



Kaupang Excavation Project
Publication Series, Volume 3
Norske Oldfunn XXIV

THINGS FROM THE TOWN



EDITED BY DAGFINN SKRE

Things from the Town

Artefacts and Inhabitants in Viking-age Kaupang

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The publication of volumes like this, with chapters that discuss the important classes of finds from an excavation, is a classic genre of Archaeology. It is particularly familiar with publications of the often find-rich excavations of Scandinavian Viking-period towns. From Charlotte Blindheim's excavations at Kaupang, six volumes were published in a series of *Kaupang-funnene* [The Kaupang Finds] (Blindheim, Heyerdahl-Larsen et al. 1981; Hougen 1993; Blindheim and Heyerdahl-Larsen 1995; Tollnes 1998; Blindheim, Heyerdahl-Larsen et al. 1999; Resi and Askvik 2008), four of which are purely finds reports. Equivalent publications from Ribe have appeared in the series *Ribe Excavations 1970–76* (5 vols. to 2004) and *Ribe Studier* [Ribe Studies] (2 vols., 2006), from Birka in the series *Birka: Untersuchungen und Studien* [Birka: Investigations and Studies] (8 vols. to 1989) and *Birka Studies* (8 vols. to 2004), and from Hedeby primarily in the series *Berichte über Ausgrabungen in Haithabu* [Reports of the Excavations in Haithabu] (36 vols. to 2007), but also in certain volumes in the series *Die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu* [The Excavations in Haithabu] (13 vols. to 2008).

It is thus a well tried and tested genre that we have joined both in the present volume and in the previous volumes of the *Kaupang Excavation Publication Series*. Awareness of genre is important in a publication project of this kind, and it is equally important to consider whether that genre should be modified in order to meet the objectives of the project and to keep up with the contemporary research agenda and publication media. We have made certain reflections on these two points that may be of general interest.

The genre of the “finds report” was first established in the large, thoroughly illustrated, typological general surveys of the later 19th century. The three Scandinavian countries were at the forefront, starting with Oscar Montelius’ *Sveriges forntid* [The Antiquity of Sweden] of 1872–4. This was followed by

Oluf Rygh, with *Norske Oldsager ordnede og forklarede* [Norwegian Antiquities classified and explained] in 1885, and Sophus Müller in 1888–95, with his *Ordning af Danmarks Oldsager* [Classification of the Antiquities of Denmark]. In these works, the basic typology and chronology of artefacts in the three Scandinavian countries were established, to which later contributions can be regarded as supplements and refinements. In the case of Viking Period archaeology, Jan Petersen’s works (1919, 1928, 1951) have been crucially important.

The genre ranges markedly from these large and thoroughly systematic finds publications on a national scale, to those that concern themselves with the objects from a particular area or site. The degree of systematization also varies greatly, from the completely systematized works of that kind, to those that contain only a provisional description of the objects from an excavation and whose primary objective is to make the material known to specialists on the various types of find that have been made.

Several of the purposes of the finds report have now been achieved, either fully or in part in a different medium: internet-accessible databases. In the most advanced examples of the kind, such as that of Sweden’s National Historical Museum (<http://mis.historiska.se/mis/sok/sok.asp>), one can search by find-place, artefact-type, period etc., and open 3-D pictures of objects. There is little doubt that this sort of service will be enhanced and developed so that before long this will be a much better medium than print for those who wish to gain an overview of objects of a given type, or from a particular period, site or area.

This development means that it is necessary for those of us who edit finds reports to think right through the question of how the genre should be developed. To begin with, it is essential not to consume page-space with printed data that the reader can retrieve more easily by searching on the muse-

um databases available on internet. More important, however, is to consider what virtues the printed form has, and then seek to develop these.

The great strength of the printed finds report over any net-search is, in my opinion, that the systematization of the finds is both qualified and contextualized. Qualification resides in the fact that while an internet-search provides little space for discussion, or in any event leaves a great deal of work to the user, the author of a printed text can explain in detail the premises of his or her systematization and propose a degree of confidence in his or her conclusions; perhaps, indeed, evaluate alternatives. The expert author can put the finds from the site in question into a context and so raise the publication from a pure systematization of the material up to a level of engagement with problems that is far beyond the basic information that one can expect to find in a database: artefact-type, provenance and date.

