To Tender Gender
The Pasts and Futures of Gender Research in Archaeology

PAG
Ing-Marie Back Danielsson & Susanne Thedéen (eds)
Almost thirty years have passed since gender studies entered archaeological discourse in earnest. What is the current status of gender research? One of the aims of this book is to contribute to answering this and other related questions. Another is to shed some light on the pasts and possible futures of gender research.

Contributions deal with publication statistics in journals over the last thirty years, neo-realist discussions of Mayan body-politic, intersectional analyses of current Swedish museum exhibitions and Viking Period box brooches, masculinities in practice at a cultural heritage site, Viking period bodily abilities and disabilities and experiments regarding how once-lived bodies and lives may be materialized.
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Almost thirty years have passed since gender studies entered archaeological discourse in earnest. What is the current status of gender research? How are the theoretical and analytical insights from feminisms used within archaeological research? Have these insights been adapted to the archaeological discipline, have they been developed and deepened? What about other subjects in academia, academic disciplines close to archaeology, how have feminist theories and methods developed here? Can archaeologists find stimulation there, or is it time for archaeology to find new prominent figures and/or new inspirational theories? If the latter, what would they be?

This book does not answer these questions fully. However, one of its goals is to contribute to the answers, and hopefully also shed some light on the pasts and possible futures of gender research within archaeology. To us, it seems that the gender perspective has lost some of its aura of creativity and innovation with the passing of time. This is an observation that other archaeologists also have deplored (e.g. Voss 2009; Alberti 2012). One possible explanation could be that the concept of gender is often conflated with that of sex. Few archaeological studies have disregarded sex-dualism and discussed more than two genders. Equally importantly, an interest in genders by extension also engenders a focus on sexuality (Voss 2009), which is acknowledged far too rarely. The dualistic, doubly sex-oriented nature of gender has left other facets of identities and becomings unattended and therefore invisible to a certain extent.

Sprung from and indebted to feminism, the very concept of gender quickly evoked discussions on what the premises and the postulates were for what is considered normal, what is specific, what is general, etc. Gender theory, via queer theory, brought with it a chance to scrutinize this normalcy and highlight the normative as a pervasive, dominating principle with structuralist effects in past and present times. However, queer studies seemingly have been left to study exceptions or focus on cross-borders. Or at least, this is what some researchers say that queer theory has done, or created (Jagose 2009:158), whereas others have emphasized that its applicability cannot be
 predefined (Halperin 1995:62; Dowson 2000). Others yet argue that both positions create “a form of disciplinary orthodoxy around the use of queer and a space in which new questions may be raised” (Alberti 2012, p. 89 our emphasis). Decidedly working against gender archaeology, and any of its belonging, and used, -isms or theories, is also the fact that research within archaeology is trend-sensitive when it comes to favouring or disregarding certain analytical concepts (Back Danielsson this volume). Concepts are considered trendy, exciting, and are perhaps not fully grasped or even explored or applied to their fullest on archaeological materials when they “suddenly” one day are found to be inadequate, boring, or even unscientific? One example of a fairly newly (for archaeology that is) embraced analytical concept is masculinity (cf. Engström this volume). Whereas this is a much-needed, imperative and welcome addition to gender archaeology, we cannot help to point out this concept’s late entrance into archaeological research. At the same time, it is unavoidable not to point out that the possible topic of femininities is seemingly absent throughout the archaeological field of research, although discussed within other academic disciplines (e.g Schippers 2007). Researchers within studies of masculinity have themselves called for increased research and theory on femininities (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:848). This lack of interest is even more surprising since female masculinities were theorized as early as the 1990s (see Halberstam 1998). Racialized, subordinate and hegemonic femininities have been discussed within other academic disciplines (e.g. Pyke & Johnson 2003, cf. Bünz this volume; Thedéen this volume). Equally, work has been carried out elucidating the necessity of conceptualizing multiple femininities and hegemonic femininities as “central to male dominant gender relations” (Schippers 2007, p. 85, emphasis in original).

Although gender from its incipience indeed has been, and is, a relational concept, relations and relationality have been the flavour of the month for quite some time in, for instance, new materialisms (e.g. Coole & Frost 2010, cf. Normark this volume, Fahlander this volume). Matter and material(ity) are naturally of the greatest interest for archaeologists, but have gained renewed attention with the criticism of, for example, the earlier pervasive cultural construction model (e.g. Ingold 2007; Olsen 2010; Hodder 2011, cf. Conneller 2011 on new material relationships in prehistory). However, an employment of a Latourian neo-materialist perspective (cf. Latour 2005), where the social is seen as entanglements of relations in rhizomatic networks, runs the risk of neglecting asymmetrical power relations (Fahlander forthcoming; Colls 2011). Further, a recognition of the agency of materials does not automatically imply that the ontology of bodies and sex is challenged, something that queer materialism is capable of doing (Alberti 2012:101; see also Barad 2003; 2007; Alberti and Marshall 2009; Dowson 2009; cf. Arwill-Nordbladh this volume). Facets of queer materialism include a focus on becoming, instead of static being, and equally a focus on

We think it is important to point out that feminists have long since pointed to the delimiting ontological and epistemic norms that underlie and prefigure archaeological practice in all forms. These norms include the impulse to seek closure and equally to reduce ambiguity and complexity (Wylie 2007:212-213 with references). This criticism also echoes within what has become known as non-representational theories, or more-than-representational theories (Cadman 2009:7; see also Dewsbury et al. 2002:438 and Lorimer 2005), where efforts are made to avoid the leap towards an overarching meaning, interpretation and/or representation (e.g. Back Danielsson forthcoming). Anderson & Harrison (2010:10) instead describe things as taking place; the recognition of the movement and change of things, and how an increased focus on practices and events result in discovering “new potentialities for being, doing and thinking”. From a feminist point of view, the focus on the lived present as an open-ended and generative process (Harrison 2000:499) is attractive (see for instance Harding 1987; 1993; Longino 1994:483). This means that practice is not downplayed to the extent that the objects, or events, of study become more or less embalmed, ‘drained for the sake of orders, mechanisms, structures and processes’ (Dewsbury et al. 2002, p. 438). Whereas non-representational, or rather more-than-representational, theories have been in use within geography for quite some time, the relevant criticism against representational theories within archaeology has not yet been addressed to any greater extent, although exceptions exist (e.g. Alberti, Jones & Pollard forthcoming).

This volume starts discussing the pasts of gender archaeology as it is reflected through published gender articles in important and influential archaeological journals. Ing-Marie Back Danielsson gives hard core facts on how small the number of published gender papers is in comparison to mainstream archaeology throughout time in her paper Much Ado about Nothing. It is also highlighted that gender papers have certain characteristics that differentiate them from “mainstream” archaeological published work, and discuss why this is so.

Can gender archaeology, its pasts rather lugubriously sketched in the first contribution, head towards a brighter future? We would like to think that subsequent papers provide clues as to what may comprise such a future. Elisabeth Nordbladh’s contribution Ability and Disability discusses bodily variations and bodily possibilities in Viking Age myth and image. She emphasizes the necessity of searching for, and developing, new analytical entrances in our studies of prehistoric materials. Her standpoint in this matter is a situated and commented one, and she discusses bodily variations with a
special focus on visual ability. She elegantly demonstrates how this bodily ability was negotiated within an ability/disability axis of power.

Susanne Thedéen’s paper *Box Brooches beyond the Border* focusses on the relevance and importance of empirical intersectionality studies in archaeology. Her study explores the intersections between gender, ethnicity and social status by analyzing the contexts and connotations of a characteristic female Gotlandic brooch found outside of Gotland mainly at sites known as trading places or early towns. The author draws the conclusion that altered contexts for the brooches did not change the association to a female gender. However, their marker of ethnicity was lost, probably in processes of creolization and/or the creation of new identities tied to a cosmopolitan dress.

Elin Engström’s contribution, *Gender in the Making*, clearly highlights that archaeology and culture heritage management is a gendered and structuring practice. Through the perspective of masculinity, she explores how a cultural heritage site, the hill-fort Eketorp on Öland, is an arena for performing both contemporary and prehistoric gendered practices. The author also suggests that the practices performed at the site by museum staff and visitors support a wider understanding of masculinities and social identities, rather than merely working as a platform for discussing men and maleness in past or present times.

Annika Bünz’ contribution *Is It Enough to Make the Main Characters Female?* reveals a number of fascinating observations of the current prehistoric exhibition at the National Historical Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. She demonstrates how facets of identities in the form of age, gender, appearances, etc. are relational to one another and further that this relationality also is dependent on the chosen prehistoric time sequence. She gives an example from the Stone Age of a powerful woman whose facial and bodily characteristics are those of an old, and ugly, woman. As time goes by, men enter the prehistoric scene to a greater extent and during the Iron Age they dominate the exhibition in the sense that they are displayed in more prominent ways and are also reflected as men with power. They may be of mature or older ages whereas women have become younger, prettier and less powerful.

Johan Normark’s *Road of Life* shows a pathway concerned with a neorealism approach. The author argues that future gender studies in archaeology will have to relate to the current neorealism approaches in philosophy. The author uses Manuel DeLanda’s assemblage theory and John Protevi’s framework of bodies-politic to show how neo-realistic approaches can unite the somatic and the social through synchronic and diachronic perspectives. As a case study the author focuses on the lives of a Maya ruler and his daughter in Guatemala; lives that were conceptualized as roads along which certain events took place. Common in the hieroglyphic corpus are dates of birth, accession, marriage and death of male and female rulers. During their roads of life they encountered several thresholds that created their unique assemblages and bodies-politic.
Fredrik Fahlander rethinks gender in a new innovative way in his contribution *Facing Gender: Corporeality, Materiality, Intersectionality and Resurrection*. A neomaterialist standpoint in combination with an intersectionality perspective is advocated in the article. In order to resurrect decaying bodies, forensic anthropology is called upon, with whose help the versatility of once-lived bodies and lives may materialize.

Acknowledgements
This book is the result of a workshop in which the pasts and futures of gender research were discussed, held at the end of the year 2010 at the Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, Stockholm University. The workshop was organized by a post doc group called PAG, Postdoctoral Archaeological Group. PAG started in 2008 and has as one of its aims to initiate and make substantial contributions to discussions on relevant and urgent issues in archaeology through organizing theme days and workshops.

We are most grateful to excellent photographer Edvard Koinberg for letting us use his wonderful portraits of daylilies in different life cycles (*Hemerocallis* in Latin). We see the photo on the front cover as the pasts of gender research, while the photo on the back cover is connected to its future – promising tripod seeds of daylily.

Lastly, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Berit Wallenberg Foundation for its generous funding of the printing of the current volume “To Tender Gender – The Pasts and Futures of Gender Research in Archaeology”.

References


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Abstract
This paper accounts for the extent to which gender research is represented in leading archaeological journals throughout the 1980s to the present through the database Arts & Humanities Citation Index (ISI). The paper regards gender research as including gender, feminisms, masculinities, queer, intersectionality and embodiment. It is concluded that gender research, despite its alleged significance and progress in later years, is substantially marginalized within mainstream archaeology. Comparisons are also made between gender archaeology and mainstream archaeology and differences between the two are discussed. The paper further addresses current research trends within the humanities placing an increased emphasis on publications in leading peer-reviewed journals. Since the paper shows that gender research is poorly represented in such periodicals the author urges archaeologists interested in gender to publish in these journals.

Introduction – how past gender research can help future gender research
This paper analyses how archaeological gender research is represented in peer-reviewed archaeological journals throughout the 1980s to the present. The analyses are made through using Arts & Humanities Citation Index (ISI) of Web of Science. So far, few articles have been published, discussing statistics of gender research. Rosemary Joyce made a welcome review in 2005, in which she accounted for the number of articles within archaeology and anthropology explicitly devoted to research on the body and embodiment. She saw a significant increase in the number of articles from the 1990s and onwards (Joyce 2005:141). However, as pleasing as such an increase may be, the number of articles discussing a specific topic must also be related to
the total number of archaeological articles published. By making such a comparison, it is possible to ascertain how gender archaeology develops in relation to other archaeological research. This is what I try to attempt in this paper, and for my purposes gender archaeology includes, for instance, feminisms, embodiment, masculinities, and queer (see more below).

Of course, by focussing on articles published in journals, represented through Thomson & Reuters’ Web of Science (Arts & Humanities Citation Index, ISI), a large quantity of gender work published elsewhere is omitted. This is not to say, obviously, that such work is unimportant or insignificant. Rather, the statistics and the analyses made through using Web of Science only represent archaeological gender research according to the same index, not a complete coverage of gender work within the discipline. It is the “world” according to Thomson & Reuters, you might say. Despite this admittedly annoying limitation, I argue that the following analyses are both relevant and revealing. I complement the analyses with statistics gathered from Fornvänner, Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research.

During the last few years academia has been forced to a large extent to apply corporate and business strategies (e.g. Aronowitz 2000; Lyotard 1984; Hamilakis 2004 and references therein, cf. Strathern (ed.) 2000). Apart from viewing students as (primarily?) financial assets, departmental budgets are also dependent on how well they stand out in bibliometrical analyses of their research (see for instance Riddarström 2011, but also Strannegård 2011). This general characteristic is a part of a greater international movement that involves universities, funding agencies, companies, research councils, etc. (Strannegård 2011:29). Not least the European Science Foundation’s continued and recently updated release of the European Research Index for Humanities must be seen in this context. Although this ranking, as well as the inclusion/exclusion of certain journals as well as publishers in indexes, is stated to guarantee bench-marking standards, it inevitably, in my view, prompts a discussion on the possible long-term effects on the quality of research of this bench-marking system. This is the case since it also will have (and has!) a great impact on what research will receive funding in the future (cf. Riddarström 2011, Strannegård 2011:29). Although important – indeed imperative – such a discussion is outwith the scope of the current work. However, it is probably not too far-fetched to believe that it could be profitable to be in the journal publishing business in the future.

The analyses presented here, and the interpretations thereof, concern past gender research. However, with the above in mind, it is argued that this material can be used as a guide for planning future publications within archaeological gender research. In fact, after doing this (statistical) review I most decisively urge researchers interested in, and devoted to, gender research to publish in leading peer-reviewed journals.
What, then, can be said about the quality (and I admit I use the word quality with a twist of irony) of gender research as represented through appearances in leading peer-reviewed journals during the last 30 years? Before answering this question I will account for the conditions under which the following statistics apply.

Preamble
Arts & Humanities Citation Index (ISI) from Web of Science lists 81 archaeological journals that have been assessed by Thomson & Reuters as "important and influential". The list of journals changes over time, as more journals may be added to the database. This means that it is almost impossible to get the same results of, for instance, two identical analyses, if a longer period of time has passed between the analyses. Search words have been gender, femin*, masculin*, queer, embodi* and intersectional*. When I use the concept gender research all of the above is included, unless otherwise stated.

Gender research has been practiced within archaeology for almost 30 years, and I have divided these into ten year spans. I account for the frequency of gender-related articles sorted by journal, author, language and country of origin. I have also made comparisons between gender research and mainstream archaeology to see if there are any differences between the two. The comparison has focused on differences in the number of times the articles are cited, and differences in document types. Web of Science distinguishes between articles, reviews, book reviews, proceedings paper, editorial material and a few other rarely occurring document types. How, then, is mainstream archaeology defined? Such a question really deserves an answer worthy an article on its own. Ericka Engelstad (2007:226ff) has discussed this relevant question to some extent and demonstrated how mainstream publications – and authors – are entangled in, and connected to, a number of political relations and issues. Here I have defined mainstream archaeology as those articles that do not include gender research.

It must be pointed out that the index mostly includes Anglo-American journals. For instance, the oldest and biggest Swedish archaeological journal, Fornvännen (Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research) is not included. (Though I pointed out to Fornvännen whilst writing this paper that it should try to be indexed there, and today it is). Despite this, gender articles are searchable in Fornvännen due to the fact that its articles are Google indexed. Therefore, this paper also comments on gender research within this journal. Before breaking down the total number of gender articles into ten year spans, I account for a couple of general trends in gender archaeology. The main focus of the paper is however on trends within gender research in archaeology during the last ten years (2001–2010).
General trends

The total number of articles within archaeological research has increased substantially during the last 30 years (Fig. 1). Despite this, the number of gender articles is steadily fairly low in comparison to the total number of published articles.

Fig. 1. The diagram shows the total number of archaeological articles per annum from 1985 to 2010 as well as how many of these that discuss gender research.

Figures 1 and 2 account for the total number of published articles within indexed archaeological journals, as well as the number of gender articles in relation to the total number of published items. From these diagrams it is difficult to discern a specific pattern for the gender articles. While the total number has increased, although in a jagged curve, the numbers of gender articles fluctuates over the years. Overall they make up a small percentage of the total. It must be noted that when a journal has gender research as a theme, the statistics are immediately affected. Reports from gender conferences have similar effects. Examples can be found from 1994, 1996, 2003 and 2007.
Fig. 2. The number of gender articles in proportion to the total number of articles. As can be seen gender articles amount to only a few percent of the total amount of published archaeological articles. Reports from gender conferences and certain journals’ concentration on gender research in certain years affect the percentage greatly.

The share of gender articles vary between a low of 0 and a high of 7.8% (1994) of the total number of articles. Between the years 1990 and 2010 the proportion of the gender articles is almost constant at between 2 and 3%. Using the concept trend to investigate three consecutive years of increase (cf. Furingsten 1983:111) shows no visible trends during the chosen time span. The exception to this is the last three years (2007–2010), where gender articles have increased proportionally (but not in absolute numbers) (Fig. 2). Generally, during the 30 years gender has been used within archaeology, gender articles account for a very small portion of the total number of published articles in journals.
Gender research in archaeology 1981–1990

According to the database, only one (1) article with a focus on gender research was published between the years 1981 and 1990. This article, ”Who made the Lapita pots? A case study in gender research”, was written by Yvonne Marshall and published in the Journal of the Polynesian Society in 1985. It corresponds to 0.1% of the total number of articles (n=968) published within the ten year span.

In this context it is worth pointing out that gender research within archaeology started in the beginning or mid of the 1980s with early contributions by Conkey & Spector (1984, “Archaeology and the Study of Gender”) and also Hodder (1984, “Burials, houses, women, and men in the Neolithic”). Prior to this, there were really only Norwegian archaeologists, whose conference on gender in the late 1970s, 1979 to be exact, resulted in the publication “Were they all men?” published as late as in 1987 (Bertelsen et al. 1987). In Sweden, inspired by the Norwegian feminists, Stig Welinder was the first Swedish archaeologist to use the concept of gender in an article from 1989. It is decidedly outside the scope of this article to account for, and review, the histories of gender research. Such accounts and reviews have been made on several occasions. In fact, it will be demonstrated in this paper that gender research is devoted to reviews of itself as a discipline to a much greater extent than other kinds of archaeological research (mainstream archaeology). This typical trait of gender research is commented on below and in the section Summary and conclusions. I refer readers interested in gender histories and reviews to Arwill-Nordbladh (2001), Bolger (2012), Dommasnes et al. (2010), Geller (2009), Joyce (2008), and Nelson (2006), Sørensen (2000), Voss (2008) to mention but a few.

When using Thomson & Reuters’ index it is of course important to understand why some articles are included in their index, while others are not. First of all, as declared earlier, not all of the listed 81 “important and influential” journals have been indexed from the 1980s and onwards. Secondly, key words are supplied by the author but ISI also generates KeyWords Plus for many articles. When defining a topic such as, gender, the topic search function searches Title, Abstract, Author, Keywords, and Keywords Plus. Not until the year 2000 did Thomson & Reuters begin to process keywords and abstracts for the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (e-mail reply 2011-09-24, Tarneet Nandra, Thomson & Reuters). This could explain why not all gender articles published in journals in the early years of gender research appear in the database. Due to these facts, and the almost infinitesimal number of gender articles (one article) in this time span according to the index, further analyses were considered futile for this time span.
Gender research in archaeology 1991–2000

Between the years 1991 and 2000 gender articles comprised 2.6% of the total number of archaeological articles. This corresponds to 55 gender articles of the total 2,122 printed items. Of these 55 articles, 10 were explicitly devoted to feminism, 1 to masculinity and 7 to queer. The relatively high number of queer oriented articles can be attributed to a special issue of “World Archaeology” on queer topics in 2000, increasing the number of articles using a queer perspective by 6 to a total of 7.

Fig. 3. The total number of archaeological articles published between the years 1991 and 2000 and the number of gender articles within the same period per annum.
Gender research in archaeology 2001–2010

During the ten year span 2001–2010 the total amount of archaeological articles was 3,360. Of these, only 89 articles were labeled gender articles (Fig. 4), or 2.6%.

Of the 89 gender articles, two (2) discussed masculinity. Whereas the search word feminis* resulted in 22 hits, no article was found discussing femininity. Likewise, there were no results using the search term intersectional*. 25 was the result for embodi*. Queer yielded three (3) hits. Some articles were categorized in several gender subfields, for instance both under the heading queer and masculin*.

Citation statistics 2001–2010

Arts & Humanities Citation Index allows you to make citation analysis of articles published within the indexed journals. This means that it is possible to see to what extent an article is cited after it has been published, and in which journals. Between the years 2001 and 2010 mainstream archaeology had an average citation of 2.55 per item (Fig. 5). Five of the top ten cited articles were published in *Journal of Archaeological Science*, followed by one each in *Archaeometry, Journal of Archaeological Research, Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory, American Antiquity* and *Journal of*...
World Prehistory. Further, the top five most cited articles had been cited between 86 and 114 times after their publication (Fig. 5).

If we instead focus on gender articles the following can be discerned. The top ten cited articles were published in *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* (3), *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* (2), *Journal of Archaeological Research* (2), and one each in *American Antiquity*, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, and *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*. The number of times gender articles have been cited is substantially lower compared to those of mainstream archaeology. The top five cited gender articles were only cited between 25 and 43 times after their publication (Fig. 5).

The h-index count, and is based on, a list of publications ranked in descending order by the Times Cited count. According to the used database, “...an h-index of 20 means there are 20 items that have 20 citations or more. This metric is useful because it discounts the disproportionate weight of highly cited papers or papers that have not yet been cited.”

Despite the encouraging fact that gender articles have a higher citation average than mainstream archaeology, this must be seen in relation to the total number of articles in respective field. Here I have chosen to include into mainstream every other archaeological article that does not discuss gender. Hence, it is not surprising that the average citations per item is higher for gender archaeology – mainstream archaeology comprises citation practices for 3,360 articles and gender archaeology only practices for 89 items.

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<th>Mainstream archaeology</th>
<th>Gender archaeology</th>
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<td>Times cited, top 5 articles</td>
<td>86–114 times</td>
<td>25–43 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h-index</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average citations per item</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>4.89</td>
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Fig. 5. Differences in citation practices between mainstream archaeology and gender archaeology for the years 2001–2010.
Countries and authors dominating the gender scene 2001–2010

98% of gender articles for this time span were written in English. 2% were written in Spanish. In terms of publishing language, gender archaeology is less diversified in comparison with mainstream archaeology. 93% of mainstream articles are written in English, followed by German (3.5%), Spanish (1.2%) and, French (1.1%), with the remainder unspecified.

Of course the country from which the author, or rather journal, comes from does not necessarily have to be English speaking just because an article is written in English. However, this is very much the case. Of the articles published within the investigated ten year span USA is in total domination having published some 70% of the gender articles (Fig. 6). Other, (mainly) English speaking countries/territories follow: England, Canada, and South-Africa. Norway is an exception with 2% followed by the “Other” category with 8%.

![Gender research articles 2001-2010](image)

Fig. 6. The countries that have published the highest number of gender research articles during the last ten years (2001–2010).

Looking in greater detail at the authors dominating the US scene we find the following researchers to have been the most diligent: Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood with 7 articles, Barbara L. Voss with 5, Paul A. Shackel with 4, Silvia Tomaskova with 3, followed by authors with 2 articles each: M.-L. Stig Sørensen, M.M. Lee, S. R. Hutson, and M. Hegmon.
There are differences between gender archaeology and mainstream archaeology when it comes to publishing countries (Fig. 7). Whereas USA also dominates mainstream archaeology (38%) other countries offer some resistance to this dominance. England has 19%, followed by Australia’s 5%, Germany’s 4%, Canada’s 3.7%, and France, South Africa and Spain having some 2% each. This means that mainstream archaeology is more diversified when it comes to participating countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publishing country</th>
<th>Mainstream archaeology</th>
<th>Gender archaeology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Africa</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Fig. 7. Differences between mainstream archaeology and gender archaeology when it comes to publishing country during the time span 2001–2010.

Differences in document types – differences in research focus?

There are differences in document types between mainstream archaeology and gender archaeology (Figs 8 and 9). Mainstream archaeology can be said to be more oriented towards publishing new research in articles (51%) and giving its views on recently published books (30%), thus in total corresponding to more than 80% of the document types. Only 10% of the articles are devoted to regular reviews. By comparison, gender research is somewhat less prone to publish articles or new research (45%) but all the more into writing reviews (34%). According to Thomson & Reuters’ Web of Science a review means that a review is made of scientific research, books, art, and/or software. A book review on the other hand is a review made of a monograph or publication written on a specific topic.

Then what might this difference mean in terms of research focus? Seemingly, mainstream archaeology is more concerned with doing research (as represented through a higher proportion of articles devoted to publishing research) and a desire to know what else is going on in the archaeological world (the book reviews), perhaps implying an outwardly oriented stance. Gender archaeology on the other hand, can be said perhaps to be more introspective with its large proportion of regular reviews of conducted gender research.
I have looked through the gender articles labelled “Reviews” and most of them are, indeed, reviews, mostly of gender research within specific archaeological fields where the reviews are made by gender researchers too. However, and importantly, the reviews likewise point to future directions for gender research within a variety of archaeological subfields, which is exciting. So, if reviews may be classified as introspective, they equally hold potential for directing future (gender) research. It can also be argued that it is sound to (re-)evaluate progress and set-backs on a methodically and theoretically level within any research field, a discussion that mainstream archaeology thus to some extent is lacking.

Fig. 8. The different document types that hide under the label “gender archaeology” during the last ten years (2001–2010). It is significant that gender research to a much greater extent than other archaeological research (mainstream archaeology) is devoted to writing reviews – compare with Fig. 9.
During the last ten year span, which journals have published the highest number of gender articles? Of the 81 listed journals in the database only 11 journals published more than 2 articles discussing gender research. This is a rather poor result bearing in mind that each journal usually contains several articles per annum and we here are speaking in terms of articles per decade. The number one journal between 2001-2010 is *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* that published 14 gender articles, followed by *Historical Archaeology* (11), *American Antiquity* (10), *Journal of Archaeological Research* (10), *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* (7), *American Journal of Archaeology* (6), *Journal of Social Archaeology* (6), *World Archaeology* (5), *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* (4), and lastly three in each of *Antiquity* and *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*. It must be remembered that in most cases the gender articles are not evenly spread out in the journals. Rather, the high number of gender articles in *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* is only due to the fact that the journal in 2007 had a special issue that focused on gender research.

Before presenting the conclusions from these analyses, I will comment briefly on gender research as represented through the previously mentioned *Fornvännen*. *Fornvännen*, Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research, has indeed a very long history, 105 years, and it is the leading journal for antiquarian research in Sweden. Of hundreds of articles published during the last 30 years, I have, with an amount of good will, counted seven (7) articles that
have a gender perspective. In addition, 12 reviews have been made of books that to some extent contained gender perspectives.

