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20 Artefacts from the 2011–12 Excavations

The excavation led by Avaldsnes Royal Manor (ARM) Project in 2011 and 2012 produced an artefact assemblage demonstrating human presence at Avaldsnes from the pioneer settlement of the early Stone Age until the present. In this chapter, the artefacts are presented in groups according to their function and discussed in relation to date and context. All finds are included in tabular form while the chapter provides some general observations on the different types of artefacts and more detailed information of certain artefacts that may shed light on dating, on-site activities, or social status. A varied range of activities such as cooking and eating, crafts, and cultivation are evident through the presence of artefacts. When possible, this chapter includes assessments of how these activities fit in with the general interpretation of the individual site periods.

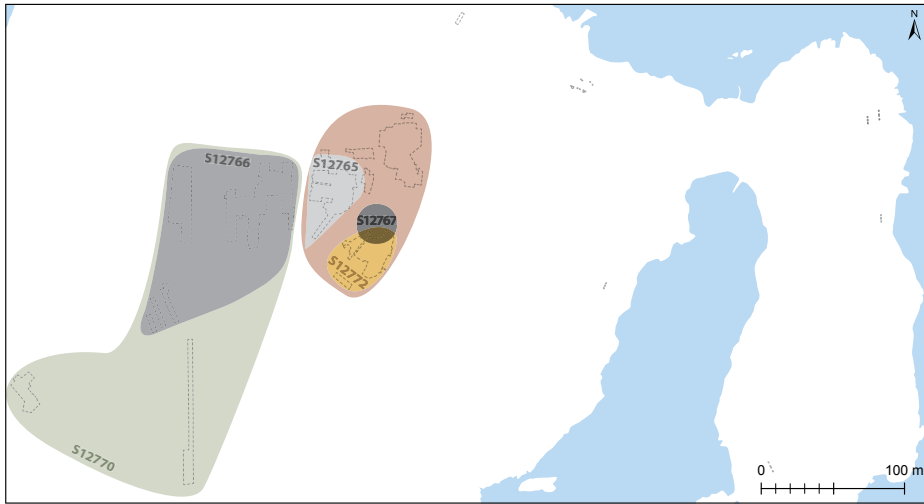
20.1 The organisation of finds and samples

The artefacts and samples are organised among 17 museum inventory numbers with respect to contexts. All are held in the collections of the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger. These contexts include features such as buildings or mounds, but may also refer to an excavation area (Tab. 20.1 and Fig. 20.1 for contexts and their related inventory numbers). In two cases the inventory numbers transect contexts or excavation areas: S12768 comprises A10, A14, and immediately adjacent construction features, because fragmented preservation and truncations made contextual discernment futile, while S12770 covers Areas 2, 3, and 4 due to the retrieval of artefacts from cultivation deposits located across area borders.

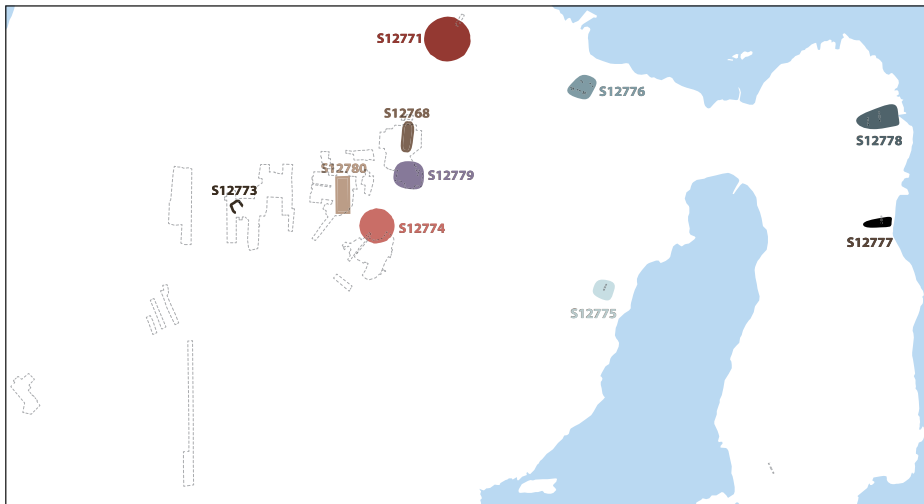
Tab. 20.1: Overview of the finds inventory numbers

