Glass and Amber Beads from the Late Roman Iron Age in Scania

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Abstract

Glass and amber beads are colourful artefacts that have been much less discussed than other accessories such as fibulae. Like these, the beads were part of the dress that signalled the wearers' social and economic status. In the article, beads from 25 graves from modern-day Scania, dated to the Roman Iron Age periods C1 and C2, are presented. In many ways they show a varied and unique expression, strengthening the view that the less ostentatious graves in Scania, in comparison with Zealand, are due to a more stable community rather than to a lack of resources.

Introduction

Graves and grave inventories are frequently used materials in archaeological research (for an excellent summary of what has been written on Scania, see Björk 2005). Especially fibulae, ceramics and weapons have been studied and published in great detail. Glass and amber beads have mostly been treated much more sparsely and often neglected. The large variation and the lack of an all-encompassing typology have probably not helped (cf. Olldag 1994; Knöfler 2011). The situation has improved during the last 20 years when more and more Danish beads have been published in consistent ways, with good photographs (e.g. Ethelberg 2000; Boye 2009) and analysis (Lund Hansen 2009). From a Scanian perspective Berta Stjernquist touched on the subject in several articles about amber and rich female graves (Stjernquist 1994; Stjernquist 2002a; Stjernquist 2002b; Stjernquist 2003), but never made a thorough survey. The aim of the article is to improve on this by presenting some of the Scanian graves with beads from the Late Roman Iron Age and to show their value as a source of knowledge about social status and identity. Much more can be said about the topic treated here, about trade, and about the beads themselves and their manufacture. I hope to return to the beads and the graves in the future.

In the article I discuss beads found in graves in Scania dated to the 3rd and early 4th century CE, i.e. periods C1(b) and C2 of the Roman Iron Age. Approximately 50 graves in Scania can be dated to this time span (number based on the catalogue in Björk 2005). I will present 25 of these, from 16 different sites, in this article (Fig. 1; Table I). Very few beads

can be dated earlier than C1b, and sometime during late C2 – early C3 the bead fashion changed (the changing fashion on Zealand described in Lund Hansen 2009 and Boye & Lund Hansen 2013 is clearly visible in Scania as well; Lundqvist 2018). There is no strict limit, however, and it would have been possible both to add and to exclude. The presentation is based on a hands-on survey of the known glass and amber beads from graves dated to the Early Iron Age in Scania. Comparisons are primarily made based on the Danish material found in the catalogues in Olldag 1994, Ethelberg 2000 and Lind 2010, and some readily available articles. There are thus a lot of beads outside Scania that I have not seen or read about, but the inhabitants of Early Iron Age Scania of course had contacts with other regions as well, not least across the Baltic.

All glass beads, and probably at least the more elaborate amber beads, are imports in this period. Where they came from is a very interesting question that is outside the scope of the present study. Many were probably made in what today would be southern Germany, but beads came from as far away as today's Ukraine and the Middle East (Spaer 1993; Olldag 1994; Thomsen 2002; Cieśliński 2009).

In the article, glass bead types are specified according to the type scheme in Olldag 1994. The reason for this is that I consider it more in line with what I find in Scania than the often used scheme in Tempelmann-Mączyńska 1985. None of them covers all the variations found. Some glass beads and the amber beads in general are easiest to find in Lind 2010.

Beads, like rings and bracelets, are dress accessories with no practical function. Even the most elaborate, and possibly rather impractical, fibula was still used for keeping parts of the clothing together. Perhaps we cannot completely rule out a function of the beads as some kind of rosaries, but since the majority of them were worn around the neck or suspended from fibulae or needles at, or close to, the shoulders, I think it is very unlikely. This does not mean that beads and other ornaments only had an aesthetic function; their symbolic value was probably rather high as well. Dress – clothes, accessories, hairstyles and other means of covering or adorning the body – is a powerful means of signalling who we are (or wish to be). We use it to express our identity and social standing at both individual and group level. It is limited by what is accepted in our community and by what is available for economic and practical reasons. The supply is much bigger today, but the main force is the same as it was during the

Fig. 1. The sites discussed in the article. 1. Balkåkra, Balkåkra parish; 2. Bodarp, Bodarp parish; 3. Lilla Markie, Bösarp parish; 4. Bjärsgård park, Klippan parish; 5. Löderup, Löderup parish; 6 Simris, Simris parish; 7. Gårdlösa, Smedstorp parish; 8. Hammarsnäs, Stora Hammar parish; 9. Köpingebro, Stora Köpinge parish; 10. Bandyklubban district, Strövelstorp parish; 11. Kabbarp, Djurslöv parish; 12. Tottarp, Djurslöv parish; 13. Trelleborg; 14. Uppåkra, Uppåkra parish; 15. Valleberga, Valleberga parish; 16. Skillinge, Östra Hoby parish.

