Wednesday 24th
Session 1

Julie Lund, University of Oslo

Time and Temporality. Viking Age Scandinavia as a Renaissance?
In this paper the aims and scope of the project ‘Using the Past in the Past. Viking Age Scandinavia as a Renaissance’ are presented. The use of temporality and references to time during the Viking Age are examined through composition of hoards. Further, the changing concepts of power in the archaeological research and role of monumentality are discussed and explored through the use of kerbstones on burial mounds. Finally, a number of research questions for the project and the conference are presented.

Andrew Reynolds, University College London

Drawing on the Past: an Archaeological Model for the Emergence of Supra-Local Society from Early Medieval England
This paper considers the socio-political implications of a series of closely spatially and temporally related cemeteries of 5th to 7th century date and how they might be read as charting the emergence of both individual communities and of collective supra-local society in early post-Roman Britain in what became by the 6th century the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent. The evidence at the heart of the paper comprises four early medieval cemeteries in close proximity excavated at Saltwood, which appropriated an earlier burial landscape and which evidently became used by four communities, arguably by a process of negotiation. In contrast to almost all other early medieval cemeteries of 5th-7th century date in England, archaeological findings demonstrate post-burial periodic occupation and by the period of the Domesday Survey, the locale occupied by the cemeteries was the assembly site of the local administrative district, the Hundred. A case is made for long-term stability of a local territory
and the wider implications of this aspect are considered. The model presented has wider applications in archaeology and anthropology.

Session 2

Anders Andrén, Stockholm University

New title: Competing Memories. The Past in Viking Age Gotland

Mads Dengsø Jessen, the National Museum of Denmark

The Construction of a Past Social Reality

The paper takes departure in the philosophy of John Searle, and will address the ability of constructing the past via an institutional reality and collective intentional acts. That is, that the past in the past could be regarded a construct which is based on the recognition that certain objects, structures, persons etc. have a specific status (besides their physical structure) and that that status, when engaged with, can influence the collective understanding of what is an active, present features and what is an non-active, past feature. Of special interest is the seemingly collective intentional inclination to overturn, presumably often as part of more elaborate (ritual) acts, features with status functions such as houses, pits or objects into features that are specifically not in use any longer – they have become past features. As case in point the pit A1182 from Kalmergården/Tissø, the deposited tool chest from the nearby Halleby Å, as well as the combination of the palisade and house OA3 in Jelling will be presented. In these cases the archaeological data, assemblage or stratigraphy imply that the intentional use of closure, deposition or overlapping respectively have been consciously utilized in order to construct a palpable ‘pastness’ of these specific features, thus making them past, non-active features.
Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh, Gothenburg University

**Material Phenomena and Temporality**

The archaeological material sometimes indicates that people in a particular prehistoric society convey certain notions and attitudes to past times. In this process, memory and various processes related to memory keeping is important. This may include memorials, competing memory politics, memory practices, or other memory work.

In this paper, a specific assemblage from a Swedish grave dated to the 10th century is discussed with focus on the different time-depths, demonstrated by the artefacts. It is also suggested that distance in time and distance in space may be co-operating in a centripetal here and now.

Frida Espolin Norstein, Gothenburg University

**Temporalities and Inheritance: The Significance of Oval Brooches as Heirlooms**

When time is discussed in relation to Viking burials it is mainly in terms of dating, which mostly rests on typologies and chronologies of specific objects in the burials. However, many of the so-called diagnostic artefacts of the Viking Age were in use for a long period of time. This makes close dating fraught with difficulties. Closer study of traces of use and repair on artefacts highlights their often long and complex use-lives. The proposed paper examines a particular group of objects from burials, the oval brooches from the British Isles and Iceland. By focusing on brooches that exhibit traces of wear and repair, the paper will highlight how several of them were clearly worn and could have been of a significant age before they ended up in the burials. It will be argued that oval brooches should in the majority of cases be seen as personal possessions of the deceased, and that they could well have been heirlooms. Through a detailed study of the oval brooches, the paper will focus on two different questions relating to time and temporalities in the Viking Age: what does it mean for our interpretations that features of a single burial will have parallel and yet distinct temporalities? Will our understanding of the significance of oval brooches in burials be altered if they are understood as heirlooms?
Longhouses as Temporal Assemblages in the Iron and Viking Ages

Archaeology considers temporality in many ways — as events, as chronological trajectories, as disruption. The three-aisled longhouse survived in Scandinavia through an exceptionally long period of time, from the Bronze Age through the Viking period. Architecture is inextricably caught up in temporality and tempo. Current discourse emphasises that a house is never a finished *product*, but always a continual *process*. Each longhouse can be considered as an emergent and dynamic assemblage of materials, animals, things and people. In contrast to the presentation of house plans as *still-lifes*, a house is thus never finished, but always becoming through time. Moreover, within the house, time is a dimension of space, continual and cyclical, punctuated by events: the rhythm of agriculture, hunting and other recurrent activities, feasts, weddings, childbirths, and deaths. The lifespan or biography of the house is of course inextricably linked with the biographies of the inhabitants. Yet some of these events must have been experienced as ruptures of time — events which necessitated an abandonment of dwelling. And finally, for new generations emerging within the house, the material and spatial environment emerges from the past, on several scales. Each house in the lifespan of this house type is a series of events; a manifestation of long-term social memory and an active choice to keep an archaic spatial ideal; to rebuild, essentially, a similar house again and again.

