

M U I N A S A J A T E A D U S 3 0

# From Hoard to Archive

Numismatic Discoveries  
from the Baltic Rim and Beyond

**Studies in Honour of Ivar Leimus**

Edited by Erki Russow, Viktors Dāboliņš and Valter Lang



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*Ivar Leimus*  
(photo: Vahur Lõhmus).



# Content / Sisukord

Erki RUSSOW	
The man with many talents. Ivar Leimus 70 .....	9
Laia haardega mees – Ivar Leimus 70 .....	15
Viktors DĀBOLIŅŠ	
New footprints of Eduard Philipp Körber's (1770–1850) numismatic research .....	17
Uusi andmeid Eduard Philipp Körberi (1770–1850) numismaatilistest teadmistest .....	35
Risto P. KOOVIT and Mauri KIUDSOO	
Roman coins in Estonia .....	37
Rooma mündid Eestis .....	58
Kenneth JONSSON	
When did Viking-Age coin hoards start to be found in northern Europe? .....	61
Millal algas viikingiaegsete aarete avastamine Põhja-Euroopas? .....	78
Helle W. HORSNÆS	
The chosen few – Sasanian, Arabo-Sasanian and Tabaristani coins found in Denmark .....	79
Vähesed valitud – Taanist leitud Sassaniidi, araabia-sassaniidi ja Tabaristani mündid .....	104
Eeva JONSSON	
The Viking-Age Edånger hoard and a numismatic connection between northern Sweden and Estonia .....	105
Viikingiaegne Edångeri aare ning Põhja-Rootsi ja Eesti numismaatiline seos .....	113

Jens Christian MOESGAARD	
Pecks – new findings and future perspectives .....	115
Täkked – uued avastused ja tulevikuväljavaated .....	144
Svein Harald GULLBEKK and Murray ANDREWS	
Was Norway rich or poor in the year 1000? .....	145
Kas Norra oli 1000. aastal rikas või vaene? .....	157
Bo GUNNARSSON	
Moneyers, die-cutters, and interaction between mints – a reflection on the ‘Everlöf’ hoard .....	159
Müntmeistrid, münditemplilõikajad ja müntlate koostöö ‘Everlövi’ aarde heistuses .....	188
Kent BENGTTSSON	
Two 11th-century memorial coins from Sven Estridsen .....	189
Kaks Sven Estridseni mälestusmünti 11. sajandist .....	196
Frida EHRNSTEN	
Coin finds in Finland from the last quarter of the 11th century .....	197
Soome 11. sajandi viimase veerandi mündileiud .....	209
Borys PASZKIEWICZ	
An uncertain late medieval penny (Dannenberg 477) from the deserted village of Grabianowo on the Vistula. Some remarks on finch-eyes of Pomerania .....	211
Tuvastamata hiliskeskaegne penn (Dannenberg 477) Visla-äärsest mahajäetud Grabianowo külast. Mõningaid tähelepanekuid Pommeri <i>finkenaugen</i> ’ite kohta .....	228
Kristīne DUCMANE	
Characterisation of the weights in the Rembate manor park hoard (second half of 16th century) .....	229
Rembate mõisapargi 16. sajandi teise poole aardest leitud kaaluvihid ..	248
Andres TVAURI and Ragnar SAAGE	
Late 18th-century tin token pendants from Estonia .....	249
Tinast kaelarahad 18. sajandi lõpust .....	268
Tuukka TALVIO	
The study of numismatics in Finland, with special reference to medieval coins .....	269
Soome numismaatikateadus, põhirõhuga keskaegsetel müntidel .....	285
Abbreviations / Lühendid .....	287

# Was Norway rich or poor in the year 1000?

Svein Harald GULLBEKK and Murray ANDREWS

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Svein Harald Gullbekk, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Frederiks gate 2,  
0164 Oslo, Norway; s.h.gullbekk@khm.uio.no

Murray Andrews, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Frederiks gate 2,  
0164 Oslo, Norway; murray.andrews@khm.uio.no

Large sums of silver flowed across Scandinavia and the Baltic in the late Viking Age – but were the proceeds shared evenly? This paper explores the regional distribution of wealth in Scandinavia and the Baltic in AD 1000, with a particular focus on Norway's position on the Viking Age economic ladder.

