



Tværfaglige Vikingsymposier

38. Tværfaglige Vikingsymposium – 38th Interdisciplinary Viking Symposium 2 October 2020, The National Museum in Copenhagen, Ny Vestergade 10

Social, cultural and economic impact of textiles and textile production in the Viking Age

IMPORTANT PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Due to the COVID-19 pandemia the following guide-lines must be observed: the maximum number of participants in the cinema is 88. Therefore, all who wish to participate – except for the speakers - must register and receive a written confirmation from the organisers no later than September 24th. Naturally, during the symposium all participants are expected to be aware of and committed to follow any Covid-guidelines in force at the time – general as well as specific at the National Museum. Regarding registration, lunch etc. please see further information next page. If you have further questions, do contact Michael Lerche Nielsen, lerche@hum.ku.dk

Symposium programme:

10.30-11.00 Registration and coffee

Introduction

11.00-11.10 Opening Jesper Hansen, Odense Bys Museer, Chair of the organizing committee

11.10-11.30 Eva Andersson Strand, Centre for Textile Research University of Copenhagen: *Textile consumption and impact on Viking Age Society*

New research

11.30-11.50 Sarah Croix, School of culture and Society, Moesgård, University of Aarhus: *Textile production and use of space in urban contexts: a contextual analysis at Ribe's Viking-Age emporium*

11:50-12.10 Carsten Jahnke, Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen: *Textiles in the Viking Ages – just homespun? Traces of textile trade*

12.10-12.30 Charlotte Rimstad, National Museum of Denmark: *Pillows and mattresses in Scandinavian Viking Age burials*

12:30-13:30 lunch break

New methodology

13.30-13.50 Rachel Balchin, University of Leicester: *Stitch Acts: Towards a New Methodology in Literary Textiles*



Tværfaglige Vikingsymposier

13.50-14.10 Tarrin Wills, Old Norse Prose Dictionary, the Arnamagnean Collection, NorS, University of Copenhagen: *Lexicographic approaches to the study of Viking Age material culture*

4.10-14.30 Jonas Holm Jæger, Department of Archaeology & Section for Evolutionary Genomics, University of Copenhagen: *ZooMS'ing in on Sheep: Wool production during the Scandinavian Viking Age and the Potential of Biomolecular Methods.*

14.30-15.00 coffee break

Tools and experimental archaeology

15.00-15.20 Ida Demant, Ulla Mannering and Eva Andersson Strand, Land of Legends Lejre, National Museum of Denmark, CTR University of Copenhagen: *Textile production and craft people in Viking Age and Fashioning the Viking Age*

15.20-15.40 Rikke Steenholt Olesen and Michael Lerche Nielsen, Institute of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen: *The Lund weaving temple and other runic artefacts referring to textile production*

15.40-45 Eva Andersson Strand and Michael Lerche Nielsen *Concluding remarks*

Guided visit to the museum from a Viking textile perspective

Registration, lunch, guided tour to the collections, afternoon beer and dinner

All participants must ask for a confirmed registration no later than September 24th. The museum offers a full meeting package including lunch and coffee-brakes at a discount price of 285 DDK. Unfortunately, the symposium has no funding to support this. Please state in your e-mail whether or not you wish to buy the meeting package.

The museum has offered free guided tours in the collection with emphasis on textiles. The guided tours will be in groups of 25 participants. Please note also whether or not your will be attending the guided tour after the conference programme.

Finally, the organizing committee will find a place to have a beer and eat dinner after the conference. This will also be at your own cost.

Please fill in and submit the form below in an email to Michael Lerche Nielsen: lerche@hum.ku.dk.

