

Miniature Spears in the Viking Age

Small Symbols of Óðinn?

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ABSTRACT: The spear is doubtlessly one of the most iconic weapons of the Viking Age. In addition to its numerous applications in armed conflict, where it was used by foot- and horseback warriors, the spear served as a potent emblem of power and social prominence. Furthermore, archaeological discoveries of spears in ritual contexts demonstrate unequivocally that these weapons played important roles in pre-Christian religious practice, in some instances perhaps echoing myths about Óðinn. This paper examines a group of rare Viking Age miniatures shaped like spears and spearheads. Made of a variety of materials, including iron, silver, copper alloys and wood, these intriguing artefacts were probably carried on the body singly or as part of elaborate sets of religious paraphernalia. By investigating the contexts of their discovery, as well as their materiality and different practical applications, new ideas will be offered about the miniature spears' social and symbolic significance.

RESUME: Spyddet er utvivlsomt et af de mest ikoniske våben fra vikingetiden. I tillæg til dets mange funktioner i væbnede konflikter, hvor det blev brugt af krigere til fods og til hest, var spyddet også et stærkt symbol på magt og social status. Ydermere viser arkæologiske fund af spyd i rituelle kontekster utvetydigt, at disse våben spillede en vigtig rolle i førkristen religiøs praksis, i nogle tilfælde måske forbundet med myter om Odin. Denne artikel undersøger en gruppe af sjældne miniaturer fra vikingetid, der er formet som spyd og spydspidser. Disse spændende genstande er fremstillet af forskellige materialer, såsom jern, sølv, kobberlegeringer og træ, og de blev sandsynligvis båret på kroppen som enkeltgenstande eller som del af mere omfattende sæt af religiøst udstyr. Ved at undersøge den kontekst, hvori de findes, samt materialer og diverse praktiske anvendelser byder artiklen på nye idéer om miniaturespyddenes sociale og symbolske betydning(er).

KEYWORDS: Viking Age; Scandinavia; Óðinn; archaeology; amulets; weapons

Introduction

The material culture of the Viking Age is replete with miniature objects. Literally hundreds of small items made of copper alloy, silver, gold, iron, wood and amber are known from graves, hoards and settlements dated between the ninth and eleventh centuries AD. Since the early days of Viking archaeology, there has been a tendency to consider nearly all such artefacts as religious paraphernalia or amulets worn by superstitious people hoping to gain special assistance from pre-Christian gods and supernatural beings (e.g. Schetelig 1911; Arrhenius 1961; Arwidsson 1989; Fuglesang 1989). Over the course of the last thirty years or so, a substantial body of literature on Viking Age amulets has been produced, investigating their different variants, symbolic meanings and wider contexts (e.g. Zeiten 1997; Fuglesang 1999; Eniosova 2009; Pedersen 2009; Jagodziński 2009; Jensen 2010; Musin 2012; Gardęła 2014; 2016a). More recently, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines have received particular attention (Helmbrecht 2011; Arwill-Nordbladh 2013; Christensen 2013; Osborn 2015; Pentz 2018; Pesch 2018; Gardęła 2018; 2020), but other categories of miniature items – for instance weapons – have also been subjected to academic scrutiny (e.g. Capelle 2003; Wamers 2017; Edberg and Söderberg 2018; Pentz 2021). In 2018, together with Kerstin Odebäck, the present author released a detailed analysis of miniature shields apparently used exclusively by Viking Age women in the areas of Denmark, Norway and Sweden but also in Germany, Poland and Russia (Gardęła and Odebäck 2018). The present study serves as an extension of the ongoing research on miniature weapons and focusses on small-size spears and spearheads from the Viking world. The goal is to thoroughly investigate the contexts of their discovery as well as their materiality and social and symbolic meanings, especially their possible links with the Norse god Óðinn. The mysterious nature of this remarkable divine figure has been discussed in numerous publications by Professor Jens Peter Schjødt (e.g. 1988; 1993; 1995; 2001; 2007; 2008) whose valuable insights have spearheaded the theoretical and methodological development of Old Norse religious studies. It is hoped, therefore, that Professor Schjødt and the international academic community will welcome this contribution to the wider debate surrounding Óðinn and the material expressions of his cult.

Since miniature spears and spearheads doubtlessly imitated full-size weapons, it is necessary to begin with a concise presentation of the role of the spear in Viking archaeology and Old Norse literature.

Background: The Spear in Archaeology and Literature

The spear is one of the oldest weapons known to mankind. Its relatively light weight and slender form contribute to its remarkable multi-functionality, making it effective in combat, hunting and even fishing (e.g. Evans-Pritchard 1976, 25-26; Thieme 2007). It therefore comes as no surprise that spears were popular in prehistoric and medieval societies and that they became some of the most enduring attributes and symbols of the warrior.

Across the world, spear shafts are typically made of wood (e.g. Kola and Wilke 2000; Sankiewicz and Wyrwa 2018) but the materials used to produce spearheads vary considerably. Archaeological discoveries show spearheads carved from bone and antler or made of flint, copper alloy and iron. The choice of material always depended on a range of spatio-chronological and technological factors but also on the availability of specific resources, the wealth of the manufacturer and/or user and the overall purpose of the spear. Some spearheads were moreover decorated; prehistoric and medieval artists employed techniques such as carving, inlay, plating, *Tauschierung* etc. The different ornamental motifs depicted on spearheads likely served a variety of functions and may have been symbols of prestige and social prominence, as well as manifestations of religious ideas (e.g. Dulnicz 2004; Chudziak 2006; Górewicz 2020, 86-125).

In the Viking Age, together with axes and swords, spears were some of the most popular elements of the warrior's equipment (e.g. Griffith 2009; Halpin 2008; Hjarðar and Vike 2016; Górewicz 2020, 45-125). In contrast to prehistoric periods, however, almost all Viking Age spearheads were made of iron (for examples of arrowheads or spearheads made of organic materials, see Kurnatowska and Tuszyński 2003, 258). Their shafts and blades could be decorated with non-ferrous metals, like silver, gold, copper, brass or bronze, and the ornamental designs could take geometric and/or zoomorphic forms. Typo-chronological studies show that spearheads vary widely across the Viking world. This diversity may reflect local trends and/or result from the different purposes of the spears – small and slender examples could be used in hand-to-hand combat and as throwing weapons, while large, heavy spears were practical both when fighting on foot and on horseback. Very long spearheads allowed their users to not only execute thrusting blows but also to slash the enemy and to inflict damage similar to sword wounds.

Viking Age spears and spearheads are found in a variety of contexts, usually in cremation and inhumation graves (e.g. Shetelig 1912; Petersen 1919; Kristján Eldjárn and Adolf Friðriksson 2000; Svanberg 2003; Pedersen 2014; Janowski 2015; Błaszczuk 2017; Wadył 2019) but also at settlement sites and in places of religious worship. Spears and spearheads discovered in watery locations, like rivers and lakes, may have been lost by their owners or deliberately deposited, perhaps in the course of funerary ceremonies or as a form of sacrifice to gods or supernatural beings (Braunmüller 2013; Sankiewicz and Wyrwa 2018).

Over the course of time, several different typologies have been developed for spearhead finds from Scandinavia and the wider Viking world. The first and still most popular classification system was created by Jan Petersen (1919) over a century ago. More recently, Bergljot Solberg (1984) proposed a new and more nuanced typology. Outside of Scandinavia, for instance in the Slavic and Baltic countries, other classification systems or variations of existing ones have been developed to include local finds which differ from those characteristic of the Norse cultural milieu (e.g. Nadolski 1954). All these typologies are useful aids in research on miniature spears

and provide valuable hints about their chronology, provenance and potential symbolic content.

