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Summary of the Symposium by Jørgen Steen Jensen

The idea of this symposium was suggested by Otto Mørkholm after the 1978 numismatic seminar at Hässelby, organized by the Nordic Cultural Foundation. The discussion which followed the lectures had shown that several numismatists had focused their interest on the monetary problems of the Baltic in the late Middle Ages.

The preceding years had seen some important books and papers on this subject. The book by R. Sprandel (1975) on the system of payment in the Baltic area from the 13th to the 15th century should be mentioned here, because it is of special interest to the numismatic reader. In addition, the survey by Peter Berghaus (1973) on various aspects of the late medieval German monetary history in the Baltic area is particularly stimulating because of the revised date for the introduction of the Lübeck witten (c. 1365, instead of c. 1340). This revision was supported by an analysis of the contents of a huge Danish hoard. No less important is Berghaus' catalogue of witten hoards from the western part of the Baltic area, the first comprehensive catalogue on this scale (149 hoards). The survey in *Past and Present* by John Day (1978) on the great bullion famine of the 15th century, concentrating on the Western European and Mediterranean countries, is important because it might help to explain some otherwise enigmatic interruptions in the Nordic minting activity.

In the Nordic countries themselves the initial studies by Brita Malmer and her collaborators on the Västerås hoard of 1972 (more than 16,000 coins, deposited c. 1520) and consequently on the Swedish coinage of the whole Sture period (1471–1520) are equal in importance to her studies on the Swedish penny of the late medieval period, which now have been published (1980). Interesting discoveries by Pekka Sarvas about the first Finnish coinage of the early 15th century are soon to be published. It was already known through his good offices that Michail Nemirowitsch of Tallinn was studying the Estonian coinage of the late 14th century in great detail.

This was, so to speak, the scientific background for organizing the symposium. We were supported by the assiduous activities of Gerald Stefke, who in regular visits to the Copenhagen and Stockholm cabinets became acquainted with unpublished or little known witten hoards, found in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Turning to the Symposium papers themselves I should like to stress *John Day's* observations concerning the decline of the European bullion reserves by half between the second quarter of the 14th century and the third quarter of the 15th century. His paper is followed by some most useful tables, which are much enlarged compared to his own, previously mentioned paper. They cover the estimated level of mint production in gold and silver, bimetallic ratios c. 1330–1500 in nine centers of Western and Southern Europe and finally estimates of the annual mine prodution.

Rolf Sprandel stresses the importance of local exceptions to Day's observations, as much money was available in Denmark and the Duchies of Slesvig and Holsten in the 1460's. The importance of Scania and its herrings is underlined, because this was until the early 15th century the best Danish commercial possibility of attracting silver and gold into the country. The royal income from the Scanian fairs included revenue from the castles. The wealth of the province is also illustrated by the comparatively large papal incomes from the archbishop of Lund. But even if the province was rich, it had – in the 14th century – no monetary system of any importance, because it frequently changed masters. This was the reason why there were no Nordic coin imitations in Northern Germany for use in Scania – it was possible to do more with Lübeck money in Scania than with Danish money.

Svend Gissel, who represented the Scandinavian research project on deserted late medieval farms and villages, proves that in Danmark rents in money were abandoned in times of inflation (c. 1300) and resumed when grain prices dropped. About 1330, when the Holsten counts controlled Denmark, both the Danish coinage and the capital market broke down. For a long period only silver coins, foreign coins or produce were used for calculating rents, which apparently were reduced in the ensuing decades. The adoption of the groat rent probably dates to the 15th century. Gissel concludes that the Danish material of calculating taxes and rents reflects a strong tendency towards money economy. In Sweden there are instances from Östergötland and Småland of rents being calculated in Gotlandic currency instead of Swedish, but the severe debasement of Gotlandic currency in the first half of the 15th century meant that it was only worth a quarter of the Swedish. Often efforts were made to offset this debasement. In some places in Sweden there was in the 1430's a tendency to shift to iron rents, but about 1500 the tendency was reversed with a return to money rents.

The North German coins of the late 14th and early 15th centuries are the theme of the papers of *Bernhard Kluge* and *Gerald Stefke.* The two papers complement one another as regards the theme, the coinage of Mecklenburg and Pomerania, and both authors agree on the need to revise the well-known standard works of Oertzen and Jesse as well as

Dannenberg's Pomeranian catalogue. The revision is not always easy, as quite fundamental matters of denomination and chronology are sometimes involved. A case especially illustrative of this is Rostock and its allegedly contemporaneous Lübeck standard and "Slavonian standard" witten coinages: as shown by Stefke, the wittens called "Slavonian" up to now have nothing to do with the "denarii Slavicales" of the documentary sources; they are identical to the "Denarii Vinkonenses" or "Finkenaugen". Moreover, these light Rostock wittens must be a generation or so later than the wittens minted in the 1370's and early 1380's according to the standard of Lübeck and the "wendischer Münzverein", whose types are imitated by them.

