The Dispersal of Gold

Material and Figural Traits of the Gold Foil Figures from Västra Vång

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ABSTRACT

Gold Foil Figures or *guldgubbar* (henceforth GFFs) are precious metal artefacts from the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. This master's essay offers a new approach to GFFs. As opposed to the established understanding of GFFs as representational images with real or mythic referents, belonging to an aristocratic milieu, this essay instead attends to GFFs in terms of their material and Figural traits. The material for this study consists of 42 GFFs from the find site of Västra Vång, Blekinge, Sweden. A comprehensive presentation of this artefact material is a secondary aim of this essay.

With the aid of a neomaterialist theoretical apparatus that draws heavily on the work of Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Wilhelm Worringer, the 42 GFFs undergo two separate analyses. In the first, the material traits expressed in the sequence of GFF production and deposition is studied in terms of a *chaîne opératoire*. In the second, I attend to the non-significatory expressive qualities of form and expression, or Figural traits, belonging to these 42 GFFs within the wider artistic milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation.

I conclude that GFFs were as a rule artefacts made for purposes of immediate disposal, not display, as a mode of dispersing gold. Västra Vång’s GFFs offer several indications that handling between the cutting operation and deposition was minimal, such as the fresh, unworn edges. The thin, brittle foils are ill suited to display. Approaching the designs on these artefacts as various sets of Figural traits being expressed allows me to contextualise the GFFs within the wider artistic milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation.

New territorial rhythms can be established only as certain elements are freed from a settled state, and made to act together with new elements, in new terrains. GFFs bring about new territorial rhythms of form and expression to gold matter, gold made to circulate as it becomes deterritorialised from a monetary function within the Roman economy. A flow of gold is extended as gold is brought to Scandinavia from continental economies. The influx of this flow of gold is not contained to an élite social stratum. Individuals in possession of minute amounts of gold returned to Scandinavia, having acquired gold as payment for involvement in military operations on the continent. This ownership of gold may have hindered their harmonious reintegration into a society based on other economic principles. The GFFs emerge as a vector of dispersing gold. The artistic expression of Figural traits is equally energised by movements of de- and reterritorialisation. Understanding that the Figural traits expressed on the GFFs from Västra Vång are part of a wider artistic milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation, alongside other systematised expressions making up parts of a collective assemblage of enunciation, makes their appearance on artefacts that were deposited immediately upon their manufacture easier to grasp. The particular procedures of miniaturisation allowed for an acceleration of the expression of variation in the conjunction of a flow of artistic expression onto a flow of gold matter. The dispersive handling of gold must be traced to both the material premises and the expressive artistic ones. Gold is not chosen because it is precious, or because of what it connotes, but because it is available, because the artisan smith is attendant to its traits as a metal matter.

*Keywords:* Gold Foil Figures, *guldgubbar*, Västra Vång, Blekinge, Scandinavian Late Iron Age, Vendel Period, Animal Style Ornamentation, Precious Metal Crafts (Gold), Metalworking sites, Figural Art, Chaîne Opératoire, Neomaterialism, Deleuze, Guattari, Worringer.
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A lot of people are owed gratitude for their direct and indirect assistance in the chaîne opératoire through which this master’s essay has come about. First, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Kerstin Cassel, for her patient encouragement and sage advice.

Academic writing involves a great deal of finding out about things which one did not previously know about. Such discoveries are sometimes pleasurable, and at other times very much not so. Finding out that some of my sources have ties to archaeologists involved in Nazi atrocities was a horrifying discovery. Of course, awareness is preferable to remaining ignorant, and finding this out before the completion of the text made it possible for me to devote some space to the issue (for this discussion, see section 2.2). I am especially thankful to Alix Thoeming for reaching out to me with advice on this matter, as well as for sharing with me her PhD dissertation on Hedeby and other settlements around the Scandinavian Late Iron Age Baltic Sea. Thoeming’s work provided an instructive example of how to responsibly engage with materials with unambiguous ties to Nazi archaeology.

Thanks to Mikael Henriksson and to everyone who I had the pleasure of working with during my internship at Blekinge museum in 2017. Thanks to all my fellow diggers of the 2017 and 2019 seasons. Thanks especially to Andreas Svensson and Paola Derudas for trenchside camaraderie and many fruitful discussions on how to interpret the evidence during the second week of the 2019 campaign.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The plethora of exquisitely crafted gold artefacts from the Scandinavian Late Iron Age has captivated scholars as well as the public for generations. Gold bracteates and gilded grave goods are frequently reproduced in print, and the three ornate Migration Period gold collars are among Sweden’s prized national treasures. However, the Gold Foil Figures (henceforth GFFs) have long remained outside of the spotlight, and only in the last few decades have they emerged as a key category of interest.

GFFs are thin ornamented sheets of gold metal, about 1-2 cm² in size. Typically, GFFs are from the 6th or 7th century CE, although there are outliers dating to the 6th through 10th century CE. To date, more than three thousand have been found from sites all over Scandinavia. The latest of the 42 sites of GFF finds is Västra Vång, Hjortsberga parish, in the southern Swedish province of Blekinge. With a history of GFF finds stretching back, at the very least, to the 16th century CE, it is not a newly encountered type of artefact as such. However, since the 1980s there has been an exponential growth in the number of GFF finds and find sites. Following this drastic change in the material, the question of how the GFFs are to be interpreted has gained in importance. In these interpretations, the GFFs are read as representational icons, keyed to mythological narratives known from later source texts or to an ideology of aristocratic lordship.

But could there not be other ways to approach the topic of GFFs, that do not reduce these accomplished art works to mere illustrations?

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this essay is to approach the study of GFFs from a new direction. As per my theoretical apparatus (see chapter 4), the questions posed to the material are not ones of what GFFs signify or represent. In this case, the GFFs will not be approached as representative or representational icons, but rather as objects functioning together with various flows of people, of precious metal, of artistic styles, and so forth; taking place between Scandinavia and other parts of Europe during the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. Furthermore, the GFFs will be interpreted in terms of their Figural and material traits, qualities of the artefacts and the manifold interactions with metal matter through which they come about (Deleuze 2005:108-13).

The discovery of GFFs at Västra Vång from 2013 and onwards constitutes an important development. With a total of 67 GFFs as of May 2020, Västra Vång is the third most plentiful GFF find outside of Bornholm, and thus far the only major discovery since that of Uppåkra, Scania, Sweden in 2001. Excavation is still ongoing, with the 42 GFFs of the 2013 and 2017 seasons - which are the subject of the present study - being joined by an additional 25 GFFs in 2018 and 2019. A secondary purpose of this study is thus to provide an in-depth presentation of the majority of the GFF material from this site.

• What traits are present in the GFF material from Västra Vång?
• What can be observed by attending to the process of their manufacture and deposition in terms of material traits?
• How does the expressions of Figural traits on Västra Vång’s GFFs relate to wider patterns in the total GFF corpus, and in the artistic milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation as a whole?
Can the framework of material and Figural traits offer a new way to study GFF motifs, that breaks away from iconography and representation?

These are the research questions that the present study poses to the material.

1.2 Scope of the Study

While finds dating to earlier as well as later periods are present in the material from Västra Vång, this study is limited to finds from the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, centering those of the Vendel Period. The chronological periods are defined in Table 1. The Migration Period is not always considered as part of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, given the many clear disparities between the material culture of Migration Period and Vendel Period Scandinavia (Mannering 2006:6; Helmbrecht 2011:19). But continuities are also present, both in craft production and ornamentation. Especially as my material dates to the 6th or 7th century (see chapter 3), in this essay the Migration Period is treated as an equal part of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. My use of Scandinavian Late Iron Age is to emphasise, since an English language text such as this might be read by others than my immediate Scandinavian colleagues, that Iron Age refers to a later point in time than is the case in other parts of Europe.

In research on the ornamental art of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, the Viking Age is typically studied separately from that of the earlier two periods. This is especially true for work concerned with the formal elements of style. With the GFF material from Västra Vång dating to the 6th or 7th century, I consequently draw on the work regarding the Animal Style Ornamentation of the Migration Period and Vendel Period, leaving the later Viking Age styles of Animal Style Ornamentation aside. This is not to say that continuities could not be observed in the GFF material, but this falls outside the scope of the present study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of period</th>
<th>Corresponds to</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400—550 CE Migration Period</td>
<td>Early Germanic Iron Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>550—800 CE Vendel Period</td>
<td>Merovingian Period, Late Germanic Iron Age, Early Medieval Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800—1050 CE Viking Age</td>
<td>Early Medieval Period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 1. Chronological periods of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age.

1.3 Composition of Studied Material

The material for this study consists of the 42 GFFs discovered at Västra Vång during the excavations of 2013 and 2017. While this essay was originally intended to cover Västra Vång’s GFF finds in their entirety, an additional 25 GFFs were discovered, 1 in 2018, and 24 in 2019, before this manuscript was completed. These will have to be left out of the present study for practical reasons. Up until 2018, GFFs had only been found within the area designated RAÄ 306, highlighted in yellow in Fig. 1. In 2018, a GFF was found in RAÄ 121, highlighted in blue in Fig. 1. In 2019, additional GFFs were discovered in both areas, of which 14 in RAÄ 306 and 10 in RAÄ 121. Since I limit the study to the GFFs from 2013 and 2017, I consequently only discuss finds made within RAÄ 306. The additional RAÄ 306 material from 2019 does not appear to fundamentally change
the composition of the GFF material from this part of the site, which appears to remain composed exclusively of single-Figure GFFs. Inclusion of the RAÄ 121 material would have had significant impact on the study of Figural traits, since these finds include the first coupled-Figure GFFs from Västra Vång.

In the text of the essay, the distinct designs resulting from the stamping of GFFs are referred to by an alphanumeric designation of their respective dies. There are 21 distinct die designs employed to make 41 of the 42 GFFs subject to this analysis. There are 17 designs unique to Västra Vång, which are designated as VV1 through VV15, with VV3 and VV4 being further divided into VV3A/ VV3B, and VV4A/VV4B respectively, since, as discussed in section 5.1, previous work on the GFFs from Västra Vång had failed to discern the existence of these two sets of highly similar pairs of dies. Aside from the 17 designs first discovered at Västra Vång, an additional four dies previously encountered at Sorte Muld and Eketorp are designated by their established identifiers as SM195, EKA, EKB, and EKC, respectively.

The 42nd GFF is not stamped with a die, but instead cut out of plain gold foil. Mikael Henriksson refers to this GFF as “Västra Vång utskuren figur 1”, as it is the first and so far only cut-out GFF found at Västra Vång (Henriksson 2018:12). This designation is here translated and shortened to VVC1, standing for Västra Vång Cut-out Figure 1. This allows me to both acknowledge the singular way in which this GFF was manufactured, but simultaneously makes clear that it features in my analysis at the same level as the stamped GFFs.

The catalogue in chapter 10 provides a full accounting of the individual GFFs and their designs. Each GFF has been illustrated by the author.

**Fig. 1.** The archaeological landscape of Västra Vång. The area to the left, highlighted in yellow, is RAÄ 306. The area to the right, highlighted in blue, is RAÄ 121. After Henriksson 2019.
1. 4 Method

Where previous studies of GFFs have, as we shall see in chapter 2 below, largely been concerned with GFFs as representing mythical narratives and/or a prevailing aristocratic ideology of lordship, in this essay my ambition is to centre the archaeological data, the artefactual material, that is the object of the analysis. The question to be posed is not what something stands for or depicts, but what the material can tell us, in its own right. This is not a call for doing away with the subjective in favour of that which objectively exists, but the very opposite. An affirmative, data-driven method is one which acknowledges that research is something which occurs in the interplay between the researcher and the researched (Haraway, 1991c:198-9; Deleuze & Guattari 2004:4-5, 13-20, 123-64).

As was described earlier, the aim of this essay is to attend to two kinds of traits of GFFs – material as well as Figural. This has methodological implications for the present study, which is divided into two separate analyses.

There is in fact a method, well established in archaeology, that approaches material culture not as something representationally meaningful but in terms of a multiplicity of processes happening at different intensities as material bodies interact. That method is chaîne opératoire. In the words of Linda Hurcombe, "The operational chain follows a time and space sequence to investigate different steps in the life cycles of objects" (2007:41). This is the method chosen for the analysis centering the material traits. In chapter 5, I employ the chaîne opératoire approach to attend to the operational acts that, as they happen in sequence, bring about the GFFs from Västra Vång (Hurcombe 2007:64, 141-4, 157).

In chapter 6, I conduct an analysis of the GFF designs. By turning my attention to the Figural traits – formal elements of expression which are not assigned a representational significance – I conduct a likewise data-driven, affirmative investigation into what is brought together on the surfaces of the GFFs from Västra Vång. At the level of Figural traits, I can note commonalities with Animal Style Ornamentation outside of those which assume a shared narrative content. Attending to such commonalities as traits in a rhizome is a departure from more traditional analyses of unitary meaning, but this does not mean it is methodologically unprincipled. As Simon O’Sullivan writes, "mapping the rhizomatic connections an art practice might or might not make between different milieus does not necessarily involve a lack of rigour. Indeed thinking art rhizomatically in this sense involves a more careful and thorough thinking through of art’s realm of effectivity" (O’Sullivan 2006:18).

Lennart Karlsson makes the point that in the study of ornamentation, providing an appropriate, well-realised set of reference visuals is a core methodological concern (Karlsson 1983:93). I would like to extend this further. Making detailed drawings of the 42 GFFs has served as a research method, a discerning interpretative operation that seeks to affirm, and dwell on/in, the artefacts. Much like the text of the essay that at once constitutes both my analytical process and a communication thereof, these images both result from close engagements with my material, and serve to communicate my understanding of the composition of the GFFs and their ornamented surfaces. Both my prose and my drawings contain traits chosen for aesthetic reasons, informed by aesthetic conventions in the composition of English language academic text and appropriate visuals, as well as my personal wishes (conscious and not) to create text and illustrations worth reading and looking at. In works on GFFs, irrespective of the intended audience, accompanying drawings or photographs are for the most part magnifications, not images at a scale of 1:1. My drawings are likewise scaled up, and do not conform to a standard scale throughout the text but grow or shink in size as the argument demands. The exception to this is the catalogue, where each GFF is depicted at a scale of both 3:1 and 1:1. My drawings include a contrasting dark brown
outline which exaggerates the depth of the stamped design. This is an aesthetic choice, but it is one that is equally informed by my wanting to make pictures of the GFFs that make their motifs clearly visible even at their actual size.

In making these images, I have drawn on my familiarity with the artefacts, having handled them or seen them up close at many occasions during my internship at Blekinge Museum in the autumn of 2017, but I have also made heavy use of high-resolution photographs. While I hope that my illustrations can be a help in further research into GFFs, an artefact type with minuscule ornamentation that photographs poorly, I want to stress particularly in light of the theories of non-representational art discussed in chapter 4, that these are my interpretations, and that the interested reader is strongly encouraged to look into the references of my drawings – the 42 GFFs currently part of the collections of Blekinge Museum in Karlskrona – just as they would with the works cited in the text.

1.5 STRUCTURE

This study is divided into seven main chapters and two auxiliary chapters. This section concludes the introduction. Chapter two discusses the previous research regarding GFFs, Animal Style Ornamentation, and the study of Scandinavian Late Iron Age iconography, noting the shortcomings of the latter. Chapter three offers a more detailed discussion of the dating and the find context of the GFFs from Västra Vång. Next, my theoretical framework is presented and argued for in chapter four, a neomaterialist approach characterised by attention to the material and figural traits to avoid the problems noted in the preceding chapter. The processes through which these GFFs were produced and deposited are analysed in terms of a chaîne opératoire in chapter five, where I also note the parallels to other precious metal crafts of the first millennium CE. The last chapter of the analysis is chapter six, which has an in-depth study of the various Figural traits displayed by Västra Vång’s GFFs as its subject. The conclusions I draw from these analyses are then presented in chapter seven. The remaining two chapters supplement these key parts of the study. A summary in Swedish is given in chapter eight. Finally, chapter ten is a catalogue of the GFFs found at Västra Vång in the 2013 and 2017 seasons. My drawings of the GFFs accompany the text of the catalogue.
2 Previous Research

This chapter provides a general outline of the history of research regarding GFFs, including the excavation and interpretation thereof.

A brief history of GFF finds, and the interpretation of their find contexts, is the topic of 2.1. The next section, 2.2, discusses Animal Style Ornamentation, and the turn from typologies of formal style elements to iconographical interpretations of pictorial contents. 2.3 details the interpretations that have accrued to GFF designs specifically, and how this should be contextualised within a wider iconographical turn. Section 2.4 then summarises the chapter and discusses the implications for the present study.

2.1 Unearthing Gold Foil Figures

From the late 1980s onwards, the GFF material has grown explosively, in regards both to absolute numbers of GFFs, as well as the number of sites where they have been found, resulting in a newfound fascination with these perplexing artefacts. This might easily overshadow that the history of post-Iron Age encounters with GFFs is in fact significantly longer (Rognstad Tangen 2010:8–15). The site with the largest number of GFFs is located on Bornholm and now called Sorte Muld, i.e. "Black Earth" in Danish. However, the site is also known by the older name Guldageren, "the Field of Gold", a name that can be confirmed to have been established by 1569 if not earlier. At least some of the finds giving rise to the name later found their way to the collections of the Danish Royal Art Chamber in Copenhagen. It is here that they begin to receive scholarly attention. Otto Sperling is the first to publish a work on GFFs, De nummorum bracteatorum et cavorum nostræ ac superioris ætatis origine & progressu, in 1700, there describing them as a form of square coinage. In 1725 Jacob von Melle would be the next to write about the odd gold finds from Bornholm (Andréasson 1995:61; Lamm 2004:115–6; Watt 2004:167; Rognstad Tangen 2010:12).

Guldgubbar is a name this artefact category has borne since at least the last decade of the 18th century, when Swedish historian Nils Henric Sjöborg adopted the moniker that the population of Ravlunda, Scania, used for these artefacts. Ravlunda was not the site of the first discovery of GFFs by practitioners of the historian’s art, as described above, and was not even the first discovery site located outside of Bornholm – GFFs had by then also been found at Kongsvik in Norway in the 1740s. Regardless, guldgubbar has subsequently become the established term not just in Swedish but (as gullgubber) in Danish and Norwegian as well (Andréasson 1995:8; Rognstad Tangen 2010:12; Watt 2016:63).

The word guldgubbar could be literally translated as gold-men or gold-oldsters. A 1942 publication on gold bracteates, which GFFs were long perceived as a subcategory of, translates guldgubbar in the English summary rather charmingly as "gold fogies" which appropriately captures the tenor of the Swedish word (Öberg 1942). Gubbe is a word in frequent use in everyday Swedish, meaning old man, with an informal, derogatory and/or affectionate tinge. Looking deeper into the etymology of the word, according to the Swedish Academy Dictionary (SAOB), gubbe is an old word for something small, round, or stacked, with the distinctly gendered modern day meaning being a later development. Today, this older sense of gubbe does not see much use outside of some regional dialects of the Swedish language, save for the word for strawberry, which is jordgubbe – that is, earth-gubbe (SAOB: gubbe, 1929). Querying the SAOB for guldgubbe also shows several instances of guldgubbe used as a name for various plants with yellow or red flowers, but this usage is in all but a few cases listed as having died out by the early 20th century (SAOB: guldgubbe, 1 a–d, 1929). The point of this etymological exercise is not to rebuke anyone for finding the word imprecise, sexist, or in the wrong register; but to underscore that the name
Fig. 2. Distribution of GFF find sites. The position of Västra Vång is indicated by a yellow rhombus. The other sites are marked in red. Illustration by the author.
might originally have had little, if anything, to do with any interpretation of the gender expressions of GFF motifs (cf Back Danielsson 2007: 46-53, 70-7). Instead, it might have been arrived upon due to GFFs appearing, small, bent, and attention-grabbing, out of the soil (Lamm 2004:60).

With GFFs being an artifact category thus far exclusive to Scandinavia, they long lacked an agreed-upon name in English. As research is increasingly conducted and published in English, several competing Anglophone designations have arisen; such as "gold foil plaques" (Stamsø Munch 2003), and "figural gold foils" (Lamm 2004). That "Gold Foil Figure", which in this essay is shortened to GFF, has won out as the generally preferred term, is likely to be an effect of the influential Danish archaeologist Margrethe Watt’s use of this wording in her English language writings since at least the late 1990s (e. g. Watt 2004 and cited sources). I have not been able to determine if Watt is the first to use this phrasing, however. Some researchers have expressed a desire to also reword the Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian nomenclature, finding the distinctly masculine connotations of gubbe to be misleading or else finding the word somewhat cutesy and out of style for scientific discourse (e. g. Hansson 2012:5; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:6). The three-letter acronym GFF was employed on site in Västra Vång for the handling of these finds. My own choice to adhere to the established term is most of all informed by my prior trench-side engagements with these artefacts, although the synergies with Deleuze’s theorising regarding the Figure, discussed in chapter 4 below, provides further cause.

While the history of GFF finds could be said to extend all the way to the 16th century, GFFs long remained rare and incidental, receiving little attention compared to more common categories of materials, such as gold bracteates or jewellery. In 1943, Mogens Mackeprang published a study of the 100 GFFs which at that point made up the entirety of the GFF corpus (Lamm 2004:118-9). Only in the latter half of the 20th century did this begin to change, with the discovery of 25 GFFs at Helgö, Uppland, Sweden in 1954, followed by the finds of 19 GFFs at Mære, Nord-Trøndelag, Norway; as well as 15 GFFs at Eketorp, Öland, Sweden; both of which occurred in 1966. But it was a return to Guldageren that instigated the modern interest in GFFs. Excavations at Sorte Muld, Bornholm, Denmark in 1986 and 1987 resulted in the unprecedented discovery of 2345 GFFs clustered inside a 500m² area. By 2016 further excavations have increased the material to more than 2500 GFFs, which despite further discoveries at other sites, makes up 80% of the total GFFs (Lamm 2004: 43, 118-21; Rognstad Tangen 2010:13-4; Watt 2016:65).

In recent years, many researchers have subscribed to the idea of the GFFs belonging to the aristocratic hall (see e. g. Lamm 2004:130, Söderberg 2005:179-83; Back Danielsson 2007:129, 202-3, 214-21; Helmbrecht 2011:263-9). In the hall, GFFs would either be deposited as offerings, or fastened to the roof-bearing posts of the building. That GFFs were glued onto wood was first proposed in 1899 by Gabriel Adolf Gustafson, who considered the sewing of GFFs onto clothing as the most likely use (Gustafson 1900:92-3). While the GFFs found at Mære in 1969 had a post hole context, these were interpreted as depositions in connection to wooden idols or a high-seat structure (Rognstad Tangen 2010:25, 61). It is with the 1994 discovery of GFFs in a post hole of a Vendel Period long house at Slöinge, Halland, Sweden, that a case was made for the GFFs being on display as part of the furnishing of the élite residence, with reference to the golden roof of the hall Heorot featured in Beowulf, as well as to the hallowed status accounted to the high-seat pillars in the saga narratives of the settling of Iceland (Callmer 1997:16-8; Fabech 1997:149; Lönnroth 1997:34). The subsequent discovery a decade later of over a hundred GFFs in the post holes of a house sequence at Uppåkra, Scania, Sweden, was interpreted along the same lines. That the GFFs are found inside the post holes, beneath the posts, is suggested to be because the GFFs would have been affixed to the posts, and "[w]hen the posts were replaced during rebuilding of the house, the figures were removed and allowed to fall down into the hole created by the post removal" (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:23). Honey and fat are mentioned as possible adhesives (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:42).
GFFs or traces of their manufacture are taken to be indications of aristocratic cult architecture. Place names are routinely given a crucial role as offering further confirmation of pre-Christian religious importance (Fabech 1994:170-1, 174; Lam 2004:59, 67, 105; Victorin 2013:53-4). Striking in its general absence, however, is an in-depth discussion of the landscapes of power, both in terms of over whom and what areas this authority was exercised, or in proposing any interpretation about characteristics common to GFF find sites but absent at sites of similar assumed sacral importance. This is a recurring trait of how Scandinavian Late Iron Age landscapes are approached by archaeologists (Cassel 2008:71-3; Skre 2010:220-2; von Carnap-Bornheim 2010:113; Høilund Nielsen 2014:20, 22-3; Löfving forthcoming).

The GFFs are often offered up as proof of the drastic shift in cult practice that Charlotte Fabech has proposed as happening at some point in the 6th century. According to Fabech, religious activity, which had up until then taken place at wetland locations, moved into the hall on the magnate farm. Fabech’s theory has been highly influential in the interpretation of GFF finds, which in several instances have been found inside houses dating to the 6th century or later. In Fabech’s three-tiered hierarchy of settlements, GFFs belong to the middle level, meaning that settlement sites with finds of GFFs are taken to be regional or superregional centres (Fabech 1997:145-9; 1999:456). This model is often repeated verbatim and rarely properly cross-examined when brought into contact with the archaeological data. Significant categories of artefacts from the Scandinavian Late Iron Age have to be put aside for the unidirectional movement from wetland to hall to appear, as has been argued primarily by Lotte Hedeager and Torun Zachrisson (Omark 2006:40). A review by Johan Omark of the applicability and use of Fabech’s writings in the study of Uppåkra has shown that while the find of GFFs at Uppåkra was made in an indoor setting, in a building that also contained other precious metal and glass artefacts, there is otherwise scant correspondence between the archaeological data and the model. Omark shows how archaeologists, despite noting these inconsistencies, nevertheless persist in proposing that cult practice at Uppåkra changed in accordance with the Fabechian model, in spite of the evidence that contradicts it (Omark 2006:42-7).

The emphasis on the ritual practices conducted by the élite in a hall setting easily gives the impression that GFFs are exclusively found within the built environment. While some of the more notable finds have indeed been found in post holes or floor layers of long houses, this is not universal (Back Danielsson 2007:194-5; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:14-6). Significantly, the Sorte Muld GFFs are concentrated to a part of the site which lack any remains of buildings, which instead cluster elsewhere at the site. A similar pattern can be seen at Eketorp, and at the Danish find site of Lundeborg, Funen (Andréasson 1995:41-2; Helmbrecht 2011:263, 266; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:9). As a consequence of the immense size of the Sorte Muld material, less than 20% of all GFFs can be tied to buildings. That this does not impact the characterisation of the contexts in which GFFs are found, is another example of the tendency Omark observes of preferring the model over the data (e. g. Hed Jakobsson 2003:171; Söderberg 2005:181-3, 223; Back Danielsson 2007:223-5).

2. 2 GOING OUT OF STYLE? FROM TYPOLOGY TO ICONOGRAPHY

Before we can turn to the interpretations put forward for the understanding of GFF motifs specifically, we should familiarise ourselves with the trends in archaeological research into Scandinavian Late Iron Age ornamentation more generally. This allows me to note both the iconographical interpretations which today are common to interpretations of GFFs and other artefacts, but also the older research into typologies of styles and their formal elements, the results of which I believe to have great potential for the interpretation of GFFs, that up until now have not been noticed. To this end, I briefly review the history of archaeological interest in
Animal Style Ornamentation, concentrating on three broad moments: the early focus on typologies of style, the impact of Nazism during and after the Second World War, and finally Karl Hauck and the iconographical turn. The later Viking Age styles of Animal Style Ornamentation are left out of this discussion as discussed in chapter 1 above. When engaging with artefacts in Animal Style Ornamentation, it is in my opinion essential that we do not continue to hide, but instead critically engage with, the lingering impact of involvement of archaeologists with the German Nazi Regime. This section provides the opportunity for discussing this issue, as part of my review of the wider field in which the interpretation of GFFs take place.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Animal Style Ornamentation was seen as offering valuable information on chronology and periodisation, on the nature and scope of exchange between native and foreign populations, on which arts and crafts were practiced at certain points in time, and so on. What it could not elucidate on, however, was symbolism or religious views, since Animal Style Ornamentation had a purely decorative use, without any form of content or message. This latter point was argued with particular force by Sophus Müller, whose late 19th century work is among the first systematical investigations into Animal Style Ornamentation (Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:16-7). Consequently, the definition of particular styles or style phases, and how these related to one another, were the questions animating this period of research into Animal Style Ornamentation. Determination of the origins in space and time of a certain style was likewise important, particularly as most of these scholars shared an understanding of art styles degenerating over time from an origin that was also its pinnacle. (Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:20-6, 30-2). Disagreements on these issues, as well as on methodological principles, was cause for spirited debate and long-lasting rivalries. Today, these are largely settled questions, with the exception of whether Salin’s Style I and II are held to be contemporaneous or not, on which consensus is not fully shared between Scandinavian and Continental researchers, although no longer debated with such vitriol as previously.

The study of formal elements of style has not disappeared in its entirety, but has today lost the central position which it enjoyed up until the 1960s. More recent studies on formal style elements of the Migration Period and Vendel Period in the tradition of Bernhard Salin have primarily been conducted by German scholars like Günther Haseloff, who is to be discussed further down in this section. Lennart Karlsson is an important exception to this, whose extensive critical review of this older tradition also serves unintentionally to bookend it (Karlsson 1983; Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:52-61). While the later turn to iconography in studies of Animal Style Ornamentation, which will be discussed below, has had great impact on the interpretation of GFFs, the same cannot be said for the older work on typologies of styles and their formal elements. My bringing this work into contact with the GFFs allows me to note striking Figural parallels that have heretofore gone unnoticed.

Before moving on to the interest in iconography which characterises current writing on Animal Style Ornamentation, there are other aspect of the history of this field that must be addressed. According to Karen Høilund Nielsen and Siv Kristoffersen, archaeology in the post-war years was characterised by "an at times extreme puritanism", one in which "[t]he notable scholars in Animal Style research after the Second World War had one thing in common: the fear of their interpretations being knowingly or unknowingly misused" (Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:16, 48; my translation). I do not as such doubt that expressions of such a concern may well have proliferated – although curiously Høilund Nielsen and Kristoffersen provide not a single quote to this effect – but it is not clear to me why we should assume that these expressions of fear were universally genuine, or reflecting a principled commitment. It seems more apt to frame this, as is done by Kerstin Cassel in her discussion of the post-war era, as a fear of having one’s work read in light of a research history in which Nazism had played a part (Cassel 2008:13). In distinction from Høilund Nielsen and Kristoffersen, I consider the main failing of post-war archaeology
not to be *too much concern* for the ties between archaeology and Nazism, but the exact opposite. To this end I will now touch on the lingering impact of Nazism on the field of Animal Style Ornamentation.

In Germany, not only had the archaeologist Gustaf Kossinna been a significant influence on the Nazis, with his aggressively nationalist, racist, and white supremacist writings on German prehistory, but additionally, some archaeologists involved themselves with the Nazi regime after the NSDAP’s rise to power (Steinel 2009:42-6). One of these was Herbert Jankuhn, who rose to prominence within the *Ahnenerbe* (German for "Ancestral inheritance"), an archaeology task force within the Waffen-SS, and carried out excavations in Hedeby under its auspices. After the war, Jankuhn was allowed to return to archaeology and went on to become a central actor in German post-war archaeology on the basis of his wartime research. I mention this not only because Jankuhn is cited uncritically – including his 1930s and 40s work – in some of my sources (e.g. Hauck 19885a; Helmbrecht 2011; Pesch 2015), but because one particular scholar is central not only to the present study and the field of Animal Style Ornamentation research as a whole, but also to Jankuhn’s reentry into archaeology: namely, Günther Haseloff. Haseloff is among the scholars Høilund Nielsen and Kristoffersen portray as being united by a shared fear of their work being used maliciously by Nazis (2002:48). If this is a concern he in fact expressed – which I have found no indication of in the works I have read – then it clearly did not translate into practice. Haseloff was one of the character witnesses Jankuhn called on at his denazification trial, where the exculpatory statements given by Haseloff and his fellow witnesses resulted in Jankuhn being judged to have been only a "fellow-traveller" (Mitläufer) and not the active collaborator he in fact was. In 1938, Jankuhn had protected Haseloff from being dismissed from his position at Kiel University on political grounds, and Monica Elisabeth Steinel suggests that Haseloff may have felt obligated to return the favour. But she also stresses that it is precisely because Haseloff, like several of the other character witnesses called on, had not aligned with National Socialism politically, that he was a credible character reference (Steinel 2009:97-100, 105-8). Had the court, let alone Haseloff himself, actually been interested in holding those who involved themselves with genocidal fascism accountable, then the witness testimonies would have provided evidence against the claim that active collaboration was the only available option for German archaeologists. Jankuhn clearly withheld much of his wartime activities from the court, and Steinel argues that Haseloff may well have been likewise kept unaware of the scope, as well as the character, of Jankuhn’s involvement. While there is undoubtedly merit to her suggestion that Jankuhn may not have provided the character witnesses with a truthful account of his conduct, Steinel’s treatment of the witnesses’s involvement is in my opinion overly generous. Haseloff did, after all, willingly involve himself with defending someone who at an earlier point in time had been enough of an asset to the Nazi authorities to make Haseloff’s own problems go away (Steinel 2009:91-6; 99-100).

