The Past and Future of Archaeology in Lund

by Peter Carelli, Lund

Introduction

The town of Lund is situated in the southernmost part of Sweden, in the province of Skåne (Scania). In relation to the present capital, Stockholm, this location could be regarded as peripheral. For most of the Middle Ages, however, Skåne was Danish, which meant that Lund was centrally situated in the kingdom of Denmark (Fig. 1).

Lund is a decidedly inland town, located on the southern slope of a western offshoot of the RoMelåsen ridge, about 9 km from the coast of Öresund, the sound now separating Sweden from Denmark. A few kilometres south of the town flows the river Höje Å, but it has never been possible to reach Lund by water.

Lund was founded around 990. At that time the kingdom of Denmark was undergoing political consolidation, and the power of the king began to expand. The town was probably founded with the aim of creating a political and administrative point of support for the Danish crown in eastern Denmark. Since the crown owned little landed property in this part of the country (Sjælland, Falster, Skåne, Halland and Blekinge), numerous royal estates were established. The royal power structure was centralized around a few large minting sites. Lund thus functioned as an administrative and fiscal centre for the "regal economy" in Skåne (Andrén 1985, 73ff.).

At the start of the 11th century, Lund was already known as an important minting town. Towards the end of that century, the town was described as a metropolis civitas. In the 11th century Lund also developed into one of the most important ecclesiastical centres in the country. The town became a diocesan see around 1050 and an archiepiscopal see in 1104. The archbishopric at that time comprised the whole of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, the Shetland Isles, and the Isle of Man.

In the 12th century Lund was undoubtedly both a spiritual and a secular centre in Scandinavia. Its ecclesiastical importance was maintained throughout the Middle Ages. The secular importance of the town, however, declined towards the end of the 13th century. Lund was of little significance in the Hanseatic trading network; instead it was the nearby Malmö that quickly became the major commercial centre in Skåne. This means that Lund cannot be called a Hanseatic town, but as a consumption centre it certainly belonged to the Hanseatic region, as the archaeological finds testify.

The beginnings of archaeology in Lund

Archaeological awareness in Lund goes back a hundred years. In conjunction with extensive excavations for the town's sewage system that began in 1889-90, the underground archaeological archives were opened. Georg Karlin, founder of the Museum of Cultural History (known for short as Kulturen), realized the potential of the material and started the museum's antiquarian work, which has now been going on for more than a hundred years. In the first half-century of archaeology in Lund, however, the interest was concentrated on remains of buildings, such as church ruins, as well as artefacts retrieved from the soil.
The breakthrough

The definitive breakthrough for archaeology in Lund came with the so-called Thule excavations of 1961, an intensive investigation of the Fågården quarter with many remains from the 11th and 12th centuries (Blomqvist / Mårtensson 1963). Several other excavations were conducted in the following year. Although urban occupation layers were not protected by the Swedish law on ancient monuments, it was customary among developers in Lund to let building projects be preceded by archaeological documentation. Since then, there have been continuous excavations in the town centre virtually every year.

From the mid-1970s the law on ancient monuments was changed to include urban occupation layers. Despite this statutory protection, however, development projects were still assessed according to the old practice. Only small parts of the developed areas were investigated, at as low a cost as possible. This practice was devastating in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a large amount of property was developed in Lund (Fig. 3). The consequence was that only a small proportion of the developed areas was investigated archaeologically. As for the remaining areas, all the archaeologists could do was to observe the builders’ excavations, a method of dubious value since it only makes it possible to document remains of an obvious kind, such as walls and wells. In the quarter of St Mårten, for example, some 5,000 square metres were developed in the years 1981-82. A previous investigation had shown clearly that ample remains from the 11th century onwards could be expected. Despite this, only 4% of the area was investigated, and only 1% of the occupation layers (Carelli / Lenntorp 1994, 16).