If finds reports are to be justified in the future, their editors and authors must strive to enhance this quality, and not spend their resources on objectives that are better served by museum databases, such as the printing of large and detailed catalogues.

These virtues of the print medium coincide nicely with the twin objectives of the current project. The first was that we should produce new empirical data that would be able to contribute to new knowledge of Kaupang; the second that we sought to "develop new ways of approaching the Scandinavian Viking Period and to produce new elements to the overall picture of that era" (Skre 2007b:15–16). In the work on these volumes, importance has been attached to the aim that each book should include *both* basic and detailed empirical studies *and* general discussions of problems and conclusions.

In order to achieve these goals, we have selected authors who are not only the leading experts in their fields but who have also shown that they can make the fruits of their specialist knowledge relevant to the wider archaeological debate. The editor, regarding the diversity that characterizes the chapters of this book as one of its virtues, has not therefore imposed directions on the types of discussion the authors should follow in their papers. Certain general guidelines were given as to what information the catalogues of finds in each chapter should include, but here too the authors have had a degree of freedom to design the catalogues in accordance with what they consider necessary and with the normal practice within that particular field. Conformity in either respect would have restricted the authors, and the result would have been a less interesting book.

This volume

In concluding each volume, I, as editor, have contributed a final general discussion that is based, on the whole, upon the preceding chapters in the book.

In Volumes 1 and 3 in particular, my contributions have contained quite extensive empirical analyses. Although there has of course been a publication plan, it only gradually became clear to me precisely what these concluding chapters of mine would deal with as the other chapters were delivered by the authors; and this applies also with the present volume. All of the following chapters contain results that help to encircle the inhabitants of the town, their activities, their cultural affinities and their trading connexions, and these are the topics I discuss in Chapters 15 and 16.

The analysis of activities on sites with a complex stratigraphy depends upon the possibility of distinguishing those finds that derive from activities within an excavated building from those that have been deposited there more or less by chance. The use of the *single-context* method of recording at Kaupang means that we can securely identify occupation deposits in the six buildings excavated. These layers were deposited as a result of the use of the buildings and we can consequently link their composition and finds to that use.

Together with the construction, furnishing and dating of the buildings, the stratigraphy and finds thus constitute sources of evidence for the use of the buildings. Particularly informative is the composition of the layers, with micromorphological analyses of occupation deposits in four of the buildings having been carried out (Milek and French 2007). Water-sieving of all of the excavated soil has meant that the collection of finds from these layers is greater and more representative than usual. The analysis of activity does not extend chronologically beyond c. AD 850 because later contexts have been disturbed by ploughing.

In the study of the trading contacts and the areas of origin of the inhabitants in Chapter 16, the context of the finds is less crucial. As a result, the large assemblage that has been gathered from surface survey and metal-detecting is of great value in that investigation. Metal-detecting has produced a large number of finds of precious metal. These artefacts are often of ethnic significance, and their origins and dating are easier to determine than those of many other types of find. The subject of Chapter 16 can thus be carried through to the abandonment of the town around the year 930.

In the 17th and final chapter, some of what we consider to be the most important strands in the three volumes that have been published in this series are brought together. Many other specific discoveries in these three volumes, meanwhile, point the way to further work, and we hope that other scholars will follow those up. We also hope that other researchers will undertake further work on those categories of archaeological find that we have not prioritized for publication, such as all of the ironwork,

the timber from the wells, and some smaller groups of material.

While this book was being put together, the author of Chapter 10, our good colleague Alan Vince, sadly passed away in February 2009 after a brief period of illness. He had delivered the final version of his chapter and figures for this book. The proof of his chapter has been read by John Hines.

