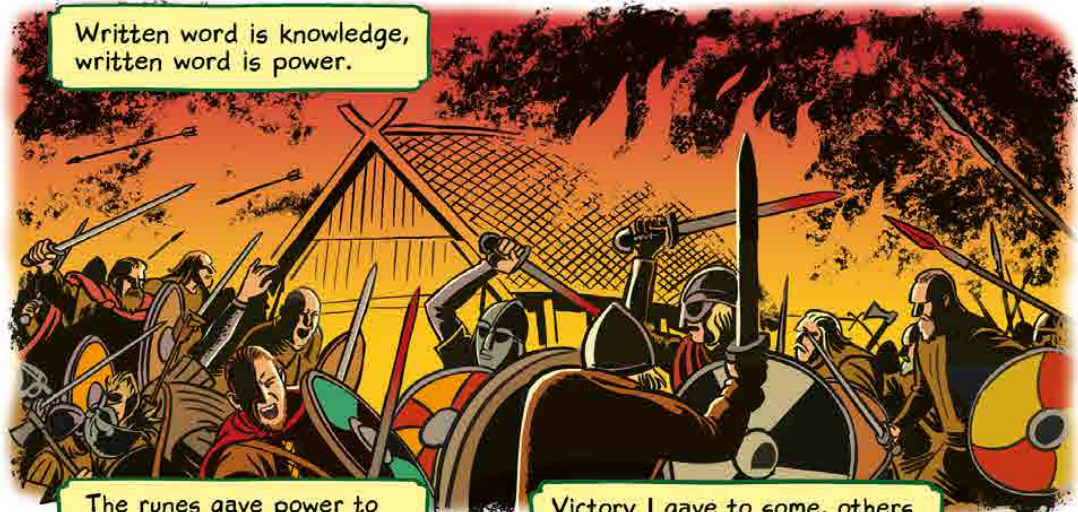


For nine nights I hung in the windswept tree.
Spear-wounded, given to Odin, given to myself.
No food, nothing to drink.
But I grasped the the runes.





Written word is knowledge,
written word is power.

The runes gave power to
those, whom I first taught.

Victory I gave to some, others
had their weapons slung in to
the bog, as gifts for the gods.



The names of the defeated
could be read on their lost
possessions.



Followed by hasty riders,
I came in from the steppes.
As fast as if my
steed had eight legs.



