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Life on the Edge:  
Social, Political and Religious Frontiers in  
Early Medieval Europe

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By Babette Ludowici

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Life on the Edge:  
Social, Political and Religious Frontiers in  
Early Medieval Europe

Edited by Sarah Semple, Celia Orsini and Sian Mui

Sponsored by



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## Preface

The sixth volume of the series 'Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung' presents 36 papers presented originally at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Internationales Sachsensymposion, held in St John's College at Durham University, from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2012. These proceedings have been published with the Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum and the Internationales Sachsensymposion.

The theme of the conference 'Life on the Edge: Social Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe', was stimulated by the situation of Durham in the ancient kingdom of Northumbria. Formed from a series of smaller British polities in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, this political unit, at its greatest extent, reached from the Irish to the North Sea and from the River Humber north to the Firth of Forth, now in Scotland. It brought together British and Anglo-Saxon communities, but also at times encompassed Pictish populations. To the south, the kingdom spanned the old Roman frontier, and its legacy of fortifications, some of which continued in active use in the 5<sup>th</sup> and perhaps even 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. This frontier continued to exert an influence on the early medieval populations of the region, and Hadrian's Wall, the stone-built limit of Britannia, ultimately came to form a building medium for some of the remarkable early Christian churches and sculptures that survive in northern England today.

As a result of Roman and Romano-British legacies, cultural exchanges and contacts with Irish and North Sea communities, and conflicts and political alliances with British and Pictish territories, the region offers a unique landscape in which to consider issues of politics and identity in early medieval society. This gave rise to the conference theme, with the hope that members might contribute papers that touched on liminality, frontiers and boundaries, centres and peripheries and borderlands, as well as stylistic, artistic, linguistic and cultural divides. In total 42 members and invited speakers presented at Durham, with six poster presentations. Although not all participants chose to publish in the volume, this proceedings represents a rich and varied repertoire of papers that capture the temporal and geographic breadth of the event.

The articles included range widely, dealing with archaeology, art, and at times written sources, and cover the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Geographically the papers touch on sites and finds from Britain and Scotland, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Poland. Articles

encompass many topics, including exchange at the North Sea edge, the building of linear divisions and defences, central places and production, religious transition, cultural borders, burial and identity, and the limits between real and imagined worlds. A number of invited participants and contributors also provide a specialist view of northern mainland Britain, focussed on key political and religious transitions and important discoveries of sites and objects.

The conference organising committee comprised Sarah Semple, Becky Gowland, Richard Gameson, John Henry Clay and David Petts (all Durham University), who were ably guided by the Internationales Sachsensymposion UK Co-ordinating Committee: Charlotte Behr, John Hines and Chris Scull. In addition the event was made possible by the hard work of a group of Durham doctoral student volunteers: Jocelyn Baker, Brian Buchanan, Lisa Brundle, Celia Orsini and Tudor Skinner.

An important feature of the Durham meeting was the attendance of a group of Polish members, whose papers appear here under Section III. Space, Place, Frontiers and Borders. It seems apt that our conference on frontiers witnessed the bringing together of scholars working on early medieval archaeology in northern and eastern Europe. Another distinctive provision was funding from the Internationales Sachsensymposion, Durham University and Durham's Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, to support scholarships for PhD students and early career researchers, allowing them attend and present their work. As a consequence this volume includes articles by number of new researchers from different countries.

During the conference, an excursion was made to some of the key sites in Northumberland and County Durham: to Holy Island, Lindisfarne, to see the site of the early Christian monastic community, the surviving sculptures and the medieval priory; to Bamburgh Castle, a seat of power from late prehistory, through to the Viking and Norman periods; to Yeavering or Gefrin, a central place and site of royal power and conversion in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD; and to the Anglo-Saxon church at Escomb, Co Durham. The organising committee would like to thank Historic England for facilitating access to the exhibition at Lindisfarne, and David Petts for site tours of the abbey. Thanks are due to Graeme Young for the tour of the Bamburgh excavations, Eric Cambridge for introducing conference participants to Escomb, and The Gefrin Trust for an on-site tour of Yeavering and the

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exhibition, coffee and traditional Northumbrian tart served up at Kirknewton Village Hall.

This volume is edited by Sarah Semple, Celia Orsini and Sian Mui, and we are grateful for the goodwill and patience of authors, and their willingness to publish in English. Authors worked hard to meet the conference theme and the articles presented here are split into sections, to reinforce the connections and synergies between papers. An introduction to the volume comments on key common findings. The papers represent the state of study in 2013 when most contributions were submitted for publication, but many authors took the opportunity to update their articles in 2015–16. This is a double peer-reviewed volume, a process which takes time, but has significantly strengthened the cogency of the book, making it an original contribution to current thinking on the theme of social, religious and political frontiers in early medieval Europe.

The editors would like to thank Alejandra Gutiérrez for typesetting the volume, Babette Ludowici for assistance throughout the production process and Tina Jakob for assisting with translation. The conference was made possible through funding from the Internationales Sachsensymposium, the Department of Archaeology and the Institute of Medieval and

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## Abstract

*Life on the Edge: Social Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe* brings together articles from specialists from across eight countries. Resulting from the 63rd meeting of the Sachsensymposium in Durham in 2012, this volume takes its inspiration from the position of this city close to the Roman frontier, and its instrumental role in the development of early Northumbria. The 7<sup>th</sup>-century kingdom of Northumbria at times united British, Anglo-Saxon and Pictish populations. To the south, it spanned the old Roman frontier and its legacy of fortifications; to the north, it stretched into modern Scotland. As a consequence Northumbria offers a unique landscape in which to consider issues of frontiers and boundaries, centres and peripheries, and the kinds of events, allegiances, political and religious changes, that helped shape the northern European early medieval identity. Articles deal with archaeology, art, and at times written sources, and cover the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Geographically the papers touch on sites and finds from England and Scotland, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Poland. Articles encompass topics including: trade and exchange at the North Sea edge; the building of linear divisions and defences; central places and production; the delimitation of settlements; religious transition; cultural borders; burial and identity; and the limits between real and imagined worlds.

### Zusammenfassung

*Leben am Rande: Sozialpolitische und religiöse Grenzen im Europa des Frühmittelalters (Life on the Edge: Social Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe)* vereint Beiträge von Fachleuten aus acht verschiedenen Ländern. Dieser Band, der aus dem 63. Treffen des Sachsensymposiums in Durham 2012 resultiert, erhält seine Inspiration aus der Lage der Stadt nahe der römischen Grenze und ihrer bedeutenden Rolle in der Entwicklung des frühen Northumbrias. Das Königreich des 7. Jahrhunderts vereinte zeitweise die britische, angelsächsische und piktische Bevölkerungen. Im Süden umfasste es die alte römische Grenze und seine hinterlassenen Befestigungen, im Norden erstreckte sich das Reich bis in das heutige Schottland. Infolgedessen hat Northumbria eine einzigartige Landschaft zu bieten, in der Fragen zu Grenzen und Begrenzungen, Zentren und Peripherien, sowie Ereignissen, Allianzen, politische und religiöse Veränderungen, die halfen die Identität des frühmittelalterlichen Europas zu prägen, gestellt werden können. Die Beiträge befassen sich mit Archäologie, Kunst, und gelegentlich Schriftquellen und umfassen zeitlich das 1.-13. nachchristliche Jahrhundert. Geographisch betrachtet gehen die Beiträge auf Fundstellen und Funde aus England und Schottland, Deutschland, den Niederlanden, Dänemark, Schweden, Norwegen und Polen ein. Thematisch befassen sich die Beiträge mit Handel und Gütertausch am Rande der Nordsee, dem Bau von linearen Begrenzungen und Befestigungen, Zentralorten und Produktion, der Abgrenzung von Siedlungen, religiösen Überritten, kulturellen Grenzen, Begräbnis und Identität, und den Grenzen zwischen der realen und imaginären Welten.