As a result of the property development of the last thirty years, Lund is among the towns in Europe that have seen the greatest amount of archaeological study, in quantitative terms. There are archaeological observations from all parts of the town, the archives contain huge quantities of data, and the artefact stores are overflowing. In terms of quality, however, the situation is very different. Although modern archaeology in Lund has had thirty years, there has been little proper processing of the source material. The excavation...
Fig. 2 Section of Kulturen's general archaeological map. This was first drawn up by Ragnar Blomqvist in 1942 and has since been continually updated. The section covers the entire quarter of Gråbröder and parts of surrounding quarters. The map also shows the excavated parts of the Franciscan Friary and the churches of St Clement and St James (cf. Fig. 5).
monographs that have been published appeared so soon after the actual digs that they should really be seen as preliminary results still awaiting final reworking (Blomqvist / Mårtensson 1963. Mårtensson 1976). Only one investigation can be described as carefully worked up, namely, that of the church and cemetery of St Stephen (Mårtensson 1981).

Even more remarkably, only a few of the many archaeological excavations conducted over the years have been compiled in report form. Synthesizing publications, in the broadest sense of the term, are completely lacking. Instead, archaeological publication has been characterized by popular presentations of finds and exhibition catalogues (e.g. Mårtensson / Wahlöö 1970. Wahlöö 1976. Cinthio / Nilsson 1990. And a number of articles in the Kulturen annual Kulturens årsbok 1935 –, see the index in Jeppsson 1986). Another endeavour on the museum side is the preservation of the Drotten church ruin.

Archaeological research in Lund

The archaeological research which has nevertheless been devoted to the medieval history of Lund is the work of just a few people. The first name to deserve mention is Anders Andrén, who wrote two reports for the Swedish project „Medeltidssladen“ (The Medieval Town), in which he tried to compile the available data on the topography of the town, both archaeological and historical. The reports also include analyses and suggested interpretations which largely sum up the state of research around 1980 (Andrén 1980; 1984). In his doctoral dissertation, too, which is about the medieval urbanization of Denmark, Lund plays a significant role (Andrén 1985).

The only person who has worked up a group of archaeological finds from Lund is Axel Christophersen, whose dissertation described the development of antler and bone crafts in the period 1000-1350 (Christophersen 1980).
These two scholars were at that time attached to the Institute of Archaeology at Lund University. This reflects that fact that excavation and research have now become separated from each other. One institution took charge of the excavations, while another one has looked after research.

The methods of Lund archaeology

If we look at archaeological methodology, we see that the work in Lund had a great influence on the growth of urban archaeology in Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s (Andersson 1987, 88f.). The long tradition of urban archaeology in Lund had resulted in a well-functioning and consistently implemented field method which was considered highly proficient and advanced for its time. Methodological development culminated with the PKbanken excavation of 1974-75.

With this excavation, however, methodological development in Lund came to a standstill. Excavation work has mostly been conserved in the state which it reached for the investigation of the PKbanken site. Ironically, this stagnation came at a time when urban archaeology was becoming a subject of theoretical research and new methods of excavation and documentation were being discussed internationally (e.g. Harris 1979). It took more than ten years before these ideas gradually began to influence archaeology in Lund (e.g. Larsson 1993 b; 1995 a).

During the stagnation of archaeology in Lund, which was partly caused by an unreasonably large work load, the role played by Kulturen in the Scandinavian and Swedish archaeological community also changed. From having been an open, outward-looking excavation institution, the museum became more inward-looking in its work, maintaining scant contact with the world of archaeology, or even with the Institute of Archaeology in Lund.

The probably unconscious opposition between excavation and research, that is, between archaeological method and theory, has been increasingly accentuated over the years. The primary task of field archaeology has been considered to be to excavate and document the archaeological source material which is then supposed to be handed over to researchers for analysis and interpretation. Although the material has been open for research, unfortunately there have not been enough interested researchers. This is the reason why there has been so much digging in Lund but with so little resulting from it.

Changes

Fortunately, this stagnation has now come to an end. Everyone agrees today that archaeology in Lund can no longer be carried on in the 1970s way. Despite a hundred years of archaeological experience, Lund archaeology is now facing a rebirth that is both costly and long-term - but necessary.

Field methodology has already changed considerably in the last few years, so that it has reached international standards. The method used is a form of single-context planning. Since 1990 reports - about 40 so far - have also been written about all the excavations that have been conducted in the town. The reports are issued in two series „Arkeologiska rapporter från Lund“ and „Arkeologiska arkivrapporter från Lund“ (e.g. Larsson 1993 a. Eriksdotter 1994. Carelli / Lidvall 1994).

