

# Early urbanism in Southern Scandinavia *ca.* 700-1100 AD. Trading places, central settlements and new model centres in continuity and change

Johan Callmer<sup>a</sup>

The debate on the origins of towns in Southern Scandinavia has very much centered on questions of continuity. It seems that early urban elements there appeared in two different milieus: trading places and central settlements.

The development from *ca.* AD 700 stands out as a rapid evolutionary process. However, it was not an unconditional continuity for it included a certain measure of change.

KEY-WORDS: towns, Southern Scandinavia, Early Middle Ages

## I

The formation of urban centres in the Early Middle Ages in Southern Scandinavia is of considerable interest both in the specific debate concerning the development of towns in temperate Europe and in a general debate of the development of urban societies. This quality is an effect of the complicated interplay of exogenous and endogenous factors. The relatively high standard of the archaeological material is also important. Important sites are indicated in Fig. 1.

The debate in Southern Scandinavia has very much centered on questions of continuity. A continuity from the Viking Period to the Middle Ages was argued by several archaeologists and historians in the twenties and thirties. There was at that time very little to found this interpretation of the early sequence of urbanism in Southern Scandinavia on. Substantial arguments were in general based on the results of the small scale German excavations at Hedeby in conjecture with the historical dating of the medieval town of Slesvig (Schleswig). For conditions in Scania the studies of Schück (1926) were important. He suggested that a number

<sup>a</sup> Arkeologiska institutionen, Lunds Universitetet, Lund, Sweden

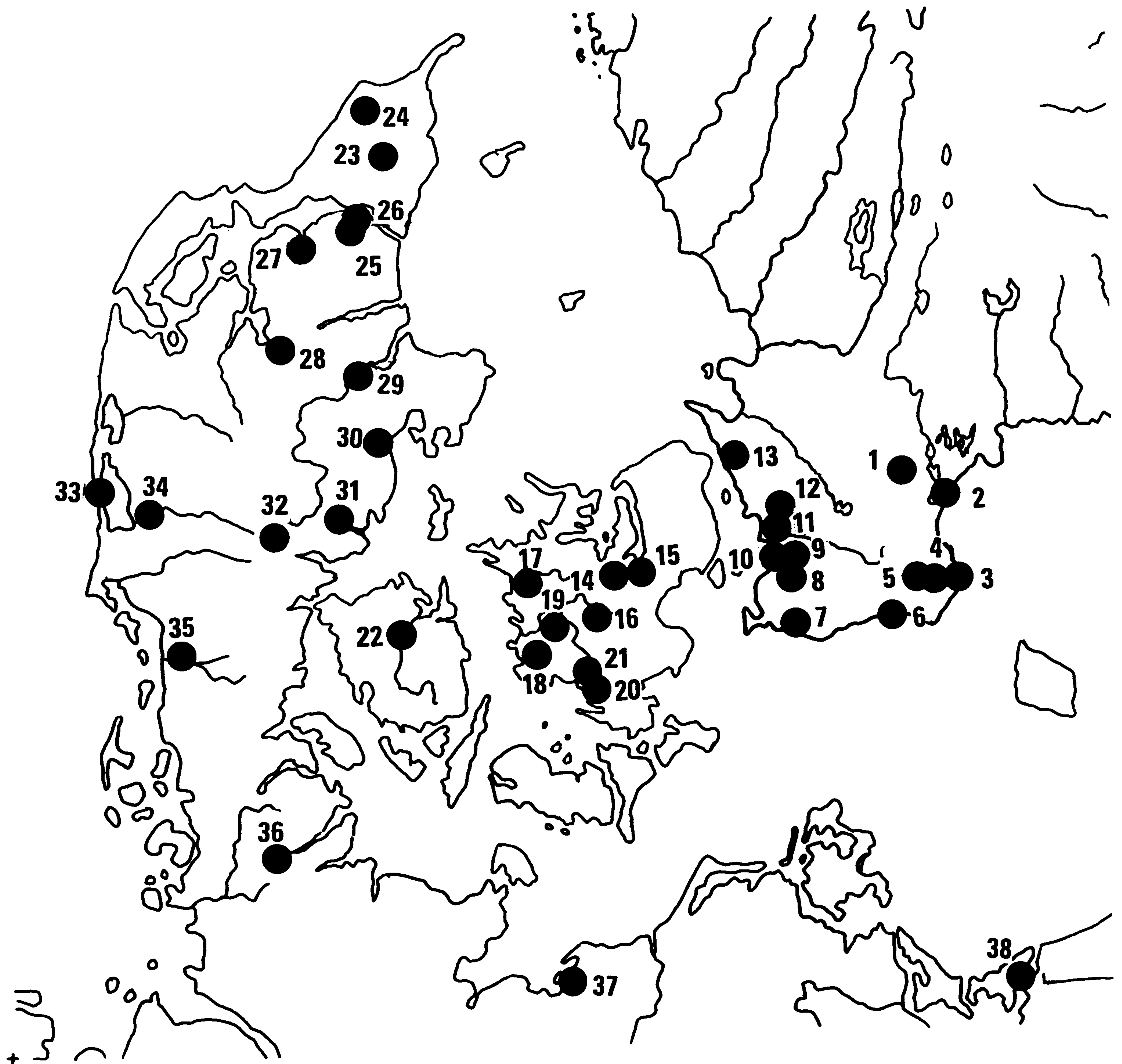


Fig. 1. Important localities mentioned in the text.

1. Vä, 2. Åhus, 3. Simrishamn, 4. Järrestad, 5. Tommarp, 6. Ystad, 7. Trelleborg, 8. Uppåkra, 9. Lund,
10. Lomma, 11. Löddeköpinge, 12. V. Karaby, 13. Hälsingborg, 14. Lejre, 15. Roskilde, 16. Ringsted,
17. Kalmargården, 18. Boeslunde, 19. Slagelse, 20. Dybsø Fjord (Vester Egesborg), 21. Naestved,
22. Odense, 23. Stentinget, 24. Hjørring, 25. Bejsebakken, 26. Ålborg, 27. Sebbensund, 28. Viborg,
29. Randers, 30. Århus, 31. Horsens, 32. Jelling, 33. Holmsland Klit, 34. Lønborg, 35. Ribe,
36. Schleswig/Hedeby, 37. Grosströmkendorf, 38. Wolin

of places still carrying names with the ending *—köping/e* (i.e., chipping) formed early types of Viking Period trading places, later superseded by the medieval towns. It was not possible to apply this model to conditions in Denmark. Also it was not founded on archaeological observations. How this continuity had developed from trading place to medieval town close by was unclear.

