BEYOND URNFIELDS

New Perspectives on Late Bronze Age – Early Iron Age Funerary Practices in Northwest Europe

Edited by
Helene Agerskov Rose, Lisbeth Christensen
and Arjan Louwen

BEYOND URNFIELDS

New Perspectives on Late Bronze Age – Early Iron Age Funerary Practices in Northwest Europe

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

SCHRIFTEN DES MUSEUMS FÜR ARCHÄOLOGIE SCHLOSS GOTTORF

Ergänzungsreihe

Band 16

Herausgegeben vom Museum für Archäologie
durch Ralf Bleile
und dem Zentrum für Baltische und Skandinavische Archäologie
in der Stiftung Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesmuseen
Schloss Gottorf
durch Dieter Quast
in Kooperation mit dem Museum Sønderjylland – Archäologie
vertreten durch Lennart S. Madsen

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

BEYOND URNFIELDS

New Perspectives on Late Bronze Age – Early Iron Age Funerary Practices in Northwest Europe

Edited by
Helene Agerskov Rose, Lisbeth Christensen and Arjan Louwen

Papers presented at the online session
'A community of ancestors: the urnfield phenomenon in northern Europe' at the 27th European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) Annual Meeting, Kiel 2021
and
the online symposium
'The URNFIELD tradition of the North',
Haderslev 2022

Ludwig

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Bibliographical data of the German National Library: The German National Library catalogues this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographical information is available online under https://portal.dnb.de.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek: Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über https://portal.dnb.de abrufbar.

All rights reserved, including the reprint of extracts, in particular for duplication, the insertion into and processing in electronic systems and photomechanical reproduction and translation.

Copy-editing: Gundula Lidke, ZBSA, SSHLM, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig
Layout, typesetting and image editing: Cornelia Lux-Kannenberg, SSHLM, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig

2023 Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA) in the Foundation of the Schleswig-Holstein State Museums (SSHLM), Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, Germany.

Print and distribution:
© 2023 Verlag Ludwig
Holtenauer Straße 141
24118 Kiel
Tel.: 0431-85464
Fax: 0431-8058305
info@verlag-ludwig.de
www.verlag-ludwig.de

ISSN 2364-4689
ISBN 978-3-86935-443-9

Printed on acid-free and age-resistant paper
Printed in Germany









https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Table of Contents

Ralf Bleile, Dieter Quast and Berit Valentin Eriksen
Preface 7

Lennart S. Madsen
Preface 9

Helene Agerskov Rose, Arjan Louwen and Lisbeth Christensen
Beyond urnfields – an introduction 11

Lisbeth Christensen
The Early Pre-Roman Iron Age urn grave tradition of southern Jutland 17

Scott Robert Dollar, Martin Egelund Poulsen and Lars Grundvad
Burial and settlement during the Early Pre-Roman Iron Age in south-central Jutland 33

Lene B. Frandsen
Billumvad urnfield and some other sites with circular ditches in the western part of Jutland 49

Sarah Skytte Qvistgaard and Bente Grundvad
Pre-Roman Iron Age cremations in Korsvanggaard, southwestern Denmark –
an urnfield with urn graves, cenotaphs and exhumations revealing *pars-pro-toto*
burial rituals. 59

Helene Agerskov Rose and Anna Egelund Poulsen
Revisiting Aarupgaard urnfield in southern Jutland, Denmark 81

Angelika Abegg-Wigg
Urn cemeteries from the Pre-Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period
in Schleswig-Holstein: An overview of the research history 93

Ingo Lütjens
Burials of the Pre-Roman Iron Age in Schleswig-Holstein. A short overview 105

Ringo Klooß
Short report on the excavation of the Early Iron Age burial site of Borgstedt
in the Rendsburg-Eckernförde district. 111

Stefanie Schaefer-Di Maida and Jutta Kneisel
The urnfield phenomenon in Schleswig-Holstein:
New insights into the chronology and hypotheses 117

Jochen Brandt
Pre-Roman Iron Age burials in the lower Elbe region 133

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Wenke Domscheit
Grave groups in Late Bronze and Early Iron Age grave fields –
the grave field of Pinnow as an example of a phenomenon 147

Robert Schumann
A tale of ancient mounds …
The re-use of old monuments for Iron Age burials in northern Germany 165

Claudia Pankau
The ceremonial wagon and its relationship with the Urnfield burial rite 183

Katarzyna Ślusarska
Between the Urnfield culture and the Nordic Bronze Age.
Man and environment in the Late Bronze Age on the southwestern Baltic coast 199

Karol Dzięgielewski
Urnfields in their own way:
The Late Bronze Age on the southern Baltic coast (middle and eastern Pomerania) 217

Arjan Louwen
A tale of people, places and broken pots. A long-term perspective on the emergence
of urnfields in the Lower-Rhine-Basin 235

Stijn Arnoldussen and Karen M. de Vries
Cups that cheered no more. Funerary rites in the urnfields of the northern Netherlands 253

Christophe Snoeck, Giacomo Capuzzo, Barbara Veselka, Kevin Salesse,
Ioannis Kontopoulos, Rica Annaert, Sarah Dalle, Marta Hlad, Charlotte Sabaux,
Amanda Sengeløv, Elisavet Stamataki, Mathieu Boudin, Eugene Warmenbol,
Martine Vercauteren and Guy De Mulder
Unravelling the mysteries hidden within the cremated human remains from Belgium –
The inter-disciplinary CRUMBEL project 271

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Pre-Roman Iron Age cremations in Korsvanggaard, southwestern Denmark – an urnfield with urn graves, cenotaphs and exhumations revealing *pars pro toto* burial rituals

Sarah Skytte Qvistgaard and Bente Grundvad

Keywords: Urnfield, cremation rituals, cenotaphs, exhumations, pars pro toto*, Pre-Roman Iron Age*

Abstract: Forty-six graves from the Pre-Roman Iron Age were excavated in 2020 at the site of Korsvanggaard in St. Darum, between Esbjerg and Ribe.[1] The urn graves were surrounded by circular ditches, which are indications of long-gone small mounds. There were also graves without circular ditches, ring-shaped ditches without graves, cenotaphs, and exhumation graves with indications of pars pro toto *burial rituals. The oldest grave dates to the Pre-Roman Iron Age period I.1a and the youngest one to I.2 –II.1. Two dirt roads or pathways were found on each side of the burial site and are either contemporaneous with the urnfield or were established later, respecting the position of the small mounds. All urnfields in southwest Jutland are presented in map and short catalogue form in this paper.*

Korsvanggaard urnfield

The appearance of urnfields with circular ditches and small mounds in the early Pre-Roman Iron Age reflects a new burial rite in southwestern Jutland. The urnfield at Korsvanggard[2] is the twelfth urnfield found in southwest Jutland within the area of Esbjerg municipality. The site was excavated in 2020, uncovering an area with 46 graves of various types (Figs. 1–2). Korsvanggaard is situated east of St. Darum, a small village between Ribe and Esbjerg. There are no visible or registered Stone or Bronze Age burial mounds in the vicinity.

The rescue excavation, which uncovered 3,273 m², delimited the urnfield to the west. The limits could not be followed further south,[3] due to cultivation and ploughing on the highest point of the area, but the urnfield certainly continued to the northeast. The small mounds were no longer visible

1 In May 2023 another five graves were uncovered and excavated at Korsvanggard. Excavation report: Sydvestjyske Museer, SJM 908_2023. The excavation was due to further expansion of the dairy farm Korsvanggård I/S and was financed by the builder. It was undertaken by Bente Grundvad and Ellen Bekker. Excavation report by B. Grundvad.

2 Excavation report: Sydvestjyske Museer, SJM 908, Korsvanggård Sted nr. 190202-69 FF: 165158. The excavation was due to the expansion of the dairy farm Korsvanggård I/S and was financed by the builder. It was undertaken by Claus Feveile, Sarah Qvistgaard, Troels Bo Jensen and Janne Krøtel. Excavation report by S. Qvistgaard.

3 In 2007, the trial excavation ASR 2227 was undertaken just south of the area; no finds or features were discovered. In 2003, the trial excavation ASR 1793 was undertaken 85–125 m southwest of the urnfield; no finds or features were discovered.

