

Who struck coins in Lund in the 11th century?

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Thanks to Brita Malmer's work, we now know, that the massive coinage in Lund (now Sweden, then Denmark) took off already in the 990s, marking the start of Lund as the main mint of the Danish kingdom for much of the Middle Ages. By the end of the 11th century, Danish coin had taken over the dominant position in the currency instead of German and English coins and uncoined silver. Controlling the coinage meant prestige and the possibility of making your name known widely. It also meant income as minted silver probably had a premium compared to unminted silver. The question of who commanded the coin production is thus of importance to understand power and wealth in 11th century Denmark. From the motives on the coins and their legends, it seems fairly clear that the king was in control by the end of the century, but whether he was throughout from the beginning has been subject to discussion. Independent moneyers – the names of whom are mentioned in the legends – and the church have been mentioned in the debate.

This paper suggests to take a fresh view on the question by examining the coins from a wide range of angles, drawing on the results of more than century of research starting with the classical standard reference book of Peter Hauberg published in 1900. Periods of a tightly controlled weight standard alter with periods with variations in weight. Periods with great variation in the coin motives alter with periods of a single homogeneous coin type at a time. Periods of imitating foreign coins alter with periods with original local motives. Periods of literacy alter with periods of blundered legends. The legends mention kings' names, but also moneyers' names. The careers of the latter can be followed closely. During the last generation, die studies carried out by a number of scholars give glimpses of whether moneyers had individual workshop or worked collectively in central mints. This can be compared to similar evidence from England that is better documented thanks to written sources. On balance, all these features indirectly allow us to estimate who was in control and whether it changed over time. The survey suggested here will allow for some preliminary conclusions but will also point to holes in our knowledge calling for future work.