I wish to participate in the 38th interdisciplinary Viking Symposium (max. 88 persons):

I wish to buy a full conference package (coffee breaks and lunch) 285 DDK:

I wish to take part in a free guided tour to the museum collections afterwards:

I wish to join for a beer afterwards (at my own expense):

I wish to join for dinner (at my own expense):



Tverfaglige Vikingsymposier

38. Interdisciplinary Viking Symposium. October 2nd 2020. Abstracts:

Eva Andersson Strand: *Textile consumption and impact on Viking Age Society*

Textiles are not simply a binary system of fibres, but a result of complex interactions between resources, technology and society. These interactions demonstrates both the society's and the individuals' needs and desire and this is equally valid for textiles for in the Viking Age society. Textiles also reflect the economic and organisational structures of societies, as well as larger processes of cultural and socio-political development taking place across decades and centuries. New research clearly indicates a new and increasing need and consumption of textiles for sails, and cloth for travellers and warfare and further a new fascination and use of luxury clothing in the late Iron Age/Viking Age. Producing these textiles affected the whole society, as a surplus of raw materials, techniques, skills, craft people and time was both essential and necessary for this production. To conclude, knowledge of textile history is hence a key to our understanding of a multitude of the Viking Age society. This presentation will therefore discuss how textiles and textile production were integrated in the society and how this information can yield new perspectives on the Viking Age Society.

Eva Andersson Strand: Associate professor and director, Centre for Textile Research, Saxo-institute University of Copenhagen evaandersson@hum.ku.dk

Rachel Balchin: *Stitch Acts: Towards a New Methodology in Literary Textiles*

This paper will draw on research that came about as a result of my in-progress doctoral thesis on the function of textiles in the *Íslendingasögur*. As the proposed title of this talk and the subject of my thesis suggest, my primary focus is textual rather than material. I look at vocabulary, literary techniques, as well as cultural and narrative contexts in order to understand the significance of textiles in the 'saga world', with the understanding that these significances may have a symbiotic relationship with the 'viking world'. However, as my proposed paper will demonstrate, just as it is a mistake to conceive of the 'saga' and 'viking' words as unrelated, it is also problematic to think of 'text' and 'textile' as occupying separate spheres. Rather, as has been argued by linguist D. McNeil in relation to verbal and non-verbal communication, this division is a social and cultural 'artefact', and the reality is that the difference is not as extreme it first appears. Logical extension of McNeil's observation leads to a correlation between 'text' with 'verbal', and 'textile' with 'non-verbal', which, due to the social and cultural privileging of mental over material, may go some way to explaining the general scholarly gap regarding textiles in Saga Studies (with the exception of Anita Sauckel's 2012 doctoral thesis). While the materiality of textiles could pose a theoretical obstacle to furthering our understanding of their function in the *Íslendingasögur*, I will demonstrate how, instead, materiality can be approached in such a way that it broadens our understanding of text. Through written textiles it is possible to explore what Victoria Mitchell has termed "the textuality of thought and matter," where textiles have textual properties, and texts contain material properties. Once this has been negotiated, it will become obvious that written textiles, although not entirely at ease with itself as a concept, is not as much of an oxymoron as it initially seems. Drawing on L.J. Austin's theory of the 'speech act', as well as Kathryn Rudy's work on sewing as speech act, I will demonstrate that all textiles and textile-making processes have the potential to behave in such a way that influences



Tværfaglige Vikingsymposier

the narratives of the *Íslendingasögur*. I have called this function a ‘stitch act’, as it removes the emphasis from language, highlighting instead the significance of the material. In identifying and exploring how stitch acts operate, I aim to work towards a new methodological approach in Old Norse literary studies.

Rachel Balchin: Ph.D. fellow, University of Leicester, rle10@leicester.ac.uk>

Sarah Croix: *Textile production and use of space in urban contexts: a contextual analysis at Ribe’s Viking-Age emporium*

In connection with the excavation of two plots from the 8th and 9th centuries in Ribe, the Northern Emporium Excavation Project has documented an exceptional archaeological material, with thousands of artefacts sealed in occupation deposits. Among them, hundreds of finds relate to textile production, including unburnt loom weights, which were often found deposited directly on top of floor layers within buildings. Their three-dimensional position within the stratigraphy was recorded systematically throughout the excavation.

