weapon grave, with fragments of a sword and a spearhead (type R208), but no other context information is known. It is

possible that the fragmentation of the weapons indicates that they were ritually destroyed in the burial ritual. The Utbjoa shield boss has been compared to shield bosses from Vimose (Engelhardt, 1869, pl. 5, nos. 10–11). From their fragmented state and the lack of good find combinations, it is hard to date the two bronze shield bosses. However, as the eight other Norwegian bronze bosses stem from C1b, the same is probably also true for those two from Sjo and Utbjoa (Joki, 2006:p.77).

The shield boss of silver from Avaldsnes was first acknowledged as a shield boss by Slomann (1964, 1973; Fig. 5.17). Shetelig (1912a, Fig. 132) wrongfully reconstructed silver fragments from the find as a silver cup, which was in turn seen by Eggers (1951) as a unique import type, E176. Slomann instead suggested that parts of Shetelig's silver cup belonged to a shield boss, while she believed that the silver rim actually belonged to a silver cup. The silver rim was later identified by Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær (1996:p.469) as fittings for the sword chape. However, Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær (1996:p.293, Abb. 201) thought that a mushroom-shaped silver knob belonged to the shield boss. Instead, as the knob is hollow, it probably stems from the sword handle.[3]

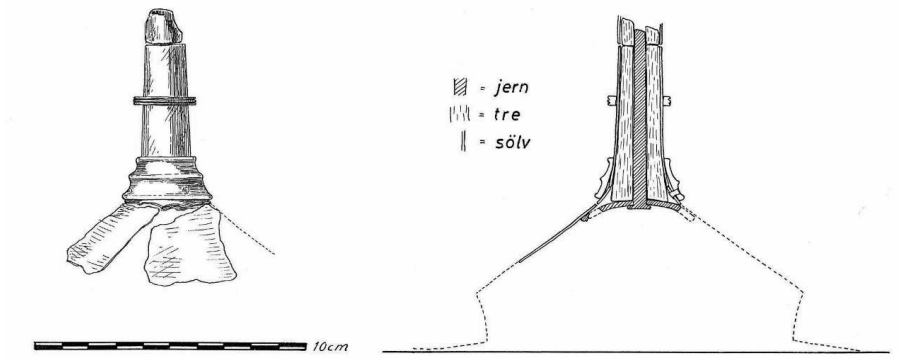


Fig. 5.17. A reconstruction of the Avaldsnes I shield boss, drawn by Storm for Slomann in 1972. The silver fragments are shown on the left, with a profile drawing and reconstruction to the right. Original captions: jern = iron, tre = wood, sölv = silver. Modified after a sketch in the top.arch., UM, UiB.

[3] My previous interpretations and illustrations of the Avaldsnes weapons are wrongful, as I followed Slomann's interpretation of the silver rim as a cup and Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær's interpretation of the silver knob as part of a shield boss (see Reiersen, 2009, 2010). A new examination of the Avaldsnes find will be published in 2017 (Stylegar & Reiersen, in prep). The publication will include several new interpretations of the various objects in this richly furnished grave.

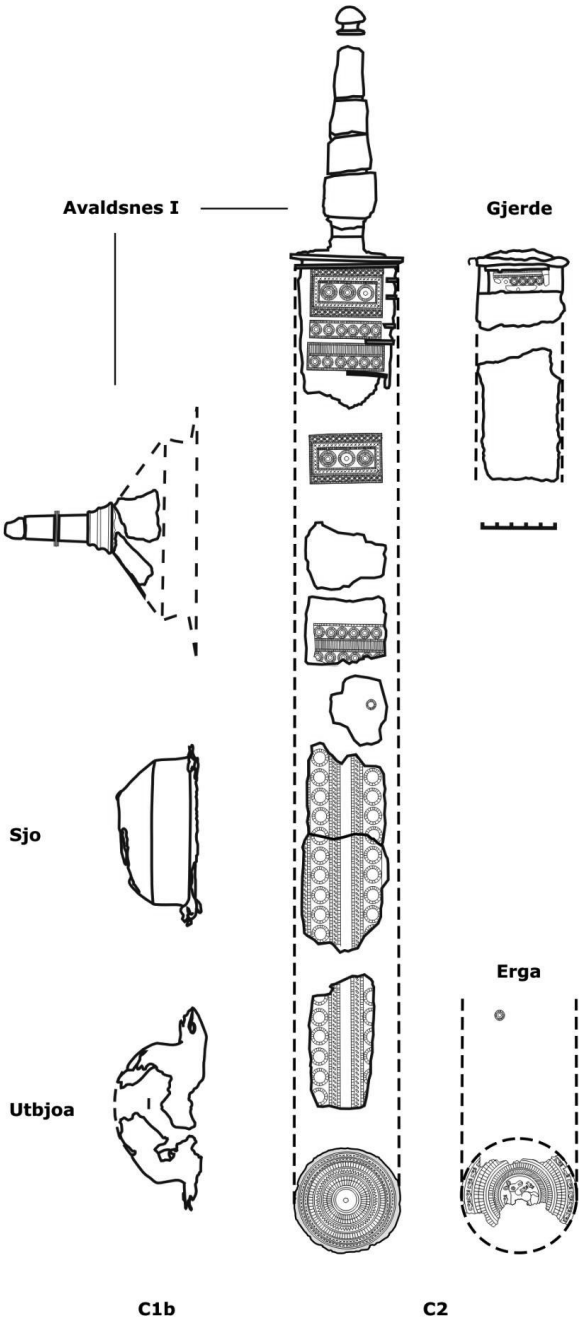


Fig. 5.18. Status weapons from C1b–C2 in Hordaland and Rogaland. To the left shield bosses of silver and bronze from Avaldsnes, Sjo and Utbjoa and to the right gilded sword sheath fittings from Avaldsnes, Gjerde and Erga.

The sword and the shield boss from Avaldsnes might be interpreted as an exclusive weapon set that has been custom-made for a high-ranking officer – an 'army leader' according to the Illerup hierarchy. The sword mounting consists of a silver plate richly ornamented with gilded silver foil, which mostly continues down to the ornamented circular chape of gilded silver foil. The sword handle is ended on top with a mushroom-shaped silver pommel knob. A loose, rectangular fitting might stem from the bandoleer, and an ornamented circular gold foil might be part of a disc brooch (Stylegar & Reiersen, *in prep*.). Chronologically, the grave find might be put in the By weapon group, or Birch Iversen's (2010a) group SkWg-7, on the transition from C1b to C2.

Two of the closest parallels to the Avaldsnes sword have been found in the study area: one sword mounting from Etne and one sword chape from Erga. At Gjerde in Etne, parts of a similar sword sheath were found, as a stray find near the sea at the end of what might previously have been a riverbed. I here considers it to be part of a grave find from Gjerde, but the river context might alternatively be interpreted as a sacrificial context. The sword sheath from Gjerde has got a mouthpiece of bronze with ornaments of gilded silver foil, similar to those on the Avaldsnes sheath (Shetelig, 1912a:pp.60–61; Joki, 2006, no. 96). The Avaldsnes sword chape is of the circular type C with gilded silver. The type is quite rare and has mainly been found in western Scandinavia (Ilkjær & Lønnstrup, 1974). Two similar sword chapes were found in Norway at Erga, Klepp, Rogaland and Rømme, Orkdal, Sør-Trøndelag, with an additional Swedish find from Simris, Scania as well as a Danish find from Vils in Jutland. The Rømme sword is a parallel both with regard to the mouthpiece and the chape from the Avaldsnes sword (Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær, 1996, Figs. 281, 283, 289, 290). The chape from the plundered Erga grave is decorated with a quadruped and birds (Rau, 2005). Like the Avaldsnes I grave, the Erga grave contained a status ring of gold (finger ring B17).

As we have seen, few weapon graves in the study area are dated with any certainty to the phases C1b–C2, but a large percentage of these graves contained high-status weapon gear. Following the definitions of Grimm (2008), below it has been attempted to group these graves according to the Illerup hierarchy (Table 5.12). Gear, predominantly of iron, is identified as level 3, gear mainly of bronze as level 2 and gear

predominantly of silver or gilded silver as level 1. The rich Avaldsnes I grave is considered a very certain level 1 grave. In addition, Grimm (2008) interpreted the Erga grave as that of an army leader of level 1, based on the presence of a sword with gilded silver foil. Løken and Myhre (2008, Fig. 30) instead suggested that Erga is a level 2 grave. Therefore, it is considered here to be either a level 1 or 2 grave. The sword from Etne had fittings of gilded silver foil, but with a bronze plate underneath, indicating a level 2 officer. The two graves with shield bosses of bronze, from Sjo and Utbjoa, are also considered to be level 2 graves. In addition to these, a grave from Hå prestegard in Hå had a sword with a pommel knob of bronze, and fittings of iron and bronze. It is here considered a level 2 grave. The rest of the graves are interpreted as ordinary warrior graves of level 3. Among these, none of the three graves from Hordaland contained a sword. Of the two graves from Rogaland, the Øksnevad grave contained a sword. This grave is, however, among the most uncertain in my list, as it is probably a mixed find due to the presence of Migration period objects. While swords occur in level 3 graves in other Norwegian regions (Grimm, 2008; Stylegar, 2008), they seem to be mostly confined to levels 1–2 in my study area. Level 1 and level 2 graves are found in connection with some major centres identified by Myhre (1987a) and Ringstad (1992) – Halsnøy, Bjoafjord, Etne, Avaldsnes, Erga and Nærbø – while level 3 graves are often found at some distance from the defined centres. The map shows two possible groups of level 1–2 weapon graves, on each side of the Boknafjord (Fig. 5.19).

Table 5.12. List of certain C1b–C2 weapon graves in Hordaland and Rogaland, listed after Ilkjær, 1990; Bemmann & Hahne, 1995; Joki, 2006. The most precious metal present in the weapon gear is listed alongside the suggested rank compared to the Illerup A military hierarchy

Find-spot	B&H Group	Material	Level	Reference	Museum no.
Odda, Odda	By	Iron	3	B&H no. 282	B 6760
Røldal, Odda	Vennolum	Iron	3	B&H no. 285	B 792-795
Berge, Kvinnherad		Iron	3	Illkj 1990 no. 28	B 1213-14
Sjo, Kvinnherad		Bronze	2	Joki 2006, p. 77	B 9254
Gjerde, Etne		Bronze, silver/gilt	2	B&H no. 252	B 6207
Utbjoa, Vindafjord		Bronze	2	Joki 2006, p. 77	B 6012
Avaldsnes I, Karmøy	By	Silver, silver/gilt	1	B&H no. 208	B 314, 605-17
Bjelland, Hjelmeland	By	Iron	3	B&H no. 209	S 393
Øksnevad, Klepp	By	Iron	3	B&H no. 228	S 6009
Erga, Klepp	By	Silver/gilt	1/2	B&H no. 210	S 1911
Hå prestegård, Hå	Vennolum	Bronze	2	B&H no. 216	S 4152

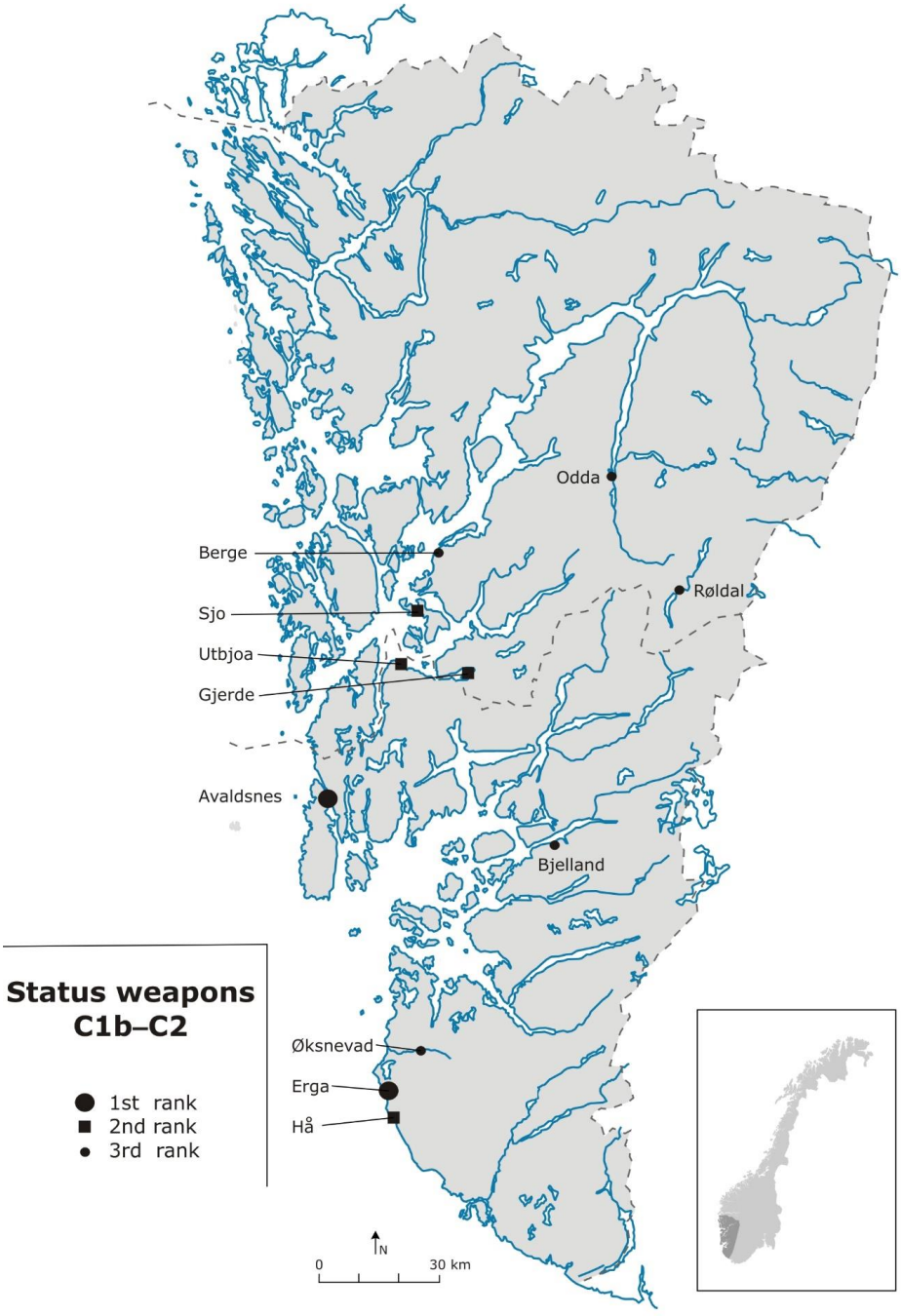


Fig. 5.19. Map of status weapons from C1b–C2 in Hordaland and Rogaland. Although graves of 3rd rank are included on the map, these are not considered status weapon graves but rather 'normal' weapon graves.

The weapon grave hierarchy in my study area might then be compared with the results from studies of the Illerup A bog find, and with weapon graves from Sweden, inland eastern Norway and from the Sogn settlement district in western Norway (Ilkjær, 2001; Grimm, 2008; Stylegar, 2008). In Illerup, the ratios between groups of weapon gear are thought to reflect the gear and hierarchy of an actual fighting army. In contrast, weapons in graves are the result of processes of selection, where regional practices guided who were allowed to be equipped with weapon gear in their graves.

From the gear of about 400 warriors in Illerup A, nine were regarded as level 1 army leaders (2%) and 36 as officers of level 2 (9%), with 350 common warriors of level 3 (89%) (Ilkjær, 2001, Fig. 3). Stylegar's (2008) study of about 150 eastern Norwegian weapon graves from the C phases showed similar ratios between the three levels of the hierarchy: about 1% were level 1, 12% level 2 and 88% level 3. The upper level was not present in the eastern Norwegian graves from C1b to C2, but seems present in C3. Studies of weapon graves in Sogn and mainland Sweden have, however, shown that this ratio is not identical in all regions. Examining 46 weapon graves on mainland Sweden, Ilkjær (2001) found five graves of level 1 (10%), 16 of level 2 (35%) and 25 graves of level 3 (54%). In a limited material of six graves in Sogn, Grimm (2008) found one level 1 grave, one to two level 2 graves and two to three level 3 graves.

If we take a closer look at the percentage of level 3 graves, the 89% and 88% of Illerup and eastern Norway are contrasted by the 54% and *c.* 50% of Sweden and Sogn. In the latter two regions, level 1–2 graves are about as common as the level 3 graves. This is comparable to the ratio in the limited number of 11 weapon graves in my study area. Here, the level 3 graves make up only 46%, with officers' graves of levels 1–2 more frequent (54%). If the Illerup material reflects an actual ratio between officers and warriors, the few graves in my study area do not necessarily reflect an army smaller than the many eastern Norwegian weapon graves. Instead, it might rather suggest that the use of weapons in graves was more restricted. In my study area, it seems that it was mostly the highest-ranking officers who were allowed weapons in their graves. This might imply that officers had some monopoly on the ownership of weapons, while the warriors generally did not own their weapons and were not buried with them.

5.5.2 Swords of the Mollestad group (C3b)

The trend within the study area from the third century (C1b–C2) of relatively few and relatively high-status weapon graves seems to continue into the fourth century (C3). The status of the C3 weapon graves is judged in terms of similarities to Scandinavian high-status weapon graves, and by association with 'chieftains' graves' and centre localities. Altogether seven graves from Bemmann and Hahne's Mollestad weapon group (C3b) are known from Hordaland and Rogaland, and all of these contained sword gear (Table 5.13). Geographically, the concentration is clearly in south Rogaland, and only one grave from this group is found in Hordaland.[4] In addition, one stray find of a lance head from the older Vøien group (C3a) is known from Rekve, Voss. The Mollestad-type swords (R197) are quite exclusive objects, with bronze fittings with fine ornaments on the sword sheath and with bronze sword handles (Fig. 5.21). According to Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær (1999), the blades of such swords are Roman imports. The distribution in Norway of the Vøien and Mollestad groups shows a focus on eastern Norway and on Sogn (Bemmann & Hahne, 1995, Figs. 33–34).

Table 5.13. Certain C3 weapon graves in Hordaland and Rogaland mainly after Bemmann & Hahne, 1995. The most precious material present in the weapon gear is listed, as well as the presence or not of swords. The Vøien group spearhead stem from Rekve in Voss, and not from Fadnes in Voss (see notes in catalogue for B7525–6 and Fett, 1956a:p.5). The bronze fitting from Skeiseid, Tysvær is a metal detector find from 2016

Find-spot	B&H Group	Sword	Material	Reference	Museum no.
Rekve I, Voss	Vøien	No	Iron	B&H no. 250	B 7525
Mele I, Osterøy	Mollestad	Yes	Bronze	Reiersen 2011b	BM 1861.315
Skeiseid, Tysvær	Mollestad	Yes	Bronze	New find	S 13628
Litlaland, Sola	Mollestad	Yes	Bronze, silver	B&H no. 226	S 2595
Jæren	Mollestad	Yes	Bronze	B&H no. 221	B 2859
Nærland, Hå	Mollestad	Yes	Iron	B&H no. 229	S 1466-72
Håland I, Hå	Mollestad	Yes	Bronze	B&H no. 217	S 4068
Håland II, Hå	Mollestad/ Kvamme	Yes	Bronze	B&H no. 218	S 4069

[4] In 2012, a weapon grave was excavated at Stend, Bergen in Nordhordland (Reiersen, 2012b). Based especially on the decoration on a bucket-shaped pot, the grave was tentatively dated to C3b or possibly early D1. Among the grave goods, belt and strap buckles, two arrowheads and the fragments of a sword blade were recognisable. A larger bundle of iron objects was taken out in plaster, which has not yet been examined. However, X-ray photos might indicate parts of a bent sword with a handle and chape of metal. If the C3b date is correct, this is the second sword of this date known from Hordaland.

In eastern Norway, the male grave from the double grave at Sætrang was interpreted by Stylegar (2008) as representing a level 1 grave from C3. In the grave, a Mollestad-type sword with regular bronze fittings was associated with a sword belt with fittings of silver and gilded silver (Slomann, 1959). In 2010, another grave of similar type was found at Seberg, Ringsaker in Hedmark (see a short, tentative description of grave 3 in Johansson, 2011). Although plundered, the grave included finds such as weapons, silver fittings for a horn and gaming pieces of glass, parts of a sword belt and a small gold-foil fragment. The gold-foil and belt pieces might stem from a sword belt of similar type and date to the one from Sætrang. These two C3 graves are assumed to reflect the top level of the eastern Norwegian late Roman weapon graves (cf. Stylegar, 2008). Ilkjær similarly considered the closest Swedish parallels to the Sætrang grave among the Swedish level 1 graves of C3 (Ilkjær, 2001, Fig. 4, cf. also Rau, 2014).

Moving back to western Norway, no sword belts of the Sætrang type were found with the Mollestad swords in Hordaland and Rogaland. However, the inclusion of this type of sword in the Sætrang grave indicates that these swords generally belonged to the weapon gear of high-ranking officers. Among the six swords found in south Rogaland, this is particularly evident on a sword from Litlaland in the Hafrsfjord centre, where the bronze chape had a circular middle piece of silver. In a similar manner, a sword from the Nydam bog find had a silver chape middle piece, as well as gilt silver foil on the mouthpiece and the sword belt (Jørgensen & Vang Petersen, 2003, Figs. 7-8). Both of the weapon graves from Håland in Nærbø had bronze sword handles. The Håland I handle was probably hourglass shaped, with pommel ornaments of stylised animal heads. Its sword mounting had ornaments depicting stylised bird heads, similar to a mounting from the Kragehul bog find (Vang Petersen, 2003, Fig. 9). A metal detector find from Skeiseid in Tysvær included a bronze strap fitting identical to the one on the Sætrang sword (R 195). Although this is a stray find, it probably stems from a grave.

The sword from Mele in Osterøy deserves some attention, as it has never before been examined together with the rest of the Norwegian finds (Reiersen, 2011b). So far, it is the only known Mollestad-type sword in Hordaland. Both the bronze strap fittings and the bronze chape are badly damaged, but their shape and concentric ornaments have

clear parallels, e.g. in swords from the Nydam bog find in Jutland and from Fremløse in Funen (Worsaae, 1859, Fig. 330; Engelhardt, 1865, pl. VIII, no. 34, pl. IX, nos. 48–50; Behmer, 1939, pl. XXIII, 4). The Fremløse specimen has got an hourglass-shaped sword handle of bronze, somewhat similar to the Håland I sword handle. It should then be noted that a lost 'gold-like' sword handle was mentioned during a survey at Mele in the 1960s, which might indicate that the Mele I sword was originally found with an hourglass-shaped bronze handle (Fett, 1965a; Reiersen, 2011b:p.40).

The C3 weapon graves seem to confirm the pattern from C1b–C2 that weapons were confined to the graves of elites. Except for the Skeiseid sword fitting, the C3 weapon graves were found within the major centres defined in this thesis. The Vøien group (C3a) lance head from Rakne in Voss comes from the same farm as a gold spiral mouthpiece in D2b (see below), at the Dyrvedalen core of the Voss centre. The lance head was a stray find from an area with many large mounds. The only C3b sword with silver in my study area, from Litlaland in Sola, was found relatively near a cluster of boathouses in the Hafrsfjord centre. In Sætrang and Nydam, such swords were associated with the highest military level. Four of the other Mollestad-type swords might be directly associated with elite milieus. The Mele grave stems from the Osterøy centre, found at the same farm as the only C3 'chieftains' grave' in Hordaland, a rich female grave (Table 3.1), and a D2b weapon grave including a sword with silver chape. Håland, with two graves with swords with bronze fittings, is situated within the Nærbø centre. From the Håland II grave with bronze fittings comes a glass beaker, confirming the high status of the deceased. Although no bronze fittings are preserved on the sword from Nærland in the Nærbø centre, the grave is among Myhre's 'chieftains' graves'. Even though the Skeiseid sword is found outside a centre, the farm name has a sacral prefix 'skeid' and suffix 'eid' ('portage'), indicating a farm of strategic importance.

In conclusion, like in C1b–C2, the weapon graves of C3 seem to reflect a military elite situated at major centres (Fig. 5.20). It is tempting to interpret the Litlaland sword with chape partly of silver as part of a level 1 grave, perhaps associated with boathouses at the Hafrsfjord centre. The other C3b graves are considered here to be level 2 graves, having either bronze sword gear or being among Myhre's defined 'chieftains' graves'.

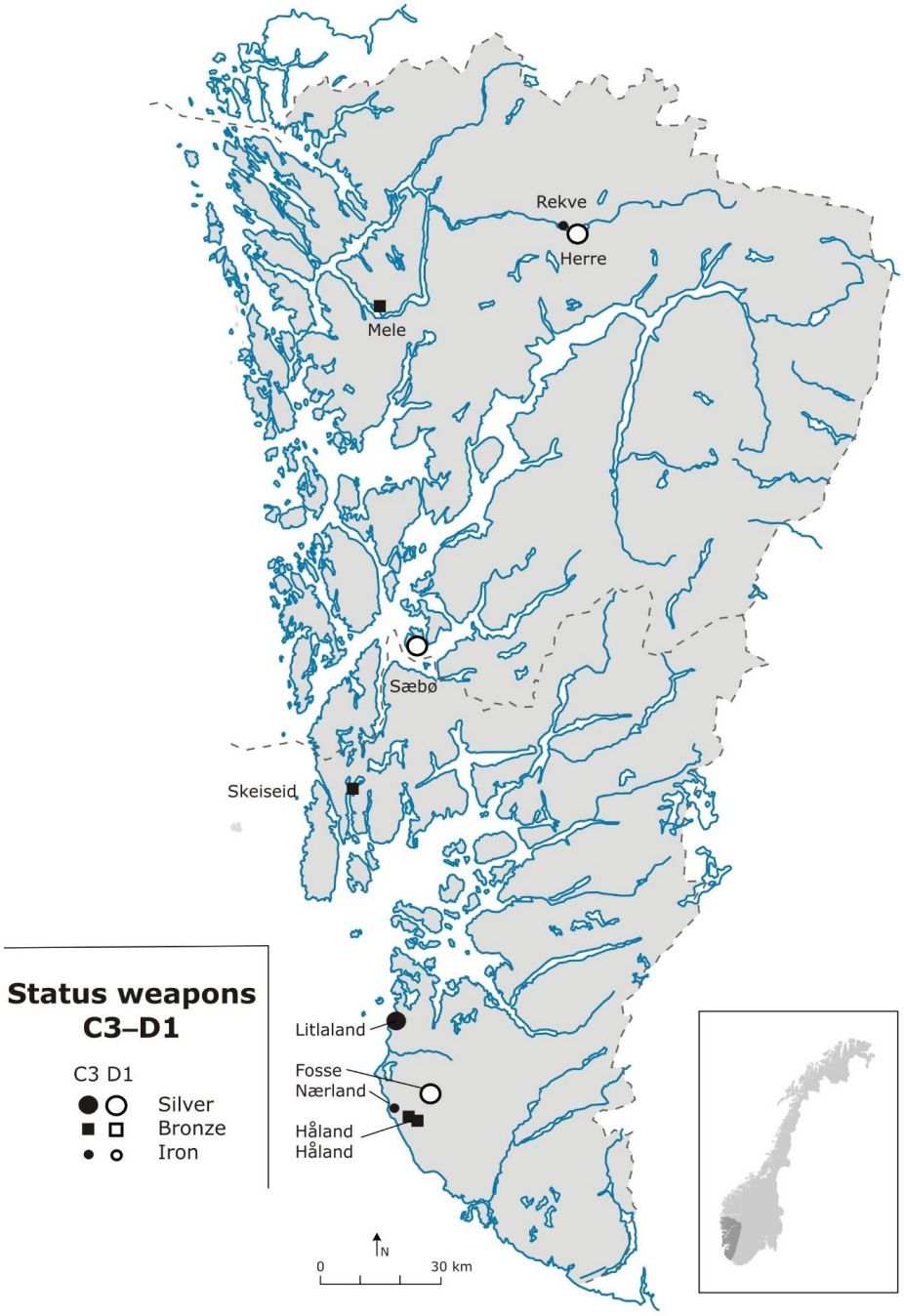


Fig. 5.20. Map of status weapons from C3–D1 in Hordaland and Rogaland.

5.5.3 Migration period sword gear of precious metal (D1–D2b)

A dramatic change happened in the frequency of weapon graves in the Migration period. Although a handful of graves generally dated to the late Roman period might be added to the 19 graves listed above as being quite certainly from these two centuries, the number is low compared to graves from the subsequent one and a half centuries. If one slightly adjusts the number of graves listed by Sørheim (2010, Appendix 1), mainly based on Fett (1940) and Bemmann and Hahne (1995), then 166 weapon graves are known from Hordaland and Rogaland. Although divergent numbers of graves have been presented, the increase in weapon graves in western Norway forms a very clear pattern (Kristoffersen, 2000, Table 24; Solberg, 2009, Table 2; Stylegar, 2011, Figs. 5–6). However, in eastern Norway, the chronological tendency is quite the opposite.

As seen on the distribution maps of Bemmann and Hahne (1995, Figs. 29–39), geographically the late Roman focus in eastern Norway (Gutteberg to By groups) gradually shifted towards western Norway in the Migration period. In phase C3 (Vøien/Mollestad), the graves clustered in an axis from eastern Norway to Sogn, while in D1 (Kvamme/Tveito) my study area played a greater role in a distribution covering larger parts of eastern and western Norway. In phase D2a (Vestly/Øvsthus), the largest number of finds occured within the study area, with clusters in Jæren, Sunnhordland and Nordhordland. In D2b, the western Norwegian focus was upheld, with a cluster in Hordaland. Most of the Migration period weapon graves in my study area stem from D2a–D2b, making it possible to examine the D2 situation in more detail.

While relatively few weapon graves are known from phase D1, three graves had sword gear of silver (Fig. 5.21). Gilt silver fittings for sword sheaths are known from two sites in Hordaland: Herre in Voss and Sæbø on Borgundøy in Kvinnherad. The rectangular fitting from Herre had ornaments of rectangular fields and St. Andrew's crosses. The fittings from Sæbø had heart-like patterns, and in addition a strap fitting decorated with Nydam-style animals (Kristoffersen, 2000:pp.336–338, no. F66). The Herre sword also had a chape of bronze with a lower part of silver. An additional grave with status sword gear is known from Rogaland. From Fosse in Time comes a D1 weapon grave with

silver fittings for a Roman officer's belt of the Vieuxville type (Böhme, 1974, Fundliste 12). These three instances of sword parts of silver from D1 might be associated with an officer level. The Sæbø weapon grave also included a gold coin and a bronze vessel, as one of the 'chieftains' graves' of D1. The three graves were all found at centres discussed in the thesis: Voss, Bjoafjord and Lye (Fig. 5.20).

While the overall number of weapon graves increased in D2a, the number of graves with sword gear of bronze and silver remained low. One grave at the Tinghaug centre stands out with a possible instance of sword gear of gold. The D1–D2a 'chieftains' grave' in Ådnehaugen, Tu contained both glass, bronze and gold (Fig. 7.34, Hauken, 2014:p.150). As the two gold rings might belong to the sword gear (Bøe, 1926:p.38), this could be the only Migration period grave with sword gear of gold. A D2a grave from Erga with sword chape of gilded silver might have been a subordinate officer.

Six further graves with sword gear of silver and bronze are known from D2a, with a main distributional focus in Nordhordland (Fig. 5.22). Two possible instances of bronze fittings for sword sheaths come from Tau and Ødemotland in Rogaland. Bronze sword chapes are known from Voll, Hå in Rogaland and from Solheim, Masfjorden in Hordaland, while a cocked-hat pommel of bronze comes from Nedre Seim, Granvin in Hordaland. Another pommel of silver is found at Mosevoll, Osterøy, and a silver sword chape comes from Hauge, Os, both in Nordhordland (Fig. 5.20). In general, sword chapes are rarely found in Norwegian weapon graves of the Migration period. Outside the study area, Fett (1940:p.71) lists five others including the rich graves from Evebø and Snartemo. The Evebø grave (D1–D2a) was a 'chieftains' grave' with a sword with chape and fittings of silver. By comparison with Evebø, it is likely that the Mosevoll and Hauge silver sword gear reflects officers controlling retinues in Nordhordland.

Compared to C3 and D1, a smaller proportion of the status weapon graves in D2a were associated with centres, and only three of the nine status weapon graves had other status finds. When the weapon burial rite became more widespread, the association between weapon graves and centres was thus weakened. However, the presence of military leaders at the Tinghaug and Erga centres indicate that some elites were still 'in control'.

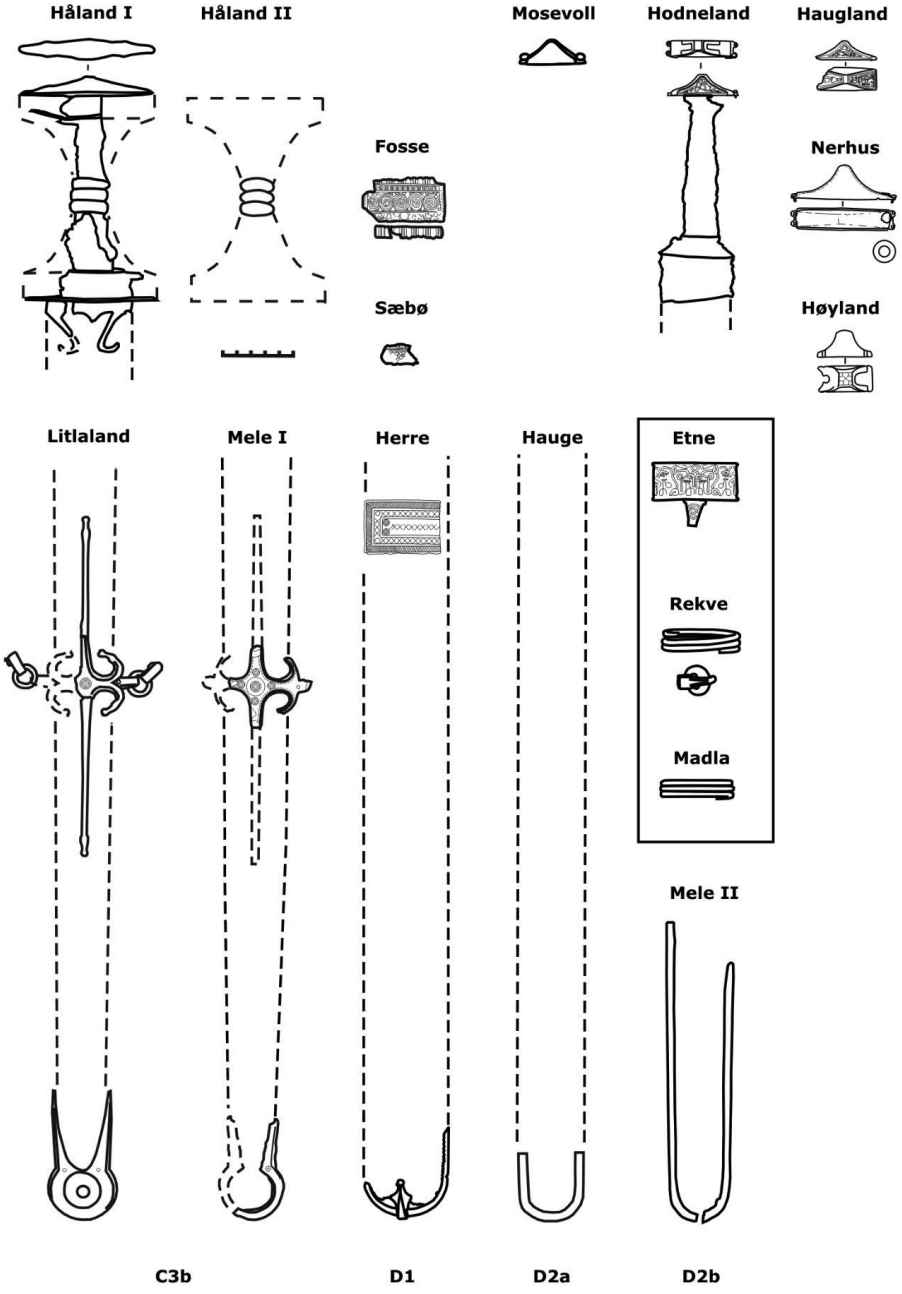


Fig. 5.21. Status weapons from C3–D2b in Hordaland and Rogaland. The drawing includes four of the C3b Mollestad swords with bronze or silver fittings, and most sword parts of silver or gold from D1–D2b in the study area. Sword sheath fittings of gold from hoards are depicted in the frame.

In Norway, cocked-hat pommels of bronze or silver, of the Brighthampton-Ciply type, have mainly been found in the Nordhordland district (Fett, 1940; Menghin, 1983, map 2). In addition to the two D2a pommels mentioned above, six D2b pommels are known from my study area. Six of these eight sword pommels were found in Nordhordland. A pommel of gilt silver with Style I ornaments was found in Haugland, Bergen, and a unique pommel with Style I ornaments in gold filigree comes from Hodneland, Lindås (Kristoffersen, 2000, nos. F75 and F78). Two other pommels of bronze stem from Raknes, Osterøy in Hordaland and Håland, Sola in Rogaland. The final two cocked-hat pommels of silver from the study area come from Nerhus in Mauranger, Kvinnherad in Hordaland and from Høyland, Sandnes in Rogaland (Myhre, 1997a, 2005d). Together with the Snartemo V grave, these are the earliest ring-swords in Norway. In the Migration and Merovingian periods, ring-swords were a high-status sword type (Steuer, 1987). In Frankish areas, rings were carried on the swords of high-ranking warriors as a symbol of their loyalty to warlords or kings. Three additional graves with other types of status sword gear are known from Nordhordland: mouthpieces of bronze or gilt bronze from Lygra, Lindås and Rongve, Osterøy, and a silver chape from Mele II, Osterøy. Among the nine D2b graves with status sword gear, the grave from Lygra contained bronze fittings for a horn and the Nerhus grave contained a small gold ring. None of the weapon graves were among the 'chieftains' graves' defined by Myhre.

In this latest phase of the Migration period, gold sword mouthpieces occur either in the form of oblong spiral rings or rectangular filigree ornamented pieces (Appendix II). Within the study area, these occur in Etne, in Rekve, Voss and in Madla, Stavanger (Fig. 5.21). All three are considered hoard finds, either found as single finds in plough fields (Etne, Rekve) or as part of a larger hoard (Madla). It is possible that the gold mouthpieces represent a top military level not present in the graves, which in D2b was moved from the burial context to public hoard rituals in accordance with the common Scandinavian tradition (see discussion on bracteates). In both eastern and western Norway, the gold mouthpieces have been interpreted as evidence of a new class of warlords – ritually demonstrating their link to the gods through sacrificial hoards (Skre, 1998; Kristoffersen, 2000). Interestingly, while bracteates might appear both in graves and hoards in western Norway, gold mouthpieces seem to be confined to hoard finds.

Table 5.14. List of Migration period status sword gear of bronze, silver and gold in Hordaland and Rogaland. List mainly after Fett, 1940; Bemman & Hahne, 1995; Kristoffersen, 2000

Find-spot	Material	Object	Reference	Date		M. no.
Herre, Voss	Silver/gilt; Bronze/silver	Sheath fittings; Chape	B&H no. 263	Kvamme	D1	B 6349
Sæbø, Kvinnherad	Silver/gilt	Sheath fittings	K no. F66	D1	D1	B 3358
Fosse, Time	Silver	Belt fittings	B&H no. 212	400-450	D1	S 6697
Tu, Klepp	Gold	Two carrying rings for sword?	B&H no. 234	400-500	D1-D2a	S 1476-93
Erga, Klepp	Silver/gilt	Chape	-	D2a?	D2a	S 7131
Hauge, Os	Silver	Chape	B&H no. 260	Vestly	D2a	B 2949
Mosevoll, Osterøy	Silver	Cooked-hat pommel	B&H no. 274	450-500	D2a	B 6491
Tau, Strand	Bronze	Sheath fittings?	F no. 196	MP	D	S 5348
Ødemotland, Hå	Bronze	Sheath fittings?	B&H no. 239	Øvsthus	D2a	S 8613
Solheim, Masfjorden	Bronze	Chape (lost)	B&H no. 288	Vestly?	D2a	B 2922-7
Nedre Seim, Granvin	Bronze	Cooked-hat pommel	B&H no. 276	450-500	D2a	B 5873
Voll, Hå	Bronze	Chape	B&H no. 238	450-500	D2a	S 927
Etne	Gold (hoard)	Filigree mouthpiece	K no. F63	D2b	D2b	B 2049
Rekve II, Voss	Gold (hoard)	Spiral mouthpiece	F no. 254		D2b	B 6948
Madla, Stavanger	Gold (hoard)	Spiral mouthpiece	F no. 140		D2b	C4523-45
Hodneland, Lindås	Silver/gold	Cooked-hat pommel, filigree	B&H no. 266	Nerhus	D2b	B 4950, B 5705
Haugland, Bergen	Silver/gilt	Cooked-hat pommel	B&H no. 261	Late MP	D2b	B 5541
Høyland, Sandnes	Silver/lead	Cooked-hat pommel, ring-sword	F no. 172		D2b	S 3364
Nerhus, Kvinnherad	Silver	Cooked-hat pommel, ring-sword	B&H no. 278	Nerhus	D2b	B 14954
Mele II, Osterøy	Silver	Chape	B&H no. 275	Snartemo	D2b	B 5742
Rongve, Osterøy	Bronze/gilt	Mouthpiece	B&H no. 284	Snartemo	D2b	B 9015
Raknes, Osterøy	Bronze	Cooked-hat pommel	B&H no. 283	Snartemo	D2b	B 6670
Håland, Sola	Bronze	Cooked-hat pommel	B&H no. 219	Snartemo	D2b	S 8611
Lygra, Lindås	Bronze	Mouthpiece	B&H no. 271	Late MP	D2b	B 3175

Table 5.15. Number of Migration period weapon graves in Hordaland and Rogaland, mainly after Sørheim, 2010, appendix 1. His numbers are based on Fett, 1940; Bemman & Hahne, 1995 and museum catalogues, and I have only made minor modifications.[5] Lost graves are not included here

County	Total	Regular weapon graves			Status sword gear			Hoard /grave
		No sword	Sword	**Total**	Bronze	Silver	**Total**	**Gold**
Hordaland	83 (100%)	57 (69%)	13 (16%)	70 (84%)	6 (7%)	7 (8%)	13 (16%)	2
Rogaland	83 (100%)	45 (54%)	30 (36%)	75 (90%)	4 (5%)	3 (4%)	7 (7%)	2
Total graves	166 (100%)	102 (61%)	43 (26%)	145 (87%)	10 (6%)	10 (5%)	20 (12%)	
Total incl. gold gear	169 (100%)			145 (86%)			20 (12%)	4 (2%)

[5] Sørheim's list has not been re-examined in detail by this author, but seven graves have been excluded from the list of grave finds either due to being probable duplicate entries (B2138=B2143, B3721=B3731, C6326=C6326), being late Roman graves from C3 (S4068, S4069), or being hoard finds (B2049, B6948). Two graves from Avaldsnes and Vikshåland on Karmøy, Rogaland with pair of spears (B916, S3446) have been added (Reiersen, 2009:p.42), as well as the above listed silver sword parts from Sæbø and Nerhus in Kvinnherad, Hordaland and the silver belt fittings from Fosse, Time, Rogaland.

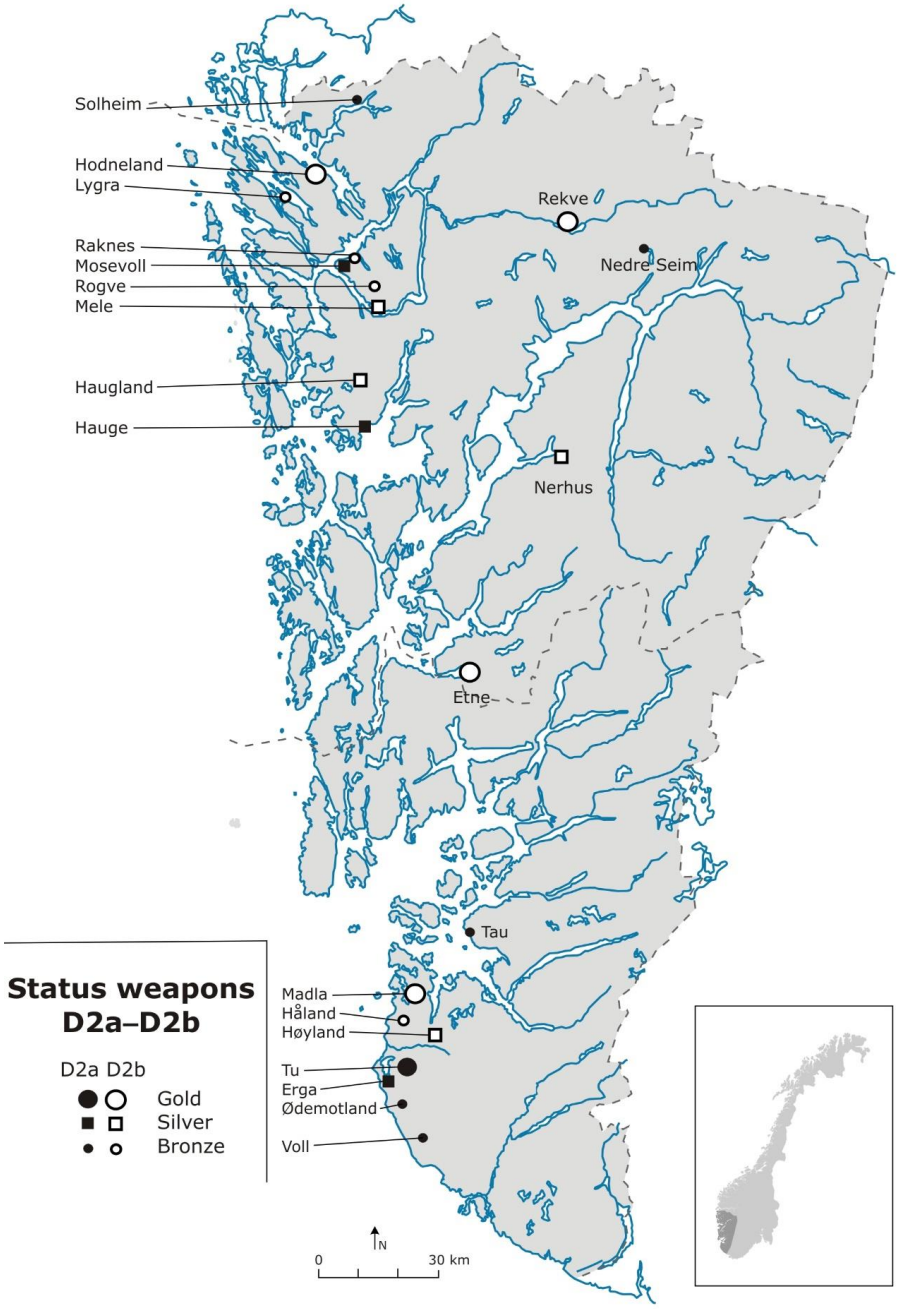


Fig. 5.22. Map of status weapon from D2a–D2b in Hordaland and Rogaland.

5.5.4 Changes in the military organisation in D2

A significant change seems to have happened from phase D1 to phase D2a. As we have seen, in C1b–C2 and C3–D1, the few weapon graves had a clear link to the higher social strata. In D2a and D2b, however, weapon graves became a less exclusive feature, and the association with high social status is less clear. This shift might be associated with a 'democratisation' of weapon ownership, where the warriors now owned their weapons (cf. Ystgaard, 2014:pp.141–2). As a result, the graves with weapons were not necessarily associated with a high social level, which is also true for graves with status sword gear. In C1b–D1, level 1–2 weapon graves were found at major centres such as Avaldsnes, Bjoafjord, Halsnøy, Etne, Erga and Næbø, Hafrsfjord, Voss, Osterøy and Lye. It seems probable that the military leadership was exercised from these centres, and that the associated retinues in the surrounding areas did not at this time have ownership of their weapons. In D2a–D2b, the distribution of status weapon graves was more spread, with a regional concentration in Nordhordland. Here, the status weapons were situated at major and minor centres in Lindås, Osterøy, Os and Fana (Fig. 5.22). In general, however, the association between status weapons, centres and chieftains' graves was markedly weakened in D2. In contrast to this, sword gear of gold was only found in the major centres: in a D1–D2a grave at Tinghaug and in D2b gold hoards at Voss, Etne and Hafrsfjord. It is possible that the hoard finds in particular represent the ritual initiation of a new military and sociopolitical class of warlords in D2b.

The majority of the Migration period weapon graves come from the D2 phases. We might then try to examine the grave material from the whole Migration period as one, in a similar manner to the way in which Ilkjær (2001) and Stylegar (2008) dealt with the whole late Roman period material from mainland Sweden and eastern Norway. The overall impression from the graves with status weapons from D2 is that often they do not represent the uppermost status level (Table 5.14). If the sword gear of gold is considered the uppermost military level, the weapon graves with bronze and silver sword gear might be considered level 2 graves. The total numbers of 166 graves and three hoards give 2% of level 1, 12% of level 2 and 86% of level 3 (Table 5.15). This is similar to the Illerup ratios and late Roman period weapon graves in eastern Norway, suggesting that the whole military hierarchy was allowed weapon graves in D2.

Another striking change from the late Roman period is that the Migration period core area of Rogaland has very few swords with sword gear of silver and bronze. Although more weapon graves with swords are known from Rogaland than from Hordaland, Nordhordland stands out as the region with the highest number of status swords. This is surprising, as categories such as bracteates and brooches show that Rogaland was in fact a core area of goldsmith production in this period (Kristoffersen, 2000). In the Hordaland weapon graves, swords are less common, but among the known swords, half of these had parts of silver or bronze. Two swords with ornaments in gold filigree are known from Hordaland. While the level 2 weapon graves are quite frequent in Nordhordland, regular swords are more commonly deposited in the graves of south Rogaland. These regional differences are observed throughout the Migration period.

With the high number of weapon graves in D2, it is also possible to use clusters of weapon graves as an indicator of military power and local retinues (see Kristoffersen, 2000; Solberg, 2009; Sørheim, 2010). Concentrations of weapon graves are found in Jæren, Etne and Voss. As Kristoffersen (2000) observed, the gold mouthpieces from Hafrsfjord, Etne and Voss thus coincide with concentrations of weapon graves. These centres also had status weapons in C1b–C2 (Etne), C3b (Hafrsfjord) and D1 (Voss).

Combining the status sword gear from hoards and graves, as well as concentrations of weapon graves, a D2 retinue organisation can be sketched in Jæren, Sunnhordland, Voss, and also in Nordhordland. In Jæren, there might have been a chronological shift in military dominance from level 1 leaders with gold sword gear at Tu in Tinghaug in D1–D2a to Madla in Hafrsfjord in D2b. The next levels are reflected by the Høyland ring-sword in Hove (level 2) and by the Jæren weapon graves concentration (level 3). The Etne gold filigree mouthpiece (level 1) might be associated with the Etne weapon graves concentration (level 3), and perhaps with the ring-sword from Nerhus in Kvinnherad (level 2). In Voss, the Rekve gold mounting (level 1) might be associated with the Voss weapon graves concentration (level 3). Finally, in Nordhordland, the gold filigree ornamented sword pommel from Hodneland resembles the gold mouthpieces, and might possibly be interpreted as a level 1 grave. In addition to Hodneland, several level 2 graves are found at major and minor centres in this region.

5.6 Accessing elite organisation through status objects

In this chapter, we have considered how the different categories of status objects might provide us with useful insights into the organisation of the elite milieus. The effective agency of shiny status objects was utilised by elites in a range of contexts, working as material co-actors. Categories such as gold rings, Hemmoor buckets of brass or gilded relief brooches contributed with visual effects making certain humans appear extraordinary. The contextual study of a variety of status objects has given us information about elite organisation, which can be summarised in three points. First, several object categories could in different ways work as indicators of shifting contacts and influences between elites at the various centres. Secondly, the analysis of status weapons has led to the identification of a military organisation among leaders and retinues on a local and regional scale. Finally, the status objects show a change in depositional practices from a placement mainly in graves to the deposition of certain high-status object categories exclusively in hoards at the end of the Migration period.

Important similarities in the study area between categories of status objects can be applied to identify contacts and shifting associations between different elite milieus. Status objects belonging to the late Roman period find complex show several special regional features indicating close interaction between elite milieus within this region. This includes the regional taste for Hemmoor buckets of type E58 and fine spindle whorls of type R171. In a similar manner, the combination in graves of type B18 finger rings and arm or neck rings and the ritual destruction of serpent head rings are special features characterising this region. In the Migration period, regional traditions are found, for instance, in local production of bracteates and relief brooches. More distant influences and contacts are illustrated by the Roman coins and medallions inspiring the local production of gold pendants, or by the exclusive E59 Hemmoor bucket coming all the way from the Roman city of Trier to the Avaldsnes centre. The presence of Scandinavian alliance networks through gift exchange and intermarriage is indicated by the rosette fibula from Zealand, and likewise in the use of serpent head rings as a special status insignia, visualising elite hierarchies in a concrete manner.

My assumption that the various elite milieus consisted of leaders and followers was ultimately based on the assumed presence of a retinue organisation. Because of this, a large part of the chapter was devoted to the study of military organisation on a local and regional scale. Using the Illerup hierarchy as a model, an attempt was made to identify military organisation from the presence of status weapons in graves, possibly belonging to officers, compared with the overall number of weapon graves. Over time, the proportions of status weapons suggest changes in the military organisation. In the C phases, the majority of known weapon graves contain status weapons, and these are situated at major centres. This was interpreted as an elite monopoly of weapon ownership, with military leaders located at the centres. The military power seems to have shifted between the various centres over time. In the D2 phases, the situation changed. The number of people buried with weapons was much increased, and the link between status weapons and centres became less clear. This might imply a 'democratisation' of weapon ownership. Military leadership was now visualised by golden sword mouthpieces, deposited in more 'exclusive' hoards at major centres. As a female counterpart to the military leaders, the late Roman period bronze spindle whorls might reflect female ritual leaders, the 'staff bearers' of the written sources.

Continuity and changes in depositional practices associated with status objects might provide further information about changes in elite organisation. In the late Roman period and the Migration period, graves were the preferred, conservative deposition context of status objects. However, in the late Migration period, the Scandinavian tradition of hoards seems to have gained some importance. Status-laden categories such as gold bracteates, gold sword mouthpieces and gold or gilded neck rings are found in such hoards. With regard to the bracteates, a deposition in graves mainly continued in the same manner as with the coins and medallions of the late Roman period, but with six late hoard depositions. Migration period neck rings occur in two hoard finds, in areas where late Roman period arm rings were previously deposited in burial contexts. The reason why the sword gear and status rings of the dominant elites were moved from the burial context to hoards might perhaps be found in a restructuring of the sociopolitical organisation and leadership in D2b. If this was indeed the case, the changes in depositional practices mirror important changes in the elite organisation.

Chapter 6. Grand buildings and central functions

This chapter deals with some of the major structure categories that are often associated with centres. Most of these might be characterised as 'grand buildings', being of a particular monumental scale. This monumentality is in fact one of the characteristics of the late Roman and Migration periods in western Norway. In the study area, no other periods have left so many visible traces in the landscape. According to Myhre (2002:pp.119–121), the 'farm' as a relatively permanent structure with fenced infields was probably established by 200 AD, accompanied by great changes in the architecture. While few of the houses in the small agricultural units of the Bronze Age and Pre-Roman Iron Age reached 25 metres in length (Horve, 2009; Diinhoff, 2010; Kildedal, 2013), this was a common house length in the Roman and Migration periods. The longest houses measured as much as 40–100 metres long. In a similar way, 200–550 AD was the main building period for large burial mounds in western Norway (Ringstad, 2004). The period also saw the emergence of several mainly new categories, such as large boathouses housing large ships, as well as hill forts and court sites. Many of the grand buildings had a potentially lasting effect as landmarks. While the largest houses built at Forsandmoen were in use for several centuries (Løken, 2001a), the large burial mounds were monuments made to last for eternity.

Like the 'shiny' qualities of the small portable things discussed in the previous chapter, these large and/or particular complicated constructions had a special 'grandness'. Both the shiny status objects and the grand buildings had material qualities making them able to endure for generations, possibly working as stabilisers upholding elite practises. In contrast to the exclusive materials seen on the small elite objects, the buildings were made out of wood, stones, turf and earth. Their 'grandness', therefore, lay not so much in the materials used as in the scale of the constructions these materials participated in, and in the energy and efforts put into the building projects. Constructing large buildings involved the cooperation of a group of people, and this great collective effort might imply that some of these structures housed institutions important to the society. Although describing the context of Bronze Age Cyprus, Knapp (2009:p.47) gives an impression of the important role monumental buildings might have had in a society:

> *The concept of monumentality embraces several types of built structures: palaces, elite residences, administrative complexes and political centres; ceremonial centres and 'temples'; fortifications and defensive compounds; and tomb constructions. Monumental structures can express power as well as mask it. The task of building such large and complex structures required a long-term commitment as well as the ability to control resources and coordinate substantial investments of labour. These undertakings cannot have failed to create a sense of group identity, or even of distinct identities, e.g. between those who built and those who inhabited or used these structures. Such monuments embody not just the earth or stone from which they were built, but the people and experiences involved in their construction; they thus hold a special place in human memory, and in individual or group identity (...)*

As has been discussed, the main social institutions mentioned in Germanic and Norse sources were the *hall*, the *retinue*, the *thing* and the religious 'superstructure'. In the discussion of the possible central functions of the 'grand buildings', I will use these institutions as a point of departure. Firstly, I investigate aristocratic architecture, to see whether there might be evidence of halls in my study area. The largest burial mounds have also been associated with elite settlements, and might similarly be interpreted within the frames of elite architecture. Secondly, I discuss large boathouses and hill forts as buildings of war. It is possible that some of these might be directly associated with organised retinues. Focussing on court sites, I then investigate traces of judicial functions, before turning to potential ritual functions based on sacral place names and other categories linked to rituals. The subchapter on ritual functions thus differs from the rest of the chapter in that I discuss categories other than the grand buildings.

The various categories are defined and their distribution plotted to examine whether these are indeed centrally situated and might be linked to central functions. When relevant, I employ case studies to explore the functions of these categories. However, the main method for judging whether a category is situated centrally, or what its functions might have been, is to compare its location with defined centres and other status object and structure categories. It is hard to give an absolute distance criterion for when there is proximity between categories or to a centre. Ringstad (1986:p.273) suggested that finds occurred centrally if they were found within defined centres or were closer than *c*. 5 km from entities defining this centre. The 5 km criterion might be applicable in most of the study area, but due to the close proximity between centres and rich finds in Jæren, closeness is here mainly judged in terms of neighbouring farms.

6.1 Architecture of the aristocracy

6.1.1 The largest farms as traces of elite settlements

Defining the hall

It seems appropriate to start our discussion on elite architecture by defining what a 'hall' might be. In the 1990s, this topic gained special focus in Iron Age research. Known from sources such as *Beowulf* as the 'headquarters' of late Iron Age elites in northern Europe, the hall played a central role in aristocratic life (Herschend, 1997). Herschend traced the origin of the hall in the Scandinavian settlement material of the late Roman and Migration periods, and his definition of the hall has been influential:

> *In the 4th century, a third house was introduced on large farms. Such houses are not common but, taken together, they form a pattern characterized by one or more of the following archaeological characteristics:*
>
> *(1) They belong to big farms,*
> *(2) They consist of one room with a minimum of posts,*
> *(3) They are singled out by their position on the farm,*
> *(4) Their hearths are* neither *used for cooking,* nor *do they facilitate a handicraft,*
> (5) *The artefacts found in the house are different from those found in the dwelling part of the main house on the farm* (Herschend, 1993:p.182–3).

> *The new house, mentioned above, has been defined as a hall (…). In the course of time the hall ceases always to be a separate house. Over the centuries it seems to become a room in a building and its status to be attached to nobility and royalty, but already in the 5th century the hall is the room of leadership in an economic as well as a military sense* (Herschend, 1998:p.16).

> *They have a proto phase, represented e.g. by Feddersen Wierde and Tjørring, where formally the possible hall rooms are made up of an ordinary, but extra room in an ordinary house, a reception room next to the traditional kitchen-dwelling in the main house of the EIA farm* (Herschend, 2009:p.252).

While *hall rooms* existed from the first few centuries AD, small, separate *hall buildings* were built from the fourth century. This was no clear chronological shift, as 'in the course of time the hall ceases always to be a separate house' (Herschend, 1998:p.16). In Rogaland, Løken (2001a) argues that hall rooms existed at the largest farms in Forsandmoen in the early Roman period. A separate hall building was built in the late Roman period, but this was a large building. Although Herschend's model forms a key point of departure for any discussion about the hall, it was based on material from southern Scandinavia. Adding some regional variation to the model, below I argue that the hall room was the most important hall type in Norway in the early Iron Age.

Judging from the so far excavated settlement material in Norway, small separate hall buildings (the *embryonic hall* or the *third house*) were as good as unknown in the early Iron Age. When a third house is found in connection with a common pair of longhouses, as at Ullandhaug or Forsand (Myhre, 1980; Løken 2001a, Fig. 19), a room in one of the longhouses is interpreted as the hall rather than the small, third house. Myhre (1980:pp.325–6) mentions several instances in south Rogaland where small buildings are found in connection with two parallel longhouses. However, these were interpreted rather as ordinary dwellings for people or animals, or as houses for specialised production. The building in the study area most closely resembling a small hall is house A10 excavated at Avaldsnes, *c*. 20 metres long, 6 metres wide and dated to the third to fourth century (Skre, 2011, 2012; Bauer & Østmo, 2013:pp.70–83). Although only one other contemporary house was found, it is possible that the small house reflects a rare *third house* – built at a point highly visible from the seaway, between two large burial mounds (Fig. 7.18). The other building, longhouse A13, was only partially excavated. The excavators argued that its proportions indicated an original length probably reaching over 40 metres (Bauer & Østmo, 2013:pp.110–111).

In the Merovingian period, the evidence of small, separate halls seems clearer. Judging from parallels such as the prominent small hall (or cult house) with gold-foil figures at Uppåkra (Larsson & Lenntorp, 2004; Herschend, 2009), one might infer that the buildings with gold-foil figures at Mære in Nord-Trøndelag, Hov in Oppland and probably also Hauge in Klepp, Rogaland, represent traces of similar types of small halls (Lidén, 1969; Grimm & Pesch, 2010; Tangen, 2010). The older tradition of the hall as a room, however, was still seen in Norway in the late Iron Age, clearly exemplified by Borg in Lofoten (Munch et al., 2003). The overall trend, from Forsandmoen to Borg, is that both hall buildings and buildings with hall rooms existed in Norway alongside each other throughout large parts of the first millennium AD. However, with a few exceptions, like at Forsandmoen and Avaldsnes, single-standing hall buildings of southern Scandinavian types, either small or large, remain analomies in the Norwegian settlement material from the early Iron Age. While such hall buildings seem to have played a larger role in the late Iron Age, one should rather focus on buildings with hall rooms when searching for elite settlement in the Roman and Migration periods.

Large longhouses as great halls

The identification of hall rooms using Herschend's (1993) criteria is, however, subjective and difficult. It is not straightforward to say what hearths were used for, postholes are not always preserved and few objects are found using topsoil stripping. In the search for a simpler criterion to identify hall rooms, it is a fact that such hall rooms have primarily been identified in the largest early Iron Age houses in Norway. Examples are the large Roman or Migration period houses at Forsandmoen, Rogaland (house CL, 50 m), Missingen, Østfold (60 m) and at Borg in Lofoten (67 m) (Løken, 2001a; Munch et al., 2003; Bårdseth, 2009). It is thus a hypothesis that house size might be a significant variable when searching for elite settlements with hall rooms. This also comes close to the term 'great hall', used for a monumentally large longhouse from the late Roman period at the Gudme centre in Funen (47 x 10 m) (Sørensen, 1994). Similarly, houses of a similar type to the Stuvehøj longhouse (51 m, Fonnesbech-Sandberg, 1992: p.31) correlate with 'princeps' graves at Roman period centres in Zealand (cf. Tables 2.3 and 4.1). These particular houses clearly reflect elite settlement, inspiring the definition of elite settlement I will employ. Simplifying my criterion for elite settlement mainly to large buildings, I will label these houses 'great halls'.

The first criterion, and main presumption, of Herschend's hall definition was that halls occur on the largest farms in an area. It is precisely the remains of these large farm units, probably the settlements of the elites, I wish to investigate here. Emerging from the alternative hall definition of interpreting large longhouses as 'great halls', it is time to set up a definition criterion of elite settlement appropriate to my study area. Different criteria have been used in order to identify the largest farms. This includes comparisons based on the total floor area of a farm unit (Myhre, 1982a:pp.213–4), approaches applying the number of houses of a farm unit as the main variable (Fallgren, 2006:p.143ff) or more detailed analyses of room functions sorting hall rooms from dwellings, byres and workshops. As the mere size, and especially length, of the houses seems to be a significant factor for elites on Zealand and Funen, I find it likely that house length might also be a simpler, and more objective, parameter for identifying elite settlement in my study area. This data is also easily accessible. Although documentation methods might vary, house length is normally listed in publications.

