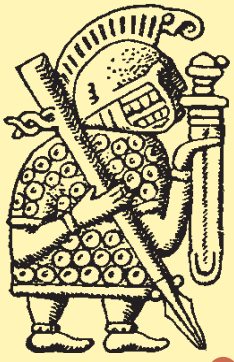

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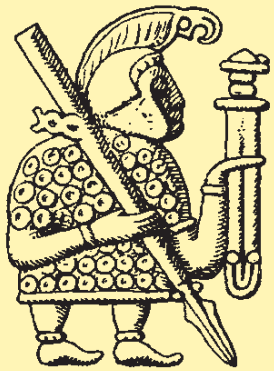

2022/2

Resources in death

The past in the late Viking Age burials in the cemetery of Havor, Gotland

By Matthias S. Toplak

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The cemetery of Havor, Hablingbo parish, on Gotland was in use from the Pre-Roman Iron Age to the early Vendel Period. In the late Viking Age, the local community decided to return to the traditional cemetery. The most prominent feature of those later Viking Age burials was the regular re-use of older graves. Even though secondary burials are widely known from Viking Age Gotland and mainland Scandinavia, the proportion was extraordinarily high at Havor. Furthermore, the secondary burials show a rather divergent interaction with the human remains from the primary burials. In some graves the disturbance of the older burial was avoided, while in many other graves the primary burial was dislocated or destroyed. Thus, the burials illustrate an intensive use of the past and local traditions and exhibit at least two different strategies in the interaction with the past and memories as resources for the local identity, from an integrative linkage to local traditions and the ancestors buried at Havor to a confrontative dissociation. Yet it was important for all communities that laid their dead to rest at Havor to link – and thus to legitimise – religious and socio-political transformations and new cultural influences to the traditional cemetery which was regarded as manifestation of a collective identity. Through the ostentatious references to the past and local traditions, the burials from the late Viking Age are a fascinating case study for the understanding and the socio-cultural adoption of the past for the construction of local identities.

Keywords: Viking Age, Gotland, past in the past, burial archaeology, secondary burials, identity

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1800 years of settlement continuity – the complex of Havor

The cemetery of Havor lies in the southern part of Gotland on the northern outskirts of Hablingbo parish, between the neighbouring parishes of Silte, Havdhem and Alva, around 8–9 kilometres east of the western shore of Gotland (fig. 1). It is part of a unique complex of archaeological features on the southern banks of the former lake and later moorland of Mästermyr, with an uninterrupted continuity of settlement from the late Bronze Age to the late Viking Age. Approximately 800 meters east of the cemetery lies a ringfort with the famous gold hoard (Nylén 1962; 2005), several buildings with stone foundations as well as the remains of further settlements in the direct surrounding area (Manneke 1965/66; 1968; 1971; 1972; 2005; Manneke et al. 2013). Parts of the area of Mästermyr were open lakeland until modern times and naviga-

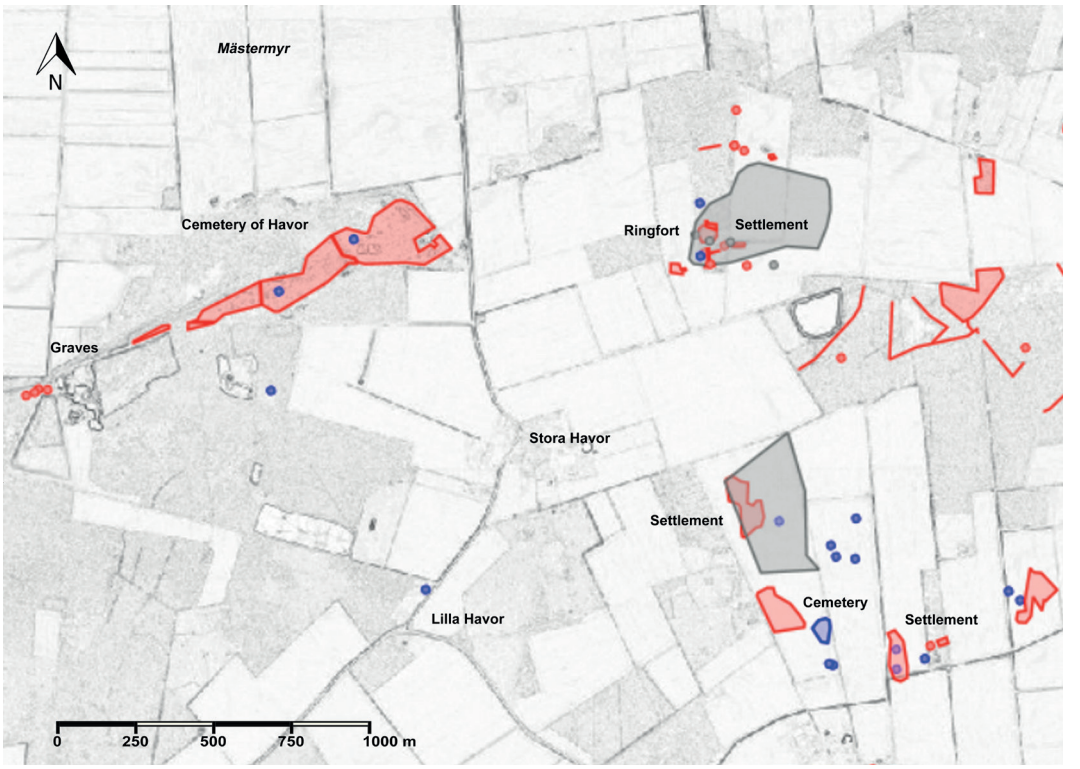


Fig. 1. Map of the area of Havor in Hablingbo parish with the cemetery of Havor, the settlement complex around the ringfort, traces of smaller Viking Age settlements and cemeteries a few hundred metres to the south, and the modern farmsteads of Stora and Lilla Havor. Map: Lantmäteriet; ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet. Reworked and redrawn by the author.

ble waterways connected Havor both with the eastern and western coast (Manneke et al. 2013, p. 6). Furthermore, there existed an important overland route from southern Gotland to the thing at Roma, passing Havor (Svedjemo 2018, p. 114). Thus, Havor was located at the crossroad of several key routes. Approximately 600 m southeast of the cemetery lies the eponymous farmstead of Stora Havor.

The large cemetery 'Rojrhagen' at Havor

The area of the cemetery – known as 'Rojrhagen' (i.e. 'grove of mounds') – is densely forested today and stretches around 750 meters from east-northeast to west-southwest on a gravel ridge (Nylén 1955, p. 61). It consisted of around 370 graves, marked on the surface with round stone settings or mounds. The north-eastern and probably oldest part of the cemetery was heavily disturbed by gravel extraction from the middle of the 19th century onwards and the extent as well as the original number of graves in this area remain uncertain. Due to time constraints and the partially dense vegetation, only three quarters of the approximately 370 graves at Havor were investigated. Furthermore, only visible grave structures were excavated so that potential flat graves without mounds or stone settings or secondary burials at the edges of larger grave mounds would have remained unnoticed.

Some few burials at Havor date back to Pre-Roman Iron Age and the early Roman Iron Age while the youngest burials can be dated to the late Viking Age (see Almgren 1914; Almgren & Nerman 1923; Nerman 1935; 1975; Nylén 1955, pp. 61–64; Thunmark-Nylén 2000,

pp. 291–306; Toplak 2021d). In the later Roman Iron Age, the number of burials increased significantly. Combined with the amount of gold jewellery and imported artefacts from the Roman Empire in several burials, this points to supra-regional contacts and an increasing significance of Havor in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. In the Migration Period, the number of burials almost halved. The finds of several complete and fragmented picture stones in (Viking Age) graves prove that the custom of erecting picture stones on some graves was also common at Havor in the Migration Period. Beside some imports from the South many finds from Migration Period graves at Havor point to intense contacts with the Scandinavian mainland and especially with the Eastern Baltic. The Vendel Period shows a radical change at Havor as the cemetery seems to have been abandoned in the course of the later 7th century for over 300 years, even though this pattern can theoretically be due to an insufficient state of research as neither all visible graves nor the entire surrounding area have ever been systematically investigated. However, it was not before the late Viking Age in the early 11th century that the cemetery of Havor was regularly used for another period of approximately 150 years. In total, 59 graves can be dated to the Viking Age with certainty and some 20 more graves with reservations (see Toplak 2022c for a detailed discussion). All burials that could safely be dated as Viking Age were inhumations, half of them under small mounds, the other half under flat stone settings. Thereby, three different groups of burials can be identified: two groups merging in the central area of the burial ground between the older graves – mainly those of the later Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period – and a third and slightly younger group, lying ostentatiously separated at the western edge of the cemetery. This separation might mirror three different farm communities that used the cemetery of Havor together and might still be visible in the separation of the three contemporary farms with the name Havor; Stora and Lilla Havor in Hablingbo parish and Havor in Havdhem parish (see Thunmark-Nylén 2006, p. 621; Svedjemo 2014, p. 147; 2018, p. 113) (fig. 2).