Among the wide array of specialized crafts attested in the Viking-Age emporia in Scandinavia, textile production played a double role. Previous research has stressed the degree of specialization and skills of the textile workers, suggesting that textiles were produced with an eye for trade, but also the importance of textile production within household economies, within which they were traditionally embedded in rural, mostly agrarian contexts.

In this paper, I will explore the potential of a contextual analysis of tools for textile production for gaining a better understanding of the social significance of this craft in an early urban setting. The analysis of the depositional context of textile tools, especially loom weights, allows investigating the character of textile production but also its relation to other activities, both craft-related and domestic. Together, this approach informs about the use of space within buildings and the character of the occupation on some of the plots of the emporium throughout the 8th and 9th centuries. By looking at the spaces for textile production, we get a glimpse at its place among the daily activities of the inhabitants and their “urban” life-style.

Sarah Croix: Assistant Professor, PhD, UrbNet, School of culture and Society, Moesgård, University of Aarhus. marksc@cas.au.dk

Ida Demant, Eva Andersson Strand and Ulla Mannering: *Fashioning the Viking Age.*

The aim of the project *Fashioning the Viking Age* is to create new and archaeologically well-founded interpretations and reconstructions of Viking Age textiles and clothing that can be used in exhibitions, teaching and popular outreach about the varied life in the Viking Age. In **Part 1. Viking Age Textile Production**, different textile types and tools are reconstructed based on archaeological finds from graves and settlements. The outcome is a Textile & Tool Box, that provides a hands-on experience of Viking Age textile production. In **Part 2. Viking Age Male and Female Clothing**, a complete male and female outfit will be constructed based on the finds from Mammen and Hvidehøj in Denmark (AD 900s). The reconstructions can be used for exhibitions and outreach purposes. In **Part 3. Viking Age Clothing Catalogue**, we create an overview of the many



Tverfaglige Vikingsymposier

different archaeological, iconographical and written sources linked to Scandinavian clothing design. The outcome is an online open-access catalogue. In the presentation I outline the first results and outcomes of the project, and presents the many different methods, techniques and collaborators/crafts peoples involved in the project. The project *Fashioning the Viking Age* is a collaboration (2018-2021) between National Museum of Denmark, Centre for Textile Research at University of Copenhagen and Land of Legends in Lejre. The project is funded by the VELUX FOUNDATIONS.

Ida Demant: Mag. Art. Land of Legends Lejre, ida@sagnlandet.dk

Eva Andersson Strand: see above

Ulla Mannering: Senior Researcher, National Museum of Denmark, ulla.mannering@natmus.dk

Carsten Jahnke: *Textiles in the Viking Ages – just homespun? Traces of textile trade.*

Textiles are and were symbols of status and power now as in the Viking Age. They can differ in quality of production and regional raw-materials - but, they can also differ by materials and techniques unknown and rare. Trade in textiles in the Viking Age is known, i.a. the trade in silk from the South East to Scandinavia. But can we draw a greater picture of textiles as trading-commodities in the Viking Ages in general? What can we say about the export of textiles from and the import to Scandinavia in this time? Was there a regular market? And what consequences will this have for our understanding of this period? The paper will try to give a first overview and maybe will give reason to some structural discussions.

Carsten Jahnke: Associate Professor, Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, jahnke@hum.ku.dk

Jonas Holm Jæger: *ZooMS'ing in on Sheep: Wool production during the Scandinavian Viking Age and the Potential of Biomolecular Methods.*

ZooMS (Zooarchaeology by Mass Spectrometry) is a palaeoproteomic method to species identification based on the analysis and identification of collagen-peptides. As collagen is the most abundant protein in humans and animals and found in tissues such as bone, teeth and skin, as well as surviving better and longer than DNA, protein residues make an obvious source of information into the archaeological record. The method provides an unambiguous species ID and in combination with being fast and cheap it constitutes a very suitable alternative to current morphological methods. As the difficulties regarding the separation of sheep and goat remains are legendary in zooarchaeology, a detailed description and characterization of Viking Age sheep husbandry has long been problematic if not close to impossible. As the introduction of sails made from wool during the Viking Age is thought to have been associated with an intensification of the sheep husbandry aimed at wool production, a reliable method for identifying and distinguishing sheep and goat remains is highly desirable. Here I present an evaluation of ZooMS to provide insight into the sheep husbandry practices and the associated wool production of Viking Age Scandinavia.