Material from the Fjellbygda and Hove districts in Jæren indicates that normal farms here had houses up to c. 30 m long, with the largest elite houses being at least c. 40 m long. Myhre's (1972b) examination of visible farm structures in the peripheral Fjellbygda district, east of the centre at Hove, investigated 35 deserted farms. Among these, 18 had documented house lengths where the longest houses were 13–30 m long (1972, Table III). After Myhre's study, a 42 m long house was excavated at Espeland (S 9277), within the centre at Hove. Furthermore, two large houses (60 m and 45 m) were recently unearthed at the central farm at Hove, unequivocally an elite settlement (Bjørdal, 2014). The extensive excavations at Forsandmoen in Rogaland and in Sogn og Fjordane confirm that a length criterion of c. 40 m might indicate elite settlement.

At Forsandmoen, the settlement of the early Roman period was organised as single-lying farm units. In 100 AD, a house (CL) 50 metres long and with a hall room was built at some distance from the main settlement area (Løken, 2001a:pp.66–8). Løken characterised it as a chieftain's farm, far greater in size than other houses, and situated close to the largest burial mounds in the area. In the subsequent late Roman and Migration periods, the settlement developed into two village units (Løken, 2006:pp.312–215). The first village unit had 13 farm units, the second three and Løken recognised four social levels (Table 6.1). The largest farm A had three longhouses, including the atypical 'hall building', and Løken interpreted this as a chieftain's farm. Close to farm A were three large farms (B–D) with longhouses of 38–41 metres. The second village also had one large farm (N) with a longhouse of 43 metres. The large farms A, B and N were used over a period of 300 years. As has been argued, hall buildings like the one from farm A are rarely found. However, this case tells us that longhouses of *c.* 40 metres represent units belonging to the same milieu at the top of a settlement hierarchy, and that one should expect several large farm units in a district.

Table 6.1. List of social levels identified from farm sizes within the two village units at Forsandmoen, according to Løken, 2001a

Social level	Village 1 units	Village 2 units	Largest longhouse (m)
A. Chieftain's farm	A		35 + 31('hall')
B. Large farms	B–D	N	38–43
C. Normal farms	E–H	O–P	30–34
D. Small farms	I–M		22–28

Among the regions studied by Myhre and Ringstad, the settlement material from the county of Sogn og Fjordane is of particular interest. In recent years, Diinhoff (2010, 2011a, 2011b) unearthed six farm units with longhouses of similar sizes to the largest farms at Forsandmoen (Fig. 6.1, Table 6.2). These buildings measured 43–67 metres, and they were found in central settlement districts (Diinhoff, 2010). Three of the buildings come from farms with graves of an uppermost social level: the Roman period Rutlin grave, the Migration period Evebø grave and several rich graves at Kvåle (Diinhoff, 2010). Myhre and Ringstad identified both the Sogndal and Gloppen districts as central areas. Furthermore, large houses were found at Solvorn and Loen in Luster and Stryn, both districts defined as central areas based on rich finds. The house at the medieval church site at Loen was located peripheral in the Stryn central area, but this was a large farm in the medieval period (Diinhoff, 2011b:p.99). The sixth large longhouse was found at Ålhus in Jølster. This clearly was a farm of some significance in the medieval period, as the powerful baron Audun Hugleiksson built a stone fortress here. Diinhoff (2011b) interprets these six large longhouses as belonging to 'estate farms', and they seem to correlate well with the elite milieus known from rich graves.

Based on the largest houses from Forsandmoen and Sogn og Fjordane, I find it suitable to set the criterion for large longhouses to 40 metres. Using this criterion, another longhouse might be added to the list for Sogn og Fjordane. In the 1960s, the remains of a large house were excavated at Modvo in Hafslo. This area is situated in Myhre's central area of Luster, a few kilometres north-west of the large longhouse at Solvorn. The Modvo longhouse measured about 40 metres, revealing finds of a gold ring, glass beads, melted glass from an imported beaker and a Roman silver denarius (Kristoffersen et al., 1993). As we have seen, one of the main presumptions behind the studies of Myhre and Ringstad was that the richest graves and largest burial mounds indicated the major elite settlements. In Sogn og Fjordane there seems to be a good correspondence between central areas postulated on the basis of rich grave finds and the largest known longhouses, both categories denoting elite settlement. So far, estate farms have not been found in the central area of Vik, or in Ringstad's large mound centre in Aurland, but this is probably due to less intensive excavation activity.

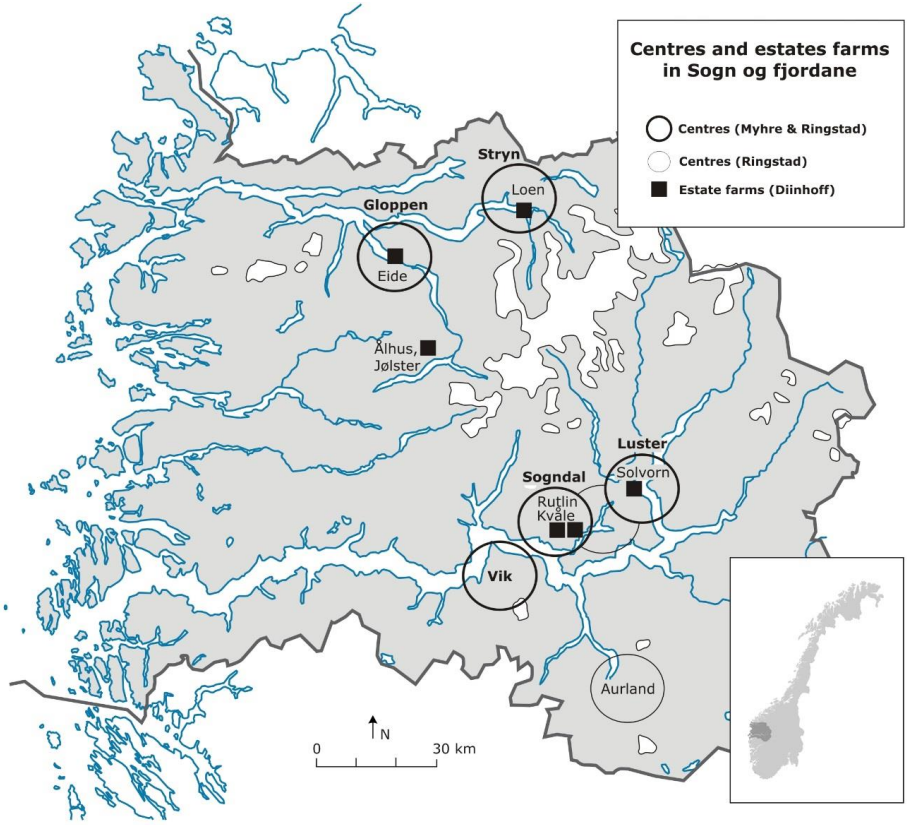


Fig. 6.1. Map of assumed centres and excavated estate farms in Sogn og Fjordane. Only the six farms excavated by Diinhoff is included in this figure. A seventh site at Modvo in Luster is, however, plotted in Fig. 6.2.

Table 6.2. List of early Iron Age longhouses >40 m long in Sogn og Fjordane, after Diinhoff, 2010, with Modvo added (Kristoffersen et al., 1993)

Farm, municipality	Visible	Length (m)	Rich farm	Rich district	Other factors
Eide, Gloppen		43	Evebø grave		
Loen kirke, Stryn		62		Stryn district	
Ålhus, Jølster		44			Medieval fort
Rutlin, Sogndal		50	Rutlin grave		
Kvåle, Sogndal		67	Kvåle graves		
Solvorn, Luster		50		Luster district	
Modvo, Luster	X	40		Luster district	

In order to test the 40-metre criterion on a larger scale, a survey of longhouses above this size has been carried out covering the rest of Norway (Table 6.3). Among these is the 60-metre-long Roman period house with a hall room from Missingen, Østfold, with finds of two silver denarii (Bårdseth, 2009). In Vestfold, a large longhouse was found at the farm at Jarlsberg, known as a medieval royal estate and manor (Grindkåsa, 2012). Furthermore, large longhouses were found at the centre at Veien (Gustafson, 2016) and at Valum, near the centre at Åker (Pilø, 1993; Rolfsen, 2000). A few kilometres north of the latter, a large longhouse was found at Lille Børke (Lislerud & Stene, 2007). Originally, this farm was part of the larger farm at Børke, situated in the Mjøsa district. Outside the longhouse, a hoard find with two glass beakers was unearthed, one with a Style I ornamented gold string. This confirms the elite character of the settlement.

Two large houses are known from Vest-Agder, both with walls visible above ground. Hagen (1953) interpreted Sosteli as a normal, perhaps marginal, early Iron Age farm, but an ongoing study indicates that it might in fact have been a high-status settlement (Jessen & Stylegar, 2012:p.140). A still undated, 45-metre-long house was also identified at Haugtuna at the centre at Spangereid (Stylegar & Grimm, 2005:p.99). In Møre og Romsdal, a 58-metre-long house was found at Aure (Ringstad, 2005). Although few rich early Iron Age finds are found near the farm, it was a large farm in the medieval period. In Trøndelag, one large longhouse was found at the large mound centre at Bertnem, and another one in Ørland, also an area with many large mounds (Farbregd, 1980; Grønnesby, 1999). A fourth house, situated by Stiklestad church, was only partially excavated, and had an estimated length of 40 metres (Birgisdottir et al., 2009). Finally, the first phase of the famous longhouse at Borg in Lofoten, Nordland was dated to the Migration period, and measured 67 metres long (Munch et al., 2003).

To sum up, the largest longhouses from the rest of Norway show the same tendency as the results from Sogn og Fjordane. They have been found within early Iron Age centres (Veien, Åker, Spangereid, Stiklestad, Bertnem, Borg), at the sites of major medieval period farms (Jarlsberg, Aure) and in districts that generally have many rich early Iron Age finds (Østfold, Mjøsa district, Vest-Agder, Trøndelag). Objects of precious metal found in or near some of these large houses seem to confirm their elite character.

Table 6.3. List of Roman and Migration period longhouses >40 metres long from the rest of Norway. The house at Lille Børke was originally interpreted as two houses (Lislerud & Stene, 2007:p.130). A longhouse of 38-40 metres from Hallem, next to Stiklestad, should also be mentioned (Sauvage & Mokkelbost, 2013). As it dates to the late Pre-Roman Iron Age, it is not listed here. It should, however, be noted that both a swastika fibula and a glass beaker are known from this farm (cf. Lund Hansen, 1987; Straume, 1987)

Farm, municipality	County	Visible	Length	References
Missingen, Råde	Østfold		60	Bårdseth 2009
Jarlsberg, Tønsberg	Vestfold		40	Grindkåsa 2012
Veien, Ringerike	Buskerud		47	Gustafson 2016
Valum, Hamar	Hedmark		51	Pilø 1993
Lille Børke, Ringsaker	Hedmark		44	Lislerud and Stene 2007
Sosteli, Åseral	Vest-Agder	X	45	Jessen and Stylegar 2012
Haugtuna, Lindesnes	Vest-Agder	X	45	Stylegar and Grimm 2005
Aure, Sykkylven	Møre og Romsdal		58	Ringstad 2005
Hovde, Ørland	Sør-Trøndelag		41	Grønnesby 1999
Østre Stiklestad, Verdal	Nord-Trøndelag		40	Birgisdottir et al. 2009
Bertnem, Overhalla	Nord-Trøndelag		40	Farbregd 1980
Borg, Vestvågøy	Nordland		67	Munch *et al.* 2003

The many large longhouses in Rogaland

Within my study area, there is a clear difference in the settlement material known from Hordaland and Rogaland. Until recently, little was known of settlement traces from the early Iron Age in Hordaland. In recent years, larger settlement excavations have been carried out in rich agricultural districts such as Halsnøy, Rosendal, Etne and Voss. These were all idenfied by either Myhre or Ringstad as centres or central areas, but 'estate farms' similar to those in Sogn og Fjordane have not yet been unearthed. Even so, some possible indications of elite settlement should be mentioned. At Skåla in Rosendal, a Roman period longhouse (house E2) was only partially excavated. It was assumed to have originally been longer than the 20–25 metres uncovered (Handeland & Diinhoff, 2011; Diinhoff, 2011a). Furthermore, a silver denarius found at Gjerde in Etne deserves attention. Found within an early Iron Age settlement (Diinhoff, 2013), it could possibly be related to similar denarii finds from large houses at Modvo and Missingen. The main settlement phase at Gjerde was the Pre-Roman Iron Age. However, large, roof-bearing postholes (up to 100 cm in diameter) from the partially excavated Roman period House A indicated a large building, some 8 metres wide (Flognfeldt & Diinhoff, 2014:pp.14–17). Its length might have reached 40 metres.

The settlement material from Rogaland shows a completely different situation, representing a vast and characteristic material quite special in a Scandinavian context. Similar to the situation, for example, on Öland (Fallgren, 2006), a large number of farmhouses, mainly from the Roman and Migration periods, are still visible in the landscape as low earth or stone walls, often surrounded by stone fences, clearance cairns and burial mounds (see, for example, Fig. 6.6). In this fossil agricultural landscape, a range of farm units of different types and sizes are preserved, including also a number of longhouses above 40 metres long. Due to the special character of the Rogaland material, I have listed as many as 42 documented large longhouses, and the actual number probably is higher. This is more than twice as many as the total for the rest of Norway (19), i.e. over two-thirds of the overall numbers (Table 6.5). Although this high number of large longhouses is at least partly due to a special architecture leading to a higher state of preservation for house remains in the region, it should be noted that the region has a very high concentration of gold finds and Roman imports.

When comparing the distribution of large houses to clusters of rich finds and centres in Jæren, we find that the settlement material seems to correlate well with these. A total of 35 of the largest houses from Rogaland come from what Myhre (1987a) identified as the Jæren 'central area'. Comparing their distribution with centres (Myhre, 1978, 2013), apart from Vasshus in Klepp, large longhouses are found near all these centres (Table 6.4). In excavated large longhouses in Jæren, sherds of imported glass beakers were found in House 1 at Ullaland in Bø, Nærbø (47 m), at Ullandhaug House 3, near Hafrsfjord (47 m; Fig. 6.3) and at Espeland near Hove (42 m) (Petersen, 1933; Myhre, 1980). From the number of large longhouses preserved, it is reasonable to assume that Jæren had a relatively dense concentration of elite settlement. In Hå municipality alone, 16 longhouses above 40 metres in length are known, including the three largest early Iron Age houses known in the country, all above 70 metres long. If one focusses on the houses above 60 metres long, at Jæren these are found quite evenly distributed within centres at Hove, Erga, Lye, Nærbø, Varhaug and Vigrestad. The large longhouses from Rogaland outside Jæren – at Forsand, at Våråå in Tysvær and at Ferkingstad in Karmøy – are all found at localities with other special find categories suggesting these areas were minor local centres (Løken, 1991; Østrem, 1999:pp.17–19; Reiersen, 2013b).

Table 6.4. List of early Iron Age longhouses >40 m long in Rogaland. The list is probably incomplete and is based on overviews for house remains in Jæren (Myhre, 1982a), from Klepp (M. Olsen, 2003), Time and Hå (Myhre, 2007, 2013), and with recent excavations added in Forsand (Løken, 2001a, 2006; Dahl, 2014), Austbø (Meling, 2001), Gausel (Børsheim & Soltvedt, 2002), Sande (Aanderaa, 2014) and Hove (Bjørdal, 2014). From Nord-Rogaland, a house of c. 65 metres has be added from Ferkingstad, Karmøy (Reiersen, 2013b), as well as a house from Våra, Tysvær. The latter is listed as either 58 or 83 metres (Askeladden id 44794). Houses over 60 m long in grey shading. Minor centres outside the Jæren core indicated in parenthesis

Farm (site)	Municipality	Visible	Length	Excavated	Centre
Våra (Liå)	Tysvær	X	58-83		(Våra)
Ferkingstad	Karmøy	X	65	(X)	(Ferkingstad)
Forsandmoen (house CL)	Forsand		50	X	(Forsand)
Forsandmoen (farm D)	Forsand		41	X	(Forsand)
Forsandmoen (farm N)	Forsand		43	X	(Forsand)
Rossavik (Heiå)	Forsand	X	47		(Forsand)
Bergevik (house 1)	Forsand		67	X	(Forsand)
Todneim (house 1)	Randaberg	X	40		Randaberg
Austbø	Stavanger		50	X	Hafrsfjord
Ullandhaug (house 3)	Stavanger	X	47	X	Hafrsfjord
Gausel (house 8F)	Stavanger		40	X	Hafrsfjord
Sande (house 1)	Sola		40	X	Hafrsfjord
Hove (Hove/Sørbø house 17)	Sandnes		60	X	Hove
Hove (Hove/Sørbø house 22)	Sandnes		45	X	Hove
Espeland	Sandnes	X	42	X	Hove
Sørbø	Klepp	X	48		Tinghaug
Tu	Klepp	X	40		Tinghaug
Orre	Klepp	X	60		Erga
Erga	Klepp	X	48		Erga
Erga	Klepp	X	56		Erga
Lye (Lyevodl)	Time	X	63		Lye
Løge	Time	X	45		Lye
Sæland (Lyngaland)	Time	X	63	X	Lye
Store Oma	Time	X	50	(X)	Lye
Re (Hanaland)	Time	X	40	X	Re
Mauland	Time	X	47		Nærbø
Gudmestad (Malhaugane)	Hå	X	44		Nærbø
Bø (Ullaland house 3)	Hå	X	47	X	Nærbø
Vigre (Kryptene)	Hå	X	72-90	X	Nærbø
Vigre	Hå	X	40		Nærbø
Obrestad (house 1)	Hå	X	54	X	Nærbø
Njærheim (Horjå)	Hå	X	43		Nærbø
Tvihaug (Torhodl)	Hå	X	40		Varhaug
Ånestad (Raualand)	Hå	X	57		Varhaug
Ånestad	Hå	X	45		Varhaug
Ånestad	Hå	X	40		Varhaug
Sør-Varhaug (Nyvlestad)	Hå	X	75-100		Varhaug
Sør-Varhaug (Haugabakkjen)	Hå	X	50		Varhaug
Husvegg (Haugland)	Hå	X	46		Varhaug
Ævestad (Mollhaug)	Hå	X	55		Vigrestad
Vatland (Hagan)	Hå	X	90-100		Vigrestad
Vatland (Hagan)	Hå	X	45		Vigrestad

In order to better illuminate the difference between the Rogaland material and the rest of the country, we can compare the way large longhouses have been identified (Fig. 6. 2, Table 6.5). Table 6.5 shows that 79% of the large longhouses in Rogaland are known because of the special character of the architecture with house wall remains visible above the surface. In contrast, 84% of the largest houses from the rest of the country had the character of postholes and wall ditches only visible when removing the topsoil. The remaining 16% are found in Vest-Agder and Sogn og Fjordane, reflecting the same western Norwegian architectural traditions as in Rogaland. We can thus say that, compared to the rest of the country, the largest houses are in one sense over-represented in Rogaland because they are far easier to identify here. Looking solely at longhouses found by mechanical topsoil stripping, nine large longhouses have so far been found in Rogaland, at Austbø, Sande, Gausel, Hove (2) and Forsand (4). This number to a larger degree compares with the six houses found by topsoil stripping in Sogn og Fjordane.

Altogether, I have found 61 buildings in Norway conforming to the length criterion of 40 metres. As might have been expected, the general trend is that the frequency of houses falls as the length of the houses increases, making the largest houses the least frequent (Table 6.5). Among the shortest longhouses listed here, 11 only just fulfil the length criterion. The criterion of 40 metres was chosen as a rounded number for the definition, but the shortest longhouse in Sogn og Fjordane certainly identified as an 'estate farm' was the 43-metres-long house at Eide, near the Evebø grave (Diinhoff, 2009; Hatling, 2013). As a test, one can see what happens if the criterion is set to 43 m. From Rogaland ten houses would fall out of the list, as well as five houses from the rest of Norway. The overall distribution in Rogaland and Norway is altered very little, apart from the exclusion of the three Trøndelag houses, which are quite certain elite settlements. In order to keep these houses on the list, we should maintain the 40-metre criterion. To conclude, longhouses above 40 metres in length seem to work as a good parameter for identifying a selection of the still-preserved elite settlements of the early Iron Age. There is a good correspondence between these longhouses and either identified centres, large medieval farms or rich finds in the houses. While there was certainly social variation between the people living in these large longhouses, it seems fair to assume that the house owners belonged to the upper part of the social hierarchy.

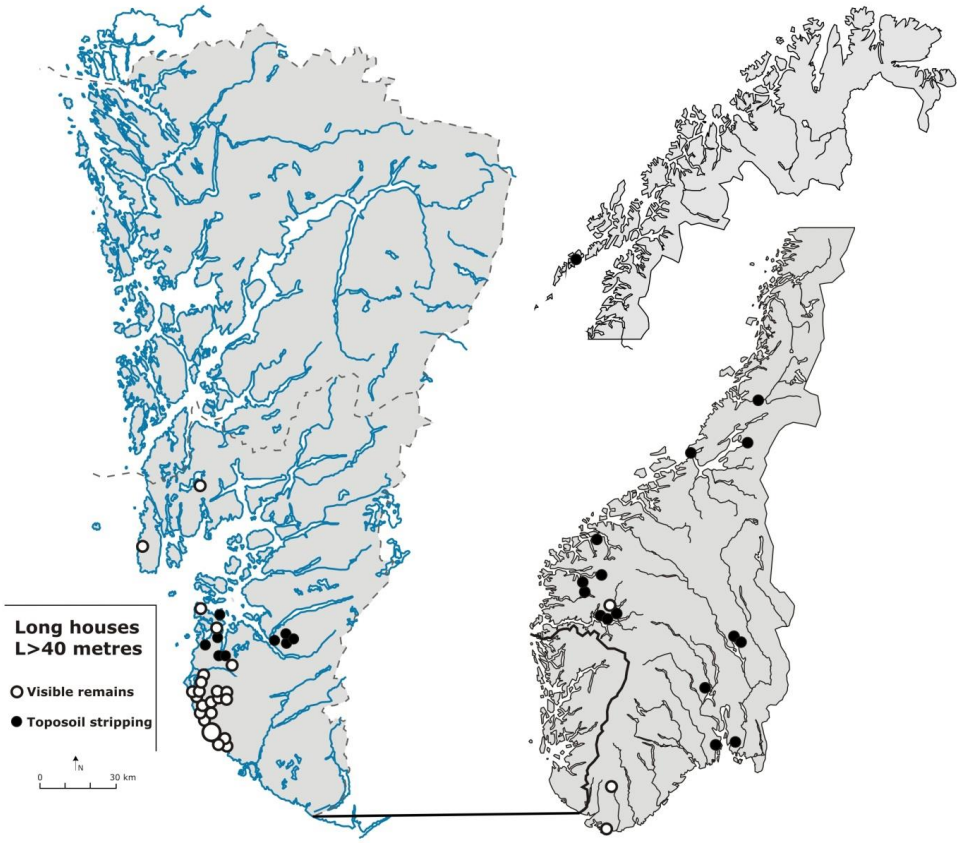


Fig. 6.2. Map of early Iron Age longhouses >40 metres long in Norway. White dots indicate remains visible above the ground, while the black dots are houses identified by mechanical topsoil stripping in the last decades. The largest dot represents 10 houses at the centres Nærø and Varhaug in Hå.

Table 6.5. Means of identification for large longhouses in Rogaland compared with that of large longhouses in the rest of Norway.

	House length (m)				Means of identification		Total
	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-100	Visible remains	Topsoil stripping	
Rogaland	24	8	7	3	33 (79%)	9 (21%)	42
Rest of Norway	11	4	4	0	3 (16%)	16 (84%)	19
Total	35	11	11	3	36	25	61

The great halls of the elite milieus

In the areas surveyed, the largest houses coincide with sites and areas with rich finds from the Roman and Migration periods. As pointed out by Diinhoff (2011b:p.102), as one of the main lessons from the excavations in Sogn og Fjordane one might expect to find 'estate farms' in all central settlement districts, and most likely several of these within the same district. This was the case in Sogn og Fjordane, in Forsandmoen and in Jæren. The presence of several large houses in Sogndal and Luster, and in Forsand, Sandnes, Time, Klepp and Hå, indicates that a single leader did not have exclusive rights to large houses, but that a wider elite milieu had the opportunity to build these buildings. 'A single elite residence could not take a paramount position in the landscape; it was occupied by a number of hall farms (…)' (Fabech, 1999b:p.470).

These settlement remains further give us reasons to believe that the grave and hoard material might often guide us to the main areas of elite settlements in these periods. Among the well-known find spots for serpent head rings and high-status weapons of the late Roman period, large longhouses have been found at Veien in Ringerike, Hove in Sandnes, Erga in Klepp and Rutlin in Sogndal. Famous Migration period graves such as Evebø in Gloppen and Vestly in Time come from farmsteads originally belonging the farms to Eide and Lye, both with large longhouses. The largest Norwegian gold hoard from the early Iron Age (>600 grams) was found close to a large house at Store Oma, Time (Fig. 7.40), and the largest hoard in Nord-Rogaland was found at Vårå, Tysvær, with a house either 58 or 83 metres long (Fig. 6.4, Østrem, 1999:pp.17–19).

In this subchapter, a length criterion of 40 metres has been shown to work well as a parameter for identifying elite settlement. I find it likely that most of these houses included 'hall rooms' conforming to Herschend's definition (Fig. 6.3). My alternative definition, however, covers a broader selection of elite settlement as it is less dependent on subjective interpretations of room functions. The large buildings I have singled out represented a resource-demanding, monumental architecture. Although these large houses included rooms for various activities, buildings of this scale might justly be labelled 'great halls'. This indeed seems to have been the main hall type in the study area, with southern Scandinavian types of 'hall buildings' playing a minor role.

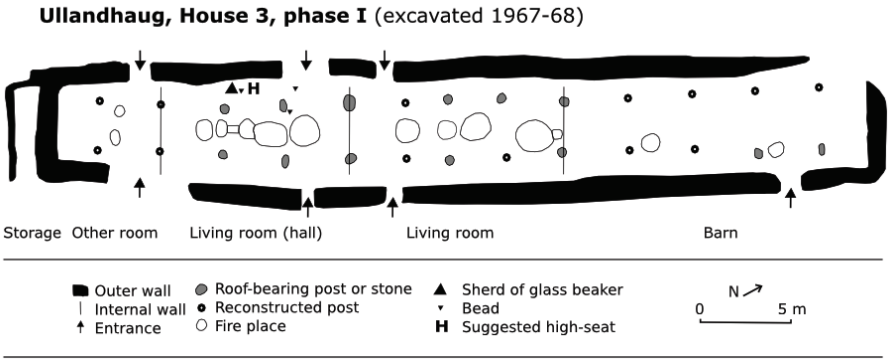


Fig. 6.3. Ullandhaug, House 3, phase 1, based on Myhre (1980, Fig. 127). The southern one of the two rooms interpreted by Myhre as living rooms, might be reinterpreted as a "hall room" based mainly on the presence of the sherd of a glass beaker situated at the long wall in the centre of this room. A few glass beads were also found here. Myhre interpreted a room in house 1 as the hall, but this was critizised by Løken (1992), who instead interpreted the northern living room in house 3 as hall (Løken, 2001). However, the glass beaker from the southern living room is an object type closely associated with activities confined to the hall (Myhre 1980:p.325). The sherd and beads might possibly indicate a location of the high-seat (H) in accordance with Herschend's (1993, Fig. 5a) model of early hall rooms.

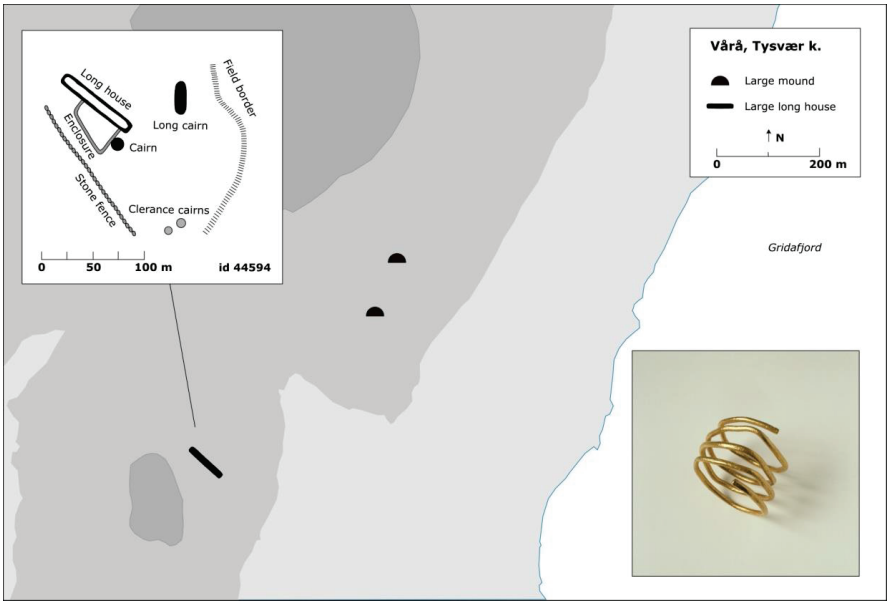


Fig. 6.4. Remains of a long house at Vårå, Tysvær (Askeladden id 44794), measured as 58 or 83 m long. Sketch after plan drawing in top.arch. AM, UiS. Two large mounds are known from Vårå and one from an adjacent farm. The payment ring, weighing 158 grams, was found at Vårå in 1840 (C 984). It is considered to be a hoard find (Bøe, 1926). Photo: Terje Tveit, AM, UiS.

6.1.2 Large burial mounds in the study area

In Chapter 3, Ringstad's work on large burial mounds and centres was discussed. In western Norway, Ringstad found 300 large mounds with a volume over 400 m^3. However, as was argued, his volume criterion could well be replaced by a simpler diameter criterion of 20 metres. Ringstad listed about 100 mounds that were over 20 metres, but just below 400 m^3, which were not included in his analysis (Ringstad, 1986, Appendix 2). If these are added, 400 large mounds are known from the counties of Møre og Romsdal, Sogn og Fjordane, Hordaland and from Nord-Rogaland. In this subchapter, I will first show that the distribution in Hordaland and Nord-Rogaland is just slightly altered by adding this new group of mounds. Secondly, the Jæren district was not covered by Ringstad's analysis. As this is an important part of my study area, I will use the simplified criterion to estimate the number of large mounds in Jæren.

We might first take a look at the distribution of the new group of large mounds in Hordaland and Nord-Rogaland (Table 6.6). Close to half of these come from the large mound centres at Etne, Voss, Karmsund, Fitjar, Skåla and Halsnøy, and altogether 77% stem from areas with more than one large mound. The main change in relation to Ringstad's results is an increased number of minor large mound clusters (Fig. 6.5). Among the new, minor clusters of large mounds are Vårå, Tysvær (3 large mounds), Nedre Austrheim (2), Sandeid (2) and Innbjoa (2) in Vindafjord, Ytre Arna and Mjelde in the Haus/Osterøy area (3), from Os (3), Fana in Bergen (4) as well as Olsvoll, Radøy, close to Seim, Lindås (3). Although these do not conform to Ringstad's volume criterion for large mound centres, based on 'wealth criteria' (gold, bronze, glass) he regarded Innbjoa (i.e. Bjoafjord), Haus/Osterøy and Seim/Lindås as centres (Ringstad, 1992:p.123). In addition, Vårå, Nedre Austrheim, Sandeid, Fana and Os might well have been local centres. The mentioned farm at Vårå has three large mounds, a large longhouse and a large gold ring, and the Fana district also has many centre indicators (Figs. 6.4 and 6.9). Finally, eight new large mounds occur in Lindås, Årstad in Bergen, Ulvik, Tysnes, Varaldsøy, Jondal, Sveio and Raunes in Vindafjord. These undated large mounds might reflect important sites in various prehistoric periods. The mound at Raunes stems from the same farm as a gold bracteate, indicating some elite presence.

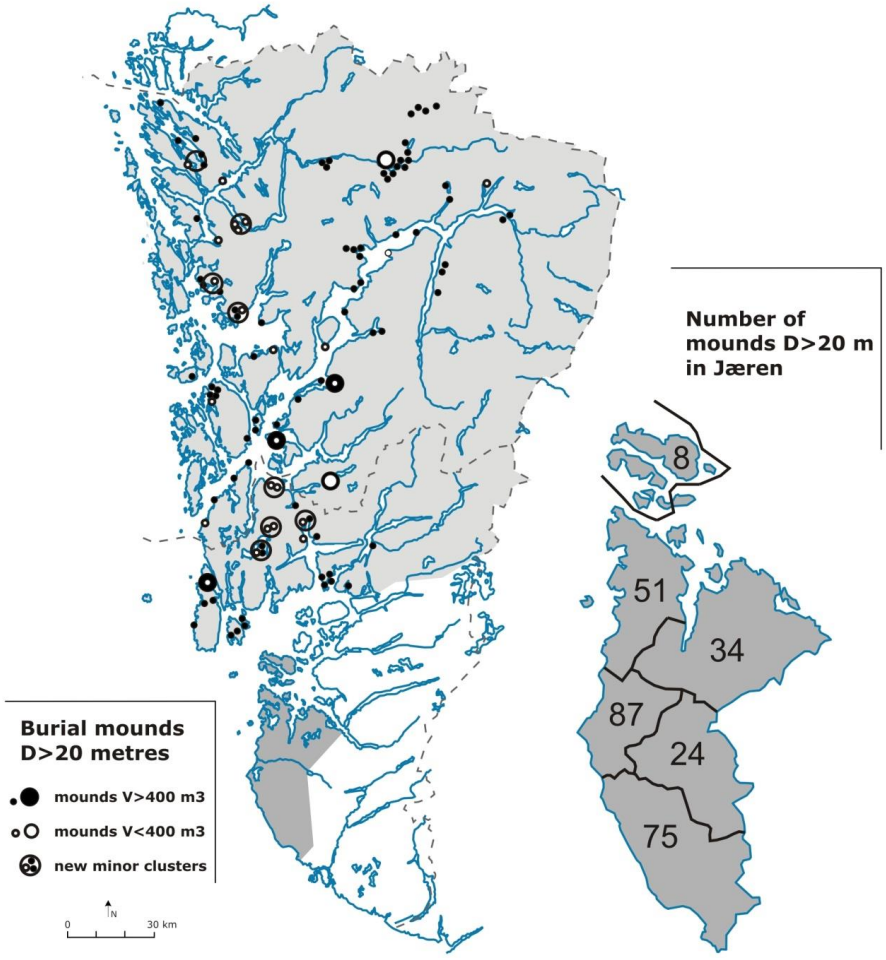


Fig. 6.5. Maps of large mounds in Hordaland and parts of Rogaland. The left map is based on Ringstad, 1986 with additional mounds from Table 6.6. The right map indicates the distribution of large mounds in Jæren (cf. Table 6.7).

Table 6.6. Large mounds >20 metres in diameter from the study area, originally not used in Ringstad's analysis (see Ringstad, 1986, appendix 2). A mound from Stend, Bergen has been added to the list (Reiersen, 2012b)

Municipality	Etne	Voss	Karmøy	Fitjar	Kvinnherad	Vindafjord	Tysvær	Os	Osterøy	Radøy	Bergen	Lindås	Tysnes	Jondal	Ulvik	Sveio	TOTAL
Large mound centre	6	5	1	1	2												15
Minor mound cluster						5	1	1	1	1	3						12
Single large mound					1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Total	6	5	1	1	3	6	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	35

Surveying the large burial mounds of southern Rogaland

While Ringstad's study analysed large mounds within all the western Norwegian counties, the find-rich districts of southern Rogaland were not included in his analysis. My simplified definition of large mounds in terms of diameter rather than volume makes it possible to estimate also the number of large mounds in this important area. In order to sketch the distribution of large mounds in southern Rogaland, I have carried out a survey mainly of the central part of lower Jæren, including also the islands of Rennesøy to the north and the eastern parts of Sandnes. The selected area is identical to the central area indicated in Myhre's (1987a) Jæren territory. This area thus has a very high concentration of rich finds matching Ringstad's 'wealth criteria' (gold, bronze and glass vessels). It is possible that minor large mound clusters, similar to those presented on the map of Hordaland and Nord-Rogaland (Fig. 6.5), occur in the regions of inner Ryflyke and Dalane outside this 'central area'. However, considering the overall trends from western Norway, the majority of large mounds come from the same areas as the richest finds. It might nevertheless be remembered that based on the lack of rich finds, Myhre did not identify Voss in Hordaland as a centre, while it turned out to be one of Ringstad's major large mound centres. As mound diameter is not always noted in the Askeladden database, I have made use of older surveys. Helliesen's pioneering surveys in the early twentieth century, covering the area from Randaberg to Time, are the most important source for the large burial mounds in southern Rogaland. Many of the secondary sources I have used are based on his observations.

My tentative survey revealed a total of 279 circular mounds and cairns over 20 metres in diameter in this area (Table 6.7, Fig. 6.5). If the 42 mounds from Nord-Rogaland are added (Ringstad, 1986, including those in Table 6.6), as well as the unknown number of mounds from the inner Ryfylke and Dalane regions, one might moderately estimate the number of mounds in Rogaland to be 350. In western Norwegian terms, this number is high, as the three counties to the north altogether have a total of some 360 mounds. In order to better illustrate the high concentration of large burial mounds in Jæren, an area measuring about 1100 km^2, one might compare it to Innherrad, Nord-Trøndelag, which supposedly has the highest concentration of large burial mounds in the country.

Stenvik (1996, Fig. 5) showed that an area of four municipalities here, some 4100 km^2, has a concentration of 150 mounds, of which 70 large mounds come from Verdal (an area of 1550 km^2). The result from Jæren thus reveals a far greater concentration of large mounds, with at least 87 lage mounds in Klepp municipality alone (115 km^2). However, it should be stressed that the largest burial mounds in Inntrøndelag are generally larger than the mounds from Rogaland, which are mostly 20–25 metres.

Table 6.7. Number of large mounds in the central part of south Rogaland, Myhre's (1987a) central area for Jæren. Please note that these are minimum figures, based mainly on old surveys. For practical reasons, long mounds have been omitted in this survey, although many of these date to the Roman and Migration period. From the selected area, the southernmost part of Hå, Ogna sokn, was omitted, as A. Myhre's surveyes did not cover this area. A map made by B. Myhre (2013:p.225) indicates no large mounds in Ogna. The same map, however, show only 39 large mounds (20-25 m in diameter) in Hå municipality, a considerable lower number than my survey. As seen on Fig. 6.7, in the Nærbø centre alone, 34 large mounds are documented

Municipality	Mound diameter (m)			Tot	Source	Centres defined by wealth criteria
	20-25	25-30	>30			
Rennesøy	6	2	0	8	Fornminner i Rogaland, 1983	(Sørbø, Utstein)
Randaberg, Sola, Stavanger	31	18	2	51	Myhre, 1978, Fig. 21	Randaberg, Hafrsfjord
Sandnes	24	9	1	34	Helliesen, 1899b, 1904, 1905	Hove, Riska
Klepp	48	27	12	87	Helliesen, 1906, 1907	Tinghaug, Erga, Vasshus
Time	16	6	2	24	Helliesen, 1911, 1913; Myhre 2007	Lye, Re
Hå	62	11	2	75	Petersen, 1923, Møllerop, 1949, 1957; A. Myhre 1955, 1957; B. Myhre 2007	Nærbø, Varhaug, Vigrestad
Total	**187**	**73**	**19**	**279**		

Table 6.7 shows the general distribution of large mounds in the municipalities pointed out by Myhre (1978, 1984/85, 1987a) as the 'central area' of southern Rogaland. With concentrations of what Ringstad termed 'wealth criteria', the centres pointed out by Myhre are thus automatically identified as centres of at least minor rank in the early Iron Age. Most of the areas distinguished by Myhre as centres might indeed rather be termed major centres of the Roman and Migration periods due to the presence of dated large mounds and rich finds, and they should also be considered large mound centres due to a high frequency of large mounds from the different periods. If one focusses on

the main centres on Jæren identified by Myhre (1978, 2013), clusters of large burial mounds are found within some proximity to these. Although 'large mound centres' are defined regardless of the date of the mounds, a few remarks should be made on the dates of the large mounds in Jæren. In this region, a high percentage of the large mounds (often cairns) are dated to the Bronze Age (cf. Sør-Reime et al., 1998). In Klepp, for instance, half of the large mounds had an oldest date from the Bronze Age, with the other half dated to the Roman and Migration periods (Bukkemoen, 2006). Unlike the trend in eastern Norway (Ringstad, 2004), few large mounds are dated to the late Iron Age. A large proportion of the mounds are thus from the early Iron Age.

Hå municipality has an unusually high concentration of both large mounds and large longhouses. This makes it possible to investigate more closely the correlation between large mounds and large longhouses. From Hå, one might use the Nærbø centre as an example of a concentration with 34 large mounds and seven large longhouses (Fig. 6.7). At the farms at Bø, Gudmestad, Vigre (2 houses) and Obrestad, concentrations of large mounds coincide with large longhouses, and both categories are also found at Njærheim (Fig. 7.38). However, although this case might illustrate a correlation between these two categories of aristocratic architecture, it must be stressed that the presence in this area of large mounds at the majority of the farms is extraordinary.

In this subchapter, I have sketched the distribution of large burial mounds in most of the study area. My starting point was the simplified definition of large mounds as having a diameter of 20 metres. An additional group of mounds was plotted on the distribution map, and 77% of these were found near other large mounds. Some of the new mounds occurred at defined centres, e.g. Innbjoa, while other mounds formed previously unidentified minor clusters such as Vårå. The simplified definition also made possible a survey of the large mounds of Jæren, revealing a concentration of large mounds, comparable only to that found in Inntrøndelag. In the previous subchapter, we found that large longhouses were a proper parameter for identifying elite farms, and that rich graves and hoards were found near these houses. As seen above, a similar association was found between large mounds and large houses. Given the lack of known large houses, large mounds and rich finds might thus indicate elite settlement.

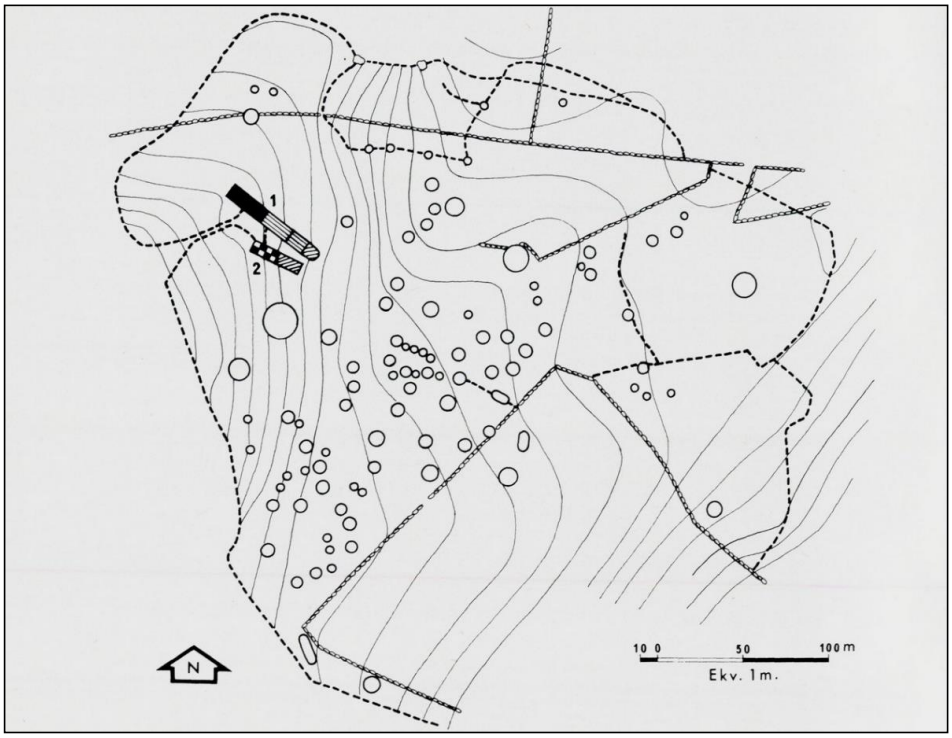


Fig. 6.6. Farm unit with two longhouses (the largest 63 m long), clearance cairns, burial mounds and stone fences at Lyngaland in Time. Note the large burial mound just south of the longhouses. After Myhre, 1980:p.292.

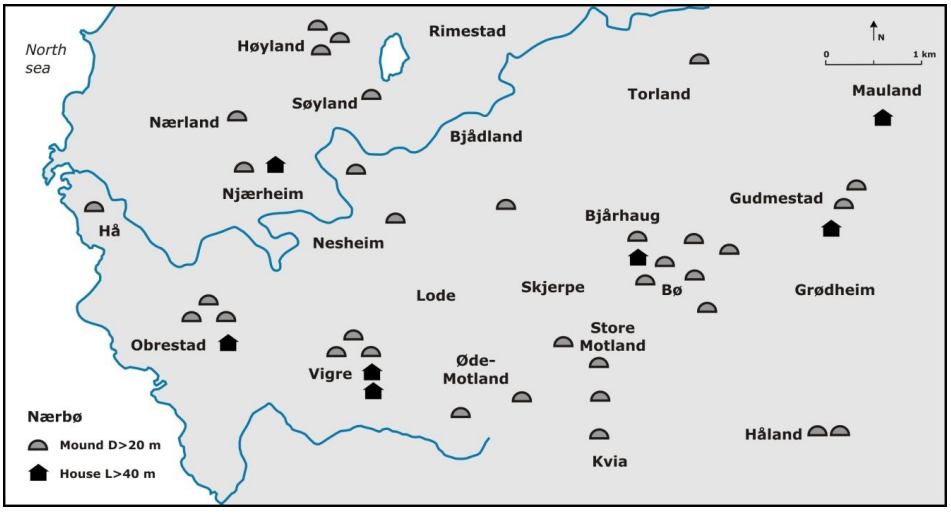


Fig. 6.7. Map comparing the distribution of large burial mounds in the Nærbø centre, Hå, to that of large longhouses. Large mounds in the Bø area based on Møllerop (1957), with large mounds added west and north of Nesheim.

6.2 Buildings of war

6.2.1 Large boathouses as manifestations of retinues

In Norway, about 300 large boathouses are known from the early and late Iron Age and the medieval period, from the coastline between Østfold and northern Troms. According to Myhre (1985:p.36): 'The large boathouses have possibly been built for warships and trading ships. They are often found in groups, especially concentrated in areas that seem to have been economic and political centres of the time' (p. 51). What generally separates a boathouse from a farmhouse is the assumed primary function as a shelter for a boat, and also its location near the seaside often at some distance from farmhouses. If the farm was situated inland or far from good harbours, one might hypothetically assume quite some distances between the farm and the boathouse. During the summer season, one might further assume that the boat was situated on the sea, allowing for other uses of the boathouse. In this subchapter, the boathouse material and various interpretations are presented, before examining whether the boathouses are located near centres and might be associated with a military organisation in retinues.

Based on earlier work especially by Myhre (1985, 1987a, 1997b), Grimm (2006) analysed these boathouses. His definition of a large boathouse was an inner length of more than 18 metres, sheltering large and slender boats or ships of 15 metres or more (Grimm, 2006:p.5). Without regard to date, Grimm (2006, Figs. 11–12, pp. 411–5) lists a total of 48 large boathouses in Rogaland and 28 in Hordaland. Among these, 44 or 45 boathouses (*c*. 58%) over 18 metres have been dated to the Roman and Migration periods based on datable finds, available ^{14}C dates, the height above sea level or the dimensions (Table 6.8, Fig. 6.8). As few boathouses have been excavated and dated, it is likely that some of these boathouses could be given a later date, and that some of the boathouses not listed here are indeed from the early Iron Age. It should also be stressed that some of the same issues of representativity regarding regional differences in longhouse architecture are also true for the boathouses. All boathouses in the study area were identified due to visible remains above ground. However, in recent years boathouses built of timber without outer walls have also been identified by topsoil stripping (Grønnesby & Ellingsen, 2012; Diinhoff & Bødal, 2013).

Table 6.8. List of large boathouses from the early Iron Age, after Grimm (2006:pp.411–15). A recent find from Avaldsnes, Karmøy is added (Bauer & Østmo, 2013), as well as a boathouse from Skåla, Kvinnherad. Grimm (2006) listed the latter as medieval based on dimensions 30 x 12 m, but Fett (1956b) argues that correct dimensions are 35 x 5 m. A boathouse at Sømme, Sola was first listed as 37.5 m long by Grimm (2006), but a recent study modified it to 24 m (Grimm, 2011a). The list includes boathouses with known length above 18 m, dated to the early Iron Age by finds, ^{14}C-dates, dimensions or altitude. The largest boathouses, 30–40 metres long, are indicated in grey

Municipality	Boathouse length (m)			Total	Largest	Dimensions (m)
	18-20	21-29	30-40			
Bergen			2	2	Flesland, Stend	40 x 8 35 x 5
Os		2		2	Askvik	27 x 5.5
Fusa			1	1	Skåtun	32 x 5
Kvam	1			1	Augstad	20 x 5
Kvinnherad	3	1	2	6	Skåla Sjo	35 x 5 30 x 6
Stord		1		1	Bjelland	27 x 5
Karmøy	1			1	Avaldsnes	20 x 8
Vindafjord		1		1	Vestrå	21 x 6.5
Tysvær		1		1	Hetland	21 x 5.5
Suldal		1		1	Hebnes	24 x 6
Hjelmeland	2			2	Store Nessa	20 x 5
Strand		2		2	Heng	25 x 5
Finnøy	4	2		6	Meling	25 x 5-6
Rennesøy	2			2	N. Reianes	18 x 4
Randaberg		1		1	Sande	27 x 5
Sola	2	5		7	Nord-Kolnes	26 x 3.5
Stavanger	2	3	1	6	Meling	30 x 5-6
Hå	2		1	3	Obrestad	40 x 4-6
Total	**19**	**20**	**7**	**46**		

With regard to the distribution of boathouses in south-western Norway (see Fig. 6.8), Myhre (1985:p.50) writes: 'Most large boathouses have been found in the central part of Rogaland and the south part of Hordaland. Local districts such as Fana-Os, Rosendal, Åmøy, Strand, Lista, Lindesnes and especially North Jæren have a remarkable concentration of large boathouses which (...) can be dated to the Roman and Migration periods.' The largest boathouses documented in Norway are 40 metres long. Boathouses of 30–40 metres were buildings capable of housing large seagoing ships at least of a size comparable to the warship from Nydam (23 m). The largest early Iron Age boathouses in Hordaland occur at Flesland (40 m) and Stend (35 m) in Bergen, at Skåtun in Fusa (32 m), at Skåla (35 m) and Sjo (30 m) in Kvinnherad, and in Rogaland at Meling on Åmøy, Stavanger (30 m) and at Obrestad in Hå (40 m).

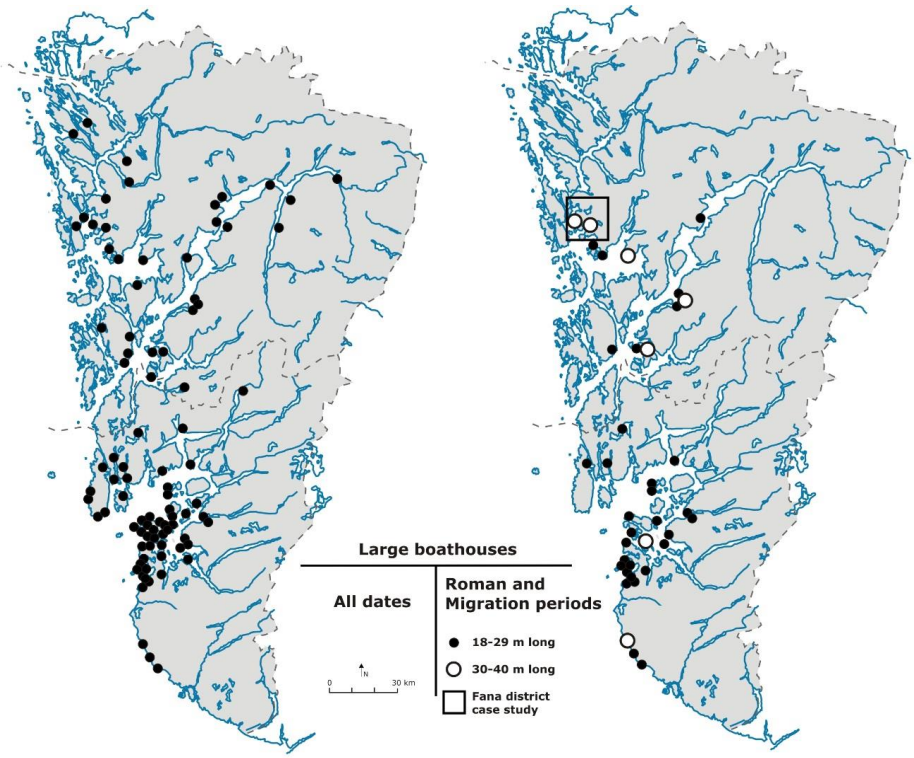


Fig. 6.8. Maps of large boathouses in Hordaland and Rogaland (after Grimm, 2006). To the left, all boathouse sites. To the right, the large boathouses certainly or tentatively dated by Grimm to the Roman and Migration periods.

The largest boathouses are thus of similar sizes to the smallest houses regarded above as 'great halls'. In order to get the boats inside the shed, a large room was needed. To achieve this, the boathouses were constructed with curved walls and the inner posts were often close to the walls. These features led Hinsch (1961) to question whether the boathouses had social functions, being the precursor or parallel to the hall, understood as longhouses with large open rooms and curved walls. Rolfsen (1974) on the other hand, focussed on the possible mercantile functions of the boathouses. Grimm (2006) discussed the various suggested functions. He argued that their main function was military, as a shed for warships (cf. Grimm, 2002), but that these ships were also used for transporting cargo. The boathouses might have had secondary functions as working and storage spaces, as status symbols and as halls (Grimm, 2006:p.228). Grimm further argued that major centres, like Hafrsfjord, had a concentration of many boathouses, while minor centres, like the area around Stend in Bergen, solely had one boathouse.

With this last proposal, the many boathouses on northern Jæren would denote a major centre. Counting only boathouses probably from the Roman and Migration periods, the main cluster seems to be confined to Hafrsfjord. Myhre (1985, 1987b, 1997b) linked these boathouses to the larger 'central area' of the assumed Jæren territory. The distribution was interpreted as the result of a centralised military organisation drawing warriors from a large region, in contrast to the decentralised medieval naval organisation. However, if Jæren is split into many different centres not necessarily cooperating, the boathouses of Hafrsfjord are situated peripherally to the many centres in central Jæren. Of course, this might be due to the lack of good harbours on central Jæren, with Hafrsfjord and Gandsfjord being the closest harbours. The low number of boathouses along Gandsfjord has been seen as the result of modern destruction (Grimm, 2006:p.67). In Hå, further south, boathouses are situated near the four best harbours at the centres of Nærbø, Varhaug and Vigrestad (Myhre, 2013:pp.259, 274–6). The locations of boathouses were thus determined by access to the sea and good harbours, and the ship's crew did not necessarily come from the farms closest to the boathouse. It is therefore often hard to estimate the area a crew came from and they might have originated in different areas, connected mainly by personal loyalty bonds.

Apart from Hafrsfjord and Hå, boathouses are found at centres in Skåla, Halsnøy, Avaldsnes, Hebnes and Rennesøy, as well as possible minor centres like Stord and Stend/Fana. The locations of these boathouses might be compared to possible evidence of local warrior retinues. Based on excavations of boathouses in Trøndelag, Grønnesby and Ellingsen (2012:p.138) proposed an interpretation linking locational choices and the many functions of boathouses to the retinue institution (my translation):

> *Boathouses may have acted as a manifestation of the power and glory of the retinue and might have been at the core of their activities including the construction and storage of boats, as a harbour, for transhipment and as storage. This was the site where new products arrived and new stories were told. Whether the news came in the form of looted goods or was obtained by exchange more peacefully, this was the place to be. This activity was so important that there seems to be a systematic relationship between burial sites and boathouses. The reason why the locations of boathouses (...) vary over time is because they were not linked to any territorial army unit, and that it was rather the connection to the retinue institution that was important. Thus, the location of the boathouses might change, since power was not necessarily linked to one particular farm over time.*

A recent analysis of the location of large boathouses in Hordaland and Rogaland confirmed that boathouses are often situated near burial sites (Dell'Aitante, 2013). The possible relation between boathouses and the weapon graves of assumed military leaders and warriors is thus worth investigating. As has already been discussed, military leaders might possibly be traced from graves with special weapon gear with fittings of gold, silver and bronze (Table 6.9), and the retinues from larger clusters of weapon graves. Of particular interest is a recently excavated grave with sword found just 20 metres from the 35-metre-long boathouse at Stend in Bergen (Reiersen, 2012b).

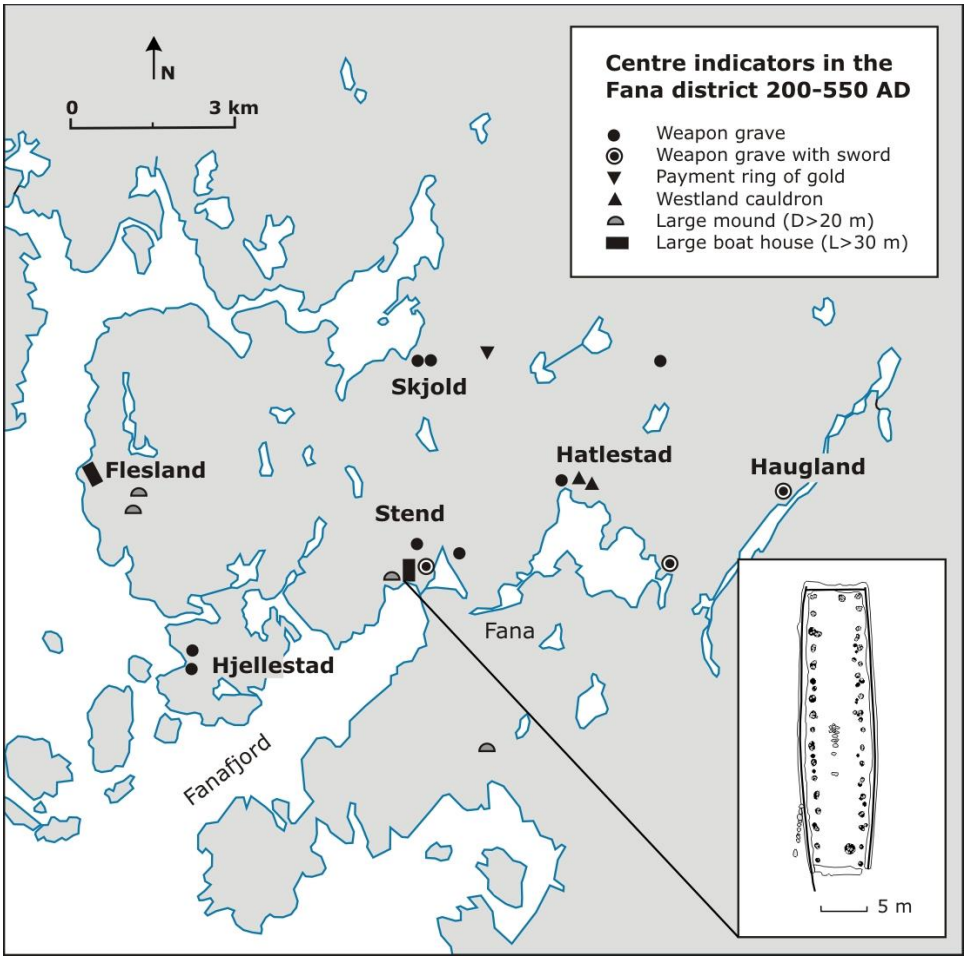


Fig. 6.9. Map of centre indicators in the Fana district, surrounding two very large boathouses, 35 and 40 metres long. Plan drawing of the excavated boathouse at Stend in the corner. Based on Grimm, 2006; Reiersen, 2012b.

As a case study, we can map centre indicators in the district surrounding the two large boathouses at Stend and Flesland (Fig. 6.9). The settlement district of Fana comes close to Myhre and Ringstad's definitions of a centre, and Stend was used as an example of a minor centre by Grimm (2006). As mentioned above, the Fana district in Bergen has four large burial mounds over 20 metres in diameter, found at Flesland, Stend and Fana, as well as a gold find and two Westland cauldrons from other farms. Weapon graves are found across the district, with swords known from three of these. These are the late Roman or early Migration period sword from Stend, a Migration period sword from Austevoll and the ornamented sword pommel of gilt silver from Haugland, the latter two being found east of Stend. If the cluster of weapon graves denotes the presence of warriors, and graves with sword gear the presence of officers and military leaders, these might reflect retinues from Fana, operating local warships situated in large boathouses on major farms by the sea. In the Trøndelag example, it was observed that the location of boathouses changed, interpreted as changes in the localisation of power. This might perhaps be the reason why large boathouses are found as close as Stend and Flesland.

The possible relationship between boathouses and the graves of military leaders can be tested in the whole study area. In Os, south of Fana, a silver sword chape was found at Hauge in the same district as two boathouses. Although outside the chronological frame of this thesis, a rare, early Roman period weapon grave was also found near the boathouse at Bjelland in Stord (Fett, 1967). A phase C1b bronze shield boss from Sjo on Halsnøy comes from the same farm as a 30-metre-long boathouse. A lost boathouse from Gjerde in Etne, described as 'large' but with unknown dating (not the medieval one, cf. Grimm, 2006), was found near a sword with gilded fittings. At Avaldsnes, a boathouse was found near the Flaghaug mound with the Avaldsnes I grave, which had a silver shield boss. If the Hafrsfjord boathouses are viewed in a local context, the sword with silver chape from Litlaland and the gold mouthpiece from Madla are found in the area. Five graves with finer sword gear are found near Nærbø in Hå, from Hå prestegard, Nærland, Ødemotland and two from Håland. These graves are situated within a relatively short distance of the 40-metre-long boathouse at Obrestad. In sum, there is some evidence of associations between military leaders and large boathouses.

As we have seen, Myhre (1985) and Grimm (2006) claimed that boathouses were found at centres. This is indeed the case for many of the boathouses from the Roman and Migration periods, although some are also situated peripherally to centres. Proximity to the sea and good harbours were prerequisites for the boathouses. In many cases, they were prominently placed in the landscape and are often found near graves. There seems to be consensus regarding the multifunctionality of the boathouses. While the main function was as a shelter for warships, they might also have been working sites, storages and halls. It was suggested that these functions could be associated with retinues that operated the large warships and gathered at these boathouses. Weapon graves might be seen as traces of such retinues. In the case study of the Fana district, weapon graves were found near two large boathouses. Several other boathouses are found near weapons linked with military leaders (cf. Tables 6.8, 6.9). The boathouses at Hafrsfjord, for instance, are located near status weapons from graves at Litlaland (C3), Håland (D2b), and from the Madla hoard (D2b). Some boathouse clusters might also represent chronological changes where the location of the warship was moved.

Table 6.9. List of status weapon graves from the late Roman (LRP) and Migration period (MP), grouped by municipality. Selected key finds are listed

Municipality	LRP	MP	Total	Key find	Metal	Object type
Masfjorden	0	1	1	Solheim	Bronze	Sword sheath fittings
Lindås	0	2	2	Hodneland	Silver/gold	Sword pommel
Osterøy	1	4	5	Mosevoll	Silver	Sword pommel
Bergen	0	1	1	Haugland	Silver/gilt	Sword pommel
Os	0	1	1	Hauge	Silver	Sword sheath fittings
Voss	0	2	2	Rekve	Gold	Sword mouthpiece
Granvin	0	1	1	Nedre Seim	Bronze	Sword pommel
Kvinnherad	0	3	3	Nerhus	Silver	Sword pommel
Etne	1	1	2	Etne	Gold	Sword mouthpiece
Vindafjord	1	0	1	Utbjoa	Bronze	Shield boss
Karmøy	1	0	1	Avaldsnes	Silver/gilt	Sword sheath fittings
Strand	0	1	1	Tau	Bronze	Sword sheath fittings
Sola	1	2	3	Litlaland	Bronze/silver	Sword sheath fittings
Stavanger	0	1	1	Madla	Gold	Sword mouthpiece
Sandnes	0	1	1	Høyland	Silver/lead	Sword pommel
Klepp	2	2	4	Tu	Gold	Sword sheath rings
Time	0	1	1	Fosse	Silver	Belt fittings
Hå	4	2	6	Håland	Bronze	Sword sheath fittings
Total	**11**	**26**	**37**			

6.2.2 Hill forts: Defence, control and conflict zones

In Norway, *c*. 450 so-called *hill forts* are known (Ystgaard, 2014:p.148), including 20 in Hordaland and 53 in Rogaland (Appendix III). These are often identified by remains of stone walls situated on the most accessible side of steep and easily defendable hilltops. As a category, their distribution was thus largely determined by topographical factors. The quantity of stones needed to fortify a hill also varied with the topography of each hill. Carrying large boulders to these steep hilltops represented great efforts, and to this should be added timber for palisades and houses, making them grand constructions of the time. The Norwegian term is *'bygdeborg'*, 'the fort of a settlement district', but local defence was probably one of several functions attached to the forts. There are uncertainties regarding the dating, distribution and functions of hill forts. Recent studies suggest that the forts might have been used in different periods, and that their functions might have varied over time and space (Ringstad, 1991; Hemmendorff, 1992; Hemmendorff & Smestad, 1997; Ystgaard, 1998, 2003, 2014; Skre, 1998; Lie, 2000; Stylegar, 2001; Midtlid, 2003; Finmark, 2009, 2011; Bernt, 2012). The review in Chapter 3 of Myhre's 'defence areas' briefly introduced the distribution of forts in the study area, and I will here focus on their varying functions and relations to centres.

