



# Ancient Germanic Warriors

WARRIOR STYLES FROM TRAJAN'S COLUMN  
TO ICELANDIC SAGAS

Michael P. Speidel

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*Michael P. Speidel*



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TO ANTHONY BIRLEY IN FRIENDSHIP

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## PREFACE

Iron Age warriors, shapers of Europe, first came to my mind on a cold winter day in 1948 when my twin brother and I crossed frozen Lake Greifensee in Switzerland. As we came through the fog to the far shore, the ruins of Fort Irgenhausen rose before us. The walls, so a sign said, were Roman. We gasped at the depth of time, wondering about Romans who had lived in heated buildings and banished the frost that bit our fingers. We wondered too about the Alamanni outside the fort, shivering and howling in the woods—*ferum ululantes et lugubre*, as Ammianus gives to understand—but who in their turn became lords of the land.

My scholarly interest in ancient warrior styles awoke years later when I saw that the reliefs in scene 36 of Trajan's Column show the men nearest the emperor to be bare-chested and barefooted, followed by club-wielders, wolf- and bear-warriors, and wearers of crossband helmets—all representing Germanic, not Roman, warrior styles. Trying to understand these warrior styles, to trace them in the ancient sources, and to see them in the context of world history, took ten years of work.

War is anguish and must not be idealized. Yet it also leads to some of mankind's most intense outbursts of life—it is hard not to be stirred by the daring and ecstasy of Iron Age warriors.

Mt. Tantalus and Maleakahana,  
Honolulu, Summer 2003

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Ever-generous Idus Newby, Professor Emeritus and former Chair of the History Department at the University of Hawaii, turned my phrases as he did with *Riding for Caesar*. Gisela, my wife, shared in this as in all my quests; we traveled together in search of sources to the far corners of the earth from Iceland to Fireland, and in countless conversations and manuscript readings she straightened the lines of reasoning.

## INTRODUCTION

### Ancient warrior styles

Archaic warriors everywhere re-enacted in masked dances the deeds of gods and ancestors. They did so to gain the divine ecstasy of “the beginning of time.” Germanic warriors too danced in this way. In battle, when it mattered most to live in mythical time, warriors bodied forth gods and ancestors by fighting in their style.<sup>1</sup>

Batavi going to battle sang of “Hercules,” their ancestral, club-wielding hero. As the hero inspired them, one may assume that some among them fought with clubs in the hero’s style. Gods and hero-ancestors no doubt were models also for wolf-warriors, long-hairs, ghost warriors, *barritus*-dancers, and naked berserks. New finds may one day tell us of the mythic models of other warrior styles as well.

Such styles upheld tribal traditions, culture, and identity. They also heartened the individual warrior: becoming greater than himself, a part of the tribe’s past and future, he rose above whatever might befall him in battle. He fulfilled his role by fighting as his forefathers had done and as those after him would do.

Arising from beliefs and states of mind as well as from weapons, warrior styles manifest themselves in dress, weaponry, and fighting technique. Therein lies their fascination. As a battle leader dons a “mask of command,” so warriors, in the words of Wallace Stevens, don “an inhuman person, a mask, a spirit, an accoutrement,” which captures well the link between outfit and outlook that underlies warrior styles.<sup>2</sup>

“Styles” are a flexible, inclusive concept: some are narrowly technical, others idea-bound, and all shade into others: wolf-warriors might go berserk, shield warriors wield clubs, and long-hairs fight as horse-stabbers. It is nevertheless helpful to focus on specific styles, for it brings into view something of the looks, mind-set, and fighting techniques—and perhaps the essence—of each style.

Warrior styles have much to offer our understanding of history. They tell us how long ago, when war was still welcome, fighting men reached the state of ecstasy that led them to do astounding things.<sup>3</sup> They lead us into the heart of Vedic Indian, Homeric, Celtic, and Germanic civilizations, where fighting prowess was the measure of a man.<sup>4</sup> They link the Bronze, Iron, and Middle Ages—two thousand years of history seldom seen as belonging together. They often turned the wheel of events during these many years: wolf-warriors founded Rome in 753 BC, enthroned Emperor Constantine in AD 306, and united Norway in the battle of Hafrsfjord in AD 872; and horse-stabbers won the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BC that turned Rome from a republic into a monarchy.

Found during the Bronze Age almost everywhere in Europe and West Asia, these styles gave way among classical Greeks and Romans to “rational” warfare. In middle and northern Europe, however, warriors followed the old styles throughout the Iron Age and early Middle Ages. There one can study them in detail and trace their history.

Not that scholars have ignored these styles. Good work has been done, above all, on Indo-European warriors. But no one has treated Indo-European or Germanic warrior

styles as a whole. Though modern surveys overlook them, they are well worth studying for their great role in history and for the light they shed on the minds of men who lived so long ago.<sup>5</sup> Much that is offered here is new, and our study carries the risks of pioneering endeavor. Yet chances are good of winning fresh insights from a thorough reading of both Roman and Germanic evidence. Roman evidence is trustworthier than is often acknowledged—ancient writers and sculptors knew their times better than modern critics.<sup>6</sup> Besides, Roman evidence keeps growing: new archaeological and epigraphic sources come to light every year, widening and deepening our knowledge of Germanic warriors during the first five centuries of our era.

Germanic evidence too has grown greatly over the last decades. New embossed metal foils with seventh-century warrior images have been found, and almost a thousand bracteate (gold-leaf) amulets from the fifth and sixth centuries are now accessible in splendid photographs and drawings. These sources prove that warriors worshiped Woden and told his myths much earlier than hitherto thought; some fighting styles are thus best understood in the light of Woden worship. Ancient Germanic warrior names, authentic evidence from before the beginning of our era, underpin our knowledge of warrior styles, and since Wilhelm Grimm first treated them in 1865, new collections and studies have made them more useful still.<sup>7</sup> Luckily, from eighth-century *Beowulf* to thirteenth-century Icelandic sagas (and Saxo Grammaticus of Denmark), northern literary works enliven the documentary evidence.

Early cultures around the world provide further insight. In the Americas as well as Africa, warrior societies dominated archaic cultures as much as they did in Europe. Germanic warrior customs such as masked dances, and styles like berserks or wolf-warriors, find astonishing parallels world-wide that sharpen our perception and help explain otherwise little-understood customs. They also put Germanic warrior styles into the world-historical framework that is essential for understanding history in the twenty-first century.<sup>8</sup>

Indo-European forerunners and parallels shed an even brighter light on Germanic warrior styles. If Greeks and Vedic Indians separated as late as 1600 BC, as they may well have done, then the time gap for comparing such eastern and western Indo-Europeans as Vedic Indians and Germans is not as huge and forbidding as once feared. Indo-European history and culture are now lively fields of research. What we know of Indo-European language, myths, ideals, concepts, and institutions suggests that most Iron Age warrior styles thrived already in the Bronze Age of the third millennium BC when Indo-European nations still lived together. Scholars like George Dumézil and Mircea Eliade have underpinned this view with persuasive explanations.<sup>9</sup> Though non-Indo-Europeans often had similar customs, language family is linked with myth, and myth with warrior styles,<sup>10</sup> which gives Indo-European parallels a particular weight. Our study of each warrior style thus begins with an outline of its Indo-European history.

The old Indo-European warrior styles lived longest and are best documented among Germanic nations of northern Europe. As neighbors, with a common language and religion, Germanic peoples shared one culture. Looking at them, as we will, from 200 BC, the date at which on current understanding Germanic culture began, to AD 1000 when Christianity transformed it, one can draw on rich sources within a strong historical frame, well-grounded in time and space.<sup>11</sup>



Our study focuses mainly on the first seven centuries of our era. Moreover, the bulk of the evidence bears on western and northern Germani from the Rhine and upper Danube to Denmark and Sweden. These are the peoples least changed by migration, which may explain why the picture found in the sources and offered here is so even and unitary.

Having striven to use all major Roman and Germanic sources, made my own translations, and traveled to see with my own eyes the artefacts from the Codex Regius in Reykjavik to Theodosius' Obelisk in Constantinople, I am yet aware that this study stands on how well it interprets works of art like Trajan's Column, the Gutenstein scabbard, and the Gerulata gravestone. I nevertheless trust that the wealth of literary sources gathered here gives a proper voice to the silent pictures and that my findings reflect what truly happened.

### **The emperor's strike force on Trajan's Column**

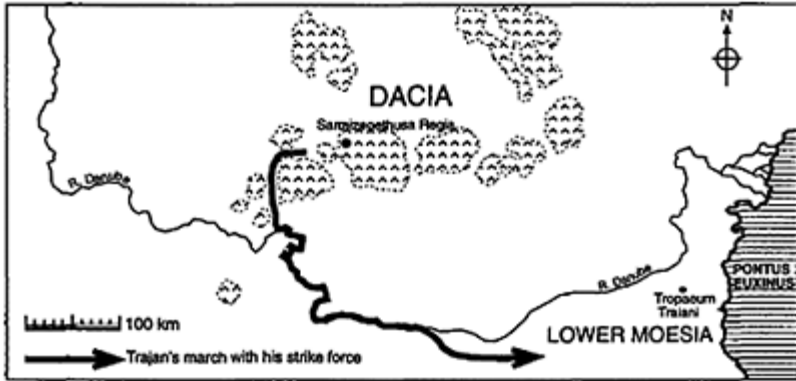
Trajan's Column, Rome's largest and most spectacular work of art, is also our best source for ancient warrior styles. Standing 100 feet tall on level space carved out of the Esquiline Hill, the Column celebrates the conquest of Dacia, Rome's last major expansion in Europe: spiral reliefs wind up the shaft to show the world how Trajan in AD 101–106 won the new province.<sup>12</sup> His fighting men were not only legionaries, but also auxiliaries and allies from the borderlands, among them tribal troops from both sides of the Rhine. Portraying these men, the Column offers the most detailed images of Germanic warrior styles we have from antiquity.

The reliefs tell the story of the Dacian wars in a straightforward sequence of events. As the scenes unfold, the emperor and his army cross the Danube in the summer of 101 and march north toward the Dacian capital of Sarmizegethusa, in what is now Romanian Transylvania. There the advance stalls. Worse, to take pressure off their heartland, the Dacians and their Sarmatian allies undertake a daring counter-thrust southward, deep into the Roman province of Lower Moesia.

Learning of this, Trajan gathers his fastest troops, mainly auxiliaries and tribal troops, and rushes with them to the new theater of war. As Figure 0.1 shows, they race to the river, sail downstream, and by hurried marches come upon the enemy in Lower Moesia. There they catch and overwhelm roving, plundering bands of Dacians and Sarmatians. Then, joined by legionaries, Trajan's strike force wins the decisive battle at Adamklissi, marked to this day by the huge Tropaeum Traiani monument.

The emperor's strike force hastening to meet the enemy in Lower Moesia appears in scene 36 of the Column (Figure 0.2).<sup>13</sup>

In the lower part of the scene, the horsemen following the emperor wear auxiliary mailshirts, neckerchiefs, and helmets. They must be the imperial horse guard, the *Equites Singulares Augusti*, for emperors always took the field with their horse guard nearby. The troopers further behind may form a group of their own and be regular cavalry, unless they too are part of the horse guard. Only the emperor rides. All other horsemen have alighted and are walking—a graphic device to stress the speed of the advance, for cavalry horses on forced marches must be spelled.<sup>14</sup>



*Figure 0.1* Trajan's marching route with his strike force in AD 101.



*Figure 0.2* The emperor with his strike force. Trajan's Column, scene 36.  
Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 90250.

In the upper part of the scene, foot soldiers hurry along in two groups of eight men each. Those to the left wear standard mailshirts like regular auxiliaries. Some of them wear open crossband helmets, others bearskins or wolfskins. Those to the right, led by the emperor himself, are barefooted, bare-chested youths, followed by a man in a sleeveless shirt and a club-man. The nearness of these men to the emperor, their tribal battle dress and strange weapons catch the eye.<sup>15</sup> They are all fast attack troops.

Further on, scenes 37–42 (see Figures 5.2, 5.3, 7.2) show the progress and aftermath of the Lower Moesian campaign: a cavalry skirmish against Sarmatians, a night attack against booty-laden Dacians, the crucial battle at Tropaeum Traiani, and Trajan's speech to the victorious troops. The emperor's youthful, barefooted followers appear three times in these scenes but nowhere else on the Column: in scene 36 they march; in scene 40 they fight; in scene 42 they are praised. Their presence in this sequence only, hitherto overlooked, proves that scenes 36–42 belong together and depict a specific campaign, surely the one that freed Lower Moesia from invaders.<sup>16</sup>

The coherence of these scenes is a good reason to trust their portrayal of warriors. Even Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, the scholar who argued most strongly against historical accuracy in the reliefs, noted that scene 42, with the emperor's speech at the end of the campaign, pays greater heed to the sundry branches of the army than any other such scene on the Column. The artist, he believed, had been told to make clear which troops had won this, the bloodiest and most decisive battle of the war. One may add that scene 36, leading up to the battle, depicts even more units and in yet greater detail. The call to make clear which troops had fought at Tropaeum Traiani thus applied to all scenes from 36 through 42, from the setting out for the battle to its aftermath. Detailed, coherent, and true in their depiction of events, scenes 36–42 are a well-grounded basis for the study of tribal warrior styles.<sup>17</sup>

How far do the reliefs reflect the true appearance of the soldiers? Aside from a few inadvertent mistakes, the reliefs stray somewhat from historical accuracy in that for the sake of clarity they depict all legionaries in strip armor and all auxiliaries in mailshirts, while in reality some legionaries also wore mailshirts or scale armor. Likewise, in reality, Dacians often wore armor and rode on horseback, but, being enemies, are rarely thus shown on the reliefs.<sup>18</sup>

These are not telling inaccuracies, however, for unlike some other works of Roman triumphal art Trajan's Column, greatly to its credit, does not invent dress or equipment, nor does it change them to make them look "classical." Above all, it portrays outlandish troops in careful, realistic detail. Caftan-clad oriental bowmen as well as bare-back riding, curly haired Mauri are shown with great accuracy. Even scale-armored Sarmatians are portrayed with some correctness. The same is therefore likely to be true of Trajan's outlandish troops in scene 36.<sup>19</sup>

Nor does the Column indulge in the exotic. Tradition demanded that the artists depict a colorful array, eager to fight. Bhagavad Gita and Homer give a rousing roll-call of the warriors who came to the great war. Herodotus does the same for the army Xerxes led into Greece. Vergil vies with Homer and Herodotus in portraying the warriors who fought Aeneas' war in Latium. And Saxo Grammaticus lists with relish the troops who battled at Bråvalla. As for Trajan's Column, to give epic scope to the narrative of the Dacian wars, it too had to portray far-fetched, colorful tribesmen. To do so it used the agreed-upon view of northern tribesmen: tall, half-naked, long-haired, eager to fight. But

the time-worn view was also true to life, as borne out by the mass of evidence offered in the following chapters. Besides, the Roman army not only hired men who fit its stereotypes, but equipped, used, and rewarded them accordingly. In that sense, too, myth is reality.<sup>20</sup> Hence while the Column's exotic bias may unduly highlight some features, by and large the warriors of Trajan's strike force must have looked like the Column portrays them.

Indeed, criticism of the Column's accuracy can prove risky. Scholars have faulted the reliefs for giving horsemen oval rather than six-cornered shields, but a survey of horsemen carved on gravestones (whose reliefs are rather close to reality in such matters) shows that most of their shields were oval, just as the Column portrays them.<sup>21</sup> For good reasons the reliefs of Trajan's Column are our main source.

### Germanic tribesmen in Roman armies

The emperor's strike force in scene 36 of Trajan's Column consists mainly of Trajan's horse guard, the *Equites Singulares Augusti*, his most highly trained elite troops. Trajan raised the unit himself, mainly from the Batavi and other Germanic tribes in the Roman Empire. Since his horse guard bore the name *Batavi*, as did Augustus' horse guard before them, Trajan, like Augustus, must have considered the Batavi to be what Tacitus called them: the manliest Germani. Chosen from horsemen who served in the *alae*, they stood above the horsemen of the cohorts in height, weaponry, skill, and prestige. Some of the horsemen in scene 36 may be meant to represent regular cavalry *alae*, but there is no telling to which of the many *alae* they belonged.<sup>22</sup>

It is even harder to know the units of the foot soldiers, for first-century Germanic auxiliaries of the cohorts are hard to distinguish from tribal irregulars. Scholars were right to take the men on the upper left of scene 36 to be soldiers of regular auxiliary cohorts as they wear standard mailshirts. Judged by their wolf-hoods alone, these men could be either Germani or free Celts from northern Britain. Yet by the end of the first century AD most of the allies and auxiliaries who fought Rome's battles in Europe were Germani rather than Celts. Moreover, as we will see, bear-warriors were a Germanic rather than a Celtic style, and four warriors in this scene wear crossband helmets that are related to Germanic Vendel helmets, while the bare-chested troops further to the right wear typically Germanic dress. Being warriors in bear- and wolf-hoods, yet wearing Roman cuirasses, the men could belong to such elite units as cohort I and II *milliaria Batavorum*. The altar at Adamklissi, on which the fallen of this campaign are listed, names the latter unit.<sup>23</sup>

With mixed Roman and Germanic battle gear, Trajan's soldiers in scene 36 match archaeological finds in the Roman province of Lower Germany, where forts and graves with mixed Roman and Germanic weaponry—and drinking horns—have come to light. Auxiliaries of Lower Germany were recruited on both sides of the Rhine, as shown by names like *Assuarius* and *Halucus* that derive from the tribal names *Chassuarii* and *Chauci*.<sup>24</sup> Although they kept some of their tribal battle gear, the men in the upper left of scene 36 are thus nevertheless likely to be regular Roman auxiliaries.<sup>25</sup>

Further proof of the trustworthiness of scene 36 is the portrayal of warriors wearing wolf-pelts with narrow paws as different from others wearing bear-pelts with broad paws.

Nowhere else in antiquity do we hear of wolf-warriors and bear-warriors fighting together. But in AD 872, Thorbjorn Hornklofi depicts Germanic wolf- and bear-warriors fighting side by side: they line the flagship of King Harald Fairhair of Norway in the battle of Hafrsfjord. It is astonishing to find in a work of Roman art the same two kinds of animal warriors that 800 years later stalk through a skaldic poem as *úlfheðnar* (wolf-hood wearers) and *berserkir* (bear-shirt wearers; later: any furious warrior). Hornklofi's poem shows that these two warrior styles existed together and that in this the Column portrays them accurately.<sup>26</sup>

To judge from their bare chests, the tribesmen in the upper right of scene 36 are likewise Germanic.<sup>27</sup> The foot soldiers in the middle are trousered clubmen, and a wearer of a sleeveless shirt of whom we know for certain that he is a German, for the ambassador of the Buri alliance in scene 9 of the Column wears the same kind of shirt. Both therefore belong to the same nation, no doubt the Armilausei ("The Sleeveless"), so named after their battle garb.<sup>28</sup>

The presence of such tribesmen does not surprise, for Germanic tribal warriors often joined imperial field armies.<sup>29</sup> Those depicted here were drawn from the expeditionary army of Trajan's summer campaign in Transylvania, which had just ended. This is certain for the club-men whom scene 24 shows fighting in that campaign, and it is likely for the others as well.<sup>30</sup>

Wearing different dress, the club-man and the man in the sleeveless shirt of scene 36 belong to different tribes. Putting sundry tribes next to each other was good tactics, for men from different tribes fighting side by side strove to outdo each other. Besides, they could fight well alongside as they shared similar warrior styles.<sup>31</sup>

Yet other men are the nearly naked foot soldiers farthest to the right and nearest the emperor. They seem to be Trajan's *Pedites Singulares*, guardsmen he had when he was governor of Roman Germany, as we will argue in the chapter on berserks.

Scene 36 underscores the light weapons, the breakneck speed, and fierceness of the troops Trajan mustered to meet the threat to Roman Moesia. The troops around him had to fight the bloodiest battle of the war. How did he choose them? He needed fast, keen, well-trained men. Caesar and Tacitus, like Trajan, considered Germanic warriors the fastest, keenest, most skillful fighters to be had.<sup>32</sup> And their huge frames and fierce looks cast dread into the enemy.<sup>33</sup> These, surely, are the reasons why Trajan chose so many Germanic troops for his strike force. The slower legionaries and praetorians, who accompanied him on the river journey and reappear for the final battle at Tropaeum Traiani in scene 40, are by design missing in the hurried overland march depicted in scene 36.<sup>34</sup>

The make-up of Trajan's strike force is traditional in that Romans often brigaded regular Germanic auxiliaries with irregular troops as fast and firstwave shock troops. They did this in AD 28 against the Frisians, when they sent their speediest troops, the horsemen of ala *Canninefatium* and irregular Germani foot, to hit the foe first, and again in AD 50 against the plundering Chatti, and again in the civil war of AD 69–70, when Batavian cohorts served as shock troops alongside tribesmen from beyond the Rhine. Batavi brigaded with other tribesmen were thus a tried and trusted combination. Even Lucanus' poetic scare of Caesar's army overrunning Rome lists "barbarian" cavalry auxilia and tribesmen from beyond the Rhine among the invader's forces.<sup>35</sup> There is no way of knowing how many tribesmen were in Trajan's strike force, but it would take at

least a thousand regulars and another thousand irregulars each to have operational impact or warrant the emperor himself leading the force to a new theater of war. The horse guard too was a thousand strong.<sup>36</sup>

The presence of Germanic guards, auxilia, and tribesmen in the emperor's strike force gives one pause. Trajan's reign marks the high point of the Empire, by which time long peace had broken the warlike spirit of the Roman heartland and even the provinces. Crack troops had thus to be raised in lands at or beyond the borders, where men were still warlike. Though Tacitus put the claim that foreigners are the only strength of Roman armies into the mouth of an enemy of Rome, the composition of Trajan's army at the height of the Empire nevertheless bears that claim out and foreshadows Rome's fall, which came when her field armies were overwhelmingly tribal. The history of the Empire depended on where it raised its troops.<sup>37</sup>

Could Trajan marshal motley groups of outlanders into an effective fighting force? It had been done before: in 48 BC Labienus welded Gallic and Germanic horsemen into such a force, arming, mounting, and training them himself. They responded with skill, dauntlessness, and loyalty as long as there was hope of winning. Caesar's Germanic horse guard, hired on the spot in Gaul, must have been more foreign than Roman in equipment, tactics, and morale. Trajan's bare-chested warriors and club-wielders, even though truly tribal, were commanded by Roman officers, as was customary during the High Empire. His barefooted berserks, if indeed *Singulares* guards of Roman Germany, combined Roman discipline with their own, older ethos of keeping faith. It was this ethos that allowed Trajan to lead a Germanic strike force of mixed origin that must have been harder to keep in order than regular auxiliary troops. Besides, being chosen by the emperor for this mission must have swelled the warriors' pride and strengthened their bond with him.<sup>38</sup>

If that was not enough, the regulars of Trajan's horse guard of the *Equites Singulares Augusti* gave him means to stiffen the discipline of his tribal forces. The combination of imperial guard and irregulars was a winner: Caracalla relied on it, as did Aurelian; and Constantine added to his regular guard, the *schola Scutariorum*, a tribal counterpart, the *schola Gentilium*. Theodosius too kept discipline among tribal warriors with the help of his horse guard, and King Harald of Norway in AD 872 likewise had a regular bodyguard besides his berserks.<sup>39</sup>

Trajan had further reason to recruit tribesmen from beyond the Rhine. When he set out for the Dacian war, he had but a weak garrison to leave on the Rhine frontier. The best way for him to keep tribes beyond the river from raiding the weakened provinces was to take the tribes' finest warriors along. Some of Trajan's club-men and naked berserks may thus have been Chatti and Mattiaci from beyond the Rhine, known for their fighting prowess.

As Germanic tribesmen were essential to Roman field armies before and after Trajan, their presence in scene 36 of the Column is to be expected, even though the scene is often overlooked in studies of Germanic troops in the Roman army. We will return to it again and again for the rich insights it offers on ancient Germanic warriors.<sup>40</sup>

Part 1  
ANIMAL WARRIORS

# 1

## WOLVES

Wolf-warriors howled and shook weapons.  
Thorbjorn Hornklofi, *Haraldskvæði*

### Indo-European wolf-warriors

The idea of changing into an animal gripped the imagination of early man the world over—Agamemnon, Plato says, wanted to become an eagle, Ajax a lion, Orpheus a swan—and it works its metaphoric magic even today. Stone Age hunters felt the spell of animal sympathy and the altered state of mind that comes with it: in Aurignacian cave-wall paintings of 60,000 years ago, men wear animal masks not only to stalk prey but to identify with their ancestors in dances. A cave-dweller in southern Germany 34,000 years ago carved a lion-headed human figure in ivory. E.O. Wilson said: “We are not just afraid of predators, we are transfixed by them, prone to weave stories and fables and chatter endlessly about them, because fascination creates preparedness, and preparedness, survival. In a deeply tribal sense, we love our monsters.”<sup>1</sup> With such animal sympathy he who “was” a predator was a keener warrior.

Warriors world-wide found their symbols in awesome aspects of nature: thunder, storm, and lightning, steadiness of mountain roots, rip of rivers, sturdiness of trees, and flight of birds.<sup>2</sup> Yet they liked toothed animals best, for unlike other thrills of nature, animals could be more than symbols: one could identify with them. Libyans had belted dog-warriors; Black Africans had lion-, leopard-, and panther-warriors; Aztecs puma-, jaguar-, and wolf-warriors; Caribs and Chinese had tiger-warriors; Romans lion-guards. As late as the twentieth century, Austro-Hungarian guard officers wore leopard skins.<sup>3</sup> Identifying with such animals not only gave a rich, transforming experience, but the very origin of war and male pride has been traced to mankind’s mesolithic change from prey to predator.<sup>4</sup>

Indo-European warriors, from Vedic Indians and Iranians to Celts and Germani, were greatly given to animal identities. Homer often describes the fighting excellence and character of a hero by likening him to a lion, a boar, or an eagle, much as the poetry of island Celts expresses their warrior spirit in terms of the animal world. Classical Greeks and Romans held on to some of this spirit: to characterize the armies of Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar as the keenest of warriors, Arrian could do no better than say they fought like wild animals. Clearly, Indo-Europeans (and not only they) kept some of their former roles as they moved from primitive to archaic, and, in the case of Greece and Rome, to “civilized” warfare.<sup>5</sup>

Wolves played a great role as warrior models throughout Eurasia and North America: wolf-warriors appear among Indo-Europeans, Turks, Mongols, and American Indians.



New World Indians brought from Siberia not only shamanism and wolf-ancestor myths, but, it seems, also wolf-, bear-, bird-, and big-cat warriorhood.<sup>6</sup> They sent forth wolf-warriors as scouts, and even patterned their warfare on wolflike spying:

It is interesting to note that Wolf in one form or another was the patron spirit of war all over the Plains. He was primarily the genius of the intelligence service, the ruthless, crafty, cautious hunter. This may well be taken as symbolic of all Plains, or of all American Indian warfare. Its prototype was the shrewd stalker and, as Wolf's depredations depended upon intelligence, the Indians hunted men in the same manner. The service of intelligence was the one branch of their art of war which was perfectly developed.<sup>7</sup>

The best way to identify with an animal is to don its pelt: a mid-sixteenth-century drawing shows a Mexican Cuetlachtli warrior wearing a wolf-hood, much like Indo-European wolf-warriors. Since wearing the animal's skin is essential to animal-warrior styles, it is of great interest to see this done in the New World no less than in the Old. Both American and European folk tales speak of people being changed into wolves by wearing wolfskins, and of being freed from shape-shifting by burning the skins.<sup>8</sup>

Animals, especially wolves, offered much to the warrior bent on going beyond the bounds of his humanity: he could walk, jump, or run as the chosen animals did; also hide, creep, lurk, scream, bray, and howl as they did—wolves often howl in triumph at a kill—and in all he could frighten the enemy while venting his own fear. He could take on an animal's rage, dread, or pride and thus free himself of cultural constraints or conscience (much as modern warriors do when they focus on technology). Moreover, with their power to change into animals and travel to other worlds, shamans gave wolf- and bear-warriorhood a cosmic dimension.<sup>9</sup>

Wolves and hyenas, almost alone among animals, fight in packs—as if going to war. Fiercely baring their teeth, with eyes flashing danger, howling dreadfully, and biting through their prey's windpipe, they are the most gripping warrior animals.<sup>10</sup>

From wolves warriors learned stealth. As a wolf-man of our own time puts it:

The wolves moved deftly and silently in the woods and in trying to imitate them I came to walk more quietly and to freeze at the sign of slight movement. At first this imitation gave me no advantage, but after several weeks I realized I was becoming far more attuned to the environment we moved through. I heard more, for one thing, and my senses now constantly alert, I occasionally saw a deer mouse or a grouse before they did... I could attune myself better to the woods by behaving as they did—minutely inspecting certain things, seeking vantage points, always sniffing at the air. I did, and felt vigorous, charged with alertness.<sup>11</sup>

Good camouflage, wolfskins allowed scouts to hide. Homer tells of the Trojan night-spy Dolon hiding under a wolfskin, and Euripides embellishes the tale:

I will draw a wolf skin over my back,  
 put the beast's gaping jaws around my head,  
 fasten the forelegs to my hands  
 its legs to mine, and mimic the four-footed  
 wolf-gait, hard to spot for the foes.

Euripides, whose Dolon walks on all fours like a wolf, stresses the stealth that the wolfskin grants. In Greek, Etruscan, and Gallic myths, a wolf-hood makes one invisible.<sup>12</sup>

Speed is another astounding quality of wolves. They trot unflinchingly, lightly, and quickly—easily 50 miles a day. Homer's wolf-warrior Dolon was a fast runner. Young and swift, wolf-warriors often served as scouts and skirmishers.<sup>13</sup> Wolves, moreover, far outdo man in fieldcraft: they are the easy masters of the woods, the wild, the winter, and the night, all frightening and uncanny to man.

Of all wild animals, wolves are closest to man in social instincts. They respect rank, delight in each other's company, and are so dedicated to the pack that the Hittite king Hattusilis told his assembly, "May your clan be one, like that of the wolves!" As dogs they are eager and faithful beyond words. Wild wolves have even suckled and raised human children. No other animal engages man's feelings so strongly. It has rightly been said that what links men who love wolves with those who loathe them is the intensity of their feelings.<sup>14</sup>

Wolf-warriors are the best-documented Indo-European warrior style, originating long before and lasting long after the Indo-European dispersal. They are found far more often than bear-, boar-, buck-, marten-, horse- or any other animal-warriors. In the second millennium BC, when our sources begin to flow, wolf-warriors are already well attested. A Hittite army leader bore the name *Lupakku* ("Wolf"), and since Indo-European animal names bespoke strength and luck, he very likely was a wolf-warrior. Likewise the name of the Hittite Luvians means "Wolf-People": Hittite texts call them *LU-MESH UR-BAR-RA*, "Men-Dog-Outside."<sup>15</sup>

Vedic India too had skin-clad wolf-warriors: Rudra, with his wolves Bhava and Śarva and with a warband of eleven long-haired Rudriyas, haunted the woods. Other early wolf-warriors are the *mairyo* youths of ancient Iran: as a warrior band they were called "wolves" and fought in a frenzy, though it is not known whether they wore wolfskins. Scythians also fought as wolf-warriors, some of their youths being "valiant dogs."<sup>16</sup>

Mycenaeans very likely had wolf-warriors. A painted *krater* from Tiryns of about 1200 BC shows four warriors on foot, two before a chariot and two behind it. All four are armed with small round shields and javelins much like Egyptian Shardana chariot runners of the time. "The pointed crests on their heads," it is said, "may represent a cap-helmet of some kind"; the tails between their legs are very likely tails of an animal skin. The men have been taken for tiger-warriors, but there were no tigers in ancient Greece. Indo-European parallels and Homeric wolf-sympathy suggest that they are wolf-warriors. If so, wolf-warriors may have played a role in the chariot-based Indo-European expansion of the mid-second millennium BC. Chariot crews needed runners beside them to capture or

finish off enemy charioteers. Fleet-footed young wolf-warriors could have played this tactical role. Some Mycenaeans seem to have had wolf-names.<sup>17</sup>

Homer too tells of wolf-warriors. He sees heroes such as Hector, Diomedes, and Achilles as at times overcome by fighting madness; that is, in the throes of “wolfishness,” a state akin to berserk recklessness. Speed, stealth, and fighting madness characterized Greek wolf-warriors, but Achilles’ captains flaunted wolfishness also as a leadership quality:

Hungry as wolves that rend and bolt raw flesh,  
 hearts filled with battle-frenzy that never dies—  
 off on the cliffs, ripping apart some big antlered stag  
 they gorge on the kill till all their jaws drip red with blood,  
 then down in a pack they lope to a pooling, dark spring,  
 their lean sharp tongues lapping the water’s surface,  
 belching bloody meat, but the fury, never shaken,  
 builds inside their chests though their glutton bellies burst—  
 so wild the Myrmidon captains...

In Sparta, warrior training was the work of Lykurgos, the “Wolf-Worker.” Lykurgos laid down a law that for a year (the “Krypteia”) young warriors must hide and live outside society, fending for themselves as naked, lone wolves. Elsewhere in Greece, Apollo the Wolf-God presided over the training of young warriors.<sup>18</sup>

Indo-European tribesmen brought the wolf-warrior style to Italy as well as Greece. Vergil says that the warriors who founded Praeneste wore wolf-hoods and fought with the left foot bare—a sign of skill, toughness, and recklessness. The Hirpi Sorani wolf-warriors from north of Rome, like later berserks, could not be hurt by fire: very likely they fought in a trance of ecstasy that made them woundproof.<sup>19</sup>

The wolf-warriors of Romulus founded Rome, and centuries later in the battles against Hannibal the legions still had in their ranks *velites*, young men who fought in the forefront and wore wolfskins.<sup>20</sup> As the sight of a wolf was an omen of victory to later Germanic warriors, so it was to early Romans: when a wolf ran through their battle line at Sentinum in 295 BC, Roman warriors welcomed it with shouts as the winning wolf of Mars. By the time of Marius, however, Rome had lost her wolf-warriors.

Among Celts in Gaul, wolves, and dogs bred from wolves, enthralled warriors. Celtic names like Cunopennus, Cunocennus, and Cunobarrus all mean “dog-head” or “wolf-head”; that is, men who fought with dog or wolf-skins over their heads. Very likely they looked like the Germanic wolf-warriors portrayed on Trajan’s Column.<sup>21</sup>

### **Wolf-warriors on Trajan’s Column**

The oldest known Germanic wolf-warriors are depicted in scene 36 of Trajan’s Column. Surprisingly, no twentieth-century archaeologist, historian, or student of Germanic

antiquities knew them, even though in 1896 Cichorius in his outstanding commentary on Trajan's Column identified the warriors in scene 36 as Germanic.<sup>22</sup> Yet they are plain to see (Figure 1.1).

On the relief, eight soldiers of the emperor's strike force wear Roman auxiliary uniforms: knee-breeches, tunics, mailshirts, and neckerchiefs. Their weapon of attack is the sword, with which Batavi tribesmen were wont to fight and with which, when they closed in for the shock attack, they stabbed their foes.<sup>23</sup> Unlike other regular auxiliaries on the Column, however, these men sport strange headgear: four wear openwork crossband helmets, two wear broad-pawed bearskins, two others narrow-pawed wolfskins. Most of them are bearded, while most regular soldiers on the Column are clean-shaven.

The wolfskins and bearskins seen here cover head and shoulders, leaving the arms free, but one cannot see how far the skins reached down the back, nor whether they still had tails as did those of Mycenaean and medieval wolf-warriors. Like Herakles, the warriors on the Column fasten their skins over the chest by crossing and knotting the animal's forelegs, whereas wolf-warriors of the Middle Ages wore their wolfskins as jackets with openings for the arms. It is hard to say whether here the Column artist modified Germanic reality to fit the classical model or whether Germanic auxiliaries,



*Figure 1.1* Warriors on Trajan's Column wearing wolfskins, bearskins and crossband helmets (detail of Figure 0.2). Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 71.2685.

when donning mailshirts, changed their wolf-hood jackets to wolf-hoods with crossed paws.

Scholars have taken the wolfskin and bearskin wearers in scene 36 for Roman standard-bearers, since these, too, wore animal skins and mailshirts. Yet the four warriors are not in the lead and hold no standards but drawn swords. They are not standard-bearers. Wearing mailshirts, they are not legionaries either. Nor, lacking strip armor, are they *antesignani*, who sometimes wore bearskin hoods. Their weapons, as we have seen, mark them as regulars in Roman service, while their wolf- and bear-hoods mark them as Germani. Being near the emperor, they are, tactically speaking, shock troops in the emperor's entourage and could even be part of his guard.<sup>24</sup>

As ancient warrior styles were mythological, the wolf-warriors on Trajan's Column, together with the bear-warriors, club-wielders, helmet-wearers, and naked berserks of this scene, are an outstanding addition to our knowledge of Germanic mythology. They stock up what has been called the "relatively bare shelves of German heathen myth proper" compared to the Icelandic tradition,<sup>25</sup> and thus, for their part, show ancient continental Germanic mythology as the link between earlier Indo-European and later Icelandic mythology.

Wolf-warriors of northern Europe have also left traces in wolf-standards and wolf-shields, seized by their Roman foes and enshrined as tokens of victory in the Flavian *armilustrum* in Rome. Moreover, the famous Gundestrup cauldron, Germanic if it belongs to the third century AD, otherwise Celtic, pictures a wolf presiding over a warrior initiation; in either case, the cauldron bespeaks the warriors' wolf-spirit and nearness to the gods.<sup>26</sup>

The wolf- and bear-warriors on Trajan's Column had forerunners in Emperor Vitellius' army thirty years earlier, when pelt-wearing auxiliaries spearheaded the emperor's strike force during his march on Rome in AD 69—Racing ahead of the army, the auxiliaries surged through the streets of the city, scaring people. "A wild show, frightening with animal skins and huge weapons," as Tacitus calls it.<sup>27</sup> It was mid-July when no one wears fur in Rome—unless bound to do so. Vitellius' warriors could have worn linen, for the art of weaving flourished in their homeland. Instead they wore warrior-style furs, no doubt wolfskins and bearskins.<sup>28</sup>

In ancient times the whole youth of a tribe or a chosen outcast group may have been wolf-warriors. Under the more settled conditions of the early Middle Ages, however, wolf- and bear-warriors were individual champions, often no more than twelve men, at times in the service of a king.<sup>29</sup> Were the wolf-warriors on Trajan's Column youthful tribal troops or individual champions? The Column portrays them wearing mailshirts and fighting with swords, as they did in the early Middle Ages. Since mailshirts slow men down, such men would have shared with wolves not so much speed but fierceness, and Trajan's wolf-warriors may already have made the transition from youthful tribal warriors to elite champions.

On the other hand, being troops close to the emperor and on the same level with other units, Trajan's wolf-warriors are likely to have been a battlefield force rather than a handful of champions. Ancient battle descriptions mention no wolf-warriors: the most that we hear is that Germani bore animal standards into battle. Perhaps animal-warriors were always few, leading others. Yet Greek and Roman authors so rarely describe northern troops that here the argument from silence counts for little. There is no telling, then, how many wolf-warriors took the field with Trajan.

Firsthand evidence of wolf sympathy among Germanic tribes of Trajan's time also comes from names. The earliest known Germanic wolf name, one Ulfenus, appears on a Trajanic inscription from Rimbürg near Aachen, followed by one Ulfus, also from Roman Germany. Some have wondered about the widespread use in Lower Germany of the Latin name Ulpius, which to German ears sounded like "wolf." Ulpius is, of course, Trajan's name, and for that reason alone would have been widely used in Lower Germany. But Ulpius also meant "wolf" in older Latin, and the punning name Ulpius Lupio suggests that the original meaning of Trajan's name was still understood. Beyond the Empire's borders, a second-century runic inscription from Himlingøje in Denmark names a Widuhu[n]daR (Woodhound—Wolf). Indo-European twin-root names such as this were aristocratic wish-names: parents hoped their sons would be "wolves." As with dragons, people feared wolves, yet stood in awe of them and wanted to be like them.<sup>30</sup>

Wilderness, with its animals, is the great background for, and shaper of, human feelings, giving fulfillment that the twenty-first century seems to be losing. Wolf-warriors, fighting beside Trajan in the Dacian war, imperial Rome's greatest military undertaking, are thus a striking instance of "biophilia," reminding us of the hold that wildlife has on the human mind and from which our spirit is woven.<sup>31</sup>

### Wolf-warriors in the later Roman army

Since we know from Trajan's Column that Germanic wolf-warriors fought in the Roman army in the first century AD, we may look for them also in the Roman army of the fourth century, when many of its recruits came from Germanic lands beyond the Rhine and the Danube. Indeed, wolf-warriors turn up in AD 361. In that year Emperor Julian raised troops among the Franks and Alamanni: six new Auxilia Palatina units in three pairs. He named one pair "Tubantes-Salii," after two Frankish tribes. To the other two pairs he gave non-tribal names: "Grati-Augustei" and "Felices-Invicti." Of these latter pairs, three units, and perhaps originally all four, bore images of bucks or wolves on their shields, as seen in the late-Roman government handbook the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Figure 1.2).<sup>32</sup>

The last two badges of the second row in Figure 1.2 (Grati, Felices), and the last badge of the third row (Augustei) show wolves or hounds. Such shield badges proclaimed the units to be wolf- or hound-warriors. By allowing these shield badges, Julian welcomed wolf-warriors among Rome's elite troops. Like Trajan, he must have valued their fighting skills and wanted them to strengthen his army. He may not have known or cared whether they were warg-wolf outlaws, the youths of a tribe, or the warband of a king:<sup>33</sup> as wolf-warriors, flaunting wolf-shield badges, they cast dread into the hearts of foes and strength into their own, for both Romans and Germani knew the fierceness of animal-warriors.<sup>34</sup> Here, as with Trajan's wolf-warriors, a large number of men was needed: no less than a thousand men to form three or more Auxilia Palatina units. Perhaps only the leaders were true wolf-warriors in the medieval sense of champions.

Some of the shield badges in Figure 1.2 may portray hounds rather than wolves, but the meaning is almost the same. Discipline and loyalty made hounds particularly useful in fighting. Thracians and Celts bred fighting dogs, war-hounds defended the laager of the Cimbri, and Pliny the Elder called dogs "the most faithful allies even without pay." Like wolves, hounds were symbolic warrior animals and are found as such among Indo-

Europeans. Several Greek and Celtic warriors wore hound-topped helmets. The tribal name of the Dacians means “Wolves” or “Hounds”; and, like Sarmatians, they followed hound-dragon standards. Among Germanic nations at the beginning of our era the fiercest Longobards fought as mad hounds, and aristocratic Lombard hound-warriors are still known in the Middle Ages. Hence



*Figure 1.2* Shield badges of Auxilia Palatina units in the Notitia Dignitatum. Drawing after Seeck, *Notitia* 1876, 116 (Oc.V).

if some of the shield badges in Figure 1.2 portray hounds, the symbolism is nearly the same as that of wolves.<sup>35</sup> Shared animal sympathy gave wolf- or hound-warriors a bond among each other, making them better fighters.<sup>36</sup>

Wolves or hounds, Julian welcomed such warriors in the Roman army. To win men like this for the Auxilia Palatina attack troops, Rome offered them higher pay than legionaries, less drudgery work—and less discipline.<sup>37</sup>

### **Wolf-Hrocs and the origin of the Alamanni**

Julian's wolf-warriors, raised among Germani along the Rhine, may shed light on the name of the two earliest known Alamannic kings. Hroc the Elder, who harried Gaul in AD 260, was long held to be legendary. However, scholars who take written sources seriously have given him back his rightful place in history. Hroc the Younger, leader of an Alamannic troop in the army of Constantius Chlorus, lifted Constantine to the throne in York in AD 306. His name was formerly misread as a meaningless Erocus, but a new reading of Aurelius Victor's manuscripts has restored it to Crocus; that is, Germanic Hroc.<sup>38</sup>

Hroc with a short o means "cape," or "fur-cape" (English "frock," German "Frack" and "Rock"). Since in Old Germanic names the simple word often stands for the compound, Hroc may well stand for the better-known Wolfhroc ("Wolf-Frock"), a warrior wearing a wolfskin hood and jacket.<sup>39</sup> This is borne out by the parallels of Trajan's wolf-warriors and Julian's wolf-auxilia units, as well as by the name Vidigabius of a fourth-century Alamannic king that also means "Wolf."<sup>40</sup> It is further strengthened by seventh-century metal foils depicting Alamannic leaders as wolf-warriors (Figures 1.3, 1.4) and by the fact that in the eighth century, when we have richer sources, the Alamanni used wolf-names more widely than other nations. Like Hroc, Indo-European and Germanic kings were often wolf-warriors.<sup>41</sup>

Warriors could have the same heraldic sign as their leader: wearing a boar-helmet, Beowulf was a boar-warrior, and so were his followers. Hroc's Alamannic followers thus may have been wolf-warriors like their king. Certainly the wolf shield-badges of Julian's Auxilla Palatina mean that the men in those units were wolf-warriors, and they are likely to have been Alamanni.<sup>42</sup>

If the Alamanni had wolf-warriors among them, as the above suggests, light falls on their hitherto unknown myth of origin. Indo-Europeans, Turks, Mongols, and American Indians alike believed that warlike nations arose from wolf ancestors. Their myths held that wolf-kings had led them to their homelands, and that as outcasts of mixed origin they once lived by robbery. This may be the myth of origin of the Alamanni too, for not only had wolf-warriors and robber-kings led the Alamanni to their homeland in southern Germany, but the name of the new nation shows that they conform to the other part of this myth, the mixed origin, as well. The Alamanni, like the heirs of Romulus and Remus, knew themselves as a people who "came together from everywhere." They called themselves "all-men" in contrast to the kindred Iuthungi, whose name means "the [true] offspring" and who, unlike the Alamanni, claimed that they were not "mixed."<sup>43</sup>

No nation, it has been said, calls itself "mixed." Yet the word "Alamanni," which the new nation took for its name, is the same as that applied to the Romans of Romulus, to the wolf-warriors who founded Praeneste, and to the Lucani of the fourth century BC: "mixed, rag-tag." By calling themselves "mixed," the Alamanni took pride in their



robber- and wolf-warrior origin. In line with a time-honored Indo-European myth, they recalled their founders as wolfish outlaws who raised a new nation.<sup>44</sup>

Other Germanic tribes, too, claimed to stem from such forebears. Closest to the Alamanni in this are the Lombards, who as youths likewise left their homes to find new lands. Paulus Diaconus says:

They were then all youths in their bloom, although very few, since they had come from one-third only of a not so large island.—They said they had *cynocephali* in their army, that is men with dog heads. And among their foes they spread the tale that these fought very fiercely, drank human blood, and, if they could not lay their hands on an enemy, drank their own blood.<sup>45</sup>

Lombard hound-warriors can be traced from the beginning of our era to Dante's great warrior Can Grande of Verona (1312–1329) and beyond. The myth of youths, sent away with elite wolf- or hound-warriors to win new lands, still lived at the time of the medieval Icelandic Volsung saga: Sigi, founder of the Volsungs, is an outlaw wolf, exiled with a warband with whom he founds a new kingdom. Later Sigmund and Sinfiotli find two sons of kings (marked as such by their heavy golden wristbands) who lived as wolf-warriors in the woods, wore wolfskins, and sucked blood from their victims.<sup>46</sup> The myth still echoes in the Wolfdieterich epic of thirteenth-century Germany.<sup>47</sup>

It has been overlooked, so far, that Lombards and Alamanni were wolf- or dog-warriors precisely *because* they left their tribes and homelands as young men. That was an Indo-European and perhaps world-wide custom.<sup>48</sup> In classical Greece, in historical times, Arcadians had a band of youthful “wolves” living as outcasts. Likewise the Brettii in southern Italy were young wolfish outcasts of the Lucani (“Wolf-Men”). They too were “brought-together” herdsmen, mixed with runaway slaves, and lived from robbery while conquering new land. So were the founders of Praeneste: wolf-warriors who had lived by robbery before they founded their town and who afterwards stayed wolf-warriors. All these groups, like Romulus' youthful wolf-warriors, were bands of young men, outlaws, banished from their tribes.<sup>49</sup> The myth of the Lombard youths has a close link with that of the first Romans in that their leaders, Ibor and Agio, were youthful twins with alliterative names like Romulus and Remus—and like Hengest and Horsa of Anglo-Saxon tradition. We hear nothing of the Alamanni being youths or having twin leaders—the details of their myth are lost—but with their “come-together” origin, their wolf-warriors, and their living by robbery, they seem indeed to have shared this type of myth.<sup>50</sup>

Caesar tells how such bands of raiders got together:

Robbery is no shame if done beyond the borders of the tribe, and they say they do it to train the young and to lessen the sloth. And when one of the leaders in an assembly says that he would lead, and that those who wanted to follow should say so, those who find the plan and the man good rise up. They promise their help and the crowd praises them; those of them who afterwards do not follow are held deserters and traitors, and no one trusts them in anything any more.<sup>51</sup>

To get more men for such a band, a leader might recruit outside the tribe too. Tacitus says, and Bede confirms, that whenever war broke out between Germanic nations, young noblemen flocked to join in. But not only athelings gathered around warlike leaders: ruff-raff, even outlaws, did so too, and were welcome, as in the cases of Romulus and Remus, the Lucani, or Celtic and Germanic warbands.<sup>52</sup>

The “All-Men” name of the Alamanni gave rise in the nineteenth century to a belief that they had been a confederation somewhat like the Germany that had arisen from the Napoleonic wars. But “all-men” does not imply a federation. Instead, it suggests warriors come together from everywhere, individually and in groups, for raiding. Some groups may have come with their own leaders, whence by the mid-fourth century the Alamanni had many kings.<sup>53</sup> The fact that their “come-together” origin became the basis of their name suggests that the myth of the Alamanni’s origin paralleled that of Rome, as their wolf-warrior kings paralleled Romulus.

### **The Gutenstein wolf-warriors**

Unlike Germanic wolf-warriors of antiquity who escaped the attention of historians throughout the twentieth-century, those of the early Middle Ages, known from archaeological and literary sources, have always been in sight. Yet they need to be better understood.

Of several early medieval wolf-warrior images that have come to light in Alamannia and Bavaria, the most revealing is embossed on the upper part of a silver foil that covered the seventh-century scabbard found at Gutenstein. Less than half of the die-impression is preserved (Figure 1.3).<sup>54</sup>

The image shows a wolf-warrior with a very large sword and a spear. His wolf-hood, unlike those on Trajan’s Column, hides the warrior’s head altogether. Since this is so on other medieval images too (Figures 1.6 and 1.7), it seems to have been the way wolf-hoods were worn at the time.

Parallel lines on the warrior’s head, back, and tail mark fur, while the curved, dotted band running down the chest toward the tail represents the hem of the pelt. A band fastens the hood around the warrior’s neck. As the wolf-skins on Trajan’s Column cover no more than half the warriors’ backs, the same seems to be true of the Gutenstein warriors. The tail, beginning at the height of the warrior’s hip, suggests that the skin ends there; indeed, a wolfskin of natural length would stretch not much further than a warrior’s hip.<sup>55</sup>

The warrior’s shoes bend upward at the tip and swell in a ring at the ankle, features known from other seventh-century shoes. Faint lines indicate narrow trouser legs. The arms seem bare. On the Ekhammar bronze, discussed on pp. 33–4 (Figure 1.7), the pelt hood has openings for the arms, and that may be the case on the Gutenstein scabbard also, though the openings are not seen.



*Figure 1.3* Seventh-century silver scabbard from Gutenstein, Baden-Württemberg. Antikensammlung,

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—  
 Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für  
 Vor- und Frühgeschichte Berlin-  
 Charlottenburg (Kat/Inv. IIc, 2830);  
 Museum photograph, Neg. Nr.  
 Unverzagt 69.

Since the square dots on the chest and below the hip mark material other than fur, the Gutenstein warrior must have worn a shirt or a hauberk beneath his wolf-hood. A hauberk is more likely, for the ring on the pommel of his sword marks the Gutenstein warrior as of the highest rank, and such men wore hauberks. Like the auxiliary cuirasses on Trajan's Column, most hauberks in seventh-century Alamannia were made of chain mail; and like the mailshirts used after the mid-third century in the Roman army, they were knee- rather than waist-length. However, a few of the highest-ranking Alamanni warriors, such as those buried at Niederstotzingen, wore lamellar cuirasses, and so, it seems, does the Gutenstein warrior. If Alamannic wolf-warriors matched the mythical hero on the Gutenstein scabbard, they were even better armored than Trajan's wolf-warriors:<sup>56</sup> in the seventh century armies were smaller and more elite, turning into feudal armies with elite weapons.<sup>57</sup>

There is another wolf-warrior on the Gutenstein scabbard, standing in the lower right corner at a right angle to the length of the scabbard. Only one fourth of him is preserved: his two feet, the lower part of his hauberk, his wolf-tail, and the blade of his spear. There is enough, however, to suggest that this left-facing warrior belonged to a scene like that of Woden and the wolf-warrior on the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6).

Scholars who have examined the Gutenstein scabbard before the Russians stole it in 1945, observed that the silver foil is of one piece.<sup>58</sup> Since the foil shows only one-fourth of this second warrior, and since he stands at a right angle to the upper one, scholars thought that the foil once served some other purpose—perhaps as a cover of a box or a bowl. But neither box nor bowl can use upright figures at right angles to each other. The reason for the cutoff figure is much simpler: having cut the scabbard cover out of a piece of silver foil, the craftsman used several dies to emboss it, though each die only in part. This is most evident for the six small patterns in the middle of the scabbard, but it is also true for the two wolf-warrior figures.<sup>59</sup>

Since the upper, right-facing wolf-warrior was to be the main image on the scabbard, the craftsman placed it upright near the top. All he wanted was the warrior himself, so he cut off most of the decorative square below the warrior. Further down the scabbard the artist needed a die that gave him a cross as the main feature. For this he used another wolf-warrior die, one with a left-facing warrior. What mattered here was the cross, not the warrior, hence most of the warrior is cut off: with the edge-covers in place, the scabbard showed next to nothing of this second warrior. Since both wolf-warriors are so much alike, their dies seem to have formed a corresponding pair. Both having the same size and dress, and both holding spears and leaning slightly forward, the two warriors are clearly counterparts to each other. The right-facing warrior, therefore, once stood, like the left-facing one, above two decorative square fields.

Trying to reconstruct the original two dies, one notices that the wolf-warrior scenes occupied broader fields than the crosses below them. This can be seen from the fact that

if the right-hand border of the decorative field under the right-facing warrior continued straight up, it would cut off the ring on the sword pommel. What at first may appear to be the border at the right of this warrior is slanting so much that it must have been the spear of a figure standing before the wolf-warrior, a figure like a mirror image of the dancing Woden on the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6).<sup>60</sup>

In reconstructing the overall shape of the Gutenstein wolf-warrior dies, one must take into account the fact that the border at each warrior's back is tilted forward on the ground line. Both dies thus tapered toward the top, and therefore, like the Torslunda dies, were made to produce decorations for curved surfaces. Since their motif is warfare they were no doubt used for decorating objects used in warfare, in this case helmets, for similar tapering scenes decorated seventh-century Vendel helmets.<sup>61</sup>

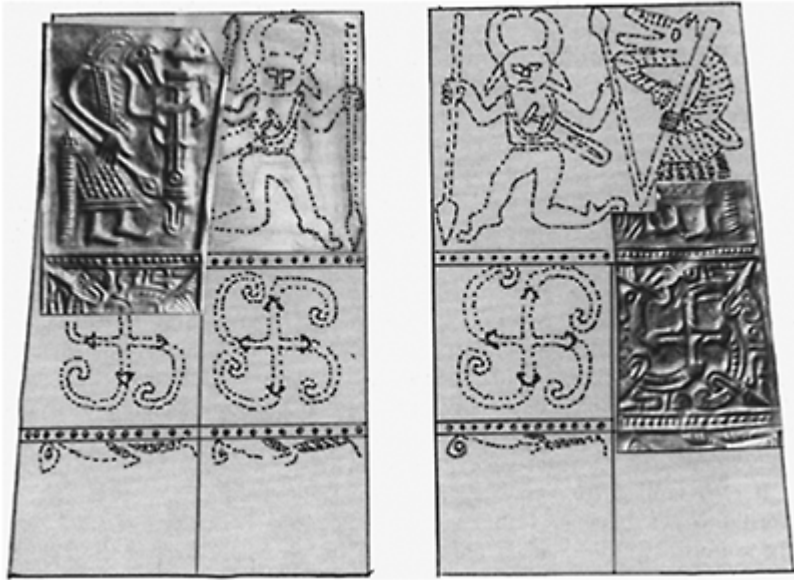
If each Gutenstein wolf-warrior followed another figure—as does the Torslunda wolf-warrior (Figure 1.6)—then the Gutenstein scenes had the same size as other scenes on Vendel helmets. Applied to a helmet, the decorative fields below the Gutenstein warriors would result in a double decorative band along the base. Since the helmet from grave 12 at Vendel has just such a band, the decorative fields on the Gutenstein dies also point to their use for decorating Vendel-style helmets. I would therefore reconstruct the Gutenstein scenes as in Figure 1.4.<sup>62</sup>

Vendel helmets are, so far, known only from Scandinavia and England. None has come to light in Alamannic lands yet, but they could well have been made and worn there. Indeed, during the sixth and seventh centuries, Swedish and Alamannic art is so closely linked that one may anticipate the finding of Vendel helmets among the Alamanni.<sup>63</sup>

The reconstruction of the Gutenstein dies (Figure 1.4) differs from an earlier one suggesting that the two warriors should flank Woden on each side in a single, centered, three-figure scene. Vendel helmets, however, have no such centered, three-figure scenes. Instead they display corresponding two-figure scenes on the left and right front panels. Of these, the Torslunda wolf-warrior die (Figure 1.6) is a very close parallel to the left-facing Gutenstein warrior. Our reconstruction of the Gutenstein panels is therefore modeled after that die.<sup>64</sup>

A clue to the meaning of the Gutenstein scenes is the right-facing wolf-warrior who bows his head, drops his spear, and (with outsize thumb) offers his sword to Woden. The god, if one may judge from the way he holds the spear, dances the war dance, spurring on the warrior.<sup>65</sup>

The image of Woden dancing before a wolf-warrior, found also on the Obrigheim foil and on the Torslunda die (Figures 1.5, 1.6), must have



*Figure 1.4* The Gutenstein dies reconstructed. Drawing by author.

conveyed a widely known meaning and an essential role of Woden. If the Gutenstein wolf-warrior scenes decorated Vendel-type helmets, they are likely to depict warriors or champions coming to battle. All Vendel helmets decorated with such scenes show warriors, sometimes five and more of the same kind, going or riding to a battle that is shown symbolically on front of the helmet as war dance (Sutton Hoo), bear-binding (Vendel 1), war dance and bear-binding (Valsgärde 7), or champions fighting (Vendel 14).<sup>66</sup> The Gutenstein wolf-warriors thus are likely to be champions going to battle (left-facing) or joining a warband by offering their weapons (right-facing), warbands often being raised from high-ranking warriors.<sup>67</sup> What speaks for this latter interpretation is the row of warriors depicted on the helmet of Vendel grave 14, all of whom offer their swords and who, being many, cannot be heroes known by name, nor gods, for whom it is not fitting to offer their weapons in token of subordination.<sup>68</sup> The Gutenstein wolf-warriors, in short, were champions joining the helmet owner's warband and going to battle.<sup>69</sup>

The Gutenstein and Obrigheim foils, like the Torslunda die (Figures 1.3–1.6), show wolf-warriors to be Woden-worshippers. As such they could hope to reach Valhalla after death and become heroes fighting on Woden's side in the last battle at Ragnarök when Woden himself might fight as a wolf-warrior. Their life and warriorhood thus was cosmically and mythologically meaningful.<sup>70</sup> It is nevertheless unlikely that the Gutenstein wolf-warrior following Woden and offering his sword is a fallen warrior who joins the god of death, for it seems untoward for a leader to advertise on his helmet that death is in store for his men.<sup>71</sup> Self-dedication to Woden by no means meant imminent death.<sup>72</sup>

As said before, wolf-names were characteristic of Alamanni warriors. This may have to do with their coming to southern Germany as youthful bands of wolf-warriors—the myth of their origin is likely to have been told for centuries and may have strengthened their anti-Roman and heathen stance. Names like *Wolfhroc* (“Wolf-Frock”), *Wolfhetan* (“Wolf-Hide”), *Isangrim* (“Grey-Mask”), and *Scrutolf* (“Garb-Wolf”) speak of wolf-warrior dress and wolf-hood, while *Wolfgang* (“Wolf-Gait”) and *Wolfdregil* (“Wolf-Runner”) stress the gait of warriors going to battle.<sup>73</sup> That gait can hardly have meant speed of onrush, for wolf-warriors now wore hauberks that slow a man down. They may have moved like wolves in other ways. The name *Vulfblaic* (“Wolf-Dancer”) suggests that wolf-warriors did their own war dance, whether at ancestor festivals or when battles began. If they danced wolf-like or in wolf-gait, they may, like *Dolon*, have mimicked walking on all fours: the Greek name *Lykormas* (“Wolf-Gait”) also points to wolf-warriors stepping like wolves. However they moved, one may say, with *Mircea Eliade*, that “he who ... could rightly imitate the behavior of animals—their gait, breathing, cries, and so on—found a new dimension of life: spontaneity, freedom, ‘sympathy’ with all the cosmic rhythms... ecstasy could... well be obtained by choreographic imitation of an animal.” This may be one root of the wolf war dance, the other being representation of wolf-warrior ancestors. From such twin ecstasy it is but a small step to mad attacks.<sup>74</sup>

The ring on the sword pommel of the right-facing *Gutenstein* warrior shows that wolf-warriors had lords or even kings in their ranks. *Woden* was the god of kings, and widely worshiped among Germanic nations that fought their way into new homelands: *Goths*, *Lombards*, and *Anglo-Saxons*. With their strong *Woden* worship—*Gutenstein* means “*Wodenstone*”—the *Alamanni* fit into this picture. Their wolf shield badges discussed on pp. 20–2 suggest that they worshiped *Woden* already by the fourth century AD.<sup>75</sup> It is known that many *Alamanni* stayed heathen until the seventh century.<sup>76</sup> Now the *Gutenstein* wolf-warriors show that even though *Alamannia* belonged to the nominally Christian *Merovingian* kingdom, warband leaders still could, throughout the sixth century, not only follow the old religion but flaunt it on their helmets of precious metal.

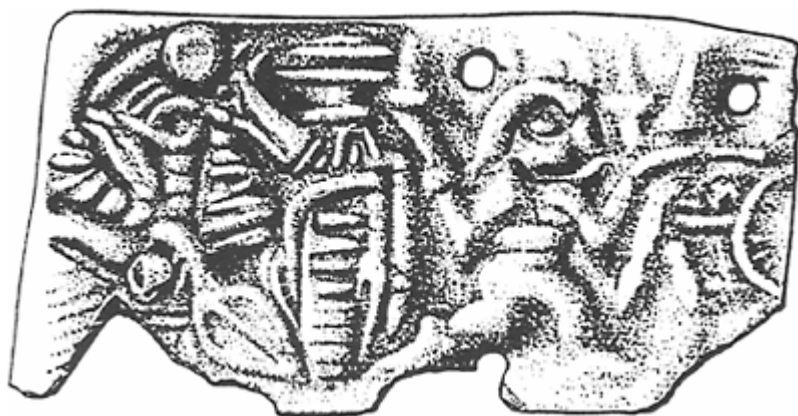
When the *Alamanni* became Christian, wolf-names no longer marked men as *Woden* worshippers. But for centuries to come, such names still bespoke a warrior ethos. Names such as *Lingulf*, *Horscolf*, *Adrulf*, *Haistulf*, *Aistulf*, *Trasulf*, *Grasulf*, *Zangrulf*, *Biterolf*, *Gradolf*, *Freki*, *Friculf*, *Leidulf* and *Agiulf*, meant *Fast*, *Battle-Mad*, *Hissing*, *Raging*, *Biting*, *Greedy*, *Bold*, *Hated*, and *Frightful Wolf*.<sup>77</sup>

Wolf-warriors are known also from *Bavaria*. Two masked men on a silvered, seventh-century strap-end from *Oberwarngau* are wolf-warriors (Figure 11.4).<sup>78</sup> The strap-ends come from belts that gave their wearers strength and that often bore “*Heilsbilder*” images guarding the wearer and bringing him luck. Another *Bavarian* strap-end, almost a twin to the one described and hence used in the same ceremonies, shows followers of *Woden* in the twindragon headgear. In seventh-century *Bavaria*, as in *Alamannia* and *Sweden*, wolf-warriordom thus went hand in hand with *Woden*-worship. Since elaborate belt fittings were insignia of rank and made at court, they broadcast the *Woden*-worship and wolf-warriordom of the *Dukes of Bavaria*. And like the *Alamanni*, their relatives, the *Bavarians*, bore wolf-warrior names.<sup>79</sup>

About the *Franks* we know less. In the fourth century AD, *Libanius* called wolfish battle madness the outstanding trait of *Frankish* warriors. In or shortly after AD 497, however, the *Merovingian* *Franks* became Christian, and *Frankish* wolf-warriordom

began to wither away. Writing about the endless fighting of southern and western Franks during the sixth century, Bishop Gregory of Tours never mentions wolf-warriors. Yet he does speak of a Duke Chedinus, whose name, like Alamannic *Wolfhetan* and Nordic *Ulfhedin*, means “animal-hooded warrior.” In Chedinus, as in Hroc, the simple word stands for the compound (here very likely Wolfhedin). Though by AD 590 his name no longer bound Chedinus to Woden, it echoes wolf-warriorhood among Franks, of which we otherwise knew next to nothing, were it not for Pope Gregory the Great who in AD 597 railed against Frankish cultic sacrifices done by men wearing animal heads.<sup>80</sup>

A seventh-century silver foil found at Obrigheim in the Palatinate may also be evidence of Frankish wolf-warriors and Woden-worship (Figure 1.5).<sup>81</sup>



*Figure 1.5* Wolf-warrior offering his sword to Woden. Silver foil from Obrigheim, Pfalz. Drawing after Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 717, fig. 29.

On this foil, as on the Gutenstein scabbard, a wolf-warrior stands facing right, head bowed, offering his sword and laying down his spear. Woden, wearing power belt and headdress (perhaps the lone-dragon headdress as on the Års medallion, Figure 11.2) dances before him, as he does before the right-facing Gutenstein warrior.<sup>82</sup> The traces further right are too faint to interpret. Measuring only 1.75 by 3.5 cm, the Obrigheim foil is too small for use on a Vendel helmet—perhaps it once decorated the browband of a *Spangenhelm* or a lamellar helmet, where centered scenes belong.<sup>83</sup> Whether from a helmet or not, the Obrigheim foil suggests that heathen warbands still existed in Francia west of the Rhine around AD 600, which would be well in accord with what we otherwise know of the Franks’ slow conversion to Christianity.<sup>84</sup>

No Anglo-Saxon wolf-warriors have come to light yet, though such men doubtless bestrode the battlefields of heathen England. In England wolf-sympathy was strong, as can be seen from the royal insignia of Sutton Hoo (the golden wolf on the king’s staff; the hero between two wolves on the king’s purse) and from the warriors’ expectation that



wolves would howl before battle.<sup>85</sup> To Vedic Indians the wolf was the animal of Rudra, to Romans the animal of Mars, to Germani the animal of Woden. This is why Geri and Freki, the wolves at Woden's side, also glowered on the throne of the Woden-sprung Anglo-Saxon kings. Wolf-warriors, like Geri and Freki, were not mere animals but mythical beings: as Woden's followers they bodied forth his might,<sup>86</sup> and so did wolf-warriors.

### Wolf-warriors in the north

In the north, where heathen religion flourished longest, the wolf-warrior style lasted longer than elsewhere and is known best. From Torslunda on the Swedish island of Öland comes a seventh-century bronze die that was used to emboss decorative images on metal foils for Vendel helmets (Figure 1.6).<sup>87</sup>

On the Torslunda die Woden, marked by his one eye, dances, wearing twin-dragon headgear. It is not a helmet, for the "horns" clearly end in bird heads or snake heads, and the left dragon also has a neckring.<sup>88</sup> The pointed "flaps" at the bottom of the headgear might be the tails of the two dragons or else tresses of the god like those on the bracteate amulets. The twin dragons do not derive from Mercury's (= Woden's) *caduceus* staff but rather from "horned" helmets such as those found at Viksø in Denmark, Woden wears this headgear for the war dance.<sup>89</sup> The scene looks like a detail of the battle shown on the Oseberg wall-hanging (Figure 11.5), where Woden and his animal warriors lead the shield wall of the warriors at Bråvalla. Its meaning thus may be "Woden leads the wolf-warrior to battle."

Roused by Woden's dance, the wolf-warrior beside him draws his sword, not, as has been said, to threaten the god but to follow him, for both move in the same direction, not against each other, and the spear of the wolf-warrior avoids the dancer's foot. Only the god dances, not the wolf, hence the god rouses the warrior. Perhaps the wolf-warrior too will begin to dance, as the warrior name Vulfolaic (Wolf-dancer) suggests.<sup>90</sup>

The wolf-warrior bears on his shoulder a very short and very thick, aristocratic spear like that of the war leaders Egil and Thorolf, described in *Egils saga* as only three feet long. Woden seems to wield more regular weapons whose lengths reach beyond the frame of the scene: a heavy lance and a lighter throwing spear, as do other war dancers.<sup>91</sup>

The wolf-pelt worn by the Torslunda warrior, like that of the Gutenstein warriors, does not reach his knees: a horizontal line, rising toward the tail, sets the fur off from the hauberk underneath. Like the medieval wolf-masks from Gutenstein and Ekhammar, the one from Torslunda fully masks the warrior but bares the wolf's teeth, the signal among wolves that they are ready to fight. Unlike the meek right-facing Gutenstein warrior, the left-facing Torslunda wolf follows Woden into battle, as shown by his drawing his sword and baring his teeth (as in Figure 1.7).



*Figure 1.6* Woden with twin-dragon headgear followed by a wolf-warrior drawing his sword. Bronze die from Torslunda, Öland. Statens Historiska Museen, Stockholm, inv. no. 4325; photograph ATA.

The Torslunda image, so much like that from Gutenstein, shows that, in the sixth and seventh centuries, heathen Germanic countries from Alamannia to Sweden shared the same art, especially in Vendel-helmet decoration; very likely they were also linked by marriage bonds among the leading families. Wolf-warrior names like Hetan/Hedin and Wolfhetan/Ulphedan further link Alamannic wolf-warriors to those in Scandinavia. Names as well as images thus show that northern and southern Germanic lands shared warrior styles and heroic myths.<sup>92</sup>

Like Alamannic and Bavarian wolf-warriors, Norse *úlfheðnar* were Woden's men, hence whoever joined a wolf-band became not a mere wolf but a mythical being, reliving the time when the gods walked on earth. Any fierce warrior might be a "wolf," but a true wolf-warrior wore a wolfskin and howled like a wolf to meld with the beast.<sup>93</sup>

The eighth-century Old English poem *Deor* speaks of Heodeningas, and the *Widsith* has Heoden ruling Glomman (Barkers). Heodeningas or Hiadnings were thus dog- and wolf-warriors who followed Heoden, the king in a dog- or wolf-hood. In his thirteenth-century Prose-Edda, Snorri Sturluson refers to great warriors as Hiadnings, who until the

end of the world fight daily, while each night Hilde brings the dead to life again. This is so close to Woden's *einheriar* warband in Valhalla that Hiadnings and *einheriar* blend into each other. In a sense, then, Hiadning wolf-warriors are Woden's *einheriar*, the ones he chose to be with him when the world ends.<sup>94</sup> A fifth-century bracteate amulet shows Woden in the last battle, at Ragnarök, wearing a wolf-helmet.<sup>95</sup>

For tenth-century Norway the skald Eyvind Skaldaspillir attests wolf-warriors with his line: "This hero bore the grey wolf-cape in the one-eyed's storm."<sup>96</sup> The "one-eyed's storm" is a kenning—an Old Norse compound expression—for battle. Wolf-warriors as the champions of Nordic kings may reflect Woden's bond with his wolf-warriors.

Outside the Germanic area, wolf-warriors likewise survived into the Middle Ages. Judging from their names, Irish warriors wore wolfskins. A Pictish dog-warrior is carved on a ninth-century stone slab in Scotland. Slavs and Lithuanians also had wolf-warriors. All of Europe beyond the reach of Rome and Christianity upheld its Indo-European heritage of wolf- and dog-warr iordom.<sup>97</sup>

### Sigmund the wolf-warrior and dragon-slayer

Bronzes, garments, weavings, warrior names, and sagas tell of wolf-warriors in heathen Scandinavia. A tenth-century bronze figurine from a grave at Ekhammar/Kungsängen, Sweden, though only about 3 cm high, offers a wealth of detail (Figure 1.7).<sup>98</sup>

Found some 30 kilometers northwest of Stockholm, the figurine is from the heartland of heathen Sweden. As with the wolf-warriors from Gutenstein and Torslunda, the man's pelt jacket is shorter than the shirt or hauberk underneath. His jacket has openings for the arms, and its lower hem ends in a short tail. The wolfskin thus matches the definition of *heðinn*—"a sleeveless, short cape with a fur hood"—that underlies the Norse term for wolf-warrior, *úlfheðinn*. The *heðinn* on the Ekhammar bronze has the same cut, open in front, as the wolf-hoods from Gutenstein and Torslunda. The tail is rather short for a wolfskin, but it might have broken off or run along the warrior's right leg.<sup>99</sup> The wolf's teeth are bared as for attack.

Does the Ekhammar warrior shake a spear in his right hand, as has been said? A close look shows that he does not. The "spear" is an *ormr*, a wingless, footless dragon-snake, its mouth clearly marked. The bend in the warrior's long arm is his elbow, as in the images of the Gutenstein and Torslunda wolf-warriors. His arm therefore ends at the lower right corner of his frock. In his right hand he holds a sword, stabbing at the dragon's belly. Under magnification, the sword shows a cross near the tip of the blade, a heathen symbol found also on bracteate amulets of about AD 500 and, as we have seen, on the Gutenstein scabbard (Figure 1.3).<sup>100</sup>



*Figure 1.7* Sigmund (?), fighting the worm. Bronze figurine from Ekhammar, Uppland. Statens Historiska Museen, Stockholm; photograph ATA, Nils Lagergren.

Images like this one are likely to portray mythical heroes, and one thinks here of Sigurd, the dragon-slayer of the north. However, most pictures of Sigurd's dragon fight show him piercing the "worm" from underneath, as in the Eddic *Fáfnismál*. The Ekhammar figurine, then, is hardly Sigurd. But there is another mythic dragon fighter of the north, Sigmund, whose feat is told in the eighth-century *Beowulf* as follows:

Sigmund's brave deeds, many a strange thing, the strife of Wael's son, his wide wanderings, feuds and foul doings of which the children of men knew nothing—only Fitela with him to whom he would tell all, the uncle to his nephew, for they were always friends in need in every fight. Many tribes of giants they laid low with their swords. For Sigmund there sprang up after his death-day no little glory, after he, bold in battle, had killed the wyrm, keeper of the hoard: under the grey stone the atheling's son had ventured alone, a daring deed, nor was Fitela with him. Yet it turned out

well for him so that his sword went through the wondrous worm and stuck in the wall, doughty iron: the dragon died of the murdering stroke.<sup>101</sup>

Since Sigmund's sword stuck in the wall of the cave, he must have stabbed the dragon when both were standing upright—just as the Ekhammar bronze shows it. What makes it almost certain that the Ekhammar figurine represents Sigmund is the hero's wolf-hood. Of all dragon-slayers only Sigmund was also a wolf-warrior. Heretofore we had only one medieval image of Sigmund, the one from Winchester that shows him biting the wolf's tongue. Now, it seems, we have an image of him as dragon-slayer, accomplishing his most famous deed. What is new is that, in this version of the myth, Sigmund slew the dragon while he was a wolf-warrior; that is, at a time of ecstatic strength and fearlessness. Heroic myth clearly held wolf-warriors in high regard, both in words and pictures.<sup>102</sup>

Sigmund could well be portrayed in the tenth century, for just then the Eiriksmál has Sigmund and Sinfiotli at Woden's behest welcome outstanding newcomers to Valhalla.<sup>103</sup>

As the Gutenstein, Obrigheim, and Torslunda wolf-warriors worshiped Woden, so did the warrior of the Ekhammar grave, for a bronze statuette of Woden lay in the same grave.<sup>104</sup> It follows that the wolf-warriors' bond with Woden, known among the Lombards a thousand years earlier, still held good in the tenth century.<sup>105</sup> Snorri Sturluson in the thirteenth century thus did not "mythologize" bear- and wolf-warriors—they had always been Woden's men.<sup>106</sup>

*Beowulf* calls Sigmund's and Sinfiotli's deeds foul as well as fair, the Volsung saga portrays the two as outlaws living in the woods by robbery, and *Wolfdieterich* in the thirteenth century likewise does both good and bad. The old Indo-European notion that warriors bear a burden of sin was thus still alive in northern Europe through most of the Middle Ages. So was the custom of sending young men as wolves into the wilds for training in survival and conquest of new land. Sigi, Sigmund's grandfather, was such a wolf-warrior guided by Woden. Sigmund and Sinfiotli are thus true-to-type wolf-warriors: of ambiguous morals, boundless strength, and fierceness in battle. They were also men to whom Woden's presence brought the power and magic that was in the beginning.<sup>107</sup>

### Wolf-warriors in Icelandic sagas

Wolf-warriors fought in 1030 in the battle at Stiklastad, says the *Helgisaga Óláfs konungs Haraldssonar*:

Thorir Hound and his men, twelve altogether, fought in front of their troops, unarmored, wearing wolf-skin coats... And men say that Björn the Stout hewed with his sword at Thorir that day. Yet wherever he aimed, his sword failed to bite as though its edge had been turned. For Thorir and his men were in those wolf-skin coats which a Finn had made with great magic. When Björn saw that his sword did not bite, he called to the king and said: "The weapon does not bite the dogs." "Then beat the dogs," said the king. Then Björn took a huge club and clobbered Thorir Hound so that he fell down and ever after had his head tilted to one side. And then he

leaped up and thrust Björn through with his spear and said: “This is how we bite bears in the northland woods.”<sup>108</sup>

In Snorri Sturluson’s version the king said: “Strike down the dog on whom steel takes no effect.” The belief that wolf-warriors cannot be hurt by steel or fire comes perhaps from their being confused with berserks, as they were by this time.<sup>109</sup> But the belief may be much older, for the Hirpi Sorani, Italic wolf-warriors, could also walk on fire. If so, wolf-warriors were ecstatic fighters all along, as woundlessness comes from ecstasy. That the Longobard dog-warriors drank blood makes them, too, ecstatic fighters, for in Icelandic sagas biting the opponent’s windpipe was a custom of mad wolf-warriors and berserks.<sup>110</sup>

Indo-European wolf-warrior youths, as we have seen, wore no armor. On Trajan’s Column, however, being Roman auxiliaries, they wore armor, and likewise on early medieval monuments, being leading warriors. *Helgi saga*, portraying wolf-warriors unarmored, thus seems to reflect literary imagination of the saga period rather than old custom, for Thorir Hound and his wolf-warriors too are leading warriors.<sup>111</sup>

As long as the ancient religion lasted, wolf-warriors were Woden’s mythic fighters at the heart of Germanic warrior society. Being fearsome fighters, they, like bear-warriors and berserks, could become a king’s champions. Saxo Grammaticus tells the delightful story that when Erik came to King Frothi’s hall and sat down with the champions, they howled like wolves until the king stopped them.<sup>112</sup> Like berserks (with whom they are sometimes confused), they were often the twelve champions of a king.

When Christianity overthrew Woden worship, wolf-warriorhood lost its religious underpinning. In sagas from the twelfth century and later, wolf-warriors are mad berserks. “The berserks that were called *úlfhednar* wore wolf-pelts for hauberks,” says the *Vatnsdæla saga*. Wolf-warriors had become mad fighters who, in the new meaning of the word *berserkir* (“bare-shirt”), scorned armor.<sup>113</sup>

Northern Europeans nevertheless kept up some of their wolf-warriorhood throughout the Middle Ages, for they lived in the midst of woods teeming with wolves. Their wolf-ancestor myths, such as the one in the thirteenth-century *Wolfdieterich* epic, show the abiding closeness of man and wolf. Even in modern Europe large packs of wolves still roamed the woods and ravaged herds, barely kept in check by trap and wolfhound until in the nineteenth-century public hunts hounded them into extinction. Only now, at the beginning of the third millennium, when no more than 200,000 wolves are left world-wide and very few are still on the loose in Europe and North America, do wolves no longer haunt our dreams.<sup>114</sup>



*Figure 1.8* Hundsgugel wolf-helmet of about AD 1390–1400, from southern Germany. Photo: Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zürich, Neg. 105 206.

Medieval knights widely upheld a wolf-symbolism. So ingrained was it that in France alone 1,200 noble families had wolves as their shield badges. Heraldic animals may have been individual or family symbols, but when so many individuals and families all bore wolf-badges, the wolf was still a widely shared warrior symbol. Although it was now only a symbol rather than a means of identification, some of the old closeness to the animal is likely to have lingered on. A token of this is the striking late-medieval helmet type called *Hundsgugel* (hound hood) that looks like a wolf head (Figure 1.8). Wearing it, early fifteenth-century knights still, in a way, fought as wolves.<sup>115</sup>

## 2 BEARS

A huge bear advanced before King Hrolf's men, and always next at hand where the king was. It killed more men with its paw than any five of the king's champions did. Blows and missiles glanced off from the animal and it beat down both men and horses.

*Hrólf's saga Kraka*

### **Bear-warriors on Trajan's Column**

Bear sympathy is found since the earliest times throughout the northern hemisphere: among North American Indians, ancient Chinese, and Ugro-Finnish Permsians, who in the first century AD wore bear-hoods with dangling forepaws. Among Indo-Europeans, however, bear-warriors occur far less often than wolf-warriors. In Europe, bear-warriors seem to be mostly Germanic, for few or none are known among Celtic and Italic tribes. Scene 36 of Trajan's Column is the only portrayal we have of ancient European bear-warriors, and as they march with Trajan's Germanic troops, they are likely to be Germani too.<sup>1</sup>

Scholars have noted the four pelt-hooded warriors in the upper left of scene 36 of Trajan's Column (Figures 0.2, 1.1), but have not distinguished the bearskin hoods of the first two from the wolfskin hoods of the later two. A detail photograph shows how bear- and wolf-hoods differ (Figure 2.1).<sup>2</sup>

The hood on the right in Figure 2.1 has the broad paws and long claws of a bear, while the one on the left has the narrow paws without claws of a wolf. The other bear-warrior, not seen here but in Figure 1.1, is less well preserved, but the claws of the crossed paws of his hood (just above and to the right of the wolf-warrior) leave no doubt that he too is a bear-warrior. By thus distinguishing between the two types of animal skins, the Column recognizes two different animal-warrior styles: wolf- and bear-warriors.<sup>3</sup>

Like the wolf-warriors in this scene, the bear-warriors are dressed as regular auxiliaries with standard tunic, knee-breeches, and neckerchief. They are also armed like auxiliaries, with cuirass, shield, and sword hanging from a baldric.

Moreover, they seem to wear helmets underneath their skin-hoods: a metal band around the forehead of the first bear-warrior in Figure 1.1 suggests a helmet. Helmets are equipment of Roman auxiliaries; free Germani rarely wore them.<sup>4</sup>





*Figure 2.1* Bear- and wolf-warriors, wearing different pelt hoods (detail of Figure 0.2). Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 41.1263, made from the Column itself, while Figure 1.1 is a photograph of the plaster cast.

Careful observer that he was, Cichorius saw that unlike the animal heads of Roman standard-bearers depicted elsewhere on Trajan's Column, those in scene 36 retain their lower jaws. Indeed, the lower jaw of the bearskin in Figure 1.1 reaches nearly to the warrior's mouth, almost like a cheek guard. The lower jaw of the other bearskin is somewhat shorter, but it too stretches toward the warrior's mouth. This is never found in pictures of Roman standard-bearers or hornblowers: Roman triumphal art—elsewhere on Trajan's Column and in the Aurelian panels, for example—always depicts the pelt hoods of standard-bearers and hornblowers without lower jaws save for a short spur stretching toward the warriors' eyes.<sup>5</sup> Retaining the lower jaws of the animal skins in scene 36 must therefore have been part of the animal-warrior get-up, for northern pelt-hooded warriors in the early Middle Ages also wore animal skins with lower jaws attached (Figures 1.3–1.7). Their names and battle fury make it clear that they did this because, unlike Roman standard-bearers, they were true bear- or wolf-men.<sup>6</sup>

Bear- and wolf-pelt battle garb marks Trajan's men as Germanic warriors. Cuirasses and helmets mark them also as Roman soldiers; that is, auxiliaries recruited in the Roman provinces of Germany. Archaeological finds support this: a Roman auxiliary helmet embroidered with bear fur, it seems, has come to light at the Batavian auxiliary fort on the Kops Plateau at Nijmegen. Germani liked to rework Roman helmets to give them a

wild look or new significance: bear fur on his helmet may have made the wearer feel bear-like.<sup>7</sup>

Another striking fact revealed by scene 36 of the Column is that in AD 101 bear- and wolf-warriors fought side by side. Bear- and wolf-warriors, as we shall see, fought alongside each other also in the battle on the Hafrsfjord in Norway in AD 872. The parallel between the two instances suggests that this was an ancient custom. Perhaps the pairing enlivened competition: Greeks and Romans paired units to fight side by side so they would vie with each other for victory and fame. Trajan may have made use of a traditional Germanic pattern for a Roman reason.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps wolves and bears reflected age sets, and as wolf-warriors were often the young, bear warriors may have been older men. Wolves and bears together were the kings of the wild and hence of the battlefield.<sup>9</sup>

### **Bear-hooded soldiers in the Roman army**

Suddenly and surprisingly in the mid-first century AD, bear-hoods came into use among regular, non-Germanic Roman auxilia. Soon afterward even the legions adopted them. In several scenes of Trajan's Column, and in many other works of art from this period, we see Roman eagle-bearers, standard-bearers, and musicians wearing bear-hoods. Heretofore unknown in the Roman army, bear-hoods were not a Roman tradition. Where did they come from, and what did they mean?