### Résumé

*Life on the Edge: Social Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe* rassemble les contributions d'archéologues spécialistes du haut Moyen Âge de huit pays différents. Ce volume est né de leurs échanges lors de la 63<sup>e</sup> rencontre du Sachsensymposium à Durham en 2012. La proximité de la ville de Durham avec le mur d'Hadrien et son rôle dans le développement du royaume de Northumbrie, a inspiré le thème de cet ouvrage. Ce royaume rassemble et unit, durant le 7<sup>e</sup> siècle, des populations bretonnes, anglo-saxonne et pictes. Au Sud, il comprend l'ancienne frontière romaine et l'ensemble de ces monuments et forts ; au Nord, il s'étend jusqu'en Écosse. Sa diversité et sa topographie créent un paysage unique qui s'adapte particulièrement bien à l'étude des frontières et des marges, des centres et des périphéries, et en outre, à l'étude des transformations sociales, politiques et religieuses, qui participent à la création de l'identité des groupes sociaux du haut Moyen Âge dans le nord de l'Europe. Dans cet ouvrage, différentes disciplines se côtoient pour répondre à ces questions, à partir des données archéologiques, de l'histoire de l'art et des sources écrites du 1<sup>er</sup> au 13<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère. Au niveau géographique, les articles portent sur les sites et les objets d'Angleterre, d'Écosse, d'Allemagne, des Pays-Bas, du Danemark, de Suède, de Norvège et de Pologne. Les discussions portent : sur les échanges autour de la Mer du Nord, les divisions internes des bâtiments et des habitats, les systèmes de défenses, les lieux de pouvoir et de production, les transitions religieuses, les tombes et les questions d'identité, les limites des cadres culturels et les limites entre les mondes du réelle et de l'imaginaire.

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## Contents

<i>Sarah Semple, Celia Orsini and Sian Mui</i>	7	<i>Morten Axboe, with a runological note by Lisbeth Imer</i>	143
At the Limits: Frontiers and Boundaries in Early Medieval Northern Europe		Local Innovations and Far-reaching Connections: Gold Bracteates from North-East Zealand and East Jutland	
<b>I Material Culture and Identity in Northern Britain</b>		<i>Per Ethelberg</i>	157
<i>Rosemary Cramp</i>	29	Slesvig as Borderland in the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> centuries AD	
Northumbria, a Kingdom		<i>Pernille Kruse</i>	169
<i>Rob Collins</i>	45	Anglian Settlements in South-East Jutland, 3 <sup>rd</sup> –4 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD	
The Frontier Foundations of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria		<i>Linda Boye</i>	179
<i>Sonja Marzinzik</i>	55	House and Fence, Landscape and Boundaries: The Landscape AD 1–500 in Eastern Denmark	
Permeable Frontiers: Changing Views of the 5 <sup>th</sup> -century Silver Hoards from Coleraine, Northern Ireland, and Traprain Law, Scotland		<i>Anne Birgitte Sørensen</i>	187
<i>Meggen Gondek and Gordon Noble</i>	59	Demarcations of Tofts at Østergård, Jutland, Denmark — Farms and Inheritance	
Rhynie: New Perspectives on Settlement in Pictland in the 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD and the Context of Pictish Symbol Stones		<i>Clifford M. Sofield</i>	195
<i>Martin Carver</i>	71	Thresholds in the Lives of Settlements: Anglo-Saxon Placed Deposits Made at Entrances and ‘Liminal Times’	
Living in the Middle: Multiple Sources of the ‘Pictish house’		<b>III Space, Place, Frontiers and Borders</b>	
<i>Celia Orsini</i>	83	<i>Adam Cieśliński</i>	211
Negotiating Identity in North-East England and South-East Scotland		A Cultural and Ethnic Border during the Roman and Early Migration Periods in North-East Poland	
<i>Sarah Semple, Brian Buchanan, Sue Harrington, Darren Oliver and David Petts</i>	91	<i>Sabine Altmann</i>	225
Power at the Edge: Yeavingering, Northumberland, England		At the Boundary of East Central Europe: The Region along the Saale River as an Early Medieval Border Zone between the Frankish Empire and the Slavic Sorabs	
<i>Stephen J. Sherlock</i>	113	<i>Matthias Hardt</i>	233
A Royal Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Street House, Loftus, North-East Yorkshire		Borderline of an Empire: The Eastern Frontier at the Time of Charlemagne	
<i>Gaby Waxenberger</i>	121	<i>Marcin Wołoszyn</i>	239
Date and Provenance of the Auzon or Franks Casket		Poles, Ruthenes and Saxons on the River Bug in 1018: The Formation of the Polish-Rus Border Zone in the 10 <sup>th</sup> –13 <sup>th</sup> century	
<b>II Centres, Settlements and Boundaries</b>			
<i>Birgitta Hårdh</i>	137		
Uppåkra’s Political Situation in the Migration Period			

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<i>John Baker and Stuart Brookes</i>	253	<i>Frans-Arne Stylegar</i>	401
Gateways, Gates and <i>gatu</i> : Liminal Spaces at the Centre of Things		Identity and Difference in Scandinavian Funerary Fashions at Home and Overseas, AD 700–1000	
<i>Brian Buchanan</i>	263	<i>Sue Brunning</i>	409
Space, Place and Transition: An Introduction to the Use of Visibility Graph Analysis for Settlement Analysis in North-East England c AD 350–800		Crossing Edges? 'Person-like' Swords in Anglo-Saxon England	
		<i>Christopher Fern</i>	419
		Treasure at the Frontier: Key Artefacts from the Staffordshire Hoard	

#### **IV Liminal Landscapes**

<i>Annette Siegmüller and Kai Mückenberger</i>	273
Structure and Function of Landing Places and Riverside Markets along the Lower Weser in the Roman Iron Age	
<i>H. M. van der Velde, J. Dijkstra and S. Heeren</i>	285
On the Origins of Dorestad? Habitation of the Kromme Rijn Area during the Merovingian Period	
<i>Annet Nieuwhof</i>	295
Potters and Pottery from Afar: Some Observations on Long-Distance Contacts	
<i>Richard Mortimer, Duncan Sayer and Rob Wiseman</i>	305
Anglo-Saxon Oakington: A Central Place on the Edge of the Cambridgeshire Fen	
<i>Knut Andreas Bergsvik</i>	317
Caves and Rockshelters in Iron-Age Coastal Norway: At the Margins of the Society?	
<i>Bente Magnus</i>	335
Here is Gold and Witchcraft Under	
<i>Anne-Sofie Gråslund</i>	345
Mission at the Ends of the World: Was Old Uppsala Really an Outpost of Paganism in the Late 11 <sup>th</sup> century?	

