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All Hands on Deck: The Role of Ship Burial Reentry in the Maintenance and Construction of Narrative in the Vendel and Viking Periods

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By

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ABSTRACT

Reentry of ship and boat burials was a widespread practice during the Vendel, Viking, and Medieval periods. Historically this phenomenon has been attributed to looting for economic gain, but that perception has recently been challenged. Using data from ship and boat burials from across Scandinavia, I suggest trends in reentry and the most likely motivation for reentry at each burial. I use GIS maps to display these trends and motivations across different regions and statistically analyze where there are hot spots of different practices. Using Neil Price's (2010) model for mortuary drama in Viking Age burial practices, I explore the use of reentry in the creation and maintenance of narrative and collective memory.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Burial during the Viking and Vendel ages could take a variety of forms. Inhumation and cremation were both practiced across Scandinavia. Among the more lavish burial practices were burials and cremations in ships and boats. Single interments, double and triple interments, and mass graves have all been recorded (Price 2010). It was common practice to inter artifacts with the dead in Viking Age Scandinavia. The grave goods found deposited with burials can help shed light on a variety of Viking Age practices and ideas. Among these are gender, social class, and religion. The study of burial practices can also assist in interpretation of Viking Age ideas surrounding the nature of the dead and the afterlife.

Once established, graves could be revisited for a variety of purposes. The act of reentering graves was widespread during the Viking Age in Scandinavia. It is often referred to as 'robbing' or 'plundering' because material was frequently taken from the burials. This phenomenon could occur almost immediately after a body was interred, or it could occur years or even centuries after interment. It has recently been argued by several scholars that the act of reentering or disturbing graves was not always a simple act of pilfering valuables; it could serve a political, religious, or symbolic purpose as well (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2007, 2015, 2016). Studying grave reentry can be particularly helpful in revealing how the dead were conceived of and treated. By studying the role the dead played in Viking and Vendel age societies it is possible to learn more about the ideologies and frameworks within which the living operated. In this study I

use the term ‘reentry’ to refer to the act of reopening graves for ritual or political purposes, as well as for purposes of looting or plundering.

The present study places the phenomenon of grave reentry and alteration within the framework of Neil Price’s (2010) model of Viking Age “mortuary drama”. Price’s framework incorporates the initial funeral rituals and the period of time during which a grave is left open, but does not yet explicitly include occurrences of reentry. I investigate how the phenomenon of reentry can be considered a continuation of this performance of mortuary drama. This study attempts to extend the idea of mortuary drama to the acts of reentry that may occur even centuries after the initial funerary performance. Using GIS, I analyze reentry on the scale of individual sites, as well as on a regional scale across Scandinavia.

I place particular emphasis on boat and ship burials in this study. Ships and other watercraft have been used in burial contexts across the world and throughout different time periods. In Egypt, for example, fourteen boats have been found associated with a burial at the site of Abydos (Ward 2006). This cemetery of boat graves dates from the First Dynasty (~3300-3100 BCE). In Southeast Asia ships are heavily linked to mortuary practices as well and have been used as or depicted on coffins (Ballard et al. 2003). Ethnographic evidence in Southeast Asia shows that ships could still, at least up to the twentieth century, play a role in the passage between phases in life, including the transition from life to death (Ballard et al. 2003). Egypt, Southeast Asia, and Scandinavia are all easily accessible, or surrounded by water. Travel by boat has thus played a major role in the development of each of these areas in terms of trade, contact with and conquest of other societies, and the spread of knowledge and ideas to and from these locations. The connection between boats and mortuary practice in these areas may be linked to this element of transportation and the importance of travel by water in each of these places.

Howard Williams' (2014) ideas of movement in Viking Age boat graves provide a framework for assessing reentry of boat and ship burials in terms of memory work and identity. Williams (2014) discusses burials in vehicles of transportation (ships, wagons, sleighs, etc.). The use of vehicles creates the impression of being suspended in animation and therefore active indefinitely. Williams (2014) also references the scenes on Gotlandic picture stones with sails unfurled in the wind and people depicted in motion. This act of depicting or suggesting motion and then capturing it permanently, either by burying it or carving it in stone, is intentional and occurs throughout the Viking Age (Williams 2014). This study examines what the act of reentry means for this suspended continual movement and the implications of disturbing it.

I examine nine different sites including Gamla Uppsala, Vendel, and Gulli cemeteries, the Oseberg, Gokstad, Tune, and Ladby ships, the Årby boat, and the Jelling mounds. The possible motivations behind the reentry of ship burials appear to fall into a number of categories. Using GIS mapping, I analyze the reentry of ship burials based on these categories. I examine the possibility of a geographical correlation between trends in the practice of reentry.

Literature Review

Viking Age Scandinavia

Historical Overview. The Viking Age lasted roughly from the late eighth century until the twelfth century. The Vendel period and the Scandinavian Iron Age proceeded the Viking Age. There was much cultural continuity between these time periods. The word "Viking" is not used to describe a group of people in this study, but rather to describe a time period in which the peoples and cultural practices of Scandinavia ventured outward in great numbers and left their mark on much of Europe, parts of Russia and the Middle East, and even North America.

Expansion and exploration are two defining characteristics of the Viking Age. In the late eighth and early ninth centuries Scandinavians began moving beyond the boundaries of

Scandinavia and into neighboring areas en masse. Vikings from Norway established colonies in Iceland, Vikings from Denmark contended with Charlemagne's forces, and Vikings from Sweden began expanding and trading further East across the Baltic region and into the area that is modern day Russia. Danes and Norwegians also landed in Britain, Ireland, and surrounding islands (Logan 2005).

It is important, when considering the people of Viking Age Scandinavia, to remember that they were not one unified group. The Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians were separated regionally from each other and each one of these groups explored and conquered different areas once they set out. They were, by no means, a unified group or kingdom. They competed frequently with each other for land and resources. They were not entirely different cultures, however. They shared a common language, similar art forms and motifs, as well as aspects of religion (Hultgård 2008; Logan 2005). These shared traits allow for appropriate comparison and analogy between the Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians.

Vikings from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway had similar hierarchical structures. They all tended to be patriarchal in nature. Kings held the highest political and social status. Next came *jarls*, or noblemen, freemen, freedmen, and *thralls*, or slaves (Logan 2005). Kings would have presided over large areas and united smaller communities of people. This hierarchy seems relatively consistent throughout the Viking world (Brink 2008b; Logan 2005).

Kingdoms arose in in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway at different times. Denmark was unified under one king earlier than the other two regions. By the mid-tenth century Denmark was under the rule of Harald Bluetooth (Roesdahl 1992). Norwegian unification took a bit longer but major areas were unified under Harald Finehair by the late ninth century (Roesdahl 1992). Sweden was the last to be unified, a process that began in Svealand and continued throughout the

eleventh and twelfth centuries (Roesdahl 1992). The unification of all three areas was anything but smooth. Civil wars and power struggles occurred as people vied for power against one another.

Conversion to Christianity. Scandinavia is considered to have been Christianized during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Conversion to Christianity in Scandinavia took place gradually over a long period of time. Often it involved a syncretic blending of Christian and pagan ideas (Page 1995). Brink (2008: 621) describes conversion in Scandinavia as a "slow cultural change". It was not something that immediately swept in and eradicated all other existing forms of religious practice. It blended with existing practice instead of replacing it outright.

Part of the reason there was so much syncretism had to do with the role of the elite in the spread of Christianity compared to that of the common people. The elite were important figures in establishing and facilitating the spread of Christianity in Scandinavia. Brink (2008a:623) describes it as "trickl[ing] down" from the elite to the common people. Kings and chieftains would often adopt Christianity as a political strategy to legitimize themselves when dealing with other Christian societies (Brink 2008a). From them it would seep into other realms of Scandinavian society and spread downward from kings and chieftains to the people over whom they had power.

Our view of conversion in Scandinavia is an incomplete one because of the few written sources that exist to give us insight (Brink 2008a). What we can tell about conversion is based heavily on written sources and the conversion of politically important people. The privilege of written sources and the emphasis on elite members of society when studying conversion means that we do not have a complete picture of what the shift meant for average Scandinavians at the time.

King Harald Bluetooth was an important figure in spreading Christianity across Scandinavia. Bluetooth was king of Denmark from AD 940 to around AD 985 (Vauchez 2005). This date range is tentative. It is known that at the end of his rule he was deposed by his son Svein Forkbeard (Haywood 2001). Harald Bluetooth officially converted the kingdom of Denmark to Christianity. At the time of his reign, areas of Norway were also under his control so he is credited for spreading Christianity across great swaths of Scandinavia through political conquest (Vauchez 2005). The evidence of his reign is often in the form of monumental constructions. He is associated with a variety of fortresses and the erection of well-known rune stones, such as the one at Jelling (Haywood 2001; Vauchez 2005).

The phenomenon of *translatio* is one of the ways the conversion of Scandinavian peoples can be seen in the archaeological record. *Translatio* involves the transfer of remains from a grave of one religion to that of another (Staeker 2005). In the context of this study, *translatio* would refer to the practice of reentering a Viking or Vendel age grave, removing the remains, and then reinterring them in a Christian manner. The archaeological record is one of the ways this practice can be seen because the burials of people, both removed and reinterred, can potentially be identified.

Viking Age Burial Practice

Types of Burial. Viking burial practices varied widely across regions. Even within the regions of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway themselves there was tremendous variation. Swedish burials usually involved cremation, while Norwegian and Danish burials involved both inhumation and cremation (Price 2010). There are, of course, exceptions to these trends. The site of Birka in Sweden, for example, differs from the regional norm. In Birka, chamber burials and

inhumations have been discovered which was contrary to the more common Swedish practice of cremation (Price 2010: 124).

Different types of cremation were practiced during the Viking Age (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992). Cremation would generally involve a funeral pyre but the path the remains took after cremation varied. Some forms of cremation involved the storage of cremated bones in a ceramic vessel; some involved the scattering of cremated bones in a grave; some involved all the cremated remains (including grave goods) being buried in the same hole; and some involved the scattering of cremated remains across the ground (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992). The cremation of remains would have occurred either directly at the place intended for burial or a short distance away (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992).

Inhumations, like cremations, also varied. Chamber burials were common, as were pit graves, and boat burials (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992). Coffins were used in some burials and not used in others. The use of chamber burials may have been adopted from elsewhere in Europe, perhaps Friesland, Lower Saxony, or Westphalia (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992).

Graves could be marked or designated in a variety of ways. Stones were used in some cases (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992). These stones were often arranged in different shapes. Circles, squares and triangles were all used, as were boat-shaped outlines (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992). Mounds and large standing stones could also be used to mark graves (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992). On the island of Gotland large standing-stones were used to designate graves (Price 2010). These stones were often intricately carved and could involve depictions of life and mythology or acts performed by the person buried there.

The positions of bodies within graves varied frequently as well. Some bodies were placed supine, some were folded up with bent limbs, and some appear to have been placed sitting in

chairs (Price 2010). Sometimes multiple people were buried together and sometimes graves were placed atop other, older burials (Price 2010). The connection these people had with one another is not always clear. In ship burials with multiple people interred the location and position can be different for each body (Price 2010). In a burial containing three people, for example, it is possible that one was placed lying supine with hands folded on their chest, another was placed on their side, and a third was placed seated in a chair, all at different locations within the boat.

Contents of the Graves. Despite the great variety in burial practices during the Viking Age, many types of grave goods appear with some regularity (Price 2010). Animals are often found with bodies of humans (Price 2010). Horse heads and bodies, and bodies of dogs, birds, cats, and other animals. have been found buried alongside humans. In graves containing multiple people, grave goods can be spatially associated with individuals (Stylegar 2007 discussed in Price 2010). This may indicate personal value or use of the goods.

Artifacts are often used to determine the gender of a body in Viking and Vendel age burials. Men have been found associated with axes, swords, knives, shields, spears, arrows, etc. (Jesch 1991; Price 2010). Women have also been found associated with knives and with shields nearby. Women may have weaving swords or staffs buried alongside them (Price 2010). Jewelry can be found in graves as well. Rings, brooches, beads, arm rings, etc. can be found in graves and on bodies (Price 2010). These objects are often used to assist in determining the gender of remains, particularly when osteological examination to determine sex is impossible.

Klevnäs (2016) has discussed the significance of certain types of artifacts found within graves in the context of reentry. Klevnäs has suggested that certain types of personal artifacts surrounding the body are what are more often taken when a grave is reentered, if artifacts are taken at all. The “personal belongings” are considered the artifacts on and around the body that

have implications about the identity and role of the person interred (Klevnäs 2016:461). For males, this type of artifact usually included weaponry and the trappings of combat; for females personal belongings usually included jewelry. Klevnäs notes that metal artifacts are heavily represented in this category of belongings.

Ship Burials. In this study I have chosen to focus particularly on ship burials. The reason for this selection is because ship burials appear to have been reentered more frequently than other types of interments (Klevnäs 2016). Ship burials occur as both single interments and in clusters considered cemeteries (Halstad-McGuire 2010; Holck 2006; Price 2010; Williams 2014; Klevnäs 2007, 2015, 2016). They occur at different sites and with great variety across Scandinavia and throughout time. Ship burials are not only seen in the Viking Age, but also in the Scandinavian Iron age and the Vendel period (Price 2008; Klevnäs 2015).

Ship burial could take a few different forms. It could involve cremation or inhumation (Gräslund and Müller-Wille 1992; Price 2010). The actual boat could vary in size and function. Small boats that hold only one person were used, as were large ships used on the open ocean (Price 2010). Graves with smaller vessels are referred to as boat burials. Graves sometimes took the form of boats even if no actual boat is involved (Price 2010). Stone settings in the shape of boats have been found across Scandinavia. In these graves no actual ships have been found, but the allusion to ships is clear. Cremations were sometimes deposited inside these stone settings. There is also evidence of ship timbers being added to a grave like grave goods, and aspects of boats, like benches, appearing in graves shaped like boats (Price 2010). The ships or boats used in burial were often dragged across land and then deposited in a trench constructed to hold the vessel. In some cases mounds were raised over the ship (Price 2008).

Reentry in a Wider Context. Reentry is a relatively frequent feature of Viking and Vendel age burials (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2007, 2015, 2016). It occurs most frequently in ship and chamber burials, but it has also been recorded in other types of burials as well (Klevnäs 2016). Reentry has been recorded in other parts of the world as well. In other parts of the world it is often recorded simply as looting or disturbance, as it is in a Viking Age context.

Reentry has also been documented in certain Anglo-Saxon burials. At the Winnall II site in England certain acts of manipulation of remains have been recorded in association with the reopening of Anglo Saxon burials (Devlin 2007). Amputations, beheadings, and unusual body positions have been noted in some of the graves at Winnall II. These practices are not characteristic of many Anglo-Saxon burials, but their occurrence in at least a few burials is noteworthy.

Reentry has also been documented in places outside of Europe. The reopening of graves in the context of the Moche civilization has been noted by Jean-François Millaire (2004). The Moche civilization existed in parts of what is now modern day Peru from 100-800 AD. Millaire (2004) claims that the reopening of Moche graves was done in association with the performance of certain rituals. These rituals often involved the use of previously interred human remains.

These acts of reentry parallel each other in certain ways. In some instances it is the simple act of recording them as looting or minimally mentioning them in excavation reports. In other ways they draw attention to ritual practices after burial and the significance of studying mortuary practice beyond the initial funeral. Although the specific instances of reentry may not have anything to do with each other across civilizations, the fact that the phenomenon of reentry occurs widely across the world has serious implications for the study of mortuary practices worldwide.

Death in Medieval Literature

There are various examples of reburial and the reanimation of corpses from medieval literature. These narratives may provide clues for how to interpret the reentry of Viking Age graves (Brøgger 1945, discussed in Klevnäs 2016). These sources are valuable to the study of Viking Age burial because they shed light on how the living may have interacted with the dead and ideas about how the dead occupied the landscape. However, many of these sources are from the medieval period, and not the Viking Age. They are not necessarily contemporary with the acts of reentry discussed in this study. They do discuss Viking age burial practice and may stem from oral tradition connecting back to that period and so can be used, albeit cautiously, to supplement our understanding of the material evidence of the burials themselves.

References to the reanimated or "living corpse" (Caciola 1996: 15) and of the re-killing of the dead during the Viking Age occur in a number of different sources. Landnámabók, Saxo Gramaticus' work 'Gesta Danorum', various Eddic poems, and a number of sagas, including the those of Hervarar, Harðar, Barðar, Reykdæla, Grettis, and Hromund Gripsson, all include instances of either a living or reanimated corpse or the re-killing of a corpse (Klevnäs 2016; Caciola 1996). These instances often also include a beheading and the repossession of important grave goods like swords.

Removal of the skulls from graves or the rearrangement of the corpse within a grave occurred in some of the sites discussed in this study. The literary examples of beheading or rearrangement of the body of the corpse are particularly interesting for this reason. Brøgger (1945, discussed in Klevnäs 2016) uses the term *reimleik* to describe the phenomenon of re-killing the dead that occurs in the sagas. If the literature is providing an accurate representation of certain practices during the Viking Age, then it could account for some of the instances of

reentry seen in the archaeological record and help provide insight into the motivation behind certain instances of reentry.