As we have seen above, the significance of the spear as a weapon and status symbol is clear from the archaeological record, especially lavishly decorated ones found in elite burials, power centres, cult sites etc. Spears also feature prominently in Viking Age art, on Gotlandic picture stones but also on stone crosses from the Isle of Man and on the famous Oseberg tapestry (e.g. Oehrl 2019a; 2019b; Vedeler 2019). All this is verified by textual sources that describe the use of spears by people of high social strata as well as by gods and supernatural beings, mainly Óðinn and the *valkyrjur*. Interestingly, some spears – like the famous *atgeirr* used by Gunnarr of *Brennu-Njáls saga* – can even be regarded as material markers of identity.

We may infer from the rich body of Old Norse literature that spears could be employed in a variety of different ways on land and at sea, for instance as thrusting and throwing weapons. Interestingly, extant texts lead us to believe that the act of casting a spear before the commencement of actual hand-to-hand combat was attributed ritual importance. On a semantic level, this practice may have been linked to an archetypal event recorded in the eddic poem *Völuspá* which describes how Óðinn himself cast a spear towards the army of the Vanir gods and in this way started the world's first armed conflict:

Fleygði Óðinn
ok í fólk um skaut –
þat var enn fólkvíg
fyrst í heimi.
Brotinn var borðveg[g]r
borgar ása,
Knátto vanir vígspá
völlo sporna.

Óðinn flung
and shot into the host –
it was war still,
the first in the world.
Torn was the timber wall
of the Æsir's stronghold.
Vanir were – by a war charm –
live and kicking on the plain.

Völuspá (stanza 24)

Text and translation after Dronke (1997, 13).

The spear-throwing ritual is also known from other Old Norse texts (e.g. *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks konungs* 10 and *Eyrbyggja saga* 44; see Einar Ólafur Sveinsson and Matthias Þórðarson 1935; Turville-Petre and Tolkien 1956, 148-149) but its most vivid description is recorded in *Þáttr Styrbjarnar Sviákappa* in a passage describing the clash of two armies led by Eiríkr and Styrbjörn on a battlefield at Fyrisvellir in Sweden. Before the actual fighting rage commences, Eiríkr – a devout worshipper of Óðinn – casts a reed (ON *reyrsproti*) towards his enemies and utters the formula 'Óðinn á yðr

alla', 'Óðinn owns you all'. In flight, the reed turns into a spear and Styrbjörn is defeated.

The idea of marking with a spear and in this way dedicating people to Óðinn appears to be semantically related to the god's archetypal self-sacrifice which is vividly portrayed in the eddic poem *Hávamál*:

Veit ek, at ek hekk
vinga meiði á
nætr allar nío,
geiri undaðr
ok gefinn Óðni,
siálfr siálfom mér,
á þeim meiði
er manngi veit
hvers hann af rótom renn.

I know that I was hanging
on a windswept tree
nine whole nights,
gashed with a spear
and given to Óðinn
– myself to myself –
on that tree
of which no one knows
from roots of what it originates.

Hávamál (stanza 138)

Text and translation after Dronke (2011, 30).

The meaning of this ritual has been variously interpreted by scholars, for instance as an act of symbolic death akin to shamanic rituals and as a kind of *do ut des* sacrifice (e.g. Fleck 1971a; 1971b; Schjødt 1993; 1995; 2008; Slupecki 2005; Price 2019). A wider exploration of its deeper significance shall not occupy us here, however. Of crucial importance in the present context is the fact that it is the spear – rather than the sword or axe – that is employed as a ritual accoutrement. The reason for selecting this particular weapon could be its ancient origin – spears had been commonly used by Germanic warriors long before the Viking Age, not only in armed conflict but also in ritual performances, as implied by their frequent occurrence in Early and Late Iron Age iconography showing 'dancing' warriors clad in animal skins (e.g. Holmqvist 1960; Speidel 2004; Price 2019, 306-311; Maddox 2020). It is impossible to know for certain if the spear with which Óðinn wounds himself in *Hávamál* is just a random spear or if it is actually his special spear Gungnir ('swaying one'), a magic weapon crafted by the dwarves (on Gungnir, see Simek 2006, 124) and mentioned in several Old Norse texts, for instance *Sigrdrífumál* 17 and *Skáldskaparmál* 9 and 33. Nevertheless, even if they were not one and the same, it is plausible that in the Norse worldview these two spears were semantically linked.

Ynglinga saga 9 mentions a different episode involving Óðinn marking himself with a spear (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1941, 22). In this case, however, rather than being part

of a (self) sacrifice, the act is conducted shortly before Óðinn's actual death in bed. We learn from the same saga (*Ynglinga saga* 9) that sometime later another Norse god, Njǫrðr, had himself marked with a spear before he died, which implies that after Óðinn's passing this custom became popular among members of the social elite, at least in the world of Old Norse literature (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1941, 23). It is possible (although admittedly extant sources do not provide any further particulars) that this custom was regarded as a necessary rite of passage which ensured that whoever was marked with a spear would join Óðinn in the afterlife, no matter where or how they actually died.

Interestingly, extant textual sources also suggest that some spears were crafted by human sorcerers who endowed them with magic powers. For instance, in *Gísla saga Súrssonar* a *seiðr*-practitioner named Þorgrímr nef forges a spear from the remains of a broken sword (Björn K. Þórólfsson and Guðni Jónsson 1943). Also in *Brennu-Njáls saga*, a man named Hallgrímr has a special spear created with *seiðr* magic:

Hallgrímr hefir atgeir þann, er hann hefir látit seiða til, at honum skal ekki vápn at bana verða nema hann; þat fylgir ok., at þegar veit, et víg er vegit með atgeirinum, því at þá syngir í honum áðr hátt; svá hefir hann náttúru mikla með sér.

Hallgrímr has a spear [atgeirr] on which he has put a spell so that no weapon but this can kill him. Another thing about it is that you know at once when it is about to strike a death blow, for it first makes a loud singing noise – that's how much power it has.

Brennu-Njáls saga (chapter 30)

Text after Einar Ólafur Sveinsson (1954, 80).

Translation (with my amendments) after Cook (2001, 49).

Apart from serving as symbols of power and ritual accoutrements of men, spears in Old Norse literature sometimes appear in connection with women (e.g. Gardela 2021). This is most vividly exemplified in the poem *Darraðarljóð* where twelve *valkyrjur* weave battle on a macabre loom the different constituents of which are weapons, including 'blood-stained spears' that serve as heddle-rods (see Poole 1991; Price 2019, 276-277). In fact, several *valkyrja* names directly refer to spears, for example: Geirahǫd, Geiravǫr, Geirdriful, Geir-Rota, Geirskǫgul, Geirvífa, Geirǫlul, Geir[r]onul (Price 2019, 281). Also the two giantesses Fenja and Menja in the eddic poem *Grottasǫngr* 15 reminisce how they once 'sliced with sharp spears blood from wounds' (Larrington 1999, 262).

As mentioned above, some Viking Age spearheads are intricately ornamented, which clearly implies that they were not regarded as 'ordinary' objects and had significant material value and potentially symbolic meanings. Although the geometric and/or zoomorphic designs that adorn them are sometimes very elaborate, it is challenging to decipher what they represent or to link them with religious ideas and/or mythical stories (Fuglesang 1980; Chudziak 2006). More often than not, it is the contexts of the spears' discovery that illuminate their special significance, for instance suggesting that they played important roles in rituals (e.g. Artelius 2005; Gardela 2019, 53-75).