Although there is some evidence of usage in the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Pre-Roman Iron Age and Viking Age, ^{14}C dates from the most intensively researched Trøndelag forts confirm a traditional consensus that the forts were mainly used in the late Roman and Migration periods (Ystgaard, 2014:pp.169–213). The ^{14}C dates available in my study area stem from Myhre's (1984/85:pp.21–30) survey of four forts in Sunnhordland. Only five samples were dated, and according to Myhre the samples were taken within the forts either from house remains or from terraces with cultural layers (Table 6.10). While 12 out of 15 (80%) of the ^{14}C-dated forts in Trøndelag were used within the Roman and Migration periods, the same is true for three out of 4 (75%) of the ^{14}C-dated forts in Sunnhordland. Three forts with preserved stone walls had overlapping dates of 18–646 cal AD (see Fig. 6.12). A fourth site without walls (Slottet, Tysnes) was dated to 675–975 cal AD (95%). At yet anoother site without walls (Bergesfjellet, Bømlo), several late Iron Age objects (vessel fragments, hones, grinding stones) were found in bogs on the hilltop. However, it must be stressed that the two

latter sites are uncertain hill forts. After Myhre's (1984/85) study, two artefacts were found on forts in Rogaland. The first is a quartzite strike-a-light found in the fort at Steinfjell, Karmøy. The furrow along the stone (Fig. 6.10) shows that the strike-a-light was originally attached to a man's belt, as a so-called 'belt stone' (Solberg, 2009:p.148). The belt stone is of the type R155 from the late Roman or Migration periods, and similar belt stones were also found in connection with two hill forts in Trøndelag (Ystgaard, 2014, Figs. 4.11, 4.17). The second object is a hone of quartzite type R157 found at Flundrehaug, Rennesøy. The hone might be dated to the Iron Age in general, but most probably to the early part. Thus, dates from certain hill forts in Hordaland and Rogaland confirm major use within the Roman and Migration periods.

Table 6.10. List of available dates for hillforts in Hordaland and Rogaland. The list is based on information in Myhre, 1984/85, with two artefact finds added and a recalibration of ^{14}C-dates with OxCal 4.2 IntCal 13 (95% probability). Sample numbers with calibration data are listed in Appendix III. The four certain hill forts with dates in the early Iron Age are indicated in grey

Site, municipality	Walls	Phases of usage	Finds	Museum number
Tjobergshaugen, Kvinnherad	Yes	18-411 cal AD	Charcoal	-
Steinslandsåta, Vindafjord	Yes	247-539 cal AD 232-596 cal AD	House remains, nails	B 13770, B 14429
Laukhammarsåta, Tysnes	Yes	399-646 cal AD	Charcoal, nail	B 13365
Steinfjell, Karmøy	Yes	4th -6th cent. AD	Strike-a-light (R155)	S 12830
Flundrehaug, Rennesøy	Yes	3rd-10th cent. AD	Hone (R157)	S 9500
Bergesfjellet, Bømlo	No	7th-10th cent. AD	Vessel fragments etc.	B 12314
Slottet, Tysnes	No	675-975 cal AD	Charcoal, bones	B 13377

Fig. 6.10. Strike-a-light type R155 of quartzite found in 2012 at the hill fort Steinfjell at Åkra, Karmøy (S12830). Photo: Terje Tveit, AM, UiS.

The closest parallels to the Norwegian hill forts are the largely contemporary Swedish *'fornborgar'* ('ancient forts', Hemmendorff, 1992). Swedish excavations have shown that in addition to the more common defensive forts, the so-called *hilltop sites* form a second category of fortified high-status settlements with halls and production of bronze and gold objects (Olausson, 2009). In addition to the functions as local defensive forts or fortified settlements, other suggested functions for the sites include forts for controlling or taxing traffic, as local defensive systems consisting of several forts, and a few might also have been used as cult sites. Two convincing examples of planned defensive structures include the line of forts between the centres at Mære and Stiklestad in Inntrøndelag and the line of forts on the east side of Lake Mjøsa, eastern Norway (Solberg, 2009, Figs. 1-2, cf. Hemmendorff, 1992:p. 38; Hagen, 1999:p.153).

Myhre (1987a) applied the hypothesis of several hill forts being part of an organised defensive system on a super-regional scale. As we have already seen, he interpreted the forts between Sogn and Telemark as defining the 'defence areas' of different 'chiefdom territories'. The basis for his interpretation was a study of the hill forts in Telemark. In Telemark, hill forts are concentrated especially along the main rivers, and Munch (1962) interpreted this as a planned system of forts. Finmark (2009, 2011) reinvestigated the hill forts of Skien in Telemark. His studies indicated that closer analyses of sight lines and locational factors show functional variation among these hill forts, and that they are not a homogenous group. Contrary to the hypotheses of Munch and Myhre, they do not seem to form large systems for defence and control.

The distribution of hill forts within the study area is shown on the map (Fig. 6.11). Concentrations of hill forts are found in Sunnhordland (12), in outer Ryfylke (17) and north Jæren (14), as well as in Dalane (15). Instead of seeing these as larger 'defence areas', one might rather interpret these as 'conflict zones'. We do not know which forts were used simultaneously, just what their specific functions were and whether they reflect cooperation or competition. Sight lines or a relative proximity between forts do not necessarily imply cooperation; one might want to keep an eye on a possible enemy. The only relatively certain point regarding the hill forts is the old tenet that they denote times of war, particularly visible in the 'conflict zones' with clusters of forts.

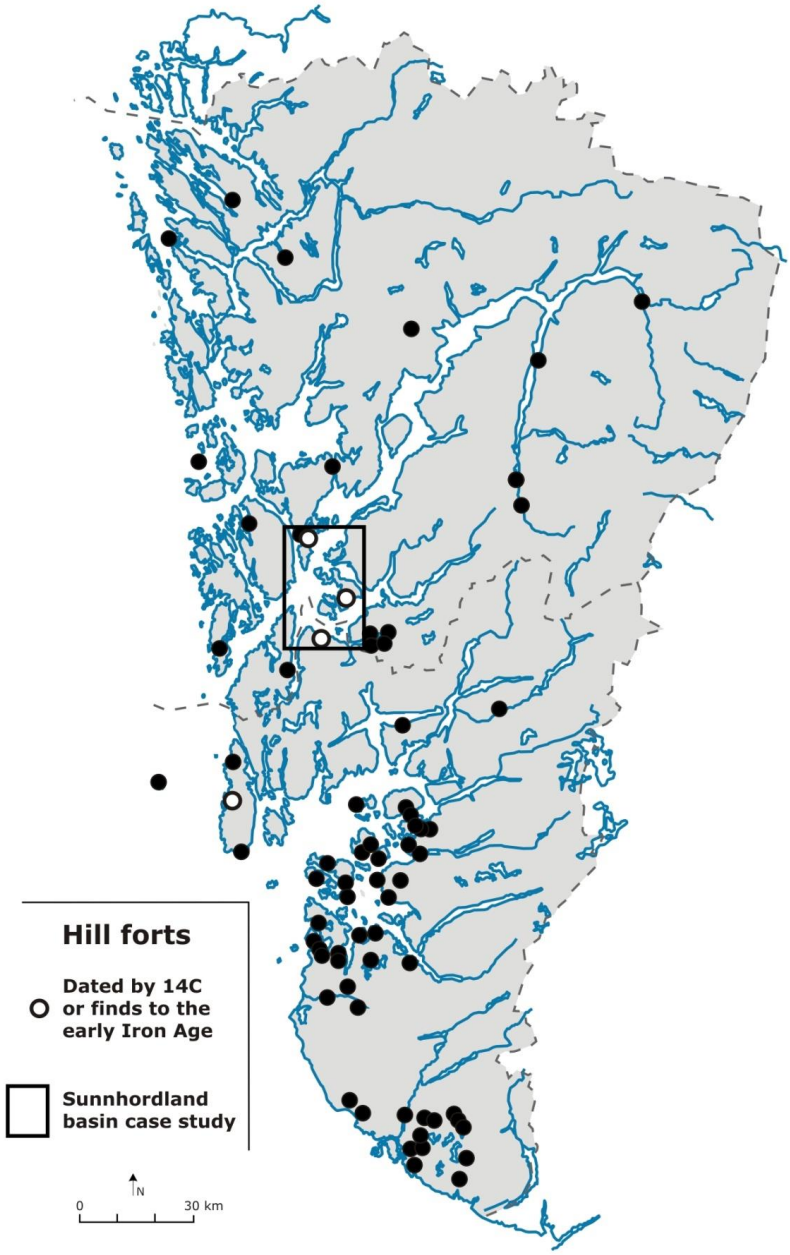


Fig. 6.11. Map of hill fort sites in Hordaland and Rogaland. White dots indicate the four hill forts dated with some certainty to the early Iron Age.The frame show the location of the Sunnhordland basin, used as a case study. The pattern visible on the map show clusters of hill forts in the districts Dalane in the south, in north Jæren and outer Ryfylke, in Sunnhordland, and more scattered on Karmøy, inner Ryfylke, Hardangerfjord and north Hordaland.

Hill forts along the Sunnhordland basin as a case study

To illustrate the functional variation among hill forts, and the fact that these should always be seen in a local context, I present a case study of three hill forts. These are situated within Myhre's supposed 'defence area' of Sunnhordland, and they have radiocarbon dates within the early Iron Age (Fig. 6.11). I will employ some of the criteria used by Finmark (2011), evaluating their functions in terms of defence, control, taxation or cult, based on sight lines, location and features on the forts. Many fjords meet in the Sunnhordland basin, making it an important communication hub. The three hill forts situated around the basin are connected by sight lines, but I would argue that their functions vary and that they are not directly connected as a system. A prerequisite for the forts was suitable hilltops. Though the topography delimited the choice of where to establish forts, one did not pick random hills. The favoured location seems to have been hills raised above a lower landscape, with a small platform on top, steep sides and only the minimum number of stone walls needed to block the entrances. The hill forts at Laukhammarsåta (1) and Steinslandsåta (3) have the haystack-shaped silhouette (Norw. 'såte') often characterising hill forts (Fig. 6.12). The elevated position of these forts gives a very good overview of all fjords entering the Sunnhordland basin.

Laukhammarsåta (1) in the north seems to have been chosen for its location at a highly strategic point in the seaway. It has a good overview of the two important fjords of Hardangerfjord and Langenuen, and it is situated right above a narrow sound connecting these two fjords. Most north- and south-going traffic, as well as most traffic from the large Hardangerfjord with its outfield resources and the centre at Skåla, had to pass within sight of this fort. Due to few opportunities for agricultural settlement on the island of Skorpo, on which the fort was situated, it is hard to interpret this site as a defensive fort for a local population. Even though the fort has a water supply, the hill plateau is of a limited size, and it seems like too exposed a location for a defensive hideout. Instead, it might be seen as a point chosen for its strategic position, used as a control point scouting for traffic of interest, the bottleneck sound below possibly also opening up for 'taxation' or attack (Finmark, 2011:p.20). It is hard to judge from where this fort was manned, but it might have been associated with a local war band, probably in the Migration period (399–646 cal AD, median 518 cal AD).

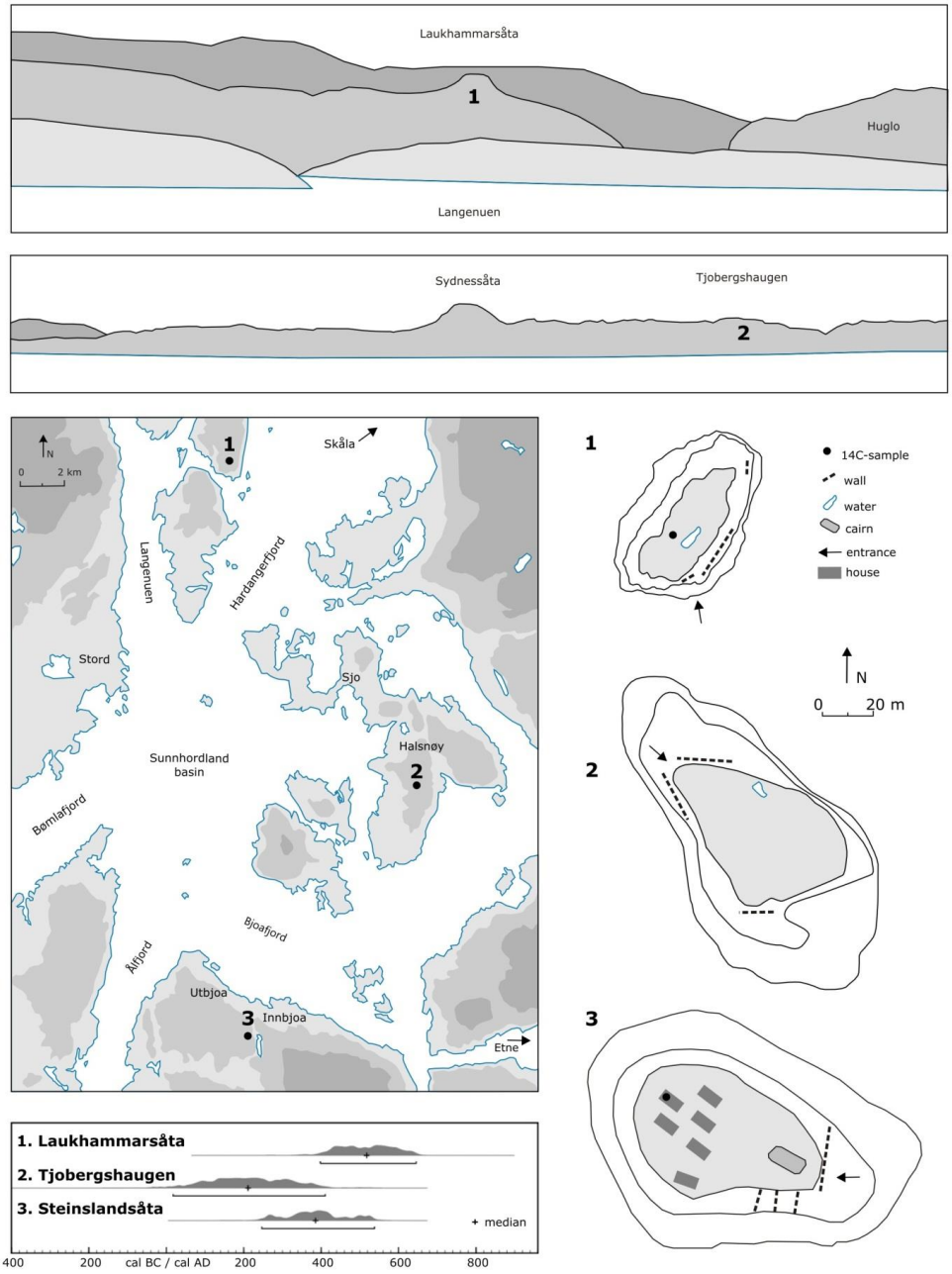


Fig. 6.12. Sketch of the three hillforts around the Sunnhordland basin with ^{14}C-dates from the 2nd-6th centuries AD. Laukhammarsåta sketched after Fett (1965b), Tjobergshaugen after Ross (1883) and Steinslandsåta after Myhre (1982b). The silhouette of Laukhammåmmarsåta is seen towards the east, and the silhouette of Tjobergshaugen is seen towards the northwest.

The Roman period (18–411 cal AD) fort at Tjobergshaugen (2) is a much less visible fort, situated peripherally in the outfield among other hills of equal height. However, if the fort had been moved 2 kilometres south to Sydnessåta, that hill would have provided the same type of location as Laukhammarsåta. One might therefore suggest that the location of Tjoberghaugen indicates a different function to the other fort. The more withdrawn and less exposed location seems like the typical site for a fort of local defence, situated in a safe spot and hard to sight from the seaway (Finmark, 2011:p.20). The fort has a water supply and a larger plateau than Laukhammarsåta, with stone walls at the entrance in the north (Ross, 1883). Being rather low-lying, the seaways are still visible in different directions. The distance from the fort to central settlement areas on Halsnøy makes it hard to decide with any certainty to which district the defensive fort belonged. It might perhaps have provided a refuge for the area around the farm at Sjo, some 5 km further north-west on Halsnøy. As mentioned above, a weapon grave with bronze shield boss and a boathouse of 30 metres was found on this farm.

The last hill fort at Steinslandssåta (3) represents a fort with a very central location. The size of the plateau is similar to the defensive fort at Tjobergshaugen, while the topographic placement and strategic view are more similar to those of Laukhammarsåta. It is, however, more straightforward to point out which settlement district employed the Steinslandsåta fort. The fort has a direct line of visibility to the centre core at Innbjoa 1 kilometre to the north-west, being the steepest hill within a short distance from the settlement. A weapon grave from the neighbouring farm at Utbjoa included a bronze shield boss, possibly indicative of an organised retinue in the area. The identification of five to six houses (Myhre, 1982b), with ^{14}C dates 247–539 and 232–596 cal AD, might further point towards a more permanent character than the two other forts. If the house sizes sketched by Myhre are close to actual measurements, the houses were of a size comparable to those at the contemporary court site Sausjord in Voss (see Fig. 6.15). Although no direct water supply is known from the fort, a large lake is found 700 metres to the east of the fort. A cairn on the plateau might either be a grave, a fundament for a signal pyre, a deposit of stones used for defence or a modern cairn made by stones from the wall (Fett, 1965b). The fort was probably operated by the elite milieu at Bjoa, as a site for control and defence, or as a fortified settlement.

The Sunnhordland case study might illustrate general trends and variation among hill fort sites and functions in the rest of the study area. Similarly to Laukhammarsåta, many of the hill forts are situated at strategic points along the seaway, without a clear association with centres or settlement. Some forts are situated at the heart of centres, like the fort at Innbjoa. The four forts in Etne are especially interesting. Although we do not know whether these were in use contemporary, three of the forts are found near the central settlement, within Etne's medieval districts of Støle, Grindheim and Gjerde (Lillehammer, 1972:p.36). Furthermore, forts in Lindås, Osterøy, Halsnøy, Karmøy and Sandnes are situated close to centres, though a bit peripheral to the main settlement. As illustrated by Halsnøy in the case study, these forts might have been peripheral hideouts for a central settlement. Although status weapons occur at several of these centres, there is not a close association between status weapons and hill forts. A large number of forts are found in Dalane, outer Ryfylke and northern Jæren, the two latter regions being also known for their boathouse concentrations. While the boathouses had warships ready for attack, hill forts were often used for control and defence. The clustering of both categories indicates a high level of stress in these 'conflict zones'.

To sum up, although few dates are available, most of the forts in my study area were probably used in one or more phases during the early Iron Age. From this, however, it cannot be concluded that these were all elements in planned, regional defensive systems. Firstly, the distribution of forts was determined partly by local topography, where suitable hilltops provide the basis for the establishment of forts. Even so, favourable topography was not always employed, as seen in the absence of a fort on the very suitable hill of Sydnessåta on Halsnøy. Secondly, the Sunnhordland case study shows that though a cluster of more or less contemporary forts are situated relatively close along a central waterway system, these must all be seen in relation to their local contexts. Even if there is some possibility of visual contact between forts, this does not necessarily imply cooperation. Different forts might represent various functions of a character associated with war and hostility. The forts might have functioned as defensive structures both for central and peripheral settlements, as forts for war bands or retinues used for control, 'taxation' or attack points, or even as more permanent, fortified hilltop sites that might also have combined several of these functions.

6.3 Traces of judicial organisation

6.3.1 Court sites as thing sites

'Court sites' ('courtyard sites', Norw. '*kretstun*') are collections of equal-sized houses arranged side by side in an oval, linear or irregular formation around an open middle field. Altogether 28 sites are known in Norway. These are found in the coastal counties from Vest-Agder to southern Troms, with concentrations in Rogaland and Nordland (Table 6.11). The functions of the court sites have puzzled archaeologists since they were first recognised as an own structure category in the late nineteenth century. While an early interpretation was that these were 'thing circles', later hypotheses suggested a function either as military barracks governed by chieftains (Lund, 1955) or as an early village stage in the evolution of the farm (Møllerop, 1957; Myhre, 1974).

Since the turn of the millennium, court sites have been much debated. Interpretations of their functions include judicial and political gathering places, sites for rituals and games, and for production and trade, military barracks and rallying points, or a combination of these functions (Armstrong, 2000, 2010; Løken, 2001b; Stenvik, 2001, 2005; Storli, 2001, 2006; Solberg, 2002; M. Olsen, 2003; Grimm & Stylegar, 2004; A.B. Olsen, 2005). A major question has been whether the court sites were closely related to chieftains' farms, or whether these were located peripherally on 'neutral ground'. In recent years, some consensus has been formed with the court sites seen as multifunctional gathering places, with a primary function as *thing sites* (Grimm, 2010; Storli, 2010; Brink et al., 2011; Myhre, 2013; A.B. Olsen, 2013, 2014). Their placement is often considered 'neutral', situated at some distance from major farms.

There seems to be regional variation with regard to the dating of the court sites. The Rogaland sites and the dated site from Vest-Agder were mainly used in the first to the fifth centuries, although the Åmøy site was also used in the Merovingian period (Grimm, 2010; Iversen, 2015). The recently excavated court site Sausjord in Hordaland was used during the Migration period (Hatling & Olsen, 2012; A.B. Olsen, 2013), and is thus largely comparable to the Rogaland sites (Fig. 6.13, Table 6.11). The northern Norwegian sites emerged *c.* 200 AD. While most minor sites here are dated to the early

Iron Age, some major sites show continuity to the late Iron Age (Storli, 2010, Fig. 10). The court sites in Sogn og Fjordane have been dated to both the early and late Iron Age (Randers, 1991; A.B. Olsen, 2005; Diinhoff & Bødal, 2013), while the sites from Nord-Trøndelag are dated to the late Iron Age (Stenvik, 2005; Strøm, 2007).

In the following, I will focus mainly on the early Iron Age court sites within my study area. The three largest sites in Rogaland – Dysjane, Klauhauane and Leksaren – had between 15 and 20 houses, with an inner length of 10–12 metres, while the remaining, less preserved sites had between three and ten known houses, with an inner length of 8–10 metres (Grimm, 2010). Klauhauane, the second largest and most thoroughly excavated site in Rogaland, had 20 houses of a maximum 10–12 metres' inner length. The site at Sausjord had 12 houses that were built simultaneously and with a similar ground plan, 10–13 metres long (A.B. Olsen, 2013). Small mounds are found at the centre of some court sites. The Klauhauane mound might be interpreted as a founder's grave from the early Roman period, and the grave has close parallels in the northern Jutish chamber graves (Reiersen, 2017). At Sausjord, a large posthole instead revealed the presence of a central pole (Hatling & Olsen, 2012:p.58; A.B. Olsen, 2013, Fig. 8).

There also seems to be some variation when it comes to the question of these sites being situated centrally or peripherally. In Rogaland, among the three largest sites – Dysjane, Klauhauane and Leksaren – the first is situated at the core of the Tinghaug centre (Grimm, 2010), the two others within the centres Nærbø and Varhaug in Hå (Myhre, 2013:p.259). The Håvodl, Skjelbrei and Åmøy sites are smaller in size and lie somewhat close, but nevertheless peripherally, to centres in Rennesøy, Hove and Lye. Håvodl is, however, located in a settlement area that should probably be related to the centre at Lye. Skjelbrei is located 7 km east of Hove in the adjacent Fjellbygda area (Myhre, 1972b). Kåda and Ritland are situated peripherally to major centres, but the large grave field at Ritland indicates that they are centrally placed in their local context. The medium-sized site at Sausjord has a location similar to the sites situated not very far from centres, but peripheral to the main settlement. It is located in the Vossestrand district (A.B. Olsen, 2013), at some distance from the centre around Vangsvatn in Voss, but at an important communication hub along a road to Sogn and centres like Vik.

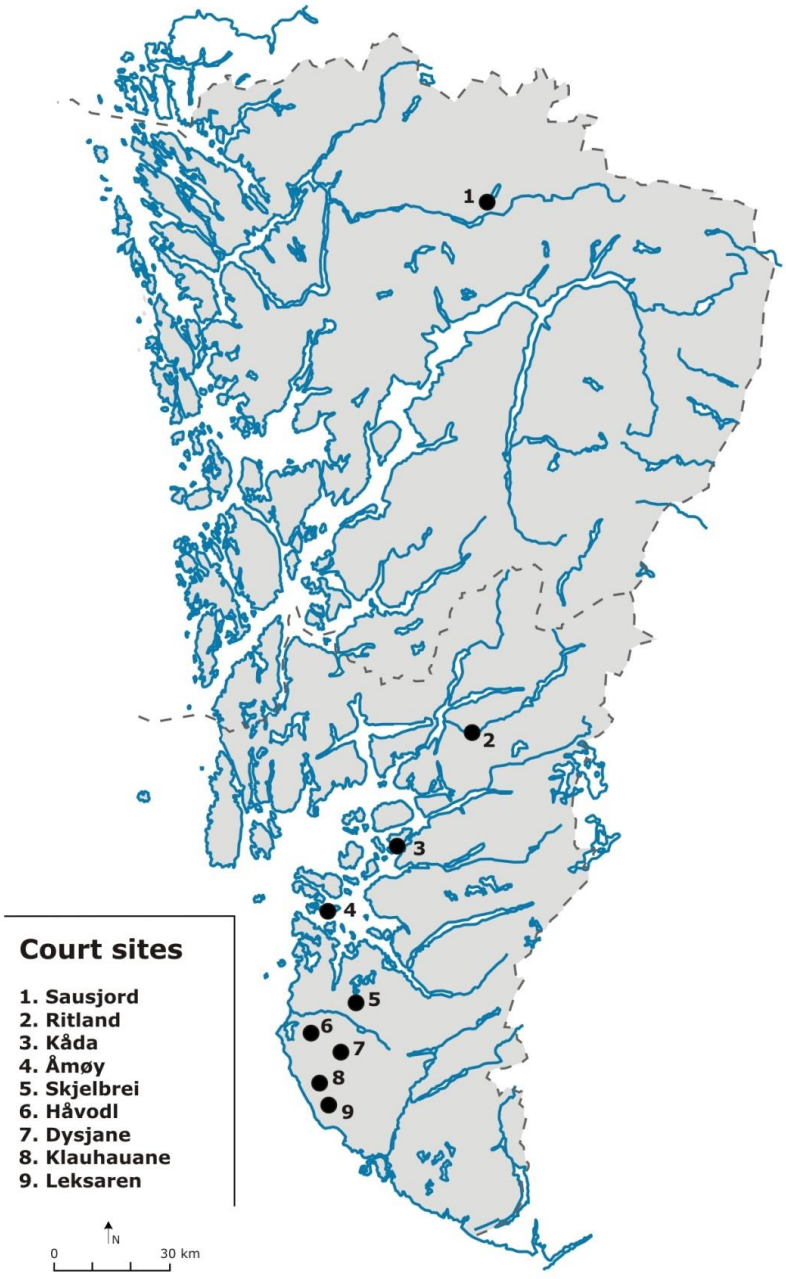


Fig. 6.13. Map of court sites in Hordaland and Rogaland. Based on Grimm & Stylegar (2004), with Sausjord added (A.B. Olsen, 2013).

Table 6.11. Frequency, dating and identification of court sites by county. The data includes the recently excavated court sites at Sausjord, Hordaland and Stryn, Sogn og Fjordane (A.B. Olsen, 2013; Diinhoff & Bødal, 2013)

County	Sites	Main phases		Means of identification	
		100-550 AD	550-900 AD	Visible remains	Topsoil stripping
Vest-Agder	2				
Rogaland	8				
Hordaland	1				
Sogn og Fjordane	3				
Nord-Trøndelag	3				
Nordland	10				
Troms	1				
Total	28				

In order to interpret long-term changes in the use of court sites, the recent debate on the sites has focussed on an analogy with developments in the Icelandic thing system (e.g. M. Olsen, 2003; Storli, 2006, 2010). While many northern Norwegian court sites were used in the early Iron Age, only a few larger sites show continuity to the late Iron Age, before being abandoned in the Viking Age. This has been interpreted as a centralisation trend from many local to fewer regional things, which were abandoned when a super-regional, Norwegian kingdom was formed. Based on the interpretation as thing sites, recent attempts have been made to delimit the size of the region covered by the court sites. Here, the number of houses has been equated to the number of districts represented at the thing site (Lillehammer, 2014; Iversen, 2015).

Though the study of the northern Norwegian court sites focusses on the late Iron Age, it forms a source of inspiration for my study of court sites. The interpretation of court sites as thing sites seems valid also for the Roman and Migration periods, and the observation that the early court sites in both northern and south-western Norway were quite numerous might well reflect a mainly local level of organisation at this stage. The rather short period of use for court sites in my study area might also benefit from the northern parallel, as the observed relation between court site abandonment and the centralisation of power in the north might also be a valid explanation here. In the rest of this subchapter, however, the focus of attention is the south-western court sites themselves, exploring the material traces for patterns of their establishment and use.

Houses of the leaders

While the court sites might have been located on 'neutral ground', at some distance from the major farms, the activities carried out at these sites were not neutral or democratic in any modern sense. Tacitus described the thing in the early Roman period as an important social institution where the tribes met to settle their matters and elect their leaders. Based on Tacitus and Gothic sources, Ramqvist (2012) interpreted regional 'folkland councils' as an important forum for Migration period elites in Norrland. The nine court sites in my study area suggest the presence of a number of thing sites of various sizes, and many sites are probably still unidentified (A.B. Olsen, 2013:p.89, cf. Table 6.11). Various sizes of court sites might reflect the size of the settlement district covered, or perhaps different organisational levels.

In recent publications, it has been assumed that 'chiefs' did not control the court sites (e.g. Storli, 2010). However, it seems likely that at least parts of the representatives meeting at these sites came from the upper social stratum, and also that leaders of some sort might have been elected during these gatherings. It seems therefore a plausible hypothesis that we might indeed detect some elite presence at the court sites. Since it is one of the main themes of my thesis that status objects are closely associated with elite milieus, I also find it important to search for outstanding elite objects within this building category. To develop my approach, it seems reasonable first to look for similar studies. As rather few status objects have been found in the early court sites of northern Norway (Storli, 2006), other contemporary parallels might be better suited as a parallel.

Grimm (2010) and Näsman (in Brink et al., 2011) underlined that ring forts on Öland, Sweden share interesting similarities in their layout, although the functions differed. Among the Öland forts, Eketorp has been fully excavated. To form an initial understanding of what the organisation of court sites might have looked like, I will first take a look at the Eketorp fort, to see if it might be a parallel to the layout and organisation of court sites in western Norway. Like the oval layout of some of the court sites, the circular layout of ring forts has been interpreted in terms of equality. Even so, based on outstanding finds from its hall room, house 03 was interpreted as the house of a leader. It had a special location in the fort, but otherwise looked like other houses.

Herschend has discussed Eketorp in several publications, and his descriptions and interpretations of Eketorp house 03 can best illustrate its importance (Fig. 6.14):

> *There is a strong measure of collectivity in the planning of the ring fort, helped, as it happens, by the subjection of the planning to the demands of fortifications (...). The martial aspect of the planning hints that the collectivity is governed by a central power. That is also the case. The central power belongs to the largest farm unit and its hall, in which a number of fragmented weapons were found (...). There are few architectural signs of this centrality, but the unusual entrance, occupying a few square metres in front of the house, together with the fore room, signify the special status of the house* (Herschend, 2001:p.165).
>
> *A settlement study shows that among the seemingly similar houses one, house 03, is nonetheless outstanding (...). It occupies the best position in the south-western facade, facing the largest square in the fort, and it is a centre in the most regularly planned part of the settlement, equipped with a canopy entrance, occupying and blocking several of the few public spaces in the fort. Inside, there is a small entrance room, and behind that the hall room, through which the standard living room is reached. This is the only house in the settlement with two living rooms and in the outer one we find the only hearth that was not used for cooking. There are no benches in the side aisles of this room, but the contrast between the artefacts in the two rooms is striking when the distribution of the household ceramics and weapons is mapped. Normally, these groups cannot be set off to mark different aspects of everyday life, but in a fortification this is possible. Therefore, it seems significant that it is in the central house of the fortified settlement, separated from the food-preparing women, in the room with the hearth that supplied the light and the heath, that we find the weapons (...).*
>
> *This means that the central hall room was planned in the ideal settlement in order to mirror a society that was in principle egalitarian, but nonetheless in need of a primus inter pares, in this case, for protection. Concentrating the military organisation to a room in one of the households is a way of pointing out the individual leader and connecting leadership with the room* (Herschend, 1993:pp.193–195).

In essence, the egalitarian layout of the Eketorp fort was contrasted by a special building, house 03. Here, weapons were found in what was interpreted as a hall room. House 03 had a very special position in the layout of the ring fort. It was facing the largest open square, at the centre of the most regularly planned part of the settlement. Using Dysjane as an example, Grimm raised the question of whether similar leader houses did exist at the court sites. Due to the poor documentation available from excavations in 1869 and 1879, it proved difficult to compare Dysjane to the well-documented Eketorp: ‘Theoretically speaking, one cannot rule out the existence of an Eketorp-style house 03 in Dysjane, but this remains highly hypothetical’ (Grimm, 2010:p.60). However, the excavation of the court site at Sausjord has provided us with a detailed picture of the layout of a court site. This gives us the opportunity to test the hypothetical possibility of a ‘house 03’ at Sausjord instead. The results from Sausjord might then, through an analogy chain, perhaps shed light also on the context at Dysjane.

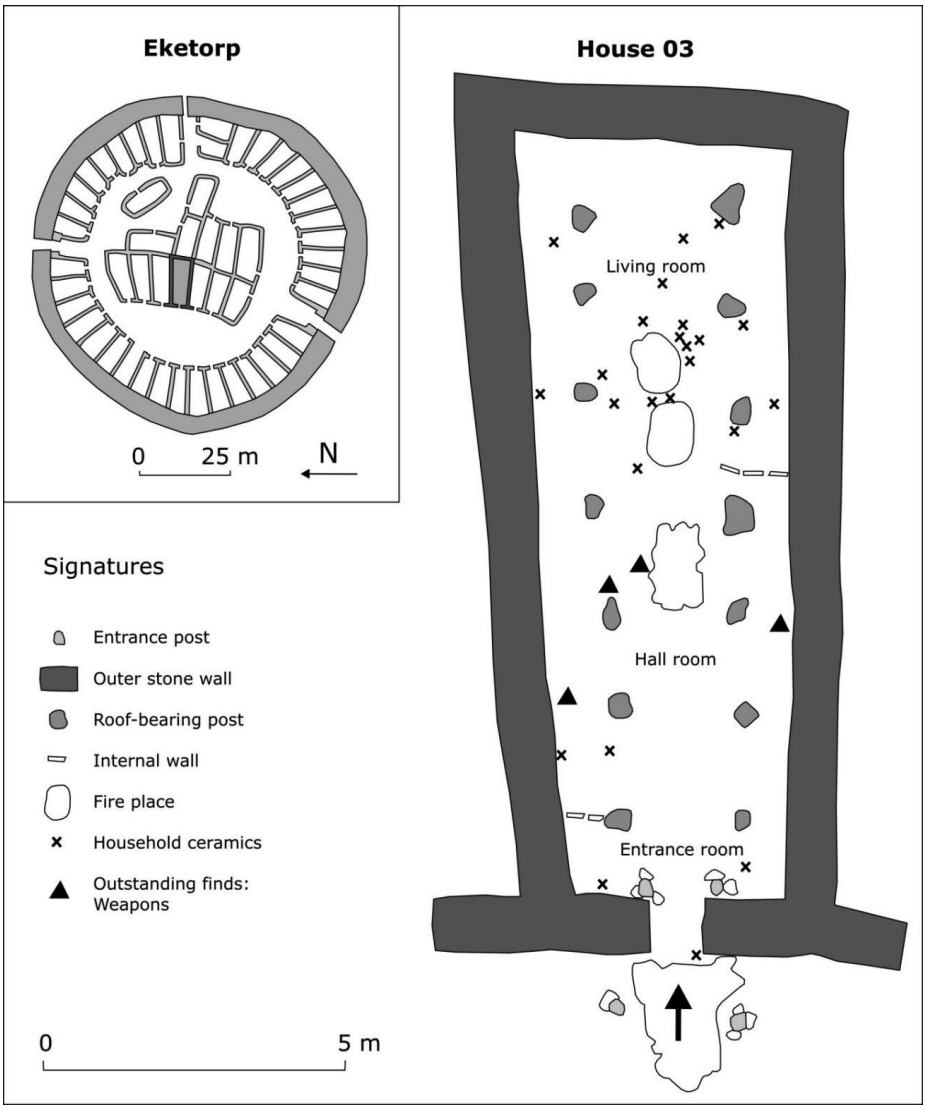


Fig. 6.14. House 03 at Eketorp, Öland, Sweden. In contrast with the court sties, the house was also used for regular settlement. The main concentration of household ceramics is found in the common living room in the back of the house, while finds of weapons are confined to the central hall room. Redrawn after Grimm (2010, Fig. 26), who based the figure on plan drawings published by Näsman in 1989 and Herschend (1993, Fig. 15). One structure in the living room has been omitted in order to simplify the plan.

Turning then to the Sausjord court site, the first observable similarity with the Eketorp ring fort is that the oval layout around the open square in front of house 03 in Eketorp clearly resembles that of well-preserved court sites like Sausjord (Fig. 6.15). If we then highlight house B in Sausjord as the only house with an outstanding find, the similarities to the location of house 03 in the Eketorp fort are even more striking. The outstanding find in question is a relatively rare bronze fibula close to type R244. Bronze fibulas are represented in several of the more richly furnished graves in this district (Næss, 1996), while objects of gold and silver are unusual. The rare bronze fibula from Sausjord might thus have been a very fine object among the local elites.

House B was the second largest house at Sausjord. The house was entered from the open field in the north (A.B. Olsen, 2013:p.93). To the west was a row of postholes, probably reflecting an external side room. This room might have been used as storage, providing more space for activities inside the house. Although no room divisions are known, the northern part of the house might be seen as an entrance room. The two southern pairs of roof-bearing posts formed a larger, open room in the house. At the centre of this room was a fireplace. Another possible fireplace next to it was considered uncertain due to low charcoal contents (Hatling & Olsen, 2012:p.20). On the east side of this room, a pair of postholes was identified close to the outer wall. Initially, these postholes were interpreted as entrance posts. However, it seems unlikely that such a small building had two entrances. Similar postholes were found along the wall in three other houses at Sausjord. If the outer walls were built on the outside of the corner posts, the two posts would have been standing inside the house.

If the open room is interpreted as a hall room, and the two posts instead as pillars flanking a leader's high seat, this comes close to Herschend's (1993, Fig. 5a) early hall rooms. In his model, the high seat was placed centrally in the side aisle in front of a fireplace in the hall. If the interpretation as a hall with a high seat is correct, the bronze fibula was deposited below a roof-bearing post in the hall, close to the high seat. It was found at the bottom of the posthole, on top of a horizontal stone (Hatling & Olsen, 2012:p.18). Its placement seems deliberate, and it might be interpreted as an elite object initiating the house and its hall room to a prominent role within the court site.

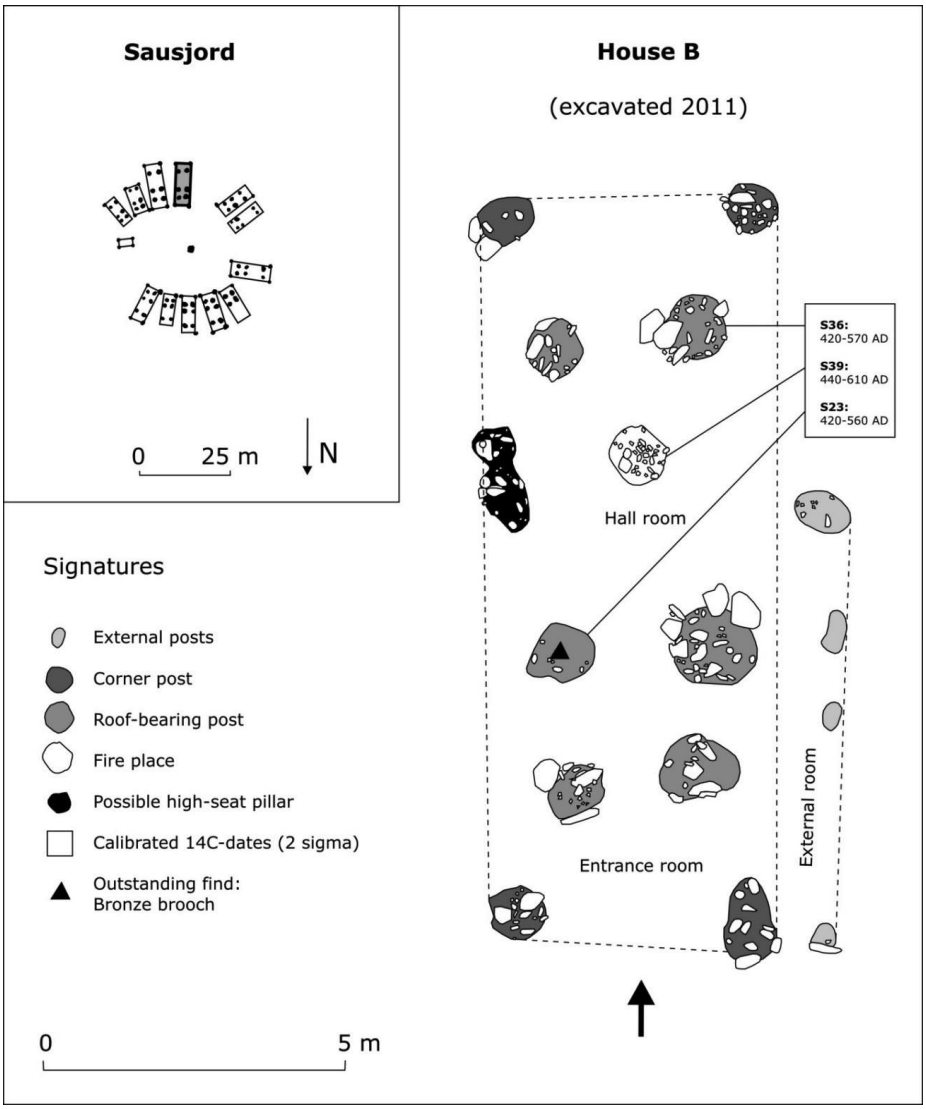


Fig. 6.15. House B at Sausjord, Voss, Hordaland, modified after Hatling & Olsen (2012, Fig. 10). The plan drawing has been simplified, by omitting three uncertain structures and one uncertain fireplace. The arrow indicates the entrance from the open middle field in the north. The house outline is sketched on the outside of the corner posts, and an external side-room is indicated by a row of four postholes. Inside the house, four roof-bearing posts frame a possible hall room with one or two fireplaces, two possible high-seat pillars along the wall with a bronze fibula deposited in a posthole. The radiocarbon dates confirm that structures in the hall are contemporary (Hatling & Olsen, 2012), and the same is true with regards to the fibula. Note that by mistake, the fibula is wrongfully related to house A in Olsen, 2013.

A prerequisite for interpreting house B at Sausjord as special is thus that the elite object found here was deliberately deposited in an initiation rite or house offering, instead of being accidentally lost. As a parallel to the same phenomenon, it should briefly be noted that the gold-foil figures of the Merovingian period are often interpreted as house offerings in halls or cult houses (cf. Lidén, 1999:p.43). The most obvious example is the hall or cult house at Uppåkra, where gold items from the house were interpreted as ritual deposits (Larsson & Lenntorp, 2004, Fig. 23). A major concentration of gold foils was found by the north-western post (Larsson & Lenntorp, 2004:p.22). Similarly to Sausjord, this led to the conclusion that (p.35): 'In the house at Uppåkra the high seat must have been located close to the northern wall not far from the north-western post'.

Returning to the Eketorp ring fort, this proved to be a surprisingly good analogy for understanding important features in the organisation of the Sausjord site. The fibula from Sausjord came from the hall room in a building with a special location within the court site. The question is, then, whether this pattern might be observed at court sites in Rogaland. With regard to outstanding finds from the Rogaland court sites, Grimm (2010:p.32) writes: 'The most notable finds are a golden finger ring from Klauhauane and a silver fibula with a long catch plate that was found in Dysjane.' These two sites have a regular, oval layout, and are thus quite suitable for a comparison with Sausjord.

Most of the court site at Klauhauane has been excavated, with a main excavation of the visible house remains in 1939–50 (Fig. 6.16, Grimm, 2010:pp.170–181). Being a rather complex, multi-phased court site, excavated with methods different from those used at Sausjord, it is problematic to compare the plan drawings from these court sites, but I will nevertheless attempt to do so. The gold finger ring from the site is an object very characteristic of the elite milieus of this area. With a total of at least eight rings, the Hå district has the largest concentration within my study area of simple gold rings from the Roman period (Andersson, 1993a). The gold ring was found in house 5, with a similar position in the court site layout to that of house B at Sausjord. House 5 had the highest documented number of structural features at Klauhauane, not forming any evident patterns, which clearly indicates various phases of usage. To make use of Petersen's (1946) plan drawings, I have therefore made some new interpretations.

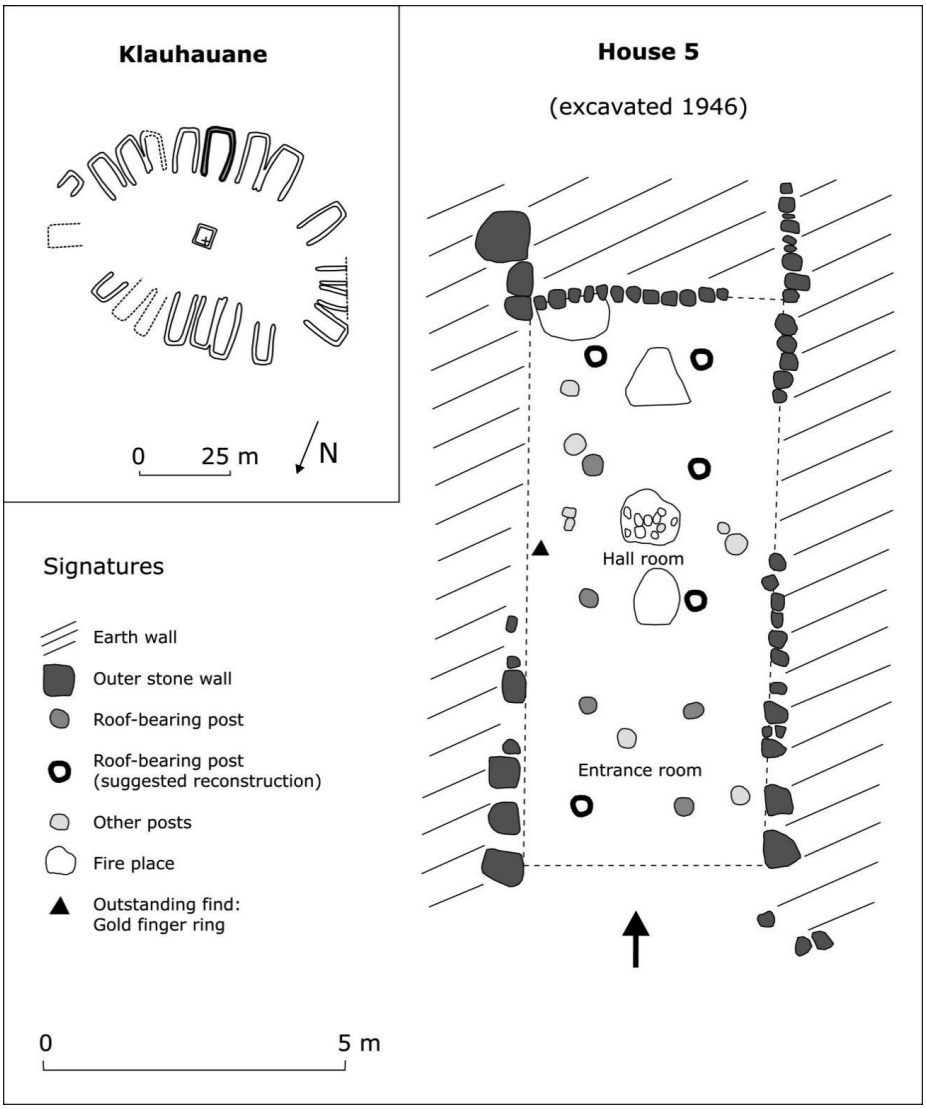


Fig. 6.16. House 5 at Klauhauane, Hå, Rogaland, modified after Petersen (1946) and Grimm (2010). A few of the postholes described by Petersen as uncertain have been omitted here, along with stones inside the house, except for stones observed in one of the fireplaces. The outer stonewalls are enclosed by earth walls. Based on a common layout for three aisled houses, five pairs of roof-bearing posts have been reconstructed. The fireplace with stones is assumed to belong to the same phase as the post rows, based on its central location in relation to these postholes. The three other fireplaces and the other postholes might stem from various phases. Based on this interpretation, an entrance room and a possible hall room are indicated. The gold ring was found along the wall in the hall room, near the fireplace.

Most of the stones documented inside the house have been removed from the plan, along with a few uncertain postholes. Among the remaining postholes documented, five postholes seem to indicate the common pattern of pairs of roof-bearing posts. On the plan, I have reconstructed the posts interpreted as missing. From the remaining structures, postholes not forming any patterns are viewed as being from various phases or as fulfilling unknown functions. Four fireplaces were documented, but only the central fireplace with (fire-cracked?) stones clearly refers to the same phase as the roof-bearing posts. Interpreting the remaining plan pattern, an entrance room might have been situated in the north, with an inner hall room around the fireplace. The gold ring was found close to the wall near this fireplace. In this manner, the gold ring might have been found in a hall room similar to that at Sausjord – and perhaps near the high seat.

We might finally test Grimm's hypothesis of 'an Eketorp-style house 03 in Dysjane'. Dysjane was only partially excavated, and the total find complex is thus unknown (Grimm, 2010:pp.32–33). Nicolaysen's (1869) excavations at Dysjane only included what he probably thought were burial mounds with a high potential of finds. He excavated a triangular monument, the central mound, and four earth walls interpreted as long mounds. These earth walls were probably among the most visible house walls at the court site. Near a central, inner stone wall connecting house walls 6 and 7, he found a silver fibula. The fibula is a relatively rare object type. Silver fibulas of Almgren's group VII are known from four late Roman period graves in Rogaland, including the Innbjoa grave with a serpent head arm ring and the Våråa rosette fibula (Straume, 1999:p.499). Not considering house orientations, the fibula was found in a house with a position in the court site layout similar to the other two sites (Fig. 6.17). Bendixen's further excavation of a third part of the court site revealed no status finds (Grimm, 2010:p.138). Although Dysjane has not been fully excavated, in the light of Sausjord and Klauhauane, I would argue that Nicolaysen in fact seems to have found the most important house at Dysjane. This house might, in light of the distribution at the two other well-documented court sites, be interpreted as having a status at the site resembling that of Eketorp house 03. Through a chain of analogies from the well-known Eketorp to the less known Dysjane, Grimm's hypothesis seems validated.

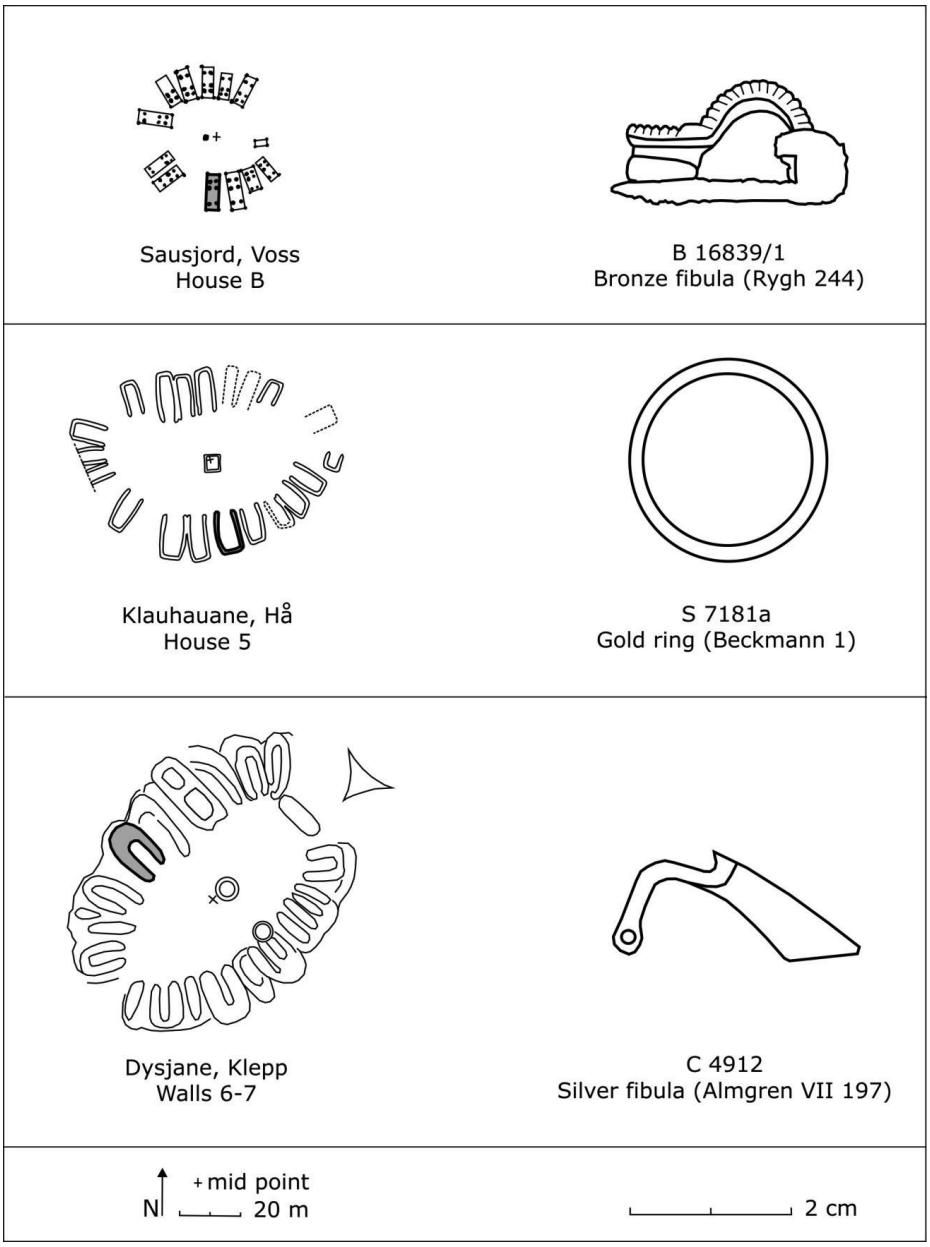


Fig. 6.17. The Sausjord, Klauhauane and Dysjane court sites, with the three houses with outstanding finds indicated in grey. Dysjane was redrawn after an unpublished sketch from Bendixen's excavations in 1879 (Lorange, undated). The gold ring was drawn after a photo available on www.unimus.no (Photo by AM, UiS), and the silver fibula after Shetelig (1912a, Fig. 28). Klauhaugane was redrawn after a sketch from the 1980s in Grimm (2010: p.174), and the Sausjord site and fibula was redrawn after A.B. Olsen (2013).

Initial thoughts on the symbolism and functions of leader houses

Using Sausjord as the key, an important aspect of the court sites has been unlocked: the *leader houses*. As the two largest court sites in Rogaland seem to confirm the layout from Sausjord, one might ask how this layout pattern should be interpreted. Similarly to Eketorp, the leader houses did not stand out much architecturally, but nevertheless had a central placement and a special role in the layout and organisation of court sites. The leader houses were situated centrally in the court sites, in the middle of one of the long sides. The occurrence of a similar layout at Eketorp testifies to the fact that this pattern was not coincidental and that the organising principle had some super-regional importance. Above we have discussed two of the leader houses on micro level, as being organised around the ideal model of the hall with a high seat. It is tempting to propose the hypothesis that on a macro level, the same model structured the court site layout.

In order to strengthen this hypothesis, a few historical sources might be introduced. The physical organisation of thing sites is hardly described in detail in Norse sources (M. Olsen, pers. com). However, certain hints to the physical layout are found in traditions related to the site 'Tingvallar mounds' (*Tingvallarheyggjarnir*) on Sandoy in the Faroe Islands. This thing site consisted of two rows of natural mounds, arranged around an open field, somewhat resembling the oval layout of court sites. According to local traditions, the leader of the thing, the *løgmaður* (lawman), was seated on the largest mound at the end of the site. The other men were seated on smaller mounds around him (Dalsgaard, 2002, Innastihagi no. 80). This placement resembles a medieval placement of the high seat at the short end. A high medieval source further describes how high seats were raised at the thing site when the king was elected:

> *All of the men who are able shall proceed to the place where the thing is to be held. Attractively prepared high seats shall be set up there. One of them, however, shall be higher and finer than the rest and placed in the middle, and no one shall sit on it* (Hirdskrá, 5).

Despite being a rather limited source material, the Tingvallar tradition and *Hirdskrá* are examples of the later use of high seats for lawmen and for kings-to-be-elected. This practice might have been influenced by earlier organisation principles, when the high seat was situated not at the short end, but centrally on the long side of the hall.

According to Norse sources, the high seat in the hall was an ideal transferable between different domains. It was at the same time the seat of the farmer and his wife in his house, likewise the seat of a chieftain or king in his hall, and in mythology the seats of gods in their halls (Steinsland, 1991). High seats were associated with socio-judicial power. Although the actual location of the high seat in the hall is debated (Steinsland, 1991), I follow Herschend's placement of the high seat in an early hall (Herschend, 1993, Fig. 5a). In this model, the high seat was placed centrally along the long wall near a main fireplace. The leader houses at Sausjord and Klauhauane might be used as examples, with main fireplaces indicating the presence of high seats situated centrally, at the midpoint of one of the long walls in the hall room. The location of leader houses, placed centrally in one of the rows of houses in the court sites, might be interpreted as a macro model of the high seat in the hall. If the oval, almost 'boat-shaped', layout with equal-sized houses was intended to portray representatives as being equal in the 'hall', the leader houses indicate a masked inequality, as symbolic 'high seats'.

We do not know just how the leader houses worked in the court site organisation, as the presence of these houses only indicates that one or several people of some elevated position resided in the house. Germanic and Norse sources mention leaders elected on the thing. Among the Goths, the *kindis* was a super-regional leader elected in times of stress (Ramqvist, 1991). However, at the local thing sites of my study area, it seems more likely that the leaders represented were local leaders. It is possible that the leader houses, initiated with status objects, were meant for these elected leaders – similarly to the medieval king's high seat at the thing. Another possibility is that these leaders actually led the construction of court sites, and directly or indirectly controlled the thing sites. In their houses, they might have gathered allies for counsel, perhaps before a public voting held in the middle field. Whether the leader houses were occupied by elected leaders or by leaders controlling the court sites, there might thus have been a significant tension between these leaders and the assumed 'egalitarian' structure that the court site layout in some way or another reflected (cf. A.B. Olsen, 2013). Whatever the roles of these elite leaders were at the court sites, the status objects found at Klauhauane, Dysjane and Sausjord are dated to the Roman and Migration periods, indicating an organisation model lasting through the early phase of the court sites.

6.4 In search of ritual functions at centres

In the early Iron Age, it is likely that rituals were part of both everyday life and special events, and that there were sites for different ritual occasions. One might assume that 'local' rituals were carried out on the farmsteads, in grave fields or at natural sacred sites, while some 'central' rituals might have been confined to the halls of the elites or to central 'sanctuaries' (cf. Nordberg, 2011). When searching for ritual functions at the centres, it seems necessary to make use of categories other than the 'grand buildings'. Although halls might have been the elite's arena for ritual feasting (Steinsland, 2005), it is often hard to identify buildings that could unambiguously be interpreted as cult houses. However, the building complex unearthed in the heart of the Hove centre might provide a good candidate for a cult house. Another candidate for a cult house is the find spot for 16 gold-foil figures at Hauge in Tinghaug, with the gold foils dating a use phase to 550–600 AD or slightly later (cf. dating of gold foils in Watt, 2008:p.43).

In order to deal with the materialisation of religious ideas in objects and landscapes, it seems again necessary to turn to the written sources for further information. Of primary interest are sacral place names from the first millennium AD and runic inscriptions in the Elder Futhark, which give some more or less contemporary knowledge of the contexts in question. However, it is also essential to make use of written sources on both contemporary Germanic and later Norse religions to interpret religious beliefs and practices. This is not to suggest that there is a one-to-one relation between the structures discussed and Norse traditions written down in a Christian context in the thirteenth century, but rather to assume that the roots of the latter might be sought in the early Iron Age. As an attempt, a few object and structure categories might be discussed in relation to the sacral place names and textual sources. Firstly, the images on gold bracteates have often been interpreted in religious terms as depictions of specific Norse gods, and it has been suggested that the distribution of bracteates might point out the ritual centres (e.g. Hauck, 1987). Similarly, phallus-shaped stones and triangle-shaped monuments have been attributed to the ritual worship of Norse gods. These categories will be discussed and compared to the distribution of sacral place names.

Sacral place names

Within Scandinavian centre research, place names alluding to pre-Christian religion have played an important role in the interpretation of religious organisation (Brink, 1996; Hedeager, 2001). Olsen (1915, 1926) was one of the first to make use of place names to map traces of pre-Christian rituals in Norway, identifying clear regional variation. The focus in the following is the place name material within the study area. Although sacral names are hard to date, it is common to date most of these to the first millennium AD, with a great deal stemming from the early Iron Age (Sandnes, 1992). Within my study area, a number of names with the prefixes Hov- and Helga- are known, as well as many theophoric place names with the name of a god as their prefix (Fig. 6.18). Fewer names have the prefix Ve-, or are uncompounded names like Vang, Hove, Lye and Frette. Vang and Hove are among the names interpreted by Olsen (1926:p.230) as major cult sites. 'Vang' occurs at the centres Skåla and Voss, but also at other places in Hordaland. 'Hove' names occur twice in Rogaland, of which at least the one in Sandnes is a certain centre (Myhre, 1964a, 1964b, 1997a). 'Lye' occurs at a centre in Time, and it might denote a sacred thing site (Olsen, 1926:pp.261–2; Myhre, 2007). Similarly, names with the prefix Ting- might indicate other possible thing sites.

Among the 43 names with a prefix possibly of a Norse god, these are represented: Frøy/Frøya: 15, Thor: 11, Njord: 8, Ull: 6, Balder: 2, Ty: 1. A slight majority of 23 names stem from the Vanir gods (Frøy/Frøya-Njord), while four Æsir gods (Thor-Ull-Balder-Ty) have 20 place names, mainly Thor and Ull. While the Vanir names dominate in Rogaland and inner Hardanger, Thor is most frequent in the western part of Nordhordland. However, both Thor and Ull often occur together with Vanir names. The Vanir gods, Thor and Ull, are normally associated with the sea, sailing, fertility, agriculture, hunting and possibly also with protection from extreme weather (Steinsland, 2005). The Njord names Nærland and Njærheim, Hå represent theophoric place names at a centre. It is curious that no Odin name is known from the study area, or indeed from the coastline between Vestfold and Sognefjord (Olsen, 1915:pp.73–8).

Some of the major Scandinavian central places had place names alluding to sacred islands and mountains (e.g. Helgö, Gudme: Gudbjerg, Albjerg and Galbjerg). Western

Norway is dominated by a dramatic and shifting landscape with many islands and mountains, and it is very likely that special landscape features played a significant role in the belief system. In the Icelandic *Eyrbyggja Saga*, it is mentioned that the Thor worshipper Torolv Mostrarskjegg, originally from Moster in Sunnhordland, on his new farm Thorsnes had a mountain believed to be sacred, *Helgafell* (Nordland, 1969:p.70). Helgaberg and Helgøy are among the Helga- names represented on the map below. Other names indicating sacred islands or sacred mountains might include Godøy and Horg (Nordland, 1969; Grimm, 2011b; Heide, 2011, 2013). As Særheim (2014) has shown for some sites in Jæren, it is furthermore necessary to employ a wider range of names to identify ritual central functions. Additional place names denoting cult sites might be Lund ('sacred grove', Vasshus, 2011) and Skeid ('open plain for horse races', see Stylegar, 2006a). Although there are few clusters of sacral place names, the centres at Hove in Sandnes, Rogaland and northern Tysnes, Hordaland are rare examples of dense sacral place name milieus (Vasshus, 2011; Heide, 2013). Recently, it has been suggested that Tysnes was a special place because of natural phenomena connected to the four annual phases of the sun, and it might have been a ritual centre (Heide, 2013).

