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Humanities & Information Management Division

from Dr Susan Kruse

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Dr. Susan Kruse
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Dear James,

Thanks for your letter and a copy of the confidential report of the Midhus hoard. It was useful to have the analyses, although their nature means there is very little that can be concluded from them quantitatively (as the report indicated). Fortunately, since modern sterling silver is so distinctive (silver and copper only), the fact that the Midhus pieces showed other elements (especially gold and lead) does seem to suggest they were all made with older silver.

The nature of the analysis, however (surface XRF without any quantitative interpretation), means that one cannot push the evidence further, or use it to compare with analyses such as Jim Tate and I have done. There may indeed be a greater variety between alloys of the objects, as we found in the Scottish material, but the results presented in the report cannot shed light on this. The discrepancies in real time, and in the counts, as well as the lack of labelling on the axes of the many graphs, also caution one against reading too much from the results. Given all the other indications, of course the great likelihood is that it is Viking Age silver - but the analyses on their own as they stand now could not prove that.