

Large Pictures Chapter 11.4

Some Viking sword hilts that could be found in the [Copenhagen museum](#)

100%

Illustration



[Link to text](#)

Source: First one: Photographed in the [Metropolitan museum](#) 2013; next two: Photographed in the [Copenhagen museum](#) (2012 and 2014); last two: from the Internet pages of the museum.

Some Viking swords as exhibited in the museum in Bergen; Norway.
One blade is clearly pattern welded, two carry inscriptions of some kind.



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Source: Wikipedia; Bryggens Museum in Bergen; Norway

Some Viking swords as exhibited in the museum in Helsinki, Finland



Some "precious" hilts of Viking swords.



Source: Internet at large; many sources, in particular sword forum. The Blatnica sword hilt was photographed 2015 in the Budapest museum



[Link to text](#)

Source: 2014 Berlin Viking exhibition.

Frankish sword wielders from the "[Stuttgarter psalter](#)" from 825 AD.



[Link to text 1](#)

[Link to text 2](#)

Source: Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart; on-line library

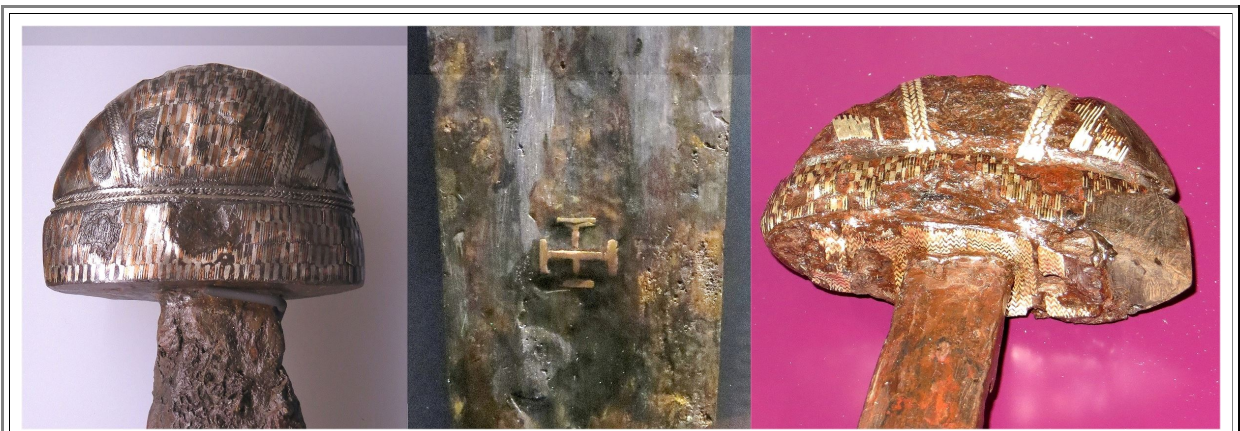
Swords displayed in the **Haithabu museum** in North Germany. Haithabu was a large Viking settlement at a strategically important place for controlling East - West trade in Northern Europe; look at [this map](#). The swords shown must have belonged to high-up guys, chieftains or kings. They are almost certainly of Frankish origin even so Haithabu had many blacksmith making a wealth of everyday iron objects. The last one on the far right might be the exception. It is rather plain but sports an inlaid copper cross on the blade; see the close-up below. Most of the swords are encrusted with remnants of the scabbard and it is impossible to see if they are pattern welded or not. The rather dim illumination doesn't help either.



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Source: Photographed at the Haithabu Museum, Schleswig, Germany

Some details of the swords above.