The Norwegian journal K.A.N., Kvinner i arkeologi i Norge (Eng. Women in Archaeology in Norway) must also be mentioned. It published twice a year during its time of existence (from 1985 to 2005) and printed 25 editions before it sadly went out of print. An obvious drawback with such a journal is that it unfortunately can be avoided in its entirety. If gender research is published in bigger, mainstream journals perhaps gender articles will be read by a wider audience and cited to a greater extent.

Summary and conclusions

In this paper I have analyzed to what extent gender articles are published and cited in indexed journals, both in absolute numbers and in relation to other archaeological articles. The analyses have been made by using Thomson & Reuters’ Arts & Humanities Citation Index (ISI) and comprise almost 30 years. On average, gender articles account for c. 2% of the total amount of published archaeological articles. Exceptions exist, especially if a journal has a special issue on gender, and if reports from gender conferences are published. Despite these welcome exceptions the number of gender articles in relation to the total number of published articles in important and influential journals is low. Seemingly, gender research is a marginalized phenomenon in journals with assumed benchmarking standards. Ericka Engelstad has pointed to the fact that gender work, sadly, is rarely found in mainstream archaeological books either (Engelstad 2007:227 citing Conkey and Gero 1997:414-416).

Trends

It is fairly evident that some theoretical perspectives a more connected to certain periods of time than others. An example of such a trend is the queer perspective which peaked during the late 90s, if indeed a modest number of 7 may be referred to as a peak. Masculinity is another theoretical entry to study prehistory. Although very small in numbers, masculinity research shows an increase during the last decade. Feminisms have a bigger hit ratio within gender research than queer and masculinity. However, I would like to emphasize that there is a total absence of research into femininities and intersectionality.
Gender archaeology versus mainstream archaeology

Gender research can in itself be said to be a theoretical perspective that embraces diversity. However, in comparison to mainstream archaeology, gender archaeology is not quite so embracing when it comes to publishing countries and choice of language for the period 2001–2010. Mainstream archaeology is more diversified than gender archaeology when it comes to publishing country. The same is true for publishing language.

There are also differences when it comes to the types of document published by mainstream and gender archaeology. I have argued here that the document types also signify different research focus and research traditions. Compared to mainstream archaeology, gender archaeology reviews itself to a greater extent, as well as investigating the pros and cons of proposed and implemented methodological and theoretical frameworks of reference. I maintained that such writings and evaluations are important since they highlight, and assist in, the constant and necessary development of gender research within archaeology. Indeed, it is probable that any research field would benefit from using such a practice.

Directions for the future

I started off the paper by situating the appearance of (gender) articles in leading journals in a wider context. I would like to finish where I started with a recommendation that gender researchers should try to publish in these important and influential journals for several reasons. For one thing, gender research published in such a way is not so easily discarded if found in an issue also devoted to other topics. Another reason is funding. Universities and funding agencies will probably, to a far greater extent than previously, place a greater weight on articles published in leading journals, and let the results of bibliometrical analyses guide their allotment of money to researchers.

References


Ability and Disability
On Bodily Variations and Bodily Possibilities in Viking Age Myth and Image

Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh

Abstract
The aim of this article is to challenge the notion of an unquestioned hegemonic bodynormativity. It is proposed that the able and disabled body is a social and cultural construction, related to bodily variations and linked to an ability/disability order of power. The theme can be discussed in ways, which are similar to those exploring gender by gender and feminist research. Based on a handful of bronze and silver figurines from Scandinavian Late Iron Age, showing a focus on ocular matters that are connected to variations in visual ability, it is stated that in this context vision and eye-sight was a theme open for negotiations within an ability/disability axis of power.

Introduction
In our society there exist certain notions that can be traced far back in time. Ideas and thoughts of earlier generations may survive to a greater or lesser extent, and gradually merge into new contexts and ways of understanding. When similarities are observed over time, it is tempting to integrate meanings of our own time into interpretations of cultural expressions of times past. However, in parallel with the survival of older concepts, new social and cultural concepts may transform these ideas, notions or cultural articulations and give them new meanings (Kuper 1988). In order to clarify such “superimpositions-of-time” it is important to discuss both older and contemporary analytical concepts and their value and constitutive contexts. By illuminating such a history of notions, it might be easier to search for and develop new analytical concepts which are more in line with current ways of understanding. Considering that interpretations of the past are made in interplay with evidence from the past and contemporary questions and concepts, it is only
through today’s analytical tools and frames of understanding that we can approach earlier times. If new knowledge will evolve, it may sometimes be necessary to search for, and develop, new analytical entrances which derive from current discussions. Such intellectual work needs to start from and be connected to a situated and commented standpoint.

In the light of some finds of human figurines from Scandinavian Late Iron Age, in this article I will use some new analytical tools to discuss one such a long-lived thought, namely the notion of the blind poet and prophet, hoping to gain some new knowledge of the Scandinavian Iron Age, but also to contribute to a modern understanding of bodily variations.

Visual impairment as a poetic and prophetic trope

In his poetic epos *Aniara*, where the lost space-ship travels without a goal, the author Harry Martinson has created a figure who can bestow some consolation on the travelers. It is the blind poetess from Rind who, in lovely words, sings songs about the old land, mediates memories from earlier days and conveys visions of a future existence. Through her ability to create enchanting narratives, the blind girl attains a very special position (Martinson 1956:104-116). The central contradiction of the character is that her physical blindness is decisive for her poetic and prophetic ability. The absence of actual sight is a prerequisite for her visionary sight.

With his modernistic epos, Martinson transfers the blind poetess into an imagined future. However, she can also be understood as an archaic figure, possible to trace back into the past. A well-known example is the Celtic bard Ossian, who in James MacPherson’s romantic and creative eighteenth century interpretation represented wisdom and the art of epic poetry. The theme of the blind poet can be followed further back. Homer himself, one of poetry’s emblematic figures, was supposed to be blind. According to the Greek myth, Thereisias of Thebe was also struck with blindness when the gods wanted to punish him. However, as compensation he was given wisdom and visionary ability.

The phenomenon of reduced sight appears in the Old Norse mythical world too. The blind god Höder involuntarily caused the death of his brother Balder, tricked by the treacherous Loke (Näsström 2001:101). Another well known myth is the story of Odin, who gave one of his eyes as a token for the utmost wisdom by depositing the eye into the well of Mimer. This self-mutilation that caused a significant physical limitation was repaid by a new ability (op. cit:56).
Variations related to bodily abilities

Narrative themes such as those mentioned above are almost self-evidently part of our cultural affinity. Here, physical blindness is overshadowed by other abilities of social importance: the capacity to use a poetic language to interpret and convey contemporary conditions or memories of the past, and the prophetic seeing into hidden worlds to foretell the future. What we perhaps are less aware of is the fact that we meet characters here who, without these extraordinary abilities, would rather be understood as figures connected to disabilities. The examples above illuminate the statement by Rosemarie Garland Thomson that “[d]isability is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, similar to that we understand as the fictions of race and gender” (Thomson 2002:5). If disability, that is variations within bodily capacities and abilities, is a specific interpretation of a specific corporeality and thus a social and cultural construction, the theme would consequently be possible to discuss and analyse in the same way that gender has been explored as a social and cultural construction (Thomson 1997:22).

As Björn Johansson writes (2008), disability and variations related to bodily abilities is a marginalized field within archaeological research. As a consequence of this, our understanding of prehistory is reduced and people with varied abilities are denied knowledge of a history that might give perspective and identity to their own situation (op. cit.:9). It is true that physical anthropologists and archaeologists often provide information of skeletal injuries, sometimes accidental and sometimes congenital (Roberts 1999). This can encourage discussions about nurture and care that indicate how people with reduced functions have, with the aid of compensatory equipment, been more or less equal participants of society (Finlay 1999; Johansson 2008). Here we recognize different levels on how to relate to bodily variations. These constitute the WHO model of reduced physical function:

1) Impairment or injury, which sometimes results in a medical classification.
2) Disability, which relates to the individual level of the impairment. Disability can also be used as an umbrella term for the whole field.
3) Handicap, which refers to the consequences of the injury or reduced function in relation to the demands of the surrounding society. (Johansson 2008:5; http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en [copied from the web 2010-09-01]).

A model like this, where reduced ability is seen as both connected to a situation and related to a norm has been characterized as a social model in order to focus on “the social structures and processes that deny certain people access to various social arenas such as, for example, the labour market, education and so on. Reduced function will thus constitute the oppression...
that the majority society exercises against certain persons by, for instance, building an inaccessible social environment” (Grönvik & Söder 2008:18-19). A central idea of this model is that the person with reduced function is related to a norm, from which he or she deviates, and thus will be defined as “the Other” (Andersson 1998).

A social disability model such as this has certain advantages, as it helps to clarify perspectives and analytical levels (Silvers 2009:3), but it has also some limitations (Grönvik & Söder 2008:18). One such disadvantage is that people with limited functions are easily stereotyped as deviant in relation to the norm. The problem is ascribed to the one who differs, who through corrections and adjustments has to adapt to normality. Here we can see an immediate parallel to feminist- and gender research where it has been demonstrated that it has been society’s ambition to adjust women in accordance with the masculine norm. Over the last decades, feminist- and gender research has showed that this norm in possible to question and challenge.

Another matter is that the androcentric norm that still marks much of contemporary society also affects society’s adaptations and adjustments for people with functional variations. The social lock-gate of adaptation still has an androcentric bias (Wendell 1989; Malmberg 2010).

Sociologists Lars Grönvik and Mårten Söder argue that the social disability model doesn’t provide a satisfactory basis for discussions of power issues, such as limited bodily abilities in relation to influence, resources, and political representation (Grönvik & Söder 2008:20-21).

Feminist and gender research has proved that our society is connected to an androcentric sex/gender order of power. One way to describe this is as an axis of power with an asymmetric hierarchy of values. Masculinity, placed in one end of the axis is often ascribed a high value. In the other end is femininity, to which a low value is often ascribed. In analogy with this, it can be stated that our society also shows an ability/disability order of power (funktionsmaktordning in Swedish, see Lundgren 2007:11). In the hierarchy of values of this axis of power, the physically, mentally or socially well functioning body is ascribed higher value than the body where these abilities are reduced. The high value position is perceived as a norm and a position from which the deviant corporeality should be corrected. At the same time a paradox appears: only after being measured against the deviant body, is the norm confirmed.

One way to approach discussions about such a value system is presented by Rosemarie Garland Thomson. She applies a feminist critique to the understanding of bodily variations. The body connected to complete abilities is placed at one end of this axis of power and the body with total lack of abilities is placed at the other end. This she calls “the ability/disability system” (Thomson 1997; 2002:3-6). In our western society there is a tendency to understand, without reflection, positions close to complete corporal ability as an obvious and essential normality, while positions at the other end of the
scale are perceived as abnormal. However, according to Thomson, interpretations connected to bodily variations are historically, socially, and culturally situated, which according to a standpoint-theory perspective has a political dimension (Thomson 1997:24). Standpoint-theory acknowledges local and situated epistemological points of departures connected to various identity categories, thereby contributing to broader and more varied accounts of the world. This also includes identity categories situated in bodily variations related to an ability/disability axis of power (Silvers 2009:5-9). Acknowledging bodily variations as a situated standpoint illuminates society’s body politics, something which often is obscured. Furthermore, as Thomson states, the system provides sets of practices, including relations between bodies and their physical environment. These shape and maintain a more or less able body. Thus also agency produces positions at the axis of power. From this perspective, “[d]isability, then, is the attribution of corporeal deviance – not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do” (op.cit:6). Such cultural rules may differ widely over time and are connected to a social knowledge of how to “use” the body (Mauss 1992:455) and how to interpret various corporal expressions such as different attributes connected to appearance (Sørensen 1997). With a critical feminist eye it will be understood that all human beings – with their temporally existing bodily abilities connected to various situations - will be transiently positioned somewhere on this axis of power. In consequence, bodily variations - abilities and disabilities - should be seen as relational constructions, which shape all of us. It should not, as often in our society, be a matter of concern only for people with reduced bodily abilities (Grönvik & Söder 2008:19).

Within the early feminist- and gender- research, it was realized that in order to question the unequal gender order of power, the problem should not be seen as originating in the marginalized category, i.e. women. Instead the masculine norm, which had been taken for granted as a natural and self-evident fact, should be questioned as a social and cultural construction. In the same way, Thomson states, that in order to challenge the ability/disability system the less-able body should not be characterized as deviant. Instead the construction of the completely able body should be challenged!

According to Thomson, the completely able body is an unattainable and illusory figure of mind, which can only temporarily and illusively take a specific individual shape. She calls this figure the Normate (Thomson 1997:8). The individuals of a society compare and identify themselves in relation to this normative figure. It is often concealed or denied that this figure can be understood as a politically situated social and cultural construction. Instead the Normate will be seen as a self-evident, natural and unambiguous normality. As formulated by Berg and Grönvik: “It constitutes a ‘natural’ and accepted normality, from which all individuals take their point of departure. In a way it will therefore not attract attention. The attention, the
significant position of identity, is focused on the deviant” (Berg & Grönvik 2007, p. 5). The Normate will thus be the figure of mind “from which it will be possible to identify people with reduced abilities” (Grönvik & Söder 2008:19). Thereby it is the deviant which is distinguished. Occasionally, however, the appearance of the Normate or the complete corporal ability is required to be made explicit and confirmed. Berg and Grönvik characterize such situations as moments of epiphany. As these occasions are integrated in the social structure, they appear to be obvious (Berg & Grönvik 2007:6).

Thus the Normate will be an unchallenged norm to strive for. In the western society, such a bodynormativity (Malmberg 2009) is distinguished by being white, male, well educated, healthy, well trained et cetera (Thomson 1997:8-9; Malmberg 2009:60). It is also, like the heteronormative sex/gender order, exclusive in its practice (Malmberg:op.cit.; Alberti & Back Danielsson, pas-sim). In other cultures the view on ability, variation and normality may have been different. Michel Foucault argues that today’s apprehension in these matters is a product of modernity, where much effort has been devoted to confirm normality by classifying what has been considered as physically and mentally deviant. If we travel a few centuries back in time, we can find examples of specific bodily articulations, which today may be considered marginalizing but in their contexts were interpreted as signs of holy stigmatization or martyrdom (Thomson 1997:38-41). Another example is obesity, which in our society can be a stigmatizing feature (Gilman 2010), where the archaeological record may prove otherwise (Gillespie 2008:129-130). Over time, and in different cultures, bodily variations may have been understood in a number of ways. This includes extraordinary abilities like extremely good eyesight, hearing or the like. As an archaeologist, it is necessary to keep an open mind concerning the way corporeal variations may have been given different social interpretations and articulations.

Meaningful practices

How have bodily differences and varied abilities been interpreted in South Scandinavian Late Iron Age? Though sparse, the literary evidence indicates distinct bodily ideals which are both status and gender specific. In the epos Rigsthula, corporal norms and thus implicitly bodily properties are expressed. So, for instance, people representing the high social strata are characterized as fair-haired, upstanding and tall. By contrast, the thralls are often described as clumsy or with bodily defects. It is obvious that such bodily characteristics do not denote bodily impairments but social classification (Brink 2008). However, it is true that the Old Norse Saga canon occasionally presents evidence of bodily injuries or complaints in more nuanced ways, as theme open for social negotiations (Bragg 1997; Lassen 2003).
Social notions can also be expressed via various practices such as rituals or ceremonies. Rituals can be defined as repeated actions following a specific custom. They can be parts of a number of social cohesions, from those that are connected to mythological or cosmological ideas, to others that are linked to the tasks of everyday life (Raudvere 2008). A notion or an idea can, by the action per se, take a material form, be confirmed, verified and strengthened but also negotiated and bent. It has to be actively brought to an event. From the perspective of archaeological interpretations, the performative character of rituals conveys an interpretative precedence to the agents and their practices. Many parts of a ritual have an immaterial, unstable character such as dancing, singing, movement, temporal sequences or other expressions that are connected to bodily abilities. Other parts have a clear material connection like location, specific implements or paraphernalia, things that now constitute archaeological evidence (Gräslund 2008). Actions are not void of purpose but performed by agents or actors with specific wishes and driving forces. These people, who can be categorized in relation to social group, gender, age, kin, or local affiliations such as farm, village or region can thus be positioned somewhere along axes of power that are connected to status, gender, age, geography, etcetera. To this we can add an axis of bodily ability/disability.

Odin from Uppåkra and comparable finds

In recent years, Scandinavian archaeologists have found many indications of a rich ritual life from the Late Iron Age. One example is the site of Uppåkra in Scania. Extensive investigations have yielded proof of a long term settlement focused on trade and exchange, metal craftwork and high status cultic ritual performances (Hårdh & Larsson (eds) 1998; Hårdh 2008). Parts of the extensive cultural layer show traces of, among other things, a major cult building or hall and revealing finds of magnificent bowls in glass and metal. Other objects of high status include about a hundred little gold foils, or guldgubbar. The hall in particular, with its many prestigious objects, has been cited when interpreting Uppåkra as a central hub for rituals and ceremonies.

As major parts of Uppåkra’s topmost cultural layers are affected by historical agricultural activities and the artifacts thus are not in situ, metal detectors have been used to recover the prehistoric metal objects that have found their way into these layers. It is therefore not possible to describe the context of the detector finds in such detail as some of the other finds from Uppåkra. They have, however, a general connection to the high-status ceremonial milieu of the late Iron Age. One of the detector finds is a five centimetre long bronze figure of a man (Fig. 1). Based on iconographical comparisons, the figurine is dated to the ninth or tenth century AD (Bergqvist
The man is showed en face. The body is slim with a stiff posture, the arms kept tight along the side. The hands are closed, but one of them displays “traces of a different metal, probably iron” (Bergqvist 1999:119). Perhaps the figure had a staff or a spear in his hand. A short diagonally squared coat and belt are visible. There is a socket at the base of the figurine which could be used to attach it to a staff or some other implement.

Fig. 1. Bronze figurine, the so called “Odin from Uppåkra”, found in Viking Age cultural layer. Uppåkra, Sweden. Length c.5 cm. (Photo: Bengt Almgren, Lund University Historical Museum).

Two characteristics have been highlighted on this figurine. One is the head-gear, a helmet featuring two curved, flat “horns”. The ends of the horns are broken off. Such horned helmets are known from other finds. One example is a similar figurine from Tissø on Zealand in Denmark (Bergqvist 1999:120).
Another example is a lead model of a casting form for a belt strap from Viking Age Ribe (Jensen 1991:33, 50). Yet another example, a three centimeter long silver pendant depicting a man with a horned helmet, was found in a woman’s grave from Birka in Lake Mälaren (Price 2002:385; Helmbrecht 2008). The figurine held a staff or a spear in one hand, a sword in the other. A similar pendant in bronze was found in a Viking Age grave from Kungsängen in Uppland. This grave was probably constructed for a woman between 20 and 40 years old. The grave included a few other bronze figurines, such as a man in close combat with a snake, a dog and a miniature pendant in the shape of a strike-a-light. All these motifs may have ritual connotations. Moreover, the buried woman had three silver finger rings and beads of silver, glass, and amber. Osteological analyses showed, in addition to the human remains, bones from horse, dog, lamb, pig and an unidentified bird (Ringkvist 1969:287). Compared to other contemporary graves in the area, the objects found in the grave indicate that the woman who was buried at Kungsängen most likely had a very specific social position.

Images of men with horned helmets, sometimes with bird’s heads at the end of the horns, are also present on some plates which were themselves decorations on helmets. These figures also carry a sword or a spear/staff. The way their bodies are depicted in movement has given them the name “weapon-dancers”. Such rectangular mountings or plates were often made of bronze. They were attached to iron helmets. Some well-known examples came from boat graves numbers 7 and 8 at Valsgärde in Uppland and the boat grave at Sutton Hoo in England. These artifacts are usually dated to the Early Vendel period, that is the sixth or seventh century AD. The same imagery can be connected to a small fragment from the East Mound in Old Uppsala. A weapon-dancer is also depicted on one of the stamps for mounting plates, found at Torslunda on Öland (Arrhenius 1994: 212, 214; Fig. 2).
We can conclude that the horned helmet has existed as a significant attribute from the Early Vendel period to the Viking Age, a span of around 400 years or more. Grave finds connect the earliest objects to society’s paramount strata and to a masculine warrior sphere where the warrior’s equipment was ostentatiously displayed. If the Torslunda stamps were part of a sacrifice deposit – the stamps were found in a stone cairn (Hagberg 1976:323) – this strengthens the ritual connotations of the motif. As the Torslunda stamps are an example of metal craft, they also associate to craftwork and production. For the younger Viking Age finds (Helmbrecht 2008), a broader context, not primarily linked to a male military aristocracy may be suggested. Still, places like Uppåkra, Tissö, Birka and Kungsängen indicate contexts of high social status. However, it can be implied that the performative social practices had become more varied: if they were attached to an implement, the figurines from Uppåkra and Tissö may have been displayed in performative ceremonies in front of an audience. The pendants from Birka and Kungsängen were probably worn on the body of particular individuals, to be shown or concealed as amulets. The Kungsängen pendant might have been part of a set of amulets, affecting its meaning and narrative. Moreover, both the Birka and the Kungsängen finds are connected to a female sphere in spite of the narrative theme of the horn-equipped helmets, which for several generations
had been associated with weapon and masculine prestige. It is worth noting here that three of the tapestry fragments from the Oseberg grave feature an image of a figure with horned headgear (Christensen & Nockert (eds) 2006: figs 1-3 p. 19, 23; figs 1-26 p. 36, 37; figs 1-28 p. 39, 41). One of these figures is interpreted as a woman by Bjørn Hougen (op.cit: 93). When used in a woman’s grave, like the one from Oseberg, it reinforces the theme’s female connection. It also broadens the motive to another material medium, the textile fabric. The find from Ribe clearly connects the theme to the sphere of metal production which is so significant for this site (Jensen 1991: 33). Further, both Ribe and Birka indicate that the theme was significant not only in the hall of the magnates but also in a proto- or early urban context. Thus, we see here a meaningful visual attribute, linked to ritual ceremonies with connotations to weaponry and combat, which are ascribed more and varied meanings over time.

Another significant trait of the Uppåkra figurine is the absence of one eye. By connecting this trait to the Edda narrative of Odin’s sacrifice of his eye, the figure has been interpreted as an image of Odin. Lindby in Scania is the site of a comparable find, a five centimeter long bronze image of a man lacking one eye. This figure is also interpreted as a representation of Odin. The slim man is shown en face, having a moustache, a pointed hat and a coat reaching to the knees. One of his arms is curved, holding the waist. The other arm is broken off. On each of the flat feet is a hole for attaching the figurine to an implement. The Lindby figurine has no find context, so there is not much to say about its social setting, although it is dated to the Viking Age.

That the Uppåkra and Lindby figurines are one-eyed is not disputed by researchers (Larsson & Hårdh 1997; Berggren 1999; Vikingatidens ABC:188). There are a few more obvious finds displaying this theme. One is the above-mentioned bronze stamp from Torslunda which depicts a weapon-dancer. Arrhenius, who has studied the object, states that “one of the eyes [has been] deliberately removed from the patrice” and thus it is not impossible that “the image has been adjusted” in accordance with practices related to the cult of Odin (Arrhenius 1994:214). Both Neil Price and Michaela Helmbrecht have noted that an eye is also missing from the abovementioned lead mould from Ribe showing a man’s face with a horned helmet (Price 2002:387; Helmbrecht 2011:144, 168). In addition, Price has studied a bronze handle about 5 cm long, ending with the face of a man with a horned helmet. This object comes from a hoard of smithing tools lying in a mid eighth century layer at Staraja Ladoga. Having examined the object “in the Hermitage magazines in St. Petersburg” Price concludes that “there is a definite trace of a blow to the right eye of the figure, again as if to mark it in some way” (Price 2002:388, see also Røesdahl & Wilson 1992:150, 197, 298).

The Uppåkra, Lindby and Staraja Ladoga figurines are all intended to be attached to another implement. The Uppåkra, Lindby and Ribe objects are
practically contemporary and belong to the south Scania-Denmark region, whereas the earlier Torslunda stamp has a slightly more northeastern regional provenance and the Staraja Ladoga handle is from the easternmost part of the Nordic sphere of influence. However, the iconography of the Torslunda stamp in particular - the weapon-dancer with the horn-equipped helmet - can be linked to a theme which at that time extended from England to the eastern part of Scandinavia. Both the Staraja Ladoga handle and the Ribe mould are clearly connected to metalwork, something which also holds for the Torslunda stamp (Hagberg 1976:331-332). All of the objects have links to the upper echelons of society and contexts where ritual or other ceremonial practices associated with performance and narrative were likely to occur.

In conclusion, there are a few obvious examples portraying one-eyed men who, with the exception of the Lindby figurine, wear horned helmets. This ocular feature could either have been explicit right from the manufacturing process, but it could also have appeared at a later stage, as a result of a dismembering act. The chronological span may be up to 400 years, meaning that the depiction of a man with a defective eye and a horned helmet may have been current for 10-15 generations depending on how many years are estimated per generation.

The Aska pendant

In the early 1920s a small mound on a minor gravesite was removed due to agricultural work in the village of Aska, Östergötland. An archaeological rescue investigation took place a few months later, and various features and artifacts were recovered. Unfortunately some of the data was obviously lost, yet many interesting observations were made (Arne 1932). The grave contained many cremated bones. Modern analysis has identified human bones from a woman aged between 20-40 years. There were also animal bones from horse, dog, sheep or goat. Some of the artifacts were typical for a high status Viking Age woman’s grave: one threefoiled and two oval brooches and a number of beads were characteristic attributes for the female costume of the time and date the grave to the middle of the tenth century. There were also some rare objects, among them an oriental bronze jar and a bronze kettle originating from the British Isles. Other objects worth note included riding equipment and a carbonized loaf (Jansson 1996). Another extraordinary artifact was an iron rod, about half a meter long. It has been interpreted either as a skewer, a measuring rod or a ceremonial staff used by a seeress or a prophetess, a so called Völva (Lundström & Adolfsson 1995; Price 2002; Gustin 2004). All in all, these and other objects indicate that the buried woman must have enjoyed a very special social position.
Another exceptional constellation of artifacts in the Aska grave were nine small gilded silver pendants. By considering the iconography, the pendants can be connected to several time frames. An examination reveals four main time-groups: a) contemporary, b) the early Viking Age about AD 800 c) the middle and late Vendel period, that is the seventh and eighth centuries AD, and d) a remarkably early reference, namely the early to middle Roman Iron Age, AD 150-200. This results in a depth of time of about 700 years, or approximately 25-30 generations. These small pendants, perhaps considered as inalienable objects, could be paraphernalia connected to the identity keeping practices of a family or kin group with histories, names and memories associated to the specific artifacts (Weiner 1985). As time, and depth of time, seem to be central to the collection of pendants, the woman who was buried in the Aska grave may have been responsible for preserving the history of the group. Being part of memorial practices, the objects might have been used to illustrate the history of a family or kin group. Some of the themes, considering their connotations to ancient times, may even refer to a mythical origin narrative (Arwill-Nordbladh 2008).

