AmS-Skrifter 29
Arkeologisk museum, Universitetet i Stavanger
Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger

Ingunn M. Røstad, Elna Siv Kristoffersen, Håkon Reiersen, Unn Pedersen, Marie Dave Amundsen and Sigmund Oehrl (eds)

Technologies – Knowledges – Sustainability
Crafting societies in the first millennium CE

Proceedings of the 74th International Sachsensymposion in Stavanger, Norway

Stavanger 2025

AmS-Skrifter 29

Editorial office:
Arkeologisk museum, Universitetet i Stavanger
Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger
Editor of the series: Anja Mansrud
Editors of this volume: Ingunn M. Røstad, Elna Siv Kristoffersen, Håkon Reiersen, Unn Pedersen, Marie Dave Amundsen and Sigmund Oehrl
Layout: Ingund Svendsen

Publisher:
Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger
N-4036 Stavanger
Norway
Tel.: (+47) 51 83 26 00
E-mail: post-am@uis.no

Stavanger 2025

Font: Warnock Pro/Conduit
Printed edition: 100

ISSN 0800-0816
ISBN 978-82-7760-205-9

Cover photo:
The front page: Amber nuggets and semi-finished amber beads and pendants from pit-house 7/91 in Biskupice, Poland. Photo: Marcin Woźniak.
The back page: Suspension loop for gold bracteate S12625, from Hå on Jæren, Rogaland. Photo: Annette G. Øvrelid.

Cover design: Ingund Svendsen, AM, UiS.

Iron Age Norway – an inverted pear-shaped society against the state?

LARS ERIK GJERPE

Lars Erik Gjerpe 2025. **Iron Age Norway – an inverted pear-shaped society against the state?** *AmS-Skrifter 29,* 205–212, Stavanger, ISSN 0800-0816, ISBN 978-82-7760-205-9.

The unification of Norway is a central theme for historians and archaeologists alike. Despite increasing hierarchization, the emergence of local power centers, and the gradual development of larger political entities from the Roman Period, Norway was not unified until the end of the Viking Age at the earliest. In my opinion, the absence of a state is the key political characteristic of Iron Age society. Therefore, I replace the commonly raised question "what caused the unification of Norway?" with the related, but different "how did Western Scandinavia remain stateless for so long?" Inspired by anarchist theory and social anthropological works, I will emphasize the importance of identity politics and present a model that takes into account numerous contemporary high-status environments.

Lars Erik Gjerpe, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo. E-mail: l.e.gjerpe@khm.uio.no

Key words: Viking Age, state formation, politics, anti-state, identity politics

Introduction

According to written sources the unification of Western Scandinavia started ca. AD 870 and was probably completed by ca. 1100, then Norway developed into a state ca. 1300 (Dørum and Holberg 2017, 11–41; Glørstad 2010; Helle 1974; Krag 2000, 44–80; Myhre 2015; Skre 2017). Archaeologists seeking the prerequisites for state formation in the centuries leading up to the Viking Age (800–1050) often point to the control of ideology, economy, military and politics, the emergence of local power centres at strategic points, and continually larger and more hierarchical regional political entities (Iversen 2004; Myhre 2015; Røstad 2020; Skre 1998, 2001, 2007b, 2020; Storli 2006, for a general view on power, see Mann 1986). The emphasis on the political organization that eventually led to a hierarchic society, a kingdom, and finally a state has dominated the view of Iron Age (500 BC–AD 1050) politics. However, in recent years such studies have been criticized for using a simplified retrogressive method, placing too much trust in historical sources from the Middle Ages (AD 1050–1537), taking hereditary ownership of land for granted, and having a too simplified view on power and control (Fallgren 2024; Gjerpe 2017, 2023; Glørstad 2010; Grønnesby 2019; Lund et al. 2022). Despite the fact that large parts of Europe became states in the wake of the Roman Empire, the most significant political characteristic of Iron Age society in what later became Norway is the absence of a state (Gjerpe 2017, 2023). In this paper I will challenge the traditional elite hierarchy model, wherein estates are formed, power aggregated, and chiefdoms developed into states (Crumley 1995). Therefore, I replace the commonly used question, "what caused the unification of Norway, and when did it happen?", with the related, but different, "why and how did Iron Age Western Scandinavia remain stateless?"

I would also like to point out a shortcoming in many works that deal with the political organisation in Viking Age Scandinavia. Large burial mounds, in general, have been a topic in the discussion about the development of the kingdom. Still the Oseberg burial mound in Vestfold, with its impressive dimensions and contents, is rarely incorporated into models that focus on political power and elites (Moen 2011; Pedersen 2008, 2023, 2025). To me, it is simple: if this spectacular burial monument cannot be incorporated into a political model, it is evident that the model must be replaced (but see Wamers 1995, 2002 for a model that incorporates Oseberg). In the following I will present new perspectives on Iron Age society and an

alternative social model, concluding with a brief case study from Vestfold.

