Foreigners and Outside Influences in Medieval Norway

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Archaeopress Publishing Ltd
Summertown Pavilion
18-24 Middle Way
Oxford OX2 7LG

www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978 1 78491 705 0
ISBN 978 1 78491 706 7 (e-Pdf)

This book is available direct from Archaeopress or from our website www.archaeopress.com

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Introduction

Stian Suppersberger Hamre

With the transition to the Middle Ages came significant changes to the organisation of Norwegian society. Urbanisation gathered speed at this time and facilitated even greater contact with the surrounding world, contact which would also have been part of the reason for the emergence of urban centres. In the 10th century in Scandinavia and surrounding areas, the merging of larger entities into kingdoms or principalities ran parallel to urbanisation and a religious shift towards Christianity. This development can be seen as a major transformation of the region, one bringing it in line with the larger part of Europe. Territorial borders have been altered many times since then but the idea of the region as being composed of sovereign territories has been sustained until the present. Therefore, it can be argued that the sovereign territories that were emerging in the medieval period formed the basis of the perception of modern states and fuelled the narrative of national identity. Thus, this also marks the time when one can start talking about migration in a similar sense to the way we discuss migration today. Migration can be defined as the relocation of residence across recognised borders to an area defined as an entity different from one's former place of residence. Travel, on the other hand, is relocation for a limited period of time with the intention of returning to one's place of origin. One does not, of course, exclude the other, as a traveller might decide to stay and an intended migrant may decide to return to their place of origin. Outside influences can be defined as societal changes resulting from external stimuli. Both migration and brief contact, through travel and trade, can bring about cultural and other changes to a society through the exchange

of ideas and customs. This exchange takes place in various directions and different societies are mutually influenced by one another.

In an historical perspective, hardly anybody denies that migration has been an ever ongoing process. However, migration can be, and has often been, interpreted within the frameworks of two models. The first portrays migration as waves of dislocation and new settlement of larger groups, with periods of little or no mobility between periods of major migration events. The second model views migration as a continuing process where the societies are changing their cultural fabric accordingly. This, however, does not exclude that, at different points in history, there have been major resettlements of large populations. The first model views immigration as threatening and disruptive to the existing society, something which will abruptly replace and transform society into a new cultural entity. On the other hand, the second model interprets migration as part of the ever ongoing development of society, as a normal condition for maintaining society as its inhabitants identify it. The different interpretations are highly relevant to the present-day interpretation of migration and have an impact on policy making as well as the level of xenophobia.

No matter what theory one thinks has been most influential, there is absolutely no denying the fact that the movements of people, goods, and ideas have played a significant part in the development of societies past and present. It is just not possible to argue for a scenario where different cultures and national or ethnic groups have developed in separate vacuums. This is not to diminish the differences between groups of people, but rather to accentuate the fact that every culture is the result of continuous influences from a variety of different groups. Groups are always willing to incorporate new things that are deemed acceptable or favourable, which is why one will find a great amount of similarities between groups of people, regardless of whether the groups are defined on the basis of culture, ethnicity, or nationality, but also many differences which set groups apart. Thus, one can decide to focus on the differences, which have been, and continue to be, the favoured way of depicting societies different from one's own; a method which is meant to strengthen the feeling of belonging, but also portray a picture of the world where whatever group you belong to is infinitely better than the others. This nurtures conflict and is often used to justify derogatory

behaviour towards foreigners and foreign cultures. This use of history with an inaccurate view of the world is harmful as it promotes hatred. Thus, it is not very productive to continue to accentuate differences. A much more sensible approach is to try and elucidate the influences which historically have acted on different societies. This will create a better understanding of how different societies have developed into their current forms, but more importantly it will bring forward an understanding of societies as ever changing entities. An understanding of how societies develop through migration and contact with others, that society is the result of a continuous exchange of ideas, customs, and goods, will make contemporary changes less frightening and possibly diminish the level of xenophobia in society, as well promoting a more realistic view of history.

There are numerous approaches to studying immigration, mobility, and outside influences on a society. Just about any relics of past societies can provide useful information, but the common denominator for all such research must be a comparison between the geographical area of interest and the surrounding areas along with regions further afield. To do so, the archaeological record can be divided into three main categories which will provide different information: the people themselves, evidence of long term influences, and evidence of contact. The most direct approach to studying past migration and mobility is through analysing the skeletal remains of the actual people who lived at the time and place you are interested in studying. The isotope composition in dental enamel holds information about where a person spent the time during the period the tooth crown developed (e.g. oxygen, strontium, lead, sulphur). The enamel on the first molar develops during the first couple of years of life and thus holds information about where the person was during this early part of life. The third molar, on the other hand, is the last tooth to develop and holds information about a person's whereabouts during late childhood or their early teens. Information is always available about where the individual was buried (excavated), so it is known where the person's life ended and where they probably spent the last part of life. Bone could provide a fourth reference point in life history as bone is constantly remodelling and the isotopic value would represent a point in the last part of life. There are, however, issues with diagenesis when using bone samples and several elements are best avoided or used with

caution until these problems have been solved or better understood. Thus, depending on the methodology, it is possible to determine where people in the past came from and potentially moved during life. Genetic analyses of skeletal remains provide a different kind of information about individuals. Contrary to the direct individual information provided by isotope studies, ancient DNA provides information about the long ancestral lines of an individual and can show the long term genetic influences on a population.

Moving on from the people themselves, it is important to see how these people influenced society and here you turn to other aspects of the archaeological record. Evidence of long term influences on society can be found in the parts of the archaeological record which can show lasting cultural influences, rather than indications of brief points of contact between people of different cultural backgrounds. The kind of 'permanent' features useful for this type of study would include architecture, building techniques, organisation and structure of churches and other religious institutions, religious practices like burial customs, the structure and organisation of towns, and, last but not least, food culture, which can be approached through a combination of archaeological and historical sources. Historical sources can, when available, be informative and lend important supplementary information about many aspects of society. The articles in this book touch upon many different approaches, but are by no means comprehensive, and a lot more research and different methodologies need to be applied in the future to develop a satisfactory understanding of the history of immigration, mobility, and outside influences on Norwegian, and any other, society of the past.

About this book

This book is the result of a conference held in Bergen, Norway, in March 2016, entitled 'Multidisciplinary approaches to improving our understanding of immigration and mobility in pre-modern Scandinavia (1000-1900)'. As the title suggests, this was a multidisciplinary conference with papers and posters from a wide range of academic disciplines: history, archaeology, biological anthropology, zooarchaeology, isotope studies, and genetics. Only some of the participants at the conference have made contributions to this book, but the multidisciplinary approach has been maintained.

Multidisciplinary publishing presents some issues with regard to format and referencing, and cross-disciplinary understanding of one another's articles. The most important aspect of different disciplines working together is being able to understand one another and an attempt has been made in this book to make the articles as accessible as possible. Very specialised terminology has been kept to a minimum. Another issue is the use of footnotes which is an integral part of writing as an historian, but rarely used by most other disciplines, especially the sciences. The sensible decision seems to be to allow for the limited use of footnotes and this has been applied in this book. The referencing, however, has been merged into a common system regardless of the different disciplines normal preferences.

Despite the challenges with truly multidisciplinary publications, there is no doubt that this is the recommended approach for the future. No single discipline can shed sufficient light on societies of the past and only through real cooperative efforts, including many academic disciplines and other sources of knowledge, will it be possible to improve our knowledge of the past. This book is an attempt at bringing different disciplines together around a common topic. It is not as academically diverse as it perhaps could have been, but it is a good start which, I hope and believe, will be improved upon in the very near future.

Acknowledgements

The conference on which this book is based was fully funded by the Research Council of Norway through grant number 249145.

I would also like to thank Darren G. Mann (Proofreading and Translation Services) for proofreading the book and Martina Suppersberger Hamre for continuous feedback and proofreading during the production of the book manuscript.

Who were they? Steps towards an archaeological understanding of newcomers and settlers in early medieval Trondheim, Norway

Axel Christophersen

Introduction

Where did they come from, the people who, in the late 10th century, settled on the spot located in central Norway that Snorre called the *'Kaupangr á Nidarnes'* and the *'Kaupangen ved Nidelven',* which means the trading place on the Nidar peninsula/by the River Nid? (Figure 1). From where did they come, those who established and gradually developed an urban community where there once were sandy tidal flats and sprawling sea-buckthorn shrub vegetation? From where did they come, the priests and the monks who filled the 18 churches and 5 monasteries? From where did the house owners, the craftsmen, the merchants, the prostitutes, and the dockers come? These are crucial questions that help us describe and understand the fact that within a few decades, a non-rural, sedentary community was established which, within the following century, transformed a rural landscape into an urban one? Initially, I will briefly discuss the relevance of some theoretical and methodological possibilities for an archaeological approach to finding answers to these questions. Then I will present some tentative answers based on a preliminary investigation of selected archaeological material from early medieval Trondheim (i.e. the late 10th century and the 11th century), that is the period in which 'Kaupangr á Nidarnes' became the royal and

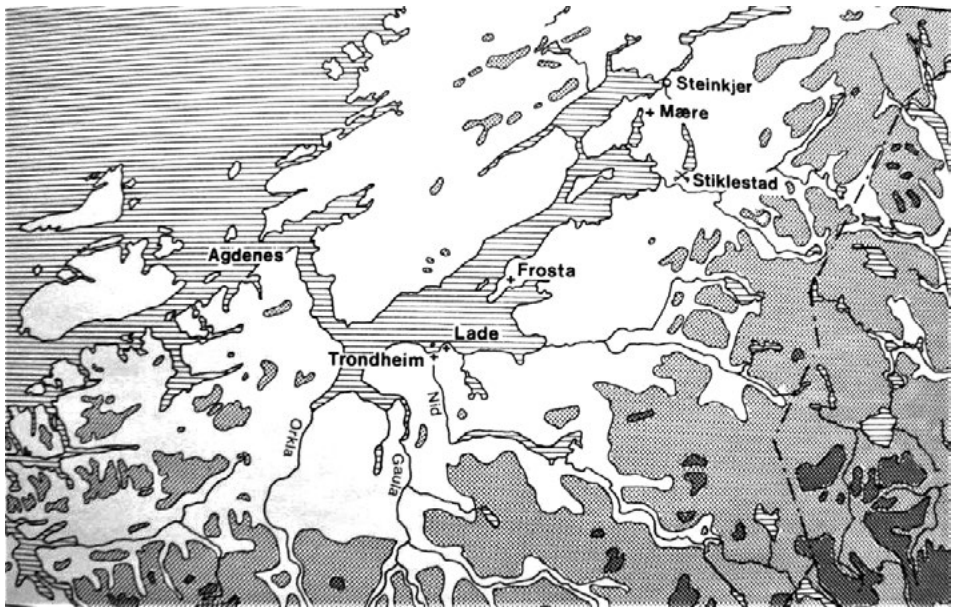

Figure 1. Map showing Central Norway with Trondheim or 'Kaupangr á Nidarnes'. *Drawing: Riksantikvarens utgravningskontor, Trondheim*

ecclesiastical centre called Trondheim and was, thus, transformed from a rural to an urban community. Finally, I will discuss some tentative possibilities regarding the range and nature of immigration to early medieval Trondheim. In light of the opportunities that aDNA and isotope analyses may provide in the future, my overall goal is, at a very early stage, to survey the archaeological possibilities of tracing the movement of people in space as they created communities in new places.

Theoretical considerations

Before archaeologically approaching the phenomenon of 'urban immigration' we need to clarify:

a. The conceptual use of the word 'immigration' and, subsequently, the meaning of 'urban immigration'.
b. The methodological challenges of using material remains to trace people moving to, and remaining in, town.

