

## DISTRIBUTION PATTERNS AND THE EXPRESSION OF COSTUME

### 6.1 EXPRESSIONS THROUGH COSTUME AND THE (RE)PRODUCTION OF IDENTITIES

Study of the individual types of dress-accessory has demonstrated that there are clear, if complex, tendencies in the patterns of distribution, both chronologically and spatially. How are we to understand these in relation to the manifestation of the phenomenon of ethnic/cultural identity within the period under examination? I have argued, above, that, through costume, the dress-accessories became part of a social discourse concerned with ethnic and cultural identity. Items of jewellery can, as already noted (see Ch. 2.2), be regarded as part of a costume, and the costume can in turn be recognized as a coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that plays a role in human interaction in time and space (Eicher 1999:1). The strength or advantage of costume may indeed reside in the embodied, non-verbal experience produced through the material (the dress-accessories) which it makes available for interaction. The importance of costume in social discourse may thus remain unconscious even though it structures social interaction. Someone who lives in a society in which a strong 'hat code' is in operation (cf. the example from the novel *Howard's End*: Ch. 2.2.1) will, as earlier noted, relate to the norm, whether this be done as a conscious act or not. The acquisition and preservation of costume as a 'semiotic field' in social discourse concerned with cultural group-association can, seen thus, occur through the activation of a cultural disposition towards visual communication through the marking of cultural difference in opposition to specific cultural others in contexts of ethnic negotiation. The costume may thus acquire a function as an instrument or tool in ethnic discourse. The assemblage of dress-accessories and the costume also make it possible for vertical (socially hierarchical) and horizontal group-membership to be symbolized concurrently. The costume can be employed instrumentally in a strategy of differentiation (cf. Pohl ed. 1998), whether that involves cultural, ethnic or social manifestation (cf. Ch. 2.2.1). In what follows, I attempt to enter in a more concrete way into how this was the case in the Migration Period and at the

beginning of the Merovingian Period through an interpretation of the chronological, geographical and contextual distribution patterns which have been revealed by the research above. Since cultural and ethnic costume manifestations in the period appear also to be imbricated with the articulation of gender (cf. Ch. 2.2.3), this topic is also discussed in relation to dress-accessories that are found in certain male-related grave-assemblages.

### 6.2 THE STANDARDIZATION OF DRESS-ACCESSORIES AND SYSTEMATIC COMMUNICATION: THE CREATION AND DISSEMINATION OF A LANGUAGE OF SYMBOLS

The connection between cultural and ethnic identity and the symbolic language of costume in the period under examination may perhaps best be illustrated through the relief brooches. In phase D1, we see, as noted, wide variation in the form of the brooches, and it has not been possible to define real 'sub-types' at this stage, except possibly in the case of the earliest ridge-foot brooches which in fact become one of the principal types of the following phase. The distribution is also limited, and represented by relatively few specimens overall. In phase D2a, this situation begins to change: three different 'external signs' stand out clearly in the form of the ridge- and plane-foot brooches and relief brooches with semi-circular headplates (types A-5/A-6) respectively. These different forms are found within specific areas even though there is also some degree of overlap between these zones. The form with a semi-circular headplate has the most clearly defined distribution in that it is almost entirely confined to Gotland, Öland and Bornholm. There were also, on the whole, more brooches around than previously. In phase D2b the quantity almost triples, while at the same time a range of regional variants that occur specifically within particular areas are produced. The brooches at this date are very often manufactured in copper alloy rather than the silver that was normal in the earlier phases. What is observable through this process can

be interpreted precisely as the transformation of ‘... habitual material variation into active self-conscious ethnic symbolism ... on the basis of changes in the nature and distribution of the styles involved’ (cf. Ch. 2.1), which according to Jones (1997:126) makes it possible to identify the point at which a material feature starts to be used as an ethnic marker. This comes about through the systematization of specific cultural traits, represented in this case by relief brooches, resulting in ‘... discontinuous, non-random distribution of material culture’ (Jones 2000:454). The distribution pattern reveals that relief brooches were not serving as ethnic/cultural markers in phase D1, but were rather symbols of social hierarchy, as they occur in very richly furnished graves (cf. Ch. 4.2.2.4; see also Kristoffersen 2000:99–100, 105).<sup>1</sup>

In order to probe this process of change in a little more detail, the re-organization and systematization that came about through a standardization of the forms of relief brooches and in the distribution of the three separate main types of phase D2a is interpreted as expressing the fact that the function of relief brooches has undergone a transformation, following which they pertain to a level at which they function as super-regional markers of shared identity across major areas. The most clearly defined signal is manifestly encountered on the Baltic islands (in the south-east), where there is least overlap in respect of this class of brooch. There too, the complementary distribution of sub-types A-5 and A-6, which predominate on the islands of Gotland and Bornholm respectively, may represent the manifestation of specific ‘island identities’. At the same time, relief brooches still very probably served as status symbols for an upper rank of society in the various areas of Scandinavia: they were manufactured overwhelmingly in silver, and frequently gilded, and it is clear that they were valuable items of jewellery.

The transformation carried on, and in phase D2b relief brooches were clearly employed as regional markers, albeit now to a large extent in respect of smaller and more sharply defined areas. They also appear by this stage to have shed some of their socially hierarchical significance: the brooches are no longer as expensively styled as they were previously, and they are now used by a wider range of the population. Kristoffersen (2000:105–6, 210) has noted that there is a development in the course of the Migration Period with the earliest relief brooches being large brooches of very high quality, which often occur in richly furnished graves, but subsequently the contexts, size and

quality of the brooches varied increasingly through the course of phases D2a and D2b. The simplest examples, without gilding, are from the last phase of the period of production and distribution, although both extremely valuable and simpler variants occur at the same time in the final two phases. In agreement with this, Meyer (1935:102) remarked that the relief brooches of the simple bronze group, which are of phase D2b, are a simpler type of brooch ‘for women of more modest means’ (translated). Considering that it was only at this date that relief brooches assume the role of ethnic marker in place of cruciform brooches (cf. below), the change in the manner of manufacture may also be cited in support of the view that it was now necessary for a wider spectrum of the population to gain access to the symbol of the group.

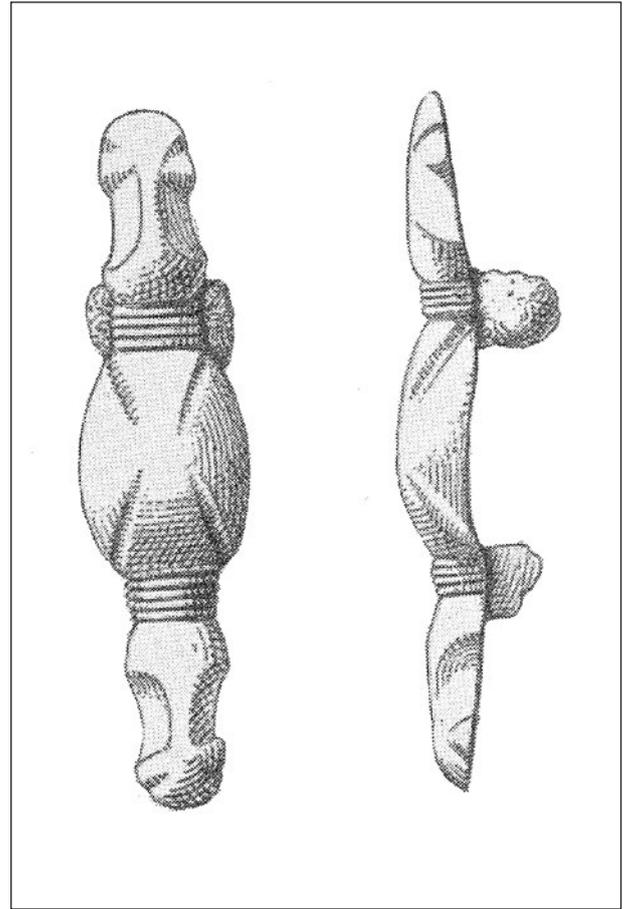
The standardization of cruciform brooches and clasps into clearly differentiated sub-types took place earlier than any comparable imposition of normativity affecting relief brooches. The former is evident from as early as phase D1, when Class A clasps were standardized or rendered uniform through the adoption of spiral clasps and ring-shaped clasps with clearly defined distributions, and there are several defined sub-types of cruciform brooch with specific geographical ranges (cf. Ch. 4.2.1.3 and 4.2.3.3). In parallel with this sort of systematization in the production and use of cruciform brooches, however, there was also quite a large number of *unique* cruciform brooches which cannot be assigned to classified sub-types (cf. Chs. 4.2.1.3 and 5.1.3). Such ‘individualistic forms’ of cruciform brooch account for 32 of the total of 139 known specimens of phase D1, and 53 of the total of 409 known specimens of phase D2a. There is thus a proportionally higher percentage of unique brooches at the beginning of the Migration Period than in phase D2a. This can be interpreted as meaning that at the beginning of the Migration Period there was some sort of rooting or consolidation of the relationship between dress-accessories and culture group affiliation, with the costume acquiring a function as a ‘semiotic field’, and that this relationship gradually became part of the habitus in the course of that phase. At the same time, one must note with reservation that as many as 342 cruciform brooches of the individualistic or unclassifiable categories cannot be precisely dated to any one phase (cf. Ch. 4.2.1.5). The fact that unique brooches were still being produced in phase D2a can also be interpreted in terms of there having existed a degree of *flexibility* in the use of cruciform brooches all the time, while normativity appears to have been

1 This is also the case in Anglo-Saxon England (Hines 1997:295–301).

stronger in respect of clasps, both in the case of the metal-wire clasps of phase D1 and the button clasps of the two following phases; there are altogether very few unique specimens of clasp. The possible exceptions in the Scandinavian context are a couple of Class C clasps and a few Class B types that do not have buttons (cf. Ch. 4.2.3.5). These, however, amount to very few clasps in total.

The signalling of identity through the use of female costume appears to have been linked primarily to super-regional levels in phase D1, with the exception of western and northern Norway, where specific types of cruciform brooch can plausibly be accepted as evidence of an incipient demarcation of regional identity, and in Jutland, where ring-shaped clasps were probably used in much the same way. It was first in phase D2a that the general focus shifted and greater importance came to be attached to regional and local group identities *all across* Scandinavia. At the same time, the manifestation of super-regional identities was still maintained in this phase through, for instance, the use of relief brooches, cruciform brooches of Type Mundheim in northern Scandinavia, and some common types of button clasp (type B1 i, B1 iii/B1 ii c, and B1 v). The overall quantity of items of jewellery is at its greatest in phase D2a (see also Hines 1993a:91–5). In this phase, cruciform brooches have a copious distribution (409 specimens); a high proportion of the button clasps are of this phase; and the use of relief brooches is relatively extensive. This can be interpreted in terms of the need to signal affiliation and difference through the use of female costume being *extra strong* at this date, and in terms of this resulting in quite massive investment in group symbolization.

There was thus an intensification of signalling in the course of the second phase of the Migration Period. The female costume appears to have been well established as a semiotic field at this time and to have functioned as an effective means of making visual, or articulating, a perceived reality based upon affiliation and the separation of different cultural and social constellations. I have referred above (Ch. 5.1.1) to how two adjoining areas of Sweden, the Mälars region and Västergötland, differ from one another in terms of the distribution of their own clasp-types and distinct variants of cruciform brooch respectively. Åberg (1953:45–6) sought to explain the absence of cruciform brooches from Svealand/the Mälars region through the isolation of the area (which he counted as part of ‘the Baltic Sea Zone’s cultural territory’) from Norrland, where there were cruciform brooches and which he claimed belonged to a ‘Norwegian’ North Sea Zone. Viewed in the light of the general



**Figure 6.1** ‘Norrland’ Type of equal-armed brooch with animal-head terminal, of unknown provenance, Hälsingland (Hudiksvall museum 7576), after Åberg (1953:fig. 77).

distribution patterns, with greater weight attached to regional differentiation in this phase, the absence of cruciform brooches from the Mälars region could also be interpreted in terms of a need or a wish of the people living there to differentiate themselves from two neighbouring areas, Norrland and Västergötland. Västergötland also, as noted, had its own variants of cruciform brooch (Types Götene and Brunnhem), which differ from those in Norrland. The Norrlandic brooches are largely of the northern Scandinavian common type, Type Mundheim, alongside individualistic examples and unclassifiable brooches. In Norrland – but also in central Sweden and on Gotland – there is, however, also a distinct type of equal-armed brooch with an animal-head terminal (Jørgensen 1994a:530; Åberg 1953:65–9) that appears to have served as a regional marker in the second half of the Migration Period (Fig. 6.1). A complex articulation of identities through the use of jewellery is thus indicated. In order to achieve deeper understanding of costume as a semiotic field it is also necessary to consider in greater detail *the context* of the jewellery by studying how the dress-accessories were worn.

### 6.3 SETS OF DRESS-ACCESSORIES, MULTIDIMENSIONAL IDENTITIES, AND 'BOUNDARY-BREAKING' FINDS OF JEWELLERY

A more detailed investigation of the immediate contexts of the finds has shown that relief brooches, cruciform brooches and clasps have often been found in mutual combinations, having been worn by one and the same individual (in the burial context at least: cf. Ch. 2.2.2). Distinct regional variants or sub-types were often directly associated in such a way with 'super-regional' types of dress-accessory that are distributed over broader ranges. One example of this is the grave-assemblage from Falkum in Telemark<sup>2</sup> which contained both a relief brooch of the early ridge-foot type and two cruciform brooches of Type Foldvik-Empingham. In accordance with the concept of multidimensional ethnicity and/or identity (cf. Ch. 2), this is interpretable as an example of how the set of dress-accessories manifests different levels of identity. From such a perspective, the ridge-foot relief brooch should symbolise affiliation to a 'super-regional' group, presumably in north-western Scandinavia, while the cruciform brooches of Type Foldvik-Empingham imply a regional grouping focused upon Vestfold, Telemark and Agder in southern Norway.<sup>3</sup> The super-regional identity that is made manifest by means of the relief brooch fastened to the woman's costume is presumably also directly linked to connections within an upper social class, since such brooches were worn by women who belonged to a high rank in society (cf. Ch. 6.2). Features of the Falkum brooch have, however, also been identified which connect this specimen more closely to other relief brooches in this region than to the wider group of ridge-foot brooches (cf. Ch. 4.2.2.5; see also Meyer 1935:9–11). This special design can also be regarded as a means of expression of a local identity.

There are innumerable examples of combinations of dress-accessories that indicate that several different expressions of identity were being made at the same time or in parallel, particularly, perhaps, in the Migration Period, but also in the early Merovingian Period. In a grave-assemblage from Ommundrød in Vestfold<sup>4</sup> there are, for instance, button clasps of the

common Scandinavian undecorated types (B1i) and with ring-designs (B1iii) – although one of these pairs, the form B1i clasps, might be from a secondary interment: cf. Ch. 4.2.2.4 – together with two cruciform brooches of the regional variant, Type Gjerla, along with a couple of early relief brooches. This could express the signalling of a region affiliation with the population of the Telemark-Vestfold area through the cruciform brooches, concurrently with the clasps representing and articulating connections with a broader Scandinavian zone. The relief brooches appear, as noted, to express a hierarchical social identity at this date: namely, the end of phase D1 or transition D1/D2a. The relief brooches in this assemblage were not fastened to the costume of the deceased, however, but rather were deposited in a box at the feet of the body (cf. Ch. 4.2.2.4; see also Dybsand 1956:22, and also Figs. 4.29–4.30).

