

# Body-Worldings of Later Scandinavian Prehistory

## Making Oddkin with Two Body-Objects

Marianne Hem Eriksen 

In the last two decades, the body has emerged as a rich field of theorization and scholarly exploration in archaeology. This paper is an excursion into a consideration of two body-objects of prehistoric Denmark: an anthropomorphic bronze figurine from the Fårdal assemblage dating to the late Bronze Age, and a figural gold foil with an anthropomorphic stamp from Sorte Muld, created perhaps as much as 1500 years later, in the Merovingian period (550–750 CE). The two images are made in very different materials, in distinctly different forms, and belong to different historical situations. Nevertheless, the two artefacts render what are likely women's bodies with clear differences, but also some uncanny similarities.

This article explores these artefacts from a more-than-representational perspective. Moving beyond a taxonomic approach, it focuses on aspects of these images beyond what or who they 'represent'. What can such an approach tell us about the capacities of bodies, as well as the capacities of the artefacts themselves? This entails, following the work of Donna Haraway, worlding them in two vastly different social, material and political worlds; drawing out their making from two very different technological processes; engaging with the similarities and differences of their biographies; and, crucially, thereby contemplating their kinship.

*Keywords: anthropomorphic figures, more-than-representation, body-worlds, worlding, Bronze Age, Late Iron Age, body-politics*

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Figure 1. Left: One of at least six gold foils depicting an anthropomorphic motif from Sorte Muld. Photo: René Laursen, Bornholm Museum, reproduced with kind permission. Right: The anthropomorphic figurine from Fårdal. Photo: Roberto Fortuna and Kira Ursem, National Museum of Denmark, CC-BY-SA.

## Introduction

This article springs from a tantalizing puzzle. It explores two prehistoric Scandinavian objects: the anthropomorphic Fårdal figurine from the late Bronze Age (900–700 BCE), and a gold foil figure with an anthropomorphic motif from late Iron Age Sorte Muld (500–600 CE). In some ways, the objects could not be more different. They are made in different materials and in distinctive forms: one a three-dimensional bronze figurine, the other pressed in gold foil. Moreover, they are situated in historical periods with discrete political, social and material structures. Although both were found within the borders of modern-day Denmark, their histories end hundreds of kilometres from each other. How is it, then, that the bodies portrayed are uncannily similar (figure 1)?

I explore these artefacts from a more-than-representational perspective (Anderson & Harrison 2010; Bailey 2014; Harris 2018). Rather than approaching prehistoric images of bodies purely from a visual, taxonomic

perspective – attempting to place them within simplified categories springing from a modern world – the aim, following the work of Donna Haraway (1997), is *worlding* them in two vastly different social, material and political worlds. This article will consider their making, engage with their histories and, crucially, thereby contemplate their shared and distinct capacities.

This study is intended not as a final interpretation of anthropomorphic imagery in late prehistoric Scandinavia, but as a contribution to opening new interpretative horizons for anthropomorphic imagery and the understanding of past bodies *writ large*, as part of the research project BODY-POLITICS (2021–2026). Thus, a final ‘meaning’ of these two images (and this is a spoiler alert) will not be provided. Do they depict a long-lived deity in Scandinavian prehistory? Is this a myth or fairy tale that people would recall across one and a half millennia? Is this a rendering of a long-lived deity or a persistent *rite de passage* that people would immediately recognize? Or are the similarities purely coincidental? In the end, we cannot know; I also remain unconvinced that these are the right questions. By looking beyond identification and focusing on aspects other than what or who the objects ‘represent’, we allow other, richer, and more complex aspects to enter the foreground. Ultimately, I argue with Haraway that, while we may not know whether these artefacts are kin, they can be made ‘oddkin’.

## Out of taxonomic prisons

Representationalism, springing from Enlightenment thinking, presupposes a hierarchy of the world, where some aspects (for example, nature, biology, evolution, physics) are *really real*, while others exist in a superimposed realm of representation: ‘meaning’, ‘ideas’, ‘concepts’, ‘symbols’, ‘beliefs’. In some schools of thought primacy has been given to the former (such as social evolutionism, positivism), while in others (like social constructivism, postmodernism), the pendulum swings, and the ‘real’ world becomes a canvas upon which reality is constructed by the thinking subject through signs and language.

Approaches to anthropomorphic figurines and images (and other archaeological materials) have been critiqued for being over-determined by a visual approach (Bailey 2014; Hamilakis 2013; see Back Danielsson 2013 for a Scandinavian perspective). A visual-only, representational gaze flattens complexity and alterity, and overlooks other aspects of the objects. Our gaze is so strongly drawn to the image, the *representation*, that we look through or past the objects as archaeological artefacts. In the words of Mary Weismantel and Lynn Meskell (2014:234–235), this fascination with anthropomorphic imagery can be ‘dangerously seductive’. They urge

us instead to ‘follow the material’, an approach leading to ‘a rich immersion into the dense relations among social actors and their non-human and material worlds’. Such an approach moves us beyond only asking *what* is represented in anthropomorphic figures, and pushes us to also ask *how*, *when* and *where*; in other words, not just what an object *is*, but what it can *do*.

A curiously overlooked approach to understanding anthropomorphic imagery (or indeed other forms of ‘art’), is to seek to understand the kinds of *engagement* they elicited. ‘Objects are constructed to engage our senses and our bodies in culturally sanctioned ways, [...] artifacts constrain, prevent, or enable specific forms of interaction and perception’, argues Weismantel (2013:24–25). The perceptual, and I will add, the wider sensory interface between object and human, is not merely an obstacle to overcome, but is itself an object of study. What kinds of engagement did the figurine and the foil elicit, enable or constrain? Douglas Bailey has significantly added to this discussion by arguing for an approach bringing ‘the actions and consequences of *touch* into play’ (Bailey 2014:27, my emphasis). Focusing on touch or other non-visual engagements moves us beyond the flatness of visual approaches, and their baggage of identification of preconceived categories, instead allowing more uncertain, immediate and corporeal aspects of the artefacts to emerge.

In Scandinavian later prehistory anthropomorphic objects have taken on a second ‘representational’ layer: they have been entrenched in ideas of identifying *who* the images represent (see Price 2006). This preoccupation slots body imagery into bounded, familiar categories such as ‘housewife’, ‘Freyr’, ‘warrior’ and ‘valkyrie’. I argue this relates to larger, conventional understandings of Scandinavian prehistory – where in many ways emphasis has been, and to some extent still is, placed on elite males as drivers of social change (see Brück & Fontijn 2013; Eriksen & Kay 2022), or else on mythological beings known from much later written sources. A research gaze fixated on the representation of objects is in no way unique to later prehistoric Scandinavia, but has consequences for the questions we explore. This gaze can lead into *taxonomic prisons*, incarcerating us in discrete cells, predetermining which parts of past worlds we are able to access.

## FOLLOWING THE MATERIAL: MORE-THAN-REPRESENTATIONAL APPROACHES AND BODY-OBJECTS

Representational approaches imply an inherent distinction between matter and meaning. Non-representational (Anderson & Harrison 2010), or in Oliver Harris’ (2018) term *more-than-representational* approaches, challenge this fundamental dichotomy.