The term immigration might give a notion of a large group of people coming from outside and in a short time populating the western shore of the River Nid, near the estuary where it flows into the broad Strindfjord which is a major arm of the Trondheimsfjord that connects a vast, fertile agricultural landscape with mountains and the sea. This was most likely not what happened. Rather, the influx of people was a sustained movement of either individuals or small groups of people sharing common interests and/or intentions. The challenge, at least from an archaeological point of view, is to give an in-depth analysis followed by a credible explanation of *why* people moved to a place significantly different in settlement and activity patterns from the surrounding rural environment in which a majority of the early inhabitants in Trondheim seem to have had their social and cultural origins. This early influx of people is something more than pure spatial movements from A to B. Moving into a place where 'otherness' is a noticeable quality is about something considerably more complex than an action provoked by a sudden impulse, adventurousness or new opportunities. It is, if not about forced coalescence, about following intentions, motivations, and objectives. Hence, it follows that the social practice of movement and migration is ultimately embedded in cultural behaviour and calls for contexts and explanations that deal with more than a simple transfer from A to B. Susanne Hakenbeck has pointed out that migration and demic diffusion should be referred to as a particular phenomenon within an overarching context of 'mobility' and they unfold within a particular cultural, social, economic, political, and/or environmental context (Hakenbeck 2008: 2). This conceptual redefinition of 'migration', perceived as a specific cultural phenomenon of 'mobility', implies that the movement of people from A to B is a socio-cultural phenomenon which entangles the act of 'spatial movement' with the current conditions and circumstances ruling in the place left behind and the place of arrival. The term 'urban immigration' should consequently be perceived as 'people intentionally moving from A (B, C, D etc.) into a non-rural agglomeration of dwellings and activities'. It should be used when tracing newcomers in non-rural communities and considering how this spatial movement of people acted as an integral part of the establishment of urban communities, specifically the one that developed along the western shore of the River Nid. As an archaeologist interested in how urban communities became established and developed (beyond political and economic realities), within social practice patterns,

the question of how urban immigration transformed rural places into urban communities, is an attempt at avoiding a purely diffusionist approach.

How can urban immigration be approached using archaeological material? There is a considerable deficiency of theoretical and methodological instruments with regard to migration studies in archaeology, and for this reason it is necessary to give a short introduction to how I have approached this topic. In the following, I will draw on a study of migration and material culture amongst European settlers in North America and the Anglo-Saxon migration to England in the 5th century by Burmeister (2000). His model for how to archaeologically investigate migration is not without its weaknesses, but acceptable for our purpose. Drawing on works done by Runblom (1988) and Ostergren (1988), he states that *'...immigrants in the UK shows that they lived, as it were, in two spheres. They adapted to the immigrant society primarily in those domains with which they came into contact, but the tradition of their home culture continued to have a powerful influence on their internal co-existence....it was here that the old culture demonstrated its greatest resistance to foreign influences.'* The division into an external, or public, and an internal, or private, domain is taken further, supported by Pierre Bourdieu's habitus concept. Habitus is a product of group-specific norms, perceptions and actions created over a long period of time. Hence, habitus is deeply rooted in the past and is decisive on perception and concepts grounded in the conditions of its own origin and structure. Furthermore, the external and internal domains tend to develop different material culture practices: It is within the external domain that practice first starts to modify when coming into contact with economic and cultural conditions that deviate from the conditions that created the immigrant's habitus. The internal domain, however, will continue to be organised in line with traditional concepts of private life and related material culture practices if the habitus is rejected, as often happens if it becomes intertwined with external conditions, the *public* domain. Moderating effects which have to be taken into account include time span and the purpose and conditions of residence in the different environment. There are, of course, a lot of other modifications and critical comments to be made regarding this schematic fragmentation of the dynamics of social life. For example, John Chapman has pointed out the worrying fact that *'...a postulated migration often infiltrates an area with*

similar levels of social structure, economic development, and technological capabilities, often resulting in the deposition of rather similar forms of material culture. This is precisely why it is so hard to identify prehistoric migrations without the demonstration of contrasts in habitus between different groups' (Chapman 2000: 557) This can very well be the situation when discussing movement within or between regions with similar level of economy, social organisation, and subsistence strategies, but definitely not for circumstances involving spatial movements between rural areas and non-rural centres. Burmeister's model, based on Bourdieu's theory of the internal domain of habitus as relatively resistant against external influences from non-corresponding conditions, offers an opportunity to make a reasoned choice of archaeological material which, under certain circumstances, can offer the possibility of tracking urban immigration. By utilising archaeological sources from the *internal* domain of material culture practice, it is hypothetically possible to trace the movements of people coming from outside into early medieval Trondheim. One has to remember, however, that to prove urban immigration is to prove the physical presence of individuals coming from outside and *remaining* in town. This is associated with considerable methodological challenges, as Mats Roslund (2010: 240f) has discussed. In an article from 2010, he sought to trace the presence of merchants from the Holy Roman Empire in High Medieval Sigtuna using ceramic vessels, brooches, rings, and decorations on knife sheaths as types of material remains with distinct social and ethnic connections related to self-visualisation and self-representation in everyday social and cultural practice. How can we know that these objects provide clear evidence of the presence of newcomers? Simply put, we cannot, because there will always be the possibility that, in urban communities characterised by social and cultural heterogeneity, social practices and material objects brought along are used outside their original habitus, plagiarised, or copied by others. Such entangled materiality and modified social practices are amongst the most intricate methodological challenges in current urban archaeological research. On the other hand, there will always exist an element of regionally, and even locally, recognisable traits in material objects, social practices, and the constructed environment, which, when present in an assemblage of objects from an urban archaeological context, indicate some kind of external bodily

presence beyond indirect influence. In the following, I will approach this methodological challenge by using assemblages of objects representing different parts of the urban social practice pattern. I will leave the question of personal presence as an open possibility within a restricted analysis of a set of material objects and environments as proxy data for the possible presence of newcomers in the early urban community life of Trondheim. From this it will be possible to continue testing and verifying continuous presence of individuals from osteological material and DNA data.

Archaeological indications of immigration in medieval Trondheim

To make this attempt empirically feasible, I will apply the following selection of objects associated with material practices operating within the internal domain of habitus:

a. Domestic architecture
b. Burial customs
c. Objects related to social visualisation/self-representation: Brooches
d. Objects related to food preparation

By doing so, I hope to demonstrate a reliable empirical basis for proposing some initial statements as to whence people in early medieval Trondheim came.

a. *Domestic architecture*

Houses play an essential role in private, as well as public life, and because of this, houses represent a social and spatial zone where private and public life becomes entangled (Christophersen 2001: 56, Svart Kristiansen 2014: 154ff). While the exterior of a house (its building technique and use of material, architectural design etc.) corresponds to the resident's notions of how to appear in the external domain, the spatial and social organisation of the house's interior is determined by the norms and conventions developed within the internal domain. Under established socio-cultural conditions, the interior and exterior appearance of houses corresponds according to habitual norms and concepts. Burmeister's point about the two different principles or forms of assimilation of public and private material culture has been heavily discussed. In his comment

on Burmeister, David Anthony (2000: 554f) makes an important point about 'the principle of first effective settlement' (Kniffen 1965; Noble 1992), which states that the first settlers establish norms of social and cultural life which are followed by later settlers from same group. On this basis it seems important to focus on the oldest traces of domestic architecture and how they correspond with the appearance of subsequent domestic architecture.

At the Library site in Trondheim, there are 205 documented buildings of which 43 are from the late 10th century and the 11th century. 98 % of all houses are 'log cabins' built using a cog joint, or *laft,* technique. In a recent article, Helge Sørheim (2015) reaffirms what a majority of scholars already agree upon, that the laft-technique originates from the vast boreal region east of Scandinavia. The wooden houses from contemporary Novgorod and Staraja Ladoga are, from a technical perspective, similar to those found in Trondheim. A comparison of technical details of the notches from houses in Phase 1-2 (late 10th century – 1025 AD) at the Library site, has been made by Karin Rosberg (2016): According to Rosberg, a significant similar technical detail is that the joists in the 10th and 11th century houses in Staraja Ladoga and Trondheim were made using the same type of notch, called 'vagenov' in Norwegian. The 'vagenov' is a simple, almost timeless and universal way to make a connection between two logs. The 'vagenov' lacks the laft-technique's basic technical principle which is to create a stable and waterproof constructive connection between two wall beams. The so called 'findalslaft' – a more sophisticated laft technique which makes the corners of the houses tighter and provides more stability for the whole building construction – has not been identified with certainty in Trondheim, as has been suggested (Christophersen and Nordeide 1994: 161f) (Figure 2). As recently pointed out by Sørheim (2015 :117), there are no reliable finds of laft-houses from the late 10th century or the early 11th century in any region in Norway, but the use of this technique, according to Sørheim, cannot totally be ruled out. The hitherto oldest and technically most advanced laft-houses are found in late 10th century and early 11th century culture layers in Trondheim. This might indicate that the oldest documented laft technique, the 'vagenov', may have originally been introduced to Trondheim by people coming from Staraja

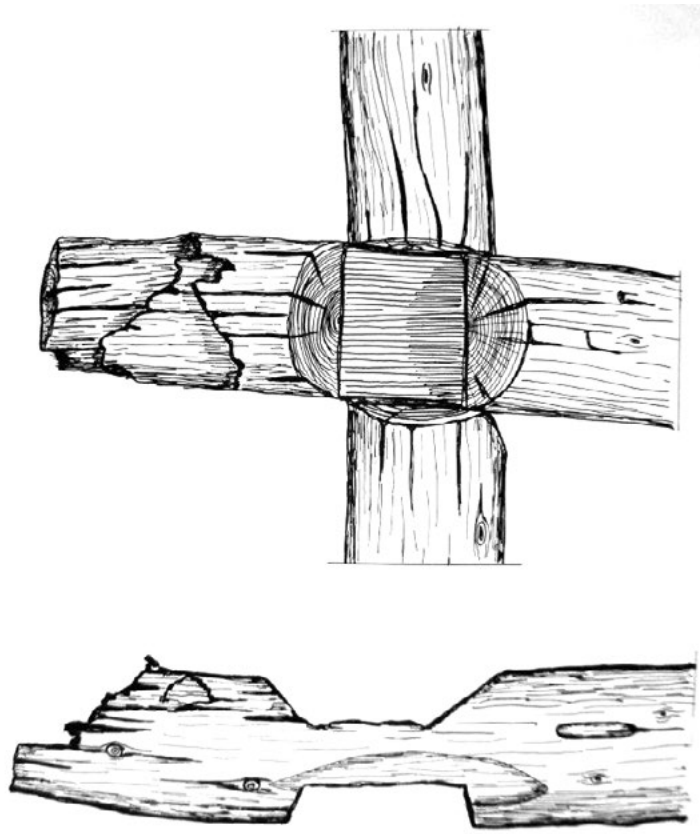

Figure 2. 'Findalslaft' used in building K60, dendrodated to 1004 AD, from the Library Site, Trondheim, Norway. Drawing: Riksantikvarens utgravningskontor, Trondheim v/ Egil Horg.

Ladoga. If, however, we consider the internal spatial organisation of the early houses in Trondheim, the evidence does not support a hypothesis of the early wooden buildings in Trondheim having been built by immigrants from the east. The oldest houses from the Library site are spatially organised according to local/regional traditions of private life. It has been pointed out by researchers (cf. Christophersen 2001; Myhre 1982; Price 1994; Skre 1996) that the two-roomed, lafted house that appears in urban contexts in the late 10th and early 11th centuries shares basic similarities with contemporary

Figure 3. Reconstruction of Building K60 in phase 2, Library Site, Trondheim, Norway. The building is dendro-dated to 1004 AD. Photo: Trond Sverre Skevik, NTNU University museum, Trondheim.

rural longhouses in Norway and the colonised North Sea region. The shared elements of interior organisation and construction are: the neutral entrance room leading from outside into the dwelling room, mentioned in Norwegian medieval documents as the 'stove', with a central fireplace later moved into a corner; fixed wall benches; and, earth floors that soon became wooden floors. Buildings K11.2 from AD 964+/-10 and K60 from AD 1004 (Figure 3), seem to be the earliest definite examples of laft-buildings in Norway. They both meet the requirements of the above-mentioned parameters of local/regional spatial organisation (Christophersen 1999; Christophersen 2001). Hence, it follows that the building-type they represent, despite its resemblance to eastern houses from regions that Norwegian Vikings frequently visited, was most probably built by local or regional people well acquainted with, and experienced in building in, a simple laft technique. This technique was obviously used because of the many practical advantages it has compared to other building techniques when houses need to be constructed in confined spaces in a narrow,

urban landscape. The laft technique seems, from this point of view, to have offered opportunities to build houses encompassing a traditional rural habitus and a daily private life surrounded by the very different social and spatial environment that eventually evolved into an urban habitus.

b. Burial customs

Medieval Christian burials followed papally authorised theological doctrines and liturgical practices, and it follows that Christian funerals should have followed a universal pattern. However, as Kristina Jonsson summarised in 2007, excavations of cemeteries in Scandinavia and elsewhere in northern Europe reveal a variety of contemporary Christian burial practices. This provides an opportunity to search for specific regional burial practice patterns in an attempt to answer the question of spatial movements and urban immigration. Jonsson (2007) argues that *'the burial ceremony in itself was...probably an important occasion for the manifestation of social identities'*, which is a pivotal aspect of urban migration processes, and, subsequently most relevant to us. A feasible methodological approach is to identify regional features appearing in deviant socio-cultural conditions within which the performance of the funeral rituals took place. This seems to be possible in the case of early medieval Trondheim. Extensive excavations have been carried out in the medieval cemeteries of St. Olav's, St. Gregorius', and St Mary's, as well as a recently excavated wooden church, hitherto unidentified, from the early 11th century. Three distinct burial practices can be detected in this assemblage: 1) graves with burial rods 2) charcoal graves and 3) graves with small wooden crosses placed on the body's chest. The crucial point is whether these observed practices can be attributed to immigration.

