

GOTHIA AS DANISH/ENGLISH TRIBUTARY LAND
An example of heterarchy around the year A.D 1000

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ABSTRACT

The argumentative theme of this book is the fact that around the year A.D 1000 there was a heterarchy with constantly changing distribution of power in Scandinavia. According to the opinion presented by me in the book, this is to be expected, since a consistent administration and rule is dependent on competent administrative machinery, something that was supplied only by the church. In one way or another, the kings and chieftains of Norway, Götaland and parts of the lake Mälaren district were dependent both on the Danish kings, Harald Bluetooth and Sven Forkbeard, and on the Danish/English king Canute the Great. In the more distant wilderness, there were instead petty kings. Harald and his successors did all meet claims to the authority from German emperors. This coincides with the claims of the Hamburg/Bremen archdiocese to run the ecclesiastical organisation of Scandinavia and the imperial claims to supremacy over the church.

In this book, the presence of villages called *Tegneby* along the East Coast of the Skagerrak, along the route to the Mälaren district and up to the Gulf of Finland is discussed. These villages are ascribed to Harald Bluetooth as part of his route control stretching from Hedeby to the northwest Mälaren district and the Gulf of Finland. These villages existed at about the same time as the "trelleborgs" (specific ring fortresses), i.e. shortly before A.D 1000. It is proposed that, while king Harald was taking control over Denmark, these fortresses functioned as his beach-heads on the Danish islands and the Scanian Sound coast. Runic stones with the titles *harda godan thegn* and *dræng* in the two Götä provinces and on Jutland, respectively, are ascribed to members of Canute the Great's thingalid in England. During this period, no sign of a Swedish kingdom is to be seen in any source. There might have been temporary alliances between Swedish and Geatic tribes, but none that lasted. Also the geographic concepts were different, and did not always refer to territorial areas, but could just as well refer to base systems used by a chieftain. Therefore, the name *Gothia* is in this book defined as the central parts of the two present Götä provinces and the route leading from them to the northwest Mälaren district.

The medieval ideal prince, represented in theory as the Rex Iustus striving for justice and peace on Earth, was irreconcilable with the viking theoretical and practical ideal to capture property, defeat opponents in battle and hence provide carrion-eating animals with plenty of food from enemies brought down in combat. In this prehistoric system of external appropriation, there was no naturally consistent right of possession, independent on the prospect of defending ones property. The right to assign land was limited and that kind of assignment needed the approval of kinsmen.

Not until the ecclesiastical organisation, with its consistency independent of who held an office, was completed 350 years later, could the Scandinavian kings get a more consistent control over their lands by cooperating with the church.

Keywords: Heterarchy, A.D 1000, power, Scandinavia, administration, kings, chieftains, Harald Bluetooth, Canute the Great, Tegneby, runic stones, thegns, drængs, property, ecclesiastical organisation.