P.Couissin believed Rome adopted bear-hoods from her northern neighbors. Roman soldiers who killed Germanic bear-warriors may have stripped off their hoods as trophies and worn them as badges of bravery. In earlier times, Roman soldiers stripped torcs from fallen Celts and wore them as trophies; after a while, Roman-made torcs became battle decorations awarded by Roman commanders. The same may have happened with Germanic animal hoods.<sup>10</sup>

Because battle decorations went to the bravest and the bravest became standard-bearers, the latter may have begun to wear a bear-hood over their helmet as a badge of status. Standing in the middle of the first line in battle, standard-bearers and hornblowers were well-placed to cow enemy tribesmen by flaunting captured pelt hoods.<sup>11</sup> On parade, hooded standard-bearers and hornblowers made a splendid show. Perhaps Rome adopted bear- rather than wolf-hood insignia because bear-warriors were uniquely Germanic, while Rome had once had its own wolf-warriors.<sup>12</sup>

If the bear-hoods of Roman standard-bearers originated from trophies, one would expect them to appear first among auxiliary cohorts on the Rhine, since they were the first Roman forces to fight Germanic bear-warriors. This is indeed where they are found. The earliest known bear-hooded Roman standard-bearer is Pintaius of cohors V Asturum, whose gravestone at Bonn dates to the reign of Claudius (41–54). The next one is Genialis, image-bearer of cohors VII Raetorum, whose gravestone at Mainz dates to the time of Nero (54–68).<sup>13</sup>

In the legions, bear-hooded standard-bearers became known by the time of Vespasian (69–79). The earliest legionary standard-bearers also served on the Rhine and may have adopted the custom from the auxilia. Later, legionaries with bear-hoods (and praetorians with lion-hoods like those of Hercules and Alexander the Great) are met on monuments of state art from Trajan's to Marcus Aurelius' time. Then they disappear.<sup>14</sup>

A striking parallel to Rome's adoption of Germanic bear-hoods are the leopard skins royal Hungarian bodyguards wore at court in Vienna until 1918. They took the custom—and the first skins—from the bodyguard of the Turkish Grand Vizier whom they overcame in 1716 under Prince Eugene. The Turkish guard, in turn, may have had the custom from medieval Georgian knights.<sup>15</sup> The persistence of this custom for several hundred years neatly parallels that of Roman bear-hood wearers. It also shows the abidingness of warrior customs the world over. From the Stone Age to the twentieth century, wearing skins of toothed animals, especially when taken in battle, raised warrior pride.<sup>16</sup>

To be singled out by Romans for trophies, Germanic bear-warriors must have been outstanding fighters—and hence few in number. This may be why Tacitus mentions neither wolf- nor bear-warriors, and why we learn of no Germanic bear-warriors who may have served in the Roman army after Trajan's time, even though from amphitheaters and bear-fight pits, both Romans and Germani knew bears well as grim single fighters.<sup>17</sup>

In the later Roman army, Germanic field marshals and troops held on to furs as part of their warrior get-up, not unlike guards today at Buckingham Palace or in the Swedish Grenadier Watch. At a time when old-fashioned Romans claimed to scorn furs, Emperor Zeno in Byzantium in 472 took pride in his fur-clad Excubitores guards. Since furs are too hot for Mediterranean summers, Zeno's northern warriors seem to have donned their pelts out of animal sympathy.<sup>18</sup>

### **Bear-warriors in the early Middle Ages**

Compared to wolf-warriors, there is less pictorial evidence for bear-warriors in the early Middle Ages, but there are bear-warrior tales. When in AD 497 or slightly thereafter, King Clovis of the Franks and his followers became Christians, wolf- and bear-warriordom among the Franks was stifled, for these fighting styles were bound up with Woden worship. The more they were Christianized, the more Franks had to forgo the religious aspects of animal-warrior styles. Yet their fighting customs may have changed little, for they still fought in a fury, as a certain Ursio did in 587. According to Gregory of Tours' "History of the Franks," King Childebert's army cornered the rebellious Ursio and his men in a church on a mountain near Verdun. The king's men, unable to force their way into the building, set it afire:

When Ursio saw this, he girt himself with his sword, came out, and began such a slaughter among the besiegers that none who showed himself stayed alive. There fell Trudulf, count of the royal palace, and many of that army were cut down. When Ursio finally tired of the slaughter, someone hit him in the leg. Weakened, he sank to the ground and, as others ran up, lost his life.

Ursio's name means either "Bear-Man" or "Furious One." Like Woden's men he seems to have fought in a trance of madness that gave him uncanny strength and made him wound-proof for a while, only to be followed by a weakness, as always in such cases. Perhaps Ursio was only a desperate, cornered man. But Gregory seems to tell the story

because he and his fellow Franks saw Ursio's deed as the height of life itself. If this was no longer the ancient bearecstasy, it was close to it.<sup>19</sup>

In the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Fight at Finnsburg*, the sixty warriors with Hnaef are called *sigebeorna*, "Victory Bears." Such appellatives no doubt gave rise to bear-warrior names. As time went by, however, ancient animal-warrior names lost their meaning among Anglo-Saxons, Franks, and Saxons. They began to fade from use when warriors no longer saw themselves as mythical bears and wolves.<sup>20</sup> Northern Europe held Christianity at bay much longer than the Franks did; hence wolf- and bear-warriors flourished there until the eleventh century.

In his poem of praise for King Harald Fairhair at the battle on the Hafrsfjord in AD 872 Thorbjorn Hornklofi says that berserks and wolfwarriors began the fight:

Grenjuðu berserkir emjuðu úlfheðnar                      guðr vas þeim a sinnum ok ísorn dúðu

Berserks snorted as the battle began, wolf-warriors howled and shook weapons.<sup>21</sup>

Since Hornklofi wrote these lines for the king and other eye-witnesses soon after the battle, they must be close to the truth. But which of the two meanings of *berserk* did he have in mind: bare-shirts, the mad fighters of modern usage, or the earlier "bear-warriors"? The fact that Hornklofi pairs *berserkir* and *úlfheðnar* (wolf-warriors) suggests that both are animal-warriors and that his berserks, as their name says, are bear-warriors.

There was a linguistic reason for this change in the meaning of the word "berserk": sometime after the ninth century, the word *berr* in Old Norse no longer meant "bear" but only "bare."<sup>22</sup> To the saga writers, therefore, berserks were "bare fighters" without hauberks, *brynjulausir*, "men without mail shirt," as Snorri Sturluson calls them, while in earlier times wolf- and bear-warriors did wear hauberks.<sup>23</sup>

The howling and snorting of Hornklofi's warriors also matched their identification with animals. Wolves, of course, howl, and Hornklofi's verb *emjuðu* denotes the howling of wolves. Attacking bears, on the other hand, snort: they push short bursts of air through their teeth and open lips. Hornklofi's *grenjuðu* seems to mean just that, for the sound of *grenja* is that of a broken sword-blade swishing to the ground. In Old Norse prose the verb *grenja* is used sixteen times of berserks, five times of swords, twice of bears and, tellingly, once of breaking waves. *Grenja* is the English word "to grin, to show one's teeth." It means not to howl but to snort and snarl. Hornklofi's berserks, snorting like bears, are therefore in all likelihood "bear-shirts", that is bear-warriors.<sup>24</sup>

The claim that Hornklofi "freely invented" the terms *berserkir* and *úlfheðnar* to describe ecstatic warriors is mistaken. The eighth-century name Wolfhetan makes it clear that the term *úlfheðnar* was used for wolf-warriors long before the poem. That the term *berserkir* also existed by then is made more than likely by the parallelism of bear- and wolf-warriors on Trajan's Column and in Hornklofi's poem, and by eighth- and ninth-century names such as Peragrim (Bear-Mask), Bernhelm, and the Bjarnheðinn.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the parallelism between the portrayal of wolf- and bear-warriors on Trajan's Column and in Hornklofi's poem links Trajan's first-century bear-warriors with medieval Scandinavian bear-warriors.<sup>26</sup>

Bear-names may also reveal something of bear-warrior tactics: the early medieval German name Perlaic ("Bear-Dancer") parallels the above-mentioned Vulfoaic (Wolf-Dancer), and suggests that bear-warriors had their own war dance, imitating bears. As

bear-dance ecstasy is known from North America, ancient China, Siberia, and the Hittites, the Germanic warrior style that derives from it is hardly a Scandinavian invention, as has been claimed, but a custom inherited from the Stone Age.<sup>27</sup>

Hornklofi's poem portrays wolf- and bear-warriors as the king's champions and hence few in number. As such, it seems, they also appear on the Norwegian Oseberg tapestry of about AD 800. There, in the legendary battle at Bråvalla, two warriors, wearing strange hoods, stride in the van (Figure 11.5).<sup>28</sup> Strutting ahead while wearing wolf- or bear-hoods, their role as the king's champions is to lead the warriors of the line, passing on to them the battle madness of Woden.

### Bear-warriors in Icelandic sagas

In the thirteenth century Snorri Sturluson wrote that, of old, Woden's men in battle "behaved like mad dogs or wolves...and were strong like bears or bulls." Snorri called this behavior *berserksgang*, which could mean "berserk gait" or "berserk attack." The warriors dressed, howled, snorted, strutted, and altogether behaved like bears or wolves, not only to frighten foes but also because for the fight they felt themselves to be bears and wolves.<sup>29</sup>

Bears on the attack snort, bark hoarsely, and finally clack their teeth. Bear-warriors, as we saw, snorted (as did berserks). Very likely, therefore, they also barked and clacked their teeth. The sagas and a twelfth-century chess set from the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides tell of a weird custom of biting one's shield (Figure 5.4). Such biting, done rapidly, makes a sound like that of bears clacking their teeth before they attack. It is also much louder than clacking one's teeth and avoids the chattering that might seem to come from fear. Not loud enough for a battlefield challenge, shield-biting could nevertheless put one into a trance. Known only from the time when "berserk" already meant any kind of reckless warrior, it may nevertheless have been a custom brought about by warriors who felt themselves to be bears.<sup>30</sup>

A warrior who donned an animal hood underwent a thorough transformation. In a trance-like state he "became" the animal, and like a shaman drew strength from his "spirit animal." As a parallel one may cite a Carib from Guyana who said of his tiger-dance: "I growl, I hiss. I swing the club just like he does when he crushes his prey with one blow of his terrible claws. And when I have killed my enemy, I must also drink his blood and taste his flesh so that the spirit that impels me to do this deed will be assuaged ...When the Tiger is in the man, the man becomes like a tiger."<sup>31</sup>

Warriors so much changed themselves in this process that their fellows noted it. The fourteenth-century saga about the heathen Danish King Hrolf tells of such a shape-shift in graphic detail. While battle engulfed his king, Bothvar Bjarki ("Battle Bear"), his champion, sat in the hall doing nothing. Yet one "saw a huge bear advance before King Hrolf's men and always next at hand where the king was. It killed more men with its paw than any five of the king's champions did. Blows and missiles glanced off from it." When someone summoned Bothvar Bjarki to the fight, the bear vanished—it had been Bjarki in changed shape. Bothvar Bjarki is our best medieval example of a warrior becoming a bear.<sup>32</sup> Like Bothvar Bjarki, bears fight not in packs but alone.

Bears in nature can also fall into a fighting madness, as told in the Irish legend of CúChulainn and as born out by the Sioux warrior name “The Grizzly bear that runs without regard.” Bjarki as a bear fought in an ecstasy that gave him more-than-human strength and made him wound-proof. The bear-warriors’ ecstatic style, like that of Bjarki, may explain why by the thirteenth century the word “berserk” had come to denote every kind of mad, fearless fighter. Bothvar Bjarki himself, when he afterwards fought as a man, did so in the grip of madness.<sup>33</sup>

But not all shape-shifts went that far: lesser changes might be no more than a token shift in dress. What matters most, however, is that animal-warriors became not ordinary bears or wolves but mythical beings: Woden’s own. Woden himself, to judge from his bear names such as Björn, at times turned into a bear or bear-warrior. Defined by culture and religion, the fighting madness of bear- and wolf-warriors was not a mindless rage but a mythical identification.<sup>34</sup>

Later medieval warriors upheld a bear-symbolism that sometimes came close to identifying with the animal. Twelfth-century “Albrecht der Bär” of Saxony and Brandenburg “was” a bear to judge by his nickname. In the later Middle Ages, knights and burghers emblazoned their coats of arms with bears as well as with wolves, boars, eagles, lions, panthers, and dragons, proclaiming thereby their will to fight, like those beasts, nobly, fearlessly, and frighteningly. By then, bears were symbols only, but if one wanted to more truly identify with the animal, there were bear masks. Charles the Fifth (1519—1556) must have wanted to look like a bear if, as is likely, the bear-masked suit of armor now in Florence belonged to him.<sup>35</sup> If so, he bodied forth nearly the same warrior’s animal sympathy as the Aztec jaguar-, wolf-, and eagle-warriors whom his captain Cortés fought in Mexico.

### 3

## BUCKS

A horned buck, knowing he has weapons, rushes into fights all the time.

Columella

Bucks (billy goats), stubborn and full of fight, also inspired Indo-European warriors. Buck-warriors, often wearing horned helmets, are found among Vedic Indians, Iranians, Sardinians, Mycenaean, archaic Greeks, and Celts. Early Rome knew them too: buck-warriors of Juno Sospita had their part in the Lupercalia festival as had wolf-warriors of Romulus and Mars.<sup>1</sup>

Ancient Germani too fought as buck-warriors. Cornuti (“Horned Ones”), wearing horned helmets, stand out on several reliefs on Constantine’s Arch (Figure 3.1).<sup>2</sup>

Since the horns on the helmets rise from the front, not from the side, they are goat horns rather than bull horns. Carved by different artists, not all horned helmets on Constantine’s Arch look alike: in the marching and battle scenes the horns bend forward, in the scenes depicting the siege of Verona and the entry into Rome, they are straight or bend backward. Nevertheless, all mark the same kind of troops: horned buck-warriors.

The reliefs on Constantine’s Arch show the horned warriors, wherever they are found, as front-rank fighters. In the siege-of-Verona scene they run along the walls, ahead of everyone else; in the battle at the Milvian Bridge, they, together with bowmen and horsemen, do all the fighting. Marked by their horned helmets as foreigners and portrayed as Constantine’s most outstanding troops, they must be the emperor’s top-ranking Auxilia Palatina.<sup>3</sup>

The highest-ranking Auxilia Palatina are known from the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the Roman government handbook of about AD 400, which lists Cornuti, Brachiati, Petulantes, and Celtae at the head of the Auxilia. Since all four of these units have twin-dragon shield badges, they belong together and were very likely raised together. Having similar shield badges, the four units also likely had the same fighting spirit: the one evoked by the name of the Petulantes—the bucks’ instinct of stubborn attack.<sup>4</sup>



*Figure 3.1* Warrior with horned helmet at the siege of Verona, AD 311. Constantine's Arch, Rome. Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 32–82.

Literary evidence states that the elite troops who in 311 won for Constantine the battle at the Milvian Bridge were largely Germanic warriors. This confirms that the Cornuti and Petulantes, Constantine's most outstanding troops, were Germanic auxiliaries.<sup>5</sup> Certainly Constantine saw them as such, for he had their shield badge depicted on his arch in Rome (Figure 3.2).<sup>6</sup>



The shield, borne by an officer in the victory parade on the socle of the arch, blazons the twin-dragon badge of the Auxilia Palatina. The gill-slits, clearly seen on the left dragon, prove that these are facing dragons, not “horns” as has been claimed. The un-Roman, Germanic twin-dragon symbol—the same as that on the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6)—is here rigged with goat horns to adapt it to buck-warriors.<sup>7</sup> A bronze statuette, now in Princeton, shows Emperor



*Figure 3.2* Shield with facing twin dragons. Constantine’s Arch, Rome.  
Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, DAIR Inst. Neg 342121.

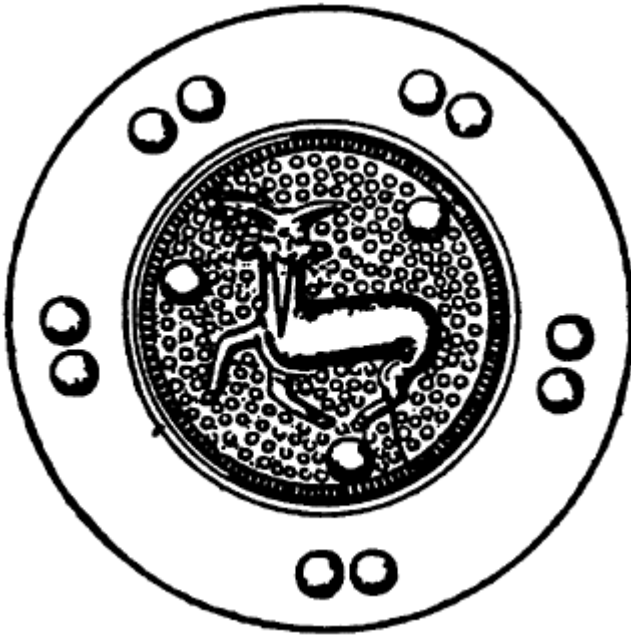
Constantine holding a shield with this twin-dragon badge:<sup>8</sup> adopting their shield, the emperor wants himself to be seen as a Cornutus buck-warrior.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise acknowledging the Cornuti’s fame, another relief on Constantine’s Arch depicts one of their horn-helmeted officers escorting a personified Roma to the victorious

emperor.<sup>10</sup> It is a stunning picture—Germanic buck-warriors conquering Rome. A hundred years later, Germanic tribal warriors again conquered the city—the Goths in AD 410—only then on their own account, against the emperor.

Although buck-warriors were Rome's elite troops during the fourth century, given the overall dearth of evidence they left few traces among free Germanic tribes. One of these is a third-century scabbard chape, engraved with a buck, that came to light in Denmark (Figure 3.3).

Since the buck decorated a weapon, it must have had a warrior meaning: the scabbard belonged to a buck-warrior. The find-spot in Denmark fits very well, for some of Maximian's and Constantine's prisoners of war, and hence their Auxilia, such as the Heruli, came from there.<sup>11</sup>



*Figure 3.3* Buck. Scabbard chape from Fredsö, Denmark. Drawing: Werner, *Aufkommen* 1966, 25, fig. 11.

The shorter Gallehus gold horn of about AD 400, likewise from Denmark but now lost, depicts two naked gods with buck horns, war-dancing. Since gods wore such horns, buck-warriors may have felt themselves repeating the primordial deeds of gods, enacting the world-wide myth of the eternal return.

Saxo Grammaticus in the thirteenth century says of the legendary Danish king Gram that he put on goatskins to intimidate others and wielded a frightful club. When Gro, the daughter of the Swedish king Sigtruk, saw him, she said: "Bold warriors have often hidden themselves under the hides of beasts." Gram, in a sense, was a buck-warrior.<sup>12</sup>

She-goats were the antithesis to buck-warriors. When in AD 363 Emperor Julian paraded Persian prisoners before his army, he called them “foul she-goats disfigured with filth” to brand them as woeful cowards. In the Grettis saga, the men from whom earl Audun bought his life called him Audun Geit, “Audun the Nanny-Goat.”<sup>13</sup>

Frankish and Nordic warrior names like Buccilin and Bucciovalda became rare after Christianity called the buck the devil’s animal.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, what is known of buck-warriors shows that our knowledge of ancient and early medieval warrior styles depends on the hazards of evidence lost or preserved. Only for wolf-warriors do we have sources rich enough to write a detailed history. But while we have fewer sources for buck-warriors, they may nevertheless have thrived from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages.<sup>15</sup>

## 4

# MARTENS

Particularly impressive are the hectic and fast hunts of these animals in treetops. Especially when chasing squirrels, martens race on thin, swinging branches and, in the heat of the chase, jump from one treetop to another, leaping up to eleven feet (three and a half meters) through the air.

H.Grzimek, *Encyclopedia of Mammals*, vol. 3

Though much smaller than wolves, bears, or bucks, predators of the marten and weasel family (mustelidae) are as fierce and bloodthirsty, lending themselves well to warrior identification. They were mythical beings too: several Asiatic tribes, notably Huns and Indo-European Mitanni, claimed the wolverine, a relative of the marten, as their forebear. Animal sympathy among Indo-Europeans thus extended to the marten and weasel family.

Ancient Germani dared not speak the animal's true name. Marten ("Biter" or "Killer") is a circumscribing Noa-name that avoids uttering the uncanny mythical name.<sup>1</sup> The marten's supernatural role is seen on a third-century embossed silver foil found at Thorsberg, Schleswig where what seems to be a clawy marten with a neckband follows four mythical animals: a sea horse, a goat with fishtail, a boar, and a bird also wearing neckbands. As these animals are mythical, so is the marten among them.<sup>2</sup>

The Latin word for helmet, *galea*, originally meant "marten pelt," but we cannot tell whether early Romans wore these helmets as marten-warriors or for their fine fur. Nor do we know why the fleet-footed spy Dolon in the *Iliad* wore a marten-pelt cap.<sup>3</sup>

The battlefield of AD 69 at the Roman fort of Gelduba on the Rhine has yielded a Germanic helmet (Figure 4.1).<sup>4</sup> Lost by a Germanic warrior, the helmet is a Roman iron bowl helmet, stripped of its neck and cheek guards and with ear openings closed. A leather band was fitted round the rim of the bowl with openings for feathers in front, an open space in the middle, and animal fur on top. Perhaps the fur was joined to an animal skull to fill the open space in front, though that is not certain. The Gelduba helmet recalls Plutarch's words about Germanic Ambrones horsemen in 101 BC:

They wore helmets like the gaping maws of frightful beasts and strange creatures, and these, with their towering feather crests, made them look even taller.<sup>5</sup>



*Figure 4.1* Germanic helmet with feathers and perhaps a marten skull. Gelduba, Rhineland. Drawing after Reichmann, “Schlachtfelder” 1994, 7.

The Gelduba helmet bears out Plutarch’s account of feathers and animals atop Germanic helmets, and so does a relief from Neumagen depicting a Germanic helmet with feathers—further support for Plutarch’s description.<sup>6</sup>

A marten as a shield badge of Constantine’s Germanic Auxilia Palatina units is found in the fourth-century *Notitia Dignitatum* (Figure 4.2).<sup>7</sup>

Rearing on the hind legs is characteristic of the marten family. The triangular pointed head, the small ears, the straight forepaws, all fit a marten very well, even the brown back, the white belly and light forehead—if the colors of the drawing are meant to reflect reality.<sup>8</sup> At the Milvian bridge,



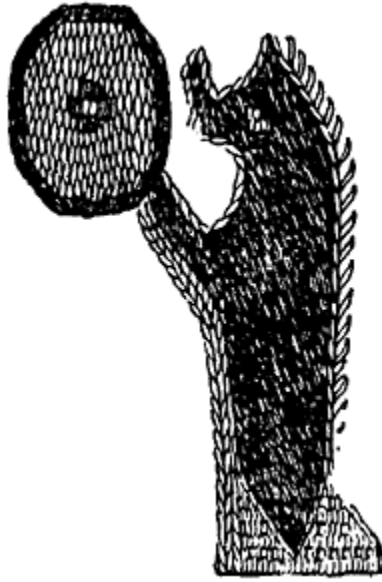
*Figure 4.2 Marten shield badge, Notitia Dignitatum (detail of Figure 1.2). Notitia Dignitatum Oc.V., 36; drawing after Seeck, Notitia 1876, 36.*

then, Constantine had among his Auxilia Palatina not only buck-warriors but marten-warriors as well.

From the seventh and later centuries come Old High German names such as Mardhedin (“Marten-Hood Wearer”) and Marthelm (“Marten-Helmet Wearer”), mostly from Frankish lands. Like the names Wolfhetan and Wolfhelm for wolf-warriors, or Bjarnhedin and Bernhelm for bear-warriors, the marten-names proclaim an animal-warrior style. Scholars studying ancient names have long suspected this to be so, but knew of no marten-warrior finds or images.<sup>9</sup> Now names and images together make it likely that ancient and early medieval Germani also fought as marten-warriors.

Ancient as well as early medieval Germanic armies are likely also to have fielded boar-, aurochs-, raven-, eagle-, and other animal-warriors, but for lack of evidence from antiquity we must pass them by, save for a truly telling woman boar-warrior from the Oseberg wall-hanging of about AD 800 (Figure 4.3).<sup>10</sup>

Her trailing robe marks her as a woman; perhaps she is a valkyrie, or one of the women champions who, according to Saxo, fought at Bråvalla.<sup>11</sup> As with the wolf-warriors of Gutenstein, Toroslunda, and Ekhammar, the animal skin covers all of her head but only part of her dress. Raising her shield, she may be chanting the *barritus* as seen in Figure 10.1. Whether battlefield champion or valkyrie, the Oseberg boar-warrior woman shows that Stone Age animal sympathy still stirred Germanic warriors in the ninth century AD.



*Figure 4.3* Boar-warrior. Oseberg wall-hanging, Oslo. Drawing after Hougen, “Billedvev” 1940, 104.

Looking back over the history of animal-warriors, the words of Mircea Eliade ring true for all such fighting styles:

Imitating the gait of an animal or putting on its skin was acquiring a superhuman mode of being. There was no question of a regression into pure “animal life”; the animal was already charged with mythology. By becoming this mythical animal, man became something far greater and stronger than himself.<sup>12</sup>

Part 2  
FRIGHTENING WARRIORS



## 5

# NAKED BERSERKS

That headstrong madness and onrush which the barbarians  
take for manhood.

Florus

### **Indo-European berserks**

“Berserks,” said Snorri Sturluson in the thirteenth century, “were men who went to battle recklessly raging like mad dogs or wolves. Willfully forgoing body-armor, they scorned wounds and death.” Fighting madness and scorn of armor, then, are the two things that mark men as berserks. While scorning armor is rare, daring warriors fighting heedless of danger are found world-wide. They often form warrior-groups with their own laws and customs, boasting of their recklessness, as did, for example, American Indian no-retreat societies. Among Indo-Europeans, fighting madness arose easily and went with several warrior styles here discussed. Nevertheless, to be berserk—that is, fighting mad and scorning armor—was a warrior style in itself and a hallmark of Indo-European civilization.<sup>1</sup>

The oldest known Indo-European warrior is carved on a stone slab from Kernosovka in the Ukraine, belonging to the Copper Age Kemi-Oba culture of 4000–3000 BC. Long-haired, armed with three axes, a club, and a knife or spear, he wears, like many later berserks, only a belt. Being naked, he is a reckless warrior, but his pulled-up shoulders, his arms held to the chest, and his stiff penis (all three also found on the famous Celtic warrior statue from Hirschlanden) show him to burn with that inner heat that brings about the power of the shaman as well as the fury of the warrior.<sup>2</sup> Man or god, he is berserk. Unfortunately, no words come to us from that early time to tell us what beliefs led to his stance.

We first hear of berserks in the army of Tukulti-Ninurta, king of Assyria 1243–1207 BC. Having fought and routed the Babylonians in 1228, Tukulti-Ninurta commissioned an epic praising the battle madness of his warriors. The poem boasts that Tukulti-Ninurta’s gods struck his foes with blindness and fear and smashed their weapons, while his warriors, calling on the war goddess, shifted shapes like Anzu the eagle-dragon, threw off their armor, and danced themselves into a fighting frenzy:

Wildly raging, taking forms strange as Anzu.  
They fiercely rush to the fray without armor,  
Having stripped off their breastplates. thrown off their clothing.

They bound up their hair and polished (?) their weapons,  
 The fierce heroes danced with sharpened weapons.  
 They snorted at one another like fighting lions with flashing eyes  
 The swirling dust storms of battle whirl about.<sup>3</sup>

Flashing eyes, fighting frenzy, snorting at one another, turning into beasts of prey, and swirling-storm tactics are found among warriors everywhere, including those of Mesopotamia.<sup>4</sup> But to shed one's armor in the face of the enemy is a behavior known only of Indo-Europeans. Were Tukulti-Ninurta's men Indo-European berserks in the service of Assyria?

Sound method demands that the bigger the gap in time and space between comparable customs, the more elaborate the shared custom must be if one is to accept a common origin. Shedding one's armor in sight of the enemy is a complicated, specific, and most unlikely gesture. A tantalizing inscription tells of Ramses II that he once fought out in front, before his chariotry and foot, without wearing his corselet, but it is not clear whether he did so to boast about his bravery or merely to say that he had been in great danger.<sup>5</sup> Having no armor is one thing; throwing it off in sight of the enemy is quite another—and Tukulti-Ninurta's men threw off not just armor but their garments as well. Otherwise unknown to Near Eastern tradition, this is so much like what we know of Indo-European berserks that it makes an Indo-European origin of Tukulti-Ninurta's men very likely indeed.<sup>6</sup>

Assyrians often took large numbers of prisoners into their army. Tukulti-Ninurta could have drafted Indo-Europeans into his service early in his reign, when he captured, as he says, "28,800 Hittites from beyond the Euphrates."<sup>7</sup> He calls his wild warriors his bondsmen, *ardani*, which could mean his sworn warband, but the meaning of the word *ardani* shades also into "servants" and could thus mean Hittite or Iranian prisoners of war.<sup>8</sup> At the time, foreign mercenaries in the Near East serving as chariot-runners wore no body armor, while as infantry for close combat they did.<sup>9</sup> Like they, Tukulti-Ninurta's foreigners may have been skilled in both kinds of fighting, with and without body armor, which would make them believe they could win against the Babylonians even without breastplates, by proudly fighting naked, trusting in speed and spryness.

The weapons of Tukulti-Ninurta's berserks, polished and sharpened before battle, may have been swords. New to the Near East, swords were brought there by Indo-European mercenaries about this time.<sup>10</sup> In later periods, too, berserks were mostly swordsmen.

Without incoming foreigners, cultural and military change as radical as the appearance of berserk warriors in Assyria is unlikely. Complex, disciplined societies with a stable population like that of Assyria do not turn wild again on their own: there are no examples of that in world history.<sup>11</sup> Assyria could not have produced these berserks by itself.

Whatever their origin, the berserk mind bore Tukulti-Ninurta's warriors to victory. Perhaps they used the new iron weapons, but if so these had little to do with their victory. The epic so pointedly praises the men's fighting spirit that one must take it as the decisive factor in their winning the battle. In war, mind-set at times matters more than technology.<sup>12</sup>

Tukulti-Ninurta's epic, revealing Bronze Age berserks, thus is a most valuable source for the berserk warrior style. It shows, among other things, that being this old, the berserk

style cannot have spread, as some claim, with fighting on horseback, for cavalry arose later, at the end of the second millennium BC.<sup>13</sup> Battle madness of elite warriors is known from the myths of many Indo-European nations, including Vedic Indians, and for that reason too is likely to have flourished long before they dispersed in the early second millennium BC.<sup>14</sup>

Bronze Age images show Hittite, Shardana, Mycenaean, and northern European swordfighters naked. Confirming one another, these pictures must reflect reality.<sup>15</sup> Archaic Greek bronze statuettes, however, represent naked warriors (with helmets and power belts) to portray a man's ideal body rather than his actual battle dress. We do not know, therefore, at what time the Greeks gave up the old berserk style and ceased to fight naked. Backward areas of Greece still fielded naked fighters in Classical and Hellenistic times: tribesmen like the Aetolians fought barefoot; Spartan youths in their *Krypteia* year fought naked with only a dagger.<sup>16</sup> Later, naked Celts influenced the Greeks: Jason in Apollonios' *Argonautica*, fought naked to be a greater hero, an ideal the Greeks adopted from the Celts in their third-century battles against them.

Homeric warriors like Hector, when overcome with "wolfishness," fought in a rage, a custom inherited from the Indo-European past. There are even traces of the belief that warriors in a berserk fury are wound-proof. When Hector raged against the Greeks, Teucer, who with his arrows shot the Trojans down one by one, hissed: "I cannot shoot this mad dog!" He tried, but Apollo sidetracked the arrow. Plutarch likewise thought of the Spartan Isadas, who in 375 BC flung himself naked into battle, that "his courage earned him the protection of some god."<sup>17</sup>

Fighting naked was once well known in ancient Italy too. Rome's aristocrats fought from horseback wearing only a loin cloth, a helmet, and greaves. They did so to be fast and nimble rather than reckless (though that frame of mind was not unknown among them either).<sup>18</sup> Looking back at old Italy's prowess, Vergil calls the hero Herminius

Great-souled, great-bodied, greatly armed warrior,  
flowing blond hair on his helmless head,  
bare-shouldered, unafraid of wounds  
huge that he was, fighting uncovered.<sup>19</sup>

Ancient Italic warriors, then, not only shared the Indo-European wolf-warrior style but also the berserk style of fighting bare-chested and barefooted, shouting, flowing-haired, unafraid of wounds, and often in single combat.<sup>20</sup> Their get-up bespeaks a berserk-like trance of recklessness and a thirst for fame that goaded them to awesome efforts.<sup>21</sup> Even Roman generals at the time of the Empire, not at the whim of their feelings, hoped to gain an image of bravery by leading their men bare-headed, without a helmet.<sup>22</sup>

Celts were famous for their naked warriors who, for fighting gear, wore only belt, shield, sword, and helmet. The well-known statue from Hirschlanden shows such a warrior on foot, while a ceramic relief from the Magdalensberg in Austria portrays a half-nude Celtic warrior on horseback.<sup>23</sup> Not all half-naked warriors need have fought in reckless ecstasy, but Celts easily fell prey to it.<sup>24</sup> At Telamon in Italy, in 225 BC, they wore only trousers and capes, while their Gaesati spearmen in the forefront, to bluster, threw off even these.<sup>25</sup> Gaesati berserks also wore golden neckbands to dare the enemy to

come and get them.<sup>26</sup> In 189 BC the Celts of Asia Minor fought madly naked, exposing their bare, white skin, so the blood of their wounds would show to greater effect and to their greater glory. The Romans, having long ago shed the berserk style for “rational” fighting, knew how to deal with foes and blinded by rage: shooting them down with arrows, javelins, and slingshot, they avoided hand-to-hand fighting.<sup>27</sup> Against Romans, reckless fighting was self-murder, yet the Celts gave it up too slowly to save themselves from being ground down between Romans and Germani.

### Trajan’s berserks

In 102 BC a scare-report made the rounds in Rome: the Cimbri, crossing the Alps, went naked through snow and ice. Ever since then, in Roman eyes Germanic warriors, like the Celts formerly, stood out for being naked. They are found thus on Trajan’s Column in scene 36, where eight bare-chested warriors that follow the emperor are likely to be Germani (Figure 0.2). The eight warriors fall into three groups. The man furthest back to the left wears baggy trousers and wields a club. One or two of the men above him may also be club-wielders. The shirt-wearer in the middle represents the Germanic Buri-Armilausi allies.<sup>28</sup> But who are the men nearest the emperor?

They are barefoot, as is shown by a single bare foot, seen to the right of the window in Figure 0.2. That foot cannot belong to the shirt-wearer: it is a right foot with its big toe to the left, while the shirt-wearer’s own right leg points forward and thus is altogether out of range. The single, bare foot, then, must belong to the man above and behind the shirt-wearer, hence to one of the youths that follow the emperor.<sup>29</sup> It mattered to the artist to put this foot into the picture, even at an awkward place, for it told viewers that the young men were barefoot, which identified them as remarkable fighters. Romans would not overlook such a thing: Vergil goes out of his way to describe old-style Italic warriors who took the field with one foot bare.<sup>30</sup> What is more, when we see Trajan’s youthful followers once more, a little further up on the Column, they are again barefoot (Figures 5.2, 5.3).

Three youths, more handsome still when the Column was new, follow Trajan closely (Figure 5.1).

Free from the unkempt barbarian look, the three are portrayed strikingly young—the Column depicts no other group of soldiers this young. The first youth, next to Trajan, has a shock of curly hair also shown in scenes 40 and 42 (Figures 5.2, 5.3).<sup>31</sup> The hair of the second and third men, unlike that of the others, falls in long, straight strands toward the forehead like Trajan’s own hair in some of his portraits. Straight hair, to Roman artists, betokened fierceness of character.<sup>32</sup> These youths may well be Trajan’s escort, for bodyguards of Roman emperors, like those of Germanic chieftains, had to be young, of the same age, and handsome. Moreover, guards tended to follow



*Figure 5.1* The emperor and his barefoot followers. Trajan's Column, scene 36 (detail of Figure 0.2). Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 71.2686.

the emperor's hairstyle.<sup>33</sup> The youth and beauty of soldiers are known to have caught Trajan's eyes, while emperors, by and large, preferred Germanic guards for being blond and tall.<sup>34</sup>

The young men lack body armor and helmets, their only protection being oval shields. Barefooted, they are more reckless but also faster than merely bare-chested fighters, which is why the Column painstakingly portrays them as barefooted in all three scenes where they appear. Their weapons are hidden, but they had swords, for they wield them in scene 40 (Figure 5.2).

Scene 40 shows two of Trajan's young, bare-chested, barefooted, and curly haired followers. The one to the right has his scabbard hanging from the belt without a baldric. As bare-chested warriors in the Rhineland wore their swords thus, the relief is quite accurate here.<sup>35</sup>

The barefooted fighter to the left wears a baldric to which the scabbard of his sword is fastened by means of an eyelet. The scabbard is noticeably narrower than any others shown breadthwise (as, for example, the scabbards of the auxiliaries further left and in the upper right of scene 40). The artist thus may have wanted to mark here a foreign warrior with an unusually narrow, ribbed, foreign type of sword.<sup>36</sup> He drew from life, for Germanic tribesmen indeed fought with such rapiers, witness the second-century,



*Figure 5.2* Two barefooted, bare-chested warriors fighting with rapiers. Trajan's Column, scene 40. Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 89.764.

narrow-bladed, ribbed swords found at Vimose in Denmark. Since mainly tribes along the Elbe river forged and wielded these rapiers and scabbards with eyelets, Trajan's youthful followers seem to be *Elbgermanen* fighting with swords and in a fencing style brought from home.<sup>37</sup>

Lordlier than the spear, the long sword is more suited for single combat than for the battle line. Hence throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages the sword was the weapon of champions, leaders, and berserks who might sally from shield walls for daring deeds. The helmet wearers further to the left in scene 36 of the Column are likewise elite troops and sword-fighters. Saxo Grammaticus in the thirteenth century reveals something of the sword-fighters' spirit when he adds to the gift of a sword the wish that its iron strength may sharpen the point of the owner's soul.<sup>38</sup>

The youths of scenes 36 and 40 appear once more, slightly higher up on the Column, in scene 42 (Figure 5.3).<sup>39</sup>



*Figure 5.3* Two bare-footed swordsmen (middle and right foreground). Trajan's Column, scene 42. Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 41.1336.

Here the emperor gives a speech to thank the men who won the battle at Adamklissi. No weapons are shown, though the soldiers do hold shields. The legionaries with their standards wear strip armor, the auxiliaries wear chain mail and helmets, but Trajan's young followers are bare-chested and bare-footed. They must have fought outstandingly well, for they loom large among those praised by the emperor, and unlike others who are seen from the back, they turn halfway to the viewer. The one to the left, youthful, clean-shaven, and rugged, strikingly holds the middle of the scene. The one to the right is a towering figure, almost a head taller than the men next to him. This is not happenstance, for his tall build is to mark him a northerner, a tower of strength, and a berserk.<sup>40</sup>

Why did the young men with Trajan rush to battle not only bare-chested but also bare-footed? Being barefoot hardly helped in battle, but it was a way to steel oneself against

pain and strengthen the will to overcome it. Spartans and Aetolians went barefoot to proclaim their toughness and scorn of wounds.<sup>41</sup> British Celts went barefoot because it helped in crossing their marshlands, and so they do even on Trajan's Column where they run about as nimble stone-throwers and slingers.<sup>42</sup> Some Gauls and Germani, on the other hand, fought barefoot "for love of fame and out of daring." That is why Gaesati spearmen in the battle at Telamon fought fully naked: greater nakedness betokened greater daring. Even in the Rome of the Republic this had been so.<sup>43</sup> For the same reasons, it seems, the young men of Trajan's warband dared to rush into battle barefoot, outdoing all other warriors in nakedness. As for fame, Tacitus in his *Germania* says that wives and mothers would count and examine the wounds obtained in battle—for which the commentaries give no reason, but which is well illustrated by Livy's report of Celtic fighting: wounds were glorious, and nakedness showed them to best effect.<sup>44</sup> Attacking recklessly, unshod, and bare-chested, Trajan's young followers may be called berserks, even though the Column does not show them overcome by madness—fighting this naked was mad enough.

Paul the Deacon says that the Heruls in the war against the Lombards in AD 560 wore only loincloths, "whether for speed or out of scorn for wounds." Both reasons may apply to Trajan's berserks who indeed may be Heruls.<sup>45</sup> Speed greatly mattered to the unarmored who ran toward the enemy through a hail of spears, arrows, and slingshot. To all, however, the principle was the same: the more naked a warrior, the more reckless and brave.<sup>46</sup>

The principle applies also to the warrior in a sleeveless shirt in scene 36 (Figure 0.2). His dress, slightly fuller than that of the bare-chests, is a very specific war garb, recognized as such by the Roman artist: surely the tribal costume of the Armilausei ("The Sleeveless"). Saxo Grammaticus records that the legendary eighth-century Danish king Harald Wartooth once gave proof of his bravery by facing enemy spears with his chest unguarded, wearing a shirt that only reached up to his armpits. Such a shirt, then, brought a warrior honor for his daring: the tribal name of the "Sleeveless" broadcast their prowess.<sup>47</sup>

Since bare-chested warriors catch the eye, Roman triumphal art often portrays them. Their wild looks were to frighten, but when they served in the emperor's army, their loyalty marked the emperor as ruler of the whole world who gathers, from the ends of the earth, hosts of fighters against those who stand in his way.<sup>48</sup> In scene 36 of Trajan's Column (Figure 5.1) the emperor's barefooted followers convey this message. Their presence is not an empty cliché of triumphal art, for they are the men next to the emperor in a scene that portrays the events leading up to the decisive battle of the war. Since the Column's purpose was to show the greatness of Trajan's deeds, the warriors around him had to be portrayed believably: the reliefs could not stray so far from the truth as to make the emperor lead barefooted warriors had he not done so. Besides, barefooted Germanic swordsmen, as we will see, are known also from first-century gravestones in the Rhineland, although on Trajan's Column they could not appear in their breathtaking role as horse-stabbers since the reliefs do not show enemy horsemen that dare fight. After the Moesian campaign, the barefoot youths, unlike other trousered tribesmen, are no longer seen on Trajan's Column.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, in the crowded framework of the Column's reliefs they are represented as fully as could be: even the famed Mauri horsemen occur only once. The Column's inscription says that it was commissioned by the senate, and the



conservative senate surely preferred the legions:<sup>50</sup> the troops must not appear too motley but truly Roman.<sup>51</sup> This would explain why the Column shows Trajan's berserks in three scenes only. Yet in the decisive campaign they are the emperor's most outstanding attack force.

They are also nearest the emperor. Their nearness to the emperor, and their Roman-style, short-cropped hair, marks them as guardsmen, very likely the infantry part of Trajan's *Singulares* bodyguard. *Singulares* horsemen usually wore Roman auxiliary dress and equipment but also kept up their native Germanic fighting styles such as swimming rivers under arms and hurling barbed spears.<sup>52</sup> As governor of Roman Germany until he became emperor in AD 96, Trajan had a guard of Germanic *Pedites* and *Equites Singulares*. He kept the horsemen of that guard as his well-known *Equites Singulares Augusti* and built them a fort in Rome. In the early years of his reign when he still faced opposition he is not likely to have given up his *Pedites Singulares* either. Whether or not he ever brought them to Rome, he may well have used them in the Dacian war of AD 101–102.<sup>53</sup> *Pedites Singulares* were provincial elite troops who might also keep their native fighting styles—witness the guard or attack troops of the Roman governor in Britain, the barefoot *Pedites Singulares Britannici*, who likewise went to the Dacian war.<sup>54</sup> In Germany, an elite native fighting style was the naked berserk or Herul attack shown in Figure 5.2.

Icelandic sagas know two kinds of berserks, those whose personality made them anger-prone, and others whose role in battle called for them to become berserk at a certain turn of events. Berserks of the latter kind served among the guard of Nordic kings. Events at the death of Caligula show that one is not far wrong even in calling a Roman emperor's guard "berserk." When in AD 41 Caligula was murdered, Josephus says:

News of Caligula's death first reached the *Germani*. They were the emperor's guard, named after the nation from which they are recruited. It is a national trait of theirs to be carried off by emotions more than other barbarians, because they reason less about what they do. Their bodies are strong and they achieve much at the first onrush against those whom they see as their enemies. They were shocked when they learned of Caligula's murder... With swords drawn they burst out from the palace to find the emperor's murderers.<sup>55</sup>

The guardsmen went on to kill several senators, and to hold hostage, at sword point, the whole theater on the Palatine, teeming as it was with Roman nobility. Although no naked blustering may have been involved (and perhaps none was needed), their violent anger as a body of warriors allows one to call them "berserks." As the following will show, it was typical for a warband to turn berserk to avenge their slain leader.

### **Scorning armor in the Roman army: Emperor Julian**

When Caesar moved the Roman frontier to the Rhine, he began to recruit northern warriors for the Roman army. Later emperors enrolled more and more of them.<sup>56</sup> Under Trajan (98–117), bare-chested berserks are seen for the first time in the emperor's escort.

Thereafter, the role of unarmored warriors in the emperor's guard grew steadily—that is, those berserk or berserk-like.

Caracalla (211–217) raised his bodyguard from warriors beyond the Rhine and Danube and promoted them to centurions in other units. He wore Germanic dress in the field—long trousers and a long-sleeved shirt—and ordered the whole army to wear this. A fair number of Germani must have served not only in his bodyguard but in the praetorian guard as well, for only the tallest were drafted into the guard, and northerners were tall. Hence, when soon after Caracalla's death Macrinus allowed the praetorians to shed their scale-cuirasses and their curved shields, they responded with enthusiasm and a great eagerness to fight.<sup>57</sup> This flew in the face of Roman tradition: praetorians had always been heavy-armed troops. Besides, it was tactically uncalled for, as the enemy were Elagabalus' heavy Roman legions. Macrinus' men lost, but the enthusiasm unleashed among them by shedding their armor points to an outburst of northern reckless fighting.

Later, in AD 296, would-be-emperor Allectus fought among his Frankish guards, dressed as they were: in shirt or coat only, without armor.<sup>58</sup> Likewise during the conquest of Italy in AD 311, Constantine's victorious horse guards wore no armor, only helmets, while the opposing guardsmen of Maxentius were burdened with knee-length hauberks.<sup>59</sup> Wearing a helmet but no armor was a berserk custom from the Bronze Age to the time of the Icelandic sagas. Nearer the end of the Empire, when most of Rome's elite troops were Germanic, Gratian (375–383) allowed his men to shed first their cuirasses, then also their helmets.<sup>60</sup>

As the berserk fighting spirit of mad attack began to pervade the Roman army, it changed its discipline and tactics. In AD 354 Constantius II won a battle against the Alamanni when three of his officers, Arintheus, Seniauchus, and Bappo, rushed the enemy in disorderly, wild lunges: *non iusto proelio sed discursionibus*.<sup>61</sup> Carefully planned movements of units gave way once more to rash attack and heroic single combat. In another incident in AD 360 at the siege of Bezabde in Mesopotamia, Constantius II's keenest troops took off their helmets so the emperor could see who fought best—and Persian bowmen shot down many. In the late Roman army the Germanic warriors' yearning to outdo others dulled Roman order and drill: their wild, free spirit prevailed.<sup>62</sup>

Later Roman emperors, fighting in the midst of their foreign guardsmen, understandably took on some of their guards' fighting style and mind-set.<sup>63</sup> Constantine, as we have seen, posed as a buck-warrior. Emperor Julian (355–363), brought up by a Gothic teacher, liked the straightforward warriors from the Rhine and found their spirit kindred to his:

I am more churlish, fiercer, and more headstrong than Cato, just as the Celts are more so than the Romans, for I was among the Celts and Germani and the Black Forest as soon as I became a man. Spending much time there, like a hunter among wild animals, wrestling with them, I met men who know not how to fawn and flatter, but only how to behave simply and frankly to all men alike ... Our characters being much alike, they loved me so that they had the heart to take up arms for me.<sup>64</sup>

“Wrestling with animals” seems strange to modern hunters, but in earlier times hunting could be a true fight between man and animal.<sup>65</sup> Germanic warriors had the openness and frankness that came from their wanted freedom and from having overcome fear. Julian felt for them a sympathy of life and character.<sup>66</sup> He even claimed to be a “Celt” himself, although beer, to him, reeked of ram, while wine tasted like nectar.<sup>67</sup>

Tellingly, Julian also took on the berserk warrior spirit. He wore no cuirass when he rode into the Persian ranks during the ill-fated retreat from Ktesiphon in AD 363. Ammianus says that Julian “forgot about his cuirass” (*oblitus loricae*), which has often been understood to mean that he forgot his cuirass in haste or in a fit of absent-mindedness. The word *oblitus*, however, can also mean that Julian purposely put the cuirass out of his mind and plunged recklessly into the fray to rouse his followers to fury—*iras sequentium excitans*, as Ammianus says.<sup>68</sup> Julian’s derring-do to stir others to fighting madness thus was a berserk feat by an emperor who, from first to last, put his trust in northern warriors and led them, as they expected it, from in front with wild sallies.<sup>69</sup> Fittingly, they avenged him in reckless berserk style.<sup>70</sup>

In the battle at Adrianople in AD 378, the spirit of headlong attack sealed the fate of Emperor Valens and the Western Empire. Rome lost the battle because its army, no longer Roman but consisting mainly of foreigners, charged the foe, against orders, too early. The elite Scholae troops thus upset the emperor’s battle plan. When they fell back—also a Germanic custom, befitting more lightly armed troops—they brought on the great rout, a fact that some historians overlook, but that was nevertheless the proximate cause for the fall of the Roman Empire.<sup>71</sup>

Berserks may have helped Assyria a great deal, for after Tukulti-Ninurta, Assyria rose meteor-like in the wars of the time. Berserks, fighting fearlessly, likewise proved useful to Rome for a long time. Yet their stormy unruliness needed to be kept in line. Tukulti-Ninurta and Trajan had their foreign warriors well in hand, and in AD 357 Julian still could hold back teeth-gnashing warriors until the right moment.<sup>72</sup> Valens in 378 could not—so he went under, and with him the Empire.

### Berserks in the early Middle Ages

In the early Middle Ages berserks are well in evidence. Paul the Deacon, as we have seen, says of the sixth-century, berserk-like Heruls that in the war against the Lombards in AD 560 they wore only loincloths, “whether for speed or out of scorn for wounds.” Both reasons may be true: Heruls, swordsmen like Trajan’s berserks, were widely sought after for their speed.<sup>73</sup>

It is not only Roman triumphal reliefs, gravestones, statuettes, and coins that portray Germanic warriors bare-chested,<sup>74</sup> Germanic art of the early Middle Ages does so too. Bare-chested fighting in the sixth century is seen on a foil from the helmet found in grave 12 at Vendel: two unarmored, bare-headed warriors fight a duel. Their bare chests mark the same daring spirit as that of Trajan’s followers. On one of the Toroslunda dies the hero with the bound bear is bare-chested.<sup>75</sup> The Swedish custom of fighting bare-chested thus stands in a Germanic tradition and comes not, as some have claimed, from late-Roman gladiators.<sup>76</sup>

Woden and Balder, in their role of rousing warriors to fighting madness, danced the war dance naked like berserks (Figures 11.2, 11.3). The nakedness of berserks thus had also a mythic and cultic side and was bound to religious ritual. Over time, however, the need for berserks to strut naked grew less. As more warriors wore mail, they could signal outstanding bravery in battle by throwing off their hauberk or flinging their shield on their back as they do in Icelandic sagas and Saxo Grammaticus.<sup>77</sup> By the seventh-century, the time-honored spear dance too could be done fully dressed, as seen on the decorative foils of the helmet from Sutton Hoo.<sup>78</sup>

During the early Middle Ages, many Indo-European nations still knew the naked warrior style. Irish legends speak of berserk fighting madness. The churl in “Bricriu’s Feast” praises the Ulaid, telling them that they “surpass the hosts of every land in anger and prowess and weaponry, in rank and pride and dignity, in honor and generosity and excellence,” while in the tale of the Táin, warriors come to battle “stark naked but for their weapons.” These are true berserk ideals.<sup>79</sup> In Eastern Europe, sixth-century Sklavenoi (Slav) warriors fought without shirts, says Procopius. Like everyone, they must have owned shirts, but they took them off to fight in the traditional naked-warrior style. Saxo Grammaticus in his early thirteenth-century “Gesta Danorum” confirms this when he mentions Slavs of old with very long swords who, like true berserks, threw off their hauberks and shields as battle began.<sup>80</sup> Iranians too upheld the custom of battle madness into the Middle Ages, and so did the bare-chested, armring-wearing Indian nairs and amocs of the Malabar coast who, like berserks, stopped at neither fire nor sword.<sup>81</sup>

### Berserks in battle

To do deeds of berserk daring was to be mad.<sup>82</sup> Dancing can unleash such madness. Dancing and being berserk have in common that they allow people for a time to do far more than they otherwise can, followed, however, by utter exhaustion. Rhythmic song and dance, as we will see, bonded warriors together, entranced them, and aroused their fighting frenzy. To be berserk was to be like Woden, the warrior god, whom bracteate amulets show dancing naked, wide-eyed, shouting, and snorting.<sup>83</sup>

Tacitus speaks of young Germanic warriors who danced with weapons in hand. Being naked, these youths were berserks. Tukulti-Ninurta’s Assyrian berserks, Celtic Gaesati, and Germanic youths, but also Aztec and Maya warriors, all danced naked.<sup>84</sup>

Naked warriors—and “naked” here can mean anything from altogether without clothes to dressed but without armor—were not only faster than those burdened by armor, they proudly flaunted their muscular bodies and scorn of wounds. When in 216 BC the Romans at Cannae saw Hannibal’s bare-chested Gauls, they took fright: men look somehow more frightening when bare-chested. Men also feel braver and more threatening when bare-chested: news media love to broadcast football hooligans strutting about bare-chested, showing off their recklessness.<sup>85</sup> To fight naked thus was a psychologically effective warrior style.

The flashing eyes of berserks are not easy to show in pictures, but they are well recorded in literature. Tukulti-Ninurta’s furious berserks, as we have seen, flashed their eyes. Hector’s eyes flashed as he raged, and Ammianus says of the Alamanni in 357 that fury shone from their eyes. From the Middle Ages we hear that Beowulf’s eyes flashed,

that madness glared in the eyes of warriors, that Woden was flame-eyed, and that King Ólaf's foes quailed at the sight of his asp-keen eyes.<sup>86</sup> Looks to frighten the foe were a widely used weapon.

Snorting is another telling trait of angry warriors. Tukulti-Ninurta's men snorted in 1228 BC, and so did the Alamanni in AD 357. Ammianus Marcellinus says that they, being eager fighters, "snorted wildly as if they would destroy all that stood against them by a blast of fury." In the early Middle Ages one of Woden's names is Thrasarr, "snorter," to which corresponds the early medieval warrior name Drasulf, "Snorting Wolf."<sup>87</sup> Saxo speaks of nine brothers, perhaps berserks, "emitting wild snorts accompanied by ugly gestures, acting out their battle maneuvers."<sup>88</sup> Throughout history, then, flashing angry looks and snorting were signs of berserkdom. Woden as leader of berserks showed both.

Shape-shifting was also characteristic for berserks. Tukulti-Ninurta's warriors in the second millennium BC took "forms strange as Anzu." On sixth-century bracteate amulets Woden changes into a bird of prey, and Snorri Sturluson knows many shapes the god could take in battle.<sup>89</sup> Shifting into animal shapes had much in common with being overcome by battle-madness, which is why bear- and wolf-warriors fought so berserk-like and wound-proof.<sup>90</sup>

Celtic and Germanic berserks in the grip of fury shifted shapes by frightfully twisting their faces and bodies. CúChulainn did so in Irish legend. Tenth-century Egil, as he came to claim the wergeld for his slain brother, showed the king how angry he was by drooping one eyebrow down towards his cheek, raising the other up to the roots of his hair, and moving his eyebrows alternately up and down. Mad shape-shifting thus is a trait of Indo-European berserks, whether Vedic Indian, Celtic, Germanic, or in Tukulti-Ninurta's service.<sup>91</sup>

The fast attack with swords, often likened to storm or fire, suited madly raging warriors best. Tukulti-Ninurta's berserks fought like a whirling storm. Vedic warriors worshiped the storm god Vayu. Cimbri rushed into battle with the speed of a raging fire. Goths at Adrianople attacked "like a thunderclap in the mountains," and Woden's battle in the tenth-century AD was a storm.<sup>92</sup>

In the well-ordered array of the shield-castle, berserks no doubt had to hold shields, and the sagas have them equipped with shields, since the honor of warriors called for it. Their hour of reckless fighting came when the enemy line was to be broken, when a wedge was to be driven forward, or the king himself surged ahead.<sup>93</sup> Ammianus noted that in AD 357 at Strassburg when Alamannic kings waded into Roman lines, their warriors exposed themselves to danger blazing with fury.<sup>94</sup>

The Old English poem on the Battle of Maldon, written soon after 991, tells how the men of Byrhtnoth's warband threw all caution to the wind when their leader was killed. Vowing to avenge him at the cost of their lives, two warriors pledged they would not yield one foot of ground, which seems to have been a berserk way of fighting. Being Christian heroes, they are not called berserks and are not naked or without shield and hauberk, but not to yield any ground at all was berserk-like, showy, and risky. It was also a trait of fighting madmen everywhere, as with the no-retreat societies of North American Indians.<sup>95</sup>

Icelandic sagas and Saxo Grammaticus make much of the berserk fighting technique of wielding a sword with both hands. This meant forgoing the safety of a shield while

dealing much stronger two-handed strokes. When Swedish anatomists, examining the skeletons of men slain at Visby in 1361, found almost unbelievably powerful sword strokes—a man had both legs cut off by one blow and heads were cloven right through their steel coifs—they thought that berserk rage must have strengthened the warriors who dealt such blows. Two-handed sword strokes rather than berserk rage may be the answer, though. Fighting with both hands must have been more than an act of despair: no doubt it was a well-trained berserk fighting style.<sup>96</sup>

### The berserk mind

Tacitus wrote of the mounted and heavily armored Sarmatians that all their manhood lay outside them; that is, in their horses and weapons. Germani, on the other hand, according to Dio, “fought with their bodies rather than weapons.”<sup>97</sup> The reason for this was not, as Romans claimed, that northerners had little to live for and therefore mindlessly rushed to their death. Rather, it was part of a warrior ideal, spelled out by Vergil when he called bare-shouldered Herminius “great-souled.” Northern warriors were “great-souled” for wishing to win through their own prowess. The ideal of winning in a fair fight, going back to the second millennium BC and known to Homer, was still held by Emperor Julian in the fourth century AD. Germanic armies, in this spirit, were ready to settle beforehand on a time and place for battle. Vandal warriors followed the same ideal when in the decisive battle at Tricamarum in AD 533 they fought only with their swords. Maurice, around AD 600, said that Franks, Lombards, and other blond peoples scorn dirty tricks.<sup>98</sup> The ideal of fairness in battle, so as to show one’s true strength, also guided Beowulf in his fight with Grendel, and later still the English in the battle of Maldon.<sup>99</sup>

Berserks could trust above all in their own fighting skills. They also had faith in Woden. As Greeks thought gods protected mad fighters, so berserks of the early Middle Ages believed that where they raged, Woden blinded the eyes and blunted the weapons of their foes. Thus Saxo, in the thirteenth century, tells of legendary Harald Wartooth, king of Vik:

Clad in a red cloak, his hair held by a band tricked out with gold, he advanced on the enemy, quietly trusting to the knowledge of his luck rather than weapons—so much that he seemed to be dressed for a party, not war. But his mind was unlike his outfit, for unarmored, wearing only his royal insignia, he went before the armed battalions and gave the raging dangers of war a chance. Yet the spears flung at him could no more harm him than if their blades pointed backward. When others saw this fighter’s woundlessness, they were taken aback and shame spurred them to attack him still more fiercely. Harald, unwounded, killed them with his sword or sent them fleeing.<sup>100</sup>

We do not know for certain whether naked and half-naked Germanic warriors of antiquity thought themselves wound-proof. The psychological and physiological state of fighting frenzy with its rise of adrenaline levels may have led to such a belief, for adrenalin “dilates the airways to improve breathing and narrows blood vessels in the skin

and intestine so that an increased flow of blood reaches the muscles, allowing them to cope with the demands of the exercise. During surgery, it is injected into tissues to reduce bleeding.” Buoyed by an “adrenalin rush,” frenzied fighters may well have thought themselves stronger and less vulnerable than others.<sup>101</sup> Since the Hirpi Sorani wolf-warriors of ancient Italy could not be hurt by fire or iron, and since the same was true of medieval berserks, it is likely that Germanic naked fighters of antiquity too felt they were wound-proof.<sup>102</sup>

Battlefield rage, shown for all to see, and hence not just the madness of despair, is widely found among Indo-European and Germanic warriors, but there is no telling how many fought in this state of mind, nor how often they did this. There certainly were some limits to fighting madness: in a stealth attack under Roman guidance, half-naked club-wielders had to be altogether quiet (Figure 7.1). On the other hand, overblown bravery in the fray of battle could turn to sudden panic: fleeing berserks dragged more than one army into a rout.<sup>103</sup>

Words and concepts shared by Indo-Europeans suggest that fighting madly was a very old custom. The word for mad attack, *eis-*, shared by Vedic, Iranian, and Germanic warriors, implies that the berserk fighting style comes from the time before the dispersal of the Indo-Europeans.<sup>104</sup> Dumézil put it thus:

*Aēšma* [to Zoroastrians] is one of the worst evils, and later, in the eyes of the Mazdaeans, the most frightful demon, who bodies forth the destructive fury of society. Yet it only personifies as something bad a quality that gives the Ṛg Veda, from the same root, an adjective of praise for the Maruts, the followers of Indra, and for their father, the dreadful Rudra: *iṣmīn* “impetuous” and no doubt “furious.” These words come from the root of Greek Latin *ira*, and, it seems, from the Old Norse verb *eiskra* that describes the rage of the wild berserk warriors; hence we meet here a technical term of the Indo-European “warrior bands.”<sup>105</sup>

Fighting madness is an ecstatic state of mind. Woden’s name, which lives on in our “Wednesday,” meant fury, but a fury that included a poet’s ecstasy: Latin *vates*, “ecstatic poet,” and Irish *fáith*, “seer, poet,” come from the same root. In myths, Woden was the god of the poets. In Old Norse literature, as we will see, berserks spoke poems on the battlefield. These linguistic and mythological rapports give the berserk mind its place in Indo-European intellectual and cultural history and confirm the age of that double ecstasy.<sup>106</sup>

The mind of berserk warriors in the second millennium BC may have been much the same as that of medieval berserk warriors two thousand years later. The English word “mind,” related to “mania,” comes from the same root as the Sanskrit *manas* and Greek *menos*, both meaning “spirit” as well as “fury.” For Homeric warriors *menos* was “a temporary urge of one, many, or all bodily or mental organs to do something specific, an urge one can see but not influence.” *Menos* came from the heavens; heroes owed their great deeds to it, and Indo-European heroic poetry sings its praise. From *menos* arose sundry forms of abandoning oneself to a new identity such as wolf- or bear-warrior, or berserk. As Mircea Eliade put it, “The frenzied *berserkir*, ferocious warriors realized precisely the state of the sacred fury (*Wut, menos, furor*) of the primordial world.”<sup>107</sup>

Flaunting reckless bravery, chanting, and dancing, were ways to rouse warriors to battle madness. Berserks, moreover, easily flew into a rage when someone taunted them or stood in their way: anger over being thwarted made them mad. They did not need to eat poisonous mushrooms in order to bring on fighting madness as some have claimed.<sup>108</sup> Heroes grew reckless when, like Thorolf, they were about to lose a battle, or when they avenged a slain leader, as Caligula's and Julian's Germanic guards did, or Byrhtnoth's warband in the Battle of Maldon and Bothvar Bjarki at Leire.<sup>109</sup>

Berserk-like warriors still fought in the Battle of the Standard in 1138 when King David of Scotland met an Anglo-Norman army. David's Galwegian and Highland warriors claimed their right to attack ahead of his armored household knights. Unarmored, but madly daring, they ran toward the English line, brandishing lances and swords, only to be shot down by English bowmen.<sup>110</sup> The few who reached the enemy could do nothing against the armored, dismounted knights who led the defense. When they fled, they dragged the rest of the Scottish army into a rout.<sup>111</sup> Though no longer heathen, they fought "trusting in manhood rather than a shield"—the berserk belief that a man's scorn of armor shows his bravery and that his daring saves him from wounds.

This belief became ever harder to uphold, and so the berserks' role in battle shrank. In the haphazard hand-to-hand fighting at the end of the Bronze Age, mad attackers like Tukulti-Ninurta's warriors or Hector and Achilles achieved much, but later they fared badly against disciplined troops, above all those with archers in their ranks such as the Romans or the Norman English.<sup>112</sup> Berserk fighting survived longest in small-troop fighting or single combat as in medieval Scandinavia.

### Berserks in Icelandic sagas

In AD 1000, when the Icelanders turned Christian, they forbade the "berserksgangr" as a heathen cult practice.<sup>113</sup> From then on, no more true wolf-warriors, bear-warriors, or naked mad fighters were to be seen, and writers were free to draw on their imagination as well as on tradition. Only Edda and skaldic poems from before that time offer glimpses of the true berserk warrior style. Sagas, on the other hand, with their rich descriptions and dramatic events, come from Christian times, and give a somewhat foggy view. They blend the warrior styles of wolf-warriors, bear-warriors, longhairs, and naked mad warriors into a literary type called "berserk," no longer naked but still scorning armor. This makes for gripping tales, due to the authentic traits of Woden's erstwhile ecstatic warriors.<sup>114</sup>

Some sagas speak of berserks as loathsome bullies, others describe them as outstanding warriors. The thirteenth-century *Barlaam saga* even calls Christ "god's young berserk" and his twelve disciples "his berserks."<sup>115</sup> Good or bad, berserks held a large place in the popular imagination as wild, howling, reckless fighters, huge, strong, blood-sucking, and mad. Some were giants.<sup>116</sup> Traits not heard of before are that they could swallow burning coals and, when angered, bit off the rim of their shields. Often neither fire nor iron could harm them, only clubs or a bite through the windpipe.<sup>117</sup> The berserks of the sagas have often been described,<sup>118</sup> but their way of fighting needs to be connected with the ancient Germanic warrior styles. Snorri Sturluson in the *Ynglinga saga*, written shortly after AD 1220, says of berserks:



Woden's men went without hauberks and raged like dogs or wolves. They bit their shields and were strong like bears or bulls. They killed men, but neither fire nor iron hurt them. This is called "berserksgangr."

Snorri still knows surprisingly many of the old naked-warrior (also wolf-and bear-warrior) traits: rage and lack of armor, a bond with Woden, numbness to pain (shield-biting), strength and fierceness, being free from hurt by fire and iron, and action as a "going." He compares berserks to wolves and bears, for by his time they embodied also wolf- and bear-warrior characteristics like howling and biting windpipes.

*Egils saga*, written in the thirteenth century, says of Harald Fairhair that in the battle on the Hafrsfjord he had twelve berserks in the bow of his dragonship, his ship in the van. Snorri Sturluson's saga of Harald Fairhair likewise has the king man his dragonship with berserks and bodyguards.<sup>119</sup> Berserks among Vikings thus had the same role as the naked Gaesati in 212 BC: to open battles. So too did the related Chatti long-hairs.

Quick to quarrel, fearless, and highly skilled in battle, berserks often served in a king's guard. King Hrolf at Leire and King Athill at Upsala each had twelve berserks as champions who defended them against all perils and onsets and won them much wealth. The number twelve is typical; it recalls the twelve warriors that were the inner circle of earlier Indo-European warbands, as well as Nordic warbands.<sup>120</sup> Since rulers did not want to depend wholly on reckless warriors, berserks constituted only a part of their guard. This was as true of Harald Fairhair and King Hrolf as of Ramses II who had the Shardana and a native Egyptian guard and Trajan who had naked northern warriors beside his regular horse guard.<sup>121</sup>

*Egils saga* reports that in the battle on Vin Heath (Brunanburh) in Northumbria in 937, Thorolf, the Icelandic Viking leader, wore a strong helmet but no hauberk, and in the press of battle

he became so berserk that he swung his shield round to his back, and took his spear in both hands. He ran forward, striking or thrusting on both sides. Men sprang away in all directions, but he killed many... Then Thorolf drew his sword, striking out on both sides, and his men also joined the attack.<sup>122</sup>

Remarkably, Thorolf went berserk at first with his spear and only after he lost it in running the enemy leader through did he draw his sword. The gesture of flinging the shield on one's back and fighting with both hands is found as early as the fifteenth century BC in Mycenae. Thirteenth-century BC reliefs in Abydos in Egypt depict Ramses II's berserk-like Shardana guard in this way, and archaic Greek warrior statuettes portray this technique.<sup>123</sup> In Norse literature, flinging the shield on one's back and gripping the sword with both hands is the quintessential berserk fighting style. *Egils saga* and other sources make it clear that the gesture signaled the will to fight recklessly without regard to one's safety, and that it brought fame. No doubt, two-handed sword-fighting was trained beforehand.<sup>124</sup>

Thorolf's wearing a helmet but no hauberk was an old, aristocratic, and berserk custom; it is known from the guardian relief at the King's Gate in the Hittite capital of Hattusas and the famous Celtic Hirschlanden statue, as well as from coins of Rome's

ancient aristocratic horsemen and reliefs depicting Emperor Constantine's guard on his arch in Rome. Several other sagas beside *Egils saga* speak of it, as does the lay of Hakon quoted below.<sup>125</sup>

Thorolf was not seized by an unforeseen berserk fit, he had prepared for going berserk by not wearing a hauberk. He had it in his hand when to fight madly. With some warriors being a berserk was a predisposition handed down from father to son, but with Thorolf it was a deliberately chosen warrior style. This is true even more so of Norway's King Hákon the Good who in 961 also scorned armor:

He threw off his armor  
thrust down his mail-coat,  
the great-hearted lord,  
ere the battle began.  
He laughed with his liege-men.  
His land would he shield  
The gladsome hero  
'neath goldhelm standing.<sup>126</sup>

Hákon's laughter underlines his scorn of wounds. Like a true berserk, he went on to fight before the line and the standard.

Berserk-like gestures abound in Nordic warrior tales.<sup>127</sup> Among them is the Norse account of the Battle at Stamford Bridge in 1066 between Harald Hardrada of Norway and Harald Godwinson of England: when the battle went badly for the Norwegians, Hardrada turned berserk. "He became so uncontrollably fighting mad that he ran out in front of the battle line and slashed with both hands"—that is, without his shield. All those near him fled, but an arrow, shot in his throat, killed him. When his followers Eystein Orri and his men saw this, they "were so mad that they did not shield themselves for as long as they could stand upright. Finally they even shed their hauberks. Then it was easy for the English [bowmen] to find their unprotected parts." The account may seem fanciful,<sup>128</sup> but it is the fancy of the traditional berserk fighting style, much like that of Tukulti-Ninurta's warriors over two thousand years earlier. Besides, as after Caligula's murder, it was typical that a warband turned recklessly berserk to avenge their slain leader.

Women too could fight berserk-like, for traditionally some women fought alongside Germanic warriors.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, one of the last known berserks was a woman in North America. *Eiriks saga* reports that about AD 1020 the Greenlanders, who under Karlsefni had come to settle in Vinland, saw a huge host of Skraelings (Indians) bearing down on them. As the Skraelings flung rocks at them from slings, the Greenlanders fled to a cliff wall to make their stand. The woman Freydis had stayed indoors. When she went outside to follow the men, the Skraelings made for her. She snatched the sword of a dead Greenlander, "freeing her breasts from under her clothes and slapped the naked sword on them, at which the Skraelings took fright, ran back to their boats and rowed away. Karlsefni's men came up to her and praised her courage." Fighting bare-breasted and

frightening her foes with unwonted, reckless courage, Freydis came close to being a berserk.<sup>130</sup>

### Berserks in Saxo Grammaticus

The tales and poems of thirteenth-century Saxo Grammaticus about Denmark's legendary kings are closely related to the Icelandic sagas and give a similar picture. Saxo's legendary hero Asmund, when he sees that his son has been killed on the battlefield, wants to die too, but in a blaze of glory he said:

Sword with both hands gripped is best.  
 Away the shield and bare the breast,  
 fight with shining blades!  
 Let our fame for fierceness glow  
 Keenly let us grind the foe.  
 Loathsome is a lengthy fight  
 End our onslaught with their flight.<sup>131</sup>

Having said that, Asmund took the sword in both hands and with the shield flung on his back regardless of the risk, killed several foes. Later he came to grief.<sup>132</sup>

Of Orvendil, father of Hamlet, Saxo says "the heat of his heart made him keener to get at the foe than to armor his body. He did not care for a shield and laid both hands to the sword. Nor did his daring lack results."<sup>133</sup>

King Hrólfr's champion Bothvar Bjarki, the bear-warrior, bids his twelve followers as they go to a hopeless fight: "Listen, brave ones! No one shall clad his doomed body in a hauberk! Be it the last thing to strap on mail! The shields go on the back, let us fight bare-chested! Put gold on your hands and rings on your arms so they will strike stronger and deal a bitter wound! No one turn backward!"<sup>134</sup> Bjarki's men are to fight like berserks, bare-chested and without shields. It is of great interest to see that they also wear gold on their hands, very likely part of the berserk style, to taunt the enemy.<sup>135</sup> The golden rings on the right arm may be a symbol of being in the warband.<sup>136</sup>

Bjarki's men, according to Saxo, must not yield ground, which may have been part of the berserk warrior style. The laws of Viking warrior bands forbade giving ground, a further hint that this was a berserk custom. Even the tenth-century English warband in *The Battle of Maldon*, swearing not to give ground, may have acted as berserks, avenging the death of their leader.<sup>137</sup>

Berserks like Bjarki are found in the visual arts as well. Four twelfth-century chess sets, found on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, boast rooks who bite their shields like berserks to flaunt their readiness for reckless fighting (Figure 5.4).

Carved in walrus ivory in twelfth-century Scandinavia, these rooks are Christians, for they stand next to bishops, yet they show traits of true berserks. Not only do they bite the rim of their shield, they wear a helmet but no



*Figure 5.4* Berserk biting his shield. Ivory chess piece from the Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides. Photograph 15880-front. Copyright: The Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland.

hauberk; hence they scorn armor. Like Bjarki's men, they wear a ring on the right arm. Besides, as rooks they are the king's battle lords and champions, much as in the sagas.

King Harald Wartooth, says Saxo, at one time gave striking proof of his bravery: wearing a shirt that only reached up to his armpits, he faced spears with his chest unguarded. The shirt resembles the war-garb of the Armilausei shown on scene 36 of Trajan's Column (Figure 0.2), which, as the tribal name implies, was worn with pride as

a token of bravery. Saxo therefore very likely echoes here a tradition through the centuries. As Harald wore this shirt in a specific battle, it was a fighting style one could adopt, or not, at will.<sup>138</sup>

King Haldan, according to Saxo, overcame several berserks. Of these Sivald and his seven sons were typical in that they were skilled in sorcery and often, in sudden fits of madness, bellowed wildly, bit their shields, swallowed hot coals, and walked through any fire. Haldan killed them with an oak he had torn out of the ground and likewise smashed the berserk Harthben who had been wreaking his lust on princesses. Harthben was said to be nine cubits tall, which at 4.5 meters is more than twice as tall as the tallest men. Harthben had twelve champions as mess-mates to hold him down when he had a fit of madness. When Haldan challenged him, he became so mad he took hard bites out of the rim of his shield, gulped down fiery coals, walked through blazing flames, and went so berserk that he killed six of his own champions. Berserks could withstand fire since the “heat” that their fury created within them overcame the outer heat of the fire.<sup>139</sup>

Grimmi, also a ravager of princesses, by his gaze blunted Haldan’s first sword, but Haldan drew another and cut off Grimmi’s hand. That berserks could blunt the first sword of their foes with their gaze is known from several other instances in Saxo and the sagas. It is an uncanny skill they share with Woden and the Master Grendel.<sup>140</sup>

In the sagas and Saxo, berserks are notorious for taking other men’s wives or daughters against their will. If berserks are indeed related to Chatti longhairs, a reason for their demands is easy to find. Having no families of their own and being outstanding warriors as well as honored guests, custom may have allowed them to sleep with the wife or a daughter of their host, as Rigs did in the Eddic poem of the *Rigsthula*. If thwarted, they would have fought over this, as, according to Saxo and the sagas, Nordic berserks did so often. It fits this theory that unlike robbers they brought the women home again after a week or two.<sup>141</sup>

The sagas and the legends of Saxo Grammaticus offer a rich tableau of berserk thoughts and deeds. To be sure, the more than two hundred years between heathen berserks and the writing down of sagas must have changed these tales very much. They thus reflect berserk warriorhood only as in a broken mirror. Nevertheless, such berserk fighting techniques as being the first to open battles, scorning armor, flinging one’s shield on the back, or wearing only a helmet, match earlier evidence of mad, naked warriors and thus report true features of the ancient berserk style. This being so, there is a certain likelihood that other berserk customs known only from sagas and Saxo but not, or little, from antiquity, such as two-handed sword fighting, yielding no ground, wearing rings, snorting and snarling, howling like wolves, and biting through windpipes, also come from antiquity.

Such conclusions are tenuous. There is no telling whether shield-biting is ancient, for it is odd and not known from before the time of the sagas. And while we hear that Italic wolf-warriors of antiquity could not be hurt by fire or iron, we do not know whether ancient Germani too held this belief about wolf-warriors, bear-warriors, and berserks, along with the related belief that one could kill them only with clubs. Even so, what we

know of the history of Indo-European berserks shows the abidingness of warrior styles.<sup>142</sup> The berserk warrior style lasted as long as native culture stayed intact. The berserks' social underpinning lay in their role as elite warriors, often as guards and champions of kings, or as kings themselves. Their religious underpinning was belief in Woden, hence it took Christianity to undo the berserk style, as it undid Woden's wolf- and bear-warrior styles.<sup>143</sup>

## 6 GHOSTS

Their shields are black, their bodies painted, and, choosing dark nights for their battles, they spread panic by the fear and spookiness of an army of ghosts.

Tacitus, *Germania*

Germanic ghost-warriors, disputed by scholars, are borne out by a Greek parallel. In the fourth century BC, Athenian youths at the age of 16–18 years spent two years as ephebe borderguards. Only by doing so could they join the rolls of the army and become full citizens. The institution, though much revised, had roots in the Bronze Age. The youths served in frontier forts as lightly armed *peripoloi*, “those who circle around.”<sup>1</sup> They engaged also in night-time ambushes,<sup>2</sup> and wore black cloaks.<sup>3</sup> The myth of the Apaturia festival at which they became full citizens told of Melas, “The Black,” who won a fight by trickery and seized Melainai, “The Black Country,” through the intervention of “Night-Dionysos of the black goat skin.”

In ancient Greece, black-dressed hunters who laid traps and set nets at night were loners like Hippolytos, who lived in the wild. This was the mode of life of Spartan *kryptaia* youths as well as Athenian ephebes.<sup>4</sup> In their initiation ceremonies ephebes, not-yet-men, dressed as girls, like Achilles on Skyros. With light weapons, trickery, and disorganized life in the wild, through stealth and night exploits, Greek ephebes perpetuated an old warrior style that stood in direct contrast to that of heavily armed hoplite citizens.<sup>5</sup>

All this helps one understand Tacitus’ description of the Harii among the east Germanic tribes:

Suffice it to mention the strongest tribes [of the Lugii], the Harii, Helveconae, Manimi, Helisii, and Nahanarvali. Among the Nahanarvali they show a grove of ancient worship. The high priest is dressed like a woman, but the gods are called [in Roman translation] Castor and Pollux: that is the character of their godhead, their name is “Alcis.” There are no images and no trace of foreign belief, although they are worshiped as brothers and young men. Moreover, besides leading in strength the peoples mentioned above, the [Harii] are fierce and heighten their inborn ferocity by artful means and timing. Their shields are black, their bodies painted, and, choosing dark nights for their battles, they spread panic by the fear and spookiness of an army of ghosts. No foe can withstand that startling and, as it were, underworld-like sight, for in every fight the eyes are overcome first.<sup>6</sup>

The fighting style of the Harii closely parallels that of Athenian ephebes. Both appear black and attack at night. It is of course practical when fighting at night to darken oneself so as not to be seen: modern soldiers daub their faces for night combat. But while night attacks are known the world over, they cannot be the only way for an army to fight, as one must be ready to fight in daylight as well.<sup>7</sup> Among classical Greeks night attacks were the opposite of regular warfare: the decisive heavy-armed hoplites fought in daylight in open fields. The same must have been true for Lugii, for as some Athenian ephebes at ceremonies wore womanly dress to mark them as not-yet-men, so Lugian high priests of the Alcis officiated in womanly garb.<sup>8</sup> Since Tacitus (implicitly) connects these priests to black night-warriors, one may infer that Alcis worshipers too were not-yet-men, worshiping the young warrior gods Castor and Pollux since they themselves were youths.<sup>9</sup>

A mistake in the manuscript tradition makes it uncertain to which tribe the night-fighters belonged. The manuscripts read *alii*, “others,” but a tribe or tribal grouping ought to be meant, for they surpass other tribes in strength. Most scholars thus read *Arii* (=Harii), which is palaeographically closest, but others think of Lugii or (implied) Nahararvali.<sup>10</sup> Recent studies conclude that the Indo-European word *koryos* (Germanic *haryaz*) means army of the young.<sup>11</sup> The Harii were thus either young warriors of the Lugii, or a tribe that sprang from young Lugii.<sup>12</sup> In either case, fighting by stealth at night befits them well, as does the ceremony in women’s dress at the Lugian shrine. It seems best, therefore, to read [*Harii*] in Tacitus’ passage.<sup>13</sup>

Whether the Harii were a tribe of their own, as Tacitus says, or Lugii youths, it is clear that ghostly, black, night-fighting youths were a Germanic warrior style.<sup>14</sup> Tacitus could have had detailed knowledge of Lugii, for Roman traders passed through their land on the way to the amber-bearing Baltic coast. Very likely they reported what they heard and saw: one can still hear Lugian bragging in Tacitus’ account.<sup>15</sup> The trustworthiness of that account is strengthened by the *Edda* and Icelandic sagas, where netherworld figures are black and, at the end of the world, an army of the dead under Surt (“The Black One”) rides to the battle of Ragnarök.<sup>16</sup>

Ghosts haunt by frightening. Shades of the dead threaten to take the living to the world below, and to fight them is grim, for one cannot kill the dead.<sup>17</sup> For these reasons alone it is likely that Lugian night-warriors played on the “fear and spookiness” of mythical ghost warriors.<sup>18</sup> From what we know of Indo-European and world-wide parallels as well as other Germanic warrior styles, the Harii did indeed body forth Woden’s Wild Host.<sup>19</sup>

With tribal wolf-warriors, the Harii shared youth, stealth, wildness, and Dioscuri worship.<sup>20</sup> The two styles thus overlapped, as did other warrior styles—understandably so, since a tribe could have several youth troops.<sup>21</sup>

Romans gladly made use of Germanic bare-bodied night-fighting skills (Figure 7.2), and strong Indo-European parallels warrant the Lugian institution of ghost warriors. Blackened night-fighting thus was an Indo-European warrior style of the young, known among Indians, Iranians, Greeks, and Celts, as well as ancient Germani.<sup>22</sup>





Part 3  
STRONG MEN

## CLUB-WIELDERS

They threw huge, fire-hardened clubs at our men, stabbed those who stood firm with blades in the chest, and broke through our left wing.

Ammianus Marcellinus

### Indo-European club-wielders

Clubs, man's oldest weapons, are found world-wide. In tribal warfare they played a great role. Africans trained in their use from boyhood on, Polynesians were famous for their fearsome clubs, and North American Indians excelled in their use. Clubs also have drawbacks: "many people have used...a war club light enough to be thrown but heavy enough to crush," yet, says Turney-High,

clubs are really poor weapons. Only a powerful man can throw them far. No one can hurl them with the accuracy of the arrow or even the spear. They are too heavy for any fighter to carry many of them to battle. Their manufacture is expensive in time and skill. Worst of all, their slow movement and large bulk make them easy to see, they are easy to predict, and therefore very easy to dodge. They must rely on the stunning capacity of their weight, for their piercing power is nil.

All this is true for primitive bands, but neither horsemen nor the tightly crammed foot soldiers of more advanced societies can easily dodge the crushing blows of clubs.<sup>1</sup>

Wielded by strong men, clubs were also weapons of prestige.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the ages, Indo-European gods and heroes, such as Indra, Bhima, Vayu, Kṛśaspa, Herakles, and Thor, fought with clubs in the grand heroic fighting style. A relief from Kernosovka, north of the Black Sea, dating to about 3000 BC, shows the earliest known Indo-European club-wielder. The Greek warrior name Meleager ("Caring for the Club") and the Germanic name Odoacar (Auda-Wakraz: "Rich in Weapons") are both related to Indra's famous *vajra* club. Mycenaean and Greek warriors fought with clubs, and Scythians in Roman times were skilled club-men.<sup>3</sup> The club-wielding style is brought out well by Silius Italicus who writes of a Spanish warrior of the third century BC:

He had no spear in hand, no helmet on his head but trusting in his broad shoulders and strapping youth he laid waste the troops with his club, needing no sword.<sup>4</sup>

Men took pride in being so strong that they needed no armor or other weapon to frighten their foes.

### Germanic club-wielders on Trajan's Column

To Romans, Germanic warriors stood frightfully tall and strong. Skeletons confirm this.<sup>5</sup> No wonder, then, that Germanic club-men loom large on Trajan's Column. A club-wielder appears in scene 24 that depicts the battle at Tapae (Figure 7.1).

Like club-men in other scenes of the Column, this one wears long, baggy trousers and shoes. His sword hangs not on a baldric but is fastened to his belt on the left hip. Not widening along the shaft, his knotted short club ends in a knob. Before him his battered Dacian foe, struck by the club, has sunken to his knees, gasping and moaning and holding his shield overhead.<sup>6</sup> The club-wielder towers head and shoulders over everyone nearby: he is taller even than the horseman behind him. His arm and weapon raised, he reaches as high as some figures in the middle ground, a truly strapping stalwart, a club-man like Orion, Herkules, or Thor. His muscular build, like that of mythic club-men, makes him a fit user of a weapon that can pass on a man's whole strength.

Size, bare chest, and weaponry mark the warrior in scene 24 as a Germanic tribesman, though he does not appear uncouth. His hair, less shaggy than that of the Dacians, is ordered, his beard trimmed, and his face relaxed—perhaps to make victory seem well in hand.<sup>7</sup> Since Indo-European heroes and Germanic leaders often wielded clubs, this man, like other club-wielders on Trajan's Column, may have served as a high-ranking elite warrior.<sup>8</sup>

Among the emperor's strike force rushing along to Lower Moesia in scene 36 of the Column, a club-wielder is perhaps the most eye-catching figure (Figure 0.2). As brawny and tall as the strapping tribesmen around him, he sports a pointed chin-beard, baggy trousers, and a rather grim look (made worse, perhaps, by the weathering of this side of the Column). In his left hand he holds a shield and on his right side a sword hangs from the baldric. The club in his right is thin at the handle and widens toward the tip. Like other men in the scene, he holds his weapon ready: he will fight with the club first and only then with his sword.