A new concept was put forward by Cinthio (1972). His concept also had an application restricted to the province of Scania. Such development, according to Cinthio, started with Viking Period trading places which, just as Schück had stated, today could be found at localities with names ending in *—köping/e*. They were abandoned in the late Viking Period. The earliest towns were founded in the early 11th century as centres of ecclesiastical and profane administration. A number of coastal towns only appear *ca.* AD 1200. Cinthio stresses the complete lack of continuity between the trading places and the towns. A similar view is expressed by Olsen (1974). Also Andrén in a study of medieval urbanism in Denmark favours the discontinuity model (1985:16–8). He sees the defenders of continuity as supporters of a nonhistorical attitude. Cinthio's model was mainly based on the excavation results at Löddeköpinge in western Scania (Ohlsson 1976) and in the historical centre of Lund (Andrén 1976).

Results from Århus and Ribe with their indications of continuity concluded in the sixties and seventies could however suggest other interpretations of the process of South Scandinavian urbanisation (Andersen, Crabb and Madsen 1971; Jensen 1991). New results clearly indicated that a number of important Viking Period trading places were not located at villages with *—köpinge* names but instead close to, or indeed below, medieval coastal towns. There were so many indications that some line of continuity of coastal activities must have existed. It was also demonstrated that the important period for the *—köpinge* places was the period *ca.* AD 1100 and the 12th century. These places have a close connection with the church as opposed to the Viking Period trading places which very often were crown property in the 13th century. There was clear evidence that the *—köpinge* places lost their importance in the 13th century (Stora Köpinge near Ystad) (Wienberg 1989:255 ff.).

If continuity has been much discussed, the conditions under which the earliest urban communities were formed have been less discussed. This is unfortunate as the development of an urban way of life, as opposed to life in the rural settlements, may be regarded as the primary question. As a result of this condition, the definitions of what an urban way of life means in terms of archaeological observations are not well worked out. With the term “urban” we may here understand a way of life which is characterised by non-agrarian production, exchange and trade. It is a specific milieu with much more intensive communication between individuals and groups; and with different cultural influences. The density of settlement is much higher than in rural milieus and this certainly means

very special social dimensions. Central to this more archaeological than historical definition are the differences of the urban milieu in contrast with rural settlement. Our understanding of the rural milieu is then of great importance. Is this rural settlement homogeneous or diverse, and if so, are there elements present which also characterise the urban milieu?

For an understanding of the development of urban society in Southern Scandinavia it is necessary to begin at its very roots. Urban elements in Southern Scandinavia appear early in two different milieus: trading places and central settlements.

## II

It is a fact that the rise in trade and exchange in north—western Europe in the second half of the 7th century and *ca.* AD 700 was also of great importance to developments in Scandinavia. Already in the first quarter of the 8th century south—western Scandinavia, one way or the other, was included in the circulation area of the new north—west European coinage, *i.e.*, of the *sceattas* (*cf.* Hill and Metcalf 1984). Although certainly trading places of a temporary character (beach markets), existed earlier, their character became more distinct with a considerable artisan's production connected with them. These trading places are not only found on the North Sea side of Scandinavia but also in the Baltic (Bendixen 1985; Wietrzichowski 1993). Many of the persons frequenting these trading places were specialists. Where and how they lived during off—season periods, we do not know. To what extent these persons were foreigners, *i.e.*, non—Scandinavians, or local people, we do not know either although both alternatives are probable and are in no opposition to each other. What is important is that with these persons we have a group whose differences in relation to the agrarian society and also to the specialist producers in the agrarian society, are beyond doubt. There were certainly a number of highly specialised producers in agrarian society especially in the realms of the uppermost social stratum (Callmer 1994).

In the second half of the 8th century a number of these trading places developed into permanent or semi—permanent settlements. These settlements have a considerable spatial extension exceeding the surface extension of most rural settlements with a wealthy boundary. Parts of these trading places are densely built in a way different from most rural settlements where building sites and plots are spacious (for exceptions see below). It is however by no means so that the entire areas of such trading places have this dense building pattern. More spacious and rural—like planning and building are probably characteristic in some areas of these places. This is a feature also of emporia in north—western Europe (van Es 1991:154ff.). Although buildings of the ordinary rural type occur at such places

there is much to suggest that the majority of the buildings in size, and partly with regard to construction, differed from rural types. Specialized production is a conspicuous element at these trading places. In several cases however the workshops are difficult to reconstruct. Debris from the production occur in considerable volume but almost always in secondary position. The model craft is the production of composite antler combs with its clearly structured waste material (Ulbrich 1978: Ambrosiani 1981).

A question of fundamental importance connected with these trading places is their relationship to political power. To solve this problem, archaeology has only limited potential. That political power tried to profit in several ways from activities at trading places, there is no doubt. The problem is rather how much such trading places were controlled by regional and supra-regional political power. Were these places planned by the political power? It has been tempting to see the relative regularity of the plot division as a proof of a regulation by the local political power (Jensen 1991:9ff.). This interpretation however must be weighed against the spontaneous self-regulation of relative equals and voluntary cooperation which no doubt also result in a regular system. Organisation forms, where both principles are at work, are not *a priori* to be excluded.

The importance of local elites has probably been overstressed lately and it is a grave mistake to be aware of this connection only. Some trading places certainly grow up at sites which are located in areas of clear political relationship. Others are however formed at places where motives connected with the trade network prevail. Such trading places between themselves clearly form a coastal network where intercommunication is central. In Southern Scandinavia this network was well developed already in the period *ca.* AD 800. It includes a hierarchy of trading places down to only occasionally visited non-permanent landings.

As a unique social, cultural and of course also economical phenomenon, these trading places developed not only along the coasts of Southern Scandinavia but also along the southern coast of the Baltic. They are consequently not to be understood as “viking towns” or “viking trading places”. The cultural colour of the trading places at this early stage however has a definite North Germanic cultural component.

*Ca.* AD 800 there already existed half a score of trading places of the type defined above. The heyday of these trading places was the end of the 8th century and the first half and middle of the 9th century. This is a somewhat later dating than, for example, the most active period at a major Continental emporium like Dorestad in the Rhine—Meuse estuary (Van Es 1991:162—3). The difference is however not great and a general contemporaneousness can be defended. The development from *ca.* AD 700 then stands out as a rapid evolutionary process, socially, economically and politically. In Southern Scandinavia by AD 800 a popula-

tion of thousands permanently lived in a milieu which we must define — in archaeological terms — as urban. Also elements of a special cultural urban core had started to develop. Such elements had, as already pointed out, strong North Germanic components but differed considerably from local regional culture.

The development had been dynamic, starting *ca.* AD 700 in the extreme south—west and reaching as far as Staraya Ladoga on the lower Volkhov in north—western Russia one or two decades after the middle of the century. Non—permanent trading places of one or a few hectares extension had in a number of cases been replaced by permanent or semi—permanent sites of ten or more hectares extension. It should again be stressed that there was continuously a hierarchy of places for trade and exchange including non—permanent sites. The parallelism of these non—conspicuous and, often with regard to the archaeological material, diffuse sites and the permanent and semi—permanent places is a feature of the sequence up into the High Middle Ages.

