Part Two

Northmen: Identities and State Formation in
Scandinavia

4. People and *land* in Early Scandinavia

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How do *Tyskland, Deutschland, Duitsland, Germany, An Ghearmáin, Allemagne, Alemania, Německo, Vācija,* and *Saksa* all relate to each other? Well, the answer to this silly question is, of course, that they all are the names of one and the same territorialized political entity found in Europe. Given that, why do we not use one single name for this entity, especially today in our modern, controlled, and nivellating, society of EU-conformism? The answer to this question touches upon the very core of a research field called 'onomastics', which studies how names are coined and who coins them.

In Sweden (my homeland), our neighbour to the south is *Tyskland* (if we ignore Bornholm), and etymologically we share the name for this European geographical and political entity with the inhabitants of the country itself, *Deutchland*, and with the Dutch, who uses the name *Duitsland*. The name *Germany* is used in English, *Germania* in Italian, *Германия* in Russian, and *An Ghearmáin* in Irish. In eastern Europe the name of the country is derived from a stem *Nem-*: *Německo* in Czeck, *Nemecko* in Slovak, *Niemcy* in Polish, and *Németország* in Hungarian. East of the Baltic the name is derived from a totally different stem beginning with *Vo-/Va-* as in Latvian *Vācija* and in Lithuanian *Vokietija*; whereas *Allemagne* is used in France, and *Alemania* in Spain. The Finns, however, use a different designation, namely *Saksa*, which is similar to *Saksamaa* in Estonian. Of course, this usage of different names for nations and people is not a new or modern phenomenon as many modern names have roots in early history, and even in prehistory. In light of this, it is rather puzzling to find that in literature on migrating peoples and ethnicity in early Europe ethnonyms, the names of peoples, are very often treated as self-appellations, bestowed upon a people by themselves. This possibility has probably been overestimated. In the Romance languages, the toponym for 'Germany' is based on the ethnonym *Alamanian*, with an etymology of 'all men', while the

German, Dutch, and Nordic toponyms have a base in ON *þjóð* 'people'.[1] Both appear to be autonyms. The name used by Anglo-Saxons seems to be a loan from Celtic (probably Gaulish), whereas the Finnish toponym contains the ethnonym *Saxons*. The question is then, who coined ethnonyms and toponyms? Did the people or their neighbours do so? The answer is, most certainly both, but the normal toponymic rule is that it is their neighbours who name them and not the other way around. This has to be modified with cases where some people have used a name for their own collective to distinguish themselves from their neighbours. But it is extremely difficult to determine whether ethnonyms — like *ynglingar* or *inguaeones*, both meaning 'the people claiming the god *Ing(uaz)* as their *heros eponymus*' — were coined by these two peoples or by their neighbours.

In the late nineteenth century, the Norwegian philologist Sophus Bugge was discussing the name *Danmark*, as several earlier scholars and amateurs had done before. In his opinion, the name is derived from the inhabitative name *Daner* 'Danes'.[2] In another very influential work written by the Swedish philologist Adolf Noreen, the toponym *Danmark* received a different interpretation.[3] He argued that the name *Danmark* did not derive from *Daner*, but vice versa, and that the *Danes* were formed from the territorial name *Danmark*, in the same way as — in Noreen's opinion — *værmar* is a derivative from *Värmland*, *gautar* from *Gautland* (now *Götaland*), *raumar* from *Romerike*, or *hordar* from *Hordaland*.

This clash of opinions between two giants of Scandinavian philology helps us formulate the second problem of decisive importance for our understanding of the earliest polities and social formations in Scandinavia, namely, how

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[1] The following abbreviations will be used throughout this chapter:

Goth.	Gothic
ODan	Old Danish
OE	Old English
OHG	Old High German
OGoth.	Ostro-Gothic
ON	Old Norse
OSax	Old Saxon
OSw	Old Swedish
Pr.-Germ.	Proto-Germanic
IE	Indo-European

[2] Sophus Bugge, 'Folkenavnet Daner', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 5 (1889), 125–31.

[3] Adolf Noreen, *Spridda studier* (Stockholm: Geber, 1895–1924), II, 139.

societies were organized and how geographical space was identified there. Was it organized out of some spatial, territorial structure, or out of identified people[4] who were looked upon as having something in common, something that bound them together? Hence, was the *land* of the *gautar* constituent from the very beginning — and if so, *land* meaning what? — or were there some organizational elements imbued in the concept of a *land* which later on led to an organization and territorialization for the people living there? We cannot, as on the Continent, look for the answer in written documents or books, and our analyses must rely on the evidence of place names, combined with the weak — and controversial — information we can get from classical authors such as Tacitus, Pliny, Ptolemy, Jordanes, and Paul the Deacon, along with the silent evidence of archaeology.

This may be a hazardous enterprise since the value of those sources, such as Jordanes' *Getica*, has been questioned to such extent that today it seems only fools and 'star-philologists' — and here it is rather a pejorative designation (which I have seen used) for those who reconstruct words and names — persist in using them. This discussion is very much dominated by historians, dealing with written sources. In addition, modern archaeology has been often marginalized and accused (rightly or wrongly) of using pre-war methodology (especially Gustav Kossinna's research), which was tainted by the affiliation with Nazi-wartime crimes. The debate has led to an unfortunate division between Walter Goffart with his disciples, on the one side, and the so-called 'Viennese School' and scholars working with an 'ethnogenesis' paradigm, on the other. Scholars have been cast — especially by Goffart and his allies — as being either the good ones or the bad ones. Knowledgeable, useful, and fruitful comments have been produced on both sides, and hopefully, eventually something good will come out of this unfortunate polarization. (It is easy to see the resemblance of this discussion to the fierce polemic concerning the Icelandic saga tradition, especially in the 1960s, and to the heated debate developing in the 1950–60s — in Scandinavia as late as in the 1980s — on the *germanisches Urrecht* and the settlement of the idea of an egalitarian pan-Germanic peasant society in pre-Christian times).

Meanwhile, the discussion still lacks two other important aspects, namely language and toponymy. D. H. Green has dealt with important linguistic

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[4] I deliberately avoid using the words 'ethnic', 'ethnicity', and 'ethnic group' since they in my opinion are extremely difficult to define, and therefore use the more 'neutral' 'people' and 'folk group'.

aspects of this matter, and historians mention place names now and then; but they have never been discussed from a toponymic methodological point of view.[5] As for the most heated discussion of the 'ancestral homeland' of the Goths, it is often stated that the question regarding the emigration from *Scandza* can only be solved by analyses of texts.[6] Yet it must be of interest for the debate to note that the word *Goths* (compare **gutoni** on the Pietroasa ring)[7] is formally identical with the ethnonym *gutar* (< **gutaniz*), that is the people living on *Gotland*, and furthermore, that there is a probable ancient linguistic affinity between *gutar*, Goths, and *gautar* (in *Götaland*) due to ablaut.[8] This, of course, offers no proof that the Goths were from Gotland or Sweden. However, this formal linguistic affinity, taken together with geographical proximity (map 2) (when the Goths first emerge in history, it happened on the north coast of modern Poland, around the mouth of the Vistuła), ought to be part of the discussion in addition to analyses of written sources. One would assume that such linguistic affinities could be useful in dealing with 'ethnic' affinities when discussing a (non-existent) homeland of the Goths.

Goffart and others have more or less disqualified Jordanes' *Getica* as a fictitious construction, unreliable in regard to historical events and places. The main critique is, of course, valid: such works are not history books in the modern sense as their main objective is to create a 'useful' history rather than a 'true' history; and the uncertainties surrounding the writing, the rewriting, the editing, and the stemmas of the codices also make these sources difficult to use, sometimes hazardous. As for the place names, it is obvious that Jordanes knew of names in Ultima Thule that had historical and geographical bearings. They cannot be Jordanes' whimsical creative inventions. Some examples can illustrate that such a viewpoint would be entirely impossible.