In the post-war era, *overt* racist and nationalist theories certainly did lose some of their purchase. As the above discussion regarding Jankuhn and Haseloff makes clear, however, this should not by any means be confused for a committed accountability process regarding white supremacy and Nazism within archaeology. Archaeologists who had supported, and even many who had themselves been actively involved with *Ahnenerbe* or the NSDAP, retained or were promoted to positions of power. Jankuhn, for instance, served as the editor of the prestigious *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* until his death in 1990, and it is there, as well as in publications related to it, that much of the work on Animal Style Ornamentation has been published. The point I wish to make here is not that the works of Haseloff, or that of other Animal Style Ornamentation researchers whose work was published under the auspices of Jankuhn’s editorship, somehow lose all scholarly merit and are reduced to reactionary diatribes. Had that been the case, simply electing not to cite Haseloff or the *Reallexikon* would have resolved the issue. But we must
remain cognizant of the fact that the scholarly milieu of these works is one that inherently op-
posed holding Nazi scholars accountable even at the expense of research practice. That avoiding 
accountability was the overarching concern can be illustrated by the fact that the systematic 
looting of Eastern European material culture perpetrated by Jankuhn and Ahnenerbe, which as 
Alix Thoeming points out has obstructed the archaeological study of Eastern Baltic settlements to 
this day, was covered up for the sake of Jankuhn’s reputation as an eminent scientist forced to 
make difficult choices (Steinel 2009:80-90; 112-3; Schreiber Pedersen 2011:245-8; Thoeming 
2018:60-2). It is further impossible to gauge the impact this must have had on Jewish researchers, 
Roma researchers, and researchers of colour.

Cassel points out that when archaeologists of the post-war era largely abandoned the theme 
of migration, due to the importance of migration in explicitly racist archeological theories, this 
resulted in such theories being allowed to continue defining the meaning of migration. The opportu-
nity was missed to instead advance a pluralistic view of migration as a multivalent phenomenon 
tied to intensities of interaction. This is all the more important in light of the explosive growth of 
archeological research on the basis of DNA evidence in the last two decades, which often ends 
up uncritically reproducing the views of Kossinna and other early 20th century scholars about ar-
Resolving not to abandon the terrain, but to instead note the lingering impact of Nazism, while 
simultaneously insisting on providing radical alternative interpretations, is a recipe for how to 
advance that is equally applicable to the study of Animal Style Ornamentation.

The main topic of this section is contrasting between a typological and an iconographical 
method, and we will now return to this topic. Style as such became a topic of intense debate in the 
1960s and 1970s, regarding the question of if it was to be understood as something extraneous and 
ornamental, or conversely as serving as a communicational medium (Gustin 2004:50-6). As noted 
above, most researchers had in the main been disinterested in any expressed content of Animal 
Style Ornamentation. Certainly, some scholars, like Haakon Shetelig, Eva Nissen Meyer or Pär 
Olsén, entertained the possibility that Animal Style Ornamentation may have contained elements 
portraying mythological narratives. But these were typically occasional asides, not a guiding prin-
ciple (Magnus 2001b:279-80; Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:32-3). Periodisation is seldom as clear 
cut as reviews of the research literature tend to suggest. The turn from typologies of style to 
iconography was a drawn-out process, which I will not outline in detail here. Høilund Nielsen and 
Kristoffersen note that it is especially in the 1980s that iconography takes centre stage, which they 
relate to the dissemination of postprocessual theories, but particularly to the work of Karl Hauck 
and his work on the iconography of Migration Period gold bracteates (Høilund Nielsen & 
Kristoffersen 2002:59). A discussion of this work is especially pertinent here, not least as it has 
had great importance to the interpretation of GFF motifs, which will be discussed in the following 
section.

"Contextual iconography", the iconographic approach spearheaded by Hauck, and sub-
sequently adopted by other researchers, is characterised by an attention to the pictorial content of 
motif complexes in terms of symbolism, keyed to mythological narratives known from medieval 
written sources. Hauck argues that the origins of the bracteate motifs are to be found in Roman 
imagery, but soon develop an independent pictorial content reflecting the native religious 
traditions of Norse or Germanic mythology, although Classical and Christian influences remain. 
At the core of Hauck’s interpretation is the argument that bracteates, especially those of types A 
and C, depict the god Odin. For this identification he draws, in particular, on a German 10th 
century manuscript known as The Second Merseburg Charm, a magic spell including a mythic nar-
rative about Odin as the healer of an injured horse. This is offered as evidence by Hauck that the 
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discrete elements seen on a specific bracteate, or even the iconography of an individual bracteate as such, but the mythic theme the bracteates collectively express (Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:59; Adetorp 2008:42-5; Helmbrecht 2011:58; Pesch 2015:340-3).

Johan Adetorp has offered a trenchant critique of Hauck’s contextual iconography on several points. To Adetorp, who like Hauck uses an iconographical method, the gravest of these is that Hauck fails to follow methodological principles of iconography. Adetorp stresses that the argument that an image portrays a certain myth (or other narrative) requires proof of this myth being known to the creator of the image. The myth must be independently demonstrated as older than the image, and also that the artist could conceivably have been exposed to the myth in some form (Adetorp 2008:37-8). For instance, the influence of Roman iconography on the Migration Period gold bracteates could be persuasively argued for since this iconography is known from Roman coins that are both older than the bracteates, and found as part of the same depositions (Barfod Carlsen 2002:131; Axboe 2008:65-9). Hauck’s use of the Second Merseburg Charm, as a 10th century manuscript written at a central German site inside of the area over which gold bracteate finds are distributed, is an improvement over the 13th century Icelandic texts from halfway across the Atlantic, but is no better disposed to provide evidence of the myth being known centuries prior. Both the Second Merseburg Charm and the Icelandic sources are furthermore from Christian contexts (Adetorp 2008:43-5).

That the real object of Hauck’s analysis is the mythic theme, not the bracteates that are taken to variously express it, means that examples that run counter to his argument can be disregarded, but remain variants of the theme, meaning that it is consider an equal example of the ideal of the theme (Adetorp 2008:41, 43, 55). The ease with which such a method can return a unified interpretation of a disparate material as reflecting a narrative known from younger sources is likely one reason for Hauck’s contextual iconography gaining widespread acceptance, despite the many interpretative leaps and confused assumptions.

A quote from Bente Magnus, who explicitly works in the tradition of Hauck, may help to further elucidate the radical departure in the understanding of Animal Style Ornamentation, when she states that “the grand relief brooches were not merely pieces of Migration Period jewellery with an incomprehensible decoration, but [...] belonged in the same social setting as the gold bracteates and in the same manner contain important information on the ideology and cosmology of the pagan Scandinavian societies on the fringes of Christian Europe” (Magnus 2001b:281). In the cited passage, as with other such analyses, Animal Style Ornamentation is argued to have served as a vehicle for an ideology of lordship by aristocratic élites. The narratives of the Icelandic myth and saga sources are claimed to preserve in writing what had previously been an oral culture, with Animal Style Ornamentation having played an analogous role in documenting these oral narratives before the advent of a literate élite (Hed Jakobsson 2003:163-4; 172-5; Pesch 2015:660).

2.3 REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN MIRROR

This section discusses the interpretations that previous studies have made of the GFFs. The predominantly iconographical nature of these interpretations is commented on, and contextualised in light of the wider turn to iconography which was the subject of the previous section. Finally, I discuss some recent critiques put forward concerning analyses of GFFs as religious iconography, and note their failure to thoroughly depart from the issues they identify, since these works nevertheless hold true to an understanding of GFFs as representational images.

As we saw in section 2. 1, scholarly interest in the subject of GFFs can be traced back to the beginning of the 18th century. Reviews of this research history will often claim that approaching
GFFs as representational icons of important personages, whether temporal lords or mythic gods and heroes, is how GFFs have been interpreted since the very first studies (Lamm 2004:115-24; Back Danielsson 2007:70-80; Rognstad Tangen 2010:12) Iconographical approaches today characterise writings on GFFs and Animal Style Ornamentation in equal measure, but as we saw above, as regards Animal Style Ornamentation this is primarily a more recent development. It is worth remembering that until the 1960s publications on the finds from Helgö, Eketorp, and Mære, GFFs were hardly more than a peripheral curiosity, and only with the explosive growth of the total GFF corpus with the Sorte Muld discoveries of the 1980s did they attain their present position within the field of Scandinavian Late Iron Age research.

Magnus Olsen was far from the first to suggest that GFFs depicted beings from Norse mythology, as this possibility was alluded to already in the 18th century work of von Melle, but it is likely that Olsen begun the trend of interpreting the coupled-Figure GFFs as depicting the wedding of the Norse fertility god Freyr to the giantess Gerðr, based on the eddic poem Skírnismál (Sayings of Skírnir), which recounts Freyr’s servant Skírnir visiting Gerðr, and his successful attempt to convince her to marry his master. In what survives of the poem today, the poem ends with Freyr’s longing for his betrothed. The resulting marriage, which the GFF couple has been argued to depict, is not part of the extant poem. This is either elided or argued to be the topic of later verses, since lost (Rognstad Tangen 2010:69-70, Hansson 2012:9-10, 11-2). Mogens Mackeprang expanded on Olsen’s claim, by suggesting that the Icelandic Vatnsdæla saga could be read as making reference to a GFF, since this text speaks of a silver idol of Freyr carried in a leather pouch (Rognstad Tangen 2010:14, 58). More recently, since the late 1980s Gro Steinland has drawn on Olsen’s interpretation to propose that the coupled-Figure GFFs should further be tied to an ideology of sacred kingship, on the basis of their find contexts in buildings argued as being aristocratic halls (Hed Jakobsson 2003:167-9; Rognstad Tangen 2010:15-6). Both Olsen’s and Mackeprang’s work predates that of Hauck, and Jan Peder Lamm and Fredrik Hansson have shown how the iconographic interpretation has had adherents for as long as GFFs have been subject to scholarly study (Lamm 2004:116-9; Rognstad Tangen 2010:14-5, Hansson 2012:9-15).

The discovery of the massive GFF material at Sorte Muld, served as the impetus for further interest in GFFs as religious iconography. This material predominantly features single-Figure motifs, calling for new analogies besides those between coupled-Figure GFFs and Skírnismál. Unsurprisingly, Hauck was to play a major role in this. To Hauck, the GFFs, like the gold bracteates, are to be understood as amulets that depict the gods of Norse mythology. Somewhat surprisingly, in light of the critical remarks on how Hauck’s interpretation of the bracteates handles the fact of their variation, he does not suggest that the GFFs invariably depict the same god. For the GFFs, Hauck foregrounds not the Second Merseburg Charm but another manuscript from a Christian context in modern day Germany: Adam of Bremen’s 11th century chronicle of the diocese of Hamburg, which contains a description of a temple at Old Uppsala and its graven images of Thor, Freyr and Odin. Here is not the place for an involved source-critical discussion on this text, to which the above noted critique by Adetorp is equally applicable. Adam of Bremen did not himself visit Uppsala, and there is further little archaeological evidence to support his narrative (Helmbrecht 2011:251-2; Hansson 2012:48). Hauck proposes that the same attributes are found on the GFFs as in the description of the idols, where Adam’s allegation that Thor is the foremost diety and has the staff as his attribute is by Hauck claimed as showing that GFFs mainly relate to a cult of Thor, with Freyr also being frequently depicted, and Odin to a lesser extent. Women on GFFs are representations of Freyja, except for the coupled-Figure motifs which Hauck likewise interpret in line with Skírnismál (Lamm 2004:119-24; Watt 2004:200-13; Helmbrecht 2011:59, 125).

Some authors have further argued that GFFs function to represent elements from Norse mythology as materialised metaphor or kenning, analogous to the important poetic function of
such kenningar in Old Norse verse (Hed Jakobsson 2003:167; Back Danielsson 2007:224; Hedeager 2010:116-7; Helmbrecht 2011:366). In this vein Lars Larsson and Magnus Lenntorp suggest that the connection between roof-bearing posts and GFFs serves to metaphorically recreate the tree Glasir which grows in Ásgardr, and its golden foliage (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:42).

That some GFF motifs lack any clear parallel in the mythological narratives is explained away, either by following Hauck in making a disregarding for variation part of the methodology, or by suggesting that these GFFs portray scenes from myths which have not survived as text (e.g. Back Danielsson 2007:194; Rognstad Tangen 2010:70. Helmbrecht 2011:58, 241 makes observations similar to mine). Such proposals should, in my opinion, demand source-critical inquiry into why some of the narratives allegedly depicted through GFFs can be found in written form whereas others cannot be, or should at the very least acknowledge that such analyses are needed. The absence of such reflections aligns with a general pattern, where historical textual sources for Old Norse myth and society are engaged with by archaeologists in an uncritical fashion (Adetorp 2008:37-40; Cassel 2008:44-5, 73; Helmbrecht 2011:355-6). These interpretations of GFFs as religious iconography use them not to study the heterogeneity of cult practice but as yet another way to centre the aristocratic élite. Michaela Helmbrecht critiques Hauck’s interpretation of GFFs along similar lines as Adetorp, noting the circular character of Hauck’s argument. GFFs are offered up as proof of an élite vested in cultic authority, in accordance with later written sources. But the existence of this religious aristocracy, the continuity between pre-Christian religion and later texts by Christian writers, and the GFFs serving as religious icons, collapses in on itself since the GFFs are only religious in light of the continuities they are supposed to prove, and so on (Helmbrecht 2011:58). This is a characterisation that captures a central issue not only with Hauck’s interpretation of the GFFs, but with the function of the reference to an aristocratic élite more generally. Surprisingly, despite levelling this critique, Helmbrecht arrives back at these same assumptions in her own research, with the main point of distinction being that Helmbrecht does not assume identity between Vendel Period religion and the later sources of mythological narratives from Christian contexts (Helmbrecht 2011:412).

Another tendency in the interpretation of GFFs emphasises the anthropomorphic form of the motifs. Regardless of if the GFFs are taken as depicting human beings or gods in the shape of humans, as anthropomorphic representational images they are argued to contain information on modes of dress, gestures, and the ways that gender and social status was performed and represented in the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. The correspondences of GFFs to other Animal Style Ornamentation featuring anthropomorphic elements form a core analytical moment in the research of the last two decades, with particular reference to helmet plates, gold bracteates, tapesries, picture stones and jewellery. Despite these anthropomorphic motifs occurring alongside animal shapes and motifs that are seen to express both human and animal characteristics, GFF motifs are considered as reliable representational sources about human people in Scandinavian Late Iron Age society. What is concentrated upon in such comparisons is correspondences in overarching, thematic motif content, such as costume and gesture. This reflects the significant impact of Hauck’s contextual iconography (Mannering 2006:5-9; Back Danielsson 2007:150; Ratke 2009:75; Helmbrecht 2011:362. Compare Magnus 2001b:281-2).

The interpretation of the coupled-Figure GFFs as a heterosexual couple engaged in a dance or embrace has a long history, and underlies the above discussed interpretation of this motif as the marriage between Freyr and Gerðr. The single-Figure and coupled-Figure GFFs alike have been taken to represent adult men and women, or gods incarnated in such gendered shapes. This gender assignment is made on the basis of the depictions of costume and hairstyle. Working from these assumptions, Ulla Mannering has studied the depiction of costume on GFFs as a source on Scandinavian Late Iron Age dress (Mannering 2006:19-30; Rognstad Tangen 2010:68-9). Helmbrecht further considers the GFF motifs as highly gendered depictions, part of a larger
pattern where "Vendel Period imagery corresponds well to the typical characteristics of men and women in skaldic poetry and specified in Snorri Sturluson’s Skáldskaparmál: Men are active, they travel and fight, while women are best described as richly adorned with jewels and as generously serving beverages" (Helmbrecht 2011:417).

At times, these differences are inflated by the use of separate terms to describe identical elements, i.e. beaker(m) versus horn(f), or neck ring/torque(m) versus necklace(f) (Mannering 2006:20, 50-60). This also fails to properly account for the significant amount of GFFs which feature none of the costume and hairstyle elements that can be sorted in line with a gender binary. Ing-Marie Back Danielsson shows how a gender binary is naturalised when such GFFs are understood as troubling an otherwise correct identification of GFFs as representing either men or women. Sharon Ratke has noted similar limits to the studies of gender expression on GFFs, where she argues that in addition to the depiction of men and women, there are motifs which combine masculine and feminine traits, and also the "wraiths" (Schemen) which constitute a distinct category lacking in gendered traits. To Back Danielsson and Ratke this should not be understood as failure to produce gendered images, but instead suggest a recognition of genders outside the gender binary (Back Danielsson 2007:70-80, 88; Ratke 2009:49-59, 61-3).

Helmbrecht has attempted a more thoroughgoing critique of iconography, instead emphasising the material and functional aspects of Scandinavian Late Iron Age anthropomorphic imagery, with GFFs serving as one of her core materials. However, the new interpretative framework Helmbrecht proposes, on the basis of the concepts of primary and secondary iconicity, taken from the realm of semiotics, fails to significantly divest itself of iconographic assumptions. Furthermore, this framework is not consistently applied in her analysis, with her results being little different compared to other scholars, as has already been commented upon. Although Helmbrecht’s method has the advantage of proving the possibility of studying images without recourse to later texts, there is a reliance on a representational semiotic, which causes her to perceive the three-dimensional anthropomorphic pendants of the Viking Age as successors to GFFs, despite the almost complete lack of correspondence between the two artefact types in find context, distribution, size, production technique, and material. This is especially puzzling since she at other times warns against awarding more importance to corresponding motifs than to disparate contexts, argued persuasively with reference to present day examples, noting that the same anthropomorphic motif has entirely separate meanings at a pedestrian crossing or on a restroom door (Helmbrecht 2011:36, 407-11). Similarly, Ratke and Rudolf Simek object to interpreting GFF motifs as mythological beings, suggesting that the GFFs could represent various types of contractual relations, given the similarities in gestures between illuminations of a German 13th century legal manuscripts and the couple motif common to GFFs (Ratke & Simek 2006:261-2; Ratke 2010:155). Once again, we find here a welcome new perspective that challenges long held assumptions, but one which ultimately strengthens the representational logic common to all these approaches.

2.4 ICONOCLASM AND BEYOND

This chapter has reviewed the previous research on the topic of GFFs, noting in turn the history of GFF finds and the interpretation of the sites of these finds, the wider context of Animal Style Ornamentation and how interpretations of the GFF motifs show both differences and commonalities to this. This chapter also contained a critical discussion on the impact of Nazism on this field of study, and what that means for the possibilities of responsible research. In this final section, I position this essay in light of the above discussed research. To this end, the reluctance expressed by some scholars to see the Scandinavian Late Iron Age artisan as engaged in creative artistry sees some further discussion.
As this chapter has shown, the ornamental practices of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age have effectively been reduced to illustrating the social landscape, not only as ideology but as a lived reality too. This, to me, is not a tenable approach. Far too often a widespread expression is treated as a singular object corresponding to a specific feature of the lived environment – and this conclusion then applied back to the general phenomenon with no regard to whether this conforms to the analogies proposed.

Interpretations of Animal Style Ornamentation, GFF find contexts, and GFF motifs all have in common a tendency to restrict themselves to only one social milieu, that of the aristocratic élite. Bengt Söderberg can be cited as a particularly telling example, as he argues that the various interpretations of, in particular, the coupled-Figure GFFs, can be brought together with little difficulty since they are all "linked to aristocratic identities and self-conception" (2005:181. My translation, emphasis added). As has been clear from this review of the previous research, I find this to obscure more than it illuminates. To be clear, this is not because of a belief that the Scandinavian Late Iron Age was an egalitarian society of free farmers. The intention of this chapter has not been to argue that interpretations in line with an aristocratic élite can never have any value, but to show just how inescapable the focus on the élite has become.

What of the artisans that, with a great degree of technical skill, wrought these artefacts? Comparatively little attention has been spent on what these artefacts might tell us about these people. Studies on Scandinavian Late Iron Age high-quality craftsmanship are typically quick to stress that rigid rules of expression and composition must have severely limited the creativity that an artisan could exercise. Animal Style Ornamentation is reinvented as tools of élite communication, as secret messages to the initiated, and their decorative beauty sidelined (Mannering 2006:14, Pesch 2012:653-4, 660). This is taken especially far by Helmbrecht, who argues that it is altogether problematic to use the vocabulary of art in studies of Scandinavian Late Iron Age imagery, since to her this would imply a continuity with current day ideas about art as the free exercise of artistic creativity (Helmbrecht 2011:44-5). While I do agree with these authors that "artistic freedom" and "genius" in the modern sense are contingent upon a historically specific understanding of art and artistry, to disregard the changes in expression that arose from deliberate or accidental actions of the producers of these artefacts is to go too far in the opposite direction.

As was stated in chapter 1 of this essay, the purpose of this study is to approach the GFFs from a new direction. My new approach seeks to go beyond the narrow focus on the aristocracy, and beyond interpreting GFFs as representational images. Based on a theoretical apparatus that will be further elucidated on in chapter 4, my analysis stays close to the GFFs under study, attending to their material and Figural traits.
3 CONTEXTUALISING GFFs IN TIME AND SPACE

Västra Vång is a site located in the province of Blekinge in South-east Sweden, in Hjortsberga parish. Västra Vång is one of many prehistoric heritage sites along the Johannishusåsen esker. Intermittent excavations have taken place in Västra Vång since 2004 by Blekinge Museum, in partnership with Södertörn University and Lund University. Some of these excavations have involved the public and/or students at Södertörn University (Henriksson 2016b:7-8; 2017:9; 2018:10). As an archaeology student and later intern at Blekinge Museum, I had the opportunity to participate in 2014, 2017 and 2019. The 2019 material has been left out of the present study due to time constraints, and will be touched on here only in brief, but the 2017 campaign is of interest here for the GFFs found in that year. I was not present for the 2013 discovery of the first GFFs from the site, which involved (among others) another team of student excavators from Södertörn (Soloeta Garmendia 2014:12).

This chapter discusses the find context and dating of the GFFs found at Västra Vång during the 2013 and 2017 excavation campaigns.

3.1 VÄSTRA VÅNG AND ITS GFFs

The first 29 GFFs from Västra Vång were found in 2013 during the second season of excavation up on the hill in Västra Vång (RAÄ 306). This hill forms part of the Johannishusåsen esker. Whereas areas in the hill’s proximity have been used for cultivation since, at the very least, the Early Modern Era, historical maps indicate that the hill was a common of pasturage. Turf was removed from an area totalling 183m². Of this area, 125m² of topsoil was excavated down to the contextual level. On the map (Fig. 3), the striped pattern marks the area not excavated beyond the initial removal of the turf. It was during the removal of a topsoil layer ca 20 cm in depth that these finds were made. GFFs were found in the excavated topsoil layer, with 16 GFFs found in the trench as shown on the map. An additional 13 GFFs were discovered in the sieving of soil from this trench. Apart from the GFFs, a filigree or named gold jewellery fragment was found, and four gold ingots, of which three are rings and one a bar. Non-gold finds include two 11th century silver coins, one Danish and the other German; as well as glass sherds, copper alloy masks, busts, rings, and ring-holders; and also a significant amount of highly fragmented copper alloy metal. The copper alloy finds were all interpreted as belonging to one or more bronze cauldrons (Jarlehorn 2014; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:12; Henriksson 2016a:13-17). This trench did not provide any identifiable traces of buildings, but did feature two irregular areas paved with stones averaging 20-30 cm in diameter (highlighted in dark grey in Fig. 3) (Henriksson 2015:5-6; 2016a:10-3).

The 2017 excavation marked a return to the hill, for the first time since 2013, after a series of intermittent excavations of other parts of the site in the interim. The trench was dug in partially the same location as the 2013 trench, with the ambition of excavating beyond the topsoil layer (Fig. 4) (Henriksson 2018:9-10). Three further GFFs were found during removal of the topsoil, of which one in the trench and two in sieve. The remaining where found in situ, and with only one exception, in the one same context, designated 1005 (Henriksson 2018:17-8). This context consists of a layer of loose sandy silt, immediately below the topsoil and visually clearly distinct. Besides nine GFFs, context 1005 contained three ingot rings of gold and a high number of glass sherds, and one copper alloy artefact, a bulbous knob. The other gold finds of this season – one GFF, a threadlike fragment of gold foil, a droplet of gold, and a fragment of a Roman solidus – were made in contexts in close proximity to context 1005. A pit cutting through context 1005 and down into 1025 below it amassed a particular concentration of GFFs and glass sherds. However, this pit could later be identified as having resulted from the earlier removal of a block containing a copper alloy
**Fig. 3.** The 2013 trench. Image by the author after Henriksson 2016a.

**Fig. 4.** The 2017 trench superimposed on the 2013 trench. Image by the author from data provided by Paola Derudas, Lund University.
**Fig. 5.** Gold finds from 2013 and 2017. Image by the author after Henriksson 2016a and data provided by Paola Derudas, Lund University.

**Fig. 6.** Bronze and glass finds from 2013 and 2017. Image by the author after Henriksson 2016a and data provided by Paola Derudas, Lund University.
artefact in 2013 (Henriksson 2018:11). The block contained no further gold or glass finds (Jarlehorn 2014). The stratigraphical sequence is not fully determined at this point, but there are clear indications of a series of distinct layers, as well as numerous depositons of various artefacts. With the exception of glass sherds found in context with GFFs, these deposition practices need not relate to the processes of depositing GFFs more than spatially. Of the various copper alloy items, only one (a bulbous knob) can be confidently determined as being in context with GFFs. The contextual position of the copper alloy mask lifted in a block can not be determined but considering the depth of the pit, is most likely from context 1025 underneath. This would agree with the interpretation that was put forward by Marianne Görman and Mikael Henriksson for these copper alloy artefacts and fragments, as belonging to a bronze vessel centuries older than the GFFs (Görman & Henriksson 2016:81-3). However, with the later obtained results from radiocarbon dating of associated organic remains, their close spatial relations may reflect a shorter period of activity than was first assumed, as will be further discussed in the next section.

With the further excavations of the Västra Vång hill undertaken in the summer of 2019, besides the additional finds of 14 GFFs, a stone-lined pit of imposing size was uncovered and partially excavated. The 2019 material is otherwise left out of this study, but in light of my reservations towards the interpretation of this feature as confirming the existence of a building, will receive some critical attention. The feature was not fully excavated, but was tentatively interpreted as a post hole. This interpretation was made solely on the basis of the form and depth of the pit, which has not yet yielded any traces of wood. At Svintuna, Östergötland, Sweden; and Hov, Oppland, Norway, GFFs were found inside the remains of buildings, in pits of indeterminate function. The Hov find provides a particularly interesting parallel to the 2019 pit since it is similarly large in size and filled with stones (Rognstad Tangen 2010:33-4; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:11-2). Even if the 2019 pit is a pit dug and lined with stones for the purposes of erecting a wooden post, this need not necessarily be the remains of a building. In Mære, Norway, GFFs were found inside four stone-lined pits, ca 80-100 cm in diameter, which is somewhat smaller but comparable to the presumed size of the one in Västra Vång. In the case of these pits, wooden remains were found, but given the placing of these pits, they likely have not constituted the roof-bearing posts of a house. Olaf Olsen suggested that these were the remains of wooden idols (Helmbrecht 2011:267-9). Another use of wooden posts in the Scandinavian Late Iron Age are the long straight rows of posts discovered at the Swedish sites of Anundshög and Gamla Uppsala, interpreted as marking out causeways (Sanmark & Semple 2011:19-30, 32; Beronius Jörpeland et. al. 2013:278-80; Löfving 2015:30). To conclude, further excavation is required to determine with confidence whether or not this is a post hole, and what sort of construction it was a part of, if so. As a result of the layout of the 2019 trench, it is not at present possible to say if the GFF depositions at the site belong to the same activity phase as the stone-lined pit.

Excavation of this and other part of the site is ongoing, and in the following years it is quite likely that more GFFs can be added to the 67 so far unearthed, of which 42 are the object of the present study. Even at the present size, the GFF corpus is still the third largest from a site outside Bornholm. The two non-Bornholm sites with more plentiful finds are Lundeborg, Funen, Denmark with 102 GFFs; and Uppåkra, Skåne, Sweden with 122 GFFs. With the finds of the 2019 campaign, Västra Vång surpassed Slöinge, Halland, Sweden, with 57 GFFs (Ratke 2007:17; Helmbrecht 2011:258).

In Västra Vång, the GFF deposition (Fig 5) relates spatially to other gold objects, sherds of glass vessels, and remains of one or more large bronze cauldrons (Figs 5 & 6). For the cauldron fragments a provincial Roman origin in the 1st to 3rd centuries CE has been suggested, on stylistical grounds. Similarities to the Danish 4th century BCE Brá Cauldron have also been noted. Conversely, radiocarbon dating of organic elements of the cauldron remains suggests a later date, as will be discussed in the next section. Cauldrons, whether dating to the Scandinavian Early Iron
Age or later, have not otherwise been found in such immediate proximity with GFFs (Görman & Henriksson 2016:83; Henriksson 2018:13). By contrast, glass sherds have been found in context with GFFs at many sites, notably Uppåkra, Slöinge, and Helgö (Lundqvist 2000:54, 154-55; Lamm 2004:51-6, 58; Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:12; Näsman 2016b:52).

The GFFs from Västra Vång feature a number of die-identical GFFs known from other sites, namely Eketorp and Sorte Muld. Foremost of these are the three designs from Eketorp, Öland, Sweden. Of the 42 GFFs, 10 are stamped with these designs, previously known only from Eketorp, where a total of 15 GFFs were found (Lamm 2004:65-6). Die-identity with Sorte Muld is more limited in scope, with one GFF from Västra Vång having been stamped with the design SM195, one of Sorte Muld’s least frequently employed dies (Watt 2016:63-5). Die-identity can more confidently be assumed for the Eketorp designs, as is further discussed in 5.1 and 5.3 below.

Consequently, the find circumstances of the Eketorp GFFs merit particular attention. The site features a sequence of three ring forts dating from the 4th to the 14th century. The GFFs belong to the second phase, called Eketorp II. Inside Eketorp II, the GFFs were discovered near the very middle of the West Square, the largest of the open areas inside the ring fort (Fig. 7). Together with five ingot bars or rings, the GFFs were deposited inside and around an irregular stone setting of limestone slabs, approximately rectangular in shape, and with no determinable function (Näsman 1976:139-40; Andréasson 1995:79-81). This is cause for further caution in assuming the 2019 pit is the post hole of a building.

According to Larsson and Lenntorp, of the GFFs found in the so-called ceremonial building at Uppåkra, only two could be identified as belonging to a specific floor layer, and no GFF could be dated on stratigraphical grounds, as they are consistently deposited in the fill of the post holes and wall trenches, and not part of any closed floor layer. The authors take this as an indication that GFFs were not allowed to be deposited on the floor, but only in the fill, and propose that the ritual character of this fill as "temple soil" might account for their further distribution (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:22). In Slöinge, the opposite conclusion was reached for a similar find context: the GFFs would only secondarily end up in the post hole fill, as the wooden post decayed, after initially being deposited on the floor of the building, together with other artefacts, and covered with what might be bone meal and ground sea shells (Lundqvist 1996:31-4; 2000:58-9).

In De Diversis Artibus, the highly technical 12th century treatise on painting, glassmaking and metalwork by the monk Theophilus, precise instructions are given on almost every aspect of these trades. When explaining how a workshop is to be built, his method involves digging a depression into the floor and placing a table in this pit so that the worker can sit with their feet planted in the pit. He gives no explanation as to why, but his next direction is to make sure the table’s surface is smooth so that any excess metal can be swept up with ease, which could suggest a concern for anything dropped from the table. Placing the table close to a window is also emphasised, and the low table might be a way of making maximum use of available light (Theophilus 1979:81-2, 81n).
As noted above, there are several known cases of GFFs found in, or adjacent to, buildings, in both cases in pits, only some of which can be interpreted as post holes. This agrees well with the layout of the workshop according to Theophilus, which might offer one alternative to narratives of the ritual nature of the built environment. Coatsworth and Pindar note that Early Medieval metalworking remains from the British Isles have in several instances been found outdoors, adjacent to irregular post holes, interpreted as wind shelters. While not following Theophilus’ instructions to the letter, they argue that this shows a similar concern for ensuring sunlight (Coatsworth & Pindar 2002:26-8). Furthermore, Larsson and Lenntorp emphasise the proximity between the Uppåkra building’s entrances and the post holes where a majority of the GFFs were found (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:22-3). This shows clear parallels with Cassel’s findings regarding the 3rd to 6th century settlements of Gotland, where loom weights cluster close to the entrance. This, she suggests, might result from the affordances of the windowless houses, as sunlight would only enter through the open door, making this a preferred work area (Cassel 1998:112).

Workshop sites take a variety of forms in the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. Some sites, such as Åhus, Skåne, Sweden; or Ribe, Jutland, Denmark; show a rigid grid of plots of parallel production, with little spatial concentration of the crafts practiced, widely considered as wics, emporia or trading sites (Callmer 2002:131-3, 148-9; Hed Jakobsson 2003:205-10). GFF production appears to diverge from this organisation of craft production – sites with distinct plots, and a widespread homogeneity in the crafts practised in the respective plots, thus far lack finds of GFFs, though since many of the South Scandinavian sites have not been contextually excavated, this should not be stated with too much confidence.

3.2 SITING THE GFFS FROM VÄSTRA VÅNG IN TIME

The GFFs from Västra Vång correspond in part to the GFF material from Eketorp and Sorte Muld. Both of these materials have been dated to the 6th century, in Eketorp on stratigraphical grounds, in Sorte Muld from associated finds (Back Danielsson 2007:196; Helmbrecht 2011:261). The Västra Vång hill locale (RAÄ 306) requires further excavation to comprehensibly determine the stratigraphical relations, but two independently dated contexts of the sites with die-identical GFFs provides strong support for a 6th century date.

The above discussed glass sherds are for the most part belonging to a distinctly Vendel Period type of glass beaker, grey-green in colour. These sherds are notably large in size. Other, smaller sherds were also found, belonging to other glass vessels, likely dating to the Vendel Period as well (Näsman 2016a:5-7; 2016b:56-8; Henriksson 2018:12). Glass sherds from the Migration Period, and a rare few belonging to the late Vendel Period or Viking Age, have also been found at Västra Vång, but not at the hill location (RAÄ 306) of the GFF deposit (Näsman 2016a:5-8; 2016b:55-60).