Beheading of a corpse occurs in many of the sources listed above. One of the most relevant sagas in this case is the saga of Grettis. In the Grettis Saga, the protagonist beheads two reanimated corpses known as "*draug[a]r*" (Klevnäs 2016: 464). Grettis, the protagonist, takes grave goods from one of the draugr's burials after beheading it (Klevnäs 2016; Caciola 1996). Following the beheading, Grettis places the head of the other draugr between its legs and reburies it (Caciola 1996). In this saga not only does the re-killing of a corpse take place, but it is by beheading and the corpse is rearranged and then reburied. There is also an instance in which the protagonist takes grave goods from the grave of the draugr he just killed.

These sources are not eyewitness accounts of Viking Age practice. They are literary works that have been created for narrative purposes. They are also not necessarily contemporary with the acts of reentry seen at some of the sites discussed in this study. They cannot be used to interpret Viking Age burial practice on their own. They can, however, supplement the archaeological record. The fact that reburial in a non-looting context is even mentioned means that we cannot simply write off instances of reentry as simple grave robbing or looting. This phenomenon is woven into the literary fabric of the medieval period and into the material record of the Viking and Vendel periods before that.

CHAPTER 2
THEORY

In this study the application of theory is what helps define acts of reentry as something more than an arbitrary or random occurrence. In Neil Price's (2010) model of mortuary drama the acts that accompany a burial, such as the deposition of artifacts, are purposeful and performative. These performances are used by the living to construct and maintain narratives and mythology. The living use these narratives and performances as a tool to construct collective memory within a society. This collective memory can be of the person being interred, of their family history, or of national or regional history. I argue that reentry uses the construction of collective memory in a similar way to funeral performance, as outlined by Neil Price. Acts of reentry are purposeful, public acts performed by the living that either alter or uphold aspects of collective memory within a society. Just as acts of funeral performance function as a tool of the living to construct and alter narrative, so do acts of reentry. It is the construction of collective memory that links the two practices.

Neil Price's Model for Mortuary Drama

The world that the people of Viking Age Scandinavia inhabited was one that incorporated the use and construction of narrative and story-telling. Neil Price (2010) has argued that this is visible in the archaeological record in the context of burial. The funerary acts carried out, according to Price (2010:137) "did not consist simply of 'rituals'… they in fact specifically represented the performance of stories". Price (2010:123) also argues that Viking funeral performances, or "mortuary drama[s]", may play a role in the construction and development of Norse mythology itself. I believe the model outlined by Price can be extended to include acts of

reentry, even if the act occurs long after the interment of the individual. Acts of reentry can function as pieces of performance and narrative construction as well.

Each burial from the Viking Age was somehow unique; no two were exactly the same (Price 2010). The differences could include the number of people interred, the use and shape of coffins, the type of grave goods interred, the position of the body, whether or not a mound was raised over the burial, how a grave was marked after being covered up, and a great number of other characteristics. Price (2010:126) points out that the differences could be as seemingly arbitrary as placing a vessel on one side of the head in one cemetery and on the other side in another cemetery. These differences did not just occur from site to site, they occurred on a national level; cremations are more common in Sweden than inhumations for example, whereas in Denmark and Norway there is a combination of the two practices. They also occurred at a more localized level; even within small communities there could be a great variety in burial practice from village to village and grave to grave.

The level of variety does not mean that there were no common trends or themes to be found across Viking Age burial practice. In fact, one of Price's main lines of evidence for the association between mythology and burial is common motifs found in burials across Scandinavia. Through the use of motifs a burial can 'reference' another burial or monument (Price 2010:142). In this way, different burials or cemeteries are linked to one another in what appear to be purposeful groupings.

One example of this is in the images on Gotlandic picture stones, features that were almost unique in Viking Age Scandinavia. They occurred almost exclusively on the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea and have been found associated in some contexts with burials (Price 2010). The stones are covered in carvings of various scenes; often the scenes depict a ship. The stones have

been found raised near burials, sometimes inhumations, and sometimes buried ashes from cremations. Occasionally the later stones have runic script on them but often they only show images.

The ship motif depicted on the stones is of particular interest to Price. No ship burials have ever been found on Gotland despite, as Price notes, the fact that maritime activity had to have been a major part of life on the island during the Viking Age. Price has asserted that perhaps the ships portrayed on the stones are similar or synonymous in meaning to ships in other burial contexts on the mainland. Ships, as noted in the previous chapter, can occur in burials themselves, as can allusions to ships like rivets, planks, and stone settings in the shape of ships. The appearance of or allusion to ships does not occur in every burial across Viking Age Scandinavia, but occurs frequently enough to be considered a trend. If one considers the wider range of vehicles of transportation, such as wagons, sleighs, and horses, found associated with burials, then the trend becomes even more common.

The meanings of the images on the picture stones are also of particular interest to Price in terms of linking funerals and burial practice to mythology. Scholars have identified images on the stones that likely correlate to events from known Norse mythology. Anders Andrén (1993, summarized in Price 2010) identified a trend in the continuity of images from one picture stone to the next in a property boundary. The images on the lower panel of one stone are repeated on the top of the next stone. Andrén was able to identify that the story of Sigurđr was being shown on the stones from one panel to the next. Price points this out specifically because it directly connects stories and monuments associated with burial. The placement of the stones around the border of a property also suggests to Price the connection to a family lineage and land ownership. The use of monuments to the dead to demarcate a border indicates that the burials

themselves were what legitimized the claim to the land. The stones act as a method of "staking title through reference to ancestral presence" (Price 2010:141). Price suggests that a new 'chapter' may have been added for each successive generation.

Price notes a few other motifs associated with groups of burials. Severed horse heads have been found in four burials in the Gausel cemetery in Norway and clay animal paws have been found buried with people of the Åland Islands and along trade routes associated with Ålanders. These two examples may be an example of kinship ties, but DNA analysis has not been done on the bodies associated with them. Price uses them as examples because they very clearly do exemplify links between different graves. Not all graves in the Gausel cemetery in Norway contained severed horse heads, but four did and that indicates that the graves were potentially linked in some way. The grave goods were not simply deposited without meaning attributed to them. The difference, Price explains, between these examples and the Gotlandic picture stones is that the motifs appear as artifacts and not as images.

These are not the only examples of shared traits and motifs among burials. There are many examples of this across Viking Age Scandinavia. There is clear evidence for connection to mythology in some cases, as in the picture stones, but in many cases the meaning behind the deposition of artifacts is a mystery. We do not have a complete understanding or knowledge of Norse mythology so the task of recognizing it in the archaeological record can be quite difficult in some cases (Price 2010:145-146). Just because we cannot identify the particular mythology associated with an artifact, however, does not mean that the connection is not there.

These motifs and continuities between burials suggest to Price that there is some common practice or understanding occurring on some level. The commonalities are not all the same between different burials and cemeteries but the fact that groupings of graves with common traits

occur so widely across Scandinavia is significant in the interpretation of these graves. Price suggests that the groupings that occur may be in connection with "discrete social groups" (2010: 147). He cites families and clans as examples but there are other associations like ethnicity, occupation, and membership in particular exclusive groups that I would argue could also be represented. Price suggests that the common features are evidence of narrative. They have meaning and relate to more than just the individual interred; they can be demonstrations of power, mark physical boundaries, or link to other graves from the same kinship or ancestral group, to name a few examples.

The alternative to considering these artifacts as part of a "materialized narrative" is to think of them as simply being interred because "these things seemed like good ideas at the time" (Price 2010: 147). The continuation of these practices by subsequent generations would have to have been simply because it was good enough in the past so why not continue it? Price does admit that his model may not be the correct explanation, but that it is a one that can be supported by multiple lines of evidence. His model can be used to explain variety and trends among burials and, I would argue, trends in the reentry of burial as well. Price rejects the notion that artifacts were simply interred arbitrarily. He posits that if the depositions were not arbitrary, then they have meaning and that the differences in deposition of artifacts and use of motif suggests something about the meaning of individual burials and other burials that draw upon the same motifs.

Norse myths function differently to us than they did to the people of Viking Age Scandinavia. Price (2010:148) calls them "dead, static texts". During the Viking Age and previous time periods when these myths and stories were developing they were anything but static. They were constantly undergoing redaction. They were living works that changed all the

time depending on who told them, what region they came from, when in time they were told, etc. All of the details that were added, taken away, exaggerated, or changed had to originate somewhere. Someone actively had a hand in the construction of the details that comprised these narratives.

Price is somewhat vague in his definition of mythology. This, I believe is purposeful, and seems to stem from the differences in our understanding of Norse myth and the comprehension of those who had an active hand in their creation. Price's concept of mythology seems to incorporate a range of narrative types and genres. The stories of supernatural beings and heroic figures are certainly included, but the histories of individuals and families are also included, as are histories associated with things like national or regional identity.

Price is explicit that he does not believe that each instance of funeral performance was an acted out version of myth. He also specifies that the "mythological element" (Price 2010:149) may not have even been strictly present at all in some cases. His model concerns the moments of inspiration that spawned these elements and details of mythology. The actions performed as part of funerals would potentially have combined "the dead, their family and relatives, the community, the folkloric history of all these people, and also elements taken from a wider sphere of heroic legend and the doings of supernatural beings" (Price 2010:149-150). The elements Price lists are all combined together through the material elements involved and deposited.

Memory Theory

Memory is something that has been studied by psychologists since the nineteenth century (Devlin 2007). The application of different theories of memory can help archaeologists explain the actions reflected in the archaeological record because they can provide a framework within which the motivation for certain acts can be assessed. Understandings of and theories on memory

have been discussed by a number of scholars. Some of these theories are particularly applicable to the present study.

Connerton (1989, discussed in Devlin 2007) discusses the relationship between memory and physical performance, specifically of commemorative ceremonies. Performance is something that can be verbally described to another person by one who has seen it. The repetition of a ceremony does not inherently require the memory of previous ceremonies. The act of repeating a ceremony does, however, according to Connerton, inherently refer to the earlier ceremonies being repeated. In her summary of Connerton's work, Devlin (2007) claims that the actual process of carrying out a ceremony can be reiterated to another person but it is much more complicated and difficult to convey to the other person what the meaning of the ceremony was.

This theory of memory is relevant to the present study because of the performance aspect discussed. The performance of mortuary drama may be recognizable in the archaeological record, but the meaning behind the performance can be difficult to identify. This is why the material record is of particular importance. The artifacts and images associated with the mortuary practices are what are imbued with meaning. The rituals performed incorporated the use and deposition of these artifacts. These artifacts, when used in multiple graves and cemeteries, seem to reference each other. The use of them in multiple places suggests the replication of a specific ceremony. If kinship, perhaps, is why a certain artifact is deposited in several burials it does not mean that the ceremony was seen or experienced by the people involved in later ceremonies. It does suggest that the meaning of the object is understood as a reference to the earlier ceremony and as the connecting element between the burials.

Halbwachs' (1992, discussed in Devlin 2007) ideas concerning collective memory are also relevant to this study. For Halbwachs collective memories are references to the past that provide

a link within a group and allow for a shared notion of identity. Collective memory, in this sense, is heavily involved in the use of mortuary drama as a tool for constructing narrative. The Gotlandic picture stones Price discussed were placed around the border of a plot of land. The use of burials to demarcate land boundaries suggests that the claim to that land is enhanced by, or legitimized through, the presence of those bodies; they act to mark a group or family's territory. If the presence of an ancestor's remains were considered a way to stake a claim to land or resources then it is an example of using the past to construct an identity, of a particular family or kinship group perhaps.

A third theory regarding memory is one constructed by Van Dyke and Alcock (2003, discussed in Devlin 2007). Van Dyke and Alcock define social memory (collective and social memory in this case are being used interchangeably) as "the construction of a collective notion (not an individual belief) about the way things were in the past" (quoted in Devlin 2007: 9). Van Dyke and Alcock view this as an active process. The construction of social memory is something that was continuously going on. The use of mortuary drama is a way in which collective memory could be constructed. Price's ideas about narrative and mythology are just the verbal manifestation of collective memory and attempts to influence it. As Price notes, mythology was not static: it was under construction constantly. As it was changing, so was the collective memory of certain groups involved.

Memory and Movement

Howard Williams (2014) has argued that the inclusion of vehicles of transportation in burials and on picture stones is a way of keeping the people in graves suspended in motion indefinitely. He argues that "boat inhumation was a strategic choice to exhibit and constitute a distinctive identity for the dead". He calls vessel inhumations "technologies of remembrance"

(2014:397) and calls the burials within vessels “ongoing place[s] for memory work” because of the presence the burials had in the landscape even after they were covered.

The continued visual presence of the graves in the landscape and the allusion to movement suggests to Williams (2014:400)that the dead were viewed as animated and “remembered sensing presences” within the communities around them. The perpetual motion that the dead were stuck in was a reference to their journey to the afterlife and potentially back into the realm occupied by the living. Vessel burial was a way for elites to construct identity and narrative. Williams also prescribed to Price’s (2010) model of mortuary drama. To Williams it is not the recurring trends or motifs that are the most important factor in the construction of narrative, however. Williams emphasizes the presence of burials in the landscape and the suspended motion conveyed through vehicles of transportation.

Williams’ ideas about motion in ship burials is important to the interpretation of certain acts of reentry analyzed in this study. In certain cases there is significant destruction of the vessel in which a person is interred. When considering the burials as being in a constant state of motion because of the vessel, it stands to reason that when the vessel is destroyed the motion is ceased. This indicates the delegitimization of power or stripping of agency from the person or family associated with the destroyed burial. The collective memory of the person interred would be altered by the reentry; the person interred would no longer be in motion and therefore no longer occupy the liminal space between the afterlife and the world of the living. They would be stripped of their influence. The destruction of the vessel in a burial would then indicate reentry for political gain.

Model

Price (2010:151) uses the phrase "stories of memory" when discussing these narratives. He describes them as "tales of individuals, of ancestry and family, and the intimate bond to the land" (Price 2010:151). The idea of them as stories of memory is the link, I would argue, that allows Price's model for understanding burial practices to be applied to understanding acts of reentry as well. Furthermore, I contend that memory is used as a tool in both cases by the living to construct or embellish narrative in a specific way.

The dead that are interred along with these funeral practices move from the realm of the living into "a world of ancestral stories" (Price 2010:123). Once they are in this realm I would argue that they begin to be used for the purposes of the living in the construction of narrative. They become the things that are remembered about them and the things that are passed on about them in stories by the living. They are no longer themselves as individuals because they do not possess individual agency. The only records of them are the narratives constructed and the evidence of their burial. They are members of a specific family or lineage, they are the feats of combat or leadership that are told in stories, they are what ties a group to a specific piece of land, they are a scapegoat during times of upheaval, they are what the living choose to identify and construct them as.

Acts of reentry function as creations of narrative and manipulation of "stories of memory" (Price 2010: 151) just as mortuary drama does. There are motifs and trends among graves that have been reentered just as there are motifs and trends in the deposition of grave goods. If the repetition of acts and artifacts associated with funerary drama are considered to be part of the construction and maintenance of narrative and collective memory, then it stands to reason that

the trends and motifs associated with acts of reentry should also be considered as part of the processes of construction and maintenance of narrative and collective memory.

In order to systematically identify and analyze trends in reentry I used two previously existing systems. The first was created by Klevnäs (2016:460). Klevnäs examines certain recurring patterns she identifies in the reentry of graves: the removal of significant artefacts from on or around the body, either the removal or deliberate destruction of human remains, and deliberate damage to other parts of the grave or its contents. The second system was created by Kümmel (2009, discussed in Bill and Daly 2012). Kümmel's system was designed to explore and evaluate the social context of the grave manipulation or reentry. Kümmel's system includes three parts as well: the distance in time and ethnic affiliation of the burial and the reentry, the apparent attitude toward the person interred (friendly, indifferent, or hostile), and whether or not the reentry was legitimate or illegitimate. Based on the answers to these inquiries, Kümmel suggests three motivations for reentry: an extension of the funerary rite, legal or illegal treasure hunting, or destruction for political reasons.

I chose to use a combination of the two systems in this study. The hybrid system I used has the following components:

1. Removal of personal or significant artifacts from around or on the body.
2. Distance in time from burial. I used data on the state of the body at the time of reentry and classified the states into three groups: fully disarticulated, partially disarticulated, or minimal disarticulation.
3. Destruction or removal of human remains.
4. Attitude toward burial. This includes the human remains, the grave, and artifacts.

5. Legitimacy of reentry. . I have chosen to define legitimacy as allowed or sanctioned by the local community.

I feel that Klevnäs did not fully account for the attitude toward the body in her system so I adopt Kümmel's classification system. I use Kümmel's classification system of friendly, indifferent, and hostile to classify attitudes. In order to determine attitude I use data on the level of destruction. If there was evidence for destruction of human remains or of the grave itself then the attitude would be classified as hostile, for example. Williams'(2014) theory of movement in vessel burials comes into play when analyzing the attitude toward a burial. If the vessel has been destroyed or purposefully damaged then it effectively ends the movement of the person interred. This is suggestive of political motivation for reentry because it acts as a way to strip power from the person interred.