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

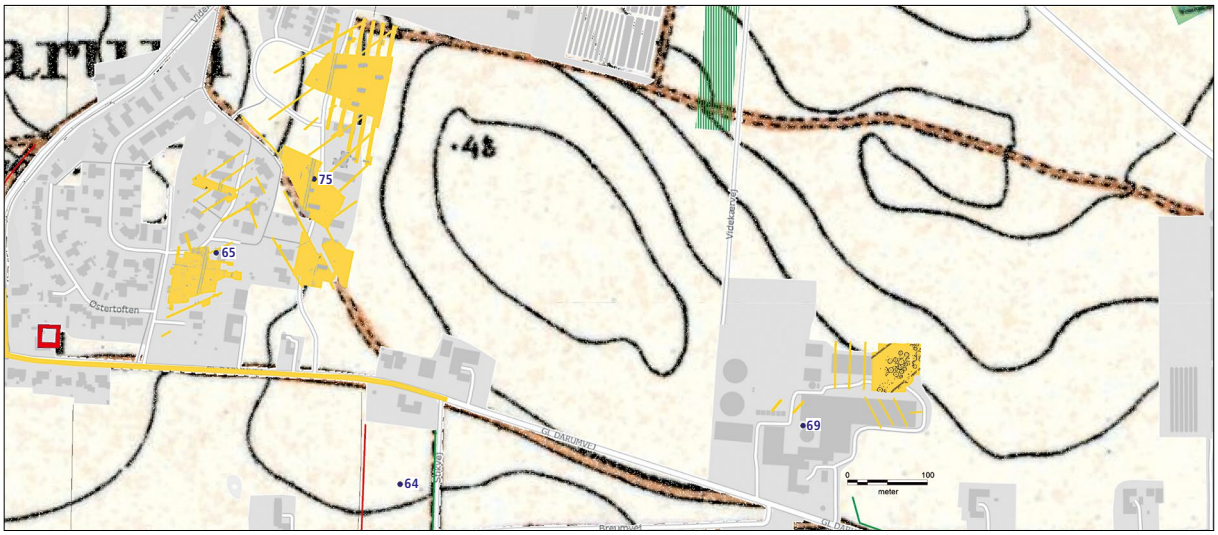


Fig. 1. Overview of Korsvanggård urnfield in the east of the mapped area; to the west the excavations of the Pre-Roman Iron Age settlement in Østertoften, St. Darum. Background map of 'Høje målebordsblade' *from 1842–1899 with current state of modern buildings. Numbers refer to local sb-numbers* (sognebeskrivelse *[parish descriptions]) in the map area of 190202 (graphics Sydvestjyske Museer).*



Fig. 2. Korsvanggård urnfield during excavation, with grave 30 up front in the middle. View from the northeast (photo Sydvestjyske Museer).

in the landscape during excavation, and the outline of the mounds could only be observed because of traces of the circular ditches in the subsoil. The state of the urns made it clear that the preservation of the rest of the urnfield is in danger due to the cultivation of the land. Most urns were excavated, wrapped in cellophane and brought to the museum, where they were carefully emptied; some of them with additional wet sieving with a 2-mm-net to protect the fragile burned bone remains during the process.

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

The landscape around Korsvanggaard

The Iron Age mounds in the urnfields often relate to older mounds or roads that led to the burial site as, for example, at Aarre, Søhale, and Aarupgaard. The Korsvanggaard burials are somewhat atypical, since there are no such mounds known in the vicinity of this urnfield and none have been registered on older maps, if there were ever any.

The Korsvanggaard urnfield is bordered by pathways/dirt roads running southwest-northeast. These consist of wheel tracks, 30–40 cm wide and 5 cm deep, which are believed to be contemporaneous with the urnfield or a little later, as the tracks respected the graves. The two roads appear to be enclosing the urnfield, allowing it a maximum width of 45 m.

If we let the roads continue in a straight line through the landscape, they reach the Kjærfenne bog, where a bronze neck ring[4] dating to the Pre-Roman Iron Age was found in 1903 during peat digging. Already in 1884, the slope towards the peat digging site had revealed[5] a settlement from the Pre-Roman Iron Age, situated close by at Breum banke. Here, at least one house had been burned down.[6] Breum banke is also the location of the 'Darum find' with 13 gold bracteates discovered in 1884.

Seven hundred meters west of Korsvanggaard, the contemporaneous settlement of Østertoften[7] with eight houses and groups of pits containing pottery dating to the Early Pre-Roman Iron Age was excavated. Perhaps these inhabitants made use of the documented roads as well. The Korsvanggaard roads towards the northeast can potentially have led to the group of mounds[8] named Fladhøj, meaning 'flat mound', 2 km away. The roads are yet undated and may be much younger and therefore just bypass the mounds.

The graves

A total of 46 graves of various types were found at Korsvanggard in 2020 (Fig. 3). The majority (n = 29) of the burials were central graves within a circular ditch. It is likely that more graves were covered by a mound and had circular ditches once, but these features no longer exist due to cultivation. The total number of original mounds is hard to estimate. Some urn graves were placed in narrow gaps between circular ditches with no further space for their own mounds. The circular ditches never overlapped.

Out of the 46 graves, 29 had preserved circular ditches, but only in eight graves an urn grave was found within circular ditches. Another eight *traditional* urn graves are (presently) without ditches, whereas four might have had the circular ditches that are no longer preserved, and the other four urn graves were tucked in between mounds, with no room for their own mounds. Fifteen graves are interpreted as dug-up urn graves and are now seen as exhumations, of which 12 were within circular ditches and three are (presently) without, most likely because they were placed in areas that would be the most cultivated. Nine graves are interpreted as cenotaphs with empty urns, of which three were still within circular ditches.

Six graves had insufficient evidence of urns or cremations – three circular ditches contained no grave, either because it was never there, was too shallow, or was not preserved due to cultivation.

4 Bronze neck ring, sb. no. 190202-3 (kulturarv.dk). Nationalmuseet inv. no. 259/03.

5 In many places, the slope towards the bog yielded 'burnt bones/ashes with pots' *(mange steder i skrænten ned mod mosen fandtes 'brandpletter med potter')*: Nationalmuseet, inv. no. 259/03.

6 Breum banke, ASR 71/66.

7 Østertoften I, ASR 1710; Østertoften II, ASR 1921.

8 Mounds around Fladhøj, St. Darum, sb. no. 190202-5 (kulturarv.dk).

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad



Fig. 3. Korsvanggård urnfield with its 46 graves – different types of graves. Green: Urn graves with cremated bones; blue: Cenotaphs with just the empty vessel; pink: Exhumations with empty grave pits (graphics Sydvestjyske Museer).

Two circular ditches had the central grave situated beyond the excavation area. One grave contained a vessel and was without a circular ditch but was not investigated any further.

The urns

The ceramic material consists of the remains of 42 vessels from 16 urn graves and nine cenotaphs (Figs. 4–6). In the exhumation graves, sometimes a few potsherds have been left behind. From all the graves found at Korsvanggaard, only two vessels were intact: one urn and one small accessory vessel.

Most of the rims were destroyed by ploughing, but in some cases the rim had fallen into the vessel due to the pressure of the soil. The rest of the urns had only their lower parts preserved. In cases where the urns were preserved to a higher degree, the vessels had a smoothly curved body profile, and the widest point tended to be at the upper part before the narrower neck and rim. The rims of the vessels are either thin and straight (period I), or thickened and faceted (period II; Jensen 2005). None

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad



Fig. 4. Korsvanggård urnfield. Grave 1, urn (x22). The only urn found intact but pressed out of shape. Notice the rim on the edge (photo Sydvestjyske Museer).



Fig. 5. Korsvanggård urnfield. Grave 1, accessory vessel (x70), placed directly on the bottom layer of cremated bones (x71) (photo Sydvestjyske Museer).



Fig. 6. Korsvanggård urnfield. Grave 3, example of collapsed urn (x12) destroyed by ploughing (photo Sydvestjyske Museer).

of the urns were decorated, and they represent most likely pottery for everyday use, re-used as urns. Secondary vessels were found inside the urn in two cases.

The grave goods

Just as the urns were badly preserved, so were the grave goods found in eight out of 46 graves. There was a very limited range of items which had not been on the pyre as the metal had not been deformed in any way by fire. In two cases, the grave goods consisted of different pieces from a belt, and in another case the grave contained a belt hook and a dress pin. In five cases, there was only one dress pin present in the grave. These include a fragmented iron coiled-head pin, dated to period I.1a–I.2a (Jensen 2005: pin type 1), a fragmented iron nail-head pin dated to period I.1–I.2 (Jensen 2005: pin type 20), and an intact iron pin with a grooved head dating to period I.2–II.1a (Jensen 2005). In two cases, the dress pin was made of bronze. From the in-depth investigations carried out at Søhale urnfield (Møller et al. 2020), we know that belt hooks are often found in women's graves (Møller et al. 2020, 37). Concerning the Søhale urns, those containing one pin often represented female graves, whereas the ones that contained two or three pins represented male burials (Møller et al. 2020, 37).

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

At the moment, this trend can neither be proved nor disproved at Korsvanggaard because the cremated bones have not yet been analysed.

