Barbarian mercenaries or Roman citizens?
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irrigen Meinung entgegentreten zu können, *Sueones* und *Gothi* seien in einigen Stellen bei Adam einander nebengeordnet und *Sueones* bezeichne deshalb eine *neben den Gothi* ("'götär'") lebenden Völkergruppe. Durch eine Analyse aller Belegstellen konnte nachgewiesen werden, dass bei Adam IV, 24 die *Gothi* eindeutig als eines der 'sveonischen' Völker hingestellt werden, während alle Stellen, die scheinbar eine Nebeneinanderreihung bieten, überzeugender auf andere Weise erklärt werden können.


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**Barbarian Mercenaries or Roman Citizens?**

Leadership, tactical ability and personal courage have always been highly valued by fighting men and, even more so, by their leaders. Also, man is vain. This is why, over and above pecuniary remunerations, soldiers have always valued, and fought to the utmost for, "a piece of coloured riband", for visible signs of their prowess being appreciated. Thus, in most armies past and present, rewards or military decorations have been given to, or granted to, deserving soldiers. These have been of many different kinds, from the enemy’s skull by way of tattoos or feather headdresses to bronze crosses and mere "coloured ribands".

In the Roman army of the late Republic and of the early Empire the "dona militaria" were of three classes:

1. *The grass crown and the oakleaf crown*,
2. *The vexillum, the corona navalis, the corona muralis, the corona vallaris and the corona aurea*.
3. *The hasta pura, the torques, the armilla, the patella, the phalera and the corniculum*.  

Awards of the first group were apparently granted to field officers only, for very exceptional services. Awards of the second type went to field officers and to regimental officers, originally for exceptional bravery only, later as regular service awards, and the same holds true for the decorations of the third group, which went to subalterns and to rankers. These awards were of moderate (corona aurea, which was mostly gold leaf) to insignificant (grass crown and oakleaf crown) pecuniary value, but
they were conspicuous and they conferred certain privileges upon their holders.

Most of these decorations are fairly well known from contemporary descriptions, from tombstones and from other monuments, but no more than a few have survived to our days since Roman burial customs did not include the deposition of such items with the dead. No corona of any kind is known to have survived, nor any vexillum or hasta. Roman bracelets are known from many sites but since they have not been found in male graves we can not differentiate between military bracelets, worn as decorations, and civilian ones, worn as jewellery. The torques depicted on funeral monuments appear generally to have been too small to be worn round the neck, being instead usually worn on a strap around the neck, in pairs, resting above the clavicles. No such torques have been found.

Phalerae, on the other hand, have been found at Lauersfort and at Kastell Munningen, in Germany, and at Newstead, in England. The set found at Lauersfort, near the legionary fortress of Vetera, not far from Xanten, is complete. It consists of nine pieces of silver-plated bronze, with heads of lions and of mythological figures, in high relief. In addition to these there is a crescent-shaped piece with a double sphinx. It is somewhat uncertain whether this belonged to the original set or whether it formed a separate decoration. (Matz 1932; Maxfield 1981, Pl.15). On the other hand, the Kastell Munningen find consists of a single phalera only, decorated with a bust of Virtus or of Bellona in high relief and dating from the time before the destruction of the fort, in 259–60.

The Newstead phalerae comprise a set of nine bronze plates, eight round and one kidney-shaped, which have now lost their original decorated silver facing. All of these are, or were, highly decorated pieces, much more elaborate than those shown on so many legionaries' tombstones. These seem, generally, to have been circular and fairly simple, with concentric circles as their only decoration.