Distinct signs and levels of identity can also be manifested through a variety of sub-types or variants of the same principal type; a point that can be illustrated by means of a grave-find from Sagland in Rogaland<sup>5</sup> which contained three cruciform brooches: one of the local Type Sagland, one of the regional Type Lima, and one of the widely shared northern Scandinavian Type Mundheim (cf. Ch. 4.2.1.5). This may be interpreted in terms of the one person expressing her affiliations to not only a local grouping within Rogaland but also a regional group in south-western Norway and an extensive northern Scandinavian group. A second example is a grave from Versland in Rogaland<sup>6</sup> in which cruciform brooches of Types Mundheim and Søndre Gammelsrød were found in association. Once again, the two variants of cruciform brooch can be interpreted as expressing group-affiliation with both northern Scandinavian and south-western Norwegian communities. As noted, the use of distinct variants of clasps can also be interpreted in the same sort of way. In a grave-assemblage from Tibble in Uppland, for instance,<sup>7</sup> both the common Scandinavian type B1i clasps, and the regional variant with running-spiral decoration (B1ii d) which is largely restricted to the Mälars region, were found. The deceased may thus have been clothed in a costume which manifested connections with both of those different regional groupings.

2 C21856.

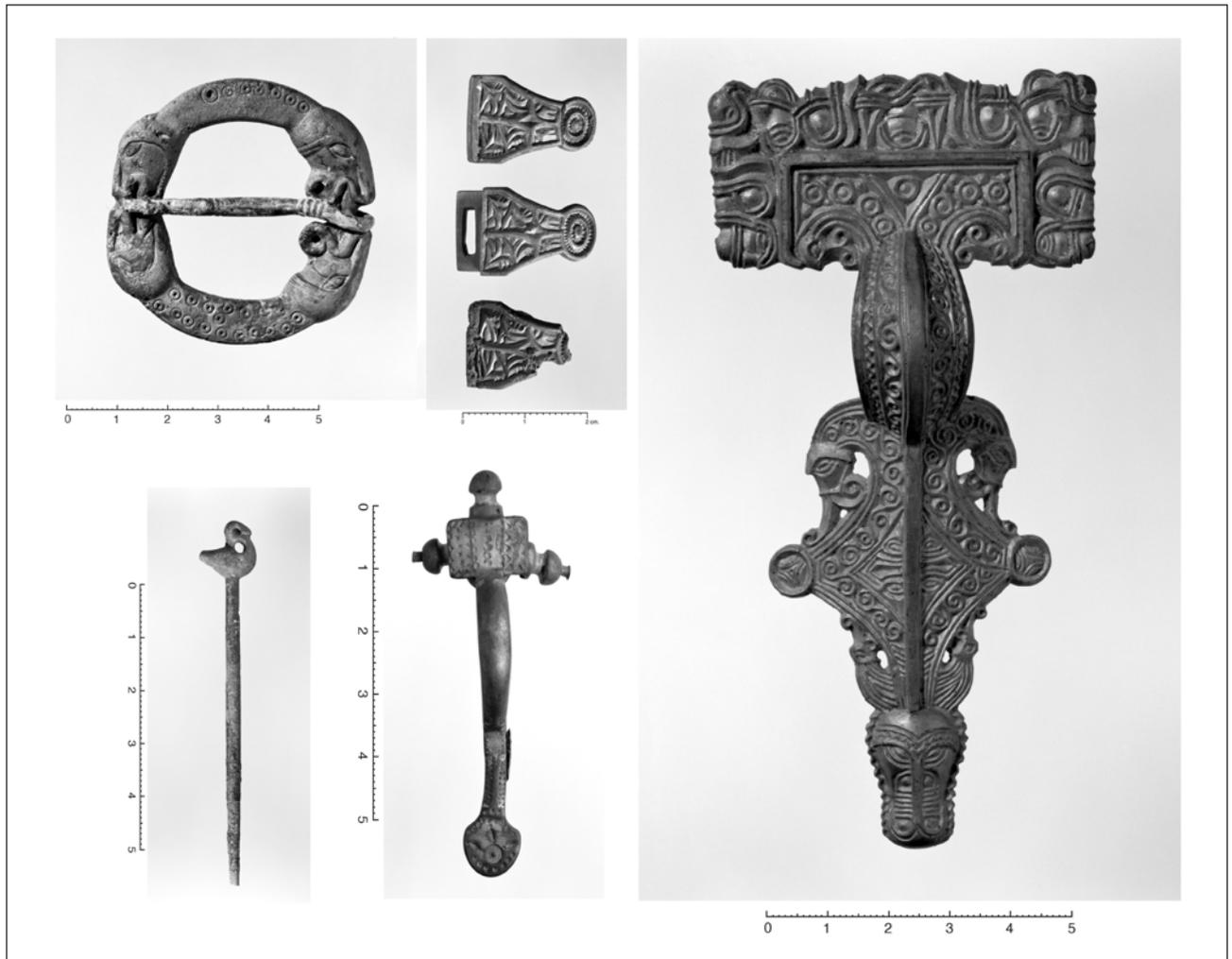
3 It is possible that Type Foldvik-Empingham also implies a connection with England, but Reichstein's study of the cruciform brooches from England (which might support this view) has been criticised from various quarters (Hines 1984:28, 250–2; Mortimer 1990:39–41, 149), and the Anglo-Saxon links of this type should consequently be regarded as uncertain in this particular case.

4 C29300.

5 S6385.

6 S1433–37.

7 SHM29348:5.



**Figure 6.2** Jewellery from the double grave at Kvåle, Sogn og Fjordane (B13954): ring ('annular') brooch, clasps, bird pin, cruciform brooch and relief brooch. Photograph: Ann-Mari Olsen. © University Museum of Bergen.

A related and particularly interesting case of what appear to be different levels of signalling is the already discussed find from Kvåle in Sogn, which contained a ridge-foot relief brooch which has features in common with some Gotlandic relief brooches with semi-circular headplates (Kristoffersen 2000:363; cf. Ch. 4.2.2.5). The deceased woman was also wearing a peculiar ring brooch with cast animal-head terminals. Also found in the grave – which housed two individuals: a girl and an adult woman (cf. Ch. 3.1.1 and 4.2.2.5) – was a pair of triangular, cast clasps with zoomorphic ornament (form C2) of a type which has otherwise only been found in two hoards from Västergötland in Sweden and one Jutlandic grave-find, a bird pin, and a pair of special silver cruciform brooches with a disc at the terminal of the foot (Fig. 6.2). On the basis of the relief brooch, the form C2 clasps, the ring brooch, the silver cruciform brooches, and also a glass bowl and a foreign type of key, Kristoffersen (2000:140–1) has argued that the adult woman in this grave had been married into the local population from southern

Sweden or Gotland in the context of alliance politics between these areas.

It is difficult to determine which objects were directly associated with the girl and which with the woman (Ch. 3.1.1 and 4.2.2.5). They were probably interred at the same time (Fig. 6.3). Kristoffersen (2000:109–10) is of the opinion that both the clasps and the silver and copper-alloy cruciform brooches probably belonged to the adult female. From their positions, however, I believe that the silver cruciform brooches, the form C2 clasps and the bird pin could just as well have belonged to the juvenile. It would appear that beads had been spread across both of the dead (Røstad 2008a:442). Either way, both the relief brooch and one copper-alloy cruciform brooch can with tolerable confidence be said to have been part of the woman's costume. This is of interest because this cruciform brooch is a variant of Type Mo: in other words a western Norwegian type that is found only in Sogn og Fjordane (cf. Ch. 4.2.1.5). The woman was thus furnished with a set of jewellery that signalled

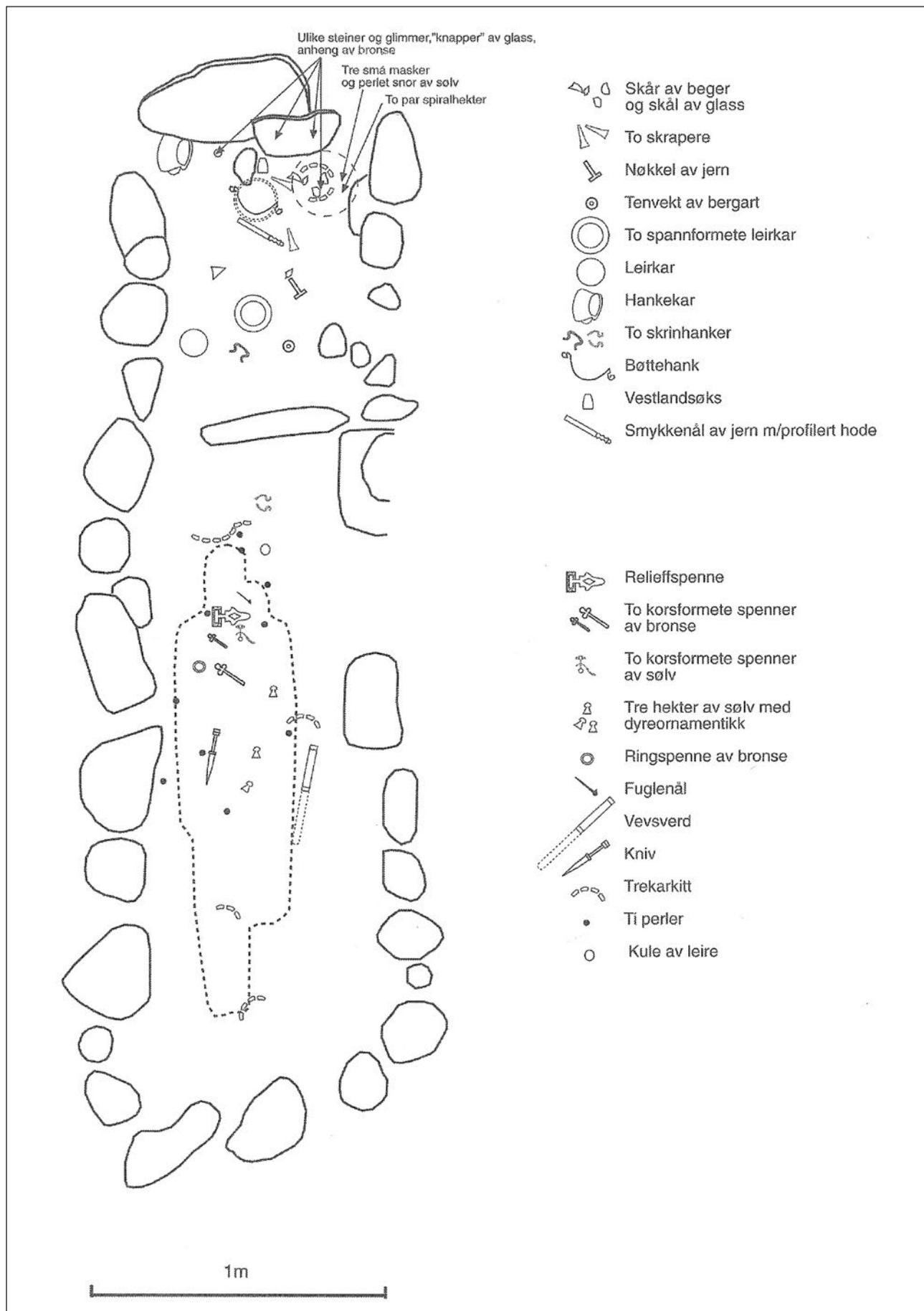


Figure 6.3 Plan of the Kvåle grave (B13954), after Kristoffersen (2000:386).

both local affiliation and a more distant connection. The latter was manifested not only through the ring brooch (and possibly the silver cruciform brooches) but also through the relief brooch: an item of jewellery of a type which at this date (phase D2a) is linked to an upper rank of society. The relief brooch, nevertheless, does not have a semi-circular headplate as was usual on Gotland in this phase, but instead a rectangular headplate and a ridged foot congruent with a primarily northern Scandinavian tradition, even though it also has details which form links with Gotlandic brooches (cf. Ch. 4.2.2.5; see also Kristoffersen 2000:363).<sup>8</sup> It is possible that the triangular clasps (form C2) in the find also represent an alien costume element since clasps of this type only otherwise occur in southern Scandinavia (cf. Ch. 4.2.3.5; Kristoffersen 2000:141).

Dress-accessories as costume components thus represent the potential of expressing group-affiliation in a complex manner by allowing one and the same individual simultaneously to express connections with different communities at a range of levels. The contextual analysis of the Scandinavian jewellery-types (Ch. 4.2.1–4.2.3) has shown that the individual items are found in a range of combinations, and that the numbers of such dress-accessories vary considerably from grave to grave. Kristoffersen (2000:107–12) has undertaken similar analyses of relief brooches that have been found in contexts within the coastal provinces of Norway, from Vestfold round to and including Sogn og Fjordane. She has shown that the relief brooches appear in combinations with a wide range of different brooches and dress-accessories across this area. From the positioning of the brooches in relation to the bodies, she concluded that relief brooches were probably used in connection with a range of different costumes, and that their use seems to have been independent of the type of costume. Kristoffersen pointed out that the relief brooches occur, as a rule, *in addition* to a 'complete' set of dress-accessories – that is, of a set consisting of a pair of brooches with or without a third brooch. She took the view that the different costumes may have represented social or regional variance. My own study has shown that certain variants, for instance the use of paired brooches in the Merovingian Period in northern Norway and, secondly, of double sets of brooch-pairs and an 'up-and-down' placement of cruciform brooches in the Kvassheim

cemetery, may be interpreted as regionally and locally conditioned respectively. In this view, even the *mode of wearing* may form part of costume manifestation. Might it be possible to imagine that relief brooches, in phases D1 and D2a, were worn on special occasions in which it was a matter of interest or significance to reflect one particular social and/or cultural affiliation rather than another, whereas in daily life it was most important to communicate a regional and/or local identity? Magnus (1995:39; 1999b:164, 167) has suggested, in this regard, that relief brooches were used by special women of higher social level who had definite roles in the course of particular rites or rituals, and that in those circumstances the brooches expressed a common mythical origin and group identity. This could, if so, be comprehensible in a manner consistent with the proposition that the culturally 'ethnic' component varies according to the specific situation that the communication of cultural difference occurs within (Jones 1997:97).

### 6.3.1 Jewellery as the expression of exogamous connections

Finds of 'foreign' types of dress-accessory and/or sets of jewellery which are specifically associable with other areas have traditionally been interpreted as the product of *exogamy* – that is, the custom of marrying outside a community. In the context of what is being discussed here, this implies that the women were originally coming from another place. For the most part, such interpretations have involved finds on the Continent or in England, including 'Scandinavian' women who had migrated to those areas (Arrhenius 1995a:87–90; Effros 2004; Hakenbeck 2004:49–51; Hawkes and Pollard 1981:326, 330–40; 2006:122, 128, 159–60; Koch 1999:183; Magnus 1999b: 167; 2004b; 2007; Vallet 1993; Vierck 1981:68; Werner 1970:75–81; 1981).<sup>9</sup> This is probably due to the fact that such an interpretative model very much presupposes that there are defined regional sets of dress-accessories available which make it possible to distinguish foreign elements and to associate them with some specific area. As I have discussed previously (Ch. 1), on the whole there is a lack of defined regional sets of dress-accessories of that kind for Scandinavia (see also Arrhenius 1995a:90).

<sup>8</sup> It may also be tempting to speculate on whether or not the spiral clasps which formed part of the furnishings (cf. Ch. 4.2.3) belonged to or were sewn on to an everyday garment which it was not appropriate to be wearing in this special funerary context, but which the woman, or perhaps the girl, used on a daily basis, and thus also participated in the reproduction of a 'north-western Scandinavian' identity.

<sup>9</sup> There are exceptions: for example Kristoffersen's (2000:140–1) interpretation noted just above, and Straume's (1995) or Bergljot Solberg's (1996; 2000:161) interpretations of certain Norwegian women's graves which suggest exogamous connections within Norway and Scandinavia.



**Figure 6.4** Cruciform brooch similar to Type Lima and a bird pin from Näs, Medelpad (SHM031286/A5). Photograph: S. Hallgren. © Swedish History Museum (CC BY).