In scene 38, in which Trajan's Lower Moesian strike force swings into action, two bare-chested warriors, wearing baggy trousers tucked into their shoes, also wield clubs (Figure 7.2).<sup>9</sup>

The scene is a night attack on Dacian raiders. Half-naked club-men, fast and quiet, were good troops for this. Three of them are shown, one, with a curved knife, far to the right, two others with clubs. The two warriors to the left, splendid types as seen in the frontispiece, show no fighting madness, which is proper for a stealth attack—and greatly to the credit of their Roman leader.



*Figure 7.1* Club-wielder with shield and sword. Trajan's Column, scene 24. Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 91.100.



*Figure 7.2* Club-men, fighting.  
Trajan's column, scene 38. Photo:  
Deutsches Archaologisches Institut,  
Rome, Inst. Neg. 41.1294.

Their clubs differ in shape. The one belonging to the warrior in the middle is thick and straight, and best suited for bashing. The knotted club of the warrior on the left, on the other hand, is thin, slightly curved, gripped up from the end, and hence suitable also for throwing. Perhaps this is why he stands not in the front line but farther back from the fighting,<sup>10</sup> although there is no telling whether he is about to throw his club or use it for bashing.

The third bare-chested, trousered warrior, further right, fights foremost in the fray. From his looks and being nearby he belongs to the same troop, even though he holds no club but a curved sword. His sword has been called a mistake. The artist, it has been said, curved the sword to make it bend around the head of the enemy kneeling there. However, since scenes 24 and 36 of the Column (Figures 0.2 and 7.1) show swords as the fall-back weapon for club-men, the wielder of the curved sword here seems to have thrown or lost his club first and then drawn his sword. The blade's curved shape need not be doubted,

for as we will see in Chapter 18, bare-chested, Germanic warriors did indeed use curved swords.<sup>11</sup>

The combination of club and curved sword is not invented by the artist of the Column. Vergil reports the joint use of these two weapons among Italic Oscan warriors—and of Oscans he says that they threw clubs “like Germani.” Vergil thus knew a Germanic warrior style that combined throwing club and curved sword. Reporting the same combination of club and curved sword, poet and Column confirm each other: this was an acknowledged warrior style. It was also practical and efficient, since the two weapons complement each other: the club stuns an enemy and the light sword finishes him off.<sup>12</sup>

Three further bare-chested warriors, one of them fallen, appear in scene 66 of the Column. Wearing shoes and trousers, they are almost certainly club-men, not berserk swordsmen, even though their weapons are not shown. One of them lies dead on the ground, his head hidden behind a shield. He is the only “Roman” casualty in all the reliefs on the Column. It is so astonishing to see a slain soldier of the Roman side that scholars overlooked him. Perhaps some battlefield realism slipped in. Nor is it happenstance that the dead warrior is a bare-chested club-wielder, for Germanic tribesmen risked their lives freely and with astounding recklessness.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, Trajan’s Column prefers to depict fighting tribesmen in order to downplay the loss of Roman blood<sup>14</sup>—it seemed better to lose foreign rather than Roman troops in battle, and more glorious to win victory through the shedding of foreign, rather than Roman blood.<sup>15</sup> Tacitus thrilled at the thought of tribesmen killing tribesmen, as did fourth- and fifth-century Romans, though that did little to bring back Rome’s military strength.<sup>16</sup>

In scene 70 of the Column (Figure 9.1), a club-wielder fights in the attack shield castle that moves against the Dacians. The others, all auxiliaries, wield spears, but he raises a club. With bowmen and slingers fighting from the rear, the picture seems well laid out and trustworthy, hence one may infer with a certain likelihood that club-wielders did indeed fight in the front line of shield walls, and if they did so in Trajan’s army, they did so in Germanic armies as well.<sup>17</sup>

Trajan’s Column does not overstate the use of clubs by tribesmen, it gives it due weight. Wooden clubs in an army with advanced metallurgy prove the efficiency of the weapon as well as the strength and fighting spirit of their users. Even Stone Age weapons could be useful against well-equipped troops of antiquity: witness the Ethiopian bowmen in Xerxes’ army invading Greece in 490 BC.<sup>18</sup> In the same way Trajan, with all his legionaries and praetorians, relied on tribal club-men as his attack force.

Trajan’s club-wielding warriors, unlike his swordsmen, wear baggy trousers and shoes, as do most Germanic warriors.<sup>19</sup> That they have taken off their shirts for battle sets the club-men apart, though not as much as barefooted warriors. On the very accurate second-century sarcophagus from Portonaccio, all wear long-sleeved shirts save for the two warriors who dive beneath the enemy horses (Figures 17.4, 18.2).<sup>20</sup> To take off one’s shirt for battle, then, was something of a berserk gesture, a display of greater recklessness and bravery—and no doubt also of one’s brawn, as with American Indian braves, for shirtless warriors looked tough and weather-hardened.<sup>21</sup> Bare-chested warriors, though outdone in nakedness by barefooted ones, thus passed for being braver than those in shirts or armor. Berserk-like bare-chestedness was part of the club-wielder warrior style.

A second-century horse chest guard, broken off from a triumphal bronze statue in Transylvania, may (or may not) depict scenes from Trajan's Dacian war. One of its bronze figures shows a tall, half-naked, trousered club-wielder (Figure 7.3).<sup>22</sup>

The foot warrior wields a club, not a sword, as has been said, for the weapon in his hand widens towards the tip in striking contrast with the sword of the horseman behind him. Further behind, another club-wielder once followed, now lost but still outlined by the gap in the gilding. On the right-hand side, now broken off, there was a similar set of figures of which only the club-man survives.

The club-wielders on this chest guard are far taller than the horsemen. Being tall and half-naked, they are Germani, very likely those who came with Trajan and who, as scene 36 of the Column shows, conquered Dacia side by side with Roman horsemen. As on the Column, the club-men are giants, and serve among Rome's main attack troops, for to Greeks and Romans the tallest were the most fearsome fighters (if also the most vulnerable to arrows and javelins).<sup>23</sup> Horsemen wielding swords, rarely seen in Roman art, were likewise attack troops eager to close with the enemy.<sup>24</sup>

In Trajan's time Germanic warriors worshiped a god whom the Romans called Herkules and who therefore must have wielded a club. His cult was



*Figure 7.3* Club-wielder and horseman on the attack. Horse chest guard from Transylvania. Photo: Ioan Piso, Cluj.

widespread, for many club-amulets have been found. Clubs as weapons would have drawn prestige from the worship of this god. Club-wielding warriors, singing the praise of the god as they went into battle, no doubt felt strengthened by his power as they fought mythic battles.<sup>25</sup>

Tacitus makes the point that a custom of the Suebi and Aestii in the furthest Northeast was to use clubs rather than iron weapons.<sup>26</sup> The further away from Roman civilization, the more he expected primitive weapons to be used—rightly perhaps.



### Throwing clubs as makeshift weapons

Throwing clubs proved decisive in AD 376 at “The Willows” (Ad Salices) near the Black Sea. There, tribal club-throwers overcame a Roman field army, which led directly to the Goths’ great victory at Adrianople. The Goths, Ammianus says, suffered reverses, but then,

always quick and resourceful, they threw huge, fire-hardened clubs at our men, stabbed those who stood firm with blades in the chest, and broke through our left wing.<sup>27</sup>

At the Willows, as on Trajan’s Column, the same warriors used clubs and blades. When Ammianus says that “barbarians” are always quick and resourceful (*reparabiles semper et celeres*) he does not mean that ingenuity allowed them to quickly come up with new kinds of weapons, but that they made new clubs in a hurry, on the spot.<sup>28</sup> Throwing-clubs as makeshift weapons are known from Rome’s Thracian war in AD 26, when the beleaguered Thracians in a last, desperate attempt to break out, pelted the siege-wall garrison with rocks, fire-hardened spears, and freshly cut oak clubs.<sup>29</sup> So it was at the Willows: all that mattered in the heat of battle was to have enough clubs, and roughly hewn ones were good enough. Indeed, some thought that rough clubs were even pithier weapons.<sup>30</sup> Since the Goths fought near their camp they could have stockpiled such clubs to throw them at the heavily armored Roman foot.

Clubs thrown in battle are easily lost. Warriors in such widely separated cultures as Oscans and Hawaiians thus tied strings to their well-wrought clubs to retrieve them. Commenting on Vergil, Servius says that Germanic club-throwers did the same. Perhaps, then, some had well-wrought clubs they wanted to retrieve by strings.<sup>31</sup>

As ancient Germani made many weapons only of wood, studies of their weaponry based on metallic finds grasp only half the truth, and greater efforts are needed to gather evidence of wooden weapons.<sup>32</sup> Trajan’s Column offers some such evidence in its portrayal of clubs. Clearly, with wooden clubs and with rocks to be thrown, Germanic warriors could quickly replenish their weapon supplies and almost always had the means to fight from afar or hand to hand.

Throwing clubs are known still from the early Middle Ages. Isidore, bishop of Visigoth Seville until AD 636, comments on Vergil’s Teutonic clubs:

The club (*clava*) is Hercules’ weapon, so called because it is held together by iron nails (*claves*). It is a foot and a half in length. Such is also the *cateia*, which Horace calls *caia*. It is a Frankish (*Gallica*) weapon made from the hardest wood. When hurled, being heavy, it won’t fly far, but will smash with the utmost strength. If thrown by someone skilled, it comes back to him. Thinking of this, Vergil [Aeneid 7.741] says of the Abellians: “wonted to fling clubs as the Teutons do.” That is why Visigoths (Hispani) and Franks (Galli) call them *tautani*.<sup>33</sup>

Since Isidore speaks of Teutons, his *Hispani* seem to be the Visigoths and his *Galli* the Merovingian Franks of his own day. Both these nations thus used throwing clubs as late as the seventh century AD, and with smashing effect.<sup>34</sup>

Isidore's claim that the heavy club, skillfully hurled, came back to the thrower, cannot be true, for it is physically impossible. However, Indo-Europeans believed that the weapons of the gods returned to the hand of the thrower after each throw, an understandable belief in light of the fact that Germani still used boomerangs in the third century AD (they deposited several such bird-hunting weapons in a moor at Oberdorla, Thüringen). The wonder of the boomerang is readily ascribed to the weapon of a god, hence Isidore's notion of the Teutonic war club as boomerang seems to echo tales of Thor's hammer Mjölnir, a heavy club that returned to the god's hand after each throw.<sup>35</sup>

### Club-men against armored horsemen

In the third and fourth centuries, club-swingers overcame the most fearsome weapon of late antiquity, the iron-clad *catafractarii* or *clibanarii* horsemen. It seems that this decisive military achievement is owed to northern tribesmen.

Trajan's Column records no fighting against horsemen, for to show Dacian foes on horseback would make them too proud. The spiral reliefs thus give no clue as to what club-wielders could do against cavalry. The relief on the southeast socle of the Column, however, seems to depict a long, straight club with a sling at the handle.<sup>36</sup> The sling, allowing for an even farther reach, makes it likely that this is a club for use against armored horsemen. Heavy armor called for the use of clubs to counter it. Remarkably, this fighting technique is found on the Danubian frontier rather than in the East where mailed horsemen abound.

In summer of AD 272 at Hemesa, Emperor Aurelian faced the forces of Zenobia, queen of Palmyra. The armored Palmyrene horsemen at first drove off the Roman horse, Zosimus reports, but then Roman foot fell upon them:

Some went at them with the usual weapons, but those from Palestine struck their iron- and bronze-clad foes with clubs and maces which in great part won the day, for the foe was terror-stricken by the outlandish attack with clubs.<sup>37</sup>

Who were "those from Palestine"? Not traditional Roman soldiers, for to Romans clubs were weapons not of the army but of the police.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, in that year Palestine still belonged to the Palmyrenes or at best had only just been freed, hence Aurelian could not have drawn battle-deciding troops from there. Nor were these club-men native Palestinians or troops stationed there under the Palmyrenes, for their fighting style struck the Palmyrenes as outlandish. They must have come from far away, then, not from the eastern frontier. Clearly they were part of the army Aurelian brought from the West. Zosimus' reference to them as troops "from Palestine" is readily explained: under Gallienus, field detachments from Palestine had been stationed in the West. Before taking these detachments back to Palestine, Aurelian, if he treated them like other field detachments, bolstered them with Germanic recruits while keeping their provincial

name.<sup>39</sup> By Aurelian's time, Frankish and Alamannic warriors had long experience in fighting catafract horsemen, and for that reason are likely to be the club-men who decided the battle of Hemesa.<sup>40</sup> Twenty years later, northern club-men formed a palatine legion of their own, the *Mattiarii*.<sup>41</sup>

In AD 312 the club-wielding tactics described by Zosimus won the battle at Torino for Emperor Constantine. A speaker praising Constantine's generalship at Torino says that Constantine's elite troops overcame Maxentius' heavily mailed *clibanarii* horsemen by letting them pass into their ranks where the emperor stood, and then striking the riders' heads with their clubs and stabbing the horses:

They attacked the armored horsemen with clubs that by striking with their heavy, iron-studded knots drubbed the wound-proof horsemen and, aimed above all at their heads, brought down those whom they had knocked into a daze. Then they began to fall head-long, to slide over backwards, to jerk about half-dead, to hang in their saddles dying, to lie entangled in the slaughter of the horses who, when a spot to wound them was found, in unbridled pain threw their riders everywhere.<sup>42</sup>

The club- and sword-wielding troops won the day. The club-men must have been highly skilled as well as fearless not to run away when the dread ironclad catafracts rode toward them. After the battle, orators praised Constantine lavishly for personally leading these fighters, clearly elite troops.

Libanius mentions the same kind of fighting later in the fourth century. Of Constantius' soldiers facing the Persians, he writes:

The warrior on foot sidesteps the horse that comes up against him and thus foils its move. Then, as the horseman rides by, he strikes him with the club on the side of the head and brings him down. The rest is easy.<sup>43</sup>

Side-stepping a horse must have called for great nimbleness such as only unarmored, "naked" troops would have.

These accounts of the battles of Hemesa and Torino, as well as Libanius' description of Constantius' soldiers against the Persians, reveal the fighting technique of club-men against horsemen. Though overlooked by specialists of Roman weaponry, these accounts, coming from three different authors, are likely to be trustworthy.<sup>44</sup>

### **Club-wielders in the Middle Ages**

Germanic warriors used clubs throughout antiquity and the early Middle Ages.<sup>45</sup> The large golden horn from Gallehus in Denmark depicts a fifth-century throwing or bashing club that broadens toward the tip, has a deeply carved handle, and looks much like a club on Trajan's Column over three hundred years earlier. The fifth-century bracteate medallion from Års in Denmark (Figure 11.2), shows Woden wielding a big, knotted club whose very thick head suggests that it is meant for striking rather than throwing. The

club, as the weapon of the god, thus was still a weapon of prestige in the north during the sixth century.<sup>46</sup>

Clubs had their use. No iron blade, only a huge club, could bring down Thorir Hound in his magic wolfskin hood. Clubs likewise were the only weapons availing against berserks, whom neither fire or steel could hurt. And Woden, having made Harald Wartooth of Denmark wound-proof, in the end killed him with his own club.<sup>47</sup>

Understandably, clubs were weapons of giants. Early Germanic literature speaks of heroes so strong that the iron blades of their swords shattered when they swung them: swords were of no help to such warriors, and swords did indeed shatter or break.<sup>48</sup> Very strong men, therefore, needed clubs. Harald Wartooth, taller and stronger than everyone else, went into battle at Bråvalla armed only with a club. Tellingly, he resembled the club-men of Trajan's Column also in that he wore neither helmet nor hauberk—in the sense of being unarmored he was a “naked” warrior.

The club as the weapon of the unarmored king was to have a long history. A seventh-century club came to light at Konghell in Bohuslän, Sweden with a runic inscription that reads “staff of command.” From a mere weapon, the club thus became a token of command. The Bayeux tapestry, dating to the eleventh century when Norman cavalry no longer used clubs, shows William the Conqueror leading his army into Brittany: taller and broader-shouldered than other warriors, in a purple cloak, wielding a club and wearing neither helmet nor hauberk, he rides ahead of his fully armored guard.<sup>49</sup> As leader of Norman warriors who upheld customs brought from Norway and Denmark, William stands in the tradition of Harald Wartooth and, even further back, in the tradition of the club-men on Trajan's Column. By his lack of a hauberk he underscores that he fears no wounds, and by his club he flaunts his strength. In eleventh-century Norman belief, Woden rides ahead of his warriors, huge and wielding a club.<sup>50</sup> In AD 813 Charlemagne forbade his warriors to muster with clubs (*bacula*) as their weapons.<sup>51</sup> Why he did so is unknown. Perhaps the clubs he forbade were all-wooden weapons. Iron-tipped clubs for striking horsemen (*goedendags*) remained a very effective weapon in medieval warfare. With them, Flemish foot wasted the flower of French knighthood at Courtrai in 1302.<sup>52</sup> Though there is no evidence to prove it, the old Frankish club may never have fallen out of use between Charlemagne's time and Courtrai.

Clubs were widely used in the Middle Ages. At Stiklastad in 1030, Norwegians threw clubs against enemy foot. At Hastings in 1066, Anglo-Saxons threw clubs (with a stone tied to the shaft) against armored Norman horsemen.<sup>53</sup> In the thirteenth century Saxo tells how Thor shattered the shields of his foes with his frightening club. As in the beginning, the club was the weapon of the uncommonly strong and was best used against armor or shields.<sup>54</sup> As Thor's weapon it must have been held in high regard, and so perhaps were its throwers.

## WIELDERS OF HUGE SPEARS

[Woden's] spear never halted in its thrust.

Skáldskaparmál

Big spears have a long history among Indo-Europeans. In a wall painting from around 1550 BC on the Greek island of Thera, a line of Achaean warriors hold spears more than twice their own length. Hector's spear in the *Iliad* is over five meters long. In Rome, too, large spears brought prestige: Vergil's Messapus owned a beamlike spear (*hasta trabalis*) as did the war goddess Bellona. Gauls are said to have had "swords larger than other peoples' spears, and spear blades larger than other peoples' swords."<sup>1</sup>

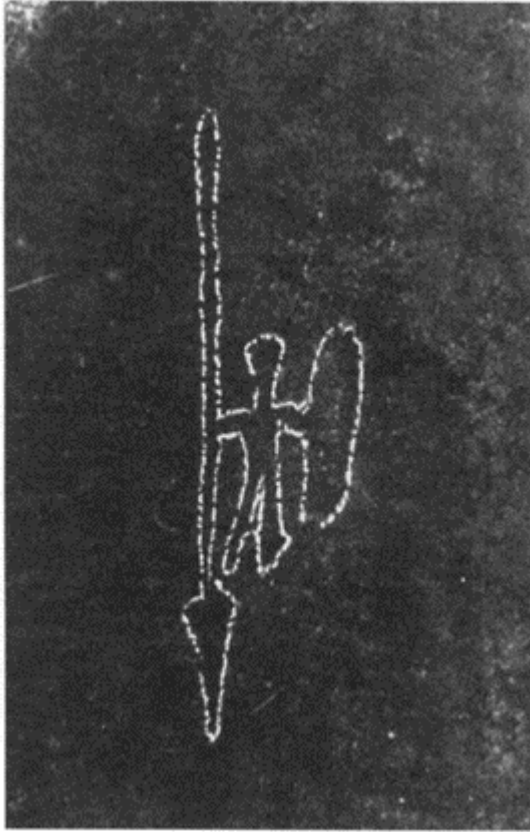
Bronze Age rock carvings in southern Sweden, made by ancient Germani or their forerunners, show a warrior with a giant spear, clearly meant to impress with the might of the weapon and the strength of the wielder, perhaps Woden himself (Figure 8.1).<sup>2</sup>

The drawing shows a spear more than twice as long as its bearer and with a huge blade. Like the long spear, the big shield suggests that this warrior fought in a shield wall formation. The size of his weapons helps one understand what Tacitus says about the use of big spears at the beginning of our era. In his *Germania* Tacitus writes about Germanic warriors:

Not even iron abounds, as one can see from the kind of weapons: Few use swords or big spears.<sup>3</sup>

Tacitus' statement that iron does not abound among Germani implies that he believed big spears had large iron blades (and were therefore rare). Since archaeologists have found many small spear blades of the time, but only a few large ones, Tacitus was certainly right in saying that few had big spears (though not everyone agrees with his inference that iron was rare).<sup>4</sup>

In his *Histories* and *Annals*, however, Tacitus speaks of huge spears as fearsome weapons of Germanic warriors. The Cherusci, he says, fought well "with their tall limbs and huge spears, striking wounds from afar." And the Batavi in AD 70 "with their huge bodies and overlong spears ran the wavering and slipping soldiers through from afar."<sup>5</sup> Yet Tacitus' earlier *Germania* and his later *Histories* and *Annals* do not contradict each other, for big spears as the weapons of elite warriors in the front line were at the same time rare and fearsome.



*Figure 8.1* Wielder of a huge spear.  
Rock drawing from Tanum, Bohuslän.  
Photo after Altheim, *Literatur* 1948,  
300f. and plate XXI (with permission  
of Max Niemeyer Verlag).

That big spears were front-line weapons is clear from several battle descriptions. Dio says that when the Suebi of Ariovistus met Caesar's legions in 58 BC, close-up hand-to-hand battle flared up so quickly that the Germani could not use their long spears. These must have belonged to men in the first line, for rear ranks could still use thrusting weapons after battle was joined.<sup>6</sup>

In AD 15 Germanicus told his soldiers not to fear the long spears of the Cherusci, for only those in the first line had them, while those further back had but short or fire-hardened spears.<sup>7</sup> There must be some truth rather than mere bravado in this, for no leader could lie to experienced soldiers about so elementary a fact and hoodwink them about what they had to face.<sup>8</sup> There are no grounds to doubt our sources on this point since they agree that big spears were rare and wielded only by warriors in the front line.<sup>9</sup>

In the battle at the Angrivarii wall in AD 16 the Cherusci were so hemmed in among each other that “they could neither thrust out and pull back their overlong spears, nor lunge forward and make use of their speed.”<sup>10</sup> The wielders of long spears in the first line thus fought nimbly, in columns (*cunei*) not too tight, whereas the shuttered-up shield castle of Ariovistus’ men was a strictly defensive formation.

Large spear blades are found only in the rich graves of the upper class, hence those who fought with long or heavy spears in front were athelings.<sup>11</sup> Like Chatti long-hairs, they bodied forth an elite warrior style that ranged them in the first line of battle. Rome gladly hired such men.<sup>12</sup> We will meet wielders of huge spears again when looking at lancers on horseback. Strabo and Tacitus link body size with weapon size: the bigger the men, the larger the spears they wield.<sup>13</sup> Warriors, naturally, took pride in both, for the taller they were, the more they frightened the foe; and the longer their spear, the greater their advantage.

Long spears were still used in the early Middle Ages: sixth-century Saxons wielded them.<sup>14</sup> But while the shield wall continued to be a major battle formation, elite warriors in the first rank seem to have turned to shorter thrusting spears, better suited for single combat.

On the seventh-century Torslunda die (Figure 1.6) the wolf-warrior holds a short spear of astonishing thickness. The same is true of spears held by *barritus* chanters embossed on the helmet from grave 7 at Valsgårde (Figure 10.1). Some battle lords thus seem to have chosen shorter spears that kept the aristocratic long blade, but achieved powerful thrust by thickness rather than length of shaft. Thick shafts still flaunted their wielders’ strength.

Mighty spear shafts still awed warriors in Norway in AD 1030. Snorri Sturluson says that for the battle at Stiklastad King Olaf hired (and converted) a warrior so tall that no one came up to his shoulders. Handsome and fairhaired, the man had a fine helmet, a hauberk of chain mail, a red shield, and a beautiful sword. His spear, inlaid with gold, had a shaft so thick it filled his hand. The king put him in the front line, to stand before his banner.<sup>15</sup>

Spears were also weapons of great prestige in the sagas. The Laxardal saga says that when Olaf went to Ireland he wore a hauberk and a helmet with golden plates, was girt with a sword, the hilt of which was inlaid with gold, and in his hand held a spear with a hooked blade, richly decorated. In the Grettis saga the hero kills two berserks with one thrust, using “the big hooked spear that belonged to Kar the Old.”<sup>16</sup>

While spears had to be light enough to be thrown, warriors of great strength could nevertheless boast huge weapons.<sup>17</sup> Warriors with huge spears, whether long or thick, could see themselves as Woden’s men, fighting in the style of the spear god, whose “Gugnir” never failed in its thrust: “Spear-Ygg” (Spear-Woden) was a “kenning” (Old Norse compound expression) for warriors.<sup>18</sup>

Part 4  
SHIELD WARRIORS



## 9

# SHIELD CASTLES

They arrayed themselves in shield castles. Closing ranks everywhere, they were safe in front, in the back, and on the sides. Thus they broke through our thin line.

Tacitus, *Histories*

### Shield castles in antiquity

Disciplined fighting seems to be as old among Indo-Europeans as are frenzied fighting and single combat,<sup>1</sup> albeit the weight given to one or the other shifted over time. Homer's *Iliad* speaks of close-knit shield walls and calls close-ordered troops "castles." Known also to Celtiberians, Dacians, and Germani, such shieldburg are an inherited Indo-European battle formation. Called *folc* or *scyldburgh* in Anglo-Saxon, *fólc* in Old Norse, and *cuneus* in Latin, they were a mainstay of Germanic battle tactics from antiquity to the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup>

In drawn-out, hand-to-hand fighting against better-equipped Romans, Germanic warriors fought against the odds and therefore sought wooded, wet, steep, or stony ground for battles, or sprang ambushes with tactical retreats and feigned flight.<sup>3</sup> But they also accepted set-piece battles. When they did, they attacked in well-coordinated shield castles, not, as some believe, in mindless free-for-alls. Unlike Roman armies, Germani drew up for battle not in lines but in columns they could quickly turn into well-knit shieldburg.<sup>4</sup>

A good example for this is Ariovistus' battle array against Caesar in 58 BC. Ariovistus lined up his seven tribes in groups of columns—each column around 300 strong, says Dio—with regular intervals between them. After a first lightning attack, which forestalled the Romans from throwing their *pila*-spears, the columns formed shield castles (*phalangae*), their shields overlapping on all sides and overhead, "as was their wont." That the men could do this while fighting proves it to be a wonted custom.<sup>5</sup> As the battle went on, Caesar's men overcame the German left flank: Roman soldiers jumped on the shield buckles of the Germani and struck at them from above. On the right, however, the Germani pushed forward and almost overwhelmed the Roman lines before Roman reinforcements came up and the Germani fled. Ariovistus had clearly planned for his shield castles to break through the Roman lines.

A shield wall is seen in scene 70 of Trajan's Column (Figure 9.1).<sup>6</sup> The stunning row of four auxiliaries' shields, all in one line at the same angle and in full view, draws the eye on the rhythmic action in the scene. No other battle scene on the Column shows shields so arrayed. Scholars have rightly taken the scene to depict the advance of a

column into battle. In a companion scene to the right, legionaries form their comparable “tortoise.”

Three auxiliary soldiers with helmets, mailshirts, and spears (as the men’s fists show) and an “irregular” club-wielder stand for a body of troops like those brigaded at Placentia in AD 69 under the name “Germanic cohorts”: Batavian auxiliaries next to tribesmen from across the Rhine.<sup>7</sup> All four warriors have the same shield emblem. Shields aligned and spears jabbing, they move ahead in bonding step, very likely to the rhythm of the *barritus*



*Figure 9.1* A shield wall on the attack.  
Trajan’s Column, scene 70. Photo:  
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut,  
Rome, Inst. Neg. 41.1443.

chant—in the same way, it seems, as warriors on the seventh-century Valsgärde foil and the ninth-century Oseberg wall-hanging (Figures 10.1, 11.5). Behind them comes another line of spearmen, then bowmen and rock-throwers. Unlike some early medieval shield castles, this one does not double the shields in the first line, for the foes have no bowmen.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 9.1 actually depicts two shield castles, an attacking Germanic one on the left and a defending Dacian one on the right. As they clash, the two formations reveal their fighting techniques. When shield castles met, they tried to push the foe out of the way, which took all the strength and skill the warriors could muster. One way to get a grip on

the ground was to hunker down. Speaking of the Alamannic shield castle at the battle of Strassburg in AD 357, Ammianus says that some very skillful warriors fought on their knees to turn back the foe.<sup>9</sup> Such a warrior is the Dacian shown in scene 70, kneeling in the first line of the crumbling shield castle. The shield of another Dacian guards him from above, just as Maurice describes the shield-castle order in the sixth century. Fighting on one's knee in the first line, while guarded by the shield of the man behind, is a very specific technique. Since both Trajan's Column and Ammianus know this fighting technique, the shield castle with the twin line of shields in front must have been a well-trained traditional battle formation in much of Iron Age Europe.

Arraying troops by tribes was an Indo-European custom that allowed warriors to fight in their specific styles. The columns and shieldburg of tribes or clans with their own war-cries and dances will have moved to different chants.<sup>10</sup> Hence when Batavi and tribal warriors from across the Rhine faced the Romans in AD 70, Civilis, like Ariovistus before him, arrayed his forces by tribes and columns. This was a good tactic also in that tribes thus set apart strove to outdo each other.<sup>11</sup>

The line along which the columns were drawn was "the battle line." Tacitus refers to it when he says that the 100 foot warriors honored to fight jointly with the horse took their stand "before the battle line." He also refers to it when he states that leaders showed their mettle by fighting "before the line."<sup>12</sup>

With the battle line drawn, there was still scope for loosely structured groups (*catervae, globi, drungi*) to stay in front or rush out to skirmish, taunt, tempt, probe, or wreck the enemy's battle order and hide their own.<sup>13</sup> Such tactics favored lighter, faster Germani over more heavily equipped Romans.<sup>14</sup> In AD 354 Constantius II overcame the Alamanni when three of his Germanic officers, Arintheus, Seniauchus, and Bappo, with their troops, rushed the enemy "in wild lunges rather than in proper battle order."<sup>15</sup> What mattered was their eagerness to fight, their reckless dash into the fray.<sup>16</sup> In such lunges, wolf- and bear-warriors, naked berserks, and others could display their daring fighting styles. And since even kings fought at times in such groups,<sup>17</sup> the picture of Trajan at the head of naked "berserk" swordsmen, helm-bearers, wolf- and bear-warriors in scene 36 of the Column may be meant to suggest that the emperor—symbolically—led elite warrior groups to fight before the battle line.

Attacking shield castles could overcome even well-ordered Roman foot.<sup>18</sup> They might advance straight, chanting the *barritus*, as did the Cornuti and Brachiati at Strassburg in AD 357, move as squares, guarding themselves on all sides,<sup>19</sup> or advance in the famous "boarhead" wedge formation.<sup>20</sup> With a narrow front formed at the battle line, the "boarhead" moved forward to break the enemy line. It had a good chance of doing so, for at the front stood the keenest warriors, including kings ringed by bodyguards and champions.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as the sides of the wedge guarded the churls in the middle, these were free to hurl weapons at the breaking point in the enemy line—the same point-of-fire tactics as the circling attacks of horse described on pp. 146–8.<sup>22</sup>

Shield castles might also attack walls. Tacitus says of troops attacking Placentia in AD 69 that they swung shields over their heads and were bare-chested. Ammianus describes the same equipment and technique at the siege of Aquileia in AD 361: "They held their shields over their heads so they could fight more lightly [clad]."<sup>23</sup> Batavi formed shield castles several stories high to attack city walls. "They stormed against the wall, most of them placing ladders at it, others over their shield castles."<sup>24</sup> A shield castle needed a roof

of shields over it to guard against missiles,<sup>25</sup> but holding up a shield for others to clamber over takes great strength. Shield castle warriors could do this because neither those who held up the shields nor those who ran over them were burdened by armor. To storm walls bare-chested, however, took berserk-like recklessness, and losses were high.<sup>26</sup>

The first two lines of shieldburg were obvious places for long-spear wielders, helmeted athelings, and startling-to-look-at long-hairs.<sup>27</sup> Scene 70 of Trajan's Column shows a club-wielder fighting in the first line (Figure 9.1). Other elite warriors may also have fought in the front lines of shield castles, in some cases as a leader's guard with large shields, ready to form a boarhead wedge.<sup>28</sup> Though dart- and stone-throwers stood further back, shield castles nevertheless brought athelings and churls together, as they depended upon each other.

Shield castles mattered to Germanic tactics because most men lacked armor.<sup>29</sup> The shield's role in the castle formation shows why those who threw their shields away earned a bad name: unable to safeguard themselves and those around them, they endangered all.<sup>30</sup>

Attack by column did not, as is often said, put all hope of victory on the first charge, for attacks succeeded each other. Libanius says the Franks attacked with a second force even before their first "phalanx" had been beaten back.<sup>31</sup> The pivotal role of the battle column and its shield castle, moreover, shows that Germanic warfare stood squarely in a northern Iron Age tradition that owed little to the Romans.<sup>32</sup>

Germanic warfare, then, was not planless or disorderly, as sometimes said.<sup>33</sup> Troops were often well-trained, well-led, and capable of intricate maneuver:<sup>34</sup> Caesar says of Ariovistus, "He won by planning and reason."<sup>35</sup> On the whole, Germanic warriors seem to have fought less fantastically wild than Celts and perhaps therefore fared better in wars against the Romans.<sup>36</sup> The newly found battle site in the Teutoburg Forest revealed that long-range planning and tactical skill brought a Roman field army of 30,000 men to a spot at which field fortifications goaded them into a deadly trap.<sup>37</sup> Anthropological studies of warfare point out the vital role of social and tactical organization,<sup>38</sup> which makes it likely that Germanic victories over Rome were won through the tactical efficiency of shield castles.

### Shield castles in the early Middle Ages

In AD 535, Cassiodorus mentions a Gothic woman named Ranilda, "She of the Boarhead-Battle." It is the oldest known mention of the boarhead battle formation. As names expressed warrior ideals, "Ranilda" is proof that sixth-century Goths in Italy held the boarhead formation in high regard.<sup>39</sup> That Germanic troops at the time still used the shieldburg formation is seen also from the fact that the Byzantines adopted it and called it by its Germanic name "*fulkon*" (*folc*). Around AD 600, Maurice describes a defensive shield-burg castle this way:

The first, second and third men in each file form a *fulkon*, that is one shield over the other, and pointing their spears forward outside the shields, they press them firmly against the ground so that those who dare coming too close will feel them. With the shoulders they push and lean against the

shields so they can well withstand the pressure of those outside. But the third man stands higher...<sup>40</sup>

The men leaning their shoulders against the shields call to mind scene 70 of Trajan's Column (Figure 9.1) and Ammianus' description of warriors fighting on their knees in the first line of a defensive shield castle.<sup>41</sup> In another passage Maurice describes a shield castle as it moves forward:

On the command *ad fulcum* those in front move their shields closer until they nearly touch the shield bosses of their neighbors, guarding themselves well from stomach to shins. Those behind them lift their shields over and rest them on the shield bosses of those before them, guarding their chest and face. And thus they move to the attack.<sup>42</sup>

This is the most detailed description we have of shield castles. When Maurice says that the "blond" peoples (Franks, Lombards) go to battle in dense and even lines,<sup>43</sup> he means not continuous lines but those made up of columns standing beside each other at intervals like Ariovistus' troops and ready to form shield castles.<sup>44</sup>

Whether on offense or defense, the shieldburg, with shields locked in front and overhead, guarded men against flying spears and arrows. In the thirteenth century Saxo twice tells of shield castles standing under a hail of spears until their foes ran out of weapons and could be safely counterattacked.<sup>45</sup>

In stating that men of the second line rest their shields on the shield bosses of those in the first line, Maurice reveals why some Germanic shield bosses had a protruding staff ("Stangenschildbuckel"). Such bosses were less for parrying blows, as has been suggested, than for shields to be locked into a shield castle: the neck of the buckle held the neighboring shield, the staff the one from above. Only men in the front line, perhaps only those at the narrow boar's head, needed staff bosses, hence very few of them have been found from any given period. As their owners were front-rank fighters and leaders, these often richly silvered and engraved bosses no doubt also served as status symbols. Fittingly, Emperor Lothair himself, in his gospel book of AD 849–851, has a shield with a knobbed staff-boss.<sup>46</sup>

From the find distribution of staff bosses one may then infer when and where Germani used shield castles. Staff bosses from graves of the pre-Roman Iron Age prove Caesar right about Ariovistus' shield castles in 58 BC, while Emperor Lothair's boss shows the double-row shield castle still in use among ninth-century Franks. Similarly, bosses from Sweden and what is now Poland make it clear that double-row shield castle tactics prevailed among northern and eastern as well as western Germani, and that all Germanic regions shared this telling feature of warcraft.<sup>47</sup>

The un-Roman shape of Germanic shield-bosses and the Germanic name (*fulkon*) of the Byzantine shield castle show that Byzantium learned the shield castle and its more specific form, the boarhead formation, from Germanic warriors. This makes sense, for by the end of the third century AD legionaries looked much like Germanic tribesmen, lacking helmets and armor but equipped with oblong or round shields. These "Romans," as vulnerable as Germanic troops, needed shield castles to guard them against spears and arrows.<sup>48</sup>

Heathen Germanic lands knew the *barritus* chant (described on pp. 111–3) from the first century to the tenth century AD. The chant gave the shield castle its beat and hence its coherence. Covered as they were by other warriors' shields, front rankers could see very little and their advance would have fallen into disorder without a strong beat to march by. The Old High German name of Folcleih, "He of the Shield-Castle Dance," also suggests that the shield castle marched in step, or "danced."<sup>49</sup> Shield-castle discipline did not bar warrior ecstasy. The *barritus* sounded like waves crashing on cliffs and thus like wild forces of nature close to that oldest and best-liked image of battle, a storm. Woden's battle is still seen as a storm in the tenth-century skaldic poem by Eyvind Skaldaspillir.<sup>50</sup> Warriors believed that Woden had taught them the shield-castle formation, and like the god himself the shield castle embodied both well-ordered discipline and ecstatic "storm."<sup>51</sup>

Known from antiquity to the Middle Ages,<sup>52</sup> shield castles typify the continuity in Germanic warcraft.<sup>53</sup> Edda and Icelandic sagas both speak of shield castles, and so does the Norwegian *Hákonarmál* in AD 961.<sup>54</sup> Anglo-Saxons warriors at Maldon in AD 991 still used the shield castle and learned how to hold their shields to form the *wihaga* or *scyldburch*. The Bayeux tapestry shows an Anglo-Saxon shield castle at Hastings in 1066: formed of only one row of shields, it allowed Norman bowmen to shoot Harold's housekarls.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxon shield castle served well both on the defense and on the attack. Anglo-Normans still used it in the crusades and beyond.<sup>56</sup> In Scandinavia the shield castle also survived into the second millennium, and with it the technique of the strongest to sally forth from it to try and break the enemy line. Of the battle at Stiklastad in AD 1030, Snorri Sturlusson says:

Then the lines before the banner of the king grew thin. So the king bade Thór to advance the standard and followed it with the body of the men he had selected to be about him in battle. These were the boldest with weapons and the best armed among his troops.<sup>57</sup>

The same battle order suited Germanic armies of the first century AD as well.

## 10 CHANTING

They raised the *barritus* as loud as could be, a shout (*clamor*) that in the heat of battle slowly grows from a faint whisper into a sound like waves crashing against cliffs.

Ammianus Marcellinus

### Singing

In battle, fear can grip men so hard that they freeze even as they turn to flee. Singing, shouting, and dancing, however, may ban or dull such fear. Warriors the world over have therefore sung, shouted, and danced to heighten their prowess and drown their fear. Indo-Europeans believed their gods and heroes had taught them this.<sup>1</sup> Plato held that soft songs made soft warriors; the late-Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus agreed and urged warriors to shout lustily.<sup>2</sup>

Ancient warriors had narrative songs to sing before battle and chanting songs to shout once fighting began. Roman legionaries, trapped in swamps between Ems and the Rhine in AD 15, set these two off from each other when they heard their foes “cram hill and dale with glad song or grim battle cry.”<sup>3</sup>

As for narrative songs, Spartans sang of their ancestor Hercules as they marched against the enemy. Tacitus likewise says of first-century Germani that before fighting they sang of Hercules, the “first of heroes.” Germani on the Rhine sang of their hero Arminius.<sup>4</sup> In the Battle at the Willows in AD 377, Gothic warriors too sang of ancestral heroes, “braying,” Ammianus Marcellinus scoffs, “in grating voices the praise of their forebears.” Emperor Julian, who often heard Germanic warriors sing, thought they had great fun singing loudly. Late Roman and Byzantine armies adopted this custom—witness the rank of *cantator*, “singer.” Since Roman troops of the early and High Empire had no such singers, Germani serving in late imperial armies likely brought the custom with them.<sup>5</sup>

The custom still lived in the ninth century: the Old High German *Ludwigslied* of AD 881 says that when Franks and Vikings met, “Song was sung, battle begun.” On the morning of the battle at Stiklastad in AD 1030, Thormod, skald of King Olaf of Norway, sang for the king’s army the *Old Lay of Bjarki*. Before the battle at Hastings in AD 1066, Normans sang the song of Roland.<sup>6</sup>

Songs of heroes and forebears turned battles into mythic struggles and warriors into mythic heroes. Singing such songs, men felt themselves heroes like Hercules, Sigmund, Siegfried, or Beowulf; or they felt themselves warriors of Thor, Woden, or Balder, whom they believed to be their fore-bears. It was a way of overcoming human bounds, as was fighting in animal-warrior or berserk fighting styles.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Barritus* chanting**

Chanting songs served as battle cry and beat for war dances. Early Greek and Roman warriors “shouted like flocks of raucous birds”; indeed, the aim of the Greek *paian* battle chant was to evoke the image of a wild animal.<sup>8</sup> Husky songs likewise heartened Thracian and Iberian warriors, and chanting Gauls and Britons frightened their foes at the onset of battle.<sup>9</sup> Of Germanic war songs Tacitus says:

They also have songs (*carmina*) whose singing, which they call *barditus*, stirs them up—they even foretell the outcome of battles from the singing itself, for they frighten, or get frightened, by how their battle line sounds, taking this to reflect not their voices but their manhood. Aiming above all at a rough, fitful note, they raise their shields to the mouth so that the sound, being reflected, gets fuller and heavier.<sup>10</sup>

Romans too believed that when armies met, the strength of their respective war cries foreshadowed the outcome of battle: a weak war cry betrayed fear, a strong one showed strength and eagerness. To Germanic warriors this mattered even more, for they believed the strength of their war cry foretold victory or defeat. They thus put their utmost into shouting: in the campaign against Ariovistus, Caesar warned his soldiers not to be afraid of Germanic shouting, and so did Emperor Decius in AD 250. At the battle of Strassburg in AD 357, the Germanic war cry was truly awesome, says Ammianus. The Auxilia Palatina units of Cornuti and Brachiati (Germanic units on the Roman side), he says, “raised the *barritus* as loud as could be, a shout (*clamor*) that in the heat of battle slowly grows from a faint whisper into a sound like waves crashing against cliffs.”<sup>11</sup> By the time of the battle at the Willows in AD 377, the Roman field army had learned the *barritus* (the later form of the word *barditus*) from the Auxilia Palatina, and by shouting it “gained great strength.” In the ninth century AD the war cry of northern warriors still sounded like crashing waves,<sup>12</sup> the howling or snarling of wolves, or the howling of a storm.<sup>13</sup>

Bronze foils from the helmet found in grave 7 at Valsgärde in Sweden depict mid-seventh century warriors in raven-helmets marching in step next to rearing snake dragons that belong to the weapons dance. In the shape of an eagle, Woden goes before (Figure 10.1).<sup>14</sup>

Holding their shields as high as their mouths, the warriors shout the battle cry as Tacitus describes in his *Germania*. Since the foils prove Tacitus right about raising the shields, one may also believe his explanation that the warriors did this to make the sound of the battle cry reverberate toward themselves and feel their own strength.<sup>15</sup> Another warrior raising the shield, very likely to chant the *barritus*, is the Oseberg boar-warrior shown in Figure 4.3.

The Hávamál, quoted below, says that Woden raised the battle cry. The two warriors in Figure 10.1 thus give Woden’s cry. Imitating the god, they act out an opening-of-battle ritual in which eagles and snakes play roles. It is fitting, therefore, that they wear bird-headed dragons on their helmets, as Woden does in rituals at the onset of war (Figures 11.1–11.3).<sup>16</sup>





*Figure 10.1* Warriors chanting the *barritus*, raising their shields. Bronze foil from the helmet in grave 7 at Valsgårde, Uppland. Drawing after Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 206ff.

Tacitus’ description of the *barditus* and its foretelling the outcome of battle are borne out by a verse of the *Hávamál* in the *Edda*:

þat kann ec **if**ellipta: ef ec scal til orrosto  
leiða langvini: undir randir ec gel, enn **þeir**  
með ríki fara heilir hildar til, heilir hildi fra,  
koma **þeir** heilir hvaðan.

That, eleventh, I know: When I shall to battle lead  
old friends under shields I yell and they fare with  
might hale to the fight, hale from the fight, they  
come hale from wherever.

The poem, heathen and hence from no later than the tenth century, has Woden stand by his friends as they sing and march into battle—a belief reflected in the eagle hovering

before the men on the Valsgarde foil (Figure 10.1). What is more, by yelling “under shields” Woden strengthens the war cry of his friends, thus making them win. Tenth-century warriors, like those of Tacitus in the first century, thus held that a strong battle cry foretells victory. The *Hávamál* then shows how much the *barritus* mattered to warriors, and how right Tacitus was, 800 years earlier, to stress this fact.<sup>17</sup>

# 11

## WAR DANCES

Fiercely shouting and bare-chested as was their wont, they  
bran-dished their shields over their shoulders.

Tacitus, *Histories*

### **Indo-European war dances**

Dance, like song and shout, gives warriors strength to outdo themselves. Unflagging dance rids the mind of wandering thoughts, thus bringing on ecstasy, the divine state of mind. To achieve this, wild warriors the world over danced before, during, and after battle. Dancing was so much a part of fighting among Polynesians of Mangaia that they had a Valhalla of war dancers: "Men killed in battle went to a special warriors' paradise where they danced with their old friends and enemies. All others had to face the 'ovens of Miru in the lower Avaiki'."<sup>1</sup>

Indo-European warriors, seeking ecstasy, danced to banish fear and flaunt strength: Tukulti-Ninurta's berserks danced on the battlefield, as did Vedic Indians, Iranians, and Homeric Greeks.<sup>2</sup> To Hector battle itself was dance: He "knew how to swing his shield left and right," very likely in a battle line of dancers. Archaic Greeks believed the Dioscuri had invented weapon dancing; Spartans danced when they closed in on a foe.<sup>3</sup> Plato thought the man who sang and danced rightly overcame his enemy in battle, echoing the proven soldier Socrates who in prison wrote, "Those who honor the gods best with dances are the best in war, which reflects Attic hoplite training."<sup>4</sup>

Ancient Thracians war-danced to sounds of flutes, leaping into the air and clashing swords as if striking each other. They did so on occasion to celebrate peace, but mainly to excite themselves before battle. Gallaecian warriors in northwest Spain "stomped the ground first with one, then with the other foot, clashing their shields to the beat."<sup>5</sup> Alpine and Celtiberic tribesmen, each in their own way, danced before battle and to honor their dead at funerals.<sup>6</sup> Wearing nothing but golden neckbands and armrings, Celtic warriors danced on the battlefield.<sup>7</sup> Even Romans, little known for dancing, danced at times with weapons in hand. They did so early in the first millennium BC as warriors, and still in historical times as Salian priests to worship the gods as Hector and Arcadians had done.<sup>8</sup> Toward the end of the first millennium AD, Slavs did splendid victory dances.<sup>9</sup>

### **The *barritus* dance**

Germanic warriors danced to honor the dead, to celebrate victory, to hail a speech, to gloat over a captured banner, and to begin a battle.<sup>10</sup> In 174 BC King Perseus of Macedonia hoped the Germanic Bastarnae in his service would frighten the Romans with

their war dance.<sup>11</sup> At Aquae Sextiae in 106 BC, Ambrone warriors advanced in step, rhythmically clashing their weapons and shouting their tribal name.<sup>12</sup> Chanting, dancing, and brandishing weapons is found together time and again.

In AD 26, Rome's Germanic cohort I Claudia Sugambrorum Veterana won fame for the uproar of its songs and weapons—*cantuum et armorum tumultus*—as it fought Thracians. Raised on the Rhine some thirty-five years earlier, the Sugambri cohort must have kept its traditional fighting style.<sup>13</sup> They must have struck their weapons against each other, as Ambrones did at Aquae Sextiae, or swung their shields in tight formation as we know of later Germanic troops from the Rhine.

The Roman commander sent the Sugambri cohort to frighten off tribal Thracians, who were themselves singing and dancing in battle line. It must have been quite a show to Roman eyes to see the old warrior styles outshouting and outdancing each other, as they were meant to do, and as men are likely to have done ever since warfare began.<sup>14</sup>

During the civil war of AD 69, “Germanic cohorts”—Batavi and men from East of the Rhine—attacked the Italian town of Placentia. They sang fiercely, Tacitus says of them, and “bare-chested, as was their wont, brandished shields over their shoulders.”<sup>15</sup> The warriors no doubt swung their shields and stepped to the rhythm of the *barritus*. The Batavi were keen war dancers, for under Civilis in AD 70 they danced again before the battle at Vetera. The name of the Batavian war goddess Vagdavercustis may mean “protectress of war dancers.”<sup>16</sup>

Scene 70 of Trajan's Column shows Germanic troops advancing in step, very likely to the rhythm of a chant (Figure 9.1). Germanic troops chanting the *barritus* and swinging their shields are known also from late antiquity, though their dance has been overlooked. In AD 357 at the battle at Strassburg, Cornuti and Brachiati shouted the *barritus* war cry like “waves crashing against cliffs,” making it resound from shields lifted up to the mouth. At the same time they frightened their foes by the way they moved: *eos iam gestu terrentes*. Some have translated the word *gestus* as if it meant “they frightened their foes by their bearing”; yet it can also mean “gesture” or “dance.” The latter is likely here: Cornuti and Brachiati danced.<sup>17</sup> From an event in AD 374 we learn more of this gesture: beaten and outnumbered by the enemy, a Roman expeditionary force in Africa under Count Theodosius overawed its foes and saved itself when its soldiers closed ranks and moved their shields in a frightening *gestus*.<sup>18</sup> The *gestus* at Strassburg, then, was also a movement of shields: the Cornuti and Batavi must have brandished them in a frightening way, all at the same time, no doubt to the rhythm of the *barritus* while lined up in shield castle formation.<sup>19</sup> Similarly at Adrianople in AD 378, “Roman” troops frightened Goths with their “threatening shoving of shields.”<sup>20</sup> To be threatening, the shoving of shields had to be brusque and rhythmic, only then could it cast fear into foes.

Singing leads to swaying and rocking. The rhythm of Germanic speech may have encouraged that, for in the words of Northrop Frye “The pounding movement and clashing noise which the heavy accentuation of English makes possible” brings about a “hypnotic incantation that, through its pulsing dance rhythm, appeals to involuntary physical resonance and is hence not far from the sense of magic or physically compelling power.”<sup>21</sup>

When in the fourth century the Auxilia Palatina of Cornuti and Brachiati were foremost in battlefield prowess, the Roman field army adopted their *barritus*—not just the shout, it seems, but the dance step as well. Emperors like Constantius II and Julian

learned to advance in a war-dance step that Ammianus calls with an old-fashioned Greek term *pyrrica*. Since one never hears of legions war-dancing during the early and High Empire, Ammianus' *pyrrica* is likely to be a newly adopted, foreign custom—the war dance of Cornuti and Brachiati.<sup>22</sup>

Can one reconstruct the *barritus* dance? In AD 363 at Ctesiphon, Julian marched his men toward enemy lines to the sound of fifes in the anapaest beat: short-short-long. The anapaest, earlier used by Spartans, may have been a common Indo-European war-dance beat, the “three-foot step” (*tripudium*) known from many nations. In Julian's army, it was the rhythm of *barritus* and shield-swinging.<sup>23</sup> Warriors chanting the *barritus* may have danced in this three-beat rhythm, taking one step each on the first two beats, then swinging foot and shield on the long third beat with a shout.

The *barritus* dance was nothing without the rhythmic shout. Ammianus chides Sabinianus, leader of the Roman forces in the Mesopotamian campaign of AD 359, who, to amuse himself, bade the band strike up the war-dance tune for theatrical gestures “in deep silence”—apparently without the soldiers' shout.<sup>24</sup>

The shield-castle dance was, of course, an attack step. On the long third beat of the *tripudium*, warriors could, instead of swinging foot and shield, jump onto their foe's shield buckle, striking him from above, as we have seen in the chapter on shield castles. This is what Vegetius advises in the fourth century AD: “while doing the war dance climb onto the [enemy's] shield and come down again, and now, doing the *gestus* [swinging the shield?], jump forward and fall back.” In the battle of Adrianople (AD 376) the Goths fought in this way.<sup>25</sup>

What with the willfulness of warriors and the heroic quest of self-seeking leaders, war-dancing brought much-needed discipline to Germanic battle lines.<sup>26</sup> This may be why the Auxilia Palatina, famed for their *barritus*, became Rome's finest and best-known troops. It is nevertheless astounding that after centuries of “rational” warfare, the Roman army returned to war-dancing, a custom befitting tribal warriors rather than imperial soldiers.

The *barritus* lived on into the Middle Ages (Figure 10.1).<sup>27</sup> Referring to legendary times, Saxo Grammaticus says the Saxon army brought its champion Hama to the battlefield “with the weapon dance of military pomp.” From the “songs and clash of arms” of the fierce Sugambrian cohort at the beginning of our era to the early Middle Ages, the war dance breathed life into shield-castle battle lines. It even allowed foot to attack and defeat horse in the open field, as Swiss pikemen did at the other end of the Middle Ages when, marching in step to fife and drum, they became the first foot warriors in a long time to march upon and overcome armored knights.<sup>28</sup>

### Woden's dance

A rock drawing from Tanum, Bohuslän, shows a spear dancer, perhaps from the Bronze Age (Figure 11.1).<sup>29</sup>

Most Bohuslän rock drawings lack a ground line, which makes the figures seem to float. This warrior, however, looks as if he jumped into the air, for his toes point downward and he has his legs together, not spread as one does when throwing a spear while standing on the ground. With the dancing Woden on the Toroslunda die (Figure 1.6)

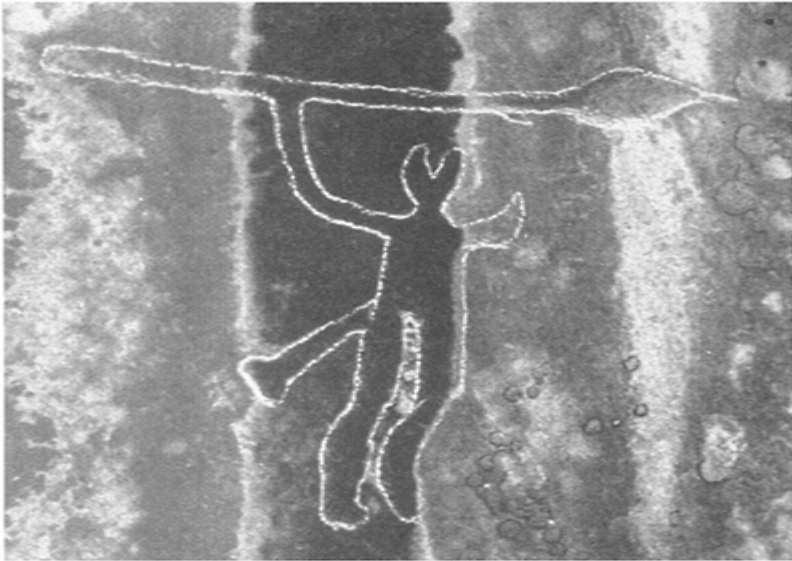
he shares the heavy spear, the sword girt to his hip, the dance step, and, it seems, even the twin-dragon headgear.<sup>30</sup> He thus may be a forerunner of Woden the spear dancer.<sup>31</sup>

Germanic weapon dancers could stir a crowd, as Tacitus notes:

As a public show at every gathering, naked youths whose sport this is fling themselves about in a dance between swords and threatening spears. Training has produced skill, and skill grace, but they do it not for gain or any payment: however daring their abandon, the onlookers' delight is their only reward.<sup>32</sup>

Tacitus calls this dance a *spectaculum*, a show to delight onlookers, and this it may well have been.<sup>33</sup> Before battle, though, its role was likely to rouse men to fight. As few Germanic warriors owned swords,<sup>34</sup> the spear-and-sword dancers would have belonged to the high-born who led men into battle.

The earliest known images unmistakably made by Germani are the sword dancers from Himlingøje in East Sealand, Denmark. Embossed on gilt silver foils that overlay a pair of third-century cups, naked dancers leap with drawn swords and animals bound about in scenes full of life and ecstasy.



*Figure 11.1* Spear dancer. Rock drawing from Tanum, Bohuslän. Photo after Altheim, *Literatur* 1948, plate XX (with permission of Max Niemeyer Verlag).

Remarkably, the dancers wear a cap-like headgear like that of Woden or Balder on the Års medallion (Figure 11.2). Silver and gold mark these cups as belonging to princes, and as the cups were made locally by order of the rulers, the sword dance seems to have been a high point of life for East Sealand princes, something they wanted to call to mind when drinking in style—and no wonder, for Tacitus says the weapon dance was the Germani's main *voluptas*.<sup>35</sup>

In the early Middle Ages too the war god is shown doing the spear-and-sword dance. A fifth-century bracteate amulet from Års in Denmark depicts Woden or Balder as a naked dancer (Figure 11.2).<sup>36</sup>

Like the Finglesham dancer (Figure 11.3), the Års dancer wears a strange headgear, and like all naked weapon dancers, a belt. Wearing also a neckband and sprouting a tail, he twirls more weapons than an ordinary man



*Figure 11.2* War god, dancing.  
Bracteate medallion from Års,  
Denmark. IK 7. Dansk  
Nationalmuseet, inv. no. 14/14;  
Museum photograph by Jesper Weng.

could hold: a shield, an ax, a spear, and a club, all at the same time.<sup>37</sup> He touches his chin with the thumb of his right hand, a power-gesture that dancing Balder and Woden also make on other bracteate amulets.<sup>38</sup>

The bent shape of the god's club on the amulet does not make it a boomerang, as has been said. Boomerangs are quite unlike such a heavy, knotted club that could never return to a thrower's hand.<sup>39</sup> Nor does the bent spear betoken self-sacrifice as has also been suggested.<sup>40</sup> Club, spear, and ax are bent for another reason—to show how sharply the god shakes them as he dances.<sup>41</sup> Spears are often shown bent when about to be thrown,<sup>42</sup> and though they are nowhere bent as much as on the Års amulet, the idea is the same. His bent spear shows the god dancing in ecstasy.<sup>43</sup>

The huge “crest” on the god's headgear has led scholars to take the figure on the Års amulet to be Mars. The cap with its long “nose guard,” however, is altogether non-classical and as little related to the Roman Mars as are the tail, the ax, and the club of the dancing god.<sup>44</sup> The god, then, is not Mars, but a Germanic war god. Like the headgear of the Torslunda and Finglesham dancers (Figures 1.6, 11.3), that of the Års dancer reaches far down over fore-head and nose, to secure a good hold. The “crest,” far too long for a helmet plume, is a dragon.<sup>45</sup> Its length matches that of a dragon on a dancer's cap depicted on a metal foil from Windisch in Switzerland.<sup>46</sup> Close parallels are found in other shapes of Woden's headgear on bracteate amulets, at times ending in bird (-dragon) heads. Bird-dragon headgear, as we will see, fits well with Woden's role as a weapon dancer.<sup>47</sup>

The bent-up tip of the god's tail on the Års medallion may mark a wolf tail. On the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6) and on the Oseberg wall-hanging (Figure 11.5), Woden dances before champion wolf-warriors. On a bracteate amulet from Gudbrandsdalen, Norway he bears a wolf on his helmet. The tail on the Års medallion thus may well mark the god's bond with wolf-warriors, for wolf hoods of early medieval warriors do show such tails (Figures 1.3, 1.6).<sup>48</sup>

Like the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6), so several figurines found in Sweden and the Oseberg wall-hanging (Figure 11.5) suggest that Woden war-danced to spur men to battle, to give them the reckless fighting mood that comes from ecstatic dancing. Adam von Bremen calls this mood *furor*, warriors themselves called it manhood.<sup>49</sup> Woden's way was to help his men indirectly rather than by fighting alongside: he heartened them by the war dance and made them wound-proof, while striking foes with fear and blindness, and blunting their weapons.<sup>50</sup>

The spear-and-sword dance described by Tacitus appears again on a sixth-century Anglo-Saxon belt buckle from Finglesham in Kent (Figure 11.3).<sup>51</sup> Like the dancer on the Års bracteate amulet, the Finglesham dancer is naked, wearing only a dragon headpiece and a “power belt.”<sup>52</sup> His bent feet show him dancing. Naked between spears, he recalls Tacitus' skilled weapon dancers. Lack of sword, club, and shield, while no doubt due to abbreviation, allows the god to step lightly as he twirls his “threatening spears.” Also due to abbreviation is the lack of such flaps (snake-dragon tails or tresses) at the side of the headgear as are seen on the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6) and the Sutton Hoo foils.

Like the dancer on the Års medallion, the one on the Finglesham belt buckle has no sword, while other evidence, from Tacitus to the tenth-century Björkö statuette, shows such dancers holding swords as well as spears. Though due to abbreviation, the lack of a sword on the Års medallion and the Finglesham buckle might suggest that in this dance



spears matter more than swords, which may be reflected also in the name Gisalec, “Spear Dancer” (not to mention Shakespeare).<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, the second-century Himlingøje cup dancers hold only a sword in what seems to be the same dance.

On the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6) the dancer with the twin-dragon head-gear is clearly Woden, for he has only one eye.<sup>54</sup> A ninth-century statuette from Uppåkra, near Lund, Sweden, likewise depicts a one-eyed Woden in



*Figure 11.3* Weapon dancer. Gilt belt buckle from Finglesham, Kent. Photo: Institute of Archaeology, Oxford.

twin-dragon headgear.<sup>55</sup> Other leaders might also wear this headgear, as does the lone weapon dancer who performs before Woden on a bracteate amulet found at Kitnæs, Denmark. Hence the Finglesham dancer, who is not one-eyed, may be Woden, Balder, one of the Dioscuri, or an unknown battle lord.<sup>56</sup> To the high-ranking warrior who owned

the Finglesham belt buckle, the war dance mattered very much, since he displayed it so eye-catchingly.

Fifth-century Franks also worshiped Woden (or Balder) as their war-dance leader. The famous tile from Grésin, in the heart of France, portrays Jesus Christ as a weapon dancer.<sup>57</sup> Juggling spear and shield, this Christ, like Balder on bracteate amulets, has a sword swishing through the air.<sup>58</sup> As with the dancers depicted on the Års bracteate amulet and the Finglesham belt buckle, his penis shows—a stunning assimilation to the war-dance god. Since Christ could hardly stand in for a lesser god, the tile is evidence for Woden (or Balder) worship among the Franks who conquered Gaul. Most important, it illustrates the central role of the war dance among Frankish warriors at the time.

That a dancer in twin-dragon headgear need not be Woden is clear also from metal foils on Vendel helmets in Sweden and England that portray two such dancers in one scene.<sup>59</sup> Because there are two dancers, they cannot be Woden. However, they may be the divine twins, his sons, the Dioscuri, who according to Greeks and Vedic Indians invented and performed the war song and the war dance.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps the Germanic image of the two dancers derived from Roman reliefs of the Dioscuri,<sup>61</sup> which would be fitting, as the latter portray the same subject: Indo-European cognate twins of warrior mythology.

A silver foil from Caenby, Licolnshire with a similar dancer shows the “flaps” to the side of the twin-dragon headgear shaped even more like snake tails than those of the Torslunda die (Figure 1,6). Very likely they are the tails of the snake-dragons on the headgear.<sup>62</sup> A tool-hilt from Dover with a similar dancer adds an important detail: the twin-dragon headgear is fastened to the dancer’s head with several straps, hence with the care one would expect for a precariously perched dancing cap or mask.<sup>63</sup>

While the Himlingøje, Års, and Finglesham dancers are naked, twin-dragon dancers on the Sutton Hoo helmet of a slightly later date are dressed. So is the Caenby dancer and others portrayed by Swedish statuettes down to the tenth century.<sup>64</sup> The change, found in other early medieval images too,<sup>65</sup> may have to do with the change from tribal to aristocratic warfare: when hauberks became the usual battle dress, unarmored garb took the place of nakedness.

Dancers with twin-dragon headgear might also be kings or war-leaders. A poem by the twelfth-century skald Einar Skulason speaks of “the dragon cap a famous king wears boldly.” Likewise, two dancers wearing dragon head-gear may have been twin brothers in the role of joint army leaders or kings, well-known among Germanic nations.<sup>66</sup> If so, they both embodied gods to make earthly battles mythical. Germanic rulers at high festivals embodied Woden in the belief that during battle Woden possessed them.<sup>67</sup>

Hence dragon dancers may be kings celebrating festivals or rousing followers to battle. Indeed, the use of dragons in battle to mark Celtic, Germanic, and late Roman leaders was an abiding tradition, still found on the eleventh-century Bayeux tapestry.<sup>68</sup> Kings led armies by their dragons, the *signum regis*, whether the dragons perched on their standard or on their headgear. The many *wyrm*-warrior names show that dragon symbolism mattered to the men also.<sup>69</sup>

Reliefs on the shorter Gallehus horn from Denmark, made around AD 400, begin with gods doing the weapon dance.<sup>70</sup> As the gods’ actions are “the exemplary model for all significant human activities,”<sup>71</sup> dragon-helmet dancers from the fifth-century Års amulet to the tenth-century silver statuette from Björkö imply that as long as they worshiped Woden, warriors danced themselves into fighting fury.<sup>72</sup>

Though the tribal warfare of antiquity gave way over time to that of much smaller warbands in the early Middle Ages, many of the old fighting styles endured: Vendel helmet decorations show naked warriors, horse-stabbers, wolf-warriors, and dancers, much as in antiquity.<sup>73</sup> Like Hector, to whom war itself was dance, early medieval rulers took pride in battlefield dancing skills and may have danced between battle lines as did Totila, king of the Goths, in AD 552, decked out in golden weapons and insignia.<sup>74</sup> *Beowulf* speaks of sword-“play,” and the Germanic word *laikaz* means dance, song, or game, as well as battle.<sup>75</sup> Warrior names such as “war dancer,” “weapon dancer,” “spear dancer,” “bear-dancer” and “wolf-dancer” abound.<sup>76</sup> Germanic battle lords, like Hellenistic kings and field marshals, sought to be fighters-as-dancers, thereby turning a fight into an artful yet risky ‘game’.<sup>77</sup>

### The masked ancestor dance

Silvered belt fittings from seventh-century Bavaria depict three kinds of masks: those of twin-dragon dancers, wolf-warriors, and long-hairs (Figure 11.4).<sup>78</sup>

The three strap-ends illustrated in Figure 11.4 are the largest and most carefully decorated pieces among sets of sixteen or so smaller belt fittings found in warrior graves. Though unearthed in different places, they are made of the same material, in the same shape, and by the same technique, each depicting two long, rectangular images. The mask above the twin-dragon images, and the big holes for the eyes, make it clear that they represent masks.<sup>79</sup>

The twin-dragon headgear depicted on the left strap-end has not been identified so far, but comparison with Figures 1.6, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3 leaves little doubt that this is Woden’s war-dance headgear. The god’s long, pointed beard is clearly marked here, as on the Års medallion, the Finglesham belt buckle, and the Björkö statuette. The masks are noteworthy as rare evidence of the twin-dragon war-dance headgear in southern Germany.<sup>80</sup>

The wolves depicted on the middle strap-end are recognizable from their pointed ears, broadening noses, and round muzzles. Yet these are not portraits of animals themselves, but wolf-hoods worn by men clad in the same kind of vertically striped, belted garment as the dragon dancers.

The third strap-end on the right shows masks with lined squares above and below the faces that may indicate hair and beard. Found on the same kind of strap-end, these masks likely represent warriors as well, perhaps long-hair warriors. Since the three strap-ends are so much alike, the masks they depict must have been used in the same ceremony, which, given the twindragon headgear, very likely was Woden’s war dance.

World-wide, warriors danced with masks on festive occasions to bring mythic ancestors and their power into the present to renew the world, and to reach the ecstasy of the beginning.<sup>81</sup> At festivals and battles, Germani too called their gods, heroes, and ancestors into the present.<sup>82</sup> Hence the masks depicted on the strap-ends, by far the oldest known images of Germanic



*Figure 11.4* Ancestor masks of twin-dragon dancers, wolf-warriors, and long-hairs (?). Strap-ends from Oberwarngau, Feldmoching, and Obenvangen, Bavaria. Photos: Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München.

masks,<sup>83</sup> may have stood for such Bavarian ancestors as Woden-sprung kings, wolf-warriors, and long-hairs.<sup>84</sup> The power of ancestors is needed most when going into battle, which is why warriors called on them at such times by their songs,<sup>85</sup> and, as the strap-ends show, by their masked dances. The Frankish king Childerich (died 481–2) may have had a mask hanging from his spear.

Years after conversion to Christianity, Saxon noblemen still danced with weapons in honor of the dead. In the mid-eleventh century, Bishop Gunther von Bamberg wore a mask of Theoderic the hero as he performed a spear-and-sword dance.<sup>86</sup> Two hundred

years later, knights of the Hohenstaufen emperors watched war dances that came down from heathen, cultic performances more than a thousand years earlier.<sup>87</sup>

### Dance on the battlefield

War dance leaders must have had high rank, for the strap-ends are rich grave goods. Besides, the widely used Germanic name Ansehelm, “He with Woden’s Helmet,”<sup>88</sup> likely refers to Woden’s twin-dragon headgear; and since such names represent warrior ideals, war-dance leaders will have stood in high honor—as Tacitus says of weapon dancers. They may also have been war leaders. The Norwegian Oseberg wall-hanging from around AD 800 seems to show war-dance leaders spurring warriors in a shield castle (Figure 11.5).<sup>89</sup>

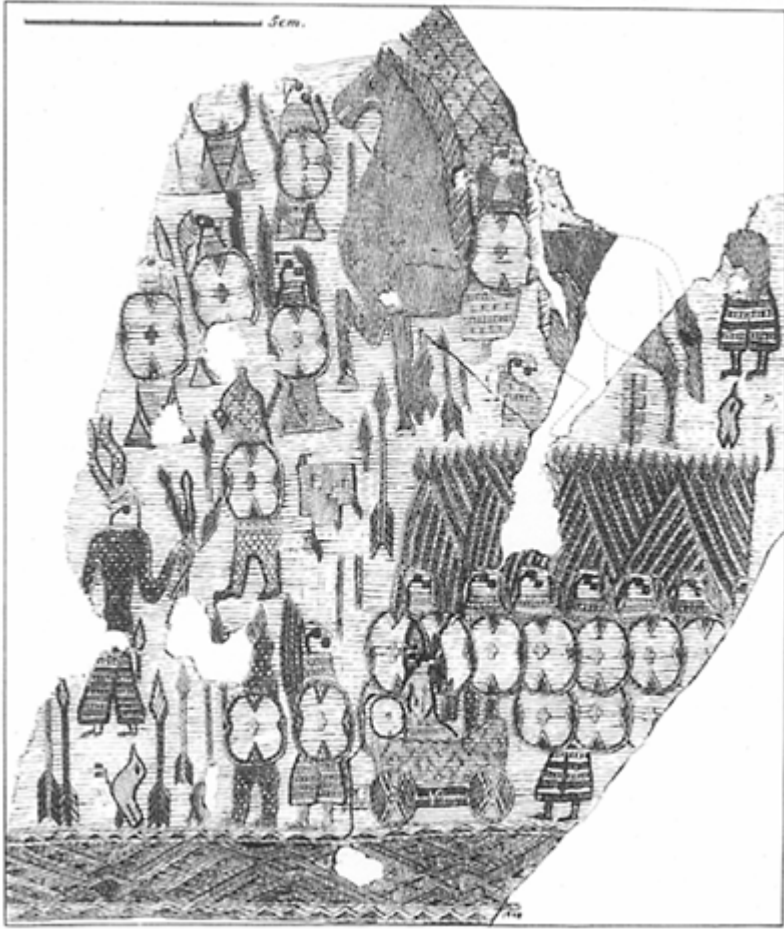
The wagon at the bottom and the women standard bearers before the line make it clear that the scene on the wall-hanging is the legendary battle at Bråvalla, where Harald Wartooth of Denmark, being old, fought his last battle from a wagon. With its well-marshaled shield castle, the wall-hanging underscores the wonted orderliness of the battle array before fighting begins.

A tall figure in the lower left of the wall-hanging wears the twin-dragon headgear and holds two crossed spears.<sup>90</sup> Being one-eyed, he may be Woden, known to have been at Bråvalla. He is turning back toward the warriors, as if to beckon them. Two hooded and, it seems, masked wolf- or bear-warriors follow him. Another fragment of the Oseberg wall-hanging shows the figure of a boar-warrior who, raising the shield to the height of the mouth, chants the *barritus* (see Figure 4.3).

By his war-dance Woden on the Torslunda die rouses the wolf-hooded warrior (Figure 1.6). He seems to be doing the same on the Oseberg wall-hanging. By “howling and shaking weapons,” as Hornklofi said, the wolf-warrior battle lords brought the ecstasy of gods and ancestors and the fighting fury that was true manhood to the men of the shield wall. At Bråvalla the king in his wagon, being old, did not lead the dance, leaving that to the hooded champions.

To bring about an army-wide unleashing of strength and madness, the weapon dance of the skilled few needed to be linked to the *barritus* dance of the many. Perhaps the rhythm of both dances was the same, so the spear-and-sword dance could ignite the *barritus* of the shield wall. Even though the gestures of shield-wall *barritus* dancers had to be more restrained than those of dance leaders, the two groups may have marched to the same threestep beat, with the ecstasy of the gods and ancestors, embodied by the leaders, stirring all to fighting fury.

For *barritus* chanters on the Valsgårde helmet (Figure 10.1), as well as the dancers on the Oseberg wall-hanging, birds have a role, and so do snake-dragons (*wyrms*), whether they go beside the warriors or hiss from the head of the war-dance leader. The birds call to mind the ancient war cries, Greek, Roman, and Germanic, that sounded like flocks of birds.



*Figure 11.5* The Battle at Brávalla. Oseberg wall-hanging, Oslo. Drawing copyright University Museum of Cultural Heritage, University of Oslo, Norway.

The tenth-century *Lokasenna* of the *Edda* says that the gods chased Loki away into the woods (that is, into outlawry), shaking their shields and howling at him.<sup>91</sup> Although this was not a battle, it was nevertheless a collective use of weapons as in a fight. It follows that in battles the gods also brandished their shields and yelled the war cry. The shield-swinging *barritus* war dance, then, like other warrior rituals, was god-sprung. Dancing it meant doing what the gods had done in the beginning.

Part 5  
CHURLS

## 12

### DART-THROWERS

The foot also hurl throwing weapons, each man several, and they shoot them immensely far, being naked or lightly clad in a cloak.

Tacitus, *Germania*

Known by the Late Bronze Age as an effective weapon, darts or light spears have the great advantage that a warrior can handle a whole handful. Even the Roman imperial army used darts: reliefs show soldiers, both foot and horse, armed with small, round shields and bundles of short spears. Arrian says Roman horsemen exercised with darts.<sup>1</sup>

Germanic warriors threw darts too. Roman reliefs of the mid-first century show bundles of captured short spears with barbed and smooth blades: they may well be Germanic. Moreover, in AD 15 the Roman field marshal Germanicus told his soldiers that while only the first line of Cherusci tribesmen had long spears, the rest had *praeusta aut brevia tela*, “fire-hardened or short weapons.”<sup>2</sup> The short weapons clearly are the archaeologically well-known, all-purpose spears with narrow iron blades. The fire-hardened ones are likely to be shafted weapons as well, for so are the other two kinds of weapons Germanicus mentions. Germanicus thus speaks of three different kinds of spears: long ones, shorter, iron-tipped ones, and fire-hardened ones.

In his *Germania* Tacitus likewise refers to three kinds of spears: big spears, iron-tipped *frameae* spears, and *missilia*: “The foot also hurl throwing weapons (*missilia*), each man several, and they shoot them immensely far, being naked or lightly clad in a cloak.”<sup>3</sup> Had Tacitus, by *missilia*, meant rocks or sling shot he would not have said that each man had several as that would have been self-evident. Nor can he mean clubs, for they do not fly far.<sup>4</sup> The *missilia* thus are light spears, different from *frameae*, in that they reached much further than regular, iron-tipped spears.<sup>5</sup>

In a closely comparable passage Strabo says that Celts and Germani had three kinds of spears: big spears, *madaris* spears, and small, all-wooden darts that they hurled even further than arrows fly.<sup>6</sup> It is the same threefold series of spears as in the two passages by Tacitus: big spears, medium-length iron tipped ones, and all-wooden ones that fly very far. The three passages confirm and explain each other and show that Germanic tribes at the turn of our era indeed used all-wooden darts in battle.

The length of the light spears is unknown. While the all-wooden, barbed spear, now in the British Museum, that on February 14, 1779 killed Captain Cook on the island of Hawaii, is 2.61 meters long,<sup>7</sup> late-Roman javelins, from 1.00 to 1.65 meters long, may give a better idea of the darts’ length.<sup>8</sup> Not all Germanic darts need have lacked iron tips, but many did, as we know from other sources as well, witness the Old Norse word for spear, *sviða*, that at first meant “spear with fire-hardened tip.”<sup>9</sup>



Light spears stayed in use for many centuries after Tacitus. Some fourth-and fifth-century Germanic graves contained up to eleven darts in a quiver,<sup>10</sup> though we do not know whether their owners were horsemen or foot warriors.<sup>11</sup> Since these darts had iron blades, their owners clearly were not poor.<sup>12</sup> Dart throwers might even be heroes: they could show their mettle when at the beginning of battle skirmishers rushed out before the line to taunt and harass the foe. A feature of most battles in antiquity, such skirmishing was part of Germanic tactics as well: Tacitus tells how in AD 69 Batavian skirmishers with sling-shot, rocks, and other *missilia* tried to lure Roman forces to attack on swampy ground.<sup>13</sup>

Throwers of all-wooden darts were often lowly warriors, as can be gathered from Snorri Sturluson's remark that in the battle at Stiklastad in AD 1030, those in the rear threw shafts with pointed stones.<sup>14</sup> If Norwegians of the eleventh century threw shafts with pointed stones, then the throwers of all-wooden darts in Tacitus' time too may have done so less for lack of iron than for being poor.

Tacitus nevertheless praises the churls for throwing their darts *in immensum*. Indeed, as we have seen in the chapter on shield castles, the often decisive boar-snout attack depended on them as much as on the elite warriors in front, for their darts, hurled from the whole width and depth of the wedge, all came down on the breaking point of the enemy line, making it crumble before the attacking boar snout. Though they were poor, dart-hurling churls were warriors to reckon with.

## ROCK-THROWERS

Caesar learned that Ariovistus' horsemen were coming closer to the hill and rode up to our men, throwing rocks and spears at them.

Caesar, *Gallic War*

It would be wrong to look down on rock-throwing. In the sixth century BC Tyrtaios' poems admonish the Spartan hind ranks to steadily keep up throwing rocks against the foe. In the battle at Plataeae, a well-flung rock hit and killed Mardonios, the Persian commander, sitting on his horse. Emperor Augustus too was hit by a rock in battle.<sup>1</sup>

Like spears or darts, rocks could bring down a man from far away. They were cheap and plentiful and hard to see or dodge. They worked well against horsemen, horses being such large targets, and they worked well from horse-back as the epigraph to this chapter shows: Ariovistus' horse guard, very likely wheeling right in a circle, hurled rocks at Caesar's horse guard.<sup>2</sup> The claim that rock-throwing proves the "inefficiency" of Germanic cavalry is mistaken, for Hadrian's own Batavi horse guard trained in throwing stones while riding by.<sup>3</sup>

Rocks for throwing could be heavy: in AD 9 a Germanic horseman by the name of Pusio ("Little John") in the service of Germanicus hurled a rock of such size against the wall of Splonum in Dalmatia that it broke the breast-work and brought down a defender who was leaning against it. This so frightened the others that they fled and the wall was taken. In the mid-third century, the Goths tried to take Marcianopolis by throwing rocks.<sup>4</sup>

Vegetius never tires of saying that Roman soldiers must learn to throw rocks well. Yet hurling well-aimed rocks is an art best learned in childhood, which gave northern warriors an advantage.<sup>5</sup> Rocks, easily found in river beds, also suited northern warriors who lacked a supply line to repair and replenish their weapons during a campaign.<sup>6</sup> Rocks that served as weapons have been recovered from Germanic graves, and Germanic slingers are shown on the Aurelian Column, ready to shoot across a river. Like darts, rocks still served as weapons in the Middle Ages, above all in sea battles. Works of art and written sources stress their role in battle.<sup>7</sup>

Standing behind the shield wall, guarded by first-rank elite fighters with long spears and big shields, churls shot arrows<sup>8</sup> and hurled sling-shot, rocks, and darts. Halfway between elite warriors and churls ranked those who, according to Tacitus, fought with iron-tipped *frameae* spears both from afar and from close up and who could therefore take a place in the front line of the shield castle if need be. Bowmen, slingers, dart- and rocks-throwers could not and therefore ranked lower, even though they may have outnumbered all others.

From the first century AD to the time of the sagas this social structure of Germanic armies seems to have changed very little, for as we have seen when looking at shield

castles, whenever columns (*cunei*) or shield castles clashed with one another, kings and elite warriors fought in the first lines and churls in the rear. Of the battle at Stiklastad in AD 1030, Snorri Sturlusson says:

Those who stood foremost struck blows, those standing next behind them thrust with their spears, whilst those behind let fly both with spears or arrows or threw stones or hand-axes or shafts with pointed stones.<sup>9</sup>

Even the ratio of churls to elite warriors, it seems, stayed the same from antiquity to the Middle Ages. Just as most first-century warriors, according to Tacitus, had but short or fire-hardened javelins while only those in the first rank wielded long lances, so Anglo-Norman churls in the eleventh century backed their elite warriors in the first line by making ranks dense enough to withstand cavalry charges and allowing knights to focus on specific attacks within the battle.<sup>10</sup>

Part 6  
HORSEMEN

## 14 LANCERS

[Hadrian ordered Roman horsemen to practice] the attack-and-flight maneuvers of Sarmatian and Germanic lancers riding in formation.

Arrian, *Tactica*

### Lancers in antiquity

Horsemen have used lances, long thrusting spears, ever since cavalry itself came to be, and such weapons are found among many Indo-European nations: a Mycenaean horseman wields a big lance about 1200 BC; Massagetae and Chorasmians of Central Asia had horse lancers by the early first millennium; and Median lancers are known by the eighth century BC.<sup>1</sup> A Celtic Hallstatt scabbard of the fifth-century BC shows horsemen with spears twice as long as their steeds,<sup>2</sup> and according to Polybius, Roman horsemen of the Middle Republic fought with such weapons.<sup>3</sup>

Germanic horsemen too wielded long spears, as seen in scene 5 of Trajan's Column that portrays the emperor's bodyguard of *Equites Singulares Augusti* or *Batavi* (Figure 14.1).<sup>4</sup>

In this scene, five guardsmen have alighted and stand behind the dais on which the emperor holds a council of war. A masonry wall marks them off from another column of soldiers who arrive from the left, also with horses. The guardsmen bear small-bladed long lances, the only shaft weapons on Trajan's Column. The artist, it seems, depicted the unusual lances because they characterized this part of Trajan's bodyguard.<sup>5</sup>

One of the lances, held upside down, is fitted with a ball at the end. The ball, a counterweight, strengthened the weapon's thrust. By moving the center of gravity farther back, it also allowed the warrior to hold the lance nearer the butt end and thereby lengthen the reach of the blade. Late Roman horse guards too wielded lances with counterweight balls.<sup>6</sup>

Tacitus, as we have seen, says that some first-century Germanic warriors fought with long spears, but scholars wondered whether he meant only foot



*Figure 14.1* Lancers of Trajan's bodyguard. Trajan's Column, scene 5. Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, Inst. Neg. 31.259

or both foot and horse. Scene 5 of Trajan's Column answers that question, as do lance blades found in graves containing spurs: Germanic horse too fought with long spears.<sup>7</sup> The Batavi horsemen who in AD 69 overran Otho's gladiators, are likely to have used such lances, as horse could hardly otherwise overcome well-armed foot.<sup>8</sup>

The lances of the horse guard on Trajan's Column are long but not bulky. The lance of a trooper serving in ala I Canninefatium at Gerulata (Rusovce in Slovakia), on the other hand, is thick as well as long (Figure 14.2).<sup>9</sup>

While other pictures of spear bearers often shorten the length of the weapon to fit the length of the warrior, the Gerulata picture devotes nearly half its space to portray the length and bulk of the shaft. Clearly, the horseman took



*Figure 14.2* Horseman holding a huge lance. Gravestone from Gerulata, Slovakia. Hošek, *Tituli* 1984, 54ff., no. 23: Sandstone, 110×90×22 cm. I owe the photograph to the kindness of Dr Schmidtová, Bratislava.

pride in the weapon on his shoulder.<sup>10</sup> Its shaft is longer than that of any other lance on Roman gravestones—nearly twice as long as the horse. Growing thick toward the butt, it looks heavy indeed, but massiveness strengthened its thrust and kept it from breaking. It was therefore an outstanding weapon against horse or foot arrayed behind shields. Its length served for thrusting rather than cutting and thus used only a small blade. Like medieval lances, it has a triangular pennon behind the blade. What use the pennon was we do not know; perhaps it served as a badge or for signaling; certainly the shaft is so massive that a pennon would not interfere with its use.<sup>11</sup> The unusually heavy spear was not standard Roman equipment, but a special weapon of ala I Canninefatium.

Tacitus says Canninefates had the same origin and language as Batavi, with whom they shared the island at the mouth of the Rhine. And though fewer than the Batavi, they were no less brave.<sup>12</sup> The ala raised among them joined the Batavian uprising and was thus moved out of Lower Germany in AD 70. By AD 92 it was in Gerulata in Upper Pannonia to defend the province against Germanic Quadi, whose horsemen also wielded long spears.<sup>13</sup> By the time the trooper's gravestone was set up, sometime in the second century AD, the unit had been away from the lower Rhine for fifty or even a hundred years. Yet it could very well have kept up Canninefatian fighting traditions in weapons as well as tactics. Hadrian wanted Germanic cavalry tactics preserved in the Roman army,

as the epigraph to this chapter shows; and like the Batavi horse guard, regular Roman auxiliary units often held on to their native fighting styles.<sup>14</sup> Hence, the lance of the Gerulata trooper seems to be a Canninefatian Germanic weapon, one of the oversized lances Tacitus calls *hasta ingentes* or *enormes hastae*.<sup>15</sup>

Such a heavy weapon was far more dangerous to the enemy than an ordinary lance.<sup>16</sup> But there was a price to be paid for carrying it. Only a man of towering strength could wield it, and the Gerulata horse, huge as it is, may have borne the weight of lance and rider only because the rider lacked helmet, hauberk, and shield.