The finds in the Viking Age burials comprise mostly dress accessories. Weapons and additional grave goods were rare and limited to some axes, a single spearhead and some pottery or vessels of wood and non-ferrous metal. In most graves, the deceased were buried dressed in festive cos-

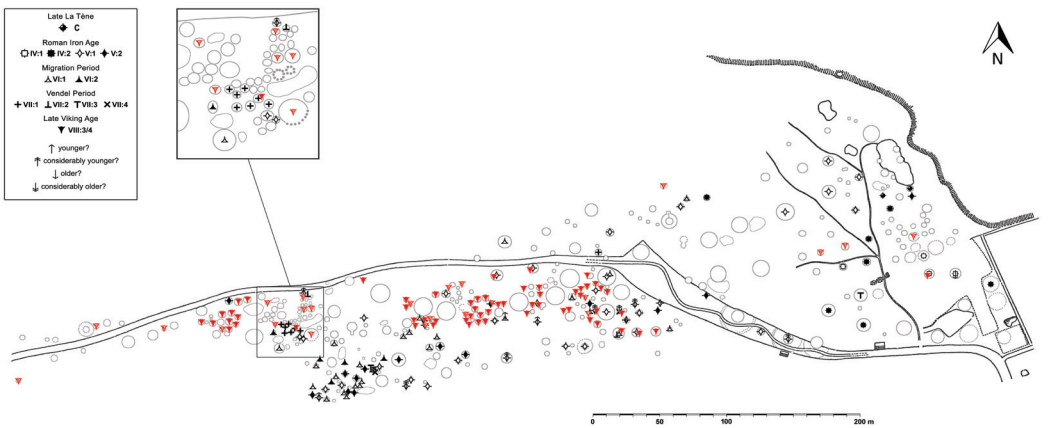


Fig. 2. Map of the cemetery of Havor, late Viking Age burials are marked in red. Map: ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet, Excavation Gabriel Gustafson 1884–1887. Reworked and redrawn by the author.

Fig. 3. Cross pendant of eastern type, perhaps manufactured in the area of Novgorod, from the late Viking Age burial of an adult male (grave 197). Photo: Gabriel Hildebrand 2011, SHM.

Fig. 4. Pennanular brooch of eastern Baltic type from the late Viking Age burial of an adult male (grave 124). Photo: Elisabet Pettersson 2006, SHM.

tumes or even in everyday dresses, similar to burials in late Viking Age churchyards on Gotland (see Thunmark-Nylén 1989; 1995; Staecker 1996; 1998; 2000; 2001). The combination of a cross-pendant (fig. 3) from one grave and the striking lack of decidedly pagan elements in the burials, might be taken as indication of an already strong Christian impact on the society of Havor despite the use of the traditional cemetery (see Thunmark-Nylén 2006, pp. 663–670, 697f; see also Gräslund 1984). Furthermore, many finds illustrate an influence from the Eastern Baltic, such as several penannular brooches (fig. 4) and bracelets. Two belts with oriental mounts and the cross-pendant as well as two bronze vessels (Trotzig 1991) bear witness to trade activities and far-reaching contacts, as do the burial of a probable male with filed teeth, which can be interpreted as an identification mark of trading communities (Toplak 2015; 2016, pp. 325–331; Toplak et al. 2021), and the burial of a female with an artificially deformed skull that might originate from Southeastern Europe or maybe even Central Asia (Toplak 2019) (fig. 5).

The past in the (Viking Age) past

Humans have always been confronted with the past, through the passing of time and the transition of experiences to memories or through the confrontation with the remains of a distant, yet renowned or a diffuse and mythical past, such as graves, ruins or other monuments (for the Viking Age see e.g. Artelius 2004; 2013; Artelius & Lindqvist 2005; 2007; Andrén 2013; Lund & Arwill-Nordbladh 2016; Fahlander 2016; 2018; Lund & Sindbæk 2021, pp. 18f). The perception of the 'past in the past' is thus of paramount importance for the understanding of past societies (see e.g. Bradley & Williams 1998; Hen & Innes 2000; Bradley 2002; Yoffee 2007; Aldrich & Wallis 2009; Georgiadis & Gallou 2009; Semple 2013). Yet, memories, traditions and 'the' past have never been stable and given facts but are persistent and dynamic processes in an active and selective social construction (Halbwachs 1992; see also Hållans Stenholm 2012, pp. 14–36). Consequently, the perception of 'the' past is fluid and prone to manipulation and must be divided into a mythical past, which is an abstract and legendary foretime beyond individual memory, and the genealogical past of concrete renowned ancestors and events (Gosden & Lock 1998; see also Hållans Stenholm 2006, p. 343; Andrén 2013, p. 269). The transitions between both concepts of the past are fluent: genealogical past can turn into mythical past over time while mythical past might be transformed into genealogical past, e.g. through constant references in ritual actions such as burials.

At the same time, memories, traditions and the past are pivotal for the perception and construction of the social identity of individuals and

Fig. 5. Drawing of the late Viking Age burial of a mature female with an artificially deformed skull in grave 192 (left) and artistic interpretation of the grave (right). Plan drawing: Gabriel Gustafson 1886; ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet. Reconstruction: Mirosław Kuźma/Matthias S. Toplak 2019.

groups and require constant interaction (for social identity see e.g. Tajfel et al. 1971; Tajfel 1975; Assmann 1986; Korostelina 2007; Raffield et al. 2015; Toplak 2019; Raffield 2020). Manifested in (ritual) actions, objects, monuments, places or ideas and beliefs, memories and traditions form a fundament for the construction of 'the' past. They must therefore be regarded as (in)tangible resources that can be used by human actors to connect past, present and even the future and to influence, negotiate or manipulate social reality, relations and identities (see Bartelheim et al. 2015; Hardenberg et al. 2017; Schade et al. 2021; Toplak 2022b). This perception of the past is especially important when dealing with burials and graves as thresholds between the past and

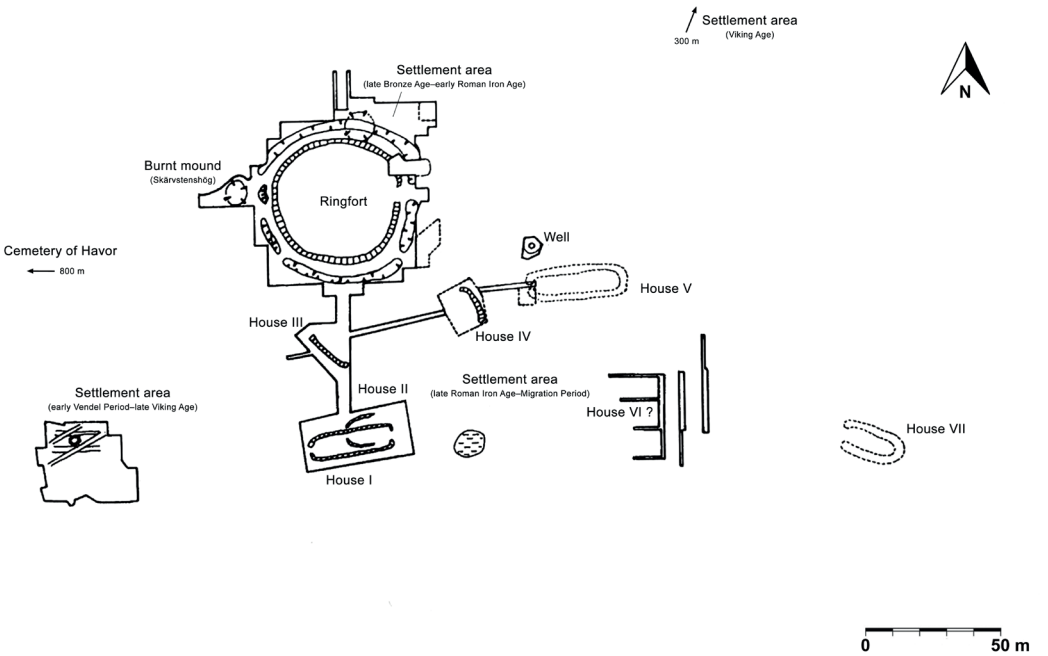


Fig. 6. Map of the settlement complex at Havor. Plan drawing: Reworked and redrawn by the author according to Manneke 2005, 108, fig. 7; taken from Rapportsammanställning 2013 (Dnr. 412-379-1996, Go, Hablingbo sn, Havor).

