*Leszek Gardela*¹

Shield-maidens and Norse Amazons Reconsidered

Women and Weapons in Viking Age Burials in Norway

Abstract

This paper provides new insights into the custom of burying women with weapons in Viking Age Norway. Possible female graves furnished with swords, axe heads, spearheads and arrowheads are known from Rogaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Telemark, Trøndelag and Vestfold, and although each case is unique, they share some intriguing confluences. In addition to weapons, their assemblages often contain high quality jewellery, curated objects, amulets, and items imported from distant locations. This paper investigates various source critical and methodological issues associated with these finds and situates them in an interdisciplinary context, seeking to propose new ideas on who the deceased were in life and how their mourners wanted to remember them in death.

Introduction

Since 2017, the re-interpretation of grave Bj.581 from Birka in Uppland, Sweden, has attracted unparalleled attention from the media, history aficionados and professional academics. This has led to new discussions regarding aspects of funerary archaeology, gender identity and Viking Age warfare. As a result of aDNA analyses of the surviving skeletal material, the occupant of the grave, previously regarded as a high-ranking male Viking warrior, was re-identified as a biological woman (Hedenstierna-Jonson, Kjellström, Zachrisson et al. 2017; Price, Hedenstierna-Jonson, Zachrisson et al. 2019). The implications of this unexpected reassessment are certainly manifold and – at least in some regards – ground-breaking. Scholars should, however, be wary of using this extraordinary burial as an excuse for re-writing everything they think they knew about Viking Age women.

Bj.581 is neither the first nor the only example of a biological woman buried with weapons. This is evident from extensive regional surveys of funerary practices (e.g. Svanberg 2003; Pedersen 2014), as well as new investigations conducted during the *Amazons of the North* project led by me in 2018–9. They show that there are actually over a dozen Scandinavian presumed female inhumation and cremation graves containing Viking Age

Contact: Leszek Gardela, E-mail: leszek.gardela@natmus.dk

¹ National Museum of Denmark

weapons or artefacts with martial connotations (for previous overviews, see Gardela 2013; 2018). In light of current research, Norway boasts the largest number of such graves in the Nordic region but the presumptions may be clouded by the fact that Norwegian graves are generally more lavishly furnished than graves elsewhere in the Viking world. Over the last few decades, Danish and Swedish female graves containing weapons have been discussed in considerable detail (e.g. Christensen 1982; Lauritsen and Kastholm Hansen 2003; Gardela 2013; Kastholm 2015), while their Norwegian counterparts still remain largely unknown to international scholars. Excavation reports and Norwegian museum yearbooks from the 19th and early 20th centuries provide limited information about the contents and contexts of these graves and are often devoid of high quality drawings and photographs (e.g. Guldberg 1901; Mørck 1901; Schetelig 1911). More recent discoveries of Norwegian female burials containing weapons or objects with martial connotations have been published to a higher standard (e.g. Engh 2009; Resi 2013). The focus, however, has typically rested on descriptive presentations of the artefactual material and little attention has been afforded to the symbolism of the burial assemblages. The full potential these graves might have for advancing the broader field of Old Norse and Viking scholarship has thus not been embraced. Previous studies (including my own) tended to concentrate either on specific female graves with weapons (mainly from Sweden and Denmark) or provided cross-regional overviews of the evidence. This contribution will focus on the Norwegian material, which will be viewed in the context of local and supra-local expressions of mortuary behaviour. In so doing, this paper sets out to introduce the important archaeological evidence from Norway to the international scholarly community. It also aspires to feed its conclusions and their implications into a wider interdisciplinary debate on the phenomenon of armed women in the Viking world. Furthermore, the present study addresses a number of critically important – yet often neglected – methodological issues pertaining to the general study of weapon graves. The article is supplemented by new high-resolution photographs of relevant burial assemblages. These illustrate decorative and typological features and document the current state of preservation of the artefacts. The article also provides reconstructions of selected graves through artistic impressions of how they may have appeared during the funeral.

State of the Art

Discussions on female roles in the Viking Age have never been held in vacuums. Consequently, they have often reflected – consciously or not – the current socio-political *Zeitgeist* and the theoretical and methodological trends in the broader world of academia. The weapon grave from Nordre Kjølén in Åsnes in Hedmark, Norway, is presumably that of a woman, and the scholarly ideas regarding the identity of its occupant deserve particular attention. Already in 1901 it was perceived as the grave of a ‘shield-maiden’ and according to Gustav C. Mørck (1901: 74) this remarkable find indicated that women warriors had really existed in the Viking Age. He saw their absence in Icelandic Family Sagas as a result of the historically removed and somewhat biased cultural context in which these texts had been put to parchment. In a European socio-political early-1900s context, when the suffragette movement was still at a nascent stage and women often underappreciated with few opportunities to act in the public arena, Mørck’s interpretation was both innovative and remarkably bold. Despite its potentially wider implications, however, the grave from Nordre

Kjølen seemingly failed to capture the interest of scholars and the general public. Soon, the discovery of the spectacular Oseberg ship (1903–4) stole all the attention. Hence, the alleged ‘shield-maiden’ from Nordre Kjølen was practically forgotten in academia.

After many decades of downplaying or dismissing the significance of women in Norse society and considering them as silent and passive companions of men (for a review of this research period, see Løkka 2014) a change was due. In the 1970s and 80s Scandinavian and international researchers began to take a greater interest in exploring and engaging with feminist approaches to the past (Sørensen 2004: 16–40). In Viking scholarship in particular, Liv Helga Dommasnes (e.g. 1979; 1987) reinvigorated the field by demonstrating the potential of burial archaeology for illuminating female roles and ranks in Viking Age society. In one of her studies, she (Dommasnes 1987: 75) argued that the occurrence of ‘male’ objects in female graves could indicate that ‘[...] these women had taken over more responsibilities than those usual to a housewife, responsibilities traditionally belonging to a man’.

The pioneering work of Dommasnes led to the gradual re-interpretation of Norse women as resourceful, powerful and proud, an image which was eagerly discussed and refined by other academics over the course of the next two decades (e.g. Andersen, Dommasnes, Stefánsson et al. 1985; Mundal and Steinsland 1989; Stalsberg 1991; Mundal 1994). Various scholarly works released in the 1970s to 90s discussed the roles of Norse women as healers, travellers, merchants and farm managers. Little, however, was said about female association with martial activities.

Change came in 1986 when Carol Clover published an influential study investigating the circumstances that might have spurred Norse women to assume masculine identities. She focused her attention on the well-known *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks konungs* (Turville-Petre and Tolkien 1956), whose female heroine Hervör, the only descendant of the renowned berserker Angantýr, embarks on a quest to retrieve the famous sword Týrfingr from his mound. In her work Clover provided a compelling interpretation of why some women would have wanted to take up arms. She argued that the weapon which Hervör repossesses is ‘[...] more than a sword, more than a phallic symbol, and more than a literary binding device. It is “the emblematic representation of the larger patrimony”’ (Clover 1986: 38). Her core argument suggests that the principle of male inheritance was so strong that in certain circumstances (e.g. in the absence of male heirs) Norse women were compelled to step into masculine roles to become ‘in legend if not in life, [...] functional son[s]’ (Clover 1986: 39).