As noted earlier, the copper alloy artefacts have been interpreted as elements of at least one but possibly several bronze cauldrons, manufactured in Continental Europe, with a production date of somewhere between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE (Görman & Henriksson 2016:83). If this dating is accurate, these artefacts are consequently significantly older than the GFFs found in immediate proximity. However, radiocarbon data points in the direction of a period of fabrication and/or use that would put at the very least their deposition closer to the GFFs in time than first assumed. During the preparatory stages of conservation, organic remains were discovered on the inside and outside of two of the copper alloy artefacts, a facial Figure "mask" and a ring handle, respectively. Wood had been used to decorate one of the mask’s eyes. The ring handle was reinforced with twisted organic fibre within its hollow core, and furthermore lay atop burnt oak twigs. These materials underwent laboratory analysis at Lund University and returned three radiocarbon dates (Table 2) (Henriksson 2018:13-4).
Of the four such copper alloy masks from Västra Vång, the one whose eye was decorated with wood differs from the other three stylistically, and is also smaller and has a different metal composition. It has consequently been proposed as not sharing a continental provenance, but instead being from the near region (Henriksson 2016a:17). This last mask is unquestionably the work of another artisan than the three other masks, but is clearly intended to evoke the others, and most likely have seen use alongside these prior to deposition. Two other copper alloy finds, a Roman bust and a smaller bust, yet again considered a provincial mimicry, follows the same pattern and further strengthens the interpretation that connects these stylistically diverging artefacts. It is not surprising as such that the date obtained from the mask is later than would be expected for the other three, if these served as its inspiration (see Table 2). But it seems unlikely that the three Continental masks would be in as good condition as they are if they were 400 years old (or more!) by the time the fourth masks was made to join them.

Among the gold artefacts found at Västra Vång is a fragment of a Roman solidus minted during the reign of Valentinian III, 425–455 CE (Henriksson 2018:12). This is not the only coin of this kind found in the near region, as in 2019, a coin medallion made out of another Valentinian III solidus was donated to Blekinge museum. It had been found in the village of Hammarby, ca 25 km Southeast of Västra Vång (Blekinge Museum: Månadens föremål juni 2019). The Västra Vång coin fragment is furthermore a point of comparison with bracteate hoards, as a Valentinian III solidus is part of a bracteate hoard from Års, northern Jutland, Denmark (Barfod Carlsen 2002:131). In Nørre Hvam, northwestern Jutland, Denmark, a cut-out GFF was found in a hoard otherwise containing ten D bracteates. According to Elisabeth Barfod Carlsen’s typology of the stylistic development of the D bracteates, the Års depot contains bracteates belonging to the early Migration Period production phase Pg. D II, while the Nørre Hvam depot belongs to the later production phase Pg. D IV (Barfod Carlsen 2002:125-31). Stylistically, this latter phase shares more of the traits employed on the GFFs from Västra Vång than the Års examples. The value of the fragmentary Valentinian III solidus for directly dating the Västra Vång find is consequently very minor. It does, however, help us put the site in context with a wider pattern of the use of Roman gold in the mid first millennium CE. According to Axboe, in Scandinavia the depositing of bracteates ceases around year 560 (2007:76). GFF production can thus be confirmed as having commenced at some point in the mid 6th century at the very latest.

Single-Figure GFFs are widely considered to be the first appearing variant, while coupled-Figure GFFs appear slightly later (Helmbrecht 2011:261; Hansson 2012:10). The Migration Period gold collars from Ålleberg and Möne display various anthropo- and theriomorphic Figures in filigree, with clear parallels to single-Figure GFFs (see Fig. 8). Often, the explanation for the minuscule size of the GFFs is gold becoming scarcer and driving a change from gold bracteates to GFFs (see e.g. Watt 2004:216; Axboe 2007:123). While this might serve as a good explanation for the disappearance of gold bracteates, the artistic execution of the GFFs indicate otherwise. As seen above, similar motifs are present on the gold collars, and while these artefacts consist of massive amounts of gold, particularly in comparison with GFFs, the relevant motifs are significantly smaller on the collars (Pesch 2015:198, 201, 260-2). Miniaturisation can be argued to constitute a dis-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>BP Date</th>
<th>CE Date</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnt oak twigs</td>
<td>BP 1605±35</td>
<td>385-545 CE</td>
<td>95.4 % probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twisted organic fibre</td>
<td>BP 1580±50</td>
<td>385-545 CE</td>
<td>95.4 % probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood in mask’s eye</td>
<td>BP 1300±40</td>
<td>645-780 CE</td>
<td>90.8 % probability</td>
</tr>
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Table 2. Radiocarbon dates from organic materials found with copper alloy artefacts. After Henriksson 2018.

A highly decorated belt buckle in gilt bronze from Finnestorp, Västergötland province, Sweden (Fig. 9), has a face that is very similar to the one seen on VV3A and VV3B. This buckle, which was found in a wetland together with other gold artefacts, is otherwise decorated in the Sjörup Style, dating it to the 5th century (Karlsson 1983:140-1; Pesch 2015:458-9, 468). The combination of a three-dot motif and a row of faces is seen as far back as in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, but the place on the cheek is highly similar between the Finnestorp buckle and various GFFs from Västra Vång (see further 6. 1. 2 below).

Coupled-Figure GFFs are known from 20 of the 42 sites. After the discovery of a coupled-Figure GFF in Västra Vång in 2018, and an additional 10 coupled-Figure GFFs in August 2019; Eketorp, and the Bornholm locale of Rønne are now the only two sites with more than five GFFs where only single-Figure GFFs have been found (Ratke 2007:15-21; Hansson 2012:30; Henriksson 2019:14-5). As noted in chapter 1, the coupled-Figure GFFs in Västra Vång were found in RAA 121, an entirely different part of the site from the single-Figure foils, and might reflect two discrete historical moments.

The Norwegian GFFs diverge stylistically, and almost exclusively depict coupled-Figures. Ulla Mannering has argued that the depictions of costumes on GFFs reflect changing styles of dress in the Scandinavian Late Iron Age and can thus provide datable evidence. GFFs from the Norwegian sites of Hauge and Mære are by Mannering argued as being from the Viking Age on these grounds. Magnus Rognstad Tangen makes a similar argument in support of a later manufacture of GFFs in Norway, on the basis of stylistic similarities between the Maere GFFs and the Viking Age Tu runestone, raised in the vicinity (Mannering 2006:104; Rognstad Tangen 2010:13, 30-1). In Mannering’s work regarding the costumes portrayed on GFFs, four datable subgroups are pointed out in the material, with three of these argued as dating to the Vendel Period and one to the early Viking Age. Most GFFs from Southern Scandinavia belong to the former three, or feature costumes that occur throughout the material. Västra Vång follows this pattern, with costumes belonging to the general or distinctly Vendel Period subgroups (Mannering 2006:106-13).

Dating the GFFs on stylistic grounds has thus far not generally been attempted, despite the detailed chronologies established for both early and late Animal Style Ornamentation. While Ratke does order the GFFs into stylistic categories, the categories pertain to the degree of abstraction in the anthropomorphic representation, not a true typology of style. Bernhard Salin conceived of Style I, II, and III as three artistic styles, separate from one another in a linear chronological progression from I to III (Salin 1904:214). Later scholars have formed two camps on this matter. These two camps could roughly be termed the "Continental interpretation", and the "Uppsala interpretation". The Continental interpretation remains true to Salin’s chronology of Animal Style Ornamentation in that the three styles are held to be diachronous. The Uppsala interpretation, more widely supported in scholarship in the three Scandinavian languages, conversely argues that Style I and II are largely synchronic artistic phenomena, with Style III developing out of Style II (Olsén 1945:86; Haseloff 1981:647; Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:43-55, 57-8). As I will show in chapter 6, the GFFs from Västra Vång have aspects of both Salin’s Style I and II. In my analysis, Style I and II are consequently assumed to be coexisting artistic trends, aligning me closest to the latter camp.

Comparing the GFFs from Västra Vång with the work of two scholars crucial to the development of the Uppsala interpretation, in Greta Arwidsson’s and Pär Olsén’s further periodisation of Style II and III, the closest correspondances of the GFFs are with Vendel Style C. Olsén designates an ornamented buckle plate from Solberga in Östergötland, Sweden (Fig. 10) as belonging to Vendel Style C, dating it to the 7th or 8th century (Olsén 1945:108-9; Helmbrecht 2011:83-5, 490). The anthropomorphic Figures of the Solberga artefact share several traits with those of GFFs (see discussion in chapters 6. 1, 6. 2 and 6. 4). The traits marking it as Vendel Style C are primarily
Fig. 8. Anthromorphic figures from the Möne gold collar. Drawings by Bengt Händel. Not to scale. After Lamm 2004.

Fig. 9. The Finnestorp belt buckle. The face with three-dot on the cheek is shown isolated in the top right with a drawing by the author. Photo by Gunnar Creutz.
Fig. 10. Detail from the Solberga buckle in Vendel Style C. Not to scale. Image by the author after Olsén 1945.

Fig. 11. Ornamented fragment, possibly from a brooch, from Dybsø fjord, Denmark. Not to scale. Image by the author after Helmbrecht 2011.

Fig. 12. Coupled Figure GFF from Slöinge, Halland, Sweden. Not to scale. Image by the author.

Fig. 13. Helmet Style design from the Taplow horn. Not to scale. Image by the author.
those not shared with GFFs, mainly the knots of interlace ribbons used as surface patterning (Olsén 1945:109). Another artefact with an anthropomorphic Figure with distinct parallels to those of the GFFs is a bronze fragment from Dybso fjord, Denmark (Fig. 11). Like the buckle from Solberga, this artefact also has traits of Vendel Style C, in this case the triangular-bodied “horse” Figures highlighted in red in Fig. 11. As with the knots of interlace ribbons, this trait is not present on the GFFs (Olsén 1945:86-8, Helmbrecht 2011:179-81, 432).

A striking resemblance can be observed between artefacts in the Old English subcategory of Style I dubbed Helmet Style by Thomas Downing Kendrick, and a group of coupled-Figure GFFs that predominate in the GFF corpus from Slöinge, and is known in one other instance from Eskilstuna. A trait characteristic to this group is a line from the top edge of the face joined to the eye, perpendicular to the nose. Fig. 12 provides an example from Slöinge. The Slöinge find has been dated to 710-720, based on the radiocarbon dating of the remains of the wooden post which many of the site’s GFFs were found deposited around (Lundqvist 1996:30-2; 2000:59). Kendrick, however, considers Helmet Style as an English variant of Style I, dating to the 6th and 7th century.

The Taplow horn with gilt silver mountings (Fig. 13) was found in a grave dating to circa 620 – predating the Slöinge GFFs by almost exactly a century. To Karlsson, what Kendrick calls a helmet is a trait present in early Style I more generally (see Fig. 25 below for examples). The parallels between the Taplow mounting and the Slöinge GFFs are nevertheless remarkable, and worth noting since they complicate the value of the oft-cited radiocarbon dating from Slöinge for the dating of GFFs from other sites (Kendrick 1938:76; Karlsson 1983:115-6; Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:37-9; Back Danielsson 2007:131-2). This is not without relevance for the GFFs from Västra Vång, since Slöinge’s single-Figure GFFs (which lack the above discussed division of the "helmet") share many traits with ones found at Eketorp, Uppåkra, Sorte Muld – and also at Västra Vång (Watt 2004:190, 193, 195; Victorin 2013:29-32, 39-48).

3.3 CONTEXTUALISING GFFS IN TIME AND SPACE

This chapter has reviewed the GFF find site in Västra Vång, and discussed the dating of GFFs in general and of the Västra Vång examples in particular, with reference both to other finds from the same contexts, and to the periodisation of GFFs and of other Scandinavian Late Iron Age ornamentation.

As showcased in this chapter, Västra Vång has a notable amount of GFFs found in situ. While the stratigraphy of the hill site is complicated and demanding of further excavation, excavating methodically rather than relying on metal detecting allows for a fuller understanding of GFF find sites going forward.

While GFFs are often emphasised as difficult to date reliably (see e.g. Mannering 2006:40-41; Rognstad Tangen 2010:11; Hansson 2012:11), the Västra Vång find is better placed in this regard, partially due to the excavation methods employed. The data from Eketorp and Sorte Muld, as well as the dating of the glass sherds found together with the GFFs, all point towards a 6th to 7th century date for this particular GFF deposition. The stylistic parallels with other artefacts ornamented in Animal Style Ornamentation lend further support to this conclusion. This dating is of use if we wish to further situate the practices of GFF manufacture and deposition within the larger temporal milieu of Scandinavian Late Iron Age practices, artistic, cultic, and political alike.

Before moving on to the analyses, which in turn investigate first the practices through which GFFs were made and handled, and secondly the Figural traits of the GFFs and their parallels to various forms of Animal Style Ornamentation; a more thorough discussion of how to approach Scandinavian Late Iron Age artisanship is needed. This is the subject of the next chapter.
4 THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF ARTISANAL REPRODUCTION

To more thoroughly break with iconography, new analytical perspectives are needed. To this end, the work of post-structuralist writers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari offers a philosophy that seeks to do away entirely with the concept of representation. Crucially, Deleuze and Guattari propose that questions of what something signifies should instead be exchanged for questions of what something is interconnected with, and what intensities something does (or does not) transmit when so assembled (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:4).

My intention here is not to argue that representation is in some sense impossible, insufficient or paradoxical – tasks that, depending on one’s attitude to Jacques Derrida and deconstructionism might seem to be either wholly absurd, or, profound, endeavours – but to use the ideas presented in this chapter to look beyond representation, allowing for new ways to approach material artefacts (O’Sullivan 2006:10-12, 14). Simon O’Sullivan characterises Deleuze and Guattari’s work as "[an] attempt to reconfigure the way we think about the world in an affirmative and creative manner" (O’Sullivan 2006:12). It is such a reconfiguration I hope to effect in introducing these concepts to the study of GFFs.

This chapter consists of three subsections. 4.1 serves as a brief introduction to the neo-materialist theoretical framework, concentrating on certain concepts. The need for new analytical approaches was stressed at the beginning of this chapter. Section 4.2 has this as its subject, outlining a way to conceptualise Animal Style Ornamentation as art, and as beyond representation. Finally, 4.3 serves as a summary of the preceding two sections.

4.1 MATERIALITIES: RHIZOMES, ASSEMBLAGES AND FLOWS

In this section, I outline some key concepts from the neomaterialist thinking of Deleuze and Guattari that see use in the analyses in the chapters that follow, and further serve as a framework for the theoretical discussion on art in section 4.2 below.

These are new ways of thinking about the world (or as Eugene Holland continually stresses, of thinking with the world) and its materiality, in a situation where the emergence of digital technology, non-linear models in the sciences, and so on, demand that we rethink just what materiality entails (Haraway 1991b:150-5; 1991c:195-9; De Landa 1997:14-7; Holland 2013:16). This section outlines some of the concepts formulated as part of this endeavour. A reader previously acquainted with the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari will undoubtedly interject that I am leaving out crucial elements. To both such a reader, and to the reader who in this text makes their first encounter with these ideas, I want to emphasise that this section is not intended as a self-contained introduction to the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari, or to neomaterialist theory as a whole, but serves to elucidate on the specific notions employed in my analysis.

I choose to start, as Deleuze and Guattari did in A Thousand Plateaus, with the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:3; Holland 2013:10). The rhizome is named for the mode of propagation employed by some plants, where roots diverge into horizontal nodes that are capable of further growth even when cut off from the original root cluster. The rhizome as a model for thinking is contrasted with the tree, the dominant model of Western thought. The tree is unitary, it erects a vertical hierarchy, it has a singular causality, a beginning and an end. The persistence of the tree as model is tied to thinking in binaries and in radially symmetric hierarchical systems (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:5, 18-20; O’Sullivan 2006:12-3). The rhizome stands as a challenge to the tree on all these points, among others. The rhizome connects heterogeneous materialities, as nodal points in
a flat system, as opposed to the hierarchically ordered sequence of the tree. Consequently, it is not itself composed of one single substance, but exists in its joining together of many different things into a multiplicity. There is no central trunk, and every node can act together with any other one without first passing through a central segment, of which the rhizome has none. As it has no centre, it similarly has no one direction in which it is heading, but spreads in all directions at once (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:7-9; Holland 2013:23).

If this seems to be a concept with no connection to the materially existing world, then that is emphatically what it is not. For instance, the tree model of descent posits species as discrete entities descending from ancestor species. Against this we can put forward the rhizomatic exchange of genetic material through viruses, for instance between humans and cows, or between baboons and cats (De Landa 1997:106-10, 138; Deleuze & Guattari 2004:11). The cohabitation of the various plant and animal species within a Scandinavian Late Iron Age settlement was not due to their close links according to an evolutionary tree, but through their linkages within a rhizomatic food web. We can pay equal attention to weeds and pests, if the human inhabitants are no longer considered a centre (De Landa 1997:107).

Let us turn to Deleuze’s and Guattari’s discussion of the rhizome formed by the orchid and the wasp. The orchid’s flower coming to liken the wasp, making the wasp an element in the reproductive apparatus of the orchid, is often described as a process of imitation or mimicry. Deleuze and Guattari emphatically reject this understanding. To them, wasp and orchid are joined together in a rhizome. Instead of imitation, “something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. Each of these becomings brings about the deterriorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:11). The wasp is removed from its role within one reproductive territory, that of wasps (deterriorialisation), and made to serve a role within another reproductive territory, which no longer consists exclusively of orchid matter (reterritorialisation). But what brings this about is the inverse becomings that take place in the orchid: new evolutionary selective pressures are introduced having nothing to do with nutrition intake from the terrain (deterriorialisation) but with the extent to which expressive traits that wasps use to select sexual partners are successfully made to appear in the orchid’s flower (reterritorialisation). The coupled movements of reterritorialisation and deterriorialisation is one expression of how the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari is about conceptualising the world as composed of processes, happening at different speeds and intensities. Crucially, being as such is replaced with becoming, ongoing procedures of which perceived being is “merely a momentary, subsidiary, and largely illusory suspension (or ‘contraction’) of becoming” (Holland 2013:1). This is a mode of thinking that does not concern itself with meaning so much as with function, and what entities are brought together by these processes (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:4; O’Sullivan 2006:18-22; Holland 2013:35). But this should in no way be mistaken for the functionalism of processual archaeology, which, to borrow a turn of phrase from Deleuze and Guattari, is not functional enough (2004:8).

How are we to speak of the complex phenomena we encounter if being is to be replaced with becomings? Assemblage is one term used to refer to such complex phenomena, being composed of various intermingling material bodies (organic as well as inorganic), making up a machinic assemblage; and on the other hand the incorporeal, or virtual, systematised expression, which is called the collective assemblage of enunciation. On a second axis, an assemblage has its territorial sides, but also its cutting edges of deterriorialisation (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:97-8).

A runestone might serve as a clarifying example. The machinic assemblage of the runestone gathers all the bodies it sets in motion: the stone, and the quarrying thereof, the stoneworker, the tools that couple rock and carver, the patron, the paint and the painter, and so on. The Old Norse language, the runic script, the curses and blessings, the naming conventions, the dragons, crosses,
and faces cut into the rock &c. are all part of the runestone’s collective assemblage of enunciation. Moving to the second axis of this assemblage, the territorial sides of the runestone establishes and negotiates territorial units of land, while cutting edges of deterritorialisation draw accelerating lines of flight carrying away the readers of mighty runes towards new forms of literacy and poetic expression, but equally carrying away the warriors that joined the eastward voyages of Ingvar, as well as the souls of the baptised towards their fates.

This model allows us to capture the tense complexity of phenomena while escaping a totalising binary logic. That the machinic assemblage is distinguishable from the collective assemblage of enunciation does not mean that these things can be said to exist independently.

This finally brings us to the nomadic following of flows. Flows constitute one element of Nomad science. Like the rhizome, it is an important concept of Deleuze and Guattari’s, that likewise serves to challenge orthodox modes of conceptualising and engaging with the world around us. If the world is made up not out of stable entities but of processes and becomings, with differing, but quantifiable, speeds and intensities; then to affirm this should mean a change in how we study the world (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:410; Holland 2013:51). Flows are matter in movement, and in moving, and intersecting, they bring about assemblages: “We will call an assemblage every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected organized, stratified—in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage in this sense, is a veritable invention” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:448. Emphasis in original). Assemblages act back on flows, and also bring about new rhizomatic connections of flows, so that change happens both on the level of flows and the level of assemblages, which, as discussed above, are made up of their intermingled materialities. Following a flow is about attention to the singularities of materialities, not the production of formal constants (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:410-1). There is a humility to following, a humility which does not seek to master the world but to attend to it (Haraway 1991c:199-201). It is the flow that already exist which can be followed, because its trajectory can not be predicted in advance (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:451; Holland 2013:51).

These concepts offer new ways to approach the materiality of material culture. My attention to the GFFs as material artefacts colours my engagements with my material throughout this essay.

4.2 Figural Art Beyond Representation

With the previous section providing some entry points into the milieu of neomaterialist philosophy, we now turn to the topic of art. The section starts with an attempt to contextualise the status of art in contemporary research on Animal Style Ornamentation, which was briefly observed in chapter 2 above. Following this, I outline the approach to art that will be employed for the analysis of GFFs in the next two chapters.

As we saw in section 2.2, up until the mid-20th century, many archaeologists were comfortable discussing ornamented material culture artefacts unambiguously in terms of art. This is a stark contrast to later works, where researchers often take great pains to emphasise that art is a notion which is to a high degree historically and culturally specific, and that we should refrain from projecting our understanding of art onto peoples of the past (Mannering 2006:14; Helmbrecht 2011:44-6). Before presenting the theories of art I employ in my analysis, I want to briefly reflect on the philosophical underpinnings of current day attitudes to art expressed in the archaeological study of material culture.

Archaeology has inherited the aesthetic framework of Western philosophy and art history. The Kantian conception of beauty is of great importance here. To Immanuel Kant, to judge something as beautiful is to make the subjective claim that it has a purposiveness without a purpose – that is, the beautiful object is perfectly formed to serve a purpose of its own, which lies wholly
outside the realm of useful objects, which we deem objectively useful and good because they can be (purposefully) put to functional use (Kant 2007:71). Consequently, free beauty is only found in art which has no functional utility, whereas the accomplishment of grace in communicating a message, or the amelioration of the form of something useful, is termed adherent beauty and lacks the purity of the former (Kant 2007:60, 71). In Kant’s works, dating to the late 18th century, the ornament has already taken on the connotations it has today: to Kant, the ornamental is specifically that which does not belong to the interiority of the work of art, but is an addition to its outside, and is only beautiful so long as it does not distract from the centerpiece (Kant 2007:57). The influence of Kant’s aesthetics in archaeology can be seen in the debate over whether style is that which is not preconditioned by material or the intended purposes, or if it conversely pertains to the realm of individual and collective expressions of identity (see Gustin 2004:52-6). Subscribing to these Kantian ideas about the nature of beauty and art, the aesthetic judgement is taken to be a wholly subjective matter. This is one of the criteria on which the field of aesthetics is defined in opposition to ethics and logic. The influence of these arguments on the philosophy of science cannot be overstated (Haraway 1991b:152-3; 1991c:193-4; Holland 2013:54-5).

That artistic merit is a subjective question, that the aesthetic and the functional are seen as opposites, and that the subjective aesthetic judgement has no place in the scientific logical search for knowledge; have all consequently been considered as problems for scientific analyses by archaeologists, whether they have subscribed to the processual view of culture as means of extrasomatic adaption or to the postprocessual attention to the communication of identities.

In approaching Animal Style Ornamentation as source of archaeological knowledge, scholars have turned to iconography as described above (see section 2. 2). This echoes cultural theorist Walter Benjamin’s theorising of the cult value and exhibition value of art objects, where he concludes that "the situation of the work of art in prehistoric times when, by the absolute emphasis on its cult value, it was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic. Only later did it come to be recognized as a work of art" (Benjamin 2007:225). To Benjamin, a trajectory can be drawn of increasing importance afforded to exhibition value, accompanied by cult value decreasing in significance. This results from an intensified reproducibility of the art object, and changes in the type of techniques employed and artefacts produced, resulting in the ascendance, in the 20th century, of photography and film, artistic media which are almost completely scrubbed of cult value. Benjamin terms this 20th century epoch, in which he is writing, "the age of mechanical reproduction" (Benjamin 2007:221). The tendency among archaeologists to consider any artefact without apparent practical use as imbued with ritual or cultic significance does not derive from the philosophy of Benjamin, but ultimately relies on the same understanding: since prehistoric artistry would not be the subject of an art exhibition, but nevertheless effects an aesthetic value judgement in the current-day archaeologist that observes it, it is assumed to have been fashioned for ritual purposes.

Reluctance to discuss material culture in terms of art is couched in terms of wanting to avoid projecting modern ideas of what it means to call something art. As I have shown in my discussion here, however, this does not in actuality constitute a break with Western aesthetic philosophy, where being the object of aesthetic enjoyment is, if not mutually exclusive from, then at least orthogonal to being the object of a scientific analysis. While I agree that we should strive for historical specificity whenever possible, and take care to not give the impression that anything exists absent historicity, we can never extricate ourselves from the situated, embodied, nature of our thinking, in time as well as in space (Haraway 1991c:189-92; Hurcombe 2007:115).

In this work, the GFFs will be openly approached in terms of art, belonging to the wider artistic tradition of Animal Style Ornamentation – but a specifically non-representational mode of art, that we might term Figural, Nomad Art, or Gothic. In line with my research questions, I am concerned not so much with what art is as with what art does (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:4, 453-9:
O’Sullivan 2006:51-2). In this approach I draw on the works of the early 20th century German art historian Wilhelm Worringer, but also on the works of Gilles Deleuze, both in his interpretation of the Figural art of the painter Francis Bacon, as well as the ideas regarding Nomad Art and rhythm that he developed together with Félix Guattari. To quote Simon O’Sullivan on the applicability of the theories of Deleuze and Guattari to the field of art, this can offer "another way of thinking art, beyond the 'horizon of the signifier', beyond textuality, but not through a return to traditional aesthetic theory or indeed to previous artist-centred models. We might say that this involves a further turn from the linguistic, a turn towards matter and to the expressive potentialities of the latter" (O’Sullivan 2006:4. Emphasis in original).

Worringer emphasises ornament in his art history, and considers it the paramount form through which a culture expresses its artistic spirit (Worringer 1997:51). The failure to properly account for the ornamental is one of the chief shortcomings of the approach to art as a matter of a mimetic imitation of the experienced world. This narrow concentration on naturalistic representation as the one artistic ideal is inadequate, as it "is of no assistance to us [...] in the understanding of that vast complex of art that pass beyond the narrow framework of Graeco-Roman and modern Occidental art" (Worringer 1997:8). Whereas naturalistic art is preoccupied with what Worringer calls empathy, the pleasures of identifying with, and being connected to, the sensory world; there is also an opposed drive in art to estrange ourselves from, and to mollify, a world of confusion and horror, which is the urge to abstraction (Worringer 1997:4-7, 14-20).

An elucidating example of Worringer’s of the workings of the urge to abstraction is the acanthus in Classical art (Fig. 14). In its early stages, what is called acanthus in art is bereft of any similarities to the plant, the traits of which only later emerge, whereas the formal geometric pattern remains the same. To Worringer this is because it was the abstraction of the affects that was sought, not the decorative beauty of this particular plant. He notes that other art historians have had great trouble to explain just what it was that made the acanthus the object of so much artistic interest, where recourse will often be made to a proposed symbolic value of the acanthus, which poses the same problems as discussed above with iconography (Worringer 1997:58-60). With reference to Sophus Müller, the pioneering Danish archaeologist, Worringer explicitly notes that the same can be said of Animal Style Ornamentation, which arises from ornamental abstraction that does not mimetically represent a model. There is an animal inspiration in Animal Style Ornamentation, but it is certain animal affects that are placed within a wholly novel context. Worringer distinctly rejects the art historians’ turn to symbolism. While symbolism might well appear over time, the ornament is not intended to symbolise, but to abstract away traits of nature (Worringer 1997:61-2). The later codifying of an independent chimerical monster is the effect of an imposition of order, as with the emergence of the naturalistic acanthus – or a reterritorialisation, to speak with Deleuze and Guattari (2004:11-5, 371-3). This entirely inverts the iconographical received wisdom in archaeology, where Animal Style Ornamentation is assumed to depict mythological narratives, a portion of which has survived in textual sources. Following Worringer, instead of the artefact illustrating a mythic story, such as that of the Midgard serpent, the Midgard serpent arises as a story told in the

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**Fig. 14.** Acanthus leaf and acanthus ornament.
deciphering of the serpentine shapes of Animal Style Ornamentation (Worringer 1997:62). The iconographical approach to Animal Style Ornamentation, as described above in 2.2, could be characterised as the very inverse of this stance.

But beyond these two poles of empathy and abstraction, Worringer argues there exists a third, that hybridises the preceding two. He names this the Gothic, as to him it must closely be identified with the history of Northern European art, from Animal Style Ornamentation (which he also terms Latent Gothic) and onwards to the medieval Gothic. In the Gothic, the two artistic urges are hybridised, as it undertakes the same process of abstracting away affects of the experiential world as in abstraction, as described above, but then makes the abstract the object of our empathic identification by giving it a life of its own, a strictly non-organic life of forces acting upon one another in the constant twisting and turning of the line, as seen in Animal Style Ornamentation, or in Gothic architecture through vertical elongation (Worringer 1920:43-51, 53; 1997:112-19).

To recapitulate, Worringer provides two important notions about art beyond the representational, both with direct application on Animal Style Ornamentation – namely, abstraction and the Gothic. Abstraction is at work in Animal Style Ornamentation, for instance in how fabric or wickerwork affect an interwoven surface, abstracted away into interlace patterns. Animal Style Ornamentation makes use of certain affects not to represent but to abstract away these affects into a new assemblage. Although the Gothic is empowered in different ways by both the urge to empathise and the urge to abstraction, Worringer makes clear that the Gothic does not constitute a dialectical synthesis of the two, as these are by no means harmonised, but precisely brought into a forceful, dissonant, coexistence that animates the Gothic Line to ever-increasing intensity (Worringer 1920:53; Deleuze 2005:89-91).

In their discussion on the distinction between the smooth and the striated, Deleuze and Guattari make use of these theories of Worringer’s for their concept of Nomad Art. Like the distinction between tree and rhizome detailed in the previous section, the opposition of striated to smooth is similarly one between a regulating, disciplinary model tied to the State: the striated; and a multitudinous, unfixed, intensive model: the smooth. Crucially for our purposes, the smooth is identified with the Gothic, which is here argued as more fundamentally alterior to representational art than geometric abstraction. Geometric regularity and perspectival representation are brought together as striating regulations of space (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:539, 547). Instead, they draw on other parts of Worringer’s argument, such as the distinction between the optical vision that registers depths and distances, which Worringer ties to empathy and for Deleuze and Guattari is tied to striation; versus the haptic or tactile vision of things at close range, where space is collapsed into a plane, a plane which Deleuze and Guattari would call smooth (Worringer 1997:41). Deleuze and Guattari explicitly draw on Animal Style Ornamentation in making the case for the haptic character of Nomad Art: “in the most famous works of nomad art [...] the twisted animals have no land beneath them; the ground constantly changes direction from the head, the hind part of the body is turned upside down; [...] the whole and the parts give the eye that beholds them a function that is haptic rather than optical” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:545, 546-9). As we shall see in chapter 6 below, these observations are highly applicable to GFFs as well.

The three aspects of the refrain, or ritornello, that Deleuze and Guattari make note of might serve as a further counterpoint to the representational understanding of art. The refrain is here not a characteristic of musical art, but is used to describe the rhythmic interplay of forces that are argued to be equally present in other kinds of art (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:330-2). The first aspect of the refrain consists of the emergence of the melody contrasted against a wider backdrop. The second aspect is the selecting and ordering in accordance with a melody, or a rhythm, that which recurs. Finally, the third aspect consists in the exploration of new terrain, improvisation upon the established theme (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:343-4). Applied to Animal Style Ornamentation, the first aspect is in the practice of a distinct ornamental art, the second in the establishment of com-
mon principles through reiteration, and the third is in the persistent variation and modulation upon said principles or themes. It is through these aspects that a territory is formed and maintained (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:344). This model allows for the recognition of the dynamic vitality of Animal Style Ornamentation, which has been missed by previous researchers framing it as bound by rigid rules stipulating imitative repetition. In the three aspects of the refrain, as in the thinking of Deleuze & Guattari more generally, repetition is no less creatively expressive, as it is part of a constant back-and-forth between rhythmic repetition and improvised difference (Holland 2013:8-9). GFFs exhibit this rhythmic dynamism of the refrain both in their material and Figural traits, as we will see in the analyses below.

In Deleuze and Guattari’s writing on language, once more there is a movement away from representation. Here it is the representational, communicating aspects of language that are challenged. Instead of giving primacy to language as a signifying structure with grammatical constants, Deleuze and Guattari stress the pragmatic use of language in speech, which they rebuke linguistics for having considered as extrinsic to language proper. For the purposes of this essay, of particular interest is the attention they give to the use of language in a way that puts the language in a state of variation. Approaching language use as a question of expressive variation, they challenge the notion that language can be clearly delineated from music, or speaking from singing. But as language is both spoken and written, literary aesthetic practices are likewise emphasised as examples of how language is placed in variation (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:107).