In this collection of pendants, one item stands out with regard to the theme of bodily variations (Figs 3a, 3b). It is a small figure of a woman en face, who is placed in a circular frame. The woman’s head is raised above the circle. The circle can also be interpreted as a snake biting its tail. The snake’s head is shaped so that when the viewer changes her focus, it can be interpreted as a large brooch. While the pendant is dated to about 800 AD, the brooch and additional jewellery depicted on the figure evoke types which were common one or two centuries earlier (Arrhenius 1962:84-86). It has been suggested that the brooch is a representation of the goddess Freya’s brooch Brisingamen, which is mentioned in the Edda poems (op.cit), thus linking the pendant – and the buried woman – to the cult of Freya. Another feature of the figurine is her long skirt, complemented with a shawl or cloak. The figure folds her hands below her round belly, demonstrating pregnancy, thereby adding connotations of fertility and sexuality. The figurine’s head and face give the impression of wear and tear, and it is difficult to distinguish any clear features. Details on top of the head suggest a coiffure, a band or maybe headgear, perhaps a helmet with a clover shaped nose cover. She is possibly veiled (Back Danielsson 2007:120, 123).

The mouth looks wry. The eyes are hardly visible. This might have been by design, thereby denoting the eyes and the sight as being vague. However, it may also be a result of wear or rubbing down over time. If the condition was a result of wear and abrasion, we here see the traces of a practice that has emphasized the eyes with such an intensity that the negation of the eyesight, the erased look, would appear.

In spite of its small size, the figurine from Aska invites various interpretations and discussions. Even if the pendant from Aska may not be such an obvious example of visual impairment as the images from Uppåkra, Lindby,
Torslunda, Ribe and Staraja Ladoga, it nonetheless focuses on eyes and sight as the theme of interest. If the poor condition of the eyes was a result of wear and tear or rubbing, this would indicate long-term use, as such abrasions do not appear over night.

Fig. 3a. Gilded silver pendant from a Viking Age woman’s grave. Length 3,8 cm. Aska, Hagebyhöga sn, Östergötland. Photo: Christer Åhlin, the National Historical Museum, Stockholm.

Fig. 3b. Drawing of the Aska pendant. Bengt Händel, ATA, Stockholm.
The pendant from Tissø

By the lake Tissø, or the lake of the god Tyr, on Zealand, archaeological investigations have been undertaken at a prehistoric site of almost 50 hectares (Jørgensen 2002; 2008). A wide range of activities are documented. Archaeological specimens found close to the shore of the lake are interpreted as sacrificial deposits from the seventh century onwards. Most spectacular is a gold collar from the tenth century. Adjacent graves have been dated to the eleventh century, thus establishing around 400 years of activity.

Fig. 4. Miniature gilded silver figurine from the magnate site of Tissø, Zealand, Denmark. (Photo: Lars Jørgensen, The National Museum, Copenhagen).

The main information derives from a magnate’s dwelling area, connected with trade and craftwork. The archaeological material is incredibly rich, including many status objects with Carolingian connections. Among the various buildings, one is distinguished by its size and its artifacts. It is interpreted as a manor or a hall. Among the objects associated with the hall were
several miniatures, many of them pendants, maybe used as amulets. One of these objects is a small female figurine of gilded silver (Fig. 4). The figurine is en face in full figure. She wears an ankle-length skirt with a striped border. The central part of the skirt shows horizontal and vertical stripes, perhaps depicting an apron. Other details of the costume may be interpreted as pieces of jewellery. The figure shows a most peculiar body language: her hair is fashioned in two pretzel-like arrangements and she seems to hold her hands on each of these. Or is she possibly cupping her ears? The gesture is unusual, but not unique. A small silver beaker from Lejre is adorned with a similar motif. Around the upper part of the beaker, a small female figure is depicted, repeated four times to encircle the object. Her arms are stretched out and her hair is arranged in two “Pippi Long-stocking-like pigtails” 1 (Christensen 2010a:9). A comparable item was found at Stavnslager, a major Iron Age settlement site near Randers on Jutland. A small copper object depicts a woman in full figure, wearing a long skirt. Her arms are stretched upwards and she seems to be pulling her two braids (Helmbrecht 2011:156). The gesture may also be compared with that of a figure from the Viking Age Vendel grave IV; a horse gear consisting of a small bronze top-mounting, which was attached to a wooden bow for looping the reins. “A human figure, who with her raised arms holds and stretches out her two hair-braids…” is placed here (Stolpe & Arne 1912). It has been suggested that the figurine from Tissø could depict a Valkyrie or, perhaps more plausibly, a representation of Freya with her big brooch. The unusual braid-pulling gesture may be compared with gestures known from classical antiquity of people pulling their hair in despair as a gesture of mourning. However, there is a very long chronological and cultural gap to consider when proposing a connection between these Roman expressions, even if it should not be ruled out. In the absence of further comparative finds, this remains an open question. We can however conclude that the narrative theme indicated here is associated with high status late Iron Age women.

Significant to our discussion are the eyes and the eyesight of the figurine. The two eyes, vastly exaggerated in proportion, are depicted differently, resulting in a non-uniform look. One of the eyes has a pupil whereas the other expresses a blank mien. Lars Jørgensen, responsible for the Tissø investigations, states that this is most likely unintentional, perhaps a mistake during the production process (Lars Jørgensen, e-mail communication 2011-04-04) 2. I do not want to overstretch the material, and will not oppose this plausible conclusion. However, unintentional or not, this is how the eyes

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1 Pippi Long-stocking is a popular Swedish fantasy figure, well-known from children’s books and films.
2 "Du har helt ret i, at øjnene er asymmetrisk. Men jeg synes nu ikke, at det højre ikke kan se. Jeg har mere indtrykket af, at det skyldes framstillingen af modellen til formen, som er skåret lidt skævt”. My warm thanks to Lars Jørgensen for this information.
looked when the figurine was used in its original context. The figurine should be seen and interpreted with regard to the specific pre-understanding that the people of Viking Age Tissø would have had of its prominent bodily characteristics, in this case an image featuring two distinctly different expressions of the eyes.

Odin from Lejre

I am also hesitant to use the last example in this survey, as the interpretation may seem a little stretched. However, for the sake of the discussion it may be worth highlighting an additional figurine. The high status context of Lejre on Zealand yields traces of a wide range of activities. Its active period ranges from the sixth century to early Christian times. Lejre is supposed to have been the residence of the Skjoldungs, Denmark's first Royal dynasty (Christensen 2008). Consequently, the site must have been the stage for a number of performative practices intended to negotiate social power.

Fig. 5. “Odin from Lejre”. Silver figurine from the magnate site of Lejre, Zealand, Denmark. Length c. 2 cm. (Photo: Ole Malling, Roskilde Museum).
A small figurine was found in 2008 in an area close to two buildings interpreted due to their size as halls (Fig. 5). The figurine was less than two centimeters tall, made of silver with niello inlays. It is dated stylistically to the Viking Age. The motif, a human figure sitting in a chair, is interpreted as a representation of Odin (Christensen 2009; 2010a; 2010b). Several arguments support this. One important reason is the site per se. It seems most plausible that a site like Lejre with its connections to society’s warrior aristocracy should be linked to the mythological character that most explicitly represented the Viking Age warrior ideology, namely Odin (Steinsland 2007: 210-212). Other reasons include the design of the figure and its various attributes. The figure sits on a chair, interpreted as Odin’s throne. The throne is known from the Edda texts which mention how Odin sits there, surveying the world. On the back of the chair are two animal heads, interpreted as Odin’s wolves Gere and Freke. On the two armrests sit two birds which might represent Odin’s ravens Hugin and Munin. The figure would thus represent Odin sitting on his throne (Christensen 2009; 2010).

However, the Odin interpretation is not entirely obvious (Sonne 2010). For example, Freya is also depicted in the Edda texts sitting on a throne-like chair. However, the major objection is the figure’s bodily appearance. The shape is rather stout and thus in stark contrast to the slim male figures from Uppåkra and Lindby. It can be better compared to a small gold figurine found at Trønning in West Zealand. This figurine is most often understood as an image of a woman (Jensen 2004:353). The shape of the body is also comparable to that of the Aska lady. Moreover, the costume and its attributes are problematic to the Odin interpretation (Mannering 2010). The figure bears a shawl or mantle similar to that of the Aska woman. The four rows of pearls also evoke the Aska figurine. The Lejre figure may be wearing a skirt. At the very least an apron-like cloth is placed over the knees, similar to clothing on the Tissø and Trønning figurines. However, even if these are intended as feminine attributes, this could be explained by an episode in the Edda text referring to Odin dressed in a woman’s costume. It has also been stated that Odin, as the major shaman, could take on a female societal role (Hedeager 1999; Solli 1999, 2002). It is, moreover, suggested that the polysemic character of the figure, both in relation to its gender attribution, its small size, its precious material and other material articulations, was an intended and desireable feature in various enactments of social performances (Back Danielsson 2010). It is clear that this miniature is an ambiguous object.

The Lejre figurine has a round head with an arched hood or a helmet. The mouth is concealed by a double-band which may be a neck-ring. The upper band could just as easily indicate a moustache, as proposed by project leader Tom Christensen, (Christensen 2009; 2010a:4; 2010b:23). It should be noted that there is a connection here with the figurine from Lindby, which is shown with a moustache. If the figure represents a man, the moustache is a
plausible interpretation. If it is an image of a woman, the band-like feature is more difficult to interpret. The nose and the eyes are obvious. However, the two eyes are depicted differently. The right eye has a more distinct gaze compared to the left eye, which is more diffuse. Tom Christensen states that he has reached “the conclusion that the left eye has been damaged after the casting of the figurine. A practically microscopic line on the eye is also present, and may be original, perhaps denoting blindness” (Tom Christensen, e-mail communication 2011-08-19).

In summation, Odin from Lejre is a figurine that is open to many interpretations. Its attributes point in many directions: an image of a man whose attributes refer to a mythological character or a figure of a woman who may have known mythological connotations, as well as other references unknown to us. As the miniature’s gender attribution is not quite evident, the figurine has also been interpreted as an expression of Odin in a feminine role, perhaps identifiable to the modern designation as a queer position.

Discussion

Some late Iron Age figurines thus demonstrate a thematic variation with regard to eyes, gaze, and eyesight. The majority of images show no unusual depiction. However, a small number of artifacts express variations. This is most clearly seen in the objects from Uppåkra, Lindby, Torslunda, Ribe and Staraja Ladoga. All of these have a distinct male attribution, but some also have a female connection. Regarding the Aska pendant, it is the very absence of detail that set the focus on its eyes. Maybe this is an original feature – if the figure was veiled its eyes would be hidden from view at the same time as the world around would be hidden to the figurine's gaze. The face gives the impression of being particularly worn and abrased around the eyes, and possibly this part of the pendant has been exposed to wear and rubbing. For the Aska figurine the female attribution is evident. The female identification for the Tissø figurine is also beyond doubt. While the different articulations of the eyes may have been an unintentional outcome of the production process, it was nonetheless an expression which most likely was noticeable when the object was in use. The gesture of this figurine, if cupping her ears, may perhaps also allude to restricted aural ability. Concerning the Lejre figurine it is likely – though not certain – that the variation in eyesight is a result of damage during use. Here the gender attribution is more ambiguous. Maybe future research will offer more comparative material. More compara-

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3 “Vi har diskuteret øjene og er kommet til den konklusion, at det venstre øje er tilføjet en skade efter figurinen er støbt. Dog kan det også argumenteres for, at den lille næsten mikroskopisk streg på øjet er ”medfødt” og et tegn på blindhed”. My warm thanks to Tom Christensen for this information.
tive evidence will also be required to broaden the discussion of eye, eyesight and gaze as a theme for bodily variation. Further technical analyses of use, wear and abrasion would aid progress. This can be linked to Ing-Marie Back Danielsson’s discussion of traces of damage – pricks, scratches and punctures - that can be observed on specific body parts on some figures depicted on gold foils and bracteates (Back Danielsson 2007:124-127). There are many examples and the “damage” seems to appear at specific locations such as the head, heart and genitalia, and Back Danielsson concludes that it is probably not the result of subsequent handling related to post-depositional conditions. Rather, it is likely that the figures “were not passive effigies, to be admired at a distance but [...] were created and creative participants in a number of plays, where an assortment of properties [...] were required, all depending on contexts, purpose and power relations” (op. cit.:127).

By considering some late Iron Age figurines, we may assume that eyesight and variations thereof was a subject in process. This ocular theme as a social narrative being expressed in material culture has also been observed by Howard Williams. In connection to objects from the Sutton Hoo grave Williams demonstrates how the multiple gaze – the opposite phenomenon to reduced eyesight – as a topic was articulated on prestigious objects (Williams 2011). This raises the question why variations connected to abilities related to eyes, seeing and eyesight were highlighted in the social narrative. According to the Edda poems, sight had a close relationship with wisdom and knowledge. Reduced visual capacity could be compensated for in real life situations through a highly developed sense of hearing, touch or smell, which could in turn give the impression of wisdom and prophetic ability. These conditions could be interpreted and explained through the myth about Odin, who by giving one of his eyes as a token received the desired all-embracing wisdom. A manifest and real reduction in one corporeal ability would, via the idea of sacrifice and exchange, be compensated by heightened ability on the metaphorical level. This interpretation may be plausible in connection to the Uppåkra, Lindby, Torslunda, Ribe and Staraja Ladoga images. With their distinctly male attributes, and depicted as they are with only one eye, it seems reasonable to associate the figures either with the God Odin himself or with ritual practices connected to the cult of Odin. In addition, the figurine from Lejre, with its more uncertain gender attribution and the figurines from Tissø and Aska, with their clear female gender attributes indicate the existence of more narratives than we know about, and hence an exclusive link to Odinic practice and worship is probably the result of our reliance on later written sources.

Anders Andrén (1989:292-293) has proposed that prophetic seeing and beholding into hidden worlds was a theme that was particularly connected to the female sphere. One example is a scene from the recollections of Ibn Fadlan, having witnessed a burial of a Rus chieftain. The female slave who soon was going to be sacrificed was lifted up to look through a raised wood-
en frame. Doing this, she was able to see her dead parents and siblings (see also Price 2002:168)

The frame can be understood as a liminal object. There are other liminal objects which can be associated to women. One such category is the threshold. Tove Hjørungdal refers to a mid-Iron Age grave in Vestlandet, Norway where a woman was buried in a stone coffin. A specific slab at one end was interpreted as a threshold stone. The grave also contained a staff, interpreted as the staff of a völva or a seeress (Hjørungdal 1992:105). This find emphasizes the connection between women, transgression and prophetic vision, as the staff may be interpreted as an attribute for seeresses. In the mythical world, this was associated with the Eddic Vala or Völva who possessed knowledge of both the past and the future. In real life there is the story of Tordis Lillvölva in Erik Rödes’ Saga – if we accept the idea that the Icelandic Sagas recapitulate, if not historically accurate events, at least socially understandable and accepted themes. Experiencing a harvest failure at the farm of a well reputed farmer, a woman, Tordis Lillvölva, was sent for and asked to foresee the future. An important part of the prophetic process was the nightly episode when the sleeping body travelled to other worlds – thus unseeing but still looking elsewhere. There, she obtained knowledge which helped her predict the future (Price 2002:71-73, 170) This links us back to the Aska grave, which contained an iron rod some researchers have interpreted as the staff of a Völva (Lundström & Adofsson 1995; Price 2002). The valuable and diverse grave material indicates the woman in the Aska grave must have been connected to the top strata of the local society. This is a higher social level than can be attributed to the itinerant Tordis Lillvölva in Erik Röde’s Saga. This suggests that the staff as a symbol for power and visionary sight can be connected to different themes and enactments of feminine performative practices. Such a different narrative theme is indicated by the Aska figurine. The focus on defective eyesight in combination with references to both times past and fertility, indicate that the narrative theme and the visionary sight in this case might be connected to memory and genealogy.

The miniatures discussed here show that there was a demand for ritual or ceremonial practices related to variations in eyes and eyesight as a narrative theme in late Scandinavian Iron Age. The different, and sometimes even unclear, gender attributions of the figures indicate that the “eye theme” was more multifaceted than the myth of Odin reveals. Maybe the single eye was a general sign for a clairvoyant capacity, given its particular meaning in connection to the specific figurine and its performative circumstances. In spite of its scarcity, the archaeological material suggests that this theme is more varied and complex than the written material reveals.

Could the unseeing gaze even have been a part of the norm? Nothing indicates that the depictions discussed here constituted a deviant or marginalized position. On the contrary, all examples are connected to the upper levels
of society. The earliest one, the Torslunda stamp, was associated via its motif with a warrior aristocracy and ritual performances. The settlements at Uppåkra, Tissø and Lejre had, at the time the figurines were in use, been inhabited for several hundred years and were probably understood as old, wellknown places with significant past associations to events and stories. Also, the Aska grave must have had its specific identification connected to ancient, traditional customs or forn siðr (Raudvere 2008). Moreover, all the objects were made of precious materials like bronze, as with the Torslunda and Uppåkra items, and silver for the other three. In addition, the Aska and Tissø figures were gilded, lending the objects a glittering luster. The niello technique afforded a contrasting effect to the silver Lejre figure. In conclusion, the high status contexts, valuable materials and well-considered design place these objects and their narratives in society’s upper echelons.

Objects like these – small figurines which could be used and displayed in ritual circumstances or hidden as protective amulets or charms (Gräslund 2005; 2008), were probably easy to control by those who had the authority to handle them. As miniatures, they were not only representations of humans or gods in a small scale - in that case they would have been understood as models (Stewart 1993) – but cultural interpretations of human or divine bodies. These bodies were situated in a historical, political, social and gendered context, and those bodily features that were emphasized were there to make life “intelligible, negotiable and communicative” (Back Danielsson 2007:171). Thus these small figurines had been used in social practices where the agents, interacting with the material accessories, were positioning themselves high up on the political and social axes of power. As both female and male references were significant, it can be concluded that both women and men were assigned a high position in the axis of power related to this gender order.

How shall we interpret that bodily variations connected to visual ability were articulated – as one of many different themes – by these small figurines? How shall this reduced visual capacity that was made manifest – and very likely had different metaphoric meanings – be positioned within an ability/disability order of power? Can it possibly be so that the ritual practices suggested that reduced visual capacity was desirable, at least from a symbolic perspective, and show us an example of a bodynormativity that differs from that which prevails in our society? Maybe miniatures portraying reduced visual ability denoted a privileged and obvious trait, which was taken for granted for some members of society? The reduced visual capacity would then be a part of a complete bodily function. The ritual practices where this condition was communicated could thus be understood as moments of epiphany when the unchallenged norm, the Normate appeared.
Epilogue

The empirical material which is the basis for this sketch is very faint. Nevertheless, I dare to say that it is worthwhile to raise questions such as those discussed above, as they may result in new and varied observations, broadening the interpretations of the archaeological record. However, my main objective has been to include questions about bodily variations and abilities as a theme in archaeological research. In doing this, I will argue that it is important to understand that people in societies other than ours may have had different views on bodily variations. In prehistory, as today, the interpretation of bodily variations, abilities and disabilities is a relationally positioned social and cultural construction within an ability/disability order of power in which the body politics of a specific society is articulated.

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Digital media: http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en (read on the web 2010-09-01)
Box Brooches beyond the Border
Female Viking Age Identities of Intersectionality

Susanne Thedéen

Abstract
This paper explores the intersections between gender, ethnicity and social status by analyzing the contexts and connotations of box brooches found outside of Gotland. Previous research has mainly considered the box brooches to be representations of females from Gotland. However, detailed analyses of the brooches’ contexts abroad, such as their combination with other objects, their display on the body and altered use, add to other understandings of them. It is suggested that burials with such brooches, and other objects of Scandinavian, Fennno-Ugrian, Baltic or Slavic origin, have a distinct female gender but, importantly, that it is not possible to determine the ethnicity of the females. Instead the buried may be understood in terms of creolized gendered identities tied to cosmopolitan dresses and places; identities that were formed by lived experiences and human encounters.

Introduction
On Gotland, the island in the Baltic Sea, a large number of brooches, so called box brooches, have been found in both burials and hoards, although the majority of them have been recovered as stray finds. The total number of box brooches retrieved amounts to over 800 (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:64). The brooches were used to fasten the outer garment. In most cases when they appear in inhumation burials, they are found immediately below the chin of the skeleton. Previous studies have revealed that the brooches can generally be linked to the female gender, and more specifically to Gotlandic females. This has led to the conclusion that the box brooch is a representation of a certain female regional identity (Rydh 1919; Thunmark-Nylén 1983a, b). This is also true for other types of brooches constituting the Gotlandic female dress, such as animal-headed brooches or fish-headed pen-
dants (Carlsson 1983). Furthermore, current studies exploring the cultural construction of age have demonstrated that box brooches were worn from around the age of five, and were thereafter worn by females of all ages (Thé-déen 2008:89f). Brooches from the Scandinavian mainland, or from other areas around the Baltic or elsewhere, have rarely been found on Gotland. At the same time a few box brooches and other types of Gotlandic dress ornaments have been found outside of Gotland (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Example of a box brooch found in Wiskiauten together with other female objects of various origin (after von zur Mühlen 1975: illustration 23).

There has been extensive discussion on how to interpret Gotlandic and other Scandinavian objects from the Viking Age found abroad. The models for explanation have mainly concerned colonization, warfare or trade. The debate on the meaning of Scandinavian objects found in the east is linked to the early discussion, first initiated by historians and philologists, on who the founders of Russia were. This discussion has been referred to as the “Varangian problem”. Later, the discipline of archaeology became involved in the argument. Interpretations have ranged from the suggestion that the inhabitants of Gotland and Scandinavia colonized areas in the east (Scandinavian scholars) to the suggestion that objects of Scandinavian origin belonged to
the local elite, who were in contact with the Vikings (Russian scholars). (For a summary of research history, see for instance Gustin 2004:59ff and Hillerdal 2006:87ff). Current studies have instead stressed more complex interaction between Finno-Ugrian, Baltic and Slavic groups and the Vikings. Their different ethnicities and various objects of mixed origin have been interpreted as indications of ethnic groups living side by side, or of creolized identities (Callmer 1994; Jansson 2000; Gustin 2004; Cassel 2008). However, the discussion has mainly focused on ethnicity, and to some extent arguments on social status. The purpose of this paper is to add the dimension of gender and, further, to explore the intersections between gender, ethnicity and social status, using the contexts and connotations of box brooches found outside of Gotland as examples.

Viking Age femininities – at home and abroad

During the last 50 years, Western societies have undergone tremendous change with regard to gender norms. The dualistic views of the 1950s were permeated with a rigorous division of the spheres of women and men compared to the contemporary view of gender where pluralism, gender as a relational concept, and gender in relation to other structuring principles, so called intersectionality studies, are explored (Crenshaw 1994; Lykke 2003, 2005; de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005). In these studies gender is crucial and focal, and intersections with other structuring principles are studied as aspects of various expressions of power and social relations (Lykke 2003:47f). Within archaeology, studies of social status, gender and social age respectively are vast, but the structuring principles have often been studied as separate entities, rather than jointly. A perspective of intersectionality may provide the theoretical means used to initiate such combined studies. One significant consideration is whether there is a hierarchy between various structuring principles in intersectionality studies, or whether they should, a priori, be viewed as equal, relating to one another horizontally rather than vertically (Rosenberg 2007:81f). Further, it is important to consider whether intersectionality studies will contribute to establishing a dialogue between gender studies and studies of social status and ethnicity, or if such studies will cause gendered identities to be concealed (Lykke 2005:8). One possibility, from an intersectionality perspective, may be that females can be ascribed more complex and varied roles and identities than previously possible. One shortcoming of many studies of women in general, and Viking Age females in particular, is that they have focused on two main female categories: the housewife, an adult, married woman with power over the farm; and the female ritual specialist (e.g. Dommasnes 1991; Price 2002). The former represents the normative female identity, while, at the other extreme, the latter stands for a “beyond the border” identity. Further, it can be argued that these
two femininities can be linked to concepts and spheres traditionally associated with the female gender. The normative identity, the housewife, is linked to the concepts of privacy and domesticity while the border identity, the wise woman, is connected to the woman as the “Other”, representing nature (cf. Arwill Nordbladh 1998:73ff). Gender researchers have attempted to widen the debate concerning the role of Viking Age females, such as Viking women traders or Viking women in powerful positions (e.g. Stalsberg 1991; Ingstad 1992), but exceptions to the two favoured interpretations have not been widely accepted.

With this debate on domestic Viking Age women in mind, it is interesting to note that the objects found with females, predominantly the tortoise brooches but also female objects from Gotland, have had such a pronounced and crucial significance in the discussion of whether the Scandinavians raided, ruled, settled or only traded with the local populations in the east. The debate has centred on whether the presence of Scandinavian female objects indicates the presence of Scandinavian women, or whether such objects were merely used by high status local Fenno-Ugrian, Baltic or Slavic women. This is probably due to the fact that the Scandinavian Viking Age female dress, in contrast to the more international male dress and attributes, had such a distinct character. The female dress signaled regional identity, and furthermore dress ornaments have been assumed to be closely connected to individual identity and ethnicity. Other phenomena have been analysed, such as objects in male burials, burial practices, grave forms, and the relation to other burials and cemeteries as well as the location of the burials in relation to trading routes and assumed trading places and early centres. However female objects, rather than the females themselves, have continuously been in focus.

Several scholars have argued that Gotlandic objects found at burials at Grobin in Latvia are evidence of colonization. Female Gotlandic objects indicate tradesmen bringing their women with them (Arne 1911; Nerman 1958:182; Thunmark-Nylén 1983b:315f). One problem with these early discussions is that the interpretation was based solely on the presence of objects of Gotlandic or Scandinavian origin (cf. Nerman 1958). The burial context as a whole was not taken into account. Objects in the burial originating from other or local cultures were neglected. Later scholars have followed this tradition. Anne Stalsberg maintains that the presence in a burial of two tortoise brooches together with an equal-armed or three-foiled brooch fastening the outer garment is sufficient to safely conclude that the buried person was of Scandinavian origin (Stalsberg 1988:452). Ingmar Jansson suggests that tortoise brooches found in Russia are indications of Scandinavian settlers, since they are found not only at trading places and urban centres but also in rural cemeteries. He also concludes that it is the Scandinavian objects that “colour” the burials as they are in the majority and the most pronounced (Jansson 1987:790; 2000:129f). The early contextual studies of Raudonikas (1931) are an exception to this rule, and his conclusion was different. Rau-
Donikas claimed that as the Scandinavian female objects were found in very rich burials (which also contained objects from the local Fenno-ugrian culture) the females were not from Scandinavia but were rather the females of Fenno-Ugrian chiefs (Raudonikas 1931:362f). This interpretation has a long history among Russian scholars and is presented as plausible until this day. Zocenko & Vergun, for example, argue that Scandinavian objects found in rich burials were “foreign” objects owned by local women with high social status as an expression of their elite position in society (e.g. Zocenko & Vergun 2007:195f).

Anne Stalsberg was among the first Scandinavian scholars to comment on the social status of Scandinavian women abroad (1991). She suggested that weights and scales found in the burials of Scandinavian women indicate that they may have held powerful positions as tradeswomen. Later she instead proposed that such weights and scales could be interpreted as indicating the woman belonged to a trading family (Stalsberg 2001). The archaeologist Charlotta Hillerdal is also keen on stressing the significance of Scandinavian females to trade. She is of the opinion that the distribution of tortoise brooches can be linked to trade routes and sites, and in combination with evidence of females buried in boat-graves, that Scandinavian females could also hold elite positions (Hillerdal 2009:279).

