

ANHANG 3

SUMMARY: THE POWERS OF ANIMALS

Migration Period gold collars and the fundamentals of Germanic art

Chap. I: Introduction

The three Swedish gold collars from Ålleberg, Färjestaden and Möne are among the most exquisite products of first millennium goldsmithing in Europe. Being the only known examples of a category of objects that surpass all others dating from the late Roman and Migration Periods in terms of their material worth and superior craftsmanship, they are very closely related to each other, whilst exhibiting many differences in their details. Their complicated construction, their fine filigree decorations and, above all, their vast array of applied zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures are fascinating and challenge us as scientists to study the objects in greater detail. However, although the gold collars have been at the centre of archaeological research and the study of religious history for more than 150 years, there has been no consensus with regard to the function and meaning of these mysterious objects, nor have they been made accessible to either scientific circles or the public in general by means of a publication that does justice to their complexity.

This work intends to remedy the latter at least. It was compiled at the suggestion of Jan Peder Lamm and Kent Andersson in a collaboration between the Swedish History Museum (SHM) in Stockholm, the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM) in Mainz and the Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA) in Schleswig. The project always had priority at the ZBSA, where it was coordinated and received generous support. The volume contains a photographic documentation created in Mainz, which includes every detail of the three collars from the front and back (Taf. 1-52). The results obtained by the late Mainz goldsmith master and restorer Maiken Fecht, who spent decades intensively studying the construction and technology of the three collars, have been incorporated, as have references and research results gained by Barbara Armbruster in Toulouse (Chap. III). The history of the research and discovery of the objects was examined by the long-standing expert Jan Peder Lamm in Stockholm (Chap. II and Appendix 1). Parallel finds (Chap. V) and the iconography (Chap. VI) were studied by Alexandra Pesch in Schleswig and she has also compiled the overall results (Chap. VII).

Particular attention was paid to the miniature depictions of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms, hybrid creatures and other motifs that were soldered into the rows of figures (Chaps. IV-VI). In order to unmistakably identify each motif, they were given systematic designations here for the first time (p. 29). These consist of a combination of a letter and a numeric character, which were created by counting the animals in each row starting at the front central bulge and working towards the back (e.g. Å 1, Å 2, Å 3 ..., F 1, F 2 etc.). In order to clarify which collar each individual image is from, the numbers are preceded by the initial of the collar concerned. The miniatures in the central panel and the special figures were counted separately (Chap. IV).

Chap. II: History of research and discovery

The chapter begins with a detailed description of the locations where the collars were found. Unfortunately all three objects were individual finds without any archaeological context. However, interesting clues regarding the past socio-political environment have emerged, which attest to the importance of the regions of Västergötland and Öland during the Migration Period (pp. 31-41).

Strangely, the sequence in which the three objects were found also corresponds to many other facts and figures associated with the collars: the first collar was found in 1827 at Ålleberg, the second in 1860 at Färjestaden, followed by the third in 1863 at Möne. This sequence also reflects the increasing number of rings the collars consist of (three in the case of Ålleberg, five in the case of Färjestaden and seven in the case of the collar from Möne), their weights (Ålleberg c. 633 g, Färjestaden 713 g and Möne 821 g), the increasing number of applied figures (Ålleberg with 136, Färjestaden with 362 and Möne with 458 figures) and finally even the dating of the collars (with the earliest being that from Ålleberg, followed by that from Färjestaden, and finally the collar from Möne).

Many researchers have studied the gold collars over the years (see pp. 41-81). The list reads like a who's who of Swedish and Danish archaeology in the 19th and 20th centuries: Johan Gustav Liljegren, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, Bror Emil Hildebrand and his son Hans Hildebrand, Oscar Montelius, Bernhard Salin, Gunnar Ekholm, Hugo Jungner, Sune Lindqvist, Mårten Stenberger, Johannes Brøndsted, Mogens B. Mackeprang and Elisabeth Munksgaard.

In 1980 the great Swedish excavator and iconographer Wilhelm Holmqvist (1905-1989) published a popular-scientific monograph, which was widely read. In recent times, Frands Herschend, Charlotte Fabech and Kent Andersson have also published new results on the collars in respect of their own fields of research. All this is presented in Jan Peder Lamm's contribution in this volume (pp. 41-103). He has also given consideration to the dating of the collars. His forensic analysis of the documents concerning the discovery and subsequent whereabouts of the collars including administrative and court records (see also Appendix 1) clearly shows how much importance was attached to the objects over time and under changing conditions and highlights the fortunate circumstances surrounding their preservation (pp. 81-94). The final paragraph is dedicated to the gold collars as exhibits and their journeys to various museums around the world (pp. 94-103).

Chap. III: Morphological and technological features of the gold collars

The three Swedish collars were made entirely of gold. They are all of the same fundamental type of construction and exhibit the same typological and technological features. Their basic structure consists of hollow tubes made of sheet gold bent into rings. They are divided into two halves that are held together by means of a hinge at the back and a plug and socket connection at the front. The tubes are visually divided into sections by means of elements slid onto them. There are large convex main bulges and smaller ribbed minor bulges (see **Abb. 8**, p. 27, 61 and 62, p. 110). Each collar consists of several sheet-gold tubes adjoined at the outer edges of the bulges. The fact that they are joined together where they are thickest, i. e. at the bulges, creates rows of hollow areas between the narrower sections of the tubes. These gaps between the sections are filled with rows of figures in half-relief. Both the tubes and the rows of figures in between are largest on the collar from Ålleberg and smallest on the collar from Möne.

The regularity of the sections, i. e. the uniformity of the bulges and ribbed elements in all three collars is striking. Each tube has sequences of three small ribbed minor bulges set between two main bulges; there are narrow sections of filigree wire between the minor bulges and wider sections of ribbed sheet metal and filigree wires between the minor and the main bulges. Thus all tubes exhibit the same repeat pattern of bulges (1:3:1:3...) and sections in between. There are only a few exceptions to this basic rule, but these inconsistencies are not immediately obvious. The centre front on each collar is marked by a vertical row of main bulges.