The drawing up of a grammar for a language by linguists, extracting constants and giving it the structure of a tree, is by Deleuze and Guattari identified with a major language. But opposed to this are the minor languages, that work from within a major language to put it in variation. "Minor languages are characterized not by overload and poverty in relation to a standard or major language, but by a sobriety and variation that are like a minor treatment of the standard language, a becoming-minor of the major language. [...] Minor languages do not exist in themselves: they exist only in relation to a major language and are also investments of that language for the purpose of making it minor.” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:116). The more a language is forced upon others as a major language, as the French language and the English language were, by colonising imperial powers, the more we can witness how these languages are experimented with, placed in variation, through creoles, dialects and jargons that deterritorialise the major language and bring about a becoming-minor (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:113-5).

The concept of the minor was first theorised in Deleuze and Guattari’s 1975 book Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature. The minor reappears in A Thousand Plateaus, again as minor literature, but also as minor language, as discussed above, and as minor science. As the discussion of minor and major languages shows, the word minor is chosen in part to allude to the power dynamics between minority and majority groups, with creole, slang, and particularly African American Vernacular English being pointed to as examples of minor languages. At the same time, it also draws on the differentiation of major and minor key in music, which shows how this is fundamentally an aesthetic or stylistic concept. In his putting of concepts from the work of Deleuze and Guattari to use for the understanding of art, O’Sullivan puts great emphasis on the minor (O’Sullivan 2006:70-7; Holland 2013:80). That to put something in variation is also to make it minor seems particularly appropriate to the study of artefacts known for their miniature size.

In deterritorialising the major language, a minor language or literature draws not on the signifying functions of language – functions which Deleuze and Guattari, as we saw above, strive to decentralise – but instead brings to the fore what O’Sullivan terms its "asignifying, intensive aspects", which "involves a kind of stammering and stuttering – or 'becoming a stranger’ – in ones own tongue” (O’Sullivan 2006:70). Deleuze and Guattari see minorities and outsiders as having a particular ease for making a language become minor, but the option always exists to put language in variation by fragmenting a language regardless of whether or not it is considered as the speaker’s
proper tongue. On the basis of postcolonial theory, some archaeologists have suggested that these theories on imperialism and othering can offer new insights in our understanding of the relations between Romans and barbarians (Svanberg 2003:12, 22-7; Cassel 2008:114-6). Deleuze and Guattari do in fact touch on this, albeit obliquely, where runes are brought up and related to the tendency of barbarians and nomads to adopt the writing systems of neighbouring empires, where runic writing is characterised as having at first served as a secret, magical language, tied more to ornamentation than communication, out of which the role as communicative writing only later emerges (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:443-4). Runes are not explicitly called minor, but all these characteristics are elsewhere identified with minor languages (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:112-6).

The topic of art outside of representation returns in a work Deleuze wrote on the painter Francis Bacon, employing a slightly different set of concepts, following other flows. When Deleuze writes on the art of Bacon, he is rather continuing his production of monographs on earlier thinkers (O’Sullivan 2006:31). The titles of Bacon’s paintings routinely refers to them as Figures, and this is a word he used to describe his works. Bacon is by Deleuze argued to have refined an art that is neither mimetic nor abstract, but showing the existence of a third path: that of the Figure. The Figure stands opposed to representational art, to figuration as such. The rhythmic tension among forces is common to all sensory data, according to Deleuze, and the theory of the Figure attempts to approach art at this sensorial level (Deleuze 2005:26, 30). The subtitle to his book on Bacon is The Logic of Sensation, and the approach to art might be described as phenomenological. “The Figure is the sensible form related to a sensation; it acts immediately upon the nervous system […] it is Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one time I become in the sensation and something happens through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other” (Deleuze 2005:25). These notions of the Figure, and of the Figural, further the discussion of Nomad Art by Deleuze together with Guattari in A Thousand Plateaus, as seen earlier in this section. What Deleuze develops with Bacon’s aid is an approach to visual art that goes beyond the logic of representation. This is primarily a work about a painter and about painting, and the observations on the Figure made with the help of Bacon’s work are not medium-independent. Nonetheless, this text has much to say about the production of the Figural image, through other means as well. The GFFs are another way of achieving the Figure. Since my material consists solely of single-Figure foils, the possible merits of applying Deleuze’s analysis of Bacon’s triptychs and coupled-Figure paintings to the coupled-Figure GFFs fall outside the scope of the present study, save for my adopting the moniker coupled-Figure for GFFs of the type exemplified in Fig 12 (Deleuze 2005:46). I have chosen to consistently capitalise the words Figure and Figural to clarify that they are used in the particular sense championed by Deleuze.

What can be established about the Figure in art? Deleuze notes that Bacon speaks of his paintings as accomplishing something that might otherwise have been arrived at through sculpture, namely "A sculpture that would have included the three pictorial elements: the armature-ground, the Figure-form, and the contour-limit. He specifies that the Figure, along with its contour, should be able to slide along the armature. But even taking this mobility into account, we can see that Bacon is thinking of a bas-relief type of sculpture, something in between sculpture and painting” (Deleuze 2004:86). It bears mentioning that the patrices upon which GFFs are stamped are examples of bas-relief. O’Sullivan has further argued that if works of art are considered as assemblages, this notion of the sculptural can be extended to any type of art object (O’Sullivan 2006:36).

The Figure is not figurative, but neither is it simply abstract in the sense of abstract art. It thus occupies a position similar to the Gothic as theorised by Worringer. In the contrasting of the Figure to narrative representation, we can recognise what Worringer termed the urge to abstraction as a decoupling of certain affects from the world. But in contrasting here with specifically narrative representation, to Deleuze it is a question of isolation from other images: "Isolating the Figure will be the primary requirement. The figurative (representation) implies the relationship of
an image to an object that it is supposed to illustrate; but it also implies the relationship of an image to other images in a composite whole which assigns a specific object to each of them. Narration is the correlate of illustration. A story slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between the two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole” (Deleuze 2004:2).

As was noted in section 2.3, even among scholars that reject interpretations of GFFs as iconographic in the narrow sense of portraying deities and other sacred entities, GFFs are nevertheless still seen as representing symbolic attributes according to a certain system of signification. That such representational frameworks are possible to construct is not a strike against the validity of the nonsignificatory approach entertained here. Indeed, Deleuze directly acknowledges this in his treatise on Bacon, a painter who could equally well be described as having a clear set of recurring motifs (distorted bodies, mirrors, washbasins, umbrellas &c), that other interpreters have attached significance to in accordance with, for instance, psychoanalysis. However, in Deleuze’s interpretation of Bacon’s works, there is emphatically no narrative to be glimpsed in these images. The Figural is not the opposite of or the inversion of representative figuration, but wholly outside of it. The point is not that the umbrella of one of Bacon’s Figures, or the hand of a GFF, cannot be identified as such, but that the structural assemblage they are part of revolts wholly against the representational logic of signification (Deleuze 2005:13, 72; O’Sullivan 2006:48).

4.3 THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF ARTISANAL REPRODUCTION

This chapter has provided a neomaterialist apparatus for the study of material culture artefacts as non-representational art. In the first part of the chapter, some concepts from the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari were discussed. These concepts, particularly the rhizome, the assemblage, and the flow, all offer new ways to approach materiality. The second part of the chapter then dealt with attitudes to art in archaeological research before moving on to the question of how to approach art outside of representation. Here I drew on the theories of Worringer, Deleuze and Guattari. Starting from Worringer’s opposition between empathy and abstraction, the related concepts of the Gothic, Nomad Art, and the Figure were introduced and discussed. The Deleuzoguattarian model of the refrain, as well as the distinctions between the smooth and the striated, and between the minor and the major, also received attention.

On the basis of this, in the two chapters of the analysis, which follow immediately after this one, the materiality of my material will be approached as something polyvalent, connected to various flows of matter, as complex assemblages of various matters. These concepts see particular use in the first part of the analysis, chapter 5, where the operational sequence of GFF production take centre stage, but are also employed in chapter 6. Chapter 6 concerns the Figural traits of the GFFs from Västra Vång, and it is consequently in that chapter that the theories of non-representational art elaborated on in section 4.2 above see most use.
5 Stamp, cut. chaîne opératoire

In this chapter I attend to the practical sequence of operations by which the GFFs were made. The GFFs from Västra Vång are at the core of this analysis, with the evidence from other sites playing an important, but secondary, role. Sections 5.1 through 5.5 discuss, in turn, the casting of GFF dies; the production of gold foil; the stamping of GFFs; the cutting out of GFFs, whether stamped or not; and finally the deposition of GFFs. In 5.6, other gold artefacts of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age are brought in to compare and contrast with my findings. Finally, 5.7 summarises the conclusions of this part of the analysis.

5.1 The Die is Cast

We begin with the casting of the patrises dies for stamping of GFFs. Why start at this juncture, particularly considering that some GFFs consist only of cut or scratched gold foil? While unlike the use of a die, gold foil is common to all GFFs – or almost all, as some bronze and silver foils, none of which have been found at Västra Vång, also belong to this artefact category – to stamp a GFF, the die employed must necessarily preexist it. Stamped GFFs make up the clear majority. The GFF find sites without any traces of employing dies for stamping number only two: Hög Edsten and Nørre Hvam, with three and one cut-out GFF respectively. While there are few characteristics that hold true for a plurality of GFF find sites, these sites both distinguish themselves by containing a hoard of other gold artifacts – at Nørre Hvam bracteates, at Hög Edsten gold and garnet cloisonné artefacts including a sword pommel. Settlements remains are absent in both cases (Barfod Carlsen 2002:131; Lamm 2004:57-8; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:10).

No patrices for the making of GFFs have been discovered at Västra Vång. At present, around 20 copper alloy patrices have been found at other sites within Scandinavia, none of which have seen use at Västra Vång (Watt 2016:65). These surviving dies, as well as the imprints resulting from the stamping operations, indicate that that as a rule, GFF dies were patrices, that is, positive relief stamps. Some authors have argued that the copper alloy artefact from Vä, Scania, Sweden, is a matrix die, i.e. a die bearing a negative relief design, like the ones used for the manufacture of bracteates (Hansson 2012:37; Victorin 2013:34). Most scholars have interpreted the Vä artefact as a bronze foil figure mounted on a piece of bronze, which I as well find to be a more probable interpretation (Andréasson 1995:79; Lamm 2004:62; Mannering 2017:21). The 20 extant patrices comprise only a tiny subset of the at least 730 dies used to manufacture GFFs. However, compared with the matrix dies used in the making of bracteates, of which only two have been found, this is a sizeable surviving corpus (Axboe 2007:14-6; Watt 2016:65). It would seem likely that many dies, for bracteates and GFFs alike, ended up as raw material for new copper alloy artefacts. Another possibility is that cast metal is only one of many materials used for patrices. Beside cast dies of copper alloys, Lamm argues that wood, horn, or ivory, may have been used, which has been tried experimentally with good results (Lamm 2004:111). Axboe similarly considers matrices of these materials having been used for bracteates, particularly in light of the wood grain patterning on the obverse of some bracteates (2007:21). The affordances of horn and ivory could possibly have influenced the diminutive size of GFFs, but as the associated finds in Nørre Hvam and Hög Edsten indicate towards an early incidence of cut-out GFFs, this appears unlikely (Hurcombe 2007:120).

Axboe argues that some traits of D bracteate motifs, the intersecting raised lines particularly, would have been extremely difficult to achieve in positive relief, but would arise rather naturally to the artisan working in negative relief, lending further evidence towards bracteates having been stamped with matrix dies. Some traits of the GFFs have a similar quality, primarily those used in effecting the extremities, as discussed in section 6.4. As is demonstrated in this section and in 5.3
below on the stamping operation, GFFs were fashioned with patrices, i.e. positive relief dies, unlike bracteates. However, some bracteates have elements in positive relief, which Axboe argues must have been added in the process of die manufacture, not as a retouching of the individual bracteate following the stamping operation. He posits that the majority of the design was first carved in negative relief, then a positive imprint was made of the design, allowing for corrections in positive relief. This revised imprint then served as the mould for casting the finalised matrix die (Axboe 2007:23-4). If any part of the designs on the GFF patrices were created in negative, they would then have been part of a similar sequence of operations, resulting in a finished patrix die.

Evidence from the GFFs stamped with the use of patrix dies in Västra Vång is cause for further discussion on the particulars of the production of GFF dies. The die-stamped designs VV3A and 3B, as well as VV4A and 4B, are respectively almost identical, with only some differences, to the heads and the dress, that are not immediately obvious.¹ The two variants (Figs. 15 & 16) are in both cases the same size, meaning that the die used for one can not have been copied from the die used for the other, as lost-wax casting would have resulted in shrinkage (Trotzig 2014:190). A partial patrix die has been found at Neble, Zealand, Denmark, corresponding to one of the differing parts of the foils, though clearly of a different design (Andréasson 1995:55). VV3A and VV3B diverge only in the presence of a few lines on the forehead of the Figure, but are otherwise identical. Axboe interprets comparable minute differences between bracteates as additions to the design of the matrix die (2007:22). This seems a likely explanation also in this case, particularly as the lines added to VV3B have a fresher, more crudely chiseled quality compared to the rest of the design (Fig. 16). At Uppåkra, a similar case of two almost identical designs is seen, in this case featuring the same head and upper body, but with differences to the lower half. Watt takes this to reflect not two separate dies, but the same die at different points in its cycle of use, having been retouched because of damage to the die. The one GFF stamped on the retouched die was clearly stamped with a die that had lost its sharpness from wear, and Watt further points to microscopic traces on the GFF’s reverse, which correspond to elements of the older design which were

¹ These differences are not mentioned in previous work on the GFFs from Västra Vång. I therefore refer to these as VV3A and VV3B; VV4A and VV4B respectively, to minimise confusion and keep the numbering of the motifs otherwise intact.

Fig. 15. VV4A (left) and VV4B (right). distinguishing elements highlighted.

Fig. 16. VV3A (left) and VV3B (right). distinguishing elements highlighted.
removed in the retouching of the die (Watt 2004:191). Such an object biography is not possible to construct for VV3A and VV3B, with both designs being equally sharp.

It is possible that several copies of identical or nearly-identical dies were made, and that partial dies might have served some function in this process. VV4A and VV4B can not have been made by retouching a single die, nor by using several dies in a cadavre exquis fashion, as the motifs do not fully align and there are no traces of any edges joined together (Fig. 15). Other GFF designs express a similar serial variation. Here we can point to three GFF designs from Sorte Muld, SM301, SM302, and SM303 (Fig 51). These are immediately distinguishable from one another, but have curious compositional parallels. Two points in the middle of the Figure’s chest is seen on all three designs in the exact same two spots, but the artistic treatment of these points serve to distinguish the designs, giving the impression that there was a model common to all three dies (Watt 2004:181). We will return to these particular designs in chapter 6.

Thus far, all the patrices found are unique. One of the patrices found at Smørenge, with the differences located to the same parts of the design as in Västra Vång: hair and dress pattern. Additionally, the pattern (but not the shape) of the frame distinguishes the two from one another (Watt 2004:175). However, since the Uppåkra patrix is significantly larger than the one from Smørenge, they offer little immediate assistance in understanding the relationship between the VV4A and VV4B dies.

Watt argues that the commonalities in pictorial traits allow for the sorting of GFF motifs into 63 separate “die-families”. Such families would, according to Watt, have been produced either by the same artisan, or by other artisans copying the motif of one of the dies acting as a prototype. Watt admits that several die-families could be the work of the same goldsmith, however, meaning that the utility of this for tracing the production of patrices is limited (Watt 2004:214; 2016:63-5). Per my discussion on the models of the rhizome and the tree in the previous chapter, I am not convinced that the spread of a motif necessarily follows such a tree-like structure of descent.

No remains of moulds for the casting of a GFF die have thus far been discovered. The bronze casting techniques employed in this time period allowed for cast metal artefacts with a high level of detail, but low survivability for identifiable moulds (Coatsworth & Pindar 2002:37-8, 69-72). Moulds for other artefact types have nevertheless survived, often at considerable distance from the items they were involved in making. Some of these moulds are from other GFF sites, as is the case with Uppåkra and Helgö (Coatsworth & Pindar 2002:71; Hjärtner-Holdar, Lamm & Magnus 2002:161-9; Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:56-7). Considering the circulation of GFF dies, evident in the use of the same die at several, geographically distant, sites, and the deposition pattern of the discovered patrices, the casting of dies might have taken place at some wholly separate location from the sites of GFF manufacture and deposition (Watt 2004:211-2, 214-5). The traces of bronze casting at Västra Vång are thus far rather minor and incidental, as compared to Uppåkra, Helgö, or Lundeborg. Copper alloy fragments unearthed at the hill location (RAÄ 306) in Västra Vång indicate some possible bronze casting with materials sourced from older artefacts (Grandin & Englund 2013:14-5), but these can in my view not securely be distinguished from other copper alloy artefact depositions at the site (see chapter 3 above). A trench south of the hill contained three burnt clay objects that, based on their composition, could possibly be moulds, as well as a large amount of what might be crucibles, these latter in various stages of fragmentation, totalling 172 fragments. Of these, some show indication of trace copper (Brorsson 2016:5-7).

Patrices were deposited in similar contexts as the stamped GFFs (see discussion in section 5.5 below). However, while dies are found together with GFFs, in no case has a patrix been found at the same site as a matching GFF. Patrices found at Uppåkra and Møllegård have been used to make GFFs, not at their respective sites, but at Sorte Muld (Andréasson 1995:74-5; Lamm 2004:105; Watt 2004:211-2; Mannering 2006:35). The sites of die disposal consequently can not help us determine the sites of their production, but further emphasises the itinerant practice of this craft.
5. 2 Gold Into Foil

In light of the non-GFF gold finds from the hill locale (RAÅ 306), the raw material for the GFFs appears to have arrived at Västra Vång in various forms. Both in number and by weight, most are bars or rings of thick gold thread, to a total of 11.87 g. Coin gold is present in the form of a 0.37 g fragment of a Roman solidus – approximately one eigth of a whole coin – from the reign of Valentinian III. A fragment from a larger gold artefact ornamented with gold filigree, and weighing 0.15 g, was also found at the site, which like the Roman coin might have been brought there as raw material for GFFs (Henriksson 2016a:16; Jarlehorn 2018). Gold was either brought here by the artisans who were to work it, or by others who sought to connect gold with a goldsmith. This movement of metal, or flow of matter, is a prerequisite to metalworking as a mode of following a flow (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:451-3, 458). The heterogeneity of the assembled gold is occasion to observe that this agglomeration, and the artistic activity, is not resulting from access to a source of unworked, raw metal (e. g. a mine), but acts upon or follows a flow already in place.

Among the finds is a droplet of gold, with a weight of 0.63 g, that has been slightly flattened, indicating that smelting of gold took place at the site. Some of the aforementioned crucibles found south of the hill are likely to be used for smelting silver and gold, based on their small size (Brorsson 2016:5). One GFF, BLM 29195:17, has a markedly different metallic sheen than the rest, and appears to have been made out of purer gold. This indicates at least two separate instances of gold foil production, most likely done at the site. The design on this GFF, VV11, is furthermore unique to this finer foil (Jarlehorn 2018).

After resmelting, the gold would be hammered into foil of appropriate size and thickness. The flattening of the droplet of gold mentioned above is in all likelihood resulting from such a sheet-making operation (Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:86-7). Theophilus instructs the maker of gold foil to layer several sheets of metal on top of one another with leather in between, and then placing it all in a leather bag before applying flattening force. He then suggests that the finished gold foil or leaf should be stored with layers of parchment in between (Theophilus 1979:30). The gold foil made for GFFs was likely not manufactured in such an industrial fashion. Gold is a highly pliable metal, but becomes brittle in response to the force applied to hammer it into a sheet of foil, and without precautions such as those Theophilus recommends, fragmentation is liable to occur (Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:86-7; Axboe 2007:24-5). Plain sheets of foil is not the form the gold takes at Västra Vång. Ingot bars and rings, and scrap fragments of coin and jewellery are regularly found deposited together with the more voluminous GFF deposits, including at Västra Vång as described above (see also 5. 5 below). Foil not stamped or otherwise fashioned into GFFs is only present as thread and cut-off edge pieces, not sheets of unworked gold foil (Jarlehorn 2014, 2018). This appears to hold true for other sites as well, where additional gold foil is typically threadlike in form (Lundqvist 2000:68; Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:24-6).

However, at Slöinge a single sheet of unstamped foil of similar dimensions to the GFFs was found, which we will return to in 5. 4 below. It is additionally worth taking into consideration, that from Sorte Muld and Uppåkra, cut-out GFFs which take a highly geometric and abstract shape are known. Back Danielsson points out that the border between gold foil and GFF might thus be less clear cut than it appears to archaeologists of today (Lundqvist 2000:68; Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:25, Watt 2004:199; Back Danielsson 2007:121-2).

Coatsworth and Pinder point to the strict separation of crafts according to material in monasteries of the mid to late first millennium CE, which their sources do not explain, but is suggested to reflect wanting to keep different metals from alloying unnecessarily. Such precautions have not been taken in the case of GFF production, according to Jan Gullman’s findings of the wide range in metal composition of the GFFs. Based on Gullman’s data, which includes GFFs from Eketorp that are die-identical with some of those from Västra Vång, Back Danielsson argues that
the purity of the gold foil was not a central concern when making GFFs (Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:25-7; Gullman, in Lamm 2004:112-5; Back Danielsson 2007:192). With the caveat that Gullman’s analysis is restricted to GFFs from Swedish sites found before 1992, which thus includes neither the substantial Danish material, nor the more sizeable find materials from Uppåkra and Slöinge, this could be argued to reflect the striating agenda of church authorities contrasting with the smooth following of a flow in Nomadic metallurgy (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:446-7, 542). In those cases when Scandinavian Late Iron Age workshop sites form striated spaces, such as the grids of rigid plots mentioned in chapter 3, separation of crafts according to materials employed is not the organising principle (Callmer 2002:148-9; Hed Jakobsson 2003:194-5, 212).

Further cause for reflection regarding the production of foil for GFFs is that in some cases GFFs found at Sorte Muld and Uppåkra are stamped into foil that was first adorned with a "waffle" pattern, fashioned with a knife or a stamp (Watt 2004:170; Back Danielsson 2007:202-3; Ratke 2009). At Neble, dies both for producing waffle-patterned gold foil and for stamping GFFs have been found, although in separate corners of the site. Another die for waffle-patterning was found at Sylten, a site within the wider Sorte Muld area (Andréasson 1995:59; Nielsen 1997:64-5). Such waffle patterning was employed when making cloisonné jewellery. Gold foil was placed underneath the garnets to catch the light and make the precious stones more radiant, an effect which becomes more intense if the foil is patterned this way. For a GFF, however, such a pattern would mainly cause difficulty in discerning the motif. The level of detail, and the regularity, of this waffle patterning are expressions of an impressive degree of technical skill among Scandinavian Late Iron Age goldsmiths working in a miniature scale, as is equally true of GFFs, which has been the subject of scholarly fascination (Trotzig 2014:256-60; Stempel 2016). That foil could be prepared for use in cloisonné, and then repurposed for a GFF, could be interpreted as foil making and GFF stamping not always being conducted by the same artisan, where the purpose of the foil may have changed as it changed hands. But it is just as possible that this double-stamping was deliberate. In any case, that such foil was still suitable for a GFF, is another reason to question the assumption that GFFs were made for purposes of display.

GFFs are generally approached in terms of their quantities, which inadvertently inflates their significance compared with other precious metal artefacts from the Migration Period and Vendel Period. The weight of the gold finds from Västra Vång up to and including the results of the 2017 excavation, amounts to 17,22 g. Of this, GFFs make up 4,2 g, 24,4% (Henriksson 2016a:16; Jarlehorn 2018). Other GFF sites commonly feature such gold material not worked into GFFs, as ingots or "scrap" fragments of gold artefacts. As in Västra Vång, this category is often larger than the GFFs by weight. This is the case at both Uppåkra and Eketorp (Andréasson 1995:79-81; Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:24-5). The average weight of a GFF from Vång is 0,1 g, which is the average weight for die-stamped GFFs in general (Jarlehorn 2014; 2018; Watt 2016:63). To give an inkling of the purchasing power this represented, in the 5th to 6th century Byzantine Roman Empire, 0,1 g of gold could buy about 45 kg of wheat or one Roman pound (roughly 320 g) of wool (Herschend 1980:235, 241).

Salaries paid for Roman military service could serve as a further point of reference. While I have been unable to find data that is contemporaneous with the GFFs, numbers pertaining to earlier centuries may provide useful reference values. In the 1st century CE, Peter Ørsted claims a common soldier in the auxiliary regiments of the Roman military was paid 250 silver denarii per year. Going by the exchange rate known to have remained stable up until at least the 2nd century, 250 denarii, weighing approximately 750 g, could be turned into 10 arurei gold coins with a total weight of about 73 g gold. Gad Rausing claims otherwise, holding that at that point in time, the

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2 The material from 2018 and 2019 is not included in this discussion. Data on the weight of constituent gold is at present only available for one out of several of the gold artefacts from these two seasons, a GFF (BLM 29298:4) found in RAA 121 in 2018, that weighs 0.07 g (Jarlehorn 2019).
annual pay of a legionary was 225 *denarii*, and for an *auxiliarius* only half of that. Later on, in the early 3rd century, the legionary’s pay was at 300 *denarii*, according to Rausing, and an *auxiliarius* again receiving only half at 150 *denarii*. After equipment, provisions and fees had been deducted, just about half would remain. The net income of a 3rd century *auxiliarius* was 160 g of silver or 13 g of gold. The disparity with the numbers given by Ørsted seems to derive partially from the debasement of both gold and silver Roman coinage over time, but also that Ørsted’s numbers likely reflect gross income, and Rausing’s net income. It is further worth taking into account that the fortunes of a Roman soldier would be bolstered by looting, as well as by bonuses paid out following a victory or on being discharged (Ørsted 2001:22-4; Rausing 2001:49).

These numbers all pertain to earlier points in the history of the Roman military, and I have not been able to find any data on how much soldiers were paid following the transition from the older *aureus* to the new gold coin, the *solidus*, under Constantine in 312 CE. *Solidus* is the origin of the word soldier, which does indicate that military salaries increasingly were paid in gold, but I have been unable to determine in what amounts. Using the 3rd century sums, a GFF would correspond to slightly less than 1% of the annual salary of an *auxiliarius*, or about three days’ pay.

Returning to the comparative properties of Scandinavian Late Iron Age artefacts, gold bracteates are both larger and made from thicker foil. More than half of all bracteates weigh between 2 and 4 g, but they can weigh considerably more, with some having a weight of more than 15 g (Axboe 2007:82-6). Two opposite conclusions might be drawn from this. On the one hand, a single bracteate accounts for roughly the same amount of gold as the the 42 GFFs from Västra Vång, which – even before the subsequent discovery in 2018 and 2019 of an additional 16 GFFs – was the site of one of the larger GFF finds outside Bornholm. But on the other hand, the notion that lack of available materials is what drove the transition from bracteates to GFFs can be put into question, since even discounting the gold used for the manufacture of GFFs, at Västra Vång the gold not made into foil would allow for the production of three to six standard bracteates. Possibly the individual artisan no longer could access enough gold for a bracteate, even as the material that flowed through the site, or found its terminus there, still would suffice. But it is more likely that the explanation is more complicated than just the absolute volumes of precious metal finding its way to Scandinavia.

5.3 STAMPING

The stamping operation proceeded as shown in Fig. 17. The patrīx is placed under the gold foil, and then possibly secured. The patrices found at Järrestad and Vester Egersborg each have a bronze handle, which might have served to secure the die by hand and prevent it from slipping (Lamm 2004:105). At least one GFF, from Uppåkra, has three legs as a result of either the foil or the die moving while being stamped. Two GFFs from Helgö show traces of similar slippage (Lamm 2004:112; Watt 2004:179. Compare Axboe 2007:24).

Theophilus gives detailed instructions in how to stamp metal foil using a die: that a thick sheet of lead is to be placed between the foil and the hammer or mallet, to make sure the design of the die is properly imprinted on the foil (Theophilus 1979:153). At Västra Vång, a number of small lead lumps were found by metal detecting in 2016. The lead pieces offered no datable information and need not relate to the stamping of GFFs at the site (Henriksson 2017:10). The proximity of lead finds to GFF find contexts is generally not noted, but this might reflect biases in the practices of publishing documentation and research practices more than the contextual relations on site (Hurcombe 2007:18-22). At Slöinge, a flat fragment of lead with triangular punch marks was found, also by metal detector survey, in the same general area as GFFs. The punch used has parallels to Migration Period artefacts such as fibulas and bracteates (Lundqvist 2000:33, 70-1). This fragment shows that artisans, working in precious metal at sites where GFFs have been found,
Fig. 17. Stamping of a GFF. Illustration by Jørgen Kraglund. After Franzén 2008.

Fig. 18. Surface defects on GFF from Västra Vång. Photo by Max Jarlehorn.

Fig. 19. Cracks and fissures in the foil of a GFF from Västra Vång. Photo by Åke Nilsson.

Fig. 20. Surface anomalies on the two EKB foils from Västra Vång compared with a drawing of an EKB from Eketorp. Anomalies circled. The leftmost Västra Vång foil is too buckled to securely make out one of the anomalies, marked with a dashed circle.
employed lead and knew its material properties, but it can by no means be conclusively linked to GFF manufacture (on lead use among Early Medieval goldsmiths in England, see Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:73-8). The stamping of a GFF likely used other materials to absorb the blow and press the gold foil onto the die. Axboe notes that the bracteates (which were fashioned by use of a matrix die) in some instances show traces of textile or wood surfaces on the reverse. Organic materials may have been used with GFFs as well, but if so these were not coarse enough to leave an imprint, making leather the likely candidate, or, less probably, given the affordances of brittle sharp-edged foil, felt or pitch (Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:113-4; Axboe 2007:21-4, 86). After this protective layer was placed on top of the patrix and the gold foil, the design would be driven into the gold foil by blows from a hammer. As mentioned in the previous section, when worked with a hammer, gold becomes brittle and cracks easily. While some of the fissures and holes in the GFFs might have arisen during the production of sheet foil, or during and after deposition, most of these defects are likely resulting from the stamping operation, given how they relate to the differences in the depth of the relief of the patrix (Figs. 18 and 19). More than half, 26 of the 42 GFFs from Västra Vång, show certain defects of this sort (Jarlehorn 2014; 2018; Watt 2016:63). Cracks in the foil are present on many of the gold bracteates as well, but have in those cases been repaired, with pieces of additional gold foil being soldered onto the reverse of the cracked disk (Axboe 2007:23). Such repairs are unknown on GFFs, in Västra Vång as well as in the total GFF corpus. When stamping onto a matrix die, as was the case with the gold bracteates, repairs of this kind can be accomplished with the artefact still against the die, but if employing a patrix die, such errors are harder to spot, and very difficult to repair without it being immediately obvious. That GFFs employed a production technique with a high risk of cracks and break-throughs, and that the resulting flaws were not repaired, is further indication that they were not intended for display.

Gert Franzén proposes that several GFFs might have been stamped in the same instance, by stacking several foil sheets on top of the patrix die, accounting for the variable level of detail of GFFs that clearly share the exact same design. However, this can better be understood as resulting from deterioration of the die from the force applied to it in stamping, or a variation in the purity or thickness of the metal foil (Franzén 2008:34; Watt 2004:179-80). Theophilus at several points stresses that sheets of gold foil should be alternated with parchment, leather or mortar in production and storage (Theophilus 1979:29-31, 108-9).

The assumption, usually implicit, is that GFFs with the same design are made using the same individual die. I share this conviction, but particularly in light of the design pairs, discussed above in 5. 1, it does well to emphasise that this is by no means proven beyond all doubt. The GFFs VV4A and VV4B, previously identified as resulting from one die, must have been made with two very similar dies. The assumed die-identity between some of the Västra Vång GFFs and GFFs found at Sorte Muld and Eketorp thus calls for critical evaluation.

Watt, who has seen both of the Västra Vång GFFs from the 2013 campaign and the Sorte Muld material, which she has been studying since the 1980s, identified one of the Västra Vång GFFs as SM195, but does make the caveat that only one instance of an SM195 GFF is known at Sorte Muld, which is further very buckled and fragmented (Watt 2016:65). I have not seen this GFF (or any other of Sorte Muld’s GFFs) in person, but only in the form of a low-resolution photograph taken by Ratke (2009). In the photo, this GFF appears to display the same interlace effect to its beaded frame as the assumed die-identical GFF from Västra Vång (see 6. 2 below). I follow Watt in terming the Västra Vång example as SM195, but I will not rule out the possibility of the SM195 GFFs having been stamped with two highly similar dies. Conversely, in case of the designs common to Eketorp and Västra Vång, I feel comfortable stating that these GFFs involved the use of the same dies at both sites. The majority of the GFFs from Eketorp are exhibited at Historiska museet in Stockholm, where I was able to inspect these GFFs in person. Lamm (2004) provides both high-resolution photographs and drawings of the
entire Eketorp corpus. There are three Eketorp designs, EKA, EKB, and EKC, and all three designs also occur at Västra Vång. In the case of EKA and EKC, the GFFs at the two sites are unquestionably stamped with the same design. The only other explanation would be that there existed several identical dies, which would call into question the notion of die-identity altogether. The Eketorp material does provide further evidence that identical designs result from the use of the one same die, since the EKB from Eketorp all share what I take to be anomalies resulting from air bubbles trapped at some point in the production of a cast copper alloy patrice. The two EKB GFFs found at Västra Vång are more crumpled and the imprint less distinct than is the case with EKA and EKC, but appear to display these same anomalies as Eketorp's EKB (Fig. 20).