As for the ongoing antiquarian work, there is at present a well-functioning organization at Kulturen. The Swedish legislation on ancient monuments is strict, giving antiquarian authorities great influence over urban planning. Although this does not occur at the primary stage, it does occur at the secondary stage involving discussions of the costs of archaeological excavations in connection with building projects. According to the law, the developer is responsible for the entire cost of the excavation. One result of this is that we see today a clear tendency for builders to try every conceivable solution to avoid archaeology, especially in the form of pile-driving and the use of concrete slabs, which is a great problem for the antiquarian authorities.

For most of the history of Lund archaeology, priority has been assigned to the oldest and most central features. Before archaeological excavations have begun, occupation layers later than the 13th century have mostly been bulldozed away without being investigated. This attitude has changed radically in recent years. There is no lon-
ger any fixed priority standard; instead, it varies according to the nature of the object of the investigation. Late medieval and post-Reformation remains can be interesting to study, as can back yards and peripheral areas of town. Nor can it be taken for granted that the thickness of occupation layers allows direct ranking of their information potential. All excavations today are considered to be equally important (Carelli/Larsson 1993).

Unfortunately, the staffing level has not followed this development; today there is only one (!) person employed to keep Lund archaeology going. Other staff are employed on a temporary basis when there are excavation projects. This is unsatisfactory, since it leads to irregular staffing and counteracts the necessary continuity of knowledge.

The development of the town – a model

Against this background, it might be thought that we know nothing at all about medieval Lund, although archaeological excavations have been going on for more than a hundred years. This is of course not true. In certain respects the level of knowledge is high, especially as regards artefacts and the topography of the town. We have good insight into the medieval street grid, the sites of the ecclesiastical institutions, the location of craft activities, and so on. What we lack, however, is qualitative analyses and syntheses.

The picture that we have of settlement development in the town can nevertheless be summed up in a model that is based in part on empirical evidence. It should still be regarded as preliminary and must be tested against more empirical material in the future. The model is based on Andrén’s suggested interpretations (Andrén 1980; 1984: 1985), and on the results of excavations conducted during the last ten years.

Phase I (ca. 990 - ca. 1050)

In the first phase the town was established on untouched soil. Although large areas have been investigated archaeologically, there is no evidence to suggest an earlier village on the site. No sunken-featured buildings have been documented in the town, and the find material shows an almost total absence of typical Viking Age artefacts. The grave material likewise shows no transitional phase between the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages, that is, between heathen and Christian times. No pagan graves at all have been found in the town, and the earliest Christian graves in the oldest cemetery lack grave-goods, which are otherwise common in the transition from one faith to another.

The oldest settlement, however, is very difficult to capture in archaeological terms. This oldest phase of settlement mostly reveals itself in a muddle of post-holes and pits which is very difficult to interpret, but a few houses of Trelleborg type have also been observed. The oldest settlement structure was probably similar to that of the village of Vorbasse in Jutland, which consisted of a number of magnates’ farms. Settlement was thus relatively sparse and scattered.

Through analyses of pollen and seeds we also know that the town was characterized by agrarian settlement in an open, non-forested setting. Besides the occurrence of several kinds of cereal grains, testifying to cultivation, there are also indications of different crops representing different seasons and/or fields. Meadow and pasture land is also indicated by pollen and seeds.

The town thus lived in close symbiosis with arable fields, meadows, and pasture.

This agrarian character may seem strange in comparison with other contemporary towns in the kingdom of Denmark. Århus, for example, was very densely settled right from the beginning, with a more „urban“ character and an economy based in large measure on trade and crafts.

In Lund the evidence seems to suggest that trade and crafts played only a secondary role in the first stage, in relation to the central place functions. The people who inhabited Lund were primarily associated with the supremacy of the king; they were lords who took part in one way or another in the king’s political and administrative organization of eastern Denmark. One of the most important tasks was the establishment of a central mint which was organized according to the English pattern as early as the start of the 11th century, or even the late 10th century (Malmer 1972). A large number of English coiners are also named on the earliest coins.

We should not underestimate the function of Lund as an ecclesiastical central place. A stave
church was built here ca. 990, probably one of the oldest churches in Skåne, and even in Denmark. This may be the church that King Svein Forkbeard built in Skåne, according to the Roskilde Chronicle (Roskildetidenkroniken 1979, 16). The remarkable thing is that the number of graves in the oldest cemetery is far too large for the early Lund. The cemetery must therefore have served as a burial place for more than the population of the town (Kriig 1987).