The small hollow gaps between the tubes and bulges are uniformly shaped. The gaps between the main bulges and the minor bulges are elongated and hexagonal in shape, whilst those between the minor bulges that are placed closer together are honeycomb-shaped. Because of the pattern of bulges, each row consists

of two elongated gaps followed by two honeycomb-shaped gaps. By virtue of the basic conical shape of the collars the gaps in the lower rows are slightly larger than those in the top rows. The rows of figures are numbered from the bottom to the top, which results in the fact that the lowest and most detailed row on each collar is identified as no. 1. The rings carry Latin numerals, whilst the gaps, i.e. the rows of figures, have Arabic numerals.

The zones that mirror each other on either side of the collars were given the same number and called »1 right« or »1 left« with the counting starting from the central bulge and continuing back to the hinge. Using this system the collars from *Ålleberg* and *Möne* have eight zones each, whereas the *Färjestaden* specimen has eleven zones (see **Abb. 64**, p. 112, **Abb. 83**, p. 128, and **Abb. 94**, p. 140).

The bulges themselves were also counted. The central vertical row of main bulges at the front was given the number 1 and each of the bulges was counted from the bottom up. The final row of main bulges is located directly beside the hinge and was given the number 9 in the case of *Ålleberg* and *Möne*, and the number 12 in the case of *Färjestaden*.

Yet another system was required to pinpoint the finer details in the areas within the zones, central panels and sections. In order to achieve this J. P. Lamm developed a detailed pattern (**Abb. 62**, p. 110). The individual zones were viewed from left to right. All bulges and interspersed ribbed elements were given capital letters, whilst the sections in between bear lower case letters. Using this pattern, the section between the left main bulge A, which precedes each zone, is divided into the segments a, B (ribbed element) and b, followed by the first minor bulge C, and the middle and third minor bulges D and E with sections c and d in between. The segments of the next section are e, F (ribbed element) and f, and these are followed by another main bulge, which starts the next zone, again with the letter A. In order to pinpoint positions on the back of the collars, which were much more rarely used than those at the front, the same system was employed. This means that each position on each collar can be identified exactly.

Traces of wear and tear and repairs on the surfaces of the three-ringed collar from *Ålleberg* (pp. 112-127) show that it must have been in use for a long time, perhaps even by several generations, before it was deposited. It was also quite severely damaged. It had been forcefully twisted out of shape at the hinge. It had also been broken into several pieces, which again would have required rotary and lever movements. By grabbing the collar with both hands, some of the bulges and sections of tubes had been dented. The *Ålleberg* collar bore 137 miniatures, 64 each on the two rows of figures as well as six special motifs (*Å So 1*) at the rear ends of the tubes and three on the front main bulges (*Å So 2*). Together with the ribbed elements, a total of 57 main bulges and 144 minor bulges were used to structure the zones. Applications in filigree work and twisted round wires were used to decorate the tubes, main bulges and miniatures, and granulation was applied both for decorative purposes and to stabilise the solder connections.

The hinges on the collars from *Ålleberg* and *Färjestaden* exhibit vertical ornamental joints both inside and out. These are decorated on the outside by thicker beaded wires and two finer twisted beaded wires, whilst on the inside they only have twisted wires. The insides, however, also have rows of granules to stabilise the solder connections between the sleeves and plates of the hinges.

Besides modern damage caused during its recovery and subsequent not very successful restoration attempts, the five-ringed collar from *Färjestaden* (pp. 127-137) also exhibits a lot of historical damage. The second plug from the bottom is only partially preserved, i.e. its tip is missing and was not repaired, although judging by the condition of the broken edges the damage does not appear to have occurred recently. The two areas of filigree work in zone 1 of the upper tubes on the right half of the collar, near the opening, have been reworked. The collar from *Färjestaden* overall shows severe signs of abrasion. Repairs, e.g. on the bulges, indicate that this collar was probably also in use for a lengthy period of time. Its four almost identical rows of figures consist of 352 miniatures, with a further ten used to cover the ends of the tubes at

the back (F So 1). The miniatures on the Färjestaden collar are generally smaller than those on the Ålleberg collar and unlike them they were made in such a way that they fill the gaps completely. This results in the Färjestaden collar appearing solid and calm. Its zones were structured by means of 115 undecorated main bulges and 320 minor bulges as well as ribbed elements. As opposed to the main bulges, which were left unadorned, the tubes and miniatures were decorated with filigree wire. Unusually, the otherwise very strict 1:3 bulge pattern is interrupted at the back of this collar on either side of the hinge. All five tubes have only two instead of three minor bulges in these sections, which also results in one less row of figures in the central panel. As a consequence the two back sections of the collar appear incomplete.

The specimen from **Möne** (pp. 138-147) is the largest and heaviest of the three gold collars. It is excellently preserved in that its frame consisting of seven rings has survived intact and only a small number of miniatures and one plug (»prong«) are missing. Neither are there any traces of abrasion on the bulges or anywhere else. From a technical point of view this collar is simpler than the other two and less care seems to have gone into the making and attaching of many of its elements. The regularity of the 1:3 pattern of 119 smooth main and 336 minor bulges, on the other hand, is particularly prominent in the case of this collar. The impression of order and calm is further highlighted by the fact that the same motif, the depiction of a face or »mask« is used repeatedly in the central panels (M Mi 1). The individual animals in the six rows of figures also appear more uniform visually and are even more understated than those on the collar from Färjestaden. Like the Ålleberg collar, the object from Möne is divided into 8 zones on each side. The collar had at some stage received a blow, apparently when it was closed, which resulted in the plugs being squashed inside the tubes, so that the collar could no longer be opened. It was subsequently opened by force, which led to the two bottom-most plugs breaking off and remaining lodged within the sockets on the left half of the collar. With its 384 miniatures in six identical rows on both sides of the centre, another 14 on the ends of the tubes at the back and an additional 24 large and 36 small »masks« in the area of the hinge, the collar from Möne has an almost breath-taking 458 miniatures in total. All the sections of tubes on the Möne collar are wrapped in filigree round wires and were not, like the other collars, mounted with individual rings of wire. Very fine beaded wires outline the shapes, whilst relatively thick beaded wires were used to cover their surfaces. Although this gives the appearance of granulation it is, in fact, not. The six sleeves of the hinges were not made of sheet metal but consist of several thick beaded wires soldered together.