S12765	Finds from metal-detecting, SP II–VI
S12766	Finds from metal-detecting, SP II–VI
S12767	Finds from metal-detecting, SP II–VI
S12768	Finds and samples from buildings A10 and A14, SP III and SP V
S12769	Finds and samples from non-building related contexts Area 1, all site periods
S12770	Finds and samples from features and deposits, SP I–V
S12771	Finds and samples from Flaghaug grave mound, SP I–V
S12772	Finds and samples from production-related features and deposits, SP III–V
S12773	Samples from building A11, SP I
S12774	Finds and samples from Kjellerhaug grave mound, SP I–III
S12775	Samples from boathouse A41, SP IV
S12776	Finds and samples from boathouse A40, SP III
S12777	Finds from stone fence, SP VII
S12778	Finds and samples from boathouse A46, SP VII
S12779	Finds and samples from medieval ruin and deposits, SP VI
S12780	Finds and samples from building A13, SP III
S12781	Soil samples from cores from across the site, all site periods

With colour-coded references to Fig. 20.1 and **Tab. 20.2**. Inventory numbers on white background contain only samples and are not discussed in this chapter.



- METAL DETECTING
- S12765 Area 5
 - S12766 Area 2
 - S12767 Kjellerhaug
 - S12769 Non-building related contexts
 - S12770 Features and deposits
 - S12772 Production-related features and deposits
 - Excavated area



- | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| BUILDINGS | BOATHOUSES | GRAVE MOUNDS | ■ S12777 Stone fence A45 |
| ■ S12768 A10 and A14 | ■ S12775 A41 | ■ S12771 Flaghaug | ■ S12779 Medieval ruin A12 and deposits |
| ■ S12773 A11 | ■ S12776 A40 | ■ S12774 Kjellerhaug | |
| ■ S12780 A13 | ■ S12778 A46 | | |

Fig. 20.1: Coloured areas show the geographic location and extent for the individual inventory numbers.

Colours refer to tables 20.1 and 20.2.

Illustration: I. T. Bøckman, MCH.

Tab. 20.2: Distribution of artefact types with respect to museum contexts and inventory numbers.

	TOTAL		12765		12766		12767		12768		12769		12770	
	pcs	g	pcs	g	pcs	g	pcs	g	pcs	g	pcs	g	pcs	g
<i>Personal decoration and equipment</i>														
Beads	14										4		3	
Fingerring, copper alloy	1				1									
Bone comb	1													
<i>Tools and equipment</i>														
Textile tools	3		1											
Coins	3		1		1									
Weights	5		4		1									
Projectiles, iron	2												1	
Ingot, lead	4				4									
Iron rivets, nails	150				1				5		19		4	
Stone Age, various	536	12,3							7		35	12,3	119	
Various, iron	8								3				4	
Various, stone, lead, bone	15		2								3		2	
Various, copper alloy	4				2						1			
Metal fragments		606,9	25,4		53,3		107,8		5,6		155,4		96,4	
Iron	1	446,2			12,1		107,8		5,6		142,8		96,4	
Copper alloy	1	32	8,3		8,5									
lead	1	128,7	17,1		32,7						12,6			
<i>Production waste</i>														
Mica	7													
Horn/antler, amber, fragment	2	0,9											2	
Burnt clay		5248,8							47		865,5		252,8	
Slag	227	3524,6					15,3		0,4		20	31,2	1110,6	
<i>Food, drink etc.</i>														
Quern, griddle stones	5										1			
Vessels, kettle	9				1								1	
Pottery	973								17		44		180	
Glass, various	6								1				4	
Bones. Teeth	2	750,17							14,4		1	26,8	156,3	
<i>Building remains</i>														
Brick, tile, mortar	2	17092,3									2	193,7		
Windowframe, soapstone		217												
Windowglass	6								1					

With colour-coded references to Table 20.1 and Fig. 20.1. The artefacts are organised in groups depending on their function. The table includes only finds; samples are omitted.