Runic inscriptions

The runic inscriptions in the Elder Futhark are more direct sources related to early Iron Age mentality and beliefs. Myhre (1987a) suggested that the distribution of literacy as witnessed by runic inscriptions might work as a centre indicator, and his hypothesis is worth investigating. As regards the geographical distribution of Norwegian runic inscriptions in the Elder Futhark (c. 100–550 AD), Spurkland (2005:p.51) writes:

> *When we plot the instances of the oldest Norwegian runic inscriptions, the following picture emerges. Runic activity seems to have been concentrated in certain regions of the country. Hordaland and Rogaland on the west and south-west coast are particularly rich in runic inscriptions. On the whole it appears that rune carving was a costal phenomenon, although there was also some activity in the open country of eastern Norway.*

Among the approximately 55 known early runic inscriptions from Norway, a total of 21 come from Hordaland and Rogaland (Table 6.12). Within the study area, the wide distribution shows that runes must have been known in different parts of the region.

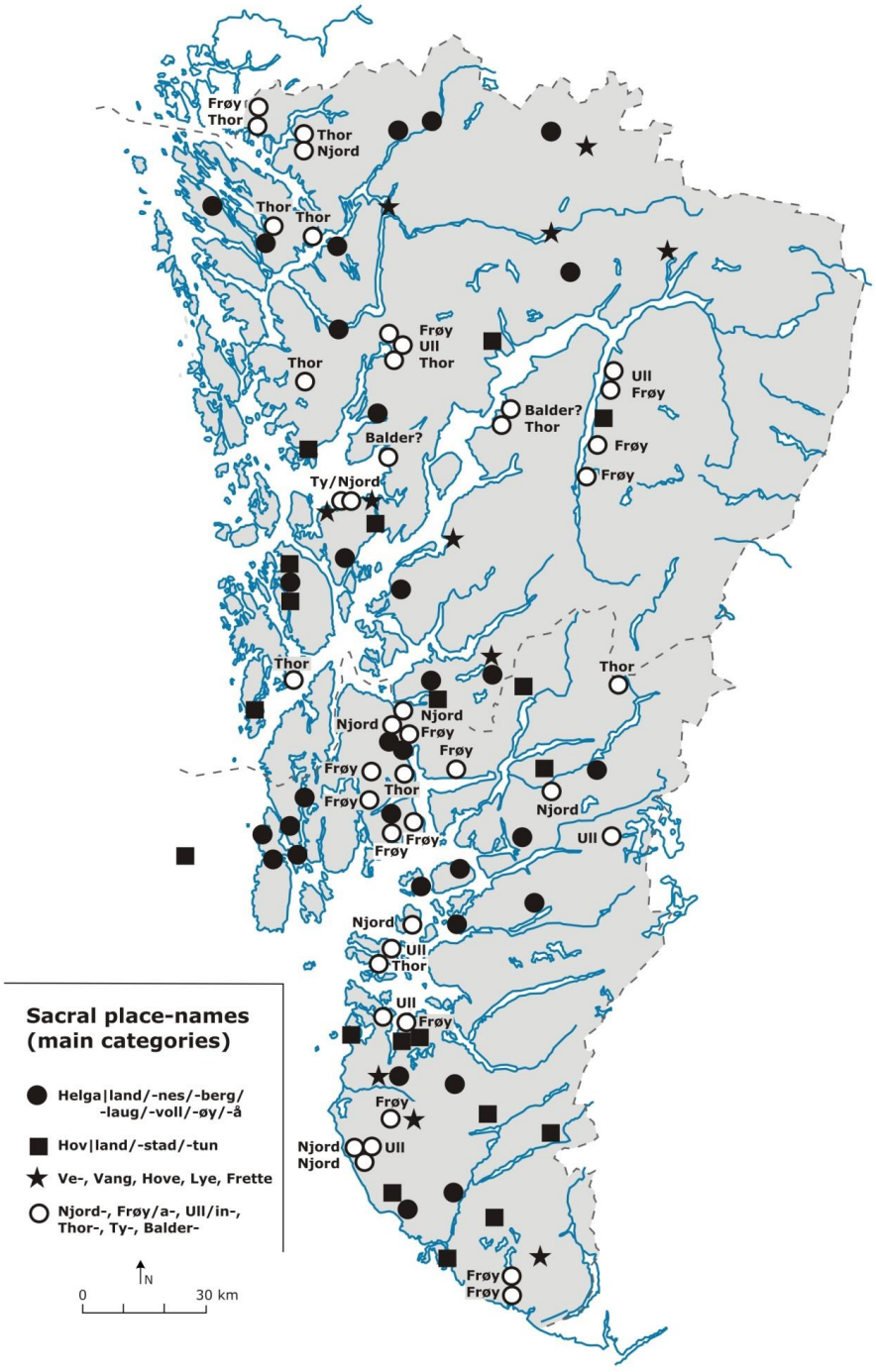


Fig. 6.18. Map of main categories of sacral place names (Olsen, 1915, 1926), as mapped by Nordland (1969), Sandnes (1992) and Fett (1998).

The geographical trend within this region is that especially memorial stones and bone objects have a wide distribution, peripheral to the defined centres. The Opedal stone and the Gjersvik bone knife were found close to sacral place names, the latter found within the Tysnes place name milieu. Inscriptions on objects of precious metal only occur in the central area of Jæren: in Sandnes, Klepp and Time (Table 6.12). This is due to the runes being mainly written on objects such as gold bracteates, gold medallion imitations and gilded relief brooches – object types already used to identify the centres. As such, runic inscriptions per se do not necessarily point out the main centres. The inscriptions, however, give some direct insights into the social organisation of Hordaland and Rogaland in the early Iron Age. Two inscriptions reveal leader titles: the Rosseland stone mentions an 'eril', a title often found in runic inscriptions, while the Nord-Huglo stone mentions the less common title 'godi' (priest) (Spurkland, 2005). Ramqvist (2012) views 'eril' and 'godi' as aristocratic titles. The 'godi' inscription is the oldest mentioning of the title, which was later used in particular by Icelandic chiefs (Steinsland, 2005:p.282). According to Runenprojekt Kiel, the two texts might read:

- *I, the priest Ungandiʀ (he who is immune to magic), carved in [the runes]*
- *I, Wagigaʀ (the agile one), Irilaʀ of Agilamundō*

Agilamundo might be a female name, indicating a woman of higher rank than her 'eril' (Spurkland, 2005). The runic inscriptions come from ritual spheres as memorial stones or as objects from graves, and also give information on personal relations. The Opedal stone was raised for 'swestar minu', Inguboro or Boro (Runenprojekt Kiel). The Eikeland brooch had the inscription 'I, Wiʀ, write in the runes for Wiwio, [my] beloved', where Wir and Wiwio might be translated as 'priest' and 'priestess' (Spurkland, 2005). The following charm was inscribed on the Sætre comb: 'Protection Nanna, protection Nanna. Hail, maid of maidens'. In Norse sources, the goddess Nanna was the wife of Balder, but it is uncertain whether this is a reference to the goddess (Spurkland, 2005). Here, the word 'alu' was interpreted as 'protection', and this word also occurs on inscriptions from Årstad and Fosse. The Fløksand knife has 'lina laukaR' ('linen, leek') inscribed on it, and this knife and the Gjersvik knife have often been linked to fertility cults as described in the *Volsetottr* (Dommasnes, 2006:p.101).

Table 6.12. List of early runic inscriptions in the study area, after Runenprojekt Kiel

Site, municipality	Type of object	Museum number
Fløksand, Meland	Bone knife	B 1792
Eidsvåg, Bergen	Memorial stone	B 5676
Opedal, Ullensvang	Memorial stone	B 4748
Tørrvika (A/B), Kvam	Two chamber stones	B 3542 e-f
Rosseland, Kvam	Memorial stone	B 10538
Nord-Huglo, Stord	Memorial stone	B 6439
Gjersvik, Tysnes	Bone knife	B 6700
Setre, Bømlo	Bone comb	B 8350
Kjølevik, Strand	Memorial stone	C 11706
Selvik, Sandnes	Gold bracteate (A)	C 1324
Store Salte, Klepp	Gold bracteate (A)	S 3123
Tu, Klepp	Gilded silver relief brooch	C 21407 a
Eikeland, Time	Gilded bronze relief brooch	S 9181 g
Mauland, Time	Gold medallion imitation	S 2245
Fosse, Time	Bronze fitting	S 6694 o2
Ødemotland, Hå	Bronze piece	B 4384
Vetteland, Hå	Memorial stone	S 4851
Møgedal, Eigersund	Memorial stone	S 3745
Bø, Sokndal	Memorial stone	C 3817
Årstad, Sokndal	Memorial stone	C 3639

Gold bracteates

Among the mentioned objects with runic inscriptions are two bracteates, although the inscriptions are short and hard to interpret. The historian Hauck established an overarching interpretative framework for understanding the gold bracteates, which has met some criticism in recent decades (Starkey, 1999; Wicker & Williams, 2013). According to Hauck (1987), the bracteates were protective amulets depicting images of Norse gods. His main idea was that the images displayed scenes from a mythical circle around Odin and Balder known from Norse sources as well as from the *Second Merseburg Charm*. The common motif on C-bracteates of a man on a quadruped was interpreted as Odin on his horse Sleipnir. While Fabech and Näsman (2013:p.58) regarded Hauck's iconographic interpretations as 'speculative and controversial', they considered his studies of the link between sacral place names and gold bracteates to be his most important contribution: 'He observed that gold bracteates and other gold finds could be used to indicate the presence of sacral centres.' Hauk (1987) argued in favour of a close association between A-bracteates and Odin place names. We might therefore start by comparing bracteate distribution to sacral place names and centres.

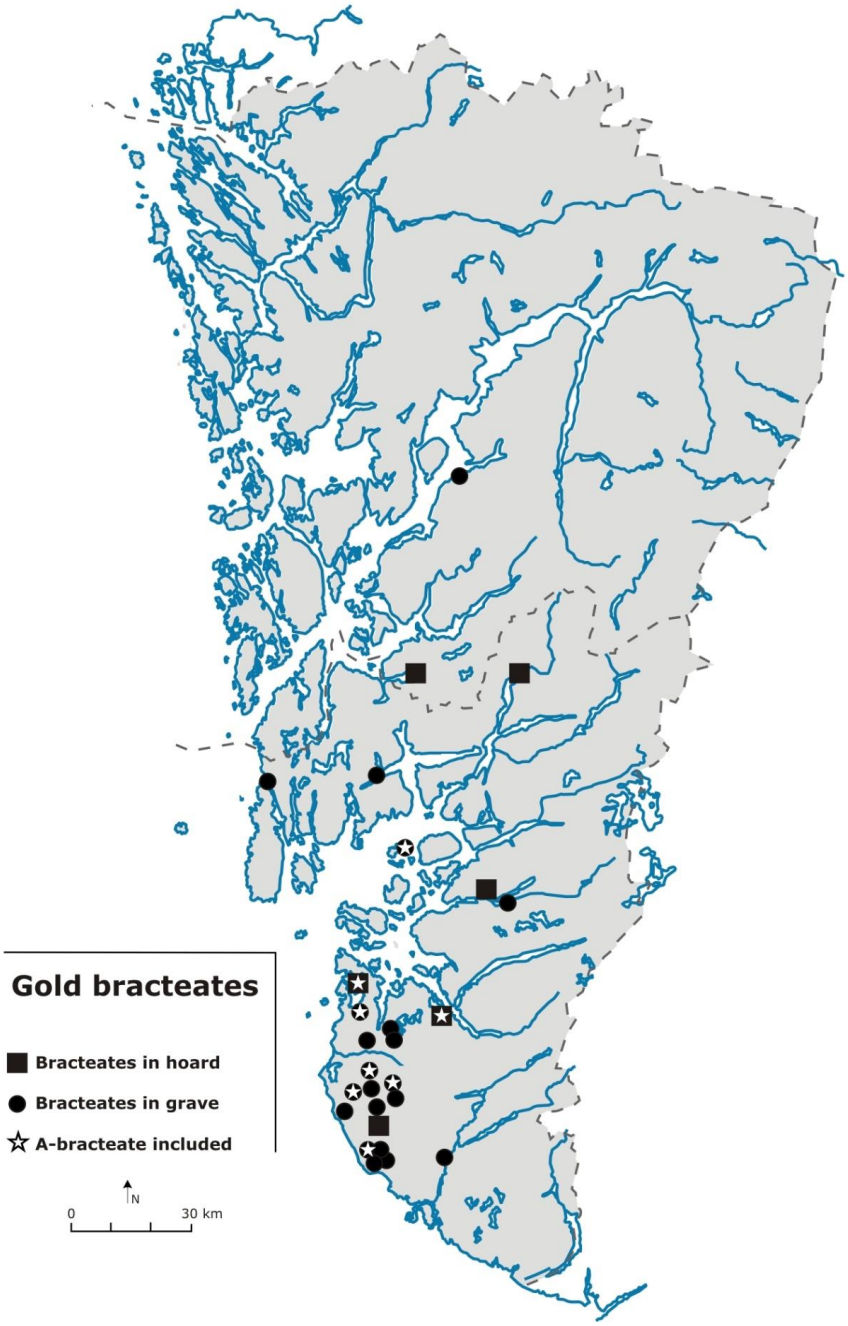


Fig. 6.19. Map of the bracteates in Hordaland and Rogaland. The map show the distribution of A-bracteates and separates the bracteate sites in the two categories of depositional practices: hoards and graves.

Among the eight find spots with nine A-bracteates in the study area, two were hoard finds (Madla, Selvik), the six others graves (Fig. 6.19). Apart from a grave with two A-bracteates on Finnøy, A-bracteates are confined to Jæren, the area with the highest overall bracteate concentration. A-bracteates are found in graves at the centres at Lye and Tinghaug, at Store Salte in the Erga centre and at Vigrestad in the Vigrestad centre, as well as in a grave at Joa and the Madla hoard, both from the Hafrsfjord centre. Apart from the more peripheral Selvik hoard and the Finnøy grave, the distribution of A-bracteates in lower Jæren largely corresponds with centre localities. Furthermore, finds of C- and D-bracteates also gather in clusters, where bracteates are found around the centre at Hove in Sandnes, and around the centres in Time and in Hå. The only relatively clear correspondence between bracteates and sacral place names, however, is the A-bracteate from Vestly (Lye) and the bracteate concentration around Hove. As no Odin place names are known in the study area, we find no association with Odin.

In Chapter 5, it was established that most bracteates in the study area were produced locally (cf. Axboe, 2007). As the images on the bracteates might have been given various meanings in different regions, these should therefore be interpreted in a local context. If we focus on the C-bracteates, Hauck's interpretation was Odin on his horse Sleipnir. With a basis in Axboe's (2004) seriation, Rundkvist (2006) found that there were at least two contemporary 'horses' represented on the southern Scandinavian C-bracteates: one with horns and a beard and one with thrown-up hind legs. He concluded: 'Gold bracteate iconography distinguishes not only between various mythological men with distinctive attributes, but also between at least two different mythological horses' (Rundkvist, 2006:p.354). Salin (1895:p.91) noted that the bearded 'horse' and the bird did not occur together, interpreting the riders on the two motifs as Thor and Odin, while Malmer (1977) suggested that Odin, Njord, Ull and Thor were all represented on bracteates. Among the Rogaland C-bracteates, a very common motif is a man-on-horse without other clear symbols (Figs. 6.20 and 6.21). The somewhat 'secular' character of these images is remarkable compared to other C-bracteates. Instead of always interpreting the riders as gods, it is possible that these C-bracteates, like older medallion imitations from the region, portray elites 'who wanted to depict themselves, as Roman emperors did' (Wicker & Williams, 2013:p.175).

Fig. 6.20. Bracteate of formula family C11 from the Selvik hoard. Pesch considers this family as originating in Rogaland. Note the design, without symbols other than the central motif of the rider. Photo: Terje Tveit, AM, UiS.

Fig. 6.21. Detail of central motif on a bracteate from the Madla hoard; an atypical variety of formula family C16. Detail of photo by Terje Tveit, AM, UiS.

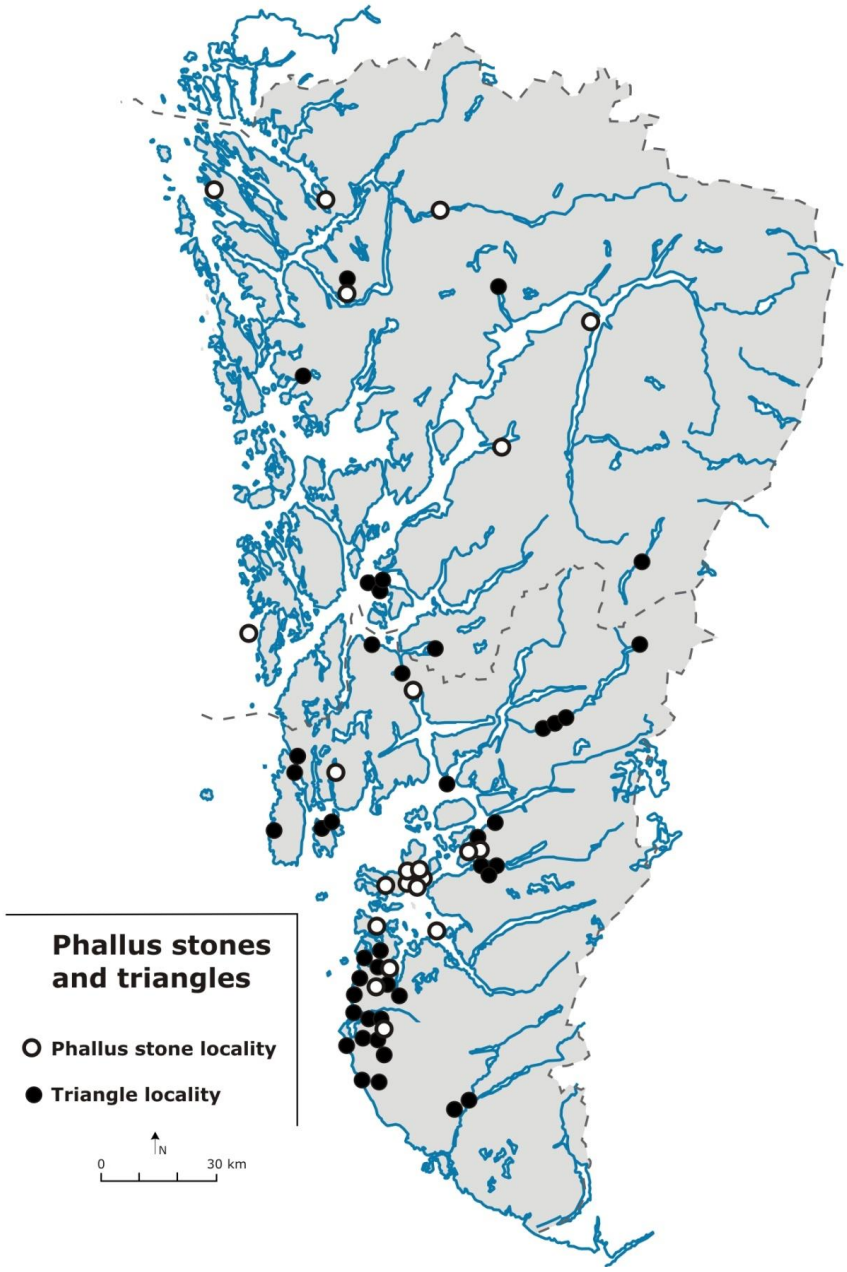


Fig. 6.22. Map of sites with phallus stones or triangles in Hordaland and Rogaland. Triangles after Kuhnle, 2013. Phallus stones after lists in Solberg, 1999; Stylegar, 2005; Myhre, 2006. A few 'natural' white stones and the 'idol head' from Rosseland are not depicted on the map.

Phallus stones and triangles

The so-called 'holy white stones', or phallus stones, are stones some 20–100 cm high, often white and phallus shaped (Fig. 6.22; Appendix III). Several stones have been found near early Iron Age graves, and they have been associated with fertility cults and the Vanir gods (Solberg, 1999). Adam of Bremen documented that the Frey idol in Old Uppsala had a phallus, and etymologically Frey and Freya are linked to Old Norse *frjór* ('fertile') (Olsen, 1915:p.66). As phallus stones are mainly found in the same western Norwegian regions as the concentrations of Njord place names, the stones have been associated with the god Njord and the older goddess Nerthus. Solberg (1999) observed that some of the phallus stones had cup marks on top, interpreted as symbols of the female sex. The observation was linked to worship of an androgynous goddess, Njord-Nerthus. Although new finds have shown that the stones have a wider distribution outside the core of Njord place names, the western concentration is still clear. While few direct associations with Njord names are found in the study area, the dominance of Vanir names in Rogaland (Fett, 1998) makes the link to fertility gods plausible here.

Solli (2008) viewed the phallus stones as being primarily associated with graves from the late Migration period, a period when Odin worship supposedly gained importance. Her suggested association between ecstasy in the Odin cult and phallus stones, however, might seem less obvious than a link to fertility cults. Myhre (2006) further argued that some stones might date to the late Iron Age. He drew attention to the fact that half the phallus stones were found near medieval churches, possibly indicating cult site continuity. Stylegar (2009:p.36) assumed that the ritual function of the stones might have been complex and that these might have been used on burial mounds, in cult houses or as 'horg'. He pointed to parallels with Swedish burial stones, *steinklot*, and Sami sacrificial stones, *sieidi*. Stylegar also argued that several stones were not 'phallic' in shape, but rather had a bread shape. Within my study area, the majority of stones are phallus-shaped (Fig. 6.23). As only a few of these are situated near centres (Osterøy, Tinghaug), they might instead represent a local, phallic cult, known from the *Volsetottr*. As the phallus stones are difficult to date and not directly linked to centres, they are regarded here as possible but uncertain indicators of ritual central functions.

Fig. 6.23. Three phallus stones from Rogaland: Tu, Klepp (S5681), Høyvik, Tysvær (S5970) and Eik, Finnøy (S5174). Photo: Terje Tveit, AM, UiS.

A final category that might shed light on ritual sites in the study area is the triangle-shaped cairns or stone settings (Swedish '*treuddar'*). The triangles are mainly a Swedish and Norwegian phenomenon, although a few are known also from Denmark and northern England (Kuhnle, 2013). In Norway, the main concentrations occur in Trøndelag and Rogaland (Ellingsen, 2003; Myhre, 2005a; Kuhnle, 2013). A recent overview of the triangles in Hordaland and Rogaland showed a total of 95 known triangular monuments, situated at 44 different localities (Fig. 6.22, Kuhnle, 2013:p.27). While 17 of these come from Hordaland, 78 structures are known in Rogaland. The common size of the triangles is 11–20 metres in length between each of the arm ends. In general, the triangles are often found near water. When they are found in larger grave fields, the triangles often have a prominent placement. As few of the excavated triangles actually contained graves, they are rather explained primarily as ritual sites. However, when graves are found within such triangles, it has been suggested that the deceased were ritual specialists buried at the cult sites (Andrén, 2004:p.414).

As ritual sites, the triangles are thought to have been associated with symbolism of the world tree of Norse mythology, Yggdrasil (Andrén, 2004:pp.390, 407; Zachrisson, 2004). The three arms of the triangles are then interpreted as the three roots of the tree, with the pole or memorial stone often situated in the middle and interpreted as a representation of the tree itself. The tree might have represented a strong symbol for central cult sites, as in the mythology it was situated at the cosmic centre of the world: the *axis mundi*. The three goddesses of divinity and destiny were situated at its roots, with the thing site of the gods at the foot of the tree. It is interesting to note that triangles are found at two of the major court sites in Rogaland, Dysjane and Klauhauane, as well as at two court sites in Trøndelag, suggesting an association with these assumed thing sites (Ellingsen, 2003:pp.84, 105; Myhre, 2005a, 2013). In Halland, western Sweden, triangles have been found at centres, and a triangle was also found at a high point close to the hall building in Helgö (Nicklasson, 2002, Fig. 8; Zachrisson, 2004:p.350).

Studies of the triangles in Rogaland suggest that triangles to some degree might work as centre indicators (Myhre, 2005a, 2005b; Bukkemoen, 2007; Reiersen, 2009:pp.29–30; Kuhnle, 2013). One problem, however, is the rather wide dating of the structures to the Iron Age. One of the oldest triangles comes from Norheim near Avaldsnes, and it has been dated by a central grave with Hemmoor bucket to C1b–C2 (Fig. 6.24). Five memorial stones are situated in its arms and near its centre. Its closest parallel comes from Bringsvær in Aust-Agder, another major Roman period centre (Skjelsvik, 1954). Although there are uncertainties connected to the dating of triangles, there seems to be some correspondence between triangles and early Iron Age centres. In Hordaland, triangles are known from Osterøy, at Stend in Bergen, at Sjo on Halsnøy, in Rogaland at the farms Innbjoa and Avaldsnes, and at the farm Sørbø, next to Hove. The triangle at the court site Dysjane at Hauge, Klepp likewise has got a very central location. Triangles are also found at farms with large longhouses, such as Ferkingstad and Ullandhaug. It is therefore a hypothesis that better dating might show that early Iron Age triangles often occur at centres, or at other special ritual sites and thing sites.

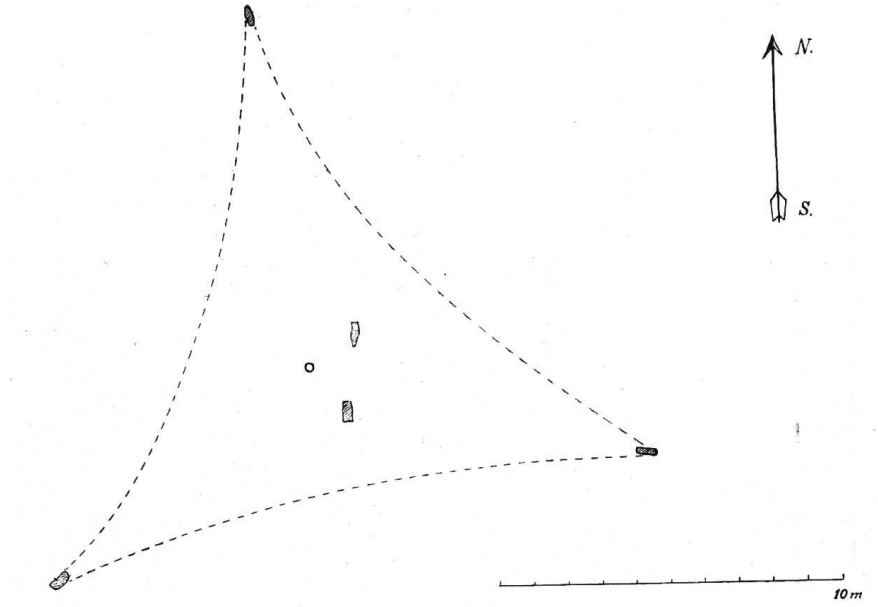


Fig. 6.24. 'De fem dårlige jomfruer' at Norheim by Karmsund, with a view southwards towards Avaldsnes. Map after Shetelig, 1912a, and painting from 1843 by J.L. Losting (at Haugesund billedgalleri). Three memorial stones are situated in the arms, two stones near the centre, while a cremation burial in a Hemmoor bucket was found in the centre of what was originally a cairn.

Summing up the possible evidence of ritual functions

In this final subchapter I have examined some categories that might shed light on ritual functions at the centres. Among these, the most important is sacral place names. The densest sacral place name milieus in the study area are found in Tysnes, Hordaland (Tysnes-Njarðarlǫg-Ve-Helgastein-Godøy-Vevatne) and at Hove in Rogaland (Hove-Lunde-Skei-Leigvoll-Helgaland-Helland). While the first perhaps was a regional cult site, the latter seems to have been a major centre with ritual functions. Sacral place names like Lye, Vang, Njærheim, Nærland and Ullaland occur at the core of centres. If place names mirror major gods in the region, the cult focussed on the Vanir gods, Tor and Ull. The absence of Odin names is interesting, indicating that this was not an important god here at the time of the naming. The distribution of runic inscriptions further indicates that runic literacy was widely known among elites in the study area. The stones from Rosseland and Nord-Huglo mention the elite titles 'eril' and 'godi'. While runes occur on gold, silver and bronze objects in central Jæren, they appear on memorial stones and bone objects mainly in more peripheral sites in the region.

Bracteates, phallus stones and triangle-shaped monuments were compared to the distribution of sacral place names and centres. Apart from the A-bracteate from Lye, no direct association was identified between the gold bracteates and sacral place names. A-bracteates and clusters of C- and D-bracteates are, however, found close to sites defined by other categories as centres. While bracteate imagery is often set in relation to the god Odin, this is less clear on the Rogaland bracteates. Many bracteates might indeed depict gods, but some C-bracteates might have depicted local elites in a similar manner to the medallion imitations. The phallus stones seem to have been a complex phenomenon, perhaps associated with fertility cults. Myhre suggested that phallus stones indicated cult sites. Situated often peripherally to the major centres, they might perhaps represent local cult sites of rather local importance. The triangles have been associated with the world tree. If the triangles were indeed material representations of Yggdrasil at the cosmic centre, this would be a structure category well fitted for a ritual centre, or indeed for claiming the ideological importance of any centre. While triangles are represented at several of the centres in my study area, a lack of dating unfortunately makes it hard to distinguish the early triangles from those from the late Iron Age.

6.5 Building social structures: Hall, retinue, thing, religion

In this chapter, I have discussed several categories of 'grand buildings', in addition to a final subchapter concerning ritual functions. My focus has been on defining the structure categories, on mapping their distribution in the study area to find out whether the categories were located centrally or more peripherally, and, most importantly, to examine whether these categories might have reflected central functions. When summing up this chapter, perhaps the most striking point is that we might with some probability associate the grand buildings with important social institutions known from written sources: the hall, the retinue and the thing. Although the ritual functions seem harder to directly associate with centres, the distribution of sacral place names gives some indication that religion and rituals were important aspects of some of the centres. Of particular interest is the cluster of sacral place names at the Hove centre.

Attempting to establish a definition of elite settlement applicable to my study area, I simplified the criterion mainly to large longhouses, which probably had hall rooms. On the basis of settlement excavations in Forsandmoen, in Sogn og Fjordane as well as similar settlements elsewhere in Norway, I found that a house length criterion set to 40 metres worked well as a parameter for identifying elite settlement. Such large longhouses are especially numerous in Rogaland, and they are well represented at centres in Jæren. In Rogaland, as well as in the rest of Norway, these large longhouses are found either close to centres identified from rich graves, hoards and large mounds, or secondly from farms known from medieval sources as wealthy, or thirdly, rich finds were found within or just outside the house. From this pattern, it seems plausible that large longhouses represent elite settlement, and they are here labelled 'great halls'. The many large houses did not necessarily belong to single 'chiefs', but rather correspond to broader elite milieus represented by several large houses in central settlement districts. At the Nærbø centre, where concentrations of both large longhouses and large burial mounds occur, there is a correspondence between these categories of aristocratic architecture. Myhre (1987a) and Ringstad (1992) suggested that rich graves, hoards and large burial mounds could guide us to elite settlements. My survey of the large longhouses generally confirms their hypothesis. Elite settlements, as represented

especially by longhouses of a monumental size, are distributed near assumed centres, and are indeed very often found near rich graves, gold hoards and large mounds.

Large boathouses and hill forts are structure categories often associated with warfare, and they show distributional patterns less easily explained. However, several large boathouses are situated near centres, e.g. the 40-metre-long boathouse at Obrestad in Nærbø. There is also some correspondence in the study area between graves with high-status weapons and large boathouses, which might support an interpretation of boathouses as gathering places for organised retinues manning local warships. The location of boathouses might have been determined by topographical factors, and it is not always easy to tell which area the associated retinues might have come from. Hill forts could likewise have either been located centrally or, seemingly, more peripherally, and their distribution was probably also much determined by topographical features and placement in relation to seaways. Clusters of hill forts might indicate intensive hostile activities, and are seen here as 'conflict zones' with a high possibility of attack. Although few hill forts have been dated, my survey shows that the certainly dated hill forts in the area stem from the Roman and Migration periods. A case study of radiocarbon-dated hill forts from Sunnhordland illustrated the functional variations between different forts. These three hill forts were connected by sight lines, but did not represent a common defensive system. When interpreted in a local context, forts seem to have had various functions, typically including control, defence or attack. Similarly to the boathouses, some of the hill forts might have been manned by retinues.

A somewhat more peaceful domain might be represented by court sites, interpreted here as thing sites. In written sources, thing sites are described as places where societies negotiated judicial and political matters, and elected their leaders. The current debate around court sites has focussed on the 'neutral' placement of court sites. In general, however, they are situated within short distances from important settlements, and in Jæren they occur in major centres. Due to the recent identification of court sites using mechanical topsoil stripping, one must assume that court sites were a more widespread phenomenon than the sites known to date. At three of the excavated sites in my study area, status objects have been found in special houses situated centrally on one of the

long sides of the court site. The distribution appears to show an important pattern, revealing a clue to how the court sites were organised. I have proposed the possible interpretation that these were leader houses, where the elite leaders dwelled while participating at the thing. It is, however, hard to say whether these were elected leaders, as suggested by Tacitus, or if they directly controlled the sites and the decisions made here. My interpretation was based on the assumptions that the status objects were deliberately deposited in the houses as a sort of initiation, and that the localisation of the house in the middle of one of the long sites shows a pattern modelled by the ideal of halls with high seats. If the interpretation is valid, it might suggest that the court sites were only partly neutral, and that certain leaders dominated these thing sites.

Finally, I have attempted to use categories other than the 'grand buildings' in order to find out whether ritual functions might be added to the functions of the centres. The sacral place names formed the point of departure, along with bracteates, phallus stones and triangles. Parts of the place name material could perhaps be associated with the worship of certain gods, and also the sacredness of natural features. It was assumed that concentrations of sacral place names or the three material categories might point out ritual centres. Although some centres had a few sacral names, the only clear place name milieu was found at Hove in Sandnes. Apart from the name 'Hove' ('cult house'), the surrounding place name milieu indicated the presence of a sacred grove and plains for ritual horse races. At the neighbouring farm, Sørbø, a triangular monument has been found, and several gold bracteates are known from the area surrounding Hove. Even so, the most important structure at Hove was a large longhouse 60 metres long, surrounded by several large mounds of unknown proportions, and many rich graves with status rings and status weapons. As such, Hove was in many ways similar to other centres, but probably had additional ritual functions, which elsewhere seems less clearly defined. The great hall at Hove was probably the most important feature of this centre, and the house might have had a combined role as a hall and cult house. It might thus be that the most important cultic functions for other centres were performed within the walls of hall rooms at elite settlements. The elites might have focussed on the ritual power associated with exclusive elite feasts in their halls. In this way, these large buildings might, perhaps, provide indirect evidence of ritual functions at the centres.

Chapter 7. Twelve early Iron Age centres

In this chapter, it is finally time to take a closer look at the 12 selected centre localities (Fig. 7.1). Based on the general model of centre organisation in Chapter 2 and on the discussion of centre indicators in Chapters 3–6, this chapter takes a step down to see how the clusters of finds and structures appear on the local level of settlement districts defined as centres by Myhre and Ringstad. The aims of the chapter are twofold: firstly, in order to understand the localities, it seems necessary to write a kind of local cultural history for each of the localities. In this manner, each of the subchapters is a contribution to the local history of many settlement districts in western Norway. Secondly, by analysing 12 localities, a large sample of centres is introduced to the research field concerning Iron Age centres in Scandinavia. It is my hope that the centre localities as individual entities, and as a collection of 12 localities, might be utilised by Scandinavian researchers as potential parallels and contrasts to other centres.

When attempting to reconstruct meaningful biographies for each locality, there are many possible sources of error. An obvious shortcoming is that the centre indicators might be seen as an arbitrary collection of preserved and documented finds and structures. However, as the centre indicators occur in clusters at the localities, and as similar distributional patterns are found in several localities, the clusters and trends are assumed to be meaningful structures that might be studied. When examining the entities of the centres, my interpretations are guided by the theoretical framework sketched in previous chapters, pragmatically ignoring other possible interpretations. As this framework is a simplification of the complexity of the past, my interpretations clearly reflect only one possible reconstruction of the past among many others.

To delimit the length of the text, each locality is discussed on a few text pages allowing only certain features to be examined in detail. As each centre has its own characteristics, it has not been a priority to examine all localities using one standardised structure. It has rather been a wish to identify local diversity in social organisation. Comparisons between the centres might reveal both general trends and variation.

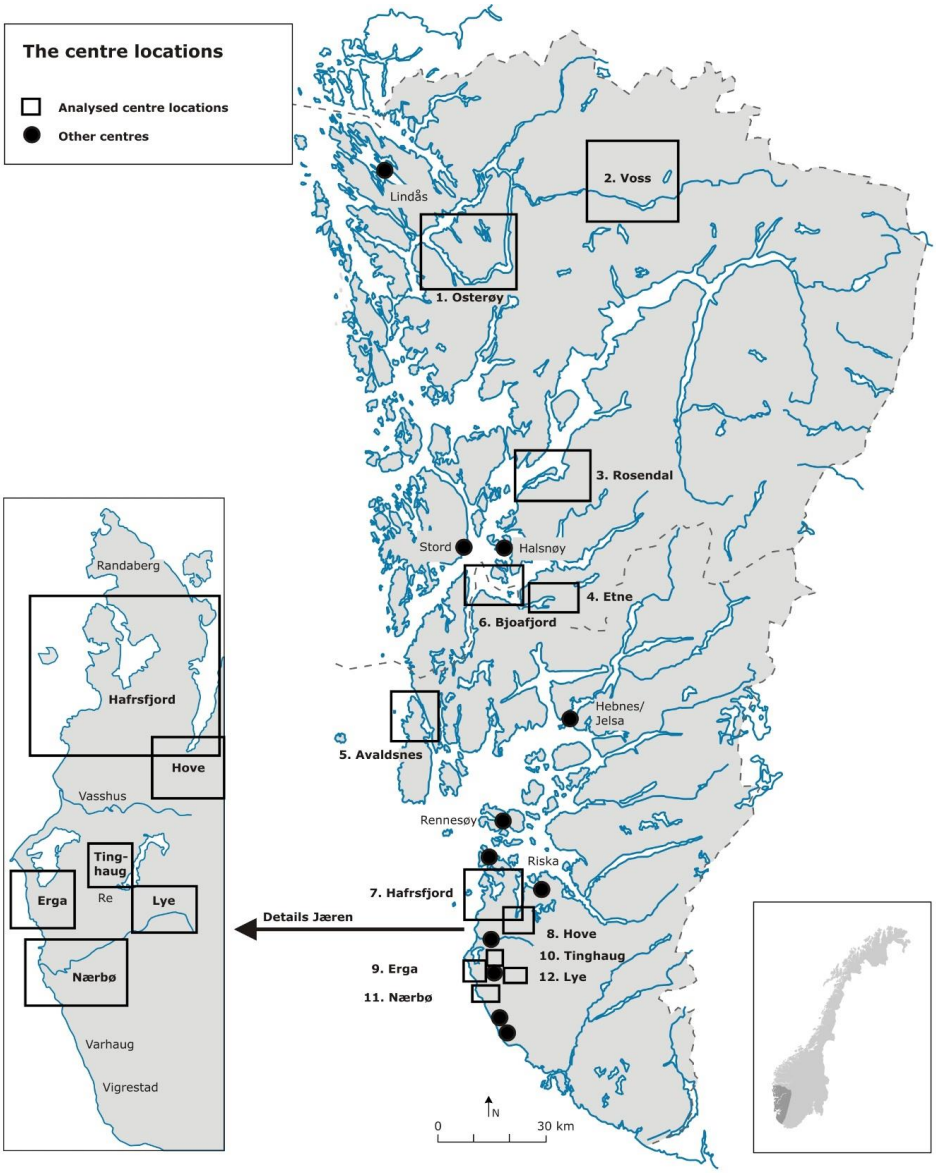


Fig. 7.1. Map of the distribution of the twelve analysed centre localities. The squares indicate the areas covered by each of the locality maps, with the Osterøy map covering a much wider area than the Tinghaug map.

The main objective of this chapter is to take a closer look at the layout of the centres. Each of the centre localities is defined by the distribution of centre indicators and by the local topography. Because of topographical determinants, the localities north of Jæren tend to be well demarcated. The localities in Jæren, on the other hand, are found close to each other and have unclear divisions in the landscape. Consequently, the northern localities are depicted on a scale allowing an impression of the wider landscape, whereas the localities in Jæren are shown in a more compact manner.

For each locality, the documented centre indicators are mapped (cf. Table 4.4). Lists of finds for all localities are found in Appendix IV. These lists are based on the research of a range of different researchers, put together and completed with new material. The most important sources for the distribution map are mentioned in the text. In order to reduce the number of signatures on the map, closely related object categories have a common signature. Among possible indicators of ritual functions, only sacral place names (as well as hoards) are mapped, but other relevant categories are discussed in the text. All signatures are large in size as it has been a priority that they should be clearly visible on the map, rather than precise markers of exact find spots.

The starting point and main hypothesis of this thesis is the notion that the distribution of centre indicators at various centre localities might give us new insights into the organisation of elite milieus. In the short introduction to the 12 selected centre localities, I will give an initial presentation of the distribution of elite milieus at each centre. As we will see, at some centres a clear geographical core of one or several elite milieus might be identified, with related entities or actors spread across the landscape. In other centres, a single elite milieu might have been structured as a cooperation between several entities of similar importance. The localities are individually presented successively from the north to the south. In order to make the examination of the 12 localities relatively effective, I have chosen to compare the localities in pairs based on geographical proximity. By examining localities in pairs, it is possible to dynamically contrast and compare two close-lying centres that probably would have had some direct contact. The locality pairs are Osterøy and Voss, Rosendal and Etne, Avaldsnes and Bjoafjord, Hafrsfjord and Hove, Erga and Tinghaug, and Nærbø and Lye.

Topography, resources and communications

Before presenting the centre localities, I shall make some general remarks on the variation of the physical preconditions of the analysed localities. The study area is characterised by geographical variation, providing the various centre localities with differences regarding the topographical layout of the centre and access to natural resources, as well as varying positions in relation to communications. As mentioned, there are clear topographical differences between centre localities in the two counties of Hordaland and Rogaland. While the Hordaland localities are generally well defined by landscapes with valleys and fjords, the examined Rogaland localities are mainly found on the Jæren plain, providing an open landscape with less clear delimitations.

It seems fair to assume that the centres had a resource base either from direct access to agricultural and outfield resources or from a strategic position providing indirect control of such resources. In terms of the direct access to agricultural resources, localities at Jæren had a great advantage (Sørheim, 2010). Centre localities on the Jæren plain, such as Nærbø and Tinghaug, had an access to fertile soil that is hardly seen elsewhere in western Norway. To the north of Jæren, the centres at Avaldsnes, Voss, Rosendal and Etne are very productive agricultural districts (Ringstad, 1986, Fig. 157).

Several of the centres are situated in a border zone between agricultural land and mountain areas with outfield resources. This is particularly true in Hordaland, where Voss, Rosendal and Etne had outfield resources nearby (Ringstad, 1986, Fig. 158). In Jæren, Hove and Lye are situated on the border between lower Jæren and higher Jæren, with some proximity also to outfield resources. Another important factor was maritime resources from the sea and rivers. Sea fishery was a potential resource for centres situated near fjords and the sea, such as Osterøy, Rosendal, Bjoafjord, Avaldsnes and Hafrsfjord. The rivers in Voss and Etne are among the best salmon rivers in western Norway, and the rivers in Rosendal also had some potential for salmon fishery (Ringstad, 1986, Table 21, p.256). In Jæren, the three largest rivers, Figgjoåna, Orreåna and Hååna, might have been important resources for the centres located in Jæren.

In order to control the movement of resources and people, one would expect to find the centres located strategically in relation to the main transportation routes. Because of the topography of western Norway, the seaway was by far the easiest way to transport people and resources between districts and to the outside world (Fig. 7.2). The main seaways of the early Iron Age might be reconstructed based on the 'Allmannaleia' (Ringstad, 1986, Fig. 160). This was the Viking Age outer seaway from northern to southern Norway, and although the ships prior to this did not have any sail, the seaway probably followed a similar line. When possible, the seaway avoided the open sea, following instead a sheltered path. In certain cases, this path could easily be controlled. This potential is evident in the narrow strait at Karmsund passing Avaldsnes.

Fjords, rivers and portages also played a role in regional communication. The fjords and rivers mainly had a function in the resource transportation on a local scale. The portages of Nord-Rogaland, on the other hand, had a regional importance as inner routes avoiding the Karmsund strait. As rich finds from the early Iron Age are found along these routes, Elvestad (2005) argues that these portages were used at this time (see Fig. 7.16). An important portage went across Sandeid (Norw. *eid* = 'portage'), which would have been a favourable south-going route for the Etne centre. In the north, the alternative routes left the south-going seaway in the Sunnhordland basin. Although these routes avoided the Avaldsnes centre, they all had to pass the Bjoafjord centre.

Land-based transportation probably had a special significance in Jæren. Here, the sea route around the Reef of Jæren was especially treacherous, and the topography on land relatively flat. The Royal Road (Norw. *Kongevegen*) was established in 1636, but it was probably based on existing roads (Skretting, 1993; Thomsen, 1996). From the northern end in Gandsfjord, the road went past several of the centre localities. The Royal Road went pass Hove, Tinghaug, through Re, passing Salte in the Erga centre, following the sea in Hå from Nærbø past Varhaug and Vigrestad, ending up in Ogna. From here, transportation on sea was more preferable. Although this road relates to the major settlement areas in a later context, it is likely that similar routes were used in the Iron Age. It hardly seems coincidental that the densest concentration of early Iron Age centres in Norway is found along this sheltered land route past the Reef of Jæren.

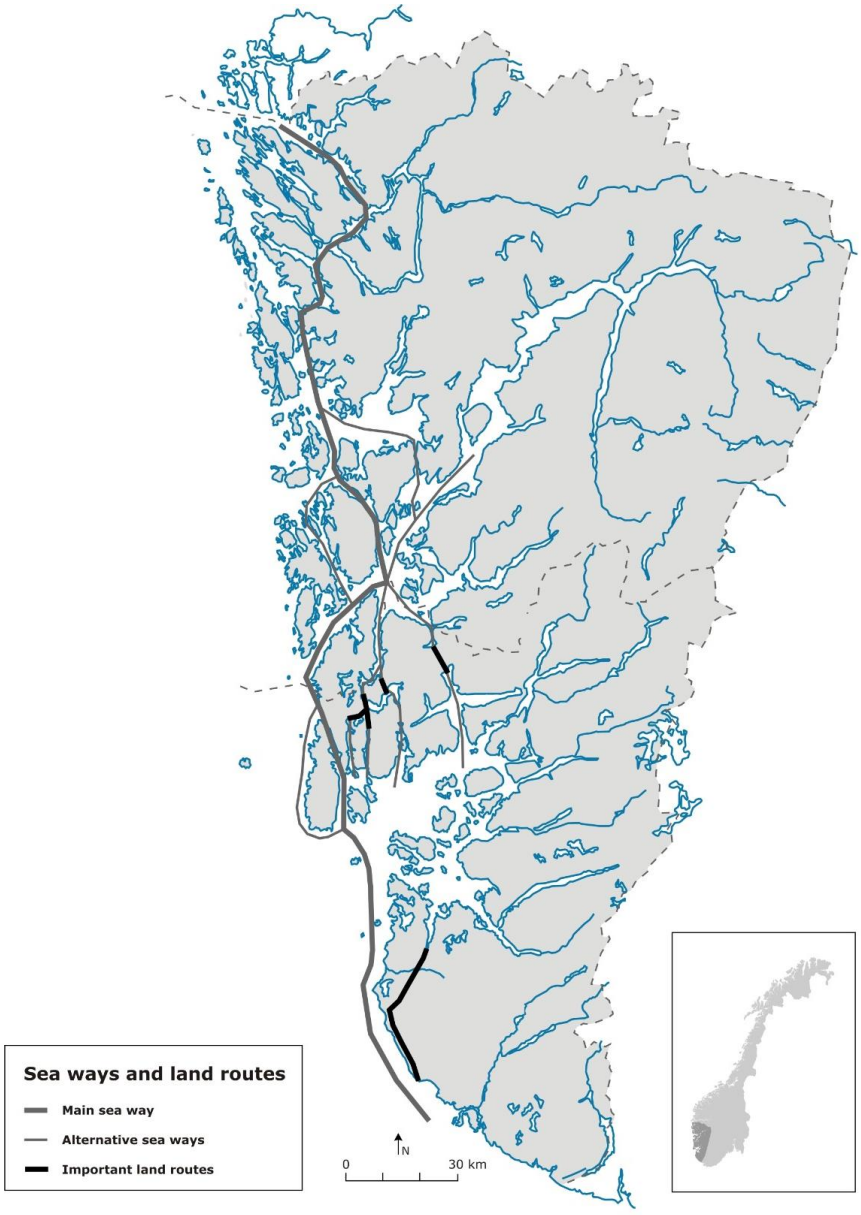


Fig. 7.2. Major sea ways and land routes in the study area, probably in use during the early Iron Age. The main sea way 'Allmannaleia' after Ringstad (1986), important alternative sea ways and portages after Elvestad (2005), and Kongevegen in Jæren after Skretting (1993) and Thomsen (1996). For further details on Elvestad's Iron Age sea ways and portages, see Fig. 7.16.

7.1 Osterøy

The island of Osterøy is situated in Nordhordland. Fjords encircle this large inland island and it is protected from the outer coast by two mainland peninsulas (Fig. 7.3). The centre locality has its main core in south-west Osterøy (the Haus area), with additional finds across the Sørfjord on the mainland (the Arna area). The north-western part of Osterøy has yielded important finds, but these are probably not directly related to the centre. The Haus area forms a fertile valley landscape, demarcated by the fjord in the south-west and a mountain range in the east. From Haus, the seaway towards the south is accessed by following the Sørfjord northwards. This is also one of the main routes from the centre at Voss and other inland areas with outfield resources. The localisation along Sørfjord therefore had some strategic potential. To the north-west, another centre is also found in Lindås. The distribution map (Fig. 7.3) is mainly based on Fett (1965a) and Hovland (1996, 1998).

Unlike the ten other centre localities further south, Osterøy, like Voss, does not have any status objects clearly dated to the third century AD (C1b–C2).[6] However, the Haus area on Osterøy provides traces of the clearest fourth century (C3) elite milieu within the study area: *The Mele milieu*. Five rich graves from the late Roman period might be related to the Mele milieu, including at least three female graves. The first is a grave with a gold finger ring and a bronze spindle whorl from Gjerstad, north of Mele. From Mele comes another grave with a gold finger ring and a bronze spindle whorl, in addition to several other status objects. Slightly later, a secondary female grave was placed on top of the Mele grave, this second grave containing two glass beakers and other status objects (Bjørn, 1924; Fett, 1965a). The only status weapon in Hordaland from C3b also stems from a grave at Mele, with a Mollestad-type sword (Reiersen, 2011b). From a neighbouring farm, Mjelde, comes a medallion imitation, based on Roman models from c. 370 AD. Together, these finds testify to the establishment of a fourth century elite milieu consisting of Mele and its adjacent farms.

[6] The deposition dates for the coins at Raknes (150 AD) and Hagebø (274 AD) are uncertain. It is of course possible that the coins were deposited in the third century. However, I find it most likely that the Hagebø coin was deposited after 300 AD, as part of the C3 milieu around Mele.

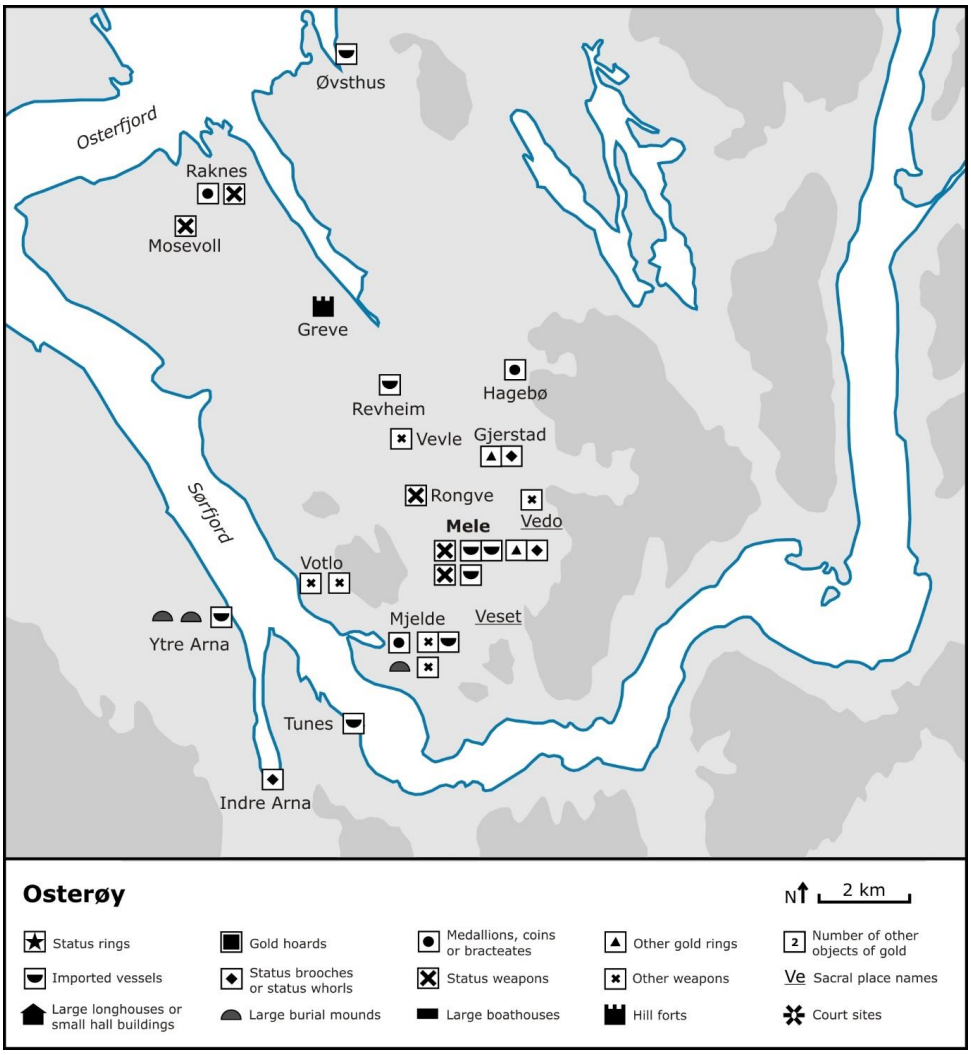


Fig. 7.3. Map of the centre locality Osterøy with a defined elite milieu at Mele. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:1.

The Mjelde medallion (Fig. 5.11) might be interpreted as a sign of alliances with Mele. If this is so, its motif might provide an insight into the self-representation of the elite milieu, inspired by continental influences (cf. Andersson, 2011). The man in the Mele weapon grave might for instance have identified himself with the horse rider on the reverse. On the other side, the image of the emperor with a diadem of beads might additionally have inspired the female fashion reflected in the female grave at Mele, containing 400 beads of glass and gold. It is further tempting to connect the two female graves with bronze whorls and gold rings with Enright's (2011) interpretation of 'staff bearers' as female ritual leaders. Such an interpretation might be supported by the sacral place names in the area. The names Vedo and Veset, found near Mele and Mjelde (Hovland, 1998:p.14), are assumed to denote sacred sites (Ve). A triangular monument is also found at Gjerstad, and phallus stones are known from Mele and Mjelde (Hovland, 1998; Kuhnle, 2013). Interestingly, the two successive graves in a chamber at Mele (Fig. 7.4) could imply that the roles of the possible ritual leaders were hereditary. In the latest grave, glass beakers and a key might be related to the role of a 'queen' or a 'lady of the house' (Enright, 1996; Kristoffersen, 2000). A female grave with a glass beaker at Ytre Arna and another grave with a splendid relief brooch from Indre Arna testify to the presence of important female individuals across the fjord.

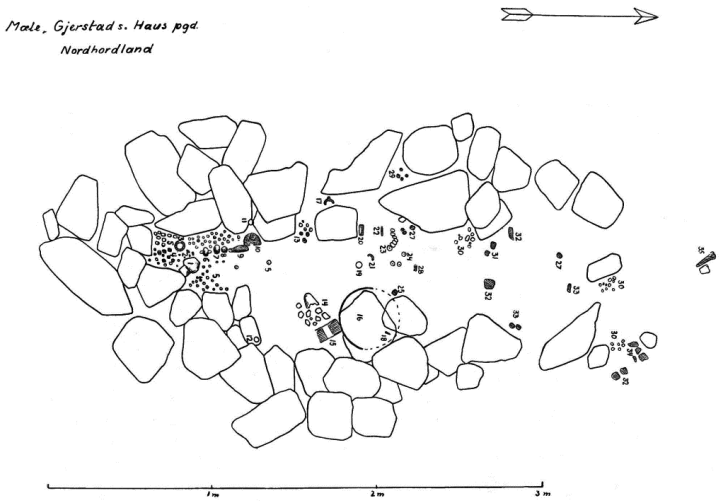


Fig. 7.4. Two female late Roman period burials from Mele (Bjørn, 1924). According to Fett (1965a), the secondary burial with glass beakers was situated stratigraphically higher than the primary burial with bronze whorl.

In accordance with the regional tendency, Roman period weapons have been identified solely in the status weapon grave from Mele. In the course of the Migration period, however, the general 'democratisation' of the weapon rite also happened in Osterøy. Weapon graves from the Migration period are found at several farms around Mele. The majority of these had swords, including a grave from Mjelde with a bronze vessel. In D2b, the military status of Mele was again emphasised in a grave with a status sword with silver chape. This ritual statement might have been an answer to the newly established group of men buried with status weapons at Mosevoll (D2a) and Raknes (D2b) in northern Osterøy. It is possible that this group was part of a retinue led by the military leader in the Hodneland status weapon grave in Lindås, north of Osterfjord (Fig. 5.21). If the group on northern Osterøy was indeed a threat to Mele, it might also explain the hill fort situated between these groups. Based on the many weapon graves surrounding Mele, including a D2b status weapon grave from Rongve, there seems to have been an established retinue organisation in the area that could face this threat.

If we assume that Mele was the leading milieu in much of the late Roman and Migration periods, the Mele elites might have controlled the distribution of imports within the centre. Imported vessels might have been obtained from travels with the retinue and then distributed to allies, or one might have allowed members of the wider milieu to obtain and own such vessels. From Mele, one lost bronze vessel is documented. The mentioned bronze vessel in a weapon grave from Mjelde might suggest a renewed alliance between these two farms. In a similar manner, a Westland cauldron from Revheim (D2) might possibly be linked to a strategic strengthening of the border zone towards the assumed northern threat in D2. Migration period imports are also found on the Arna side of the Sørfjord, with a Westland cauldron from Tunes dated to D1. It is possible that this might be related to a control of the passing sea traffic, where it was favourable for the Mele milieu to have allies present on both sides of the fjord. The importance of this strategic control is further underlined by the three large mounds situated on each side of the fjord, at Mjelde and at Ytre Arna.[7]

[7] Fett (1965a) mentions yet another large mound at the farm Mele. Søre Kollhågjen was 20 m in diameter and 2–3 m high, with an early Iron Age grave. As it was largely based on a natural hill, it has not been included on the distribution map.

7.2 Voss

The only 'proper' inland centre in the study area is found in Voss. The locality is situated in an area of mountain valleys, north-east of Osterøy. The main settlement district is concentrated around Lake Vangsvatn (47 masl), with mountains north and south of the lake reaching over 1300 masl. In Voss, there is direct access both to good agricultural land and to outfield resources. From Vangsvatn, the transportation routes follow the valleys westwards towards Sørfjord and Osterfjord, northwards pass the Vossestrand area to Sognefjord, as well as through the south-eastern valleys to Hardangerfjord (Næss, 1996, map 2). Although most centre indicators cluster along Vangsvatn, some are also found in adjacent valleys. The distribution map (Fig. 7.5) is mainly based on Ringstad (1986), Næss (1996), Holand (2001) and Fjelberg (2008).

Similarly to Osterøy, the distribution map seems to outline a marked core of the centre: *The Dyrvedal milieu*. Although there is not one clearly dominant farm, several neighbouring farms in the fertile valley of Dyrvedal form the core milieu of the centre. The farms at Hæve and Rekve in the valley are the only farms in Voss with two weapon graves from the early Iron Age. Vessels of glass and bronze have been found at the farms at Gjerstad, Gjerme and Veka, and a gold hoard from Rekve, consisting of a sword mounting (85.5 g), clearly stems from a leading milieu. In addition, a relief brooch from Hæve might reflect the 'Rogaland group' tradition (Kristoffersen, 2000:p.342). As with the other localities, on the map large mounds from all periods are included. However, if only the large mounds dated to the early Iron Age are shown, the main cluster in Voss is found in Dyrvedal (Næss, 1996, plate 2).[8] The clusters of large mounds and objects with animal-style ornaments support the interpretation of Voss as a centre (Ringstad, 1992; Kristoffersen, 2000), and the cluster in Dyrvedal of gold, glass and bronze should be sufficient to point out the 'central area' in Myhre's terms. As Voss is actually the only locality examined in this thesis that is not considered a centre by Myhre (1987a), it seems necessary to reconsider Myhre's results in order to restore the status of Voss as a defined centre on equal terms with the other localities.

[8] As with the other localities north of Boknafjord, the mounds depicted on the Voss distribution map are mainly based on Ringstad (1986). However, his list shows fewer mounds than Næss's (1996, plate 2) map from 1968, as some of Næss's mounds are probably slightly below 20 metres in diameter. The pattern shown on her map is, however, clearly a valid pattern. Also note that only the large mounds either dated to the early Iron Age or undated are mapped in Fig. 7.5.

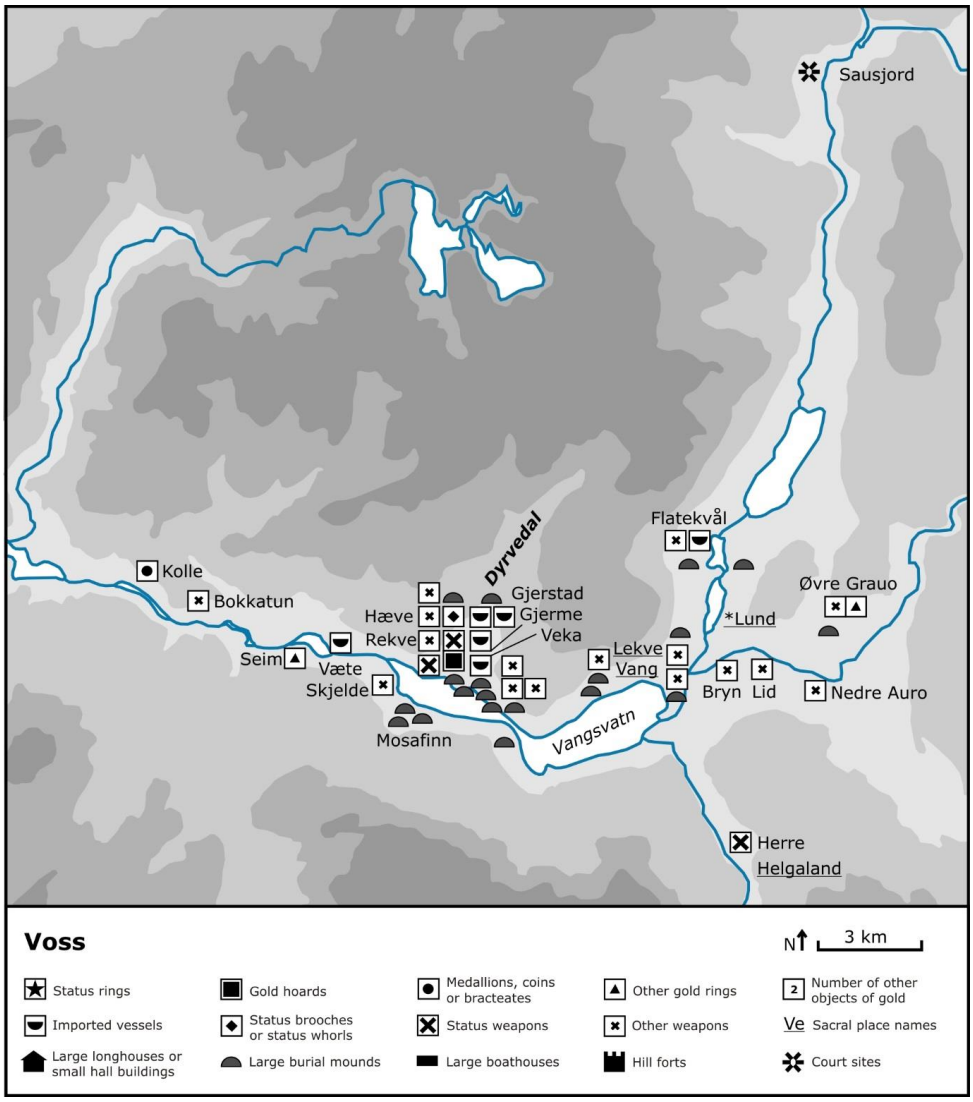


Fig. 7.5. Map of the centre locality Voss with a defined elite milieu in the Dyrvedal valley. Although the court site at Sausjord is mapped here, this is done to illustrate its distance from Lake Vangsvatn. It is not considered part of this centre, but might rather be linked to the Vossestrand district further north. In the Dyrvedal valley, only the most important farm names are shown. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:2.