The **original weight** of each collar can only be surmised today: breaks, losses and abrasion have made it impossible to establish exact values. This is most true in the case of the severely damaged collar from Ålleberg, and less so in the case of the almost intact collar from Möne. During the examination carried out in Mainz all individual parts were weighed. The data gathered at that juncture, together with the calculated weights of lost parts allowed us to arrive at relatively precise approximate values (pp. 148-152). Maiken Fecht calculated the original weight of the collar from Ålleberg to have been 633 g, whilst the collar from Färjestaden would have weighed 713.09 g and the specimen from Möne 822.93 g.

The volume also presents numerous results concerning the **manufacture of individual constructional and decorative elements** on all three collars (pp. 153-189). The tubes, for example, were made by bending fragments of sheet metal so that they fitted exactly together; the joints were then soldered. Internal gold sleeves stabilise the connection. The plugs, which hold all three collars together at the front – not, however, by way of a snap-in mechanism or any other firm catch – were also made of sheet gold and were relatively crude in appearance. They were probably made by wrapping the sheets around a tapered spike made of wood or metal and then bending them into a circular shape. The function of two sockets soldered onto the backs of the Ålleberg and Färjestaden collars remains a mystery (pp. 155-157). There was much debate for a long time as to how the bulges had been made. Barbara Armbruster recently suggested the use of

a turning or spinning lathe (see p. 159). This would have entailed cutting a moulded core from hardwood or some other hard organic material on a lathe and then fitting it with a thin tube of sheet gold. Once the gold tube was fitted the organic core would have been removed by burning it. This would have been the easiest way suggested to date of mass-producing the hollow bulges. New insight was also gained with regard to the manufacture of the miniatures (pp. 167-180). Previously scholars assumed that the minute figures had been made by engraving pieces of sheet gold and then mounting them onto other fragments of sheet gold. Here, Barbara Armbruster has also put forward some interesting suggestions, whereby the miniatures would have first been shaped in wax, fitted onto wax plates and then cast together using the lost-wax technique (pp. 167-171).

Thoughts on the material (*solidi*), the alloys and the amounts of material used (pp. 172-174) are followed by descriptions of the tools required and of what the goldsmith's workshop may have looked like (pp. 175-182), as well as the *chaîne opératoire* of making a gold collar (pp. 182-185). The chapter concludes with the defects, damage and traces of wear and tear on the three artefacts (pp. 185-189).

Chap. IV: Catalogue of the miniatures on the three collars

The catalogue presents descriptions and images of the individual zoomorphic motifs, hybrid creatures, anthropomorphic figures, faces and shapes from the rows of figures on each of the gold collars. Besides older drawings of some of the miniatures, photographs and drawings from Mainz are also reproduced. The different designations used previously by researchers for some of the miniatures are also given in note form and the dimensions of the miniatures are listed. A precise description of each miniature is intended to support the identification of the numerous depictions on the gold collars and where possible the categorisation of the zoological or mythological types and of the forms and symbols depicted. The same is repeated in Chap. VI, this time in greater detail and in the context of meaning, together with a list and images of important iconographical parallels for each of the miniatures.

Chap. V: Objects of similar form

Although only three gold collars exist (so far) in the whole world, an entire horizon of parallel finds can be drawn on from their spatial and chronological backgrounds. First and foremost among them are the examples with just a single ring. The neck ring from Hannenov (pp. 269-274) has justifiably been called a »one-ringed collar«, which is just lacking the rows of figures. With its 1:3:1 sequence of main and minor bulges and filigree work consisting of rings of wire, ribbed elements and profiled wires, it is very similar to the collars from *Älleberg* and *Färjestaden*. A particularly interesting feature on the ring from Hannenov is that it has figurative mounts on the front row of main bulges and on both main bulges to the right and left. Another similar feature is a section on a ring from the parish of *Köinge* in *Halland* (pp. 274-276), which is made up of two main and five minor bulges. With its internal diameter of c. 37 cm this ring is large enough to be pulled over a person's head. However, because of its size it appears quite impractical as a piece of jewellery worn around the neck. We may therefore consider it to have been jewellery for a statue. The third »one-ringed collar« is the ring from *Hjallese* (pp. 277-278). Some of the best parallels, however, are a pair of rings from *Svindinge*, which would have been worn on the wrist and which have zigzag patterns between the tubes that are reminiscent of the zoomorphic depictions on the gold collars (pp. 278-281). Other comparable objects are various knotted rings (pp. 294-299) and neck rings with thickened terminals (*Havor*

group, pp. 285-290), as well as rings with overlapping terminals (pp. 290-294). Whilst anthropomorphic sculptures made of wood or metal are, of course, not related to the collars, some of them exhibit jewellery similar to the gold collars, which is why they have been included in this chapter (pp. 317-324). This also includes the famous wooden figure from Rude Eskildstrup (pp. 317-319). Migration Period gold bracteates (pp. 300-309) can be associated with the collars not just because of similarities of many of their motifs but also because of their luxurious suspension loops with filigree work. Those exhibit highly interesting features that are comparable to the collars from a technological point of view, particularly those found in groups with tubular suspension loops. In addition, brooches from the mid-first millennium are also discussed as possible parallels by virtue of their motifs and technological details (pp. 310-316). The chapter ends with a look at Gothic and Roman artefacts (pp. 325-331).

Many of the objects mentioned date from the same period as the gold collars, whilst others probably pre- or post-date them. The links amongst the other finds and between them and the collars vary in nature. They all help, however, to gain a better understanding of the extraordinary pieces of jewellery in terms of their construction and meaning. Whilst they are unique, the gold collars do not stand alone.