It is interesting that, in Scandinavian funerary contexts, spears are occasionally found embedded in the ground, suggesting that they were thrust with some force,

perhaps in an act alluding to the aforementioned ‘Óðinnic ritual’ of the casting of the spear. Referring to extant Old Norse textual sources, scholars like Andreas Nordberg (2002; 2003) and Neil Price (2019, 95; 2020, 245) have argued that the presence of such spears in mortuary contexts indicates that the dead were dedicated to Óðinn and/or had close links to this god. It should be borne in mind, however, that ritually thrust weapons (spears, swords and even shield bosses) are also noted in Germanic graves that date from the Early Iron Age, a fact which suggests that the Viking Age custom had deep historical roots and that – at least initially – it may not have been associated with Wotan/Óðinn at all (e.g. Liana 1963; Skowron 2005; Gardęła and Ciesielski 2012). Shafted spears embedded vertically in graves could have held myriad meanings: for instance, they might have allowed the mourners to maintain close physical contact with the dead – if the spear shaft extended from the inside of the grave to the outside and was visible on the surface of the cemetery, it would on the one hand serve as a grave-marker and on the other hand as a means allowing the mourners to stay ‘in touch’ with the dead without the need to (re)open the grave (Gardęła and Ciesielski 2012).

After briefly outlining the significance of spears in Viking archaeology and Old Norse literature and showing that these weapons were strongly linked to Óðinn, we can shift our attention to their small-size counterparts. Before evaluating their complete corpus, it is appropriate to provide a critical review of previous scholarly work on miniature spears.

A History of Research on Miniature Spears

In contrast to other types of small-size objects commonly regarded as ‘amulets’, miniature spears have received fairly limited scholarly attention. Although they were known to the academic community at the beginning of the twentieth century, they were not discussed alongside similar types of artefacts until 1961 when Birgit Arrhenius published her paper on Viking Age miniatures. Arrhenius was familiar with miniature spears from Barkarby (Järfälla sn., Uppland, Sweden), Birka (Adelsö sn., Uppland, Sweden), Gåshagen (Vasterhejde sn., Gotland, Sweden), Helgö (Ekerö sn., Uppland, Sweden), Klinta (Köpings sn., Öland, Sweden), Köpings stad (Västmanland, Sweden) and Torvalla (Husby-Skederids sn., Uppland, Sweden) as well as three finds from unspecified locations in Sweden (Figs. 1-2). She noted in her discussion that the miniatures’ forms are diverse and that some specimens closely resemble full-size spears, especially the so-called winged spears or *Flügelanze*. The most characteristic feature of full-size winged spears is (as their name implies) the presence of ‘wings’, essentially large protrusions attached to the socket that prevent the spear from going too deep into the victim’s flesh, allowing the warrior or hunter to pull it out immediately, and making it possible to parry blows or to hook the opponent’s weapon (Kurasieński 2005; Górewicz 2020, 58-61).

In view of the miniature spears’ peculiar materiality and find-contexts, Arrhenius regarded them as items of symbolic significance. Drawing on textual sources about

Langobard and Frankish rulers, she highlighted the importance of spears in Germanic pre-Viking Age traditions where they often served as emblems of authority and royal power. Also in Ottonian Germany, spears were attributed special meanings: the best example is the ceremonial Holy Lance (or Lance of St Maurice) which, in fact, represents an unusual variant of a winged spear. In discussing the symbolism of spears in Norse societies, Arrhenius emphasised their links with the god Óðinn (who owned the magic spear Gungnir) and noted that spears were often depicted on Gotlandic runestones (cf. Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 443-446; Oehrl 2019a; 2019b).

In the 1970s, research on miniature weapons was taken up by Ulf Näsman (1972) who discussed the material and symbolic aspects of five such artefacts (1 spear and 4 swords) from Eketorp, Sweden. All of these were found in houses and alongside other small-size goods such as amber and glass beads (Näsman 1972, 96). As regards the miniature spearhead with small protrusions on the sides of the blade, Näsman dismissed any link with early medieval *Flüggellanze* and instead saw it in light of spears from the Migration Period. Referring to an earlier study by Robert Koch (1970), which concerned miniature weapons in Merovingian female graves, Näsman argued that the Eketorp finds might also be linked to women and possibly served as symbolic weapons to defend against supernatural powers. He also speculated that the miniatures were given to women by men who could not protect them personally when they were away (Näsman 1972, 100).

More than twenty years later, in 1997, Miriam Koktvedgaard Zeiten focused on different specimens from Old Denmark. At that time, only three miniature spears were known from the Danish area: one from Århus (Århus s., Hasle h., Århus a.) and two from Hedeby (Lkr. Schleswig) (Andersen and Madsen 1985, 63; Elsner 1992, 79). In a similar vein to Arrhenius, Zeiten was keen to interpret at least some of these artefacts as having links to Óðinn. As she cautiously wrote (Zeiten 1997, 18):

(...) although the proposal that especially the spearhead is an Odin attribute appears quite reasonable, it does not mean that all miniature spearheads are to be viewed as such.

In her critique of Näsman's (1972) views, Zeiten (1997, 18) pointedly observed that 'a theory building on a weeping woman being abandoned by her strong man does not seem rewarding'. Yet, overall, it appears Zeiten favoured the idea that miniature spears (like other small-size weapons) protected their owners against supernatural beings.

Miniature spears surfaced again in 2010, in Bo Jensen's monograph on *Viking Age Amulets in Scandinavia and Western Europe*. Based on previous studies and new surveys of museum collections, Jensen assembled a catalogue including 27 miniature spears. Most of the finds in Jensen's corpus were discovered in Sweden and the remaining ones came from Denmark and Germany. As previous scholars, Jensen saw miniature spears as part of a broader group of Viking Age miniature weapons including swords, axes and shields. By comparing them to the features of full-size spearheads, Jensen was able to ascribe several of them to particular types within Jan Petersen's (1919) classification system. His observations in this regard are important and provide clues concerning their chronology: Jensen's catalogue includes miniature spears

representing Petersen's types A (roughly ninth century), B, C, D (ninth century), G and M (late tenth century), which means that this type of artefact was used throughout the entire Viking Age.

Jensen (2010, 45) devoted little attention to the possible symbolism of miniature spears. Other than noting the views of previous scholars like Arrhenius (1961) and Staecker (2004, 50), he did not elaborate on who their manufacturers and/or users might have been. This aspect, however, was later developed by other archaeologists.

Also in 2010, Erika Rosengren published an article on miniature weapons (mainly swords and spears) proposing the idea that small-size militaria were used in connection with wedding rituals. Referring to Tacitus, who claims that in some Early Iron Age Germanic tribes the man would give his future wife a set of weapons and a warhorse, Rosengren argued that over the course of time the ritual changed and expensive full-size militaria were replaced by miniatures. In this way, Rosengren (2010, 211) contends, women who obtained these objects acquired new identities in Viking society; just like free men – who were entitled to carry weapons – women would manifest their position as ladies of the house by carrying miniature militaria.

Rosengren doubtlessly provided a novel approach to miniature weapons – objects which had earlier been seen mainly as amulets, religious symbols or (very occasionally) toys. However, the difficulty in accepting her theory is that its only foundation is the account of Tacitus from the first century AD, i.e. chronologically removed from the Viking Age by almost a thousand years. Rosengren (2010, 202) is fully aware of this issue, but does not see it as a major obstacle.

