Editorial

The first year of the new millennium is soon at an end. At the same time as the millennium change has brought visions of the future, it has also involved a great deal of historical retrospection. Vikings and the Viking Age have been highlighted, especially in North America due to the 1000-year anniversary of the first Norsemen reaching the continent. All this focus on the Viking Age, which is actually a rather short period of the Nordic pre-history (ca 800–1050 AD), has resulted in a growing interest from a wide international public.

This year Viking Heritage Newsletter has also expanded to become a Magazine. Your responses to this change have been very encouraging. For the coming year we have a lot of visions and new ideas. A big problem, however, is how to finance our activities, as the Viking Heritage project has formally ended. Even though there is more interest than ever in what we are doing, it seems really hard for us to raise enough funds to carry on the activities. In order to continue we need to re-organise. This issue will unfortunately be the last paper version for a while. Our intention is to develop our magazine into a digital magazine that you can read and download from the Viking Heritage website.

To all of you subscribers who have already renewed your subscription we are offering an anniversary issue including five years of interesting articles from earlier issues of the Magazine, but also including new material. We hope that you all will find that good value for your money. We cannot, for obvious reasons, register any new subscriptions for the moment, but we will keep you updated with information about our doings on our website.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has participated in this year’s issues. Thank you all for interesting articles!

To all of you from all of us here at Viking Heritage: A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year! And of course: pleasant reading!

Marita, Olle, Therese, Maj-Britt and Dan
Viking Heritage
Gotland University College

E-mail: viking@hgo.se

Words of Wisdom

Never reproach another for his love:
It happens often enough
That beauty ensnares with desire the wise
While the foolish remain unmoved.

From "Hávamál" ("The High One")

About the front page:
Tablet weaving woman. Read more about this handicraft on page 22.
Photo: Ny-Björn Gustafsson, Viking Heritage.

http://viking.hgo.se
At Trabjerg northeast of Holstebro in Jutland, Denmark a large excavation of a Viking settlement was carried out in the middle of the 1970’s. This was one of four very large Viking-Age settlements selected by the Settlement Committee research initiative under the Danish Research Council for the Humanities for a massive undertaking to investigate the area as thoroughly as possible. There was very little known about Viking-Age settlements at that time and the first level of excavations was preceded by rationally removing the peat mechanically, making it possible to quickly get down to the dark impressions that were marks from the poles used in buildings and enclosures.

Both subject matter and science. There were developments in. At the time mechanical removal of the peat layer was a relatively new technique that would come to revolutionise Danish archaeology. In the following decade, the 1980’s, another equally important tool came into general use, namely the metal detector. Once again one must be amazed by the most unexpected results a new, practical angle of approach to prehistoric life could gather from the Danish countryside. Volunteers with local knowledge have gradually come to be associated with almost every museum. In their spare time they search the terrain in order to find and to delimit settlements from the periods when metals were used, an accomplishment that not only has given invaluable results but would also have been impossible to carry out in practice in another way.

In this way Harald Holm accomplished an important undertaking that received a great deal of attention in the Holstebro Museum’s area. In 1990 and 1993, during excavations of the area where the Trabjerg-settlement was being investigated, he managed to find more than a score of objects of different kinds – for instance dress buckles, weights and coins – things that had remained in the humus layer and that could only be discovered by chance with the naked eye. In the spring 1991 it was also possible to “look” at a ploughed grave mound about one kilometre south of the settlement. This was successful, yielding a pair of spearheads and an axe, all made of iron and seeming to stem from the Younger Roman or Older Germanic Iron Age. Somewhat younger were stamp-decorated bronze plates probably belonging to a shield. The most striking was a three-clover shaped beautifully decorated piece that we’re going to examine in detail here.

At first sight it looked like a very familiar piece of Viking-Age jewellery; the so-called trefoil costume brooch. This was a common women’s brooch that was used alone or – more often – together with two oval brooches. The object is made of three similar elliptical sections starting from an arched centre. However the back of the clover-shaped find from Trabjerg Bakker has no needle or hanging attachment indicating that it is not a piece of jewellery. It has been a mount, intended to be fastened onto a thin material.

The mount is a fine piece, as
evidenced by both its material and shape. Both it and the preserved rivet are cast in silver. The front is decorated with exquisite flower ornamentation in relief. Stems wind to and fro, at times bound by a sort of knotted double line and in twelve places the clinging vines meet in small three-pointed leaves. The composition is identical in all three lobes with a small three-pointed figure in the middle. Vines, leaves and a design of close raised “double bands”, between which a black mass, so-called niello, has been laid. This is a mixture of melted silver, copper, lead and sulphur that appears black and makes an effective contrast to the shining silver flower decoration. The larger surfaces around the leaves are recessed and here there are also traces of gold covering that was first found during restoration. In the photograph only a third of the specimen is cleaned but there is no need to believe that the rest would be formed differently. Otherwise it is completely on the fittings and the very well dated illustrated manuscripts, it is often possible to make a surprisingly exact dating of the simple items. Eldest in line is a mount from a Scanian treasure hoard at Häljarp, where it was found together with a number of coins and other items. The fitting seems to be produced between 780 and 800 and can be connected to Charlemagne’s Court School in Aachen, where his octagonal church (consecrated 805) with the Emperor throne still can be seen. With regards to the stylised acanthus ornamentation the fitting from Häljarp may be compared to the adornments in a manuscript ordered by Charlemagne himself as a gift for the Pope. Godescale, a monk who resided at the court in 781-83, decorated the manuscript. At the death of Hildegard, Charlemagne’s wife, in 783 the manuscript was finished. Under the direction of Anglo-Saxon monk, Alcuin, Charlemagne’s Court School was a centre for the flourishing intellectual life during the Carolingian era. Charlemagne called for Alcuin personally from the Lindisfarne monastery on the Holy Island in northern England in 781. As you know the monastery was attacked in 793, an event marked by historians as the beginning of the Viking Age.

The Norwegian trefoil mount from Huseby in Trondheim was found in a woman's grave together with a silver chain and a couple of oval brooches. It has a
secondary hole drilled through it showing that it was used as a pendant in the end. From other manuscripts it can be connected to the so-called Ada-school in Aachen during the period 800-814. The expression school is not to be taken literally since it was more a sort of centre, acting as a source of inspiration to the surroundings, but several of the “schools” had strong personal contacts with the art-interested emperor.

The third in line is from a treasure find in Østra Påboda in Småland, Sweden. The different fittings found apparently come from the same workshop, presumably the monastery in Tours. The two manuscripts with illustrations of warriors in arms, mentioned before and dated to 843-851 when the abbot Vivian resided there, come from that monastery as well.

The fourth mount was found in Kolin in Bohemia in an exceedingly richly arrayed warrior's grave that contained a chalice, sword and spurs among other things. This fitting can be connected to the so-called older Metz-school because of similarities with decorations in the so-called Drogo-prayer book. Drogo was one of Charlemagne's sons and in 826 his brother, the future emperor Louis the Pious, appointed him bishop in Metz (in Lorraine). In his younger years he had travelled with his father several times to Italy and Rome where he became inspired by the Roman ornamentation. Metz became one of the larger and active art centres, where items of the highest quality were produced. It is generally considered that the Kolin-fitting was produced during the period 850-855.

The most beautiful of the known acanthus-decorated Carolingian belt fittings comes from an incredibly rich treasure find in Hon, not far from today's Oslo. In this find, which contains mainly gold objects with a total weight of 2.5 kilos, a trefoil filigree-decorated belt mount was found among arm-rings, coins, beads, pieces of jewellery, with its lobes equally cut off. This mount is the only one made of gold. There have been disagreements regarding the place and time of its production, but much would indicate that it should be connected to the Metz monastery after 855, when bishop Drogo died and the so-called older school closed down. From then on the school was characterised by a younger group of craftsmen.

There are other mounts though not decorated with the acanthus-motif, from Biskupija-Cravina in Croatia and St Vincenzo al Volturno in southern Italy. The latter, made of iron, was found a few years ago when the monastery's workshop area was investigated.

A group of monks who had emigrated all the way from Syria came to Northumbria in north-eastern England in the end of the 7th century. They brought one of the Mediterranean's most characteristic art motifs with them – the grapevine, with its origins in Classical antiquity, but also a symbol of the paradise in Christian symbolism. It became a part of Anglo-Saxon Christian art and later reached the Continent.

The acanthus motif began to be used in an entirely different way, namely in imperial decrees. The word itself derives from Greek akantha, thorn bush, which tells us something about the plant's features. The motif derived from Classical antiquity – among other things on Corinthian pillar capitals from 4th century BC – was thus an immediate reference to classical culture. The acanthus motif was used widely in manuscripts and on reliquaries, chalices and altars and, as we have seen, also spread to the metal craftsman's small products. Charlemagne, who was crowned emperor by the pope in 800, saw himself as the creator of a new Roman Empire. A tremendous upswing for all manner of art and culture, the so-called Carolingian renaissance, was a central part of his program. The acanthus motif was later imitated and further developed in the Nordic countries.

The mount from Trabjerg Bakker combines in one and the same piece the two plant motifs – the Oriental-English grapevine and the Classical-Carolingian acanthus. It has presumably a connection to Metz, like the Hon-mount, and is to all appearances the youngest of the trefoil belt fittings. In order to get a clearer idea of the Trabjerg object an investigation of the find site was undertaken in 1995 by Bjarne H. Nielsen from the Holstebro Museum. There were results, but they were very mixed. Settlement remains and many graves from the Older Iron Age, placed around two grave mounds – presumably from the Bronze Age – that had been ploughed over, were the most essential. A piece of a gold foil may be from the Germanic Iron Age, but it was not possible to determine if the fitting had come lying in a grave or had came from an accumulated buried treasure.