[5] See D. H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and the German contributions mentioned and cited below.

[6] For details and references see Walter Goffart, 'Jordanes's *Getica* and the Disputed Authenticity of Gothic Origins from Scandinavia', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), 379–98 (pp. 380–1).

[7] Hermann Reichert, '*GUTANI ? WI HAILAG*', *Die Sprache*, 35 (1993), 235–47.

[8] Ablaut is the regular change of vowels, as in strong verbs (*run–ran–run*, OSw b*iu*þa–b*au*þ–b*u*þin).

Map 2: Prehistoric Peoples in Scandinavia.

In Pliny's *Natural History* (AD 79), Tacitus' *Germania* (AD 98), Ptolemy's *Geographia* (AD 125–50), Jordanes' *Getica* (AD *c*. 550),[9] and also other authors writing in the first millennium, we find names of peoples rather than territories. The most detailed is perhaps Jordanes' enumeration of approximately thirty *gentes* in Scandinavia. Several scholars have, more or less successfully, tried to identify these names and locate them in geography.[10] It is my estimation that around 50% of the names mentioned have been correctly identified and thereby given a plausible location on a map. These *gentes* are: the *screrefennae* 'the Finns/Saami', the *suehans* 'the Swedes', the *theutes* 'the people living in the province of Tjust in Småland', the *bergio* 'the people living on the hilly Bjärehalvön in Skåne', *hallin* 'the people living in Halland (originally obviously the southern part of the later province of Halland)', *fervir* 'the people living in Fjäre (later a hundred) in the northern part of the later province of Halland', *finnaithae* 'the people living in Finnveden in Småland', *gautigoth* obviously 'the västgötar', *ostrogothae* 'the östgötar', *raumariciae* 'the people living in Romerike', and *grannii* 'the people living in Grenland'. A tentative identification has been given to the *vagoth* 'the *gutar* on *Gotland*', the *lothida* 'the people living in *Luggude* in Skåne', the *rugi* 'the people living in Rogaland', and *ranii* 'the people living in *Ranríki*', that is, the northern part of today's Bohuslän.

In the eighth century, Paul the Deacon commented on *Germania* in his *History of the Lombards*. It is said that numerous prisoners of war were captured and sold, presumably as slaves, to the south. He declares that he had knowledge of this remote region from Pliny's *Natural History* and other sources, while naming such peoples as the Goths, Vandals, *Rugi*, and *Heruli*. Paul claims that the Lombards (*Langobardi*) originated in *Germania* from the island called *Scadinavia*. It is also notable here that Paul the Deacon mostly identifies people and mentions territories only for large geographical entities, such as *Germania* and *Scadinavia*, although admittedly building and citing his story from much earlier authorities such as the *Liber pontificalis*, Bede, Gregory of Tours, and Isidore of Seville. The same is the case with the anonymous Geographer from Ravenna who, sometime in the late seventh to early ninth century, excels in vast

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[9] It is not clear to what extent Jordanes was dependent on an older work written by Cassiodorus; see for example, the discussion by Goffart, 'Jordanes's *Getica*', p. 385.

[10] A fairly late work, which was especially influential in Scandinavian studies, is Josef Svennung, *Jordanes und Scandia: Kritisch-exegetische Studien*, Skrifter utg. av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, 44,2A (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1967).

geographical knowledge and enumerates peoples, albeit intertwined with some names of *urbes* (towns) and rivers in his *Cosmographia*.[11] What is notable here is that geographical identification is focused more or less on *gentes*. Were identified territories thereby not existent in Scandinavia around the middle of the first millennium? Most certainly there were spatial entities, as some names such as *raumariciae* and *ragnaricii,* mentioned by Jordanes, indicate. These ethnonyms seem to derive from names ending in *-ríki*, but unlike the toponyms for the medieval regions ending in *-ríki*, such as *Raumaríki*, this early *ríki* was probably not territorialized. It was a polity built on the power a king or chieftain had over a people, a polity admittedly with some kind of a geographical extension, however, with no explicit or defined borders, probably very similar to the influence and power an Icelandic *goði* (chieftain) had over his *þingmen* (followers) in his *goðorð* (legal district of the *goði*).

This connection is interesting in that the oldest place name elements for settled areas and settlements are the words which denote a people or a kind of territory. In Scandinavia — as in more or less the whole of the Germanic-speaking area — we find place names with the suffix *-inga-*. Most of these names occur in central eastern Sweden, where this suffix has evolved into an element *-inge*. These settlement names in *-inge* most certainly go back to an inhabitative name in *-ingaʀ* denoting an identified people. The most accepted theory, albeit with some formal problems, is that the settlement element *-inge* goes back to a 'double'-suffix formation, with an inhabitative suffix *-inga-* and a collective or locational suffix *-ia*, hence *-inga-ia > -ingi > -inge*.[12] For example, the name *Hämringe* in the province of Uppland is an older *Hæmbringi*, containing the suffixes and a word *hammar* 'a small (rocky) hill'. The name must be understood as denoting an identified group of people who were in some respect located to a *hammar*. Since it is not the geographical fixed location but a group of people that hence was of importance when coining the name, such a name could have a spatial extension designating the territory in which this group of people moved and lived.[13]

[11] *Ravennas anonymus, Cosmographia: Eine Erdbeschreibung um das Jahr 700*, trans. by Joseph Schnetz, Nomina Germanica, 10 (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1951).

[12] Carl Ivar Ståhle, *Studier över de svenska ortnamnen på -inge*, Studier till en svensk ortnamnsatlas, 3 (Uppsala: Lundequistska bokhandeln, 1946), p. 161.

[13] For Anglo-Saxon equivalents, ending with *-ingas, -ware, -sæte/-sætan, -ge* etc., see Barbara Yorke, 'Political and Ethnic Identity: A Case Study of Anglo-Saxon Practice', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrell (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 69–89.

In contrast to the West Germanic place names in *-inga-*, found for example in Germany and England, the Scandinavian *-inge-* names never seem to have had a personal name as the qualifier in the first element. Instead, the first element is a topographical term, such as in *Hämringe*, mentioned above, *Ledinge* from *ledh* 'route', *Björklinge* from *birki* 'a grove of birch trees', and *Skärplinge* from *skarp* meaning 'poor soil'. At least in Sweden, these place names can be dated to the first half and the middle of the first millennium, more specifically to the Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period — some of them can probably be placed even in the Vendel or Merovingian Period (*c.* 600–800).[14]

Another ancient place name element we have in Scandinavia is *-hem, -heimr*,[15] which is the same element as the German *-haim* and the English *-ham* making this place name element found, more or less, all over the Germanic-speaking area. Decisive for understanding these names are place names like *Trondheim*, meaning the territory of the *trønder* in *Trøndelag*. It can be shown that this element obviously had a semantic content of something spatial, without having been territorialized (hence with defined borders).[16] Thus, the semantic content for both *-inge* and *-hem* is not something punctual in the landscape, but it has some spatial extension where some identified people lived.

This observation seems to match very well with the custom of classical authors' use of *gentes* for geographical identification. Therefore, the overall picture of place names indicates a general difference between the first and second halves of the first millennium in Scandinavia. In the former period, geographical and toponymical identification related to peoples and tribes, which certainly had a social and political background in the way polities were organized, with personal power over people. It also had implications for claiming access to and ownership of land and territories. In the late Iron Age in Scandinavia (*c.* 600–1050), we find place names with individuals as qualifiers and place name elements pointing to sites and punctual references in the landscape, for example to a specific arable land, to farms, and to houses, which

[14] Ståhle, *Studier över de svenska ortnamnen på -inge*, pp. 569–91; compare Stefan Brink, 'Iakttagelser rörande namnen på *-hem* i Sverige', in *Heidersskrift til Nils Hallan på 65-årsdagen 13. desember 1991*, ed. by G. Alhaug and others (Oslo: Novus, 1991), pp. 66–80 (pp. 67 and 77, n. 1 and 2).