Clover’s (1986; 1993) pioneering studies of strong and resourceful female characters in Old Norse literature, who boldly assume masculine identities and effectively become ‘functional sons’ capable of securing their inheritance, are now considered as the cornerstones of medieval Scandinavian female lifeway research. Until recently, however, they have not been woven into archaeological discussions of female graves containing martial equipment (but see Gardela 2018: 392). The reasons for this omission are obscure but might reflect a reluctance among some scholars to look beyond the comfortable sphere of their own academic speciality. Another reason might be the reservations many Viking archaeologists had until at least the 1990s as to the validity of Old Norse sagas as textual sources, claiming that the texts had little to do with the historical realities of the Viking Age.

Much has changed in Viking and Old Norse studies generally and in scholarly approaches to female lifeways in the North in particular after the release of Neil Price’s (2002) highly acclaimed monograph *The Viking Way*. In this seminal study Price convincingly portrayed

Norse women as prominent *personae* in the social arena. He showed that they had the agency and capacity to become feared and revered ritual specialists whose far-reaching sphere of activity and influence extended from the homestead to the human and supernatural battlefield. In addition to exploring the lives and deeds of the enigmatic *völur* and other female sorceresses, Price (2002: 331–46) devoted considerable attention to the supernatural *valkyrjur* whose compound names often allude to weapons and the violent sights and sounds of armed conflict. On several occasions Price (2002: 337) also drew attention to Viking Age pendants and appliquéés that may have served as portable images of these remarkable entities. Thus, he demonstrated intriguing correlations between texts and tangible archaeological material, showing that the idea of armed women doubtlessly existed not only on the pages of medieval manuscripts but also in the minds of real Viking Age Scandinavians.

The foundational work of scholars like Dommasnes, Clover and Price have certainly paved the way for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between women and weapons in the Viking Age. Such subjects have also been discussed in the core studies of Judith Jesch (1991) and Jenny Jochens (1995; 1996), which comprehensively investigated the lifeways of Norse women using textual accounts and other sources. However, the first truly interdisciplinary approach to this theme was provided by Lydia Klos. In an article from 2006, she explored the idea of armed women from several different angles. Partly by looking at Old Norse and Continental European texts that mention arm-bearing females in Germanic societies and partly by scrutinising iconographic sources and presumed female graves containing martial equipment. Essentially, Klos saw these ambiguous women as operating ‘between two worlds’. She substantiated this theory by referring to the well-known passage from *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks konungs* where the Norse heroine Hervör, dressed as a man and using a male name, finds herself betwixt and between two worlds: life and death as well as the masculine and feminine spheres (Klos 2006: 28–9). Following in the footsteps of Lotte Motz (1980), Klos (2006: 30) observed that in the Norse world single women seem to have had more capacity to exercise their will than those who were married.

In an attempt to test the hypothesis that some real women of the Viking Age could participate in warfare, Klos pointed to a number of Viking Age female graves containing weapons. Acknowledging the persistent problem of determining the sex of a deceased (typically resulting from the absence of human remains), she argued that one way of tackling this issue might be by carefully considering other artefacts found in these graves. In her view, the presence of jewellery (especially oval brooches) alongside military equipment may be a strong indicator that the deceased was perceived as biologically female. This is a reasonable approach but one that can turn out to be a double-edged sword since in the Viking Age, in some rare instances, biological men could be buried with female goods (e.g. Price 2002: 271–2; 2020: 176). Furthermore, as Klos admitted, not all items that tend to be labelled as ‘weapons’ in archaeological reports were necessarily used for martial purposes. For instance, axes have numerous domestic applications and arrows can also be used for hunting (Klos 2006: 32; cf. Lund and Moen 2019).

The last two decades of archaeological investigation regarding the roles of Viking Age women (e.g. Coleman and Løkka 2014; Kjesrud and Løkka 2017; Moen 2019) bear witness of an increasing awareness of the various source critical and interpretative issues involved. This was something that previous scholarship tended to present in a cursory manner. Since so much of our knowledge about the past is based on mortuary evidence, it is crucial to

abstain from perceiving graves as fossilised images of the dead, directly mirroring who and what they were in life. Cutting-edge burial research, largely centred around Anglo-Saxon material but still immensely relevant for other periods and areas of Europe, including Scandinavia, has been performed by scholars such as Martin Carver (1992: 181), Heinrich Härke (2014) and Howard Williams (2016). It suggests that instead of seeing graves as ‘mirrors of life’ and straightforward ‘reconstructions’ of identity and social organisation, a more stimulating and careful approach would be to view them as ‘poetic impressions’. These would be distorted compared to the way the dead would have seen themselves, instead largely illustrating how the mourners wanted to remember (or forget) them. Adopting such a theoretical stance to research on female graves containing martial equipment would obviously have a wide range of implications and lead to new challenges. When unravelling the identities of these people and learning more about their social and natural environment, even the tiniest details are important – everything in the surviving burial record could be of significance.

Methods

All in all, c. 30 Viking Age graves belonging to presumed women, buried with martial equipment, have been found in the areas of present day Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Regrettably, only c. 50% of these were documented professionally *in situ* and survive in conditions that allow credible archaeological research (cf. Gardela 2018: 397–8; for revisions to the corpus, see Gardela 2021). These graves contain objects such as swords, spearheads, and shields (discovered singly or forming ‘weapon sets’) as well as multifunctional items such as axe heads and arrowheads. The Norwegian evidence, the main focus for this study, has been assembled by me and is derived from archival reports, museum year-books (e.g. *Bergen Museums Årbok*), academic articles and first-hand examinations of artefact collections in four of the five University museums in Norway (the University Museum of Bergen, the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo, the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) Museum in Trondheim). Aiming towards a holistic and multifaceted understanding of this diverse material, careful attention has been paid to not only the martial equipment but also to other artefacts from the graves. Most of these have been measured and photographed to ensure up-to-date documentation of their current condition. Furthermore, several reconstructions of inhumation graves have been prepared by a graphic artist. Also, a miniature copper-alloy axe from a grave at Svingesæter in Sogn og Fjordane (cf. Gardela and Toplak 2020) has been replicated by a professional jeweller with the aim of testing its functional aspects.

One issue associated with the Norwegian burial material is that some of the graves from the 19th and early 20th centuries were discovered by farmers and amateurs who had no prior experience and training in handling and recording osteological and archaeological material. The aforementioned inhumation grave from Nordre Kjølén exemplifies what happened. It was excavated in August 1900 by a farmer who had removed all the artefacts from their original context before the professional archaeologist arrived (Guldberg 1901; Mørck 1901). Therefore, no *in situ* drawings of the burial tableaux were made. As a consequence, our current knowledge regarding the original layout of this grave relies solely on the *post factum* personal communication between the farmer and the archaeologist, Gustav C.

