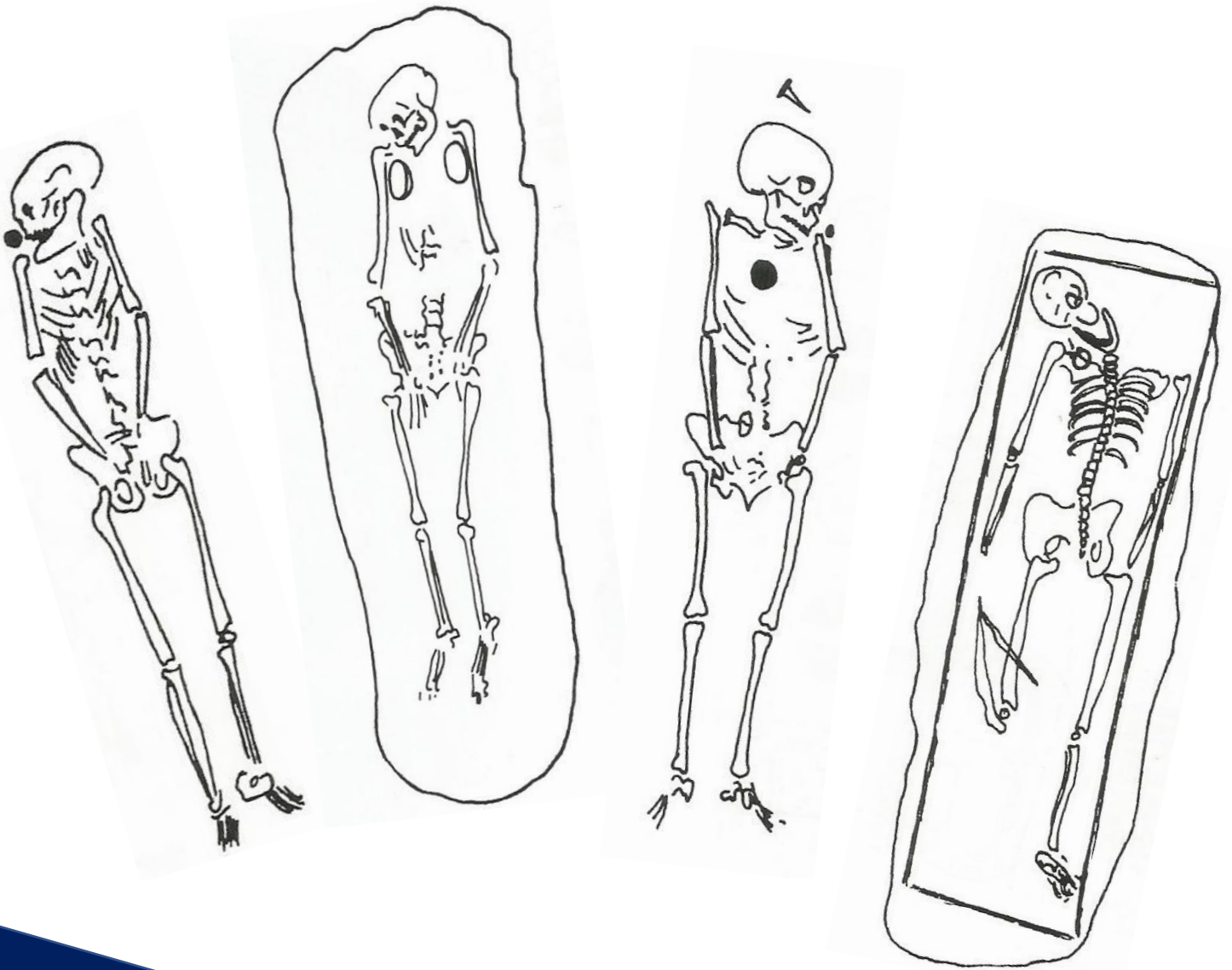


The Vikings of Haithabu (8th-10th Century AD): Burials and Identity



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Danish summary

Hedeby var i det 8. og 10. århundrede Skandinaviens største handelscenter. Byen var geografisk, strategisk placeret i den nordligste del af Slesvig i bunden af den snoede kanal, Slien. Det var en handelsby influeret af verdensomspændte handelsforbindelser og et krydskulturelt socialt miljø. En by, hvor der ikke alene blev engageret i handel, men også med udveksling af ideer og tanker. Givet byens bemærkelsesværdige aktivitet har stedet været af arkæologisk interesse siden 1812. Siden da er der blevet foretaget et væld af arkæologiske udgravninger i Hedeby hvoraf den seneste blev foretaget i 2017. Med de arkæologiske rigdomme, vikingetidsbyen rummer, er der belæg for at undersøge de sociale strukturer, de levendes miljø samt den materielle kultur som forbinder levende og døde.

Begravelseskulturen i Hedeby vidner om en klar interesse fra de efterladte; at ære (eller vanære) den afdøde med det skiftende indhold af gravgods. Dette gravgods kan udarbejdes af teorier omkring materialisering og materiel kultur, teorier omkring skabelsen af en kønsidentitet og kønsroller samt teorier omkring begravelsesarkæologi undersøges. Teorierne om materiel kultur engagerer sig i den specifikke indvirkning som materiel kultur har på individet samt dette overførelsesstadium fra levende til død. Denne skiftende tilstand fra levende til død og overførelsesstadiet fra én verden til den næste, samt hvordan mennesker lever i dialektiske forhold med materiel kultur, kan anes i gravens konstruktion. Et dialektisk forhold der forstås således, at i takt med at mennesket skaber ideen om genstande og bruger genstande, skabes mennesket i samme øjeblik. Fænomenologisk kan dette forklares sådan, at alt imens mennesket rører genstanden, rører genstanden også mennesket. Endvidere vidner den materielle kultur i gravlæggelserne om, at der i de specifikke materialegrupper og vedlæggelsen af genstande i gravlæggelser, lægges forskellige betydninger i forhold til, hvordan den afdøde skal forstås. Gravgaverne bør i de fleste henseender, reflektere hvem den afdøde var. Dette bør dog tilgås kritisk, da gravgodset enten kan symbolisere og reflektere den afdødes tilværelse og identitet, eller at den selvsamme tilværelse og identitet kan blive manipuleret til noget, den afdøde ikke er.

Traditionelt set er gravgods altid blevet pålagt et religiøst perspektiv, hvor vedlæggelsen af genstande er med det formål for øje, at de skal bidrage til enten beskyttelse eller benyttelse i livet efter døden. Dette kan forklare den bagvedliggende årsag til, at de til tider yderst rigt udstyrede grave og deres opståen. I prominente gravlæggelser som bådkammergraven i

Hedeby, er der et øjensynligt ønske om, at den afdøde på ingen måde skal mangle noget i et liv efter døden. Både ved overvejsen om at graven indeholdte et væld af hverdagsgenstande, værktøjer og militære genstande som sværd, pile og skjoldbuler samt rideudstyr. Endvidere vidner gravens konstruktion både om et ønske om en sikker overgang fra det ene liv til det næste, men graven er også en identitetsmarkør der kunne bevidne at den afdøde må have befundet sig i det øverste lag i den sociale stratigrafi.

Genstandene i gravene kan, i lyset af teorier om kønsidentitet og kønsroller samt dannelsen af disse, belyse og forsøge at afklare i hvilket omfang at kønsidentiteter er en statisk tilstand, eller bør forstås som noget dynamisk og omskifteligt. Dette kan klargøres, ved at nærstudere både genstandene men også mønstrene i gravlæggelserne og iagttage hvilke genstande og genstandsforbindelser der primært associeres med enten mænd eller kvinder.

Materialet for undersøgelsen består derfor af 22 sikre eller formodede mandegrave og 27 sikre eller formodede kvindegrave samt 188 kønsmæssigt ubestemte grave. Dette skaber en procentfordeling af de kønsbestemte grave, hvor 55% af gravene er kvinder, og 45% er mænd. Dette skaber et umiddelbart ubalanceret indtryk i fordelingen af gravene og kan med nogen sandsynlighed også forvrænge det egentlige billede af deponeringen af genstande. Ud fra genstandsmaterialet i disse grave tegner sig både klare og uklare mønstre, der kræver en kritisk tilgang og årvågenhed. Det har været påkrævet at analysere tilstedeværelsen og forbindelserne mellem genstande i grave, hvor hverken skelet materialet eller genstandsmaterialet med overbevisende sikkerhed, kan anvendes til at kønsbestemme den afdøde. Forbindelserne, både genstandene imellem samt genstandenes forbindelser til enten mænd eller kvinder, og hvor ofte disse forbindelser opstår, er i undersøgelsen belyst ud fra brugen af netværksanalyser og en korrespondensanalyse.

Analysen er opdelt i mande- og kvindegrave, hvor fordelingen af genstande er inkorporeret i grupperne: værktøjer, smykker og pyntegenstande samt hverdagsgenstande.

Gravgodset i kvindegrave, der kan indgå i en tolkning om en kvindelig tilstedeværelse i graven, er primært domineret af tilstedeværelsen af smykkegenstande. Disse smykkegenstande være sig perler, skålformede og trefligede spænder samt pladefibler. Kombinationen af smykkegenstandene viser en tendens, at majoriteten af gravene, hvor skålformede spænder er til stede, er kombineret af et varierende antal af perler. Den af

kvindegravene, hvor der er det største antal af perler, er grav 810 med 97 perler. Derudover indeholder kammergrav 3 også et betydeligt antal perler, indeholdende 47 perler. Udover inventaret af perler er der specifikke værktøjsgenstande, der associeres med kvinder. Disse genstande foreslår ydermere en kønsrolle fordeling i forhold til den private og domestiske sfære, hvilket primært forbindes med vævning og tekstilbearbejdning. Disse genstande være sig sakse, en syl og en pincet. De sidstnævnte er fundet i den rigt udstyrede grav 497, i hvilken der også blev fundet en kødgaffel og en ske. Kødgafflens mål på 47 cm kunne indikere, at den med al sandsynlighed er benyttet til madlavning, hvilket kan betyde, at madlavning og kogekunst primært bør blive associeret med kvinder.

I kontrast til kvindegravene udmærker mandegravene sig ved den mulige forbindelse til handel, som reflekteres i vedlæggelsen af mønter i gravene. Disse mønter indgår under genstandskategorien *værktøjer*, da de blandt andet kan forbindes med handel og kan muliggøre en mulig identitet indenfor handel. Derudover er der flere af gravene, der indeholder mønter, hvor mønten er den eneste genstand i graven og anbragt i munden på den afdøde, ligesom i grav 167. Dette kunne antyde en umiddelbar differentiering i forhold til den religiøse praksis og måske antyde en kristen indflydelse i begravelsesritualet. Endvidere er våben tilknyttet en tilstedeværelse af en mandlig skikkelse ud fra sammenføring med skriftlige kilder, som Sjørupstenen i Skåne. Disse våben i gravlæggelserne tyder på, at der ud fra våbentyperne kan have været forskellige militære roller eller rang. Sværdene synes dog at være det mest anvendte eller eftertragtede våben.

Et betragteligt antal af krigergravene indeholder spillebræt, der indgår i genstandskategorien 'hverdagsgenstande' i mandegravene. Denne genstandskombination kunne tyde på, at brugen af spillebræt kræver en vis strategisk tænkning, der muligvis kan være tilegnet gennem en tilværelse i militæret. Derudover antyder inkluderingen af spillebræt, at de afdøde muligvis kan have bevæget sig i et betragteligt højt lag i den sociale stratigrafi, da brugen af spillebræt ligeledes bør forstås som en non-produktiv fritidsbeskæftigelse. Afdødes placering i den sociale stratigrafi synes at være afspejlet i gravgodset ud fra vedlæggelsen af luksuriøse genstande som kister samt omfanget af gravgodset. Det synes, at et fåtal af gravene har overvejende luksuriøse genstande eller en betragtelig mængde gravgods, der indikerer den afdødes sociale status.

Som en adskilt gruppe af individer er der fire anormaliteter, der tegner et billede af en mulig spaltning i forhold til identitetsskabelse. Når køn og identitet ikke afspejles i gravgodset, kan det være nødvendigt at overveje gennemsnitshøjden for både mænd som kvinder i vikingetiden for at skabe et nuanceret billede af den afdøde. Da disse fire anormaliteter indeholder genstande, der traditionelt forbindes med enten kvindelighed eller kvindelige aktiviteter og højderne på de afdøde antyder et mandigt køn, udfordres kønsbestemmelsen.

Knive kan, grundet deres betragtelige tilknytning til både det kvindelige køn såvel som det mandlige køn, ikke antages for at være tilstrækkelige som enestående genstande i forhold til kønsbestemmelse af en grav. Da dette er tilfældet for mange af gravene, er der derfor 153 grave, der har været umulige med nogen overbevisende sikkerhed at fastslå som enten mand eller kvinde. Knivenes placering er ligeledes taget i betragtning, da placeringerne menes at kunne have angivet et anderledes mønster i forhold til, hvordan knivens tilknytning til den afdøde kunne have været. Generelt for både mænd som kvinder har disse knive været anbragt enten på eller i tæt nærhed til taljen og derfor ligeledes utilstrækkeligt til kønsbestemmelse. Udover knive er der visse andre genstande, der går igen i kvindegrave og mandegrave, hvor særligt perler er repræsenteret om end tydeligere i kvindegravene. Der viser sig en tendens i kvindegrave, at perlerne ville være placeret i kæder eller snører mellem de skålformede spænder, hvor det i mandegrave synes at være tilfældet, at perlerne er anbragt som halskæde. Disse tendenser har bidraget til et nyt forslag af mande- og kvindegrave.

Med fokuset liggende på genstandskombinationer i gravlæggelser og med tendenserne i analyserne over mande- og kvindegrave, udarbejdes et nyt forslag til fordelingen af mande- og kvindegrave. Dette resultat er blandt andet udarbejdet af en vurdering om, at grave, der overstiger vedlæggelsen over 9 perler og er kombineret med udpræget kvindelige genstande eller grave, hvor der blot er en enkelt perle til stede i graven, blev associeret med kvindegrave. Den eneste undtagelse var grav 128, hvor det ud fra rekonstruktionen af graven lader til, at perlerne danner en halskæde, der typisk figurerer hos mænd. Dernæst er grave, hvor der er udpræget mandlige genstande som mønter, glas eller pile, tilknyttet mænd. Dette skaber et nyt samlet antal kvindegrave på 53 kvindegrave og 31 mandegrave. Procentfordelingen af mande- og kvindegrave, angives derfor til at være 64% kvindegrave og 36% mandegrave.

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1. Introduction

Haithabu was in the period of the 8th-10th century an active place, buzzing with life, sounds and a great variety of people. A center of commerce, where people of different cultural backgrounds met. A place for exchanging wares and goods, ideas and thoughts. And lastly, a place with a need for many and different kinds of skills. The town was one of the most significant urban sites in all of Scandinavia, and has been of archaeological interest since 1812, when the first burials were uncovered.¹ With its archaeological richness inspires research on the social structures, hierarchies, the living community, the commerce and the material culture. But where you find life, you will also find death, as dying is the natural companion of living. And it is partly through the mortuary behavior of the past people that life in a different reality can be revealed. This thesis investigates funerary practices of people buried in one of Haithabu's cemeteries, analyzes the ritual handling of objects and connects these rituals with expression of identities. The research questions of this thesis are:

- 1) What were the main elements of funerary ritual in Haithabu? Are there any patterns in the deposition of objects in the graves, what are their frequencies and significance?
- 2) How are identities expressed, shaped or communicated with use of material culture in the Viking Age burials of Haithabu?
- 3) Is there any specific type of material objects or combination of material objects that can be taken as a material expression of a social position, identity or gender role?

This study is based on the analysis of 238 furnished graves, dated to the 8th- 10th century located in the cemeteries both inside and outside the semi-circular rampart surrounding Haithabu. The analysis is informed by the theories of material culture and materiality, including 'technology of enchantment' by Alfred Gell, the objectification theory by Daniel Miller and the dialectic relationship human and object examined by Mikkel Bille and Tim Flohr Sørensen. The application of these theories allows for a better understanding of the role of material objects in shaping and communicating the many identities of the individuals buried in Haithabu. Gender theory, particularly research on the construction of gender in the Viking Age constitutes another important theoretical framework applied in this thesis. Investigating identities in the past is not a straightforward task. First, one might have to ask:

¹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 p. 13.

What shapes and creates an identity? Is it possible to have more than one identity at a time? Can one trace the identity of people living in societies that are long gone? Many a question may arise, when engaging with burial rituals, the meeting of the material and the immaterial and how people have been living with and by the material culture of their time. Does a hammer make a man a blacksmith? Does a sword make a man or woman a warrior? Or could the identities of the deceased have been altered, by the relatives left behind, in order to change a person's reputation through the process of staging? To some degree, one can argue that the grave goods relate to the deceased. But in order to get a deeper understanding of the person in the grave, and attempt to interpret the buried person's identity, it is important to remain critical, be aware which questions one seeks an answer to and never to lock oneself in the interpretations. Perhaps the world of the Vikings was much more complex, than we imagine. The recent debates on gender roles sparked by a reassessment of one of graves from Birka as a possible female warrior burial based on genomic results² is an example of this complexity.

1.1 History of research

Haithabu has a long history of archaeological interest. The first excavations of graves in Haithabu were conducted in 1812 followed by an investigation of a boat chamber grave in 1908, and the first publication on the graves written by Herbert Wilhelm Alfred Jankuhn. Simultaneously, survey and excavation of the harbor and settlements areas took place. The different geophysical methods on sea and land have been in use for archaeological purposes in the studies of Haithabu since 1952. A large scale geophysical survey that started off in 2002 contained survey methods such as the use of ground-penetrating radar, Flux- and Caesium-magnetometer which have provided a large-scale magnetogram that shows the settlement structures of Haithabu, and even provided a glance of the main street of Haithabu.³ Apart from these geophysical surveys systematic surveys by metal detectorists have found objects that dates back to the younger phases of Haithabu.⁴

In 1979-1980 a large excavation was conducted, as a Viking Age shipwreck in Haddebyer Noor was discovered. This large excavation and the various scientific methods that were used provided an extensive knowledge about the harbour. Apart from an archaeological investigation, the use of divers, sonar and seismic exploration methods, have been in use,

² Hedenstierna-Jonson 2017 p. 853.

³ Hilberg 2012 p. 107.

⁴ Hilberg 2012 p. 103.

in order to get more knowledge of the harbour of Haithabu.⁵ A more exhaustive research history is presented by Volker Hilberg.⁶

The numerous excavations conducted in the town continue to generate a substantial number of publications. In 2010 a comprehensive overview of Haithabu's cemeteries and description of individual graves was published as a catalogue by Ute Arents and Silke Eisenschmidt. The catalogue was followed by Eisenschmidt's publication *'The Viking Age Graves from Hedeby'* (2011), which is a brief overview of her studies and results, presented at a conference on Iceland. Both studies constitute a background material for the analysis undertaken in this thesis. Burial customs in the Viking age southern Denmark have also been studied by Anne Pedersen. Her publications *'Materiel kultur, identitet og kommunikation'* (2008) and *'Dead Warriors in Living Memory: A Study of Weapon and Equestrian Burials in Viking-Age Denmark, AD 800-1000'* (2014)', touch in detail upon the many aspects of the burial customs in the Viking Age of Southern Scandinavia. They touch upon aspects such as the creation of warrior identity and how weapons in graves, take part as a great aspect of the burial customs in the Viking Age of Southern Scandinavia. Furthermore, her publication *'Dead Warriors in Living Memory: A Study of Weapon and Equestrian Burials in Viking-Age Denmark, AD 800-1000'* (2014)' has particularly been useful in this thesis, as an attempt of making analyses on the warrior oriented burial goods from Haithabu have been processed.

This thesis differs from the studies of Eisenschmidt and Pedersen, as this study focuses on gender and materiality, and how combinations of materiality can be taken as expressions of a gender and gender role.

1.2 Haithabu

Haithabu is situated in the northernmost part of Schleswig. According to archaeological and historical research the town was established sometime in the 8th century and it lost its importance by the end of the 10th century. The grave goods bear witness to a hierarchical system and aristocratic burials that reveals a social structure of the inhabitants of Haithabu. Haithabu, along with Ribe, Birka and Kaupang was a major urban center of commerce in Scandinavia in the Viking Age, and is in some ways much similar to Ribe and Birka. The

⁵ Kalmring 2009 p. 246.

⁶ Hilberg 2012 p. 101-112.

harbour of Haithabu was of fundamental importance for the success and prosperity of Haithabu, as it bound the settlement in a network of commerce with all the other emporia in Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea. It has even been characterized, as the 'hub of the North Sea – and Baltic trade'.⁷ When taking the geographical placement of Haithabu consideration, it becomes clear as to why this specific location would be so ideal for the foundation of such a trading center. Its location in the very end of the rather narrow waterways of the Schlei fjord, out to Haddebyer Noor, would possibly grant a certain control on the in- and out-going traffic, as it would be easy to imagine that it would take quite some time, for a ship to arrive at the harbour or shores of Haithabu. Furthermore, the reference in the written sources confirms its role as a high-sea point, for international trade and as a naval base.⁸ The construction of the harbour facilities took place in the end of first third of the 9th century⁹, and today we have a fair reconstruction of how the harbours bridges might have looked. A considerable number of different artefacts, items and trading goods, have been dropped in the harbour basin providing information about the material standards of living and consumption in the town.¹⁰ The results of magnetic surveys in Haithabu and earlier excavations conducted by Jankuhn in the 1930's uncovered a linear structure running parallel to the shore, which was interpreted as the main street of Haithabu lined up with houses.¹¹

As Haithabu was the largest trading center in the Viking Age, a town of that size and function needed protection, a solid defense and a central organizing power. Such defense systems and defense structures, are apparent in Haithabu and in the near surroundings. They consist of the semi-circular rampart that stretches to cover the whole western part of Haithabu, as the western part of Haithabu leads out to the lake Haddebyer Noor and a wooden-piled structure in the water.¹² Furthermore, just outside the northern part the semi-circular rampart of Haithabu lies a significant hill, one the eye cannot miss - the *Hochburg*. The Hochburg serves as a hillfort to Haithabu. However, whether this hillfort has been erected due to raids or plundering or not, may be hard to argue, as the erection of defensive structures, such as hillforts, could just as well be markings or symbols of a central power.¹³ Written sources that

⁷ Kalmring 2009 p. 245.

⁸ Kalmring 2009 p. 246.

⁹ Kalmring 2009 p. 249.

¹⁰ Kalmring 2009 p. 254.

¹¹ Hilberg 2012 p. 105.

¹² Olausson 2009 p. 65.

¹³ Olausson 2009 p. 37.

date back to the 11th century by Adam of Bremen claims that the Hochburg could have been in use by Henry the 1st of East Frankia in the year 934 AD, until Svein Forkbeard took it over in 983 AD.¹⁴ Lastly, but probably the most famous of the defensive structures of Haithabu, is *Danevirke*. Its building was initiated around the year 700 AD.¹⁵ Apart from the defenses of Haithabu and considering the Hochburg which quite possibly could be marking a central and aristocratic seat of power, the many graves and cemeteries tell stories of people from different strata of society. One of the graves that truly reveals the definite existence of a seat of power in Haithabu is the boat-chamber grave, whose content will be later discussed. Informed by the grave goods and the many trading routes (see fig. 1), there should be no doubt that Haithabu truly was a renowned town that people would travel to.

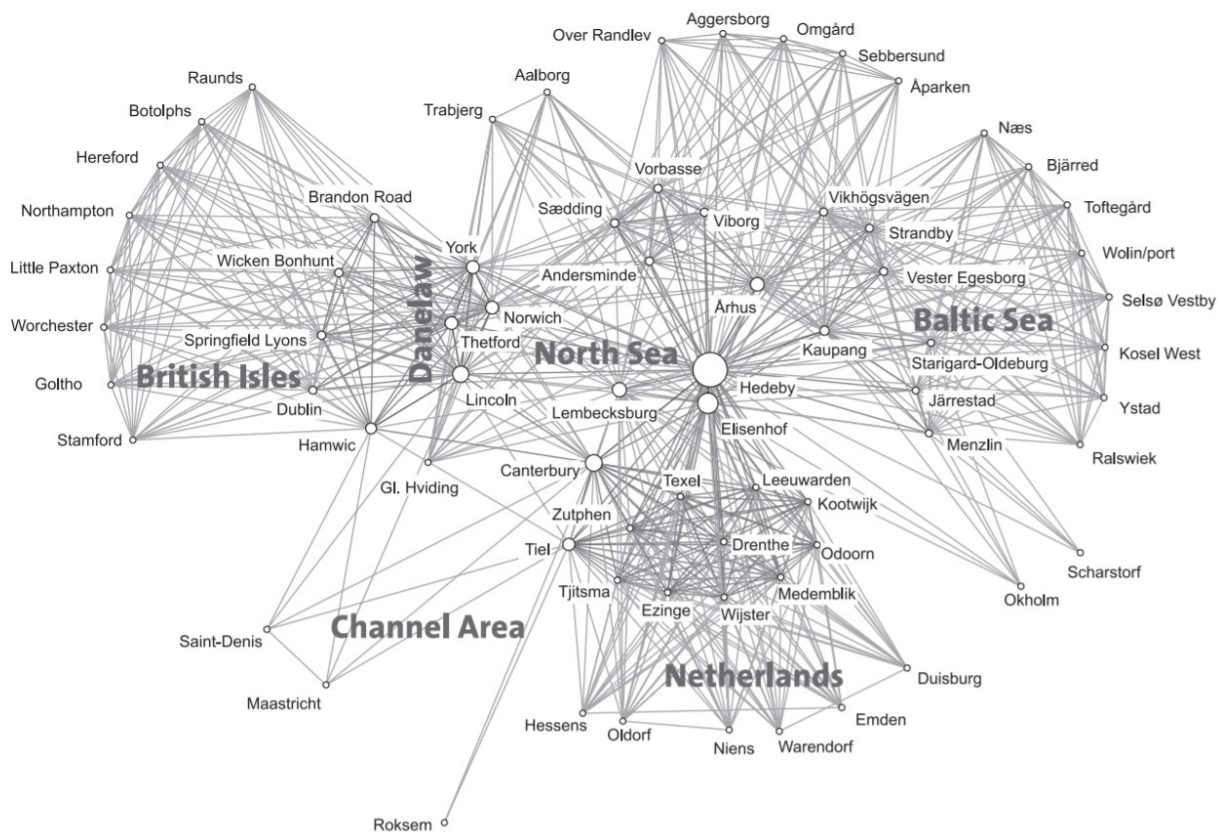


Fig. 1.: Resembling the maritime network of 152 sites, based on cooking pots. The size of the nodes, i.e. the circles, is regulated by the connections between the nodes.