Cost and benefits of living in a state

Most readers probably prefer to live in a state, exchanging income for a judicial system, police, and defence, and even willingly pay to live in a welfare state. However, this is not universal. Pierre Clastres (1989) considered states as failed stateless societies, not an evolutionary improvement, and there are plenty of examples of people resisting state formation (see examples discussed by e.g. Graeber and Wengrow 2021; Grønnesby 2019; Scott 2009). To explore why Western Scandinavia remained stateless for so long, despite what seems like increasing concentrations of power and wealth, I will focus on willingness, premises, and the ability to prevent the emergence of the state, and present a model for a stateless society without centralized power – in other words, resilient against kingdom and state.

The state is characterized by its centrality, wherein a ruler governs their subjects, defined either socially or geographically. This authority is underpinned by a claimed monopoly on both physical and symbolic violence, as well as an asserted right to extract a surplus (Opedal 2005; Weber 2000). What can loosely be defined as state power, including the ability to command obedience, is a central if not an exclusive part of a state. The Norwegian king's power as well as incomes were relatively small in the early Middle Ages, and Norway was not a state, and of course not a welfare state (Bagge 2000, 1996; Dørum 2006; Orning 2005). Still, kings and states have some common traits. Both demand submission and services and seize surplus in exchange for (often intangible) goods and protection, and often act as guarantors against social upheavals. However, a monopoly on violence was not important for Iron Age rulers (Dørum and Holberg 2017, 40–41). A user-friendly or utilitarian definition of an Early Medieval Scandinavian kingdom applicable here could thus be: That a person or institution claims the right to demand surplus (produce or service) from all residents in a geographically defined area and to use violence to support this claim, and that this right is accepted by most of the population, which in return get protection. Some claim that collecting tribute from clients in exchange for preventing damage is the main business idea for organized crime as well as rulers and states (Tilly 1985). To Émile Dürkheim, on the other hand, the state has a moral function (Neumann 2020). The stronger the state is, the more it protects or emancipates individuals from despotic institutions like families and guilds. Norbert Elias emphasises that the state domesticates us by forming our habitus into a less explosive, and thus less violent one (Elias 1994). This is illustrated by a distinct difference within Viking Age Scandinavia: the appearance of more violence in stateless Norway than in the more state-like Denmark (Bill et al. 2024). Ingunn M. Røstad (2021, 286) notes that, "The development of intensified material articulation of regional grouping upon a foundation of older 'tribal' affiliation may indicate that ethnic and/or cultural identity turned into a factor of political power." If the state is defined by centrality, a claimed monopoly on the right to collect surplus, and to support this claim by violence, and providing a more docile-tempered inhabitants with a common identity, then resistance to state formation might be understood as identity politics as well as wealth distribution: Who are we, or rather, what kind of people do we *want* to be?

Opposition to the state formations may thus be found in different, possibly overlapping groups: those who must pay tribute and tax, those (in charge of institutions) who lose power, and those whose identities are under threat (Fukuyama 2018). Some of those who complain about the price for protection charged by the state are anarchists. Could anarchy theory help us understand the Iron Age politico-social organization and explain why Eastern Norway stayed stateless at least until the tenth century, while large parts of Europe failed in the wake of the Roman Empire?

Anarchy and Iron Age Norway

Anarchy is a socio-political system, as opposed to the everyday use of the word anarchy does not mean chaos, neither does it refer to a world without order or an egalitarian society without oppression (Angelbeck and Grier 2012; Borake 2019; kok 2020). Further, anarchy may cover widely dispersed ideologies from anarcho-capitalism, which favors free-market economy and private institutions, to anarcho-collectivism where private ownership is abolished (Geloso and Leeson 2020). What all anarchic ideologies have in common is the value placed on autonomy, the decentralization of power, networks, communal decision-making, communal activity, justified leaders, the absence of durable formal authorities, and above all, the abolition of the state.

One example of a stateless, even anti-state, society with anarchic traits is Zomia (Scott 2009). This stateless mountainous region of mainland Southeast Asia, surrounded by states for centuries, was a magnet for people fleeing from the state. Mountainous or inaccessible areas, many with soil, climate, and/or topography poorly suited to large-scale cereal farming, often served as zones of refuge from the state (Grønnesby 2019, 107–11; Scott 2009,

129–33, 170–72). The rugged mountain area of Zomia, where roads were destroyed in the rainy season, was not subjected to state control until machine guns and helicopters made military conquest possible. When discussing how the people of Zomia kept the state at bay, James C. Scott (2009, 127–28) points out that: "their agricultural practice, their social organization, their governance structures, their legends, and their cultural organization in general bear strong traces of state-evading or state-distancing practices."

Geir Grønnesby (2019) and Lars Erik Gjerpe (2017, 2023) have, from different standpoints, argued that land was a public good and that settlement was relatively mobile in Early Iron Age (500 BC–AD 550) Mid- and South-Eastern Norway. Grønnesby employs the term "unbound sedentism" to characterize a settlement pattern that hindered concentration of landed property and the forming of estates. On this basis, they developed models for Iron Age society with anarchic or heterarchical traits that radically break with existing research on Iron Age Norway. Further, both agree that settlements gradually lost mobility, and that land became private property during the Late Iron Age (AD 550–1050).