The completion of the publication plan

With this volume, the publication resulting from the research project that began with the excavations at Kaupang of 1998–2003 is concluded. The one item remaining is a doctoral thesis (Pedersen, *in prep.*), which at the time of writing has approved, and which will be published in revised form as a fourth volume. As that will be a monograph, my own editorial duties end with this third volume. We have hereby succeeded in publishing the studies that were announced in Volume 1 (Skre 2007b:13, 2008b:11), although for practical and financial reasons they have been grouped in fewer volumes than originally planned (Skre 2007a; 2008a).

That we have fulfilled the goals of the ambitious research and publication plan that was devised in 2003 is due first and foremost to the dedicated authors and collaborators in this project. None of this could ever have been undertaken without the financial support of our loyal grant-givers, who are listed on the colophon page of this book. I wish to take this opportunity to offer sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of these. I wish also to express special gratitude to Professor John Hines who has translated, revised or checked the language in every chapter, and thereby made an invaluable contribution to the consistency of the three volumes in this series.

LARS PILØ, DAGFINN SKRE

To make full use of this book, it will help the reader to know the most important results of the archaeological fieldwork at Kaupang. A comprehensive account of the results of the archaeological excavations and recording undertaken there from 1998 to 2003, as well as an overview of earlier fieldwork, has been published in volume 1 of this series (Skre 2007a). In that volume, Kaupang is additionally set into its local context of Skiringssal, and its relationship with south-western Scandinavia more widely is outlined. The main emphasis in what follows falls upon a description of the archaeological contexts of the artefactual finds from the fieldwork of 1998–2003.

The fieldwork of those years was the first stage of the Kaupang Excavation Project, which has been directed from the University of Oslo – also with the financial support of those institutions listed on the colophon page of this volume. In 1998–1999 only surveys and minor trial excavations were carried out. A major excavation of 1,100 sq m was carried out in the settlement area of Kaupang from 2000–2002, in addition to several minor excavations. From 1999 to 2001 the project undertook survey work and excavations at the neighbouring farmstead to Kaupang, Huseby. Finally a small investigation was undertaken of the harbour sediments of Kaupang in 2003.

In 2003 the second stage of the project also got underway, with a group consisting of thirty scholars from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Germany working on Kaupang and Skiringssal. Besides the publication of the results of the excavations themselves (included in Skre 2007a), the aim of this phase of the project has been to publish the most significant aspects of the artefactual finds, to pick up some of the most important questions posed by the finds and the results of the excavations, to construct a comprehensive picture of Kaupang and Skiringssal, and to place Kaupang in its contexts

of Scandinavia and the North Sea region. The main focus of vol. 2 (Skre 2008a) was coinage and economy.

The present volume is the third volume from the work of these specialists. It is not the aim of the project however to publish the artefactual finds in their entirety; the material is available in its entirety to any interested scholar. An overview of the finds can be found in Pedersen and Pilø 2007:180–4.

2.1 Exploring Kaupang and Skiringssal 1867–1999

Kaupang is located in county Vestfold at the mouth of the Oslofjord. Vestfold means “West of the Fold”, and Fold is the ancient name of the Oslofjord. Vestfold is the richest region of Norway in Viking-period archaeology with sites like Oseberg, Gokstad and Borre (Fig. 2.1).

The fertility of the Vestfold soil is one reason for its rich archaeology, the regions proximity to the main communication route of the period is another. The sailing route along the coast was followed by all maritime traffic along the northern shores of Skagerrak and through the fjords. Valleys led on to the fertile inner parts of Eastern Norway and further through woodlands up the mountain plateau of Hardangervidda, where hunting, iron extraction and other industries produced goods for trade. From a communicative point of view, Kaupang was ideally located.

2.1.1 The cemeteries

In 1867 Nicolay Nicolaysen, the first Norwegian field archaeologist, made Skiringssal his first major archaeological project. He excavated 79 barrows at Kaupang, 71 of them in what appeared to be the main cemetery called *Nordre Kaupang* (Fig. 2.2). All graves from this cemetery are cremations. Nicolaysen employed local workmen, and this affected the quality of the excavation. The workers found a large number of small artefacts, such as weights, but we



Figure 2.1 Kaupang is located on the coast of county Vestfold, south-eastern Norway. Areas under cultivation in modern times are shaded green, largely reflecting the situation in the Viking Age. Map, Julie K. Øhre Askjem.

