

Report 2, 6th of June

The excavation at Fröjel, first week!

So, we have started a new week of the excavations of the Viking Age harbour at Fröjel. Today, there were 24 new fieldworker entering the dig. They are coming from many different parts of the world, and they will participate in the excavation for two or four weeks. They are coming from USA, Canada, Australia, Norway and Germany, besides from the mainland of Sweden.

This very first day, we have had an initial lecture concerning Viking Age harbours on the island of Gotland, and specifically of our previous results from Fröjel. But after lunch, it really was time to go down on ones knee, and to put the trowel in the ground to uncover the hidden Viking history.

So far, we haven't got that far. But they have already found some interesting artefacts. There is rather much of slag, but also several rivets and nails, and I think we will come down to a Viking Age house in the next few days. We have to wait and see.

In the part of the area were we started last week, that means close to the former shore line, we are down to a level were we clearly can see the different layers. It looks as if we have a very dark layer in the outer zone, with rather fat soil and some amount of fire cracked stones, charcoal and smaller pieces of burnt clay. We haven't found so much of artefacts, just some bones. But one interesting item has been found. That is a weight of lead, some 0.5 cm in diameter, with flattened pool sites.



The excavation area close to the former shore line gives a good view of the different layers. To the left at the photo above, there is a thick culture layer, with some charcoal, fire cracked stones and traces of some post holes. To the right, it's just pure beach



Working hard to get through the first layer; Aura Simon from USA, Judy Kowalski from Australia, and Gillian Salter Kaiser from USA



sand. The artefacts found in the area are very few, some smaller bones, iron nails and burnt clay. One important artefact has been found so far. Sara Halla, above, is showing her first important discovery, a weight of led from the Viking Age harbour. It's about 0.6 cm in diameter, and flat on the pole side.

Yesterday, we started excavations with a new group of 24 persons coming from many different



parts of the world. This group will be excavating in the middle of the settlement of the harbour, in an area that we know is from the 11th century. We have, some years ago, been excavating the southern part of a Viking Age house in this area, and our new investigations are aimed at giving light on the question of the settlement pattern in this part of the harbour and trading place. The soil is very dark, and we could already while taking away the turf register a lot of bones and also slag, charcoal and smaller iron artefacts. In the week to come, we will probably come below the 30 centimetres that are disturbed by several hundreds years of ploughing.

The participants in this area are from Sweden, Norway, England, Germany, Australia, Canada and USA; a real international group of anthropologists and archaeologist.



Helene Josefsson, above, has found a strange piece of a belt decoration, made of bronze (to the right).



Gillian Salter Kasier, to the left, has found her first Viking Age artefact, a small role of bronze plate. Exactly what it is used for is difficult to judge. It could either be a waste from a bronze casting workshop, or raw material for making small flat objects of bronze.

And what in the world is Angela Helmer holding in her hand!?

All photos. Dan Carlsson