Against this background I will explore some of the state-evading practices of the Iron Age society and how concentrations of ideological, economic, military, and political sources of power were counteracted (Mann 1986). Honor and reluctance to subordination were central values in Viking Age society (Hanisch 2002; Meulengracht Sørensen 1995) and economy, and military and political power were embedded in this. Religion was of course an important ideological factor. Norse religion lacked dogmatism; its core was rooted in rituals rather than personal beliefs, which meant it did not have the intellectual oversight of a priesthood (Steinsland 2005, 32). It was then hard to monopolize a certain interpretation of the religion, and difficult to use religion to control people. Regardless, religion is a powerful political tool, as the arguably sacral kingship demonstrates (Steinsland 2000). While literacy in the form of text and writing skills are a characteristic of, and essential for, organizing states (Scott 2009, 220–37), orality or the absence of literacy was an integrated part of Iron Age Scandinavia (Bagge 2000, 96–97), as runes are suitable for short messages, but not for longer narratives, preaching, accounting, or bureaucracy. Orality effectively hinders bureaucracy and is more democratic, because the ability to tell and listen to stories is almost always more widespread than the ability to read and write. Moreover, the notion of "original" holds no significance in storytelling – the stories are not frozen in time but change with the activity of the storyteller and the listeners.

The Norse religion and orality are elements of a stateless society, but the core is the lack of central authority that maintains personal security or assists in retaining property. Therefore, honor and violence are often integrated, in the sense that allowing someone to infringe upon your honor without consequence results in being perceived as defenseless, which in turn leads to further infringements (Hanisch 2002; Meulengracht Sørensen 1995). Several Viking Age stories tell of resistance to submission, and how this resistance was part of an identity under threat. According to the Saga of St. Olaf, Asbjørn offered to serve as *konungs ármaðr*, a significant servant in the king's administration, but fully reliant on the king and thus obeying and serving in a completely different manner than a nobleman (Iversen 1997, 168–79). His relatives then told him that he would bring shame upon them and himself by becoming the king's thrall. According to legend, the reason for migrating to Iceland was that a group of men could not tolerate the restrictions on their freedom brought about by the kingship of Harald Fairhair (Ólason 1989, 281).

Power in the Iron Age was based on personal qualities such as prestige, legitimate genealogy, honour, and wealth, while military power relied on the support of a retinue and the strength of the warrior. As opposed to a soldier, the warrior does not accept subordination, thus making it challenging to build a power base based solely on warriors. As Guy Halsall (2003, 113) has noted:

> Viking forces were fluid, made up of different bands under the leadership of particular warriors, joining forces for the duration of particular campaigns or campaigning seasons, or until they agreed to part company. Given that Viking bands, their composition and their internal relationships were transient, there was no necessary long-term relationship between them and an employer. Viking leaders wanted paying promptly, and in good coin too, and that did not stop them from changing sides if they were offered a higher sum.

In other words, an Iron Age warrior was not a reliable, trustworthy or enduring source of power. Asbjørn's story also points to the conflict of loyalty between kin and the Germanic war-bands or retinue (Green 1998, 55, 66, 102). Tension between different elites and between elites and "common people" results in unstable or precarious power dynamics, thereby hindering individuals from usurping power (Arnold 2021; Barth 2008). Feuds and violence are not only products of a stateless society; they also help maintain a stateless condition. Aversion to powerful leaders had deep roots. Tacitus highlighted the limited power of leaders in Germanic society: "But the kings do not have unlimited power without restriction..." (Rives 1999, 80). Also, according to Tacitus the "leading

men" made decisions in minor matters, while everyone participated in making decisions in matters of greater importance, as the Germanics lacked formal leadership in peacetime (Grønnesby 2019, 99). In absence of formal institutions, decisions were not made by voting but through consensus, meaning that no one opposes decisions (Barth 2008). However, during periods of war, an esteemed warrior among the aristocracy could be chosen as war leader, as the well-known story of Arminius illustrates. He defeated the Roman army in the Teutoburg forest in AD 9 and attempted to acquire roman-like power among his own people. When his military skills were no longer needed, his attempts to accumulate power were not tolerated, and he was killed by members of his tribe (Hedeager and Tvarnø 2001, 100). King Ingjald in Uppsala encountered a similar fate when he sought to consolidate power (Norr 1998, 72, 221). These murders bear resemblance to collective, unanimous choices rather than the deeds of a solitary murderer or a pretender with ambitions for the throne. These narratives have a common theme in that they highlight that the rulers acted on the behalf of "others", possessed no official authority, and could be removed by these others if they believed that the duty was not being carried out adequately. In anarchist models, "justified leaders" are emphasized as part of society's defense against the state and state formation. Such leaders are described in anthropological literature, where they do not make decisions on behalf of the community, but instead convey the consensus of the tribe. In other words, the leader is powerless (Gjerpe 2023). Instead, the leader is respected for his/her wisdom and articulates the consensus of the group. In return (s)he gains prestige. But (s)he is tolerated, not obeyed, and the power of a leader can be defined as the power to organize those who voluntarily follow the leader. Control over major organizations or areas, or power to compel people to do anything they oppose, is outside their scope. Consequently, people could not amass power and establish kingship. However, they could still become leaders, as the next passage will demonstrate.