1) Burials with grave rods: They are documented in 12 of more than 300 burials from the cemetery around the church of St. Gregory, but all are dated to the second half of the 13th century and are, thus, of lesser interest to us (Figure 4). It should though, be mentioned that Caroline Arcini (1999) has suggested that this burial practice may indicate that a group of people immigrated to Trondheim during the 13th century 'from the south'. Despite its very wide geographical presence in Scandinavia, France, Germany, and England, the burial practice of placing grave rods under or beside the dead has been documented at relatively few sites. The

Figure 4. A 13th century burial (SKJ263) with grave rod from the cemetery of St. Gregory/St. Olav, Trondheim, Norway. Photo: Riksantikvarens utgravningskontor, Trondheim.

majority of rod burials in Scandinavia come from the cemetery around St. Stefan's and the Holy Trinity Church in Lund, Sweden (Cinthio 2002: 83ff, Jonsson 2007). English researchers (e.g. Roberta Gilchrist 2008) suggest that this particular burial practice derives from Denmark in the Early Middle Ages, but it is disputed. Also disputed is the symbolic meaning of this practice, which is beyond our ability to know. From the point of view that a majority of burial rods come from early medieval churchyards in southern Scandinavian and are relatively rare in number outside Lund, it is likely that the rod burials practice originated in southern Scandinavia amongst individuals or groups of people in a particular social and/or religious setting. Its appearance in Trondheim around the middle of the 1200s indicates a small population of southern Scandinavian origin in Trondheim at that time.

2) Charcoal burials: Of particular significance are the recently (2015-2016) unearthed charcoal graves from a hitherto unknown early medieval church. In all, 15 individuals have been documented, of which 2 individuals, who died between 1165-1275 AD were buried with ca. two cm of charcoal between their bodies and the base of the coffin. Charcoal was furthermore found randomly scattered around two more individuals. Charcoal burials appear in different variations, of which a bed of charcoal placed between the dead and the surface upon which the body rests is the earliest charcoal burial

practice known and the one which we will concentrate on. This burial practice has about the same prevalence as the contemporary burial rod practice, but from where and from what this practice derives is ambiguous. The English archaeologist Julian Richards (2002: 165) suggests the burial practice emerged from the encounter between the Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons; while the Swedish archaeologist Maria Cinthio (2002), based on the distribution of charcoal graves from the two early medieval Lund cemeteries mentioned earlier, points at England as the region of origin. A comprehensive study of charcoal burials in England undertaken by James Holloway (2009: 224) sheds a more nuanced light on the dynamic behind the use and prevalence of this particular practice. He states that *'...in some cases, links between burial practice in England and burial practice in other countries can be demonstrated; elsewhere, the links are extremely unclear...'*. He does not deny the idea of an English diaspora in early medieval Lund based on Maria Cinthios observations of the amount, distribution, and locations of charcoal burials from the cemetery around the oldest Holy Trinity church. However, strongly supported by Anders Andrén (2000: 14), he additionally emphasises the importance of the particular social context (Holloway 2009: 234) and the importance of expressing ethnic belonging through burial practice: *'Outside its original context, the rite may have gained another connotation- that of 'foreignness' or 'Englishness'* (Holloway 2009: 235). From this we cannot automatically infer from the presence of charcoal burials the presence of an English population in Trondheim in the mid-12th century, but, following Holloway's reasoning, we cannot ignore the possibility.

3) Cross burials: Burials with small crosses of various materials placed on the body's chest occur in Britain, France, and Germany, as well as in Scandinavia. The same burial practice, with wooden crosses placed near the dead and inside the grave, is known from Herjolfsnes, in Østerbygd on Greenland's west coast, and from Trondheim. From the cemetery around a little stone and turf church located on Herjolfsnes ca. 50% of the buried dead were equipped with a small wooden cross placed on their chests. From the late 10th – early 11th century cemetery associated with St. Olav's church comes one coffin burial with a wooden cross inside the coffin. The cross is identical to one of the crosses from Herjolfsnes (Figure 5). The excavation

Figure 5. Wooden cross (T016564) from a coffin burial from the Fire-station Site 1947, Trondheim, Norway. Photo: Axel Christophersen, NTNU University Museum, Trondheim.

was carried out in 1947 and the excavator perceived this at the time *'to be the first discovery of its kind in Scandinavia'* (Petersen 1947: 68) after Digre (unpublished report) and this may still be true today as far as this investigation has found. The other wooden cross from Trondheim is also identical with a cross from Herjolfsnes (fig. 144, no. 135, s. 206). It was found in a layer connected to a lafted house

built in the early 1200s. This may indicate that the crosses were used for other purposes, rather than solely as a part of a symbolic burial practice. The excavator of the Herjolfsnes church, Poul Nørlund, put forth the theory that at least some of these crosses may have been processional crosses or devotional crosses held in a person's hand during the burial ceremony (Nørlund 1924: 218f). In the Middle Ages, individuals could express and strengthen their faith through simple personal devotions conducted in a corner of one's home. Holy symbols helped in these spiritual endeavours, since they made the objects of devotional practices tangible. Such symbols were produced from a wide variety of materials, reflecting the wealth and rank of the individual (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Oct. 2001/ https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/priv/hd_priv.htm). The relationship between the late medieval crosses from Herjolfsnes and the identical crosses from Trondheim is somewhat ambiguous, but it points to a plausible connection between Trondheim and Greenland, which at that time was included in the Archbishop of Nidaros' diocese, from which he received taxes and fees paid in valuable goods like walrus rope and tusks. If so, the wooden cross burial locally practiced in Trondheim may indicate the return of a person to Trondheim after having stayed for a while in Østerbygd. We do not know the sex of the dead person, but if male it is possible he had been one of the archbishop's local representatives in Greenland in the beginning of the 13th century or simply a returned tradesman.

c. *Objects related to social visualisation/Self-representation: Brooches*

In efforts to preserve identity, material symbols used in everyday self-representation procedures are important. Clothes, jewellery, decorative elements, and ornamentation on accessories like shoes, combs, weapons, bags etc. are artefacts that have the potential to indicate the existence of 'otherness'. For critical reasons, however, we have to bear in mind the symbolic complexity and use of such objects, and that *'...few artefacts can be said to have a distinct social and ethnic connection'* as Mats Roslund (2010: 241) has repeatedly pointed out. From early medieval Trondheim there comes a significant amount of objects related to self-representation, amongst them rings, beads, brooches, pendants and buckles. Most of these objects seem initially to be of local or regional origin, like for example, the Urnes-buckles and the many belt and ring

Figure 6. 'Zellenemailfibelen' (N115067) from Krambugt.1991/2 Site, Trondheim, Norway. The brooch was found inside a house, phase 6 (late 11th century).

buckles. The Urnes buckles may indicate broader contact with southern Norway, West Sweden, and Scania as well. A few artefacts are clearly from outside Scandinavia and worth giving a closer look, such as a disc brooch from the Library Site, dated to 1025-1050 AD which has an enamelled cross motif similar to Francian-Ottonian 'Kreuzemailscheibenfibeln'. According to Müller-Wille (2003: 451ff), these appear in many local variations within the Rhine-Meuse area, Westphalia, Lower-Saxony, and the northern part of the Netherlands. Jens Ulriksen (2002/2003: 146f) typologically describes a particular variant of these brooches which he calls Irish-Scandinavian 'Zellenemailfibelen'. They typically have a secondary needle, locally attached to the back in order to attach the fibula to clothes (Figure 6). The one from the Library site has a needle, and a mould for the bottom part of the needle comes from a layer dated to 1075-1125 AD (Bergquist 1989: 72, fig 38). According to Ulriksen, they were produced in Ireland and in Scandinavia and are dated to the 9th and 10th centuries. The one from Trondheim is from the second half of the 10th century or earlier. Another brooch is of the 'Scheibenfibula' type, which has certain parallels to disc-fibulae from the Rhine-Meuse area,

but it also has similarities to late Viking Age pelta-decorated brooches from Birka. A third brooch, a 'Buckelnfibel', has a slightly elevated centre decorated with a central symbol and radiating triangular parts. It comes from an early 11th century context and so far has no known parallels in Scandinavia.

This brief review of just a few examples of brooches from early medieval Trondheim shows that a few brooches probably have their origins in the Rhine-Elbe area and/or Ireland, but most of the brooches and pendants seem to be locally produced in a traditional late Viking-early medieval style, like the Urnes brooches found at the Library site in late 11th-early 12th century contexts (Christophersen 1987: 102f). Also locally produced are the many small bronze crosses (Bergquist 1989: 77, fig. 43 and p. 83, fig. 50). All in all, the brooches that may have their origins in regions outside the area dominated by 'viking style preferences' represent a negligible amount compared to those locally produced. The few foreign brooches may have come to Trondheim with random itinerant traders and craftsmen.

d. ***Objects related to food preparation***

Cooking and serving food has given rise to a number of practices intimately connected with, and thus important for, recreating the habitus of private life. The material resources associated with these particular practices creates a stable and significant assemblage which is relatively simple to distinguish from the regionally diverse cooking and serving practice pattern. Commodities, firewood, the fireplace, and objects for preparing the food (e.g. the storage, cooking, serving, and drinking vessels, the cutlery etc.) are among the most frequent and significant objects related to daily life practices that appear in medieval urban excavations, and thus are an exceptionally applicable category of finds for identifying cooking and serving routines different from local practices. Irene Baug (2015: 39) briefly discusses this when she argues that '*changing food customs and implementing new dishes and new ways of preparing food within a culture involve a certain resistance*'. The amount and chronological distribution of various utensils for cooking, baking and serving food in early medieval Trondheim seems to correspond to this hypothesis.

A. Bakestones

The big, round bakestone made of soapstone and used for baking non-fermented bread was not introduced to Trondheim before the first half of the 12th century (Weber 1989) (Figure 7). Irene Baug (2015: 44) has recently argued that the limited distribution and use of bakestones in Norway reflects a regional variation in social and cultural food habits and practices. From this it could be suggested that an unbroken tradition of food preparation practice, that excluded the use of soapstone bakestones for making bread, existed in Trondheim from its founding until the beginning of the 12th century. Baug (2015: 39f) argues that the changing bread baking technology was subjected to both social and economic resistance.

Figure 7. Bakestone from Library Site/FA, Trondheim, Norway, phase 10 (13th-14th century), made of Ølve-slate. Photo: Trond Sverre Skevik, NTNU University museum, Trondheim.

B. Cooking pots and household vessels

The tradition of using soapstone vessels for cooking goes back to the Pre-Roman Iron Age in Norway, but became particularly common during the Late Iron Age and the Middle Ages.