Confronting the dichotomies we take for granted can rupture the way we see the world. Take the body. In early readings of gender theory, and

still predominant for many, the biological body is sexed – it fits a ‘factual, scientific’ category. Any performance or subversion of cultural norms, socialization and ornamentation of that body is thus a secondary layer, a superimposed *idea* of gender, stuck on top of a natural, biological body. More-than-representational thinking starts from a very different tack. The corporeal aspects of the body *matter* – and the factual, observable, corporeal body is already ‘gendered’, already ‘classed’. The very plasticity of the body, even our genetic expression, emerge from gestation onwards. The diet of the mother, the gender reveal party, the colour-coding of onesies and architectural space intended for the infant; and, later on, the kinds of games and activities that are encouraged, literally mould the neurological pathways, the development of motor-balance skills, spatial perception and the epigenetics of the growing body. Gender is not tacked upon a static, factual, neutral canvas: *meaning and matter emerge together*.

Similar points can be made for any entity: the ocean, animals, computers – they are impossible to place in pure categories of nature or culture, they are ‘nature-cultures’ (Haraway 2003). More-than-representational theory is thus committed to an expanded social world, ‘including all manners of material bodies’; it brings to the forefront the relations *among* things: ‘[Life] [...] occurs *before* and *alongside* the formation of subjectivity, *across* human and non-human materialities’ (Anderson & Harrison 2010:13). This point of departure pushes us to confront our own comfortable assumptions about how the world works, the terms we employ and the questions we never articulate because we believe we already know the answers. While a representational framework invites us to ask questions such as ‘which gods do these figures represent?’ or ‘What is the symbolism of the pose?’, a more-than-representational approach invites us to think ‘How did these objects act in the world?’ and ‘What kinds of human/non-human collaborations did they spring from?’ Harris (2018) argues that rather than rejecting questions of symbolism or meaning, a *more-than*-representational approach still makes room for identity, subjectivity and meaning. More-than-representational approaches relate, for example, to the works of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2013[1987]), who encourage us to make mappings, not tracings. That is, not to make copies or reproductions of the same idea (like tracing and re-tracing an image on a piece of paper), but to make mappings or connections that are experimental, open, susceptible to constant modification – mappings are open-ended and creative, rather than reductive and representational.

In an open-ended vein, I have previously written about ‘body-objects’, in part inspired by Ben Alberti and Yvonne Marshall’s (2009) seminal concept of vessels that are neither quite bodies, not quite pots, but ‘body-pots’. The body-objects discussed were disarticulated human remains used for deposition in settlements: crania, infants, femurs and scapulas in pits, hearths

and postholes. I argued that these are neither quite objects nor quite bodies – they are animate objects or body-objects, challenging our instinct to categorize reality into human and non-human, artefact and person, object and subject (Eriksen 2020, 2017). In a similar way, the miniature metal bodies explored in this work can also be conceptualized as body-objects – entities that intersect and are created across human and material divides.

## BODY-WORLDDING AND BODY-WORLDS

Nothing comes without its world, so trying to know those worlds is crucial. (Haraway 1997).

A final working concept to weave in here is ‘body-worlding’. Related to her concept of situated knowledge, Donna Haraway argues that ‘nothing comes without its world’ – critters and bacteria, humans and books, pigeons and colonialism do not exist in splendid isolation, but are immersed in a multitude of pre-existing (and emergent) relationships (Haraway 1997, 2003, 2016). No artefact or phenomenon can be approached without trying to know the world from which it emerged, world not meaning ‘an extant thing but rather [...] a mobile but more or less stable ensemble of practices, involvements, relations, capacities, tendencies and affordances’ (Anderson & Harrison 2010:8). The idea of needing to ‘world’ (*sensu* contextualize) is certainly not new in archaeology (e.g. Hodder 1986), but it is worth reconfiguring in a non-representational framing. The idea is not to ‘read’ what an artefact ‘symbolizes’, that is, accessing a semiotic world that somehow lies *behind* the object. Meanings and objects occur in tandem, networked through a thousand threads to molecules and communities of practice and landscapes and labour. They are immersed in a world, so trying to know that world is crucial.

Bodies – whether of flesh and blood or cast in metal – are always immersed in worlds. In their study of the body through history, John Robb and Oliver Harris (2013:3) coin the noun ‘body-worlds’: ‘the totality of bodily experiences, practices and representations in a specific space and time’. The body is not a biological fact, a neutral canvas that we ‘dress’ in culture. Rather, bodies emerge as products of specific histories: our bodies hold entire worlds in how we run, sleep, have sex, interact (Mauss 1973); that is, what we think our bodies could and should do. This article attempts to ‘follow the material’, and by combining Haraway’s worlding with Robb and Harris’ ‘body-worlds’, to explore the realities from which two body-objects emerged and in which they were immersed. To think again with Deleuze and Guattari (2013[1987]), the aim is not to *trace* the objects, suggesting things they might represent in an endless repetitive exercise, but to *map out flexibly from* tiny metal bodies into worlds they bundled into them thousands of years ago.



Figure 2. The Fårdal figure and the snake-horse. Photo: Roberto Fortuna and Kira Ursem, National Museum of Denmark, CC-BY-SA.

## The Fårdal figurine, 900–700 BCE

Returning to the two body-objects from Scandinavian later prehistory, a peculiar assemblage was found in connection with roadworks in 1927 at Fårdal, Jutland, Denmark (Kjær 1927). Within the slope of a moraine ridge,

two bronze vessels and a leather belt were found next to each other. Inside the larger vessel was an intriguing assemblage. It included jewellery (five bracelets, a neck-ring with engraved ship motifs, a fibula, a tutulus and a toggle button); birch bark containers; pieces of leather; an awl; and bronze smelting residue. Embedded in the assemblage were five figurines of bronze: two single animal heads, one double-headed animal with a bird placed between the two heads, a hybrid image of a being with a snake body and a horse's head, and an anthropomorphic figurine.

This final artefact is a kneeling woman (?) in a corded skirt (see Nationalmuseet 2022 for a 3D photograph). One hand is raised, forming a loop, and the other hand grasps one breast. The breasts are small and circular. A neck-ring is wound tightly around her neck, and there is a bracelet on the right arm. The eyes are inlaid with gold foil and are particularly accentuated. The forehead is low with a marked brow-ridge; the mouth is small. The hair is pulled back in a ponytail, and the sides of the head are possibly shaved. Both nose and chin are pointed. The toes are not marked, whereas we can glimpse – as on some of the so-called adorants of Bronze Age rock art – that she only has four fingers (for example, Aspeberget in Tanum, see Hansen 2019). Based on similarities with rock art panels and a razor, it has been argued that her hand contained a string tied to the snake-horse from the same deposit (Jensen 2003; figure 2). Additionally, the Fårdal figures and their close parallels from Grævensvænge have appendages at the base, indicating that these kinds of objects were meant to be fastened to something.

