

**SMALL THINGS
WIDE HORIZONS**

**STUDIES IN HONOUR OF
BIRGITTA HÅRDH**

Edited by

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Preface

The 16th of August 2015 is Professor Birgitta Hårdh's 70th birthday. At the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History in Lund, an editorial group was set up for the publication of a Festschrift in her honour.

For several decades Birgitta has been an important staff member and researcher at the Department. Her doctoral dissertation was based on Viking Age silver deposits in southernmost Sweden. This is a field that she later developed in several national and international publications. As a result she is regarded as one of the leading experts on the Northern European Viking Age, engaged in diverse research projects both in Sweden and internationally, and she is a vital collaborator in various networks specializing in the Viking Age.

Through time, Birgitta has extended her research to comprise other periods in the Iron Age. This is particularly clear in her research on the major site of Uppåkra outside Lund. Here she has devoted articles to a detailed treatment of the finds from the Late Iron Age. She has also edited several of the volumes in the series Uppåkrastudier, with both national and international contributions.

Another special field examined by Birgitta Hårdh is the megalithic graves in south-west Scania. Both find material from individual sites and broader perspectives on the Middle Neolithic have been covered in these studies.

Besides doing research, Birgitta Hårdh has for several decades been a lecturer and professor, with long experience of teaching students and supervising doctoral candidates in the subject. She has also been director of studies and served on a number of committees in the Faculty of Arts and Theology.

A feature common to all Birgitta Hårdh's research is that she has been able, through analysis of a body of finds, to broaden the perspective, not least geographically through her profound knowledge of phenomena in Northern Europe and indeed all of Europe. This book has been given the title *Small Things – Wide Horizons*, which is a good summary of Birgitta's research hitherto.

Thanks to the large network of contacts to which Birgitta Hårdh belongs, the call for papers for this Festschrift met a great response. A total of forty titles were submitted to the proposed volume.

Through this Festschrift we wish to thank and honour Professor Birgitta Hårdh as a fine colleague and an excellent scholar. We all look forward to coming years and many more important contributions to archaeological research.

*Lars Larsson, Fredrik Ekengren,
Bertil Helgesson, Bengt Söderberg*



BIRGITTA HÅRDH

100 Viking Age hoards of Bornholm

Status, challenges and perspectives

Gitte Tarnow Ingvardson & Finn Ole Sonne Nielsen

Abstract

The last 25 years of intensive detector archaeology has quadrupled the number of Viking Age hoards on Bornholm to amazing 100 hoards. The numerous hoards provide Museum of Bornholm with new and vital information on the history of Viking Age Bornholm, but the large number of hoards does also cause administrative challenges. This paper presents an update on the last 25 years of results and failures. Furthermore the paper discusses the perspectives of detector archaeology by introducing three new spectacular silver hoards: Skovsholm—the oldest Viking Age hoard of Bornholm, Åbo—located in a roof bearing post of a house and Ahlesminde – the first Danish Viking Age hoard containing gold coins.

The extended collaboration between amateur archaeologists and Museum of Bornholm generates an overwhelming amount of archaeological finds every year. Astonishing, 100 Viking Age hoards are recorded on the island today, and the number increases every year. This paper gives an update on the corpus of hoards and discusses the challenges and perspectives of metal detector archaeology by presenting the three most recent Viking Age hoards: Skovsholm, Åbo and Ahlesminde.

In 1980 G. Galster published a survey of the Viking Age coins of Bornholm. The publication included 48 finds with a total of 5483 coins. The geographical locations were recorded on 7 single finds and 23 hoards, whereas the rest of the finds were listed as site unknown (Galster 1980, 8 f.). This comprehensive catalogue gives valuable descriptions on coin types, but lacks in most cases information about the context of the hoards. Most of the hoards described in Galster's catalogue were found in the 17th, 18th and 19th century. Galster's catalogue lists only seven hoards found in the 20th century, and the latest find date is 1939. Information on the context of the hoards has, in many cases, been lost during the years, or was perhaps not recorded, as the archaeological context of the hoards was considered unimportant at the time. Until the final decades of the 19th century it was a common procedure to melt down or exchange large parts of Viking Age hoards. Therefore, only a small proportion of the coins from the earliest hoards discovered are preserved today (Jensen 1992, 19). In order to qualify the evidence of the hoards, Museum of Bornholm initiated a targeted research campaign, with two main focuses, in 1989. Firstly, to rescue what might be left

of the hoards in the fields, and secondly, to locate the exact deposition place of the hoards.