The topic of Viking Age miniature spears was taken up again in 2014 in my monograph *Scandinavian Amulets in Viking Age Poland* (Gardela 2014, 102-104) where especial focus was placed on two newly-discovered iron examples from the emporium in Truso/Janów Pomorski. Attention was also devoted to an unusual miniature winged spear made of wood from the port-of-trade in Wolin, an object possibly associated with the Slavic population of the town. *Ebbonis vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis* (book III, ch. I), a text recounting the life of Otto of Bamberg, suggests that some kind of 'spear cult' may have existed in Wolin and speaks of a pillar with a spear stuck in it which allegedly stood in the town (Labuda 2003, 174-175). Ebbo claims that the spear originally belonged to Julius Caesar, but this is highly improbable. It seems more likely that the Wolin spear was a ritual item used in religious ceremonies and/or an attribute of some pagan deity or mythical founder of the town (for more detailed discussions, see Ślupecki 1994, 40-41; Kuczkowski 2008). Spears were commonly used by the Pomeranians in their divination rituals, but – in contrast to Old Norse religious practices – the scarcity of data makes it challenging to associate them with particular Slavic deities or supernatural beings (see Górewicz 2020, 121-122 for interesting speculations on the links between spears and the gods Perun and Weles).

This overview shows that, over the course of the last fifty years or so, a number of different hypotheses have been offered to explain the symbolic meaning of miniature spears. Some scholars have viewed them as amulets linked to the cult of Óðinn, others have suggested they were worn for protection, and others yet have argued that they

served as marriage gifts substituting for full size weapons. All these different theories have something to offer, but none seem to comprehensively explain the phenomenon of miniature militaria. One way forward may be to thoroughly investigate the contexts of their discovery – by exploring where, how and with whom miniature spears tend to be associated in the archaeological record, we can arrive at new ideas regarding their social and symbolic significance. It may also be stimulating to view them in light of theories of miniaturisation which have been recently developed in the work of Douglass Bailey (2005).

Regional Patterning and Find-Contexts of Miniature Spears

Although Jensen's (2010) catalogue is fairly comprehensive and includes miniature spears from Denmark, Sweden and Germany, he has missed several examples from Russia as well as the aforementioned iron spears from Truso/Janów Pomorski and the wooden spear from Wolin in Poland (Gardeła 2014, 102-104). Furthermore, over the last decade a number of new miniature spears have been found in Scandinavia, necessitating a revision of earlier assumptions. At the present stage of research, it appears that miniature spears were especially popular in Sweden, with only a few examples in Denmark and elsewhere; the 'eastern distribution' of this group of finds is thus very clear from the archaeological record. Table 1 at the end of this article presents an updated list of all currently known miniature spears from Scandinavia and Continental Europe.

Miniature Spears in Graves

Only six miniature spears have been found in Viking Age funerary contexts. Interestingly – and in stark contrast to miniature shields which appear in numerous inhumations and cremations (Gardeła and Odebäck 2018) – miniature spears occur predominantly in graves with burnt human remains. While it is rarely possible to be certain about the biological sex of the deceased, the goods that accompany them suggest they were predominantly female. One obstacle in researching these graves is the fact that most of them were discovered over fifty years ago and poorly documented – descriptions of their contents are vague and detailed drawings, section plans and *in situ* photographs are often unavailable. Hoping to weave a comprehensive picture of the occurrence of miniature spears in mortuary contexts, the discussion below draws on a variety of sources, including archival material, published site reports and museum-based studies of the grave assemblages.

No other Viking Age site has provided as many miniature spears as Birka in Uppland, Sweden. Two have been identified in graves and at least another two have been found in the settlement context. Remarkably, one of these miniature spears was discovered in the unusual grave Bj. 581 which held the remains of a woman buried with a full set of weapons (sword, axehead, battle knife, two spearheads and two shields), two horses and a range of other goods (on Bj. 581, see Arbman 1943, 188-190; Hedenstierna-Jonson et al. 2017; Price *et al.* 2019; Gardeła 2021). In this case, however,

the miniature was discovered in the fill of the grave and not in the burial chamber, as one would normally expect. It therefore remains unclear if the artefact found its way into the grave accidentally, for instance during the process of backfilling, or if it was deposited intentionally and as part of some ritual.

Inhumation grave Bj. 944 from Birka also contained a miniature spear (Fig. 3). The burial chamber was furnished with a wide array of weapons (a sword in a wooden scabbard with a decorative chape, a battle knife, a shield and a spearhead) as well as riding equipment (an elaborate bridle with bits, iron crampons and possibly a saddle, as implied by the presence of a large buckle), dress adornments (e.g. a penannular brooch), an antler comb, a whetstone and other goods (see Arbman 1943, 368-371, for a full list of artefacts). Judging by the presence of copper alloy 'buttons', it seems the deceased from Bj. 944 was dressed in an eastern-style caftan. Furthermore, a horse was buried at the foot-end of the chamber.

The miniature spear from Bj. 944 was discovered *inside* the chamber on the right-hand side of the body. Interestingly, the tip of this object was pointing towards the foot-end of the grave – a detail that may hold special significance (cf. Kurasiński 2014 and below). Although the sex of the deceased remains undetermined and notwithstanding the fact that the funerary assemblage gives the impression that the grave belongs to a man, a female equal-armed brooch was discovered in the fill (Arbman 1943, 370-371). Could the buried person actually have been biologically female? For the time being this question must remain open.

Another miniature spear was discovered in a cremation grave from Barkarby in Järfälla sn., Uppland, Sweden (Fig. 1c). It was found together with a miniature sword (Arrhenius 1961, 144-145), pottery and a small comb fragment. Regrettably, nothing else is known about this grave's construction and its wider context. The artefactual assemblage is insufficient to make any inferences about the sex of the buried individual.

Also a grave discovered accidentally at Johannesdal in Köpings sn., Västmanland, Sweden contained a miniature spear (Arrhenius 1961, 147). This specimen differs from others in that it was made from a re-used iron arrowhead (Fig. 4). This is not the only peculiarity of the Johannesdal grave, however. Among its rich furnishings (including a shield boss, two fragmentary arrowheads, a miniature sword, a spearhead and a glass bead) was also a short double-edged sword whose point was rounded, rendering it ineffective in combat. The unusual features of this weapon give reasons to believe that – like the miniature spear – it was re-forged. In other words, it appears that someone had used an old broken sword to give it a new 'life'. The closest parallel is a sword/knife from Gnezdovo, Russia (Roesdahl and Wilson 1992, 307) discovered on top of a cauldron containing the horned skull of a ram and wool. The context and unusual form of the Gnezdovo sword suggest that it was used as a ritual tool, perhaps in connection with sacrifices. Could the short sword from Johannesdal have played a similar role?

A possible miniature spear is also known from a funerary context in Öland. It was discovered in a Viking Age cremation grave at Köpingsvik in Slätbo hundred, Köpings

sn. According to Svanberg (2003, 252), originally a number of different cemeteries existed at Köpingsvik but over the course of time they merged to form one large burial site. The graves in this area have different forms – e.g. large cairns, small stone cists – and the dead are either cremated or inhumed. The grave with the miniature spear that interests us here was excavated in 1965 by Ulf Erik Hagberg (Svanberg 2003, 253-254). Its external structure had the form of a cairn. Beneath the cairn was a cremation layer, ca. 4.5 x 2.3 m large and 10 cm deep. Based on an osteological analysis, the deceased person appears to have been biologically female. The grave goods buried with this individual indicate that the mourners held her in high esteem. Among the different artefacts are fragments of gold thread (probably adorning the garments of the deceased), various pieces of silver jewellery (e.g. fragments of a chain, a ring) and numerous pieces of melted silver and bronze. Furthermore, the grave contained beads of glass and carnelian as well as gilded mounts, a fragmented key made of copper alloy, a casket handle and an arrowhead (for a full list of finds, see Svanberg 2003, 253-254). Based on the typological features of the assemblage, the Köpingsvik grave has been dated to the period between 750-850 AD (Svanberg 2003, 254).

Only one miniature spear is known from a burial context in Gotland. It was discovered in the cemetery at Sandegårde, Sanda (Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 224). The spear was suspended from a small ring together with four other miniatures (sword, shield, horse and chair). Uniquely, the small ring was attached to a thick armring, meaning that the miniature items were not intended to be worn around the neck. The same grave also included a key, implying that it may have belonged to a woman.