Spatial layout and dating

As observed at many of the larger urnfields, such as Aarupgaard, the graves were placed in a linear sequence without any intercutting of the 21 circular ditches (Jensen 2005, 97; Terkildsen 2015; Møller et al. 2020). The small number of metal objects found in the urns and the poor state of preservation of the vessels only allow a loose interpretation of the development of the urnfield at Korsvanggaard. The diameter of the circular ditches varies from 4 to 8.3 m and, usually, there were two openings in the circular ditches, which were situated approximately towards the north and the south. Grave 30 is interpreted as the oldest grave at the site; its circular ditch had a single 1.7-m-wide opening to the north. This ditch is also the largest at the site, with a diameter of 8.3 m and a width of 1 m; it contained a large number of deliberately placed head-sized stones. From other urnfields, such as Aarre and Aarupgaard, it is known that the irregular and large circular ditches are among the earliest burials (Lorange 2015, 26). The few potsherds from the urn are dated to the early Pre-Roman Iron Age. Two small sherds display a thin, vertical rim but, as the burial has been exhumed, no additional knowledge can be derived from any possible grave goods. With this information and the dating of the ceramic urn, grave 30 has been dated to Pre-Roman Iron Age period I.1a (*c.* 400 BC). It is believed that grave 30 was the first grave at the urnfield and that the layout of the rest of the urnfield was based on this (Fig. 7).

There were three graves from period I.1b–1.2a: graves 1, 22, and 25. Graves 22 and 25 both contained belt hooks and urns with thin, flared necks. Graves 1 and 25 contained pins – one was a bronze pin and the other one a nail-head pin. The nail-head pin dates grave 1 to period I.I–I.2, although it could also have been an older artefact at the time of burial. Grave 1 also contained a small secondary cup that was *c.* 6.3 cm high. From period I.2a onwards, all the circular ditches have two entrances pointing south and north. Compared to the previous period, the circular ditches now became more regular, smaller and narrower.

Eight graves are dated to Pre-Roman Iron Age period I.2 (graves 2, 16, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 44). One of them, grave 44, contained an urn with a thin, flared rim and a band-shaped handle as well as a belt hook, both of which can be dated to the late Pre-Roman Iron Age. Eleven graves are dated to period I.2–II.1 (graves 14, 17, 21, 24, 27, 28, 34, 36, 37, 38, 45). The dating of the graves is mainly based on the grave goods, as the preservation of the urns is too poor to use them for this purpose.

Burial rituals and *pars pro toto*

Although most of our knowledge about Iron Age burial customs derives from archaeological investigation, the thoughts behind the burial rituals are not visible in the archaeological records. The first step of the burial rituals visible in the archaeological record was the placing of the deceased on a pyre. After cremation the bones were carefully selected from the pyre debris (dirt, charcoal), and therefore there are only few remains of pyre debris in the burials. This seems to have been a common practice and is also seen at, for example, Søhale urnfield (Møller et al. 2020, 29). Some of the undisturbed urn graves at Korsvanggaard appear to contain only a selection of bones, based on the small number of cremated bone remains. No anthropological assessment or analyses have been made so far.

The cremated bones were placed in the urn, with the grave goods placed on top of these, which is a positioning also observed in burials at Aarre (Lorange 2015, 22–23) and Søhale (Møller et al. 2020, 56).

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad



Fig. 7. Korsvanggård urnfield; chronology of burials. The graves are numbered from southwest to northeast, but with urn graves, tucked in between mounds, numbered last. Pre-Roman Iron Age (I/II) – grey; Early Pre-Roman Iron Age: I.1a – blue (Grave 30); I.1–1.2 – petrol; I.2 – green; Transition Early/Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (I.2–II.1) – orange; Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (II) – yellow (graphics Sydvestjyske Museer).

The dress pins and belt hooks must have been removed from the clothes of the deceased before cremation as none of the metal objects were affected by fire.

The comparison of observations from the Funen urn cemeteries with ethnographic descriptions of, for example, Hindu rituals in connection with cremations from Bali suggests that the most central part of the burial ceremonies were the processes around the cremation and the arranging of the pyre, and not the depositing of pyre remains and grave goods in the grave (Henriksen 2015, 184, 206). This also corresponds to our earlier suggestion that only a selection of the cremated bones and personal belongings were buried.

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

The mounds that contain a central grave with an urn but no cremated bones or grave goods are interpreted as cenotaphs. Korsvanggaard contained nine such cenotaphs, so a significant amount of burials there did not contain any burnt bones, which is a considerable proportion of the total number of graves. Three cenotaphs (graves 27, 29, 37) had circular ditches and were placed in the northeastern part of the urnfield. The cenotaph interpretation derives from Becker's description of empty vessels found in several mounds from the early Pre-Roman Iron Age in southwest Jutland (Becker 1961, 167). The empty graves in the urnfields are often seen as substitutes for urn graves, perhaps for somebody who died away from home or as a symbolic grave of a 'foreign' individual. Becker suggests, concerning the cenotaphs, that 'presumably the normal procedure at the urnfield is to first build the mound and then – perhaps several years later – dig down to place the central urn grave in it' (Becker 1961, 167). This might explain urnfield graves in which no urns, bones or grave pits were found in the centre of the mound. Based on Aage Brusendorff's observations from 1913 on the urnfield at Jernvedlund, Møller states that the narrow burial shaft for the urn can be followed down through the fill of the small burial mound, so that in some cases the mound seems to have been built before the burial (Møller 2013, 104–105). Jørgensen (1975, 8), however, does not believe that the urns were dug through the mound. He argues that the shaft is due to convergence after the possible wooden lid of the urn decayed. If this is the case, then the empty mounds must certainly be cenotaphs.

The reasons the urns were placed in the mound without cremated bones can only be speculated about, and there have been many possible explanations (e.g. Møller et al. 2020, 57). We find the most reasonable interpretation to be that a cenotaph is a substitute for an urn grave, in cases where it was not possible to bury the deceased as tradition otherwise dictated. An accessory vessel was placed in three of the cenotaphs, possibly as a form of *pars pro toto* of the absent deceased. This will be discussed further below. The classification of exhumation activities of urn graves and cenotaphs at Korsvanggard are not just examples of poor preservation, because at the bottom of the vessels, the rim and neck were often seen collapsed inwards into the empty vessel, which was free of soil, with no traces of either bones or grave goods. A lot of the graves proved to be intentionally empty, a phenomenon which is also known from the urnfield at Billumvad, close to Oksbøl and Varde (see Frandsen, this volume).

Fifteen graves at Korsvanggaard were exhumed shortly after burial, and 12 of these were within a mound with a circular ditch. Three were without a mound and situated in a heavily cultivated area, but so close to other graves that not all of them can originally have had space for a mound. The re-dug pit is often oval-shaped at the surface and a little larger than the grave pits of the undisturbed urns and cenotaphs. It is evident that the exhumation was a deliberately performed act by someone who knew exactly where to locate the urn. The exhumed graves can be divided into three different groups – graves that were completely emptied (graves 5, 7, 38), graves where a few pottery sherds had been left behind (graves 13, 15, 19, 36), and graves where a few pottery sherds and cremated bones were left behind (graves 9, 14, 16, 18, 20, 26, 30, 34). In the graves where a few bones and pottery sherds were left behind, it is believed that they were either left by accident or deliberately placed as a *pars pro toto*. The exhumed graves are scattered throughout the urnfield, but with a concentration in its central part. Grave 30 had been exhumed, too, making the exhumation practice a consistent burial ritual throughout the urnfield's use-life.

Graves without bone remains are a common phenomenon in Pre-Roman Iron Age urnfields, and possible explanations for the high number of exhumed graves and cenotaphs have been discussed by many researchers (Becker 1961; Jørgensen 1975; Møller et al. 2020). Jørgensen (1975, 8) suggests that the lack of bones indicates child burials, where the tiny bones were completely consumed by the fire, Becker (1961, 168–169), on the other hand, proposes that the high number of Pre-Roman Iron Age cenotaphs is due to a catastrophe that resulted in a high number of memorial cenotaphs,

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

whereas Møller et al. (2020, 57) suggest that because the settlement starts to cluster in coastal areas in periods I.2 and II.1, the empty burials may be 'the result of a more frequent curation of the bones from recently deceased and buried ancestors'. Another approach is to look at cultures that practise comparable burial rites today, such as some communities in northern Vietnam where exhumation is believed to allow the soul of the deceased to enter the afterlife. The bones are assumed to shelter the soul and spirit and, in order to enter the afterlife, the bones must be reburied in a suitable tomb. The exhumation usually takes place three to four years after the burial (Seah/Nair 1996, 70). A similar way of thinking and handling the cremated bones by Iron Age people is possible and would explain the high number of empty graves at Korsvanggaard.

Pars pro toto in cenotaphs and in exhumations

Accessory vessels

There are many unknown elements of the burial rituals that took place at the urnfield sites. One group of objects to consider is that of the relatively common accessory vessels that were placed in the urns or as the main vessels in the cenotaphs. These could represent personal belongings and were therefore placed in the grave. At Korsvanggaard, accessory vessels were found in four graves in the western part of the urnfield – urn grave 1 and cenotaph graves 4, 6 and 43. The three cenotaphs did not have circular ditches, which indicates they were part of the later phase at Korsvanggaard, although it cannot be ruled out that the ditches were destroyed by cultivation. A similar trend has been observed at Aarupgaard urnfield, where miniature and accessory vessels rarely occur in the earlier phases, but are more common in the later phase (Terkildsen 2015, 65).