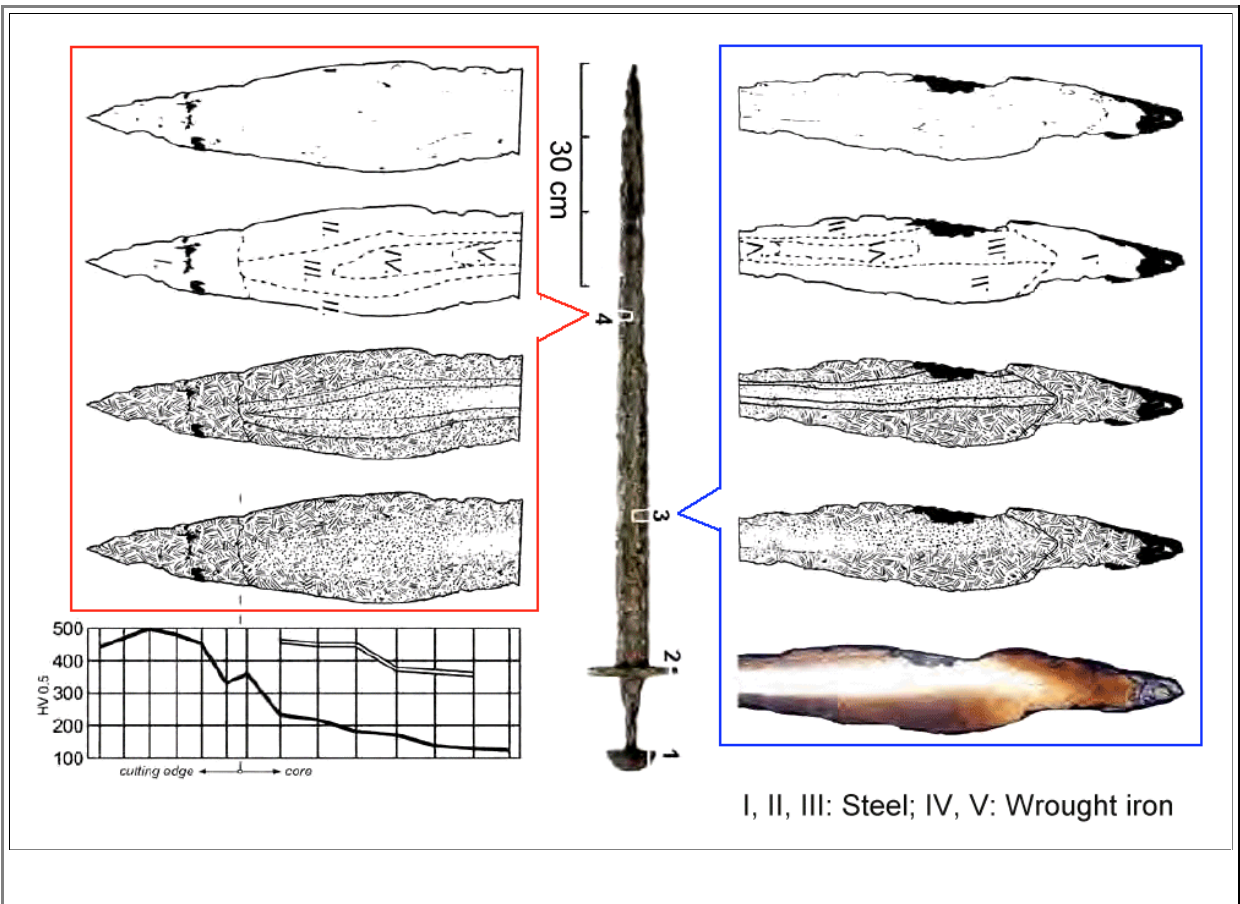


Source: Photographed at the Haithabu Museum, Schleswig, Germany

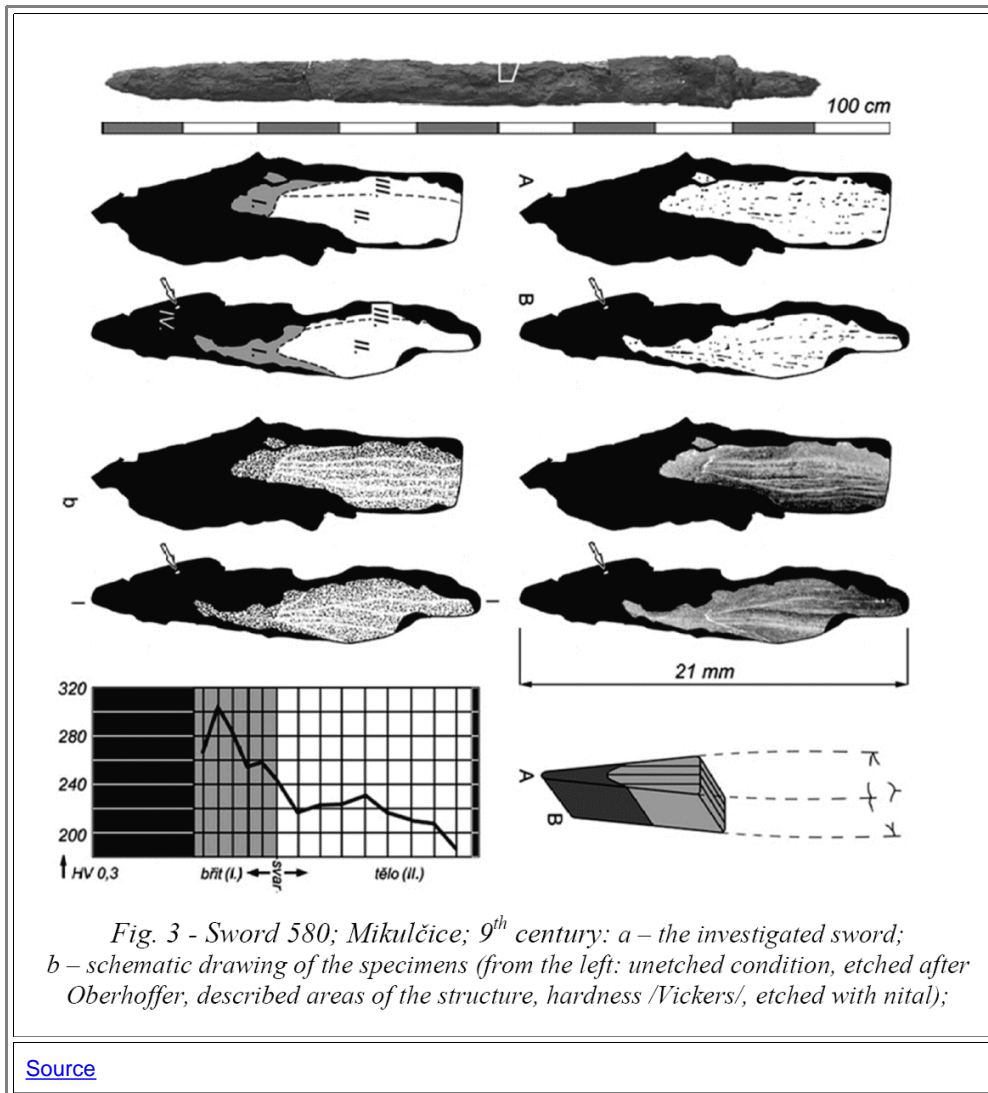
Here is a sword (hilt) shown in the [Neues Museum in Berlin](#) that is almost identical to the one above .



▶ Metallography of an all-steel sword from the 9th century found in Moravia; Czech Republic.



Metallography of a second all-steel sword from the Moravia 9th century grave yard.



The other empires and cultures around the Frankish Empire at the death of Charlemagne in 814 AD



EUROPE
at the death of
Charlemagne
814

[Link to text](#)

Source: Internet a lage; obscure

Here is a large version (with enhanced contrast) of the picture in the [Psalterium Aureum](#). It shows a scene from the tales around King David; here the taking and pillaging of the city of Edom.



Erstürmung der Stadt Edom u. Brandschatzung durch Reiter u. Fußvolk, unten wohl Übergabe der Stadt an Joab u. dessen Reiter.