Table I. The graves and the beads treated in the article

Balkåkra, Balkåkra sn	SHM 16442	O 2208: 2; O 2407 :2, O 3300: 19
Bodarp, Bodarp sn	SHM 7667	O 2211:10; amber unspec: 1
Bodarp, Bodarp sn	SHM 8327F	O 2211:1
Lilla Markie, Bösarp sn	SHM 19757b	O 2413:2
Bjärsgård park, Klippan sn (formerly Gråmanstorp sn)	LUHM 29122	O 1310: 1; O 3300: 1; glass melted: 1; rock crystal: 1; lost: 1
Löderup, Löderup sn, Grave 8	LUHM 32125	O 1104: 4; O 1106: 1; O 1107: 1; O 1112:1; O 1202: 1; O 1203: 100; O 1212: 8; O 1213: 1; O 1306: 1; O 1307: 3; O 1308: 4; O 1309: 3; O 1310: 8; O 1312: 1; O 2208: 2; glass unspec: 7; glass fragm; Lind 59: 125; Lind 61: 3; Lind 65: 1; Lind 69: 11
Simris, Simris sn, Grave 41	LUHM 29155	O 2203: 3
Simris, Simris sn, Grave 47	LUHM 29155	O 1212b: 3; O 1308: 5; O 1311?: 1; O 3300: 7; Lind 57: 3; gold-in-glass unspec: 3; Lind 59: 6; Lind 62: 3; glass fragm
Gårdlösa, Smedstorp sn, Grave 2	SHM 25302	O 1104?: 1; O 1107:1; O 1111:2; O 1214:1; O 1303:1; O 1308:3; O 1309:1; O 2201:1; O 2212: 1; O 2407:1; O 2413:2; O 2415:2 O 3300:6; Lind 12:2; Lind 60a:1; Lind 66:1; silver spiral: 1; silver tube: 1; glass unspec: 3
Gårdlösa, Smedstorp sn, Grave 3	LUHM without number	O 3300: 3 + fragm; Lind 59:1
Gårdlösa, Smedstorp sn, Grave 4	LUHM without number	O 1104: 1; O 1301: 2; O 1308: 1; O 1310: 1; O 2203: 2; O 2305: 1; amber rounded: 1; amber unspec: 1
Gårdlösa, Smedstorp sn, Grave 14	LUHM without number	O 1111: 1; O 2407: 1; Lind 59:1
Hammarsnäs, Stora Hammar sn, Grave 13	SHM 21706:28	glass unspec mosaic: 1
Hammarsnäs, Stora Hammar sn, Grave 87	SHM 21706:43	O 1104: 1; O 1106: 1; O 1109: 1; O 1204: 9; O 1307: 4; O 1309: 1; O 1312: 1; O 2203: 5; O 2204: 1; O 2208: 1; O 2211: 1; Koch 50: 1; Lind 59: 1; Lind 60: 1; glass unspec: 2
Hammarsnäs, Stora Hammar sn, Grave 95	SHM 20443:23	O 1109: 1; O 3300: 14; Lind 59: 2
Hammarsnäs, Stora Hammar sn, Grave 135	SHM 20816:83	O 2211: 1
Köpingebro, Stora Köpinge sn	LUHM 31437	O 3300: 39
Strövelstorp, Strövelstorp sn, A1961	LUHM 30544	Lind 59: 33; amber rounded: 1
Djurslöv, Tottarp sn	LUHM 28573	Lind 59: 49; silver spiral: 8
Kabbarp, Tottarp sn	SHM 11392	O 1104: 4; O 1109: 1; O 1110: 4; O 1204: 1; O 1212: 2; O 1214: 5; O 1305: 1; O 1306: 4; O 1307: 4; O 1310: 2; O 2203: 3; O 2208: 1; O 2212?:1; O 2219: 2; glass unspec: 1; Lind 59: 2; Lind 69: 34; amber fragm
Trelleborg	LUHM without number	O 1203: 1; O 1311: 1; O 2203: 1; Lind 59: 6; Lind 62: 1; Lind 69: 1; Lind 70: 1; silver spiral: 1; amber unspec: 1; amber fragm
Uppåkra, Uppåkra sn	LUHM 30001	O 1104: 3, O 1107: 1; O 1204: 6; O 1212: 4; O 1307: 3; O 1308: 1; O 1310: 1; O 2208: 1; O 3300: 1; Lind 59: 5; Lind 62: 1; Lind 65: 1; amber rounded: 2; amber unspec: 1; bronze ring: 1; glass fragm
Valleberga 24, Valleberga sn, Grave 1	LUHM 28945	O 1208: 2; amber rounded: 3
Valleberga 49, Valleberga sn	LUHM 32326	O 1104: 5; O 1203: 1; O 1204: 20; O 1308: 5; O 1312: 4; O 2204: 5; O 2208: 1; Lind 59: 14; Lind 60: 1; Lind 61: 4; amber barrel-shaped: 1
Skillinge, Östra Hoby sn	LUHM 28981	O 1308: 1; O 3300: 21

Roman Iron Age, and is and has been in every society. Beads may be small, but they could send subtle signals about the wearer's identity, wealth and background. These signals would have been strengthened by other jewellery, hairstyles and clothes in different fabrics and colours, themes that will not be treated here, but must be kept in mind for the total picture.