Fig. 7. The hoard from Havor, view into the bronze situla with the famous golden neck ring on top. Photo: Peter Manneke 1961, ATA, Riksantikvarieämbetet; taken from Rapportsammanställning 2013 (Dnr. 412-379-1996, Go, Hablingbo sn, Havor).

the present and this world and the otherworld; for example in the form of secondary burials, burials in or beneath older structures (see Cassel 1998, p. 153; Bokor 2019), older graves that were integrated into settlements (Lundström 1981, pp. 117–120; Widerström 2021, p. 273) or older objects as part of the grave structure (Burström 1996; Rundkvist 2012) or as grave goods (see Toplak 2022c for an intensive discussion).

The past as resource in the burial ceremony

As public ceremonies, burials serve as mediums of social discourses, allowing to present, construct or manipulate the identities of the deceased, the relatives and also of the entire society through the utilization of certain tangible or intangible resources such as grave goods, rituals or even emotions and atmospheres as technologies of remembrance (Jones 2003; see Williams 2003a; 2006; Sayer & Williams 2009; Toplak 2018b; 2021; 2022b; 2022c for a detailed discussion). Thus, also the integrative or confrontative attitude towards local traditions and the memory of 'the' past as formative elements of identity must be understood as intentional choice to regard or disregard certain resources (Williams 2006, pp. 11, 21f), e.g. in the ostentatious destruction or neglection of older graves or objects. Beside several other references to local traditions, such as the re-use of Migration period picture stones (see Toplak 2022c; Oehrl & Toplak in prep.) (fig. 8a–b), the two paramount aspects that must be discussed as ostentatious instrumentalization of this resource 'past' and that highlight the importance of traditions and local history for the social identity of the late Viking Age communities at Havor were the re-use of the cemetery after almost 300 years and the prominent feature of the unusually large number of secondary burials in older graves of a distant and mythic past. Therefore, it seems necessary to discuss the spiritual and socio-political functions of cemeteries and graves.

According to Heinrich Härke (2001; see also Williams 2002; 2006, pp. 196f) cemeteries must be interpreted as 'places of power' that have several different functions and meanings; as resting places for the dead and emotional sites for grief and memory (see e.g. Tarlow 1999; 2000; Williams 2007; 2010; 2013; 2014), as liminal places of transformations and thresholds to the spheres of the ancestors or as cult sites (see e.g. Baudou 1989; Gardeła 2016). As topographical sites, cemeteries can furthermore express claims to power and control over land, people and such also over the access to 'the' past. Consequently, three factors of power arise from these different functions and meanings (Härke 2001, pp. 19–29) that must be taken into consideration. Cemeteries have an inherent spiritual power through their function as liminal places between the world of the living and the spheres of the dead and thus between past, present and future, they are arenas for the display and exercise of power through ritual actions during funerals and ceremonies of remembrance that aim at the presentation, construction and manipulation of social identities and they are tools as well as expressions of power and rulership through the control over access and usage (see also Oestigaard & Goldhahn 2006; Wessman 2010, p. 96).

While the burial ground can be regarded as the frame that links a society with its individual members as well with its past and as a spatial containment of a different i.e. liminal sphere, the actual graves themselves are the manifestation of the past in the present, housing the remains of either concrete 'emergent ancestors' or abstract and mythical 'first principal ancestors' (Helms 1998, pp. 37–42). For this reason, graves are not only places for individual memory but also links in the continuous process of social remembrance and thus of the construction, negotiation, and manipulation of the past and consequently also of the social structures. The erection of new grave monuments implies the manifestation of certain identities, mentalities and ideologies and embeds them in the landscape, thus creating new or altering existing 'biography of places' (Küchler 1993; Cummings 2003, p. 35), which – as 'commemorative catalysts' – also affect the social structures (see e.g. Bradley 1993, pp. 45–68; 1998, pp. 51–68, 85–101; Jones 2003, p. 65; Williams 2006, p. 158; 2013, p. 197; Wickholm 2007; 2008). The burials of individuals on a certain cemetery integrate the deceased as well as the relatives not only in a social place, i.e. in the particular social group that uses (or used) the

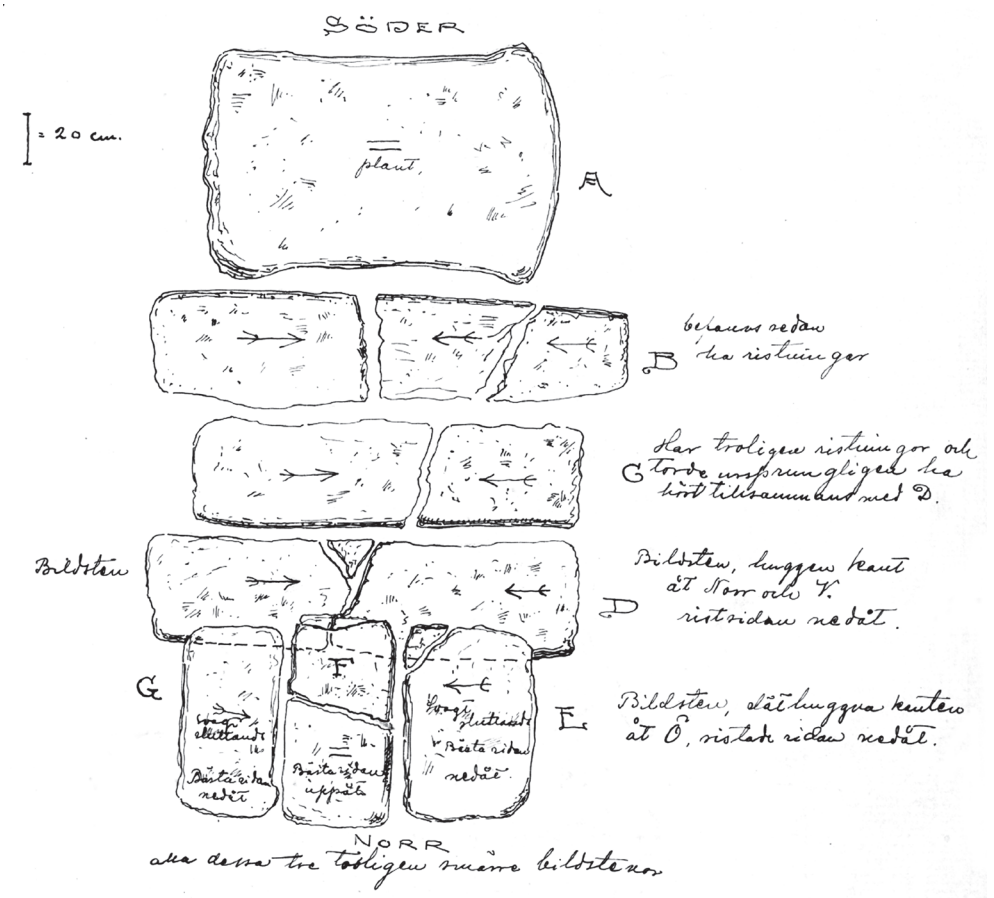


Fig. 8a–b. a) Migration Period picture stone Havor II with reconstructed painting from the inhumation burial of an adult male (grave 191), dating to the late Viking Age. Photo: Matthias S. Toplak 2016. b) Position of the picture stones Havor II–VII as covering slab over the burial. Drawing: Gabriel Gustafson 1886, ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet.

cemetery and in this group's past, but also in the landscape as a concrete spatial place and thus also in the biography of this place. In the process of active embedding of the deceased into the landscape and the ostentatious material as well as mental structuring of the landscape through grave monuments, burials do not only express a social identity, defined by the affiliation to a certain group and to a topographical territory, but they can also express claims of ownership or rulership over this landscape (see e.g. Bonney 1976; Charles-Edwards 1976; Dan Carlsson 1979, p. 150; 1981 for case studies). Especially grave mounds as widely visible monuments, that require both work effort and land can express claims for power and ownership (Bratt 2008, pp. 157–162; Thäte 2009, p. 108). Therefore, grave mounds in Viking Age society might also have been intended as manifestations or markers of Odal (see e.g. Andersson 1997, p. 53), which denotes land that has been inherited within one family for several generations (Zachrisson 1994, pp. 219–221; Ebel 2002). This possible perception of graves as manifestations of Odal is strongly connected with the ancient individuals in those graves that were either regarded as concrete and individually remembered 'emergent ancestors' or abstract and mythical 'first principal ancestors' (Helms 1998, pp. 37–42). Concrete or mythical ancestors are thus not only important defining factors for collective identities and the affiliation to certain social groups such as families, settlement societies or even nations (Murray 2016, p. 147). Through their graves, they are furthermore bound to certain places while simultaneously binding their descendants to these very places, creating a 'genealogy of place' (McAnany 1995, p. 99; see also Hill & Hageman 2016, p. 45). According to the Saxe/Goldstein Hypothesis (Saxe 1970, p. 119; Goldstein 1976, pp. 60f; 1981; see also Morris 1991, pp. 156, 161–163), they are consequently giving legitimacy for ownership or land use to their descendants and are "powerful social, economic, and cosmological agents who legitimize hierarchy and link lineages to resources" (Hill & Hageman 2016, p. 49; see also Gosden & Lock 1998, pp. 4–8; Lund & Arwill-Nordbladh 2016, p. 421; Weiss-Krejci 2016).