I chose not to include the element of ethnic affiliation in Kümmel's system because, as Bill and Daly (2012:818) state "there are no historical or archaeological sources pointing towards the presence of any other powerful, ethnic groups than the Norse in the region at this time". In terms of Kümmel's suggested motivations I believe that it is important to include the attempt to re-kill the person interred. In Chapter 1 I discuss the extensive literary evidence for the re-killing of the dead. None of Kümmel's suggested motivations seems to include this type of motivation. I have also chosen to include the act of *translatio* for religious reasons as a motivation for reentry.

It would be foolish to ignore trends within acts of reentry or to write them off as simple acts of plundering. There is clear evidence that many acts of reentry were not random or arbitrary and that they often followed the same pattern from grave to grave or cemetery to cemetery. Price (2010: 151) describes rituals associated with death and burial as being "about power and the use of power they are spectacles with a message and a purpose". As with any type of performance

they are done for an audience. There are people performing and people taking in the performance. I would argue that acts of reentry are also performances and that they are conducted with an audience in mind. The audience of reentry is most likely a different one than the audience of the original burial because of the amount of time that has passed.

The model Price has constructed for the analysis of mortuary drama is one that can easily be applied to acts of reentry because the phenomenon Price calls mortuary drama and the acts of reentry both use and manipulate the dead and narratives surrounding them for specific purposes. These purposes can be to support claims to land, legitimization of a claim to a certain resource, tying an individual to a particular family, the legitimization of a political leader or religion, etc. The reason for reentry, just as Price notes the reason for deposition of certain artifacts, may not ever be perfectly clear. The fact that the living were using reentry of graves and memory of the dead as a way to structure narrative and convey a message to an audience is clear.

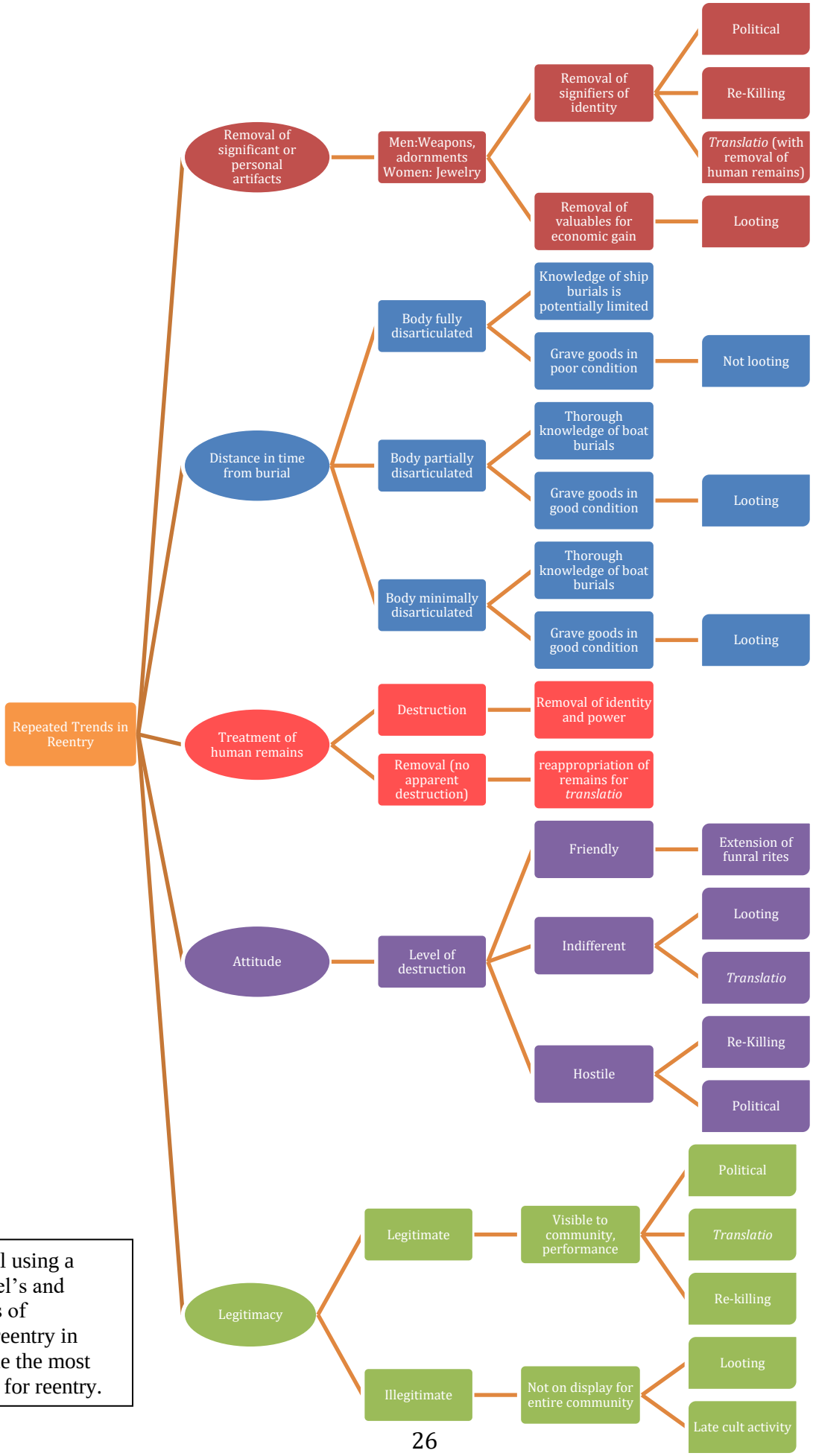

Figure 3.1 Model using a hybrid of Kümmel's and Klevnäs' systems of classification of reentry in order to determine the most likely motivation for reentry.

CHAPTER 3
METHODS

The methodology I used to conduct this study consisted of a combination of review and analysis of the work of other scholars and the construction of maps using ArcGIS software. The sources I consulted employed a variety of methods including excavation, analysis and application of theory, and reliance on stratigraphic and epigraphic evidence. I used a variety of forms of written work. This literature included articles from academic journals, edited volumes and manuscripts, the proceedings from conferences, and books on archaeological theory. I also used books written by scholars of Scandinavian archaeology and art history.

There is a fair amount of literature written about Viking era Scandinavia and the archaeology of ship burials. Some of this literature is written in other languages including Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Icelandic. All of the sources I relied on were written in English. Some of the sources I used provided descriptions or summaries of the work of other scholars published in other languages. The Gulli site, for example, is written about almost exclusively in Norwegian so I had to rely upon the summaries of various scholars to compile information about the site. Information on reentry of the Årby boat was also entirely in German except for summaries in a few articles. This language barrier meant that most of the original site reports were unavailable to me. I had to rely on the subsequent discussion of the sites by other scholars who wrote in English.

Some of the sites I focused on were excavated in the 1800s and early 1900s. Many of the sources I consulted were attempts by scholars to revisit these sites and excavation reports with fresh theory and technology. These types of sources were particularly valuable because of the emphasis they sometimes placed on reentry. One of the problems with older site documents and sources was the lack of acknowledgement or description of reentry. In most cases it was noted

that there was intrusion into a grave, but not much description was given beyond that. It was seen as a hindrance to analysis of the site as opposed to a source of valuable information. Recently scholars in the field have begun to note the ways in which reentry can be used to study the people of the Viking and medieval periods. This is often discussed at length in sources that revisit sites or old reports, which is why this type of source was so valuable. The treatment of the phenomenon employed by the present study is a contribution to the field because it could raise important questions for further research about the relationship between geography and type of reentry.

I also used GIS to construct and analyze maps for this study. I used the ArcGIS 10.3 software for desktop. ArcGIS is a product of ESRI. ESRI also provided the basemaps I used. I had an advanced license so I was able to conduct specific kinds of spatial analysis that I would have been unable to conduct otherwise. I used hot spot analysis to identify where certain patterns associated with reentry were most prevalent. This type of analysis allowed me to identify whether there was a correlation between geographic location and the occurrence of certain trends in reentry. I had originally hoped to use cluster analysis but I did not have enough samples for that type of analysis. That is something that could be possible in the future with the discovery of more sites and translation or revisiting of more sources. The ideal sample size for hot spot analysis is 30 and I only used data from 17 burials. More reliable results would be possible with more data points. In order to get the coordinates for each site, I used Google Maps to get X,Y coordinate data. I then used an online converter to change the points to a degrees, minutes, seconds format to upload into GIS. The global reference system I used in GIS was WGS84, which is the standard for the US Department of Defense.

There is some variety in where the data I used comes from. I chose to focus on sites within Scandinavia and all of the data I used comes from Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The sites I examined were from the Viking and Vendel periods in Scandinavia. I included nine different sites in the study. The Danish sites include Ladby and Jelling. The Swedish sites include Vendel, Gamla Uppsala, and Årby. The Norwegian sites include Oseberg, Gokstad, Gulli, and Tune. Three of the sites I included were cemeteries and included multiple burials. The Vendel, Gamla Uppsala, and Gulli sites were all cemeteries, all the other sites were single interment ship or boat burials. Both ships and boats were used in the burials in this study. The Jelling site is the only site marked with a ship-shaped stone setting, all the other sites include actual boats or ships.

I was able to find detailed information on specific burials from Vendel and Gamla Uppsala. At Gamla Uppsala I included three burials and at Vendel I included seven burials. At each site I only included the burials that showed signs of reentry. Each burial was a different data point on the GIS maps. I chose to classify each burial as a specific data point because each is a specific occurrence of reentry. At Gamla Uppsala each burial included may even be related to a separate occurrence of reentry at the site (Klevnäs 2007). I would have liked to do the same with individual burials at Gulli, as it is also a cemetery, but specific information on burials at Gulli was not available in English. The inclusion of the individual burials at Vendel and Gamla Uppsala meant that I had seventeen data points.

I did not specifically examine sex or gender in this study, but I believe it is important to mention the methods used by scholars I cite to determine these traits. Sex is biological, whereas gender is a construct of culture. Sex is determined through osteological examination of human remains. Gender is often determined by examination of the grave goods associated with the human remains. In Viking and Vendel age graves there is a relatively consistent set of artifacts

associated with the male gender and the female gender respectively (Jesch 1991; Price 2010). Men have been found associated with axes, swords, knives, shields, spears, arrows, etc. (Jesch 1991; Price 2010). Women have also been found associated with knives and with shields nearby (Jesch 1991; Price 2010). Women may have weaving swords or staffs buried alongside them (Jesch 1991; Price 2010). Jewelry can be found in graves as well. Rings, brooches, beads, arm rings, etc. can be found in graves and on bodies (Jesch 1991; Price 2010). Table 3.1 provides a detailed list of artifacts used to assign gender to bodies.

Male Artifacts	Female Artifacts	Present in Both Male and Female Graves
• Weapons (swords, spears, axes, arrows) • Spurs • Horse riding equipment (stirrups and bits) • Blacksmith's tools (shears, hammers, tongs, files) • Penannular brooches	• Oval brooches • Disc brooches • Trefoil buckles • Arm rings • Necklaces • Caskets • Spindle whorls • Weaving swords • Staffs	• Buckles • Combs • Clay pots • Wooden vessels • Knives • Whetstones • Coins • Beads • Shields

Table 3.1. Artifacts Used to Identify Gender. (Table compiled using data from Jesch 1991 and Price 2010)

I feel strongly that this is important to note in the methods section of this study because much of the data discussed in the next chapter relates to the removal of human remains and personal artifacts. Without skeletal remains it is impossible to determine sex and without grave goods it may be impossible to determine gender. In some of the cases discussed in the following chapter the entire grave has been stripped of human remains or artifacts. In cases where significant amounts of artifacts or remains have been removed our perception of both sex and gender can be skewed. In many cases the person interred is referred to as either "male" or "female" in the literature but it is often unclear whether this is a conclusion of sex drawn based on osteological examination or one of gender drawn based on grave goods. All the graves discussed in this study belong to people determined to be either of the male sex or gender except for the Oseberg ship. The remains in the Oseberg have been both sexed and gendered and determined to be female. In some of the graves it is unclear what the sex or gender of the person interred was. These have either been assigned male, despite missing artifacts and remains, or not assigned any sex or gender. See Table 3.2 provides a comprehensive list of whether bodies were sexed or gendered at each site.

Site	Sexed	Gendered	Unknown
Oseberg	X	X	
Gokstad	X	X	
Arby			X
Jelling	X	X	
Ladby		X	
Gulli			X
Vendel II		X	
Vendel III		X	
Vendel IV		X	
Vendel VI		X	
Vendel VII		X	
Vendel X		X	
Vendel XI		X	
GU 1		X	
GU 2			X
GU 3			
Tune			X
TOTAL	3	12	4

Table 3.2. Sexing and Gendering Status of Each Burial.

CHAPTER 4
DATA

The present study aims to identify any correlation between geographic region and reentry trends. For this reason, this chapter is organized by region. First are the Swedish burial sites, then the Danish, and finally the Norwegian. The is a variety of types of sites in each location including single interment boat and ship burials, multiple interment ship burials, and cemeteries. There is a range in social status of each interment as well. Monumental ship burials of supposed Kings and Queens are discussed, as well as more modest boat cemeteries catering to the local population. Background is provided on each site and then data concerning the artifacts, human remains, and burial itself is presented.

The Gamla Uppsala Cemetery

The site of Gamla Uppsala is in the Mälar Valley region of Sweden. It is a cemetery with four boat graves on site, three of which show signs of disturbance and reentry (Klevnäs 2007). The four graves can be found in the garden of the nearby vicarage. The burial ground was first excavated in the 1970s using modern excavation techniques. This is critical because many of the sites that were excavated in the 19th and early 20th centuries address and record reentry ambiguously or ignore it outright. Gamla Uppsala is a site with ample evidence of reentry recorded and examined. Alison Klevnäs (2007) has revisited prior data from the site, including Nordahl's (2001) work, and synthesized and summarized much of the data. Klevnäs (2007) has written a thorough discussion of the site with regard to the issue of reentry. It is from this synthesis by Klevnäs that the data for this site is gathered

In order to understand the context of the boat grave cemetery in Gamla Uppsala, one must understand the larger site of. There is evidence of settlement and burial at Gamla Uppsala

beginning early in the first millennium AD (Klevnäs 2007). The site is well known for the burial mounds from the first millennium and its function as a ritual site. The boat grave cemetery consists of four inhumation boat graves, a few cremation graves, and a horse burial (Klevnäs 2007). The inhumation boat graves are the ones I focus on in this section. Only one of the graves (Grave 36) appears undisturbed; the other three inhumations all show signs of reentry (Klevnäs 2007).

Grave 1

Skeletal Remains. This grave has been dated to around AD 900 and is oriented east-west. The person interred has been determined to be male (Klevnäs 2007). It is unclear in Klevnäs' article whether this determination was one of sex or of gender, the remains are simply described as male (see Table 4.1 for a comprehensive list of the sex and gender of each inhumation). The remains interred in Grave 1 show very distinct signs of being moved after burial. The upper body of the man was flipped in such a way that his right arm was underneath him and the other was out to the side. Five bear claws were found in the grave, which indicates he may have been laying on a bear skin. Klevnäs suggests the bear skin may have been used by the robbers who reentered the grave to lift the upper body of the man and roll it over. The body was clearly moved while it was still relatively intact because the entire upper body was moved at the same time. According to Klevnäs this indicates that the reentry most likely occurred within the a few days or weeks following the death of the individual.

*Grave Goods***.** The body was not the only thing moved out of position by the robbers[1]. There were very few grave goods left in their original places.

[1] I have chosen to use the term "robbers" to refer to those who reenter graves in this study. This term, or the term "looters", is what is often used in the literature. "Robbers" is not an ideal term as it has connotations of illegality or economic gain. However, the term fits the phenomenon of grave reentry better than "looting". The graves discussed in this study do show signs of having been

Site	Male	Female	Unknown
Oseberg		X	
Gokstad	X		
Arby			X
Jelling	X		
Ladby	X		
Gulli			X
Vendel II	X		
Vendel III	X		
Vendel IV	X		
Vendel VI	X		
Vendel VII	X		
Vendel X	X		
Vendel XI	X		
GU 1	X		
GU 2			X
GU 3			X
Tune			X
TOTAL	11	1	5

Table 4.1. Determined Sex or Gender of Each Body.

robbed of human remains and personal artifacts so technically the term is adequate. Robbing in this study simply indicates the removal of either artifacts of human remains. It should not be conflated with "robbing" in the sense of taking for economic gain when used in this study.

These few items include one horse and its associated equipment and a Tor's hammer ring. Klevnäs compares the neat and orderly arrangement of boat graves at the nearby Valsgärde cemetery to the disorderly and ransacked burials in Gamla Uppsala. The boats at the Valsgärde cemetery do not show signs of reentry and so are still orderly and intact. The objects in Grave 1 at Gamla Uppsala are either scattered around the grave (as in the case of 23 gaming pieces) or in a pile at the feet of the man. The items in the pile include the bodies of two dogs, moved while still fully articulated. Klevnäs (2007:30) suggests that the arrangement of the artifacts is due to a systematic approach by the robbers. There does not seem to be any purposeful damage of the body or grave goods.