This seems to fit with the fact that no more than ca. 2% of the total amount of pottery from the Library Site is dated to before 1100 AD (Reed 1990: 50f and table 4). The traditional local use of soapstone vessels is dominant compared to the amount of various types of continentally produced pottery right up to Library Site Phase 6 (1150-1175 AD) (Reed 1990: 53). Furthermore, the total amount of pottery shards from before ca. 1100 AD (Library Site Phase 1-4) represents no more than a maximum of 17 vessels, of which only 5 vessels belong chronologically to Phase 2 (1000-1050 AD). This implies that ceramic vessels were practically not in use as ordinary household utensils amongst the sedentary population prior to the second half of the 11th century, and only used exceptionally, at least on a daily basis, before the first half of the 12th century. A substantial increase in the use of imported pottery does not seem to have occurred in Trondheim before the second half of the 12th century. Measured in number of maximum units per phase in the same period, the distribution of vessels according to their provenience shows that 37% of all vessels prior to 1100 AD derive from various kilns that operated in eastern England (Stamford, Gimston, London, and East Midlands), while nearly 32% derive from various locations in the west Baltic area, or are alternatively copies of Slavic ceramics produced in Scandinavia (south Swedish or Danish). The remaining 16% of vessels originate from various production sites in the Rhein-Elbe region/southern Scandinavia (Paffrath, Aardenburg, Farum Lillevang), while one vessel (blue alkaline glazed ware) comes from the eastern Mediterranean/Syria/Egypt (Reed 1990: 72). Furthermore, the rim shards of two bowls from Phase 2 were identified by Reed to as being of Byzantine origin.

How can the distinctive distribution patterns of foreign pottery that appear in Trondheim during the period ca. 1000-1100 AD cast light on early immigration to Trondheim in the same period? In his doctoral thesis, Mats Roslund (2001: 56ff) thoroughly analysed and discussed how cultural identity and material culture are entangled and how this can be utilised in tracing migration and movement between early medieval town

communities in northern and eastern Europe. Particularly, he asks why cooking pottery of Baltic ware types appear in large amounts in Swedish towns after ca. 1000 AD and proposed that they are either imported, produced by imported slaves who had mastered the technology and the design, or produced by locals based on influx of Baltic prototypes (Roslund 2001: 203ff). Another possibility, not directly discussed by Roslund, is that Baltic pottery that appears in small amounts may indicate (amongst other possibilities) cross-cultural marriages, and that cooking pottery was brought from women's homes as part of a dowry or, more likely, as necessary and familiar daily household utensils to be used in their new homes. If so, the scattered occurrence of non-local cooking pots in the first century of the rising urban communal life of Trondheim could indicate an influx of individuals, possibly women, from west Baltic and/or southern Scandinavian areas. The remaining few vessels are pitchers, jugs, and beakers, mainly originating from eastern England or the Danelaw area, which at this time was a part of King Knut the Great's North Sea Empire. Taking into account the utmost rarity of these vessels in the period of current interest, they too represent exotic objects which might have been brought to Trondheim as gifts or as traded or looted goods. Finally it has been suggested that two jugs from the Mediterranean/Byzantine/Syrian region, the shards of which were found in Trondheim in Phase 2 (1025-1050 AD), were brought to town by a member of King Harald Hardråde's Varangian Guard, the bodyguard of the Byzantine emperor (Reed 1990: 77).

The overall conclusion of the above review of the assemblage of early pottery specifically related to the daily household suggests that no external cooking practices were brought into Trondheim from surrounding culture areas. One plausible exception to this is the simple cooking pots in reduced black earthenware probably originating from the western Baltic and/or southern Scandinavian area.

Conclusion

The paramount question above has been: from where did the first inhabitants of early medieval Trondheim come? This question is still to a large extent unanswered, primarily because there is a lack of material studies from the surrounding rural regions, and also because the appearance of material objects and cultural practices is not necessarily

dependent on migration and movements alone. Locals who had visited regions outside central Norway could have brought exotic objects, practices, and behaviours back home to be locally introduced. What can support this is the fact that the material objects and the practices related to them appear quite isolated and are only found in small quantities. Although the analysis presented above is preliminary, it shows with a certain degree of credibility, possible areas which immigration and newcomers *might have come from* to Trondheim during the late 10th century and the 11th century (Figure 8). The most likely regions in which these influxes had their roots are eastern England/the Danelaw area, the west Baltic coast, and the area between the Rhein and the Elbe. A more exotic ingredient in the early history of migration to Trondheim is the possible arrival of individuals from such distant places as Greenland and the Near East. People, either as individuals or in small groups, from these regions may have made their way to early medieval Trondheim for shorter or longer visits. Some of them also might have become residents and contributed to the life of the community and its gradually changing character. *So far, however, there are no observations that indicate a significant migration from regions outside Scandinavia* and even less evidence of the establishment of a diaspora inside the town itself during the Middle Ages. On the contrary, the most striking observation is that most of the daily life challenges seem to have been carried out within a traditional routine everyday life, utilising the traditional material resources of household utensils and nutritional sources. The houses were erected with local craft skills and in accordance with local concepts of technical standards and the spatial organisation of daily life activities. The observed external burial practices stand out as rather isolated incidents. The personal items so far examined are dominated by local or regional items, and the few coming from outside – if they weren't locally produced imitations – appear as unusual and exotic items. All together the above discussed archaeological observations indicate indirectly, that most of the settlers of the first 4-5 generations of urban development on the Nidarnes peninsula came from the region of central Norway, but a random influx of individuals or small groups from outside this region also seems to have taken place.

How does this fit in with new research based on information from other sources? There are no contemporary texts from the period which directly support or reject the above general conclusions. The written sources

Figure 8. The map shows the North European regions from where people in early medieval Trondheim have emigrated.

provide only indirect information about craft and commercial activities. For that reason craft and trade have been the most prevalent factors in the discussion of the basic dynamic and motivating forces driving people to move from rural districts to urban centres and/or from towns to other towns with reference to the growing economic activity and population expansion in northwestern Europe from the 8th century onwards (Benevolo 1993: 23, Helle 2006: 107ff, Hodges 1996: 289ff, Nicolas 1997: 54ff, Verhulst 1999: 68ff). Another independent source of information about past movements and migration is isotope analysis. The archaeo-osteologist Stian Suppersberger Hamre has analysed the oxygen isotopes

in the teeth of ca. 100 skeletons from the cemetery around St. Olav's church in Trondheim. Although he has based the analysis on somewhat younger source material, his results correspond astoundingly well with those presented above. In the group of 41 individuals studied, who died in Trondheim between ca. 1200 -1350 AD, nearly 42% had moved from distant locations in Norway and/or Sweden (between 300-400 km from Trondheim), 15 % had moved from an area to the southwest of Scandinavia (e.g. Scotland), 15% from a southern continental area (e.g. Spain, Italy, or southern France), 7% had moved southward from Trondheim during their childhood and returned, while one individual had moved to Trondheim from a distant northern area, probably North West Russia (Hamre et al. 2017). The most astonishing result of the study was that 40% of the medieval individuals were born elsewhere from where they were buried (Hamre and Daux 2016). This indicates that the influx of urban settlers, at least in the High Middle Ages, was based on regional movements of individuals or small family groups that left their rural background, along with the associated experiences, routines, and practices, to move to town. This seems to have been the normal way urban communities increased their populations during the Middle Ages according to studies of migration to towns in medieval England (cf. Unwin 1990).

What ultimately transformed Nidarnes from a rural landscape to an urban landscape was that objects, ideas, attitudes, behaviours, and practices were brought together by a mixture of newcomers, guests and returnees, the majority of whom were from the local region, but some of whom came from further afield. To fully understand this pivotal process, we need a more comprehensive understanding of the early settlers' intentions and motivations, which we ultimately have to search for in the migratory movements of the time and the consequences for the places people left and the places they settled.

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The population in Norway, a long history of heterogeneity

Stian Suppersberger Hamre

In recent years, much new information about the pre-modern population in Norway has come to light. In particular, analyses of skeletal material have proven to be very informative as these studies have yielded a lot of data on the genetic composition of the population, while isotope studies have provided information about individuals' geographical origins and mobility. As an ever increasing amount of information becomes available, it becomes increasingly clear that the groups of people which have lived in this part of the world can be characterised by heterogeneity. The picture which emerges is quite different from the homogeneous and uniform population which is still often depicted in the media, by politicians and in popular beliefs about the past. This view – of a population which was homogeneous up until relatively recent times – is very popular among nationalists and the political far-right, and is one of the foundations of their views. The belief that the 'pure Norwegian' once existed is strong and although it should be easy to define what this entails, no one has ever managed to come up with a remotely plausible definition of what it means to be Norwegian. The only possible exception might have been H.M. King Harald V in his speech of September 1st, 2016 where he included just about everything in the definition of Norwegian-ness. The reason it is so difficult to define what it means to be Norwegian today, and what it meant in the past, is that views on this have changed continuously throughout history and such views will always vary within the population. Also, one does not have to go too far back in time before the concept of Norway did not exist. The true Norwegian of the past, void

of outside influences, is a mythical figure, and coming up with a believable definition of something that never existed is impossible. However, while it is easy to make these statements, what evidence is there to back them up? The rest of this article will focus on the information provided by the skeletal remains of past populations of Norway, particularly from DNA and isotope studies.

Genetic and isotope data are very different with regard to the kind of information they bring to the table. DNA provides information about long lines of ancestral history but does not say much about an individuals' life and origins. Analysing the mtDNA data from Norway, one can look at individual haplogroups and their development and dispersion and, thus, try to say something about where influences on the population may have come from. Another approach is to compare the Norwegian population with other populations to look for similarities and differences between contemporary datasets. In this article I will do both: firstly, the identified haplogroups will be presented and discussed and, secondly, the Norwegian data will be compared to datasets from other parts of Europe.

Isotope studies, on the other hand, provide no information about the long lines of population development but give rather detailed pictures of the time in history when the studied individuals lived and provide unique insights into the lives of individuals from the past. Whatever genetic diversity one finds in a population, it is the result of the movement of people from one place to another, bringing their DNA with them and sharing it with members of the population of the area to which the person moved or migrated. Thus, the combination of DNA and isotope data has the potential for developing a quite detailed picture of the populations of the past.

DNA studies

Several studies have provided new information about the genetic composition of the pre-modern Norwegian population (Achilli et al. 2005; Günther et al. 2017; Hamre et al. 2017; Ingman and Gyllensten 2007; Krzewinska et al. 2015; Naumann et al. 2014; Passarino et al. 2002). A large population study of the medieval and post-medieval populations in Trondheim has also been carried out recently where stable isotopes and genetic information have provided new information about mobility and

the composition of the population (Hamre and Daux 2016; Hamre et al. 2017). As part of this study, genetic information from 97 individuals from medieval and post-medieval Trondheim was collected and this data will be presented in this article (Table 1).

Genetic data from medieval and post-medieval Trondheim

The 97 analysed individuals came from five different archaeological sites in Trondheim: Folkebibliotekstomten, Søndregate, Vår Frue Kirke, Vestfrontplassen, and Servicebygget. The skeletal material from Folkebibliotekstomten and Søndregate dates to the Medieval period and consists of 40 individuals, while the remaining 57 skeletons from the other three sites are post-medieval. The sites have been described in detail by Hamre and Daux (2016) and will not be described any further here. The methodology and analyses behind the DNA results have been described in detail by Hamre et al. (2017) and will also not be reiterated here.