This is a picture of early urban development which is the result of investigations during the seventies and eighties. Most important to this new perspective were the observations at Ribe in south—western Denmark (Jensen 1991) and at Åhus in southern Sweden (Callmer 1992). No less important although much more fragmentary were the observations at Löddeköpinge (Ohlsson 1976), Trelleborg (Jacobsson 1987) and Ystad (Strömberg 1978, 1981) in southern Sweden and at Dybsø Fjord on Sealand (Ørsnes 1966:262–3) and in central Århus in Jutland (Andersen, Crabb and Madsen 1971). Of extraordinary value for the interpretation of these, and resulting in a number of additional indications, was the important work on the southern coast of the Baltic from Grosströmkendorf near Wismar (Wietrzichowski 1993) to Janów Pomorski on Lake Drużno slightly southeast of Elbląg (Jagodźński and Kasprzycka 1991).

### III

Already in the second half of the 9th century there were signs of change and indeed of decline among the trading places with urban elements in Southern Scandinavia. In connection with this an observation — which in time lies earlier but which could be of consequence for the understanding of this phenomenon — should be mentioned. In the first half of the 9th century two trading places in the Baltic: Hedeby (Jankuhn 1976:114) and Birka grew exceedingly in importance and emerged as the most important supra—regional places. A similar position was attained simultaneously, or slightly later, by Wolin on the south coast of the Baltic (Filipowiak 1988:694ff.). It is difficult to give a full explanation for these changes. Two major alternatives present themselves: either there were changes within the

network of trading places in regard to the connections between sites, or there was an external negative and even destructive influence. There is much to suggest that the turn of the 9th century was a period of political change in Southern Scandinavia. Political power in the Danish kingdom had been declining and only at the beginning of the 10th century came the slow reconstruction of the kingdom by his dynasty (Christensen 1977:223ff.). The period in question then probably must be characterised as a period of breakdown in local political structures. This may have been of crucial importance for the life of trading places in the earlier network, and the formation of new political structures which were not congruent with the old system of trading places. It is not unlikely that under these circumstances this was a period of turmoil and insecurity, in the coastal regions and at sea especially. The nature of these changes in the archaeological material makes it at present impossible to come closer than this admittedly speculative explanation.

Signs of change and decline are most conspicuous in the eastern part of Southern Scandinavia. The phenomenon is however not restricted to the South—Scandinavian area. Important changes and considerable decline can be noted from Kaupang in the Oslofjord area of Norway (Blindheim 1975) to Eastern Prussia in the south—east (Kulakov 1989). This observation should perhaps make us wary not to give up altogether the idea of intrinsic changes in the network.

The specific culture which had developed within this network changed notably, although the North—Germanic elements still were strong. A special feature was the progressive standardisation of handicraft products. No doubt products largely produced at trading places covered the demand of regional populations for a number of commodities. Best known in the archaeological material are bronze jewellery and antler combs.

If the closing decades of the 9th century should be understood as a period of decline, the 10th century is a period of such diverse elements as the ultimate destruction of parts of the earlier network of trading places, steadfast continuity, and radical innovation. Of the trading places mentioned, none east of the Sound survived the beginning of the 10th century as permanently occupied settlements. To the west of the Sound substantial continuity is however to be noted. The single trading place so far partly excavated on Sealand, the already mentioned locality at Dybsø Fjord (Ørsnes 1966:262—3), continued through the 10th century. Also Århus and Ribe in Jutland show unbroken continuity. The importance of artisan's production however was probably reduced, at least at Ribe, in the 10th century. Hedeby both experienced continuity and considerable change. Throughout the century Hedeby functioned as a trading place of the old type with many of the earlier characteristics pertaining to it. Considerable change is however connected with the permanent establishment of political power at Hedeby some time *ca.* 900.

Certainly the king of the Danes had had a representative in Hedeby earlier, and at least at times had owned property there, but it had not been his residence. This change which is clearly told by historical sources (Jacobsen and Moltke 1942:13–6) is also indicated by archaeological observations. The building of the semi-circular wall around the settlement (Jankuhn 1984:206) and the appearance of high status burials (Aner 1952) are the most important of these.

An important factor for the continuity in Southern Scandinavia of urban life was the continuity of settlement at a number of places on the southern coast of the Baltic. A traditional trading system functioned along that coast into the 12th century with the centre at Wolin.

#### IV

As already pointed out we have also to consider central settlements in connection with early urbanism in Southern Scandinavia. Already at the very beginning of the eighties it was argued that there had existed during this period large central settlements with special administrative and religious functions, *i.e.*, in other words special settlements — residences of local petty kings and jarls (Callmer 1982:160–1). They often were the centers of clearly definable settlement regions. The evidence has come from surveys and minor excavations. The representatives of mainstream Viking Period archaeology found the existence of such places unlikely. In the light of a number of remarkable excavations in the eighties in Denmark the attitude radically changed. The most important of these was the excavation of a central settlement at Lejre on Sealand (Christensen 1989). The place itself has by tradition been pointed out as the old political centre of Sealand and as the seat of the local dynasty of the Skjoldungar. Some impressive burial monuments of the late Iron Age were also known at the site. The excavations revealed remnants of a large settlement comprising of several different parts. One part consisted of a sequence of very large timber halls, obviously representative milieus of a very high level. A second part was a more ordinary rural milieu. A third part was a densely built sector with highly specialized craft production. The settlement at Lejre can be dated from the 7th to the mid-10th century.

Additional excavations have revealed a number of basically related sites. It is however without doubt that there are very considerable variations with regard to size, layout, and the relative relationships of the different components. A characteristic feature of these sites is size, the richness of find material, and evidence of specialized production. In Jutland localities of this kind have been identified and partly excavated at Stentinget in Vendsyssel (Nilsson 1992), at Bejsebakken (Ålborg) on the narrowest part of the Limfjord (Johansen 1992) and at Jelling near

Vejle in east Jutland (excavation 1993 by Vejle Museum). Probably related is a settlement at Lønborg, near Skjern on the lower Skjern Å (Egeberg Hansen and Lass Jensen 1988). It is likely that additional sites of this type will be identified in the near future. For Funen no central settlement of the Viking Period has yet been found. An earlier regional center is however well known from Gudme (Thrane 1987). Probably it had lost its prime importance in the 7th or early 8th century. From Sealand Lejre has already been mentioned but for the western part of the island settlements have been studied at Boeslunde at Korsør (Nielsen 1992) and at Kalmargården near Tissø (Nielsen 1983:27). In the province of Scania in southern Sweden the relevant sites are Vä in the north—eastern part (Thun 1982), Järrestad on the east coast (Callmer 1994), perhaps Västra Karaby in a central position on the western plain (Ohlsson 1971) and perhaps earlier Uppåkra (Vifot 1936).