Archive analysis and detector surveys have enabled Museum of Bornholm to review Galster's catalogue. Three of the locations are grave finds (Galster 1980, catalogue nr. 11, 12 and 46). 13 of Galster's "sites" have unknown find places (Galster 1980, catalogue nr. 2, 3¹, 4, 7, 10, 12, 26, 28, 29, 35, 40, 43 and 47). Some hoards recorded in the catalogue with two or three locations, but are, in fact one and the same hoard (Galster 1980, catalogue nr. 22 identical with 27 and 34 identical with 41 and 45). These corrections do not alter the fact that Galster's catalogue was an excellent starting point for Museum of Bornholm's targeted research campaign on Viking Age hoards. At present, 23 of the hoards in Galster's catalogue have been located geographically, fig. 1.² The precise location of 11 of the 23 sites has been established, and new surveys have added more finds to these hoards³. The survey method used to relocate the silver hoards was, and remains, systematic detector surveys carried out by skilled amateur archaeologists at locations derived from a more or less precise description of the find spot from Galster's publication. At these 11 locations, detector archaeologists have found concentrations of silver objects with a similar composition of coin types and hack silver to the original hoard recorded in Galster's catalogue. One of the more spectacular successes of these investigations is the Dalegård hoard.

The Dalegård hoard

In 1886 two German Viking Age coins were found near the Dalegård farm, in Åker parish, fig. 1 (Galster 1980, catalogue nr. 17). More than hundred years later, in 1995, detector archaeologist Sebastian Lund surveyed the fields of Dalegård. The result was a concentration of 75 Viking Age coins found within the plough soil. Shortly after, a small rescue excavation was conducted by Museum of Bornholm (Wagnkilde 1996). As always at hoards sites, the plough

¹ Rømersdal is described as the find place for Galster 1980, catalogue nr. 3. However, surveys have made it clear, that this is not correct. A possible location for the so called Rømersdal hoard is BMR 1693 Stenshøj/Ringeby in Vestermarie parish.

² Galster 1980, catalogue nr. 1, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 44, 48. Further two hoards are located: Lille Ravngård in Østermarie (Skovmand 1942, catalogue nr. 51) and Åkirkeby gl. Kirkegård (Thurah 1756, 89).

³ Galster 1980, catalogue nr. 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 27, 31, 33, 34, 39, 42