Figure 2.2 Settlements, cemeteries and single barrows in the Kaupang area. Light green shading shows the extent of the settlement area, darker green shading area with plot division. Shaded light brown areas represent the suggested, former extent of the various cemeteries. Contour interval 1 metre. Map, Anne Engesveen.

33 boats in all. Thus several boats had more than one body in them; in two instances, four. Both the large number of boat-graves and the fact that all of the burials were inhumations makes Bikjholberget different from all other cemeteries in the Oslofjord area. The graves at Bikjholberget were also more richly furnished than those at Nordre Kaupang, and the amount of imported material was higher. Blindheim therefore drew the conclusion that Bikjholberget was the *merchant's cemetery*; the site where the traders of Kaupang were buried. Her excavation technique was more careful than Nicolaysen's, and her excavation team better qualified. The ratio of grave goods retrieved was presumably greater as a result. However, as was normal at that time, the fill was not sieved. Thus some smaller objects may have been lost. Many of the graves were disturbed by later burials, but in some areas the stratigraphical relationships were extremely complicated. In consequence, the association of some objects with specific graves can be uncertain.

A total number of 204 graves and stray finds that probably derive from graves are known from the Kaupang cemeteries. If one includes the empty barrows and barrows containing nothing but layers or patches of charcoal, the number of excavated graves is 237. If one includes unexcavated burial mounds, 407 graves (i.e. buried individuals) can be documented – assuming that the unexcavated mounds contain one grave each. Based on various types of information a total of 700 graves can be estimated in all (Stylegar 2007:77). However, there is no doubt that this number is still an underestimate. Many flat graves are probably still undetected, and a large number of graves have been removed over the centuries without any finds from them being brought to any museum. The actual number of graves within the Kaupang complex could have been about a thousand, as suggested by Blindheim (et al. 1981:65, cf. 1999:153–4).

have to assume that some nevertheless went missing, and that the grave assemblies from the excavation of 1867 probably are incomplete.

With Charlotte Blindheim's excavations of burials and settlement remains at Kaupang from 1950 to 1974 there was a new surge in Skiringssal research. It was Blindheim who revealed the remains of the urban site at Kaupang and retrieved a significant collection of archaeological finds which provided a basis for dating the site and for assessing the craft, trade and connexions evident there.

Blindheim discovered the cemetery of Bikjholberget, consisting entirely of flat graves except for one small mound. The original number of graves there is assumed to have been around 160 (Stylegar 2007:77). In the years 1950–7 Blindheim excavated 74 of these. Forty-eight of these burials were in boats –



Of the 204 known burials from Kaupang, 116 contain closely datable artefacts. The first burials seem to have taken place around AD 800. Overall, there is a slight preponderance of burials of the first half of the 10th century as compared to the 9th. The general lack of burials with artefact-types dated to after c. AD 950 probably indicates that the cemeteries at Kaupang stopped being used regularly for burials somewhat before this time. Thus the apparently equal numbers of 9th- and 10th-century graves really conceal a much higher burial frequency in the later period. The barrow cemetery at Nordre Kaupang is distinguished by having a clear majority of graves from the first half of the 10th century.

To avoid the confusion resulting from the many different numbering systems that different excavators have applied to the Kaupang graves, a new series of numbers, each starting with Ka., has been allocated in the complete catalogue of excavated graves published by Stylegar (2007:103–28). This catalogue provides cross-references to all earlier numbering systems. In the present publication all references to graves use Stylegar's numbering. For reference to a specific artefact within a grave a letter is added to the number, the same letter as in the original catalogue.