**Key words:** coin hoards, distribution of wealth, monetary geography, silver economy, Viking Age

Hilisviikingiaegses Skandinaavias ja Läänemere idakaldal liikusid suured hõbedakogused, kuid kas tulu jagunes kõikjal võrdselt? See artikkel keskendub rikkuse jagunemisele Skandinaavias ja Läänemere idakaldal 1000. aasta paiku, keskendudes eelkõige Norra kohale viikingiaegse majanduse edetabelis.

**Võtmesõnad:** mündiaarded, rikkuse jagunemine, rahageograafia, hõbedamajandus, viikingiaeg

## Prologue

Ivar Leimus is a stalwart figure in medieval European numismatics. For several decades he has worked tirelessly to document and analyse the many thousands of Viking Age and medieval coins found in the Baltic region, a significant task that has both increased our understanding of money and society in pre-modern Northern Europe, and has broadcast Estonia's rich monetary heritage to an international audience. We have been particularly inspired here by his rich paper *'Millennium breakthrough. North goes West'* (Leimus 2009). We offer this paper to Ivar as a mark of his high esteem on the opposite side of the Viking world.

## Introduction

Following a short period without recorded Viking attacks, in 979 seven ships raided the coast of Wessex, beginning a new period of documented Viking activity and tribute-taking in England that lasted until the collection of an £82,500 *geld* payment by Cnut the Great in 1018 (Metcalfe 1990). Danish Vikings seem to have played a leading role in many violent activities throughout this period, in many cases assisted by Norwegian companions. The Norwegian Viking chief Olav Tryggvason is recorded as having collected a tribute of £16,000 from Aethelred II in London in 994; in the following year he established himself as Norwegian king, and within a couple of years he issued the first Norwegian coinage (Skaare 1976, 58–60). In 1007–1008, Olaf Haraldsson, the later King and saint of Norway, led a Viking army on an expedition in Austrvegr. In 1009, he joined forces with Danish king Sweyn Forkbeard's army under the leadership of the legendary commander Thorkell the Tall, which plundered the town of Tiel on the Rhine estuary, received £3000 tribute from Canterbury, and eventually besieged London. Over the next few years, Viking plundering reached hitherto unheard levels. In 1012, the English king Aethelred II paid £48,000 to Thorkell the Tall and his Viking army, and Thorkell soon entered the king's service. Olaf Haraldsson joined Duke Richard II in Normandy, and, in the autumn, plundered the Loire Valley and launched raids on Spanish territory. In 1013–1014 Thorkell and Olaf supported Aethelred II against Cnut the Great. Just one year later, Olaf negotiated for a return to Norway, and established himself as king.

Records of Viking attacks, tribute payments and mercenary salaries are partly exact, partly imprecise, and their trustworthiness has been questioned by scholars time and again (Gillingham 1989; 1990; Lawson 1989; 1990; Metcalfe 1990). However, coin hoards and runestones leave little doubt that large sums were transferred to the Vikings during the decades around the year 1000. This transfer of wealth raises several questions. Was it paid in silver, partly or fully?



How was it brought back to Scandinavia? Where in Scandinavia did it end up? How was it used when it arrived in Scandinavia? In this article, we will explore just one question about wealth in the Viking world in ca 975–1030: was Norway a rich or a poor region compared to other parts of Scandinavia and the Baltic?

## Measuring early medieval wealth: the potential of coin hoards

In the modern world, the wealth of nations and regions is routinely assessed and compared by means of macro-economic metrics like gross domestic product (GDP), net national income (NNI), and gross fixed capital formation (GFCF). These measurements were developed in the 20th century as tools for monitoring the health of advanced capitalist economies (Vanoli 2005), and offer snapshots of wealth as measured through aggregate production, income, and expenditure statistics calculated by states, central banks, and non-governmental organisations. With the notable exception of Sweden, where GDP estimates can be produced as early as the 1560s (Schön & Krantz 2012), statistical data of this kind simply does not exist for Scandinavia and the Baltic much before the 1810s, much less the late Viking Age (Abildgren 2017; Grytten 2022). Any effort to evaluate Norway's relative wealth in this early period, therefore, demands an alternative metric. In this paper, we will consider one particular class of archaeological find as a material yardstick: coin hoards.