It is not impossible that sons of chieftains from the Nordic area went south and among other things got used to earning wages from taking part in military battles on the Continent during the early Middle Ages. The fittings could surely have been brought home as part of their mercenary pay. That this very masculine outfit would directly inspire different kinds of Nordic female jewellery would certainly have caused great astonishment in the Carolingian armours.

E-mail: ibenskibsted@hotmail.com

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The recently found hoards from Spillings farm on Gotland, Sweden

By Ola Korpås, Per Widerström and Jonas Ström

Gotland is rich in historical remains and traces from times long ago. Throughout the years many artefacts from our past have been found on the island. Especially remarkable are the large amounts of silver that have been found here. For example more English coins have been found on the tiny island of Gotland than in England itself.

One of the more, if not the most, spectacular phenomena is the large, or even huge, amount of silver hoards that have been found in different parts of Gotland. In fact, more than seven hundred silver hoards have been found on the island. And that figure only takes into account the hoards that have been registered in modern times.

Most of the hoards have been found when farming, during road construction and in other more or less scientific ways. In the early summer of 1999 the biggest hoard so far was found at Spillings farm in Othem parish, situated in the northeastern part of Gotland. Personnel from the Gotland Fornsal Museum in Visby found the hoard with a metal detector after the landowner had brought the archaeologists’ attention to the place.

While working with the metal detector in a field near the Spillings farm the metal detector gave a sharp signal and when placed closer to object beneath the surface of the soil Jonas Ström, who is an expert in the use of such detectors, noted a new observation. The display on the metal detector showed the sign “overload”, a clear indication that this find was something out of the “ordinary”.

When archaeologists had started working on the excavation of the find, the work with the metal detector continued and once again its display showed the “overload” sign! This was only 3 meters from the first one, but the ground at Spillings had even more to yield to the archaeologists. Only 1 m from the second silver hoard the metal detector indicated another large find. A hoard containing bronze objects was revealed; most of them destroyed, cut or burnt, pieces of bronze artefacts. Some of it was melted together in a big chunk of melted bronze. It is considered to be a scrap metal deposit. It seems like a chest of bronzes exported from the Baltic countries of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to Gotland, probably meant to be melted down and remade into a more local type of jewellery.

Hoard I

Two silver hoards of this size within three meters of each other must be seen as something extraordinary, even on Gotland! The first hoard, hereafter hoard I, measured 40x50 cm on the surface. In the first layers of hoard I we found Arabic coins, bracelets, arm-rings and bars all made out of silver. Hoard I was excavated at the site and the work was problematic when the silver in the hoard had been exposed to a chemical process, which coloured the surface of the objects purple and made them fragile. The bracelets were twisted into each other and in some cases it seems that they have been put together in certain weights to correspond to a weight system used during the Viking Age. A proper English term for this is “Ringmoney”. This term that does not exist in Swedish, but most definitely should! The majority of the coins in hoard I were found in the bottom placed in a small wooden chest. This was also taken in for closer examination in the laboratory at the museum. The coins have not yet been counted due to the chemical process but there are approximately between 3000 and 4000 silver coins. All of them are Arabic dirhems. The chest the coins were placed in measures approximately 17x18 cm. The total weight of hoard I is about 25 kg.
Hoard II

Hoard II was not exposed to the same aggressive chemical process as hoard I and was removed as a mass for excavation in the laboratory where it could be examined carefully. Preparation of a silver hoard this size had never before been done on Gotland. Everything went well except that a stone obstructed the metal plate used to slide under the hoard before lifting it up from the ground. After overcoming that minor problem the hoard was taken indoors and the examination could begin.

This hoard was investigated from the bottom. The second hoard showed to be even bigger than hoard I and not only that, the objects were in better condition. In hoard nr. II 312 arm-rings, 20 bars, 30 bracelets, 20 finger-rings and approximately 9000 silver coins were found. The majority were Arabic coins from the Sassanidian dynasty from the mid-8th century, Ummajadian coins from the 8th century and Abbasidian coins from the 9th century. The TPQ, the youngest coins in the hoards are dated to 866-867. That is also is the preliminary dating for the deposition of the hoard/hoards. Johan Landgren, the numismatic who will continue his work with the hoards from Spillings in the future, made this dating. Therefore I want to remind readers that this is a still preliminary figure. The few coins that are not Arabic are a coin from the Byzantine Empire struck for Basileos I in 867, and two other so-called Hedeby coins minted around 825. Most of the coins have not yet been fully examined, but Johan Landgren has browsed through them and divided them into groups of younger and older coins. The youngest group has been examined pretty carefully explaining why its estimated age is considered as a probable date. The total weight of hoard II is about 40 kg.

Silver hoards

Silver hoards have traditionally been interpreted as having been buried in the ground during violent times and then forgotten. The general interpretation is that the silver has been hidden in the ground within the farm property, mainly within a building. Too few larger archaeological investigations have been made at the places where silver was found and the question of where the silver was kept during the Viking Age has never had received a proper answer.

When the silver was removed from the ground only the small area of the hoard itself was excavated or salvaged and the area around was hardly ever investigated. This is mainly due to the costs involved with the necessary archaeological excavations. The main question discussed was why the hoards were hidden and also what the reason was for the large amount of silver found on Gotland. The silver hoards mostly contain silver coins but also bracelets, finger-rings, brooches, pieces of silver and rarely gold coins. The coins in the hoards dated before 970 are mostly of eastern origin and those after 970 are of western origin, mainly from England and Germany.

In 1977 a project, called The Hoard Project, with the main purpose of investigating the places where silver hoards have been found, began on Gotland. The silver itself has been the object of many studies but the sites where it was found have never undergone any deeper scientific studies, with the exception of Majör Östergren's research "Mellan stengrund och stenhus" from 1989 that singles itself out in this field.

The project undertook new investigations in the places where the hoards have been found both from archive studies and with the help of metal detectors and archaeological excavations. Another reason for starting the project was also to excavate the sites before people with less scientific motives did. The plundering and looting of historical monuments was, and still is, a big problem on Gotland and of course the silver hoards are the object of special interest for looters. In the early nineties the Swedish government passed a law restricting the use of all metal detectors in Sweden.

With new excavations at sites where silver hoards have been found, archaeologists wanted to study the link between the silver hoards and settlements from the same time. On Gotland many settlements from the early Iron Age (up to 500 AD) are visible in the landscape because of the stones used to build the walls. In the younger phase of the Iron Age houses were made of
wood, making settlements from that era hard to find. In the end of the 1960's Lena Thunmark and Gustav Trotzig carried out the first larger excavation at Burge in Lummelunda where a silver hoard had been found during cultivation in 1967. Their excavations showed that the hoard had been placed inside the walls of a house (Thunmark & Trotzig 1971: 97).

Later excavations at sites where silver hoards have been found provide us with archaeological information showing a similar pattern to the Burge investigation. Silver hoards seem to be connected with settlements from the same period. Materials found at the sites are of typical settlement character, ceramics, nails, bones and postholes.

**Bronze hoards**

Hoarding as a phenomenon in archaeological material is well worth a discussion, as it seems to appear all over but there is little known about it. Hoards might consist of iron, bronze, silver or gold; valuable goods from the specific period in any case. They might be hidden from enemies or placed in pattern to create a territorial borderline, or they might be seen as ceremonial offerings, gifts to gods for religious reasons. On Gotland, as mentioned earlier, more than 700 silver hoards have been found. One or more are added to this number every year. Bronze hoards are more rare. The number of bronze hoards is uncertain but if not correct, this is the fifth found, one more or less, on Gotland. Perhaps therefore this hoard has been slightly neglected in the way not only the media but also we, the archaeologists have presented the major find from Spillings farm. This find is not as large, not as valuable today and not as glimmering as the polished silver, but still, it can provide us with archaeological facts that will increase our knowledge about trade in a way “another” silver hoard cannot. This is not meant to be patronising but, while more silver hoards provide more factual information, a rare find results in more new knowledge and equally important-it arouses more questions.

In this short description we will focus on the hoards from Spillings. The bronze hoard was found only 1 meter from silver hoard II. The hoard contained dress-pins, arm- and neck-rings, bracelets, mountings and pieces of melted bronze. Most of the objects were destroyed, cut in pieces or half melted. Perhaps destroyed by fire would be an appropriate expression. Indubitable evidence of wood and large iron-mountings showed that the bronze had been kept in some kind of a wooden container.

Judging from the iron-mountings the container was a chest. During the excavation well-preserved pieces of a solid lock for the chest appeared. Many of the bronze pieces had been exposed to a high temperature and a big chunk of bronze artefacts was melted together at the bottom of the hoard. The bronze hoard can be seen as raw material for bronze casting. The bronze objects that were found were all of Baltic type. At the moment nothing specific can be said regarding the dating of the objects. Hopefully a planned Swedish-Baltic project, still in an early phase, will be able to provide some vital answers concerning dating the hoard and the objects within it. An answer from the radiocarbon dating laboratory is expected soon.

The weight of the bronze hoard was approximately 20 kg. The smaller squares are test pits. The eastern one, in the top right corner, showed traces from a house, with an easily recognisable clay floor level. In that one we also found a great deal of ceramics and animal bones. We have tried to show the situation of the house with the dotted line in the picture. The dark areas within the trench are areas with stones and darker soil. Wooden remains probably belonging to a roof were found and laboratory results will indicate if the hoards and the building belong to the same time period. This and other questions will hopefully be answered when test results arrive and other analyses are all completed.

**Literature**


**About the author:**

Ola Korpås, Per Widerström and Jonas Ström are archaeologists.

E-mail: per.widerstrom@gotmus.i.se

**Photos:** Göran Ström
Another great Viking Feast!

All recipes are for 4 persons

**Nettle Soup**

1 1/2–2 litres of tender nettles  
1 litre vegetable bouillon  
3 tablespoons flour  
1 decilitre milk or cream  
Salt, white- or black pepper  
1/2–1 teaspoon of sweet cicely or thyme  
4 eggs, boiled

Rinse and parboil the nettles. Pour off the water. Bring the bouillon to the boil. Place the nettles in the bouillon.