Mørck, who eventually came to examine the site. It is noteworthy, however, that having personally seen the mound, Mørck (1901: 71) was convinced that only one individual had been buried there. Another noteworthy aspect of the Nordre Kjølén burial is that the associated artefacts remained in the farmer's possession for several years. It was not until after a fire at the farm that the grave goods were donated to the museum in Kristiania/Oslo. At that point the assemblage was already incomplete, e.g. lacking an iron shield boss, which had deteriorated completely.

The second general issue with Norwegian mortuary archaeology pertains to a persistent tendency to interpret the sex of the deceased based on artefactual assemblages alone, especially when there is no remaining bone material. With the exception of the territories in the north, Norwegian soil tends to be very acidic, which means that prehistoric and medieval osteological remains are rarely found intact. In fact, a significant proportion does not survive at all (but see Holck 1986). Scholars have been striving to tackle this issue since the early days of Viking archaeology (e.g. Shetelig 1912). Over time, using comparative evidence from other parts of Scandinavia (where bone preservation is more favourable), a consensus has been reached to associate jewellery (e.g. oval, round, trefoil and animal-head brooches) with women and weapons with men (e.g. Petré 1993; Svanberg 2003: 23; Price 2020: 175–6). Recent international studies have revealed certain fallacies in this assumption (e.g. Moen 2019; Lund and Moen 2019). They suggest that it promotes a problematic and simplistic correlation between the sex of the deceased (as well as their gender) and the 'sex' of the associated grave goods. This is something Swedish archaeologists ironically call 'sexing metal' (Price 2020: 175). One result of the traditionalist approach is that individuals who may have had nuanced or fluid gender identities completely disappear under the archaeological radar. Another consequence is that it promotes a very literal/functional understanding of grave goods, downplaying or even dismissing their symbolic role in mortuary practices.

The third issue pertains to the state of preservation of the finds from female weapon graves, especially those made of metal. Most of the items survive in decent condition but corrosion build up hampers any ocular attempts to determine if they saw practical use prior to their deposition in the graves. Without specialist metallographic analyses it is challenging or near impossible to determine whether the swords, axe heads or other militaria were ever used as weapons (by the deceased or anyone else). They may have been manufactured only to serve as symbolic 'grave goods' and/or 'theatrical props' to manifest status, beliefs, power etc. during a funerary ceremony.

To integrate a sound level of source criticism in the following overview, I will perform a three-step analysis. Firstly, by evaluating if the artefacts buried in these graves could be used for martial purposes. Secondly, by considering if their placement in relation to the deceased and other elements of the grave deviates in any way from the most common patterns as well as if anything suggests that they had non-utilitarian or symbolic meanings. Thirdly, by approaching the assemblages in a holistic manner, considering their overall composition and local and supra-local context. When relevant, other source categories, such as written accounts and folklore, will be employed to enhance the overall interpretation.

Location	Grave goods	Museum number	References
Aunvoll, Nord Trøndelag, Norway	Sword (Petersen's type H or I; the pommel is missing), comb, sickle, shears, c. 120 iron fragments (nails and rivets), whetstone, eight gaming pieces made of bone, round white stone (possibly a gaming piece), bone fragments of an adult dog. A spearhead (similar to Rygh's type R474) and a red/brown glass bead were found in the spoil heap after the excavation. These items probably come from the same grave	T20248	Stenvik 2005
Løve, Vestfold, Norway	Axe head (Petersen's type H), knife, at least 20 beads made of various materials (several dated to the Merovingian Period), copper-alloy ring, three horse crampons, a horse bridle, <i>ranglel</i> rattle, textile remains (wool) with gold thread	C52536	Gardeta 2013: 286–7; Resi 2013
Mårem, Telemark, Norway	Axe head (Petersen's type H), oval brooches (similar to Rygh's type R655), round brooch decorated in the Borre style (similar to Rygh's type R666), copper-alloy tube with fragments of gold foil inside, copper-alloy ring, silver wire ring (probably worn on one of the fingers of the right hand), well preserved textile fragments (wool), sickle, knife, six nails, iron ferrule, pieces of quartz, pieces of burnt clay, nine slag fragments, indeterminate fragments of wood, animal vertebrae. The grave also included three strings of glass beads (1. around the neck of the deceased; 2. suspended from the oval brooches; 3. around the right wrist). The beads (61 in total) were made of glass, mosaic glass, rock crystal, faience, stone and lead. Some of the beads could originate from very distant locations, including south-eastern Europe, the Middle East and Egypt	C53630	Engh 2009: 152–6, 162–4; Gardeta 2013: 287–8
Nordre Kjølén, Hedmark, Norway	Sword (Petersen's type M), axe head (Petersen's type G), spearhead (Petersen's type K), arrowheads, file, whetstone, shield boss (similar to Rygh's type R563; now missing)	C22541	Guldborg 1901; Mørck 1901; Hernæs 1984; Holck 1984; Gardeta 2018: 393, 398–9
Sanddal, Sogn og Fjordane, Norway	Axe head (Petersen's type D), sickle, large weaving sword, oval brooches (similar to Rygh's type R657), silver wire chain, four spindle whorls, ten loom weights, fragmented whalebone plaque, whetstone, strike-a-light, indeterminate iron fragments (possibly parts of a chest), 13 small stones (possible gaming pieces), horse bit, rein distributors	B11413	Aannestad, Glørstad 2017: 162–3

Table 1. List of presumed female inhumation graves from Viking Age Norway furnished with swords, spearheads, axe heads and arrowheads.

Women and weapons in Viking Age Norway: a concise overview

The following descriptions of presumed female burials containing weapons have been condensed to a minimum. The accompanying table (Table 1) includes information about the entire assemblages and details of their typological and chronological classification.

The richly furnished inhumation grave from Nordre Kjølén in Åsnes, Hedmark, is probably quite familiar to international researchers and history enthusiasts by now (Fig. 1). It has recently been displayed at the *Vikingr* exhibition at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo and was also featured in the National Geographic Documentary *Viking Warrior Women* (2020). The farmer who excavated the Nordre Kjølén mound in 1900 claimed that it contained the remains of a single individual buried supine, flanked by several weapons: on the

Figure 1. Artistic reconstruction of a presumed Viking Age female grave from Nordre Kjølén, Hedmark. Illustration: Mirosław Kuźma. Copyright: Leszek Gardela.

