

Prominence for Pioneers

Dept. of Archaeology and Ancient History



Photo (detail): Nils Thomasson



The Dept. of Archaeology & Ancient History at Uppsala

Olof Verelius: 'Professor of the Fatherland's Antiquities', 1662-1682

The post was intermittently filled in the 18th and 19th centuries, to be refounded as the Chair of Archaeology in 1914.

Since then, seven Chair Professors have held the job through to today.

All of them are men.



Many of them are commemorated on the walls of the Department in the form of large, bronze medallions (or, in one case, a portrait painting).

There are no images of female archaeologists anywhere in the Department's visual environment.

The gender-coded signals of our workplace are exclusively male. This does not promote a message of inclusivity, and negatively impacts students, staff, and visitors.

We want to change this.



Women in archaeology,
geology, and palaeontology

Building on existing studies
of female archaeologists
in Sweden

The work of

Birgit Arrhenius
Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh
Sif Bokholm
Barbro Johnsen
Påvel Niklasson
Ewa Ryberg
Marie-Louise Stig-Sørensen
Stig Welinder
Carin Österberg
and others

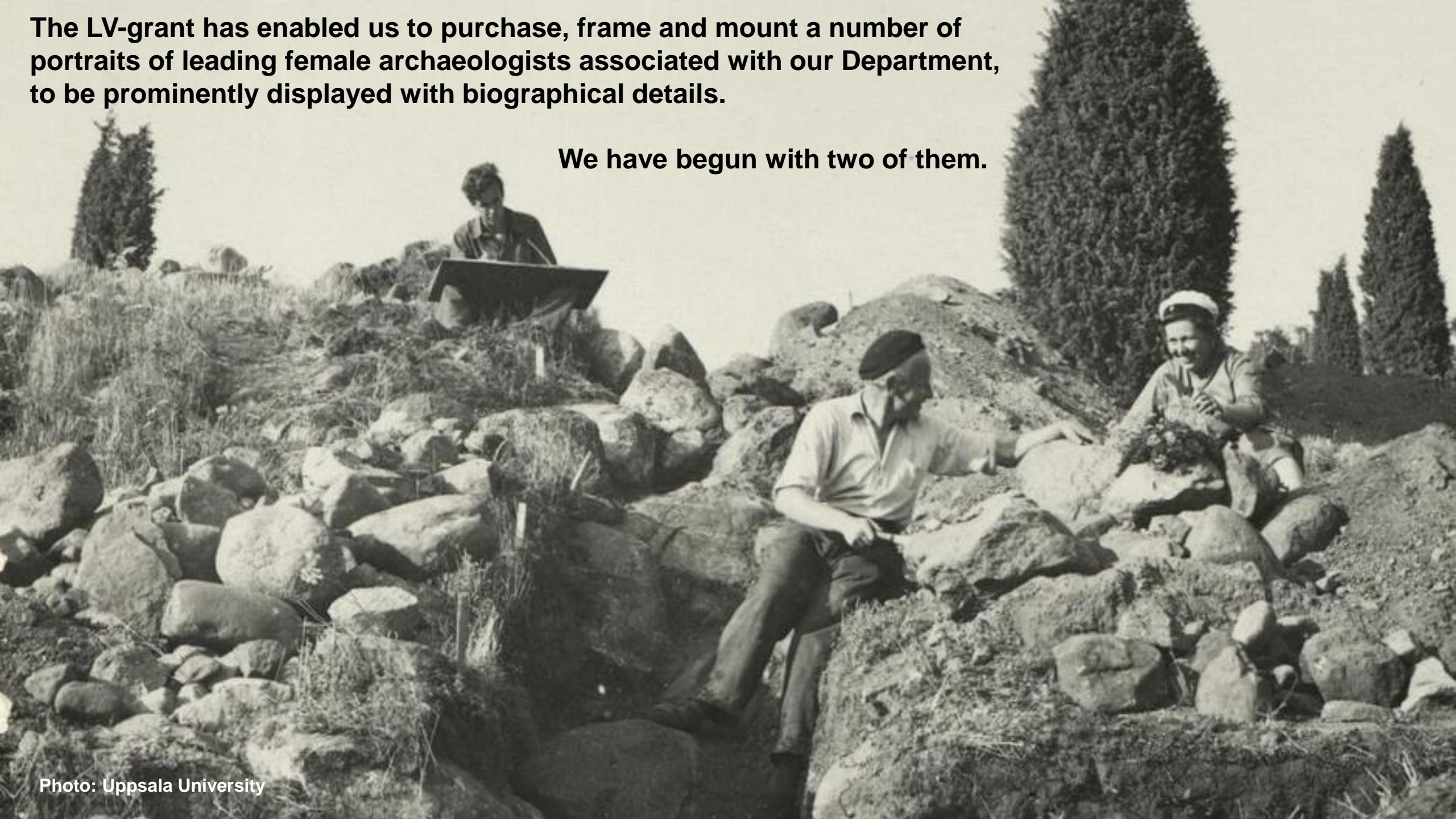
We've been inspired by the online *Trowelblazers*
project, collecting short biographies of female
pioneers and promoting them to the public