Unfortunately the very complex and extensive excavations necessary to reveal the relevant traces of these settlements have not been undertaken. Our conclusions must for the time being still mainly rest on small scale excavations and surveys. It is however already at this level of knowledge possible to suggest that at least at a number of these settlements parts of the population lived a life which in many respects was similar to that at the trading places. These settlements were more extensive agglomerations with more inhabitants than ordinary rural settlements. Parts of such settlements may have been more densely built than the rural settlements (*cf.* Lejre). The flow of information was more lively and communication was easier. There were more visits by strangers. In these respects there was however a considerable relative difference from conditions at the trading places, with a more free exchange of ideas. There were probably often both specialists living permanently at these settlements and visits of groups of specialists frequenting other central settlements and indeed also the trading places.

If it is correct to state that trading places have an element of urban society, it must be understood that elements of urban life at central settlements were much less important. The dominating structure was that of the elite residing at the settlement. Central settlements clearly represent a special category in its own right. At the trading places probably also the local or regional elites tried to exert their influence but their power and the possibilities to control activities were certainly more limited there.

Several of these central settlements were established some time in the Late Migration Period or in the early 7th century. A few may have an even longer tradition. They are especially rich in material from the 8th and 9th centuries. There may have been a certain decline in the beginning of the 10th century but this is difficult to ascertain. Most of these sites were abandoned up to *ca.* AD 1000. Only one of the central places studied so far may show an unbroken continuity with central settlement character at least until *ca.* AD 1100 (Stentinget).

## V

Like Norway but probably unlike other parts of Sweden (perhaps with the exception of Sigtuna) Southern Scandinavia witnesses the formation of a number of urban sites of a new type in the second half of the tenth century. Mostly their beginnings seem to be located at the very end of the 10th century. Historical sources, the majority of which are not contemporary but slightly later (11th and partly 12th century), indicate their intimate connection with the development of the Danish realm.

Examples of such sites in eastern Denmark are Lund in Scania (Andrén 1976, 1984) and Roskilde on Sealand (Nielsen and Schiørring 1982; Andersen 1985) and further west we find Odense on Funen (*Fra boplads* 1988). In Jutland the new sites are Viborg not far from an arm of the Limfjord (Krongaard Kristensen 1988) and Ålborg at the narrowest section of the same fjord (Knudsen Møller 1980, 1992). With the earlier urban sites of Ribe, Århus and Hedeby this development gives us a new network of urban sites with a numerical dominance for Jutland.

If the connection with royal power is characteristic of these places at the beginning, so is the connection with the administration of the church. As in other parts of Europe this close connection between ambitious royal dynasties and the church is important.

Knowledge of the size, structure and cultural colour of the earliest period of these sites is very incomplete. In comparison with the trading places of the 9th century they are probably quite small, with an extension of less than 5 hectares. Probably they included a royal residence, a church and housing for the king's followers and servants. There may also have been predominantly rural components and more densely built sectors of the type found at trading places.

Although the beginnings were modest for all these new sites the subsequent growth was rapid and already in the first half of the 11th century Lund, Roskilde and Viborg had a more impressive extension. During the first half of the 11th century or in the middle of the century another five sites were founded, the majority of them on Sealand and in Scania (Randers, Slagelse, Ringsted, Helsingborg and Tommarp: Andrén 1985:170–1; Arnskov 1931; Wihlborg 1981; Redin 1972).

These sites share several of the characteristics of the central settlements of the preceding periods. Whether or not they also share some of the characteristics of the trading places has been much discussed. Mostly it has been argued that trade and exchange if at all present played a marginal role only. The problem is however highly complicated for several reasons. A number of find categories typical of trading places disappear in the second half of the 10th century probably as a result of a general collapse of a production organisation closely connected with these

places. The most important of these categories included waste from the production of bronze jewellery. The total disappearance of all traces of this jewellery tradition, with roots in the 8th if not the 7th century all over Scandinavia, may however be better understood in a wider Scandinavian perspective of cultural change in this period. There are also indications of a continuation of specialised craft production similar to that of trading places. Most instructive is the study of waste from comb-making (Ryding 1987).

In the second half of the 11th century the medieval urban character of these sites became more and more manifest. Street patterns became largely fixed and buildings along these streets became grouped more closely. Both Lund and Roskilde by this period reached their total medieval spatial extension (Andrén 1984:29; Nielsen and Schiørring 1982). Craft production became increasingly well represented. Bronze-casting in quantity reappeared (Bergman and Billberg 1976). From the location of workshops it is reasonable to suggest that some artisans may have rented their localities from the plot owners or could have been dependants of the owner. The institutions of the church during this century acquired considerable amounts of property in the centres. The number of churches especially in Lund, Roskilde and possibly Viborg was by AD 1100 considerable (Andrén 1985:34ff.).

Of the sites dealt with here a majority may be understood as coastal, or situated close to the coast. Lund, Tommarp, Ringsted and Slagelse are however inland sites. In the second half of the 11th century coastal activity was increasing. Fishing, but also some reasonable coastal trade and exchange set their imprint on a number of localities on the coast. It is of consequence that to begin with these diffuse indications do appear at places where we found some of the major trading places of the early period (Trelleborg, Ystad, Simrishamn and Åhus: Jacobsson and Wallin 1986; Tesch 1983; Jacobsson 1979; Callmer 1992). *Ca.* AD 1100 the indications hint at a semi-permanent occupation at some of these places and during the 12th century they became more permanent with the erection of large town churches at the end of the century or *ca.* AD 1200. It is of considerable interest to note this close connection between earlier and later coastal places. This is the result of recent work, mainly from the eighties.

## VI

When we now look at the sequence from AD 700 — 1100 in Southern Scandinavia we can perceive a continuous curve of urban society with vague beginnings *ca.* AD 700 or even earlier, highly varying amplitude, and qualitative changes and crises. A continuity can however be defended. It is not an uncondi-

tional continuity and it is necessary to specify these variations and to look closer at the critical moments.

In the 8th century a rapidly rising number of persons were living at trading places under conditions which we must characterise as urban society. The number of such large places was not inconsiderable but there were differences in size. Taken together however thousands of people must have populated such places. Rudiments of urban society also existed at some central settlements. The number of people living a mainly urban life began to decline at trading places in the second half of the 9th century reaching a lowest level some time after the middle of the 10th century. Milieus with considerable elements of urban life were then not numerous. Later, numbers began to rise again but to begin with only very slowly. During the first half of the 11th century however numbers rose again rapidly.