Sindbæk, S. 2015: Northern Emporia and Maritime Networks. Modelling Past Communication Using Archaeological Network Analysis, Johannes Preisler-Kapeller & Falko Daim (ed.), Mainz, p. 109.

¹⁴ Kalming & Holmquist 2012 p.7.

¹⁵ Dobat 2008 p. 40.

Also, a noteworthy aspect of the existence of Haithabu, is the clashes of culture. It is known that at-Tartuschi, a Spanish Arab, visited Haithabu and described Haithabu as a big, poor and dirty town and furthermore describes the population of Haithabu, saying that the people were living on fish and were singing like howling dogs.¹⁶ This does indeed leave an impression of how foreign cultures experience other cultures.

1.3 Sources and empiric material

The primary source and empiric material used in this investigation are the archaeologically excavated graves from inside the semi-circular rampart of Haithabu. The thesis analyses material from 238 burials dated back to the 8th-10th centuries. Approximately 1350 graves in Haithabu, have in the period from the year of 1820 to 1970 been identified and excavated.¹⁷ These 1350 graves are the total of the graves from both outside the semi-circular rampart, and inside the semi-circular rampart. The greatest densities of the graves are inside the semi-circular rampart. The majority of them are without any or with few grave goods or lacking considerable skeletal remains that could be used for discussing the deceased's gender and identity. Only a few of the rather large number of graves, are richly furnished, with a great variety of what must be considered expensive grave goods. Outside the semi-circular rampart are found several mound burials and some urn graves. The tendency of lack of skeletal remains in the graves from the different cemeteries in Haithabu, is due to the chemical composition in the soil that do not favor biological material. This does indeed further challenge the essence of this investigation, which focuses on *identity* and the possibility of regarding and discussing expression of identity through the grave goods that are present in the graves.

1.4 Theoretical approaches

The analyses conducted in this thesis are based on several different theoretical approaches, namely theories of materiality, gender theory and burial archaeology.

1.4.1 Theories of materiality

Material culture is a curious thing. We're surrounded by it, living with and by it and one could, with fairly good reason, argue that we are somehow moulded by it as well. In the archaeological record, it becomes clear what great importance objects have. When dealing

¹⁶ Mikkelsen 2012 p. 543.

¹⁷ Eisenschmidt 2011 p. 83.

with questions of identity in the context of burials, many questions related to the handling and significance of material objects can arise. How are the objects used? What are they used for? What exactly is their function? In truth, one can never ask the deceased why exactly he or she, would have been buried with those belongings. Therefore, it is evident that material culture tells the tale of the deceased and the living community responsible for the burials. In order to let the material culture 'talk', it is important to be aware of what answers one seeks and what questions one asks. When seeking knowledge of the impact of material culture on humans, it is crucial to understand the dialectic relationship that the objects and humans form. The model made by Mikkel Bille and Tim Flohr Sørensen illustrates this relationship (fig. 2):

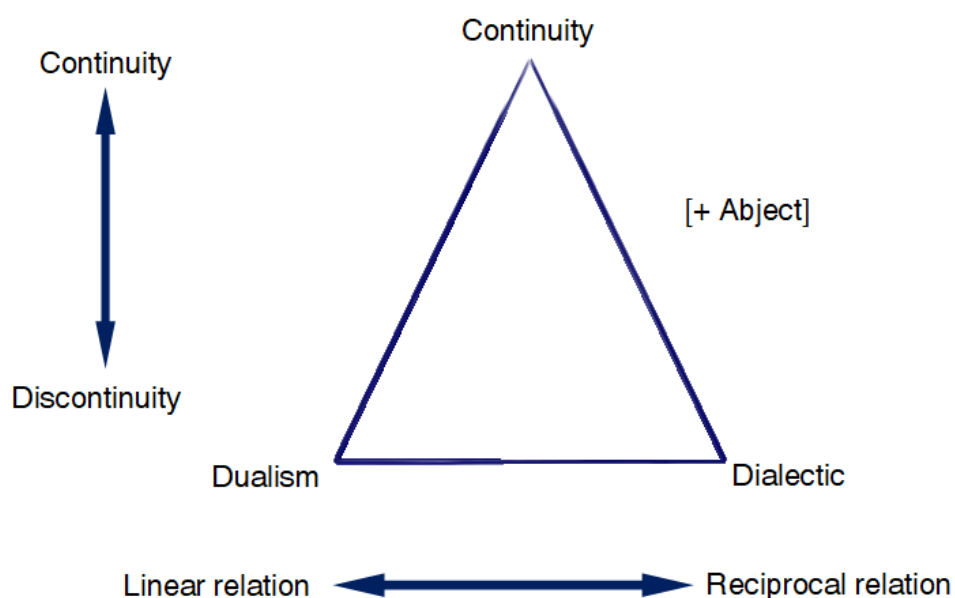


Fig. 2: Model by Mikkel Bille and Tim Flohr Sørensen, resembling the 'Approaches to thing-human-relation'.

Bille, M. & T. F. Sørensen 2012: Materialitet - en indføring i kultur, identitet og teknologi, Frederiksberg, pp. 24.

The presented model by Mikkel Bille and Tim Flohr Sørensen, sheds light upon the thing-human-relations. It is defined by various approaches to how humans and material culture interact with each other, as well as how humans and material culture live with and by each other. Dualism, dialectic and continuity, as presented in the model, are three different perspectives on the human-thing-relation. Though they may be partly related to each other, it is important to understand the differences. For example, the dualistic perspective must be understood as a linear movement in one direction from subject to object whereas the

dialectic perspective stresses their (the human and objects) reciprocity.¹⁸ The only perspective that stands out, is the 'continuity' perspective. This approach seeks to dissolve the division of subject and object¹⁹ and includes both phenomenology and the 'actor-network theory', where things (objects) and humans are defined by their presence and mutual dependencies in a network and are thereby called 'actors', and thereby not divided in the same manner, as they are in the dualistic perspective.

The most crucial point of the model, in connection with this thesis, is the *dialectic* perspective. The dialectic perspective is the part, where an interaction between human and object is established. This particular interaction defines their mutual relationship.²⁰ The human shapes and creates the object and the object thereafter assists in shaping and creating the human as well. This approach also goes under the term of '*objectification theory*' presented by the anthropologist Daniel Miller in 1987.²¹ When Daniel Miller talks about 'materiality', it is not a static and unchangeable state or condition, but in fact a rather dynamic and continuous process of creation of both human, as well as object. The reason is that they are both shaped through interactions with one another.²² One could indeed argue that it is not only a way to engage with the relationship between human and objects, but it is also a way of grasping the immaterial, as this approach touches both materiality and immateriality. The 'immaterial' could be perceived as ideas, thoughts and ideologies - in this case that could be transferred to be the idea of grave goods, the thoughts of their function and the underlining ideology of rituals. In relation to the theoretical approaches developed by Tim Flohr Sørensen, Mikkel Bille and Daniel Miller the archaeologist Christopher Tilley's views on material culture and engagements with material culture, are important to consider, as he touches upon the same field but in different ways. Considering *objectification*, Tilley mentions that objectification is the concrete embodiment of an idea.²³ In many ways, Tilley agrees with and complements the views of Miller. Tilley argues that a focus on *materiality* necessarily involves considerations of objectification processes and embodiment, as people always have to work, use, transact, possess and consume objects.²⁴ As this is a study of

¹⁸ Bille og Flohr 2012 p. 25.

¹⁹ Bille og Flohr 2012 p. 26.

²⁰ Bille & Flohr 2012 p. 24.

²¹ Bille & Flohr 2012 p. 25.

²² Ibid.

²³ Tilley 2006 p. 2.

²⁴ Tilley 2006 p. 15-16.

material culture focusing on the shaping and creation of identity (or identities) through the graves goods, a quote by Christopher Tilley is worth mentioning:

‘So differing forms of sociality and different ways of identity construction are produced through the medium of living with and through a medium we call ‘material culture.’”²⁵

Another theoretical approach important for the understanding of the use of grave goods, the need for them and roles they play, in the overall establishment of the graves, is the theory of agency recited by Jude Hill, in her article *‘The Story of the Amulet - Locating the Enchantment of Collections’* (2007). She argues about the magical, protective and healing effects tokens may have. Her article is based on a contextual study of a number of amulets, charms and mascots from the 20th century exhibited at the Wellcome’s Historical Medical Museum. An example could be the blue beaded bracelets or necklaces that have been worn, to prevent matters such as bronchitis.²⁶ The collection of these amulets, charms and mascots is mainly exhibited in order to understand ‘the history of medicine and mankind’.²⁷ In a sense, it can be perceived as a materiality with an immaterial effect, such as a protection trait, which the human applies in the value and consider as the value of the given amulet, charm or mascot. One could argue that if the crux of the matter is that it is all about applying these magical values to an item, it therefore does not really matter what sort of particular item that would be, as long as it does the intended work for the individual. For example, cross pendants could have functioned as magical amulets for a wider group of people albeit its specific protective and symbolic meaning would be decidedly different for Christians and non-Christians. However, the thought of adding magical, protective or healing traits in items and in the material culture, may not be that far from the ideas, thoughts and ideologies of burial rituals from the Viking Age, as the burial goods could be deposited for many a reason. Are they plainly just belongings of the deceased, or do they indeed serve a greater perhaps even protective purpose for the deceased and maybe even the living community? Perhaps these protective purposes of magical amulets and objects, could be associated with protective means against hauntings and warding off evil spirits? Considering these question, the approach of perceiving items as magical, protecting or even healing actors for a person, can be of great use when engaging with burial practices, where the only thing that speaks, is the silent tongue of the deposited material goods. Considering this theoretical approach

²⁵ Tilley 2006 p. 3.

²⁶ Hill 2007 p. 66.

²⁷ Hill 2007 p. 65.

and the thought of magical traits in items, opens up doors for new additional questions, to ask a long-gone society and reality. It may even allow the interpreter, to glean a deeper knowledge - or perhaps only get a sense of the original thought, behind the burial rituals and the elements used in these rituals. No matter how material or immaterial, these thoughts and elements might be.

Regarding the burial rituals, and the custom of depositing belongings in the graves, it is fair to ask whether or not the burial ritual and process behind, function as a manifestation of the identities of the deceased. Are the burials supposed to show who the buried person was, and how the buried person was perceived in the living community or could it just as well be that the relatives, just might have attempted to alter the deceased's reputation? That they have actually made an attempt to stage a person, for what the relatives wanted the deceased to be, and not for whom the deceased was? Alfred Gell has through his anthropological work, become aware of the technology of enchantment. The technology of enchantment is a theory, based upon the *enchantment of technology* which is the power that technical processes have of casting a spell upon the beholder, so that the beholder sees the real world in an enchanted form.²⁸ Technical processes occur in almost every action that produces some sort of product. In other words, enchantment of technology deals with the intention to dazzle the beholder, on either a phenomenon or the execution of objects. In his work *'The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology'* (1994) he figured how art and in a sense, material culture, can be an actor in a psychological way of altering one's perceptions, such as the canoe prow-boards from the Trobriand Islands, as to which he mentions:

*'There is an obvious prima-facie case for regarding a great deal of art of the world as means of thought control. Sometimes objects are explicitly intended to function as weapons in psychological warfare; as in the case of canoe prow-board from the Trobriand Islands.'*²⁹

In the case of the Trobriand canoe prow-board the intention is to inspire fear or unease and worried emotions in the beholder, as they are means of psychological warfare. In the case of the Viking Age burials, one could argue the principle is similar, however not necessarily in terms of 'warfare' in particular. But one can argue that the Viking Age burials have been organized in manners of inspiring emotions of the beholders at the funerals. Prominent and

²⁸ Gell 1994 p. 44.

²⁹ Ibid.

richly furnished burials such as the boat-chamber grave in Haithabu, must have been a rather spectacular sight during the burial rite. It is possible such burial rituals, would have had a considerable impact on local people and foreigners alike. Considering the emotions that such sights must have inspired in the beholders, one can argue that the burial customs in the Viking Age were a way to express and practice religion, but also to honour the deceased. Last to be mentioned but not less important in connection with dealing with material culture, and understanding cultures, is the *'Hawkes' Ladder of Inference'* which in its basic sense, argues that the more immaterial an aspect of a culture is, the harder it is, to do proper interpretations. This could for example be religious beliefs, as stated by Christopher Hawkes:

*'In general, I believe, unaided inference from material remains to spiritual life is the hardest inference of all.'*³⁰

1.4.2 Gender studies – gendered lives and material culture

In the attempt of achieving a deeper understanding of the past individuals and their given identities, the studies of gender, which have been greatly developed by the Danish archaeologist Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, can provide a powerful means of how identity is formed at different times and in various contexts.³¹ By considering gender archaeology, one may get a more nuanced and complex picture of what it means to shape and create an identity. This is partly because there are several dimensions in the term 'identity', as it refers to a vast range of aspects in either an individual, or social groups, such as ethnicity, social class and gender. Gender and identity are however not synonymous, but they do partly overlap one another.³² Since the 1970's gender archaeology defines gender as:

*'a social construction responding to socially perceived differences between people's bodies, differences commonly categorized as variations upon male and female, but which may include other categories and sub-groups within them.'*³³

In her studies Marie Louise Stig Sørensen pointed out that it is important to recognize that people are both gendered individuals and social agents. This means that formative activities

³⁰ Hawkes 1954 p. 162.

³¹ Sørensen 2009 p. 253.

³² Sørensen 2009 p. 254.

³³ Sørensen 2009 p. 254.

are influenced by several agents and identities, and that gender is formed through continuous self-perception and the societal norms and expectations.³⁴ According to her argument, the male and female gender roles and ideals are created in the context of the societal norms and expectations of the environment and social context, in which the individual lives and act. In other words - in order to be perceived as a male or a female, it is required to do what males or females are expected to do, in the social surroundings that they take part in. By arguing in that way, it may thereby be claimed that gender identity is not based solely on a biological difference granted by nature, which divides male from female in their sexual appearances, but rather that gender identity is continuously performed, practiced and negotiated.³⁵ Furthermore, material culture and gender identity are associated with one another, and it can be claimed that the study of gender is about how living gendered lives involve and are affected by material culture.³⁶

Since its early formulations in the 1970's-80's, the study of gender developed in many productive ways.³⁷ These include first and foremost, the idea that material culture was acting as a signature for the gender. This can in some respect, be turned to the practice of grave goods, where the grave goods would be resembling or signifying the gender of the deceased.

What in all occasions can be considered as important to keep in mind, when engaging with gender studies and the approach of gender studies, is that it is a means to bring attention to neglected aspects of past societies and it has the ability of raising questions about how it is possible, to assess the social significance of different kinds of objects, rather than remaining focused on prestige items.³⁸ Furthermore, gender studies may also have the abilities, through the material goods of the time, to create a more nuanced picture of gender roles in a domestic aspect. Concerning the domestic aspect of the Viking Age Sofie Gräslund argued one of two great points that:

*'In earlier time, one of women's main tasks was to produce textiles needed on the farm, which was absolutely crucial work.'*³⁹

³⁴ Sørensen 2009 p. 255.

³⁵ Sørensen 2009 p. 257.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Sørensen 2013 p. 399.

³⁸ Sørensen 2009 p. 259.

³⁹ Gräslund 2001 p. 260.

Although the ideal women's place was primarily connected with the domestic sphere, the domestic work contributed substantially to the economy of the household. Anne Gräslund suggests a possible contradiction between the ideology of labour separation and the reality of overlapping spheres, emphasizing that:

*'A farm was like a firm, run by husband and wife together, in which the work of both partners was of equal importance although different and complementary.'*⁴⁰

1.4.3 Burial archaeology – interpreting the faint and the clear traces

Burial archaeology is an established research field that is analyzing and theorizing about the roles and forms of mortuary behavior and rituals that includes selections and treatment of grave goods. Of particular importance here, is the scholarship conducted on the Iron Age and early medieval mortuary behavior and the ritual responses in pre-Christian and Christian religious traditions.

Burial archaeology is in many aspects concerned with the material culture of a given culture. Apart from focusing on material culture, it is a means to gain an insight into a given culture's mortuary behavior, their religious beliefs and past societies' response to death. It is the study of rituals and burial practices through material remains., and has been a field of focus for many scholars. Heinrich Härke is a renowned scholar in the field of burial archaeology, with main points of interests in the research on burial rites in the Anglo-Saxon context.⁴¹ His observations and theories can be gainfully used in studying burial rites in Haithabu. Another renown scholar in the field of burial archaeology, is Neil Price. Neil Price touches upon the possibilities that the construction of graves can reflect the surrounding social structure and stratification. From the rather prominent high-status burials, to rather low-status burials.⁴² Recent research conducted in Birka in 2017 by some of the most renowned scholars in the field of archaeology, sparks new life into mortuary behavior and sheds light on anomalies, which are a point of interest for the Polish scholar Leszek Gardela. His main interest lies in the mortuary behavior in the early medieval period of Scandinavia and Central Europe, and seeks to provide new notions in the recent debates of 'female warriors'. His preliminary study consists of a range of female burials from Scandinavia with offensive weapons.⁴³ The new

⁴⁰ Gräslund 2001 p. 89.

⁴¹ Härke 2013 p. 1.

⁴² Price 2012 pp. 259-263.

⁴³ Gardela 2013 p. 273.

results in Birka are particularly interesting, as they can shed new light on the notion of gender roles and whether the stereo-typical perception of grave goods as gender-defining objects is being dissolved or not.⁴⁴ The research conducted by these and other scholars addresses the role of material culture in burial rituals.⁴⁵

A crucial and central point in doing burial archaeology, is the 'grave goods'. The term 'grave goods' is an archaeological term that:

*'simply denotes anything found in a grave in addition to human remains and encompasses a variety of items, from the remains of dress to deliberate objects in graves, as well as sacrificial offerings.'*⁴⁶

Grave goods have provided one of the most important means for constructing chronologies, giving a temporal framework to a hitherto unknown depth⁴⁷. In a culture history paradigm grave goods have been a great factor in defining regional changes and tribe identifications, in other words an ethnic approach to the grave goods. Furthermore, variations of wealth in grave goods in the same cemeteries, have given reason to argue social hierarchies in local communities.⁴⁸

Taking this into perspective, it is fairly clear from the burial remains and grave goods of Haithabu that a clear social hierarchy has been established. Additionally, it is important to note that Heinrich Härke mentions that:

*'Above all, grave goods have always suggested a religious dimension, their very presence apparently implying a 'pagan' concept of an afterlife where material goods were useful and important.'*⁴⁹

Without necessarily neglecting the importance of material goods in a religious perspective and a religious manner of use, it may be debated whether or not all sorts of grave goods and gift givings in such a manner, are heavily weighted upon religious beliefs and necessarily suggests religious dimensions or not. Burial goods, gift givings and the diversity

⁴⁴ Hedenstierna-Jonson 2017 p. 853.

⁴⁵ Price 2012 pp. 259-263; Härke 2013 p. 1; Gardęła 2013 p. 273; Williams 2006

⁴⁶ Härke 2013 p. 1.

⁴⁷ Härke 2013 p. 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

in grave constructions in the Viking Age, may suggest a hierarchical order and reflect the social structure.⁵⁰ This is, however, a debate that briefly will be worked through in this section, but will be brought up later again in this thesis, when the burials of Haithabu will be thoroughly analyzed and connected with the perspectives of burial archaeology, attempting to reach a deeper knowledge of the creation of identity through grave goods, and the individual's identities in Haithabu.

A lot of speculation may arise, when engaging with grave goods and such an aspect of mortuary behavior, in cultures with burial customs that concern gift giving, in a manner such as grave goods. What are the primary role and function of the grave goods? It is indeed a challenging question, as it moves up upon the *Hawkes' Ladder of Inference*, and touches upon the section of 'immateriality' in materiality – in other words – the thought and idea behind the gift giving, which is the hardest of all inferences to interpret.⁵¹ However, there are other means for reaching an interpretation than solely going with the physical objects that reside in the graves. These are for example historical or ethnographic evidence that will prove useful when attempting to illustrate a greater meaning of grave goods.⁵² Also, it needs to be stressed that archaeologists are to a great extent and on many occasions, challenged in doing reconstructions of graves. The reason is the material group of perishable material, as the preservation level of the soil cannot be guaranteed as being in favor of biological materials or easily perishable materials, such as textile and wood. It must therefore be considered that it is only under certain circumstances that such item groups and materials are revealed, when engaging with burials and burial archaeology. However, this does not necessarily have to compromise the succession of a fair interpretation, as the soil stains may reveal the presence of a perished wooden coffin, for example.⁵³ Another challenge that is worth mentioning when doing interpretations of graves, is the possible disturbance and inclusions made in the soil that may disturb the original content of the graves and thereby the interpretation. The material groups that this argument is based upon, is the accidental inclusion of pottery shards of animal bones, which easily can be confused as being deliberately put in the graves as either food vessels or animal offerings.⁵⁴ Such inclusion can appear due to settlements, settlement waste and farming.

⁵⁰ Price 2012 pp. 259-263.

⁵¹ Hawkes 1954 p. 162.

⁵² Härke 2013 p. 4.

⁵³ Härke 2013 p. 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

It can be claimed that interpretations of grave goods have evolved through time, as a hermeneutical spiral. Chronologically speaking, the first and probably the most famous interpretation of grave goods, is that the grave goods have been deposited in the graves, in order to aid the deceased in the afterlife or on the journey to that place.⁵⁵ It may be hard to argue or neglect that aspect, which may be a reason why it remains an interpretation most archaeologists will resort to and can be considered a 'safe base'. However, it is important to always keep an open mind in the attempt to find other interpretations by thinking in new ways. That way a much deeper knowledge of grave goods and the creation of identity through grave goods is plausible to be achieved, and new approaches may blossom.

Also, despite being indicators of religious beliefs and mortuary behaviors according to a certain culture, as touched upon earlier, grave goods have also been routinely interpreted as indicators of identity and social standing. Examples could be the great boat chamber grave in Haithabu, or other richly furnished burials –relatively recent results from Denmark is the chieftain's chamber grave from the Viking Age uncovered in Fregerslev in 2016, with beautiful gold-plated riding equipment.⁵⁶ The bridle that was uncovered in the chamber grave in Fregerslev, was quite similar to the richly furnished chamber grave in Grimstrup.⁵⁷ Whilst it does not necessarily have to be considered wrong or an imperfect interpretation, to solely interpret a person's identity by the given grave goods, it is important to consider other reasons as to why grave goods of the given sort, have been deposited the way they have. As the Norwegian archaeologist Solberg has suggested, grave goods might just as well act as metaphors for the life the deceased has lived, or certain events from the life of the deceased.⁵⁸ It is an interesting point of view and interpretation, as it divides itself from the 'common' interpretations that a lot of archaeologists tend to resort to, solely go with the grave goods as clear indicators of identity. It is not an accusation of other archaeologists' work through time in any negative manner, but it can be claimed that it is important to widen the focus, to bring up other meaningful suggestions in order to do the most proper engagements and interpretations in burial archaeology. Given that grave goods in many occasions are the only sources from which archaeology can channel knowledge from the deceased, it is of utmost importance, to get as many meaningful interpretations as possible.

⁵⁵ Härke 2013 p. 5.

⁵⁶ Bagge 2016 p. 91.

⁵⁷ Bagge 2016 p. 93.

⁵⁸ Härke 2013 p. 8.