www.trowelblazers.com



The LV-grant has enabled us to purchase, frame and mount a number of portraits of leading female archaeologists associated with our Department, to be prominently displayed with biographical details.

We have begun with two of them.



Dr. Hanna Rydh (1891-1964)

The first woman in Sweden to gain a doctorate in archaeology, defended at Uppsala in 1919.

Her archaeological achievements are many and impressive:

She excavated many famous Swedish archaeological sites in the 1920s and 30s, including Skopintull on Adelsö, and published several major books and reports such as the excavations of Stora Förvar on Stora Karlsö.

In 1924-25, Hanna was in charge of the early Stone Age collections at the National Museum of Antiquities in Paris, and excavated in the Pyrenees.

In 1953, in her early sixties, she led the Swedish archaeological expedition to India (on which she insisted on equal pay for male and female participants), and published two more books.





Even in old age, Hanna continued to host women-only evenings for young scholars, artists, and politicians

1931-38: Landshövdingfru, Jämtland; in 1938, on her husband's death, she very narrowly loses a vote to succeed him in this position, the first time a woman ever stood for such an election

1937-49: chair of the Fredrika Bremer Association

1943-44: Riksdagsledamot for Folkpartiet

1946-52: President, International Women's Alliance

From the 1920s onwards, she also worked tirelessly as a suffragist and a feminist activist

During WWII she directed efforts to house Finnish refugee children, and was an organiser in the Swedish resistance movement in the event of a German invasion.

After the War, captured archives revealed that the Nazis had classified her as “Anglo-Bolshevik and Feminist”



In 1922, Hanna was awarded a prestigious university scholarship, but it was publicly questioned whether she should accept having just become a mother.

Her reply,
“my son's birth makes no difference”
was reported in newspapers
around the world.

In the following decades she became
a global role model for
the ‘new woman’

On the walls of HER Rooms are photos of women who fought for women's Rights. My favorite is Dr. Hanna Rydh, an archaeologist and Suffragist.



She KNEW how to protest. She KNEW how to dress.



Artist Maira Kalman, New York

Maira has given us permission to display a copy of the portrait in our Department



Hanna Rydh in the Lapland mountains

**A picture taken by
the pioneering
Sámi photographer
Nils Thomasson**





Prof. Greta Arwidsson (1906-1998)

While studying archaeology at Uppsala, she became a key figure in the Valsgärde boat burial excavations, completing her doctorate on them here in 1942.

An archaeological career of international significance:

1936-41:

Antikvarie, Statens Historiska Museum

1942-46:

Lecturer in Scandinavian Archaeology, Uppsala University

1946-56:

Landsantikvarie for Gotland, 'Forngreta'

1956-73:

Professor of Scandinavian Archaeology, Stockholm University

- **the first woman to hold such a post in Sweden**

She produced the definitive publications for Valsgärde, Birka, and many other archaeological sites of central importance

BIRGIT ARRHENIUS
FORNGRETA

*En biografi om Greta Arwidsson,
den första kvinnan som blev lands-
antikvarie och professor i arkeologi*

LÄRDA I SVERIGE



PROFESSOR
GRETA ARWIDSSON

* 1906 † 1998



There is a general consensus among Swedish archaeologists today that, were it not for the prejudices of the time, Greta would have become professor very much earlier than she did, and most probably in Uppsala. It is high time that her achievements were recognized by her 'home' department.

Having taken three degrees in Uppsala, Greta was also a major figure in the student community and *nationslivet*, where she was the first woman ever to become *klubbmästare*; her efforts were an important factor in opening this aspect of the student experience to women on an equal basis.



Greta in 1973. Photo: Per Bergström



**The medal struck in 1973
by Vitterhetsakademien in Greta's honour**



**Greta at work on the Valsgärde finds
in the Gustavianum Museum,
a collection that she largely created and organised**

To be continued ...