The inverted pear-shaped society

After having presented central values in Iron Age Norway, I will now introduce the societal framework I believe they operated within. Wayne Suttles' (1958) "The inverted pear-shaped society"-model is based on studies of the Coast Salish, a society rigged to counter concentration of power and state formation (Angelbeck and Grier 2012). It differs from the social stratification pyramid, even if Suttle identifies different classes (in the sense "people with access to the same means"). On top are the *Leaders*, defined as "an impermanent set of adult males with greater wealth and prestige". They spring from the largest class, the *Good people*: "whole lineages strongly linked by tradition to village sites and natural resources, possessing wealth (due to spirit powers and ritual knowledge), inherited privileges, and 'advice,' and producing leaders" (Suttle 1958:504).

Social mobility was low in the inverted pear-shaped society, except between the good people and leaders. It was hard to become leader unless born to the right parents, genealogy was as important in the Salish' social system as it was in the Scandinavian Iron Age (Suttle 1958). The leaders in Suttons's model are echoed in Beowulf, where:

> the term *þiudans* (*þēoden* in Beowulf) occurs numerous times to characterize kings and members of royal lineages. The term does not seem to signify a distinct type of ruler, though, but occurs as one of numerous laudatory epithets for prominent men, some of which are kings (Skre 2020, 201).

Then there is the smaller class Suttle calls *Worthless people* and the even smaller class of *slaves*. Several things separate Suttles model from the traditional social pyramid; it is noteworthy that the *Good people* is the most numerous class and that the leaders are impermanent and recruited among the Good people, who compete to become leaders, and that the two lower classes does not generate a large surplus (Suttle 1958:501–2). By building on Suttles model and his descriptions of Salish culture, I will suggest a way in which power and different elements of a society relate to each other in what might be described as an heterarchical way in a smaller but well known part of Viking Age Scandinavia (Moore and González-Álvarez 2021, 127).

Good people and leaders in Viking Age Vestfold

Vestfold possesses at least three ship burials, numerous grave monuments, a marketplace, and a town from the Viking Age, despite its relatively small size of just over 2,000 square kilometers, with 20 percent of it being cultivated land. The ship burials of Oseberg (AD 834), Gokstad (ca. AD 900) (Bonde and Stylegar 2016), and Borre (early 900s) (Myhre 2015) are all situated along the coast, with a mere 9 kilometers as the crow flies from Borre to Oseberg, and approximately 22 kilometers from Oseberg to Gokstad. Add to this the monumental cairns at Mølen in southwestern Vestfold (Løken 1977), the Kaupang town-like settlement with large cemeteries (Skre 2007a), and Heimdalsjordet, a marketplace close to the Gokstad burial (Bill and Rødsrud 2017), there is at least five or six "elite places" in the small Vestfold area (Figure 1).