1.5 Methods

The number of burials selected for analysis is 238 inhumation burials, consisting of 22 male burials, 27 female burials, 1 children's burial and 188 ungendered burials. The gender of the graves is defined by the objects and the pairing of the objects that were previously interpreted as objects affiliated with either females or males. This is done in order to get an overview whether it is possible to see any patterns of grave goods that can be associated with particular gender roles, social standing and religious identities. On the basis of this analysis, the 188 inhumation burials will be reviewed, with an aim of interpreting possible gender, social and religious identities of the deceased. However, one should be cautious with interpreting the gender of the deceased solely on the grave goods. Evidence from both the Gerdrup grave near Roskilde and recent research in Birka show that weapons have also been deposited in female graves, therefore it can be claimed that warrior burials should be interpreted with care, when regarding the gender of the deceased. These warrior burials have got their own analysis, as they are a special and an important category to attend, in matters such as *identity*. However, a few of the female graves seem rather richly furnished considering the grave goods, and these have also been considered among the aristocratic graves. These choices have been made, in order to produce some analyses that have been considered useful for both presentation, interpretation and research. Though they may not reveal the complete truth of the deceased's identities in Haithabu, they serve well as means for a good insight into the tendencies in the burial customs, in Haithabu and a solid base for interpretation of individuality and identity. Also, stray finds that have been uncovered in Haithabu have been disregarded, as they do not belong to any particular grave or context, and therefore considered useless in this research. Therefore, the analyses and graphs presented only show the grave goods and grave material that have been found in the context of graves, which leaves out a rather large number of finds.

To show the tendencies of the deposited grave goods and how they are deposited, a network analysis has been produced, which contains both male, female and children's graves and the grave goods in these graves. This has been done, as it provides a good overview of the content and how they are linked to one another. A seemingly equal presentation could possibly have been done with a correspondence analysis, but as there are many quite low incidents of some material categories of grave goods in the respective categories of men, women and children, these could alter the results in a regretful and non-presentational manner. However, the presented network analyses have their own disadvantage of showing rather small connections, based on the incidents of occurrences. This choice of making the

connection weighted on their occurrences has been made, to show the greatest occurrences, as they are believed to hold much useful information, for the cemeteries as well as the interpretation that forms the base of the discussion of identity. A correspondence analysis has been produced, in connections with the anomalies in Haithabu, to investigate how certain groups of objects are associated with male or female graves. Visualizations of data, such as histograms and tables have also been produced, as they have been considered useful in their respective ways of uses.

Studying Viking Age graves it is important to recognize certain problems and biases related to, for example, preservation and historical gaps between the past and present. As every culture in the past has had their ways of dealing with the dead, material culture has been used and altered in different ways, to compliment the given culture's traditions. Material culture in burial ritual context may reveal the different aspects of both individuality and identity of the deceased and the living community. It is important to remember that even though some graves seem rather poorly furnished in contrast to other graves, it does not make the lesser furnished graves, any less significant in the whole. The significance of an identity should not necessarily be accounted for solely on the basis of how richly or poorly the burials are furnished even though the lack or minimal presence of material goods inhibits archaeological interpretation of different identities in the past. However, considering the burial tendencies, especially in the Viking Age, there are several reasons as to why some grave goods might be either missing or have simply disappeared due to for example erosion.

These are just a few of the many reasons that may cause a loss of burials goods:

Cultural practices:

1. The person that has been buried, has only got burial goods of organic or easily perishable material.⁵⁹
2. The hierarchical or financial situation of the deceased, may have resulted in poor furnishing of burial goods. Such burials may be cremation burials.⁶⁰
3. The buried person may be a foreigner to the local community and therefore from a different culture, in which burial goods as part of their burial traditions and rituals, may not have been practiced.

⁵⁹ Härke 2013 p. 4.

⁶⁰ Price 2012 p. 259.

4. Perhaps a demeaning act for the deceased by rejecting the deceased any personal belongings in the grave.
5. Cause of religious change. For example, modifications of mortuary behavior and burial rites, as a result of Christianity and Christianization.⁶¹

Furthermore, there are issues according to matters such as preservation, as the preservation level of the soil, in which the grave has been constructed, may not have been in favor of the burial goods that was once put in the graves⁶², which can result in the loss of grave goods of organic material as well as human remains.

As mentioned, these are just a few reasons as to why some items may have vanished and disappeared or never even been there in the first place. There are of course a lot of other reasons that can be debated in this matter, which will be presented later in this thesis.

2 Religious beliefs, gender and social stratification in the Viking Age

The Viking Age, was characterized by meetings between and syncretism of the Norse and Christian beliefs. This is indicated by historical narratives, such as the important source of Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* that narrates saint Ansgar's missionary travels to the north as well as by archaeological evidence from Haithabu and Ribe.⁶³ From this transitional era of religion, a number of religious symbols are uncovered in the graves, including. Christian crosses, Thor's hammers, mythical and animal figurines.⁶⁴ Furthermore, there have been uncovered small miniature amulet-tools and weapons (alongside everyday-tools, such as firesteels).

In order to engage with the burial patterns of the Viking Age, it is of great importance to understand the possible reasons, as to why the religious symbols might have been put in graves in the first place. These grave goods (together with other, everyday objects) quite possibly might have functioned as an insurance for the deceased to be able to continue his or her work and existence, in the world beyond. This custom conforms with decidedly pre-Christian notions of afterlife. Snorri Sturlusson in his first book *Heimskringla* suggests such

⁶¹ Kieffer-Olsen 2004 p. 176.

⁶² Härke 2013 p. 4.

⁶³ Palmer 2004 p. 236.

⁶⁴ Pedersen 2004 p. 61.

a view on life, and its continuation in the afterlife might have been commonly shared. In his *Ynglingasaga* 8, in *Heimskringla*, a brief passage states;

*'In his country Oðinn instituted such laws as had been in force among the Æsir before. Thus he ordered that all the dead were to be burned on a pyre together with their possessions, saying that everyone would arrive in Valhalla, with such wealth as he had with him on his pyre and that he would also enjoy the use of what he himself had hidden in the ground. His ashes were to be carried out to sea or buried in the ground. For notable men burial mounds were to be thrown up as memorials.'*⁶⁵

It is important to remember that Snorri's '*law of Oðinn*' should be perceived more as an ideal than the standard orthodox way of dealing with the passage of the dead and funerary rites.⁶⁶ In Scandinavia, there are regional and local differences in the burial rites which are attested archaeologically.⁶⁷ However, this does not necessarily make the words in the '*law of Oðinn*' completely inaccurate, but one must consider the specific context and case rather it as an absolute standard.⁶⁸ The conversion from the Norse belief to Christianity brought several changes in the burial customs and rituals, and the transitional era started off earlier in the towns. At the end of the 8th century cremation burials were by the Christian community, believed to be decidedly a heathen burial custom and in the 10th century, inhumation graves were the dominant burial custom, at least in Haithabu.⁶⁹ Therefore, it can with convincing certainty be claimed that cremated individuals, were not Christian. However, neither ought all the inhumation burials be considered Christian burials.⁷⁰ The orientation of burials is important to consider, as it is Christian custom to be oriented east-west, with the head towards the west, because the deceased should be able to behold Christ on 'the last day' in the east. However, this is not textually accounted for in the Bible, but seems to be commonly accepted around the 4th century.⁷¹ Christian burials generally do not include grave goods, because all are equal in the eyes of God.⁷² Furthermore, graves in which Christian motifs

⁶⁵ Price 2012 p. 257.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ulriksen 2011 p. 162.

⁶⁸ Price 2012 p. 258.

⁶⁹ Eisenschmidt 2004 p. 125.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Gräslund 1985 p. 300.

appear, does not necessarily argue that the deceased in fact was Christian as objects with Christian motifs, due to their distinctiveness, have been popular.⁷³

The questions related to the construction and expression of gender roles in the Viking Age are equally complex. In recent years, the usual equation between biological sex and culturally constructed notions of gender has been critically reassessed and the interpretation of what constitutes both female and male goods has been challenged.⁷⁴ One could argue that the prevailing interpretations of female and male goods, were (and to a degree still are) rather stereotypical. The reason may be due to the fact that on many occasions the skeletal remains are either sparse or missing, which leaves the archaeologist to assume sex and gender of the buried based solely on the grave goods.⁷⁵ In a Scandinavian context, this has meant identifying skeletons buried with weapons and certain tools as male, and those buried with jewelry and domestic implements as female.⁷⁶ Objects that are mainly interpreted as female-related are pairs of tortoise brooches, disc brooches, trefoil brooches, arm rings, necklaces, caskets and the implements such as those used in production of textiles (spindle whorls, wool combs and weaving battens).⁷⁷ It can be claimed that such objects serve as indicators of Viking Age femininity. Through contextualizing archaeologically recovered objects with historical and literary sources researchers like Judith Jesch proposed that the idealized notions of femininity revolved around successful housekeeping, maintaining household and production of textiles. This domestic ideal of a woman was associated with several material objects (e.g., keys, jewelry) and practices (e.g., spinning and weaving). An example, could be the Westness-woman that was discovered in 1963. She was a young woman in her twenties buried with a newborn child. In this particular grave, domestic implements such as wool combs, a weaving batten, a bronze basin, a knife and a pair of shears, including a sickle for outdoor use were uncovered.⁷⁸ Keys might have been associated with female gender roles. It is far from common that all female burials contain keys⁷⁹, but when they are deposited they are most commonly found with other objects associated with women. The symbolism of keys in female burials, has been widely discussed. In the Danish law '*Jyske Lov*' that dates from 1241, it is mentioned that women

⁷³ Eisencshmidt 2004 p. 134.

⁷⁴ Sørensen 2009 p. 260.

⁷⁵ Jesch 1991 p. 13.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Jesch 1991 p. 14.

⁷⁸ Jesch 1991 p. 9.

⁷⁹ Pantmann 2011 p. 76.

had the right to the keys of the household.⁸⁰ Others have suggested the religious symbolism of keys as either a symbol of Christianity or a symbol of the Norse god Freya. Lastly, the symbolism of keys has also been associated with wealth and social standing, arguing that the keys have been used to lock away valuables.⁸¹ However, there are several occasions in which there is no clear link between caskets and chests (which could be indices of a certain wealthy social status) and keys in burials. They are rather rarely found together and when they are, they are rarely compatible.⁸² This does not necessarily question the symbolism of either keys or caskets, as symbols of status of wealth. A study of female burials on Zealand carried out by Pernille Pantmann, shows that among the 102 female graves 9 of them contained keys.⁸³ Given that keys are mainly found in relation to female burials, perhaps they ought to be perceived as associated with femininity, in the same way as jewelry such as tortoise brooches, disc brooches, trefoil brooches, arm rings, necklaces and production orientated grave goods such as weaving tools. The fact that '*Jyske Lov*' is from 1241, it is a somewhat a doubtful conclusion that it would necessarily have to do with the right to the keys and thereby the household back in the Viking Age. Especially, if the earlier argument presented by Anne-Sofie Gräslund that a farm (or household) in the Viking Age was run like a firm, equally by husband and wife is borne in mind.⁸⁴

It would seem that tools can be perceived as being indicators for both femininity and masculinity. Men too have been buried with tools, however, these tools are of a rather different sort and associated with different tasks than weaving. Many of the tools that are traditionally linked to a distinctly male gender role, are tools of blacksmithing. Shears, hammers, tongs and files⁸⁵ as well as tool boxes. However, it is important to keep in mind that tools are rarely found in graves. In Denmark only one certain Viking Age male grave, has been uncovered in Lejre in 1962, which contained blacksmithing tools. The blacksmithing tools comprised a hammer, a pair of tongs and a file.⁸⁶ Case studies carried out by Anne Stalsberg suggest in some respect that men and women may have engaged in much the same tasks in the Viking Age. Based on the grave goods from a Varangian women's grave, which included weighing equipment, linking the deceased with trade, Anne

⁸⁰ Pantmann 2011 p. 75.

⁸¹ Pantmann 2011 p. 76.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Gräslund 2001 p. 89.

⁸⁵ Jesch 1991 p. 14.

⁸⁶ Pedersen 2014 p. 140.

Stalsberg stresses that trading was a family-based matter. This example illustrates an interesting aspect of gender roles, as it suggests that men and women should be perceived as both 'indispensable members of their economic micro-unit (i.e. their family)'.⁸⁷ This does indeed illustrate a significant organization of the household in the Viking Age, and it also aids in some respect, in the disrupting of the borders, of what should be perceived as either 'feminine' or 'masculine'. Apart from blacksmithing tools, military orientated burial goods, such as weapons and equestrian equipment have routinely been associated with men and masculinity. Weapons and equestrian equipment have been closely associated with a masculine warrior gender role. There is a significant number of aristocratic burials in all of Scandinavia, with a varying arsenal of weaponry and other burial goods generally associated with masculinity. A good example is a richly furnished aristocratic burial in Grimstrup South-Western Jutland that was uncovered in 1983.⁸⁸ As with the case of female graves, the interpretation is challenging as human remains rarely are preserved, so the interpretation may be rather simplistic or reductive. In respect of this challenge, some anomalies may be overlooked due to lack of skeletal human remains. Contextualizing these objects with the help of written sources may help us establishing the contemporary ideals of male gender roles. Military and martial arts have been means of negotiating masculinity in death, and is articulated primarily in the military implements in burials, and the martial aspect of a male's identity have been considerably contentious.⁸⁹ The Sjörup runestone in Scania from around 1000 AD, emphasizes the valiant notions of martial arts⁹⁰ and the affiliation to the male gender saying:

*'Saxe raised this stone for his fellow Esbern, son of Toke. He did not flee at Uppsala, but fought as long as he had weapons.'*⁹¹

Writings such as the one on the Sjörup runestone and the contentious warrior identity, may be the reason as to why, equestrian equipment and offensive as well as defensive weapons are mainly interpreted as being associated with male graves, and ultimately can be defined as objects resembling masculinity. In this context it is interesting to consider research conducted in Birka in 2017, suggesting that in some instances Viking Age women were buried with weapons thus apparently taking male gender roles. This example possibly

⁸⁷ Stalsberg 2001 p. 73.

⁸⁸ Stoumann 2009 p. 23.

⁸⁹ Hadley 2008 p. 277.

⁹⁰ Jesch 2009 p. 73.

⁹¹ Roesdahl 2012 p. 158.

illustrates that the use of weapons in burials may be more nuanced and gender roles more fluid. Furthermore, it does seem that jewelry is not necessarily present to the same extent and amount in male burials as it is in female burials. The materials of the jewelry may for some part be the same, such as glass and amber beads, pendants and even some brooches. However, the brooches that most often can be associated with males are penannular brooches.⁹² Perhaps, this tendency can shed light upon what was the contemporary thought on masculinity and when something was masculine to wear, in the Viking Age. Given that both feeling either feminine or masculine are considerably important aspects of both *being* and the very creation of one's identity, a great factor in the shaping of one's identity is material culture. Material culture can be altered and manipulated, to be used in specific manners, and to fit into the contemporary beliefs, imaginations and notions of either femininity and masculinity of that time, and therefore express it in specific ways.

The important influence that objects have on individuals, and how the material culture is capable of being altered and manipulated. The complexity of material objects is stated by Lou Taylor:

*'Material objects matter because they are complex, symbolic bundles of social, cultural and individual meanings fused onto something we can touch, see and own. That very quality is the reason that social value can so quickly penetrate into and evaporate out of common objects.'*⁹³

Furthermore, this is also why gender and material culture are so intricately linked; gender gains material reality and affective qualities as it becomes acted out and experienced through material culture.⁹⁴ Though the material culture can be altered, with the intention to befit the contemporary ideals of femininity and masculinity, it is also important to consider the powerful impact of cultural interactions, in the Viking Age. Different forms of mobility and cross-cultural interactions could affect the perception of objects and their association with particular gender roles possibly causing alterations and changes, in what was considered either feminine or masculine to wear and use.⁹⁵ Ultimately, this could affect the burial traditions as well. Therefore, culture contact is, in matters such as identity, perceptions of masculinity and femininity, worth to be considered. Especially when considering Haithabu

⁹² Jesch 1991 p. 14.

⁹³ Taylor 2002 p. 72.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Glørstad 2012 p. 30.

as a significant and large commercial urban center, where a great amount of people lived and supposedly moved to as well. By moving among people, such a population may undoubtedly have had the need of reflecting themselves to one another, which led to ideas and perceptions of what is needed to *be* - and be considered as - either *being* feminine or masculine.

There are many debates about the nature of gender categories and the material components and reflections in the Viking Age and other historical contexts, and some of the conclusions might seem either challenging or perhaps even doubtful. Following recent examination of gender construction and notions of femininity and masculinity the present study operates with similar material parameters for the grouping of individuals and deciphering possible gender roles as reflected in grave goods. In order to properly engage with the research aims of this study and the analyses, it has been crucial and needed to use these parameters as a starting point. The former conclusions associating particular objects with femininity or masculinity, will be subjected to critical scrutiny.

The social stratigraphy of the people of the Viking Age is rather diverse, dynamic and with considerable regional differences. Though sagas make a fair notion of what the social stratification in the Viking Age looked like, there are no concrete and contemporary sources regarding the structure of the society in the Viking Age. Written sources (e.g. runes and runestones) and archaeological finds, are therefore the sources for reconstructing the social landscape.⁹⁶ The archaeological evidence is clear that there have been great hierarchical differences between people. Especially grave goods and larger monumental settlements, are indicators of a social strata. As some contemporary burials are rather poorly equipped with fundamental everyday objects, and some are richly furnished with all sorts of expensive and luxurious artefacts, they are clear indications that a certain hierarchical difference has been established and practiced between aristocracy and free folk. There is even archaeological evidence in high status burials, e.g. in Lejre, where sacrificial rites of people have taken place. Slavery, is believed to be a widely common practice, and human sacrifice in rich burials is associated with thralls as commercial goods and 'grave goods', so they could continue their work for their master in the afterlife.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Roesdahl 2012 p. 61.

⁹⁷ Roesdahl 2012 p. 63.

3. The burials of Haithabu – on trace of the individual

The overall number of graves in Haithabu consists of 1350 burials dating in the period 8th century to the 10th century. These are scattered around Haithabu, both inside and outside of the semi-circular rampart. The two largest densities of graves are in the flat-grave cemetery inside of the semi-circular rampart, and at a site just south of the semi-circular rampart. There have not been conducted comprehensive anthropological analyses of the bone material from Haithabu, which is the reason why the interpretations in this thesis are primarily based on grave goods, the measurements of skeletons and grave-pits. Furthermore, there is a slight but significant overweight of female graves compared to male graves, which ultimately can distort the overall image of the distribution of objects, see fig. 3:

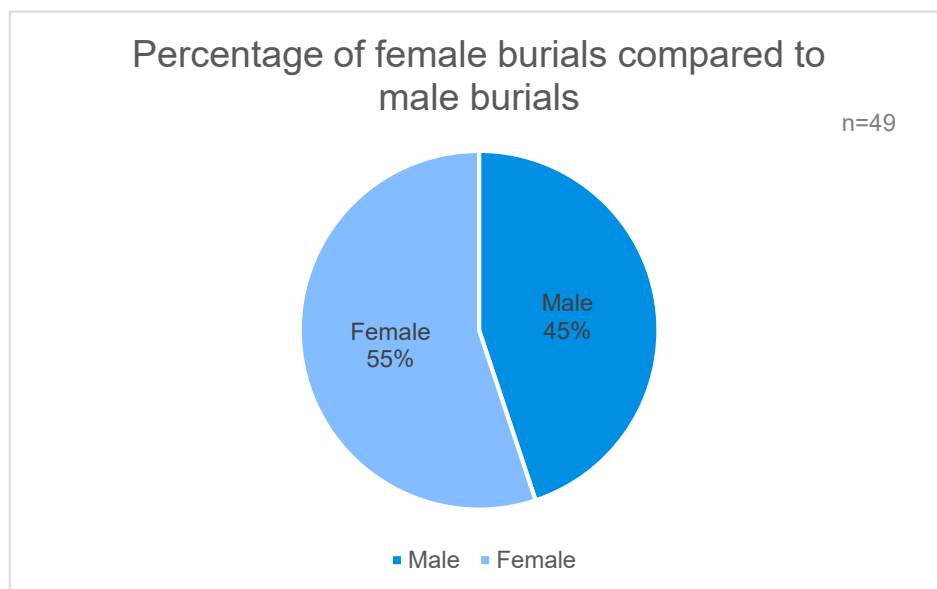


Fig. 3: Piechart displaying the overweight of recorded and gendered female graves, in contrast to recorded and gendered male graves.

Fig. 3 is based on 22 either certain or presumed male burials and 27 either secure or presumed female burials. The distribution of the gendered graves is aggregated with the traditional interpretation of affiliation patterns in objects.

The individuals that have lived and existed in the past, have had a much more nuanced history that is possible to be recover and acknowledge archaeologically. In this thesis, I scrutinize the objects deposited in the selection of 238 furnished graves, their quality, quantity and pairing, I consider them in the light of the approaches developed in material culture, gender and burial studies as well as research on Viking Age social, religious and

gender identities. Such contextual analysis will lead me to interpretation regarding possible material construction and expression of identities in Haithabu. The analysis focuses first on the deceased whose sex/gender and age has been determined in Eisenchmidt's research. The observed patterns (and possible anomalies) will then be extended to other the ungended 188 furnished graves.

3.1 The grave goods from the Haithabu burials

Of the 1350 graves excavated in Haithabu, 258 were furnished. As the cremation burials have been disregarded, the burials analyzed in this thesis are the 238 inhumation graves. A wide range of different objects have been uncovered in these graves. Objects that may quite possibly be gifts given as a last kind regard to the deceased, perhaps heirlooms or beloved items of the deceased or maybe just tools – essential objects for an everyday life and its extension in afterlife. The number and types of objects for this analysis is listed in appendix 2. The material groupings are the same as the ones presented in the table for the network analysis (see appendix 1). The table for the network analysis as well as the network analysis itself, will make the foundation for the interpretation, of the association patterns of the different objects. The association patterns of objects may be able to reveal certain tendencies that will be helpful in order to conclude whether or not some objects are closely linked to a gender or other identity. The conclusions reached on the bases of Haithabu material can enrich current discussions on gender identity in Viking Age Scandinavia. They can serve as means to disrupt the borders and stereotypical imaginations of grave goods and what gender these particular grave goods are related to. In the attempt to connect the association patterns to genders and gender roles, a possibly more nuanced picture of a long-gone society may emerge. Also, as some objects may be fused with different meanings, they may possibly be reflecting a certain cultural and religious practice, such as the existence and significance of highly regarded heirlooms. It is true that it may be hard if not impossible to argue, solely on the grave goods whether some objects are heirlooms or not. It is however possible, to look at the wear and tear of objects to conclude whether they have been altered and modified from being one object to another, and whether they have been used prior to the deposition in the grave or not. An example of a metal piece from a brooch that may have undergone some modification is the metal piece, presumably a bracket that was found during the excavation of Borgring in Køge, (Denmark). The metal bracket was seemingly identical with an unusual brooch uncovered in a Viking Age female's

grave in the Viking Age fortress of Fyrkat⁹⁸, where both shape and ornamentation fit very well (see fig. 4).



Fig. 4: To the left is the brooch from Fyrkat, and to the right the metal bracket from Borgring.

<https://videnskab.dk/kultur-samfund/det-var-satans-dette-smykke-kan-have-tilhoert-blaatands-trolddomskvinde>

In order to give an overview of how the grave goods in the burials of Haithabu are distributed and associated with each other, a network analysis have been developed for this purpose (see fig. 5).

The network analysis shows the distribution of the grave goods that are associated with both males, females and children. Furthermore, it is developed to show the associations between the objects themselves, as these may be able to serve as means of identifying certain pairing of objects.

The frequencies of these occurrences, which are the data that have produced this network analysis, are shown in the table in appendix 1.

⁹⁸ <https://videnskab.dk/kultur-samfund/det-var-satans-dette-smykke-kan-have-tilhoert-blaatands-trolddomskvinde>

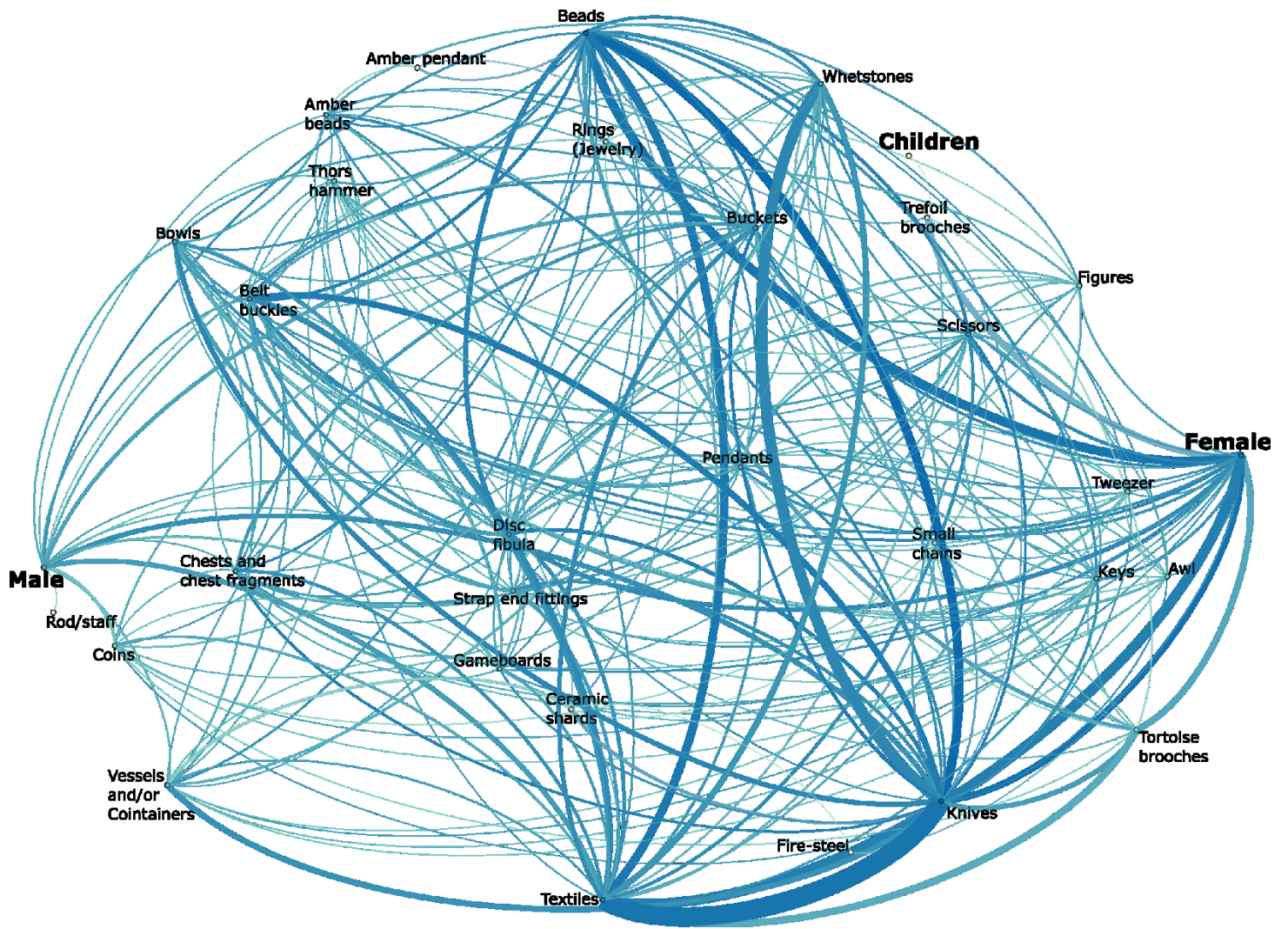


Fig. 5: Network analysis that shows the distribution of the grave goods that are associated with either male, female or children graves. It also shows the associations and combinations of the individual items.