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Source: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/description/csg/0022>

Ulfberht Swords

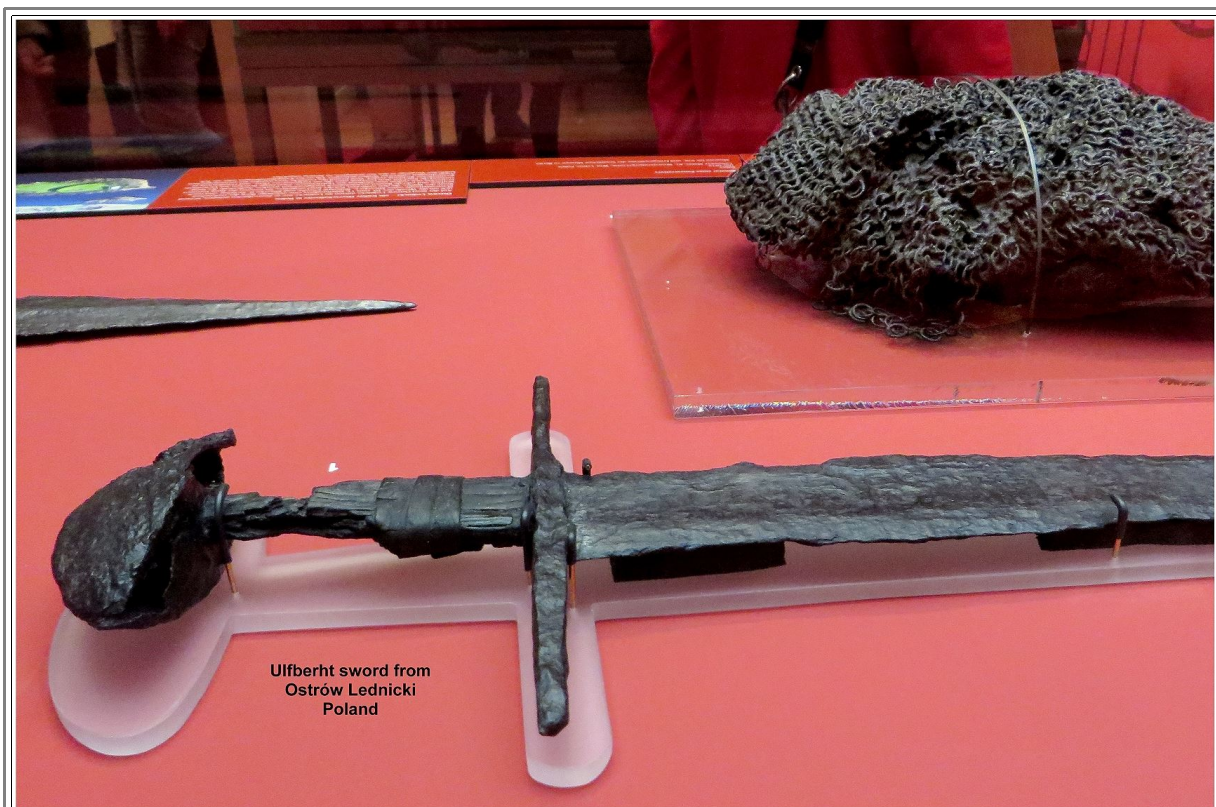
Below are the Ulfberht swords from the 2014 Berlin Viking exhibition

I apologize for the bad quality but picture taking was not permitted and the illumination - as seems to be the [present custom](#) - was shitty.

They are from (not quite in the order going down; the museum didn't provide details):

1. Peltomaa, Häme, Finland;
2. Wiskiauten / Mochewoje, Obl. Kaliningrad, Russia;
3. Berlin,
4. Awecken, Awajki, Woj. Ermland-Masuren, Poland;
5. Schwedt, Brandenburg, Germany (see also [below](#))
6. Unknown place in Norway; (with some chain mail found at the same place),
7. Ostrów Lednicki, Poland





Ulfberht sword from
Ostrów Lednicki
Poland

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Here is an Ulfberht sword that was sold for € 13.000 in 2012 by Bonhams:



Bonhams

A Paris Société de Vente aux Enchères
1863-1865 to 1865-1866, Courty

Ulfberht bur 410 625 (110-471)

Found in the First House in Origin of France
Assigned to the First House in Paris, July 1841

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Here is another Ulfberht sword that was sold at an auction in Brussels in 2011 for € 14.000 by Hermann Historica & Pierre Bergé.
It is dated to 1050 - 1150 and extremely well preserved.