Viking Age coin hoards have been unearthed in Scandinavia and the Baltic for more than three hundred years, with hundreds of examples containing hundreds of thousands of silver coins known from the period ca 800–1150 (Jonsson 2015; Jonsson, this volume; Fig. 1). Many of these finds have been published in full or summary form over the past fifty years, with notable contributions surveying the Danish (von Heijne 2004), Estonian (Molvögin 1994), Finnish (Talvio 2002), Norwegian (Screen 2013), and Swedish and Gotlandic (Jonsson 1986; 2015; von Heijne 2004) hoards of the period ca 975–1030. Each of these hoards represents a significant materialization of value in monetary form, assembled on the basis of a coherent economic rationale and hidden in the ground for safekeeping or ritual/symbolic purposes (Zachrisson 1998; von Heijne 2004). In many respects, therefore, they can be considered as ideal forms of 'wealth deposit', and geographical patterns in their abundance and scale might provide one means of measuring the wealth of the regions they were found in. This proposal finds some support from studies of coin hoarding in better-documented social contexts. Recent research into late medieval coin hoards from England and Wales, for example, has identified a strong positive correlation between the geographical

distribution of coin hoards dated 1465–1544 and wealth assessed by the 1524–1525 lay subsidy, a national tax levied on landed income, wages, and movable goods (Andrews 2019, 46–47).



*Fig. 1. The Årstad hoard, Egersund, Vest-Agder, Norway. The hoard consists of 1,849 coins, tpq ca 1029. UMK find no. 95. Photo: Ellen C. Holte.*

*Jn 1. Årstadi aare, Egersund, Vest-Agder, Norra. Aardes on 1849 münti, tpq u 1029.*

While the comparative quantification of late Viking Age coin hoards offers a practical means of assessing Norway's wealth against its Scandinavian neighbours, it raises some obvious theoretical issues. In particular, the singular focus on coin hoards prioritises one particular form of wealth – coined silver – above others, which could include important early medieval capital assets like ploughs, livestock, and slaves, portable goods like precious metal jewellery, and fundamental territorial resources like agricultural land, forests, and extractive minerals. This constraint is, of course, as much of a reflection of the nature of the Viking Age

economy as it is of the period's archaeological resources, which tells us relatively little about perishable goods or non-tangible assets, and lacks the kind of quantifiable data on productive land and other resources found in later historical sources. Given the cultural significance of silver in the Viking Age, however, we should be wary of overstating the inadequacy of coin hoards as a wealth indicator: it is surely significant that, when Cnut the Great sought to win over the elites of western Norway in the 1020s, he did so by bribing them in silver rather than cattle, iron, or land (Finlay & Faulkes 2014, ch. 185; Andersen 1977, 130–131).

## Norway's wealth in the year 1000: the coin hoard evidence

Table 1 presents a series of estimates of the abundance of late Viking Age coin hoards from six regions of Scandinavia and the Baltic, consisting of a) the total number of coin hoards dated ca 975–1030; b) the total number of silver coins present in those hoards; c) the total number of coin hoards dated ca 975–1030 divided by territorial size (km<sup>2</sup>); and d) the total number of silver coins present in those hoards divided by territorial size (km<sup>2</sup>). The use of dual metrics – one measured in raw numbers, the other scaled for territorial size – is intended primarily as a heuristic tool, accounting for predictable variations in the total number of hoards found on small islands like Gotland (ca 3200 km<sup>2</sup>) versus large peninsular states like Norway (ca 324,000 km<sup>2</sup>). However, it is important to note that these differences in modern geography do not necessarily coincide with areas of late Viking Age settlement: while most parts of Gotland contained villages and farmsteads in ca 1000, contemporary Norwegian settlement was sparser and more dispersed, with small numbers of isolated farms and small hamlets dotted along the west coast, the Oslofjord, and the Sognefjord and the plains in eastern and middle Norway, and a near absence of settlement in the mountains and remote woodlands, and large areas of inland in the north (Eriksen 2019, 48–52; Svedjemo 2020, 299–301). Despite these shortcomings, it is clear that both sets of estimates in Table 1 rank the six territories in fundamentally similar ways, and offer parallel perspectives on the geographical distribution of wealth in the late Viking Age.