Burials with grave goods	Number of burials
Female	27
Male	22
Children	1
Inhumation graves without recorded gender	188
Total of graves	238

Table 1: Showing the distribution of the graves in Haithabu.

The material group 'beads' includes beads of different materials, such as glass, quartz and silver. Amber beads are excluded from this group, as they appear with seemingly equal frequencies in male and female burials, but they are associated with the same objects.

Before engaging comprehensively with the network analysis and the grave goods that are associated with the main groups: male, female and children, it may be informative to give an overview of how these graves are distributed (see table 1).

The analysis will include the 27 female and 22 male burials and the objects found in respectively female or male burials. By doing so throughout the analysis, it is possible to create a base for consideration of gendered objects, and gendered object combinations that may allow interpretations of gender in the remaining furnished inhumation graves.

The graves that have been presented in the network analysis (fig. 5), are both richly furnished as well as rather poorly furnished burials. Consequently, the great boat-chamber burial, as well as other aristocratic burials. Material groups such as military-orientated paraphernalia, which would include both weapons and equestrian equipment, have been excluded from this analysis as they will be brought back for another analysis and debate later in the thesis.

The object combinations presented in the network analysis (fig.5) indicate that the most frequent and common object combination is that of textile fragments and knives. The second most frequent object combination is that of knives and whetstones, closely followed by the combination of knives and beads. Female burials also have a major tendency to contain both beads and knives. In view of the theories regarding gender objects presented in chapter 2, there is clear evidence in the network analysis that certain groups of objects should be taken as indicative for gender. An example, could be the generally large frequencies of jewelry and their associations with female burials, as well as keys, scissors, tweezers and awls. Males on the other hand are much more likely to have a very diverse range of paraphernalia of grave goods, with knives being the most frequent one.

3.2 Female burials in Haithabu and the associated grave goods

The female burials of Haithabu were furnished with a vast range of objects. In order to critically assess the grave goods that have been uncovered in the female burials, the following analysis will be divided into two sub-chapters, where analyses of the tools that are primarily found in the female graves in Haithabu will be carried out, followed by another sub-

chapter assessing the jewelry, as well as all the other groups of objects. The material presented, is from both certain and expected female burials, based on the grave goods.

3.2.1 Female burials and their tools – a possible indicator for female gendered labour?

From the network analysis (fig. 4.), it is apparent that some specific objects have a much larger tendency of being deposited in female burials, than others.

Objects that can be used for work, such as awls, knives, scissors, tweezers and whetstones were found in many graves (fig. 6). These were tools intended for specific tasks as well as multifunctional everyday objects. How they are distributed in female graves is visualized in figure 6:

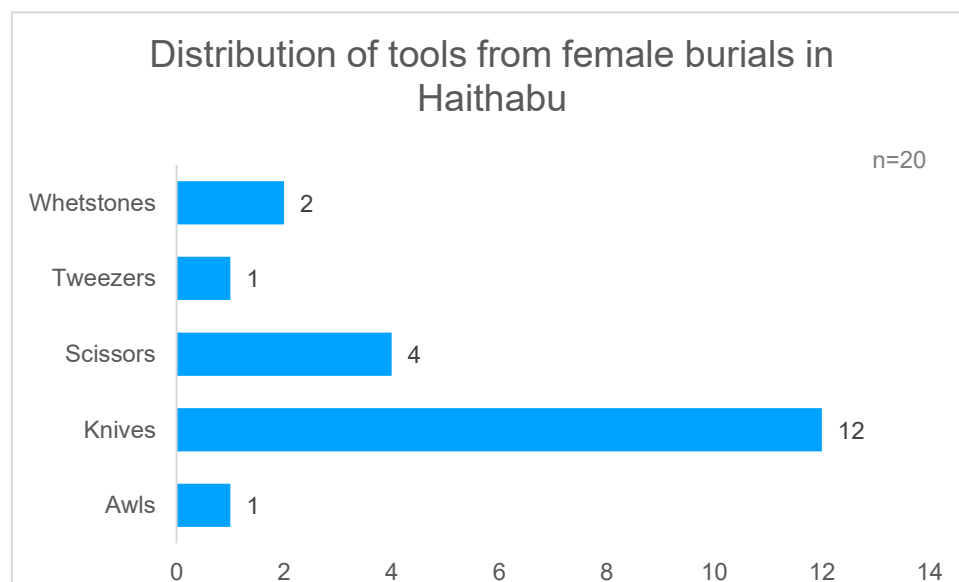


Fig. 6: Histogram visualizing the distribution of tools in female burials.

The histogram shows that knives have the largest occurrence among all tools in the female burials. Knives have been uncovered in 12 of the 27 female graves, and ought to be perceived as a commonly used and highly regarded tool, becoming also a central part of the grave goods. In grave 32, grave 77, grave 108, grave 307, grave 427 and chamber burial 2 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*) the knife is situated closely to the waist of the deceased, suggesting that the knife would have been attached to a belt.⁹⁹ A peculiarity, is the chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*), where the knife was uncovered in a casket.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 302, p. 310, p. 313, p. 326, p. 362 and p. 406.

¹⁰⁰ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 411.

Traditionally, the labours of women have been associated with indoor-activities in the household and the outdoor-activities of keeping gardens. Knives could have been used, for example, in food preparation: cutting cabbages, gutting of fish or harvesting herbs. The high number of knives suggests that they were so imbedded in the material culture that it is quite possible that they were fused with an essential aspect of one's very existence. It is rather easy to imagine that the use of a knife has been crucial in the daily chores and as such assumed the role of an important object in burial rites. Though the number of whetstones in the female burials is rather low, these objects ought still to be given attention. As knives were essential tools in daily chores, the blade would inevitably become dull from use. It could therefore reasonably be claimed that whetstones are nearly as essential for the usage of a knife, as the knife itself, as the efficiency of a knife – and thereby the use of the knife, is dependent on the use of whetstones, to sharpen the blade. However, less than half of all the female furnished graves have knives present in the grave and only two out of 27 contain whetstones. Theoretically, if whetstones were such essential tools, one would expect a much larger number of whetstones appearing in uncovered female burials. Or perhaps, the ritual in this case is more complex and has an individualized character, what paraphernalia that have been considered for the given deceased individual.

The other objects that can be connected with the ideal notion of women as a primary household caretaker involved in the chores are artefacts related to spinning and weaving. Such an understanding may arise given that most of these tools that are found in the female graves, are orientated towards weaving and other indoor-activities, as argued by Judith Jesch in the aforementioned example of the Westness-woman. In the case of Haithabu, however, there is an absence of concrete weaving tools such as weaving combs and spindle whorls in the female graves, which poses a question if weaving would be the dominant female task in Haithabu.

Only one single find of an awl, in the material from Haithabu. Awls have presumably been used for either widening a hole in a fabric or to make a hole for threading a piece of fabric or shoes. Awls ought to be perceived as closely connected to needlework tasks related to both tailoring and weaving, which are both in-door activities. However, it is important to stress that only a single find of an awl and a rather low number of scissors, which can also be connected to textile related work. In this specific case (grave 497) the composition of grave goods indicates burial of a woman skilled in tailoring - with an accepted understanding

that grave goods are a clear resemblance of an individual's identity and that the deceased's paraphernalia of grave goods are means for a continuation of the deceased's labour in the afterlife. This grave is one of the most richly furnished among female graves of Haithabu. Apart from an awl, scissors and a tweezer, a filigree inlaid disc fibula along with a large collection of jewelry, table-ware and a chest were deposited. It could be argued that given the fact that the finds of scissors are exclusively present in the female graves, makes it plausible that these tools presumably would have been associated with women. One could imagine that such scissors would come in handy, when one would have to cut threads – perhaps frayed ends of thread that could be a requisite, to do either sewing repairs on clothing, or for shortening thread for the fabric that is being weaved. Given the complete absence of scissors in male graves, such tools seem to be associated with female work. Another use of scissors, could perhaps also be of hygienic use, more specifically to cut hair. One may wonder, whether or not the scissors ought to be perceived strictly as being a symbolism of the labour of weaving or the female gender in a broader sense, and perhaps even connect it to a labour of hairdressing. It is apparent from various sources that the Scandinavians would have had an eye for fashion, which could permit an understanding of the use of scissors as being both a practical instrument for the execution of the chores of the day, but also a means to develop and follow the latest hairdressing fashion that could alter an individual's expression and alter the surrounding population's perception of of an individual and that individual's identity. In an anonymous old English letter, where a man exhorts his brother Edward to follow the custom of his Angle-Saxon ancestors and not commit to the 'Danish fashion with barbed neck and blinded eyes', gives the expression that the Scandinavians were dandified and fashion creative.¹⁰¹

Another object that could be categorized as a tool, is the tweezers that have been uncovered in the aforementioned grave 497. A special feature of these particular tweezers is that they were uncovered, with attached fragments of textile – possibly preserved from the corrosion of the tweezers' metal. This gives a clue that the tweezers were perhaps placed on the person, which is an important and crucial aspect when dealing with graves and grave goods, as it tells that the object, in this case the tweezers, was found in situ, and possibly would have been either laid on the deceased, or be attached to a belt. These tweezers ought to be considered as a special find, as they do not relate to the sphere of daily work. It is of course possible that the tweezers could have been used in some sort of in-door activities, perhaps

¹⁰¹ Roesdahl 2012 pp. 41-42.

to make it easier to grasp upon a thread and drive it through a hole in a fabric, and therefore used in a much finer work of tailoring fabrics or textiles.¹⁰² However, it is also plausible, and perhaps even more convincing that the tweezers ought to be perceived as related to a concern of hygiene, or perhaps as medical tools as suggested by Annette Frölich¹⁰³. Finds of tweezers in burials are rather rare though when they do appear they are often in combination with other hygienic objects, and altogether interpreted as a 'toilet bag'.¹⁰⁴ Given that in Haithabu there has only been a single find of tweezers, and that this has been found in situ in a female burial, might give a notion that such tweezer has primarily been in use by females. It is however important to stress that it is not self-evident that due to the fact that a tweezers have not been uncovered in a male's grave, it does not necessarily mean that the tweezers are exclusively found in female burials and that men would not have been using tweezers. The burial material suggest that these objects have either not been preserved or been material element in the staging of male's burials, and thereby taken part in the male inventory of grave goods. Tweezers ought in most cases be considered a necessity for keeping a good hygiene. Perhaps, tweezers are a means for keeping a beautiful face – like grooming the eye brows. If so, it is quite possible that they could help in forging an idea of what the ideal of beauty was in the Viking Age. It thereby becomes more than just a tool for hygienic purposes, but it is also, depending on the use, altered into a beauty-making object that in some sense could be compared to the use of a comb.

3.2.2 Female burials - adornments and jewelry

The greatest inventory of female orientated grave goods in Haithabu, is that of jewelry and adornments. The gathered material that will be presented in this chapter, is collected from both richly furnished graves as well as rather poorly furnished graves. Therefore, this chapter is unable to, with certainty, clearly visualize, comment and analyze the very lowest social layers of the society of Haithabu, as they will be assumed to have been buried without adornments of this sort, and thereby have no grave goods to represent. This chapter only describes the jewelry and adornments that have been uncovered in secure and expected female burials of Haithabu.

¹⁰² Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 p. 171.

¹⁰³ Frölich 2004 p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 p. 171.

The distribution of the adornments from female burials in Haithabu, is as presented in fig. 7.

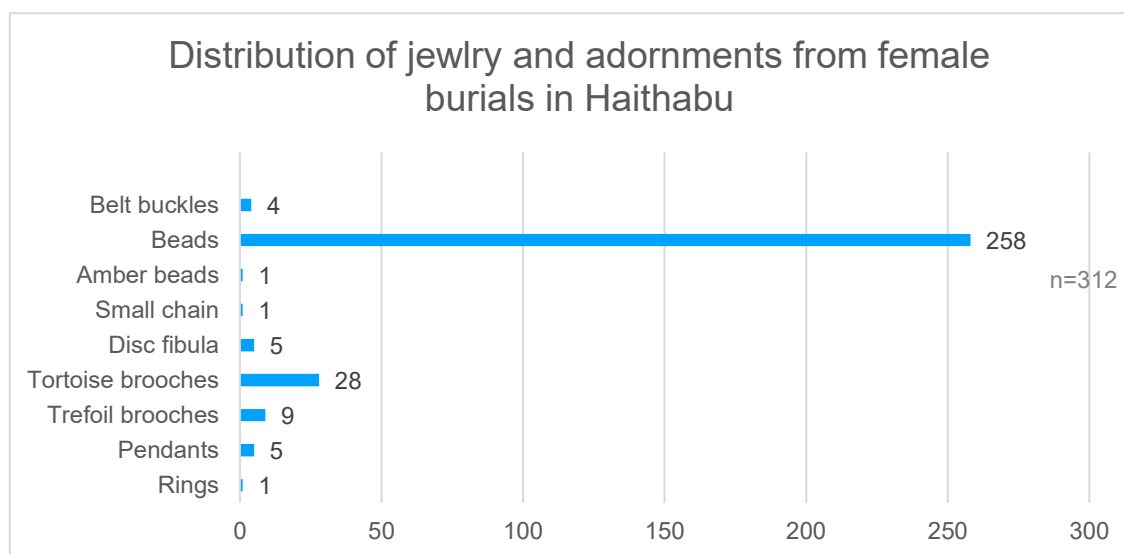


Fig. 7: Histogram visualizing the distribution of jewelries and adornments in female burials of Haithabu.

The histogram shows a tendency in both female fashion, but also of what might be considered materialization of the female gender. The most popular piece of jewelry is beads that are distributed in 14 female burials. There is a general tendency that beads would be distributed in noteworthy numbers. 18 beads were uncovered in grave 77, 44 in grave 81, 47 in chamber burial 3 and an assortment of 97 beads was distributed in grave 810. Due to the position of the beads, they must have been put in the grave either as a necklace on the chest, or have been a complex arrangement of beads between the tortoise brooches.¹⁰⁵ The grave in which the largest assortment of beads had been distributed, is grave 810, where 97 beads were uncovered along with a pair of tortoise brooches. The positioning of the beads in grave 810 was similar, to the positioning of the beads in chamber burial 3. The beads would presumably have been attached between the pair of tortoise brooches however, in grave 810 the beads would have been strung and put in several layers.¹⁰⁶ The generally high inventory of beads in female burials, constructs a notion that beads in relatively large numbers, may be taken as expressions of womanhood. The second most popular ornament is the tortoise brooches – or oval brooches that have been uncovered in 15 female burials. They are all richly adorned and ornamented, mainly made of copper alloy

¹⁰⁵ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 Vol. 2 pp. 332.

¹⁰⁶ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 Vol. 2 pp. 382-383.

and date primarily to the 9th century.¹⁰⁷ In some cases, in Scandinavia, tortoise brooches have been made of copper alloy and then gold-plated.¹⁰⁸ A rather rare example of tortoise brooches, is a pair from chamber burial 5, made of silver with filigree.¹⁰⁹ The most common objects that are uncovered alongside with tortoise brooches in burials, are knives with 7 incidents followed by beads with 5 incidents.

One of the reasons for such a large occurrence of tortoise brooches, may be due to their very practical use which is to fasten the straps of the women's dresses, as seen on fig. 8. However, apart from its very practical use, it also rapidly becomes an indicator of female presence or a female gendered presence. Previous research of ornamental objects and styles suggests that some objects that are predominant in male grave goods on the Continent, are converted and become female adornments in the North.¹¹⁰ Examples are trefoil brooches, which are believed to derive from sword hilt fittings, from the Carolingian Empire.¹¹¹

In the burial material from the female graves of Haithabu trefoil brooches were also found. Considering the positioning of the trefoil brooches, found in situ in the female burials (see fig. 9), it is possible that they would have been used in order to fasten clothes or fabrics, such as capes.

No reconstruction of the single children's grave with a trefoil brooch has been produced in the original publication, which is why that particular grave is not incorporated in fig. 8. However, the children's grave has been considered as a young female, and is therefore still considered in the analysis.



Fig. 8: Reconstruction of women's dresses in the Viking Age. On her chest is two tortoise brooches, to fasten the dress.

*Roesdahl, E. (ed.) 2012:
Vikingernes Verden, 8th ed.,
Copenhagen, pp. 44.*

¹⁰⁷ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 Vol. 1 p. 95.

¹⁰⁸ Klæsøe 1997 p. 111.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Klæsøe 1997 p. 129.

¹¹¹ Roesdahl 2012 p. 45.

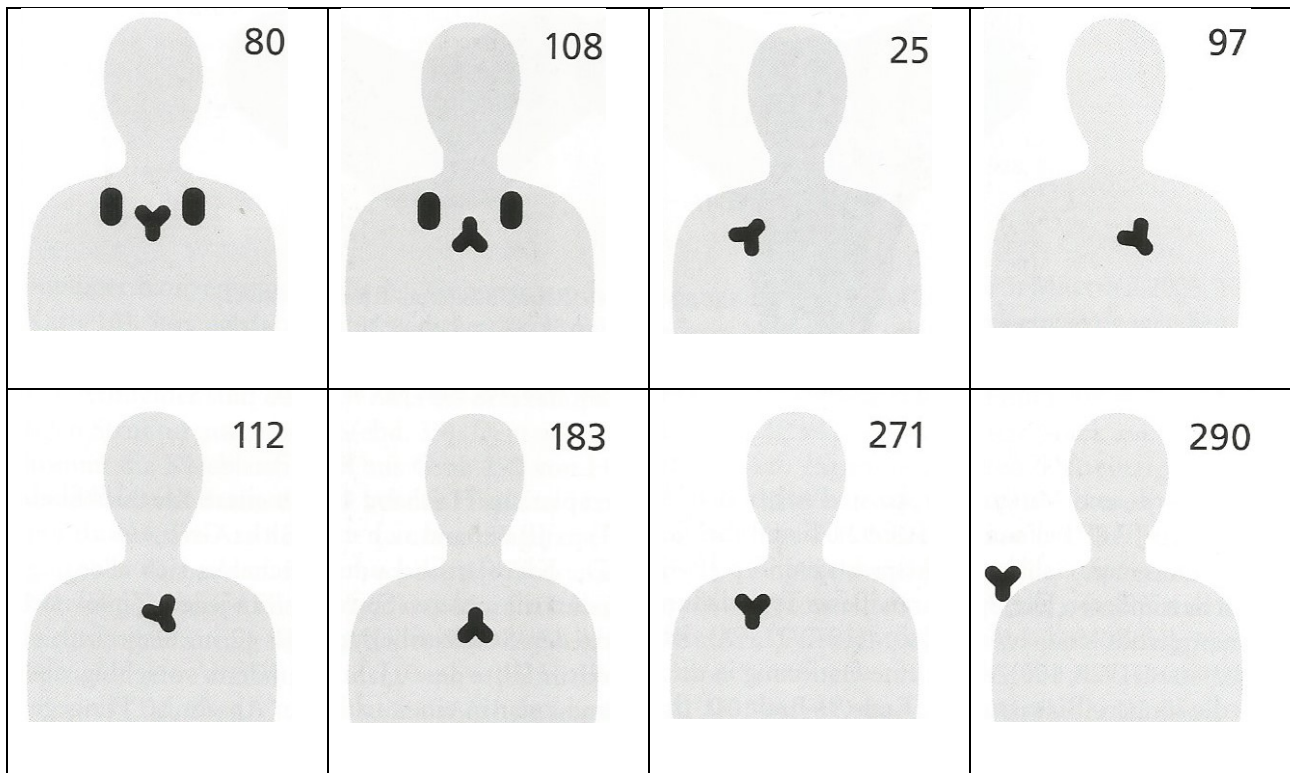


Fig. 9: Eight reconstructions showing how the trefoil brooches were found in 8 of the female graves in Haithabu.

Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt 2010: Die Gräber von Haithabu, Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, vol. 1, pp. 97.

The reconstructions of how the trefoil brooches were found in the graves, suggest that trefoil brooches supposedly could not have had the same practical use of purpose, as the tortoise brooches would have i.e. to fasten the straps for a dress. The use of trefoil brooches was seemingly more intended for a practical purpose of fastening a fabric such a shawl or cloak as suggested by Else Roesdahl.¹¹² The varying orientations of the trefoil brooches, can possibly be due to either personal preferences of the deceased individual or perhaps it may be cause of change in fashion. Though given the rather low number of occurrences with a whole set of brooches (tortoise and trefoil brooches), it is interesting why such a full paraphernalia is present in some graves and not in others.

The fact that these trefoil brooches have a rather low occurrence in comparison to other groups of adornments and other ornamental objects in the female burials, and considering what objects the trefoil brooches are mainly associated with, suggests that trefoil brooches as single objects ought not necessarily be connected to the aristocratic stratum of society.

¹¹² Roesdahl 2012 p. 45.

They have without any doubt been expensive to procure, but the case of a young girl being buried with a trefoil brooch, allows consideration whether some of these trefoil brooches have been purchased by the individual in the grave or whether they may have been either heirlooms or gifts. Heirlooms differ from gifts. Heirlooms are usually items that can be inherited from older generations. Although heirlooms are in a sense 'gifts', they do not fit the standard of gifts reciprocally exchanged, as defined by Michael Mauss. Maus argued that a gift is never free, but will always be given as a social obligation and will need to be paid back in one way or another. The gift does thereby require some sort of reciprocity, in the form of an object, a favor, confidentiality or promise of fidelity.¹¹³ In terms

of burial rites, perhaps gifts are fused with another connotation as being part of a ritual, or perhaps to prevent haunting from a wronged burial rite.

Another reason why the majority of brooches in the grave goods material from Haithabu are tortoise brooches and not trefoil brooches may be that the tortoise brooches have been in use for a much longer period in Haithabu than trefoil brooches, which automatically would lead to a much larger material of tortoise brooches compared to trefoil brooches. The trefoil brooch was a new creation at the beginning of the Viking Age, whereas the tortoise brooch had old roots in the societies and cultures in Scandinavia.¹¹⁴

Apart from the large number of beads both types of brooches are relatively common. This therefore forms a base for arguing that these brooches ought to be perceived as indicators of female presence. However, the groups of jewelry with a much lower frequency in the burial material from Haithabu, such as the small chain, the ring, the disc fibulas and the pendants ought to be perceived as equally important as the brooches and beads. Especially the single find of a small chain suggests its use for practical purposes. As argued by Else Roesdahl, the aforementioned tools that would constitute a 'toilet bag', this collection of



Fig. 10: Picture taken of a disc fibula with filigree uncovered in the female grave 32.

Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt 2010: Die Gräber von Haithabu, Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, vol.2, pp. 427.

¹¹³ Bille & Sørensen 2012 pp. 125-126.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

hygienic tools would have needed to be fastened, in order to be brought along. A chain would have functioned either as a fastener between two brooches adorned with beads, or as a fastener of small tools.

As with most items with needle attachments, disc fibulas ought also to be perceived as a practical means of fastening clothing. These disc fibulas could however be adorned and ornamented in many ways, and may be associated with the socially elevated groups in Haithabu. The most exquisite disc fibulas from Haithabu, are either made of gold or gold-plated silver with ornamentations such as filigree inlays (see fig 10).