Lances with shafts of even width could be held in many ways: overarm, underarm, at the height of the thigh with the right arm nearly straight, or held up by the knee, couched as in the Middle Ages, or gripped with both hands.<sup>17</sup> Some horsemen of ala I Canninefatium must have had such lighter lances of even width, for we know that they used them in the “Sarmatian” way, held with both hands.<sup>18</sup> The thick Canninefatian lance, on the other hand, was best borne on the shoulder when not thrust or thrown. Maurice describes this at the end of the sixth century, when he states that “blond” peoples hold their lances on their shoulders—further evidence that the Gerulata lance is a Germanic weapon.<sup>19</sup>

With such a lance a warrior might still jab or throw but he could not wheel around easily or use the weapon in the many ways of a light, slender lance. Clearly, fighting with heavy lances required tactics other than Sarmatian wheelings. Hence, as in the epigraph to this chapter, Arrian distinguished Germanic from Sarmatian lancer maneuvers.<sup>20</sup>

The Gerulata rider holds his weapon on the left, and so do others, as shown in Figure 14.3. He may do so for practical as well as artistic reasons: if horsemen wanted to ride off to the right after an attack, as both Romans and Germani usually did, they had to fight with the lance on the left.<sup>21</sup> In the later Middle Ages, the lance, held on the right but pointed left across the neck of the horse, served the same purpose.

For many miles downstream from Gerulata along the Danube, Romans faced Quadi. To deal with them, Trajan raised a cavalry unit armed with long lances, ala I Ulpia Contariorum, 1,000 strong, that became the leading cavalry unit in Upper Pannonia, holding the fort at Arrabona (Győr in Hungary) in the middle of the Quadian frontier.<sup>22</sup> Whether these troopers used slender or bulky weapons, lancers were the most effective fighters against Quadi.<sup>23</sup>

Still further downstream, perhaps at Aquincum (Budapest), stood the gravestone of Flavius Bonio who served in the ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana. Like the Gerulata trooper, Bonio holds a long lance on his shoulder while his steed walks quietly. With his shield on the left and the lance on the right, he may have served a tactical role other than that of the Gerulata trooper—like wheeling to the left—but the technique of holding the lance on the shoulder was the same. Very likely his long-lance fighting style also came from Lower Germany, for ala Tungrorum like ala Canninefatium had stayed there until the time of the Batavian uprising in AD 69–70, and Germani were still serving in it in Pannonia.<sup>24</sup>

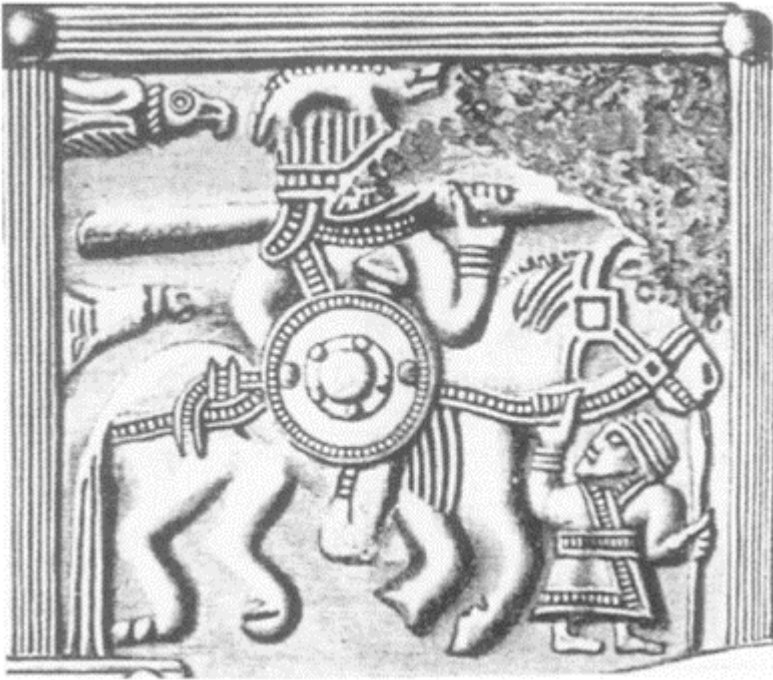
Hadrian trained his lancers to ride attacks in both Sarmatian and Germanic fashion.<sup>25</sup> Unlike moralists like Ammianus, who held lancers’ tactics of sweeping up and wheeling away to befit robbers rather than warriors, Hadrian knew what was needed to win.<sup>26</sup> Lancers were dangerous, not only in recklessly straight assaults on cavalry as at Adrianople in AD 378 but even against well-ordered foot.<sup>27</sup>



In the fourth century Ammianus defined the warrior style of the Alamannic king Chnodomar by his huge lance. In AD 357 at the battle of Strassburg, he writes, Chnodomar was “daring and confident in the vast strength of his hands, huge, high on a foaming horse, and braced by a throwing spear of frightful size.”<sup>28</sup> Chnodomar’s great, big spear heralded a warrior of overpowering strength.<sup>29</sup>

### Lancers in the early Middle Ages

An embossed plaque on the helmet found in grave 1 at Vendel shows a Swedish horseman riding to battle (Figure 14.3). Wearing a boar helmet, the horseman carries a sword, a shield, and a very thick spear. Like the



*Figure 14.3* Horseman with a heavy spear on his shoulder. Bronze foil from the helmet in grave 1 at Vendel, Uppland. After Stolpe and Arne, *Graffältet* 1912, plate 5.2.

Gerulata trooper he holds the spear with one hand, resting it on his shoulder. Similar scenes suggest that he will either thrust or throw the spear. Indeed, during the early Middle Ages most lances were used for throwing as well as thrusting.<sup>30</sup> Even the heavy,

winged lances held by horsemen on the Vendel-helmet foils could be used both ways like the lances on the eleventh-century Bayeux tapestry.

By good luck we have a description from around AD 600 about maneuvering with shouldered lances. In his Byzantine army handbook Maurice describes a ten-man deep cavalry attack of 320 men, in which the first two lines (dekarches and pentarches) are lancers:

The dekarches and pentarches lean forward, guarding their head and part of their horse's neck with their shield while holding the lance on their shoulder like the "blond" peoples. Hidden beneath their shield, they advance in good order, at a canter only and not too wild, so that the vehemence of the charge does not break up the ranks before they come to blows, which is a real risk. The bowmen behind them shoot.<sup>31</sup>

Together, the Gerulata gravestone, the Vendel plaque, and Maurice's description leave no doubt that cavalry attacks with shoulder-held spears were a Germanic fighting technique. Maurice wants Byzantine lancers to use this technique as it was efficient, but perhaps also as many Byzantine horsemen were of Germanic origin and already skilled in it.

Maurice thus lets us see what Arrian meant in the early second century when he reported that Germanic lancers rehearsed the formations in which they fought. One of these formations must have been the attack with shoulder-held lances. It breathes the same spirit of order in battle, of keeping the ranks unbroken until the clash with the foe, that characterized the shield castle of the foot described in Chapter 9, to which it is related. Only during hand-to-hand fighting did unbridled recklessness take over.<sup>32</sup>

Another passage of Maurice has been translated to say that "Germanic warriors prefer fighting on foot and in rapid charges (*elasia*)," which would mean that they preferred fighting on foot over fighting on horseback. Yet Maurice uses the word *elasia* always for cavalry charges.<sup>33</sup> Hence this passage too should refer to cavalry charges, stating that early medieval warriors delighted in both, fighting on foot and on horseback.

Little is known of early medieval cavalry formations in northern Europe save that Germanic horsemen at all periods could alight to fight on foot.<sup>34</sup> The foils on Vendel helmets and the Pliezhausen disc (Figure 17.5) show that lancers attacked at a canter, just as Maurice wanted it to be done. But they say nothing about formations. This makes Maurice's testimony all the more valuable. Maurice's passage, revealing the Germanic cavalry attack formation with shoulder-held lances as the model for sixth-century Byzantine cavalry, shows that the northern lancer tradition continued in full force from antiquity into the Middle Ages.<sup>35</sup>

The most outstanding feat of fighting with the thrusting spear is seen on a helmet-foil scene from Valsgarde that shows a lancer on horseback lifting his foe bodily into the air at the tip of his lance while the victim flails with arms and legs.<sup>36</sup> It is the great triumphant image of the time, Thorolf's deed in *Egils saga*, here done on horseback.<sup>37</sup>

Fighting from horseback with a huge lance was thus a Germanic warrior style from early Batavi and Canninefates horsemen to those of the Vendel period and on to knights of the high Middle Ages, with their heavy, couched lances.

## 15

# SPEAR-THROWERS

They carry spears...with a narrow and short iron blade, but so sharp and handy that they fight with the same weapon as needed either from afar or from close-up. Even horsemen make do with shield and spear. Tacitus, *Germania*

### Barbed spears in antiquity

Most Germanic warriors, whether foot or horse, were spear-throwers.<sup>1</sup> Unlike Celts and Romans, however, they often had among their weapons a spear with barbs.<sup>2</sup> West- and north-Germanic graves from the end of the pre-Roman Iron Age onward yield barbed spears.<sup>3</sup> Roman triumphal art such as Caligula's silver disc from Niederbieber and first-century coins also portray Germanic barbed spears and so does a gravestone from the late second century AD showing Quadi warriors:<sup>4</sup> Romans, it seems, took barbed spears to be typically Germanic.

The advantages and disadvantages of barbed blades are hard to assess. They cause more frightful flesh wounds and are hard to pull out, yet throughout ancient warfare far fewer barbed spears are found than smooth-bladed ones. In antiquity, only a rare Greek spear-fighter of the Geometric period has such a weapon, and only the Iberian Lusitani were known for (all-iron) barbed javelins.<sup>5</sup> Designed to slow down prey, barbed spears were often used in hunting, but seldom in war. There must have been a price to be paid for using them, but we do not know whether the price was that they penetrated less, cost more, broke more easily, or handled more awkwardly than smooth-bladed spears. Perhaps they were less honorable.<sup>6</sup>

Barbed spears worked best against unarmored foes and horses. Thus, in Hannibal's war against Rome in 211 BC, Roman light *velites* with hooked spears (*incurvae hastae*) brought down the Capuan horse.<sup>7</sup> Like Roman *velites*, Germani may have used barbed spears against unarmored foes and horses. Not only did most of their foes—other Germani—lack armor, which made the use of barbed spears against them especially effective, but, like *velites*, Germanic foot ran with the horse, fought alongside, and wounded enemy steeds and riders from below, for which barbed spears were the best weapons.<sup>8</sup>

Several one-barbed spear blades have been found.<sup>9</sup> Handy for throwing, thrusting, and cutting in hand-to-hand combat, they are also good for tearing at a foe's shield or helmet.<sup>10</sup> A one-barbed spear could pull a rider from his horse. The devil too found such a weapon useful, witness Dürer's 1513 engraving "Knight, Death, Devil."

A twin-barbed throwing spear is carved on a second-century gravestone of the Roman emperor's Batavi horse guard (Figure 15.1).<sup>11</sup>

The owner of the gravestone was a weapon keeper (*armorum custos*), and like other soldiers of that rank he had his weapons depicted in unwonted detail. Not only is his barbed spear a Germanic weapon, but so is his long, truncated shield.<sup>12</sup> Since Batavi

horse guards trained in such Germanic tactics as swimming across rivers fully armed, they must also have used Germanic weapons.<sup>13</sup> Tacitus spells this out when he writes that Italicus, a Cheruscan prince, was trained in Rome “in the uses of weapons and horses customary to both his native and our own forces.” Emperors raised their horse guard among Germani, not only for their looks and trustworthiness but for their wonted fighting styles too, one of which was the throwing of barbed spears.<sup>14</sup>

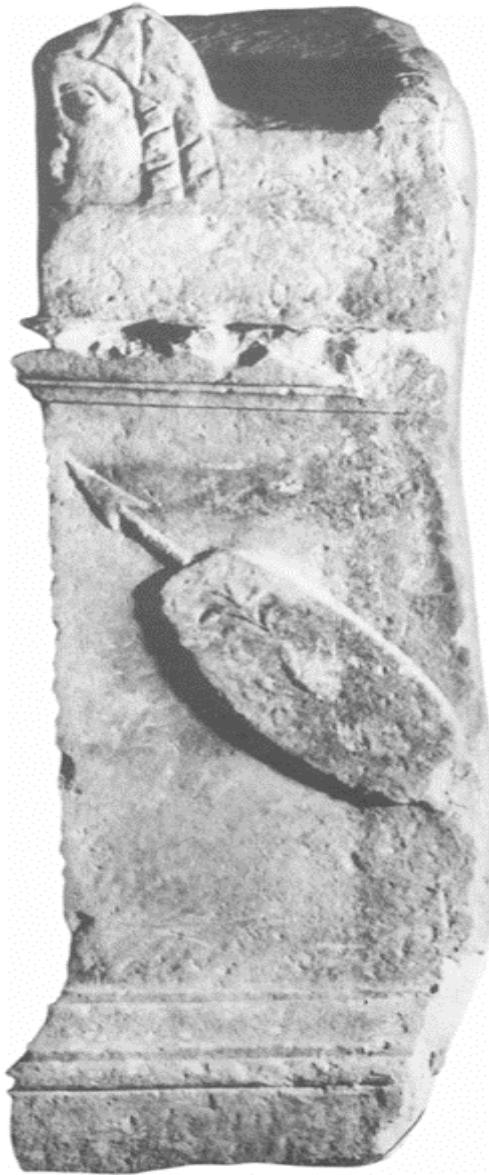
In time, barbed spears became weapons of prestige. If one may trust Constantine’s famous silver medallion from Ticinum, they were the main weapon of his horse guard.<sup>15</sup> Coins from Elagabalus (AD 218–222) to Romulus Augustulus (AD 476) show emperors wielding barbed *lanceolae* spears.<sup>16</sup> To look like their guardsmen and share their fame, emperors may indeed have wielded such spears.<sup>17</sup>

Barbed spears are often found together with smooth-bladed ones. Both foot and horse would first have thrown barbed spears, then come to blows with thrusting weapons.<sup>18</sup> One or two spears for throwing and one for hand-to-hand fighting are obvious choices for warriors everywhere.<sup>19</sup> Hawaiian warriors had one long, smooth-bladed spear (3.6 meters) for thrusting, and two shorter ones (2.6 meters or less), sometimes barbed, for throwing.<sup>20</sup>

### **Barbed spears in the early Middle Ages**

Germanic warriors still wielded barbed spears in the early Middle Ages. Finds from their graves reveal that from the fourth century to the seventh, high-ranking Alamanni, Franks, Saxons, and Bavarians fought with barbed spears.<sup>21</sup>

Bronze foils on the sixth-century helmet found in grave 14 at Vendel pointedly illustrate how barbed spears hampered foes: they stick in one fighter’s dress and another’s shield. When warriors had two shaft weapons, one tended to be barbed, the other smooth-bladed. This combination is known from graves of the first century AD in northern Germany, from head-stones of third-century Germanic troops serving in the Roman army, from Scandinavian graves a century later, and from dancers depicted on seventh-century Vendel helmets.<sup>22</sup> The barbed spear was no doubt meant to be thrown first, while the smooth-bladed spear might be either thrown or used in hand-to-hand fighting.



*Figure 15.1* Spear and shield of a second-century horse guardsman. Gravestone, Rome. Photo: Michael Speidel.

The painful but heroic response to a barbed spear that pierced both shield and flesh was to break the shaft, with the blade still in the wound, thereby freeing the shield and

making it possible to pull out the blade. Doing this was, according to Jordanes, the glory of Rugians in AD 501. It was also Byrhtnoth's great deed in the battle of Maldon in AD 991.<sup>23</sup>

The barbed spear is Woden's weapon on fifth- and sixth-century bracteate amulets, both on foot and on horseback.<sup>24</sup> Wielded by the god, the barbed spear by then was a weapon of prestige. One of its Germanic names, it seems, was *gaisaz*, from which come such atheling names as Ariogais (second century), Gaiseric (fifth century), Garibald (sixth century), and Chrodegar (seventh century).<sup>25</sup>

On some bracteate amulets, Woden's spear has a throwing strap attached to the middle of the shaft. Used since the second millennium BC by Indo-Europeans such as the Philistines, the throwing or rifling strap is found on Germanic spears throughout the first millennium of our era.<sup>26</sup> Easy to use with the first weapon thrown, it is not as easily used thereafter in the midst of the fighting. It thus marks a spear as the weapon likely to be used first.<sup>27</sup> Woden threw such a spear at the beginning of battle,<sup>28</sup> and spear-throwers may have thought of themselves as repeating Woden's throw.

Barbed spears were even brought up to date. By the fourth and fifth century most leading warriors wore hauberks. Frankish noblemen, therefore, changed the barbed spear into an *ango* whose narrow heavy head gave it enough thrust to pierce hauberks, and whose shaft, wound with iron, could not be hacked off once it stuck in dress, armor, shield, or flesh. Its weight meant that a warrior could carry only one *ango*, and its barbs meant that, whether thrown or thrust, it could be used only once. Like regular barbed spears it is therefore often found together with smooth-bladed weapons. Thrown or used in hand-to-hand fighting, the *ango* worked well and stayed in use for several hundred years.<sup>29</sup> Found only in very rich graves, it was, like all heavy spears, a weapon of elite warriors.

After the seventh century, it seems, horsemen no longer used short spears,<sup>30</sup> but barbed blades on long throwing spears are still prominent on the eleventh-century Bayeux tapestry. In antiquity and the early Middle Ages, then, barbed blades gave Germanic weaponry "a note of its own."<sup>31</sup> In use since the pre-Roman Iron Age, they too mark northern Europe's abidingness of weaponry and fighting styles.<sup>32</sup>

## 16

# WHEELING RIGHT

They ride their horses straight ahead, or with one wheel to the right, closing into a circle so no one is last.

Tacitus, *Germania*

When fighting on horseback first came to central Europe in the seventh-century BC, Illyrian horsemen shot at least two spears at their foes as they closed in and before they reached for the battle-ax. Celts must have done much the same, for Roman imperial cavalry trained in the Celtic tradition hurled two, three, even four spears as they rode up to the enemy.<sup>1</sup> Germanic horsemen did the same.

Throughout history, the classic cavalry attack was to ride straight into the enemy line, horse or foot, and try to break it. Germanic horsemen rode such attacks as well, but while this was best done with long spears,<sup>2</sup> few Germani used long spears or swords: their horsemen “made do with shield and *framea* spear.”<sup>3</sup> A major mode of attack thus must have been to throw spears from afar. This could be done particularly well when riding in a circle within throwing distance,<sup>4</sup> a technique that added greatly to cavalry efficiency.

A battle between Cherusci and Batavi horsemen in AD 16 may be typical of Germanic cavalry engagements. Feigning flight, the Cherusci had lured the Batavi under Chariovalda onto level ground between hills before suddenly turning and attacking. When the Batavi responded by defending themselves back to back, the Cherusci assailed them “from afar and from up close,” hurling spears, it seems, from a distance while riding in a circle,<sup>5</sup> and thrusting with spears from up close. It is hard to say why the Cherusci used both forms of attack. Perhaps pride demanded that they not only shoot their foes from a safe distance but show courage in hand-to-hand fighting. They must have been skilled in both tactics, for nearly all Batavi, among them Chariovalda and many leading men beside him, fell.

Tacitus describes the tactics of Germanic horse:

Nor are [their horses] taught to change their circular movements like ours. They ride them straight ahead, or with one wheel to the right, closing into a circle, so no one is last.<sup>6</sup>

Scholars took Tacitus’ words to mean that Germanic horse had only one way of attacking: riding up to the enemy and then turning away to the right.<sup>7</sup> Tacitus, however, plainly speaks of two kinds of attack: one in which horsemen ride straight to the enemy line, trying to break it,<sup>8</sup> and another in which they ride single file and wheel in a right-hand circle before the enemy line while throwing spears (or darts and rocks) at it. As Germanic horsemen had throwing spears they could use for thrusting as well, the circling could turn at once from a throwing into a thrusting attack.<sup>9</sup>

While cantering in a circle, spear-throwing was kept up without a break, or in Tacitus' words no one was "last." The first to ride against the enemy thus circled back to follow the last, thereby creating an unbroken circle. Describing how Roman horse trained for this tactic, Arrian, like Tacitus, stresses the need to preserve the circle.<sup>10</sup> Even in a straight line attack horsemen might shoot several spears at the enemy before closing in,<sup>11</sup> but in circling attacks footmen could keep on handing them fresh weapons at the far end of the circle.<sup>12</sup>

The right-circling maneuver required training but was easier than left-circling. In the latter, the horseman had to shift hands, and the rider had to shift his shield towards the enemy to guard his otherwise open right side.<sup>13</sup> The left-circling attack being so complex, Germanic horsemen did not go in for it, according to Tacitus, though surely, like all cavalry, they could wheel left in the open field.<sup>14</sup>

Circling, even if only to the right, betrays discipline and skill: the horsemen had to train for it.<sup>15</sup> They must have dressed their horses in a training rink, a schooling for which their neighbors, the Celtic Sequani, were famous (though Ariovistus' skilled horsemen overcame them).<sup>16</sup> When under attack themselves, horsemen, to stand up to flights of spears, needed great skill in forming a cavalry shield wall with shields locked both in front and overhead.<sup>17</sup>

By and large, ancient authors found Germanic fighting on horseback outstanding. Hence when a leading authority on medieval warfare wonders whether Germani before AD 500 had horsemen at all, the Dark Ages seem dark indeed.<sup>18</sup> Among Caesar's army in 58 BC, rumor had it that Ariovistus' Suebian troops, many of them horsemen, were trained to the utmost,<sup>19</sup> and in Augustus' time King Marbod of the Suebi had his horse guard so well trained that it became a danger to the Roman Empire.<sup>20</sup> Tacitus may have had circling attacks (and feigned flight) in mind when he wrote that the Tencteri tribe on the Rhine excelled in *equestris disciplina*.<sup>21</sup> The vaunted indiscipline of the Germani, then, did not interfere with their cavalry training, and one may believe Aurelius Victor when he says that in AD 213 Caracalla, on the river Main, faced the Alamanni "who fight wonderfully well from horseback."<sup>22</sup>

Warriors on foot prided themselves in how far they could throw a spear—Germani could throw theirs *in immensum*.<sup>23</sup> Roman horsemen took pride in hitting home with four medium-heavy spears while riding up to the foe. Germanic horsemen, whose circling attacks resembled Roman ones, surely also took pride in how many spears they could shoot and how well they hit the foe before they closed in on him.<sup>24</sup> The result of it was daunting firepower.<sup>25</sup>

Weapons found in graves suggest that toward the end of the first century AD Germanic horsemen had grown in number. Literary sources show that they grew further still during the third century.<sup>26</sup> Their fighting power is borne out by the role Emperor Maximinus gave them in AD 238: to ride into Italy as the vanguard of the imperial field army, daring and spirited fighters as they were.<sup>27</sup> Throughout the rest of the third century, Rome went on to raise elite cavalry regiments from Germanic tribes, such as the equites Marcomanni or the *alae Alamannorum, Francorum, Iuthungorum, and Vandilorum*.<sup>28</sup> All this points to more than mere reckless attacks: it betokens efficiency that comes from skillful fighting in formation and shooting well-timed flights of spears.

Roman art sometimes depicts Germanic horsemen bare-chested or with light coats fluttering from their shoulders.<sup>29</sup> That may have been their true battle dress. Even Rome's



own early horsemen, the Celeres, fought bare-chested, wearing no more than a loincloth and sometimes a light coat.<sup>30</sup> Bare-chested horsemen can throw weapons farther than men burdened by armor, and when attacking or fleeing they can rush faster through enemy missiles. Light dress also lets warriors quickly get back on their feet if unhorsed, while armored horsemen, once fallen from their steeds, are helpless and easily finished off.<sup>31</sup> Besides, horsemen free from armor could alight nimbly to fight on foot as horse-stabbers and then mount again.<sup>32</sup>

Hadrian wanted his horsemen to ride in both Germanic-style lancer and spear-throwing formations. Their spear-throwing attacks, then, must have been nearly as frightening as their lancer charges. Hadrian even wanted the men to raise their battle cry in German, as Dacian horsemen were to raise theirs in Dacian, and Raetians in Raetian.<sup>33</sup> The horsemen of the emperor's guard, recruited in the Roman provinces of Upper and Lower Germany, Raetia, and Dacia,<sup>34</sup> brought along northern European, Iron Age fighting styles of a skill and daring that made them the Empire's best cavalry.

In his army handbook from the end of the sixth century, Maurice still wants the Byzantine army to train for circling attacks. Yet of the "blond peoples," the Franks and Lombards, he says that while they fight very well as horsemen, they scorn the orderliness of tactical formations during the fray, especially when on horseback.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps Germanic horsemen had given up circling, preferring the straight attack. Norman knights on the eleventh-century Bayeux tapestry ride no circling attack, but while some stab or thrust with their weapons, most are still spear-throwers.

Part 7  
FOOT AGAINST HORSE

## HORSE-STABBERS

The horsemen sent by Caesar...wrought wonders of bravery. Many slid from their steeds, dove beneath their foes' horses, and struck them in the underbelly.

Plutarch, *Crassus*

### Indo-European horse-stabbers

Only the most undaunted foot warrior can face horse-warriors, be they on chariots or horseback. But foot fought very efficiently as supporters of cavalry or chariotry. Bronze Age charioteers of the second millennium BC relied on fleet-footed "runners" to back them in battle and to finish off enemy chariot crews whose vehicles had crashed or whose horses were wounded. For this task Egyptian Pharaohs hired bare-chested Indo-European Shardanas, warriors from Sardinia armed with swords and short spears.<sup>1</sup> Later, when horsemen came to play a role on battlefields, runners armed with swords or short spears strengthened them to great effect.

Few warriors on foot dared to take on horsemen by themselves, but some did. On a fifth-century Etruscan stele from Bologna, a tall, altogether naked Celtic swordsman coolly faces an armored horseman who rushes him and has his horse kick at him.<sup>2</sup> Remarkably, the naked swordsman stands as tall as the rider on horseback, and his fearless stance makes it clear that this is an even-handed fight with the outcome wide open. While Celtic and Germanic warriors often were tall, size may have been particularly helpful to naked swordfighters, giving them speed in the attack and a greater reach than that of their foes in hand-to-hand fighting. The stele shows that by the fifth century BC Celtic foot-warriors, wielding straight swords, dared to face enemy horsemen even in single combat. In the first century BC Diodore still reports that Celtic foot, sword in hand, daringly met enemy horsemen.<sup>3</sup>

For a warrior on foot to take on a horseman openly and evenly was an act of either great daring or dire need. There was, however, a way to fight a horse-man on somewhat more even terms: bringing him down by stabbing his steed.

An alabaster urn of the second century BC from Chiusi, now in Florence, portrays a clash between a horseman and a Celtic foot-warrior, this time with the end in sight.<sup>4</sup> The long-haired, naked Celt, holding booty in his left, lacks a shield. Sunk on his right knee, he has dived between the forelegs of the enemy horse and with his straight sword stabs the steed in the belly. At the same time, the horseman with his lance hits him in the groin. The Chiusi scene, derived from reliefs depicting third-century battles between Celts and Greeks, is so striking and specific that it is likely to portray a typical Celtic fighting style.

Early Roman horsemen too had to face naked horse-stabbers. Coins of 57 BC, but harking back to events in earlier centuries, show a helmeted, naked swordsman beneath the horse of the *tribunus militum* Manius Fonteius.<sup>5</sup> The enemy, it seems, is a high-ranking Gaul, for as with Roman horsemen of the Middle Republic or with naked berserks, to wear a helmet but no armor was to signal high rank and great daring.<sup>6</sup> Roman horsemen of the Early and Middle Republic also fought in this style, some of them alighting from their horses to overcome enemy cavalry.<sup>7</sup>

Thucydides in the fifth century BC says of Thracians from north Greece that “they dashed out against horsemen and then closed ranks again.” In dashing out they may have attacked the enemy’s horses. Certainly they did so in the fourth century, for silver coins of 335–315 BC, struck by Patraos, the Paionian vassal of Alexander the Great, show a bare-chested, kilt-clad Thracian infantryman with a javelin (in other versions with a curved sword) as he fights against a spear-wielding Paionian horseman and tries to dive beneath his foe’s steed.<sup>8</sup> Livy too writes about Thracians attacking like this in 171 BC: “Loudly yelling, and furious like long penned-up wild animals, they ran ahead of all others up to the Italic horsemen and their lances. They cut the horses’ legs or stabbed them in the belly.”<sup>9</sup> For stabbing the horses they will have used javelins, for cutting the horses’ legs, curved swords. Archaeological and literary source bear each other out. Patraos’ coin as an archaeological source shows the Thracians’ weapons and nakedness; Livy, as a literary source, reveals their tactics of loudly yelling and running at the foe ahead of the main body of troops, even without the help of their own horsemen.

Dacian warriors, relatives of the Thracians, also fought as horse-stabbers. The Trajanic frieze on Constantine’s Arch in Rome highlights a Dacian who dives beneath Trajan’s horse perhaps to stab it.<sup>10</sup> Since the scene was to broadcast Trajan’s manhood in braving great risk, horse-stabbers must have been some of the most dreaded foes. Among Indo-Europeans, horse-stabbing clearly was an old, widely known, and much-feared fighting technique.

### Germanic horse-stabbers in the time of Caesar

Caesar encountered the horse-stabbing warrior style in 55 BC when he led his army against the Usipi and Tencteri near the mouth of the Moselle river. There, as 800 Usipi horsemen attacked his vanguard of 5,000 Gallic horse, an astonishing thing happened. Caesar says of the Usipi:

As was their wont, they alighted from their steeds, stabbed several of our horses from beneath and sent the rest fleeing in such a fright that they did not halt until they saw our army. In that skirmish 74 horsemen of ours were killed, among them high-born, brave Piso of Aquitania whose grandfather had been king of that nation.<sup>11</sup>

Caesar’s report makes it clear how effective such horse-stabbers could be: to the point that they decided a battle. His account suggests that at the time Gauls no longer fought in this way.<sup>12</sup>

Caesar's encounter with the Usipi horse-stabbers did not end there. The next day, when the leaders and elders of the Usipi and Tencteri came to him as ambassadors, he breached the rules of warfare by throwing them in fetters. He then slaughtered their leaderless people and afterwards offered to let the leaders go—into the hands of waiting, revenge-seeking Gauls. When the leaders pleaded to stay with him, Caesar agreed and granted them freedom. They then joined his army, for it was the custom that foes who asked for mercy to avoid slaughter bound themselves to their conqueror by strong bonds of obligation, a custom still known to Icelandic sagas.<sup>13</sup> Later that year, Caesar may have given his Usipi and Tencteri to Crassus to take them along to the Parthian war.<sup>14</sup>

Though Plutarch, when he speaks of Crassus' western horsemen, does not set Germani off from Gauls and in the Greek manner calls both "Galatae,"<sup>15</sup> he says of them that in the battle at Carrhae in 53 BC "they wrought wonders of bravery. Many slid from their steeds, dove beneath their foes' horses, and struck them in the underbelly. The beasts jumped with pain, and, dying, trampled riders and foes alike."<sup>16</sup> The "Galatae" horsemen are likely to have included Usipi and Tencteri who dived beneath enemy horses at a time when Gauls no longer fought that way.<sup>17</sup>

In the Civil War in 48 BC at Dyrrachium, Caesar's Germanic foot fought outstandingly well, counter-attacking against Pompey's forces so that, alone of his foreign soldiers, Caesar praised them.<sup>18</sup> Shortly afterwards, at Pharsalus, they won the day for him. When Pompey's horse, the flower of Rome's aristocratic youth, came around Caesar's right wing to attack him from behind, Caesar ambushed them with six cohorts of Germani, his 3,000 most daring foot taken from the third line—that is, from the reserves. They not only rushed Pompey's horsemen and sent them fleeing, they went on to cut down the bowmen and slingers who had come along with the horsemen; then they took Pompey's left wing in the rear, beginning the rout of his lines.<sup>19</sup>

About this attack Florus says: "the German cohorts attacked the dispersed horsemen as if they were on horseback and the others on foot."<sup>20</sup> These cohorts are often mistaken for legionaries,<sup>21</sup> but the third line was the place to station lightly armed auxilia rather than legionaries.<sup>22</sup> Caesar himself praises the speed at which the men attacked, and speed is not a quality of heavily armed legionaries but, in Caesar's own judgement, of Germanic foot, and so is their skill in taking on horsemen.<sup>23</sup> Florus, who abridges Livy, likewise stresses the speed of these troops; he seems to be right, therefore, when he says that they were Germanic cohorts.

The surprise attack of foot against horse at Pharsalus was a repeat of the battle fought by the Usipi and Tencteri in 55 BC, only Caesar had modified it by instructing the warriors to stab the faces of the horsemen rather than their legs and their steeds—aiming at a foeman's face being the fiercest form of close-up fighting.<sup>24</sup> As the Thracians did in 171 BC against Italic horsemen, running up to the enemy horse with great speed forestalled them from mounting a charge. It is one of the rare cases of foot advancing on horse and driving them off.<sup>25</sup>

In AD 15 Arminius and his Cheruscan followers fought the Romans by stabbing their horses:

Arminius cried "There is Varus with the legions caught again by the same doom!" and with chosen followers he cut through the Roman column. They mainly wounded the horses who, slithering in the blood and the

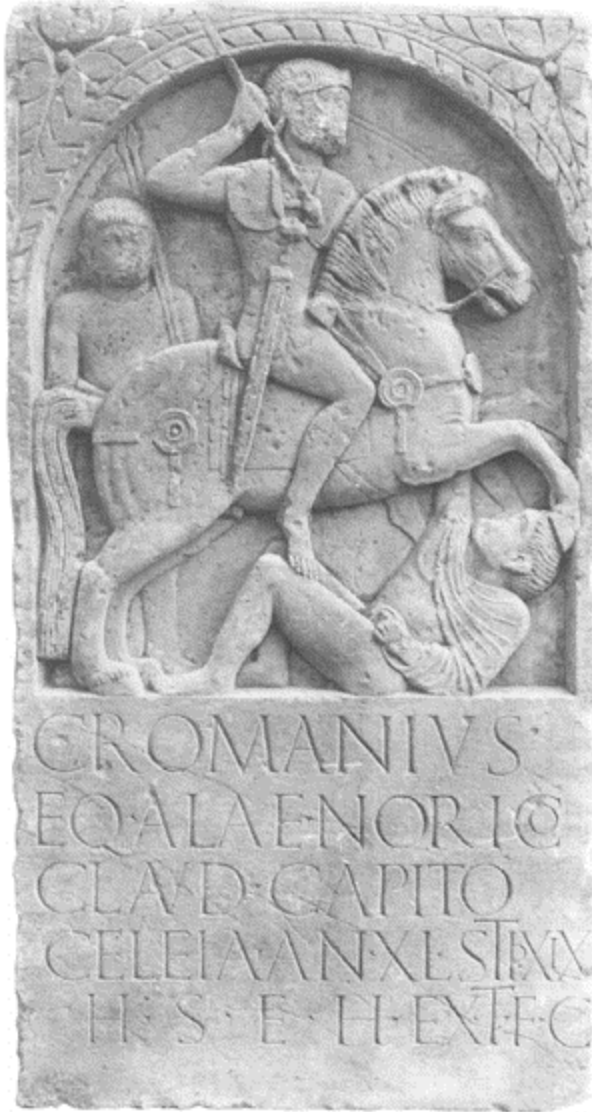
slippery mud, threw their riders, pushed everyone aside, and trampled over those who lay on the ground ... Caecina, who upheld the front, fell to the ground as his horse was stabbed from below. He would have been surrounded had not the first legion stepped in.<sup>26</sup>

Stabbing horses from below is the work of warriors on foot. They could be dismounted horsemen like the Usipi and Tencteri in 55 BC, or foot trained to run with the horse, as were Ariovistus' men in 58 BC and the Alamannic horse-stabbers in AD 357.<sup>27</sup> They could even be whole units of warriors on foot, as were the Thracians and Caesar's men at Pharsalus.

### **Germanic horse-stabbers on Roman gravestones**

**O**n first-century Roman cavalry gravestones from the Rhineland, a naked Germanic warrior with a straight sword often dives beneath the steed of his foe. As the horseman, spear in hand, rides over him, the warrior below raises his head between the horse's legs and strikes the animal with his sword.<sup>28</sup>

On some gravestones the horseman rides over the stabber, looking not at him but straight ahead at what might come, seemingly heedless of the warrior underneath: scorning him and the danger he poses, he lets his steed kick the warrior in the head. Such a scene is shown on the gravestone of Romanius, found at Mainz in Upper Germany (Figure 17.1).<sup>29</sup> The object above the head of Romanius' foe has been called a shield,<sup>30</sup> but it is the man's bent right arm, holding a sword hidden behind his head. The warrior on the ground is not fallen; rather, he has, of his own will and daring, dived beneath the horse to stab it from below. What has been overlooked so far is that for the sake of speed and nimbleness he has forgone the protection of a shield. To guard himself he has wrapped his coat several times around his left arm. Depicted on gravestones, this is a technique also known from literary sources as useful in skirmishes against horsemen.<sup>31</sup> In the sixth century young Heruls likewise fought naked without shields but with coats. They did so to achieve the famous Herulian battle-speed, and they too are likely to have wrapped their coat around the left arm for protection.<sup>32</sup>



*Figure 17.1* Horse-stabber underhoof.  
Gravestone of Romanius, Mainz.  
Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Mainz.  
Inv. S 601. Museum photograph.

Another such gravestone, from east of the Rhine, is that of Dolanus (Figure 17.2). The naked warrior on the ground holds a sword in his right hand, ready to stab the steed, but Dolanus disregards him and looks straight ahead, no doubt toward a foe on horseback. Dolanus' groom, with two spears, stands behind him, looking almost like a small figure

on the horse's back. Two lions growl above the scene. All these are things we will find again on medieval horse-stabber scenes.



*Figure 17.2* Another horse-stabber underhoof. Gravestone of Dolanus, Wiesbaden. Wiesbaden, CIL XIII 7585=Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 42. Museum photograph.



Greek gravestones, among them the highly visible and often copied Athenian gravestone of Dexileos of the fourth-century BC, provided the model for the Rhineland gravestone reliefs. They too portray the enemies naked, which raises the question of how far the Rhineland gravestones only repeat an artistic convention and how far they truly portray the fighting of their own time.<sup>33</sup> Three things point to the latter. First, literary sources report this fighting style in the Rhineland. Second, while Dexileos unrealistically wears only a shirt, horsemen on Rhenish gravestones wear carefully carved cuirasses of their time. Third, the coat wrapped around the arm to guard it is a trustworthy detail, known from other contemporary sources. The realism by which the Rhineland gravestones transform the original Dexileos model makes it likely that they depict the naked warrior beneath the horse also realistically and in a way that would convince onlookers who had seen this kind of fighting.<sup>34</sup>

There is more tension in these scenes than has been thought. Greeks and Romans liked to boast of their steeds trampling enemies,<sup>35</sup> but that is not the only reason for gravestones to show the warriors underhoof. The naked warriors, by their swords and fighting poses, suggest that in the mid-first century AD, as in the time of Caesar, Germanic horse-stabbers posed a serious threat to Roman horsemen.<sup>36</sup>

Tacitus in his *Germania* says about Germanic warriors:

Overall, their strength lies more in their infantry, which is why they fight in mixed formation. The foot warriors chosen from the young men of the whole army and placed before the line are so fast they keep up with the horsemen in battle. Their number is fixed: one hundred from each district, and so they are called: what at first was a number is now a name and an honor.<sup>37</sup>

Romanus, Dolanus, and other Roman horsemen depicted on their grave-stones as looking ahead, reveal that the naked horse-stabbers beneath them fought together with horsemen and thus belong to Tacitus' chosen youths of the "Hundred."

Ancient writers marveled at the bravery of horse-stabbers in Crassus' war. Yet their fame was to rise still higher. When in AD 70 Roman forces fanned out from Mainz to reconquer Gaul and Germany west of the Rhine, Vespasian commemorated the campaign with coins on which he, like the horsemen on Mainz gravestones, rides down an enemy sword-fighter—a German if one may judge by his six-cornered shield.<sup>38</sup> The image of Vespasian as a heroic rider who fights a swordsman on foot also stems ultimately from the Athenian gravestone of Dexileos, but it seems to have reached Vespasian by way of gravestones from the Rhineland, where the heroic horse-stabber fighting style still lived. Vespasian, here realistically wielding a shield, may have chosen the scene after illustrated battle reports from Mainz. His pose became the model for a long series of imperial triumphal images,<sup>39</sup> almost the only Roman triumphal image in which the enemy truly fights back. The stout-hearted men who on foot dared to take on horsemen won fame not only at home but also on Roman gravestones and imperial coins.<sup>40</sup>

A third-century image of such a fight is seen on the gravestone of an imperial horse guardsman in Rome.<sup>41</sup> It portrays a long-haired, bearded, bare-chested, and trousered Germanic warrior who, while guarding himself with a shield, kneels between the forelegs of his foe's cantering steed, trying to strike the beast (Figure 17.3).

This is the most even-handed fight of all such scenes known. The warrior on the ground purposely bends his knee, and the horseman aims his lance at him. The guardsman may have met such foes in battle and wanted to show on his relief the real danger and hence the glory of such fights.



*Figure 17.3* Kneeling warrior, facing a horseman of the emperor's guard. Gravestone, Rome. CIL VI 32803; Photograph B.Malter.

On the late second-century Portonaccio sarcophagus from Rome, twelve Germanic horsemen and four warriors on foot fight the same number of Romans. The Germani on foot are bare-chested. One is the horse-hewer on the lower right (Figure 18.2); another lies dead in the mid-foreground; a third, above in the middle, tries to flee together with three long-sleeved horsemen, all four having thrown away their blades. The fourth bare-chest is the horse-stabber on the lower left (Figure 17.4).<sup>42</sup>

Peerless in the precision with which it depicts fighting men, the sarcophagus shows this horse-stabber with his "horned" hairdo as he wields a very short spear, useful for

stabbing.<sup>43</sup> He wants to help the warrior above him by getting at the steed of the attacking Roman horseman but is brushed away



*Figure 17.4* Horse-stabber with a spear. Sarcophagus from Portonaccio, Rome. Photograph: German Archaeological Institute, Rome, Inst. Neg. 61.1399.

by the horse's hoofs. The four bare-chests, lightly clad so they could run with the horse, are clearly of the honored "Hundred" youths mentioned by Tacitus that are trained to fight with the horse.<sup>44</sup> The Portonaccio sarcophagus not only confirms Tacitus' information but also shows that the "Hundred" were bare-chested and had in their ranks horse-stabbers as well as hewers.

### Horse-stabbers in late antiquity

Horse-stabbers are known not only from archaeological finds.<sup>45</sup> Literary sources describe them both in Caesar's time and in late antiquity. Heliodore, in his novel *Aethiopiaca*, written around AD 250, imagines a battle where heavily mailed Persian catafracts ride a shock attack against onrushing Blemmye foot:

When the Blemmyes came to blows and were about to be reached by the oncoming lance points, on a given sign they all together stooped and dived beneath the horses. One knee propped on the ground, barely keeping head and back from getting trampled, they did an astonishing thing: under the bellies as the horses rushed by, they wounded them, stabbing upwards with their swords. Through this, many horsemen fell to the ground, for the steeds, in their pain, would scorn the bridle and throw their riders. As they lay there like logs, the Blemmyes stabbed them in the thighs.<sup>46</sup>

Though he based his account on that of Plutarch, Heliodore added several sharp details of his own, like the stooping on one knee, as seen on the Chiusi urn, the horse-guard gravestone and the Portonaccio sarcophagus (Figures 17.3, 17.4).<sup>47</sup> Whether Heliodore knew this detail from written reports of his own time or saw it on imperial triumphal art, he singles out this fighting technique as the most astonishing and decisive in his imagined battle.<sup>48</sup>

In the West, in AD 357 at Strassburg, light Alamannic foot-warriors helped the Alamanni horsemen when they faced iron-clad Roman *clibanarii* horse. Sneaking towards the ranks of the Roman horse, the foot-warriors tried to stab the steeds. Ammianus says of them:

They brought all their best cavalry in close order to the left wing and scattered between them light, fast infantry, with good reason. For they knew that even a skilled fighter on horseback, having to hold bridle and shield, and wielding the lance with but one hand, when meeting a Clibanarius horseman of ours could not harm the iron-clad warrior. However, as in the thick of a fight one watches only what comes straight on, a foot soldier could stealthily crawl up, pierce the side of the horse, bring the heedless rider down, and then easily kill him.<sup>49</sup>

Since Ammianus speaks of *clibanarii* locked in combat, the horse-stabbers who attacked them went against the front rank of the foes. To creep deeper into the enemy ranks, where

the horsemen's attention was not so strongly engaged, would have been too risky. Even so, the heavy armor of the *clibanarii*, whom Rome brought to the West in the third century, rendered the task of horse-stabbers harder. Though the weight of the armor made the horsemen clumsier and thus easier to approach, the horses' cuirass now reached to their knees and the riders' mail to their toes, making it hard to stab or slash them.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, at Strassburg Alamanni horsemen with their foot helpers routed the Roman *clibanarii*.<sup>51</sup>

In AD 363, Julian's men, many of them from the Rhine, worsted a force of Persian *clibanarii* on the banks of the Tigris. Libanius says of them:

The foot warrior dodged the lance of the horseman, ripped the horse open with his sword, brought both to the ground, and stabbed the iron-clad rider.<sup>52</sup>

The horse-stabber style of diving beneath the enemy's horse had met the challenge of the *clibanarii*: against heavier armor they pitted even stouter hearts. Byzantine foot, often northerners, fought *clibanarii* in this way still in the tenth century.<sup>53</sup>

While imperial art understandably favored the rider who overcomes all,<sup>54</sup> to Libanius, as to Heliodore and Plutarch, horse-stabbing was the keenest kind of fighting. Those who dived beneath horses were, to the ancients, the bravest, the most skillful, and the most astonishing heroes. They were also forerunners of the heroes of medieval legend.

### **Horse-stabbers in the Middle Ages**

A gold foil from about AD 600 found at Pliezhausen in Alamannia shows a spear-wielding horseman riding over a warrior who stabs his steed from below. Once part of a warrior's gear, the foil was later reworked into a disc brooch (Figure 17.5).<sup>55</sup>

Beneath two lions that face one another, the horseman rides straight ahead, a shield in his right hand and a long lance in his left either for throwing or stabbing.<sup>56</sup> The blade of the lance ends in an eagle's or a bird-dragon's head.<sup>57</sup> Dancing on the horse's back is a smaller figure, also with a shield and holding on to the lance. Below, gripping the bridle, the foe rises between the horse's forelegs and stabs the steed in the chest.

Although made in Alamannia,<sup>58</sup> the Pliezhausen disc was thought to derive from triumphal images of Roman emperors and Byzantine saints.<sup>59</sup> Yet given the striking similarity, the Pliezhausen scene certainly stems from Roman gravestones along the Rhine, many of which in the sixth century still stood on the roads just outside Mainz, Worms, Wiesbaden, and other towns.<sup>60</sup>



*Figure 17.5* Sixth-century horse-stabber. Disc brooch from Pliezhausen, Baden-Württemberg. Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart, inc. 29/173. Drawing by P. Paulsen after Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957.

Only gravestones display all elements of the scene: the spear-wielding horseman, the swordsman underneath, the smaller figure further back “on” the horse, and the lions above (Figure 17.2).<sup>61</sup> On both kinds of monuments the horseman’s spear points not to the man on the ground but further ahead. Like Romanius and Dolanus on their gravestones, the Pliezhausen rider pays no attention to the stabber: he looks straight ahead toward a foe that is not seen here, but whom other foils show as stabbed by the lance.<sup>62</sup> Neither the gravestones nor the Pliezhausen foil portray the fight itself, instead they show the risk the horseman runs.

This image appealed throughout the Germanic world. Metal foils on seventh-century helmets from Sutton Hoo in Kent and from Vendel and Valsgärde in Uppland, Sweden, portray the same scene.<sup>63</sup> These foils, too, are modeled after gravestones from the

Rhineland or, more likely, after Alamannic metal foils such as the Pliezhausen one.<sup>64</sup> Further proof that the horse-stabber scene originated on the Rhine is the fact that most variations of it in the Swedish foils are also found on first- to fourth-century Rhenish gravestones. Thus on bronze foils from Valsgärde, not one but two foes threaten the rider from below,<sup>65</sup> just like on a gravestone from Worms.<sup>66</sup> Likewise on the Valsgärde foils (but not on that from Pliezhausen) the horseman's helper holds his own spear, as on the gravestones (Figures 17.1, 17.2). On some of the Valsgärde foils, the foe on the ground does not stab the horse but strikes at it with his sword-arm bent back,<sup>67</sup> again as on the gravestones. On some foils a groom holds the horse by the bridle as he does on Rhenish gravestones.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, the Pliezhausen scene (aside from the lions) and the Swedish ones are square like gravestone reliefs, not round like coins, their supposed models.<sup>69</sup> The scenes on the foils are therefore not of Coptic or Byzantine inspiration, but modeled by sixth-century Alamannic artists after images on Roman gravestones around Mainz and Wiesbaden.<sup>70</sup>

The die with which the Pliezhausen disc was made could well have served for making helmet foils, as its size (5.5×5.4 cm) is that of helmet-foil images.<sup>71</sup> The round embossed border was certainly not part of the original design, for, touching the scene at the top, it leaves a large empty space at the bottom.<sup>72</sup>

All three warriors in the scene hold their weapons in their left hand, which suggests that the design is a mirror image of its original. Scholars therefore thought that the Pliezhausen scene had been designed for the *phalerae* discs of a horse harness, where a left and a right image is required.<sup>73</sup> Yet this is unlikely, for the horse-stabber motif is known only from helmets, not from *phalerae*, and has its corresponding mirror-image on helmets.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the size of the Pliezhausen scene fits helmet decorations better, being rather too small for *phalerae*.<sup>75</sup>

The likelihood that the Gutenstein wolf-warrior scenes were also designed for Vendel-helmet foils and that the horse-stabber image comes from grave-stones along the Rhine suggests that the system of Vendel-helmet imagery, and indeed some helmets, reached Sweden from Alamannia.<sup>76</sup> The contacts between heathen Alamannia and the Germanic north and their shared sixth- and seventh-century heathen culture thus appear in a new light. Alamannia was a leader among the lands of native Germanic culture that fended off Christianity, wrote runes, and upheld the worship of Woden.<sup>77</sup>

From first-century gravestones at Mainz to the sixth-century Pliezhausen disc, the horse-stabber scene underwent an astonishingly profound change in meaning with only the slightest change in design. The Roman horseman, who glories in winning and in trampling his foe, becomes the Germanic hero, who glories in fearlessness and welcomes his fate (*wyrd*), even if it means being felled by the foe below.<sup>78</sup> The change in design, although small, is significant: on the Roman gravestones, the warrior beneath the horse is not yet put out of action, but his strike will go amiss; on the Germanic pictures, he has struck home and the rider must fall.<sup>79</sup>

Wearing the dragon helmet, the god who dances on the horse behind the rider is either Woden himself or one of the Dioscuri in Woden's role as war dancer. He pushes the lance, not to save the rider from falling, nor to bring him victory. His role is to egg the warriors on, to give them *virtus* or fighting madness, and he does this, here as elsewhere, by dancing the war dance.<sup>80</sup>

Though he is a tool of fate, the horse-stabber is not an opponent of Woden. Even the riders would see it that way, for according to Snorri Sturluson the Swedes thought that Woden “often appeared before great battles, gave victory to some, and bade others to come to his place. Both fates seemed good to them.”<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, the horse-stabber is not reviled.<sup>82</sup> He wears the kaftan-like coat of noble warriors, and care is taken to show him unharmed.<sup>83</sup> Indeed he is neither fallen nor overcome.<sup>84</sup> He bravely fights as an elite warrior in the horse-stabber style, and his fate is as undecided as that of the rider. He too is a hero.

The horsemen on Roman gravestones in Mainz were foreigners,<sup>85</sup> the warriors beneath them Germanic tribesmen. The Alamanni who adopted the horse-stabbing image still practiced that warrior style in the fourth century at Strassburg, and hence very likely in the sixth century as well. They may thus have felt akin not only to the horseman but also to the warrior beneath the horse. For many hundred years those who dived beneath horses had amazed Greeks and Romans with their daring deed.<sup>86</sup> Surely Germanic warriors honored them as well.

Reworking the Roman image into a Germanic one, the artist gave the horseman a heavy lance to be carried on or above the shoulder, unlike the downward-pointing, much lighter Roman spear.<sup>87</sup> Since this implies a degree of realism—as does the horse’s canter, unlike the overly heroic Roman gallop—one may infer that during the sixth century elite warriors still dived beneath enemy horses. By the eleventh-century, when the Norwegian “Mirror for Kings” warns against wounding horses, stabbing steeds may have been thought low-class,<sup>88</sup> but in the sixth and seventh centuries Germanic warriors still saw horse-stabbers as heroes.

Alamannic artists thus transposed Roman gravestone art into a portable medium and flowing lines, and at the same time changed a Roman image of heroism into a truly Germanic one. Nearness of these images to real life will have helped. The artistic achievement matches the transformation, at about the same time, of a Constantinian victory coin into Woden’s image on Nordic bracteate amulets.<sup>89</sup>

We have come to the gate of heroic myth. We dare not enter, for our sources are too scanty. Still, a glance through the gate, so to speak, makes one wonder why in the North dragons are so often killed with a sword and from underneath.<sup>90</sup> In the battle at Strassburg the Alamanni routed the Roman *clibanarii* and their dragon standards, slaying dragons like the heroes of Indo-European myth. Doing this with the sword and from below,<sup>91</sup> horse-stabbers may have become the model for Sigmund the dragon-slayer.<sup>92</sup>



## HORSE-HEWERS

With them the horsemen went into battle, to them they could withdraw, and from them they got help in their harder tasks.

Caesar, *Gallic War*

### Indo-European horse-hewers

Horse-hewers differed from horse-stabbers in that they used curved weapons. With curved swords, dirks, or cleavers they hewed at the steeds of horsemen who were caught up in fighting other men. Herodotus tells of such a fight by Onesilos and his squire during the Persian War on Cyprus in 498 BC:

Onesilos took his post over against the Persian general Artybios. Now Artybios rode a horse trained to rear up against foot soldiers. When Onesilos learned this, he said to his shield bearer, a Carian, well-skilled in war and full of daring: "I hear that Artybios rides a horse that rears up and with fore-legs and teeth attacks the man against whom his rider urges him. Think it over now and tell me whom you want to encounter, the steed or Artybios himself." The squire answered: "I am willing, my prince, to do either or both, whatever you say, but I will tell you what to me seems best for you. Since you are a prince and a field marshal you ought to face the prince and field marshal. Leave it to us followers to face the other followers and the horse. Fear not the horse's tricks, I promise you it will not rear up against anyone anymore." ... When Artybios on his horse charged Onesilos, the latter, as he had agreed with his shield bearer, struck at the onrushing foe. The horse put his forefeet on Onesilos' shield, but the Carian hit it with a curved sword and cut off the horse's feet. Artybios the Persian field marshal and his horse fell right there.<sup>1</sup>

Thracians, as we have seen, fought with the same technique of using curved swords against enemy horse. To help a friend in battle by hewing at his foe's

horse was no doubt a warrior style as old as cavalry itself. It called for awesome skill and daring since short, inward-curved weapons, though good for horse-hewing, are not otherwise very useful in battle.<sup>2</sup>

Modern onlookers understandably frown upon such cruelty to animals, but Herodotus makes it clear that the Persian horse, as it kicked and bit, was as frightful an enemy as its rider and had to be dealt with. A look at Romanius' horse (Figure 17.1) shows that it too kicks the warrior underneath in the head.

### Germanic horse-hewers in antiquity

Germanic forces often fought as foot and horse together. As early as 168 BC, 10,000 Bastarnae horse and as many foot came from the lower Danube as mercenaries to King Perseus of Macedonia. The foot, we are told, ran as fast as the horse rode, and when a horseman fell in battle, a footman took his steed.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, in 58 BC, Caesar tells of Germanic horsemen relying on their squires:

This was the kind of fighting for which the Germani had trained. There were six thousand horsemen who had chosen as many very fast and strong foot, one each for his own safety. With them they went into battle, to them they could withdraw, and from them they got help in their harder tasks. If a rider fell wounded from his horse, they shielded him. For riding farther or getting away faster, the foot were trained to match the speed of the horses by holding on to their manes.<sup>4</sup>

Caesar found such men useful and hired them against the Gauls. Tacitus adds that each Germanic clan had a hundred young foot warriors to fight along with the horse.<sup>5</sup> They could keep up with the horse because it charged, as we have seen, not at a full gallop but at a canter.

Like Onesilos or the Thracians, these foot warriors among the horse may have wielded curved swords. In the North, curved blades suitable to cut flesh or tendons with a pulling stroke are known, it seems, as early as 350 BC: three of them came to light at Hjortspring in Denmark, with blades 57, 53, and 35 cm long.<sup>6</sup> Unfit for fencing, they must have been used together with other weapons such as a straight sword,<sup>7</sup> or to help a fully equipped team mate.

From the first century AD, quite a few Germanic curved swords are known. A coin of the Hermunduri in Bavaria from the beginning of our era depicts a warrior with two short curved swords. A similar sword or dirk, made of wood and with a blade about 30 cm long, came to light in the camp of Drusus the Elder at Oberaden in Westphalia (11–8 BC).<sup>8</sup> Another appears on Caligula's silver disc from Niederbieber, and a curved weapon like the one from Oberaden is depicted on a late first-century cavalryman's grave at Arlon in Belgium.<sup>9</sup> Curved daggers or swords are portrayed also on a weapon-relief from the Flavian Armilustrum temple in Rome;<sup>10</sup> captured from Rome's foes, they too point to the curved sword as a northern European weapon.

From the Rhine frontier comes the curved sword on Andes' headstone in Mainz. Andes' foe sprawls on the ground, clinging to his weapon (Figure 18.1).<sup>11</sup> With his long, pointed beard and thick crown of hair, the man is a crack Chattian warrior like those described in the next chapter. His weapon, being bent rather sharply halfway up the blade, recalls one of the Hjortspring blades.<sup>12</sup> The long-haired warrior raises his sword not against Andes himself but, like Onesilos' Carian, slashes at the feet of Andes' horse. He is bare-chested, wearing only tight, ankle-length trousers, allowing him to be quick and nimble in attacking the enemy's horse from below.



*Figure 18.1* Long-haired Chattian warrior with curved sword. Gravestone of Andes, Mainz. Photograph Landesmuseum Mainz, S 608.

A curved sword could hew off the leg of a horse, or rip open its side as it rushed by. Wherever it hit, the sword would deal a wound that brought the rider down. To judge from their gravestones, Roman horsemen saw horse-stabbers and hewers as dangerous and took pride in riding over them.

Trajan's Column shows no foes fighting on horseback and hence no horse-hewers.<sup>13</sup> In the later second-century, however, the Portonaccio sarcophagus, found in Rome, shows a horse-hewer: in the exquisitely carved relief he wields a curved sword or cleaver but has fallen to the ground (Figure 18.2).<sup>14</sup>

The horse-stabber and hewer are bare-chested so as to be nimble and fast.<sup>15</sup> The horse-hewer does not even have a shield: like horse-stabbers on Rhenish gravestones (Figure 17.1), he has only a thin coat or skin wrapped around his arm to guard him against blows.<sup>16</sup>



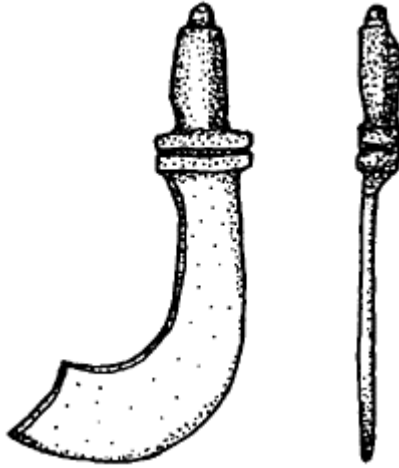
*Figure 18.2* Horse-hewer with curved weapon. Sarcophagus from Portonaccio, Rome. Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rome, Inst. Neg. 61.1399.

Done in the style of the Aurelian Column, the Portonaccio sarcophagus dates to the last third of the second century. As no wars raged along the Rhine at that time, the relief must depict a battle against Danubian Germani.<sup>17</sup> This fits well with a find from the legionary fortress at Enns (Lauriacum) on the Danube, where a miniature curved bronze sword or cleaver of the late second century has come to light. Only 5 cm long, it looks much like the weapon on the Portonaccio sarcophagus (Figure 18.2).

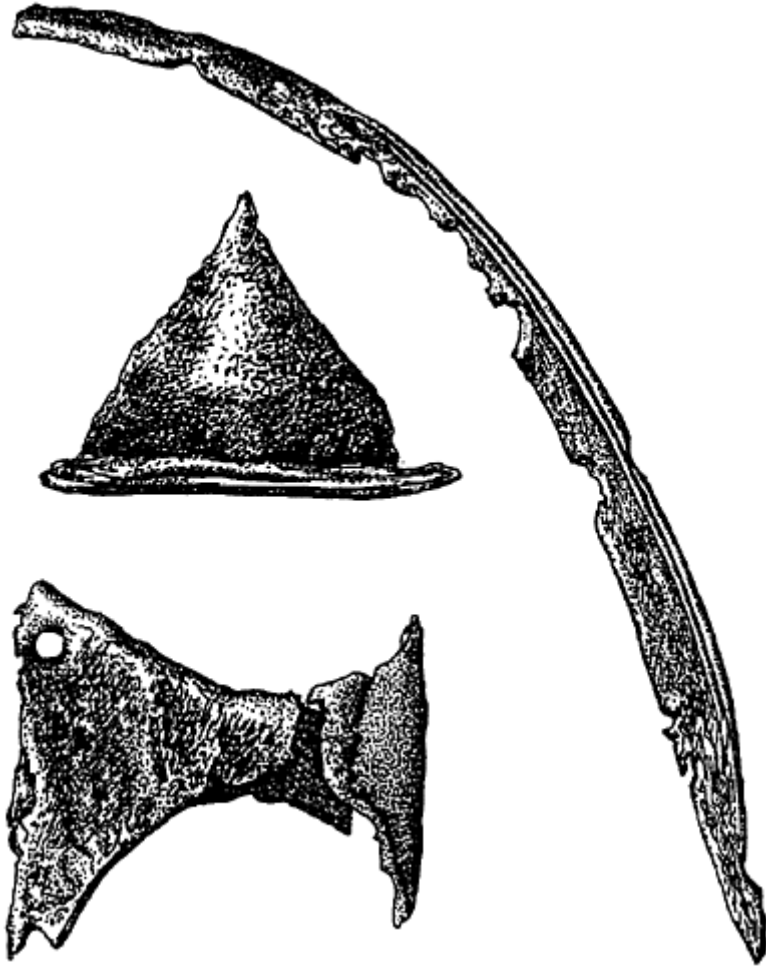
Roman soldiers had no weapons of this shape. However, since bronze miniatures are typically put into graves of Germanic warriors, or worn by their women, the Enns bronze cleaver very likely betokens the honored weapon of a warrior.<sup>18</sup> Having yielded other northern warrior gear, such as a bronze guard for a horse's head,<sup>19</sup> the legionary fortress of Enns seems to have housed an auxiliary troop of Germanic tribal horse and foot from beyond the Danube.

The curved "cleavers" of the Portonaccio sarcophagus and the Enns fortress belong to the Danubian frontier. So does the famous find from Káloz near Intercisa in Pannonia, where in a second-century twin grave two warriors were buried together with a horse. The richer warrior owned a shield with a bronze buckle and rim, a straight sword, and a lance; the poorer one had a shield with an iron buckle, a curved sword, and an ax as shown in Figure 18.4.

Since bronze-decorated weapons distinguished leaders from followers,<sup>20</sup> the horse must have belonged to a leader, the curved sword to his squire. Both must have been killed in the same battle or struck down by the same sickness.<sup>21</sup>



*Figure 18.3* Miniature bronze weapon from Enns, Oberösterreich. Found in 1982 by Robert Binder, Parzelle 1132; R. VII, 1131; inv. 84, 1982; drawing: Mok, 1996. I owe knowledge of this piece to my friend Hanns Ubl.



*Figure 18.4 Weapons of the squire.  
Twin grave at Káloz, Hungary.  
Drawing after Böhme, *Zeugnisse* 1975,  
181.*

The curved sword from Káloz with its iron hilt is 55 cm long, slightly longer than the wooden sword from Oberaden but shorter than some from Hjortspring. Like the sword on the Niederbieber disc and those from Hjortspring, the back of the blade is strengthened and straightens near the tip where it becomes double-edged to make it useful for stabbing as well. Although it has been said that Germanic mixed horse-foot formations did not give rise to special weapons,<sup>22</sup> horse-hewers indeed used a special weapon: the curved sword.

Herodotus' story of Onesilos points to the Káloz twin grave as the burial of a lordly horseman and a squire, who with his curved sword helped his master to fight enemy horsemen. Germanic horsemen, according to Caesar, usually had squires, but he does not say whether these fought with swords or spears.<sup>23</sup> The twin grave of Káloz is therefore particularly welcome as archaeological evidence that squires still used curved swords by the end of the second century and as confirmation for Caesar's report about the one-to-one relationship between horseman and squire.<sup>24</sup>

According to Tacitus the foot warriors who went along with the horse fought at the forefront. Very likely they are the naked hewers with curved swords seen beneath Roman horsemen on their gravestones (Figures 18.1, 18.2). Caesar says that they fought as squires of individual horsemen. Tacitus must be right when he says that the foot running with the horse were young, for only the young can keep up with horses at a canter. Their being young also suggests that the "hundred" runners were squires. Their fighting jointly with a horseman thus foreshadows the working together of knights and squires during the Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup>





Part 8  
OUTSTANDING  
WARRIORS

## 19

# LONG-HAIRS

They begin all battles and always fight in front.

Tacitus, *Germania*

### Indo-European long-hairs

One of the warrior's most striking means to awe his foes was his hair. Long hair alone did not mark a specific warrior style, for most Indo-European warriors wore long hair, but hair styles mattered—Celts alone had nine different ones. Indian, Iranian, Greek, Celtic, Italic and Germanic warriors wore their hair long, and Spartans claimed that long hair made them more handsome—or more frightening.<sup>1</sup>

Shaking one's long tresses unnerved foes. Thor as well as Indra shook their hair when angry. Lusitani, who fought the Romans in Spain in the mid-second century BC, "shook their hair against the enemy."<sup>2</sup> Of the Alamanni, Ammianus says: "As they raged even more than usual their flowing hair looked dreadful, and madness shone in their eyes."<sup>3</sup> Goths, too, shook their hair in defiance, and so did Germanic guardsmen in fourth-century Byzantium.<sup>4</sup> Iormunrekkr in the ninth-century *Hamðismál* shakes his hair as he grows battle-mad.<sup>5</sup>

Well-kempt hair, however, also was an ideal of Indo-European warriors, and, as long hair might be a bother in battle, many tied up their hair before a fight, a custom best known, perhaps, from Herodotus' account of the Spartans at Thermopylae, who, while waiting for the attack, combed their hair. Tukulti-Ninurta's berserks bound up their hair; Thracians bound theirs into a topknot; and mountain Lusitani gathered their hair, womanish long, on the forehead.<sup>6</sup>

### Chatti long-hairs

Among the Chatti on the middle Rhine, elite warriors identified themselves by their long hair. Their hairstyle matters, for it links the evidence in Tacitus' written account with that from Roman gravestones in a way that they confirm each other. Reflecting perhaps the first-hand observations of Pliny the Elder in his *Germanic Wars*,<sup>7</sup> Tacitus writes as follows:

A custom, seldom taken up among other Germanic peoples through a man's own daring, has among the Chatti become the rule: to let hair and beard grow long when they have come of age, and not to free the face of

its growth—vowed and pledged to valour—before they have slain an enemy. Over the blood and spoils they bare the brow. “Now at last,” they cry, “we have paid the price of birth and shown ourselves worthy of country and parents.” The coward and the shirker stay unkempt. The bravest also wear an iron ring (which is considered shameful) like a fetter, until they free themselves by killing a foe. Many Chatti like this look, and as their hair turns white, they are a mark of note for friend and foe alike. They begin all battles and always fight in front, a startling sight, for even in peace they do not soften their looks. None of them has home, land, or business of his own. To whatever host they choose to go, they get their keep from him, wasting the goods of others while despising their own, until weak old age makes them unfit for such hardy manhood.<sup>8</sup>

These words have been misunderstood. Scholars have taken Tacitus’ phrases “to free the face” and “to bare the brow” to mean cutting off one’s hair.<sup>9</sup> Yet this is not what Tacitus says. When a Chattian warrior killed a foe, he shed the looks of his face (*habitus oris*) and unveiled his forehead (*frontem*). The *habitus oris* thus shed was the hair hanging over the forehead and face, not the full, long hair in the back, nor the beard. By contrast, the *squalor* that stayed with one who had yet to slay an enemy consisted of having hair all over his face. One who had killed a foe thus bared his forehead by binding his combed hair with a band, as Indo-European and Germanic warriors often did.<sup>10</sup> To keep his stern warrior look (the *habitus* of long hair that Chatti warriors liked), a man might let his hair grow uncut until old age, using a hairband to keep his forehead free.<sup>11</sup>

The roof-tile antefixes of the shrine at the fortress of legio XI Claudia in Vindonissa seem to portray such Chatti warriors. During the legion’s stay at Vindonissa from AD 69 to 101, its main feat was fighting in Domitian’s Chattian war of AD 83. When Domitian held his triumph, the legion also celebrated, highlighting its deeds on roof tiles at its headquarters.<sup>12</sup> One of these tiles shows a young man with unkempt hair, untrimmed beard, and without a hairband,<sup>13</sup> which may portray the hair *squalor* of a Chatti warrior who has not yet killed a foe. Another tile from the same shrine depicts an older, bearded, very long-haired warrior with a hairband,<sup>14</sup> whose hair falls in long tresses down to his shoulders but whose throat, unlike that of the young warrior on the first tile, is shaved.<sup>15</sup> He may be a long-hair warrior of the Chatti who, having killed a foe, rid himself of *squalor* by freeing his forehead with a hairband, while letting the rest of his hair grow freely.

If the Chatti long-hairs did indeed free their foreheads with the help of hairbands, a long-standing problem with Tacitus’ passage is solved, for in this way elite warriors with uncut hair looked different from the unproven and cowards, and the manuscript text makes sense as it stands.<sup>16</sup> Tacitus, it seems, did not mistake the hairstyle of leading Chatti for that of unproven warriors, nor did he give in to an overweening wish to make “sense” of his “ethnographic material”.<sup>17</sup> By setting off the *squalor* of the unproven Chattian warrior from that of the freed forehead of his proven counterpart, Tacitus presents an understandable and meaningful, if curt, account.

Confirmation of this reading comes from Roman military gravestones in the Rhineland that portray long-haired enemy warriors. Andes’ headstone in Mainz, for instance, shows a sprawling warrior clinging to a curved sword (see Figure 18.1).<sup>18</sup> Some of the warrior’s

hair falls over his forehead, but most of it is gathered on top of his head where it rises high and then flows backward in a long pony tail. While the band that holds his hair is hard to see, its place and effect are unmistakable.<sup>19</sup> With his long, pointed beard, daring the foe to grab it, and with his thick crown of hair, Andes' foe is a crack warrior like those described by Tacitus. At the same time he is also one of the lightly clad, daring horse-hewers we have studied in the previous chapter.<sup>20</sup>

The gravestone of Carminius Ingenuus at Worms too depicts a long-haired warrior (Figure 19.1).<sup>21</sup> Again, the foe on the ground has his hair gathered on top of his head. Bound with a hairband, it streams in a long tail down his back. Thus bearded and long-haired, he too may be a Chatti warrior who, having freed his forehead when he first killed a foe, now lets his hair grow long. A third long-haired tribal warrior rears his head on a grave monument from Koblenz.<sup>22</sup> He seems to lack a pointed beard, but his hair is also gathered on top in a pony tail, and, as on other gravestones, his hairband is marked by a carved line around the head.<sup>23</sup> A fourth such warrior has come to light at Bartringen in Luxemburg. Like the Koblenz relief, the Bartringen one comes from a large, sculptured grave monument built for a Roman horseman in the mid-first century AD. It depicts a bare-chested warrior lying on the ground amid scattered weapons. He has been called "a dying Gaul,"<sup>24</sup> but he is neither dying nor a Gaul. Gauls by this time had long been conquered and were subjects, not enemies. The man's hands are fettered on his back, and his head is comforted by a woman.<sup>25</sup> On his hip hangs a scabbard, worn on a strap coming down from his belt; a trustworthy detail, for scabbards hung in this manner are seen also on other grave monuments and on Trajan's Column.<sup>26</sup> The find-spot in Luxemburg is beyond the Chatti frontier, and indeed, there is no telling whether the prisoner belongs to the Chatti or is from another tribe whose men, as Tacitus says, followed the Chatti custom.<sup>27</sup> Be that as it may, this and other Germanic warriors seen with long hair on sundry reliefs from the late first century on the Chatti frontier fit well with Tacitus' account of the Chatti, and may be from that state.<sup>28</sup> But not all Chatti warriors, Tacitus noted, kept their hair long, and indeed some Germani depicted on gravestones in the region wear their hair short (Figure 17.1).

Grave reliefs carved for the glory of Roman soldiers who overcame tribal warriors had to tell their tale believably. Standing along the roadways leading out from towns, they needed to convince onlookers and thus had to depict native warriors somewhat realistically.<sup>29</sup> They thus constitute independent evidence for Tacitus' account of the long-haired Chatti.<sup>30</sup>

Warriors world-wide have treated unproven youths as unworthy of honor,<sup>31</sup> a fact that lends weight to Tacitus' report of that practice among the Chatti. Such treatment of the less accomplished, coming from the warriors' natural desire to be admired and emulated, goaded the unproven to do all they could to throw off their shame, as did, for example, young Aztec warriors, forbidden to cut their long nape locks before they overcame a foe.<sup>32</sup>



*Figure 19.1* Long-haired tribal warrior.  
Gravestone of Carminius Ingenuus,  
Worms. Photo: Stadtarchiv Worms,  
Neg. M 9179c; CIL XIII, 6233.

Chatti saw themselves as hair-men. Of the two meanings of their name recognized in modern scholarship, hat-men and hair-men, the latter is more likely to be true, as gravestones along the frontier show them so strikingly long-haired.<sup>33</sup> If their name does indeed mean “hair-men,” Tacitus was right to focus on their hairstyle.<sup>34</sup> Though he followed age-worn ethnographic concepts,<sup>35</sup> he nevertheless reported what was most striking about them and what mattered most to the men themselves. In the case of the Chatti it was their long-haired warrior style.<sup>36</sup> That is no less true even if Tacitus focused on the Chatti because they resembled the idealized type of the Italic farmer-soldier.<sup>37</sup>

It was a fighting style not only for the Chatti. Other Germani too, Tacitus says, sometimes adopted Chatti hairstyles. The most famous of these is Civilis, leader of the Batavian uprising against Rome, who vowed to let his hair grow over his forehead until he overcame the legions.<sup>38</sup> This is the more understandable, as the Batavi were close relatives of the Chatti.<sup>39</sup>

Suebi tied their hair into a knot at the side or on top of the head. So did Franks, whose kings in peacetime let their long hair down, parted in the middle, but before going to battle braided and knotted it on the side of the head. In Danish legend he who unknots his hair is a fighter no more.<sup>40</sup> When Chatti warriors, freeing their foreheads, bound their hair with a hairband, they did much the same thing that long-haired warriors did everywhere.<sup>41</sup> Scholars have often seen long-haired Chatti warriors as forerunners of the Nordic berserks.<sup>42</sup> Both were attention-getting, professional warriors who began all battles, which makes such a link indeed likely. To be sure, neither does Tacitus describe the Chatti as mad fighters, nor are Nordic berserks said to have uncommonly long hair. However, the fact that some Chatti long-hairs fought naked suggests that they fought like berserks, madly and without armor.

Tacitus calls the deity to whom the long-hairs are beholden “Virtus.” This may be Woden, the god of the berserks, for he was the one to give men *virtus* and battle-madness.<sup>43</sup> Another shared custom of long-hairs and berserks, the wearing of rings, points in the same direction. It has been overlooked, so far, that Nordic berserks also wore rings, which they did “so they could strike stronger and cause a bitter wound.”<sup>44</sup> Rings mark a bond, above all that of belonging to a warband. Since in the case of berserks this is Woden’s warband, the same may be true for long-hairs.<sup>45</sup>

World-wide comparisons of primitive warriors and disciplined soldiers suggests that to fight a war rather than only battles, societies need a well-established government.<sup>46</sup> The Chatti, of whom Tacitus says in so many words that they alone go to war while others go to battle, should therefore have had a relatively efficient state “government.” Hence when long-hairs came to other Chatti as guests, they did so not by dint of threat but, like the comparable Irish *fianna*, by acknowledged, and no doubt religiously underpinned law.<sup>47</sup> Where kings ruled, as in the Nordic Middle Ages, berserks lived as champions of kings.<sup>48</sup> Among the Chatti, who had no kings, long-hairs would have lived as guests or retainers of local leaders, who, as the Icelandic *Eyrbyggja saga* suggests, were glad for the backing of such men in their never-ending quarrels.<sup>49</sup> The same saga says that berserks had no property of their own—like Chatti long-hairs.

The looks of Chatti long-hairs told their foes that they faced fierce, strong, and skillful fighters. Their vaunted hairdo, a sign of battle prowess, struck fear in the enemy’s heart. Tacitus understood the meaning of warrior styles well when he said that “the first to lose in all battles are the eyes.”<sup>50</sup>

### Long-hairs in the Middle Ages

While Rome asked her Germanic warriors to cut their hair,<sup>51</sup> free Germani looked at long hair as a sign of honor and outstanding warriorhood. They wore it so long that for the battle at Strassburg in AD 357, King Chnodomar of the Alamanni had to wind a round,

gold-embroidered band into his hair. So too did Harald Wartooth, legendary king of Denmark, and other Viking rulers.<sup>52</sup>

Seventh-century Bavarian warrior masks with lined squares above and below the face may represent long-hair warriors (Figure 11.4). If so, long-hairs were a warrior style like wolf-warriors shown on similar masks. If it is true that long-hairs continued as berserks, their style still flourished in the high Middle Ages.

Though different from well-combed long hair, the symbolism of unkempt hair too lived on into the Middle Ages. In AD 574, 6,000 Saxon warriors vowed not to cut hair or beard until they avenged themselves on their enemy, the Suebi.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, in the tenth century, Harold Fairhair was Harold Unkempt until he conquered all of Norway.<sup>54</sup> Long and unkempt hair marked different warrior styles, yet both can be traced from antiquity to the Middle Ages.

## HELMET-WEARERS

A head-guard along the helmet's roof, with wires wound round, guarded the outside so that a sword could not harm him.

*Beowulf*

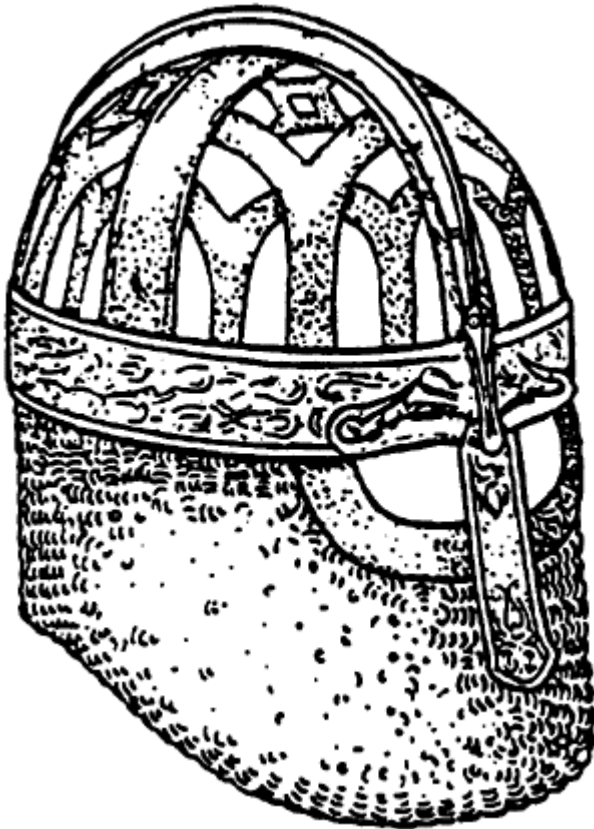
### **Crossband helmets of Trajan's Column and Vendel helmets**

Indo-European battle lords stood out for their bronze or gold helmets. The Vedic Marut warband wore such helmets, Scythian leaders of the fourth century BC strutted in golden open-work headgear, and Celtic chieftains likewise wore gold-gleaming helmets.<sup>1</sup> From Denmark's Bronze Age warriors, forebears of the Germanic, come the splendid ceremonial helmets of Viksø with their cast-on crossbands that make them forerunners of the helmets discussed in this chapter.<sup>2</sup>

Little is known, however, of early Germanic helmets. Ancient writers say that some warriors wore helmets, but aside from two first-century reworked Roman helmets (Figure 14.1), no Germanic helmets from antiquity have come to light yet.<sup>3</sup> Trajan's Column makes up for this lack. Four of the "irregulars" in the emperor's strike force in scene 36 wear helmets of a nonRoman type. Consisting of browband, fore-to-aft band, and ear-to-ear band, and held in place by a chin strap, they may be called crossband helmets (Figure 20.1).<sup>4</sup> The angular shape of the bands indicates that they were made of metal.

Unlike other helmets on the Column, those here sit so high on the head that, from forehead to neck, strands of hair curl out below them. Between the bands, locks of hair also appear, and since these look much like the hair below the helmet, they seem to be the wearer's own hair, not the metal imitation of hair or the wig found on some Roman army helmets.<sup>5</sup> Half-circle buckles rather than Roman hinges fasten the cheek straps to the browband.<sup>6</sup> The decorative lines along the edges of the ear-to-ear band are like those on Swedish Vendel helmets and on Lothair's crown (Figures 20.2, 20.4). together.<sup>10</sup> Germanic helmets on Trajan's Column, as well as Vendel helmets, thus are of the crossband type,<sup>11</sup> and several Vendel helmets share with those of Trajan's Column the feature that the spaces between the crossbands are open (Figure 20.2).





*Figure 20.2* Open Vendel helmet with a ridge (wale). Grave 6, Valsgärde, Uppland. Drawing after Böhner, “Spangenhelme” 1994, fig. 18, no. 5. See there for further such helmets.

For all that scholars have said, crossband helmets, whether from Trajan’s Column or Vendel, differ fundamentally from the comb- or ridge-helmets of late-Roman guards, for there the ridge or “comb” has the structural function of holding together the two iron halves of the helmet bowl.<sup>12</sup> Crossband helmets, on the other hand, have no bowl, even when the spaces between the crossbands are closed with decorative metal foils. Their fore-to-aft band, therefore, does not hold parts of the bowl together. Architecturally, Germanic crossband helmets, together with Vendel helmets, stand in a native tradition. They first appear in scene 36 of Trajan’s Column.

Though nothing links Constantinian half-bowls with Vendel crossbands,<sup>13</sup> scholars thought that early medieval Vendel helmets must have evolved from the comb helmets of Constantine's time, partly because a gap of almost five hundred years yawns between the helmets documented on Trajan's Column and the Vendel finds. It is true that, so far, crossband helmets from the first centuries of our era are known only from Trajan's Column and a gravestone showing Quadi warriors, but none from finds in the ground.<sup>14</sup> Yet since few Germani wore helmets, not many finds are to be expected. Besides, such gaps in the finds occur elsewhere too: very few late-Roman helmets have come to light after those of Constantine's time, and no Carolingian ones. The lack of actual finds, as with Celtic helmets, proves only that helmets were rare, just as Tacitus says, and they were rarely buried. Coins of Probus in 278 and of Constantine in 315 seem to portray Germanic leaders wearing wale-topped crossband helmets.<sup>15</sup>

Crossband helmets also differ structurally from late antique and early medieval *Spangenhelme*, where instead of two crossbands, several metal strips lead from the browband to the top and they are riveted together to produce a blow-resistant cover.<sup>16</sup>

Crossband helmets come in two varieties: with and without a protective ridge (wale) over the fore-to-aft band. The helmets on Trajan's Column have the protective ridge, which the *Beowulf* epic calls a *wala* and we may term "wale." The epic describes the function of the wale atop Beowulf's helmet thus: "A head-guard along the helmet's roof, with wires wound round, guarded the outside so that a sword could not harm him dreadfully should the bold shield-warrior go against his foes."<sup>17</sup> The function of the wale, then, was to parry sword blows, as combs did on Hittite and Hallstatt helmets more than a thousand years earlier.<sup>18</sup> Decorative dragon heads at each end of the wale gave added magic protection.<sup>19</sup>

It has been said that a quick turn of the helmet-wearer's head, as a sword blow fell, would take the blow across the wale and thus keep the cap from splitting.<sup>20</sup> It seems, however, that no such turning was needed to parry a blow, for when warriors fought face to face and shield to shield, sword blows from an opponent's right hand naturally hit the wale at an angle. The wale that absorbed blows to the head was a useful thing indeed, for the worst slashes of long swords came from above, slicing through the head.<sup>21</sup>

The crossband helmets on Trajan's Column are open between the bands to flaunt the hair, a warrior's pride. The wish to show off one's hair also explains why the helmets sit so high atop the head—unlike Roman helmets they let the hair curl out from underneath. Celtic and Germanic leaders seldom wore helmets since they wanted their hair to be seen and their person to be known. Wanting to be recognized for their deeds in battle, warriors even took off their helmets in the thick of fighting.<sup>22</sup>

The open helmets depicted on Trajan's Column, with narrow cheek pieces and no neck guards, cannot have been meant to guard against all dangers, certainly not against arrows.<sup>23</sup> In a sense, then, they were crowns rather than helmets. They are also much lighter than Roman helmets, which befits the faster Germanic fighting styles. As during the migration period Germanic weaponry grew heavier, so crossband helmets became closed Vendel helmets, even though they kept their crossband structure.

Who were Trajan's crossband-helmet wearers? So far, scholars have found no means to identify them.<sup>24</sup> Yet wearing un-Roman helmets while striding to war alongside barefooted swordsmen and wolf-warriors, they are very likely Germani.<sup>25</sup> All four are bearded, and like several other Germanic warriors on the Column, two of them have their

chin and middle cheeks shaven in the beard style of the fourth-century Welschbillig herms and “forebears” on the seventh-century Sutton Hoo scepter.<sup>26</sup> All of this suggests that the helmet wearers on the Column are Germanic lords.