12771	12772	12774	12776	12777	12778	12779	12780
pcs g	pcs g	pcs g	pcs g	pcs g	pcs g	pcs g	pcs g
	6					1 1	
2 4	1 1 7 259 1 4	1 68	1 18		15 1	94 19 4	1 9
30,5 30,5	26,5 1 26,5				2,3 2,3	101,8 20,3 1 15,2 66,3	1,9 1,9
	0,9 2669,2 53 253	0,1	106,3		547,2 153 1691,4	219,4 1 354,5	7 540,7 8,2
7	4 434 157,6	18 2,3	5 4,5	1	3 16 1 40,7	1 3 233 1 326,5	18 1 21,3
0,1					0,7	16893 217 5	5,6



Fig. 20.2: Photo of adverse and reverse of the coin S12765/1.

Scale: 2:1.

Photo: Anke Kobbe, AM.

20.2 Coins

Two coins were found in topsoil by metal-detecting in Areas 2 and 5, while one coin was found during excavations in medieval deposits adjacent to the medieval ruin A12 and is clearly related to the high medieval royal complex.

S12765/1 from Area 5 (Fig. 20.2) is a silver pfennig issued by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III in Goslar, after the reform of 1046–7. The coin weighs 0.84 g, the adverse showing an *en face* half-length portrait of a crowned Henry III with the inscription HEINRICVS IMP. The reverse shows half-length portraits of the apostles Simon and Judas, both with halos (Dannenberg 1876:fig. 668; Kluge 1991:pl. 21, no. 121). At some point, Judas's face was scratched while Henry's crown was enlarged. The coin has been identified by Professor Svein Gullbekk, MCH, who also noted clear traces of wear indicative of circulation for at least two decades.

The other coin retrieved by metal-detecting is S12766/2 (Fig. 20.3). This coin has been identified by Gullbekk as a *klipping*, a squared copper coin with a circular stamp, likely issued by the Scandinavian monarch Christian II in the 1520s.

The third coin was found in a medieval deposit near the medieval masonry cellar A12. S12779/1 (Fig. 20.3) is a medieval coin of silver and copper alloy weighing 0.75 g, of which 27.5% is silver. The coin has been identified by Terje Helland, MCH, as a *hvid* issued by *Rigsrådet* in Malmø, at that time part of Denmark, in the interregnum period between Christian I (1448–81) and Hans (1483–1513) (Schou 1926:fig. 11; Galster 1972:fig. 22).



Fig. 20.3: Photos of adverse and reverse of the coins S12766/2 (below) and S12779/1 (above).

Scale: 2:1.

Photo: Terje Tveit, AM.

20.3 Iron projectiles

The socket from an arrowhead (S12772/2, Fig. 20.4), blade missing due to corrosion or fracture, was retrieved from the fill of the stone-built palisade base A20 in Area 6. The type and date are discussed by Østmo (Ch. 11:217), leading to the conclusion that it most likely is a redeposited arrowhead type R213 or R535, dating to the period AD 300–500.

A spearhead (S12770/133, Fig. 20.4) was also retrieved outside of original context as it was found in the transition between a cultivation deposit cut by cooking pits dated to SP III and the overlying cultivation deposit, postdating the same cooking pits. The spearhead bears clear resemblance with Petersen (1919) type A or Solberg (1984) type VI.1a with a flat lanceolate blade, wide and short socket and no marked corner points, normally dated to the 8th century. However, the Avaldsnes specimen differs from these types in the lack of mid-rib or vertical grooves on the socket; although Rygh's type specimen R522 C1936 does not have either mid-rib or vertical



Fig. 20.4: Photos of the spearhead S12770/133 (left, maximum length 15.3 cm) and the arrowhead socket S12772/2 (right, maximum length 2.4 cm).