However, another pair of highly decorated phalerae form part of the famous bog find from Thorsbjerg, in Denmark, where the equipment of defeated enemies had been sacrificed. These consist of heavy, cast, circular bronze plates, once rivetted to a leather harness, and covered with thin, chased silver plates, partly quilt. The two phalerae seem to have been of the same size, with a diameter of 132 mm. The central medallions, which are identical, are surrounded by circles of nine medallions each, with Medusa masks, inside an elaborately chased border, 35.4 mm wide. As Werner (1941) has shown, these phalerae are Roman provincial work, probably from the Aachen area, and date from the second half of the second century A.D. This find is particularly important since Thorsbjerg is far outside the Limes, deep in Germanic territory. The ethnic background of the original owners of the phalerae from Newstead, Munningen and Lauersfort can never be ascertained, although they must have been Roman citizens (vide infra) but the man whose decorations were sacrificed at Thorsbjerg by his victorious enemies was a German, although a Roman citizen.

Remain the patellae and the cornicula. What, then, were the patellae? High-quality service items, spectacularly ornamented, were sometimes awarded for bravery, both in the French and in the British armies and navies. Thus, Napoleon gave “muskets of honour”, service arms with engraved silver plates, to deserving infantrymen and both Napoleon and king George gave swords of honour to deserving officers.

Is it conceivable that the patellae were exactly what the name implies: high-quality cooking vessels? The idea of such being granted for valour may appear ludicrous, but recent parallels come to mind. Thus, both the Janissaries of the Ottoman army and the warriors of the Zulu impies treasured their regimental cooking vessels, one of the worst corporate punishments which could be meted out in either army being depriving a regiment of one or more cooking pots. To the individual legionary, accustomed as he was to cooking in fragile clay vessels with low heat permeability, a brightly polished bronze cooking vessel would not only be eminently practical but also, carried strapped to the outside of the field pack, a highly visible decoration.
Many different types of Roman bronze vessels have been found in Scandinavian tombs but two of them are quite predominant: the "wine ladle with sieve" and the bronze pan. Remarkably enough, neither such vessels nor any others appear among the dona militaria so often shown on Roman tombstones. Just possibly, one of them might be shown on the Pictish symbol stone of Dunnichen, in Scotland, which should probably be dated to late Imperial times (Johnson 1980 fig. 17). This carving has been taken to represent a mirror but it might, just as well, show a Roman bronze pan, seen from above.

The wine ladle with its sieve was used when serving the wine. In the Roman army, cheap wine, "posca", formed part of the daily ration. More often than not it was probably of such a quality as to require straining. In Scandinavia, such ladles with sieves were probably most useful when beer or mead was served. Although not intended for the purpose, the ladle itself could also be used for cooking.

The bronze pan was clearly intended as a cooking vessel, not as a scoop or a ladle, since the bottom is invariably fairly thick, which affords a more even heat distribution, and provided with deep, concentric furrows, which increase the bottom surface in contact with the embers of the hearth. It is remarkable that no lids have ever been found, but these were probably of wood.

It has long been accepted that barbarian chiefs and other mercenary officers in the Roman service were rewarded with metal vessels, the inventory of the famous grave at Hoby, in Denmark, being taken to be a case in point. Here, a local warrior of the first century A.D. had been laid to rest with a magnificent table service of silver and bronze vessels, one of which had apparently once belonged to Gaius Silius, legate of Germania Superior in the years 14–21 A.D.

However, these magnificent vessels were more probably diplomatic gifts or unique rewards to a spectacularly successful mercenary general than "ordinary" patellae. However, many bronze vessels of a more "ordinary" quality have been found in Germanic tombs outside the limes, both on the Continent and in Scandinavia, and these have invariably been of practical use. It should be noted that they all seem to date from the first two centuries of the Christian era, i.e. from that time when military dona were awarded.

After about 200 A.D. dona were no longer given — and no more cooking pans or wine ladles found their way to Scandinavia. Certainly, several third-century graves contain such vessels, but these were invariably old when deposited. They may have been in practical use for several generations before being buried with their last owner.

The corniculum is attested in but three literary passages (Livy, Suetonius) and in but one monumental inscription and is "probably the most obscure of all the military decorations. The apparent failure of the corniculum to survive into the Imperial period has had one particularly unfortunate result: there is no way of knowing for certain what it was. There is no pictorial evidence for its appearance, and nowhere is it described." (Maxfield 1981 p. 98.) "Corniculum" is a diminutive of "cornus", horn. It seems unlikely to have been a wind instrument, the diminutive proving it to have been very small. Maxfield (1981 p. 99) concludes that the "corniculum was, in all probability, a helmet decoration".