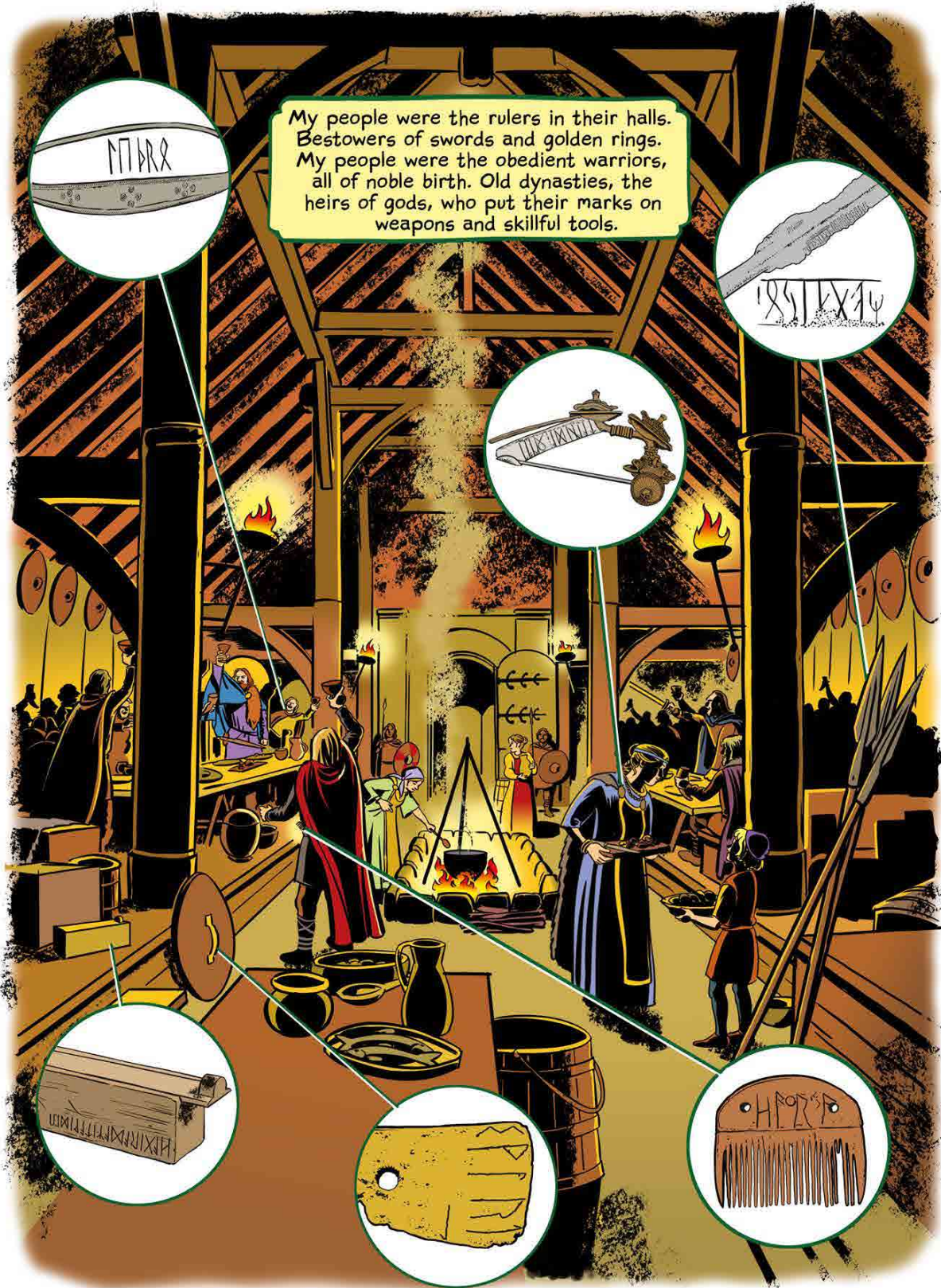
My spear
was slung at
the enemy.

'The High One'
I was called.



Princes adorned their weapons and
rings with runes. It gave them prestige,
it showed of their power.





My people were the rulers in their halls. Bestowers of swords and golden rings. My people were the obedient warriors, all of noble birth. Old dynasties, the heirs of gods, who put their marks on weapons and skillful tools.

I brought them up to greatness; I flung them to the ground. They fought against eternity, sought immortality in legends, sought power as unshakeable as rocks.

Einang Stone
"I God-Guest wrote the runes"

The first runestones were raised along the norwegian fjords, in the earliest days of the letters. But the runes were rarely set in stones.

They usually were carved in wood and bone — and easily destroyed by time and ages.