Photo: Anke Kobbe, AM.

grooves, neither do some specimens of Solberg's type VI.1a (1984:55). More importantly, S12770/133 is distinctly smaller than spearheads classified as Petersen type A (5 specimens) or Solberg type IV.1 (4 specimens) in the collections of the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger: the former measures only 15.3 cm, of which the socket is 1/3 of the total length, whereas the comparable spearheads or sockets are approximately twice as long, and the holotype of Petersen type A (C7662) measures 27.4 cm.

The spearhead's relative shortness, in tandem with the lack of mid-rib and vertical grooves on the socket, speaks against an Iron Age date, requiring the consideration of other parallels (Hauken personal communication 2016). The spearhead is registered as historic, possibly medieval in the inventory of the Archaeological Museum in Stavanger. A spearhead of similar shape with lanceolate blade, no median rib, and a short, wide socket was found at Bornholm in a 13th-century context, offers a possible parallel; unfortunately, the find was published without scale (Grieg 1943:114–15), preventing further conclusions as to which of these types provides the closest parallel to the Avaldsnes specimen. As the spearhead was found not by digging deep in the SP III cultivation deposit, but rather by removing younger, superimposed deposits, the context does not contradict either of the suggested dates to the 8th or the 13th centuries.

20.4 Personal decoration and equipment

Beads of glass, amber, and jet as well as a singular copper-alloy finger ring were the only types of personal decoration found during the ARM excavations. The finger ring is a stray find and cannot be typed or dated. The beads are mainly simple ring- or barrel-shaped, made of amber or of opaque or translucent glass in the colours blue, white, yellow, auburn, and green. The majority of the beads were found in the farmyard-area established in SP III with a tendency of a cluster in the Area 6. Though soil chemical signatures may imply artisan work using ashy fluxes, there are no clear indications of local bead production (Østmo, Ch. 9:159). The spatial distribution of beads may well be explained by the proximity to dwellings and farmyard activities.



Fig. 20.5: Collection of the beads from Avaldsnes.

Scale: 1:1. Top row: 12769/57, 74, 91, 114. Second row: 12770/9–11. Third row: 12772/15–20. Bottom row: 12779/16.

Photo: Terje Tveit, AM.

In Denmark, the translucent or transparent simple beads of blue, green, and brownish shades are typical of the early Roman Iron Age and persist until the end of the Roman Period, while beads of opaque yellow, orange, red, and brownish-red glass begin to appear at the transition to the Migration Period (Olldag 1995:27–31). The Avaldsnes beads may therefore date to the Roman and the Migration periods – that is, to the entire SP III. One bead, S12769/57 (Fig. 20.5), has an outer coating of amber coloured glass; a bead-type generally termed a gold- or metal-foiled bead. When such beads appear in Scandinavia in the Roman Iron Age, they commonly have gold or silver foil covered by a translucent layer of glass creating a metallic appearance, likely imitating silver or gold beads (Olldag 1995:27–8; Sode et al. 2010:320–1). The metal-foiled beads disappear in the 6th century and reappear in the late 8th century, then mostly with silver foil or without foil, with the metallic effect provided only by the outer coating of glass against the core (Sode et al. 2010:231). S12769/57 should therefore date to either the Roman Iron Age or the Viking Age. As the thread-hole in the Avaldsnes specimen is larger than similar beads found at Viking Age Kaupang, a closer parallel may be found among Danish beads from the Roman Iron Age (Olldag 1994:pl. 1, 5th row, no. 3, type 1305, alternatively Pl. 5, 4th and 5th rows, type 3200 or 300; Wiker personal communication 2012).

Another bead (S12772/16, Fig. 20.5) was found in a hearth dated to the 3rd–4th centuries (Ua-45336) in Area 6. It is formed by a helical or spiral-wound glass rod,



Fig. 20.6: Bone comb, S12779/22.
Scale: 1:1.
Photo: Helge Hollund, AM.

creating two segments. The translucent blue glass, in light of known Roman Iron Age spiral-shaped beads from Denmark and on the Continent, support the date provided by the radiocarbon-dated hearth (Olldag 1994, type 1103). These, as well as some 3rd–4th century specimens found (and possibly produced) on the British Isles are formed in blue glass by a similar technique, but not segmented (Guido 1978:91–2, fig. 37, 1; Guido and Welch 1999:51).