2.1.2 The settlement

Prior to 1956 there had been no reported finds from the settlement area (this section is based on Pilø 2007b). In 1956 Blindheim started excavations in what was later seen to be the northern part of the settlement area, and excavations continued here on almost an annual basis until 1967, leading cumulatively to the excavation of a site of 1,350 sq m (Fig. 2.4). A few minor excavations were conducted in other parts of the settlement area until 1984. The settlement excavations up to that year were published in full by Roar L. Tollnes (1998). These excavations documented structures that at the time were interpreted as the remains of houses, wells and jetties. In light of the more recent excavations however, those interpretations can now be questioned (Pilø 2007b). The main change is that the structures interpreted as houses are now considered to represent fences and stone foundations and supports at the lower ends of plots. Thousands of artefacts were recovered, including large quantities of imported material from most of northern Europe and from the Middle East.

For the times, the excavations of 1956–1974 were methodologically well conducted. The deposits were removed in spits and squares. An overall system of 2 x 2 m squares was employed. Spits were 10 cm thick. No, or very little sieving, took place, as was the custom at the time. The cultural deposits were generally termed “black earth” even though their colour and composition varied. Little emphasis was placed

on stratigraphy. Since the deposits were removed in spits, it is now impossible, except in a few cases, to relate specific artefacts with certainty to the stratified layers documented in section drawings or photographs. For a more detailed presentation and evaluation of the evidence from the settlement area prior to 1998, see Pilø 2007b.

2.2 Fieldwork in the Kaupang settlement

1998–2003

In the spring of 1998 the preparations began for the excavations that would eventually take place from 2000 to 2003. Field surveys were undertaken every year from 1998 to 2002.

2.2.1 Research questions

The principal questions behind the fieldwork relate to two key topics (Skre 2007d): the debate over the first *urban sites* in Scandinavia – of which Kaupang appears to be an example; and the debate surrounding the *central places* of Scandinavia in the first millennium AD – of which Skiringssal appears to be one (see below).

The principal objective of the excavations planned at Kaupang was to decide whether Kaupang was one of the many seasonal market sites of this time or one of the very few towns established in the early Viking Period. With reference to the general objectives, the following five concrete research questions were defined as those that the fieldwork aimed to investigate:

- The character of the settlement – seasonal or year-round
- The layout of the settlement – possible plots, lanes, grouped buildings, open spaces
- Building-types
- The location and character of various forms of activity – trade, craft production, etc.
- The dating of the settlement, and possible changes in its activities and character

2.2.2 Overview

The fieldwork at Kaupang from 1998 to 2003 (Pilø 2007b) fell into two parts, with 1998–1999 as a pilot project period, which included surveys and limited trial trenching, and 2000–2003 being the main project period, which included a series of excavations in addition to continuing surveys. Geophysical mapping was also undertaken.

Surveys

Prior to 1998 excavations had only taken place in the northern part of the settlement area, and no systematic surveys of the entire settlement area had been undertaken. Very little was known about other parts of the settlement. Thus the surveys were designed to collect archaeological data over large parts of the settlement area (Fig. 2.3).

Figure 2.3 Aggregated artefact recovery during field surveys 1998–2002. Illustration, Julie K. Øhre Askjem.

The field surveys have led to the collection of 4,336 artefacts from the settlement area: 1,940 from fieldwalking and 2,396 by metal detection. The total area covered by the field surveys at Kaupang is approximately 62,500 sq m, most of which has been surveyed several times, both through fieldwalking and metal detecting. The total fieldwalked area is 60,000 sq m, while the total metal-detected area is 46,500 sq m.

