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Oriental Coins and the Beginning of the Viking Period

Ulla S. Linder Welin's recent article in this periodical (1974, pp. 22—29) dealing with the date of the beginning of the Viking Period and with the date when the Oriental coins, Sassanian and Arabic, first reached Scandinavia requires a few comments. There is an especially strong need for a reply to her article since she is the main authority on Oriental coins in Scandinavia and because the Oriental coins always will be of utmost importance for the chronology of the Viking Period.

Linder Welin, at the beginning of her article (1974, p. 22), regrets the lack of interest in the problems of the Oriental coins and states that C. J. Tornberg's writings mark the heyday of research on Oriental coins. It is remarkable that Linder Welin does not mention S. Bolin's, unpublished but widely circulated work (1939 A) of which the article "Muhammed, Karl den store och Rurik" (1939 B) may be regarded only as a provisional sketch. We should also mention the important contributions by R. Fasmer (1925, 1927, 1931, 1933, 1936 B) and V. L. Janin (1956) which, although they are centred on Eastern Europe, also are relevant to Scandinavian problems.

Further on in her article (p. 22), Linder Welin has chosen to quote an article by B. Schnittger and the opinions of O. Montelius, neither of whom seriously dealt with Viking Period problems in their research. At present Schnittger's and Montelius' opinions are not shared by any authors in the field.

We must agree with Linder Welin (1974, p. 24) that the Frankish coins hardly antedate the incursion of the Oriental coins in Eastern Scandinavia. However, we think she is wrong when she states that Bolin was blinded by the large number of 'Abbāsid and Samānid coins. S. Bolin's later attempts on the coin finds of the Viking Period show very clearly that he noticed the early Arabic

coins and in fact used them for special purposes. It is difficult to decide whether the Oriental coins actually antedate the Western coins in Western and Southern Scandinavia. As Linder Welin points out, Stenberger (1958, p. 251) did acknowledge the primacy of the Oriental coins. In fact, his statements were probably gathered from Bolin's MS. There is a very conspicuous agreement between Bolin's work and Stenberger 1958.

Linder Welin's assertion (1974, p. 24) that there is "an earlier stratum of import" (earlier than the 'Abbāsid coins), and that this stratum consists of "an important and sizeable group of Omayyad and Sassanian coins struck before A.D. 750 and brought to Sweden and consigned to the soil well before the end of the eighth century" calls for a critical analysis of the find list presented by her.

Before we start our review of the finds, it is important, from a methodical point of view, to make clear how a coin can be used in dating a find. This has been discussed by Herschend (1972, pp. 55—56) who seems to maintain the idea that the degree of wear of a coin can be used. The degree of wear can be used for an analysis of the function of the coin but, of course, not directly for dating purpose.

Linder Welin's idea must be that a coin in a grave gives a firm date. Even if it is not explicit in her article, we must assume that, in her opinion, the date of a grave with a coin is the date of the coin *plus* a number of years *known* to us. It must be made clear that the only certain date a coin gives is a *terminus post quem* and nothing else. It must also be realized that the mechanical addition of a given amount of time to the date of the coin must be regarded as pure self-deception. Curiously enough, this method of dating is very often used even in connection with hoards, cf. e. g. Stenberger 1947.

Our review of the finds will follow Linder Welin's numbers.

1. *Dalarna*, Husby parish, Ytternora, SHM 19589: Stray find? I. Serning's assumption that the coins *could* belong to the hoard from Ytternora cannot be regarded as definitely erroneous. The occurrence of two coin finds in the same village in a province so poor in finds of this type is conspicuous (cf. Serning 1966, pp. 138—139). The SHM only keeps a copy of the coin. The original is kept at Dalarnas museum, Falun.

2. *Gästrikland*, Hille parish, Oppala, SHM 8631: It is doubtful whether this find could be called a closed find. The find inventory includes three pairs of double shelled oval fibulae. One pair lacks the upper shell. The brim, which is remarkably narrow (breadth max. 0.4 cm), makes it probable that the pair according to Petersen's classification is early JP 51 (Petersen 1928). The second pair is a rare variation of JP 51:b. The third pair is JP 52 (one ordinary variation and one atypic). None of these fibulae could be dated earlier than the turn of the ninth century and the tenth century. According to Bellander (1939, p. 129), the find included an Anglo-Saxon coin.