Was the purpose of the deposition and the placing of an accessory vessel, perhaps containing an alcoholic beverage, in the grave a way of offering a toast, as a last farewell? There is no reason to believe that the accessory vessel in grave 1 was a *pars pro toto*, since the cremated bones and the grave goods were all there. But maybe the carefully placed accessory vessel on top of it all, which was found still standing upright and which held no pieces of burnt bones, could have contained the very last drink in honour of the deceased for future well-being in the hereafter. This could very likely be the case for the three accessory vessels in the three cenotaphs as well.

In Oosterhout, a contemporaneous Dutch site, the osteological analysis of the cremated human remains from miniature urns and accessory vessels, found inside larger urns, showed that they only contained a small selection of cremated bones. A high number of the urns there seem to contain accessory vessels. The authors state: 'These small urns are an excellent example of a *pars pro toto* ritual, which is performed in various cultures through time' (Veselka/Lemmers 2014, 151). The concept of *pars pro toto* burial rituals is that part of something (part of an object or part of a human being) could be seen as substituting or representing something larger (the complete object or even the complete individual). In the Dutch area, there are urns with miniature vessels or with accessory vessels placed in larger vessels comparable to those at the Danish urnfields. Placing an accessory vessel into a larger cremation urn has been established as an example of the *pars pro toto* ritual, where an object can take the place of something else. In this case, a selection of bones represents the complete deceased individual. In the three cenotaphs at Korsvanggaard, the accessory vessels may represent the last toast in the burial ritual; a sort of *pars pro toto* in honour of the alleged deceased who was absent. This sometimes also goes for the funeral wake, whether the deceased was actually buried or not.

Sacred 'white' stones

More examples of the *pars pro toto* burial ritual are evident at Korsvanggaard urnfield in some of the exhumated urn graves. In four instances – graves 14, 19, 20, and 34 – the urn has been exhumed and

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

a white or light-coloured stone deposited in its place, thereby representing a *pars pro toto* ritual. In the re-dug grave pits in graves 19, 20, and 34, a whitish stone was present in the fill. The stones were smooth, water-rolled beach stones of granite or gneiss and thus not naturally occurring at this location. Grave 14 consisted of a well-preserved circular ditch with a central grave pit, perhaps slightly larger than ordinary urn pits. The pit held only a very few burned bones and small pieces of pottery towards the bottom of the feature. The re-entering of the feature showed that the grave had probably been exhumed shortly after the burial took place, as the later pit was right on top of the grave pit (Fig. 8). A white quartz stone was deliberately deposited in the grave as a *pars pro toto*, similar to the many whitish stones found in contemporaneous sacrificial sites in south Scandinavian bogs, some of which have been interpreted as fertility sacrifices as, for example, at Käringsjön, Forlev Nymølle, Salpetermosen, and Svennum (Carlie 1998; Lund 2002, 184; Pantmann 2020; Wåhlin in print). Stones are scarce in the vicinity of Korsvanggaard, and the few naturally occurring rocks are irregular boulders from quaternary glaciation in the area of St. Darum and Ribe in the sandy lowlands of the North Sea basin. Quartz – and other stones – are not so commonly found. Nor are these stones naturally occurring in bogs, meaning that they are deposited intentionally by humans. Pantmann proves the use and importance of white and light-coloured stones, which were deposited foremost in the wetlands of Salpetermosen, Syd, and Gørløsegård, but are also seen in all aspects of life during the pre-Roman Iron Age and continuing throughout the rest of the Iron Age. The stones are carefully selected precisely because of their bright expression, which should probably be seen as part of their sacral function and part of their orchestration (Pantmann 2020, 67–68, 81). The Svennum bog excavations have revealed ritual offerings of light-coloured stones, pottery, animal bones and six human crania.

Wåhlin states that the light-coloured stones were intentionally deposited as sacrificial offerings in themselves (Wåhlin in print). Quartz is known to have a special meaning in graves. In three Bronze Age burial mounds at Kårarp in Sweden, approx. 3.5 km from Käringsjön, graves packed with quartz have been identified, and 130 pieces of quartz have been found in an early Iron Age burial mound at Fröböke in Halland. Carlie suggests that whitish stones were of sacred significance, and it is in this



Fig. 8. Korsvanggård urnfield. Grave 14, placed in the center of a well-preserved circular ditch. The grave pit only contained a few pottery sherds and a quartz stone (photo Sydvestjyske Museer).

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

perspective that one must understand them in both grave and wetland context (Carlie 1998, 23–24; 1999, 49). White stones were regarded as sacred or magical by people from the Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age periods, according to Carlie (1999), based on the position of quartz built into grave monuments in Tiraholm, southwest Småland. She interprets the stones as traces of rituals, in connection with the consecration of the burial site as a sacred ground (Carlie 1999, 48). 'Most likely, the white color was a symbol of the superior divine and cosmological forces in existence. Judging from the archaeological sources, the sacred power of whiteness was particularly effective in connection with cults of the dead. There is a great deal to indicate that the white color was used in funeral rituals, because of its internal power to guarantee the prevailing cosmology, with the continuance of life and rebirth of the dead, or passage to another world. It is in this perspective, I believe, we should understand the use of white stones in Iron Age burial tradition' (Carlie 1999, 57). Småland is quite some distance away from the urnfields discussed in this volume, but perhaps the religious beliefs were not. The view of the sacred and the magical may very well be the same and, therefore, the whitish stones in the Korsvanggaard exhumations are of significant value in a burial ritual.

As an ethnographical analogy – perhaps too far-fetched – there is a *pars pro toto* ritual among the Chukchi people, a group of indigenous reindeer herders in northern Kamchatka, Siberia, Russia, where, when making a sacrifice, a stone may be a substitute for the beast to be killed. In this case, the substituted stone must be stabbed with a knife to represent the actual slaughter of, for example, a reindeer. Other objects can be substitutes in the Chukchi ritual sacrifice, but the stone is left as the last alternative (Willerslev 2013, 145). Willerslev points out a trickery of the *pars pro toto:* 'The chain ends with the minimally acceptable substitute: A stone. The troubling fact, however, is that the value hierarchy of substitutes is shadowed by its contrary, so that in a certain sense, the lowest is also considered the highest' (Willerslev 2013, 145). The Chukchi thus have a *pars pro toto* use of stones in sacrificial rituals that are not immediately comparable to burial rituals. Nonetheless, it is quite interesting that the stone can take the place of a human. The substitute stone in the Chukchi sacrificial ritual can not only mean the slaughtered beast but actually also the human being: '[…] human sacrifice is always accompanied by the sacrifice of the victims of the lowest worth, such as the killing of a wooden reindeer or stone. The Chukchi even say that the lowest substitute in the chain, the stone, is in certain ways the equal of the highest victim, the human being' (Willerslev 2013, 150).

We accept the premise that a white stone can become sacred and can be part of a *pars pro toto* burial ritual because the whitish stones occur in this special context, where they cannot have been deposited by freak coincidence given they are not of common occurrence in the area. We suggest that the whitish stones in the exhumations are *pars pro toto* objects that substitute the urn containing the deceased. It is our impression that perhaps these particular bright, whitish stones have indeed become sacred and do replace either the white bones and/or the human being as a person. We interpret the re-dug urns as exhumations. But what was the reason for this and what happened afterwards?

Did the exhumed human remains serve a purpose, and were they/where were they reburied? Was it a disgrace to be exhumed by plundering and removal from what was perhaps intended as an eternal resting place? Or was the exhumation of the urns seen as a necessary part of a reburial for the family and descendants when moving to another locality or tradition? If a reburial is in order to allow the soul of the deceased to enter the afterlife, why were only a selection of the urn graves exhumated for possible reburial?

Conclusion

New excavations of urnfields prove to be important, even though the graves are not so well preserved as they were in the 19th century and the following years. More information is to be derived because

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

recent investigations show a much higher number of cenotaphs and exhumations compared to the urnfields that were excavated and published earlier. This is most likely due to the more accurate registration of traces of burial rituals and empty graves, whether they are exhumated urns or cenotaphs, which will serve as important evidence of complex burial customs in the Pre-Roman Iron Age. It will be important to look for whitish stones in special contexts in all excavations from the Pre-Roman Iron Age, so the overall rites can be better understood, whether in burial customs or ritual offerings in wetlands and settlements.