This survey has shown that, unlike other categories of small-size militaria, miniature spears are relatively rare in Viking Age burial contexts. All graves that contain them vary as regards their external and internal features, which means that the miniatures were employed in a broad spectrum of funerary ceremonies. It appears, however, that the custom of providing the dead with miniature spears was most popular in connection with cremations. While graves with burnt human remains cannot reveal anything particular about the manner of displaying miniature spears on the body, the position of the miniature spear from grave Bj. 944 at Birka suggests that it was suspended from a string worn around the deceased person's neck. As noted above, the item would have hung with its tip pointing down.

It is clear that the graves with miniature spears have fairly rich assemblages, implying that the dead belonged to the upper strata of society or at least that the mourners thought highly of them. Taken collectively, the grave goods include jewellery, weapons, riding equipment and imported goods (e.g. Bj. 581, Bj. 944). It is worth emphasising that, in addition to miniature spears, three graves contained miniature swords (Barkarby, Johannesdal, Sandegårde). The relatively small size of the find corpus, as well as the fact that most of the graves with miniature spears are poorly documented, significantly hamper our attempts to determine who the deceased were in life. As mentioned above, there are good reasons to believe that at least some of these individuals belonged to the social elite but the functions they held in society are very difficult to gauge. Given the fact that several graves contained whole sets of

objects of likely amuletic and magical significance (e.g. the grave from Sandegårde had a miniature chair of the *kubbstol* type; artefacts of this kind have been associated with the practice of *seiðr* magic – see Price 2019, 120-125), it is possible that some of the dead were ritual specialists, but in view of the current scarcity of comparative data, this is only a tentative hypothesis.

Miniature Spears in Hoards

In contrast to miniature shields, miniature spears are rarely found in hoards. One such item was discovered in a hoard from Riddare in Hejnum on Gotland (Östergren 1989, 112-113) which also contained two other miniatures suspended from a small copper alloy ring (a sword and a horse). Other items from the same context (*fyndområde* II) include a lead weight, an iron ‘punch’, three iron arrowheads, a fragmented copper alloy sword scabbard chape, a spearhead, three iron knives (fragmented), several other items of ferrous and non-ferrous metals as well as thirteen prehistoric pottery shards (Östergren 1989, 112).

In a hoard from Klinta in Köpings sn. in Öland, a miniature spear was suspended from a ring alongside several other miniatures: three staffs, a sword and a strike-a-light (Montelius 1872, 164; Arrhenius 1961, 141-142). Miniature staffs constitute a relatively rare group of Viking Age paraphernalia and can be associated with the practice of *seiðr*, a type of magic mastered by Óðinn (e.g. Gardela 2016b, 117-123; Price 2019, 165-168). Interestingly, the spear and the staffs are not the only items from the Klinta hoard that carry Óðinnic references: a small stand-alone figurine can perhaps also be included among them. This item has been interpreted as a representation of a *valkyrja* (e.g. Price 2019, 167).

Miniature Spears in Settlement Contexts

Most of the miniature spears known today come from settlement sites in Sweden. The contexts of their discovery imply that were used by people who inhabited large and important ports of trade as well as smaller towns and villages. As mentioned, Birka is the site which has yielded the largest number of miniature spears – two from burial contexts and another two from the settlement area. Located on Lake Mälaren in Central Sweden, the town of Birka was an intercultural melting pot, as reflected in its rich archaeological material including items from different places in Europe and beyond. Also on the nearby island of Helgö, where an important town had been established long before Birka rose to prominence, two miniature spears have been recovered (Jensen 2010).

The artefacts that interest us here are also known from other localities in mainland Sweden, including Hagestad in Löderup sn. in Skåne (Tegnér 2005, no 651; Strömberg 1961), Jättened in Gudhem sn. in Västergötland (Jensen 2010), Torvalla in Husby-Skederids sn. in Uppland (Arrhenius 1961, 143) (**Fig. 2e**), and several other locations (Arrhenius 1961, 148; Jensen 2010). In Gotland, miniature spears have been discovered at Gåshagen in Västerhejde sn. (Arrhenius 1961; Jensen 2010, 45, 47) (**Fig. 1j**) and at Riddare in Hejnum (Östergren 1989, 112-113; Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 224).

Interestingly, excavation campaigns and amateur metal detecting activities in present-day Denmark have yielded only six miniature spears: one has been found in a pit house in Århus in Jylland (Andersen and Madsen 1985, 63; Zeiten 1997) (**Fig. 1h**), two examples at the royal estate at Tissø in Sjælland (**Fig. 5**) – a place which also served as an arena for religious ceremonies (Jensen 2010; Petersen 2010, 137) –, two from unspecified locations near Nørholm (Jensen 2010) and Holbæk (**Fig. 6**), and one from the fortress of Trelleborg in Sjælland (Pedersen 2014) (**Fig. 1l**). The find from Trelleborg is unique in the sense that its creator strived to imitate pattern welding on the miniature's blade by ornamenting it with grooved lines. The relatively small number of miniature spears in Denmark, which contrasts with literally hundreds of other amulet types found across the country, suggests that miniature spears were less popular here than they were in Sweden. No items of this kind have been found in Norway and Iceland.

Currently, only three miniature spears are known from present-day Germany. Two of these come from the Viking Age town of Hedeby which – like Birka – was frequented by traders and travellers from different corners of the then-known world (Elsner 1992, 79; Zeiten 1997, 57) (**Fig. 1d**). One miniature spear is known from Ralswiek in Rügen but it is unclear whether this should be associated with Viking Age Scandinavians or Western Slavs who were the dominant group of people in this area (Herrmann 1998, 81; Jensen 2010, 45).

Only three miniature spears are known from Poland. Two of them come from the Viking Age port of trade at Truso/Janów Pomorski, located on the southern coast of the Baltic and literally in-between the Western Slavic and Baltic worlds. The Truso spears are made of iron and suspended from a small ring alongside an iron Þórr's hammer (Jagodziński 2010, 192; Gardęła 2014, 102-104) (**Fig. 2d**). The third spear was found in Wolin – as mentioned, it is a very unusual specimen, made of wood and closely resembling a *Flügellanze* (Gardęła 2014, 102-104) (**Fig. 7**). The uniqueness of the Wolin spear is also emphasised by the fact that it has a fully preserved wooden shaft, meaning that it could not have been used as a pendant like the other miniscule objects discussed here. It is possible that – similar to shafted miniature axes – this specimen was used as a hair or clothing pin.¹

Although rarely discovered today, miniature spears were not unknown in Eastern Europe and in the area of the Rus. Excavations at Shestovytsya in present-day Ukraine have yielded two amulet rings with miniature spears attached. The first one was found in the settlement area in 1998 and the second one within the hillfort in 2004. The ring from the settlement is made of silver and has four miniature spears (Androshchuk and Zotsenko 2012, 362) (**Fig. 2b**). The ring from the hillfort has only one miniature spear (Androshchuk and Zotsenko 2012, 354) (**Fig. 2c**). Both items from Shestovytsya are dated to the tenth century.

¹ The miniature spear from Wolin is remarkably well preserved for its (presumed) age. Little is known about the precise context of its discovery, which may lead to the speculation that it is a modern forgery. It is noteworthy that the socket of this object closely resembles the well-known Lance of St. Maurice, copies of which are held in several museums in Poland.

