

We Call Them Vikings

May 17 to November 11, 2014

Produced by The Swedish History Museum in Sweden and MuseumsPartner in Austria

High-res images available on request from sstackhouse@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Spearhead, Iron, silver.

Runic inscriptions on the silver coated socket read 'Rane owns this spear' and 'Botfus carved'. Weapons with runic inscriptions are rare, and this one is decorated with silver which makes it one of a kind. The ornamentation is an example of a particularly fine craftsmanship.

Stor-Vede, Follingbo, Gotland, Sweden. SHM 15928

(FID 914435)



Beads of bronze, glass and gold in a set of six rows.

These beads of glass and precious metals are a magnificent example of a wealthy woman's personal belongings.

Gravefind, Stora och Lilla Ihre, Hellvi, Gotland, Sweden.

SHM 20826:370

(FID 108059)



Pendant, Thorshammer, silver with filigree ornamentation.

This pendant has the shape of a Thor's hammer, an object that could have been used in connection to burials and to cult activities. It is the only one of its kind and is finely crafted.

Location of find is not known, Scania, Sweden. SHM 9822

(FID 106659)



Key. Bronze.

On the handle is a Christian motif, showing the crucifixion, above a small palmette. Keys are common in Viking Age Scandinavian material, but it is very rare indeed to have them adorned with such obvious Christian symbolism.

Sweden. SHM 6819:535

(FID 364197)

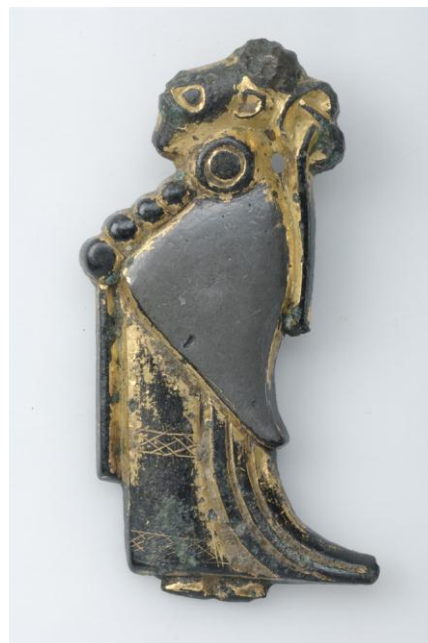


Pendant, silver and gilded.

This figurine may represent Frigg, the most powerful of the Asynjurs or female gods. The details in the clothing give many clues to the way the clothes were used. These pendants are very rare in Viking Age archaeological material. In Sweden only a few have been found and they are all included in this exhibition.

Grave find, Tuna, Alsike, Uppland, Sweden. SHM 10035: III (F23).

(FID 108947)



Freyja Pendant, silver.

The silver pendant is generally accepted to be a representation of the goddess Freyja portrayed as a pregnant woman. Freyja is the most important fertility goddess in the Nordic countries. She is invoked during pregnancies and deliveries but she is also a skilled magician prevailing over life and death. Freyja is the most important of the Valkyries, mythological female figures, and takes care of half of the men who died in battle. This is a unique object, none like it have ever been found.

Aska, Östergötland, Sweden. SHM 16429
(FID107873)



Sword. Iron, with hilt and pommel inlays of gilded bronze.

Most men were farmers or labourers on a farm and rarely carried a weapon other than a knife and an axe. But nevertheless, battle, the hunt and the ability to ride were important elements of what constituted the ideal man. A buried man carried weapons in the grave to indicate he was free and with the right to speak at the Thing, an assembly of free men that met to resolve disputes and make political decisions.