No doubt the trading places from their beginning to the 10th century share similar qualitative properties. Great changes can be observed in urban society in the second half of the 10th century and in general the early new model centres were more like the central settlements. Qualitative properties acquired in the late 10th century and the early 11th century formed part of the basis for new model centres which linked up with later medieval urban society.

It is easy to observe that there was a prolonged and severe crisis for urban society during the hundred years following the end of the 9th century. This crisis however, as suggested, had two steps. The first was the declining numbers of places and people living under urban conditions around AD 900, and the second within the second half of the 10th century was a partial collapse of the trading system based at Hedeby, Birka and possibly Wiskiauten.

Culturally there are differences between the urban society of the trading places of the early period and the central settlements. Both however share a long series of characteristics which contrast against the new model centres of the late 10th century. These cultural changes underline the serious character of the crisis. It is however a mistake not to note several important elements of cultural continuity which linked the trading places with the new model centres. Only two elements will be mentioned here. Although some large hall buildings are known from the new model centres, building traditions there in general link up quite closely with the smaller rectangular houses in wattle and daub, stave technique or *skiftesverk* of the trading places (*cf.* Schietzel 1981:61–4; Nilsson 1976:41–59). In this continuity of building traditions it is probably correct to see more than technical transfer. The buildings form one important dimension of a social framework which was part of the essence of urban life.

The second element, as already suggested, is the craft production of antler combs (*cf.* Ulbrich 1978; Ambrosiani 1981; Ryding 1987). Between the products of the trading places and those of the new model centres there is no cultural gap.

Technique, shape and decoration have a close cultural interrelationship. Important is the far-reaching identity of the craft technique and the stubborn, conservative preference of antler as a raw-material in opposition to the easily available bone raw material.

A serious discussion of functional continuity would request a better and considerably improved material base. In general we can state that the crisis of the numerous early trading places must have made necessary functional changes to the remaining permanent trading places. No apparent changes to the non-permanent trading places like Sebbensund can be noted (Birkedal Christensen and Johansen 1992). These functional changes are at present extremely difficult to pinpoint. Political inference and political presence increases. There were changes in the organisation of the craft production towards further standardisation. At the new model centres functions of trade and exchange were obviously less prominent in the earliest phase. Administrative functions dominated. The functions of trade and exchange however had an increasing importance again in the 11th century.

Social continuity is closely connected with functional continuity but it is hardly the same thing. Different social groups could carry out similar functions in society. Social continuity was likely, both for trading places and the central settlements up to the end of the 9th century. Any judgement on the social formations of these localities must at present be mainly founded on the observations of buildings and plots. The general impression is that the relatively small houses and plots were inhabited by small family units comprising of a few people in addition to the nuclear family. At present however it is difficult to ascertain whether this social model has any relevance for the trading places. Also other alternatives are likely, *e.g.*, with a higher proportion of adults and a dominance of males in relation to the conditions in rural populations. Also at central settlements social elements, not unlike those at trading places, may have existed, but of course on a much smaller scale. The social organisation of these groups remains unclear although the social side of smaller units, non-rural specialisation and wide connections give a certain idea. The question of social dominance and control can only be positively answered for central settlements. For trading places a certain control from political elites is also likely but — as already pointed out — it is unclear to what extent. Control of the individual unit may have been limited and restricted to certain fees.

In the period from the late 9th century to the second half of the 10th century control increased at trading places. It is tempting to explain the collapse of parts of the trading system in the second half of the 10th century as the result of an excessive control of craft production, trade, and exchange. No doubt control at the new model centres was considerable and not unlike that at central settlements. In the 11th century however close control may have been increasingly difficult to achieve with growing populations and with both royal and ecclesiastical interests

represented. Attempts to use coinage more regularly however gave certain possibilities to economic control.

A certain social continuity is indicated by the rather unchanged buildings for living and for production. Continuity or discontinuity of mentalities is of course extremely difficult to discuss on the basis of the archaeological material. Attitudes of people living at trading places must have included both a certain entrepreneurship and an ability to negotiate reasonable conditions with representatives of the local elites either on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. Ability to communicate more widely than in rural society, including a number of different specialized techniques was part of this mentality. Although considerable changes must have occurred in the 10th century no sharp discontinuity is likely.

If we try to view these changes from trading places and central settlements to new model centres against the background of a sequence of generations, the problem becomes more clear. There is always a transfer of traditional values from one generation to the other. People with earlier urban traditions could have been, and probably were, part of the population of the new model centres. It is not unlikely that central settlements may also have played a role in the transfer of urban traditions locally.

With this necessarily very short discussion on different aspects of continuity it is however possible to arrive at a somewhat broader understanding of the problem of continuity and discontinuity in the urbanisation process. An additional number of arguments for continuity have been presented but it is a continuity which does not mean an unchanged status, but instead naturally includes a certain measure of change. The 10th century must be characterized as a very critical period for urbanism in Scandinavia. The continuity in at least three trading places in the western part of Southern Scandinavia, and also the influence from places on the southern coast of the Baltic, were very important for the further development of urbanism during the second half of the 10th century. Tenth century development is one of relative continuation, with regard to culture, function, social system, and probably also mentality. A discontinuity can not be defended on the basis of recent results.

## VII

In addition to the aspects of continuity already discussed, we must also look closer at regional patterns of continuity and discontinuity. It has in recent years been maintained that the recurrent location of similar functions in a settled landscape cannot be used as indicators of continuity (Andrén 1985:17). This is however a statement which can be challenged for at least two reasons. Behind such

statements is the idea that landscape patterns give little room for alternative solutions. It also presupposes that the temporal distance is so considerable that no living local tradition about earlier conditions exists and affects the actions of people. In a number of cases it has recently been possible to study in more detail relative locations of central settlements and trading places. Several of these indicate a long living tradition of urban life. They also suggest a number of different variations on the subject of local topographical continuity. We shall here try to give a short presentation of the state of research in Southern Scandinavia. We shall start in the east and move towards the south—west.

In the north—eastern part of the South—Swedish province of Scania the wide plain of Kristianstad forms a well defined settlement area. Slightly to the west of the centre of the plain the large central settlement at Vä began already in the Roman Iron Age (Thun 1982). It showed continuity to the 10th century. The following century is incompletely documented. The place was turned into a monastery with a very large adjoining village in the 12th century only to become a regular town in the 13th century. At the estuary of the Helge river trading places from the 8th century (already 7th?) to the late 9th century have been excavated at Åhus. Immediately to the east of the earlier trading place activities began already in the 11th century which became more and more marked. The stone church and later town church of Åhus was probably built in the 12th century. The town dates from *ca.* AD 1200. Two villages with *köpinge*—names existed a few kilometres to the west. Both had an ecclesiastical connection in the Late Medieval Period and in neither case have recent excavations revealed a Viking Period trading place (Callmer 1992).