SMALL THINGS – WIDE HORIZONS

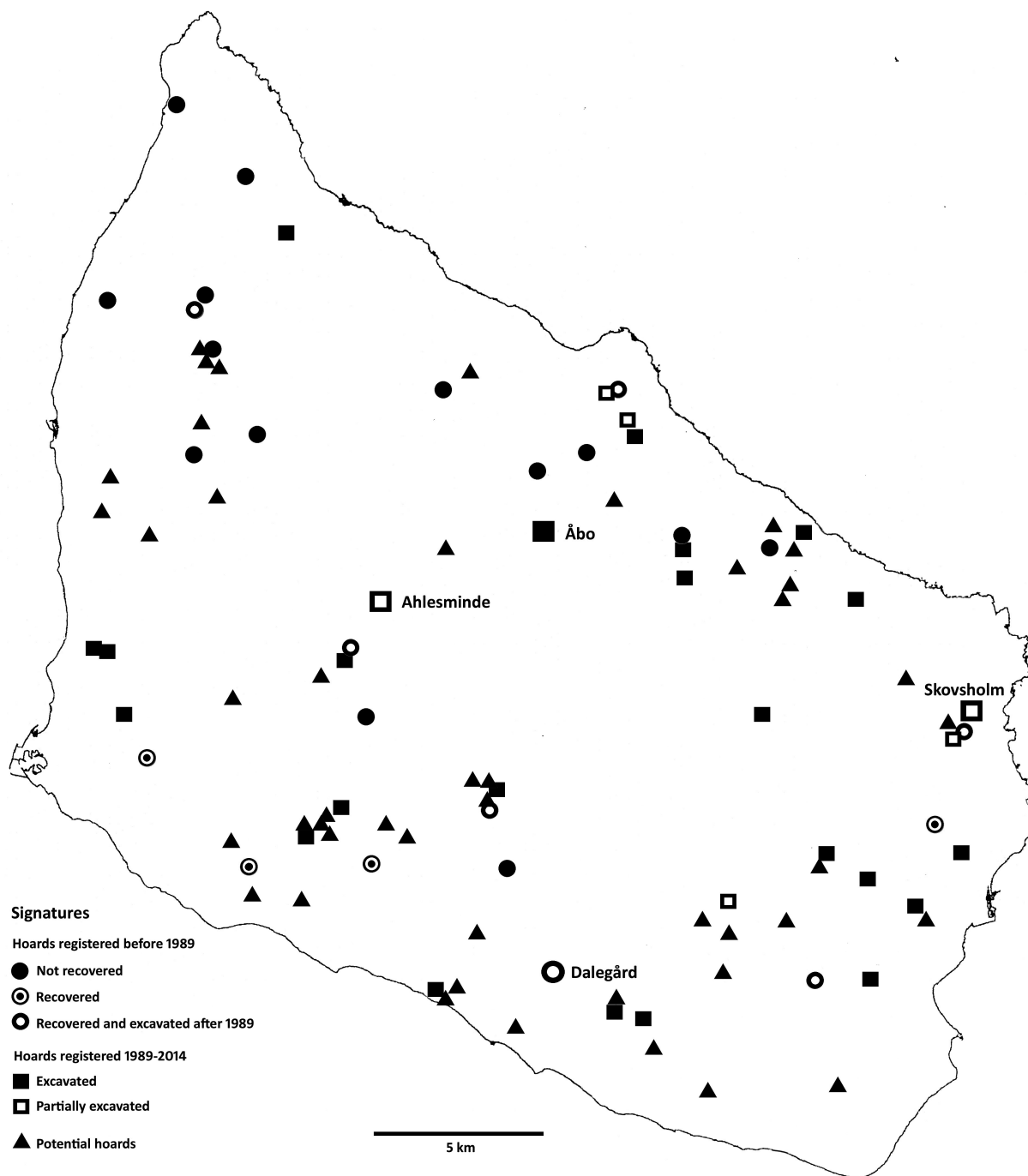


FIG. 1. THE DISTRIBUTION OF VIKING AGE SILVER HOARDS ON BORNHOLM.

soil was removed in thin layers, 5–10 cm deep with, an excavator, and the surface was surveyed with metal detectors between each layer.⁴ This resulted in further 54 coins. Using this approach, the plough soil was divided in four layers. In the fourth layer an intense concentration of coins and ceramics appeared. In this area excavation was continued by hand, supported by thorough metal detector surveys. This resulted in an additional 26 coins. The excavation showed

that the hoard was deposited in a ceramic vessel, probably close to the roof bearing post of a house. Unfortunately the vessel had been moved from its original deposition by the establishment of a drainpipe in the 1950's. Fortunately, a fragment of the vessel was found intact in the modern ditch and still contained 323 coins and 4 pieces of scrap silver. The results of this small survey speak for themselves. Two Viking Age coins in the vicinity of the Dalegård farm was transformed to a Viking Age hoard of 454 coins and 4 pieces of scrap silver deposited in a Viking Age house.

⁴These surveys was made by detector archaeologist Sebastian Lund, Jack Simonsen and Klaus Thorsen

Table I

Site	Excavated area	On settlement	Circumstances of deposition	House	Container	tpq of hoard
Lillegærde, BMR 1513	10 m ²	X	Deposited in area with settlement finds		Ceramic vessel	1048
Nørre Sandegård I, BMR 1853	240 m ²	X	Spread near house			1027
Kobbegård, BMR 2114	240 m ²	X	Deposited near roof bearing post in house in small pit	c. 17 m	Leather purse	1018
Pæregård, BMR 1083	470 m ²	X	Deposited between roof bearing posts in house	c. 18 m	Ceramic vessel	1026
Dammegård, BMR 2000	300 m ²	X	Spread near roof bearing post in house	c. 18 m		961/2
Ndr. Stensebygård, BMR 2151	400 m ²	X	Spread near smith pit			1047
Kannikegård/Tyskegård, BMR 2174	585 m ²	X	Spread near a bedrock 20 meters from burnt house	c. 18 m		1009
Krusegård, BMR 2158	245 m ²		Found in secondary layers			1047
Munkerup, BMR 2255	275 m ²	X	Spread in the outskirts of settlement site			1046
Munkegård I, BMR 2212	500 m ²	X	Spread in the outskirts of settlement site		Wooden trunk	1002
Skovvang, BMR 2291	240 m ²	X	Deposited in the outskirts of settlement site		Ceramic vessel	1017
Melsted/Krogegård, BMR 2153/2252	425 m ²	X	Spread near burnt houses			1050
Ypnastedgård, BMR 2154	260 m ²	X	Spread in the outskirts of settlement site			11th century
Kannikegærdet, BMR 2292	260 m ²	X	Spread near the west ends of three houses			991
Skimlen/Buddegård, BMR 2306	675 m ²		Spread in area without other finds			969
Dalegård, BMR 1754	450 m ²	X	Deposited in a house disturbed by drainage.	min. 11 m	Ceramic vessel	1004
Frostegård, BMR 1229	575 m ²	X	Spread in the outskirts of settlement site			1042
Tyskegård, BMR 2150	420 m ²		Spread near bedrock in an area without other finds			997
Døvregård NØ, BMR 2588	360 m ²		Deposited in the outskirts of settlement site		Ceramic vessel	1024
St. Gadegård III, BMR 1978	855 m ²	X	Spread near house	33 m		11th century
Smørbygård, BMR 1491	280 m ²	X	Deposited in a small pit in the outskirts of settlement area			1020
Slamrebjerg, BMR 1508	280 m ²	X	Spread near house	min. 15 m		1017
St. Frigård II, BMR 1711	450 m ²	X	Spread in the outskirts of settlement site			995
St. Klintegård, BMR 2758	420 m ²	X	Spread in west end of house			1080
Englyst, BMR 2320	230 m ²		Spread in area without other finds			11th century
Gyldensgård, BMR 3194	255 m ²	X	Deposited between roof bearing posts in house		Leather purse?	1012
Skørrebro, BMR 3337	300 m ²	X	Spread near house			939