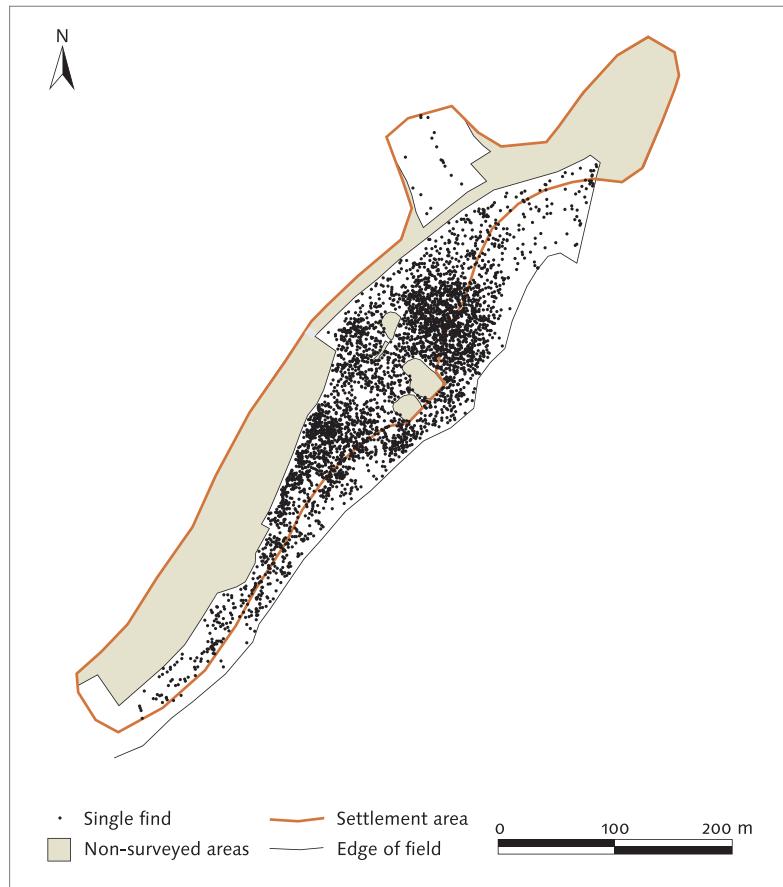
The problem of displacement of artefacts due to ploughing and erosion in the slopes towards the Kaupang inlet was obvious even before the surveys started. Thus it is no longer possible to gain information on the location of activities based on the artefacts recovered from the ploughsoil, apart from on the central plateau. Even so the artefacts recovered have yielded important new evidence on the dating and the extent of the site as well as on the character of activities that took place there.

Only iron objects were not recorded during metal detecting – unless they could be identified by the archaeologists as dating to the Viking Age. During fieldwalking all materials were collected except non-tool flint, bone and iron (unless artefacts dating to the Viking Age could be identified).

Excavations

The *main research excavation 2000–2002 (MRE)* was the key part of the fieldwork campaign at Kaupang (Figs. 2.4–6). The excavation site was chosen because it was centrally located in the settlement area and distant from the site of the 1956–1974 excavations. In addition it had relatively well-preserved cultural deposits and a high density of surface finds.