Wearing cuirasses, they are also Roman auxiliaries. Perhaps they are followers of a warband leader in the service of Rome,<sup>27</sup> for, as with the Vedic Maruts, leaders often gave their followers weapons and helmets like their own. Archaeological finds have documented this custom among Germanic warriors as early as AD 200. Frankish princes equipped their warbands thus in AD 470, and Beowulf’s *helm-berend* followers all wore boar helmets like Beowulf’s own. Sixth-century warriors, portrayed on bronze foils from grave 14 at Vendel, all flaunt eagle helmets, and in AD 1152, when Gregorius Dagsson came to the Norwegian assembly in a gilded helmet, all his followers were helmeted too.<sup>28</sup> Members of Germanic warbands thus may have been uniformly equipped as early as the first century AD.

Literary sources say that few German warriors owned swords or helmets, and archaeological finds show this was indeed so.<sup>29</sup> The helmet wearers in scene 36 thus belong to a group of elite warriors. Rulers often sought out high-born followers for their warband, and athelings sometimes fought in units all of their own.<sup>30</sup>

Wearing helmets against sword blows, these warriors meant to go against swordsmen like themselves. Swords, as we have seen, were the noblest of weapons, held in even greater honor than spears.<sup>31</sup> A class of high-born swordsmen thus flourished in first-century Germany, as it did in the early Middle Ages: men who stood out for their sword-fighting and showy helmets—a noteworthy new aspect of ancient Germanic society.

Anglo-Saxon battle lords also wore open crossband helmets, known from actual finds.<sup>32</sup> The finest such helmet, with a separately worked tubular wale ending in animal heads, comes from Sutton Hoo. Buried about AD 625, it may have been made as early as AD 500.<sup>33</sup> Other Anglo-Saxon crossband helmets include the seventh-century Coppergate helmet from York that has a double-raised wale shaped into animal heads at each end,<sup>34</sup> and the Benty Grange helmet that adds some slanted subsidiary strips like those on the Thorsberg crown to the regular crossband structure (Figure 20.3).<sup>35</sup>

Book illustrations such as the Stuttgart *Bilderpsalter* show that Frankish warriors in Carolingian times also wore crossband helmets.<sup>36</sup> Wale helmets were weapons of high standing from Trajan’s Column to Vendel graves, and so they were later still, for Valhelm and Walahelm are Anglo-Saxon and Old High German warrior names.<sup>37</sup>

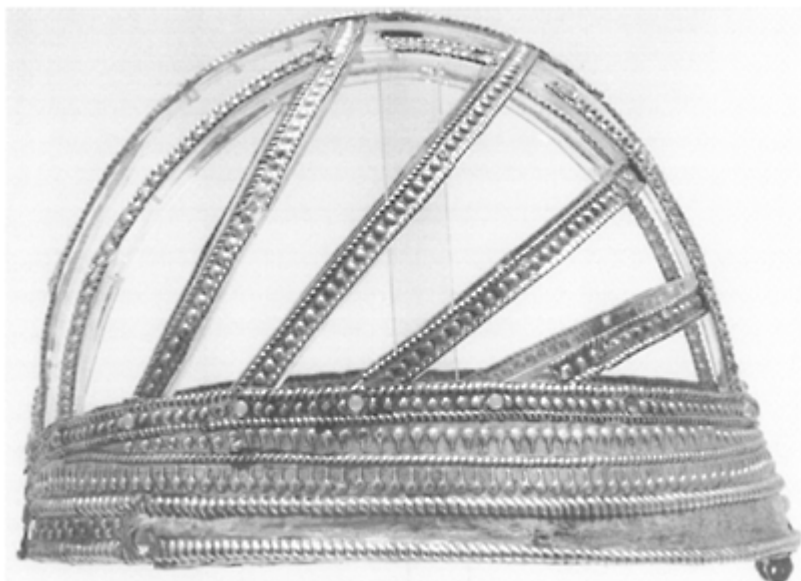
Once taken as proof of the North’s cultural dependence on Rome,<sup>38</sup> Vendel helmets thus stand in a native Germanic tradition. Both in design and in prestige as status symbols for high-ranking followers of kings,<sup>39</sup> they hark back to the helmets in scene 36 of Trajan’s Column. Germanic warriors wore them for many years thereafter too. As a mark of high standing, leaders still wore Vendel helmets in the tenth century, in the middle of the Viking period, when other warriors wore newer, pointed-bowl “Norman” helmets as in Figure 5.4.<sup>40</sup>

### Crossband crowns

The helmets on scene 36 of Trajan’s Column look remarkably like medieval and modern crowns. The earliest known crown of this type is a third-century cap made of gilded silver

found at Thorsberg in Schleswig (Figure 20.3). It follows the basic crossband construction, with browband and fore-to-aft band, but instead of one ear-to-ear band it has four slanted such bands.

Worn with a face mask like later Vendel helmets, the Thorsberg crown sat as high atop the head as do the helmets on Trajan's Column and crowns



*Figure 20.3* Silver crown from Thorsberg, Schleswig. Side view. Photo: Archäologisches Landesmuseum, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig.

of kings. Its drop-like ornaments show that it was made in free Germany, not in a Roman province.<sup>41</sup> Being of precious metal, it must have belonged to a prince and served as a symbol of power. It lacks a separate wale, as do several Vendel helmets and crossband crowns.<sup>42</sup>

The structure of the Thorsberg crown, with its four “ear-to-ear” bands, is similar to that of the helmets from graves 7 and 8 at Vendel and that of the Benty Grange helmet. Crowns and helmets with several ear-to-ear bands thus constitute a sub-group of crossband helmets, linked by their structure to helmets and crowns from the first to the seventh century.

Vendel helmets and the Thorsberg crown share the same structure because Germanic crowns were, in fact, golden helmets.<sup>43</sup> Late Roman emperors wore golden helmets in battle so that their soldiers could recognize them, a custom they adopted in the third century AD, perhaps from northerners.<sup>44</sup> The kingly tenth-century Viking leader Olaf in

the *Laxardal saga*, upon coming to Ireland, wore a helmet with golden plates, and in AD 1030 King Olaf of Norway wore a golden helmet in the battle at Stiklastad. Snorri Sturlusson writes that when the king in his golden helmet, together with his best-armed retainers, sallied out of the shield castle his foes were filled with dread.<sup>45</sup> It was a tactical move almost like Trajan's in scene 36 of his Column (Figures 0.2, 1.1), or that reported by Ammianus Marcellinus for the battle at Strassburg in AD 357: the princes sallying forth to the decisive attack.

While we have no other early crowns or images of crowns from the North, Charlemagne in the early ninth century, if one can trust his somewhat damaged lead seals, wore a crossband crown, just as his soldiers wore cross-band helmets.<sup>46</sup> The crown of his grandson Lothair I (840–855), well known from a gold medallion (Figure 20.4), clearly was an open crossband "helmet" with a protective wale.<sup>47</sup>

Lothair's crown resembles the crossband helmets on Trajan's Column, especially in the shape of the wale, which grows higher toward the top, but differs in that the ear-to-ear band reaches only halfway up to the fore-to-aft band, perhaps so that more of the hair shows. The vanishing ear-to-ear band is of great interest, for it points to the German imperial crown from which, by the time of Otto the Great (936–962), the ear-to-ear band has gone altogether.<sup>48</sup> The crown of Konrad II (1024–1039) in Vienna (Figure 20.5) likewise lacks an ear-to-ear band, but its architecture is clear, as it is made of browband and fore-to-aft band with a wale.<sup>49</sup> Konrad's crown, moreover, has hinges on the sides for cheek pieces, which further points to its origin from a helmet.<sup>50</sup>

The crowns of Lothair, Otto, and Konrad, stemming as they do from open crossband helmets with a wale, thus embody a tradition seen already on Trajan's Column.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, it is fair to say that Indo-European golden helmets gave rise, in an unbroken line, to medieval and modern crowns.<sup>52</sup> Royal crowns today, then, still bespeak battle lords who, like the helmet-wearers



*Figure 20.4* Lothair I, wearing an open crown with a wale. Book cover, British Library, London. British Museum, ADD M.S. 37768; Museum photograph.

in scene 36 on Trajan's Column, wore striking and daringly open crossband helmets as they faced their foes. Woden himself was believed to fight in earth's last battle, at Ragnarök, wearing his golden helmet. Warrior kings with golden helmets or crowns thus shared in his ecstasy.<sup>53</sup>



*Figure 20.5* German imperial crown (AD 1027). Weltliche Schatzkammer, Hofburg, Wien. Photo: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, Neg. III 19.159.





Part 9  
WARRIOR STYLES  
THROUGH THE AGES

## IRON AGE WARRIORS AND THE CIVILIZATIONS OF GREECE AND ROME

Caesar's foresight was found to counterbalance the  
Germani's fiery spirit and their headlong, reckless attack.

Dio Cassius

Indo-European warfare of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age has not yet been studied as a whole. Aside from chariotry, relatively little of it is known. There is very early evidence, however. Natalevka-type stone stelae from around 3000 BC, found in Ukraine, show a naked berserk warrior as well as clubs, axes, spears, knives, bows, arrows, and horses, betraying a wealth of fighting techniques.<sup>1</sup> By 1600 BC at the latest, when Aryans came to India, Indo-European warrior styles were in full swing. Around 1200 BC, at the end of the Bronze Age in West Asia, berserks decided battles and wolf-warriors ran with war chariots.

Warbands (*Männerbünde*) with their own ways of bravery and "willfulness," underpinned these warrior styles. Sanskrit *svadhā*, "inherent power, habitual state, custom," is kindred to Greek and English *ethos*, "character, behavior," and to Latin *sodales* "warband". *Svadhā* comes close to our concept of warrior style, referring not only to "group" and "behavior" but also to weapons that went with these. The *Ṛg-Veda* says of Indra's Marut warband: "They glitter like lightning through the rain, with weapons befitting their *svadhā*." To fight in such style was a ritual, acting out a myth. Groups of wolf-warriors and berserks had their own weapons, tactics, and war dances. *Svadhā* heightened the group's spirit and made its grim ways less shocking to themselves and out-siders.<sup>2</sup> Their excesses meant glory: wolf-warriors, berserks, and ghost warriors no doubt won the "unwilting glory" held out by the *Iliad* and *Rig-Veda*<sup>3</sup>

By the time of their classical periods, Greeks and Romans had created another ideal: balanced reasonableness. Seeing themselves as civilized, they saw others as barbarians, given to wantonness in all ways of life: eating, drinking, bragging, fighting, and fleeing. Plato and Aristotle thought it unreasonable to gorge on food and drink, an ideal of Indo-European warriors.<sup>4</sup> They saw the fearlessness of "barbarians," however great, as mindlessness and believed that "barbarians," having little to live for, rushed to their death.<sup>5</sup> As they perfected the art of disciplined, rational fighting, Greeks and Romans saw mindlessness as the root of "barbarian" tactics.<sup>6</sup> In the fourth century AD, Ammianus holds this view of all "barbarians," especially Africans, while in the sixth century, Maurice restricts it to the "blond nations."<sup>7</sup>

Yet Greeks too once had ecstatic warriors and only slowly abandoned the wild ways of "mad-dog" Hector and "wolfish" Achilles. The *Iliad* tells of an early step down the

path to “civilized” fighting: while Trojan warriors yelled and shouted, Greek battle groups kept quiet, listening for orders.<sup>8</sup> During the archaic period, as the tactics of heavy-armed citizen hoplites spread, most Greeks laid aside their weapons to live peacefully in towns, donning simple dress instead of gold-gleaming Indo-European warrior garb.<sup>9</sup> Spartans so insisted on orderliness that they punished Isadas for fighting naked when he saved them from a sudden rush of the enemy.<sup>10</sup>

Greeks thus turned to well-ordered fighting, and for many years the hoplite array of the classical period stood unshaken. That changed when Athenians faced backward Aetolian hillmen who, lacking armor and fighting barefoot on their native ground, sent the hoplites reeling.<sup>11</sup> Though civic-minded Athenians kept up their prowess in war, they had seen the limits of orderly tactics. Henceforth, when they needed attack troops, they hired Aetolian or Thracian tribesmen, whose speed and fierceness mark them as berserk-like warriors.<sup>12</sup>

Rome took the same path. Early Romans shared the Bronze Age and Iron Age Indo-European warrior styles that Italic tribes brought from north of the Alps to the Italian peninsula around 1000 BC.<sup>13</sup> Wolf-warriors, as we have seen, founded Rome, and in Hannibal’s time such warriors still went before the legions. Indeed, early Italic warriors upheld many Indo-European fighting styles: some fought shouting, as half-naked foot and horse, barefoot, fur-clad, flowing-haired, or in warbands. Some wielded wooden clubs, firehardened spear-tips, and curved swords, or screeched war songs like flocks of raucous birds.<sup>14</sup> Harnessing the power of ecstasy, these styles won early Rome her victories.<sup>15</sup>

**Over** time Rome recast her army into more disciplined legions, even though reckless attack and single combat remained hallmarks of the Roman army down to the time of Caesar. Gradually, however, Roman soldiers donned uniform (more or less), cut their hair, and when attacked stood quietly until given the signal.<sup>16</sup> To their field commanders, the worst faults were now speed and daring.<sup>17</sup> Their animal sympathy shrank to mere symbolism. “Rome,” as Dumézil puts it,<sup>18</sup> “lost even the memory of those bands of warriors who sought to be more than human, on whom magico-military initiation was supposed to confer supernatural powers, and whose likeness was presented, very much later, by Scandinavia with its berserks and by Ireland with its Fianna.”

Romans, like Greeks, fashioned an ideology to underpin the new tactics. Trusting in reason, will, and order,<sup>19</sup> they now gaped at Celtic and Germanic madness (*vesania*, *amentia*, *iracundia*, *furor*), those fits of reckless rage, that mindless rush to battle. In AD 250, Emperor Decius told his soldiers: “A man trusting in reason is safer than one carried blindly toward unknown outcomes.”<sup>20</sup>

An embossed sword sheath from Windisch in Switzerland shows how Romans looked at northern warriors and how they hoped to overcome them (Figure 21.1).<sup>21</sup> The scene shows a giant long-haired warrior who if he stood to his full height would be taller than the soldier on horseback and might well take him on. Instead, he is speared in the back as he runs away—the thrust of the spear has thrown him forward and swept the horseman back-ward. The scene gives one to understand that superior Roman generalship, discipline, and fully armored staying power have turned the tide of battle, and now, as the tribesmen flee, helmeted but lightly clad auxiliary lancers in pursuit cut them down.

Theory held that huge bodies were more vulnerable and that reason would overcome fighting madness. In practice, large bodies were of course an advantage, and as for

fighting madness, Greeks and Romans needed it too for steadiness was not enough: the keenest troops of Alexander and Caesar fought “like beasts.”<sup>22</sup>

For a while, relying on discipline and reason brought stunning conquests. Disciplined Romans overcame the Gauls who had earlier outdone them in the “glory of war.”<sup>23</sup> In the ensuing peace, however, Romans and Italians



*Figure 21.1* Giant warrior overcome by Roman horseman. Bronze scabbard, Windisch, Switzerland. Photo: Kantonsarchäologie Aargau, Vindonissa Museum.

ceased to be warriors, and their heartland lay open to attack. Tacitus and Ammianus bewail this in their *Histories*. Uniformity and superb equipment bought time for Rome; hiring foreign tribesmen bought still more time. But it was borrowed time and came to an end. Far-sighted Tacitus saw Roman *virtus* as so blunted by peace and Empire that he has someone say “Only foreigners still count in the Roman army.”<sup>24</sup> Trajan’s Column bears this out when it shows the emperor leading northern wolf- and bear-warriors, berserks, club-men, and helm-wearers—fierce, frightening figures who bestride the battlefields and do much of the fighting.

Those who saw Rome’s warrior spirit ebb, pointed to the disappearance of the old and colorful fighting styles. Romans of the Republic upheld a civic ideal of manhood, but during the Empire, Romans looked to the north to find the freedom and manhood once characteristic of Rome and Italy.<sup>25</sup> Writing wistfully of old Italic warrior styles, Vergil

uses images of northern warriors. Silius Italicus echoes him, and Lucanus, in Nero's time, looks beyond the Alps for colorful warrior styles.<sup>26</sup>

Strabo, in Augustus' time, observed with insight that the warrior spirit still thrived among free Germani and island Celts.<sup>27</sup> With Ariovistus in 60 BC, the old styles had already begun to make headway against the somewhat Romanized Celts in Gaul.<sup>28</sup> When Ariovistus and his warriors faced Caesar, Dio Cassius has Caesar give a speech that repeats the time-worn Greek and Roman view of northern warriors: tall, naked, reckless, loud, unruly, and rash.<sup>29</sup> The description, however, though hackneyed, is in many ways true.

Using the old fighting styles, and combining a spirit of freedom with culturally sustained forms of discipline rather than blind obedience, northern warriors held their own against Rome even at the peak of her power. Tacitus quipped that Germanic freedom was deadlier to Rome than Persian despotism: Rome had come to see Germanic warriors as its most fearsome enemies.<sup>30</sup>

When Caesar moved the frontier to the Rhine, he began large-scale recruitment of Germani. As the legions' role began to shrink, emperors enlisted more and more old-style northern warriors from beyond the Rhine and Danube.<sup>31</sup> This not only brought about a resurgence of warrior styles in the imperial army but emperors also came to behave like Germanic leaders. Trajan "led" wolf-warriors and shirtless, barefoot berserks; Caracalla caroused with his bodyguard as Germanic chieftains did with their warbands, and he and Maximinus fought with their own hands and strained to look tall and fierce "like the most warlike barbarians."<sup>32</sup> Under Septimius Severus (AD 193–211) warfare again became for Roman emperors what it had been for leaders in the Bronze Age and Iron Age and what it would remain for the next thousand years throughout Europe: the all-consuming occupation of rulers, governments, and ruling classes.<sup>33</sup> The come-back of the old warrior styles signaled the advent of the Middle Ages, not only in Europe but in Iran and China as well.<sup>34</sup>

Are frenzied warriors not easily overcome by disciplined, well-equipped troops? Classical Greeks and Romans would have it so,<sup>35</sup> and as late as AD 296 a speaker praising Constantius, the father of Constantine, claimed that Julius Caesar had had it good, for all his Roman battle order had to do was best British warriors "used only to half-naked Picts and Irish as foes."<sup>36</sup> Seneca similarly held that in their overweening anger Germani could be beaten even by unwarlike Asiatics;<sup>37</sup> and Constantius II made light of Julian's victories over "half-armed Germani."<sup>38</sup>

The rise of Germanic troops in the Roman army, however, proves otherwise. By the fourth century it reached a high point: Rome's and Byzantium's best troops were Germanic soldiers, using Germanic weapons and tactics. Theodosius' obelisk in Byzantium shows that even the role of escorting the emperor at public ceremonies, formerly belonging to the praetorian guard, fell to long-haired, blond Germanic guardsmen, with their characteristically broad, inward-curving spear blades and their golden torc neckbands (Figure 21.2).<sup>39</sup>

Germanic warriors rose to the position of Rome's highest-ranking soldiers not because they were easily overcome but because they were the keenest fighters to be found. Their fame was such that, as we have seen, Constantine had himself portrayed as a buck-warrior. Besides, their ethic was to keep faith with the warband leader—in this case the

Roman emperor. Should anything befall him, they would avenge him as berserks, as they did at the death of Caligula and Julian.<sup>40</sup>

The Germanic equivalent of discipline on the battlefield was *barritus* chanting and shield-swinging; the equivalent of strategic discipline was (besides tribal coherence) keeping faith with the “giver of rings.”<sup>41</sup> These were inner bonds that stood up to outer Roman order and drill and allowed warriors to win against soldiers. Warrior styles were a mind-set, and Plato, like Herodotus, may have been right to conclude that in war mind-set matters most.<sup>42</sup>



*Figure 21.2* Germanic guards of Theodosius (AD 379–395). Theodosius’ Obelisk, Byzantium. Photo: Michael Speidel.

## END AND AFTERGLOW

If a man goes berserk, he will be punished by the lesser outlawry.

*Grágás Lawbook*, “Christian Laws”

### Abidingness and end

Over large areas of Europe, Roman influence and then conquest brought an end to the old warrior styles. Caesar held that the Gauls had become soft through contact with Rome long before he conquered them.<sup>1</sup> Likewise Roman monuments rarely portray Dacians fighting in the old styles: at the most they use curved swords, form a double shield wall, or stab a horse. Living in towns and being subject to kings, Dacians, like Gauls, shed the old styles through contact with Rome. Not all of Western Europe, however, shut itself off from the old warrior styles:<sup>2</sup> Island Celts and Germani kept their freedom, their warrior spirit and their old fighting styles into the early Middle Ages.

On the battlefield the old styles held their own against the Romans. They also lasted so long because they were bound up with heathen Germanic culture. By steady renewal in images of mythic beginnings among gods and ancestors, they achieved ecstasy.<sup>3</sup> In many archaic societies war was the aspect of life that called the most for the presence of gods and ancestors,<sup>4</sup> and this holds true also for ancient Germani: witness the masked ancestor dance. Tacitus, noting that Germani “believed the gods to be with those in battle,” implies that this belief mattered more to ancient Germani than to Romans.<sup>5</sup>

As one of the most tradition-bound human pursuits,<sup>6</sup> warfare kept rural, non-literate European societies like those of the Celts and Germani steadfastly to their old ways.<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, during the long time from 200 BC to AD 1000, warrior styles evolved, for as society grew more aristocratic and monarchic, hauberks, helmets, and *ango-spear* came into wider use, also broadax, throwing-ax, and bow. The aristocratic outlook may also have caused the weapon dance in the seventh century to be performed dressed and no longer naked. Changes, though, were never sweeping, and from the third century onwards the ratio of churls to elite warriors stayed about the same.<sup>8</sup> Early medieval warriors thus had little reason to abandon the time-honored fighting styles. Besides, warrior items of “materialized ideology” like ancient, powerful weapons, or splendid Vendel helmets, strengthened the athelings’ grip on power.<sup>9</sup> Iron Age warfare thus continued without a break into the early Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup>

The coming of Christianity undid the old warrior styles. As native religion gave way to Christianity, the warrior styles, bound to Woden-worship, were outlawed. For Iceland we have the wording of that law, as seen in the epigraph to this chapter. Similar laws were passed in other newly Christianized lands, though among Merovingians, Christianized early in the sixth century, the changeover took longer—witness the

Obrigheim foil (Figure 1.5). In Scandinavia, where Christianity came late, the break was sharp and sudden: the old styles went out at once. Only at Uppsala, in the far north, did Woden's war dance last through most of the eleventh century.

### Afterglow

In the high Middle Ages, the knights' widespread wolf- and bear-sympathy, as seen in the *Hundsgugel* (Figure 1.8), are mere shadows of the erstwhile wolf- and bear-warrior styles. Nevertheless, Icelandic sagas of the fourteenth century still know the wolf-warrior Guðmund Ulfhedin to be king of the warrior paradise Glaesisvellir.<sup>11</sup> Likewise in the legend of Woden's Wild Host, told in mainland Europe until modern times, wolves run with fallen warriors.<sup>12</sup>

Berserk blustering, and vaunting one's unguarded fearlessness, are still alive when eighth-century Beowulf throws off helmet, hauberk, and sword as he meets the monster Grendel.<sup>13</sup> Icelandic sagas and Saxo Grammaticus speak of such diehard berserk habits as shield-biting and scorning armor. Howling like wolves, unbelievably strong, quickly flying into a fearsome rage, the steel-proof and fireproof berserks of the sagas represent sundry elite warrior styles rolled into one. Even as an afterglow of vanished customs, the berserks of these tales left a deep mark on men's minds. While Tacitus' long-hairs exact from other men food and lodging, the berserks of the sagas lay hands on high-born women—a harrowing memory of how elite warriors weighed on society.

Humanists of the Renaissance read Tacitus' tale of fur-clad northern warriors scaring people in the streets of Rome. When Bartoli's etchings of Trajan's Column, published in 1667, brought images of wolf- and bear-warriors and half-naked berserks to the attention of many, northern patriotism began to idealize the old warrior styles. Wolf-hooded warriors strut about in J.C. Sang's copper engraving for Schönaich's 1753 epic *Hermann oder das befreite Deutschland*. A few years later, though, the performance in Leipzig of J.E.Schlegel's play *Hermann* failed to overwhelm Goethe, "notwithstanding the many animal skins."

In the mid-eighteenth century the Flemish artist Peter Anton Verschaffelt sculpted a hooded wolf-warrior as the centerpiece of his allegory *The Art of War*, still standing outside the palace at Schwetzingen. On a Dutch engraving of 1783 the national hero Civilis wears a (winged) wolf-hood.<sup>14</sup> In Switzerland a painting of 1858 shows wolf-warriors growling among Helvetians as they send Roman prisoners under the yoke.<sup>15</sup> Wolf-warriors also lurk on the walls of Denmark's Frederiksborg Castle painted after the fire of 1859. Stockholm and Göteborg have naked-warrior monuments. Never yet collected or studied systematically, such works of art can be delightfully odd: an iron sculpture made in 1842 by August Fischer casts its two fighters in patriotically reversed roles: a Roman on foot fights with a club against a Germanic bear-warrior on horseback.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps out of embarrassment at animal-hooded and half-naked forebears, the twentieth century largely overlooked Germanic warrior styles on Trajan's Column. To us in the twenty-first century, the old warrior styles are both an anthropological phenomenon and a part of European antiquity alive until the High Middle Ages. They appeal, for the human motivations they embodied still live.<sup>17</sup> This study may have shown



that our shared humanity can give us an insider understanding of ancient warriors and empathy for a bygone style of life.

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters reveal that there are rich sources allowing us to trace the history of Germanic warrior styles. Though some styles are better documented than others, a coherent picture emerges. Deep-rooted, colorful warrior styles offer insight into the tactics of ancient warfare, into the frame of mind of the warriors, and into the culture of heathen Germania.

The warrior styles in turn throw new light on the sources. Our study has shown that, tied together by the presence of barefooted berserks, scenes 36–42 of Trajan’s Column to narrate one specific campaign, essential for grasping the historical content of the reliefs. Depicting Germanic warrior styles known from later centuries, the Column again proves its historical accuracy. Icelandic sagas, for their part, are now seen to preserve elite warrior traits of far earlier times.

The continuity of Germanic culture turns out to be stronger than hitherto acknowledged. On Trajan’s Column as in Icelandic sagas, wolf- and bear-warriors fought alongside each other. From the first century to the seventh, leaders wore crossband helmets, *barritus* chanters swung their shields in unison, and charging lancers bore long spears on their shoulders. The heroic ideal described in Tacitus’ *Germania* is the same still in the tenth-century *Battle of Maldon*. Contrary to twentieth-century opinion, much of Germanic antiquity continued without a break into the Middle Ages.

The unity of heathen Germanic culture is also found to be stronger than hitherto thought. Alamanni, Swedes, and Anglo-Saxons all wore Vendel helmets decorated with the same heroic images first designed in Alamannia. Southern Germans, like Scandinavians, fought as ecstatic wolf- and bear-warriors or berserks. Bavarians danced Woden’s war dance as did Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons. Migrations, alliances, warriors seeking employment abroad, high-born women marrying to other courts, trade, warfare, prisoners, and much else caused North and South to share all the main features of society, war, religion, language and poetry.

Lastly, the deep Bronze Age and Iron Age tradition of these warrior styles leaps to the eye. Foot warriors stabbing enemy horses from underneath are known not only among Alamanni and Swedes but also among Thracians and Celts, and thus are an Indo-European warrior style like wolf-warriors and ecstatic naked warriors. Claims of Roman influence—that berserks stem from gladiators, that Woden was a “Randkultur”-Mars, that Vendel helmets derived from late-Roman guard helmets—are unfounded. Our study has shown that these things belong to native Germanic and Indo-European tradition.

Whatever progress has been made, much is still to be learned about ancient Germanic warriors, much that will widen and deepen our understanding of Europe’s older, heathen culture.

# TIMETABLE

3000 BC–800 BC	Bronze Age
800 BC–AD 500	Iron Age
800 BC–AD 500	Antiquity
AD 500–AD 1000	Early Middle Ages
2000 BC	Dispersal of Indo-Europeans
1600 BC	Greeks come to Greece, Aryans to India
1600 BC–1100 BC	Mycenaean Period
1000 BC	Italic tribes come to Italy
800 BC	Homer's <i>Iliad</i> and <i>Odyssey</i>
753 BC	Romulus founds Rome
480 BC	Xerxes attacks Greece
336 BC–323 BC	Alexander the Great
58 BC	Caesar advances the Roman frontier to the Rhine
31 BC–AD 14	Augustus
9	Battle in the Teutoburg Forest; Rome retreats from Germany east of the Rhine
96–117	Trajan
98	Tacitus writes the <i>Germania</i>
c. 200	Alamanni come to southern Germany
306–337	Constantine
355–363	Julian
357	Battle at Strassburg
378	Battle at Adrianople
378–568	Migration period
c. 390	Ammianus publishes his <i>History</i>
400–500	Anglo-Saxons come to Britain
476	Fall of Rome
c. 500	Clovis and the Franks take Gaul, become Christian
520–793	Vendel period
600–700	Alamanni and Anglo-Saxons become Christian
768–814	Charlemagne
793–1066	Viking period

850–930	Iceland discovered, settled
872	Battle of the Hafrsfjord; Norway united
872	<i>Haraldsquiða</i> by Thorbjorn Hornklofi
c. 950	Denmark becomes Christian
c. 1000	<i>Poetic Edda</i>
1000	Norway and the North Sea islands become Christian
1066	Normans conquer England
1070	Heathen shrine at Uppsala closed
1200–1300	Icelandic sagas
1208–1218	Saxo Grammaticus
c. 1220	<i>Prose (Snorra) Edda</i>

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 Grönbech, *Kultur* [1912] 1997, II, 218ff.; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 44ff.; 154ff.; 250ff.; Hauck, "Lebensnormen" 1955; Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, 225; Eliade, *Return* 1954; Eliade, *Myth* 1963, 145; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 21ff.
- 2 Stevens, "Gigantomachia," *Poetry* 1997, 258; compare Keegan, *Mask* 1987. Forebears and those after: Tacitus, *Agricola* 32.4 (on Britons).
- 3 War welcome: Herodotus 5.6 (Thracians); Strabo 4.4.2 (Celts); Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* 4a.1.2: "Germanos, avidam bello gentem"; Tacitus, *Germania* 14: "ingrata genti quies"; *Historiae* 4.16.1: "Laeta bello gens"; Ammianus 16.12.46: "Alamanni bella alacriter ineunt"; Libanios, *Oratio* 59, 128 (Franks in the fourth century AD thought that a life lacking deeds was the greatest grief, while wartime offered the highest happiness); Iordanes, *Getica* 39 (206): "Certaminis huius gaudia" (Huns). Davie, *Evolution* 1929, 147; Turney-High, *War* 1991, 166ff. Turney-High, *War* 1991, 144. Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship* 1971, 151: War was "a way of life as much as a means of survival or expansion." World-wide: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 141f. Eliade, *Return* 1954, 29: "War or the duel can in no case be explained through rationalistic motives"; Steuer, "Kriegswesen" 2001; LeShan, *Psychology* 1992. War. Motivations for war: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 141ff.; Beck, *Waffentanz* 1968; Haas, *Anthropology* 1990, XII.
- 4 Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 193: "The centrality of the warlike element." Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 950: "Den Zugang zum 'Eigentlich Keltischen' im Heroentum und in der Heldensage suchen." Kershaw, *God* 2000.
- 5 Work on Indo-European warrior styles: Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969; Birkhan, "Germanen" 1970; Blaney, "Berserkr" 1972; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974; Crevatin, *Ricerche* 1979; Ziegler, *Oðin* 1985; McCone, "Hund" 1987; Miller, "Hair" 1998; Kershaw, *God* 2000; for the valuable studies by Georges Dumézil, Otto Höfler, and Karl Hauck see the bibliography. A book on Indo-European warrior styles is badly needed. The study of initiation (Blaney, "Berserkr" 1972, 90–129; Meier, "Initiation" 2000) and the so-called *Männerbünde* (Bollée, "Sodalities" 1981; Bremmer, "Suodales" 1982, cf. *AE* 1996, 39) is beyond our more narrow military scope, but see now the outstanding work by Kershaw, *God* 2000. Overlooked: Beck, *Germanen* 1998; Schmitt, "Altertumskunde," 2000.
- 6 Tacitus mistakenly criticized: see p. 82, note 7; 98, note 4. Trajan's Column: see notes 14, 19, 21, and p. 7.
- 7 Bracteates: Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* I–IV, 1985–1989; also Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, 261. Names: Grimm, "Bedeutung" 1865; Kaufmann, *Personennamen* 1968, renewing Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900; Müller, "Wolfhetan" 1967; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970; Reichert, *Lexikon* 1987 and 1990; Beck, "Personennamen" 1986.
- 8 Turney-High, *War* 1991; Haas, *Anthropology* 1990. Turney-High's is an outstanding study of primitive war, far more useful than the dry-as-dust dichotomies of Wright, *War* 1942; but while he makes welcome use of Caesar and Tacitus, Turney-High does not consider any works on these two authors and hence at times mishandles them. Davie, *Evolution* 1929, deals with European primitive warfare only second-handedly. Good use of anthropology for early European warfare: Steuer, "Kriegswesen" 2001.

- 9 Greeks and Indians separated: Drews, *Coming* 1988; Drews, *End* 1993; Kuzmina, "Migration" 2001. Feared: Andreas Heusler in Schramm, *Personennamen* 1978, 55; Mallory, *Search* 1989, 110f. Research: Poetry: Schmitt, *Dichtung* 1967; *Dichtersprache* 1968; "Altertumskunde" 2000; sceptical: Humbach, "Dichtersprache" 1967; contra: von See, *Heldendichtung* 1978, 2. Ideals: Schramm, *Personennamen* 1957. Religion, myth: Littleton, *Mythology* 1982; Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987; Drews, *Coming* 1988, 152; Lincoln, *Death* 1991, 1–19. Culture: Mallory, *Search* 1989; Parpola, "Problem" 1995; Schmitt, "Altertumskunde" 2000, 384–402. Institutions: Deger-Jalkotzy, *E-QE-TA*, 1978. Lively: Mallory and Adams, *Encyclopedia* 1997. Dumézil, *Eliade*: see bibliography.
- 10 Linked: Littleton, *Mythology* 1982, 227ff.; Schmitt, "Altertumskunde" 2000, 399. Germanic culture of the early Middle Ages may have kept Indo-European ways longest and most authentic (or archaic): Russell, *Germanization* 1994, 118.
- 11 In tracing these styles from antiquity into the Middle Ages, one may use evidence from both periods: early medieval data explain those from antiquity, and vice versa. A similar use of sources in studying the Celts: Stancliffe, "Kings" 1980, 80.
- 12 The best plates of the Column by far are those of Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896. Figures 1.1, 5.1, 14.1 and 20.1, likewise made from nineteenth-century casts, show some features not visible on Cichorius' plates. Even outstanding recent color plates such as those in Settis, *Colonna* 1988, are often inferior, for the Column is now wasting away in traffic fumes.
- 13 Strategy and the thrust of the Column suggest that the battles in scenes 37 and 38 occurred after Trajan and his troops arrived (Gauer, *Untersuchungen* 1977, 68, contra: Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 181). Trajan's presence in scenes 36 and 39 implies his being nearby in scenes 37 and 38. Adamklissi: Vulpe, *Studia* 1976, 199–265; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 177ff.; doubted by Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 86ff.
- 14 Equites Singulares Augusti: Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 244; Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 417; *Riding* 1994, 44f.; 116ff. Horses spelled: Cichorius, failing to see the realism here, demanded of the cavalry that "in Wahrheit hätte sie aufsitzen müssen" (*Reliefs* 1898, 177). Lehmann-Hartleben, *Trajanssäule* 1926, 71, never tiring of "artistic reasons," suggested that the horsemen walk to leave space for depicting the foot above them.
- 15 Richmond, *Army* 1982, 20 noticed the man in the sleeveless shirt ("kilt-wearer"). Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 84 find nothing worth commenting on in scene 36 but the "pendants dangling from the bridle of the emperor's horse"—only that the pendants do not dangle from the bridle.
- 16 Figures 0.2, 5.2, 5.3. Patsch, *Kampf* 1937, 66–70; cf. Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 177f.; Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 86ff. Contra: Bennett, *Trajan* 1997, 93.
- 17 Greater accuracy in scene 36: Lehmann-Hartleben, *Trajanssäule* 1926, 16, 20; Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1898, 196; Gauer, *Untersuchungen* 1977, 111. Scene 43 is back to normal: it shows only auxiliary cohorts. Accuracy in historical events: Cichorius, *Reliefs* II 1896, 117 (trust); Lehmann-Hartleben, *Trajanssäule* 1926, 64 (artistic reasons); Hamberg, *Studies* 1945, 109; Speidel, *Studiey* I 1984, 369–377 and 412. Laubscher, *Galeriusbogen* 1975, 129 may be right in that the showing of Decebalus' head in scene 147 is not a formal *adlocutio* as I had suggested, yet it had the same function, see Gauer, *Untersuchungen* 1977, 104, note 246. Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 177 flounder on this.
- 18 Mistakes: In scene 50 a (much-eclipsed) standard-bearer wears strip armor when he should wear a mailshirt. Legionaries: The metopes of Adamklissi prove that some Trajanic legionaries wore mail; Bishop and Coulston, *Equipment* 1993, 85. Dacians: Dion Chrysostomus, *Orations* 12.19. A few Dacians—in distress—are seen on horse-back in scene 31, others in flight in scene 144.
- 19 Accuracy in this sense is widely admitted: Cichorius, *Reliefs* II 1896, 191. Mauri: *ibid.* 294ff.; Hamberg, "Germanen" 1936, 49; Richmond, 1982; Campbell, *Emperor* 1984, 146ff.; Speidel, *Studies* I 1984, 129 and 140f.; Waurick, "Rüstung" 1989. Sarmatians: Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 280; Gamber, "Waffen" 1964. Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 19ff.

- and 299 admit accuracy in general, but p. 80 assert that “common sense would suggest” Sarmatian catafracts had legs free from armor, which is refuted by the famous Dura-Europos catafract graffito; the measure of correctness and mistakes in representing the Sarmatians is well taken by Gamber, “Waffen” 1964, 24f. Bishop and Coulston, *Equipment* 1993, 21f., though wary of sculptors’ mistakes, yet single out “presence and equipment of certain irregular troop types” as valuable information given by the Column. Contra Timpe, “Begriffsbildung” 1999, 32: “das weithin erfahrungsresistente Barbarenbild.”
- 20 Saxo 214ff. Stereotypes: Rehm, *Bild* 1932, 88f.; tall, etc.: below, p. 88; eager: CIL VI, 40524 (AD 135) and above, note 3. Literary commonplaces reflecting the truth: Ammianus 23.6.30 “ut scriptores antiqui docent nosque vidimus”; Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, XII. Contra: von See, “Germane” 1981. Northern stereotype: Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 105–115; Mattern, *Rome* 1999, 66–80. Myth as reality: Mattern, *Rome* 1999, 222. Rome using troops in the northern stereotype: Dio 38.45.4–5. Hadrian even made his Germanic guardsmen pray to the gods whom Plato believed to be those of the *Naturvölker* (Cratylus 397d): Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 25 (Sol, Luna, Caelum, Terra, Mare). Fake prisoners of war, dressed up to look like the stereotype: Suetonius, *Caligula* 47; Tacitus, *Agricola* 39.
- 21 Hexagonal shields: Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 267. Oval: Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, nos. 4; 5; 9; 12; 15; 17; 18; 20; etc., and even more so in the century of Trajan’s Column, and with the horsemen around the emperor: Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 9. Gravestones close to reality: Adler, *Studien* 1993, 240.
- 22 Singulares: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 39; 109ff. Tacitus, *Germania* 29: Batavi “virtute praecipui.” Alae: Vegetius 1.5; Speidel, *Studies* II 1992, 243. Alae in Trajan’s army: Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 106ff.
- 23 Regulars and irregulars: Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 81ff. Cohorts: Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896, 178f. Gauer, *Untersuchungen* 1977, 59 sees in scene 36 “Praetorianer oder Legionäre in Etappenuniform (Eilmarsch!),” but “Etappenuniform” (whatever that is) does not go with sword in hand. Germanic pelt-wearers: Tacitus, *Histories*, 2.88: “ipsi tergis ferarum et ingentibus telis horrentes.” Germani: e.g. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 36; cf. 11.3 (not Gauls); *Histories* 2.32.5. Helmets: see pp. 181ff. The fallen: CIL III, 14214; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 121, 237ff.; Strobel, “Anmerkungen” 1987, has also cohorts IX Batavorum there, but that unit seems to have stayed in Britain until AD 105, see Birley, *Garrison* 2002, 65. For cohorts I and II Batavorum milliariae see now Roxan, “Diploma” 1997, 168.
- 24 Erdrich, “Rom” 1996, 130–132; Enkevort and Zee, “Militaria” 1999, 200; Chauci and Chassuarii: Tacitus, *Annals* 1.60; 2.17; cf. Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 77ff. Names after tribes: Speidel, *Studies* I, 1984, 712; Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, p. 49.
- 25 Cf. Alföldy, *Weltkrise* 1967, 397ff. Native weapons: Richmond, *Army* 1982, 20, referring to cohorts I Aelia Dacorum in Britain (RIB 1914) that used its curved Dacian swords there.
- 26 See p. 43, and also for “Berserkir” meaning bear-warriors.
- 27 Caesar, *Galic War* 4.1.10; 6.21.5; Tacitus, *Germania* 6: “nudi aut sagulo leves,” cf. 20; 24; *Histories* 2.22: “nudis corporibus” (for the term “cohortes” in Tacitus see Kraft, *Alen* 1951, 38; Callies, “Truppen” 1965, 151f.); Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 79. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1.20. Strangely, Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896, 177, says the irregulars are not Germanic; Wolters, “Kampf” 2000, 212, doubts Germanic bare-chested warriors fighting in the later first century altogether—but why reject the testimony of Tacitus and the whole, vast pictorial record?
- 28 Buri ambassador: Dio 68.8, see scenes 9 and 27 and my paper “Trajan’s Buri Allies,” 2004. See p. 60f, this volume.
- 29 For example, Caesar, *Galic War* 7.13.1; 7.65.4; 7.67.5; 7.702ff.; 7.80.6; 8.10.4; 8.13.2; *Civil War* 1.83.5; 3.4.3; *African War* 19.2ff. Tacitus, *Histories* 2, 17, 2; 2, 22, 1 2, 88; *Annals* 1.56.1; 4.73.2; Florus 2.13.48; Herodian 7.8.10; 8.1.3; 8.4.3; *Panegyrici Latini* 8.12 and 16; Ammianus 20.4.4; *Historia Augusta*, *Maximini duo* 24.5; *Triginta tyr.* 6.2; Claudian, *In Gildonem*, *Carmen* 15, 371ff. Bang, *Germanen* 1906, 29; Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 77;

- MacMullen, *Responses* 1976, 186; Speidel, *Studies* I 1984, 211ff. In AD 306 Constantius had Alamanni in his comitatus: *Epitoma De Caesaribus* 41.3; Speidel, *Auxilia* 1996, 165f. Other irregulars in Roman field armies: Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.126, cf. 5.49; Hyginus 2 and 19, etc.
- 30 Cheesman, *Auxilia* 1914, 131; Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 8, no. 32: “Germanische Hilfstruppen auf dem Vormarsch”; Gostar, “*Numerus*” 1972, 246f.; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 177ff. Scene 24: Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896, 177. By contrast, Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1986, 178 takes the auxiliary cohorts in scene 36 to be of the Lower Moesian army since he (*ibid.* 190) wants them to fight in scene 38 far from Trajan, somewhere north of the Danube, a view by and large rejected (Petersen, *Kriege* 1899, 50ff.; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 182).
- 31 See pp. 103ff.
- 32 Fastest: Caesar, *Gallic War* 8.36: “Germanosque pedites, summae velocitatis homines”; *ibid.* 46.2 “pedum...pernicitate gaudent.” Tacitus, *Germania* 6: “apta et congruente ad equestrem pugnam velocitate peditum.” Ammianus 29.6.1 (Quadi): “perceleri procinctu.” Two hundred years later, the Salian Law (long prologue) still states: “Gens Francorum...velox.” Iordanes, *Getica* 117, shows how much the speed of a tribe mattered in being hired. Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 147: “Irreguläre Aufgebote waren oft mit Aufgaben betraut, die schnell durchzuführen waren.” Keenest: Seneca, *De ira* 1.11.3: “Germanis quid est animosius? Quid ad incursum acrius?”; Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.1.15 (122); Tacitus, *Germania* 4: “Corpora tantum ad impetum valida”; Tacitus, *Annals* 4.47: “Sugambra cohors, prompta ad pericula”; *Histories* 2.21: “Suebi—in prima acie versabantur.” Appian 4.1.3; Herodian 8.1.3; Ammianus 16.12.46. Tribal troops were attack forces in 53 BC (Caesar, *Alexandrian War* 29f.), in AD 238 (Herodian 7.8.10; 8.1.3; 8.4.3), as well as in the fourth- and in the sixth-century imperial army (Claudianus 26, 580ff; Maurice, *Strategikon* 2.6.34f.; 11.3.10). Germanic troops equipped for the attack: Beck, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 473. Skillful: Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.36; 1.39: “incredibili virtute atque exercitatione in armis”; 4.1: “cotidiana exercitatione”. Velleius 2.109; 2.118: “versutissimi”; Tacitus, *Annals* 11.16 (on King Italicus): “armis equisque in patrium nostrumque morem exercitatus”; Ammianus 16.12.37: “peritissimi bellatores.” Miltner, “Waffenübung” 1954.
- 33 Huge and frightful: see p. 88; dread: Tacitus, *Histories* 2.32 “Germanos quod genus militum apud hostes atrocissimum sit...ne vultum quidem atque aciem oculorum dicebant ferre potuisse”; 2.76.1: “Transrhenanas gentes quarum terrore fractae populi Romani vires”; 2.88; Herodian 7.1.12; Eunapius VI, frg. 37 (Blockley); Zosimus 3.7.1; see Figures 7.1, 7.2, 21.1.
- 34 Legions slower than auxilia: Tacitus, *Histories* 2.11: “tarditas inerat. Agmen legionum alae cohortesque praeveniebant.”
- 35 Batavi and tribesmen: Tacitus, *Annals* 4.73: “alam Canninefatem et quot peditum Germanorum inter nostros merebat circumgredi terga hostium iubet,” see Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 147: “teilweise wohl irreguläre Aufgebote”; Tacitus, *Histories* 1.59; 2.17; 2.22; 2.27f.; 2.32.1; 2.35; 2.43; 2.88, etc.; Trajan’s Column, scene 70. Chatti: Tacitus, *Annals* 12.27.2–28; Lucanus: *Pharsalia* 1, 430–484. Batavi brigaded with *gentiles* tribesmen still appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Oc. 42.34) but there the Batavi are *laeti*, that is themselves prisoners of war, probably Franks who had settled in Batavian lands.
- 36 Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 22.
- 37 Crack troops: Tacitus, *Histories* 2.32.1: “Germanos, quod genus militum apud hostes atrocissimum sit.” Claim: Tacitus, *Annals* 3.40.3: “Nihil validum in exercitibus nisi quod externum.” Peace: Tacitus, *Agricola* 11; *Histories* 2.17: “longa pax ad omne servitium fregerat faciles occupantibus” Vegetius 1.28.6; Demandt, *Spätantike* 1989, 265ff. Tribal: e.g. Claudian, 5.106ff.; 15.371ff.; 20.518ff.; 21.152ff.; 28.218ff.
- 38 Loyalty: Caesar, *African War* 19; 29; 40. They switched sides only when hope had left, *ibid.* 53. Suetonius, *Galba* 43; Tacitus, *Annals* 13.54, cf. Julian, *Misopogon* 360C; Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.16. Wenskus, “Diskussion” 1992. Roman officers: Trajan’s Column, scene



- 70, see p. 89f. Ethos: Compare Tacitus, *Histories* 2.66: “Batavis... quos Vitellius agmini suo iungi ut fidus...iubet.” A more regular strike force of auxilia in AD 70 was that of the Cn. Domitii Lucanus and Tullus, Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 131ff. Mixed, hence harder to discipline: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 367f. Pride: Tacitus, *Histories* 2.11 (on the 14th legion): “Addiderat gloriam Nero eligendo ut potissimos, unde longa illis erga Neronem fides et erecta in Othonem studia.”
- 39 Caracalla: Dio 78.5; Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 414. Aurelian: Dexippus, *Scythica*, FGH II.A, no. 100, frag. 7. Constantine: Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I 1969, 279ff. Theodosius: *Panegyrici Latini* 2.32.4f.; AE 1990, 881. Harald: see p. 75.
- 40 Taking tribal troops along: cf. Tacitus, *Histories* 1.61 (Germanorum auxilia) and 3.21.2 (Suebi) in AD 69. Speidel, *Studies* I 1984, 256f.; *Studies* II 1992, 222. Chatti, Mattiaci: Tacitus, *Germania* 29–31. The “copiae barbarorum” to join the usurper Saturninus in AD 88 (Suetonius, *Domitian*, 6) very likely were Chatti: Mommsen, *Geschichte* 5, 1886, 137. The troops could have come from as far away as the Baltic, see Böhme in Geuenich, *Franken* 1998, 33f. Overlooked: Bang, *Germanen* 1906; Callies, “Truppen” 1965; Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968; Goldsworthy, *Army* 1996, 49.

## 1

## WOLVES

- 1 Plato, *Politeia* 620; today: Kellert and Wilson, *Biophilia* 1993. Cave des Trois Frères in southern France; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 65; Höfler, *Siegfried* 1961, 32; Kühn, *Felsbilder* 1952, 12ff. Cf. Unruh, “Wargus” 1954, 20; Clark and Piggott, *Societies* 1966, 94f. (identify); Alföldy, *Struktur* 1974, 27; Street, “Haushunde” 1999, 24f. Lion-headed figure: Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 50f. Predators: Wilson, in Kellert and Wilson, *Biophilia* 1993.
- 2 Mountains, rivers: *Book of Songs*, poem 263; Ammianus 31.8.5. Trees: Corippus, *Iust.* 3.172ff.; *Atlamal* 30: “borr scialdar”; *Fáfnismál* 36: hildimeidör; for -viðr see Beck in Hauck, “Brakteat” 2000, 38; Exeter Book 487: “wer-beamas” (Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 52); Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Óláfs saga Helga* 50; 227. Birds: Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 150ff. and fig. 19 (Bactria); Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1047ff.; Aztec eagle warriors: Hassig, *Warfare* 1988, 45ff.
- 3 Animals: Bowra, *Poetry* 1952, 97. Africans: Herodotus 7.69. Aztecs: Hassig, *Warfare* 1988, 90: “Some helmets, made of wood and bone, were highly decorated with feathers, while others were made of the heads of wild animals—wolves, jaguars, and pumas—over a frame of wood or over quilted cotton, with the wearer gazing out from the animal’s open jaw”; Salmoral, *America* 1990, 192–207; jaguar-warriors are known as early as Olmec times: Hassig, *War* 1992, 16f., note 37. Caribs: Whitehead, “Warfare” 1990, 152; Chinese: *Book of Songs*, poem 263. Indo-Europeans: Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 139–147. Rome’s Germanic “lion” and “panther” guards: Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 414; lion and panther known in the second-century among Germani: Werner, *Zierscheiben* 1941. Austria: see p. 42.
- 4 Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites* 1997.
- 5 Identities: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 385; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 201; Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 139–147. Homer: Strasburger, “Aspekt” 1978, 100f. Celts: Evans, *Lords* 1997, 62. Appian, *Civil War* 2.151, 632: **θηριώδεσιν ἑοικότα**. Jews did likewise: Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.85. Keep former ways: Wright, *War* 1942.
- 6 Turks, Mongols: Altheim, *Niedergang* I 1952, 118; Eisler, *Man* 1952, 132–144; Alföldy, *Struktur* 1974, 69ff. and *passim*. Contact maintained between Asia and America after 11000 BC: Lévi-Strauss, *Tropiques* 1977, 281. Wolf (dog) forefather: Thompson, *Tales* 1929, 167ff. and 347; Koppers, “Hund” 1930; Alföldy, *Struktur* 1974, 69ff. Warrior myths brought from Siberia: Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 151ff. Amerindian animal-warriors: McCone, “Hund”

- 1987, 115; Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, e.g. figs. 56, 102; Tlingit masked warrior helmets: Siebert and Forman, *Art* 1967; Aztec big-cat warriors: Whitehead, "Warfare" 1990.
- 7 Turney-High, *War* 1991, 108f.
- 8 Indo-Europeans as wolf-warriors: Lincoln, *Death* 1991, 147–166. Wear the skin: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1976, 459f.; Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 20; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 32f. Cuetlachtli: Lienzo de Tlaxcala after Innes, *Conquistadors* 1969, 185 (James Lockhart of Frazier Park, California, kindly identified the warrior); cf. Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, fig. 19. Folk tales in America: Thompson, *Tales* 1929, 168 and 347; Europe: *Volsung Saga*; Grimm, "Bedeutung" 1865, 213; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 320. Cf. Dronke, *Edda* 1997, 258; 285f.
- 9 Wolf-warriors howling: *Volsung saga* 8; Saxo 115.7f.: "Ululantium more luporum, horrissonas dedere voces." Berserks of the sagas, being in part wolf-warriors, also howl: *Grettis saga* 19; see p. 44. Howl at a kill: Heinrich, *Ravens* 1989, 55; rid of human constraints: Lincoln, *Death* 1991, 138–146. Shamans: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 200f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 27ff.; Eliade, *Shamanism* 1976, 385; 459f.; Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 147 (a delightful hooded shaman: Kühn, *Felsbilder* 1952, plate 103). North American Indian warriors were wolves or bears in this sense, e.g. Catlin, *Letters* 1973, II, 24.
- 10 McCone, "Hund" 1987; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 42ff.; Beck, "Personennamen" 1986, 304; Kershaw, *God* 2000. Eyes: Grimm, "Bedeutung" 1865, 222, and p. 69f, this volume.
- 11 Lopez, *Wolves* 1978, 282.
- 12 Dolon: *Iliad* 10, 314ff. Euripides, *Rhesus*, 208–215; Gernet, "Dolon" 1936; Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 400 unplausibly suggests a white wolf-pelt. A wolf-hood made Athena invisible: *Iliad* 5, 484f. Greeks, Etruscans, Gauls: Gernet, "Dolon" 1936, 201f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 83. The Sioux too sought stealth by creeping clad in a wolfskin: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, 254.
- 13 Younger men: Polybius 6.22.3; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974; McCone, "Hund" 1987. Germanic myths of heroic wolf-youths: *Volsung saga*; Hauck, "Bilddenkmäler" 1976, 591. For Apollo Lykeios leading the education of the young (whence Lyceum) see Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 158; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 131f.; Gershenson, *Apollo* 1991; cf. Scheibelreiter, *Tiernamen* 1976, 54f.
- 14 Hattusilis: Kershaw, *God* 2000, 176. Engage feelings: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, *passim*; Steinhart, *Company* 1995, 345; Rheinheimer, "Wolf" 1994. Eisler, *Man* 1952, 132ff. gives a long list of nations named after wolves. Dogs: Pliny, *Natural History* 8, 142ff.; human children: Singh and Zingg, *Wolf-Children* 1942 3ff., with photographic documentation. Feelings: Kellert, *Kinship* 1997, 152.
- 15 Eisler, *Man* 1952, 132ff.; Eliade, *Zalmoxis* 1970, 13–30 (diminished somewhat for the Dacians by Iliescu, "Männerbund" 1983); McCone, "Hund" 1987; Davidson, *Myths* 1988, 78ff.; Mallory and Adams, *Encyclopedia* 1997, 647f.; Enright, "Warband" 1998, 312; 329; Kershaw, *God* 2000. Greek and Italic tribes: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 119ff.; Persians: Ammianus 19.1.3; Celts: Diodore 5.30.2f.; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 735ff; 954f; 1049. Indians with horse-hoods: Herodotus 7.70; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 150f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 96 (Gandharva). Hittites: Kershaw, *God* 2000, 149ff; 176ff. "Lupakku": Eisler, *Man* 1952, 144. Names: Scheibelreiter, *Tiernamen* 1976, 56. Dog outside: Eisler, *Man* 1952, 132ff.
- 16 Rudra: De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II 1957, 95f.; Gonda, *Religionen* 1982, 85ff.; Kershaw, *God* 2000. Iran: Wikander, *Männerbund* 1938, 64ff.; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 15f; 19f. The Sanskrit name *Vṛkājina*, "Wolfskin" (Pāṇini 6.2.165) is the exact equivalent of Old Norse *Ulfhedinn*. Scythians: Ivančik, "Guerriers" 1993.
- 17 Tiryns krater and quote: Vermeule and Karageorghis, *Vase Painting* 1982, 108–109, catalogue no. X.1; Lincoln, *Death* 1991, 137 (taking them for tiger warriors); Drews, *End* 1993, 146. Prof. Deger-Jalkotzy, Innsbruck, kindly points out to me the name *ro-ko*, which may be Lykos or Lykon, "Wolf".

- 18 *Iliad* 16, 156–164 in the Fagles translation; cf. 4.471f. and Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.355ff. Wolfish rage (λύσσα): *Iliad* 8.299; 9.237–239 and 305 (Hector); 21.542f. (Achilles); West, *East Face* 1997, 213. Greek wolf-warriors: *Iliad* 9.459 (λύξέν); Pausanias 4.11.3; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12.380f.: “Dorylas, qui tempora tecta gerebat/pelle lupi”; Burkert, *Homo* 1972, 98ff.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 33f; 82f; 131f; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 122; Lincoln, *Death* 1991, 131–137. Sparta: Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 463ff., esp. 550ff. Apollo the wolf god: Bowra, *Poetry* 1952, 398; Unruh, “Wargus” 1954, 10; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 132; Gershenson, *Apollo* 1991. Greek heroes with wolf names or wolf myths: Gershenson, *Apollo* 1991, 67ff.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 162ff. Animal-rage warriors nevertheless differed from blindly raging amok runners: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 34; also p. 44f, this volume.
- 19 Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 129ff; 187. Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.688: “fulvosque lupi de pelle galeros/tegmēn habuit capiti: vestigia nuda sinistri instituere pedis, crudus tegit altera perro.” See p. 72; Binder, *Aussetzung* 1964, 30f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 184ff. Hirpi Sorani: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 77; 187f.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 146ff. Etruscans: Vergil, *Aeneid* 11.679ff.: “Caput ingens oris hiatus et malae texere lupi/cum dentibus albis”; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 83.
- 20 Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.275: “lupae fulvo nutricis tegmine laetus.” Propertius 4.10.20: “galea hirsuta compta lupina iuba.” Livy 1.12.9: “Romulus cum globo ferocissimorum iuvenum.” Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 81; Hauck, “Bilddenkmäler” 1976, 591; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 130. Ancient wolf-spirit and Luperci in Rome: Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 346ff.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 34; 80ff; 86ff. Hannibal’s time: Roman wolf-warriors: Polybius 6.22.3; Walbank, *Commentary* 1957, 703. Alföldi, “Hasta” 1959, 63, wrongly took Republican denarii to show wolfskins: the coins portray the goat-hood of Juno Sospita; cf. Eliade, *Zalmoxis* 1970, 13–30.
- 21 Celts: Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 344ff; 356ff; 379ff; 735ff; 1049. Wolves called dogs: McCone, “Hund” 1987, 106; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 379–382; Scheibelreiter, *Tiernamen* 1976, 55f.; Celtic dogs bred from wolves: Pliny, *Natural History* 8.148.
- 22 No hint of the Column’s wolf- and bear-warriors is found in Jahn, *Bewaffnung* 1916; Delbrück, *History* 1990 (=1921); Meuli, “Maske” 1933; Gundel, *Dakerkriege* 1937; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 175f.; Strobel, *Untersuchungen* 1984; Ziegler, “Oöin” 1985; Kershaw, *God* 2000, etc. Höfler, *Schriften* 1992 (= 1940), 129 refers to Cichorius’ treatment of scene 36, but only for “Fellhüllen,” and does not follow it up. Luckily, this also kept Hitlerites from claiming the warrior styles for their dream-history. Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 116ff., greatly to his credit, gives wolf-warriors their due, yet misses scene 36 of the Column. Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 84, report nothing.
- 23 Tacitus, *Agricola* 36.1: “rem ad mucrones et manus adducerent, quod est ipsis vetustate militiae exercitatum.”
- 24 Standard-bearers: Pollen, according to Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896, 178. Antesignani: Vegetius 2.16. Guards: Froehner, *Colonne* 1865, 101. Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896, 178 with reference to his “systematischer Teil” (never published) takes them to be a German cohort. The soldier with a pelt-hooded shield in scene 12, whom Cichorius held to be of the same unit as that in scene 36, is a legionary standard bearer (his standard omitted as in scene 106), for auxiliaries on the Column are not builders and do not direct legionaries.
- 25 Mythological: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 640. Bare shelves: Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 191.
- 26 Hittites: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 33 and 82 with plate 2. Armilustrium: Crous, “Waffenpeiler” 1933, 76; 102. Gundestrup cauldron third century AD: Birkhan, *Germanen* 1970, 170ff; 357. Initiation: McCone, “Hund” 1987, 111; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 196ff; 256. A good picture of the wolf scene is in Piggott, *Druids* 1975, 78.
- 27 Tacitus, *Histories* 2.88.3: “Nec minus saevum spectaculum erant ipsi, tergis ferarum et ingentibus telis horrentes.” They would be the Transrhenani of Tacitus, *Histories* 2.93.1; cf. 1.52.3; 1.61.2; 2.22.1; 2.32.1; 2.35.1. The Batavian cohorts were not with them, as they had

- already gone home: Tacitus, *Histories* 2.69; Bang, *Germanen* 1906, 58; Heubner, *Historien* 1968, 302. Keppie, *Legions* 2000, takes them for legionaries, but their huge weapons give them away as Germani (Tacitus, *Histories* 5.18; *Annals* 1.64; 2.14; 2.21; Lucanus 6.259; Dio 38.49.2; Ammianus 16.12.24; Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936, fig. 9).
- 28 Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 71. German weavers’ skills: Todd, *Barbarians* 1987, 115f; Speidel, *Decorations* II, 1997, 232. Much, *Germania* 1967, 272 sees here fur coats. Italic fur-bearing soldiers, though: Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.523; 570. Fur as part of Roman camp dress in the north: Tacitus, *Annals* 2.13.1.
- 29 Tribal wolf-warrior youths: Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 540ff.; Bremmer, “Suodales” 1982, 141; McCone, “Hund” 1987; Gershenson, *Apollo* 1991, 116 (“age-mates”); Kershaw, *God* 2000. Chosen group: the Arcadian “wolves,” Pliny, *Natural History* 8.81, etc.; Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 553; also p. 194, this volume. Twelve: *Helgisaga Óláfs konungs Haraldssonar* 68f.; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 86; *Hrólfs saga Kraka*; Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 303ff.; also pp. 44 and 75, this volume. In the Volsung saga kings themselves are wolf-warriors.
- 30 Animal standards (“ferarum imagines”): Tacitus, *Histories* 4.22.2. Wulfenus: Nesselhauf, “Inschriften” 1937, nos. 245ff.; 251. Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 379. (W)ulfus: CIL III, 1839. See also the joint wolf- and bear-names discussed on p. 41. Ulpius: CIL XIII, 11810; Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892–1916, 7080 additions; Syme, *Tacitus* II 1958, 786; Wiegels, “Ulpius” 1999–Honored: Syme, *Tacitus* II 1958, 786. Meant wolf: Pokorny, *Wörterbuch* 1959, 1178f.; Cagnat, *Inscriptiones* 1911, vol. 3, no. 20 (Cios, Bithynia); an Ulpius Lupus, perhaps a Batavian, is found in Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 35; also AE 1990, 516. A new Batavian Lupus of Trajan’s time: Birley, *Garrison* 2002, 100. Woodhound: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 69; 212; Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 378f.; Düwel, *Runenkunde* 2001, 2; cf. Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 1509; Walthun. Indo-European names: Schmitt, “Alttertumskunde” 2000, 400. Wolf: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 201 and 210f. Feared, etc.: Unruh, “Wargus” 1954, 9; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 191ff. Dragons: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 188ff. Be like them: e.g. Ingiald in Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Ynglinga saga* 34.
- 31 Wilson, *Diversity* 1992, 348–351.
- 32 Julian’s Auxilia: Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* 1969, 159. Shield badges authentic, though sometimes slipped from their place: Speidel, *Studies* II, 1992, 414–418; contra: Grigg, “Inconsistency” 1984. Franks and Alamanni the main contributors to the fourth-century Rhine army: Waas, *Germanen* 1971, 9; Alamanni: Strohecker, *Germanentum* 1965, 30–53 (p. 38: not prisoners but volunteers). For the animal on the first badge of row 4, see p. 53.
- 33 A change from tribal youths to the warband of a leader: Kershaw, *God* 2000, 131f. Wargs: *rg Veda* 1.42 (Maurer, *Pinnacles* 1986, 188); Avesta: Wikander, *Vayu* 1941, 138; Eisler, *Man* 1952, 145; Unruh, “Wargus” 1954; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 15; 20; cf. 39: “helper” or “wolf”; Eliade, *Zalmoxis* 1970, 16; Gerstein, *Warg* 1974, 132; Campanile, “Meaning” 1979; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 119. Outlaws: Schmidt-Wiegand, “Spuren” 1994, 258; Gerstein, *Warg* 1974, 155; McCone, “Hund” 1987; Campanile, “Meaning” 1979. On the sociological problem see Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 372f.; Höfler, “Verwandlungskulte” 1973, 250. According to Unruh, “Wargus” 1954, 38f., “wargus” came to denote the criminal, “ulf” the warrior wolf. Romans: CIL XIII 6429; Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892, 395=RIU 1127–1137; Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892, 724. Sidonius *Epistulae* 6.4.1: “Vargorum (hoc enim nomine indigenas latrunculos nuncupant) superventus,” cf. Unruh, “Wargus” 1954, 7. Anglo-Saxon *Vearg*: Grimm, “Bedeutung” 1865, 204; Saxo 137, with commentary by Davidson, *Saxo* 1979. Cf. Slavic *vrag* (Davidson, *Saxo* 1979).
- 34 Seneca, *De Ira* 2.15.4: “Deinde omnes istae feritate liberae gentes leonum luporumque ritu...” Seneca knew little of wolves when he wrote “as they will not obey so they cannot rule”; see Steinhart, *Company* 1995, 345. Ammianus 31.7.9: “Verebantur hostes et male sanos eorum ductores ut rabidas feras”. Iordanes, *Getica* 24: “pugnabant beluina saevitia.”

- Opus imperfectum in Matthaëum (fifth/sixth century; Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 1857ff., 56, 626): “Sicut solent et barbarae gentes nomina filiis imponere ad devastationem respicientia bestiarum ferarum, vel rapacium volucrum, gloriosum putantes filios tales habere ad bellum idoneos et insonientes in sanguinem.” Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 98f.; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 178. See also the “wolf” of Vegetius 4,23,3.
- 35 Thracians: Herodotus 5.1; also the Cimmerian wolfhounds in war: Gordon, “Swords” 1953, 76. Celtic war dogs: Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 345ff.; above, note 21. Cimabri, allies: Pliny, *Natural History* 8.61.143; 148. Hounds like wolves symbolic: Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 99; Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 77, note 37.1; Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 353ff.; 379; cf. Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 41ff.; 55ff.; Paul, *Wolf* 1981, 86ff. Kershaw, *God* 2000, 133ff. Indo-European: Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 345ff.; McCone, “Hund” 1987. Greek hound-topped helmets: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 33f.; Celtic dog-helmets: Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 209; 1108; 1125; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 104f.; 119f. A Pictish hound-warrior is seen on the ninth-century stone from Gellyburn, Murthly, in the Scottish Museum, Edinburgh. Hound-dragon standards: Trajan’s Column, basis. Dacians=Wolves or Hounds: Pokorny, *Wörterbuch* 1959, 235; Eliade, *Zalmoxis* 1970. In AD 250 on a coin of Decius (RIC IV, 101c) the Roman province of Dacia holds a wolf- or hound-dragon standard. Longobards: see p. 23.
- 36 For example, Saxo 115.7f, where they howl together.
- 37 Vegetius 2.3.5: “Minor sudor, et maturiora sunt praemia.” Ammianus 18.2.6: “Auxiliarii milites semper munia spernentes.” Speidel, “Auxilia” 1996.
- 38 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 1.32 (Persecution of Christians by Valerianus, AD 257–262): “Horum tempore et Chrocus ille Alamannorum rex, commoto exercito, Gallias pervagavit.” The version in Fredegar, *Chron.* II.60 that makes the same Crocus King of the Vandals is muddled, see Schmidt, *Ostgermanen* 1969, 109, note 3 (Schmidt, however, takes Gregory for being even more mistaken—wrongly, it seems, cf. Castritius, “Krokus” 2001). The elder unhistoric: Schmidt, *Westgermanen* 1970, 234; 248; Buchner, *Gregor* 1955, I, 37. Historic: Loreto, “Penetrazione” 1994; Demandt, *Staatsformen* 1995, 552f.; Castritius, “Semnonen” 1998, 362. For the coming of the Alamanni in Caracalla’s time see Becker, *Rom* 1992, 322ff. The younger Crocus: Aurelius Victor, *Epitoma* 41.3 (Pichlmayr 166): (Constantine, at the death of Constantius in 306) “quo mortuo cunctis qui aderant annitentibus, sed praecipue Croco Alamannorum rege, auxilii gratia Constantium comitatu, imperium capit.” (Of course, to Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 1.24, it was god himself who chose Constantine.) Speidel, “Auxilia” 1996, 165. Misread: Schönfeld, *Wörterbuch* 1965, 78; Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 204. Aurelius Victor: *Epitoma* 41.3 in the Teubner edition 1966 by Fr. Pichlmayr; Reichert, *Lexikon* I, 1987, 227; 576 (Rucco); II 1990, 36; 549.
- 39 Hauck, *Namenbuch* “Adelskultur” 1957, 17; Hauck, “Mittelalters” 1957, 368; Förstemann, 1900, 1655; and especially Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 204. If Hroc had a long o, it would mean “crow”: thus Kaufmann, *Personennamen* 1968, 199, who unconvincingly explains the double c in forms such as Chrocus and Chrocchus as “expressive gemination” rather than as a sign that the o is short. Kaufmann’s result is accepted by Reichert, *Lexikon* II, 1990, 549, while Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 58 hesitates about it (on pp. 212ff he still takes Wolfhroc and Hroccolf for wolf-warriors and Hedinus and Bialfi as shortened from Wolfhetan etc.).
- 40 Ammianus 27.10.3; 30.7.7. Reichert, *Lexikon* I 1987, 788 (Vithigabi); Kershaw, *God* 2000, 159.
- 41 Wolf-warrior kings: Romulus, the Irish Cormac mac Airt (McCone, “Hund” 1987, 138); Sigmund and Sinfiotli in the *Volsung saga* (see p. 23). Thorfinn, earl of Orkney, raiding England at some time before 1033, is “wolf-lord” in *Orkneyinga saga* 24. For the high rank of Norwegian dog-warriors see Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 56. Compare Achilles’ captains flaunting wolfishness, see p. 16. Alamannic Wolfhrocs: Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 203.

- Wolf names among Alamanni: Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 1655; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 212f.
- 42 Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 330–333; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 83ff.; 102ff. Cf. Steuer, “Helm” 1987, 222; Steuer, “Gefolgschaftsproblem” 1992, 208. As the name Heoden in the poem *Widsith* means “wearer of a wolf- or dog-skin,” so Heoden’s tribe were the Glomman (“Barkers”): *Widsith* 21; 69; Much, *Osten* 1920, 154ff.; 161; doubted somewhat by Beck, “Personennamen” 1986, 313f.; see also p. 33, this volume. Compare the Wolfings: Beck, “Personennamen” 1986, 313.
- 43 Wolf-forebears, robbery: e.g. Italic Hirpini-wolves, of whom Servius, *Aen.* 9.785 says “lupos imitantur... id est raptio viverent” (Scheibelreiter, *Tiernamen* 1976, 51). Altheim, *Niedergang I*, 1952, 118; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 127ff. and *passim*; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 127ff.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 133ff. The myth of the wolf-forebear also reached Southeast Asia, Palaeosiberia, and North America: Koppers, “Hund” 1930; Gershenson, *Apollo* 1991, 116 and 123. Germanic Wulfings: *Beowulf* 461; 471; Grimm, “Bedeutung” 1865, 206. Alamanni: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 494ff.; Steuer, “Theorien” 1998. Iuthungi: AE 1993, 1231 (= 1996, 1182–3); Dexippus FGH 100.6.18f.: οὐ μγάδων οὐδὲ ἀσθενῶν ἀλλὰ Ἰουθούγγων καθαρῶς. Contra: Castritius, “Mischlinge” 2002.
- 44 No nation: Wais, *Alamannen* 1943, 16f.; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 505f.; 509ff.; Geuenich, *Geschichte* 1997, 41. Rag-tag: Agathias 1.6.3: Ξύγκλυδές εἰσιν ἄνθρωποι καὶ μγάδες; Cato, *Origines* fr. 20 (Peter): “convenae”; for Ξύγκλυδές = “convenae” see Strabo 4.2.1; cf. Plutarch, *Romulus* 9.2; Strabo 5.3.2 (230c); Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 495f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 119; 130f. Praenestines as “collecticii”: *Scholia Veron. Aeneid* 7.681 (after Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 189); Kershaw, *God* 2000, 136. Indo-European: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 120; Campanile, “Meaning” 1979; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 133ff. Compare the foreigners added by the Spartan founders Eurystheus and Prokles: Strabo 8.5.5; Wagner, “Dioskuren” 1960, 237.
- 45 Lombards: McCone, “Hund” 1987, 129. Hound-, but also wolf-warriors: Kershaw, *God* 2000, 151ff. Paul the Deacon, *Historia* 1.7 (MGH) “Erant siquidem tunc Winnili universi iuvenili aetate florentes, sed numero perexigui, quippe qui unius non nimiae amplitudinis insulae tertia solummodo particula fuerint.” 1.11: “Simulant se in castris suis habere cynocephalos, id est canini capitis homines. Divulgant apud hostes, hos pertinaciter bella gerere, humanum sanguinem bibere et, si hostem adsequi non possint, proprium potare cruorem.” For Germanic formal equivalents of cynocephali see Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 190 and 221. There is, of course, much cliché here, see Ammianus 27.4.9f, and Wiedemann, “Men” 1986, but compare Strabo 291 and Velleius 2.106.2. The dog-warriors are reported right: Höfler, *Gehetmbünde* 1934, 187; *Schriften* 1992, 49ff. and 58ff.; Hauck, “Lebensnormen” 1955, 206ff.; De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 37; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 69ff.; 190; 205.
- 46 *Volsung saga* 8: “konungasynir.” Heavy golden armrings as a mark of royalty: Werner, “Armring” 1980. Blood: *Helgakviða Hundingsbana in fyrri* 36, 9f.
- 47 Herodotus (1.122) told such a tale (with a wolf foster-mother) of the Persian Achaemenian dynasty, with many of the same details as in the myth of Romulus. The link between Cyrus and Romulus was seen already by Pompeius Trogus 44.4.12; Binder, *Aussetzung* 1964; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 134ff.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 133ff. Epics: *Wolfdieterich*, cf. Grimm, “Bedeutung” 1865, 206ff.
- 48 Gershenson, *Apollo* 1991, 116 and 123f., argues that wolf-warriors founding new nations were young because the wolf was the animal of initiation rites.
- 49 Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 42–82: Dante’s symbol of the fierce veltro-hound, *Inferno* 1, 101ff. will set the world aright, *Paradiso* 17, 76ff.; Altheim, *Niedergang I*, 1952, 116; Hauck, “Lebensnormen” 1955, 208f.; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 37; Höfler, *Siegfried*

- 1961, 30f. Myths: Hauck, “Lebensnormen” 1955, 206ff. Left: Dumézil, *Mythes* 1939, 65–78; Hauck, “Lebensnormen” 1955; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 485–494; Bremmer, “Suodales” 1982; McCone “Hund” 1987, 129; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 42–82. All fail to mention wolf- or dog-warriorhood as part of the youthful land-seeker myth of the Lombards and Alamanni. Arcadians: Pliny, *Natural History* 8.81; Przyluski, “Loups-garons” 1940, 129 and *passim*, takes this to be pre-Indo-European. Lucani: Iustinus, *Epitoma* 2.1.4ff.: “confluente...multitudine”; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 130f. Other wolf-warriors living by robbery (though not seeking new land): Sigurd and Sinfiotli in the *Volsung saga*, see p. 35f, this volume. Praeneste: see pp. 14 and 22. Banished: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 127ff.; Campanile, “Meaning” 1979.
- 50 Robbery: Ammianus 16.5.17: “raptu vivere.” Horsfall, “Romulus” 1971, 1113. Ibor and Agio: *Origo Gentis Langobardorum* (MGH Script. Rer. Lang.); Paul the Deacon, *Historia* 1.3; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 157. Hengist and Horsa: Bede, *HE* 2.5, cf. Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 237. Raus and Raptus: Dio 71.12, cf. de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 249ff. Twin kings: Ward, *Theme* 1970; Chaney, *Cult* 1970, 9; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 151ff.; also p. 122, this volume. Twins leading youthful land-seekers: Wagner, “Dioskuren” 1960, 229ff.; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 129; Wenskus, “Religion” 1994, 222. Old Irish wolf-warrior bands: McCone, “Hund” 1987, 105.
- 51 Caesar, *Gallic War* 6.23.6–8.
- 52 Tacitus, *Germania* 14; Bede, *HE* 3.14. Outlaws, riff-raff: Caesar, *Gallic War* 3.17.4, speaks of such “deperditi homines, latronesque,” and while he does not use the word *convenae*, he uses *convenerat*. Ziegler, “Odin” 1985, 85ff.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 130. Celts: Bremmer, “Suodales” 1982, 140ff. Such recruitment is well paralleled among North-American Indians: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 87 (though with mistakes about the Suebi); Catlin, *Letters* 1973, II, 242. Germani: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 368ff. Kershaw, *God* 2000, 131 rightly wants them to be “cultic initiatory brotherhoods.” To Romans, Longobards and Alamanni were wilder than others: Velleius Paterculus 2.106.2: “Langobardi gens etiam Germana ferocitate ferocior.” Alamanni: *Panegyrici Latini* 4.2.1; Ammianus 27.10.5; 28.5.9; Symmachus, *Oratio* 1.17; 2.4 (“ferox natio”); Alföldy, *Krise* 1989, 196.
- 53 Confederation: Mommsen, *History* 1996, 274f. Brought together: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 494–512. Many kings: Ammianus 16.12.1.
- 54 In 1945 the Russians stole the scabbard in Berlin; they have yet to return it. A photograph of a cast (less precise) is in the Römisch-Germanisches, Zentralmuseum, Mainz, see Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 437 (size 27.4×7.4 cm). Naue, “Schwertscheide” 1889; Garscha, “Schwertscheide” 1939; Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957, 11ff.
- 55 Naue, “Schwertscheide” 1889, 120, sees here a “Waffenrock.” The parallel lines of fur are horizontal, both on the tail and on the back, contra Naue, *ibid.* Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957, 12, assumes that the fur reaches to below the knees: “bei dem Bruchstück die gleiche Zottenmusterung wiederkehrt, die bei der oben ganz erhaltenen Gestalt des Wolfskriegers benützt ist, um seinem Gewand Fellcharakter zu geben”; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 300, “knielanger Mantel.” The tail, as a comparison with the Torslunda die (Figure 1.6) will show, is neither a seax (thus Naue, “Schwertscheide” 1889, 120) nor “a quiver, filled with arrows” (Garscha, “Schwertscheide” 1939, 3).
- 56 Shoes: the shoe vessel from Mainz-Herchtsheim, Wiczorek, *Franken* II 1996, 679. Lamellar armor: Naue, “Schwertscheide” 1889, 120: “Bronzeplättchen.” Ring-swords: Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1987, 213; Steuer, “Gefolgschaftsproblem” 1992, 208. Knee-long hauberks: Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 238 (Gammertingen); 408 (Niederstotzingen); in the Middle Ages: Contamine, *War* 1984, 184ff.
- 57 Härke, “Organization” 1997. Compare berserks, p. 75, this volume.
- 58 Naue, “Schwertscheide” 1889, 119: “das erhaltene Fragment der Silberplatte”; Garscha, “Schwertscheide” 1939, 3f.: “bei dem aus einem Stück geschnittenen Scheidenbelag.”