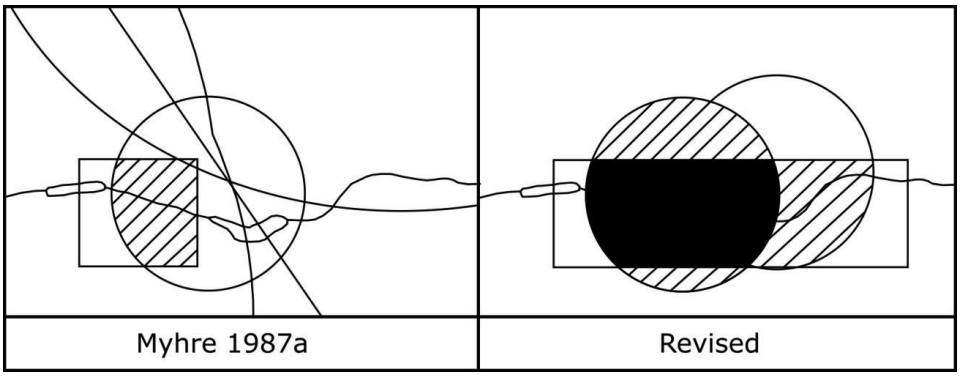


Fig. 7.6. Revision of Myhre's map of Voss. To the left, detail of Voss from the map in Myhre, 1987a, Fig. 7 (my Fig. 3.2) and to the right a revised version. Present on Myhre's map: Gold finger ring Seim, two glass imports Gjerstad. Finds added on the revised version: Gold finger ring Øvre Grauo, gold sword mounting, Rekve (Ringstad, 1986), imported bronze vessels from Gjerme, Veka, Flatekvål and Væte (Holand, 2001). Although the dating of the lost bronze vessels from Gjerme, Veka and Væte is a bit uncertain, the drawing remains the same if only one of these three vessels is included.

On Myhre's map, Voss is depicted merely as a periphery to coastal centres, situated on the border between the hypothetical territories of Sogn and Nordhordland (Fig. 7.6). However, by adding bronze imports not considered by Myhre (after Holand, 2001:pp.213–214), as well as two gold items that were not on Myhre's map, the situation is quite different. The revised map depicts the locality as a clearly defined centre with Dyrvedal as a 'central area' and an adjacent 'influence area'. If a hypothetical territory circle was drawn, it would overlap with three defined territories, thereby revealing a clear weakness in the territorial model. The view of Dyrvedal as the dominant elite milieu of the centre is supported by the fact that, like Mele in Osterøy, this is where the earliest datable graves are found. From Rekve in the lower part of the valley comes the only known weapon grave in Hordaland from C3a. Due to the rareness of weapon graves during this phase, it is considered a status weapon grave, even though only a spearhead was found. From Gjerstad, further up the valley, comes an imported glass beaker from a C3 grave, and fragments of another glass beaker in a C3/D1 grave (Holand, 2001; Fjelberg, 2008). Both of these might be female graves. Imported bronze vessels are known from Gjerme and Veka, just south of Gjerstad.

Voss has the highest number of weapon graves among the localities in the study area. In Dyrvedal, a concentration of seven weapon graves from C3 to D2b culiminated in the deposition of a gold sword mounting at Rekve in D2b. The status weapons from Rekve in C3a and D2b seem to suggest that the Dyrvedal milieu held the military leadership in Voss at least in these phases. Although the two weapon graves in the same burial mound at Hæve in D1 and D1/D2a might indicate some continuity in the military status of Dyrvedal, the milieu's military position is less certain at this time. In D1, weapon graves are known from Bokkatun, Herre and Øvre Grauo, in addition to a D1/D2a weapon grave from Lid. Interestingly, both the Herre and the Øvre Grauo graves might reflect military leaders situated outside Dyrvedal. The silver sheath fittings from Herre indicate a military leader of the highest rank. While the Øvre Grauo grave did not contain status weapons, it included a gold ring suggesting a high-ranking warrior, buried in a large chamber inside a fairly large mound (Fig. 7.7). It is possible that the Herre, Øvre Grauo and Lid weapon graves indicate a retinue in the part of Voss that is east of Vangsvatn, while the Hæve graves might be linked with the Bokkatun grave to a retinue in the western part of Voss. Another possibility is that these were in fact part of the same retinue, with leadership changing between these clusters.

Weapon graves from the rest of the Migration period follow a similar pattern with one cluster in Dyrvedal and another concentration of weapon graves in valleys east of Vangsvatn. Outside Dyrvedal, the distribution of large burial mounds, gold items and bronze vessels largely follows the same distribution pattern as these weapon graves. As these entities are found along communication routes from Voss, their distribution might perhaps reflect allies of the Dyrvedal milieu, securing control over these routes. The alternative interpretation is that these were smaller milieus competing with Dyrvedal for power. Although Dyrvedal was probably the dominant milieu, the place name evidence suggests that the eastern part of Voss played an important role in the centre. Three of the four local sacral place names cluster east of Vangsvatn. The names Vang, Lekve and a lost farm name *Lund are all located between Lakes Vangsvatn and Lundarvatn (Vasshus, 2011). Situated on a communication hub connecting the valleys in Voss, it is possible that this could be interpreted as a natural location for gatherings in the district, rather than as an actual counterpart to the milieu in Dyrvedal.

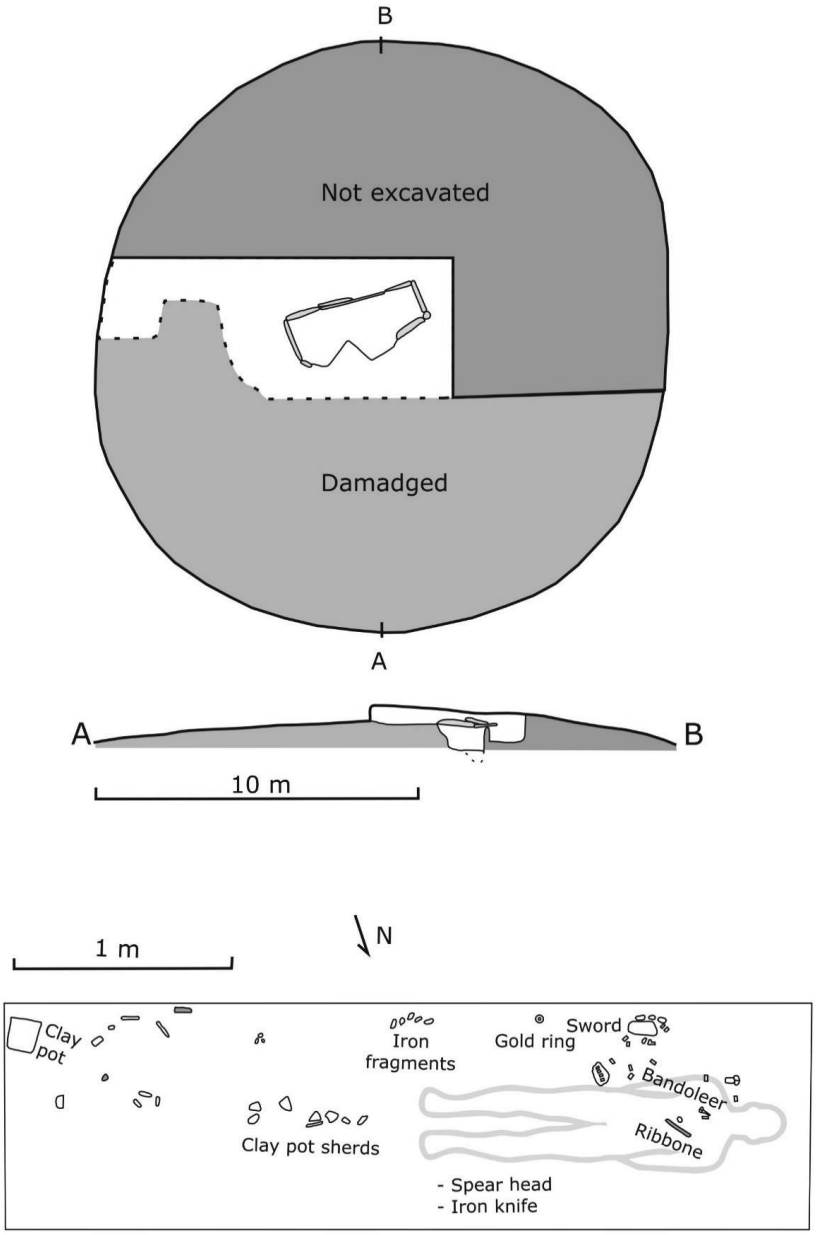


Fig. 7.7. The weapon burial from Øvre Grauo, Voss. This burial might stand as an example of the burial of a member of the elite in Voss. The buried man had weapon gear with sword and a gold ring. He was placed in a burial mound of nearly 20 metres in diameter, in a chamber more than double his length. Oversized burial chambers is a feature very commonly found in Voss (Stylegar, 2014). Modified after Næss, 1996.

7.2.1 Comparing Osterøy and Voss

The examination of the centre localities at Osterøy and Voss can be summarised in a comparison of the organisational features identified at these centres. Although the natural settings for coastal Osterøy and inland Voss are relatively different, the elite organisation and development at these localities seem to compare remarkably well. At both localities, the dominant elite milieus are clearly demarcated to the farms around Mele and to the farms in the Dyrvedal valley, respectively. While Mele seems to be the most important farm, in Dyrvedal it is not that easy to identify the most influential farm. Rekve, Hæve and Gjerstad all are candidates for this role over time. At both localities, the first status objects occur in phase C3, when the elite milieus were established through status weapon graves and female graves with glass beakers.

In Osterøy, and particularly in Voss, there are many weapon graves, and several of these have status weapons. The farm at Mele has graves with status weapons in C3b and D2b, while Rekve in Dyrvedal similarly has a status weapon grave from C3a and a gold sword mounting from D2b. Within these phases, the farms presumably were leading retinue organisations reflected by weapon graves in each of the two centres. In between these phases, however, status weapons occur outside the core milieu. In Voss, the military leadership in D1 seems to have been situated outside Dyrvedal, before shifting back in D2b. In Osterøy, two status weapon graves from D2a and D2b, located outside the centre, might have reflected a temporary threat to the Mele elites.

At both localities, there is evidence of female elites, with the clearest pattern found in Osterøy. Here, there are two female graves with gold rings and bronze spindle whorls, of which the C3 grave at Mele was succeeded by another female grave with two glass beakers. At Gjerstad in Voss, a parallel to this pattern is perhaps found in two successive graves with glass beakers, which might both be female. It is possible that this indicates that the roles of female elites were hereditary. At both centres, there is also a presence of relief brooches in D2b, although it occurs in the centre core only in Dyrvedal. The female elites in the Mele milieu might possibly be linked to roles as ritual leaders, as there is a cluster of sacral place names near these graves. A similar cluster of sacral place names is also found in Voss, but it is situated outside Dyrvedal.

7.3 Rosendal

The locality of Rosendal is situated strategically at the entrance to the Hardangerfjord, with the island of Snilstveitsøy providing some shelter from the fjord. Rising from sea level, the highest mountains in Rosendal reach over 1400 masl, enclosing and dividing the valleys of this settlement district. Agricultural conditions in Rosendal are favourable and outfield resources are also found in the district. As the traffic of people and outfield resources from the Hardanger region in the north followed the fjord, the location at the end of the fjord offered a great strategic potential (Fig. 7.8). The distribution map is mainly based on Fett (1956b), Ringstad (1986) and Grimm (2006).

A priori, one would assume that the dominant elite milieu would be found in the farms near Skåla, with three medieval churches and the site of a Renaissance barony. However, while the map of Voss shows a clear pattern of one dominant elite milieu, the Rosendal map shows an even clearer pattern of milieus in three different valleys. Apart from *the Skåla milieu*, there is also evidence of elite milieus in the adjacent *Guddal* valley as well as in the *Uskedal* valley, some kilometres further south-west. If the presence of all three categories, gold, glass and bronze, had been used to define the core of this centre, Uskedal would actually have been identified as a dominant milieu. While Guddal had a medieval church, Uskedal did not. This is an important reminder that the retrospective use of medieval conditions should be used with some caution.

Although clusters of well-documented large mounds are only found in the Skåla area, with two mounds in Guddal (Ringstad, 1986), Uskedal originally also had a cluster of large mounds. Lorange (1882:pp.62–63) described several impressive burial mounds at Haugland, in the inner part of the valley (Fig. 7.9). These were natural terrace mounds, which had been modified to form a group of very large burial mounds (Shetelig, 1912a; Fett, 1956b). The cluster of mounds was such a characteristic feature that the farm was named after these mounds (mound, Norw. *haug*). When it comes to military structures, these seem to have been focussed at the northern inlet of Rosendal. The milieus at Skåla and Guddal have evidence of three and two large boathouses, respectively (Grimm, 2006). A cluster of four weapon graves is known from Skåla, with one grave in Guddal, one at Voll, one at Berge and a stray find from Uskedal.

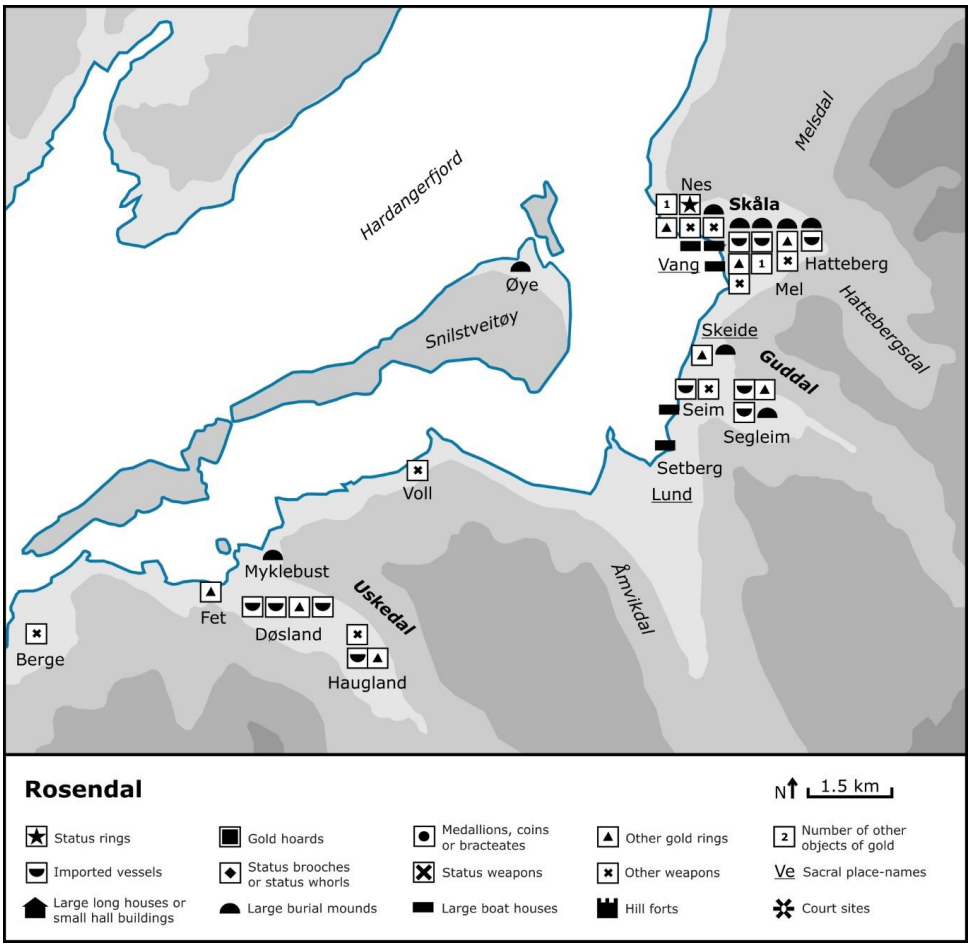


Fig. 7.8. Map of the centre locality Rosendal with defined elite milieus at Skåla, in the Guddal valley and in the Uskedal valley. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:3.

The earliest status grave comes from Nes in the Skåla milieu. Due to the presence of a serpent head ring with a special find context, it deserves special attention (Fig. 7.10). The excavator Shetelig (1912a:pp.44–5) noted that an inner cairn was separated from the outer mound by an undisturbed layer of clay. He first thought that this indicated a secondary addition to an original cairn. As all artefacts found were of a late Roman date, he instead concluded that this was one grave. Even so, there are chronological issues that indicate that Shetelig's first assumption was correct. The presence of a C1b serpent head finger ring type B39b (Andersson, 1993a) and lost sherds of a younger bucket-shaped pot (listed in Engevik, 2008 and Kristoffersen & Magnus, 2010) might suggest a primary female grave in C1b and a secondary female grave from C3. The cairn was built with a fragmented gold ring and a stone (1.4 x 1 m) in the centre. Shetelig (1912a, Fig. 100, h) noted the peculiar *in situ* context of the ring, deliberately pinned vertically to the ground. The gold ring had been cut and burnt, and a gold drop in the cairn suggests that the melting happened nearby (Bøe, 1926:pp.51, 81, note 1). Three fireplaces situated around a large stone might be related to rituals prior to the cairn construction. In this phase, the ring was cut, and then burnt on the funeral pyre. A surviving ring fragment was pinned to the ground in what became the cairn centre.

The serpent head ring gives unequivocal evidence that the Skåla milieu played a vital role in the formation of the centre in the third century. It also provides an important find context for interpreting the two other fragmented serpent head rings in the study area. The establishment of the Skåla milieu, as reflected in the Nes grave, is perhaps also mirrored in settlement material excavated at Skåla (Handeland & Diinhoff, 2011). In the transition to the late Roman period, the settlement expanded and a longhouse (E2) of unknown length was raised (cal AD 75–310, 75–310 and 130–340, Fig. 7.11). In the fourth century, status graves are also found in the Guddal and Uskedal milieus. In Guddal, a grave with bronze vessel and gold ring from Segleim is dated to C3, and a gold ring from Skeide probably has a similar date. In Uskedal, two simple gold rings might stem from the Roman period. In Sverdhaugen at Haugland, a grave with melted gold and melted glass probably also stems from the late Roman period (Fig. 7.9), and at Døsseland the first of two graves with glass beakers probably dates to C3/D1.

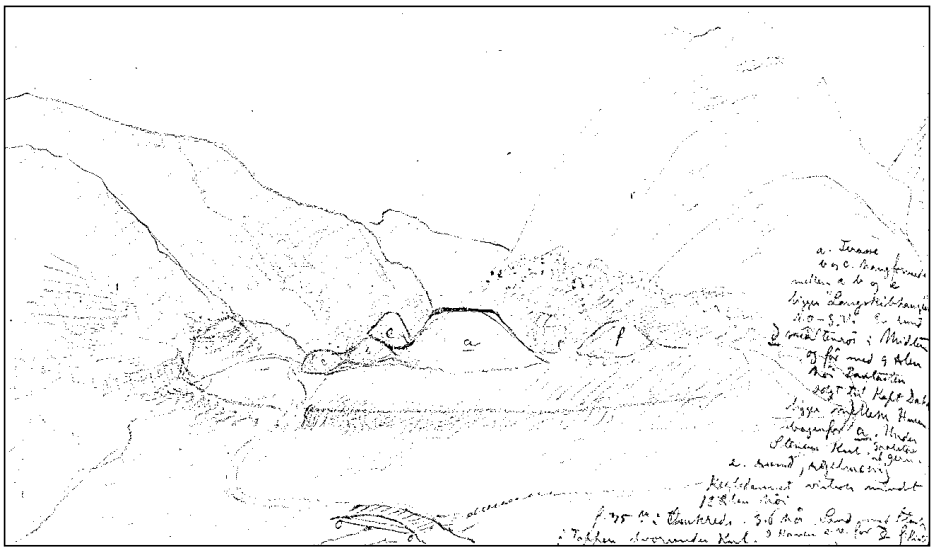


Fig. 7.9. Lorange's unpublished sketch of the large mounds at Haugland, described in his article from 1882 (pp.62–3). The flat terrace Domstolen (a) was encircled by the burial mounds Store and Vetle Kongshaug (b,c), the natural Blåhaug (e) and the mound Alterhaug/Setehaug (f, 25 m diam.). Sverdhaug (d, 30 m diam.) had a raised stone on the top and was situated behind a. The long mound Langskipshaug was found between a, b and c. The mounds had early and late Iron Age burials, and additional early Iron Age flat graves were found around Sverdhaug. The burial in Sverdhaug yielded melted gold and melted glass (Shetelig, 1912a). As melted gold is only known from Roman period graves, this gives an indication of the date.

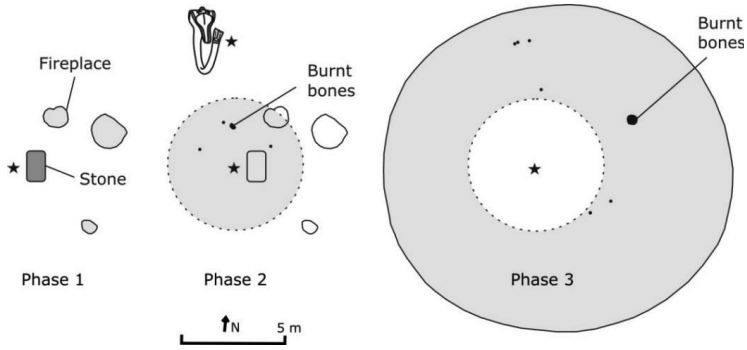


Fig. 7.10. A reinterpretation of three phases in the cairn Løehaugen at Nes. 1. Fireplaces and stone associated with funeral and destruction of the ring. 2. Primary burial (C1b) in a small cairn of stones, sealed off by a clay layer. The fragmented finger ring was pinned into the ground in the cairn centre. 3. Secondary burial (C3) in an outer mound of soil and stones. Sherds of bucket-shaped pots and other items were found spread in the mound, with a main cremation cluster found in the top, off-centre. The dimensions of the primary cairn were not documented, and the large, central stone is noted only in the unpublished report. Modified after Shetelig (1912a, Fig. 100).

In Uskedal, another grave at Døsland has a Westland cauldron from D1. The second grave at this farm with a glass beaker might stem from the Migration period, perhaps not much later than the first one. The two remaining bronze vessels from Guddal cannot be dated specifically, and the same is true for three bronze vessels from Skåla. The number of imported vessels is relatively even among the three elite milieus, but when it comes to military structures, the Skåla milieu stands out with four weapon graves and three large boathouses. By far the largest boathouse in Rosendal was situated at Skåla: 35 metres long, and with dimensions like the Stend boathouse (cf. Fig. 6.9). Among the four weapon graves in Skåla, the two Nes weapon graves are dated to the middle of the fifth century (D1/D2a), and to D2b. A lost gold ring and a grave with gold bead have also been found at Nes. There are no documented status weapons in Rosendal, but the two lost graves with weapons and gold rings at Skåla and Mel strengthen the hypothesis that the military leadership was situated in the Skåla milieu.

With regard to ritual functions, the place names show no clear cluster. At Skåla, the name Vang occurs, and in Guddal the names Skeide and Lund are found. In Uskedal, the Haugland terraces stand out as a gathering place in the valley, which is supported by the presence of a 'holy white stone' in a grave at Haugland. The sites at Vang, Skeide/Lund and Haugland might thus have been ritual sites for each of the milieus.[9] The grave with gold and glass in Sverdhaug is linked to the Haugland site (Fig. 7.9). It was built on a terrace mound, modified to appear as a huge, cone-shaped mound, 30 metres in diameter, 8 metres high, with a memorial stone on top (Shetelig, 1912a).

Although the three elite milieus probably cooperated, it is possible that a role as the dominant elite milieu shifted between these three valleys. The datable status graves suggest a chronological sequence of Skåla in C1b, Guddal in C3, Uskedal in C3–D1 and Skåla in D2. The lack of datable objects at farms in Skåla other than Nes is, however, problematic, and the gap in the chronology might not be representative. Although the milieus were relatively equal, Skåla probably held the military leadership at the inlet to Rosendal, supported by neighbouring milieus at Guddal and Uskedal.

[9] E.N. Fett (1972:p.156) instead viewed the farm at Eik as a cult site in Uskedal. She considered Vang and another Eik farm as cult sites in Skåla, and Skeide as the cult site in Guddal. See Vasshus (2011:pp.15–17) for a discussion on Eik names.

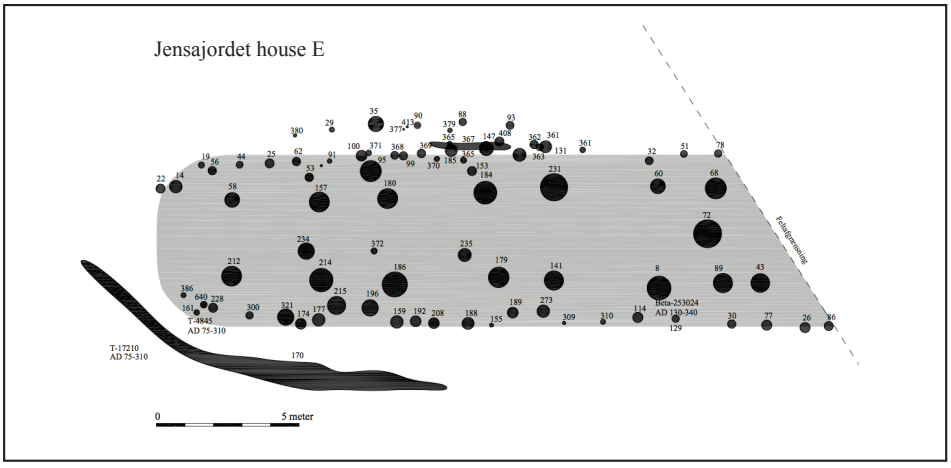


Fig. 7.11. Roman period settlement excavated in 2008 at Jensajordet, Skåla, Kvinnherad. On the transition to the late Roman period, the early Roman period House H was replaced by two parallel houses, House E (phase 1) and House B, which again were succeeded by a larger House E (phase 2) and House C. House E2 probably was a great deal longer than the 21 metres uncovered within the trench delimitations. Slightly modified after Handeland & Diinhoff, 2011, Figs. 6 and 57.

7.4 Etne

The locality of Etne is situated in Sunnhordland in a broad valley at the inner end of the Etnefjord. This is one of several centres in the region of Sunnhordland, including also Bjoafjord, Halsnøy and Stord. Alongside Voss and Rosendal, Etne is among the best agricultural districts in Hordaland, with outfield resources found in the adjacent mountain areas. The fjord and mountains naturally delimit the settlement district. It is internally divided by the river Etneelva and its two side rivers arriving from lakes in side valleys to the north-east (Stordal) and to the south-east (Litledal). The northern and eastern part of the central settlement is situated on high-lying terraces, with the western part located lower along the Etnefjord. While the fjord provided a main transportation route, several mountain roads eastwards went past the Stordal valley. The map (Fig. 7.12) is based mainly on Fett (1963), Ringstad (1986) and Lie (2000).

In a similar way to Rosendal, the clear lines offered by the local topography make it possible to separate between three elite milieus where most status finds are clustered. They are found at the large Stødle terrace in the north, at the Grindheim terrace in the east and also in the west at Gjerde, in a lower area where the river meets Etnefjord. These three elite milieus – *the Gjerde*, *Grindheim* and *Stødle milieus* – correspond to the local, medieval church districts. The three milieus were encircled by hill forts at Matskor, Vad and Steine, with another hill fort at Bryllåm considered more uncertain. The forts surrounding the settlement in Etne might well reflect an organised defence (Lillehammer, 1972; Lie, 2000). Many of the status finds in Etne stem from the grave fields at Stødle-Sørheim-Austreim and at Grindheim-Rygg. A concentration of five large mounds is found at Stødle, four at Grindheim, three along the Sørelva river between Rygg and the Litledal valley, as well as one at Gjerde.[10] The majority of the many weapon graves from Etne come from grave fields at Grindheim (5), Stødle (3) and Øvstebø (3), with single graves found at Gjerde, Osvåg and Hovland. While the grave fields at Grindheim, Stødle and Øvstebø were the focus of early excavations in Etne, in the last decade several settlement excavations have been carried out at Gjerde.

[10] Ådlehaugen at Gjerde (or Haugen) is listed by Fett (1963) as 19 metres in diameter and 2 metres high, based on the excavation report from 1875. An article in Haugesunds Dagblad (1938) described it as 20 metres. I consider it likely that the mound was originally at least this size, and it is therefore considered a large mound here. It dates to the early Iron Age.

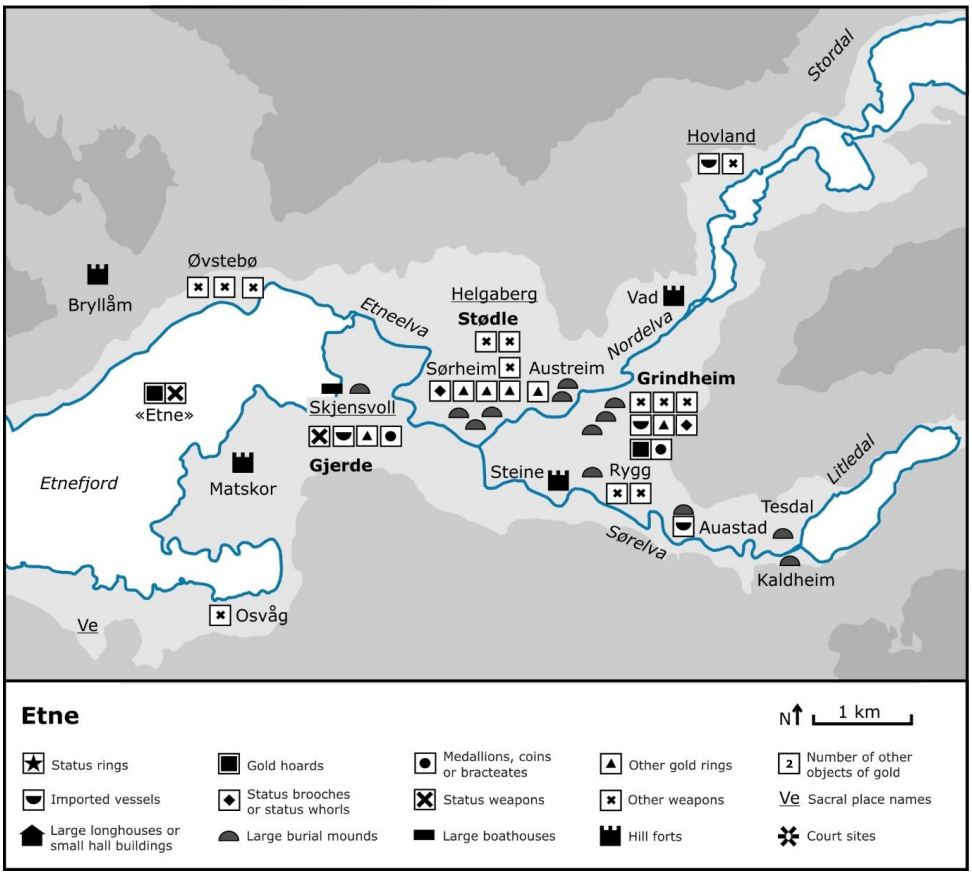


Fig. 7.12. Map of the centre locality Etne with defined elite milieus at Stødle, Grindheim and Gjerde. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:4.

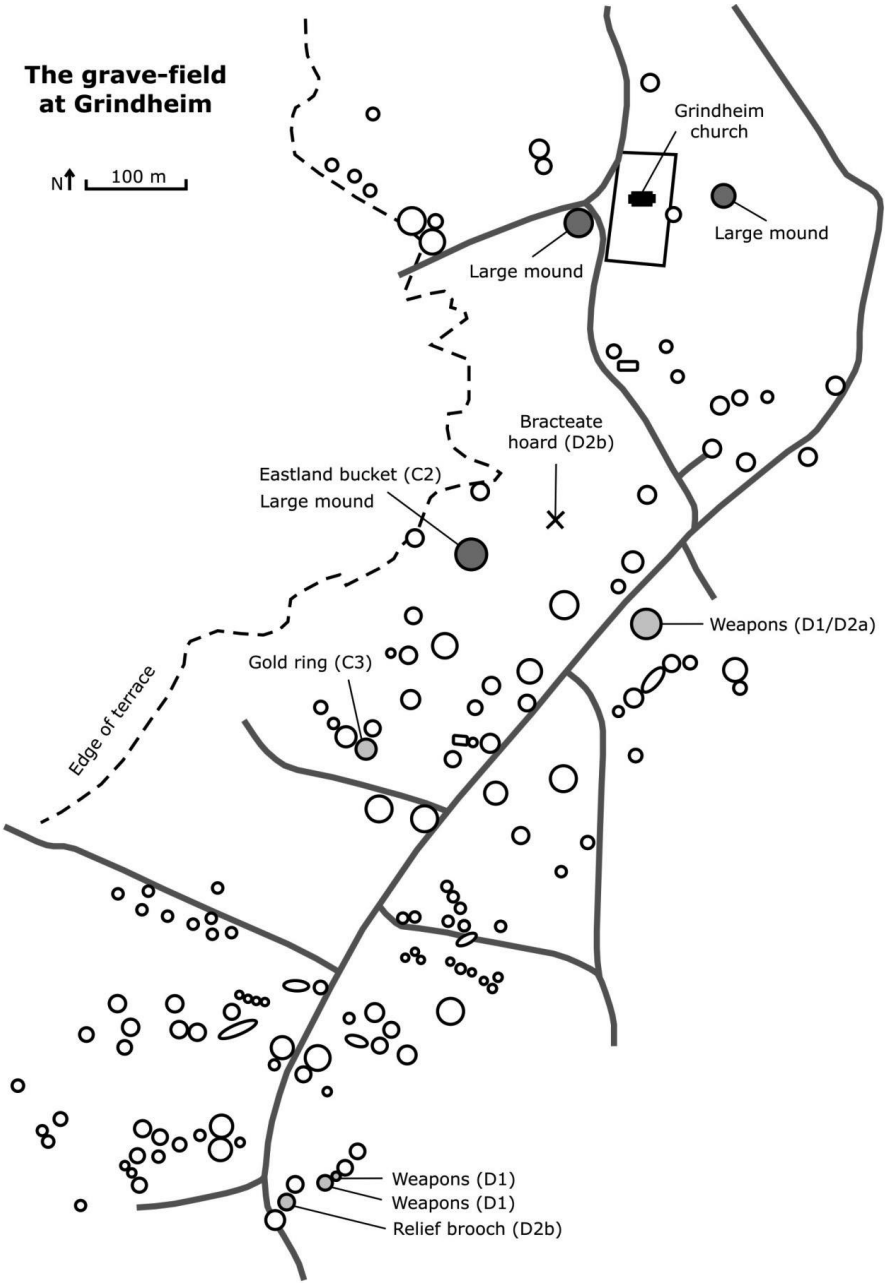


Fig. 7.13. The grave-field at Grindheim, modified after a drawing by Bakka (in E.N. Fett, 1968, Fig. 25). Large mounds, nos. 2, 4 and 60. Late Roman period status finds: Eastland bucket: no. 60, gold ring: no. 81. Migration Period status finds: Weapons: nos. 29, 140 and 141, relief brooch: no. 143. The bracteate hord was found 60-70 metres from nos. 28 and 60 (not 50), between the road and the foot of the terrace slope (E.N. Fett, 1968:p.210).

The key find from Gjerde is a status sword from C1b–C2, corresponding to an officer in the Illerup hierarchy. It was found near two large boathouses. While one of these had medieval dimensions, the size of the other 'large' boathouse remains unknown (Bendixen, 1898:p.27; Grimm, 2006). The latter was situated between the large early Iron Age mound Ådlehaugen and another large mound, perhaps indicating an early Iron Age date. It seems at least likely that a retinue in Etne would have departed from a harbour at Gjerde. Some 500 metres to the south-east, a Roman denarius (177–192 AD) was found during settlement excavations in 2013. At Illerup, denarii were associated with officers (Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær, 1996). In the same settlement area, a longhouse, House A (cal AD 90–250, 80–240), and a smaller, parallel house, House C (cal AD 130–250), were dated to the Roman period (Flognfeldt & Diinhoff, 2014). These houses were only partially excavated. The excavator suggested that House A was at least 8 metres wide, comparing it to the longhouses from Gausel, Stavanger (40x8 m) and Eide, Gloppen (43x7.5 m and 24x7 m). It is hard to tell whether House A reached 40 metres, but the scenario that a large longhouse was standing at Gjerde *c*. 200 AD seems not improbable with regard to the denarius and the officer's grave. In addition, a gold ring and a melted glass vessel testify to the elite presence at Gjerde.

The two other elite milieus also have late Roman period finds. The earliest find from Grindheim is a primary grave in a large burial mound, consisting of a C2 cremation grave in an Eastland bucket (Fig. 7.13). Gold rings from C3 are found at Grindheim and at Sørheim in Stødle. Two of the three lost gold finger rings from Sørheim and Austreim are described as rings of types B10–14, dated to the late Roman period. Two Westland cauldrons from C3 are found a bit more peripherally at the farms Auastad and Hovland. These farms are situated strategically at the entrance to the valleys of Litledal and Stordal, respectively, with the potential to control communications and outfield resources in these valleys. It is therefore possible that the vessels could be regarded as alliance gifts from the milieus at Grindheim and Stødle. It is further interesting that one of the Grindheim bracteates (D2b) has got two close parallels at Teig in Sauda (Pesch, 2007, type D18), which is accessed over the mountains from the eastern end of the Stordal valley. This might be regarded as the traces of a later alliance related to the use of resources in the mountain areas between Etne and Sauda.

Migration period weapon graves are found in grave fields at Grindheim, Øvstebø and Stødle. Three of the five graves at Grindheim and Rygg might be dated, two from D1 and one from D1/D2a. One of the three Øvstebø graves is dated to D2a, and among the three graves from the Stødle terrace, one is dated to D2, and another to D2b. These graves indicate a chronological shift from Grindheim in D1 to Stødle in D2b. To this should be added the gold-filigree sword mouthpiece (D2b) found somewhere in Etne (Fig. 7.15). The hill forts at Matskor and Vad were situated strategically with regard to the main communication lines entering Etne. The Vad hill fort guarded the way from Stordal, and a ford (Norw. *vad*) across the river to Grindheim (Fig. 7.14). Lie (2000) interpreted the forts as a defence system. As there are no sight lines between Vad and Matskor, he interpreted the Steine fort as a mediator for interaction between the forts. The status sword from Gjerde and the gold sword mouthpiece from Etne surely testify to the presence of strong military leadership capable of creating such a defence system.

Two female elite graves with simple relief brooches might be dated to D2b. The first, from Sørheim in Stødle, has a small, fragmented relief brooch, which might be linked to the 'Rogaland group' (Fett, 1968:p.193). From Grindheim comes another small relief brooch, found with two bronze keys possibly denoting a 'lady of the house' (Kristoffersen, 2000, F64). At Grindheim, the D2b hoard with a splendid necklace of six bracteates (Fig. 7.15) might further suggest the presence of female ritual leaders. As the hoard was found in an open space in the grave field (Fig. 7.13), E.N. Fett (1968:p.210) suggested it was deposited at a ritual site. Other ritual sites might be indicated from the place names Helgaberg in Stødle and Skjensvoll in Gjerde, and at Ve and Hovland. At Gjerde, a cooking-pit field was excavated in 2004. Demarcated by a ditch, it was interpreted as a site for ritual feasts (Flognfeldt & Diinhoff, 2014:p.6 with references). Additional cooking-pit fields were also found at Gjerde in 2013.

Altogether, Etne was a centre with clear sociopolitical, military and ritual functions. While the Gjerde milieu played an important role in the third century, in the fourth to sixth centuries Grindheim and Stødle were the dominant milieus. It should be noted that bracteate hoards and gold-filigree mouthpieces are often found at southern Scandinavian central places, providing strong evidence of Etne's role as a major centre.

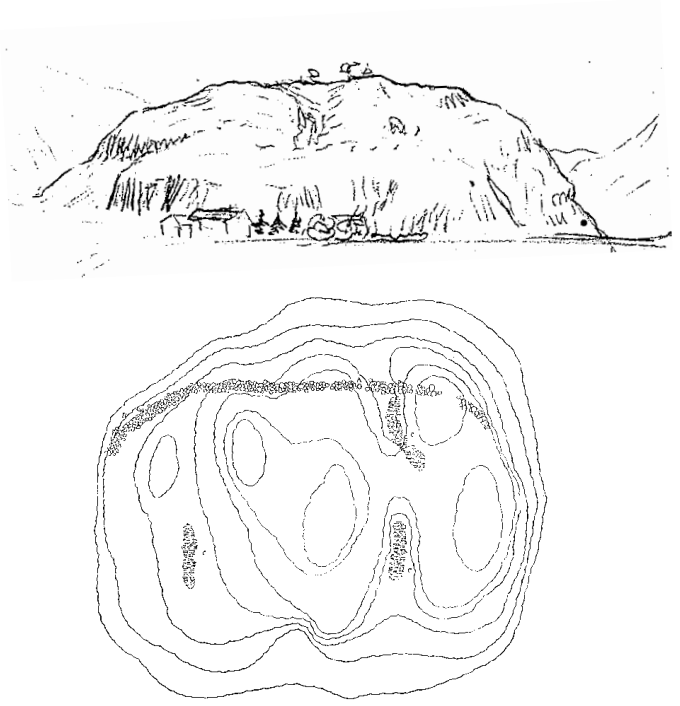


Fig. 7.14. Hill fort at Vad. Plan drawing modified after Shetelig (1908, Fig. 2), and an unpublished sketch by Shetelig (cf. Shetelig, 1908, Fig. 1). The fort silhuette is seen from the southwest, with the Stordal valley in the back.

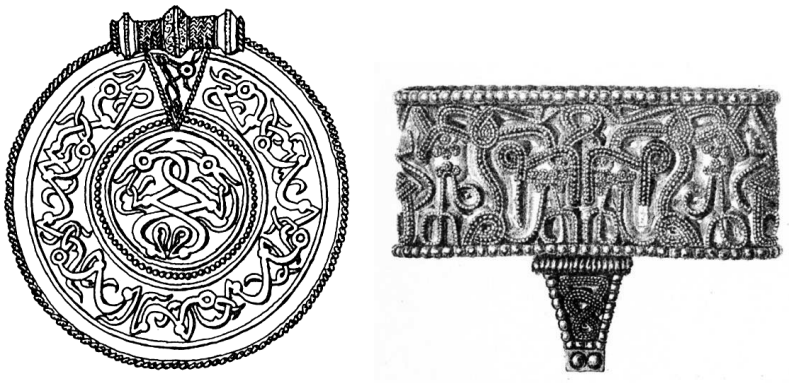


Fig. 7.15. The largest bracteate from Grindheim and the gold mouthpiece found in Etne. After Hagen (1967, Fig. 71) and Nicolaysen (1867, Fig. 24a). The gold bracteate is 7 cm in diameter and the gold mouthpiece 6 cm broad.

7.4.1 Comparing Rosendal and Etne

The most important similarity between Rosendal and Etne is the presence of three well-defined elite milieus. While in Etne their localisations correspond to the three medieval church districts, in Rosendal two of the three areas have medieval churches. Status objects from the late Roman period have been found at all six elite milieus. The most important third century finds come from Nes in Skåla and from Gjerde. Both farms have large boathouses, although the date of the Gjerde boathouse is uncertain. For other milieus, the fourth century was the main establishment phase. The C1b serpent head finger ring from Nes and the D2b hoards from Etne are indicators of major centres.

Settlement material from excavations at Gjerde and Skåla was used in order to shed some further light on the early establishment of the milieus here *c*. 200 AD. These are the first larger settlement excavations in Hordaland that have been conducted at the core of assumed centres. At both sites, there is evidence of farms with parallel longhouses, built in the transition to the late Roman period. Although only partially excavated, the largest longhouses at both sites might have been of considerable length. These preliminary results indicate a settlement expansion similar to that in Rogaland.

In Etne, status weapons from C1b–C2 and D2b, and a high number of weapon graves, suggest a retinue organisation. A lower number of weapon graves in Rosendal cluster in Skåla, near the large boathouses. Similarly to the elite milieus in Osterøy and Voss, in Etne status weapons are present both in the late Roman period and in phase D2b. The five large boathouses at Skåla and Guddal in Rosendal, and the three hill forts encircling Etne, provide further insights into the military organisation of the centres. Of particular interest is the local defence system indicated by the Etne hill forts.

Finally, based mainly on place names, ritual sites were identified near all elite milieus in Rosendal and Etne. In addition, the grave field among the large terrace mounds at Haugland in Uskedal, and the find spot for a bracteate hoard at the large grave field at Grindheim, were regarded as ritual sites. At Gjerde, with the sacral place name Skjensvoll, several cooking-pit fields have been found, perhaps denoting ritual feasts. Altogether, the two centres had identifiable sociopolitical, military and ritual functions.

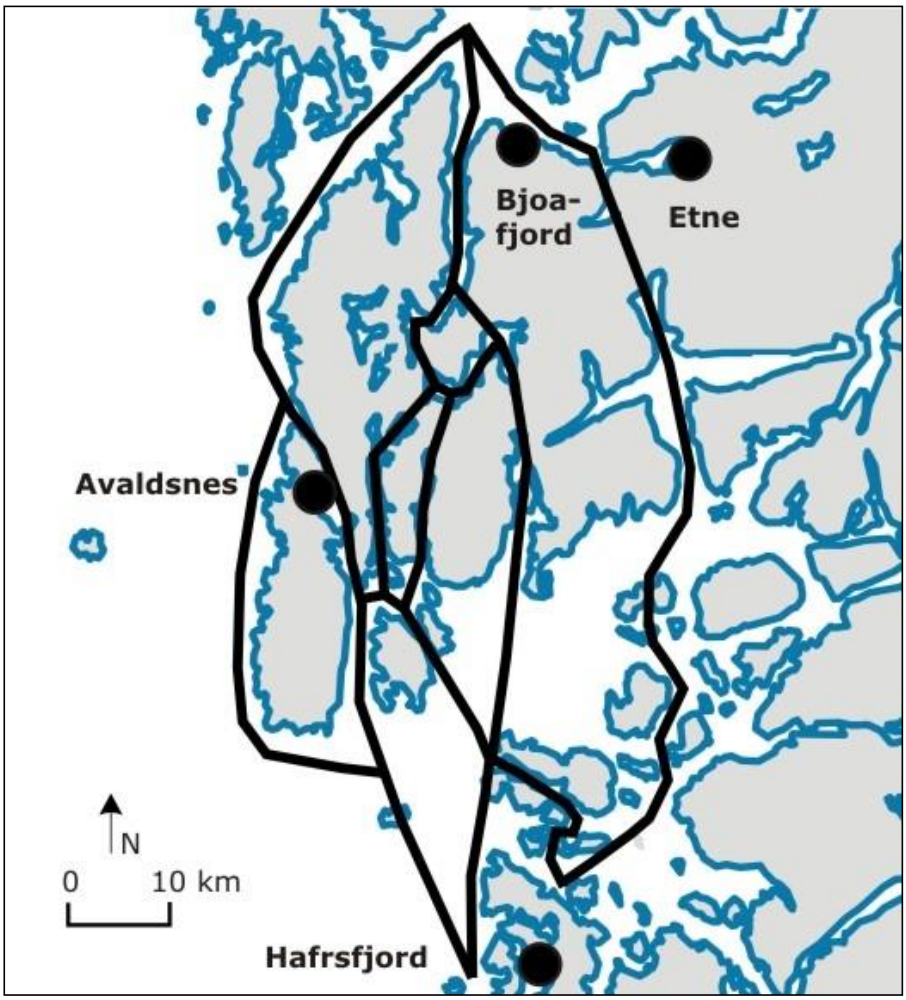


Fig. 7.16. Map of Elvestad's reconstruction of the seaways and portages between Jæren and Sunnhordland that was probably used in the Iron Age. The discussed centre locations in this region is indicated by black dots. Modified after Elvestad, 2005, Fig. 10.

7.5 Avaldsnes

The locality of Avaldsnes is situated on the northern part of the island of Karmøy, along the Karmsund strait. In the Old Norse language, *Körmt* was the name of the island, meaning 'shelter'. As the harsh waves from the North Sea hit the western parts of the island, the main seaway between north and south has traditionally been on the east side of the island, through the strait of Karmsund, sheltered by the large island. Strong tidal currents midway in the strait furthermore make this a point where traffic can easily be controlled. Apart from this highly strategic position along a narrow strait, the topography is characterised by lowland and favourable agricultural conditions. The distribution map (Fig. 7.17) is based on Ringstad (1986) and Reiersen (2009).

Although the distribution map shows several minor clusters of status finds, the main concentration clearly points out the farm Avaldsnes as housing the dominant milieu. The many large burial mounds from the grave field in Reheia and the Gunnarshaug area are mainly dated to the Bronze Age and the late Iron Age, respectively. The largest burial mound from the early Iron Age is the Flaghaug mound at Avaldsnes. Although most of the finds at Avaldsnes stem from the Flaghaug mound, other finds confirm that *the Avaldsnes milieu* is the clearest C1b–C2 milieu in the study area. The finds from Flaghaug reflect a centre that at its peak had a dominant regional importance. However, the lack of status graves from the Migration period is remarkable, as most other major early Iron Age centres in Rogaland show a peak in the Migration period. A key question, then, is whether the lack of status graves reflects a scenario when the elite milieu was well established and no longer needed a display of ritual spending, or if this reflects an actual reduction in the former dominance of the Avaldsnes milieu.

A prelude to the establishment of the C1b–C2 milieu is seen in a grave from Bø at the end of the early Roman period, with a fine gold berlock and one of the earliest bronze vessels imported to western Norway. Two objects found south of Avaldsnes suggest that the establishment of the Avaldsnes milieu was connected to the Danish centre in Himlingøje (Reiersen, 2011a). The rosette fibula type 4A from Vårå (C1b) and the serpent head finger ring type B39c from Kolstø (C2) are both object types closely associated with Himlingøje (Ethelberg et al., 2000; Lund Hansen & Przybyla, 2010).

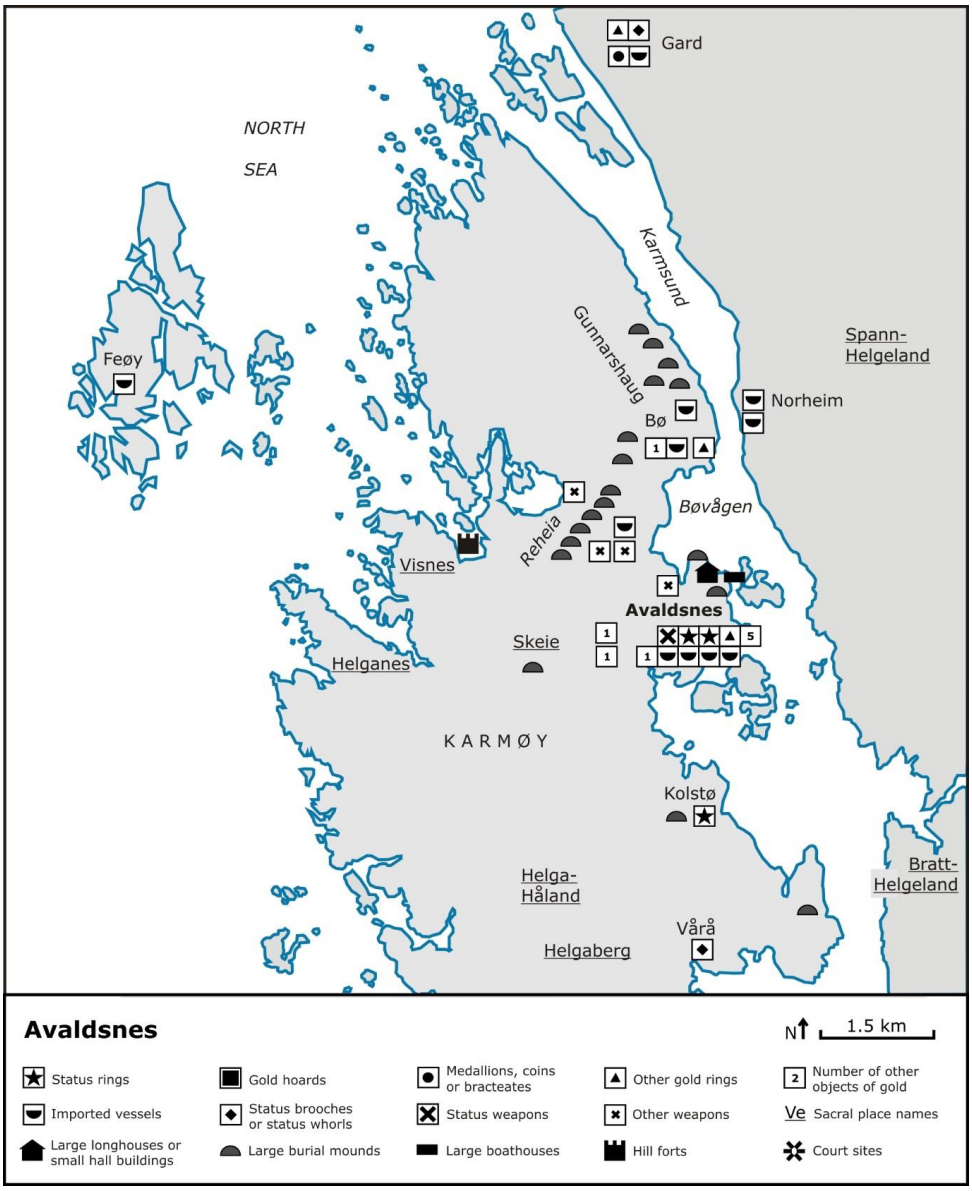


Fig. 7.17. Map of the centre locality Avaldsnes with a defined elite milieu at Avaldsnes. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:5.

At Avaldsnes, the large Flaghaug mound, 30–40 metres in diameter (Figs. 7.18, 7.19), enclosed an inhumation grave (C1b–C2) in a large stone chamber (3.6 x 1.2 m). The grave contained an exclusive drinking set with a fine Hemmoor bucket (E59), along with a gold neck ring (590 grams), a large finger ring type B18, and a weapon set with a shield with silver boss and sword with gilded silver fittings (Reiersen, 2010). The status weapons indicate the highest level of the Illerup hierarchy. Two secondary cremations with a Hemmoor bucket (E58) (C2) and a Westland cauldron (C3) as urns make it possible to consider Flaghaug as a dynastic burial site. Situated near another large mound and tall memorial stones, the monuments were an impressive sight from the seaway. Together, the many late Roman period graves along Karmsund included most categories typical of the contemporary Rogaland material (Fig. 7.20, Reiersen, 2011a). Objects like the B18 finger ring, three Hemmoor buckets from Avaldsnes and Norheim, and a bronze whorl R171 at Gard suggest that the material complex of object types mainly found in Rogaland had its very roots in the Avaldsnes milieu.

The excavations at Avaldsnes revealed two houses that might be related to this milieu (Skre, 2011, 2012): a small hall building (A10) and a large longhouse (A13). The hall building was badly damaged by modern activity, but its original size was estimated at 20 metres long and 6 metres wide (Bauer & Østmo, 2013:pp.70–83). Its walls and posts were fitted into holes cut out in the bedrock, and the building had a large central room with a fireplace. An early phase was indicated by a dated sample from a posthole (cal AD 140–240), with the main phase suggested by dates originating from the wall ditch, a posthole (cal AD 240–335, 260–390), and the fireplace (cal AD 220–400, 260–390, 330–430), contemporary with the three burials in Flaghaug. The longhouse A13 was damaged, but it had an estimated width of *c.* 8 metres (Bauer & Østmo, 2013:pp.106–115). The excavators compared its dimensions to large longhouses at Gausel, Stavanger (40 x 8 m) and Hove, Sandnes (60 x 7 m). Judging from the ^{14}C dates, while two early dates overlap with the small hall building (cal AD 340–430, 340–420), seven later dates testify to a main phase in the Migration period, *c*. 400–550 AD. Although the two houses might both have been standing a short period, it seems likely that the hall function, for some reason, was moved in the fifth century to a room in the longhouse.

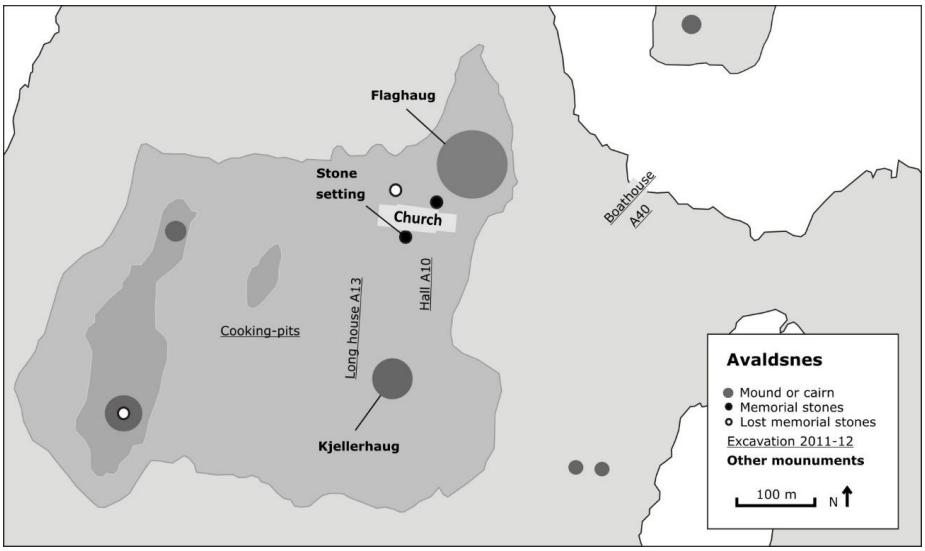


Fig. 7.18. Map of the central part of the farm Avaldsnes, with important monuments depicted and the location of excavated features dated to 200-550 AD indicated. Modified after Reiersen (2009), with information about the excavated features after Skre (2011, 2012), Bauer and Østmo (2013).

Fig. 7.19. The medieval church and the 18th century vicarage at Avaldsnes, situated between the large mounds Flaghaug (left) and Kjellerhaug (right). The memorial stone next to the church was part of a stone setting of three stones, standing where the church was built. The settlement excavations show that a possible hall building and at least one longhouse were situated near the stone setting, between the two large mounds. The vicarage thus gives an impression of how the settlement might have looked like. Aquarel in Lorange's sketchbook (undated), after a drawing by J.C.Dahl from 1811.

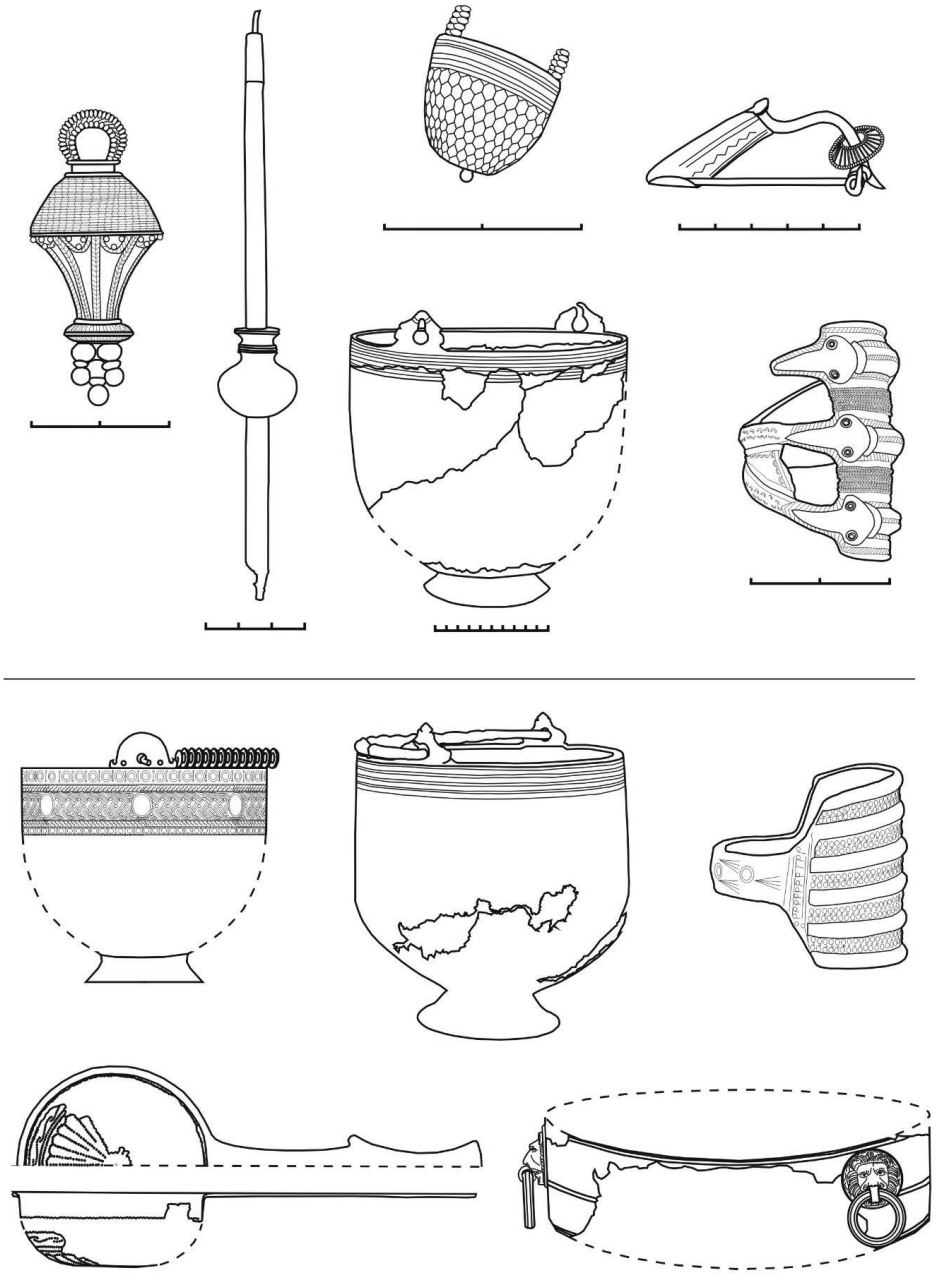


Fig. 7.20. Objects from the Roman period material complex at Avaldsnes. The lower part depict some of the objects from Flaghaug, with the upper part depicting other finds from the area. The Flaghaug objects are depicted in the same scale as similar categories above. Based on Reiersen, 2010.

The status weapon grave from Flaghaug might be associated with a boathouse (A40) found in a natural harbour east of the mound (Bauer & Østmo, 2013:pp.156–167). In its first phase in the late Roman period (cal AD 260–300, 320–380), it measured *c*. 20 x 8 metres. In a second phase in the Migration period (cal AD 440–490, 510–520, 530–550), its width was reduced to 5 metres. It is possible that this could reflect some downsizing of activities related to the harbour. A Migration period weapon grave is, however, found at Avaldsnes, with another one at Vikshåland and two lost graves from Reheia. A hill fort is also found at Visnes, near Vikshåland. It might possibly be related to a control of the alternative seaway passing the west side of the island.

At Visnes, the sacral place name Helganes occurs, and altogether five Helga names are known in the area. The most important is a farm named after a hilltop, Helgaberg. Kristoffersen (pers. com.) has highlighted that the names Helganes and Helgaberg are situated at each end of a characteristic rock formation in the northern part of the island. The sacral name Skeie is also found immediately to the west of Avaldsnes. At Avaldsnes, several excavated cooking-pit fields provide evidence of large social gatherings (Bauer & Østmo, 2013, Fig. 8.4a). The cooking-pit cluster in trench 3012 dates from the Roman and Migration periods. Another particularly large cooking pit was found isolated in trench 1939 (cal AD 230–260, 300–310). It might be related in time to the Flaghaug burials (Bauer & Østmo, 2013:p.64). The excavators suggested that this large cooking pit (3 x 2 m) provided enough food for one large gathering event.

In the Migration period, a lower number of status graves, a possible moving of the hall from a visible point to a withdrawn position in the longhouse and the downscaling of the boathouse indicate dramatic changes at Avaldsnes at some point before 400 AD. Although the large longhouse was still used, the importance of the farm was reduced. In the Migration period, the status finds are instead found spread out at farms north of Avaldsnes. Lost bronze vessels, probably from the Migration period, are known from Reheia, Gunnarshaug and Norheim, and glass beakers come from graves at Feøy and Gard, the latter including a bracteate. This shift to the farms further north also continued in the following centuries (Reiersen, 2009). A possible cause of the assumed collapse at Avaldsnes might be that its control of the seagoing traffic was weakened.