The beads and the graves

The most common type of glass bead during the period treated is gold-in-glass, with a total of 104. The only more frequent type are simple disc-shaped amber beads. Although the bead type may be common, its distribution is uneven. Ninety-three of the beads come from four graves where gold-in-glass dominates, and another 14 from a grave where they make up slightly less than half of the beads. With one exception, these graves are located not far from the south coast. The remainder are from three graves with just a few beads.

Balkåkra, Hammarsnäs 95, Skillinge, Köpingebro and Simris 47

A grave from Balkåkra contained at least 18 gold-in-glass beads, one red glass bead, two mosaic beads and a bronze "amulet case" (Fig. 2). A grave from Hammarsnäs contained 14 gold-in-glass beads, one red glass bead, two amber beads and a gold pendant (Fig. 3). Finally a grave from Skillinge yielded 21 gold-in-glass beads, one blue glass bead and a stag-shaped bronze fibula (Fig. 4). No other graves in Scania show similar combinations of gold-in-glass beads and one rare item (the pendant, the amulet case and the stag fibula). The grave with by far the most gold-in-glass beads, 39, is from Köpingebro (Fig. 5). It is the one furthest from the coast, about 3 kilometres, and no other beads or any more uncommon object were found in it, only two fragmented fibulae.

The grave from Balkåkra was found during ploughing in 1919 and excavated by Olof Sundin. No other graves are known at the site. Apart from the gold-in-glass beads and the amulet case the grave contained fragments from yet more gold-in-glass beads, a turquoise bead with mosaic in yellow, brown, red and white, a fragment of a mosaic bead in the same colours, two black glass beads with yellow and green? crossing wave decoration, three bronze fibulae type A VII 196, a comb, an iron knife, a bronze needle, an amphibolite and a ceramic vessel. The skeleton was lying on its back, with its head to the south-east. The beads, hanging in one row, and the amulet case were found on the chest, and there was a fibula on each shoulder and one by the jaw (Sundin 1920). No osteological analysis was performed. The drawing shows a skeleton approximately 1.65 m tall, so it is at least not a small child.

The amulet case is of Roman origin. They are very rare in northern Europe. Four have been found on Zealand and two on Bornholm (Ethelberg 2000, 88 f.; Knöfler 2011, 17). Ethelberg also lists three from Poland and four from Germany, it has not been within the scope of the present work to ascertain whether more have been found. The one from Balkåkra was empty apart from a piece of iron rust on the inside, but it is possible, perhaps likely, that it originally also contained various organic materials. Flax fibres, wheat grains and leather were found in an amulet case from Himlingøje (Lund Hansen 1995, 154).

Grave 95 from Hammarsnäs is one of at least 141 graves from this site, which is one of the largest known Early Iron Age grave-fields in Scania. It was excavated in 1933 by Folke Hansen. Eleven more of the graves contained beads, two of which will be treated below. Apart from the beads and the gold pendant, grave 95 contained one silver and two bronze fibulae type A VII 196, two amber beads and a tiny hemispherical piece of light green glass. The skeleton was lying on its side, with its head to

Fig. 2. Balkåkra. Photo by The Swedish History Museum.

Fig. 3. Hammarsnäs Grave 95. Photo by The Swedish History Museum, modified by the author.

Fig. 4. Skillinge. Photo by the author.

Fig. 5. Köpingebro. Photo by the author.

Fig. 6. Gårdlösa Grave 3. Photo by the author.

Fig. 7. Gårdlösa Grave 4. Photo by the author.

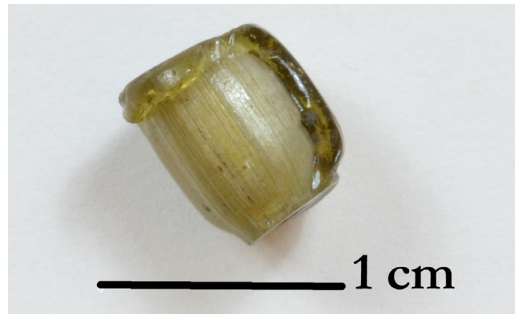

Fig. 8. The gold-in-glass bead from Bjärsgård. Photo by the author.

Fig. 9. Uppåkra. Photo by the author.

the south, and is described as a "full-grown weak individual, probably a woman" ("fullvuxen klent byggd individ, sannolikt kvinna"). The beads and the pendant were found near the neck and the fibulae by the shoulders (Hansen 1936, 58). Hansen's osteological reasoning may have its flaws, but a later study showed that he was usually right (Pettersson 2002, 627 ff.). We may assume that the beads were hanging between two of the fibulae. The tiny piece of green glass was also found here and might have been attached to one of the fibulae. The red bead from Hammarsnäs is flat and "box-like", Olldag 1109. There is no parallel from any Scanian grave; the ones found in Olldag's catalogue date to C1 and C2. The two amber beads are simple flat discs, the most common bead type of all.