Grave 1 appears to be missing several types of grave goods that are typical of a moderately wealthy male boat burial (see Table 4.2 for a comprehensive list of removal of personal artifacts at each site). The burials in the Gamla Uppsala boat burial ground are by no means assumed to have contained vast amounts of wealth, but there are certain types of grave goods that would be expected to occur a in male boat grave, such as this, which do not appear in Grave 1. Klevnäs notes the lack of valuables in the grave, particularly the lack of weapons. The only weapons found associated with Grave 1 were a bundle of arrows. One would expect to find a sword, at least one shield, at least one spear and axe, as well as arrows in such a grave (Arwidsson 1983, summarized in Klevnäs 2007). There were also no glass beads, silver coins, drinking vessels or tools in the grave. These artifacts were common in male graves during the Viking Age. Weapons in boat burials would typically have been arranged around the body of the person interred. Klevnäs suggests this is why the body was moved around; the robbers wanted access to the weapons around the body. The lack of weapons and other personal objects is most likely not due to decay because there are favorable preservation conditions on the site (Klevnäs 2007:31).

Site	Removal of personal artifacts	Unknown
Oseberg	X	
Gokstad	X	
Arby	X	
Jelling	X	
Ladby	X	
Gulli	X	
Vendel II	X	
Vendel III	X	
Vendel IV	X	
Vendel VI	X	
Vendel VII	X	
Vendel X	X	
Vendel XI	X	
GU 1	X	
GU 2		X
GU 3	X	
Tune		X
TOTAL	15	2

Table 4.2. Removal of Personal Artifacts.

The Boat and Stone Setting. There is evidence that the boat was still intact when robbers reentered the grave. When a robber enters a vessel burial in which the boat has decayed it is often possible to see the outline of the boat by the location of rivets. Displacement of rivets in the outline of the boat or ship is useful in reconstructing the route robbers took into the boat, as the rivets that are displaced indicate the entrance into the grave. In the case of Grave 1, the rivets were all undisturbed, which is a strong sign that the boat was still intact. This, along with the full articulation of the human and animal remains when moved, indicated a reentry date not too long after the death and burial of the man interred.

There were large stones placed over Grave 1. The setting above Grave 1 is apparently incomplete, but this is not necessarily due to the reentry of the grave by robbers. The stones could have been taken as building material at some point after the burial and their absence may have nothing to do with the reentry. It appears that the reentry of Grave 1 may have been known to the community at the time. The stones on top of the grave would have had to have been moved to reenter the grave. This kind of labor would have taken a group of men several hours to complete. Gamla Uppsala would have included what Klevnäs (2007:32) refers to as an "extensive" settlement at the time of reentry. It would have been near impossible to conduct the act of reentry in secret. This assumes that the grave was constructed in one phase, however, which is not certain. Klevnäs (2007:32) references the evidence for the building of ship and boat burials in stages at sites like Oseberg. If the stone were raised over Grave 1 after the burial of the man, then it is possible that the robbers entered after the burial but before the erection of the stones.

Grave 2

Grave 2 at Gamla Uppsala also showed signs of disturbance. The evidence of reentry in this grave is far less clear than that of Grave 1, however, because the construction of a cellar caused significant damage to the grave. It is possible to date the grave to the Viking Age, but not more precisely than that. The cellar damaged the area of the boat that most likely held the body. The surviving grave goods included metal belt buckles and hooks, and wooden and clay containers. Despite the damage caused by the cellar, the stratigraphy in the intact area of the boat shows signs of disturbance from robbers (Nordahl 2001, summarized in Klevnäs 2007). The state of the animal remains and boat planks in Grave 2 indicates that it was reentered after some amount of decomposition. The body of a horse found in the boat was not fully articulated when Grave 2 was reentered.

Grave 3

Grave 3 at Gamla Uppsala was essentially stripped bare by robbers. Almost all the contents of the grave were removed. The grave was oriented east-west. The human and animal remains were fully disarticulated when the grave was reentered. The planks of the boat had also fully decomposed. In the fill of the shaft used by the robbers to enter the grave there has been found a fair amount of animal remains. These remains may be attributed to late cult activity at the site if they are in some way related to the horse burial nearby Grave 3 (Nordahl 2001, discussed in Klevnäs 2007). The horse burial dates to the fourteenth century AD, after the end of the Viking Age. It has been suggested that horse burial is an indication of late cult activity, and if the animal bones in the shaft fill are related to the horse burial they, too, could be related to the same phenomenon.

Grave 36

Grave 36 was the only undisturbed boat grave. The burial was dated to the ninth century AD and the remains were determined to be female. The burial was oriented east-west, just as graves 1 and 3 were. The grave goods found included silver and bronze ornaments. There was a stone setting and wooden post that would have marked the location of the grave after the burial was complete. Animal remains were also found in the grave. The animal remains appeared to have preserved better than the human remains found in Grave 36.

Episodes of Reentry

Klevnäs (2007) has argued that the evidence from Gamla Uppsala suggests at least two different instances of reentry, perhaps three. The evidence for this comes from the times at which the graves were reentered and robbed. Grave 1 was reentered very soon after the person was interred around AD 900. Graves 2 and 3 appear to have been robbed some time later, after the bodies had fully disarticulated. Klevnäs (2007) believes that Graves 2 and 3 may have been reentered on separate occurrences. She believes this because the two graves are across the cemetery from each other and they were reentered and robbed in starkly different ways.

The Vendel Cemetery

The Vendel Period of Sweden lasted from AD 550 to 750, directly preceding the Viking Age. The period derives its name from the site of Vendel in Uppland, Sweden (Klevnäs 2015). The Vendel site, like the Gamla Uppsala site located just slightly south of Vendel, was a boat grave cemetery. The burials at Vendel have been dated from the Migration period, into the Viking Age. The Vendel boat graves are part of a more extensive burial ground that includes cremation graves. There is a church associated with the land that the ship burials occupy. After

the building of the church, people continued to be buried in the church yard throughout the medieval period (Klevnäs 2015).

The site was first excavated by Hjalmar Stolpe (Klevnäs 2015). The first burial was discovered in 1883 by workmen who were expanding the churchyard. The workmen, along with later grave diggers at the nearby church, did some significant damage to a number of the graves on site. There were 14 graves excavated at Vendel. Twelve of these graves were boat burials and seven of these boat burials showed distinct signs of reentry. Three out of the four unrobbed graves were damaged in some way, either by workmen, grave diggers, or the construction of a nearby road.

Stolpe's initial reports and correspondences regarding the site have been reexamined by Alison Klevnäs (2015). She is the only one to have reexamined the site in the context of reentry since Stolpe. The data for this site all comes from her reexamination of his initial reports. Stolpe took meticulous notes regarding the reentry of the graves at Vendel, which is fortunate considering how infrequently this occurred at sites excavated during this time period.

Episodes of Reentry

The reentry at Vendel appears to have been the result of just one episode of reentry. At the very least it was the work of one group continuing the process across the whole cemetery. It is possible to see how the robbers worked their way through the site. The graves most likely entered first were the ones closest to the church. Reentry can be seen in these graves through the displacement of ship rivets. It appears that as the robbers progressed deeper into the cemetery their entry into the graves becomes more precise. Vendel IV was the most precisely and efficiently targeted grave at the site. The robbers had essentially perfected the method for

targeting a specific area of the grave by the time they reached Vendel IV and there is a very minimal amount of displacement of the ship rivets.

Stolpe argues that the differences in finesse when entering different graves across the site is evidence of the robbers learning about the burials as they went (Stolpe 1894, discussed in Klevnäs 2015). The graves at Vendel were oriented northeast-southwest and the layout of the graves was fairly consistent. The northeast part of the boat is where the robbers would find the bodies and the personal artifacts associated with the remains. This is the area that the robbers systematically began to target the deeper they progress into the cemetery. This indicates that knowledge of the boat grave customs was limited at the time of reentry. If there had been more knowledge of the custom then the robbers would not have had to teach themselves throughout the process.

Date of Reentry

There are several factors that suggest a reentry date for the site. Unlike the Gamla Uppsala site, there appears to be either one single event of reentry or a few acts committed close to one another in time and by the same robbers. Therefore a date for the reentry of one grave is suggestive of the dates for the other graves. It is clear from the skeletal remains found that a substantial amount of time had passed since burial. The bodies of humans and animals were all fully disarticulated when the graves were reentered. The boats had also decomposed fully, as evidenced by the displaced boat rivets showing where the robbers entered the graves.

There is also evidence for a reentry date in the fill of one of the robbers' trenches. In the fill of Vendel X there were pieces of brick found. Stolpe was able to identify the brick as the same kind used in the construction of the church nearby. He proposed that the construction of the church was when the reentry took place. Klevnäs (2015) interprets this as an indication that the

reentry occurred during the construction of the church at the very latest. The brick fragments simply indicate a t*erminus ante quem,* not an exact date (Klevnäs 2015:7). There were no artifacts found that would indicate a date later than the medieval period; there was no material later than the brick found in the fill. There was also some ceramic evidence in the fill that indicates a medieval reentry date. The contents from the fill, decomposition of the boat and skeletal remains, along with the evident lack of knowledge about the boat grave custom strongly indicated a medieval reentry date.

Preservation

The preservation at this site was markedly different than that of the Gamla Uppsala site. At Vendel there was very poor preservation of skeletal remains. Klevnäs (2015) notes that the preservation inside the boats was significantly poorer than outside of the boats. There were a number of animal remains outside of the boat and they fared far better than the human remains inside. Several explanations have been suggested for this. One suggestion is that the animals may have been bled at slaughter before being buried, which could have slowed the rate at which they decayed (Olsson 1980, discussed in Klevnäs 2015). Klevnäs, however, argues that the lack of human remains has more to do with the reentry and less to do with preservation conditions.

What was Removed?

As stated above, the robbers targeted specific areas of the boats. The effected would have contained the human remains and the personal grave goods directly related to the remains. The two graves that are definitively undisturbed, Vendel IX and XIV, are the only burials with any significant amount of skeletal remains. Vendel XII and XIII, both reentered boat graves, have partial remains. The robbers appear to have used shovels to remove the area in the graves with remains and personal equipment. There is no indication that the contents were sorted through,

reburied, or scattered across the site. The main part of the graves were just scooped out and transported elsewhere. The burials were comprehensively cleared of human remains and the artifacts directly associated with the bodies. There is no evidence that the remains or burials themselves were treated with any sort of violence or malice, they were simply emptied quite thoroughly. The areas of the graves that did not contain human remains appear to have been left intact once the robbers learned the layout of the graves well enough to target them. It is clear that the targets of the robbery were the human remains and the artifacts directly associated with them. The removal of human remains means that the gendering of the body was done entirely based on grave goods. This is a skewed perspective and the human remains may have provided other clues as to the intersection of sex and gender at the site.

The Årby Boat

There is minimal information on the reentry at Årby, just as at Gulli. The Årby site is a single interment in a boat in Sweden, not terribly far from the Vendel and Gamla Uppsala cemeteries. The most heavily cited source on the Årby boat (Arbman et al. 1993) is written in German. I was limited to mentions of the Årby boat in two different articles by Klevnäs (2016, 2007).

The Årby boat was reentered when the flesh had not fully decomposed from the remains interred. The soft tissue was still partially intact (Klevnäs 2016, 2007). The reentry did not occur immediately after the burial, but it did occur before the joints had fully disarticulated. According to Klevnäs (2007), this is an indication that the burial was within living memory of those in the community. The person buried would still potentially have very close living relatives and acquaintances in the nearby settlement. Even when different soil conditions are considered this holds true. Klevnäs (2016: 460) describes the method of reentry at Årby as “keyhole

interventions". She contrasts this approach to the large scale interventions at Ladby, so one is led to believe that keyhole interventions are smaller and potentially involve multiple small cuts dug onto the burial.

The only other piece of information available on the reentry of the Årby boat was about what kinds of artifacts were removed by the robbers. According to Klevnäs (2016) there was a noticeable lack of metal artifacts in the reentered burials. Klevnäs notes that many of the contents were removed from the boat.

The Ladby Ship

The Ladby ship is located in Ladby, Denmark. The site of the ship is also in very close proximity to a cemetery with a minimum of 31 other graves (Sørensen 1997).The cemetery lies east-southeast of the ship (Thrane 1987). It is unclear how the two sites are related to each other, but some of the graves in the cemetery appear contemporary with the Ladby ship (Thrane 1987). The graves in the cemetery vary in terms of wealth and status. Some are essentially bare, while others contain what would have been very valuable ornamentation (Thrane 1987). There are certainly no other monumental ship burials located in the cemetery. For this reason I have chosen to classify the Ladby ship as a single burial and not part of a cemetery like Vendel, Gamla Uppsala, or Gulli.

The ship was first excavated in 1934 by P. Helwig Mikkelsen and later by Gustav Rosenberg in 1935 (Sørensen 1997). The grave has been dated to the early to mid tenth century AD. The determination of this date is mainly based upon art styles of artifacts found within the grave (Sørensen 1997). The burials in the nearby cemetery have been dated to a variety of time periods. Some of them are definitively Viking and one has been dated to even earlier, around AD

700, but some of them appear to be only two to three hundred years old (Sørensen 1997; Thrane 1987). It has been suggested that the later burials are of soldiers from the Dano-Swedish Wars.

The Ship

The Ladby ship was 22m long and approximately 3m at the widest point (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). The weight of the unladed and dry ship would probably have been around four tons (Thrane 1987). It would have been seaworthy, surely, and able withstand fairly rough waters. The ship has been classified as a Viking Age warship. It is unclear how long the ship was in use as a warship before it was used in burial, but it certainly had seen some use. Radiocarbon dating of sheep wool and cow hair has been used to show that it would have sailed anywhere between AD 885 and 1035 (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). In order to use it in burial, the ship was dragged inland to where a replica of it stands today in the town of Ladby. There was a full anchor and chain found in the front part of the boat. There is also evidence that sails were used when sailing the ship (Sørensen and Pentz 2008).

Skeletal Remains

The amount of human remains found was miniscule. Both burnt and unburnt human remains were found but in very small amounts. It is unclear how many people were originally interred in the burial because of the lack of skeletal remains. Animal remains were found in abundance in the burial, however. At least three or four dogs appear to be present, along with eleven horses. The majority of animal remains were found toward the front of the ship (Sørensen and Pentz 2008).

The unburnt remains have been assumed to belong to the individual for whom the burial was intended (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). The literature on the burial tends to refer to the ship as being for one individual, often referred to as a chieftain or prince because of the rich array of

grave goods found (Sørensen and Pentz 2008; Sørensen 1997). This may not have been the case, however, and there may have been more than one person buried there. The burnt bones may have belonged to a person sacrificed during the funeral rituals, as this was not an uncommon practice during the Viking Age. They may have been burnt close to the site of the ship, but the site has not been identified as of yet (Sørensen and Pentz 2008).

Determining the sex of the unburnt bones was not possible (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). There were simply too few remains to come to any conclusive decision regarding the sex. However, the burial has been gendered as male based on the types of grave goods found within the grave. The age of the person to whom the unburnt bones belong was somewhere between 20 and 50 years of age (Sørensen and Pentz 2008).

Grave Goods

The grave goods in the Ladby ship were mostly fragments (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). There were fragments from a wide variety of items including: knives, a silver belt buckle that functioned as the buckle of a sword belt, parts of a game board, a painted wooden board, gold and silver clothing decorations, a shield, a bundle of 45 arrows, a silver plate, a bronze platter, two buckets different kinds of buckets, an elaborate dog leash, part of a sword hilt, and a significant amount of riding gear (Sørensen and Pentz 2008).

Many of the grave goods have been dated. They date from AD 850 to 950 but there is a concentration of artifacts that are from AD 900 to 925 (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). A number of the grave goods also appear to be of foreign origin. The rich embroidery on the clothes worn by the main individual interred is suggestive of either a Russian or Byzantine pattern (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). The silver belt buckle appears to be from Charlemagne's kingdom to the south. The belt buckle was probably an antique when it was buried in the Ladby ship (Sørensen and Pentz

2008). Whoever was interred here was wealthy and, as Sørensen and Pentz (2008:6) state "of considerable rank". Above I noted that he is often referred to as a prince or chieftain; this is due to the incredible wealth of grave goods found in the burial. Some have even speculated that the Ladby ship held one of the Danish kings of the Olaf, or Hedeby Dynasty (Thrane 1987).

As I stated above, most of the grave goods were fragmentary. There also appear to be some grave goods that are incomplete or missing from the burial (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). The silver plate, for instance, is not complete. There is also no sword, despite the presence of the silver buckle used as part of a sword belt and hilt fragments. Sørensen and Pentz (2008:19) suggest that at least a spur, a spear, and a battle axe are missing from the grave.

Episodes of Reentry

As this is a single interment, there is only one episode of reentry visible at the Ladby ship. The episode of reentry at Ladby was conducted by robbers who knew what they were doing. They knew exactly which part of the ship to target to get to the body, just as at Gulli and Gamla Uppsala. Sørensen (1997) believes that the reentry occurred during the Viking Age. What part of the Viking Age is not specified, but if known it would have implications about the treatment of the body.