3. *Uppland*, Adelsö parish, Birka, grave 1010, SHM Bj1010: The grave inventory includes one early comb (Arbman 1940, Taf. 160:5). Ninth century. There is a similar comb in a probably early ninth century grave find from Uppland, Vendel parish, Karby (SHM 9521: B:5). The beads in grave 1010 are in favour of a later date (unpublished investigations of Viking Age beads by the author).

4. *Uppland*, Adelsö parish, Birka, grave 29, SHM Bj29: The grave inventory includes a comb with crisscross decoration and a fibula fragment (Arbman 1943, Abb. 11:14). Late ninth or tenth century. A similar comb occurs in grave 922 together with oval fibulae JP 37:1 (Arbman 1943, pp. 359—360) and in grave 181 together with a torque with hammer amulets (Arbman 1943, p. 76). Oval fibulae JP 37:1 certainly postdate the early combinations with Hiberno-Scottish imports (cf. below) and could hardly be dated to the eighth century. Beads associated with JP 37:1,

among them cornelian beads also contradict a dating to the eighth century. Except for grave 6 at Valsgårde, Gamla Uppsala parish, Uppland (Arwidsson 1942B, p. 79, Taf. 36) no find with a torque with hammer amulets has been assigned to the eighth century. Mostly these torques are of tenth century date.

5. *Uppland*, Adelsö parish, Birka, grave 197, SHM Bj197: The grave inventory includes a penannular brooch (Arbman 1940, Taf. 52:6). Brooches of this type always occur with doubleshelled oval fibulae of tenth century date.

6. *Uppland*, Adelsö parish, Birka, grave 550, SHM Bj550: The grave inventory includes a pair of oval fibulae JP 23 and a Frankish mount (Arbman 1940, Taf. 83:8). Ornamental details of other JP 23 fibulae and the possibility to use imported Frankish mounts as a chronological *terminus post quem* horizon allows us to place the grave about. A.D. 900. Cf. a comparable JP 23 fibula in Smålands Museum at Växjö L 820 from Ingelstad, Östra Torsås parish, Småland.

7. *Uppland*, Adelsö parish, Birka, grave 731, SHM Bj731: The grave inventory includes a pair of oval fibulae of a variation of JP 51:c (Arbman 1940, Taf. 65:7). Tenth century. In grave 835 at Birka (Arbman 1943, pp. 308—309), similar (more distinct ornamentation) fibulae occur together with a Samānid coin (Andarābah A.D. 911/12, Ahmad ben Ismā'il).

8—15. *Uppland*, Adelsö parish, Birka, SHM 5208:20, SHM 21064, SHM 14592, SHM without numbers: All these finds lack chronologically relevant context. The author takes the position that stratigraphy cannot be used for lowfrequency objects like coins. Cf. the criticism of the stratigraphic chronology of Haithabu (Capelle 1968, pp. 29—30 and especially Schietzel 1974, pp. 33—34). Capelle deals with the brook-bed stratigraphy and Schietzel with the stratigraphy of the settled areas, but the same general attitude is relevant to any sequence of accumulated cultural debris. It is difficult to grasp whether Kyhlberg realizes these problems (Kyhlberg 1973).

16. *Uppland*, Adelsö parish, Skopinntull, SHM 16171: The bridle or belt mounts (Rydh 1936, Figs. 300:a, b, 302-04) in this find fit their close parallels in Norway, on Gotland and in Russia give a date to the first half of the tenth century. For parallels cf. Brögger 1916; Fig. 1, Figs. 18—26; Stenberger 1961, Abb. 43; Salonen 1929, pp. 231 and 234; *Suomen Kuvalehti* 1873, p. 247; Sizov 1902, tab. II:2, 9, tab. XI:8, 14—15, tab. XII:1; Spicyn 1905, ris. 61, 66; Spicyn 1906, ris. 3, 5, 12.

17—18. *Uppland*, Ekerö parish, Helgö, SHM: These finds lack chronologically relevant context as there is an almost complete lack of stratigraphy at Helgö.

19. *Uppland*, Skuttunge parish, Grävsta, grave 7, SHM 19464: The grave inventory includes a pair of fragmentary oval fibulae of type JP 51:a. The date is the turn of the ninth century or early tenth century. Finds with JP 51:a are relatively often associated with Hiberno-Scottish imports, which indicate a comparatively early date. Fibulae of type JP 51:a occur with a Louis Debonaire (A.D. 814—840) coin in the Lerchenborg find (Skovmand 1942, pp. 107—110).