Materiality and Diversity

In discussing the materiality of miniature spears, it must be noted that no two examples are exactly the same. This implies that, unlike other well-known amulet types, they were never mass produced, and it seems that there were no strict rules dictating their shape and size (the length varies from ca. 3cm to 10cm). The materials used are also diverse, including copper alloy, silver, iron and wood. The same diversity can be seen in the techniques of their production: miniature spears could be cast, forged or cut from sheets of non-ferrous metal. The copper alloy find from an unspecified location near Holbæk was gilded and its unusual blade resembles full-size magic staffs with 'basket handles' consisting of several iron rods arranged around the central shaft (Gardela 2016). As noted above, one exceptional example from Johannesdal was even made from a re-used iron arrowhead.

Based on the finds that constitute the presently-known corpus, it may be surmised that almost all miniature spears were intended to be worn as pendants (at the neck or belt). This reading is supported by the fact that they are often found attached to small rings (sometimes together with other amulets) and by the fact that stand-alone examples have special suspension loops or perforated sockets allowing them to be drawn onto strings. In the exceptional case from Sandegårde, a small ring with a miniature spear and several other amulets has been suspended from a large armring, so it could only be worn on the arm.

Attention should also be paid to the manner in which miniature spears were suspended. The examples attached to small rings usually have perforated blades, which (in some cases) gave their users the freedom to decide whether to wear them with the tip pointing up or down – this could be a matter of personal preference and aesthetics but it could also hold more symbolic meanings. Unlike the miniature spears on rings, stand-alone examples tend to have perforated sockets, meaning they could only be hung with the tip pointing downwards. The same goes for miniature spears that have a special suspension loop on the reverse – they, too, would hang with the tip pointing down. The fact that so many miniature spears were worn in this way may suggest that their position was symbolically charged.

Finally, while there is no doubt that miniature spears suspended from rings were intended as pendants, those found singly and possessing a socket could potentially serve as hair or clothing pins, similar to miniature axes. So far, with the exception of the problematic wooden find from Wolin, none of the miniature spears have preserved traces of wood in their sockets, so this idea must remain tentative. The find from Jättened in Gudhem sn. in Västergötland – discovered together with a second miniature spear, an awl and a needle – has a long iron shaft and could, perhaps, be used as some kind of surgical tool (Fig. 8).

Interpreting Miniature Spears

The textual and archaeological sources reviewed above leave no doubt that in the Germanic world the spear played a significant role. The weapon seems to have been associated with ideas of rulership and power and probably also linked to Óðinn, both

in its role as the god's distinctive attribute and as a ritual tool used by his worshippers. Textual sources lead us to believe that the spear was employed in battle magic (e.g. the casting of the spear before the commencement of the battle) as well as in funerary rites (e.g. the marking of the dead). The hypothesis postulated by previous scholars that at least some miniature spears may have referred to ideas associated with Óðinn thus finds fairly strong support. This hypothesis is additionally corroborated by the fact that many of the miniature spears would hang from their owner's neck or from amulet rings pointing downwards, whereby the direction 'down' is often seen as having 'Óðinnic' connotations – downward pointing spears can be encountered on a wide array of Late Iron Age finds likely portraying rituals or mythical imagery.² The most evocative examples include Vendel period plaques with 'dancing warriors', the Oseberg textile showing a spear-carrying woman (Vedeler 2019, 43-44), and the Kirk Andreas stone which likely depicts Óðinn engaging in a fight with the terrible wolf Fenrir (Wilson 2008, 79) (Fig. 9). Also some Viking Age graves, probably belonging to people involved in magic, contain spears directed downwards (see Christensen 1982; Gardela and Ciesielski 2012; Kurasiński 2014; Ulriksen 2018).

In light of the textual and material evidence at hand, it is impossible to determine if the wearing of miniature spears manifested a particular devotion to Óðinn, however. We should bear in mind the fact that while some miniature spears are found singly (implying that they may have been worn without any additional adornments), there are also examples that co-occur (on the same ring) with other amulet types, e.g. miniature swords and staffs, horse-shaped pendants, a chair pendant and Þórr's hammers. In this light, the question arises of whether these sets of multiple amulets were assembled to enhance their magic properties or whether they were carried to display devotion not to one but to several gods. We can also speculate that such amulet sets played some role in ritual performances in the course of which the owner would use them as visual aids to illustrate legendary tales and/or mythical stories. These are just some of many possible interpretations – it is probable that the meanings of these items were never fixed but varied from place to place and from person to person.

Douglass Bailey's (2005) inspiring work on miniaturisation may improve our current understanding of miniature spears. In a study entitled *Prehistoric Figurines: Representation and Corporeality in the Neolithic*, Bailey argues that we should view miniatures in a broader sense than merely as ritual accoutrements. He emphasises the need to consider the various evocative qualities inherent in these objects and the psychological effects they might have had on their users. As he rightly observes, all miniatures have the capacity to enlarge the person using and/or viewing them, thereby evoking the feeling of omnipotence and omnipresence. At the same time, however, they can unsettle the user and spectator or allow them to 'indulge in flights of fantasy' (Bailey 2005, 33).

² Holding a downward pointing spear could also mean that the spear is ready to be thrown – I would like to thank Matthias S. Toplak for this observation.

In discussing the material and symbolic aspects of small-size spears, we should acknowledge the fact that they are not ‘models’ of full-size militaria and they generally do not strive to reproduce them in terms of finesse and attention to detail. As we have seen above, these tiny objects are typically manufactured from fairly soft and non-ferrous metals, unlike their full-size counterparts which are usually made of iron. Furthermore, many of the miniatures are devoid of sockets for wooden shafts, an essential feature of made-to-use large spears without which they would be ineffective as weapons.³ Finally, the small size of miniature spears as well as the fact that they have blunt edges would hamper any attempts at using them to inflict physical damage. All this makes these objects ‘dysfunctional’ but perhaps the reduction of their physical qualities served as a form of deliberate ‘ritual inversion’ leading to the enhancement of their symbolic and agentic power? Miniature spears can be seen as ‘cultural creations’ which result from ‘human experimentation with the physical world’ (Bailey 2005, 29) and as items which had the capacity to provide different kinds of stimuli. The tiny size of miniature spears enabled their owners to exercise full control over them; they could carry them anywhere they pleased, openly displaying them on the body or by keeping them concealed underneath clothes, in pouches or special containers. In tense situations, these small items might have provided their users with a sense of confidence and empowerment. In the Norse cultural context, this may have been additionally strengthened by the spears’ symbolic links to Óðinn and/or other supernatural entities.

Concluding Remarks

Similar to minuscule swords, axes, shields and helmets, Viking Age miniature spears are very difficult to fully comprehend. Although there are good reasons to believe that they were associated with Óðinn, we should remain open to alternative ideas and interpretations. The current challenges in ‘reading’ their meaning-content largely result from the fact that many of them are chance finds lacking precise contextual information. It is therefore critically important in the course of future excavation campaigns and amateur metal detecting activities to pay close attention to where, with what and how exactly these objects are deposited in the ground. Careful recording of their contexts coupled with meticulous analyses of their materiality have the capacity to open up new pathways into the minds and mentalities of their Viking Age creators.

Table 1. Miniature spears in Denmark, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine.

DENMARK

³ In light of this, perhaps we should abandon using the common label ‘miniature spears’ and start drawing clearer distinctions between miniature spearheads and miniature (shafted) spears?