Chap. VI: The iconography and hermeneutics of the gold collars

The figurative depictions between the individual rings of the three gold collars are probably the main reason these unique pieces of jewellery have attracted so much interest over the years. Their interpretation is the prerequisite for the understanding of the inherent meaning and, ultimately, the function of the collars. It is essential for the interpretation of the depictions to identify the creatures and animals depicted, and to categorise them according to natural or imaginary »species«, and any further interpretative approaches will be based on these. It is therefore essential to attempt to identify the species in each case and for this identification to be well founded. Where this is not possible the aim is to use iconographical parallels to at least gain an understanding of the sphere of related depictions and with that their contexts of meaning.

As part of an overview on the research carried out previously into the miniatures on the collars and into the interpretation of Migration Period images the main strands of contemporary analysis are revisited (pp. 335-336). The results obtained by Wilhelm Holmqvist, who has carried out the most detailed research into the gold collars to date, and as do the ideas developed by Kent Andersson and Karl Hauck on the basis of Holmqvist's work are presented (pp. 337-343). Based on Karl Hauck's method of »context iconography« the next steps are defined and explained.

Germanic imagery cannot be understood on its own and it cannot be described if the individual depictions cannot be addressed and identified specifically. The images, which are usually stylised, always require a translation into perceptions and designations that we can understand. Only when a depiction of an animal is identified, for instance, as a »bird« or better yet as a »bird of prey« or even as a »hawk«, is it possible to distinguish it from the image of another animal such as a »horse« or a »serpent«, and only then can one begin to search for the semantic meaning of the image.

Whilst the animal depictions on the collar from Möne cannot be addressed as zoological or mythological »species« but only occur as groups of unspecific quadrupeds or serpents in various stances, the creatures on the Färjestaden collar are, or at least appear to be, more readily identifiable. The collar from Ålleberg, however, exhibits depictions of beings that can all be attributed to particular »species«, either within the current system of biological and natural scientific classification or within the ancient western traditions of imagination. Based on these species the chapter adopts an interdisciplinary approach and attempts to es-

establish the original meaning of the images using various categories of sources. The results, summarised in such brevity as to be almost improper, are as follows:

The first animal (Å 1) which begins the sequence both on the left and right halves of the Ålleberg collar has been identified as a horse. The horse undoubtedly played an outstanding role in the cultural history of humankind. Amongst all the meanings associated with horses one may conclude in respect of the gold collars and their period that horses were seen as the confidants of the gods, as advisors with divine knowledge, as guides for the dead or as popular sacrificial animals with the special ability to mediate between humankind and the gods (pp. 350-359).

The next animal has been identified as a pig or boar (Å2, Å9 and Å13). The distinctive feature here is the arched back of the figure on one hand and its massive lower jaw on the other. Boars are almost always present in the Germanic world of imagery and imagination. In death-defying attack mode, these powerful animals were the perfect symbols of male fighting prowess and heroic ideals. Symbolically elevated standards with depictions of boars also provided support in battle and protected their bearers, both in this life and in the next. Whilst other ideas that linked boars with fertility and regeneration may still have been distinct features in the Migration Period, their functions to inspire in battle and as symbols of power and strength later prevailed (pp. 360-370).

The biological impossibility of a two-legged quadruped is represented by a backward-looking animal with a long snout and bulbous nose (Å 3, F 9; see also M 8, M 27). Based on comparable depictions these creatures can probably be identified as does. Cervids were associated with numinous qualities such as enormous life force and they were also linked, in particular, with the power of healing and regeneration. This obviously made them invaluable champions of human life (pp. 371-381).

The collars from Ålleberg and Färjestaden bear several miniatures that can be identified, at least arguably, as bird depictions. They can be divided into birds of prey and birds of the crow family (Å 5, Å 10, F 4, F 5, F 20) as well as possible waterfowl (F 11, F 13). In addition there was also a special type called rolling birds. Both the waterfowl and the birds of prey and crows had the ability to travel between the spheres and were knowing, communicative and intermediary creatures. Birds were often linked with the areas of knowledge, or secret knowledge and the gift of foresight. As servants of the gods they would also provide assistance, for instance in cases of divine intervention such as healing and exorcising demons, as depicted on Migration Period gold bracteates (pp. 382-396).

»Rolling animals« cannot be directly linked to any natural species. The specimens on the gold collars can be traced back to various models. Some of them can be linked to pairs of animal-head protomes (Å 6, F Mi 1, F 1), which were commonly applied to chip-carved bronze artefacts and whose talismanic features are unmistakable (pp. 397-400). Other examples with shortened hindquarters attest to iconographical links with marine creatures that were typical of the Nydam Style and were believed to bring luck (F 10, F 12); they also often occur in pairs and thus display a certain internal kinship with the rolling animals (pp. 401-402). Although rolling animals were purely iconographical and imaginary, and therefore not zoologically defined real animal species, they were given equal status in Germanic iconography.

Other animals that cannot really be viewed as naturally occurring species are serpent-, lizard- and dragon-like creatures, which German-speaking researchers have summarised as »Wurme« (an artificial term similar to the word for worms) due to the difficulty in distinguishing between them. They occur on the gold collars either as serpent-like creatures (Å 8, Å 16, F 6) or as dragon-like figures, often bearing two heads (Å So 1, Å 11, Å 12, F 22); they come in pairs or on their own. Contrary to what was previously believed they apparently had positive meaning (pp. 403-427). Intertwined serpents were generally viewed to have apotropaic powers, or at least to have provided protection. Many of the »worms« on the gold collars appear to share

this protective function. It is even possible that the »dragons« that accompany the hinges on all three collars (Å So 1, F So 1, M So 1) were perhaps intended to watch over and protect the gold collars themselves.

Some of the miniatures on the gold collars may represent hybrid creatures made up of various animal species (pp. 427-428). A miniature on the Färjestaden collar may possibly be termed as a »griffin-like beast« (F 16). The tendency, however, seen in many of the miniatures, to use relatively uniform heads, eyes, shoulders, snouts/beaks etc. for each »animal category« makes it quite difficult to actually identify the animals accurately. Moreover, the exact classification may even have been undesired.

Anthropomorphic figures are the exception among the miniatures on the gold collars. However, on the Ålleberg collar they have a distinguished position for two reasons: firstly, three human whole-figure depictions are prominently placed in the central front area of the collar (Å So 2), and secondly there are forty human faces distributed across most of the so called »middle sections« (Å Mi 1).