#### **V Embodied Objects and Material Identities**

<i>Torun Zachrisson</i>	355
The Enigmatic Stone Faces: Cult Images from the Iron Age?	
<i>Elna Siv Kristoffersen</i>	365
Defining and Transcending Boundaries in Style I Animal Art	
<i>Lisa Brundle</i>	373
The Taplow Drinking Horn: Gripping-arm Gestures and Female Performance in the Migration Period	
<i>Kathrin Meents (née Felder)</i>	383
Ontological Transitions and Liminality in Early Anglo-Saxon Female Life and Burial	

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## Local Innovations and Far-reaching Connections: Gold Bracteates from North-East Zealand and East Jutland

Morten Axboe, with a runological note by Lisbeth Imer

From Thomsen to Pesch, bracteate research has endeavoured to establish groups of related bracteates (e.g. THOMSEN 1855; SALIN 1895; MACKEPFRANG 1952; PESCH 2007; for history of research, see PESCH 2007, 27–39 and BEHR 2011). This is necessary if we are to comprehend the material. In this paper I shall rely on the groups which Pesch (2007) has established and labelled *Formularfamilien* (FF), but my primary argument is that that we should also pay attention to ‘outsiders’ — odd small groups like FF C3 treated below, and designs which are not full members of the *Formularfamilien*, or which cannot be associated with known groups at all. Some of these outsiders are indeed poorly made, but others have consciously designed motifs with details of obvious iconographical importance. Their makers were innovative — perhaps too innovative to have followers, and thus they never gave rise to new *Formularfamilien*. These designs ‘at the edge’ of recognisable *Familien*, can make a significant contribution to current understanding of places of production and central sites and the intellectual vigour of the Migration Period. A second line of argument is that bracteate production and innovation were not limited to the large ‘central places’ like Gudme, Sorte Muld or Uppåkra with their ‘temples’ or ‘royal halls’ and workshop activities (e.g. AXBOE 2012; JØRGENSEN 2009; PESCH 2011). Other areas and centres on a smaller scale will also have contributed, not only with ‘standard’ designs, but also with iconographic innovations.

### The gold bracteates of North-East Zealand

North-East Zealand, situated north of Copenhagen between Roskilde Fjord and Øresund, is an area where numerous bracteates have been found (MACKEPFRANG 1952, 112ff; AXBOE 2011, 981f [IK 619,2]), while no central place has yet been identified. Among the bracteates are the first recorded find from Denmark, a C-bracteate (IK 50; Fig 6) found in 1672 on the banks of the lake Esrum Sø, and the hoard from Jørlunde/Hjølunde (IK 77–9, 94,2; Fig 1) which was donated in 1817 to the Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities, thus initiating the bracteate research of C J Thomsen (AXBOE et al. 2006; AXBOE 2006).

The Jørlunde hoard consists of four bracteates from different dies, IK 77–79 and 94,2. A fifth design is represented on the reverse of IK 94,2, indicating that the flan was re-

used, but although it can be seen to represent an otherwise unknown C-bracteate die, little can be said about it (AXBOE 1981, 30f; IK vol 3.2, Taf 129). The Jørlunde bracteates are all of C-type, but if we take a closer look, the bracteates IK 78 and 79 (Figs 2 and 3) are quite extraordinary. Both have large male heads with marked eyebrows, moustaches and elaborate hair-dresses with diadems and beaded contours, ending with a bird’s or snake’s head. On IK 78 this is accompanied by a human head in front of the large male head with a runic inscription saying **alu** above it. In the same place IK 79 has a full human figure armed with a sword, and below the large male head, where the C-bracteate ‘horse’ would normally appear, there is a full C-bracteate motif with a human head and a horse. The large head has an arm, which seems to hold or point to the small figure and the criss-cross motif below it (see HAUCK 2011b, 99ff, 111). These two bracteates are so characteristic that Alexandra Pesch has placed them in a separate *Formularfamilie*, FF C3, together with just one more die, the C-bracteate IK 29 from Bolbro on Funen, where both the male head and the C-bracteate animal are closely related to the Jørlunde bracteates IK 79 and especially IK 78 (PESCH 2007, 158–61).

Quite a few bracteates have been found on Zealand, but it is remarkable that all finds are located in the eastern and southern parts of the island; the north-west is simply devoid of bracteates (see map in AXBOE 2007, 10). If we look for further parallels to the Jørlunde bracteates, it should be noted that one of them (IK 94,2) is actually die-identical to two bracteates IK 94,1 in the Kitnæs hoard (Fig 4) found c 10 km west of Jørlunde on the opposite bank of Roskilde Fjord (MUNKSGAARD 1966; JØRGENSEN and VANG PETERSEN 1998, 258f). These die-linked bracteates have a more common, but nevertheless elaborate, C-bracteate design. They belong to the rather small group of C-bracteates which show a human hand resting on the horse’s shoulder (AXBOE 2004, 148; to the list can be added IK 153,2 Suchań and IK 647 Stavnsager, Fig 10). Besides these we find a snake and a strange bird or other creature facing each other in front of the human head, a snake-like zigzag line over the head, and below the animal the obscure runic inscription **lit**. The design of this die doesn’t quite fit in with Pesch’s *Formularfamilien* and she places it among the ‘Bastard’ dies — hybrid or associated members — of her C 2 family (FF C2,a). Similarly, the fourth Jørlunde bracteate IK 77 (Fig 5), where the elaborate, eared bird can be





Figure 1. The Jørlunde hoard. Photograph: A. Mikkelsen, © NM Copenhagen.



Figure 2. IK 78 Jørlunde. Diam 31 mm. After IK.



Figure 3. IK 79 Jørlunde. Diam 27.3 mm. After IK.



Figure 4. IK 94,1 Kitnæs, die-identical to IK 94,2 Jørlunde. Diam 27.2 mm. After IK.



Figure 5. IK 77 Jørlunde. Diam 39 mm. After IK.



Figure 6. IK 50 Esrum (Esrom) Sø. Diam 28 mm. After IK.



Figure 7. IK 93 Kitnæs. Diam c 25 mm. After IK.

noted, is only associated with the C1 family. Nevertheless, this die too shows a consciously designed iconography with the 'breath' line pointing from the man's mouth to the animal's right ear and two similar lines from the bird's beak to the man's nose and the animal's left ear.

Thus the Jørlunde bracteates stand out as rather special: two of them (Figs 2 and 3) almost form their own *Formularfamilie*, while the other two differ to some degree from the families they are most closely related to. We may add a fourth bracteate from the area to the C3 'Jørlunde Family', the C-bracteate IK 50 Esrum (Esrom) Sø (Fig 6) found some 20 km north-east of Jørlunde. Pesch includes it among the

'Bastard' dies associated with her FF C 2, but she also explicitly mentions it as a link connecting the 'Jørlunde' group FF C3 and FF C2 (Pesch 2007, 153, 159); a relationship already noted by C. J. Thomsen (1855, 302). This bracteate also has individual features: the bust of the large male head — Odin/Woden in Karl Hauck's interpretation — is larger and more detailed than usual, showing his healing hand on the horse's flank, while his other hand is holding a small man with a staff in one hand, a small circular object in the other, and with rings on both arms. Besides, there are two small snakes above Odin's head and S- and volute-shaped *Beizeichen* next to the small man.





Figure 8. IK 92 Kitnæs. Diam 26.5 mm. After IK.