No	Location	Material and Type	Context	Size	Museum Number	References
1.	Århus, Jylland, Denmark	Copper alloy. Spearhead with a central rib. The socket has a suspension loop on the back. Resembles Petersen's type G	Found in a pit house dated to the first half of the tenth century	Length: 3,2cm	FHM 1600 yz	Andersen and Madsen 1985, 63; Zeiten 1997; Jensen 2010, 45
2.	Tissø, Sjælland, Denmark	Iron	Settlement find	-	FG 1151	Jensen excludes this find, saying it is uncertain what it was used for
3.	Tissø, Sjælland, Denmark	Copper alloy. Spearhead with a socket	Settlement find	Length: 2,5cm	FG 3134	Petersen 2010, 137
4.	Trelleborg, Sjælland, Denmark	Copper alloy. Elaborate spearhead with an imitation of pattern welding on the blade. The socket is perforated	Settlement find	-	-	Pedersen 2014, 139
5.	South of Nørholm, Jylland, Denmark	-	-	-	C 35469	Unpublished; included in Jensen's catalogue
6.	Near Holbæk, Sjælland, Denmark	Copper alloy, gilded	Stray find (metal detector find)	Length: 4,8cm Weight: 2,9g	DIME ID 97926	DIME Portal (Digitale Metaldetektor-fund)
GERMANY						
No	Location	Material and type	Context	Size	Museum Number	References
1.	Hedeby, Kr. Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	Copper alloy. Spearhead with a central rib. Wings suggested on the upper part of the socket. No signs of perforation or suspension loop	Settlement find	Length: 3,9cm Width: 0,6cm	ALM KS Hb 13710	Elsner 1992, 79; Zeiten 1997, 57
2.	Hedeby, Kr. Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	Copper alloy. Lozenge-shaped blade. No socket. The lower part of the spearhead is perforated	Settlement find	Length: 4,9cm Width: 0,5cm	ALM KS Hb	Zeiten 1997
3.	Ralswiek, Rügen, Germany	Copper alloy. This specimen could be of Slavic provenance	Settlement find	Length: 3,3cm	Obj N 30/C 100, Periode B	Herrmann 1998, 81; Jensen 2010, 45
POLAND						
No	Location	Material and type	Context	Size	Museum Number	References
1.	Truso/Janów Pomorski, Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, Poland	Iron	Settlement find. Two miniature spears suspended from a ring	Length (spear 1): 1,8cm Length (spear 2): 1,3cm	MAH 1599/2008	Gardela 2014, 71, 102-103

			with a Þórr's hammer			
2.	Wolin, Western Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland	Wood. Resembles a <i>Flügellanze</i>	Found inside a building with a post-and-beam construction	19cm	284/01	Gardela 2014, 103-104
SWEDEN						
No	Location	Material and type	Context	Size	Museum Number	References
1.	Barkarby, Järfälla sn., Uppland, Sweden	Iron	Cremation grave. The miniature spearhead was found together with a miniature sword	Length: 5,7cm	SHM 21965	Arrhenius 1961, 144; Jensen 2010, 47
2.	Birka, Adelsö sn., Uppland, Sweden	Silver	Settlement find	-	-	Arrhenius 1961, 147
3.	Birka, Adelsö sn., Uppland, Sweden	Copper alloy. Resembles a <i>Flügellanze</i> or Petersen's type C or D	Settlement find	Length: 4,9cm	SHM 13794	Arrhenius 1961, 145
4.	Birka, Adelsö sn., Uppland, Sweden	Iron	Grave Bj 581	Length: 5,3cm	SHM 34000: Bj 581	Arbman 1943, 188-190; Hedenstierna-Jonson <i>et al.</i> 2017; Price <i>et al.</i> 2019
5.	Birka, Adelsö sn., Uppland, Sweden	Iron. Spearhead with a socket	Grave Bj 944	Length: 7,8cm	SHM 34000: Bj 944	Arbman 1943, 368-371
6.	Gåshagen, Västerhejde sn., Gotland, Sweden	- Resembles Petersen's type A	-	-	-	Arrhenius 1961; Jensen 2010, 45, 47
7.	Hagestad, Löderup sn., Skåne, Sweden	Copper alloy	Settlement find	-	LUHM 81441, 81442	Tegnér 2005, no 651; Strömberg 1961
8.	Helgö, Ekerö sn., Uppland, Sweden	- Resembles Petersen's type B, C or D	Settlement find	-	-	Jensen 2010, 47
9.	Helgö, Ekerö sn., Uppland, Sweden	-	Settlement find	-	-	Jensen 2010
10.	Johannesdals hälsobrunn, Köping stad, Slättbo h., Västmanland, Sweden	Iron. Made from a re-used arrowhead with asocket	Grave find. Miniature spearhead was found together with a miniature sword	Length: 8,2cm	SHM 17761	Arrhenius 1961, 147

11.	Jättned, Gudhem sn., Västergötland, Sweden	Copper alloy. Resembles Petersen's type E. No perforations and no suspension loop	Stray find. Discovered together with another miniature spear/lance, an awl and a needle	Length: 6,6cm	SHM 10738: 12-13	Jensen 2010
12.	Jättned, Gudhem sn., Västergötland, Sweden	Copper alloy. Resembles a lance with a diamond shaped blade and a long shaft. No perforations and no suspension loop	Stray find. Discovered together with another miniature spear, an awl and a needle	Length: 10,7cm	SHM 10738: 12-13	Jensen 2010
13.	Klinta, Köpings sn., Öland, Sweden	Silver	Hoard. Suspended from a ring together with three miniature staffs, a miniature sword and a miniature strike-a-light	-	SHM 128	Montelius 1872, 164; Arrhenius 1961, 141-142; Jensen 2010; Gardela 2016, 117-123; Price 2019, 167
14.	Köpingsvik, Köping sn., Sweden	Copper alloy	Grave find	-	SHM 18644 (1927) or 25840 (1957)	Svanberg 2003, 253, no. 142:59; Section B; Jensen 2010, 47
15.	Riddare, Hejnum, Gotland, Sweden	Copper alloy	Found during potato digging together with charcoal and bones. Suspended from a small ring together with a miniature horse, miniature sword and miniature chair/ <i>kubbstol</i>	-	SHM 876	Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 224
16.	Riddare, Hejnum, Gotland, Sweden	Copper alloy	Hoard/deposit. Suspended from a small ring together with a miniature horse and miniature sword	Length: 2,55cm	SHM 31745	Östergren 1989, 112-113; Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 224
17.	Sandegårde, Sanda, Gotland, Sweden	Copper alloy	Grave? Suspended from a small ring together with a miniature	-	SHM 21187	Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 224

			horse, miniature sword, shield and miniature chair/ <i>kubbstol</i>			
18.	Stora Uppåkra, Uppåkra sn., Skåne, Sweden	Copper alloy	Settlement find	-	U 6381	Capelle 2003. Jensen excludes this find arguing that it dates from pre-Viking times
19.	Unspecified location on Gotland, Sweden	Copper alloy	Unknown context. Suspended from a ring together with a miniature horse	-	SHM 777	Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 224
20.	Unspecified location in Skåne, Sweden	Copper alloy	-	-	-	Arrhenius 1961, 148-149. From Bruzelius' collections. Possibly dated to the Vendel period
21.	Västerljug sn., Södermanland, Sweden	Iron. Resembles Petersen's type M	Stray find	-	-	Arrhenius 1961, 148
UKRAINE						
No	Location	Material and type	Context	Size	Museum Number	References
1.	Shestovytsya, Ukraine	Iron	Settlement find (hillfort)	Length: 5cm	-	Androshchuk and Zotsenko 2012, 354
2.	Shestovytsya, Ukraine	Silver	Settlement find (settlement)	Length: 1,6- 1,9cm	-	Androshchuk and Zotsenko 2012, 362