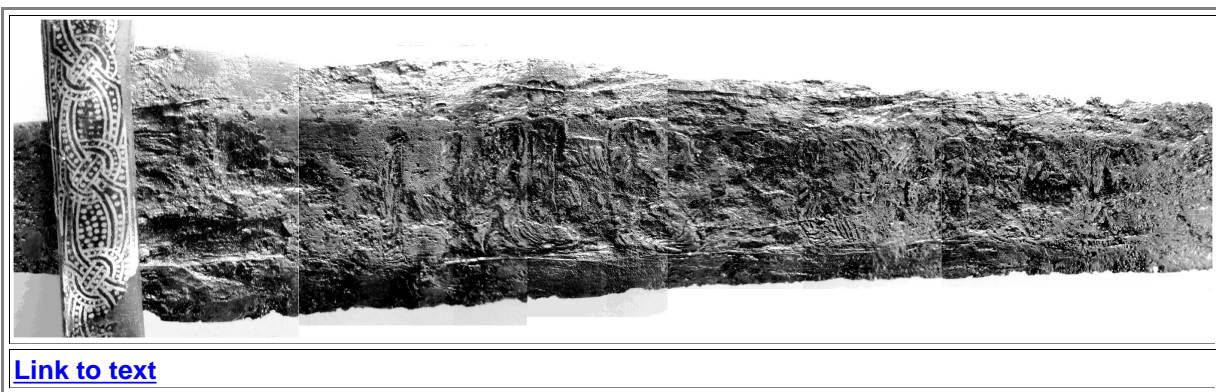
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Here is a splendid **Ulfberht** from the archaeological museum in Dublin / Ireland. It is known as the Ballinderry Sword and here is what the museum has to say about it: The first known piece of German technology in Ireland dates to the mid-9th century. It is a superb sword marked with the name of its maker Ulfberht. The Vikings, who had a huge impact on Irish history, bought blades from high quality workshops in the Rhineland. Ulfberht was the brand name of a master whose blades have been found as far east as Russia and as far west as the lake dwelling in Ballinderry, County Westmeath where this sword was found in 1928. His name had such prestige that there is even evidence of cheaper copies pretending to be Ulfberht originals: an early example of brand piracy. The Ballinderry sword is one of Ulfberht's finest. It tells us a lot about the mixing of cultures: the blade is German, the hilt and pommel are Scandinavian and the whole thing belonged to an Irish chieftain. He acquired it, possibly in battle but more probably through trade with Viking Dublin. It suggests that the newcomers created a kind of arms race among the native Irish. This was, quite literally, cutting-edge technology and the Irish, not for the last time, had to adapt to it.
The National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology





Here is the **Hamburg Ulfberht sword**. Its inscription is not easily "readable" any more but it is clear that the letters were made from [striped \(and twisted\) rods](#). Both, cutting edge and bulk shows a kind of "striation" along the length of the blade. That can be seen as strong indication that the material was [faggoted](#) and piled. If that interpretation is correct, at least this "true" Ulfberht sword has not been made from crucible steel as claimed by [Alan Williams](#).



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Now I have some funny ones! First another Ulfberht from Hamburg - or so the figure captions claims ("das Ulfberht Schwert - Exportschlager aus dem Frankenreich" (The Ulfberht sword - major export item from the Frankish empire) in some Google sponsored web site. Second, one from a recent (Nov. 2017) auction of Hermann Historica, advertised (my translation) as "Viking sword, Middle Europe, 9th century; ... difficult to read inscription (Ulfberht)?".