In the analysis above, however, what we may call ‘outliers’ or ‘abnormalities’ can be demonstrated within the distribution patterns of most of the selected regional or local Scandinavian types of dress-accessory. In the case of the relief brooches, this can be illustrated through the finding of a brooch that belongs to the northern ridge-foot group in Denmark, the finding of a brooch of the Rogaland group at Isesjøen in Østfold, and the finding of a brooch of the Gotlandic group at Trygslad in Vest-Agder. Other such examples are: a find from Näs in Medelpad, Sweden (Fig. 6.4)<sup>10</sup> which includes a cruciform brooch similar to the type of south-western Norway, Type Lima, and a bird pin (type A1) – a combination of dress-accessories which recurs also in three grave-assemblages from Rogaland; the finding of a cruciform brooch of the North Jutlandic Type Sejlflod (variant 1) at Hamrevik in Bohuslän;<sup>11</sup> and the finding of a typically

eastern Swedish domed button clasp (type B1 vi) from Linnestad in Vestfold.<sup>12</sup> Another case is the woman buried in the Krosshaug barrow at Klepp on Jæren in Rogaland,<sup>13</sup> who was furnished with ‘Jutlandic’ ring-shaped clasps (type A2a) and a ‘south-western Scandinavian’ relief brooch (of the early ridge-foot type with a rectangular headplate) that has typically ‘southern Scandinavian’ spiral ornament. Such finds could potentially represent exogamous connections. An alternative proposed explanatory model for comparable finds of women buried with ‘foreign’ jewellery is that these represent women who had accompanied male warriors to foreign lands. Ursula Koch (1999:180, 183, 191), for instance, has interpreted the Bavarian finds of a moulded pin in a female grave at Schretzheim (grave 177) and of a Jutlandic type of de luxe brooch from Neresheim (grave 20) as showing that the women who were buried in these two places were originally from, respectively, central Sweden and from Jutland but had come along with a military band, and so subsequently dwelt amongst Thuringian families who had settled alongside the Danube.

It is, however, important to remember in this context that the individual who was wearing the ‘foreign’ dress-accessories will not necessarily have been of foreign cultural and/or ethnic origin. There is no obligatory one-to-one relationship between the ‘biological’ ethnicity of the wearer and the geographical ‘place’ of an item or set of jewellery (Ch. 1.2.2), as is often implied in exogamy interpretations. A woman was buried at Veiberg in Sunnmøre in phase D1 of the Migration Period, for example, furnished with a necklace of glass beads including what is known as a face bead, which is probably from Constantinople in the East Roman Empire. This woman should not be regarded as having been born in the East Roman Empire on that basis, although on the basis of the other jewellery she was wearing, including two small bow brooches with an attached copper-alloy chain and a moulded ring, it has been suggested that she was originally from the Baltic region, or possibly from Agder (Solberg 1996).<sup>14</sup> The Veiberg woman was also wearing a pair of cruciform brooches of Type Lunde and spiral clasps (type A1) that were common forms of dress-accessory in western Norway. The face bead cannot be regarded as having participated in any form of systematic communication of cultural difference,

10 SHM031286/A5: Näs, Skön parish, Medelpad.

11 SHM? Fl. 8.

12 C30166c.

13 B2269–99.

14 Attention should be drawn, however, to the fact that copper-alloy chains are possibly rather more commonly found in southern Norway than Solberg (1996) would lead one to believe.

but I have argued that the cruciform brooches and clasps, amongst other items, represent just such a form of communication (Ch. 6.2). Again, what emerges is the use of a set of dress-accessories which articulates different dimensions of affiliation, and, if the small bow brooches with the attached copper-alloy chain and the moulded ring did contribute to the systematic communication of cultural difference, we may also – possibly – be dealing with the manifestation of a ‘foreign’ identity.

One can suppose that the use of ‘foreign’ dress-accessories could represent other types of contact besides marriage alliances, for instance the exchange of gifts between leading families, chieftains and/or petty kings and the like in different regions. Magnus (2006:405), for example, has interpreted finds of ‘Swedish’ equal-armed relief brooches in Finland as diplomatic gifts. Gift-giving in the upper range of society in the form of garments and jewellery is documented in written sources from a slightly later period: at the beginning of the 9th century, a Frankish king gave a Danish prince, amongst other things, Frankish clothing and jewellery as a baptismal gift (Lynch 1986:175–7). From contemporary Continental and Anglo-Saxon documentary sources we also know that the fostering of one another’s children was relatively common amongst the upper levels of society (Crawford 1999:122–38). Was it perhaps the case that women who were brought up in fosterage away from home, thus acquiring cultural roots in different areas, wished to signal this duality through the use of types of dress-accessory from both regions? It is a matter of debate, however, whether the fostering of *girls* was a common cultural practice in this period (Crawford 1999:126; Evans 1997:118–20). Some historical sources indicate that this did take place, at least in the Late Anglo-Saxon Period/Viking Period,<sup>15</sup> and within contemporary Celtic societies in the Migration Period (Crawford 1999:126; but see Evans 1997:118–20 for an opposite view). The previously discussed form C2 clasps in the Kvåle burial could, in light of this, manifest the southern Scandinavian cultural origin of the girl buried there – or possibly that of the adult woman (cf. above) – while the cruciform brooches, and the bird

pin, allude to a regional Norwegian grouping in the area in which she was resident and was buried. It is possible, however, for an ‘inverse’ interpretation to be suggested for the adult woman: that she was fostered in a Swedish area, and took back to her place of birth those cultural markers from that Swedish area, in order to make known the ‘foreign’ aspect of her identity.

‘Cross-border’ jewellery finds of this kind occur all over north-western Europe in the Migration Period. It would seem, too, that there is a consistent feature: ‘foreign’ types of dress-accessories regularly show signs of having been manufactured locally – in other words they were produced in the areas in which they eventually ended up in the ground, or at the very least differ from their ‘parallels’ in the ‘area of origin’ in the same way as the ‘Gotlandic’ relief brooch from Kvåle does. The nominally ‘Scandinavian’ or ‘Nordic’ relief brooches from the Continent and England exemplify this. Although the relief brooches have unambiguous Scandinavian models, they are shaped in ways that reveal that they nevertheless are quite distinct from Scandinavian specimens (Haseloff 1981:708; Hines 1997:233). In the case of the Anglo-Saxon great square-headed brooches, for instance, one such telling feature is the length of the bow, which is conspicuously shorter than on the Scandinavian counterparts (Hines 1997:233). Cruciform brooches, which are found over a wide area of Europe and which have, amongst other things, been accepted as evidence for a North German or Anglian, and Jutish, migration to England, are also shaped differently on either side of the North Sea (Mortimer 1990:17). There was also local manufacture of what are known as ‘Danubian’ brooches (often referred to as ‘Visigothic’ brooches) in those parts of Frankish territory that lie in what is today France (Effros 2004:181). The American historian Bonnie Effros (2004:176–9) has, corroboratively, pointed out that these ‘Frankish’ ‘Visigothic’ brooches ‘have surprisingly few parallels in regions which the Visigoths are known from written sources to have inhabited at the same period.’

The form of these local variants of foreign items of jewellery shows that the objects were not imported from somewhere else even though the type itself is

15 According to Snorri’s Kings’ Sagas, there were several examples of the practice of fostering including girls in Viking-age Scandinavia. In *Ynglinga saga*, there is an account of Queen Gauthild, daughter of the king of Gautland (*Götaland*) and married to the King of the Svear, Ingjald, sending their son for fosterage with her own foster-father Bove, in Västergötland. Gyda, daughter of the King of Hordaland, was, according to *Haralds saga ins hárfagra*, fostered by a powerful farmer in Valdres. In *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, the foster-parents of Astrid from Obrestad, the mother of Olav Tryggveson, and of Tyre, daughter of the King of the Danes, are referred to. In *Óláfs saga ins helga*, Astrid, daughter of the King of the Swedes Olav Eiriksson and wife of Olav Haraldsson, grew up in the home of a chieftain in Västergötland. In the cases of both Gauthild and the two Astrids, it is also noted that the biological father was still alive when his daughters reached adult age. In my view, this indicates that this custom was practised in the same way for both girls and boys, in that the children were sent away to be fostered even while their biological parents were still alive.

originally from there. What appears to have been local production of 'foreign' dress-accessories indicates that the objects were not brought from elsewhere, but were deliberately made with the objective of copying such pieces in certain other areas (Arrhenius 1995a:91; Effros 2004:181; Haseloff 1981:708; Røstad 2001:44–5, 77–9; Straume 1995:98; Vallet 1993:118). Another feature that is recurrent with examples of such 'foreign' items of jewellery is that, as was the case with the Kvåle find, they were usually used in combination with local items, and that their positioning is also often consistent with the local costume style (Effros 2004:181; Hakenbeck 2004; 2006:128, 131; Koch 1999:176, 177, 181–3; Owen-Crocker 2004:91–2; Røstad 2001:47–78; 2003:10). What these 'cross-border' finds may reveal more than anything else, then, are the extant connections between far-distant areas and the general knowledge that *some people* at least must have had concerning the use of items of jewellery in other surrounding, and more remote, areas.

Irrespective of what such 'foreign' dress-accessories represent, their use can be regarded as a deliberate manifestation of a foreign-looking connection, and an aspect of the wearer's cultural identity. This can be illustrated through Migration-period burials in a cemetery at Altenerding in Bavaria (Sage 1984). In this cemetery, several women with artificially modified skulls were interred. The modification of the skull was a custom practised at the end of the 4th and beginning of the 5th centuries in south-eastern Europe (Buchet and Pilet 1994:123; Hakenbeck 2009) and has traditionally been regarded as an ethnic marker linked to the Huns (Werner 1956:11–17). The feature has, however, also been attributed to other ethnic groups, including the Burgundians, the Goths, the Alemanni, the Gepids, the Avars, and the Alans (Buchet 1988:64; Effros 2004:182; Hakenbeck 2009:3; Werner 1956:17). Without adopting a position over whether or not modification of the skull can be assigned to a particular ethnic group, it is possible to accept this as an ethnic feature which in Migration-period western and central Europe was understood to mark a south-eastern (Asian/Oriental) connection and possibly also ethnic origin (Buchet 1988:65). In the period of c. AD 450–550, individuals with artificially modified skulls are found in a number of cemeteries in central Europe. Generally, these are women, more often relatively elderly individuals. However, skull modification does *not* appear to have been a custom in these central European areas. For one thing, there is no sign of this

practice having been carried out on any children buried there – artificial cranial modification has to be carried out in earliest infancy, because then the skull is 'soft' and can be moulded. For another thing, the number of individuals with modified skulls found in graves in central Europe is relatively low. We can, therefore, conclude that these elderly women with artificially modified skulls who have been found in graves in central Europe were of eastern origin (Hakenbeck 2009:7). The modification of the skull involves the skull being pressed together and elongated, thus changing the facial features to produce an 'Asiatic'-looking appearance (Buchet 1988:61). The women from Bavaria with elongated skulls have 'morphological characteristics' which imply a south-eastern European origin. Because of their modified skulls, they stood out physically, and yet these 'culturally foreign', possibly south-eastern European, women were still wearing a costume with a set of dress-accessories that was consistent with local fashion and similar to the majority of the other women interred in the cemetery. It appears, likewise, to have been the norm all over western and central Europe in the second half of the 5th century and first half of the 6th for eastern 'Asiatic/Oriental' women with modified skulls to be buried in local costume (Hakenbeck 2006:181–3; 2009:7). Contrarily, one woman at Altenerding who did *not* have an elongated skull, was provided with a 'North European' peplos-dress and buried with 'Scandinavian' types of dress-accessory which were placed as if in a typically 'Scandinavian' set (Hakenbeck 2004:49–51; 2006:122, 128; Werner 1970:78–81). This 'Scandinavian' woman very probably did not stand apart by dint of some 'foreign' physical appearance, but it was *her* cultural difference, that was emphasized in her mode of dress and the burial rite.

Another example which serves to illuminate the use of foreign jewellery for the deliberate manifestation of cultural and/or ethnic identity can be taken from a Migration-period cemetery at Saint-Martin-de-Fortenay in Normandy, where seven interred individuals had artificially modified skulls. Six of these had not been buried with jewellery that signals any cultural or ethnic affiliation, but the seventh, a woman (in grave 300), was interred with jewellery that can be considered typical of the south-eastern Danubian zone and the area north of the Black Sea. Such artefacts are often referred to as 'Visigothic', and the area of origin and core region of distribution of these items appears, potentially, to agree with the source of the practice

of modification of skulls.<sup>16</sup> The brooches, however, are decorated with (Romano-)Germanic geometrical chip-carved decoration, and the distribution of 'Visigothic' brooches with this sort of decoration is concentrated in the central Rhineland and westwards, north of the Seine. The woman in this grave was also wearing these supposedly 'Visigothic' brooches horizontally, or at an angle with the headplate pointing downwards, positioned side-by-side above one another and very low down to one side of the chest/upper body. This is consistent with local, northern French 'Frankish' practice and is not consistent with the *mode Danubienne*, where one brooch on each shoulder is the norm (Buchet and Pilet 1994:119, 121; Effros 2004:182; Pilet et al. 1994:99–105; Vallet 1995:88–91). Physical anthropological study has shown that this woman was also different in terms of, inter alia, stature and skeletal build (Alduc-le Bagousse and Buchet 1990:111–12). This woman therefore not only manifested a cultural and/or ethnic connection with areas further east 'physically' on the basis of the implications of her elongated skull, of her appearance and of her use of jewellery, but concurrently also expressed a degree of local belonging through how the items of jewellery were fastened on her dress and how they were decorated.

Examples of this kind show that foreign origin or a different cultural background would not necessarily be reflected in the mode of dress and the set of jewellery *directly*.<sup>17</sup> In cases of the use of 'foreign' jewellery, it is, however, probable that these do manifest some identity, or aspect, of the deceased which, in that person's own time, it was considered necessary or desirable to express (cf. Hakenbeck 2004:49–51; 2006:159–60, 228–9). The use of foreign dress-accessories stands out in its contemporary context as a 'divergent' habit of clothing, and this is decisive in its semiotics (see also Kaiser 1983:3):

...normative behaviour in dress is not seen by society; it is 'invisible' in seeming to be 'naturally' appropriate. Deviant behaviour, on the other hand, is seen. It is seen as an intentional form of communication which stands out and directs attention to itself [...]. Deviance is an 'interruption of symbolic order'. Thus the deviant burials must be regarded as bearing a message, which would be understood by those burying

them, one equal in importance to, but different from, the normative burials. [...] That the living *chose* to differentiate a person from the others around, and perpetuate this difference into death, must have been intentional behaviour (Pader 1980:155).

As far as the 'Scandinavian', or possibly even 'Swedish', woman from grave 421 at Altenerding in Bavaria is concerned (Werner 1970:78–81), for example, it may have been important, for some reason or another, to allude to a foreign, Scandinavian link or to the fact that the deceased was of Scandinavian descent. The identification of this woman's jewellery as 'Scandinavian' or 'Swedish' is debatable, however. Bitner-Wróblewska (2001:84, 88, 197) argues that the brooches in the grave are of a Baltic type but had been made in a Scandinavian workshop. Magnus (2004b:281) for her part declares that '...no grave find with a set of jewellery similar to that of the Altenerding grave is known from Scandinavia. It comprises an unusual mixture of Baltic and Anglo-Saxon items, and the only items that may tentatively be labelled Scandinavian are the two dress pins.' The two dress pins are what are known as moulded-head pins: a type that is found primarily in the Mälars region (Waller 1996). However, there are no *identical* pins from Scandinavia, because the Bavarian finds differ from their Swedish counterparts, as Magnus (2004b:275) points out, by having flat and perforated, mushroom-shaped heads. The imitation of an originally Scandinavian type of dress-accessory, and the placement of these items on the costume in accordance with Scandinavian and/or northern European models, appears perhaps most of all as a wish to preserve a 'foreign' identity, at one level at least. A possibly related case from Scandinavia is the grave-find from Medelpad already discussed,<sup>18</sup> with a set of jewellery of 'south-western Norwegian' character, including a bird pin and a cruciform brooch that is like Type Lima. This brooch, however, diverges from its Norwegian relatives by lacking 'wings' on the bow.