Apart from the two bracteates linked with Jørlunde, the Kitnæs hoard contains bracteates from two more dies. IK 93 (Fig 7), represented by 13 bracteates in the hoard, is a basic C-bracteate, and is associated with Pesch's first C-bracteate *Familie*, albeit only as a member of the 'Bastard' group C1a (PESCH 2007, 142–51): neither the hairstyle, the triangular male nose, the rather open mouth of the animal nor the lack of a runic inscription fits with the characteristics of the main group C1. Nevertheless the bracteates show an articulate and conscious design. The third Kitnæs die (IK 92, Fig 8) is represented by five bracteates and is special both as one of only four dies depicting a rider on horseback (IK 65, 93, 112, 173; AXBOE 2004, 148) and through the additional motifs: a small man with a staff or a sword in each hand in front of the horse, and a spear under the horse. Pesch includes it in her group C2a; both the 'Bastard' dies and those of the main group C2 show unusually wide variation in their motif details (PESCH 2007, 153, n 3).

Small human figures are unusual on A- and C-bracteates, but as we saw they occur not only on IK 92, but also on two of the Jørlunde bracteates (IK 78–79) as well as on IK 50 Esrum Sø. Moving farther south to the tip of Roskilde Fjord we find another C-bracteate with an extra man: IK 585 Sankt Ibs Vej (HAUCK and HEIZMANN 2003), and still farther south the three double bracteates IK 101 from Kongsvad Å in South East Zealand (JØRGENSEN and VANG PETERSEN 1998, 243f). East Zealand thus holds six of the known bracteate designs with small human figures, while the remaining dies (putting the classic B-bracteates aside) are widely dispersed: IK 141 Penzlin (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), IK 197 UFo (of unknown, but probably Danish provenance), IK 261 Guldbæk (Northern Jutland), IK 353 Tønder area (South West Jutland), and IK 584 Brinton (Norfolk).

There are other bracteate finds in North-East Zealand, both single finds and the impressive hoard from Stenholts Vang with

12 bracteates, partly mounted on elaborate tubes with filigree ornamentation, a large golden bead and some pieces of hack gold (MACKEPRANG 1952, 113; IK 179–180; JØRGENSEN and VANG PETERSEN 1998, 240f), but these examples must suffice to demonstrate that the bracteates from this area have a rich and varied iconography. Some of the details are unusual, like the horseman bracteate from Kitnæs (Fig 8), and dies with human beings as additional figures are definitely more common here than elsewhere. When the dies do not fit into the *Formularfamilien* it is not due to a poor or misapprehended iconography. On the contrary, we find motifs rich in detail, demonstrating the artistic and iconographic originality of the bracteate makers, with the closely related dies IK 78–79 from Jørlunde (Figs 2 and 3) as the foremost examples.

Bracteates were precious and their iconography has been a matter of great importance and reflection. Karl Hauck has proposed an interpretation of the Jørlunde and Esrum bracteates (Figs 2, 3 and 6), where the small human figures are identified as Balder/Baldr, the son of Odin. This interpretation is to be understood within the framework of Hauck's general thesis that bracteate iconography focused on Odin as the lord of magic and master of life and death. Thus the C-bracteates depict Odin with Balder's mortally injured horse, which according to the Second Merseburg Charm he alone had the power to heal, while the *Drei-Götter-Brakteaten* show the ritual death of Balder (ultimately to return from Hel), which had been foreboded by the fatal accident of his horse. Hauck interprets IK 79 Jørlunde (Fig 3) as Odin (the large head with the outstretched arm) presenting Balder partly as the well-armed young lord (one of the possible etymologies of 'Baldr'; see SCHIER 1976, 2f; SIMEK 1993, 28) in front of him, partly as taking his horse on the fatal ride in the bottom part of the picture field. The horse's imminent fate is illustrated by the vomit emanating from its mouth, and Balder's impending death by the criss-cross detail in front of him, which has been interpreted as the funeral pyre, with reference to representations on Roman coins (HAUCK 1970, 297 with no 53, 327). On IK 50 Esrum Sø Odin is holding Balder, who carries a staff or sceptre in one hand and a circular object in the other, while Odin's hand is resting on the horse below him. Parallels to the circular object are found on IK 189 Trollhättan and the *Drei-Götter-Brakteaten* IK 51,3 Gudme II, 165 Skovsbo and IK 646 found near Lejre (CHRISTENSEN 2015), as well as on the late-Roman medallion imitation IK 126 Midtmjælde (HAUCK 1992, 499ff; 2011a, 7–9). IK 78 Jørlunde seems to be an abbreviated version of the motif with Balder represented by his head only (HAUCK 1992, 472ff, 2011b, 100f, 111f; HAUCK and HEIZMANN 2003, 247–50). On the otherwise closely related IK 29 Bolbro, Balder is not shown.

Within the same frame of reference, Hauck has interpreted small human figures on other bracteates as Balder. Two of these come from the area around Roskilde Fjord: IK 92 Kitnæs (Fig 8) and IK 585 Sankt Ibs Vej, Roskilde (BECK and HAUCK 2002, 67–72; HAUCK and HEIZMANN 2003). No matter how

far one can follow Hauck's interpretations, it is obvious that North-East Zealand and the Roskilde Fjord area have given rise to original, consciously designed bracteates with an independent iconographic profile, testifying to coherence in iconographic and mythological thought.

#### Far-reaching bracteate connections

This was not due to isolation, a fact highlighted by two new finds. At the Sachsensymposium in Haderslev in 2010, Alexander Bursche presented the Suchań site in West Poland with finds of different origins, including two C-bracteates. One of these, IK 153,2 Suchań, is die-identical to a bracteate allegedly found in Scania as part of a hoard of four bracteates (MACKEPBRANG 1952, cat no 226). This was the first time a die linkage could be established between Scandinavia and the Continent. Shortly after the symposium Linda Boye reported the find of a bracteate fragment at Sötoftegård about 7 km south-south-east of the recorded find-spot of the Jørlunde bracteates, and on examination it proved to be die-identical to the other Suchań bracteate (IK 619,1, Fig 9). The provenance of the 'Scanian' hoard with IK 153,1 is rather dubious, as it is one of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century finds that appeared in private Danish collections as 'found in Scania', a label which one may suspect was chosen to circumvent the Danish treasure trove (*danefæ*) regulations (AXBOE 1981, 2ff). The Sötoftegård fragment, however, provides the Suchań site with a secure link to a Danish find-spot, not just to the more dubious 'Scanian' hoard. One may speculate whether the 'Scanian' hoard actually was found in North-East Zealand, but that remains unprovable.

The die IK 619,1 Suchań / 619,2 Sötoftegård belongs to the *Bastard* group FF C14,a. The proper FF C14 consists

of only five bracteates from four dies, found in Scania, Blekinge and on Bornholm (PESCH 2007, 220–4). Apart from the Sötoftegård/Suchań bracteates, *Bastard* bracteates have been found on Öland (IK 134) and in Central Poland (IK 386 Wapno). The bracteates of FF C14 all have the runic inscription *ota* ('fear, terror'). As demonstrated by the Suchań bracteate the inscription of IK 619 reads *oh*, which is probably to be understood as a garbled version of *ota* (AXBOE 2011, 981). The bracteate from Sötoftegård was cut in two, and the preserved lower half was folded up and most likely intended for the crucible. Nevertheless, it demonstrates connections within the West Baltic area, including Poland.