[15] As for the dating of *-hem/-heim*-names in Scandinavia, see Stefan Brink, 'Absolut datering av bebyggelsenamn', in *Bebyggelsers og bebyggelsesnavnes alder*, ed. by V. Dalberg and others, Norna-rapporter, 26 (Uppsala: Norna, 1984), pp. 18–64 (pp. 45–48).

[16] See Brink, 'Iakttagelser rörande namnen på *-hem* i Sverige'.

likely reflects a change in land use and ownership of land. It seems fairly obvious that during roughly this period a consciousness of demarcation of territories began. Strict borders with boundary-marks can be placed as late as in the Viking Age or the Scandinavian early Middle Ages (after *c.* 1050), although a consciousness of dividing borders — in Old-Nordic *mark*(*ir*), but also *vidher* and *mardher* both denoting 'large forest' — is obvious during the late Iron Age.

Therefore, the importance of identifying 'people' in an earlier period in Scandinavia is something that seems to have an actual background in society and the organization of land. This does not mean that the Scandinavians during the early Iron Age (*c.* 0–600) lacked proper toponyms for landscape features or even settlements and houses, but rather that place names worked in this early phase within a hierarchical structure, in which identifying people took precedence over identifying territories.[17]

Another question is which indigenous word(s) were used in Proto-Nordic Scandinavia equivalent to the use of *gens* and *gentes* on the Continent. The direct cognate to Lat. *gens* was ON *kind* f. 'family, tribe, people', although a more common word was probably ON *þjóð* f. (< Pr.-Germ. **þeuðō*) 'people'.[18] In the same way as for *kind* f., *þjóð* f. seems to have had no extra semantic connotations, unlike ON *herr* m. (< Pr.-Germ. **harja*) 'people, population, multitude; army', which semantically has a military component.[19] This latter word, which has been assumed in several compounds such as ON *herað* n.,[20] is often translated as 'the people (that counts, namely, the people in arms), that is the men', at least in earlier historical research. Several personal names have been derived from the word ON *þjóð* such as *Þjóðarr* (< **þeuðō-gaiRAR/-harjaR*), *Þjóðrekr* (compare OGoth. *Theudericus*), and also the title ON *þjóðann* 'king, chieftain', compare Goth. *þiudans*. As we can see from our weak source material, this title, ON *þjóðann*, had no military connotations, unlike the intimately connected ON *dróttinn* (< Pr.-Germ. **druhtinaz*), a derivation from ON *drótt* f. (< **druhti-*)

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[17] See the interesting discussion regarding the development of the place-name element *kind* in Sweden, by Thorsten Andersson, '*Kind* som ortnamnselement', *Namn och bygd*, 88 (2000), 43–51 (pp. 43–44).

[18] Jan de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd edn (Leiden: Brill, 1962), p. 613.

[19] de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch,* pp. 224-25.

[20] Etymology may be, in my opinion, discussed; see for example, ibid., p. 223; and Thorsten Andersson, 'Herred', *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 14 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 435–40.

meaning 'retinue or body of warriors'. The word *þjóð* is found in several old place names in Scandinavia, many obviously denoting assembly sites, and the most well known is probably *Tjølling* (< *Þjóðalyng*), which is the name of a parish in Vestfold, southern Norway. The most plausible interpretation is that the church in this parish was erected on the pre-Christian assembly site, which was very common in parts of Scandinavia,[21] where the people (*þjóð*) of this settlement district met.[22]

Words for smaller divisions, tribes and large families are actually a rather complicated problem in early Scandinavian languages. In Proto-Germanic (and hence probably also in Proto-Nordic) the common word for an (extended) family was **hiwa*, later found in Old Nordic languages in derivations and compounds as *hæ-*, *hi-*, *hy-* or *hjo-/hju-*.[23] The word is found on rune stones, but not in place names. Instead, the *-inga* suffix was used frequently for identifying smaller units of identified groups of people, related or not.
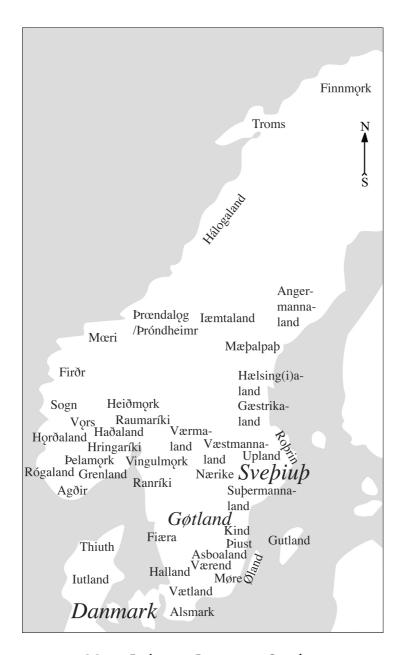
In Scandinavia probably the oldest territories we know of are the so-called *landskap*, normally translated as 'provinces', which in prehistoric and medieval times were called *land*. We can be fairly sure that these *land* were in existence well before the Viking Age.[24] The first elements of the names of these provinces

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[21] See Stefan Brink, *Sockenbildning och sockennamn: Studier i äldre territoriell indelning i Norden* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1990).

[22] Stefan Brink, 'Skiringssal, Kaupang, Tjølling — the Toponymic Evidence', in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. by Dagfinn Skre, The Kaupang Excavation project, Publication Series, 1; Norske Oldfunn, 22 (Århus: Århus University Press, 2007), 53–64 (p. 63).

[23] Stefan Brink, *Lord and Lady — Bryti and Deigja: Some Historical and Etymological Aspects of Family, Patronage and Slavery in Early Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon England*, The Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture 2004–05 (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, forthcoming).

[24] For the toponymic status and the dating of these territories (*land*), see Jöran Sahlgren, 'Namnet Uppland', *Ortnamnssällskapets i Uppsala årsskrift* (1961), 19–25; Thorsten Andersson, 'Länder- und Landschaftnamen', *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 17 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), pp. 557–69; idem, 'Landschaften — Stämme — Reiche: Sprachliche Zusammenhänge in altnordischer Zeit', in *Völkernamen — Ländernamen — Landschaftsnamen*, ed. by E. Eichler and others, Onomastica Lipsiensia: Leipziger Untersuchungen zur Namenforschung, 2 (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2004), pp. 9–32; Stefan Brink, 'Land, bygd, distrikt och centralort i Sydsverige: Några bebyggelsehistoriska nedslag', in *Centrala platser, centrala frågor: Samällsstrukturen under järnålder*, ed. by Lars Larsson and Birgitta Hårdh, Uppåkrastudier, 1 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1998), pp. 297–326 (pp. 308–11).

Finnmǫrk

Troms

N

S

Hálogaland

Anger-
manna-
land

Þrœndalǫg   Iæmtaland
/Þróndheimr

Mœri

Mæþalþaþ

Firðr

Hælsing(i)a-
land

Sogn   Heiðmǫrk

Gæstrika-
land

Vǫrs   Raumaríki

Hǫrðaland   Haðaland   Værma-
Hringaríki   land   Væstmanna-   Roþrin
Þelamǫrk   Vingulmǫrk   land   Upland
Rógaland   Grenland   Nærike   *Sveþiuþ*
Agðir   Ranríki   Suþermanna-
land

Gøtland   Kind
Fiæra   Þiust   Gutland
Thiuth   Asboaland
Halland   Værend   Øland
Iutland   Møre
Vætland
Danmark   Alsmark

Map 3: Prehistoric Provinces in Scandinavia.