7.6 Bjoafjord

The locality of Bjoafjord includes the settlement districts on both sides of Bjoafjord, on the present border between the counties of Hordaland and Rogaland. On the southern side of the fjord, the Bjoa area forms the northern part of a peninsula. Mountains in the south demarcate a relatively fertile agricultural landscape. North of the fjord, the island of Borgundøy, with the adjacent Fjelbergøy, form the other area in this locality. The islands of Halsnøy and Stord to the north and west are considered separate centres. Borgundøy and Fjelbergøy offer more limited agricultural resources than Bjoa, with the Borgundnuten mountain dominating the largest island. While Bjoa had access to outfield resources, such resources were limited in Borgundøy. The map (Fig. 7.21) is based on Fett (1965b, 1971), Indrelid (1991), Reiersen (2011a, 2012a).

Perhaps the most important feature at this locality is the strategic placement with regard to the different seaways meeting in the Sunnhordland basin, explaining the occurrence of centres in an area with somewhat limited resources. Like Avaldsnes a Karmsund, the milieus around the Sunnhordland basin had an opportunity either to plunder the passing traffic or to demand a toll for safe passage (Solberg, 2000:p.108). While some seaways avoided Karmsund (Fig. 7.16), most of these alternative seaways passed the Sunnhordland basin. The importance of the alternative seaways from Nord-Rogaland to Sunnhordland is confirmed by the distribution of Iron Age finds (Elvestad, 2005). The two certain large longhouses in this region are found at Ferkingstad, along the alternative route west of Karmøy, and at Våråå situated along an alternative route passing Grindafjord towards the portage of Haraldseid in Skjold, in an area with four large mounds. The main portage went past Sandeid, where several large mounds and a grave with two serpent head finger rings of type B40 of silver are found.

At the locality of Bjoafjord, elite milieus can be identified on each side of the fjord: *the Bjoa milieu* and *the Borgundøy milieu*. Interestingly, the two milieus seem to reflect a chronological shift, with two status graves at Bjoa from C1b to C2, and status graves at Borgundøy from D1 to D2a. Both milieus utilised the strategic placement along Bjoafjord, but their contact networks might have differed. While Bjoa was probably closely linked to the centre at Avaldsnes, Borgundøy might have been an ally of Etne.

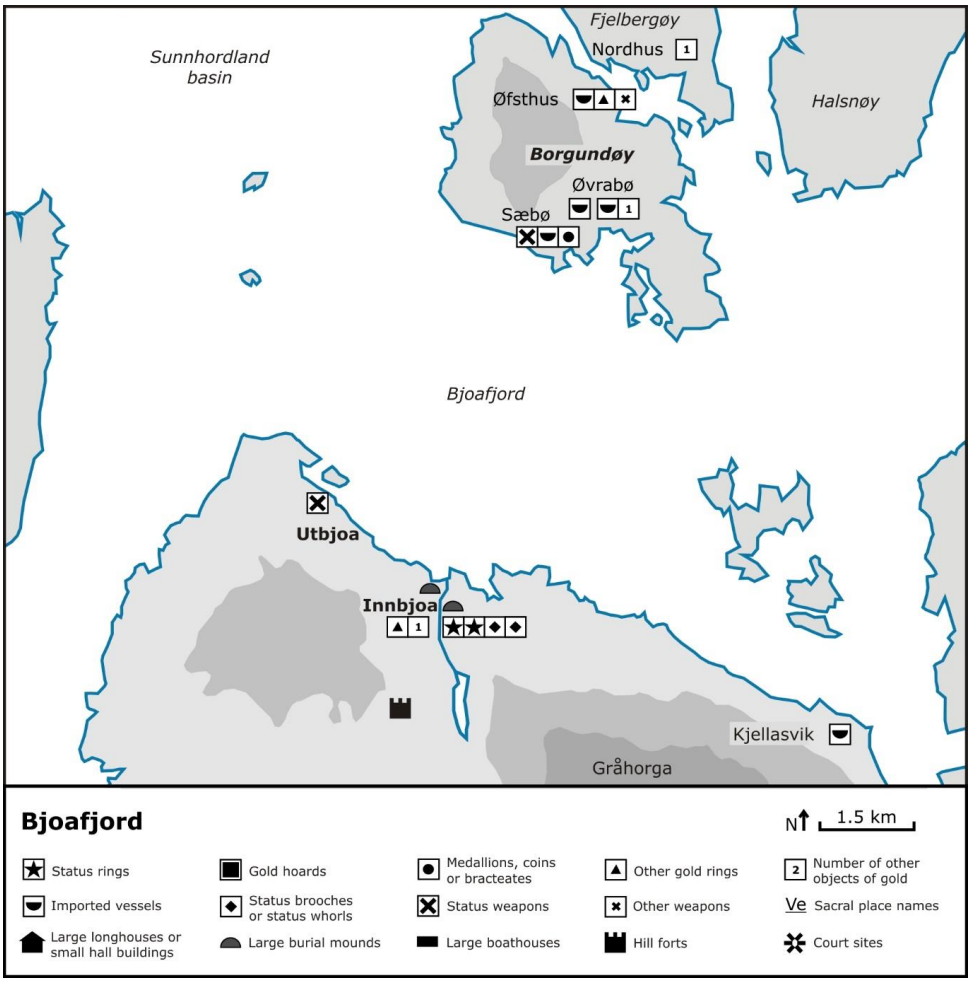


Fig. 7.21. Map of the centre locality Bjoafjord with defined elite milieus at Bjoa and in Borgundøy. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:6.

In the Bjoa milieu, the farm Innbjoa formed a core, confirmed by several finds of gold and by two large burial mounds. The plundered grave at Innbjoa from C1b included a serpent head arm ring of type B, a B18 gold finger ring, an R166 bronze whorl, an R171 silver whorl, an A VII 205 silver fibula and sherds of two handled pots (Fig. 7.22).[11] The grave testifies to several ritual practices characteristic of centres in the region. The early stone chamber at Innbjoa (3.7 x 1.6 m) has a contemporary parallel in the Flaghaug grave with very similar dimensions (3.6 x 1.2 m); a double 'man's length'. The graves at Avaldsnes and Innbjoa both have finger rings of type B18, although the large, unburnt ring at Innbjoa might be interpreted as a male object deposited in a female cremation grave. The arm ring from Innbjoa is preserved only as a tiny fragment, the remains of a ring treated in the same manner as the finger ring from Nes in Rosendal. At Hove, an even closer parallel is found. Here, a female cremation in a Hemmoor bucket included a destroyed serpent head arm ring and an unburnt B18 finger ring. The handled pots might be related to other early pots in the region, in Avaldsnes found with an R171 bronze whorl (at Gard) and a rosette fibula (at Våråå).

The Borgundøy milieu had its core at Sæbø and Øvrabø. The establishment of this milieu in D1 is documented mainly by the Loptshaugen grave at Sæbø (Fig. 7.23, Kristoffersen, 2000, F66; Hauken, 2005). In the mound, there were two find clusters. The main cluster was found in connection with a small stone chamber containing a cremation grave in a Westland cauldron, including a solidus with attached loop. Another concentration was found underneath a long stone slab (*c*. 1.8 m long), resting on smaller stones. Here, burnt fragments of silver fittings decorated in animal style were found. The fittings belonged to a status sword, contemporary with the chamber grave, and probably related to the burial. It was, however, considered such an important object that it deserved a special treatment. At Øvrabø, another grave contained the only glass beaker in Hordaland of the type with applied threads (Straume, 1987, map 10). A second grave at Øvrabø included a melted glass beaker and a gold curency ring.

[11] The chamber had no slabs on top, and a clay pipe indicated that the grave was plundered (Reiersen, 2012a). A farmer conducted the initial digging in 1882, before again filling the chamber with soil, with a proper re-excavation by Ross in 1883. One possible sherd of a bucket-shaped pot, documented by Shetelig, might stem from a secondary grave, mixed with the primary grave during either the plundering or the farmer's digging. As the sherd has been lost, its type cannot be identified.

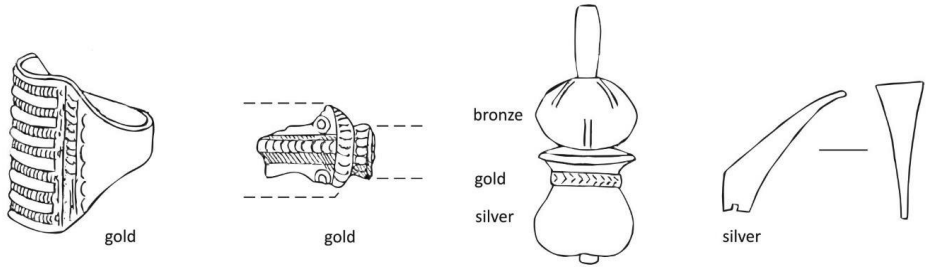


Fig. 7.22. A selection of the preserved objects in the Innbjoa grave. The finger ring Beckmann 18 is similar to those from Avaldsnes and Hove and the golds fragment is of a serpent head arm ring, probably type B. Two spindle whorls, one of bronze type R166 and the other a type R171 whorl of silver with gold string. Fragment of silver fibula Almgren VII 205. Translated after figures in Reiersen, 2012a, based on sketches drawn by Shetelig.

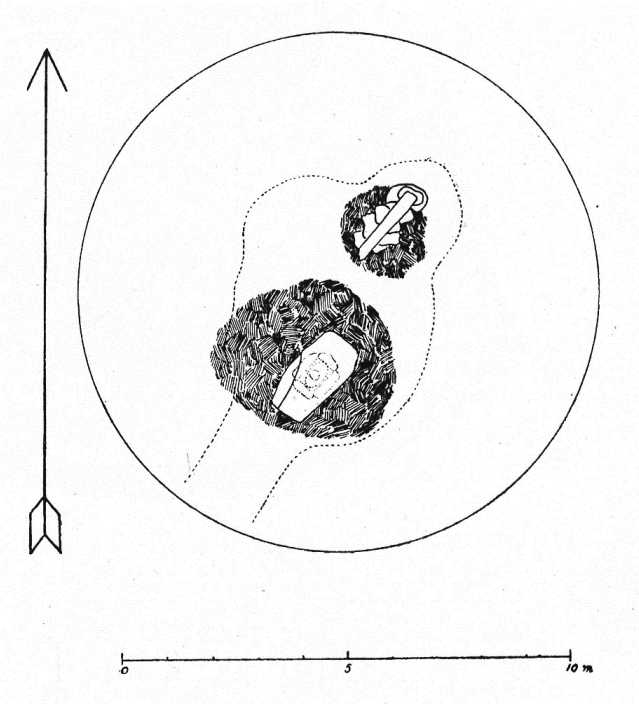


Fig. 7.23. Plan drawing of the Loptshaugen grave (Shetelig, 1912a, Fig. 192 based on a drawing by Ross). The main concentration around the chamber in the south contained most of the objects. The minor concentration under a long slab in the north included parts of a status sword with silver fittings.

The military function was probably essential for the two Bjoafjord milieus. The status weapon grave from Utbjoa (C1b–C2) had a sword, a spear and a shield with boss of bronze. Protected by Bjoanes, the western tip of the peninsula, Utbjoa offered a protected harbour, strategically close to the Sunnhordland basin. From Utbjoa, four boathouses are known, all *c*. 14 metres long. Three of these might have been longer, but none has been ^{14}C-dated. It should, however, be noted that the other farms in this region with status weapons in C1b–C2 – Avaldsnes, Gjerde and Sjo – all have large boathouses. The wide ^{14}C dating of the Steinslandsåta fort (cal AD 247–539, 232–596) makes it hard to judge whether it was used mainly during the peak of the Bjoa milieu, or if it worked later as a defensive structure against a threat, e.g. from Borgundøy.

At Borgundøy, the view from Borgundnuten provided an overview of the Sunnhordland basin. The Sæbø status weapon burial (D1) was situated near a harbour in Sæbøvika, with boathouses at Sæbø and Gjerde (Grimm, 2006). Although the boathouse at Sæbø is medieval, this was probably also a strategic harbour in the Migration period. Another weapon burial from Øvsthus (D2a) was situated along the Fjelberg strait, on the north side of the island. It was mixed with a female burial (perhaps D1), and these included a repaired, facet-cut glass beaker, a gold finger ring and a silver ornament (Kristoffersen, 2000, F67). The weapon burial might be linked to a female burial (D2a) with relief clasps at Nordhus (Kristoffersen, 2000, F68). A grave with bronze cauldron at Kjellasvik might also be related to the Borgundøy milieu. Situated at a point where four fjords meet, this might have been an important outpost.

The burials from Innbjoa and Utbjoa both suggest that the elite milieu at Bjoa was associated with a late Roman period alliance network between centres in the region, with Avaldsnes as the dominant centre. It seems likely that the milieu was established with support from Avaldsnes, in order to control traffic avoiding the Karmsund strait. Consequently, when the Avaldsnes milieu diminished, the milieu at Bjoa collapsed. The niche at Bjoafjord was later filled by the Borgundøy milieu. Lacking direct access to resources, it perhaps relied on allies to uphold its role. The gold mounting from Etne indicates that this was the major Migration period centre in the region, and Borgundøy might possibly have been subordinate to Etne (cf. Kristoffersen, 2000:p.204).

7.6.1 Comparing Avaldsnes and Bjoafjord

The localities of Avaldsnes and Bjoafjord show several important similarities, related partly to the fact that the two centres probably cooperated in the late Roman period. Both the Karmsund strait at Avaldsnes and the Sunnhordland basin were strategic points in the traffic between north and south. Two graves from Innbjoa and Utbjoa provide parallels to the richest grave in Flaghaug with a large burial chamber, a B18 finger ring, a sword and a silver shield boss. The ritual destruction of serpent head rings is a practice documented also in the Rosendal and Hove centres. The Avaldsnes milieu diminished in the Migration period, with status burials in this phase found scattered in the northern part of Karmsund. Likewise, there is no evidence of the Bjoa milieu in the Migration period. Instead, a milieu was established at Borgundøy. The simultaneous rise and fall of the Avaldsnes and Bjoa milieus suggests an intimate link between these. Solberg has suggested that the fall in activity at a major centre might lead to a fall also at centres lower in the hierarchy (Solberg, 2000:p.123). While the close ties to the Avaldsnes milieu might well explain why the milieu at Bjoa was short-lived, it is possible that the subsequent Borgundøy milieu was associated with the Etne centre.

At Avaldsnes, the recent excavations provide some insight into the settlement at the core of this elite milieu. The small hall building, with few parallels in the study area, might be related to the contact between Avaldsnes and southern Scandinavian milieus. The partially excavated longhouse, which might have been longer than 40 metres, fits better with the pattern in the study area. An important parallel to the longhouse is the partially excavated longhouse from Gjerde in Etne, likewise about 8 metres wide. It is interesting that the closest parallel to the Avaldsnes sword was found at Gjerde. At both Avaldsnes and Bjoafjord, the strategic control of passing traffic was the key priority. Therefore, the military organisation was probably important. At Avaldsnes, a contemporary boathouse is found at a harbour situated near the status weapon grave. This relation is somewhat less clear for the weapon graves at Utbjoa and Sæbø. However, both farms have favourable harbours with undated or medieval boathouses. While ritual functions were identified at Avaldsnes through sacral place names and cooking-pit fields, there is little evidence of ritual functions at the Bjoafjord locality.

7.7 Hove

The locality of Hove is situated in northern Jæren in the inner part of Gandsfjord, south of centres at Hafrsfjord and Riska. In historical times, the land road southwards to Jæren went from Gandsfjord. As the route was probably used in the early Iron Age, Hove had a strategic placement. The fjord and the valley of Ganddal, south of the fjord, separate a lowland, lower Jæren, in the west from a hillier landscape, higher Jæren, in the east. The settlement district offered favourable agricultural conditions, an easy access to a good harbour and to the seaway through Gandsfjord, and it was situated rather close to large areas with outfield resources further east. The distribution map for Hove (Fig. 7.24) is based mainly on Myhre (1972b, 1997a) and Reiersen (2011a).

The status finds point out *the Hove milieu* as the core of the centre, with the farms Hove, Sørbø, Lunde, Høyland and Austrått. The majority of the large mounds, however, are found slightly peripherally to the milieu, in the south-western part of the area. Høyland has a cluster of military features, including four weapon graves and the hill fort at Ragnhildsnuten, providing an overview of the whole district. Among these burials, a ring sword from D2b was found at the associated farm Helgaland. Because the locality of Hove has got the densest cluster of sacral place names in the study area, a major focus is given here to its possible role as a centre with ritual functions.

A female grave from Hove testifies to the establishment of the Hove milieu in C1b–C2. Although there are some issues with its find context (Myhre, 1997a), the objects probably reflect a single female grave from a cairn excavated at Hove in 1843 (Reiersen, 2013a). The grave included a destroyed serpent head arm ring type C in two large fragments, a finger ring of type B18, an E58 Hemmoor bucket and two spindle whorls of soapstone. If the whorls are placed on top of each other, they resemble an R171 whorl. Type R171 whorls were mainly cast in metal, and the shape might have been hard to reproduce using one piece of stone. This might therefore be an R171 whorl in two pieces. The find spot of the grave is perhaps indicated by the negative prints of a large cairn, west of the recently excavated settlement at Hove (Bjørdal 2014, p. 17). A gold fragment found south of the cairn probably stems from the arm ring found in 1843 (Fig. 7.27). The female grave might thus be linked to contemporary settlement.

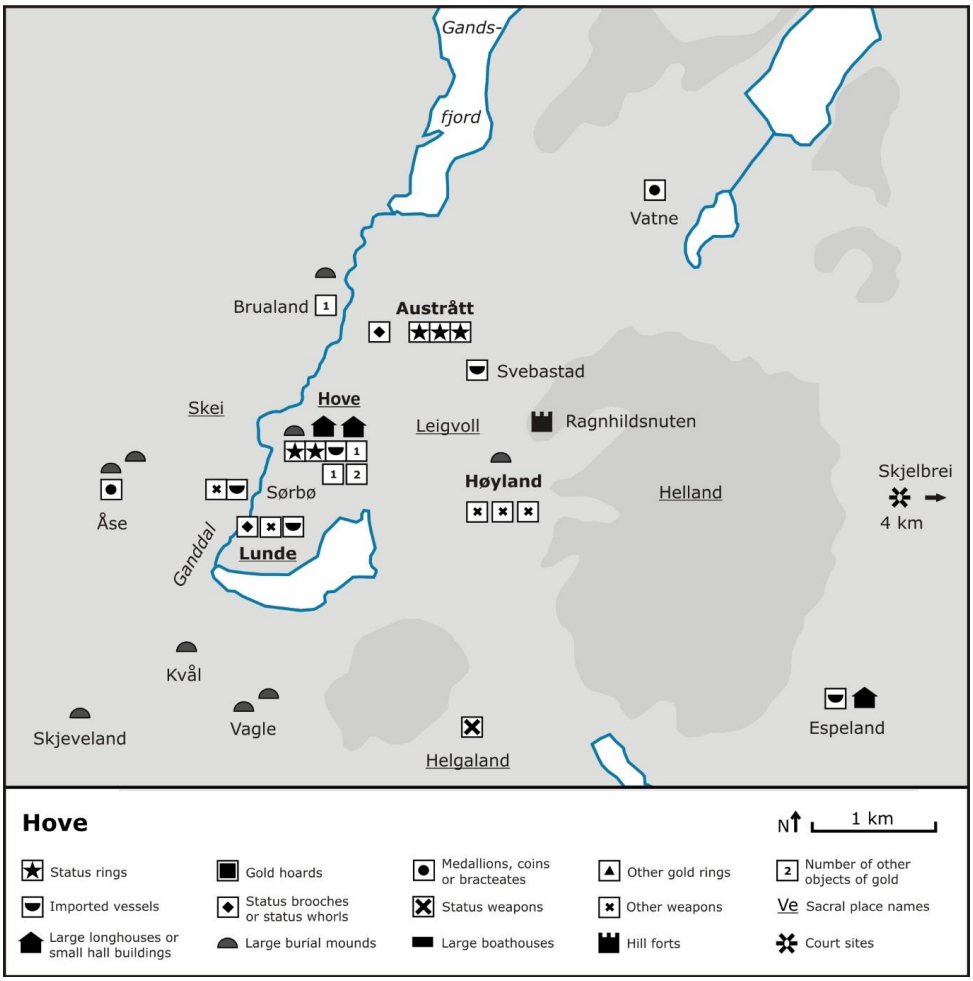


Fig. 7.24. Map of the centre locality Hove with a defined elite milieu at Hove. Although the direction to the court site at Skjelbrei is indicated on the map, the site was probably rather related to the adjacent Fjellbygda district. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:7.

The excavations at Hove in 2011–12 is the most extensive investigation so far carried out at the core of a centre in the study area. It provides us with a detailed view of an elite settlement in the late Roman and Migration periods, and the excavation results from Hove might thus have implications also for other localities. As the excavation report is yet to be published, the preliminary interpretation is based on an article supplied with information from the excavator (Bjørdal, 2014, pers.com.). The focus is on the settlement in Field 3, although burials were found south-west of this settlement.

In the early Roman period, the settlement was characterised by a number of small longhouses in the northern part of the field, 10–20 metres long (Bjørdal, 2014, Fig. 5). The pattern was broken up in the south by initial dates from a large house (house 22), 45 metres long, and by two adjacent longhouses (23 and 25), both *c*. 30 metres long. In the late Roman period, the settlement around house 22 continued (Fig. 7.25). The settlement in the northern part of the field, however, was considerably restructured. Another large longhouse (house 17), at least 60 metres long, was built. It was attached to a small, quadratic side building (house 59). In connection with houses 17 and 59, a large rectangular yard was dug out, linked to a road leading in a south-eastern direction. Several buildings north of house 17 might perhaps be connected with the large house. In the Migration period, the large house 22, the large house 17 with house 59, and a parallel house 9 were still in use. Houses 22 and 17 might have been two units, separated by the yard. In the early sixth century, activity in the houses was reduced, and the yard was refilled. The size of the farm decreased in the Merovingian period, with a smaller version of house 17 being the largest building, still attached to house 59.

A characteristic feature of the locality at Hove is the high number of sacral place names, offering a special opportunity to examine ritual central functions. It is tempting to discuss the settlement material in the light of the *hov* name, denoting a ‘cult house’. While the longhouse 22 shows that power was situated at Hove in the transition to the late Roman period, the complex around the largest house 17 was an even clearer statement of Hove’s position from the late Roman period. The stone stairs leading out to the lower-lying yard show that the large house was intimately linked to the yard. Interestingly, the small house 59 was attached to the longhouse 17 for many centuries.

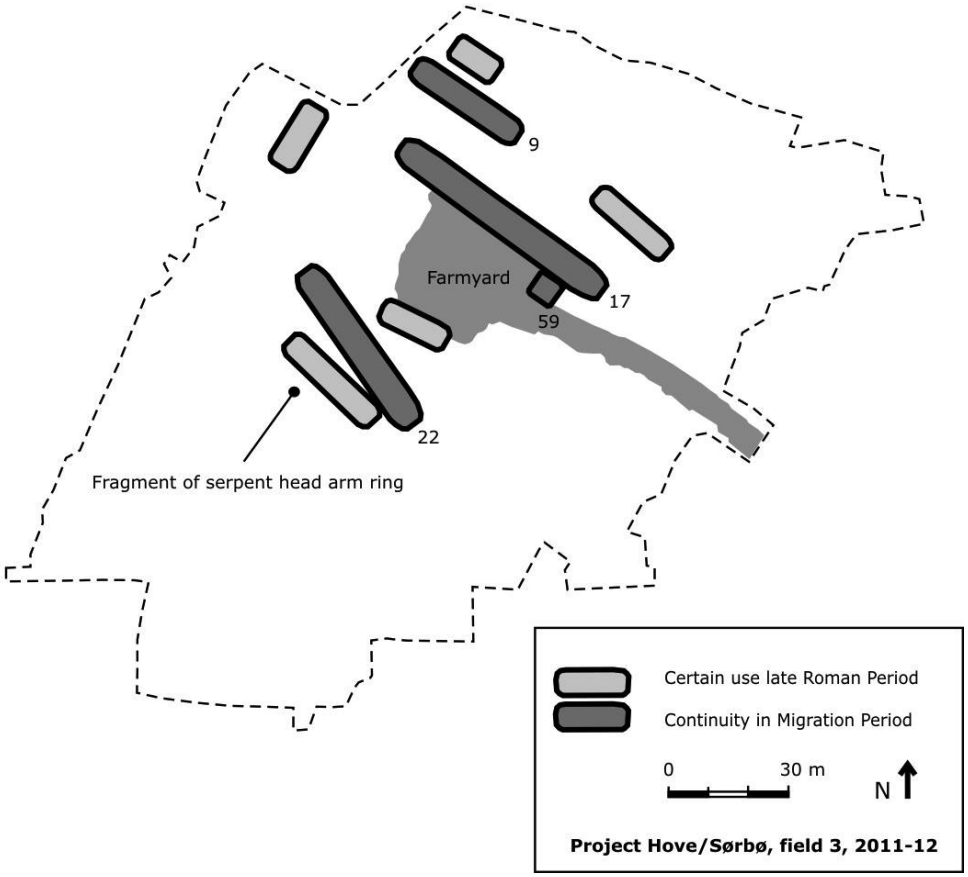


Fig. 7.25. Field 3 at Hove, excavated in 2011-12. Houses ^{14}C-dated to the late Roman period and the Migration period are depicted. An area without structures, northwest of house 22, was interpreted as a negative print of a large cairn. The rich female grave with serpent head arm ring might stem from this cairn, possibly as a secondary grave. The approximate find-spot for the gold fragment stemming from the arm ring in the female grave is indicated. Redrawn after Bjørdal, 2014 with minor simplifications. The uncertain later Roman period house '38' and the early Roman period house 25 with possible continuity to the late Roman period have been omitted here.

Its long period of use resembles that of the cult house in Uppåkra (Larsson, 2007). Furthermore, the cluster of quern stones related to house 17 parallels querns found in a longhouse near the cult house in Uppåkra, in longhouses near the cult site in Helgö, and at Ullandhaug, with its sacral place name and seeral large triangular monuments (Prøsch-Danielsen & Soltvedt, 2011:pp.150–1; Zachrisson, 2014:pp.183–4). With this in mind, the large house 17, the small house 59 and the unusual farmyard might reflect a complex of cult houses. The most outstanding find in house 17 was found in the area where houses 17 and 59 meet, stressing the special nature of the smallest house. The late Roman period berloque-shaped amber bead is a rare object type (Fig. 7.26). In Zealand, the object type is closely related to the elite milieus with serpent head rings (Lund Hansen & Boye, 2013). As the type is linked to the object complex in the rich female grave, the woman might be related to house 59. If this house was a small *hov*, her presence might indicate the role as ritual leader (*hov-gydja*) (cf. Sundqvist, 2014).

Among the other sacral place names are Skei and Leigvoll, suggesting areas for horse races and games just west and east of Hove, with a Helgaland name further south-east, as well as Lunde, denoting a sacred grove (Vasshus, 2011; Særheim, 2014, pp:60–62). Two female graves might furthermore be linked to areas with possible ritual activity. A relief brooch was found at Lunde, with a triangular monument at the adjacent farm at Sørbø (Kuhnle, 2013). The bronze spindle whorl from Austrått, on the other hand, coincides with an area in Svebastad/Austrått with two special bog offerings. These offerings included a very large Westland cauldron (C3) and three riveted neck rings of gilded silver, two of which had gold inlays (D) (Myhre, 1997a; Martens, 2011). It is possible that the three women buried at Hove, Lunde and Austrått were ritual leaders.

While the Hove milieu seems to have been intimately linked to its ritual functions, the serpent head arm ring from Hove and the weapons at Sørbø, Lunde and Høyland indicate that the milieu also had political and military leaders. The large longhouses at Hove, the neck ring hoard from Austrått and the D2b ring sword from Helgaland testify to the fact that the milieu established in the late Roman period continued into the Migration period. The C-bracteates from Åse and Vatne, and the distribution of large burial mounds, might indicate a wider number of followers linked to this milieu.

Fig. 7.26. Berloque-shaped amber bead from Hove, found in the area linking the large longhouse 17 with the small house 59. To the author's knowledge, in Norway amber beads of this type are elsewhere known only in a female grave from Kvassheim, Hå, Rogaland. Photo: H. Hollund, AM, UiS.

Fig. 7.27. The serpent head arm ring from Hove, found in 1843, and a small gold fragment found by metal detector survey in 2009. The small fragment is placed in the area where a terminal end has melted off the largest ring half. Its size, gold colour and black traces of burning, and the fact that the gold fragment is melted, makes it highly likely that the small fragment indeed is the melted-off terminal of the serpent head ring. Material studies indicate that the arm ring had first been cut in two before being melted together with a silver object, perhaps a fibula, presumably on the funerary pyre. Finally, the halves were bent forming two closed rings, the smallest fitting into the other. This bending might be secondary, from 1843. Photo by the author.

7.8 Hafrsfjord

The locality of Hafrsfjord is situated at the northern end of the Jæren district, bordering the North Sea in the west. In the other directions, Hafrsfjord is encircled by centres, with Randaberg in the north, Riska in the north-east, Vasshus in the south and Hove in the south-east. While agricultural conditions in the area are quite favourable, there is limited direct access to outfield resources. However, this might not have been a problem as the centre had a strategic placement with regard to the seaways through Gandsfjord in the east and following the North Sea in the west. For the latter route, Hafrsfjord was a point where the traffic could be controlled and a number of boats could meet. The many boathouses illustrate how this strategic placement was a key feature. The map (Fig. 7.28) is based on Myhre (1978, 1981) and Grimm (2006).

From the map, the rich finds seem rather evenly distributed among farms in the area. However, the two farms Joa and Madla, situated at the fjord of Hafrsfjord, should be highlighted as especially important based on special find categories and gold hoards. In fact, Myhre (1978) suggested that the two farms formed the core of two centres. While in the present study, Hafrsfjord is viewed as one locality, the *Joa and Madla milieus* might well have competed for the power in this centre. Based partly on natural borders in the landscape and partly on the distribution of hill forts, it is possible to draw a line across the Hafrsfjord area, separating a north-eastern half associated with Madla from a south-western half associated with Joa. This division follows the inlet of the Hafrsfjord, and goes across the mainland in the east through the (former) Lake Stokkavatn. The four hill forts north of this lake might indicate that it was indeed an important border. At the outlet of the Hafrsfjord, the hill fort at Berget on the Tananger peninsula is mirrored by another hill fort at Risnes near Madla.

As with most centres in the study area, the Hafrsfjord centre was established in the late Roman period. Within the Madla milieu, Roman period gold rings were found at Tjensvoll and Jåttå, with one Westland cauldron from C3 at Hinna. In the large longhouse at Ullandhaug, the hall yielded a sherd from an imported beaker (Fig. 6.3). The three Roman coins so far known from Jæren all come from farms near Madla. While Madla has a high number of early finds, the finds from Joa are more prominent.

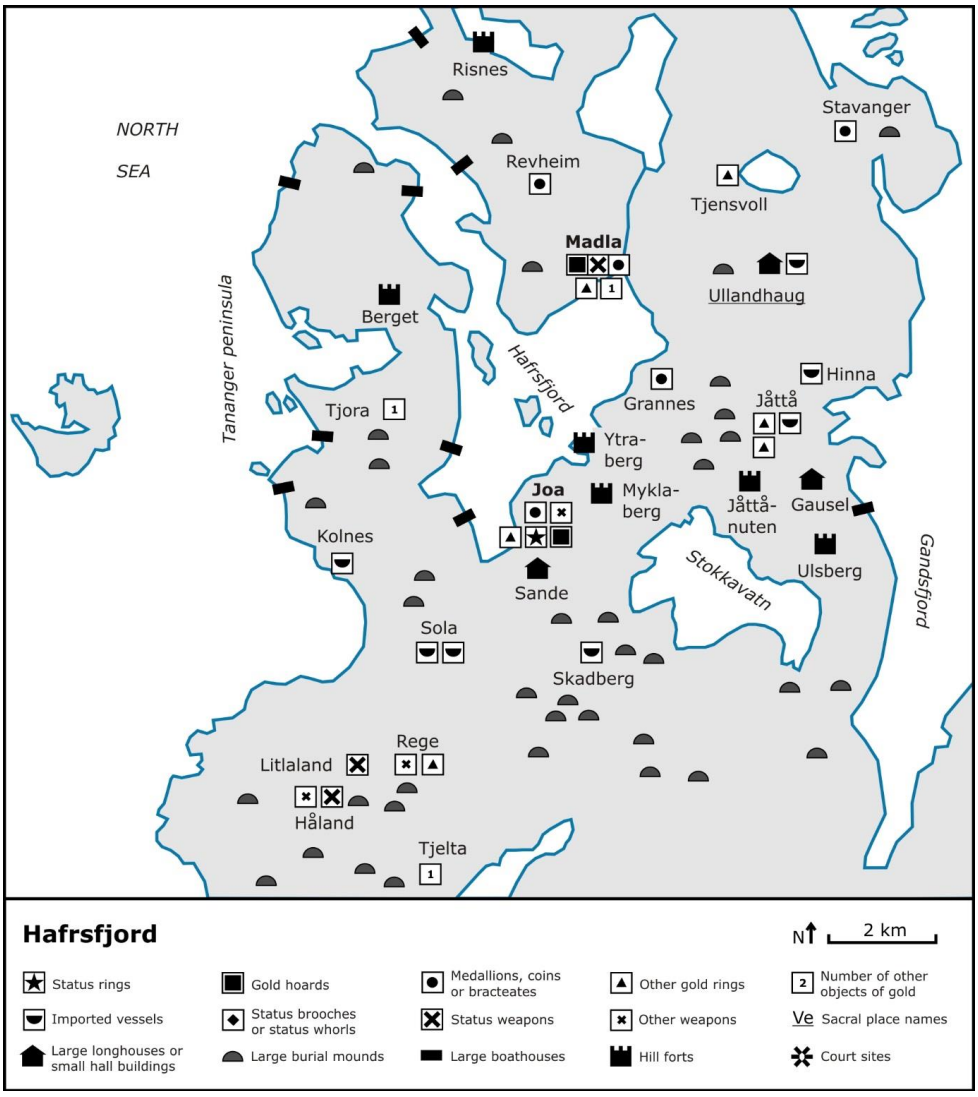


Fig. 7.28. Map of the centre locality Hafrsfjord with defined elite milieus at Madla and Joa. Note that the large Lake Stokkavatn was drained out in the early 20th century and is now the Forus area. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:8.

The key find here is the lost serpent head finger ring found at Joa (C2). From the same farm, another Roman period gold ring is also known. A grave at Litlaland included the only C3 sword with silver chape in the region, indicating a high-ranking officer within the Joa milieu. Another Roman period gold ring was found at the adjacent farm at Rege.

The finds dated broadly between the fourth and sixth centuries show that the Joa milieu had a relatively high number of imported vessels. While the majority were Westland cauldrons, rarer objects like the Skadberg glass horn also reached farms in this milieu. Weapons from the Migration period also cluster in the Joa milieu at the farms Håland and Rege, next to Litlaland,[12] and with a stray find from Joa. One of the Håland burials contained a status sword with a bronze pommel from D2b. In this final phase of the Migration period, the two elite milieus highlighted their power through the deposition of gold hoards at Joa and Madla (Fig. 7.29). While a burial at Joa with an A-bracteate shows that the milieu was powerful, the Madla hoard with 14 A-, C- and D-bracteates and a gold sword mounting suggests that the Madla milieu was controlling the centre in D2b. Two further gold rings from Madla testify to the importance of this farm.

With regard to monuments, the Hafrsfjord area has got many large burial mounds. Although many of these stem from the Bronze Age, some were raised in the early Iron Age, including the status weapon grave at Håland. In the Hafrsfjord centre three large longhouses are known, and all of these have been excavated. The large longhouse at Ullandhaug was situated at a site with rather marginal agricultural resources compared to its neighbouring farm Madla. However, three large triangular monuments and a place name related to the judicial god Ull (Steinsland, 2005:p.245) might indicate a site near Madla with religio-judicial functions for the wider elite milieu. In recent years, two further large buildings have been excavated at Gausel by the Gandsfjord and at Sande, just south of Joa. The concentration of hill forts found near Joa and near Gausel might be interpreted as the local defence of two important settlements in the Hafrsfjord area. As mentioned, the line of hill forts might also be interpreted as a border between the two elite milieus that were competing for power in Hafrsfjord.

[12] The neighbouring farm Ølberg (S3051), as well as Tjora (S2431), also had weapon graves in the early Roman Period. This conforms to the later pattern of weapon graves situated just south of the boathouse cluster on the Tananger peninsula.

Fig. 7.29. The Madla and Joa hoards. On top the Madla hoard, showing only five of the fourteen bracteates. Photos: Terje Tveit, AM, UiS.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Hafrsfjord centre is how the large cluster of boathouses in the Tananger peninsula could best be explained. Myhre (1985) presented the hypothesis that armies from a larger region gathered at the boathouses in Hafrsfjord. In order to test the claim, it seems reasonable to explore the local context of this strategic harbour, while keeping in mind the regional, military context that the many large warships were perhaps a part of. The Tananger peninsula offered harbours both on the west side facing the North Sea and on the more sheltered Hafrsfjord side. The hill fort at Berget, situated at a narrow point on the peninsula, provided a stategic view both to an important bay on the west side and to the narrow fjord inlet on the east side.

As the farms in Tananger have yielded few rich finds, the high maritime activity in the peninsula might be linked to the nearest elite milieus. The serpent head finger ring suggests that the Joa milieu controlled the harbour in C2. If so, allied centres in the same elite network, such as Hove and Avaldsnes, might indirectly have had access to the harbour. The status weapon grave at Litlaland indicates that the military power still resided in the Joa milieu in C3, and that its military power extended beyond the centre. In the Migration period, the Joa and Madla milieus might have competed for dominance. In D2b, the gold sword mounting from the Madla hoard, and the status sword from a grave at Håland, suggest that the Madla milieu now held the upper military leadership, with subordinate officers among others in the Joa milieu. The military power of Madla might now have covered the Jæren region, with subordinate officers in other centres, as is perhaps indicated by the Helgaland ring sword in Hove.

To sum up, the elite milieus at Joa and Madla made use of a range of status objects also seen at southern Scandinavian centres, including a serpent head finger ring, A-bracteates, a gold sword mounting and large gold hoards. Large longhouses are known from the neighbouring farms of both Madla and Joa, as well as in Gausel. Hill forts situated between the latter two areas worked as a local defence and as a border between these competing milieus. The most characteristic feature of the centre is the cluster of boathouses, suggesting that it had an important military function. If the boathouses are seen in the light of status finds from Joa, Litlaland and Madla, the local context also provides an insight into the regional significance of this very strategic harbour.

7.8.1 Comparing Hove and Hafrsfjord

The localities of Hove and Hafrsfjord share many similar features, although there are also important differences. Both centres are situated strategically with regard to the passing north- and south-going traffic, and both have favourable harbours. While it makes sense to define the elites in Hove as belonging to solely one milieu, the elites along Hafrsfjord might be grouped as two competing milieus encircling Joa and Madla. The many sacral place names open up the possibility that the ritual function was the main central function of Hove. Likewise, the dense cluster of boathouses at Hafrsfjord makes it likely that at this centre the military function was the primary one.

In the late Roman period, the serpent head arm ring from Hove and the serpent head finger ring from Joa suggest that the centres were part of the same network as centres further north at Avaldsnes, Bjoafjord and Rosendal. Hove was probably a centre of a higher level than Hafrsfjord, thereby perhaps controlling the activities at Hafrsfjord. Throughout the Migration period, this relationship might have been inverted. In D2b, the ring sword from Helgaland in Hove might reflect an officer subordinate to the military leader whose gold sword mounting was deposited in a large hoard at Madla. The Helgaland grave is linked to a cluster of weapon graves at the farm at Høyland, quite parallel to a similar cluster seen at Litlaland, Håland and Rege in the Joa milieu. The Joa and Madla hoards with half a kilo of gold, and the status weapons from Madla and Håland, testify to the important role Hafrsfjord played in the late Migration period.

At Hove, the excavated large longhouses confirmed the presence of high-status settlement suggested by the serpent head arm ring. The largest longhouse, small house and yard might have been a cult house complex. The large house at Ullandhaug next to Madla might have played a somewhat similar role. Large longhouses at Sande near Joa and at Gausel in the Madla milieu also confirm the close association between status finds and the presence of large longhouses. The boathouses in Hafrsfjord might be associated with the two local elite milieus, and with the regional networks these were engaged in. It is possible that Hafrsfjord was part of a wide serpent head network in C1b–C2, before playing a leading role in networks at Jæren in the phases C3–D2b.

7.9 Erga

The locality of Erga is situated on the southern side of the large Lake Orrevatn. As the middle and southern parts of Jæren have got high numbers of status objects, several centres are found a short distance from Erga. The closest centres are Tinghaug and Re to the north-west, and Nærbø to the south. Situated by the main seaway and just south of the dangerous Reef of Jæren, the locality of Erga had a strategic placement in relation to the maritime traffic. While the locality had good agricultural conditions, it offered little direct access to outfield resources other than fish. The distribution map (Fig. 7.30) is based mainly on Olsen (2003), Bukkemoen (2006) and Grimm (2010).

As this part of Jæren has got a high density of centres, it is hard to delimit each of them. Although the farm at Erga stands out as the core of a centre, it is difficult to demarcate the borders of its closest influence area. North of Orre, the farm Reve has got several rich finds (Grimm, 2010:p.127, no. 3), and it might have been linked either to Erga or to the centre at Vasshus, north of Orrevatn. South of the farm Erga, the two Salte farms are situated relatively close to Nærbø and might thus alternatively be associated with this centre. In this thesis, Salte has been included as a part of the Erga locality, with Reve omitted. Although *the Erga milieu* probably played a dominant role, it is possible to identify a minor southern cluster belonging to *the Salte milieu*.

In the late Roman period, rich graves are found at the farms Erga, Salte and Orre, which are also the only farms in the area with several large mounds. While a grave at Orre from C1 had a gold string, two Roman period gold rings are known from Salte. The two most important graves, however, stem from Erga and date to C2. Firstly, a status weapon grave is probably directly linked to the establishment of this locality as a centre of some importance. It contained a large gold finger ring of type B17 with inlaid stones, and parts of a sword with gilded fittings. This grave had been plundered, and it might originally have resembled the richest Flaghaug grave at Avaldsnes. Judging from the status ring type, unparalleled in the region, its carrier might perhaps be interpreted as the leader of another military network than Avaldsnes. A contemporary female grave contained a unique R171 amber spindle whorl and a glass sherd, although the latter might be modern. The Erga milieu thus acquired a strong position in the third century.

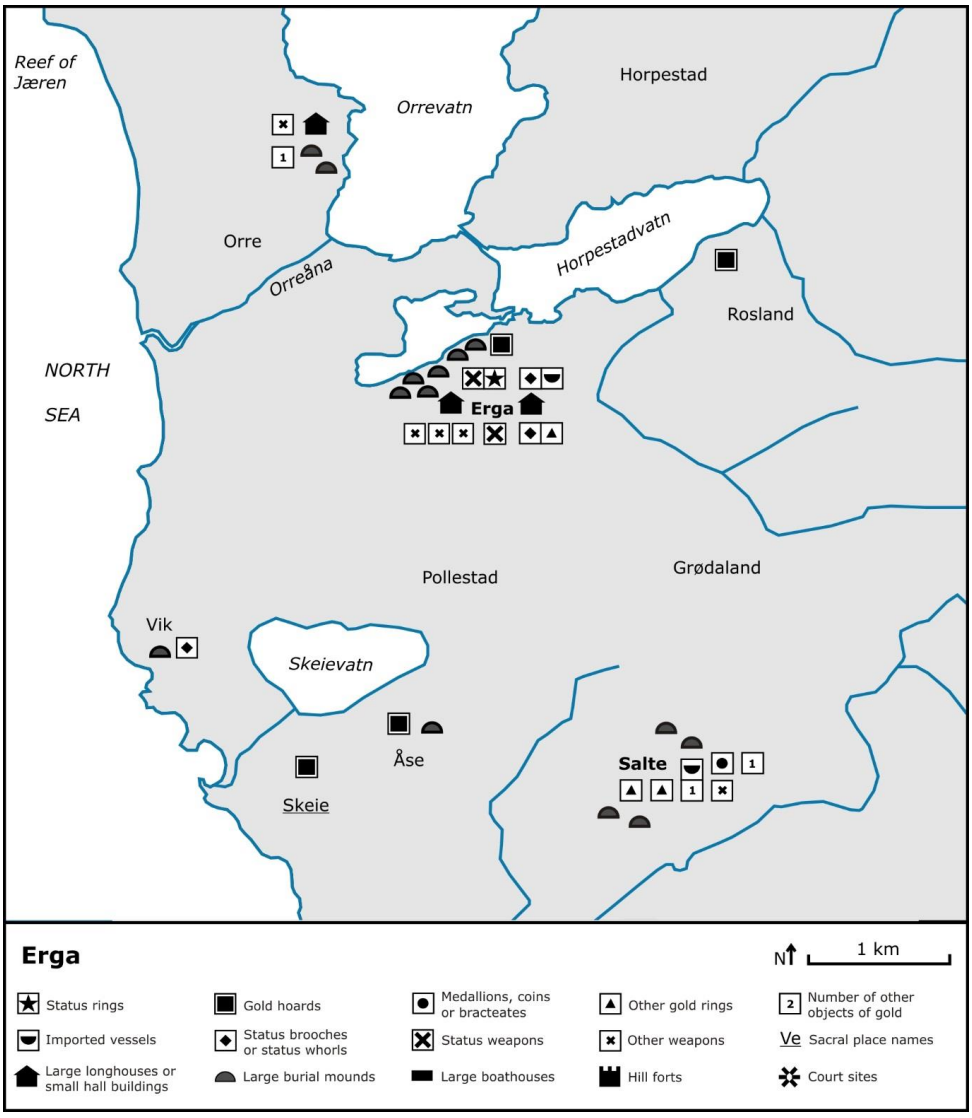


Fig. 7.30. Map of the centre locality Erga with defined elite milieus at Erga and Salte. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:9.

In phase D1, an alliance might perhaps be identified between the Erga milieu and the adjacent centre at Tinghaug. At Erga, a double burial included a female grave with a status brooch and a shield-shaped pendant, both associated with the D1 craft tradition at Tinghaug (Kristoffersen, 2000, F46). This possible alliance between Tinghaug and Erga is interesting as the inland centre Tinghaug might have accessed the North Sea through Orrevatn and the Orreåna river. The Erga milieu might thus have been an important ally (cf. Kristoffersen, 2015), perhaps also linked by military bonds. The double burial included a D2a weapon grave with status sword with gilded silver chape, and a gold ring (Fig 7.31). This grave and three Migration period graves with sword at Erga indicate that the farm still held the military leadership at the centre. In comparison, the farms Orre and Salte have got one weapon grave each, containing only spearheads.

The importance of the Erga milieu is indicated also by the presence of three large longhouses, including two houses at Erga (48 m and 56 m) and one at Orre (60 m), although these have not been excavated (Fig. 7.32). In the Migration period, a large gold hoard was deposited at Erga (172 g), and a minor hoard at the adjacent farm Rosland (55 g). At Salte, one grave with a Westland cauldron and a gold pendant, a grave with an A-bracteate, as well as a grave from Vik with a relief brooch, indicate an elite milieu in D2. To the west of Salte, gold hoards are found at Skeie (71 g) and Åse (14 g). Similarly to Erga and Rosland, these hoards were deposited near a large lake, and the sacral place name Skeie might indicate a ritual site for the Salte milieu. If the weight of the hoards are used as an indication of the dominant Migration period milieu, it might be suggested that the Erga milieu (227 g) was superior to Salte (85 g).

To sum up, the farm at Erga formed a relatively clear core of the centre in both the late Roman and Migration periods. Among the finds from Erga are two large longhouses, two large burial mounds, the grave of two military leaders, a cluster of weapon graves, female graves with status whorls and status brooches, and a large gold hoard. The Erga milieu probably dominated the local area, and might also have been a partner of the centre at Tinghaug. Even so, status finds at Orre, and especially the high number of finds at the minor Salte milieu, indicate that several of the other farms in the area played key roles at this centre, actively engaging in the accumulation of wealth.

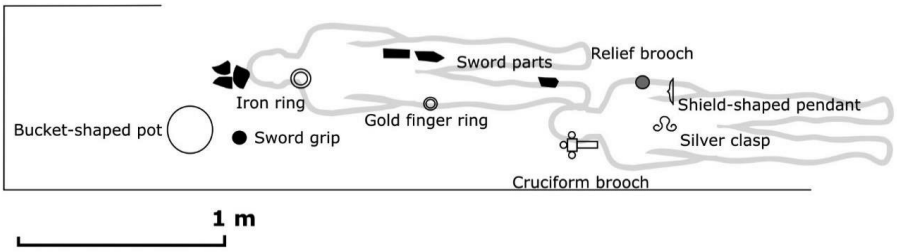


Fig. 7.31. Burial chamber with a double burial in a large long mound at Erga (S7131, modified after Kristoffersen, 2006, Pl. 12). The chamber had been damaged prior to the excavation and therefore lacked a clear delimitation. The approximate positions of the male and female individuals are indicated based mainly on the distribution of a sword and several brooches. The sword had a chape of gilded silver, and the bucket-shaped pot related to the male part of the chamber indicates a D2a date for this status weapon grave. On the contrary, the brooches of the female grave indicate an earlier D1 date. A very close parallel to the chronological situation with an early female burial and a later male burial is seen in Ådnehaugen, Tu (Fig. 7.34).

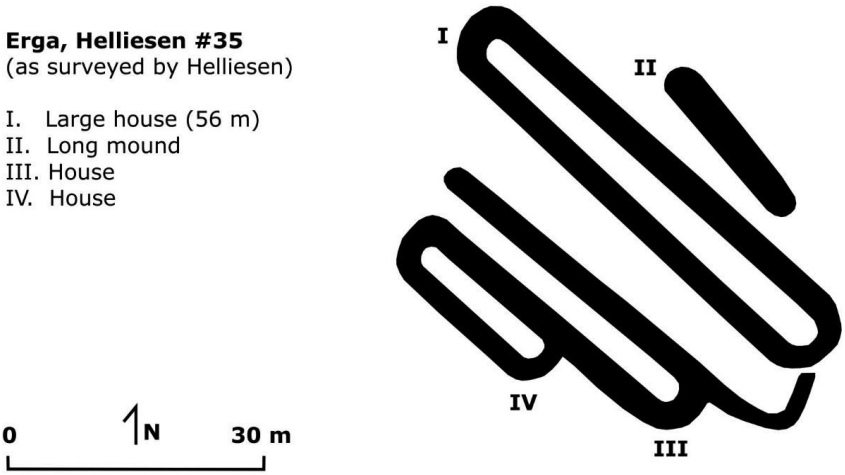


Fig. 7.32. The farmhouse site Helliesen #35 at Erga, with the features I-IV after Helliesen. As the site has never been documented by plan drawings, the sketch was based on a combination of aerial photos from 1937 and 2014.

7.10 Tinghaug

The Tinghaug plateau is found some 7 kilometres inland, north-east of Erga and to the west of Lake Frøylandsvatn. This is a ridge stretching from Tu in the south to Anda in the north, with the elevated peak Tinghaug at Tu being the highest point in lower Jæren (96 masl.) (Magnus, 1975:p.144). In historic times, the main road to Jæren went across the plateau. In addition to this very strategic placement, the area has exceptionally good agricultural conditions. Situated inland, it was also rather close to outfield resources in higher Jæren, east of Frøylandsvatn. The distribution map (Fig. 7.33) is based on Olsen (2003), Bukkemoen (2006), Grimm (2010), Særheim (2014) and Hauken (2014).

Although many of the farms in this area have yielded rich finds, the unquestionable core of the centre was situated in the south near the peak at Tinghaug: *the Hauge-Tu milieu* (Kristoffersen et al., 2014). However, this milieu seems to be confined to the Migration period. On the northern part of the plateu, the farms Anda, Særheim and Laland probably formed an earlier, late Roman period elite milieu: *the Anda milieu*. In addition, the two Braut farms north-west of the plateau have yielded several rich Migration period finds and also probably played an important role at this locality. Although large burial mounds are found at all of these farms, the two largest mounds of Revehushaugen and Krosshaug at Hauge enclosed very rich Migration period graves. The 'chieftains' graves' in the area (Myhre, 1987a; Table 3.1) include graves from Krosshaug, Hauge and Ådnehaugen, Tu, both with bronze and glass vessels and gold items, as well as two graves at Braut with bronze vessels and either glass or gold.

The earliest status finds at Tinghaug are concentrated in the Anda milieu. This includes a gold berlock at Særheim (B2), a Hemmoor bucket at Anda and an Eastland cauldron at Særheim (both C1b–C2). A gold hoard (170 g) found at Anda might indicate that this was the core of the elite milieu, although the hoard might also date to the Migration period. In the study area, gold berlocks and Hemmoor buckets are elsewhere only known from the centres at Avaldsnes and Hove (Reiersen, 2011a). Here, the E58 Hemmoor bucket seems of particular interest, as in Norway this bucket type was favoured only by certain elites situated in Rogaland. This particular distribution makes it possible that the Anda milieu was an ally of the two other mentioned centres.

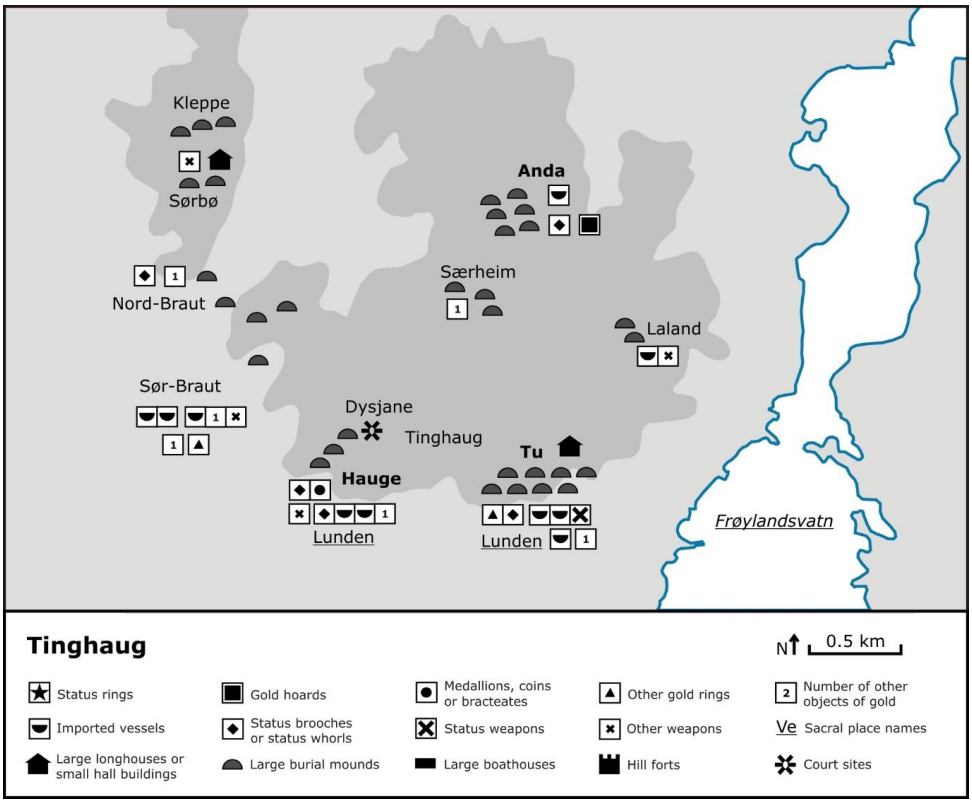


Fig. 7.33. Map of the centre locality Tinghaug with defined elite milieus at Anda and the farms Hauge and Tu. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:10.

The only late Roman period status find in the southern part of the Tinghaug plateu is the C1b–C2 silver fibula found between house walls 6 and 7 at the court site of Dysjane at Hauge. Hauken (2014:pp.144–5) has argued that the ceramics from the associated house walls 6 and 7 and 2 and 3, excavated by Nicolaysen, might be dated specifically to the early and late Roman period. The objects from the central mound, and from the house walls 4, 5 and 11, excavated by Bendixen, can only be broadly dated to the late Roman and Migration periods. The general view, however, is that the Dysjane court site might be dated to the Roman period. If this is correct, the site predates the graves of the strong elite milieu at Hauge-Tu. As the milieu at Anda was active in this phase, the silver fibula deposited in the assumed 'leader house' might perhaps be related to this milieu. Though the site of the court site seems to be 'central', it might originally have been built on a rather 'neutral' place, some distance from the associated milieu.

When the Hauge-Tu milieu was later established in this area, traditions associated with the court site might have been utilised when building their power base. The most important D1 grave is Krosshaug, a mound of *c.* 30 metres in diameter, built a short distance from Dysjane on a highly visible point at the edge of the Tinghaug plateau. Apart from the imported glass and bronze vessels, the female grave included splendid relief brooches of gilded silver, other decorated objects and a weaving batten (Magnus, 2014). The craft style and the presence of weaving battens characterise a group of three rich female graves from Hauge-Tu, including also graves from Ådnehaugen and Revehushaugen (Table 5.11). The decorated objects from Krosshaug have their closest local parallels in female graves from Ådnehaugen, from Anda and from Erga. In addition to a splendid relief brooch, the rich D2b female grave from Revehushaugen contained A- and C-bracteates. Similar brooches of the so-called 'Rogaland group' are found at the neighbouring farm at Nord-Braut, and at other centres such as Lye, Nærbø and Hove. In addition, a stamp-identical A-bracteate is found at Hafrsfjord. Thus, the craft traditions at Tinghaug show contacts between farms at the centre, and influenes towards bordering centres. It is notable that the only weaving battens in Rogaland stem from the three graves at Tinghaug. Sundqvist (2014) has related the weaving battens, splendid brooches and gold bracteates to female ritual leaders at Hauge-Tu.

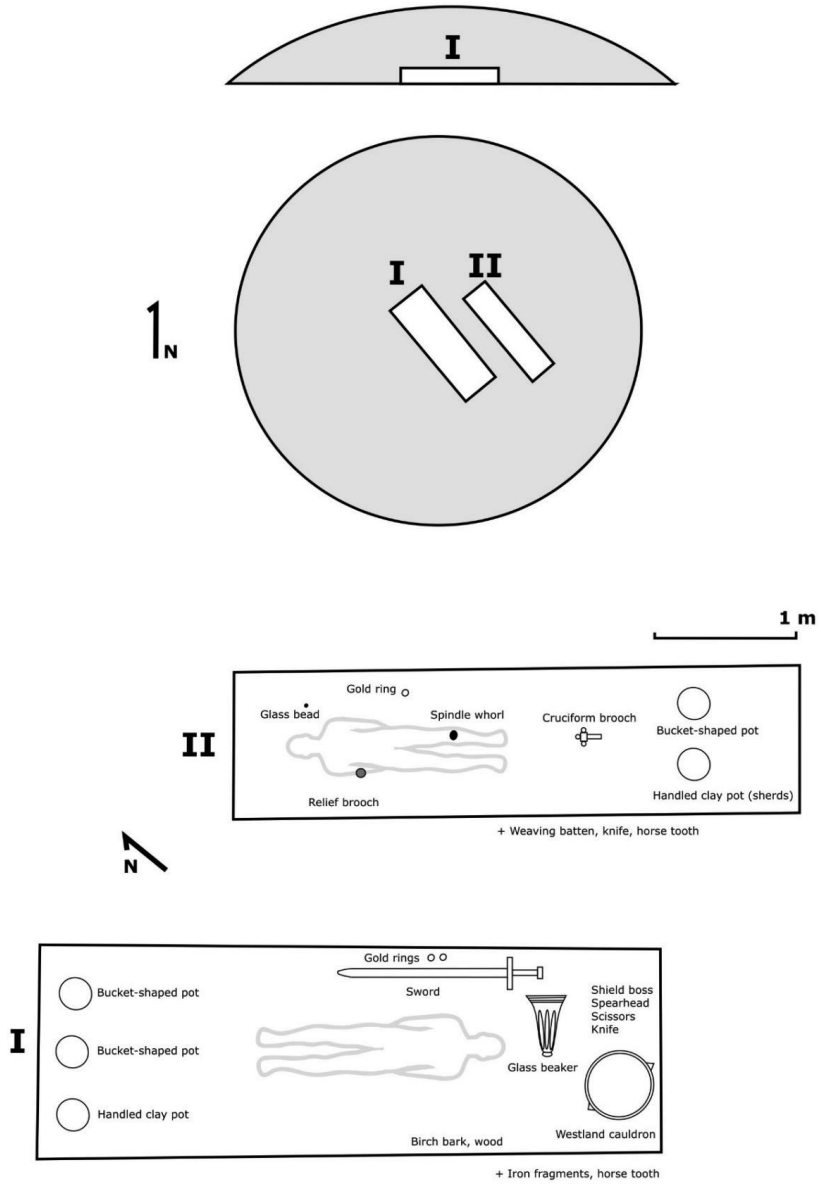


Fig. 7.34. The male (I) and female (II) graves in the mound Ådnehaugen at Tu. The burial mound and chamber I after Helliesen (sketch from 1882), with the chamber II depicted based on a sketch in the letter accompanying the finds (unearthed 1901). Although the male grave is situated centrally in the mound, the female grave seems to be the earliest of the two. This might be due to secondary additions to the mound in relation to the burial of the male individual. The female grave has previously never been depicted, and the letter with details for objects in this grave is found in top.arch., KHM, UiO.

The suggestion that Hauge-Tu was associated with ritual functions might be further investigated through sacral place names and monuments. According to Særheim (2014), the farms at Hauge and Tu are both associated with Lunden names, possibly denoting sacred groves. The Lake Frøylandsvatn carries a Freya name, originating from a farm north of the lake. Another Vanir god is related to Hauge-Tu through local traditions associated with Njord (*Njåre*), documented in the nineteenth century (Særheim, 2014:pp.54–5). A phallus stone is found at Tu, and triangular monuments at Dysjane and Særheim (Lillehammer, 2014, Fig. 10). Finally, early in the subsequent Merovingian period, 16 gold-foil figures with a fertility motif were deposited near Lunden at Tu. Though the evidence is limited, it is possible that Hauge-Tu was associated with a fertility cults and Vanir gods. In addition, Tinghaug ('thing mound') at Tu might be interpreted as a thing site established by this Migration period milieu.

Two of the three mentioned female graves are also associated with male weapon graves. Of particular interest is the fifth century male grave (D1–D2a) in Ådnehaugen, with glass and bronze vessels (Fig. 7.34; Hauken 2014:p.150). According to Bøe (1926:p.38), the two gold rings found near the sword might be part of the sword gear. If this is the case, it indicates a military leader of the highest rank. Another D1 weapon grave from Sørbø had a full weapon set, and a Migration period spearhead was also found at Laland. In D2b, a grave from Sør-Braut had a full weapon set, a gold ring and a Westland cauldron. It is therefore possible that the military leadership at the centre had shifted to Braut in D2b. Although the preserved weapon set is limited, the D2b male grave in the large Revehushaugen might represent his subordinate at Hauge-Tu.

Summing up, the Tinghaug centre seems to have had a wide network of contacts in both the late Roman and Migration periods. In C1b–C2, the Anda milieu might have been associated with Avaldsnes and Hove, and the subsequent Hauge-Tu milieu probably interacted with all the other centre localities at Jæren examined in this study. It is possible that the early Anda milieu controlled the Dysjane court site. In the Migration period, the elite milieu at Hauge-Tu probably moved the thing site to the hill at Tinghaug. This elite milieu had a cluster of ritual leaders, a possible military leader, and it probably formed the main origin of the regional goldsmith traditions in Jæren.

7.10.1 Comparing Erga and Tinghaug

When comparing the centres at Erga and Tinghaug, their relatively even number of status objects in the late Roman period might indicate rather equal relations between the Erga and Anda milieus at this time. In the Migration period, however, it seems evident that the Hauge-Tu milieu achieved a quite dominant position. From this period, Hauge, Tu and the Braut farms have yielded four imported glass vessels and four imported bronze vessels, whereas Erga and Salte have one imported vessel each.

The C1b–C2 objects related to the Anda milieu are limited to two graves with one imported vessel each. However, in the study area, only Avaldsnes has more than one imported vessel from the third century, stemming from three different graves. If the Anda milieu was associated with the military leader at Erga, this part of Jæren might have been a powerful ally or rival to the serpent head network. While the military leader at Erga made use of another ring type as his 'insignia', the E58 Hemmoor bucket from Anda and the amber R171 whorl from Erga are of types specific to the Avaldsnes material complex, indicating contact and shared traditions in elite material culture. While the court site at Dysjane was perhaps associated with the Anda milieu, in the Migration period the thing site might have been moved slightly to 'Tinghaug' at Tu.

When the Hauge-Tu milieu gained importance, the older Anda and Erga milieus seem to have been among their earliest allies. In Jæren, the female grave at Erga is the only one outside Tinghaug with brooches similar to those in Krosshaug. The two weapon graves with imported vessels and gold rings in Ådnehaugen, Tu and at Sør-Braut are strong indications of a military leadership at Hauge-Tu in the Migration period. At Erga, one status weapon grave and a cluster of weapon graves suggest that the Erga milieu had the military power at this centre, probably as a subordinate to the Hauge-Tu milieu. The strong Hauge-Tu milieu had a wide contact net. The distribution of status brooches similar to that in Revehushaugen indicates an influence from the Hauge-Tu milieu in bordering centres. The stamp-identical A-bracteates in Revehushaugen and in the Madla hoard with a gold sword mounting also suggest close relations between elite milieus in the two major Migration period centres at Tinghaug and Hafrsfjord.