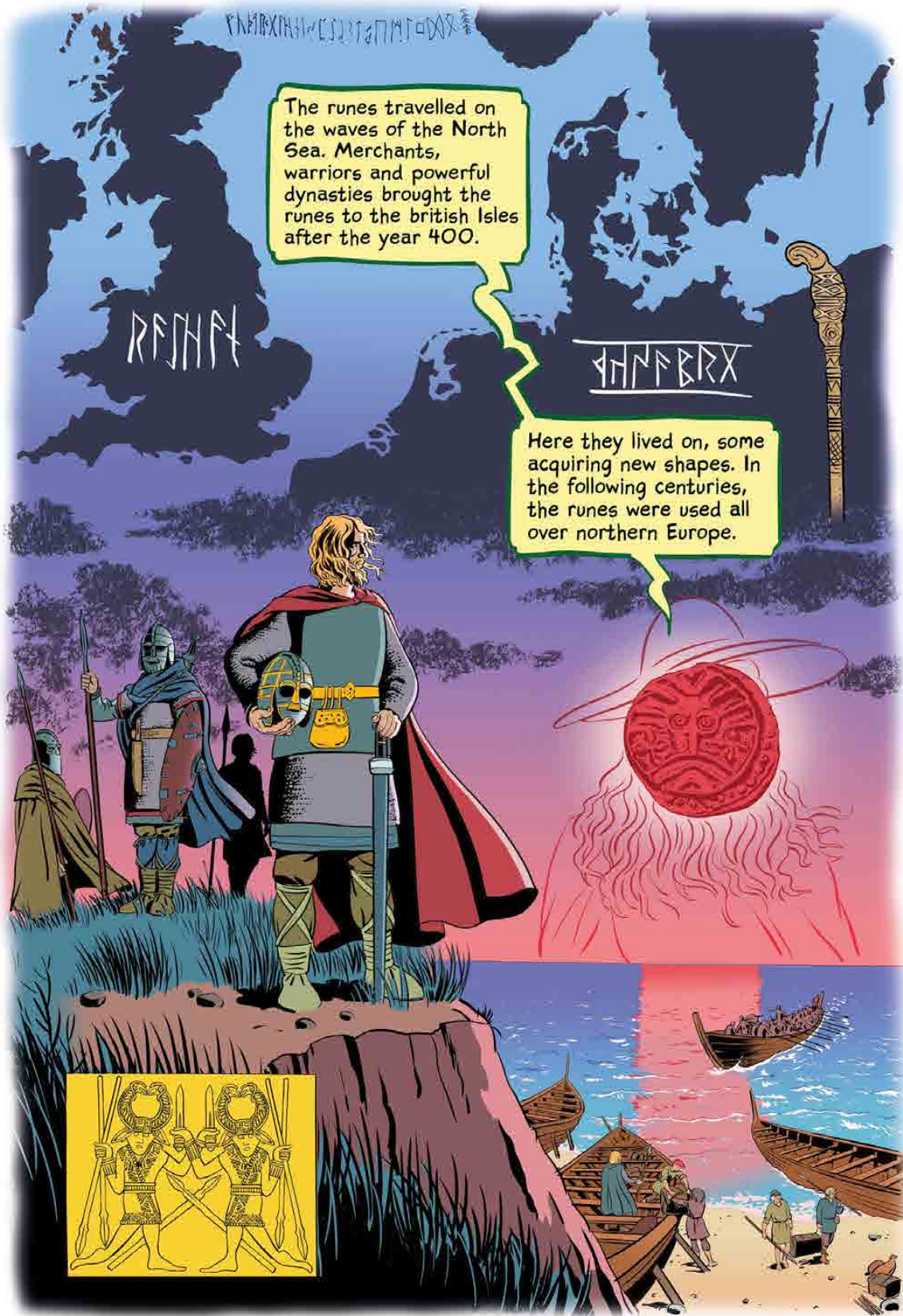
Nogganvik Stone

Øverby Stone

Kragehul Spear

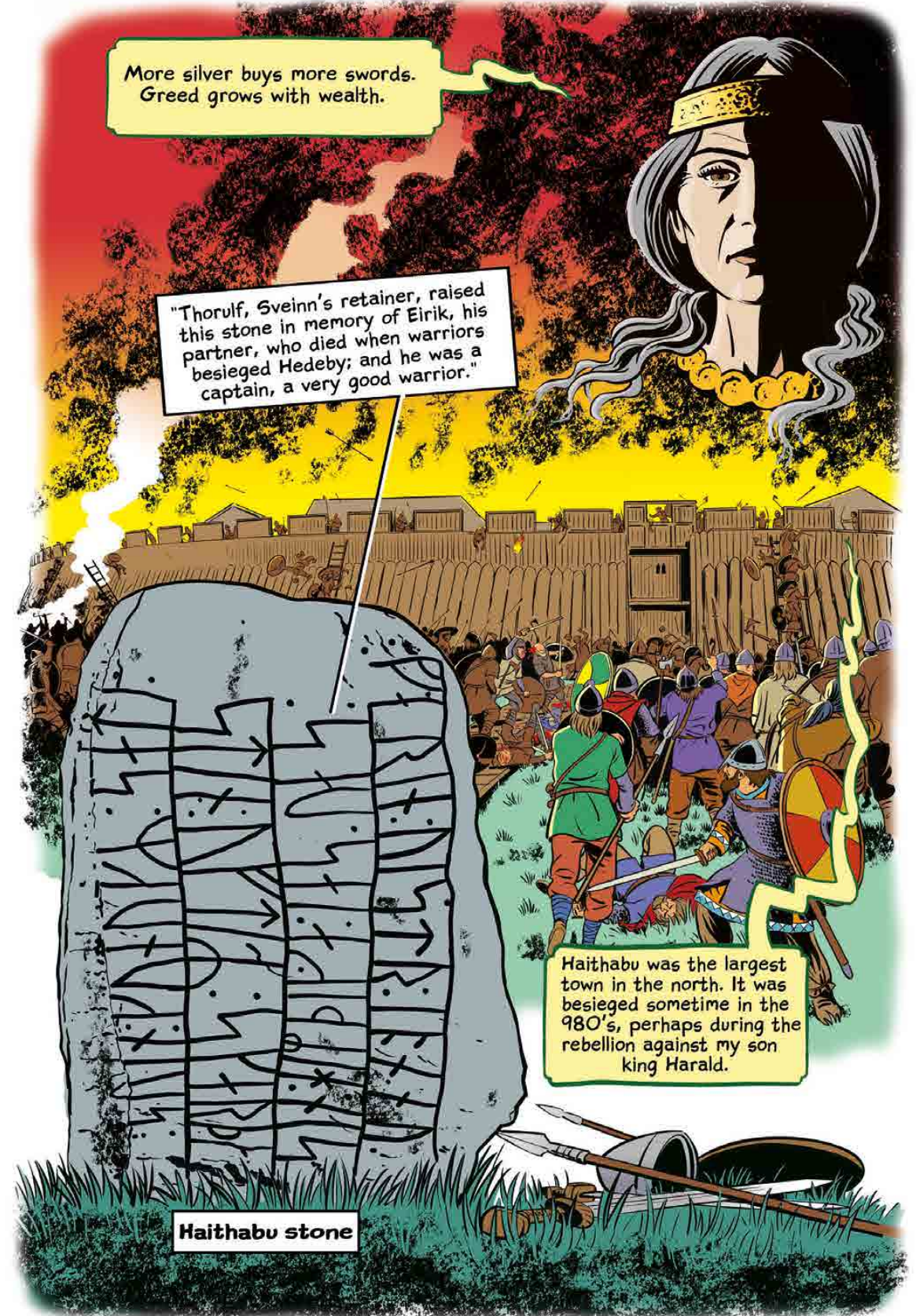
"JEG ASGILS ERIL HEDDER MUHA ...KRAFT...VIER (??)..."

"I Asgil's Eril is kalled Muha ... power ... hallow ..."



The runes travelled on the waves of the North Sea. Merchants, warriors and powerful dynasties brought the runes to the British Isles after the year 400.

Here they lived on, some acquiring new shapes. In the following centuries, the runes were used all over northern Europe.



More silver buys more swords. Greed grows with wealth.

"Thorulf, Sveinn's retainer, raised this stone in memory of Eirik, his partner, who died when warriors besieged Hedeby; and he was a captain, a very good warrior."

Haithabu was the largest town in the north. It was besieged sometime in the 980's, perhaps during the rebellion against my son king Harald.

Haithabu stone