In Haithabu, disc fibulas ornamented with filigree, such as the one uncovered in 1855/1856 grave 32, would be rather expensive to procure. In grave 32 the brooch was found with other objects such as a pair of tortoise brooches, a bead, a knife, a whetstone, a scissor, a key, a chain and a coin.¹¹⁵ In the other four graves it was paired with a pair of tortoise brooches, a filigree pendant, 7 beads of varying materials, a knife, a ring with ferrule, a lock and a stag figure (grave 45)¹¹⁶, a fragment of an iron fitting (grave 76)¹¹⁷, a pair of tortoise brooches, 18 beads of varying materials, a knife (grave 77)¹¹⁸, a Thor's hammer, three pendants, 12 beads, scissors, an awl, tweezers, a chest, a bowl, a wooden bucket, a meat fork, a spoon, a wooden figure and a knife (grave 497).¹¹⁹ The low frequency of this type of jewelry may imply their exclusiveness, solely or primarily associated with a certain part of the population and certain layers of the social stratification of Haithabu.

3.2.3 Female burials and everyday objects

Gender and gender roles can be acknowledged, by analyzing the combination patterns of objects. Fig. 11 presents the distribution of everyday objects in female burials in Haithabu:

¹¹⁵ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 29.

¹¹⁶ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 33.

¹¹⁷ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 46.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 146.

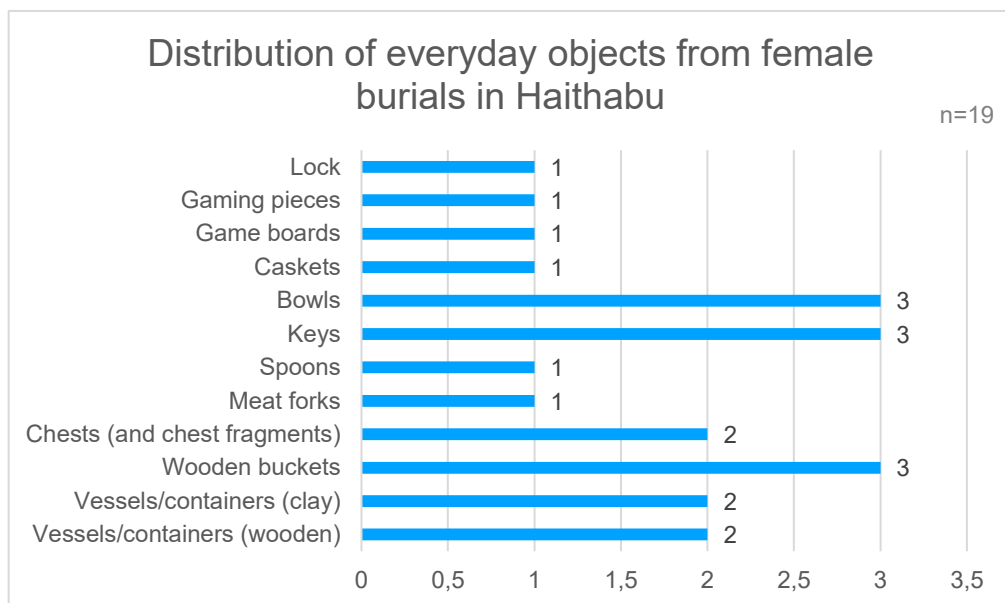


Fig. 11: Histogram displaying the distribution of everyday objects from female burials in Haithabu.

The objects chosen for the histogram are objects that did not fit into the categorization of either tools or jewelry, but are still objects that are considered to have a significant impact on the lives of the individuals.

The highest frequencies of everyday objects in female burials, are bowls (grave 497, chamber burial 2 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*) and chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*)), keys (grave 32, chamber burial 2 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*) and chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*)) and wooden buckets (grave 497, chamber burial 3 and chamber burial 2 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*)). The graves in which these everyday objects were uncovered, especially grave 497 and chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*) are rather richly furnished. In grave 497 the bowl and the bucket were paired with a large assortment of jewelry and tools: 12 beads, a disc fibula with filigree, three pendants, tweezers, scissors, an awl, a chest, a meatfork, a spoon, a chest, a wooden figure and a knife.¹²⁰ Generally, the chamber burials in Haithabu are rather richly furnished in terms of tools, jewelry and everyday objects. The chamber burial 2 on the cemetery *Südgräberfeld-Ost* apart from the wooden bucket, bowl and wooden vessel, it was furnished with a disc fibula, 3 beads, a key and a knife.¹²¹ Another case is the chamber burial 5 from the same cemetery, which included: a pair of tortoise brooches, two disc fibulas, a golden pendant, an amber bead, 10 beads, a whetstone, a key, two knives, a bowl, a

¹²⁰ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 pp. 146-150.

¹²¹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 pp. 246-249.

chest, a game board, a gaming piece and a scissor.¹²² The only lock that was uncovered in the female graves, is the one from grave 45, which also included a pair of tortoise brooches, a disc fibula, a pendant with filigree inlay, beads, a stag figure of silver, a knife and a ring.¹²³

As most of the everyday objects, such as buckets, bowls, wooden vessels and caskets and chests of wood, were made of organic material the considerably low occurrence may be related to issues of preservation. The probability of perished organic materials will inevitably distort the image and perception of the distribution of grave goods and the grave good patterns. Therefore, it is of vital importance, to consider the graves in which organic material has been preserved. Though the majority of everyday goods are found in richly furnished graves, the inventory of grave goods in female graves is very diverse, and the chamber burial 3, which contained a pair of tortoise brooches, 47 beads, and a carrying handle which is presumed to derive from a bucket¹²⁴, is, compared to the aforementioned graves, rather poorly furnished. So this suggests that everyday objects of organic material ought not to be perceived as objects predominantly associated with the higher stratum of society.

The rarity of game boards in female burials and the low occurrence of chests suggest that these objects were not commonly owned. The material combination of grave goods that is affiliated with the game board, is a chest. This combination of game board and chest, was encountered in chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*).¹²⁵ The second chest was uncovered in grave 497. Both with a significant assortment of grave goods. However, the chest and the game board, ought not to be fused with an understanding of a definitive female gender, as both game boards and chests are also uncovered in male burials. The large assortment of grave goods in both chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*) and grave 497, suggests that objects and a combination of objects of such a standard would be primarily, if not exclusively, associated with the wealthier and considerably higher stratum of society.

The rather unique finds of a meat fork and a spoon, and the context of the objects in a richly furnished grave (grave 497), may suggest that the meat fork and spoon ought to be interpreted and connected to the domestic sphere and cooking. The measurements of the meat fork would suggest a considerably higher probability that these implements, meat fork

¹²² Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 pp. 251-257.

¹²³ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 pp. 33-36.

¹²⁴ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 pp. 97-99.

¹²⁵ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 pp. 1251-1257.

and spoon, ought to be connected to cooking over eating. It is rather doubtful that the meat fork would have been used for eating, as the measurements of the meat fork is 46.4 cm in length.¹²⁶ Therefore it can be claimed that this meat fork is the sole implement in the grave goods from Haithabu that can be directly linked to females and the daily chores of cooking. Apart from the meat fork, there are other finds exclusively present in female burials, connecting females to the domestic sphere. These objects are keys and the single lock from grave 45.

The presence of keys and locks suggests an exclusive affiliation with the female gender, as these have not been uncovered in a single male burial. Furthermore, the material combinations in the burials, where keys and locks are present, are of a decidedly rich character. Graves such as grave 32 (a key, a pair of tortoise brooches, knife, whetstone, scissor, chain and coin)¹²⁷, grave 45 (a lock, a pair of tortoise brooches, a disc fibula, stag figure (of silver), ring, beads and pendants)¹²⁸, chamber burial 2 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*) and chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*). The dominant objects in the graves including either keys or locks, are decidedly female objects such as tortoise brooches. This suggests that if such a combination of materials is encountered in a burial, there is a significant probability that the deceased would have been female.

Albeit the presence of vessels of either clay or wood is considerably low in both female and male graves, they are still significant finds, and suggest a need for burying the deceased with objects from the daily life. Considering the finds of vessels from secure graves in Haithabu would suggest that vessels would have a higher probability of occurring in females graves. However, the general low occurrence of vessels in male and female graves, would make such a claim questionable, especially if the vessels originally were made of perishable material such as wood. Logically, as vessels ought to be considered as a rather common object among grave goods, it is convincing that vessels in burials would have occurred equally in females graves as well as males graves.

In terms of interpreting gender in ungendered graves based on the object combinations in the graves, the combination of jewelry and everyday objects in the female graves is of great importance. Such combinations, suggest that there is a significant connection between everyday objects such as keys, bowls and buckets and the use of jewelry. The use of jewelry

¹²⁶ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 149.

¹²⁷ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 29.

¹²⁸ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 33.

in the female graves is rather distinct to that of the males. This suggests that the probability that a deceased is of the female gender increases with the larger assortment of jewelry present in the burial. Furthermore, the rather unique object combinations of everyday objects such as keys, locks and tools such as tweezers, awls, and scissors are also considerable objects that can be taken as indicators of a female gender.

3.3 Male burials in Haithabu and the associated objects

The male burials of Haithabu were furnished with noteworthy assortments of objects. In order to critically assess the grave goods that have been uncovered in the male burials, the following analysis will be divided into three sub-chapters. Firstly, an analysis of the tools that are primarily found in the male graves will be carried out, followed by a sub-chapter assessing the jewelry and adornments. Lastly, the everyday objects in male burials will be examined. The material presented, is from both certain and expected male burials, based on the grave goods.

3.3.1 Male burials, the associated tools and commercial objects – town dwellers, merchants and warriors?

Traditionally, tools associated with blacksmithing and carpentry, such as tongs and hammers, have always been interpreted as being associated with men, and work such as blacksmithing and carpentry as male dominant crafts.¹²⁹ In Haithabu no such tools were found in a burial context.¹³⁰

Fig. 12 illustrates the distribution of tools and grave goods associated with male graves.

¹²⁹ Pedersen 2015 p. 63.

¹³⁰ The only hammer that has been uncovered in Haithabu, was a stray find but nothing certain is known about it (Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 19).

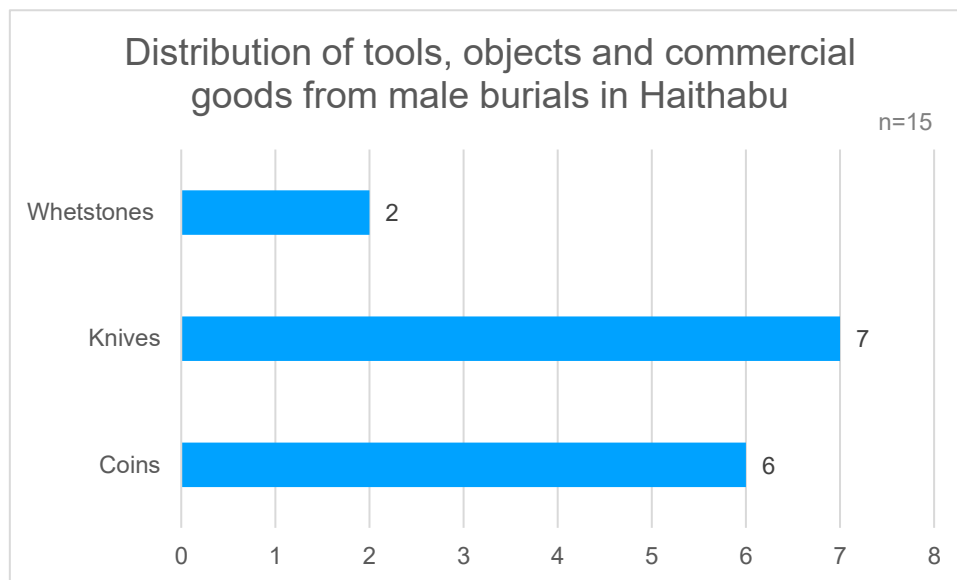


Fig. 12: Histogram showing the distribution of tools, objects and commercial goods from male burials in Haithabu.

As with the objects found in women's graves, tools such as knives and coins have the largest frequency in the male graves in Haithabu. As was the case of the female burials, this suggests that knives and whetstones have been practical tools for most of the chores of the day and were deemed as important to include as grave gifts. They are tools not exclusively associated with one or the other gender, as both males and females have had chores to attend, in which knives were deemed useful or crucial. However, it is quite possible that the usage of knives by men and women, at least to some degree, related to different tasks. There is indeed a really large range of chores, to which a knife would be deemed useful, for example in outdoor-activities such as harvesting mushrooms and herbs, cutting fish lines, gutting animals during a hunt and preparing sticks for fires. One must imagine that knives have been such a crucial tool to complete the daily chores that they have been essential for one's living. The large occurrence of knives in both female as well as male graves may suggest that some tasks were more commonly shared by men and women. Logically, it is much more convincing that females and males would have split the chores of the day, in order to keep the household running smoothly and thereby the use of knives as well as the division of males and females, ought not to be perceived as binary as traditionally believed and interpreted. In fact, the chores of males and females, may to some degree actually overlap with each other. Considering that the chores of the day would have had to be completed whether or not a male was present such a binary division has clear shortcomings.

Knives were universal tools without specific gender associations and as such they are found in both female and male graves. Knives have been uncovered in grave 62 (paired with a sword and a bead)¹³¹, grave 132 (paired with a pair of tortoise brooches and a ring)¹³², grave chamber burial 8 (paired with a spearhead, shield boss and a bucket)¹³³, in the boat-chamber burial (paired with swords, shield bosses, arrowheads, equestrian equipment and everyday objects, such as a comb and glass beaker and game board)¹³⁴ and in grave 1128 (paired with an axe).¹³⁵ In comparison to the female graves, the material combinations affiliated with knives are of a significant different character. Most of the knives are paired with offensive weapons, and only a few of them include either everyday objects or objects that could be used for offensive matters as well as practical tools for woodcutting, i.e. the axe from grave 1128. The prominent boat-chamber burial ought to be assessed with a certain criticism, as it is expected of such a large and prominent burial to include a large assortment of grave goods. The location of knives in relationship to the body is in grave 62 just upon the waist of the deceased¹³⁶ whereas in grave 1128 the knife was placed near to the right site of the deceased's neck.¹³⁷ While knives appear in similar frequencies in both female and male graves, coins seem to be primarily associated with male burials. Six examples were found in 4 graves. Grave 167, grave chamber burial 5, chamber burial 7 and chamber burial 10. Except grave 167, the primary material combination of coins is weaponry, such as arrowheads and shield bosses.

The tendency in the grave good material from Haithabu indicates that coins ought to be primarily perceived as orientated to the male gender. They may relate to trade as an occupation and indicate that males would more often undertake the activities of commerce than females would. However, the considerably larger tendency of coins being uncovered in male graves than in female graves, does not necessarily imply that females would not have undertaken commercial activities, and involved themselves with transactions and commercial deeds that would require the use of coins. In times, where the male of the

¹³¹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 41.

¹³² Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 57.

¹³³ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 105.

¹³⁴ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 112.

¹³⁵ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 228.

¹³⁶ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 308.

¹³⁷ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 228.

household would have to leave town for several days, for example in connection with raids and commercial trips¹³⁸, the household would still have to continue its function and work.

Coins could also symbolize some sort of religious action in the burial rite as, for example, payment for a ferryman. But there is no evidence that any such payment would have been practiced, in Norse societies. However, in the account of Balder's death, in the passage where Hermod attempts to retrieve Balder to the Aesir, there is one guarding the bridge to the halls of Hel:

*'En þat er at segja frá Hermóð at hann reið níu nætr dökkva dala ok djúpa svá at hann sá ekki fyrr en hann kom til árinna Gjallar ok reið á Gjallar brúna. Hon er þokð lýsigulli. Móðguðr er nefnd mæðr sú er gætir brúarinnar.'*¹³⁹

Móðguðr is the woman guarding the bridge to the halls of Hel, and at no point is it mentioned whether or not some sort of mint payment is required, which leaves the impression that such things were not needed, practised nor required to pass to the realm of Hel according to Norse mythology. Therefore, there is only vague basis to argue that the coins in the graves of Haithabu, would have been put there with the purpose of paying some sort of toll, in order to be able to pass to the realm of the dead. Furthermore, if such burial rites were practised to an extent to make such an argument convincing, it would likely be so that coins would be uncovered in a much larger number of graves, than what seems to be the case in Haithabu. Therefore, it seems much more convincing that the coins could be expressions of the practised, perhaps even specialized, labour of the deceased. Or that people who have been buried with coins, have a different cultural background. A rather peculiar example of a grave

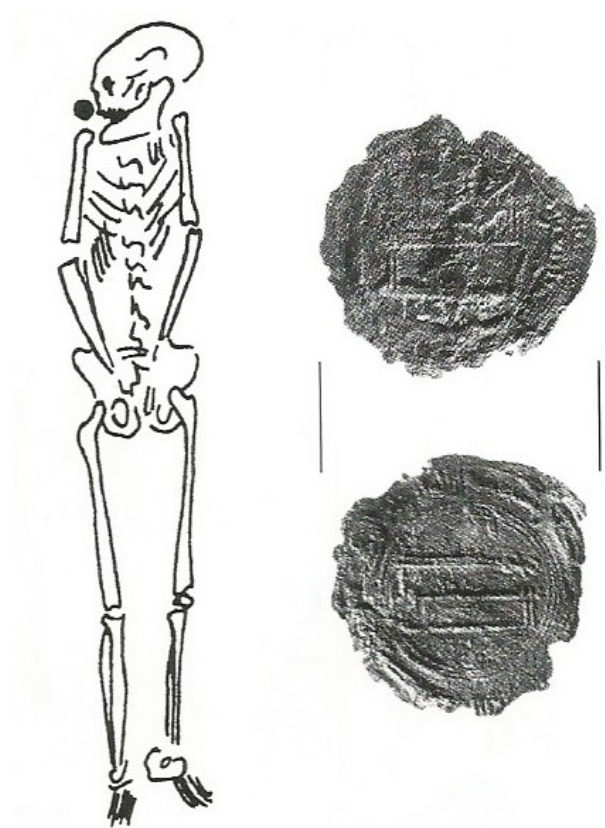


Fig. 13 Reconstruction of grave 167 and the positioning of Kufic embossed coin.

Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt 2010: *Die Gräber von Haithabu*, Vol. 2, Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, pp. 317.

¹³⁸ Roesdahl 2012 p. 67.

¹³⁹ Faulkes 2005 p. 79.

(849) that has not been able to be categorized as either male or female was uncovered revealing a coin in the mouth of the deceased, as the only object of the grave goods.¹⁴⁰ This may suggest a Christian ritual.¹⁴¹ It is known that Ansgar erected a church in Haithabu in the 9th century, and a community of converts could have lived and visited Haithabu already then. The coin in grave 167 is a coin with a seemingly Kufic inscription, closely comparable with Arabic *dirhem*. The skeleton was found with the head slightly turned to the right, and a coin in front of the mouth (see fig. 13).¹⁴² Due to possible disturbances in the soil, the slight turn of the head could potentially have happened after the burial was sealed, and thus suggest that the coin originally would have been placed in the mouth.

Apart from the presented objects that are associated with male graves, another group of objects that have traditionally been linked to the male gender are that of military and equestrian objects, such as swords, spears, axes, arrowheads, shield buckles and riding equipment.

3.3.1.1 Weapons as indicators of military rank or military position?

For the analytical part, the group of objects involving swords, spears, axes, arrowheads, shield buckles and riding equipment will serve as indicators for two military ranks of infantry or cavalry. The military ranks were originally designed for this analytical part, and are regulated by the presence or absence of equestrian equipment in burials. How the weapons are distributed between these military positions, is visualized in fig. 14.

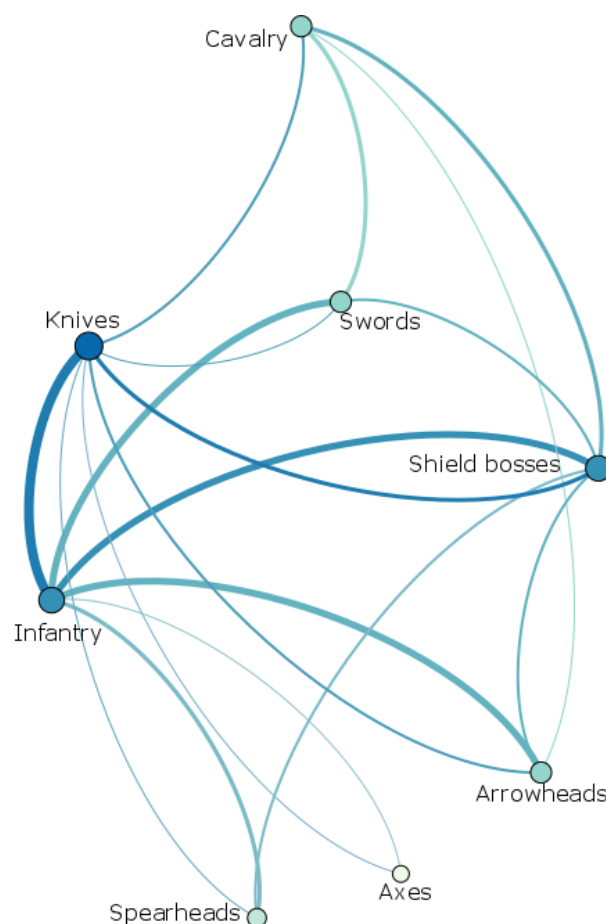


Fig. 14: Network analysis showing the distribution of weapons in infantry and cavalry burials.

¹⁴⁰ Arent & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 188.

¹⁴¹ Travaini 2004 p. 179.

¹⁴² Arent & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 317.

This network analysis is developed, by dividing burials that included equestrian equipment and isolating them from the graves in which equestrian equipment was non-present. This resulted in two groups of rather different military positions.

The material of military equipment is rather sparse in Haithabu indicating that the town perhaps should not be perceived as a military centre or at least with the same military functions as seen in Birka. Apart from the Hochburg, Haithabu is also protected by the great semi-circular rampart enclosing Haithabu to the sea, sea barriers and the Danevirke rampart erected by King Godfred.¹⁴³ The defensive works would indicate a rather successful establishment of a military power. Furthermore, in the Viking Age society, there were mandatory duties to arm in times of struggle or when a king bid them to do so, in order to defend the country or regions. This would apply to any man, capable of wielding a weapon.¹⁴⁴ Considering the inventory of weapons, the richly furnished graves and the complex defensive works also suggest a successful establishment of an aristocratic centre.

The network analysis of all the weapons and equestrian equipment from Haithabu, indicates that the burials of the military unit of infantry, would generally be much more likely to include axes, knives, swords, spears arrows and shields. In fact, spears and axes are exclusively associated with infantry burials, according to the material of Haithabu. Though, unless the typology of the axe is completely certain, and can with certainty be associated with militaristic affairs and warfare, it is quite likely that the axe just as well could be a practical tool for wood cutting and carpentry. However, if the axe would have been chosen by the individual as a weapon instead of a sword, it would seem rather convincing that it would resemble the preference of the deceased rather than any definite social or military distinction.¹⁴⁵

It is quite possible that an individual's military position, could be influenced and perhaps even based on that individual's social- and economic standing. The only individual in Haithabu who was buried with equestrian paraphernalia, was the aristocratic individual in the boat-chamber grave. This may indicate, apart from the fact that he was a socially high standing individual that either the use of cavalry as a militaristic unit in Haithabu, was not practised in a large extent or perhaps that the militaristic units, should be found outside of the Haithabu borders as Haithabu was primarily a commercial centre.

¹⁴³ Roesdahl 2012 p. 141.

¹⁴⁴ Roesdahl 2012 p. 153.

¹⁴⁵ Pedersen 1997 p. 126.

The distribution of cavalry graves and infantry graves is rather uneven. There is only a single grave that meets the criteria of 'cavalry' and eleven graves that meet the criteria of 'infantry'. It is interesting to note that some weapons namely swords and shields were uncovered in both cavalry and infantry graves. These might have been the most popular weapons preferred by both military units. According to Anne Pedersen, swords should be the most frequent of weapons to be uncovered in cavalry burials, and a 'full set of arms', which is a combination of swords and spears in one grave, is generally rather frequent as well¹⁴⁶, however lacking in the material from Haithabu. Therefore, due to the unevenly matched distribution of cavalry and infantry graves, it may perhaps be more interesting to look at the combination of weapons instead, and leave that to be indications of the military rank or military position of the individual. Among the eleven infantry burials, there are two individuals that have been buried with either one or two spearheads, and what seems to be a trend, is that they would also have been buried with shields. If the assemblage of the grave goods is a literal reflection of the individuals' positions and roles during their lifetimes, this could indicate that these individuals perhaps could have been either a frontline or a vanguard, given the advantage spears would have, in keeping enemies at a distance – but still be able, to protect oneself with a shield. In general, the finds of shield bosses and the combination of military orientated grave goods associated with shield bosses, do indicate a certain versatility, meaning that it is not strictly nor solely associated with one type of weapon or military position.

It is difficult to conclude, if the arrowheads were associated with any sort of militaristic orientated archery or if they have been used for hunting purposes only. Arrowheads have been uncovered in both cavalry and infantry graves all the same. According to the Bayeux tapestry, which often reveals a rather good example, of how Viking warfare could have been, archery is solely reserved for infantry units. It would seem logical that the reason could be that perhaps the bow would be too large and strong, to be efficiently operated on horseback.

When having a glance at the context in which the weapons and the military orientated grave goods have been found, what seems to be a trend is that most of the warrior orientated grave goods have been uncovered in rather richly furnished chamber burials. This may give an indication that weapons and militaristic paraphernalia in general have been rather

¹⁴⁶ Pedersen 1997 p. 126.

expensive to procure, and thereby such an assortment of grave goods could indicate a certain status of wealth of the buried individual.