- 59 Bowl or box: Garscha, "Schwertscheide" 1939, 3f.: "Es will scheinen als ob das Blech ursprünglich für andere Zwecke bestimmt gewesen wäre"; Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, 23: "Kanne, Eimer." Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 205, adds "Trinkhorn"; Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 718: "etwa die Verkleidung eines Kästchens... zerschnitten und wieder zusammengesetzt."
- 60 Spear: Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, 12ff. with fig. 5. Unlike Hauck, however, I find no meaningful "Glättungspuren" around the upper wolf-warrior, on either the photograph of the Berlin Museum or the galvano cast published in Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 437.
- 61 Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 198ff.; Arwidsson, *Valsgärde* 1977, 21ff.; Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, 208ff.; Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 707ff.
- 62 Gutenstein scenes: 5.5×7.5 cm, compare with 5.2×5.6 cm (Valsgärde 7), 5.2×5.8 cm (Sutton Hoo 2), 6.2×7 cm (Torslunda) and 5.5×5.4 (Pliezhausen). The Gutenstein dies (including four embossed borders of about 3 mm) thus each measured about 14×7.5 cm. The grave 12 helmet is illustrated in Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 719.
- 63 The golden Pliezhausen disc also comes from an Alamannic Vendel helmet, see Chapter 17, 162f. Alamannic and Swedish art linked: *ibid.*
- 64 Vendel crossband helmets: see p. 163. No three-figure scenes: the Obrigheim foil (Figure 1.5), restored by Hauck "Adelskultur" 1957 as a three-figure scene (doubted by Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 717f.), is too small for a Vendel helmet and thus has no bearing on whether the Gutenstein scene had two or three figures. Corresponding two-figure scenes: helmet from Sutton Hoo, Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 186ff. Helmets from Vendel, graves 12 and 14: Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 719. The Torslunda scene is even closer to the Gutenstein scene than suggested in the restoration drawing by Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, fig. 5, for above the foot of the left-facing warrior seem to be traces of the butt-end of Woden's spear, which therefore, as on the Torslunda die, points upward (Figure 1.6). Also, what to Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, 14, seemed to be "eine weitere verdrückte Speerspitze," looks like the toe of Woden as on the Torslunda die. If so, Woden there faced left.
- 65 Thumb: contra Sutton Hoo Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 718; but the Sutton Hoo helmet foils, Bruce-Mitford, 1978, 189, also have outsize thumbs. Dance spurring on: see pp. 117ff. Einheriar: Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, 17f.; Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 718. Offering one's weapons to join a following: *Formulae Marculfi*, MGH Form. 55: "una cum arma sua in manu nostra trustem et fidelitatem nobis visus est coniurasse." Mythical heroes: Hauck, "Wiedergabe" 1981, 168ff.; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994, 544. Heroes pledging themselves to Woden: Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 83ff.; Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 41ff. Cf. Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 223.
- 66 Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 101; Böhner and Quast, "Grabfunde" 1994, 397 (Vendel 1); Anwidsson, *Valsgärde*, 1977, figs. 25–6; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994, 534, fig. 3.
- 67 Tacitus, *Germania* 13f.; Bede, *HE* 3.14. Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Óláfs saga Helga* 215 shows the pride warband leaders took in having outstanding warriors joining them.
- 68 Main weapon handed over: Hauck, "Wiedergabe" 1981, 168ff.; Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 205; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994, 544. Vendel grave 14: Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, 17 and plate VIII; Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, fig. 30.
- 69 This is slightly less than Steuer's "Reichsideologie" ("Ringschwert" 1987)—there was no Alamannic "Reich" in the sixth century.
- 70 Woden as a wolf-warrior: IK 65 (Gudbrandsdalen); cf. IK 7 (Års, fig. 26) and *Heimskringla, Ynglinga saga* 6. Ziegler, "Óðin" 1985.
- 71 Contra: Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, 17. On the Vendel 14 helmet the dead would be rather too many.
- 72 Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 83ff.
- 73 Alamannic names: Müller, "Wolfhetan" 1967, 210f.; among the early Saxons and Anglo-Saxons, wolf-warrior names are rare. Anti-Roman stance: Ammianus 26.5.7: "gentes immanissimas"; Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 122ff.; Scardigli, "Problem" 1999



- 74 Gait: Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 207f. Vulfolaic: Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 1655, cf. 995f.; Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 245ff.; Kaufmann, *Personennamen* 1968, 223; Reichert, *Lexikon* I, 1987, 796. The earliest example comes from AD 585: Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 368.6 and 380.26 (a Lombard). From the seventh century onwards the name Vulfolaic is often found: Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 1655. Lykormas: Eisler, *Man* 1952, 142. Children raised by wolves could run very fast on all fours: Singh and Zingg, *Wolf-Children* 1942, 30. Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 460f. War dance: see p. 123.
- 75 Auxilia Palatina shield badges often blazon Germanic religious symbols: Altheim, *Niedergang* II, 1952, 345ff.; Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959. Altheim, *Literatur* 1948, 148f. and *Niedergang* II, 1952, 348ff. takes the many sun symbols as a reflex of Aurelian’s sun worship, but they may be Germanic, see Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 38, especially in view of the likelihood that Maximian on the Rhine, not Aurelian, raised the first Auxilia Palatina (Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 155ff.).
- 76 Agathias 1.7; 2.1.7. Böhner and Quast, “Grabfunde” 1994.
- 77 Names: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 139–143. New homelands: Höfler, “Verwandlungskulte” 1973, 252f. Alamannic cult of Woden: Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 78. Ethos: Werner, “Heilsbilder” 1963.
- 78 Oberwarngau, grave 171; Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München, inv. 1953, 308; unpublished. Such belt-ends are datable to AD 640–670: Siegmund, “Gürtel” 1999, 172, fig. 9.
- 79 Heilsbilder: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 53f. Insignia: Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 282f. Bavarians as relatives of Alamanni: Geuenich, *Geschichte* 1997, 90f. Wolf-names: Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, *passim*.
- 80 Libanius: *Oratio* 59.131 (on Franks): **Θηριώδη λύσσα**. Chedinus: Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 485; for the related Hiadnings and Old Norse Heðinn; also see p. 33, this volume. There are some Frankish wolf-warrior names (Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967), but Chrocius is Alamannic and not from West Francia (Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 24–26), *pace* Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 202. Gregory: Unruh, “Wargus” 1954, 20f.
- 81 Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1987, 205 suggests Obrigheim on the Neckar river rather than Obrigheim in the Palatinate, hence from Alamannia, but see now RGA s.v. *Obrigheim*. Hauck, “Breddenkmäler” 1957, 354, sees here an illustration of the Hildesaga. Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957, 12, gives Woden a twin-snake headgear (cf. p. 120f, this volume), but Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 717, says one cannot see it. The dancer’s headgear looks rather like the lone-snake cap on the Vindonissa foil (Hauck, “Adelskultur,” fig. 3). Further right was a warrior with a shield, according to Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957, 11ff., but doubted by Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 717.
- 82 Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 717, mentions “zwei noch schwach erkennbare Ansätze” above the god’s head that might be restored to look like the twin dragons of the Torslunda die dancer, but this is unlikely, for to show the twin dragons, the dancer’s head needs to be depicted frontally.
- 83 Browband decorations: Böhner, “Spangenhelme” 1994. A drinking bowl or beaker (Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1987, 205) seems less likely, given the content of the scene.
- 84 Conversion: Wallace-Hadrill, *Church* 1983, 17–36.
- 85 Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978; Hauck, “Sutton Hoo” 1982, 351f. Howl: *Fight at Finnsburg* 6: “Gylleð græghama.”
- 86 Indians, Romans, Germani: Kershaw, *God* 2000; Livy 10.27.9: “Martius lupus—gentis nos Martiae et conditoris nostri admonuit”; Woden’s wolves: *Grímnismál* 19; de Vries, *Religiongeschichte* II, 1957, 61. Geri: *Grímnismál* 19. Woden-sprung kings: Chaney, *Cult* 1970, 121ff., who fails, however, to see the two throne wolves on the Bayeux tapestry as Woden’s beasts with the king. Woden’s wolves in England: Owen, *Rites* 1981, 10f. and 15;

- comparable eagle carvings: Beck, *Bildderkmäler* 1964, 30f. God's might: Höfler, "Abstammungstraditionen" 1973, 28f.
- 87 Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* I, 1956, 454 and II 1957, 498; Davidson, *Scandinavia* 1967, 98f.; Beck, "Stanzen" 1968; Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 214ff.; Hauck, "Kulte" 1980, 519 (one-eyedness); Hauck, "Germania-Texte" 1982, 192f. (with a drawing that marks the neck-ring of the right-hand dragon); Hauck, "Dioskuren" 1984, 485; Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 718 reviews Hauck's results, mainly approving. The hat-wearer not Woden: Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 208; Anwidsson, *Valsgårde*, 1977, 125; Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 222; but see pp. 117ff, this volume. Not adduced here are the hound-headed warriors on the shorter Gallehus horn, for they may be "Mischwesen" rather than wolf-warriors, contra Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 79; Quast, "Kriegerdarstellungen" 2002, 271.
- 88 See the twin-dragon shield badge on p. 49 and in Figure 3.2.
- 89 Flaps: see p. 120. Viksø: Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 330. See also Caesar's Vercingetorix denarius. Headgear: see pp. 118ff.
- 90 Threaten: Hauck, "Herrschaftszeichen" 1954, 47; Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1954, 19f.; Alföldi, "Cornuti" 1959, 177. Spear avoids foot: Beck, "Stanzen" 1968, 239; 247ff. Vulfoiaic: see p. 29
- 91 See pp. 98 and 117.
- 92 Hauberk: contra, Höfler, "Berserker" 1976, 300 "mit einem bis zu den Knien reichenden Fellkittel—bekleidet." Hauberks: Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo*, 1978, 232–239. Wolf-names: Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 51. Reichert, *Lexikon* II, 1990, 656–659. In the north: Müller, "Wolfhetan" 1967, 201ff. Müller's study lays to rest von See's claim ("Berserker" 1961) that Thorbjörn Hornklofi in the ninth century "invented" the úlfheðnar; see also Beck, "Stanzen" 1968, 247; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 222; Höfler, "Berserker" 1976, 300. On the shared culture of Alamannia and Sweden, see p. 162f.
- 93 Saxo 115; *Volsung saga* 8. Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 460f. (also p. 14, this volume).
- 94 Gods present: Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglingasaga* 6; Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 141; Eliade, *Myth* 1963, *passim*. Any warrior wolf: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 4ff. and 178ff.; in "The Battle of Maldon," 96, the Danes are called "waelwolfas." Young Helgi is a friend of "wolves," Helgakviða Hundingsbana 1.6: "sá er varga vinnr." Hiadnings: *Skáldskaparmál* 61; *Hátatal* 49; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 162–172; Landolt, "Hedeninge" 2000, 109–110. For the related Frankish Chedinus, see p. 30. For Old Norse Heðinn, see Blaney, "Berserkr" 1972, 31ff.
- 95 IK 65 (Gudbrandsdalen).
- 96 Beck, "Stanzen" 1968, 247f.
- 97 Irish: McCone, "Hund" 1987, 104. Pictish: stone of Gellyburn, Murthly, Perthshire, now in the Scottish Museum, Edinburgh (a photograph in Birkhan, *Kultur* 1999, 337). Lithuanians, Slavs: Kershaw, *God* 2000, 165ff.
- 98 Ringquist, "Människofigurer" 1969, from grave 46. Ringquist's drawing gives the hood a back-crest which it does not have, as I observed when studying the original.
- 99 *Úlfheðinn*: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 212. Tail: strangely, folk tales from Schleswig-Holstein hold that a short, stumpy tail betrays a werewolf, setting him off from a real wolf (Rheinheimer, "Wolf" 1994, 411).
- 100 Perhaps a spear: Ringquist, "Människofigurer" 1969- Heathen crosses (Thor hammers): Paulsen, *Axt* 1939, 240; 266; Hauck, "Auswertung" 1998, 336; Hauck, "Brakteat" 2000, 32; 48; 57; 63; Behr, "Kreuz" 2000. Crosses on sword blades: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 50.
- 101 Portray heroes: Hauck, "Wiedergabe" 1981, 168ff.; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994, 544. Sigurd: Ellis, "Sigurd" 1942; Blindheim, *Billedkunst* 1972; Ploss, *Siegfried* 1966; Ziegler, "Oðin" 1985, 10 and 100ff.; Düwel, "Sigurddarstellungen" 1986. Some tenth-century crosses from the Isle of Man show Sigurd stabbing horizontally, but perhaps only for lack of space (Ellis, "Sigurd" 1942; Düwel "Sigurddarstellungen" 1986, 240ff.). A fourteenth-

- century weaving from Lundeval/Telemark has both Sigurd and the dragon stand upright as they fight—but this is because the dragon snaps after Sigurd's horse (Blindheim, *Billedkunst* 1972, no. 19; Ploss, *Siegfried* 1966, 102 with fig. 11; Düwel, "Sigurddarstellungen" 1986, 249). *Beowulf*. 874–887.
- 102 Sigmund: Neckel, "Drachenkampf" 1920, 122ff. (contra: Ploss, *Siegfried* 1966, 12). A hero fighting a standing dragon seems to be shown on the Burwell box, too, but without a wolf-mask: Vierck, "Nordendorf" 1967, 121f. and fig. 5.1a. Winchester: Biddle, *Excavations* 1966, 329ff. Cf. Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 210ff.
- 103 The Icelandic *Fornmanna sögur* (3, 182f.) of the fourteenth century still know a wolf-warrior as king of the otherworld; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 172ff. Being too heathen for Christian times, the lay of Sigmund gave way, around AD 1000, to the lay of Sigurd: Neckel, "Drachenkampf" 1920, 226. Sinfiötli=Fitela: *Beowulf* 879; 889; Fitela="wolf": Klaeber, *Beowulf* 1950, 434f.; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 211. Early lay: Neckel, "Drachenkampf" 1920; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 210ff.; Haubrichs, "Karolinger" 2000, 292. Sigmund and Sinfiötli: Grimm, "Bedeutung" 1865, 206.
- 104 Ringquist, "Människofigurer" 1969
- 105 Woden's men: Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 331f. Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957; Hauck, "Bilddenkmäler" 1976, 592; Ziegler, "Oðin" 1985. Enright, "Warband" 1998, 329; 335. Among Alamanni, wolves and eagles were Woden's animals—witness the Deisslingen and Löhningen discs. Woden worshipers, typically, were leaders of warbands, de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II 1957, 97ff. Warbands were religious groups: Enright, "Warband". For the religious link of animal names and animal symbolism among ancient Germani see Müller, "Tiersymbolik" 1968; third-century Germanic dog- and wolf-images as the animals of a war god: Werner, *Aufkommen* 1966, 13ff.; cautious: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 195ff. (not "Attributstiere").
- 106 Beck ("Stanzen" 1968, 247f.) assumes a bond of Woden with the *úlfhednar*, based on the line by Eyvind Skaldaspillir quoted on p. 33, which, however needs not imply a bond with Woden. "Mythologize": von See, "Berserker" 1961, 135, commenting on Snorri's *Yngliga saga* 6: "Woden's...men went to battle without hauberks and acted like mad dogs or wolves"; Höfler, "Berserker" 1976, rightly rejects this. Moreover, Woden himself sometimes wore fur, hence his Old Norse name Loðinn: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 214; see Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 329ff.; also Woden's wolf-tail on the Års bracteate amulet see Figure 11.2. His Anglo-Saxon name Grim means "the one with the mask," which makes him a masked warrior, perhaps a wolf-, bear-, or buck-warrior: Grimm, "Bedeutung" 1865, 205; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970; Stenton, *England* 1971, 100; Owen, *Rites* 1981, 10; Kershaw, *God* 2000.
- 107 Wolfdieterich: Grimm, "Bedeutung" 1865, 209- Compare the *Volsung saga*, Ziegler, *Oðin* 1985. Sin: Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 65–107. Magic: Eliade, *Myth* 1963, 13ff.
- 108 Blaney, "Berserker" 1972, 85f.; cf. Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Ólafs saga Helga* 228 (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 1964, 514f.).
- 109 See p. 43f.
- 110 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1.11; *Volsung saga* 8; *Helgaqviða Hundingsbana in fyrri* 36.9f.; *Egils saga* 66; cf. Saxo 24; 51. Compare Ammianus' tale of a windpipe-biting, blood-sucking naked Arab (31.16.6; Woods, "Ammianus" 2002) that may be a Gothic wolf-warrior tale.

- 111 Sturluson: *Óláfs saga Helga* 228. Hafstrjand: Sturluson, *Harald's saga Hárfagra* 18; see p. 43f. Fire and steel: compare p. 79, this volume; furs, of course, offer also some natural protection against blades: Pausanias 4.11.3.
- 112 Saxo 115.7f.: “Pugiles...ululantium more luporum horrissonas dedere voces”; compare Saxo 162. However, they need not be wolf-warriors (as distinguished from bear-warriors by Hornklofi), for by Saxo's time they all could be called berserks, cf. Davidson, *Saxo* 1979, II, 105; moreover, the battle cry generally seems to have been a wolfish howl: p. 111, this volume.
- 113 Wolf-warriors: Gerstein, “Warg” 1974, 155; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 145; Kershaw, *God* 2000. Seen as berserks: Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 60ff.; von See, “Berserker” 1961, 129–135, Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, I, 274. It may be best not to call wolf-warriors “werewolves,” for were-wolfishness is not a warrior style but rather a personal trait, or even an imagined sickness (lycanthropy); cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 8.80; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 50; 60; 62ff.; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* I, 1956, 238; Burkert, *Homo* 1972, 103. *Vatnsdæla saga* 9: “**þeir** berserkir, er úlfheðnar v&uacute;r kallaðir; **þeir** hófðu vargstakka fyrir brynjur.” Our translation, in which we are heartened by a kind letter from H. Beck, follows Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 200, and others. By contrast, von See, “Berserker” 1961, 135, translates “wolf-pelts over their hauberks,” yet if berserks by this time were understood to be “bare-shirts” (*Ynglinga saga* 6), how could they wear hauberks? Scorned armor: Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 331.
- 114 McCone, “Hund” 1987, 106, wrongly equates wolf-warriors of antiquity and the early Middle Ages with naked warriors: they were armored, as Figures 1.1, 1.4, 1.6 and 1.7 show.
- 114 Wolfdieterich: Grimm, “Bedeutung” 1865, 206ff. Public hunts: Rheinheimer, “Wolf” 1994. On the loose: *New York Times*, April 2, 2000 (evening edition).
- 115 Medieval wolf-sympathy: Grimm, “Bedeutung” 1865, 205f.; 210ff.; Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 1653: “Wolfhelm,” Old English “Vulfhelm.” Family symbols: Werner, “Heilsbilder” 1963, 380. *Hundsgugel*: The helmet was once fitted with a mail neckguard, compare Contamine, *War* 1984, fig. 19. Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 65 suggests there was a broad tradition of such masks in other materials, now lost. The other age-old warrior image of wolves, that of outlaws haunting the woods, lived on even longer into early modern times. The peasants of Lorraine, whom the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) turned into highwaymen, were “Schnapans, lousps de bois,” just as those who fought the French invaders of the Franche Comté from 1674 to 1678, were “lousps de bois”: Boulainvilliers, *État* 1752, 396; Gresset, *Provinces* 1977, 30 (references I owe to the kindness of Kieko Matteson).

## 2

## BEARS

- 1 Bear sympathy: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 201f. Ziegler, “Óðin” 1985, 77. Sioux: Catlin, *Letters* I, 1973, 244; a Tlingit bear helmet in the Leningrad Museum of Anthropology: Siebert and Forman, *Art* 1967, plate 51. China: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 460f. A bronze figurine of a bear-man from Ust-Garevaya, Perm region, is in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Bears and warriors in Asia: Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 72f. The old-fashioned Greeks of Arcadia wore perhaps both wolfskins and bearskins in battle, but we do not know how far they identified themselves with the animals (Pausanias 4.11.3; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 44f.; Scheibelreiter, *Tiernamen* 1976, 50; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 121ff.). Celts: Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 439f. The bear-pelts of Silius Italicus 4.558 and 8.523 (and perhaps those of Pausanias 4.11.3, too) covered only the chest, not the head, hence the warriors did perhaps not identify with bears. Beck, “Personennamen” 1986, 304: “Mit einer

gewissen Wahrscheinlichkeit lässt sich ein indogermanisches Erbe nur für das Namenselement Wolf sichern.”

- 2 Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896, 175: “Vier der Soldaten tragen über Kopf und Schultern ein Thierfell, dessen Unterkiefer als Wangenschild zu dienen scheint und dessen Tatzen über der Brust gekreuzt sind; an der rechten Seite tragen sie die leere, am balteus von der linken Schulter herabhängende Schwertscheide, während das Schwert selbst in der gesenkten Rechten zu ergänzen ist.”
- 3 Overlong bear claws are seen also on the gravestone of Pintaius: Bauchhenss, *Grabdenkmäler* 1978, no. 5; see the marked claws on the gravestones of Faustus, Secundus, and Genialis: Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, nos. 7; 8; 9.
- 4 Roman helmets combined with bear-hoods for use by Roman soldiers: Vegetius 2.16; gravestone of Pintaius: Bauchhenss, *Grabdenkmäler* 1978, no. 5. Roman helmets combined with animal-hoods for use by Germanic warriors: see p. 51f. Germanic helmets covered with animal skins: Plutarch, *Marius* 25.7. Free Germani: Tacitus, *Germania* 6: “Vix uni alterive cassis aut galea”; Much, *Germania* 1967, 144f.
- 5 Cichorius, *Reliefs* 1896, 175: “Über Kopf und Schultern ein Thierfell, dessen Unterkiefer als Wangenschild zu dienen scheint.” Spurs: Trajan’s Column, scene 61. Hellenistic lion-head helmets, too, were not meant to mask the wearer but to add to his height and fierce looks: Crous, “Waffenpfeiler” 1933, 81.
- 6 Names: CIL XIII, 11735 from Heidelberg has a *Respectus Beri*, “son of the bear”; Speidel, *Studley* II 1992, 102f.; Reichert, *Lexikon* II, 1990, 480. Nesselhauf, “Inscripfen” 1937, nos. 245ff.; 251. Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 379. Names and fury: see pp. 43 and 45.
- 7 Kops plateau: Enkevort-Willems, “Helmets” 1994. Marten-helmet: see p. 52. Both reworked helmets fit Polybius’ description 6.22.3 of “a plain helmet” (i.e. without plume), covered with a wolfskin. Reworking: Jankuhn, in Much, *Germania* 1967, 145; Ilkjær, “Gegner” 1997; Reichmann, “Spuren” 1999, 109 (below, Figure 4.1). Batavians reworking helmets: Enkevort and Willems, “Helmets” 1994, 134f. Naturalistic masks are not essential in animal sympathy (Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 54; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 301), hence some bear hair was enough, as was some wolf hair wound around the ring Gudrun sent to Gunnar (*Atlaqviða* 8). Names such as Bernhelm, Beornhelm: Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 96f. Feeling like a bear: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 459; Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, I, 291.
- 8 Germanic paired units: Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 158f. Greeks: Xenophon, *Lacedaemonians* 4.2ff.; Romans: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 32; 42f.; 60; 73; also p. 8, this volume; Byzantines: Priscus, frag. 49 (Blockley)=*Excerpta de leg. gent.* 21: ἐς φιλοτιμίαν Wolf and bear are at times also paired in names as on the arch of Dativius Victor in Mainz, CIL XIII, 11810; Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892–1916, 7080 additions; or in graffiti from Heddernheim: Scholz, “Bevölkerung” 1997, 53f. Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, constantly pairs Norse wolf- and bear-warriors. Romans, too, held bears and wolves together in awe (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14.255; 15.87; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 8.17), and some Roman families named their sons Bear, Boar, and Wolf: CIL XI, 1777, Volaterrae, noticed by Syme, *Papers* 1988, 526, as Anthony Birley reminds me. Wolf- and bear-names in the same family in Icelandic sagas: *Egils saga* 1ff.; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976,

302. See also the bear-wolves on the belt-buckle from Herbergen, Waurick, *Gallien* 1980, 189.

- 9 *Atlakviða* 11 (around AD 900). The Norwegian *Gulafingslov* lawbook (94) outlaws bears and wolves together: Gerstein, “Warg” 1974, 139; Paul, *Wolf* 1981, 56.
- 10 In the famous Esquiline painting from the third or second century BC, M. Fannius, getting a military decoration, wears an animal skin over his shoulder, perhaps a token of overcoming an enemy: Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952, 50ff. Roman standard bearers wearing animal skins over the shoulder: CIL XIII 6911 and 11868=Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, 8 and 9. Bear-hoods, a Roman tradition: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 81f and Hägg, “Haithabu” 1984, 186, without evidence. Adopted: Couissin, *Armes* 1926, 422ff. Torcs: Livy 6.42.5; 7.9.6–10.14; Valerius Maximus 3.26; Ammianus 24.4.5; Maxfield, *Decorations* 1981, 86f.
- 11 Standard-bearers with decorations: Maxfield, *Decorations* 1981, 138. Late-Roman torc awards likewise first went to the bravest and then became a badge of standard-bearers: Speidel, “Decorations” I, 1996. Sander, “Germanisierung” 1939, 14f., awkwardly suggests that Romans wore bear-hoods against the cold. Badge: Vegetius 2.16: “ad terrorem” seems right, contra Couissin, *Armes* 1926, 424. First line: Speidel, “Who Fought” 2000. Höfler’s suggestion, *Schriften* 1992, 67ff. that first-century legions had enough Germani in their ranks to entrust Germanic pelt-wearers with their holy standards, is rather unlikely.
- 12 Polybios 6.22.3. In a few cases, however, the reliefs picture wolf- rather than bearhoods on Roman standard-bearers, such as in scene 26 of Trajan’s Column; regular bear-hoods of Roman standard bearers on Trajan’s Column: Florescu, *Trajanssäule* 1969, 110. Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 82, has the cornicen on the Great Trajanic frieze wear a wolfskin, but his plate 5.2 more convincingly calls it a bearskin. The Aurelian panels portray only bearskins, no leopard skins: Scott-Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs* 1967, 41, contra Couissin, *Armes* 1926, 422. Alföldi, “Hasta” 1959, 4, sees wolf hoods on coins of the mid-first century BC, but they are the hair hoods of Juno Sospita.
- 13 Rhine auxiliaries: Couissin, *Armes* 1926, 422ff.; there is one from Ragusa/Croatia, now in Vienna: Domaszewski, *Fahnen* 1885=Aufsätze 1972, 73 fig. 87. Pintaius: CIL XIII 8098=Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892–1916, 2580=Domaszewski, *Aufsätze* 1972, fig. 86=Bauchhenss, *Grabdenkmäler* 1978, no. 5. Genialis: CIL XIII 11868 (Weissenau)=Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, no. 9. On coins of Hadrian further standard-bearers of auxiliary cohorts wear bear-hoods: RIC 927–930: Exercitus Raeticus; cf. RIC 935: Exercitus Syriacus.
- 14 Rhine legions: Couissin, *Armes* 1926, 423. Early legionary standard-bearers with bear-hoods are Q. Luccius Faustus and Valerius Secundus, standard-bearers of legion XIV Gemina; their gravestones, found at Mainz, date from the years after AD 70: CIL XIII, 6898 and 6911=Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, nos. 7 and 8. Trajan: Great frieze on Constantine’s Arch in Rome; RIC 657. The latest bear-hood I know is that of the hornblower on the Portonaccio sarcophagus, see e.g. Kiechle, “Taktik” 1965, plate 15.2, just beneath the dragon standard. Praetorian standard-bearers: Trajan’s Column, scene 113; perhaps after Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.688f.; for the transition to lion-hoods compare Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 81.
- 15 Unruh, “Wargus” 1954, 20. The guard get-up is still preserved in Vienna’s Wagenburg-Monturdepot at the Hofburg (information I owe to my friend Hanns Ubl). Georgians in the Caucasus: Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, verse 84, says of his knight “Over this rich apparel was flung the skin of a panther, and the cap on his head was made from the self-same panther skin” (translation by Venera Urushadze, Tbilisi 1986).
- 16 Odysseus similarly stripped the Wiesel cap off Dolon for a trophy: *Iliad* 10.458. North American Indians wore the dress and weapons of those they had slain in battle: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, 100. Likewise a medieval knight had the right to bear the arms taken from a

- foe in battle (Keen, *Chivalry* 1984, 130). Paris of Troy wore a leopard skin in battle: *Iliad* 3.17.
- 17 Unless a third-century irregular unit among the Batavi, known only as *numerus Urs* (...), represents bear-warriors named after Latin *ursus* (bear). *Numerus Urs* (...): CIL XIII, 12505–12507; AE 1938, 34; Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 80; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 184.
- 18 Scorn: Claudian, *In Rufinum*, 2.76–85; Synesius, *De Regno* 20; Sidonius, *Epistulae* 5.7.4; John Lydus *De magistratibus* 1.12. Codex Theodosianus 14.10.4: “Maiores crines, indumenta pellium etiam in servis intra urbem sacratissimam praecipimus inhiberi” (AD 416). Excubitores: Corippus, *Iust.* 1.202ff.; 3.165ff.; Haldon, *Praetorians* 1984, 136ff.; Whitby, “Omission” 1987, 483ff. Fur: John Lydus, *De magistratibus* 1.12. In the mountains, Arcadians and Bruttians, though, wore fur: Pausanias 4.11.3; Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.523; 568ff. Sympathy: Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 70f.; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 122.
- 19 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 9.12. Bear-names: Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 48f. Names meant what they said: Scheibelreiter, *Tiernamen* 1976, 48. Scheibelreiter, *Gesellschaft* 1999, 185; 371ff.: “verwandelter Mensch”; “Sonder- oder Höchstform der Existenz”; “Trance.” Weakness: *Egils saga* 27; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976. “Ursio” (o.t. “yrre”): Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 18.
- 20 *Finnesburg* 38. Names no longer understood: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 246.
- 21 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, *Haralds saga Hárfagra* 18. Berserks in Norse literature: *Weiser*, *Jünglingsweißen* 1927, 43ff.; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 198f.; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935 34ff.; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* I 1956, 493; Kuhn, “Grenzen” 1956, 68ff.; von See, “Berserker” 1961. Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 222, Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, and Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 301, give the best accounts. Simek, *Dictionary* 1993, 35; Daxelmüller, “Geheimbünde” 1998, 563.
- 22 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, *Ynglinga saga* 6. Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 21f.; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 222f; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 21ff.; 27ff. (fullest account of the discussion); Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 299; Simek, *Dictionary* 1993, 35; contra von See, “Berserker” 1961, well refuted by Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 27ff. For bear warriors in Norse literature see Hrólfs saga Kraka; *Weiser*, *Jünglingsweißen* 1927, 48; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 48ff.; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 299; Ranke, “Bär” 1976, 47. Wolfpelts, too, could be called *serkr*, see Daxelmüller, “Geheimbünde” 1998, 563; von See, “Berserker” 1961, 132.
- 23 See also *Haraldskvaeði* 20f., dated by von See, “Berserker” 1961, 131f. to the twelfth century. Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 34ff.; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 93f. “Serkr” in this context may mean “hauberk,” Thorbjorn Hornklofi, *Haraldskvaeði* 4: *serkjom hring-ofnom* “ring-woven sarks.” Cf. von See, “Berserker” 1961, 132; Höfler *Runenstein* 1952, 299
- 24 Hornklofi’s *emjuðu* is the howling of wolves: *Atlamál* 24.7: *emioðo úlfar*. Wolf-warriors howling: see p. 14. The shaking of weapons may refer to the wolf-warriors’ war dance, see p. 29. Grenja of berserks: e.g. *Egils saga* 64, cf. Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 10. Snorting of bears on the attack: Grzimek, *Encyclopedia* 1990, 400. Broken sword blade: Lay of Hildibrand’s death (*Ásmundar saga kappabana* 8, prologue). Berserks snarling like dogs: *Vatnsdoela saga: grenjuðu sem hundar*. Grenja in Old Norse prose: information kindly given by James E. Knirk of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* in Copenhagen. Real bears: *Vilmundar saga vidutan* 170; *Grettis saga* 75.6. Remarkably, the sound of waves breaking is also that of the fourth-century *barritus* battle cry: Ammianus 16.12.43 (see p. 111). In the light of Knirk’s information, Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 10, and Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 217, seem to be mistaken in translating *grenia* as *heulen*. The shield-biting that goes with it may also be a bear-attack sound (see p. 77), and *Egils saga* 54 (where Davidson, *Saxo* 1979, II, 77 and 105, takes *grenja* wrongly for the howling of wolves).
- 25 Claim: von See, “Berserker” 1961, now amply refuted by Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 23ff. A technical term: Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 19ff.; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 299, was right—as so often; cf. Strom, “Björnfallar” 1980. Parallelism: Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 201;

- Personennamen* 1970, 222f. Names: Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 262–270 (with “Perrhelm”); Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 50ff.; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 306; 329f.; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 220; Ranke, “Bär” 1976; Beck, “Eber” 1986, 335; Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, I, 272. See also the bear-youth and bear-fight of seventh-century heroes on the Torslunda plaques and Vendel foils: Hauck, “Bildendenkmäler” 1976, 591; “bear-heads” (Björnhofda): Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 300; Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 967. Bears as shield names: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 36. *Bjarnheðinn* (“bear-pelt”) is a rare Norse personal name: Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 299; Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 202; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 212. Bearhelm and Wolfhelm are both common names (Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 96ff.), although “helm” may here mean “leader, protector” (Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 220f.).
- 26 Nowadays it is the fashion to dismiss such links (e.g. RGA 17, 2001, 205–237), but here they stand well documented. More positive: de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* I, 1956, 9ff.; Gordon, *Battle* 1966, 26; Ellmers, “Schiffsdarstellungen” 1986. The study of the Celts has not suffered from such time-serving, cf. Stancliffe, “Kings” 1980, 80.
- 27 Perlaicus: Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 263. Imitating: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, 244. Dancing bears in the early Middle Ages: Ranke, “Bär” 1976. China: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 460f.; Mallory and Adams, *Encyclopedia* 1997, 56, report Hittite bearskin dancers. Bear-warrior style a Scandinavian invention: Simek, *Dictionary* 1993, 35. Nordic berserks certainly derive not from late-Roman guards as has been said, nor from (bare-chested) gladiators, contra Kuhn, “Grenzen” 1956, 68–73; Kuhn, “Kämpfen” 1968; see Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 365; Ziegler, *Odin* 1985, 77f.
- 28 Oseberg drawing also in Marstrand, *Skipene* 1986, 132. Hougen, “Billedvev” 1940, fig. 9; Simpson, *Life* 1987, 151ff. The “ears” of the hoods point to wolf- or bear-warriors, while their puzzling shape could be due to constraints of textile art, or to the felt of which they may have been made like others found at Haithabu in Schleswig Haithabu: Hägg, *Haithabu* 1984.
- 29 Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglinga saga* 6, (see p. 74, this volume). Howled: Davidson, *Road* 1976, 113f., referring to Leo the Deacon. Gait: Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 207ff. with reference to Wolfdregil etc. Becoming a bear: Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 20ff.; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 171; Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 116. Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 178ff.; 194. Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, I, 291: “Man kann die Sprünge eines Tieres nicht nachahmen, ohne dass eine innere Anpassung stattfindet.” Understandably, the Roman Vegetius (2.16) sees only the frightening aspect of bear-hoods: “Omnes antesignani vel signiferi, quamvis pedites, loricas minores accipiebant et galeas ad terrorem hostium ursinis pellibus tectas”; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 54f.; 67f. Animal language as spirit language of power: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 93ff. Sagas: *Egils saga* 64, cf. Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 10. Shape-shifting: Blaney, “Berserker” 1972, 39ff.
- 30 Bear attack sounds: Grzimek, *Encyclopedia* 1990, 400. Berserks biting shields in sagas: Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglinga saga* 6; *Vatnsdœla saga* 16; *Grettis saga* 151–153; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 4. The Lewis chess rooks are in the form of warriors biting shields that they hold in their hands, thus refuting the suggestion of Przyluski, “Loupsgarons” 1940, 133ff, that berserks held shields with their teeth because their hands had become paws. The best shield-biting rook of the Lewis chess set is in the Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, see Figure 5.4. Snorting and teeth-snapping in battle madness is known of the Sioux too: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, 246.
- 31 Trance: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 385; 459f.; 504; Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 146f.; Beck, “Ekstase” 1989; Höfler, *Siegfried* 1961, 28ff.; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 63. Some shamans, too, used bear heads for their cap of power, Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 154f. Carib: Whitehead, “Warfare” 1990, 152.
- 32 Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 70f., suggests that the bears on Vendel helmet foils are also warriors in bear disguise. If so, they differ from wolf-warriors in that they, like Bothvar Bjarki, are all-bear, not just hooded men.



- 33 *Hrólfs saga Kraka* 33; Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 20. Wound-proof: cf. Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 100. Grades of shape-shifting: Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 39ff.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 36f. Strength: Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglinga saga* 6 (on berserks): “strong as bears or bulls.” Irish legend: Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 30, note 41. Sioux “Mah-to-ra-rish-nee-eech-ee-rah”: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, 223.
- 34 Woden’s bear names: de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1956, 363; Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 13. Woden as a bear: Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 237. Religious, symbolic, not mindless: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 80; 98f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 34. Modern views of bear-warriors are ambivalent: J.J.R. Tolkien’s Beorn in *The Hobbit*, though quick to anger, is good, while Michael Crichton’s bear-warriors in *The Thirteenth Warrior* are evil.
- 35 Symbols: Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 147–149ff.; Beck, “Eber” 1986, 335. Bear-warrior suit: Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Firenze; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 64f.

## 3

## BUCKS

- 1 Columella 7.3.4: “est illud incommodum in cornuto, quod cum sentiat se velut quodam naturali telo capitis armatum, frequenter in pugnam procurrit.” Indians: Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 177f.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 202. Iranians: Ammianus 19.1.3 on the Shah wearing a ram’s head, for which see the Sassanian silver bowl now in Baltimore: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, plate 14; Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 139. Sardinian Shardana: Drews, *End* 1993, 135ff., 145 and 154; Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 286f. Mycenaean: the famous warrior-vase from Mycenae (Vermeule and Karagheorgis, *Vase Painting* 1982, 132ff.; Catalogue no. XI, 42). Archaic Greeks: Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 570–575; Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 177f. Alexander’s horned fur helmet (Künzl, “Fellhelme” 1999, fig. 11) may be a buck headgear. Celts: Diodore 5.30. Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1125–1149. The Celtic war god was often horned: Pauli, *Kelten* 1980 (with goatskin); Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 637. Celtic buck-warriors are known from helmets with goat horns and from the British Gabrantovices (Goat People): Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 462ff. Romans: coins and terracottas show Juno Sospita dressed like a goat-hooded warrior; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 86ff. (with a huge bibliography); see also Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 57; Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 346ff.; Ulf, *Luperkalienfest* 1982, 140f., doubts whether Luperci and wolves are related, but provisionally admits bucks and hounds as “initiation animals”; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 148; 192f. The Luperci have a very close parallel in the vrāta of Vedic India: de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 96.
- 2 L’Orange, *Bildschmuck* 1939, 41–43; 60–64.
- 3 L’Orange, *Bildschmuck* 1939, 63, takes all spearmen of the siege scene to be Cornuti, but the second and the fourth may not have horns and the third certainly has none. However, since they wear the same leather helmets as that worn by Cornutus below the wall, they are also Germanic warriors of the auxilia. Their leather helmets recall the leather helmet of a horseman in scene 36 of Trajan’s Column (Figure 0.2), also from the Rhine; compare earlier large Celtic horned leather helmets: Moreau, *Welt* 1961, plate 48f.; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1125f.
- 4 *Notitia Dignitatum* Oc. V, 2–23; Seeck, *Notitia*, 1876, 115. For the raising of these units under Maximian (284–305) see Julian, *Orations* 1.34; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 155f.; hence Altheim, *Literatur* 1948, 232 wrongly thinks they did not fight at the Milvian Bridge in 312. Fighting spirit: Columella 7.6.4: Quia cornuti fere perniciosi sunt propter petulantiam; cf. Petulantia in Ammianus 17.13.28; 26.7.4; 29.5.33; 31.6.3; Alföldi, “Schildzeichen” 1935. Bucks as warrior animals: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 190. Other Germanic warriors besides the Cornuti and Petulantes of Constantine’s Arch may also have worn helmets with upstanding horns, as on the Prutting stone of AD 313: CIL III

- 11771=Garbsch and Overbeck, *Spätantike* 1989, 71; contra: Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 173; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 211. Helmets with horns carved or overlaid on the bowl, are, of course common, see the Portonaccio sarcophagus, Figure 17.4.
- 5 Germanic warriors: Zosimus 2.15.1; Libanius, *Oratio* 30.6; Speidel, “Auxilia” 1996. Contra Barnes, *Augustine* 1995, 387 “largely Gallic”; but see F.Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle*, vol. I, Paris 1971, 204. His “Germanoi” are men from the Rhine armies, named after the Roman provinces of the Germaniae. Gauls, pacified for 350 years, had lost their onetime warrior traditions (Tacitus, *Agricola* 11), although some still enrolled (Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 154).
- 6 Alföldi, “Schildzeichen” 1935; L’Orange, *Bildschmuck* 1939, 43 and 123; Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 117ff.; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 208ff.
- 7 “Horns”: Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 172; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 132f.; Hauck, “Bilddenkmäler” 1976, 590; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 218. For a buck with a beard coming down from the upper lip see e.g. Selzer, *Steindenkmäler* 1988, no. 255, though snakes also have such beards: Garbsch, *Paraderüstungen* 1978, plate 3, B3 (grave B11 from Straubing).
- 8 Princeton Art Museum; Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, fig. 2.
- 9 As emperors paraded in the accoutrements of their guard, Cornuti promoted from the auxilium must have formed a section of the Schola Gentilium guard.
- 10 Cornuti on the arch: L’Orange, *Bildschmuck* 1939, 41–43; 60–64. They are famous later as well: Ammianus 15.5.30; 16.11.9; 16.12.43; 16.12.63; 31.8.9.
- 11 Meaning: Werner, *Aufkommen* 1966, 25. Heruli, etc: *Panegyrici Latini* 10.5.1: “Chaibones Erulique, viribus primi barbarorum, locis ultimi”; Nixon, *Praise* 1994, 62ff. *Panegyrici Latini* 12.25.2: “Tibi se ex ultime barbaria indigenae populi dedivere.” Speidel, “Auxilia” 2004.
- 12 Gallehus horn: see p. 122. Myth: Eliade, *Myth* 1954. Saxo, 13f.: “Nam tegmine saepe ferino/contigit audaces delituisse viros.” Davidson, in her 1979 commentary p. 28, note 13, quotes an Icelandic parallel. Perhaps a buck-warrior is meant in the Oseberg weaving: Marstrander, *Skipene* 1986, 128 (upper left). Buck-warriors fired the Dutch nationalistic historical imagination: Teitler, *Opstand* 1998, 9; 11; 22; 40; 66.
- 13 She-goats: Ammianus 24.8.1: “deformes illuvie capellas et taetras.” Audun the Nanny Goat: *Grettis saga* 7.
- 14 Names: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 75ff.; 169; 190; a new Buccus from Vindolanda: Birley, *Garrison* 2002, 100—though the name could also be Celtic as in CIL XIII, 5730 (Langres). Bucciovaldus (“Buck-Warrior Leader”): Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 9.23; Buccilin, etc.: Reichert, *Lexikon* II, 1990, 487; also Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 462f; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 190.
- 15 Ethnographic traces of buck-warriors from the Middle Ages to the present: de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 64, referring to masked processions; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 40f.; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 175; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 95.

## 4

## MARTENS

- 1 Wolverine: Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 73f.; 178f.; 325f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 37f.; plates 4.1 and 4.2. Heroic myth looked to the weasel: *Volsung saga* 8. Noaname: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 206.
- 2 Werner, *Aufkommen* 1966, 26 and plate 12. The animal with its long, slim body and sharply curved back is certainly neither a wolf (Werner *ibid.*) nor a tiger (Werner, *Zierscheiben* 1941, 62); Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 54: “rückwärts blickendes Tier.”

- 3 Dolon: *Iliad* 10.335; 458; see p. 15, this volume. Greek γαλήνη, “marten” is Latin “galea.” Meuli, *Maske* 1933, 1848; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 37f.
- 4 For a photo, see Reichmann, “Spuren” 1999, 109. Dr Reichmann, in a letter, kindly described some features of the helmet for me, adding that a comparable Lynx skull and pelt was found in the fort. For reworked Roman helmets see p. 41.
- 5 Plutarch, *Marius* 25: Κράνη μὲν εἰκασμένα θηρίων φοβερόων; compare Vergil, *Aeneid* 11, 680f. The Goths in AD 399 also wore yawning animal helmets: Reichert, “Feldzeichen” 1994, 310f. (Gainas).
- 6 Neumagen relief, now in Trier: Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 70. Doubt: Reichert, “Feldzeichen” 1994, 310f.
- 7 Compare the Tell Halaf relief: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, plate 4.1. The unit ascribed to the badge is that of the Iovii, but on this side of the manuscript the labels are untrustworthy. Germanic: Speidel, “Auxilia” 2004.
- 8 Grzimek, *Encyclopedia* 1990, 400: “A long-tailed weasel sitting up. In this posture, which is quite typical of mustelids, the animals stand up on their hind feet and stretch the head high in order to see and smell ‘what is going on’.” A fine drawing of martens is in *Brehms Tierleben, Kleine Ausgabe*, Leipzig 1903, 192.
- 9 Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 1099; Müller, “Wolfhetan” 1967, 202; Kaufmann, *Personennamen* 1968, 250; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 73; 125; 128; 161; 191; 212.
- 10 Indo-European boar-warriors: Alföldi, *Early Rome* 1965, 275; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 169f. Boar-warriors of the Germanic Middle Ages: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965; Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 457ff.; Chaney, *Cult* 1970, 120ff.; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 87ff. There is also the name Ebur-roc, “Boar-Skin Wearer” (Kaufmann, *Personennamen* 1968, 200).
- 11 Marstrander, *Skipene* 1986, 132. For the Oseberg wall-hanging see also this volume, p. 125.
- 12 Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 460. His suggestion that “the possible influence of shamanic dress on military armor could profitably be studied in detail” was anticipated by Altheim, *Niedergang I*, 1952, 67.

## 5

## NAKED BERSERKS

- 1 Florus 1.37: “Invicta illa rabies et impetus quem pro virtute barbari habent.” Snorri: *Ynglinga saga* 6, quoted this volume, p. 74. The world-wide role of berserks: Speidel, “Berserks” 2002. No-retreat societies: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 211ff. Sadly, berserks do not rate an entry in Mallory and Adams, *Encyclopedia* 1997, though they are recognized on page 632f.
- 2 Slab: Mallory, *Search* 1989, fig. 27 and p. 204; Telegin and Mallory, *Stelae* 1994, 10ff.; 101. Heat: Saxo 190 and 77.10: “Nimio animi calore”; Eliade, *Yoga* 1958, 330ff.; Henry, “Furor” 1981, 54; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 805ff. Hirschlanden statue: see p. 60.
- 3 Lambert, *Fragments* 1957–8, 38–51; *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* 5.A.31ff.; Machinist, “Epic” 1978, 121, with the Akkadian text; Foster, *Muses* 1996, 227. Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 10f. For throwing off armor see the same epic 4.A.39 (Machinist 111; Foster 225).
- 4 Beasts: Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 385; an Assyrian warrior demon with human body and fantastic animal head (Niniveh, about 645 BC): Reade, *Sculpture* 1999, 30. Storm: Hurovitz—Westenholz, “LK3” 1990, 5. Snorted: Foster translates Akkadian *iziqa* (from *zāqu*) as “blasted.”
- 5 Breasted, *Records* [1906] 1962, vol. 3, paragraph 365.
- 6 Machinist, “Epic” 1978, 111; commenting on p. 325 on this not being Mesopotamian.

- 7 See Mayer, *Politik* 1995, 210. This would explain how they had come across the Euphrates: Hittite soldiers, attacking Assur. Enrolling the conquered: Malbran-Labat, *Armée* 1982, 89ff. Assyria adopting aspects of Hittite politics and warfare: Mayer, *Politik* 1995, 221ff.; 235f.
- 8 Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 14ff. Long-haired, naked Iranians: Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 17f.; Machinist, “Epic” 1978, 325. Schröder, “Ursprung” 1939, 325–367, 337f., Schmökel, *Geschichte* 1957, 205, as well as Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 10 and 33, think of Aryan Mitanni influence.
- 9 Drews, *End* 1993, 175.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 193ff.
- 11 Cultural (language-) change within a stable population is argued for India by Erdosy, *Indo-Aryans* 1995, 23f.—without convincing parallels, though.
- 12 Sigurd, *Volsung saga*: “When men come to battle, a fearless heart matters more than a sharp sword.” See p. 197, this volume.
- 13 Cavalry: Drews, *End* 1993, 164ff. Wikander, *Vayu* 1941, 92ff, suggested that ecstatic cult forms and warrior styles spread with cavalry warfare from the Aryans to the Thracians and thence to the Germani.
- 14 Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 242. Indians: Maruts, see p. 72; Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981; compare the sixteenth-century berserk Malabar amoks of India, who, like berserks, “stopped neither at fire nor sword”: Nieuhof, *Voyages* 1988, 263; Spores, *Amok* 1988, 16f.
- 15 Hittites: the guardian carved at the King’s Gate, Hattusas; they shared Indo-European warrior styles: a Hittite seal shows animal-warriors such as are known in the Veda—see Alföldy, *Struktur* 1974, plate 2/1; McCone, “Hund” 1987. Shardana: Abydos relief (Drews, *End* 1993, 144f; 174f.). Mycenaean: fresco at Pylos palace (Drews, *End* 1993, 140f.; 174). Northern Europe: statuette from Grevenswænge, Denmark (Demakopoulou, *Gods* 1999, 94).
- 16 Statuettes: Boardman, *Art* 1985, 31, the Karditsa statuette, c. 700 BC. Greek art: Himmelmann, *Nacktheit* 1990, 29ff. Apollonios, *Argonautica* 3.1280ff.; Himmelmann, *Nacktheit* 1990, 29ff. Aetolians: Thucydides 3.97ff.; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 5.18.13ff. Spartans: Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 550ff.; Alföldy, *Struktur* 1974, 122f.
- 17 Hector: *Iliad* 6.100f.; 9.237ff. Teucer: *Iliad* 8.299 and 311; Plutarch, *Agésilaios* 34.
- 18 Polybios 6.25.3–11. Alföldy, *Reiteradel* 1952, 49–53.
- 19 *Aeneid* 11.641–644, cf. 11.666f.; Propertius 4.1.27–28. Dumézil, *Mythes* 1939, 86, reckons also Indian Gandharvas and Greek Centaurs among such warriors.
- 20 Wounds glorious in Republican Rome: McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 49.
- 21 Rome and Italy: Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.641ff. cf. Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.356ff. (bears: 8.523). Vergil had valuable sources of information, as is clear from the parallels of Polybios 6.22.3 (Walbank, *Commentary* 1957, 703) and Propertius 4.10.20; Pliny, *Natural History* 10.16; Alföldy, *Struktur* 1974, 81. Flowing hair: *Aeneid* 11.640ff. Barefooted: Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.689f. Naked: see e.g. a sixth-century bronze statuette from Umbria: Gersa and Weiss, *Hallstattzeit* 1999, plate 14. Open combat, single combat: Livy 1.24ff.; 42.47; Polybios 13.3; 36.9; Demandt, *Idealstaat* 1993, 250ff. Use of clichés here: Schweizer, *Vergil* 1967, 16f.
- 22 Trajan in the great frieze on Constantine’s Arch. Fronto, *Principia historiae* 14: “caput ...neque vel adversus tela munitum praebere.”
- 23 True battle gear: Diodore 5.29.2: **Γυμνούς και περιεζωσμένους καταβαίνειν εις τόν κίνδυνον**. Power belt: see p. 000. Fischer, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 414, sees well that literary and monumental sources confirm each other, but needlessly finds a contradiction between glory-seeking and religious belief. Hirschlanden: Cunliffe, *Celts* 1997, 63; Magdalensberg: Birkhan, *Kultur* 1999, 275.
- 24 Livy 5.37.4: “flagrantes ira cuius impotens est gens.”
- 25 Polybios 2.29.7f.; cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus 14.13; Livy 22.46.5; 38.21.9; 38.26.7; Diodore 5.30.3; see also the naked Celtic warrior of Pergamene art in Rome’s Capitoline Museum, the bronze statuette of a slinger in Berlin’s Pergamon Museum (Birkhan, *Kultur*

- 1999, no. 723) and many other works of art; Fischer, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 414; Davidson, *Myths* 1988, 89; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 867; 960f.
- 26 Golden wristbands worn in battle by Germanic warriors had the same role: Procopius, *Gothic Wars* 3.24.24; *Battle of Maldon* 160f. Finger-rings: Saxo 58.22.
- 27 Livy 38.21.9: “gloriosius se pugnare putant” (he also makes much of their rage). Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 11.646: “pulchramque petunt per vulnera mortem”; McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 49.
- 28 Roman eyes: Plutarch, *Marius* 23.2. Buri: Speidel, “Buri” 2004.
- 29 Contra Cichorius, *Reliefs* II 1896, 175 and 178; a close parallel is the barefooted slinger in scene 66 of the Column.
- 30 *Aeneid* 7.689. Cf. Kershaw, *God* 2000, 136.
- 31 Only scenes 36 and 42 (Figure 5.3) show men this young—the same men as here. Compare youthful Celtic warriors with wild curls: Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1063.
- 32 Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 113.
- 33 Young: Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.497; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.69; Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.460; Herodian 7.6.2; *Panegyrici Latini* 3.24.4: “iuvenes cum gladiis...imperatoris maiestatis solemnis ornatus”; Ammianus 31.13.16: “quidam de candidatis...iuvenis”; Synesius, *De regno* 18: **νέοι πάντες**; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 78. Handsome: **ὄραιοι** (Herodian 4.7.3); Procopius, *Wars* 3.2.4; Anecd. 6.2ff.; Zosimus 2.42. Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 61; 78; 87f.; 120. Tacitus, *Germania* 13.3: “electorum iuvenum globo circumdari, in pace decus, in bello praesidium.” Hairstyle: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 144 (Antoninus); 81 (M. Aurelius); 64 (Septimius Severus); 138 (Caracalla). Speidel, *Studies* II, 1992, 154 (Caracalla).
- 34 For promotions Trajan preferred **κάλλος τ’ἡλικίην τε βίην καὶ ἄντος ἔχοντα**. AE 1993, 1547; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 78. (The man who set up the inscription very likely belonged to Trajan’s horse guard: Stoll, *Heer* 2000, 480f; Speidel, “Lebensbeschreibungen,” 2004.) Germanic looks: Septimius Severus’ chariot leader on the arch at Leptis Magna (Wrede, *Hermengalerie* 1972, 71 and fig. 33.3); Herodian 4.7.3; *Panegyrici Latini* 8.16.4; Galerius’ arch in Thessaloniki (Laubscher, *Galerinsbozens* 1975, 41f.). Gregory of Nyssa, *De creatione hominis* II, 292; Synesios, *De regno* 18. Same age also in India: Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981, 189.
- 35 Gabelmann, “Grabmonumente” 1973, 144f.; fig. 12; 197.
- 36 The fighter’s sword is carved in stone, which is how the Column often treats unusual weapons, such as the round-bladed lances in scene 5, the curved sword in scene 38 (see Figure 7.2), the dagger in scene 115, the clubs, and the Dacian sickle-swords. To be sure, some scenes, such as 24 and 72, also show unremarkable swords. Rossi, *Column* 1971, 124, shows a Dacian sword of the Column next to one actually found—both look very much alike.
- 37 Rapiers: Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 426, fig. 91d and e; 423, cf. 374. Scabbards with eyelets can, but need not, denote foreign swords, e.g. those on the base of the Column. Such a scabbard, from the mid-second century, found at Lynhøjgård/ Jutland, is in the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen (inv. no. 14677); I thank Dr Lars Jørgensen for his kind help at the museum in June 1999. Scabbards with eyelets, on the Column and in the Roman army: Weski, *Waffen* 1982, 18; Waurick, “Rüstung” 1989.
- 38 Swords as the most heroic weapon: Procopius, *Vandal War* 2.3–9 and 14; cf. Ammianus 21.5.10. Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 117; 121; Davidson, *Sword* 1962, 44f.; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 237f. Saxo 41.
- 39 Cichorius, *Reliefs* II 1896, 209, rightly states their dress to be the same as that of the bare-shirts in scenes 36 and 40.
- 40 Northerners seen as tall: see p. 88. Nordic berserks huge: Edda, *Hábarðsljóð* 37–39; *Eyrbyggja saga* 25; see p. 74, this volume; Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 12; 23. Italic berserks huge: Herminius.

- 41 Polybius 2.28.8 unconvincingly says the Gaesati at Telamon hoped to fight better in the nude partly because of brambles on the battlefield, cf. Fischer, “Bewaffung” 1976, 414. Spartan youths trained without sandals: Xenophon, *Lacedaemonians* 2.3; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 16.6; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 122f. Aetolians: Thucydides 3.97ff.; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 5.18.13ff.; Aetolians and Spartans both followed old traditions: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 127. For the parallel of the Praenestines see Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.685ff.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 184. Strengthen their will: Plato, *Laws* 633B (with scholia); cf. Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 550ff. Barefootedness likewise was to toughen Shaka’s Zulu warriors in 1816: Morris, *Washing* 1965, 47 and 52.
- 42 British barefoot: Dio 76.12; Herodian, 3.14.5ff. *Pedites Singulares Britannici* on Trajan’s Column: scenes 66; 70; 72; 108; 113.
- 43 Polybius 2.28.7f.: **διὰ δε τὴν φιλοδοξίαν καὶ τὸ θάρσος** Diodore 5.29.2: **ἐπὶ τοσοῦτο τοῦ θανάτου καταφρονοῦσιν**. Rome of the Republic: McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 49.
- 44 Livy on the Celts of Asia Minor: see note 25. Tacitus, *Germania* 7.2: “Hi cuique sanctissimi testes, hi maximi laudatores: ad matres, ad coniuges vulnera ferunt; nec illae numerare aut exigere plagas pavent.” See p. 278, note 42, this volume.
- 45 Heruls: see p. 68; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 285–307.
- 46 Contra Wolters, “Kampf” 2000, 212, to whom the nakedness of Germanic warriors refers to their chests only.
- 47 Saxo 208; see pp. 60 and 78, this volume.
- 48 Ruler of the world: Strohecker, *Germanentum* 1965, 19. Campbell, *Emperor* 1984, 46f.; 146ff. Anywhere on earth: “remotis extractum lustris,” Silius Italicus 3.354f. Cf. Claudian, *In Gildonem, Carmen* 15.371ff.: “Quaecumque meo gens barbara nutu/stringitur adveniat: Germania cuncta feratur/navibus et socia comitentur classe Sygambri.”
- 49 Trousered tribesmen: scenes 70; 72, cf. 108 and 115. Scenes 66 and 115 could mean barefoot warriors, but they are bearded and thus perhaps rather the same unit as in scene 108.
- 50 CIL VI 960=Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892–1916, 294. Senate conservative about troops: Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 3.15. Regular soldiers too resented the emperors’ tribal guards: Cassius Dio 78.6.4; Zosimus 4.35. Mauri: scene 64; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 68ff.; 151f.
- 51 HA Probus 14.7: “Sentiendum esse, non videndum, cum auxiliariis barbaris Romanus iuvatur.” Ash, *Ordering* 1999, 67ff.
- 52 The guards’ Roman looks: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 130; native fighting styles: *ibid.* 26f.; swimming: *ibid.* 122f.; Speidel, “Lebensbeschreibungen” 2004. Barbed spears: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 113 and plate 8; Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, no. 83; see also p. 142, this volume. Cf. Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952, 52.
- 53 Equites Singulares Augusti and Trajan’s guard in Germany: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 38ff. The *Pedites Singulares* from Germany, like those from Britain, may have stayed on in Dacia to become part of the Numerus German(ician)orum in Dacia, together with German Exploratores: AE 1972, 485–488=IDR III/3, 260–266a. Gostar, “Numerus” 1972; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 148; Speidel, *Studiey* II, 1992, 361f. The British *Pedites Singulares* could also be called N(umerus) Brit(annicianorum): AE 1967, 412; CIL III, 1396.
- 54 *Pedites Singulares*: Speidel, *Guards* 1978; *Pedites Singulares Britannici*: scenes 66; 70; 72; 108; 113, as I will argue elsewhere; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 101.; 148f.
- 55 Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.1.15 (122); Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 23f.
- 56 Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.13.1; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares*, 3.14f; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 12ff. By the early fourth century Rome even felt a need to stand up to the northerners culturally and forbade the wearing of long hair or furs in the city: *Codex Theodosianus* 14.10.4: “Maiores crines, indumenta pellium etiam in servis intra urbem sacratissimam praecipimus inhiberi” (AD 416).
- 57 Attack troops: Tacitus, *Historiae* 2.22 (with 2.17); compare 2.32; 2.35; 3.21. Caracalla: Dio 78.3.3; 78.6.1; Herodian 4.7.3; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 64ff. Tallest: Herodian 5.4.8. Few

- gravestones of Germanic praetorians have come to light, but this is so mainly because Germani rarely set up gravestones; Speidel, *Studies* II, 1992, with note 17. Praetorians: Dio 78.37.4; cf. Herodian 5.4.8.
- 58 *Panegyrici Latini* 8.16.4f.: “imitatione barbariae...vix unius velaminis repertus indicio.”
- 59 Constantine’s Arch in Rome, battle at the Milvian Bridge: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 161, plate 20; Galerius’ winning guard, as shown on his arch, likewise lacked cuirasses: Meyer, “Thessaloniki” 1980, 394. Constantine’s troops Germanic: Libanius, *Oratio* 30.6; Zosimus 2.15.1; Speidel, “Auxilia” 1996, 163–170, 170.
- 60 Vegetius 1.20: “itaque ab imperatore postulanti primo catafractas, dein cassides deponere”; Sander, “Germanisierung” 1939, 30f.; Buchholz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 476; Speidel, “Who Fought” 2000.
- 61 Ammianus 15.4.11; compare emperor Julian’s tactics criticized by Gregor Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 5.13 as **ἄτακτοι ἐκδρομαῖς**. Early Byzantine horse followed the rule Tacitus reports for Germanic warriors: that it is fine to give ground, so long as one turns back to the fight (Maurice, *Strategikon* 3.10.15).
- 62 Ammianus 20.11.12. Bodmer, *Krieger* 1957, 120 (on Merovingians): “Nicht die Disziplin und die reibungslos funktionierende Organisation waren hier ausschlaggebend, sondern der kriegerische Schwung.”
- 63 Emperors now fighting with their own hands: Dio 77.13.2 (Caracalla); Herodian 7.2.6 (Maximinus).
- 64 Frank: Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, sect. 44. Julian, *Misopogon* 359c; **δ’ ὁμοίότητα τρόπων**. In the mid-fourth century there was again little difference between northern Gauls and Germani, as people from across the Rhine had been settled in many places and served in all army units.
- 65 E.g. Saxo 51; Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 240ff.
- 66 Tacitus, *Germania* 22: “Gens non astuta nec callida”; Strabo 4.4.2 (on Germani and Gauls): **φύλον ἄπλοῦν**; cf. Much, *Germania* 1967, 310. Julian: *Misopogon* 337 C; 352 A; rustic “mores” (ἤθη): 359. Strabo 4.4.2 and *Panegyrici Latini* 3.(11).21 likewise praise these traits. Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 212, ignoring Julian, errs in this. Scheibelreiter, *Gesellschaft* 1999, 372ff.
- 67 Julian, *Oratio* 8 (to Sallust), 252 A; beer: *Epigram* 1.
- 68 Ammianus 25.3.3 (to be understood like the “cavendi immemor” 25.3.6). See *Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. “obliviscor.” Discussion: Bleckmann, *Reichskrise* 1992, 384. Ammianus 25.3.6: “iras sequentium excitans audenter effunderet semet in pugnam.” The emperor’s followers lack cuirasses on Constantine’s Arch in Rome and on Galerius’ Arch in Thessalonica. Ammianus’ testimony excludes the suicide hypothesis of Wirth, “Perserkrieg” 1978, 490.
- 69 Julian, *Letter to the Athenians* 285 B-C; Ammianus 25.4.10: “augebat fiduciam militis dimicans inter primos.” Ammianus 21.13.13: “ascitis in societatem superbam auxiliaribus.” The *Epitoma de Caesaribus* 43.7 criticizes Julian’s military leadership as *audax*, “recklessly daring”; Gregor Nazianzenus *Oratio* 5.13 calls Julian’s tactics **ἄτακτοι ἐκδρομαί**.
- 70 Ammianus 25.3.10: “Incredibile dictum est quo quantoque ardore miles ad vindictam ira et dolore ferventior involabat, hastis ad scuta concrepans [a Germanic warrior custom] etiam mori, si tulisset fors, obstinatus.” See p. 73.
- 71 Ammianus 31.12.16. Feigned flight: see p. 103. Overlooked: Elton, *Warfare* 1996, 266—see my review thereof, *American Historical Review* 1997, 1139.
- 72 Ammianus 16.12.12: “stridore dentium freudentes.”

- 73 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1.20 (MGH, *Scriptores rerum Longobardorum* 58.33ff.): “Qui sive ut expeditius bella gerent, sive ut inlatum ab hoste vulnus contemnerent, nudi pugnabant, operientes solummodo corporis verecunda.” Cf. Procopius, *Persian War* 2.25 (some without shield); Iordanes, *Getica* 117; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* 7.236 (speed); Much, *Germania* 1967, 139f.; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen* 1969, 563. Speed mattered, cf. Caesar, *Gallie War*, 1.52.3; Dio 38.49.1f. Baring oneself even worked for Romans: Germanicus took off his helmet in battle (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.21.2), and while he did not do it to dare the enemy at least he did it to be seen as brave by his own men. Swords: Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.4: **σπαθία Ἐρουλίσσια**.
- 74 Schumacher, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935; Gabelmann, “Grabmonumente” 1973, 197; sestertius of Domitian RIC 278 (drawn with trousers, wrongly it seems, in Schumacher, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, p. 43). Tacitus, *Histories* 2.11; 2.22; *Germania* 6: “nudi aut sagulo leves”; Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936, 33f. Since Latin *nudus* can mean “half-nude” or “unprotected”, Tacitus’ passages could also refer to trousered troops (contra Walser, *Rom* 1951, 85). Much, *Germania* 1967, 140. Triumphal art: Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936, 32ff. On the other hand, spite for the loser may show the foe fully naked as on the gravestone of Dexileus (394 BC) in Athens, where the fallen, naked foe is a Greek who surely did not fight naked. Foes of Roman horsemen on gravestones in Mauretania and elsewhere are often naked, too (Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 155, etc.), very likely also to spite them.
- 75 Sixth-century Vendel helmet: Arrhenius, *Chronology* 1983, 44. Duel: Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 719, fig. 5. Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 45 and fig. 3. Later, on a Vendel grave 1 foil (about AD 630), the same hero wears a “kaftan” Beck, fig. 2.
- 76 Gladiators: Kuhn, “Grenzen” 1956, 68–73; Kuhn, “Kämpfen” 1968; see Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 365.
- 77 Mail: Even in the first and second centuries AD, some high-ranking Germanic warriors wore hauberks: Tacitus, *Germania* 24; Böhme, “Zeugnisse” 1975, 153–217, 214; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 105. Early Middle Ages: *Beowulf* (Klaeber, *Beowulf* 1950, 311 s.v. *byrne*); *Hildebrandslied* (saro, *gūðhamo*). Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 195f.; vanishing nakedness: Hauck, “Dioskuren” 1984, 482–494, 485. Shirt: Saxo 208.25 (cf. Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 93): “subarmali tantum subucula fretus inermem telis thoracem opposuit.” Wolters, “Kampf” 2000, 212, sees this trend operating already in the first century AD, but offers no evidence.
- 78 Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 186. Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 197. See also the Woden figurines from Ekhammar and Birka (Ringquist, “Människofigurer” 1969).
- 79 Ulaid: Gantz, *Myths* 1985, 252. Irish legends: Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 30ff.; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 960f. Tain: Davidson, *Myths* 1988, 89. When, on the other hand, in the thirteenth century Irish warriors went into battle bare-chested, bare-footed, and armed only with axes (Gerald of Wales, *History* 1982, 101; illustration: Keen, *Warfare* 1999, 84) they may have done so, like the ancient British (see p. 42), less to show their reckless daring than to cross the marshlands more easily.
- 80 Eastern Europe: Procopius, *Wars* 7.14.26. Antes and Sklavenoi: *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3, 1991, 1910. Saxo 214f.
- 81 Iranian Rustam: Schröder, “Indra” 1957, 23ff. The nairs of the sixteenth-century Malabar coast, cognate to Greek **ἀνήρ** and Latin “Nero,” may also derive from Indo-European berserks: Speidel, “Berserks” 2002, 287ff. “Quick-tempered *Männerbünde*” in India: Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981.
- 82 Bowmen against berserks: Livy 38.21.8ff. (189 BC); Tacitus, *Annals* 4.47 (AD 26); Dio 77.14.1 (AD 213); Herodian 6.7.8 (AD 235); Ammianus 20.11.12; Procopius *Persian Wars* 2.25.
- 83 Bonded: McNeill, *Keeping* 1995, 8; 17; 102ff. Songs: Tacitus, *Germania* 3.1; Ammianus 31.7.11. Dance: see p. 120; Eliade, *Return* 1954, 28f. Berserkdom’s relation to Woden is



- discussed by Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 197–206; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 34–67; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 330ff.; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 94ff.; Branston, *Gods* 1974, 92ff. Shouting: IK 195 (Ulvsunda); Hauck, “Über-lieferung” 1993, 454ff.; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 262ff.
- 84 Gaesati: Polybius 2.29.6; Aztecs: Salmoral, *America* 1990, 202; Cendinnen, *Aztecs* 1991, 117; Hassig, *War* 1992, 142; McNeill, *Keeping* 1995, 104. A Maya vase with naked warriors, holding each other by shoulder and midriff as they dance in a circle, can be seen in the Pre-Columbian Museum of Santiago de Chile.
- 85 Cannae: Livy 22.46.6 (on bare-chested Gauls): “ante alios habitus harum gentium cum magnitudine corporum tum specie terribilis erat.” Saxo 208; this is the shirt of the Armilauzi (p. 64, this volume). Football hooligans, however, are worlds apart from the religiously and mythologically underpinned berserks who decided the fate of nations, contra Mallory and McNeill, *Archaeology* 1991, 170f.
- 86 Frighten: Dexippus, frag. 26.5. Eyes: Iliad 8.349: Ἰσχυροῦς δ’ ὄμματ’ ἔχων (Hector). Even Romans did this: Tacitus, *Histories* 3.3: “flagrans oculis”; Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.39: “acies oculorum”; Tacitus, *Germania* 4: “truces et caerulei oculi”; Ammianus 16.12.36: “elucebat quidam ex oculis furor”; also 21.13.15 (oculorum vestrorum vibratae lucis ardorem); 31.13.10 (furore ex oculis lucente); *Beowulf* 726f.: “him ofēagum stōd/ligge gelīcost lēoht unfæger”; Helgaqvīða Hundingsbana 1.6: “hvessir augo sem hildingar”; *Vohunga saga* 42; Saxo 7.11.1: Olo Vegetus, king of Denmark, frightened the bravest by his stern and flashing glance. Sturluson, *Óláfs saga Helga* 226; Bowra, *Poetry* 1952, 99; Much, *Germania* 1967, 101; Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 179; Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, 266. Óðin is Báleygr, “flame-eyed,” in *Grímmismál* 41.4, cf. Hauck, “Auswertung” 1998, 307.
- 87 Amulets: Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* 1985, 75; “Polytheismus” 1994, 262. Ammianus 16.12.46: “Alamanni, bella alacriter ineuntes, altius anhelabant velut quodam furoris afflatu opposita omnia deleturi.” Thrasarr: Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 262. Drasulf: Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 140. Snorting: see pp. 41; 88.
- 88 Saxo 162, with the commentary by Davidson, *Saxo* 1979.
- 89 Woden as a shape-shifter: Tunalund bracteate IK 193; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 262ff.; also the Daxlanden amulet (Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 440, fig. 506); Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* 1970, 201. Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglinga saga* 6; compare Woden’s Indian counterpart Rudra as Vishvarupa: de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 95f.
- 90 Wound-proof wolf- and bear-warriors: see pp. 43; 45. De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II 1957, 97ff.; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 303; Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, 274. Balder’s mythical woundlessness may also have come from his ecstatic dance: Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 49; Hauck, “Auswertung” 1998, 339; Hauck, “Kollierfund” 1998, 518—ecstatic dance, however, is no contrast to ecstatic fighting: it is its cause.
- 91 CúChulainn: three times in Briciu’s Feast (Gantz, *Myths* 1981, 221–255); Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 968ff. (ríastrad). Egil: Fell, *Egils saga* 1975, 84 (ch. 55). Indo-European and Germanic warriors: Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 139ff.; Blaney, “Berserker” 1972, 13; 36–63; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 263f. Vedic Indian: Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 51.
- 92 Wikander, *Vayu* 1941; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 19. Cimabri: Plutarch, *Marius* 12. Goths: Ammianus 31.12.17. Woden: see p. 109.
- 93 For example, *Hrólfs saga Kraka* 33f.; etc, see also p. 75f, this volume.
- 94 Ammianus 16.12.49: “Latera, quae nudabat ira flagrantior.”
- 95 *Battle of Maldon* 246f.; 253: *yrre*—mad with anger, 275. Berserk custom: see p. 78. No-retreat societies: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 211ff.
- 96 Visby: Davidson, *Sword* 1962, 197. Personal despair: *ibid.* 202.
- 97 Tacitus, *Histories* 1.79–2: “Omnis Sarmatarum virtus velut extra ipsos.” Bodies: Dio 38.49.2: σώμασι πλείον ἢ τοῖς ὄπλοις.

- 98 Little to live for: *Panegyrici Latini* 12.24.2; Ammianus 21.13.13; see p. 194, this volume. Vergil, *Aeneid* 11.641; for this as a Roman ideal see Livy 42, 57–60, 2; Caesar, *Gallic War* 7.52. Great-souled: *Josephus*, *Jewish War* 2.377; Iordanes, *Getica* 24. No trickery: “Caesar”, *African War* 73: “Contra Gallos, homines apertos minimeque insidiosos, qui per virtutem, non per dolum dimicare consuerunt.” Tacitus, *Germania* 22: “Gens non astuta nec callida.” Homer, *Iliad* 7.247f.; Julian: Ammianus 23.5.21. Maurice, *Strategikon* XI.3.21: **πάσης ποικιλίας ἔκτος**. Settling beforehand: Plutarch, *Marius* 24; Reichert, “Mannesideal” 2001, 219. Vandals: Procopius, *Vandal War* 2.3–9; 2.3.14.
- 99 *Beowulf* 679ff.; *Battle of Maldon* 89.
- 100 Saxo 207, cf. Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 93f. Blinded: Saxo 109.16ff.; *Flateyrbók* II, 72; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 3ff. Blunted: *Hávamál* 148; Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglinga saga* 6. Woden protects from spears and swords: *Hávamál* 150; 158.
- 101 Bleeding: Clayman, *Encyclopedia* 1998, 414.
- 102 Roman hints of invulnerability: Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.692, “quem neque fas igni cuiquam nec sternere ferro” (Messapus); Pliny, *Natural History* 2.93.207–208 (Hirpi Sorani), cf. Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 77f.; 125; 187. Fire: see p. 74.
- 103 Madness: *Iliad* 8.299 (Hector) and 21.542f. (Achilles); Strabo 4.4.2. De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 94ff.; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 45f.; Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 208–212. Madness of despair: Tacitus, *Agricola* 37.3: “Quidam inermes ultro ruere ac se morti offerre.” Panic: Polybios 2.30.4 (Telamon), see p. 60: **ἀποδειλιώντες**; *Battle of the Standards*, AD 1138, see p. 73.
- 104 Wikander, *Männerbund* 1938, 59f.; Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 117; Pokorny, *Wörterbuch* 1959, 299ff.; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 19; Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 211; Ivančik, “Guerriers” 1993, 326; Neumann *et al.* *Schmuck* 1995, no. 46: *ais[i]g{a}z*. The unknown *nomen agentis* from this root might be the Indo-European word for berserk, unless it is **Μέντω**.
- 105 Dumézil, *Mythes* 1939, 215 (= *Idées romaines* 1969).
- 106 Eleventh-century Adam of Bremen 4.26: “Wodan id est furor” (de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 94). Tacitus, *Germania* 9: “Deorum maxime Mercurium colunt.” Mercurii dies became Wednesday, hence Tacitus’ Mercurius meant Woden; Much, *Germania* 1967, 171ff.; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 199ff.; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 26ff.; Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 114ff. God of poets: Hauck, “Erfinder” 1998, 37; Hauck, “Auswertung” 1998, 300 (with the image of the seer). A berserks’ poem: p. 76.
- 107 Menos: Schmitt, *Dichtung* 1967, 104. Pokorny, *Wörterbuch* 1959, 726f., cf. **Μέντω**. Identity: Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 12. Eliade, *Return* 1954, 29
- 108 Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 24ff.; 30; Davidson, *Myths* 1988, 87; Blaney, *Berserkr* 1972, 10f.; contra Fabing, “Going Berserk” 1956; *Ekstase*, RGA 7, 1989, 91–94.
- 109 See also Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.15ff.
- 110 Howlett, *Chronicles* 1889, 190: “primo ingressu inermes armatis occurrerent istos, animi virtute pro scuto utentes”; 196: “Videres ut hericium spinis, ita Galwensem sagittis undique circumseptum, nichilominus vibrare gladium, et caeca quadam amentia proruentem nunc hostem caedere, nunc inanem aerem cassis ictibus verberare.” Ibid. p. 35: “Scotia...incolas barbaros habens...citis pedibus levique armaturae confidentes, anxium amarae mortis exitum pro nihilo ducentes.” Stephen Morillo kindly drew my attention to this battle.
- 111 Howlett, *Chronicles* 1889, 162; 192; 197; Bradbury, “Battles” 1992, 191. Compare the flight of the berserks at Telamon: Polybios 2.28–29.7.
- 112 Romans: Livy 38.21.8ff.; Herodian 6.7.8 (AD 235).
- 113 Grágás 7. Weiser, *Jünglingsweiher* 1927, 44ff.; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 149ff.; see p. 198, this volume.

- 114 “Berserk” at first meant a warrior wearing a bear-hood and only later came to denote a mad fighter without armor as in *Ynglinga saga* 6; *Haraldskvaeði* 20f. (dated by von See, “Berserker” 1961, 131f. to the twelfth century). Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 26. Later tradition still knows that some berserks were wolf-warriors: *Grettis saga* 3; *Haraldskvaeði* 20; see p. 37, this volume.
- 115 Bullies: e.g. *Egils saga* 64; *Grettis saga* 19; *Hrólfs saga Kraka*; *Vatnsdoela saga* 33; 46; *Laxdæla saga* 60 and 62. Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 23; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 61. Christ’s disciples “sins berserks,” Christ “hinn vngi berserks guðs”: *Barlaam saga* 58; 196; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 171ff. Saxo 21.1.
- 116 Madmen: Morgenblaðið, June 10, 1999: Serb troops in Kosovo behaved “sem gengu berserksgang.” Berserks: Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 1ff. Howling: *Grettis saga* 19; blood-drinking: *Hrólfs saga* 23; Saxo 51; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 80. Hüge: *Eyrbyggja saga* 25; giants: Edda, *Hábarðsljóð* 37–39; Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 23.
- 117 Coals: *Vatnsdæla saga* 46; Saxo 186.25: “Igneos ventri carbones mandare non destitit.” Shield biting: *Asmunds saga Kappabana* 8; *Ynglinga saga* 6; *Egils saga* 64; Saxo, 186, etc. Fire: Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglinga saga* 6; *Grettis saga* 2; *Vatnsdæla saga* 46; compare *Hrólfs saga Kraka* 28; *Eyrbyggja saga* 25. Clubs: Edda, *Hávamál* 156; Sturluson, *Skaldskaparmál* 44; *Egils saga* 9; *Vatnsdæla saga* 46; Helgisaga Óláfs konungs Haraldssonar (Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 85f). Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 12ff.; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 93ff. Windpipe: *Egils saga* 66 (a wolf-warrior trait—see p. 36).
- 118 Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972.
- 119 *Egils saga* 9; Snorri Sturluson, *Haralds saga Hárfagra* 9; *Grettis saga* 2; cf. Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 300; Fell, *Egils saga* 1975, 177f.
- 120 Guard: *Hrólfs saga Kraka* 26; Sturluson, *Skaldskaparmál* 44; Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 303ff.; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 54; Kuhn, “Kämpfen” 1968, 223; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 40; 52ff.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 124. See also the Rudriyas, this volume, p. 16. Twelve: *Grettis saga* 19; Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 301f.; see also the twelve *mesedi* bodyguards of the Hittite king (Güterbock and van der Hout, *Instruction* 1991, 7; Beal, *Organization* 1992, 212ff), the twelve Hittite warrior gods on parade in the rock shrine of Yazilikaya (Mallory, *Search* 1989, fig. 2), and the twelve (or so) E-QE-TA guardsmen of the Mycenaean kings (Deger-Jalkotzy, *E-QE-TA* 1978, 209). For an Icelandic-Norwegian warband of twelve, serving in Byzantium and Norway, see *Laxdæla saga* 73 and 77; twelve as Icelandic companions in a feud: *Eyrbyggja saga* 18 and 20; *Laxdæla saga* 14; twelve as raiding bands: *Egils saga* 46. Strangely, Ebel, *Kriegswesen* 2001, claims that berserks never constituted a king’s war band.
- 121 Ramses II: Drews, *End* 1993, 154. *Hrólfs saga* 24.
- 122 *Egils saga* 53 as translated by Fell, *Egils saga* 1975, 80. Brunanburh: Jones, *History* 1984, 237.
- 123 Mycenae: battle scene on a silver vessel, shaft-grave IV; Höckmann, “Lanze” 1980, 278. Shardana: Drews, *End* 1993, 144f.; this volume, p. 59. Cf. *Asmunds saga Kappabana* 4, etc.
- 124 *Asmunds saga Kappabana* 4; Missed, somewhat, by Davidson, *Sword* 1962, 202, and Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972.
- 125 *Vatnsdæla saga* 16; *Grettis saga*: Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 5f.; Saxo 214f.; see also the archaic Greek statuettes (this volume, p. 59), the Watsch belt buckle (Kimmig, “Bewaffung” 1976, 405 with plate 28a), and Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952, 49–53.
- 126 *Hákonarmál* 4; Snorri Sturluson, *Hákonar saga Góða* 30 (and 6), following in part the translation by Hollander, *Heimskringla* 1964, 120.
- 127 For example, Starkad in the fight against Herthjof: *Gautreks saga* (Genzmer, *Edda* 1997, 335); Agner (Saxo 2.64); Harold Wartooth at Brávalla (Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 93). Biarki in *Hrólfs saga Kraka* 32; cf. Hildibrand in *Ásmundar saga Kappabana* 8.
- 128 Battle at Stamford Bridge: Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* 92f. Fanciful: Jones, *History* 1984, 412.

- 129 Tacitus, *Histories* 4.18; *Germania* 7, cf. Much, *Germania* 1967, 162f.; Dio 72.(71).11; Saxo 38.39, also 214; 219; 222, etc., see figure 11.5; Ziegler, “Oðin” 1985, 62. Women warriors world-wide, see Turney-High, *War* 1991, 159ff.
- 130 *Eiriks Saga Rauða*, 6. Women berserks discussed: von See, “Berserker” 1961, 130.
- 131 Saxo 26.23f.: “Utraque ferrum comprimi iuvat manu;/nunc bella praeter scuta nudo pectore/exerceamus fulgidis mucronibus./Ferocitatis fama nostrae luceat;/audacter agmen obteramus hostium/nec longa nos exasperent certamina/fugaque fractus conquiescat impetus./Quo dicto geminam capulo manum iniciens, absque periculi respectu reflexo in tergum clipeo complures in necem egit.”
- 132 See also Höfler, “Berserker” 1976, 298–304, 302f. Davidson, *Sword* 1962, 202.
- 133 Saxo 77.9ff. Fisher, in Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979, 83, translates “muniendi corporis” as “to defend himself,” but it seems “to put on armor” is meant.
- 134 Saxo 58.18ff.: “Attendite fortes!/Nemo lorica se vestiat interituri/corporis; extremum perstringat nexile ferrum;/in tergum redeant clipei, pugnemus apertis/ pectoribus, totos auro densate lacertos;/armillas dextrae excipiant, quo fortius ictus/collibrare queant at amarum figure vulnus./Nemo pedem referat!” Not to give ground: see p. 103, note 3.
- 135 See p. 60.
- 136 See p. 179.
- 137 *Jómsvíkinga saga* 16; laws berserk-like: Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 143; a list of such laws: Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979, II, 86. Maldon: see p. 70f. Berserks equaled with Vikings: *Grettis saga* 19f.
- 138 Saxo 208. Armilauasi and (Danish) Heruli: see pp. 64; 68.
- 139 Heat conquered by inner heat: Saxo 190; see p. 57, this volume.
- 140 Saxo 185–187; also 155; 204. Woden: *Edda, Hávamál* 148; Grendel, *Beowulf* 804.
- 141 Sexual rights for outstanding warriors, Germanic: Lactantius, *De mortibus* 38.5–7; Zosimus 2.42.1; *Grettis saga* 19 (bringing them home again); Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 9ff.; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 145f. Indo-European: Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 70f.; Mandelslo, *Reysebeschreibung* 1658, 141ff.; Plato, *Republic* 468b–c. World-wide: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 158f. Sex for honored guests as a Germanic custom: *Rigsthula*, with the comment by Dronke, *Edda* II 1997, 119. Sons of such unions may have become *Weihekrieger*: Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952; Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979, 119.
- 142 Mallory, *Search* 1989, 110f. and 272, claims 6,000 years of change, but 2,500 years will do.
- 143 Contra: Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 196, who suggests “more ordered forms of society” outlawed them. Yet *Eyrbyggja saga* 25 shows that the more-ordered Norwegian society, like Trajan’s Rome, could use berserks, while the less-ordered Icelandic society could not.

## 6

## GHOSTS

- 1 Vidal-Naquet, *Hunter* 1986.
- 2 Thucydides 4.67. Cf. *Iliad* 9.65–68.
- 3 Vidal-Naquet, *Hunter* 1986, 110ff.
- 4 As brilliantly shown by Vidal-Naquet, *Hunter* 1986.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Tacitus, *Germania* 43: “Apud Nahanarvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur. Praesidet sacerdos muliebri ornatu, sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant. Ea vis numini, nomen Alcis. Nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium; ut fratres tamen, ut iuvenes venerantur. Ceterum alii [Harri?] super vires quibus enumeratos paulo ante populos antecedunt, truces insitae feritati arte ac tempore lenocinantur: nigra scuta, tincta corpora; atras ad proelia noctes legunt ipsaque formidine

- atque umbra feralis exercitus terrorem inferunt, nullo hostium sustinente novum ac velut infernum aspectum; nam primi in omnibus proeliis oculi vincuntur.” Boehlich, “Exercitus” 1929; Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 126–131; Neumann, “Hariii” 1999.
- 7 Ancient British night attacks: Tacitus, *Agricola* 26; Roman: Tacitus, *Histories* 3.22f.; Byzantine: Maurice, *Strategikon* 9.2; North African: Nicolaus Damascenus, *Ethnon Synagoge* 24 (according to Boehlich, “Exercitus” 1929, 66); Pacific, African, and American: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 107–123. Night attacks impractical, impossible, and hence Tacitus not to be believed: Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 130, note 78.
- 8 A relevant parallel from India are the Marut gods, wild young warriors, “who adorn themselves like women,” *Rg-Veda* 1.85.1 (Maurer, *Pinnacles* 1986, 130). Indo-European warriors who look like women: Ammianus 23.6.80 and Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 20. For the Maruts see Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 42f.; Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981, 180f.; Bremmer, “Suodales” 1982, 137; 143f.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 98–101; 201–239. Indo-European priests in women’s garb: Wenskus, “Religion” 1994, 222–5.
- 9 Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 130: *Jungmannschaft*. Women’s dress as a punishment for unmanly warriors (Zosimus 3.3.5, cf. Ammianus 25.1.7–9) reflects the same custom; compare Oettinger, *Eide* 1976, 11; 75f.
- 10 A discussion of the matter, proposing to read “Lugii”: Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 128; best: Neumann, “Hariii” 1999
- 11 Benveniste, *Vocabulaire* 1969, vol. 1, 112–113. McCone, “Hund” 1987; Kershaw, *God* 2000. See also Jørgensen, *Spoils* 2003, 173.
- 12 For youth groups forming new tribes see p. 23; Bremmer, “Suodales” 1982, 145. Tribes named after armies: Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981, 180f.; Neumann, “Hariii” 1999.
- 13 Tacitus says of them that in strength they “go before” (= lead) the other tribes, which suggests that they belonged to them; contra: Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 128, taking *antecedunt* to mean “im Gegensatz stehen,” but see e.g. Caesar, *Civil War* 3.108.4: “Ex duabus filiabus ea quae aetate antecedebat.” They thus match Tacitus’ list, a little further up, of the strongest of the Lugii, which begins with the Harii.
- 14 Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 99ff.; 163ff.
- 15 Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 126ff.
- 16 Black: Boehlich, “Exercitus” 1929, 51; Army of the dead: *Völuspá* 52. Gainsaying Tacitus without source or argument: Wolters, “Kampf” 2000, 210.
- 17 *Hrólfs saga Kraka* 33: “These dead are now the grimmest to fight against.”
- 18 Boehlich, “Exercitus” 1929, 56 (“Urtyp des irdischen”); Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 44; 166f.; 246ff.; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 56; Benveniste, *Vocabulaire* 1969, 112f.; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 41f.
- 19 For the Wild Host see now, with welcome documentation, Insley, “Herelings” 1999; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 38–40. After a review of research over the last sixty years Kershaw (*God* 2000, 23) concludes that it is no longer possible to dismiss Höfler’s findings in his *Geheimbünde*. Contra: Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 131. Other Germanic warrior styles: see p. 123f.
- 20 Stealth and youth of wolf-warriors: see p. 15; Papuan spies too were “ghost people” (Turney-High, *War* 1991, 111). Worship of Dioscures: Wagner, “Dioskuren” 1960; compare the “night-Dioscure with the black goat-skin” of the Athenian ephebes: Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 578f.
- 21 Such as the Gaulish Petrucorii, who, as their name says, had four *koryos* troops.
- 22 Black-clad Iranian and Indian youthful Männerbünde: Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 35; 51f.; Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981, 173 and 185; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 202f. According to Kershaw, *God* 2000, 42, the painted British warriors of Caesar (*Gallie War* 5.14) are also bodying forth dead ancestors. While there is abundant evidence for Indo-European *Jungmannschaften* (Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969; Vidal-Naquet, *Hunter* 1986, 122; McCone, “Hund” 1987; Kershaw, *God* 2000), there is less, yet some evidence for them

among ancient Germani: see Springer, “Kriegswesen” 2001, 341; contra: Castritius, “Jungmannschaften” 2000.