Previous interpretations of the iconography of the collars have always started out from the frontal figure on the Ålleberg collar (Å So 2, pp. 429-447). Numerous iconographical parallels have been collected in order to interpret the figure. Its posture with its raised arms plays a prominent role. Frequently viewed as an expression of divine epiphany, this type of image can also be seen as representing a posture of sovereignty, i.e. as depicting the sovereign power held by the person shown. Historically, this posture has been used time and time again to depict divine beings. Overall, the front figure from Ålleberg (Å So 2) fits in well with the Germanic imagery of the Imperial and Migration Periods, whilst at the same time exhibiting iconographical links with human figures from an earlier horizon, which has been associated with the Celts, as well as with later depictions, often of a Christian nature. More so than the other miniatures on the collars, this figure represents various strands of tradition. Despite its uniqueness, it is thus a representative part of the entire western iconographical genesis. The many related depictions, which occur as images of gods or sacred beings also suggest that this figure depicts a powerful Germanic deity. Based on results from bracteate research it has been suggested that it might be Woden/Odin, the principal god in the Nordic pagan religion. On the Ålleberg collar he is flanked on both sides by the animals in the rows of figures, which also links him with the gods depicted on bracteates such as the figure on the key object IK 166 from Skrydstrup.

With regard to another anthropomorphic whole figure incorporated into a row of figures on the collar from Ålleberg (Å 7, pp. 448-450) Holmqvist has expressed the opinion that it might depict an augurium, a bird oracle; due to the fact that the figure is shown with its face turned upwards, Holmqvist suggested that it might depict a Germanic sacrificial priest. However, several parallels between this figure and the one on the central bulge on the Ålleberg collar (Å So 2) also allow us to interpret it as depicting Woden.

The collar from Möne also has human figures acting as shield bearers (M 29, M 30) depicted behind each other, but perhaps intended to appear as standing beside one another. There is also a skirted figure (M 32) just beside the hinge. Whilst most of the clues with regard to the two shield bearers indicate that they were human heroes, perhaps great warriors, ancient kings or semi-mythical ancestors (pp. 450-453), the skirted figure seems more likely to have been another depiction of a god (pp. 454-456). As usual, there is no compelling proof to support these theories, but we can only gather clues based on the current state of research and knowledge.

Whilst there are no anthropomorphic elements on the collar from Färjestaden, both the Ålleberg and Möne collars exhibit depictions of human faces. These are often termed »masks« by researchers in the field. The masks on the Ålleberg collar (Å Mi 1, pp. 457-472), however, are identical to the heads of the central figures (Å So 2) so that the masks appear to be truncated depictions of the same person. Their importance is further emphasised by the fact that they occur 40 times in total in the central panels of the rows of figures. There are many iconographical models and parallels for these faces, which also indicate that they were intended to depict the face of a Germanic deity, most likely, again, of Woden. The power and potency of this

god are also visualised by his inflated cheeks and open mouth. Similar features can be seen on bracteates, some of which bear symbols that have been interpreted as visualised breathing, or the breath of life, which the depicted deity would perhaps have used in his healing practices on both humans and animals.

It is not immediately evident with regard to the 192 »masks« in the central panels of the Möne collar (M Mi 1, pp. 473-476) and its 24 smaller and simplified variants in the hinge area whether they depict human faces or animal heads; ears, beards and other details that would be helpful in this respect are absent. However, there are good reasons to categorise all these motifs as anthropomorphic face depictions. *En face*-depictions are an expression of a strong presence. The beholder comes face to face with the person depicted and senses the presence of the other being. Full-face depictions in general appear animated by a magical supernatural power that radiates through the eyes. This impression may even be intensified in images where it is not immediately clear whether they are human or animal »masks«. The power of the direct gaze captivates the beholder and demands one's undivided attention (pp. 477-480).

Another figure that is not a zoologically identifiable animal but a creature with a quadruped's body and human head can be found on the collar from Älleberg (Å 4a, Å 4b, pp. 480-484). Similar miniatures on the left and right halves of the collar differ in that their bodies and heads are shaped completely differently: a phenomenon that only occurs in this particular instance. Such hybrid creatures with animal bodies and human heads were not uncommon in the Nydam and Animal I Styles. Interpretations, however, have quite rarely been put forward. They lack any particular attributes, features or other concretising motifs, and the body shapes, gestures and image contexts are so different on all the objects with their variety of depictions that it is almost impossible to draw any general conclusions.

The next category studied is that of the geometric miniatures: circles, spirals, hexagons and arches. They occur mainly in the central panels (Å Mi 2, Å Mi 3, F Mi 2), and in two instances within the rows of figures in the conical sections (Å 15, Å 17). Parallels are drawn on and comparable finds listed. However, they are not truly recognisable symbols such as stars, triskeles or swastikas so that it is not possible to attribute any particular meaning to them (pp. 486-491).

The iconographical study ends with thoughts on combinations and series of motifs and on the animals that are not depicted on the gold collars, which might offer further assistance in interpreting certain miniatures and the collars in general (pp. 492-494).

Chapters VI.4 and VI.5 (pp. 502-509) give a summary of the general insight gained from the iconographical analysis. Most of the miniatures that can be identified on the three collars are combinations of animals that are commonly found elsewhere in Germanic art, such as horses, boars, stags, birds and »*wurme*« (snaks, dragons etc.). Other motifs may be interpreted as possible migratory images but also occur quite often, such as the double-headed serpent (Å 11), the two intertwined serpents (Å 8), the »ouroboros« (F 6) or the animals with human heads (sphinxes, animal-men [Å 4, M5?]). However, whilst the »variety of species« is quite high and clearly recognisable on the Älleberg collar, many of the animals on the collar from Färjestaden are more difficult to distinguish. Its quadrupeds, particularly the backwards looking so-called »*Mittelkopftiere*«, »middle head animals«, cannot be identified at all, and the waterfowl and marine creatures only with reservations. Finally, the collar from Möne mainly exhibits multiple occurrences of the same four-legged coiled creature, whilst migratory images and birds are completely absent. It appears that the makers of the Möne collar attached less value to the variety of species and the depiction of particular figures and symbols, but were more intent on displaying a variety of animal depictions in general. This is also supported by the sequence of images on each of the three collars. An obvious approach is to not only compare the individual miniatures and motifs on the gold collars but also to search for similarities in the sequences of motifs. Comparable cycles of particular animals or figures could suggest groupings based on motifs or scenes that may refer back to a particular model such as a mythical legend that provided the context for the depictions. How-