Further down the east coast of Scania traces of Viking Period settlement (9th century and later) have been found in the town of Simrishamn at the estuary of the Tommarp river including Arabic coins on the beach (Jacobsson 1979). The 11th century at present is only weakly documented. From the following century constructions connected with large scale fishing were excavated. The town itself could be dated to the 13th century. *Ca.* 6 km up the river a central settlement dating from the 8th to the 10th century is situated at Järrestad (Callmer 1994). This settlement was superseded by the town foundation of Tommarp only two kilometres further up—river in the 11th century (Redin 1972).

On the south coast of Scania an extensive trading place dating from the 7th to the 10th century is situated immediately to the west of the town of Ystad (Strömberg 1978, 1981). Activities, although of a diffuse character, are documented in the town from the 10th century on. In the 12th century more distinct indications could be noted. The town can be dated to the 13th century. *Ca.* 9 km to the northeast of Ystad is a village with a *köpinge*—name. A peak of activities could be dated to the 11th century and the period *ca.* AD 1200 (Wienberg 1989:255ff.).

At Trelleborg in the western sector of the south coast of Scania traces of another extensive trading place have been found below the entire medieval town. The waterfront and the more important parts of the settlement may have been eroded away. The dating is the 8th to the late 9th century. In the 10th century a fortification of the Trelleborg type as built in the northwestern part of the former trading place (Jacobsson 1989). Activities in the 11th century are poorly documented but in the following century the indications are stronger and the town dates to the 13th century (Jacobsson and Wallin 1986). Two villages with *köpinge*-names are situated 3 and 4 km to the east of Trelleborg. They have both an ecclesiastical connection in the late medieval sources (Skansjö 1983:177ff., 259ff. and oral communications).

Mid-western Scania is a complicated area with regard to continuity problems. Lund (Andrén 1976, 1984), founded *ca.* AD 990 lies at a distance of *ca.* 2 km from an earlier central settlement at Uppåkra which may however have been abandoned in the 7th and 8th centuries (Vifot 1936). It was resettled in the 9th century. A candidate for a regional central settlement in the 7th and 8th centuries is the settlement at Västra Karaby, more than 20 km to the north-west of Lund (Ohlsson 1971). A possible trading place at Löddeköpinge (note the *köpinge*-name) at the estuary of the Lödde river can be dated to the 8th and 9th centuries (Ohlsson 1976). The coastal site corresponding to Lund was however Lomma immediately to the west of Lund (Skansjö 1980). Excavations there have not been conducted and may be impossible to carry out due to later restructuring of the area in question.

Hälsingborg on the northern part of the west coast is situated only *ca.* 1.5 km to the northwest of a very large settlement with exclusive finds dating from the Viking Period (unpublished excavation). Settlement in the medieval town begins in the 11th century (Wihlborg 1981). It is possible that a trading place connected to the Viking Period settlement existed at the estuary of the Rå river (Strömberg 1961:45). There is a village with a *-köpinge* name nearby.

On Sealand a central settlement was discovered at Lejre only 8 km from Roskilde as already stated (Christensen 1989). The settlement dates from the 7th to the 10th century. There may have been an adjoining trading place at the Roskilde fiord. Lejre is superseded by Roskilde in the last decade of the 10th century (Nielsen and Schiørring 1982; Andersen 1985). Lejre/Roskilde was the centre of the plain district of eastern Sealand. The plain of western Sealand is less distinct with regard to settlement structure. Two central settlements at Tissø (Nielsen 1983:27) and Boeslunde (Nielsen 1992) were reduced or even abandoned in the late Viking Period. At the end of the 10th century the eponym Trelleborg fortress (Nørlund 1948) was constructed only *ca.* 8 km to the north of Boeslunde. The town Slagelse with a mint from *ca.* AD 1030 (Arnskov 1931) is situated 5 km from Trelleborg and 12 km from Boeslunde.

In south—western Sealand a trading place has, as already been told, been identified on the coast of Dybsø Fjord (Ørsnes 1966:262—3). It was probably continuously used from the 8th century to the Early Middle Ages. The town of Naestved is situated *ca.* 6 km to the north, a few km upstream the Suse river. In the town traces of a considerable settlement with continuity from the Migration Period have been documented. Historical sources may point back to the town status in the first half of the 12th century (Petersen 1988).

On Funen, Odense carries the name of a pagan sanctuary. Settlement in the town may have started in the first half of the 11th century (minting) but is as yet poorly documented archaeologically (*Fra boplads* 1988). This could be an indication of a moderate dislocation in the 11th century. A considerable Viking Period settlement at Odense Å has been touched by recent excavations (*Arkaeologiske udgravninger* 1987:81). No trading place at the estuary of Odense Å has yet been identified but may be expected to turn up. Odense has an ideal situation in relation to the settlement region of central Funen.

In Jutland we will start our survey in the north. The recently discovered central settlement at Stentinget (Nilsson 1992) cannot be directly connected with the medieval centre of Vendsyssel at Hjørring, located in a distance of *ca.* 20 km) (Andren 1985:158). Stentinget was reduced in importance *ca.* 1100 and may with regard to central functions have been superseded by Hjørring.

At the narrowest section of the Limfjord a central settlement is known at Bejsebakken in the suburbs of contemporary Ålborg (Johansen 1992). This centre was abandoned or reduced in the early 11th century and obviously replaced by Ålborg (Knudsen Møller 1980, 1992). If there was a trading place on the beach, this is uncertain but a trading place with exactly the type of location expected has been excavated at Sebbærnsund *ca.* 27 km to the west of Ålborg (Birkedahl Christensen and Johansen 1992).

Although not situated on a major river, Viborg has a situation which is not unlike that of Odense. It also shares having a name indicating a pagan sanctuary with Odense, Vä and perhaps Lund. It is only situated 9 km from Limfjord. Settlement in the town area and to the east began in the late 10th century or *ca.* AD 1000 (Krongaard Kristensen 1988). Traces of a modest agrarian precursor have also been excavated in the town (Levin Nielsen 1968). No central settlement in the neighbourhood is yet known.

Continuous settlement has been well demonstrated at Århus (Andersen, Crabb and Madsen 1971). The beginning of the sequence there may be dated from *ca.* AD 800 (instead of the 10th century date given by the excavators). Along the east coast of Jutland there are several medieval towns with a conspicuously similar location at the bottom of fjords. With few exceptions they are insufficiently studied archaeologically. A considerably earlier settlement has been found just outside

Randers (*Arkaeologiske udgravninger* 1989:152), and at Horsens recently a late Viking Period settlement has been documented with indications of continuous activities up to the more manifest remains of the 12th century (Knudsen Møller and Schiørring 1992). Much interest may now be directed towards Vejle. Recently a large central settlement has been documented at Jelling *ca.* 9 km to the north-west of Vejle (excavations by Vejle Museum). It is reasonable to expect this early royal centre to have had a harbour and this harbour with possible trading place functions must have been situated at Vejle or close by. The central settlement at Jelling was abandoned or at least reduced at the end of the 10th century.