7.11 Nærbø

The locality of Nærbø is situated on the North Sea coast a short distance south of Erga, and along the outlet of the Hååna river south-west of Re, Tinghaug and Lye. To the south of Nærbø, there were centres at Varhaug and Vigrestad. The Nærbø area has got very favourable agricultural soil, and the position on the coast and along a major river was strategic with regard to resources that were transported from the inland or past the coast. The cluster of large longhouses, large burial mounds and rich grave finds supports an interpretation of Nærbø as a major centre in the southern part of Jæren. The map (Fig. 7.35) is based on Møllerop (1957), Grimm (2010) and Myhre (2013).

The parish name Nærbø was constructed from the names of the parishes Njærheim and Bø when these were combined in 1832. In a recent work, Myhre (2013) viewed the area as one centre, Njærheim/Bø. However, in his first map of centres in Jæren (Myhre, 1978, Fig. 19), Njærheim, Rimestad and Bø were defined as separate entities.[13] However, Myhre later noted (2007) that the farms in the lower part of the Hååna river around Njærheim and Rimestad seem to be closely connected. They are here viewed as one *Njærheim milieu*. Likewise, the farm at Bø south-west of Njærheim and south of Hååna probably formed the core of another, larger settlement district, which was the closest influence area of the *Bø milieu* (cf. Møllerop, 1957).

Interestingly, sacral place names are found at the core of both elite milieus (Særheim, 2014:pp.57–59). Both Njærheim and Nærland have Njord names, and at Bø an abandoned farm is named Ullaland (of Ull). According to Særheim (2014:p.58), a close association between Njord and Ull names has been identified in parts of Sweden and this might indicate that the two gods were interrelated. It is interesting that Njærheim and Ullaland are both among the farms with large longhouses. The presence of ritual sites in the area is further indicated by a runic inscription found in a grave near the court site at Klauhauane. This inscription mentions a sacral site, 've'.

[13] Based on the presence of gold hoards and chieftains' graves, Myhre (1978, Fig. 19) drew a large circle around Bø and smaller circles around Njærheim and Rimestad. If the signatures on his map are compared to his later list of chieftains' graves (Myhre, 1984/85, cf. Table 3.1), Rimestad should actually have had a large circle, and the two others small circles (cf. catalogue for B 2132 and Bøe 1926, no. 144). This observation is, however, of minor importance.

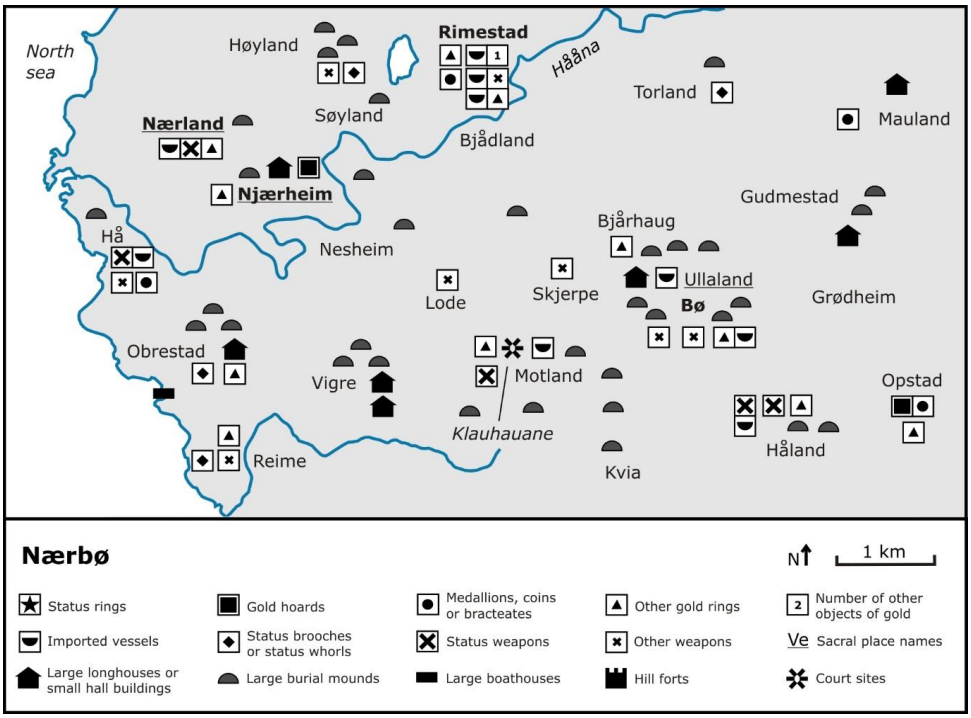


Fig. 7.35. Map of the centre locality Nærbø with defined elite milieus at Njærheim and Bø. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:11.

Because of the large number of large mounds and farm structures, the Nærbø area has been a case study in several settlement studies (e.g. Møllerop, 1957; Rønneseth, 2001). In Norway, the concentration of seven documented large longhouses is paralleled only by the Varhaug centre, immediately to the south. Similarly, the mapped area has a dense cluster of large burial mounds that is paralleled only at the Tinghaug centre. The majority of these large mounds and large houses are situated in the Bø area. Although only one large boathouse is known from the area, the Obrestad boathouse is one of two known boathouses in Norway with a length reaching 40 metres (Grimm, 2006).

The earliest status finds in the area are found around the lower part of Hååna river, most notably a C1b burnt weapon grave from Hå with an Eastland cauldron. The sword had a bronze knob, and it is interpreted as a status 2 grave, perhaps subordinate to the military leader at Erga in the north (Table 5.12). The Hå grave seems to be part of a general build-up of wealth in the whole area in the late Roman period. Bronze spindle whorls are found at the farms Obrestad and Høyland and simple Roman period gold rings are found at Rimestad, Obrestad, Reime, Håland, Opstad, and at the court site Klauhauane (Andersson, 1993a). Somewhat more elaborate ring types are found at the central farms at Bø, Nærland and Njærheim, although the latter stem from a D1 grave.

The mentioned finger ring from Bø was found in a C3 ‘chieftains’ grave’ with a Westland cauldron, perhaps expressing the power of this central farm in this phase. At the neighbouring farm Håland, there are two C3 status weapon graves with bronze fittings (Fig. 7.36), the latest grave also including a glass beaker. These two might be linked to the Bø milieu. Regionally they were perhaps subordinates of a military leader at Hafrsfjord. A medallion imitation from Mauland, north-west of Bø, might possibly be interpreted as an alliance gift from Bø. The court site at Klauhauane, 1 kilometre south-west of Bø, was probably also associated with the closest elite milieu. The vast majority of clay pot sherds point towards major use in the Roman period, although early bucket-shaped pots might date to the transition to the Migration period (Grimm, 2010). The gold ring found in the ‘leader house’ might be related to the elite milieu and their control of the court site. It is notable that when in the Migration period the power balance seems to have shifted to the Njærheim milieu, the court site went out of use.

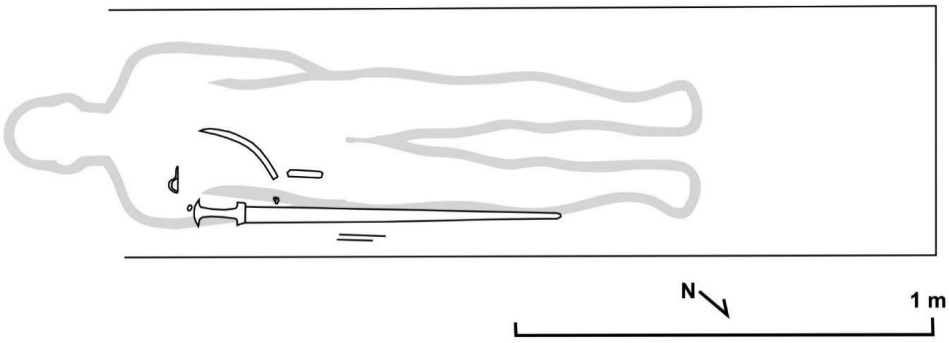


Fig. 7.36. The weapon burial Håland I. Modified after de Lange, 1921,Fig.7.

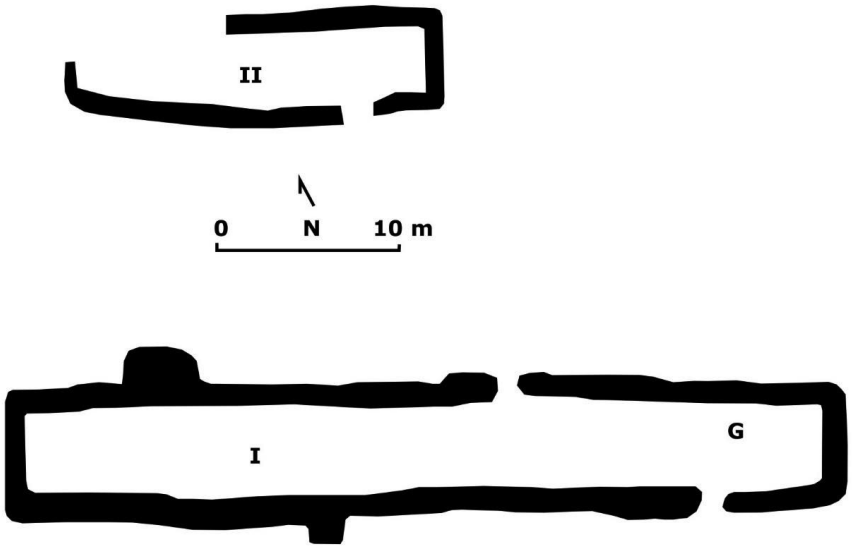


Fig. 7.37. Simplified plan of the large longhouse (house I) at Ullaland, Bø and the associated smaller house (house II). The glass beaker sherd is indicated with a G. Modified after Petersen, 1933.

In the transition to the Migration period, the Njærheim milieu seems to have gathered more importance, and there are two chieftains' graves from Nærland (C3–D1) and Rimestad (D2) as well as a gold hoard (61.5 g) from Njærheim. The Nærland grave has traits from both C3 and D1, and it is hence dated to early in phase D1. An intriguing possibility is that the two glass beakers from Nærland and Rimestad are of a type that might have been locally produced (Straume, 1987:p.63). The Rimestad glass had a gilded silver band decorated in Style I with similarities to a gold band from Vestly in the Lye centre. These status objects indicate that the Njærheim milieu had a similar high level of goldsmith craft to the nearby centres Tinghaug and Lye. At Njærheim, a large longhouse was situated next to a possible 'thing mound' (Fig. 7.38), perhaps indicating that a thing site at one point was established alongside this elite settlement.

Although the Njærheim milieu had a prominent position in the Migration period, the Bø milieu probably maintained some power. A glass sherd was found in the Migration period longhouse at Ullaland in Bø (Fig. 7.37) and other large houses were probably also in use. As Ull is associated with judicial functions (Steinsland, 2005:p.245), it is possible that the thing site was moved to Bø in the Migration period. At Motland, near the site where the old thing site had previously been, there are two richer graves: one with a Westland cauldron (D-phases) and one weapon grave with bronze fittings (D2a). Other finds include a relief brooch from Torland and A-bracteates at Opstad and Hå.

In sum, the Nærbø centre is remarkable in several ways, with a high density of large longhouses, large mounds, and a high number of gold rings and imported vessels. There is some chronological tendency of shift of power between the Bø and Njærheim milieus, but this trend is rather unclear. The initial status finds are distributed across the area and the assumed height of the Bø milieu in C3 is overlapped by the rise of the Njærheim milieu in the transition to the Migration period. Although the Njærheim milieu then gained importance, the Bø milieu upheld much of their power base. It is possible that the unclear borders between the two milieus should be interpreted as a rather friendly coexistence of these milieus. The opposite possibility is that the rather wide use of explicit expressions of power such as large houses, mounds and splendid objects in this particular area could indicate a high level of stress and competition.

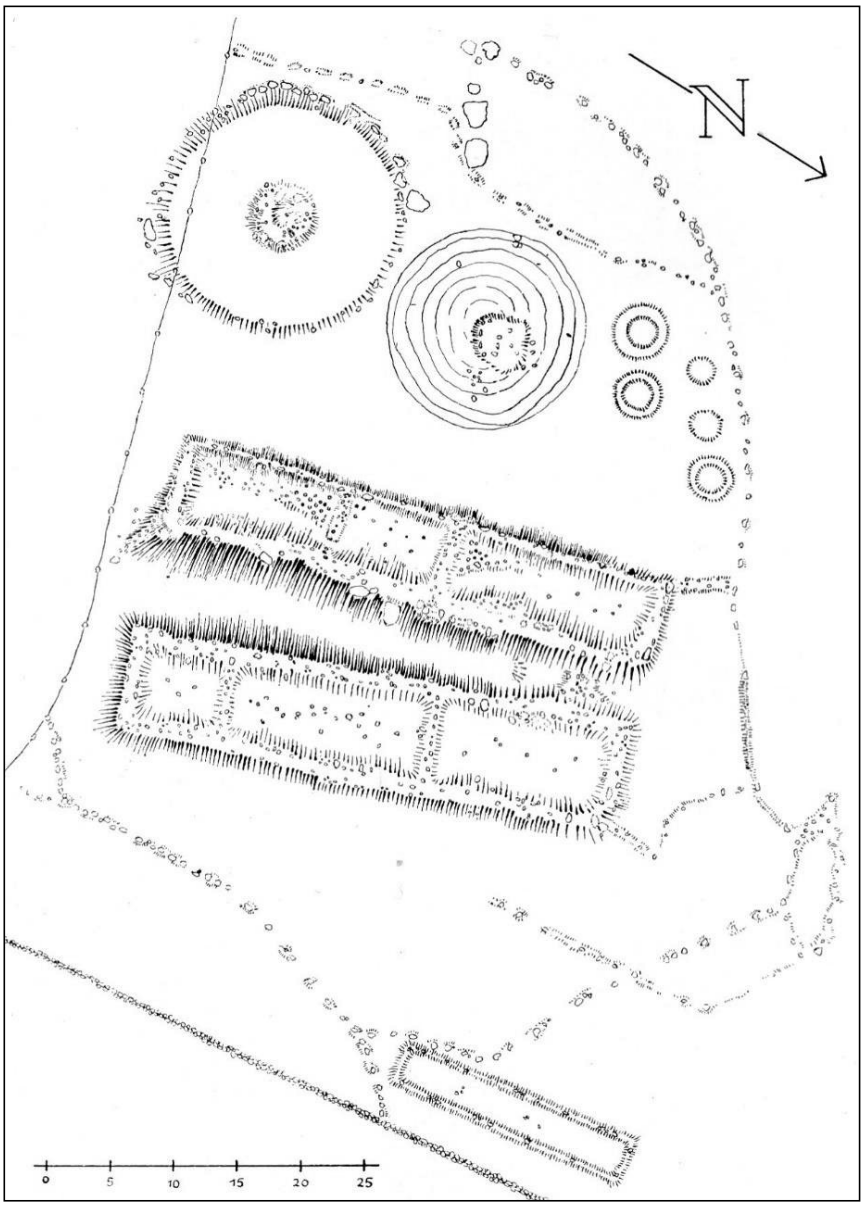


Fig. 7.38. A farm and mound complex at Njærheim with longhouses (the largest 43 meters long) and burial mounds (the largest 19 metres in diameter). The largest mound in the left corner is flat on top and it has been described as a 'thing mound' (Sprockhoff, 1945:p.63). At the same spot, a local tradition associated with 'Njåre' (Njord) has been documented in the 19th century (Rønneseth, 2001). As was mentioned above, a similar 'Njåre' tradition existed also at Tinghaug (Særheim, 2014). After Sprockhoff, 1945:p.42 (see also Rønneseth, 2001, Figs. 6-8).

7.12 Lye

The 12th and final locality is Lye. It is situated along the upper part of the Hååna river, north-east of Nærbø, with Lake Frøylandsvatn and the centres Tinghaug and Re in the north-west. Although the agricultural conditions in the Lye area are rather favourable, it has a more hilly landscape than Nærbø. The position on the border to higher Jæren is strategic, offering direct access to outfield resources. The distribution map for Lye (Fig. 7.39) is based mainly on Myhre (2007) and Grimm (2010).

From the clusters on the distribution map, it is evident that the core of the centre was situated on the north-western side of Hååna, at the farms at Vestly/Lye and Store/Lille Oma. Two or three chieftains' graves are found at Vestly/Lye and the largest early Iron Age gold hoard in Norway of more than 600 g of gold stems from Store Oma. Based on these special finds, in Myhre's (1978) earliest map of centres in Jæren, Vestly and Oma were depicted as two large overlapping circles. In a later article, the two entities were instead seen as part of the same centre, Lye (Myhre, 2007). The Lye/Vestly and Oma farms are situated very close to each other and it seems reasonable to assume that these were parts of the same elite milieu. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that power did shift between these farms over time. It is, however, not possible to verify this hypothesis, as only one of the many status finds from Oma is preserved and datable.

The sacral place name Lye ('Lygi') is found at the core of the elite milieu. According to Særheim (2014:p.60), it has a similar meaning to the Latin word 'lex', probably denoting a site sacred by law. The name Tingvollen ('thing mound') is related to a flat and large mound at the farm at Lye and might indicate that this was a thing site (Særheim, 2014:p.60). In addition, the neighbouring farm at Løge ('Leikvin') could indicate a plain where games were held on special occasions. Two runic inscriptions from this area might illuminate social and religious sides of society in the Lye area. The inscription from Fosse mentions the sacred word 'alu' ('beer'), underlining the vital role of alcohol in society in general and in the lifestyle of the elites in particular. The inscription on a relief brooch from Eikeland further mentiones Wir and Wiwio, possibly being the titles of both a male and a female ritual leader (Spurkland, 2005).

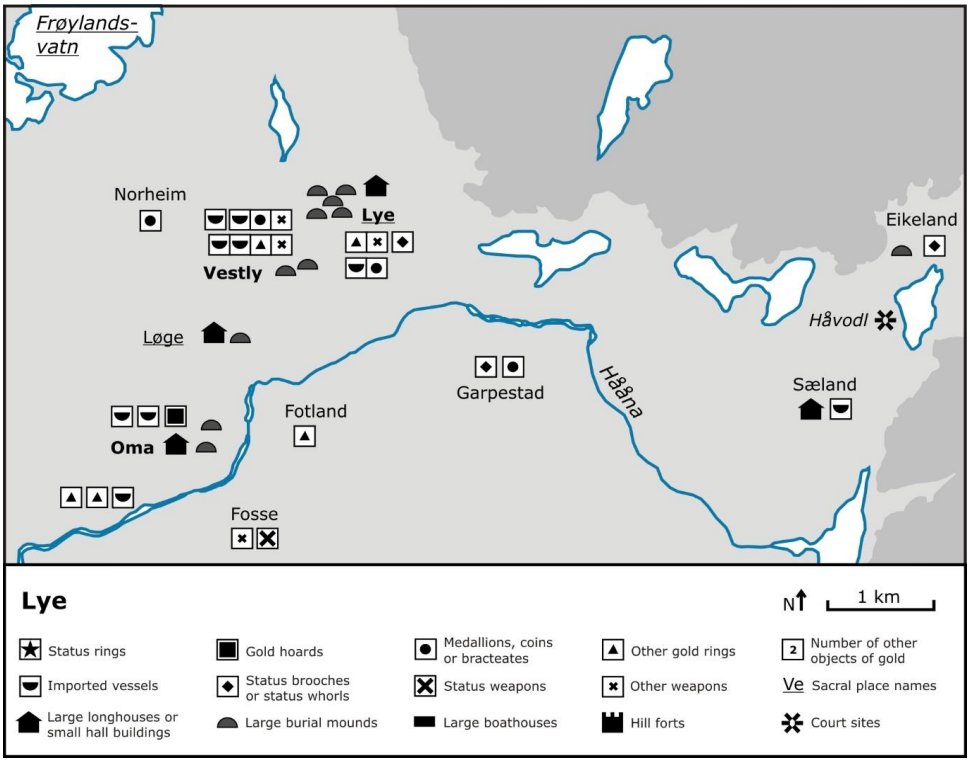


Fig. 7.39. Map of the centre locality Lye with a defined elite milieu at Lye. For a list of the mapped objects, see Appendix IV:12.

The earliest status find in the area is a C1b–C2 wine strainer of bronze from Vestly. Alongside the strainer from Avaldsnes, these are the only known strainers from the study area. Though this is a rare object, a single find is hardly evidence of strong and stabile elites in Lye at this time. The small Håvodl court site at Sæland has been ^{14}C-dated with main phases of usage in the early and late Roman period. Sherds of bucket-shaped pots are probably related to the end of its usage in the transition to the Migration period (Grimm, 2010:pp.150–152). Unlike the court sites Klauhauane and Dysjane, the excavations of Håvodl revealed no status finds. The site is of a relatively small size and it has a peripheral placement. It is possible that this minor site was a very local and quite egalitarian thing site that was not controlled by elites in the Roman period.

The large gold hoard from Oma is the largest early Iron Age hoard known in Norway. It included finger rings of types normally found in C3 graves, and it was probably deposited within the phases C3–D1. As it consists mostly of gold bars, payment rings and a few finger rings, it has the character of a non-sacral hoard (Figs. 7.40, 7.41). It was found in a stone fence related to a farm with a longhouse of *c*. 50 metres (Myhre, 2007:p.18). The ownership and deposition of this very large gold hoard might thus with all probability be directly linked to elites situated at Oma in C3–D1. In addition to the hoard, the large longhouse and two large burial mounds, a total of three gold finger rings and three imported vessels are lost but documented from the two Oma farms.

At Vestly, the first proper ‘chieftains’ grave’ is dated to D1. It included an A-bracteate, a glass beaker and a sword. A similar, but lost grave find is reported from Lye, including a glass beaker and a gold bracteate. Another lost grave at Lye had a gold ring and a sword. The second certain ‘chieftains’ grave’ at Vestly is the ‘goldsmith grave’ from D2b with a gold ring, glass, bronze vessel, weapons and many goldsmith tools (Fig. 7.42). It is the only contemporary grave in Norway with goldsmith tools. Myhre (2007) has suggested that the Vestly grave and the Oma hoard point towards a production centre in Lye. At Vestly and Lye there is a total of seven large burial mounds and a large house, 63 metres long. Similarly to the Hauge-Tu, Bø and Njærheim milieus, it is possible that the Lye milieu in the Migration period moved the thing site from Håvodl to their own sacred thing site, ‘Tingvollen’ at ‘Lygi’.

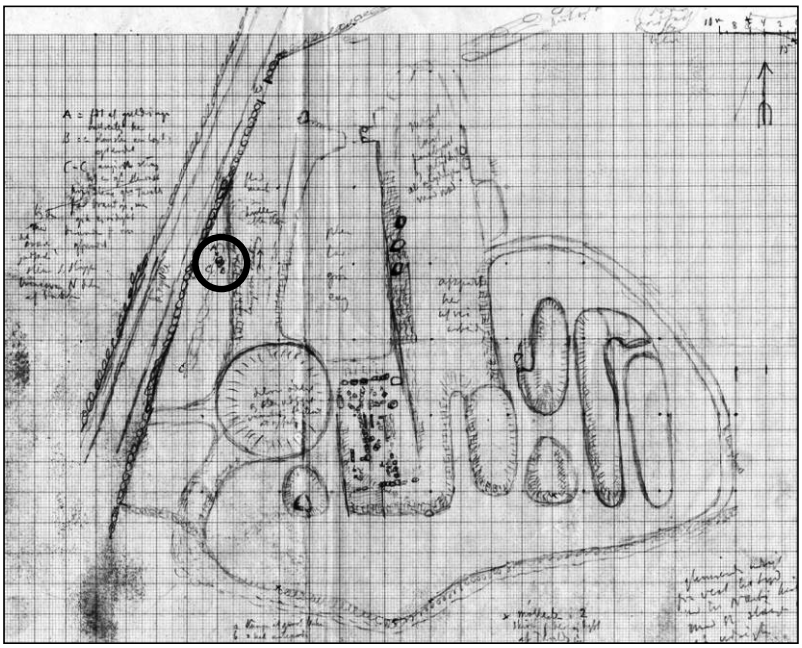


Fig. 7.40. Gustafson's sketch of the find spot (circle) for the Oma hoard in a stone fence related to an early Iron Age farm with a house about 50 metres long (after Myhre, 2007, Fig. 14). Gustafson did a minor excavation here.

Fig. 7.41. The main part of the large Oma hoard (C-numbers). In addition, the hoard included three finger rings and two gold bars. Photo: KHM, UiO.

The two ‘chieftains’ graves’ from Vestly, and the lost grave from Lye with a gold ring, all included swords. This is the largest cluster of weapon graves in the area, and the relation to the graves of the upper stratum indicates that these were military leaders. However, a second cluster of weapon graves is found at Fosse across the Hååna in the south. The most important grave included silver belt fittings of Roman origin, and should thus probably be interpreted as a rather rare D1 status weapon grave. In addition, another Migration period weapon grave is found at Fosse. It is hard to tell whether the Vestly chieftains’ grave or the Fosse status weapon grave should be interpreted as the military leader of the area in D1. They might perhaps reflect different warbands.

If the other finds of status objects in the area are considered, it seems plausible that these more scattered finds are at least partly the result of alliance gifts from the Lye milieu. The D-bracteate found at Vestly’s neighbouring farm at Norheim might with some probability be interpreted as a gift from the local elite leaders. The easternmost status objects are a relief brooch at Eikeland and a lost, imported beaker found at Sæland. The latter farm also had the longhouse at Lyngaland of over 60 metres. As Sæland and Eikeland are found along a main route to the outfield resources in high Jæren, these objects might be the result of alliances, securing control of the outfield resources. In the D2b grave at Garpestad, contacts with other centres are emphasised. The bracteate is stamp-identical to one in Hå at the end of the river Hååna in Nærbø and the ‘Rogaland group’ relief brooch might be linked to the Hauge-Tu milieu.

To sum up, the Lye area has a clear distributional core at Lye/Vestly and the two Oma farms, probably reflecting solely one Lye elite milieu. As a whole, the milieu seems to show some stability, with a C1b–C2 grave at Vestly, a large C3/D1 hoard at Oma, D1 and D2b chieftains’ graves at Vestly, and other wealthy graves at both Lye and Oma. Both the large non-sacral hoard at Oma and the ‘goldsmith grave’ at Vestly indicate the production of status objects in the area. Farms outside this cluster have also yielded some status finds, which might mainly be the result of alliances in order to secure access to the outfield resources. It seems probable that the name ‘Lygi’ and the ‘thing mound’ found there could reflect a chronological replacement of the neutral court site at Håvodl with a Migration period thing site at the core of the Lye milieu.

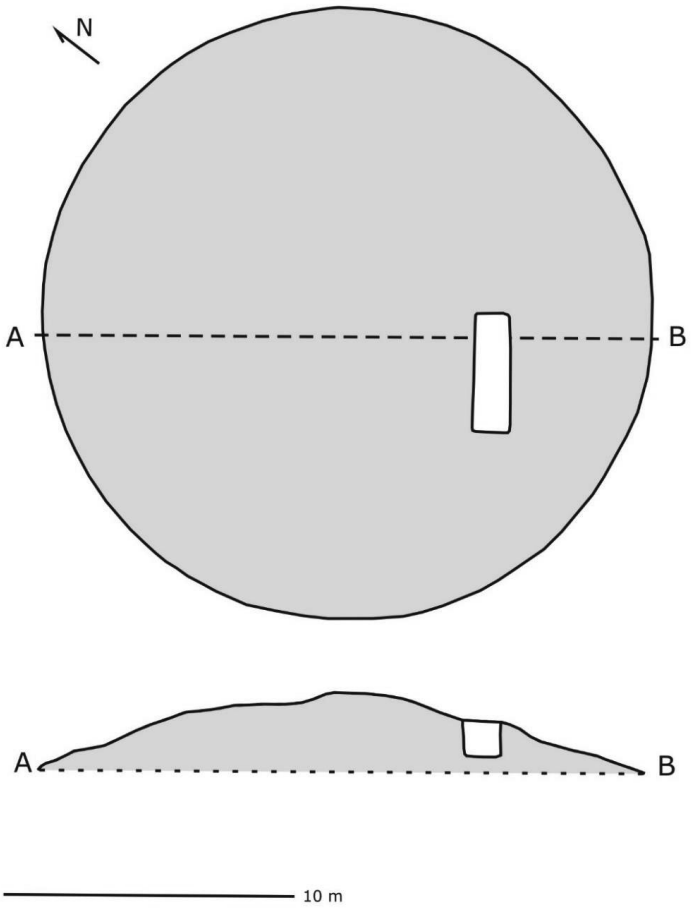


Fig. 7.42. The 'goldsmith burial' at Vestly. Modified after Møllerop, 1960.

7.12.1 Comparing Nærbø and Lye

The localities of Nærbø and Lye are situated close to each other along the Hååna river. As one of these is found on the coast and the other near outfield resources, some cooperation between elites in these areas seems likely (Myhre, 2007, 2013). There are several similarities between the centres. Both have many large longhouses preserved and sacral place names are found at the core of the milieus at Njærheim and Nærland, at Ullaland in Bø and at Lye. The defined elite milieus at Lye and Njærheim in particular, but also at Bø, all consist of several prominent, neighbouring farms.

The earliest status grave in Lye is a C1b–C2 grave with bronze strainer. At the Nærbø centre there seems to be a general build-up of wealth in the late Roman period, with an early C1b status weapon grave at Hå. In C3, the Bø milieu seems to have achieved some dominance with a chieftains' grave and two status weapon graves at Håland. Throughout the D phases, the Lye and Njærheim milieus in the upper and lower part of Hååna achieved a stabile position. At Lye, the Oma hoard and the Vestly goldsmith grave indicate the possibility of local goldsmith craft. Similarly, the possibility of locally produced glass beakers from graves at Nærland and Rimestad reflects the very high level of local craft in this district. The two centres thus share similarities with Tinghaug, confirming that Jæren played an important role in goldsmith production.

At Tinghaug, it was suggested that the court site at Dysjane was associated with the Anda milieu in the late Roman period. When the Hauge-Tu milieu gained power, they probably established the new thing site 'Tinghaug' at the central farm Tu. Similar developments have also been sketched for Nærbø and Lye. At Lye, the small, perhiperal and neutral court site at Håvodl might have been replaced by a thing site at 'Lygi'. In Nærbø, the court site at Klauhauane was probably controlled by the closest Bø milieu in the Roman period. When the site went out of use, the thing functions might have been moved to elite farms. At Bø, the sacral Ull name associated with a large longhouse might indicate a thing site, and at Njærheim, the only large longhouse in this milieu was found at a farm with a sacral name situated next to a 'thing mound'. Even if this interpretation surely is uncertain, the suggested pattern is interesting.

7.13 A large data set of elite milieus and centres

By analysing how the centre indicators are distributed on the local scale of centres, several interesting insights into the organisation of elites have been identified. Firstly, the analysis confirms that even if there are many similarities between the localities, the material also shows great variation (Tables 7.1 and 7.2). While some of the centres had one dominant elite milieu, such as in Osterøy and Voss, others like Rosendal and Etne had several demarcated milieus. Some centres seem to be intimately linked through alliances, such as the Avaldsnes milieu and the Bjoa milieu at Bjoafjord. The most important central functions probably varied, and while Hove had the ritual functions as the primary one, Hafrsfjord seems to have been an important military centre. In central Jæren, the close-lying centres at Erga on the coast and Tinghaug further inland seem to be closely related to the latter as a dominant centre in the region. The centres at Nærbø and Lye along the Hååna river also share similarities and were probably related.

Several of the structure categories show special tendencies at specific centres. In Rosendal, the large boathouses are clustered in the Skåla milieu, and in Hafrsfjord an even more pronounced cluster is found in the Tananger peninsula. In Etne, the hill forts surround the main settlement and in Hafrsfjord they demarcate a border between two elite milieus. The many preserved large longhouses in Nærbø and Lye confirm that such houses are found mainly in direct connection to the elite milieus. At Tinghaug, Nærbø and Lye, there is a tendency for court sites situated on 'neutral ground' to be replaced by thing sites situated in the main core of the elite milieus. Special material complexes link major centres such as Avaldsnes and Tinghaug to several other milieus.

In this chapter, a large number of local contexts have been explored in some detail, based on the interpretation of centre indicators as evidence of elite milieus at centres. As single entities and as a larger data set, these contexts present new knowledge about the organisation of elites in the late Roman and Migration periods. Based on these 12 early Iron Age centres and a total of 21 elite milieus, a general understanding of the centres in this regional context might be sketched. In the next chapter, insights from the different local contexts are therefore assembled to paint an updated picture of how elite milieus organised their centres in western Norway *c*. 200–550 AD.

Table 7.1. List of the examined centres and elite milieus

Centre	Elite milieu	Centre	Elite milieu
Osterøy	*Mele*	Hafrsfjord	*Joa* *Madla*
Voss	*Dyrvedal*		
Rosendal	*Skåla* *Guddal* *Uskedal*	Hove	*Hove*
		Erga	*Erga* *Salte*
Etne	*Gjerde* *Stødle* *Grindheim*	Tinghaug	*Anda* *Hauge-Tu*
		Nærbø	*Njærheim* *Bø*
Avaldsnes	*Avaldsnes*		
Bjoafjord	*Bjoa* *Borgundøy*	Lye	*Lye*

Table 7.2. Simple comparison of centre indicators present at the centres

	Status rings		Status weapons		Status brooches		Status spindle whorls	Medallions/coins	Bracteates	Glass beakers	Bronze vessels	Large gold hoards	Cluster weapon graves	Large longhouses/halls	Cluster large mounds	Large boathouses	Hill forts	Court sites	Sacral place names
	RP	MP	RP	MP	RP	MP													
Osterøy			X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X		X		X		X
Voss			X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X		X				X
Rosendal	X									X	X		X		X	X			X
Etne			X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Avaldsnes	X		X		X		X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X
Bjoafjord	X		X	X			X	X		X	X						X		
Hove	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X			X	X		X		X
Hafrsfjord	X		X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Erga	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Tinghaug				X		X			X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X
Nærbø			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Lye				X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X

Chapter 8. A look into the organisation of centres

A major aim of the thesis has been to modify the model proposed by Myhre (1987a) in *Chieftains' graves and chiefdom territories in South Norway in the Migration Period.* Throughout the thesis, I have argued that the territorial implications of the model might be rejected and that the focus should rather be turned onto the material and spatial core of Myhre's hypothetical territories: centres identified from centre indicators. Focussing on these centres and the elite milieus that lived here, we have stepped down on observable local levels situated between the individual and the regional scale. While Myhre's aim was a generalising model, my study of a large sample of centre localities has tried to identify both general features and variation between the centres.

In this chapter, results from different parts of the thesis are brought together to form a synthesis on how western Norwegian centres were organised. The focus of the chapter is the central functions that elite milieus assembled at the analysed localities in order to attribute these sites a special significance as 'centres'. While the previous chapter provided space for discussing developments in time and space at each of the centres, observations from the various contexts are here grouped in a summary and discussion of some of the most important findings in the thesis. The chapter has been divided into subchapters dealing with themes related to each of the four central functions focussed on in the thesis. This includes the sociopolitical, military, judicial and ritual central functions, associated with the *halls*, *retinues*, *things* and *religion* documented in the historical written sources. The chapter ends with a comparison of the analysed centres to a selection of centres in other regions in Norway and in Scandinavia.

While some of the centres in the analysis have proven to be outstanding examples of one particular central function, others might have a rather different material and structural complex allowing for insights into other central functions. It is often hard to judge whether this variation is due to actual differences between centres or if it rather reflects issues of preservation and representativeness. Either way, observations on central functions from the different centres might complement each other and give a broader understanding of how western Norwegian elite milieus organised their centres.

8.1 Great halls, status objects and alliances

Based on written sources, above all the *Beowulf* poem, it is generally assumed that the 'hall' worked as a political 'headquarters' for elites in large parts of the Iron Age (Herschend, 1997). Through exclusive feasts held in this room, political leadership was communicated to local elites and followers and important bonds were tied with allies from other elite milieus. In a similar manner to the Queen of King Hrodgar, the lady of the house probably played a vital role as hostess (Enright, 1996). In the hall, the generosity of a leader was expressed in these feasts by offering food and drink, and alliance bonds were made through the exchange of status objects as alliance gifts.

In Chapter 6, it was argued that in the study area, the 'hall' of the late Roman and Migration periods was typically a room rather than a building of its own. It was further pointed out that 'hall rooms' were generally situated within large longhouses termed 'great halls', 40–100 metres long. A few documented hall buildings of the southern Scandinavian type reflect interesting exceptions to this general rule. Although 'great halls' have been found in most of Norway, two-thirds of the documented buildings of such dimensions are found in Rogaland. The fact that settlement material in Rogaland is often visible above ground might partly explain this situation. Even so, the many large longhouses of Jæren clearly have high research value as they cluster with other material traces of elite milieus such as rich graves, hoards and large burial mounds.

A few of the excavated large longhouses have yielded objects that unequivocally link the houses to the social strata of elites. Sherds from broken glass beakers at Ullaland in Nærbø, Ullandhaug at Hafrsfjord and Espeland near Hove might well be traces of feasts in the hall. At Hove, the amber bead found in the largest longhouse seems closely linked to the material complex of the female grave with serpent head arm ring found a stone's throw from the house. It might have belonged to the same woman. A spatial association between secular gold hoards and large longhouses is documented at Oma in the Lye centre and at Våråå in Tysvær. Several large longhouses are found at major farms at the core of elite milieus, including Tu, Lye, Erga and Njærheim. Furthermore, possible evidence of partially excavated large longhouses is found at Skåla and Gjerde,

as well as at Avaldsnes. Although no certain ‘great halls’ have been identified at the Hordaland localities, the presence of centre indicators that are found alongside such buildings in Jæren might justly be used as indirect evidence of elite settlements.

These ‘great halls’ were probably raised by a broader stratum of elites situated at major and minor centres. Based on the Jæren material, it would appear that no single leader or ‘chief” exercised an exclusive right to raise monumental buildings. As a consequence, several ‘great halls’ might occur in the same centre or district, as is seen in Forsand and in the Jæren municipalities of Time, Klepp and Hå. In Hå, the examined centre at Nærbø and the adjacent centre at Varhaug have the highest concentration of documented large houses, with seven houses each. Although the Nærbø centre also has a higher number of status objects and large burial mounds than most other centres, it gives a hint to how dense the elite settlement at Jæren was in the early Iron Age.

In the hall room, status objects were exchanged as gifts to partners in the local milieu and to allies from other milieus. One might imagine that ritualised gift exchange was part of any larger social gathering, whether a special visit of neighbouring elites or at seasonal feasts, weddings and burials. Gift exchange was probably an integral part of social life, and perhaps the prime factor explaining the spread of status objects (Hauken, 2005:pp.61–63). In a few specific cases, it seems possible to identify the participants in the exchange of alliance gifts in regional alliance networks. The alliance networks of the Avaldsnes milieu in C1b–C2 and that of the Hauge-Tu milieu in D1 and D2b might illustrate how gift exchange was utilised to form alliances.

In the Stevns region on Zealand, Lund Hansen et al. (1995) identified a network of centres in the late Roman period. Here, Himlingøje was the dominant centre, and distributed special elite insignia to its dependent allies. It has been argued that the study area is the region in Norway best suiting this model, with Avaldsnes as a dominant centre (Reiersen, 2011a). The Zealandish type of rosette fibula at Våråå might indicate the presence of a Zealandish woman here, suggesting that the Avaldsnes milieu had contact with the Himlingøje network in C1b. At Avaldsnes, a special complex with status rings and Hemmoor buckets seems to outline a network of their closest allies.

The spread of status rings in the study area indicates that Avaldsnes with a Kolben type neck ring and finger ring of type B18 was the dominant centre, with the Hove and Bjoa milieus at the next level with serpent head arm rings and finger rings of type B18. The resemblance between the B18 rings seems to indicate a similar origin of production, and they might well have been alliance gifts from the Avaldsnes milieu to their closest subordinates. Minor partners in the alliance were offered serpent head finger rings, including Kolstø in the Avaldsnes milieu, Nes in the Skåla milieu at Rosendal and in the Joa milieu at Hafrsfjord. The Avaldsnes material complex also included three Hemmoor buckets, with similar buckets from Hove and Anda. It is possible that the Anda bucket was as an alliance gift linking this milieu to the alliance network.

Special details in the burial rituals at Avaldsnes, Hove, Innbjoa and Nes indicate that the people of this network met and had some shared practices. The Avaldsnes and Innbjoa grave chambers had similar, large dimensions, otherwise unparalleled in the period. The female graves with serpent head rings at Hove, Innbjoa and Nes are the only C1b–C2 graves in Norway where gold items are known to have been ritually damaged. At Hove and Innbjoa, the only graves in Norway with serpent head arm rings, the burnt and cut arm rings were supplemented with unburnt B18 rings of large sizes fitting male fingers. Together, these odd similarities seem hardly coincidental but are rather a product of actual relationships between the owners of these status rings. As mentioned, the finger rings might have been alliance gifts from the Avaldsnes milieu.

In the Migration period, a similar alliance network was negotiated by the Hauge-Tu milieu, traceable especially from the spread of relief brooches (Kristoffersen, 2000). Firstly, in D1 a local tradition is identified by the occurrence of similar items at Hauge and Tu, as well as in the closest elite milieus at Anda and Erga. In D2b, the spread of ‘Rogaland group’ brooches associated with the ‘Hauge master’ is found at Hauge and Nord-Braut in the Hauge-Tu milieu, as well as in neighbouring centres like Lye, Hove and Nærbø. In the same grave as the Hauge brooch, an A-bracteate was found, stamp identical to one in the large Madla hoard at Hafrsfjord. These alliances might have been formalised through gift exchange of status objects in ‘great halls’ such as those found at Tu, Erga and Hove, or in separate hall buildings like the one at Avaldsnes.

8.2 Military hierarchies, retinues and buildings of war

The many weapon graves, boathouses, hill forts and bog sacrifices of the late Roman and Migration periods are testimonies of turbulent times with conflicts ranging from supra-regional battles to small raids on local communities. The military organisation probably had a vital role in society, as the guarantor of an active defence and attack. Based on sources from Tacitus to later Frankish and Norse texts, the unit of a leader and his retinue (*comitatus*) seems to be the system on which the Germanic military organisation was ultimately based (e.g. Steuer, 2006). However, the archaeological material indicates that the nature of the warfare organisation changed over time. In the following, the general developments in the military organisation of the study area are compared with similar trends in other Scandinavian regions. Thereafter, the traces of military hierarchies, retinues and buildings of war are reviewed in more detail.

In Chapter 5, an analysis of weapon graves was carried out to identify military hierarchies in the C and D phases, interpreted from the occurrence of status weapons. The basis for the approach was the interpretation of the Illerup A find in terms of a strict army hierarchy. Ilkjær (2001, Fig. 3) identified the gear of 400 defeated men as belonging to army leaders (2%), officers (9%) and soldiers (89%), paralleled by army levels described by Tacitus and Amminius as *princeps*, *comites* and *pedites* (Table 2.3). While army leaders and officers had custom-made swords and shield gear, ordinary soldiers had mass-produced weapons (Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær, 1996,:pp.484–5). This pattern might indicate that officers controlled the weapon gear and distributed it to their soldiers. Although critics have questioned the use of Roman literary sources to interpret Scandinavian military organisation (e.g. Tillisch, 2009; Birch Iversen, 2010b; Gundersen, 2010), it is generally acknowledged that the military organisation was influenced by the Roman army (e.g. Herschend, 2009; Varberg, 2014; Ystgaard, 2014).

The Illerup A sacrifice is assumed to reflect the full weapon gear and hierarchy of an actual fighting army. In contrast, weapons in graves to a far greater extent are the results of processes of selection, where social norms and burial practices guided who were allowed to be equipped with weapons in their graves. A study of C phase weapon

graves in eastern Norway showed similar ratios to the Illerup army (Stylegar, 2008), indicating that all levels of the army hierarchy were buried with weapons. In contrast, studies of more limited numbers of weapon graves in mainland Sweden and in the Sogn district in western Norway indicated that about half of the graves belonged to level 1–2 officers (Ilkjær, 2001; Grimm, 2008). In the study area, weapon graves from C1b to C2 included only 46% level 3 graves, with officers' graves of levels 1 and 2 over-represented in comparison with Illerup A. Thus, as in Sweden and Sogn, mainly the officers, situated at centres, were buried with weapons. In phase C3, the few weapon graves continued to be dominated by status weapon gear. This supports the assumption that in the late Roman period, the officers owned the weapons, while common warriors did not own their weapon gear and, hence, were not buried with it.

A recent study of central Norway indicates structural changes in the military organisation in the Migration period (Ystgaard, 2014). While the weapon graves of the C phases were found in the most fertile or strategic districts, the D phase graves were more evenly distributed across the regional landscape (Ystgaard, 2014:pp.83–92, 251–261). Ystgaard linked the centralisation of weapons in the Roman period to the great costs of a type of warfare with specialised warriors engaging in supra-regional battles on open battlefields. The Migration period probably had a much looser organisation in retinue groups led by a new class of 'warlords'. This warfare was less cost-intensive, focussing on internal fights and minor strikes on points in the landscape. Ystgaard views the majority of the hill forts as evidence of such small-scale warfare.

Although there clearly are regional differences in the material, similar changes are also observable in western Norway. In the Migration period, the nature and distribution of weapon graves in the study area were radically changed. The number of datable weapon graves increased from 19 in the C phases to 166 in the D phases. Now, the relation between weapon graves and elites was greatly weakened, including also the status weapon gear, which is infrequently related to other rich finds or elite milieus. This development is interpreted as a 'democratisation' of the right to own and be buried with weapons, and it probably mirrors changes in warfare organisation similar to those in central Norway. In the Migration period, regular weapon graves account for 87% of

the weapon graves. Most of these had no sword, but rather a combination of one or more spears, knives, shields, axes and arrows (Sørheim, 2010, Appendix 1). The weapon complex of the Migration period was suitable, for example, for battles where hill forts were attacked and defended (Skre, 1998:pp.272–3). Weapons such as axes probably reflected affordable investments that common farmers could obtain without the support of elite leaders (cf. Ystgaard, 2014:p.258). However, it is possible that these armed men could be assembled as warrior groups and led into warfare by warlords.

Stepping down from these general developments, we might then review the evidence of military organisation in the study area. In the previous subchapter, we observed that the alliance networks of the late Roman period Avaldsnes milieu and the Migration period Hauge-Tu milieu were particularly wide-ranging. As the political and military alliances were often inseparable, the above-sketched alliance networks are added to the status weapon graves in order to sketch the dynamics of the military landscape.

The nature of warfare in the late Roman period could imply that armies were assembled from larger regions in order to fight in supra-regional battles. In C1b–C2, the regional alliance networks might confirm this type of military organisation. The Avaldsnes milieu seems to have had a level 1 army leader with a Kolben type neck ring, silver shield boss and gilded sword sheath. In the nearby districts, level 2 weapon graves were found in the Gjerde milieu at Etne, in the Bjoa milieu (Utbjoa) and at Halsnøy (Sjo). The distribution of serpent head rings and Hemmoor buckets further points out that the Bjoa (Innbjoa) and Hove milieus had leaders on level 2 with serpent head arm rings. The Anda milieu on Tinghaug with a Hemmoor bucket might also have been part of the same network. A level 3 serpent head finger ring are found in the Skåla milieu (Nes), which was probably the military core of the Rosendal centre with a concentration of boathouses. Another level 3 serpent head finger ring was found in the Joa milieu at Hafrsfjord, located near the largest boathouse concentration in the study area. An association with retinue warships is also confirmed by the presence of large boathouses at Avaldsnes, Sjo and possibly also at Gjerde, while hill forts are found strategically close to the Bjoa and Hove milieus. On the coast of central Jæren, status weapon graves were found in the Erga milieu (level 1 or 2) and in Hå (level 2) at the Nærbø centre,

the latter near the large Obrestad boathouse, 40 metres long. Differences in the material complexes might indicate that these leaders belonged to another military network.

In C3, a Mollestad sword with bronze and silver fittings point out the Joa milieu (Litlaland) at Hafrsfjord as leaders of the military hierarchy. Further status weapon graves were found in the Njærheim (Nærland) and Bø milieus (Håland I–II) at Nærbø. The first status weapon graves in Nordhordland and Voss come from the Mele milieu in Osterøy and from the Dyrvedal milieu (Rekve I) in Voss. In addition, parts of a status sword were found in Skeiseid, Tysvær, at a strategic point in Nord-Rogaland bearing similarities to the local power base at Våråå, Tysvær in the neighbouring fjord.

While in D1, status weapon graves were still associated with centres, interestingly, their locations stand somewhat in 'opposition' to the established elite milieus. Firstly, the Herre grave in Voss was found outside the Dyrvedal milieu, and might perhaps reflect a competing retinue. Secondly, the Sæbø grave was associated with the establishment of the Borgundøy milieu at Bjoafjord, standing in opposition to the old Bjoa milieu across the fjord. At Lye, the Fosse grave was found across the Hååna river at some distance from the cluster of three graves at Lye/Vestly with swords, gold and imports. The Fosse grave might thus also be interpreted as standing in opposition to the established Lye milieu. It is possible that structural changes in the early Migration period allowed an establishment of military leaders outside older elite milieus.

In the Migration period, graves with sword parts of gold are rare. In the study area, a sword with carrying rings of gold (D1–D2a) was found in the Hauge-Tu milieu (Tu) at Tinghaug and a sword pommel with ornaments in gold filigree (D2b) stems from the Lindås centre (Hodneland) in Nordhordland. Although the relation between the sword and gold rings in the rich grave at Tu is somewhat uncertain, it makes perfect sense that the Hauge-Tu milieu had military dominance in D1–D2a. The distribution of female status brooches indicates a strong milieu with a broad base of allies in both the preceding phase D1 and the succeeding phase D2b. Upon establishment in D1, status brooches show close ties between Hauge-Tu and the older Anda and Erga milieus. After the possible phase of military dominance in D1–D2a, the 'Rogaland group' brooches from D2b indicate that Hauge-Tu now had allies in Lye, Nærbø and Hove.

The stamp-identical A-bracteates in a grave at Hauge and in the Madla hoard with gold sword mounting also indicate alliances with a new military leader at Hafrsfjord.

The late Migration period witnessed the establishment of a new class of 'warlords', associated in particular with the deposition of golden sword mountings in ritual hoards. Kristoffersen (2000) noted that three such depositions in the study area, at the Dyrvedal milieu (Rekve II) in Voss, in Etne, and in the Madla milieu in Hafrsfjord, are located in relation to larger clusters of weapon graves in Voss, Etne and Jæren. The 'warlords' in Madla, Etne and Dyrvedal might possibly be associated with subordinate officers with ring swords like those in the Hove milieu (Høyland) and in Nerhus along Hardangerfjord in Kvinnherad. In addition, the gold sword pommel from Lindås (Hodneland) was found in association with the cluster of weapon graves in Nordhordland and might be related to the many status weapon graves in this region. The military organisation in Nordhordland might be exemplified by the presence of boathouses near status weapon graves in the Fana and Os districts, and by a hill fort situated between two clusters of Migration period status weapon graves in Osterøy.

In central Norway, Ystgaard (2014) associated the hill forts especially with the new nature of warfare and military organisation in the Migration period. In Chapter 3, Myhre's interpretation of hill forts as large regional defensive systems was criticised. In the study area, the dated forts with documented stone walls confirmed that the main phases of usage were in the Roman and Migration periods (Table 6.10). A study of the ^{14}C-dated hill forts in Sunnhordland suggested that these were not part of one large system. The local contexts rather indicated they had different functions. Interestingly, two of the centres with identified 'warlords' have convincing traces of hill fort clusters used as local defensive systems. In Etne, there is one fort at each of the three elite milieus, and at Hafrsfjord there is a line of four forts between the Madla and Joa milieus. The cluster of both hill forts and boathouses in certain 'conflict zones' such as Ryfylke might be the evidence of proactive preparations by local communities in response to a felt threat of conflict. The hill forts might thus be related to local strategic systems at the major centres where warlords were situated, as well as being used as forts for defence and attack spread out in the Migration period landscape of conflict.

8.3 Court sites and the organisation of the thing

The starting point for my investigations of judicial organisation among elite milieus at various centres was twofold. Firstly, influential work by researchers such as Näsman (1988) and Ramqvist (1991) underlined the vital role of the thing as a social institution in Germanic societies. The claim was rooted in written sources like Tacitus' *Germania* and *The Passion of St. Saba the Goth*. Secondly, based on several recent studies of court sites, a present research consensus identifies the Iron Age court sites as traces of thing sites in Norway (Grimm, 2010; Storli, 2010; Brink et al., 2011). In Chapter 6, the placement and layout of various court sites in south-western Norway were compared in order to shed light on the establishment and use of the court sites. The court sites situated within defined centre localities were then examined in Chapter 7. Here, a potential association with specific elite milieus was discussed in more detail. By summing up the results of these chapters, several important insights might be added to our knowledge of the establishment, use and abandonment of court sites.

While the court sites found further north along the Norwegian coast show periods of use in both the early and the late Iron Age, the sites in my study area were primarily in use in the early Iron Age. The excavated sites from central Jæren show a general pattern of use mainly within the Roman period (Grimm, 2010). In contrast, the recently excavated court site at Sausjord in Hordaland was used during the Migration period (A.B. Olsen. 2013). Finally, the rather peripheral site at Øygarden on an island north of Jæren testifies to a rare continuity into the Merovingian period (Iversen, 2015).

An important research question was whether the court sites were situated close to the dominant elite farms and were controlled by these, or if they had a more 'neutral' and peripheral placement. Firstly, it should be underlined that court sites occur both at defined centres and in more peripheral settlement districts such as the Sausjord site in Vossestrand and Skjelbrei in Høyland Fjellbygd. The main focus of this analysis, however, has been the sites occurring within centre localities. The largest sites in Jæren, Dysjane and Klauhauane are 'classical' examples of court sites occurring at the heart of centres, Tinghaug and Nærbø, respectively. The study of the Tinghaug centre

somewhat surprisingly revealed that the Dysjane site was probably associated with the Roman period Anda milieu rather than with the Migration period Hauge-Tu milieu. The site therefore originally had a somewhat less 'central' position than is often presumed. At Nærbø, the Klauhauane site was situated at a neighbouring farm to the central farm Bø, at a position just slightly withdrawn from the associated Bø milieu. Finally, the small site at Håvodl was situated rather peripherally within the Lye district. While none of these three 'central' court sites was located at dominant farms, there is a strong association especially between the two largest sites and elite milieus.

In order to examine more directly the role of elite milieus in the establishment and use of the court sites, spatial analyses were carried out on some of the sites in my study area that both had a regular layout and had been excavated. The hypothesis was that the distribution of status finds in the physical layout of court sites could illuminate whether and how elites were present at court sites. My analysis was inspired mainly by Grimm's (2010) hypothesis that 'leader houses' similar to that at the Eketorp ring fort on Öland might have existed in the court sites. The Eketorp fort similarly had an 'egalitarian' layout, but one house yielded status finds and features indicating 'inequality'. While Grimm's study did not test the hypothesis, my study had an advantage in that the Sausjord site had been completely excavated by modern standards in 2011. By comparing the Sausjord site and the Eketorp fort, a house with special finds was identified at the same place in the layout here as at Eketorp. A further analysis of status objects from the Klauhauane and Dysjane court sites identified surprisingly similar results: 'leader houses' situated centrally on one long side of the court sites.

The well-excavated Sausjord site proved vital for identifying and explaining this pattern. At Sausjord, a status brooch was found deposited below a post in the hall room, which clearly happened at the time when this house and the court site as a whole were raised. The deposition was interpreted as an initiation of the house as a special part of the court site upon its establishment. While the oval layout of the site with houses of the same size expressed 'equality' between entities of similar status, a masked 'inequality' was present in the form of this initiated 'leader house'. In the analysis of the two other court sites, it was argued that the status finds here were also found in

rooms interpreted as hall rooms, and perhaps near the possible position of a high seat. While the latter claim might be debated, it was further put forward that the idea of a hall with a high seat, in fact, was the structuring model behind the placement of the 'leader house' in the layout of the court sites. The presence of a similar layout at Eketorp indicates that the organising principle had super-regional importance.

We do not know how the leader houses worked in the court site organisation, as these houses only indicate that leaders were present. It seems likely that these were local leaders. The initiated houses might have been reserved for leaders to be elected on the thing, or could have been made for established leaders actually raising these sites to control the judicial organisation. In their halls in the court site, the leaders might have gathered allies for counsel, perhaps before a public voting held in the middle field. There might thus have been a tension between leaders and the 'egalitarian' structure of the site. It is possible that 'leader houses' were one reason why the court sites went out of use, indicating that the organisation had in itself the seed to its own downfall. While we have seen that the military organisation developed from a centralised model in the late Roman period into a more 'democratic' model in the Migration period, the developments in the judicial organisation seem to have taken the opposite direction.

Storli's (2010) study of the northern Norwegian court sites indicated a relation between a process of centralisation of power and the gradual decreasing number of court sites. A parallel process might have happened in south-western Norway in the early Iron Age. It is possible that one of the main reasons why the court sites in Jæren went out of use was that some leaders increased their power, resulting in a dissolution of the court sites by the leaders or by the collective. Within the study area, the hierarchisation process in the early Iron Age peaked in the Migration period. It seems therefore a plausible hypothesis that the abandonment of court sites in this period might directly be related to an increasing power of the elite milieus. When the court sites were dissolved, it seems that new thing sites instead were established at the major farms. This pattern is perhaps identifiable at the centres at Tinghaug, Nærbø and Lye, where place names, 'thing mounds' and a special association with elite milieus point out the new thing sites.

These three centres in Jæren could reveal how the judicial organisation might have been developed and 'centralised' after the court sites went out of use. At Tinghaug, it was suggested that the court site Dysjane was originally associated with the Anda milieu in the Roman period. When the Hauge-Tu milieu gained power, they probably established a new thing site at the peak of 'Tinghaug' at the central farm at Tu. Similar developments were observed at Nærbø and Lye. In Nærbø, the court site Klauhauane was probably controlled by the adjacent Bø milieu. When the site went out of use, judicial functions might have been moved to elite farms. At Bø, the sacral Ull name associated with a large longhouse might perhaps indicate a new thing site. The only large house in the Njærheim milieu is located at Njærheim. This farm similarly had a sacral place name and the house was situated next to a flat 'thing mound'. At Lye, the small court site at Håvodl was probably succeeded by the site of 'Tingvollen' at 'Lygi'.

In sum, there seems to be a trend at the examined centre localities with court sites that these were established in the Roman period by elite milieus at localities slightly withdrawn from their major farms. As the power of the elite milieus increased, the court sites were dissolved and new thing sites were established at the major elite farms. This pattern, however, is not without exceptions. The small site Håvodl near Lye, for instance, had no certain indication of an association with elites. A lack of court sites elsewhere in the study might partly be explained by a lack of identification. However, the lack of court sites at Avaldsnes and Hove might perhaps rather indicate that these powerful Roman period milieus had little need for a 'democratic' judicial organisation.

In Iron Age Norway, it seems that court sites were a known organisational model for thing sites, which could be put into use when the sociopolitical context called for it. In the area of Sausjord, this happened first in the Migration period. At the Øygarden site, the need for a court site continued from the Roman to the Merovingian period. Iversen (2015) argues that it was a regional thing site in the last phase, following a similar centralisation of thing sites to that in northern Norway. The presence of gold-foil figures at Hauge-Tu, where 'Tinghaug' is located, suggests continuity of judicial-religious power here too. This might indicate a separate regional thing site for Jæren. In early historical times, Hauge was the thing site in Jæren (Steinnes, 1955:p.408).

8.4 Centres and ritual functions

As in the late Iron Age, religion and rituals were probably an integral part of social life in the late Roman and Migration periods. With this later period as a parallel, it is likely that rituals were performed locally on the farms, at natural sacred sites, in the halls of the elites or on other central ritual sites (Steinsland, 2005; Nordberg, 2011). However, due to the problem of linking specific archaeological structures to ritual functions, this central function in many ways has been the most problematic to identify. The sacral place names were used as a key category for identifying ritual functions. In addition, status spindle whorls and status brooches might possibly be linked to female ritual leaders described in written sources as 'staff bearers' and 'ladies of the house' (Kristoffersen, 2000; Enright, 2011). A few other categories could be linked to religion and rituals, including phallus stones and triangular monuments, both widely dated to the Iron Age, as well as gold bracteates (Hauck, 1987; Solberg, 1999; Andrén, 2004).

On the regional map, all major sacral place name groups were plotted, including theophoric names with Norse gods as prefix, names with Helga-, Hov- or Ve- as prefix, and uncompounded names like Vang, Hove and Lye (Fig. 6.18). In the local context of centre localities, additional names related to rituals were mapped, such as Lund, Skeid and Leik names. Vang and Hove names were interpreted by Olsen as major cult sites, occurring at the centres in Voss, Rosendal and Hove, with Lye denoting a sacred thing site (Olsen, 1926:pp.230, 261–2). At Vang in Voss, a cluster of three sacral place names, Vang, Lekve and *Lund (Vasshus, 2011), are found outside the elite milieu in Dyrvedal, perhaps indicating a neutral ritual site located at some distance from the milieu. In Rosendal, Vang is found at the core of the Skåla milieu, with Skeide/Lund names in the Guddal milieu, and with a sacred natural site at Haugland in the Uskedal milieu. With regard to the distribution of theophoric names, it has been emphasised that the western Norwegian region is special in that no Odin name is known, indicating that this later main god was not that important here at the time of the name giving. In the region, Vanir names (Frøy/Frøya-Njord) dominate in Rogaland and Hardanger, while Thor is most frequent in Nordhordland. The Æsir names Thor and Ull often occur with Vanir names. Based on place name studies in Sweden, it seems that Njord and Ull

were interrelated (Særheim, 2014:p.58). In the Nærbø centre, Njord and Ull names occur in the two elite milieus at Njærheim and Nærland and at Ullaland in Bø.

It is notable that sacral place names occur at 11 of the 12 centre localities. The only locality without a certain sacral place name is Bjoafjord. However, the largest mountain rising 740 metres over the Bjoa settlement is called Gråhorga (Fig. 7.21). The suffix 'horg' might indicate a sacred mountain, a tradition closely linked to the Sunnhordland area in the Helgafell story of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*. The importance of natural features as sacred sites is further testified by special sites like Haugland in Uskedal (Fig. 7.9), with a mix of large mounds made by nature and people, and with a phallus stone. However, the key example of a natural sacred site coincides with a place name cluster on Tysnes (Tysnes-Njarðarlǫg-Ve-Helgastein-Godøy-Vevatne). It has been linked to a site where the topography allowed sunlight to focus on one special point on all the four sun phase dates (Heide, 2013). A second dense cluster of sacral place names is located at the centre at Hove (Hove-Lunde-Skei-Leigvoll-Helgaland-Helland), where the archaeological material confirms its status as a centre with ritual centre functions.

At Hove, a large longhouse with a small, quadratic side building was built in the transition to the late Roman period. From the longhouse, stone stairs led out to a special, lower-lying farmyard, which was further connected to a road (Fig. 7.25). The two buildings coexisted for many centuries, paralleling the continuity of the small cult house at Uppåkra (Larsson, 2007). The longhouse at Hove had a concentration of quern stones similar to longhouses at ritual sites in Uppåkra, Helgö as well as in Ullandhaug. It is therefore likely that the buildings were the 'hov' complex at Hove. A special amber bead was found in the area where the two buildings were connected. The bead type is closely linked to the female grave found in relation to the buildings, and the woman buried with serpent head arm ring and spindle whorls might have been the ritual leader of the 'hov' in the third century. In the area, there is possible evidence of two further female ritual leaders. A bronze spindle whorl from Austrått comes from an area with two special bog offerings unparalleled in the region – a huge Westland cauldron (C3) and three neck rings of gilded silver (D). At Lunde ('sacred grove'), a third woman was buried with a relief brooch in an area with a triangular monument.

The Hove example provides us with several useful insights. Firstly, the large longhouse, i.e. a 'great hall', was closely related to the ritual complex. The longhouse and the small house might have been a complex with a great hall + cult house. If this is the case, the partially excavated longhouse and small building at Avaldsnes might provide a parallel to Hove. There is, however, some correlation between sacral place names and large longhouses, perhaps indicating that these were actually the cult houses. In Jæren, where such buildings mainly occur, there are eight sacral place names with uncompounded names denoting cult sites or with a theophoric prefix. Five of these, Hove, Lye, Njærheim, Ullaland and Ullandhaug, have large longhouses. Large longhouses have not been documented at Nærland in Nærbø, Frøyland in the Riska centre or Frøyland north-east of Tinghaug and Frøylandsvatn. Four of the longhouses above correlating with sacral place names, Lye, Njærheim, Ullaland and Ullandhaug, have been associated with judicial functions as possible thing sites. As there might well have been a link between ritual and judicial power, one interpretation does not exclude the other. Generally, it is likely that some rituals were carried out in the 'great halls' of the local elites, and that Hove is a rare example of a more specialised ritual centre.