An interesting phenomenon related to the finding of 'foreign' items of jewellery, and perhaps particularly relief brooches, is the fact that in some cases these had remained in circulation for an extended period before they ended up in a grave (see, e.g., Hines 1997:226). This can be deduced from contemporary repairs and

16 This means the area of origin of this practice *in the Migration Period*. The practice has been found more or less throughout prehistory and in diverse parts of the world (Buchet 1988).

17 That there is no direct link between the use of ethnic markers and biological descent is also shown by strontium isotope analyses from England (Lucy 2005:106).

18 SHM031286/A5: Näs, Skön parish, Medelpad.



**Figure 6.5** Swedish equal-armed relief brooch and reconstructed costume from Szentes-Nagyhegy grave 84, after Magnus (2007: *Abbn.* 2 and 13).

severe wear on the brooches. In Anglo-Saxon England, for instance, there is one such ‘old’ relief brooch in a rich female grave from Finglesham, Kent, grave D3. The brooch, with a pair of gold bracteates (Chadwick 1958:fig. b, e-f), is interpreted as an heirloom, or family treasure, which signalled the Jutish origin of the woman buried here (Hawkes and Pollard 1981:326, 330–40). A woman buried in Szentes-Nagyhegy in Hungary, grave 84, with an equal-armed relief brooch that was old and worn when it was deposited in the grave, is interpreted in the same way (Fig. 6.5): in this case in terms of the signalling of an eastern

Swedish/Scandinavian family connection (Magnus 1999b:166–7; 2007:177, 190).

This sort of depositional custom implies that there may exist a certain time-lag between, for instance, the relief brooches which had been in circulation for a relatively long time and other items of jewellery and objects in the grave-assemblage – a phenomenon that is frequently referred to in an English context as *the heirloom factor* (Hawkes and Pollard 1981:326, 340; Leigh 1980:17; Mortimer 1990:110). This phenomenon could also be linked to several of the Scandinavian relief brooches of phase D1 that occur in phase-D2a contexts (cf. Ch. 4.2.2.4). Examples of this are, for

instance, the two relief brooches from Tu in Klepp, Rogaland and Vik in Fjære, Aust-Agder, which are older than the other dress-accessories in the grave-assemblages and both of which show evidence of wear before they were buried in the graves (Kristoffersen 2000:266–7, 318; Schetelig 1917b:198). In this phase, what the Scandinavian relief brooches manifested was, first and foremost, super-regional connections and high social status. This is intrinsically able to support the view that the Scandinavian brooches were also heirlooms. These ‘family treasures’ stand out in the European context because they often appear to represent genuinely imported objects: items of jewellery that had been carried from one area to another. Such imported objects are few, however, in comparison with the total quantity of finds of ‘foreign’ dress-accessories – for instance only two Anglo-Saxon great square-headed brooches out of some two hundred specimens distributed in England (Hines 1997:1, 11, 233), and about five out of a hundred Kentish square-headed brooches (Haseloff 1981:21–3; Leigh 1980:11–34), are considered to be genuine imports from Scandinavia. Most of the ‘cross-finds’, by contrast, were locally manufactured (cf. above).

Items of jewellery that were locally made and therefore should be counted as ‘imitations’ can represent neither that sort of old heirloom that has been brought to a foreign place nor imported ‘exchange goods’ or gifts. The traditional interpretation, as noted, is that marriage connections and alliances between kin-groups in different areas were expressed by means of the curatorial of such ‘external’ or foreign costume elements (Engevik 2007:174; Koch 1999:183; Kristoffersen 2000:140; Solberg 1996; 2000:161). When this type of find is considered in a more general fashion as the expression of family links and/or alliances between kin-groups independent of the individual’s – i.e. the person who was wearing the jewellery – ‘biological’ descent and the place where the jewellery was manufactured, the ‘cross-finds’ are able to represent super-regional connections, such as ancestors in other areas (cf. Koch 1999:180), political alliances (including those created by the mutual fostering of children), or marriage connections; but first and foremost the manifestation of a level of identity as ‘foreign’. In this context it is, moreover, interesting to return to the burial find from Kvåle in Sogndal (Ch. 6.3), and ask if some of the ‘foreign’ (south-eastern Swedish) items of jewellery belonged to the young girl, as I have suggested. If they did, this would imply that both the adult woman and the young girl were wearing ‘foreign’ jewellery. The find could then be interpreted as one in which foreign ancestry or connections were signalled

in more than one successive generation, and that, in turn, could be understood as the active maintenance of ethnic association.

Such an interpretation of the distribution of foreign items of jewellery also implies that those items of jewellery which *belong* to their home territory, in geographical terms, express family links and/or alliances between kin-groups. This means, further, that the majority of the family connections and alliances existed at a local or regional level. Ethnological sources show, however, that practices can vary when it comes to regional or local costumes and whether or not women change costume when entering into marriage. In some cases the custom may be for the bride to change her costume and to observe the local mode in the area she has moved into, while other examples reveal that negotiations over a possible change of costume can precede the marriage itself and that a change of costume will not necessarily accompany a ‘cross-connection’ through marriage between different costume areas (Straume 1995:99).

Straume (1995:99–100) also drew attention to an interesting ethnological analogue which she considered might serve as a model for a social ‘farmer rank’ in Migration-period Germanic society: the marriage patterns in Valdres c. AD 1600–1850 (Saugstad et al. 1976). During this period of some 250 years only 1–2% of a total of about 1,900 marriages involved someone from Valdres marrying someone from neighbouring areas or districts (Nord-Aurdal and Lærdal). The rest of the marriages were arranged between relatives in Valdres. In half of the cases the distance between the bride and the groom was less than five kilometres. This was despite the fact that the royal road between Bergen and Oslo passed through Valdres, which might lead one to expect greater contact between settlements. The marriages referred to involved those of the rank of ‘farmer’, and the relatively narrow geographical framework within which marriages were contracted may have had its roots in a desire or a strategy to keep the land as far as possible ‘in the family’ and to reinforce and stabilize the social structures of the local community, such as relationships with neighbours, by means of marriage alliances (Saugstad et al. 1976 in Straume 1995:99–100). From this analogous case, it may then be correct that jewellery signals the fact that kin-group connections and alliances in the Migration Period were above all local. The ethnological sources also indicate that the use of costume and dress-accessories was a conscious choice and a deliberate decision in the context of exogamy. The latter supports the proposition that the external associations represent a deliberate signalling of ‘foreignness’.

#### 6.4 THE CONSOLIDATION OF REGIONAL GROUP IDENTITIES

Turning back to the overall distribution patterns within Scandinavia, a range of changes came about when the cruciform brooches fell out of use at the transition to phase D2b and relief brooches apparently took over as regional group markers (cf. Ch. 5.1.1). To begin with, the number of markers diminished at this threshold, with a total of 125 relief brooches, contrasted with 409 cruciform brooches in the preceding phase. (I am keeping the button clasps, which occur in both phases, out of the reckoning here, but shall return to them shortly.) The reduction in the quantity of items of jewellery can be interpreted as a reduction in investment in group symbols. Some caution is necessary here, however, because the reduction may be attributable to other factors or to changes in society. Several scholars have claimed, for instance, that there was a natural catastrophe around AD 536–7, with subsequent famine and epidemic plague which in the end led to a dramatic fall in population levels in Scandinavia and the rest of Europe alike (Gräslund 2008; Jensen 2004:136–40; Solberg 2000:197–8, 201–2). A social development in the direction of greater centralization of power and political stability has also been seen as the reason for, overall, diminished investment in grave deposition towards the end of the Migration Period and at the transition to the Merovingian Period (see, e.g., Myhre 1992b:164; 2003:85–6; Solberg 2000:176; Ystgaard 2014:261–4, and cf. Ch. 7.1.1). The reduction in the number of brooches could thus be seen as a consequence of a population decline, or of a reduced need for social marking because of the consolidation of political power. I return to political development in the following chapter.

There was, however, another change involved in the transition from cruciform to relief brooches. Compared with the relatively high number of unique (individualistic) cruciform brooches of phase D2a, there are few unique relief brooches in phase D2b which cannot be grouped within some regional sub-type. Of the 125 relief brooches of this phase there are only nine unique or individualistic brooches which cannot be assigned in that way (three by the Ågedal master, one which is defined as a ‘copy’ of the Ågedal master, two individualistic brooches, and the brooches which Meyer (1935) labelled ‘three late works’).<sup>19</sup>

Six of these brooches are dated by Meyer (1935) to stadium 5.<sup>20</sup> Although no great weight is attached to the distinction between Meyer’s two latest stadia here, since they together constitute phase D2b, it is possible that these brooch-variants of stadium 5, together with the specimen that is dated to the transition between stadia 4 and 5, belong to an early part of phase D2b. In a couple of these finds<sup>21</sup> the unique or individualistic relief brooches occur in association with ‘untypical’ cruciform brooches, supporting an early dating within phase D2b or around the transition of D2a/D2b, since the latter brooches disappear in phase D2b. The individualistic relief brooches may therefore represent some sort of ‘experimentation’, such as attempting new designs, which did not take root, in a transitional period before the new types became established, as has also been argued in the case of the type C1i clasps, above (Ch. 4.2.3.7).

In the case of clasps, too, there are extremely few unique examples. It is only clasps of the bar-type and a couple of Class C clasps that stand out (cf. Chs. 4.2.3 and 6.2). It is harder to demonstrate any reduction in the distribution of clasps in phase D2b compared with the foregoing phase, but in any event no *new* types of clasps were introduced in the concluding phase of the Migration Period. This phase is thus characterized by standardization in the use of clasps.

The ‘thorough systematization’ that generally marks phase D2b in respect of relief brooches and clasps may possibly mean that the situation in respect of the signalling of identity was no longer experienced as being as flexible as it had been. This restriction in the use of brooches and clasps, and the general reduction in the quantity of ‘items of marker jewellery’ in this phase compared with its predecessor, could possibly be explained in terms of the regional groupings having become so thoroughly established by then that there was no longer any need to invest so much in their material manifestation. At the same time, the apparent lack of flexibility can also be interpreted as meaning that alternative affiliations and groupings on top of the already extant regional groupings were no longer available as ‘self-identification options’, as they had been before. Put another way, this could be seen as expressing the fact that potential levels of identity for individual group members were fewer than in the preceding phase. This could indicate that geographical

19 Respectively B3410: Ågedal, Vest-Agder; C7454: Gyland, Vest-Agder; S1969: Fristad, Rogaland; unnumbered: Vik, Aust-Agder; Cp. Dcccxxxiii: Trygslund, Vest-Agder; SHM2564, 2786, 4409: Järnskogsboda, Värmland; S2547: Rivjeland, Rogaland; B5362: Kvasheim, Rogaland; C13697: Hægebostad deserted farm, Vest-Agder.

20 B3410: Ågedal, Vest-Agder; C7454: Gyland, Vest-Agder; S1969: Fristad, Rogaland; Cp. Dcccxxxiii: Trygslund, Vest-Agder; SHM2564, 2786, 4409: Järnskogsboda, Värmland.

21 C7453–62: Gyland, Bakke, Vest-Agder; B3410: Ågedal, Bjelland, Vest-Agder.

and social mobility at this juncture was more restrained than it had been, a state of affairs which could in turn be a consequence of the structures of Migration-period society becoming fixed and consolidated after a more 'open' phase (Hines 1993a:91–5; Ringtved 1988b:49; cf. Ch. 7.1.1, below). It is nevertheless not possible to exclude the possibility that, for example, small equal-armed brooches and 'small brooches' (small bow brooches) also took over the function as markers when the cruciform brooches went out of fashion, and that there are several unique specimens amongst these brooch-types.<sup>22</sup>

A further change that took place in phase D2b was, as noted, that more people were participating in the form of marking that involved the use of relief brooches than had previously been the case. The range of relief brooches is, at the same time, much wider and more varied than before, and there are examples of more ornate and valuable relief brooches besides simple variants. This contrasts with the two preceding phases of the Migration Period, when relief brooches can in themselves be defined as status markers. This development can be interpreted as a 'democratization' of the relief brooches: the change may reflect the diffusion of the brooch-type to a broader social register that covers more ranks of society than before. Another possible interpretation is that society underwent a transformation through which social ranks and roles changed, and that the brooches were adapted to these changes. There could, for instance, have been a social change through which the distance between what formerly constituted separate social ranks in the highest stratum of society was dissolved. Alternatively, the change in brooch-use in phase D2b could mean that group identity had become more important than individual identity and/or the manifestation of individual status.

An apparent paradox is the fact that, at the same time as the relief brooches of this phase are characterized by readily recognizable, distinct regional variants or sub-types, *all of the relief brooches* are nevertheless more similar to one another in form than they had ever been before. Virtually all of them now have a cruciform footplate and rectangular headplate (cf. Ch. 4.2.2.7). The cruciform footplate and (more or less) rectangular headplate are also features found on the Anglo-Saxon great square-headed brooches (cf. Ch. 4.2.2.7). This

may mean that the relief brooches were also used for *trans-regional marking* in the concluding phase of the Migration Period. If so, this would imply that one and the same type of brooch had a double function at this stage, in that it simultaneously marked both a regional identity and affiliation to a trans-regional grouping. In some cases, brooches that are particularly valuable could also have functioned as status markers. The use of a common type, the northern plane-foot group, over large parts of Scandinavia, can also be accepted as evidence for the reinforcement of a common, super-regional Scandinavian identity by means of relief brooches. The super-regional identity which is expressed by the use of the brooches appears, however, not to be linked exclusively to an upper stratum of society at this time, but rather to apply to a number of the higher ranks of society. This can be perceived as the maintenance of a super-regional association which was manifested in phase D2a by the use of cruciform brooches of Type Mundheim and common Scandinavian clasp-types.

As already noted (Ch. 5.1.3), in phase D2b a tendency for (some of the female) population in Denmark increasingly to distance themselves from people in northern and eastern Scandinavia, through the use of a distinct *de luxe* type of brooch, can be detected. Button clasps, meanwhile, are found not only in Denmark but also over much of the mainland Scandinavian peninsula. This may indicate that there was no complete cultural distancing between these areas, and that there were still some levels of identity at which a common Scandinavian identity was preserved in the southern regions too. In this context, the fact that this is a matter of costume manifestation which principally involved women is also to be taken into account, and the possibility that the situation appears different when male costume and other forms of manifestation are incorporated.

The inferred distancing is equally not to be understood in terms of the areas becoming isolated from one another. It was not lack of communication which led to ethnic signalling; quite the opposite. Ethnic and cultural marking are often catalysed when contact between groups intensifies (cf. Barth 1969). Reichstein (1975:112) commented that the growing production of different types of cruciform brooches, i.e. dress-accessories, in phase D2a (his Stufe D3), indicates the

<sup>22</sup> Small bow brooches of the 'small brooch' type constitute a widely distributed type of jewellery in the second half of the Migration Period, and new finds are being made all the time. Since small brooches (i.e. 'small long brooches') in Anglo-Saxon contexts can be interpreted as ethnic or cultural markers (see Leeds 1945), it is not improbable, as noted, that they functioned similarly in the context of Scandinavia. Regrettably, though, no comprehensive investigations of brooches of this type have been undertaken in Scandinavia, and it is not within the scope of this project to carry out such an analysis (cf. Ch. 4.2.4).

*presence* of cultural connections, not their absence. This distancing should rather be understood as expressing the fact that there had been a change in how south-western Scandinavian identity was negotiated at this point, and that the change appears to have brought with it an increased consciousness of, and possibly increased need to express, difference in this area in relation to the remainder of Scandinavia – at least in terms of the semiotic elements of female dress. It also appears likely that *local* semiotic elements have diminished in relation to the previous phase, when there were several distinct local variants of cruciform brooch and generally a wider distribution of jewellery representing cultural symbolism. The overall focus of phase D2b seems, nevertheless, like that of its predecessor, still to have been a matter of smaller regional groupings.