are often ethnonyms or the name of a people (map 2 and map 3): *jæmtar* in *Jämtland*, *angermæn* in *Ångermanland*, *hælsing(i)ar* in *Hälsingland*, *gæstrikar* in *Gästrikland*, *væstmæn* in *Västmanland*, *sødermæn* in *Södermanland*, *gøtar* in *Öster*- and *Västergötland*, *gutar* in *Gotland*, **hallir* in *Halland*, *iutar* in *Jutland/Jylland*, *raumar* in *Romerike*, **ranir* in *Ranrike*, *hringar* in *Ringerike*, *þilir* in *Telemark*, *grenir* in *Grenland*, *rygir* in *Rogaland*, *horðar* in *Hordaland*, *trøndr* in *Trondheim*, and *háleygir* in *Hálogaland*. At least some of these 'landskap' names appear to have been used at an earlier stage, for example, the ones ending with -*ríki*: *Romerike*, *Ringerike*, *Ranrike*, and perhaps also *Svearike*.[25] However, the large majority of these 'landskap' names are compounded with the word *land*, which is the most common term for a larger territory, a region or a polity in Scandinavia. During the Viking Period, the word *land* was used in names for provinces and countries, and at least some of these place names were coined by the Scandinavians themselves from the names of the people living there. This can be seen in the cases of *Langbardhaland*, *Lífland*, *Saksland*, *Grikland*, and *Virland*. Alternatively, a name was created based on some characteristics of the people the Scandinavians met in that region, as in the case of *Serkland* 'the country where people are wearing a *serkr*, that is a shirt, gown'.[26]

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[25] Thorsten Andersson, '*Hringaríki, Ranríki, Raumaríki*: Till diskussionen om ordet *rike* i gamla nordiska ortnamn', *Saga och sed* (1976), 56–83.

[26] This usage of the word *land* 'province, country' is found on many rune stones: **h[an] trukn-þi : [a] lf:lanti**, 'He drowned in Lífland' (Sö 39); **bruthur : sin : suera : as : uarþ : tauþr * o * eklanti**, 'their brother Sverri(?), who died in England' (Sö 46); **han : austarla : arþi : barþi : auk : o : lakbarþilanti**, 'He ploughed his stern to the east, and met his end in the land of the Lombards' (Sö 65); **o sirklanti : likR : sunR iuintaR**, 'in Serkland lies Eyvindr's son' (Sö 131); **han uarþ : tauþr : o| |oklati i liþi**, 'He died in the retinue in England' (Sö 160); **kuþuiR : uaR uastr : a : aklati : kialti : skifti : burkiR : a : sahks:lanti : suti : kaula**, 'Gudhvér was in the west; divided (up) payment in England; manfully attacked townships in Saxony' (Sö 166); **biurn : uaR trebin : a : kut:lanti**, 'Björn, (who) was killed on Gotland' (Sö 174); **o * eklanti**, 'in England' (Sm 27); **risti × stin × iftiR × kurmar × sun × sin + iaR × uaR + trbin × a × iklanti**, 'raised the stone in memory of Gudhmarr(?), his son, who was killed in England' (Vg 20); **hn * uarþ * trbin * i * estlatum**, 'He was killed in Estonia' (Vg 181); **rahnualtr * huar a × griklanti**, 'Ragnvaldr was in Greece' (U 112); **hon tuk| |knuts kialt a| |anklanti**, 'He took Knútr's payment in England' (U 194); **hon hafþi o| |onklanti tuh kialt| |takit**, 'He had taken two payments in England' (U 241); **hon fil a uirlanti**, 'He fell in Virland' (U 356); **thiR * fyrþu * stin * þina * af * kutlanti**, 'they brought this stone from Gotland' (U 414); **han uas tribin + a + uirlanti**, 'He was killed in Virland' (U 533); **saR × uarþ × tuþr a × iut(l)ati × on skulti fara × til × iklanþs**, 'He died in Jútland. He meant to travel to England' (U 539); **hon**

It is evident that in the eleventh century the word *land* was used for a 'province', in this case Södermanland, as in this famous rune inscription:

Ketill and Björn, they raised this stone in memory of Thorsteinn, their father; Önundr in memory of his brother and the housecarls in memory of the just(?) (and) Ketiley in memory of her husbandman. These brothers were the best of men in the land and abroad in the retinue, held their housecarls well. He fell in battle in the east in Gardhar, commander of the retinue, the best of landholders.[27]

On an Upplandic rune stone the word *land* is perhaps denoting larger units than provinces: 'Stydhingr/Stœdhingr had the stone raised in memory of Árni, his son. He travelled to every land'.[28]

The word *land* was ambiguous in early Scandinavia as it had a double meaning. The meaning 'arable land, farming land', for example, is undoubtedly the original meaning, and this is also the most common meaning of the word found in runic inscriptions.[29] The second meaning found in early Scandinavia is *land* denoting a 'province' or a 'kingdom'. For early Scandinavians, there was no

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uarþ [tau]th(r) [a] kriklati, 'He died in Greece' (U 540); **hn us| |siok * uti * þa þiR * kialt * toku * a kutlanti**, 'He was sick abroad when they took payment on Gotland' (U 614); **han : uarþ : tuþr : a : srklant**, 'He died in Serkland' (U 785); **furu- trikia frislats a**, 'We travelled to meet the valiant men of Frisia' (N 540). For abbreviations and sources for runic citations, here and below, see *Samnordisk rundatabas* <http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskning/samnord.htm>.

[27] ***** **ketil : auk + biorn + þaiR + raistu + stain + thin[a] + at + þourstain : faþur + sin + anuntr + at + bruþur + sin + auk : hu[skar]laR + hifiR + iafna + ketilau at + buanta sin * ¶ bruþr uaRu þaR bistra mana : a : lanti auk : i liþi : uti : h(i)(l)(t)u sini huska(r)la : ui- + han + fial + i + urustu + austr + i + garthum + lis + furugi + lanmana + bestr** (Sö 338). See also this Norwegian runic inscription: **su uas mar hanarst × o haþalanti**, 'She was the handiest maiden in Hadhaland' (N 68).

[28] **stþthinkr × lit resa stin × iftR × arna × sun × sen × han × fyr × hayrt × lant** (U 948).

[29] Inge Særheim, *Namn og gard. Studium av busetnadsnamn på -land*, Tidvise skrifter, 38 (Stavanger: Avdeling for kultur- og samfunnsfag, Høgskolesenteret i Rogaland, 2001). In the runic inscriptions: **kiulfiR uarþ um lanti þisu**, 'Gylfir acquired this land' (Hs 14); **þair : finr : auk : skofti : rais(t)u : s(t)in : þena : þa : es : (þ)air : s(k)iþtu : lantom : sinum : saRn(e)r : uala**, 'Finnr and Skopti, Váli's sons, they raised this stone when they divided their land(ed property)' (N 29). In a couple of Danish inscriptions a term for an overseer or steward is found, *landhirdhi*: **mana : sin : frinta : þans × uas * lantirþi ÷ kitils ÷ þis ÷ nuruna**, 'Manni, their kinsman, who was Ketill the Norwegian's estate-steward' (DR 107); **hon : uas : l(o)nt:mono : baistr : i : tonmarku : auk : furstr**, 'he was the first and best of landholders in Denmark' (DR 133), **osur lat:hirþiR : kukis : sun : raist runar þasi**, 'Özurr Estate-steward, Køgir's(?) son, carved these runes' (DR 134).

difference, from a toponymical point of view, between *Frisland, England, Serkland, Lifland, Estland, Virland, Jamtaland, Hælsing(i)aland, Gotland*, or *Haðaland* as these were all identified as regions where certain people lived. Due to the lack of written sources, we do not know when this new regional meaning for the word *land* occurred first. However, this meaning was well established in the Viking Period and most certainly could have been used well before this period. (It is doubtful if this meaning was used already in the Roman Iron Age. More likely the secondary meaning of the term *land*, a territory or a polity, evolved during later periods.)