Half a barrel-shaped white-and-turquoise mosaic bead with yellow, red, white, and black checkerboard pattern was also found in Area 6 (S12772/19, Fig. 20.5). Checkerboard patterns appear in Scandinavia in the Roman Iron Age, mainly in the 3rd century, in the Merovingian Period, and in the early Viking Age (Olldag 1994:233). The combination of colours resembles a late Roman Period bead (Olldag 1994:pl. 4, 4th row, no. 4). The bead was found in a construction layer containing fragments of Iron Age pottery within palisade base A20, which was likely constructed around AD 600. The mixing with SP III pottery indicates that the bead was likewise redeposited, and should be dated to SP III.

The bone comb (S12779/22, Fig. 20.6) is dated to the 12th–16th centuries (Nordström 1996:figs. 5 and 22).

20.5 Tools and equipment

Various tools and equipment have been found across the site. An undated stylus was found in Area 1 and may be related to the medieval complex or the post-medieval rectory. A gaming piece of horn, likely a knight for a chessboard dated to the 15th–17th centuries, bears witness to leisure activity at the post-medieval rectory.

Textile production is documented by spinning whorls from the A13 longhouse in Area 5 and its immediate surroundings and by a piece of a loom weight of clay



Fig. 20.7: Weights located through metal detecting in Areas 2 and 5. Scale: 1:1. From left to right: S12765/4–7, S12766/7. Photo: Terje Tveit, AM.

S12772/89 from a waste deposit underneath the SP IV palisade-base. The loom weight resembles Petersen (1951:fig. 161); similar types are found in Viking Age contexts, such as Kaupang, but also in settlement contexts from the Migration Period (Helliksen 1997:79–81; Øye 2011:351–4). Other tools related to daily routines are whetstones for sharpening other tools and equipment; three slate whetstones were located in Area 6, one of quartzite in Area 2, and one of sandstone in Area 5. A fragment of a sickle (S12768.1) was found in Area 1, likely predating A10, but it is impossible to identify or date due to fragmentation. A tong (S12768/2), most similar to type R398 dated by Petersen (1951:85–90) to the late Iron Age, and an iron hook (S12768/3) were found in the hearth and wall ditch of A10. An awl for metalwork, wood-carving, leather-work, or similar crafts, as well as pointed iron objects that are likely fragments of various unidentified tools or equipment, were found in Area 6. The awl resembles the one dated by Petersen (1951:233–5, fig. 127) to the late Iron Age. In addition, seven sinkers of lead, soapstone, and unspecified rock were found. Most of these are difficult to identify or date; although some may be related to fishing, the function of most of the sinkers remains uncertain. One semi-circular sinker of soapstone (S12779/87), found in a medieval deposit near the masonry cellar, was identified as a medieval type (Olsen 2004, type A). An unfinished semi-circular sinker of soapstone, presumably of similar date, was found in the vicinity.

The tools and equipment are generally located within the farmyard established in SP III, likely reflecting the everyday routine of an Iron Age farm. In addition to tools, five weights of lead or copper alloy could indicate trade near the farmyard in Area 5 and in the field in Area 2. The weights have rather wide, though partly overlapping date ranges, spanning from the early Iron Age to the early post-medieval period (S12765/4–7, S12766/7; Fig. 20.7).

20.6 Metals

This group of artefacts is heterogeneous and dominated by fragmented objects of iron or copper alloy of uncertain functions, such as small, undecorated fittings from unknown objects or various small fragments as well as rivets and nails of iron. While the individual fragments convey little information, the clustering of metal fragments and fittings are concentrated in places where metal-detecting was performed; even higher volumes of metal were retrieved from Area 1, in cooking pits and cultivation deposits in Areas 2–4, and in medieval deposits near the masonry cellar A12. Although some iron smithing is indicated from slags in Area 6, only 26.5 g of iron fragments plus a handful of rivets or nails have been found within this area (Østmo, Ch. 9:171–7). It is impossible to assess the volume or type of smithing taking place in Area 6 on the basis of the metal waste and nails. Nails and rivets may also be related to various constructions rather than to smithing.