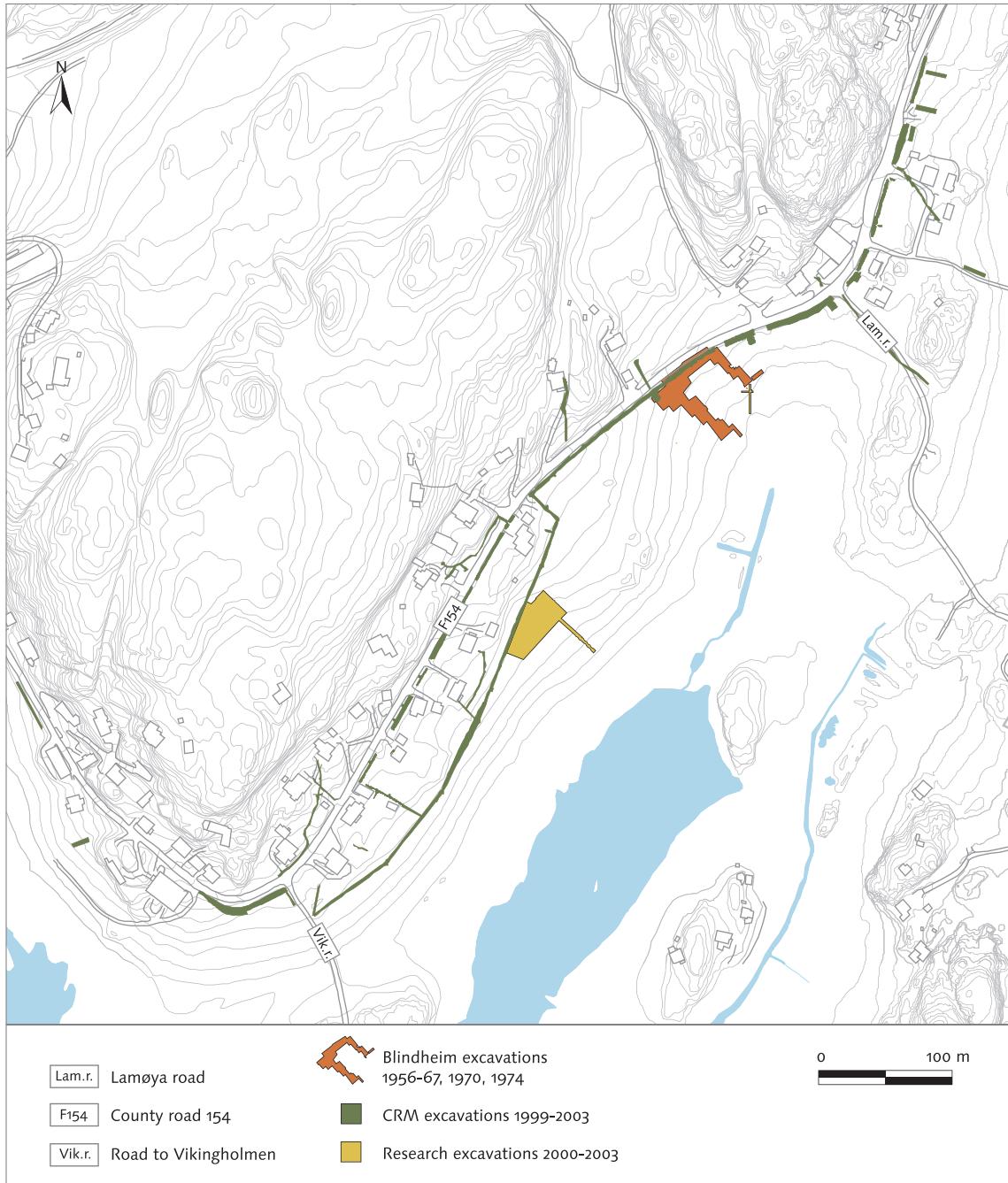
The excavation site covered 1,100 sq m, of which 400 sq m were excavated down to the original beach deposit. It was situated between 3.5 and 6 m above present sea-level, and thus included areas suitable for settlement, as the Viking-age sea-level is estimated to have lain c. 3.5 m above the present mark.



It also included the Viking-age beach in front of the settled area. The excavation area of 1956–1974 was situated between 1.0 and 4.5 m above present sea-level.

Several *cultural resource management excavations (CRM)* took place from 2000–2003 too (Fig. 2.4). A large-scale excavation in areas affected by a new water and sewage system and a footpath was conducted in 2000, in advance of the MRE. This excavation was preceded by trial trenching in the autumn of 1999, covering 240 sq m within the site. The 2000 CRM excavations consisted of a series of trenches with a total length of 800 m. The trenches were normally 2–3 m wide, and the total excavation area covered 2,250 sq m. From 2000–2003 a number of additional shorter and narrower trenches had to be opened to allow connexions to be made between modern buildings and the new sewage system. These trenches had a total length of 650 m and covered an additional 610 sq m, bringing the total area excavated for CRM purposes at Kaupang in the years 1999–2003 to 3,100 sq m.

In effect, these trenches constituted a series of exploratory trenches all the way from the northern barrow cemetery through the entire settlement area to the southern barrow cemetery. The CRM excavations allowed new evidence to be gathered from parts of the settlement area which had previously



seen very little or no archaeological activity. However, due to the narrowness of the trenches and extensive disturbance in the areas along the modern road, valuable information was collected only here and there from these excavations.

A test excavation was undertaken in the *harbour area* in 2003, c. 1.5–2.5 m below the Viking-age sea-level (Fig. 2.4). Deposits which dated to the 9th century and possibly the early 10th century were found.