The gold pendant from Hammarsnäs is listed by Andersson as one of nine *bullae* in Scandinavia. He also mentions other denominations that have been used for this kind of object, such as "kapselformigt hänge" (capsule-shaped pendant). In its present shape the pendant from Hammarsnäs is a tiny bowl, and the same goes for most similar pendants (Andersson 1995, 35 ff.). A pendant from Friel in Västergötland (The Swedish History Museum, SHM 6567) is inset with a piece of amber.

The grave from Skillinge was surrounded by a stone cist of limestone slabs and was found and badly damaged by the landowner who wanted to get rid of the stones. The landowner found three fibulae – two bronze and one partly gilded silver A VII 196 – and some of the gold-in-glass beads. The remains of the grave were excavated by Berta Stjernquist. *In situ* she found a dissolved ceramic vessel and parts of the skeleton which showed that the body had its head to the north-west. The rest of the finds – more beads, the stag-shaped fibula, two lead pendants (one fragmentary), a piece of bronze, ceramic sherds and some fragments of cloth and leather – were found in the dumped soil. Other limestone slabs, said to have been dug up from the same field, were observed and Stjernquist presumed that there had been more graves since this type of stone is not natural at the site (Stjernquist 1955a; Stjernquist 1955b, 47). The stag-shaped fibula is as far as I know, a unique object, not similar to any other animal-shaped brooch. The single blue bead from Skillinge is covered in some kind of varnish that makes it hard to define its type exactly, but it is basically spherical, Olldag 1308. Blue beads of this type are very common during the whole Roman Iron Age and have no value for dating.

The grave at Köpingebro was excavated in 2004. It was disturbed by animals but most of the 39 gold-in-glass beads were lying together in the north-western part of the grave. No other beads were found and the skeleton was not preserved. The rest of the finds consisted of a vessel and two very fragmented fibulae, one of them a type A VII 196. No other graves are known nearby, but might exist north of the excavated area (Becker 2004, 19; Przybyła 2015, Fig. 11).

The fifth and last grave with a larger amount of gold-in-glass beads is grave 47 from the well-known Simris grave-field. This set has unfortunately not been available and the description is based on two photos and a short written description (Stjernquist no date; Stjernquist 1955b, Fig. XX:17; Stjernquist 1991, Fig. 10). The string of beads consists of thirteen gold-in-glass beads – seven double segmented, three of Lind's type 57 and three oblong with thicker ends – together with nine amber (Lind's type 62 and simple flat discs), eight blue (three Lind's type 16) and one "dark" glass bead, together with an unknown number of fragmented glass beads and lead and tin pendants. The beads were found by the skull and were worn in the hair. Also in the grave were a silver collar with a pear clasp, two silver fibulae (one partly gilded) type A VII 196, two bronze fibulae type A VII 205, fragments

of an iron knife, a comb, an iron buckle, a strap-end of silver and two ceramic pots. All surrounded by a stone cist (Stjernquist 1955b, 19 f.). The partly gilded silver fibula is similar, but not identical to, the fibula from Skillinge. Gold-in-glass, blue and amber are the colours of a Bornholmian P2 string in Jørgensen's categorization (Jørgensen 1989, 172), and the set has great similarities to several of the strings at Slusegård (Lind 2010).

Gårdlösa

Gold-in-glass beads were also found in four graves at Gårdlösa, six of them in grave 2, belonging to a woman in her twenties. She was buried with four fibulae – one silver A VII 196 with a runic inscription, one silver A VI with an elongated foot and two bronze A VI, fragments of a comb, a sewing needle, and a ceramic vessel. Some textile fragments were also preserved. The A VI fibulae with elongated foot dates this grave to *c*. 300 CE. Thirty beads, many of rare variants, hung in a row on her chest from the fibula with elongated foot and one flat bead was placed in the vessel (Gejwall 1981, 73; Stjernquist 1993a, 49; Stjernquist 1993b, 35 ff.). A turquoise, a yellow and a greyish blue bead are very tiny, less than 3 mm in one direction. Some of the beads have very few parallels in Scania. There are two yellowish green fluted beads, Olldag 1111, which have their only parallel in Gårdlösa grave 4 below, one bluish green with mosaic flowers, Olldag 2413, with its only parallel in Lilla Markie below, one turquoise with mosaic rosettes in brown, yellow, red and white, with its only parallels in Balkåkra above. Other beads have no parallels at all in Scania. These are two with meander decoration, Olldag 2415, one spotted, Olldag 2201, one black with a white crossing-wave pattern, the only one in Scania where the waves are white, one narrow double conical, Olldag 1107, and two lentil-shaped, Lind's type 12. Three beads lack parallels and cannot be placed in any type category. One is white, rather large, and decorated with pink and green stripes. One is spotted in black and white and has mosaic inlay in pink. The last one is beige with blue and pink shades. To find out whether the last two always looked like this or if they are degraded would need a closer examination than I had time to perform. There are two amber beads, one very even and smooth ring-shaped and one straight eight-shaped, Lind's type 68. The set includes a silver tube and a short, badly preserved, silver spiral. All in all the beads in the set very much resemble what can be found on Bornholm.