Another indicator of a wealthy individual and a socially high-status individual, could be that of the presence of adornments and jewelry.

3.3.2 Male burials – adornments and jewelry

The assortment of jewelry in the male burials from Haithabu, is in comparison to the assortment of jewelry in female graves, rather poor. Fig. 15 presents the distribution of adornments and jewelry in male burials.

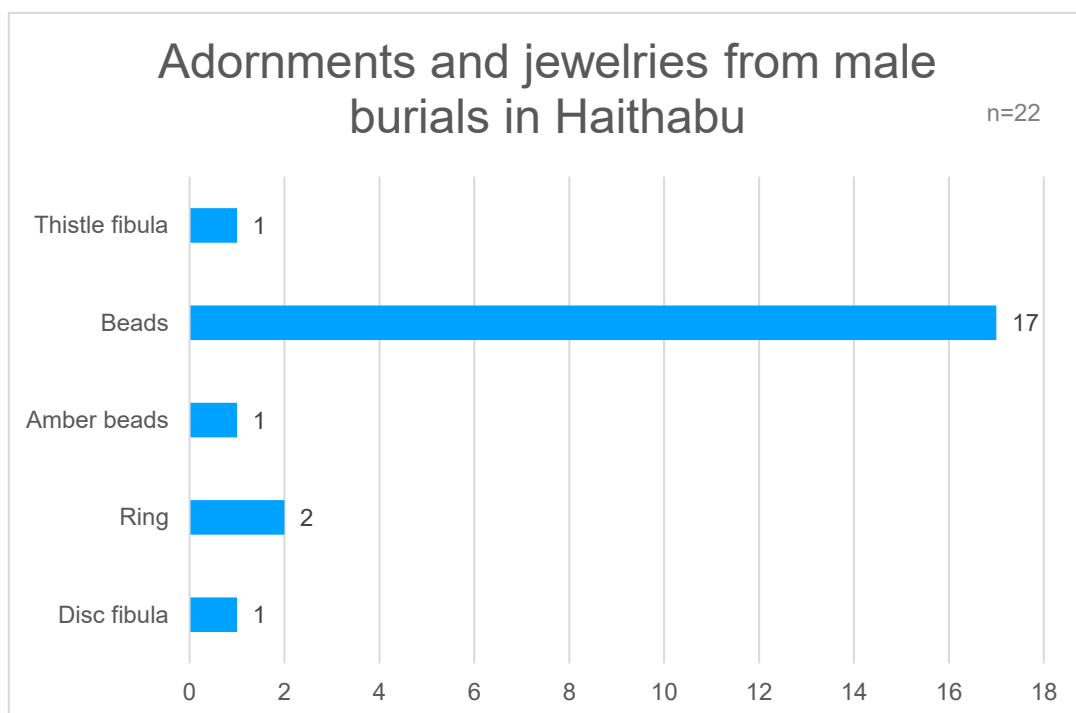


Fig. 15: Histogram showing the distribution of adornments and jewelries in male graves in Haithabu.

Beads were most common types of ornaments found in male graves. The male graves, in which beads were uncovered are grave 62, grave 86 where the six beads were encountered positioned to shape a necklace upon the deceased, grave 89 where the bead was found in proximity to the mouth and shoulder of the deceased (see fig. 13), the prominent boat-chamber burial and grave 875, where the beads shaped a necklace formation similar to that in grave 86.¹⁴⁷ This may indicate that the use of beads should not necessarily be interpreted in relation to gender. Strictly speaking adornments are clearly much more present in female

¹⁴⁷ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 389.

grave than male graves. But taking the overall collection of jewelry in male graves in consideration, the beads could rather well represent a practiced ideology of what adornments were considered as being rather unisexual to wear. On the other hand given that a rather low number of beads was uncovered in male graves in comparison to female graves it is also a possibility that the men who wore beads, were rather controversial men, well knowing that beads could have been gazed upon as a feminine piece of jewelry. It is worth pointing out that on average the number of beads in female graves is much higher; it seems that some women at least were buried with long strings of beads while the number of beads in male graves is rather modest. It would seem that beads were simply just so imbedded in the Viking Age ideal of beauty that they were worn by both men and women, albeit in a different way. The customs observed in Haithabu relate to customs observed in other cemeteries dated to the Viking Age. In the analysis of Icelandic burials that included beads conducted by Elín Hreiðarsdóttir, it appeared that beads were recovered from male and female burials, and that women on average would have more beads than men.¹⁴⁸ Considering that Haithabu was the largest center of commerce in southern Scandinavia in the 10th century, it is quite likely that there would either have been a considerable number of bead-makers during the markets that would work with exotic pieces of glass, procured via various transactions and exchanges.¹⁴⁹ Or that these beads, were commercial wares brought on commercial voyages by foreign merchants and thereby imported to Haithabu, from other countries and regions. The beads from Haithabu appear in all sorts of colours: blue, yellow, green and red and their shapes differ much as well. It is clear that some difficult techniques have been practiced in producing the various beads. So perhaps, the beads could be a symbol or indication of a certain wealthy status of an individual, depending on the number of beads present in the graves. This is however, without saying that beads necessarily should be associated with the aristocratic layers of society.

¹⁴⁸ Hreiðarsdóttir 2010 p. 67.

¹⁴⁹ Ljungkvist 2012 p. 190.

Quite rare pieces of jewelry in the Viking Age are finger rings. According to Else Roesdahl, finger rings were rarely in use in Scandinavia.¹⁵⁰ In the material from Haithabu, it becomes clear that the use of finger rings has not been practiced to any considerable extent, which is why they ought to be perceived as a peculiar and interesting material group. When engaging with rings, given their rarity in Scandinavia, it may be crucial to consider the symbolism of rings, instead of merely looking upon to object itself. They may symbolize a bond and perhaps be associated with matters such as fidelity between two individuals or between a social group and an individual. However, given the very low number of finger rings in Haithabu, it is quite possible that such a social structure built on the use of rings and dividing the social hierarchies according to the use of rings, should not be granted too much attention, as it would be expected that the use of rings would have been practiced to a supposedly much larger extent, and that it would be much clearer in the archaeological material, than what it seems to be. It is quite possible, considering cross-cultural interactions taking place in Haithabu that the use of rings has been brought along by foreigners. According to Else Roesdahl the use of earrings was a characteristic Slavic phenomenon, and finger rings are rarely uncovered in the burial material from the Viking Age.¹⁵¹ Considering that statement, and given the little use of finger rings that were found in Haithabu, these deceased people should perhaps be perceived as foreigners.

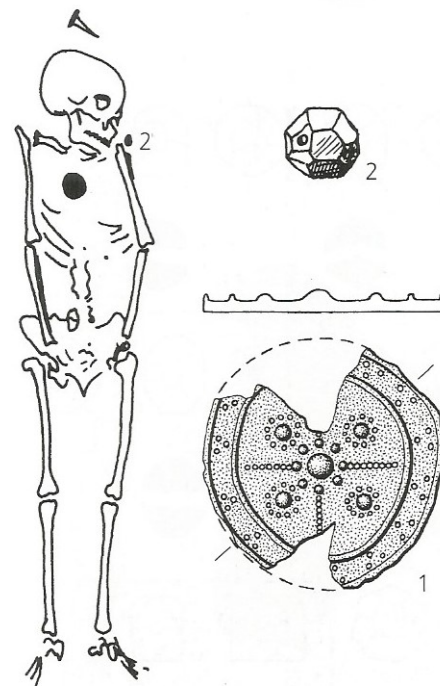


Fig. 16: Illustration of the burial grave 89. The bead and the disc fibula, was uncovered in situ in this grave.

Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt 2010:
Die Gräber von Haithabu, Vol. 2,
 Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, pp.
 311.

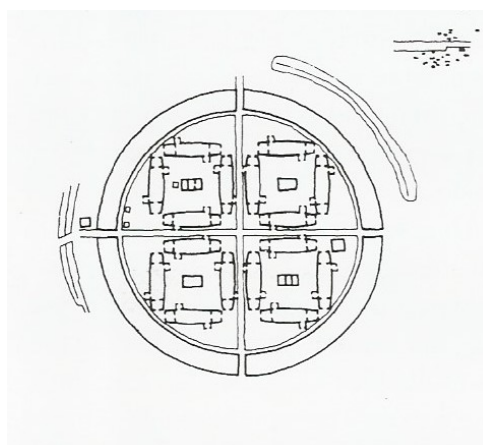


Fig. 17: Illustration of the ring fortress Fyrkat, situated near Hobro, Denmark.

Roesdahl, E 2012: *Vikingernes Verden*, 8th ed., Copenhagen, pp.
 148.

¹⁵⁰ Roesdahl 2012 p. 46.

¹⁵¹ Roesdahl 2012 p. 46.

Brooches and other means of fastening pieces of clothing had both practical and aesthetic value becoming a part of an individual's expression. While females have their beautifully adorned and rather exclusive tortoise brooches as well as trefoil brooches, it seems to be a tendency that males primarily have used penannular brooches. However, in the male burials in Haithabu, though the inventory of brooches in these graves is rather sparse, there is clear evidence that disc fibulas are not solely female apparel. Fig. 16 presents a drawing and reconstruction of the grave 89, in which a disc fibula and a bead was uncovered in situ. The motif of the disc fibula indicates that it had had more functions, than just its practical purpose of fastening pieces of clothing. The cross motif indicates in a convincing manner that males and females alike have had the need to have decorated pieces of clothing, as expressions of their personality and identity. Whether or not the cross motif should be perceived as Christian motif, and the deceased should be interpreted as being a Christian is debatable. There are clues implying that Christianity flourished in Haithabu, with the building of a church in the 9th century, so it is a possibility that some of the population would have become Christian. However, the people of the Viking Age are also well known for their understanding of geometrics which becomes clear in the erection of the ring fortresses. Fig. 17 presents the plan of the ring fortress of Fyrkat. In fact, the ornamentation of the disc fibula is quite similar to the spatial organization of the ring fortresses, with a circular rampart, households on either side of the lines (roads) stretching towards the center. According to the archaeological records, the center of the ring fortresses would normally be more like a crossroads, as illustrated in fig. 17, than being a center as the disc fibula would suggest. This is not to say that the proposition of the ornamentation of the disc fibula necessarily is either

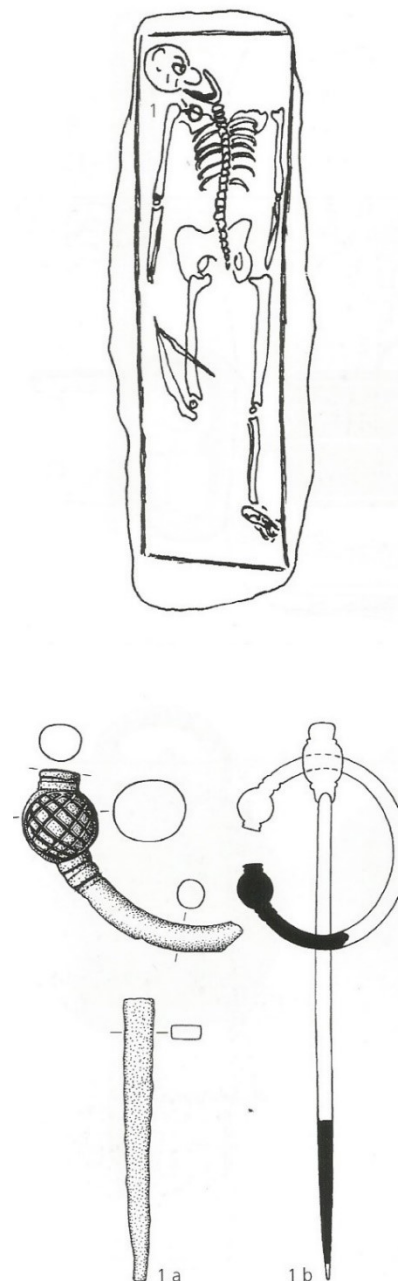


Fig. 18: Illustration of burial grave 312. The remains of the thistle fibula were found in situ, and later a reconstruction of its shape was created.

*Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt
2010: Die Gräber von
Haithabu, Vol. 2, Wachholtz
Verlag, Neumünster, pp. 327.*

depicting or inspired by the ring fortresses, but there are some similarities in the propositions of the ring fortress and the ornamentation of the disc fibula that could perhaps be rather interesting, if there in fact could be a connection. Though it is more convincing that it is nothing more than a peculiar matching coincidence between the ornamentation of the disc fibula and the outline of the ring fortresses, and more likely should be perceived as indicators of the geometric understanding in both craftsmanship and the town organizational skills of the people in the Viking Age. The very few finds of disc fibulas do however suggest that they have simply eroded, or that they have not been in common use by males, or they should be affiliated with the wealthier individuals of Haithabu. The considerable number of disc fibulas in female burials contra the very sparse number in male burials, suggests that there is a certain overweight of females wearing these disc fibulas, which ultimately could make disc fibulas more feminine in terms of apparel, than masculine.

The last brooch to be mentioned, which has clearly been intended for a practical purpose as well as in making a certain expression of the wearer, is the thistle fibula, the shape of which is much larger than a 'regular' penannular brooch, though the way of use is the same (see fig 18). According to Judith Jesch, these sorts of brooches (penannular brooches) are the ones that are most likely to appear in male graves.¹⁵² The burial material and grave goods from Haithabu would suggest that Jesch would be right in her claim, as there are no female graves with penannular brooches. This may indicate a certain division between what was perceived as being either feminine or masculine in terms of brooches. As for example trefoil brooches are exclusively uncovered in female graves, brooches such as the one uncovered in grave 312 suggest that these are exclusively male apparel. Given the fact that only a single find of such a penannular brooch as the one presented in fig. 16 in Haithabu has been uncovered, there would always be a certain basis for criticism and a natural uncertainty of strictly seeing these brooches as being associated with male apparel alone. But taking the grave goods into consideration, there are quite a lot more female graves than male graves that are richly



Fig. 19:
Reconstruction of male's clothing, with a penannular brooch to fasten to cloak on the right shoulder.

*Roesdahl, E. (ed.)
2012: Vikingernes
Verden, 8th ed.,
Copenhagen, pp.
44.*

¹⁵² Jesch 1991 p. 14.

furnished with a large assortment of jewelries the existence of more of such penannular brooches could be expected, if they were used to a larger extent by both genders. As this would not seem to be the case, at least in Haithabu, there is a certain basis to consider them as being male apparel. The way the thistle fibula was uncovered in grave 312, as displayed in fig. 16, lying on the deceased right shoulder, suggests that the deceased would have been either wearing or been shrouded in a cape, at the moment when he was put to rest. In the reconstruction in fig. 19, which shows how such penannular brooches would have been worn in the Viking Age, it fits perfectly with keeping the individual's right arm free, so the cape would have completely covered the individual's left arm. The illustration of grave 312 and the reconstruction of how such a penannular brooch would have been worn, therefore correspond perfectly with each other. By taking the ornamentation of the thistle fibula into consideration, it is quite possible that such a penannular brooch has been rather expensive to procure. This could indicate that the social standing of the wearer of this brooch was reasonably high, and that he may have been amongst the wealthier people in Haithabu. There is a rather wide range of grave goods that traditionally can be associated with females and males, as being expressions of either femininity or masculinity. There is a peculiar group of anomalies in the material from Haithabu that challenges the traditional interpretations of certain material groups.

3.3.3 Male burials and everyday objects

The everyday objects in the burials of Haithabu suggest a universal way of using grave goods. Although there are many implements of everyday objects in female and male burials that do not differentiate considerably, there are still objects that are predominantly affiliated with either the male or female gender. However, the combinations of everyday objects may offer crucial clues about the gender of deceased individuals.

The distribution of everyday objects in male burials, is presented in fig. 20.

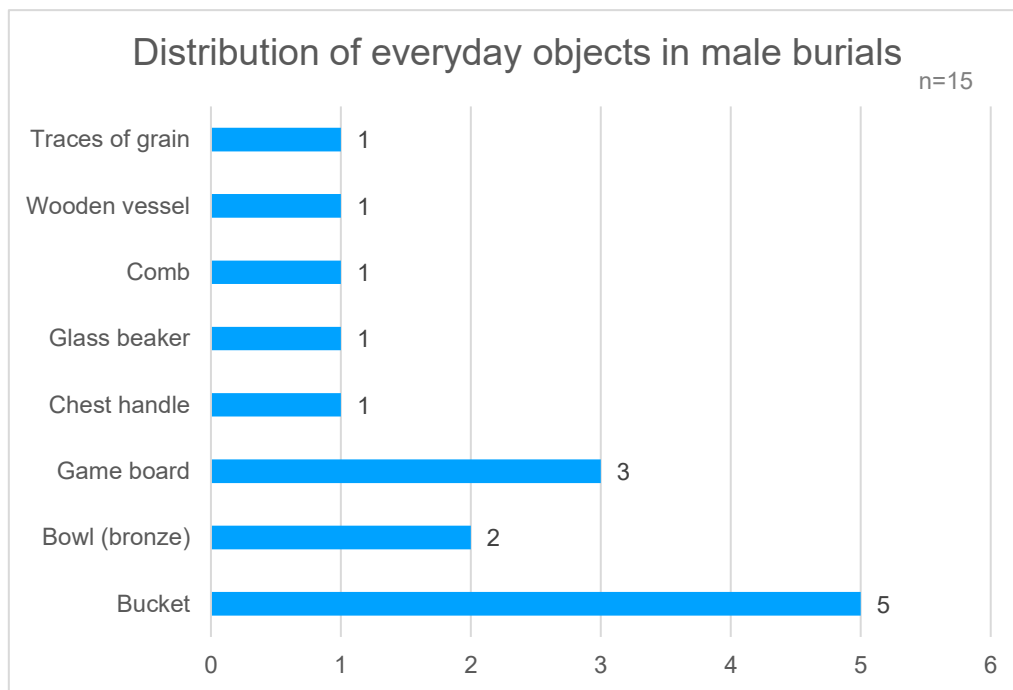


Fig. 20: Histogram displaying the distribution of everyday objects uncovered in male burials.

The everyday objects in male burials, are either primarily associated with the higher stratum of society or found in the graves equipped with weapons. The wooden buckets were found in 5 burials, which exceeds the number of buckets in the female burials (3). Although the distribution of buckets in female and male graves is uneven, buckets ought to be considered universal objects. Therefore, buckets cannot be claimed as gender-defining objects. It is necessary to consider the objects that are affiliated with the buckets.

The five burials in which buckets have been uncovered, are chamber burial 1, chamber burial 5, chamber burial 7, chamber burial 8 and the prominent boat-chamber grave. In chamber burial 1, the bucket is combined with two spearheads, a shield boss, a bronze bowl with traces of grain, and a game board.¹⁵³ In chamber burial 5, the bucket is combined with three arrowheads, a shield boss, a chest handle and two coins.¹⁵⁴ In chamber burial 7 it is combined with a shield boss, a game board and two coins.¹⁵⁵ In chamber burial 8 the bucket was combined with a spearhead, a shield boss, a knife, and wooden remains of a spear shaft.¹⁵⁶ In the prominent boat-chamber grave, the bucket was paired with sacrificed horses,

¹⁵³ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 93.

¹⁵⁴ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 100.

¹⁵⁵ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 103.

¹⁵⁶ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 105.

an assortment of weapons, equestrian equipment and everyday objects such as a bronze bowl, a wooden vessel, remains of a wooden box inside the bronze bowl, an amber bead, a glass beaker, a comb, a knife and a game board.¹⁵⁷

That the object combinations that include buckets are varying, the object combinations suggest a mutual use in the burials of males and females. Therefore, they cannot be taken as gendered objects, but their affiliation with richly furnished graves, suggests that buckets ought to be primarily associated with people of the higher strata of society. There are however distinct variations between the object combinations in the male graves and female graves. In the female graves where everyday objects were encountered, there was a significant number of jewelry as opposed to male graves, where it is primarily a matter of objects associated with the military.

The everyday objects in the boat-chamber grave consist of both decidedly highly regarded objects such as the glass beaker, which is a unique find in Haithabu, but also of what perhaps ought to be considered as hygienic objects such as the bronze bowl and the comb. The use of the bronze bowl can be unclear, but it is possible that such bowls were used for washing.

The inclusion of game boards seems to be predominantly affiliated with male burials. In fact, the female chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*), may suggest that game boards were an unusual possession for females, and the inclusion of game boards in female grave goods ought to be considered as a rather rare phenomenon in Haithabu. Game boards as an inclusion in a decidedly militaristic assortment of grave goods, suggests that the owners of the game boards must have had a certain tactical understanding, due to the conceptual link between military strategy and strategically moving gaming pieces across a board game.¹⁵⁸

In terms of interpreting ungendered graves, the significant absence of jewelry and adornments combined with everyday objects in the analyzed male burials, could suggest a pattern that the more significant the absence of jewelry and adornments is in burials, the higher the probability that the deceased would have been male. However, it is of vital importance to consider what type of jewelry or adornment the grave contains. Although some of the male burials include jewelry and adornments, albeit in low numbers, there are

¹⁵⁷ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 pp.111-125.

¹⁵⁸ Whittaker 2006 p. 106

certain types of jewelry such as disc fibula that are shared in female and male graves, and ought not to be taken as certain evidence of either a female or male gender.

3.4 The anomalies of the Haithabu burials

The cemeteries of Haithabu, and in particular the flat-grave cemetery, are rather diverse in the sense that there is no apparent linear pattern in how the burials are organized. This means that it is hard to determine unequivocally if the individuals have been buried in families. Furthermore, the skeletal material is often very sparse, so on many occasions the interpretation of gender, is based upon the grave goods. In the flat-grave cemetery many of the graves lie either very close to each other, overlap each other, or are placed directly upon each other. This testifies to a cemetery that has been much in use over the years in the period when Haithabu was an active commercial center. The way the flat-grave cemetery has been organized means that there is a certain danger and possibility that some grave goods have been disturbed, and may possibly be uncovered in other graves than intended, due to for example animal activity in the ground. Fig. 21 presents a part of the flat-grave cemetery with the greatest density of graves, and those graves that according to the chosen classification can be determined as either female or male burial.

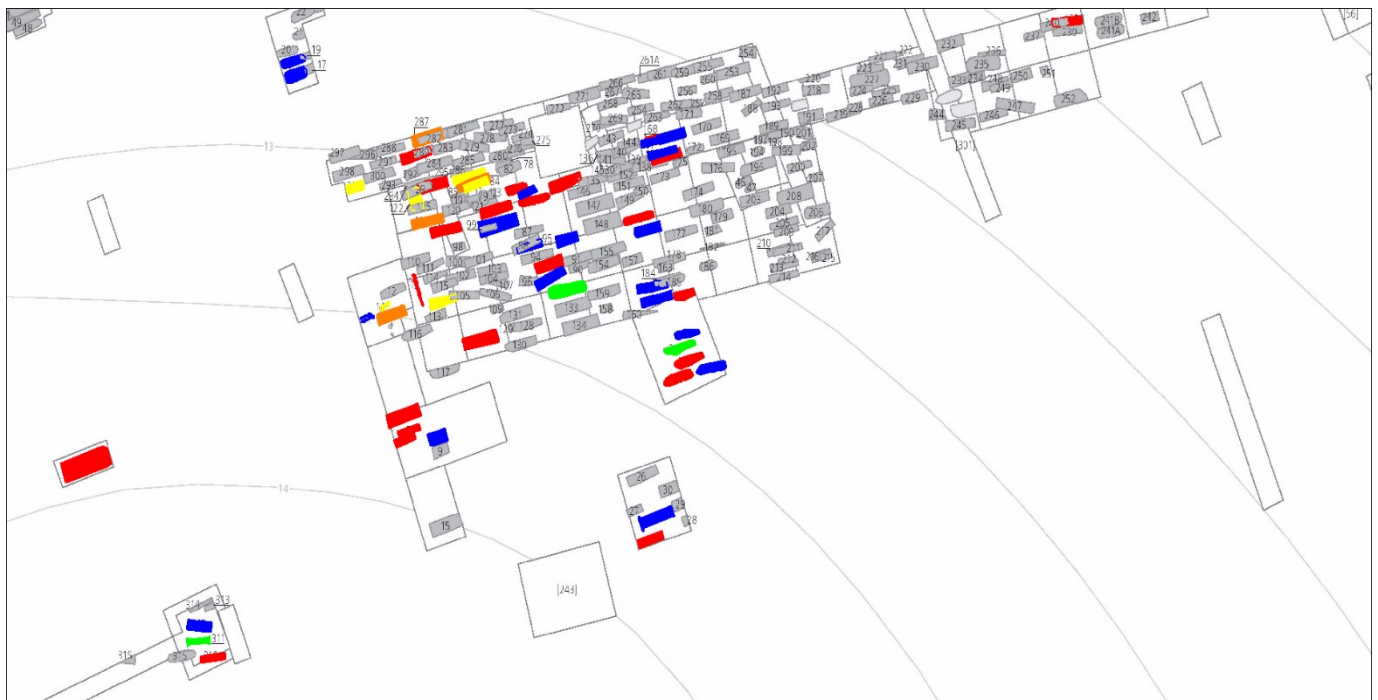


Fig. 21: Excavation plans of the graves at the flat-grave cemetery. The color-code of the map is as follows:

Red = Female's burials	Yellow = Children's burials	
Blue = Male's burials	Green = Anomalous burials	Brownish-orange = Double graves

The classification of the graves is based upon the traditional interpretation of grave goods and understanding of the construction of idealized gender roles in the Viking Age, as proposed in recent scholarship discussed earlier. The children's burials and anomalous graves have been marked according to the information given in the description of the graves by Arents and Eisenschmidt. The grave goods uncovered in the latter do not correspond with the traditional interpretation of grave goods. In the burial material of Haithabu, there are three peculiarities in which the grave goods and the gender of the individuals, do not correspond well in view of the traditional interpretations of objects and which gender such grave goods traditionally are associated with.