It is not clear whether or not the body was fully disarticulated at the time of reentry. If the body was not fully disarticulated, then the widespread scattering of the little human skeletal material that remains indicated a serious amount of intentional damage done to the body. If the body was fully disarticulated then the scattering of the remains could be attributed to less malicious action.

Almost all of the grave goods are also scattered across the ship (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). The fragmentary nature of the grave goods appears to have been purposeful. The burial

was most likely found in the aft of the ship. The only artifacts left intact by the robbers were found outside of where the chamber was supposed to have been (Thrane 1987). The robbers seem to have pulled out all of the grave goods and then broken them before returning them back to the fill of the grave. Not all of the fragments made it back into the grave, however. As noted above, some of the grave goods, like the silver plate, are incomplete. The grave goods and human remains appear in fan patterns which indicates they were shoveled back into the grave by the robbers (Sørensen and Pentz 2008). This intentional damage to the grave goods suggests that the damage to the body may have been intentional as well.

The Jelling Mounds

The Jelling site is considerably different from all of the other sites discussed in this study for a few reasons. The first is that there is no actual ship buried at the site. There is, instead, a large setting of stones that has been suggested to form the outline of a ship (Andersen 1996). There are other interpretations of the stones as a "V" shape, but it is somewhat unclear. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to consider the stones as a ship setting. The Jelling site is also different from the other sites in this study because there is considerable debate over who was buried there and what the purposes of reentry were. Andersen's (1996) work is a synthesis that discusses previous excavation work before 1996, and other theories regarding the reentry of the ship.

There were multiple excavations done at the site throughout the last two centuries (Andersen 1996). There have been a variety of discrepancies in the work done by various archaeologists at the site. The plan drawings that depict the entrance used by robbers has proven to be particularly challenging for later researchers. It is shows different features depending on the excavation (Andersen 1996). The evidence of reentry is clear, but the motivation behind the reentry can be interpreted in different ways depending on which line of evidence is examined.

Structures on Site

The site of Jelling is a complex that contains a few mounds. Of particular interest are the two large royal mounds that were long thought to contain the remains of King Gorm and Queen Thyra, parents of King Harald Bluetooth (Andersen 1996). Harald Bluetooth has been credited for bringing Christianity to Denmark. The mounds have been labeled the North and South mounds. It was discovered after excavation that the South mound was constructed after the North Mound, and did not ever actually contain any human remains. This was the mound assumed to hold King Gorm. When this was discovered the assumption became that King Gorm was buried alongside his wife in the North Mound (Andersen 1996).

The North Mound was 8m in height. It had a diameter of around 62m. The North Mound is smaller than the South Mound. Inside the North Mound there is a chamber burial. This is supposedly where the King and Queen were interred. Stones were raised in the shape of a shipat the site pointing toward the North mound. The stones stood at around one meter high (Andersen 1996).

There is a large runestone as well as a church in between the two mounds (Andersen 1996). The runestone names King Gorm, Queen Thyra, and Harald Bluetooth, and was raised by Harald. The runestone does not explicitly state that the people named are those buried at the site, but it has been assumed that this is implied (Andersen 1996). Excavations have shown that the church that stands today was preceded by at least two other churches. In one of the predecessors there is evidence of a grave with male remains. The man interred there was between 30 and 50 years old and his bones were fully disarticulated when moved. The burial has been dated to the tenth century AD (Andersen 1996).

Grave Goods and Skeletal Remains

There were very few grave goods found in the burial chamber (Andersen 1996). Much of what was found was fragmented. The fragments found do create the image of a once very wealthy burial. The fragments include pieces of carved and painted wood items, the remains of a railing, three hinges, two figures of birds, and a few different mountings and fittings. In terms of complete finds there were only two: a small silver cup and what has been interpreted as a box or chest (Andersen 1996). The box was not in good shape and fell apart very soon after discovery. Pieces of grave goods have been found inside of the burial chamber, but also in a particular concentration in the soil over the chamber.This concentration has been explained by Andersen (1996) as potentially the pile of artifacts sifted through by grave robbers as they pulled things up from the chamber below.

Among the few skeletal remains found in the burial were a small piece of skull and some animal bones. The bones were not in very good condition when found. This lack of remains has been explained by many researchers as the result of the removal of King Gorm's body and reinterment in the nearby church, hence the evidence of reentry (Andersen 1996). Andersen has argued that this was not what occurred and that the reentry into the grave was simply conducted to gather valuables.

The removal of King Gorm's body has long been attributed to his son Harald (Andersen 1996). It has even been suggested that the remains found associated with the church, presumably the church's founder, are the remains of King Gorm. This action would align with what is known of Harald Bluetooth's associations with Christianity. Andersen argues that it is actually Harald Bluetooth himself who is buried in the church. Klevnäs (2016: 465) describes the act as a "secular transition". Sørensen and Pentz (2008: 21) also discuss the Jelling grave as if the reentry

was conducted in an attempt to transfer King Gorm's remains to the church. The discrepancies in site reports and drawings are a major hindrance to understanding the nature of reentry at this site.

The Gulli Cemetery

There is far less information on the burials at Gulli than on some of the other sites discussed in this study. This is partially due to the fact that it was excavated fairly recently and there is only one publication that deals extensively with it (Gjerpe 2005). This publication is written in Norwegian so I have been limited to using a brief summary of the site by Klevnäs (2016).

Gulli is a cemetery in Vestfold, Norway. There are signs of reentry in several of the inhumation graves there, including a few boat graves. The reentry appears to have happened quite some time after burial. This conclusion is supported by the heavily corroded nature of the metal artifacts found in the graves. Klevnäs states that the reentry probably occurred before the fourteenth century; there is no mention of why this conclusion is drawn.

The robbers at Gulli appear to have targeted the areas of the graves with human remains, similar to the robbers at Vendel. The robbers at Gulli, however, appear to have specifically targeted the skulls in the graves. There were also grave goods removed from the burials. Klevnäs provides the example of a pair of oval brooches being taken from one of the graves. It is unclear how it is known that this was taken or from which grave it was taken.

The Gulli cemetery, unlike the other two cemeteries discussed, shows signs of deliberate damage to the grave goods left behind in the burials. In one of the intrusive cuts there a sword and shield boss were found. Both the artifacts had been broken before being left behind in the cut.

The Gokstad Ship

The Gokstad site is a single interment in a monumental ship in Vestfold, Norway on the western side of the Oslo Fjord. The site was first excavated in 1980 by Nicolay Nicolaysen, who noted the reentry at Gokstad when the original excavation was conducted (Bill and Daly 2012; Bonde and Christensen 1993; Urbanus 2014). The Gokstad ship is in close proximity to the Oseberg ship, also discussed in this study. The burial took place some time between AD 895 and 905 (Urbanus 2014). The person buried at Gokstad is often referred to as a 'chieftain' because of the incredible wealth and monumental nature of the burial (Urbanus 2014).

The Ship and Grave Goods

The Gokstad ship was truly monumental. The ship, now housed at the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, was 23.2m long and at its widest point was 5.2m across. There was a mound erected over the burial. The ship had a mast, a sail, a side rudder, and would have had room for sixteen pairs of oars (Bonde and Christensen 1993). It originally had 32 shields as adornments in black and yellow (Urbanus 2014). There were also three smaller boats interred nearby (Urbanus 2014: 35).

The burial at Gokstad was incredibly wealthy. The grave goods found included wooden furniture including several ornate beds, equipment for riding, fishing, sailing, and cooking, a game board, and game pieces made from horn (Urbanus 2014). Despite the vast wealth found with the burial, there were no weapons or personal jewelry or adornments found with the body (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016; Urbanus 2014). These appear to have been removed during the episode of reentry that occurred some time after the burial. Both the grave goods and the ship itself were treated with violence (Klevnäs 2016). The wooden furniture and parts of the ship were hacked at with axes during the reentry.

Skeletal Remains

The burial contained a fair amount of animal remains. Skeletal remains from 12 horses, 8 dogs, 2 goshawks, and 2 peacocks were found at Gokstad (Urbanus 2014). Hardly any remains of the person interred there remained (Bill and Daly 2012; Urbanus 2014). The only human remains found were four parts of bone from a leg, one shoulder blade, one part of the upper arm, and skull fragments (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016; Urbanus 2014). The person interred was determined to be male. The remains were treated with considerable violence (Klevnäs 2016). The remains in the burial were scattered and a considerable amount of them appear to have been removed at the time of reentry. The skull of the man interred was purposefully and forcefully crushed and then scattered by the robbers (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016).

Episode of Reentry

There appears to have only been one episode of reentry at the Gokstad site. The robbers entered the Gokstad mound from the east and dug toward the side of the ship. As noted above, the reentry did considerable damage to both the grave goods, body, and the ship itself. The damage to the ship's bottom and sides was so extensive that a practical reason for removing large pieces of them has been ruled out (Bill and Daly 2012). The reentry occurred at Gokstad before the mound atop the ship had caused the ship underneath to collapse. The remains of the man were fully disarticulated at the time of reentry (Bill and Daly 2012). This indicates that the reentry did not occur immediately following the burial.

The reentry at Gokstad would most certainly have been noticed by the community. The burial was quite large and would have been visible in the landscape. The method of reentry would have made the robbers' efforts very apparent. The trench at Gokstad was over 20m long and 4-6m deep (Bill and Daly 2012). The displacement of so much earth would not have been

easy or quick. The robbers who reentered the Gokstad ship either had the permission and understanding of the local community or were protected by someone powerful so as to avoid negative repercussions. The robbers left behind wooden materials like spades, which Bill and Daly (2012) were able to dendrochronologically date and produce a time span in which the reentry most likely occurred. The date range for the reentry at Gokstad is 939-1050 AD.

The Oseberg Ship

The Oseberg ship burial is one of the most wealthy and famous burials from the Viking Age. The site is close to Gokstad in Vestfold on the west side of the Oslo Fjord. The site is remarkably well preserved. The clay in the soil caused much of the burial to remain preserved under the mound erected over top of it. The first excavation at Oseberg was conducted from 1903-1904. Just as at Gokstad, the reentry was immediately clear (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016).

The Ship and Grave Goods

The Oseberg ship was just as monumental as the Gokstad ship. It was 21.85m in length, and 5.1m at its widest point (Bonde and Christensen 1993). The Oseberg ship had a mast and sail, a side rudder, and would have had room for fifteen pairs of oars (Bonde and Christensen 1993). The burial chamber within the boat was constructed in AD 834 (Bill and Daly 2012; Bonde and Christensen 1993). The burial chamber was made of rough logs and planks in a tent-like fashion (Klevnäs 2016). It was located just behind the mast of the ship. Just as at Gokstad, there are noticeable signs of violence against the ship (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016). The ship was damaged by axes in a similar fashion as the Gokstad.

There was an incredible amount of wealth buried with the Oseberg ship. Grave goods recovered included: a small copper alloy and cloisonné Buddha decoration, down feathers, bronze fittings, a wooden saddle, equipment for food preparation, various tools and containers of

different sizes, two looms, tapestries, clothing and textiles, four carved wooden poles with animal heads, three wooden boxes, a four combs, two axes, horse harness mounts, two tents, a house frame, two and a half pairs of shoes, and quite a lot of intricately carved and decorated wooden furniture and vehicles (wagons and sleighs) (Gardela 2013; Klevnäs 2016). Some of this material was found in the burial chamber and some was found outside the chamber in another section of the ship. The material outside of the burial chamber appeared mostly untouched or ignored by the robbers who reentered the burial (Klevnäs 2016).

The material within the burial chamber is another story. Two of the boxes found in the burial chamber had been forced open and sorted through (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs2016). The trench the robbers dug into the ship was littered with fragments of grave goods. The ship and grave goods appear to have been treated violently by the robbers; some of it had been pulled out of the grave and broken (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016). Specific artifacts also seem to have been removed by the robbers. One of the most striking aspects of the Oseberg burial is that, despite the vast wealth found, there was no jewelry in the grave (Bill and Daly 2012; Gardela 2013; Klevnäs 2016). Metal objects in general seemed to be lacking from the grave (Klevnäs 2016).

Skeletal Remains

Both Human and animal remains have been found in the Oseberg burial. The remains of over twenty animals were found in the stern of the ship (Klevnäs 2016). Extensive work has been done on the skeletal remains in the Oseberg ship, both recently and at the time of discovery (Holck 2006). The remains of two women were found in the grave. The remains were fragmentary and incomplete, just as at Gokstad. The remains were fully disarticulated at the time of reentry (Bill and Daly 2012; Holck 2006). One of the women appears to have been older than

the other. This woman's remains were found mostly scattered in the trench dug by the robbers (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016).She was missing several bones from the face. The younger woman's remains were even less complete. They were found in the robber's trench as well as in the burial chamber (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016). The younger woman's skull was found in pieces throughout the grave and appears to have been crushed in a fashion similar to that of the Gokstad chieftain (Bill and Daly 2012; Klevnäs 2016). The lack of remains from the younger woman indicates that the remains were taken by the robbers. The only remains left inside the burial chamber were a skull fragment, a finger bone, and a broken hip bone (Holck 2006).

Episodes of Reentry

The Oseberg ship was only reentered once. The robbers seem to have known where to dig. The trench they dug targets the burial chamber directly (Holck 2006). The break in at Oseberg was remarkably similar to the one at Gokstad. It occurred before the mound had caused the ship to collapse but after the remains were fully disarticulated (Bill and Daly 2012). Bill and Daly (2012) used the same method of dating for the Oseberg as they did for the Gokstad vessel. Spades and stretchers were left behind at the Oseberg in greater number than at the Gokstad and the samples had sapwood intact, so the dating was more precise. The Oseberg was reentered sometime between AD 921 and 953. Just as at Gokstad, the reentry was deliberately destructive and a practical motivation for destruction has been ruled out (Bill and Daly 2012). It would have been visible and known to the community as well. The robbers would either have had the permission of the community or the protection of someone powerful.

The Tune Ship

The information available in English on the Tune site was scarce. The site was usually only mentioned briefly in comparison to the Gokstad and Oseberg sites. However, I feel that it is

important to include because it helps to provide a breadth of data for more accurate analysis. Klevnäs (2016: 457-458) discusses the three aforementioned sites briefly when discussing mound-breaking in Norway. “Along the Norwegian coastline, early reentries into monumental graves were more a rule than an exception” she says. She describes the reentry at these sites as “similar in timing and method” to Gokstad and Oseberg.

Bonde and Christensen (1993) also describe the reentry at Tune in relation to the reentry at Gokstad and Oseberg. The Tune ship is located on the East side of the Oslo Fjord. It was originally excavated in 1867. The remains at Tune were placed in a grave chamber within a ship and covered by a mound, very similarly to Oseberg and Gokstad. The Tune burial is considered contemporary with the Gokstad burial. The ship was 20m in length, and 4.3m at its widest point. It had a mast, sail, side rudder, and would have been large enough for 11 or 12 pairs of oars.

The Tune ship seems to have been reentered similarly to the Oseberg and Gokstad vessels. This I take to indicate the presence of violence. The most striking quality of the reentry at Oseberg and Gokstad was the level of deliberate violence toward the human remains, grave goods, and ship. I would also guess that the human remains at Tune were tampered with as well.

Conclusion

The data collected from each of these sites clearly demonstrates the presence of several trends in reentry across Scandinavia. The presence and combination of trends at these sites are suggestive of a range of different motivations for reentry. These trends and motivations are discussed further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5
ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the data presented in the previous chapter I have devised a process to systematically classify certain phenomena associated with reentry. The system I use is a hybrid of Klevnäs' and Kümmel's systems (discussed in Chapter 3). I analyze the data from Chapter 4 based on the following characteristics:

1. Removal of personal/ significant artifacts from around or on the body.
2. Distance in time from burial based on the state of the remains (fully disarticulated, partially disarticulated, or minimal disarticulation).
3. Destruction or removal of human remains.
4. Attitude toward burial (hostile, indifferent, or friendly).This includes the human remains, the grave, and artifacts (Table 5.1).
5. Legitimacy of reentry. I have chosen to define legitimacy as allowed or sanctioned by the local community.

Based on the results, I analyze how reentry at each site was used as a tool by the living to maintain or alter the collective narrative or understanding of the burial. I categorize each burial by the most likely motivation for reentry. Motivations for reentry include: destruction for political reasons, an act of translatio, attempts to re-kill the dead, an extension of the funeral rites by non-Christians, or for the purposes of looting. I then use the maps I constructed using GIS to analyze the different trends on a regional scale.

The Gamla Uppsala Cemetery

The motivations for reentry at this site appear to have been different for each of the graves. Grave 2 is difficult to analyze because it is unclear what was removed and what the attitude

toward the burial was because the grave was so badly damaged by later construction. In Graves 1 and 3, however, the motivations manifested in starkly different ways.

Weapons were a common artifact in male graves of this type during the Viking and Vendel periods (Jesch 1991; Price 2010). This means that the lack of weapons and other valuables in Grave 1 is particularly important for understanding this burial. Grave 1 was reentered very shortly after burial, perhaps after only a few days. This means that the artifacts in this grave would have been in relatively good condition. It is possible that this grave was robbed simply in order to acquire valuables. If there were weapons in this burial, they would have been among the more valuable artifacts. Their absence suggests they were the target of the robbers. There is no notable damage to the human remains by the robbers. This, along with the lack of destruction of the boat and grave goods, suggests an indifferent attitude toward the burial (see Table 5.1 for a list of attitudes at each burial). It is possible that the reentry was conducted in secret, making it illegitimate. If the stone setting above the burial had not yet been put in place when the grave was reentered, then it is possible the robbers were able to get in and out of the grave fairly quickly and discreetly.