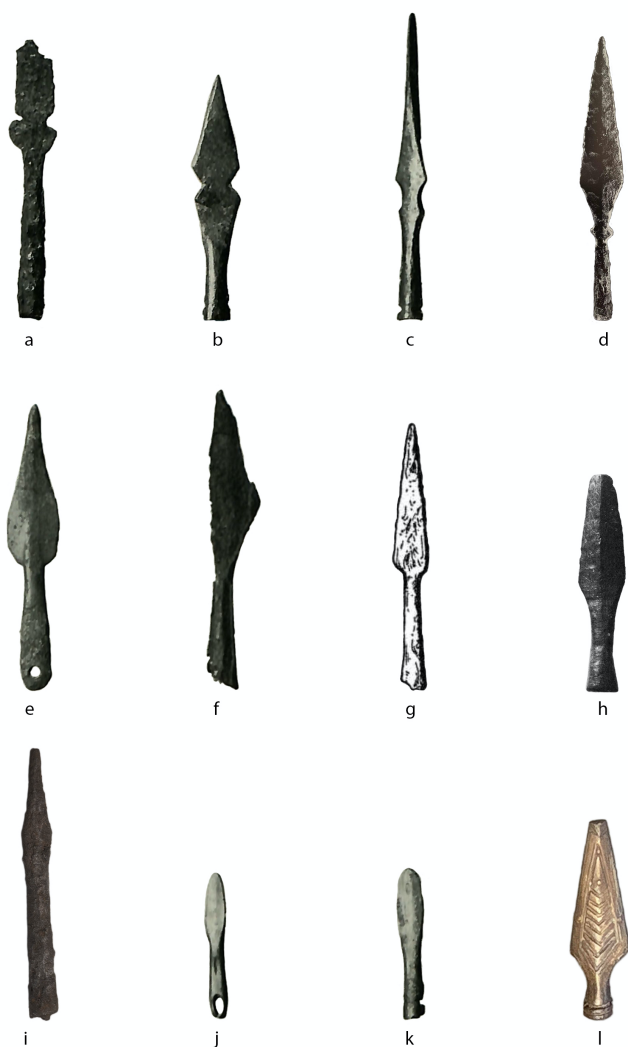


Figure 1: Viking Age miniature spears: a – Helgö. After Arrhenius 1961, 146; b – Birka Svarta Jorden. After Arrhenius 1961, 146; c – Barkarby. After Arrhenius 1961, 146; d – Hedeby. After Elsner 1992, 79; e – from the Bruzelius collection. After Arrhenius 1961, 148; f – Västerljung. After Arrhenius 1961, 148; g – grave Bj 944 from Birka. After Arbman 1943, 370; h – Århus. After Andersen and Madsen 1985, 63; i – grave Bj 581 from Birka. After Birkaportalen; j – Gåshagen. After Arrhenius 1961, 148; k – Birka Svarta Jorden. After Arrhenius 1961, 148; l – Trelleborg. Photo by Leszek Gardela. Not to scale. All images edited by Leszek Gardela.



Figure 2: Viking Age amulet sets including miniature spears: a – Klinta. After Arrhenius 1961, 142; b – Shestovytsya (settlement). After Androshchuk and Zotsenko 2012, 262; c – Shestovytsya (hillfort). After Androshchuk and Zotsenko 2012, 354; d – Truso. Photo by Leszek Gardela; e – Torvalla. After Arrhenius 1961, 143; f – Sandegårde. After Statens Historiska Museum online catalogue; g – unspecified location in Sweden. After Arrhenius 1961, 141; h – Riddare. After Östergren 1989, 113. Not to scale. All images edited by Leszek Gardela.

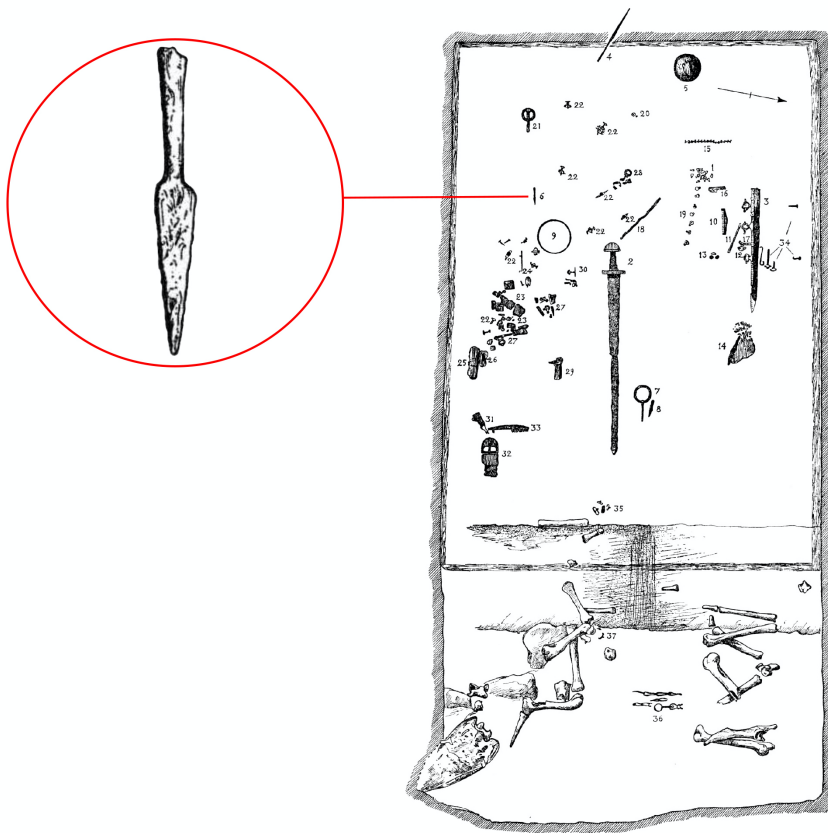


Figure 3: The location of the miniature spear from grave Bj 944 at Birka. Spear drawing and grave plan after Arbman 1943, 369-370.



Figure 4: Amulet set from Johannesdal: a – miniature sword; b – miniature spear; c – iron file; d – short sword. After Statens Historiska Museum online catalogue. Not to scale. Edited by Leszek Gardela.



Figure 5: Miniature spear from Tissø. Not to scale. Photos by Leszek Gardela.



Figure 6: Unusual miniature spear from Holbæk kommune, Denmark. Photos from the DIME portal. Edited by Leszek Gardela



Figure 7: Miniature spear from Wolin. Not to scale. Photos by Leszek Gardela.

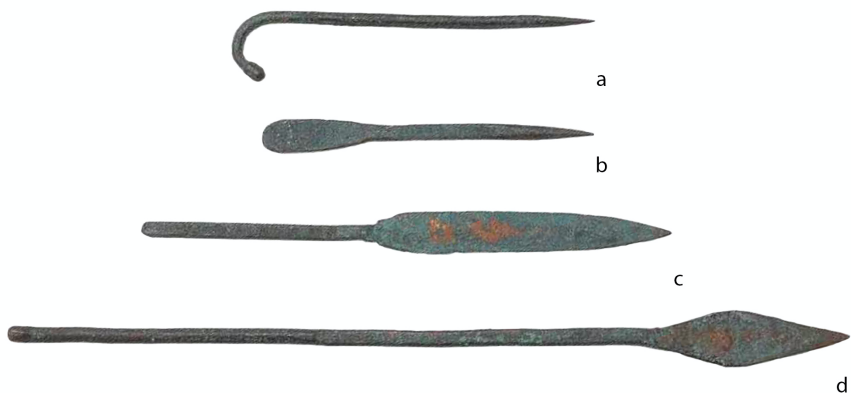


Figure 8: Set of objects from Jättened: a – pin; b – awl; c – miniature spear; d – miniature spear with a long shaft. After Statens Historiska Museum online catalogue. Not to scale. Edited by Leszek Gardela.



a



b

Figure 9: Viking Age imagery with spear-carrying figures: a – detail of the Kirk Andreas stone from the Isle of Man. Photo by Leszek Gardela; b – detail of the Oseberg tapestry showing a (presumed) woman with a downwards-pointing spear or staff. Photo by E.I. Johnsen, MCH. Used by kind permission of Marianne Vedeler

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