SMALL THINGS – WIDE HORIZONS

Site	Excavated area	On settlement	Circumstances of deposition	House	Container	tpq of hoard
Skovgård, BMR 3360	500 m ²	X	Spread near houses			11th century
Nørremølle BMR 3419	425 m ²	X	Deposited few meters from burnt? house		Ceramic vessel	1024
Rosmannegård I/SV BMR 3494	510 m ²	X	Spread near house			997
Rosmannegård II/S BMR 3494	400 m ²	X	Spread near house			1000
Munkegård II BMR 2212	? m ²	X	Found in secondary layers			11th century
Skovsholm BMR 3709	580 m ²	X	Found in secondary layers			855
Smedegård NØ BMR 3710	410 m ²		Deposited near a ditch		2 hoards Wooden trunk	1153
Åbo BMR 1831	480 m ²	X	Deposited up to a roof bearing post in house			1036
Ahlesminde BMR 3767	10 m ²	X	In situ		Leather purse, wooden trunk	c. 1080

Detector surveys are of course not limited to the locations described in Galster's publication. Detector archaeology is wide spread on Bornholm, and Viking Age silver objects such as: coins, jewellery, ingots and scrap silver are constantly found by private metal detector users. When a concentration of coins and hack silver is found by metal detector Museum of Bornholm seeks to undertake a small archaeological rescue excavation. Rescue excavations are funded by The Heritage Agency of Denmark, and during these investigations, securing the content of the hoard comes first, whereas documentation of context of the hoards comes second. Therefore, the excavation areas are, unfortunately, very limited.

At present Museum of Bornholm has accomplished small excavations initiated by silver concentrations on 36 sites, 7 of which are included in Galster's catalogue, table I. All together more than 8.450 coins have been registered since 1989. The extent of excavations range from 10 m² to 855 m², and it goes without saying that the significance of the archaeological evidence often is proportional to the size of the excavated area. The precise extent of the excavations is recorded in table I. On the map fig. 1 excavated sites have been divided in two categories: **Partially excavated**: where less than 50 m² has been investigated, or the survey failed due to the estimated core area of the hoard being incorrect. **Excavated**: where more than 200 m² has been excavated.

All Viking Age hoards found after 1989 on Bornholm have been located by private metal detector users. The detector archaeologist records every single silver object with GPS coordinates. These coordinates are given to the museum, together with the object. What often starts out to be a few single finds on a field often turns out to be a disturbed hoard scattered in the plough soil. Therefore, Museum of Bornholm is constantly faced with the questions: 1:

How large a concentration of silver objects indicates a disturbed hoard? 2: When is a rescue excavation needed? Based upon our current experience, a concentration of five silver objects or more within an area of 15 × 15 m strongly indicates a disturbed hoard. At present, 46 locations hold silver concentrations that strongly suggest a disturbed hoard is to be found here,⁵ fig. 1.