20. *Uppland*, Skuttunge parish, Grävsta, grave 24, SHM 19464: The grave inventory includes a penannular brooch and a fragment of an oval fibula (not examined by the author). The brooch is of certain tenth century date. Cf. find no. 5 above. Three cornelian beads in this grave also contradict a dating to the eighth century.

21. *Uppland*, Stavby parish, Jönninge, grave 1b, SHM 24989: The grave inventory includes a dirham struck at aš-Šaš for *Al-Ma'mun* who reigned A.D. 813—833.

22. *Södermanland*, Strängnäs, Låsta no. 1, grave 9, SHM 27589: The grave inventory includes a bronze pendant, 25 beads, of which 10 are multibeads with gold folium, and a comb with criss-cross ornamentation. Tenth century. Cf. comments to find no. 4. Other combs with criss-cross and net decoration occur regularly with double-shelled (late) oval fibulae. The high percentage of gold (false) folium multibeads indicates a dating to the second maximum of multibeads in the

Viking Period (unpublished investigations of Viking Period beads by the author) i.e. the tenth century.

23. *Småland*, Södra Vi parish, Skärstad: The grave inventory is probably identical with an oval fibula and beads kept in the SHM without number. The oval fibula is of type JP 37:12. The date is late ninth century or about A.D. 900. Cf. comments to find no. 4.

24. *Skåne*, Bonderup parish, LKM 26149: The armlet is difficult to date, but certainly not earlier than the ninth century. Cf. Petersen 1928, pp. 157—158.

25. *Öland*, Kastlösa parish, Bjärby, SHM 21207:2: The grave inventory does not include chronologically relevant objects.

27. *Åland*, Hammarland parish, Boda, ÅM 62: Stray find.

Of these 27 finds only ten are associated with objects which at present are of chronological significance. Only one find or possibly two (nos. 3 and 23) could be of certain ninth century date. We must state that the result of our review of Linder Welin's find list is that there is neither support for her approach to the dating of archaeological finds, nor for her proposal to date the beginning of the Viking Period to before A.D. 750 or even A.D. 700 with reference to these finds.

Before we turn to the reasons for Linder Welin's failure to prove her theses on dating we shall briefly look at her ideas of the chorology of the finds and at the ideology lying implicit behind them. This is very important since here we are involved with the remarkably biased approach of some Swedish scholars to society and economy in the Viking Period. At the bottom of this approach lies the myth of the mighty kings and the highly centralized and efficient kingdom of Swithiod. This approach could actually be traced very far back and could be regarded as the twin of the traditional approach to the problem of the homelands of the Goths. Cf. Lindroth 1972. The approach has found its most ardent advocates among historians. Cf. for example Tunberg 1947. In line with this is the supposition that Birka represents some sort of capital of the Mälars Valley or even of Swe-

