

PREFACE

This book is the result of the cooperation between chemist Eva Elisabeth Astrup and archaeologist Irmelin Martens, both former professors at Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo.

The investigations presented in this book are intended to offer a metallographic analysis of Viking Age swords as an equal and important part of archaeological research on such weapons. The choice of swords from Telemark county was made partly because of the research on iron extraction I had carried out there.

Primary questions concerned weaponsmiths' knowledge and skills, but obviously such issues are closely related to a wide range of problems relating to the societies where the smiths lived and worked. Although we have raised and discussed some of these topics, it is beyond the scope of this project to fully explore societal factors.

I look back on the long-lasting collaboration between Eva Elisabeth Astrup and myself with much gratitude. This endeavour included the study and interpretation of X-radiographs, as well as many fruitful discussions of various aspects of Viking Age weapon production. Unfortunately, E.E. Astrup was unable to take part in the concluding discussions because of health problems. Our cooperation has always been very pleasant and rewarding and has added much to my knowledge and understanding of many complex questions. Her contribution goes far beyond the metallographic investigations and the other chapters where she is directly involved, and has been crucial to my intention and ability to finish this book. She was always conscious that her investigations are part of archaeological research, and her archaeological knowledge is extensive, yet always accompanied by open-minded curiosity.

Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6.8 and 7 are written by me, chapter 5 written by Astrup and me, chapter 6 written by Astrup and chapter 6.7 is written by Vegard Vike.

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Irmelin Martens