Secondly, the Hove example illuminates a possible presence of female ritual leaders identified from status whorls and status brooches. Although the link between object groups and ritual specialists might seem simplistic, this link is based on the female roles of 'staff bearers' and 'ladies of the house', described in written sources. Enright (2011:p.152) suggested that the spindle staff was a symbol of female ritual leaders, 'staff bearers'. However, such spindle staffs were common household objects. To identify special 'staff bearers', I have focussed on the most exclusive spindle whorls, associated with the introduction of spindle whorl technology. The women carrying staffs with splendid whorls might have had a position as ritual leaders. The female graves contemporary with the Hove grave seems closely associated with the introduction of the spindle whorl technology. The Hove grave's closest parallel at Innbjoa included the finest pair of spindle whorls in Norway, one bronze R166 whorl and one silver R171 whorl with a gold string. In the Mele milieu, two C3 female graves with bronze whorls and gold rings were interpreted as 'staff bearers'. The interpretation might be supported by two sacral place names denoting sacred sites (Ve), two phallus

stones and a triangular monument in the area. The two graves were found in the same burial chamber, perhaps implying that the roles of these women were hereditary. The interpreted relation between a set of Migration period objects and the role as 'lady of the house' is well established, and this role also included ritual functions (Kristoffersen, 2000:pp.137–9). Three graves in the Hauge-Tu milieu with relief brooches, weaving battens and an A-bracteate reflect some key examples of 'ladies of the house', and a recent study identifies these elite women as possible ritual leaders (Sundquist, 2014).

The final category that might be associated with religious practice is gold bracteates. In his famous interpretation, Hauck (1987) related the iconography of the bracteates to a mythical circle around the main god Odin. This interpretation was partly based on a relation between A-bracteates and Odin place names. The lack of Odin place names in the study area opened up room for other interpretations of the bracteates deposited and mostly made in the study area. While much of the bracteate iconography was probably linked to religion, it is possible that a wider pantheon of gods worshipped in the region was depicted. A local type of C-bracteate depicting a man on a quadruped and without other symbols might alternatively be interpreted as depicting elites, in a similar way to the older medallion imitations (cf. Andersson, 2011). Bracteates are mainly found in the Jæren district, at centres like Hove, Hafrsfjord, Tinghaug, Erga, Lye and Vigrestad.

At the end of the Migration period, large gold hoards were deposited in the ground. These hoards might have been a ritual response to a global catastrophy around the year 536 AD (Axboe, 2007; Gräslund & Price, 2012; Toohey et al., 2016). In western Norway, gold bracteates had previously been deposited in graves, but at the end of the Migration period bracteates were also put down in hoards, as in the rest of Scandinavia. In the gold hoards, status objects became powerful ritual statements of the elite's response to the crisis. One deposition happened at Grindheim in Etne. Here, a splendid bracteate necklace was put down between ancient mounds in a grave field with long continuity. However, the offerings could not stop the effect of the crisis, which would instead mark a great discontinuity perhaps later inspiring the important *Ragnarok* myth (Gräslund & Price, 2012). The golden era of the late Roman and Migration periods had ended, and in the late Iron Age, a slightly changed society was rebuilt on its ashes.

8.5 Similarities with centres beyond western Norway

The elite milieus in western Norway were not isolated. Instead, their success relied much on contact with, and influences from, areas outside the region. At the end of this chapter, we might therefore briefly zoom out from the regional view. I will first give a simplified overview of the early Iron Age centres within present-day Norway, before comparing centres in the study area to the Norwegian centres and to Scandinavian centres presented in Chapter 4. To provide an overview of the distribution of centres in Norway in the late Roman and Migration periods, a selected set of centre indicators (status objects) occurring in most of the country have been mapped both as single find spots and as clusters (Figs. 8.1 and 8.2). Although only a rough sketch of the centre distribution is provided here, most centres in the study area are depicted as find spots in Fig. 8.1. The regional clusters identified in Fig. 8.2 are districts well known from previous research and give a somewhat representative picture of powerful regions in this era. However, as the mapped status objects occur less frequently at the centres in northern Norway, the map is not adequate for these northernmost regions. In this area, more region-specific structure categories such as court sites and boathouses seem a better-suited tool to map the distribution of centres (cf. Grimm, 2006, Fig. 27).

In the following, we will take a closer look at the distribution of centres in the different Norwegian regions. Moving eastwards from the study area, Vest-Agder has a number of major and minor centres both on the coast and inland, such as Lista, Sande, Snartemo and Spangereid (Fig. 4.2, cf. Stylegar, 2001). Similarities, e.g. in goldsmith traditions, suggest close contacts between the elites in Jæren and Vest-Agder (Kristoffersen, 2000). In Aust-Agder, the most notable centre is found at Bringsvær in Fjære, where the number of Roman period status objects from rich graves is comparable to that in the Avaldsnes centre (Skjelsvik, 1961). In eastern Norway, the material of the Grenland district shares similarities with southernmost and western Norway and the district therefore has previously been discussed in relation to these regions (Myhre, 1987a; Kristoffersen, 2000). A more distinct eastern Norwegian region had its core in Vestfold and Østfold on the coast, and in the inland districts of Romerike, Ringerike, Hadeland, Toten and Ringsaker. Skre's (1998) study of Romerike provides an insight into how

the elite milieus of eastern Norway were organised. Among the most important categories of this study were hoards with gold sword mountings or bracteates, sacral place names and hill forts. In the fertile Ringerike district, the most important early Iron Age centres were Åker and Veien (Rolfsen, 2000; Gustafson, 2016), while Kjorstad in Gudbrandsdalen is an example of a centre further inland and closer to the outfield resources (Gundersen, 2016). Along the coast, centres in Østfold played a special role throughout the Roman period (Solberg, 2000:pp.94–96), including the centre at Missingen with a large longhouse and many stray finds (Maixner, 2015).

Moving northwards from the study area, a series of centres are found along fjords in the Sogn and Nordfjord districts, and along the seaway in Sunnmøre and Nordmøre (Figs. 3.6 and 6.1, Ringstad, 1992). These north-western Norwegian centres probably had direct interaction with elite milieus in the study area. As has been shown, at the centres in Sogn and Nordfjord there is evidence of many large longhouses, somewhat comparable to the situation in southern Rogaland (Fig. 6.1, Diinhoff, 2011a). In central Norway, the Inntrøndelag district has the largest concentration of centres (Prestvold, 1999:pp.79–81; Solberg, 2009, Fig. 2). Among these are Roman period centres such as Egge and Gjeite and Migration period centres like Dalem, with the centre at Bertnem situated further north in Namdalen (e.g. Farbregd, 1980; Stenvik, 2012; Hedeager & Forseth, 2015). Ystgaard's (2014) study provides an insight into the changing military organisation in central Norway, where weapon graves, hill forts and boathouses were key categories in the early Iron Age. Likewise, Storli's (2006) study of court sites and related structures in northern Norway gives an overview of the elite milieus and their developments in Nordland and south Troms. As mentioned, while the distribution of status objects is limited in northern Norway, this region has a very high frequency of structure categories such as court sites and large boathouses (Grimm, 2006, Fig. 27).

In sum, the material associated with Norwegian early Iron Age centres shows both local and regional variation. However, a rough comparison indicates that many features found at centres in the study area are also observed in varying frequencies and configurations at other centres. Boathouses and court sites appear mainly on the coast from Vest-Agder to Nordland (Grimm, 2006, 2010). Eastern Norway, on the other

hand, has many splendid Migration period hoard finds (Fig. 8.1) and a larger number of sacral place names. While hill forts occur in most Norwegian regions with centres, rather few have been identified in north-western Norway (Ringstad, 1991, Fig. 2). Variations in the regional burial practices have led to a high number of Roman period graves especially in eastern Norway, and likewise to a high number of Migration period graves in western Norway. Although large longhouses occur at major and minor centres in most of the country, they appear to be most frequent in southern Rogaland.

Through their study of Spangereid, Stylegar and Grimm (2005) added Norwegian features such as hill forts, boathouses, court sites and weapon graves to the centre indicators appliccable to southern Scandinavian regions (cf. Fabech & Ringtved, 1995). These features supplement the picture provided by settlement material, grave finds, hoard finds and place names. Although the Norwegian centres were adapted to their local natural and social context and included other structural features to those in the south, it seems reasonable to assume that major centres in the southern Scandinavian areas to some extent inspired the establishment of some of the centres in Norway. A convincing example of this is the establishment of the Avaldsnes network in the late Roman period, evidently inspired by the wealth centre of Himlingøje and its network. Special burial practices related to graves with status rings at Avaldsnes, Hove and Bjoa seem to strengthen the hypothesis that the milieus using these elite insignia actually knew each other. Furthermore, the excavations at Hove reflect a vital contribution to the interpretation of Scandinavian elite milieus with serpent head rings (Bjørdal, 2014). The association between the large longhouse and the find spot for a serpent head arm ring mirrors the association seen in Zealand between large Stuvehøj-type houses and graves with serpent head finger rings (Boye, 2011). The longhouse at Hove, however, was considerably larger. Its long continuity alongside a small building somewhat resembles the continuity seen in the small cult house at Uppåkra (Larsson, 2007).

Similarly to the centre at Högom, most of the western Norwegian centres of the Migration period were identified through the presence of rich graves. As many features associated with Scandinavian ‘central places’ remain undetected at these centres, they might be considered ‘wealth centres’. Näsman (2006:p.214) interpreted wealth centres

like Himiligøje as being connected to an older economic system than that of the central places. Although it might be problematic to label centres in the study area 'wealth centres' based ultimately on the regional burial practices, it is a possibility that the same conservative structures leading to a continuity in burial practices from the late Roman period to the Migration period also influenced a conservative organisation of centres.

There are, however, also interesting similarities between some western Norwegian centres and the central places. In the Migration period, gold hoards with sword mouthpieces and bracteates were deposited at the central place of Gudme (Thrane, 1992). While so far no gold sword mouthpieces have been found at the major central places of Uppåkra, Helgö and Sorte Muld, one filigree mouthpiece has been found in Etne and one spiral mounting occurred in the Madla hoard from Hafrsfjord. Both these centres have bracteate hoards, the Grindheim hoard and the Madla hoard, respectively. At these centres, Etne and Hafrsfjord, there are also interesting associations between the occurrence of gold sword mountings and military structures such as clusters of weapon graves, the use of several hill forts as strategic defences, and large boathouses. These centres thus allow us some interesting insights into the military organisation, an aspect that is not always easily recognisable at the southern Scandinavian centres.

In western Norway, Tinghaug is perhaps the centre that most clearly reflects the wealth and continuity associated with the major southern Scandinavian central places (see Fabech, 1999a; Kristoffersen et al., 2014). Tinghaug had an elite milieu in the Roman period, but its peak clearly was under the Hauge-Tu milieu in the Migration period, continuing into the Merovingian period with gold-foil figures and several rich graves (cf. Meling, 2014). A key characteristic of the major southern Scandinavian central places seems to have been the production of status objects. Although the production sites have not yet been identified, the Tinghaug centre and the nearby centres Nærbø and Lye stand out as the possible origin for several categories of locally produced status objects in the Migration period, including relief brooches, bracteates and possibly glass beakers (var. X1) (Straume, 1987:p.63; Kristoffersen, 2000, 2012; Pesch, 2007; Myhre 2007, 2013). Future systematic surveys and excavations on the Tinghaug plateau could thus potentially reveal the first 'proper' central place known in western Norway.

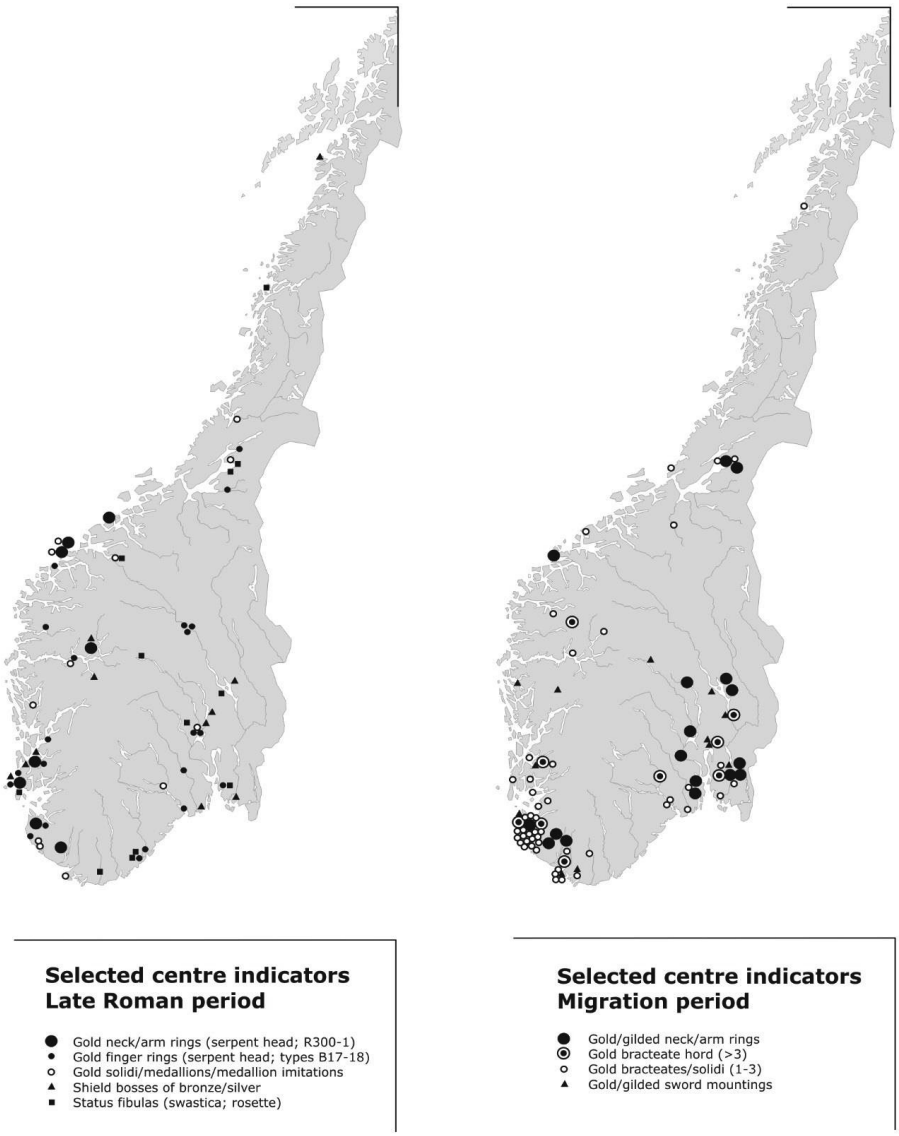


Fig. 8.1. Selected centre indicators of the late Roman and Migration periods in Norway. A few gold arm rings are not shown on the map due to an unspecified find spot. The filigree-ornamented sword pommel from Hodneland, Lindås is mapped alongside the gold/gilded sword mountings, as these are its closest paralell. A simple definition for bracteates hoards have been applied to the map, counting more than three items as a hoard. The mapped centre indicators are listed either in Chapter 5 or in Appendix II.

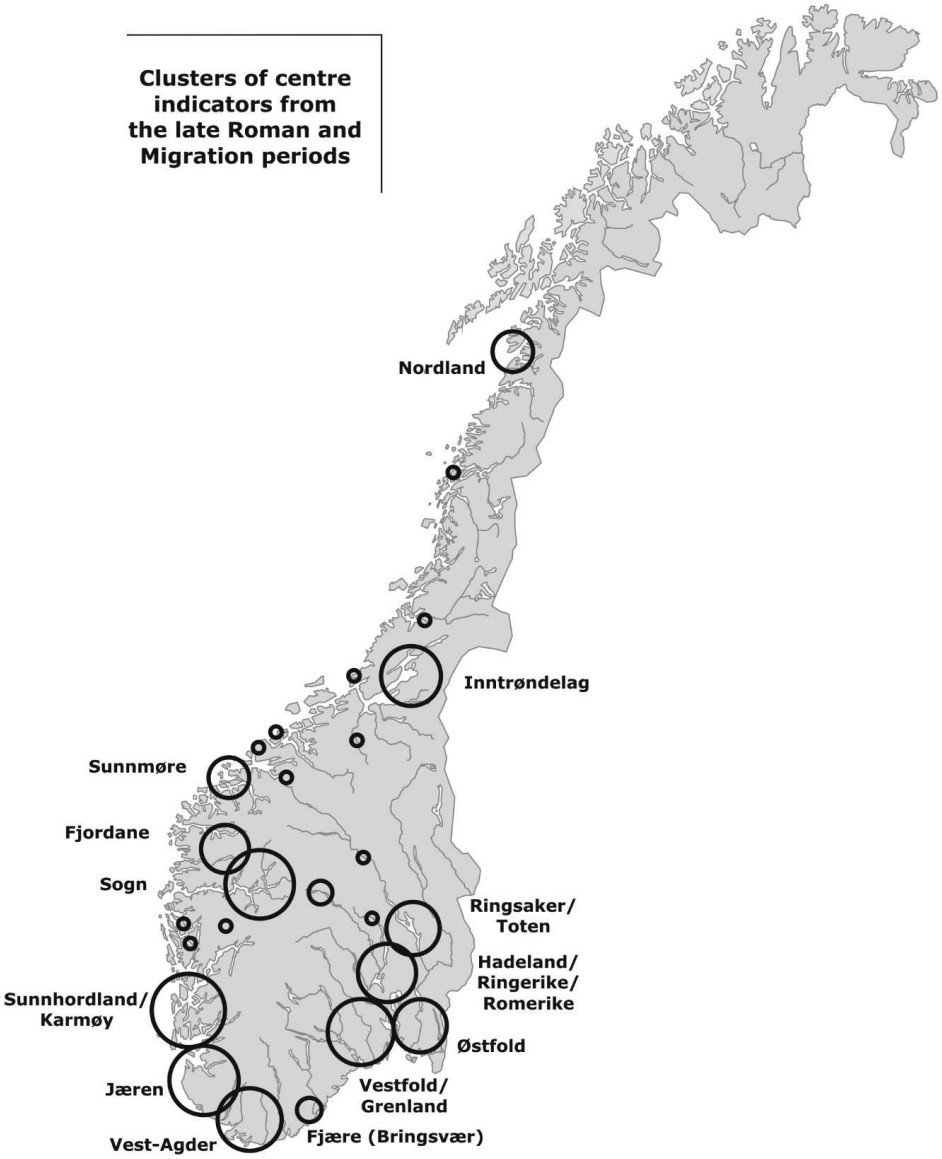


Fig. 8.2. Clusters of selected centre indicators from the late Roman and Migration periods in Norway. Some of the major regional concentrations are indicated by name, the smallest dots reflect more isolated finds in Fig. 8.1.

Chapter 9. Summary and concluding remarks

How were the western Norwegian centres of the late Roman and Migration periods organised? Based on the distribution of centre indicators, is it possible to identify how elite milieus interacted and gathered central functions at certain localities?

At the start of the thesis, the main theme of the study was presented as these two questions. These questions were further elaborated to a set of questions that was pursued through the progress of Chapters 2 to 7. While the first of the questions above was related to the most basic aim of the thesis, the second question provided a clue to how this aim methodologically was to be approached in the thesis. The second question was thus intimately linked to the simple model of centre organisation that was presented in Chapter 2. After a review of relevant research history and some more recent perspectives on centres and material agency, I arrived at a basic model of how the elites organised their centres. According to this model, the main components of the centres were the elite milieus, the centre indicators and the central functions that were associated with these centres. Throughout the thesis, this simple model allowed us an access the elite milieus and centres through a study of centre indicators.

Previous studies carried out by Myhre and Ringstad formed my methodological starting point, and Chapter 3 explored the methods used to identify centres in their studies. While some methodological shortcomings were found and some theoretical implications were rejected, the methods for identifying centres were largely validated. In Chapter 4, the methodological framework was modified in accordance with recent Norwegian and Scandinavian research on centres. The chapter concluded with a set of centre indicators, including status objects and grand buildings, as well as sacral place names and categories related to rituals. In Chapters 5 and 6, many categories of centre indicators were analysed closer to see how they could illuminate elite milieus and central functions. By applying the simple model of Chapter 2, elaborated with insights from Chapters 5 and 6, the local contexts of 12 of Myhre's and Ringstad's centres were analysed in depth in Chapter 7. This collection of centres provided a large data set identifying general trends and variation in how the different centres were organised.

In Chapter 8, important insights from the analysis in Chapters 5 to 7 were summarised in a synthesis on how centres within the study area were organised especially with regard to the central functions. At each of the centres, the core of one or more elite milieus was identified, alongside a varying composition of central functions. From this it might be concluded that the general model of centre organisation worked well as an approach to these centres. The main results of the analysis were related to the presence of central functions associated with the hall, the retinue, the thing and the religion.

The halls of the written sources are thought to have their roots in the late Roman period. While it is often hard to distinguish hall rooms, in these periods they tend to be found in houses of extraordinary dimensions. In Norway as a whole, buildings of such dimensions occur at sites that might be associated with elites. A clear majority of these 'great halls' are found at defined centres in Jæren. The concentration of seven large longhouses at the centre in Nærbø shows that such houses were common among a broad stratum of elites. It was further assumed that many political alliances were negotiated in the hall. Several possible alliances have been identified in the thesis, with the alliance networks of the Avaldsnes and Hauge-Tu milieus being the most prominent examples. While the late Roman period Avaldsnes network was traceable mainly by the distribution of serpent head rings and Roman imports, the allies of the Hauge-Tu milieu in the Migration period were identified through the spread of status brooches.

To these networks might be added the military networks interpreted mainly from status weapons. The status weapon graves indicate the presence of military leaders at changing localities over time, and with varying relationships. The large boathouses found near some of the military leaders indicate a military organisation in retinues. While weapons were mostly found in status weapon graves in the late Roman period, weapon graves had a wider distribution in the Migration period. This was interpreted as changes in the military organisation and the nature of conflicts. Hill forts were interpreted as evidence of conflicts, especially in the Migration period. The centres at Etne and Hafrsfjord had a presence of both military leaders and defensive systems with several hill forts. Hill forts might have had a rather varied use both for defence and for attack, thereby occurring both at centres as well as in peripheral parts of the region.

Important insights into the relation between elite milieus and judicial organisation in the study area were also obtained. Comparing the layout of some of the most regular court sites in the study area to that of the ring fort of Eketorp in Öland, similar leader houses to the one in Eketorp were identified at the court sites Sausjord, Klauhauane and Dysjane. The leader houses indicate that upon establishment of these court sites, some elites had special importance and probably controlled certain decisions made on the thing site. The sites at Klauhauane and Dysjane were established in the Roman period, slightly withdrawn from the associated elite milieus, and they were abandoned in the transition to the Migration period. It is possible that the court sites went out of use due to the increasing power of some elites. The thing sites might then have been moved to sites at elite farms, as is perhaps seen in Tinghaug in Tu and Tingvollen in Lye. While ritual central functions have proven harder to identify, the Hove centre provided an important case study of a ritual centre. Hove had a cluster of sacral place names, a building complex interpreted as a ritual site, as well as graves identified as possibly belonging to female ritual leaders. Although there are uncertainties connected with the identification of ritual central functions, the presence of sacral place names at all of the studied localities indicates that this was an integral aspect of most centres.

The study of the early Iron Age centres in western Norway is a classical research theme where important knowledge has been built up by researchers such as Shetelig, Slomann, Odner, Myhre and Ringstad. The present thesis has contributed with new knowledge, underlining also that further research is still needed in this field of research. Although the results of the thesis primarily apply to the study area, my analysis of elite milieus and centres is also a contribution to our general knowledge about early Iron Age centres in Scandinavia. The 12 centres provide a large data set for further investigations of late Roman and Migration period centres in Norway and in Scandinavia. As it has been a major aim to introduce these centres to researchers in the wider Scandinavian discourse, it is my hope that the thesis provides a key to the treasure chest of centres that the western Norwegian material holds. Future research both on single centres and regional variation is certainly needed to reveal both similarities and differences between the many early Iron Age elite milieus and centres in Scandinavia.

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Appendix I: Map of municipalities in the study area

Map of municipalities in Hordaland and Rogaland (2017).

Appendix II: Lists of selected object categories

Please note that only the object categories not already listed in Chapter 5 are listed below. For an overview of Roman and Migration period imported vessels in Norway, see Lund Hansen, 1987; Straume, 1987, 2015; Holand, 2001; Hauken 2005.

1. Spindle whorls of bronze in Norway (Fig. 5.13)

Museum no.	Location
T 17925	Glein, Dønna, Nordland
T 6839	Risvik, Overhalla, Nord-Trøndelag
T 17554	Kjesbu, Inderøy, Nord-Trøndelag
T 2179	Valstad, Verdal, Nord-Trøndelag
T 14735	Rognhaug, Levanger, Nord-Trøndelag
T 22802	Lø, Steinkjer, Nord-Trøndelag
T 494	Lysøya, Åfjord, Sør-Trøndelag
T 58	Rennebu, Sør-Trøndelag
B 8628	Blindheim, Ålesund, Møre og Romsdal
B 7548	Emlem, Borgund, Møre og Romsdal
B 6891	Gjerstad, Osterøy, Hordaland
B 6981	Mele, Osterøy, Hordaland
B 491	Hauge, Sveio, Hordaland
B 4208	Innbjoa, Vindafjord, Rogaland
C 2211	Sørhaug, Haugesund, Rogaland
S 1292	Sauda, Sauda, Rogaland
S 6778	Hegreberg, Rennesøy, Rogaland
S 3775	Dirdal, Gjesdal, Rogaland
B 487	Austrått, Sandnes, Rogaland
B 4481	Orre, Klepp, Rogaland
B 4643	Reve (?), Klepp (?), Rogaland
S 5035	Re, Time, Rogaland
S 9510	Lye, Time, Rogaland
S 1019	Fuglestad, Hå, Rogaland
S 1290	Høyland, Hå, Rogaland
S 8520	Nord-Varhaug, Hå, Rogaland
S 8513	Obrestad, Hå, Rogaland
S 5966	Reime, Hå, Rogaland
B 5340	Kvassheim, Hå, Rogaland
B 5342	Kvassheim, Hå, Rogaland
B 5375	Kvassheim, Hå, Rogaland
Lost	Lunde, Farsund, Vest-Agder
C 3748	Nodeland, Songdalen, Vest-Agder
C 23143	Horrisland, Vennesla, Vest-Agder

C 7760	Bringsvær, Grimstad, Aust-Agder
C 7342	Bringsvær, Grimstad, Aust-Agder
C 7343	Bringsvær, Grimstad, Aust-Agder
C 7774	Bringsvær, Grimstad, Aust-Agder
C 36666	Bratsberg, Skien, Telemark
C 19466	Lardal, Vestfold
C 22382	Larvik, Vestfold
C 12958	Tveitane, Larvik, Vestfold
C 12997	Tveitane, Larvik, Vestfold
C 13009	Tveitane, Larvik, Vestfold
C 13052	Tveitane, Larvik, Vestfold
C 13079	Tveitane, Larvik, Vestfold
C 18788	Klåstad, Larvik, Vestfold
C New	Ås Østre, Sande, Vestfold
C 4173	Kjørstad, Sør-Fron, Oppland
C 5518	Garder, Østre Toten, Oppland
C 14637	Oren, Lunner, Oppland
C 9602	By, Løiten, Hedmark
C 623	Sætrang, Ringerike, Buskerud (3 whorls)

2. Swastika fibulas in Norway (Fig. 8.1)

Museum no.	Location
T 2792	Tommeide, Dønna, Nordland
T 586	Hallem, Verdal, Nord-Trøndelag
C 5877	Åk, Rauma, Møre og Romsdal
C 10003	Gangså, Marnardal, Vest-Agder
EG 57	Evang, Østre Toten, Oppland
C 25200 a	Nedre Lunde, Nordre Land, Oppland

3. Shield bosses of bronze and silver in Norway (Fig. 8.1)

Museum no.	Location	Type
Ts 5401	Bø, Steigen, Nordland	Bronze shield boss
B 8590	Rutlin, Sogndal, Sogn og Fjordane	Bronze shield boss
B 9369	Prestegården, Aurland, Sogn og Fjordane	Bronze shield boss
B 609	Avaldsnes, Karmøy, Rogaland	Silver shield boss
B 9254	Sjo, Kvinnherad, Hordaland	Bronze shield boss
B 6012	Utbjoa, Vindafjord, Rogaland	Bronze shield boss
C 4763	Jevnaker, Jevnaker, Oppland	Bronze shield boss
C 22231	Vennolum, Gran, Oppland	Bronze shield boss
C 22323	Møistad, Hamar, Hedmark	Bronze shield boss
C 22849	Vestad, Larvik, Vestfold	Bronze shield boss
C 18578-84	Hunn, Borge, Østfold	Bronze shield boss

4. Gold medallions and solidi in Norway (Fig. 8.1)

Museum no.	Location	Type
T 5218	Hov, Namsos, Nord-Trøndelag	Medallion
T 17460	Vika, Inderøy, Nord-Trøndelag	Medallion imitation
C 5874	Åk, Rauma, Møre og Romsdal	Medallion imitation
B 11546	Godøy, Giske, Møre og Romsdal	Medallion imitation
B 12048	Haram, Haram, Møre og Romsdal	Medallion imitation
B 1875	Hove, Vik, Sogn og Fjordane	Medallion imitation
B 1876	Midt-Mjelde, Osterøy, Hordaland	Medallion imitation
S 2245	Mauland, Time, Rogaland	Medallion imitation
C 4327	Vestre Hauge, Farsund, Vest-Agder	Medallion
NM 8512	Gunheim, Sauherad, Telemark	Medallion imitation
C 22668	Veien, Norderhov, Buskerud	Medallion
Lost	Kroen, Steinvik, Nord-Trøndelag	Five gold coins
B 8983	Hamre, Leikanger, Sogn og Fjordane	Solidus with loop
B 4590	Evebø, Gloppen, Sogn og Fjordane	Solidus with loop
B 3358	Sæbø, Kvinnherad, Hordaland	Solidus with loop
Lost	Prestegården, Ølve, Kvinnherad, Hordaland	Gold coin
S 4100	Ånestad, Hå, Rogaland	Solidus
Lost	Lunde, Farsund, Vest-Agder	Gold coin or bracteate

5. Gold bracteates in Norway (Fig. 8.1)

Museum no./IK	Location	A	B	C	D	?	Total
Ts 2438	Mjønes, Bodø, Nordland			1			1
T 1660	Inderøy, Verdal, Nord-Trøndelag				1		1
C 4565-7	Dalem, Steinkjer, Nord-Trøndelag			3			3
IK 317	Rømul, Meldal, Sør-Trøndelag			7			7
T 26337	Tornes, Fræna, Møre og Romsdal	1					1
B 317	Hauge, Luster, Sogn og Fjordane			1			1
B 4258	Høyvik, Jølster, Sogn og Fjordane			4	2		6
B 1885	Stedje, Sogndal, Sogn og Fjordane			1			1
IK 212	Ænes, Kvinnherad, Hordaland					1	1
B 11060, 7955	Grindheim, Etne, Hordaland				6		6
S 8390	Gard, Haugesund, Rogaland			1			1
B 4319	Raunes, Vindafjord, Rogaland			1			1
S 7130	Teig, Sauda, Rogaland				2		2
S 6975	Fora, Finnøy, Rogaland	2					2
S 2547	Rivjaland, Hjelmeland, Rogaland				1		1
S 4547	Holta, Strand, Rogaland				3		3
C 4523-35, 7172	Madla, Stavanger, Rogaland	1		3	10		14

C 2022	Joa, Sola, Rogaland	1					1
S 4800	Vatne, Sandnes, Rogaland			1			1
S 1295	Åse, Sandnes, Rogaland			1			1
S 11648	Skjørestad, Sandnes, Rogaland				1		1
C 1324-29	Selvik, Sandnes, Rogaland	1		1	4		6
S 3123	Store Salte, Klepp, Rogaland	1					1
B 4000	Hauge, Klepp, Rogaland	1		1			2
S 4482	Norheim, Time, Rogaland				1		1
B 1849	Vestly, Time, Rogaland	1					1
B 1877	Garpestad, Time, Rogaland			1			1
AM 826-27	Rimestad, Hå, Rogaland			2			2
C 715	Opstad, Hå, Rogaland			1	1		2
S 938	Voll, Hå, Rogaland				1		1
C 3201	Vigrestad, Hå, Rogaland	1					1
S 8096	Hå gamle prestegard, Hå, Rogaland			1			1
C 1628	Kydland, Hå, Rogaland				1		1
S 8075	Sør-Varhaug, Hå, Rogaland			1			1
S 1295	Vinningsland, Bjerkreim, Rogaland			1			1
B 5994	Kvassheim, Hå, Rogaland				1		1
C 760	Årstad, Eigersund, Rogaland				1		1
C 3325	Berge, Lyngdal, Vest-Agder			1			1
C 687	Vanse prestegard, Farsund, Vest-Agder			1			1
B 3410	Ytre Ågedal, Audnedal, Vest-Agder			2			2
C 7539, 53, 63	Gyland, Flekkefjord, Vest-Agder			3			3
C 22600	Jåtog, Farsund, Vest-Agder				2		2
C 23241	Brekne, Farsund, Vest-Agder				1		1
C 21400	Austad, Flekkefjord, Vest-Agder			6			6
C 465	Hole, Hurum, Buskerud				1		1
IK 305	Modum, Buskerud			1			1
IK 509	Simones, Notodden, Telemark	1		1	3		5
C 9440	Søtvet, Skien, Telemark			2			2
C 21856	Falkum, Skien, Telemark	1					1
C 30166	Linnestad, Re, Vestfold			2			2
C 11220	Tveitane, Larvik, Vestfold			1			1
C 11365 etc.	Lerhus, Eidsvoll, Akershus				10		10
C 2468-92	Sletner, Aurskog-Høland, Akershus		2	9	6		17
C 1727 etc.	Øvre Tøyen, Aurskog-Høland, Akershus			5	14		19
C 50484 a	Dingstad, Spydeberg, Østfold				1		1
C 648, 689	Fredrikstad, Østfold			1	1		2
C 4068	Lille-Skjør, Eidsberg, Østfold			1			1
B 1887	Western Norway				1		1
IK 310,476,72:2	Norway			2	1		3
Total		12	2	71	77	1	163

IK refers to number in Hauck & Axboe, 1985-89. A gold loop, probably from a large bracteate, recently found at Hå in Hå, Rogaland (S 12625), is not included in the list.

6. Gold and gilded neck and arm rings in Norway (Fig. 8.1)

Museum no.	Location	Type
C 4965	Vuku, Verdal, Nord-Trøndelag	Neck ring fragment
Lost	Ysse, Nord-Trøndelag	Arm ring
B 896	Valderøy, Borgund, Møre og Romsdal	Arm ring (?)
B 517-18	Austrått, Sandnes, Rogaland	3 neck rings (2 in fragments)
B 3734	Vasshus, Lund, Rogaland	Neck ring
Lost	Holmegård, Holum, Vest-Agder	Arm ring
C 27610	Øksendal, Sirdal, Vest-Agder	2 neck rings
C 1632	Ofegstad, Re, Vestfold	2 neck rings
C 3814	Stokke, Vestfold	Neck ring fragment
C 29353	Åker, Hamar, Hedmark	Arm ring
C 35221	Åker, Hamar, Hedmark	Neck ring
C 325	Veien, Norderhov, Buskerud	Neck ring
C 1022	Nordre Aas, Øvre Eiker, Buskerud	Neck ring
C 12024	Bardalen, Nordre Land, Oppland	Neck ring
C 2469	Sletner, Aurskog-Høland, Akershus	Neck ring
C 21821	Østre Nordbråte, Trøgstad, Østfold	Neck ring fragment
C 9124	Børud, Østfold	Neck ring fragment

7. Gold sword mouthpieces in Norway (Fig. 8.1)

Museum no.	Location	Type
B 6948	Rekve, Voss, Hordaland	Spiral mouthpiece
B 2049	Etne, Hordaland	Filigree mouthpiece
C 4537	Madla, Stavanger, Rogaland	Spiral mouthpiece
C 25813	Bergsaker, Lyngdal, Vest-Agder	Filigree mouthpiece
C 25077	Åmdal, Lista, Vest-Agder	Filigree mouthpiece
C 18981	Elton, Vestre Toten, Oppland	Spiral mouthpiece
C 992	Egge, Vestre Slidre, Oppland	Filigree mouthpiece
C 21827	Madserud Allé, Oslo	Spiral mouthpiece
C 11423-24; C 11427	Lerhus, Eidsvoll, Akershus	2 filigree mouthpieces; Spiral mouthpiece
C 1793-94	Øvre Tøyen, Aurskog-Høland, Akershus	2 spiral mouthpieces
C 2468	Sletner, Aurskog-Høland, Akershus	Filigree mouthpiece

Please note that the filigree pommel from Hodneland, Lindås was added to this group in Fig. 8.1.

Appendix III: Lists of selected structure categories

Please note that only the structure categories not listed in Chapter 6 and not easily accessible in other publications (e.g. Olsen, 1915; Grimm, 2006, 2010; Kuhnle 2013) are listed. As my survey of large burial mounds in southern Rogaland is preliminary and incomplete (Table 6.7), my tentative list of large mounds is not included here.

1. Phallus stones in Hordaland and Rogaland (Fig. 6.22)

Museum no.	Location
B 7869	Mjelde, Osterøy, Hordaland
B 9002	Toft, Lindås, Hordaland
B 12044	N. Haugland, Radøy, Hordaland
B 10540	Bolstad, Voss, Hordaland
B 9922	Hauso, Ullensvang, Hordaland
B 10576	Sunndal, Kvinnherad, Hordaland
-	Nautøy, Bømlo, Hordaland
-	Vestbø, Vindafjord, Rogaland
S 5970	Høyvik, Tysvær, Rogaland
S 5173	Gard, Finnøy, Rogaland
S 5080	Eik, Finnøy, Rogaland
S 5174	Eik, Finnøy, Rogaland
S 5680	Noreim, Finnøy, Rogaland
C 16221	Noreim, Finnøy, Rogaland
S 4176	Nord-Hidle, Finnøy, Rogaland
S 4176	Nord-Hidle, Finnøy, Rogaland
-	Nord-Hidle, Finnøy, Rogaland
-	Byre, Finnøy, Rogaland
S 5175	Nedre Fister, Hjelmeland, Rogaland
S 5176	Nedre Fister, Hjelmeland, Rogaland
S 5177	Nedre Fister, Hjelmeland, Rogaland
S 5990	Nedre Fister, Hjelmeland, Rogaland
S 6521	Idse, Strand
S 10645	Hauskje, Rennesøy
S 3742	Harestad, Randaberg, Rogaland
-	Røyneberg, Sola, Rogaland
B 2727	Austvoll, Sandnes, Rogaland
S 5681	Tu, Klepp, Rogaland

A few ‘natural’ white stones not listed here are interpreted as ‘holy white stones’ in the discussion of the centre localities Osterøy (Mele) and Rosendal (Haugland).

2. Hill forts in Hordaland and Rogaland (Fig. 6.11)

List of hill forts in Hordaland and Rogaland. The hill forts listed by Myhre (Myhre = number in Myhre 1987a, Fig. 9) are compared to the sites currently listed in the Askeladden database. For more details on the ^{14}C-dates, see list 3 below. The strike-a-light from the hill fort Steinfjell in Åkra, Karmøy is depicted in Fig. 6.10. In a few cases, some adjacent hill fort sites might be regarded as parts of the same hill fort.

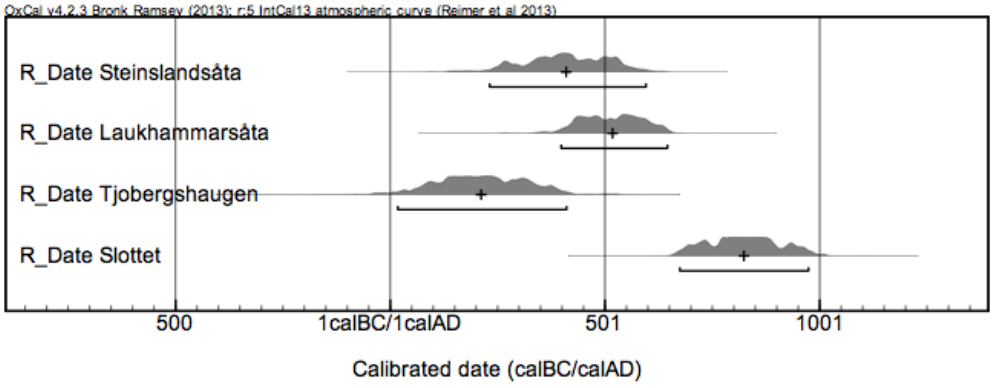
Myhre	Askeladden id	Location	Site	Finds / ^{14}C dates
122	15786	Grimstad, Lindås	Nordre Mulen	
121	91771	Herdla, Askøy	Nesseborgen	
120	6461	Greve, Osterøy	Bjødnekletten	
115	111682	Møkster, Austevoll	Borgeledhaugen	
116	101841	Sandvin, Odda	Sandvinshaugen	
-	101832	Berge, Odda	Åsthelleberget	
117	100866	Nedre Børve, Ullensvang	Børvehovden	
118	102251	Varberg, Eidfjord	Steinberg	
119	105710	Steine, Kvam	Kletten	
131	25630	Sunde, Tysnes	Slottet	675-975 cal AD
113	6064	Laukhamar, Tysnes	Laukhammarsåta	399-646 cal AD
-	132183	Laukhamar, Tysnes	Paddeborgo	
114	72879	Skålavik, Fitjar	Slotthaug	
112	6386	Sjoangjo, Kvinnherad	Tjobergshaugen	18-411 cal AD
107	90572	Berge, Bømlo	Bergesfjellet	Viking Age finds
108	90177	Brenneland, Etne	Holenuten	
109	90172	Vad, Etne	Hushaug	
110	90165	Steine, Etne	Heio	
111	90166	Matskor, Etne	Borgaråsen	
105	106039	Røykjenes, Sveio	Børshovda	
106	55218	Steinsland, Vindafjord	Steinslandsåta	232-596 cal AD
102	33964	Vik, Karmøy	Storaborg	
103	34355	Vignes, Karmøy	Bårholmen	
-	4923	Åkra, Karmøy	Steinfjell	Strike-a-ligth (EIA)
104	44770	Hovland, Utsira	Børgje	
100	65515	Rosseid, Suldal	Børshauen	
101	15207	Tjøstheim, Suldal	Steinsveo	
93	34153	Runestad, Finnøy	Borgåsen	
94	4748	Kindingstad, Finnøy	Borgaråsen	
95	53956	Nåden, Finnøy	Nådøynå	
99	4733	Hauga, Finnøy	Finnborg	

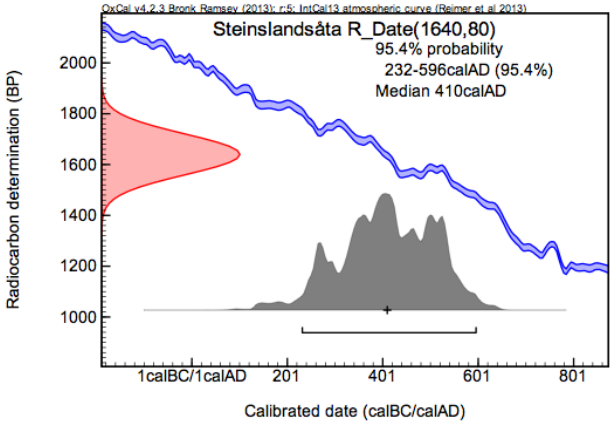
96	24124	Ytre Nessa, Hjelmeland	Hingardshammar	
97	44456	Mjølhus, Hjelmeland	Borgaråsen	
-	72175	Mjølhus, Hjelmeland	Mjølhus	
-	72177	Espeland, Hjelmeland	Søre Borgaråsen	
98	65685	Rosså, Hjelmeland	Borgåsen	
-	65661	Øvre Fister, Hjelmeland	Husåsen	
-	44037	Øye, Hjelmeland	Eikjehaugen	
91	24591	Sedberg, Strand	Sedbergåsen	
92	5432	Tau, Strand	Borgåsen	
-	44925	Meltveit, Strand	Nibe	
89	64525	Hodnafjell, Rennesøy	Flundrehaug	
90	15028	Nordbø, Rennesøy	Lysefjellet	
-	24377	Hodne, Rennesøy	Rennesøyhodne	
80	44569	Røyneberg, Sola	Myklaberget	
81	65861	Saurnes, Sola	Ytraberg	
82	14842	Haga, Sola	Bergjet	
88	44507	Søre Lunde, Stavanger	Jissberje	
78	65790	Gausel, Stavanger	Ulsberget	
79	65806	Jåttå, Stavanger	Jåttånuten	
83	5470	Nord-Sunde, Stavanger	Risnes	
85	14958	Hogstad, Sandnes	Storaberget	
84	34600	Selvik, Sandnes	Borghammaren	
86	5571	Eltravåg, Sandnes	Kattaborg	
87	44662	Uskjå, Sandnes	Uskjeklubben	
77	24781	Skaret, Sandnes	Ragnenut	
76	15068	Stangeland, Klepp	Helleberget	
75	26148	Åsland, Time	Åslandsnuten	
74	24151	Hadland, Hå	Borgerberget	
73	4991	Lindtjørn, Hå	Borgåsen	
72	4849	Tengesdal, Bjerkreim	Litlaberget	
62	53581	Hestad, Eigersund	Borgaråsen	
63	23950	Podlå, Eigersund	Kvennhusknuden	
64	43824	Podlå, Eigersund	Slåde	
65	53574	Rapstad, Eigersund	Rapstadborga	
66	23959	Birkjeland, Eigersund	Storeknut	
67	4798	Helleland, Eigersund	Borgaråsen	
68	23935	Mjølhus, Eigersund	Kongssede	
69	14569	Skåra, Eigersund	Veshovda	
70	34231	Skåra, Eigersund	Borgåsen	
71	71941	Grastveid, Eigersund	Beringsfjedle	
61	65887	Ytre Evja, Sokndal	Borrlandshaugen	
60	65879	Urdal, Sokndal	Borlandsfjellet	

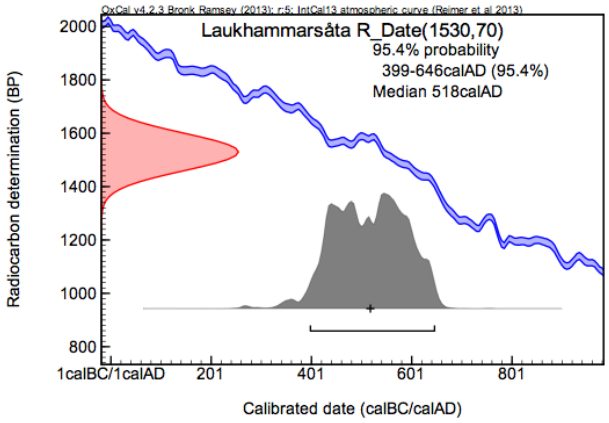
3. Calibration curves for ^{14}C-dates from hill forts (Table 6.10)

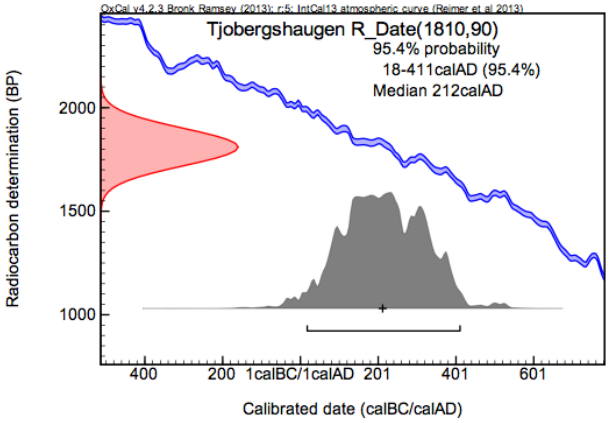
The table below lists Bjørn Myhre's charcoal samples from hill forts in Sunnhordland, which were dated in 1981-83 at the radicarbon laboratory at NTNU, Trondheim. By recalibrating original ^{14}C-dates obtained from the NTNU laboratory, new calibrated dates with 95.4% probability were produced using the calibration IntCal13 in OxCal. Note that only one of the two Steinslandsåta samples are listed here.

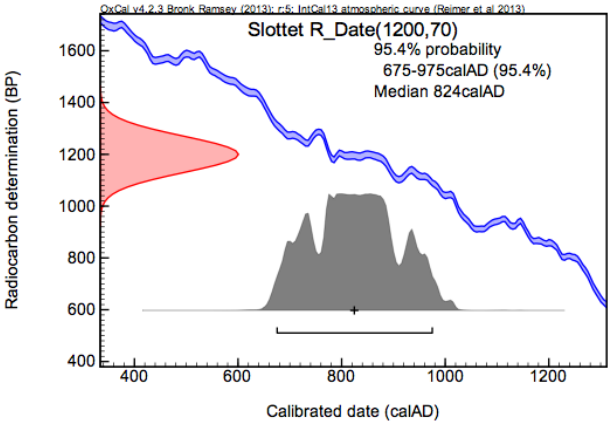
Site / Location	Sample nuber	14C-date BP	Original cal AD	MASCA cal AD	OxCal IntCal 13 cal AD (95.4%)	OxCal Median
Steinslandsåta, Vindafjord	T-4143	1640±80	330±110	265-530	232-596	410
Laukhammarsåta, Tysnes	T-4330	1530±70	460±90	430-605	399-646	518
Tjobergshaugen, Kvinnherad	T-4882	1810±90	160±90	85-335	18-411	212
Slottet, Tysnes	T-4883	1200±70	780±100	715-895	675-975	824






OxCal v4.2.3 Bronk Ramsey (2013); r:5; IntCal13 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2013)
Laukhammarsåta R_Date(1530,70)
95.4% probability
399-646calAD (95.4%)
Median 518calAD
Radiocarbon determination (BP)
2000
1800
1600
1400
1200
1000
800
1calBC/1calAD
201
401
601
801
Calibrated date (calBC/calAD)


OxCal v4.2.3 Bronk Ramsey (2013); r:5; IntCal13 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2013)
Tjobergshaugen R_Date(1810,90)
95.4% probability
18-411calAD (95.4%)
Median 212calAD
Radiocarbon determination (BP)
2000
1500
1000
400
200
1calBC/1calAD
201
401
601
Calibrated date (calBC/calAD)


OxCal v4.2.3 Bronk Ramsey (2013); r:5; IntCal13 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2013)
Slottet R_Date(1200,70)
95.4% probability
675-975calAD (95.4%)
Median 824calAD
Radiocarbon determination (BP)
1600
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
400
600
800
1000
1200
Calibrated date (calAD)

Appendix IV: Lists of objects at each centre locality

Suggested dates, interpretations and sources are mentioned in the text in Chapter 7.

Note that only the object categories are listed here. See also discussion in Chapter 5.

Abbreviations: S = Museum of Archaeology, Stavanger; B = University Museum, Bergen; C = Museum of Cultural History, Oslo; BM = British Museum; AM = Ashmolean Museum.

1. Osterøy (Fig. 7.3)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Øvsthus	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2C	B 316
Raknes	Status weapons	Bronze sword knob	B 6670
	Coin	Silver denarius	B 6186
Mosevoll	Status weapons	Silver sword sheath fittings	B 6491
Revheim	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2D?	B 4626
Hagebø	Coin	Bronze tetradrachme	B 13397
Vevle	Weapons		Lost
Gjerstad	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl	B 6891
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B30 var	
Rongve	Status weapons	Gilt bronze sword sheath fittings	B 9015
Vedo	Weapons		Lost
Mele	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 6981
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B10 var Ia	
	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl	
	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
	Status weapons	Mollestad type sword	BM 1861, 0315.4
	Status weapons	Silver sword chape	B 5742
Mjelde	Medallion	Medallion imitation	B 1876
	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
	Weapons		
	Weapons		B 1639-41
Votlo	Weapons		B 7962
	Weapons		Lost
Ytre Arna	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 8649
Indre Arna	Status brooch	Relief brooch	B 564
Tunes	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2C	B 311

2. Voss (Fig. 7.5)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Kolle	Coin	Silver denarius	B 8791
Bokkatun	Weapons		B 5639
Seim	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B30 var	B 1899, B 732
Væte	Imported vessel	Bronze dish	B 320
Skjelde	Weapons		B 5407
Hæve	Status brooch	Relief brooch	B 6473
	Weapons		
	Weapons		B 6475
Rekve	Status weapons	Vøien group spearhead	B 7525
	Status weapons Gold hoard	Gold spiral sword mouthpiece; 85,5 g	B 6948
	Weapons		B 351-535
Gjerstad	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 12046
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker (?)	B 12047
Gjerme	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
Veka	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
Bø	Weapons		B 2665
Byrkje	Weapons		B 6227
Djukastein	Weapons		B 395
Kvåle	Weapons		B 9995
Lekve	Weapons		B 4290
Vang	Weapons		C 6326
Flatekvål	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	B 915
	Weapons		B 740
Øvre Grauo	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2	B 9373
	Weapons		B 739-51
Nedre Auro	Weapons		B 7145
Lid	Weapons		B 3675
Bryn	Weapons		C 1320
Herre	Status weapons	Gilt silver/bronze sword fittings	B 6349

3. Rosendal (Fig. 7.8)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Nes	Status ring	Finger ring, type B39b	B 5931
	Gold object	Gold bead	B 7428
	Weapons		B 4472
	Weapons		B 11157
Skåla	Imported vessels	Bronze vessel	Lost
	Imported vessels	Bronze vessel	Lost
	Gold object	Payment ring	Lost
	Gold ring	Gold ring	Lost
	Weapons		Lost
Mel	Gold ring	Gold ring	Lost
	Weapons		Lost
Hatteberg	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	B 7838
Skeide	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B10 var Ib	B 7427
Seim	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	B 4639 / Lost
	Weapons		B 6883
Segleim	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2C	B 308-310
	Gold ring	Gold ring	
	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
Voll	Weapons		B 7672
Fet	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2	B 1897
Døsland	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B1	B 11914
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 11476
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2C	B 319
Haugland	Imported vessel	Glass beaker (?)	B 6103
	Gold object	Drop of gold	
	Weapons		B 3868
Berge	Weapons		B 1213-14

4. Etne (Fig. 7.12)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Hovland	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 1B	B 7956
	Weapons		B 6512
Stødle	Weapons		B 10201/ S 2213
	Weapons		B 15394
Sørheim	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B13	B 6137
	Gold ring	Gold ring	Lost
	Gold ring	Gold ring	Lost
	Status brooch	Relief brooch	B 10205/ S 2850
	Weapons		B 10205/ S 2850
Austrheim	Gold ring	Finger ring	B 331 / Lost
Grindheim	Gold hoard Bracteates	Hoard of 6 D-bracteates	B 7955, B 11060
	Imported vessel	Eastland bucket	B 6233
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B11 var b	B 7634
	Status brooch	Relief brooch	B 10202/ S 2617
	Weapons		B 5888
	Weapons		B 5893
	Weapons		B 5894
Rygg	Weapons		B 5890
	Weapons		B 5892
	Weapons		B 10204/ S 2700
Auastad	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 1C	B 4858
Gjerde	Status weapons	Gilded sword sheath fittings	B 6207
	Imported vessels	Glass beaker	B 1598
	Gold ring	Gold ring	Lost
	Coin	Silver denarius	B new
Øvstebø	Weapons		B 7743
	Weapons		B 7886, B 7958
	Weapons		B 8316
Osvåg	Weapons		B 466
«Etne»	Gold hoard Status weapons	Gold filigree sword mounting	B 2049

5. Avaldsnes (Fig. 7.17)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Feøy	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 2123
Gard	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B33 var	C 2210-12
	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl, type R171	
	Bracteate	C-bracteate	S 8390
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	
Norheim	Imported vessel	Hemmoor bucket, type E58	B 5759
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron	Lost
Gunnarshaug	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
Bø	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	B 5754, B 6050
	Gold object	Gold berlock	
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B5	B 5903
Reheia	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron	Lost
	Weapons		Lost
	Weapons		Lost
Vikshåland	Weapons		S 3446
Avaldsnes	Status weapons	Silver shield boss / gilded sword sheath	B 606-17, C 718, C 24819-20
	Status ring	Neck ring, type R300	
	Status ring	Finger ring, type B18	
	Imported vessel	Hemmoor bucket, type E59	
	Imported vessel	Bronze strainer, type E161	
	Imported vessel	Brass dish, type E86	
	Gold object	Gold pin	
	Imported vessel	Hemmoor bucket, type E58	
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B5	
	Gold objects	5 currency rings / spiral rings	
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2C	B 605
	Gold object	Gold pendant	S 6810
	Gold object	Gold ingot	S 12222
	Weapons		B 916
Kolstø	Status ring	Finger ring, type E39c	B 2774
Våråa	Status brooch	Rosette fibula	S 3196

6. Bjoafjord (Fig. 7.21)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Utbjoa	Status weapons	Bronze shield boss	B 6012
Innbjoa	Status ring	Arm ring, serpent head type B	B 4045, B 4208
	Status ring	Finger ring, type B18	
	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl	
	Status whorl	Silver spindle whorl, type R171	
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B30 var	B 6014
	Gold object	Gold string	
Kjellasvik	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2	B 7665
Sæbø	Status weapons	Gilt silver sword sheath fittings	B 3358
	Imported wessel	Westland cauldron, type 2C	
	Coin	Gold solidus with loop	
Øvrabø	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 3856
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 3855
	Gold object	Currency ring	
Øfsthus	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 3731
	Gold ring	Finger ring	
	Weapons		
Nordhus	Gold object	Gilt clasps	B 4096

7. Hove (Fig. 724)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Vatne	Bracteate	C-bracteate	S 4800
Brualand	Gold object	Gold berlock	C 9259-60
Austrått	Status rings	3 neck rings (2 in fragments)	B 517-18
	Status whorl	Bronze whorl	B 487
Høyland	Imported vessel	Large Westland cauldron, type 1D	S 2988
	Weapons		S 4560
	Weapons		S 4748
	Weapons		S 4785
Helgaland	Status weapons	Silver/lead ring sword pommel	S 3364
Hove	Status ring	Arm ring, serpent head type C	C 1101-02,06-07,30-33
	Status ring	Finger ring, type B18	
	Imported vessel	Hemmoor bucket, type E58	
	Gold object	Ring fragment = arm ring, type C	S 12523
	Gold object	Currency ring	C 1154
	Gold object	Currency ring / spiral ring	S new
Lunde	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2D	B 3159
	Status brooch	Relief brooch	C 1638
	Weapons		B 3100
Åse	Bracteate	C-bracteate	S 1295
Espeland	Imported vessel	Glass beaker (?)	S 9277

8. Hafrsfjord (Fig. 7.28)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Revheim	Coin	Silver denarius	S 7710
Stavanger	Coin	Silver denarius	Lost
Tjensvoll	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B33	S 9644
Madla	Status weapons Bracteate Gold hoard	Gold spiral sword mounting, 1 A-, 3 C- and 10 D-bracteates, currency rings; 305 g	C 4523-45, C 7172
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B	B 3018
	Gold object	Currency ring	C 14551
Ullandhaug	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 9643
Hinna	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 1B	S 2246
Grannes	Coin	Silver denarius	S 12432
Jåttå	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron	Lost
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B10 var Ia	S 4578
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2	S 2444
Joa	Bracteate	A-bracteate	C 2022
	Status ring	Finger ring, type B39 (?)	Lost
	Gold hoard	5 currency rings, string and 2 beads; 185 g	C 18732
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B30 var	B 4396
	Weapons		S 3533
Skadberg	Imported vessel	Glass horn	B 350
Tjora	Gold object	Gold object	Lost
Kolnes	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 5462
Sola	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron	C 22814
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2D	C 14974
Rege	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B33	B 4244
	Weapons		S 2462
Litlaland	Status weapons	Mollestad type sword	S 2595
Håland	Status weapons	Bronze sword pommel	S 8611
	Weapons		S 1759
Tjelta	Gold object	Gold object	Lost

9. Erga (Fig. 7.30)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Orre	Gold object	Gold string	B 2584
	Weapons		B 4226
Erga	Status weapons	Gold sword sheath fittings	S 1911
	Status ring	Finger ring, type B17b var III	
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker (?)	S 4446
	Status whorl	Amber spindle whorl, type R171	
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B4	S 7131
	Status brooch	Relief brooch	
	Status weapon	Gilded silver sword chape	
	Gold hoard	Currency ring; 172 g	S 3904
	Weapons		S 2311
	Weapons		S 7778
	Weapons		S 8614
Rosland	Gold hoard	7 currency rings; 55 g	S 4483
Vik	Status brooch	Relief brooch	S 8615
Åse	Gold hoard	Currency ring; 14 g	S 3250
Skeie	Gold hoard	Currency ring; 71 g	S 6442
Salte	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2D	S 7990
	Gold object	Gold foil	
	Bracteate	A-bracteate	S 3123
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2	B 4782
	Gold ring	Finger ring	S 4249
	Gold object	Currency ring	S 3122
	Weapons		B 4782

10. Tinghaug (Fig. 7.33)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Anda	Imported vessel	Hemmoor bucket, type E58	S 2337
	Status brooch	Relief brooch	B 2973
	Gold hoard	170 g	C 6700-05
Særheim	Gold object	Gold berlock	S 1518
Laland	Imported vessel	Eastland bucket	S 420-21
	Weapons		
Tu	Status weapons	2 gold carrying rings for sword (?)	S 1476-93
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2D	
	Gold ring	Gold ring	C 21407
	Status brooch	Relief fibula	
	Gold object	Currency ring	B 4644
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 1494
Hauge	Status brooch	Relief fibula	B 2269-99
	Gold object	Circular plate	
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	
	Imported vessel	Bronze dish	
	Status brooch	Relief fibula	B 4000
	Bracteates	A- and C-bracteates	
	Weapons		
Sørbø	Weapons		S 2409
Nord-Braut	Status brooch	Relief fibula	S 2451
	Gold object	Currency ring	B 4061
Sør-Braut	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 4058
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2C	
	Weapons		S 2452
	Gold object	Currency ring	
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2	
	Gold object	Gold bead	B 4061
	Gold object	Gold rings	Lost

11. Nærbø (Fig. 7.35)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Rimestad	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 4268
	Gold object	Gold string	
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 2132 etc.
	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	
	Gold ring	Finger ring	
	Weapons		
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2	B 4696
	Bracteate	Two C-bracteates	AM 826-7
Høyland	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl, type R171	S 1290
	Weapons		S 4785
Nærland	Status weapons	Mollestad type sword	S 1466-72
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	
	Gold ring	Finger ring	
Njærheim	Gold hoard	Currency ring; 62 g	B 6303
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B33	B 5115
Hå	Status weapons	Sword with bronze knob	S 4152
	Imported vessel	Eastland bucket	
	Bracteate	C-bracteate and bracteate loop	S 8096, S 12625
	Weapons		B 4882
Obrestad	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl, type R171	S 8513
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2	C 7746
Reime	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2-5	C 2690
	Weapons		S 1453
	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl	S 5966
Lode	Weapons		B 4884
Skjerpe	Weapons		B 4881
Motland	Status weapons	Sword sheath bronze fittings	S 8613
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2D	C 16268
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B1	S 7181
Torland	Status brooch	Relief brooch	S 440
Mauland	Medallion	Medallion imitation	S 2245
Bø	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 1A	S 4355
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B11 var Ib	
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 4792
	Gold ring	Spiral finger ring	B 4879
	Weapons		S 911-18
	Weapons		S 4070
Håland	Status weapons	Mollestad type sword	S 4068
	Status weapons	Mollestad/Kvamme type sword	S 4069
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	
	Gold ring	Finger ring	C 1087
Opstad	Gold hoard Bracteate	C- and D-bracteate	C 714-15
	Gold ring	Finger ring, type B2	C 1155

12. Lye (Fig. 7.39)

Location	Map signature	Type	Museum no.
Lye	Status whorl	Bronze spindle whorl	S 9510
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	Lost
	Bracteate	Gold bracteate	
	Gold ring	Gold ring	Lost
	Weapons		
Vestly	Imported vessel	Bronze strainer, type E161	S 1053
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	S 8635
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron, type 2D?	
	Gold ring	Finger ring	
	Weapons		
	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	B 1849-50
	Bracteate	A-bracteate	
	Weapons		
Norheim	Bracteate	D-bracteate	S 4482
Oma	Gold hoard	Large hoard with finger rings types B3, B4, B10, B11, B12 and many ingots; Over 600 g	C 18265-70, S 1921, B 6301
	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
	Imported vessel	Bronze vessel	Lost
	Imported vessel	Westland cauldron	Lost
	Gold ring	Finger ring	Lost
	Gold ring	Finger ring	Lost
Fosse	Status weapons	Gilded silver sword belt mound	S 6697
	Weapons		S 6694
Fotland	Gold ring	Finger ring	Lost
Garpestad	Status brooch	Relief brooch	B 1784
	Bracteate	C-bracteate	B 1877
Sæland	Imported vessel	Glass beaker	Lost
Eikeland	Status brooch	Relief brooch	S 9181