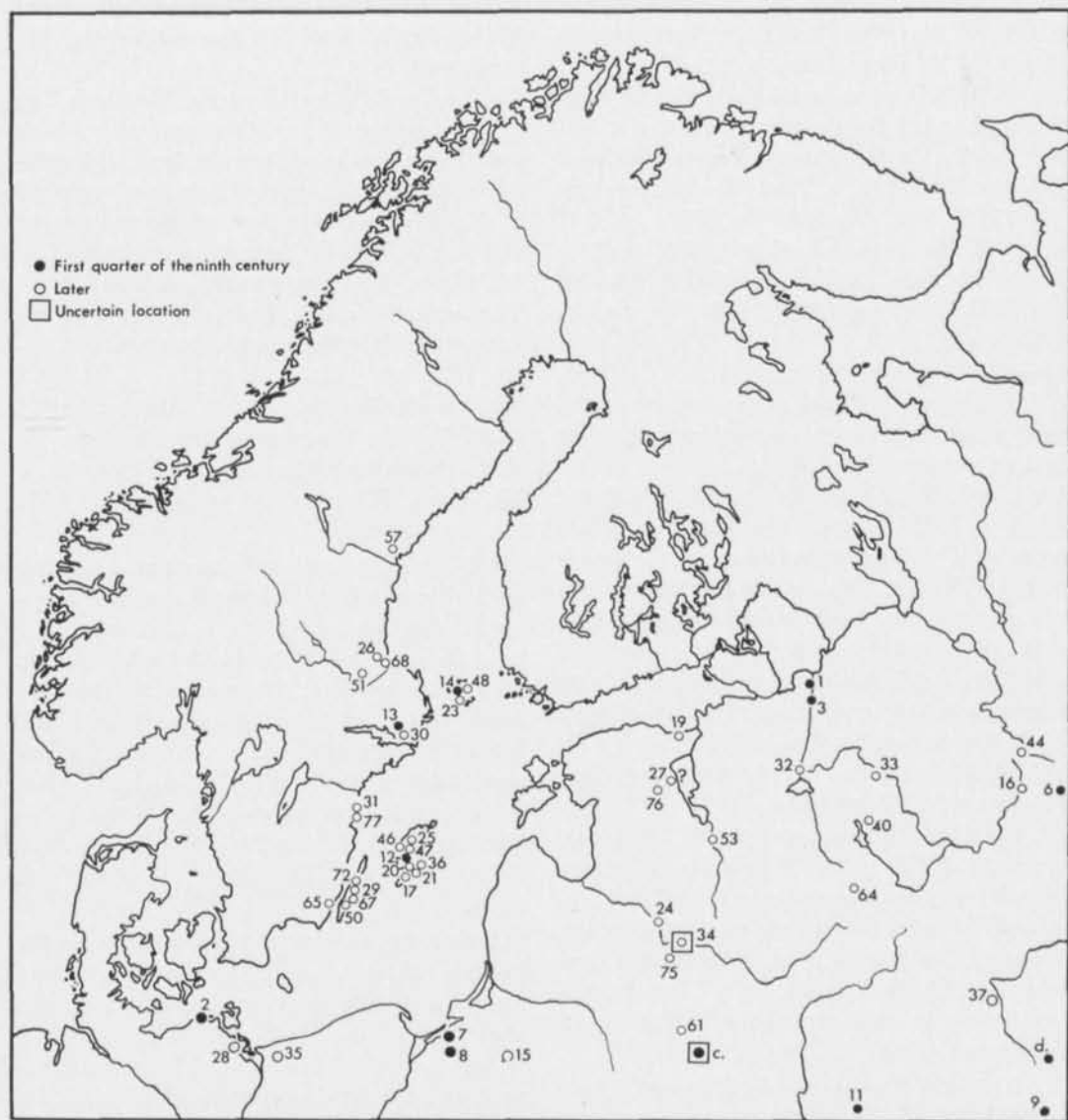


Fig. 1. Finds of Oriental coins containing more than twenty determined coins A.D. ca. 800—950. Finds on Gotland from the tenth century are omitted. (Finds 3, 5, 10, 18, 22, 38—39, 41—43, 45, 49, 52, 54—56, 62—63, 66, 69—73, a—b, e lie outside this map). — Orientaliska myntfynd, vilka innehåller fler än tjugo mynt daterade till ca. 800—950 e.Kr. Gotländska fynd från 900-talet är ej medtagna. (Fynden nr. 3, 5, 10, 18, 22, 38—39, 41—43, 45, 49, 54—56, 62—63, 66, 69—73, a—b, e ligger utanför denna karta.)

Key to Fig. 1: 1. Staraja Ladoga, district of Leningrad, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 140). — 2. Prerow, district of Rostock, DDR (Bolin 1939 A). — 3. Krivjanskaja, district of Rostov, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 137. — 4. Knjaščino, district of Leningrad, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 32—33, Fasmer 1926, p. 291). — 5. Zavališino, district of Belgorod, USSR, SSSR (Fasmer 1931). — 6. Ugo-diči, district of Jaroslavl', RSFSR, SSSR (Fasmer 1927). — 7. Braniewo-Braunsberg, district of Gdąnsk, Poland (Markov 1910, pp. 110—111). — 9. Jaryloviči, district of Brjansk, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 50—51). — 10. Elmed, Tatar ASSR, RSFSR, SSSR (Fasmer 1926, p. 289). — 11. Litvinoviči,