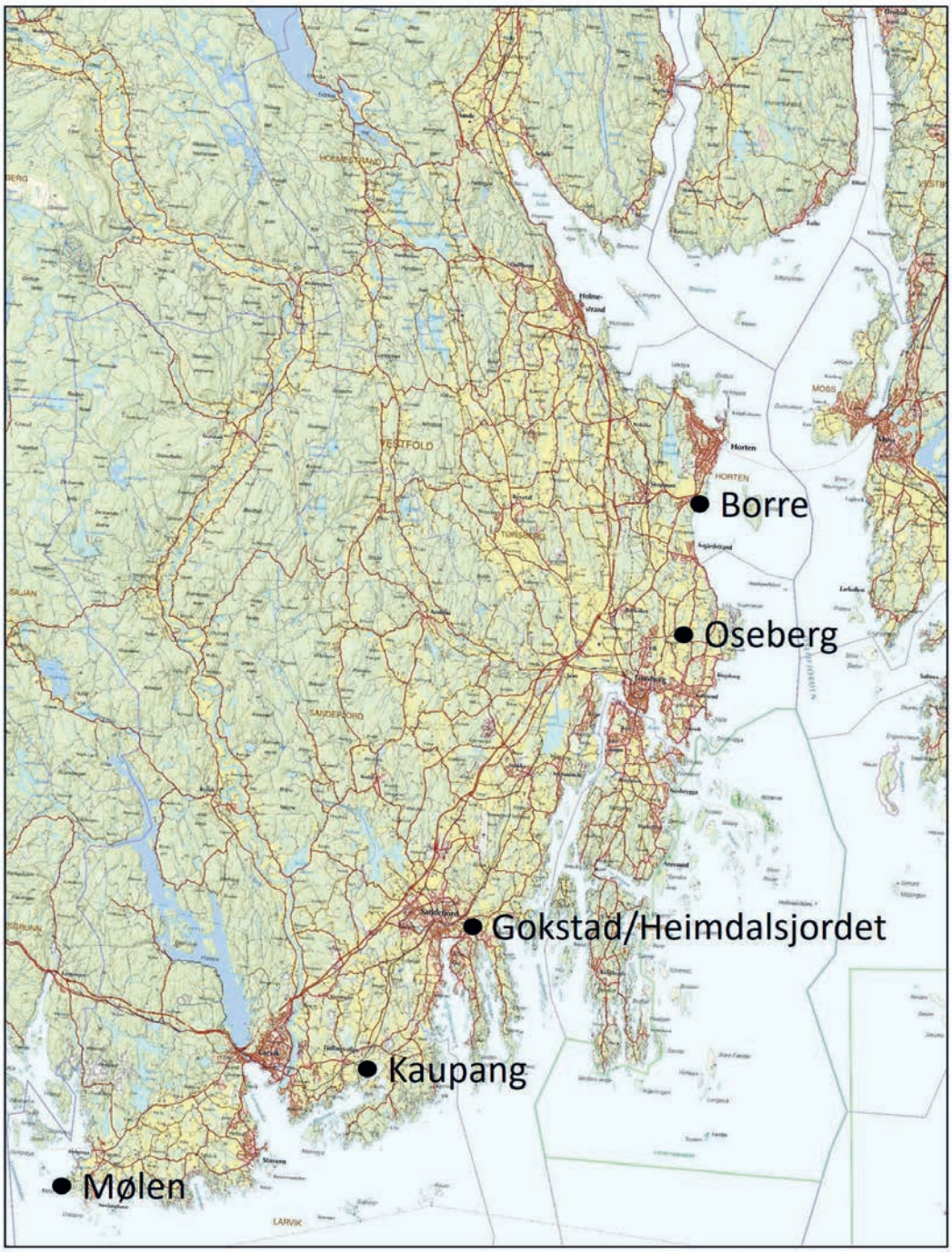

Figure 1. Central sites mentioned in the text. Basemap: Kartverket.

The Borre cemetery, with several large mounds from the Merovingian Period and the Viking Age, and possibly Mølen, stand out as being important for centuries, and are possibly the monuments of a dynasty (Løken 1977; Myhre 2015). Kaupang and its cemeteries were in use ca. 800–950, while the Gokstad and Oseberg mounds are solitary large mounds, even if Gokstad lies close to a contemporary marketplace and graves (Bill and Rødsrud 2017; Pedersen and Pilø 2007; Stylegar 2007). In addition to these "very rich" monuments over what may be interpreted as *Leaders*, many "rich" monuments over what may represent *Good people* have been excavated in Vestfold (Figure 2). The graves are found in various contexts, some solitary, others in smaller or larger cemeteries spanning a limited period (Gjerpe 2005), some cemeteries span the early as well as the Late Iron Age (Østmo 2005). Boat graves, equestrian graves, chamber graves, graves with weapons, smith's equipment, jewellery, gold, imported objects, or graves impressive due to large monuments are regarded as memorials of the *Good people* (Myhre 2015; Sjøvold 1944). The 33 inhumation boat graves from Vestfold, exclusive of the Kaupang cemetery, demonstrates the richness of the material (Bill and Rødsrud 2013; Gjerpe 2005; Gollwitzer 2012; McGraw 2022;

Müller-Wille 1970; Ulriksen 1999). Further, a large number of graves with swords – possibly numbering ca. 200 in 1980 – illustrates the large number of well-equipped graves in Vestfold (Hernæs 1985).

All in all, the three ship burials, the large cemeteries, Kaupang and Heimdalsjordet do not fit within current hierarchical models, and Oseberg is often omitted. Egon Wamers included Oseberg in a model of Danish rulership, but omitted Kaupang and other "elite places", while Unn Pedersen and Marianne Moen among others have pointed out that there is a powerful person in the Oseberg burial but have so far not developed a model that explains the other monumental burials in Vestfold or Kaupang and Heimdalsjordet. I also find the large quantity of second-tier graves and the few "humble" graves hard to explain withing the existing hierarchical models. On the other hand, this fits quite well with the inverted pear-shaped model, where leadership is unstable, and the lowest classes are the smallest.

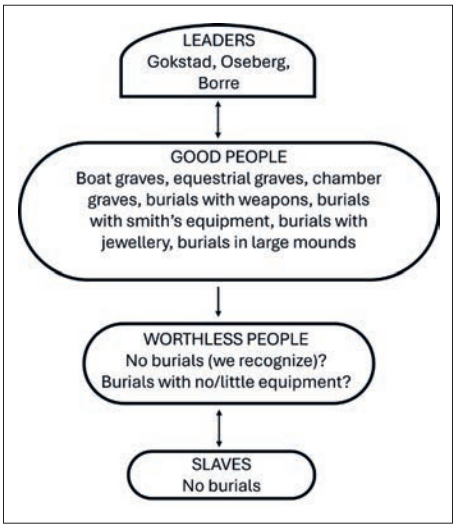

Figure 2. Viking Age burials related to Suttles' (1958) inverted pear-shaped society-model.

