They're big, they're great, they are from Sweden…..

- swedish copper coins found in Golden Age West-Frisia (1611-1725), The Netherlands.

Frank Postma, Christiaan Schrickx & Michiel H. Bartels

In the soil of West-Frisia (Province of North Holland, Netherlands) archaeologists frequently find large Swedish copper coins dating from the period 1611-1725. The coins are routinely found in towns but are most often found in villages. It seems that Westfrisian seafarers received small change in local currency after purchasing goods, drinks or food in the Kingdom of Sweden. Many sailors carefully kept the coins for their next voyage or cherished the items as souvenirs. At home in West-Frisia the coins had no value, as copper coins were not accepted as legal tender in the Dutch Republic. Collecting coins and other objects from overseas was most likely a favourite pastime. In some cases coins were adapted to be worn as brooches or pierced to hang on a necklace. These Swedish coins are the only archaeologically tangible objects that keep the memory of a once great trade between the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Sweden, Finland, Livonia and the Baltic Sea.

Preface

Swedish copper coins of substantial size dating from the 17th-18th centuries are eye-catching archaeological finds in West-Frisia. The coins are being found in larger numbers in West-Frisia than in any part of The Netherlands. West-Frisia is situated within a 126 km long ring dike which protects it from the Zuiderzee (South Sea). In the Dutch Golden Age (1580-1700) West-Frisia, approximately 40 km north of Amsterdam, was bordered on almost all sides by open sea (fig. 1). Nowadays it is protected from floods and seawater by two major dams. In the 17th and 18th century the towns of Hoorn, Enkhuizen and Medemblik were important harbours and home to large fishing-, naval- and merchant fleets. In recent years Archeologie West-Friesland has undertaken many excavations in these towns

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Figure 1. View at Hoorn and the Westfrisian Ringdike by Gaspar van Wittel, 1731. Much Scandinavian wood was used in windmills, houses and revetments.

and outlying villages. Metal detectors have been routinely employed to search for artefacts and excalvated soils have been meticulously detected, producing an abundance of coins (fig. 2). A large number of the coins that have been recovered originated in Sweden (fig. 3). Indeed, because of their sheer size, they can hardly be missed. Apart from finds of from systematic excavations, this article also discusses coins from private collections and others held by the West Frisia finds depot.



Figure 2. Metal detecting at the site of Gedempt Achterom 45 next to the former Synagogue in the town of Medemblik, 2012.

The Swedish coins

The oldest Swedish copper coins found in West-Frisia date from the reign of King Gustav II Adolf (1611-1632) of the house Vasa. These square or rectangular coins are called 'klippe' or in Swedish *klippingar*. The images on the coin were hammered or rolled in thick strips of copper after which they were clipped into squares or rectangles (fig. 4, 5, 6).

All of the other coins are round. Seven 1 öre coins with a diameter of 40 till 42 mm and a weight of 18–27 gr have been discovered from the latter part of Gustav II Adolf's reign between 1627 and 1631. The

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Figure 3. A just found öre from a farm site in Schellinkhout.

coat of arms of the Kingdom of Sweden, recognizable by a cross quartering the shield may be seen on the obverse side (verso) of the coins. Three crowns can be seen in the first and third quarter of the shield. In the second and fourth quarter a crowned lion is depicted over three sinister wavy bendlets. In the centre the Arms of the House Vasa is shown by stalks of wheat. The edge lettering reads GVST(AVUS) ADOLPH D.G. SVEC.GOTH.VAN. (REX) M.P.F. On the reverse (recto) of the coins minted in the town of Säter, the crossed arrows of the arms of the Province of Dalarna can be seen. Between 1 and ÖR, MONETA NOVA CVPREA DALARENSIS is inscribed on the edge, along with the year that the coins were minted, in Roman numerals (fig. 7). On the reverse of the 1 öre coins that were struck in the harbour town of Nyköping in 1628 or 1629 the arms of the Province of Södermanland, a griffon with upright wings is shown. The value 1 ÖR is also shown on the reverse with the edge inscription MONETA NOVA CVPRE NICOPENSIS and the year of that the coins were minted in Roman numerals.



Figure 4. A fyrk coin (klippe) of ¼ öre dating 1624 minted in Säter, found in Schellinkhout. On the verso the Vasa sheaf between the letters G A R (Gustav Adolf Rex); on the recto three crowns between 1 and F with above the year 1624 (18 x 20 mm, 6,91 gr).



Figure 5. A coin (klippe) of ½ öre dating 1626 minted in Säter or Nyköping, found in Aartswoud. On the verso Vasa sheaf between G A R.; on the recto crowned crossed arrows between 1/Z and ÖR (23x25 mm, 12,58 gr).



Figure 6. A 1 öre coin (klippe) dating 1626 minted in Säter or Nyköping, found in Wijdenes. On the verso three crowns between G A R and above 16Z6; on the recto crowned crossed arrows between 1 and ÖR (31 x 31 mm, 34,60 gr).