Figure 2. Sword (a), axe head (b), spearhead (c) and arrowheads (d) from Nordre Kjølén. Photos: Leszek Gardela.

left-hand side by a sword and on the right by an axe head as well as a spearhead (Fig. 2). A shield with an iron boss, which had been placed under the head of the deceased was also found, along with a set of arrowheads from an unspecified location in the grave. Other grave goods included a large whetstone and a small metal tool, probably a file. By the feet of the deceased lay a horse (Guldberg 1901; Mørck 1901), likely slaughtered during the funeral (on horse sacrifices, see Müller-Wille 1972).

The skeletal remains from Nordre Kjølén were remarkably well preserved. According to Gustav Guldberg (1901: 9), the anthropologist who studied the osteological material, the human bones belonged to a gracile female, c. 20 years old when she died. The sex estimation as well as other particulars of the deceased's physique were confirmed after a follow-up osteological investigation carried out in 1984 by Per Hernæs and Per Holck. Interestingly, Hernæs dismissed Mørck's 'shield-maiden' interpretation and argued that the size of the sword grip would have been too large for such a gracile individual, and that she would have been unable to use it effectively in combat. In contrast to Bj.581, however, the Nordre Kjølén skeleton has always been regarded as a biological woman (e.g. Jochens 1996: 88; Klos 2006: 32; Gardela 2018: 393, 398–9; Moen 2019: 105; Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir 2020: 60–1), although it still lacks a genetic analysis.

When moving further south and south-west from Hedmark, the region of Vestfold is the area with the largest number of presumed female burials containing martial equipment. At least three such burials (graves Ka. 3, Ka. 10 and Ka. 16) are known from the 9th- and 10th-centuries cemeteries adjacent to the Viking Age coastal trading town of Kaupang (Stylegar 2007; Moen 2011; Moen 2019: 105, 173, 175; Lund and Moen 2019). However, the fact that they are all cremation burials without surviving osteological material is a major issue since the sex estimations are based solely on artefactual assemblages. The assumptions that the deceased were females rely solely on the fact that, apart from H and K axe-head types categorised from Jan Petersen's (1919) typology, the graves contained domestic tools and items conventionally associated with adult female attire (e.g. oval brooches). Additionally, given the early date of the excavation (the graves were discovered by Nicolay Nicolaysen in the 19th century – see Stylegar 2007: 69–70), as well as the cursory nature of the documentation, it is impossible to determine whether they actually were single graves or held the remains of two or more individuals.

A 10th-century inhumation grave from Løve near Larvik in Vestfold, which contained a single individual buried with a horse, also deserves closer attention (Resi 2013). In addition to an axe head, this grave contained a knife and various small items suspended from a necklace with multi-coloured beads that probably held amuletic properties. The characteristics of some beads indicate that they originate from the Migration Period (Resi 2013: 118–9). Thus, they could be seen as curated antiques, perhaps manifesting links with the distant past and/or claims to power and ownership (cf. Røstad 2018). The positioning of the axe head, close to the deceased's head, is unusual. In most cases axe heads are found by the hips or around the lower legs in Viking Age graves (e.g. Petersen 1919; Pedersen 2014: 202–5; Kotowicz 2018; but see Blindheim and Heyerdahl-Larsen 1995: 127–8). The Løve grave is also a very peculiar example of human-horse relations (Fig. 3). Although bone preservation was poor, the layout of the surviving skeletal remains implies that the animal had been interred on the right-hand side of the deceased with its neck resting by her feet. This is very unusual, since in Viking Age Scandinavia horses (or horse-body parts) tended to be placed

Figure 3. Artistic reconstruction of a presumed Viking Age female grave from Løve, Vestfold. Illustration: Mirosław Kuźma. Copyright: Leszek Gardela.

in the foot end of a grave, sometimes on elevated platforms. While burials of humans and horses are widely attested in the Viking world (e.g. Arbman 1943; Sikora 2003–4), horses and parts thereof are extremely rare in single female graves (e.g. Price 2010: 142–5; Ulriksen 2018), which makes the Løve burial even more remarkable. Also noteworthy from Løve, is a special kind of iron rattle, known as *rangle*, probably used for religious purposes, which was placed on the animal's chest (cf. Petersen 1951: 48–50; Lund 1974). Further, an elaborate bridle with decorative fittings was found near the horse's head, implying that this was an animal of special importance. The presence of iron crampons for the horse's hooves could imply various things: e.g. that the funeral took place in winter, or that the mourners believed that the deceased would depart to a cold part of the otherworld, or even that the grave was furnished with equipment for different seasons of the year. Collectively, the unusual features of the funerary record strongly suggest that the individual from Løve was someone extraordinary.

Although unique in most aspects, certain features of the Løve burial are comparable to two other opulent burials: Gausel in Rogaland, Norway, and Trekroner-Grydehøj in Sjælland, Denmark (Price 2010: 142–5; Armstrong Oma 2018; Ulriksen 2018). The former (also known as the grave of the 'Gausel Queen') has been interpreted as that of a woman practicing magic, due to the presence of a large iron staff (a so called sorcery or *seiðr* staff, see Price 2002: 192; Gardela 2016). The Gausel burial also included an elaborate horse bridle and an object interpreted either as a shield boss or a lamp fragment. These not only add to its ambiguity but also reflect a tendency, observed elsewhere in the Viking world, to furnish graves of presumed ritual specialists with unusual goods. Grave A505 from Trekroner-Grydehøj, which held the remains of a woman buried with several animals (including a horse and a dog), also contained one item with martial connotations – a unique copper-alloy staff which resembles an arrow or a spear. Its features and other details from the grave strongly suggest that it served as an emblem of authority, similar to the iron staffs from Norway. In conclusion, viewed in the context of other lavishly furnished female graves containing horses, the non-normative burial from Løve has parallels. They suggest that the (presumed) woman lived her life as a ritual specialist and that she was laid to rest with the tools of her trade, including the axe (head).

Also worth mentioning are the two axe heads found in the famous 9th-century Oseberg grave, which held the remains of two biological women (Christensen 1992: 88; Holck 2006). In this case, however, it is unclear whether the axes were associated with the deceased or even if they can be considered as proper grave goods. They may have been items used in the construction of the burial chamber, or possibly tools left by 'robbers' entering the grave some years after the funeral (cf. Bill and Daly 2012). In a typological sense, similar to several cases discussed above, the Oseberg axes are objects that would have been commonly used in woodworking and thus cannot necessarily be interpreted as weapons.