Thicken the soup with flour mixed together with some cold water and let boil a couple of minutes to a well-thickened consistency. Add milk or cream. Flavour with salt, pepper and sweet cicely or thyme. Remove the eggshells and divide them into halves. Place them in the soup tureen with the soup.

"**Chimney sweepers**"

1 kilo ungutted herring  
1 litre water  
1 dl salt  
1 tablespoon of butter  
Butter mixed with dill  
50 g butter  
1/2 dl finely chopped dill

Gut the herring, leaving the backbone. Rinse them carefully and let drain off. Mix water and salt in a bowl. Let the herring soak in the water about 1 hour. Take up the herring and drain off carefully. Fry in hot frying pan 2–3 minutes on each side or grill them over live coals. In that case place them in a gridiron, brush them with butter and grill them over live coals 2–3 minutes on each side.

Serve them immediately together with the dill-flavoured butter and bread.

**Cowberry pears**

1 litre cowberries (red whortleberries), about 600 g  
3 dl water  
3 dl honey  
1 kilo small, firm pears

Pick the cowberries over and put them in a casserole. Add water and honey. Bring to a boil and then simmer on low heat without lid, about 10 minutes. In the meantime peel the pears letting the stalks remain. Scrape the stalks with a knife and cut a cross at the bottom of the pears. Put the pears in the casserole and let them boil with the cowberries until they are soft, about 30 minutes. Skim carefully. Put the cowberry pears in carefully cleaned, hot jars, pouring the liquid over them. Put on the lids and let the pears cool.

Keep them in a dark and cool place.
The round towered churches of Norfolk and northern Europe

BY MICHAEL KNIGHTS

The round western church tower is well known to be a characteristic and distinctive feature of Norfolk churches. There are 123 standing round towers in the county. In addition, there are 11 ruinous round towers and evidence for a further 11. They range in date from the late 11th century to the 15th, the majority dating from the 12th century.

Why were the towers built round?
A strongly held belief is that the reason for the towers being round is due to the lack of suitable freestone in the region for making ashlar quoins required for the corners of a square or rectangular tower. This theory does not stand up to scrutiny when it is pointed out that many contemporary square towers were built without ashlar quoins, and that many of the nave quoins and reveals in churches with round towers are built with ashlar. In addition, there are round parish church towers built of brick and ashlar in northern Europe, and in Norfolk there are towers built of conglomerate, such as at Bessingham or West Dereham. Furthermore, other areas in Britain and Europe, where there exists a paucity of freestone, did not resort to building round towers. It is clear that the reason for this predilection for round western towers was the result of a conscious stylistic or cultural choice.

Links with Viking communities
Norfolk was not the only place in Europe with round towers. There are a number of churches with round western towers existing in northern Germany, in Schleswig Holstein and the northern parts of Lower Saxony; in Skåne (southern Sweden, formerly Denmark) (Plate 2); and in Orkney and Shetland. There is also evidence for one in Norway. The earliest churches in the group are only known from excavation. They are at Heeslingen near Bremen, and Johannisberg near Hersfeld. Both these churches can be dated from documentary evidence to around the year 1000.

As a rule the surviving north European churches are larger than the East Anglian towers and are built of large glacial erratics (feldstein). They all date from the second half of the 12th century and they have some features which are strikingly similar to Norfolk’s round towers. The church at Ratekau near Lübeck, has a pair of circular double-splayed windows lighting the ground floor of the round tower – a common characteristic of the earlier East Anglian round towers. Double-splayed windows of both circular and rectangular types are found in many of the round towered churches in Norfolk, and are the rule rather than the exception in the north European round towers.

So distinctive is the round western tower, its occurrence in these regions must indicate shared influences. Norfolk was conquered, and then settled by peoples from southern Scandinavia during the ninth and early tenth centuries and a residue of Scandinavian language and custom was undoubtedly absorbed into the local culture. In addition, it is well known that trade was intensive between Norfolk and countries bordering the North and Baltic Seas. Furthermore, it is necessary to remember that Norfolk was an isolated region in relation to the rest of England. Given its position projecting into the North Sea, more than any other English county, it is only to be expected that communication and trade were predominantly with Scandinavian countries across the water – boats being the only effective means of transport during the Middle Ages.

The surviving Orcadian round towered church at Egilsay, and the lost round towers at Deerness and Stenness are not so unexpected if set in this context of seafaring communities around the North and Baltic seas. Apart from the building materials, the church of St Magnus, Egilsay would not look out of place in the Norfolk countryside.

There is further evidence of this cultural exchange. At the round-towered church of Great Leighs in Essex, there is an interesting detail which confirms the presence of a Danish mason in East Anglia during the 12th century. The hood mould of the west door is decorated with a curious plait motif unknown in the Anglo-Norman sculptural repertoire. It originates in the region now called Schleswig Holstein, where several churches have the same distinctive motif.

Other sculptural details found in Norfolk churches with round towers point to a Scandinavian influence. Surviving ironwork on the south door at Raveningham, the snake on the impost of Breckles’ tower arch, and the unusual plate tracery at Cranwich all display the influence of Viking art. Perhaps the clearest example of this influence is the 12th century capital from the cloisters of Norwich cathedral, which is carved with interlacing snakes or ribbons, typical of the Urnes style. This illustrates the lingering influence of Viking culture in the county, long after the Norman conquest.

Why did Norfolk people choose round towers?
As fashions in medieval church building were almost always imitative it is very likely that most churches with round towers were simply imitating the neighbouring parish church. However, the question remains: what were Norfolk builders imitating?

Imitation in building, or what Richard Krautheimer called ‘architectural iconography’, is often characterised by the imitation of one particularly distinctive feature. Thus, the many churches which claim to be reproductions of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem have only
one characteristic in common – they are centrally planned. Also, in the late 11th century, the bishop of Hereford, Robert of Lorraine, built for himself a chapel based, according to William of Malmesbury, on Charlemagne’s palace chapel at Aachen. The bishop’s building was rectangular, as opposed to the polygonal Aachan chapel, but it was of two storeys with an octagonal well in the central bay connecting the two floors. In this case, William of Malmesbury, and presumably Robert of Lorraine, both considered that the two storeys and the octagonal well were enough to make the connection with Charlemagne’s chapel. In Norfolk, the builders of the church of St George at Methwold considered the Ely cathedral lantern worthy of imitation. They chose to perch it on top of the western tower, even though at Ely it stood at the crossing and was designed to resolve the problems caused by the collapse of the Norman tower.

This last example illustrates the desire of the patron and designer of a parish church to emulate the mother church of the diocese. This emulation can be observed in Kent where a small number of churches (best preserved at Godmersham) have single towers attached to the side, with apses projecting from their east walls. It is clear that the position of the tower to one side of the church at the junction between nave and chancel and the presence of the apse is a direct reference to the radiating chapels of Canterbury Cathedral which were, of course, towers as well. It is in this context that the derivation of Norfolk’s early round towers may be seen.

In the medieval diocese of East Anglia the two major foundations existing in the late 11th century were the abbey of Bury St Edmunds and Norwich Cathedral. Rebuilding of the church at Bury began in 1081. Norwich cathedral was a new church built on virgin ground as the cathedral of East Anglia, and was officially begun in 1096. Its design was influenced by the earlier church at Bury. The eastern arms of these two flagship buildings were completed in 1096 at Bury, and 1101 at Norwich.

It seems possible that the radiating chapels found at both these mother churches were the local source for the East Anglian round tower. The radiating chapels survive in plan form only at Bury, and in an altered form at Norwich. At Norwich the radiating chapels were two-storied, with turreted pilasters in the angle between the chapels and the eastern apse. The chapels at Bury were of three storeys including the crypt. The taller chapels at Bury, also with the quadrant turrets or pilasters, were obviously impressive structures, and it is likely that they provided the inspiration for the earlier round towers of parish churches in the region.

The influence of the great churches of Bury and Norwich is further illustrated by the use at parish churches of the quadrant pilarster. This feature is commonly found on the junction between a round tower and the west wall of the nave. It is unique to East Anglia and thus very distinctive. The reconstruction drawing of Norwich cathedral’s radiating chapels shows turrets, with little conical roofs, positioned where the north and south radiating chapels join the ambulatory. These turrets were originally very prominent, and so it is interesting to see how they were adapted in to relatively minor features by parish church builders. A particularly clear attempt at copying these turrets can be seen at St Matthias, Haddiscoe Thorpe where the quadrant pilasters are capped with conical pieces of limestone, with a carved head above.

What was the original source?
The likeliest source for the turreted massing of the vast churches at Norwich and Bury are the great churches of The Holy Roman Empire under the Carolingian, Ottonian and Salien dynasties. These churches were studded with round towers, drawing on...
particular examples, such as the twin western towers at Gernrode and Möllenbeck (Rinteln) or the transept towers of the influential church of St Michael at Hildesheim. The earlier round towers at Heeslingen and Johannisberg were probably emulating great churches such as these. The Norman patrons of the great churches of Bury and Norwich looked to the Empire for examples of suitable scale and status for their newly acquired kingdom of England.

Conclusion
The source for the round towers of Norfolk parish churches remains elusive. However, the existence of very similar round towers around the Baltic and North Sea coasts, combined with the surviving Scandinavian decorative motifs in East Anglian churches, are evidence of a continuing Scandinavian presence, albeit within the Christian context, first brought to the coasts of Norfolk by the Vikings.

Conjectural reconstruction of the radiating chapels and turrets at Norwich Cathedral

Nordic research project about the Viking Age costume at Birka

This autumn the Birka museum in Sweden has started a sequence of symposiums for researchers with special interest on different topics regarding the Viking-Age Birka. The symposiums are aimed at shedding light upon the knowledge of Birka. The first symposium was carried out in the beginning of September and it was focused on the latest results within textile research and Viking-Age costumes. The symposium was also aimed at laying the ground for reconstructing a Viking-Age woman’s costume. Through this project the researchers are hoping to get some answers about questions regarding the social structures at Birka.