However fantastic and interesting the numbers of finds are, it causes massive administrative challenges. The aim of the excavations is to locate the exact deposition place of the hoards and, thereby, rescue the silver hoards from further destruction by ploughing. When Museum of Bornholm initiates an excavation, it is therefore of great importance to establish the core area of the scattered silver objects, as this is most likely to be the area closest to the original deposition place. Silver objects from sites that have been repeatedly ploughed over can be transported over very long distances, and this sometimes makes it very difficult to establish the core area of a disturbed hoard. Due to economic limitations,

⁵ BMR 861 Baggård, BMR 891 Ladegård, BMR 1233 Lille Myregård/BMR 1478 St.Myregård, BMR 1517 Ypnastedgård area I, BMR 1519 Randkløvegård Ø, BMR 1527 Dalhuset, BMR 1550 Uglegård, BMR 1568 Skyttegård, BMR 1627 Møllebjerg/V. Rosendalegård, BMR 1762 Torpegård, BMR 1956 Jydegård, BMR 1978 St.Gadegård N (I), BMR 2035 Ø.Rosendalegård N., BMR 2079/3429 Lundsminde NØ/Skørrebrogård NØ, BMR 2207 Østerlars Nord, BMR 2212 Munkegård SØ, BMR 2221 Buddegård, BMR 2224 Klintely, BMR 2239 Fynegård/2291 Skovang, BMR 2288 Lille Loftsgård, BMR 2302/2606 Hullegård/Lille Loftsgård, BMR 2303 Dyrkobbøl, BMR 2322 Egesgård V, BMR 2351 Duegård Øst, BMR 2367 Stangegård N, BMR 2589 Døvegård SØ, BMR 2652 St.Smørenggård SV, BMR 2656/3495 Tornegård/Lillevang, BMR 2658 St. Bukkegård, BMR 2660 Stangegård NV, BMR 2661 Almegård S, BMR 2662 Klintefryd, BMR 3142 Kællingeby, BMR 3188 Åvang V., BMR 3235 Holmegård Ø., BMR 3245 Bukkegård, BMR 3275 Lappegård, BMR 3367 Tjørneby, BMR 3428 Hakonsgård NNØ, BMR 3439 Risbygård, BMR 3479 Smørenggård S, BMR 3480 Ø. Skovgård/Egeby, BMR 3500 Lille Bjerdegård, BMR 3537 Hentregård, BMR 3549 Dalshøj, BMR 2341 Lundsminde

Museum of Bornholm is merely able to perform rescue excavations at one or two locations per year—and the museum constantly faces the dilemma of prioritising between sites with potential disturbed hoards. What is most important? To excavate the newly plough over site with a very clear concentration of silver objects, or to rescue what is left of the hoard that has been plough over for generations? So far the strategy of Museum of Bornholm is to excavate sites where success is most likely. Consequently sites are frequently prioritized according to locations, where the core area of the scattered hoards is well-defined. The motivation for this strategy is the notion that less disturbed hoards hold the most valuable historical information. The museum is painfully aware that this strategy probably causes the total destruction of the context of widely scattered hoards.

On 12 of the 36 excavated sites, the hoard was found *in situ*. At 21 locations we came too late but a well-defined distribution patterns located the original deposition place within a few meters and at 3 locations, excavations did not reveal the hoards deposition place. The three most recently excavated hoards, Skovholm, Åbo and Ahlesminde, possess three different find histories, and these three hoards will serve as examples of the challenges and perspectives of detector archaeology on Bornholm. The Skovsholm hoard was excavated shortly after the location of a very clear concentration of silver objects, but the excavation did not reveal the deposition place. The Åbo hoard was surveyed by metal detector a couple of years before it was excavated. The excavation revealed the hoards exact deposition place. The Ahlesminde hoard was found on a site with no earlier record of prehistoric remains. A small excavation revealed the hoard with still some 120 coins left in a leather purse deposited in a wooden box.

The Skovsholm hoard

Skovsholm is strategically well placed on a plateau near the Skovsholm stream with an excellent view of the coastline south of Svaneke, fig. 1. Two natural harbours, Thygehavn and Årsdale, are located to the north and to the south of where the Skovsholm stream flows into the Baltic. Natural springs offer a supply of fresh water at both harbours. Before 2012 the only recorded prehistoric find at Skovsholm was an Iron Age glass bead. However, the area was classified as interesting because of its geographic location and its proximity to the Sorte Muld complex, an important Iron Age power and trading center.