Location of find is not known. SHM 32452
(FID 264234)

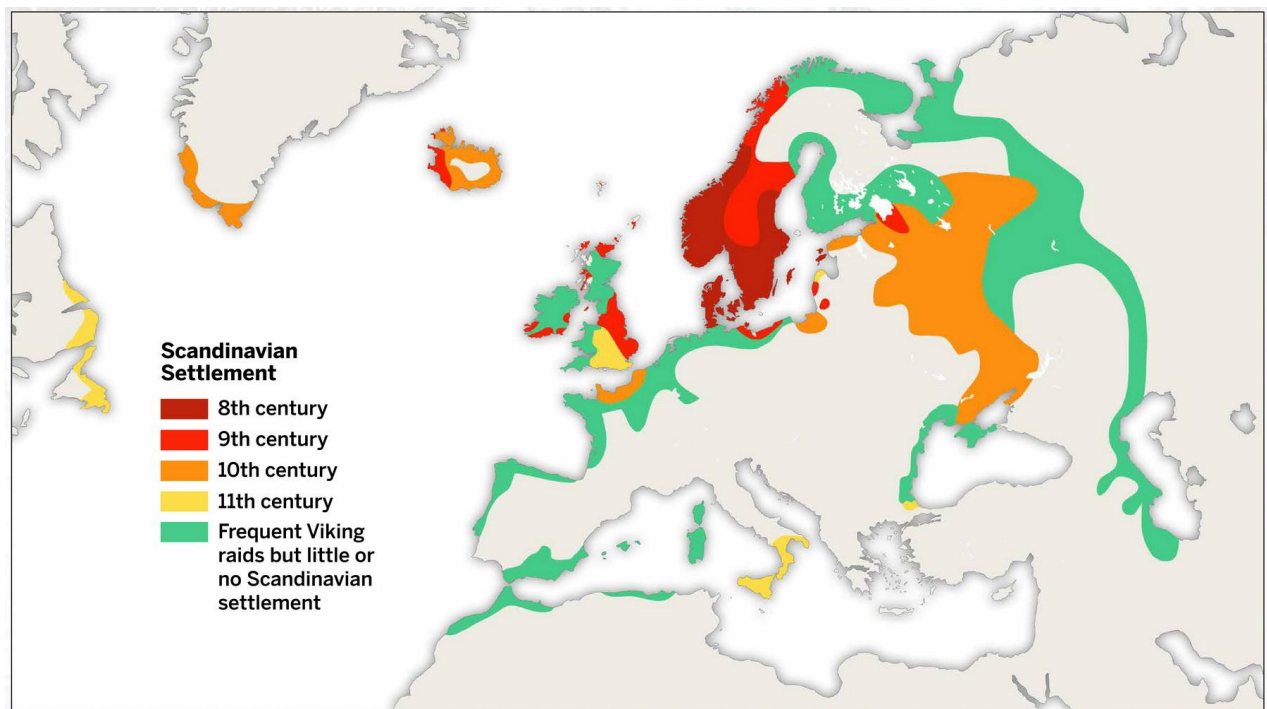


Pendant, Silver.

The pendant is in the shape of a male head. On the head there is a bird with its wings spread out on the side down to the ears. The pendant comes from a unique grave find containing objects of precious metals, marking the deceased as of great importance in society. The grave belonged to a woman, but the male head may represent the masculine ideal of the time.

Grave find, Aska, Hagebyhöga, Östergötland, Sweden.
SHM 16560
(FID 106604)





Scandinavian settlement and Viking activity. Though the word ‘viking’ appears in Old Norse sources, it is mainly used to describe an activity. Men and women went ‘on a viking’ – a commercial trip or raid. People seem to have referred to themselves as a Viking only when involved in this activity. This map shows the wide extent of Viking activity and Scandinavian settlement across Europe and the North Atlantic from the 8th to the 11th century. Image: The Swedish History Museum.

Pendant, crucifix, Silver.

The pendant is considered to be the oldest known crucifix found in what is present day Sweden. It was found in a woman’s grave. She seemed to have great wealth. The crucifix is completely unique, both in shape and in its early date. No others of this type have been found. Grave find, Björkö, Adelsö, Uppland, Sweden. SHM 34000:Bj 660 (FID 108914)



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