district of Gomel', BSSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 12. Hejde prästgård, Hejde parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, p. 104). — 13. Väsby, Hammarby parish, Uppland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 91 and Linder (Welin) 1938, p. 124). — 14. Svedjelandet, Geta parish, Åland, Finland (Granberg 1966, pp. 13 ff.). — 15. Formely Ramsau, district of Olsztyn, Poland (Bolin 1939A). — 16. Uglič, district of Jaroslavl', RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 54—55). — 17. Norrkvie, Grötlingbo parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, p. 76). — 18. Devica, district of Voronež, RSFSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 19. Kochtel', Estonian SSR (Fasmer 1926, p. 292 and Fasmer 1928). — 20. Oxarve, Hemse parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, p. 118). — 21. Hummelbos, Burs parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, p. 33). — 22. Jagožury, Udmurt ASSR, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 8). — 23. Hammarudda, Jomala parish Åland, Finland (Granberg 1966, pp. 30 ff.). — 24. Achremcy, district of Vitebsk, BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 3). — 25. Svenskens, Endre parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, p. 48). — 26. Häcklinge, Valbo parish, Gästrikland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 90 and Linder (Welin) 1938, p. 124). — 27. The shore of Lake Pejpus, Estonian SSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 18). — 28. Pinnow, district of Neubrandenburg, DDR (Bolin 1939A). — 29. Södra Gärdslösa, Gärdslösa parish, Öland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 95 and Linder (Welin) 1938, p. 124). — 30. Fittja gård, Fittja parish, Uppland, Sweden (Linder (Welin) 1938, pp. 109 ff.). — 31. Åskedal, Loftahammar parish, Småland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 94; Peterson & Linder (Welin) 1963, p. 312). — 32. Novgorod, district of Novgorod, RSFSR, SSSR (Fasmer 1925). — 33. Poterpel'cy, district of Novgorod, RSFSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 34. Former Government of Vitebsk, BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 2—3). — 35. Formerly Carnitz, district of Szczecin, Poland, (Bolin 1939A). — 36. Hemmor, När parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, pp. 154—155). — 37. Mišnevo, district of Kaluga, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 12). — 38. Borki, district of Rjazan', RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 40—41). — 39. Chersones, district of Crimea, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 45). — 40. Šumilovo, district of Kalinin, RSFSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 41. Pogrebnoje, district of Sumy, USSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 16). — 42. Bobyli, district of Orel, RSFSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 43. Zeleznycy, district of Moscow, RSFSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 44. Kuzneckoje, district of Jaroslavl', RSFSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 45. Poltava, district of Poltava, USSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 140—141). — 46. Sojvide, Eskelhem parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, p. 51). — 47. Roma, Roma parish, Gotland, Sweden (Stenberger 1947, p. 166). — 48. Bertby, Saltvik parish, Åland, Finland (Granberg 1966, pp. 50 ff.). — 49. Novaja Lazarevka, district of Cherson, USSR, SSSR (Izvestija Imp. Archeologiceskoj kommissii. Pribavlenie k No 5. 1905, pp. 58—59). — 50. Sandby, Sandby parish, Öland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 96). — 51. Ytternora, Husby parish, Dalarna, Sweden (Serning 1966, pp. 138—139). — 52. Kokrjat, district of Molotov, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 11). — 53. Borovikovo, district of Pskov, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 37—38). — 54. Biljarsk, district of Kujbyšev, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 10). — 55. Kiev, district of Kiev, USSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 13). — 56. Kiev, district of Kiev, USSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 57. Birsta, Skön parish, Medelpad, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 89). — 58. Without provenance (the Hermitage) (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 59. Čaple-Obrempalki, district of Brest, BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 45). — 60. Strupovo, district of Gomel', BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 26—27). — 61. Lencikovščina, district of Minsk, BSSR SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 138). — 62. Former Government of Kazan', RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 11). — 63. Former territory of Sosnica, district of Černigov, USSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 52). — 64. Pal'cevo, district of Kalinin, RSFSR, SSSR (Janin 1956, tab. I). — 65. Södra Kärr, Söderåkra parish, Småland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 94). — 66. Bogdanovskoje, Udmurt ASSR, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 7). — 67. Ullevi, Gårdby parish, Öland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 96). — 68. Åsbygge, Valbo parish, Gästrikland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 90). — 69. Kiev, district of Kiev, USSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 12). — 70. Murom, district of Vladimir, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 5—6). — 71. Stavropol', district of Kujbyšev, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 41). — 72. Valsnäs, Löt parish, Öland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 95). — 73. Bolgary, Tatar ASSR, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 137). — 74. Gomel', district, BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 25). — 75. Former territory of Disna, BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 1—2). — 76. Tartu, Estonian SSSR (Markov 1910, pp. 17—18). — 77. Hula, Loftahammar parish, Småland, Sweden (Markov 1910, p. 94 and Peterson & Linder (Welin) 1963, p. 312).

(In order to avoid a too strong Gotlandic influence on our material, hoards from the tenth century from this island were omitted.)

den. Lately in a modified form, for example Welinder 1974, p. 246 and Hyenstrand 1974, pp. 154—155.