The analyses revealed the presence of 11 haplogroups and a large variety of sub-groups (Table 1). What does this say about the population, except for the obvious: that the population in Trondheim has been genetically diverse throughout most (or all) of its history? Most of the genetic groups found in the Trondheim material are unsurprising and are more or less common varieties found at different frequencies around the European continent. In a European town like Trondheim, which was part of far-reaching trading networks and was also an important destination for pilgrims, one would expect to find a wide variety of people. Was this heterogeneity a result of the town being established a few centuries earlier? Or was the town populated by people from around Europe? If we take a look at the genetic data available for Iron Age Norway (Table 2), it is clear that genetic variety was present long before the Middle Ages. With the exception of three haplogroups (W, X and Z) all haplogroups were present among the 51 Iron Age individuals. Thus, it seems clear that the population was genetically heterogeneous long before the Middle Ages. Also, judging from the recent study by Günther et al. (2017) dealing with the earliest peopling of Scandinavia, genetic variety appears to have been present since the very beginning. Although homogeneity could probably never describe the population, it seems clear that genetic variety has gradually increased throughout history; an

Table 1. Mitochondrial haplogroup information for newly-analysed individuals from Trondheim

Skeleton ID	Site	Sex	mtDNA haplogroup
SK78	Folkebibliotekstomten	M	H6
SK146	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	K2
SK150	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	HV0
SK152	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	H4a
SK159	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	U5a2
SK162	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	H5
SK173	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	H
SK175	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	J2a1a1
SK180	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	U5a1b1
SK187	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	J1c2
SK191	Folkebibliotekstomten	M	U5b
SK196	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	W5a2b
SK207	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	I1a1a
SK225	Folkebibliotekstomten	M	T2b
SK238	Folkebibliotekstomten	M	H7a1
SK243	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	U5a1b
SK254	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	U5b
SK256	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	H
SK259	Folkebibliotekstomten	M	H
SK280	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	U5a1
SK285	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	K2
SK297	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	X2c
SK302	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	H
SK340	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	T2e1
SK352	Folkebibliotekstomten	F	H1b1
SK357	Folkebibliotekstomten	M	J1c2
T19110 IX	Søndregate	M	T2b24
XI	Søndregate	F	H1a3a
XIV	Søndregate	?	Z1a

Skeleton ID	Site	Sex	mtDNA haplogroup
XX	Søndregate	M	Z1a
XXI	Søndregate	F	K1a
XXII	Søndregate	M	T2b
XIII	Søndregate	F	H11a
XXIV	Søndregate	M	H
XXXVI	Søndregate	M	Z1a
XXXVIII	Søndregate	F	HV
XL	Søndregate	F	H6
LVI	Søndregate	M	H2
LXVIII	Søndregate	M	X2c
LXIX	Søndregate	M	H1b
KA4	Vår Frue Kirke	F	K2b1a1a
KA9	Vår Frue Kirke	M	I2c
KA12	Vår Frue Kirke	F	HV
KA13	Vår Frue Kirke	F	U2e1c
KA14	Vår Frue Kirke	F	H
KA28	Vår Frue Kirke	M	H
TA2004/21 10	Servicebygget	M	U5b1b1a
12	Servicebygget	M	I4a1
16	Servicebygget	M	J1c
42	Servicebygget	M	H11a2
65	Servicebygget	M	H7b
71	Servicebygget	M	H
88	Servicebygget	M	H
98	Servicebygget	M	H
105	Servicebygget	M	W1+119
134	Servicebygget	?	R0
176	Servicebygget	M	H
193	Servicebygget	M	I
204	Servicebygget	F	R0
229	Servicebygget	?	K
293	Servicebygget	M	U3a1c1

Skeleton ID	Site	Sex	mtDNA haplogroup
329	Servicebygget	M	H
372	Servicebygget	M	J2a1a1a
514	Servicebygget	M	U5a1
542	Servicebygget	M	K1b2
550	Servicebygget	M	J1c2
583	Servicebygget	F	J1c1
629	Servicebygget	F	J2b1a
657	Servicebygget	M	H
679	Servicebygget	F	HV
787	Servicebygget	F	J1c
818	Servicebygget	M	J1b1a1
885	Servicebygget	?	R0
981	Servicebygget	M	H
1996/8 23	Vestfrontplassen	M	X2c
131	Vestfrontplassen	M	T2b+150
148	Vestfrontplassen	M	H1c3b
193	Vestfrontplassen	M	H
223	Vestfrontplassen	?	K1c
228	Vestfrontplassen	M	R0
286	Vestfrontplassen	M	U5a1
289	Vestfrontplassen	F	H11a
292	Vestfrontplassen	M	R0
295	Vestfrontplassen	M	U4a1
301	Vestfrontplassen	M	U5a1a1h
305	Vestfrontplassen	M	U5a1b3
359	Vestfrontplassen	M	J1b1a1
383	Vestfrontplassen	F	H1c
421	Vestfrontplassen	?	T2b
466	Vestfrontplassen	F	J1c1
510	Vestfrontplassen	M	HV0a
629	Vestfrontplassen	M	U5a2
686	Vestfrontplassen	M	J1b1a1a

Skeleton ID	Site	Sex	mtDNA haplogroup
737	Vestfrontplassen	F	H28
1002	Vestfrontplassen	M	H1b1
1056	Vestfrontplassen	F	H5+16311
1058	Vestfrontplassen	M	H

increased heterogeneity which can only have been the result of outside influences. Is it possible to say anything about where these influences may have come from? By looking at specific individuals, it is possible to identify where some of these influences could have originated. Let's first look at subclade H7. One medieval man belonged to haplogroup H7a1 (haplotype: 16261T 16519C 194T 195C 263G 309.1C 315.1C) and a post-medieval man belonged to haplogroup H7b (haplotype: 16193T 16519C 152C 263G 315.1C). H7 is, according to Eupedia.com, mostly found in the Near East, Caucasus, Iran, Central Asia, and Balto-Slavic countries (http://www.eupedia.com/europe/Haplogroup_H_mtDNA.shtml), while the Empop database (https://empop.online) places the centre of gravity for H7 in southeastern Europe, in the region of Hungary and Romania, and a recent article discusses the H7 connection to Ashkenazi Jews (Yacobi and Bedford 2016). Two other individuals are interesting as they belong to haplogroup W: a medieval woman belonging to W5a2b (haplotype: 16177G 16189C 16223T 16292T 16362C 16519C 73G 150T 189G 194T 195C 204C 207A 263G 315.1C 523DEL 524DEL) and a post-medieval man belonging to haplogroup W1 (haplotype: 16223T 16261T 16292T 16519C 73G 119C 189G 195C 204C 207A 247A 263G 309.1C 315.1C). Haplogroup W is interesting because it is rare in modern Norway and was also absent from the Iron Age material (Table 2) (Krzewinska et al. 2015). This could suggest that it was introduced into the Norwegian population relatively late or that individuals belonging to this haplogroup may have been immigrants to Norway. Hamre et al. (2017) argue for just this scenario when they suggest that the W5a2b individual moved to Trondheim from the alpine regions of central Europe. W1 is found over most of Europe, with centres of gravity on the Iberian peninsula and in southeastern Europe (https://empop.online) which suggests another influence on the Norwegian population from more southerly European regions. A

likely northern influence on the Trondheim population can be traced through two medieval individuals (one man and one woman) who belong to haplogroup U5b (haplotypes: 16261T 16270T 16390A 73G 94A 150T 263G 309.1C 315.1C and 16192T 16270T 73G 150T 263G 309.1C 315.1C), and another post-medieval man belonging to haplogroup U5b1b1a (haplotype: 16144C 16189C 16270T 73G 150T 263G 315.1C). According to Tambets et al. (2004), U5b is the most common haplogroup among the Saami and U5b1b1a is mainly found among the Saami, the Finns and the Yakuts (http://www.eupedia.com/europe/Haplogroup_U5_mtDNA.shtml). Thus, the presence of these U5 subclades strongly suggests an influence from a northerly region on the population in Trondheim. A similar influence may be represented by the three medieval individuals belonging to haplogroup Z1a (haplotypes: 16129A 16147T 16185T 16223T 16224C 16260T 16298C 16519C 73G 151T 152C 249T 263G 309.1C 315.1C 489C and 16129A 16185T 16223T 16224C 16260T 16298C 16519C 73G 151T 152C 249T 263G 315.1C 489C and 16129A 16185T 16223T 16224C 16260T 16298C 16519C 73G 151T 152C 249T 263G 309.1C 315.1C 489C). Haplogroup Z is largely absent from Europe but is found in low frequencies among the Saami (Ingman and Gyllensten 2007). Ingman and Gyllensten (2007) suggest that this is due to an influence on the Saami population from the Volga-Ural regions of Russia.

Population comparisons

As has been shown, Trondheim has been genetically diverse throughout its history, but how does it compare to other contemporary European towns? Trondheim being a town on the outskirts of Europe, one could possibly expect to see less mtDNA haplogroup variability than in populations more centrally located in Europe. Several studies have published mtDNA information from other populations around Europe and these will be used for comparative purposes. Was the Norwegian population more, or less, heterogeneous than other contemporary populations?

Tables 2-7 and the associated pie charts show the mitochondrial haplogroup variability in several European populations. The most striking feature of these charts is the large variety of haplogroups represented in relatively small population samples combined with the similarities when it comes to which haplogroups are represented. The only haplogroups

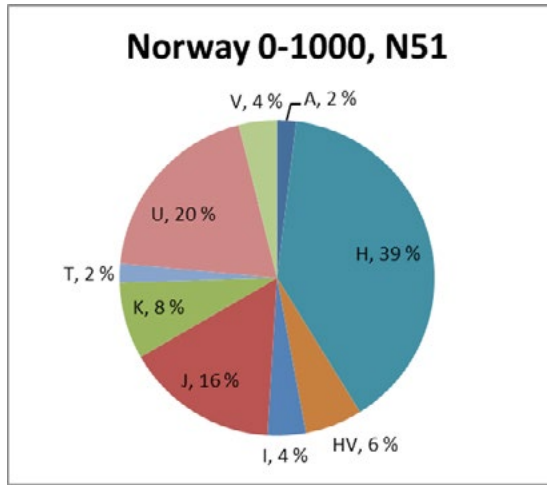
present in the other populations which are not found in the Norwegian sample, is a small presence of haplogroup N in the Polish sample and an equally minor presence of haplogroup L in the Slovenian sample. There is little difference between different populations around Europe, which suggests a long period of interaction and similar influences throughout the European continent. There is also no reason to suggest that Trondheim and Norway were isolated on the fringe of the European continent. Among these comparative samples, the Norwegian population is the one showing the largest haplogroup variability. It is impossible to say with any certainty that the Norwegian population really was more diverse than many other European populations – the samples are too small for that – but it seems reasonable to say that the Norwegian population was no less heterogeneous than other European populations.

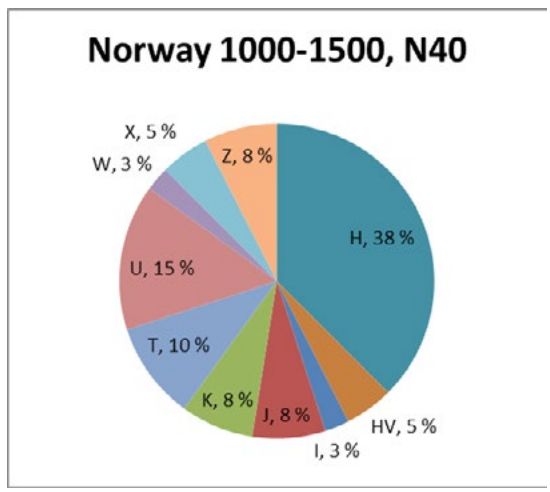
Diversity, such as that shown by the genetic evidence, is the result of significant movements of people throughout the continent and this is supported by a number of different isotope studies. Hamre and Daux (2016) carried out the largest oxygen isotope study to date, including 95 individuals from medieval and post-medieval Trondheim. That study showed significant mobility within the population, with people coming from different areas of Europe, although the main movement towards Trondheim appears to have come from the north and the east. What was shown, more than anything, was that the population was not a sedentary one, which is in correspondence with, and would have been a prerequisite for, the genetically heterogeneous population. Several other studies have also shown that the European population has been mobile for a very long time (e.g. Chenery et al. 2011; Evans et al. 2006a, Evans et al. 2006b, Leach et al. 2010; Leach et al. 2009; Prowse et al. 2007), and future isotope studies will, no doubt, continue to provide information about mobility and migrations in past European populations, which will give us an ever improving understanding of past societies and populations.