Another, and more literal interpretation suggests itself in analogy with the patella, which was undoubtedly a vessel of some kind: that the corniculum was a small drinking horn with metal fittings. The relief on the now-lost tomb-stone of L. Gellius Varus, who served in the Legio XIII Gemina, in the Augustan–Tiberian period, shows a legionary signum, topped by what appears to be a crown, although rather different from the corona depicted elsewhere, and with three simple phalerae. Beneath these are shown what appear to be two short, curved horns, threaded on the shaft of the signum at right angles. These are quite different from the foot-rests to be seen on most pictures of signa.

Very few drinking horns have been found inside the Limes, the Romans apparently preferring clay cups or glass vessels, brittle items eminently unsuitable for rough usage. On the other hand, metal fittings for small drinking horns have been found in many Scandinavian
tombs of the period. Both Ekholm (1974) and Sophus Müller (1911) assumed them to have been of local manufacture, and point to a number of early finds from Bohemia, which they believed to have been made in the Marcomannic kingdom.

In the first few centuries A.D. Germanic art was of an entirely different nature. The strictly geometric, abstract design of the horn mounts was entirely foreign to Germanic ideals, as was that of certain belt buckles and strap end fittings which had once formed part of Roman military equipment. When a Scandinavian artist tried to copy one of these Roman end mounts he botched the job hopelessly (Juellinge 2).

The rims and tips of these drinking horns were usually protected by metal fittings, and the horns also usually had carrying or hanging chains of bronze. The rim mount, with a U-shaped section, protected the fragile, thin edge of the horn, held in place by a number of small rivets. These mounts were purely utilitarian, never being decorated. In some cases, they also overlapped a broad bronze strip around the outside of the horn. It seems likely that these were not original, but had been added in Scandinavia. The mount from Skällhorns, Källunge parish, Gotland, lacks, or has lost, the rim mount proper, retaining but the broad bronze strip, to which leaf-shaped ornaments had been rivetted. Since this does not cover the edge of the horn it affords but limited protection. The diameter of the rim mountings is fairly small, indicating that the horns were those of domestic cattle rather than those of Uri, and that their volumetric capacity was limited.

The carrying chain was usually Y-shaped, two branches being attached with rivets to the horn near its mouth and one near its tip. The rivets at the end of the two short branches are always very short, indicating that they had been driven through the thin part of the wall, near the mouth of the horn, whereas the rivet at the end of the longer branch of the chain is invariably quite long, having been driven through the solid part of the horn, near its tip. The chains are always rather short, which goes to confirm that the horns were short, those of domestic animals.

The end mounts are either cast in one piece or composite ones, the latter consisting of a cast, funnel-shaped socket, the tip of which is extended to form a shaft on which the discs and balls which form the decoration of the mount have been threaded and rivetted. The mounts cast in one piece, which are by far the most common, are either solid or tubular, in the latter case faintly resembling the mouthpiece of a trumpet. Finally, one rare type consists of a cast, profiled end mount with a very short socket, to the inside of which are attached three bronze strips which were also rivetted to the wall of the horn (Juellinge).

The sockets are usually of circular section, although such of square or polygonal section are not rare.

The chains usually consist of a number of twisted bronze rods with flattened, perforated ends, the links being joined by simple bronze rings bent together of bronze wire. In some cases the bronze rods are profiled rather than twisted and in some the "chain" consisted of leather strips with small, decorative bronze plates rivetted to them and joined by bronze fittings.

To be sure, bronze pans and wine ladles with strainers, as well as drinking horns, are "imports" from the Empire, but they shall probably not be taken to be evidence of "trade" in the common sense of the word. There certainly was an active trade between Germania and the Empire, but these vessels, the phalerae, the Roman swords and the Roman chain-mail so often found in Scandinavian tombs of the Roman Iron Age were probably the properties of mercenaries who had returned home after having completed their terms of service in the Roman army.