An overview from 2013 counted 33 known bronze-cast anthropomorphic figures from the Nordic Bronze Age, of which 26 survive. Of these, 21 are identified as female (Varberg 2013:153). The figurine from Fårdal, as well as its close relatives from Grevensvænge (Thrane 1999), have been interpreted as depictions of deities or ritual specialists. For example, Peter Glob suggested that these were the first anthropomorphic gods in the Nordic Bronze Age, and named the female figure 'death goddess' (Glob 1961) and 'goddess with the neck-ring' (Glob 1969). Jeanette Varberg (2013) ventures further, and tentatively connects the being with Athena, Epona, the Mesopotamian Ishtar and the Norse deity Freyja, the latter known from written sources two millennia later (for suggested links with Egypt, see Iversen 2014). Kristin Oma and Lene Melheim (2019) suggest an alternative angle: rather than representing an individual, the Fårdal and some of the Grevensvænge figurines show ritual initiates in the process of transforming through a *rite de passage*. Stressing the gender ambiguity of some of the figurines, Oma and Melheim (2019) suggest that these are in fact young males who have inverted gender roles during the rite of passage. Moreover, they argue that the figurines depict yoga poses, suggesting a link to Indian and global Indo-European practices and beliefs.



One consequence of a representational starting point is that, once an anthropomorphic figure is connected to a deity known from a textual mythology, inquiry often ends there – the researcher having been ‘seduced’ by the visual (Weismantel & Meskell 2014:234). However, this is where it starts to get interesting. If the Fårdal figurine is a depiction of Ishtar, how did the ideas of the Mesopotamian deity translate to a North European perspective? Why was Ishtar in the late Bronze Age communities seen as wearing a corded skirt? Or, if this figurine is connected to Freyja, how would stories of Freyja transfer across *two millennia*, through shifting ritual, political and social worlds? Oma and Melheim (2019), on the other hand, are less interested in connecting the figurines to a named deity. They focus on the global practices and actions the figurines may relate to. However, there is still a need to place the figurines in categories which are understandable to the present West. If, for example, a body has ambiguous sex characteristics, it is a man posing as a woman – assuming that the categories ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are binary opposites, clear-cut and akin to ours three millennia later.

A dominating visual approach may thus limit the inquiry because it begins and ends with answering ‘what do these objects *represent*’? There is a danger that the rich and complex bonds among the materials, makers, architecture, depositional places, body-concepts and body-corporeality become reduced, almost sanitized. Questions remain not only unanswered, but unasked. I hope to show that transcending a representational focus can open new doors. First, however, we will move about one and a half millennia forwards in time, to the enigmatic figural gold foils.

## The Sorte Muld gold foil, 500–600 CE

The second artefact is a tiny figural gold foil from Sorte Muld, Bornholm, Denmark, tentatively dated to 500–600 CE. Impressed on its face is an anthropomorphic figure. The figure’s body twists, so that the torso is shown frontally, and the legs in half-profile. The knees are bent, the body squatting or perhaps moving. The head seems bald, with large, prominent eyes. The nose is straight, the lips are full and the chin is pointed. The figure wears a neck-ring. Two drop-like shapes on the chest have been marked, which I see as breasts, similar to other foils with primary sexual characteristics. The right hand is lifted to the left ‘breast’, while the left hand points downwards. No clothing can be discerned. The foil is torn across the face and the four corners have been folded or manipulated. This is not unusual for figural gold foils, as they are sometimes found crumpled or folded in depositional contexts (discussed below).

Gold foil figures constitute a tantalizing type of object from the Late Iron Age. These minuscule artefacts have figural motifs stamped into (or, rarely, cut from) gold foil <1mm thick. The resulting object is a relief pressed into the thin, fragile foil. They are less than 5cm in size, often more like 1–2.5cm, the weight 0.10–0.15g (Gullmann 2004; Watt 2019a). The figures depict anthropomorphic beings, either single figures or pairs; and, rarely, quadrupeds. The most up-to-date tally identifies 3243 gold foil figures from 50 sites, all but one within modern-day Scandinavia (Watt 2019a). Twenty-two patrices (positive dies) to make the gold foils have been found, while 725 different motifs have been identified. The earliest finds from Uppåkra and Sorte Muld date from the 520s–530s CE, while the latest figures, from Borg in Lofoten, date to the early Viking Age. The main production date has, however, been argued to be c. 550–700 CE (Watt 2019a:38), and the late finds may have been curated for some time. Curating them would have been a feat, due to the objects' fragility. Foils from secure contexts are mainly from ritual architectural structures, such as feasting halls and cult buildings. They concentrate around postholes, which led to the suggestion that the foils may have been fastened to roof-supporting posts in a striking visual display. However no adhesive material has been found, and there is no consensus on this interpretation (Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019a).

Sorte Muld ('dark soil') has unearthed the largest assemblage of figural gold foils, approximately 3400 at the time of writing (Watt pers. comm. 2022). An enormous area of settlement – interpreted as an Iron Age power centre – has been identified; however, most of the finds are from the topsoil and metal detecting, and thus the gold foils lack precise contextual information. Out of the thousands of Sorte Muld foils, Sharon Ratke's (2008) database contains six near-identical foils showing the single figure of a staring woman (?) touching her breast (?) with her left hand. Rathke reports that all are from a midden. The foil figures have likely been pressed with a single patrix, and are therefore similar, but not identical artefacts. This motif has been interpreted in two ways. Margrethe Watt (1992) has incorporated it in a *dancing group*. This group is interpreted as bodies in motion, on tip-toe or with bent legs, with marked hand gestures, engaged in a 'ritual dance'. However, Ratke (2009) designates the category in which she places this artefact as 'wraiths', arguing that they commemorated and represented dead persons.

The research gaze has generally been drawn to the taxonomy and identification of the foils. A recent compendium of gold foils, while extremely valuable in its scope and detail (Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019b:10), identifies two ways the objects can be studied: first, to examine 'what or who specifically is to be seen [...], mortal men or women, gods/goddesses, abstract concepts'. Second, to look for 'parallels or precursors' in contemporary Eu-



Figure 3. Drawings of the coupled gold foil figures. Illustration: Watt 2019a, with kind permission.

rope. Most interpretations centre on the male-female pairs (figure 3), while the single figures, animals and idiosyncratic foils have received less attention. The reigning interpretations can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) depictions of Norse deities, such as Freyr and Gerðr (Steinsland 1990) or Þórr or Odinn (Hauck 1993); (2) functional interpretations such as temple money (Watt 2004) or tokens for ritual events (Baastrup 2015); or (3) depictions of aristocratic Iron Age individuals (Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019a; Watt 2019b), such as warriors, chieftains or ruling couples entering into marriage.

Standing outside these approaches, Ing-Marie Back Danielsson's extensive work on the figures from perspectives of gender, affect and ontology opens radically different insights into gold foil figures (e.g. Back Danielsson 2007, 2012, 2013). Her work is an inspiration for the present study. Back-Danielsson's work especially focuses on two aspects of gold foil figures: the affects that they may have induced in makers/viewers/handlers,

and the ways they may have resonated with textually-attested ontological concepts about metals and making. This work takes inspiration from these approaches and builds on them in two ways. First, while Back Danielsson's interest is focused on the gold foils themselves, the aim here is to start from the artefacts and begin to flesh out the broader body-worlds of Bronze and Iron Age Scandinavia. Second, the ontological concepts developed here grow, not primarily out of written sources; rather, they aim to trace body-worlds in ways that are applicable to textually-attested and un-written worlds alike.

In sum, the interpretations of gold foils have often focused on the visual and representational. Much of this work is tremendously valuable in its empirical detail and comparative outlook. However, as with the Bronze Age figurine above, representational starting questions can lead to a somewhat flat and familiar past, where debate centres on connections with 'known' (that is, written) personas. The mesmerizing qualities of the artefacts are placed in the background of the attempt to identify familiar beings or categories.