Conclusion

I have argued that anarchist theory and a model inspired by social anthropology studies of stateless societies contributes to explaining why Norway was united into one kingdom relatively late, despite the (claimed) presence of many prerequisites for state formation from the Roman Period onwards. I have emphasized that ideological resistance rooted in both identity politics, the reluctance to subordinate oneself, distribution politics, the reluctance to give up income, resulted in a social organization that resisted state formation. The inverted pear-shaped model clearly deviates from the societal pyramid, where a small minority is supported by a broader base. The *Good people* constitute the majority, who compete to be leaders. The *Good people* of the Viking Age are represented by the many rich graves, while those who won the competition and became *Leaders* are buried in the very rich graves – for example the Oseberg ship burial. A power distribution which makes the accumulation of wealth and power difficult, is central to the model. Consequently, stable concentrations of power that expand and eventually form a kingdom were hard to establish and maintain. Contrary to the pyramid-shaped elite-hierarchy models, and in line with case studies of the Oseberg burial, the inverted pear-shaped model allows the Oseberg ship burial to be acknowledged as a manifestation of power. Further, it explains why there are so many rich burials – they do not represent an upper class or a fixed level in a hierarchical organisation, but the general populace. It also explains why there are several very rich graves and powerful centres in the small landscape of Vestfold, and how society's defence against the state prevented them from expanding. Moreover, it takes into consideration potential new evidence of very rich graves, if a so far unknown ship burial is excavated in Vestfold, it would strengthen rather than weaken the model. However, the defence against the state broke down when, among other things, a new ideology influenced by Christianity made submission socially accepted and the inheritance of land became common.

Bibliography

Angelbeck, Bill and Colin Grier. 2012. "Anarchism and the Archaeology of Anarchic Societies: Resistance to Centralization in the Coast Salish Region of the Pacific Northwest Coast." *Current anthropology* 53 (5): 547–87.

Arnold, Bettina. 2021. "And Make Some Other Man Our King". Labile Elite PowerStructures in Early Iron Age Europe." In *Power from Below in Premodern Societies: The Dynamics of Political Complexity in the Archaeological Record*, edited by T. L. Thurston and Manuel Fernández-Götz, 106–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bagge, Sverre. 1996. *From Gang Leader to the Lords Anointed. Kingship in Sverris Saga and Hákonar Saga Hákonarsonar*. Odense: Odense University Press.

Bagge, Sverre. 2000. *Mennesket i middelalderens Norge: tanker, tro og holdninger 1000-1300*. Oslo: Aschehoug.

Barth, Fredrik. 2008. *Afghanistan og Taliban*. Oslo: Pax.

Bill, Jan, David Jacobson, Susanne Nagel and Lisa Strand. 2024. "Violence as a Lens to Viking Societies: A Comparison of Norway and Denmark." *Journal of anthropological archaeology* 75: 1–25. https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/uph8w

Bill, Jan and Christian Løchsen Rødsrud. 2013. "En ny markeds- og produksjonsplass ved Gokstad i Vestfold." *Nicolay* 120: 5–12.

Bill, Jan and Christian Løchsen Rødsrud. 2017. "Heimdalsjordet – trade, production and communication." In *Viking-Age Transformations: Trade, Craft and Resources in Western Scandinavia* edited by Ann Zanette Tsigaridas Glørstad and Kjetil Loftsgarden. Oxon: Routledge.

Bonde, Niels and Frans-Arne Stylegar. 2016. "Between Sutton Hoo and Oseberg – dendrochronology and the origins of the ship burial tradition." *Danish journal of archaeology* 5 (1–2): 19–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/21662282.2016.1245885

Borake, Trine Louise. 2019. "Anarchistic action. Social organization and dynamics in southern Scandinavia from the Iron Age to the Middle Ages." *Archaeological Dialogues* 26 (2): 61–73. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203819000151

Clastres, Pierre. 1989. *Society against the state. Essays in political anthropology*. New York: Zone books.

Crumley, Carole L. 1995. "Heterarchy and the analysis of complex societies." *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 6 (1): 1–5.

Dørum, Knut. 2006. "Materiell basis og den antropologiske vendingen." *Historisk tidsskrift* 85 (1): 87–105. https://doi.org/doi:10.18261/ISSN1504-2944-2006-01-05

Dørum, Knut and Eirin Holberg. 2017. *Frå høvdingdømme til statsmakt i Noreg ca. 200-1350*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Elias, Norbert. 1994. *The civilizing process*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Fallgren, Jan-Henrik. 2023. "Settlement, Climate Crisis and Lordship in Early Medieval Scandinavia." *Current Swedish archaeology* 31: 143–81.

Fukuyama, Francis. 2018. "Against Identity Politics: The New Tribalism and the Crisis ofDemocracy." *Foreign Affairs* 97 (5): 90–115.

Geloso, Vincent and Peter T. Leeson. 2020. "Are Anarcho-Capitalists Insane? Medieval

Icelandic Conflict Institutions in Comparative Perspective." *Revue d'économie politique* 130

(6): 957–74.

https://doi.org/10.3917/redp.306.0115

Gjerpe, Lars Erik, ed. 2005. *Gravfeltet på Gulli. E18-prosjektet Vestfold Bind 1*. Oslo: Kulturhistorisk Museum.