In Gårdlösa grave 3 there were one segmented gold-in-glass bead and one disc-shaped amber bead (Fig. 6). There were also some ceramic sherds and a broken A VII 205 fibula. The buried individual was probably an old woman (Gejwall 1981, 73; Stjernquist 1993, 49). In grave 4, belonging to a child about the age of five (Gejwall 1981, 73; Stjernquist 1993, 49), there were two amber beads, one blue, two white and two green monochrome glass beads, a clear blue glass bead with yellow eyes with red rims, Olldag 2401, and a green cylinder-shaped bead with white and red decoration, Olldag 2305 (Fig. 7). These last three lack parallels in Scania. There were also a fragmented turquoise bead with red dots, a fibula, A VII 196, an iron knife and a ceramic vessel. A child about the age of five was also buried in grave 14 together with a flat amber bead, a yellow, brown, white and red mosaic bead, a ribbed translucent bluish green bead, Olldag 1111, a knife, a ceramic vessel, probably a comb and perhaps a bracelet (Gejwall 1981, 74; Stjernquist 1993, 50). The mosaic bead is very similar to the fragmented ones from Balkåkra.

Bjärsgård and Uppåkra

A single gold-in-glass bead was found in a cremation grave at Bjärsgård, outside Klippan (Fig. 8), together with four other beads, an A VII 193 fibula, a knife and a spindle whorl

(Strömberg 1960; Strömberg 1961, 50). The grave has been dated to C1a (Helgesson 2002, 249), and the bead has an oblong shape which is not found in later graves. This makes it the earliest grave in Scania with a gold-in-glass bead. This goes against our expectations that novelties turn up first in (what we believe were) richer areas. According to Schulte, the fibula is of a rare sub-type as well (Schulte 2011, 95). Of the other beads, one is lost, one is melted, and one is made of rock crystal and without parallel. The fourth one is opaque yellow-green and rather plain.

A single gold-in-glass bead was also found in a grave south east of Uppåkra (Fig. 9). The grave should probably be dated to C2. Among the 31 beads there are blue and purple beads (see below), one bead with a wave decoration and a flat, trapezoid amber bead with an asymmetrically placed hole (Lind's type 64). There were also five damaged beads in a cremation grave close by which was dated to C1b, but they are not preserved (Nagmér 1988; dating Björk 2005, 198 f.).

Bösarp, Hammarsnäs 13 and Simris 41

A grave from Bösarp in Lilla Markie parish also belongs to C1b (Fig. 10). It was found in a gravel pit in 1931 and excavated by the tenant, who had his recompense reduced for not having notified the antiquarian authorities (SHM Huvudkatalog del B). He found two beads, bright blue with yellow, black and red rosette decoration, Olldag 2413. There were four fibulae: one silver A VII 196; one silver A VI 168 with gilt decoration; and two of bronze with high catch-plates.

Another type of mosaic bead, yellow and brown with an eye in turquoise and red (Fig. 11), was found together with a pottery vessel in grave 13 at Hammarsnäs (Hansen 1936, 25), where a baby was buried. There is no other bead like this in Scania.

The warrior grave Simris 41 is the only Roman Iron Age grave in Scania with beads that is generally interpreted as belonging to a man. This is probably correct, but note that only a few teeth were preserved of the skeleton (Stjernquist no date). There are two white beads decorated with dots/eyes in red, yellow and green and a badly preserved turquoise with the same decoration (Fig. 23). They are the only ones of Olldag's type 2401 in Scania.

Kabbarp, Djurslöv and Strövelstorp

Only two rosette fibulae are known from Scania, both are from Tottarp parish, and both were found together with beads (Lund Hansen & Przybyła 2010).

The first was found in 1901 in a sand-pit at Kabbarp by the landowner, who also excavated it (without being criticized, as far as I know). The beads lay on the chin and breast of the skeleton, which is said to be of "a person about the age of 16" ("en person på omkring 16 år") (SHM Huvudkatalog del B). Lännart Ribbing who wrote this was a zoologist and anthropologist and his father was professor of practical medicine (*Nordisk familjebok* s.v.), so the estimated age is not guesswork, but teenager is probably better. There are 29 "chubby" eight-shaped amber beads (Fig. 12), plus fragments of several more, two disc-shaped amber beads, and 37 glass beads, green, blue, red, purple, black and orange, with and without decoration. There are two black beads with combed zigzag in white and red, Olldag 2219, the only ones of this type in Scania except one in grave 152A from Kristineberg, dated to C3. This bead has a combed zigzag in red and yellow and the background colour is faded, but might have been black (Rudebeck & Ödman 2000, 180 ff; id. pl. 21). Eight-shaped amber beads are generally seen as markers of high status in themselves, and here there are many and of high quality (Lund Hansen 1995, 217 ff; Cieśliński 2009).