## The body-worlds of body-objects

After having surveyed these bodies, then, as representations of specific deities ('goddess with the neck-ring', Ishtar, Freyja), categories of persons (initiates, wraiths), or practices (yoga, dance), this study turns to different ways of mapping out from the artefacts. The two body-objects were not merely images for an inquisitorial gaze. In the following, both visual and other aspects of the two figurines are considered: (i) their making, (ii) the body-worlds of their gestures and material culture, (iii) the engagements they elicited in their circulation and curation and (iv) their ultimate grounding in worlds through deposition.

### (I) MAKING AS WORLDING

The making of the two bodies has been done by different hands, using different techniques, approximately 1200 years apart. Each technique re-articulated the human body in metals with distinct qualities. Both periods saw human and animal bodies rendered in various substances. In Bronze Age Scandinavia, people carved bodies in rock art, wood and clay (although the latter is rare). In the Iron Age, bodies were made from wood, amber, bronze, gold and silver, woven into textile tapestries and carved on picture- and rune stones. With such a wide repertoire, the materials used for the specific body-objects discussed here were a deliberate choice.

So, let us 'follow the material'. The figurine from Fårdal was cast in bronze, with eyes inlaid with gold. Tin and copper were acquired from

large-scale bronze networks crisscrossing Europe. The discussion of the provenance of metals in the Nordic Bronze Age is a vast research topic and will not be pursued here (see, for example, Ling et al. 2013; Melheim et al. 2018; Nørgaard et al. 2021). However, whether this particular figurine's substance was acquired from far away or repurposed from bronze already in Scandinavia through recycling, the work involved bringing in material from one distant world or another (central Europe, or the past) and literally and figuratively re-casting it into new roles and relations – something that bronze afforded, but only to the skilled.

The figures were in all likelihood made in the lost wax technique by first forming tiny human and animal bodies in wax heated to 62–65°C, and subsequently covering the wax models with clay. Upon burning, the wax would melt and the clay created a negative model of the object, into which bronze could be poured (Rønne 1991; Rønne & Bredsdorff 2008). The method entwines highly skilled technical know-how, including specific human-bee relationships: research has shown how one wild bee family can produce c. 1 kg wax per year, enough to cast for example 10–20 bronze swords (Koch 2000 cited in Jensen 2003). Part of the making of bronze artefacts, then, was knowledge and engagement with wild bees and local clay, soft wax as well as hard metals. Moreover, creative bronze work requires not only bellows, furnaces and clamps – and intimate knowledge of technologies of wood, fire, clay, wax and so forth – but also specialized tools such as crucibles and moulds (Stig Sørensen & Appleby 2018). Moulds were a particularly important innovation in bronze work because they made the creation of more complex objects possible. In addition to technical know-how and specialized artefacts, bronze working also involved creative use of the senses – embodied knowledge of the sound, colour and smell of the metal at different stages of production (Kuijpers 2008). The material also pushed back (Ingold 2013): the forms you can steer molten bronze into are very different than those of carving wood, quarrying stone or pressing sheets of gold. Bronze figurines thus grew out of networks of material movement, teaching and learning, as well as specific moments of creativity, care and concentration.

The gold foils were crafted in a different manner. Gold would be melted in a crucible over a fire (pure gold melts at 1064°C), and then heated and steeped repeatedly until it formed foil or sheets (Gullmann 2004). Paper thin leaves of gold foil were then pressed with bronze patrices into a range of different motifs, or else cut out of the foil (figure 4); however, note that Watt no longer believes a hammer was involved in the production. Experiments coupled with trace-wear analyses indicate that, most often, the patrices were pressed into the foil with subsequent detail work applied to the front of the objects (Watt pers. comm. 2022). The bronze patrices were also

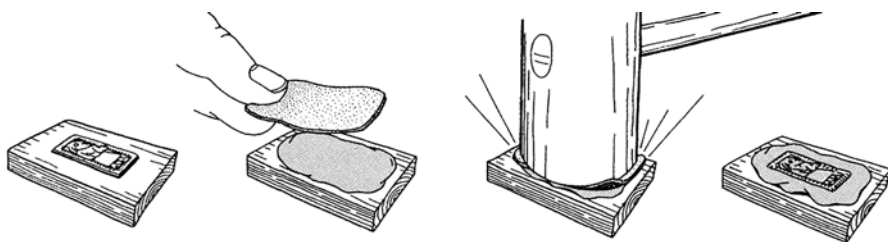


Figure 4. Illustration of gold foil making. Drawing: Watt 1992, with kind permission.

likely created though the lost wax technique (Watt 2016), perhaps world-  
ing in some similar ways to Bronze Age body-images.

The origin of the gold is most likely Roman. Germanic and Hunnic pressures on the Roman Empire in the third–fifth centuries CE instigated a flow of gold artefacts to Northern Europe, through tributes, soldiers' pay or booty (Axboe 2007; Watt 2019a). From the mid-sixth century, however, the flow of gold diminished. This has been suggested to explain the use of *foil*, which conserves raw material (Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019a:429–430). Notably, the carats of gold in foil figures vary so much that the makers must have used whatever gold they could acquire – the purity of the gold was not their primary concern (Gullmann 2004).

Gold has conventionally been viewed through a modern, capitalist lens: until recently, gold was, of course, the basis of the current global monetary system. Gold artefacts in prehistoric Europe have thus been slotted into categories of 'wealth', 'precious metal', 'status', 'trade', 'treasure' and so forth. Perhaps these conventional assumptions have been somewhat less prevalent in gold foil research due to their ritual contexts, however traces can be found (for example, 'temple money' above, or mentions of their 'retail price' [Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019a:430]). Rather than placing primary emphasis on any monetary value of bronze or gold, however, we can explore how the materiality of the metals affected the qualities and capacities of the objects, and the engagements and conversations they could be part of. An essential capacity of metals is their ability to be recycled and remelted. Part of the histories of the body-objects here is where they came from; that is, what other objects they used to be before they stabilized into these specific forms. While we may never know for certain, *their makers surely did*. Perhaps part of their capacities was that they were made from gleaming things from other worlds, melted down and formed into miniscule bodies.

## (II) RECASTING BODIES IN METAL: CHOICE-MAKING

When people in the Bronze or Iron Ages made a miniature body out of bronze or gold, it entailed more than technical skill – it also involved creative choice-making. They were crafting a body like their own, but in a hard

material, not flesh and blood. The makers worked with metals, moulds, wax and fire to create new entities that are instantly recognizable to us millennia later. However, they could not make generic, neutral bodies – bodies are always political and historical objects (e.g. Robb & Harris 2013). Re-making bodies in metal casts into relief how the crafter and their society conceptualized the body. Choices were made in which traits and capacities emphasized which aspects of its body-world the object should display. Some of the choices made when creating these two objects are sketched out in the following section. If nothing comes without its world, what did the objects *come with*?

