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Denmark

The Hammerum finds

In 1993 several graves were found in Hammerum near Herning, Jutland, Denmark during the construction of a new road. During the excavation it was discovered that some of the graves contained well preserved organic materials and three of the graves were taken up as whole blocks of earth and brought to the local conservation department. For various reasons two of the graves were never excavated and kept in the storage at Herning Museum until 2008 when curator Hans Rostholm contacted Ulla Mannering, Centre for Textile Research in Copenhagen and Lise Ræder Knudsen, the Conservation Centre in Vejle, to get a second opinion about their scientific value and potential. The verdict came instantly: one of the graves has a preservation of textiles only paralleled by few other grave finds in Denmark.

The two graves have now been excavated, many samples have been taken for ¹⁴C-analysis, micro environment and pollen analyses, dye analysis, strontium and stable isotopes analyses, fibre analyses, and the textiles have been photographed, CT-scanned and described. Next step is to gather all the results and to put the finds into their proper archaeological context. In this presentation we reveal the first results of these fascinating grave finds. The most spectacular grave contained very well preserved keratin materials (wool and hair) while all other organic materials had decomposed. It has turned out to contain a young female dressed in three textile costumes, one of which is almost complete. The find is ¹⁴C-dated to the 1st Century AD and adds important information to the costume design from the Danish Early Roman Iron Age.