The data presented in Table 1 reveals significant differences in the numbers and sizes of late Viking Age coin hoards across Scandinavia and the Baltic. Gotland, a veritable 'silver island' (Carlsson 2020), stands out as having produced vastly more hoards dated ca 975–1030 than anywhere else in the region, whether measured in raw numbers or scaled for territorial size. It is trailed significantly by the second-richest region, Denmark, followed closely by Estonia and Sweden – whose relative positions switch depending on the metric used. Norway, mean-

while, falls to the rear of the pack, particularly when scaled for territorial size, while Finland trails the race with fewer than a dozen hoards dated ca 975–1030.

Comparing the overall number of hoarded coins tells a similar story. As ever, Gotland ranks in at first place, having produced more hoarded silver coins for the period ca 975–1030 than the rest of Scandinavia and the Baltic combined. It is followed at some distance by Denmark, Estonia and Sweden – the latter of which has produced many coins, but from a fairly large territorial area – while Norway and Finland sit at the bottom of the bundle. From a Norwegian perspective, the scale of difference needs to be emphasised. For every silver coin found in a hoard from Norway, there are two to three from a hoard from Denmark or Sweden, while there are eight from a hoard in Gotland.

There are, then, clear differences in the abundance and size of coin hoards in late Viking Age Scandinavia and the Baltic, from silver-rich areas like Gotland to silver-poor regions like Norway and Finland. These differences cannot be easily explained by modern influences on the recovery of archaeological artefacts. Recreational metal detecting, for example, is heavily regulated in mainland Sweden and banned on Gotland (Källman & Korsell 2009), yet almost as many late Viking Age coin hoards have been found from these regions as are known from the rest of Scandinavia and the Baltic combined.<sup>1</sup> In Denmark, Estonia, Finland, and Norway, meanwhile, metal detecting is a legal and reasonably well-developed hobby (Dobat 2016; Maaranen 2016; Gullbekk *et al.* 2019; Kurisoo *et al.* 2021), but late Viking Age coin hoards are much less common. While Norwegian detectorists, for example, have uncovered a fair number of single coin finds over the past few decades, the most recent late Viking Age hoard of any real size, the ‘Posthusfunnet’ (the Post Office hoard), was found in Trondheim during building works at Dronningsgate (Queen’s street) 10 in 1951 and contained more than 964 coins, buried after ca 1035 (Skaare 1976, 147). Seven decades of road construction, house building, farming, and metal detecting have since uncovered nothing as substantial, and there is little to suggest that this will change any time soon. Questions of ‘agency’ and regional variation in silver-handling traditions, meanwhile, can hardly explain the degree of variation found within late Viking Age hoards from Scandinavia and the Baltic. If coin hoards, as previously suggested, are primarily a reflection of a region’s ability to attract riches and resources through commercial and violent endeavour, then the unevenness with which late Viking Age hoards are recorded within Scandinavia and the Baltic clearly suggests that some regions were significantly wealthier than others. The Swedish archaeologist Christoph

<sup>1</sup> The ban on the use of metal detectors in Gotland does not apply to the National Heritage Board, which led a large-scale survey project (*Skattfyndprojektet*) in 1977–2009 that aimed to locate and excavate Viking Age hoards: Jonsson & Östergren 1990.

Kilger (2019, 132) posits that ‘*the richest spots for Viking silver are the Baltic islands of Gotland, Öland and Bornholm*’, and to this list we can add several regions in southern Scandinavia, including Scania, Zeeland, and Funen, and the Mälaren region on the Swedish mainland. Norway, meanwhile, seems to have been much less well off, although not quite as poor as Finland, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland.

