



Figure 7. Hedensted Church. The image shows the excavation, during which a posthole, wells and coins were found. © National Museum, 2008.

and the bishop supported the idea of installing floor heating in spite of conservation objections. This entailed a full-scale excavation, and investigations provided important knowledge about the history of the church. In this case, cultural evidence could have been preserved for the future and this was the wish from the historical point of view. However, the church placed more value on present needs, even though the alternative choice would not have involved destructive solutions and would have been possible (Figure 7). When local wishes are strong, money is available and the bishop supports the community, conservation arguments fail.

Discussion and conclusion

Preserving the cultural heritage of churches in Denmark is closely connected to financial support from the church itself. Both too little and too much money in the hands of church councils can be a threat to cultural heritage, as huge renovation or redecoration programmes often tend to conflict with the National Museum's aim of protecting entire contexts, i.e. church interiors. As economic resources are growing, preservation can be threatened. The preservation of cultural heritage is of no liturgical significance. Therefore, the conservation treatment of wall paintings can become dependent on private grants, and, in the worst case, this can be a reason for a church to abandon its responsibility. Leaving the protection of church heritage in the hands of church authorities could mean that some decisions, in theory, could be fatal to the heritage. However, the experience of the National Museum shows that, apart from a few cases, the church administration accepts its responsibility. It is not an easy position, as the bishop fundamentally has a theological approach and therefore