If all GFFs with the same design are made with the same die, then that die would see use multiple times, and in many cases at several different sites. The die discovered at Møllegård, Bornholm, would have been used to stamp at least 70 GFFs with the same design (Rognstad Tangen 2010:10). At least 430 different patrices have been employed at Sorte Muld, which while a significant portion of the 730 known designs, is not proportionate to Sorte Muld's overshadowing majority of the GFF corpus, with at least 80% of GFFs being from this site (Helmbrecht 2011:259; Watt 2016:65).

In some cases, the traces of wear point towards a temporal sequence. Comparing the two EKB from Västra Vång with photographs of those found at Eketorp, it is immediately obvious that the latter retain a finer relief (see Lamm 2004:98-102 for these photographs). Upon close inspection of the EKB from Västra Vång, the design has lost a significant level of detail, particularly to the upper half. This could be due to the uneven, crumpled character of these two GFFs, but it is likely that they were made with a patrice that had undergone more wear. Conservator Max Jarlehorn describes the impression of the EKB motif stamped on BLM 28583:35 as "faint" (Jarlehorn 2014, my translation). Neither in the case of the EKA or EKC GFFs is a similar level of wear to be seen. This indicates that one die, EKB, saw use at Eketorp before being employed at Västra Vång, arriving at the latter site in a state that implies intermediate use. Meanwhile, the use-sequence for the other two dies is unclear. If we assume that these follow EKB in being used at Eketorp first, then their voyages to Västra Vång differ. The EKA and EKC dies did not see the same level of use as EKB in their movement from one site to the other. My interpretation is that individuals carrying the patrices met at Eketorp, and that carriers of the same dies (though not necessarily the same specific individuals) later reconvened at Västra Vång. The roads they travelled diverged, either in space or time, but took the dies from one site to the other.

Earlier, in section 5.2, the presumed higher gold content of one of Västra Vång’s GFFs was noted. This GFF, BLM 29195:17, is further the only extant use of its patrice die, and was not found in the same context as the other GFFs of that season (Henriksson 2018:12, 17). In much the same way as the various stamps used to mint the coins of a coin hoard can tell us of its dating and composition, this indicates in the direction of (at least) two separate instances of GFF production in Västra Vång, with different raw materials and dies available to the artisans. However, Gullman has shown that the gold content of GFFs from the same site and context can differ greatly in terms of material purity. While the VV11 GFF, BLM 29195:17, must necessarily have been stamped from a different sheet of foil, we can say little about how the two relate chronologically absent further laboratory analysis (Gullman, in Lamm 2004:112-5).
5.4 Cutting

After stamping, the edges of the gold foil were trimmed. Most of the GFFs from Västra Vång feature fresh edges, retaining the residual snags that have resulted from cuts not perfectly aligning (Jarlehorn 2018). These have neither been cleaned away, nor worn off (Fig. 21).

One GFF, BLM 28583:43, has a flap folded back onto the GFF, which was caught in the stamping of the foil. The curious possibility of the foil being cut prior to the stamping appears as a possibility in this specific case. Another option is that the die might have been placed close to the edge of this sheet of foil, for some reason. Many of the GFFs are cut so close to the Figure that it seems wholly outside the realm of possibility that the foil was cut prior to stamping. The droplet of gold discussed above in 5.2 was likely intended to be worked into foil for GFFs, but at 0.63 g it contains enough gold for six GFFs. Taking notice of the weight of this droplet, as well as the plain foil rectangle from Slöinge also mentioned in 5.2, it seems that at least in some cases, the gold foil was initially divided into pieces of a suitable size. Before the die was applied, the foil might have been cut, but it must have received renewed attention after the stamping operation, at least in a majority of cases.

The GFFs stamped with dies VV3A, VV3B, VV4A, and VV4B are consistently cut leaving practically no margin around the design, with no cut-offs resulting. The same is the case with VV2 and VV14, of which only one GFF each has been found. Together, these contour-cut GFFs number 16 in total, 38% of the 42 GFFs. The rest have small sections of foil not part of the design surrounding it, varying greatly in its extent. Some have cuts intruding on the motif. While this is difficult to disambiguate from other fragmentation processes, in at least two cases, BLM 28583:42 and BLM 29195:20, can this clearly be seen to result from the cutting operation.

The two EKB from Västra Vång, BLM 28583:32 and BLM 28583:35, are not consistently contour-cut, but both display a cut of the foil’s upper edge which follows the outline of the design, although in both cases this cut has intruded on the motif. The other cuts leave sections of...
unstamped foil, but clearly curve in relation to the outline of the design. Of the seven EKB GFFs from Eketorp, only one – Eketorp EKB4 – at all approximates this treatment of the design, with a series of short straight cuts that loosely follow the outline of the design. The other six have straight edges which for the most part leave generous margins of unstamped foil (Lamm 2004:99-102). In the case of EKA and EKB, however, this difference between the Eketorp and Västra Vång instance is not seen.

This indicates that cutting a GFF out of the stamped foil was most likely done by free hand, with some cuts being carefully executed with a high degree of precision, and others conversely with a carelessness that seems equally deliberate. If the latter were committed in error, this was not a grave enough one to make them unsuitable for deposition alongside the other GFFs. It is my opinion that, lacking independent indications to the contrary, we should refrain from presuming that these irregularities are mistakes. Whether deliberate or not, they are a consistent feature of the cutting operations by the machinic assemblage at Västra Vång and other sites. The comparison with the die-identical GFFs from Eketorp is further cause to empathise that sharing a patrix did not necessarily translate into a shared expression to the cutting operations.

Some GFFs show scratched lines along the edges, that can be interpreted as practice cuts or abandoned attempts. Possibly these might have served to guide in the cutting, and been removed with the chaff on the close-cut foils. Some of the relevant GFFs were then cut with little care for the design. These incised lines provide further indication towards the use of a knife and not shears in the cutting operation (cf Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:55).

In section 5.2 I noted the finds at Neble and Sylten of dies for patterning gold foil with a waffle pattern. Christiane Stempel has demonstrated experimentally that this technique need not have been universally employed when making waffle-patterned foil, but that an edged tool could equally have been used (Stempel 2018). Cloisonné jewellery from this period frequently consists of very complex shapes of the individual cells, demanding that the goldsmith could execute very complicated series of cuts when making the individual pieces of backing gold foil (Coatsworth & Pinder 2007:141-8). Keeping this in mind, particularly as some GFFs demonstrate clear links to cloisonné techniques, being stamped from waffle-patterned foil, indicates that adeptly working gold foil with a cutting tool was a crucial skill for the Scandinavian Late Iron Age goldsmith, and offers further reasons to doubt that the "careless" cuts evident on some of the GFFs from Västra Vång are necessarily accidental. And conversely, if these cuts were unintentionally executed in such a fashion, it did not make these GFFs unsuitable for deposition alongside the elegantly contour-cut GFFs.

One GFF has, unlike all the other GFFs from Västra Vång, not been stamped but simply cut out of plain foil. This cut-out Figure is also among the heaviest of the GFFs at 0.20 g, indicating that it is made of slightly thicker foil than the others. To give it parity with the stamped GFFs, and to follow the nomenclature established for GFFs from Västra Vång, this GFF is referred to as VVC1. In cutting out the legs for VVC1, the foil appears to have melted, possibly indicating that the cutting instrument was heated prior to use, deliberately or not. About 100 such unstamped GFFs have been discovered, in the form of both cut-out and incised Figures (Watt 2016:65).

No matter if the GFFs are stamped or just cut out, the cutting is an operation of equal expressive power and importance. Cutting permitted adorning a GFF with a band of gold foil wrapped around it, a practice documented with GFFs from Uppåkra and Sorte Muld, with both cut-out and stamped foils having been thus adorned (Watt 2004:182, 186, 199-200; Back Danielsson 2007:119-22). Some GFFs have pits or holes bored or cut, having been subject to more attention with the cutting instrument than simply the operation of cutting it out from the sheet. VVC1 has an appendage underneath its chin, which protrudes, beard-like, forward. The cut that frees this part from the main body would have been conducted after it was initially cut into shape.

VVC1 further has a a pit in its head, which has broken through the metal at the bottom, but
has not been cleaned of burrs. The single GFF from Nørre Hvam has a hole in the center of its face, but unlike VVC1, here the hole has made it all the way through the foil and allows for drawing a thread through it, as with the loops added to the back of cut-out foils from Hög Edsten and Sorte Muld. From Úppåkra, some cut-out GFFs have their eyes marked by prominent pits or bulbs, and others are pierced by a gold foil bands through a hole (Watt 2004:198-200; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:10).

Earlier, I argued that Animal Style Ornamentation demanded a high degree of creativity of the artisan, not just a facility for imitation. That the methods for producing a GFF are so myriad, offering so many examples of experimental variation upon a theme, is cause to argue that this was not an activity conducted as demanded by some customer-client, or otherwise restrained to rote reproduction because of artistic convention, but one where there was a great degree of independence, at least in artistic regard, to the hand that held the knife.

5. 5 DEPOSITION

With reference to the above discussed droplet and gold foil threads, as well as the fresh, unworn edges (Fig. 21), and the damage to the surfaces of the GFFs (Figs. 18 & 19), the site up on the hill must have been both the site of their production and their disposal. As was noted earlier in chapter 2, previous researchers have suggested that the GFFs from Úppåkra and Slöinge were affixed to posts and other surfaces with the use of some sort of adhesive, before ultimately being deposited at the same site. This fails to take into account the rawness of the edges of the GFFs, as described above. I have not had the opportunity to inspect the Úppåkra GFFs first hand, but based on the photographs and drawings featured in Watt 2004, in many cases they display the same jagged edges (see e.g. Watt 2004:180-1, 191, 196). In an article on Úppåkra’s GFFs, Helmbrecht points to these specific affordances of the GFFs as indicating "that the figures were produced only in order to be laid down in the ground” (Helmbrecht 2013:12, emphasis in original).

While the immediacy of the deposition act might be a point of contention, the act of deposition is generally approached as purposive and not accidental. In Västra Vång, some of the GFFs were found folded over one or more times. After being unearthed, the GFFs were usually straightened out, in some cases before conservation (Henriksson 2016a:14). This may have served to inflate the extent to which the GFFs from Västra Vång appear less crumpled together compared to examples from other sites. Crumpling or folding the GFFs being part of their deposition procedure is a theory that has been entertained by some researchers (Andréasson 1995:25; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:16-8). The GFF BLM 29195:4, has a wide depression bisecting the motif, caused by the application of enough force not only to bend the foil but also to deform the design, without breaking the foil apart. If folding or crumpling was part of the deposition procedure, which BLM 29195:4 could be taken as indicating, then it is not universally carried out. These folding or crumpling actions, may have been effected by human agents or other agentive forces following deposition. Ratke’s documentation could be read as crumpling and fragmentation tending to coincide (Ratke 2009). In Västra Vång only three GFFs were found as fragments: BLM 28583:37, BLM 28583:45, and BLM 29195:3. These can clearly be seen to retain less than half of the full motif. The low degree of fragmentation most likely reflects the absence of intensive agricultural use of this part of the site.

Intentionally destroying artefacts as part of their deposition is often observed in a wide range of material culture dating to the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, as well as in many other points in time and space across the archaeological record. In Scandinavia, from the Scandinavian Early Iron Age onwards, such destructive handling of gold artefacts is common. Among these earlier depositions of gold artefacts there are sometimes striking parallels to GFFs to be seen. Particularly we can point to the trove of gold snake-head rings from Skedemosse, Öland, dating
to the 2nd to early 4th century. These rings retain casting seams that show the part-molds employed in their making, which speaks to their not being used before deposition, and Ulf Erik Hagberg proposes that they were in fact "simply made in order to be sacrificed", a statement which greatly parallels the one by Helmbrecht above (Hagberg 1967:12). As with the GFFs from Västra Vång, the snake-head rings are exquisitely crafted and decorated artefacts that pass out of use and are deposited immediately following their manufacture (Cassel 1998:66-9).

Both of the sites with designs in common with Västra Vång – Eketorp and Sorte Muld – lack the so often emphasised connection to buildings, instead employing an open area as the scene of deposition, despite there being no shortage of buildings at either of these sites. These areas may in both cases possibly have been demarcated, as georadar survey suggests a fence of some kind surrounding the area of GFF deposition at Sorte Muld, and a similar purpose could be suggested for the rectangular stone setting at Eketorp (Näsman 1976:140; Andréasson 1995:24, Helmbrecht 2011:266). When GFFs are found inside of houses, the evidence again points to purposeful rapid deposition and not display. In the Uppåkra building, GFFs were not found on the floor, but in the fill of post holes and wall trenches, which was argued to relate to a sacred character of the accompanying soil (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:22). At Slöinge, GFF contexts were rich in ground shells and bones (Lundqvist 2000:58-9). This sealing of the deposition with a deliberately produced and procured substance can not be confirmed at other sites. Söderberg argues that we should thread carefully in assigning significance to the GFFs ending up in post holes when deposited inside buildings, as this could result from material falling down into the hole when old posts are replaced with new ones (Söderberg 2005:224-6). Gravity, and not a cultic importance of buildings, could in other words be the force structuring these depositions in many of those cases where GFFs are found inside buildings. This is well worth emphasising, particularly as the GFFs in Västra Vång thus far lack unambiguous ties to post hole features, which as noted in chapter 2, is something that is true of several GFF sites, despite the stress on post hole contexts in the research literature.

Gold in the form of bars, rings, or fragments of jewellery and coin was brought to Västra Vång and deposited in this form – that it was not worked into GFFs did not preclude the deposition at the site. Larsson and Lenntorp argue that such inclusions means that this other gold should be considered as not simply waste material, but worthy of deposition in its own right (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:25). Similarly, some GFFs appear cut with little care for the wholeness of the motif, but were likewise deposited. The fragmented GFFs could in at least the case of BLM 29195:3 have been deposited in this fragmented state, although GFFs may also have undergone fragmentation after deposition. With the exception of one thread-like piece, foil trimmed away when cutting out the GFFs did not go into the Västra Vång deposit. The general absence of foil remnants could be due to their immediately being recycled as material for additional GFFs. That these trimmed-away scraps are not part of the deposition assemblage in proportion to the cutting in evidence on the deposited GFFs, speaks to the expressive power of the cutting operation.

Taking Larsson and Lenntorp’s conclusion in the opposite direction, we could assign the waste characteristic to the assemblage of deposited gold as a whole. Whether worked into GFFs or not, gold was taken out of circulation.

By no means is RAÄ 306, the hill where these GFFs were both manufactured and deposited, the only site of deposition relating to artisanal production in Västra Vång, however. In 2018 and 2019, GFFs were found in topsoil in another part of the site, RAÄ 121, finds which have been left out of the present study due to time constraints. Additionally, south of the hill, garnets, together with the aforementioned fragments of crucibles, have been discovered. These are in all likelihood unambiguous waste materials, not as the GFFs manufactured for intentional deposition. However, at Slöinge, garnets were found deposited together with GFFs (Lundqvist 1996:34).

Patrices are handled differently compared to the other tools involved in the assemblage of GFF manufacture, which are as a rule not part of these depositions. If the crucibles from Västra Vång
saw use in the production of patrices for GFFs, they were nevertheless disposed of in another corner of the site. At Lundeborg, crucibles and iron tools for working in gold, silver and bronze have been found, but as part of workshop areas separate from the areas of GFF deposition (Thomsen 1994:26-8). Scandinavian Late Iron Age tools in general have a distinctly different deposition pattern compared with the GFF dies, as burial goods or in hoards consisting almost exclusively of deposited tools (Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:41; Trotzig 2014:92). If any of the GFF dies were made of organic materials, as suggested by Lamm, then these could also have been part of such deposits, while leaving little to no trace archaeologically (Lamm 2004:111; Hurcombe 2007:130-2).

A certain amount of care appears to have been taken in picking out what sort of artefacts and materials went into a GFF deposition, but not in accordance with a stable, defined recipe consistently applied, but that one changed from site to site, yet not necessarily in terms of what each site could provide. Apart from the presence of GFFs, there does not appear to be any obvious shared characteristic that could allow us to better understand why it is at these particular sites GFFs have been deposited. And among comparable sites – such as those where GFFs occur inside of buildings – there is typically significant variation regarding what other artefacts and raw materials are found together with the GFFs. To my mind, this suggests the absence of a strict, regulated framework around the act of deposition.

While some few cases are known of GFFs made into amulets, and in one case rolled up and made part of a necklace, the 42 GFFs studied here were all immediately deposited. That die-identical GFFs are found at Västra Vång and, respectively, at Eketorp, and Sorte Muld, is because of a circulation of the dies, not of the GFFs themselves. The deposition of GFFs are traits of expression of the speed of the mobile metalworking-machine, which circulates the dies and put them to use in stamping (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:442-3).

As discussed in chapter 2, a narrative has solidified around GFF depositions, as being closely linked to aristocratic residences and cult buildings. While some GFFs have indeed been discovered inside buildings, as discussed in section 3.1, this can not be confirmed in the case of Västra Vång. As emphasised above, at neither of the sites with dies in common with Västra Vång were the GFFs deposited in a building. At Sorte Muld, the GFFs are found within a 500 m² area in the middle of the site. The area has been argued to have been fenced off, per the results of geomagnetic survey, but lacks buildings. At Eketorp, the GFFs come from an open area between the houses of the settlement, deposited around a small rectangle of limestone slabs (Helmbrecht 2011:266; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:9).

As this section has shown, closely identifying GFFs with seats of land-controlling aristocrats seems untenable. Fabech’s model of precious metal deposition moving unilaterally from bog to hall hides the heterogeneity of deposition practices and their locales. While the vast majority of GFF deposition sites are dry land locales, one case is known of a GFF from a wetland context. The bead necklace from Tørring, Jutland, Denmark, which includes a rolled-up GFF, was found in a bog (Andréasson 1995:41-2; Soloeta Garmendia 2014:17). While the Tørring find is unique in many senses, this still shows that wetlands were not anathema to the depositors of GFFs. Nor should we forget the operational continuities that can be pointed to between GFF depositions and older depositional practices primarily carried out in wetlands, but which likewise employ gold as the material for artefacts deposited immediately upon production (Hagberg 1967:12; Cassel 1998:61, 68-70; 2008:99, 120). The immediacy of deposition after production argued for here, might offer another explanation of why find sites on dry land predominate, instead of the grand narrative of transformations in religious doctrine. The affordances of GFFs do not suit transportation: they are delicate and prone to fragmenting (Andréasson 1995:24. Compare Rebay-Salisbury 2014:171-3). It should be no surprise then that it was one of the few that had been fitted to be carried which was found in a bog.

An interesting parallel might be drawn to the brooch from Vikestad, Nordland, Norway,
which will be discussed more closely in the next chapter. This richly ornamented fibula features an anthropomorphic Figure on its reverse (Fig. 34). While it is on an artifact made to wear, this design is hidden as the brooch is in use. Similarly, the GFF rolled up into a bead hides the motif from view. The irregular use of GFFs as amulets – with simple loops of gold or copper alloy, and not the ornate suspension loops of the bracteates – could in this sense be argued to retain the secret, covered aspect of the deposition act, worn not for display but to hide them on one’s body (Back Danielsson 2007:140; Helmbrecht 2011:307, 377).

5.6 Adjoining Chains

The transformation of gold coinage into bracteates, GFFs and gilt ornament might be seen as the traces of negotiations within what was chiefly a honour or gift economy, necessitated by the influx of new wealth in the form of gold currency or metal (Herschend 1980:43; Cassel 1998:164-5; Hed Jakobsson 2003:107; Gustin 2004:252-5). But if so, the Norse were not alone in this destructive handling of gold. Indeed, according to the French historian Chaques Le Goff, most gold circulating within Christian Europe in the 6th and 7th centuries would be smelted down into ingots at first opportunity, to be reminted when needed (2012:8-9). It is not a question of an unfamiliarity with coinage, but of an attention to the materiality of gold and the uses to which it can be put.

It is undeniable that compared to the earlier Migration Period, the gold artefacts of Vendel Period Scandinavia are, both on an individual and an aggregated level, made out of significantly smaller amounts of gold (Watt 2004:216). Is the adaption of working in thin foil then simply a consequence of a scarcer supply of gold? This is too simplistic an explanation. While the amount of available material no doubt informed the artistic choices of the Vendel Period goldsmiths, crafting in gold foil is not a self-explanatory response to gold becoming a less abundant resource. The art of book illumination provides an interesting comparison. Theophilus describes two methods of applying gold to parchment: in the form of gold leaf, or as a paint made out of powdered gold suspended in a viscous liquid like egg yolk, commonly called shell gold for the method of storing it (Theophilus 1979:31, 36-7). While both forms are used in book illuminations of the Early Medieval period, in almost all cases older than the 12th century, shell gold is used. From then on, however, gold leaf is increasingly employed and eventually wins out. A possible cause is the significant safety hazards involved in the preparation of shell gold, which would often involve mercury. The shift might also be artistically motivated, since gold leaf permits more intensive burnishing, as well as the diapering of the gold with a stamped or scratched pattern (Morgan 2016:193-7).

The risk of inhaling toxic mercury vapours is even higher when gilding silver, which might have offered another option to the goldsmith with little gold on hand (Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:129). Opting not to employ techniques which exposed the goldsmith to risk of injury to the brain or lungs, and possible death, could be argued to speak to goldsmiths having at least some power to bring about improvements in their working conditions, whether they were paid specialists or captive thralls.

Yet another explanation would be to note the many affinities between GFF manufacture and that of cloisonné jewellery. Cloisonné jewellery is found together with GFFs at Hög Edsten. At Uppåkra and Gudme, both cloisonné jewellery and GFFs have been found, although in neither case in close connection with one another (Arrhenius 1997:43-4; Andréasson 1995:49-50; Härdf 2004:52, 87). As was discussed in preceding sections of this chapter, gold foil embossed with a waffle pattern of the sort commonly used for cloisonné, has been used to stamp GFFs at Uppåkra and Sorte Muld. Slöinge and Västra Vång are both sites with traces of work involving garnets. The foil used in cloisonné is of a similar thickness to GFFs, a point of distinction compared with bracteates. Both waffle-patterning and cutting the foil into the distinct and complicated shapes of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age cloisonné jewellery demands a high degree of cutting skill, a talent
which the GFFs also attest to (Coatsworth & Pinder 2002:62).

The GFFs preserve technical knowledge from the manufacture of gold bracteates. Several of the GFF sites also show finds of gold bracteates, or are found at sites closely connected to them (Helmbrecht 2011:362-3). High frequency of the one type, however, does not indicate a likelihood of the other type at the site. The distribution of GFF find sites does not form a clear pattern, and cannot be said to conform to the geographical spread of the gold bracteates. During the later phases of Axboe's typology, Bornholm and Blekinge have few if any finds of bracteates. The portrayal of hair styles show a clear geographical pattern according to Axboe, and while the distribution trends east, here Bornholm has clear correspondences to Östergötland, Västergötland, Scania, and Gotland, but differs greatly from contemporary Denmark, Norway and Öland. It bears mentioning that the traits of these bracteates employed for the typological sequence have no clear parallel on the GFFs (Axboe 2007:78).

As discussed earlier in the chapter, unlike GFF dies, the ones used for bracteates were fashioned in negative relief, as matrices. While the punches employed for the decoration of the ornamental borders were likewise executed in negative relief, some such punches show interesting parallels to GFF patrices. The bracteates IK13, IK62, IK116, IK302 and IK324 have all in at least one instance each been found with ornamental borders made by repeated application of a punch with a facial motif, in profile or en face (Fig. 22). Unlike the smaller geometric punches some of these punches for facial motifs are larger, similar to GFF dies in size. A few have a square cross-section and may in fact not have been punches proper, but small dies with many properties in common with GFF patrices (Hauck 1985c:16, 75-6, 149-50; 1986a:134-5, 162-3; 1986b:89-90, 105-6).

Axboe makes the assumption that bracteate dies and punches did not circulate widely, but were closely connected to workshops of one or more goldsmiths, and having a relatively short period of use. Consequently, the spread of bracteates that share either dies, border punches, or both, dictate the working region of such a workshop. Whether it is the goldsmiths or their craft products that travel is a question that the material is not equipped to answer, and Axboe does not commit to either interpretation. The distances involved are in any case somewhat shorter, or equal to, the distances between Västra Vång and Eketorp, or Västra Vång and Sorte Muld, respectively (Axboe 2007:25, 41-6). According to Pesch, the gold collars found at Ålleberg, Färjestaden and Möme show indications of having been made with partially shared sets of tools (Pesch 2015:175). While Ålleberg and Möme lie quite close together in Southwestern Sweden, the Färjestaden collar is from the island of Öland in the Baltic. Västra Vång, which shares some of its dies with Eketorp, also on Öland, is situated between these two areas of gold collar deposition.

The so-called "scabbard mountings", executed in gold foil and filigree, provide further parallels to the GFFs. These have traditionally been interpreted as decorative elements of sword scabbards (Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:42-3). Siv Kristoffersen notes that they are not generally found together with swords, and are never found as part of burial assemblages, which are otherwise rich in warrior equipment. Instead, they are deposited in the ground, sometimes together with other gold artefacts. While somewhat similar in shape to ornamentations of Scandinavian Late Iron Age scabbards, these artefacts are too small to have served such a purpose. They also lack traces of wear (Kristoffersen 2000:90, 180-2). Their find contexts, their material composition, the absence of wear, and their indeterminate function are all traits they have in common with GFFs. Furthermore, their anthropomorphic designs in Salin's Style I have affinities with those of the GFFs, which we will return to in the next chapter (Salin 1904:239; Haseloff 1981:256-59).

At Uppåkra, a metal beaker decorated with bands of gold foil with designs imprinted with a patrix die was found within the same house structure as the GFFs and patrices. Similar beakers and horns with decorated gold or silver bands, primarily of glass, but also of metal, horn, or wood,
Fig. 22. A Bracteate IK 302, Meckenheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. Note the border of repeating faces in profile. After Hauck 1986b (not to scale).

Fig. 23. Lombard shroud crosses, 6-8th century (not to scale).
have been found at sites in Scandinavia and the British Isles, mainly in burial contexts (Hårdh 2004:61, Kristoffersen 2000:89; Rognstad Tangen 2010:63). One of these is the Snartemo beaker, which also gives its name to a type of glass vessel, sherds of which have been found at Västra Vång, in the same context as the GFFs (Näsmann 2016b:56). The stylistic similarities between the Helmet Style designs on the Taplow horn and GFFs from Slöinge was noted in section 3.2.

Another artefact type with interesting parallels to GFFs, is that of the Lombard shroud crosses, found in present day Germany and Italy (Fig. 23). These are made out of sheets of thin gold foil, stamped with an intricate design in Style I or II, often featuring anthropomorphic elements (Salin 1904:314-5; Høilund Nielsen & Kristoffersen 2002:53; Lamm 2004:127-8). Here, as with the GFFs, stamping is followed by cutting the artefact from the sheet, where a similar combination of precise shaping cuts – in this case, fashioning the metal into a cross shape – and a disregard for symmetry or fullness of the motif, takes place, which Salin observes with dismay (Salin 1904:315).

The name chosen for this type of artefact hints at their find circumstances within Christian burials, sown onto the burial garb of the deceased. Consequently, the shroud crosses feature holes at the edges and/or in the middle of the cross. This is a clear difference to GFFs, a further indication that the latter were likely not stitched to clothing. Nevertheless, the shroud crosses show many technical similarities to GFFs, where we yet again can follow a stamp—cut—immediate disposal sequence, even as the assemblages differ at every instance. The distinction between burial and nonburial disposal contexts is one that is (relatively) easily observable to modern day archaeologists, but does not necessarily always correlate to a distinction of importance to the lived realities of the second half of the first millennium CE. GFFs are not typically found as grave goods, but those found at Ulltuna, Bolmsö, and Visingsö are from burial settings (Soloeta Garmendia 2014:9, 12).

5. 7 CLOSING THE CHAIN

This chapter has analysed the operations conducted in the manufacture of GFFs, discussing them one at a time in sequence. Section 5. 6 then brought in products of goldsmith activity contemporary with the GFFs to further contextualise these processes. In this final section of the chapter, I outline the conclusions to be drawn from the chaîne opératoire as a whole.

The artefacts produced by this series of operations were frail and not suitable to transportation unless augmented to accommodate this, something done only in a rare few cases, and to none of the GFFs from Västra Vång. The fresh edges of the thin, brittle gold foil, show that handling following the cutting operation was kept to an absolute minimum. These were not artefacts crafted for purposes of display.

We can return our attention to the question of whether it was lack of gold that caused the shifts in gold artefacts produced in Scandinavia during the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. Compared with collars and bracteates, the manufacture of GFFs is a more frugal use of the material to produce a multiplicity of artefacts in gold, assembling die-identical and not so at the same site of deposition. It has been my ambition throughout this chapter to emphasise that GFFs are part of an interconnected set of sites for deposition in bulk. In Västra Vång, and, I would argue, in most instances, this deposition was immediate following the cutting operation. Other parts were made to circulate before finding their place in the earth: the patrices found after being employed at several sites, and the rare few GFFs that have loops and other affordances to give them mobility.

The usage of GFFs were in their manufacture. Here we might see further reason for the many different ways they could be interacted with by the cutting instrument, as a way to prolong the engagement. Deposition then followed, in a variety of contexts, taking the GFFs, and their constituent gold, out of circulation.
That GFFs are taken out of circulation allows us to grasp some of the circulation that brought them into being. While GFFs, absent the rare exceptions, could not and did not circulate, the dies used to stamp them, and most of all the gold matter out of which they were made, manifestly did. Gold, having had a prior existence as coin and/or jewellery, is then remade into ingot form to further allow and accelerate its circulation within the circuit of itinerant metallurgy. Patrix dies are made to follow the flow of gold, and themselves made to circulate, but then put out of circulation along the same lines as the GFFs.

As Frands Herschend characterises the Scandinavian Late Iron Age coin and gold hoards of Öland, the material is distributed between two massive hoards and a large number of significantly smaller caches (Herschend 1980:70-82). He argues that this reflects that gold did not exclusively belong to the élite, but that less illustrious members of society possessed meagre gold fortunes, not as a rule but at certain points in their lives (Herschend 1980:82, 130). The stray finds and small hoards speak of “a new kind of gold-owner – the multitude that for their participation [in military campaigns] only receive infinitely small sums. It is imaginable that the emergence of a large number of new gold-owners is cause for problems in a prehistoric society” (Herschend 1980:42, my translation). Taking gold out of circulation, as I have here argued to be a function of the operative sequence giving rise to a GFF, could be understood as one way to do away with the problem of gold ownership.

There is an individual agent enacting the stamping operation, and an agent (possibly the same person as the stamper) undertaking the cutting operation. But these are always already part of a machinic assemblage, as is the gold material they are working, as are their instruments of cutting and stamping. And equally, at the same time, they always already belong to a collective assemblage of enunciation, joining these expressive acts to a wider array not as discrete, easily delineated subjects, but as a multitude.

There is a standard operating procedure of stamp once, make one sequence of cuts; but it is not followed without straying – not followed without attempts to deterritorialise, to accelerate a line of flight, to speak with Deleuze and Guattari (2004:367-8). And these attempts appear equally in the stamping phase – double-stamping with the same die, double-stamping with two different dies, or foregoing stamping entirely – as well as in the cutting phase – free-hand cutting out of Figures, precise cuts, imprecise cuts, cutting across the motif, or cutting through the motif. In other words, we are not looking at a class of artefacts that consistently appears the same way, neither in the sense of having one uniform appearance, nor of an unchanging sequence of operations always employed to make them appear.

In the previous chapter, I held that the three aspects of the rhythmic refrain could serve to model the functioning of Animal Style Ornamentation as non-representational art. The first aspect is the emergence of a melody against a backdrop. Acting upon an already existing flow of gold could be understood in terms of this aspect. The next aspect selects and orders according to a rhythm, which here takes the form of the stamp-cut-immediate deposition sequence. The third aspect concerns variation upon the theme in improvisation. The variations in how a GFF is stamped, as well as how a GFF is cut, has the character of this improvisation. In the Gothic refrain of the GFFs, these aspects all take place at once, engaging the material and Figural traits of GFFs. This chapter has concentrated on the material traits. In the next chapter, we turn to the Figural traits.
6 Figural Analysis of GFFs

In this chapter, I analyse the Figural traits of the GFFs found at Västra Vång. As these are traits common to other GFFs, and in many cases, other artefacts featuring Animal Style Ornamentation as well, the material discussed goes beyond this GFF corpus. The structure of this chapter, however, reflects the traits apparent on GFFs from Västra Vång, not of the GFF phenomenon as a whole. Consequently, traits common to GFFs, but not present on the Västra Vång examples, will be dealt with only in passing, if at all.

The chapter begins with the various faciality traits. After an introductory discussion of the concept of faciality in 6.1, three subsections deal with specific facial traits. 6.1.1 regards the face in profile, 6.1.2 the three-dot and associated traits, and finally the visage encountered en face in 6.1.3. Next, 6.2 concerns the treatment of the GFFs as surfaces, with particular attention to the edges and borders framing the foils. 6.3 has as its subject how bodies are partitioned and composed. Gestures and attributes have formed the core of many previous analyses of GFFs, but in keeping with my criticism of iconography, will not do so here. Instead, 6.4 is structured around the traits constituting various kinds of extremities. Reflecting on the GFFs as miniatures, 6.5 aligns this with the concept of the minor. Finally, 6.6 recapitulates the results of the chapter.