*Table 1. Estimates of numbers of coin hoards and hoarded silver coins from Scandinavia and the Baltic, 975–1030. Compiled by Murray Andrews*

*Tabel 1. Skandinaavias ja Eestis 975. ja 1030. aasta vahel peidetud mündiaarete ja hõbemündileidude võrdlev suurus*

Region	No. coin hoards	No. silver coins in hoards	No. coin hoards per km <sup>2</sup>	No. silver coins in hoards per km <sup>2</sup>	References
Denmark	41	ca 10000	0.00095	ca 0.233	von Heijne 2004
Estonia	21	ca 2600	0.00046	ca 0.057	Molvögin 1994
Finland	10	ca 1200	0.00003	ca 0.004	Talvio 2002
Gotland	ca 120	ca 45000	ca 0.03769	ca 14.133	Jonsson 1986; 2015
Norway	23	ca 5800	0.00006	ca 0.015	Screen 2013
Sweden (excl. Gotland)	ca 35	ca 18000	ca 0.00008	ca 0.040	Jonsson 1986; 2015; von Heijne 2004

## Access denied? Norwegian wealth and the flow of silver in the late Viking Age

If coin hoards suggest that late Viking Age Norway was poorer than its Scandinavian and Baltic neighbours, why should this have been the case?

One clue is presented by an analysis of the regional composition of coin hoards. Figure 2 compares the percentages of coins from Anglo-Saxon England and Early Medieval Germany in a sample of 98 hoards dated 975–1030 from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gotland, Norway, and Sweden (excluding Gotland).<sup>2</sup> These graphs show that, in most parts of Scandinavia and the Baltic, the late Viking Age hoards consist predominantly of German *pfennige*, whereas English pennies are normally only present in small numbers. The hoard buried at Reslöv, Skåne (Sweden) after 996 is typical of the genre: of its 548 silver coins, 380 were minted in Germany, compared to 163 from England (von Heijne 2004, no. 1.125).

<sup>2</sup> The 98 hoards are drawn from the sources listed in Table 1, and were included on the condition that they contained no fewer than 10 identifiable English and/or German coins.

The find from Hultre, Endre (Gotland, *tpq* ca 991), meanwhile, is a more extreme case of the same phenomenon. It contained ca 470 silver coins, of which at least 317 were from Germany and only four from England (Malmer 1982). Given these skewed ratios, Kenneth Jonsson (1990, 142–143) has suggested that the Anglo-Saxon coins in Danish and Swedish hoards were indirect arrivals from German sources, having been originally acquired through Anglo-German trade and ultimately entering Scandinavia and the Baltic via ‘mixed’ currency parcels from the Elbe and Rhine estuaries. This would neatly match the hypothesis of the Norwegian historian Jon Vidar Sigurdsson (2017, 154), who has suggested that the Vikings controlled North Sea trade in ca 975–1050 by means of tolls and customs exacted on English, French, German, and Scandinavian merchants operating at the mouth of the Rhine (cf. Gullbekk 2023).