There, foreigners could enlist in one of the many numeri, irregular mercenary units, recruited and commanded by barbarian officers for limited periods of time, much as, in the seventeenth century, individual colonels contracted to recruit and maintain a regiment for a specified period of time. Alternatively, the recruit might elect to join one of the regular army units recruited from non-citizens, the auxilia. What he could not do, in republican and early Imperial times, was to join a legio.
In the numeri, the foreign warriors retained their national arms and equipment, in the auxilia they wore Roman uniforms and chain-mail, even when the legions had changed to the cheaper lorica segmentata, as well as Roman weapons. Thus, the equipment in the tomb of a warrior who had served with a numerus was probably no different from that of any ordinary farmer-warrior who had never crossed the Baltic, whereas those men who were laid to rest with Roman arms or armour or with Roman military decorations had almost certainly served in the regular units.

But Maxfield (1981) states, explicitly, that dona militaria were awarded to Roman citizens only, no more than one single case being known where a peregrinus was the recipient, non-citizen soldiers being rewarded by their whole units receiving citations. Maxfield referred to one Antiochus, an evocatus triarius of the Ala Parthorum et Araborum, who lived in the early part of the first century A.D. He was decorated at least twice, in spite of apparently being a peregrinus, serving with an auxiliary unit. However, his name proves him not to have been a "barbarian", and he was almost certainly born in the Empire. Since auxiliary centurions and decurions were often Roman citizens, transferred from the legions, Antiochus may have been a citizen, in spite of his name. In the east, a Roman citizen might retain his original name or a name in his native language, as did Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul, and who, as a Roman citizen, appealed to the Emperor.

How, then, can we explain the phalerae from Thorsbjerg, and how can we be justified in assuming the wine ladles and the drinking horns found in Scandinavia to be dona militaria? The explanation is to be found in the organization and traditions of military life, which appear to have changed little over the centuries. The men now serving with the Gurkhali battalions of the British army are, almost without exception, the sons and grandsons of servicemen. Two thousand years ago there were probably Germanic families with similar military traditions.

A man who served his time with an auxiliary unit obtained Roman citizenship upon discharge. Although the time-expired soldiers seem to have been expected to settle within the Limes and doubtlessly did so in most cases an appreciable numer did return home, as Roman citizens. Any marriage contracted after citizenship had been obtained became a legal one, and any children, born in wedlock, would then automatically become Roman citizens even when born in Scandinavia and they would thus, when in their turn serving in the Roman army, perhaps as legionaries, be qualified to receive military decorations.

In the Flavian period auxiliary soldiers would apparently occasionally receive citizenship even before discharge, as suggested by the case of Titus Flavius Capito, a decurion of the Ala Pannoniorum (Maxfield 1981 p. 123). Such "new citizens" were also eligible for decorations, should they merit them during remaining period of service.

It is remarkable how few Germanic or other barbarian names appear among those recorded on the funeral monuments of auxiliary soldiers. Those who aquired citizenship, normally at the end of their period of service, adopted Roman-style names. But it is evident that many of those commemorated died while still in the service. Two possibilities suggest themselves: either that the men adopted Roman-style names already when joining, names by which they were known during their period of service, or that these men were Roman citizens already when joining the colours. In the Empire, to be a non-Roman meant being discriminated against. A citizen, and only a citizen, enjoyed the full protection of the law, only he had full status. This probably reflected upon the time-expired soldier, even when he had returned to his native land.

In the Roman army, not only did every soldier in the legions and in the auxilia have to be able to speak latin, he also had to be able to read it and, if an officer, to write it. He might enter the auxilia as a barbarian but he left it, a full Roman citizen, with twenty years experience of literacy and numeracy in Latin and with twenty years vocational training in a very wide range of trades.