### 6.5 THE MEROVINGIAN PERIOD – THE RECONFIGURATIONS OF A NEW PERIOD?

The beginning of the Merovingian Period is characterized by increasing differentiation between northern, southern, eastern and south-eastern Scandinavia in the distribution of various types of dress-accessory. This distancing can be interpreted in terms of an increased need to mark the difference between these regions. At the same time, the individual areas that are constituted by the shared use of similar types of jewellery are larger than the regional groupings which dominated the previous phase. Conical brooches with geometrical decoration occur, for instance, across virtually the whole of Norway. An area comprising Denmark, including Bornholm, and Skåne is dominated by beak brooches and equal-armed brooches, and although the Mälars region still stands out with a great concentration of finds, the typical dress-accessories of this region are also found across a fairly wide area of eastern Sweden. All the same, a thread of continuity can be traced through from the preceding phase, and indeed to some degree back to phase D2a, in that the islands of Gotland and Öland, and also, in part, Bornholm, still largely share common forms of jewellery (see the map in Nielsen 1991:fig. 2). The fact that the Mälars region still stands distinct, as an area where particular types of dress-accessory cluster, can also be explained in terms of some continuity in costume marking from the previous phase. The shift in focus which emerges – of a sort of ‘regrouping’ into larger

and fewer, and more clearly distinguished, areas – can be understood as the creation or formation of several different super-regional identities. These new extensive groupings may have been rooted in the activation of a partially latent level of identity that was already operative in earlier phases. Some congruency can be seen, for instance, between those areas in which Type Mundheim is found in phase D2a and those where conical brooches are distributed in the first phase of the Merovingian Period. The areas of distribution of cruciform brooches of Type Lunde in phase D1 and of conical brooches with Style II ornament in Merovingian Period phase 1 are partly the same. As has been noted, ‘island identities’ on the Scandinavian Baltic islands were also maintained.

During the transition to the Merovingian Period, the focus alters and smaller or more narrowly bounded local and regional groups appear to fade into the background. Nevertheless, regional manifestation can be detected through the more extensive use of paired brooches in northern Norway than anywhere else in Norway or Sweden. This implies, as already noted, that the mode of wearing may also have been an element of cultural expression. Conical brooches with Style II decoration occur primarily in the southern half of Norway but otherwise have a local cluster in Lofoten-Vesterålen. The distribution of the Style II brooches can be interpreted as the manifestation of a narrower regional and local grouping within the area throughout which conical brooches are found. These two principal types of conical brooch are found, as noted (Ch. 3.2.3.1), in combination with one another in two cases, which may indicate the manifestation of different, or possibly partially overlapping, levels of identity.

As in the preceding phases, there are still some forms of jewellery that are common to the whole area of Scandinavia, including dress pins with polyhedral heads, S-shaped brooches, bead sets that are dominated by orange-red and yellow opaque glass beads, and possibly disc-on-bow brooches too. It is possible that some allusion to a shared Scandinavian group identity may be glimpsed through the use of common types of dress-accessory such as these.<sup>23</sup> These common jewellery-types are also often combined with brooches that are considered to be regional markers. The opaque orange glass beads, for instance, are found in assemblages of dress-accessories along with conical brooches, and dress pins with polyhedral/

<sup>23</sup> Dress pins with polyhedral heads and S-shaped brooches are also found on the Continent and in England (Gjessing 1934:130–3; Strauss 1992:58–61, 175; Waller 1996:48; Ørnsnes 1966:144, 164–5, 185) and should therefore possibly be viewed as common European types (cf. Ch. 4.3.2).

polyhedral heads appear in combinations not only with conical brooches but also with snake brooches, beak brooches and equal-armed brooches. There are also combinations involving a range of regional types with different geographical associations, such as a pair of conical brooches found together with an 'East Swedish' domed wheel-cross/quadruped brooch.<sup>24</sup> Just as with combinations of jewellery-types in the Migration Period, this can be interpreted as the expression of different levels of group identity in one and the same individual. It could thus represent the manifestation of association with an eastern Swedish grouping, alongside participation in a wider Scandinavian, or even northern European, grouping (cf. Ch. 6.3).

With the exception of the early disc-on-bow brooches, a striking feature is that all of the various brooch-types that represent group marking in this period (phase 1 of the Merovingian Period) are very simple, and not particularly valuable objects. The brooches are virtually uniformly made of copper alloy, and decoration in the form of gilding, cloisonné, granulation or filigree is practically totally absent. The most common form of ornamentation is punchmarking or simple incised work. This type of decoration often looks like 'DIY' work on the conical brooches of the period, and of little individuality. This is a sharp contrast to the carefully manufactured items of jewellery of the Migration Period, arguably above all of the relief brooches, compared with which the brooches of the early Merovingian Period look quite 'amateur'. One exception, though, is the conical brooches with Style II decoration, which are consistently of high quality and in some cases have inlaid garnets to form, for instance, the eyes. The (burial) contexts in which the items of jewellery are deposited can also be described as generally quite simple in the first phase of the Merovingian Period. It is consistently rare to find gold or imported items in the graves of this phase (cf. Ch. 4.3.1.4; see also Gudesen 1980; Helgen 1982; Solberg 2000:186–8; Vinsrygg 1979).<sup>25</sup> The common Scandinavian types of bead ornaments and dress pins also represent simple forms of jewellery. This may indicate that costume manifestation was to a great extent a feature of an upper, but not the very highest, tier of society.

The more costly disc-on-bow brooches are an exception, and may perhaps be regarded as a shared

marker of a supreme social class. Ørsnes (1966:111, 184) argued for similarities between southern and eastern Scandinavian disc-on-bow brooches on the one hand, and Norwegian examples on the other, in this phase. The distribution pattern of the type, however, is one of the things that would appear to contradict this view, as so many disc-on-bow brooches are from Gotland (and eastern Sweden) compared with the rest of Scandinavia. On Gotland (and in eastern Sweden), moreover, the disc-on-bow brooches have a distinct design, which means that they can be identified as a particular sub-type (cf. Ch. 4.3.2). The brooches could, nevertheless, have functioned as regional markers for a higher tier of society on Gotland and in eastern Sweden.

As I have mentioned above (Ch. 6.4), there was a range of social change at the transition to the Merovingian Period which has to be looked at in connection with the development that took place concerning the signalling of group identities. I return to this issue in the following chapter, but shall first present another factor that may have been determinative in the use of jewellery, namely age.

### 6.5.1 Age bands

The number of items of jewellery and the wealth of sets of dress-accessories are not necessarily directly reflective of the social status of the person buried in a grave (cf. Ch. 2.2.2). With regard to burial contexts and the number of brooches found in any one grave, one must take into account that an important factor might be the age of the individual at death. The historian and archaeologist Guy Halsall (1996) illustrates this in a very interesting study of the status and power of women in central Austrasia (in present-day Lorraine, France) in the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th. He shows that in the 6th century in this area the richest grave goods, meaning the most costly and the largest assemblages of dress-accessories, are recurrently found in the graves of younger women in their teens and early twenties (Halsall 1996:10–11).<sup>26</sup> He associates this with a law that sets the *wergild*<sup>27</sup> of women of this age band very high, on the grounds of female fertility. Children, meaning young girls and/or newly born infants, and women aged 40 or more, may also be buried wearing jewellery, but they are furnished

24 Ts3071: Ytre Elgsnes, Harstad *kommune*, Troms.

25 The trend towards fewer (Ch. 5.1.2) and more simply designed jewellery, and likewise towards more simply furnished graves, is also found on the Continent: for instance amongst Frankish burials in Lorraine, France (Halsall 1996:11–12); cf. below.

26 Similar trends have also been demonstrated in an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Berinsfield, Oxfordshire (Williams 2006:55) and RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell, Suffolk (Caruth and Hines forthcoming).

27 *Wergild*: economic compensation paid in the case of killing and/or maiming.

with markedly fewer types of dress-accessory. The older women are often buried only with a necklace.

Halsall was of the view that the set of dress-accessories worn by the individual was determined by the role they played in the household and in the community, and that age bands were thus imbricated with their gendered role. More was invested in the costume of young women because they were important to the kin-group's future position by means of potential marriage alliances. Eligible young women were 'decked out' and put on show in the public arena, and this is reflected in burial practice too. He argued that the age bands were significant in relation to social status, but that older women buried with few items of jewellery or none do not necessarily represent 'low-status' individuals. The social status of this age group could have been expressed in different ways. The graves of women aged 40–60 at death are, for instance, often richly furnished with 'domestic equipment' such as pottery, keys, chatelaines and the like, even though they have less jewellery (Halsall 1996:17, 23).

Investment in grave goods can be seen as connected to the degree of social stress consequent upon the death of an individual. The high level of investment associated with teenage girls and young women up to the age of 40 or so is probably linked to their important role in the construction of alliances between kin-groups and to the role of women in the household, perhaps particularly in connection with the raising of a new generation. Another important point is that in Lorraine in the Migration Period there appears to have been a custom that declared that it was not 'right' for more middle-aged and genuinely elderly women to wear jewellery and sets of dress-accessories that were associated with a different stage of life (Halsall 1996:12–21). In terms of what Halsall discussed as 'the grammar of display', the items of jewellery were associated with the social role of an 'eligible' young woman, and adult women who had passed this threshold consequently passed their own items of jewellery on to their teenage daughters. He argued that this is what lies behind Gregory of Tours's comment in the context of the burial of a woman of high rank in a church in Metz in AD 585. This father of the Church emphasized two points: the woman was childless, and she was interred with 'much gold and a profusion of ornaments' (*cum grandibus ornamentis et multo*

*auro*) (Halsall 1996:1, 20).<sup>28</sup> It is easy to comprehend the existence of a possible practice of this kind that determines the use of jewellery in light of modern dress codes which are effectively determinative of how adult women (and also men) dress in comparison with teenagers. The often unwritten rules of this kind have existed in many periods, and lie behind popular expressions like 'mutton dressed as lamb', reflecting the fact that the breaking of such rules is considered inappropriate. A similar practice and social mechanism may have lain behind the deposition of the two relief brooches and a gold finger ring in the Ommundrød grave in a box at the feet of the deceased woman (cf. Chs. 4.2.2.4 and 6.3). Had the Ommundrød woman passed a stage of life at which it would have been natural for her to wear such items, without any surviving daughter she could pass the jewellery on to? In this context it is also interesting that the other individual interred in the same grave, who only had a garment with clasps and no other jewellery, is thought to have been a child (Kristoffersen 2000:253).<sup>29</sup> She might have been the deceased woman's heir.

Studies of the connection between jewellery and age bands have to some extent been difficult in Scandinavia because so much of the human skeletal evidence is in a very poor state, and was often not curated during early excavations, and sometimes bones had been completely destroyed (i.e. decomposed) before archaeological excavation began. This is particularly the case in Norway, where the conditions for the survival of osteological material are almost uniformly unfavourable. Waller (1986; 1996), however, has investigated age bands in relation to the use of dress pins in the Migration and Merovingian Periods on the basis of relatively recently excavated cremation graves from the Mälär region in Sweden. The relationship between age and the use of jewellery in the early Merovingian Period has also been studied in the area of southern Scandinavia (Jørgensen 1994a:536). Both of these analyses reveal that the situation is not fully congruent with Halsall's observations on the situation in Lorraine. To begin with, some types of dress pin were worn by both men and women in the Mälär region. Moreover, Waller (1986:146; 1996:126) points out that it was adult women (aged 20–40 at death) who constituted the largest group of 'pin-wearers'. One should, however, be aware that in Waller's study

28 We may note that there is legislation concerning the use of jewellery in later periods in Italy that reveals a similar tendency. A Florentine law of 1472 permits newly married women to wear two brooches and a necklace for the first three years of their marriage. In the second three years, the number of brooches is reduced to one, while it is still permitted to wear a necklace. After six years of marriage, wedded women are forbidden to wear brooches. Whether or not this law was observed is, of course, another matter (Campbell 2009:96).

29 The individual is apparently inferred to have been a child from the dimensions of the burial, because the skeleton has completely decomposed.

(1986:146, tab. 1) it is difficult to distinguish between teenagers and older children. At this period, too, the dress pins may be regarded as relatively 'simple' types of jewellery, so that it is difficult to correlate the results with Halsall's conclusions. In southern Scandinavia, the largest and finest sets of jewellery with paired and de luxe brooches were worn by 'adult women', while girls and younger women were usually buried with a simple small brooch and no display brooches (Jørgensen 1994a:536). I will return to these apparent discrepancies between Halsall's conclusions and the Scandinavian studies below.

It has not been possible for me, in the course of the present research, to examine possible age bands in relation to the evidence of the jewellery on a systematic basis. However, the human skeletal remains are preserved in several of the grave finds in northern Norway of phase 1 of the Merovingian Period, allowing us to determine an approximate age at death. In one find from Våje in Nordland,<sup>30</sup> with a set of dress-accessories consisting of just one conical brooch and 18 beads, the deceased has been identified osteologically as 'possibly a woman of Nordic type, around 50 years old' (see the *Schreinerske samlinger* database). In a find from Rønnevik in Nordland,<sup>31</sup> an 'adult' woman was buried with a set of jewellery consisting of a conical brooch, 24 beads, and two bone dress pins. In a find from Storfosen in Sør-Trøndelag, too,<sup>32</sup> the individual interred was identified as a woman aged c. 40–50. The grave contained a conical brooch, two dress pins, and 82 beads. In grave 3 on Ytre Kvarøy in Nordland,<sup>33</sup> fragments of the skull of a child were found, and this grave might consequently be identified as a child's grave. It contained a conical brooch with geometrical decoration and about 32 beads. It would appear, therefore, that in the case of Norway in the first phase of the Merovingian Period the issue of age at death had no influence on the number of brooches buried with the dead person.

We must also take into account the fact that the boundaries between the different age bands in osteological studies are artificial, and that no account is taken of, for instance, possible sub-groupings *within* any one age category: for instance whether or not individuals were in their early 20s or around 30, etc. In the Scandinavian studies referred to here, there is very often no information about what end of a range the adult women belonged to: around 20, or closer

to 40. It is difficult, therefore, to compare the situation in Scandinavia with Halsall's results concerning Continental evidence. Another consideration is that the Frankish graves pertain to a Christian population, in contrast to that of Scandinavia.

Even though the practices revealed, and the traditions involved with the use of jewellery in Lorraine, cannot simply be carried over into Scandinavia at the same date, there are aspects of congruency in the form of the high investment in the grave goods of adult women in both regions. The situation also changed in central Austrasia around the turn of the 6th century to the 7th. There was a general reduction in the level of furnishing of graves. Women were less frequently provided with jewellery than they had been, while the range of dress-accessories also changed in character, appearing simpler and more standardized (albeit with individual exceptions). From this watershed onwards age categories and to some extent also gender categories gradually dissipated. The change must probably be viewed in connection with the appearance of a more stable and firmly grounded aristocracy, in which the position of the kin-group no longer needed to be reinforced and demonstrated through investment in the funerary practice. The change may also be due to younger women no longer playing the same key role in political marriage alliances (Halsall 1996:11–12, 24) because ecclesiastical and royal power were firmly consolidated. It is possible that there were similar reasons for the use of conical brooches not being governed by age banding (cf. above), since these are dated to after the time by which the changes in burial practice took place in the Frankish territory of central Austrasia. Comparable processes, with a reduction of grave goods and the introduction of jewellery of simpler form, took place, as has been noted, in Norway at the transition to the Merovingian Period as well (cf. Ch. 4.3.2).

