

Bodies from Viking ships to be exhumed

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Scientists in Norway plan to exhume three bodies found in the country's most famous Viking ship burials because they fear the remains may be disintegrating.

The remains of a man found in the Gokstad ship were re-interred in 1928 after examination with the technology available at the time. The bodies of two women found 20 years later in the Oseberg ship were also re-buried.

Metal containers were used.

"Now we fear that condensation caused by temperature swings in both metal caskets may have made the textile damp," Terje Gansum of the Midgard Historical Center in Vestfold told Aftenposten. "This could in turn have destroyed the remains, or at least damaged them."

The grave openings are scheduled for September. Scientists said they hope they will be able to analyze the DNA in the bodies, including determining whether the two women in the Oseberg mound were related.

The ships and furniture, weapons and other objects buried with the occupants are in an Oslo museum. Both mounds were plundered by robbers centuries ago.

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