A direct connection between North-East Zealand and Scania is proved by a folded up C-bracteate found September 2014 at Høvlbakke east of Helsingør together with fragments of a silver-gilt brooch closely related to the fibula from Vedstrup / Hove Mølle. The bracteate appears to be die-identical with IK 625 from Uppåkra.

If we look at the other bracteates discussed above, the two Jørlunde bracteates in Figs 2 and 3 belong to the very small group FF C3, the third member of which is IK 29 Bolbro. Apart from lacking the small human head/figure of the two Jørlunde bracteates this die is obviously a close relative, and besides it is interesting as a link to the concentration of bracteate finds of East Funen around the centres with the sacral place-names Gudme (Home of the Gods) and Odense (Odin's sanctuary). As mentioned, the Esum Sø bracteate (Fig 6) can be seen as connecting FF C3 with FF C2. The proper members of this group with known find-spots come from within present-day Denmark, and apart from IK 133 Öjorna/Östtorp from Västergötland, the associated C2,a bracteates have all been found in Zealand, including the bracteates IK 94,1 Kitnæs (Fig 4), IK 94,2 Jørlunde and IK 92 Kitnæs (Fig 8; PESCH 2007, 152–7). IK 77 Jørlunde (Fig 5) and the 13 copies of IK 93



Figure 9. IK 619,1 Suchań (Diam 24 mm; after IK) and 619,2 Sötoftegård (17.9 x 14.1 mm). Photograph: M. Axboe.

Kitnæs (Fig 7) belong to the *Bastard* group C1,a. The proper FF C1 is a large group mostly found in Zealand and Gotland, but also represented in Scania, Funen and Jutland as well as in South East Norway and East Poland. The only proper C1 bracteate in North-East Zealand is IK 298 Lynge Gyde, found c 6.5 km east of Jørlunde (PESCH 2007, 142–51).

Of the remaining bracteates from North-East Zealand, the seven specimens of IK 179 Stenholts Vang belong to FF C12,a and are thus related to bracteates mainly from Scania but also from Funen (the seven bracteates IK 30 from the Bolbro hoard with the third member of FF C3), Bornholm, Gotland and northern Poland (IK 100 Körlin/Korlino; PESCH 2007, 210–15). Neither IK 191 Tulstrup which shows rather peculiar details, nor the remaining bracteates from Stenholts Vang (IK 180) are ascribed to any of Pesch's groups. Last, but not least, the A-bracteate IK 383 from Viksø belongs to the bracteates featuring a male bust accompanied by 1–2 boars, Pesch's FF A1–A2 (2007, 72–9). Together, these two groups have a very peculiar distribution, following the coastal route from West Norway via Kattegat and Øresund to Öland and thus exemplify the far-reaching connections of bracteate iconography (HAUCK 1988, 206f).

#### North-East Zealand: aspects of centrality

Had the bracteates from North-East Zealand been found in Funen, Scania or on Bornholm, one would point to Gudme, Uppåkra or Sorte Muld as the central places where such innovations might have taken place, but at present nothing similar is known from North-East Zealand. The find spot of the Jørlunde hoard is generally located to the site Lærkefryd, situated between Jørlunde and Slangstrup. This information was obtained from the Sites and Monuments Register of the National Museum for 1890, but the sources are ambiguous, as other information claims that the find was made just north of Slangstrup in 1817. When the bracteates were donated to the museum, the only information given was 'found near Slangstrup', which may fit with both locations. Meanwhile, excavations and detector surveys have revealed a sacrificial site at Lærkefryd, situated at the top of a hill. The detector finds range from the late-Roman Iron Age to the Viking Period, and they include high-quality objects which have been deliberately destroyed. Among them are both late-Roman and Migration-Period sword hilt parts, fragments of late-Roman and Nydam Style scabbard mounts, a buckle tongue with a Style I mask, an iron battle axe, bridle parts, strap fittings with rings, bronze brooches and several denarii, as well as gold finger-rings, one of which has snakes' heads, and fragments of gold neck-rings which have been violently cut up. There are few Vendel-Period finds, while the Viking Age is represented by a dirham, circular pendants and several fragments of a bronze-gilt equal-armed brooch with animal ornamentation. Partial excavations have revealed some postholes, but no

real settlement structures: two pairs of posts may be the remains of a small building, but traces of walls or floor were not preserved. There were numerous cooking pits (SØRENSEN 2000, 66–73; 2006b; JØRGENSEN 2009, 347; pers comm PALLE Ø. SØRENSEN 2012). The site seems to be an open-air sacrificial site, used more or less intensively over 700 years. In the valley at the foot of the hill lies the pre-Roman/early Roman age Rappendam bog with finds of wagon parts and ploughs as well as human and animal bones (KUNWALD 1970; 2003).

As far as we know the Iron-Age settlement of the area consisted of single farms, but some sites stand out from the usual rural settlement in having aspects of centrality. At Hørup, about 3 km north-west of Lærkefryd, a small workshop starting in the early Roman Age and continuing into the Migration Period has been detector-surveyed and partly excavated. There is clear evidence of the works of a blacksmith, bronze-caster and comb maker, while the presence of gold- or silversmiths is only indirectly suggested by the fragments of finished objects, like clasp buttons. Patches of clay, 0.5–0.6 m in diameter, with a red-burnt centre and accompanied by small burnt stones, are interpreted as forges, and postholes near them as wind-breaking fences. Vitrified clay was found both near the forges and elsewhere. Six ovens were excavated, but there was no indication of what they had been used for. Some of the brooches found have been deliberately folded up, as if to be recycled; these 'scrap fibulae' seem to date to the late Roman and early Migration Period. Fifteen Roman coins have been found, the latest issued by Valentinian I (AD 364–7). Secure evidence of fine metalworking is provided by more than 70 fragments of crucibles, two of which were almost totally preserved, and a fragment of a mould, while tuyère fragments may belong both to fine metal smiths and to blacksmiths (SØRENSEN 2000; 2006a; AXBOE 2012).

Around 6.5 km south-east of Lærkefryd lies the settlement of Søtoftgård with late-Roman and Migration-Period bronze brooches, denarii and other Roman imports, as well as hack silver and gold, including fragments of Roman dishes and the halved bracteate IK 619,2 (Fig 9). On the slope below the settlement, detector finds from culture layers include bronze sprues, smelted lumps and drops, and the site may be a contemporary parallel to Hørup, obviously with bronze working and most likely with silver and gold smithing too (SØRENSEN 2000, 65; AXBOE 2012).

The general wealth of the area in the late Roman Age is demonstrated by graves with status objects like gold rings, silver jewellery and spurs, as well as Roman glass and bronze vessels (SØRENSEN 2000, 62–4). The only medallion imitation known from Denmark was found at Gundsømagle Holme 10 km south of Lærkefryd (MACKEPANG 1952, 107; IK 262). Hørup and Søtoftgård are evidently not 'central places' in the same sense as Gudme or Uppåkra, but they seem to be part of a 'central landscape' including the open-air sacrificial site at Lærkefryd. Even a theophoric place-name can be found



in the surrounding district: the hamlet Onsved in Hornsherred west of Roskilde fjord, meaning 'Odin's sanctuary' or 'Odin's Grove' (KOUSGÅRD SØRENSEN 1992, 232; JØRGENSEN 1994, 220). Until now, however, preliminary detector surveys have yielded no indications of a central place here (pers comm PALLE Ø. SØRENSEN April 2013), a situation comparable to that of the Gudum ('Home of the Gods') area in West Zealand and two Gudum villages in North Jutland, which are equally devoid of finds in spite of their cultic name (DOBAT 2011; HENRIKSEN 2011; compare however CLAUDI-HANSEN and AXBOE in preparation). Both the bracteates and the Roman imports demonstrate economic and intellectual surplus in the late Roman and Migration Periods, but it seems that the 'landscape of power and cult' was organised differently from the pattern we find at Gudme, Uppåkra, and Sorte Muld — the 'central' functions were dispersed over several sites.