TABLE 2. MITOCHONDRIAL DNA DATA FROM NORWAY: HAPLOGROUPS AND SUBCLADES

mtDNA haplo-groups	**0-1000** (Krzewinska et al. 2015: N43) (Naumann et al. 2014:N9)		**1000-1500** (N40) (table 1)		**1500-1900** (N57) (table 1)	
	N	Subclades	N	Subclades	N	Subclades
A	1	A4b				
H	20	H(19), H1a	15	H(5), H11a, H1a3a, H1b, H1b1, H2, H4a, H5, H6(2), H7a1	19	H(11), H1c3b, H11a, H1c, H1b1, H11a2, H5, H7b, H28
HV	3		2	HV, HV0	3	HV(2), HV0a
I	2		1	I1a1a	3	I, I2c, I4a1
J	8	J(7), J1b1	3	J1c2(2), J2a1a1	10	J1c(2), J1c2, J1c1, J1c, J1b1a1(2), J1b1a1a, J2a1a1a, J2b1a
K	4		3	K1a, K2(2),	4	K, K1b2, K1c, K2b1a1a
R0					5	
S						
T	1		4	T2b(2), T2b24, T2e1	2	T2b(2)
U	10	U(8), U4, U5a, U5b1b1	6	U5a2, U5a1b1, U5b(2), U5a1b, U5a1	9	U2e1c, U3a1c1, U4a1, U5b1b1a, U5a1(2), U5a2, U5a1a1h, U5a1b3
V	2					
W			1	W5a2b	1	W1
X			2	X2c(2)	1	X2c
Z			3	Z1a(3)		

The numbers in brackets denotes the number of individuals within that particular subclade





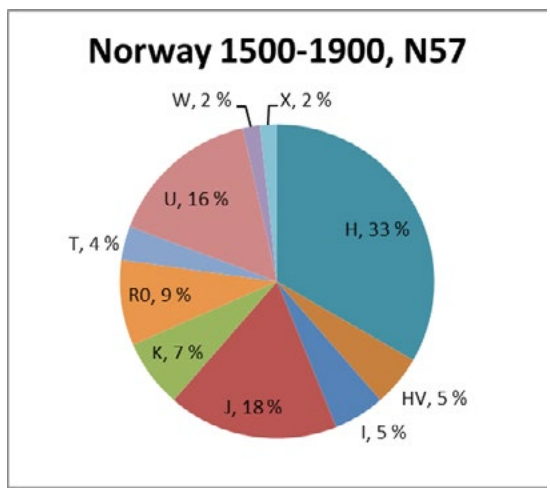


FIGURE 1. PIE CHART REPRESENTATION OF THE HAPLOGROUP DATA IN TABLE 2

TABLE 3. MITOCHONDRIAL DNA DATA FROM DENMARK

mtDNA Haplo-groups	**0-1000** (Melchior et al. 2008:N18)		**1000-1500** (Rudbeck et al. 2005:N9)	
	N	Subclades	N	Subclades
H	7	H(6), H1	3	
I	2		2	
J	2		1	
K	2			
R0	1	R0a		
T			2	T, T2
U	3	U2e, U3a, U5b1	1	U7
V	1			

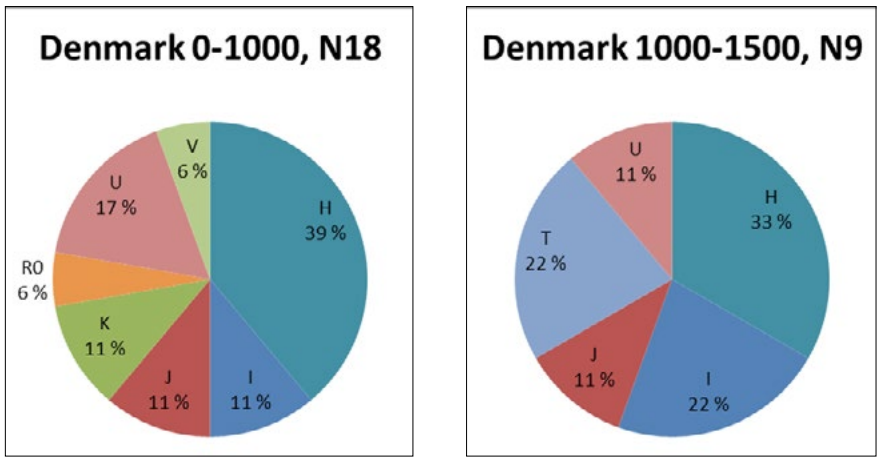


FIGURE 2. PIE CHART REPRESENTATION OF THE HAPLOGROUP DATA IN TABLE 3

TABLE 4. MITOCHONDRIAL DNA DATA FROM SLOVAKIA

mtDNA Haplogroups	**1000-1500** (Csákyová et al. 2016:N20)	
	N	Subclades
H	4	H1, H2a2a1(2), H6a1a1a
J	4	J, J1c8a1a, J2b1a, J2a1a1
L	1	L0a2
R0	1	R0a
T	6	T1a(3), T2b, T2f1a(2)
U	4	U4a3, U5a1, U8a1a(2)

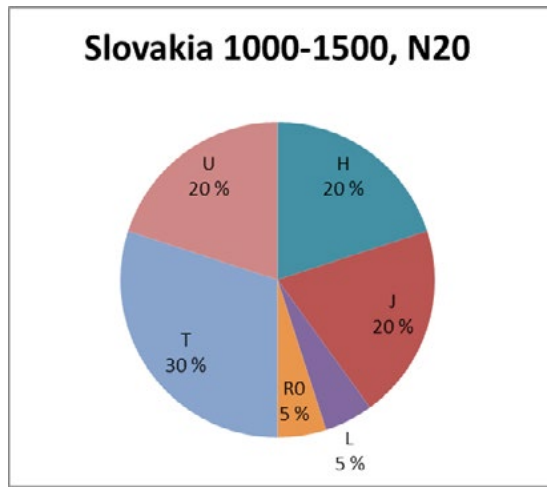


FIGURE 3. PIE CHART REPRESENTATION OF THE HAPLOGROUP DATA IN TABLE 4

TABLE 5. MITOCHONDRIAL DNA DATA FROM POLAND

mtDNA Haplogroups	**0-1000** (Juras et al. 2014:N23)		**1000-1500** (Juras et al. 2014:N20)	
	N	Subclades	N	Subclades
H	14	H(11), H5a1(3)	8	H(6), H1a, H5a1
HV			2	HV, HV0
J	1	J2a	2	J1b(2)
K			2	K1, K2
N	1	N1a1a2	1	N1b1
R0			1	R0a
T	1	T2	1	T1a
U	3	U3, U5a1, U5b		
W	3		1	
X			2	X2, X4

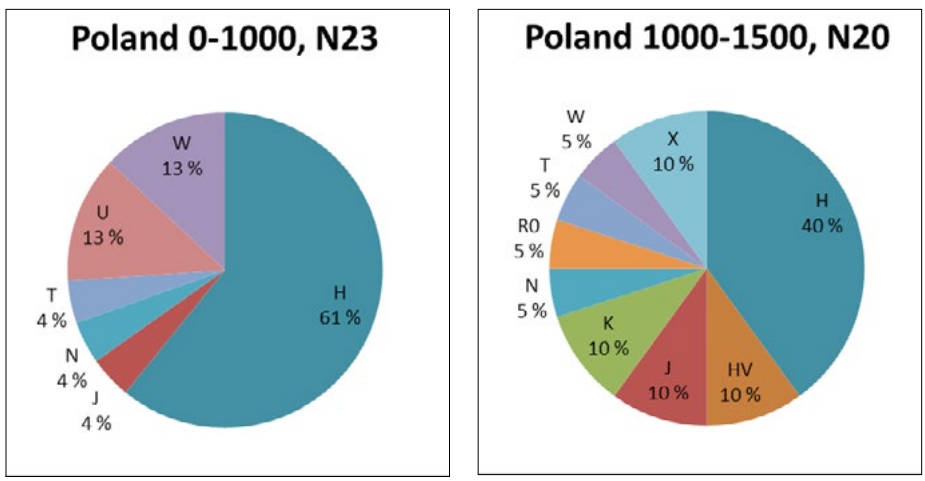


FIGURE 4. PIE CHART REPRESENTATION OF THE HAPLOGROUP DATA IN TABLE 5

TABLE 6. MITOCHONDRIAL DNA DATA FROM ENGLAND

mtDNA Hg	**0-1000** (Schiffels et al. 2016:N10)	
	N	Subclades
H	6	H1e, H1ag1, H1g1, H1at1, H2a2b1, H2a2a1
K	2	K1a1b1b, K1a4a1a2b
T	1	T2a1a
U	1	U5a2a1

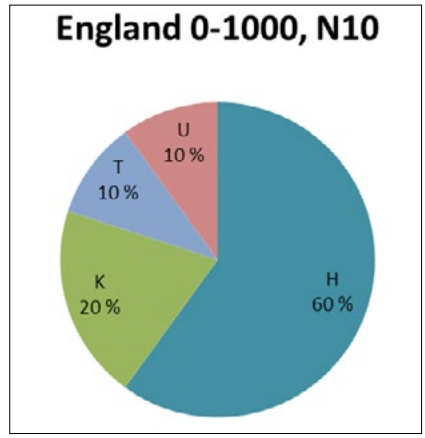


FIGURE 5. PIE CHART REPRESENTATION OF THE HAPLOGROUP DATA IN TABLE 6

TABLE 7. MITOCHONDRIAL DNA DATA FROM ITALY

mtDNA Hg	**0-1000** (Vai et al. 2015:N28)	
	N	Subclades
H	14	H(7), H2a2b1, H2b(3), H6a1b1, H24(2)
I	1	I2a
J	5	J(4), J2a2c
T	3	T, T2e
U	5	U2e1, U4, U5a1b1e(2), U5a2a,

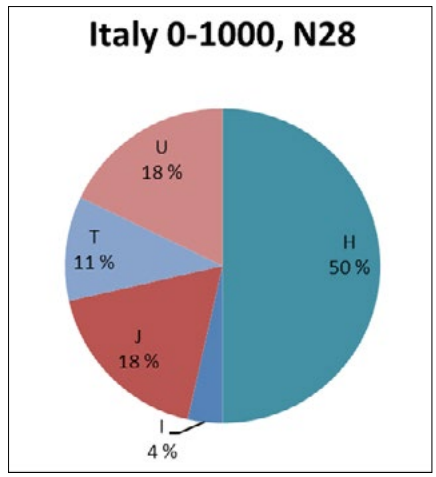


FIGURE 6. PIE CHART REPRESENTATION OF THE HAPLOGROUP DATA IN TABLE 7

Discussion

There is no doubt that the various populations in Europe have been mobile and have mixed their genetic material for a very long time, but was this mobility and genetic exchange restricted to the European continent? The genetic evidence does not provide evidence for significant influences from outside Europe. A striking feature of the above genetic data is the near absence of any variety of the major African mitochondrial haplogroup L and the absence of the North-African haplogroups U6 and M (Salas et al. 2002). It is known that there had been contact with both the American and the African continents, and with the Middle East. The Vikings made contact with the American continent more than a millennium ago (Fitzhugh and Ward 2000; Sawyer 2003), there are Middle Eastern artefacts found as far north as medieval Bergen, Norway, and the Roman empire included large areas of northern Africa. Historical evidence tells us about, among others, Quintus Lollius Urbicus, a governor of Britannia with North African origins. Still, the evidence of these influences is surprisingly vague. Ebeneserdottir et al. (2010) point to possible genetic evidence of pre-Colombian contact between Iceland and America, Leach et al. (2010) present evidence of a lady of possible North African origin in Roman York, while Redfern et al. (2016) discuss two individuals from Roman London of possible Chinese origin. Considering what is known about contact with other continents, why is evidence of people from outside Europe largely absent? Maybe the answer lies in the obvious fact that the world was 'larger' than today, making intercontinental travel a significant undertaking, and the probable absence of a need for large numbers of people to travel to Europe from other continents. Thus, people of such origins would have been quite few relative to the local population and, therefore, difficult to find in the archaeological record. Evidence is, however, slowly emerging through further and improved analyses of skeletal material and research into early intercontinental interaction will be interesting to follow.

Conclusion

The evidence is there, European populations have been heterogeneous for a very long time and even populations occupying towns on the fringe of the continent, like Trondheim, were at least as diverse as contemporary towns more centrally located. What this tells us, more than anything, is

that it is time to stop pretending there was ever an archetypical person representing the 'real' or 'original' Norwegian (or any other nationality, for that matter). This is not to say that Norwegian culture does not exist or that it is not distinctive in any way, but rather restating the obvious that, at any one point in time, Norwegian culture has been the result of outside influences, just like other societies have been influenced by Norwegian culture. All populations and cultures are the result of continuous mutual influences and are constantly changing. Thus, when studying and researching Norwegian history, the sensible approach is to focus on the interaction with external populations and cultures and try to understand the nature of mutual influences. Then, it will be possible to develop a better understanding of how our population and culture has come to be, and it will be easier to observe and accept the changes to society in modern day Norway.

Acknowledgements

This research project which produced the genetic information from Trondheim was fully funded by the Research Council of Norway through grant number 220821.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following people: Jon Anders Risvåg og Birgitte Skar at the NTNU Museum of Science for granting me access to the skeletal material; Charles Utvik for his vital help while collecting the skeletal samples; and Petra Kralj and Walther Parson at the Institute of Legal Medicine, Medical University of Innsbruck, Austria, for the molecular genetic analysis of the remains.