Another interesting presumed female inhumation grave was found in a small Viking Age cemetery at Mårem in Telemark (Engh 2009: 152–6). It was excavated in 2003 to a very high standard and even though the skeletal remains were almost completely decomposed there is no doubt that it held the remains of a single person (Fig. 4). Various adornments in the grave convey an idea of the lavish burial attire of the deceased. Two oval copper-alloy brooches connected with a string of beads covered part of the chest and probably served as fasteners for an apron worn over a long dress. A bead necklace was found by the neck, along

Figure 4. Artistic reconstruction of a presumed Viking Age female grave from Mårem, Telemark, Illustration: Mirosław Kuźma. Copyright: Leszek Gardela.

with a round copper-alloy brooch decorated in the Borre style, probably a small item of jewellery that fastened a cloak or shawl. A third string of beads was found by what would have been the right wrist, implying that it might actually have been worn on the wrist. A silver-wire ring discovered nearby probably adorned one of the right-hand fingers. Another, more puzzling item found at Mårem was a copper-alloy tube, resembling objects commonly regarded as needle-cases (Fig. 5). Instead of needles, though, this contained small gold-foil fragments. Similar finds from different parts of Europe imply that the foil might have had a gnostic inscription (cf. Engh 2009: 153–4). In addition to the different pieces of jewellery, the Mårem grave included an axe head (Fig. 6), placed by the left thigh and an iron sickle below the feet. Six nails, possibly from a wooden chest, were also found in the burial pit along with fragments of iron, slag, quartz and burnt clay. As noted above, bone preservation was very poor, but it is possible that the grave also contained a small animal or at least parts of one, as implied by a single non-human vertebrae fragment.

In their recent article about women in Norwegian Viking Age boat and ship burials, Hanne Lovise Aannestad and Zanette Tsigaridas Glørstad (2017) mention a grave from Frafjord in Gjesdal, Rogaland, suggesting that it was a female buried with weapons. According to an unpublished report from the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger, this grave was discovered by an amateur in 1955 and hence not professionally documented *in situ*. Similar to several other graves in Norway discussed above, no osteological material had survived, which means that the sex estimation, if one was made, was based exclusively on the artefactual assemblage. The finds from the Frafjord grave include an iron shield boss and an axe head (Fig. 7) as well as textile implements, possible parts of a bridle and several indeterminate iron fragments. The size and number of iron rivets discovered inside the Frafjord grave suggest that the boat was around 7 m long and 1.7 m wide. Although the presence of textile implements (i.e. objects that are rarely found in male graves in Viking

Figure 5. Copper-alloy container from Mårem, Telemark. Photos: Leszek Gardela.

Figure 6. Axe from Mårem, Telemark. Photo: Mårten Teigen, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo. CC BY-SA 4.0

Figure 7. Axe (a, b), shield boss (c; not to scale) and horse bit (d) from a Viking Age grave from Frafjord, Rogaland. Photos: Leszek Gardela.

Age Scandinavia) may indicate that this was a female burial, it is impossible to rule out that the Frafjord grave contained two bodies, one of whom might have been biologically male. Due to the lack of osteological remains and *in situ* documentation of the original grave layout, it cannot be considered as an obvious example of a female weapon grave.

At least two possible female graves with martial connotations are known from the county of Sogn og Fjordane. The first is a 10th-century cremation grave from Terum in Aurland furnished with artefacts including jewellery, spinning implements and tools (Dommasnes 1979: 110–1). Small fragments of corroded iron suggest that it may also have contained a wooden chest with fittings. In addition, the Terum grave held two poorly preserved tanged-type iron arrowheads (Fig. 8). Although female artefacts dominate the assemblage, the possibility of a two person opposite-sex burial cannot be ruled out.

A second 10th-century boat burial, from Sanddal, Jølster in Sogn og Fjordane, containing an axe head may also have held the remains of a woman (Aannestad and Glørstad 2017: 162–3). Much of its assemblage can be attributed to female attire, including two oval brooches, a silver-wire chain and various implements for textile production (Fig. 9). Additionally, the Sanddal grave was furnished with equestrian equipment: an iron horse bit and two or three iron strap/rein distributors. Indeterminate fragments of iron probably represent the remains of a chest. One particularly puzzling feature is 13 small stones, whose oval shape would have made them impractical as gaming pieces and their true purpose difficult to gauge.

Figure 8. Two arrowheads (a), a woodworking tool (b) and cremated bone (c) from a Viking Age grave from Terum, Sogn og Fjordane. Photos: Leszek Gardela.

Figure 9. Axe from a presumed Viking Age female grave from Sanddal, Sogn og Fjordane. Photos: Leszek Gardela.

Another possible example of a female boat burial, furnished with at least one weapon, was discovered in 1981 at Aunvoll in Nord Trøndelag during construction work. Part of the grave had been damaged as a result of mechanical digging, but fortunately the rest of its contents was professionally excavated by NTNU (Stenvik 2005). The deceased had been buried supine and was accompanied by a broad range of goods including: a sword (Fig. 10), eight gaming pieces, a round white stone, a sickle, a whetstone, a file, shears, a knife and a comb. Interestingly, the Aunvoll grave also contained bone fragments of an adult dog, comparable in size to a Norwegian *buhund*. Sometime after the excavation, a spearhead and a glass bead were found in the spoil heap, along with numerous fragments of iron nails, probably all from the same grave. Osteological analyses of the surviving bone material imply that the individual from Aunvoll was a woman who died at the age of 19–20. One scholar has suggested this person to be a ‘Trøndelag-Amazon’ (Stenvik 2005). Since osteological features of such young individuals can be ambiguous, a verifying aDNA analysis would be desirable.

Apart from the examples discussed above, excavations have revealed that several other presumed female graves contained weapons or multifunctional items with martial connotations. One, from Hopperstad in Sogn og Fjordane contained a heavy axe-like wood-working iron tool, which could have been used as a weapon. It is possible that in a funerary context such an object would have been associated with ideas of ship building and sea travel, activities that may be connected to, e.g. warfare and trade (Dommasnes 1987).

Figure 10. Sword (a) and spearhead (b) from a Viking Age female grave from Aunvoll, Nord Trøndelag. Photos: Leszek Gardela.

The lack of bone material presents a problem in many of the poorly documented Norwegian graves discovered in the 19th century. Although they contained iron staffs and weapons, accurate sex estimations are almost impossible. Regardless of archaeological preservation and documentation problems, textual sources and folklore, as we shall see below, support the idea that Viking Age women who dealt with magic may have used weapons as status symbols and/or ritual tools.

The critical overview provided in this section has shown that approaching and interpreting possible female graves containing martial equipment is a challenging task. The burials in Kaupang, Terum and Frafjord are problematic, not least since they are cremation graves (where bone material is practically non-existent), but also because of lacking or very superficial *in situ* documentation. More promising for further considerations are the graves from Nordre Kjølén and Aunvoll, both of which have been assessed as female based on osteological analyses. The graves from Mårem, Løve and Sanddal are also interesting (despite the lack of human bone material) since they are undoubtedly single inhumations and furnished with female-gendered jewellery and other grave goods typically associated with women.

Female graves with weapons: mirrors or poetic impressions of life?

The questions are still: what can actually be said about presumed women buried with weapons in Viking Age Norway? Are we capable of unravelling their identities using the methods at hand? As argued above, it is essential to consider the various source critical issues regarding documentation and state of preservation associated with the discovery of these graves. All cases do not have the same potential and some of the data is simply too vague for credible research.