### Lejre

When discussing the area around Roskilde Fjord one must also mention Lejre, situated near its southern tip. Lejre is the legendary seat of the equally legendary *Skjöldung* dynasty of Danish kings. Apart from the myths, however, there are not only early historical sources like Thietmar of Merseburg that point to the former importance of Lejre; in recent years there have also been archaeological finds. Most of the finds have been Viking-Age, including the Mysselhøjgård magnate's farm with several succeeding large 'halls' from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century to around AD 1000 (CHRISTENSEN 2007; 2010, 241–9; 2015 [appeared after the present paper was completed]). Another 'hall' was found at Fredshøj some 500 m further north, dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries and possibly demolished only to be moved to Mysselhøjgård (CHRISTENSEN 2007, 116–24; 2010, 249–52). From the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when graves were generally sparse in Denmark, Lejre can boast the Grydehøj barrow, constructed over a large cremation burial. The cremation layer covered around 380 sq m, and apart from small bronze lumps, iron nails and poorly preserved human bones, it contained bones from horse, cattle, dog, sheep/goat, birds and deer. When the barrow was built, the cremation layer had been covered with gold-wrought cloth and with timbers, possibly from a mortuary house (WULFF ANDERSEN 1993, 103–16; 2007, 150–155; ANDERSEN 2007, 135–8). Had the cloth been on the pyre as part of the deceased's dress, as proposed by Wulff Andersen, no trace of the fine gold threads would have been preserved.

Lars Jørgensen lists Lejre among his 'second-generation aristocratic sites', founded in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (JØRGENSEN 2009, 337, 344f). But new finds may be taking Lejre further back in time as a high-status site. Thanks to metal-detector enthusiasts, Migration-Period precious metal finds are now also emerging. In 2011 a small hoard of gold bullion and a Justinian I solidus imitation was found at Lejre

(BONDESSON and BONDESON 2012). The following year a 5<sup>th</sup>-century hoard was detected at Mannerup some 8 km south of Lejre. It consists of c 3000 pieces of hack silver together with a few coins and a gold ring, and its total weight of about 7 kg makes it the largest Migration-Period hoard from Denmark. In the same year a gold bracteate was found at Lejre (IK 646). It is a *Drei-Götter-Brakteat* struck with a die closely related to IK 165 Skovsborg, but most extraordinarily it is a double bracteate, consisting of two flans with the same design soldered together. Bracteate and hoard will be published by Tom Christensen, Roskilde Museum, together with the recent Lejre excavations (CHRISTENSEN 2015).

Thus the Lejre area seems to have been of some importance as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, in the 'Golden Age' of mythology. Moving into more speculative territory, it is tempting to recall the many 'Balder' bracteates from North-East Zealand and the Roskilde Fjord area, to which IK 646 from Lejre itself can now be added. The Norse sources on Balder seem to indicate a connection between the *Skjöldung* dynasty and Balder, possibly as a mythological ancestor and/or tutelary deity, as well as a connection between Balder and the Lejre area (SCHIER 1976, 5; 1992). Is this part of the background for the concentration in this area of bracteates with additional small human figures? If so, it must be stressed that even if the later literary transmission of the Balder myths shows important differences between Danish sources like *Saxo Grammaticus* and the Norwegian/Icelandic sources, the *Drei-Götter-Brakteaten* indicate that Balder's death by the mistletoe shot was well-known in southern Scandinavia, where all these bracteates are found, with IK 20 Zagórzyn ('Beresina') from Poland as the only exception.

### Stavnsager

The assertions that bracteate production was not limited to the large central places, and that iconographic innovation might also take place elsewhere, can be substantiated by a bracteate hoard from Stavnsager in East Jutland (Fig 10). Stavnsager is a settlement area south of Randers in East Jutland (FIEDEL et al. 2011). The investigations undertaken until now seem to indicate that the settlement started as a 5<sup>th</sup>-century rural hamlet, developing during the 6<sup>th</sup> century with longhouses, *Grubenhäuser*, a large number of brooches, fragments of weaponry, traces of bronze casting, a gold foil figure (*guldgubbe*) fragment and evidence of connections to south-eastern Scandinavia. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century there are indications of a magnate's farm and jewellery with high-quality animal ornamentation with mythological associations, and the settlement continues during the Viking Age as a manor as well as a crafts and trading centre.

The four bracteates IK 647–650 were found with a metal detector only a few metres from one another during the



Figure 10. The Stavnsager bracteates. Top: IK 650 (Diam 25 mm), left IK 649 (22.3 mm), right IK 648 (24 mm), bottom IK 647 (39 mm). Photograph: A. Mikkelsen, © NM Copenhagen.

summer of 2012 and most likely represent a dispersed hoard. They were struck on four previously unknown dies, two of type C and two of type D. The largest is the C-bracteate IK 647 (Fig 10, bottom). Its lower part is torn and it was somewhat bent, but has been straightened during conservation. The picture field shows a human head with a rather flat hair-style and a characteristic half-mask-like shape of the eye. An arm is indicated by the angled line connecting the cheek with the back of the animal, and the scroll under the animal's head may be interpreted as a hand. The animal is depicted with four legs with shoulders and thighs in rather un-anatomical positions. Its eye is a half-mask like the man's, and it has a high, slender ear and U-shaped horns. It is impossible to tell whether the scroll over the animal's snout represents a bird or a snake. Both interpretations have been proposed for the related dies IK 110 Lindkær and 140 Overhornbæk (IK vol 1,2,

194, 243; PESCH 2007, 225), and may also be considered for the 'hand' on the Stavnsager bracteate. The picture field is framed by a band with bird's-head terminals, filled with runes and rune-like characters (see Imer below). This border was part of the die, while the zones of epaulettes and small bosses were punched separately.

The central motif of IK 647 is closely related to IK 110 Lindkær and 140 Overhornbæk, and together with the runic band also found on these two bracteates it qualifies IK 647 as a 'core member' of Pesch's FF C15. An identical band is found, however, on the A-bracteates IK 312,1 Overhornbæk and 312,2, allegedly from Vendsyssel, and like IK 647 their inscriptions can be taken as failed *futarks* (MOLTKE 1957). Such runic bands are unique to these four dies, and it is of great interest that we here have an indisputable link between A- and C-bracteates (AXBOE 2004, 155ff).