The classical authors' usage of names of people for geographical identification may have its setting during the first half of the first millennium in Scandinavia. During this period, societal power was personal, similar to that on the Continent, rather than territorial. The power was conducted by bonds between the (Goth.) *reiks* and his people, and not within a territorial (ON) *ríki*. It is unclear if this had a background in an unstable settlement structure. This is difficult to determine, as we simply do not know how unstable the geographical locations of different peoples were in mainland Scandinavia during the Migration Period. It seems that there were some polities or folk groups that were geographically identified by the demarcation of dense and large forests, surrounding a given folk group, and with one or several focal sites, marked out by some extraordinary ancient monuments.[30]

Therefore, we know the names of identified 'peoples' in Scandinavia as many of them were preserved in later territorial names ending with *-land*, *-þjóð* and *-ríki*: *iæmtar, hælsing(i)ar, svear, gautar, gutar, raumar, hǫrdar*, and *trønder* (map 2 and map 3). Since we lack written sources for early Scandinavia, we cannot tell if there was a similar development as on the Continent, where there were large groups of people who moved and changed settlement location, or if some small tribe or family became important and emerged as an important 'people'.[31] Scholars from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries allowed themselves

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[30] See for example, Bjørn Myhre, 'Chieftains Graves and Chiefdom Territories in South Norway in the Migration Period', *Studien zur Saschenforschung*, 6 (1987), 169–88; and Per Ramqvist, 'Resources, Population and Power in the Migration Period: An Analysis of the Archaeological Remains in Central Norrland', in *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic*, ed. by Ingmar Jansson, Estonian–Swedish Archaeological Symposium, 2; Theses and Papers in Archaeology, new series, A7 (Stockholm: Dept. of Archaeology, University of Stockholm, 1995), pp. 33–38.

[31] See for example, Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 114–21.

far-reaching conclusions regarding *origines gentium* and *vagina nationum* following the close linguistic resemblance of the names found in works by classical authors and the names of peoples and regions in Scandinavia (*Cimbri — Himmerland* or *Haruden/Charuden — Hordaland, Hardsyssel*), whereas today most scholars are more cautious in this regard.[32]

Several of these peoples or folk groups have names referring to topographical features. These important ethnonyms have not been considered in recent discussions. These names have often been discounted, because they are regarded as useless for locating *gentes* in early Europe. But ethnonyms of this kind make it possible to identify and locate a people to a certain geographical place or area, for instance (map 2 and map 3): *sygnir* is formed from the fjord name *Sogn*, *egðir* is connected to *Agðir* (provinces of *Vest-Agder* and *Aust-Agder* in Norway), *mærir* to **Mærr* (province of *Møre*, Norway), *hælsing(i)ar* to *hals* (as in *Hälsingland* and *Helsingborg* in Sweden and *Helsingør* in Denmark), *jæmtar* probably to a **Iæmt* (in *Jämtland* in Sweden), and **hallir* in the province name *Halland* referring to *Hovs hallar* by the coast. In these cases, a topographical feature is the basis for the name of a people and can more or less be located with certainty and identified in the landscape. The names reveal stability, although one cannot disregard the possibility that peoples with those names moved from the area where we find the natural feature for the name in question to another distant area with the name still attached to them. If this possibility is to be considered, we have to reckon with the division of the name of a people, with the name used for two, or even more, groups.

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[32] See for example, the often cited analyses by Josef Svennung, 'Svearnas ö och sithonerna hos Tacitus', *Fornvännen*, 57 (1962), 193–211; idem, *Scandinavia und Scandia: Lateinisch-nordische Namenstudien*, Skrifter utg. av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, 44,1 (Uppsala: Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, 1963); idem, *Jordanes und Scandia*; and idem, *Skandinavien bei Plinius und Ptolemaio: Kritisch-exegetische Forschungen zu den ältsten nordischen Sprachdenkmälern*. Skrifter utg. av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, 45 (Uppsala: Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1974). For a modern *Stand der Forschung* in the field, see for instance *Germanen, Germania, germanische Altertumskunde*, ed. by Heinrich Beck, 2nd edn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998); *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht*, ed. by Heinrich Beck, 2nd edn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999); and Gerhard Rasch, *Antike geographische Namen nördlich der Alpen*, ed. by Stefan Zimmer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005). For Scandinavian research, see Bent Jørgensen, *Stednavneordbog*, 2nd edn (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1994); *Norsk stadnamnleksikon*, ed. by Jørn Sandnes and Ola Stemshaug, 4th edn (Oslo: Samlaget, 1997); and *Svenskt ortnamnslexikon*, ed. by Mats Wahlberg (Uppsala: SOFI, 2003).

Other names for *gentes* in Scandinavia are more difficult to understand or place, regarding geographical location or their etymological background. This is the case with the name of the Danes (*Danir*), which is obscure regarding both the etymology and the early occurrence of the people identified with this name. Jordanes states that the Danes originated in *Svitjod* (*Suetidi*), which has been noted by early scholars and discussed extensively. In reality we have nothing substantial to corroborate Jordanes' strange statement.[33] The name of the nation, Denmark (*Danmark*), contains the word *mark* 'dividing forest',[34] and traditionally the name is understood as a *pars pro toto* name, originally denoting the dividing forest towards the Saxons in southern Schleswig.[35] Elias Wessén has given an interesting interpretation in regard to the late tenth-century inscription on one of the famous rune stones at Jelling, where it says 'the Harald, who won all of Denmark to himself' (**sa haraltr ias saʀ uan tanmaurk ala**). Wessén's interpretation is that by this statement, King Harald is bragging by claiming he has won all of the 'Danmark', namely the border forest in southern Schleswig.[36]

The name of the Swedes (*Svear*) has been interpreted as an autonym, a self-praising name 'we ourselves', going back to an IE **sue-* 'self, own', used in two obviously parallel stems Pr.-Germ. **sweaniz* and **swīaniz* (perhaps < **swejaniz*), which explains name forms such as *Suiones*, *Suehans*, and *Sueones* used by the classical authors, as well as ON *svíar* and OSw *svear*. This ethnonym is found in two Old Norse words: *Svíaríki* 'the *ríki* of the *svear*' — which can be found in

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[33] 'Suetidi, cogniti in hac gente reliquis [. . .] eminentiores, quamvis et Dani, ex ipsorum stirpe progressi, Herulos propriis sedibus expulerunt. Qui inter omnes Scandiae nationes nomen sibi ob nimia proceritate affectant praecipuum', Jordanes, *Getica* (cited from Svennung, *Jordanes und Scandia*, p. 99).

[34] See for example, Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, 'Marca: Zu den Begriffen, Mark und Gemarkung in den Leges barbarorum', in *Untersuchungen zur eisenzeitlichen und frühmittelalterlichen Flur in Mitteleuropa und ihrer Nutzung*, 1, ed. by H. Bech and others, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philol.-Hist. Klasse, 3,115 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 74–91.

[35] See for example, Jørgensen, *Stednavneordbog*, pp. 57–58; Thorsten Andersson, 'Länder und Landschaftsnamen: Skandinavien', *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 17 (Berlin: de Gruyter 2001), 557–69 (pp. 557–58). A different interpretation can be found by Peter Sawyer, *Da Danmark blev Danmark: Fra ca. år 700 til ca. 1050*, Gyldendal og Politikens Danmarkshistorie, 3 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal & Politiken, 1988), pp. 22–23.