Tverfaglige Vikingsymposier

Jonas Holm Jæger: Master's student, prehistoric archaeology, Department of Archaeology, the SAXO-Institute, Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen & Section for Evolutionary Genomics, the GLOBE-Institute, Faculty of Health, University of Copenhagen, jonash@palaeome.org

Rikke Steenholt Olesen and Michael Lerche Nielsen: *The Lund weaving temple and other runic artefacts referring to textile production.*

Within the corpus of c. 3,725 runic inscriptions from the Viking age and c. 2,775 inscriptions from the medieval period in Samnordisk runtextdatabas we find a number of textile utensils. Thus, almost 50 spindle whorls from Greenland to Ukraine carry runic inscriptions. In addition, inscriptions on needles reveal the name of the specific type of object: *nál*, *skefningr*, *spýta*. Runic inscriptions have also been found on weaving swords and on a weaving contrivance, a so-called temple, from Lund with the inscription **tinbl:bein**. A few inscriptions tell about the sale and distribution of wool and knit-work and several personal bynames refer to garments. Apart from informing us about the name for the objects, the types of inscriptions found on textile objects provide information on the intellectual milieu and the men and women who were involved in textile production.

Rikke Steenholt Olesen and Michael Lerche Nielsen: Associate Professors, Institute of Nordic Studies and Linguistics (INSS), University of Copenhagen rikke.steenholt.olesen@hum.ku.dk, lerche@hum.ku.dk

Charlotte Rimstad: *Pillows and mattresses in Scandinavian Viking Age burials.*

In several Scandinavian Viking Age burials, remains of pillows and mattresses have been recorded. Particularly in the rich male burial from Mammen in Denmark, an almost fully preserved blue coloured pillow and thick layers of feathers, probably belonging to a mattress, were found. Similar layers of feathers have been recorded in several rich female graves, e.g. in Hvilehøj in Denmark and Oseberg in Norway. What kind of grave furnishing do they come from? From which birds do the feathers come? Was death seen as the eternal sleep and can the grave furnishing tell us anything about the use of mattresses and pillows for the living? The paper presents the latest analyses of the furnishing textiles found in the Mammen and Hvilehøj burials which are currently being studied within the scope of the Danish Fashioning the Viking Age project at the National Museum of Denmark.

Charlotte Rimstad: National Museum of Denmark, Ancient Cultures of Denmark and the Mediterranean, charlotte.rimstad@natmus

Tarrin Wills: *Lexicographic approaches to the study of Viking Age material culture.*

Judith Jesch's groundbreaking work 2001 work, *Ships and Men in the Viking Age*, uses the lexicon of Viking Age texts as a starting point for a large part of its investigation of an important aspect of Viking Age material culture. Jesch restricts herself to texts that can be dated to the Viking Age itself: runic inscriptions and early skaldic poetry, but the method can be extended to texts that come later, where there is good reason to argue there is continuity in material culture. This paper presents some resources that can be used



Tværfaglige Vikingsymposier

in a similar way to find words that, in context, can shed light on early Scandinavian material culture in fields such as food, warfare, building and so on. To find textual sources that deal with material culture researchers need a way of finding words that belong to the relevant social and cultural fields and easily accessing the texts that use them. This paper presents features found in the skaldic project and related projects (including lexiconpoeticum.org), as well as the Dictionary of Old Norse Prose. It will also explore the lexicon of textiles and clothing to explore what can be found from the textual records relating to the Viking Age.

Tarrin Wills: Senior Editor at the Old Norse Prose Dictionary, the Arnamagnean Collection, NorS, University of Copenhagen, tarrin@hum.ku.dk