The western side of Jutland with a very different landscape and more difficult approaches from the sea has few indications of trading places. At Holmsland Klit on the seaside of Ringkøbing Fjord a traditional trading place goes back at least to the 8th century. On the inland side and *ca.* 3 km upstream the major tributary of the fiord, Skjern river, a probable central settlement has been identified near Lønborg. There is no closer connection with Ringkøbing, the only medieval town on the fjord (Egeberg Hansen and Jensen 1988).

Ribe, with continuity from *ca.* AD 700 and only minor changes in location today, is the best documented urban sequence in Southern Scandinavia (Jensen 1991). A considerable dislocation has been noted from Hedeby to Slesvig (Schleswig) further south on the coast of Jutland. As the crow flies the dislocation is however no more than *ca.* 2 km. The sequence at Hedeby—Schleswig is well documented from *ca.* AD 810 but could have begun earlier. It is of importance to note that there is a name continuity from the trading place to the new model centre (Jankuhn 1976:269ff.).

## VIII

A number of important conclusions can be drawn from the survey given above. In fact a number of central settlements of the Viking Period are closely connected with later, medieval towns. This connection is indeed as apparent as the connection between medieval towns and trading places. Only in a few cases (Kalmargården, Stentinget, Jelling and Lønborg) can no close connection be suggested with later towns. There is however in almost all cases a certain dislocation. It seldom exceeds 10 km and is frequently less. A few centres do not change their location more than slightly (a few hundred meters) In the case of Vå the dislocation is slight but the character of continuity complicated. The reorganisation from central settlement to new model centre mostly falls around AD 1000 but may perhaps in some remote areas like Vendsyssel have been delayed until *ca.* 1100. A social continuity in groups and individuals from the central settlements to

the new model centres is also in this light most probable. The local tradition of political structures including earlier central settlements was certainly alive for a considerable time. In this respect the relative continuity, *e.g.*, at Vå is perhaps not controversial. In conclusion we may state that the topographical continuity of central settlements is a not infrequent variant of the continuity of urban elements in Southern Scandinavia.

Certain problems — as pointed out — are indeed connected with the continuity between trading places and towns. In general, trading places are best known in the west and the east, whereas they are little known from the Danish isles. The results from Århus, Ribe and Hedeby/Slesvig must be considered conclusive but may be characteristic primarily of middle and southern Jutland. On the islands so far only the site at Dybsø Fjord has suggested the existence of trading places. However they are likely to turn up.

Another variant of the problem of continuity is provided by the trading places in the province of Scania close to or even beneath medieval towns. The number of observations of this kind is too high to disregard. Both local traditions of continuity and traditions in coastal shipping must have played an important role. A sort of continuity of ideas and concepts may be supported.

The most important question remains to be studied further as pointed out initially. We know very little about how and why the earliest urban communities were formed. That the influences from the North Sea area were important is beyond doubt. The rapid development of the system of trading places and the emergence of an urban population of thousands of inhabitants in a few generations is a result mainly of an internal development within Southern Scandinavia. This is an important research field for the coming years.

## REFERENCES

- Ambrosiani, K. 1981. Viking Age combs, comb making and comb makers in the light of the finds from Birka and Ribe. *Stockholm Studies in Archaeology* 2.
- Andersen, H.H., P.J. Crabb and H.J. Madsen 1971. *Århus Sønder vold, en byarkæologisk undersøgelse*. Århus.
- Andersen, M. 1985. Arkeologien i Roskilde. *Meta* 1985:2/3.
- Andrén, A. 1976. Stadsbilden. In *Uppgrävt förflutet för PK banken i Lund. En investering i arkeologi*, A. Mårtensson (ed.). Lund.
- 1984. Lund — tomtindelning, ägostruktur, sockenbildning. *Riksantikvarieämbetet och Statens Historiska Museer. Rapport. Medeltidsstaden* 56. Stockholm.
- 1985. *Den urbana scenen. Städer och samhälle i det medeltida Danmark*. Malmö.
- Aner, E. 1952. Das Kammergräberfeld von Haithabu. *Offa* 10.
- Arkeologiske udgravninger* 1987. *Arkeologiske udgravninger i Danmark* 1986. København.
- Arkeologiske udgravninger* 1989. *Arkeologiske udgravninger i Danmark* 1988. København.
- Arnskov, P. 1931. *Bogen om Slagelse. Historiske og topografiske Skildringer af Slagelse gennem Aarene*. Slagelse.
- Bendixen, K. 1985. Skandinaviske fund of sceattas. *Hikuin* 11.