The motivation behind the reentry at this grave does not appear to involve an extension of the funeral rites, although it is possible. If this were the motivation the reentry would have been legitimate, but there is no evidence to strongly suggest that this is the case. There was no evidence of beheading or violence against the corpse so the reentry is not suggestive of an attempted re-killing (Klevnäs 2016). There was no evidence hostility toward the grave, the grave and remains were left intact, which indicates that political motivation for reentry is unlikely. The remains were left within the grave, so *translatio* is out of the question. Reentry into this grave

Site	Hostile	Indifferent	Friendly
Oseberg	X		
Gokstad	X		
Arby		X	
Jelling		X	
Ladby	X		
Gulli	X		
Vendel II		X	
Vendel III		X	
Vendel IV		X	
Vendel VI		X	
Vendel VII		X	
Vendel X		X	
Vendel XI		X	
GU 1		X	
GU 2		X	
GU 3		X	
Tune	X		
TOTAL	5	12	0

Table 5.1. Attitude toward Grave.

appears to have most likely been the result of looting for valuables. In this case the person interred became a tool to use for economic gain by the living who robbed the grave.

Grave 3 is a completely different story. Grave 3 was emptied completely. Human remains and personal artifacts were removed in one episode. There is no evidence of hostility against the grave or person interred so the motivation is unlikely to have been politically motivated. The animal bones in the fill of the robber's trench raise the question of whether this was an act of late cult activity during the medieval period (Klevnäs 2007). The reentry at this grave occurred after the body and boat had decayed. This indicates it was quite some time after burial. This grave may have been reentered as an extension of the funeral rites by late pagans. It may also have been for other religious reasons. Perhaps the body was moved and interred in the nearby church in an act of *translatio.* However, the animal bones in the fill are more easily explained by late cult activity.

It is unclear whether the reentry was legitimate or not. If the reentry was legitimate then it would suggest an act of *translatio* to the nearby church, whereas illegitimate reentry might indicate lingering cult activity during the period of Christianity following the Viking Age. The nearby horse burial, however, is strong evidence that late cult activity was indeed occurring at the site during the medieval period (Klevnäs 2007). With this evidence the most likely motivation appears to be an extension of the funeral practice or other religious motivation by pagans. If this reentry was associated with late cult activity it would indicate an attempt to strengthen or enhance the cult practices through association with the grave. The person interred was probably unknown to the people who reentered the grave, and therefore not specifically part of local or regional narrative. However, the association of them as pagan or non-Christian was clearly still part of the collective memory of at least part of the local population at the time of

reentry. This association could have been used by the local non-Christians to validate or enrich the practices at the site.

Connerton (1989, discussed in Devlin 2007) has discussed the relationship between memory and physical performance of commemorative ceremonies. In this case the reentry can be considered the physical performance. According to Connerton (1989) the act of repeating ceremonies includes an inherent reference to the previous ceremonies performed. If this was an act associated with late cult activity then the non-Christians performing the act were paying homage or referencing the ceremonies performed earlier in time, during the Viking or Vendel periods. This reference is used to strengthen and legitimize the performance and tie the interred bodies into the narrative being spun by those reentering the grave. Halbwachs (1992, discussed in Devlin 2007) uses the term collective memory to describe references to the past that link a group together and help create a shared notion of identity. In this case the non-Christian practices associated with the person interred are being linked to the non-Christian practices of the people who reentered the grave in the medieval period.

The Vendel Cemetery

The graves at Vendel appear to have been reentered as a single event. For that reason I will classify them all with the same motivation for reentry. The graves were reentered after the boats and human remains were fully disarticulated. Knowledge of the boat custom seems to have been limited at the time of reentry (Klevnäs 2015). This, along with the lack of hostility toward the graves, indicates that an act of re-killing the dead is an unlikely motivation for reentry. If the goal was to re-kill the dead, then the robbers would have had more knowledge of Viking Age funeral customs than is apparent at the site.

The area of the boats that held the bodies and personal artifacts appears to have been the target for the robbers. The amount of time that had passed when the graves were reentered means that the grave goods were probably not in great condition. Any valuables, like swords or jewelry, that were taken would probably have been useless for their original function and would not have had much monetary value. The fact that the bodies and personal items were the targets of the robbers, despite the poor condition of grave goods, indicates that looting was not the primary objective.

There was no indication of a particularly friendly or hostile attitude toward the burial. The contents of the grave appear to have been removed and then transported elsewhere; there is no indication that the grave goods or remains were sorted on site. The large-scale nature of the reentry at Vendel may indicate that it was legitimate. Seven graves were reentered at Vendel. There was only one episode of reentry according to Klevnäs (2015). This would have been time-consuming and there would have been some visible evidence of the robbers' progress through the cemetery. If the reentry was indeed legitimate, not a result of looting valuables, there were no signs of hostility, and a significant amount of time had passed since burial, then it stands to reason that the most likely motivation was one of *translatio.*

The act of *translatio* would have acted as a way to strengthen or legitimize the practice of Christianity in the area (Staeker 2005). The members of the local community at Vendel at the time of reentry were most likely the descendants of the people interred at the cemetery. By removing the bodies of predecessors who were pagan and reinterring them in a Christian fashion or location the people who reentered the burial were retroactively tying Christianity to the community at Vendel. They were legitimizing the practice of Christianity in Vendel by tying it to the ancestors of the community.

The Årby Boat

The Årby boat is the only site that was reentered when the remains were partially intact. Not enough time had passed for the person interred to have faded out of the memories of the people in the local community. They might even have had close living relatives still alive at the time of reentry. This also means that the artifacts may have been in good, working condition. Many of the contents of the boat were removed. There was a distinct lack of metal artifacts as well, indicating a lack of weapons and jewelry (Klevnäs 2016).

Klevnäs (2016:460) describes the reentry at Årby as "keyhole interventions". This may indicate that the reentry was illegitimate because it was done in such a way that did not require much manpower or time. It may not have been sanctioned by the community at the time. The robbers may have attempted to remove artifacts without attracting attention from local residents. There is no noted violence at this site or evidence that the reentry was designed to be on display to the people in the community, which suggests there was no political motivation. The discreet and non-violent nature of reentry also suggests an act of *translatio* is unlikely, as is an attempt to re-kill the dead, or an extension of the funeral rites. It seems that reentry into this grave may have been similar to reentry at Gamla Uppsala Grave 1. Looting seems to be the most likely reason for reentry.

The Ladby Ship

The burial at Ladby contained incredible wealth. It has been suggested that it may have been for a chieftain or prince. Most of the grave goods in the Ladby ship were fragmentary. Some of the artifacts were incomplete and it seems that some personal artifacts were removed. There is no sword, despite the presence of a sword belt buckle and hilt fragments. It has also been suggested that at least a spur, a spear, and a battle axe are missing.

The absence of weapons is indicative of reentry for either political reasons or re-killing because of the association of weapons and personal artifacts with identity and power. The intentional damage to the remaining artifacts also suggests political motivation. The reentry has been dated to the Viking Age which means *translatio* is unlikely. The remains were also removed; the minuscule amount of skeletal remains left were scattered all over the grave.

The legitimacy of this reentry is unclear. It would most likely have been known to the community however, because of the amount of manpower and time it would have taken to do so much damage to such a monumental grave. It is possible that the reentry may have been in an attempt to re-kill the dead, but political motivation seems more likely because of the almost complete removal of the remains. In the sources discussed in chapter 1 beheading is mentioned, as is removal of artifacts like weapons, but the complete removal of remains is not mentioned (Klevnäs 2016). The high status of the man interred means that there was a lot of wealth to be found in the grave, but this does not seem to have been the motivation for reentry since almost all the grave goods were destroyed. The motivation appears to have been the attempted delegitimization of the man interred or perhaps his associated lineage. Just as at Gulli, a transfer of power by forceful means seems to have occurred.

The Jelling Mounds

The reentry at Jelling is difficult to analyze because of the problematic excavation reports. There are a variety of theories about reentry at Jelling and many aspects of the reentry are unclear or ambiguous. The North Mound was originally thought to belong only to Queen Thyra, but was later believed to contain both the Queen and King Gorm. The literature discussing the Mound does not reference any female remains, despite the association of the mound with the

Queen (Andersen 1996; Staeker 2005). This begs the question of who was actually interred here and the implications that has on why the grave was reentered.

The only evidence that suggests looting as motivation for reentry is the concentration of grave goods found in the soil above the burial chamber. The fragmentary nature of most of the finds, along with the scarcity of human remains is indicative of other motivations for reentry. Even this evidence is difficult to interpret, however, because it is unclear in the literature whether the grave goods are fragmentary because of poor preservation or because the robbers intentionally broke them. It is also not clear whether the lack of human remains is due to poor preservation or because the remains were all removed. If Queen Thyra was buried in the North Mound along with King Gorm but only the king was removed and buried with the church, as has been suggested, then where are the queen's remains? Either both bodies deteriorated due to poor preservation conditions, both were removed, or there is a gaping hole in the literature regarding Queen Thyra's remains.

I believe the best classification for this site is *translatio.* There is clear evidence that Harald Bluetooth made efforts to alter the site at which his parents are supposedly buried. There were multiple church constructions and a runestone erected naming the King and Queen. The site underwent changes to intentionally display a shift from a pagan burial ground to one associated with Christianity and the church (Andersen 1996; Staeker 2005). With all the alterations made by Harald Bluetooth, it is not too farfetched to imagine him reburying his father in association with the founding of a church on the site. There is plenty of evidence that King Gorm was vehemently opposed to Christianity (Staeker 2005). This is one of the arguments that has been used to support the idea that it is not King Gorm buried under the church. However, Bluetooth was a well-known supporter of Christianity and his father did not exactly have a great deal of agency as

a corpse (Haywood 2001; Vauchez 2005). If Bluetooth was attempting to strengthen or legitimize his own goals and ideals then tying his family to the foundation of a church would make sense, regardless of his father's personal beliefs. Harald Bluetooth could very well have been using his father's remains as a tool to connect his family lineage to Christianity and legitimize his own political ventures.

There are certainly discrepancies to be found and questions raised by the original excavation reports. The question of the Queen's remains is the most striking to me since the mound was originally associated with her and not the King. With the evidence at hand however, *translatio* seems to be the best explanation for the reentry at Jelling.

The Gulli Cemetery

The lack of information in English on specific graves at Gulli means I had to classify the whole site with one motivation for reentry. The reentry at Gulli occurred after a significant amount of time had passed since burial. This means that the artifacts in the graves would not have been in any sort of working condition. The metal artifacts that remained in the graves were heavily corroded (Klevnäs 2016). At least one pair of oval brooches was removed from a grave, despite the probability that they were in poor condition. This, along with the presence of a broken sword and shield boss in the fill of one of the graves suggests that personal artifacts were of particular interest to the robbers for reasons other than looting, potentially because of their association with the identity of the person interred.

The bodies at Gulli were also targeted by robbers. The skulls in particular seem to have been sought out. The targeted removal of the skulls and personal artifacts, along with the presence of broken artifacts indicates either reentry for political reasons, or an attempt to re-kill the dead. *Translatio* seems unlikely because of the deliberate destruction of artifacts and specific removal

of only the heads. It could be that the heads were taken and interred in a church somewhere and that certain artifacts were destroyed because they carried pagan associations, but there are other, more likely motivations. The removal of personal artifacts in combination with the removal of the skulls speaks to an attempt to remove integral aspects associated with the identities of the people interred. Personal artifacts, like jewelry and weapons, were indicators of status, regional, and familial affiliation. The removal of these was a removal of key pieces of a person's identity and power. In a similar way, the removal of the skull is the removal of the part of a person that thinks. It is the removal of the part of a person that once had a recognizable face.

In Chapter 1 I discussed literary examples of re-killing the dead from the medieval period. One of the trends among these instances was the removal of the head and personal artifacts such as swords (Klevnäs 2016; Caciola 1996). The literature indicates that the removed heads are often reburied; as far as I can tell from the scarce literature on Gulli, there is no evidence of this. However, as I noted in Chapter 1, these accounts are not from the Viking Age and may have discrepancies. The systematic removal of the skulls does not occur at any of the other sites in this study; Gulli is the exception. The combination of skull removal and personal artifacts is strongly suggestive of attempts to re-kill the dead.

The Gokstad Ship

The Gokstad ship, like the Ladby ship, displayed substantial wealth and has been attributed to a local prince or chieftain. This makes the lack of personal adornments and weapons incredibly striking. The man interred was of significant status and certainly would have been buried with an extensive array of weapons. The complete absence of weapons can only be explained by the reentry by robbers. It is clear that the wealth of the Gokstad burial was not explicitly what the robbers were after, seeing as many valuable artifacts were left behind. The

complete removal of all weapons is an indication that personal objects were the desired target of whoever reentered the grave, especially when considering the rank of the man buried. If the man was a king or chieftain, as is commonly thought, then his weapons may even have been well known.

Despite the removal of certain valuable grave goods, there was a significant amount of wealth left in the ship and destroyed. The destruction, rather than removal, of valuables is suggestive of political motivations and not looting for economic purposes. The large scale, visible nature of the reentry indicates that the reentry was probably legitimate. Either the community willingly sanctioned the reentry or the people reentering the burial had the protection of someone very powerful (Bill and Daly 2012). This, along with the hostile treatment of the grave and remains indicates reentry for political purposes or an attempt to re-kill the man interred. *Translatio* is unlikely because of the level of hostility shown toward the grave. There is also no evidence suggesting that the reentry was an extension of the funeral rites.

The precise dating of the reentry of Gokstad ship has shown that it was also contemporary with Harald Bluetooth's campaign to conquer and acquire parts of Norway. Bluetooth was powerful enough to have reentered and destroyed the burial at Gokstad without facing negative repercussions from the local community. The destruction of the graves of local Norwegian rulers would also certainly have strengthened Bluetooth's political campaign. By destroying the graves of former Norwegian rulers or dynasties Bluetooth would have strengthened his own claim to the lands he was attempting to acquire. In this way, the graves and remains would have become a tool for Bluetooth to utilize in his quest for dominance over contested lands.

The Oseberg and Tune Ships

The Oseberg and Tune ships were probably reentered for the same reason as the Gokstad ship. The reentry at Oseberg was also contemporary with Bluetooth's campaign through and rule over parts of Norway. It seems likely that the reentry at Tune was contemporary as well. The reentry at all three sites was similar in level of hostility shown toward the burial, as well as personal artifacts taken. This is a tentative evaluation in the case of Tune because it tends to only be referred to in association with reentry at Oseberg and Gokstad (as discussed in Chapter 4). The three sites are also in close proximity to one another on the Oslo Fjord. They are all part of the same contested area that Bluetooth was attempting to acquire for Denmark. Bluetooth may have been using the destruction of the monumental burials to make a statement to the local communities about his power. He seems to have been establishing himself as the legitimate holder of the lands, in opposition to the families and dynasties associated with the individuals interred at Oseberg, Gokstad, and Tune.

The public nature of reentry at these sites, in combination with their close proximity may have been and even larger statement to the entire region. Connerton's (1989) ideas about memory and repeated performance are relevant at these sites. If Harald Bluetooth is responsible for the reentry at these three sites, then each successive reentry may have been a reference to the ones before it. In this way he was repeating a ceremony, effectively performing for the people in the area, and referencing his own work. He would have built up his own credibility each time he destroyed the grave of a previous ruler or powerful family.

The Construction and Maintenance of Narrative

Klevnäs (2016: 462) claims that "the removal of certain forms of possessions is one of the most consistent features of reopenings [of graves] across Scandinavia". The forms of possessions

Klevnäs refers to are specifically artifacts worn on or arranged around the body. Metal artifacts, especially jewelry and swords, appear to be particular targets for removal by robbers.

The data collected for this study reflects this practice. Fifteen out of the seventeen graves showed evidence of personal artifacts being removed. The only two graves that do not explicitly show this practice are the Tune ship and Gamla Uppsala Grave 2. The explanation for this at Tune is because of the lack of information available on the reentry of the burial there. The Gamla Uppsala burial was considerably damaged by the construction of a cellar. One of the areas impacted by the cellar construction was the section of the boat that most likely contained the body and any personal artifacts. It is very possible that personal artifacts were taken from both Tune and Gamla Uppsala Grave 2, but it is unclear at present.

