ANNUAL REPORT - SORTE MULD ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT / FIELD SCHOOL 2021
BORNHOLM, DENMARK

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The Sorte Muld Archaeological Project & Field School was held from June 7 to July 2, 2021, at Svaneke on the island of Bornholm, which is situated within Denmark territory, in the Baltic Sea.

In 2018, the EU South Baltic Program granted the ArchaeoBalt, a project run by the Bornholms Museum and its partners (the University of Gdansk, University of Lund, University of Århus, and Museum of Gdansk), the opportunity to conduct an archaeotourism project. The primary objectives of this project included the excavation and preservation of the Sorte Muld.

The chief objective of the excavation was to establish an overview of the Acropolis of the area and its surroundings. The overview of its collection of archaeological finds dating from the 2nd century BC to the 10th century, i.e., from the early Iron Age to the Viking Age, was also taken into account.

Essentially, one of the project's tasks for 2021 was to investigate the main temple and the possible relation of a Viking longhouse of the site. Previous excavations revealed that the Sorte Muld must have included several

contemporaneous building complexes in the 5th and 6th centuries, and the overlapping of late buildings from subsequent occupations was also observed. Through GPR, it has been possible to identify the main temple and areas with houses and core samples from all the sites, where the cultural layers are still intact. Magnetometer surveys have helped in identifying the traces of iron extraction in the northwest edge of the complex. Magnetic maps of the site compiled during recent prospections displayed interesting anomalies in the highest central area of the southern and northern parts, allowing us to draw better interpretations of the complex settlement pattern developed throughout the years of the site's occupation.

During the first season of 2019, the outer limits of the main temple were detected, and during the 2021 excavation, the main temple and the longhouse added new elements to our research as these discoveries would help in understanding not only the use but also the areas of activity in the Acropolis of the Sorte Muld.

The excavation and documentation were completed by the students who participated in the project under the guidance of four supervisors from our staff. The focus of the instructors was on teaching the students to conduct methodological excavations and to document and analyze the revealed archaeological remains and finds.

The method of excavation used by the students was the same as that employed in the excavation of the Iron Age settlements; however, the topsoil of the area was not cleared by the machinery; the remains of culture layers and old humus layers were removed by shovels and smaller equipment. The layers in and around the temple were well-preserved; therefore, a meticulous and slow-paced excavation was performed. Due to the conditions of the context, it was necessary to practice water sieving, to recover the materials that were difficult to detect during the excavation process. The analysis was made based on the material found and the considerations made during the process of excavation.

They performed basic field documentation tasks during an ongoing excavation project, such as employing measuring and documentation tools and creating written, graphic and photographic record principles of GIS use and its applications in archaeology.

Students participated in processing the finds and documentation procedures including cleaning, sorting, labelling, documenting, storing the archaeological finds, studying and recording Bronze Age and Viking material, and so on.

Throughout the excavation and post-excavation analysis, students gained experience in detailed recording techniques necessary for optimum information recovery. These included GPS recording of every excavation for digital mapping and the collection of archaeological material.

Students were also taught the basic principles of photogrammetry and practiced them by maintaining a photogrammetric record of the areas they excavated.

Furthermore, students gained experience with post-excavation analysis during the fieldwork by carrying out an analysis of the material they excavated.

Students conducted the standard and 3D comprehensive recording. Additionally, the mapping material already collected is being worked upon simultaneously with current fieldwork findings.

All the materials were sorted and subjected to basic analysis unless they needed special treatment or further analysis.

We appreciate the outstanding participation of the IFR students on the field and in the laboratory activities carried out. We also acknowledge that the SMAP reached its goals.

The results of the excavations will be included in the season's report and in future articles, posters, and presentations given by the BM researchers. Credit will always be given to the students and the IFR for their wonderful support.