Secondary burials in the Viking Age

The re-use of older cemeteries after several centuries and secondary burials in older graves as post-funeral interaction with the ancestors or the ancient dead from a mythical past were common features in Viking Age Scandinavia and beyond even until the early Christian Period in the late 11th and early 12th century and must be regarded as "an integrated part of Late Iron Age and early medieval burial practices" (Fahlander 2016, p. 139; see also Artelius 2004; Thäte 2007, pp. 5f; Lund 2013, p. 53; for an overview see e.g. Gardeła & Kajkowski 2015; Aspöck et al. 2020). A wide range of possible interpretations for this custom has been brought forward; from profane reasons such as less amount of work to religious meanings such as ancestor worship, pagan backlashes in times of Christianization, hostile actions against old pagan traditions, religious dualism or syncretism or even a symbolic Christianization of the past (see e.g. Andersen 1995; Williams 2006, p. 117; 2016a, pp. 24f; Thäte 2007, p. 279; Artelius 2013, p. 37; Fahlander 2016, p. 139; 2018, pp. 57f). Viking Age secondary burials in older graves especially from the Bronze Age or the Roman Iron Age can be found on a large number of cemeteries (see Toplak 2022c for references) and up to 20% of the Iron Age cemeteries in Denmark, southern Sweden and the Swedish Mälaren valley exhibit secondary burials from the Viking Age (Pedersen 2006, p. 348; Thäte 2007, p. 166; Hållans Stenholm 2012, pp. 110, 131). However, in most of these cemeteries the number of secondary burials was rather low with only few cases. Figures for cemeteries with Viking Age secondary burials from eastern Sweden range between 1–15% (Hållans Stenholm 2006, pp. 278–291). While it seems possible that the secondary burials on some cemeteries might actually have been intended as links to a concrete genealogical past and as a continuous tradition (Thäte 2007, p. 276), especially in graves from the Vendel Period (Hållans Stenholm 2006, p. 343), secondary burials in centuries-old graves must rather be understood as attempts to create associations with a diffuse and mythical past (Fahlander 2018, pp. 51f), as an 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; see also Oestigaard 2015). Furthermore,

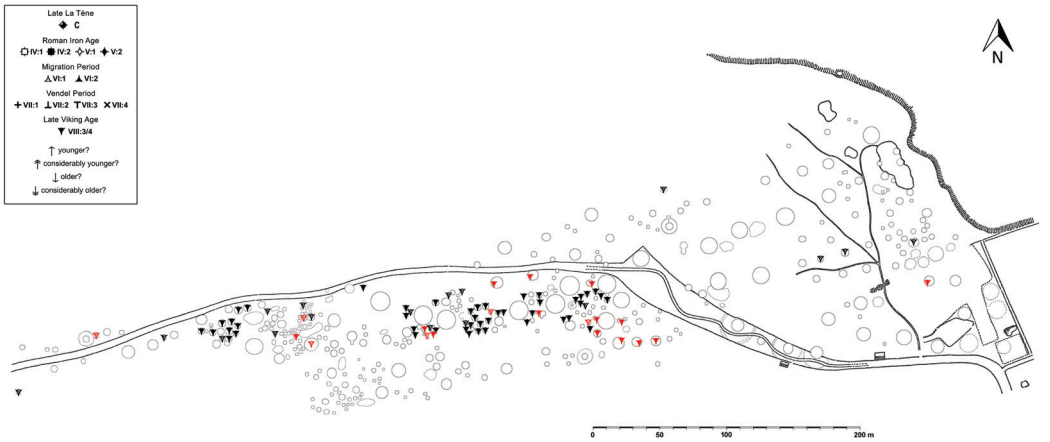


Fig. 9. Map of the late Viking Age secondary burials in the cemetery of Havor (marked in red). Plan drawing: Gabriel Gustafson 1884–1887, ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet. Reworked and redrawn by the author.

even the interaction with the grave monument and the remains of the primary burial differs significantly, ranging from a careful integration of the secondary burial into the primary grave monument or even into the primary burial itself (see e.g. Thäte 2007, pp. 277f; Semple 2013, p. 14; for the Slavic area see Gardeła 2020) to a disrespectful destruction of the primary burial (Fahlander 2016, pp. 152, 155f). This illustrates that one has to be aware of divergent motivations and ideological concepts behind this custom, perhaps dependent on chronological (and thus religious) developments with the upcoming Christianization (Fahlander 2016, pp. 144, 152) or reflecting different groups with different intentions.

Secondary burials at Havor

The custom of secondary burials at Havor was not limited to the late Viking Age as almost one dozen older burials – from the later Roman Iron Age to the later Vendel Period – were integrated into older graves (see Toplak 2022c). The most interesting example was a triple secondary burial in the grave of two men buried with weapons from the later Roman Iron Age. The first secondary burial dates to the Migration Period while the two others stem from the later Vendel Period when the cemetery was already largely abandoned. They can be interpreted as the last try of a leading family or a social group in a period of upheavals to ostentatiously link themselves to times before the decline of Havor.

Almost one quarter of the Viking Age burials at Havor were secondary burials in older graves. Their distribution reveals a striking pattern as most of them were located in the eastern part of the central area of the cemetery and thereby belonging to the eastern and the middle group of Viking Age graves. In contrast, the separated western group of Viking Age graves was almost completely lacking secondary burials, except for three burials at the eastern edge, from which only one can securely be dated to the Viking Age (fig. 9). Even though most of the primary graves can be dated to the later Roman Iron Age, graves from all periods – except for the Pre-Roman Iron Age – and both grave mounds and flat stone settings were used for Viking Age secondary burials. As in the rest of Scandinavia, the interaction with the primary burials differed significantly at Havor. In several graves it was apparently avoided to disturb the older burial and the Viking Age deceased were buried above the primary burial in a shallow pit beneath the surface or at the side of the older grave mound (fig. 10a–b). In some cases, the Iron Age stone cists were dug up only partially so that a layer

of soil remained between the primary and the secondary burial (fig. 11). In some other graves, the primary burial was disturbed or even completely destroyed. The Viking Age inhumations could be buried directly on top or even in the older cremation layer, older stone cists were fragmented and re-used as stone frame for the Viking Age burial and the few Iron Age inhumations were dislocated (fig. 12a–b). Hence the late Viking Age secondary burials at Havor exhibit a broad range of different interactions with the local past, from a respectful integration into local traditions to a distinct differentiation and even confrontation, that must be regarded as divergent strategies in the construction and consolidation of a distinct identity.

Discussion

The basis for this use of tradition and the past as a 'technology of remembrance' and furthermore as a more or less tangible resource to influence, negotiate or even manipulate the social reality was the re-use of the traditional cemetery at Havor after several centuries by two and later on three different groups, perhaps farm communities, and the proximity to the older graves. Even though it cannot be ruled out completely that some single burials from the early Viking Age remained unidentified on the burial ground, the major (and public) return to the cemetery did not happen before the beginning of the 11th century, although settlements existed through the entire Vendel Period and the Viking Age. Therefore, the return to the cemetery must be regarded as an intentional choice which is significantly striking considering the establishment of a churchyard around the early church at Hablingbo some 3 km southwest of Havor in the second half of the 11th century (see Rundkvist 2003b, p. 76). Despite the fact that the characteristics of the late Viking Age burials indicate the presence of an early Christian community at Havor, it was obviously of more importance to bury the deceased next to the ancient dead than to bury them in a sacred churchyard. This means that the resource 'past' or rather '(common) descent' was of greater value for the local identity than the resource 'Christianity' or 'new faith'. However, as some graves were found empty during the excavation despite the relatively good preservation conditions, Lena Thunmark-Nylén (2006, pp. 257f, 667) suggested that some deceased might have been exhumed later on and re-buried on a Christian churchyard. Such a *translatio* from a pagan to a Christian burial place was proposed by Knud J. Krogh (1982) for Jelling, but remains without parallels in Viking Age Scandinavia, as Jörn Staecker (2005, pp. 14f) rightly observes (see also Sindbæk et al. 2005 for a detailed discussion on this topic).