The second brooch, from Djurslöv, was lying on the chest, while a string of alternating amber beads and silver spirals hung between two

Fig. 10. Lilla Markie. Photo by the author.

Fig. 11. Hammarsnäs Grave 13. Photo by the author.

Fig. 12. Amber beads from Kabbarp. Photo by The Swedish History Museum.

Fig. 13. Djurslöv. Photo by the author.

Fig. 14. Some of the beads from Trelleborg. Photo by the author.

Fig. 15. One of the beads from Valleberga 24. Photo by the author.

Fig. 16. Valleberga 49, the beads worn in the hair. Photo by the author.

bronze fibulae type A 205 (Fig. 13). The grave was found in a gravel pit by the landowner and excavated by J. E. Forssander and B. M. Vifot in 1940. The skeleton is said to be of a younger woman. Close by was a less adorned grave of an older woman. The amber beads are of the most common flat disc-shaped type, but silver spirals are rare. Apart from here, there are just three more finds in Scania: one in grave 1 at Källby (The Historical Museum at Lund University, LUHM 28430), which probably dates to C3, one in Gårdlösa grave 2, and a tiny piece in an unpublished grave from Trelleborg, excavated by Mats P. Malmer in 1953 (The Historical Museum at Lund University, LUHM without no.). A square amber bead with the hole drilled from the side (Lind's type 62) and a glass bead decorated with dots, unfortunately with its surface too degraded to determine its colours, supports a 3rd century dating of that grave as well (Fig. 14).

A total of 34 plain amber beads were found in grave A1961 at Strövelstorp in 1994 (Fig. 24). Two fragmentary bronze fibulae with reversed foot and two pottery vessels were also found (Ericson Borggren 1996, 5). The grave is dated to C2 (Björk 2005, 234). There are beads from another grave at this site as well, but they are, I think, slightly later in date.

Valleberga and Hammarsnäs 87

Two graves with beads were excavated by Märta Strömberg at Valleberga in the early 1950s and mid 1970s. In one there were a fibula type A VII 196, two pottery vessels and an amber bead in the form of a natural piece of amber with a drilled hole (Strömberg 1975b:3 f.). In the other were two large turquoise "faience" beads (Olldag 1208, Fig. 15), three amber beads and a piece of flint with a natural hole. There were also two fibulae with reversed foot, a fragmented fibula, an iron S-shaped object, two ceramic vessels and remains of a small leather bag. The lower jaw was preserved but was not osteologically analysed (Strömberg 1953, 174 ff.). The turquoise beads are the only ones of this type from Scania with known provenance. In Olldag's catalogue, most are dated to C1 or C1/C2, but there are later finds as well. The amber beads are more even and of a higher quality than most others.

From another part of Valleberga comes a set of 53 beads (Figs. 16 and 17). A young individual was buried with blue and olive green glass beads and amber beads, hanging in a double row on the chest, and a diadem or similar with five clear glass beads with red dots with yellow dots (Olldag 2204), a clear melon bead, a red with turquoise zigzag, an olive green and three blue glass beads. There was also a comb, a sewing needle and what was perhaps a small wooden box (Strömberg 1975b:23 ff.). In the museum catalogue fragments of gold-in-glass beads are registered as belonging to this grave, but they were found in the topsoil and the attribution is not confirmed by the documentation. Combinations with blue, olive green and often purple and beads decorated with dots or wave-patterns occur during the whole Roman Iron Age, but are most common in C2.

Just this last colour combination is found in Hammarsnäs grave 87 (Fig. 18). Also in the set are turquoise and clear glass beads and one amber bead. Three beads are white with red? and now lost dots. One is black with a dot/eye in red and a now lost colour. Another is turquoise with red dots with three blue dots inside, the only Olldag 2204 in Scania apart from the ones in Valleberga above. There is also an Olldag 2211 in a more worn state than the ones from Bodarp below. One of the olive green beads is slightly ribbed and has had inlays. It resembles Koch's type 50 and is the only one in Scania. There were traces of a skeleton, probably a child's (Hansen 1936, 54–56). A single Olldag 2211 bead was found near the head in Hammarsnäs grave 135 (Fig. 19). There were no other finds in the grave (Hansen 1936, 68).

Fig. 17. Valleberga 49, the beads hanging on the chest.

Fig. 18. Hammarsnäs Grave 87.

Fig. 19. Hammarsnäs Grave 135.

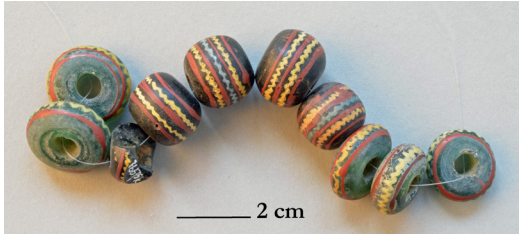

Fig. 20. Bodarp, The Swedish History Museum SHM 7667. Photo by the author.

Fig. 21. Bodarp, The Swedish History Museum SHM 8327F. Photo by the author.