Along with IK 647 two D-bracteates were found, both from new and intriguing dies which do not fit in with Pesch's *Formularfamilien*. IK 648 shows a bird-like creature with a round head and a curved beak (Fig 10, right). The body is curved, ending in a foot with two toes. From the thigh emerges an up-turned wing, from which the tail is hanging. Less normal for a bird are the two ears, but similar ears can be found on a few bracteate birds: IK 77 Jørlunde (Fig 7), 123 Market Overton and 206 Vårpalota. More rudimentary ears appear on IK 29 Bolbro, 141 Penzlin, 154,1–3 Zealand/Overhornbæk/Unprovenanced and 304 Mjønnes, and possibly on the B-bracteates 104 Lau backar, 176 Söderby and 195 Ulvsunda. Birds' heads with ears may even occur at the forehead (IK 570 Sylten) or the nape of the human heads (IK 50 Esmur Sø, Fig 6), 105 Lellinge Kohave, 149,1 Scania(?) and 255 Geltorf. Equally unusual for birds are the hair- or bristle-like lines at the creature's back, although a few parallels may be quoted: IK 200,2 Gärvalds and 341 Sønder Rind, and less obviously the contoured 'bristles' of IK 22 Bergløyken, 63 Gotland, 200,1 Unprovenanced (Gotland?) (IK 200,1–3 represent three different dies — see AxBOE 1981, 69f) and 571 Dannau.

It is striking, however, how these lines are reminiscent of the hatched hairstyle of some human heads on the bracteates. Perhaps this gives us a clue to the interpretation of IK 648. It is not unknown in Migration-Period art for some details to be interpreted in more than one way, for example as both a human head (or part of one) and a Style I animal. Equally well-known are animals with a human face, so-called *Tiermenschen* (LEIGH 1984; HASELOFF 1986; LINDSTRØM and KRISTOFFERSEN 2001; KRISTOFFERSEN 2010). Both phenomena are warnings that motifs in Migration-Period art should not be taken at face value: there can be more to them than meets

the eye. Similarly, some gold bracteates and chronologically earlier medallion imitations (AxBOE 2004, 216–23) may be interpreted as illustrating Odin's shape-shifting abilities. This applies to the medallion imitations IK 193 Tunalund Av, where the large male head rises from a rather naturalistic supine bird (HAUCK 1994, 264f); IK 3 Åk Av, where the bird is more stylised; and IK 346 Strangegården, which I am inclined to include among the medallion imitations rather than the A-bracteates (AxBOE 2004, 61f). Among the bracteates the unprovenanced IK 196 is crucial: here a bird emerges from the hair of the large male head (Fig 11; HAUCK 1978, 389); but the many bracteates with a bird or animal head at the forehead or nape may also hint at shape-shifting.

The recently found A-bracteate IK 641 Weltzin from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Fig 12; PESCH 2014) is important for this discussion. Here we find not only the compulsory human head with stylised diadem and brooch pendants or cloak and a bird facing it, but also an animal with an open mouth, a large eye and a pointed ear, hatched fur and a hind leg. The animal gives the immediate impression of being a wolf, although it lacks carnivore's teeth to confirm the identification. The lines indicating the furred body of the animal can alternatively be seen as the man's hair, and the animal may be interpreted in several ways: either as a demonic creature menacing 'Odin' and his bird helper, or as an indication of his ability to shape-shift to bird, snake or wolf (see LANGE 2005).

Both IK 641 Weltzin and the bird bracteate IK 648 from Stavnsager add new aspects to bracteate iconography. The same can be said of the other Stavnsager D-bracteate, IK 649. This shows a 'classic' D-bracteate design with a backwards-looking beast where the ribbon-shaped neck and body together form an S and are interlaced with the limbs (Hauck's



Figure 11. Unprovenanced bracteate IK 196, where a bird seems to emerge from Odin's hair. Diam 30 mm. After IK.



Figure 12. IK 641 Weltzin. Diam 29 mm. After PESCH 2014.



GM 1 [IK vol 3.1, 42–7], compare Pesch FF D8–10). The head, which is hanging down at the right edge of the picture field, has an ear and an open mouth with a tongue. Shoulder and hip are looped, the legs are slender, and each foot has two toes. *Beizeichen* appear as two groups of three beads each, a triangle at the right end of the loop and a Y-shaped detail in the upper left part of the picture field, whose most likely interpretation is as a small creature (*Ketos* in Hauck's terminology) of the kind found on some D-bracteates (IK vol 3.1, 22–6). The shape of the head of the large animal does not fit in with the parallels mentioned above, and neck and body are drawn with broader lines than usual for the GM 1 bracteates. So again we have an individualistic version of a classic bracteate motif. This is emphasised by the runes **aalul** (see discussion by Imer below) at the left lower edge of the bracteate. For one thing this appears to be a garbled version of the well-known **alu** inscriptions, perhaps intended as a sophisticated palindrome **alula**, as proposed by Klaus Düwel (pers comm 2012). More importantly, we have here the first example ever of a runic inscription on an indisputable D-bracteate. Until now runes have been known only on A-, B-, C- and a few F-bracteates, and it has been regarded as an established fact in bracteate research that runes never occur on D-bracteates. In this light the silver-gilt bracteate IK 388 from grave 14 at Welbeck Hill near Grimsby might be reconsidered, with its inscription **law** or **læw** — perhaps a miscopied **lapu** — this may possibly represent a bird and thus be counted among the D-bracteates. The design is difficult to grasp, and several interpretations have been proposed. There are no such problems with the D-bracteate from Stavnsager. The design is clear and the runes beyond doubt.

The fourth bracteate, IK 650 (Fig 10, top), was found some months after the first three. It is a C-bracteate where the human head has not only a hatched hair-style, but also a plait. The beads contouring the front hair echo the Roman emperor's diadem, or more precisely its central jewel. Both man and animal have eyes of the 'half-mask' type. An elaborate bird is facing the man. The feet of the animal should be noted: they are large and lobed, and the foremost foot has an extra 'toe'. This has a parallel on IK 163 Skonager, and within the framework of Hauck's interpretation of the C-bracteates it is tempting to understand this detail as a way of indicating the wounded leg of Balder's horse, just like the 'blood drops' on IK 157,1–2 Sievern and other bracteates (HAUCK 1970, 136ff). The bracteate is closely related to Pesch's FF C2 and its derivatives FF C2,a; actually, if the bust diagnostic to FF C2 had been present, Pesch would, as a matter of course, include IK 650 in the main *Formularfamilie* C2 (pers comm 2013).

A short inscription, consisting of two runes, is placed between the cheek and the front leg of the animal. It can be transliterated **iz**, and though this, as noted below, makes no linguistic sense, it can be compared to similarly placed inscriptions, among others on IK 163 Skonager just mentioned

above, which have been interpreted as names (Beck in HAUCK 2001; BECK 2011, 301; DÜWEL and NOWAK 2011, 469ff).

#### Stavnsager in context

As we have seen, the closest relatives of IK 647 Stavnsager are the C-bracteates IK 110 Lindkær and 140 Overhornbæk of FF C15 and — because of the runic band — the A-bracteates IK 312,1 Overhornbæk and 312,2 of unknown provenance ('Vendsyssel' is only the area where the presumed finder lived). The recorded find-spots of these bracteates are all in the Randers area, forming a triangle of 9 × 16 × 18 km. To these can be added the B-bracteate IK 384 Vindum Stenhuse, which Pesch with good reason combines with IK 312,1–2 in her FF A8 group. IK 384 was found some 30 km west of the rest; nevertheless we have a rather local and very distinctive production comprising both A- and C-bracteates, most likely made in the same workshop and possibly by the same artisan.