## 7

## CLUB-WIELDERS

- 1 Africans: Buchholz, *Kriegswesen* 1980, 334 and plate 25.b. Silius Italicus 3.277. Polynesians: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 13. Indians: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, I, 236. Drawbacks: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 12; but see 16: “Wherever too much armor is observed, one will find that the enemy fights with very effective war clubs.”
- 2 Carneiro, “Warfare” 1990, 197 (Fiji); Whitehead, “Snake-Warriors” 1990, 151 (Caribs).
- 3 Heroic use: Schröder, “Indra” 1957; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 34; 61; Wikander, *Vayu* 1941, 33 and 125; Bhima, Kṛṣṇaspa: Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 83 and 111. Kernosevka relief: Mallory, *Search* 1989, 176. Names: Mallory and Adams, *Encyclopedia* 1997, 112. Mycenaean: Buchholz, *Kriegswesen* 1980, 334. Greeks: *Iliad* 7.140f.; Herodotus 1.59-Scythians: Valerius Flaccus 6.83: “Scytharum puer e primo torquens temone cateias.”
- 4 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2, 153ff.: “atque illi non hasta manu, non vertice cassis, sed fisis latis umeris et mole iuventae agmina vastabat clava nihil indigus ensis. Exuviae capiti impositae tegimenque leonis.” Club and lion skin turn this Saguntine priest of Hercules into an image of the god himself. Silius’ sources of information: Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 165ff.
- 5 Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.39–1: “ingenti magnitudine corporum”; 4.1.9: “immani corporum magnitudine”; *African War* 40.5: “mirifica corpora Gallorum Germanorumque”; Velleius 2.106: “iuventus immensa corporibus”; Columella, *Re Rust.* 3.8: “Germaniam decoravit altissimorum hominum exercitibus.” Josephus *Jewish War*, 2.377; Suetonius, *Caligula* 47; Tacitus, *Germania* 4; 20.3; *Historiae* 4.14.1; 4.29; 5.14.2; Diodore 37.1.5; Appian 4.1.3; Strabo 4.4.2; 7.1.2; Dio 38, 35; Manilius 4.715; Mela 3.26; Florus, *Epistulae* 1.38; Dio 38.35; 38.46.2; 38.49; Herodian 7.1.12; Dexippus frg. 26.6; Libanius *Oratio* 18.70; Ammianus 16.12.47: “grandissimis illi corporibus freti”; Vegetius 1.1.4; Eunapius VI, frg. 37 (Blockley); Sidonius, *Carmen* 12 (Burgundians as seven-foot giants); Zosimus 3.7.1; Jordanes, *Getica* 24. Skeletons: Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 332f.
- 6 Other scenes: 36; 38; 66; 70. Nail-studded: Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 120; knotted, not nail-studded: Petersen, *Kriege* 1899, 29. Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 114, saw the right hand of the kneeling foe “in unverständlicher Weise vor die Brust gelegt.”
- 7 Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 120 and 311, and Richmond, *Army* 1982, 20, suspend judgement on the nationality of the club-man, but for Germani being outstandingly tall see Figures 7.1 and 21.1 also note 5. Similar bare-chested Germans in scene 108: Cichorius, *Reliefs* III, 1900, 193. Relaxed: *Panegyrici Latini* 4.23.2: “Certum est enim pro negotii modo animosam esse virtutem—in parvis prope ad securitatem remissa.”
- 8 Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952, 52; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 61f.
- 9 To Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 108 and 334, they are “clibanarii.”
- 10 Like the Buri ambassador’s club in scene 9 of the Column. Throwing clubs: Kolia, *Waffen* 1988, 173f.
- 11 Artist curved the sword: Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 191. The swords of the clubmen in scenes 24 and 36 (Figures 7.1, 0.2) seem also curved if one may judge from the angle of their hilts. The bare-chests in scene 108 of the Column, belonging to another tribe, have straight swords.
- 12 *Aeneid* 7.730–732; 741: “Teutonico ritu soliti torquere cateias.” The Abellians, like the clubmen on Trajan’s Column, also had swords: *Aeneid* 7.743. Knowledge of the Teutons may have come to Vergil from narratives of their inroads in Italy seventy years earlier. Further combinations of club and curved sword are spun out of Vergil by Silius Italicus (*Punica*

- 3.277ff.; 8.581) for North African and Italic warriors. Practical: heavily mailed Sarmatian horsemen, once brought to the ground, were finished off with light swords: *levi gladio*, Tacitus, *Histories* 1.79.4.
- 13 For example, Maurice, *Strategikon* XI.3. Overlooked as a Roman casualty: Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 311; Gauer, *Untersuchungen* 1977, 98, n. 144.
- 14 Tribesmen: scenes 24; 38; 40; 66; 70; 72; 115: six times in the first war, once in the second. In the second Dacian War (AD 105–106) Germanic tribal warriors, very likely club-men, turn up twice, though they seem to belong to other tribes. Scenes 108 and 115 show oriental archers different from those of the first war (Cichorius, *Reliefs* III, 1900, 193), hence Germani for the second war in these scenes may also be different. They certainly are so in scene 108, since they wear cloth caps (Cichorius, *Reliefs* III, 1900, 193) and, by analogy, perhaps also in scene 115. Cloth caps are worn by ambassadors whom Trajan met in AD 105, hence they may denote a nation on the lower Danube such as the Bastarnae. One of the ambassadors lacks the cloth cap—and so do the Germanic fighters in scene 115. The bare-chests of scene 108, sandwiched between bowmen and stone-throwers, may be club-men, though they bear straight swords.
- 15 Caesar, *Gallic War* 8.37: “sine ullo paene militis vulnere.” Tacitus, *Annals* 14.23.3: “hostilem audaciam externo sanguine ultus est,” cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 3.39; *Germania* 33.1; Alföldi, “Grenzscheide” 1950, 40. Tacitus, *Agricola* 35: “Ingens victoriae decus citra Romanum sanguinem bellandi.” Battles fought by auxiliaries only: Trajan’s *Column*, scenes 24 and 38; Walser, *Rom* 1951, 39; Hanson, “Agricola” 1991, 1772; Lepper and Frere, *Column* 1988, 70.
- 16 Tacitus, *Germania* 33. Claudian, *Gothic War* 579f.; *Sixth Consulate* 218–222; Cameron, *Claudian* 1970, 369ff.; Dewar, *Claudian* 1996, 202f.
- 17 Cf. Saxo 66.20ff.: Thor with his club smashes shields.
- 18 Herodotus 7.69; Burns, *Persia* 1962, 25ff. For the efficiency of Nubian bowmen see the Abu Simbel reliefs: Curto, *Art* 1971, 9, and L’Orange, *Bildschmuck* 1939, 45–47.
- 19 Figures 7.3, 9.1, 17.3, 21.1; Agathias 2.5.3; Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935.
- 20 One other foe, in the top center, also lacks a shirt, but he has a garment slipping off his left shoulder.
- 21 Plutarch, *Marius* 23.3; Seneca, *De ira* 1.11.3.
- 22 Domaszewski, “Pferdeschmuck” 1888; Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, p. 29, no. 114; Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936, 36.
- 23 Club, not sword, contra Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, and Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936. Came to Dacia: Speidel, *Studies* II, 1992, 90ff. Tallest most dreaded: Herodian 7.1.12; most vulnerable: Herodian 6.7.8; 7.2.2; cf. Dio 77.14.1.
- 24 Dio 78.38.4. Compare IK 65 (Gudbrandsdalen) where Woden throws aside his spear to close in with the sword.
- 25 Germanic Herkules: Tacitus, *Germania* 3.1; Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 172ff. Amulets: Werner, “Herkuleskeule” 1964; Wenskus, “Religion” 1994, 205ff. Singing: Tacitus, *Germania* 3.1: “Fuisse apud eos et Herculem memorant, primumque omnium virorum fortium ituri in proelia canunt.” Fighting the god’s battle: Eliade, *Return* 1954.
- 26 Tacitus, *Germania* 45.2: “Aestiorum gentes... quibus ritus habitusque Sueborum... rarus ferri, frequens fustium usus.”
- 27 Ammianus 31.7.12: “Barbarique ut reparabiles semper et celeres, ingentes clavas in nostros concientes ambustas, mucronesque acrius resistentium pectoribus illidentes, sinistrum cornu perumpunt.”
- 28 Thompson, *Early Germans* 1965, 117, hesitatingly: “which may or may not have been an impromptu weapon.” Agathias 2.6.3 remarks on the easy repair of Frankish Alamannic weapons. Weapon repairs in Germanic armies: Steuer, “Kriegswesen” 2001, 366.
- 29 Tacitus, *Annals* 4.51.1: “Manualia saxa, praeusta sudes, decisa robora iacere.”

- 30 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.584: “inrasae robora clavae.” Much might be learned about Germanic clubs if one could be certain that the wooden implements found at the Great Moor near the Teutoburg Forest (Pieper, “Holzfunde” 1999) are weapons.
- 31 Servius, auct. *Aeneid*, 7.741: “quas in hostem iaculantes lineis quibus eas adnexuerant, reciprocas faciebant.” Hawaiians: Arning, *Notizen* 1931, 57; Summers, *Culture* 1999, 102ff.
- 32 Studies: Steuer, “Phasen” 1970; Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976 and “Germanen” 1985; Weski, *Waffen* 1982; Adler, *Studien* 1993. Contra: Weski, “Material” 1994 (overlooking clubs). Efforts: Capelle, “Erkenntnismöglichkeiten” 1982, 287.
- 33 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 18.7.7: “Clava est qualis fuit Herculis, dicta quod sit clavis ferreis invicem religata; et est cubito semis facta in longitudine. Haec et cateia, quam Horatius caiam dicit. Est enim genus Gallici teli ex materia quam maxime lenta, quae iacta quidem non longe propter gravitatem evolat, sed quo pervenit vi nimia perfringit; quod si ab artefice mittatur, rursus redit ad eum qui misit. Huic meminit Vergilius dicens (Aen. 7.741): ‘Teutonico ritu soliti torquere cateias.’ Unde et eos Hispani et Galli tautanos vocant.” Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1137, takes *cateia* for a spear, but both Servius and Isidore describe it as a club. (Servius’ term “hasta” if consistency was intended, may mean something like a stick.)
- 34 Visigoths, Franks: Werner, “Bewaffnung” 1968, 102. Neither “cateia” nor “tautanos” have a compelling etymology, though: Werner, “Bewaffnung” 1968, 102; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1137.
- 35 No return: contra Hauck, “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 569. Indo-European belief: e.g. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.684; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 127. Oberdorla: Behm-Blanck, “Seeheiligtum” 1958, 265; the full excavation report is now forthcoming. I thank the *Landesarchäologin*, Dr Sigrid Dušek for kind information and a photograph. Werner, “Bewaffnung” 1968, 102, first matched Isidore’s passage with the Oberdorla find. Mjöllnir: *Skáldskaparmál* 35; Simek, *Dictionary* 1993, 219.
- 36 See also scene 78. Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 61.
- 37 Zosimos 1.53.2:  
 τῶν δὲ ἀπὸ Παλαιστίνης τὰς κορύνας καὶ τὰ ῥόπαλα τοῖς σιδήρῳ  
 ἢ καὶ χαλκῷ τεθωρακισμένοις ἐπιφερόντων ὅπερ μάλιστα τῆς νίκης ἐν μέρει  
 γέγονεν αἴτιον τῷ ξένῳ τῆς τῶν ῥοπαλῶν ἐπιφορᾶς τῶν πολεμίων καταπλεγέντων.
- 38 Two gravestones are sometimes said to show Roman soldiers with clubs: CIL V 7717 = Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892–1916, 2560 = *Inscr. It.* IX, I, 93 of Cuneo/Italy, and a stone in the Museum at Smyrna published by Pfuhl and Möbius, *Grabreliefs* 1977, 296. Both portray not clubs but staff-slugs (fustibali): see Vegetius III. 14 with the commentary by Milner, *Vegetius* 1993, 91. It is true that a Spartan policeman, perhaps with his club, had joined Aurelius Verus in his Parthian war (Premmerstein, “Untersuchungen” 1911), but town policemen surely could not decide big battles such as the one at Hemesa.
- 39 Brought by Aurelian from the West: Ritterling, “Legio” 1924, 1344. Altheim, *Niedergang* II, 1952, 428, suggests cohorts XII Palaestinarum which, however, was stationed in Syria Coele that was part of the Palmyrenian Empire and not “outlandish.” Germanic recruits, but provincial names: Zosimos 1.52.3, calling Aurelian’s Raetian and Norican field detachments “Germanic troops.” Field detachments named after provinces: Zosimos 1.52.3; Speidel, “Chattan War” 1987, 234; Speidel, *Studies* II, 1992, 77 and 416f.
- 40 Experience: Herodian 8.1.3 (surely also with Maximinus in Germany the year before); Nesselhauf, “Inchriften” 1937, 103. Franks under their duke Pompeianus in the battle of Hemesa: Hieronymus, *Chronicle* 263 Olymp. a 2 (Helm 222). As Persia fielded fully armored catafracts against Rome by the early third century, the Germani who helped Rome against the Persians at the time may have fought with such clubs (Maricq, *Orientalia* 1965, 49; Bivar, “Equipment” 1972, 276f.).



- 41 Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1131, holds *mattea* to be the Celtic word for “club”; it may have been borrowed into Latin like *gladius* or *lancea*, and thus be used to describe Germanic troops. Mattiarii: *Notitia Dignitatum*, Or. 6.2=42; Grosse, *Militärsgeschichte* 1920, 62; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 218–222. On *mattiobarbuli* as clubs see Koliaas, *Waffen* 1988, 173ff.
- 42 *Panegyrici Latini* 4.23.4: “Catafractos equites, in quibus maxime steterat pugnae robur, ipse tibi sumis.” Constantine had little choice in this as catafracts typically went for the enemy commander: Nikephoros Ouranos, *Tactica* 57.145ff. (McGeer, *Dragori’s Teeth* 1994, 104). *Panegyrici Latini* 4.24: “Catafractos equites...clavis adoriuntur, quae gravibus ferratisque nodis hostem vulneri non patentem caedendo defatigabant ac maxime capitibus afflictas, quos ictu perturbaverant, ruere cogebant. Tunc ire praecipites, labi reclinis, semineces vaccillare aut moribundi sedilibus attineri, permixta equorum clade impliciti iacere, qui reperto sauciandi loco passim equitem effreni dolore fundebant.” *Panegyrici Latini* 12.6.3–4; Nixon and Saylor-Rodgers, *Praise* 1994, 368f. (well translated).
- 43 Libanius, *Oratio* 59.110 (overlooked by Nixon and Saylor-Rodgers, *Praise* 1994):  
 Επιφερόμενον γὰρ τὸν ἵππον ὁ πεζὸς ἐξιστάμενος ἐκείνῳ μὲν κενὴν τὴν ὀρμὴν κατεσκέυαζεν αὐτὸς δὲ ἐν τῇ παραδρομῇ τὸν ἔποχον ῥοπαίῳ παιῶν ἐπὶ κόρῃς ἀνέτροπέ τε καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν εὐλετώσ εἰργάζετο.
- 44 No reference to clubs is given in Bishop and Coulston, *Equipment* 1993.
- 45 Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 61; Buchholz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 479.
- 46 Prestige: Werner, “Herkuleskeule” 1964; Capelle, “Erkenntnismöglichkeiten” 1982, 280. Hauck, “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 575, sees in IK 39 Woden holding a club, but it may be a jewel.
- 47 Clubs against berserks: see Chapter 5, note 117. Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 93. Saxo 220.6f.: “Regem arietavit in terram, ereptamque cadenti clavam in ipsius caput detorsit proprioque eum gestamine interficit.” Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 89ff.; 100f.; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 24ff.
- 48 Giants: Saxo 13.14ff. Shatter: *Beowulf* 2683ff. with Klaeber’s commentary.
- 49 Konghell club: Stephens, *Handbook* 1884, 15f.: *hauf thuiükü f(ur) h(ari)*= “headman of the army.” The club as token of command in the ancient Near East: Buchholz, *Kriegswesen* 1980, 334f. No longer clubs: Thorne, “Clubs” 1982, though he misses the berserk meaning.
- 50 Norman leaders bestowed shields with shield devices as gifts of honor: Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 126f. For their descent from Norway, see Snorri Sturluson, *Haralds saga Harfagri* 241. Woden: Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia Eccl.* 8.17 (the Harlekin legend); Daxelmüller, “Geheimbünde” 1998, 563; Wenskus, “Religion” 1994, 226.
- 51 MGH *Legum Sectio II, Tomus* 7, p. 172, Cap. I, 170.17 (*Capitulare Aquisgranense*); *baculum* used here is the same as on the Bayeux Tapestry, a striking, not a throwing club. Johaneke, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 464; Capelle, “Erkenntnismöglichkeiten” 1982, 281.
- 52 Contamine, *War* 1984, 73 and fig. 7. Rogers, *Age* 1999, 137.
- 53 Stiklastad: *Heimskringla, Óláfs saga Helga* 226. Hastings: Bayeux tapestry; Thompson, *Early Germans* 1965, 117.
- 54 Saxo 66.20ff.

## 8

## WIELDERS OF HUGE SPEARS

- 1 Thera: Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 229; Höckmann, “Lanze” 1980, 276. Hector: *Iliad* 6.318; 8.794; Drews, *End* 1993, 192. Romans: Vergil, *Aeneid* 12.293f.; Statius, *Thebaid* 4.5–7. *Hasta trabalis*: see p. 139, note 29. Gauls: Diodore 5.30.4 and Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.423.
- 2 Scandinavian rock-drawings: Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 324f.; Woden: de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1956, 44ff.; 60. De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1956, 46, has the same image for Val Camonica in northern Italy.

- 3 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.1: “Ne ferrum quidem superest, sicut ex genere telorum colligitur. Rari gladiis aut maioribus lanceis utuntur.”
- 4 Spears found: Adler, “Hastae” 1995. Use of iron: Much, *Germania* 1967, 128ff.; Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 371; Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 135ff. The suggestion (Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 459) that Tacitus’ *lanceae maiores* were javelins with thongs lacks proof.
- 5 Tacitus, *Annals* 1.64.2: “procera membra, hastae ingentes ad vulnera facienda quamvis procul.” Tacitus, *Histories* 5.18: “Immensis corporibus et praelongis hastis fluitantem labantemque militem eminus fodiebant.” See also *Annals* 2.14.2: “enormis hastas”; 2.21.1: “praelongas hastas”; *Histories* 2.88.3: “ingentibus telis”; Ovid, *Ex Ponto* 3.4.97: “damnatas hastas”; Lucanus 6.259: “longis Teutonus armis”; Dio 38.49.2. Haas, “Germanen” 1943/44, 104; Much, *Germania* 1967, 136f. Adler, “Hastae” 1995, errs in assuming that Tacitus in his *Histories* and *Annals* describes long spears as a “weit verbreitetes Element der germanischen Bewaffnung.”
- 6 See Tacitus, *Annals* 2.21.1.
- 7 Dio 38.49.2; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.14.3: “Primam utcumque aciem hastatam, ceteris praeusta aut brevia tela.” 2.14.2: “Immensa barbarorum scuta.”
- 8 Propaganda: Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 458. Compare Much, *Germania* 1967, 136f.
- 9 Contra: Adler, “Hastae” 1995.
- 10 Tacitus, *Annals* 2.2.1: “cum ingens multitudo artis locis praelongas hastas non protenderet, non colligeret, neque adsultibus et velocitate corporum uteretur.”
- 11 Graves: Adler, “Hastae” 1995, 100. Fought in front: Tacitus, *Germania* 7: “Duces exemplo potius quam imperio, si prompti, si conspicui, si ante aciem agant, admiratione praesunt.”
- 12 Tacitus, *Histories* 2.88: “Ingentibus telis horrentes.”
- 13 Strabo 4.4.3 (about Celts and Germani). *Iliad* 16.140 about Greeks. The biblical Book of Samuel (1.17.2; 2.21.15ff.) says the same about Philistines.
- 14 Widukind 1.9: “armati longis lanceis,” quoted after Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 459. The Goths under Belisar in Mesopotamia attacked with long spears in dense array and the Persians, rather than await it, turned to flight: Procopius, *Persian Wars* 2.18.24  
**δόρατα μακρά** cf. Iordanes, *Getica* L.261: “Contis pugnantem Gothum”); but perhaps these Goths were horsemen. For the fourth century see Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.7.2, whose **δόρατα μακρά** seem to be weapons of Germanic allies.
- 15 Snorri Sturlusson, *Óláfs saga Helga*, 214.
- 16 *Laxardal saga* 21; *Grettis saga* 19. It is not a barbed spear, as translated by Faulkes, *Sagas* 2001, 113; the *krokar* are likely to be the “Aufhalterhaken” of Carolingian winged spears.
- 17 To be thrown: Steuer, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 443.
- 18 *Óláfs saga Helga* 227.

## 9

## SHIELD CASTLES

- 1 Vidal-Naquet, *Hunter* 1986, 122.
- 2 *Iliad* 4.334; 4.347; 13.130ff.; 15.618ff.; 16.211ff.; 17.354ff.; cf. Dio 38, 49f.: **πύργοι**. Kuhn, *Edda* II, 1968, 58f. Celtiberians: Livy 40.40.2–8; McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 60f.
- 3 Ground: Tacitus, *Histories* 5.15; 5.18; *Annals* 1.64; Herodian 7.2.5; etc. Tactical retreat, ambush: Tacitus, *Annals* 1.63; Frontinus, *Strategemata* 2.3.23; Ammianus 16.12.23 and 16.12.27. Feigned flight: Caesar, *Civil War* 1.44; cf. 4.4.4. Tacitus, *Germania* 6.4; *Annals* 1.56; 1.63; 2.11: “fugam simulantes,” cf. 2.14; Herodian 6.3.7 (contrast with Persians); Maurice, *Strategikon* 4.3.30ff. Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3, does not contradict this as he may

- refer to exceptional vows made by warriors on the battle field (*Battle of Maldon* 246 and 275; Saxo 58.25; *Bjarkamál* as by Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Óláfs saga Helga* 208). For typical tactics of light troops compare Caesar, *Civil War* 1.44 (on Spanish Lusitani): “Genus erat pugnae militum illorum ut magno impetu primo procurerent, audacter locum caperent, ordines suos non magnopere servarent, rari dispersique pugnarent, si premerentur, pedem referre et loco excedere non turpe existimarent”; also Smail, *Warfare* 1956, 78.
- 4 Germanic tactics: Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936, 39ff.; Altheim, *Niedergang* II, 1952, 135f.; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 249; Wolters, “Kampf” 2000; Springer, “Kriegswesen” 2001. Roman line: Vegetius 3.20.1: “Una depugnatio est fronte longa quadro exercitu, sicut etiam nunc et prope semper solet proelium fieri.” Germanic columns: Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3: “Acies per cuneos componitur”; *Histories* 2.42.2: “catervis et cuneis concurrebant”; Ammianus 16.12.20: “Densantes semet in cuneos.” Delbrück, *History* 1990, 39ff.; Miltner, “Waffenübung” 1954; Beck, “Fylking” 1998.
- 5 Ariovistus: Caesar, *Galic War* 1.51: “Generatimque constituerunt paribus intervallis, Harudes, Marcomannos, Triboces, Vangiones, Nemetes, Sedusiones, Suebos.” To form a shield-castle during battle was possible, practical, and useful, for Maurice prescribes it as well: *Strategikon* 12.B16.83ff. Caesar, *Galic War* 1.52, “At Germani celeriter ex consuetudine sua phalange facta impetus gladiatorum exceperunt. Reperti sunt complures nostri milites qui in phalngas insilirent at scuta manibus revellerent et desuper vulnerarent”; Dio 38.49f.; Florus 1.45.13; Orosius 6.7.8f. Contra: Adler, *Studien* 1993, 250. Shield buckles: Servius *ad Aen.* 11.284: “calcato umbone adversarii se in hostilem clipeum erigit miles et ita contra stantis vulnerat terga.”
- 6 Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1886, 325ff.
- 7 Other Roman auxilia could, of course, also form shield walls (Arrian, *Ectaxis*), but here they are advancing in step and combined with a club-wielder.
- 8 Double shields needed against bowmen: Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.B16.30ff.; 12.B16.53ff.
- 9 Ammianus 16.12.37: “Frontem artissimis conserens parmis.” The word *parma* to Ammianus means a non-Roman shield (cf. 29.5.39; 31.5.9), hence he speaks of the Alamanni: “Obnixi genibus quidam barbari peritissimi bellatores hostem propellere laborabant.” The passage is sometimes translated as if the Alamanni pushed the enemy with their knees. A controversy whether legionaries did this: Wheeler, “Firepower” 2001, 181, against Goldsworthy, *Army* 1996, 229.
- 10 Indo-European: *Iliad* 2.362f.; Much, *Germania* 1967, 161. Tribes of distinct warrior styles: Iordanes, *Getica* 261: “Cernere erat contis pugnantes Gothum, ense furentem Gepida, in vulnere suo Rugum tela frangentem, Suavum pede, Hunnum sagitta praesumere, Alanum gravi, Herulum levi armatura aciem strui.”
- 11 Tacitus, *Histories* 4.23.2: “Batavi Transrhenanisque, quo discreta virtus manifestus spectaretur, sibi quaeque gens consistunt”; 4.16.12: “Canninefates, Frisios, Batavos propriis cuneis componit”; 5.16: “Civilis haud porrecto agmine, sed cuneis adstitit.” Tribally aligned army of Odoacar: Iordanes, *Romana* 344; cf. Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 341. Roman warfare likewise used competition among units to bring out the best in each: Dio 38.47.1; Tacitus, *Agricola* 21; 26.2; 36.2; *Josephus, Jewish War* 5.502f.; 6.142; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 32; 42f.; 60; 73 (note 90); Speidel, “Auxilia” 1996, 166; Stoll, *Integration* 2001, 35ff. Walser, *Rom* 1951, 95, doubts columns as “barbarian” battle formations (a “topos”); as he offers no proof, it is a case of Walser against the evidence.
- 12 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3: “Quos ex omne iuventute delectos ante aciem locant”; *ibid.* 7.1: “Duces si prompti, si conspicui, si ante aciem agant, admiratione praesunt.” Cf. *ibid.* 31.3: “Haec prima semper acies.”
- 13 Tacitus, *Histories* 2.42.2: “catervis et cuneis concurrebant”; *Annals* 2.45: “vagus incursibus aut disiectas per catervas.” *Drungi*: Vegetius 3.19.2: “Circumveniantur tui a multitudine hostium aut a vagantibus globis, quos dicunt drungos.” Tempting to single combat: Altheim,

- Niedergang* I, 1952, 121f.; Schmitt, “Buccellarii” 1984, 155. Compare Roman *antesignani* and *Óláfs saga Helga* 226, quoted on p. 109.
- 14 Tacitus, *Annals* 2.21.1: “Velocitate corporum uteretur.”
- 15 Ammianus 15.4.11: “non iusto proelio, sed discursionibus”; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.45: “vagus incursibus aut disiectas per catervas” (while with the Chatti, Tacitus, *Germania* 30.3, finds “rari excursus”). Thin lines of daring attackers: Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.A7. 17–19.
- 16 *Alacritas*: Ammianus 16.12.46. Tellingly, Gallienus, that most forward-looking of all Roman emperors, cultivated *alacritas* on his coins: Alföldi, *Weltkrise* 1967, 12ff.
- 17 Tacitus, *Germania* 7.1: “Si ante aciem agant, admiratione praesunt.” Ammianus 16.12.49 (Strassburg, AD 367): “Exiuit itaque subito ardens optimatium globus, inter quos decernebant et reges”; Speidel, “Who Fought” 2000.
- 18 Tacitus, *Histories* 4.20.3 (Bonn AD 70); Herodian 6.7.8 (mid-third century AD).
- 19 Tacitus, *Histories* 4.20.3: “in cuneos congregantur, densi undique et frontem, tergaque ac latus tuti; sic tenuem nostrorum aciem perfringunt.” Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.B16.20ff, says how it is done: all bunch up toward the middle; clearly this is not a wedge. Strassburg: Ammianus 16.12.44: “nexam scutorum compagem.” *Cunei* are good for guarding the rear, just as Tacitus says: Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.A7.22f.
- 20 Ammianus 17.13.9: “Exercitus...desinente in angustum fronte, quem habitum caput porci simplicitas militaris appellat, impetu disiecit ardente”; Vegetius 3.19.5 (quoted in note 22). Beck, “Fylking” 1998.
- 21 Tacitus, *Histories* 3.5; 3.21 on the Suebian kings Sido and Italicus: “cum delectis popularium primori in acie versabantur.” Ammianus 16.12.24, on the Alamannic king Chnodomar: “anteibat cornu sinistrum.” Vegetius 3.19.5–7 in the fifth century, when the Roman army was at its most Germanic, recommends the boarhead formation to Roman leaders: “Secundus dux in media acie ponitur peditum, qui eam sustentet et firmet. Hic fortissimos pedites et bene armatos de illis superfluis [reserves=guards] secum habere debet, ex quibus aut ipse cuneum faciat et hostium aciem rumpat aut, si adversarii cuneum fecerint, ipse forcem faciat, ut cuneo illi possit occurrere.” Champion wolf- and bear-warriors and berserks: see pp. 33; 36; 44; 75.
- 22 Vegetius 3.19.5: “Cuneus dicitur multitudo peditum, quae iuncta cum acie primo angustior deinde latior procedit et adversariorum ordines rumpit, quia a pluribus in unum locum tela mittitur.” Engström, “Chieftains” 1997, 249- There is nothing “unsinnig” here, contra Springer, “Kriegswesen” 2001, 340.
- 23 Tacitus, *Histories* 2.22, see p. 115, this volume. Ammianus 21.12.13: “Quidam elatis super capita scutis ut pugnaturi levius.”
- 24 Tacitus, *Histories* 4.23.2: “invasere vallum, adpositis plerique scalis, alii per testudinem suorum.”
- 25 Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.52; Frontinus 1.45.13.
- 26 Tacitus, *Histories* 2.22.1; 4.23.2.
- 27 Tacitus, *Germania* 31.3: “Haec prima semper acies.”
- 28 Large shields: Tacitus, *Annals* 2.14.2: “Immensa barbarorum scuta.” Large shields of Constantine’s Germanic guard: Constantine’s Arch, Rome, siege of Verona scene.
- 29 Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.B16.30ff.: “They march in the ‘fulkon’ if...the soldiers in the front line lack armor or greaves.”
- 30 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.4; *Lex Salica* 30.6. Greek parallels: Much, *Germania* 1967, 152f.; Stoll, “Gemeinschaft” 2002, 170f. Roman parallels: Plutarch, *Caesar* 16; Dio 49.16.1. The custom is a functional necessity; contra: von See, “Germane” 1981, 44f.
- 31 Libanius, *Oratio* 59.130.
- 32 Roman warfare adopted: Strobel, “Chattenkrieg” 1987, 429; Demandt, *Staatsformen* 1995, 545, but Tacitus, *Germania* 30 does not call the Chatti “gelehrsame Schüler der Römer”; also Jahn, *Bewaffnung* 1916, 213; Stoll, *Heer* 2001, 269–279. Tacitus, *Annals* 2.45 refers to an exception, see Velleius 2.109. Right: Miltner, “Waffenübung” 1954; Schmidt,

- Westgermanen* 1970, 361; Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 425. Sixth-century BC formation tactics in Europe north of the Alps: Kimmig, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 392f.
- 33 Examples of the planlessness cliché: Norden, *Germania* 1974, 112ff. Dio 38.45 ἀσύντακτοι φέρονται even Maurice, *Strategikon* 4.1.17 speaks of ὀπλῶν ἀνασειοει ἱκανοτάτους προεκφοβήσαι. “Lack of discipline”: see note 3.
- 34 Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.39.1; 1.52; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.45.2; Velleius Paterculus 2.109.2, cf. Wolters, “Kampf” 2000. Goths: Dexippos 26.5 (Jacoby 1923 IIA, 100, p. 469): μεμελετημένον Alamanni: Ammianus 16.12.37, “peritissimi bellatores.” Franks: Agathias 2.5, ἄριστα ...
- “Ἴσον δὲ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν τῆς παρατάξεως καὶ πυκνὸν ἐν ταῖς μάχαις τὸ πεζομαχεῖν.”
- 35 Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.40.8: “magis ratione et consilio quam virtute.”
- 36 Wackernagel, *Volkstum* 1956, 128; 132, borne out by passages stressing Germanic battle discipline, such as Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.39–1; Velleius 2.109.2, and Tacitus, *Germania* 30.2.
- 37 Schlüter and Wiegels, *Rom* 1999. The same strategy again in AD 15 and 16: Tacitus, *Annals* 1.63; 2, 19–21; Franks, *Rom* 1980, 273–6.
- 38 Turney-High, *War* 1991, 227f. Intense Germanic social organization: Lund-Hansen, *Himingøje* 1995, 385–416.
- 39 Cassiodorus, *Varia* 10.26.3; Reichert, *Lexikon* I, 1987, 552. Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 42.
- 40 *Strategikon* 12.A7.52ff.
- 41 Roman legionaries also put their shoulders against their shields when in a defensive line (Arrian, *Ektaxis* 26)—this is a technical necessity. Our point here is that Germanic warriors did it too, and did it well.
- 42 Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.B16.34–38. Germanic guards are shown holding shields overlapping to their bosses (though not in two rows above each other) on the southwest side of Theodosius’ Obelisk in Byzantium.
- 43 Folc: *Battle of Maldon* 22.241; 259; Beck, “Fylking” 1998; Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.17–18: “Ἴσον δὲ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν τῆς παρατάξεως καὶ πυκνὸν ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ποιοῦσιν.”
- 44 He says as much of the “Scythians”: *Strategikon* 11.2.50–55.
- 45 Arrian, *Tactica* 36.1, prescribes this even for Roman horsemen. Saxo 43 and 65. Cf. Tacitus, *Histories* 5.18: “Absumptis quae iaciuntur.”
- 46 Shield bosses (often silvered or gilt): Böhme, *Grabfunde* 1974, 111–114. Shields mattered greatly for pushing the enemy over: Tacitus, *Agricola* 36: “Batavi...ferire umbonibus.” Ammianus 31.5.9: (Goths) “Barbari...globos irrupere nostrorum incauti et parmas oppositis corporibus illidendo obuio hastis perforabant.” But the spiked bosses with which some Germani fitted their shields hardly served as a weapon; contra: Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 425. Adler, *Studien* 1993, 247, rightly states that Roman soldiers likewise shoved with their shields.
- 47 Finds of staff-bosses: Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 374; 425; 429 (silver-plated, from Sweden); 432f. (graves of leaders); 435. Steuer, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 440, records rich graves with hard-to-handle, big shields that seem well suited for front-line warriors in the “fylking,” cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 2.11.2: “immensa barbarorum scuta”; also Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 461. Lothair: Ms. Lat. 266, Folio 1, verso, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
- 48 Third-century legionaries: Speidel, “Framework” 2002, 137, fig. 7.12. A Roman phalangarius in the mid-third century: *Journal of Roman Studies* 1988, 101.

- 49 Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 551; see also *ibid.* Folchildis and Folcwig, “She/He of the Shield-Castle Fight.” Marching in step: Ammianus 19.6.5; figure 10.1; Franks, *Rom* 1980, 54.
- 50 Eyvind’s poem: Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 247f. Likewise “Hjadnings’ storm” meant “battle” to Snorri Sturluson: *Skáldskaparmál* 62. Woden, wind, and storm: Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 323–341; Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 138; see p. 70, this volume. Compare Dante, *Inferno* 22.2 and the 1988 “Desert Storm” campaign. Warrior-style spirit: Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.13; Bodmer, *Krieger* 1957, 120 (on Merovingians): “Nicht die Disziplin und die reibungslos funktionierende Organisation waren hier ausschlaggebend, sondern der kriegerische Schwung.”
- 51 Taught: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 47. Discipline and ecstasy: Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 17–28.
- 52 Agathias 2.8; Saxo 31 and 207f. One cannot brush Agathias aside as does Springer, *Kriegswesen* 2001, 340, for the whole, detailed description of the battle at Capua is based upon the Frankish–Alamannic wedge formation; for Saxo 31 and 207f. see the commentary by Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979. Continuity of the boar-head formation: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 41–47; Beck, “Fylking” 1998; Müller, “Tiersymbolik” 1968, 204. Array by tribes: Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.15: *κατὰ φυλάς*; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 497.
- 53 Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.17, does not contradict this when he says the Germanic front line is even and packed, for the boarhead-wedge may be formed from the first line of a shield castle as in Vegetius 3.19.5f. and *Óláfs saga Helga* 226, cf. Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979, 120ff.
- 54 *Hloðsquiða* 32ff.: *scialdborg*; Snorri Sturluson, *Óláfs saga Helga* 226; Saxo 43 and 65 with the commentary by Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979, II, 53.
- 55 *Battle of Maldon*: “bæd **fæ**thra randan rihte heoldon” (20); *wihaga* (101f.); *scyldburgh* (242); *bordweall* (211). Much, *Germania* 1967, 142; Evans, *Lords* 1997, 38. The shield wall at Hastings, as seen on the Bayeux tapestry, thus had a long tradition.
- 56 Anglo-Norman forces used it: Morillo, *Warfare* 1994, 157. On the attack, in the crusades: Hollister, *Institutions* 1962, 132ff.
- 57 *Óláfs saga Helga* 226.

## 10

## CHANTING

- 1 Freeze: Ammianus 17.12.5: “stratisque plurimis quorum gressus vinxerat timor”; Ammianus 31.7.13: “Lapsorum timore impeditorum secando suffragines.” Samoan war songs: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 218. Songs heighten feelings: Plato, *Laws* 812C. With a song of thunder and wind, the young Marut warriors of the *Ṛg-Veda* awakened Indra’s prowess, *Ṛg-Veda* 1.85.2 and 10; they are heaven’s singers (5.57); Zimmer, *Leben* 1879, 294 (thunder, wind: Maurer, *Pinnacles* 1986, 131; 133). Greek Dioscuri inventing the war song: Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 21ff. To the ancient Irish the battle gods invented the war-cry: Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 642. Raising the spirit: Plutarch, *Marius* 19; Valerius Maximus 2.6.2; Tacitus, *Germania* 3: “Accendunt animos.”
- 2 Plato, *Republic* 411; Ammianus 22.4.6.
- 3 Tacitus, *Annals* 1.65: “laeto cantu aut truci sonore”; *sonor* is battle cry: *Annals* 14.36.
- 4 Hercules among Germani: Tacitus, *Germania* 3.1: “Fuisse apud eos et Herculem memorant, primumque omnium virorum fortium ituri in proelia canunt”; for the concept “first of all men” see my paper “Lebensbeschreibungen” 2004. Spartans: Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974,

- 172ff.; Valerius Maximus 2.6.2 (quoted in Chapter 11, note 3). Arminius: Tacitus, *Annals* 2.88.3.
- 5 Goths: Ammianus 31.7.11: “Barbari vero maiorum laudes clamoribus stridebant inconditis”; Jordanes, *Getica* 43: “cantu maiorum facta modulationibus citharisque canebant”; Sidonius, *Epistles* 1.2.9; Demandt, *Staatsformen* 1995, 546. Fun: Julian, *Misopogon* 337c. Cantator: Maurice, *Strategikon* 2.19; the word means “singer,” not “herald” *pace* Dennis, *Strategikon* 1984, 34.
- 6 *Ludwigslied* 48: “Sang was gisungen, wig was begunnen.” Stiklastad: Sturluson, *Óláfs saga Helga* 208; Hastings: Much, *Germania* 1967, 57.
- 7 Mythical battle: Eliade, *Return* 1954, 28f. Sigmund: *Beowulf* 875ff., see p. 33ff., this volume; Hercules and Siegfried: Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 172ff.; Much, *Germania* 1967, 76. *Beowulf*: Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 209ff.; cf. Hauck, “Bildddenkmäler” 1976, 590ff. Thor, Woden and Balder as forebears: Simek, *Dictionary* 1993, 26ff. (Bældæg and Balder); 374 (Woden).
- 8 Birds: *Iliad* 3.2–6; *Aeneid* 7.705; Caesar, *Civil War* 3.92; Julian, *Misopogon* 337c. To Vergil, and hence to Tacitus, *Germania* 3 (though not to von See, “Germane” 1981, 53) this betokened admirable manhood; Klingner, *Virgil* 1967, 515ff.; Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 115ff. Even Jesus as warlord of heaven sounded like a crane: Papyrus Bodmer 29, 295 (Kessels, “Vision” 1987, 340f.); cranes as warriors animals: Stoll, *Integration* 2001, 570; Brunetto Latini, in his *Tesoro*, says “Cranes fly in squadrons like horsemen riding to battle.” Silence is not always Roman nor shouting always “barbarian”: Caesar, *Civil War* 3.92. Arcadians: Xenophon, *Anabasis* 6.1.11. Paian: Polyaeus 3.9.8, see Stoll, “Gemeinschaft” 2002, 168.
- 9 Thracians: Xenophon, *Anabasis* 6.1.6 (the Sitalkas); Plato, Seventh Letter 348h; Tacitus, *Annals* 4.47: “more gentis carminibus et tripudiis persultabant.” Iberians: Diodor 5.34.5 and Silius Italicus 3.344–349: “misit dives Gallaecia pubem/barbara nunc patriis ululantem carmina linguis/nunc pedis alterno percussa verbere terra/ad numerum resonas gaudentem plaudere caetras.” Gauls: Livy 5.37.8 (387 BC) “Truci cantu, clamoribusque variis, horrendo cuncta compleverant sono”; Livy 38.17.3f.: “cantus ineuntium proelium et ululatus et tripudia.” Polybios 2.29–6 (at Telamon): τοῦ παντός στρατοπέδου συμπαιανίζοντος . Britons: Tacitus *Agricola* 33
- 10 Tacitus, *Germania* 3.1: “carmina quorum relatu quem barditum vocant, accendunt animos, futuraeque pugnae fortunam ipso cantu augurantur; terrent enim trepidantve prout sonuit acies, nec tamen voces illae quam virtutis concentus videntur. Affectatur praecipue asperitas soni et fractum murmur, obiectis ad os scutis, quo plenior et gravior vox re percussu intumescat.” Cf. *Histories* 2.22: “cohortes Germanorum, cantu truci”; 4.18.3: “virorum cantu...sonuit acies”; 5.15 “cantu aut clamore”; *Annals* 1.65.1: “laeto cantu aut truci sonore”; *Annals* 4.47 (quoted in Chapter 11, note 5); Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 115ff.; Much, *Germania* 1967, 76ff.; 308; Beck, “Barditus” 1976; Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 123f. The Romans did not call such songs “classica” *pace* Beck, “Feldgeschrei” 1994, 305.
- 11 Romans: Livy 4.37.9; Plutarch, *Crassus* 27; Tacitus, *Histories* 4.18.3; Arrian, *Ektaxis* 25. Much, *Germania* 1967, 76ff. Caesar: Dio 38.45.5. Decius: Dexippos, frag. 26.6 (Jacoby, FGH II, A, no. 100, p. 469). Ammianus 16.12.43: “Cornuti enim et Brachiati usu proeliorum diuturno firmati eos iam gestu terrentes barritum ciere vel maximum. Qui clamor ipso fervore certaminum a tenui susurro exoriens paulatimque adolescens ritu extollitur fluctuum cautibus illisorum”; Vegetius 3.18.9: “Clamor autem, quem barritum vocant, prius non debet attolli quam acies utraque se iunxerit.” Heusler, “Dichtung” 1913, 499: “Kein blosses Hurra, sondern ein sinnvolles Feldgeschrei metrischen Taktes,” cf. *Óláfs saga Helga* 226.
- 12 Ammianus 31.7.11: “Romani quidem voce undique Martia concinentes a minore solita ad maiorem protolli, quam gentilitate appellant barritum, vires validas erigebant.” Cf. 21.13.15.

- Learned from the Auxilia Palatina: Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 135–137. Crashing waves: see p. 44, note 24; also *Helgaqviða Hundingsbana in fyrri* 28.5f.
- 13 Edda, *Lokasenna*, Introduction: “þá skóko æsir skioldo sína ok æpðo at Loka”: “Then the Aesir shook their shields and yelled (howled or snarled like wolves see *Hárbarðzlióð* 47; or like the wind see *Álvissmál* 20: æpi) at Loki.” Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979, II, 77.
- 14 Arwidsson, *Valsgärde* 1977, fig. 115; Hauck, “Kulte” 1980, 482. Eagle: Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 270.
- 15 Much, *Germania* 1967, 82f. Contra Lund, “Germania” 1991, 1879f. and 2027–2031, ignoring the Valgarde foils. If part of the *barritus* was a swooshing sound as described by Ammianus, it did indeed increase when thrown back by a shield, cf. Much, *Germania* 1967, 82f.
- 16 Act out a ritual: Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 270, with reference to the picture stone from Stora Hammars I/Lärbro, Gotland, and the bracteate amulet from Ullerup Mark-A, IK 2, 358. For the “Vogelschlange” as Woden’s headgear see also the Kitnæs amulet (IK 92); Hauck, *Goldbrakteater* 1985, 101–103.
- 17 *Hávamál* 156; Neckel, *Edda* 1962, 43. Tacitus rightly stressed: contra Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 122. Contra: Lund, “Germania” 1991, 1879f. and 2027–2031, though the Edda passage proves beyond cavil that the effect of sound on the mind worked, and was known, not only among Greeks and Romans but, naturally, also among Germanic warriors.

## 11

## WAR DANCES

- 1 Outdo: McNeill, *Keeping* 1995. Ecstasy brought forth: Meschke, *Schwerttanz* 1931, 4f. Ecstasy defined, divine: Beck, “Ekstase” 1989; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 262. Mangaia: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 166, cf. Eliade, *Shamanism* 1964, 458ff. War dances of American Indians: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, II, 242; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 126; Aztecs, Mayas: see p. 69. Dance against fear: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 215, also 41 (Jibaro); Whitehead, “Warfare” 1990, 152 (Caribs). Pompeius Trogus 11.5.10.
- 2 De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* I, 1956, 443; cf. Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 177. Emboldening: McNeill, *Keeping* 1995. Indo-European war dances: Kershaw, *God* 2000, 83ff. *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* 5.4.31ff. (Foster, *Muses* 1996, 227). *Atharva Veda* 12.1.41: “The earth (= battlefield) on whom mortals sing and dance with various noises, on whom they fight, on whom the drum ‘speaks,’ may that earth rout my rivals, rid me of my foes”; for help with this I thank my teacher Walter Maurer. Wikander, *Männerbund* 1938, 67ff.; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 20; Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 211; Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 549ff. On the Maruts see also McCone, “Hund” 1987, 120f.; Kershaw, *Gods* 2000, 98ff.; 213ff. A Hittite bearskin dancer: Mallory and Adams, *Encyclopedia* 1997, 56. Iranians: Curtius Rufus 7.10.4; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 20f.; 56ff.; drums frenzied Iranian warriors: Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 46f. Ecstasy to ward off danger: Düwel, *Runenkunde* 2001, 13.
- 3 Hector: *Iliad* 7.241: οἶδα δ’ ἐνὶ σταδίῃ δῆψ μὲλπεσθαι Ἄρηϊ, for which see Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 249; Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 37ff. Greeks: Scholia to Pindar, *Pythian* 2.69; Jeanmaire, *Couroi* 1939, 596ff.; Wheeler, *Hoplomachia* 1982; Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 21ff.; Spartans: Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 630f.; Valerius Maximus 2.6.2: “Eiusdem ciuitatis exercitus non ante ad dimicandum descendere solebant quam tibiae concentu et anapaesti pedis modulo cohortationis calorem animo traxissent, uegeto et crebro ictus sono strenue hostem inuadere admoniti.” Quintilian, *Institutions* 1.17f.: “haec chironomia, quae est (in nomine ipso declaratur) lex gestus, et ab illis temporibus heroicis orta sit et a summis Graeciae viris atque ipso etiam Socrate probata, a Platone quoque in parte civilium posita



- virtutum,—Lacedaemonios quidem etiam saltationem quandam tamquam ad bella quoque utilem habuisse inter exercitationes accepimus.”
- 4 Plato, *Laws* 803; 813; Athenaeus, *Deiphosophistae* 628f., aptly commented by Athenaeus when he says that dance “shows discipline and care for the body.” Stoll, *Gemeinschaft* 2002, 166 (with literature).
- 5 Thracians, Peace: Xenophon, *Anabasis* 6.1.5; North American Indians: Catlin, *Letters* 1973, II, 242. Battlefield: Tacitus, *Annals* 4.47: “more gentis cum carminibus et tripudiis persultabant.” Gallaecians: Silius Italicus 3.444ff.: “misit dives Callaecia pubem/barbara nunc patriis ululatem carmina linguis/nunc pedis alterno percussa verbera terra/ad numerum resonas gaudentem plaudere caetras”; Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 165.
- 6 Alpine tribes: Livy 21.42.3; Celtiberians: Livy 23.26.9 and 25.17.4: “armatum exercitum decucurisse cum tripudiis Hispanorum motibusque armorum et corporum suae cuique genti adsueta.”
- 7 Polybius 2.97.7; *κίνησις* is dance, not just gestures as translated by W.R.Paton, *Polybius*, vol. I, Cambridge, Mass. 1967, 315. Appian, *Keltika* 8; Livy 38.17.4: “Gallorum ineuntium proelium ululatus et tripudia”; Tacitus, *Agricola* 33. Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 177.
- 8 Salii: Livy 1.20.4; Quintilian, *Institutions* 1.18: “neque id veteribus Romanis dedecori fuit: argumentum est sacerdotum nomine ac religione durans ad hoc tempus saltatio et illa in tertio Ciceronis de Oratore libro verba Crassi, quibus praecipit, ut orator utatur ‘laterum inclinatione forti ac virili non a scaena et histrionibus, sed ab armis aut etiam a palaestra’.” Bloch, “Dances” 1958; Latte, *Religionsgeschichte* 1960, 115; Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 248f.; Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 211; McCone, “Hund” 1987, 133; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 91ff. Romans and dance: Horsfall, “Romulus” 1971, 1114f. Mars Gradivus was not their leader in the dance (*pace* Beck, “Stanzen” 1968), for *praesul* in late antiquity is not just a dance leader but any kind of leader. Hector: *Iliad* 7.241; Arcadians: Xenophon 6.1.11.
- 9 Saxo 75.5ff.
- 10 Funeral: Hauck, “Ludus” 1951, 15; Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 43; cf. Livy 25.17.4. Victory: Saxo 100; cf. Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 43. Speech: Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.17.3; Ammianus 15.8.15. Banner: Ammianus 27.1.2. Gloat dances known the world over: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 143f. Exulting: Ammianus 23.5.24f.
- 11 Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus* 12(*κίνησις*).
- 12 Plutarch, *Marius* 19.4; Much, *Germania* 1967, 84; tribal names were still shouted in the Middle Ages: Hauck, “Lebensnormen” 1955, 186–223, 210f.; Beck, “Feldgeschrei” 1994; the custom occurs also among the Aztecs in AD 1516, who shouted their cities’ names as a war cry: “Y los capitanes de ellos, que venían delante ... apellidando sus provincias decían ‘Mexico, Mexico, Temixtitan, Temixtitan’” (Cortés, *Carta-Relación* 2000, 229).
- 13 Sugambri: Tacitus, *Annals* 4.47: “Sugambrae cohortis...cantum et armorum tumultu trucem.” Raised: Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 84f.
- 14 Similar war-cry shouting matches: Plutarch, *Marius* 19.4; Suda E 2310; Sturluson, *Óláfs saga* 226.
- 15 Tacitus, *Historiae* 2.22 (referring, it seems, to the troops of 2.17: Batavi and Transrhenani, cf. 1.61.2): “temere subeuntes cohortes Germanorum, cantu truci et more patrio nudis corporibus super umeros scuta quantientium.” For the term “cohortes” in Tacitus see Kraft, *Alen* 1951, 38; Callies, “Truppen” 1964, 151f. A Batavian shield castle (“testudo”) attacking a wall: Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.23.2.
- 16 Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.17.3: “ubi sono armorum tripudiisque (ita illis mos) adprobata sunt dicta, saxis glandibusque et ceteris missilibus proelium incipitur”; Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 188f. Not part of the war dance is the clashing of weapons for approval, for which see Ammianus 15.8.15 etc. Vagdavercustis: de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 325. Iranian Sogdians also sang to the *tripudium*: Curtius Rufus 7.10.4.

- 17 Ammianus 16.12.43: “eos iam gestu terrentes.” Penguin edition 1998, 112 (W. Hamilton): “bearing”; Seyfahrt, *Ammianus Marcellinus* 1975, 197: “Haltung”; Loeb edition 1971, 287 (J.C. Rolfe): “gestures.” Dance: *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, p. 764 s.v. *gestus*, 1.b.
- 18 Ammianus 29.5.38: “Conglobatis suis scutaque in formidabilem moventibus gestum.” Ammianus uses the word *gestus* again for the war dance in 14.2.17 and 18.7.7 (see note 24).
- 19 Ammianus 16.12.44: “Nexa scutorum compago, quae nostros in modum testudinis tuebatur.”
- 20 Ammianus 31.12.12: “Horrendo fragore, sibilantibus armis, pulsuque minaci scutorum, terrii barbari.”
- 21 Swaying: Meschke, *Schwertanz* 1931, 4; dance, song, and music inseparable in Greek customs: Plato, *Laws* 816A; Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 22; 61. Germanic speech: Frye, *Anatomy* 1957, 278f. (for “English” substitute “Old Germanic”).
- 22 Themistius, *Oratio* 1.2a (ἐνόπλιος χορεία); Julian 11b; Ammianus 16.5.10: “artemque modulatus incedendi per pyrricham concinentibus disceret fistulis”; cf. 18.7.7 (see note 24); 19.6.9. Greek pyrrhic war dance: Plato, *Laws* 815A; Strabo 10.3.8; Wheeler, “Hoplomachia” 1982; Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 35ff. Trajan apparently did not take up the advice by Dio Chrysostom (2.60–61) to institute war dances for honoring the gods and training the soldiers.
- 23 Julian: Ammianus 24.6.10: “Cristatis galeis corusci Romani uibrantes qui clipeos uelut pedis anapaesti praecinentibus modulis lenius procedebant”; cf. Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.17.3. Tripudium, “three-foot step”: Spartans: Valerius Maximus 2.6.2 (see note 3). Fifes also incited the *tripudium* of Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 8.27.
- 24 Ammianus 18.7.7: “Sabinianus... nihil formidans, more vitae remissioris fluxius agens, militari pyrrice sonantibus modulis pro histrionicis gestibus in silentio summo delectabatur.” The accusation is a cliché, see Herodian 7.8.5. “War dance” at the non-military *pyrrhica* of the time was indeed for stage actors (Robert and Robert, *Bulletin* 1987, 481), but Ammianus is at pains to say it was a *pyrrhica militaris*, for which see *Historia Augusta*, *Hadrian*, 19–8; Horsmann, *Untersuchungen* 1991, 147. Spartan festivals: Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 74ff.
- 25 Vegetius 2.23.5: “insurgere tripudiantes in clipeum rursusque subsidere, nunc gestiendo provolare cum saltu nunc cedentes in terga resilire.” The translation by Milner, *Vegetius* 1993, 57, ignores *tripudiare* and *gestire*. Goths: Ammianus 31, 59; “Parmas suppositis corporibus illidendo”, as the manuscripts have it.
- 26 Germanic lack of discipline: Stoll, *Heer* 2000, 269ff.; but see also Caesar, *Galic War* 1.36.7: “exercitissimi in armis”; 39: “incredibili virtute atque exercitatione in armis.” For their “planlessness,” see Chapter 9, note 33.
- 27 Also shown on Möne collar Holmquist *Gods* 1960.
- 28 Saxo 156.6: “militaris pompae tripudium”; cf. Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 43. Foot: Ammianus 24.6.8; see p. 153, this volume. Morillo, *Warfare* 1994, 162 (though with reference to Roman legions rather than *barritus-chanting* Germanic foot).
- 29 Cf. Almgren *Felszeichnungen* 1934; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 214f.; Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 324f. Date: 1500–300 BC.
- 30 If they are not twin-dragon headgear, the two “horns” would be wolf ears rather than bull horns (contra Altheim, *Literatur* 1948, 300; *Niedergang* I, 1952, 116), as suggested by similar figures (musicians) from Kalleby, Tanum, in Almgren *Felszeichnungen* 1934, 8, fig. 7.
- 31 Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 214f.; Altheim, *Literatur* 1948, 299f.; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 44f.
- 32 Tacitus, *Germania* 24.1: “Genus spectaculorum unum atque in omni coetu idem: nudi iuvenes, quibus id ludicrum est, inter gladios se atque infestas frameas saltu iaciunt. Exercitatio artem paravit, ars decorem, non in quaestum tamen aut mercedem: quamvis audacis lasciviae pretium est voluptas spectantium.”

- 33 That war dances could be spectacles to delight crowds is suggested by Ammianus 16.5.14 (as taxes were low): “Cum alacritate et tripudiis laetabantur”; cf. Livy 21.42.2.
- 34 Tacitus, *Germania* 6; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 239; Evans, *Lords* 1997, 38f.
- 35 Werner, *Zierscheiben* 1941, seeing here hunting scenes; Storgaard, “Aristocrats” 2003, 116f., recognizes dancers and offers a good photograph.
- 36 Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* (I.3) 1985, no. 7; see also *ibid.* III.2, p. 129 and I.1, pp. 134ff., and Hauck, “Überlieferung” 1993, 442ff.
- 37 For the shape of the hitherto overlooked belt compare Balder on IK 40, and the Björkö statuette: Ringquist, “Människofigurer” 1969. The naked tenth-century BC warriors from Grævenswange, Denmark, also wear helmet and belt (Demakopoulou, *Gods* 1999, 94). For power-belts see note 52. Here, as on the Finglesham belt buckle, the god’s penis too is shown (*pace* Hauck, “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 568 and 575: “Geschlechtslosigkeit.”) Heroes over-armed: CúChulainn in Old Irish tales, cf. Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 967. The curved, jagged line on the right is a shield, perhaps in side view (like Constans’ medallion of AD 340–350 from Aquileia, RIC 35) rather than truncated inside view (Hauck, “Brakteatenikonologie” 1978, 397ff; “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 568). For the “Hammertüllen” ax see Böhme, “Zeugnisse” 1993.
- 38 Balder: IK 20; Woden: IK 128, cf. Hauck, “Auswertung” 1998, 307. Naked dancing, though, is not a Roman import, for it is found already in Tacitus, *Germania* 24.
- 39 Boomerang: Hauck, “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 569, and Capelle, “Erkenntnismöglichkeiten” 1982, 278, who sees here a “gebogenes Wurfholz”; Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 190: “bumerangförmige Keule.” Germanic boomerangs: Isidore, *Etymologies* 18.7.7; Behm-Blanke, “Seeheiligtum” 1958, 265 (finds from Oberdorla, Thüringen that, naturally, look exactly like modern boomerangs).
- 40 Compare the bent spear on the bracteate amulet from Tunalund (Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* 1.3, 1985, no. 7; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 269ff.) and the lance of the Dura-Europos catafract (e.g. Bivar, “Equipment” 1972, fig. 5). Sacrifice: Hauck, “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 569; Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 190.
- 41 *Vibrare*, “to shake,” is Latin for throwing a spear: Tacitus, *Germania* 6.1; Seneca, *Epistles* 36.7: “Si in Germania (natus esset) protinus puer tenerum hastile vibraret.” The swords of IK 107 and 197 are likewise bent to show they are the dancing sword of IK 39.
- 42 See e.g. the bent spear of the horseman on the Sutton Hoo helmet: Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 190, fig. 143.
- 43 A fine parallel to this is a warrior vase of the Peruvian Nazca culture (AD 400–700), now in the Pre-Columbian Museum of Santiago de Chile, depicting several warriors dancing with outward-turned feet, each bounding between five or six parallel spears, as if they shook them with great strength.
- 44 Mars: Hauck, “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 568. There is no ground to call Woden “Mars-Woden” or even “Randkultur-Mars” (Hauck, “Veränderung” 1980, 241; “Überlieferung” 1993, 441f.), merely because Adam of Bremen (4.25ff.) says Woden in Uppsala is depicted with weapons as Mars is in Bremen. Who would not portray a war god with weapons? Are therefore all war gods Mars? Clearly, Adam does not equate Woden with Mars, or call him Mars, or even liken him to Mars. Woden also wields an ax on the Beresina bracteate (IK 20): it may be one of his attributes.
- 45 Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* 1985, 134: “Federbusch.” Helmet crests, however, reach no deeper than a warrior’s neck. For a Germanic horned helmet with a long crest, see the Prutting stele: Garbsch and Overbeck, *Spätantike* 1989, 71; it nevertheless reaches only to the warrior’s neck. Tantalizingly, Hauck, “Brakteatenikonologie” 1978, 397, also termed the Års crest “schlangenhaft.”
- 46 Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 47f.; “Adelskultur” 1957, 7f. To the ancients, snakes and dragons were the same. Snakes as dragons in Greece and Rome: Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.204 and 2.225, cf. Servius, *Aeneid* 2.204; *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*: “draco”; Merkelbach,

- “Drache” 1959, 226; Wild, *Drachen* 1962, 3ff. Germanic *wyrm* as both snake and dragon: Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 38; Müller, *Personennamen* 1970, 64f. A comparable lone dragon on an East Iranian helmet: Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 152ff.
- 47 Constantine’s Arch: Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, fig. 4. A parallel bracteate amulet with a lone-dragon headgear is IK 16 from Aschersleben, cf. Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* 1970, 203ff. with plate (fig. 40, 1–4); remarkably, it shows the same neckband and Hauck rightly called it an “ältere Vorprägung” (Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* 1970, 208). Other comparable headgear of Woden: IK 44; 50; 78; 79; 92; 191; 198.
- 48 The Års dancer shows no horse tail, contra Hauck, “Bildzeugnisse” 1980, 569: see the upturned tail of the wolf on Franks Casket (Hauck, “Auzon” 1973); IK 99 (Kølby) may indeed show a horse tail—but without upturned end (Hauck, “Überlieferung” 1993, 445, fig. 12c). Gudbrandsdalen: IK 65.
- 49 Figurines: Ringquist, “Människofigurer” 1969; Bergquist, “Religion” 1999. Spur to war: *Hárbarðzlióð* 24. Virtus given by Woden: *Chronica Æthelweardi* (ed. A. Campbell, London 1962) 1.3: “Sacrificium obtulerunt pagani, victoriae causa sive virtutis.” Ziegler, “Oðin” 1985, 91. Adam of Bremen 4.26: “Bella gerit, hominique ministrat virtutem.” Madness=virtus: Florus 1.37, quoted on p. 57, this volume. Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 193: “He does not ‘embody’ martial ecstasy, he dispenses it, being himself devious and manipulative.” Here Woden “embodies” it in order to dispense it.
- 50 God’s help: Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Ynglinga saga* 6; *Hávamál* 148; *Óláfs saga Helga* 228; Saxo 109. De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 56; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 85ff.; Ziegler, “Oðin” 1985; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 4. Cf. *Rg Veda* 2.12.8; 10.121.6; 6.25.6; Zimmer, *Leben* 1879, 294; *Iliad, passim*; Tacitus, *Germania* 1.3 (Hercules); Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 32. In the Middle Ages: Beck, “Feldgeschrei” 1994, 305–306. “God with us”: Vegetius 3.5.4; Maurice, *Strategikon* 2.18.3; 7.B16.10. Adam of Bremen 4.26: “Wodan id est furor” (de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 94).
- 51 Davidson, “Significance” 1965. Date: Siegmund, “Gürtel” 1999, 172f., no. 5.
- 52 Power belts of gods and warriors: *Snorra Edda, Gylfaginning* 2.1: Thor’s belt doubles his might; *Skáldskaparmál* 18; Saxo 69.14f. Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 54; Kühn, “Christus-Schnallen” 1973, 56f.; Siegmund, “Gürtel” 1999, 176.
- 53 Reichert, *Lexikon* II, 1990, 556.
- 54 Woden: Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 716. Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 46f.; Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957, 15; Hauck, “Kulte” 1980, 519; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 241; 271; Beck, “Stanzan” 1968, 247f. It seems far-fetched to see here a one-eyed follower of Woden, such as the Batavian Civilis (Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 201) or Hagen of the Nibelungs (Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957, 16f.). Not Woden: Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 176; Davidson, “Significance” 1965, 32, note 38; Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 208. See Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 40ff.; Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 712ff.; Arwidsson, *Valsgårde* 1977, 125.
- 55 Bergquist, “Religion” 1999
- 56 Kitnæs: IK 92. Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 195, holds the Finglesham dancer to be one of the Dioscuri.
- 57 Now in The Museum in St-Germain-en-Laye. Salin, *Civilization*, vol. 4, 1959, plate XI, facing p. 400; 573; Wallace-Hadrill, *Church* 1983, 28. Vallet, “Authenticité” 1989, 75–81. Jesus seen as a young hero: *Dream of the Rood* 39.
- 58 IK 39; see also IK 79 with Procopius, Gothic Wars 4.31.20: “τὸ δόρυ ἐκ χειρὸς ἐς χεῖρα παραπέμπων.”
- 59 Drawing in Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 186ff., cf. p. 206f.; cf. Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 208 with figs. 53b; 53c, and 54b. Other war dancers: Valsgarde, grave 7: Arwidsson, *Valsgårde* 1977, foil E, cf. pp. 119 and 122, cf. Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 224ff. and Hauck, “Kulte” 1980, 497, fig. 18; also Hauck, “Wiedergabe” 1981, 234, fig. 41.

- 60 Dioscuri: Wagner, “Dioskuren” 1960; Hauck, “Wiedergabe” 1981, 237ff.; Hauck, “Dioskuren” 1984; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 225ff.; contra: Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 716. De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 247: “nur sehr fragmentarische Zeugnisse für einen Dioskurenkult.” Two spears with different blades, however, are worthless for identification of Dioscuri (*pace* Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 327), since they are standard equipment of Germanic warriors: Adler, *Studien* 1993, 91, and Woden wields them on the Torslunda die. Inventors of war dance and song: Wagner, “Dioskuren” 1960, 225; Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 21ff.
- 61 A relief at Mainz has much in common with the Sutton Hoo foil: Selzer, *Steindenkmäler* 1988, fig. 37.
- 62 Caenby: Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo*, 1978, 206.
- 63 Dover: Hauck, “Wiedergabe” 1981, 198, with fig. 13. Masks: see p. 124, this volume.
- 64 Ringquist, “Människofigurer” 1969; Bergqvist, “Religion” 1999
- 65 Hauck, “Auswertung” 1998, 307, comparing the bracteate amulet IK 128 (Nebenstedt) with the gold foil from Sorte Muld (type 280), three generations later.
- 66 Skulason: Sturluson, *Skaldskaparmál* 53: “Snáks ber fald of fraeknu fólkvödr.”
- 67 Embodied: Hauck, “Lebensnormen” 1955, 214f.; *Goldbrakteaten* 1970, 266f.; “Germania-Texte” 1982, 198; “Gudme” 1987; “Polytheismus” 1994, 225f., 241, 270. Possessed: Glúmr Geirason, *Gráfeldardrápa* 12 (AD 970): “Woden himself was in the Sea-Warriors” (after Much, *Germania* 1967, 160). De Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* II, 1957, 252ff.; Hauck, “Wiedergabe” 1981, 243; 253f.; see p. 31, this volume.
- 68 Celts: Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 641 (on Uther Pendragon); Ammianus 16.12.39: “Caesar ...quo agnito per purpureum signum draconis summitate hastae longioris aptatum.” Signum regis among Anglo-Saxons: Chaney, *Cult* 1970, 127ff. Norsemen: Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Óláfs saga Helga* 49 (AD 1016). In scene 75 of Trajan’s Column, the Dacian dragons also seem to go with the king.
- 69 Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 1665; Kaufmann, *Personennamen* 1968, 418; Werner, *Heilsbilder* 1963.
- 70 Axboe et al., “Gallehus” 1998.
- 71 Eliade, *Myth* 1963, 6.
- 72 Ringquist, “Människofigurer” 1969.
- 73 Beck, *Bildendenkmäler* 1964, 50; Beck, “Stanzen” 1968; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 214ff. Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 157; Alföldi, “Cornuti” 1959, 177; Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 189ff.
- 74 Procopius, *Gothic Wars* 4.31.18ff.
- 75 Beowulf: “sweorda gelac” and “ecga gelac” are metaphors for battle: Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 9; *laikaz*: Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 244.
- 76 Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 245ff.; cf. Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 996; Kaufmann, *Personennamen* 1968, 223. A fifth-century runic inscription from Norway has the name HadulaikaR, “Battle-Dancer” (Reichert, *Lexikon* I, 1987, 417).
- 77 Athenaeus 155B; Werner, *Waffentanz* 1968.
- 78 Twin-dragon dancers: München-Feldmoching, grave 229; Prähistorische Staatssammlung inv. 1952, 1006 Dannheimer and Ulbert, *Reihengräber* 1956, 22. Wolf-warriors: Oberwarngau, grave 171, inv. nr. 1953, 308, unpublished. Long-hairs: Oberwarngau, grave 161. Such belts are datable to AD 640–670: Siegmund, “Gürtel” 1987, 172, no. 9.
- 79 They have long been recognized as masks, see e.g. von Freeden, “Gräberfeld” 1987, 538. Rectangular masks are not unusual and are known, for example, among the Tlingit of America’s northwest coast: see Siebert and Forman, *Art* 1967, plates 29ff.
- 80 Twin-dragon headgear is seen also on a belt-fitting from Alamannic Buggingen: Christlein, *Alemannen* 1979, plate 81. See also Figure 1.4.
- 81 Meuli, “Maske” 1933; Eliade, *Return* 1954, 53 and 70; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 26ff.

- 82 Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, II, 218ff.; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 44ff.; 154ff.; 250ff.; Hauck, “Lebensnormen” 1955; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 26ff.
- 83 The next ones come from the Viking age, more than two hundred years later: Beck, “Maske”, RGA 19, 2001. From the ninth century comes a small bronze mask with comparable, stylized, very long hair, found at Voel/Denmark and now at Silkeborg Museum (kind information by Knud Bjerring Jensen).
- 84 Wolf-ancestors: see p. 22f; Woden, ancestor of kings: see p. 35. Isengrim: Meuli, “Maske” 1933, 177 ff. The black mask further up on the strap-end may stand for the blackened commoner ancestors we have met as Harii. Meuli, “Maske” 1933, 177ff., records that in Switzerland, wolf-mask festivals survive to this day under the name of Isengrim, “ironcolor mask,” with blackened youths dancing along. Wolf-dancers (Vulfoalaic): see p. 29.
- 85 Tacitus, *Germania* 3.1; *Histories* 5.17.2; Ammianus 31.7.11; Iordanes, *Getica* 43.
- 86 Hauck, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 43 Childerich: Wenskus “Religion” 1994, 226–7.
- 87 Hauck, “Ludus” 1951.
- 88 Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 128; Reichert, *Lexikon* I, 1987, 54.
- 89 Marstrander, *Skipene* 1986, 132.
- 90 The dragon heads seem to point outward (as they also do on one of the Bavarian strap ends), a variant of the design, unless the crests of the dragon heads are meant.
- 91 *Edda, Lokasenna*, Introduction 14f.

## 12

## DART-THROWERS

- 1 Bronze Age: Drews, *End* 1993, 180ff. Spear bundles of Roman horsemen: Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 117; Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 686 (CIL III, 7317); gravestone of Oclatius, Neuss (AE 1926, 67); gravestone of Ael. Victorinus from Pannonia (CIL III 3677=10609=Schober, *Grabsteine* 1923, 259=Speidel, “Mauri” 1993, fig. 4). Spear bundles of Roman foot: gravestone of M. Porcius Probus, CIL V, 5196=Franzoni, *Habitus* 1987, 80ff.—Bishop and Coulston, *Equipment* 1993, frontispiece: there the bundle is recognized, but not the role of the small shield, for which see Diodore 5.34.5 and Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, no. 686. Such reliefs are few, hence this was not a major weapon. Arrian, *Tactica* 43.1: *κούφα παλάτα*.
- 2 Tacitus, *Annals* 2.14.3: “Primam utcumque aciem hastatam, ceteris praeusta aut brevia tela.”
- 3 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.1: “Pedites et missilia spargunt, pluraque singuli, atque in immensum vibrant, nudi aut sagulo leves.”
- 4 Not rocks: Much, *Germania* 1967, 139- Not clubs: Isidore, *Etymologies* 18.7.7: “Clava ... iacta quidem non longe evolat propter gravitatem,” cf. Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 458.
- 5 There is no reason to assume that the *missilia were frameae* (Adler, *Studien* 1993, 242) and that therefore Tacitus needlessly made “a distinction that the Germani themselves did not make” (Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 140); to do so is also to overlook the word *et* in Tacitus’ text that sets *missilia* off from *frameae*. See also Vegetius 2.14.3.
- 6 Strabo 4.4.3. Cf. Polybios 6.22, where the *grosphus* is said to be as thick as a finger.
- 7 British Museum 1946, Oc. 1.1.
- 8 Vegetius 2.15.5.
- 9 Sviða: Buchholz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 478. See also Isidore, *Origines* 18.7.2: “Contus ferrum non habet sed tantum cuspite acuto est.” Bone-tipped: Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936, 46. Horn-tipped: Pliny, *Natural History* 11.45, “Urorum cornibus barbari septentrionales... praefixa hastilia cuspidant.” All kinds of spears without iron blades: Jahn, *Bewaffnung* 1916, 217; Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 458; Capelle,

- “Erkenntnismöglichkeiten” 1982, 278ff.; Pieper, “Holzfunde” 1999, 520. Contra: Weski, *Waffen* 1994.
- 10 Crous, “Waffenpfeiler” 1933, no. 468. Spear bundles of the fourth and fifth centuries: Werner, “Bewaffnung” 1968, 104; Böhme, *Grabfunde* 1974, 110f.
- 11 However, a short, smooth-bladed spear could be used by foot warriors against horsemen as in figure 17.4.
- 12 Even Norwegian kings threw darts—from shipboard, with both hands or two at a time: Snorri Sturlusson, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* 109; *Óláfs saga Helga* 249.
- 13 Tacitus, *Histories* 5.17.3. Skirmishers generally: Vegetius 3.14.11; Ammianus 24.6.10.
- 14 *Óláfs saga Helga* 226.

## 13

## ROCK-THROWERS

- 1 Mardonios: Plutarch, *Aristeides* 19; compare Ammianus 20.7.10; 31.10.14; Suetonius, *Augustus* 20.1.
- 2 Caesar, Gallic War 1.46.1: “Caesari nuntiatum est equites Ariovisti propius tumulum accedere et ad nostros adequitare, lapides telaque in nostros coicere.”
- 3 Batavi: Arrian, *Tactica* 43.1; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 113. Mistaken: Thompson, *Early Germans* 1965, 115.
- 4 Weight: Vegetius 4.22.8; Baatz, *Bauten* 1994, 121f. Pusio: Dio 56.11; cf. Homer, *Iliad* 12.442f.; Tacitus, *Histories* 2.22.1 Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 18. The rock-throwers on Trajan’s Column, scene 66, are Britons, as I will show elsewhere. Goths: Dexippus, *Scythica*, FGH 467, frag. 25.
- 5 Vegetius 2.23; 3.14; 4.8; 4.17; 4.29, 4.44. Childhood: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, plate 14.
- 6 Supply: Maurice 9.3.28; Albrethsen, “Problems” 1997. Repair and replenish: Ammianus 31.7.12; Agathias 2.6.3, see p. 93, this volume.
- 7 Recovered: Völling, “Funditores” 1990, 31f. Written sources *ibid.* 55. Sea battles: Saxo 111.19f.
- 8 Bowmen: Thompson, *Early Germans* 1965, 116f.; Böhme, *Grabfunde* 1974, 110f.; Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 429f.; 435; Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 459; Speidel, “Lebensbeschreibungen” 2004. Bowmen despised: Altheim, *Niedergang* II, 1952, 133.
- 9 Sagas: Beck, *Ebersignum* 1965, 42. Stiklastad: *Óláfs saga Helga* 226.
- 10 Morillo, *Warfare* 1994, 191. Compare also Saxo 220.

## 14

## LANCERS

- 1 Mycenaean: Moulina burial, Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 284. Massagetae, Medians: Eadie, “Development” 1967, 161ff. Iran: Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 19ff.; Sassanians: Bivar, “Equipment” 1972, fig. 10.
- 2 Hallstatt scabbard, now in the Naturhistorisches Museum, Wien: Pauli, *Kelten* 1980, 260f.; Celtic lances: Birkhan, *Kelten*, 1997, 1136. Lancers among Scythians: Sembach, *Gold* 1984, no. 55; Sarmatians: see notes 11 and 16–18; in the Roman imperial army: Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 1969, 265ff.
- 3 Polybius 6.253–11; McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 27ff.
- 4 Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 39; Speidel, *Guards* 1978, 47; Strobel, *Dakerkriege* 1984, 104.

- 5 Lances were good not only for battle but also for crowd control, see Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10.1: “Lancea longissimo hastili conspicuo propter terrendos miseris viatores.” The men in scene 5 thus may be the *hastiliarii* of the bodyguard: Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 12f. (in war, no doubt, their lances had metal blades). For the use of Germanic weapons among the bodyguard see p. 143.
- 6 For example, Constantine’s horse guards on his porphyry sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum.
- 7 Only foot: Adler, “Hastae” 1995, 96. Spurs: *ibid.* 100.
- 8 Batavi: Plutarch, *Otho* 12.5.
- 9 Found on Bergl hill, now in the Museum of Rusovce–Bratislava, Slovakia. I owe the photograph to the kindness of Dr. Schmidtová, Bratislava. Two dolphins play in the gable. Anvil, hammer, and thongs are seen above the broken inscription.
- 10 One soldier of ala I Canninefatium is named “Contarius,” surely also out of pride about his weapon: Speidel, *Studie* II, 1992, 62ff.; compare names like Ariogaisus: Schönfeld, *Wörterbuch* 1965, 28; Reichert, *Lexikon* II, 1990, 513f.
- 11 Small blade: Servius, *Aeneid* 7, 664: *ingenscontus cum ferro brevissimo.* The pennon, hard to see on our photograph (figure 14.2), is very clear on the original. A triangular pennon is seen also on a lance in scene 65 of the Bayeux tapestry. To signal: Vegetius 3.5.8 (*flammulae*); Maurice, *Strategikon* 1.2.19; 1.2.76; cf. 2.14.5; 2.10; 3.5.12; 7.B.16.5; 7.B17.14. Or to keep the weapon from penetrating too deeply? Thus White, *Technology* 1962, 8—yet Maurice says to take the pennons off for battle, hence some at least were badges or decorations, for which see Ubl, “Waffen” 1969, 363. Another Pannonian cavalry lance with a pennon: Schober, *Grabsteine* 1923, p. 44, no. 91, fig. 38. A seventh-century Alamannic lance with a flag: Quast, *Gültlingen* 1993, 43. Pennoned lances, *dafar darraður*, are mentioned in the ninth-century *Atlakviða* (4). Interfere: Keen, *Chivalry* 1984, 24.
- 12 Tacitus, *Histories* 4.15.1.
- 13 Ala Canninefatium: Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 14; Lörincz, *Hilfstruppen* 2001, 17f. Against the Quadi: Altheim, *Niedergang* II, 1952, 138; Kiechle, “Taktik” 1964, 104; Alföldy, *Krise* 1989, 398. Ammianus 17.12.1f.: “Sarmatas et Quados...quibus... hastae sunt longiores.”
- 14 Horse guard: see p. 143. Auxiliary units: see p. 212, note 27.
- 15 Hošek, *Tituli* 1984, 57ff., no. 23, sees in the Gerulata horseman a Canninefas and in his lance a Germanic weapon; cf. Ubl, “Waffen” 1969, 356. Bishop and Coulston, *Equipment* 1993, 109f., take the Gerulata lance for Sarmatian. There is no substance to the claims that the long lance of Danubian *contarii*, whether Sarmatian, Canninefatian, or Quadian, is a Parthian import (contra: Kemkes-Scheuerbrandt, *Patrouille* 1997, 37), or that the Germanic long lance “was taken over from the steppe-peoples” (Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 459). Tacitus: *Annals* 1.64.2; 2.14.2. See also p. 100, this volume.
- 16 Arrian, *Tactica* 40.4.
- 17 Arrian, *Tactica* 43.2. Sarmatian contus-lances: Tacitus, *Histories* 1.79 (no shields, both hands), cf. *Annals* 6.35. Couched: grave stele from Budapest (Schober, *Grabsteine* 1923, 44, no. 91), cf. Keen, *Chivalry* 1984, 24 and figs. 2–3.
- 18 Speidel, *Studies* 1992, 64f.; Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 170. Sarmatian lances supported by the knee: Valerius Flaccus VI.236: “abies obnixa genu.” Silius, *Punica* 15.684: “sustentata genu...pondera conti”; Adamklissi, Metopes 1 and 2; see also gravestones from Worms and Paris (Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, nos. 49 and 95).
- 19 See p. 140.
- 20 Arrian, *Tactica* 44 (but not 4.7); contra: Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 99; also Müller, *Einfluss* 1998, 89ff., who, while elsewhere rightly reducing inflated Sarmatian claims, yet takes Ammianus 17.12.1f. as Sarmatian influence. For pictures of the Sarmatian lance see e.g. Mielczarek, *Cataphracti* 1993.



- 21 Ride off to the right: Arrian, *Tactica* 36.5. For the Middle Ages see the discs from Nendingen (Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 415) and Pliezhausen (figure 17.5), as well as many Vendel helmet decorations. Böhner, “Eschwege” 1981, 711, overlooks this tendency. If the attack formation were a wedge, then the left side would likewise need its lances to the left. Left-handedness an advantage: Dio 72.22.3 (Commodus); Speidel, “Mauri” 1993, 124 (a spear thrower).
- 22 Lörincz, *Hilfstruppen* 2001, 18; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 113; Speidel, *Studies* II, 1992, 65. Milliararia units being decisive: Birley, *Army* 1988, 349ff.
- 23 Slender thrusting lances of this ala: Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 174f.; van Rengen, *Apamea* 1992, plate 23. A bulky one: van Rengen, *Apamea* 1992, plate 25.
- 24 Flavius Bonio: CIL III 3679; Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 253. Ala Tungrorum Frontoniana: Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 38ff. Germani: Saddington, “Ala” 2002.
- 25 Arrian, *Tactica* 44:  
**καὶ ὄσας οἱ Σαυροματῶν ἢ Κελτῶν κοντοφόροι ἐπιστροφάς τε καὶ ἀποστροφάς.** Scholars sometimes took this passage to refer to Celts rather than Germani, for, as Greek authors often do, Arrian uses the word “Keltoi” when he refers to Germani, as in his *Ectaxis* 2: **Κελτοὶ ἱππεῖς**= “equites cohortis I Germanorum.” Haas, “Germanen” 1943/44, 76; Paschoud, *Zosime* I, 1971, 204; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 113. Contra: Kiechle, “Taktik” 1964, 114, ignoring the facts that Arrian himself uses the word “Keltoi” for the Quadi (*Anabasis* 1.3.2), and that the inhabitants of Gaul to Arrian are “Galatai” (*Ektaxis* 9: *ala II Gallorum*= **εἰλη ἢ Γαλατικῆ**). Besides, these new maneuvers, previously not trained by Roman cavalry, cannot well be Celtic in the sense of Gaulish, for the Gauls had long lost their freedom and with it their warlike spirit (Tacitus, *Agricola* 11.4: “Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse accepimus; mox segnitia cum otio intravit, amissa virtute pariter ac libertate”).
- 26 Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.79.1f.; Ammianus 17.12.2.
- 27 Arrian, *Ectaxis*; Plutarch, *Otho* 12.5; Vegetius 3.23.4. Goldsworthy, *Army* 1996, 232f. Adrianople: Ammianus 31.12.17.
- 28 Ammianus 16.12.24: “Audax et fidus ingenti robore lacertorum...immanis, equo spumante sublimior, erectus in iaculum formidandae vastitatis.” Fourth- and fifth-century lance blades: Böhme, *Grabfunde* 1974, 100–104.
- 29 The huge lance became a proud weapon even to Roman emperors: Constantius II (337–361) wielded a beamlike *hasta trabalis* to show that he was one with his (Germanic) horse guard: *Panegyrici Latini* 4.29.5, cf. Nixon and Saylor-Rodgers, *Praise* 1994, 375. Gloating over those killed “trabalibus telis”: Ammianus 16.12.53.
- 30 Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.10f.
- 31 Maurice, *Strategikon* 3.5.32, cf. 11.3.10. The latter passage repeats the former, it does not, therefore, speak of swords borne on the shoulder but of lances (contra: Gamillscheg, in Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Strategikon* 1981, 369; Dennis, *Strategikon* 1984, 38 and 119). Helmet from Vendel grave 1: Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, table 2.1. Gamillscheg translates **τριτόδω** as “drei Schritte,” which is impossible; Dennis, translates it “at a trot,” but a three-beat horse gait, not too fast, clearly is a canter.
- 32 This seems to be Maurice’s verdict, *Strategikon* 11.3.17ff., when he says they array themselves for battle evenly and densely but fight recklessly. Maurice’s description of “blond” peoples as **ἐλασία** (*Strategikon* 4.1.17) likewise refers to a time when the two armies have already closed in upon one another and hand-to-hand fighting has begun.
- 33 Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.11f.: **Χαίρουσι δὲ τῇ πεζομαχίᾳ καὶ τοῖς μετ’ ἐλασίας ἐμπέτοις**, translated by Dennis, *Strategikon* 1984, 119, as “rapid charges”, by Gamillscheg in Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Strategikon* 1981, 369, as “schwungvolle Angriffe.” However,

- ἔλασις and later ἔλασία in Maurice always refer to horse; earlier such use: Plutarch, *Sulla* 19.
- 34 Horsemen: Werner, “Bewaffnung” 1968, 107f. Alighted: Tacitus, *Annals* 1.64; 2.14; Ammianus 16.12.34; Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.7ff.; *Battle of Maldon* 2; Hollister, *Institutions* 1962, 131–140. Carolingians: Last, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 470.
- 35 Engström (“Chieftains” 1997, 250; 254) instead sees Sassanian or Byzantine horse as the model for northern cavalry (no reference to Mauritius). But even though some equipment, such as the mail face guard, may have come from the south, like Roman equipment (Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 425) it did not change essential tactics.
- 36 Valsgårde grave 7, left side, zone II. Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 233, fig. 17.
- 37 *Egils saga* 53. Compare *Grettis saga* 19.

## 15

## SPEAR-THROWERS

- 1 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.1: “Hastas vel ipsorum vocabulo frameas gerunt angusto et brevi ferro, sed ita acri et ad usum habili, ut eodem telo, prout ratio poscit, vel cominus vel eminus pugnent. Et eques quidem scuto frameaque contentus est. Pedites et missilia spargunt, pluraque singuli, atque in immensum vibrant.” Tacitus is fairly accurate: Wenskus, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 458; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 234ff.; also Rives, *Tactus* 1999, 135ff.
- 2 Celtic blades, all smooth: Connolly, *Greece* 1981, 117. There are no Roman barbed blades in Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, though some Roman *pila*, designed to render shields useless, had barbs: von Schnurbein, “Ango” 1974, 425 (for a Celtic equivalent see note 5). To von Schnurbein’s list of barbed blades from Roman sites, but likely Germanic, one might add one from Lyne fort, Scottish borders, Antonine or later (Museum of Scotland no. FR 281; *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries Scotland* 35, 1900–1901, 154–186); another of the fourth century from Housesteads is now in Newcastle Museum.
- 3 V. Schnurbein, “Ango” 1974; Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 374f. (the quote in the text); 423; 427; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 85ff.; Steuer, in Schlüter and Wiegels, *Rom* 1999, 477; 483. Drawings of Germanic barbed spear blades: von Schnurbein, “Ango” 1974, 427; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 89. A good photograph: Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, no. 150.
- 4 For example, gold coins of Claudius (RIC, 2nd edn 73) and Domitian (RIC 127); and a dupondius of Domitian (RIC 295). However, since Trajanic coins show barbed Dacian javelins, there is a danger that later coins meaninglessly imitate the spears of Domitian’s coins, e.g. Commodus, RIC 1570, and Probus, RIC 222. As for foot, Stilicho’s spear on his diptych is not barbed (contra: Steuer, in Schlüter and Wiegels, *Rom* 1999, 483, following von Schnurbein, “Ango” 1974, 426; also Bishop and Coulston, *Equipment* 1993, 164)—good photographs show the blade merely ribbed. Quadi: CIL III 10969=RIU 509 (Brigetio).
- 5 Geometric mixing bowl from grave F at Tekke-Ambelokipi near Knossos, shown on the front cover of Buchholz, *Kriegswesen* 1980. Lusitani: Diodore 5.34.5; compare a nearly all-iron Celtic blade with barbs: Bruneaux and Lambot, *Guerre* 1987, fig. 15. Gildas mentions “uncinata tela” of Picts and Scots.
- 6 Not honorable: Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1134. The Old Indian lawbook of Manu (*Mānavadharmashāstra* 7.9) forbids kings to slay their foes with concealed, barbed, or poisonous weapons (Maurer, *Pinnacles* 1986, 310).
- 7 Valerius Maximus 2.3.3; Frontinus 4.7.29; Livy 26.4f. Cf. Sallust, *Jugurthian War* 46.7. Kromeyer and Veith, *Heerwesen* 1928, 309; McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 42. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* s.v. *incurvus* (1097, 11f.) takes “incurvus” here to mean “hooked.”
- 8 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3: “In universum aestimani plus penes peditem roboris; eoque mixti proeliantur.” See pp. 157 and 166. Hamberg, “Bewaffnung” 1936, 41f.