Other scholars have also commented on Scandinavian objects appearing in foreign contexts. Holger Arbman was one of the first to note the mixture of Scandinavian and foreign objects. He argued that burials with mixed objects might be an indication that Scandinavian females were influenced by local traditions or fashions (Arbman 1955:41). The scholar Anders Carlsson has not interpreted the female objects in terms of ethnicity. His dissertation refers to animal-headed brooches found outside of Gotland in contexts with objects from other regions. He has suggested that these combinations of objects are an expression of an international female dress (Carlsson 1983:39). Another scholar who concludes that burials may contain objects from various areas is Ella Kivikoski (1980:47f). She suggests that burials on Åland represent Finnish women marrying abroad and importing objects from their original context. Another line of thought is proposed by Kerstin Cassel, who is of the opinion that objects cannot be used to determine the ethnicity of the deceased. She maintains that the mixture of objects must be understood in terms of hybridization, or as creolized identities where Scandinavian, Fenno-Ugrian and Slavic identities merged (Cassel 2008:133).

Contexts and connotations of box brooches

Box brooches have been discussed in two dissertations. The first was written by Hanna Rydh in 1919 and was called “Dosformiga spännen från vikingatiden”. Some sixty years later, Lena Thunmark-Nylen (1983a) explored
various aspects of the handicraft tradition and the process involved in the production of box brooches. The box brooches have their predecessors in the round brooches from the Vendel Period (550–800 AD). The earliest box brooches date from the 800s and have gripping-animal ornamentation. The late box brooches have dot ornamentation and have been dated to the 1000s. The brooches are known to have been used during Christian times, since they have also been recovered from early churchyards on Gotland. Certain types of box brooches are more common in burials, while other types – like Thumark-Nylén’s type 7b – occur with very few exceptions in hoards (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:86). All in all, only 27 box brooches out of several hundred have been found outside of Gotland. A few examples of the other Gotlandic brooch type, the animal-headed brooch, have also been found outside of Gotland (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:29f).

Turning first to the spatial distribution of box brooches, Fig. 2 shows that they have been found in the Baltic countries (except Estonia) and along the southern Baltic coast, as well as in Denmark, Scania and Öland. Ten box brooches have been found on Öland, although none were in a confirmed burial context. This probably mirrors the well-established contacts between the two islands indicated in other forms of material culture. Further north, one box brooch has been recovered in Birka and another on Åland but no examples of box brooches have been found to date in Norway, Norrland, Finland or Russia. Box brooches have a more limited distribution than animal-headed brooches, which have been found in Uppland, Östergötland and Småland. Only one animal-headed brooch has been found in Russia, in Staraja Ladoga (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:30).

Fig. 2. Spatial distribution of box brooches and animal-headed brooches (Jansson 1983).
From a chronological point of view, the spatial distribution shows that early Viking Age types appear in the Baltic countries and along the southern Baltic coast. This agrees with the evidence of round Vendel period brooches also found in these areas. Later types have been recovered in Birka and on the island of Åland, as well as in Denmark and Hedeby. Furthermore, while the early types have been used in the burial dress, the late types were utilized differently and have been altered to suit new purposes, for example as weights (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:29).

One common feature of the sites of box brooch finds is that they all appear to close to, or a short distance upstream from, the coastline. Furthermore, in several cases they appear at trading sites, urban centres and early towns such as Hedeby, Birka and Lund. These places are melting pots and marketplaces, and it is reasonable to expect to find objects of various origins at such sites. An animal-headed brooch has been found in the early town of Sigtuna, strengthening this indication (Drenzel & Henriksson 1990). The two box brooches from Hedeby were stray finds and thus unfortunately lack context (Capelle 1968:107; Vang Petersen 2000). The box brooch from Lund is interesting in this context as it was found during an excavation of the town’s main square (Mårtensson 1967:117ff). The box brooch from Birka was found in a burial which will be discussed further below. The burial ground outside the fortification Fyrkat in Denmark contained a box brooch. Fyrkat is situated by a water course not far from the coast. Fyrkat is not an early town or trading site, but neither is it in a rural setting.

It has been discussed whether the box brooches recovered on the other side of the Baltic Sea, at Grobin, Elbing and Wisikauten, can be linked to trading sites, however the evidence is inconclusive (Nerman 1958; Jansson 2000). Of the two brooches from Öland with known find contexts, one was recovered at Djupvik on the west coast. The name Djupvik translates as Deep Bay, suggesting it may have been the site of a Viking Age harbor. The box brooch found at Långängsbacken, Åland was recovered from a burial ground situated on the beach of a cape in the strait where Långängsbacken farm was situated. The farm is interpreted as an average Viking Age farm (Kivikoski 1980:9). This conclusion is however unconvincing if one considers that the burial ground is one of the largest on Åland. There is a medieval manor on the other side of the strait, and there are indications of contact with both mainland Sweden and Finland, which is atypical of burial grounds on Åland. The burials contained few weapons, which may explain Kivikoski’s conclusion (Kivikoski 1980:46). Thus, rural contexts do not seem to be important find contexts for box brooches. Rather, they are tied to special places or meeting-places of various sorts.

Ten box brooches have been found in burial contexts, the remainder being stray finds. Burial finds are presented in figure 3 together with information on find context and objects of non-Gotlandic origin. The data has been compiled from Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:29f; Fig. 3).
The box brooch recovered from the burial at Fyrkat in Denmark is unique in that it is of a type normally found in hoards. This type of brooch features inlays of silver and niello and is gilded. Interestingly, this box brooch was not found under the chin, as is common in Gotlandic burials, but above the head. Furthermore, only the upper part of the brooch was recovered; the bottom including the clasp was missing. This may indicate that it was not intended to be used as a dress fastener. In fact, it has been suggested that it may have been a souvenir, or was perhaps used as a container of some sort (Roesdahl 1977:138). Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that although the brooch may not have been used as a dress ornament, it was still deposited in a context with female connotations. The large number of objects recovered from this burial also included a stick interpreted as either a sorcerer’s staff or a measurement tool (Price 2002; Gustin 2010). In either case, the subject was most likely a woman with a special identity (Fig. 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inv nr</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Other objects</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up, Birka</td>
<td>Burial 1067</td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>2 tortoise brooches</td>
<td>Arbman 1940-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da, Fyrkat</td>
<td>Burial 4</td>
<td>7b</td>
<td>pendant and toe-rings Fennno-Ugrian/Baltic/Slavic</td>
<td>Roesdahl 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ål, Långängs-backen</td>
<td>Burial 68</td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>2 Finnish oval brooches</td>
<td>Kivikoski 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le, Grobin</td>
<td>Burial 3a</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 tortoise brooch</td>
<td>Sturms 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le, Grobin</td>
<td>Burial XI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 equal-armed brooches, Baltic neck-rings and finger ring</td>
<td>Nerman 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le, Laukskola</td>
<td>Burial 67</td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Zarina 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ry, Wiskiauten</td>
<td>Burial 2a</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 tortoise brooches Baltic chains</td>
<td>von zur Mühlen 1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ry, Wiskiauten</td>
<td>Burial 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 tortoise brooches Baltic chains</td>
<td>von zur Mühlen 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Po, Neustädterfeld</td>
<td>Burial 7</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Rectangular brooch</td>
<td>Neugebauer 1937b</td>
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<tr>
<td>Po, Neustädterfeld</td>
<td>Burial 41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rectangular brooch</td>
<td>Neugebauer 1937a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3. Box brooches outside of Gotland recovered from burials.

Other clothing-related objects found in box brooch burials display mixed origins, deriving from various areas around the Baltic. Some burials contain objects from different areas of Scandinavia. This is the case at Birka (Bj 1067) as well as the burials at Wiskiauten, where box brooches were found together with two tortoise brooches (Arbman 1940-43:443f; von zur Mühlen 1975:79). Only one burial yielded a box brooch together with two animal-headed brooches, the customary arrangement on Gotland (Zarina 1992).
Other burials feature a collection of various objects from Scandinavia, Gotland and the Baltic countries, as well as Finland and Russia. The burial at Fyrkat, for example, contained objects which probably originated in Finland or Russia, including toe rings and various silver pendants (Roesdahl 1977:138, 140).

Box brooch burials seem to consist of atypical and unfamiliar combinations when compared with traditional Gotlandic arrangements. There are three main differences. Firstly, the typical dress arrangement is not represented. Secondly, objects in the combinations are not contemporaneous. Finally, the combinations do not appear to have been used together in life. An example of the first difference can be found at a burial from Grobin in Latvia where a box brooch was found with only one of the two expected tortoise brooches. The burial also contained a bangle and five fragments of a chain (Sturms 1949:206f). There may of course be a source-critical explanation for this, and there are some uncertainties regarding the circumstances of the find, but other arrangements support the absence of a second tortoise brooch. Other examples include two burials from Wiskiauten in Lithuania, both of which contained a box brooch (amongst a few other objects) found together with two tortoise brooches, a number of beads and chains and four arm-rings of Gotlandic origin (von zur Mühlen 1975:122f; Fig. 1). It is very uncommon to find as many as four arm-rings in burials on Gotland. Adult women on Gotland wore arm jewellery in pairs, with one arm-ring on the right arm and one bangle on the left arm (cf. Thedéen 2008:87f). Cases featuring more than two arm-rings are rare. The number of arm-rings in this burial, together with the unfamiliar combination of box brooch and tortoise brooches, make it impossible to assume that the woman was Gotlandic. One further interesting feature of this burial is that the box brooch is older than the other objects, with the dates around 800 and the 900s respectively.

A final example of such an atypical arrangement is the burial from Långängsbacken on Åland where a female was cremated and buried in a mound. A mixture of female objects was recovered: a box brooch and two Finnish round brooches, as well as a number of beads and a knife (Fig. 4). Kivikoski however notes that the two Finnish brooches are not the same size. Furthermore, one of the brooches is older and in poorer condition, indicating that they were probably not worn together as a pair in life (Kivikoski 1980:48).
Fig. 4. The box brooch and the two Finnish round brooches recovered from the Långängsbacken burial (after Kivikoski 1980:illustration 10/no 11, 12, 13).

One related – and very significant – issue is how the box brooches were used and displayed on the body. This may indicate whether the brooch was used to fashion an outer garment, as on Gotland, or if the function was altered in some way. Unfortunately, only two of the burials are inhumation graves, the remainder being cremations. One cremation grave from Grobin in Latvia, burial nr XI, is however interesting as a box brooch, two equal-armed brooches and two Baltic neck-rings were recovered from it (Fig. 5a). The grave also contained three arm-rings and fragments from at least two neck-rings, a Baltic finger-ring, a tool brooch, a chain, three keys, 12 beads and a spindle whorl (Nerman 1958:18f; Fig. 5b). The burial contains three items which would have been placed close to the neck, but as burial XI is a cremation, we cannot know if they were actually placed there. It is however unlikely that they were all displayed around the neck. Instead, they must have been given new contexts on the body or have been used in altered ways. As equal-armed brooches generally occur singly in Scandinavian contexts, it is possible to suggest that they have been used as pair-brooches here, an unfamiliar sight in Scandinavia (Thunmark-Nylén 1983b:308f).
Fig. 5a. The two Baltic neck-rings recovered from the cremation grave (burial nr XI) from Grobin, Latvia (after Nerman 1958: illustrations 15, 16).
Fig. 5b. The box brooch, tool brooch, an equal-armed brooch and a chain from the cremation burial nr XI from Grobin in Latvia (after Nerman 1958: illustrations 15, 16).

The above suggestion is confirmed by evidence from the inhumation burial from Birka (Bj 1067) which contained a box brooch, two tortoise brooches, 12 beads and a knife (Arbman 1940-43:443f; Fig. 5c). The box brooch was not found beneath the chin but below one of the two tortoise brooches which had been placed in their expected position on the chest but had fallen forward. This means that the box brooch was found about 30 cm beneath the chin. One theory, speculative perhaps, is that the box brooch was placed in
the woman’s right hand. The drawing of the burial shows that the arm was bent 90 degrees with the palm of the hand upwards and the box brooch is found directly above the hand, but beneath one of the tortoise brooches. Accordingly, it can be noted that neither of the inhumation burials at Birka and Fyrkat featured a brooch found beneath the chin as is the distinct practice on Gotland.

![Fig. 5c. Burial 1067 from Birka, Sweden (after Arbman 1940-43:443).](image)

These observations clearly indicate how the original Gotlandic positioning, function and symbolic significance of the box brooches were changed and manipulated. Firstly, the clasp-function was changed from a Gotlandic style to a mainland style, as indicated by the box brooch in the Birka burial (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:29). Similarly, the function of the box brooch (Fig. 6a) from the burial at Fyrkat (Fig. 6b) in Denmark was changed, since the bottom and the clasp had been removed, or perhaps lost. Instead, the clasp had been replaced by two holes (Roesdahl 1977:95).

![Fig. 6a. The box brooch from the Fyrkat burial nr 4. (Photo: Arnold Mikkel-sen in Pentz et al. 2009:221).](image)
Another kind of manipulation is exemplified by a chain attached to the box brooch found in burial X in Grobin (Nerman 1958:ill. 14; Fig. 6c). This alteration resulted in a new function – perhaps changing the brooch to a pendant. It also indicates that the brooch may have been displayed in another position on the body (Thunmark-Nylén 1983b). Perhaps it was one of these women Ibn Fadlan described in his account from 922 AD: Each woman has on her breast a small disc, tied around her neck, made of either iron, silver, copper or gold in relation to her husband’s financial and social worth. Each disc has a ring to which a dagger is attached, also lying on her breast. Around their necks they wear bands of gold and silver. According to Jansson, this disc is a tortoise brooch (Jansson 1983). However, in one burial containing a box brooch and neck-rings, the brooch had a chain with a key attached, indicating that it may be a box brooch Ibn Fadlan is describing.

Some box brooches are filled with lead, indicating that another practice may have been to repurpose them as weights (Thunmark-Nylén 2006:29). An example of this is found at Hedeby, which is consistent with Hedeby being an early urban trading centre. The brooch has however no known find context (Capelle 1968:107). There are also examples of other brooches, such as animal-headed brooches, being filled with lead.
Fig. 6c. The chain attached to the box brooch found in burial X in Grobin (after Nerman 1958: illustration 14).

One final and very important point is that some box brooches found outside of Gotland have been manufactured locally. This is the case for some of the box brooches and other objects found in Grobin, as well as the box brooch from Djupvik on Öland (Jansson 2000:120; Thunmark-Nylén 1983b, SHM 24957).

A comparison with tortoise brooches
There is also reason to believe that box brooches found abroad and tortoise brooches found primarily in Russia should be understood in different ways. This strengthens the interpretation that box brooches do not necessarily represent the presence of Gotlandic females. Tortoise brooches and box brooches differ in amount and distribution, as well as context and body position.
Some differences in burial customs have also been noticed. Firstly, tortoise brooches seem to have a much wider distribution and more extensive use in the east compared to both box brooches and animal-headed brooches. As many as 200 tortoise brooches have been found in Russia. Further, Ingmar Jansson suggests that as the distribution of tortoise brooches is not limited to trading places and urban centers but also encompasses rural farms, it is reasonable to assume that the objects were brought there as possessions of permanently settled Scandinavian women (Jansson 1987:790; 2000:129). He has also shown that the proportion of tortoise brooches found at Birka is the same as in Russian cemeteries, a further argument in favor of the presence of Scandinavian females in Russia. This is in contrast to box brooches which, whether recovered as stray finds or in burial contexts, are exclusively found at trading-places or urban centers.

In addition, tortoise brooches and box brooches seem to appear in different contexts, in arrangement with different objects, and are displayed differently on the body. Tortoise brooches are used and worn in the Scandinavia fashion, and according to Ingmar Jansson it is the Scandinavian objects that “colour” the burials as they are in the majority and the most pronounced (Jansson 2000:130). Tortoise brooches appear to be combined to a lesser degree with objects of Baltic or Fenno-Ugrian origin than box brooches. Box brooches, on the other hand, are found in mixed-origin contexts and are used in other ways than was originally intended. As was noted above, box brooches and animal-headed brooches have seldom been recovered together in a burial outside Scandinavia. A few examples from Vendel period burials have been mentioned, but later analyses have shown them to be not animal-headed brooches but beak-formed brooches from Southern Scandinavia (Carlsson 1983:39; Thunmark-Nylén 1983b; Jansson 2000:119). To my knowledge, there is only one example, from Latvia (Zarina 1992), in which a box brooch was found in the same burial as two animal-headed brooches - the normative dress code at Gotland. There are actually more examples of box brooches being combined with tortoise brooches than with animal-headed brooches.

Thirdly, tortoise brooches and box brooches appear to differ with regard to burial custom. While burials grounds with box brooches exhibit evidence of the local burial custom with oval pits, those with tortoise brooches seems to be more complex, revealing both local traits with charcoal layers next to the buried person as well as examples of Scandinavian burial rituals such as the deposition of Thor’s hammer rings. All in all, the distribution, contexts and burial customs associated with Gotlandic objects demonstrate different patterns than those for tortoise brooches. This implies that Gotlandic objects and box brooches must be interpreted in another way (Callmer 1994:65).
Box brooches and burial rituals

The analysis above provides reason to doubt that box brooches found outside Gotland, whether singly or in burials, are evidence of the presence of Gotlandic females. This is an interpretation proposed by many scholars over the years, at least with regard to box brooches in burials (cf. Nerman 1958; Thunmark-Nylén 1983). One shortcoming of Nerman’s interpretation of the Grobin burials is that he neglected the evidence from the local Baltic culture, both in terms of objects and burial custom. Nerman concluded that not only single burials but entire burial grounds had ethnicities; one burial ground housed people from Gotland, while a burial ground with mounds housed a combination of people from Gotland and Scandinavia. He reached this conclusion primarily by analyzing the origins of the objects. Nerman comments on the funeral ritual but does not notice the local burial custom with oval burial pits (Nerman 1958:86ff). Later excavations have, however, revealed a mixture of features, including more local features, than those of Nerman (cf. Callmer 1994:60; Jansson 2000:119). The burial grounds at Wiskiauten and Elbing demonstrated different grave forms: mounds in Wiskiauten and flat burials in Elbing, but the local burial custom with oval pits is present at both these burial grounds as well.

Also Thunmark-Nylén argues that the early settlers in Grobin, both men and their women, came from Gotland but struggled to maintain the Gotlandic traditions for more than a generation or two which would explain the mixture and manipulations of objects (1983b:316). The mixtures and manipulations are already present in the earliest burials from the Vendel period however, thus indicating that other explanations must be considered. Anders Carlsson is convinced that the burials with box brooches do not represent women of Gotlandic origin but he draws this conclusion solely on a comparison between the dress arrangement and customs of Gotland versus those of mainland Scandinavia (Carlsson 1983:39). I agree with Carlsson’s conclusion, but think it is important to add the observations above. This includes, for example, the burial custom, the location of display on the body and a consideration of objects of Baltic origin. In general, it is possible to argue that the mortuary practices are probably more conservative and less likely to change than costume or dress ornaments. It follows that the funeral ritual may be a more reliable indicator of the mourners’ identity. One dilemma is that dress objects have, to a large extent, been ascribed more importance than the burial custom, and have been assumed to constitute clear evidence of ethnicity, at least for females. I argue rather that the dress and ornaments represent the entire life of an individual, while mortuary practices represent one specific event. The combination of dress ornaments may be viewed as a representation of an individual’s life experience and may be changed during the course of a person’s life due to passage rituals but also in connection to various human encounters (Jones 2002).
Conclusions

Kerstin Cassel has noticed that most Scandinavian scholars have favored interpretations where Scandinavian objects found in the east are interpreted as representing the presence of people from Scandinavia. Conversely, foreign objects from, for example, the Baltic countries, Finland or Byzantium found in Scandinavia are, in most cases, interpreted as Viking imports rather than as the possessions of immigrants from the east (Cassel 2008:127). One possible reason for this interpretation is that the Vikings have been considered superior in relation to the Finno-Ugrian, Baltic and Slavic groups (Cassel 2008). Further, the interaction between the Scandinavians/Gotlanders and the people in the east has often been discussed in general terms using concepts such as interaction, contacts, alliances or group identity. However, Ingrid Gustin has made an important contribution to the discussion of social aspects of trade and contacts in the Viking Age Baltic region. She suggests that interaction and contacts between ethnic groups rest upon long-term social relations based on trust (Gustin 2004:240ff). She does not discuss gender aspects of these long-term social relations, but I suggest that the female burials with mixed objects from several ethnic groups may represent females with a certain social position. These women had an important role in maintaining the long-term social relations between ethnic groups. Such a role probably implied exchanges of objects in various social settings implying altered experiences and identities. Trading places, urban centers, and early towns where the box brooches are found may represent such places where the domestic and original use and context of objects was set aside in favor of new creolized identities formed by life experience, human encounters and a certain cosmopolitan life style.

One inference from the study is that ethnicity appears to be negotiable, both in terms of the fact that objects from various cultures can be combined and secondly that they are given new contexts in relation to the dress and body. In accordance with Kerstin Cassel, I argue that it is not possible to determine the ethnicity of these women (cf. Cassel 2008). They are most likely not Gotlandic women, but one cannot merely assume that they were local either. In line with Eicher and Sumberg, it may be possible to suggest that the mixture of objects represents a cosmopolitan dress where the ethnic markers do not signify various ethnicities (Eicher & Sumberg 1995:298). Instead the ethnic markers have merged into a new type of creolized and cosmopolitan identity with new connotations. It is however interesting to note that the box brooches do not lose their gender associations. They are found in very distinct female contexts with objects of different origin yet also female dress associations. In hybridization processes, the gender contexts and associations of an object may be altered (Cassel 2008:125). Box brooches found in burials outside of Gotland are however only recovered from exclusively female contexts, never within contexts representing males.
or children. There must therefore have been some knowledge of the gender connotations of the objects from the original contexts. This knowledge, however, need not have been transmitted specifically by Gotlandic females.

References


Gender in the Making
Masculinities in Practice
at a Cultural Heritage Site

Elin Engström

Abstract
This paper explores how a cultural heritage site can be interpreted through different aspects of masculinity theory. The main arguments focus on archaeological reconstructions as gendered spaces as well as exploring heritage sites as arenas for performing gendered practices. By taking a closer look at the heritage site Eketorp, on Öland, Sweden, it is also suggested that the practices performed at the site by museum staff and visitors support a wider understanding of masculinities and social identities, rather than merely working as a platform for discussing men and maleness in past or present times.

Introduction
Cultural heritage is a gendered affair. The physical places and material culture we call heritage are a medium for remembering historical events as well as the lives and works of past people. Acknowledging cultural heritage is intimately connected to our understanding of ourselves as individuals and our present-day society. Thus, defining what is to be regarded as heritage always carries political and social dimensions which have the power to include and exclude different groups in society. One important dimension of this is the framework which is widely called gender. For this reason, it has also been suggested that the cultural heritage discourse has in many respects a masculine perspective, inasmuch as it is often concentrated around historical events connected to political, cultural or religious events which primarily include men at the expense of women and other minority groups (Magnus & Morger 1994; Stig Sørensen 1999; Smith 2008).
There has been an increase in archaeological research with an explicit focus on masculinities in recent decades. The impetus for this theoretical approach and empirical focus derives from the observation that, despite many theoretical advances and a large amount of empirical research on gender identities in the past, as well as an extensive critique of a biased and androcentric archaeological research, the interpretations of male identities seem to have been overlooked or ignored. The result of this imbalance has been described as a gender archaeology overflowing with female individuals and male stereotypes connected to a universal normative narrative (Knapp 1998; Welinder 1999; Caesar 1999a; Alberti 2006; Skogstrand 2011). This imbalance in gender research has thus resulted in a range of archaeological research with an explicit framework of masculinity theory or an empirical focus on men (for a Scandinavian context see for example Welinder 1997; Caesar 1999b; Skogstrand 2005; Thedén 2009).

But what exactly constitutes a masculine cultural heritage site? Is it the shape and size of a site, such as a large building or a manifest position in the landscape? Is it the function of a site, such as an official building or a fortification? Is it archaeological artifacts found at the site, such as weapons? Or is it the activities that take place at the site today such as staged living history battle reenactments or visitors trying their hands at archery? How do the interpretations of archaeological artifacts affect our understanding of the role of heritage? This paper explores the relationship between archaeological interpretations, cultural heritage research and masculinity theory through a discussion of cultural practices at the heritage site Eketorp.

Location – Eketorp

Eketorp fort is located at the southernmost tip of the island Öland, Sweden, barely two kilometers off the coast in the Baltic Sea. Travelling south on the island’s main eastern road, the site rises as a circular fortification, and the five meter high stone wall with its crenulated parapet giving it a characteristic appearance. The surrounding flat, barren landscape, consisting of a vast limestone-plateau – the Great Alvar - provides a perfect setting for this cultural heritage site. The ring-shaped prehistoric fortification is one of fifteen fortifications still visible on the island, all of which are dated roughly to the period AD 200-600 (Fallgren 2008: 119, 122-124). A few of them, including Eketorp, were re-built and re-used in early medieval times. The excavation of Eketorp fort, conducted from 1964 to 1974, is one of the largest archaeological projects ever undertaken in Sweden. An extensive amount of archaeological artifacts were found and the project resulted in several research publications (see for example Borg et al. 1976; Boessneck et al. 1979; Näsman & Wegraeus 1979; Näsman 1984; Borg et al. 1998; Borg 2000). The excavations revealed three distinct settlement phases, one on top of the
other. The initial settlement phase has been interpreted as a Late Roman Iron Age temporary protection, later directly transformed into the second phase, a fortified settlement finally abandoned in the late seventh century AD (Näsman 1976:51-55). These two phases, Eketorp I and Eketorp II, are usually understood in relation to indications of a wealthy island with intense contacts with the Roman Empire (Hagberg 1979). During the third phase, Eketorp III, the fort was rebuilt and used for a shorter period, a few decades around 1200 AD. These archaeological remains, which consist of radially placed house foundations, an extensive range of artifacts and weaponry, and the remains of smithies between the inner and outer ring-walls, have been interpreted as a medieval military garrison with close political ties to the mainland (Borg 2000).

After the excavations a full scale reconstruction of the site was discussed, and a major reconstruction project was launched in the late 1970s, starting with the ring-wall and a couple of the Iron Age houses. A museum was constructed at the centre of the fort and in 1984 the museum exhibition was opened in the presence of the Swedish royal family. The reconstructions and the museum were managed by the Swedish National Heritage Board and in the year 2000 Eketorp was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List together with the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. Today, the site is one of Öland’s most popular tourist attractions and is run by Kalmar County Museum (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. The reconstructed Eketorp fort. (Photo: Elin Engström 2011).
Eketorp as reconstruction and gendered space

As a prehistoric fortification with obvious ties to men and masculinities, Eketorp may seem as a straightforward or even predictable choice for research analyzing masculinities and cultural heritage. However, the connection between masculinity and cultural heritage is in my opinion much larger and more complex than these immediate connotations suggest. I will argue for a wider understanding of heritage as a reflexive and negotiating social arena. I will not begin by considering this social context, however, but with the case of the archaeological reconstruction itself.