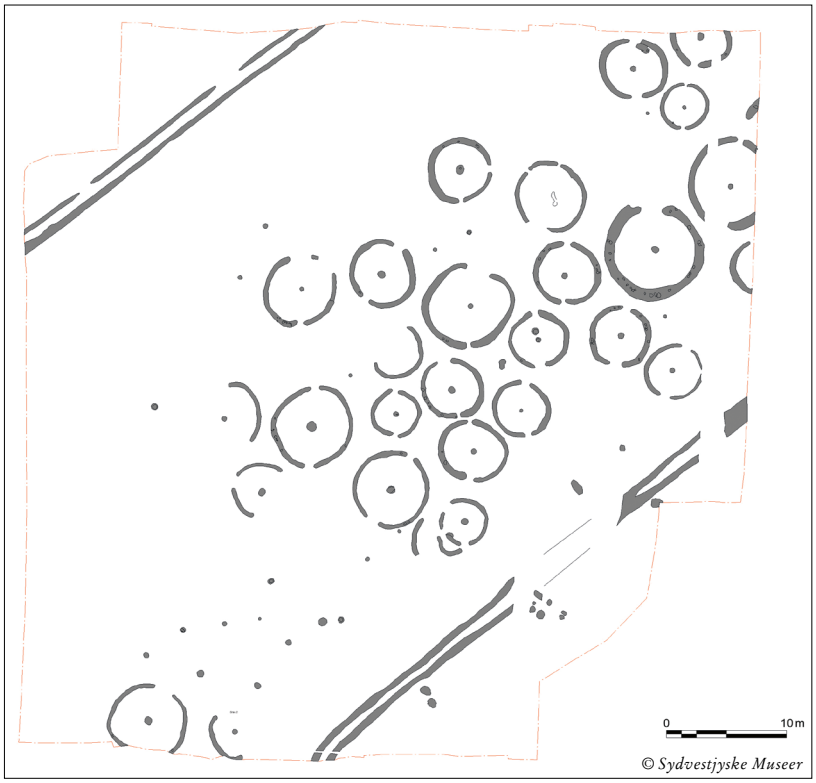
The traditional urnfield grave with a small mound, a circular ditch and an urn with cremated bones only occurs in 16 out of 46 cases of burial at Korsvanggaard. In contrast, the number of empty graves is high – there are 15 exhumations and nine cenotaphs, most of which have been covered by mounds.

The small accessory vessel sometimes placed within the larger vessel in the cenotaphs could be seen as the last time someone offered a toast for the deceased person, or perhaps as a *pars pro toto*. No information about the deceased can be derived from the cenotaphs, and the same is true for graves that had been exhumed, unless a specific piece of burnt bone has been left as a *pars pro toto*.

It is highly important to document all traits of the graves well, even though they might not contain grave goods and even though it might not be possible to assess the whole urnfield. Future investigations can be fruitful before the urnfields are ultimately destroyed by cultivation.

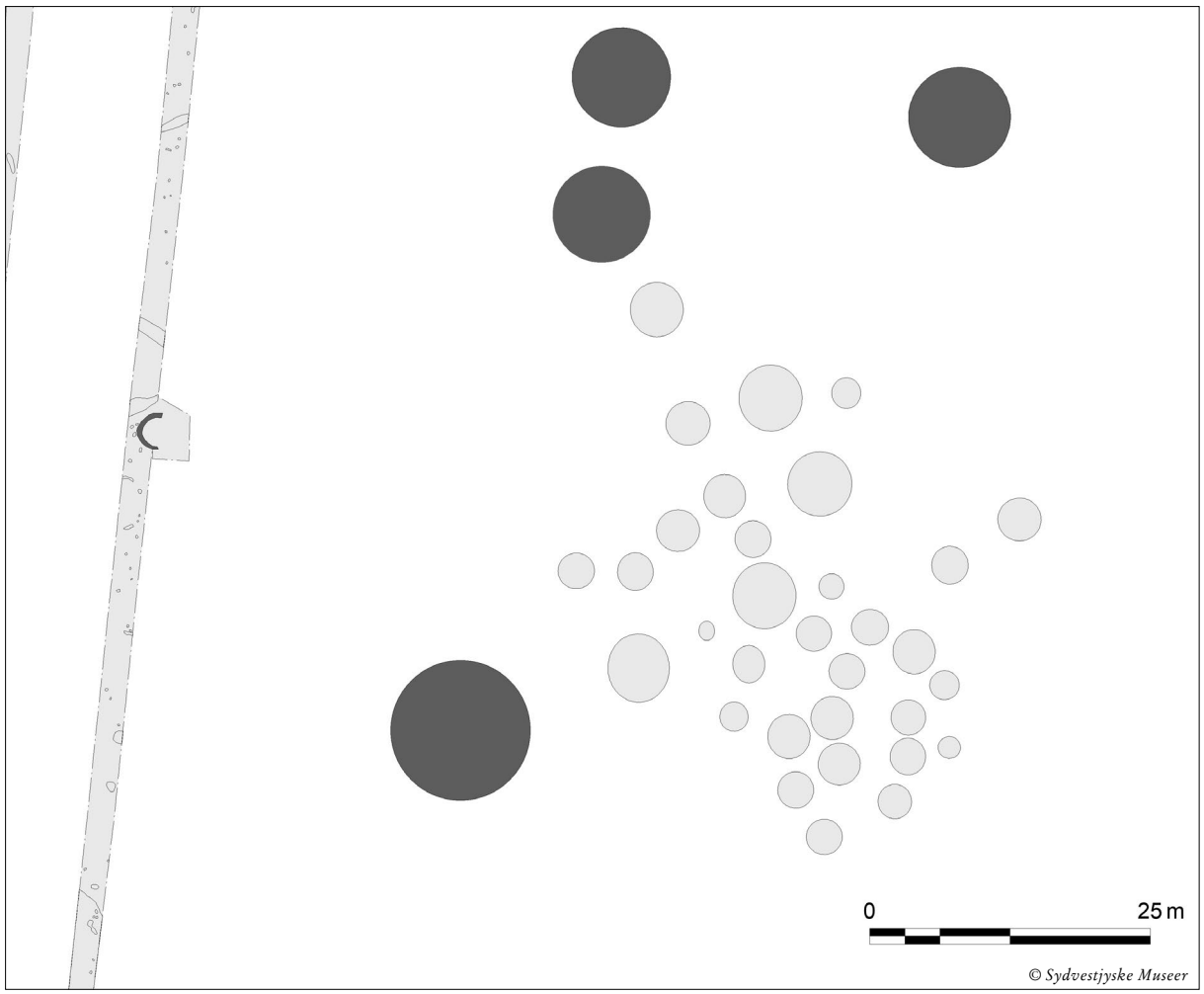
Catalogue of urnfields in southwest Jutland

Korsvanggaard
Sydvestjyske Museer, inv. no.: SJM 908
Year of excavation: 2020; 2023
Number of graves: 46 (+ 5 excavated in 2023)
Older mounds: None



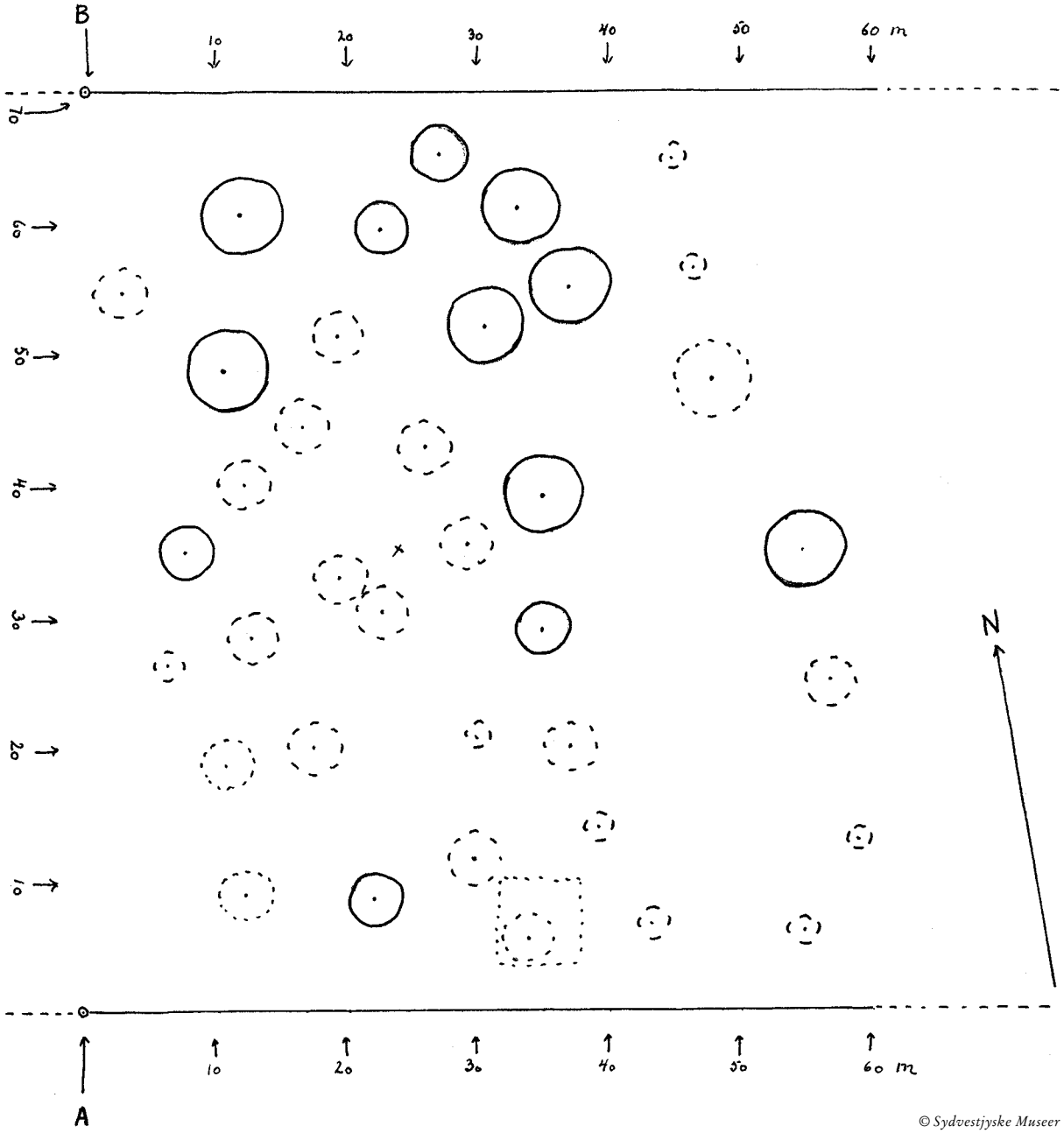
https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Jernvedlund
Nationalmuseet, inv. no.: NM 538/13; Sydvestjyske Museer, inv. no.: SJM 213
Year of excavation: 1913; 2013
Number of graves: 35
Older mounds: 5
References: Hansen 1998, 125; Møller 2013; Møller et al. 2020, 71