– It is very exciting to be able to gather Nordic researchers to take part in the latest research results about Birka. At the same time we will get help with the task of reconstructing a Birka costume, says Annika Richert, local manager at the Birka museum.

Hopefully one result of the project will be a female costume that women from the higher stratum of society in Birka could wear. So far by looking at the Viking-Age artefacts found at Birka researchers have been able to draw conclusions about what a simpler female costume looked like. One of the questions at issue now is if there is enough archaeological material to put together a description of a Viking-Age costume in its full splendour. The reconstruction efforts will be based upon the rich material of textile fragments and other equipment found in the Birka graves. There is also material from the other Scandinavian countries and from the northern part of Germany that will be studied as well. The finished costume will hopefully be ready for display at the Birka museum’s temporary summer exhibition in 2003. Every summer an exhibition – exploring a different topic each year – is on display in the central gallery of the museum.

At the symposium in September it was decided to begin this project with a merchant’s costume for the year 2002. During the three-day long symposium there were open public lectures led by the researchers. In the future the lectures will result in a written publication, regarding Viking-Age costumes. The articles in the publication will be in Scandinavian languages but short summaries will be in English.

In September 2001 there will be a second symposium regarding the defence system at Birka. More information about that forthcoming meeting will follow in future issues of Viking Heritage Magazine. You can also contact Annika Richert e-mail: annika.richert@raa.se or Malin Westling, public relations officer, e-mail: malin.westling@raa.se.

Http://www.raa.se/birka

About the author:
Michael Knights is the Principle Building Conservation Officer with Norfolk County Council and have been involved with many EU funded projects to date, three with the Högskolan in Gotland as partners! He is the head of a small team of conservation experts and four of them are involved in one way or another with various aspects of the NSVL project. Dirk Bouwens (Building Surveyor) is supervising the reconstruction at Swaffham. Stephen Heywood(Architectural Historian) carried out the initial research into the origins of the round towered churches and Caroline Davison (Conservation Officer) is developing the church trails and interpretation elements of the project. Truly a team effort!

E-mail: michael.knights.pt@norfolk.gov.uk
Previous Excavations
The first excavation at Reykholt took already place in 1941 when the passage leading from Snorralaug ( the warm hot spring bath ) to the farm was excavated. It had been discovered when a new sportshall was erected in 1934 to the east of the already existing school. In 1964 and 1984 minor excavations took place. In 1987 excavations were started again at the initiative of and with funding from the Ministry of Education. Trial trenches were dug to establish the extent of the farm mound. It turned out that the last farm houses, made of turf, stone and wood, were pulled down in 1930. The farm buildings were rebuilt and moved every so often. One building phase supersedes another and some of the remains are very fragmentary as a result.

In 1989 remains of some old turf walls with traces of volcanic ash in them (tephra), identified as the so-called Ládnám-lager, which can be dated to 871 AD (± 2 years) were excavated. These walls could be associated with a fireplace which has been radiocarbon dated from charcoal to the period between the 8th and 10th centuries. These remains, overlap natural deposits and belong without any doubt to the earliest occupation of the site.

As a result so far we can say that there are overlapping building phases spanning the period from the initial settlement, probably already in the 9th century, until the 20th century.

A special feature at the site are the hot springs. Investigations have shown that the geothermal water was used as a resource in the past. The use of this resource during the earliest settlement period in Iceland has not been extensively studied so far.

Present excavations
A major reason for the interest in studying and excavating the farm site lies in its historical significance.
Contemporary written records are available for this period which contain descriptions of buildings and other arrangements at the site, for example the Sturlunga Saga, which is a relatively reliable source for events in the 13th century. This gives archaeologists and historians the opportunity to compare these descriptions with the structural remains unearthed through archaeological enquiry.

Reykholts is probably among the earliest farms, settled in the country (also it is not mentioned in the Landnámabók), with continuous occupation until the 20th century. Therefore a comparison with three other farm-mounds excavated in Iceland, spanning similar length of occupation is planned:
Stóraborg, a medium-sized coastal farm, Bessastaðir, the seat of the Governor and the later President of Iceland, and Viðey, where there was a monastery for a period of time in the medieval period. A complete comparison

This summer the National Museum of Iceland was again conducting an archaeological investigation of the farmsite at Reykholt, which is situated in the beautiful valley of Borgarfjörður, western Iceland. This site is closely linked to the famous historian Snorri Sturluson (1179–1242), who is reputed to have written „Heimskringla” – a history of the Kings of Norway and the Poetic Edda (also called Snorra Edda), which contains not only tales of the heathen gods of germanic mythology but also teaches poetic metres. It is also believed that he has written Egils Saga. This year, an international team of archaeologists, a zooarchaeologist and a palaeoentomologist from Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and of course Iceland came to Reykholt, to continue the work from the last seasons.

Reykholts – Snorri Sturlusons’s farm in Iceland

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of finds, structures, size and status from these four farm-mounds is of immense importance for piecing together the settlement history of Iceland.

This year’s excavation has focused on the area that was previously excavated in 1998-1999.

At this time the old farm and the tunnel, which leads from Snorralaug and connects with the farm site was examined. The tunnel is at least 38 metres long with a turn at the end and five steps at that turn, before the 17th / 18th century passageway house cuts into these steps. The walls are made of stone which reach a maximum height of about 1.8 m although it is likely that the original height was in excess of this. The space between the walls reaches a maximum width of 1 m. How the roof was made is not yet known. Several organic layers were encountered within the tunnel which may have been floors which accumulated during the use of tunnel. These layers have been sampled with the intention of looking at the variety of insect remains, pollen and plant material which can be preserved in such organic layers. This could reveal whether any kind of bedding material was used for the floor and what kind of wood was used as a roof structure, if any.

A large stone-construction was also excavated this year. There are no previous examples of anything like this construction in whole Iceland. There are speculations about whether it might be the stronghold of Snorri Sturluson mentioned in some Sagas. But this question remains to be answered!

Another part of this year’s excavation were some structures which seem to date into the 18th and 19th centuries. Turf walls as well as fragments of wood, bones, textiles and charcoal will help to give us more informations about these farm houses.

The fact that the archaeologists have to deal with cultural deposits descending to a depth of 1-2 m from the surface and a time period from about 1000 years, makes the whole excavation at Reykholt very complicated. So there is still a lot of work needed to put all the little pieces together, so we can get a clear and detailed picture about this important place! The excavation will continue next year...

Come and visit Reykholt

Reykholt is visited by a large number of tourists, both foreigners and Icelanders every year.

This year even Harald, the King of Norway came to Reykholt to see were Snorri lived and worked! Already last summer tourists could join a guided tour at the excavation area; and there is also a big information centre and museum, which shows the history and importance of Reykholt and Snorri Sturluson. So if you are planning a trip to Iceland - don’t forget to visit Reykholt – it’s definitely worth the trip!

If you want to know more about Reykholt: www.reykholt.is

About the author:

Florian W. Huber has studied Archaeology and Scandinavian languages in Munich, Germany and Umeå, Sweden. He is now studying at the University of Kiel, Germany. He wants to specialize in the Viking Age.

E-mail: flohlys@yahoo.de

Language checked by Andrew Evens.
The stability of the Icelandic system of society was based mainly on the balance between two completely different principles. According to the ideology of the settlement phase all freeborn had equal rights before the law. On the other hand an aristocratic principle dominated the political structures of the free state. As we have already learned, godar and Pingmann formed the leading classes in Icelandic society. The Icelandic social contract originated from the times when the land was fully settled. Consequently the pressure of a growing population could no longer be mitigated by a colonisation of new areas. Instead, for many freeborn and former equals the only chance for survival was to become dependents of a rich landowner, a development naturally overshadowed by deep social conflicts. To solve this problem all freeborn were subjected to the same law and a common institution was created: the great Althing, which represented a compromise between an ideological demand and social reality.

The end of the peaceful era (fríðar-úld) began when Christianity was introduced to Iceland. After failure by a couple of other missionaries, the north-German Dankbrand finally succeeded in converting some of Iceland’s leading godar. This, of course, alienated them from their own Pingmann. That tension would finally burst into an open schism when at the great Althing of the year 1000 the two hostile parties declared themselves to be ”unligum”; the Icelandic social contract threatened to break up. Only thanks to the dexterity of the law speaker could the threat of a civil war be averted. According to his judgement Christianity became the official religion of the free state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still state, while heathen practices were still allowed if carried out in secrecy. Preserving the customs of child abandonment and eating horsemeat can be explained by their economic importance. The second conflict caused by Christianity arose from the introduction of church taxes. The church owner, in particular, benefitted from receiving the greatest share of the tithe. As a result rich landowners started to build their own churches. As we recall, the principal of godar was founded mainly on the economic equality of herindr and godar. However now the godar were forced to make up for the extreme accumulation of power by raising the leasing rentals for their tenants and acquiring new guardianships. In the long run the competition between godi and church owners led to the impoverishment of the Icelandic middle class. With the weakening of the power of their godar and their clans, it became more and more difficult for common people to come into their own. This extreme distortion of justice dramatically disturbed the former feeling of solidarity between all freeborn.

This development would not be without consequence for the institution of slavery. Yet, for the moment, let us return to the beginning again. Investigating the specific conditions of the colonisation phase we have to conclude that there had never been any real economical need for slavery! The fact that settlers took slaves with them to Iceland can of course be explained by the cultural conditions back in Norway: Many slaves were therefore captured during the journey, quite often from the Celtic nations on the British Isles. However slavery on Iceland is nothing more than an ideological import. Slavery’s disappearance is assumed to have occurred sometime around the end of the Viking Age. Actually, there was never any law to abolish slavery on Iceland. Rather some demographic changes were needed to make the system of slavery unbearable. Firstly we have to consider the diminishing livelihood on the average farm because of the competition between godar and churchowners. Then the fathers of the church were also concerned with a prohibition of infanticide and eating horsemeat. Yet these heathen practices were most important for the nourishment of large numbers of the population on one hand and birth control of slave class on the other. Naturally, the consequences of that development do not become evident to their full extent until a few generations later. We need mention that the preachers of God were not particularly engaged in the destiny of slaves.