The fields of Skovsholm farm were subject to metal detector survey for the first time in 2012 by the president of The Association of Amateur Archaeologists on Bornholm, Klaus Thorsen. After just a few hours Thorsen had found 40 Kufic dirhems in an area of 15 × 30 m. The detector surveys were intensified during the next months, and in 2013 Museum of Bornholm initiated a small excavation. The usual survey

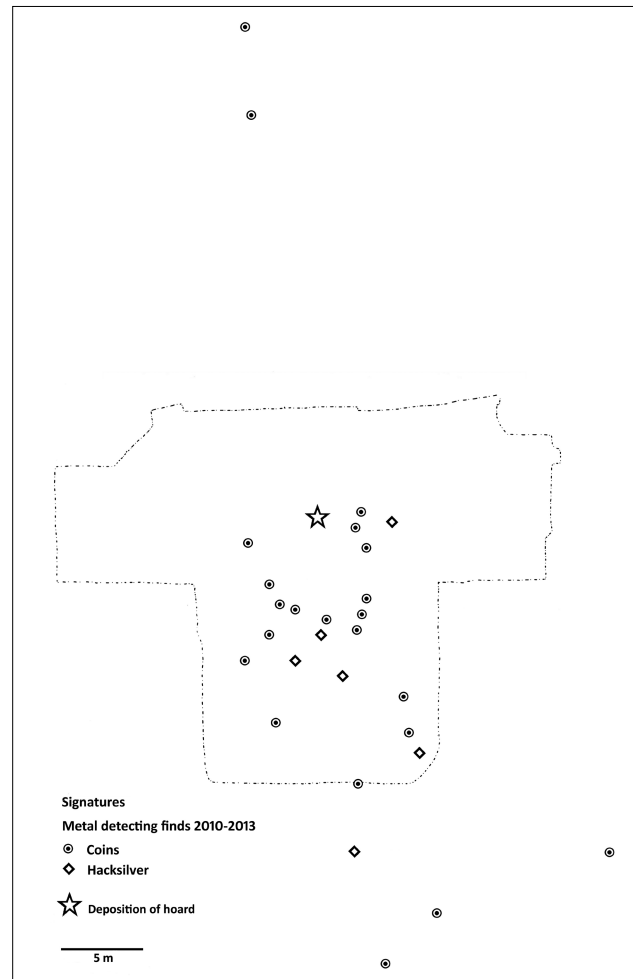


FIG. 2. THE DISTRIBUTION OF SILVER OBJECTS LOCATED WITH METAL DETECTOR ON ÅBO.

method was applied, but unusual results appeared. The plough soil was stripped of in layers off 5–10 cm and surveyed by metal detectors.⁶ In all 152 Kufic dirhems were recorded during surveys and excavation. Contrary to expectation, all Viking Age coins were found in the top layers, whereas the bottom layers provided younger finds, for example, a Danish medieval penny. The excavation confirmed that the hoard was distributed nearby a natural spring. Investigation later established that an early modern well, during the early period, had been established in connection with the spring. The earth containing the Viking Age coins had been moved to the area where they were found in connection with the closure of the well in modern time. Even though the metal detector surveys showed a very clear concentration of coins, the original deposition place of the hoard was not identified. An area of 580 m² with settlement remains was unearthed. However, the connection between settlement activity and hoard remains unclear, as the original deposition place was not established.

Skovsholm is the earliest Viking Age hoard on Bornholm. It is dominated by coins minted in the Abbaside-dynasty, and was probably deposited between 860–90 (Laursen & Ingvardson 2014, 55 ff.). The majority of hoards with Kufic dirhams on Bornholm are deposited around 100

⁶ Beside Klaus Thorsen the field was surveyed by detector archeologists Walter Jacobsen and Frank Pelle.