ever, the miniatures at the start of the rows can only be compared in a few cases (pp. 502-503) on the collars from Ålleberg and Färjestaden, and even then with little conviction. It is possible to see a particular efficacy and power within or associated with many of the animals, anthropomorphic figures and other miniatures, not by means of an analysis of the gold collars alone, but by comparisons with other examples in contemporary iconography and many other textual and pictorial sources. The power held by the figures is different depending on the animal concerned, and is often difficult to pinpoint exactly, resulting in some being doubtful whilst others remain a complete mystery. There are also examples of several animals being associated with the same powers and meaning. It is generally not quite possible to positively identify the animals with regard to their immanent meaning and referential properties. Many of the beings and symbols carry a multifaceted variety of meanings. A large number of the miniatures thus elude a concrete and definitive interpretation; unlike logos, numerals or even traffic signs, the miniatures can be read in more ways than one.

The contexts within which the images on the collars can be interpreted lie in the Germanic philosophy and ideology, which was expressed in the imagery. It experienced its heyday with the gold collars, relief brooches, gold bracteates and other valuable artefacts with Animal Style decorations. The imagery is the key to unlocking the ideas and religious beliefs behind the three precious items studied. The Germanic world is generally believed to have been pagan because Christian missionaries did not officially reach the Nordic region until much later. However, to what extent the Germanic world had perhaps already been touched by Christian influences in the 4th and 5th centuries, which went beyond the purely iconographical and aesthetic, cannot be discussed in detail here. Suffice it to say that the Germanic belief system found its expression in a synthetic world of images that was never adverse to adopting elements from the outside and combining them with its own traditions whilst adhering to a regulatory system of motifs and stylistic criteria.

The apparent consistency of Germanic artwork throughout vast regions of Northern, Western and Central Europe, its normative character and a uniformity that could almost be termed a canonisation has often been remarked upon. Not everything was worthy of depiction. The task and aim of the artist was not to portray the subjects as naturalistically as possible or to constantly find new subjects and motifs, but rather to competently use a predetermined set of highly stylised images depicting a limited array of motifs. There was hardly any scope for individual artistic expression as we would expect today. Rather, art was determined by a variety of agreements of rules, conventions, with regard to form and content. This meant that the artisans almost always acted as copyists at least to some extent. However, even such conscious copying still requires a deep and competent understanding of the general, »classic« lines and of the possibilities and limitations, which probably means that the artisans had to have undergone formal training and specialisation. Minor variations often occurred and depended on the prior knowledge and skill sets of the makers of the objects. Whilst many of the variations were intentional, the images and topics generally remained rather easily recognisable and developed only at a relatively slow rate. The imagery was thus determined by theme and variations. The principle of copying allowed for a decentralised and wavelike dissemination of particular shapes, motifs and techniques. By actively participating in the reproduction and distribution of objects and motifs the individual artisans were part of a living tradition. However, there must also have been people, intellectual settings, workshops, or perhaps organisations that were in a position to introduce true innovation and to change the existing regulations. They would have been in charge of adopting new motifs and would have introduced these into the common pool, thereby varying, altering and adding to it. This is mainly supported by the fact that the changes that resulted in new stylistic phases repeatedly occurred almost simultaneously in many regions. In general the exclusive use of commonly held symbols also ensured the basic legibility and understanding of the imagery beyond the individual regions. All the depictions were symbols that worked for the individual beholder and had their intended effect

by virtue of their immanent semantic meaning on one hand and, moreover, bore and conveyed a shared identity thanks to their formal uniformity on the other.

Six contextual and formal design principles can be listed as general norms or agreements for Style I images (and to a lesser extent for later Animal Styles):

1. Symbolism;
2. Theme and variation (based on copying, reception, synthesis, consensus);
3. Non-naturalistic depiction of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic creatures, often squatting, curled up, intertwined, concealed;
4. Dissection of the figures into individual and freely combinable parts, which could be added or removed;
5. Repetition and sequencing;
6. Tinyness.

Not all the criteria can be seen in all the depictions. They do, however, offer a basic foundation upon which it is possible, especially by way of dissociation with neighbouring cultures, to gain a basic understanding of the images in their political and religious meaning. They had already fully developed by the time the gold collars were made and they remained in use as basic principles regulating most of the Germanic artwork until the Viking Period.

Chap. VII: Divine pieces of jewellery, overall results

Chap. VII.1 deals with the dating of the gold collars (pp. 511-515). However, due to a lack of stratigraphic references, archaeological contexts and associated finds the objects can only be dated using parallel finds and iconographical features. Based on the existing chronological systems and notwithstanding the uncertainties, we may assume that the Ålleberg collar was made between c. AD 450 and AD 480. The collar from Färjestaden, which can only be dated based on a stylistic analysis probably also dates from the late 5th or perhaps from the early 6th century AD. The Möne collar, finally, can probably be dated to the first third or mid-6th century by virtue of its decorative elements that belong to the late Style I and are comparable to the late D-type bracteates. In any case the dating of the collars is closely linked with the questions surrounding the chronological sequencing in general. Although several recent finds and research approaches have brought new insight, thus shedding some light on the darkness surrounding the detailed dating, the gold collars, due to their nature as isolated finds, cannot be of any assistance in clarifying the absolute chronological sequence of Migration Period Scandinavia; instead it is more likely that a new detailed chronological system of stylistic phases might in the future actually lead to a more precise dating of the collars.