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Foreigners in High Medieval Norway: images of immigration in chronicles and kings' sagas, twelfth and thirteenth centuries

Thomas Foerster

In March 2016, when the conference preparing the present volume was held in Bergen, Europe found itself in a deep immigration crisis. Millions of refugees from Syria and other war-torn countries sought sanctuary in Europe. One reaction to this crisis was the appearance of several right-wing anti-immigration movements. In the Nordic region, one group emerged that patrolled the streets of Finland and, later, other countries, claiming to protect people from what they perceived as criminal immigrants. Considered by many to be nothing but racist thugs with the intention to intimidate, they chose uniforms with a very martial appearance and sought to create a medieval tradition for their groups. However, unlike other white supremacists – like the Norwegian Anders Behring Breivik – who found their medieval models in the crusading movements and particularly in the Knights Templar- or rather their caricature – in modern popular culture (Dette 2001), these groups placed themselves in Norse pagan traditions and chose the name 'Soldiers of Odin'. Obviously, their Odin is similarly a modern caricature of the Iron Age deity. One may even argue that if they had read the primary sources about Odin they would not have chosen him as an icon of their racist opposition to immigration from the Middle East – because Odin himself was an immigrant from the Middle East.

The Icelandic gode Snorri Sturluson, writing in the early thirteenth century, provided the most important accounts about the religious beliefs

of the Vikings and of Iron-Age Scandinavia. In his *Prose Edda*, written from a Christian viewpoint, he adds a prologue to his version of the stories about the Norse gods. In this prologue, he gives a euphemerised account of their origins that differs from the myths presented later in the book and explains the gods in a Christian perspective (Strerath-Bolz 1998). Thus, he sees them as powerful men that the Norse revered as gods, and these men came originally from Turkey:

> 'Odin had the gift of prophecy, as his wife also did, and through this learning he became aware that his name would become renowned in the northern part of the world and honoured more than other kings. For this reason he was eager to set off from Turkey, and he took with him on his journey a large following of people, young and old, men and women.' (Snorri Sturluson, Prose Edda: Faulkes 2005: 5[1] translated by Byock 2005: 6).

In *Heimskringla*, his historical work, Snorri even stated that Odin taught the Norwegians necessary skills that they had not known until then (Aðalbjarnarson 1941, vol. 1:17). While Snorri clearly seems to have welcomed the cultural transfers inherent in these migration myths (generally cf. Bagge 2014b), modern debates about immigration highlight questions of identity rather than development. In many, if not most, cases today, immigration causes debates about national identities. The foreigner leads the native to define what 'native' means and, in most cases, such definitions would recur to discourses about the past. That is obvious in the examples of modern anti-immigrant groups using images of crusaders or Viking deities to create a group identity that not only excludes foreigners, but in some cases even incites violence against them. These may be extreme examples but even beyond such 'imagined communities' of culturally homogeneous nations (Andersson 2006) they serve to illustrate that, generally speaking, alterity, or otherness, creates identity (Foerster 2009: 8-16). Snorri's migration myths notwithstanding, this was no different in the Middle Ages. Migration movements happened all the time, and at all times they also created conflict.

[1] *Óðinn hafði spádóm ok svá kona hans, ok af þeim vísindum fann hann þat at nafn hans mundi uppi vera haft í norðrhálfu heimsins ok tignat um fram alla konunga. Fyrir þá sǫk fýstisk hann at byrja ferð sína af Tyrklandi ok hafði með sér mikinn fjǫlða liðs, unga menn ok gamla, karla ok konur, ok hǫfðu með sér marga gersemliga hluti.*

It is, of course, not the historian's prime concern to rectify the uninformed use of medieval myths in modern political debates. However, as immigration has caused debate in all periods of history, the historian may offer insights into how this debate was held in other periods and how it reacted to various immigration movements. This article will, therefore, study immigration to medieval Norway, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This was the time after the country was Christianised by missionaries from England and the Continent and by the efforts of its kings (For an overview, see Bagge 2010: 21-67. Also cf. Bagge 2005a). In the thirteenth century, immigration patterns changed considerably with increased urbanisation and internal colonisation (For a brief overview, see Sawyer and Sawyer 1993: 40-42). It was then particularly in the latter half of the thirteenth century that German merchants were granted a great deal of rights and privileges by the Norwegian kings,[2] which again resulted in very different forms of immigration. It was mainly in the time between these, however, that the cultural identity of this newly Christian country was debated and defined (Foerster 2009: 96-115). For that reason, the Nordic countries experienced a surge of historical writing that aimed to place this kingdom on the map and within the history of Christian Europe (Here see Mortensen 2006: 247-73). In these discourses of identity, otherness fulfilled a similar function as it does in debates today: many of these chroniclers created a Norwegian Christian identity by comparing their realm to other kingdoms in Europe that had received Christianity earlier (Foerster 2009: 177-87. Also cf. Fraesdorff 2005; Scior 2002; Scior 2005). Similarly, the immigrants to Norway in this period influenced these discourses of who the Norwegians were or wanted to be.[3]

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Odin was certainly not the first Middle Eastern immigrant who came to Europe or to the Nordic region. Of course, his band of deities coming from Turkey had particular significance: his origins were connected to the mythical city of Troy. Most peoples in Europe wanted to be descendants of the Trojans, in one way or another (Wolf 2009. Also cf. Giardina 1998.

[2] Here see DN, vol. V, no. 23. See esp. Bagge 2010: 92 and 350-53. Cf. NMD, nos. 22 (1250) and 30 (1278). See the commentary in ibid., no. 41, 202. Also cf. DN V, no. 4, a treaty between King Håkon Håkonsson and the city of Lübeck (Bergen 1250 October 6), which already speaks of 'the discord between the people of our region and the Lübeckians' (*hactenus inter homines nostre regionis et Lybicenses multiplex extiterit discordia et diuersarum iniuriarum illacio*).

[3] For a similar example in William of Tyre, cf. Schwinges 2014, at 353-357.

For a general overview, see Plassmann 2006: 11-27). Virgil's Aeneid was a very popular text (See e.g. Tétrèl 2010), and since it was known that surviving Trojans settled in various places in the known world, anybody could write an origin story with links to Troy. These origin myths do not necessarily indicate a greater openness of medieval societies to immigration. As identity was made in contrast to alterity, in medieval Norway as much as today, that otherness could mean foreigners living in Norway or entire other countries. Foreigners could even include Danes or Swedes. One of the most well-known stories from the Old Norse kings' sagas is an episode that is told about the Battle of Svolder in the year 999 or 1000. Standing on his ship, King Olav Tryggvason is described as having shown little regard for his approaching enemies – at least for the Danes and the Swedes. In Snorri's *Heimskringla*, Olav says 'We are not afraid of these soft Danes, for there is no bravery in them.' For the Swedes, he continues, it would also have been better to stay at home. Only for the Norwegians amongst his enemies, does he show respect: 'we may expect the sharpest conflict with these men, for they are Norsemen like ourselves.' (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*: Aðalbjarnarson 1941, vol. 1: 357[4] translated by Laing 1907, vol. 1: 241). This passage shows that some kind of Norwegian national consciousness or conception certainly developed in this period. The first version of this story is recorded in Oddr Munk's *Saga of Olav Tryggvason*, which dates from the 1190s (Jónsson 1932). Later it was also included in the *Fagrskinna* compilation of c. 1220 (Finlay 2004) and then in Snorri's *Heimskringla*, in the version quoted here (Generally see Hallan 1987). Therefore, a Norwegian people was already seen as distinct from other peoples in the late twelfth century – different even from the neighbouring Nordic peoples of Danes and Swedes (For this passage as a source for a Norwegian national community, see Bagge 2005b: 179-82).

Similarly, foreigners living in Norway or the other Nordic countries would clearly be seen as such. This is particularly evident in Iceland. The isolationist Icelandic legal tradition of the late twelfth century includes

[4] *Konungr svarar: ‚Ekki hræðumk vér bleyður þær. Engi er hugr í Dǫnum. En hverr hǫfðingi fylgir þeim merkjum, er þar eru út í frá hoegra veg?' Honum var sagt, at þar var Óláfr konungr með Svíaher. Óláfr konungr segir: ‚Betra væri Svíum heima ok sleikja um blótbolla sína en ganga á Orminn undir vápn yður. En hverir eiga þau in stóru skip, er þar liggja út á bakborða Dǫnum?' ‚Þar er,' segja þeir, ‚Eiríkr jarl Hákonarson.' Þá svarar Óláfr konungr: ‚Hann mun þykkjask eiga við oss skapligan fund, ok oss er ván snarprar orrostu af því liði. Þeir eru Norðmenn, sem vér erum.'*

clear inheritance provisions for the case that a foreigner should die in Iceland, or an Icelander abroad. Specifically named are Denmark, England, the Isles, Greenland, the islands to the west, Dublin, Saxony and other places (DN XIX, no. 51). Other sources mention the fact that Icelanders were also considered foreigners in Norway[5] or, alternatively, that Norwegians saw themselves as foreigners in Iceland (See e.g. Hauksson et al. 2013, vol. 1: 230. Cf. Mc Dougall 1987). A particularly striking example is found in the thirteenth-century *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, which describes how much King Håkon IV honoured Bishop Nikolas Arnason, his most important opponent in the Bagler party, on the occasion of his death in 1225. The king respected the bishop, despite his opposition, for his learned integrity and his importance, and the saga mentions that the bishop also descended 'from the greatest lineages in Sweden and Denmark and was furthermore of great domestic stock' (Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonar saga: Hauksson et al. 2013, vol.1: 307).[6]

The earliest sources already draw clear distinctions between natives and foreigners in a more general way: papal charters for the Norwegian church mention pilgrims to St. Olav's shrine in Nidaros (Generally cf. Ekroll 2012), and specify them as *tam advenas quam indigenas* – as both foreign and native pilgrims.[7] This wording was taken over in thirteenth-century charters,[8] and later also translated into the vernacular. In a charter of 1297, King Eric Magnusson similarly takes pilgrims to Trondheim and other sites into his protection, also mentioning both domestic and foreign pilgrims. Here, the Old Norse text makes the distinction between *hærlændsker æða vtlændzker*.[9] In different settings, we also find such wording in the Sagas.

[5] See e.g. Sverris saga (Jónsson 1929: 10). Cf. Driscoll 2008: 13.

[6] *Hann var ok kominn af hinum stærstum* ættum *í Svíaveldi og Danmǫrk og* þó *vel* ættaðr *innanlands*. On Bishop Nikolas, see Hervik 2006.

[7] DN II, no. 3 (Pope Celestine III for Eric, archbishop of Nidaros, Rome 1194 June 15): *Omnes eciam ad ejus ecclesiam deuocionis causa et peregrinacionis intuitu accedentes tam advenas quam indigenas siue guerre tempus sit siue pacis in eundo et redeundo firma volumus et statuimus securitate gaudere potiri et eos qui rei de talium molestatione inuenti fuerint pœne canonice in eos generali deliberacione statute decernimus subiacere.* Also printed in NMD, no. 13, 69. Here see Nielsen 2008: 159-178.

[8] DN I, no. 64a (treaty between King Magnus Håkonsson and archbishop Jon of Nidaros regarding secular and ecclesiastical authorities; Bergen 1273 August 1): *Item concessit denuo et mandavit, omnes peregrinos limina beati Olavi et aliorum sanctorum visitantes devotiones causa, tam advenas quam indigenas, sive guerre tempus sit sive pacis, in eundo et redeundo firma securitate potiri.*

[9] DN I, no. 87: *Af þui at oss bær at halda oc halda lata allum mannum frið oc naðer þeim ær til vars lanðz koma. oc með retto vilia fara. æinkanlegha þeim dugande mannum. sæm staðar hins hælga Olafs konongs oc annara hæilagra staða j Noregi vitia. sua sæm retter pilagrimar. þa vilium ver at þer vitit at ver hafum*

The *Ágrip*, the earliest of the kings' saga compilations mentions that 'each man who sailed to Iceland, native or foreign (*hérlenzkr ok útlenzkr*), was to pay a land tax' (*Ágrip*: Jónsson 1929: 30-31[10] translated by Driscoll 2008: 43). As this referred to the period of Danish rule in Norway, the foreigners mentioned here were most probably the Danes.