Based on the above it is only the graves from Nordre Kjølén, Løve, Mårem, Sanddal and Aunvoll that can be plausibly interpreted as biologically female burials containing objects potentially used in martial contexts. Scholars need to be wary, however, of immediately assuming that these women were warriors in life.

The graves from Nordre Kjølén, Løve, Mårem and Sanddal all contained axes that can be classified as Jan Petersen's types: D in Sanddal, G in Nordre Kjølén and H in Løve and Mårem (Petersen 1919). Such axes, relatively small with narrow blades, were very common in Viking Age Norway. Nowadays they are regarded as multifunctional objects that could be used as tools as well as weapons (cf. Kotowicz 2018). In contrast to the broad-bladed axe from Bj.581 at Birka, neither can be regarded as a weapon *par excellence*. When discussing the role of these objects in the graves, close attention needs to be paid to how they were placed in relation to the body. At Løve the axe lay very close to the head, a position rarely encountered in Viking Age burial contexts. The axe from Mårem lay on the left-hand side of the deceased, also something rarely seen, since axes (as well as swords and spearheads) in Viking Age graves tend to be placed on the right-hand side of the body (cf. Pedersen 2014; Kotowicz 2018; Gardela 2021). How the axe heads from Nordre Kjølén and Sanddal were placed is unclear; in the former case, we only know that the axe head lay somewhere to the right of the deceased.

Swords were also unusually positioned in these presumably female graves. In Nordre Kjølén and Aunvoll, they rested on the left-hand side of the bodies (cf. the graves from Birka, including grave Bj.581 – Sayer, Sebo and Hughes 2019). Moreover, in the former the

sword pointed, or was inverted, towards the head end of the grave, which is rare in Viking Age Scandinavia. The closest Norwegian parallels were found in the Viking Age cemeteries at Gulli (grave S400) (Gjerpe 2005: 38–45), Kaupang (grave Ka. 294–6) (Stylegar 2007: 95–9) and Tønsberg (Lie 2016), all in the region of Vestfold. Further analogies are, however, also known from England, Estonia, Finland, Hungary and Poland. Various interpretations have been proposed for this practice, ranging from apotropaic or anti-revenant measures to indications of a very prominent social status. The latter theory is predominantly based on the imagery from the Bayeux tapestry where William is portrayed with an inverted sword (Kyhllberg 2012: 83–6; Gardela 2021). While not ruling out that weapons in some graves actually indicate warrior status, it is possible to reach different conclusions by projecting such ideas onto the grave from Nordre Kjølén. Perhaps the unusual position of the sword intended to communicate that the deceased had some paramount role in the community. If this individual was regarded as a biological woman, the sword – echoing Clover’s theory about ‘functional sons’ – may have been an heirloom that legitimised her, and potentially her offspring’s, power. Alternatively, it served as a funerary reminder of an important event in her life.

Returning to the axes from Løve, Mårem and Sanddal and remembering that their specific morphometric features hamper any attempts to determine if they served as tools or weapons, it is still possible to explore other explanations for their presence in these very specific funerary contexts. Evidence suggests that the individuals buried in Løve and Mårem may have had important roles in their society, perhaps as ritual specialists. This is implied by the amuletic, exotic and curated objects in their assemblages (e.g. the *rangle*/rattle and the copper-alloy tube respectively), as well as the presence of animal remains. Nothing particular can be said about the landscape setting of the graves from Nordre Kjølén, Sanddal and Mårem. The location of the Løve grave, however, is remarkable since it was situated next to a stone circle dated to the Early Bronze Age (Resi 2013: 117–8). The location of this burial, by a site tangibly rooted in the past, potentially filled with numinous powers (on the re-use of burial sites in the Viking Age, see Thäte 2007), might have reflected and amplified the particular role of the deceased in the community, perhaps as a ritual specialist capable of seeing into the past and the future.

A remarkable passage from *Ljósvetninga saga* (Björn Sigfússon 1940: 59–60) concerning a cross-dressing Norse sorceress supports the interpretation above. According to the saga, an Icelandic sorceress named Þórhildr, wearing trousers and a helmet, waded into the fjord holding an axe. During a ritual designed to predict the future of her client, she then struck the water twice with the axe. The use of axes for magical purposes, e.g. in healing rituals, is also well attested in the folk traditions of Scandinavia, Finland and Central Europe (e.g. Holck 1996; Kalseth 2010). Collectively, these independent strands of evidence strongly suggest that – at least in some Viking Age female graves – axes were not seen as weapons *per se* but rather as the magical accoutrements of ritual specialists or sorceresses.

All these interpretations are conjectural and rely on the assumption that graves and their contents serve as ‘poetic impressions’. As such, their purpose was to provide hints to who the deceased were in life and how mourners wanted to portray and remember them in death. I still do not want to rule out the possibility that some women buried with weapons or weapon-like objects were warriors. This is, however, a highly complex body of material. Consequently, we need to bear in mind that in the Viking Age – as well as in other time

periods – professional warriors and people who only occasionally used weapons, need not have been buried with the tools of their trade. Weapons may instead have been passed on to family members, ritually destroyed or turned into other items. The warrior women many scholars so eagerly search for may still be out there, waiting to be found. When investigating the intricate lives of the women buried with weapons in the Viking world, however, scholars must understand that their attempts to label them as ‘warriors’, ‘functional sons’, ‘widows’ or ‘sorceresses’ will probably never fully reflect the complexity of these remarkable individuals. Needless to say, male graves with martial equipment should also be approached with the same degree of caution.

Acknowledgements

The research leading to this article was part of the *Amazons of the North* project conducted at the University of Bonn and the University of Bergen. The project was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the European Union (FP7-PEOPLE-2013-COFUND – grant agreement n° 605728).

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the staff and museum curators from Bergen, Oslo, Stavanger and Trondheim who provided invaluable support during the course of the project: Hanne Lovise Aannestad, Zanette Tsigaridas Glørstad, Torkel Johansen, Terje Masterud Hellan, Brita Hope, Mari Høgestøl, Birgit Maixner and Melanie Wrigglesworth. I am also indebted to my mentors at the University of Bergen, Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide and Randi Barndon. Special thanks to Rudolf Simek from the University of Bonn and Mirosław Kuźma. I would also like to express my gratitude to Marianne Hem Eriksen for checking my translations from Norwegian and to Frode Iversen, Karoline Kjesrud, Beñat Elortza Larrea, Marianne Moen and Fredrik Sundman for their valuable comments on the various drafts of this article.