In any event, the results from Halsall's and similar investigations provide an indication that less elaborately furnished 'jewellery graves' do not necessarily represent a lower social class. It is important to keep this point in mind when addressing the Scandinavian jewellery finds. This has, for instance, been a core premiss of discussion concerning exogamy or marriage-alliance interpretations, as noted above (Ch. 6.3.1). It has conventionally been assumed that marriage alliances took place almost exclusively within the very highest level of society in the period under review, because

30 Ts4465: Våje, Tjeldøya, Nordland.

31 Ts3978.

32 T15808.

33 Ts6372.

that is what is described in contemporary historical records. Some of the graves of the Migration Period that contain, for instance, valuable relief brooches can indeed be assigned unproblematically to such a social level (Koch 1999:178; Magnus 1999b:167; 2004b:280). This applies, inter alia, to the graves from Kvåle and possibly Krosshaug, already discussed, and from Hol on Inderøy, Nord-Trøndelag (Solberg 2000:161). Nevertheless, far from *all* such finds with ‘foreign’ items of jewellery look especially ‘rich’ (Arrhenius 1995a:88; Koch 1999:183; Magnus 2004b:280). Such is the situation with, for example, the ‘Scandinavian’ woman’s grave from Altenerding in Bavaria that has been discussed (Magnus 2004b:280) and comparable ‘cross-border’ finds of the Merovingian Period.

It is also relevant to note that even in those cases in which the quantity of brooches worn is correlated with the age of the deceased, the overall impression given by the distribution patterns of the dress-accessories across all areas is based upon adults. There are far fewer children’s graves than adults’ in the basic data available. This means that it is primarily the use of jewellery by adult women that is investigated and compared here. In those cases where there are exceptions, as in the Kvåle grave, where a child’s skeleton has been preserved (Ch. 6.3), the details of the find indicate that children may also be buried with ethnic markers.

#### 6.6 THE TRANSITION TO THE MEROVINGIAN PERIOD: A BREACH OR CONTINUITY IN DRESS-TRADITION?

Hines (1993a:95) has argued that the end of the use of clasps and other types of dress-accessory of the Migration Period at the transition to the Merovingian Period indicates that it was a particular type of *female costume* that went out of use, and that this was the result of a comprehensive break with the past and with what the female costume previously symbolized. I agree with Hines’s proposition to a considerable extent. The emergence of fewer, clearly bounded and more extensive regions, and the greater distancing in the use of particular brooch-types within the individual regions, can be interpreted as a new feature of the way in which costume manifestation functioned. Nevertheless, I believe that the geographical distribution patterns revealed (cf. Chs. 4 and 5.1) can also be accepted as evidence that the transition between the Migration Period and the Merovingian Period was characterized by some degree of continuity. It was, as demonstrated, to some extent the same areas that were marked out by the use of particular jewellery types in these two periods (e.g. the Mälars region; Denmark–Skåne in

southern Scandinavia; and Gotland), and typical of the distribution patterns in both the Migration Period and the early Merovingian Period is a degree of overlap between the regions, together with the distribution of certain common types across these borders.

It is possible also to emphasize the breaks that took place in the course of the Migration Period, with the disappearance of spiral clasps at the transition to phase D2a, and the point at which cruciform brooches went out of use at the transition to phase D2b. Both of these can be regarded as conspicuous breaks in the costume tradition (see also Hines 1993b:120). We do not know, however, whether these changes were experienced in that way, as ‘conspicuous breaks’, by any contemporary individual, because the transitions could have taken place over a period of a number of years, or even have been drawn out over several generations. Moreover the obsolescence of a type does not necessarily represent the disappearance of a cultural grouping or identity – it is possible, indeed, that this marking was no longer required because the presence of the group was fully embedded within habitus. This could have rendered material manifestation superfluous. Such a fully embedded grouping could have helped to change the context of ethnic negotiation and redirected the focus to forms of marking that were more contested, or of greater strategic significance at the time.

Another point is that even though the Migration-period types of dress-accessory were abandoned, and the garments themselves may have changed their cut (cf. Ch. 2.2), women’s dress nevertheless retained its function as a cultural semiotic field. Hines may still be right that this change represents a deliberate breach with elderly and out-dated symbolism. I return to this matter in Chapter 7.1, questioning the specific historical context to which these costume manifestations belonged.

#### 6.7 GENDER AND ARTICULATIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY IN THE MIGRATION AND MEROVINGIAN PERIODS

So far, discussion has been concerned primarily with jewellery associated with female graves. I have already observed (Chs. 1.3.1 and 2.2.3) how ethnic and cultural manifestation in the Migration and Merovingian Periods appears to be imbricated with articulations of gender. In simpler terms, one might say that while women were buried with items of jewellery, men were buried with weaponry. The reality is more diversely faceted, of course: some women were buried without jewellery, and by no means all men’s graves contain weaponry. There are also some dress-accessories found

in men's graves. Nonetheless the impression on the whole is that there was a clear tendency for a gender-based dichotomy, according to which jewellery was used to express or to underpin a social role linked to women (Hjørungdal 1991:71–2; Kristoffersen 2000:102; cf. Ch. 2.2.3). The weapon-burial rite can in itself be viewed in connection with the emergence of warrior bands and a military aristocracy (cf. Ch. 7.1.1) and as expressing the fact that *the warrior* was a key social role at the time, making it important to present and to reproduce the role in funerary practice (cf. Hakenbeck 2006:160; Halsall 1998:154–6; Hanisch 2003:29–30; Hedeager 1990:136–7; Kristoffersen 2000:143, 183; Steuer 1987:190). To a far greater extent than is the case with jewellery, the weaponry of this period shared trans-regional common characteristics (Bemman and Hahne 1994:353; Effros 2004:171; Hakenbeck 2006:160, 227; Jørgensen 1999:13, 164; Kristoffersen 2000:171, 188; Nielsen 1991:130; Siegmund 1998:188–9; Steuer 1987; Ystgaard 2014:130–2).<sup>34</sup>

Although the items of jewellery are found overwhelmingly in women's graves, there are, as noted, some exceptions. This is the case first and foremost with belt-fittings that were part of the baldric or weapon-harness. These can be carefully made and richly decorated, as is exemplified by the famous Åker find (Åker, Vang, Hedmark), where the weapon-belt was ornamented with gilt Style II-decorated mounds, strap-distributors and belt buckle (Røstad 2020). Like the weaponry itself, the belt-fittings are usually of similar design over large areas (Bemman and Hahne 1994:497; Hakenbeck 2006:227). The belt set from Åker, for instance, has some close parallels in Germany (Gjessing 1934:26–7). With reference to Bavarian finds, Hakenbeck (2006:227) has argued that the trans-regional distribution patterns may be taken as evidence that such male 'jewellery' (i.e. mounts from weapon-harness) and weaponry mark the identity of a warrior retinue or band, rather than a local or regionally based identity. This concurs with interpretations of the homogeneous armament of this period (Effros 2004:171; Hedeager 1992a:294–5; Steuer 1987).

As well as the belt-fittings, ornamented dress-accessories such as beads, brooches, clasps and pendants also

occasionally occur in weapon graves: in other words in association with artefact-types that are conventionally understood as 'male' and associated with a masculine social role. Of the selected types of dress-accessory that have been studied above, this involves clasps and cruciform brooches.<sup>35</sup> These, however, account for relatively few finds in comparison with the whole corpus of jewellery finds. One problem in this regard is that it is inevitably impossible to exclude the possibility that jewellery which has been found in combination with neither diagnostically female nor male artefacts is in fact from male graves. It would be extremely difficult to identify any such finds, although some osteological analyses suggest this to have been the case, for instance in the Mälars region (see, e.g., Bennett 1987:102, fig. 73a; Waller 1986; 1996:126). Systematic osteological studies of the human skeletal remains from the graves that are included in this study have largely been carried out on finds from eastern Sweden (Bennett 1987:111; Gejvall and Persson 1970; Iregren 1972a; 1972b; 1983; Persson 1972; Petré 1984:88–113; Waller 1986:157, amongst other things in connection with the project *Mälardalen i folkvandringstid* [The Mälars Valley in the Migration Period]). Since the whole of the data sample has not been subjected to such thorough scientific investigation, it would risk creating a false picture of the real situation if only the results from the studies in that area were incorporated into this study here.<sup>36</sup> The sexing of this evidence has often, in fact, been extremely problematic, as what was being dealt with were highly fragmented skeletal remains from cremation burials (Bennett 1987:102).

Another point is that, even though an osteological study may indicate whether the individual buried was a man or a woman, examination of the skeletal remains really only tell us about the person's *biological sex*, which cannot automatically be equated to *social sex* or *gender* (cf. Ch. 2.2.3; Kristoffersen 2000:102; Solli:2002:94, 96–104; Sørensen 1991:121–2; 2004:42–52). Finds of jewellery combined with weaponry, by contrast, express an aspect of a *social role* and thus make it possible to explore the function of this jewellery in its particular context in more detail. In this respect, we are dealing more concretely with what type or types of identity are manifested through dress-accessories

34 There are still some exceptions, such as the 'Kvamme Group', which according to Bemman and Hahne (1994:320, 322) represents a distinct weapon-group of western Norway in the first phase of the Migration Period. An investigation into whether or not armament can represent ethnic and/or regional manifestation lies, however, outside the scope of this study.

35 In a grave-assemblage from Sörfors, Attmar, Medelpad (SHM12220), a relief brooch of the *Bothnian Group* was found together with cremated bone and a two-edged sword. It is uncertain whether or not this is a mixed grave find. The find is consequently not counted in here.

36 Accordingly, I shall also not make use of gender-indicative artefacts in this area, such as handled combs and/or comb cases and buckles which are presumed to be 'male' artefact-types (Bennett 1987:110).

in weapon burials in this period. In what follows this will, in consequence, be a matter of a selected social role as ‘warrior’ when items of jewellery in ‘male graves’ are discussed. The warrior role has traditionally been understood as a male role, but there are certain exceptions, including the warrior women or ‘Amazons’ of the Migration Period (Geary 2006:26–34; Pohl 2004; cf. Ch. 8.2). It is therefore not entirely impossible that some weapon graves which have not been sexed osteologically represent female warriors.<sup>37</sup>

I shall make use of a slightly broad definition of the weapon grave, in that, in addition to finds which contain swords – including ‘weapon knives’ (seaxes), sword pommels and scabbard chapes – spears and/or shields, I shall also include burial finds consisting of no more than arrowheads or an axe. Arrows might represent hunting equipment, which makes their classification as ‘weaponry’ a little uncertain. There are, however, only two finds in which only arrows occurred. Axes are recorded in male graves of the Iron Age but it is debatable whether these represent tools or weapons, or both. Bone arrows do in fact occur in graves that are usually identified as female (Hjørungdal 1991:71–2). Thus, there are elements of uncertainty regarding the axe and arrowhead graves.

Of a total of 616 Scandinavian finds of clasps, 46 are from weapon graves.<sup>38</sup> This total is made of 21 finds in Sweden, 22 in Norway and three in Denmark.<sup>39</sup> The geographical distribution of these grave finds is congruent with the general distribution of clasps (cf. Ch. 4.2.3). When the various types of clasp that occur in the weapon graves are examined in more detail, it transpires that, in every case but one, these are button clasps. The exception is one find of Class B clasps of the ‘bar type’ (type B2/B individualistic form) (cf. Ch. 4.2.3) which are part of an assemblage that also includes button clasps. 17 finds are of the type with plain buttons (type B1i), five of clasp buttons with ring designs (types B1iii/B1ii c), three of buttons with Style I decoration in relief (type B1v), and there is one find each of the types with faceted decoration (types B1ii b/e), the Norrala Type/three-armed punch decoration (type B1iv b) and the type with a dot-in-ring punchmark (type B1iv c). Seven finds contained unclassifiable button clasps. There are

also ten combinations of different clasp-types in the same context in 11 weapon graves: combinations of two types in eight of these graves, of three different button types in two of the graves, and of four different types in one of the graves. The use of more than two types of clasps or clasp button may represent a phenomenon that is correlated with weapon graves.<sup>40</sup>

Thus the most common types of clasp found in weapon graves are simple, undecorated clasps, clasps with ring designs, and clasps with Style I decoration. The plain button clasps (B1i) and the type with ring designs (B1iii/B1ii c) are, as shown (Ch. 4.2.3.5), common, super-regional, types in Scandinavia. The flat relief-decorated buttons in Style I (B1v) mostly cluster, as has been noted, in south-western Norway and Vestlandet as well as the Mälars region in Sweden, but are also found fairly evenly distributed around the main Scandinavian peninsula, and thus can be considered a super-regional type covering this entire area. The type with punched ornament in the form of a dot-in-ring and circles (B1iv c) should, as noted (Ch. 4.2.3.5), also properly be regarded as a super-regional type since the relatively few specimens that constitute this type have a wide, pan-Nordic range, albeit with a certain tendency towards a cluster in Medelpad. Altogether 28 finds, more than half of the weapon graves, contain clasps of these four types that have a super-regional range, while only ten weapon graves contain clasp-types with regionally more limited distributions pertaining to specific areas of Scandinavia.<sup>41</sup> That clasps associated with the dress of the warrior are dominated by types that are shared over wide areas agrees well with the fact that the weapon-belts and accoutrements that the warriors had with them in the grave are also super-regional (cf. above). It is thus, first and foremost, the ten finds that do not conform to this pattern – the finds with regional clasp-types – that are of interest. I shall therefore consider them in detail.

Five of the weapon graves with regional clasp-types are from sites located within the core area of distribution of those types, as outlined in Chapter 4.2.3.5: the type with faceted decoration (B1ii b/e) from Lunde, Farsund *kommune*, Vest-Agder and Snartemo, Vest-Agder; the Norrala Type (B1iv b)

37 My thanks to Lene Melheim for drawing my attention to this!

38 I am not considering clasps from mixed finds, or multiple graves of individuals of different genders in which the grave goods cannot be separated with confidence. I also exclude finds of the Late Roman Iron Age.

39 For more details, see table 38 in Røstad 2021: <http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-86140>, or Røstad 2016:tabell 6.1.

40 For more details, see supplement to table 28–30, Graves with clasps from phase D2a/D2b, in Røstad 2021: <http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-86140>, or Røstad 2016:Tekstvedlegg tabell 4.51–4.53.

41 There are also the seven finds with unclassified button clasps, and one find with both the plain type (B1i) and the form B2 bar type (B individualistic form).

from Borg, Norrala, Hälsingland; clasps with domed relief buttons (B1vi) and spiral ornament (B1ii d) from Salby in Södermanland, and with domed relief buttons from Viken, Lovö, Uppland. These finds belong to some of the geographical areas that are most prominently distinguished by other types of jewellery in the Migration Period (cf. Chs. 4.2.1–2, 5.1–3 and 7.1.1) and where clasps are generally widely found (cf. Ch. 4.2.3.2): the south-west of Norway; the Mälars region in eastern Sweden; and partly also the north-east of Sweden, even though that area is rather less conspicuously marked in terms of specific variants of items of jewellery amongst the range of types discussed here (cf. Ch. 4.2.1–2) compared with the two others. The area does, however, have some other local jewellery-types or variants: for instance equal-armed brooches (cf. Ch. 7.1.1).