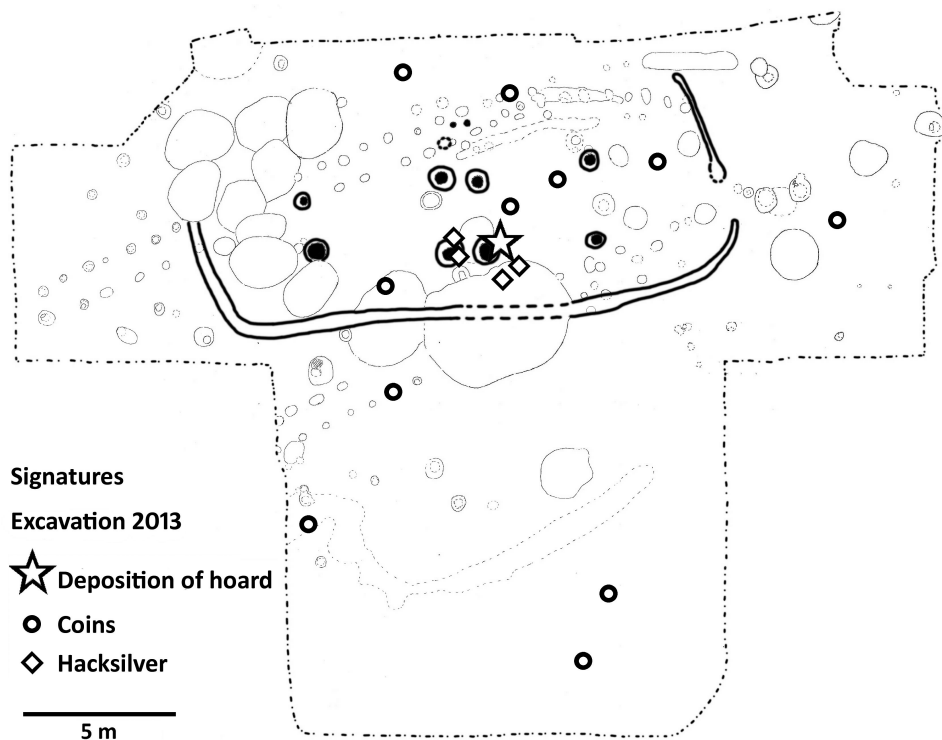


FIG. 3. EXCAVATION PLAN OF THE ÅBO SITE. THE HOUSE IN WHICH THE HOARD WAS DEPOSITED IS MARKED WITH BLACK. OTHER SETTLEMENT REMAINS ARE MARKED WITH GREY.

years later during the second half of the 10th century. Abbaside dirhems are not unknown from the island. Many of the much younger hoards contain a proportion of these early dirhem types. However, Skovsholm is the only hoard dominated by Abbaside dirhems, and is the first clear evidence of an early import of Kufic dirhems to Bornholm. The finding of Bornholm's earliest Viking Age hoard underlines the importance of the site, however further excavations are needed if the relationship between hoard and settlement is to be understood.

The Åbo hoard

In March 2010, metal detector archaeologist Frank Pelle found 8 coins and 2 pieces of scrap silver within a 12 × 12 m area near the small farm Åbo, central Bornholm, fig. 1. There was little doubt that the field held a disturbed hoard. However, further surveys of the area were postponed two years, due to the cultivation strategy of the farm. An additional 15 coins and 4 pieces of scrap silver were found using metal detectors in 2012. A small rescue excavation was carried out in 2013–14 with financial support from The Heritage Agency of Denmark (Laursen 2013, 3 ff.). The distribution of silver objects in the top soil showed a clear core area, fig. 2. The excavation soon revealed the original deposition place of the hoard, as a part of the hoard was found *in situ* within the posthole of a roof bearing post of a house.

The excavation at Åbo had fulfilled its purpose, as the content of the hoard was secured. Still, the context of

the hoard remained unclear, as the house in which the hoard was deposited was only partly unearthed. In order to ascertain the size of the house, Museum of Bornholm continued the excavation in 2014 and uncovered a 14 m long house interpreted as a stall-house surrendered by a trench/drainage, fig. 3. Samples were gathered from the postholes of the house, and hopefully future macro fossil analysis will give an insight to the function of the house. The hoard was deposited in an area with dense settlement remains in several phases.

The hoard consists of 23 German pennies, 19 English pennies, 9 Abbaside dirhems and 1 Samanide dirhem, totalling 52 coins, in addition to 11 melt/lumps and one foil bead. The bead is decorated with patches and lines of granulation. It was probably produced in the Slavic territory during the 11th century (Hårdh 1976, 90 f.). The melt/lumps are of a flattened rounded type. Hårdh has drawn attention to the fact that this type of melt/lumps, are characteristic for, at least, some of the hoards from Poland, Bornholm and Eastern Sweden, consequently indicating that they were also produced in this area (Hårdh 2011, 289). Due to their very uniform appearance, this type of melt/lumps should perhaps instead be categorised as ingots, as opposed to the melts/lumps, which demonstrates a more diverse and random appearance. The hoard was probably deposited in the decade following 1036.



FIG. 4. DINAR MINTED BY FATIMID CALIPH AL MUSTANSIR (1036–1094) IN MISR (EGYPT) IN 430 AH / 1038/39 AD.



FIG. 5. DINAR MINTED BY FATIMID CALIPH AL MUSTANSIR (1036–1094) IN AL MAHDIYA (TUNESIA) IN 452 AH / 1060/61 AD.