Intriguingly, the body-objects come with similar things. Both include portable material culture: they share tightly wound neck-rings, used to adorn the body, a technology of enhancement and decoration persisting for thousands of years in Northern Europe. The Fårdal figurine also wears a corded skirt (figure 9), which decidedly belongs in Bronze Age worlds (Bergerbrant 2014): mapping out into wool production and the human-sheep relations that entails (Oma 2018), incorporating bronze tubes which would clink and shine, worlds where garments may not be intended to conceal the genital area of the body, but allow glimpses of it. Moreover, the makers in both cases chose to accentuate the eyes: in the Fårdal figurine with gold, in the foil through enlargement. Both body-objects stare at us with some intensity. From the front, their hair looks similar; however, the Fårdal figure's three-dimensionality allows us to see a braid/ponytail at the back of the head, and what looks like clean shaven sides. While razors and hair-removal are frequently connected to a male-warrior aesthetic ideal in the Bronze Age (Treherne 1995), we cannot assume *a priori* that shaving the head (or other body-parts) was an exclusively male-gendered practice (see Thedéen 2003), nor that when razors are found in potential women's burials they had no practical function (*contra* Görman 1996).

Finally, they share a pose of touching or grasping the breast. The Fårdal figurine's cupping of the breast is striking and has *en passant* been interpreted as offering breastmilk – perhaps to the horse-headed snake from the same assemblage (Jensen 2003). Breastmilk has the capacity to generate all kinds of fascinating relations and kinships: for example, early medieval laws indicate that the first nursing may have been a *rite de passage* for infants to acquire personhood (Mejsholm 2009). Yet, whether the pose possibly shared by these two figurines is related to breastfeeding is completely unknown. This discussion is inextricably linked to *gendering* anthropomorphic imagery, which is fraught with pitfalls. In both Bronze and Iron Age scholarship the existence of a binary gender system is often *a priori* expected, with little debate. In a study of late Iron Age costumes, a set of criteria for gendering depictions of bodies in bracteates, foils and woven

tapestries is set out: *women generally have longer hair than men; women most often wear dresses*, and so forth (Mannering 2017) – but without critical discussion of the bases of these claims. The gender characteristics of the gold foil discussed here have puzzled researchers, perhaps because it lacks hair and because researchers disagree over whether neck-rings are male or female attributes (Ratke 2009; Watt 2019a:47). Likewise, while the Fårdal figurine is largely accepted as female-gendered, a few researchers have found similar figures dissonant (Oma & Melheim 2019).

Sometimes we seem to forget that it is not *our* concepts of sex/gender/body that are salient. It is *we* who feel the need to categorize objects into clear-cut rubrics; as Back-Danielsson (2013) points out, some studies have excluded the majority of material because the gender cannot be determined. The fact that several depictions of bodies are gender-ambiguous was likely intentional, just as a small minority of pairs on gold foils have been interpreted as male-male and female-female (Back Danielsson 2007), and one gold foil has been altered from male to female (Watt 2019a:42). Rather than excluding ambiguously gendered bodies from analysis, we should acknowledge that gender was not always at the forefront of what the makers of foils desired to depict. There is no *need* to certainly gender body-objects. We can simply allow body-objects to be what they are, to let other aspects of their worlding emerge.

Whatever choices are made, body-objects are not static *reflections* of bodies. Depictions or reconfigurations of bodies can work as regulatory ideals (Butler 1990); like Barbie dolls, they create worldings of how a body could and should look, do and be (Bailey 2014). In this way, and others, the body-objects are also imminent in Bronze and Iron Age body-politics. Whose bodies were idealized in metal images? We hardly ever see, for instance, groups such as children or pregnant women in body-imagery from Scandinavian later prehistory (I am aware of one, possibly two, pregnant bodies in the entire body-imagery corpus from Bronze and Iron Age Scandinavia), although these kinds of bodies must have been ubiquitous in contemporary communities. This has obvious and stark consequences for body-objects' work as regulatory ideals and as media of self-understanding. Presumably, large parts of the populations would go through life never encountering a depiction of a body that reminded them of their own. That was also a part of choice-making and body-worlding.

### (III) ENGAGING AS WORLDING

Metal bodies did not stop doing worlding work after they had been made. Following Weismantel (2013), it may be productive to think of ongoing engagement between figurine/foil-body and human body as a *conversation*. Incorporating Bailey's (2014) touch-based approach, we may ask how the



objects were held by human hands, in their making, use and deposition. Beginning with the Bronze Age figurine, what is its sensory pull, and what kind of conversation with human senses does it invite? And how can these questions help us make mappings, not tracings, to learn about the worlds in which these figures were imminent?

One question is how the body-objects would circulate among hands, persons, spaces and communities. Unlike some societies famous for their figurines, metal figurines of Bronze Age Scandinavia were likely not ubiquitous parts of daily life. They are not found in settlements, but in few numbers from very specific, depositional contexts. Their relative rarity and restricted contexts may indicate that they were restricted in circulation. Perhaps the bronze figurines would pass through few hands in their use-lives. However, the artefacts may have circulated quite some distance. The similarities between bronze-cast figures across south and central Scandinavia (Lund & Melheim 2011; Varberg 2013) indicate networks of people and places across the ocean who created and engaged with metal human and animal bodies in similar ways.

‘Making a small-scale version of an object or person, and then experiencing that miniature [...] has unusual effects on the person experiencing the object made small’, argues Bailey (2014:29). He traces the co-emergence of new kinds of anthropomorphic figurines with new forms of personhood and embodied knowledge in Neolithic Europe. From other ways of conceptualizing ‘person’, perhaps more collective in nature, later prehistory saw a new focus on the body being the locus for individual personhood. These observations may have some bearing on the Nordic Bronze Age rock art, individual oak-coffin burials and anthropomorphic objects too – an increased focus on individual, sometimes clearly *gendered*, bodies – in costume, rock art, burial and imagery. Interestingly, however, Bailey later deems these ideas as a limited, visual approach (Bailey 2014:32). What happens, he asks, if we centre the *physical* interaction between body-object and human body?

If we start conventionally with the visual, the figurine, with its greenish hue, would have looked quite different in the Bronze Age. It would have gleamed and shone, and the gold-inlaid eyes would have stood out. Its corded skirt may have prompted associations with human bodies wearing these (cf. figure 9); its breast to the body-worlding of breasts and so on. We could also ask: if one held the Fårdal figurine in their hand, what would one sense? The *proximal* knowledge generated from touch is different from the *distal* knowledge generated from discourse and observation; Bailey (2014:33) argues: ‘Proximal knowledge is context-specific, fragmentary, mundane and performative; it allows for fluidity, uncertainty, incompleteness’. The figurine’s size of 5cm must make it possible to rest it on the palm. Presumably, it would feel cold for a moment. It was small enough to

be enveloped in one hand; the hand engaging the sensitive nerves in the fingertips, would allow aspects other than the visual to emerge. Presumably, one would also feel the little peg underneath the figure, which allowed it to be attached to, become part of, some sort of larger assemblage.

The little pegs likely invited some sort of action or belonging. In the twentieth century it was famously suggested that the figurines were fastened to a model of a boat, similar to the depictions of boats on rock art and razors (Glob 1961). The image of these figurines propped up on a wooden boat has been reprinted in so many instances that it has become *doxa*, but no such miniature boat has to my knowledge been found. This interpretation actually prompts numerous questions. If the figurines were made to be displayed on a model boat, where were the boats displayed? In the houses, or in the open air? At what times? Who kept them? The interpretation is also again a very visual-focused idea – the figurines, then, are made to be seen from afar, to be visually appraised, with little consideration of the practices they were part of, the handling and interaction that may have been necessary for their *work*.