[36] Elias Wessén, 'Nordiska folkstammar och folknamn: En översikt', *Fornvännen*, 64 (1969), 14–36 (p. 18).

the present-day name of the nation in Scandinavian languages, *Sverige* — and *Svíþjóð* (an old stem composition[37]) 'the *Svía* people' — which is used as the basis for the name of the Swedish nation in English (*Sweden*), German (*Schweden*), and French (*Suède*). The name of the people, *Svíþjóð*, was commonly transferred to the area where the *Svíar* lived; and there is a consensus today that from early on and into the transitional period between prehistory and history in Scandinavia (around the eleventh century), *Svíþjóð* is to be identified and located to the region around the lake Mälaren in central eastern Sweden,[38] comprising the provinces of *Uppland*,[39] *Södermanland* 'land of the people living to the south', and *Västmanland* 'land of the people living to the west'. Probably *Svíþjóð* was identified with a core area of the *Svíar*, the region around the lake Mälaren, whereas *Svíaríki* and *Svíaveldi* were used for an extended *Svía* state (*ríki*), later on comprising regions obviously not originally under *Svía* control, such as the region of the *Götar*.[40]

The name of the *Göta* people is, from a linguistic point of view, an extremely interesting case, which has recently been discussed by the Swedish onomastician, Thorsten Andersson. The ethnonym has been preserved in the name of the region *Götaland* — the southern part of Sweden, south of *Svealand* — and in the name of two provinces: *Västergötland* 'the province of the *Götar* to the west' and *Östergötland* 'the province of the *Götar* to the east'. The dividing natural feature, which has separated the *Götar* from each other, is the second largest lake in Sweden, lake Vättern. The name of this people has been part of an earlier discussion of the 'homeland' of the Goths. However, in recent decades,

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[37] Hence not a genitive composition.

[38] Peter Sawyer, 'Svear. Historisch', *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 30 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 165–70 (p. 165).

[39] Interpreted as an older *Up[svea]land* by Harry Ståhl, 'Uppland och svearna: Ett tolkningsförslag', *Ortnamnssällskapets i Uppsala årsskrift* (1981), 36–45, however today the interpretation 'the districts higher up and away from the sea (and Roden)' seems to be more acceptable and plausible; see Thorsten Andersson, 'Svethiudh, det svenska rikets kärna', *Namn och bygd*, 92 (2004), 5–18 (pp. 9–14).

[40] Andersson, 'Svethiudh, det svenska rikets kärna', pp. 5–18; idem, 'Landschaften — Stämme — Reiche', pp. 9–32; and idem, 'Från Sethiudh till Svearike ur språklig synvinkel', in *Namnens dynamik: Utvecklingstendenser och drivkrafter inom nordiskt namnskick*, ed. by Staffan Nyström, NORNA-rapporter, 80 (Uppsala: NORNA, 2005), pp. 53–76.

especially in Germany, Scandinavia has been toned down as a potential 'homeland' of the Goths, in favour of a location in Germany.[41]

From a linguistic point of view, the name *Götar* is to be seen together with the ethnonym *Gutar* 'the people living on *Gotland*' — the latter going back to Pr.-Germ. **Gutaniz*, which is identical with Goths (< **gutaniz*; compare **gutani** on the Pietroasa ring, probably reflecting a form in genitive plural, *gutanê*; nom. pl. *Gutans*).[42] The ethnonym *Götar* goes back to a Pr.-Germ. **gautaz* (**gautôz* pl.), whereas the Goths and *Gutar* are derived from an *-an-*extension in *Schwundstufe*, **gutaniz*. It is well known that this linguistic relation with ablaut may also reflect a geographical relation, as with linguistically and geographically related river and lake names (*Mjær* : **Mors*) and inhabitant names (*grænir* : *grenir* in *Grenland*, *dælir* : *-dalr* and *-stæðingar* : *-staðir*).[43] The form **gutan-* may be a parallel form to **gaut-*, originally functioning as a second element in compounds (*-gutan-*). To this variant we have several parallels, but it is also interesting to note that the *-an-*suffix had an individualizing function, much like that of a denominal derivation marking an affinity of some kind — as with ON *goði* (< **goðan*) 'pagan cult leader, chieftain' to *goð* 'god'. However, it is not impossible that there were two parallel stems with ablaut, **gaut-* and **gutan-*, which could have a linguistic and 'ethnic' relation in some way. Thus, it seems unwise not to take into account this linguistic evidence in the discussions on the 'origin' of Goths, *Götar*, and *Gutar*, even though, in my opinion, the etymology of *Götar* and *Gutar* remains obscure.

During the middle of the first millennium, a kind of organization seems to have taken place among these identified folk groups, and the basis for this was probably some kind of a legal tradition, which bound the people together. The roots for such a legal institution can possibly be traced already in Tacitus' *Germania*, but when we enter into the Vendel or Merovingian Period (*c.* 600–800), we can assume a judicial structure in Scandinavia — certainly controlled

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[41] See for example, Ludwig Rübekeil, *Suebica: Völkernamen und Ethnos*, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 68 (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1992).

[42] See Wessén, 'Nordiska folkstammar och folknamn', 19–29; Thorsten Andersson, 'Götar', in *Från götarna till Noreens kor: Hyllningsskrift till Lennart Elmevik på 60-årsdagen 2 februari 1996*, Skrifter utg. genom Ortnamnsarkivet i Uppsala. Serie B. Meddelanden, 11 (Uppsala: Ortnamnsarkivet i Uppsala, 1996), pp. 33–50; idem, 'Götar, goter, gutar', *Namn och bygd*, 84 (1996), 5–21; and idem, 'Gøtar', *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 12 (Berlin: de Gruyter 1998), pp. 278–83.

[43] See Thorsten Andersson, 'Götar, goter, gutar', pp. 13–14.

by kings and chieftains — with some geographical focus in the landscape, a *thing* site. This is evident around *c.* 800 — or more cautiously, in the ninth or tenth century — when we have an important runic inscription on an iron ring, making up by far the earliest law rule in Scandinavia. And what is so important in this inscription is the line 'what the people are entitled to according to the law of the people' (**svaþ liuþiʀ æigu at liuþretti**). This runic ring, with its law rule, is probably to be tied to one of these *thing* sites, the main *thing* assembly for the people called the *Hælsingar* in northern Sweden and for their province *Hälsingland*. We know from a written document that this place was the main assembly place for the Hælsingians during the Middle Ages, and this rune ring makes it plausible to assume that it was also the case for the period before the late Iron Age.[44]

A second important indication for a legal background to the provinces is that more or less all of the old provinces in Sweden had their own provincial laws, the Hälsinge Law for the Hælsingians, the Guta Law for the Gutar on Gotland, the Östgöta Law for Östergötland, and the Västgöta Law for Västergötland, etc. Although these laws are to be seen as legislation written during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, mirroring the society of that period, the mere fact that we have similar law books for different provinces (such as for Hälsingland, Uppland, and Södermanland) probably indicates the existence of provincial legal customs, of which we know practically nothing. And thirdly, an indication of a legal background for these *land* in Scandinavia is the fact that two of them were legal districts, namely *Trøndelag*, ON *Þrœndalog* 'the law district of the *trøndr*', and *Roslagen*, OSw *Roþslagher* 'the law district for *Roþ(r)in*'. Beside these we have a couple of other names for districts in *-lag/ -log*.[45]

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[44] See Stefan Brink, 'Forsaringen – Nordens äldsta lagbud', in *Femtende tværfaglige Vikingesymposium: Aarhus Universitet 1996*, ed. by Else Roesdahl and Preben Meulengraht Sørensen (Højbjerg: Hiukuin, 1996), pp. 27–55; idem, 'Law and Legal Customs in Viking Age Scandinavia', in *The Scandinavians from the Vendel Period to the Tenth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. by Judith Jesch (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 87–115; idem, 'Legal Assemblies and Judicial Structure in Early Scandinavia', in *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages*, ed. by P. S. Barnwell and Marco Mostert, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), and idem, 'Legal Assembly Sites in Early Scandinavia', in *Assembly Places and Practices in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Aliki Pantos and Sarah Semple (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004), pp. 205–16.

[45] Stefan Brink, 'Law and Legal Customs in Viking Age Scandinavia'.

In my opinion, there was hence during the late Iron Age, roughly 600–1000, a social organization in Scandinavia based on territories called *land* or *ríki*. Several of these have atypical names, normally given from a topographical feature, most commonly an island, such as *Öland*, *Lolland*, and *Langeland*, where the element *land* has a third meaning, namely 'large island or peninsula'.[46] In Norway these *land* are very often valleys, such as *Valdres*, *Hallingdalen*, and *Gudbrandsdalen*, an area around a lake, as probably for *Voss*, or a mountain. The territories seem to have been stable entities over time, partly because of topographical realities. There was presumable also a tendency for a kind of overlordship, with some king or leader dominating several *land*; this becomes obvious in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The power base, hence the people living in that *land*, was probably a stable factor, but the kings and leaders were more interchangeable.