- 9 Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 374, with fig. 79.0. Ilkjær, *Illerup* 1990, 170; 329.
- 10 Tearing: Agathias 2.5; Saxo 65. Tacitus may have had such blades in mind when he said that the iron of the *framea* was sharp and handy for face-to-face fighting: sharp (*acer*), it seems, for cutting, and handy (*ad usum habilis*) for ripping. By contrast, Much, *Germania* 1967, 136, is somewhat at a loss to explain why Tacitus refers to the iron of the *framea*, and translators tend to go astray here.
- 11 Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, p. 9 and no. 83; cf. *ibid.* no. 355a.
- 12 A horse guard’s shield on another gravestone also shows a barbed spear: Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 355a, with nearly the same shield ornament. Unwonted detail on the gravestone of an *armorum custos*: CIL V, 5196=Franzoni, *Habitus* 1987, no. 56. The owner of the gravestone is a Thracian, but Batavian custom prevailed among the horse guard: from the first to the third century they had the unofficial name *Batavi*, many were Batavians, and their style of gravestones came from Lower Germany.
- 13 Swimming rivers: Speidel, “Lebensbeschreibungen” 2004.
- 14 Tacitus, *Annals* 11.16: “Armis equisque in patrium nostrumque morem exercitus” (surely with the horse guard: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 26). Native Germanic weapons of Roman troops in the fourth and fifth centuries are typified by Stīlico’s weapons: von Schnurbein, “Ango” 1974, 426 (but see note 4, this chapter).
- 15 RIC VII, *Ticinum*, p. 63. Further guards with barbed spears: Aurelianus’ Protector CIL III, 327=Dessau, *Inscriptiones* 1892, 2775=TAM IV. 137, cf. Speidel, “Decorations” II, 1997, 233; also a cut class beaker in Köln: Waurick, *Gallien* 1980, 113.
- 16 Elagabalus: RIC 57; BMC 195. *Lanceola: Historia Augusta, Maximinus* 30.2 (Lippold, *Kommentar* 1991, 365, suggests *lanceae* were not widely used in the Roman army before the end of the third century, but see Balty, “Apamea” 1988; Tomlin, “Manuscripts” 1998); Anonymus Valesianus 78 on Anastasios in AD 518, “In trinitatem lanceolam non mittis!” For Anastasios using the barbed throwing spear see Kolias, *Waffen* 1988, 189. *Lanceola* as the Latin name of the Germanic weapon: *Historia Augusta, Claudius* 8.5 with Much, *Germania* 1967, 139.
- 17 Look like them: Tacitus, *Histories* 2.20 (Caecina); Herodian 4.7.3 (Caracalla); *Panegyrici Latini* 8.16.4 (Allectus); *Epitome de Caesaribus* 47.6 (Gratian). Speidel, “Decorations” II, 1997, 231. Germanic kings too wished to look like their followers: see p. 185. Share fame: Tacitus, *Germania* 14.1; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 39f. Disconcertingly, though, Constantine’s barbed spear on the nine-solidi Arras hoard medallion (RIC 801) is taller than the emperor himself and rather thick, more like a *hasta trabalis*, perhaps to make him look strong. See p. 138.
- 18 Von Schnurbein, “Ango” 1974; Weski, *Waffen* 1982, 190; Capelle, *Archäologie* 1990, 66; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 246. Portonaccio sarcophagus (Figure 17.4). Arrian, *Tactica* 4.6 (end). Adler, *Studien* 1993, 186ff.
- 19 Ilkjær, *Illerup* 1990, 259.
- 20 Summers, *Culture* 1999, 97ff.; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 91. Twin-spears of the Geometric period in Greece: Höckmann, “Lanze” 1980, 302; *Odyssey* 1.256; Drews, *End* 1993, 192. Illyrians: Belt from Vace=fig. 14 in Mallory, *Search* 1989. Slavs: Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.4.44. Germanic guards of the Byzantine emperors also had *pila* and *lanceae* (Corippus, *Iust.* 3237–3245).
- 21 Alamanni, Franks, Saxons: Böhme, *Grabfunde* 1974, 111. Bavarians: the Inzing barbed javelin blade (sixth-seventh century) in the Charlottenburg Museum für Ur-und Frühgeschichte. High-ranking warriors: Steuer, in Schlüter and Wiegels, *Rom* 1999, 483.
- 22 Two unusual late-Roman gravestones from Aquileia show legionaries with barbed spears: CIL V, 900 and 944=Franzoni, *Habitus* 1987, nos. 13 and 14. Scandinavia: Schulze-Dörrlamm, “Kriegergräber” 1985, 549, with fig. 34. Vendel helmet foils: Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 224; grave 54 at Simris, Skona (Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, figs. 93 and 94); Adler, *Studien* 1993, 91; Hauck, “Wiedergabe” 1981, 234. The Torslunda die

- (figure 1.6) shows one of Woden's spears much thinner than the other, very likely to set it off as a throwing spear.
- 23 Iordanes, *Getica* 261; *Battle of Maldon* 134–137.
- 24 On foot: IK 6 (Års); IK 20 (Beresina); IK 39 (Denmark); IK 51.1 (Fakse); IK 51.3 (Gudme); IK 66 (Gummerup); IK 65 (Skovsborg). On horseback: IK 65b (Gudbrandsdalen); IK 92 (Kitnæs; Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, 273); IK 98 (køje); IK 151 (Skona); IK 163 (Skonager); IK 193 Rv (Tunalund). Balder's spear as he rides to Hel is also barbed: IK 14 (Aneby); IK 86 Rv (Inderøy). Woden's weapon: Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, 243ff.; 270ff. Raddatz, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 430: "Es hat offenkundig keine spezielle Reiterbewaffnung gegeben."
- 25 Beck, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 482. Reichert, *Lexikon* I, 1987, 68; 216; 301ff.; 309; Reichert, *Lexikon* II, 1990, 513f.
- 26 Raddatz, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 427; cf. Koliass, *Waffen* 1988, 189. Engström, "Chieftains" 1997, takes the strap for a carrying handle only, but Saxo 26.41: "Haec vociferantem Hadingus hasta traicit amentata," proves beyond cavil that it was a throwing strap; likewise *Atlamál in Grænlenzko* 42.
- 27 Strap: IK 92 (Kitnæs); Raddatz, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 427; Koliass, *Waffen* 1988, 189. Philistines: Drews, *End* 1993, 185. Perhaps the Roman pilum was thrown thus: gravestone of Flavoleius Cordus, Mainz (Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, 92); cf. Isidore, *Origines* 18.7.5: "Lancea est hasta amentum habens in medio." Saxo 26.
- 28 *Hervarar saga* ("Hunnenschlachtlied" 28.4): "óć lاتی svá Óđinn fleinn fliúga."
- 29 Thrown or hand-to-hand: Agathias 2.5; von Schnurbein, "Ango" 1974; Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 237ff. Compare the nearly all-iron Celtic spear from northern Italy (Bruneaux and Lambot, *Guerre* 1987, fig. 15); also a Mycenaean spear with bronze-covered shaft (Höckmann, "Lanze" 1980). The *kesja* spears or byrnie piercers (*brynþvarar*) of Egil and Thorolf in *Egils saga* 53 are also a kind of *ango* to judge by the square cross-section of the blade.
- 30 Engström, "Chieftains" 1997.
- 31 Raddatz, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 374.
- 32 For its latest occurrences in the Middle Ages, see von Schnurbein, "Ango" 1974, 421.

## 16

## WHEELING RIGHT

- 1 Fighting on horseback: Birkhan, "Germanen" 1970, 398f. Illyrians: belt from Vace (fig. 13 in Mallory, *Search* 1989). Romans: Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.96; Arrian, *Tactica* 41f. Celts: Strabo 4.4.3; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1133f.
- 2 Cavalry attacks: Arrian, *Tactica* 4. Goldsworthy, *Army* 1996, 228; Morillo, *Warfare* 1994, 154ff. Germani: Caesar, *Gallie War* 7.80.6; Arrian, *Tactica* 44.1; Ammianus 16.12.36; 31.12.17; Procopius, *Gothic War* 4.32. Early Byzantine horse followed the rule Tacitus reports for Germanic horsemen (*Germania* 30.3): that it is fine to give ground, so long as one returns to the fight (Maurice, *Strategikon* 3.11.15).
- 3 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.1, a fact confirmed by finds in graves. Cf. Arrian, *Tactica* 4.6. Spears were preferred as the first weapon to be used (Ammianus 31.13–5), but a horseman could also use his sword while still holding spears: Speidel, *Studies* I 1984, 173ff.=Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 220f.
- 4 Arrian, *Tactica* 4.6: *ἐς κύκλους περιπτεύοντες διαχωρῶνται τῷ ἀκροβολισμῷ*. Latin "hasta" and "lancea", even "contus" are very wide concepts, more overlapping with English "spear" than with "lance" ("contus" for throwing: Strabo 10.448; Arrian, *Ektaxis* 16f.; 26).

- Adler, *Studien* 1993, uses modern German “Speer” for barbed spears only—against German and English usage.
- 5 Tacitus, *Annals* 2.11.
- 6 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.2: “Sed nec variare gyros in morem nostrum docentur. In rectum aut uno flexu dextros agunt, ita coniuncto orbe, ut nemo posterior sit.” Speidel, “Cavalry Training” 1996.
- 7 For a review of the literature on Tacitus’ passage see Lund, “Germania” 1991, 2050ff. Lund, *Probleme* 1989, 269ff., “solves” the non-existent problem by laying violent hands on Tacitus’ text, changing it from *aut* to *et*. Even such outstanding studies as Adler, *Studien* 1993, 250, and Wolters, “Kampf” 2000, 209, see here only one instead of two different attack maneuvers.
- 8 Tacitus, *Historiae* 3.2.4: “alae perrupere hostem.” *Annals* 14.37: “eques protentis hastis perfringit quod obvium et validum erat.” If the charge miscarried, they would ride off to the right, as Romans might do (Arrian, *Tactica* 36.5).
- 9 Spears: Adler, *Studien* 1993, 259f. Lammert, *Taktik* 1931, 52, is wrong to take Tacitus’ above-mentioned words “eques quidem scuto, frameaque contentus est” to mean a horseman had only one spear. Attack: cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 6.35 (on Sarmatians and Hiberi): “Modo equestris proelii more frontis et tergi vices, aliquando ut conserta acies corporibus et pulsu armorum pellerent, pellerentur.”
- 10 Arrian, *Tactica* 38.5: τοῦ συνεχοῦς σφζομένου; cf. *ibid.* 4.6. Lammert, *Taktik* 1931, 56.
- 11 Arrian, *Tactica* 4.6.
- 12 Helpers: Caesar, *Gallie War* 1.48; 8.13; Livy 44.26; Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3. See the illustration of CIL III 3677=10609 in Speidel, “Mauri” 1993, fig. 4.
- 13 Arrian, *Tactica* 37.2–5; 44.1: ἀκροβολισμοὺς πολυειδεῖς καὶ πολυτρόπους.
- 14 Totila in AD 552 even changed circles: Procopios, *Gothic War* 4.31.19.
- 15 Herodian 8.1.3; Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.11fF.
- 16 Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.423: “Optima gens flexis in gyrum Sequana frenis.”
- 17 Arrian, *Tactica* 36.1.
- 18 Caesar, *Gallie War* 4.12.1; Strabo 4.4.2; Plutarch, *Otho* 12; Tacitus, *Germania* 32; Dio 55.24.6f.; Herodian 8.1.3; Aurelius Victor 21.2 (see note 22); Dexippos, FGH 100, f. 6.4: Ἰουθοῦγγων ὧν πολὺς ἐφ’ ἵππομαχίαι λόγος. Prokopios, *Gothic War* 4.32.18ff.; Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.7. Gundel, *Untersuchungen* 1937, 38; Springer, “Kriegswesen” 2001, 339. Thompson, *Early Germans* 1965, 116ff., grudging that “German cavalry was somewhat less ineffective than German infantry,” makes one wonder about the Roman army they conquered. Authority: Contamine, *War* 1984, 180; likewise Jankuhn, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 457.
- 19 Caesar, *Gallie War* 1.39: “incredibili virtute atque exercitatione in armis.”
- 20 Velleius Paterculus 2.109; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 20.
- 21 Tencteri: Tacitus, *Germania* 32. Feigned flight: Plutarch, *Marius* 26.1f.; Arrian, *Tactica* 44.1: Κελεύων... ἀποστροφάς; Ammianus 17.12.3. Feigned flight was still known to Norman cavalry in the eleventh century: Morillo, *Warfare* 1994, 148. Cf. Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 73f.; Smail, *Warfare* 1956, 78.
- 22 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 21.2: “Alamannos, gentem populosam ex equo mirifice pignantem.”
- 23 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.1. Strabo 4.4.3 says the same of Celtic warriors, a “topos” based on truth. Cf. Diodore 5.34.5.
- 24 Adler, *Studien* 1993, 240, rightly remarking that Caesar easily integrated Germanic horse into his cavalry; on 244 he considers Arrian’s horsemen hurling 15–20 spears (*Tactica* 42), but that belongs rather to the show-side than to the war-side of the maneuver.
- 25 Wheeler, “Firepower” 2001.

- 26 Weapons: Adler, *Studien* 1993, 259f. Literary sources: Herodian 8.1.3; Dexippos, FGH 100, frag. 6.4; 7.2.
- 27 Herodian 7.2.1; 7.8.10; 8.1.3.
- 28 Speidel, *Studies* I, 1984 139; cf. Dexippos, FGH 100, frag. 6.4. Vandals: Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 120.
- 29 Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, nos. 115; 116; 124.
- 30 *A campestre*: Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952, 36ff.
- 31 For example, Tacitus, *Histories* 1.79.3f.; Libanius, *Oratio* 59.110; Vegetius 3.23.3.
- 32 Caesar, *Gallic War* 4.2.3; 4.12.2; Tacitus, *Annals* 1.64; 2.14; Ammianus 16.12.34: “statim desiluit et secuti eum residui idem fecere”; Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.7ff.; cf. Julian, *Oratio* 2.60; 1.36.D.
- 33 While we do not know the battle cry in German, the one in Sarmatian is known to have been *Marha, Marha*, “Death, Death!” (Ammianus 19.11.6). Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 6.232. Syme, “Argonautica” 1929, 133; Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus* II, 1975, 73, note 112.
- 34 Arrian, *Tactica* 44.1. Horse guard: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 113 (though the Gerulata gravestone and horse-guard recruitment show that these “Kelts” are Roman Germani, not Quadi from beyond the frontier); see p. 257, note 25.
- 35 Fight well: Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.7; scorn orderliness: *ibid.* 11.3.22f., **τάξεως περιφρονοῦσι καὶ μάλοισα τῆς ἐφ’ ἵππου**.

## 17

## HORSE-STABBERS

- 1 Drews, *End* 1993, 141ff.; 175.
- 2 Pauli, *Kelten* 1980, 208; Cunliffe, *Celts* 1997, 70f.
- 3 Diodore 5.29–1. See also Strabo 3.4.18 on Celtiberians and Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.6.5 on Macedonians,
- 4 Florence, Museo Archeologico; Kemkes and Scheuerbrand, *Patrouille* 1997, p. 83, fig. 91.
- 5 Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952, plate 4.
- 6 Roman horsemen: equiline painting (Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952; McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 46).
- 7 Polybius 6.25.4; McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 51f.; 69; 73ff.
- 8 Thucydides 7.30.2; cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.10.7. Collection of the American Numismatic Society 1040; *Antike Münzen Nord-Griechenlands* III 2.201f.; Gaebler, “Münzkunde” 1927, 237–242, with several variant images (fig. XI.20: curved sword).
- 9 Livy 42.59.2f.: Italicos equites incurrerunt ut usu belli et ingenio impauida gens turbaretur; tre [...] is hastas petere pedites [...] equorumque nunc succidere crura [...] is, nunc ilia suffodere.” To hack off legs, straight spears will not do, spears with curved blades or swords are needed. Thracian javelins and short swords: Herodotus 7.75.
- 10 Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs* 1967, 12 and fig. 4b.
- 11 Caesar, *Gallic War* 4.12–15. The horses, meanwhile, stayed in place: Caesar, *Gallic War* 4.2 (wrongly declared impossible by Walser, *Caesar* 1956, 63). Usipi and Tencteri: Schmidt, *Westgermanen* 1970, 409–419
- 12 Gauls still knew mixed foot and horse tactics, though: Caesar, *Gallic War* 7.18.1: “cum equitatu expeditisque qui inter equites proeliari consuissent”; 80.3–7: “Galli inter equites raros sagittarios expeditisque levis armaturae interiecerant qui suis cedentibus auxilio succurrerent et nostrorum equitum impetus sustinerent.”
- 13 Caesar, *African War* 40: “qui ex Curionis proelio capti conservatique parem gratiam in fide pariter tuenda praestare voluerunt.” Cf. Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 155f., with note 205; Speidel, “Garde” 1995. Sagas: *Heimskringla, Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* 41; *Njals saga* 153; 157.

- 14 Assuming they came with the elder Crassus; but they could also have come with the younger Crassus in winter 54/53 BC (Plutarch, *Crassus* 17.7).
- 15 Plutarch, *Crassus* 25.2: **Γαλάται** Greek terms for Gauls and Germani: Haas, “Germanen” 1943/44, 76; Paschoud, *Zosime* 1971–1989, I, 204; III/2, 152.
- 16 Plutarch, *Crassus* 25; the scene is paralleled by Heliodore, *Aethiopica* 9.14ff., see p. 160, this volume.
- 17 Compare the “Galli Germanique” in Egypt in 55 BC: Caesar, *Civil War* 3.4.3; 3.4.4 and Caesar’s Gauls and Germani in 48 BC in the East: *Alexandrian War* 17; 29f.; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 13.
- 18 *Civil War* 3.52.2; cf. 1.83.
- 19 Caesar, *Civil War* 3.89.4; 3.93.5. Plutarch, *Pompey* 69.2; *Caesar* 44.2; Frontinus 2.3.22; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.76. If auxiliary cohorts 500 strong, rather than legionary ones at 275–300 were meant, then six of them were indeed 3,000 strong as the sources say. Contra: Kraner *et al.*, *Commentarii* 1968, 272f. Most daring: Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.76, **εὐτολμοτάτους**. For the battle see Paschoud, “Mouvement” 1995.
- 20 Florus, *Epitoma* 2.13.48: “Germanorum cohortes tantum in effusos equites fecere impetum ut illi esse pedites, hi venire in equis viderentur.”
- 21 Mommsen, *Geschichte* 3, 1882, 427; Kraner *et al.*, *Commentarii* 1968, 272f.
- 22 Vegetius 3.14.8–11.
- 23 Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.48.5. See p. 8, this volume.
- 24 See Tacitus *Agricola* 36.2 and *Annals* 2.21.1.
- 25 Vercingetorix: Caesar, *Gallic War* 7.67.
- 26 Tacitus, *Annals* 1.65: “Arminius...cum delectis scindit agmen equisque maxime vulnera ingerit. Illi sanguine suo et lubrico paludum lapsantes excussis rectoribus disicere obvios, proterere iacentes...Caecina...suffosso equo.”
- 27 See pp. 160; 166. Compare Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.16 (battle at the Granicus river); Caesar, *Civil War* 3.84.3f.
- 28 For example, the gravestone of Bassus, Köln, Römisch-Germanisches Museum. CIL XIII, 8308; Gabelmann, “Grabmonumente” 1973, 172 (about AD 96); Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 17. The origin of this scene on Mainz grave-stones: Gabelmann, “Grabmonumente” 161f.
- 29 CIL XIII, 7029; Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 26; Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, no. 31.
- 30 Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, no. 31, p. 135; my observation to the contrary comes from a study of the original in Mainz. Klein-Pfeuffer, *Fibeln* 1993, 174, takes the gesture to be reaching for the bridle.
- 31 Gravestones: CIL XIII 7052; Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 27; Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, no. 33. Unlike more recent authors, Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 59, recognized Romanus’ use of a coat to guard his arm. Literary sources: Caesar, *Civil War* 1.75: “sinistras sagis involvunt, gladiosque destringunt, ita se a caetratis equitibusque defendunt.” Tacitus, *Histories* 5.22.2: “pauci ornatu militari, plerique circum brachia torta veste et strictis mucronibus”; cf. Petronius, *Satyricon* 63.
- 32 Procopius, *Persian War* 2.25; Paul the Deacon 1.20; Jordanes, *Getica* 23. The coat around the arm would leave them with only their genitals covered, just as Paul the Deacon says, cf. Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 50.
- 33 For Dexileos’ foe being naked to show his helplessness, see Ridgway, *Styles* 1997, 7, and, in a more general way, Himmelmann, *Nacktheit* 1990, 38; 40f.
- 34 Greek models: Mackintosh, “Horseman” 1986. Roman art typically began with traditional models, then added realistic touches: Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 59ff.; Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 5f.

- 35 Gravestone of Dexileos, Athens, 394 BC. Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.488; 490; *Panegyrici Latini* 4.29.5; Zosimus 1.50.4; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 108.
- 36 Similar gravestones from the Rhine frontier: Reburus; Bassus; Andes; Annauso; Cantaber; Freioverus; Anonymi; Dolanus; Ingenuus; Leubius; Licinus; Anonymus: Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 6; 17; 20; 21; 22; 24; 31; 32; 38; 42; 45; 46; 47. Troops from Roman Germany brought the motif to Britain, where it seems to have lived on meaningfully: Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 69; 72–83; perhaps the British continued the earlier Celtic fighting style. In Mauretania and Numidia, on the other hand, the barbarians underhoof are mainly stuff for victory (Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, nos. 55; 56; 57; 59; 61; 62; see also 95 and 101).
- 37 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3: “centeni.”
- 38 H. Mattingly, BMC II, page L and no. 622, and the slightly later no. 643, plate 25.2. BMC II, plate 26.3 (Vespasian) is illustrated in Scott-Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs* 1967, fig. 4a. Scott-Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs* 12, mistakes Vespasian’s coin as referring to the Jewish War. First-century four- and six-cornered shields Germanic: Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 58; Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 425.
- 39 Scott-Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs* 1967, 12, traces the type.
- 40 Sestertius of Domitian, RIC 284. Domitian has the warrior rear up rather more: BMC II, no. 339, plate 73.2. Fame at home: Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.48; cf. Tacitus, *Germania* 6: “honor est.” Andes’ foe wears the Chatti hairdo of proven warriors. Wenskus, “Adel” 1973, 64.
- 41 From p. 158.
- 42 Hamberg, *Studies* 1945, 176–179; Andreae, “Portonaccio” 1969.
- 43 Cf. Patraos’ coin, note 8 above (I own such a coin with a reverse of good quality that shows the spear well and also the decorated boots of the warrior on the ground). Germanic short spears, 1 meter long, for close-up fighting have been found: Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 427. For dropping on one’s knee, see p. 158, this volume.
- 44 Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3.
- 45 Contra: Steuer, “Kriegswesen” 2001, 364.
- 46 Heliodore, *Aethiopica* 9–18. On the thighs the armor ends.
- 47 For other third-century traits see Altheim, *Literatur* 1948, 108ff.
- 48 Tribal troops of Gordian III fighting in the East in 244: *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* 7; Speidel *Studies* I, 1984, 713f. Altheim, *Literatur* 1948, 112, rightly saw Heliodore’s “Blemmyes” sword fighters doing something different to what Aurelianus’ club-men did at Hemesa in AD 272. For club-wielders at Hemesa in AD 272, see p. 94f.
- 49 Ammianus 16.12.22: “Norant enim licet prudentem ex equo bellatorem cum clibanario nostro congressum frena retinentem et scutum, hastam una manu vibrante tegminibus ferreis abscondito bellatori nocere non posse. Peditem vero inter ipsos discriminum vertices cum nihil caveri solet praeter id quod occurrit, humiliter occulte reptantem latere forato iumentum incautum rectorem praecipitem agere levi negotio trucidandum.”
- 50 Horses: *Panegyrici Latini* 4.23: “crurum tenuis.” Claudian, *In Rufinum* 2.361: “par vestitus equis.” Riders: see the Dura-Europos graffito, e.g. Gamber, “Waffen” 1964, fig. 22. Clibanarii: Speidel, *Studies* II 1992, 406–413.
- 51 Ammianus 16.12.21f. and 16.12.38, though he is not explicit about their deed.
- 52 Libanius *Oratio* 18.265.
- 53 Nikephoros II Phokas, *Praecepta Militaria* I.125ff. (Geer, *Sowing* 1994, 19; 270).
- 54 On Coptic weavings, too, military saints ride serenely over kneeling or running men that stab their horses with spears from below: silk sleeve from Achmim, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, p. 708 and plate 66.
- 55 Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957 (*Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*; for corrections see Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 710); Beck, *Bildendenkmäler* 1964, 40ff.; Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 224ff.; Böhner and Quast, “Grabfunde” 1994 (with reasons for the date); Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 282; 436.



- 56 The lance is long and thick, even more so than in the corresponding Swedish pictures, yet winged lances could serve for throwing, as seen e.g. in the Stuttgarter Psalter (Last, "Bewaffung" 1976, 468, fig. 102). On lances thrown see also Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 34, and p. 138, this volume. On the other hand, the foil of the helmet from Valsgarde grave 7 shows an enemy stabbed (Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, 233, fig. 17).
- 57 Discovered by Hauck, "Adelskultur" 1957, 6; confirmed by Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 708.
- 58 Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 708.
- 59 Davidson, *Sword* 1962, 190; Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 23f.; Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 709; 714: "Reiterheilige" (even Coptic); Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, 232: "Formenrepertoire der imperialen Münzprägung und Triumphalkunst"; 241: "In prinzipieller Abhängigkeit von den Konventionen der imperialen Münzpropaganda und Triumphalkunst."
- 60 Klein-Pfeuffer, *Fibeln* 1993, 174. Mainz was the center for reliefs with foes beneath horsemen: Gabelmann, "Grabmonumente" 1973, 161f. Contra Quast, "Kriegerdarstellungen" 2002, 271: "Bestenfalls noch als 'Ruinen' wahrgenommen ...sehr unwahrscheinlich."
- 61 Lions: Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 17; 29; 42; 43; 45; 76; 79. Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 709, takes the lions for "Mediterranean." Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 40, sees their jumping towards one another as a "Germanic version." It is hard to see how Böhner and Quast, "Grabfunde" 1994, 389 and 394, find a Christian Arbor Vitae between the two lions. For the small figure on the horse see also CIL III, 4061=Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 107 (Pettau, but in the Mainz tradition: Gabelmann, "Grabmonumente" 1973, 161); cf. Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 535 (Rome). Helper: Klein-Pfeuffer, *Fibeln* 1993, 174f. Even the horse-stabber's crossed legs as seen on the Pliezhausen, Sutton Hoo, and Valsgarde foils are somehow prefigured by the horse-stabber's half-crossed legs on Dolanus' gravestone that almost look like the medieval stabber's attempt to make the horse stumble.
- 62 See the corresponding foil on the helmet from grave 8 at Valsgarde: Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, p. 233, fig. 17.
- 63 Sutton Hoo: Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 190ff.
- 64 Arwidsson, *Valsgarde* 1977, 121, saw the connection between the gravestones and the Swedish scenes but missed the Pliezhausen foil.
- 65 Valsgarde 7, II, right-hand side; Hauck, "Wiedergabe" 1981, 231ff.; Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, fig. 17, p. 233.
- 66 CIL XIII, 6233=Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, no. 45; Boppert, *Steindenkmäler* 1998, no. 49.
- 67 Arwidsson, *Valsgårde* 1977, Abb. 128; Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 217, fig. 164a.
- 68 Valsgarde, grave 8, cf. Hauck, "Bilddenkmäler" 1976, 592, Abb. 116. Rhenish bridle holder: gravestone of T. Statilius Taurus from Mainz: Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, no. 37. Groom: Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, no. 37, cf. Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, nos. 90; 93. Klein-Pfeuffer, *Fibeln* 1993, 174, mistakes the sword blow as reaching for the bridle, thereby robbing herself of the best proof for the origin of the Pliezhausen image from the Mainz gravestones.
- 69 Coins: Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 24f. Correct: Klein-Pfeuffer, *Fibeln* 1993, 174.
- 70 Contra Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 714; "barbarische Umdeutungen christlicher Vorbilder," *ibid.* 716. The bridle-holder, then, comes not from the Roman image of Victoria, *pace* Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 33.
- 71 See p. 27.
- 72 Perhaps the gold foil itself at first graced a helmet, for once larger, it was later cut to fit the round border: Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 710. The foils of known Swedish and English Vendel helmets are of bronze, but Germanic kings, if they could, wore golden helmets: see p. 188.

- 73 Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957; Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 707ff.; 710; Böhner and Quast, “Grabfunde” 1994, 390: “Sonst unverständlich.”
- 74 Arwidsson, *Valsgårde* 1977, figs. 25; 26; cf. Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 712f. Also Vendel, grave 1, as illustrated in Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 715.
- 75 The diameter of the Pliezhausen disc is 6.9 cm, while none of the phalerae quoted by Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 710, are less than 8.7 cm. Size as argument: Hauck, “Adelskultur” 1957, 6; Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 710.
- 76 The Obrigheim foil (Figure 1.5) too may have served as a helmet decoration (see p. 31). Remarkably, the Sutton Hoo helmet is closer to Pliezhausen than to Vendel or Valsgårde 7 and 8, for rider and helper, as noted by Hauck, “Wiedergabe” 1981, 255, wear no helmets. Cultural exchanges between Alamannia and Sweden: Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, 703; 716; 722ff.; in the field of personal names: Beck, “Stanzen” 1968, 238.
- 77 “Reichsideologie” (Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1987) is too strong a concept, though, for sixth-century Alamannia. “Religiös-kultische Ideologie” (Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1999, 334) seems better, or “Ausdruck einer eigenen Identität” (Quast, “Kriegerdarstellungen” 2002, 276). Runes: Stocklund, “Runes” 2003, 178. Woden: Hauck, “Uppakra” 2002. Contacts in Roman times already: Lund-Hansen, *Himlingøje* 1995, 416.
- 78 Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 44f. “Wyrð”: *Beowulf* 455; 477; 734; 1205; 2420; 2526; 2574; 2814.
- 79 Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 40.
- 80 A single dragon may have perched on the Pliezhausen dancer’s head (as on the Års medallion and the Vindonissa foil), but the traces are too faint to be certain. Dioscuri: Hauck, “Polytheism” 1994, 236. Virtus, egg on: see p. 120. Contra: Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 237; 240: “Rettung aus Kampfnot.” Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1999, 334: “Sieghelfer.”
- 81 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Ynglinga saga* 9.
- 82 The horse-stabber’s aristocratic cloak and his not being hurt also speak against his fighting “dirty,” contra Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 40. If Ammianus 16.12.22 implies a judgement, it is that of an enemy.
- 83 “Nicht getreten”: Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 39; “unversehrt”: Klein-Pfeuffer, *Fibeln* 1993, 174. Contra: Böhner and Quast, “Grabfunde” 1994, 389: “sterbend.”
- 84 There is no substance to the claim that he is “überwunden,” contra Böhner and Quast, “Grabfunde” 1994, 389.
- 85 Contra: Arwidsson, *Valsgårde* 1977, 121, who sees in the horsemen Roman “legionaries” hired in free Germany. Of our three examples, Andes (Figure 18.1) comes from Dalmatia, Romanus (Figure 17.1) from Noricum, Dolanus (Figure 17.2) from Thrace—in this they are typical.
- 86 Herodotus 5.111f.; Plutarch, *Crassus* 25; Heliodore, *Aethiopica* 9.14ff.; Zosimus 1.52f.; *Panegyrici Latini* 4.23f.; Libanius, *Oratio* 59.110 (Förster 263, 19ff.); Libanius, *Oratio* 18.265.
- 87 Sixth-century lancer attacks: see p. 140.
- 88 *Konungs Skuggsjá* p. 156, after Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 38f. Compare the Merovingian *gleven*. Wieczorek, *Franken* 1996, II, 703.
- 89 Bracteates: Hauck, “Polytheismus” 1994, 210.
- 90 *Beowulf* 884ff.; 2697ff.; Saxo Grammaticus 36.24f.: “Ventre sub imo/esse locum scito, quo ferrum mergere fas est”; see Davidson and Fisher, *Saxo* 1979, II, 39; even when the slayer rides on horseback, as on the Seengen disc. Edda, *Fáfnismál*, Introduction; Blindheim, *Billedkunst* 1972. The snake with the horseman from Vendel, grave 1, may be Woden himself rather than a dragon to be fought (Böhner, “Eschwege” 1991, pp. 176f. and fig. 28.2, contra Hauck, “Bilddenkmäler” 1976, 591).
- 91 Army units being dragons: Letter of Marcus (Haines, *Fronto* 1963, 300ff.); Lucian, *Hist. Cons.* 29-Indo-European myth: Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 46; Watkins, *Dragon*, 1995. Sword from underneath: Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 20f. Germanic languages adopted Latin

“draco” for “dragon” from Roman army standards, even though they had their own word, “worm”: Höfler, *Siegfried* 1961, 99ff.; Ploss, *Siegfried* 1966, 68.

- 92 Compare the Ramsund carving, Wild, *Drachen* 1962, Abb. 1; Hauck, “Bilddenkmäler” 1957, 366ff.; Beck, *Bilddenkmäler* 1964, 20f.; Hauck, “Bilddenkmäler” 1976, 596f.; Ploss, *Siegfried* 1966, 66–68; Düwel, *Runenkunde* 2001, 140–141.

## 18

## HORSE-HEWERS

- 1 Herodotus 5.110f; “with a curved sword”: δρεπάνω. Bronze Age curved swords: Drews, *End* 1993, 141–163; 196f.; cf. Macqueen, *Hittites* 1986, 32.
- 2 Drews, *End* 1993, 195f.; the slightly curved, tip-heavy Greek *macheira* saber, however, was a savage weapon: Connolly, *Greece* 1981, 98f.
- 3 Livy 44.26 (after Polybios): “Veniebant decem milia equitum, par numerus peditum et ipsorum iungentium cursum equis et in vicem prolapsorum equitum vacuos capientium ad pugnam equos.” Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 380f.; Much, *Germania* 1967, 148f.; Timpe, “Germanen” 1998, 204–206.
- 4 Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.48: “Genus hoc erat pugnae, quo se Germani exercuerant: equitum milia erant sex, totidem numero pedites velocissimi ac fortissimi, quos ex omni copia singuli singulos suae salutis causa delegerant; cum his in proeliis versabantur, ad eos se equites recipiebant; hi, si quid erat durius, concurrebant; si qui graviore vulnere accepto equo deciderat, circumstebant; si quo erat longius prodeundum aut celerius recipiendum, tanta erat horum exercitatione celeritas, ut iubis equorum sublevati cursum adaequarent.” Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.48; 8.13; Dio 38.48.2; Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3; Ammianus 16.12.21f.; Libanius Or. 18.265. Vegetius 3.16 finds this still useful. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 336.
- 5 Caesar, *Gallic War* 7.65: “Trans Rhenum in Germaniam mittit ad eas civitates quas superioribus annis pacaverat equitesque ab his arcessit et levis armaturae pedites qui inter eos proeliari consuerant.” 7.67; 8.13: “Germani quos propterea Caesar transduxerat Rhenum ut equitibus interpositi proeliarentur”; 8.36.3f. Tacitus, *Germania* 6.3. Walser, *Caesar* 1956, 62.
- 6 Rosenberg, *Hjortspringfundet* 1937, 40f., swords 521; 517; 523; Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 371, fig. 78f. The swords are kept in the National Museum in Copenhagen where Dr Jørgensen kindly discussed them with me in June 1999. The blades are 2.6 cm, 2 cm, and 2.3 cm broad.
- 7 Compare the warrior wielding a scythe and a sword on the shorter Gallehus horn (Axbøe *et al.*, “Gallehus” 1998, 335, fig. 43).
- 8 Coin: Forrer, *Numismatik* 1965, 290f., fig. 491. Sword: von Schnurbein, “Sica” 1979, fig. 1. Wooden swords: Capelle, “Erkenntnismöglichkeiten” 1982, 284. Dirk: Gordon, “Swords” 1953, 67; Adler, *Studien* 1993, 63. Another curved sword or dagger, resembling the Greek, Etruscan, and Iberian *macheira*, lies at the feet of a furclad Germanic warrior on the arch of Carpentras in France, built at the beginning of our era: Walter, *Barbares* 1993, 21ff., with plate IX; Cunliffe, *Celts* 1977, plate XXa.
- 9 Gabelmann, “Grabmonumente” 1973, 153f., fig. 20. The sword of Rufus’ foe at Gloucester (RIB 121; Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 79) is also curved: troops from Roman Germany brought the scene to Britain.
- 10 Crous, “Waffenpfeiler” 1933, 103, type 102.
- 11 CIL XIII, 7023; Gabelmann, “Grabmonumente” 1973, 165 (around AD 75); Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 97ff., no. 20; Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, 141ff., no. 33.
- 12 A sharp bend is also found in the sickle sword on the Gallehus horn: Axbøe *et al.*, “Gallehus” 1998, 335, fig. 43.

- 13 For the curved sword on Trajan's Column, scene 38, see p. 229, note 36; against foot: note 25 this chapter.
- 14 Hamberg, *Studies* 1945, 176–179; Andraea, “Portonaccio” 1969.
- 15 Compare the young Heruls who fought without shields (Procopius, *Persian War* 2.25), also for speed (Jordanes, *Getica* 23), see p. 64, this volume, or the barefoot British (Dio 77.12.2).
- 16 Caesar, *Civil War* 1.75; Tacitus, *Histories* 5.22.2. If the wrap was not a coat but an animal skin, it reflects Indo-European usage, known e.g. from Arcadians (Pausanias 1.3).
- 17 Hamberg, *Studies* 1945, 176, with the remark that the eagle shows the number IIII—if so, it belongs to legio quarta Flavia, stationed at Singidunum-Beograd (Ritterling, “Legio” 1924, 1543).
- 18 Christlein, *Alemannen* 1979, 113; Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 88ff.; Steuer, “Theorien” 1998, 291f. Compare the clubs and hammers of Donar: Werner, “Herkuleskeule” 1964. Second- or third-century miniature weapons are typical for Elbgermanen (Capelle, “Miniaturgeräte” 2001, 46), the ones who haunted the Danubian frontier. Symbolic value among the Vikings still: Steuer, “Kriegswesen” 2001, 367.
- 19 Germanic bronze guards for horse heads: Wilbers-Rost, *Pferdegeschirr* 1994. Dr Hanns Ubl will publish the Enns piece.
- 20 Ilkjær, “Gegner” 1997.
- 21 Cf. Speidel, *Denkmäler* 1994, 238.
- 22 Adler, *Studien* 1993, 260.
- 23 Cf. Livy 26.4.4.
- 24 For this relationship see Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 380f.
- 25 Tacitus, *Germania* 6: “ex omni iuventute delectos”; Livy 26.4.4: “iuvenes”; Caesar, *Civil War* 3.84: “adulescentes”. Johrendt, “Milites” 1976. Roots of knighting: Höfler, “Kontinuitätsproblem” 1937, 25; Keen, *Chivalry* 1984, 64ff. In the Middle Ages, northerners still wielded curved swords, but we do not hear whether they used them against horses. Axboe *et al.*, “Gallehus” 1998, 335, fig. 43; Hauck, “Germania-Texte” 1982, 195, fig. 8, where Wenskus, “Religion” 1994, 231f. sees Saturn with a scythe. In *Beowulf* (37: bil=falchion) the weapon is often mentioned, see Klaeber, *Beowulf* 1950, index 307. A curved sword on a bracteate medallion: IK 107. Norwegian curved swords: Davidson, *Sword* 1962, 41. Eleventh century: Paulsen, *Axt* 1939, 225, fig. 134. A curved sword against foot: Saxo 26, 28f.

## 19

## LONG-HAIRS

- 1 Celtic hairstyles: Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1061ff. Iranians, Indians: Warrior vase from Tepe Sialk; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 19; 34ff. Greeks: *Iliad* 2.542: ὄπιθεν κομώωντες; Strabo 10.3.2. Celts: Strabo 3.3.7; see also the Watsch belt-buckle, Mallory, *Search* 1989, plate 13. Italic tribes: *Aeneid* 11.642f.; Ligurians: Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 442f. Spartan saying: Xenophon, *Lacedaemonians* 10.3; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 22.1.
- 2 Thor and Indra: *Thrymsquida* 1: scor nam at dýia; *Rg Veda* 10.23; Schroeder, *Ursprung* 1939, 337f. Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 117, traces the Indo-European origins of this tactic and its role in ecstatic fighting; Miller, “Hair” 1998, 43. Gilgamesh shook his hair back after he overcame Humbaba: Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 37. Long-haired Vedic Indians: Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981, 174; 190; Iranians: Binder, *Aussetzung* 1964, 35. Lusitani: Appian, *Iberika* 67, cf. Strabo 3.154f.; Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 164.
- 3 Ammianus 16.12.36: “eorumque ultra solitum saevientium comae fluentes.” A literary commonplace: Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 164. Flashing eyes: see p. 69f.

- 4 Goths: Eunapius VI, frag. 37 (Blockley), 9f. (*Excerpta de leg. gent.* 5). Byzantine private guards, aping the imperial guard: Gregory of Nyssa, *De creatione hominis II* (p. 63, Hörner): οἰκέτας ἔχοντα τὰς κόμας ἀνεμμένας καὶ ταύτας ξανθὰς καὶ κατεπιτηδεύμασι σοβούοντας.
- 5 *Hamðismál* 20: “Scóc hann scor iarpa,” not “flung back his hair” as in Dronke, *Edda I*, 1969, 165.
- 6 Well-kempt: *Tukulti-Ninurta epic* 3.30ff.; Herodotus 7.208; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 22.1; Sidonius, *Carmina* 12 (Burgundians of the “crinigera caterva” kept their hair together with rancid butter). McCone, “Hund” 1987, 126f.; Demandt, *Staatsformen* 1995, 632f.; Miller, “Hair” 1998. Bother: Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.B.1. Spartans: Herodotus 7.208; Xenophon, *Lacedaimonians* 10.3; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 22.1. Thracians: *Iliad* 4.533; silver bridal decoration from Letnitsa, Bulgaria (Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 385). Lusitani: Strabo 3.3.7.
- 7 Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 207ff.; 265–274; Schmidt, *Westgermanen* 1970, 352; Perl, *Germania* 1990, 212: “Die sachkundigen Einzelheiten gehen wohl auf einen Augenzeugen der Feldzüge zurück (z.B. Pomponius Secundus, ann. 12, 27ff., war mit dem älteren Plinius bekannt: Pliny, *Nat.* 18.83; 14.56; Pliny, *Epist.* 3.5.4). A less flattering verdict about Pliny: Walser, *Rom* 1951, 65. Observation as a source of Tacitus’ *Germania*: Bringmann, “Topoi” 1989, criticized by Lund, “Germania” 1991, 2211. Comments (though not those of Norden) on the sources and trust-worthiness of the *Germania*: Lund, “Germania” 1991, 2215–2222; Perl, *Germania* 1990, 38–45; Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 249f.
- 8 Tacitus, *Germania* 31 (Winterbottom 1975; also Furneaux 1884): “Et alii Germanorum populus usurpatum raro et privata cuiusque audentia apud Chattos in consensus vertit, ut primum adoleverint crinem barbamque submittere nec nisi hoste caeso exuere votivum obligatumque virtuti oris habitum. Super sanguinem et spolia revelant frontem seque tum demum pretia nascendi rettulisse dignosque patria ac parentibus ferunt. Ignavis et imbellibus manet squalor. Fortissimus quisque ferreum insuper anulum (ignominiosum id genti) velut vinculum gestat, donec se caede hostis absolvat. Plurimis Chattorum hic placet habitus, iamque canent insignes et hostibus simul suisque monstrati. Omnium penes hos initia pugnarum; haec prima semper acies, visu nova. Nam ne in pace quidem cultu mitiore mansuescunt. Nulli domus aut ager aut aliqua cura; prout ad quemque venere, aluntur, prodigi alieni, contemptores sui, donec exsanguis senectus tam durae virtuti impares faciat.” Much, *Germania* 1967, 385–392; Lund, “Germania” 1991, 1926f.; 2126f. Hairstyle: Demandt, *Staatsformen* 1995, 548.
- 9 For example, Fehrle, *Germania* 1929, 39 (= 1959, 45); Weiser, *Jünglingsweißen* 1927, 33; Clemen, “Altersklassen” 1938; Höfler, *Rumenstein* 1952, 190: “diese geweihte Tracht des Hauptes, durch die sie sich zur Tapferkeit verpflichten, abzulegen.” They all mistake *os* (face) for *Haupt* (head). Lund, *Tacitus* 1988, 95, omits *os* altogether: “Haartracht”; Perl, *Germania* 1990, 109: “Kopf”; Fuhrmann, *Germania* 1972, 45, rightly translates “Gesicht” but then goes on to claim “Haarwust” for the elite warriors (p. 85); Weiser-Aall, “Chattenkrieger” 1932, “Zweimal dieselbe Maske.” Ulrich, “Einschaltung” 1936, 132: “Die grössere Zahl der Jünglinge legen, wenn sie einen Feind erschlagen haben, die wüste Haartracht ab. Die Schar der Auserlesenen aber trägt diese als Ehrenzeichen bis an ihr Ende.” Much, *Germania* 1967, 386: “die Haare geschnitten”; Timpe, “Absicht” 1989, 126: “Bartablegung.” Best: Birley, *Tadus* 1999, 53 (“fece”).
- 10 Tacitus, *Germania* 38.20: “Capillum retro pectuntur ac saepe in ipso vertice religant.”
- 11 Perl, *Germania* 1990, 214, was on the right track: “vielleicht blieb die Stirn frei.”
- 12 Ritterling, “Legio” 1924, 1696. Strobel, “Chattenkrieg” 1987. Hänggi, “Bataver” 1990.
- 13 Vindonissa Museum, Brugg, Inv. 770; Hartmann, *Römer* 1985, fig. 23. The wreath and the palm leaf on the tile hint of triumph, the inscription hails “l(egio) XI C(laudia) p(ia) f(idelis).” There are lines down the young man’s neck, but they are not a hairband, for a band

- tied behind the head would have to come forward from the sides. Thus the lines down the neck are tendons, cf. Hänggi, "Bataver" 1990, 69: "Versuch einer Halsmuskelwiedergabe."
- 14 Vindonissa Museum, Brugg, Inv. 3050; Hartmann, *Römer* 1985, fig. 27. Hänggi, "Bataver" 1990, 71, interprets the hairband as "staffs" ("Die beiden unterhalb der Ohren ansetzenden Stangen könnten darauf hinweisen, dass dieser Kopf trotz erkennbarem Halsansatz aufgespiesst war"), however a round hairband of just this shape is seen on the Vindonissa roof tile, inv. no. 4225; Hartmann, *Römer* 1985, fig. 25.
  - 15 Hänggi, "Bataver" 1990, 70f.: "Sein Bart wirkt etwas kürzer, vielleicht sogar gepflegter." Tacitus does not say that the Chatti threw off their beards, *pace* Timpe, "Absicht" 1989, 126: "Bartablegung."
  - 16 Nor need the unproven and cowards be killed off lest they be mistaken for leading warriors, contra: Weiser-Aall, "Chattenkrieger" 1932.
  - 17 Fuhrmann, *Germania* 1972, 85; Timpe, "Absicht" 1989, 126.
  - 18 Gabelmann, "Grabmonumente" 1973, 165 (around AD 75); Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 97ff., no. 20; Boppert *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, 141ff., no. 33.
  - 19 Schumacher and "Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 71: "Auf dem Scheitel zusammengebunden."
  - 20 Nudi: Tacitus, *Germania* 6. See p. 167, this volume.
  - 21 Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, no. 72; Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 136f., no. 45; Boppert, *Steindenkmäler* 1998, 83ff., no. 49.
  - 22 Landesdenkmalamt Koblenz-Ehrenbreitstein; Gabelmann, "Grabmonumente" 1973, fig. 10.
  - 23 See Romanius' gravestone, Mainz (Figure 17.1); Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 110; Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, 31; also Carminius' gravestone (Figure 19.1).
  - 24 Jean Krier, "Der Sterbende Gallier," *Antike Kunst* 31, 2000, 80.
  - 25 A captured woman, comforting a fettered prisoner, is found also on the Halberstadt Diptych: Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 166.
  - 26 Gabelmann, "Grabmonumente" 1973, 145, fig. 12. See Figure 5.2 and p. 62, this volume.
  - 27 The gravestone of Longinus at Colchester portrays the hair squalor of the warrior on the ground. Perhaps a motif brought along from Germany.
  - 28 No ponytails aside from Andes' and Carminius' gravestones are found in Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935 (esp. p. 69), nor in Paulovics, "Germanendarstellungen" 1934, Hamberg, "Germanen" 1936, or Krierer, "Ritt" 1997. Schmidt, *Westgermanen* 1970, 365, claims, against Tacitus' evidence, that Chatlian hairstyle was no different from that of other tribes.
  - 29 Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 59f.
  - 30 Contra Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 249: "There is no other evidence for this custom."
  - 31 Davie, *Evolution* 1929, 15; Freeman, *Report* 1970, 238, says of the Iban of Sarawak: "When he had taken a head, and only then, was an Iban male entitled to have the back of his hand tattooed. With this achieved, his prowess was on constant display ...and he was much sought after as a husband." Cf. Turney-High, *War* 1991, 84ff.; 145; 149; 162.
  - 32 Clendinnen, *Aztecs* 1991, 113. Accomplished warriors were shorn: Salmoral, *America* 1990, 202; Clendinnen, *Aztecs* 1991, 117; Hassig, *War* 1992, 142.
  - 33 Neumann, "Chatten" 1981; Birkhan, "Namenselement" 1967, 117 and 138f., even though he now takes the name of the Hessians to be different (*Kelten* 1997, 834).
  - 34 Hamberg, "Germanen" 1936, rightly points out that Roman literary and artistic portrayals of Germani echo one another. Lund's objection of "Zeitgeist" ("Germania" 1991, 2053) falls on himself. A searching discussion: Timpe, "Absicht" 1989.
  - 35 Hairdo as ethnic identification: Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.7.1; Demandt, *Staatsformen* 1995, 548. Tacitus' words were not written against Roman emperors (contra Lund, "Germania" 1991, 1934; 2159; cf. Timpe, "Absicht" 1989, 107). For a comparable gravestone with a "Suebian knot" see that of Cantaber from Mainz: Schleiermacher,

- Reitergrabsteine*, 1984, no. 22; Boppert, *Grabdenkmäler* 1992, no 30. Germani in the minor arts: Paulovics, “Germanendarstellungen” 1934; RadnotiAlfbldi, “Plebs” 1994.
- 36 Tacitus, *Germania* 31: “haec semper prima acies, visu nova”; *ibid.* 38. One can see the plight of Caligula and Domitian who, for their Chatti triumphs, bought Germanic prisoners on the slave market, but then had to make their hair look Chatti-like. Suetonius, *Caligula*, 47; Tacitus, *Agricola* 39.
- 37 *Aeneid* 9.610ff.; Horsfall, “Romulus” 1971, 1112f. Lund’s comparison with philosophers (“Germania” 1991, 1927) goes to the wrong context.
- 38 Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.61.1: “Civilis barbaro voto post coepta adversus Romanos arma propexum (=over his forehead) rutilatumque crinem patrata demum caede legionum deposuit.” See also *Voluspa* 33 “ne hofuð kemði”; *Baldrs draumar* 11; Much, *Germania* 1967, 38. A similar Roman custom (Suetonius, *Iulius* 67.2; *Augustus* 23.2) may be rather a gesture of mourning as suggested by Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 250.
- 39 Relatives: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 365 and 424.
- 40 Saxo 179.37f.: “Renodat caesariem et laxos patitur fluitare capillos.”
- 41 Suebi: Much, *Germania* 1967, 427ff. Franks: plaque from Grésin, Salin, *Civilization* 1959, plate XI, facing p. 400; 573. Sixth-century Danish bracteate medallions show Woden with a braid knotted in the back (Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* I, 1985, 103f.). The legendary Danish hero Starkadr held open hair unbecoming to a warrior (Saxo 179).
- 42 Furneaux, *Germania* 1884, 94; Weiser, *Jünglingsweihen* 1927, 43ff.; Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 192; Much, *Germania* 1967, 389; Fuhrmann, *Germania* 1972, 85; Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 89; Timpe, “Absicht” 1989, 126; Timpe, *Studien* 1995, 227; Perl, *Germania* 1990, 215; Davidson, *Beliefs* 1993, 99; Kershaw, *God* 2000, 43. No connection with berserks: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* 1961, 365; Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 251.
- 43 Virtus: see p. 120. The Chatti had a shrine of Woden (Gudensberg) at their state center: Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 155.
- 44 Saxo 58.23f.: “Armillas dextrae excipiant, quo fortius ictus collibrare queant et amarum figere vulnus.” Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 191f.; Much, *Germania* 1967, 388.
- 45 Rings as a warband badge: Werner, “Armring” 1980; Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1987; Lund-Hansen, “Goldring” 1998. Woden: Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 250f. Rives’ objection that Tacitus says nothing about animal warriors vanishes when one recognizes northern berserks as originally mad and naked rather than animal fighters. In the north many snake-headed wristbands were sacrificed and hence had a religious meaning: Werner, “Armring” 1980, 25–60.
- 46 Turney-High, *War* 1991, 258; Przulski, “Loups-garous” 1940, 134f.
- 47 Blaney, “Berserkr” 1972, 146; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1046. Weiser, *Jünglingsweihen* 1927, 38, and Kershaw, *God* 2000, 46 suggest religious reasons. The Chatti had a religious organization with a state priest:  $\Lambda\iota\beta\eta\varsigma\ \tau\omega\upsilon\upsilon\ \chi\alpha\tau\tau\omega\upsilon\ \iota\epsilon\rho\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$  (Strabo 7.1.4, p. 292).
- 48 Güntert, *Geschichten* 1912, 9ff.; Simek, *Dictionary* 1993, 35.
- 49 *Eyrbyggja saga* 25: “Berserks to serve and guard you.”
- 50 *Germania* 43: “primi in omnibus proeliis oculi vincuntur.”
- 51 Claudian, *Eutrop.* 1.383f.: “detonsa Sygambria”; Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.B.1 (=Dennis, *Strategikon* 1984, 420). Wolfram, *Goten* 1990, 111.
- 52 Tacitus, *Germania* 38; Appian, *Celtica* 8; Ammianus 16.12.24; Sidonius, *Carmina* 12. Miller, “Hair” 1998, 41–60. Chnodomar: Ammianus 16.12.24. Harald Wartooth: Saxo 207.10 “Mitra auro variata capillitium redimitus in hostem progreditur,” which seems to be old, contra Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 93; Ninck, *Wodan* 1935, 24. Vikings: e.g. Saxo 207.
- 53 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Longobardorum* 3.7: “Sex milia Saxonum qui bello superfuertant devoverunt se neque barbam neque capillos incisuros, nisi se de Suavis hostibus ulciscerentur”; Gregory of Tours, *History* 5.15.

54 Snorri Sturluson, *Haralds saga Hárfagra* 23 (AD 872); Höfler, *Runenstein* 1952, 196f.; Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 249ff.

## 20

## HELMET-WEARERS

- 1 *Rg-Veda* 8.7.25; also 5.54.11; other Vedic warriors had helmets made of several pieces: Zimmer, *Leben* 1879, 298. Scythian open-work helmet: from the Ak-Burun Kurgan, now in St Petersburg, Ermitage nr. AKB 28, cf. Sembach, *Gold* 1984, 127. Celtic helmets for looks: Bruneaux and Lambot, *Guerre* 1987, 102ff. Golden helmets for outstanding foreigners serving in the Roman army: Arrian, *Tactica* 34.2.
- 2 Kimmig, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 384; Cunliffe, *Prehistory* 1994, 330.
- 3 Writers: Plutarch, *Marius* 25 (see p. 52, this volume; Tacitus, *Germania* 6: “vix uni alterive cassis aut galea”; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.14; Cassius Dio 38.50.2; Agathias 2.5; Alföldi, “Helmform” 1934, 139f.; Much, *Germania* 1967, 144ff.; Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1987, 196f.; Waurick, “Helm” 1999, 327f. Reworked: Enkevort and Willems, “Helmets” 1994; Reichmann, “Schlachtfelder” 1994. Raddatz, “Bewaffnung” 1976, 374; Waurik, “Helm” 1999, 327f.
- 4 Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 175, describes the helmets correctly thus: “Die vier anderen Soldaten tragen dagegen eine deutliche eiserne Haube, bestehend aus einem starken Bügel, der von der Stirn zum Hinterkopf geht und rund um den Kopf sowie von Ohr zu Ohr einen eisernen Reifen hat; zwischen den einzelnen Eisenteilen der Haube, die durch ein eisernes Sturmband unter dem Kinn gehalten wird, blickt deutlich das Kopfhair hervor.”
- 5 “Buckelhelme,” worn during the early Empire by auxiliaries along the Rhine frontier, show curls embossed on the bowl of the helmet and thus likewise reflect a warrior’s pride in his hair as the seat of life (Schleiermacher, *Reitergrabsteine* 1984, 73; 90; 93; 100; 110; 123). Hair: p. 175; Roth, “Bilddenkmäler” 1976, 555; Böhner, “Niederdollendorf” 1950, 67. Being bowls, Buckelhelme are not open, show no true hair, and altogether differ in their structure from crossband helmets (Klumbach, *Helme* 1974, 45f.). Wigs: Künzl, “Fellhelme” 1999.
- 6 Buckles also fasten the neck guards of several fourth-century Roman comb helmets: Berkasovo 1 and 2; Deurne; St Giorgio di Nogara. Klumbach, *Gardehelme* 1973. Manojlović-Marijanski, “Fund” 1973, 30f., sees, perhaps rightly, in leather-fastened cheek guards a non-Roman tradition.
- 7 Reinach’s drawings are reproduced in Le Bohec, *Armée* 1989, XII.
- 8 Froehner, *Colonne* 1865, 101.
- 9 Somewhat similar are third-century helmets from Dura-Europos as Ubl, “Eisenhelme” 2001, 8, rightly points out. Yet their high paraboloid shape and ridged bands set them off as very distantly, if at all, related.
- 10 Arwidsson, *Valsgårde* 1977, 26.
- 11 Another type of crossband helmet, dated to the fifth and sixth centuries, with very broad bands and the spaces between the bands filled, is named after the find spot at Bretzenheim near Mainz and may be a sub-group of the same tradition: List, “Spangenhelme” 1903; Behrens, “Kriegergräber” 1916, 6; Gamber, “Waffen” 1964, 16, Böhner, “Spangenhelme” 1994, 535ff.; a tenth-century crossband helmet from Groningen/Netherlands: Jager, *Koningen* 2000, 11. Not crossband helmets in this sense are Trajanic bowl helmets reinforced by crossbands, contra: Böhner, “Spangenhelme” 1994, 535ff.
- 12 Klumbach, *Gardehelme* 1973; Overbeck, “Zeugnisse” 1974; James, “Helmets” 1986; Simkins, *Warriors* 1988, 151–154. Alföldi, “Helmform” 1934, 118f., 139ff., does not keep the crossband helmet well enough apart from the comb (“ridge”) helmet.



- 13 Contra: Alföldi, "Helmform" 1934, 118ff.; Arwidsson, *Valsgårde* 1977, 21–33; Hauck, "Germania-Texte" 1982, 214; Almgren, "Helmets" 1983, 11–16; Ambrosiani, "Regalia" 1983; Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 200ff.; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994, 539; Steuer, "Helm" 1999, 332: "Dabei wird später die Kalotte aufgelöst in kreuzweise übereinandergelegte oder ein Netz bildende Bänder," which staggers belief; Ubl, "Eisenhelme" 2001, 8.
- 14 Leaving aside reworked Roman helmets and unreliable trophies, finds of Germanic helmets are reported in Schumacher and Klumbach, *Germanendarstellungen* 1935, 60, and Much, *Germania* 1967, 145. Quadi: CIL III 10969—RIU 509 (Brigetio). Constantinian cavalry helmets: Klumbach, *Gardehelme* 1973, 9–14; James, "Helmets" 1986. Vendel helmets: Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 199ff.; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994, 533ff.
- 15 No Carolingian helmet finds: Steuer, "Helm" 1999, 335. Coin of Probus: Victoria Gutthica binio gold medallion, *Catalogue Auction Leu* 1997, no. 119; another coin of Probus (RIC 913) shows a captured warrior perhaps with a wale helmet. A Frank or Alaman seems to be shown with a wale helmet on the Constantinian coin of AD 315, RIC VII, 1966, Ticinum 28=M.R. Alföldi, *Goldprägung* 1963, no. 159, p. 45 and plate 5, fig. 74.
- 16 Bishop and Coulston, *Equipment* 1993, 172; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994.
- 17 *Beowulf* 1030–1034; Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 210ff.; Arwidsson, *Valsgarde* 1977, 21f.
- 18 Hittites: the guardian at the King's Gate in Hattusas, e.g. Macqueen, *Hittites* 1986, frontispiece. Hallstatt Celts: Kimmig, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 403.
- 19 They take the place of the (bird dragon?) beaks on the Viksø helmets (see note 2, this chapter). Twin dragons are found across Europe on fourth- to sixth-century sword chapes, belt buckles, brooches, amulets and fibulae, often fashioned as a two-headed wyrm (Werner, "Heilsbilder" 1963; Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, 699f) may be a very specific symbol. Belt buckles with twin dragons of varying heads ("Tierschnallen") are known from the fourth century, e.g. Waurick, *Gallien* 1980, 152ff; 176ff. Vierck, "Nordendorf" 1967, 123ff.; Böhner, "Spangenhelme" 1994, 452ff.; Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, fig. 149 (Runder Berg). Twin dragons on bracteate medallions: Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten* 1985, nos. 262 and 286.
- 20 Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 210.
- 21 Ammianus 18.8.12; 31.7.4: "Quorundam capita per medium frontis et verticis mucrone distincta in utrumque umerum magno cum horrore pendeat." *Óláfs saga Helga* 226; Davidson, *Sword* 1962, 196f.; *Myths* 1988, 78.
- 22 Hair: Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, II, 124; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 1063. Later Germanic helmets, like that of Sigurd at Hylestad, also left much hair to be seen. Took off helmets: Ammianus 20.11.12, see p. 67, this volume; William the Conqueror showed his face in the battle of Hastings in 1066—witness the Bayeux tapestry.
- 23 During the first two centuries of our era Germani rarely fought with bow and arrows: Raddatz, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 425; 429f.; Wenskus, "Bewaffnung" 1976, 459.
- 24 Cichorius, *Reliefs* II, 1896, 178: "Zu einer Bestimmung dieser Truppe fehlt jeder Anhaltspunkt."
- 25 Cheesman, *Auxilia* 1914, 131, rightly took them for such: "helmets of a curious Teutonic pattern."
- 26 Wrede, *Hermengalerie* 1972, herms 68 and 69 with plates 34.1; 36.1; 35.1; pp. 70f. Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 374 (though hardly a hint of "sexual ambiguity").
- 27 Such as the *numerus Hnaudifridi*, RIB 1576.
- 28 AD 200: Ilkjær, "Gegner" 1997. Franks: Sidonius, *Letters* 4.20. Weapons given: Tacitus, *Germania* 14; for the law codes see McCormick, *Victory* 1986, 292, note 149-*Beowulf* 303–306; see also 334; 2517f.; 2635–2638; 2642; 2864ff.; Höfler, *Schriften* 1992, 91ff.; 105ff. The custom was adopted by Roman emperors for their guards, cf. Alföldi, "Helmform" 1934, 108. Eagle helmets: Böhner, "Eschwege" 1991, fig. 30; Helmet 7 from Valsgarde (Hauck, "Polytheismus" 1994, figs. 12a and 13); Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 196f. The

- Icelander Bolli's eleven followers all wore red scarlet dress and rode in golden saddles (*Laxardal saga* 77). Dagsson: *Heimskringla, Haraldssona saga* 26.
- 29 Few swords: Tacitus, *Germania* 6: "rari gladii utuntur." Evans, *Lords* 1997, 38f. Helmets: see note 3.
- 30 Chariovalda, leader of the Batavians fighting for Rome in Tiberius' time, Tacitus, *Annals* 2.11: "ac multi nobilium circa" (AD 16); for Chariovalda's troops perhaps becoming regulars, see Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen* 1968, 91. In AD 470 Prince Sigimer, perhaps from the Rhine area, had a following of armed *reguli*, Sidonius, *Letters* 4.20; likewise *Beowulf* 357: "mid his eorla gedriht." Saxo in the thirteenth century states (54, 34f., and 12.1f.): "Tanto etenim princeps aciem securior intrat, quanto illum melius procerum stipaverit agmen"—a prince enters the fight the safer, the stronger the band of athelings that guards him." Seven kings as a bodyguard: Saxo 217. Units of their own: Ammianus 16.12.49: "optimatum globus" (AD 357); Saxo 220. Gothic *optimates* troops of the sixth century: Haldon, *Praetorians* 1984, 96ff.
- 31 Sword as noblest weapon: see p. 63. Raddatz, "Bewaffung" 1976, 425: "Das für den Stich geeignete leichte Schwert war von nachgeordneter Bedeutung" no doubt refers to its rarity rather than its standing in the eyes of the warriors.
- 32 Anglo-Saxon helmets: Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 200f. Almgren, "Helmets" 1983; Waurick, "Helm" 1999, 327f. See also Pollington, *Way* 1989, 150: "Manuscripts often show a style of helmet consisting of a circular rim, to which are attached two metal bands which intersect at the crown... It is perfectly possible that substantial numbers were produced to equip those freemen who regularly engaged in military service."
- 33 Sutton Hoo and Benty Grange helmets: Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974; Bruce-Mitford, *Sutton Hoo* 1978, 203–225.
- 34 Tweddle, "Coppergate" 1982.
- 35 Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects* 1974, 231.
- 36 Last, "Bewaffung" 1976, 469; Stuttgarter *Bilderpsalter* fol. 90 verso. Steuer, "Helm" 1999, 335.
- 37 Förstemann, *Namenbuch* 1900, 808 and 1518.
- 38 Alföldy, "Helmform" 1934, 119; Hauck, "Germania-Texte" 1982, 214: "Subspatantike"; Almgren, "Helmets" 1983.
- 39 Ambrosiani, "Regalia" 1983; Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 200ff.
- 40 Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 200; Capelle, "Gjermundbu" 1998, 126ff. Steuer, "Helm" 1999, 337.
- 41 Jankuhn, "Herrschaftszeichen" 1954, 105–114; von Carnap-Bornheim, "Forschungen" 1997.
- 42 Alföldy, "Helmform" 1934, 119; Deér, "Kaiserkrone" 1950; Almgren, "Helmets" 1983. The crossband crown of Theodahad, king of the Ostrogoths 534–536, as seen on several coins (pictures in Altheim, *Krise* 1943, plate 73; Müller, *Einfluss* 1998, Abb. 1; 3; 4), according to Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 107, and Müller, *Einfluss* 1998, 58, is a textile cap, and not a metal crown, but the similar openwork cap Vandal kings gave to their Moorish vassals in North Africa is called by Procopius (*Vandal War* 3.25.7) "a silver cap, not covering all of the head but like a wreath, and held in place on all sides by silver straps." The word for cap here is the same as that used by Procopius, *Gothic War* 4.32.18, for the Gothic crown or cap. Even as a cap the Gothic royal headgear is astonishingly close to crossband crowns. The Lombard crown, depicted twice on the Agilulf visor (Fuchs, *Alamannen* 1997, 407; von Hessen, *Contributo* 1975, 90–97 with plate 30) may be a crossband helmet. Crossband crowns are also that of St Candidus in St Maurice, Switzerland, (Furger, *Schweiz* 1996, 66) and that worn by Rudolf of Swabia around AD 1080 (Schramm, *Kaiser* 1983, 395).
- 43 Alföldy, "Helmform" 1934, 140ff.; Chaney, *Cult* 1970, 137ff.; Gussone and Steuer, "Diadem" 1984, 368ff and 371, on Charlemagne; Steuer, "Ringschwert" 1987, 196.
- 44 Ammianus 27.10.10f.; Kraft, "Helm" 1951.

- 45 *Laxardal saga* 21. Snorri Sturluson,, *Heimskringla, Haraldssona saga* 26; *Óláfs saga Helga* 213; 226; also *Hákonar saga Góða* 28.
- 46 Schramm, *Kaiser* 1983, 273; Gussone and Steuer, “Diadem” 1984, 371. Soldiers: see note 36.
- 47 Steenbock, *Prachteinband* 1965, 156ff. and fig. 89. Unlike Steenbock, one should date the book cover to Lothair’s own reign, so M. Schulze-Dörrlamm, Mainz, advises me, to whose kindness I owe many of the references here.
- 48 Ivory carving from Seitenstetten, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York; Schramm, *Kaiser* 1983, 335.
- 49 Schramm, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954; Schulze-Dörrlamm, “Zierelemente” 1998.
- 50 Schulze-Dörrlamm, “Zierelemente” 1998. The decorative elements over the *wala* may indeed imitate Constantine’s helmet but the architecture of browband and fore-to-aft band is altogether different from Constantine’s half-bowl helmet.
- 51 Jankuhn, “Herrschaftszeichen” 1954, 105–111; Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen* 1954, I, 230, and especially II, 396f. (unjustly criticized by Deér, “Byzanz” 1957). The openness, merely potential to Schramm, is actual in the openwork helmets of Trajan’s Column. More recent literature: Steuer, “Ringschwert” 1987, 196. Made in 1027: Schulze-Dörrlamm, “Zierelemente” 1998. Gussone and Steuer, “Diadem” 1984, 371, think of “neue Kronenformen wie Bügelkrone.”
- 52 Harold Godwinson, the last Anglo-Saxon king (AD 1066) also may have worn an open crossband-wale crown: witness a silver penny of the Lewes mint, BMC Anglo-Saxon 11.46. See also the gold penny of Edward the Confessor: Sutherland, *Coinage* 1973, no. 216, plate 20.
- 53 Golden helmet: *Gylfaginning* 51; *Skáldskaparmál* 17 (*gullhjál*m). Shared: Eliade, *Myth* 1963.

## 21

IRON AGE WARRIORS AND THE CIVILIZATIONS OF GREECE  
AND ROME

- 1 Chariotry: Drews, *Coming* 1988; Drews, *End* 1993. Stelae: Telegin-Mallory, *Stelae* 1994; see p. 57, this volume.
- 2 *Svadbā*, Maruts: *Ṛg-Veda* 7.56.13; Pokorny, *Wörterbuch* 1959, 883; Benveniste, *Vocabulaire* 1969, 331–332; Dumézil, *Destiny* 1970, 62ff; Stibbe *et al.*, *Lapis* 1980; Bollée, “Sodalities” 1981; Bremmer, “Suodales” 1982 (cf. AE 1996, 399); Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 55; 242; Mallory and Adams, *Encyclopedia* 1997, 631. Compare the warrior societies of North American Indians: Turney-High, *War* 1991, 211ff. Origin: Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 86ff.; 151ff.
- 3 *Ṛg-Veda* 1.85.8; Schmitt, *Dichtung* 1967, 61ff.; Schmitt, “Altertumskunde” 2000, 399.
- 4 Plato, *Nomoi* 637.d.8 (Celts being drinkers); Plutarch, *Marius* 19.3 (Germani); Herodian 6.3.7 (Persians). Schröder, “Indra” 1957; also the warrior Vrkodarah, “Wolf-belly,” *Bhagavadgita* 1.15; Plutarch, *Camillus* 5.44.6 (Gauls); Tacitus, *Germania* 14.2; *Histories* 2.21.1f.; 4.29.1; *brymskviða* 24. Ash, *Ordering* 1999, 42f.
- 5 Losers: Strabo 4.4.5. Courage: Aristotle, *Euthydemian Ethics* 1229.b.22f.; *Nicomachian Ethics* 1115b.24ff.; *Politics* 1327.b.25. Little to live for: Quintilian 3.14.55; *Panegyrici Latini* 12.24.2: “Francus...qui vitam pro victus sui vilitate contemnet”; Ammianus 21.13.13: “Feritate speque postrema ad perniciosam audaciam prompti.” See note 6. A late-Roman Platonist, Themistius, went so far as to suggest that the Roman emperor needed no soldiers at all: he could prevail with reason alone (*Oratio* 18.219b).
- 6 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 22.3 (no overgreat fury!); Polybios 2.35.2–3; Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.40.4; Strabo 4.4.2; Seneca, *De ira* 1.11.3–4; Tacitus, *Histories* 4.29: “temeritas inanis, inconsulta

- ira.” Dio 38.45.4–5; Herodian 6.3.7; Dexippos fragment 26.5 (Jacoby, FGH II A 100); Ammianus 15.4.11.
- 7 Ammianus 29–5.38: “sine sui respectu ruentes in pugnam”; Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.3.
- 8 *Iliad* 4.427–431.
- 9 Thucydides 1.6; Ammianus 23.6.75 (on Iranians as against Greeks). Hoplites: Estell, “Poetry” 2000, 6ff.; Stoll, “Gemeinschaft” 2002, 158ff.
- 10 Spartans: Plutarch, *Agesilaos* 34.
- 11 Thucydides 3.97ff.; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 5.18.13ff.
- 12 Thucydides 7.30; Connolly, *Greece* 1981, 49; Raeck, *Barbarenbild* 1981.
- 13 Italic and Germanic tribes still neighbors near the end of the second millennium BC: Fromm, “Lehnsforschung” 1999, 213–230, 216f.; Schmidt, “Isoglossen” 1999, 234f.; Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 390f.
- 14 Rome and Italy: *Aeneid* 7.641ff., cf. Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8, 356ff. (bears: 8.523). Fire-hardened spear-tips: Livy 1.32.12: “hasta praeusta.” Propertius 4.1.27f.: “Nec rudis infestis miles radiabat in armis, miscabant usta praelia nuda sude.” Half-naked: Alföldi, *Reiteradel* 1952, 50ff. Flowing hair: *Aeneid* 11.640ff. Open combat, single combat: Livy 1.24ff.; 42.47; Polybius 13.3; 36.9; Demandt, *Idealstaat* 1993, 252ff. Raucous song: *Aeneid* 7.705. Use of clichés here: Schweizer, *Vergil* 1967, 16f. Roman warbands: AE 1996, 339 (Stibbe *et al.*, *Lapis* 1980; Bremmer, “Suodales” 1982).
- 15 Demandt, *Idealstaat* 1993, 250ff.
- 16 Reckless attack, single combat: London, *Soldiers*, forthcoming. Hair: Miller, “Hair” 1998; auxiliaries: Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.442: “Nunc tonse Ligur, quondam per colla decore crinibus effusus toti praelate Comatae”; Maurice, *Strategikon* 12.B.1. Stand still: Caesar, *Civil War* 3.92, cf. von See, “Germane” 1981, 62–Caesar, of course, knew better; Arrian, *Ektaxis* 25; Ammianus 16.12.47: “quieti et cauti.” Maurice, *Strategikon* 2.17f.; 3.5.3; 12.B.14; compare Sun Tsu, fragment 6, in Ames, *Sun Tsu*, 1993, 247. Discipline as Roman warrior style: Horsmann, *Untersuchungen* 1991, 196.
- 17 Suetonius, *Augustus* 25.4: “Nihil autem minus perfecto duci quam festinationem temeritatemque convenire arbitrabatur” (i.e. haste and recklessness).
- 18 Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 210; idem, *Horace* 1942, 7ff.
- 19 Vegetius 1.1; Josephus, *Jewish War* 4.45; *Antiquities* 19–1.15 (122); Appian 4.1.3; Dio 38.45.4f. This cliché, found already in Aristotle (*Pol.* 1327.B.25), gets even more overworked during the third-century wars, especially in Dexippos: Bleckmann, *Reichskrise* 1992, 208f. *Panegyrici Latini* 12.24.2: “Romanum vero militem quem qualemque ordinat disciplina et sacramenti religio confirmat.” Also Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.479 (Titus), and the epigraph to this chapter; Stoll, *Integration* 2001, 38.
- 20 Decius: Dexippos 26.5. Celts: Strabo 4.195 (= 4.4.2); Livy 5.37.4 (387 BC); McCone, “Hund” 113; Birkhan, *Kelten* 1997, 968. Germani: Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.40.4. Vitruvius 6.1.3–10; Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.377; Florus 1.37: “Invicta illa rabies et impetus quem pro virtute barbari habent.” Meuli, “Maske” 1933, 1845f. Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.29: “inconsulta ira”; Appian 4.1.3; Dio 77.20.2; *Panegyrici Latini* 12.23.4: “tam prodigos sui”. Ammianus 16.12.30: “rabies et immodicus furor”; 16.12.36–47; 25.5.33; 26.7.11; 31.6.3: “petulantia”; 31.5.12: “vesania.” Jordanes, *Getica* 24: “beluina saevitia.” Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1.24.1: “gaudium comprobati,” cf. *Beowulf* 1539 *gebolgen*. Hamberg, “Germanen” 1936, 21–49, 39f.; Timpe, “Furor” 1998, 254f. For ecstatic warriors see also de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte* I, 1956, 94ff. Cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 4.47 on cohorts Sugambra “prompta ad pericula.”
- 21 Hartmann, *Römer* 1985, fig. 4.
- 22 Vulnerable: see p. 92. Advantage: Vegetius 2.14.3. Fight madly: *Aeneid* 12.499: “irarumque omnis effundit habenas”; Silius Italicus, *Punica* 5.158: “rabies”; 5.172: “furentem”; Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 7.551; 10.72; Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.63: “furore et rabie”; Josephus approves of frenzied attacks—if done by Romans (B.I.3.485: *προθυμία δαμιόνος*).

- Ammianus 16.12.37: “iretque in barbaros fremens.” Claudian, 7.73, claims for Honorius “quae tibi tum Martis rabies!” *Aeneid* 8.700–703; Dumézil, *Religion* 1970, 209; 390.
- Appian, *Civil War* 2.151: **ἔξ μάχας θηρώδεσιν ἑοίκοντα**.
- 23 Sallust, *Catiline* 53.3: “gloria belli Gallos ante Romanos fuisse.”
- 24 Pliny, *Panegyric* 23: “nam milites nihil a plebe habitu tranquillitate modestia differebant.” Tacitus, *Annals* 3.40: “nihil validum in exercitibus nisi quod externum”; *Histories* 2.32: “Germanos quod genus militum apud hostes atrocissimum sit.” Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 3.15. Ammianus 31.5.4; Demandt, *Spätantike* 1989, 265ff.
- 25 Roman ideal of manhood: Dahlmann, “Mannesideal” 1978; McCall, *Cavalry*, 1992. Lucan 7.432ff.: “redituraque numquam/libertas ultra Tigrim Rhenumque recessit/ac totiens nobis iugulo quaesita vagatur/Germanum Scythicumque bonum, nec respicit ultra/Ausoniam.” Haas, “Germanen” 1943/44, 111ff.; Horsfall, “Romulus” 1971.
- 26 *Aeneid* 7.641ff.; 9.603ff.; Silius Italicus 8.356ff.; Rehm, *Bild* 1932, 66ff.; 88f.; 96f. Virgil critical of this old Italy: Schweizer, *Vergil* 1967; Horsfall, “Romulus” 1971. Ethnological sources of Silius: Norden, *Urgeschichte* 1974, 165ff. Cf. Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 82: “Jedenfalls wussten noch die augusteischen Dichter sehr gut, dass in der alten Zeit die Krieger mit solchen Wolfsrachen ausgerüstet waren.” Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.419ff.
- 27 Germani: Strabo 4.4.2, taking his account of the early Celts “from the customs that hold fast to this day among the Germani”; *ibid.* 4.4.3: **θυμικὸν καὶ ταχύ πρὸς μάχην** Seneca, *Dialogi* 4.15.1; Tacitus, *Histories* 4.16.1: “Germani laeta bello gens”—compare Sallust, *Cat.* 40.1: “natura gens Gallica bellicosa.” Ammianus 16.12.46: “Alamanni bella alacriter ineuntes”; Haas, “Germanen” 1943/44, 111. Russell, *Germanization* 1994, 118, calls Germanic culture at the time “the most authentic Indo-European”—yet Sarmatians, Alans, Slavs, and Balts might equal them if we knew more about them. Insular Celts: Birkhan, “Germanen” 1970, 391; 439; Evans, “Lords” 1997. Sarmatians (“Scythians”): Lucan 7.432ff.; Vernadsky, “Hintergrund” 1951.
- 28 Caesar, *Gallie War* 1.48; 7.65; 8.13; 4.12–15.
- 29 Dio 38.45.4–5, going far beyond Caesar, *Gallie War* 1.40. Germani like Gauls: Dio 38.46.2.
- 30 Forms of discipline: Tacitus, *Histories* 3.21, “fidei quam iussorum patientior”; *Germania* 7, “exemplo potius quam imperio.” Main enemies: Tacitus, *Annals* 2.88, “[Arminius] florentissimum imperium lacessierit”; *Germania* 37.3, “Quippe pro regno Arsacis acrior est Germanorum libertas”; Strobel, “Chattenkrieg” 1987, 431.
- 31 Caesar, *Gallie War* 7.13.1; Aur. Victor, *Caesares* 3.14f.; Demandt, *Spätantike* 1989, 268ff.; Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 12ff.
- 32 Fought: Dio 77.13.2; Herodian 7.2.6. Looks: Dio 77.11.1–2; Herodian 7.1.12. *Panegyrici Latini* 8.16.4 accuses the Roman pretender Allectus of wearing Germanic dress and long hair. Rome resisted where she could, and though giving in to military needs, she stood up to the northerners culturally: laws forbade the wearing of long hair or furs in the city: *Codex Theod.* 14.10.4: “Maiores crines, indumenta pellium etiam in servis intra urbem sacratissimam praecipimus inhiberi” (AD 416).
- 33 Morillo, *Warfare* 1994, 2.
- 34 Thus the vision of Altheim, *Niedergang* I, 1952, 215. Altheim takes the sundry old warrior styles all together as one “style of history,” rightly perhaps; but he overlooks that they are older than Greece and Rome, and he overstates the role of horsemen (the Auxilia Palatina were foot).
- 35 Polybios 2.35.2–3 **λογιωμόν** Strabo 4.4.2; Dio 38.45.4–5; Dexippos FGH II A 100, F 26.5.
- 36 *Panegyrici Latini* 8.11: “Natio etiam tunc rudis et solis Pictis modo et Hibernis adsueta hostibus adhuc seminudis, facile Romanis armis signisque cesserunt.”
- 37 *De ira* 1.11.3–4.
- 38 Ammianus 21.13.13: “semiermes.”

- 39 Spearblade: like Stilicho's on his ivory diptych. Long-haired, blond, pretty-faced, young: Synesios, *De regno* 18.a.
- 40 See p. 66. Cf. Priscus, frag. 30 (Blockley).
- 41 Tacitus, *Germania* 14; Ammianus 16.12.60; Beowulf 2632ff.; see p. 117, this volume. Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 13ff.; 19; 25; 29; 36f.; 55; 58f.; 72; 84; 92; 102; 129.
- 42 Herodotus 5.78, see also p. 59, this volume. Plato, *Politeia* 667 c (cf. Jaeger, *Paideia* 1973, II, 332f.)—Germanic women and children, as in Plato, witnessed battles: Tacitus, *Germania* 7.2, with Much, *Germania* 1967, 162f.; see p. 64, this volume. Modern emphasis on morale in battle since Du Picq and Keegan: McCall, *Cavalry* 1992, 16ff.

## 22

## END AND AFTERGLOW

- 1 *Gallic War* 1.1.3 and 6.24. Tacitus, *Agricola* 11.5: "Nam Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse accepimus, mox segnitia cum otio intravit, amissa virtute pariter ac libertate. Quod Britannorum olim victis evenit: ceteri manent quales Galli fuerunt." This is borne out by the fact that they were not recruited into the horse guard of the Equites Singulares Augusti: Speidel, *Riding* 1994, 81ff. *Grágás* (about AD 1130): "Ef maþr gengr berserksgang. Oc varþar honvm þar fiorbavrg garþ (=banishment for three years)"; Blaney, "Berserkr" 1972, 150.
- 2 Contra: Lévi-Strauss, *Tropiques* 1977, 281ff.
- 3 Culture understood with E.O.Wilson, *Biophilia* 1984, 101, as "a product of the mind which can be interpreted as an image-making machine that recreates the outside world through symbols arranged into maps and stories."
- 4 Eliade, *Return* 1954; *Myth* 1963, 145.
- 5 Tacitus, *Germania* 7: "Velut deo imperante, quem adesse bellantibus credunt"; Much, *Germania* 1967, 160.
- 6 Contamine, *War* 1984, 183. Military display especially conservative: Estell, "Poetry" 2000, 52.
- 7 Piggot, *Europe* 1965, 22: "Two groups of cultures, literate innovators and non-literate conservators," lived side by side in Europe during the Roman Empire; cf. *ibid.* 226–260. An overly critical assessment of continuity in Indo-European warrior styles, equating conservative with static: Mallory, *Search* 1989, 110f.; better: Puhvel, *Mythology* 1987, 242. A model study of recurrent phenomena in ancient Germanic history across more than a thousand years is Wenskus's *Stammesbildung* 1961. War-lore continues from AD 200 to 1200 in naming weapons: Düwel, *Runeninschriften* 1998, 149. Ancient Germanic—medieval continuity: Höfler, "Kontinuitätsproblem" 1937; Kienast, "Treue" 1978, 320ff.; Beck *et al.*, *Germanen* 1998, 240ff.
- 8 Third-century aristocrats e.g. Werner, *Zierscheiben* 1941; Storgaard, "Aristocrats" 2003.
- 9 DeMarrais *et al.*, *Ideology* 1996.
- 10 Piggott, *Europe* 1965, 226–260. The Vikings did not change essential customs: Grönbech, *Kultur* 1997, II, 306. See also Rives, *Tacitus* 1999, 135ff.: "It is necessary to extrapolate. Yet it seems safe to do so, because in its main lines the picture remains fairly consistent over the centuries." Contra: Lund, "Germania" 1991, 2050ff., seeing continuity as "belanglose Parallelen."
- 11 *Fornmanna sögur* 3, 182f.; Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934, 172ff.
- 12 Wild Hunt: Höfler, *Geheimbünde* 1934; Kershaw, *God* 2000. Farther afield, in Tibet and Japan, images of ancient Indian Hayagrīva horse-hooded warriors, now god-like heroes, still dance the war dance. Indian warriors with horse-hoods: Herodotus 7.70. In June 2000 I

- noted a Hayagrīva “Horse Buddha” in Tibet’s Sera monastery who was still escaping destruction by Chinese occupiers; Linrothe, *Compassion* 1999, 85ff.; Widengren, *Feudalismus* 1969, 150f.; Alföldi, *Struktur* 1974, 96 (Gandharva).
- 13 *Beowulf* 671ff.; also 2506ff.; 2518f.
- 14 Bartoli’s drawings: Dzur, *Trajanssdule* 1941 (scene 36 is Bild 25f.). Civilis: Teitler, *Opstand* 1998, 20. Buck-warriors: Teitler, *Opstand* 1998, 22, taken up in 1950 by John Huizinga: Teitler, *Opstand* 1998, 11; see also 9; 40; 66.
- 15 Painting by Charles Gleyre, now in the Musée Cantonal des Beaux Arts, Lausanne, reproduced as a cover illustration to Birley, *Tacitus* 1999. See also the painting by P. Thumann, *Return of the Victorious Teutons*.
- 16 D.Baatz kindly informed me of the iron sculpture now in the Schinkel Pavilion of Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin, and of the Schwetzingen piece.
- 17 McNeill, *Keeping* 1955. At the beginning of the Iraqi war in 2003, men of the 3rd US infantry division stomped out a war dance, for dancing still arouses feelings like those of the ancient warriors. In the same war, the US Marine unit that drew fire in the town of Nasiriyah was “Timberwolf”: under the spell of animal sympathy another world, ancient and uncanny, still opens. Michael Crichton’s film *The Thirteenth Warrior* needlessly casts bear-warriors as foreign and ugly, yet it stirs powerfully. Knowledge, according to Plato (Seventh Letter, 344a), needs an inborn affinity.

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- CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, Berlin, 1863–.
- FGH F.Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Leiden, 1923–.
- IK Karl Hauck, *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit*, vols I.2–III.2, *Ikographischer Katalog*, München 1985–1989.
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- RGA *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd edn by H.Beck *et al.*, Berlin, 1973–.
- RIC H.Mattingly *et al.*, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, London, 1923–.
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