The other five finds involving regionally distinctive clasp-types disrupt the typical distribution patterns as shown in Chapter 4.2.3.5 to a greater or lesser degree. To begin with there is a weapon grave from Skåra/Skreia in Vestfold<sup>42</sup> with clasps of the type with faceted decoration (B1ii b/e) which is considered to be a typically south-western or western Norwegian type, focused on Hordaland and Vest-Agder (cf. Ch. 4.2.3.5). This find thus lies rather on the margins of the main area of distribution. Two male graves with weaponry from Skyttberg/Prästbolet and Högom (barrow 2) in Medelpad<sup>43</sup> contained a regional clasp-type that is found predominantly in the Mälars region: the type with spiral ornament (B1ii d). The Högom find also includes clasps with domed relief buttons (B1vi) which are a distinctly south-eastern and eastern Scandinavian (East Nordic) type, focused in the Mälars region and on Gotland. This too can be counted a breach of the normal distribution pattern. A find from Salands on Gotland<sup>44</sup> contained clasps of type R268 (B1ii a/B1iv a) which is a type of south-western and western Norway and western Denmark. This clasp is dated on the evidence of its Nydam Style to phase D1, while two other objects in the grave-assembly, a crossbow brooch and a belt buckle, can be assigned to Nerman's (1935) period VI:2 (Hines 1993a:16): in other words a little later in the Migration Period and within what is treated here as phase D2a or D2b. Finally there is an interesting find from Rasagården

in Västergötland in which clasps of the types with faceted decoration (B1ii b/e) and domed buttons (B1vi) were deposited in a weapon grave. This find spot is located both outside of and between the core distribution areas of each of these clasp-types. Altogether, then, there is a recurrent pattern involving 50% of the regional types of clasps from weapon graves being found outside of the principal areas in which those types are concentrated.

Turning to the find contexts of the clasps in weapon graves, there are 16 finds that only have weaponry along with the clasps, apart from pottery and other organic containers, tools such as fire-making equipment and whetstones, or other simple items such as combs, belt buckles and the like. 12 of these finds have only one type of clasp. In 19 finds, one of which is uncertain, there are belt-fittings. In 15 graves there are objects or fragments of gold: most common are gold finger rings, while there are also gold bracteates and other types of gold pendants. One find contained a gold coin medallion.<sup>45</sup> Copper-alloy or silver bow brooches (including crossbow brooches) are known from six or possibly seven finds. Cruciform brooches are known from two finds. Glass drinking vessels or sherds from such vessels have been found in 13 finds,<sup>46</sup> while bronze vessels or cauldrons occur in seven. In general, we can infer that the quantity of both gold and imported objects in weapon graves which also have clasps is relatively high in relation to the total number of graves.

Six of the ten finds involving regionally specific clasp-types contained items of gold, while a seventh context had remains of a glass vessel. In light of the criteria for the marking of status (Hedeager 1990:103–12; 1992b:92; Myhre 1987a:169–70; 1992s:165; Ringstad 1992:118; Storli 2006:90, 94), this implies that a relatively high proportion of the weapon graves with geographically distinctive clasp-types can be counted as high-status burials. There are also two of the most richly furnished graves of the Scandinavian Migration Period overall in this group: the weapon graves from Snartemo, grave II, in Vest-Agder and at Högom (barrow 2) in Medelpad. There are two other graves in this group which also stand out as exceptionally rich high-status burials, with imported glass and bronze cauldrons or bowls as well as gold:

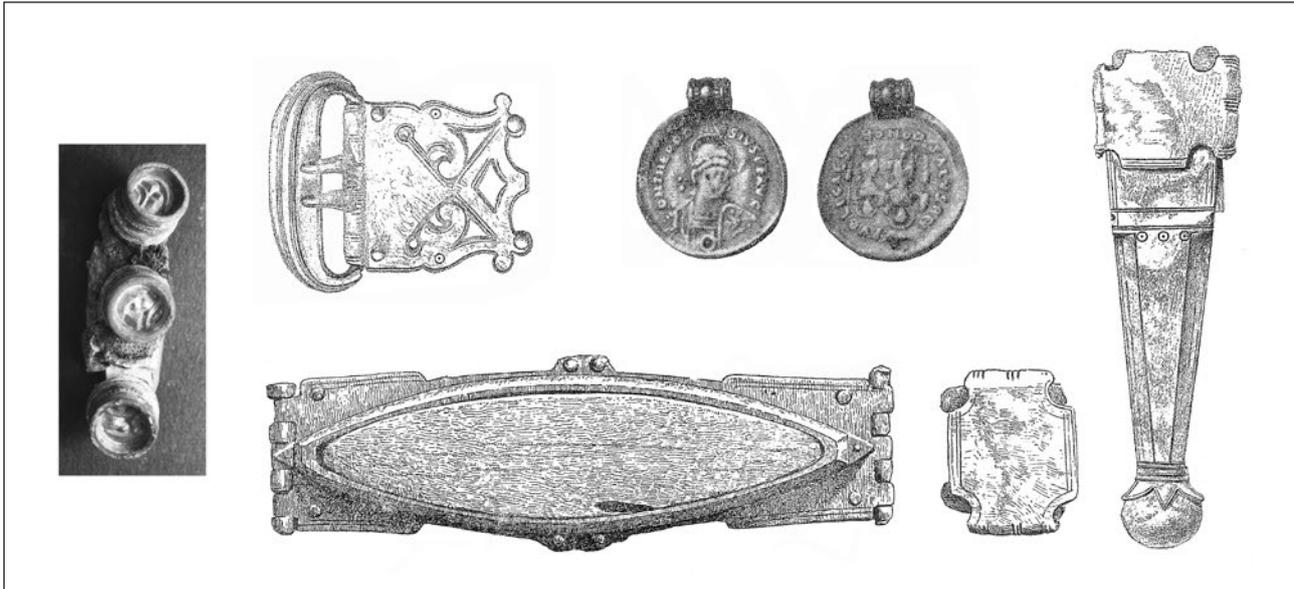
42 C18892–904.

43 SHM25518/II and Sundsvall museum: Högom grave 2.

44 SHM25386.

45 The Högom find had two gold finger rings, two triangular gold pendants, and a round gold plate.

46 B3731: Øvsthus, Hordaland, is a double grave, but the position of the glass vessel adjacent to two spearheads and a whetstone (Schetelig 1912:154–9) may indicate that it was part of the man's grave goods.



**Figure 6.6** Clasps, belt-mounts, buckle and gold solidus from Evebø (B4590), after Schetelig (1912:figs. 258 and 259) © University Museum of Bergen. Clasps photograph: © University Museum of Bergen.

the weapon graves from Lunde on Lista, Vest-Agder,<sup>47</sup> and Skåra in Tjølling, Vestfold.<sup>48</sup> According to the accession register, the latter had been subject to intrusion and disturbance in antiquity and may therefore have contained even more grave goods. By contrast, undecorated button clasps (type B1i) are found in nine contexts with only weaponry, pottery or other organic containers, and simple equipment such as combs or fire-making apparatus,<sup>49</sup> while five further finds also include belt-fittings (three) or small bow brooches (two). These account for 14 of the total of 17 graves that have only plain button clasps. The weapon graves with this type of clasp can thus be seen to be relatively modestly furnished burials. Only six of these graves have a sword as part of the armament, which may be significant in light of the fact that swords occur in 26 of the total of 46 weapon graves with clasps.<sup>50</sup> Swords were also found in all ten of the finds with regionally specific clasp-types.<sup>51</sup>

Regarding the finds that include the super-regional common types with ring designs (types B1iii/B1ii c), a dot-in-ring punchmark (type B1iv c) and Style I ornament (type B1v), the contexts are somewhat more diverse. This applies both to finds of these types

on their own, and to finds in combination either with one another or with undecorated button clasps (type B1i).<sup>52</sup> Four of the five grave finds with Style I button clasps (B1v) also include one or more objects of gold. Three of the graves also include imported glass and/or bronze vessels besides the items of gold. Amongst these graves is the very richly furnished male grave from Evebø in Gloppen.<sup>53</sup> In addition to a garment with gilt button clasps on the sleeve, the man interred at Evebø was also furnished with a belt with belt-fittings, a decorated buckle and a mounted belt-stone, a looped gold solidus and a balance (Fig. 6.6). Silver and gold coins used as pendants are commonly interpreted as status symbols expressing an elite identity in contemporary Continental grave finds, such as, for instance, the graves under St-Denis in Paris, and in Cologne Cathedral (Bursche 2001:95–8; Effros 2003:147). Balances are linked to a juridical function associated with a leadership role (Kristoffersen 2000:145; Solberg 2000:106) and can thus also be interpreted as markers of status. All five graves with this type of clasp included swords in the armament.

Two of the five graves containing clasps of the type with a ring design (B1iii/B1ii c) contained items or

47 B3203.

48 C18892–904.

49 I am here referring to weapon graves with undecorated button clasps as the sole clasp-type.

50 Including one find with a seax.

51 In one of these finds, the grave from Salands, Linde, Gotland (SHM25386) there is no more than a U-shaped scabbard chape and a few iron fragments, but these indicate either that there had been a sword in the grave or that the scabbard-elements represented a sword in a *pars pro toto* manner.

52 In what follows, I have excluded finds of these types combined with regionally specific types.

53 B4590: Evebø, Gloppen, Sogn og Fjordane.

fragments of gold. One of these graves and another burial at Skottssund, Njurunda, Medelpad,<sup>54</sup> also included fragments of glass vessels. The find from Skottssund may have been robbed (Baudou and Selinge 1977:248–61; Straume 1987:114). Also found in this grave were 33 complete or fragmentary decorated belt-mounts of gilt silver. As with gold, baldrics with mounts and ornamentation are regarded as symbols of power and rank (Bemmann and Hahne 1994:495). Two of the five graves with clasps with ring designs (B1iii/B1ii c) had a sword or a seax amongst the weaponry, including the Skottssund grave referred to. In the case of the solitary grave with clasps of the punched dot-in-ring type (B1iv c), a grave from Veiem in Grong, Nord-Trøndelag,<sup>55</sup> its other grave goods included belt-mounts, a rich collection of weaponry including a sword, two spears, an axe, arrows, a bow and a shield, a number of containers of wood and other organic material, but not gold or imported items such as glass or bronze vessels.

The principal period in which button clasps occur consists of, as already noted, phases D2a and D2b. Hines (1993a:76–81), who also includes clasps of the Roman Iron Age in his study, has pointed out an interesting difference between spiral- and ring-shaped Class A clasps and Class B button clasps in burial contexts: Class A clasps are found almost exclusively in women's graves, while in the Roman Iron Age and early in the Migration Period Class B clasps occur overwhelmingly in male graves. In the main period of distribution of the button clasps, by contrast – in phases D2a and D2b – these types of clasp are found predominantly in women's graves (I shall be returning to the exceptions below). There is also a striking tendency for the clasps in the women's graves to be used regularly on the sleeve at the wrists, while their use in men's graves is more varied: they are, for instance, also used on the trouser legs at the knee or the ankle (Fig. 6.7), as belt-fasteners, and at the neck opening of a shirt or jacket (Hines 1993a:76–81).<sup>56</sup> This sort of difference in use can be illustrated by the grave, referred to earlier, from Högom (Ramqvist 1995:151) and the weapon graves from Borg in Norrala, Hälsingland (Bennett 1987:109),<sup>57</sup> Skottssund, Njurunda, Medelpad (Baudou and Selinge 1977:258–61), and Vestly, Time, Rogaland (Kristoffersen 2000:307–8; Møllerup 1961:6).<sup>58</sup> If we conjoin these observations with what has been

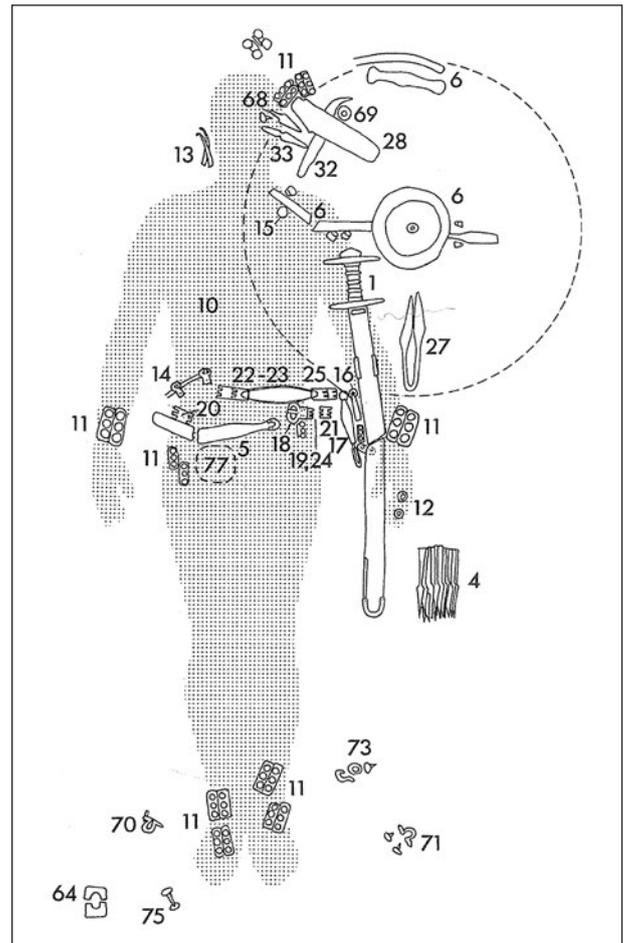


Figure 6.7 Clasps at the ankle in the man's grave in Högom mound 2, after Ramqvist (1992:pl. 11).

argued above about how female costume functions as a semiotic field in relation to identity (see Ch. 6.2–6.3), these trends in gender-association may show that it was only when the clasps came to be integrated as a component of a *standardized* costume that they also became gender-specific: Class A clasps, as shown, become an embedded element of female dress in phase D1 while button clasps (form B1) do not take over the function of a standardized costume element in female dress until the beginning of phase D2a.

There is thus a tendency for individual items of jewellery which obtain a function as markers of cultural or ethnic identity to also become gender-specific. Meanwhile there is another aspect in the use of these items of jewellery in warrior graves. Even though this is unusual (according to Hines 1993a: 76–81), some men were also wearing clasps at a date when

54 SHM25337/6.

55 T19624.

56 All types of clasp in England are found only in female graves, where they were used on the sleeve at the wrists (Hines 1993a:81).

57 SHM26520/6.

58 S8635.

these had become an integral feature of the female dress. About half of the weapon graves with clasps can be dated to the period of phase D1/D2a–D2b.<sup>59</sup> It is particularly interesting that some of the richest Scandinavian graves of the Migration Period belong to this group (see Ramqvist 1995:154 for similar observations). This applies, to begin with, to the find from Enebø in Gloppen, Sogn og Fjordane, which is dated to the transition of phase D1/D2a or early in D2a (Kristoffersen 2000:373; Straume 1987:80). It applies also in the cases of Högom barrow 2 and Snartemo grave II, which are dated to phase D2a and phase D2b respectively (Kristoffersen 2000:276; Straume 1987:110). More of the richly furnished weapon graves discussed above with, amongst other things, imported and gold objects, are dated to this period: the graves from Lunde, Vanse, Vest-Agder (Hines 1993a:19), Vestly, Time and Vatshus, Klepp, Rogaland (Kristoffersen 2000:308, 322), Øvsthus, Kvinherad, Hordaland (Straume 1987:106),<sup>60</sup> Skåra/Skreia, Tjølling, Vestfold (Hines 1993a:16; Hougen 1924:46), and Viken on Lovö, Uppland (Hines 1993a:21). There is also a fairly rich weapon grave with unclassifiable button clasps from Kvasheim in Rogaland that is datable to phase D2a (Kristoffersen 2000:297; Straume 1987:89–90), and probably also a rich weapon grave with plain button clasps from Barshaldershed on Gotland.<sup>61</sup>

What the context may reveal, then, is that when clasps occur in weapon graves, they are frequently associated with richly furnished graves and a high social class. This is particularly the case with those finds that incorporate clasps of distinctly regionally associated types. It was, moreover, not the clasps alone that were used to decorate the costume in these rich grave finds: there are other items of jewellery such as gold finger rings, gold medallions and belt-sets worn by the warriors (see also Solberg 2000:168–9). The picture is nuanced a little, however, in that the majority of the finds with simple plain button clasps as the only clasp-type present are *not* especially well furnished in respect of high-status artefacts such as imported items and/or gold. The use of clasps of this type by men thus does not appear to have been linked to an exceptionally high social group (see also Bennett 1987:110). This is

also the case, as noted, with a number of finds involving the super-regional common types of clasp with ring designs (B1iii/B1ii c) and dot-in-ring punchmarks (B1iv c). The preference for undecorated clasps (B1i) may, as I discuss further below, be associable with the manifestation of a super-regional identity. This can, once more, possibly be regarded as the expression of a need for a more ‘open’ or dynamic identity in the context of the warrior role, an issue which is discussed further in a later chapter (Ch. 8.3).