Whatever the pegs on the anthropomorphs and zoomorphs were fastened to, it made them flexible and reconfigurable. A case in point is the aforementioned Vestby hoard from Norway. Here, two Bronze Age horse heads – of the Fårdal type – have been used and/or curated for 200 years. In the early Iron Age, however, the pegs of the horse (?) heads have been cast into quadruped bodies (Rosenqvist 1954; Lund & Melheim 2011) – reconfiguring and remaking them into a new animal, and a new object. Across approximately six generations or more, the heads have engaged in certain types of practices and conversations as horse (?) *heads* – before being remade into a different animal and given a different body!

Turning to the gold foils and the question of touch, these invite a different kind of physical engagement than the three-dimensional, reconfigurable bronze figurines. About the size of a fingernail, the gold foils are extremely fragile and not made to be extensively handled. Pesch and Helmbrecht conclude that foils are ‘too small and delicate to handle and thus to be used for any practical purpose’; subsequently, ‘only in large numbers [do] the gold foil figures seem to have been meaningful’ (Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019a:431). This smuggles in a lot of contemporary baggage. Rather, size and fragility were clearly part of the capacities and qualities of gold foil figures (Hedeager 2015). While the use of *foil* may be connected to diminishing flows of gold to the North after the fall of the Roman empire, and the need to make the substance last as long as possible, there were other choices available to their Late Iron Age makers. They could have cast fewer, solid figurines in gold; they could have used silver or bronze. Yet, they intentionally chose to make thousands of minuscule artefacts in thin sheets of gold, which made them



Figure 5. A gold foil figure handled by a human hand. Photo: Tone Bergland, Kulturhistorisk Museum, CC-BY-SA.

soft, malleable and difficult to handle. Their engagement was, seemingly, not based on frequent *touch*. But the engagement they elicit is not primarily visual, either – the objects are so small that researchers use a microscope to examine them (Watt 2019a). Any visual engagement with the motifs would have to be in very close proximity (figure 5).

Some interpretations of the ‘function’ of foils suggest other engagements they would enfold, rather than being extensively handled or appraised visually. Current interpretations of the foils as temple money or tokens granting entry to ritual events (Baastrup 2015) imply that people would journey with the foils to ritual sites. Whether or not these interpretations are correct, the objects clearly circulated despite their fragility. An extremely valuable resource for their circulation is Watt’s (2019a) ‘die families’ reproduced in figure 6. By identifying 725 distinct motifs, Watt makes geographical links between foils pressed by the same patrices, or which display the same motif but with slight differences. Artefacts likely made in the same workshops or by the same hands (whether goldsmiths were itinerant or steadfast) circulated across geographical areas, from central place to central place. Despite their delicacy, these tiny body-objects, the patrices and/or the bodies that made them, travelled quite some distance in their lifetimes – and similar objects were desired across landscapes and communities, as figure 6 demonstrates. The objects were clearly part of conceptual, sensory and practice-based conversations with humans in multiple locales. How they

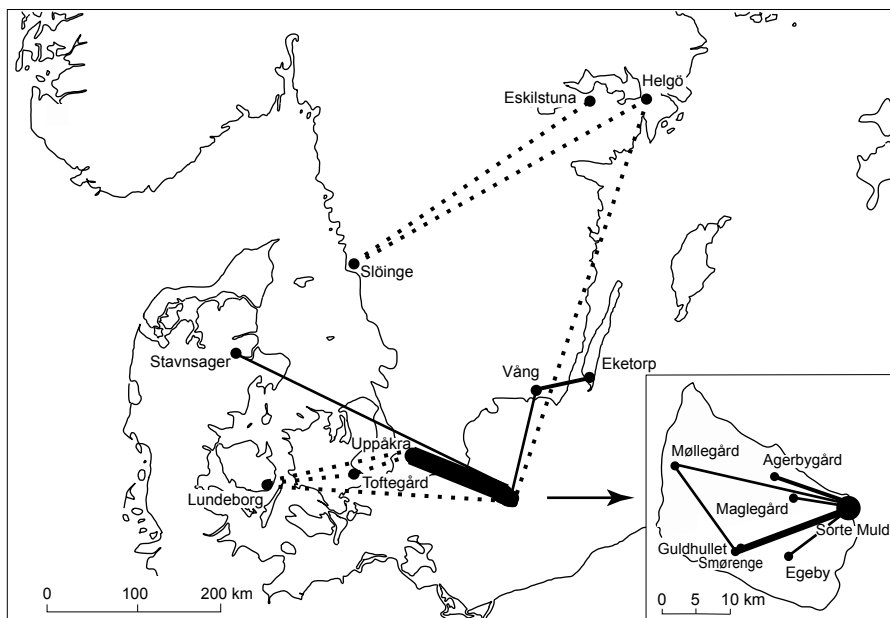


Figure 6. Watt's map of the geographical links among the gold foil 'die families'. Note that finds from Norway have not been included. Illustration: Watt 2019a, with kind permission.

travelled, we can only speculate: in wooden boxes (Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019a:440) or in containers on the body, such as leather pouches, perhaps.

The figures did not always travel unaltered. Crucially, several figural gold foils have been manipulated in different ways (Back Danielsson 2007, 2013). This includes stabbing, scratching, folding, bundling and other alterations. Back Danielsson has shown how some of the vaguely anthropomorphized figures have been stabbed through the 'heart'; others have been pierced or punched in the genital area. Watt demonstrates how the head and legs of an atypical figure from Guldhullet have been deformed, while its arms have been folded across the body (Watt 2019a:41). A few foils have had loops added, making them into pendants. Some have been equipped with material culture, such as neck-rings, belts and phalluses. In one instance, the motif's costume and facial hair have been altered – potentially transforming the figurine from male to female (Watt 2019a:42).

One such aspect of the specific figural gold foil motif discussed here has not been noted as far as I am aware. All six re-figurings of this motif seem to have been folded or slashed across the mouth (figure 7 shows the two images I have permission to reproduce, see Ratke [2008] for the remaining photos). In line with this paper's approach, trying to understand what this action *means* may not be the most productive way forward: we may never really know. What we can know, is that something about this specific body-



Figure 7. Two of the gold foils indicating manipulation of the mouth. Photo: Left, Martin Stoltz, and right, René Laursen, Bornholm Museum, with kind permission.

object prompted the human makers and users to engage with it in bodily-specific ways – to physically alter or manipulate its mouth – perhaps to stop it from speaking? The engagements with specific body parts (mouth, heart, genitalia) speak to precise conversations between human and non-human bodies. Finally, an unknown proportion of figural gold foils have been deliberately folded or bundled (Pesch & Helmbrecht 2019a; Watt 2019a:41), which has seen little comment. This again constricts *visual* engagements with the objects – in fact, their motifs, through the practice of folding and crumpling, were intentionally concealed, hidden from the human gaze.

