In my dissertation project I will be reconstructing and investigating a range of rituals involving amulet rings, and how this set of practices can serve as a window onto some of the broader themes at play in late Scandinavian Iron Age religion(s).

It has become increasingly clear, thanks in large part to recent salvage excavations, that use of amulet or votive rings (Sv. amulettringar, torshammarringer, eldstålsringar) was in fact one of the most common and characteristic types of ritualized activities performed by people during this period, especially in the region of Mälardalen. Despite this, there has not been much research specifically dedicated to studying these practices. Or that considers varied facets of the amulet ring phenomenon all together. I plan to address these issues in my project by employing a “bottom-up” approach to analyze a variety of assemblages that incorporate amulet rings, in order to discover what actions were actually being performed with and around these enigmatic objects. And by then exploring this evidence further through the lenses of new materialist ideas, and in combination with other types of sources (such as literature and ethnographies), to flesh out a more detailed and vivid picture of what these events could have been like.

The assemblages I will be studying come from sites such as Hjulsta in Uppland, Gamla Uppsala, Lilla Ullevi, Helgö, Birka, and Borg in Östergotland. Places chosen because they are well documented and suitable to fine-grained analysis, but most importantly because together they encompass different types of sites, different forms of amulet rings, and slightly different points in time – in short, the kind of variety needed for trying to get a better sense of the whole amulet ring phenomenon. My work with this material will consist of two parts: first, establishing how practices involving amulet rings manifested at each case site, and secondly comparing these sets of site-specific information in order to look for patterns. Including trends which might indicate any re-occurring (or changing) qualities, concerns, or concepts associated with amulet rings as a category and/or the rituals they were a part of.
Information which in turn may serve as inroads into better understanding some of the broader issues at play in the religious world that late Scandinavian Iron Age people inhabited, for example the marking and maintenance of sacred space, the logic of sacrifice and the notions of value it was bound up with, and how living humans, the dead, and other non- or more-than human agents were believed to relate.

My goal in *Doing Things with Rings* is ultimately to create a series of snapshots of practice, that when pieced together form a mosaic presenting a more holistic, dynamic image of one evidently important -- but thus far poorly understood -- aspect of late Iron Age ritual life. An image that can not only reveal more about specific acts involving amulet rings, but also help us glimpse something more of the lived experiences and worldviews of the people who took part in these events.