According to Ann-Mari Hållans Stenholm (2012, pp. 43, 240), this re-use of older graves as resource 'past' is characterized by a threefold structure: 1) The past and the ancestors as legitimating parameter; 2) the graves as representation of the past and the ancestors; 3) the re-use of older graves as ritual practice to legitimize status and property claims. Based on this structure, three central motivations for the re-use of the traditional cemetery of Havor in the late Viking Age must be discussed. 1) Due to its biography, reaching far back to a mythical past, and perhaps also due to its location and atmosphere, the cemetery was perceived as a powerful liminal place on a spiritual level, as a nodal point between this world and the world beyond and between the present and a distant and therefore mythical past, which therefore made it an especially advantageous – or even necessary in an apotropaic sense – burial place. 2) As burial place of the society's ancestors, the cemetery was of paramount importance on a social level for the identity of the late Viking Age communities in times of social and religious changes. As Tore Artelius (2013) states, the re-use of older – which means pre-Christian – burial mounds was of particular significance in the advent of Christianization as it could be utilized as a resource for an "ideological defence" (Artelius 2013, p. 37) against this religious upheavals through the preservation of a pre-Christian ideology. In a similar way, the reopening of older, i.e. decidedly pagan graves, by early Christian communities, e.g. in the Merovingian period in southern Germany, is – along with some other interpretative approaches (see e.g. Aspöck 2011; van Haperen 2017; Klevnäs et al. 2021; Aspöck et al. 2020) – often interpreted as a "retroactive Christianization" (Geary 1994,

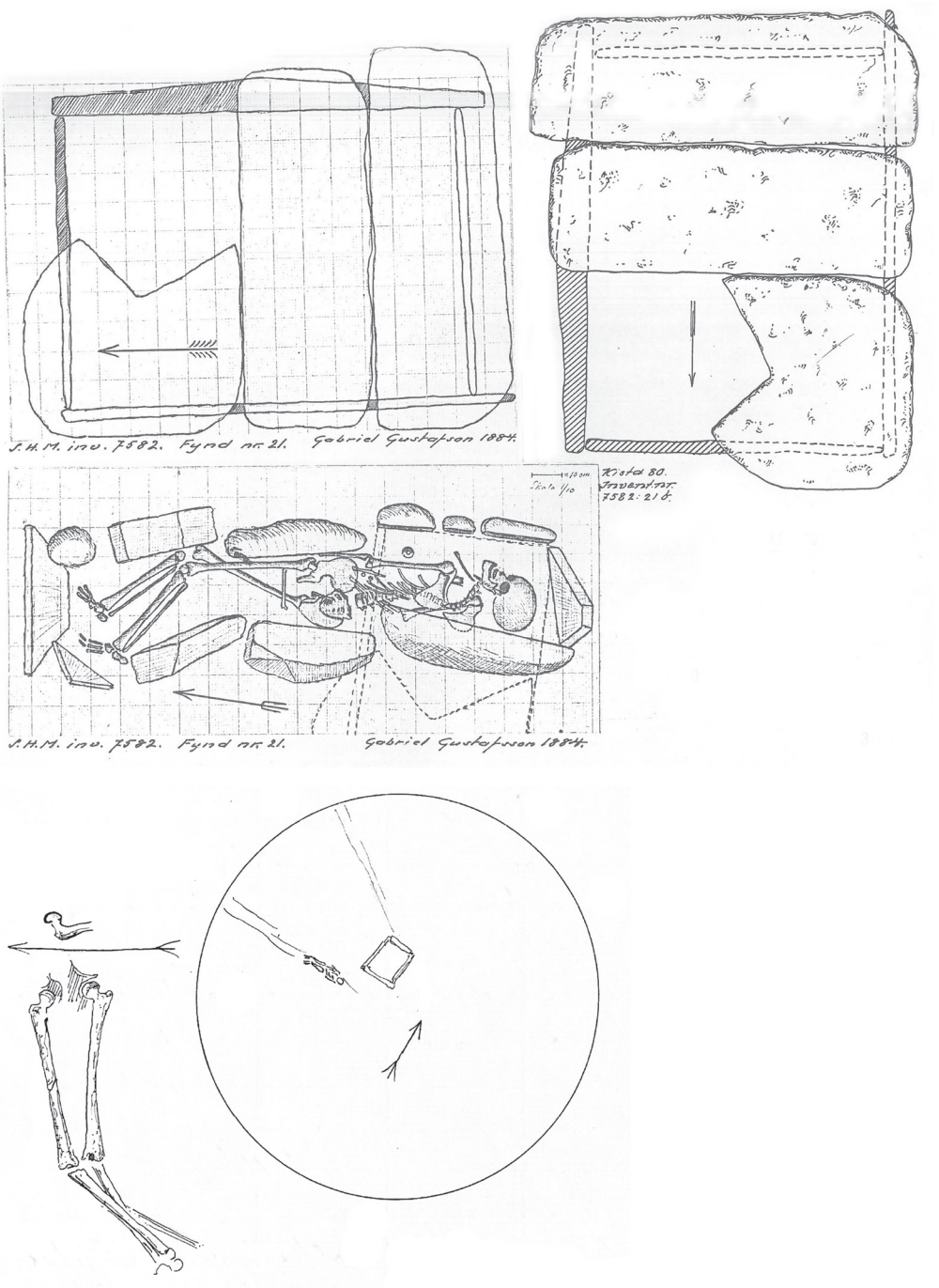


Fig. 10a–b. a) Drawing of the late Viking Age secondary burial in grave 21. The female deceased was buried on top of the stone cist of an early Migration period cremation burial; b) Drawing of the secondary burial in grave 186, probably dating to the late Viking Age. The deceased was buried in the periphery of a grave mound next to a stone cist from the later Roman Iron Age. Drawings: Gabriel Gustafson 1884–1887, ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet.

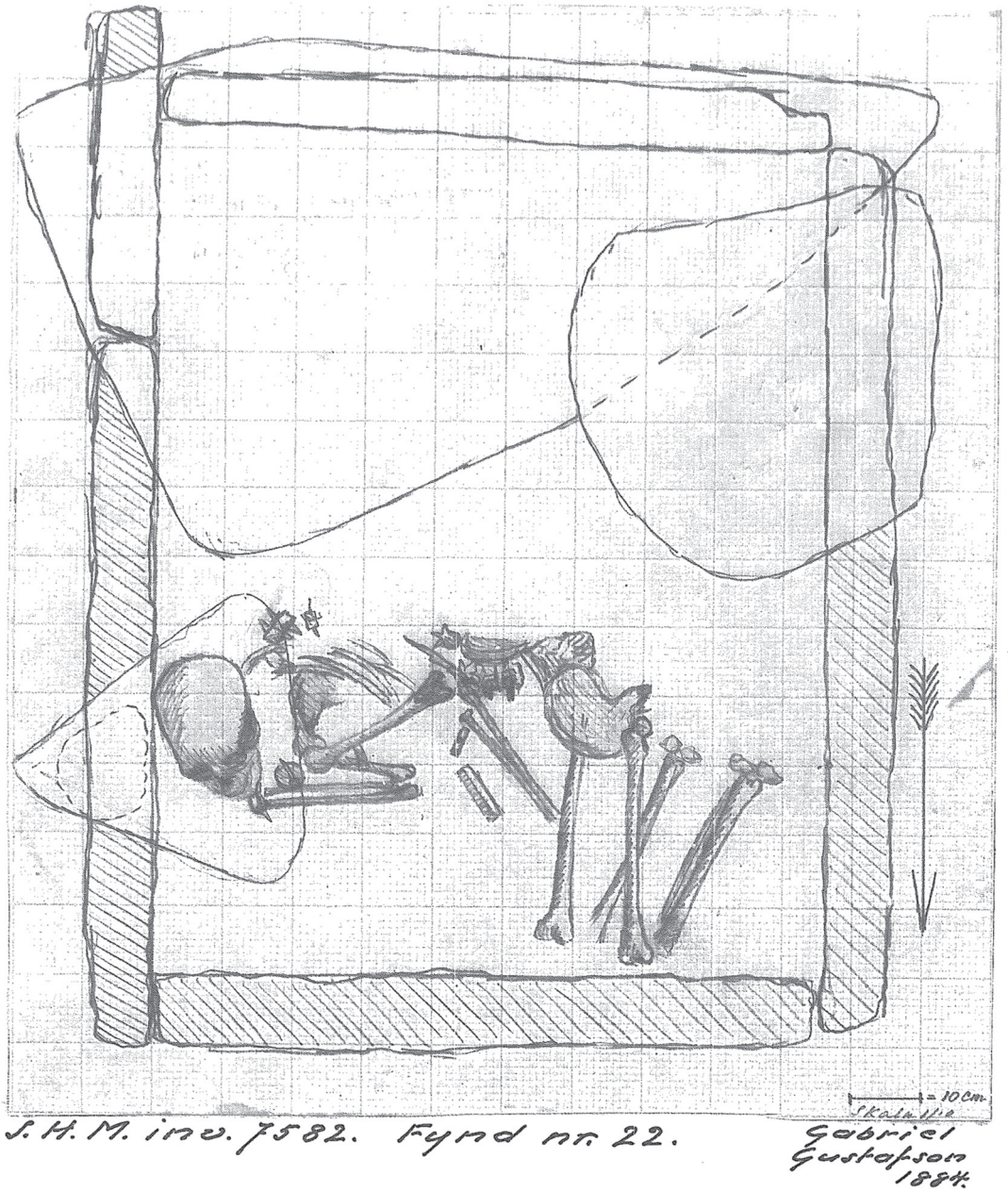


Fig. 11. Drawing of the late Viking Age secondary burial in grave 22. The female deceased was squeezed into the small stone cist from the later Roman Iron Age. The primary cremation burial was left intact, and the late Viking Age deceased was buried on a thick layer of soil directly beneath the covering slab. Drawing: Gabriel Gustafson 1884–1887, ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet.

