

Proof of Viking warrior women? Maybe, but maybe not

In [a paper](#) published in American Journal of Physical Anthropology, Uppsala University archaeologist Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson and her team announced that they had, at last, proven that there were warrior women among the Vikings. The claim seemed to fit the evidence. Male Vikings were frequently buried with swords, and the sword was undoubtedly associated with the battle-scarred ideal of masculinity in Viking culture. If we assume that men buried with swords are warriors, then a woman buried with one was probably a warrior, too.

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[Professor Judith] Jesch has written extensively about gender roles in Viking society in her fascinating book *The Viking Diaspora*, and she finds a lot of problems in the researchers' analysis. For one thing, even when men were buried with swords, that didn't mean they were necessarily warriors. Swords were often decorative or symbolic. [...] But Jesch's most damning criticism is that the researchers don't acknowledge a key point: the bones they analyzed might not actually have been from the grave in question.

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Though fascinating, this grave doesn't really change our picture of the Viking world very much. If the researchers are right that this woman was a military leader, it tells us simply that there were rare exceptions to the generally rigid gender roles among Vikings.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [New evidence of Viking warrior women might not be what it seems](#)