Ironically it would be the breakdown of society caused by the introduction of Christianity that would bring about the disappearance of slavery on Iceland.

The third destructive conflict happened when church within the scope of the movement of libertas ecclesiae began to claim possession of land and property donations. As a problem, the definition of property as we find it in ecclesial law completely contradicted the conception of the church owners who, following the old idea of ódal as family land, had only meant to lease property out to the church. Lasting more than one hundred years that conflict finally led to a complete change in the common definition of land ownership. Henceforth the power traditionally associated with land ownership no longer rested with the family clans but became the personal and freely transferable belonging of an individual. In the end we find social structures that had not much in common with the conditions during the beginning phase. The particular Icelandic social contract has become invalid; there are hardly any partners left with equal rights. The fríðar óld is superseded by an era of discord. A handful of families now moves into the focus of history, becoming new factors of influence. That is the prelude to the age of the Sturlungar.

Due to an active marriage policy the five or seven important family clans would be so interwoven around the year 1220 that traditional conceptions of family no

About the author:
Michael Neiß has studied Archaeology and Scandinavian studies at the Humboldt University of Berlin. In 1998 he continued his studies of Archaeology at the University of Stockholm and now he is a student of comparative religion at the same University. His special interests are: later Iron Age, ornamental art and iconography interspersed with religion and society.

E-mail: michaelneiss@hotmail.com
longer had any practical meaning. Instead territorial bonds became more important, making the ættir reside in their own separate territories, so to say. Putting the total breakdown of traditional structures in the context of the individualization of power gives us a key to a new understanding of the bloody conflicts of the Sturlunga-Age. Consequently it was more likely a matter of personal battles than just cruel feuds between family clans...

A remarkable characteristic of Icelandic culture is the strong connection between ecclesial and profane erudition. It all began when the first bishop was ordained in 1056. However its real heyday came when the first monasteries were founded on the island. In that context we ought to remember that pupils to be educated here also were members of the leading families. That is why education undoubtedly had to pay some respect to the specific interests of that social class. As a matter of fact, most sagas are supposed to originate from or at least have been written down in the monasteries. As far as can be determined that specific Icelandic erudition is considered to have reached its climax in the stormy days of the Stulungar. With reference to that one might wonder to what extent the Sagas reflect the ideal of a better society. Most Sagas are placed in the days of the fröðar óld, between the years 930-1050. Despite the fact that they were written down at a time when slavery had disappeared for centuries these pieces of literature show an astonishingly uniform stereotype picture of the conditions of slavery. In any case we have to deal with a deep gap in tradition between the time when the Sagas were believed to have taken place and when they were recorded on parchment. Accordingly we need to wonder about the ways in which that picture of slaves could have been handed down to the Icelandic Sagas.

In the next issue, the article will continue under the title: How credible is the picture of slavery in Icelandic literature?

Literature sources:
Hastrup, Culture and society on medieval Iceland, 1985; Wilde-Stockmeyer, Sklaverei auf Island, 1978
Fröjel Discovery Programme

BY DAN CARLSSON

For the third consecutive year archaeological excavations of a Viking-Age harbour and trading place have been carried out at Fröjel on Gotland, in the middle of the Baltic Sea. The harbour settlement covers an area of about 60,000 m² and contains extensive traces of buildings and graves from the period ca. 600-1180 AD.

This year’s archaeological excavations dealt with both the buildings and the graves and took place over a period of 11 weeks. Digging was carried out in the form of courses for archaeological students from all over the world. In total about 100 persons participated in the different courses connected with the archaeological excavations during the summer.

Excavations were quite extensive and a total of 11 graves as well as the remains of several buildings from the Viking Age were investigated. The graves, dated to 9th and 10th centuries, all consisted of richly equipped women’s graves, with one exception. The sole man found amongst the examined graves had been laid over a woman’s grave, apparently intentionally. The osteological analysis indicates that the man and the woman lying beneath him were related to each other. The women were all richly equipped with much well-preserved jewellery in the form of animal-head brooches, chains, knives, beads, etc. The man, who was unusually tall (about 180 cm), had been buried without any objects at all.

Excavations of the buildings gave clear indications that the houses in the harbour area had been built in close rows in a right-angled pattern, quite like a town plan. Large postholes showed that several of the buildings had been of impressive construction and size. The find material from the building area was plentiful and is estimated to some 5000 objects, especially made of iron. The material provides proof of a number of different activities at the place, not least handicraft in different forms.

At present we are working on a report of the year’s digging, while at the same time we have begun plans for the coming field season. Next summer we will also conduct excavations in the form of practical dig courses and those who are interested in participating can register with me via e-mail to dan.carlsson@hgo.se or visit our home page: http://fröjel.hgo.se.

Dan Carlsson, Associate professor
Gotland University College
This summer in July I went on a three-week study tour through southern Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands and United Kingdom visiting museums and historical villages. The welcome and helpfulness I met when I interviewed responsible persons from each site was fantastic. The aim of my study tour was to study and evaluate how the Vikings and the Viking Age are displayed in different visitor centres and site museums in northwestern Europe. Primarily I wanted to study the ways these sites communicate with the public. Not all of the places I visited had a Viking-Age theme – it was also interesting for me to study how other subjects are interpreted and presented.

Fröjel Discovery Programme and regional development

The report will result in guidelines for the creation of a visitor centre and site museum at the ancient port of trade at Fröjel. The parish of Fröjel is situated on the west coast of Gotland, Sweden in the Baltic Sea. The Viking-Age harbour was one of many along the Gotlandic coast before the Hanseatic town of Visby grew in importance, becoming the main port of the island in the late 12th century. Archaeological excavations have proven that extensive handicraft and trade took place at Fröjel. Farmers from the inland came to the harbour to exchange their goods for valuable imports from near and far.

The Fröjel Discovery Programme research project is run by Gotland University Collage has carried out extensive archaeological excavations at the site throughout the years, and we have gained much knowledge of the activities and settlement patterns at the former trading place. The natural next step is to share our knowledge with the public and the inhabitants of Gotland. Our goal is to create an innovative exhibition in a museum close to the excavation site that will give a picture of a flourishing society over 600 hundred years (8th - 12th A.D.). The main purpose of the future site museum and visitor centre is to combine archaeological research with regional development. Creating an attractive site museum will lead to positive benefits for the region economically and culturally thanks to the flow of tourists and visitors that will come to the future attraction. Hopefully new businesses can be established on local initiatives that will lead to a more dynamic development within the local society. It’s very important that the project rests on a foundation of local interest and support.

Historical villages

The sites I visited can be divided into two types, historical villages and site museums. In the 1990's many historical villages and site museums were opened in Scandinavia. You can almost refer to a trend for Viking theme and regional site museums at former excavation sites. In Sweden we have for example the new site museums at Birka (The
Display of the Vikings

Among the museums I visited were Lindholm Hoje Museum, Ribe Viking Museum in Denmark, Viking Museum Haithabu in Germany, Anne Frank Haus and Rijksmuseum in Netherlands, and Jorvik Viking Centre and Vikingar! Largs in the United Kingdom. The most interesting site museums with innovative exhibitions were Lindholm Hoje Museum and Ribe Viking Museum in Denmark. In their exhibitions you could see very educational interpretations and new ideas realistically presented. The exhibitions in some of the other museums I visited were very traditional with items displayed in costly showcases arranged thematically: religion, trade, crafts, defence and household etc. These thematic arrangements are rather boring and static and don’t hold the visitors’ interest for long. It’s very important not to have too much text since the visitors don’t read it anyway. Our goal should be not to teach in an academic way - instead it should be learning through entertainment.

One type of exhibition that has proven to be very popular is to create an illusion of a

historical village that is as interesting as the museum on site – a museum on the Net!

I don’t think that many of the historical villages will survive in the future. They are too dependent on the work of volunteers and the re-enactment movement. Re-enactors and animals must people historical villages otherwise the sense of vitality is lost which is devastating for the illusion of historical reality. Most of the sites have problems with decreasing numbers of visitors. The historical villages are too alike – if you’ve seen one you’ve seen them all. After the first opening year the public interest for the site declines rapidly and that leads to a weak and unstable economy. Many site museums suffer from the same problem due to spending much effort and money on a permanent exhibition that will soon be outdated. It’s better to put an effort into creating new smaller exhibitions annually, making it easier to keep the public interested.

Viking Heritage Magazine
The "Ale in the Viking Age" project

The Ranneberg nature and culture path was opened on an autumn day, November 1-4th. The path has been produced by the "Ale in the Viking Age" project (Ale - Municipality) which is a North Sea Viking Legacy project. 8 signs made of solid oak have been put up that provide information on the Viking Age, plants, animals, sites, ancient fields and strongholds. It is possible to read about finds from the Viking Age in Ale:

- The Viking Age Åskekärr ship that was dug up in the Åskekärr village in 1933.
- Ten graves from the late Viking Age, found during archaeological excavations in Nödinge church 1981.
- Ten bracelets and two neck rings made of silver discovered in Lid, in 1853.