An archaeological reconstruction could be primarily understood as part of an identity politics with the authority to configure national, regional and local identities (Petersson 2003). This is very much the case for Eketorp. In a Scandinavian context, the site holds somewhat of a pioneering position regarding archaeological reconstructions. Prior to its launch in the late 1970’s, only a handful of reconstructions had been undertaken in Sweden, and the project was surrounded by extensive professional and popular debate (Petersson 2003:209-221). Although being part of a larger complex of reconstructions in Scandinavia, Eketorp, being run by the Swedish National Heritage Board thus holds a special position, grounded in considerable professional and political weight and approval. Archaeological reconstructions have also been described as ultimately standing between two knowledge ideals. One ideal highlights a scientific, technological approach with emphasis on methodology and verifiable experiments. This approach primarily strives for knowledge of craft techniques, constructions, equipment, artifacts and distribution patterns (Petersson 2003:234). The other ideal, a humanistic approach, puts actions at the centre of attention. This approach is primarily focused on aspects of living conditions or travel, for example. The goal here is to understand the circumstances of people in the past via for example ethnographic or ethnological methods (Petersson 2003:234-235).

The scientific approach is most visible at Eketorp, via the extensive research and publications associated with the archaeological excavations and later reconstructions. Emphasis is put on both detailed technical aspects of the constructions itself as well as archaeological interpretations relating to past activities on the site. Reconstructions of houses, bake ovens and smithies can be seen at the site, also examples of this technological approach. Both knowledge ideals are however clearly represented at Eketorp today since the activities available on the site could be understood as a way to visualize and explore the conditions experienced by people in the past. Representations of both these aspects can also be found in the most unexpected places (Fig. 2).
What is however not highlighted to any greater extent is the clear gendered dimension of these two research ideals, and many of these activities can be regarded as having traditional masculine connotations. Eketorp has several connotations to traditional masculine arenas, and could even by definition be regarded as a gendered and foremost masculine space. The very practice of archaeological reconstruction has itself been defined as a space between theory and practice, sense and sensibility (Petersson 2003:208). It is a place where theoretical probabilities can be put into practice and, in contrast to written words, is in itself full of physical experiences via sound, smell, touch and sight. This is also why notions of authenticity are regarded as vital ingredients in archaeological reconstructions, representing as they do both reason and emotional values (Petersson 2003:208). An archaeological reconstruction is not a space understood solely by its physical appearance, however, but also by the interactions between the people who visit it, which leads us to the discussion of heritage.

The feminist critique acknowledged in archaeological research has likewise won its place in museum studies and debates concerning museum representations of archaeological artifacts. In this respect, research discussing foremost representations of women in museum exhibitions has been undertaken. Today, this is a question of problematizing notions of biological sex,
age, ethnicity and sexuality (e.g. Glaser & Zenetou 1994; Stig Sørensen 1999; Aronsson & Meurling 2005). Oddly enough, this seems not to be the case for research on cultural heritage; from a Scandinavian context, research concerning gender and heritage is sparse, and internationally it has been argued that gender is a highly unproblematized aspect of identity within the heritage discourse (Smith 2008:160). Exploring different current interpretations of the past in conjunction with practices at cultural heritage sites is a dimension of the heritage discourse that has expanded in recent years. From a Swedish perspective these topics are vibrant, and the debate concerning the use of history and identity has focused on, for example, historical novels, theatre productions at heritage sites, archaeological reconstructions and living history societies (e.g. Gustafsson 2002; Axelsson 2003; Petersson 2003). Although these research topics all approach the use of history and cultural practices at heritage sites in different ways, very little attention is paid to deconstructing identities by explicitly focusing on gender (see however Renander 2007). Smith maintains that heritage literature not only neglects sites that reflect women’s history, but that gender stereotypes affect even those stories that are told (Smith 2008:162). Further, she argues that the heritage discourse can to a great degree be considered masculine, since “it has been masculine values and perceptions, particularly masculine values from the elite social classes, that have tended to dominate how heritage has been defined, identified, valued and preserved” (Smith 2008:162). The issue here is not only that heritage discourse is centered on masculine values, but the notion that these are considered neutral values, shared by all, and therefore also all-inclusive. The suggested solution to this gender-biased heritage is to concentrate instead on highlighting sites directly connected to women. Another approach advocates focusing on activities connected to women in otherwise traditionally masculine spaces (Magnus 1994:16-17). I would argue that these suggestions, rather than representing a progressive understanding of the gendered dimension of heritage, could instead be understood as representing an “add gender and stir” approach (see also for instance Smith 2008 and Stig Sørensen 1999).

Longbow relations – masculinities in practice

How, then, can we understand the social practices at Eketorp, and how do they relate to notions of past and present masculinities? These questions were explored during two two-week long field studies performed at Eketorp in 2010 and 2011. The discussion below originates from field notes, photographs and interviews made during these visits, but also from experiences from my previous employment as a museum guide at Eketorp in 2007 and 2008. Today, Eketorp is more than a reconstructed archaeological site; a major part of any visit to the site is the experience of animals strolling
around the area and the many activities provided by the museum staff. At Eketorp, these different activities include archery, baking, textile work, forging and several games. The activities serve a pedagogical purpose; the visitor does not merely experience a reconstructed site, but may also try activities that provide another dimension to this physical understanding of past times. According to Eketorp’s website, the reconstructions, grazing animals and range of practical activities makes the site a “living” fort (Eketorp website, www.eketorp.se). The intention is presumably to provide a contrast to traditional archaeological sites which lack these visual and physical aspects. What does it however mean for the visitor to try out these different activities? How does performing activities expose notions of gender in general and masculinities in particular?

One of the activities available on a visit to Eketorp will provide us with an example for our discussion; longbow archery. Again, the selection of this particular activity may seem like an obvious choice in relation to masculinity. Archery could be understood as an activity intimately connected to traditional notions of masculinity, or at least notions of male activities like warfare and hunting. The archaeological material from Eketorp indicates that archery was a key activity. It is the reason for the crenellated parapet that gives the fort its characteristic appearance, and the find of 225 arrowheads, categorized as weapons, is one of the key artifacts supporting the interpretation of the site as a fortification (Sandstedt 1998:190, 209; Borg 2000:65, 22f). Archery also seems to hold an important position in the museum today, as the activity is frequently featured in museum advertising. Original arrowheads can be found in display cases in the museum exhibition and reproduction of arrowheads are used as pastiche in the entrance (Fig. 2).

Archery is one of the first activities visitors encounter after walking through the main gate and entering the fort area. Museum staff members dressed in historic clothing provide instruction, usually surrounded by enthusiastic visitors. As a former employee at Eketorp, I have personally instructed this particular activity many times, but a few tendencies are equally easily noticeable when observing it from aside. First of all, the popularity of this particular activity needs to be stressed. The excitement of trying out a weapon with historical connotations or the immediate element of contest do not fully account for this popularity. I would argue that intrinsic notions of gender also play a part. There is often a large queue with entire families waiting to give it a go, and visitors often take photographs of the action. With the help of the museum staff, even children as young as two to three years old are encouraged to try it out (Fig. 3).
Any visitor that fails to hit the bull’s eye receives encouraging comments such as “better luck next time” or the more humorous “you will go hungry tonight then”. What are more interesting, however, are the comments made when someone does perform well, simply because the reaction tells us something about the expectations surrounding this particular activity. The archer hitting the bull’s eye usually cheers vividly and receives praise from family members and museum staff. Fair enough, it is of course an achievement. Thinking back of the hundreds of people I have instructed, it is however the women I remember as the most cheerful when performing well, while the men tended to simply nod contentedly. As one woman put it after outdoing her husband, “We can go home now, the day couldn’t get any better than this”. Similar events were pointed out to me and it is my experience that this theme is recognized and discussed among the museum staff. But what does this tell us about notions of gender and masculinities performed at heritage sites?

There have been few explicit analyses of the notions of masculinity and practices at cultural heritage sites, but a few examples are briefly discussed here. Åseberg & Axelsson explored digital representations of gender identity through photographs published on Swedish living history groups' websites (Åseberg & Axelsson 2007). Knox and Hannam (2007) described Scottish Highland games and Scandinavian Viking heritage tourism as arenas for gender conformity. The conclusions shared by these two examples point
strikingly to the conclusion that heritage sites are arenas for traditional gender values. Åseberg & Axelsson show that even the digital representation of living history reenactment demonstrates tendencies of traditional gender roles. The somewhat worn-out dichotomies passive-active and domestic-public are well noticeable in the photographs (Åseberg & Axelsson 2007:165-168). Knox & Hannam illustrate how the Scottish Highland games have, with time, moved towards clearer cut binary positions between masculinity and femininity where “highland dancing”, which historically were performed by males, today, is performed by women. The construction of Scottish identity in this context shows clear gender roles, with highly controlled esthetic practices of performed passive femininity and physically active masculinity associated with strength (Knox & Hannam 2007:268).

Discussing aspects of gender performance at heritage sites require a definition of what a heritage arena is, and what it means to visit a cultural heritage site as a tourist. There has been surprisingly little interest in researching how gender affects the behavior of visitors to cultural heritage sites. In terms of archaeological reconstructions as a cultural phenomenon, Petersson has convincingly shown that both political and cultural identity dimensions play a role, although she does not take into account how this could be understood in relation to gender (2003). In relation to Scandinavian Iron Age reconstructions, a common phenomenon is the focus of family and everyday life (Petersson 2003:314). In relation to this, Knox and Hannam (2007) emphasize that tourism should be regarded not, as is more commonly thought, escaping everyday life and structures, but rather as a way to manifest them. The focus on presenting everyday life in the past together with a strong claim for authenticity at heritage sites is thus interpreted as a way to refer back to a mythical past where gender roles were more clearly defined (Knox & Hannam 2007:271).

Gustafsson comments on how clearly defined roles seem to fill a vital function in the annual medieval festival “Medeltidsveckan” on the island of Gotland, Sweden. Playing a beggar seems to be the most popular role, emphasizing the historical illusion by increasing the contrast to the festivalgoer's normal life. The chance to change gender does however not seem to be as popular, possibly since it may intrude on notions of authenticity (Gustafsson 2002:228-233). Returning to the discussion of masculinities and heritage, another example of how masculinities are constructed is explored through American Civil War reenactments by English living history groups (Hunt 2008). The conclusion here is again that the temporary environment provided by living history and heritage-setting leisure activities creates a “collective mythological and imagined masculinity”, which ultimately establishes boundaries towards femininity (Hunt 2008:462). The focus on military activity and the adoption of aggressive masculine roles, coupled with a discouragement of female participation, are explained via notions of a contem-
porary crisis in masculinity (Hunt 2008:466). Consequently, these examples suggest that there seems to be an established view of gender identities in the past, which is cemented rather than contested at heritage arenas.

**Around the ring-fort and back again – a quest for a queer masculinity?**

Let us take a look at our longbow example from Eketorp again. As the research discussed above shows, heritage sites are filled with normative expressions of masculinity, and ultimately this establishes boundaries towards femininity. The social arena at Eketorp is seemingly full of traditional gender values; it is a site filled with traditional masculine connotations and elements such as social hierarchies and physical violence. Likewise it is an arena filled with traditional feminine connotations, represented by baking or textile production, etc. On first impression it does then seem that archery is a social practice with powerful masculine connotations. Yet today this activity is popular with whole families, young, old, women and men. How can analyses of masculinities be approached in this rather heterogeneous environment?

Archaeological research exploring masculinities has primarily focused on material culture and expressions perceived as connected to males and maleness (e.g. Welinder 1999; Skogstrand 2005; Thedéen 2009). One visible tendency is the large focus on different dimensions of hierarchies. In this respect, the concept of hegemonic masculinity does seem to have a dominant position in interpretations of male identities in prehistory. It presents a framework for understanding how some men come to dominate women, but also other groups of men (Connell 1995). The concept has been the subject of intense debate on how the hegemonic position must be understood as a subject of negotiation and re-negotiation according to different social arenas and views on sex, sexuality, ethnicity and social status (see for example Demetriou 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). A gender archaeology influenced by queer theory clarifies how a binary understanding of sex and gender is highly problematic in archaeological research. The argument for a queer archaeology highlights how this approach can draw attention to normative practices in the past, as well as to contest these tendencies in the production of archaeological knowledge (see for example Dowson 2000; Voss 2000; Alberti 2001; Back Danielsson 2007). The points raised by queer theorists are important to the interpretation of masculinities in archaeological research for two reasons. Firstly, they point directly to the challenging aspects of performativity and identity in relation to the physical body. The influence of Judith Butler’s aspects of performativity and her definition of the biological sex as social construction and thus a disassociation of the un-
derstanding of gender as interdependent on the biological sex puts the discussion of masculinities in a difficult position (Butler 1990; 1993). Can we really be satisfied with exploring masculinities in relation to the male body alone? Does this not endanger an understanding of masculinities as grounded in essentialist interpretations of both sex and gender? Alberti (2006:415-419) acknowledges this problem and argues strongly for an understanding of masculinity that problematizes the relation to the biological body. The question then is what is masculinity if not attached to the male body? Secondly, queer theory, by putting emphasis on the social deviant, highlights normative practices and the policing of normative structures, and ultimately, the normative independence of the deviant (Halberstam 1998; Dowson 2000:163-165; Voss 2000).

Returning to Eketorp and the discussion of social practices at heritage sites, these aspects of masculinity have several implications. The obvious one entails the different stories that are presented at heritage sites, and how these reflect different notions of gender identities. Another aspect of great relevance is what people actually do at heritage sites, and furthermore, how these practices reflect on present notions of masculinity identities. In other words, it is not only what kind of social practices that are presented and taking place at the site that are of interest (in our case, the archery in itself), but also what they may represent for the visitors performing them.

The explicit remarks made by the female visitors who did well at archery signify two things. Firstly, that the result was seemingly unexpected, and secondly that it is socially acceptable to manifest this success. The surprise may perhaps be interpreted as an acceptance of normative gender dichotomies, but the cheering may also be interpreted as a way to acknowledge skepticism towards these stereotypes. At the same time, the museum exhibition, both textually and visually, depicts archery historically as a strict male activity. Longbow archery as performed at Eketorp is in this respect clearly a social practice loaded with both past and present notions of gender. Yet the activity is performed by both men and women today. So what then, should we make of the intense cheering?

I argue that although the archery at Eketorp may be interpreted as a symbol of masculinity, it is not automatically synonymous with male identity. Women performing the (assumed?) masculine activity of archery, and sometimes doing it better than a man does, instantly remind us of what normative masculinity really is. It may be in precisely these moments that we understand that this woman is not a man. This is the position of sociologist Judith Halberstam, who considers masculinity to be explicitly separated from the biological body. She argues that it is through non normative expressions of masculinities that the constructions of normative masculinity can be seen, and not vice versa (Halberstam 1998; 2001).

This is where we approach the meaning of these different connotations of masculinities at Eketorp. Instead of regarding traditional masculine artifacts
and practices solely as a part of male identity politics, they could instead be understood as metaphors for visualizing past and present social hierarchies and social relations as a whole. In that respect, the artifacts and practices that represent expressions of masculinity need not be directly connected to men or male activities. Rather, the tendency of “gender-bending” performances in heritage arenas has previously been acknowledged (e.g. Gustafsson 2003; Hunt 2008:476-478). The rare occurrence of female knights performing at “Medeltidsveckan” on Gotland, for example, is made possible by the knight’s enigmatic helmet that could hide either a prince or a maiden. The staging of traditional gender identities thus seems to invite contrasts such as ironic expressions of gender crossing and inversion (Gustafsson 2003:234). However, rather than interpreting these ironic expressions as anomalies in contrast to a notion of “real” male masculine performances, these situations provide, in my opinion, the true chance of understanding constructions of masculinity as a whole. I would therefore argue that the visitors at Eketorp, far from being passive consumers of traditional gender values, also use these settings as an arena to comment on and create individual opinions of gender identities. However, applying a queer understanding of masculinity and using these concepts as analytical tools also enable us to find expressions of masculinity out with the obvious. The cultural heritage site Eketorp, saturated on first impression with traditional notions of masculinities, allows us, by this definition, to explore how past and present notions of masculinity are created, contested and recreated.

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Is It Enough to Make the Main Characters Female?
An Intersectional and Social Semiotic Reading of the Exhibition *Prehistories 1* at the National Historical Museum in Stockholm, Sweden

*Annika Bünz*

**Abstract**
This paper discusses the permanent exhibition *Prehistories 1* at the National Historical Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. It concludes that women to a greater extent than previously are included in the narratives of the exhibition. However, is it enough to make more characters female? Reading the museum narratives through intersectionality and social semiotics, it is suggested that numbers are not enough. A certain variety exists among both male and female characters in relation to class and to a certain degree to age. But, the exhibition’s descriptions of prehistory as a society advancing and becoming more and more complex are still representing male characters as older, more authoritative and powerful. In comparison, women’s roles appear visually underdeveloped and may thus be perceived as less important. Visually the exhibition displays a historical narrative of a journey from distant nature (woman) to familiar culture (man), replicating the grand narrative of human history and excluding the Sámi people as cultural Others, in particular Sámi women who are subject to exclusion at the intersection of ethnicity and gender.

**Introduction**
Scholars within a range of disciplines have shown that both museum exhibitions and the archaeological discipline to a great extent lean on the grand narratives of evolution, progress, development and the rise of the West. In these narratives, the white Western man, physically and symbolically, heads the evolution from nature (woman) to culture (man) (Haraway 1989;
McClintock 1995; Wiber 1998; Smith 1999; Conkey 2005; Scott 2007; Golding 2009). In this process, the West also develops as opposed to the Rest, the Other (Said 1978; Hall 1992; Pickering 2001). This narrative has also seemed to prevail in many Swedish museums (Bünz & Steen 2008). Nevertheless, due to political decisions and measures from the Swedish government (e.g. the governmental investigation “Genus på museer” [Gender in museums], Ds 2003), a gender perspective is today more frequently employed in Swedish exhibition designs; a discerning museum visitor can observe a bigger number of women in contemporary museological narratives. But is this casting of women as main characters enough? Is this move sufficient to visualise and write women into the narratives of prehistory? If so, what about other traditionally marginalized subjects – Others? How does the exhibition represent for example, age, ethnicity and class?

In this chapter I analyse the exhibition Prehistories 1 at the National historical museum in Stockholm, Sweden. I focus in particular on two parts of the exhibition, which are of specific significance for understanding the relation between Prehistories 1 and the representation of diversity. I employ intersectionality and social semiotics to understand and discuss these representations and the type of discourses and subjectivities the exhibition produces. My focus is on its displays, visual as well as textual, and I ask a number of questions: what images does this particular exhibition convey of prehistorical subjects? How are people; women, men, children and elderly presented? What stories are told? How can they be understood?

Theoretical and methodological frame

Museum exhibitions are created to communicate knowledge. This communication occurs by means of for example texts, images, reconstructions and archaeological findings that are brought together and arranged in a space. Communication occurs between creator and receiver, museum curator and museum visitor. The study of communication and representation as the creation of meaning with signs is called semiotics. A semiotician studies how meanings are made and how reality is represented in words, images, sounds, gestures and objects (Chandler 2002:2). To investigate something from a social semiotic point of view is to shift focus from signs to sign-making (Kress & Leeuwen 2006:8; Kress 2010:9). Sign-making occurs in specific historical and cultural contexts by agents with complex interests and their own specific life histories (Kress & Leeuwen 2006:7, 12).

When discussing communication and representation with terms from social semiotics the researcher looks at a constantly ongoing process of sign-making wherein individuals have a transformative role as agents in a constant presence of a social context. Conventions shape the resources, and the social structures are inevitably marked by power differences (Kress &
Leeuwen 2006:13). The making of signs involves a procedure where the sign-maker seeks to make representations of objects and entities (Kress & Leeuwen 2006:7; Kress 2010:10).

Kress & Leeuwen focus on “displaying the regularities of visual communication” (2006, p. 14), when they within the frame of social semiotics form a grammar of visual design. According to Kress & Leeuwen (2006:47–48), there are two kinds of participants involved in the making of signs, the represented participant (people, places, things, ‘abstract things’) and the interactive participant, that is, the participants involved in communication (who speak, listen, write, or read). Gunther Kress uses the concept of multimodality to discuss sign-making by different kinds of modes and by combining multiple modes. A mode is a resource for making meaning; for example image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving images and 3D objects (Kress 2010:79). “The signs are made with very many different means, in very many different modes” (Kress 2010, p. 10). A museum exhibition is composed of many such different modes.

For the most part, the scholars referred to within social semiotics discuss Western culture and only briefly review some aspects of other cultures. The exhibition studied here is designed within a Western and Scandinavian culture. Within the framework of social semiotics I do my analysis as a sign-maker in the role of an interactive participant.

The theoretical framework of social semiotics and sign-making is here used as a method to complement the theoretical perspective of intersectionality. To use intersectionality is to problematise and make visible how relations of power are created within, between, and across categories such as race, class, and gender (de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005:23). According to postcolonial feminist theorists, white Western middle-class women have been allowed to represent all women while the intersecting oppression that a lot of women live under is forgotten and ignored (Collins 2000; de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005). Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that Western scholars tend to presuppose that women belong to one single category, a coherent group with “identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnicity, or racial location, or contradictions” (Mohanty 2003, p. 21). This implies entertaining “a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy that can be applied universally and cross-culturally” (Mohanty 2003, p. 21).

Intersectionality presumes an epistemology where power and subordination constantly is constructed and reconstructed by individuals, ideologies, generally accepted knowledge, discourses and material conditions (de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005:24–25). De los Reyes & Mulinari (2005:23) regard intersectionality as a perspective intended to describe a complex reality and the infinite number of subject positions created in society today. Using intersectionality to analyse a museum exhibition means to look for different subject positions created in the narrative/s and is a way to detect ideologies, generally accepted knowledge and discourses communicated in the process.
My study of the exhibition *Prehistories 1* thus entails an examination of how gender, age, social position and ethnicity produce, and are produced by, such knowledge and discourses.

National museums and the Swedish context

The exhibition *Prehistories 1* is displayed at the National Historical Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. This museum “administers culture heritage and provides a perspective on our existence in order to strengthen the democratic development of society” (National historical museums 2011). The task “is to preserve and promote Sweden's cultural heritage and provide perspectives on social development and the present” (National historical museums 2011).

As stated above, this chapter is interested not only in gender, but other socio-cultural positions and a distinct Swedish perspective of intersectionality. In this context it should be mentioned that Sweden is a geographically large country and the northern half, called Norrland, is a sparsely populated area with an abundance of natural resources. These have played an important part in the building of the welfare of the entire country, a majority of whose population lives in the southern half of the country. Despite its size and economic significance, and in spite of extensive fieldwork and research having been carried out in the northern parts of the country, the general public still knows very little about the prehistory of Norrland (Bergman 2009:178). The archaeological records in the north show a variety of cultures during prehistory; peoples in the north and south developed different cultures, and one question raised by the archaeological records of the northern parts, for example, if an independent kingdom existed in Norrland 1500 years ago (Baudou 1992).

However, what is more commonly known is the history of the indigenous Sámi people who inhabit present-day Norrland as well as the northern parts of Norway, Finland and the Kola Peninsula. In the early twentieth century the Sámi were among those who in the name of science were measured and photographed for eugenic research (Samer 2009). The Sámi people are commonly connected with reindeer herding. In my examination of *Prehistories 1* I look for perspectives on cultural diversity throughout the country including how the Sámi people is presented. What, and who, is included in the grand narrative of prehistoric Sweden? How are human subjects and cultures depicted?
Gender, age and class in *Prehistories 1*

The exhibition *Prehistories 1* opened in 2005. It presents prehistory through eight different life stories. In the introductory text, the stories are described as “frozen moments” in time, from c. 7000 BC to c. AD 600, and it is declared that: “The oldest is the woman from Bäckaskog […] and the youngest the magnate from Vendel […]”.

Every moment in time comes with a heading that informs the visitor about one or several characters that lived during this period, and period-specific narrative is constructed as lived from the perspective of these characters. The characters are based upon findings of human remains and archaeological materials; women, men, older people and children are represented. The first moment, c. 7000 BC has the heading “The Bäckaskog woman”, and the second moment, c. 4800 BC is titled “The old man and the child from Skateholm”. The third moment is called “The people of Rössberga”, 3500–2700 BC, the forth “The Chieftain from Hasslöv and the woman from Stora Köpinge”, 1300–1100 BC, the fifth “The cloak-bearer from Gerum and the child from Bankälla”, 200s BC, the sixth “The man from Öremölla and the woman from Gårdlösa”, 200s AD, the seventh “The men from Kvisisleby and Krankmårtenhögen,” AD 200–400 and finally the eighth is entitled “The lord from Vendel and the aristocratic woman from Köpingsvik”, c. AD 600.

The frozen moments are exhibited in areas that are divided; each period is thus framed in a separate room. The rooms are arranged so as to usher visitors through them in chronological order. All characters are represented in photographic images on textile wall hangings. The representations are, with some exceptions, in natural size. Before entering the display rooms, the visitor is introduced to the exhibition by a film featuring some of the people represented on the wall hangings.

The eight different moments offer stories of twelve different characters, one group of people and some children. Four stories are told by female characters and seven by male. One of the male characters is an old man. Apart from Moment 1, which focuses on the woman from Bäckaskog, and Moment 3, presenting the people of Rössberga, there is always a male character present in the narratives together with a woman, child or another man. In addition to the main stories, there are side stories in Moment 3 and Moment 4, and in these side stories one male and one female character are mentioned as well. The inference made from the counting is that women are numerically under-represented as main characters in the eight moments in time.

However, when wandering through the exhibition I realize that women are visually well represented. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, they are represented through Moment 1 “The woman from Bäckaskog”. The Bäckaskog woman is the only character presented in two different kinds of environments in a comparatively large area, and she is also represented both
by a reconstruction of her head and a photograph on a wall hanging. Second-
ly, in Moment 3 “The people of Rössberga”, there is a side story about a
young girl. This girl is represented by an image of a woman, and there is also
another image of a middle-aged woman who is not mentioned anywhere in
the texts. Both are in natural size (Fig. 1). The man portrayed in the other
side story is represented by a reconstruction of a head, which, without natu-
ral colouration, hair and clothes, appears lifeless. The result is that the two
women are given much more space in the visual display than the man.

Fig. 1. The two atop women represent characters in a side story. The women
on the bottom line represent characters from the main stories: the woman
from Gårdlösa to the left, and the aristocratic woman from Köpingsvik to the
right. (Photo: author).

There are several children mentioned in the texts, but in the images only
three children can be counted. One child is together with a man and two
children are supposed to represent “the child” from Bankälla. The Swedish
text reads “children from Bankälla” but the English translation only talks of
one child. The child depicted with the man could be a girl, five or six years
old, and the children representing “the child” from Bankälla are two boys,
approximately five and three years old.
Visually, women and men are represented in a number of situations, as well as in different ages ranging from young to middle-aged. However, they are not represented as old. They figure in different social positions, ranging from thrall to aristocrat. “The old man from Skatetholm” is represented by a man in his thirties, even though it says in the text that he was c.60 years old. The woman from furthest back in time, the woman from Bäckaskog (Fig. 2), who has her own narrative and her own moment in time, is represented by a middle-aged woman, a good deal older than the aristocratic woman from Köpingsvik, who lived during the seventh century AD. (Fig. 1). The woman from Köpingsvik is one of the main characters in the textual narrative, but her visual representation is almost hidden behind a corner. The introductory film at the entrance does not include the woman from Köpingsvik at all. The introductory text excludes the woman from Köpingsvik from the exhibition’s grand narrative, and the visual display thus describes her as a side story of no importance to the big picture.