In this paper, I explore dwelling and time in Iron and Viking Age landscapes. How can we bring together the multi-scalar temporal meshwork embedded in one house, in a succession of houses in one place, and in the deep-time building and rebuilding of a particular house type over millennia? While this paper will not provide definite answers, I hope to move the discussion forward by looking at the assembled longhouse through multiple temporal scales.
Richard Bradley, University of Reading

**Commemoration and Change: remembering what may not have happened**

The first part of the paper discusses the early Irish texts concerned with the significance of place names – *dinnshenachas* – which account for the historical importance of ancient monuments and other features. They are illustrated by the Medieval poem ‘Tara noblest of hills’. I compare the archaeology of the Hill of Tara with two reconstructions offered on the basis of early texts and contrast the different interpretations of this evidence by Jim Mallory and John Waddell. Although they share little common ground, the differences between their accounts help to identify the features that were rapidly forgotten and those that retained a little of their original significance. There is an important distinction between memory – the attempt to recall accurately past events and practices – and commemoration – actions in the present that were inspired by the remains of the past.

In the second part of the paper I shall consider how some of these ideas can be applied to prehistoric material which by its very nature lacks any counterpart in literary sources. I shall trace the changing history of the monuments around Silbury Hill in southern England from the use and reuse of a Neolithic chamber tomb, through the construction of the largest artificial mound in Europe, and the foundation of a small Roman town and sanctuary. It will end with the fortification of Silbury Hill itself and the deposition of a burial there during the Viking Age.

Simon Barker, the Norwegian Institute in Rome

**Title to come.**

Anne Pedersen, the National Museum of Denmark

**The Past in the Present – re-use of Ancient Monuments in Viking-Age and Early Medieval Denmark**
Re-use of ancient monuments is a common phenomenon in southern Scandinavia and was practiced not only in prehistoric times but also in the Viking Age immediately before the introduction of Christian cemeteries. New graves, particularly well-furnished burials, were placed in Stone and Bronze Age mounds, and many prehistoric mounds formed focal points around which much later cemeteries were laid out. Chamber burials in ancient mounds were recorded from the 19th century, whereas Viking-Age cemeteries surrounding such mounds have mainly been documented in recent decades, in part as a result of the increased attention shown towards the surroundings of threatened monuments. Early interpretations of monument re-use often focus on pragmatic, economic considerations such as the amount of labour saved when compared with the effort involved in constructing a new monument. However, other factors were probably equally, if not more significant to the choice of burial site, among them the continued importance of the dead in the living society and the purposeful association with past traditions and monuments; the past either as a long distant past or as an implied (deliberately constructed) depth of time. The inclusion of archaic architectural elements in, for instance, prominent settlements attests to a conscious and active focus on the past. This was apparently no less so in the generations following the Viking Age. Churches were built next to or even on the site of ancient burial mounds, and recent excavations have shown that in some instances the church was placed close to a Viking-Age cemetery, suggesting that the location held a special significance. Building on a time-honoured site may have been one of the means to integrate the church into both the physical and the ritual and mental landscape.

Rebecca Cannell, University of Oslo

**Burial Mound Construction as an Expression of Past, Present and Future**

As part of the Past in the Past project, I will outline why the materials such as soils and sediments that were used for gravemound construction should be seen as more than containers of artefacts or material for dating and environmental construction. Focussing on Viking Age Southern Norway, this presentation includes examples to illustrate how the materials used and the how construction details were connected to the landscape they reside in. The materials chosen are not random, nor are the internal and external form of the grave mound itself.
Patrick Gleeson, Queen’s University Belfast

**Myth, the Past and Landscapes of Kingship in Early Medieval Ireland**

This paper explores the role of the past, imagined histories, and mythology in the creation of landscapes of kingship in early medieval Ireland. Ireland is famous for having one of the earliest and richest corpus of mythologies in western Europe. Rather than exploring the origins and symbolism of this corpus, this paper examines how archaeology illuminates the role of the past and royal landscapes in creating myths, particularly during the 7th to 9th centuries AD. The reuse of past monuments is a common feature of discourses of power right around Europe, with legitimacy, ancestral significance and religious or political motives commonly encountered. This paper explores the degree to which practices of re-use are embedded in cosmological frameworks, while at the same time questioning how strategies of rulership are implicated in the maintenance and manufacturing of such frameworks and beliefs. Rather than myth that is so redolent in the Irish landscape being ancient histories encoded in place, this paper explores the social and political context in early medieval politics within which these myths originate.