https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

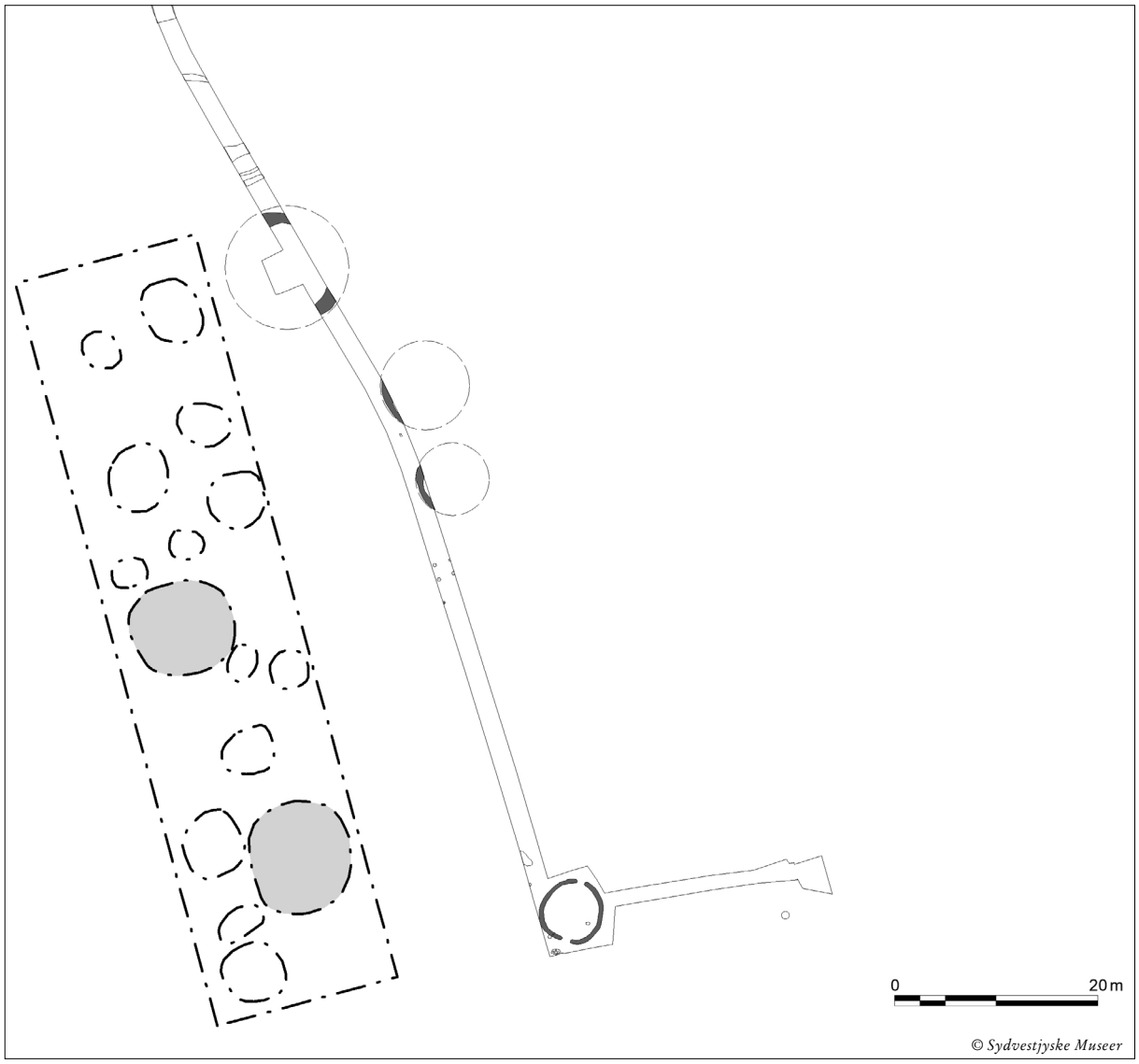
Krogsgaard Mark
Esbjerg Museum, inv. no.: ESM M6 54
Year of excavation: 1955
Number of graves: 36
Older mounds: No known ones



© Sydvestjyske Museer

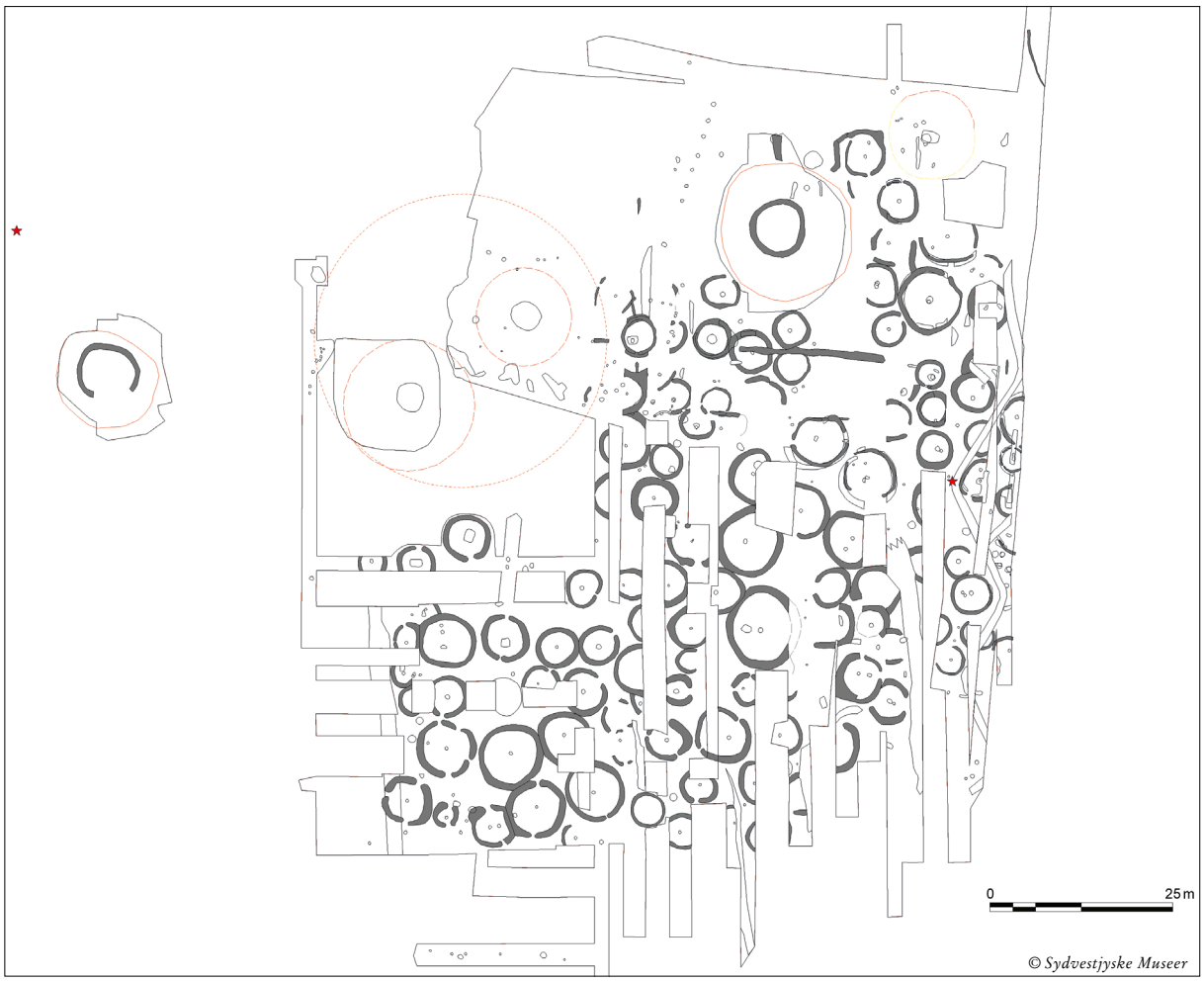
https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Den hemmelige Skov, Kjersing
Esbjerg Museum, inv. no.: ESM 865; Sydvestjyske Museer, inv. no.: SJM 510
Year of excavation: 1935; 2015
Number of graves: 17
Older mounds: Two (marked with grey on the map below)