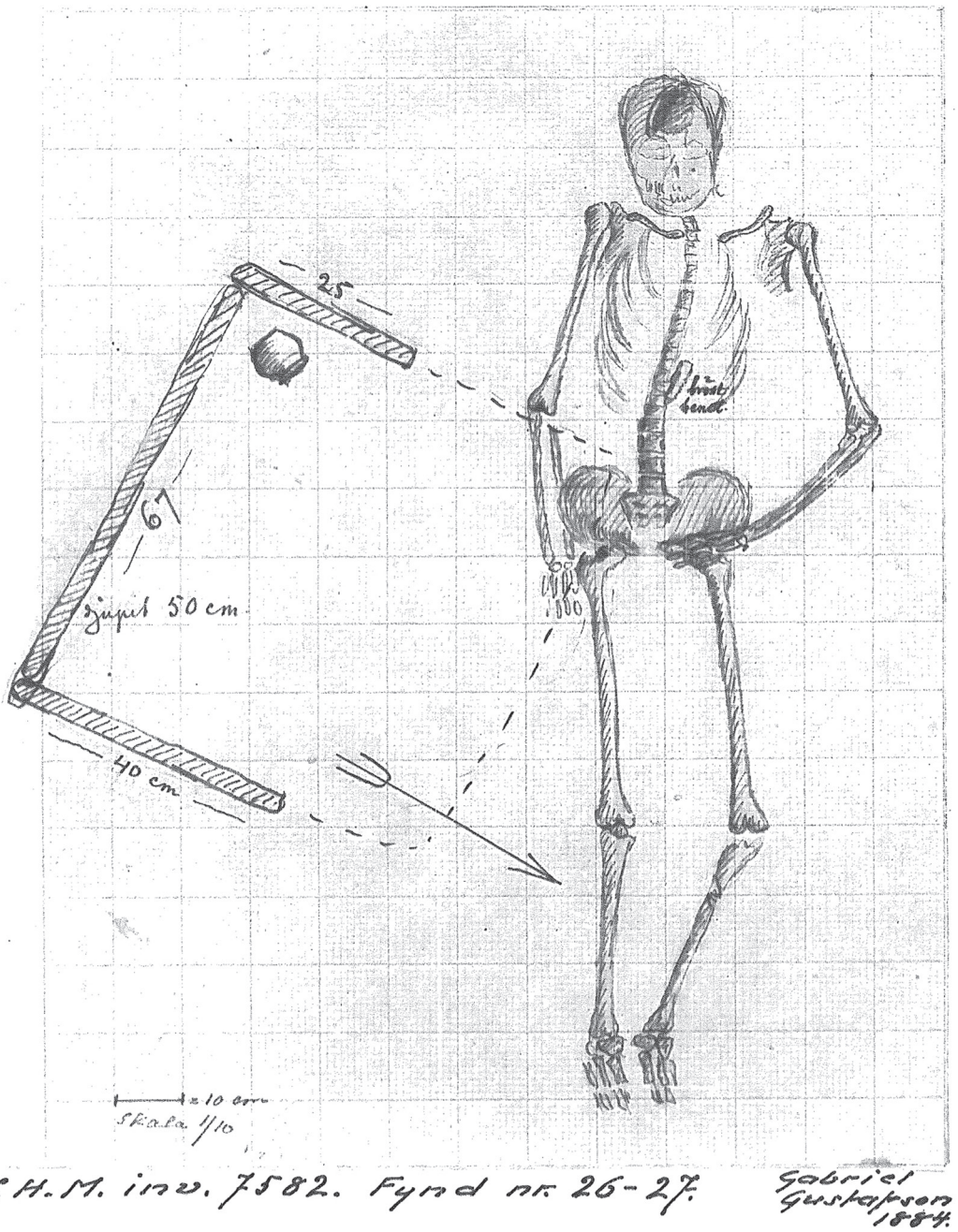
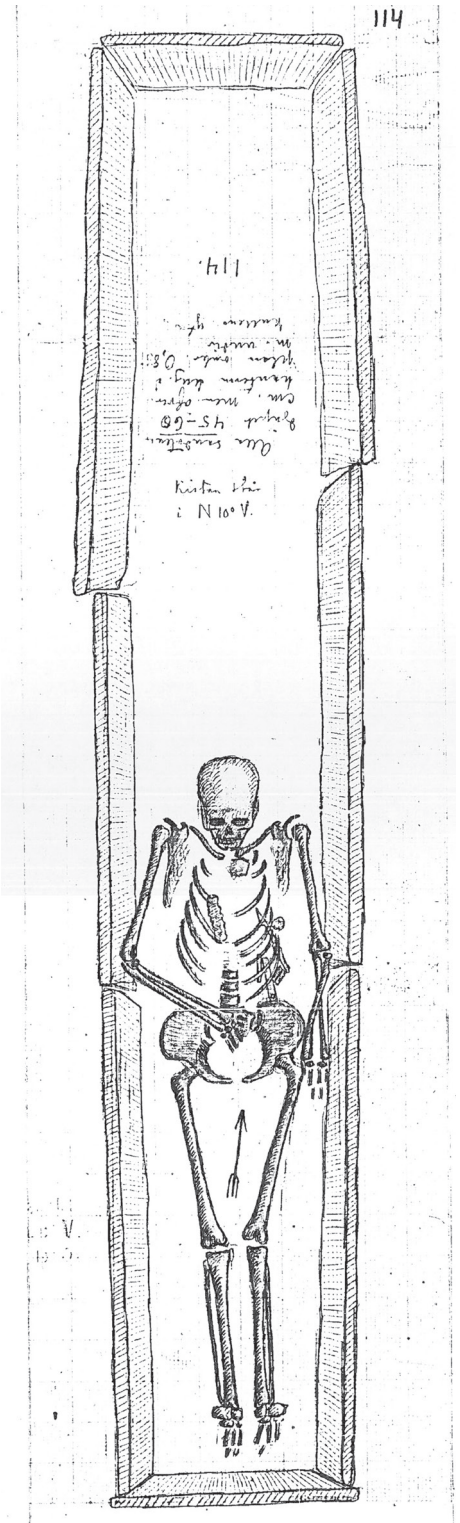


Fig. 12a–b. a) Drawing of the secondary burial in grave 27, probably dating to the late Viking Age. The stone cist of the primary burial, a cremation burial from the early Migration period, was destroyed to enable the secondary burial in the middle of the stone setting; b) Drawing of the late Viking Age secondary burial (grave 114) in an almost 3,5 m long stone cist from the later Roman Iron Age. The remains of the primary inhumation were removed or destroyed during the secondary burial. Drawings: Gabriel Gustafson 1884–1887, ATA/Riksantikvarieämbetet.



pp. 37–39; see also van Haperen 2017, pp. 23, 157f), or as a necessary act for a *translatio* of the dead into a consecrated Christian grave. As discussed above, a *translatio* cannot be ruled out completely in single cases in Havor. Based on the assumption that most of those that were buried in Havor in the late Viking Age were already members of an early Christians community (see Schülke 1999 for a discussion on this topic), the secondary burials at Havor point to an inclusive relationship between the new faith and the local past as a legitimizing parameter. In addition to Tore Artelius' 'conservative' interpretation, the re-use of pre-Christian graves in times of Christianization might have been intended not only as confrontation against a new ideology and enshrinement of old beliefs but also as incorporation of the Christian faith in local traditions. By burying their relatives between or even in older graves, people could link themselves, their memories, their traditions, and their perception of 'the' past with the biography of the place and by this consolidate or (re-)construct their social and religious identity. Thus, the (re-)constructing of 'the' past also provides a "meaningful context that legitimises the present" (Hållans Stenholm 2012, p. 240) to cope with transformations. The use of cemeteries for funerals but also for commemorative ceremonies can be an important tool for the establishment and maintenance of social relations, e.g. through the emotive force during the funeral (Williams 2007), giving a strong sense of belonging to a certain group, as opting in (Assmann 1986). Furthermore, it can alter, negotiate or even manipulate social reality and relations by constructing (new) collective identities, e.g. when different social groups use the burial ground together, thereby creating a collective genealogy. 3) On a socio-political level, the cemetery certainly was used as medium for the legitimation and exercise of power in a more or less classical, i.e. economical definition of resource (see e.g. Giddens 1984, p. 258) through the control over access and use of the area. Burials on the older cemetery and between the older graves could furthermore be interpreted not only as expressions of a local identity but also as expressions of Odal mentality and thus claims to power and ownership because of the (alleged)