Mari Østmo, University of Oslo

**Landscapes of Commemoration**

Burials from southwestern Norway from the period AD 200-1000 display a variation of mortuary practices observed through the treatment of the body of the deceased, the careful selection of objects to accompany the dead body, the construction of the monument and the location of the monument in the landscape and in relation to other monuments as well as lived spaces. By applying the perspective concept of material citations it is possible to distinguish some underlying principles relating to the negotiations of identities and the activation of distant and recent pasts. By comparing these trends with the compositions of elite centres, such as the recently excavated Avaldsnes, this paper will examine whether different strategies of commemoration may be bound to different landscapes, and further, how these strategies changed or endured over time.
John Ljungkvist, *Uppsala University*

**Viking Age History Writing in Gamla Uppsala and Valsgärde - conscious relations to Past Burials and Monuments**

Medieval Scandinavian literature, based on oral norse poetry and in some occasions, even on rune stones, reveal that Viking communities had multiple ways of relating to the past. The material culture does unfortunately not give us the words of the oral stories but we do, in some cases, see the remains of events related to the stories. Some are very local, related to a specific place or family, while others are old monuments related to legends known from Iceland to the Baltic.

I intend to use the burial ground of Valsgärde and the centre of Gamla Uppsala to present two sites where people in Viking elite setting choose to relate (and not relate) their graves, buildings and activities to remains from the past.

Valsgärde is presented with a focus upon the almost fully excavated burial ground, used for more than 1200 years. It has some remarkable relations between boat and chamber burials that were created up to 800 years apart.

Gamla Uppsala is a far bigger site where the memory about its past central role has lived on since it emerged for more than 1500 years. Discussing the history writing of this place is far more complex. It involves the aspect of creating history and memory through monuments, before the Viking age. We can also see how old monuments and features were treated and dealt with and maybe indentify when the role of the monuments disappeared. I hope to show that Viking history writing was a selective matter. We can find evidence of both respect and as ruthlessness towards traces of the past.

Nanouschka Myrberg Burström, *Stockholm University*

**Time, Temporality and Imitative Artefact Dialogue**

In present-day Scandinavia a coinage was initiated about AD 995, which imitated contemporary Anglo-Saxon coins. For more than thirty years the English and Scandinavian coinages were closely connected through a network of humans and objects that moved,
Physically and conceptually, between mints and kingdoms. Different iconographical models were used in a strategic/rhetorical way by commissioners and artisans to create relations between cognitive nodes through association, referencing, paraphrasing and appropriation. When circulating, the coins linked users to an official and shared discourse, and maintained the created relations through the impact of their materiality.

The practice of imitating coins was however not unique to the Scandinavian Viking Age but belongs to a long tradition; this model was turned to on many occasions throughout history. The particularities of coin manufacture allow us to study the development closely: from more or less close copies through changes of names, titles, moneyers, types, dies, sizes, shapes and weight into stages where the resemblance with the originals has developed into something new. The imitative dialogue may thus be apprehended both on a general, long term, level, as well as in quite specific situations.

While many re-contextualising practices in the Viking Age seem to deal with reconnection with the past, the coin-imitation practice combines components of ‘ancientness’ with a contemporary conceptual framework, and create something for the future. Object agency and the hybrid, creative, characters of these coins provide starting points for a deeper understanding of the coins’ wider connotations and meanings, as well as for the imitative practice itself.

Maria Domeij Lundborg, The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity AB/Lund University

Animals of the Past - old motives in new ways

Animal ornamentation was one of the most characteristic artistic expressions of the late Iron Age. The style reached its peak during the early- or mid-Viking Age, but had by then been produced and reproduced for nearly 500 years. Stylistically, there is an obvious variation over the centuries – but the motives are quite the same: At the center of attention is the highly stylized, animal- or humanlike figures that are often cut up and reversed – or outdrawn and plated – in more or less complicated and web-like patterns.

In my research I use early medieval, skaldic poetry from the northwestern part of Europe as analogy to animal-ornamented objects of the late Iron Age. In my speech I will draw attention to how these parallel, artistic expressions was renewed by the use of old motives
and elements, but in new combinations. I will further touch upon how stylistic references to an ancient past might have added an extra dimension of value to ornamented objects, object-bearers and their activities in the present.