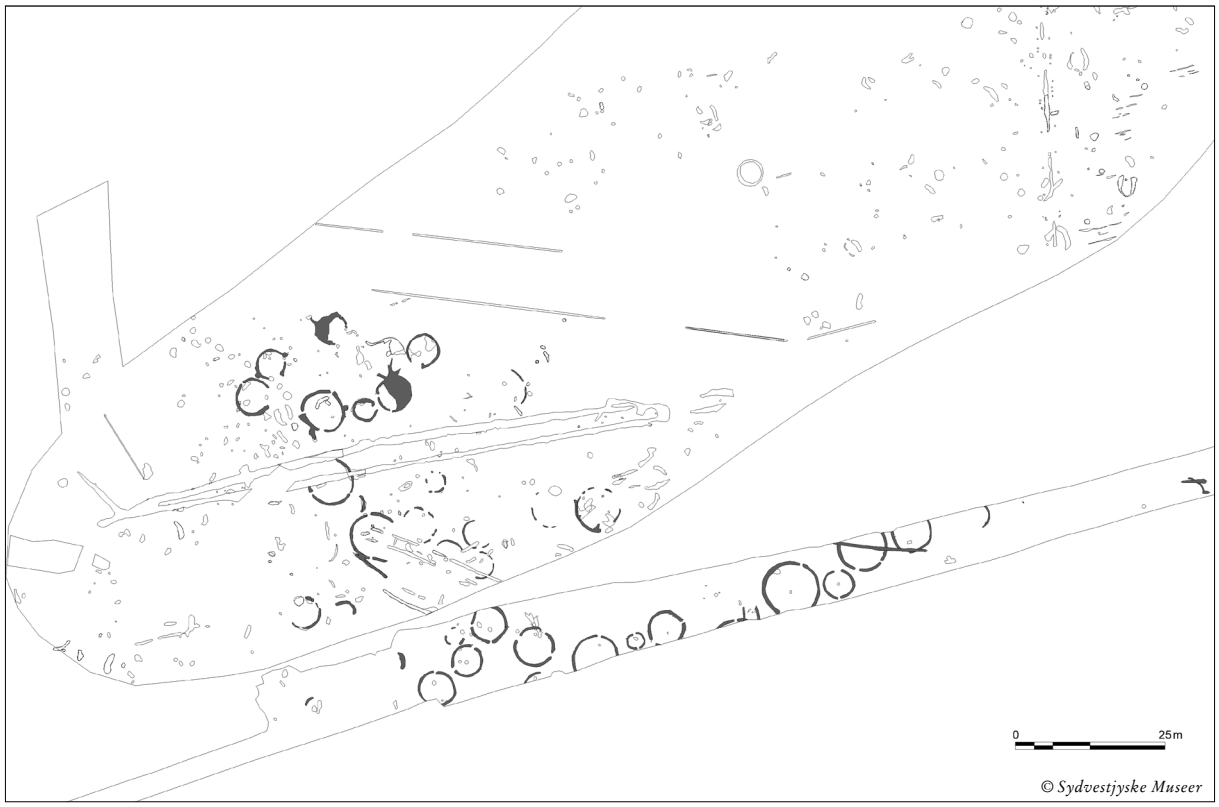
https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Veldbæk
Esbjerg Museum, inv. no.: ESM 1357
Year of excavation: 1983; 1986; 1995
Number of graves: *c.* 125
Older mounds: 8
Reference: Møller et al. 2020, 42–43



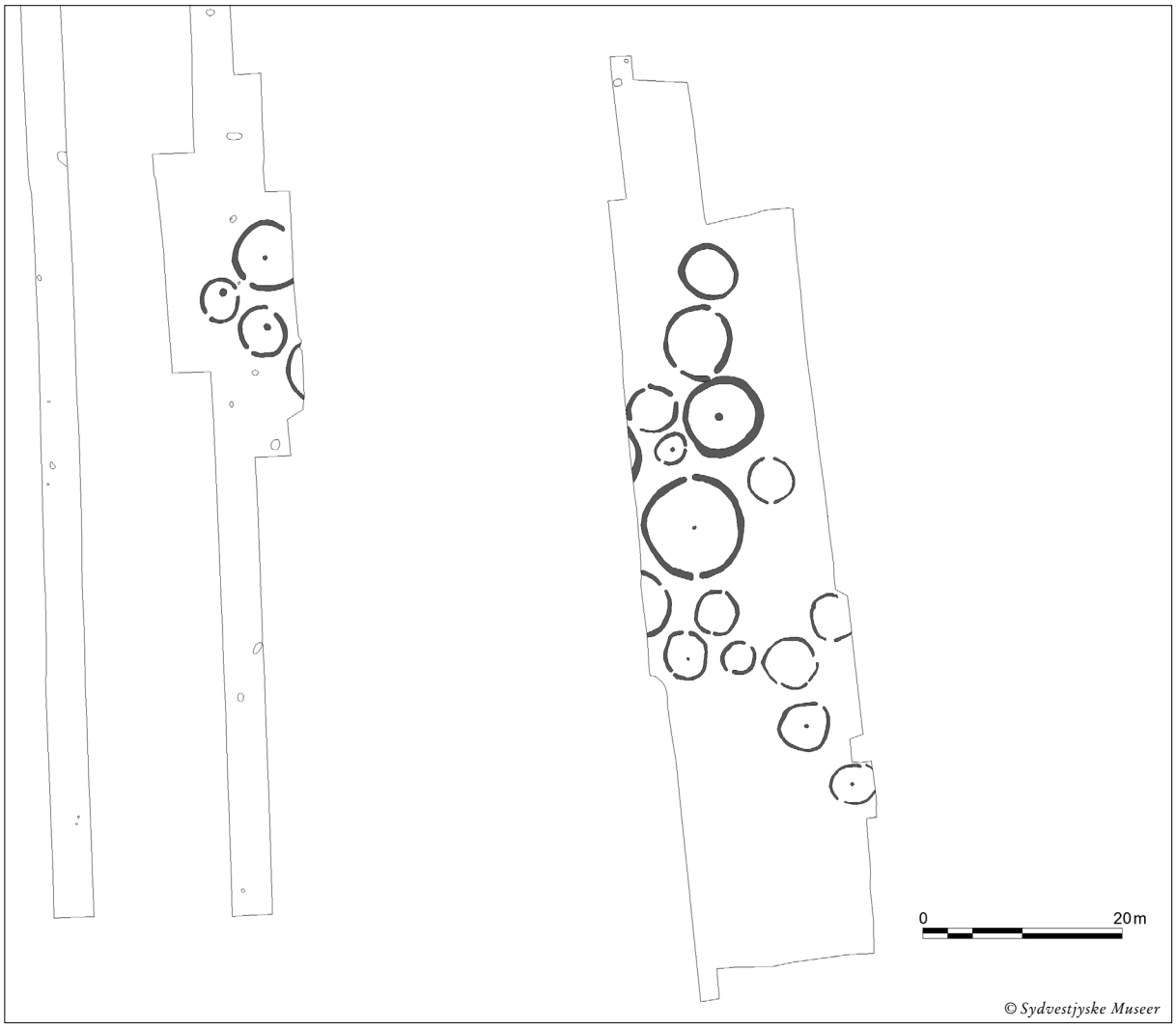
https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Nordskrænten
Esbjerg Museum, inv. no.: ESM 2256, ESM 2636
Year of excavation: 1998; 2008
Number of graves: 50
Older mounds: 2



https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Solbakkegård
Esbjerg Museum, inv. no.: ESM 2178
Year of excavation: 1996; 1997
Number of graves: 20
Older mounds: 4