- Bergman, K. and I. Billberg 1976. Metallhantverk. In *Uppgrävt förflutet for PK banken i Lund. En investering i arkeologi*, A. Mårtensson (ed.). Lund.
- Birkedahl Christensen, P. and E. Johansen 1992. En handelsplads fra yngre jernalder og vikingetid ved Sebbensund. *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* 1991.
- Blindheim, C. 1975. Kaupang by the Viks Fjord in Vestfold. In *Archaeological contributions to the early history of urban communities in Norway*, A. Herteig et al. (eds). Oslo.
- Callmer, J. 1982. Production site and market area. Some notes on fieldwork in progress. *Meddelanden fran Lunds universitets historiska museum* 1981–82.
- 1992. Platser med anknytning till handel och hantverk i yngre järnålder. Exempel från södra Sverige. In *Hövdingesamfund og kongemakt. Fra stamme til stat i Danmark* 2. Århus.
- 1994. Hantverksproduktion, samhällsförändringar och bebyggelse. Iakttagelser från Østra Sydskan-dinavien ca. 600–1100 e. Kr. In *Produksjon og samfunn: om erverv, spesialisering og bosetning i 1 årtusende e. Kr.*, G. Resi and P. Rolfsen (eds). Universitetets Oldsaksamlings skrifter. Ny rekke. Oslo. In press.
- Christensen, A.E. 1977. *Vikingetidens Danmark paa oldhistorisk baggrund*. København.
- Christensen, T. 1989. *Lejre. Syn og sagn*. Roskilde.
- Cinthio, E. 1972. Variationsmuster in dem frühmittelalterlichen Städtewesen Schonens. In *Frühe Städte im westlichen Ostseeraum*, H. Hinz (ed.). Kiel.
- Egeberg Hansen, T. and O. Lass Jensen 1988. Skjern Ådalen — traek af 10.000 års bosøttelse historie. *Fra Ringkøbings Amts Museum* 1988.
- Filipowiak, W. 1988. Handel und Handelsplätze an der Westküste Westpommerns. *Bericht der Römisch—Germanischen Kommission* 69.
- Fra boplads* 1988. *Fra boplads til bispeby. Odense til 1556*. Odense.
- Hill, D. and M. Metcalf (eds). 1984. *Sceattas in England and on the Continent*. British Archaeological Reports, B.S. 128. Oxford.
- Jacobsen, L. and E. Moltke 1942. *Danmarks Runeindskrifter*, 1 (Text). København.
- Jacobsson, B. 1979. Bebyggelselämningar vikingatid, medeltid, Kv. Ålen, Simrishamn, Skåne. *Riksantikvarieambetet och Statens historiska museer. Rapport B* 1979:58. Stockholm.
- 1987. Oden. Ett vikingakvarter i staden Trelleborg. *Ale* 1987:2.
- 1989. En trelleborg värd namnet. *Gjallarhornet* 9:4.
- Jacobsson, B. and L. Wallin 1986 *Trelleborg under vikingatid och medeltid*. Lund.
- Jagodziński, M. and M. Kasprzycka 1991. The early medieval craft and commercial centre at Janów Pomorski near Elbląg on the South Baltic Coast. *Antiquity* 65.
- Jankuhn, H. 1976. *Haithabu. Ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*. Neumünster.
- 1984. Die Befestigungen um Haithabu. In *Archäologische und naturwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen an ländlichen und frühstädtischen Siedlungen im deutschen Küstengebiet von 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, H. Jankuhn et al. (eds), 2. Weinheim.
- Jensen, S. 1991. *Ribes Vikinger*. Ribe.
- Johansen, E. 1992. Forhistorien. In *Fra Aalborgs fødsel til Grevens fejde 1534. Aalborgs historie*, 1. Aalborg.
- Knudsen Møller, B. 1980. Aalborg. In *Ti byer. Diskussionsoplæg til mødet på Skarrildshus*, O. Olsen and O. Schiørring (eds). Projektet Middelalderbyen. Statens humanistiske forskningsråd. København. (litho)
- 1992. Middelalder. In *Fra Aalborgs fødsel til Grevens fejde 1534. Aalborgs historie*, 1. Aalborg.
- Knudsen Møller, B. and O. Schiørring 1992. *Fra grubehus til grillbar. Horsens i 1000 år*. Horsens.
- Krongaard Kristensen, H. 1988. A Viking Period and Medieval settlement at Viborg—Søndersø, *Jut of Danish Archaeology* 7.
- Kulakov, V. 1989. *Kaup. Stanovlenie evropeiskogo srednevekovogo goroda*. Moskva.
- Levin Nielsen, E. 1968. Pederstraede i Viborg. Købstadsarkaeologiske undersøgelser i 1966–67. *Kuml* 1968.

- Nielsen, H. 1992. Boeslunde — et sjaellansk Gudme? In *Sjaellands jernalder. Arkeologiske Skrifter* 6.
- Nielsen, I. and O. Schiørring 1982. Medieval Roskilde — an urban archaeological survey. *Journal of Danish Archaeology* 1.
- Nielsen, L.C. 1983. Land og by i vikingetiden. In *Land og by i middelalderen. Symposium Lundeborg 1983*. Odense.
- Nilsson, T. 1976. Hus och huskonstruktioner. In *Uppgrävt förflutet för PK banken i Lund. En investering i arkeologi*, A. Mårtensson (ed.). Lund.
- 1992. Stentinget. En inlandsbebyggelse med handel og håndverk fra yngre jernalder og vikingetid. En foreløbig meddelelse. *Kuml* 1990.
- Nørlund, P. 1948. *Trelleborg*. København.
- Ohlsson, T. 1971. Rapport från Västra Karaby. *Ale* 1971:2.
- 1976. The Löddeköpinge investigation, I. The settlement at Vikhögsvägen. *Meddelanden från Lunds universitets historiska museum* 1975—76.
- Olsen, O. 1974. Nogle tanker i anledning af Ribes uventet høje alder. *Fra Ribe amt* 1974.
- Ørsnes, M. 1966. *Form og stil i Sydskandinaviens yngre germanske jernalder*. København.
- Petersen, J.E. 1988. Farvergade i Naestved. Arkeologiske fund fra germansk jernalder og middelalder. *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* 1987.
- Redin, L. 1972. Tommarp. Skånes hembygdsförbund. *Årsbok* 1972.
- Ryding, O. 1987. *Kammakerihantverket under äldre medeltid i Lund*. Seminar paper, Lund University. Lund.
- Schietzel, K. 1981. Stand der siedlungsarchäologischen Forschung in Haithabu — Ergebnisse und Probleme. In *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu*, 16. Neumünster.
- Schück, A. 1926. *Studier rörande det svenska stadsväsendets uppkomst och äldsta utveckling*.
- Skansjö, S. 1980. Malmö stads tidigmedeltida föregångare? Om Lomma såsom stadsbildning eller bondby enligt det äldsta skriftliga källmaterialet. *Ale* 1980:2.
- 1983. *Söderslutt genom 600 år. Bebyggelse och odling under äldre historisk tid*. Lund.
- Strömberg, M. 1961. *Untersuchungen zur jüngeren Eisenzeit in Schonen*, II. Lund.
- 1978. En kustby i Ystad — före stadens tillkomst. *Ystads fornminnesförenings tidskrift* 23.
- 1981. Vattenförsörjning och verksamhet i forntidsbyn. *Ystads fornminnesförenings tidskrift* 26.
- Tesch, S. 1983A. Ystad I. *Riksantikvarieambetet och Statens historiska Museer. Rapport. Medeltidsstaden* 44. Stockholm.
- Thrane, H. 1987. Das Gudme—Problem und die Gudme—Untersuchung. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 21.
- Thun, E. 1982. *Vä. Järnålder, medeltid*. Örebro.
- Ulbricht, I. 1978. Die Geweihverarbeitung in Haithabu. In *Die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu* 7. Neumünster.
- Van Es, W.A. 1991. Dorestad centered. In *Medieval archaeology in the Netherlands*, J. C. Besteman et al. (eds). Assen.
- Vifot, B.—M. 1936. Järnåldersboplatsen vid Uppåkra. *Meddelanden från Lunds universitets historiska museum* 1936.
- Wienberg, J. 1989. Kirkerne og befolkningen i Ystadorrådet. In *By, huvudgård och kyrka. Studier i Ystadorrådets medeltid*, H. Andersson and M. Anglert (eds). Stockholm.
- Wihlborg, A. 1981. Helsingborg. *Riksantikvarieambetet och Statens historiska Museer. Rapport. Medeltidsstaden* 32. Stockholm.
- Wietrzichowski, F. 1993. Untersuchungen zu den Anfängen der frühmittelalterlichen Seehandels im südlichen Ostseeraum unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Grabungsergebnisse von Großströmkendorf. *Wismarer Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte* 3.