Chap. VII.2 focuses on the workshop that created the gold collars (pp. 515-519). It has repeatedly been stated that most of the early medieval craftsmen would have travelled about offering their skills to different patrons. Although we must not exclude the possibility of migratory craftsmen in this case and although goldsmiths would have been able to create outstanding pieces even with limited means and using portable equipment, the workshop that created the gold collars must have been large, very experienced and staffed with several artisans; therefore, we can assume that it was a local permanent facility. Such »schools« have already been shown to have existed in the Merovingian and Viking periods. Large medieval monastic workshops would most likely serve as comparable examples. These facilities would have had the equipment, the knowledge and also the manpower to create various types of high-quality objects. At the same time, individual specialists would have travelled to other monasteries and workshops to pass on

their technological expertise whilst picking up new skills themselves. It is also possible that a temporary assembly of goldsmiths from various places of origin could have been recruited specifically for the purpose of creating a particular object.

The three gold collars were probably made in the same workshop. This is suggested not only by the fact that they have the same basic constructional and formal features but was also shown by an examination of the goldsmithing techniques carried out in Mainz, which gathered evidence of the same tools having been used in the making of more than one of the collars. If the workshop was a permanent local facility the most likely location would have been present-day Västergötland, where two of the three collars were found. However, no such workshop has so far been identified there or elsewhere. The central places of the period would have been possible locations.

It is difficult to provide an exact characterisation of these master goldsmiths and their personal lives. Their work and the importance of the objects they created, however, show that they must have been highly trained and seen as »scholars« of their time by the élite. Those masters at least who designed the high-ranking objects must have been trained not just in goldsmithing and in the contemporary styles of art but must have also been familiar with the ideological background of the depictions they were working on, because otherwise they would not have been able to correctly select and arrange the motifs used.

Chap. VII.3 deals with the functions, patrons and wearers of the gold collars (pp. 519-522). They could undoubtedly have been worn by people. They were sturdy, quite durable and could be opened and closed as often as desired. Shaped like obliquely truncated cones and ideally sized they nestled comfortably into a human neck, be it male or female. Besides being worn purely for decorative purposes, gold collars were probably also used to represent one's standing. We may view such precious items as symbols of the highest rank, perhaps as regalia of secular and/or sacred élites. The idea has been muted both in expert circles and in popular-scientific works that the three collars were sacrificial offerings to the gods. However, there is no evidence to suggest a ritual destruction, nor are there any other clues to support this thesis. Perhaps it is worth noting, though, that none of the collars were associated with any other finds. They appear to have been individual objects that were given special treatment. Their deposition might indeed have had a highly politicised meaning. Local and perhaps even regional rulers must surely have reigned from the multifunctional central places in the regions of Västergötland and Öland, which have yielded vast numbers of finds. They would have been potential patrons who might have bought and worn the collars. In the hands of secular and/or sacred potentates gold collars might have visualised the wearer's power or closeness to the gods and could even perhaps have symbolised the beginnings of the foundation of a state. The deposition of such an object in the ground would thus be turned into a highly political act of quasi-national importance. The gold collars, whose outstanding value lies in their material worth, their masterful technical detail and their rich iconography, may therefore have actually been real »*Riksklenoder*«, i.e. Imperial Regalia for the Migration Period population of Sweden.

From the Bronze Age onwards neck rings were among the most important pieces of jewellery in Northern Europe, and this is examined in greater detail in **Chap. VII.4** (pp. 523-525). They have survived both as original finds and in image displays, e.g. in the form of statuettes. Large and extremely valuable gold neck rings were used by Germanic peoples from as early as the time of Christ's birth, and during the Migration Period they experienced their heyday in a variety of guises. The link between such rings and sovereign power has repeatedly been shown. The importance of neck rings as symbols of power or as particularly powerful pieces of jewellery has been attested to not only by archaeological finds but also by written sources, some of which date back to the Migration Period. Large rings are also known to have had sacred and legal functions. Neck rings can be seen as universal symbols of secular and pastoral, or by proxy, even of divine power. They were used as symbols of honour and dignity, as jewellery for the élites, as regalia and sacred insignia.

Chap. VII.5 examines the cross-cultural relationships at the time of the gold collars as a precondition for the creation of such objects (pp. 525-528). One question is that of the origins or place of conception for some of the forms, motifs and stylistic elements, including e.g. the fastening mechanism on the collars or the face depictions. The fact that strikingly similar types of objects and decorations occurred in the first half of the 1st millennium AD in far-flung regions with various political backgrounds and that certain motifs and technologies quickly spread throughout vast areas or even throughout the entire Germanic territory time and time again, makes it even harder to precisely pinpoint the origins of the phenomena studied. Debate has raged over the origin of almost every new stylistic phase and motif in Northern Europe. This is particularly pronounced with regard to the 5th century, during which Late Roman and Gothic elements and perhaps even influences from nomadic horse tribes came together in the Nordic region. The specialised Germanic craftsmen created their imagery and constantly renewed it by employing techniques and motifs from various other cultural spheres they had come into contact with. Roman pictorial art was adopted as a main root and model early on, i.e. in the first four centuries AD. The same can be said for Late Antiquity, which supplied fundamental new impulses with its chip-carved decorations and images on coins. The Germanics embraced many elements from Roman art and adopted a synthetic approach to creating their own imagery.

An area that is a little less obvious and has not been studied in as much detail is the fact that the Germanic artisans also borrowed from the iconography of the Celts. Close similarities and considerable continuity can often be identified between the artistic spheres that are today viewed as Celtic and those associated with the (later) Germanics. However, it is exceedingly difficult to draw a definitive line between the two cultures. Particularly the strands of continuity that reach back from the post-Christian Germanic centuries to pre-Christian times are much more suggestive of a continued development in many areas rather than two completely different cultures having exhibited parallels that developed independently.

Similarities between the imagery of Scythian steppe peoples from the 7th century BC and the Germanic Animal Style are striking but in terms of direct links and continuity largely inexplicable. Unless one would wish to see it as a coincidence which, in view of the significant remove, would be an obvious conclusion, another possibility would be Celtic groups, and later perhaps Goths, who would have acted as mediators; however, without definite evidence pointing to the links in between this remains purely speculative.