6.1 Regarding the Face

In earlier attempts to attend to the imagery of the GFFs, much attention has been devoted to the costumes, the postures, and the hands. As later sections show, traits expressing such features are present on the GFFs from Västra Vång to varying degrees, and will be dealt with in time. A face is a trait present on every single GFF from this site, with the exception of two GFFs, BLM 28583:37 and BLM 28583:45, which were found in a fragmentary state where the presence (or absence) of a face could not be confirmed. These faces (Fig. 24) are powerfully expressive, drawing the attention of the viewer with their striking noses and marked eyes. Several authors have remarked on what is seen as a disparity between a purportedly more naturalistic depiction of hands, feet, and clothing on the one hand, and on the other hand the abstractly rendered facial motifs, which Helmbrrecht even calls crude (Hedeager 2010:113; Helmbrrecht 2011:120, 378). Back Danielsson and Hedeager have emphasised the abstracted, schematic quality of the faces on GFFs, arguing that this bespeaks a liminal, transgressive quality to these designs (Back Danielsson 2007:170; Hedeager 2010:113-6). This is a core element of Back Danielsson’s interpretation, as to her, what we see on the GFFs are in fact not faces at all, but masks. Masks and "masking practices" are understood to relate to literal facial coverings, but is also used in an expanded sense of bodily transformation. While inventive, Back Danielsson does not explain how it is that facial coverings are always masks in this expanded sense, when she otherwise claims that facial coverings should not be assumed as a privileged nexus of masking. Back Danielsson collapses the distinction between faces and masks altogether, leaving us not more but less equipped to grapple with the specificity of facial motifs as we encounter them on Scandinavian Late Iron Age artefacts like GFFs (Back Danielsson 2007:101-17). Of what use is the assertion that the large triangular noses of the Slöinge GFFs have something especially masklike about them, when the extant facially worn masks lack any similar elements, and unadorned strips of gold foil are considered instances of a masking practice in their own right? (Back Danielsson 2007:120-2, 131-7. See Helmbrrecht 2011:38; 223-9, 378 for a similar critique of this argument). Faces such as these are not only a crucial element of GFF designs, but a vital motif prevalent throughout Animal Style Ornamentation (Haseloff 1981:81-98). Before moving on to discussing the apparent facial traits of the GFFs from Västra Vång in detail, the concept of a face demands further investigation.
What is a face? To Deleuze and Guattari, a face is the result of an abstract machine of faciality, a signifying regime working a system of white walls and black holes. Faces, whether en face or in profile, are distinguished sharply from heads. The face does not arise from the head but is forced upon it, to sort us into distinct social categories, making us into subjects of political power (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:196-201). But this is not to be read as if the head is the material substrate of the face, instead by facialisation, the face replaces the head in its entirety (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:201). It is not even a question of the face representing the head, since, as the discussion in chapter 4 made clear, representation has no place in this philosophy. We are not, then, to resign ourselves to only ever seeing the face and not the head. Francis Bacon is a painter of heads, not faces, says Deleuze, and this is no mean feat – but it is a possible one, if one that requires a purposeful "dismantling of the face" (Deleuze 2004:15, see also Deleuze & Guattari 2003:189).

The face deterritorialises the head, an operation in which "it passes from the stratum of the organism to the strata of signification and subjectivation" (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:194). However, the abstract machine of facialisation does not necessarily work on the head, but is in operation anytime something is moved to the strata of subjectivation and signification, i.e is facialised (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:188-9, 194). The signified, or the subject, does not preexist the face, but is made to appear in the face by the abstract machine of faciality (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:201).

It is possible, say Deleuze and Guattari, to escape from the face, that is to say, to escape signification and subjectivation. Bacon’s dismantling of the face is one such vector of escape, but already in the faciality plateau of A Thousand Plateaus this option is noted. Instead of making a face, the abstract machine may also perform a "defacialisation", engendering a "probe-head" which engages the cutting edges of deterritorialisation of the facial assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:210-1). The probe-head is only mentioned in passing, but O’Sullivan has suggested that the dismantling of the face Deleuze theorises with Bacon is one iteration of what this could mean. O’Sullivan stresses that "Crucially, they [probe-heads] are not a return to some kind of primitive pre-faciality. They are in fact an escape that takes place from within the terrain of the face" (O’Sullivan 2006:60).

Cultural theorist Yoko Tawada has also dealt with the question of the face. Borrowing from Walter Benjamin, Tawada says that the face is the site where something or someone can be individuated, sighted, faced. Both Tawada’s and Benjamin’s works are written in German, and
etymologically, the German word for face, Gesicht, is related to the verb sichten, to sight (Tawada 2009:172n). She makes the example of a fish. A fish has a face, but no head separate from its body (Tawada 2009:169-73). The face is consequently not necessarily human, or necessarily singular. Not everyone would agree with Tawada’s assertion that a fish has a face, but they reject it in accordance with the same understanding of the face as the site of individuation – the fish is not an individual to be faced, and is thus faceless.

Much like Deleuze and Guattari, Tawada separates the face from the head, but along different lines. The attitudes posed to facialisation, and the involvement of regimes of power, are stark differences between their theories (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:127, 202; Tawada 2009:182-4). Nevertheless, they agree on the face constituting a site of individuation or subjectivation, separate from the head. Furthermore, all see the face as having historically and stylistically specific forms of expression (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:106, 194; Tawada 2009:176-7).

Mediated through Tawada, Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas regarding the face can more easily be brought in line with the psychological phenomenon of pareidola, the tendency in humans and some other animals to interpret simple pictograms as faces (compare Hupfauf 2014:153). Pareidola is the principle behind, for example, emoticons like :) or :(. While pareidola as such is not specific to any one culture, the way faces are codified as cultural signs takes on culturally and historically specific forms. Tawada’s observation, that faces need not be singular or human, further encourages us to widen our scope and look for faces where we would not expect to find them.

With Worringer, we could say that the facial traits, the individuating processes, are abstracted away, put to work within another realm (Worringer 1997:61-2). To Hedeager, the faces of the GFFs are more schematically depicted than the rest of their motifs, which to her suggests that such a face is not a site of individuation, and instead acts to bring about what we with Deleuze and Guattari would term a becoming-animal, where "the person as a conceptual category has been socially and culturally redefined as a 'dressed animal'” (Hedeager 2010:113). This is another mode of dismantling the face, more akin to the probe-head described by Deleuze and Guattari. Here the face is not shattered but multiplied, a rhythmic reterritorialisation of the facial traits within the artistic universe of Animal Style Ornamentation, empowered by the inorganic vitality of the Gothic (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:208-11, Deleuze 2004:90; O’Sullivan 2006:60-1). Back Danielsson argues that in Animal Style Ornamentation, faces, or masks as she terms them, regularly appear toward the edges of artefacts, and in the case of artefacts consisting of several discrete parts, at the treshold between elements (Back Danielsson 2007:147). It is where one mass or body intersects another, at the literal interface, that the body is faced.

For the sake of clarity, I will present my analysis of the facial traits in three subsections, the first on the face in profile, the second on the three-dot motif, and the third and final subsection on the view en face. My use of the word face in the following pages hems closest to Tawada’s use of the same.

6. 1. 1 Nose and Eye. The Face in Profile

Most GFFs, whether single-Figures or coupled-Figures, show faces in profile (Ratke 2007:24, 69-74). The GFFs from Västra Vång follow the wider pattern of faces in profile (Fig. 24), with just one design, EKC, portraying the face as seen from the front. With four GFFs, the EKC is one of the more commonly used dies, but consequently is a small minority by either measure. According to Helmbrecht, the preference for the profile distinguishes GFFs from other contemporary depictions of anthropomorphic motifs, where the frontal en face view is widely preferred (Helmbrecht 2011:234, 375-6). Helmbrecht’s assertion is peculiar, as GFFs are the largest of her categories, making up more than a third of the total material (Helmbrecht 2011:351). This only exacerbates
Fig. 25. Examples of heads and hips in Style I and II. Image by the author after Salin 1904.
issues with her sampling method, that leaves out significant portions of the earliest Late Scandinavian Iron Age ornamentation, chiefly among them the bracteates. These, too, primarily depict faces in profile, not en face (Haseloff 1981:11, 89).

Helmbrecht considers the emphasis on the eyes to be a significant trait, particularly for the faces seen en face. This is equally the case with GFFs, which, as seen in Fig. 24, as a rule feature a prominent circular eye (Helmbrecht 2011:373, 375-6; Hupfauf 2014:153). The delineation of the eye further serves to separate the nose from the rest of the face. All the Västra Vång GFFs are single-Figures, and the nose-and-eye trait appears only once on each foil. There is a preference in the employed designs for profiles facing rightwards, which Julia Victorin has noted as a general pattern on the single-Figure GFFs (Victorin 2013:52). The leftwards facing designs are some of the more frequently used, making this predominance less apparent in the resulting GFF corpus.

Helmbrecht’s conclusion on how this faciality of the GFFs relates to other anthropomorphic imagery was noted above. However, if the wider use of the nose-and-eye trait in Animal Style Ornamentation is taken into account, a different pattern emerges. If we compare the GFFs with Style I and II as defined by Salin (Fig. 25), the nose-and-eye in profile instead turns out to be a widely shared trait. Salin advances from the treatment of the prominent eye which is either round or leaf/almond shaped. Curving around this eye is what Salin calls the setting of the eye (Augeneinlassung). This setting of the eye is at times practically identical to the nose-and-eye face of a GFF. Differences in the expression of this element is one way in which Style I is distinguished from Style II by Salin. The setting of the eye only loosely encircling the eye, is characteristic of Style I, whereas in Style II the the element has become more pronounced and solid at one end, bonded to the jaws, thinning at its other end as it breaks away from the eye’s orbit either upwards or downwards. A depression forms a virtual nine-shaped loop around the eye, which now is more universally circular. Arwidsson and Karlsson have reservations about Style I & II being diachronous, but reach similar conclusions, considering the more independent curvature of the setting of the eye to be an older stylistic variant. I will abstain from committing to a side in these debates, but instead take note of these different trends of composition. In the GFF material we can note both of these trends occurring in how nose, hair and cheek relate to the eye (Salin 1904:246; Karlsson 1983:22-3, 143-8, 169).

According to Haseloff, a Migration Period fibula from Pompey, France, is one of the earliest examples of Style I. He gives special attention to a detail from the fibula’s foot plate (Fig. 26). Haseloff shows how the traits of the motif allows for the assembly of several different heads, one of which is a human face (Haseloff 1981:97-9). While the traits used for the human face include some which are not seen on GFFs, the same nose and eye is employed both for the human face and the animal head.

The nose-and-eye profile face, in its simplest from reduced to a 9-shaped loop around a prominent dot, is a trait with a long history and broad application throughout Animal Style Ornamentation. We can recognise it in Salin’s Styles I and II as providing both heads and hips with facial traits. Do the more unambiguous facialisations of hips, such as the Style II hip with a wide eyed en face visage (Fig. 25, lower half, second from the left) arise out of recognising this faciality of the hip, or is it part of a wider programme of deliberate facialisation? Both appear probable (cf Helmbrecht 2011:188-91). These itinerant faces are a nuisance to Salin, who continually stops to disparage what to him is simply degenerate confusion. (Salin 1904:234, 237; Karlsson 1983:28-9). If we look at the gold collars, all three use this simple face, but only the Mône collar, generally considered as the youngest, makes full use of it for the hips and bodies. The Figures of the Mône collar make great use of these zones of indiscernibility between face and hip, human and animal. The zone of indiscernibility extends in both directions at once, engendering a becoming-face of the hip, and a simultaneous becoming-hip of the face (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:302; O’Sullivan 2006:59). Some of this collar’s Figures twist the whole serpentine
Fig. 26. Detail from a fibula from Pompey, France. From left to right, the first image highlights the anthropomorphic visage, the second image the animal head, and the third image the two birds. Image by the author after Haseloff 1981. Not to scale.

Fig. 27. GFFs from Västra Vång with three-dot on the cheek. VV2, VV3A, VV3B, VV4A, VV4B. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 28. Other facial dots: VV6 and VV14. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 29. Other marks adjacent to the face: VV13 and VV8. Image by the author. Not to scale.
body to make a face, a becoming-face of the entire animal body, contorting itself like one of Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire’s squids around its spine into an anthropomorphic biped that walks with a head for a leg. Pesch notes that some Figures lose their forelegs and extend their snouts instead (Pesch 2015:249-53, 259). As we shall see in sections 6.3 and 6.4 below, this is congruent with other tendencies in Animal Style Ornamentation as well.

On GFFs the face is most commonly depicted with a downward chin, but sometimes the chin is raised to become perpendicular to the body. On VV2, the face is rotated to look directly upward. This distorted position has been observed on GFFs from other sites. It also features on bracteates, fibulas, and on the gold collars from Ålleberg and Möne (Pesch 2015:448-50, 480-5). Helmbrecht ties this to the the contorted body of the ornamental animal in Animal Style Ornamentation, and also suggests that this alongside other human imagery might serve to depict scenes of being captured and bound, noting that several such episodes feature in the extant record of Norse myth and saga (Helmbrecht 2011:111, 134). The interpretation of the Figure as tied down will be discussed in more detail in section 6.3. As outlined earlier, my intention here is to steer clear of such narrative interpretations. However, the connection of the twisted, knotted bodies of Animal Style Ornamentation to this likewise twisted head, that looks by all appearances to have liberated itself of the neck, rings true. A further parallel is the theriomorphic Figures of the Ålleberg gold collar, human-headed but with the body of an animal (Pesch 2015:480-1). Whether depicted from the side or from above, the head is similarly rotated, as befitting a quadriped. As Worringer says, the Gothic line depicts an inorganic vitality, a liveliness that imposes new movement. While VV2 shows us an extreme of becoming-animal, faces deformed by pushing against the edge (VV11) or to accommodate a hand (VV12) are a common refrain. Turning to Deleuze, this distortion is not accident or compromise, but strict intentionality. This is not a violence twisting the body: “On the contrary, they are the most natural postures of a body that has been reorganized by the simple force being exerted upon it” (Deleuze 2004:42). By using the medium of thin gold foil, the stamping operation consisting of a very literal forceful deformation of a plane, the deformations that Bacon labours so to arrive at is produced in a less arduous way (Deleuze 2005:3).

As later sections of this chapter will demonstrate, the nose-and-eye trait is far from the only parallel we can observe between the composition of animal heads and GFF motifs. Such affinities demand that we turn away from understanding the ornament as a representational riddle, and that we instead turn our attention to the Figural traits.

6.1.2 Pits, Rings, and the Three-dot Motif

The Västra Vång GFFs are set apart by the frequent appearance of one to three pits on the cheek (Figs. 27 and 28). A single pit is seen on VV6. VV14 has at least two pits with a more scattered placement, possibly joined by a third in between, but as the only GFF with this design known thus far, BLM 29195:2, is crumpled at this part of the foil, this can not be conclusively determined. Three pits, clustered together at equal distance from one another, are seen on several GFFs: VV2, VV3A, VV3B, VV4A, and VV4B (Fig. 27). On GFFs, the three pits are unique to Västra Vång, but as will be discussed below, this motif of three equidistant dots, which I will here call the three-dot motif, is a trait that has a wider application elsewhere. The single pit can be seen on some of Uppåkra’s GFFs, which Watt suggests might be a representation of an ear (Watt 2004:181-2). A related trait is a ring or circle adjacent to the face, seen on VV13 (ring) and VV8 (circle) (Fig 29). Similar rings and circles can be seen on GFFs from other sites. These have been suggested to depict fibulas or other jewellery (Watt 2004:203-4; Mannering 2006:50, 56).

In the manufacture of Migration period gold bracteates, compasses saw use in several stages: first in the production of a matrix die, delimiting the placement of elements, both of the central
motif and the ornamental borders; second in the cutting of the bracteate from the stamped gold sheet. The circumference thus drawn or cut can sometimes be seen, but far more prevalent is the central pit, knob, or ring at the radial center of the bracteate’s disc (Hauck 1985a:28; Axboe 2007:23, 25). Whether this mark is in positive or negative relief depends on at which point in the production of the die or bracteate, as discussed in section 5.1. Some, such as the C bracteate IK 221 from Öland (Fig. 30) have more than one such mark, the compass having been moved between two instances of use (Hauck 1986a:25-6). Interpreted as resulting from the manufacturing process, this axial mark has been disregarded in the iconographical interpretation of the bracteates, despite constituting a distinctive trait of these artefacts that distinguish their pictorial contents from their Roman precursors. On bracteates of type A and C, as well as a large number of bracteates of the more loosely defined type B, this axial mark appears in the middle of the profiled face, or, less commonly, at its border (mouth, chin or beard). Over time, this trait is emphasised and at times appears to merge with the three-dot motif. Such is the case on the C bracteate IK 237, found in present day northern Germany, where the face prominently features the three-dot motif, in Hauck’s interpretation as a mouth for the Figure (Hauck 1986a:46). Here, the facial dot has migrated from the radial centre of the disc (see Fig. 31). In Adetorp’s dissertation on the iconography of the C bracteates, the three-dot motif is established as one of the most frequently occurring ideograms, though Adetorp makes no note of the central facial dot, nor the regular use of a three-dotted punch for the ornamental border bands (for an example of the latter, see Hauck 1985c:151). Nevertheless, the regular presence of a three-dot on the steed’s hips of the Figure is emphasised. Fig. 32 depicts one such example, IK 177. The faciality of the Animal Style hip was discussed in 6.1.1 above. A key argument put forward by Adetorp concerns the curious similarities in the composition of the motif between the C bracteates and Celtic coinage from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE. Among these striking similarities is the prevalence of the three-dot motif, as well as its placement adjacent to the face or on the hip of the steed (Adetorp 2008:25-6, 122-5, 140-9, 154).

The appearance of a single or triple pit in the same place on the Vång GFFs, is best understood as a continuation of these established facial traits. All five variants with the three-dotted cheek (VV2, VV3A, VV3B, VV4A, VV4B) are contour-cut, with practically no margin of unadorned foil. On bracteates and beaker foils, the three-dot is regularly depicted adjacent to the face (Adetorp 2008:143, 215; Pesch 2015:466, 496). A further possibility, then, is that moving the three-dot onto the face retains this combination on a Figure depicted without a surrounding field. The earlier discussed Finnestorp buckle (Fig. 9) is similarly lacking a field neighbouring the face. The techno-cultural influence of the compass mark could be seen as prefiguring this configuration.

Adetorp has exclusively studied the C bracteates, and it is worth stressing that the three-dot motif appears on other types of gold bracteates as well. They do, for instance, regularly feature on D bracteates (e.g. Hauck 1989a:88; 1989c:6). Earlier, I noted that Watt has offered the interpretation of the facial single pit on GFFs as representing an ear. Again we can note parallels between GFFs and the various types of bracteates. The faces in profile on the A, B and C bracteates regularly feature shapes interpreted as ears, and the differences in how this ear is depicted is one of the main variables used by Axboe to establish a typological seriation (Axboe 2007:27, 33-4, 134-6). None of the variants listed by Axboe can be said to correspond to Watt’s pit-as-ear, but ears as a disconnected shape on the cheek of the Figure’s face occur in his material, although the location of the ear is not given any analytical weight as such (Axboe 2007:135). One of his typological elements is the B-shaped ear. On D bracteates, a free-floating B-shaped ear occurs regularly. On GFFs, B-shaped ears feature on the GFF 476 from Helgö. Interestingly, on the D bracteates, sometimes this B-shape is replaced with a three-dot (Fig. 33) (Hauck 1989a:88, 90, 147; 1989c:6, 52; Lamm 2004:67, 78).
Fig. 30. C bracteate IK 221, Bostorp, Öland, Sweden. After Axboe 2007. Not to scale.

Fig. 31. C bracteate IK 237, Eckernförde, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. The red line marks the radius of the disc. Image by the author after Hauck 1986b. Not to scale.

Fig. 32. C bracteate IK 177, Søtvet, Telemark, Norway. After Hauck 1985c. Not to scale.
**Fig. 33.** Ears on GFF 476 from Helgö compared with three-dot on D bracteates IK 407 (above) and IK 469 (below). GFF illustration by Bengt Händel, IK 407 after Hauck 1986b, IK 469 by the author after Hauck 1986b. Not to scale.

**Fig. 34.** Reverse of the Vikestad buckle-and-bow brooch. Anthropomorphic Figure highlighted in yellow. Image by the author after Salin 1904. Not to scale.
The three-dot motif is one of very few self-contained ideograms to feature on GFFs, and a trait thus far limited to the GFFs from Västra Vång. The other such ideograms are a single pit, seen on GFFs from Västra Vång, Sorte Muld, Uppåkra and Hauge; a circle, seen on GFFs from Västra Vång, Helgö, and Mære; a triangle, seen on GFFs from Stentinget, Mære, and Lundeborg; and a semicircle, which is exclusive to Helgö (Lamm 2004:49; Watt 2004:180; Rognstad Tangen 2010:73-4, 111-3; Victorin 2013:16-18). As discussed above, the three-dot, the single pit and the circle/ring all occur on bracteates, as does the B-shaped ear. Other ideograms are not seen on GFFs. These, particularly triskeles, swastikas, and valknut, are a standard motif on bracteates, picture stones, and tapestries. Here again we can note a similarity between GFFs and the gold collars, which likewise feature none of these. The spiral and the rosette can both be seen on the collars, as with the bracteates, but these are less distinct as ideograms (Adetorp 2008:25-6; Pesch 2015:486-90). On the GFFs, even these are absent.

The earlier mentioned Vikestad brooch, and specifically the Figure depicted on its reverse, is of interest here (Fig. 34). It was found without its pin, which would have been fastened by a nail or nails through one or more of the three holes located above the interlaced beard of the Figure. Helmbrecht suggests that the pin might have been decorated with a face. There are extant brooches with such a facial ornament. In any case, the holes on the Vikestad brooch make up a three-dot. The ornamentation is executed in Style III, and has been dated to the 9th century on typological grounds, exemplifying a continued use of the three-dot as a facial trait after the Västra Vång GFFs (Salin 1904:67, 209, 276; Back Danielsson 2007:140-3; Helmbrecht 2011:179, 295).

This section has traced the three-dot and its close affines the pit and the ring, observing the presence of these traits on other artefacts ornamented with Animal Style Ornamentation. I suggested the possibility that a lineage can be traced back to the use of compasses in bracteate production effecting a mark on the cheek, and that this served to strengthen the connection between the three-dot and a wider artistic programme of facialisation.

6. 1. 3 The En Face View

Unlike many other contemporary and later artefacts ornamented in Animal Style Ornamentation, a face as seen from the front is not frequent in its appearance on GFFs (Ratke 2007). This is true both of the general pattern and of the GFFs from Västra Vång, where the en face Figure is seen on only four GFFs, all with the same EKC design (Fig. 36). As a consequence, this part of the analysis will be kept somewhat brief.

The facial traits drawn as a line with two loops and a bend might be seen as a further parallel to the three-dot motif discussed above, in that this line loops around three points that are spaced much the same as with the three-dot (Fig 35). Other Late Iron Age artefacts create this same en face expression with a soldered-on wire, as can be seen on, for instance, the Möne collar. Pesch likens the motif to a pair of pince-nez glasses, before settling on calling it a "bodice hook shape" (Pesch 2015:474). A further parallel to the three-dot, and the surfaces it appears on, is that in the case of EKC, the shape of the face is the teardrop or pear shape common to the animal hip, as discussed earlier.

This is well in line with how Deleuze and Guattari understand the abstract machine of faciality as working a system of "white walls" and "black holes". While some configurations of this abstract machine lets literal black holes become eyes on/in an equally literal white wall facial surface, this is but one of the ways that it can manifest: "Thus the black hole/white wall system is, to begin with, not a face but the abstract machine that produces faces according to the changeable combinations of its cogwheels. Do not", they caution us, "expect the abstract machine to resemble what it produces, or will produce" (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:187).
Fig. 35. Three-dot and "bodice hook shape". Image by the author.

Fig. 36. The beaded frame. EKC, SM195 and VV9. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 37. The plain frame. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 38. Interlace of the beaded frame on SM195. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 39. Interlace of the arms and costumes on coupled-Figure GFF from Slöinge. Image by the author. Not to scale.
Back Danielsson argues that the use of *split representation* in Animal Style Ornamentation, which particularly the "scabbard mounting foils" have been taken to express, is further relevant for the interpretation of facial traits on coupled-Figure GFFs. *Split representation* is a term established by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss for the depiction of a zoomorphic Figure in a flat plane, where the body is split in two halves and mirrored along a central vertical axis, making the two profiles of the face into one visage seen *en face* (Hed Jakobsson 2003:126-7, 132-3; Back Danielsson 2008:137-40). Indeed, in making the entirety of the body’s surface face the viewer, the body as a whole has been turned into a face (cf Deleuze & Guattari 2003:127, 194-6).

Conversely, to Deleuze and Guattari, the "paranoid" *en face* visage, with its watchful gaze, is emphatically not the same as the "passional" faces meeting one another in profile. This is not because the penetrating gaze is challenged by its opposite, but rather they see the two profiles partaking in a mutual movement of averting their gazes, a deterritorialising movement of turning away. The two profiles turning to face one another are also partaking in a turning away, in this case from the observer (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:126-9, 136-40, 203).

While most coupled-Figure GFFs lack the vertical symmetry characteristic of split representation, the parallels are clear if considered as two modes of making a coupled-Figure motif. That the earlier mentioned "scabbard mounting foils", that best exemplify the use of motifs that could be described as split-representative, have other affinities with GFFs was remarked upon in 5.6. Neither coupled-Figure GFFs nor a "scabbard mounting foil" are among the finds from Västra Vång under analysis here. Consequently, a more thorough interrogation of how the traits employed for faces in profile and *en face* relate to one another is outside the scope of the present study.

6.2 The Border and the Field

With GFFs, we can speak of two borders: the raised and/or patterned frame, as well as the foil’s edge. Both are modes of making lines that delineate, acting on the capacity of the line to create surfaces (Ingold 2007:44-5). While all GFFs have edges, the raised frame, usually adorned with a bead pattern, is not always present. Västra Vång has comparatively few thus adorned: the highly fragmented VV9, SM195, and four EKC, a total of six (Fig. 36). An intermediary is the plain raised frame which features on VV7 (Fig. 37).

Only one example of VV7 is known thus far, BLM 28583:56, which has one horizontal raised section underneath the feet, and a vertical raised section along the right edge of the foil. At the left extreme of the horizontal line, it is cut off by the edge of the foil. The vertical line is not joined to the horizontal one, and could equally be understood as part of the Figure’s braid, as it aligns with the loop of hair placed just above it. From other sites, Figures with hair depicted only as a loop with no vertical braid are known, although these GFFs to the best of my knowledge lack a raised frame (Watt 2004:191; Helmbrecht 2011:122, 162-3). The braids will see further attention in the section on extremities below. Even if the vertical section on the VV7 design forms part of a braid extremity, it nevertheless serves to frame the design. The cut-off aspect of the horizontal section means that absent any additional finds of GFFs with this design, we cannot determine if there was a frame bordering the entirety of the design. With this in mind, we should not rule out other designs featuring raised borders on their dies, particularly on the contour-cut GFFs, only to have these be cut away before deposition.

While at first the composition of GFF motifs might seem entirely estranged from the interwoven aesthetic of Animal Style Ornamentation, on closer inspection the GFFs appear tied to the same sense of rhythm. On the SM195 design, the corners of the border frame alternate in a succession of over- and underlays (Fig 38), much like the interlaced serpentine limbs of the ornamental
beasts. This adherence to the rhythmic layering can further be seen in the embrace, or mutual grasping, present on the coupled-Figure GFFs known from other sites (Fig. 39). The outline of the costume is transformed from the imaginary delineation of the treshold into the plasticised, graspable thread as the hands and arms of the Figures weave under and over it in accordance with the interlacing rhythm of Animal Style Ornamentation (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:545; Ingold 2007:57).

Calling the raised border a frame brings to mind the framing of an artwork for purposes of display. O’Sullivan notes that while the frame is an enclosing act, defining the work of art against the backdrop, in another sense the frame also acts to connect, relating an artwork to other works of art in a wider artistic milieu, or serving to connect the artwork with a spectator (O’Sullivan 2006:18). While GFFs were not made to be displayed, as was argued in the previous chapter, the separation that the raised frame and the cut edges bring about is in this sense also a form of connection, where Figures are made to relate to one another as discrete entities without narrative linkages: "Isolating the Figure will be the primary requirement. The figurative (representation) implies the relationship of an image to an object that it is supposed to illustrate; but it also implies the relationship of an image to other images in a composite whole which assigns a specific object to each of them. Narration is the correlate of illustration. A story slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between the two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole" (Deleuze 2005:2).

In Bacon’s work, the border thus serves to place the Figure in isolation, to cancel out the representational or narrative scheme it might otherwise be drafted into (Deleuze 2005:2, 32). The isolating border is but one of many means through which the Figure can be cut away. These borders are not a scenic background, or a doorway through which the Figure is yet to enter, which would only ease its reintroduction into the narrative, but are instead "strictly to the side of [the Figure], or rather, all around it, and are thus grasped in a close view, a tactile or ‘haptic’ view, just as the Figure itself is", inhabiting the same plane as the Figure (Deleuze 2005:4). Deleuze and Guattari speak of Nomad Art as characterised by this "close vision-haptic space" as opposed both to view at a distance and to the optical perception of space (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:543). Working in this surface-depth is one expression of this, miniaturisation another – GFFs express both.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the unadorned foil surrounding the stamped motif of a GFF has not always been removed, but on the GFFs from Västra Vång only small margins are left, with a high incidence of contour-cut GFFs. Particularly in the case of these GFFs from Västra Vång, the Figure fills the surface of the GFF, until apprehended by the border or the cut edge. This it has in common with other Animal Style Ornamentation imbued by the force of what Worringer terms the Gothic Line, where as Deleuze puts it "the line does not go from one point to another, but passes between points, continually changing direction, and attains a power greater than 1, becoming adequate to the entire surface" (Deleuze 2005:74. Italics in original, my emphasis in bold). On a GFF, the Figure does not take shape freely, but neither does it contort itself according to the demands of the already formed surface of an artifact like, for instance, a fibula. Hed Jakobsson argues that frames or edges serve to bind the Animal Style Ornamentation, but also to accentuate its vitality, making the motifs full of movement that leads nowhere. This, she argues, is also in a sense to be held in place (Hed Jakobsson 2003:137-8). These observations mirror the ones by Worringer, Deleuze, and Guattari on the nonorganic vitality of the Gothic line, as quoted above.

Helmbrecht has stressed the flat character of Scandinavian Late Iron Age imagery, proposing that this lack of a depth of field, with everything taking place in the same plane, is due to the barbarian oral culture being on a lower developmental stage than the mature perspectival vision of written culture. She likens the lack of perspective to children’s drawings, and while Helmbrecht does recognise that following this line of thought to its conclusion would have unfortunate implications, which would imply an inherent superiority of modern day Western art, she never-
theless does suggest that this might be tied to the oral culture of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age lacking a written language, where she makes the analogy to the child’s limited reading capacity (Helmbrecht 2011:235-6).

To Deleuze and Guattari, however, this is not caused by lack of ability but is due to the different aesthetic principles of Nomad Art, such as its use of "close-range' vision, as distinguished from long-distance vision" (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:543). In fact, it is down to a wholly different relation of the eye to space, where the eye does not seek to survey a landscape and master it through the knowledge of the spatial relationships within, which Deleuze and Guattari call the "optical" working of the eye in a "striated space". Instead, the eye reaches out as a tactile feeler, making vision "haptic" and space "smooth". "Where there is close vision, space is not visual, or rather the eye itself has a haptic, nonoptical function: no line separates earth from sky, which are the same substance; there is neither horizon nor background nor perspective [...] there is no intermediary distance or all distance is intermediary" (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:545). The haptic eye does not seek to establish a topography, but instead a patchwork, "an amorphous collection of juxtaposed pieces that can be joined together in an infinite number of ways" (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:526). The artefact may well have a geometric centre, or an axis of symmetry, but there is no use of perspective, no primacy of foreground to background. Not only the material affordances of thin foil sheets with cut edges, but equally the artistic treatment of frame and surface, align the GFFs with these aspects of Nomad Art as theorised by Deleuze and Guattari. Interrogating these aspects as stylistic, Figural traits allows for a fuller understanding than the assumption that it reflects an inability to engage with space as three-dimensional, as we have seen in this section.

6. 3 BISECTION, TRISECTION OF THE BODY

From lines surrounding the Figure, we now move on to lines that cross the Figure. Looking at the GFFs from Västra Vång, and how their motifs are composed, there is a recurring partitioning of the design into two or three parts. Lines intersect the body of the Figure, at the shoulders, and also at the waist or hips, splitting the body into sections. The Figure is not always trisected, sometimes it is instead bisected by a line that intersects the Figure at either the shoulders or the waist/hips. Trisection is seen on VV3A, VV3B, VV6, VV8 and EKC (Fig. 40). Bisection along either of the lines of trisection is seen on VV10, VV12, EKA and EKB (Fig 41).

In the research literature on GFFs, as well as other anthropomorphic designs from the Scandinavian Late Iron Age lines partitioning the body have been discussed in terms of an element of clothing – a belt, necklace, or a decorative band or hem – or otherwise imbued with iconographical significance – depicting either the bondage that several mythic characters undergo, or a "power belt" as an attribute of Thor’s (Watt 2004:202-4, 211-3; Helmbrecht 2011:134-8; Mannering 2017:48, 58, 84-5, 184-5). This fails to take into account that these partitioning lines are not only in evidence on anthropomorphic motifs, where Figs. 11 and 34 provide non-GFF examples, but on the bodies of other Figures such as the steeds of the C bracteates (Figs. 30, 31, and 32) (Adetorp 2008:164-5). If we compare the GFFs to the principles of composition in Animal Style Ornamentation, another pattern emerges, drawing us away from naturalism or iconography.