descent from the ancient dead which transforms the resource 'past' into concrete possession. The concept of 'ancestor worship' or 'ancestor veneration' was and still is clearly overstressed in archaeological theory as 'one-fits-all-explanation' for all different approaches to the past in the past (see e.g. Whitley 2002; Halsall 2010, pp. 245f). However, ideas of ancestors and descent are strongly connected with claims for power and of central significance for the understanding of the perception of older graves and cemeteries (Gosden & Lock 1998, pp. 4–8; Thäte 2009, pp. 105f; Semple 2013, p. 63; Lund & Arwill-Nordbladh 2016, p. 421). It still remains unclear if those individuals who were buried in the older graves at Havor centuries before the Viking Age were individually remembered 'emergent ancestors', abstract 'first principal ancestors' or legendary, mythological-cosmological founding fathers. Due to the unbroken settlement continuity at Havor, it seems possible that the late Viking Age communities actually descended from those ancient dead. However, in oral societies the remembrance of the past tends to become diffuse after 150–200 years (Montell 1996, p. 178) and genealogical past becomes mythical past (see Fahlander 2016, p. 154). Following Richard Bradley (1987), the re-use of Havor must rather be understood as a '(re)invention of tradition' and a "creation of ancestry" (Semple 2013, p. 107).

Those different strategies and motivations for the re-use of the old cemetery are clearly mirrored in the distribution of the Viking Age burials in relation to the older graves and the interaction with those burials. As stated above, three different groups of Viking Age burials can be identified, presumably reflecting three different farming communities. Two groups, subsequently merging into one another and of a largely homogenous character concerning the form of the graves, the find material and the gender distribution, were lying in the central area of the burial ground between the older graves of the later Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period. It was obviously of paramount importance for those two groups to bury their deceased not only in this cemetery but in close proximity to the older graves as liminal thresholds to the past and the other world or as housing of the ancestors. This integrative instrumentalization of the resource 'local past' could establish or strengthen the social identity of the people that (re-)use Havor as cemetery as members of a certain society which was rooted in local traditions, and maybe even provide legitimation for power and land. The third group of Viking Age burials, in contrast, was lying ostentatiously separated at the western edge of the cemetery, apart from the contemporary burials and in a closed cluster. Thus, the resource 'past' was utilized in an ostentatiously dissociative way. For this separation, two explanations can be brought forward. The access to the core area of the cemetery could have been denied to this third community so that the proximity to the older graves ultimately signals power and control over a topographical space in terms of a sociotopography for the two other groups while it simultaneously marginalizes the third group as outcast. In turn, rather than being the result of limitations, the separated location of the third burial group might have been an intended dissociation from the collective identity which is manifested in the older graves. The interior social identity of the members in this group could have been more important than the affiliation to the entire community at Havor that was defined by the descent from the ancestors in the old graves. Nevertheless, the traditional cemetery of Havor was still of relevance for this group as they decided to bury their deceased at least at the margin of the burial ground instead of using another place. In this way, the third group could instrumentalize the resource 'local past' one the one hand to link their own identity as separated (and maybe newly arrived) community to this place to legitimize their claim for power while on the other hand distancing themselves from the two other communities that buried their dead at Havor. This second explanation seems more probable, based on the specific archaeological evidence. On the one hand, many burials of this third group were located under clearly visible burial mounds, which can be understood as an ostentatious signal that not only emphasised the presence of this group in the community around Havor, but also expressed claims to power. On the other hand, the find material

of many graves of this third group indicates that the individuals buried there were members of a socio-politically consolidated community with far-reaching contacts. This behaviour mirrors the threefold process in the re-use of older graves as it was postulated by Richard Bradley (2002, pp. 122ff): interpretation – confrontation – legitimation (see also Hållans Stenholm 2006, p. 344) through dissociation, while the two central groups' interaction with the older graves was focused on integration. These different strategies at Havor are also visible in the interaction with older graves. Secondary burials in older Iron Age graves, as characteristic of the late Viking Age phase at Havor, are completely missing in this third, separated group of graves, even though it would theoretically have been possible to use some of the adjacent graves from the Migration and early Vendel Period. Again, this might theoretically result from social or even religious limitations that forbid the use of old graves for this distinct group. More likely, based on the archaeological evidence discussed above, is that it reflects an intentional decision of dissociation. However, it strengthens the pattern that became visible with the marginalized location of these graves. It can be assumed that this third group consisted of newly arrived settlers that came to Havor from other places around Gotland or that this community emerged from the two other groups – perhaps as a result of the increasing trading activities on Gotland and at Havor. This hypothesis finds support in the divergent character of many of these graves. In contrast to the two other groups, there were only two and thus significant few female burials in this third group and one out these of two female burials was the grave of the female with an artificially deformed skull which can be assumed to originate from outside Gotland. Even the content of many graves in this eastern group differ in several aspects from the rest of the cemetery. Some burials exhibit distinct eastern influences; oriental belts, for instance, were limited to graves in this eastern group while typical Gotlandic lamellar belts were found only in graves of the two other groups. Also, the cross pendant, as only explicit symbol of the Christian faith, comes from a male burial in this eastern group as well as both bronze vessels. The two other groups, in contrast, reveal striking patterns in the choice of the graves for secondary burials. In the eastern of these two groups, both graves under stone settings as well as grave mounds were used for secondary burials, but no new grave mounds were built. Despite the fact that the Viking Age graves of the western group were lying between older grave mounds, only two distinctly separated older grave mounds were re-used. It can be argued that this pattern in the erection of new and the re-use of old grave mounds was especially connected to the concept of Odal and that secondary burials in the old grave mounds as visible monuments of the past gave a specific legitimacy. In addition, most of these secondary burials in older grave mounds belong to the earliest burials from the late Viking Age and could thus reflect the re-occupation of the cemetery by leading families that settled at Havor for generations or even centuries. Secondary burials in grave mounds could therefore have been limited to certain individuals or families which might explain why a large number of grave mounds from the older periods remained neglected and almost half of the Viking Age secondary burials were found under flat stone settings. This feature supports the interpretation that the separated location of the burials in the third group in the eastern part of the cemetery, which were placed under burial mounds in almost half of the cases, should not be understood as a passive exclusion of this group, but as an active disassociation. However, this pattern is not entirely without parallels (see Fahlander 2016, pp. 158–150; 2018, pp. 57, 60). It was perhaps especially this neutral shape of the graves and their unknown status that made them suitable as link to the past (see Fahlander 2018, p. 57).

While these patterns in the choice of the grave monuments for secondary burials reflect the attitude towards both the past and the contemporary society at Havor on a macroscale, the interaction with the remains of the primary burials must be discussed as deliberate bond to or dissociation from the ancient dead on an individual level, i.e., a microscale. These interactions differed significantly, even within this very limited temporal and spatial frame at Havor and

cannot be explained with chronological or religious changes or developments but must be regarded as different socio-political strategies in the use of the past. Certain patterns between the outer form of the grave – grave mounds or stone settings – and the form of interaction with the primary burial could not be observed.

