

**At the 17th Nordic Onomastics Conference (NORNA), University of Helsinki, Finland:**  
**Personnavne med genstande og genstande med personlighed - om grænser mellem mennesker, objekter og “personhood” i skandinavisk jernalder**

Projektet ArcNames, som afsluttes maj 2021, har arbejdet med personnavne fra skandinavisk jernalder i arkæologisk belysning. I oplægget opsummeres resultaterne af projektet. Der lægges særligt fokus på relationer mellem mennesker og genstande ud fra arkæologiske betragtninger om objekters karisma, biografier og personlighed. Dette perspektiv inddrages i en diskussion om brug af genstande i personnavne og om jernaldermenneskets opfattelse af personlighed og identitet.

*Research seminar about the use of place names in Norwegian archaeology. The seminar took place online and was open to everyone ([Programme and further information](#)).*

**Forbindelser mellem stednavne, bebyggelsesarkæologi og landskab set fra et teoretisk perspektiv**

Stednavne er udtryk for fælles kommunikation om et 'sted' indenfor et vist fortidigt tidsrum. Derfor kan de danne et vigtigt modstykke til arkæologiske tilgange til bosættelse og landskab. Her diskuteres kort den teoretiske ramme for en tværfaglig anvendelse af arkæologi og stednavne. Begge kildematerialer er produkter af hver sin type menneskelig praksis og indgår i en proces, hvor mennesker interagerer med det omkringliggende miljø: de fysiske omgivelser påvirker menneskelig aktivitet, som samtidig ændrer dem kontinuerligt. Undervejs i processen gen- og omskabes menneskers opfattelser og fortolkninger af landskab og steder, og det udmunder blandt andet i navngivning.

*EAA 2020, The session "Interaction in action: Human and societal adaptability in response to changes in climate and environment in Medieval Europe." (see the programme and abstracts [here](#)):*

**Claiming and Naming land. Personal names in Place names and restructuring of land rights in Late Iron Age Scandinavia**

This paper will discuss how social change and restructuring of settlement patterns may be reflected in the use of personal names in place names in Iron Age Scandinavia. Naming land after certain individuals can be a way of marking ownership and claims to land. The first place-names using personal names are thought to appear in the 4th century AD and this trend continues with a growing number of names into the Viking Age. However, mostly our dating of these place-names is only very broad. Further, we need a better understanding of the social background of the individuals behind the personal names used in place-names. Both environmental, archaeological and linguistic data indicate that dramatic changes happened in society during the 6th century. One example is the foundation of several new magnates' farms or so-called central places around 550 AD. The paper will discuss these name types in relation to the present archaeological knowledge about settlement structures and dynamics. Should we reconsider some of the place names that are coined with personal names as evidence of a horizon related to restructuring of land in the wake of the 6th century changes?



*EAA 2020, The session "Coping with death at all ages: (post-)funerary practises, mourning and resilience" (see the programme and abstracts [here](#)):*

**Boro, my sister, dear to me. The use of names in funerary contexts in Roman and Migration Period Norway.**

When runic inscriptions first appear in Scandinavia, they are mainly maker's marks found on objects. In Norway, runes soon also came into use in connection with death and burials. Whereas the later Viking Age commemorative rune stones are often formulaic, the early inscriptions are a hetero-generous group. Some are short, maybe only a name buried inside a mound or stone setting. Peculiarly, male names can be found in mounds with female burials. Other commemorations are placed in the open on rocks or stones, and may name both the deceased and the dedicator. Names are closely connected with personhood and represent both individual identity and kinship. This paper will discuss the use of written names in funerary contexts as individual and innovative ways of coping with grief and loss. Preserving the name of a loved one may be considered an action directed both towards an afterlife and commemoration for those left behind.

[The 2019 Aarhus Old Norse Mythology Conference, Bergen, 31 October – 1 November 2019: Methodology in Mythology. Where Does the Study of Old Norse Religion Stand, and Where Can We Go from Here?](#)

**Linking archaeology and sacral place names**

Archaeology and place name studies are two separate disciplines, each with their own methodological problems. Linking the two types of source material involves all the issues of both disciplines and the pitfalls of circular arguments are many. With all this in mind, the two materials have their individual strengths, meaning that bringing them together has the potential to give us a better understanding of Old Norse religion.

One key issue is that of chronology: our ability to date human activities at a site and relate them in time to the coining of a place name is important. However, we also need to understand the biography of a place in a long-time perspective.

Another theme is terminology and the nature of religious or ritual sites and activities. We rarely know exactly what type of word related to what kind of site – and this may have varied between regions and/or changed over time. Sacral place names can denote places with hardly any human activity or with centuries of continued sacrifices or other rituals. In fact, some sites that seem to have had religious importance have no known sacral place names. Nevertheless, with excavations and metal finds, especially through the last 20-30 years, we have a growing number of sites that can be interpreted as ritual or religious that are linked topographically to known sacral place names. Such finds reinforce the weight of the evidence of place names, but also present us with new questions as we begin to see the diversity of religious sites, even between those that we link with similar types of place names.



[Personal Names and Cultural Reconstructions](#), University of Helsinki, Finland.

**An archaeological perspective on Scandinavian Iron Age personal names**

What was the relation between personal names, social identities and status in Scandinavia ca. 300 - 800 AD? The paper presents a research project aiming to rethink the evidence of Late Iron Age Scandinavian naming by viewing various themes and elements used in mono- and ditematic personal names from an archaeological perspective. The project is a Marie Curie Individual Fellowship hosted by the University of Bergen, taking an interdisciplinary approach by combining studies of anthroponyms, toponyms and archaeology and focusing on material from Western Norway. It will investigate how motives expressed in personal names correspond with iconography, burial assembles and runic inscriptions. A prominent theme is female names and their strong relation to warfare viewed in light of the status and roles of women as expressed in graves, images and even written evidence. These issues also have relevance to questions of landholding and ownership structures, especially through the occurrence of personal names in place names and runic monuments.

