

Viking Photos

This photo resource is used by schools on Shetland to allow them to make a display of artefacts the children have handled during the sessions when I visit.

There are two sections to this, a simplified description with the labelled photo. The second section is made up of photographs without labels. This allows for schools not using Comic Sans as their primary font.

All of the photos should be able to be blown up to a reasonable size.

The pack is a huge size, but if you want individual photos to blow up let me know and I will sort it out for you.

Cheers

Stephen

Making money



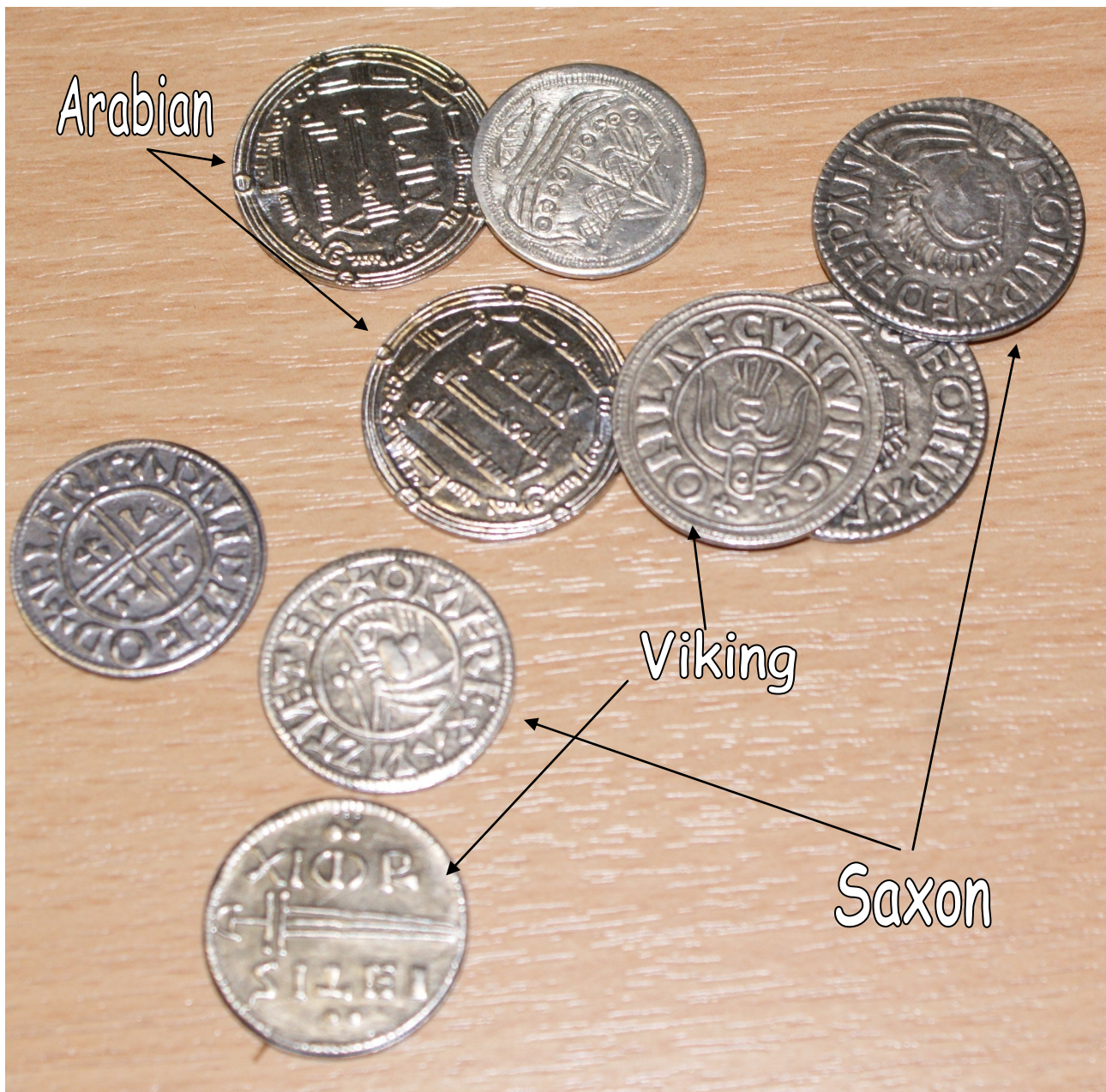
Coin die and coin blanks



Struck coins



Ring Money



Viking money did not have a face value like our modern ones do. Islamic Dirhams, English Pennies, Frankish Deniers could all be used at the same time. The coins were valued by their weight.

The Vikings would also use ring money, this was a silver bangle that would be worn on the wrist. The richer the person the more bangles would be worn. Money wouldn't be used for buying every day items like bread and mead but for more expensive items like livestock, weapons and land.

On the whole the Vikings lived in a bartering society, so for every day items they would barter for the goods and services they wanted.



The Vikings are seen as great warriors. In fairness some were. However the vast majority were farmers and tradesmen who were expected to fight for their lord, or who went raiding to supplement their income.

A lord would expect to be equipped with the best equipment as would his bodyguard of close friends and relations. Everyone else would make do with what they could find. Chain mail was very expensive as were swords, so only the very rich could afford them. Spears and axes would be carried by the majority of the warriors. A shield and possibly a helmet and padded jacket would be the only protection they could afford.