The archaeological finds from this period are mostly of an ordinary household character. There are strong similarities to the finds from contemporary villages in the region. There are, however, some features that differ sharply from these. An example is the locally produced, early-glazed pottery. The forms of this type of pottery are very different from those of the totally dominating Baltic ware. In Lund a number of sherds of this ware have been found, while their frequency at other Danish find locations appears to be low or non-existent (Christensen et al. 1995).

To sum up, it can be said that Lund in its earliest phase was a town consisting of a number of magnates' farms with a population who worked with administrative tasks on behalf of the king. This was a community that consumed rather than produced.

Phase 2 (ca. 1050 - ca. 1150)

Towards the end of phase 1 there was a distinct change in the settlement structure of the town: an expansion is clearly observable. This takes the form of intensified, denser settlement, and the large plots were now divided into a large number of smaller parcels. A recent excavation revealed a total of eight long, narrow plots, 6-10 metres wide.

Settlement also began to concentrate around the square, which probably indicates that merchants were taking a greater interest in the town. During this period, craft was also professionalized, although on a limited scale. A clear example of this is the antler and bone crafts which had formerly been done within the domestic sphere for household needs. The growing amounts of waste observed in the archaeological material also indicate that antler and bone crafts were practised by itinerant professional craftsmen (Christophersen 1980).

An important change in phase 2 is that the town of Lund was no longer viewed as part of the surrounding countryside. A tax on plots in 1085 - known as midsommargälden or 'midsummer duty' - marked that the town was fiscally separate from the countryside. In 1134 there is also a mention in a written source of fortifications around the town.

In the mid-11th century there was also a radical change in ecclesiastical administration. A central administration was built up for the church in Lund. Around 1050 the town became a diocesan see and in 1104 an archiepiscopal see. The centre of this administrative network was the archbishop's castle of Lundagård, just north of the cathedral dedicated to St Lawrence.

As regards the ecclesiastical topography of Lund, at least six stave churches were built in Lund at this time. These were replaced relatively quickly with stone churches, besides which completely new stone churches were built in other parts of the town. A total of 19 churches were built in Lund at the end of the 11th century and in

Fig. 4 Medieval churches and monasteries in Lund. Reconstruction by Ragnar Blomqvist 1962.
the 12th century (Fig. 4). This building activity went hand in hand with a division of the town into parishes, a system that was in force until the Reformation in 1536.

Although the town in this phase can really be described as an urbanized central place, the town still had a highly agrarian character. It can thus best be described as „congested countryside“.

**Phase 3 (ca. 1150 - ca. 1250)**

During this phase there was a shift in the functions of the town. In a short time its significance as a royal administrative centre decreased, and Lund came to be a regional centre for trade and craft. However, it retained the function of a central ecclesiastical place.

The most distinct feature in the archaeological material is the remains of craft work. A number of craftsmen’s workshops have been shown to belong to this phase, so it can be assumed that crafts were now practised in stationary workshops by professional craftsmen, and that the „large-scale production“, unlike previously, was now intended for an anonymous market.

The most distinctive characteristic of this phase is the development of a proper monetary economy. This is clearly seen in the frequency of stray coin finds. A monetized economy made it possible to have local market trade in the town square, with a much greater exchange of goods than before. The archaeological finds also show that Lund at this time had become part of a growing international market.

Settlement expanded further in this phase. This chiefly meant that existing settlement became denser. The long, narrow plots were often filled with houses, with the gables forming rows along the streets.

With this phase, the town had taken shape. With the development of an urban culture, too, the town was not just fiscally demarcated from the countryside but also culturally.

**Phase 4 (ca 1250 - 1536)**

This long phase can be described as a time of consolidation. In terms of topography there were very few changes to the town. The interest of the crown decreased further, and the mercantile element was reduced to a level more in keeping with other contemporary towns in Denmark. In pace with the internationalization of trade, Lund declined even more in importance as a commercial town; its place was soon taken by Malmö, a coastal town about 20 km to the south. During this phase life in the town was dominated by the central ecclesiastical administration. Lund developed into a seat of church government. This is reflected in the fact that 10-12% of the plots in the town belonged to the canons of the cathedral chapter, and that the town supported 25 separate churches throughout the Middle Ages. At the time of the Reformation in 1536, the ecclesiastical institutions owned about 80% of the area of plots in Lund.