On table 2 is a presentation of frequencies of the finds made, in the anomaly burials:

Objects	Number of objects
Tortoise brooches	2
Spindle whorl	1
Needle	1
Rod/staff	1

Table 2: Showing the objects and the frequency of the objects uncovered in the anomalous burials.

First to be mentioned, is grave 132 that was uncovered in 1909 by Knorr (fig. 22).¹⁵⁹ According to the description of this grave, there is some uncertainty, if the deceased in this grave is a male or female. The description states:

*'(...) Skelett in gestreckter Rückenlage; Mann (?), adult.'*¹⁶⁰

The uncertainty of the sex of the deceased ought obviously to be taken into consideration, and the grave ought therefore to be critically assessed. According to the description of the grave, the measurement of the burial is 2.06 meters in length and 0.54 meters in width. The individual in the grave would have been a rather tall person, which could have been a factor that led to the interpretation of the individual as a male, as the individual would have been unusually tall for a woman. The average female height in the Viking Age was approximately

¹⁵⁹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 52.

¹⁶⁰ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 57.

158 cm whereas the average male height was approximately 171 cm.¹⁶¹ It is important to stress that such a claim is made without disregarding the possibility that the individual possibly could have been an unusually tall woman. Unfortunately, no osteological or genomic research was conducted in this case. However, embracing the interpretation and possibility that the individual would have been a male, the objects in the grave, which consists of two bronze tortoise brooches, a bronze ring and a knife¹⁶², could shed new light upon how gender and sexuality is to be perceived in the Viking Age. As the objects laid in the grave contradict the usual and traditional interpretation of the gender such paraphernalia would be affiliated to, could perhaps suggest a need for a more critical assessment of the individual and the objects, when engaging with burials.

If the individual was indeed a male, it is quite possible that he would have been quite a controversial individual, as his apparel would be in direct opposition to what is today believed and interpreted, as being the right male clothing in the Viking Age. It might have been a case of what we regard today as a transgendered individual. It is also possible that the concepts of gender in the Viking Age were more complex and fluid. When engaging with burial material from male and female graves, certain patterns and a basis for arguing what pieces of clothing are associated with what gender arises. However, perhaps the idea of trans-gender and homosexuality in the Viking Age ought to be embraced, due to anomalous burials that deviate from the standards.

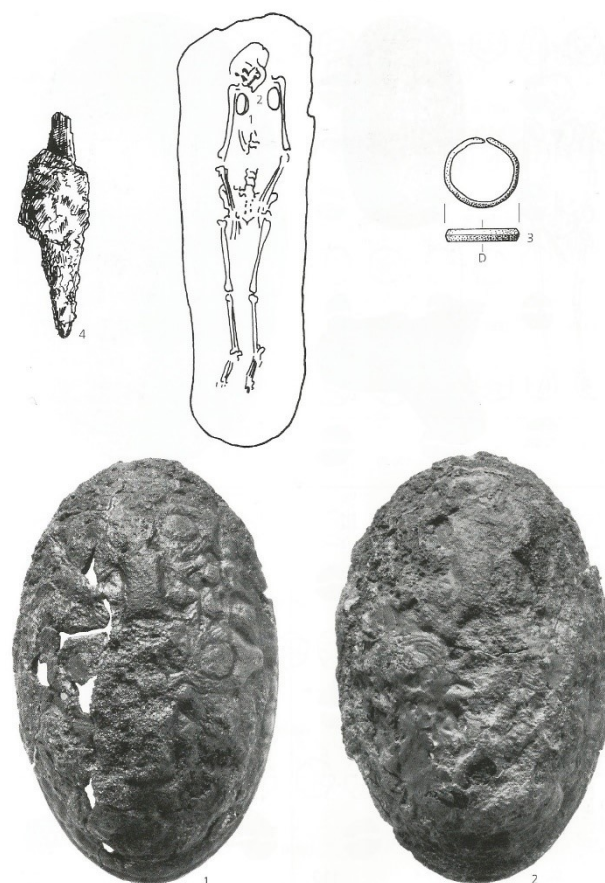


Fig. 22: Illustration of the grave 132, displaying the tortoise brooches, the ring and their placings in the grave.

Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt 2010: Die Gräber von Haithabu, Vol. 2, Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, pp. 314.

¹⁶¹ <https://videnskab.dk/sporg-videnskaben/hvordan-sa-vikingerne-egentlig-ud>

¹⁶² Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 57.

The second anomaly in the burial material of Haithabu, is the grave 311 that was uncovered in 1931 by Jankuhn (fig. 23).¹⁶³ As in the case of grave 132, the measurements of the grave are rather large. 2,03 meters in length and 0,68 cm in width, with traces of a wooden coffin measuring 1.7 meters in length and 0.38 meters in width. Furthermore, according to the description of the burial, the individual was highly compressed.¹⁶⁴ In grave 311 a spindle whorl was uncovered. According to Judith Jesch, weaving tools are traditionally associated with femininity and the female gender, which is why it was chosen to include this grave amongst the anomalies. However, there are several possible reasons as to why, this spindle whorl was detected in the burial. The spindle whorl could have been pushed there due to underground activity. An argument can be made that the spindle whorl should not be perceived as a strictly feminine tool. Perhaps the view of labour in the Viking Age was much more nuanced, and not so strictly divided between male and female, as

traditionally believed when such tools are uncovered. As the previously presented inventory of knives could suggest that females and males could have been able to attend the same activities, it would make sense that activities such as weaving would have been shared by males and females alike in a household due to the fact that textiles have been greatly needed by both genders. Furthermore, it is hard to argue that males never would have engaged in weaving, as weaving could be both for personal use as well as for commercial use. However, in view of the traditional interpretations, grave 311 ought to be perceived as a peculiarity, if the spindle whorl was deliberately put in the grave along with the deceased

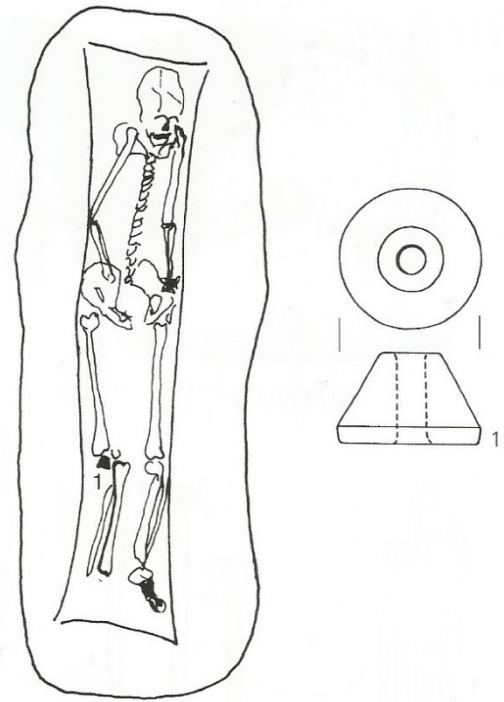


Fig. 23: Illustration and reconstruction of grave 311 displaying the shape of the grave, the individual and the spindle whorl found close to the deceased's knee.

Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt 2010: Die Gräber von Haithabu, Vol. 2, Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, pp. 326.

¹⁶³ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 89.

¹⁶⁴ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 90.

male, who in turn is described as a 'senior'¹⁶⁵, as such a phenomenon is not widely practiced in Haithabu. Given that the spindle whorl could have been deliberately put in the grave along with the deceased, the spindle whorl could therefore not only challenge the traditional view of gender and what a specific assortment of objects and tools ought to be associated with it. It could also challenge the modern view of household functions in the Viking Age, and attempt to disrupt the borders between what is considered either male or female activities. Though it is important to stress that one single occurrence of an anomaly with a spindle whorl can hardly be taken as a solid base for arguing that previous studies are wrong, neither would this be the intention. It is solely to create awareness that some household functions may be practiced equally by males and females.

Another anomaly which supports the possibility that indoor-activities could have been shared between men and women is grave 303, which was excavated in 1930 by Jankuhn¹⁶⁶, and measures 170.5 cm and believed to be a 'senior' male. In the grave an 8.6 cm long bone needle was found on top of the hip of the deceased (fig. 24). Considering the awl from the female grave 497 and the spindle whorl from grave 311, the bone needle could suggest a use in tailoring. Activities like tailoring, can be considered among indoor-activities such as spinning and weaving. The peculiar inclusion of a bone needle in a male grave supports the argument that men and women, in some cases, could have been engaging with the same activities, albeit they would predominantly be associated with females.

The last rather peculiar find from the anomaly male burials, is the rod (or staff) that was uncovered in grave 1, from the cemetery *Gräber am Noor* uncovered in the period from 1967-1969 by Schietzel.¹⁶⁷ The measurements of the wooden coffin, in which the deceased

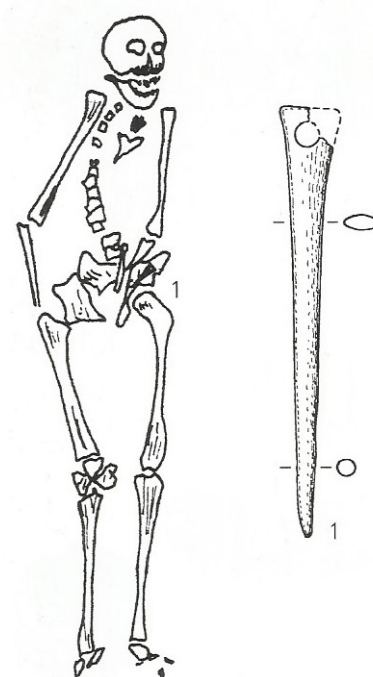


Fig. 24: Illustration and reconstruction of grave 303 displaying the placement of the needle on top of the hip of the deceased.

Arents, U. & S. Eisenschmidt 2010: Die Gräber von Haithabu, Vol. 2, Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, pp. 326.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2. p. 87.

¹⁶⁷ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 108.

was put to rest, was 1.75 meters in length and 0.5 meters in width, but the height of the individual was 161-163 cm.¹⁶⁸ Taking the height into consideration, it would fairly well correspond with the average height of a woman, so there is definitely a basis for arguing that this individual would have been female. However, it is possible that the conclusion of gender of the individual was made based on the shape and condition of the skeleton, though no comprehensively explained information is given on this matter. Other than the sort of wood which is *acer campestre*, the staff itself is not further described. The staff was found diagonally on the buried individual's skeleton.¹⁶⁹ Traditionally, finds of staffs have been rather quickly linked to sorcery and thus either occult or religious role of the deceased.¹⁷⁰ It is possible and worth considering that the staff could or ought to symbolize the ritual practise of *seiðr*. Although there are debates on the origin of *seiðr*, it seems likely that it evolved alongside the Sámi religion, taking part in the common spiritual heritage of the North.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, Neil Price stresses that the practice of *seiðr* have been highly dynamic, with local differences.¹⁷² *Seiðr* is, according to Gardela, by definition associated with women, due to the *seiðr*'s being a metaphor for domestic activities, such as the processes of spinning and weaving.¹⁷³ Considering the fact that the staff was found in a supposed male's grave, and if one should embrace the idea of this staff as having a magical or ritual purpose, the staff may just likely indicate that the buried person has been a rather controversial man, given that the art of practising *seiðr* was primarily associated with and attributed to women.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, given that *seiðr* was often connected to female associated domestic activities, and male practitioners in the sagas have been referred to as *argr*, which may be considered as an insulting word for a man, meaning that he is 'unmanly'¹⁷⁵, may therefore leave an impression and raise questions if this particular individual was 'unmanly', and perhaps even a homosexual.

The original interpretation of these anomalous graves leaves a door open for a critical assessment of the methods used (and not used) to reach these conclusions. There is a certain possibility that faults in interpretations have occurred during the excavations, and it is possible that the archaeological investigations and interpretations have been coloured by

¹⁶⁸ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 109.

¹⁶⁹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 109.

¹⁷⁰ Gardela 2008 p. 46.

¹⁷¹ Price 2012 p. 248.

¹⁷² Price 2012 p. 247.

¹⁷³ Gardela 2008 p. 48.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

the archaeological paradigms of the time. Considering that the graves presented in this chapter were excavated in 1909, 1931, 1967-1969 the technology and archaeological practice that is in standard use today was not practiced to any considerable extent at the time.

4. Material culture and material combinations as indicator and expressions of gender and identity

The Viking Age, was a dynamic era bringing about technological abilities to travel far and wide. It was also an era with a great blossoming of commercial centers in the whole of Scandinavia. The archaeological traces reveal that such commercial centers have been populated by a very large and diverse group of people. It is these archaeological traces, more precisely the material culture that open a doorway and possibility into understanding the various individuals living their daily lives, in a reality that is far away from modern reality.

The burial material and grave goods from Haithabu show both patterns and anomalies, which are helpful to understanding some aspects of life in Haithabu. When engaging with the burial material, in matters such as tracing both identity and gender it is important first to understand how material culture and individuals work and live with and by each other. In a dialectic relationship, the individuals and the objects shaped and created each other's *reality* by interacting with each other. The individual's identity and on some occasions gender, is in fact expressionless if it was not for the active role, which material culture plays as part of the grave goods. The following quote from Daniel Miller's study on Indian women and their clothing, is very illuminating when it comes to understanding and perceiving objects and how the objects *are* in a dialectic relationship with an individual. The objects might as well be tools and jewelry from the Viking Age, as they too are living and acting through their silent existence shaping and allowing to express identity. Though it is taken from a rather different setting and is a different case, it is certainly an applicable approach in this matter:

*'The intention of this section is not to tell you how the Indian women wear a sari, or how the sari represents their identity. The intention is to explain how the sari wears the Indian woman, how it makes her what she is – both woman and Indian.'*¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Miller 2010 p. 23.

Taking this quote into consideration, and by attempting to apply its message to the individuals in Haithabu, there are certain patterns in the grave goods that can be taken as expressions of identity, gender roles and perhaps even gender identity as well.

When investigating the assortments of grave goods in the female burials, there are some specific material objects, pairings and combinations that are encountered predominantly in female burials. Such objects include scissors, keys, locks, tweezers and awls as well as jewelry such as trefoil brooches, tortoise brooches and beads. Though beads ought to some extent to be perceived as universal jewelry in male and female burials, there is clear evidence that beads were in fact predominantly deposited in female burials.

According to Michèle Hayeur-Smith, humans are able to convey subtle messages about their social and cultural identity through the visual clues of adornments.¹⁷⁷ The need to visually express the female gender identity, has clearly been important to the women in Haithabu and became a central issue to consider by the mourners participating in burial rituals. The most dominant pairings of adornments and jewelry in female burials is that of tortoise brooches and beads (see appendix 1). This suggests that the women in Haithabu had a need for jewelry that were both practical and aesthetic as expressional objects, such as tortoise and trefoil brooches. The significant number of tortoise brooches, and the pairing of tortoise brooches with decidedly female objects, suggest that such practical adornments must have been considered womanly to wear. The large assortment of jewelry and adornments in female graves, suggests an ideal notion of the *correct* female expression. There is a certain reciprocity between jewelry and women. The expressional values of the adornments depend on the way they are used, and the character of a proper womanly expression depends on the expressional value of the adornments. The material culture and the individual do in this case live with and by each other in a dialectic relationship, as recited by Tim Flohr Sørensen and Mikkel Bille. The reciprocity defines the relationship between the material culture and the individual¹⁷⁸. This reciprocal relationship can be further explained by using Daniel Millers investigation of the use of the sari, and the impact the sari has on Indian women. Although the woman physically puts on the jewelry and adornments, it is phenomenologically the jewelry and adornments that wear the woman and fuse her with the ideal notions of womanhood, and the proper womanly expression.

¹⁷⁷ Hayeur-Smith 2001 p. 228.

¹⁷⁸ Bille & Flohr 2012 p. 24.

Apart from jewelry, the cooking implements such as the meat fork and spoon, which were uncovered in the richly furnished grave 497, are the sole evidence linking cooking with female household chores. Perhaps this sole occurrence of such cooking implements suggests that cooking ought to be linked with a notion of Viking Age womanhood in Haithabu. Apart from the cooking implements, there is a certain base for arguing that females, according to the grave goods, ought to primarily be associated with indoor-activities and the domestic sphere. The presence of objects such as the scissors and the awl in female graves only would suggest that the socio-economic organization of a household in the Viking Age, linked female engagement with indoor-activities. Additionally, among decidedly female objects are keys and locks paired with jewelry and adornments. This suggest that femininity and the female gender identity were fused within specific assortments of objects. Furthermore, it would suggest that it is through objects and the associated activities that gender was enacted and became an affective dimension of both personal and social life¹⁷⁹. This claim would be equally relevant for understanding material facets of both female as well as male gender identities as reflected in a burial context.

There is a certain base for arguing that when objects such as tailoring implements, cooking implements or richly adorned jewelry such as tortoise and trefoil brooches in a burial are encountered, there is a convincingly high probability that whoever would have been buried with such implements would have been of the female gender. However, it is of vital importance to consider that the construction of every grave is manipulated and carried out by the surrounding society. By such actions identities can be altered, exaggerated or toned down. This applies to the expression of gender of the deceased which according to Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, may partly overlap with other aspects of personhood:

‘Gender, as an identity, refers to a wide range of specific dimensions of the person and associated practices and ideals in a manner that makes gender construction aligned with, possibly even linked to, but nonetheless also different formation of other identities.’¹⁸⁰

The quote by Marie Louise Stig Sørensen expresses the complexity of constructing identity and construction of gender identity. The chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*) differs to a considerable extent from all other female burials, due to the implements of a decidedly rich character and the luxury of amusement implements such as a game board and gaming

¹⁷⁹ Sørensen 2009 p. 262.

¹⁸⁰ Sørensen 2009 p. 254.

pieces. Such game boards and gaming pieces ought, from the distribution of such implements, to primarily be affiliated with male burials. These are indeed unique objects in female burials in Haithabu, and it may suggest that there is a noteworthy balance between constructing an identity and gender identity, while also attempting to pay respect to the deceased's pastime activities. Though such pastime activities may not be directly linked to a female gender identity, the need and use of amusement implements, reflects a certain leisure of the deceased, an identity showing that she was privileged enough, to afford and attend to such non-productive activities. Furthermore, considering that the material culture is active agents in shaping a person's identity, the other decidedly female implements in the burial (keys, scissors and tortoise brooches), secure the deceased's femininity and gender identity, despite the rather male predominant implement of amusement grave goods.

The notions of gender and identity in burials are largely ascribed to the use of material culture. Fig. 25 presents the associations between objects and males or females. It is developed by focusing on the presence or non-presence of objects associated with female and male graves.

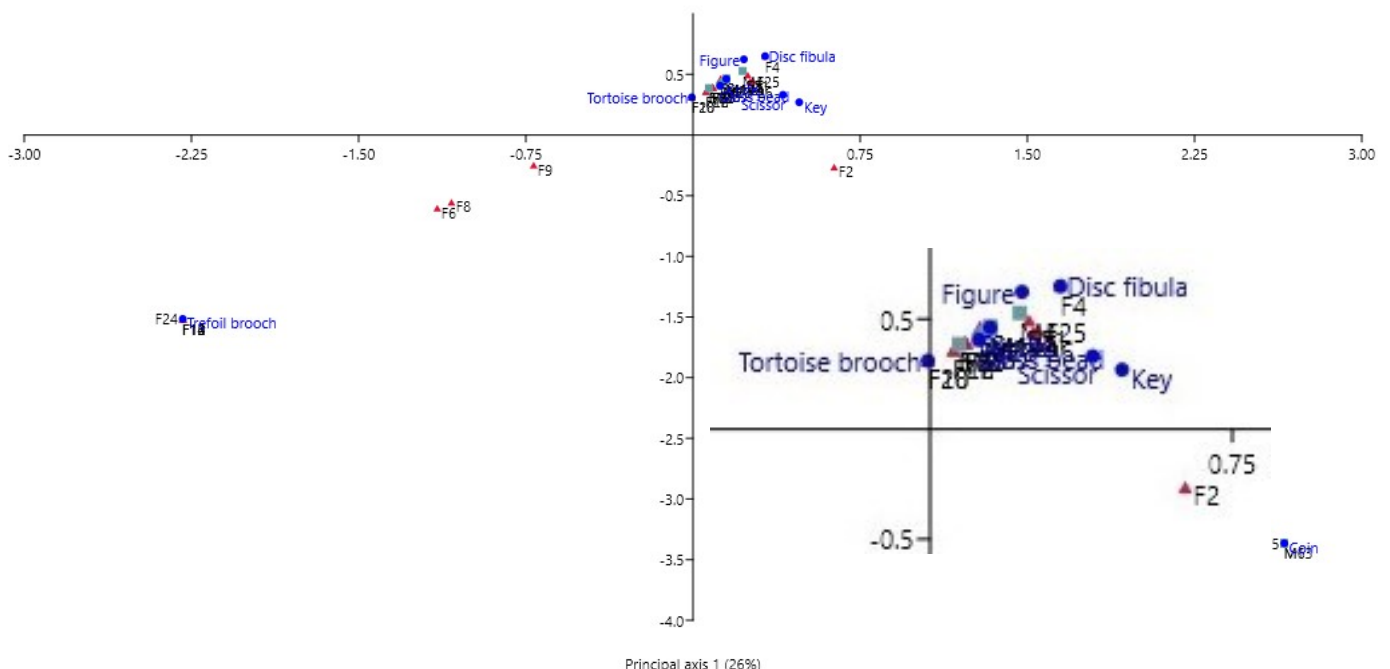


Fig. 25: Correspondence analysis which presents the associations between objects and males or females. Females are marked with a red triangle and males are marked with a blue square.

In the case of the female burials, the material culture is dominated by considerable domestic objects generating notions that this would be the primary place for women, whereas the male burials differ considerably from the female burials. The material culture in male burials, suggests a possible division between both tasks and functions.

The second-largest occurrence of objects that can be ascribed predominantly to males is coins. The largest assortment of coins is paired with weapons such as swords, spears and shield bosses, however, there are incidents in which a single coin appears to be the sole objects in the grave. As it is plausible that the deceased had several identities in military duties and civil professions, the pairings of these objects is rather interesting. The pairings of the objects could suggest that the use of coins perhaps ought to be perceived as a reflection of trade and a civil profession as a merchant. As coins are predominantly uncovered in male burials, this would suggest a possible division of gender associated tasks, and the decidedly male or female spheres - that males would undertake trading and primarily function in the public sphere and female in the domestic sphere. However, the implements of weapons distort the rather peaceful image of a merchant, which suggests that the deceased would primarily have engaged with military affairs and that he was of a wealthy standing.

Although coins undoubtedly would have taken part in transactions, there are few incidents that suggest a rather contradicting notion of the use of coins in burials, and few indices suggesting that the deceased would have engaged in trade. In grave 167 the coin was presumably put in the mouth of the deceased. This rather poorly furnished burial, and the position of the coin, would suggest that the intention of the coin is of a decidedly different religious character, than what is common in the grave custom in Haithabu. Additionally, the fact that the coin is embossed with Kufic writing, could suggest that the buried may have been a foreigner with a different culture regarding mortuary behavior. However, Arabic silver was in wide circulation in the Viking Age.¹⁸¹ Perhaps the general use of coins in burials, could be affiliated with the transitional era of religious practice, with the influence of Christianity and the cross-cultural meetings between Christian mortuary behavior and Norse mortuary behavior.

Though there is no concrete pattern of distribution as regards coins, the rather richly furnished chamber burials (chamber burial 3 and chamber burial 7) have been given two

¹⁸¹ Sindbæk 2012 p. 152.

coins. Apart from coins there are other objects that are affiliated with religion, belief and spirituality. The staff from grave 1, which is associated with the performance of *seiðr* and a Thor's hammer from the ungendered grave 370. Jude Hill's engagements with amulets, as magical and protective objects, to for example ward off evil spirits could be interesting to consider when dealing with disc fibulas. A disc fibula such as the one found in grave 89 (fig. 16), apart from having the shape geometrically similar to the ring fortresses, it also resembles a shield with a central boss. Miniature weapon-pendants dating to the Viking Age are known from Tissø and Trelleborg.¹⁸² Perhaps dressing ornaments such as disc fibulas, could be linked to a certain religious or spiritual notion of protection and be regarded with an equally religious value as Thor's hammers.

Regarding the military implements and the construction of the chamber burials, it is evident to consider them as the main implements reflecting both the gender and identity of the deceased. Following the engagements and perspectives of Christopher Tilley, regarding material culture and theories of materialization, the military implements in the burials, ought to be perceived as active objects and actors, creating the concrete embodiment of an idea.¹⁸³ The idea of a warrior status is shaped by the military and martial objects that are affiliated with the deceased. The sparse number of warrior burials in Haithabu and their rich furnishing suggest that they belong to prominent members of society. The weapons and associated objects suggest that the affiliation to military and martial arts is predominantly associated with the male gender.