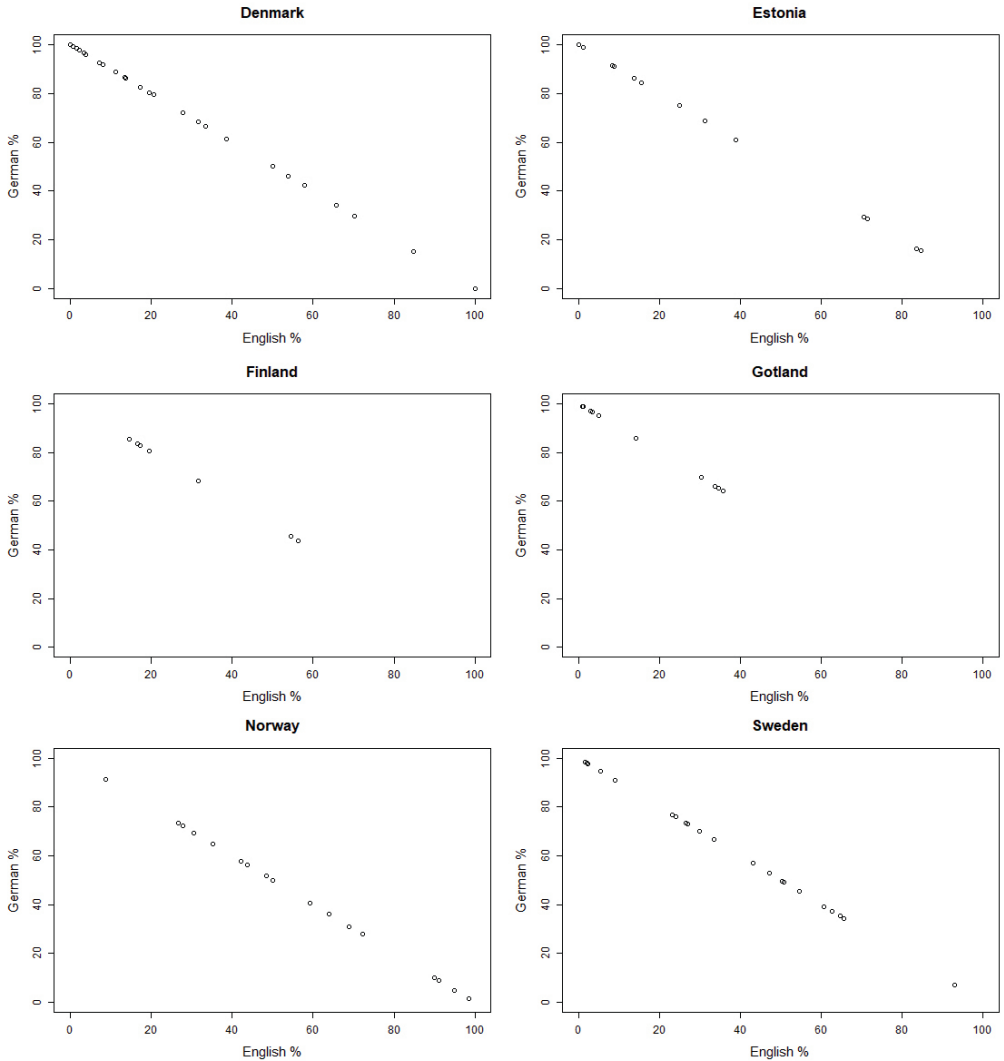
However, Figure 2 also shows that the Norwegian hoards follow a quite different pattern. Half of the 18 sampled Norwegian hoards contained more than 50% English coins, compared with less than a third of the 26 Danish hoards and none of the 12 Gotlandic hoards. Several prominent Norwegian hoards contain particularly large numbers of English coins. The hoard buried after ca 1029 at Årstad, for example, contained 1004 English coins and 690 German coins, while the hoard buried after ca 1018 at Slethei contained 301 English coins but just 16 German coins (Screen 2013, nos 16 and 24). The hoard buried after ca 991 at Fuglevik, meanwhile, contained about 62 English coins and only one German pfennig (Screen 2013, 8), one of the very few Scandinavian hoards where it seems clear that the parcel of English coins travelled direct from England to the place they were put into the ground. One notable exception is the hoard from Tråen, which contained 10 English coins but 104 German coins (Screen 2013, no. 10) – a composition more in keeping with the Danish, Estonian, Finnish, Gotlandic, and Swedish finds.

The differences in the balance of English and German coins in late Viking Age silver hoards from Norway and other parts of Scandinavia and the Baltic are of clear interest, and suggest that the coins present in these hoards were originally sourced from separate coinage pools with distinct regional characteristics. This conclusion is supported by an analysis of the pattern of English coins in late Viking Age hoards from Norway, which include noticeably more coins from the Anglo-Scandinavian Danelaw than are found in Danish and Gotlandic hoards of the same period (Gullbekk 1995, 5). If we accept the Jonsson and Sigurdsson hypotheses, these patterns might imply that Norwegians in AD 1000 had much weaker ties to the Elbe and Rhine regions than their neighbours, but conversely had greater links with Scandinavian settlers in the British Isles.

Whether occasioned by geographic, economic, or political circumstances, Norway’s relative detachment from the mainstream of Viking activity in the



North Sea would have placed clear limits on its access to inflows of German silver, which could only have been partly offset by its relatively privileged access to silver minted in eastern England. From the perspective of the rich Gotlanders and even the reasonably well-to-do Estonians, the elite of Viking Age Norway *circa* AD 1000 would have had the air of the provincial *parvenu*.