Friday 26th
Session 5

Sarah Semple, Durham University

Landscape, Identity and Power: Changing Engagements with the Past in Anglo-Saxon England

It is now well-accepted that the early medieval populations of Anglo-Saxon England engaged physically with the past through the use and manipulation of prehistoric and Roman features and monuments. Such activities have been related to social processes including the forging of identity, the claiming of land and the marking of territorial power. There is, however, a broader suite of evidence, beyond the archaeological record, that demonstrates the continued renegotiation of the prehistoric within the later centuries of the first millennium AD. Poetry and literature and manuscript art reveal that the prehistoric legacy remained potent, despite the conversion to Christianity, and remained relevant to discourses on power and authority and to elite performance. Yet perceptions of these places and landscape features changed, and some monuments were viewed in more negative terms, as haunted and dangerous places.

This paper explores these changing activities and perceptions, and contends that the management of the past as a resource, over time, became an increasingly elite concern. It formed an integral component in forging new experiential landscapes connected to the growth of royal authority. This ‘grammar of power’ was built upon the inherited intellectual territory of past centuries, but it existed alongside a popular perception of landscape, that was influenced by the church, but retained a profoundly local flavour.

Stine Brunstad, University of Oslo

Viking Age Runestones linking Present and Future Pasts
Throughout the Viking Age, runestones constituted and transformed places of commemoration in a variety of ways. My project will focus on the relationship between short- and long-term accumulation of matter in places and the resulting juxtaposition of old and new commemorative monuments, in other words, multi-temporal memorial assemblages. How and why were Viking Age runestones involved with the use or reference of the past? When runestones were raised in the proximity of other monuments or graves, it can be considered a strategy for articulating the present with the past and the future; with continuity and memory on one hand, and with change and anticipation on the other hand. This presentation will explore the degree of involvement with older sites in the Viking Age, in the face of social, cultural and religious change.

The biographies of places can be examined through their interrelated short- and long-term phases of accumulation. Every archaeological site unfolds to a specific rhythm, some develop slowly over time, while others are rapidly accumulated, and the result is different forms of monumentality. While some structures decay or disappear relatively quickly, others remain physically present and visible in multiple archaeological periods. These ancient monuments can be re-activated through use, reference and incorporation in younger memorial complexes. I will examine how the occurrences of raising runestones in the Viking Age were articulated with the long-term accumulation of matter in places, and what these different time-perspectives can inform us about the Viking Age society.

Leszek Gardeła, University of Rzeszów/Snorrastofa – Medieval and Cultural Centre Reykholt, Iceland

Death, Mourning, and Memory: Second Fiddles in Viking Age Mortuary Practices

In traditional approaches to mortuary archaeology, Viking Age graves and their contents were typically seen in a very straightforward way and regarded as “mirrors” reflecting the identities and professions of the dead in an undistorted way – e.g. graves with weapons were seen as belonging to warriors, and graves with opulent jewellery or elite goods as belonging to members of the highest echelons of society. Over the last decades, these traditionalist approaches, characteristic of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship, have changed dramatically; rather than seeing graves as “mirrors of life”, today’s scholars argue that burial tableaux were instead “mirages of life” that, for the most part, reflected the various aspirations of the mourners.
Although we all know very well that “the dead don’t bury themselves”, we still tend to forget about it in our publications. This often leads us to reaching far-fetched conclusions, especially when we are dealing with graves that contain rich furnishings.

In this paper, by shifting the interpretative focus from the dead to the mourners who orchestrated and participated in Viking Age funerals, I would like to debate alternative ways of “reading” graves and their contents. Based on selected case studies from across the Viking world, I will pose questions about the role of mourners in creating, shaping and forging memories about the dead. How many people were involved in preparing the deceased for burial? Who took part in the procession and in the final mortuary acts at the grave side? What were the differences between private and public funerals and how did they affect individual and collective memory? Is it possible to unravel Viking Age mnemonic techniques and their meanings based on the stratigraphy of graves and the positioning of their contents?

Anna Wessman, University of Helsinki

Weapons as Heirlooms
Cemeteries are often affected by re-use, an intentional behaviour that is connected to temporality, commemoration and memory. It’s a clear sign of the fact that also people in the past wanted to relate to their history. Site re-use is often connected to visible monuments but in Finland it rather seems to be the other way around. Cemeteries that are not visible above ground are repeatedly manipulated, in different ways, and this behaviour seems to increase during Late Iron Age.

In this paper, I will introduce a few examples from Häme region in Finland, where inhumation burials have been dug into older cremation cemeteries under level ground during 11th century AD. Inside the inhumation burials old weapons can be found, which have been picked up from the older cremation cemeteries. These weapons, which are often swords, are clearly on display in these burials, which suggests that their function is not only to legitimate power but also to proclaim ownership of the past. As heirlooms, these weapons tightened the ties to the ancestors in a concrete way. They express not only genealogy but perhaps also a sense of belonging with the past. Hence, they also become symbols of continuity.