Kluge has also studied the question of whether the towns had their own independent coinage or if it was the prince who coined money. He suggests that only Wismar and Rostock had an autonomous coinage; the others were probably ducal. In Pomerania there were more towns with monetary autonomy, the most important of which were Stralsund, Anklam, and Greifswald. Especially in the 1390's the use of the Mecklenburg and Pomeranian wittens expanded westwards, but after 1430 they were rare. Kluge has analysed the contents of all the witten hoards. A third of the coins are from Mecklenburg, a third from Pomerania, and a third from Hamburg, Lübeck and Lüneburg – the importance of Stralsund and Rostock was apparent only after 1410.

Stefke, who – as mentioned above – has studied the witten problem intensively for some years, gives us some exact dates for the introduction of these denominations in various mints after 1365, the year when, in Lübeck, wittens were first struck: Wittens were introduced at Stralsund perhaps already in the late 1360's; at Rostock, 1371; at Lüneburg, probably only some time before 1379; Lübeck viertelwitten 1375; dreiling at Lübeck 1381/82 (and nowhere else before 1392). Most wittens from Slesvig and Holsten, and those from Ribe, too, are dated to c. 1380, while the first Kiel wittens, in the opinion of Stefke, are somewhat older, from the early 1370's. The bulk of the Slesvig and Holsten viertelwitten imitations, as well as of those from the Werle mints, was probably coined in the later 1380's (work at Parchim not having been started before the end of 1384). At Greifswald and Anklam, the witten coinage did not begin before 1389. Stefke feels it more difficult to give exact dates for the "eastern" coinages of the first quarter of the 15th century. In this period, the first, relatively short-lived minting of shillings of the Stralsund-Rostock standard (Sundische Schillinge) took place in Pomerania, the beginning of which is dated to "soon after 1410". Finally, Stefke discusses some questions connected with the export of bad north German coins, especially viertelwitten imitations, to the Scanian fairs of the late 14th century.

The three Polish papers present numismatic material which scarcely has been discussed in any Western language since the great political changes in Europe after the Second World War.

Making use of the coin halves in the hoards, *Jerzy Piniński* shows the development of the monetary circulation of Eastern Pomerania, as half a denar was enough to buy small daily provisions. The percentage of Pomeranian coins in the hoards was generally high, and the coins of Szczecin (Stettin) were usually the most important single group. In the 15th century the mint of Stargard grew in importance.

Stanisław Suchodolski presents various problems of the bracteates of the Teutonic Order. They are complicated, as neither their chronology nor the mints nor the minting formulae are known with certainty. It is probable that the motifs on the coins were changed every 10 years and that they were reused after some time. Consequently analyses of fineness are important in determining the age of a given coin. The studies of these coins were mostly made by past generations, but based on an analysis of the hoard material Suchodolski succeeds in presenting a coherent picture of their use in Prussia, Poland and neighbouring countries.

Marta Męclewska, who presented the second paper on the coinage of the Teutonic Order, has done some noteworthy recent research on this coinage. The period of the reformed, two-sided coinage started – according to Męclewska – c. 1360. She discusses the use of the halbschoter (16 denars) and the vierchen (4 denars). They were followed c. 1380 by the shilling, which was struck in great quantities. After the battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg) the shillings were devaluated, and a revaluation in 1416 was temporary. In 1454 the coinage of the Prussian Estates, which had revolted against the Order and had been granted a royal Polish minting privilege, was twice as good as the emissions of the Order. For obvious reasons this coinage was to be shortlived. From 1457 the coins of the Estates and the Order had the same fineness and could be used indiscriminately in both the royal and the Order's territories.

Among the Nordic countries Norway occupied a rather special position at this time, as we do not know of any Norwegian minting activity between 1387 and 1483. The coinage immediately preceding this period was rather limited in scope, and it is mostly known from church finds. When Norwegian coinage was resumed under King Johan (Hans), skillings, halfskillings, and – especially – hvids were struck, probably to a standard parallel to the Danish one. At the same time the archbishop of Nidaros (Trondheim) resumed his coinage.

In his paper *Kolbjørn Skaare* stresses the importance of church finds, which, however, do not do justice to the use of greater denominations, e.g. the English sterling, not to mention gold coins. In the period when Norway did not strike her own money, monetary circulation was kept on a rather high level through the use of foreign coins. Many of them are from the other Nordic countries, with which she was united in a political union, usually called the Union of Kalmar. Swedish coins represent c. 20% of the late medieval coins in church finds, and Danish crown bracteates from the early 15th century were also of importance. Skaare suggests they were referred to in a letter of 1417 as "Norwegian copper money". Most important, however, are the Mecklenburg oxhead-bracteates, which account for nearly a quarter of the late medieval church coins.