Over the entire course of their development, the Germanics were influenced on one hand by observing and analysing their neighbouring peoples with their imagery in particular, and on the other by a drive to use these to create their very own unmistakably Germanic cipher. Together with runic writing, which appears to be as old as Germanic imagery and was probably used and maintained by the same specialists, this cipher formed something akin to a Germanic »corporate design«. The ties would furthermore have been reinforced by orally disseminated Skaldic poetry, epic tales of gods and heroes and common rituals. A fundamental prerequisite for the intensive cultural communication was the significant mobility of the so-called élites. Moreover, there was probably a certain amount of exchange of master craftsmen between major goldsmiths' workshops, which would have facilitated the creation and genesis of new forms and motifs and not only allowed for a technological transfer but also a pervasive dissemination of cultural characteristics as well as a long-term and continued use and maintenance of certain elements, even beyond the so-called cultural boundaries. Objects like the gold collars can ultimately be seen as the results of and witnesses to a consistent and intensive contact and exchange between various groups with close cross-cultural links.

Chap. VII.6 sums up the results of the volume with regard to the assumed power of the animal depictions. These played a virtually existential role throughout Germania. The Germanic »applied art«, with its array of animals, hybrid creatures and other figures and its standardisation in terms of the motifs and stylistic elements, used to decorate weapons, clothing accessories, jewellery and other items of everyday use as well as status symbols mirrors the world view of its makers and bearers like no other art form. It bears witness

not only to the exquisite technological capabilities of the periods but also mirrors the large-scale socio-political organisational structures by adopting and disseminating specific motifs. As a collectively maintained creation its imagery conveys and shapes a specific northern Germanic identity. The Germanic culture portrayed itself by means of its images; in contrast to the Late Antique and medieval »book cultures«, it was based on imagery, a true »visual culture«.

This idea, grown out of the existence of the images on archaeological finds, does not, however, match the perceptions of Germanic society as conveyed by ancient and early medieval historians, according to whom the Germanics were uncivilised barbarians who did not know any permanent or commonly maintained forms of organisation and administration and who were constantly embroiled in conflict and war against each other. It is difficult to associate the leader of such rabble with as delicate a piece of jewellery as a gold collar. Neither is it easy to picture his retinue, or even a high-ranking woman or the priest/priestess of a battle-hardened people wearing such exquisite jewellery. It is therefore hardly possible today to present a well-founded model of northern Germanic life and forms of government that exhibits no discrepancies.

Early Christian depictions of Bible figures and objects of church inventory were also adorned with horizontal or vertical rows of animals. The same depictions would certainly have been understood throughout Germania by virtue of their fundamental meaning as symbols of divine power and as auspicious signs. This is once again evidence of the fact that the North and South shared certain fundamental features despite their differences both in terms of religious beliefs and in terms of the concrete imagery used. Ultimately they were both first-millennium European cultures that had shared roots and influenced each other throughout their ongoing development.

However, it was not just in pictorial art that animals played a role in ancient Germania. Based on the writings that have survived from the Christian Middle Ages in the north, which include myths from the pagan religion, the sagas and Skaldic poetry, numerous aspects can be identified that attest to a relationship and even a certain degree of permeation between animals, humans and gods, although the sources also contain differences and even discrepancies. Overall, the interpretation of written sources is a rather important approach to carrying out a semantic analysis of certain animal species.

By virtue of their tiny size and stylised appearance the miniatures on the gold collars are a balancing act between the figurative/concrete and the abstract/ornament. Only in certain cases, mainly on the Ålleberg collar, can the miniatures be identified as zoological species or mythological creatures and this allows us to interpret them as fulfilling their role as »animals of power and strength«. The crucial element in all the depictions is their symbolic nature. They were emblems, symbols or symbolic signs that had a defined meaning and were understood by whoever saw them.

Each individual zoologically identifiable animal species basically represents an idea that existed in the imagination of the people at the time. All the animals carried a certain amount of numinous power with varying degrees of efficacy. Depicted on objects from the material world the animal figures promised supernatural assistance to those who bore them, offered support and succour, a favourable outcome to their plans as well as protection from threat and harm, both in life and in death. The concept of »the boar«, for instance, was associated with a complex, both mythically normative and everyday practical idea that was present in the depiction and could spread its supportive influence from there. Over the centuries various animals began to exhibit certain symbolic trends: the boar was mainly associated with strength and honour, the stag with health and healing, the horse with closeness to the gods and divine knowledge, the bird with sometimes prophetic (secret) knowledge, the serpents or »wurme« with protection. The animals exhibited their own characteristics independent of the gods, and had their own numinous powers and effects. However, most of the animals on the gold collars cannot be identified based on current biological systems of classification. The stylisation and schematisation of the gold collars from Färjestaden and Möne, in particular, reduced the

figures to just depicting animals in general, which meant that the only recognisable meaning that remained was the general concept of the animal. Accordingly, the motifs referred to the effect of animals in general. Perhaps they combined the features of several animal species and were thus charged with their cumulative power, or perhaps this just allowed the beholder to take from the depiction the effect that was needed at that particular time.

The dynamics of the miniatures against the constant rhythm of the gold collars and their patterns of main and minor bulges created a field of tension which focused the Germanic philosophy and world view in the mid-first millennium AD. This essence of the combined efficacy of animals, hybrid creatures, anthropomorphic figures and abstract forms was intended to benefit the bearers and users of the gold collars and to visualise their closeness to the gods. That is why the makers used the most valuable material and exhibited their highest conceptual and technical skills. Whilst in terms of the motifs and style the individual depictions on the collars were taken from the usual repertory of Germanic symbols from the Early Migration Period and up to the later phase of Animal Style I, their sum total and variety far exceeded most other images and objects. With its models and roots both in Antiquity and Late Antiquity and also in the Celtic world, and by virtue of its competent innovative powers, the intricate and independent imagery of the northern Germanic peoples interacted with the artistic community in the rest of Europe and was thus an important branch of the overall development. The gold collars are a manifestation of the synthetic Germanic culture.

A. P. – Translation: Sandy Hämmerle, www.prehistrans.com