The engagements I have discussed here decidedly push us out of the seduction of the visual approach and force us to acknowledge these artefacts not only as flat depictions, but as part of ongoing material practices and conversations. Some contrasts have emerged as well. The bronze figurines were durable. They could have been, and likely were, repeatedly handled by human hands, physically pulled out of one arrangement, carried elsewhere and reassembled with other figurines. In fact, they seem to have been designed for just this. A gold foil figure treated in the same way would have quickly crumbled – the material itself constraining what could be done with the artefact, and demanding great caution when the artefact was handled.

Regardless of the visual qualities they shared, they were profoundly different kinds of things to touch and carry.

However, the foils were not cast once and for all in a specific image as static products, rather their making and worlding were ongoing processes. Minuscule metal bodies were to be dressed and adorned, folded or ripped, punctured or stabbed, by human hands. In this, I follow Back Danielsson (2013:334) in that the objects themselves generated responses in their makers and users. These figures were handled extensively by human hands and through other objects, such as knives and tools. Specific parts of their bodies were targeted with scratching, puncturing and so on. A very small number of foils were made into pendants, potentially to be worn on the human body, creating intimate body-to-body links. As recently argued for gold bracteates (Wicker 2020), body-worn body-objects may have generated specific affects and emotions for their wearers and viewers; they may have gleamed and dazzled, dangled and jangled.

#### (IV) GROUNDING IN WORLDS

Finally, a crucial point about the kinds of engagements these artefacts would elicit is rarely remarked upon: they were intentionally placed in spaces where they could no longer be engaged with, no longer touched. It is both intriguing and significant that the body-objects discussed here end their use-lives in similar ways. Both the Bronze Age figures and the gold foils are taken out of their ongoing relationships and grounded in the earth. Significantly, none of the Bronze Age figures and disappearingly few foils are found in graves. These body-objects were not meant to accompany *dead bodies* in burial, but were embedded in specific architectures and landscapes. Moreover, there is another deliberate choice made here: as noted above, the metals came from other forms, and could easily have been recycled and remade again. However, for the deposited objects, this was not done. Their forms were now stabilized, fixed into particular body-articulations, and placed in the ground.

Neither body-object was deposited in the ground in splendid isolation – they were enchainned with figures and/or artefacts in the same assemblage, and with kinship to figures deposited elsewhere. The Fårdal figurine was part of an eclectic assemblage including bronze vessels, multi-species figurines, leather, tools and women's jewellery. Somehow, these were seen to work together, to belong together. In a similar vein, the gold foils are always deposited in numbers, either in one event or in several, reiterative events, at selected central places or in conjunction with specific, elite architectures (halls, cult buildings). An example of gold foil deposition likely occurring in *one* event is attested at the 600–800 CE hall site of Slöinge in Sweden (Lundqvist & Arcini 2003). After the inhabitants tore down a hall build-

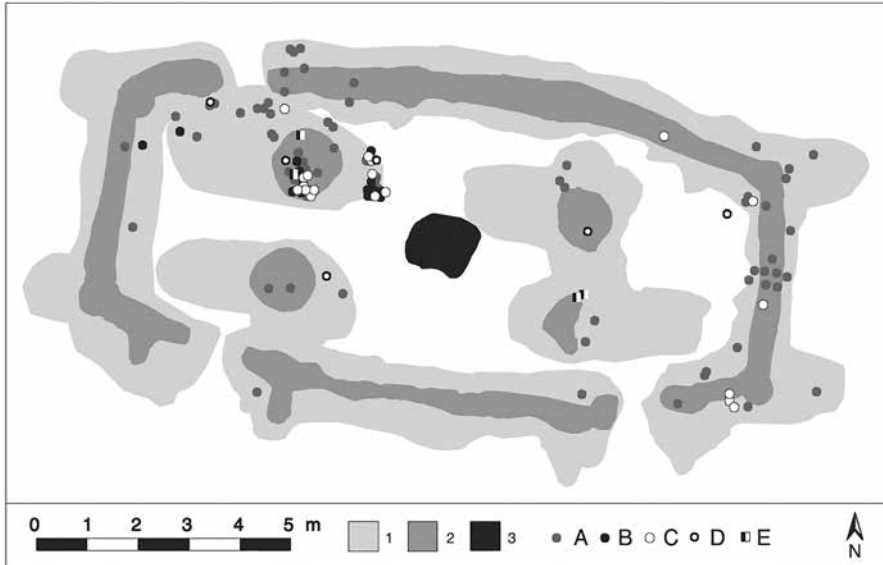


Figure 8. Plan drawing of the interpreted cult building from Uppåkra, Sweden, a multigenerational building dated from the Roman Period to the early Viking Age. The image shows the concentration of gold foil figures in the building, divided into different motif groups (A–E). Illustration: Larsson & Lenntorp 2004:23, with kind permission.

ing by removing its roof-supporting posts, they deposited numerous spectacular artefacts in just one posthole: 35 (!) gold foils, a further 15 gold foil fragments, 27 garnets, 15 glass shards and 48 ceramic shards. It is almost as if this particular posthole needed to be saturated with miniature bodies and gleaming things at the site closure. Figure 8, in contrast, shows an example of repeated deposition: the spatial distribution of gold foils at the cult building from Uppåkra (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004). Here, gold foils were likely deposited with others of their own kind in reiterative events, as the artefacts are found through sieving fill masses at different levels and in different constructional elements.

Although space does not allow such an examination here, there is enormous potential for future research to embed anthropomorphic figures in their assemblages, rather than separating them out: to explore the arrangements of artefacts and potential relations among them. I argued above that a salient trait of the Bronze Age figurines is that they are reconfigurable: they may have been dynamically shifting between different constellations. Bronze Age body-objects may thus have been parts of several assemblages through their histories. The Vestby hoard, for instance, consisted of objects of various age when it was deposited at the very end of the Bronze Age (Lund & Melheim 2011:442), indicating that the objects had been part of

different networks and contexts, perhaps curated and circulated for some time, before being deposited together. Likewise, the gold foils clearly travelled among different hands, communities and networks a thousand years later – but have likely not been extensively handled due to their fragility. The foils may have been *made for deposition*, made to be embedded into specific architectures and spaces, from the very beginning.

## Making oddkin: reflections and conclusions

This article started with a paradox: how could two tiny metal bodies, made more than a millennium apart, share some uncanny similarities? However, the questions quickly moved from the cul-de-sac of a visual, representational approach to a more open-ended excursion. By following the material and making mappings, not tracings, and by worlding the objects in two distinct periods of prehistory, it has been possible to map outwards from the objects themselves. This has led us in different directions that may work as starting points for new discussions in the future: into flows of bronze-working know-how and Roman gold; shared or similar ideas of neck-rings or gestures; and to contrasting types of sensory interaction. This approach has allowed an appreciation of the diverse ways body-objects can be made, and the ways the materials push back and define what kinds of human-object engagements can take place. None of these provide any final answer on anthropomorphic ‘art’ in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Rather, I hope this paper provides some creative ideas of how current approaches to body-imagery can be enriched.