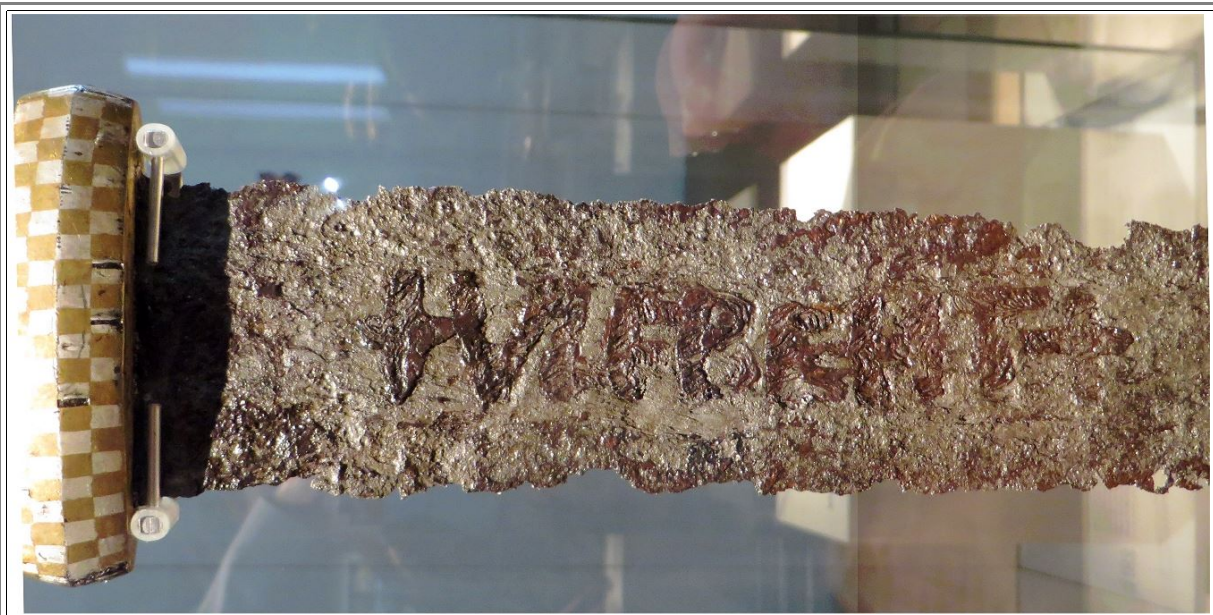
Their funny because you must imbibe quite a bit if something good before you can make out an "Ulfberht" on those swords.

They are definitely made from folded (or faggoted) steel, though and thus are definitely not made from wootz steel.



[Link to text](#)

Here is the **Nuernberg Ulfberht sword**. It was found in the Rhine close to Mannheim (South Germany) and is dated to the 9th century. Its inscription is very well preserved and reads: +VLFBEHT+. It thus contains a "typo" and wouldn't be counted among the ["true" Ulfberhts](#). The two lower pictures show the Ulfberht together with a colleague from the front and the backside. . The "colleague" was found in the Danube in Bavaria, dates to the 9th / 8th century and has some more decorative inlay on the front and the back. The Ulfberht also has some structure on the back but it is difficult to see details-.



[Link to text](#)

Two more **Ulfbeht**'s follow that I found in unexpected places. The first one lives in the "Archäologisches Landesmuseum Brandenburg". It is a genuine Ulfbeht although I couldn't quite make out the [spelling group](#) it belongs to. Here it is:



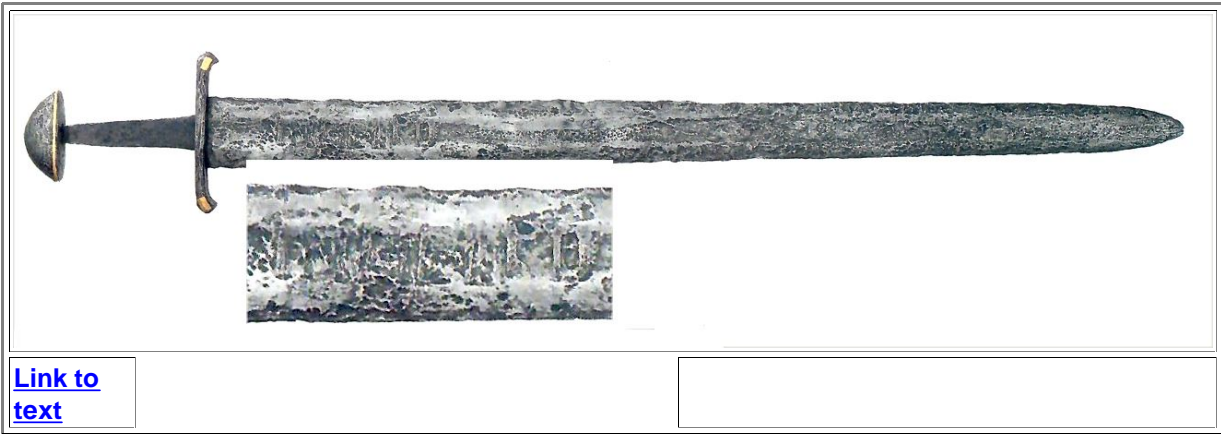
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The second unexpected **Ulfberht** is in the "Stadtmuseum Aachen". There is definitely an inscription, probably a variant of "Ulfberht", but it is not possible to see details.



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Yet another **Ulfbehrt** from the "[Deutsches Klingemuseum Solingen](#)". It is described in the book given in the link



The so far last **Ulfbehrt** from an auction house (once more Hermann Historica), coming up for bidding in May 2020. It starts at € 15.000,-