Gjerpe, Lars Erik . 2023. *Effective houses. Property Rights and Settlement in Iron-age Eastern Norway*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Glørstad, Ann Zanette Tsigaridas. 2010. *Ringspennen og kappen: kulturelle møter, politiske symboler og sentraliseringsprosesser i Norge ca. 800-950*. Phd-thesis, University of Oslo.

Gollwitzer, Martin. 2012. "Brønner, graver og bosetningsspor fra bronsealder til middelalder på Hesby (lokalitet 13)." In *E18-prosjektet Vestfold. Dyrking, bosetning og graver i Stokke og Sandefjord*, edited by Axel Mjærum and Lars Erik Gjerpe, 107–215. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Graeber, David and David Wengrow. 2021. *The dawn of everything: a new history of humanity*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Green, Dennis Howard 1998. *Language and history in the early Germanic world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grønnesby, Geir. 2019. *" . . . en pludselig og stærk omvæltning"? Eldre jernalder og overgangen til yngre jernalder i Trøndelag. Praksis og overregionale nettverk*. Phd-thesis, NTNU. Trondheim.

Halsall, Guy. 2003. *Warfare and society in the barbarian West, 450-900*. London: Routledge.

Hanisch, Morten. 2002. "Gravritualene som fortellinger om ære." *Primitive tider* 5: 23–38.

Hedeager, Lotte, and Henrik Tvarnø. 2001. *Tusen års europahistorie: romere, germanere og nordboere*. Oslo: Pax.

Helle, Knut. 1974. *Norge blir en stat 1130 - 1319*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Hernæs, Per. 1985. De østnorske sverdfunn fra yngre jernalder En geografisk analyse. Thesis, University of Oslo.

Iversen, Frode. 2004. "Eiendom, makt og statsdannelse kongsgårder og gods i Hordaland i yngre jernalder og middelalder." Phd-thesis, University of Bergen.

Iversen, Tore. 1997. *Trelldommen: norsk slaveri i middelalderen*. Bergen: University of Bergen.

kok, marjolijn. 2020. "A bit of anarchy in the Iron Age." In *Alternative Iron Ages: social theory from archaeological analysis*, edited by Brais X. Currás and Inés Sastre Prats. London: Routledge.

Krag, Claus. 2000. *Norges historie fram til 1319*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Lund, Julie, Martin Furholt and Knut Ivar Austvoll. 2022. "Reassessing power in the archaeological discourse. How collective, cooperative and affective perspectives may impact our understanding of social relations and organization in prehistory." *Archaeological Dialogues* 29 (1): 33–50. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203822000162

Løken, Trond. 1977. "Mølen - et arkeologisk dateringsproblem og en historisk identifikasjonsmulighet." *Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Årbok* 1975/1976: 67–85.

Mann, Michael. 1986. *A history of power from the beginning to A.D. 1760*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McGraw, Jessica. 2022. Rapport arkeologisk utgravning graver og boplasspor Aske, Larvik kommune, Vestfold. Report. Oslo: Museum of Cultural History.

Meulengracht Sørensen, Preben. 1995. *Fortælling og ære: studier i islændingesagaerne.* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Moen, Marianne. 2011. "The Gendered Landscape: a discussion on gender, status and power expressed in the Viking Age mortuary landscape." Master thesis, University of Oslo.

Moore, Tom and David González-Álvarez. 2021. "Societies against the Chief? Re-Examining the Value of "Heterarchy" as a Concept for Studying European Iron Age Societies." In *Power from Below in Premodern Societies: The Dynamics of Political Complexity in the Archaeological Record*, edited by T. L. Thurston and Manuel Fernández-Götz, 125–56. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Myhre, Bjørn. 2015. *Før Viken ble Norge: Borregravfeltet som religiøs og politisk arena*. Tønsberg: Vestfold Fylkeskommune.

Müller-Wille, Michael. 1970. "Bestattung im boot. Studien zu einer nordeuropäischen Grabsitte." *OFFA* 25/26: 1–203.

Neumann, Iver B. 2020. "Durkheim og staten." *Norsk sosiologisk tidsskrift* 4 (4): 241–52.

Norr, Svante. 1998. *To rede and to rown : expressions of early Scandinavian kingship in written sources*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.

Ólason, Vésteinn. 1989. "Den frie mannens selvforståelse i islandske sagaer og dikt." In *Medeltidens födelse*, edited by Anders Andrén, 277–86. Lund: Gyllenstiernska Krapperupsstiftelsen.

Opedal, Arnfrid. 2005. *Kongens død i et førstatlig rike. Skipsritualer i Avaldsnes-område og aspekter ved konstituering av kongemakt og kongerike 700-950 e.Kr.* Phd-thesis, University of Oslo.