Bibliography

- Aannestad, Hanne Lovise and Zanette Tsigaridas Glørstad
 2017 Kvinner og båtbegravelser i vikingtiden. In *Dronningen i vikingtid og middelalder*, edited by Karoline Kjesrud and Nanna Løkka, pp. 155–83. Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo.
- Andersen, Randi, Liv Helga Dommasnes, Magnús Stefánsson and Ingvild Øye (editors)
 1985 *Kvinnearbeid i Norden fra vikingtiden til reformasjonen. Foredrag fra et nordisk kvinnehistorisk seminar i Bergen 3–7 august 1983*. Universitetet i Bergen, Bergen.
- Arbman, Holger
 1943 *Birka I: Die Gräber. Text*. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Stockholm.
- Bill, Jan and Aoife Daly
 2012 The Plundering of the Ship Graves from Oseberg and Gokstad: an Example of Power Politics? *Antiquity* 86: 808–24.
- Björn Sigfússon (editor)
 1940 *Ljósveitinga saga með þáttum, Reykdæla saga ok Víga-Skutu, Hreiðars þáttur*. Íslenzk fornrit 10. Hið íslenska fornritafélag, Reykjavík.
- Blindheim, Charlotte and Birgit Heyerdahl-Larsen
 1995 *Gravplassen i Bikhjølbergene/Lamøya. Undersøkelsen 1950–1951*. Kaupagfunnene, Bind II, Norske Oldfunn XVI, Universitetets Oldsaksamling/Universitetet i Oslo, Oslo.

- Carver, Martin
1992 Ideology and Allegiance in East Anglia. In *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After*, edited by Robert T. Farrell and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, pp. 173–82. American Early Medieval Studies 2, Miami University, Oxford (Ohio).
- Christensen, Arne Emil
1992 Kongsgårdens handverkere. In *Osebergdronningens grav. Vår arkeologiske nasjonalskatt i nytt lys*, edited by Arne Emil Christensen, Anne Stine Ingstad and Bjørn Myhre, pp. 85–137. Schibsted, Oslo.
- Christensen, Tom
1982 Gerdrup graven. *Romu: årsskrift fra Roskilde Museum* 2: 19–28.
- Clover, Carol J
1986 Maiden Warriors and Other Sons. *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 85 (1): 35–49.
1993 Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe. *Speculum* 68 (2): 1–28.
- Coleman, Nancy and Nanna Løkka (editors)
2014 *Kvinner i vikingtid. Vikingtidens kvinner*, Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo.
- Dommasnes, Liv Helga
1979 Et gravmateriale fra yngre jernalder brukt til å belyse kvinners stilling. *Viking* 42: 95–114.
1987 Male/Female Roles and Ranks in Late Iron Age Norway. In *Were They All Men? An Examination of Sex Roles in Prehistoric Society*, edited by Reidar Bertelsen, Arnvild Lillehammer and Jenny-Rita Næss, pp. 65–77. AmS-Varia 17. Arkeologisk Museum i Stavanger, Stavanger.
- Engh, Ann Kristin
2009 Rike importfunn i vikingtidsgraver. In *Arkeologiske undersøkelser 2003–2004. Katalog og artikler*, edited by J. Bergstøl, pp. 147–65. Kulturhistorisk Museum/Formminneseksjonen, Oslo.
- Gardela, Leszek
2013 ‘Warrior-women’ in Viking Age Scandinavia? A Preliminary Archaeological Study. *Analecta Archaeologica Ressorviensia* 8: 273–339.
2016 *(Magic) Staffs in the Viking Age*. Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia 27. Verlag Fassbaender, Wien.
2018 Amazons of the North? Armed Females in Viking Archaeology and Medieval Literature. In *Hvannadalir – Beiträge zur europäischen Altertumskunde und mediävistischen Literaturwissenschaft*, edited by Alessia Bauer and Alexandra Pesch, pp. 391–428. Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 106. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.
2021 *Women and Weapons in the Viking World: Amazons of the North*, Oxbow Books, Oxford.
- Gardela, Leszek and Matthias Toplak
2020 Kleider und Krieg. Militaria bei Wikinger-Frauen. *Archäologie in Deutschland* (2) 2020: 40–3.
- Gjerpe, Lars Erik
2005 De enkelte gravene. In *Gravfeltet på Gulli. E18-prosjektet Vestfold. Bind 1*, edited by Lars Erik Gjerpe, pp. 27–104. Varia 60. Kulturhistorisk Museum Formminneseksjonen, Oslo.
- Guldborg, Gustav
1901 Om skeletlevningerne af en kvinde fra vikingetiden begravet med vaaben og hest paa Nordre Kjøl in i Aasnes. *Christiania Videnskabs-Selskabs Forhandlinger for 1901* 2 (1901): 1–10.
- Härke, Heinrich
2014 Grave Goods in Early Medieval Burials: Messages and Meanings. *Mortality: Promoting the Interdisciplinary Study of Death and Dying* 19 (1): 41–60.
- Hedenstierna-Jonson, Charlotte, Anna Kjellström, Torun Zachrisson, Maja Krzewińska, Veronica Sobrado, Neil Price, Torsten Günther, Matthias Jakobsson, Anders Götherström and Jan Storå
2017 A Female Viking Warrior Confirmed by Genomics. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 164: 853–60.
- Hernæs, Per
1984 C22541a-g. Et gammelt funn tolkes på ny. *Nicolay* 43: 31–6.

- Holck, Per
- 1984 Antropologisk kommentar ved lege Per Holck. *Nicolay* 43: 37–9.
 - 1986 *Cremated Bones. A Medical-anthropological Study of an Archaeological Material on Cremation Burials*. PhD Thesis, Anatomical Institute, University of Oslo, Oslo.
 - 1996 *Norsk folkemedisin: kloke koner, urtekurer og magi*. Cappelen, Oslo.
 - 2006 The Oseberg Ship Burial, Norway: New Thoughts on the Skeletons from the Grave Mound. *European Journal of Archaeology* 9 (2–3): 185–210.
- Jesch, Judith
- 1991 *Women in the Viking Age*. Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge.
- Jochens, Jenny
- 1995 *Women in Old Norse Society*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and New York.
 - 1996 *Old Norse Images of Women*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir
- 2020 *Valkyrie. The Women of the Viking World*. Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York.
- Kalseth, Jenny
- 2010 Steinøks eller tordenkile? *Spor* 2 (2010): 28–30.
- Kastholm, Ole Thirup
- 2015 Spydkvinden og den myrdede. Gerdrupgraven 35 år efter. *Romu: årsskrift fra Roskilde Museum* 2015: 63–85.
- Kjesrud, Karoline and Nanna Løkka (editors)
- 2017 *Dronningen i vikingtid og middelalder*. Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo.
- Klos, Lydia
- 2006 Wanderer zwischen den Welten. Die Kriegerinnen der Eisenzeit. In *Beretning fra femogtyvende tværfaglige vikingesymposium*, edited by Edith Marold and Ulrich Müller, pp. 25–43 Hikuin, Aarhus Universitetet, Højbjerg.
- Kotowicz, Piotr Niemir
- 2018 *Early Medieval Axes from the Territory of Poland*. Moravia Magna, Seria Polona Vol. V. Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, Kraków.
- Kyhlberg, Ola
- 2012 *Den långa järnåldern. Sociala strategier, normer, traditioner*. OPIA 54. Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala.
- Lauritsen, Tina and Ole Thirup Kastholm Hansen
- 2003 Transvestite Vikings? *Viking Heritage Magazine* 2003 (1): 14–7.
- Lie, Ragnar Orten
- 2016 Birkakrigere i Norge? *Spor* 2: 33–7.
- Løkka, Nanna
- 2014 Vikingtidskvinnen i ettertidens lys. In *Kvinner i vikingtid. Vikingatidens kvinner*, edited by Nancy Coleman and Nanna Løkka, pp. 11–36. Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo.
- Lund, Cajsa
- 1974 Paa rangel. *Stavanger Museum årbok* 1974: 45–120.
- Lund, Julie and Marianne Moen
- 2019 Hunting Identities: Intersectional Perspectives on Viking Age Mortuary Expressions. *Fennoscandia Archaeologica* 36: 142–55.
- Moen, Marianne
- 2011 *The Gendered Landscape. A Discussion on Gender, Status and Power in the Norwegian Viking Age Landscape*. BAR International Series 2207. Archaeopress, Oxford.
 - 2019 *Challenging Gender. A Reconsideration of Gender in the Viking Age Using the Mortuary Landscape. Vol 1–2*. Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History. University of Oslo, Oslo.