Fig. 2. The woman from Bäckaskog, c. 7 000 BC. (Photo: author).

One of the men living sometime between AD 200 and AD 400, the man from Kvissleby, is depicted as a sitting middle-aged man (Fig. 4). The man who lived during the seventh century AD, the lord from Vendel, is also represented as sitting. The man from Kvissleby is thin and leans forward, probably sitting on a stool, whereas the Vendel character is a stout middle-aged man leaning back, almost certainly sitting on some kind of throne. From the texts you learn that the lord from Vendel has power over other people and that the man from Kvissleby is called “a minor king”. One text talks about traces of people living as thralls, and the thralls are represented by three
people on a wall hanging, two men and a young woman. In the introductory film, the man from Kvissleby sits with other people, talking and showing an artefact that he holds in his hand while the lord from Vendel is sitting in a throne meeting the onlooker’s eye, being served something to drink from the female thrall.

I conclude that the exhibition narrative tells a story where men are young at the beginning of time and middle aged at the end of the story. As the time in the narrative passes, society is described as increasingly hierarchical and complex. The men gradually gain power and are assigned titles such as lords and kings. Women, on the other hand, are older and have authority far back in time but get younger and less important as the narrative moves forward in time. Women are not assigned titles like Lord or Queen; they are only mentioned as “women”.

Men who have gained power are illustrated sitting down and are being served by others. The lord from Vendel is in the narrative accompanied by the woman from Köpingsvik when the seventh century AD is presented, but in the text that introduces the exhibition, the lord from Vendel is staged as the only representative of the time period.

To summarise the findings about text and images accounted for above, I reach the conclusion that together the exhibition characters to a certain extent represent a diversified collection of subject positions when it comes to gender, age and class. But what about cultural diversity and the prehistory of the northern part of the country? What about the women, children and elderly who also lived there during prehistory? How are they represented in the narrative?

Cultural diversity in Prehistories 1

The question about prehistory in the northern part of the country is easily answered. In each exhibited Moment, the graves that are discussed are marked out on a map of Scandinavia. The northernmost marking is actually to be found no farther north than Kvissleby and Krankmårtenhögen in Moment 7 (Fig. 3). Sweden is thus split into two halves; one entirely without and one with markings, that is, the southern half of the country. This means that nothing is told about the northern half of the country. It seems as if there is nobody – no men, women, children or elderly – in present-day Norrland during prehistory according to this exhibition. This means that the exhibition offers no perspective on the present when it comes to cultural diversity.
Nevertheless, the Sámi people is mentioned and discussed. This mention occurs in the texts about the man interred in the burial mound Krankmårtenhögen. Next, I examine this moment of the narrative closer. In the following, I do a close reading of this material from the perspective of social semiotics (Hodge & Kress 1988; Leeuwen 2005; Kress & Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2010).

Moment 7: The men from Kvissleby and Krankmårtenhögen
The stories about the men from Kvissleby and Krankmårtenhögen and the period they lived in are told in an exhibition room decorated with two large wall hangings; one frames a photograph of a river running through the woods, the other shows moving pictures of a stream running down a slope. The room is filled with the sound of running water. Two characters from the narrative are depicted on wall hangings, dressed like prehistoric men (see Figs 4 and 5). In this room you can only see middle-aged men; there are no women, children or elderly present in the visual representation.
The room seems to be meant to represent the north of Sweden, that is, present-day Norrland: The Krankmårten man in the photograph is walking in the snow dressed in warm clothes trimmed with fur (Fig. 5). The river runs through the woods, which leads the thoughts to tree trunks transported in rivers, which used to be a common sight in the north. Horns of reindeer and elk can be seen in a showcase. These are elements that together signify Norrland. However, there is something contradictory about the room that can be derived from the lustrous yellow tone in some of the showcases and wall hangings. These showcases display artefacts made of gold, silver and bronze. The colour of the whole room is a blue-grey hue and it is contrasted by highlights of these yellow, golden hues.

Leeuwen (2005:6-9) discusses how colours are used in *framing*, which is a concept that deals with how elements are connected and disconnected to each other (Leeuwen 2005:17-19). Colours are important to the understanding of the display in the room where Moment 7 is presented. The representation of the man from Kvissleby is enveloped by a yellow hue (Fig. 4) and the background colour of the showcases on both sides of the representation is
golden yellow. There is also a yellow tone in the image depicting the man. He is here the *represented participant* who signifies the character. The man is connected to the artefacts by what with multimodal terminology is called a colour *rhyme*: the lustrous yellow hue in the images above and the yellow tone in the showcases.

By contrast, the representation of the man in Krakmårtenhögen is bluish with elements of brown and grey, and these colours rhyme with the hue in the illustration and showcase below the representation (Fig. 5). The representation further rhymes with the blue-grey hue that dominates the room. The represented participant that signifies the man buried in the Krankmårten mound is thus connected to the illustration below and the exhibited horns and remains of elk and reindeer. This man is also connected to the room as a whole. According to Kress “colour, as a background ‘wash’, frames by establishing the ‘ground’ on which things ‘are’, ‘belong’, ‘happen’, ‘take place’.” (Kress 2010, p. 151). The character is connected to this room where this moment in time takes place. It belongs to the background wash. And I, as an interactive participant, thereby connect the narrative about the man buried in the Krankmårten mound with the north, that is, Norrland. The character “the man from Kvissleby”, on the other hand, is connected to that which by contrast in colour is *disconnected* from Norrland.

To proceed with the analysis, I now perform a closer examination of the two wall hangings representing the two characters (Figs. 4 and 5). The creator of the image, who is also a so called *interactive participant*, has depicted the man from Kvissleby in a long shot. According to Kress & Leeuwen (2006:148), a picture from afar indicates an impersonal relationship between the represented participant and the onlooker, the other interactive participant. A medium shot conveys a social relationship and a close shot a personal one. The image shows the whole person, but the legs below the knees are hardly visible in the dark that surrounds the man. The surrounding darkness narrows the shot and puts it somewhere in between a long shot and a medium shot. From this I conclude that the relationship between the represented participant and the interactive participant is of an almost social character. The representation is positioned so that the character meets a full-grown onlooker on an eye-to-eye level. The man is placed in an *equal position* to an adult museum visitor. A child, a short person, or someone sitting in a wheelchair will meet the represented participant’s gaze from an inferior position.

Furthermore, the man is facing the viewer almost from a frontal angle, which means that the represented participant, by one interactive participant, has been placed in an *involved position* toward the other interactive participant, the museum visitor. The man also demands something from the viewer, as he looks him/her straight in the eye; the represented participant is a subject interacting with the interactive participant. The long shot indicates an impersonal, almost social, relationship to the museum visitor, but the frontal angel proposes involvement.
The dark colour surrounding the representation conceals whatever is surrounding the man in the image. This darkness surrounding the man is a locative circumstance, a specific participant that Kress & Leeuwen (2006:72) call a setting. In this case the setting is darker than the foreground and enhances the yellow glow of the represented participant, making it salient. The lighting in the image can be read as an indoor surrounding.

The wall hanging depicting the man in the burial mound Krankmårtenhögen is placed high above the onlooker (Fig. 5). This could be interpreted as a power position from which the represented participant looks down on the interactive participant. However the representation does not gaze at the viewer; it turns its gaze away. This image addresses the viewer indirectly; the interactive participant is not the object, but subject of the look.
The man in the Krankmårten mound is by the creator placed as an object of a presupposed detached gaze of the museum visitor. The oblique angle showing the man’s profile detaches the viewer and the long shot is impersonal. In this picture, the represented participant is dark and the setting is light blue. There are no glowing colours in the image and even though the man’s contours are distinct he is not salient. The setting is as important a participant as the represented character. The facial features are not visible to the viewer; you can only distinguish the contours of his profile. The represented participant signifying the man in the Krankmårten mound blends in with the background – it blends with nature.

The way the wall hangings are placed in the room makes the characters turn their backs at each other and the visual display thereby conveys that they do not interact with each other at all. They are actually depicted as each other’s opposites. A close-up look at their faces reveals that the man from Kvissleby is depicted with distinct features looking directly at the viewer, while the man in Krankmårten mound is depicted with a diffuse profile. The men are thus pictured as almost social versus impersonal, involved vs detached, indoors vs outdoors, sitting vs walking, and relaxed vs striving, in bright saturated colours vs grey unsaturated colours, and as salient vs diffuse being surrounded by artefacts vs remains of animals. One could say that the represented participants, according to the visual design, signify the dichotomies culture vs nature and Us vs Them.

Let me now add something about the texts in this specific room. The time period and the two characters are presented with the subheading: “Did they ever meet, the minor king from Norrland, and the man from further inland?” This heading connects the man from Kvissleby with Norrland and thereby contradicts the visual design. The text discusses the two men, how they could have lived and how they were buried. A short passage declares that during this period there were jewelleries and plates manufactured from gold and bronze, and they were decorated with animals and humans.

The stories about the two men are elaborated in two other texts. “The man by the coast” (my translation) is the heading of the text that discusses the man in the burial mound at Kvissleby. The text reads: “At the mouth of the river Ljungan, in the area of Kvissleby, a couple of burial mounds stand out against the landscape. To be buried in a mound behoved only the very rich and powerful” (my translation). In the next paragraph, the reader is informed that the man from Kvissleby was buried in one of the mounds. But, the text goes on, it was recently discovered that the grave actually contained two people, a man and a woman. This is the only mention of a woman in this room. This means that a woman, who was buried together with one of the main characters of this narrative, is neither included in images, nor in the text.
The text about “The man by the coast” is placed next to the showcase where the artefacts found in the mound are displayed. These artefacts are rather plain with no lustrous colours. The background colour connects the showcase with the representation of the character. It also connects the showcase with the showcases on each side of the image representation. But it is placed in another part of the room, by the picture of the river. The placing in the room does not connect the artefacts with the representation of the character. Rather, it creates a distance between artefacts and character. Had it not been for the colour rhyme, I probably would not have made the connection until I had studied the texts more thoroughly. The showcase with the horns and remains of elk and reindeer on the other hand, is directly connected to the man from further inland, both by the colour rhyme and the placing in the room.

When I look closer at the two showcases on each side of the image representation of the man from Kvissleby, I realise that these artefacts have been found in places all over the country, from Skåne in the south to Hälsingland in the north. They represent the Migration period (c. AD 400–550) in different parts of the country and are by no means more connected to the finding in Kvissleby, than to Krankmårtenhögen. They comprise a selection of what has been found, and the story about the Migration period is told based on these findings. The showcase to the right of the representation of the man from Kvissleby is placed next to the showcase that displays animal remains, but the background colours disconnect the two showcases. The colours also disconnect the representation of the man in the Krankmårten mound from the lustrous artefacts and thereby also from the Migration period. The two showcases that display the lustrous, elaborate artefacts are both accompanied by texts describing the Migration period. The headings are: “A time filled with fairytales and myths” and “Gold, status and power” (my translation). The latter text informs about the plentiful gold treasures from the Migration period, sometimes called the “Nordic Gold Age”.

The text about the man in the Krankmårten mound discusses traces of humans who lived in what we today call Norrland and concludes that these traces in some cases differ from traces found in the southern parts of Sweden. The wording “differ from” the south, suggests that the traces from the north are deviations. These few lines of text are intended to cover the traces of humans in the northern half of the country, although the mentioned finds actually come from the most southern part of Norrland. In the last paragraph you can read that there has been an animated debate about the people in Krankmårten. “Who were the people buried here? Some think they were Sámi, others insists they were not”. The paragraph ends with the question: “Does this indicate that there were Sámi people here a thousand years ago?” (my translation).
After reading through the texts in the room I conclude that everything that is
told about the Migration period is connected to the man from Kvissleby.
Everything that concerns culture and myths, gold and power, is connected to
the represented participant that signifies this character. The man from
Kvissleby represents this moment in time in the textual narrative. The men-
tioning in the text of the character as being a minor king from Norrland,
whereas the visual disconnects it from the north, indicates a colonial idea of
a king living in the south ruling over the north. The man in the Krankmårten
mound, possibly of the Sámi people, signifies the Other and his narrative is
not part of the grand narrative. Instead, this character is connected to nature
and disconnected from culture, gold and power and Us.

Important to note is that the colour rhyme to connect the characters to
showcases and artefacts and to disconnect the characters from each other is
only used in this room. In the other rooms of the exhibition, all showcases
have the same background colour; in one room red, in another green and in
yet another yellow, and in these rooms all characters, artefacts and showca-
eses are framed together in a frozen moment in time by one connecting colour.

To conclude the analysis of the room supposedly signifying Norrland, the
diversity of prehistoric subjects including men, women, young and middle-
aged, which characterises the exhibition as a whole, is not reproduced in this
room. A woman is mentioned together with the man from Kvissleby, but the
man from further inland stands alone as a character representing the Other,
perhaps as a representative of the Sámi. If this is the case, it can be conclu-
ded that Sámi women, children and elderly are not included in the narrative at
all.

Distance in time and space

The wall hangings depicting the woman from Bäckaskog (Fig. 2) and the
man from further inland (Fig. 5) are, as opposed to all other representations
of characters, placed high above the viewer. This creates a distance between
the represented participants and the interactive participant. The woman from
Bäckaskog is looking down at the onlooker from a high position, and the
man from further inland is depicted on a wall hanging placed high up in the
corner of the room, not even looking down at the museum visitor. But if you
want to, you can study the woman from Bäckaskog thoroughly in a recon-
struction of her head that is exhibited in a showcase nearby, though this re-
presented participant does not meet your eyes. It is placed at eye-to-eye level
with a half-grown child. If you were an adult you would be looking down on
the reconstruction and even though the woman’s eyes look straight forward,
the gaze is distant. The character is also represented by a skeleton, the hu-
man remains that the character is created from, and thus there are three re-
presented participants that signify the character. You can get close to two of
them but only meet the gaze of the third, the one placed high above. The
man in the Krankmårten mound is not represented in any other way than in the image on the wall hanging. What you can get close to, and scrutinize thoroughly, are the horns and other remains from animals that are exhibited in the showcase beneath the representation. You can also see all the details in the illustration showing how the grave could have looked in the landscape.

Another thing that brings these two representations together is that the characters are depicted in an outdoor setting while the other characters are made salient by a black background and a lighting implying that the character are indoors. The woman from the distant past is blending with the nature in a way that makes it hard to discern her features; she “is” the woods, and the woods are her (Fig. 2). The man in the Krankmårten mound can clearly be distinguished by the contours, but he is not more salient than the background. The two characters are both depicted as part of nature, they are both hard to get close to, but the woman from Bäckaskog meets your gaze and is a moment of “our” history while the man from further inland neither meets your gaze nor is represented as a part of the grand narrative of the exhibition.

The blending with nature also occurs in the representation of the child from Bankälla. The two boys are represented in a larger scale than natural children. The setting is a forest. The image of the children and the forest blend in the same way as in the representation of the Bäckaskog woman. But the wall hanging is not placed high above the onlooker; it is placed at eye-level, which signifies equality (Kress & Leeuwen 2006:148). The children are nature in the same way as the Bäckaskog woman, but they are closer in time and they are not distant in space.

Conclusions
When examining illustrations of human evolution the anthropologist Melanie Wiber concludes that they all share a common plot.

“The arduous journey is a common feature of many of them; the harsh struggle for survival is another. [ - - - ] Human social and biological evolution has been a great journey, one that has taken us as a species from an animal-like dependence on nature to a human level of independence through culture” (Wiber 1998, p. 49).

Wiber argues that these illustrations take part in a wider field of a larger meta-narrative, and the narrative is an often written and single dominant view of events (Wiber 1998:49).

Nature, the distant past, as well as distant geographical areas, is often considered to be female (McClintock 1995:36–38). The journey throughout the history made in Prehistories 1 starts with a female character represented as blending with nature and ends with a male character sitting on a throne.
Stephanie Moser identifies the wild landscape style as a mean to illustrate prehistory. Caves, forests, mountains and large dramatic skies are iconographic means to illustrate the distant past (Moser 1998:115-116). The Bäckaskog woman character is depicted in the forest and she is also placed in a position in the room that distances her both in time and space. The lord from Vendel represents culture close in space and time. The journey from distant nature (woman) to familiar culture (man) is indeed the plot of the narrative of Prehistories 1.

Stephanie Moser concludes that imagery throughout the ages has defined otherness or outsider status. “The visual language of distant time thus continues an age-old tradition of constructing ancestors, non-western peoples, non-Christians and animals in terms of their opposition to us” (Moser 1998, p.172). In Prehistories 1, the Sami represent and are depicted as the Other. The dichotomies “sitting/walking” and “relaxed/striving” can be read as representing the view that “We” have finished our arduous journey and harsh struggle for survival and thereby can sit down and relax. The Other still strives and struggles for survival in the distant nature, the wild landscape. The man in Krankemårtenhögen is walking in the (prehistoric) landscape instead of sitting indoors. The character is as distant in time and space as the Bäckaskog woman, even though they are more than 7000 years apart. And the intersecting effect is that the Sámi women, children and elderly are not only distant, they are excluded – rendered invisible behind a middle-aged man.

Age is something that can promote authority. The lord from Vendel exudes authority, on the one hand by his position on the throne and, on the other, by being middle-aged. The middle-aged Bäckaskog woman also conveys an amount of authority when she gazes down at the visitor, both from being of old age and from her position of power. The female character from the most recent moment in time, the woman from Köpingsvik (as well as most of the other depicted female characters), is depicted as young. She is described as having status, but is visually represented as without authority. The old man from Skateholm is depicted as young and thereby gains no authority by age in the visual representation. Looking at the depiction of authority throughout time, as held by subjects of old age, this is at the beginning described as female, that is furthest back in time, and as male at the end of the journey.

This analysis has only concerned selected parts of the visual design and parts of the texts in the exhibition. There is of course a lot more to analyse in the exhibition Prehistories 1. On the one hand there are other identity categories that I have not looked further into, such as for example sexual orientation and physical disabilities. On the other hand, the interactive participant, as in the museum visitor, is of varying age, sex, religion and ethnicity. As Monique Scott puts it, “diverse individuals bring unique understandings to museum exhibitions” (Scott 2007, p. 3); that is understandings that derive
from varied cultural histories. Just as the social semiotic approach regards the sign-maker, Scott argues that the museum visitors interpret exhibitions through their prior experiences and through their culturally learned beliefs, values and perceptual skills (Scott 2007:3). When I visit this exhibition I can identify with most parts of the narrative as “my history” because of my background in the same culture as the exhibition narrative seems to be told within. The perspective of intersectionality is a vital reminder that the analysis must not just focus on the represented participants in the museum exhibition; it is equally important to examine the interactive participant’s intersecting identities. How would a person with a completely different background interpret the exhibition’s messages? How would a person who lives in, and identifies with, the northern parts of the country, perceive what is told? I conclude that further investigations and discussions taking this into consideration are needed to better understand the complexity of representing diversity in historical exhibitions.

References


Abstract
Future gender studies in archaeology will, in one way or another, have to relate to current neorealist approaches in philosophy. In this article, I will use Manuel DeLanda’s assemblage theory and John Protevi’s framework of body-politic to show how neorealist approaches can unite the somatic and the social through synchronic and diachronic perspectives. As a case study I shall focus on the Maya ruler B’ajlaj Chan K’awiil of Dos Pilas and his daughter Ix Wak Chan Ajaw of Naranjo in Guatemala. The lives of these rulers were conceptualized as roads along which certain events took place. Common in the hieroglyphic corpus are dates of birth, accession, marriage and death of male and female rulers. During B’ajlaj and Wak Chan’s roads of life they encountered several thresholds that created their unique assemblages and bodies-politic.

Roads of life
The Classic period king B’ajlaj Chan K’awiil of Dos Pilas and his daughter Ix Wak Chan Ajaw of Naranjo in Guatemala were far from being “socially constructed” individuals from a social constructionist perspective. They were affected by a hierarchical timocratic collective, changing gender categories and kinship systems, age-old power structures, and more recent turnovers in power balance. Whatever they achieved in terms of political activities, they were also affected by the capital of the Kan kingdom, Calakmul, at least from AD 650 (Fig. 1).
Fig. 1. Map of the Maya area. (Source: author).
B’ajlaj’s and Wak Chan’s lives and activities were recorded with calendar dates. These dates give us the opportunity to study long-term diachronic trends as well as synchronic events relating to a ruler, a group of people, a polity, and geopolitics. Geopolitics refers to the “relationships of authority that are created within practices among polities across a given ecumene through the demarcation of difference, hegemony, exclusion, and inclusion” (Smith 2003, p. 115).

People in the Maya area viewed, and still view, time as a road (be/bih) along which events occur. In contemporary Yucatec, the word be is used as a root for “day”. Be-la e, means “today, nowadays” (literally “the road right here”) and ka a-be means “the day after tomorrow” (“two road”) (Hanks 1990:312). Different kinds of temporal roads are known from the Maya area. Ethnohistorical sources mention life roads of communities and polities, such as in the statement ka u satah ob be Chak’an Putun (“they destroyed the road of Chak’an Putun [Champoton]”) (Keller 2001). Whether such a “polity-road of life” existed during the Classic period is unknown, but the idea of a road is related to journey and process, and it is consistent with the ontology that I seek to utilize later on. From such a perspective the focus is set on process/road rather than the actual end product/final destination.

The roads of life are better documented on the level of individual human beings. Among the contemporary Yucatec, the life history of an individual is called u ts’ola’n beel maak (“the ordered road [of a] man”). Important phases along this road are also associated with similar expressions. Birth is called hok’ol be (“step onto road”) and marriage is called ts’okan u beel (“finish or complete one’s road”) (Keller 2001:13-14). This is a terminology that appears to have a long history. In Classic period inscriptions, one of the death phrases is och bih (“entered the road”) (Montgomery 2002:192). The road of an ancient individual was fairly open in the early stage of life. The options to take different turns at road junctions became fewer as life proceeded. After the initial complexification during childhood, adolescence, and maturation there was a progressive rigidifying of the road.

Monuments bearing the ruler’s portrait were also creations of time. The ruler’s face was linked to time since some rulers’ portraits are found within the cartouche of the day sign Ajaw (which is the title of the ruler). The kings were embodiments of time and its passage, and the monuments were inseparable from their selves (Sharer & Golden 2003:33-35).

In this text we will primarily follow the life roads of two individuals: B’ajlaj and Wak Chan. To some extent we will also intersect with the roads of B’ajlaj’s brother and enemy Nuun U Jol Chaak of Tikal and B’ajlaj’s overlord and ally Yuknoom Ch’een of Calakmul/the Kan kingdom. These people not only formed the roads of individuals but also those of groups (family, allies, subordinates). On another scale, we shall also follow the life roads of various polities (primarily Dos Pilas and Naranjo) and the “super-powers” in Late Classic Maya geopolitics (Tikal and the Kan kingdom).
Munson and Macri (2009:429) argue that the Classic Maya political network was not dominated by these two “superpowers”, as argued by Martin and Grube (2000). I agree with their conclusion that the political network of the Maya area was a weakly centralized network consisting of heterogeneous agents using a combination of strategies at different times to assert their authority or dominance. Still, the sites of Tikal and Calakmul were crucial nodes for the networks discussed in this text.

K’awiil Hammers in the Sky and Lady Six Sky

Except where indicated, the following account of B’ajlaj and Wak Chan’s roads of life is compiled from Boot (2002), Fahsen (2002), and Guenter (2003). Only where these authors disagree on the interpretation of the hieroglyphic record is this noted. B’ajlaj was born on 9.9.12.11.2 8 Ik’ 5 Keh which corresponds to the 15th of October 625 according to the GMT correlation.

B’ajlaj’s birth date was important since the day of one’s birth affected the rest of one’s life in various ways. Having a good birth day may have been an advantage (Normark 2000; Stuart 2011). It is therefore also possible that the day of B’ajlaj’s birth influenced the name he was given. His name has been translated as “K’awiil Hammers (in) the Sky,” and it is believed to reflect the rainy and stormy season he was born into (according to the GMT correlation). K’awiil was a patron associated with kingship and lightning.

The person recorded as B’ajlaj’s father, K’inich Muwaan Johl II, is believed to have been the 24th ruler of Tikal. Guenter argues that B’ajlaj was a secondary son of this king, and that he had an older brother who eventually became the 25th ruler of Tikal: Nuun U Jol Chaak. The establishment of part of the Tikal court at Dos Pilas may have been part of a strategy to protect the river route from the Kan kingdom’s increasing influence to the south of Tikal (the Kan kings controlled most of the areas west, north, and east of Tikal through vassals).

Yuknoom attacked Dos Pilas in 650, and B’ajlaj probably escaped to nearby Aguateca. However, B’ajlaj became an ally and a vassal to the Kan ruler, a position that affected the rest of his life and eventually that of his daughter too. In 657 Yuknoom forced Nuun out of Tikal and several monuments were destroyed. Not long after this, the two brothers are believed to have jointly submitted to the Kan ruler. In the mid 660s, B’ajlaj married a woman from nearby Itzan, a site within Kan’s control. This alliance was probably orchestrated from higher up in the geopolitical hierarchy. The Lady of Itzan bore him at least two sons who succeeded him in office. Another wife, Ix B’ulu’, gave birth to his daughter Wak Chan (“Six Sky”). Wak Chan’s birth date is unknown.
The relationships between the two brothers and their overlord were obviously strained. In 672 B’ajlaj was expelled from Dos Pilas by Nuun, and he spent five years in exile. In 677 the Kan king once again attacked Nuun. This time Nuun fled from Dos Pilas, where he seems to have been staying. This indicates that Tikal was still in the hands of Yuknoom. Seven days after his brother’s flight, B’ajlaj arrived at Dos Pilas. Two years later, in 679, Nuun was finally defeated and killed. Nuun was not recorded as a king of Tikal in the inscriptions at Dos Pilas. B’ajlaj’s use of Tikal’s emblem glyph as one of his titles indicates that he saw himself as the ruler of the Tikal kingdom. Eventually, in 682, Nuun’s son Jasaw Chan K’awiil became the new king of Tikal. Jasaw’s accession to the throne may have been a direct act against his uncle and the Kan king. Four days after Jasaw’s accession, on the Period Ending of 9.12.10.0.0, B’ajlaj and Yuknoom participated in a joint ceremony, probably at Calakmul.

The ruler of Naranjo attacked Calakmul’s vassal Caracol in 680. Naranjo’s victory must have been short-lived as it is believed Calakmul defeated Naranjo shortly thereafter, leaving its throne empty. Wak Chan was sent to Naranjo where she arrived in 682, only four months after Jasaw’s accession. She was never inaugurated as a ruler, although she is believed to have acted as one for several years. Instead, she was always referred to as a princess of Dos Pilas. While she is believed to have married, the identity of her spouse is not known. In 688, she gave birth to the future king of Naranjo, K’ak’ Tiliw Chan Chaak. She co-ruled Naranjo with her son for the remainder of her life, dying in 741 (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009:55). It is likely that Naranjo was used by the Kan king and Dos Pilas to prevent Tikal from realizing its ambitions on its eastern flank.