Fig. 22. A few of the beads from Löderup. Photo by the author.

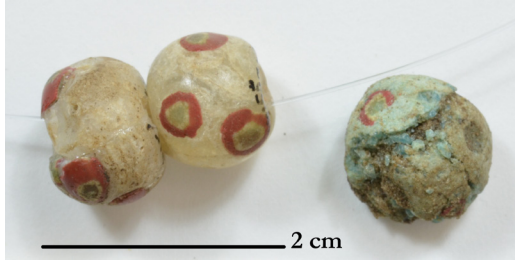

Fig. 23. Simris Grave 41. Photo by the author.

Fig. 24. Strövelstorp. Photo by the author.

Olldag 2211, green or black rather large beads with a diameter about 2 cm, decorated with straight and zigzag lines were, as just said, found in two graves at Bodarp, one with five green and five black hanging around the neck (Fig. 20) and one with a single green (Fig. 21). In the first there was also a large piece of amber with a drilled hole and a comb. In the second a pottery vessel. Both graves were found by chance in the early 1880s. There are more graves with beads in the same area, but they are later, C3, or more difficult to date. Most beads of type 2211 in Olldag's catalogue are dated to C1 and C2, but there are a few dated to C3 as well. In Olldag's catalogue there is no grave with more than two; that there are ten at Bodarp is outstanding.

Löderup

Grave 8 from Löderup, excavated by Märta Strömberg in 1971, has the largest set of glass and amber beads from the period treated. The report says 289 beads plus fragments. An attempt by me to sort the fragments gave the result that there were originally at least 326. This makes it the third largest set of beads from the whole Roman Iron Age in Scania in terms of numbers. Only Hörte (The Historical Museum at Lund University, LUHM 27995) and Odarslöv/ESS A79182 (The Historical Museum at Lund University, LUHM 32364), both from C3, are larger with 605 and 551+. There was hardly anything left of the skeleton, but teeth and some fragments showed that the deceased had been an adult lying on her back, and that the beads were spread all over the upper part of the body, including around and above the head. The other grave goods were an iron knife, a bronze sewing needle, a tiny bronze ring, some iron and bronze rivets and a pottery vessel (Strömberg 1975a). Unfortunately there is no description of how the various beads were distributed, so we do not know if the different types were separated or not. The set is dominated by 181 amber beads and 100 blue glass beads of Olldag's type 1203. Most of the amber beads are simple discs, some even, some more roughly made. There are a dozen eight-shaped and five beads made of broken eight-shaped. We also find oblong amber beads, Lind's type 61, and pendants of Lind's types 65 and 66. Some of the Olldag 1103 beads are extremely tiny, around 3 mm in both length and diameter. There are also some tiny green, blue and turquoise, similar to the smallest ones in Gårdlösa grave 2. Seven tiny spiral-wound beads lack parallels in the material I have checked: four very pale yellowish beige, two olive-coloured, and one purple (Fig. 22). Tempelmann-Mączyńska, type 143 is a purple spiral, but the other colours are not found among her categories. The rest of the beads are green, red, orange, purple and white/clear. One white and one purple bead have zigzag decoration in red and white respectively, Olldag 2208.

Discussion

If we look at the distribution, beads have been found in both eastern and western Scania. Strövelstorp and Bjärsgård excluded, all come from the southern part. The north-east is empty, however. This mirrors the map of known and excavated graves from both the Early Iron Age as a whole and the Roman Iron Age in particular, with the exception that the north-west should have been empty, not the north-east (Björk 2005, Fig. 1 and Fig. 11).

There is a huge variation. Apart from the gold-in-glass strings, none of the bead combinations really resemble one another. All basic colours – nuances can always be discussed – that we see in glass beads from the Roman Iron Age as a whole are present, except brownish red. Amber beads are present in more graves than any colour among the glass beads. There is just one yellow bead (in Gårdlösa grave 2) and one dark yellow

(in Uppåkra). Orange is only found at Kabbarp. Both yellow and orange become more common during C3. All black beads are decorated.

Several of the graves contain bead types that are not found in any other grave in Scania. This can be contrasted with the fact that A VII 196 fibulae have been found in more graves in Scania from this period than any bead type except disc-shaped amber beads. Is this variation a sign of individuality or is it pure chance, just depending on what was available?

I would argue that the bead combinations can be divided into four groups: one dominated by gold-in-glass, one with very polychrome beads, one dominated by amber, and one with olive green (Olldag's colour code 34) and blue. Note however that not all fit into this division.

The combination of gold-in-glass beads together with just one or a few more beads that we see in Scania is rare. In Olldag's catalogue I have found two on Bornholm and three on Jutland, and there is also one from Öland (The Swedish History Museum, SHM 18406). Strings of beads with only gold-in-glass beads, like the one at Köpingebro, are just as rare. There is one on Zealand, two on Jutland (Olldag catalogue no:s 148, 264 and 302) and one on Öland, the latter early Roman Iron Age (Hagberg & Beskow-Sjöberg 1996, 108).