FIG. 6. DENAR MINTED BY ARCHBISHOP ANNO II (1056–1075) IN COLOGNE IN THE LAST YEARS OF HIS EPISCOPATE.

The Ahlesminde hoard

The most recently discovered hoard, Ahlesminde, contains three rare gold coins, and is perhaps the most spectacular of the new hoards. The hoard was located this April 3rd (2014) near Tingsted in Vestermarie parish, in a field with no earlier record of prehistoric activity, fig. 1. Nevertheless, a detector survey was carried out, as Museum of Bornholm had recorded an area of black earth, indicating disturbed settlement activity. A large concentration of coins was located less than 15 min after detector archeologists Frank Pelle and Bent Gregersen started their survey. The density of coins indicated that this was a newly disturbed hoard, and the museum was contacted immediately. The day after the hoard was uncovered *in situ* and brought to the museum in plaster bandage.

190 coins and coin fragments were recovered with metal detectors during the excavation. A part of the hoard was found *in situ* still buried in the remains of a small wooden box, measuring approximately 10 × 15 cm. Another 98 coins were found, as the wooden box and its contents were partially excavated during preparations at Museum of Bornholm prior to onward transport. The preparations identified the remains of a leather purse, and the remaining part of the hoard together with the leather purse was sent to the preservation department of the National Museum of Denmark for further excavation. Therefore at present the precise content of the hoard is still unknown. The degree of preservation of the coins is unfortunately very poor. At present 262 coins are identified: 140 German, 80 English, 27 Danish, 10 Kufic, 4 Irish, 1 Hungarian. Providing no surprises are hidden within the unexcavated remains, the deposition date of the hoard can be placed in the years around 1080 (Ingvardson & Laursen 2014). The hoard contained three very rare gold coins. Two Kufic gold dinars from North Africa and a gold denar minted in Cologne, fig. 4, 5 and 6. This is the first instance of gold coins appearing within a Danish Viking Age hoard.

Kufic gold dinars are extremely rare. Only one other gold dinar is known from Bornholm. It was found as a single find by detector archaeologist Sebastian Lund in 2001 on the settlement site Vejrmøllegård near Åkirkeby on south Bornholm.⁷ The coin is an imitation attributed to the Khazars probably minted in the end of the 9th century (Moesgaard and Rispling 2002, 91 ff.). Only three others gold dinars from the 10th and 11th centuries are known within a North European context. Two Fatimid dinars from the late 10th and mid-11th centuries from Isle of Wight and St. Leonard and an Almoravid dinar from the late 11th century from York (Blackburn 2007, 59 f.).

The gold denar from Cologne is unique. The coin is minted by Archbishop Anno II (1056–76). There was no gold currency in Germany in the 11th century, and the denar is most likely a donation coin minted for a special occasion. The stamp is known from silver coins minted in the last years of the Archbishops Episcopate, which gives a date for the coin within the first half of the 1070's. An uprising against Archbishop Anno II was put down in 1074. Perhaps this special gold coin was intended for the Archbishops followers and minted in celebration of this occasion. Another possibility is that the coin was minted in connections with the Archbishop's death in 1076. We do not know the size of this special coin production, we only know that the gold denar from Ahlesminde is the only example known to date.

In addition to the coins, a few other objects were found in the hoard. A massive gold finger ring and a silver buckle were probably a part of the owner's personal equipment, fig. 7. The only scrap silver in the hoard is a fragmented

⁷ Museum of Bornholm BMR 1923x46 (06.02.05 sb 239). Den Kgl. Mønt- og Medaillesamling Fundprotokolnr. 6341



FIG. 7. GOLD FINGERING AND SILVER BUCKLE ORNAMENTED WITH DRAGON HEAD FROM THE AHLESMINDE HOARD.

silver ingot. There are very few hoards from the end of the 11th century from Bornholm and when analysed, the Ahlesminde hoard will provide valuable information about the Viking Age economy on Bornholm. The quality and rarity of the objects in the hoard testifies the high social status of the owner. Hopefully, future surveys will provide us with more information about this unique hoard and its context.

The large numbers of silver hoards on Bornholm is, of course, a blessing and constitutes a unique research base providing vital information on the social, economic and political landscape of the Baltic Sea region. As the examples presented here show, every hoard gives new, often surprising knowledge. However, there can be little doubt that a more comprehensive contextualisation of the hoards would generate new directions for future research. Museum of Bornholm looks to the future with both concern and expectation. In the years to come, at least 46 Viking Age hoards will come to light. That is 46 new administrative challenges and 46 magnificent pieces in the puzzle of Viking Age Bornholm.

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