20.7 Production waste

The iron smithing in Area 6 has already been addressed with respect to metal waste. Regarding slags, Area 6 (S12772) contains relatively high concentrations of spheroidal slags, while other pieces of slag are found in larger concentrations in Area 2 (S12770) and in the boathouse A46 (S12778), dating to SP VII. The concentrations of burnt and sintered clay does however show a clear clustering in Area 6, likely reflecting that they stem from ovens of various functions, ranging from metalwork to drying of grain, possibly baking of bread or pottery production. S12780 contains a concentration of mica fragments in the hearth in longhouse A13. Their function remains unknown, but could have been used in clay for pottery production. The slag in S12778 likely reflects secondary use of the boathouse area in SP VII.

20.8 Food- and drink-related artefacts

The food- and drink-related artefacts are related to the preparation of food; these include a quern stone of volcanic rock (S12779/86) found in a medieval context by the masonry cellar A12, schist griddle stones in boathouse A46 dated to SP VII, and fragments of vessels or kettles of copper alloy (S12779/2, Fig. 20.8) or soapstone in Areas 1, 2, and 6. Judging from the type of ware as well as presence of carbonised food remains on some sherds, some of these ceramic vessels would have been used for



Fig. 20.8: Fragments of copper alloy kettle, S12779/2, from medieval context by the masonry ruin A12.

Scale: 1:2.

Photo: Terje Tveit, AM.

cooking. Other ceramic pots are likely tableware. The pottery has been analysed by Kristoffersen and Hauken (Ch. 21).

A few fragments of drinking beakers as well as flasks of glass are dated to the late medieval or early post-medieval period, relating to the high-medieval royal complex or the rectory respectively. These were found either in deposits related to the masonry cellar or as small fragments apparently washed into features in SP III building A10 from a superimposed late medieval or early post-medieval floor deposit.

20.9 Organic waste

The finds of organic waste comprise carbonised food on pottery sherds from a cooking pit in Area 6 as well as macrofossils and burnt bone (discussion in Ballantyne et al., Ch. 19).

20.10 Building remains

Mineralised wood found in the wall construction and other places in the boathouse A40 may be part of the building construction or related to the boat itself or boat repair activity. Although some bricks, window glass, and building elements of soapstone were found across Area 1 and 2, the majority were located in medieval contexts around the masonry cellar A12 and redeposited in the deposits forming the post-medieval rectory garden, indicating the tearing down of the building elements related to A12 or adjacent to this building.

20.11 Lithics

The lithic material found during the ARM excavation was mainly redeposited in Iron Age contexts, resulting in a mixing of artefacts such as microliths, flakes, microblades, and various types of cores, burin, crested blades, a greenschist round-butted adze, and undatable microdebitage. This artefact assemblage likely represents several separate events spanning most of the Mesolithic to the late Neolithic. Well-preserved Stone Age sites ranging from pioneer sites to late Neolithic settlements with cultural deposits have been excavated in the vicinity.

20.12 Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided an overview of the types of artefacts found during the ARM 2011–12 excavations. Certain artefact types or specific artefacts have been described in detail, while others have been treated more generally. Many of the artefacts found across the excavation areas are not easily dated as they are too fragmented to be securely identified or have wide dating ranges. When possible, they have been assigned to a site period or known activity in the vicinity. Otherwise, the artefacts are not contextualised in this chapter – contextualisation is covered by the respective thematic chapters in the present volume.

Acknowledgement: I would like to thank Gry Wiker for assistance with identifying the glass beads and for suggesting parallels and relevant literature, Svein Gullbekk and Terje Helland for identifying the coins, and Åsa Dahlin Hauken for input regarding the identification of the spearhead.