Haseloff argues that the composition of the Figures in Style I is guided by principles that hold true no matter if the designs are anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, or a mixture of the two. He establishes six principles for the composition of motifs in Style I. The first of these is the division of the animal or human body into its constituent parts, which appear in the ornament as discrete elements. Haseloff names the way that the ornamental motif is composed through using these
Fig. 40. Trisection of the Figure. VV3A, VV3B, VV6, VV8 and EKC. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 41. Bisection of the Figure. VV10, VV12, EKA and EKB. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 42. Detail from the Gummersmark fibula. Image by the author after Salin 1935. Not to scale.
disembodied body parts as building blocks the principle of addition. The third principle is the principle of abbreviation, which concerns how the adding together will leave out certain parts of the body, making e. g. a head, an arm, and a leg sufficient for a full human Figure. The next two principles concern particular forms of abbreviation or reduction: the composition of protomes, that is, depictions of only the upper half of the body; and double beings, having two heads on opposite sides of the body. Finally, the sixth principle is the tendency to fill the entire surface of the object with ornamental shapes, which Haseloff considers a particular expression of horror vacui, the fear of empty space. As these elements are body parts which in Haseloff’s view are not parts of a coherent animal or human motif, he names this principle Tiersalat, meaning Animal Salad (Haseloff 1981:113-4).

These principles also appear in other styles of Animal Style Ornamentation. Pesch reworks Haseloff’s principles in her study of the gold collars, and emphasises continuity between Style I and the later styles (Pesch 2015:509). Salin notes the use of abbreviated animal shapes in all three of his Styles, particularly emphasising the animal composed of a face, a back, and a hind leg (Salin 1904:235 263, 269). Karlsson likewise sees these tendencies at work, particularly in the 6th century Animal Style Ornamentation, often taking a form where “the body and extremities appear dismembered and put together with no regard for their organic relations, piled according to principles pertaining to economising on available space” (Karlsson 1983:22, my translation). The Gummersmark fibula provides such an example (Fig. 42), cited by both Salin and Haseloff, of an anthropomorphic Figure depicted as an arm, a leg, and a face, all pointing in separate directions (Salin 1904:225-6, 229; Haseloff 1981:113). The lines that bi- or trisect the Figures of the GFFs can be understood as an expression of the principles of division and addition. As Haseloff notes regarding Style I, the division is generally not delineated save for the outline of the constituent parts, and the space through which the added parts are not made to form a whole. Västra Vång’s GFFs, as with most other artefacts of their type, are in the main examples of a rather sober use of this principle, but it can clearly be observed at work in how legs attach to bodies, as will be further discussed in 6.4 below. With this in mind, we can also see bi- or trisection at work on the GFFs when the upper or lower hem of the clothes are not marked with lines, but when a depression in the foil delineates the body from the head on one end, and the legs at the other, making a virtual line, which is a generally observed characteristic of the GFFs from Västra Vång. Returning to the bisected Figures in Fig. 41, we can note how VV10, EKA and EKB all feature a distinct separation of the legs from the costume, effecting a similar triparitite division of the Figure as with the unambiguously trisected Figures in Fig. 40.

Returning to the parallels between GFFs and the animal heads of Styles I and II of Animal Style Ornamentation, Figs. 25 and 26 provide examples of a similar partitioning of the heads assembled according to the principles of division, addition, and abbreviation. A majority feature either a perpendicular raised line, or a virtual line of empty space, separating the nose-and-eye from the jaws. To Salin, Style II crosses a threshold into Style III as the increasingly convoluted twisting of the interlacing animal body starts to overlay the head, splitting it in two between eye and mouth. Over time, this brings about a truncation of the head, removing the long snout altogether, in favour of a snub-nosed pug head. Salin is certainly correct to consider the increasingly complex interlace as a point of distinction between the styles, but fails to take into account the examples from Style II of the body overlapping the head that he himself cites only some pages beforehand, but in that context characterising this as confusion and degeneration of the animal shapes. Results from later excavations have further disproved Salin’s allegation (Salin 1904:255-9, 272-3; Karlsson 1983:148-9, 168-72). If we take the composition of GFF motifs as a turning of the principles of division and addition back on themselves, we can understand this as a deterriorisation of the ornamental form of the animal head, which is reterritorialised into the anthropomorphic Figure on the GFF. Instead of the head of an animal, this ornamental element is
reinterpreted as an abbreviated antropomorphic Figure. The distribution of horizontal lines that trisect the vertical extension of the Figure expresses the same vitality that is elsewhere effected by the interlace weaving under-over-under again. In a roundabout way, Helmbrecht reaches a similar conclusion as she suggests that such horizontal bands on GFFs have the iconographical significance of a fetter, by proposing that the binding of the Figure effected by interlacing bands on other artefacts has the same meaning (Helmbrecht 2011:138). As I have shown here, these affinities between the partitioned Figure and interlace can be noted without reliance on an iconographical approach.

Certainly, these lines may be argued to result from depictions of costumes. But just as Worringer notes that the structural form of the acanthus ornament is in force before the addition of naturalistic details of the acanthus plant to it, as a reterritorialisation, here the structural forms common to Animal Style Ornamentation are reterritorialised into a particular anthropomorphic clothed Figure (Worringer 1997:108; Deleuze & Guattari 2004:536-7). Worringer in fact touches on this specifically, although he is apparently unaware of the appearance of anthropomorphic motifs all throughout Animal Style Ornamentation: "The way in which, in Northern ornament, animal motifs become geometrical patterns, in which everything organic is drawn into the expression of their lines, is well known. The same fate naturally also befell the representation of human figures, as it occurs at an advanced stage in the development of this art, e.g. in illuminated manuscripts" (Worringer 1997:109-10).

This section has investigated the role of partitioning as a persistent trait in the composition of GFF motifs. But there are other compositional patterns, apparent especially in how extremities do and do not appear as elements of these Figures. It is to those we will now turn.

6. 4 EXTREMITIES

Only a few of the GFFs from Västra Vång have arms or hands. Legs are common, as are feet, with the latter appearing on every single design, save for VV1 and VV15, where the foil is broken off at the ankles or hem. A looped braid is another recurring trait.

A large number of the GFFs feature legs: VV1, VV2, VV3A, VV3B, VV5, VV6, VV8, VV10, VV12 VV14, VVC1, SM195, EKA, and EKB. In all cases except VV1, these legs end in feet. VV1’s design likely has feet on the ends of its legs, but as the one example of this design thus far unearthed, BLM 28583:31, was found without its lowermost part, this can not be confirmed. The legs are depicted straight (VV2, VV3A, VV3B, VV5, VV6, VV10, VV14, SM195, EKA, EKB), with knees bent (VV1, VV8), or spread apart (VV12). The feet are always drawn in profile, even on the en face EKC Figure. The feet point in the same direction as one another, and as the profiled face, except for VV10 and EKB, where the toes point straight down. The feet of VV14 point slightly down and to the right. The cut-out Figure VVC1 also has articulated feet, pointing slightly downwards in the same direction as VV10.

Again we can turn to the animal heads of Style I and II. The jaws of the animal head can be opened, or closed in ways that approximate these stances of the feet. Fig. 43 shows how the extended toe-tip posture, the straight horizontal legs, the legless feet, and the stride with legs apart are all prefigured by the jaws of animal heads in Styles I and II. Furthermore, In Style I, the jaws of the heads sometimes bend and cross into the interlacing shape of a gamma or ampersand. Salin notes that all examples he cites of this are executed in filigree. But we can also note that such jaws are typical of "scabbard mounting foils", as is made clear in the larger material of this type studied by Haseloff (Salin 1904:224, 235, 239; Haseloff 1981:248-52). On GFFs, the legs can sometimes be seen coiling around one another in such a fashion. This stance is not present on any of the Västra Vång GFFs, but from Ravlunda, Uppåkra, and Sorte Muld, examples with this pose
Fig. 43. Parallels between legs and animal heads. Top row: Animal heads after Salin 1904. Leftmost is in Style I, all others in Style II. Bottom row: EKB, VV8, VV10, VV6, VV4B, VV12. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 44. Further parallels between legs and animal heads. From left to right: Style I heads after Salin 1904. Ravlunda GFF, illustration by Eva Koch, and Uppåkra GFF, illustration by Margarethe Watt, both after Watt 2004. Not to scale.
are known (Fig. 44) (Watt 2004:183-5; Helmbrecht 2011:160-2, 165-6). As was made clear in section 5. 6, there are already a striking number of commonalities between GFFs and the "scabbard mounting foils". The addition of this one points us further away from iconography, towards the subscription to a common refrain of rhythmic interlace in the artistic use of gold for making Figures.

Interestingly, D bracteates commonly feature legs ending in feet of the same type as seen on the GFFs, both in the heel and toe-tip posture (Fig. 45). On the D bracteate shown here, IK 469 from Nørre Hvam, the two legs connected to the Figure’s hips coil around the body and end in an extended toe. In the middle of the disk, a disembodied foot can be seen. A B-shaped ear, of the type discussed in 6. 1. 2 above, appears in a similar disconnected state in the disk’s periphery.

This general absence of arms or hands in the composition of GFF motifs demands particular attention. 30 of the 42 GFFs lack any extremities other than legs or feet. Of the remaining eleven, six feature a looped braid in addition to the legs or feet, four with arms, hands, or handlike elements, and one GFF both a hand and a braid. In addition to these, the cut-out Figure VVC1 has a beardlike appendage likewise drawing away from the body of the Figure. My treatment of the braid and beard as extremities follows from my Figural approach, and will be expanded on below. Had I followed earlier researchers in not considering these in terms of extremities, the primacy of Figures with no extremities save the legs or feet would be even more striking, at 37 to 5. Figures without arms or hands are common not just in the Västra Vång material, but within the wider GFF corpus (Ratke 2009). The presence of motifs without arms can once more be fitted into the wider milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation, where as we saw in the previous section, Haseloff makes the abbreviation of the animal or human body a core compositional principle. Such abbreviation is remarked upon already in the work of Salin, who particularly stresses the recurring animal assemblages of head-back-hind leg (Salin 1904:269). The emphasis by previous researchers on the coupled-Figures, as well as on the gesturing hand, has overshadowed the fact that armless Figures occur frequently in the GFF material as a whole.

The presence of arms, legs, braids, and their poses, does not demand of us to reenter the realm of the narrative. To use a term from Deleuze and Guattari, the Figure is a Body without Organs, that is to say, it rejects the particular organisation of the body that is the organism. We have already encountered this in the discussion of the facial traits at the beginning of this chapter, where I discussed how a Figure can have several faces, several points at which it is faced, which are not distributed in accordance with the organisational model of the organism. In other words, the body may well have organs, but these are temporary organs that come into being when an interaction of forces demands it. The Figure without arms, then, is a Body with no need of arms (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:168-9). Here this has some practical applicability in that it helps us understand the Figures with no arms not as lacking limbs but being otherwise ordered. As in the previous section, we might once again turn our attention to the composition of animal heads in Animal Style Ornamentation, recognising in the Figure without arms the same structure of a nose-and-eye atop a split that divides the body into two long thin sections – the jaws of the animal head, or the legs of the anthropomorphic Figure. But these parallels remain in place for the Figures possessing additional extremities beyond legs, as in Style II, a nose or eyebrow appendage on occasion blossoms into a hand/paw, a loop, or even an entire head. To the zone of indiscernibility between face and hip, which was discussed in section 6. 1. 1, we can therefore add another one, a zone of indiscernibility between face and limb, as the nose or eyebrow turns into a site of becoming-extremity. Hedeager points to other examples of such zones of indiscernibility in Animal Style Ornamentation, such as a belt buckle from Åker, Norway (Fig. 46) and a shroud cross from Wurmlingen, Germany (Fig. 47). In both cases, an anthropomorphic Figure is assembled where animal heads in Animal Style Ornamentation serve as some, or all, of its extremities (Hedeager 2010:112, 114-5).
Fig. 45. D bracteate IK469. Nørre Hvam, Denmark. Image by the author after Hauck 1989c. Not to scale.

Fig. 46. Belt buckle from Åker, Hedmark, Norway. After Hedeager 2010. Not to scale.

Fig. 47. Detail from Lombard shroud cross from Wurmlingen, Germany. Image by the author after Hedeager 2010. Not to scale.
Fig. 48. Västra Vång GFFs with arms and/or hands. VV5, VV11, VV12. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 49. Västra Vång GFFs with possible arms and/or hands. VV1, SM195. Image by the author. Not to scale.

Fig. 50. VV1 in comparison with GFFs from Ravlunda (middle) and Sorte Muld/Uppåkra (left). Note how the element in the middle of VV1’s Figure compares with the raised hand on the other GFFs. Illustration of VV1 by the author, other illustrations by Eva Koch, after Watt 2004. Not to scale.
While legs and feet proliferate, as noted earlier only a small number of the GFFs from Västra Vång feature arms or hands (Fig. 48). VV12 has two arms, each with a hand, one bent at the elbow and crossing the body at the waist, the other raised to the face. VV5 has one arm, likewise stretched across the body and ending in a hand. VV11 features a hand sprouting immediately from the side of the body. Both VV5 and VV11 hold an object in hand, as will be discussed further below. An additional two designs, VV1 and SM195, have ambiguous features which could be understood as arms or hands (Fig 49). The hands have from two to four digits, with a prominent thumb pointing away from the hand at a near-perpendicular angle.

In the middle of the Figure seen on VV1, there is a curious combination of lines which evoke a hand. This impression is strengthened when VV1 is compared to a series of designs which feature a highly similar motif, known from Sorte Muld, Uppåkra and Ravlunda (Andréasson 1995:77; Watt 2004:183-4; Helmbrecht 2011:165-6). Fig. 50 shows VV1 and two such designs, the latter two featuring an arm raised to place a hand in the middle of the Figures chest. The line bisecting the VV1 Figure may, in full or in part, result from a fold in the foil, but at the point when it underwent conservation, no such fold appears to be in evidence, which of course may be a consequence of the handling of this GFF during the excavation (Hurcombe 2007:21-2; Jarlehorn 2014). Mindful of the fact that this may be a case of the studied material playing tricks on the interpreter, my analysis advances from assuming this line to be a part of the motif (Haraway 1991c:199, 201). Here we then see a different treatment of connecting a series of points, where there are different horizons of plasticisation, scrambling the hand. Two fingers float freely offset from a slender limb ending in a thumb. As noted in section 5. 1, Axboe suggests that the making of matrix dies for bracteates at times involved both positive and negative relief as separate stages. This is one expression of how the Gothic line of Animal Style Ornamentation is subject to constant de- and replasticisation. This is not to say that the VV1 die was necessarily produced through such a complex sequence, only that the GFFs produced likewise experiment with the raising and lowering of the contour, effecting a dismantling of the hand, similar to Bacon’s treatment of the face (Deleuze 2005:156; O’Sullivan 2006:62-3). An interesting parallel to this can be seen on three GFF designs from Sorte Muld, SM302, SM303, and SM301 (Fig 51). These three designs, which clearly both parallel one another and differ from each other in their variation, all have two dots in the middle of the upper body. On SM302, this is effected by two circular depressions, which to Watt suggests the nipples of a nude Figure. But the other two designs these same dots are employed as part of what could be described as a bola tie or necklace of a clothed Figure. On SM303 this is effected in negative relief as two lines joined to circles, whereas on SM301 it is executed in positive relief (Watt 2004:180-1).

Much attention has been given to gesturing hands in the research literature. The hand raised to the face with the thumb pointing inwards, here seen on VV12, is known from a wide range of artefacts, including bracteates, fibulas, and GFFs from Sorte Muld and Uppåkra (Haseloff 1981:116-9, 132; Watt 2004:206-8; Ratke 2009:56-7, 92-4; Helmbrecht 2011:160-2). It has been the focus of several interpretations, with Kendrick making it a core trait of his Helmet Style, where he proposes Roman devotional art as its origin, as a gesture of blessing or divine protection. This interpretation has also been argued for by Hauck and Helmbrecht (Kendrick 1938:77; Karlsson 1983:115-6; Helmbrecht 2011:161). Others, such as Watt, have drawn on the narrative of Sigurd Fafnirsbani, who gains magic powers when licking his fingers and thus ingesting the blood of the dragon Fafnir. Watt notes that this "seer’s thumb" also appears in Irish sources (Watt 2004:206-8). These interpretations need not necessarily be understood as contradictory, as Cassel has noted how Scandinavian Late Iron Age artefacts make use of Roman imagery in new contexts, for new purposes – with Deleuze and Guattari we can term this de- and reterritorialisation. Again we can turn to Worringer, and note that the tales of Sigurd and other seers need not be the impetus for this motif, but instead a narrative that arises in decoding Figures such as the one on VV12. As
Fig. 51. Serial variation among three designs from Sorte Muld. From left: SM302, SM303, SM301. Illustrations by Eva Koch, after Watt 2004. Not to scale.

Fig. 52. Parallels between VV12 and animal heads. Image by the author. Not to scale.
Cassel emphasises, this need not be understood as an ignorance of the Roman meaning on the part of the barbarians, but deliberate acts of transformation. In this she draws on postcolonial theories of hybridisation and creolisation. Here we can see clear parallels to how Deleuze and Guattari understand the relationship between a major language and minor languages, including creoles, which set the major language in variation. (Worringer 1997:61-2; Deleuze & Guattari 2004:73, 112-17; Cassel 2008:113-21). The minor character of Animal Style Ornamentation will be further expanded on in the next section. We can acknowledge the influence of Roman imagery without foregrounding the significance of these motifs in a Roman context. And furthermore, noting this influence of Roman material culture is not an attempt to establish a tree-like descent, but to recognise it as one of many things connected together rhizomatically in the GFF phenomenon. In the case of VV12, we can for instance note a subtle interlace effect as the kaftan’s trim overlays itself, and then passes under the outstretched hand.

If approached as a Figural trait, we can note other parallels to the VV12 design (Fig. 52). The compositional affinities between animal heads and GFFs are particularly striking when comparing VV12 to one of Salin’s examples of a Style II animal head. This example was earlier referenced for the commonalities between its gaping jaws and VV12’s striding legs. But furthermore, the way in which the setting of the eye extends and bends back upon itself, ending in a two-digit paw, is remarkably similar to the arm with its gesturing hand which is seen on VV12. We can also note Haseloff’s interpretation of a detail of the Pompey fibula encountered in 6.1.1 above, where a similar set of trait was understood not as an arm with a gesturing hand, but a moustachioed nose and a mouth (Haseloff 1981:97).

In sections 6.2 and 6.3 of this chapter, I noted how the composition of GFF motifs provides for a number of sites of expressing the interlace rhythm of Animal Style Ornamentation. The comparison between GFF legs and the jaws of animal heads in Style I and II earlier in this section provided further examples of such rhythmic interlace, as does the kaftan and arm of the VV12 Figure. To this we can also add another extremity, which accomplishes the interlace effect in almost every instance: the braid. Braids are commonplace on GFFs, in the form of a long appendage to the head weaving over and under itself, either in the form of knot or a simple loop. Four designs from Västra Vång feature a braid, in all cases of the loop kind: VV4A, VV4B, VV7, and VV11 (Fig. 53). VV15 may include a braid, but the fragmentary state of BLM 28583:45 does not allow for a confident determination. The serpentine bodies of Animal Style Ornamentation give ample opportunity for combining a face with an outstretched extremity that loops around itself, as an independent motif or as part of a larger Figural assemblage. The combination of a looping, braid-like extremity and a face can be seen on the Färjestaden collar, and on fibulas, there interpreted as a sea creature or dragon (Salin 1904:206; Pesch 2015:397-402). As a P or 9-shaped loop around a dot, a delineation of the braid from the face, or from the hip, as discussed above in 6.1.1, is a fruitless endeavour.

Before moving on from the matter of the braid, however, it seems pertinent to point to one particular appearance of such an appendage adjacent to the face. The 5th century fibula from Galsted, Denmark, displays two Figures in profile with an en face visage between them. Peculiar to these particular Figures is the inclusion of a braid-like looped extremity at the back of the head, strikingly similar to a trait of some GFFs (Fig. 54). In his discussion of this very detail, Salin in fact pauses to remark that he finds the inclusion of this element to the otherwise conventionally composed animal motif impossible to explain (Salin 1904:228). Pausing to reflect on this Figure we can also note other resemblances with the anthropomorphic motifs of the GFFs, where the hind leg that bends towards the back of the Figure at an odd angle brings to mind the train of the dress, as seen on many GFFs. At Västra Vång, such a dress train can clearly be seen on VV7 (Fig. 55). It may also form part of VV9, but the foil of BLM 28583:37 is too damaged to say for sure. Returning to the braid-like P-shaped appendage, we can remark that it is not without faciality, an example of
**Fig. 53.** Västra Vång GFFs with braids. VV4A, VV4B, VV7, VV11. Image by the author. Not to scale.

**Fig. 54.** Detail from the Galsted fibula. Not to scale. Image by the author after Salin 1904.

**Fig. 55.** Train of dress on VV7 and GFF from Slöinge. Image by the author. Not to scale.

**Fig. 56.** Beard appendage of VVC1. Image by the author. Not to scale.

**Fig. 57.** Västra Vång GFFs with objects. VV5, VV11, SM195. Image by the author. Not to scale.

**Fig. 58.** GFF SM114 from Sorte Muld. Figure holding a staff. Illustration by Eva Koch after Mannering 2017. Not to scale.
the zone of indiscernibility between face and extremity remarked upon earlier. But there is also something of the wing to this shape. While on the GFFs, the looped or knotted braid is regularly interpreted as exclusively feminine, a loop of hair is a trait prominent to the bracteates also, and in those cases it is conversely deemed masculine. Again we can note the affinity with the wing however, with some bracteates sporting a bird head to the hair piece (Adetorp 2008:203-8; Hedeager 2010:111). The braid on the GFF motifs can be understood as a reterritorialisation of these traits as abstracted affects, like that which the acanthus ornament underwent.

As another appendage to the face, the "beard" of the cut-out Figure VVC1 (Fig. 56) could be compared to the braid. This extremity is made to appear by the cutting instrument, where a segment of the unstamped gold foil shape is split off. Since it, unlike the braids, is exclusively a creation of the cutting operation, it does not enter into a rhythmic repetition as dies are circulated, like the braids do. This could explain why this particular articulation is a variant that does not appear to have spread to other sites.

Only three designs from Västra Vång wield an item: VV5, VV14 and SM195 (Fig. 57). Thus far only one of each respective design is known from Västra Vång, with one other example of SM195 occurring at Sorte Muld. That the iconographical approach has considered attributes such as held objects as central to the symbolic content of the GFFs is hardly surprising. As with the armless Figures discussed above, this absence of wielded attributes is consequently more common than might be expected from the research literature. The three objects are all long and staff-like. In this, Västra Vång does not deviate from the wider GFF corpus, where staff-like objects are among the most common objects to appear on single-Figure GFFs, both with and without a frame (Ratke 2007:29-32, 37). VV5 holds a simple staff that reaches the shoulder. The object is executed as a raised vertical line, that parallels the stripes that pattern the body of the Figure. The arm is bent and held close to the body, with a two-digit clawlike hand gripping the staff crudely by overlaying it. Had held staffs not been established as a regular trait on GFFs, it is doubtful that the VV5 Figure would have been interpreted as holding something, as the "staff" can only be distinguished from the vertical lines of the Figure’s body by being formed from a slightly wider line, that extends to a higher position than the other lines. Once the "staff" passes the hand of the Figure, it disappears entirely into the pattern formed by the other lines, and only by assuming that the upper portion is a staff can one of these verticals be inferred as the continuation of a staff. Turning to SM195, here the staff, as noted earlier, has the beaded pattern of the frame, and passes diagonally from top left to bottom right, ending at the level of the tunic’s hem. As discussed earlier, no clear hand, let alone grip, can be seen, but in the middle of the staff a plain section is inserted in the beaded line. SM195 contrasts starkly with VV5, as here the staff is easily distinguishable from the costume from one end to the other, but once more unlike the VV5 design, SM195 lacks a hand as an interface with the body of the Figure, instead joining the staff to the Figure by extending across it. Finally the VV11 Figure has the most ornate object, but the details are difficult to make out. At its top it is thin and staff-like, and stretches from under the face of the Figure down to the ankles, where it flares out into an irregular bulb, decorated with three irregular rows of depressions or pits. This object, which we might with deliberate anachronism call a candlestick, lacks immediate parallels on other GFFs. The candlestick object is uneven and bulbous, but whether this is deliberate or a result of a worn die is impossible to say. It is gripped by a four-digit hand, that juts out immediately from the front of the Figure’s body, completely without an arm.

The staff is by Ratke argued to be especially prevalent on GFFs, with staff carriers appearing only rarely in the manuscript illuminations that form her main point of comparison. Helmbrecht makes similar observations, noting the prevalence of staffs in GFF motifs, and also that staff-like objects on other artefact types are distinctly weapons, with spear heads or blades at their top or bottom. The staff pair held by the "weapon dancers" is pointed to as an exception, but two such short staffs held in the same hand at opposite angles is not a trait observed on GFFs, neither at
Västra Vång nor elsewhere (Ratke 2007:166; Helmbrecht 2011:91, 113-7, 142, 352). In the haste to assign an iconographic significance to the staffs, drawing on burial inventories and Icelandic texts, the staff as a distinct characteristic of GFF motifs has been glossed over. Unlike the three-dimensional Figures, where a long thin staff is difficult to produce with most manufacturing techniques and at high risk of breakage regardless, the affordances of working in bas-relief means that on GFFs, staffs can be added to motifs with ease (Rebay-Salisbury 2014:172). But this does not explain the general absence of polearms and spears on GFFs, with a single GFF from Sorte Muld as the exception that proves the rule; and staffs contrariwise being absent on other motifs in bas-relief or a flat plane, such as on runestones, picture stones, tapestries and helmet plates. On bracteates, staffs are with some few exceptions almost exclusively consigned to the "Three gods" subtype of type B, and the "medallion imitations" (Manneing 2006:128; Axboe 2007:93). As the review of the Västra Vång material undertaken here shows, staffs or other objects are not necessarily central to the content of GFF motifs, as GFFs with held objects only form a subset of the GFFs with hands, which in turn is significantly outnumbered by GFFs without arms.

Ratke points to the Sorte Muld design SM114, where a staff occurs alongside the Figure, but with neither an arm or a hand connecting it to the body of the Figure. Manneing points to an illustration by Eva Koch, which we can identify as being of the exact same GFF, and not another example of the SM114 design, by its irregular edges (Ratke 2007:29-30; Manneing 2017:39). In Koch’s illustration (Fig. 58), a three-digit hand can clearly be seen gripping the staff – but this hand is not joined to the Figure, but instead hovers disembodied beside it, in a similar fashion as on VV11. The disembodiment of the hand is an expression of Haseloff’s principle of addition. But if this design were to be contour-cut in the way exemplified by some of the GFFs from Västra Vång, such a disembodied hand, without anything to indicate an arm, could be cut away without the resulting GFF appearing deprived of its hand or object. And by the same token, if the differences between VV3A and VV3B are understood as a modification of the VV3A die by the addition of lines carved on a previously plain area, staffs like VV5’s could appear as additions around a hand outstretched forwards. The more involved object on VV11 would likely need to be part of the design of the die from the onset, but even this could be understood as introducing variation between otherwise highly similar GFF designs, if compared to the differences between VV4A and VV4B, which likewise must have been designed in parallel or from a common origin. While the differences between VV3A and VV3B, and VV4A and VV4B, respectively, pertain to other elements of their motifs, the presence or absence of hands, and objects wielded by them, could be understood in an analogous way, all being ways to introduce variation, to improvise on a common theme. Such improvisation forms the third aspect of the rhythmic refrain, as theorised by Deleuze and Guattari. That not all of the staffs can be understood as such modification of the peripheral, or of the blank spots – here we could name the diagonally overlaid staff of SM195 – is not a strike against this interpretation, but can instead be understood as further experimentation around the staff as an element that has by then been made into a component of the common theme (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:358).

This section has shown how the extremities can be tied to other expressions of Animal Style Ornamentation, particularly those of the animal heads. The reterritorialisation of motifs brings about a rhythmic variation on a theme, where other elements become salient, without being entirely novel creations.
As noted throughout this essay, the diminutive size of the GFFs is often remarked upon. Instead of assuming that this is a response to an increasing scarcity of gold, we can note that miniaturisation is a persistent trait of Animal Style Ornamentation in its own right, established before the advent of GFF manufacture and continuing on after this production ceases. Based on her in-depth study of the Migration Period gold collars, Pesch includes the miniature scale as one of the principles in her adaptation of Haseloff’s framework. Miniaturisation is similarly stressed in Back Danielsson’s argument, but does not cohere into a concept useful for an analysis of the stylistic and expressive traits of GFFs, especially since she consistently frames miniaturisation as the representation of something larger (Back Danielsson 2007:130, 172-5; Pesch 2015:509). With Worringer, we could instead frame this as the abstracting away of certain affects into new artistic assemblages, where the smallness is not a consequence of viewing things at a distance, but to engender an encounter in close quarters, where the miniature scale demands of the eye to move in close, viewing the ornament not optically but haptically. To offer the gold collars as an example of this miniaturisation in action, here a set of elementary shapes are brought together in a number of variants that still pertain to a common theme, to create interrelated assemblages, letting the gaze lose itself in the mass of minute details, where new motifs arise out of the collision of parts (Worringer 1997:52, 61-2; Deleuze & Guattari 2004:545).

The miniature scale of the ornamentation of the GFFs should be understood in the context of an already established tendency to adorn the surfaces of various artefact types with ornamental elements in miniature. The miniature scale allows for the coverage of surfaces in their entirety with a rhizomatic swarm, an Animal Salad. But the GFFs articulate miniaturisation in a further sense, as here the miniature elements are not joined together, instead there is a deterritorialising movement as the ornamental Figures are scattered, cut apart, and made part of assemblages where not only the ornamentation, but the dimensions of the individual artefacts, take on a miniature quality. This deterritorialisation of the miniature ornament, reterritorialised in the form of a GFF, can also be expressed through the three aspects of a refrain, as the experimentation with the already formed miniaturising tendency (the third aspect of the refrain), liberating itself from the requirement of a larger artefact underneath its surface, crossing a threshold over into the formation of a new melody of independent miniature Figures (the first aspect of the refrain), a melody which is kept in play through the circulation of dies and the repetitive operations of a machinic assemblage that stamps and cuts (the second aspect of the refrain) (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:344).

But we can also understand the working in miniature as a minor practice, that deterritorialises the major and puts it in variation. These minor practices derive from the exposure to the regularising demands of the major. O’Sullivan understands the minor in art as inherently political. This, I want to emphasise, should not be taken to imply that there existed a Germanic ideology to rival the Classical world which was spread through an artistic programme of Animal Style Ornamentation. Instead, what O’Sullivan understands as the political character of the minor regards how these are practices situated in a certain milieu, where the major is made to stammer and stutter. This milieu is, as any other, always run through by various political structures of power and dominance. The minor puts the major in variation not only as regards expression, but also as regards form. (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:116; O’Sullivan 2006:70-1).

As discussed in chapter 4, the minor emerges from within the terrain of the major. New operational sequences, like those investigated in chapter 5, arise within an already established circulation of gold, and its numismatic regime of signs (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:116; O’Sullivan 2006:71-2; Cassel 2008:114-20). Looking back to the discussion of the rhizome, we can recall the hostility expressed against understanding the orchid’s likeness to the wasp as imitative. By the same token, the Nomad Art of Animal Style Ornamentation, as expressed in GFFs, need not be
understood as aping a Roman system of iconography when it borrows certain formal elements from that imagery. Much like the gold metal, which likewise is ultimately of Roman origin, there is a capture of code as the Roman imagery is deterritorialised, used as raw material for new artistic forms and expressions (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:11).

Miniaturisation, which is at play not just with GFFs but also elsewhere within the milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation, is one way to put gold in variation through intensifying its expressive potential. Whether it is through covering the entire surface of a larger artefact with an Animal Salad, consisting of a multitude of small heterogeneous elements, or the disassembly of gold, turning ingots, coins, and jewellery into a series of GFFs each consisting of only tiny amounts of gold foil; variation is introduced into the flow of gold. The new Figural motifs that appear on the GFFs exemplify the expressive potential of this variation.

6. 6 Figure It Out

In this chapter I have investigated the Figural traits of the GFFs from Västra Vång, in five sections each devoted to a complex of traits. In 6. 1, after an introductory discussion musing on how to define a face, the subsections 6. 1. 1–3 dealt with particular facial traits, in turn, the profiled nose-and-eye face, the three-dot motif, and the frontal view of the face. In 6. 2 I then turned to the surface and its limits, giving particular attention to the beaded frame. Next, the horizontal lines which divide the bodies of the Figures was the focus of section 6. 3, there understood as a core trait of composition. 6. 4 concerned the extremities that to various degrees occur as elements of GFF motifs. Finally, the last trait to be studied was the diminutive scale of the GFFs, in section 6. 5.