This biased approach has, it seems, been much strengthened by the large scale excavations of cemeteries, but not of sites in the Mälär valley carried out mainly after World War II. We get the impression that it is even thought that the vast number of preserved cemeteries in this area marks the realm of the Swithiod kings. The author has gathered this idea from discussions with a large number of colleagues. There are much better alternative explanations of these observations in the agricultural differences between different regions of Sweden. The large number of grave finds in the Mälär valley consists, to a very large extent, of graves excavated on purpose. The large scale excavations are mainly a consequence of the forced exploitation of the Stockholm region. Of the grave finds in Linder Welin's find list, all graves from this area are excavated on purpose.

It is, of course, much more interesting to study the incidentally recovered finds. These finds do not show a concentration to the Mälär valley. For purposes outlined below the author has examined hoards from the ninth and tenth centuries (Fig. 1 and note 41). The hoards, which are all incidentally recovered, certainly give a more telling picture. At this point we must state that we do not agree with Bolin's and other historians' assumptions that hoards necessarily mean war, and that this point cannot be used in reverse to prove the internal stability of the central Swithiod realm. Cf. for example Warnke 1968, pp. 302 ff., and especially Sarvas 1967 and 1969. It is important to touch on these matters as work on the Viking Period, and especially on Birka, is being planned and even under way on a very large scale. New investigations were started in 1970. (Cf. Ambrosiani et al. 1973.)

After this digression we must return to the main subject of our paper. Which were the reasons for Linder Welin's failure? We have been able to show that the graves thought by her to be of the eighth century with only few

exceptions belong to the tenth century. This fact must mean that in the tenth century coin-stock in Scandinavia, consisting of both coins used as coins and coins used as pendants, there was still quite a number of Omayyad and Sassānian coins. To get some idea of what the coin-stock looked like in the ninth century and in the first half of the tenth we must turn to the hoards. Although there is a remarkable number of unpublished hoards, it was possible to study no less than 77 hoards from Sweden, Finland, SSSR, Poland, and DDR with more than twenty classified coins, among which one excellently published by Linder Welin. (Cf. Fig. 1 with comments.)

True Sassānian pehlevi drachms, although they were struck before the Arabic conquest of Iran, are quite numerous in North European hoards. We are not concerned now with the drachms struck by the Ispahbadhs of Ṭabaristān and by the Omayyad governors of Iran. True Sassānian drachms, however hardly occur in hoards with *terminus post quem* later than A.D. 900. In the first quarter of the ninth century, Sassānian drachms occur in 56 % of the hoards and constitute an average of 9 % of the coins. In the second quarter, the figures are lower. Drachms occur in 56 % of the hoards and constitute an average of only 3 %. In the third quarter, the tendency is the same. Now they occur in 24 % of the hoards and constitute an average of 3 %. In the last quarter of the ninth century, they occur in 33 % of the hoards and constitute less than 1 % of the coins.

Since Arab-Sassānian coins are also represented among Linder Welin's finds, we shall see how they occur in the hoards. Fasmer (1936A) surveys the Ṭabaristān coins. During the first quarter of the ninth century, they occur in 50 % of the hoards and constitute an average of 9 % of the coins. During the second quarter of the century, the figures are inconsiderably different, *wiz.* 67 % and 7 %. However, in the third quarter of the century, the figures have dropped to 18 % and only 1 %. With few exceptions they do not occur later.

The dirhams of the Omayyad dynasty are

remarkably long-lived in hoards. Omayyad dirhams were struck before A.D. 750, and most of them emanate from the mint at Wāsiṭ in the province of ʿIrāq (Linder Welin 1955). In the first quarter of the ninth century, they occur in 79 % of the hoards and constitute an average of 9 % of the coins. In the second quarter, they occur in all hoards examined (100 %) and still constitute 9 % of the coins. In the third quarter, the figures have sunk. They occur in 82 % of the hoards and constitute 6 % of the coins. In the last quarter of the ninth century, they occur in 67 % of the hoards and with an average of 4 % of the coins. In the tenth century, Omayyad dirhams still occur but are rather few. In the first quarter of the tenth century, they occur in 25 % of the hoards with an average of 4 % of the coins. In the second quarter, they occur in only 11 % of the hoards still, however, with 4 % of the coins. In the second half of the tenth century, they still occur and in a few cases constitute as much as 4 % of the coins in a hoard. Cf. the hoard from Friedrichshof (Janin 1956, Table II).

In conclusion, we must state that true Sassānian drachms, Arab-Sassānian drachms and Omayyad dirhams played an important role in the hoards of the ninth century, and that the Omayyad dirhams did not lose their importance until after the middle of the tenth century.