Method of excavation

The documentation method employed during the MRE was *single context* recording. Each layer and feature is recorded as a discrete individual context.

The contexts are excavated in the reverse order to that in which they were deposited. Applying single-context recording at Kaupang was a demanding process. The cultural deposits in the settlement area are compressed and dry, and consist of humus, sand, silt and clay – except for the waterlogged deposits in some of the pits, which contain a broader selection of organic material. Many of the deposits were difficult to delimit, as they had been the object of intense bioturbation (disturbed by faunal activity, mainly earthworms) and leaching.

Stratified deposits were not expected in the area investigated for CRM reasons because extensive testing with augers showed only a dark homogene-

Figure 2.4 The main excavations at Kaupang 2000–2003. Contour interval 1 metre. Map, Julie K. Øhre Askjem.

Figure 2.5 Plot-divisions in the MRE.



ous deposit below the ploughsoil. However, as excavation quickly proved, stratified deposits were indeed present in the area next to where the MRE was to be conducted, even though auger testing had failed to identify them. In the CRM trench these deposits had to be excavated to a tight deadline, and full-scale stratigraphical excavation was not possible. This was unfortunate, and has made it difficult to correlate the layers and structures found in this excavation fully with those in the subsequent MRE.

All excavated deposits from intact contexts and from the later medieval plough layer in the MRE were water-sieved. The basic mesh width used was 5 mm. In addition, part of each intact context, never less than 20% of the total, was sieved through a 2 mm mesh. In all, about 120 cu m of cultural deposits were sieved in connexion with the MRE.

To enable the sufficiently precise location of artefacts retrieved from the water sieving of excavated deposits, layers greater than 1 sq m were separated into smaller units during excavation and recording, using 1 x 1 m squares, aligned with the national geographical grid system of Norway.

Full-scale sieving of the ploughsoil covering the MRE area was not possible, but measures were taken to recover a proportion of the artefacts during top-soil removal. The soil was removed in 2 x 2 m squares – in most cases in 10-cm spits to facilitate the use of a metal detector. 35% of the ploughsoil – or c. 95 cu m – was sieved. No bone or other material of uncertain or post-medieval date was collected from the ploughsoil. In spite of this, more than 1,400 unit finds were recovered from the ploughsoil covering the MRE area, including, for instance, slightly more than 2 kg of pottery.

The basic tool for field documentation at Kaupang was *Intrasis* (= *Intra-site Information System*). Intrasis is an archaeological information system for recording and managing field data. Further information is available at <http://www.intrasis.com>

2.2.3 Context

The artefacts from the fieldwork at Kaupang 1998–2003 derive from both surface surveys in different parts of the settlement area and the excavation of specific sites within it. In total, more than one tonne of artefact and bone material was collected during all of the excavations and surveys 1998–2003. The proportion of broken and fragmented objects is high – as can be expected of settlement material largely consisting of discarded objects and waste. With a few exceptions, the datable artefacts belong to the Viking Age – with an emphasis on the 9th century, but continuing into the second half of the 10th.

Overall site phasing is always a difficult task in excavations with complex stratigraphy and even more so in excavations of sites with plot-divisions. The phasing within the individual plots is facilitated by the implementation of single-context recording in the field. However, inter-plot phasing regularly proves more difficult as stratification seldom can be followed across plot boundaries. This is due to the constant re-digging of ditches, renewal of fences, trampling, and other activities that took place in the divisions between the plots. This was also the case at Kaupang, and inter-plot phasing was thus impossible. Even so it can be seen that the same sequences are represented on most of the six excavated plots in the MRE – a development from a seasonal (Site Period [SP] I) to a permanent settlement (SP II and probably much of SP III), and a later truncation of the stratified deposits by ploughing, resulting in the formation of ploughsoil. Here and there a later medieval plough layer was preserved beneath the modern ploughsoil (Fig. 2.6).

Six plots were excavated from top to bottom (1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B – only the A-plots were excavated in their entirety; Fig. 2.5). In general it can be said that the deposits were best preserved on Plot 3B and least well preserved on Plot 1A, i.e. that the deposits