

Title: From the Shadows to the Shield Wall: The Rise of the Female Figure in Viking Society, Religion, and Warfare

Alfonso Pacheco Contreras

Abstract

By analyzing fictional and non-fictional female figures in Norse literature and their influence on pop culture adaptations of the Viking culture, this paper tries to demonstrate the relevance of women in the structure of a society characterized by a high level of violence, religion, and traditions. The influence of Viking culture knows no limits. Just as the Viking resistance on battle, Viking culture has resisted time. More so than ever, the public has entered into the Scandinavian world during Viking Age in order to understand and learn from a society considered an emblematic part in European history. However, the female figure in Viking society has received a secondary role over centuries. Thus, it is not surprising that the archetypes of the good mother and the nurturer have been the recurrent source for female portrayal based on Viking culture. Nevertheless, new film's and television's adaptations such as Marvel's *Thor* and History's *Vikings* take inspiration from strong female figures who claimed an equal position in comparison to that of the male figure in Viking culture. Additionally, historical texts and archeological findings confirm the existence of powerful, independent, and fearsome women who lived among the Norse people during Viking times. The presence of women praised for their wit, and sharp mind for business rises in the figures of the women from Oseberg's funeral, the richest burial from the Viking age. In terms of religion, the female figure is intrinsically connected to matters of war and spirituality beyond the house hold. The Valkyries have a strong connection with both, warfare and the path to enter Valhalla, two significant elements in the Viking's collective imaginary.

Keywords: Vikings, culture, death, women, role, religion, war.

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Biografía

Nombre: Alfonso Pacheco Contreras

Institución: Universidad de Costa Rica

Grado Académico: Bachillerato en Inglés

Logros y Publicaciones: Premio ACAM 2010 al mejor disco, categoría punk rock, por la autoría en la producción musical titulada ¿Cuál Democracia?