

*Cultural Diversity in Life and Death: Town Dwellers and Urban Communities in Late Viking Age Sigtuna, Sweden*

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Initially, the town Sigtuna seems to bear many traits of an emporium with its thick cultural layers containing unique objects from far and near, and buildings placed along the shores of a bay. Although there are objects and features pre-dating the Late Viking Age town, its very location is different from a port of trade such as Birka, as it is situated much further into the maritime landscape, upstreams water routes and beyond pole blockages. Furthermore, while an emporium is placed on the boundary between peoples, Sigtuna is situated on the border between two of the main territorial districts, folklands, of the realm of the Svear. When Master Adam of Bremen writes his *Gesta* in the 1070s he calls Sigtuna *civitas magna Sictone* or *Sictona civitate* indicating that it belonged in a Christian society of religious importance, contrasting it to both to the port of trade *portus* and *oppidum* Birka, that he associates with trade and commerce, and the pagan cult at the *templum* (Old) Uppsala.

The project *Intersection Sigtuna* has revealed new insights into the foundation phase of the town, as well as the cultural diversity of its inhabitants. More than 350 graves from the early urban phase (AD c. 970-1100) have been excavated by archaeologists. Furthermore, at minimum a hundred additional graves can be traced in antiquarian records, which adds to the knowledge of burial customs in early Sigtuna. An in-depth analysis of cemeteries, mortuary practices, together with new <sup>14</sup>C-datings, demonstrate diverse ways to handle the dead. Different types of burial grounds with various spatial settings within the townscape were used contemporaneously during the early urban phase; this poses questions about mobility, social communities, and wide-reaching networks among the early town dwellers.

The paper discusses cultural diversity among the early urban population based on burial data combined with osteological analysis and aDNA. Newly published genetic and isotope data have revealed a heterogenetic population in terms of origins and affiliation. Four individuals representing four different life stories will be highlighted reflecting cultural diversity and both regional and supra-regional connections.