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Figure 7.A 1 öre coin dating 1628 of King Gustav II Adolf minted in Säter, found in Venhuizen (40 mm, 26,9 gr).



Figure 8.A ¼ öre coin with a central hole dating 1636 of Queen Christina minted in Säter or Nyköping, found inn Zwaag (30 mm, 8,38 gr).



Figure 9.A 1 öre coin dating 1646 of Queen Christina minted in Avesta, found in Schellinkhout (48 mm, 52,38 gr).



Figure 10.A 1 öre coin dating 1676 of King Karl XI minted in Avesta, found in Schellinkhout (45 mm, 42,20 gr).



Figure 11.A 1 öre coin dating 1725 of King Fredrik I minted in Stockholm, found in Zuidermeer (23 mm, 3,89 gr). This is the youngest Swedish coins found in West-Frisia.

Five ¼ öre coins with a diameter of 29-30 mm and a weight 8-13 gr have been excavated from the reign of Queen Christina (1632-1654), the daughter of king Gustav II Adolf. The three crowns of the Swedish coat of arms can be seen on the obverse side of the ¼ öre coins. Between the letters C R S (C(HRISTINA) R(EGINA) S(VECIAE) and the reverse side stands the crowned coat of arms of the Vasa family between ¼ and ÖR. This coin has a secondary drilled central hole (fig. 8). Ten 1 öre coins with a diameter of 46–48 mm and a weight of 43–55 gr were also found. The Swedish arms are shown on the obverse of the 1 öre coins. The edge inscription reads CRISTINA DG SVE GO WAN REGINA ET PRI HAE. Crossed arrows are shown on the reverse of the 1 ÖR. The edge inscription reads MONETA NOVA CVPREA DALARENSIS with the year 1646 in Roman numerals (fig. 9).

No copper coins of 1 öre were minted during the reign of King Karl Gustav X (1654-1660). Gustav X did however issue 1 million

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silver öre coins. These higher value silver coins have yet to be found in West-Frisia.

Four coins have been recovered from the reign of King Karl XI (1660-1697), A 1/6 öre piece with three crowns on the obverse between C R S (CAROLUS REX SVECIAE) and above that the year. On the reverse the coin shows a crowned lion with left 1/6 and a S and rights ÖR and M. Crossed arrows between 1 ÖR and SM and above that a star are shown on the reverse (fig. 10).

Eight eighteenth century Swedish coins have been excavated. These include two coins of Queen Ulrika Eleonora (1718-1720). They were minted in 1719 and possibly 1720. Three crowns and the letters VERS (VLRIKA ELEONORA REGINA SVECIAE) can be seen on the obverse side. A crowned shield with crossed arrows with left 1 and K and right ÖR and M appears on the reverse. At least three coins were minted during the reign of King Fredrik I (1720-1751), two in 1724 and one in 1725 (fig. 11). On the obverse side of these coins stand three crowns and the letters FRS (FRIDERICUS REX SVECIAE). On the reverse stands a crowned shield with crossed arrows with left 1 and K and right ÖR and M. The earliest of these coins was minted in 1725 and was found in the hamlet of Zuidermeer. Another of these coins was found by metal detecting in the village of Venhuizen and has a pin attached to it, indicating that it had been modified for use as a brooch.

Find spots in and outside West-Frisia

Of the 37 coins mentioned above nine were found in Westfrisian



Figure 12. Map of West-Frisia with locations of finds of Swedish copper coins plotted on the map of 1651. The dotted line is the late medieval ring dike.

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King/Queen	Reign	Denomination and amount			
		⅛ öre	¼ öre	½ öre	1 öre
Gustav II Adolf	1611-1632		1, 1624 (klippe)	1, 1626 (klippe)	1, 1626 (klippe)
Gustav II Adolf	1611-1632				7 (1627-1631)
Christina	1632-1654		5		10
Karl XI	1660-1697	1			3
Ulrika Eleanora	1718-1720				2
Frederik I	1720-1751				4

Table 1. Swedish copper coins from the 17th and 18th century found in West-Frisia, NL.

towns: five in Enkhuizen, three in Medemblik and one in Hoorn. The other 28 coins were found in in Westfrisian villages Schellinkhout (5), Venhuizen (5), De Weere (2), Aartswoud (2), Wijdenes (2), Zwaagdijk (2), Bovenkarspel, Hauwert, Lambertschaag, Oosterleek, Scharwoude, Westerblokker, Westwoud, Wognum, Zuidermeer and Zwaag (fig. 12). This indicates that proportionally many more Swedish coins have been excavated in the villages that lay on or behind the West-Frisian Ring Dike, close to the Zuiderzee (tab. 1). It is not possible at this point in time to provide a comprehensive overview of finds of Swedish coins from elsewhere in The Netherlands. A quick scan through the coins found in the province of North-Holland suggests that Swedish copper coins are known from Amsterdam, Alkmaar, Callantsoog, Heemskerk and the Isle of Texel. The amount of coins found on this island is relatively high, with 12 examples so far. One



Figure 13. Painting by Paulus Potter of the Westfrisian countryside with a so called Stolp farm in 1639. The inhabitants were both farmers, skippers and invested in cargoes.