May 2020

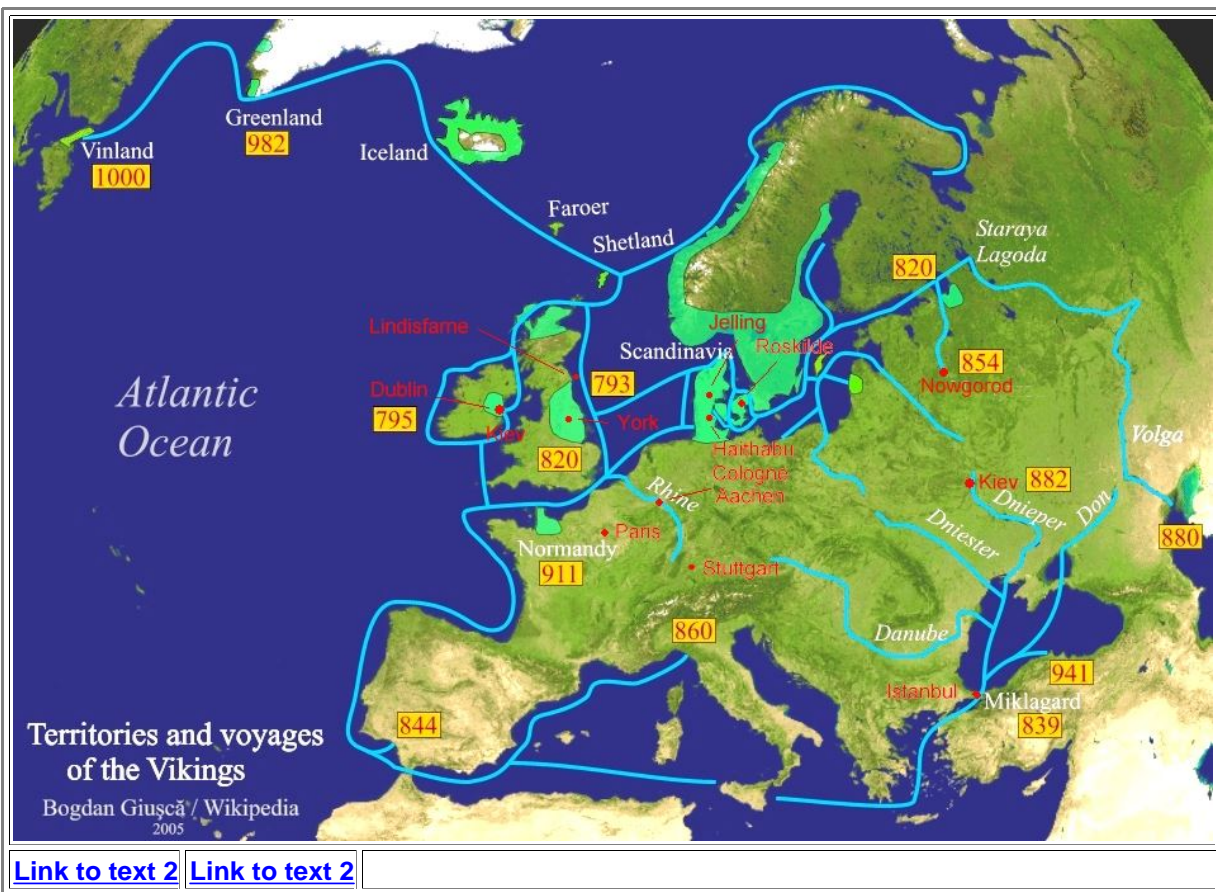
HERMANN HISTORICA

A fine Northern European Viking sword with an Ulfberht blade, 10th century
Broad, double-edged blade with a slightly rounded point and shallow fullers on both sides. The designation "ULFBEHRT" inlaid in iron on one side of the base, the opposite side with remnants of an inlaid ornament. The short quillons with vertical fullers on both sides, remnants of silver inlays and silver plating. Broad tang, the pommel forged in two pieces with remnants of the same silver decoration as the quillons. Length 91.5
Outstanding Viking sword with a blade of the well-known "Ulfberht" type, which is currently attributed to a Franconian workshop in the Rhineland. A very similar blade can be seen in Ewart Oakeshott, Records of the Medieval Sword, fig. 51.

263744 III €15.000

[Link to text](#)

The map show the travel route of Vikings, including how far they went down some major rivers. The rivers themselves may go on, and that is not shown.



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Here is the front page of the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" from Oct. 25th 2014, advertising a large Ulfberht article in its "science" pages. The article is (surprisingly) good. It reports recent findings from the newest Ulfberht sword found in 2014 in the river Weser in North Germany, and that these findings do not quite support the "steel from the East" hypothesis.



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The "**Weser**" **Ulfberht**. The pommel was covered with a lead-tin (?) alloy, and the lead comes from a mine in the "Rheinisches Schiefergebirge", not far from the old and powerful monasteries of Fulda and Lorsch in the heartland of the Frankish empire; just a bit south-east of Cologne in the map above. Both monasteries were producers of weapons, say historians.



Hypereutectoid bloomery steel (about 0.9 % carbon) from [Schmalkalden](#) , probably 18 th century. Massive cementite needles are running into a pearlitic structure. Is there slag? Maybe yes (the black regions), but it is not certain. ([Buchwald](#) II; p. 219)



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Silver denars from "Arabia" (actually Samarkand / Iran) brought back to Denmark by the Vikings.



[Link to text](#) Source: Photographed 2015 in the [Moesgaard museum](#)

Here are some details of one of the Viking swords displayed in the Stockholm Archaeological Museum. Clearly visible is:

- Pattern welding with a "fishbone pattern" on both sides closer to the hilt and a ["flower / curlicue" pattern](#) farther down. This necessitates to use very thin twisted rods and thus indicates a [vener type](#) of structure.
- An inlay with an "S" type shape on one side of the blade; it is shown enlarged at the bottom of the picture below. The "S" is obviously made from a thin untwisted striped rod.
- A stripes structure of the steel used for the cutting edges. This may indicate [faggoting](#)



Here is an "Ingelrii" sword; shown in Hannover, Germany. It was found in the "Devils Bog" near Wopswede and was dated to the 11th century. The inscription (probably with twisted rods) has disappeared, only the grooves remained