Brita Malmer presents a study based on the same type of sources as Kolbjørn Skaare, but limited to three selected major church finds from southeast Sweden. Swedish coinage had at this time three elements. The penny, which was revaluated from a copper coin to a silver standard of 50% under King Albrecht (1364–89), seems, however, not to have been minted in the decades from 1380/90. When it was struck again c. 1410 both weight and fineness were reduced. The örtug, also introduced by King Albrecht and containing 90% silver, was the main denomination of the period. Finally, the half-örtug was introduced in 1478. Malmer analyzes the finds of Alvastra Monastery (including the church), that of Växjö Cathedral, and that of Hagby Round Church (1236, 1123, and 577 medieval coins were classified). Only a little more than half of the coins were Swedish, mainly belonging to the 13th and 14th centuries, the others mostly 15th century Danish, German, and Gotlandic coins. The Swedish coins gain in importance from c. 1470. Malmer concludes that the composition of the foreign coins naturally seems to be dependent on the geographical location of the finds, but on the whole the three finds are much alike. Obviously the different coin groups were mixed by circulation, before the individual coins happened to be lost. Two hoards, however, indicate that mixing did not always take place, the contents of these hoards being imported more or less directly.

In his paper, the publication of which unfortunately was delayed, *Lars O. Lagerqvist* dealt especially with the use of Danish coins in Sweden as known to us from 12 hoards and 13 church finds, as well as from written sources.

The paper by *J. Steen Jensen* on the Danish monetary circulation deals especially with the question of how Danish currency in the 15th century gradually prevailed in the domestic circulation of silver coins. The mints were reopened after more than half a century of near to total shut-down in the first years of the 15th century, and in the next decades Danish coins dominate in some hoards. From the 1430's the picture is clear, and except for the gold coins and the base Mecklenburg oxhead-bracteates, Danish currency is dominant. In the early 1440's Danish minting activity is concentrated in a new mint in Malmø on the Sound because of the importance of the Scanian fairs and derivative economic activity. The output of the

Malmø mint was apparently high around the middle of the 15th century, in a period when the minting in the rest of Europe was low.

Analysis of the circulation of the base Danish currency (crown bracteates and copper sterlings) of the first decades of the 15th century shows a difference in the finds from the churches and the monasteries. Apparently bracteates were mostly used in the churches, while copper coins may have been held a little in contempt here. In the monasteries the proportion between these two types was just the opposite, probably reflecting the real pattern of circulation.

Pekka Sarvas has concentrated, in the written version of his paper, on the first Finnish coinage of Erik of Pomerania in the early 15th century. He has had the good luck to publish a coin, so far unknown, found in Hämeenlinna (Tavastehus), which probably is the "first coin" of Turku/Åbo, mentioned in 1414. Sarvas discussed the newly established monetary system in Finland, which was unlike that of Sweden, but may have been intended to correspond to the Livonian currency.

The last contribution, about the Estonian artig, is a detailed die study of the artigs from the Livonian Order, struck in Tallinn (Reval), and those of the bishop of Tartu/Dorpat from four Estonian hoards. The date of these hoards is quite convincingly assigned to a war over fishing rights between the bishopric of Tartu and Pskov in 1367–69, and the proof is given by *Michail Nemirowitsch's* chain of dies from Tallinn and Tartu, combined with a thorough knowledge of Estonian history. The dates are important in other respects, too, because they suggest as a possible date for the first coinage of the Livonian artigs the year 1361.

The circulation of medieval gold coins in North Germany is unfortunately not published in this volume. *Peter Berghaus* has collected material from more than 1000 finds and was able to demonstrate the close connection between Denmark and Northern Germany in this respect. For the Rhenish florin, the royal German florin, and the Netherland florin the conclusion is clear: the pattern of circulation of these (and other) gold coins is very much the same in Denmark, the Netherlands, the Rhineland, and Northwestern Germany.

The symposium was concluded by a discussion in which *Philip Grierson, John Day, Svend Gissel, Lars O. Lagerqvist,* and *Rolf Sprandel* took part. Philip Grierson drew attention to the Flemish minting ordinances of John the Fearless (1405–19), underlining the role of market considerations by the princes and their advisers. The later ordinances of John also stipulated the price at which the metal should be bought and regulated the relation between the market price and the mint price of the coins.

Lagerqvist mentioned that such stipulations were not found in the oldest Swedish minting contract of 1449. Day suggested the possibility of the dealers offering some sort of discount in periods when bullion prices were rising, while Sprandel thought that medieval tax-payers and debtors welcomed debased coinage when their obligations came due. Svend Gissel drew attention to the link between income and reconstruction after the 14th century crisis, illustrating his thesis by means of Scanian examples. Finally Philip Grierson thanked Otto Mørkholm for the idea of organizing this symposium and publishing the papers in the present volume.