This character also affected settlement. Many of the long, narrow plot parcels were amalgamated to give bigger units. The houses on these plots were built around the four sides of a yard, with the main building in some cases being built of brick. The farms often had their long sides facing the street, a settlement pattern which was intact until the demolition craze of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. This settlement structure also led to a change in the utilization of the plots. The inner parts of the plots were no longer needed for buildings; instead they were cultivated as cabbage patches (Fig. 5).

Mercantile activities were more than ever before gathered around the town square. This is also seen in the fact that some of the long, narrow plots were further subdivided into very small units. These were used for shops surrounding the entire square.

The archaeological finds from this phase testify to great wealth and high consumption in the town. The pottery is a telling example of this, since most major production places in Western Europe are represented in the material.

**Future prospects**

What are the future prospects for archaeological research in Lund? The changes that have occurred in recent years could best be described as preparatory work for research. A research programme is however being drawn up by the archaeologists at Kulturen. If this development continues, Lund has a good chance of pursuing internationally acceptable research in urban archaeo-
The main potential lies in the long tradition of urban archaeology, the relatively well-organized and informative archives, the large areas that have been excavated, and the large amount of finds.

It appears, however, that the main research interest, as in the past 15-20 years, will come from the Institute of Archaeology, the only institute in Sweden with a department of medieval archaeology. This situation is not a problem, since several of the active archaeologists at Kulturen are doctoral students at the Institute of Archaeology, and informal cooperation between the university and the museum functions well today. Apart from this, scholars from other European countries have recently become aware of the Lund material, which will hopefully help to internationalize research work.

Finally, a few lines about ongoing or planned research projects. I myself have begun a study of material culture in the 12th and 13th centuries. I have also worked with profane graves in Lund, that is, graves found outside cemeteries (Carelli 1995) and with Stone Age artefacts in medieval urban layers (Carelli in press). Caroline Arcini is in the final phase of writing a doctoral dissertation about the oldest cemetery in Lund, where over 3,000 graves from the period 990-1536 are analysed osteologically. The study describes the diseases that have been identified and the health development of a medieval town population (Arcini 1988; 1992). The same cemetery is being studied by Maria Cinthio, who discusses things such as the development of buildings in the church complex and the various forms of medieval burial practices (Cinthio 1992). Gunhild Eriksdotter is planning a study of medieval wooden buildings from Lund, and Stefan Larsson is planning an analysis of the extensive pottery material. He has also taken part in an international project about early-glazed pottery (Christensen et al. 1995). Lund pottery is also treated by David Gaimster in a forthcoming study of late medieval pottery in...
southern Scandinavia, and by Mats Roslund, who is particularly interested in early black earthenware. Roslund is also preparing a study of Byzantine artefacts found in Lund.

These are only some of the ongoing or planned research projects in Lund at present. It will take 5-10 years, however, before they begin to bear fruit. The interesting thing about Lund archaeology is therefore not its history, but its future …

Translated by Alan Crozier

**Literature**


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Zusammenfassung


Die Archäologie in Lund entwickelte sich in den Jahren 1929 bis 1968, der Durchbruch kam mit der „Thule-Ausgrabung“ 1961. Mitte der 70er Jahre wurden auch archäologische Kulturschichten per Gesetz unter Schutz gestellt, doch um die Kosten gering zu halten, wurde nur in einigen Bereichen planmäßig gegraben. Trotzdem ist Lund – was die Qualität anbelangt – die Stadt Europas mit den meisten archäologischen Untersuchungen, was die Qualität angeht, sieht es aber ganz anders aus.


Da Lunds Universität das einzige Archäologische Institut Schwedens mit dem Fachbereich Mittelalterarchäologie hat, arbeiten jetzt auch Museum und Universität eng zusammen, so daß nicht mehr die Trennung zwischen Theorie und Praxis besteht. So sind mehrere Forschungsarbeiten, sowohl Fund- als auch Befundauswertungen, im Werden.

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