The path is barely a kilometre in length and ends on the top of the stronghold – Ranneberget – with extensive view of the Göta älv river valley. From here you see the other four strongholds in Ale and using a compass you can get the direction for other historical sites with an historical connection to the Göta älv river valley and its surroundings during the Iron Age, Viking Age and Middle Age. Halfway up to the top there is a campsite with benches and a fireplace. In the area, adjacent to the Göta älv River, there are numerous ancient monuments such as ancient fields, a Stone Age settlement and a stronghold. During the work with the path a stone with skälgröpar was found as well. Our ambition has been to get as close to the history as possible. With the help of illustrations (by Ewa Ljung) of the material and known facts we show what the area might have looked like about 1000 years ago. We have also produced maps of how the Göta älv River’s shoreline has changed throughout thousands of years, from a deep bay to a river. The texts’ facts (by Bodil Pettersson) have been checked by archaeologists at the Låöse Museum, the biologist at the Ale Municipality and the Society for Nature Conservation. The sign holders of oak are untreated and harmonise well with the surrounding consisting of heath-land oak, hazel and crab-apple bushes. A nature inventory has been conducted in order to obtain knowledge about the plants that remain from the time when the meadowland was grazed. In order to preserve the flora and make the ancient fields and the walls of the strongholds visible for the future, the area must be cleared a couple of times a year. For this reason the local Society for Nature Conservation has adopted the path and will keep the area free from trees and brush.

The "Ale in the Viking Age" project will invite the public to an opening with a program for all ages on May 5, 2001. The Viking Day in Ale Municipality will be arranged on May 4, 2001 with games and other activities for the municipality’s second-forms who are studying the Iron Age. The activities will be held in the area where the Åskekärr ships were found and initiative holder and co-ordinator is librarian/member in the Society for Viking Ships, Ann Franzén. The "Ale in the Viking Age" project was initiated by the Education and Culture Board in Ale Municipality arising from the interest about the Viking-age ships. The project is divided into three subproject:

- Nature and culture paths
  - The Göta älv river valley during the Viking Age – summary of the research situation in the Göta älv river valley.
  - Ale Viking farm – investigation of the possibilities to reconstruct a Viking-age farm in Ale Municipality.

The project has been financed by Ale Municipality, the County Administrative Board, the County Council, EU’s Regional Fund/Norway by Interreg II C North Sea. (See article in Viking Heritage Newsletter 1/2000)

For more information: www.alevikingatid.nu
info@alevikingatid.nu

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By Geir Sør-Reime, project manager

The two Interreg IIC projects, North Sea Viking Legacy and Balder/Via Viking are now launching a major new initiative called Destination Viking. Viking Heritage has also been involved in the development of the project ideas.

The current projects are now approaching their conclusions and are looking for ways to go ahead. The Interreg IIC bodies have intended that projects receiving grants should develop into more permanent initiatives.

A document outlining possible strategies for the new Destination Viking initiative is currently being circulated among current and potential partners of both the North Sea Viking Legacy and the Balder/Via Viking projects.

After a discussion period, partners interested in joining the new project will be invited to a conference where the project description will be finalised. Thereafter, partners will be invited to sign up for the new project.

The Destination Viking proposal now being discussed has a number of elements, primarily based on experience won during the current NSVL/Via Viking projects, including the co-operation with Viking Heritage.

The overall objective is to establish a cross-national tourist destination - Destination Viking – based on the common Viking heritage. This destination must focus both on the Scandinavian countries as the lands from where the Vikings originated (and most of them lived) – as well as on the Scandinavian expansion during the Viking period – both east and westwards. Here again, focus should be on both the trade and raiding activities as well as the settling of Scandinavians in a number of areas outside of Scandinavia during this time, and the cultural impacts to this day of this Scandinavian expansion.

The interaction and co-operation between Scandinavians and other peoples, like the Vends and other Baltic people and the Scots, must also be emphasised.

The project must have a number of elements, all contributing directly or indirectly to the establishment and running of such a destination.

A major element must be the selection and development of attractions to be included in the destination.

The selected destinations include a number of elements, like cultural remains from the Viking Period, including objects/artefacts, reconstructions and/or enactments. The people responsible for these elements should also form networks to

http://viking.hgs.se
improve the quality of their work and to learn best practice from each other. This is a continuation of the current work of both the NSVL and the Via Viking project of the Baltic Sea Area.

Our common Viking legacy in addition imbends a huge potential for educational programmes, which must be developed within the framework of trans-national co-operation.

Main focus tourism, Destination Viking
This has two main elements: production and sale/marketing.

Production means to provide or produce a string of attractions that can be marketed and sold either as a more or less integrated package, or be included as major elements in travel packs. Destination Viking should be used to attract visitors to the Viking area, but should not exclusively focus on Viking heritage, Viking remains or Viking lore.

There must be a strong Viking focus for products labelled Destination Viking, but the historical aspects or any Viking links should not be exaggerated.

Each partner will have the main responsibility for providing or producing the basic products, the attractions that are going to be marketed and sold.

A central and professional team must handle the concerted marketing of Destination Viking. This can for instance be located to one of our partners.

The sale of products (tours etc.) should be the duty of the tourism trade. Close relations should be established between our organisation (the marketing team) and the tourism trade (including incoming companies, tour operators, hotels, destination companies etc.).

Selection and development of Destination Viking sites
Destination Viking must work on several levels. There must be both a limited number of top 50 attractions (the Viking Route) and an almost unlimited number of other attractions available. The top 50 attractions are used in international marketing, marketing aiming at creating interest in the Destination Viking and its organisation and projects.

There should be a selection process thorough, based on quality criteria, also taking into account even geographical distribution, the special focus on rural and areas in economic recline and a balanced focus between the Scandinavian core areas and the areas influenced by the Vikings.

Cultural remains/sites
These are, along with the museum exhibits of ‘real’ objects, the cores of any historic tourism. Therefore there must be a major focus on these.

Re-enactments etc. are only ways of presenting or interpreting the original remains/sites/objects.

The interpretation and presentation of sites and monuments are based on academic research. The project should encourage and probably also itself initiate new research projects, workshops and international research co-operation. Seminars, workshops and conferences should be held under the auspices of Destination Viking.

Viking should set up an academic advisory board directly linked to the Board of Management in order to ensure continuity and which should be responsible for site selection, approval of quality improvement programmes and for annual academic research programmes.

Reconstructions
Reconstructions are one of the main ways of presenting cultural remains to the public.

Recent academic research efforts have been directed towards this area, and a number of new reconstruction proposals and suggestions have been realised throughout the "Viking world". It is of vital importance that there is no monopoly on working with reconstructions. Several suggestions and hypothesis should be tested in full scale. At the same time, it is important that the scholars working with reconstructions talk together and exchanges ideas, results and experiences. It is suggested that an advisory board on reconstructions be set up, possibly as a sub-committee under the academic advisory board and attached to the Board of Management.

In addition, a selection of these Top 50 will often be included in more regional/local products based on the Viking Heritage. But here the "lesser" attractions play the major role. Our aim should be that a reasonable number of Viking attractions should be available within reasonable distance from any tourism destination in Scandinavia and the areas primarily visited or colonised by the Vikings.

Therefore, both the Top 50 and an almost unlimited number of "lesser" attractions should gradually be included into Destination Viking and its organisation and projects. There should be a selection process thorough, based on quality criteria, also taking into account even geographical distribution, the special focus on rural and areas in economic recline and a balanced focus between the Scandinavian core areas and the areas influenced by the Vikings.

DESTINATION VIKING
A major new initiative

Viking Heritage Magazine

http://viking.hgo.se
Tablet Weaving

By Viktoria Persdotter

On the front page of this issue, there is picture of a woman weaving a band using the tablet weaving technique. This technique was commonly used during the Viking Age, and its origins in Scandinavia can be traced as far back in time as the early Iron Age. Some scholars also claim that certain Danish Bronze-Age textiles were made using this technique. Tablet weaving is a complex, intricate technique, and in this article I will give only a very brief, theoretical introduction to the technique.

In the technique of tablet weaving, the warp threads are twisted around each other using tablets, before they are locked together by the weft. The patterns of the band are created either by differently coloured warp threads changing places, or by letting an additional weft float over and under warp threads. Often both techniques, with numerous variations of them, are used together to produce the patterns. The direction in which the warp is threaded through the tablets, as well as the direction they are turned, affect the structure of the band and enhance the patterns.

Prehistoric weaving tablets were made from a variety of materials, wood, horn, bone, and even bronze (there are Gotlandic finds of weaving tablets made from bronze). Nowadays, cardboard tablets are widely used. They are suitable for occasional weaving projects, using the modern weaving technique where all the tablets are turned individually. Making copies of Iron-Age artefacts requires Iron-Age equipment, and wooden tablets are far superior to modern substitutes.

Prehistoric bands were made from all kinds of textile fibres available, such as wool, linen, silk and horsehair. In many of the bands preserved from the Viking Age, ex. from Birka, (Sweden) and Mammen (Denmark), gold and silver threads have been woven into the band. Although imported materials like silk, gold and silver were used for the bands, there is no doubt that these bands were locally produced, as local materials (wool, flax) were used for the non-visible parts of the band. There are also several finds of intricately patterned Viking-Age and early mediaeval bands, not least from Finland, made entirely of wool or wool and linen, ex. Leksand (Sweden), Mammen (Denmark), Eura, Humikkala, Kaukola (Finland), Oseberg, Norway.

The patterns of the preserved Viking-Age bands usually consist of geometrical figures, interlaced knots and swastikas (yes, this symbol was not invented in the 1930’s, but is a common symbol on Iron Age artefacts, having nothing to do with a certain political movement of the 20th century). The commonly used technique of tablet weaving nowadays, where all the tablets are individually threaded according to a drawn schedule and then turned in the same direction at the same time, thus creating various repeated chevron patterns (see below), is not in evidence from the Viking Age. In Scandinavia, this simplified technique did not come into use before the 19th century, and all hitherto known prehistoric and mediaeval bands have their patterns produced by equally threaded and individually turned tablets. There are, however, occasional prehistoric finds of discoloured, seemingly single-coloured bands, which originally might have been patterned in the above-mentioned technique, although it is very unlikely.