- Mørck, Gustav
 1901 Indberetning om arkæologiske undersøgelser paa Nordre Kjølen, Aasnes pgd., Soløer. *Foreningen til Norske Fortidsmindesmærkers Bevaring. Aarsberetning for 1900*: 68–74.
- Motz, Lotte
 1980 Sister in the Cave; the Stature and the Function of the Female Figures of the Eddas. *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 95: 168–82.
- Mundal, Else
 1994 The Position of Women in Old Norse Society and the Basis for their Power. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 1(2): 3–11.
- Mundal, Else and Gro Steinsland
 1989 Kvinner og medisinsk magi. In *Kvinnors rosengård – medeltidskvinnors liv og hälsa, lust och barnafödande*, edited by Hedda Hunneng, pp. 97–121. Stockholms Universitet, Stockholm.
- Müller-Wille, Michael
 1972 Pferdegrab und Pferdeopfer im frühen Mittelalter, Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Boemonderzoek 20–21 1970/1971, pp. 119–248.
- Pedersen, Anne
 2014 *Dead Warriors in Living Memory. A Study of Weapon and Equestrian Burials in Viking-Age Denmark, AD 800–1000*. Publications from the National Museum. Studies in Archaeology and History Vol. 20: 1. University Press of Southern Denmark and the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.
- Petersen, Jan
 1919 *De norske vikingesverd. En typologisk-kronologisk studie over vikingetidens vaaben*. Videnskapsselskapets Skrifter. II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse 1919. No I. Jacob Dybwad, Kristiania.
 1951 *Vikingetidens redskaper*. Videnskaps-Akademi, Oslo.
- Petré, Bo
 1993 Male and Female Finds and Symbols in Germanic Iron Age Graves. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 1: 149–54.
- Price, Neil S.
 2002 *The Viking Way. Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*. AUN 31. Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, Uppsala.
 2010 Passing into Poetry: Viking-Age Mortuary Drama and the Origins of Norse Mythology. *Medieval Archaeology* 54: 123–56.
 2020 *Children of Ash and Elm: A History of the Vikings*. Basic Books, New York.
- Price, Neil S, Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, Torun Zachrisson, Anna Kjellström, Jan Storå, Maja Krzewińska, Torsten Günther, Veronica Sobrado, Matthias Jakobsson and Anders Götherström
 2019 Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing Birka Chamber Grave Bj. 581. *Antiquity* 93 (367): 181–98.
- Resi, Heid G.
 2013 Nebeneinander, gleichzeitig, doch sehr unterschiedlich. Was davon ist Individualität. In *Individual and Individuality? Approaches Towards an Archaeology of Personhood in the First Millennium AD*, edited by Babette Ludowici, pp. 117–22. Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung 4. Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover, Hannover.
- Røstad, Ingunn Marit
 2018 The Immortal Brooch. The Tradition of Great Ornamental Bow Brooches in Migration and Merovingian Period Norway. In *Charismatic Objects: From Roman Times to the Middle Ages*, edited by Marianne Vedeler, Ingunn M. Røstad, Elna Siv Kristoffersen, Zanette T. Glørstad, pp. 73–102, Cappelen Damm AS, Oslo.
- Sayer, Duncan, Erin Sebo and Kyle Hughes
 2019 A Double-edged Sword: Swords, Bodies, and Personhood in Early Medieval Archaeology and Literature. *European Journal of Archaeology* 22 (4): 542–66.
- Schetelig, Haakon
 1911 En miniatyrøks av bronse fra vikingetiden. *Bergen Museums Aarbok 1911 (13)*: 1–18.

- Shetelig, Haakon
1912 *Vestlandske graver fra jernalderen*. Bergen Museums Skrifter, ny række, Bd. II, No. 1. A/S John Griegs Boktrykkeri, Bergen.
- Sikora, Maeve
2003–4 Diversity in Viking Age Horse Burial: A Comparative Study of Norway, Iceland, Scotland and Ireland. *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* 12–13: 87–109.
- Sørensen, Marie Louise Stig
2004 *Gender Archaeology*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Stalsberg, Anne
1991 Women as Actors in North European Viking Age Trade. In *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, edited by Ross Samson, pp. 75–83. Cruithne Press, Glasgow.
- Stenvik, Lars F.
2005 Sosjale forskjeller. In *Trøndelags historie. Bind 1. Landskapet blir landsel. Fram til 1350*, edited by Ida Bull, Olav Skevik, Kalle Sognnes and Ola Svein Stugu, pp. 147–53. Tapir Akademisk Forlag, Trondheim.
- Stylegar, Frans-Arne
2007 The Kaupang Cemeteries Revisited. In *Kaupang in Skiringssal, Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, pp. 65–101. Norske Oldfunn XXII. Aarhus University Press, Aarhus.
- Svanberg, Fredrik
2003 *Death Rituals in South-East Scandinavia AD 800–1000. Decolonizing the Viking Age Vol. 2*. Acta Archaeologica Lundensia Series in 4° No. 24. Almqvist & Wiksell International, Lund.
- Thäte, Eva S.
2007 *Monuments and Minds. Monument Re-use in Scandinavia in the Second Half of the First Millennium AD*. Acta Archaeologica Lundensia Series in 4° No. 27. Wallin & Dalholm, Lund.
- Turville-Petre, E.O.G. and Christopher Tolkien, eds.
1956 *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*. Viking Society for Northern Research/University College London, London.
- Ulriksen, Jens
2018 A Völva's Grave at Roskilde, Denmark? *Offa* 71/72, 2014/2015: 229–40.
- Williams, Howard
2006 *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.