Although, until the reign of Septimius
Severus (193–211), serving soldiers were not supposed to marry, many evidently did, although these marriages were not recognized in Roman law. The children would follow their mothers’ status — until the moment when the time-expired soldiers received their citizenship. This included the right to full legal marriage with the wives they had at the time of their discharge or whom they married later. Probably the wives themselves did not become citizens, but their children did. Being legitimate sons and daughters of Roman fathers, they were Romans — no matter where born.

Germanic officers and soldiers served in the Roman army not only in late Imperial times but from the very beginning of the Empire. Arminius, the victor of the battle in the Teutoburger Forest, in 9 A.D., was not only a Germanic chief — he had served his time in the Roman army, evidently rising to high rank, since he became not only a Roman citizen but a Roman knight, a member of the “ordo equester”. When the revolt broke out, his younger brother still served in the Roman army, where he remained true to his salt all through the war, in spite of Arminius attempts to make him desert.

Quite obviously, the cornua and patellae, like Roman arms and armour may have become treasured heirlooms, inherited by men and women who, themselves, had never left their native soil. Pans, as well as ladles and horns are sometimes found in women’s graves, which goes to show that they were not only status symbols but that they also had a high use value, that they were treasured and that they could be inherited. In the great majority of cases, however, the dona militaria seem to have followed their original owners into the grave. These men, buried with cornua or patellae in the back-woods of Scandinavia, were no ordinary Barbarian mercenaries, nor were they merchants or import agents, but Roman citizens, men who could speak and read, (and, in many cases, probably also write) Latin, who had been schooled for twenty years in the Roman army, in a Roman world, men whose fathers and, perhaps grandfathers and great-grandfathers had served Rome before them. Small wonder that the Roman impact on Scandinavia was strong enough to justify the first four centuries of our era being called the Roman Iron Age.

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Sammanfattning

Rausing diskuterar i denna debattartikel företeelser som militära hedersablar och andra utmärkelsetecken i nutid och under det romerska imperiets tid. Han tar också ur nutiden traditionerna hos de i den brittiska armén ingående gurkhaenheterna som referens till motsvarande på det militära och sociala området, som kan förmodas ha existerat mellan germanska legosoldater och den romerska kulturen under de första århundradena av vår tideräkning. Tjänstgöringen inom de romerska arméerna skapade, menar han, en klass av germanska soldater och militära befattningshavare som så emanciperats av den romerska kulturen att de både kunde tala latin och efter fullgjord tjänst blivit romerska medborgare, ja som kanske under generationer fötts som sådana eftersom deras fäder och förfäder tjänat Rom före dem. Bevisen på dessa förbindelser utgör, menar han, de talrika "dona militaria", dvs. militära utmärkelse- och hederstecken som man finner i det nordiska gravmaterialet från romersk järnålder och bl. a. kan ha formen av ringbrynior, hjälmprydnader, dryckeshorn, kokkäräl samt skopor och silor för vin. Hit hör också phalerae — en sorts dekorativa rustningsbeslag av medaljkaraktär som bl. a. hittats i Thorsbjergs offermosse. Höga utmärkelser av detta slag kunde endast romerska medborgare få. Det som man hittat i mossen måste ha tillhört germaner, germaner som samtidigt också likt Arminius, segraren i slaget i Teutoburgerskogen år 9 e. Kr., varit romerska medborgare.

Jan Peder Lamm

En skeppsarkeologisk katastrof? — Ett genmäle


Marinarkeologien er et ganske nyttfelt innen faget. Det har selvfølgelig vært skrevet om arkeologiske båtfunn siden Engelhardt grov ut Nydamskipet for snart 125 år siden, men disiplinen marinarkeologi er knapt 30 år gammel. Kravene til spesialkunnskaper og dykkerferdighet har ført til at en liten gruppe spesialister har dominert feltet og førte en debatt for seg selv, som den øvrige arkeologmiljø i liten grad har deltatt i. Mye av debatten har dreid seg om dokumentasjon av skipsrester, og om problemene med å få utgravningsteknikken under vann opp på et tilfredsstillende nivå. Dette gjelder både