*Fig. 2. Percentages of English vs German coins in 98 silver hoards dated 975–1030 from Scandinavia and the Baltic. Graph by Murray Andreus.*

*Jn 2. Skandinaaviast ja Eestist pärit ning ajavahemikku 975–1030 dateeritud 98 hõbeaarde inglise ja Saksa müntide protsentuaalne vahekord.*

## Conclusion

In his paper *'Millennium breakthrough. North goes West'*, Ivar Leimus (2009) discussed the cultural, economic, and political reorientation of Northern Europe during the tenth century, which saw a dramatic shift in influence from the empires of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to the developing states of Western Europe. Evidence of this transformation can be found in Viking Age silver hoards, which consist mainly of Islamic dirhams before the AD 980s, but consist mainly of western European (and particularly German and English) coins in the decades thereafter. In this paper, we have shown that the proceeds of this economic reorientation towards Western Europe were not shared evenly across Scandinavia and the Baltic. Using the number and size of silver hoards as an index of regional wealth, we can see clear differences in the distribution of wealth in Northern Europe in AD 1000: while Gotland was by far the richest place, Norway and Finland were among the poorest. These differences cannot be explained by modern factors alone, but seem to reflect genuine historical distinctions in the nature and degree of Viking interaction with the economies of Western Europe. In the case of Norway, this probably reflects a lack of involvement in Viking activities on the Elbe and Rhine, the source of most German silver exported to Northern Europe, when compared to the relatively strong ties with the Anglo-Scandinavian Danelaw in Eastern England.

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# Kas Norra oli 1000. aastal rikas või vaene?

Svein Harald GULLBEKK ja Murray ANDREWS

## Resümee

Pärast lühikest vaikuseperioodi jätkusid 979. aastast alates viikingite retked Inglismaale ning ühtlasi taani viikingite juhtimisel ja nende norra kaaslaste osalusel aset leidnud andamikogumine. Olav Tryggvason kogus 991. aastal maksu Æthelred II käest, samuti sai temast esimene Norra kuningas, kes lasi münte vermidada. Seevastu Olaf Haraldsson juhatas Londonit piiranud viikingiarmeed, kogus andamit Canterburyst ning rüüstas Loire'i orgu ja Hispaania alasid. Ehkki paljud õpetlased on viikingiretki ja maksukogumist puudutavasse teatisse suhtunud kahtlusega, osutavad aarded ja ruunikivid, et 1000. aasta paiku liikusid tõepoolest suured rahasummad viikingite kätte. Selles artiklis uuritakse, kuidas see hõbevara hilisviikingiaegses Põhja-Euroopas jagunes ja kas umbes aastail 975–1030 oli Norra võrreldes Skandinaavia teiste osade ja Läänemere maadega rikas või vaene piirkond.

Tänapäeval hinnatakse ja võrreldakse rahvaste ja piirkondade rikkust makromajanduslike mõõdikutega, näiteks sisemajanduse kogutoodangu, netorahvatulu ja kapitali kogumahutusega põhivarasse. Paraku puudub selline statistiline andmestik valdava osa Skandinaavia ja Läänemere-äärsete alade kohta enne 1810. aastaid, kõnelemata hilisviikingiajast, mistõttu vajame alternatiivseid mõõdikuid piirkondliku rikkuse jaotuse hindamiseks kõnealusel ajajärgul. Selles artiklis pakutakse, et viikingiaegse rikkuse mõõtmiseks saab kasutada mündiaardeid. Viimase kolme aastasaja jooksul on nii Skandinaaviast kui ka Läänemere maadest leitud sadu viikingiaegseid aardeid, millest igäihe omaaegne rahaline väärtus on märkimisväärne. Ühtlasi näitab aarete geograafiline jagunemine, nagu ka hiliskeskajast pärit võrdlusainestik, regionaalseid rikkuse jagunemise mustreid. Kuigi mündiaaretele keskendumine tähendab mündihõbeda eelistamist teistele jõukuseallikatele, näiteks kariloomadele ja maavaldusele, kajastavad aarded nii viikingiaegse majanduse olemust kui ka selle perioodi arheoloogilisi ressursse. Et hõbe oli viikingiaja kultuuris hinnatuim jõukuse vorm, siis peaksid mündiaarded andma suurepärase sissevaate rikkuse laiemale jagunemisele.