Several of these graves, as we have seen, contain more than one type of clasp, such as grave 3 at Viken on Lovö in Uppland, which had clasps not only of the plain type (B1i) and ring designs (B1iii/B1ii c) but also domed buttons (B1vi). Bennett (1987:109–10) explained this through the use of multiple types representing status, and she also maintained that several garments had been laid in the grave. She notes at the same time that the number of garments could also be considered in light of the season of the year in which the burial took place. As I have argued in the case of diverse types and variants of items of jewellery being worn by one woman (Ch. 6.3), the use of different clasp-types may manifest multidimensional identities for the warriors interred. The man from Viken may, through his clasps, have articulated both a common Scandinavian and an eastern Scandinavian identity. The chieftain or petty king from Hogöm, who was wearing both the common Scandinavian clasp-types with a ring design (B1iii/B1ii c) and a dot-in-ring punchmark (B1iv c) together with a clasp with spiral ornament (B1ii d) that is characteristic of the Mälars region, and a type that is common to both the Mälars region and Gotland, the domed button type (B1vi), could have used the clasps not only to present a common Scandinavian identity as a warrior but also concurrently to emphasize his connections with the area to the south and south-east of Medelpad.<sup>62</sup> In this regard, a further significant point is that several of the grave finds with distinct regional clasp-types also have common Scandinavian types. That is the case in six finds out of ten. It thus appears to have been especially important to present super-regional identity (or identities) in the weapon graves. A near exact parallel in the clothing fabric/textiles (tablet-woven

59 In addition there are two finds that can be assigned to phase D1 while the remaining finds cannot be more closely dated other than to the Migration Period in terms of the system used here (cf. Ch. 3.1).

60 B3731.

61 SHM19535 and SHM32260A. The grave contained an iron shield boss which is of Nerman's (1935) period VI:2 (Rundqvist 2003:124).

62 Interestingly, the weapon grave from Skottsund, Njurunda, Medelpad of phase D1 also displays contacts with the Mälars region/Uppland and Gotland through some of the grave goods (the sword and the belt-fittings). However, this find also shows contacts with the west of Norway through the pottery (Straume 1987:115).

braids) between the graves of Högom and Enebø may also show that the material and the cut of the dress were a common denominator for the uppermost rank of the warrior aristocracy (Nockert 1991; Ramqvist 1995:154).

Turning to *cruciform brooches*, only 13 finds, involving 15 out of the total of 931 brooches, are cases that can be claimed with reasonable certainty to have been male graves: i.e. they are found associated with weaponry and there is no indication that the context is a mixed male and female burial (cf. above). All of these finds are from Norway.<sup>63</sup> One of these 13 finds is dated to the transition of phase C3/D1,<sup>64</sup> six are of phase D1,<sup>65</sup> three of phase D2a,<sup>66</sup> while the remaining three cannot be dated any more closely within the range of C3/D1–D2a of the Migration Period. Six finds in weapon graves involving seven cruciform brooches in total can be assigned to specific sub-types: Type Skogøya (twice), Types Røssøy and Groß Siemss (one each from the same find), and Type Lunde (three times). Four finds involve individualistic forms and the remainder are unclassifiable.

It is noteworthy that three of the finds involve northern Norwegian types, a detail that at first glance might suggest that there was a distinct costume practice for men in that region. Both the find involving a brooch of Type Røssøy (together with Type Groß Siemss) and one of the finds involving a brooch of Type Skogøya, however, are from Hordaland and thus not from the core area of distribution of these brooches in Nordland and Troms. The specimen of Type Groß Siemss was also found far from the principal area of distribution of this type in Denmark and northern Germany. The other four finds with regional types, conversely, are from sites within the core areas of distribution of these types: Type Lunde from three sites in Vest-Agder and Type Skogøya from Skogøya in Nordland. The male-associated finds of cruciform brooches otherwise have a wide range of distribution within Norway. Male wearing of cruciform brooches consequently cannot be seen as an expression of a

regionally based dress-style. That the finds are exclusively from Norway could possibly be interpreted as a super-regional, 'Norwegian' fashion, but this seems an over-interpretation since the brooch-type as a whole is found most frequently in Norway (cf. Ch. 4.2.1). A similar tendency to that which was suggested in connection with the clasp finds, above, can be sketched for the cruciform brooches. A relatively high proportion of distinct regional types of dress-accessory that occur in male graves tend to be types that are outside of those types' core areas. The sample of cruciform brooches in weapon graves is so small, however, that this can only be suggested as a tentative pattern.

Of the 13 finds in which there are cruciform brooches, eight had no other items of jewellery, but two finds had glass beads, two included clasps, two a bow brooch, and two belt-fittings. Four finds had items of gold: in three cases these were gold finger rings, and one was a looped gold imitation-coin medallion.<sup>67</sup> One of the finds with gold is a grave from Veien at Nordrehov in Buskerud,<sup>68</sup> which contained two gold finger rings and a larger ring of gold of the type known as a 'payment' or 'currency ring'.<sup>69</sup> Only one of the weapon graves with cruciform brooches included imported objects in the form of glass drinking vessels and bronze cauldrons: the already discussed burial from Skåra/Skreia in Tjølling in Vestfold, which also included clasps. In the Veien burial, which included a leather belt with copper-alloy fittings and a scabbard with a decorated display mount, there were also copper-alloy drinking horn mounts. Two finds also contained balances: the grave from Veien already noted and the burial with the gold medallion from Hove, Vik, Sogn og Fjordane. These balances may, as observed above, be associated with a leadership role and interpreted as status symbols. The gold medallion, which consists of a 'coin', can also be regarded as expressing affiliation to the highest social rank (cf. above). Additionally, eight of these finds included a sword.<sup>70</sup> Otherwise, it is appropriate to note that none of the

63 For more details, see table 39 in Røstad 2021: <http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-86140>, or Røstad 2016:tabell 6.2.

64 C335: Veien, Nordrehov, Buskerud (type: individualistic form).

65 B2258–68: Gjervik, Hamre, Hordaland (Types Røssøy and Groß Siemss); B3353: Viblemo, Audedal, Vest-Agder (Type Lunde); C15286: Åmot, Kvinesdal, Vest-Agder (Type Lunde); C2646–80: Holmegård, Mandal *kommune*, Vest-Agder (Type Lunde); C5153: Veien, Nordrehov, Buskerud (individualistic form, similar to Type Eine); and B4842: Bø, Stryn, Sogn og Fjordane (individualistic form with spatulate footplate).

66 B3175: Lygra, Lindås, Hordaland (Type Skogøya); Ts2685–92/2790: Skogøya, Salten/Steigen, Nordland (Type Skogøya); and C18892–904: Skåra/Skreia, Tjølling, Vestfold (unclassifiable).

67 B560: Hove, Vik, Sogn og Fjordane.

68 C325–39 and C343–8.

69 The payment/currency ring, however, might have been a secondary deposit in the barrow (Gustafson 2016).

70 In a grave from Holmegård, Mandal *kommune*, Vest-Agder (C2646–80) there were two cruciform brooches. This grave contained a double set of weaponry, however, with two swords and two shield bosses. This was probably, then, two weapon graves, but it is uncertain

graves with *regional* brooch-types included 'status markers' such as gold and/or imported items.

Compared with the social context of the regional and Style I decorated button clasps, it would not appear that weapon graves with cruciform brooches are similarly associable with an exceptionally high social class. The finds including cruciform brooches appear to cover a wider social range. This is congruent, too, with the social context of cruciform brooches that is found in women's graves (cf. Chs. 4.2.1 and 6.2).

As conical brooches are the only form of jewellery of the Merovingian Period included in the core evidence here, it is more problematic to discern anything detailed concerning the relationship between warriors, jewellery and articulations of identity in this period. There are also no weapon graves that definitely included conical brooches. The tendency for warriors who were articulating cultural or ethnic identity through using items of adornment and costume to belong to a markedly elevated social rank can nevertheless be matched in the Merovingian Period. This emerges through the finds from, for instance, Åker, Vendel, Valsgärde, Kobbeå on Bornholm, and Kylver on Gotland in which the 'warriors' are furnished with weapon belts with, inter alia, gilt Style II decorated fittings and buckles of extremely high quality. In several of these graves the deceased was also furnished with a helmet and/or ring-sword. Like the belt buckles, the helmets are decorated, and interpreted by some as 'crowns', or markers of an exceptionally high social status (Almgren 1983; Härke 1992:159; Steuer 1987:196, 202). It has been argued that these graves represent members of the retinue or warrior band, and/or local chieftains or petty kings who were buried around the periphery of the central zone where the supreme 'warlord'/king was located (Ambrosiani 1983; Hedeager 1992a:294; Myhre 1992a:170; Steuer 1987:203, 225).

In these ways, three main trends appear in the function of items of jewellery in relation to the social role of the warrior in the Migration and Merovingian Periods. To begin with, there seems to have been a need to manifest affiliation through the use of items of jewellery in cases in which the deceased was from some area external to the core zone of the regional grouping. Secondly, cultural or ethnic regional manifestation often makes itself evident through the use of regional clasp-types when the deceased is of a particularly high social class. The third trend is that in a broader social stratum within the warrior-class it is primarily a super-regional affiliation that is expressed through the use of a common Scandinavian clasp-type, the

undecorated button clasps (type B1i) and possibly also types B1ii c/b1iii and B1iv c. The general preference for super-regional clasp-types may mean that the role of warrior was acted out first and foremost at a super-regional cultural or ethnic level with reference to potential membership of a social warrior group or warrior band. This is to a certain extent reflected, as I have noted earlier, by the use of homogeneous armament over Scandinavia as a whole, and in other 'Germanic' areas (see also Ch. 8).

In the case of the higher social tiers, the use of 'regional' clasp-types on the warrior's costume may indicate that the situation was different. In this context it could have been desirable for the manifestation to resonate with the regional costume signalling components that are found recurrently in women's dress. This could mean that affiliation or association with a regional grouping was an aspect of the warrior's identity in a particular social role amongst the upper social echelons. This ought perhaps to be looked at in connection with the fact that mobility was greatest amongst the uppermost social ranks (Odner 1973:116), leading to the highest level of cultural contact. If the warriors who were adorned with 'regional' signalling clasps represent local leaders, chieftains, petty kings (and queens?), or similar social roles, the manifestation of regional association may be linked, amongst other things, to specific rights or to access to resources (cf. Barth 1969; Hodder 1979; see Ch. 1.2.2). Alternatively, if not concurrently, individuals who held this social role may have had a function as cultural or ethnic 'markers' for the group – of warriors? – they led. In that case this could be linked to the inferred politicization of ethnicity that took place in the Migration Period (Pohl 1998b; cf. Ch. 7.1.1).

If we compare the use of jewellery by warriors as it can be seen through the weapon graves of this period with those patterns that have been identified here concerning how jewellery appears on the female costume, it would seem that the relationship between gender and ethnicity operated at different levels for warriors on the one hand and women on the other. With women of this period, ethnicity seems to suffuse *several* gender-related social roles, at least in the Migration Period. It has been argued, for instance, that the manifestation that is effected through relief brooches is linked to a role as 'lady of the house' (Kristoffersen 2000). Relief brooches are able, concurrently, to express both regional and local belonging, and super-regional connections (cf. Chs. 6.2–6.4, 7.1.1, 7.1.3). Furthermore, a group of simpler

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if there was originally one brooch with each man or if one man had been buried with two brooches.

relief brooches (the simple bronze group) are, as already noted (Ch. 6.2), associated with ‘women of lesser means’ (Meyer 1935:102) – in other words a social tier which presumably lay below that of the ‘lady of the house’. This is often also the case with cruciform brooches and clasps, which can be found in quite modestly furnished women’s graves. In the previously discussed find from Kvåle in Sogndal (Ch. 6.3), a girl aged about 10 appears to have been buried with cruciform brooches. The dead girl must have had a social role or identity that was different both from that of the lady of the house and from other ‘adult’ female roles. This can be taken as evidence that ethnic or cultural manifestation also operates at a level at which the articulation is linked to the role of child, or at least a not yet fully adult woman (see also above, Ch. 6.5.1).<sup>71</sup>

The articulation of ethnic and cultural identity that is interwoven with the warrior identity appears on the whole – just as the role of warrior itself – to be connected to a super-regional level. In this regard, it may be noted that clasps found in the weapon-booty hoards are also of common Scandinavian varieties, with the exception of one find of a regional type from Ejsbøl mose (Ch. 4.2.3.5).<sup>72</sup> A relevant point in this context is that the clasp is part of a 5th-century ‘substitute deposit’ in which it was the officers’ or warrior leaders’ items that were sacrificed and that several of the objects are of ‘princely’ character (Ørsnes 1984:43; 1988:25–6, 105). Only in the case of the leading ranks of society does it appear that the warriors’ ethnic or cultural regional affiliation is an aspect to which attention is drawn. This is of particular interest because it agrees with what can be inferred from contemporary documentary sources on the Continent, where ethnicity was a phenomenon that was only articulated with royalty or the aristocracy (Geary 1983). Regional sub-types of cruciform brooch from simply furnished weapon graves may, however, represent an exception, since none of these finds, as has been shown, indicates that the ‘wearers’ of the brooches were of the upper social ranks.

The finds of regional types of jewellery made outside of their core areas of distribution, and associated with weaponry, are not numerous, but this is a phenomenon

of interest all the same. Conventionally, similar ‘out of place’ finds in female graves have been interpreted as evidence of exogamy, i.e. women who have been married in to the area from elsewhere (cf. above, Ch. 6.3.1). Should these warrior graves be interpreted in the same way? That cannot, of course, be ruled out, but the find from Gjervik in Hordaland, with two different ‘foreign’ regional types, which represent on the one hand a connection with southern Scandinavia and northern Germany, and with northern Norway on the other, does not support such an interpretation. An alternative explanation, as I have already indicated, is that these weapon graves represent members of a warrior aristocracy, and mark access to resources or perhaps the group’s rights over a specific area.

As has been shown, the situation changes in the Merovingian Period. The ethnic or cultural jewellery markers of this phase, such as the conical brooches, appear to belong to a more homogeneous social level. None of the brooches is from an exceptionally rich grave find. The graves with conical brooches are relatively consistently furnished and appear to represent neither the uppermost nor the lowest level of society, but what might rather be characterized as an intermediate stratum (Ch. 6.5). A related phenomenon, as noted (Ch. 6.5), has been observed on the Continent (Hakenbeck 2006:138–9; Halsall 1996:11–12, 24). According to Mannering (2006:223), pictorial representations of costumes of the Merovingian Period show that the *male costume*, by contrast, was more varied than that of women at this date. This may indicate that *textiles* had to some extent superseded jewellery as social and cultural markers in the context of male clothing in the Merovingian Period.

I have argued in this chapter that, in the course of the Migration Period, dress-accessories acquired an instrumental function in strategies of social, cultural and/or ethnic differentiation (cf. Pohl ed. 1998), and I have sought to demonstrate how the items of jewellery worked as a semiotic field in a complex social discourse. In the next chapter, I go further into the historical context of costume signalling, and investigate the reciprocal influences between jewellery and society.

71 Similar observations have been made in the context of younger girls buried in row-grave cemeteries in Lorraine, France (Halsall 1996:10–11; 1998:154).

72 This hoard included a button clasp of type B1ii in the Nydam Style. Being in relief, it differs, as noted, from the main group, which are punch-decorated (Ch. 4.2.3.5). The only other clasps of this variant in the Nydam Style are from the weapon grave at Salands on Gotland, discussed above.