Orning, Hans Jacob. 2005. "Den materielle basis for den norske kongemaktens utvikling i høymiddelalderen." *Historisk tidsskrift* 84 (3): 455–69. https://doi.org/doi:10.18261/ISSN1504-2944-2005-03-05

Pedersen, Unn. 2008. "Dumme menn og troll til kjerringer." In *Facets of archaeology. Essays in honour of Lotte Hedeager on her 60th birthday*, edited by Konstantinos Chilidis, Julie Lund and Christopher Prescott, 585–95. Oslo: Unipub.

Pedersen, Unn. 2023. "The power of beauty. The Oseberg ship burial and its finurlighet." *Primitice tider Spesialutgave Sivs festskrift*: 173–82.

Pedersen, Unn. 2025. "The Oseberg ship burial: commemorating leadership and joint effort." *Viking Special Volume 3 Telling different stories: Combining perspectives on the Viking Age*: 211–30.

Pedersen, Unn, and Lars Pilø. 2007. "The settlement: Artefacts and site periods." In *Kaupang in Skiringssal. Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, 179–90. Aarhus: Aarhus University press.

Rives, J.B. 1999. *Tacitus Germania Translated with introduction and commentary by J.B. Rives*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Røstad, Ingunn Marit. 2020. "The Åker Assemblage – Fit for a King? A new account and discussion of a collection of treasures of the Norwegian Merovingian Period." *Medieval Archaeology* 64 (1): 1–30.

Røstad, Ingunn Marit. 2021. *The Language of Jewellery: Dress-accessories and Negotiations of Identity in Scandinavia, c. AD 400–650/70*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Scott, James C. 2009. *The art of not being governed. An anarchist history of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale Agrarian Studies Series. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Sjøvold, Thorleif. 1944. "Studier i Vestfolds vikingtid. Gravplasser og gravskikk." *Universitetets Oldsaksamling Årbok 1941-1942*: 5–102.

Skre, Dagfinn. 1998. *Herredømmet : bosetning og besittelse på Romerike 200-1350 e. Kr. Acta humaniora 32*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Skre, Dagfinn. 2001. "The Social Context of Settlement in Norway in the First Millennium AD." *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 34 (1): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/00293650116757

Skre, Dagfinn. 2007a. "The Skiringssal Cemetery." In *Kaupang in Skiringssal. Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, 363–83. Aarhus: Aarhus University press.

Skre, Dagfinn. 2007b. "Towns and market, kings and central places in south-western Scandinavia c. AD 800-950." In *Kaupang in Skiringssal. Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, 445–69. Aarhus: Aarhus University press.

Skre, Dagfinn. 2017. "Sea Kings on the Norðvegr." In *Avaldsnes: A Sea-Kings' Manor in First-Millennium Western Scandinavia*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, 781–99. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Skre, Dagfinn. 2020. "Rulership and Ruler's Sites in 1st–10th-century Scandinavia." In *Rulership in 1st to 14th century Scandinavia. Royal graves and sites at Avaldsnes and beyond*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, 193–243. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Steinsland, Gro. 2000. *Den hellige kongen: om religion og herskermakt fra vikingtid til middelalder*. Oslo: Pax.

Steinsland, Gro. 2005. *Norrøn religion: myter, riter, samfunn*. Oslo: Pax.

Storli, Inger. 2006. *Hålogaland før rikssamlingen: politiske prosesser i perioden 200-900 e.Kr.* Oslo: Novus.

Stylegar, Frans-Arne. 2007. "The Kaupang Cemeteries revisited." In *Kaupang in Skiringssal. Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, 65–128. Aarhus: Aarhus University press.

Suttles, Wayne. 1958. "Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish." *American Anthropologist* 60 (3): 497–507. http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uio.no/stable/666338

Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, 169–89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ulriksen, Eli. 1999. "Båtgrav som kilde - konstruksjon og rekonstruksjon av båt fra vikingtid." In *NIKU 1994-1999. Kulturminneforskningens mangfold*, edited by Grete Gundhus, Elisabeth Seip and Eli Ulriksen, 32–36. Oslo: NIKU.

Wamers, Egon. 1995. "The symbolic significanse of the ship-graves at Haithaby and Ladby." In *The ship as symbol in prehistoric and medieval Scandinavia*, edited by Ole Crumlin-Pedersen and Birgitte Munch Thye, 149–59. Copenhagen: Danish National Museum.

Wamers, Egon. 2002. "The 9th century Danish-Norwegian conflict - Maritime warfare and state formation." In *Maritime warfare in Northern Europe Technology, organisation, logistics and administration 500 BC-1500 AD. Papers from an International Research Seminar at the Danish National Museum, openhagen, 3-5 May 2000*, edited by Anne Nørgård Jørgensen, John Pind, Lars Jørgensen and Birthe Clausen, 237–48. Copenhagen: The National Museum of Denmark.

Weber, Max. 2000. *Makt og byråkrati. Essays om politikk og klasse, samfunnsforskning og verdier*. Oslo: Gyldendal.

Østmo, Mari A. 2005. "Tilhørighet i tid og rom: om konstruksjon av kollektiv identitet og bygdefellesskap i jernalderen." Master thesis, University of Oslo.