

Abstract #: 1960

THE REALITY OF VIKING AFTERLIFE: THE PRESENCE OF SILK IN THE VIKING NARRATIVE

Karolina Pallin^{1,2}

¹ *TexArk - The society for textile archaeology and culture studies*

² *Textile studies, Uppsala University*

This paper presents a study within the larger project “The narrative of Viking legacy”, which studies the difference between today’s narrative of the Viking Age and the archaeological material. The pilot study was presented at the conference The Viking Age as a Foreign Place, at The Center for Viking Age Studies, Oslo. This second study is presented for the first time here at the EAA annual meeting.

Grave goods can be seen as objects supposed to accompany humans into the afterlife. The Viking afterlife is, according to the Sagas, a mythological place. However, the reality of the Viking afterlife is how we know them. A reality where the archaeological material is of most importance. The Vikings live in the stories we create about them and the effect these stories have on us and our society. They live in the “Viking narrative”

In Scandinavia, silk first appears in the grave goods in the Viking era, marking a change in available luxury goods. As one of a handful of luxury goods that archaeologically defines this era, silk should naturally be a large part of the Viking narrative.

This study explores Viking attributes found in the Viking narrative, with a particular focus on silk as a defining item and a defining luxury concept. The study shows that silk is found in some parts of the narrative and is absent in others. The aim of this paper is to discuss this clash in the narrative and why this is both interesting and problematic.

Keywords

Viking narrative, Viking afterlife, Archaeological material, Silk

Note/comment