So what about the eerie likeness and shared traits between the two body-objects? Bailey (2014:29) states that whether Neolithic figurines are toys, deities or portraits, we will simply never know. It is more honest, he argues, to acknowledge that the question is impossible to answer. To my mind, the persistent traits between the two anthropomorphic objects – the eyes, the necklace, the pose – are provocative. While historically situated and influenced by their contemporary networks of objects, materials and concepts, I do suggest that these body-objects likely spring from a common trajectory of body-worlds: a long-lived history of the body in Scandinavia including some shared notions of what a body *is* and what it can *do*. There is vast potential in exploring these histories of the body in more detail, as the Body-Politics project aims to do in coming years. Figure 9 is an attempt to map out the potential relationships and connections among the two body-objects discussed in this paper; their landscapes; their kinship with other objects and materials; and other forms of anthropomorphic imagery. Mapping body-worlds in this way is intended as a playful and creative way of envisaging



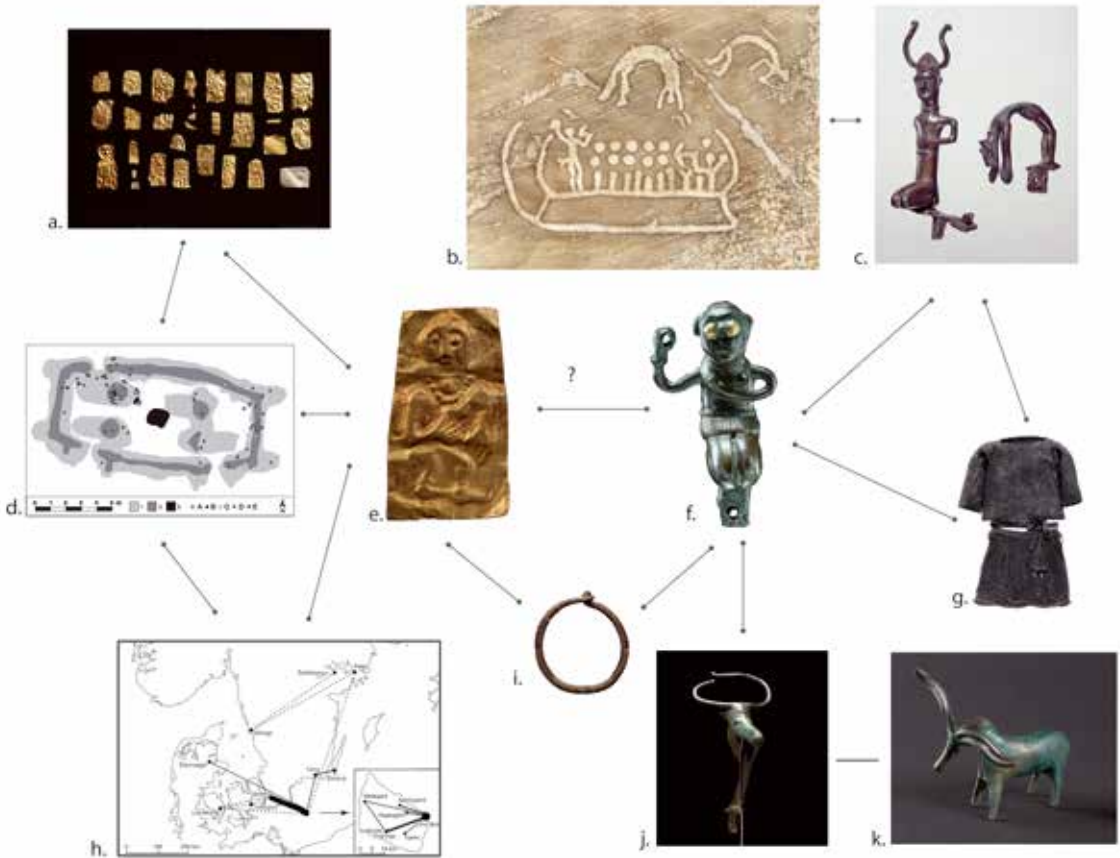


Figure 9. A playful exploration of the two body-objects and some of their potential relations in their body-worlds. Compilation: The author. a) A collection of gold foil figures from Sorte Muld, Bornholm, Denmark. Photo: Lennart Larssen, National Museum of Denmark, CC-BY-SA. b) A rubbing of rock art from Sotetorp, Tanum, Sweden, showing 'acrobats' over a ship. Rubbing: Dietrich Evers, published by SvenskHällristningsForskningsArkiv, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. c) The two remaining figures of the late Bronze Age Grevensvænge assemblage, Zealand, Denmark. Photo: Lennart Larssen, National Museum of Denmark, CC-BY-SA. d) See caption 8. e) See caption 7. f) See caption 1. g) The upper body garment and corded skirt from the Egtvedt burial. Photo: Roberto Fortuna and Kira Ursem, National Museum of Denmark, CC-BY-SA. h) See caption 6. i) Neck-ring from the Bronze Age. Photo: Per E. Fredriksen, NTNU Vitenskapsmuseet, CC-BY-SA. j) Animal head of the Fårdal assemblage. Photo: Roberto Fortuna and Kira Ursem, National Museum of Denmark, CC-BY-SA. k) One of the reconfigured animals from the Vestby hoard, Norway. Photo: Kirsten Jensen Helgeland, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, CC-BY-SA.

some of the networks of places, materials and practices that body-objects were engaged with through their processes of creation and use.

Yet, whether these two artefacts are expressing the same idea, myth, deity, ritual – whether they are *kin* – may be impossible to completely pin

down. However, Haraway encourages us to focus less on kin and more on making ‘oddkin’. ‘*Kin* is a wild category that all sorts of people do their best to domesticate’, she writes (Haraway 2016:2), but ‘oddkin’ encompasses all kinds of kinship outside conventional relations, and across human-non-human divides. While Haraway is writing in the context of contemporary ecological devastation and contrasting with more conventional types of kinship, her original and provocative concepts on worlding and oddkin have relevance also when trying to understand the past. When we follow the substances and figurations of miniature, metal bodies, paying less attention to visual representation and more to making and engagement, different past worlds appear – as do stranger resonances between worlds. If we approach the two body-objects under scrutiny here as bundles of concepts, molecules, metals, intersecting with architectures, other bodies and spaces – the objects and their worlds (e)merge and intertwine differently.

Ultimately, more-than-representational theory opens an expanded world, inhabited by all kinds of bodies. Moving out of taxonomic prisons allows us to *see* unexpected things. Scandinavian later prehistory, with its rich weirdness, did not consist only of warrior-chiefs and ritual specialists, not only human elites, nor only humans. This article has challenged anthropomorphic artefacts as passive objects to be viewed and human bodies as active subjects who observe. Body-objects did *worlding work*: they were regulatory ideals communicating specific body ideals while excluding others – a line of research that the Body-Politics project is currently pursuing. Body-objects also work on us: the materials pushing back during their making, the bronze figurines requiring new constellations, the gold foils demanding all kinds of manipulations. The fact that these images still evoke, that they mesmerize (at least some) researchers and the public, is part of their capacities, too. They do not belong solely in the past. They are time-travellers, they form new links and acquire new capacities even today. These two body-objects have the capacity to prompt me to link them together in this text. Now they are, decidedly, oddkin. In the end, I am not merely observing them. Their accentuated eyes are staring back at me, across millennia, with intensity.

## Acknowledgements

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## PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Watt, M. Bornholm Museum. Personal communication via email. 8 October 2022.

## DIGITAL SOURCE

Nationalmuseet 2022. *Menkeskefigur fra Fårdal*. <https://samlinger.natmus.dk/do/asset/3773>. [Accessed 22 November 2022].