The Viking-Age tablet woven bands were often used as decoration on clothes, as well as headbands and hair bands. Judging from pictures, and the puzzling lack of belts with metal buckles in many otherwise richly equipped Viking-Age graves, woven band could also have been used as sashes. Amongst many re-enactors, there is a peculiar habit of wrapping woven bands, or narrow leather strips crosswise up the calves. There are however, as far as I know, no Scandinavian depictions of humans, or any other archaeological finds from the Viking Age providing proof of this detail. Assuredly there are finds of puttees from the Viking Age; from Hedeby, Latvia and Lithuania, and they can also be seen depicted on the Bayeux tapestry, but they do not have anything to do with the above-mentioned arrangement. The Viking-Age puttees were not tablet woven, but consisted of about 10 cm wide and 1 metre-long strips of cloth, woven on an ordinary loom in the twill technique (there is also a find from Hedeby of puttees made from hemmed strips of tabby-woven cloth). They were, as in later times, wrapped not crosswise but horizontally overlapping, thus covering the calves completely.

About the author:
Archaeologist and craftsman, e-mail: viktoria.persdotter@swipnet.se
Ribe VikingeCenter  
bringing history to life

By Bjarne Clement

Background and history
People interested in archaeology and history have always known that the area around Ribe played an important role in the Viking Age. It was just a matter of time before evidence could be presented. “Den Antikvariske Samling”, of the Museum of Ribe, has fully confirmed these expectations through excavations over the last 25 years. Almost every year there are new exciting findings in different excavations and it is verified without doubt that Ribe is one of the world’s most important areas in documenting trade, craft and farming in one of the basic societies for the travelling Vikings.

As a natural consequence of these strong historical roots Ribe VikingeCenter was established in 1992. We are situated only 2 km. south of Ribe in an area where it is possible to create a topography that gives the visitor a true impression of how things looked 1000 – 1200 years ago. So far we have reconstructed two important and very well-made environments true to craftsman traditions, the Marketplace from the beginning of 700 AD and the Manor Farm, consisting of a longhouse and five other buildings from 980 AD. In April 1999 we began the reconstruction of a section of the original townhouses from 825 AD which will be eight houses all together. Because the reconstructed environments have all been excavated in or just outside of Ribe, it is possible to go to the original places and see how things have developed since the Viking Age. When it is finished you will really be able to experience progress through the Viking Age and thus get a further perspective on this very important period of the Danish history that every Dane identifies as a very special part of our cultural heritage.

Promotion of the Viking Age
The purpose of Ribe VikingeCenter is to promote the Viking Age by vitalising reconstructed environments. Together with this presentation the archaeologists’ theories from experimental archaeology are being constantly tested and developed not only in relation to the reconstruction of buildings, clothes, instruments, tools and equipment, but also in relation to the sociological aspect of history because the environments are "alive" six months every year. The Center’s main concept is promotion at a high professional level, in depth, over longer time periods and in authentic settings.

Another very important aspect is that we have chosen to let the reconstruction of environments be a part of the promotion. That gives a dynamic atmosphere that is lost if you open a Centre on a turnkey basis. At Ribe VikingeCenter the anticipation of new projects coming up automatically stimulates visitors’ curiosity about the results so they are encouraged to seek information and come again another time.

Our visitors spend quite a long time, up to 3-4 hours, at the Centre. We see this as fulfilling a need for absorbing information based on quality, authentic experiences, activities and education. This is not what we experience in our modern "zapping culture". But you can say we use the "zapping culture" in a positive way. A lot of people find history boring and slow. Here you can get a survey of the Viking Age and then go in depth where you want to, get in contact with the Vikings - talk, see, touch and sometimes try doing...
things. You can see at least 15 different craft activities every day. Our experience is that the visitor spends about 10 min. in every craft location, perhaps not all at once but by coming back to see how far the blacksmith, the turner, the basket weaver etc. have come during that time.

The preservation of the old crafts is also very important in this context. In these living environments you have the opportunity to see many different crafts being done and in that way exchange experiences that might be disappearing. Remarks such as: “...My grandfather did it this way...” – can this be right? – were the Vikings really that good? etc. are quite usual at the Centre and definitely put a visit into perspective.

Employees
Ribe VikingeCenter is a very complex institution when it comes to staff. We work together with a Production School which means we have about 30 young people all the year round producing Viking clothes, equipment for the houses/Vikings, taking care of the animals and servicing the staff and tourists in the café. In the summertime they also take part in the production as Vikings in the reconstructed environments. The number of "normal" employed staff is about 20 in the summer and 15 in the winter. We also employ 8-12 people in different social- or unemployment programmes.

Volunteers
We have four different groups of volunteers connected to the Centre- adults, children, grandparents and archers. They take part in our presentation, not every day but in special events. They have all taken part in courses with some of the best craftsmen in Denmark. We continuously update their skills so they can provide a high level of authenticity.

Professional partners
Ribe VikingeCenter works together with many different experts and institutions on many levels. Sometimes concrete questions receive concrete answers but very often we have a dialogue in which we try to set our theories from an experimental process into a theoretical understanding of the past. All these expert partners are people who work at approved museums or have skills that are approved at a level that make their knowledge and experience valuable in museological promotion and documentation.

"Den antikvariske Samling", the approved museum of Ribe
Our reconstructions are made in cooperation with the museum of Ribe, "Den Antikvariske Samling" that has been in charge of the excavations on which they are based, -and their expertise is available for our craftsmen.

Since the start in 1992 there has been a close and informal professional cooperation between the two institutions. The Museum can contribute with constant expert advice about exact problems but also those of a more general character. We verify some of their theories and inform them afterwards about results that might add new knowledge to their understanding of the period. The archaeologists, Claus and Lene Feveile are our staff’s primary advisers and teachers. This exchange of experience is aimed at giving the new national and international knowledge and understanding of the Viking Age an experimental experience that will make promotion of the period even more exciting and authentic to experts as well as to "ordinary" people.

European Projects
We are a partner in different projects- NSVL, PA.R.A.B.O.W a project under RAPHAEL, LEONARDO and the most recent, CONNECT.

All these projects are about exchanging knowledge and making connections between partners but the CONNECT project is more inclined towards education. The idea is that people from all over Europe can come and be trained in old crafts and techniques. If you are interested in the Viking history of Ribe further information is available in the enclosed list of literature.

- Stig Jensen, Ribes Vikinger 1991
- Bencard, M (ED) Ribe Excavations 1970–76 Vol. 1-4
- Bencard, M. 1979 Vikingerzeitlicher Handverk in Ribe
- Frandsen, L. B. og S. Jensen 1990
- Pre-Viking and Early Viking Age Ribe, 1988
- Excavations at Nicolaigade 8 1985–86

About the author:
Bjarne Clement is a qualified comprehensive school teacher. He did some Iron Age reconstruction and teaching in the eighties. He created the Viking Centre project together with Karen Nørgaard as a project for unemployed young people and it has now developed into a Centre with 40,000 visitors every year.

E-mail: bjarn@ribevikingecenter.dk
In the second-last issue of the Viking Heritage Magazine, an exhibition at the county museum of Gotland, called "Children – did they exist?" was announced by senior curator Malin Lindqvist. As I spent a great deal of the summer working on Gotland, I went to see it, and I was not impressed. The exhibition was, in my opinion, not a scientific interpretation of the past, but rather a reflection of, and a simplification, when various aspects of the past however calls for objectivity and respect, neither towards the audience, but also towards the humans of bygone times. There is, in my opinion, no reason to present a prehistoric society in a way that would lead to legal proceedings, if it were used to describe a present ethnic minority.

When viewing the past, we are able to spot only minimal fragments of a vast and foreign landscape. We imagine distinguishing shapes, structures and repeated patterns, and we also imagine it is possible to arrange them according to our conception of the world of today. When giving a professional, public presentation of various aspects of the past however, we must not let ourselves get carried away by a wish to prove that the present is more enlightened and human than the past, or vice versa.

To my opinion, it is also incumbent on each and everyone working professionally with public interpretation of the past, to let unanswerable questions be unanswered.

Children – they did exist!

BY VICTORIA PERSDOTTER
Archaeologist and craftsman, e-mail viktoria.persdotter@wipnet.se

It is, at first sight, easy to be horrified by the announcement that children of the past often had to carry out practical, physical work. For many westerners of today, physical work is something foreign, and regarded as primitive and unhealthy. But we must bear in mind that in a society like the one of the Viking Age, where most people sustained on farming and cattle-rearing, everyone, young as well as old, women as well as men, carried out physical work. Having the children start by carrying out simpler household tasks at an early age was not a sign of cruelty, or a way to deprive them of their childhood – it was simply a way of teaching the children the skills necessary to survive in today’s society.

We cannot study it in a scientific context, never apply today’s conception of the world and moral values to societies of the past. Particularly not when speaking of prehistoric societies, where the very limited archaeological sources and the usually non-existing written sources make it practically impossible to judge the situation of the children, or any other group, in a certain society. The people of prehistoric societies not only lived in a material world essentially different from ours; they also lived in a world of ideas essentially different from that of today, making it impossible for us to fully understand the way an individual viewed his/her own situation.

Besides, there is no such thing as “children of the Viking Age”. Being the child of a jarl was not the same thing as being the child of a thrall. Being a child in the inland area of northernmost Sweden was not the same thing as growing up in the middle of Hedebý. Having “Ingá” as a mother was not the same thing as having “Hildur” as a mother. The Viking Age not only included far from equal societies with a severe social stratification, as well as extensive geographical areas and 300 years of comprehensive political and social changes; it also included millions of different individuals, none of them being less individual than any of us living today.

Of course there must be generalisations and simplifications, when various aspects of the past are put on show. Without generalisations and simplifications, no scientific research, be it in archaeology, mathematics, medicine, or anything else, as well as a presentation of its results, would be possible. But in professional interpretations of the past, tangible facts must never be allowed to disappear amongst, or be replaced by routine assumptions, fixed ideas, or an anxious urge to be politically correct by today’s standards.