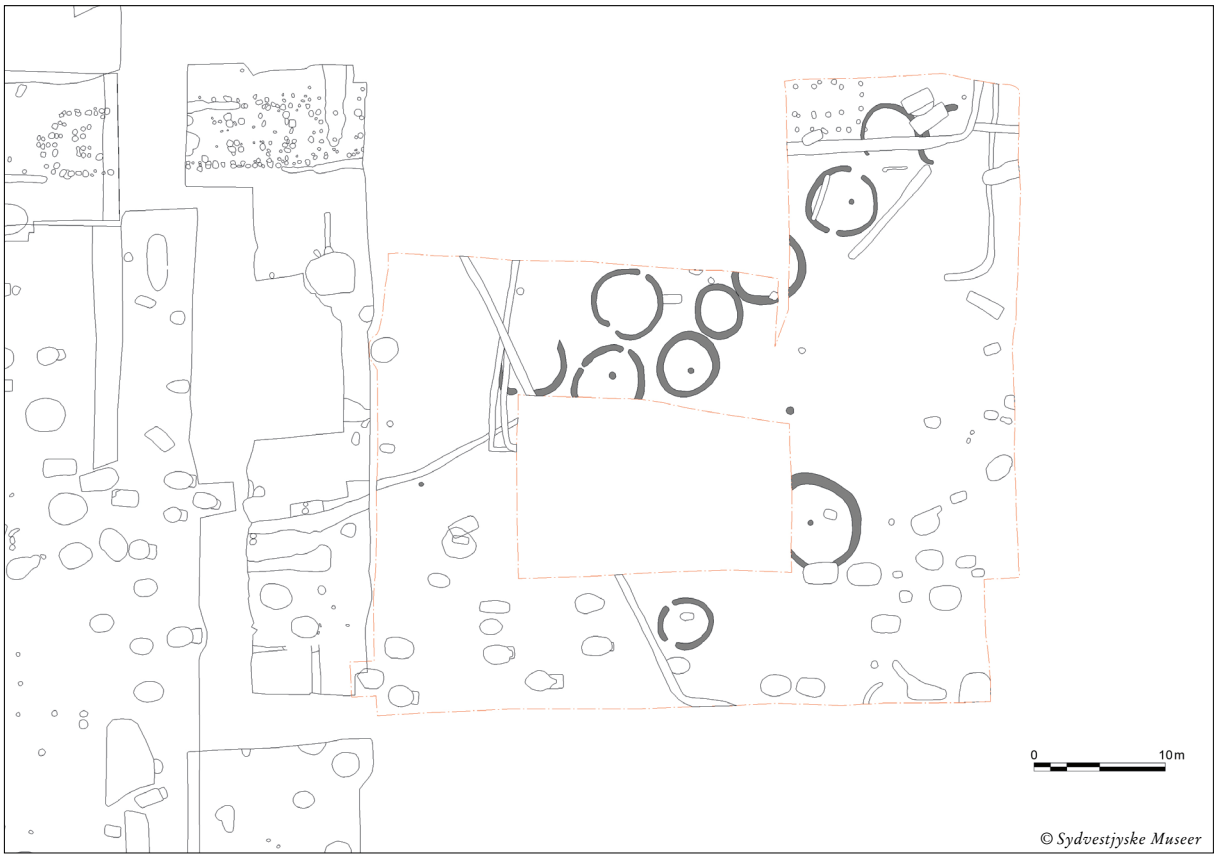
https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Søhale
Esbjerg Museum, inv. no.: ESM 2139
Year of excavation: 1996
Number of graves: 103
Older mounds: 2
Reference: Møller et al. 2020



https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

Præstestien
Esbjerg Musuem, inv. no.: ESM 1421
Year of excavation: 1982
Number of graves: 12
Older mounds: 2



Forum, Bryndum
Nationalmuseet, fundberetning 52
Systemnummer (kulturarv.dk): 75436 190502-54
Year of excavation: 1891
Number of urnfield graves: *c.* 100

Korskro Grimstrupvej
Nationalmuseet, inv. no.: NM C6532-36
Year of excavation: 1890
Number of urnfield graves: 21
The urnfield was investigated in 1890 by A. P. Madsen, who describes 21 graves from the Pre-Roman Iron Age. No site plan could be found in the archives of southwest Denmark.

Korskro
Esbjerg Museum, inv. no.: ESM 1911
Year of trial investigation: 1993
The trial excavation revealed post holes from a Pre-Roman Iron Age house, 14 cooking pits and four uncertain features interpreted as pyre pits. Further investigations were not made on the site because

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

RAS (Rigsantikvarens Arkæologiske Sekretariat) interpreted the uncertain features as traces of toppled trees.

Bibliography

Becker 1961: C. J. Becker, Førromersk jernalder i Syd- og Midtjylland. Nationalmuseets Skrifter, Større beretninger VI (København 1961).

Carlie 1998: A. Carlie, Käringsjön. A Fertility Sacrificial Site from the Late Roman Iron Age in South-west Sweden. Current Swedish Archaeology 6, 1998, 17–37.

Carlie 1999: A. Carlie, Sacred white stones. On Traditions of Building White Stones into Graves. Lund Archaeological Review 5, 1999, 41–58.

Dollar/Grundvad 2015: S. R. Dollar/L. Grundvad, Tuesbøl – En tuegravplads ved Brørup fra ældre førromersk jernalder. In: P. Foss/N. A. Møller (eds.), De dødes landskab. Grav og gravskik i ældre jernalder i Danmark. Beretning fra et colloquium i Ribe den 19.–20. marts 2013. Arkæologiske Skrifter 13 (Copenhagen 2015) 51–70.

Hansen 1998: S. S. Hansen, Yngre bronzealder, førromersk jernalder og ældre romersk jernalder, 1000 f.kr – 200 e.Kr. In: P. Asingh/L. Feveile/S. Jensen (eds.), Marsk, land og bebyggelse – Ribeegnen gennem 10.000 år. Jysk Arkæologisk Selskabs Skrifter 35 (Højbjerg 1998) 115–136.

Henriksen 2015: M. B. Henriksen, Kenotafer, ødelagte grave eller ofringer? Deponeringer og andre aktiviteter på ældre jernalders gravpladser. In: P. Foss/N. A. Møller (eds.), De dødes landskab. Grav og gravskik i ældre jernalder i Danmark. Beretning fra et colloquium i Ribe den 19.–20. marts 2013. Arkæologiske Skrifter 13 (Copenhagen 2015) 183–214.

Jensen 2005: C. K. Jensen, Kontekstuel kronologi – en revision af det kronologiske grundlag for førromersk jernalder i Sydskandinavien. LAG 7 (Højbjerg 2005).

Jørgensen 1975: E. Jørgensen, Tuernes Mysterier. Skalk 1975(1), 3–10.

Lorange 2015: T. Lorange, Det sakrale landskab ved Årre. Landskabets hukommelse gennem 4000 års gravriter. In: P. Foss/N. A. Møller (eds.), De dødes landskab. Grav og gravskik i ældre jernalder i Danmark. Beretning fra et colloquium i Ribe den 19.–20. marts 2013. Arkæologiske Skrifter 13 (Copenhagen 2015) 21–36.

Lund 2002: J. Lund, Forlev Nymølle. En offerplads fra yngre førromersk jernalder. Kuml 51, 2002, 143–196.

Møller 2013: N. A. Møller, Tuegravpladsen ved Jernvedlund. Levende Viden 1, 2013, 100–111.

Møller et al. 2020: N. A. Møller/L. L. Harvig/B. Grundvad, The Iron Age Urnfield Tradition of Southern Jutland, Denmark. Acta Archaeologica 91(1), 2020, 11–80.

Pantmann 2020: P. Pantmann, Lyse sten – et udfordrende arkæologisk fænomen med potentiale. Gefjon 5, 2020, 52–83.

Seah/Nair 1996: A. Seah/C. Nair, Vietnam. Cultures of the World (New York 1996).

Terkildsen 2015: K. Terkildsen, Gravpladsen Årupgård som kilde til social stratifikation i førromersk jernalder. In: P. Foss/N. A. Møller (eds.), De dødes landskab. Grav og gravskik i ældre jernalder i Danmark. Beretning fra et colloquium i Ribe den 19.–20. marts 2013. Arkæologiske Skrifter 13 (Copenhagen 2015) 51–70.

Veselka/Lemmers 2014: B. Veselka/S. Lemmers, Deliberate selective deposition of Iron Age cremations from Oosterhout (prov. Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands): a 'pars pro toto' burial ritual. LUNULA. Archaeologia protohistorica XXII, 2014, 151–158.

Willerslev 2013: R. Willerslev, God on trial. Human sacrifice, trickery, and faith. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 3(1), 2013, 140–54.

Wåhlin in print: S. Wåhlin, Six Human Skulls in a Bog – Svennum – a first century AD sacrificial bog. In: M. J. Walsh/S. O'Neill/L. Sørensen (eds.), In the Darkest of Days: Re-investigating Human Sacrifice and Value in Southern Scandinavian Prehistory (Oxford).

Bente Grundvad
Sydvestjyske Museer
Ribe
Denmark
Ben10@sydvestjyskemuseer.dk

Sarah Skytte Qvistgaard
Sydvestjyske Museer
Ribe
Denmark
SQ@sydvestjyskemuseer.dk

https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad

This volume presents the results of an international network project on Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age urnfields from northwest Europe.
Individual chapters present the archaeological material and its research history within a local, regional, or supra-regional context, demonstrating the wide range of nuances contained by the funerary phenomenon. The volume provides the first comprehensive overview of the urnfield funerary phenomenon in northwest Europe and forms the foundation for future research across national and disciplinary boundaries.
This volume successfully demonstrates that the inconspicuous urnfields of northwest Europe are not as anonymous as previously assumed but hold valuable information about life and death in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age.

9 783869 354439
https://doi.org/10.2369/9783869354439.07-qvistgaard.grundvad
www.verlag-ludwig.de