At each of these steps of the analysis, parallels between GFFs and Animal Style Ornamentation were emphasised. The heads of animal Figures provided a particularly instructive comparison, where the face in profile, the lines of bi-/trisection, the various positions of the legs, and the presence of arms and braids were elements of the GFFs which could all be tied to different traits in the expressions of animal heads. That the facial traits of the animal heads were also employed elsewhere on the animals’ bodies, particularly as hips, had implications for the interpretation of the three-dot motif, the view en face, and the looping braid. Similarly, the interlace of the elongated ribbons or animal shapes common to Animal Style Ornamentation made appearances on the GFFs, in the rhythmic sequence of the segments of a beaded frame, in the spacing of the horizontal lines of bi-/trisection, and in the extremities interweaving one another. The compositional principles proposed by Haseloff for the study of Style I were shown to have a high degree of applicability to the GFF material, and likewise the distinctively diminutive size of the GFFs could be brought in line with a wider pattern of miniaturisation.

In this chapter, I have undertaken a series of interrogations of the various Figural traits of the Västra Vång GFFs. In summarising the results of these investigations, I would like to conclude not with a list of principles, but with a listing of a series of facets, that are joined together in a rhizome, bringing about a minor rhythm. I would like to note seven such facets:

1. On GFFs, there is always at least one face.
2. The isolation of the Figure by a border.
3. A haptic, close range plane, covering and deforming the entire surface.
4. The bisection or trisection of the Figure, effecting division and addition.
5. The Figure as a Body without Organs, with extremities made to appear as needed.
6. A rhythmic interlace of lines.
7. Miniaturisation accelerates variation.
Each of these facets demand some further explication. To begin, (1). On GFFs there is always at least one face. Faces are sites of facing the Figure, but not necessarily singular: the three-dot is a face within a face. The distribution of faciality traits follow a wider pattern in Animal Style Ornamentation, where nose-and-eye, three-dot and en face each have different patterns and speeds of propagation, so that even the single-Figure GFFs can be sites of multiple faces. This proliferation of facial traits joins the GFFs into a wider artistic milieu, aligning with the patterns noted for the appearance of these various faciality traits within Animal Style Ornamentation. We can note here how Animal heads and GFF motifs show distinct parallels in their composition, notably in the deployment of faciality traits.

(2). The isolation of the Figure by a border. A border serves to isolate the Figure from other Figures, closing off narrative linkages. This can be accomplished by the cut edge of the foil, but in some cases this becomes the site of variation through plasticisation, where the edge of the motif is articulated by a fully plasticised beaded frame. As with other experimentations with plasticisation of lines, these frames can form sites of expressing the rhythmic interlacing of lines, as will be further discussed below.

(3). A haptic, close range plane, covering and deforming the entire surface. A GFF consists, in a very literal sense, in the manipulation of a surface – the thin sheet of gold foil. There is no depth of field, but a flat plane where everything is equally close. The flat plane is a smooth space, where the Figure extends to cover it in full, with the aid of the cutting operation that removes excess foil. This expresses the same drive to cover the entire extent of the surface that in the case of ornament added to a larger artefact is expressed as Animal Salad. These are different ways to make the ornament expand over the full surface, and has nothing to do with any purported fear of empty space (horror vacui), but are different ways to bring about a smooth space.

(4). The bisection or trisection of the Figure, effecting division and addition. The division of a body into constituent body parts, followed by the adding together of these elements to make a Figure were principles of composition delineated by Haseloff. The partitioning of a Figure by lines that bisect or trisect it forms a particular variation on these principles. Such partitioning lines are prevalent on GFF motifs, but occur widely in the composition of anthropo- and zoomorphic motifs in Animal Style Ornamentation.

(5). The Figure as a Body without Organs, with extremities made to appear as needed. The Body without Organs is not opposed to organs as such, but to the organism. As a Body without Organs, the GFF is not a representation of an organism as a holistic system. Having nothing to do with representation, the extremities that appear as part of a GFF motif are not present as demanded by the scheme of the organism, but as differential traits expressing variation. The arms, legs, and braids follow the expression of such traits seen elsewhere in Animal Style Ornamentation, with the animal heads once more providing an instructive reference material.

(6). A rhythmic interlace of lines. The interlace is a crucial stylistic feature of Animal Style Ornamentation, with elements interweaving over-under-over serving not to striate and regularise, but to further accentuate the flat character of a smooth space. Plasticisation makes edges of Figural elements, as well as of the foil itself, into plasticised lines, that are brought into the interlace. The GFFs employ the rhythmic interlace in a more subdued way, but it is nevertheless apparent in how the sections of a beaded frame, the extremities, and the lines of bi-/trisection all bring the interlace rhythm into play.

(7). Miniaturisation accelerates variation. Miniaturisation was noted as a persistent trait of Animal Style Ornamentation, allowing for haptic, close range, engagements with deterritorialised affects, intensifying the variation in composition. The GFFs bring about a further intensification of this variation, by the fragmentation into independent ornamented objects made out of miniscule amounts of gold material.

In chapter 4, the Deleuzoguattarian rhythmic refrain was proposed as a model for how Animal
Style Ornamentation functions as non-representational art. The rhythmic refrain has three aspects, where the first aspect concerns how a melody emerges against a wider milieu or backdrop. The second aspect concerns the selection and ordering of traits in accordance with a rhythm. Finally, the third aspect entails the improvisation and experimentation on the established theme, bringing it in variation. In the previous chapter, we saw how the various operations engaging the GFFs materially could be understood in terms of these aspects of the refrain. In this chapter, the various Figural traits of the GFFs from Västra Vång have been investigated. In the discussion of the seven facets above, time and again we can see the emergence of the GFFs as a distinct melody within the milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation (the first aspect of the refrain), and how the seven aspects all in various ways perform selections or orderings on the one hand (the second aspect of the refrain), and variation on the established theme on the other (the third aspect of the refrain).
7 CONCLUSIONS

The ambition of this essay has been to study 42 GFFs from Västra Vång, by way of an approach that has sought to capture their material and Figural traits, and not their purported iconographical significance. These aims and research questions were established in chapter one. Chapter two then provided a background on the previous research on GFFs, Animal Style Ornamentation, and described how the interpretation in accordance with an iconographical framework, as well as elite-centred narratives of aristocratic expressions of identity have coloured the interpretation of GFFs thus far. Chapter three presented the find site in Västra Vång of the 42 GFFs that form the material for my analysis. This included a discussion both of the context of the find, as well as its dating. Building on the misgivings regarding iconography which were expressed in chapter two, in chapter four I presented a theoretical framework through which the material and Figural traits could be captured, based on a neomaterialist attitude to materiality, and an understanding of art following from the works of Deleuze, Guattari, and Worringer.

This was followed by the two chapters of the analysis. In chapter five, I investigated the chaîne opératoire made up of the operations through which the GFFs from Västra Vång were produced and deposited, concluding that both stamping and cutting were operations with expressive power to effect variation, and that GFFs were as a rule artefacts made for purposes of immediate disposal, not display, as a mode of dispersing gold. Västra Vång’s GFFs retain unworn, fresh edges indicating that handling between the cutting operation and deposition was minimal. The thin, brittle foils are ill suited to display. GFFs with cuts that damage the stamped motif, and others with cracks and fissures in the gold foil from the force of the stamping operation, have not been repaired but deposited together with carefully contour-cut GFFs as well as unworked amounts of gold, which further strengthens the impression of a lack of concern with producing artefacts suitable for display. The second half of the analysis was undertaken in chapter six, where I turned my attention to the Figural traits of the GFF designs. I looked in turn at faciality, borders, the surfaces, the lines of bi-/trisection, the various extremities, and finally the miniature scale of the GFFs, demonstrating that commonalities between GFFs and the wider artistic milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation could be found at each of these points. On the basis of this investigation of Figural traits, I proposed a series of seven facets, namely

1. On GFFs, there is always at least one face.
2. The isolation of the Figure by a border.
3. A haptic, close range plane, covering and deforming the entire surface.
4. The bisection or trisection of the Figure, effecting division and addition.
5. The Figure is a Body without Organs, with extremities made to appear as needed.
6. A rhythmic interlace of lines.
7. Miniaturisation accelerates variation.

These facets all pertain to combinations of Figural traits specific to GFFs, but also served to situate the Figural composition of GFFs within Animal Style Ornamentation. This concluded the analysis.

In this chapter, I discuss the conclusions drawn from these analyses, both taken separately and together. I also evaluate the merits of the theoretical apparatus employed in the study.

This essay has been informed by a critique towards the prevailing tendency to approach GFFs in terms of iconographical representation. By attending to the GFFs in terms of their material and Figural traits, I have sought to discover and affirm qualities to these artefacts that have nothing to do with any function to represent. In chapter four, I argued that the reluctance towards calling GFFs and other Animal Style Ornamentation art again reflects an iconographical interest in the
decoding of a message that artefacts are alleged to have been tasked to communicate, which ultimately rests on an opposition posited in philosophical aesthetics between beauty and utility.

That GFFs, instead of being iconographical images, are artefacts that arise as flows act upon one another seems a way out of the circular arguments of what these images signify, towards an attention to the traits that we can recognise in the material. By all means, GFFs could possibly have had significance as icons in accordance with a mythological framework to a Scandinavian Late Iron Age individual. But is this something we can determine from the evidence at hand? To answer this question would, in my opinion, require a familiarity with the inner thoughts of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age individual to an extent that is altogether impossible to acquire as an archaeologist. Not only is it impossible, in my view it is not what archaeological research should strive for. The advantage of the Figural approach to these artefacts is that we need not construct something outside of the artefacts that we then suggest that they depict representationally. Instead, we can take the Figural traits as they appear as our point of departure, noting how they connect to other expressive practices of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. My investigation into the material traits is likewise one in which I attend to processes and connections, as flows or as rhizomes, happening at different speeds and intensities. The analysis concerned these two kinds of traits: material traits and Figural traits. In the essay, the analysis was divided into two separate chapters, each devoted to one of the two kinds. This is not intended to suggest that the material and the Figural can always be easily delineated from one another, but for the sake of analytical and rhetorical clarity.

Returning to the model of the assemblage presented in chapter four, the two analytical chapters could equally be characterised as attuned to the machinic assemblage (chapter five) and the collective assemblage of enunciation (chapter six). The purpose of the assemblage model is not to present these as independent layers, but rather an analytical tool allowing us to elucidate on certain qualities, to better understand their messy intermingling. For the Figural traits are not independent of the material traits of the bodies and masses involved in the chain of operations that give rise to a GFF. The machinic assemblage is not independent from the collective assemblage of enunciation. However, this is not to say that there is an identity between the two, but that the GFFs as material culture objects take place as these axes of the assemblage intermingle. The attention to the material bodies acting and being acted upon, as well as the attention to the Figural traits expressed in the composition of the Västra Vång GFFs, did in neither case provide us with an exhaustive table of the components of either the machinic assemblage or the collective assemblage of enunciation, which was never the intention of these analyses. The material traits and the Figural traits discussed are those which appear, or that I through my analytical process have managed to make appear, in the GFF material of this study.

The attentive reader may point out that these two terms form only one of the axes of the assemblage as defined by Deleuze and Guattari. In addition to the horizontal axis that comprises the machinic assemblage and the collective assemblage of enunciation, there is also a vertical axis that spans between the territorial sides of the assemblage and its cutting edges of deterritorialisation. Starting with the latter, the deterritorialising power of the GFFs were commented on at several points. Deterritorialising lines of flight carry away Roman coinage from the Roman world and from a monetary functioning, they carry away coins, jewellery and other gold matter; they carry away the cutting instrument from the incising of lines and the cutting of foil shapes for cloisonné jewellery; they carry away the rhythmic interlace and the affects of the animal heads of Animal Style Ornamentation; and they put the major Roman imagery such as the hand raised to the face in variation. These all pertain to breakages departing from already formed terrains, opening up new areas to new corporeal and incorporeal becomings.

The territorial sides, on the other hand, concern the reterritorialising movements, through which matters and expressions are aligned with an already formed terrain, or how a new terrain
opened up by the line of flight is stabilised and maintained. De- and reterritorialising movements pull in different directions, but at the same time they also empower one another, inevitably bringing about one another. The example of the orchid and the wasp in chapter four provided one demonstration of how movements of de-/reterritorialisation couple with one another in a rhizome. But this connection is continually stressed by Deleuze and Guattari, as they emphasise that "it is always on the most deterritorialized element that reterritorialization takes place" (2004:243. Emphasis in original). New territorial rhythms can be established only as certain elements are freed from a settled state, and made to act together with new elements, in new terrains. Consequently, the (re-)territorial sides of an assemblage are not the sites that resist deterritorialisation, but the formation or negotiation of a territoriality that the deterritorialised affects find themselves in. What are the new ways that the GFF is made to regulate and regularise itself? If we follow Deleuze and Guattari, we should look to that element which is most intensively deterritorialised in answering the question. In my opinion, it is the gold metal which we should assign this quality. GFFs bring about new territorial rhythms of form and expression to gold matter, gold made to circulate as it becomes deterritorialised from a monetary function within the Roman economy, either retaining the form as coin even as it is displaced from a monetary meaning and exchange practice, or taking on interstitial forms as jewellery or ingot. The influx of this flow of gold is not contained to an élite social stratum, but resulting from a disparate set of interactions between neighbouring economical systems. A flow of gold is extended as gold is brought to Scandinavia from continental economies. Gold could be acquired through participation in military operations on the continent, as payment for involvement in regular militaries or irregular war bands. Payment in metal currency would have brought with it a familiarity with the exchange of currency to satisfy needs and wants. Individuals in possession of minute amounts of gold wealth returning to a society where wealth was strongly tied to land-holding and gift exchange, presented an incongruity. They may have discovered that their ownership of gold presented a threat to the social fabric. To allay such fears, and harmoniously reintegrate, the gold would have to pass out of their hands. This is a reaffirmation of territorial regimes of power, a reterritorialisation. The GFFs emerge as a vector of dispersing gold. This is not to suggest that gold was invariably given this treatment, but rather an attempt to follow the flow and dwell on the material and Figural traits of the gold that manifestly was handled in this way.

The artistic expression of Figural traits is equally energised by movements of de- and reterritorialisation. Understanding that the Figural traits expressed on the GFFs from Västra Vång are part of a wider artistic milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation, alongside other systematised expressions making up parts of a collective assemblage of enunciation, makes their appearance on artefacts that were, effectively, deposited immediately upon their manufacture easier to grasp. These systems of expression were not attuned to in mediation on displayed GFFs, but within a collective in which GFF dies circulated, alongside other expressive traits. The particular procedures of miniaturisation allowed for an acceleration of the expression of variation in the conjunction of a flow of artistic expression onto a flow of gold matter. The dispersive handling of gold must be traced to both the material premises and the expressive artistic ones. Gold is not chosen because it is precious, or because of what it connotes, but because it is available, because the artisan smith is attendant to its traits as a metal matter. The material traits of the metal gold attended to were not those that make it suitable for display (the reflectiveness of its surface), but that as a soft, highly ductile metal it is easy to work with if compared to for instance bronze or iron. Even in small quantities, gold could be worked into foil that could be artfully cut or incised with an edged tool, and which likewise held a stamped relief image well. Thus we might tie the circulation of dies with anthropomorphic motifs to the border punches employed in bracteate manufacture, liberated by a line of flight, conjugating on the flow of gold in a way that allows for an accelerated dispersal. A line of flight liberates the traits of expression from their placement on the surface of
larger artefacts, like fibulas, gold collars, and bracteates, to establish new territorial rhythms. The seven facets proposed in chapter six capture the qualities of the new expressive rhythms of the GFFs.

That a class of artefacts consisting of minute amounts of gold made for immediate deposition nevertheless becomes subject to intense artistic engagement of such high quality and variation is in and of itself reason to question the established narrative of Animal Style Ornamentation as an art of repetition where improvisation was censured. The sequences of operation studied in chapter five likewise troubles the narrative of slavish repetition, at all points. Discrepancies abound at every point, in the metal purity of gold foil, in the presence of un stamped and double-stamped GFFs, in the cuts that carefully follows a contour or cuts it apart. Deliberate or not, such consistent material variability can hardly be reconciled with the alleged pressures to conform to standards and produce exact copies. Variation is not the exception to the rule, it *is the rule*. There is rhythm and recurrence and repetitious return, but this is because of variation, not in spite of it.

The Deleuzoguattarian model of the refrain proved a particularly fruitful instrument for demonstrating the creative interplay between difference and repetition, present equally on the Figural and the material level. Of the three aspects that constitute a rhythmic refrain, the first consists of a new melody emerging against a backdrop, the second the ordering and selection according to a rhythm, and the third the putting of this rhythm into variation by improvisation on the theme. GFFs emerge as a particular mode of engaging with gold matter, as a particular inventory within the wider milieu of Animal Style Ornamentation. Through reiteration, a rhythm emerges in how the ornamental motifs, and the operational sequences which bring them about, are put together. But this repetition is accompanied by a constant improvisation, which experiments with the stamp-cut-immediate deposition sequence at all points, and equally with the pictorial content of the GFFs, adding new traits as extremities, effecting interlace effects, and so on. Variation may then in turn be made to persist through repetition, creating new opportunities for experimentation as the refrain and its rhythm repeats.

New artistic refrains arise, where designs that appear particularly anthropomorphic come to predominate. In my analysis of Figural traits of the GFFs, I emphasised their place in a wider context of ornamental practice. The intermingling of human and animal in Animal Style Ornamentation has been noted by many scholars (see e.g. Haseloff 1981:10-17; Back Danielsson 2007:111-3; Helmbrecht 2011:409-10). GFFs have generally not been seen to exemplify these transformations. By looking beyond the identification of discrete animals, and instead concentrating on the occurrence of Figural traits, making note of the formal affinities in composition between GFFs and the animal heads of Animal Style Ornamentation, as well as noting the correspondences with both antropo- and zoomorphic motifs on the gold collars, I argue that GFFs also show the *animality* of Animal Style Ornamentation. The ornamented surfaces of both early and late Animal Style Ornamentation frequently assemble Figures with anthropo- and zoomorphic traits in proximity, if not always in undeniable admixture. On the level of the assemblage, no clear lines are to be drawn between the constituent parts. By concentrating my attention to the level of traits, I could show how certain Figural traits were employed in anthropo- and zoomorphic designs alike. Their occurrence as part of GFF designs is not a question of crystallising into a discrete artistic genre of anthropomorphism, but one of many moments in a rhythmic variation, which again and again gives rise to new mixtures of animal and human, abstract and emphatic. These tensions effect a zone of indiscernibility that is one of the sources of the powerful artistic vitality of Animal Style Ornamentation.

The compositional correspondences between GFF motifs and other Animal Style Ornamen
tation motifs, such as animal Figures, their hips and heads, or the rhythmic interlace, shows that the composition of GFF motifs can be comprehended outside of representation. This is not to say that, for example, Scandinavian Late Iron Age costume cannot have had any influence on GFF
motifs. But the choice of which costume traits that are abstracted away and made part of a GFF design is a question of artistic expression. It will not do to assume that the imagery of GFF designs faithfully, and losslessly, represents a world outside of them without at least the acknowledgement of the source-critical issues of such a treatment of forms of artistic expression.

In GFFs we encounter an artefact category that enchants and confounds us. Much of the earlier research has been preoccupied with making them legible, with proposing direct referents for their pictorial content, in either the realm of the lived environment, or in mythological narratives of the Scandinavian Late Iron Age. The approach forwarded in this essay offers an alternative. My task here has not been to disenchant the GFFs or rob them of their mystery, but to affirm it, to offer modes of attending to the material traits, as well as the Figural traits, of these perplexing artefacts.
8 ATT SKINGRA GULD. SAMMANFATTNING

Från den yngre järnåldern finns ett stort fyndmaterial av högklassigt ädelmetallhantverk. En föremålstyp som under de senaste årtiondena fått särskilt stor uppmärksamhet är de små stycken av tunnt guldfoliebleck som kallas guldgubbar. Guldgubbar hör vanligen till folkvandringstiden eller vendeltiden, med en tonvikt på 500- och 600-talet. I dagsläget har de bara hittats i Skandinavien, varför namnet guldgubbar länge saknade en etablerad engelskspråkig översättning. Under senare år har dock beteckningen ”Gold Foil Figures” kommit att börja användas bredt i engelskspråkig forskning. I den här sammanfattningen följer jag min engelskspråkiga huvudtext i att använda mig av förkortningen GFF.


Uppsatssens syfte och frågeställningar presenteras tillsammans med en metoddiskussion i kapitel ett. Den här uppsatsens huvudsyfte är att nära sig GFF från en ny angreppsvinkel. Istället för att betrakta GFF som avbildande representationer, vill jag ta fasta på deras materiella och figurala drag, det vill säga egenskaperna hos de interaktioner med metall som artefakterna består av. Ett vidare syfte med den har uppsatsen är att presentera Västra Vångs GFF-material.

Frågeställningarna i uppsatsen är som följer:

• Vilka materiella och figurala drag förekommer i GFF-materialet från Västra Vång?
• Vad framträder när vi uppmärksammar tillverkningen och deponeringen av GFF i termer av materiella drag?
• Hur relaterar de figurala drag som kommer till uttryck hos Västra Vångs GFF till bredare mönster inom det totala GFF-materialet, och inom djurornamentikens konstnärliga miljö som helhet?
• Kan modellen av materiella och figurala drag möjliggöra ett nytt sätt att studera GFF och deras motiv, som bryter sig loss från ikonografi och avbildning?

I kapitel två redogör jag för den tidigare forskningen om GFF. Kapitlet har fyra avsnitt, där det första, 2.1, redogör för föremålskategorins tillblivelse i den arkeologiska forskningen, och hur fyndlokaler har tolkats under senare tid. Avsnitt 2.2 behandlar djurornamentiken, och skiftet från en förståelse av djurornamentiken som just ornamentik, och upprättandet av omfattande typologier för denna ornamentiks skiftande formelement; till att istället se djurornamentiken som berättande bilder svarandes mot de fornordiska myter som är kända från historiska texter av kristna författare. I avsnitt 2.2 görs också en längre diskussion om nazismens påverkan på arkeologin och hur arkeologer inte tagit ansvar för detta, och de lärdomar vi kan dra av detta för att själva förstå ett ansvarsfullt sätt. I 2.3 återkommer jag mer specifikt till GFF, och diskuterar de tolkningar som förekommer i den tidigare forskningen om bilderna på GFF. Sådana tolkningar har som noterades om djurornamentiken ofta tenderat att leta efter direkta samband till textkällor. Andra forskare har istället understrukt GFF som avbildande källor till dräktskick eller uppfattningar gar genom. Gemensamt för dessa tolkningar är att de alla utgår från GFF som avbildande representationer. 2.4 sammanfattar genomgången av den tidigare forskningen, och påtalar hur ett genomgående mönster blir synligt, där arkeologiska lämnningar hela tiden knyts till en aristokratisk elitmiljö. Den förevarande studien är ägnad åt att istället hitta nya sätt att förstå GFF, som istället håller sig nära det arkeologiska materialet och dess materiella och figurala drag.

Amnet för kapitel tre är en ingående redogörelse för fyndomständigheterna i Västra Vång för de 42 GFF som utgör uppsatsens material, samt för dateringen av desamma. Här diskuterar jag

I kapitel fyra redogör jag ingående för den teoriapparat som vägleder mitt analysarbete. Eftersom jag närmar mig GFF som i hög grad materiella föremål, men även som icke-representativa Figurala bilder, vänder jag mig i synnerhet till Gilles Deleuze och Félix Guattaris nymaterialistiska filosofi. Deras verk har mycket att säga om båda det materiella och det Figurala, på ett nydanande sätt som bestämt tar avstånd från representation. Avsnitt 4.1 rör de teorier som har särskild betydelse för min undersökning av materiella drag hos GFF, men avsnittet utgör också en presentation av övergripande principer i Deleuze och Guattaris tänkande.3 Här betonas särskilt hur den nymaterialistiska världsåskådningen inte uppfattar världen som statisk, utan som pågående processer i spännings mellan olika krafter. Varandet som sådant ska ersättas av blivanden. Anordningen (assemblage) är en förtjänstfull term som Deleuze och Guattari formulerar för att förstå komplexa fenomen i en värld av blivanden och flöden. Anordningen har två axlar. Den första löper mellan en maskinell anordning (machinic assemblage) som sammanför alla de kroppar som har del i ett fenomen, inte bara levande kroppar som smeder, utan också hammare, patriser och guldet som sådant; och en kollektiv yttrandeanordning (collective assemblage of enunciation) som för samman alla de virtuella system av uttryck som materialiseras i anordningen, som djurornamentikens djuformger eller brakteaternas runinskrifter. Anordningens andra axel är mellan de territoriella sidor (territorial sides) som upprättar områden och regelbundenhet, och avterritorialiseringspensar (cutting edges of deterritorialisation) som accelererar avterritorialiseringen mot nya ytor. Andra begrepp som diskuteras här är rhizom och flöden. Det här är en modell som jag har stor behållning av i min analys, där kapitel fem kan sägas vara ägnad en studie av den maskinella anordningen i tillverkningen av GFF, och kapitel sex å sin sida rör de Figurala dragen som del av en kollektiv yttrandeanordning.


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3 Deleuze och Guattaris begreppsflora har givits svensk språkdäckt i enlighet med den svenska översättningen av Tusen Platåer av Gunnar Holmbäck och Sven-Olov Wallenstein från 2015.
omgivning, den andra att det sker urval och organisering i enlighet med en rytm, och den tredje är variation på det rytmiska temat genom improvisation och omarbetning. Den här modellen använder jag mig av för att lyfta fram den livliga dynamik som kännetecknar GFF, materiellt som Figuralt, i termer av uttrycksfulla konstnärliga rytmer.

I kapitel fem, som är uppsatsens första analyskapitel, studerar jag GFF genom en chaîne opératoire. I tur och ordning undersöker jag guldgubbar och guldbleck, präglingen av GFF, samt utskärningsförfarandet, och hur GFF därefter deponeras omedelbart. I analysen visar jag att både präglingen och utskärningen var behäftade med en uttrycksförmåga för att skapa variation, och att GFF som regel tillverkades för omedelbar deponering gav deras vassa kanter med kvarvarande klippeskägg. Det tunna guldblecket lämpade sig dåligt för att visas upp. GFF har skurits på sätt så skadat motivet och andra exemplar har omfattande sprickor. Inget av detta har repareras utan dessa GFF har lagts ned tillsammans med andra som skurits ut med betydligt större hänsyn till motivets helhet. Den rytmiska ritarriten kan fångas i hur en fast sekvens av prägling, utskärning och deponering, lämnar utrymme för variation i samtliga steg.

I uppsatsens andra analyskapitel, kapitel sex, är det istället de Figurala drag som framträder på GFF från Västra Vång som jag intresserar mig för. I tur och ordning berör jag i detta kapitel ansiktsdrag, ytor och ramarna, linjerna för tu- och tredelning, de olika extremiteterna, och slutligen den miniatyrstorlek som kännetecknar GFF, där jag kan visa på likheter mellan GFF och en större konstnärlig miljö som är djurornamentikens på samtliga av dessa punkter. På grundval av denna undersökning av Figurala drag hos GFF föreslår jag en rhizomatisk serie av sju faser:

1. En GFF har alltid minst ett ansikte.
2. Figuren avgränsas av skurna kanter och/eller en plasticiserad ram.
3. Ett baptiskt plan på nära håll, som täcker och deformerar ytan i sin helhet.
4. Tudelning eller tredelning av Figuren, där uppdelning och sammanfogning uttrycks.
5. Figuren är en Kropp utan Organ, med lemmar som uppträder när så krävs.
6. Ett rytmiskt sammanflätande av linjer.
7. Miniaturisering stegar variationen.

De sju fasetterna fångar alla kombinationer av Figurala drag som är kännetecknande för GFF, men tjänar också till att situera den Figurala sammansättningen av GFF-motiv inom djurornametiken. Med detta avslutades analysen.

Resultaten av de båda undersökningarna sammanfattas i kapitel sju, uppsatsens slutsatskapitel. Genom att återknyta till anordningens andra axel, den mellan de territoriella sidorna och avterritorialiseringspseudorna, kan jag fånga in verkandet hos GFF i spänningen mellan att å ena sidan upprätthålla eller upprätta territoriella sammanhang, och å andra sidan förflytta eller avterritorialisera materiella och Figurala drag. Att GFF, istället för att vara ikonografiska bilder, är artefakter som uppstår i mötet mellan olika flöden erbjuder en väg ut ur cirkelresonemang om vad dessa bilder betyder som vi kan ersätta med en uppmärksamhet på de drag som vi kan se i materialet. Förtjänsten med mitt Figurala grepp om dessa artefakter är att vi inte behöver konstruera något utöver artefakten som vi ser på att de avbildar representativt. Istället kan vi utgå från förekomsten av de Figurala draggen i rhizomatiskt sammankopplade konstnärliga praktiker under den yngre järnåldern. Min undersökning av de materiella dragen hos GFF är likaledes ett sätt att vara uppmärksam på förlopp och förbindelser som flöden eller som rhizom, i olika hastigheter och intensiteter.

Deleuze och Guattari menar att nya territoriella ritarriten uppstår i en återterritorialisering på det mest avterritorialiserade elementet. Nya territoriella rytmer etableras bara i det att vissa element befrias från ett stabilt tillstånd och på så vis kan få spelrum att agera tillsammans med andra element i nya kombinationer. Jag menar att det är guldet som vi kan tillskriva rollen som

8. 1 POPULÄRVETENSKAPLIG SAMMANFATTNING


I tolkningar av guldgubbar betonas vanligen att de är hittade på platser där kult utövats inom samhällets härskarskikt, och att guldgubbarnas bilder föreställer antingen människor eller forn- nordiska gudar som de är kända från medeltida kristna källor. Jag delar inte den uppfattningen, och jag menar att vi arkeologer måste vara försiktigare med att anta att arkeologiska fynd alltid har med människor i samhällets absoluta toppskikt att göra. Den här uppsatsen är istället ägnat åt att hitta nya sätt att närmare sig guldgubbar. I det ärendet försöker jag fånga hur själva guldgubbarna som materiella ting, men också deras motiv, är sammansatta. Om vi hejdar oss från att anta att bilden är menad att avvilda, kan vi få syn på andra konstnärliga sammanhang.

Jag undersöker guldgubbarna på två olika sätt. För det första studerar jag en så kallad chaîne opératoire, det vill säga hur handlingar som att prägla ett guldbleck eller att skära till det kan ordnas till en serie av på varandra följande moment, och att vi på det sättet kan få kunskap om
hur guldgubbarna är gjorda och vad – eller snarare hur – en gör med dem sedan. För det andra riktar jag blicken mot vad jag med hänvisning till Gilles Deleuze och Félix Guattari kallar för Figurala drag, visuella element som guldgubbarnas motiv är sammansatta av, och som vi också kan känna igen i ett större konstnärligt sammanhang, där jag särskilt pekar på likheter mellan guldgubbarna och annan nordeuropeisk bildkonst från den här tiden, som inom arkeologin kallas för djournamentet, eftersom den utmärker sig med sina snirkliga, sammanflätade djurfigurer. Tittar vi nära på guldgubbarna så går det att få syn på samma stildrag som vi i andra fall tolkar som långsmala djur i underliga former.

Som ett resultat framstår guldgubbar som något annat än kultiska avgudbilder eller verktyg för samhällselitens inåtvända eller utåtriktade förmedling - utan istället som ett fenomen som uppkommer i hanterande av ett inflöde av små mängder guld med nordbor som återvände från kontinenten.

Det är små mängder guld, inte några stora förmögenheter, som används till att göra guldgubbar. Den genomsnittliga guldgubben väger 0,1 g. Guldgubbar tillverkades genom att prägla och sedan skära ut bilder ur små tunna guldbleck. Vi kan på goda grunder säga att de inte har tillverkats för att bli uppvisade. De har till exempel regelbundna sprickor som aldrig är lagade. Trots att de är gjorda av tunn, ömtålig guldfolie har kanterna kvar vassa klippskägg, vilket talar för att det var direkt efter tillverkningen som de lades ner i marken.


Att förstå guldgubbar som konst har stor betydelse i den här uppsatsen, och jag tänkte därför avsluta med en liknelse med en helt annan slags konst som ligger oss närmare i tiden: frijazz. En jazzmusiker spelar inte saxofon för att metallen som instrumentet är gjord av blänker så vackert, utan för att det går att spela musik på den, både gamla melodier och sådana som skapas i stunden genom improvisation. Någon gång ibland blir en sådan improvisation inspelad och på så vis sparad för eftervärlden, men i de flesta fall är det bara i musikerns och lyssnarnas minne som improvisationen finns kvar. Guldgubbekonstrünen är ingen jazzmusiker, men båda är konstnärer som använder glänsande metall för att skapa konst med inslag av både upprepning och nyskapande. Att det som skapats går att titta eller lyssna på efteråt har varit mindre viktigt än att få tillfälle att utöva sin konst.
9 REFERENCES

Bibliographic Note: In keeping with Swedish standard, ÄÄÖ are listed as separate letters following after Z, and not as accents. Å and Ö are listed as Á and Ö, respectively.


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Lamm, Jan Peder. 2004. "Figural Gold Foils Found in Sweden: A study based on the discoveries from Helgö". In Bo.Gyllensvärd (ed). Excavations at Helgö XVI. Exotic and sacral finds from...
Helgö. Stockholm.


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### 10. 1 DIGITAL SOURCES


### 10 Catalogue

Each GFF is shown at scale 3:1 and 1:1.
Measurements were taken by the author from photographs and may result in inexact values.

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| Size    | A: Height 6,1 mm Width 4,9 mm  
          | B: Height 13,3 mm Width 6,1 mm |
| Weight  | 0,08 g                  |
| Notes   | 2017. In two parts due to breakage during conservation. |

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