The removal of personal artifacts is not an arbitrary phenomenon. It is a reflection of the aim of robbers to remove identifying artifacts and alter the identity or perception held of the people interred. It is not an accident that the areas of the boat and ship burials containing the bodies were targeted in almost every grave discussed in Chapter 4, or that the most commonly removed artifacts were significant personal objects despite the vast amounts of wealth available in many of the graves. The reentry at many of these sites was clearly not motivated by the search for valuables since, in many cases there was a plethora of valuables left behind or intentionally destroyed. It was not random artifacts that were removed or destroyed, it was the artifacts that typically acted as symbols or signifiers of identity. Jewelry and weapons were personal adornments. They could speak to the regional or familial heritage of the person who possessed them. They were indicators of power and status. The act of taking these was a direct attempt to remove the power of the people interred. The destruction of these artifacts at certain sites functioned as a way to physically and visibly demonstrate the removal of power from the people

in the graves. In this way, the understandings of a person such as ‘powerful’ or ‘ruler’ can be forcibly disassociated by the removal of identifying artifacts. Who is one without their identity? Can one really be wealthy without wealth? Can one demonstrate power and prowess in battle without weapons?

The amount of time that passed between reentry and burial is important in understanding what the grave would have meant to the people in the immediate vicinity. If the grave was fresh when it was robbed, as in the case of Grave 1 at Gamla Uppsala, then the person interred was likely remembered and known to the people in the community. If the grave was robbed decades after burial, then it is possible that the person is still remembered or at least known to be associated with a specific family. If the grave was robbed centuries after burial, then it becomes a bit fuzzy. If the person was royalty or understood to be a famous hero or then their burial may have retained some meaning to the people in the community around it. However, it could also be that, at this point, the burial was essentially anonymous or perhaps reduced to a handful of characteristics like “Viking Age” or “pagan”. The longer after burial a grave is reentered, the less likely it seems to have been for the purposes of looting valuables. The artifacts in burials would have lost all function or monetary value as they deteriorated more and more.

The destruction of human remains appears to point toward instances of reentry for political purposes or attempts to re-kill the dead. Removal of remains without hostility toward the grave is an indication of *translatio* rather than political motivation. The goal of *translatio* in this context appears to be a legitimization of Christianity through the use of ancestral remains, not the defamation of the individuals interred.

In both cases the physical bodies of the person interred become the tools of the living. New political factions may destroy the remains of previous rulers or dynasties in order to legitimize

their own political rule. They alter the narrative surrounding these people by establishing themselves as dominant. The physical remains of a once powerful person are destroyed and therefore rendered powerless against whatever new force is acting against them. They also break the chain of legitimacy that may stem from a familial line associated with the person interred. In a similar sense, the bodies of non-Christians are taken and retroactively associated with a religion they may have had no contact with during their lifetimes. In this way Christians are using the physical remains of once pagan ancestors to encourage and legitimize the practice of Christianity. The individuals who are removed from their graves were not Christian, but the living use them to establish a narrative about Christianity that involves tying the religion to the ancestors of a community. Pagans may also use the remains of someone they associate their religion with in order to strengthen or enhance their own religious practices. The ancestors or predecessors at a site are essentially co-opted by the later communities for their own purposes.

It is clear that the construction of narrative surrounding people, particularly wealthy or powerful people, does not end with their death and burial. Although they can no longer influence their own story, the living that can access their graves and remains have the power to construct new understandings of them or maintain existing ones. A man who was once a powerful king may be defamed by a later king who wishes to demonstrate his own power and control over a specific area of land or resources. People that were not Christians can be associated with Christianity, regardless of what they believed during life.

Analysis of GIS Maps

The maps I constructed using GIS allow me to analyze certain trends in reentry on a regional scale instead of just on a site-to-site basis. I chose to display the distribution of reentered ship and boat burials across Scandinavia based on the time elapsed after entry, the destruction of

human remains, the removal of human remains, hostility toward the burial, attitude toward burial, and legitimacy of reentry. There seem to be two clusters of reentered ship burials: one around the Mälaren Valley region in Sweden, the other in Vestfold, Norway. There are only two sites in Denmark and they are not very close to one another.

Time Elapsed after Burial

Almost all of the burials discussed in this study were reentered after a significant amount of time had passed and the bodies had fully disarticulated. There were two exceptions to this: Gamla Uppsala Grave 1 and Årby. Grave 1 was reentered almost immediately after burial and Årby was still partially articulated. Both of these sites have been classified as being reentered for the looting of valuables. This classification stems mainly from the lack of hostility toward the burials and the likely good condition of the artifacts in the graves. See Figure 5.1 for a map of this trend.

Destruction of Human Remains

There is a hotspot of destruction of human remains in Vestfold, Norway. At the Danish sites there is one instance of destruction and once instance in which there was no destruction. There is a cold spot for destruction of human remains at the Swedish site. Destruction of human remains appears to have occurred more often in Norway. It occurs at sites associated with political reentry and re-killing the dead and not at sites associated with *translatio* and looting. See Figure 5.2 for the map of this trend.

Removal of Human Remains

The removal of human remains appears to be concentrated around Vestfold, Norway and the Oslo Fjord at the Oseberg, Gokstad, Tune, and Gulli sites. One of the Danish sites has

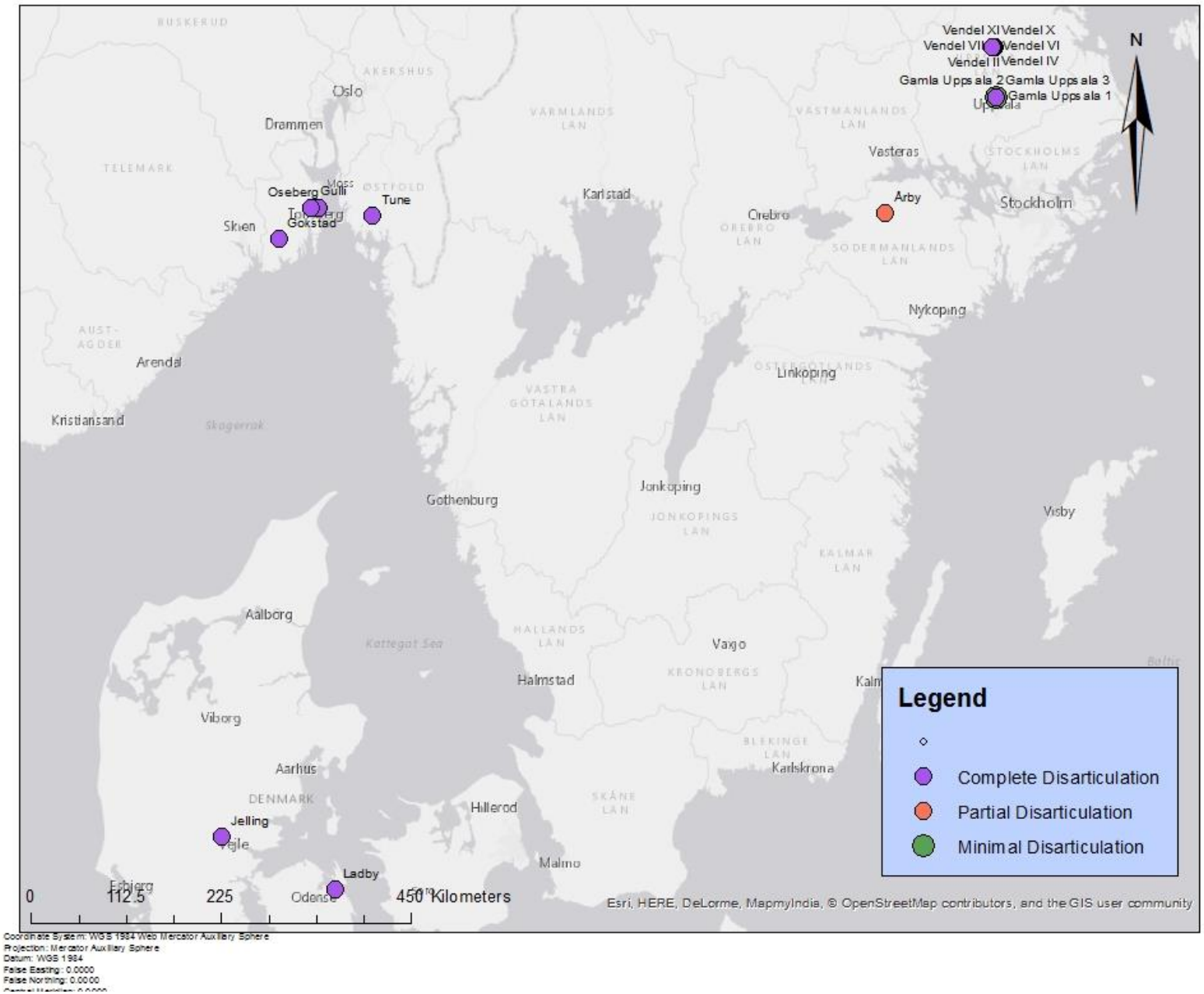

Figure 1.1. *Degree of* disarticulation of human remains at each site is shown to demonstrate how much time passed between burial and reentry.

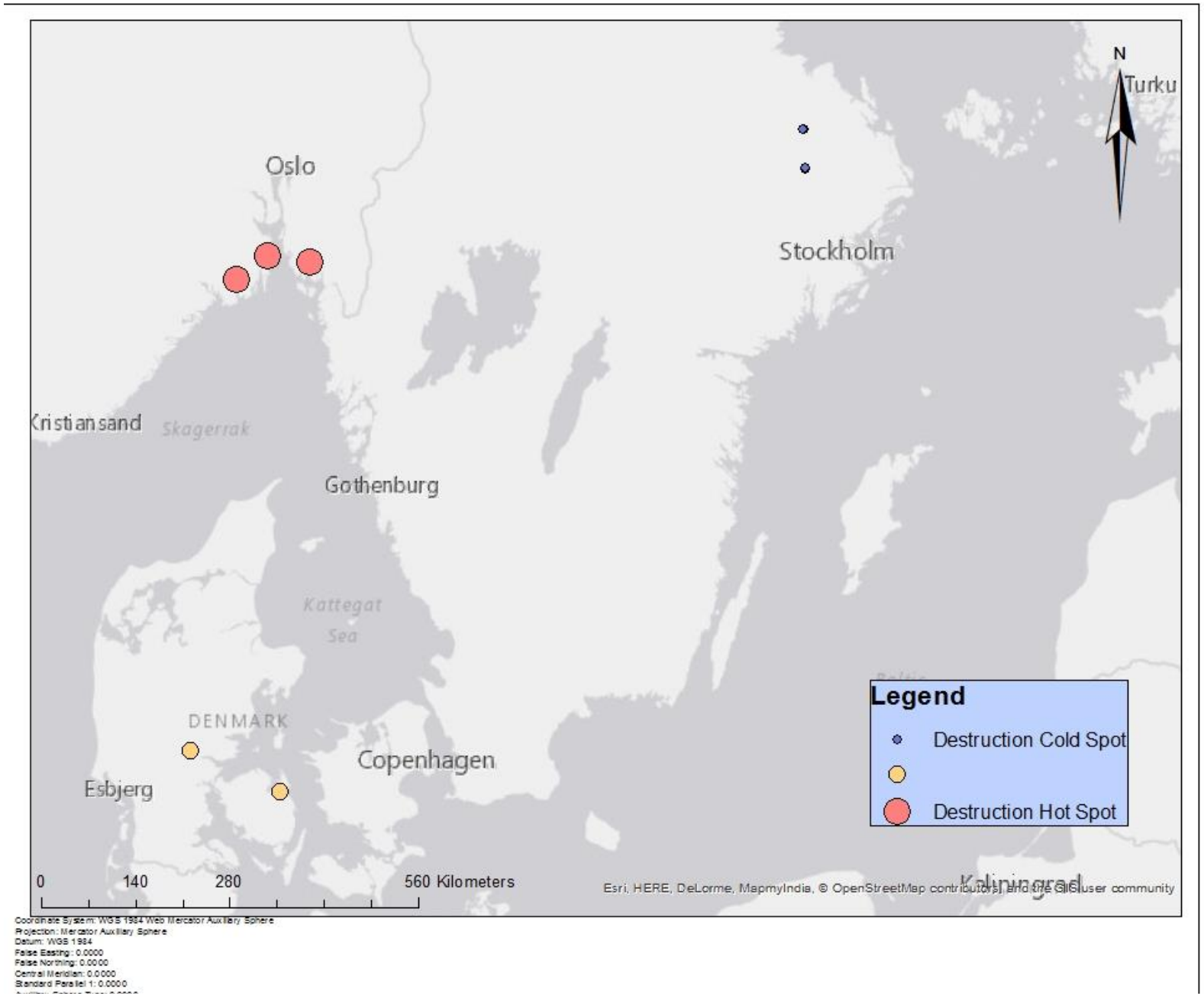

Figure 5.2. Hot spot analysis of destruction of human remains using GIS. There is a hotspot of destruction around Vestfold, Norway. There is a cold spot around the Mälaren Valley.

evidence for the removal of human remains and the other does not. The burials clustered around the Mälaren Valley tend not to have any removal of human remains; the exception to this is Gamla Uppsala 3. Removal of human remains seems to have occurred most often in Norway, particularly in areas captured by Harald Bluetooth during his campaign to conquer parts of Norway. The Swedish graves show far less evidence of removal of human remains. The political motivations for reentry at many of the Vestfold sites may explain why this occurs in a cluster around the Oslo Fjord. See Figure 5.3 for a map of this trend.

Attitude Toward Burial

Sites that display more hostility in reentry seem to be more common in Vestfold than anywhere else. The graves in the Mälaren Valley do not display any evidence of hostility; they have all been classified as indifferent in attitude. The political nature of reentry at these sites could explain the cluster of hostility in Vestfold. Gulli is also the only instance of reentry in this study classified as being motivated by attempts to re-kill the dead. It appears in this cluster of hostility in Vestfold. The Danish sites, once again, fall into separate categories; one shows signs of hostility and the other does not. See Figure 5.4 for the map of this trend.

Legitimacy

I did not perform hot spot analysis for legitimacy. The reason for this was that the majority of sites seem to have been legitimately reentered or it is unclear whether or not the reentry was legitimate. I felt that the data were better displayed with the legitimacy of each individual burial shown instead of where hotspots of either legitimacy or illegitimacy occurred. There does not seem to be a regional trend in legitimacy of reentry. The burials in Norway and Denmark are all legitimately reentered. The only illegitimate burials occur in Sweden, two of

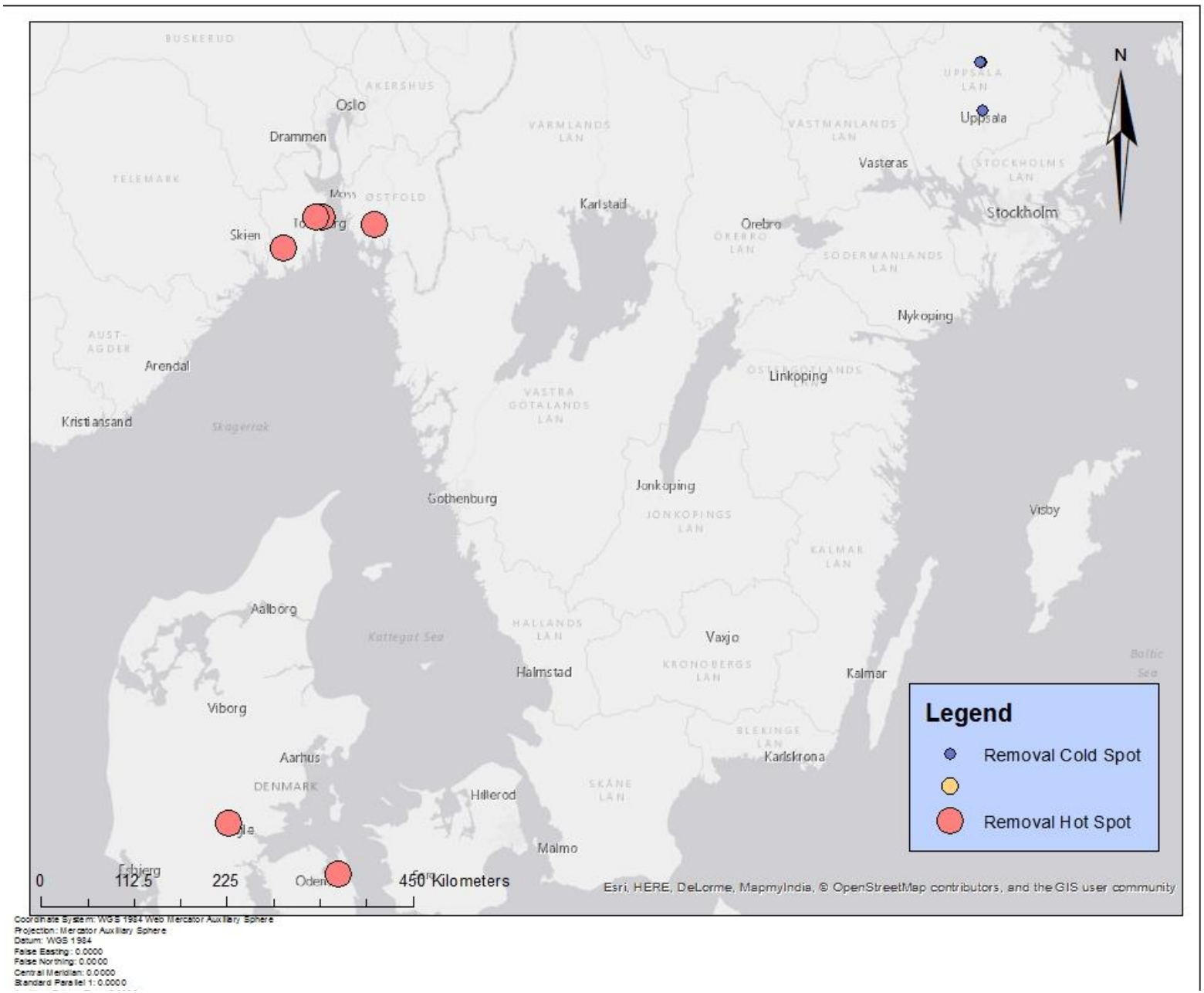

Figure 5.3. Hot spot analysis of removal of human remains using GIS. There are two hotspots, one in Denmark and one around Vestfold, Norway. There is a cold spot in the Mälaren Valley.

which are at Gamla Uppsala. Gamla Uppsala was reentered in at least two different episodes for two separate motivations so the fact that the graves there were reentered illegitimately may be a coincidence. See Figure 5.5 for the map of this trend

Overall, it seems that the occurrence of certain trends in reentry are regionally correlated. Norway, particularly the area around the Oslo Fjord, tends to show signs of political and hostile reentry more often than sites in Sweden and Denmark. Swedish burials tend to show *translatio* as motivation for reentry more often than in Norway and Denmark. Denmark tends to be statistically insignificant in most regards. This is likely due to the fact that only two sites of ship or boat burial reentry occur in Denmark and they are starkly different occurrences.