No known recorded date of death has been found for B’ajlaj. According to the retrospective mention on Stela 5 at Aguateca, he danced and oversaw the 9.13.0.0.0 Period Ending in 692. This is the last known date where he is mentioned, and he probably died around this time. In 698 the next known accession occurred at Dos Pilas (Itzamnaaj B’alam). Guenter believes that B’ajlaj is buried inside the unexcavated Structure L5-49, on which we find Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 that records his major events. The Hieroglyphic Stairway forms a vertical manifestation of B’ajlaj’s and Dos Pilas’ roads of life.

Neorealism

I shall not discuss the above roads of life from a social constructionist perspective. Gender studies in archaeology have from the onset been part of social constructionism and/or the greater “Linguistic Turn” in the humanist and social sciences. The focus has been set on meaning, discourse, performance, etc. Social constructionism questions the independent world, accept-
ed knowledge, essentialism and realism (Hacking 1999). However, it is a transcendental idealism in that all “natural categories” are seen as social constructions. In other words, linguistic categories transcend the objects. The core of social constructionism is found in neo-Kantian theory of perception. Here, every individual’s perception is structured by concepts and representations that are socially constructed (DeLanda 1999:30). If a woman is described as a warrior queen she will be treated as such, and she will also behave accordingly.

Latour argues that nothing in constructionism works, neither the builder, the material used, its solidity, nor its durability. Constructions do not stand the test of time, only that which is not constructed persists (Latour 2003:31, 36). Related to constructionism is the concept of deconstruction. Gender researchers have spent quite some time deconstructing the terms man and woman to demonstrate that they are socially constructed. However, as Latour points out, “If X is constructed, then I can easily ‘deconstruct’ it to dust” (Latour 2003, p. 41). Construction and deconstruction go hand in hand, even though they are quite different. It is easy to deconstruct that which has been difficult to construct.

In contemporary continental philosophy there is a trend away from such transcendent idealist perspectives where objects, entities, or people are subordinated to discourse, meaning, performance, etc. This trend develops several neorealist ontologies, and it is now known under the umbrella term “the Speculative Turn.” Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) is considered to have been a pioneer in this field and “there can be little doubt that his project was aimed at moving beyond the traditional Kantian limitations of continental thought” (Bryant et al. 2011, p. 5). Feminist writers, such as Braidotti (1991) and Grosz (2004) have been inspired by Deleuzian ideas, but they have largely confined themselves to a “postmodernist” discourse. Harman states that ”although the reading of Deleuze as a realist is plausible, it is certainly not obvious, and in any case realism is surely not the basis for most of Deleuze’s popularity” (Harman 2008, p. 368). Still, I will primarily follow the neorealist readings of Deleuze advanced by DeLanda and Protevi.

Many of the central figures in the “Speculative Turn” are male bloggers that interact intensively with each other. Few women have joined this network, and for this reason one can say that the Speculative Turn thus far forms a male network of power, a phlegm (gubbslem in Swedish) (Palmås 2008). So far the Speculative Turn has inspired one conference on object-oriented feminism (Bogost 2010) and female contributors are indeed welcome to the “movement” (O’Rourke 2011). However, the gender identity of these theorists is of less importance than how these theories can actually be practically applied in gender studies. One can, of course, create gender perspectives based on only male thinkers. Take for example Grosz’s (2004) experiments with feminism and evolutionary ideas found in the writings of the male thinkers Darwin, Nietzsche, Bergson and Deleuze.
A central theme in these neorealisms is the non-anthropocentric perspective. A realist ontology worthy of the name cannot be grounded in something only constructed by human minds. Humans should therefore no longer be central to our understanding of the world. This is a viewpoint already noted in some archaeological literature (Normark 2006). Anthropocentric assumptions affect the explanatory focus by separating humans from things a priori “while things are variously discussed as integral to archaeological reconstruction of culture, explanation in all of these accounts privileges either the objects pole or the people pole of the spectrum” (Webmoor 2007, p. 568). Witmore argues further that “anthropocentrism is not so much the problem as are asymmetrical definitions of what it is to be human” (Witmore 2007, p. 548). These asymmetrical definitions are inherent in much of contemporary “material culture” or “materiality” studies that are more or less part of the Linguistic Turn. For example, Preucel and Meskell suggest that materiality “takes as its remit the exploration of the situated experiences of material life, the constitution of the object world and concomitantly its shaping of human experience” (Preucel & Meskell 2006, p. 14). The human is still the main target and the object world is simply used to understand the human subject. We find the same issues in archaeological gender studies. Joyce “takes the embodiment as the shaping of the physical person as the site of experience of subjectivity, a shaping that is simultaneously the product of material and discursive actions” (Joyce 2006, p. 84).

Anthropocentrism is one of several aspects of correlationism which “(consist) in disqualifying the claim that it is possible to consider the realms of subjectivity and objectivity independently of one another” (Meillassoux 2008, p. 5). Thinking and being are always correlated, they are never considered separately. The speculative realists therefore attempt to break with correlationism.

From the perspective of Harman’s (2009) object-oriented philosophy, the subject is rather an objective construction. A subject is a function of one of the objects when two objects relate to each other. The subjectivity found in one object forms an experience of the other object. Indeed, Harman argues that objects sense each other. Even non-human objects are “social.” Morton suggests that objects have been treated like women because “a function of patriarchy is to establish identity through a neutral (i.e. nonparticipatory) gaze. This gaze is what ‘makes things real’”(Morton 2011). It is this correlationist gaze that I will attempt to overcome in this text.

On the other hand, Žižek says that “the critical claim that patriarchal ideology continues to be the hegemonic ideology is the form of the hegemonic ideology of our times” (2010, p. 50). Žižek’s comment is a correlationist and idealist standpoint, but I agree that the so-called patriarchal ideology is a straw(wo)man in feminist theory. What is seen as patriarchal structure is rather a logic, a Deleuzian abstract machine (diagram), which works upon objects (Palmås 2008:13). I will discuss this diagram later on.
In this text I will emphasize the works of the triad Deleuze/DeLanda/Protevi rather than the affiliated speculative realists. Deleuze sees the world as a creative and complexifying process of becoming. He heads towards the “posthuman” world which consists of a multiplicity of non-humans. Deleuze sees the extensive boundaries of individual entities not existing merely in human experience. They are real products of definite processes of actualization (DeLanda 1999:33, 41). Even though some of the speculative realists doubt that Deleuze escaped correlationism, DeLanda and Protevi have for sure definitely cut these ties. DeLanda and Protevi have contributed texts to the recent anthology on speculative realism (Bryant et al. 2011), but they are not usually considered to be speculative realists, just “neorealists”.

Towards a neorealist gender study

Glyphs and images from the Maya area that inform us about roads of life will be viewed as scale free assemblages connecting spatiotemporally distant events and entities of heterogeneous composition and scales (humans, buildings, institutions, polities, language, etc.). These assemblages are expressions of dynamic self-differentiating processes immanent to objects.

From the preserved inscriptions and iconography we cannot say much about the daily lives of B’ajlaj and Wak Chan but, as indicated earlier, the trajectory of their roads of life is better known. Huge gaps in time are punctuated by important, highlighted events in their lives (and that of their polities). The road of life structures the individual in a different way than the repeated short-term activities that we otherwise deal with in archaeological assemblages based on funeral rituals, vessel production, food preparation, etc. A study of the morphogenesis of gender roles and their associated activities will benefit from different approaches that work on several scales and through several temporalities. Such approaches create biographies that simultaneously reflect repeated action, unique events, institutions, and a long-term view.

Gender studies can also benefit from a perspective that “transcends” performative actions. Morris argues that body, sex, gender, and sexuality are related to each other by performative actions. The performances focus on practices related to gender categorizations which only become obvious through repetition (Morris 1995:571-574). Performance is primarily based on the human agent level, or occasionally on a group of agents, but seldom do we hear of the performance of a polity in these studies. Instead there is a dialectic relationship between a human agent and a fuzzy macro-structure. Repeated action or practice are usually the only means to explain the emergence of institutions and sites, but these are merely unintended outcomes of social action; they are nothing more than the conglomerate of individual humans and their performances. The institutions or sites are not accorded
any capacities of their own (cf. Beekman 2005). Being the main agents in gender studies, humans automatically fall under the gender division(s). However, “some of the ranking or sorting processes that maintain the differential access to economic and cultural capital are resource dependence relations that exist not between people but between institutional organizations” (DeLanda 2006, p. 65). Attempts to change social categories defined by organizations emerge not because the categories shape perception, as argued by social constructionists, but because there are unequal rights and obligations given them by organizations and other assemblages (DeLanda 2006:62).

The focus on repeated performances neglects the moments when change in kind is possible and these moments are not always on the human agent level. Differentiating activities always occur through repetition but these changes are usually gradual, only differences of degree. In order to truly break one’s habits, more radical and often unique events will have to take place. Once a threshold is reached a new constellation can be formed. Protevi (2009) exemplifies this with the Columbine School massacre killers. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold formed a killing machine, where they as a group emerged as something quite different than they would have been separately. This “body-politic” was also affected by liberal laws and rights concerning firearms, military training, the school system, etc. Thus, assemblages of many different scales and temporalities helped to form this killing machine. Their body-politic had to develop to a point where it could overcome or bypass the inhibition to kill at close range. Although their training slowly changed them, it was at the event of the massacre that they finally transformed in kind and formed a new body-politic. Bodies-politic will be discussed at greater length later.

Protevi (2009) also shows how the interaction between geology, the sun, the weather system and racism created an event (Hurricane Katrina), beyond the level of the single human agent, that itself ultimately affected individual subjects, institutional and federal policies, etc. Therefore, it is not always events on the human agent level that affect gender production.

Although we have some knowledge of the gendered events along B’ajlaj’s and Wak Chan’s roads of life, they cannot be understood unless we focus on how higher and lower assemblages shaped their action. There are plenty of large scale assemblages that affect the gender role of an individual. For example, lineage is a large assemblage that affects individual gender categories. As will become apparent – particularly in relation to Wak Chan – “the manner in which descent is reckoned affects the gender roles of individuals within any society” (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009, p. 67).

In many archaeological gender studies, the human agent is still a generalized category. One cannot simply replace one generalized set of categories (the “biological sexes”) with another more specific but still generalized category (the “socially constructed gender(s)”). Categorizations remain never-
theless. These categorizations often fall back on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) arborescent mode of thinking, in which categories are ordered into ontological hierarchies. This also concerns the now popular intersectional studies which discuss the mixture of categories already known, such as gender and indigenous identity (Conkey 2005).

Stratification and destratification of bodies

Neorealist approaches may be of help, since they do not set up ontological hierarchies, and rather than working from established categories they look at how order emerges. Let us begin with the “biological” organism. Deleuze and Guattari (1987; 2004) argue that the organism is a hierarchically ordered body in a hierarchical social system. Organism is a term of political physiology where the somatic biological system is patterned by a social system (but not in the way envisioned by social constructionists). Whereas an organic system can only return to homeostasis, the subject is what emerges after crossing certain thresholds. Thereby, the subject is free from automatic self-evaluation and is able to evaluate others. It can even sacrifice its own organic system for the sake of other bodies or for other reasons (Protevi 2009:136). According to Protevi, the Columbine killing machine committed suicide not because Harris and Klebold felt remorse once their subjects began to re-emerge after their berserker rage, but because their killing spree had been so intense “that their whole lives afterward would be just too dull to face” (Protevi 2009, p.159).

All patterning of social, physical, and semiotic registers are the result of stratification which is Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987:502) term for the process that first sorts heterogeneous components into groups and then locks and codes them into redundant systems (strata), such as the organism. However, there is also an experimental creative aspect of the body (the line of flight or destratification). The counterpart to the organism is the anorganic or non-organismically ordered body (aka the Body without Organs, BwO). This is a body that has escaped the constraints of the organism and is free to experiment. The anorganic body retains its organs, but these are released from the habitual patterns found in the organism. It is a destratified, decentralized, and dehabitualized body. The organism and the anorganic body are opposed processes of stratification and destratification. Actual bodies consist of varying ratios of stratification and destratification (Protevi 2009:89-109). These mixtures are always found in an assemblage since it is never fully actualized, i.e. all its potentials are not active simultaneously.

Hence, the body is an assemblage of various organs. Organs are flow-break couplings, through which a body negotiates with the outside and regulates the inside. They are “part-objects” formed by the connection of flows
The synthesis of the properties of assemblages cannot be reduced to their constituent parts. Polities, cities, groups, and human individuals are not different ontological hierarchies. Instead, assemblages are based on a flat ontology where micro and macro are not two fixed levels (such as agent and structure). Rather, they are the concrete parts and the emergent whole at any spatial scale. Assemblages above the level of the human subject affect their human components, and they can also affect other assemblages of similar scale. In the same way that human beings use different “part-organs” (hands, eyes, legs, etc.) to interact with other assemblages (human beings, polities, computers, oceans, etc.), the polity uses its components (human beings, army, commodities, institutions, treaties, etc.) to interact with other assemblages (polities, empires, climate system, microbes, etc.) (DeLanda 2006:38).

Assemblages always exist in populations that are generated by recurrent processes. B’ajlaj was generated by a multitude of unique events and repeated processes and properties: his birth, meteorology (his name), his interactions with parents, siblings, and children, ancient and contemporary political decisions, ancestors, patron deity, spatially distant polities, etc. Hence, the human subject is only an intermediate level of organization. She is an expressive component that combines genes, language, and objects into assemblages (DeLanda 2006:22). Here, gender identity is an effect rather than an origin from a given and essential entity. Gender identity is produced by certain assemblages.

Access to skills and resources to acquire affective cognitive capacities such as emotional patterns, thresholds and triggers to form or join assemblages are regulated along political lines, and hence they are differentially distributed with regard to gender (Protevi 2009:29f, 40). In the contemporary United States, firearms primarily circulate among males and more men participate in military training. These are two of the reasons why the Columbine killing machine was composed of two men rather than two women. Gendering activities during the Classic Period in the Southern Lowlands were distributed at various sites (temple, palace, house, cave, etc.), groups and organizations (family, lineage, priesthood, royal court, etc.) and performed through certain portable and non-portable objects (ceramic vessels, spindle whorls, grinding stones, chert and obsidian artefacts, stelae, etc.). The assemblages formed by these parts had various goals, intensities, and efficacies.

It is important to note that the physiological, subjective, and “social” scales discussed in this text are linked together in entrainment, which means that formerly independent assemblages fall into step with one another (Protevi 2009:9). For example, gender identity falls into step with the workings of the lineage or the polity. Ardren and others (2010) show how gender
roles in cloth production at Xuenkal intensified and fell into step with the emergence of Chichen Itza as a major subordinating force in the Northern Lowlands. Reese-Taylor and others (2009) argue that a major change in gender roles for royal women of the Southern Lowlands coincided with people from the Northern Lowlands being married into the Kan kingdom, and therefore introducing another kinship system. Hence, kinship, such as B’ajlaj being father to Wak Chan, and subordination, such as B’ajlaj and Wak Chan being subordinated to the Kan ruler, appear to have created a stable sociopolitical assemblage through entrainment. Hence, what the life-course of humans shows is that the diachronic development of functional and expressive multiscalar assemblages achieved a synchronic focus of real time “performance” as the assemblages constrained the behaviour of their individual components (Protevi 2009:8).

Bodies-politic

The previously mentioned concept of bodies-politic discussed by Protevi also builds upon Deleuze’s and DeLanda’s ideas on stratification and assemblages. Bodies-politic capture

“the embodied and embedded […] character of subjectivity: the production, bypassing, and surpassing of subjectivity in the imbrications of somatic and social systems. Individual bodies-politic are cognitive agents that actively make sense of situations: they constitute significations by establishing value for themselves, and they adopt an orientation or direction of action” (Protevi 2009, p. 33).

First-order bodies-politic are on the personal scale. The second order is on group or civic scale (polity in this text). These are analytical scales since all concrete bodies-politic consist of all compositional and temporal scales (short-, mid-, and long-term) (Protevi 2009:37f).

Protevi does not specifically deal with gender in his discussion of bodies-politic. However, in order to understand what possible bodies-politic B’ajlaj and Wak Chan may have taken in a long-term perspective, we can use the Deleuzian concepts of body plan (phylum) and diagram. The body plan is specified by topological notions, like the connectivity of various components of the body. Here DeLanda’s (2006) examples come from developmental biology. Although animals like cows, birds, whales and sea-tulips have different actual forms they share the common topological body plan of the chordata (a phylum, a taxonomic rank). This body plan consists of a space of potentials with distributed attractors that create different structures by bifurcations and the breaking of established symmetries. It is through symmetry-
breaking events that each foetus ontogenetically develops in different directions until the form of each individual is finalized. This morphogenesis is therefore not dependent on the realization of a predetermined essential genetic code.

DeLanda argues that the social sciences can study spaces of potentials with distributed attractors, or universal singularities (topological invariants), that are shared by different body plans, as in the biological example above. The connection between the universal and individual singularities (actual entities such as Wak Chan) is a temporal differentiation (DeLanda 2006:29). For example, individual singularities, like human individuals, form an organization through attraction (people gathering around a cause), bifurcation (the gathering transforms each individual’s goals and functions), and symmetry-breaking (the transformations are substantial enough to form an organization with goals and functions different in kind from those of its parts. New sets of attractors and bifurcators are formed within the emergent organization). The organization itself then becomes a new individual singularity with multiple parts.

Although B’ajlaj and Wak Chan had different actual forms (“man” and “woman”) they shared a topological body plan common to divine rulers of the Classic period Maya area. After birth there were other intensive processes that reached thresholds and thereby broke symmetries and differentiated their bodies according to various sorting mechanisms. Several invariants were sorted out in order to stratify components of a population into the concrete assemblages of B’ajlaj and Wak Chan. Such invariants of a Classic period population in the Southern Lowlands were “biological sex,” status, age, height, ethnicity, kinship, language, etc. These are not just predefined concepts, such as in intersectional studies; rather they are mixtures of universal singularities that can be actualized in a great variety of ways.

From a populationist perspective, there is no bimodal distribution of relations among a human population that corresponds to a binary sex-gender system (Fausto-Sterling 2000; Protevi 2009). “Biological sex” can therefore be seen as a body plan where the invariants can be described as extremely masculine and extremely feminine. When this topological body-plan is actualized into a concrete individual, the sex identity emerges somewhere in between the extremes. Gender identity, however, emerges from more than this set of topological invariants. The body plans of B’ajlaj and Wak Chan included other sets as well.

The universal singularities of status were divine descent at one extremity and captive and slave at the other (Houston et al. 2006). Age invariants included, for example, old men, postmenopausal women, adult men and women, juveniles, and infants (Ardren & Hutson 2006; Normark 2000). Height appears to have been one set of invariants along which the population was sorted, particularly since dwarfs were represented as a special category at the royal court (Houston et al. 2006). Dressed and naked bodies are also im-
portant universal singularities of a human population. Captive nobles were often naked and hence devoid of dignity, despite their earlier status (Houston et al. 2006). Clothing is also one of the most important gender markers in the iconography of the Maya area (Palka 2002). Kinship consists of the extreme invariants of patrilineal descent and matrilineal descent (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009).

People were sorted according to these and other topological invariants, while other assemblages, such as a polity, affected the sorting process, ultimately leading to a gendered position that is never fully actualized – it is always on the brink of differentiating. What causes this sorting process? It is the diagram (aka abstract machine). In this case, I consider ajawlel (kinship) to be the primary diagram. Assemblages are selected by diagrams. For instance, queens may have had a fairly marginal existence in patrilineal polities. Queens became more important when the ajawlel diagram selected matrilineal descent. Thus, the assemblages worked from historical processes of emergence. The diagram was not static and neither was the emergent assemblage. Through life, along the road, the rulers changed position within the space of universal singularities as they grew larger, older, reached puberty, acquired or lost status, etc. The potentials open to actual individual assemblages (B’ajlaj and Wak Chan in this text) were therefore affected by a diagram that connected and emphasized different universal singularities of the body-plan (DeLanda 2006:40).

Bodies-politic are formed from the invariants mentioned above. The invariants are defined by their degree of freedom. Differentiation only occurs when the body plan is actualized into concrete assemblages (DeLanda 2006:126). The concrete assemblage is therefore the body-politic that emerges when universal singularities lose freedom and become locked into assemblages. B’ajlaj became a warrior king of divine and patrilineal descent. Wak Chan became a warrior queen of divine and patrilineal descent, but due to her father’s subordinated relationship and incorporation into a new kinship system prevalent among the late Kan kings (see below), she initiated matrilineal descent towards her divine son. In short: the ajawlel diagram sorted and distributed the universal singularities of B’ajlaj and Wak Chan differently, and they were actualized into different bodies-politic.

As mentioned above, the bodies-politic were affected not only by repetitive performances, but also “unique” non-repeated events. For example, in 650 B’ajlaj was probably forced to become a vassal to the Kan ruler. This was most likely an intensive encounter, outwith B’ajlaj’s normal habits. In this situation, he could respond to form a new body-politic. He chose a direction in order to survive, and selected one road among many options (such as being killed).

The ajawlel diagram sorted body plans into assemblages and situations. For example, the events the rulers were depicted as participating in were usually heavily ritualized and ceremonialized. Ritual actions were often ex-
ternal to the individual actors. They were a way of binding people to a group, or excluding them from it (Kertzer 1988). Hence, the kingship diagram sorted out its components into expressive and spatial relations within the royal court (Normark 2010). In the iconography, we usually find high-ranking interlocutors on the ruler’s right side. On his left side were the family and courtiers (Houston & Stuart 2001:63). Vertical position was also important. Rulers were often depicted in higher elevations if they were seated. Being depicted on the same level as the ruler is believed to have indicated honour, while appearing below the ruler indicated dishonour (Palka 2002:428).

Non-ruling royal women were often constrained to certain situations, locations, and objects in the iconography. They never used ritual items used by men and they had their own ceremonial objects. Women were seldom sole agents in the monumental depictions since they usually accompanied men (Joyce 2000:74). They were often shown offering food and drink or assisting in dressing men and deities. On some vessels, and on the Bonampak murals, women have been depicted behind elite men on top of a bench throne (Reents-Budet 2001). Even the physical locations of the monuments depicting corporeal humans have their own places in space. Most stelae that depict women at Yaxchilan are located along the sides of the plaza, with the female sides facing away from the plaza (Sanchez 1997:175).

Even though the neorealist approaches oppose the Linguistic Turn they cannot overlook the way language also participates in the sorting of populations. Language itself is an assemblage, but what interests us here is how linguistic entities operate at several scales simultaneously. Words are component parts of many assemblages (networks, organizations, gender). Some linguistic entities, such as inscriptions, can code all components of an assemblage (DeLanda 2010:51). For example, ix- and aj- have been described as the feminine and masculine agentive prefixes which have been attached to some nouns, place names, or verb roots in Maya hieroglyphic writing. These attach females and males to a place or action. In all known cases, the glyph ix- is associated with a human in a huipil (a female dress) (Houston & McAnany 2003). If this person is described as a mother, then she most likely is a female and not a cross-dresser/third gender, as suggested in various models on female and male complementary roles (Looper 2002; Normark 2000). In inscriptions, untitled people were labelled winik (“person”) and this may indicate that the royalty had another gender identity than the commoners (Houston et al. 2006). In short, the ajawlel diagram sorted people of different status into different gender identities.
Warrior queen as body-politic

Some royal women were sorted differently at certain places and periods in the Maya area than those described above. Several of the stelae at Naranjo (those depicting Wak Chan), El Perú, Coba, Calakmul and Naachtun depict what has been termed a warrior queen. These depictions are either accompanied by a stela depicting a male (her husband or her son in the case of Wak Chan), or the royal pair is placed on opposite sides of the same stela, such as on Stela 5 at Coba (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009:49). A tomb of one of these queens (Lady K’abel) has recently been found at El Perú (Daues 2012).

Apparently, these women had different gender roles than other royal women. The ajawlel diagram emphasized other invariants or included new invariants that created a new body-politic. Parts can be exchanged since they are not necessary components of a whole assemblage. A component may be removed from an assemblage and set into another assemblage where different interactions will take place (DeLanda 2006:10). When Wak Chan moved from the Dos Pilas polity-assemblage to the Naranjo polity-assemblage she left the father-daughter group and the Dos Pilas polity to become a crucial component of the “super-power” geopolitics as a warrior queen, a spatio-temporally limited body-politic. Hence, Wak Chan was not depicted as a “typical” royal woman. On Stela 24 at Naranjo she is given the title ix kaloomte’, the highest ranked title in Classic Maya politics. She wears a large plumed headdress that features war symbols, and she stands on a war captive (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009:55). The beaded net skirt she is wearing has been associated with both the Maize God and the Moon Goddess. This skirt is believed to reflect gender complementarity (Looper 2002:174; Reese-Taylor et al. 2009:43).

Wak Chan was partially the product of greater assemblages. From AD 623 and onwards, the number of queens depicted in public art increased throughout the Southern Lowlands. Reese-Taylor and others propose that “this was instigated by the power and influence of the Kaan [Kan] state, which appears to have emphasized - or at the very least given representational priority to - the political power of women and, perhaps, a preference for matrilineal or ambilineal descent” (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009, p. 64).

Within this new body-politic of “warrior queen” we find some repeated and differentiated patterns recorded on the stelae mentioned above. Between 682 and 709, at least five queens carried the ix kaloomte’ title and two of them stood on top of captives. A possible sixth warrior queen is mentioned on Stone C at Yo’okop (Wren & Nygard 2005). Although we lack evidence for direct participation in battle among both kings and queens, it is likely that women depicted as warriors were intended to be perceived as being engaged in warfare in a manner similar to warrior kings. One source that suggests women actually went into battle is found on Stela 9 at Calakmul. It describes
a queen capturing another high-ranking noblewoman during war (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009:42, 53, 58).

Reese-Taylor and others (2009) suggest that polities featuring warrior queens were related politically. The earliest evidence of a queen standing on a captive is found at Coba in AD 623, suggesting that this relationship may have emerged in the Northern Lowlands. Parental statements of rulers in inscriptions at several Northern Lowland sites emphasize matrilineal descent. Here, the phrase “child of mother” is more widespread than the phrase “child of father”. There is also an unknown connection between Stela 1 at Coba and Stelae 24 and 29 at Naranjo since they all relate to the date of Wak Chan’s arrival at Naranjo (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009:61, 64). The timing of the warrior queen stelae, the ix k’aloomte’ title, and female captives correspond with the emergence of the Kan emblem glyph on stelae at Calakmul. The Kan polity occupied Calakmul from at least 633 to 734/736 when Martin (2005:8) believes it was finally defeated by Tikal. If so, Wak Chan died a few years after the fall of the dynasty that had been crucial in forming her body-politic.

In summary, the emergence of the warrior queen body-politic indicates a change in status of royal women that may have been linked to a Yucatecan lineage that married into the Kan polity (Reese-Taylor et al. 2009:62). B’ajlaj was first drawn into the expanding assemblage of the Kan kingdom, and later Wak Chan was set up to become a warrior queen at Naranjo. Once an assemblage has emerged, it can also affect its component parts. The kinship diagram of the Kan kings organized its components into a more homogeneous form when a matrilineal component entered the polity-assemblage. The warrior queens were “subsumed” into certain ideals of warrior kings.