Interpreting the past is not a simple task. The past, as well as its significance for people of today, is neither uncomplicated, nor uncontroversial. Sources of knowledge are very limited or non-existent, the various interpretations of them are countless, and at times controversial. Public interpretation of the past however calls for objectivity and respect, not only towards the audience, but also towards the humans of bygone times. There is, in my opinion, no reason to present a prehistoric society in a way that would lead to legal proceedings, if it were used to describe a present ethnic minority.

When viewing the past, we are able to spot only minimal fragments of a vast and foreign landscape. We imagine distinguishing shapes, structures and repeated patterns, and we also imagine it is possible to arrange them according to our conception of the world of today. When giving a professional, public presentation of various aspects of the past however, we must not let ourselves get carried away by a wish to prove that the present is more enlightened and human than the past, or vice versa.

To my opinion, it is also incumbent on each and everyone working professionally with public interpretation of the past, to let unanswerable questions be unanswered.

The latest number (3/2000) of Viking Heritage Magazine arrived here yesterday, and I perused it immediately, from cover to cover. As always, I found much to enjoy, with Malin Lindqvist’s fine article on those intriguing rock crystal lenses being of special interest to me.

I must take issue, however, with Gunnar Thompson’s “New World Settlements 1250-1650,” on the last page. He contends that “evidence from cartography and archaeology supports the theory that Viking settlements in the New World were thriving at the time of Columbus.” Your readers deserve to know that the evidence from these two scholarly fields support no such theory – quite the contrary. Nor is there any literary and documentary evidence for Thompson’s claim.

On the basis of the scattered objects of Norse origin found on the Canadian littoral, the modern archaeological record shows that the Greenland Norse continued to cross the Davis Strait for some centuries after the Vinland voyages, but to coastal areas considerably north of the L’Anse aux Meadows site. They left no known evidence of house construction of any kind. Nor is there any sign at all of a “thriving” Norse colony anywhere in America at the time of Columbus.

Thompson’s statements about Nøyland are similarly without foundation. This “New Land” was sighted in 1285 (not 1261) by two Icelandic priests named Adalbrand and Tryggvald Helgasonar, who had drifted off course on their back home from Norway, and who reported having spotted an unknown coast far to the west of Iceland. Nothing was said about the distance involved or about which coast it could have been. Nor was it “King Haakon IV of Norway-Sweden” who reacted to this supposed discovery, but Eirik “Priest Hater” Magnusson (d. 1299), who sent a man named Hrolf off on a fruitless search for this new coast.

Now for the cartographical “evidence”: The ca. 1414 world map drawn by the Venetian Albertin de Virgo disappeared in 1932, but we know what it looked like. The
Excavations in Gorodishe and Wolin

During this summer two interesting excavations have been going on. At Rurikovo Gorodishe (Holmgard) the oldest wooden fortification from the Viking Age in Russia was examined with students from Gotland University College taking part in the excavation.

The name "Norumbega" had its tender beginnings as "oranbega" on the map which Girolamo da Verrazzano drew after his brother Giovanni’s exploratory voyage to America in 1524, grew via Giacomo Gastaldi’s “Nurumberg” pn his 1548 map of North America, and reached full-fledged fantasies slightly later on some Dieppe maps of the St. Lawrence region. It had nothing to do with the Norse – although the notion that it did had already arisen by the time the Venetians through the Baltic fish trade.

Penannular brooch found in Wolin, Poland. Photo: Blazej Stanislawski.

They have also found traces of an irrigation system from the 11th century, a sculpture of a Slavonic god, Viking jewellery and the already-mentioned sun compass.

Viking period settlement Conference in Cardiff, July 4-7 2001

Since its foundation more than a century ago, when W P Ker concurrently held the Chairs of English and History, Cardiff University, a constituent institution of the University of Wales, has maintained a distinguished record of scholarship in interdisciplinary medieval and Norse studies. With its students working on excavations organised from within the School of History and Archaeology at Cardiff on Norse-period sites in the Hebrides, and on excavations of an early-medieval and Viking-period settlement at Llanbedrog, Anglesey, it is the natural venue for a major international conference at which new evidence concerning all aspects of human settlement in Britain, Ireland and elsewhere in the Viking world from the 8th to 11th centuries A.D. can be presented, compared and discussed.

A rich programme has been put together, with 42 papers offered by scholars from across the world, covering all the major types of settlement (rural, urban, coastal and military), all the major types of evidence (excavated, artefactual, historical and onomastic), and many new and significant perspectives on the topic, such as settlement in the context of law, literature, economic and environmental factors, or ethnic and cultural allegiances.

The conference fee is £70 per person, including refreshments between or after conference sessions and lunches on the Thursday and Saturday. Members of the Society for Medieval Archaeology, and current students, are offered a concessionary rate of £45. A daily rate is also available. Payment of the conference fee is requested upon enrolment, and payment can be made by cheque or credit card. Please use the enrolment form attached to this leaflet.

Accommodation has been provisionally reserved for conference participants in student residences close to the conference venue and Cardiff city centre. The price of bed and breakfast in a single, semi-en suite room is £25 a night. These rooms can be occupied from Tuesday July 3rd to Sunday July 8th. In order to secure your accommodation we have to ask for bookings through: Arthurton

Cardiff Marketing: fax +44 (0)29 2037 7653; phone +44 (0)29 2066 7773; e-mail: mallingdd@cardiffmarketing.co.uk or rosalindd@cardiffmarketing.co.uk

For more information contact: John Hines, Hines@Cardiff.ac.uk

Additional reading


Respectfully,

Kirsten A. Seaver
Palo Alto, California, U.S.A.
E-mail: seaver@eiland.Stanford.EDU

http://viking.hgo.se
Excavation of Alntorp’s foundry

At the moment there are plans of an archaeological excavation of Alntorp’s medieval foundry in the woods east of Lake Nora in Örebro County, Sweden.

– Tremendously exciting research to get more information about these early foundries, says Eivind Claesson, archaeologist at Örebro County Museum.

Alntorp’s foundry has been (dated to be) established as early as the 12th century and that is a small sensation in itself. – Allan Wetterholm, an archaeologist from Nora, dated the foundry. The oldest dated foundry is located in Moshytan and it was already in operation in 960 AD.

– A former opinion was that smelting operations began during the 13th century at the earliest, says Eivind Claesson. But now we must probably change that opinion based on the many new and earlier datings that are being made.

The complete foundry area is to be excavated. How was the foundry constructed and how were the different workshops located in the surrounding e.g. houses, smithies, corrosion pits and dams? These are just some of the questions researchers would like to find answers for.

CAA 2001 will be held in Visby on the island of Gotland, Sweden, April 25–29, 2001. The conference will take place at the Gotland University College and will consist of three parallel sessions of lectures, as well as posters and demonstrations. The aim is to bring together archaeologists, anthropologists, osteologists, environmentalists, cultural heritage managers, historians, mathematicians, numismatists, human geographers, computer scientists and experts from other disciplines related to archaeological research and methodology, and to encourage communication between these disciplines, provide a survey of present work in the field and to stimulate discussion and future progress.

Main themes of the CAA 2001 will be:

– GIS Applications
– CAD Applications
– GPS
– Survey and Mapping
– Database Applications
– Computer Applications in Osteology (human and animal)
– Statistics and Quantitative Methods
– Virtual Reality
– Cultural Heritage Management

No Viking ship in Nattviken in Härnösand

The last issue of Viking Heritage Magazine presented the presumed find of a shipwreck from the Viking Age in Nattviken.

The Central Board of the Swedish Antiquities announces in an advance notice that it is most likely a ship from the 17th century that has been found in Nattviken. This is their conclusion based on diverse samples from the ship and the dendrochronological analysis, i.e. determination of the age by studies of the annual rings in the wooden material. However test results are considered preliminary and the final result will be presented in a couple of weeks.

Famed ships in New York

On September 2–4 an important part of Leif Ericsson Year took place in New York. Two Viking ships sailed into Manhattan along the Hudson River with skyscrapers all around. To see our ship VIKING PLYM, the oldest in the world, rowing into Riverside Park together with the famous American NORSEMAN was quite spectacular. In this setting our ship looked even older.

The publicity prior to this event had been quite tremendous, especially in the Scandinavian-American media. The words “Famed ships” are taken from one such newspaper. And now three TV-channels and also New York Times met us. Our new “solar shield” with its beautiful ornamentation received a great amount of attention.

Setting sail on the Atlantic Ocean and sailing by the Statue of Liberty with the Manhattan skyline over the dragon’s head was a memorable adventure. We were very warmly received at all the different events we attended and we spread the message that Vikings were bold seafarers and discoverers, not just warriors and definitely without horns!

Photo: Dagmar “Höfdingakläda” Elenborg.

The Lord Mayor of New York himself sent us his greetings and the programme ended in Philadelphia with a tremendous Viking feast with our Norsemen friends for about 100 people. We had sailed together in Stockholm 1998, so we made a proud team. The 17 persons in our crew (two of them 83 years old!) came back tired but full of wonderful memories.

More pictures can be found on our website www.vikingplym.org.

Chief Carl Bråvalla
The objectives of the network are:

- To develop and maintain the European Institute of Cultural Routes project.

- To co-operate with schools, universities etc. in the field of education and training in the study of the Vikings.

- To collect information of present Viking history activities, and to distribute information about Vikings and their history.

Viking Heritage acts as a monitoring and advisory body on all issues relating to an enhanced understanding of the Viking history.

In promoting these aims, VIKING HERITAGE provides an information service with VIKING HERITAGE SERVER & DATABASE (http://viking.hgo.se) in co-operation with NORTH SEA VIKING LEGACY.

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Order the guidebook Follow the Viking, Highlights of the Viking World. The book contains 50 of the most important destinations in different countries, selected by an international group of archaeologists and is richly illustrated in full colour.

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Information e-mail: majbritt.andersson@hgo.se
Tel: + 46 498 29 98 28, + 46 498 29 98 30