In the investigation of the creation of warrior identity, it is important to consider Christopher Tilley's claim that:

'So differing forms of sociality and different ways of identity construction are produced through the medium of living with and through a medium we call 'material culture.'"¹⁸⁴

This quotation may be rephrased to the case of the creation of warrior identity, 'it is through the medium of material culture, (i.e. weapons) that the status of a warrior is articulated and manifested in the deceased'. As the identity and the perception of a warrior is constructed and articulated through the medium of weapons distributed by the living society, it may be

¹⁸² Pedersen 2004 p. 63.

¹⁸³ Tilley 2006 p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ Tilley 2006 p. 3.

questioned whether the status of a warrior may necessarily reflect the real identity of the deceased, or if the identity has been altered and orchestrated into becoming a warrior.

Furthermore, it is evident due to the relatively sparse number of warrior burials in Haithabu that the status of a warrior may have been afforded to only a few.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the individual preferences reflected in the distribution of weapons, and the pairings of objects uncovered in the burials, may suggest different echelons of warriors. Perhaps the distribution of the weapons and the affiliated objects should be taken as metaphors of the life, which the deceased has lived.¹⁸⁶ The echelon of warriors can be investigated by examining the pairings of weapons and their affiliation with additional objects. Graves in which equestrian equipment has been uncovered, suggest that the deceased would have engaged in horseback riding. This suggests the possibility of different militaristic units such as cavalry and footmen. In contrast to cavalry graves, the graves in which equestrian equipment is absent could be interpreted as footmen or infantry.

The aforementioned metaphorical use of grave goods, may additionally suggest religious notions and ideas of an afterlife, and the continuation of a person's life in a realm beyond that of the living. Such notions are implied in *Oðins Law*, recited by Snorri Sturluson in *Heimskringla*¹⁸⁷. Therefore, these religious, ritual acts and the deposition of weapons, may suggest that the different patterns of distribution of weapons, and the divisions in warrior ranking, could be evident agents in the creation of the individual's identity as a warrior. Furthermore, the noteworthy presence of game boards in warrior burials, suggests a possible affiliation between strategic thinking and military identity. Game boards were found in chamber burial 1 (in which the game board was paired with two spearheads and a shield boss), chamber burial 7 (in which the game board was paired with a shield boss) and the prominent boat-chamber burial (in which the game board was paired with two swords, equestrian equipment, a rich assortment of jewelry and everyday objects). However, recent research in Birka¹⁸⁸ may question the traditional interpretation of the affiliation between the male gender and the deposition of weapons.

The social standing of the deceased can be interpreted in the burial goods. In the instances of decidedly female implements and the pairings of objects in female burials, there are clear

¹⁸⁵ Hadley 2008 p. 275.

¹⁸⁶ Härke 2013 p. 8.

¹⁸⁷ Price 2012 p. 257.

¹⁸⁸ Hedenstierna-Jonson 2017 p. 853.

indices that some females in Haithabu were not locked to the domestic sphere. A group of richly furnished female graves testifies of a stratum of society that was more privileged than most. The burial material suggests that privileged women were noteworthy and well-regarded individuals in a social sphere, as their grave goods testify to a very wealthy group of people. Though tortoise brooches are dominant among the assortment of jewelry in female burials, they are also paired with rich and luxurious objects such as caskets and chests, as in grave 497 and chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*). The deceased from the aforementioned burials and low number of chests and caskets in female burials, suggest that these individuals in particular were elevated in the social stratum.

The social standing of deceased persons in male burials is also reflected in grave goods, albeit rather different grave goods. The following argument is based on the inventory of the prominent boat-chamber burial, as a deceased with such a considerable assortment of grave goods, obviously ought to be linked to the highest possible strata of society. Furthermore, there is little to no evidence in any other object combination present in male graves that can be taken as clear indicators of social standing. The presence of the high number of objects associated with military and warfare in a grave as prominent as the boat-chamber burial, testifies that these sorts of objects were fused with a highly regarded meaning. This suggests that the warrior burials: chamber burial 1, chamber burial 2, chamber burial 5, chamber burial 6, chamber burial 7 and chamber burial 8, ought to be associated with the social elite.

Considering the significant assortment of grave goods in the aforementioned female burials, the prominent boat-chamber burial and the warrior burials suggests that the number of grave goods ought also to be regarded as factors indicating socially elevated identities.

There are many objects in the graves that do not in any distinct way seem to relate to a specific notion of female or male gender. Knives are good examples of such objects. Due to the considerable number of knives in female and male burials, they cannot be taken as expressions of gender. The pairings of knives in burials is therefore of particular interest in terms of interpreting gender of the deceased. The majority of female burials containing knives also include jewelry such as tortoise brooches, or implements reflecting the domestic spheres such as scissors, awl, tweezers, spoons and meat forks. In male burials, knives are predominantly associated with offensive weapons, everyday objects such as buckets and objects of leisure, such as game boards and jewelry such as beads and disc fibulas. The positioning of the knives seems to be rather similar in female and male burials, and the general tendency would suggest that the knives would have been either hung from or

otherwise attached to a belt, as most of the knives have been found in either the proximity of directly on the waist of the deceased. Cases in point are, the male burial grave 62 and the female burials grave 32, grave 77, grave 108, grave 307, grave 427 and chamber burial 2 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*): in all of them the knives were positioned on the waist of the deceased. The only female burial that differs is chamber burial 5 (*Südgräberfeld-Ost*), where the knife was uncovered in a casket. Such peculiarity compared to the general tendency may suggest a toolbox and that the knife was associated with specific tasks.

Beads and disc fibulas were found in both males and females graves, albeit the distribution of beads in female graves exceeds to a considerable degree that in male graves. The difference in distribution of beads in male and female burials, suggests that beads, when they occur in large numbers, ought to be affiliated with a female presence. A case in point is the male burial 875. It contained the highest number of beads which amounted to 9 beads. The female burial that contained the highest number of beads is grave 810 with 97 beads. There are other female graves with a noteworthy number of beads, such as chamber burial 3 with 47 beads and grave 77 with 18 beads. The predominant use of beads and the high number of beads in female graves, suggest that beads were conventionally and primarily associated with women and perhaps believed primarily to be female adornments. The rather extravagant use of adornments and the clear intention of expressing a notion of femininity, through dress are visualized by the large assortment of 97 beads along with a pair of tortoise brooches that was uncovered in grave 810¹⁸⁹.

Furthermore, the placement and positioning of the beads in male and female burials show some minor yet possibly significant differences that likely relate to gendered notions of dress and appearance. In female graves, they were primarily placed on the chest, and presumably fastened between two tortoise brooches. In male burials with beads the patterns of bead placement, suggest that they were worn as a necklace.

Though the number of beads ought to be considered as a crucial factor in the interpretation of gender, the combination of objects affiliated with beads is the most important element. For instance, the female grave 810, chamber burial 3 and grave 77 are all paired with tortoise brooches. The male grave 875 is paired with a bundle of arrows which is traditionally associated with a male presence and grave 86 was back in 1934 believed by Rudolf Frercks to be a male.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 Vol. 2. p. 181.

¹⁹⁰ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 50.

The anomalies of Haithabu suggest notions that identities and gender identities were not necessarily static, but on the contrary, rather dynamic and changeable.

The grave goods that were encountered in grave 132 were a pair of tortoise brooches, a ring and a knife. The pairing of objects alone suggests a female presence, according to the conventional pairing of objects in female burials. Presumably due to the measurements of the skeleton, the deceased was interpreted to be a male. This would suggest that materialization of gender has been of crucial importance in the Viking Age. As earlier argued tortoise brooches ought to be affiliated with a female presence, but the measurements and original interpretation of the deceased, would suggest a man wearing a female's jewelry. This emphasizes the complexity and power of material culture. Complexity, regarding the gender-based values that have been fused onto the tortoise brooches, which in turn 'evaporate' out of the tortoise brooches, and create the notions of the gender of the deceased. The social values create the notions of what is perceived as either feminine or masculine to wear, but it is through ideas, manufacture and use that material culture creates the notions of gender and thereby shapes the social values that are fused onto these objects. This ought to be perceived as the power, regarding material culture's ability to completely change the perception of an individual, solely by specific patterns and deposition of specific objects.

The second anomaly is grave 311. The material objects recovered from this grave are rather sparse, counting a single spindle whorl. Spindle whorls are associated with weaving and indoor-activities, suggesting that the deceased would have been female. However, the measurements (1.7 m in length, 0.3 m in width), suggest a male presence as they match the average height of a man. Although there is a probability that the spindle whorl might suggest that the deceased would have been male, and engaged with weaving, there is a convincing probability that the spindle whorls have been disturbed, and misplaced due to activity in the soil. The peculiar position of the spindle whorl, almost 'becoming a part' of the right knee of the deceased (according to fig. 22) is rather curious, as it hardly indicates any clear intentions of expressing a strong relation between the deceased and the object. Apart from grave 311, grave 303 also included an object that could be related to in-door activities, perhaps tailoring. The presence of a bone needle in grave 303 may be perceived in contrast to the awl from grave 497, as they both can be connected to needlework and tailoring. This testifies to the possibility that needlework and tailoring also could have been

activities for men. This argument is not intended to be an attempt to question the claims that female activity primarily would have been orientated towards in-door activities. It is to emphasize that it is possible to argue that perhaps labour, household and housekeeping in the Viking Age Scandinavia ought to be understood as activities shared between man and woman.

For this matter, it is important to remember the quote by Anne Stalsberg arguing that:

*'(...) a household in the Viking Age should be perceived as a firm, run equally by husband and wife.'*¹⁹¹

The example of grave 311, grave 303 and the last anomaly grave 1, correspond rather well to the sub-groups that Marie Louise Stig Sørensen touches upon:

*'a social construction responding to socially perceived differences between people's bodies, differences commonly categorized as variations upon male and female, but which may include other categories and sub-groups within them.'*¹⁹²

The low number of anomalies, suggests a social division and a formation of sub-groups, where the individuals are neither decidedly male nor female. Perhaps the process of the shaping of their identity resided in a limbo, in which they were not recognized as one or the other gender by the surrounding community, but perceived themselves as decidedly female. The last example of an anomaly is grave 1 which may suggest a presence of an 'unmanly' man. Grave 1 from the cemetery *Gräber am Noor*, was furnished with a rod or staff. According to Gardela, the use of such staffs suggests a female presence given the connection between staffs and the ritual performance of *seiðr*. According to Neil Price, *seiðr* ought to be linked to shamanism, developed alongside the Sámi religious and ritual acts. If the anomaly grave 1 from the cemetery *Gräber am Noor* was a man, due to the fact that the individual in grave 1 was given the rod or staff as part of the grave goods would suggest, according to Gardela that the deceased was an 'unmanly' man. This may suggest that the rod or staff could reflect the process of and the first step in the attempt for a male to construct a female gender identity and the becoming of a female. However, apart from the individual's 'unmanliness' he ought to be perceived a performer of religious and rituals acts and a religious character.

¹⁹¹ Sørensen 2009 p. 260.

¹⁹² Sørensen 2009 p. 254.

The four anomalies suggest either a possible aspiration among few men, to construct a gender and gender identity beyond that what was given by nature. If the anomalies were to be male and 'unmanly' men, the act of burying them with decidedly female affiliated objects, such as jewelry, job-affiliated objects or with a staff could be perceived as a mocking act by the surrounding community, compared to burials with the status of a warrior. Considering Heinrich Härkes claim that:

*'Above all, grave goods have always suggested a religious dimension, their very presence apparently implying a 'pagan' concept of an afterlife where material goods were useful and important.'*¹⁹³

The burial and staging of an individual, is the last attempt to either honour or dishonour an individual. This alternate explanation of anomalies in Haithabu occurs as the identity of an individual is easily altered, manipulated and orchestrated in a burial and the identity is according to the contemporary religious beliefs, articulated through material culture.

After analyzing the patterns of objects in female and male burials, the patterns can be expanded onto 'ungendered' graves, to suggest a more nuanced picture of the distribution of female and male burials. The distribution of male and female burials presented in fig. 3 and table 1 was based on the initial certain or presumed 22 male burials and 27 female burials. By expanding and applying the patterns of objects onto the 188 'ungendered' graves suggest an additional 26 female burials and 9 male burials. Fig. 26 presents the distribution of the certain or presumed burials, and the new suggestions. They are distinguished as such based on the inventory of objects and their co-occurrence.

Graves in which the assortment of beads exceeds 9 beads, and are paired with predominantly female objects are affiliated with women, as well as graves that have only been furnished with beads as singular finds, due to the predominant use of beads in female burials. The only exception is grave 128, which from the placement of beads would suggest a male presence, due to the placement of beads which shaped a necklace.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Härke 2013 p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010 vol. 2 p. 313.

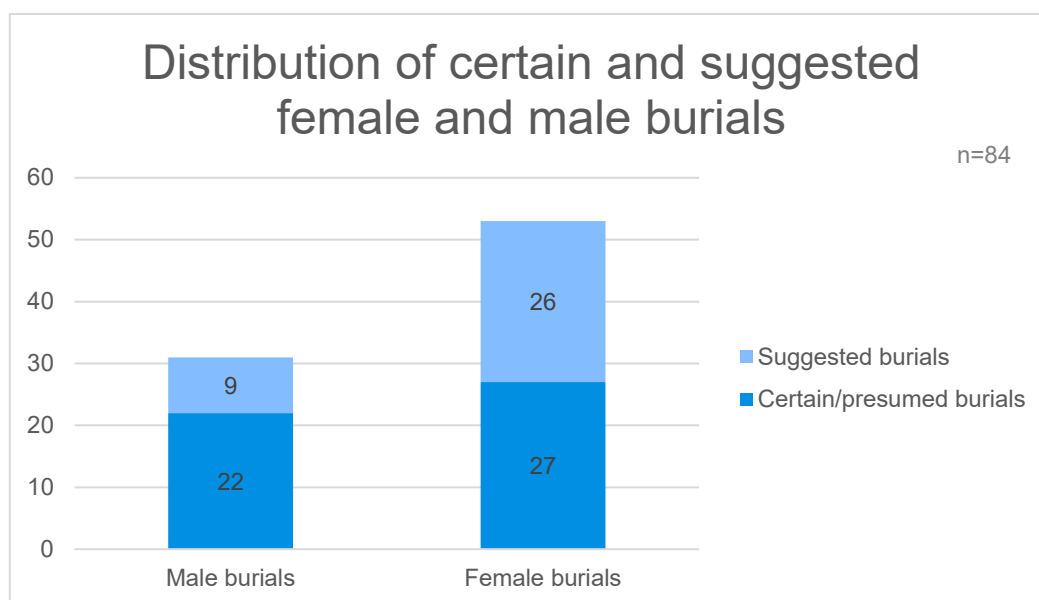


Fig. 26: Suggestion to the distribution of female and male burials, according to the patterns of objects.

Chains, chain links and pendants are only or predominantly uncovered in female burials and have therefore been affiliated with women.

Objects such as coins have, due to their predominant occurrence in male graves, been affiliated with males. As males in general have a sparse inventory of jewelry compared to that of females, the focus for deciphering male graves differs from the focus laid on female burials. Apart from the predominantly male objects such as coins, objects related to everyday use have been taken into consideration. The inclusion of a glass beaker in the prominent boat-chamber burial and the complete absence of glass-made objects (apart from beads) in female burials, suggest that these should only be affiliated with male burials. Burials that include objects related to either hunting or warfare, such as arrows, have also been included. In the case of grave 820 which included a bundle of arrows, is paired with objects that are either shared or predominantly female objects, such as clay vessels. Objects such as knives, whetstones, buckets and bowls which occur in considerable numbers in both female and male burials, have not been taken into consideration in this analysis.

Applying this analytical approach, based on gender related objects in order to decipher patterns in 'ungendered' graves, has expanded the number of the certain or presumed female burials to 53 burials and the certain or presumed male graves 31. In contrast to the percentage distribution of female and male graves in fig. 3, suggesting 55% female graves and 45% male graves, the percentage distribution of female and male burials in fig. 27 suggests 64% female graves and 36% male graves.

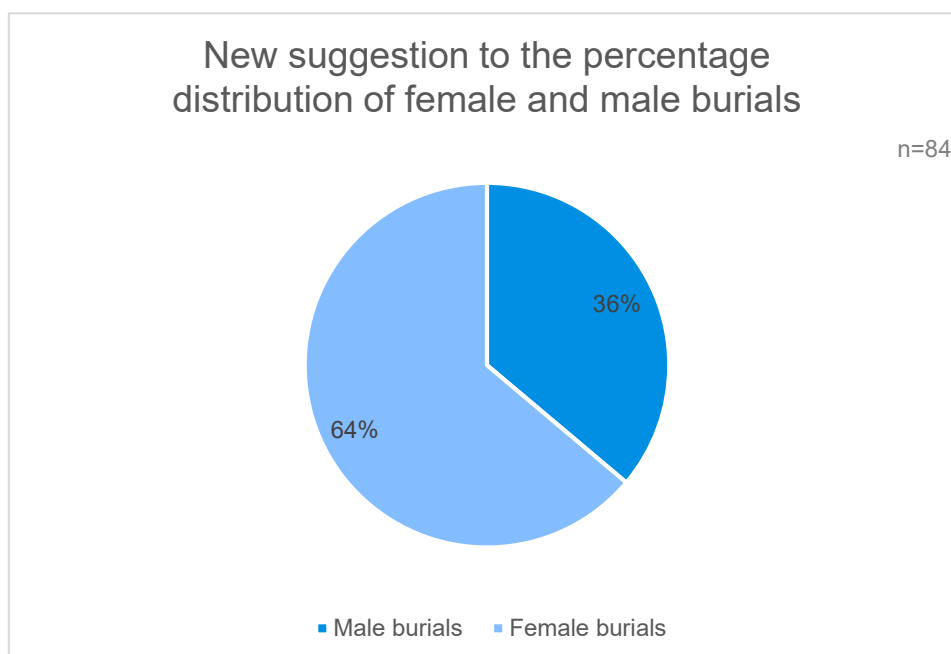


Fig. 27: New suggestion to the percentage distribution of female and male burials.

Due to the considerable number of ‘ungendered’ graves with knives as the sole implement or objects that are fairly even distributed in male and female burials, and are not clearly indicative of a female or male gender, there are still 153 ‘ungendered’ graves that cannot be further analyzed with the approach applied in this thesis.

5 Conclusion

Based on theories of materialization, gender studies and theoretical approaches on burial archaeology this thesis has the aim of analyzing the main elements of funerary ritual in Haithabu, especially the selection and patterns in the deposition of objects in the graves and connecting them to construction and expression of identity. Analyses of objects distributed in 22 male burials and 27 female burials in Haithabu have resulted in the discovery of patterns in the distribution of grave goods, which can be taken as expressions of female and male identities and gender identities. The graves have been analyzed from the traditional perspective of objects affiliation to gender, to enable a frame of reference for the female and male gender. There are different and significant aspects to consider, when attempting to decipher the patterns of distribution of objects that could be taken as expressions of either identity or gender roles.

The main elements of the funerary practices and the mortuary behavior in the Viking Age is closely entwined with grave goods, religious beliefs and a notion of an afterlife. The ‘*law of Oðinn*’ testifies of a notion of an afterlife and that the deceased will arrive to Valhalla with as much value as was deposited in the burial. The patterns of deposited grave goods in female

and male graves suggest that female graves have a significant tendency to include jewelry. Furthermore, there are specific objects that are fused with a contemporary notion of womanhood. The assortment of jewelry, tools and everyday objects suggests that objects such as beads, tortoise brooches, trefoil brooches, scissors, tweezers, awls and keys are primarily associated with women. Their unique presence or the considerable number of objects presented in female burials, compared to that in the male burials, are indicative of a female gendered presence. An example, is the inventory of beads in female burials that includes 258 beads whereas in male burials, there is a mere 17 beads present. Furthermore, there is a significant representation of objects connected to the domestic spheres and indoor activities in female burials, which ought also to be linked with womanhood. Objects such as cooking implements (a meat fork and a spoon) from grave 497 and objects associated with tailoring or weaving, such as the awl and the scissors, are predominantly represented in female burials, testifying to a predominant gender role which can be associated with a female presence. In contrast to predominantly female associated objects, the inventory of weapons, coins and objects representing pastime activities such as game boards, seems to be closely related to a male presence. Weapons have primarily been considered male objects, by contextualizing with written sources, such as the runestone from Sjörup in Scania. Whether the inclusion of coins suggest that the funerary practices in Haithabu have been under the influence by either cross-cultural traditions or by Christianity is open for speculation, though the presence of coins in Medieval Christian burials is well-known.

Identity and the creation of identity are complex matters but can be perceived in the funerary practices, the rituals and the grave goods in the burials of Haithabu. The patterns of object depositions, and their association with either a female or male presence, would be impossible to acknowledge without considering the powerful impact material culture has on individuals and cultures. The burials testify to a dialectic, reciprocal relationship between the objects distributed in the graves and the deceased. Phenomenologically expressed, as the human touches the object and the objects simultaneously touches the human - meaning that it is not only about how the human use the objects, it is also how the objects use the human. The tale of the deceased can only be articulated through the deposited grave goods, which emphasizes the importance of material culture. People can never be free from material culture, as material culture is so embedded and entwined in the human ways of living. The identity of the deceased is thereby shaped, displayed and articulated by objects related to the deceased. Therefore, it is of crucial importance when engaging with burials to

consider that the construction of the burial and the staging of the deceased, are arranged and orchestrated by the mourners, and the identity of the deceased can potentially be manipulated by the mourners, due to the contemporary notions of proper burials.

It is possible that the gendered expression in the anomalous burials, has been manipulated or altered by the surrounding society. However, it is evident in the anomalous burials that implements predominantly associated with womanhood have been given to males. In burial contexts such as these, it is required to consider the recorded height of the deceased and compare it to the average height of Viking Age females and males, to create a more nuanced picture and consider the most convincing possibilities regarding gender. The bone needle in grave 303 has been compared to the inclusion of the awl in grave 497, which might suggest that tailoring could be an occupation engaged in by both male and females, albeit predominantly by females. This suggests that gender roles and gendered activities could have been much more fluid, than what is traditionally believed.

The pairings and combinations of objects are not only able to express gender roles or identities, they can also express the social standing of an individual. The noteworthy graves that have been taken into consideration for this approach, are graves with a considerable inventory of objects. As the female and male graves are irregularly furnished regarding the number of objects in the graves, the size of the inventory of objects, is claimed to be substantial in the argumentation that the social standing of the deceased is reflected in grave goods. Furthermore, the number of graves with a considerable inventory of grave goods is rather low, which suggests hierarchical differentiations and an organized social structure. The rarity of warrior burials shows that such burials were only afforded to a few, a suggestion that the buried warriors belonged to an elevated stratum of society. Furthermore, apart from the number of graves, it is required to consider the objects themselves the material combinations and pairings as the most luxurious objects have to be considered as decidedly associated with individuals belonging to an elevated stratum of society. Graves in which chests and caskets are presented, testify to riches and the ability to lock them away.

Deciphering the patterns in grave goods and attempting to apply the approach onto the 188 'ungendered' graves, in order to bring new suggestions to the distribution of possible female and male graves is not a straightforward task. Due to the predominant use of beads in female burials graves in which pendants, small chains or chain links and beads that appear as single finds or paired with predominantly female objects, have been the patterns applied to

decipher female burials. The suggested male burials have been considered by the appearance of predominantly male objects, such as coins, glass (given the sole implement of a glass beaker in the prominent boat-chamber burial) and arrows. However, this approach has been challenged by the groups of materials present in both female and male graves. The considerable inventory of knives and the inclusion of whetstones in male and female graves suggest that graves solely containing knives or including whetstones, cannot be considered as regards gender. This is the reason why it was only possible to decipher 9 possible male graves and 26 female graves. Adding these new burials to the number of the initially analyzed burials (22 male burials and 27 female burials), results in 31 male burials and 53 female graves. This suggests a percentage distribution of 64% female burials and 36% male burials, in contrast to the initial percentage distribution 55% female burials and 45% male burials.

6 Future work

The distribution of the gendered graves presented in this thesis, is aggregated and developed with the traditional interpretation of affiliation patterns in objects. This makes a significant unevenly matched picture, of the distribution of female and male graves, as females account for 63% and males account for 37%. Ultimately, this leads to a possible distortion of the distribution of commonly shared objects, such as knives, whetstones, beads and disc fibulas. However, future work with the burials of Haithabu, may be able to either alter or develop another picture of the distribution of gendered burials.

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8.1 Appendix 1:

Table for network analysis

[illegible]

AB: Amber beads

AP: Amber pendants

SEF: Strap end fittings

FS: Firestaters

R/S: Rod/staff

TH: Thor's hammer

8.2 Appendix 2:

Table of objects and number of objects.

Objects from the burials of Haithabu	Number of objects
Awl	1
Beads (glass)	377
Beads (amber)	5
Belt (and strap) buckles	25
Brooches (tortoise)	32
Brooches (trefoil)	9
Bowls	8
Buckets	11
Ceramic shards	28
Chains (and fragments)	5
Chest and chest fragments	4
Coins	11
Disc fibula	12
Figures	2
Fire-steels	3
Gameboard	4
Keys	3
Knives	117
Lock	1
Pendants	11
Pendants (amber)	2
Rings	5
Rod/staff	1
Bone needle	1
Scissors	4
Textile (fragments)	55
Tweezer	1
Thor's hammer	1
Vessels and containers	23
Whetstone	26