It is very interesting to note that Ṭāhirid dirhams from the provinces of Dǧībāl, Khurasan and Transoxania struck in A.D. 820—872 and Ṣaffārid dirhams, mostly from the province of Fārs and struck in A.D. 867—908, survive for less than a hundred years in the hoards. The difference between the coins of the Sassānids and the Omayyads, constitute at most 4 % of a hoard, but Ṭāhirid and Ṣaffārids, on the other, is very marked. Ṣaffārid dirhams were never numerous and constitute at most 4 % of a hoard, but Ṭāhirid dirhams constitute as much as 27 % of one ninth century hoard (hoard 47 above "Roma"). The reason for their swift disappearance is, to some extent, that the coins of these dynasties were drowned in the over-

flow of Samānid coins (Janin 1956, p. 122). Shortley after 900 A.D., we note that the chronological centre of gravity of the hoards shifts from the first decades of the ninth century to some ten years before the date of the latest coin. This shift is mainly explained by the incursion of the Samānid dirhams mentioned above but certainly not completely. To gain an explanation we must assume that the coin-stock, although it received the Samānid addition, also lost a considerable amount of coins. We don't think it is too bold to propose that this, in fact, is the impact of the emergence of the tenth century silver jewelry production in Scandinavia and somewhat later at Bulghar. Recent research on the composition of the silver used for silver ingots and armlets may point in this direction (Arrhenius et al. 1973).

We must now turn to the problem of relating the evidence of the hoards to the evidence of the grave finds. The general impression we get is that old coins occur later in the grave finds than in the hoards. The best possible explanation is reached when we assume that there were several economical spheres characterized by different systems of valuation:

- I Silver valued and common; bronze jewelry used
- II Silver valued but uncommon; bronze jewelry and beads valued and common
- III Silver valued but most uncommon; bronze jewelry valued but uncommon; beads valued and common
- IV Beads valued but uncommon.

The division has been worked out by the author in connection with attempts at an evaluation of the Viking Age female graves from a social and economic point of view. The chronological difference between the hoards and the graves may indicate the relation between spheres I and II. The important thing is that coins had different functions in these two spheres. A full consideration of the problems sketched here presupposes that the full hoard and grave material is treated. Unfortunately, both graves and hoards badly need publication.

Even if we have been able to show that the find list presented by Linder Welin is not relevant to her proposals, it could be that she was right about the date of the incursion of the Oriental coins to "well before the end of the eighth century". We must now return to the hoards. Among the hoards used by the author in order to study the Omayyad and Sassanian coins and with a few additions¹ there were 18 hoards with more than twenty determinable coins, which had a *terminus post quem* in the first quarter of the ninth century and one from the end of the eighth century:

Staraja Ladoga 787	Lapotkovo 817
Prerow 802	Borki 817
Krivjanskaja 806	Mokajmy-Sójki
Knjaščino 808	(ex Storchnest) 818
Zavališino 810	Jaryloviči 821
Nižnjaja Syrovatka 813	Elmed 821
Ugodiči 813	Litvinoviči 824
Mogilev 815	Hejde 824
Gov. of Minsk 816	Väsby 825
Braniewo 816	Svedjlandet 825

These hoards give the very strong impression that the Oriental coin did not reach the Baltic until about 800 A.D. The ninth century hoards show that it was probably along the Volga route that the Oriental coins reached the Baltic. It is obvious that Gotland had a part to play already from the start. Important areas were also Åland, the lower Dalälven region, the Mälär Valley, Öland, Kalmar County, the mouth of the Oder and the land of the Old Prussians.

We agree with Linder Welin's statement that the Viking Period is a period only historically but not archaeologically fully defined. Although several works have been written about the so-called transition period,

¹ a) Nižnjaja Syrovatka, district of Sumy, USSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 52). b) Former government of Mogilev, BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 25). c) Former government of Minsk, BSSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 24). d) Lapotkovo, district of Tula, RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 49). e) Borki, district of Rjazan', RSFSR, SSSR (Markov 1910, p. 40).

the chronological problems still remain. Almgren 1955 is still the classic. E. Bakka's initiative to pick up one of H. Shetelig's ideas about the Hiberno-Scottish imports must be warmly welcomed (Bakka 1973, pp. 9—17; cf. Shetelig 1927). As Bakka points out, the earliest finds of Hiberno-Scottish import in Western Scandinavia do not appear as a stray admixture but manifest themselves as a definable find horizon. The characteristic forms of Shetelig-Bakka's find horizon, with the exception of the Hiberno-Scottish imports, consist, among other things, of thin-shelled oval and zoomorphic fibulae, thin armlets with crosswise zigzag grooves, armlets with thickening ends, thin overlapping armlets with wound ends. It is well worth noticing that this horizon is very well contrasted against earlier and later material, not only by bronze jewelry, but also by beads. The author (MS unpublished) has noticed that the bead inventory is characterized by monochrome, wound glass beads mostly white and blue or by gold folium, generally, false, multibeats (having their first maximum in this horizon and reaching a second maximum in the tenth century) and by some new types of mosaicque beads.

