Posament: An Overview of my Trip to Historiska Museet

MISTRESS DISA I BIRKILUNDI
Who am I?

• Mistress Disa i Birkilundi
• Researching Posament for six years
• Researching tetrad creation for five years
• Traveled to Stockholm earlier this year to see extant Posament pieces in the archives at Historiska Museet.
What is Posament?

- Wire coiled around a fiber core
- Used to adorn fabric
- Found primarily in Birka, Sweden in the 9th and 10th centuries
Who Wore Posament?

- Found almost always in graves of men
- With the recent recategorization of graves all types now found in men and women’s graves
- Usually seen in head and belt area
- Found on scabbards and purses
- Likely used in headpieces and hats
Where is Posament found on Birka?

• 1,103 graves on Birka
  – Only 44 contain Posament
    • 3.99%

• Four types of graves
  – Chamber
  – Coffin
  – Non Coffin
  – Cremation

• 55% of posament found in Chamber graves
  – Chamber graves are only 10% of total graves
Chamber Graves

- Most commonly used in the 10\textsuperscript{th} century
- Showed high status within the community
- Not necessarily wealthy
- Posament was most likely worn by higher status individuals in the 10\textsuperscript{th} century and in smaller quantities within the rest of the community.
Types of Posament

- Eight types
  - Four braided
  - Four knotted
- Other styles created using these types
Materials

- Silver Wire
- Gold Wire
- Silk Thread
  - Also found backed with silk fabric
Size of Wire and Tentrad

- Size of both wire and tentrad vary
- Tentrad measures from .25mm to 1mm
- Wire size
  - 28 to 36 gauge silver wire
  - 24 to 36 gauge gold wire
Creation of Tentrad

- Drop Spindle Method
- Used by Sami
- Easily Transportable
- Using existing tools
- Can create smaller tentrad than previously assumed needle method
Visiting Historiska Museet
Posament In Person!

- Many pieces are smaller than thought
- A challenge to photograph
  - Exciting changes on the way!
Posament In Person!

- Gold Tentrad!
- Posament attached to possible knife sheath?
Posament In Person!

- Interesting insights on the Birka books
- Posament mislabeled in Birka III found!
  - Grave 944
Observations and Recommendations

• Don’t be afraid to contact museums
• Set up appointments ahead of time
• Bring a list of things you want to see and questions you want to ask
• They are as excited about these pieces as you are
• Bring multiple cameras
  – Phone camera attachments are your friend!
• Bring a notebook
• You will get overwhelmed!
Questions?