Conclusion

How does this neorealist gender perspective in archaeology differ from a social constructionist perspective? It primarily seeks explanations from immanent perspectives. It thereby avoids the main traps of constructionism and correlationism that seek transcendent explanations where archaeological objects are always correlated and subordinated by the non-present human subject. Explanations are sought within the assemblages and objects themselves, rather than in ideology, discourse, habitus, etc.

Patterns are emerging from self-organizing processes that are primarily non-human and therefore non-discursive. Gender is thereby no longer a “social construction” in the sense implied by social constructionism. It is an emerging pattern that focuses on the morphogenesis of individual entities rather than falling back on linguistics that place individuals into predefined categories in a hierarchical order from specific to general (B’ajlaj-man, Wak Chan-woman, or man with beaded skirt - third gender). Each individual is
the emergent result of several scales of assemblages (organs, human bodies, groups, institutions, polities, etc.). Different bodies-politic and political affects above and below the subject create an emergent identity that is never stable in the long run, but rather always open to its own destratification.

References


Facing Gender
Corporeality, Materiality, Intersectionality and Resurrection

Fredrik Fahlander

Abstract
This text discusses some recent trends within gender research with a special concern for their possibilities for archaeological application. It is argued that the linguistic constructionist perspective, or third wave/postmodern feminism, fits the archaeological realities poorly. Instead, a neomaterialist standpoint in combination with an intersectional perspective is advocated. However, since such an approach departs from the study of active agents, an archaeological application needs to some extent to ‘resurrect’ the dead. Thus, methodological aspects are discussed in relation to new advances within forensic anthropology in order to extend the amount of personal information that can be derived from the bones and associated materialities.

“...this abstraction ‘woman’ – who has seen or known it? I know we agree on certain traits to define ‘the eternal feminine’. But let's admit it - they're vague. Added to that, our era is particularly averse to such adventurous generalizations.”
Jacques Boulenger (1924)

It has sometimes been argued that archaeologists know more about death in prehistory than they do about life. Indeed, since much of our data and material come from funerary contexts it is not surprising that we tend to focus on questions of eschatology at the expense of elaborating fictions of social life in past societies. Questions of identity, gender and ethnicity are generally pursued through analysis of burial data, because it is in the graves we may establish a relation between a body and materialities (albeit not in any straightforward manner). Other archaeological material is seldom gendered. An axe or a bone needle found at a settlement site can only be assumed to have had an owner/user about whom we know virtually nothing.
One problem with burials, however, is that the dead normally have limited influence on the formation of the burial – it is principally the agency of the living that is articulated in their graves. This predicament is especially important when it comes to the issue of gender as a composite aspect of individual identity; that is, as something partly experienced, partly corporeal, and partly social, which also depends on the constitution of the social and material contexts. Another problem is that we face dead people. Or rather, we face fragmented and/or cremated parts of a skeleton. We do not face bodies, persons or individuals; we face bones. There is quite an extensive gap between the surviving mortal remains and all those components we normally attribute to a living person; the living body is so much more than its corporeality. If we wish to pursue issues of gender and corporeality through burial analysis, it could be rewarding to focus to a greater extent on buried individuals as once-living agents rather than dead objects.

In this text I wish to explore a few possibilities that may help us to put the flesh back on the bones by utilising more of the information embedded in the bones and the grave. Although we cannot ‘resurrect’ the dead anywhere close to a multifaceted living person, there are a few possibilities at hand worth investigating further. It is partly a methodological inquiry, but also involves a less tactile dimension concerning perspective and vision. If we succeed in making the dead ‘come alive’ and at least succeed in visualising a group of heterogeneous individuals as bodies, we may actually find ourselves looking at the past in a different manner. To picture a group’s corporeal composition; the tall, the short, the ‘big boned’, fragile or ‘elegantly’ built, the bald, and others yet, perhaps disfigured, will most certainly affect the way we approach them and interpret their material worlds (cf. Gheorghiu 2009, Fig. 3). I will approach these issues by advocating the potential of some new advances within forensic anthropology, as well as highlighting some recent developments in feminist theory and their implications for methodology concerning burial data.

Making sex in archaeology (or, the gender that is not)

The constructionist view of gender as something historically situated has proved quite influential in archaeology, but the incorporation of feminist thought led to problems when faced with the relativism and anti-essentialism of third wave feminism. Although such ideas were quite quickly incorporated in theory, it has not been as successful in mainstream archaeology, which still operates with rather essentialist and dual apprehensions of sex, gender and the feminine (e.g. Claassen 1992; Gilchrist 2009). One reason probably lies in some of the inconsistencies and ambiguities of third wave feminism, especially the postmodern element of emphasising the queer and the exceptions, and thus transforming any duality to a continuum of endless
variation (cf. Geller 2009). For instance, even though sex can be defined in different ways, it does not follow that there really are more than a dozen different ‘sexes’ of similar social dignity (cf. Nordbladh & Yates 1990). Rather, it is quite evident that genital sex is more than 99% bipolar, while corporeal sex with respect to body shape, body fat and hair distribution etc generally fall within two intersecting bell-curves (Harré 1998:14). From a corporeal composite point of view, sex is neither bipolar nor a continuum, but rather bimodal (Fig. 1).

![Fig. 1. The bimodal character of general distribution of biological properties such as body shape, distribution and extent of body hair, body fat etc according to sex (after Harré 1998:14).](image)

Another, perhaps even more important, reason why third wave feminist theory was never successful in development-led archaeology may lie in the very nature of archaeology itself. While social scientists can observe, conduct interviews and analyse statistics, archaeologists dealing with prehistory must work with substantially different kinds of data. From this point of view, it is quite understandable that fleeting categorisations are tricky to employ when it comes to actual case studies. Remember, archaeologists face bones, not people (in particular, we face osteologically sexed bones). Moreover, we cannot simply assume that a certain time or place is organised as a phallocratic system, that is, a system advocating masculine power and dominance, even if sex/gender may have been important social variables. It is, however, not my aim here to wholly reject the application of third wave feminism in archaeology. On the contrary, many of the arguments are valid and useful, but have been somewhat obscured by an overdose of postmodern jargon. The contemporary debate in feminist theory is much more encouraging on this matter, since there are clear indications of a desire to be less sophist and more operational.
Looking forward, looking back, walking sideways? Feminist theory in the 21st century

There is nothing substantial suggesting the emergence of a fourth wave of contemporary feminist thought that is radically different. Rather, feminist theory today faces a plurality of combinations of old and new perspectives, aims and standpoints (Hekman 2010; Hewitt 2010; Budgeon 2011). This ambiguity is not specific to feminist studies per se, but is in various respects true for the social sciences (and archaeology) in general. Fortunately, the postmodern debate of the 1980s and 1990s never resulted in total relativism where ‘anything goes’, but seems rather to have ebbed away in what may best be described as an unwanted truce (Fahlander forthcoming). The unsolved state of this controversy is quite apparent in the social theory of the new millenium and has spawned a range of different responses. There are still adherents to a postfeminist perspective arguing that other issues, such as sexuality or masculinity, are more appropriate subjects if analysed independently of sex/gender, and thus replacing them as the primal foci for feminist studies (Moi 1999; Lindberg 2009). On the opposite side of the fence, there is a conservative strand that refutes social complexity and heterogeneity altogether, advocating a return ‘back to basics’ (that is pre postmodern 1950s ideals, cf. Faludi 2007). It is, however, refreshing that an increasing number of scholars of the new millenium have begun to tackle the social complexity in more progressive ways. Recently, Hekman (2010) and others (Andersen 2005:441; Barad 2007; Browne 2007) have reacted against the post-structural idea of sex/gender as primarily a discursive phenomenon (linguistic constructivism). Similar criticism has also been raised against the ‘soft post-structuralist’ perspectives of Giddens and Bourdieu, from which sex/gender are mainly defined through practice/performance (e.g. Butler 1990). Both perspectives make some important points, but the idea that sex/gender is discursively constituted (by language or practice) opens up for a relativism that is not really sustainable. What seems to be lacking is recognition of the many slow-changing or non-negotiable aspects of life; the traditions and inert institutions (material and immaterial), which to some extent resist social hybridity (Fahlander 2003:34f). Hekman and others thus wish to turn the focus away from the body as a performing sign and instead explore the materiality of sex/gender.

Studies of materiality, or the ‘socialness of things’, have been growing continuously stronger in the social sciences, and it is no surprise that such studies have gained ground within feminism as well. This is, of course, not a new observation; the material dimension of sex/gender has previously been explored quite extensively (e.g. Haraway 1991). The materialism of the 1990s was, however, predominately humanocentric, while the contemporary ‘neo-materialism’ is more concerned with the network between humans and things (Latour 2005, cf. Fahlander 2008). The corporeal body has always
been central to feminist studies, but has perhaps been seen as more of an obstacle and a problem rather than as a possibility. The body represents much of what feminists have reacted against, for example the modern view of different natural dispositions of male and female bodies and the consequences of this view in terms of a predestination the individual cannot escape. But still, the body is unavoidable in social studies; it is “a point of intersection between patriarchal structures and women’s lives” (Hekman 2010:80). The ways in which the corporeality of the body are related to social aspects are by no means given (Butler 2004:185f). Gender is not simply ideology added to a biological base. Identities, including gendered ones, are rather constituted by ideology (discourse, norms, culture) in intersection with the body (genetics, hormones, statue, appearance) and the material (technology, material culture, nature). No single aspect can satisfactorily be given dominant status here. It is thus also a matter of scale and context. Individual corporeal aspects are but a few intersecting parameters in a given analysis, and it would be meaningless to try to give them any general importance. Some sort of contextual intersectional framework is thus needed to avoid relativism, whilst still recognising a certain fluidity in the complex matrix of social life.

Although intersectionality may be a fairly new term, the idea that sex/gender intersect and depend on other parameters (e.g., race, status, descent, sexuality, etc.) dates from the late 19th century and was widely recognised by social scientists in the early 20th century (e.g. Lowie 1923). The contemporary use of the term is, however, less about social roles and more of a way to recognise the heterogeneity among individuals from different contexts (Demos & Texler Segal 2009:1; Davis 2008:68). It is thus a less relativist perspective than the postfeminist anti-essentialism, working with issues of sex/gender within a limited matrix of possible parameters, rather than a continuum of endless variation. Some raise concerns about the potential problems when sex/gender can no longer be assumed to be the principal aspect in social analysis. Indeed, the possible decentring of sex/gender inherent in the intersectional perspective may fit a little too well with the aforementioned conservative trends in contemporary society, and is perhaps bound to be misused to some extent. On the other hand, it is difficult not to agree with Davis when she writes: “intersectionality has precisely the ingredients which are required of a good feminist theory. It encourages complexity, stimulates creativity, and avoids premature closure, tantalizing feminist scholars to raise new questions and explore uncharted territory” (Davis 2008:79). In order to develop theory and keep the subject flourishing, it is perhaps necessary to take risks and have faith that it will overcome such obstacles? And, of course, one can always study those areas where gender/sex actually appear to be the most important variables (e.g. Gubar 2000:164).
There is, however, an aspect of the archaeological material that partly prevents a direct attempt to employ an intersectional perspective in the past. Such an approach needs to consider living, acting individuals while the prehistoric material generally consists of fragmented dead bodies. The dead are buried by the living and the grave is thus more representative of the agency of the undertakers and attendants at the funeral. In order to ‘sift out’ more information about the deceased’s life, we need to both improve methodology and find ways to increase the personal information that can be derived from the bones and associated materialities beyond sex, age and ‘status’. We need to ‘resurrect the dead’ and to some extent discuss them as living agents (cf. Joyce 2005). It is a small but crucial distinction. If we simply relate corporeal aspects of the bodies to the materialities in the grave, we would at best end up with a number of polythetic groups with no clear relation to the social matrix of the particular time and place. In the remainder of this text I will therefore explore some new advances within forensic anthropology, which increase the amount of personal information that can be derived from the skeletal remains. I will also elaborate on how it may be possible to avoid simple comparisons between osteological sex and materialities.

The obfuscating body

Material perspectives on the body are a well-established issue in the social sciences, and have recently been incorporated in archaeological theory (Meskell 1999; Fahlander 2001; Hamilakis et al. 2002; Rautman 2000; Sweeney & Hodder 2002; Meskell & Joyce 2003; Joyce 2005). In archaeology, the material dimension of the body is discussed in two general ways. One facet is that our corporeality is often related to the way we are able to act in the world. Our bodily constitution (height, muscles, etc.) may facilitate some tasks while prohibiting others. The other facet concerns the body as a surface and focus on phenotypical characteristics that potentially may work as imperatives for social subjectivation and categorization. The neomaterialist perspective combines those two facets by viewing the body as a node in a material and ideological network, working as a social actant like any other material object. It thus resembles the poststructuralist decentring of the cognitive subject, but instead favours the socialness of materialities over discourse (cf. Fahlander 2008).

As previously mentioned, bodies may be controversial. Some corporeal aspects can be discussed harmlessly, while others tend to be personal or even reveal something about ourselves or our society of which we prefer to be unaware. The biology–culture issue is one of the most infected ones in the social sciences and many social scientists have avoided the subject altogether (Featherstone et al. 1991:8). But, wherever one may stand in that particu-
lar debate, it is difficult to wholly neglect the biological (material) aspects of the body while keeping an idealist view of the self governing autonomous agent. This said, I will test the boundaries of acceptability when it comes to the body as materiality in the study of the past.

It may not be particularly offensive to suggest, with the support of statistics or observational studies, that bodily characteristics are generally socially important. For instance, Paul Higate (1998:191f) has made some interesting notes on body size and status in hierarchical organisations such as the US military. His examples indicate that characteristics such as body height often confuse and affect otherwise formal and strict hierarchical situations. Others have pointed out how we consciously or unconsciously let appearance affect our judgments of an individual’s personality, profession, and morality (e.g. Ahola 2010; Berggren et al. 2010; cf. Thomson 2009). It may be argued that the importance of appearance is typical of western individualised society, but many have stressed its general importance throughout history (e.g. Gremillion 2005). The significance of looks (good, powerful, evil, odd, etc.) is also a frequent theme in many early texts, whether ancient Greek or Roman texts or Medieval Icelandic sagas. There is therefore no reason why appearance and looks should not have been as important in prehistory as they sometimes are today - although they probably have been experienced differently (cf. Borić & Robb 2008:2 for additional examples).

Several of the visual aspects that make up an individual’s appearance are already available to us in terms of osteological measurements, but which are curiously seldom employed in their full extent. One exception is Roberta Gilchrist’s study in which she established a relation between body height and status in medieval Britain (1997; 2009; cf. Fahlander 2003:103f). There are several additional corporeal aspects available to us if the bones are sufficiently preserved, recorded and osteologically analysed. For instance, a comparison of the width of an individual’s shoulders and pelvis in relation to the thickness of the main diaphyses will give, if not a proper body mass index, at least an approximation of body shape (Christopher et al. 2005). To get an impression of the basic ‘look’ of a person we can consider the general profile of the skull, eyebrow ridges, distance between the eyes, the shape and form of the nasal cavity, the shape and declination of the nasal bone and the shape of the cheek. New developments in the forensic sciences also allow us to make rough facial reconstructions. Previously, such reconstructions have been expensive and time consuming, suffering from a great deal of subjectivity and requiring a sculptural artist. Nowadays, however, it is possible to perform cranial reconstructions with relatively simple means and labour. The point of departure is a 3D scan of the skull, something which is easily achieved with an ordinary digital camera and software such as 3dsom™ or Photomodeler™. These 3D-models are the basis for forensic reconstruction software to put the flesh back to the bones without the need for elaborate clay reconstructions (e.g. Turner et al 2005; cf. Claes et al. 2010). Some of
these programs are also able to manipulate the result and add eyes, facial hair etc. Other software specializes in emulating the effect of aging (Faces™ or E-fit™).

We should not, however, let ourselves get carried away here. Although this is a fairly easy and inexpensive process, we will not end up with true images of the dead. Craniofacial reconstruction still “balances between the worlds of Art and Science.” (Claes et al. 2010:144). Forensic scientists struggle with a number of issues that are simply impossible to estimate from the skull alone. The shape of the nose, for instance, can be predicted with only about sixty per cent accuracy and the shape of the tip with only about forty per cent (Fig. 2). The problem of knowing the crucial tissue thickness has, however, been reduced by a massive sampling of tissue depth measurements from medical CT-scans (e.g. Cavanagh & Steyn 2011). Besides these general problems there are, of course, also a great many factors involved in making up our appearance that cannot simply be inferred from the bones alone. For instance, it is difficult, if not impossible, to infer the hairstyle, mouth and pigmentation – not to mention scars and other superficial wounds. In addition we also need to consider facial expressions and cosmetic manipulations such as tattoos, piercings, etc.

Fig 2. An illustration of the 52 landmarks used in digital craniofacial reconstruction (left). (B) and (D) are examples of model bias from choosing poor facial template; (A) is based on an average generic template while (C) is based on similarity in ancestry, gender and age. In both cases unwanted facial features of the template remain visible in the final reconstruction (indicated by ellipses). In order to reduce the model bias multiple reference heads can be used (Claes et al. 2010:141).
Notwithstanding the apparent objections and difficulties, some of these problematic issues are actually within our reach, with the aid of forensic genetics. Eye colour, hair colour, hair type and male baldness, facial morphology and ethnic origin are some of the visual traits that can be directly or indirectly inferred from the DNA (Graham 2008; cf. Kidd et al. 2006, Keyser 2007; Liu et al. 2009). Some of these corporeal aspects can be tested through a ready-made kit that simultaneously analyses multiple markers, similar to the medical SNP panels by which one can test dispositions for a range of genetic disorders. The kit is already in use by law enforcement and the procedure is no more time consuming or complex than, for instance, genetic sex estimations. The range of other phenotypic traits that have genetic bases continues to expand, but, of course, many of them suffer from source-critical problems. Physical appearance is generally complex, derived from multiple genes and in some cases environmental factors. Moreover, ancient DNA is generally highly degraded and fragmented and the absence of a certain genetic marker is therefore not necessarily indicative at all. It is nonetheless interesting to follow the rapid developments in forensic biology and the possibilities they might offer us in terms of visualising individual phenotypical features. There are thus no obvious reasons, besides source critical problems and financial costs, why archaeology should not seek to incorporate forensic techniques to reconstruct the bodies and faces of the dead. At the very least, there are few general scientific arguments (besides research traditions) for choosing to finance genetic sex estimations at the expense of information regarding e.g. skin, hair or eye colour. We also need to remember that the goal here – in contrast to forensic anthropology – is not primarily to reconstruct an individual identity as closely as possible. It would be tremendously helpful and inspirational if we could simply reconstruct a general body shape (BMI, body posture) and a broad image of the head (general looks).

The tell tale bones? Hormones, bodies and personality

Bones are not simply a static support for our bodies, but are also shaped by our way of life. Anne Fausto-Sterling (2005) provides a range of examples of how the lifestyles of different groups (urban ultraorthodox Jewish adolescents or Chinese female farmers) may result in significant, measurable traces on bone shape and composition. Of course, there are numerous source critical problems involved. Variations in bone structure normally have many different reasons which exclude any direct causal relations between a typical lifestyle and the composition of the bones. The main point is, however, that the bones contain a wealth of information about an individual’s life that can be retrieved in order to do intersectional analysis. The bones can be analysed in terms of injuries, wear or certain diseases, but also to infer, for example, diet and to some extent, heredity and lineage. Moreover, studies of enamel
hypoplasia and cribra orbitalia can indicate periods of illness or stress over the course of an individual’s life (Kjellström 2011:204f). More recently, strontium or oxygen isotope measurements have increasingly been employed to establish if a certain individual died at the same place as s/he grew up (Sjögren et al. 2009). These are all well known procedures, but may not always be available due to the demands of expertise and financing.

One biological issue not normally discussed in osteoarcheology, but which may be worth considering, is the effect that hormones can have on the bones. The interesting thing about hormones is that they also, to varying degrees, seem to affect our personality, disposition and preferences. It is perhaps a bit of an uneasy subject, since our personality and the ‘I’ are things we generally like to view as chosen or appropriated, not given to us by biology. It is a tricky subject since genes, hormones, milieu and lifestyle generally depend on one another. There are few, or no, causal effects between them; genes and hormones are rather mediators in a complex system of impulses and feedback (Fausto-Sterling 2005:1495). It is thus easy to get caught in circular arguments here, confusing the influence of social and psychological factors on hormone secretion with the influence of hormones on behaviour (Rossi 1977:10). We do not, however, need to take a position in the debate on biology versus culture; it will suffice to be open enough to discuss some statistically measured probabilities.

One interesting example is the statistical correlation between the ratio of the length of the index finger and the ring finger and certain dispositions or personality traits (e.g. Voracek et al. 2007; Manning & Fink 2008; Caswell & Manning 2009). For instance, if your index finger is longer than the ring finger, statistics suggests an increasing risk of breast cancer (if you are female), as well as a propensity to suffer from eczema, allergies, and fever. So far so good, but researchers also claim that such a person is generally more interested in men than women (regardless if they themselves are a man or a woman), and apparently also has a better chance of holding down a job, becoming wealthy and reaching a high age. If, however, you have a longer ring finger, you suffer an increased risk of developing prostate cancer (if you are male) or cardiovascular disease, but be more interested in physical activities and a propensity to build muscle. However, you will also be more prone to aggression and at greater risk of going to prison, being murdered or developing a drug addiction. Furthermore, such a person will probably have more interest in women than men (irrespective of gender) and have less difficulty learning to play musical instruments.

This kind of statistical probability measuring balances on the border of pseudo-scientific mumbo-jumbo – not least because of the obvious problem of discerning which of the many inputs and feedbacks from life-style and milieu are important in any given case (cf. Oudshoorn 1994). But it is nonetheless evident that hormones affect our bodies and minds more than we normally wish to acknowledge. Archaeology is very much about correla-
tions, deviations and patterns within a specific set of data, and there is little sense in refraining from utilising as much information as possible. The ratio between the length of the index finger and the ring finger is thus only one of many potential variables that, of course, need to be correlated with other independent indications before any possible effects on personality traits can be inferred. I am therefore not suggesting that we should measure the finger bones of buried individuals in order to determine their possible sexual preferences or aptitude for playing guitar. It does, however, suggest that there are correlations between some personal traits and phenotypical elements of the body that may be interesting to pursue further. After all, osteological sex is also very much an effect of hormones (Fausto-Sterling 2005).

The resurrection: materialising sex and gender

As I pointed out in the beginning, my main focus here concerns burial analysis. The question is not only how we can expand our knowledge of the dead’s corporeality and life, but also how we can employ this methodologically. The general problems with burial archaeology are quite thoroughly discussed (e.g. Fahlander 2003:71-86; Fahlander & Oestigaard 2008). Although burial analysis can never be a simple process, if carried out from a generally accepted set of procedures it still holds a great potential to tell us something about prehistoric life, both individually and generally. We would certainly prosper by considering a greater array of bodily parameters than those traditionally applied (sex, age, stature, etc.). However, in order to really make use of an extended body of data, I suggest a less mechanical approach in which the dead become living acting individuals as opposed to dead objects. The bottom up approach, taking each and every single individual as a starting point is important in order to be able to discuss how bodily aspects, material culture and ideology intersect. This is thus partly a methodological issue, but also a perceptual one. The methodological aspects will involve a series of associations and interpretations of both what the materialities linked with the dead individual may represent, but also what different bodily characteristics may hint at in terms of dispositions and preferences.

One step in such an approach would be to actually try to ‘resurrect’ the individuals via their bones and associated materialities. This can never be a direct and objective process, but still may prove worthwhile, as it most will certainly make us view them in a different way in relation to one another (Fig. 3, see also Bergerbrant 2007:51ff). For instance, if we were to ‘resurrect’ the hunter-fishers of the middle Neolithic Pitted Ware Culture on the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea, we would immediately recognise the similarities in body shape and faces between the men and the women (it is quite difficult to make standard sex estimations based on general body and skull shape alone in these individuals). We could also easily discern the rela-
tively older individuals (60-70 years) from the younger. Such a ‘resurrection’ would most probably deepen our understanding of why traditional comparisons between osteological sex and grave interments at this site show no clear correlations (Fahlander 2003:119). On a methodological level we may use such ‘images’ of the living dead to make composite categorisations based upon different corporeal aspects. For instance, just as a fishing hook found in a grave may be classified as fishing gear and share the same category as a harpoon from another grave, individuals can be classified in different groups according to body shape, traces of wear, slender posture and perhaps even according to subjective judgements of general looks. Of course, ‘looks’ are not only subjective, but can be enhanced and manipulated in many ways that we can no longer reconstruct (hairstyle, makeup, dress, gait or ‘attitude’, etc). Still, we continuously evaluate material culture according to aesthetical standards, and there is no apparent reason why we could not discuss the materiality of the body in similar ways. By going deeper in detail (and in a way ‘beyond’ osteological determinations of sex and age) we may, for instance, be able to discuss individuals of the ‘bimodal gap’; that is, those who phenotypically lie in between ‘general’ sexual body characteristics (Fig. 1). Analysis of such individuals may prove telling with regard to, for instance, how masculinity and femininity are articulated in a particular group, and even how materialities are employed to enhance or mask such ‘ambiguities’.

Fig 3. A hypothetical ‘resurrection’ of bodies at Greby Iron Age burial ground on the Swedish west-coast (montage by the author).
Besides employing polythetic categorisation of materialities, features and bodily aspects, an intersectional approach also needs to ensure that we do not, consciously or unconsciously, prioritise some matters over others. Mary Whelan (1995) has conducted an interesting analysis of an Indian burial ground using a less presumptuous approach. Instead of initially departing from the osteological analysis of age and sex, she began the process of categorizing individuals from each grave according to the types of artefacts they were buried with. In this way, she ended up with a number of groups of individuals which she then correlated with the osteological sex assessments. Whelan could thus present a far more complex picture of gender relations and social structures during the period than if she had followed the traditional procedure of comparing sex and age with the artefacts. This approach may be termed associative, forming categories based upon ‘what seems to go together’. Another way would be to depart from certain single variables that for some reason seem to be especially significant, and investigate which biodata are generally associated with such materialities (cf. Sofaer Derevenski 2002). Both are interesting ways of distinguishing intersectional parameters at a given time and area – especially when employing a wider range of bodily parameters as indicated in this text.

“Return to gender”?

In this text I have sought to explore how to employ a wider corporeal perspective which does not necessarily depart from predefined ideas of sex or gender. The idea is simply to add more bodily characteristics to the analysis, both discrete and composite, (body shape, facial attributes, ‘looks’) than those usually considered (sex, age, height and status). Such polythetic categorisation may open up for discussions of how these aspects may (or may not) intersect with sex/gender and associated materialities. We may also, if we feel comfortable doing so, employ less visible traits such as the relation between finger bones and other hormonal manifestations in the bones to get a hint of individual dispositions and preferences. Of course, such inferences need to be supported in some way by other evidence. I have also argued that visualising the osteological data in the form of three-dimensional bodies may be helpful in a less tangible way to confront the dead as bodies as opposed to bones and tabular data. By emphasising the life of the dead rather than death and bereavement we surpass the classical division between social and ritual analyses in the archaeology of death. The neomaterialist perspective of the body in combination with an intersectional standpoint also transcends polarities such as biology versus culture and male versus female.
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