The other C-bracteate from Stavnsager, IK 650, has peculiar details like the 'bleeding' foot and the missing bust, but can be affiliated to FF C2, which also includes the bracteates IK 58, 75,1–3, 142, 163 and 300 with inscriptions under the animal's head representing names, as mentioned in Lisbeth Imer's contribution below. The two D-bracteates have general resemblances to some other bracteates, but they both show special characteristics and have no really close relatives: the head and body of IK 649 are peculiar and its runic inscription is simply unique, while bird bracteates like IK 648 are generally scarce and incongruous in design. On the other hand there is no reason to regard these bracteates as secondary or 'degenerate': they show a conscious design, and the shortcomings of the inscriptions are no worse than usual.

The find-yielding area at Stavnsager measures c 100 ha and is thus comparable to Gudme, Uppåkra and Sorte Muld. At present, Stavnsager cannot qualify as a central place as early as the Migration Period. In the Vendel Period it appears to rise to a status comparable to some of Jørgensen's 'second generation aristocratic sites' like Järrestad or Toftegård (JØRGENSEN 2009, 337sq), but our knowledge of Stavnsager is still preliminary. The new bracteate hoard is another small piece of the puzzle: no matter whether they were produced at Stavnsager or just deposited there, they hint that the site may have acquired an aristocratic status a little earlier than presumed (see FIEDEL et al. 2011).

Unless future research reveals Stavnsager as another Gudme, the bracteates from East Jutland thus illustrate the same point as those from North-East Zealand: independent and innovative dies with a consciously designed iconography could be created away from the large central places and the 'religious specialists' ascribed to them. The same can be said of other areas like West Himmerland in Central Jutland (AXBOE and NIELSEN 2011) and the Trollhättan area in West Sweden (AXBOE and KÄLLSTRÖM 2013). The complexity of

the ‘central place’ phenomenon and the organization of fine metalworking in the late Roman and Migration Periods should not be underestimated. North-East Zealand will not be the only place where several sites shared aspects of centrality between them, thus together constituting a ‘decentralised central place’. Similar thoughts have been published by Feveile on South West Jutland with Dankirke and the Høgsbrogård precious-metal hoard (FEVEILE 2011; 2014), and fine metals were worked not only at the central sites, but also in more humble surroundings (AXBOE 2012).

## The runes on the Stavnsager bracteates

Lisbeth Imer

IK 647 Stavnsager-C (C 38872)

On bracteates, we often come across rune types that are not known from other objects; sometimes the markings have nothing to do with runes. On the large C-bracteate from Stavnsager we find both runes and rune-like characters. In the following transliteration, the two rune-like marks at the beginning and at the end of the inscription are not included. They probably belong to the decoration of the bird’s head or neck. In the transliteration below, ‘-’ denotes an unidentified rune or sign, ‘=’ denotes a ligature, and ‘( )’ denotes an uncertain reading. The writing direction runs partly to the right, partly to the left and shifts in the middle of the inscription.

<b>u</b>	<b>þ</b>	<b>a</b>	-	<b>i</b>	-	-	<b>u</b>	-
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>e</b>	<b>(l)</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>(l)</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>(a=a)</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>u</b>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>i</b>	-	<b>a</b>	<b>l</b>					
19	20	21	22					

Runological comment on the reading:

1. Normal **u**-rune with low branch.
2. Normal **þ**-rune with angular pocket.
3. Normal **a**-rune with low branches.
4. Uncertain — possibly a **u**- or a **þ**-rune. An error in the casting of the die might interfere with the reading.
5. Normal **i**-rune.
6. Possibly a reversed **t**-rune, also known from the Lindkær bracteate, where it is transliterated as a possible **k**-rune.

7. Uncertain — possibly a **k**-rune. The sign is known from other bracteate inscriptions.
8. Normal **u**-rune.
9. Uncertain — possibly a wrenched **n**-rune.
10. Normal **e**-rune.
11. Possible **l**-rune with low branch.
12. **a**-rune damaged by the crack in the bracteate.
13. Possible **l**-rune with low branch, damaged by the crack in the bracteate.
14. **d**-rune.
15. Uncertain — possibly a double **a**-rune. The type is also known from the Overhornbæk bracteate, where the sign is read as uncertain.
16. **e**-rune with very low angle.
17. Normal **r**-rune.
18. Normal **u**-rune.
19. Normal **i**-rune.
20. Uncertain; also known from an A-bracteate from Overhornbæk (IK 312).
21. Normal **a**-rune.
22. Normal **l**-rune.

Translation and interpretation:

The inscription does not make linguistic sense. The best parallel for the Stavnsager bracteate is the bracteate from Lindkær (IK 110), which reveals an attempt to write the futhark. The first three runes, **uþa**, on the Stavnsager bracteates can be interpreted as a similar attempt.

IK 649 Stavnsager-D (C 38874)

The runes on the D-bracteate are a sensation. Even though D-bracteates constitute the largest group of bracteates, runes have never been found on this type of bracteate before. The inscription is short, but carved very nicely and steadily into the matrix die.

<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>l</b>
1	2	3	4	5

The runes 4 and 5 are a little smaller than the previous runes, because the ornamentation has taken up much of the space. This implies that the runes were added after the creation of the ornamentation.

Translation and interpretation:

At first glance, the inscription makes no linguistic sense, but possibly it represents a corrupt or extended version of the **alu** formula, or even a corrupt palindrome of the word **alula**. Palindromes are known from other runic inscriptions, e.g. the Kylver stone in Sweden and the ceramic vessel from Spong Hill in England, where **alu** is written with mirror-runes. The interpretation of **alu** is much disputed. Some argue that



it could have the meaning 'rage, ecstasy' or 'protection, defence' (KRAUSE and JANKUHN 1966, 239), whereas others believe it could mean 'sanctuary' or 'temple', and that it can be traced in place-names in *Al-* (cf BRINK 1992). A very prevalent interpretation is the word 'ale', i.e. Old Norse *ǫ* (HØST 1976, 102), because this is the most logical development of the word, linguistically speaking. We do not know when ale was introduced as a drink in prehistoric times, however, so we have no direct evidence of a link between the drink and the word. The above-mentioned suggestions hold the word to be a noun, and only Rooth proposes that the word could be a 1st pers pres sg verb with the meaning 'I give strength' or 'I protect' (ROOTH 1926, 9–10). This latter interpretation of **alu** fits better with the contextual use of the word, considering its occurrence on weapons, amulets, rune stones and so on (IMER 2011).

#### IK 650 Stavnsager-C (C 39138)

The second C-bracteate from Stavnsager bears two runes, transliterated **iz**, beneath the head of the horse. They make no linguistic sense, but the position of the runes is known from other bracteates in the vicinity of Stavnsager, namely the Randers and Skonager bracteates (IK 142 and IK 163 respectively) and from the Maglemose, Hesselager and Funen bracteates (IK 300, IK 75 and IK 58 respectively). On the Skonager, Randers, and Funen bracteates the inscriptions are names: the Skonager inscription is read as the name *Niuwila* 'The new one'(?), and the Randers and Funen *Houaz* is thought to mean 'The High One' (Randers: cf IMER 2013, 105f; SEEBOLD 1992, 289). This is probably also the case with the Maglemose bracteate, which bears an abbreviated form **ho•z**. Taking this into consideration, it is plausible that the runes on the second C-bracteate from Stavnsager also represent a name in an abbreviated form.

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