When analysing these *land* in Scandinavia, it is possible to identify — from later historical evidence, place names, and major ancient monuments — focal sites in these *land* equivalent on a slightly lower level to the *Yeavering* in Northumbria, *Jelling* in Jutland, *Lejre* in Zealand, and *Uppsala* in Uppland. These *foci* must have been the major *thing* assembly sites for the *land*. While the power structure in society was constantly changing due to personal abilities of leaders and to shifting alliances,[47] the *thing* site seems to have been a stable factor in the landscape and society. Dismissing the public *thing* assembly in the light of the discourse of the last fifty years and its settlement with the nineteenth-century legacy of the free Germanic peasant and warrior society — in which free men were believed to have assembled at the *thing* making wise decisions in legal disputes and giving consent by rattling their weapons, *vapnatak* — would be comforting. But new evidence has been discovered that forces us to take these *thing* assemblies into account when trying to reconstruct and understand our prehistoric, albeit non-egalitarian, Scandinavian society. We know that society was hierarchical and stratified, but we still have these *thing* sites in addition to written contemporary evidence saying that a people in

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[46] See Harry Ståhl, 'Some Old Uppland Island Names', in *Proceedings of the Sixth Viking Congress Uppsala 3–10 August, Bonäs, Dalarna 10–12 August 1969*, ed. by Peter Foote and Dag Strömbäck (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, 1971), pp. 87–99.

[47] See Stefan Brink, 'Social Order in the Early Scandinavian Landscape', in *Settlement and Landscape*, ed. by Charlotte Fabech and Jytte Ringtved (Århus: Århus University Press, 1999), pp. 423–39 (p. 434).

a *land* around the year 800 had their *liuþrettr*, probably to be understood as some legal custom in force in that *land*.

When analysing these Scandinavian *land*s, a good example can be found in the Swedish province of Småland, a name meaning 'the small *land*s'. During the Middle Ages, this province was divided into several hundreds called *hærað*, which were the oldest administrative districts we know of in Scandinavia and can be dated to the tenth or eleventh centuries. One of these districts is called *Handbörd*, OSw *Andbyrþ*, and the central parish in that hundred is *Högsby*. In the valley runs a major watercourse, Emån, which crosses an esker, a major land route between central Östergötland and Kalmarsund. On this site important for communication, we find the parish church built in **Hög*, and this name means 'burial mound' and denotes a lost ancient monument. The second element in the hundred name, OSw *Andbyrþ*, is the word OSw *byrþ*, which has the meaning 'an obstacle in a watercourse, where you have to carry the boat and cargo past the hindrance'; and the first element is the particle *and* 'facing or in front of', giving the name a meaning like 'the place facing/in front of the obstacle in Emån'. This place was obviously the mound, **Hög*. Now we know that one of the two ways of naming a hundred was to give it the name of the *thing* site for that hundred, and the other was to give it a name of the settlement district, the *bygd*.[48] In this case, it is obvious that we are dealing with a *thing* assembly name, *Hög*, alluding to a *thing* mound. The neighbouring hundred is *Aspeland*, OSw *Asboaland*, meaning 'the land of the *asboar*', that is, the people living on or assembling on an esker. But in this hundred there are no eskers to combine with this name. Instead, we have in *Handbörd* one of the most important eskers in Sweden, and on this esker we have found an important *thing* assembly for a hundred. The most plausible conclusion to this problem is that this *thing* assembly must be seen in connection with *Asboaland*, which then gives it a logical meaning 'the land of the people assembling on an esker'. This indicates that we have found an older structure *preceding* the hundred divisions, the *hærað*, which hence ought to be older than the late Viking Age.[49]

Another case can be found in the northeastern part of the Swedish province of Skåne. During the Middle Ages, there were three hundreds, but an older structure is certainly an older *land*, found as a name of one of these hundreds, *Villand*, ODan *Vætland* 'the *land* with/around the waters, lakes', which was obviously split

[48] Thorsten Andersson, *Svenska häradsnamn*, Nomina Germanica, 14 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1965).

[49] For this case, see Brink, 'Land, bygd, distrikt', pp. 308–11.

up during the late Viking Age or early Middle Ages (probably the tenth or eleventh century) into three *hærað*, of which one kept the old name.[50]

A third interesting case is the hundred called *Finnveden* in eastern Småland. This name is mentioned by Jordanes as *finnaithae* for the people living here, a name obviously not invented by Jordanes, but identical with the unique place name of *Finnveden* (probably OSw *Finna-aiþ-).*[51] The name is remarkable as it contains the word *finnar*, the same word found in *Finns* and *Finland* and in the name *screrefennae* used by Jordanes probably for the Saami. This word is related to the verb *to find* (< Pr.-Germ. **finþan*) with a cognate in OE *fundian* 'to hunt, to go', giving it an older meaning of 'mobile people who hunt'. A way to understand this is to see an ancient appellation for the people dwelling there, who at the time of naming were still a hunter and gatherer culture, in contrast to a sedentary culture on the arable lands around the great lake, Helgasjön, by Växjö.[52]

The archaeologist Fredrik Svanberg has provided an interesting analysis of these small regions in southern Sweden and has been able to identify regional burial customs. He found that people living in Finnveden during the period *c.* 800–1000 had used a special cremation ritual with characteristic mound-burial grounds and with specific artefacts deposited in the graves.[53] This burial custom contrasted with those of their neighbours, indicating that this people, during this period, and identified by a specific and unique name, also had their own rituals and customs.

Such 'neutral' examples ought to be of more interest in the heated and sometimes provocative debate regarding possibilities of using archaeological evidence for identifying archaeological 'cultures' or customs — which, as some archaeologists assume, bound groups of people together — instead of repeated references to pre-war methodological excesses and Nazi or Soviet ethnic archaeology, where Gustav Kossinna, of course, is an easy and obvious target.[54]

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[50] Brink, 'Land, bygd, distrikt', pp. 316–20.

[51] To my knowledge, this identification has not been questioned.

[52] Brink, 'Land, bygd, distrikt', pp. 312–16.

[53] Fredrik Svanberg, *Decolonizing the Viking Age, II: Death Rituals in South-East Scandinavia AD 800–1000*, Acta Archaeologica Lundensia, series. in 8°, 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 2003), pp. 156–61.

[54] See for example the essays in *On Barbarian Identity*, by Alexander Callander Murray, 'Reinhard Wenskus on "Ethnogenesis": Ethnicity, and the Origin of the Franks', pp. 39–68; and Sebastian Brather, 'Ethnic Identities as Constructions of Archaeology: The Case of *Alamanni*', pp. 149–75.

