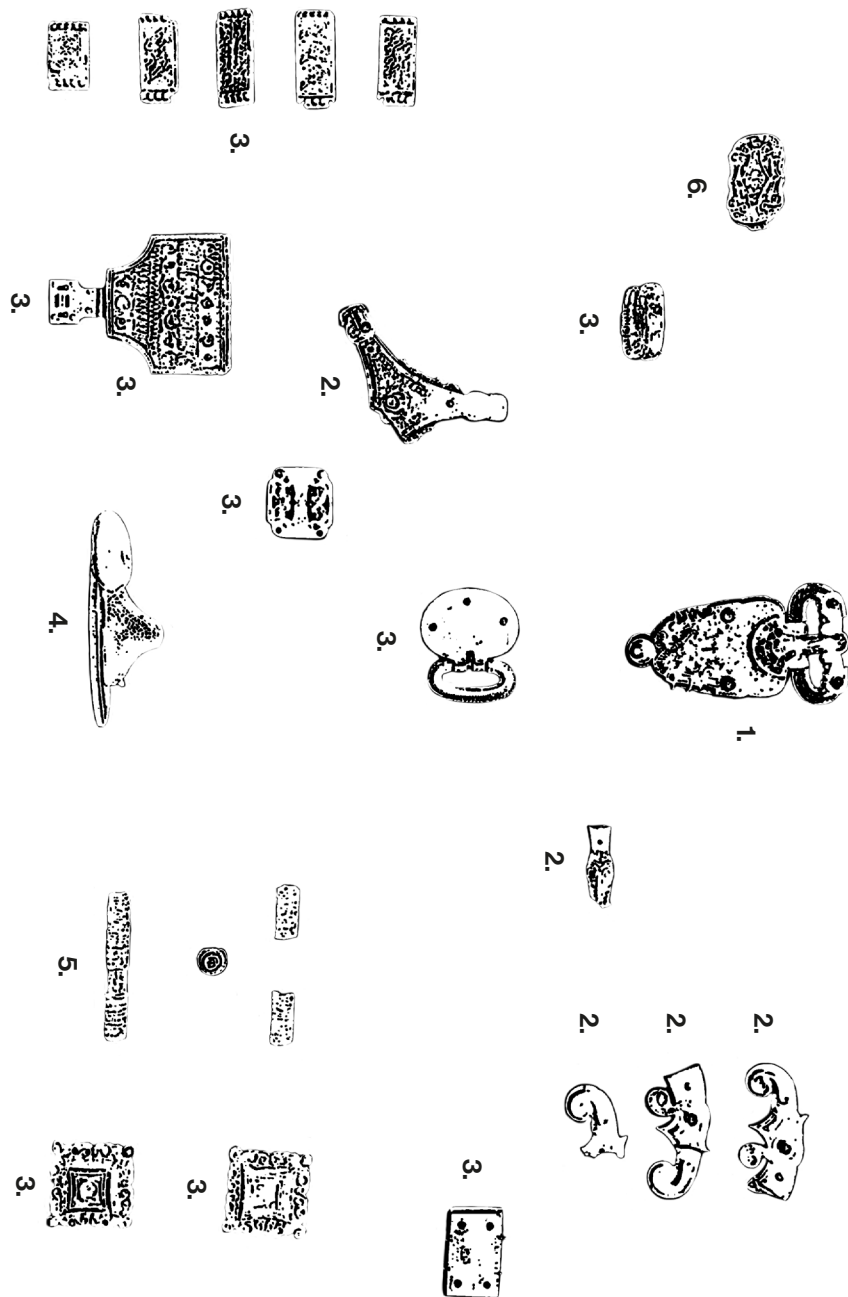




3. The Åker chieftain's protectors

These objects come from the grave of a powerful chieftain who died some-time in the late 500s. We see the remains of the war gear he took with him to the grave; a sword and a sword belt with an ornate buckle, and several small decorative belt mounts. His shield is also decorated with figures of silver and gold.

The decorations are full of powerful animals; fierce beasts, birds of prey and a "wild boar-warrior". Did the mighty animals give the Åker chieftain strength when he went into battle? Did they frighten his enemies?

The Åker chieftain's gear was exclusive and expensive. It gleamed of silver and gold, with details enhanced with red garnets and black silver. The beautiful pieces resemble similar finds from other chieftain's graves in Scandinavia, England and the Continent. This indicates that the Åker chieftain must have been part of a large and powerful network.

In the case

Finds from Åker, Hamar, Innlandet (Hedmark)

1. The large buckle is a fabulous work of craftsmanship. In the centre, we see a man with a large moustache, his hair parted down the middle. His legs are bent outwards, and turn into two wild boar heads with tusks sticking up from their lower jaws. On both sides of the man's head and at the top of the buckle, we see birds of prey with large curled beaks. C4901
2. Bird's heads with hooked beaks were mounted on the back of the shield, and could not be seen. Perhaps their job was to protect the warrior and give him strength? C4903, C8347, C14786, C38000/1, 2a og b
3. Birds, snakes and other animals decorated the warrior's belts and straps. C4902, C5651-2, C5897, C10379, C14785, C16605, C21406, C38000/4-9
4. On the top of the chieftain's sword was a pommel with a ring. C16604
5. The scabbard was reinforced with decorated mounts C38000/10 and a 'sword bead'. C38000/12
6. Birds of prey with red eyes and cool hairdos show their teeth. From a mount. C21406