The cemetery sites tend to occur in Sweden, although there is one instance of a Norwegian cemetery at Gulli. The cemeteries tend to show fewer signs of reentry for political reasons than the monumental ship burials like Ladby, Oseberg, Gokstad, and Tune. This could be linked to the status of those interred in the monumental ship burials. It makes more sense destroy the burials of notoriously wealthy and iconic rulers because it has more of an impact and makes a stronger statement about the power of the person reentering the grave. The act of *translatio* ties Christianity to the history and ancestors of a local area. Cemeteries are perfect sites for this because they are often used continually by local people for generations. See Figure 5.6 for a map of motivations by burial.

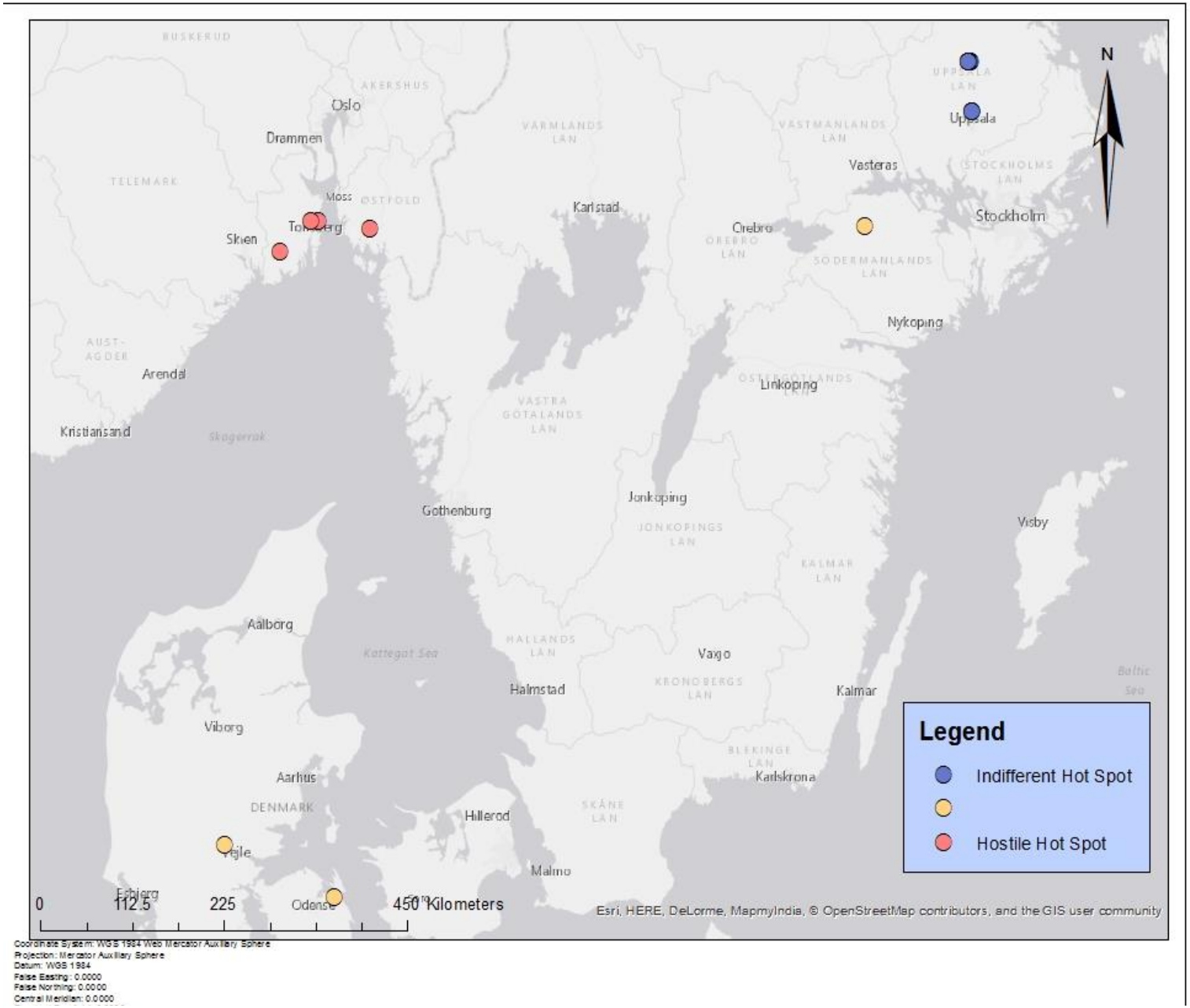

Figure 5.4. Hot spot analysis of attitude toward graves using GIS. There is a hot spot of indifference around the Mälaren Valley and a hot spot of hostility around Vestfold, Norway.

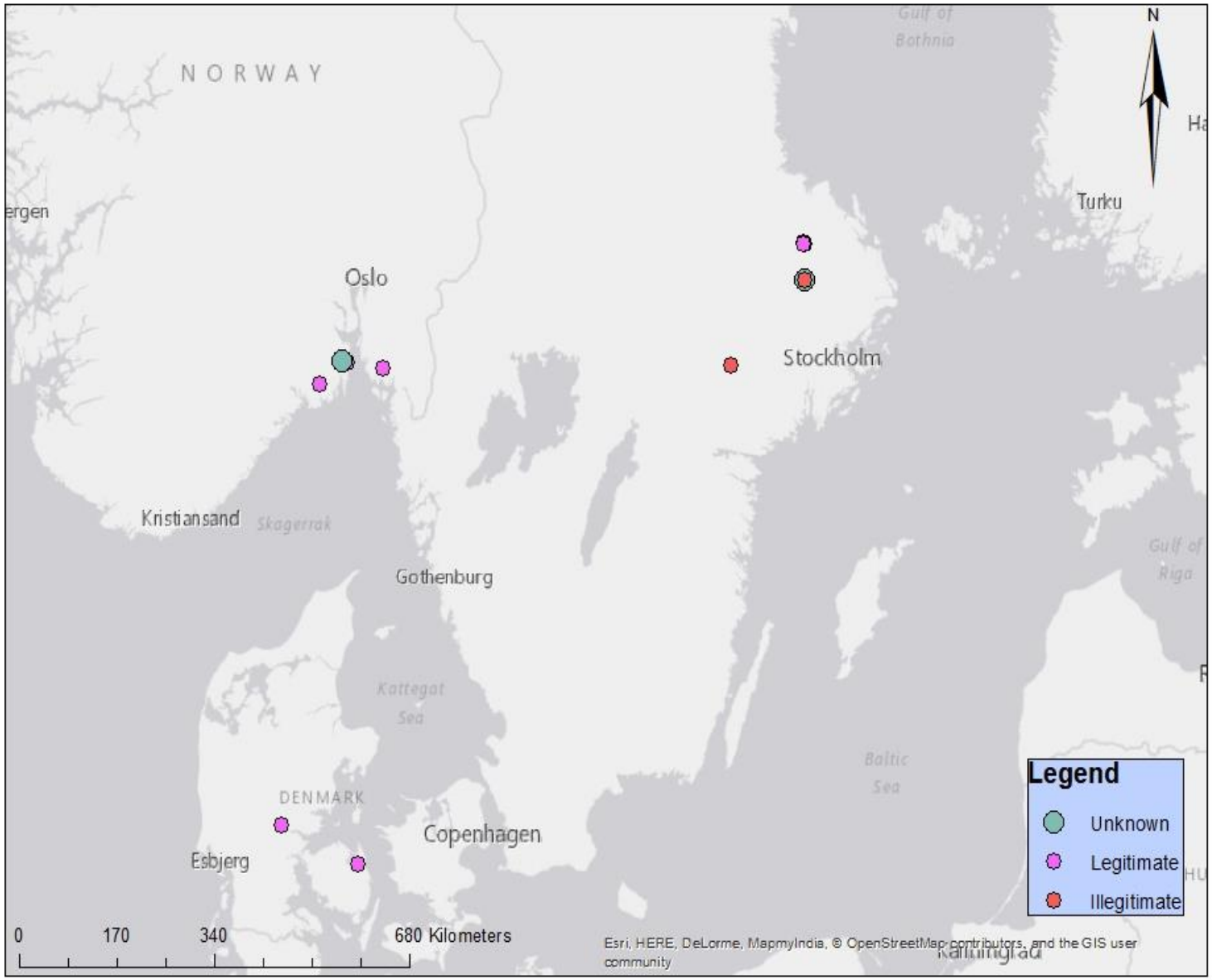

Figure 5.5. Legitimacy of reentry at different sites is shown. Only three of he burials were reentered illegitimately and at two of the burials it is unclear whether the reentry was legitimate.

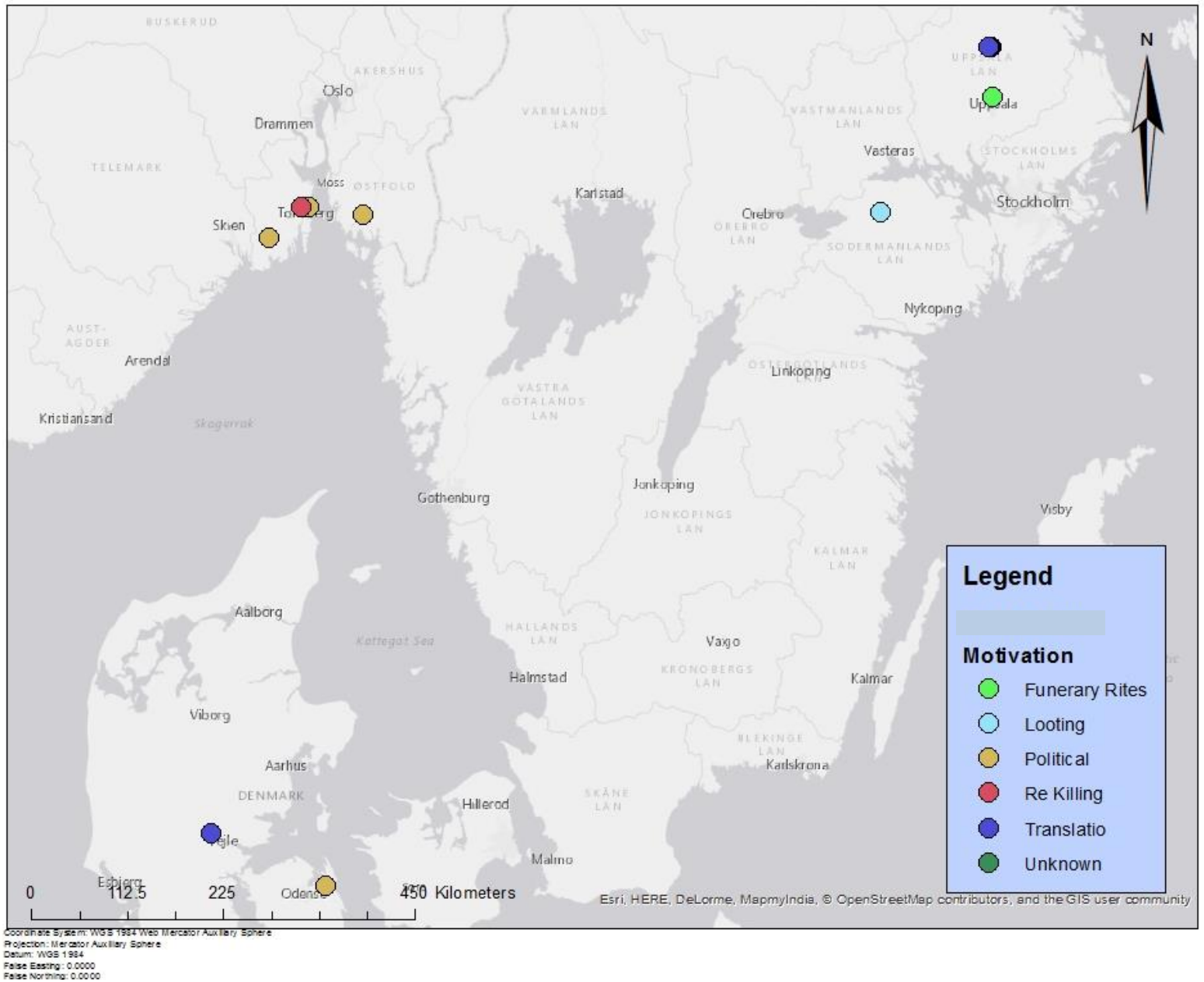

Figure 5.6. The most likely motivation for reentry at each site is displayed. Political reentries seem to occur most frequently around Vestfold, Norway. There is only one instance of reentry for re-killing the dead. *Translatio* appears to occur frequently in the Mälaren Valley.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

There were several aims of this study. One goal was to identify trends in the reentry of ship and boat burials constructed in Viking and Vendel age Scandinavia. The second goal of this study was to place these trends within the framework Neil Price (2010) calls mortuary drama by identifying the likely motivation for reentry at each of the 17 burials discussed. The final goal of this research was to visually display these trends using GIS to explore the possibility of a regional correlation in certain practices.

Five criteria were used to identify and classify trends in reentry: the removal of personal artifacts, the distance in time between burial and reentry, the treatment of human remains, the attitude toward the grave by robbers, and the legitimacy of reentry. Using data on a variety of sites from across Scandinavia these criteria were applied to determine one of five motivations for reentry at each burial. These motivations included *translatio,* reentry for political purposes, an extension of the funeral rites by non-Christians, attempts to re-kill the dead, and looting for economic gain.

The dead at each one of these sites were used as tools by the living people who reentered their graves to either construct or maintain a narrative, or for economic gain. In some cases the collective memory of the local or regional community was influenced in order to legitimize a contemporary ruler and defame a previous one. In some cases the physical remains of a person were used to tie a religious practice to a group of people, whether this was Christianity or the lingering remnants of paganism during the medieval period. It is clear that except in cases of looting for economic gain, memory of the dead is used by the living for their own gain. This

memory may include specific elements like their feats as a ruler, or it may be more generalized like their association with a certain religion or area of land.

The maps constructed for this study show clearly that there are two clusters of reentered boat burials in Scandinavia, with a few outliers in Denmark. One of these clusters occurs around the Oslo Fjord, an area of political contention during Harald Bluetooth's reign. This cluster includes three monumental ship burials and tends to involve reentry for political reasons. It can often be characterized by hostility and violence toward the burials. The other cluster occurs in the Mälaren Valley in Sweden. This cluster includes two boat grave cemeteries. The burials in this area tend to show signs of *translatio* during the transition of Scandinavia to Christianity. The removal of personal artifacts occurs at every burial in this study except two, for which there is either a scarcity of information or considerable damage was done to the burial during later construction.

Future Research

There is a large area of southern Sweden that does not show any signs of boat burials being reentered. It could be that there is a higher concentration of reentered chamber burials that occurs in this region. The islands off the coast of Sweden also do not show signs of reentered ship burials, Gotland does not have any ship burials at all. Northern Norway is also starkly empty of reentered ship burials. Further research on the relationship of ship burials location and reentry location is needed to understand this phenomenon. Data on where reentered chamber graves occur in relation to reentered ship burials also needs to be done to understand the phenomenon of reentry more fully.

The inclusion of more sites on maps such as these would also shed light on the prevalence of these trends across Scandinavia. It is possible that there are sites in mainland Scandinavia that

were not included in this study because there were no publications on them in English. It is also possible that other areas of Scandinavia, Europe, and Russia may have reentered ship burials from the Viking and Vendel periods. Iceland, Northern Germany, Britain, Finland, and anywhere else the people of Viking and Vendel age Scandinavia traveled and lived, may have sites that could be included on maps like these. The maps constructed and presented in this study will hopefully raise questions and lead to new avenues of research on the reentry of Viking and Vendel period burials.

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