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Figure 14. Painting by C. J. Rietschoof of ships at the sound of Hoorn around 1700. So called katships were designed to carry loads of timber from Norway and the Baltics to the Netherlands.

example is striking: a 1 öre coin of King Karl XI were colourful pieces of class were mounted into the coin and a clip was adhered to make it a brooch (Collection Daalder, determined by Enno van Gelder 21-9-1960, KPK letter 1135). Coins are rarely found outside the province. Most of the coins from West-Frisia are unstratified finds, recovered from the top soil of farm sites, pasture fields or dumps of town waste (fig. 13). It is impossible to know if such finds were intentionally discarded, or lost. Aside from these unstratified finds, two coins have been recovered from the cool store of a dike house at Schellinkhout. This small brick cellar was backfilled around 1680 and the inhabitant of the house was active in maritime transport (fig. 14). (Gerritsen, 2016, 409-410).

Trade in the Baltic

The trade of the Hollanders and West-Frisians in the Baltic was a major activity which far exceeded the intercontinental Dutch trade in the East- and West Indies. Dutch towns specialised in the transport of bulk goods. In the 16th century skippers carried large amounts of wheat, rye, and timber to the Low Countries (Lesger, 1990, 42). Other products included pitch, tar, hides, fur, gunpowder, raw iron, charcoal, copper and arms. A substantial proportion of these products came from mainland Sweden or the Swedish territories of Finland and Livonia, modern day Estonia and northern Latvia. In the 17th century the contacts between the Dutch and the Swedish became even more intense (fig. 15). A Dutch architect designed the

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Figure 15. Map of Europe showing the Kingdom of Sweden around 1675 and West Frisia. Red dots are places of mint.

town plan of the town of Göteborg founded by King Gustav II Adolf in 1621. Jakob van Dijck and Abraham Cabeljau (Cabilau) even became lord-majors of this major town in western Sweden (NN, 1931). It is known that King Gustav II Adolf purchased firearms and ordnance from the Dutch gun founder and arms trader Lodewijk de Geer in 1618 (NN, 1907). After that De Geer built a substantial iron- and copper mining and melting industry in and around Finspång in the Province of Östergötland and was given the monopoly of the iron- and copper trade by King Gustav II Adolf (Romein & Romein-Verschoor, 1977).

A study of the Westfrisian Baltic trade has pointed to the fact that between 1681 and 1720 many participating skippers and sailors originated from the villages of Venhuizen and Schellinkhout. A smaller number of crewmembers came from Aartswoud, Hem, Oosterleek, Wijdenes and other villages (Boon,1996, 243). This would seem to explain why Swedish coins were found in these villages. The early stages of the Nine Years War in 1688 and the outbreak of the Nordic War in 1700 caused a sharp reduction in the Dutch Baltic trade, even when the merchant fleet was heavily protected with Westfrisian and other war ships. The frigate Huis te Warmelo from the town of Medemblik sank in 1715 south of Porvoo, Finland (Swart,2016). After 1720 the Westfrisian share of the Baltic trade was minimal (Boon,1988, 94). This can be deduced from the archaeological record: Swedish coins are absent after 1725.

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Figure 16. 1 öre coin dating 1627 of Gustav II Adolf minted in Säter, found in De Weere. On the verso a crowned shield with GVSTAVUS ADOLPH (D.G. SVEC.) GOTH.VAN REX MPF on the recto crossed arrows between 1 and ÖR MONE(TA NOVA CVPREA DALARENSIS) MDCXXVII (40 mm, 21,1 gr).

Conclusion

It is clear that Westfrisian skippers and sailors went out and about in Swedish, Finnish and Livonian harbours buying goods for home, and visiting inns. The beer and spirits that they drank was paid for with Dutch and other coins. The small change that they received could only be spent in Sweden. Our evidence suggests that pennywise sailors brought the loose change home to spend on their next journey, or else retained the coins as souvenirs. At home in West-Frisia the Swedish copper coins had no financial value in contrast to other foreign coins in the United Republic of the Seven Provinces. Collecting coins and other – exotic – items from overseas would seem to have been a popular pastime in the 17th and early 18th century Dutch Republic. Some Swedish coins may have been pierced to hang on a cord around the neck as a pendant (fig. 16) another coin had a pin attached and was worn as a brooch Swedish coins are the only archaeologically tangible objects that keep the memory of a once great trade on the Kingdom of Sweden and the Baltic Sea.

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The three authors work at Archeologie West-Friesland (Hoorn, NL), the archaeological association of seven Westfrisian municipalities; Frank Postma conducts the numismatic research; Dr. Christiaan Schrickx is archaeological project leader and historian, Dr. Michiel Bartels is county archaeologist.
E-post: m.bartels@hoorn.nl

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