There have been many different opinions on the true nature of the Hiberno-Scottish imports. Some scholars advocate an interpretation of them as missionary gifts. However, their very marked concentration to the Norwegian west coast and their abrupt appearance in the above mentioned find horizon make this interpretation most unlikely. Regarding the date of the Shetelig-Bakka find horizon, we see very little reason to place it before A.D. 800. Only after the turn of the century is it probable that Hiberno-Scottish objects reached Scandinavia in such force that they could manifest themselves as characteristic objects in a find horizon. Hiberno-Scottish imports occur in more than 30 % of the combinations of this find horizon.

Now it could be thought that Shetelig-Bakka's find horizon had only importance for and was only relevant to Norwegian material. However, several of the types characteristic of this find horizon occur in Southern and

Eastern Scandinavia as well. There are for example a few but important finds of thin-shelled oval and zoomorphic fibulae (from Jutland (uncertain), Bornholm, Scania, Småland, Östergötland and Uppland. (Cf. Almgren 1955, p. 79.) Most probably the thin-shelled, large, rectangular fibulae from Southern Scandinavia are related (Ramskou 1946, p. 133). Relevant types of armlets and beads are represented too, especially in the Bornholm material. Considering the consequences of these finds, we are compelled to push M. Ørsnes' phases 3b, and at least part of 3a, into the ninth century (Ørsnes 1966, p. 241). The Swedish material dealt with by B. Almgren (1955) must, consequently, also be definitely placed in the ninth century as well as at least a number of G. Arwidsson's characteristic style D finds (Arwidsson 1942A).

The consequences of this suggested rearrangement are far-reaching and very important for our understanding of the Vendel and Viking Periods. The contrasts between the two periods appear to be much sharper than earlier supposed.

To sum up, it is still reasonable to maintain that the Viking Period begins about A.D. 800. The beginning of the Viking Period is characterized by the incursion of the Oriental silver coins and by certain brooches, armlets and beads worn by women. It remains to define characteristics for men's objects and sites (which is at present impossible for lack of excavations).

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Orientaliska mynt och vikingatidens början

U. Linder Welins artikel i *Fornvännen* 1974:1 fordrar en kommentar. Ur metodisk synpunkt förefaller hennes arbetssätt vara diskutabelt.

En granskning av de av Linder Welin använda fynden visar, att inget fynd kan föras till 700-talet och endast ett eller två fynd till 800-talet. Resten av fynden tillhör otvivelaktigt tiden omkring 900 e. Kr. och 900-talet.

Korologiskt sett förefaller Linder Welins starka betoning av Mälardalens betydelse diskutabel, särskilt mot bakgrund av skattfyndens (och andra slumpmässigt framkomna fynds) utbredning. Åland, Nedre Dalälven-regionen, Gotland, Öland, Kalmar län, Odermynningen och Ostpreussen var från början lika betydelsefulla områden.

En analys av myntstocken i Nord- och Östeuropas skattfynd ca 800—950 e. Kr. visar, att äkta sassanidiska drachmer, arabisk-sassanidiska mynt och omayyadiska dirhamer ut-

gjorde en inte obetydlig del av 800-talets myntstock; de sistnämnda hade även betydelse för 900-talets myntstock. Av allt att döma är mynt i gravarna genomsnittligt äldre än mynt i skatterna. Detta förhållande kan möjligen förklaras om man postulerar olika värdesfärer.

Den av Linder Welin föreslagna dateringen av den orientaliska myntströmmens inbrott i Östersjöområdet får inte något stöd i skattfyndens vittnesbörd. Den traditionella dateringen till ca 800 e. Kr. är mera trolig.

En fyndhorisont av smycken av kvinnlig karaktär, synkron med tiden strax efter 800 e. Kr., kan urskiljas i norskt material och den har även betydelse för Östersjöområdet. Denna fyndhorisont ger närmast vid handen, att en del på stilistiska grunder daterat senvedtida material måste föras in i 800-talet.