Female warriors of the Viking age

Fact or fiction? - An archaeological Master’s thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the concept of female warriors during the Viking age. I list seven cases from different parts of the Norse world where women have been buried with weapons and compare these archaeological sources with written sources using methods of material culture studies and theories of gender identity and feminist thought.

By looking at these I found evidence of special ideas on- and treatments of female warriors in line with a concept of third genders which could explain the rarity of their existence. However I concluded that female warriors did indeed exist in the Viking age, even though there were very few of them.

Keywords: Archaeology of gender, Viking age, Female warrior, Valkyrie, Shieldmaiden.

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