Tabel 1 esitab kokkuvõtlikud andmed kuue Skandinaavia ja Läänemere piirkonna hilisviikingiaega dateeritud mündiaarde kohta. See andmestik sisaldab a) kõiki umbes aastaist 975–1030 pärit mündiaardeid, b) neis aardeis olevate mündide koguarvu, c) mündiaarete regionaalset levikutihedust (km<sup>2</sup>) ja d) mündide

koguarvu aardes ruutkilomeetri kohta eri piirkondades (km<sup>2</sup>). Topeltnõudikute kasutamine aitab arvesse võtta mündiaarete koguarvu geograafilisi iseärasusi, näiteks võrrelda väikest Gotlandi saart suure poolsaarelise Norra riigiga – kuigi need tänapäevased geograafilised jaotused ei pruugi kokku langeda hilisviikingiaegse asustustrüki. Sellest hoolimata järjestatakse mõlemas andmekogumis käsitletavat piirkonnad sarnaselt. Gotland tõuseb terves Skandinaavias ja Läänemere ruumis esile vaieldamatult suurima aarete ja hõbemüntide arvuga. Taani, Eesti ning Rootsi mandriosa asetuvad skaala keskosas, samal ajal kui Norra ja Soome sõrgivad sabas. Norra vaatenurgast lähtudes tuleb skaalaerinevusi rõhutada eraldi: igale Norrast leitud hõbeaarde mündile vastab Taanis ja Mandri-Rootsis kaks-kolm aardemünti ning Gotlandil kaheksa hõberaha.

Tabel 1 andmestik näitab selgeid erinevusi Skandinaavia ja Läänemere ruumi hilisviikingiaegsete mündiaarete arvukuses ja suuruses ning tajutavaid kontraste hõbedarikka Gotlandi ning hõbedavaese Norra ja Soome vahel. Sellist varieeruvust ei saa seletada ainult arheoloogiliste esemete leidmise tänapäevaste eripäradega: kuigi Gotlandil on hobiootimine keelatud ja Mandri-Rootsis lubatud, vastab mõlema piirkonna aarete koguarv ülejäänud Skandinaavia ja Läänemere piirkonna aarete koguarvule. Seega osutab hilisviikingiaegsete aarete ebaühtlane jaotus Skandinaavias ja Läänemere maades, et mõned piirkonnad olid märkimisväärselt rikkamad kui teised, sealjuures oli Norra varanduslikult palju tagasihoidlikumal kohal kui Gotland, ent samas mitte nii vaene kui Soome, Fääri saared ja Island.

Miks oli Norra hilisviikingiajal palju vaesem kui tema naabrid Skandinaavias ja mujal Läänemere ääres? Ühe võimaliku seletuse annab hõbeaarete koostise analüüs, mis näitab, et aarded koosnesid tavaliselt suures osas Saksa ja väiksemal määral Inglise pennidest. Tüüpiline näide on 548 hõberahaga Rootsi Reslövi aare, mis sisaldab 380 Saksa ja 163 Inglise münti. Arvatakse, et need aarded kujutavad enesest „segatud“ rahapakke, mis jõudsid Skandinaaviasse ja Läänemere äärde Põhja-Saksa ning Madalmaade kaudu, kus viikingid kehtestasid Elbe ja Reini jõe suudmes kauplevaile Inglise, Prantsuse, Saksa ja Skandinaavia kaupmeestele tee- ja tollimakse. Suurem osa Norra aardeid on aga teistsuguse koostisega ja sisaldavad palju suuremat hulka Inglise münte, kui see on Põhja-Euroopale tavaliselt omane. Årstadi aare Norrast Vest-Agderi maakonnast Egersundist peegeldab seda fenomeni, sisaldades 1004 Inglise ja 690 Saksa münti. Need erinevused viitavad, et Norra hõbeaarete sisu pärineb hoopis teisest piirkonnast, arvatavasti Inglismaa idaosas asuvaist skandinaavlaste Danelaw' asulatest. Norrakad paistavad olevat olnud rohkem seotud Danelaw' Inglismaaga kui tavapärase viikingitegevusega Elbe ja Reini ümbruses, mis selgelt piiras nende ligipääsu Saksa hõbedale, ning seetõttu oli viikingiaegne Norra paljude naabritega võrreldes märgatavalt hõbedavaesem.