This discursive straitjacket is an obstacle to a fruitful discussion, and it does not particularly encourage archaeologists to take part in the discussion mainly conducted by historians. In Scandinavian archaeology, one seldom sees an identification of archaeological 'cultures' with 'ethnic' groups in the last three or four decades, so this methodological discourse (found on the Continent) seems not to be of immediate interest in Scandinavian studies.[55]

In Svealand (the provinces around Lake Mälaren), the equivalent to the OSw *hærað* hundred in *Götaland*, was called OSw *hundari*. The — hitherto — commonly accepted background to this concept and institution is to connect the *hundari* with an early existence of the naval organization, called *ledung*, which is backed up with two statements found in *Germania* by Tacitus.[56] What we know from Scandinavian sources is that *hundari* is found on one rune stone from *c.* 1050, stating that a man, Jarlabanki, alone owned a *hundari*.[57] The meaning of this statement has been lively discussed, and we know from the earliest provincial laws (especially the Law of Uppland) that a *hundari* in the Scandinavian early Middle Ages was a territorial unit, which was to put up warships and equip them with men and food. There has been and still is an

[55] For a modern discussion on archaeological 'cultures' and 'ethnicity' in Scandinavia, see e.g. *Fra Stamme til Stat*, I: *Jernalderens samfund*, ed. by P. Mortensen and B.M. Rasmussen (Aarhus: Jysk Arkæologisk Selskab, 1988); *Fra Stamme til Stat*, II: *Høvdingesamfund og kongemagt*, ed. by P. Mortensen and B. M. Rasmussen (Aarhus: Jysk Arkæologisk Selskab, 1991); Myhre, 'Chieftains Graves and Chiefdom Territories in South Norway in the Migration Period' and Johan Callmer, 'Territory and Dominion in the Late Iron Age in Southern Scandinavia', in *Regions and reflections: In honour of Märta Strömberg*, ed. by K. Jennbert and others, Acta Archaeologica Lundensia, Series in 8° 20 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1991), pp. 257–73; Ulf Näsman, 'Från region till rike — från stam till stat: Om danernas etnogenes och om den danska riksbildningen', in *Rikssamlingen — Høvdingmakt og kongemakt*, ed. by Jens Flemming Krøger, Karmøyseminariet 1996 (Stavanger: Dreyer, 1997), pp. 46–65; and idem, 'Danerne og det danske kongeriges opkomst. Om forskningsprogrammet "Fra Stamme til Stat i Danmerk"', *Kuml* (2006), 205–241.

[56] 'Their number [of foot soldiers] is also set, at one hundred each from every canton: that is what their own people call them, and what began as a number is now a name of honour' (chap. 6). 'Likewise in these assembles are chosen the leaders who administer justice in the cantons and hamlets; each has a hundred associates from the commons, who provide influence as well as advice' (chap. 12). The English translations from Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. by J. B. Rives (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), pp. 79 and 82.

[57] **iarlabaki lit raisa stain þin- at sik kuikuan auk þinkstaþ þina karþi auk ain ati alt hu-tari þita** (U 212), 'Jarlabanki had this stone raised in memory of himself while alive, and made this assembly-place, and alone owned all of this Hundred'.

intensive discussion in Sweden among historians, archaeologists, and philologists regarding the age of this organization and as to what the basis for this *hundari* originally was: 100 warriors for the *ledung* ship, 100 farms as a taxable foundation for the *ledung* organization, 100 units of land for taxation purposes, and so on. There is a tendency today to see the *ledung* as a fairly late institution (around the eleventh to twelfth centuries),[58] but the fact is that we have only circumstantial evidence and assumptions rather than any solid way to date its origin. In Scandinavian philology, *hundari* is commonly supposed to come from a Pr.-Germ. **hundaharia-*, a compound with Pr.-Germ. **hunda-* 'hundred' and **harjaz* (> ON *herr*) meaning 'army; people, or number of people', hence with an assumed meaning of 'an army of hundred warriors', which links up with a *hundari* as part of a *ledung* organization.[59]

There is no doubt that a *hundari* was an administrative district, equivalent to the *hærað*, at least from the eleventh century onwards. The idea that the *hundari* as well as the *ledung* are ancient relies partly on the fact that the word seems to have been used for an administrative faction or group of people (later district) among the *Alamanni* in southern Germany and Switzerland (-*huntari*), and in the Netherlands (-*hunderi*) from the eighth century.[60] Furthermore, in the Middle Ages, the province of Uppland in Sweden was divided into three larger units, called *Attundaland*, *Tiundaland*, and *Fjädrundaland*, meaning the '*land* with respectively eight, ten, and four *hund*'. The word *hund*, also found in some district names, such as OSw *Norund*, *Haghund*, *Laghund*, and *Opphund*, is the Pr.-Germ. **hunda-* n. 'hundred', is assumed to be an older synonym for *hundari*, used for *hund* districts preceding the *hundari* districts around Lake

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[58] See for example, Niels Lund, *Lið, leding og landevaern: Hær og samfund i Danmark i ældre middelalder* (Roskilde: Vikingeskibshallen, 1996).

[59] For a discussion of the etymology and concept of *hundari*, see Thorsten Andersson, 'Die schwedischen Bezirksbezeichnungen *hund* und *hundare*: Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion einer germanischen Wortfamilie', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 13 (1979), 88–124; idem, 'Hundare', *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 15 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), pp. 233–38. For a discussion on the dating and possible connection to Roman organization, see Anne K. G. Kristensen, *Tacitus' germanische Gefolgschaft*, Det Konglige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab: Historisk-filosofiske meddelelser, 50,5 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1983); Alexander Callander Murray, 'From Roman to Frankish Gaul: *Centenarii* and *Centenae* in the Administration of the Merovingian kingdom', *Traditio*, 44 (1988), 59–100; and Thorsten Andersson, '*Hundare* och det germanska hundratalet', *Namn och bygd*, 87 (1999), 5–12.

[60] Thorsten Andersson, 'Hundare'.

Mälaren. To date, no one has been able to explain why we had these two supposedly administrative and synonymous terms used in succession and why *hundari* had to replace the semantically identical *hund*.

It is in my opinion fruitful to seek another explanation for *hund*. The word Pr.-Germ. **hunda-* had no doubt the meaning 'hundred', but also a more fluid meaning of 'many, plenty'.[61] By assuming that this latter meaning was to be found in *hund*, we can get out of the *ledung* straitjacket, and search for other explanations of *hund*.[62] A more likely explanation is that *hund* was synonymous with e.g. OSw *kind* 'people, folk group' (which later evolved to 'settlement district') and to OSw *hærað*; the latter, apart from having a meaning 'administrative district', also had the meaning of 'settlement district', for which the Scandinavian languages have the word *bygd*.[63] For example, this meaning can be found in the name OSw *Funbohærað*, in Uppland, where we had no *hærað* organization (instead *hundari*). If *hund* (< Pr.-Germ. **hunda-* n.) meant 'people, folk group' > 'settlement district (*bygd*)', it would be logical to replace the word with *hundari* when a *ledung* organization was established. With this hypothesis it seems possible to explain why *hund* was replaced by *hundari*, and it would also fit in with new ideas of the *ledung* organization being rather late and non-existent in the time of Tacitus.[64]

To summarize, we end up with a picture during the late Iron Age in Scandinavia — before the emergence of the kingdoms of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark — characterized by several settlement districts, *bygder*, or *land*, which seem to have an older background in ancient folk groups probably existing already in the early Iron Age. What seems to have changed is that these folk

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[61] See e.g. Elof Hellquist, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok*, 3rd edn (Lund: Gleerup, 1948), p. 370; Tacitus, *Germania*, ed. and trans. by Alf Önnerfors, 3d edn (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1969), p. 112.

[62] The fact that *hund* seems to have a close cognate in a word OHG, OSax *hunno* (< **hunðnan-*) for a 'centenarius' in the Roman-Frankish administration (see Andersson, '*Hundare* och det germanska hundratalet', pp. 6–7) is not problematic for my interpretation.

[63] This is an assumption already made by Hellquist, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok*, p. 370.

[64] However, it must be stressed from a philological point of view that the terms *hund*, *hundari* etc. are very old formations. The question is if it is possible to transfer the semantic content which, for example, the word *hundari* had in the Middle Ages to, for example, the time of Tacitus. The answer is, of course, no, it is not. But what then did the term cover semantically in Pr.-Germ. time, and how did the word develop semantically? This is extremely difficult to find out, since we lack written sources, which might help us.

groups (*þjóð*, *kind*, etc.) evolved into territories or folklands, called *land*, *ríki*, etc., with some basis in a legal structure. These *land* were transformed during the late Viking Age or the early Middle Ages, probably in the tenth or eleventh centuries; and some were split up into administrative districts, which in southern Scandinavia were called *hærað* and in the provinces around the lake Mälaren *hundari*. The latter in their turn obviously had an older and obscure history.