In some secondary burials, both the disruption of and a close proximity to the actual primary burial was avoided and the deceased was interred for instance at the edges of the older grave mound (cf. fig. 10b). This suggests that it was rather the grave monument as 'liminal place' and as manifestation of the past than the metaphysical presence of the ancestors that was of importance for the social identity of the deceased and the relatives but that the ancient dead were either respected or even feared. At first glance, it seems reasonable to put forward a similar explanation which focuses on the monument rather than the ancient dead in those cases in which the Viking Age burial disrupted the primary burial, especially older inhumation burials that were dislocated deliberately. While the destructive interactions with the remains of the primary burial appear as signs of disinterest rather than fear on first sight, they might have had a concrete intention. Based on the interpretation of the regular reopening of graves as intentional acts of the elimination of memory by other groups as was suggested by Alison Klevnäs (2013; 2015; 2016; see also Fahlander 2008), this interaction with the remains of the ancient dead may also reflect intentional forgetting through dissection or superimposition as it might reflect active remembering (Hållans Stenholm 2012, p. 244). However, using the approach of the 'ontological turn' (see e.g. Alberti & Bray 2009; Watts 2013), Fredrik Fahlander (2016, p. 153; 2018, pp. 51f, 60) suggests that the older burials were perceived as a certain kind of resources, as powerful materialities beyond time that required some form of interaction (cf. Williams 1998, p. 97). The central aspect would thus not have been the link to genealogical or emergent ancestors but the perception of bones and cremated remains as manifestation of a mythical past (Hållans Stenholm 2012, p. 42) and "a special type of materiality oscillating between nature and culture" (Fahlander 2016, p. 155). Due to its liminality as threshold between past and present, the world of the living and the spheres of the dead, this "materiality of the ancient dead" (Fahlander 2016, p. 154) could have been perceived as possessing a certain 'agency' (see Barrett 2000; 2001; 2012; Dobres & Robb 2000; 2005; cf. Kristeva 1980 for the concept of 'abjects') which supports the deceased's journey to the afterlife or the transformation into an ancestor. This concept of a merging of the Viking Age deceased with the remains of the ancient dead into a "duovidual" (Fahlander 2016, p. 155; see also Williams 2001; 2005; Hedeager 2011, pp. 81–96; Fahlander 2013; Toplak 2022a for the concept of an 'ideology of transformation'), as the embodiment of a new identity between past and present, appears especially convincing in these secondary burials in which the Viking Age individual was buried on top or even in the cremation layer of the primary burial or in which the stone cists of the primary burial were fragmented and re-used for the Viking Age burial. This different perception and the re-use of the older burial as basis for the new funeral continued and transformed the object biographies (see e.g. Kopytoff 1986; Thomas 1996, pp. 141–182; Gosden & Marshall 1999; Hoskins 2006; Boschung et al. 2015) of the stone cists and even of the human remains of the primary burials and entangled traditions, the knowledge of the past and maybe even mythical biographies of the ancient dead with the Viking Age deceased as ostentatious fusion of past and present. Based on this approach, even an active preservation of memory through objects related to burials seems possible. As Tore Artelius and Mats Lindqvist (Artelius & Lindqvist 2005) showed with their case study on the imitation of pre-Roman Age burial customs in Viking Age Västergötland, simple objects such as small stone flakes can be utilized as "as a projection of the past and as a very concrete way to identify ancestors" (Artelius & Lindqvist 2005, p. 27). Thus, not only stone flakes that were deposited in the Viking Age graves as imitation of pre-Roman Age burial customs but also stone flakes that were kept by the relatives possess a certain agency that is able to link past and present. In

line with this new 'chapter' in the biography of objects connected with older graves, even the primary burial or parts of it must be regarded as resources that could have been instrumentalized as agent(s) to alter or negotiate social reality. Objects from the grave such as bones, cremated remains, artefacts or fragments from the stone cists, could have been removed and served as 'mortuary citations' (Williams 2016b) during other funerals, commemorative ceremonies or even everyday life (see e.g. Glørstad & Røstad 2015). In this way, the remembrance of this distinct funeral would be enshrined in the collective memory as an active and dynamic part of the local society by visible, circulating artefacts (cf. Kümmel 2008; 2009; van Haperen 2017, pp. 187f), while at the same time being prone to continuous (re)interpretations and (re)contextualizations in the process of the construction of social memory (see e.g. Jones 2003, pp. 65–67; Williams 2003b; 2006, pp. 40f, 170f; 2016b). Such an interpretation can be brought forward in two specific Viking Age burials. In a secondary burial, only very few bones of the primary burial were found (cf. fig. 12b) which allows the theory, that bones of the 'ancient dead' were taken from the grave during the Viking Age funeral (cf. van Haperen 2017, p. 187f). Furthermore, one of the oldest Viking Age graves at Havor was opened some time after the funeral. The bones of the upper body that had been dislocated during the grave opening had been carefully deposited in stacks on the left side of the skeleton's body, indicating an intentional secondary grave opening in the context of multilayered burial rites. According to the excavation documentation, the bone material was incomplete and bones seem to have been removed during this secondary grave opening. Thus, a reduction of secondary burials – and in general the use of the past as resource – as sheer medium to legitimize claims for power or ownership is certainly far too simplistic due to the large variation, the different contexts and the divergent interpretational approaches one can offer for this custom (see Hållans Stenholm 2006, p. 344). However, the perception of and the interaction with the past and local traditions – e.g. on a material level through the re-use of older cemeteries, secondary burials or artefacts as mnemonic citations – was obviously of paramount importance for the presentation or construction of different facets of local, regional, political or religious identities and thus also for concepts of authority and legitimacy (Semple 2013, pp. 3–7). Similar to the preceding Iron Age periods (Cassel 1998, pp. 122–128; 159–162, 181; Svedjemo 2014, pp. 189f; 2017, pp. 186f see also Toplak 2022c), the socio-political system of the Gotlandic Viking Age was characterized by a little hierarchical, small-scale community consisting of individual, internally stratified familial associations. Overarching ruling structures of a royal central power cannot be identified on Gotland (Svedjemo 2017, pp. 186f). Instead, a flat social stratification can be assumed (Jansson 2021, p. 330), consisting of a large group of free peasants and of a small group of richer families as a quasi-aristocratic elite (Hyenstrand 1989, pp. 13, 80; Carlsson 1990, pp. 6, 12; Blomkvist 2002, pp. 110f; Shepard 2021, pp. 4f; in contrast, see Siltberg 2008, p. 312). This flat social stratification and the decentralized socio-political system was prone to external influences such as the extensive long distance trade which initially started from a large number of smaller port and trading sites on the Gotland coast as interfaces (Carlsson 1998; 2004; 2021, pp. 226–228; Thunmark-Nylén 2006), and was re-organised in the later Viking Age through a re-orientation of trade routes (Jonsson 1997, pp. 9f; Blomkvist 2002, pp. 124f) and an centralisation in early Visby (see Toplak 2016, pp. 7–14). In the same way, both the intensified relations with the neighbouring Svear realm – which might have led to a socio-political as well as an economic crisis on Gotland in the early and middle 11th century (Blomkvist 2002, p. 198; Jansson 2021, pp. 321f) – and the diffuse, unstructured and dynamical Christianisation entailed massive social and religious upheavals and as a consequence a strong social and identitary heterogeneity. This is exemplified by the motif variance of Viking Age picture stones (see especially Lindqvist 1941; 1942; Oehrl 2019) and especially by the striking diversity of Christian burial practices (see for example Thunmark-Nylén 1983; 1989; 1995; Gräslund 1984; Staecker 1998; 2000;

2001; Toplak 2016, pp. 316–319; 2017; 2018a; Ljung 2020). Thus, both older, pagan cemeteries and newly established churchyards were used for burials contemporaneously for a longer period of time (Staecker 2001, p. 241; Rundkvist 2003a, p. 77; 2003b, p. 78). In addition, a number of late Viking Age burials with Christian elements can be found in many traditional cemeteries between older pagan graves. Therefore, the cause for these two different burial traditions obviously did not lie in a sheer chronologically conditioned replacement of the older (pagan) cemeteries by (Christian) churchyards. Rather, it can be assumed that the parallel use of traditional cemeteries and churchyards reflects different expressions of localization in the social (and religious) context, in the field of tension between time-honored traditions and a connection to the ancestors and the local past on the one hand, and the possibility of constructing new identities based on Christianity on the other.

This clearly heterogeneous society of the Gotlandic Viking Age, which can be identified on a macro level, characterized by different religious and social approaches to the construction and presentation of a local identity is also reflected on a meso level in the divergent interaction with the local past as social and religious resource in the Viking Age burials on the cemetery of Havor. In accordance with the archaeological evidence from the rest of Gotland, the use of the past in the Viking Age past at Havor indicates a society in social as well as religious upheaval.

Conclusion

The re-use of the old cemetery at Havor in the late Viking Age and the location of the burials between and even in older graves exhibit different strategies in this use of the past as resource and thus presumably also different social groups. The memories, ideas, beliefs and even the legitimations that are manifested in the past and in local traditions were contextualized in a new way during the funeral ceremony to illustrate, construct or even to manipulate social reality. Thus, they must be regarded as a form of resources, just as older graves, that could have been perceived as important spiritual and eschatological thresholds into other spheres that facilitate the soul journey of the deceased or the transformation into an ancestor. They could visualize or establish links to individual genealogical or emergent ancestors to claim descent from certain individuals or social groups and thereby legitimize claims for ownership and power through the link to or the control over the past. They could link to the past of the entire community to strengthen their social identity in times of political and religious upheavals, or they could even link to a rather diffuse past of the topographical place which allows to integrate new social groups, new ideologies or beliefs and thus to re-invent local traditions. Furthermore, funerals in older cemeteries could also be used for a deliberate dissociation from the local identity through confrontation with certain traditions and customs or simply through omission of older graves as resources. The interactions with older graves are thus perhaps the most long-lasting expressions of identities. The new conceptualisation of 'resources' allows a holistic analysis of human actions by disaggregating these processes into actors, influences, and motivations, thus providing far more differentiated but also critical perspectives on human behaviour and the cultural valuation of symbols, norms and traditions as means of the maintenance or transformation of society.

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