A riveted mail shirt could have up to 40 000 separate links. There is one rivet in every five links.



A seax is a large knife worn by all men and boys. These could be up to 60 cm long.



Depending on the wealth of the wearer helmets could differ greatly. The one on the right gives a lot more protection. The helmet has cheek guards as well as a neck guard. The nasal guard is a lot more ornate too. Poorer warriors could have used a helmet made from toughened leather.

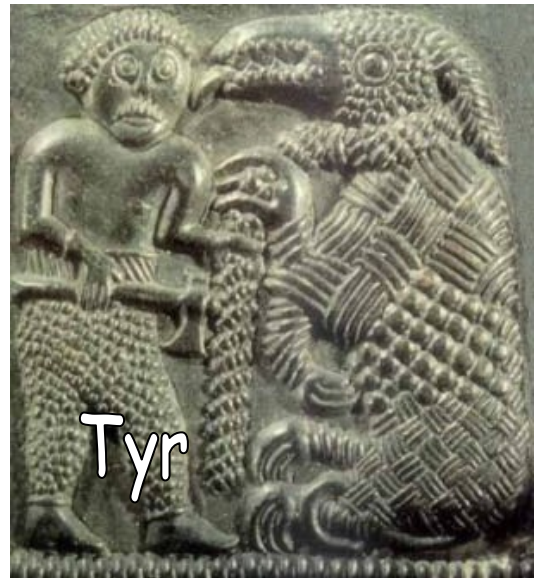


Even weapons could be heavily decorated, the more decoration the higher the price.



Odin

Religion



Tyr

Before their conversion to Christianity the Vikings had a range of pagan Gods.

In many respects the pagan gods and goddesses worshipped by Vikings were similar to humans. Like humans they had good and bad characteristics and, like humans, they could die. The Vikings believed that the gods lived in Asgard and that this gods, if treated well would help them against evil forces.

The Vikings believed that justice was made by the gods. Religion went hand in hand with law at that time.

At the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh century, the Vikings changed their beliefs and became Christians.

In Hedeby you can find Viking era graves with both a cross and a hammer of Thor carved into the stone and indeed in some graves you find a skeleton wearing both a crucifix and hammer of Thor. Being seen as Christian would help the Vikings trade with those that were Christians. A Christian was not allowed to trade with a pagan!



Thor



Freya



Viking Crucifix



Horn was an important part of a cow or sheep as it could be used to make various items from armour to spoons.

To use the horn it would be cleaned. If used for a drinking horn then it could be decorated. If you wanted a flat shape you would cut off the tip and then boil the horn to soften it. The horn would then be cut in half and boiled again. the boiled horn would then be pressed flat. The shape of the item would then be cut out and moulded if necessary.





Leather was an important material that was used for various items.

Some Vikings were skilled leather workers, but a lot of people would have been able to produce items for themselves and their family.



When out raiding or trading a Viking would have to be able to keep his equipment and clothing in good condition so repairs would have to be made on the go.

The awl was used to make holes in the leather, the beeswax helped the thread pass through the holes. For a stronger seam you use two needles. Each needle passes through the same hole, this doubles the thickness of the stitching and means if a thread snaps you still have a solid seam.



Trade



The Vikings traded all over Europe, and as far east as Central Asia.

They bought goods and materials such as silver, silk, spices, wine, jewelry, glass and pottery. In return, they sold items such as honey, tin, wheat, wool, wood, iron, fur, leather, fish and walrus ivory. Everywhere they went the Vikings bought and sold slaves.

The Vikings founded trading cities in Scandinavia such as Birka, Ribe, Hedeby and Skiringsal. In Ireland they founded Dublin and in England they made York flourish to become the most important trading town outside of London.

Bone working



Bone, antler and ivory were used for a wide range of practical and decorative uses. Each material has its own distinct properties which the Viking craftsmen understood well.

Antler was the best material for needles and small items like tweezers that needed some flexibility

Bone was more plentiful, being surplus from meat production, but was less strong. Larger surfaces were available from shoulder blades and since the long bones were hollow small boxes and containers were often made from bone.

Ivory was available from walrus tusks and whale teeth. The great advantage of ivory for the ancient carver was the thickness of the material and the beauty of finish possible.





horn finial

Drinking horns could be decorated. One way was to add a finial to the base of the horn. The one shown here is a raven

The Vikings could use a flint and steel to start their fires.

When you strike the flint against the steel it will produce sparks. The hard flint edge shaves off a particle of the steel. This particle, heated by the friction, ignites.

The sparks fall onto prepared tinder which is in turn used to light the fire.



flint and steel



amber

Amber is fossilised tree resin. The countries surrounding the Baltic are areas where deposits of amber are found.



Oseberg Tapestry

The discovery of the ship burial in Oseberg in 1904 is one of the most important Viking discoveries. Believed to be the burial mound of a Viking queen from the year AD834. The Oseberg burial is one of the few sources of Viking age textiles. The tapestry is in fact a number of tapestries with the largest fragment being 25 x 30 cm and the smallest a mere 5 cm square. The widest tapestry is 25 cm and the smallest 16cm wide. No-one knows how long the tapestries originally were.