As for the polychrome beads, what is striking is what we do not have, or rather have in an extremely small quantity, namely glass beads with mosaic rosette pattern, Olldag 2413. In Denmark, Bornholm included, it is a very common type. In Olldag's catalogue it is found in more graves dated to C1 and C2 than any other bead type. In Scania, only four have been found, two in Gårdlösa grave 2 and two at Lilla Markie. Other mosaic beads are also very common in Denmark, but in Scania there are also only four, from three graves. Was Denmark and the continent so fond of them that there were none left or did the Scanians not want them?

Gold-in-glass beads and mosaic beads are partly overlapping. They are often combined with A VII 196 fibulae. This is consistent with Rau's Gruppe 1 and Perlenkettengruppe 1 in his examination of inventories from rich female graves (Rau 2010, Abb. 21 and Abb. 25). If the community on eastern Zealand controlled trade, why did they hold on to the polychrome beads while passing on the gold-in-glass?

In Scania, amber beads are only found together with gold-in-glass and polychrome beads in small amounts. Instead, there is a pure amber bead string from Strövelstorp, and at Djurslöv the amber is combined with silver spirals, and at Kabbarp with a rather varied set of glass beads. The first two, like the ones with polychrome beads, are simpler variants of what is found at, for example, Skovgårde, where these different bead combinations are found together (Ethelberg 2000).

Olive green, together with blue, amber (and purple), the graves from Valleberga 49 and grave 87 from Hammarsnäs, could go together with the two graves from Bodarp with Olldag 2211 beads. The beads in these graves are on average larger than what we usually find in Scania, and more translucent. They are not combined with fibulae. This may of course be due to bad conditions for preservation, but since metal is preserved in other graves at the same sites, it is more plausible that they never were there.

It has long been recognized that the Scanian graves are not as rich as the contemporary Danish ones, not least those on Zealand. The reason for this is often interpreted as the communities on Zealand controlling trade and locking the Scanians out, especially during C1b (Lund Hansen 1995; Martens 2002), but also by the Scanian community being more stable, with less need for the elite to show off their status through lavish burials

(Helgesson 2002; Björk 2005; cf. Przybyła 2015). The lesser wealth is seen when we look specifically at the beads as well; in general there are fewer beads and there are fewer types. The impression, however, is far from poor in many ways. The graves with gold-in-glass beads and one rare item each stand out. So do the graves with rosette fibulae, and the ten Olldag 2211 beads from Bodarp. As for gold pendants like the one from Hammarsnäs and amulet cases like the one from Balkåkra, Lund Hansen has suggested that they made a connection between women of a probably similar social standing (Lund Hansen 1995, 227). If this is true, and I think it might well be, the people buried at Hammarsnäs and Balkåkra were at a social level similar to that of women at Himlingøje and Skovgårde. It definitely does not seem as if the Scanian community had to be satisfied with the leftovers from their wealthy neighbours. Rather, they picked and chose what they liked.

This brings us to the question of taste and aesthetics. To me, a Scandinavian middle-aged scholar in the 21st century, a simple chain with only or almost only gold-in-glass or amber beads makes a completely different, more elegant, impression than a polychrome chain. There is no way we can find out how they were perceived in the Roman Iron Age. As said, there are a lot of examples of mixed chains and gold-in-glass chains found together with polychrome ones. Olive green and gold-in-glass seem to be mutually exclusive, though. To what extent an individual could choose what to wear based on personal taste in contrast to what was prescribed by social norms in general and what was expected of someone belonging to a certain family or group, is hard to know.

The polychrome and gold-in-glass beads on the one hand and the blue, olive green and purple were in all likelihood made in different places. The manufacture, colours and general appearance are very different. We thus seem to see traces of new trade contacts towards the end of the period treated.

Marianne Lönn (2015), writing about the graves from Ytter Restad in Bohuslän (late C3/early Migration Period), and Marcena Przybyła (2011), discussing fibulae, have argued for luxury items as part of a gift system, in Przybyła's case explicitly saying a gift system controlled by men. While not all beads may have been gifts, it is certainly possible that some were, and that is another aspect of the question who chose the beads and with how much freedom of choice. Yet another is that beads were placed in children's graves. In the graves treated here, four were children, the youngest less than a year old. It may not have been "their own" beads at all, which they were not necessarily in adults' graves either, even though I think it is the most plausible.

Dress, social relations and trade are all vast and very interesting subjects within (and outside) archaeology. I hope that this article has shown that glass and amber beads can add more nuances to the picture.

We archaeologists get happy when we find a bead (or several). It is colourful and look nice, we know what it is, we can relate to it, and since we do not do it every day, it is a reason to have cake. In the Roman Iron Age the beads were used as adornment and as a means to show the wearers' identity. The well-off inhabitants in Scania seem to have had a clear conception of what they liked and the position vis-à-vis their trade and exchange partners to get it. Hopefully the beads made them happy too, I am convinced that they wore them on occasions when they had cake.

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