Of course, Denmark, Iceland, and the other Nordic countries were not the only regions from which foreigners immigrated to Norway. Generally speaking, the Viking Age was more an age of emigration from Norway, but a large number of foreigners also lived in the country during this period, though perhaps not entirely of their own free will. Slaves (or *þræll*) were a major source of plunder and income, and the Viking Age economy rested in large part on the labour of these slaves (See Brink 2008, Skyum-Nielsen 1978-1979). Of course, they would not feature extensively in the sources as most written texts were produced after the Conversion and, hence, after the heyday of the slave economy, and also because slaves were not of primary interest to any writer. There are only a few rare exceptions, one of them being Tyrker, a freed slave of German origin who accompanied Leif Erikson on his voyage to America.[11] Later sources also mention Norwegian ships crewed by Danes, Englishmen, and Germans (see below), but in those times it can be assumed that they were sailors in the pay of the ship's owner (This against Ellmers 1995. For other examples, see Doumerc 2007).

Other foreigners that came to Norway in the early Middle Ages were Christian missionaries that were sent to Scandinavia from their churches in England (Abrams 1995) or Germany (See the general overview in Orrman 2003). In particular the church of Hamburg claimed the responsibility to convert the entire North, and, as a result, several texts were written in this church that argued for that claim and that presented the successes in their best light, namely Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae episcopum* (Cf. the overview in Foerster 2009: 32-42. Now see also Barnwell 2015). However, these

tekit alla pilagrima þa sæm fara vilia norðr till hins hælga Olafs. saker aflausnar synda sinna. huart sæm þeir æro hærlændsker æða vtlændzker.

[10] *Maþr hverr er til Íslanz fœri, skyldi gialda landaura hérlenzkr ok útlenzkr, ok helzk siá hlýþskyldi þess, er Sigurþr konungr Iórsalafari gaf af ok brœþr hans flestar þessar ánauþir.*

[11] Grænlendinga saga: Sveinsson/Þórðarson 1935: 248-257, at 249: *Þar var Suðrmaðr einn í ferð, er Tyrkir hét.*

do not yield much information about the lives of foreigners in Norway, as they are mostly legendary forms of hagiography, where the country the missionaries migrate to has to be a religious 'Other'. For them, the whole purpose of the missionary, especially in literature, was to turn the entire country towards Christianity and not to adapt to the customs and traditions prevalent there. However, also in ecclesiastical regards, the conversion and integration of Scandinavia into Latin-Christian Europe changed immigration patterns. Under the missionary kings, several foreign priests served at the royal court as administrative personnel or in missionary capacities. A particularly troublesome specimen of such foreign clergymen was a German one named Thangbrand, who served under Olav Tryggvason in the tenth century. Snorri relates about him:

> 'When King Olaf Tryggvason had been two years king of Norway (997), there a Saxon priest in his house who was called Thangbrand, a passionate, ungovernable man, and a great man-slayer; but he was a good scholar and a clever man. The king would not have him in his house upon account of his misdeeds; but gave him the errand to go to Iceland, and bring that land to the Christian faith' (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*: Aðalbjarnarson 1941, vol. 1: 319[12] translated by Laing 1907, vol. 1: 202).

Not only in the Conversion period, but also in later centuries, the sources mention foreign churchmen; not like Bishop Nikolas Arnason who was (partly) of foreign origin, but foreigners who chose to settle in Norway and served in their ecclesiastical function there for the rest of their lives.[13] After the Conversion, however, Norway became part of the wider Roman church and was also visited by several churchmen, the most prominent of which was surely Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear, the later Pope Adrian IV, between 1152 and 1154. He had been sent from Rome to establish the See of Nidaros, but also to improve Norwegian government (Bergquist 2003). Snorri noted that he was highly regarded by the Norwegians, so much so

[12] *Þá er Óláfr konungr Tryggvason hafði verit tvá vetr konungr at Nóregi, var með honum saxneskr prestr, sá er nefndr er Þangbrandr. Hann var ofstopamaðr mikill ok vígamaðr, en klerkr góðr ok maðr vaskr. En fyrir sakir óspekðar hans þá vildi konungr eigi hann með sér hafa ok fékk honum sendiferð þá, at hann skyldi fara til Íslands ok kristna landit.* Thangbrand is also mentioned in several other sources, for an overview see *Ágrip* (Driscoll 2008: 94-95, n. 61). Also cf. Eickhoff 1999.

[13] See e.g. for the late twelfth century *Sverris saga*: Hauksson 2007: 189: *Þá var til kosinn sá maðr er Marteinn hét ok var hirðprestr Sverris konungs. Hann var enskr at ǫllu kyni ok forkunnar góðr klerkr.*

that 'there never came a foreigner to Norway whom all men respected so highly, or who could govern the people so well as he did' (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*: Aðalbjarnarson 1941, vol. 3: 333[14] translated by Laing 1907, vol. 3: 965).

The establishment of bishoprics and archbishoprics in the North also attracted other foreigners in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. When Norway underwent this ecclesiastical organisation, major churches had to be built, such as the cathedrals of Trondheim or Bergen. These building measures attracted artisans and specialists from many countries just as they did in the rest of Europe (For the example of Bergen see e.g. Lidén 1970).

Such building activities also contributed to urbanisation, as these craftsmen and their families settled in the cities and had to be fed, clothed, and housed (For a brief overview, see Sawyer and Sawyer 1993: 159-61). As these Norwegian cities grew, trade followed, mostly generously supported by the royal administration. For that reason, the most important influx of foreigners into medieval Norway probably came through trade. While many Norwegian ships sailed to England and Denmark as well as to the Baltic region (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*: Aðalbjarnarson 1941, vol. 2: 83), many foreign ships also arrived in Norway. Snorri mentions traders from Denmark and Saxony as early as the tenth century: 'Tunsberg at that time was much frequented by merchant vessels, both from Viken and the north country, but also from the south, from Denmark, and Saxland' (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*: Aðalbjarnarson 1941, vol. 1: 140[15] trans. Laing 1907, vol. 1: 52). The *Historia Norwegie*, an anonymous Latin chronicle of Norway, also mentions that in the early history of Norway Saxons had come to the region of Sarpsborg to mine gold ore (Ekrem and Mortensen 2003: 58). Starting in the twelfth century, however, most Norwegian trade was taken over by northern German merchants, who increasingly used Bergen as their main trading port. They had secured this position for a variety of reasons. In particular, their pre-existing trade networks eventually proved an immeasurable advantage over their Norwegian competitors. Fishermen from northern Norway, drying

[14] *Engi hefir sá maðr komit í Noreg útlendr, er allir menn mæti jafnmikils, eða jafnmiklu mætti ráða við alþýðu, sem hann.*

[15] *Til Túnsbergs sóttu mjǫk kaupskip bæði þar um Víkina ok norðan ór landi ok sunnan ór Danmǫrk ok af Saxlandi.*

their stockfish over the winter, could not travel much further south than Bergen in the short summers, and there they met German traders with large cargo ships and excellent networks (Guttormsen 1985, Sørheim 1997). Many formed good trading relations with them. In return, the Germans imported grain from the European mainland to Norway (For a recent overview, see Bagge 2014a: 136-139. Also cf. Bagge 2005b: 55-56). In *Sverris saga* it is mentioned that the Norwegians still built their own ships for the Baltic trade (*Sverris saga*: Hauksson 2007: 38-39), but the Hanseatic League would soon drive them out of business in that region. Historically, historians like Johan Schreiner (1935), have blamed these Germans for Norway's decline as they destroyed the country's trade in the late Middle Ages (Schreiner 1935. Also cf. Blom 1957). Recently, these views have begun to change (For an overview, see Bagge 2010: 351) and the immigration of German tradesmen is also seen within a framework of cultural interchange (See e.g. Olesen 2000).

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This overview of foreigners in High Medieval Norway was principally gathered from the texts that are most concerned with Norwegian identity: the Latin chronicles from the twelfth century – the *Historia Norwegie* and Theodoricus Monachus' *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* – and the kings saga compilations. The latter include the *Ágrip*, which dates from very late in the twelfth century, probably the 1190s. In the next generation, the *Morkinskinna* and the *Fagrskinna* were put to parchment; they date from the 1220s. Lastly, and most importantly, Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* from the 1230s, is a comprehensive account of the history of the Norwegian kings, which collects, as its predecessors do, kings sagas in chronological order. All of them are collected histories of Norway, and by writing a history of a whole kingdom or a people, they also create identities for it (Cf. the overview in Kersken 1995: 409-423. Also cf. Foerster 2009: 96-115 and 151-170). Given this interest, however, it is surprising that the references to the different foreigners mentioned in these sources never elaborate on the distinctions between foreigners and natives in Norway. Their concern with other countries is much greater, as Norwegian kings are often described as having gone abroad and gathered glory there. Therefore, intercultural comparisons in these texts occur almost exclusively in descriptions of Norwegians abroad, but not

of foreigners in Norway. There are, however, two individual king's sagas that do pay much more attention to foreigners and assign much more importance in their texts to them than the king's saga compilations do: *Sverris saga*, the saga of King Sverre in the late twelfth century, and that of his grandson Håkon Håkonsson in the thirteenth century, the *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. Both kings (and therefore both their sagas) had to devote much of their attention to civil wars in their times. The two kings did not have a lot of chances to go abroad, but had to fight their wars at home, and had to find allies there. These two texts offer more references to foreigners living in Norway, allowing for a picture to emerge of the authors' views on immigration or particular groups of immigrants.

The first of these texts, a biography of King Sverre (r. 1184-1202), was begun after 1185, and its first part, at least, was written by Abbot Karl Jónsson of Þingeyrar monastery in Iceland, and under the direct supervision of, and using information provided by, King Sverre himself (*Sverris saga*. Hauksson 2007. Here cf. Bagge 2012b, Hauksson 2006). It is concerned with Sverre's lowly birth (albeit from a royal father), his arrival in the kingdom with a claim to the throne, and his fights with the Birkebeiners against the more ecclesiastical Baglers under King Magnus Erlingsson (Cf. Bagge 1991, Bagge 1996, and generally Bagge 2010). Time and again, Sverre is presented as an orator, giving rousing speeches to his men, encouraging them in battle, but also criticizing them for what he considered bad behaviour (*Sverris saga*: Hauksson 2007: 48-49, 57-58, 61-64, 72-74, 82-84, 135-138, 145-146, 151-154, 159-161, 221-222, 273-274). One of his speeches in this regard has become quite famous for revealing his views on foreigners in Norway.

In the spring of 1186, so the saga tells us, Sverre came to Bergen, and just like today, the city was full of foreigners. In the harbour were merchant ships from all known countries. In particular, many Germans had arrived, and on their cogs they had brought wine: so much wine that in town it became cheaper than ale – with results that can be easily imagined. People were getting drunk and soon, there was trouble. Fights broke out between Norwegians who wanted more wine and Germans who did not want to serve them, and these fights escalated into small wars. 'Many other disturbances arose that summer through drink', the saga tells us:

> 'There was a man of the Birkibeins so witless through drink that he threw himself out between the hall and the king's sitting room, thinking he was leaping into the water to swim, and he was killed. Another leapt from the quay in the Kings-court and was drowned' (*Sverris saga*: Hauksson 2007: 158[16] translated by Sephton 1899: 128-129).

Also some of the king's retainers had drunk themselves into a stupor and started to fight among themselves – and these were not simple bar brawls, they involved swords and resulted in many deaths. When the king arrived, he was outraged by these events and settled them immediately. However, he decided not to chide his retainers for drinking too much. Instead, he scolded the Germans for bringing the wine to Bergen:

> 'We desire to thank the Englishmen who have come here, bringing wheat and honey, flour and cloth. We desire also to thank those who have brought here linen or flax, wax or caldrons. We desire next to make mention of those who have come from the Orkneys, Shetland, the Færeys or Iceland; all those who have brought here such things as make this land the richer, and we cannot do without. But there are Germans who have come here in great numbers, with large ships, intending to carry away butter and dried fish, of which the exportation much impoverishes the land; and they bring wine instead, which people strive to purchase, both my men, townsmen and merchants. From that purchase much evil and no good has arisen' (*Sverris saga*: Hauksson 2007: 159[17] translated by Sephton 1899: 129-130. Generally cf. Knirk 1992).

To a modern observer, King Sverre's argument may be reminiscent of some of the less qualified contributions to the debates about immigration

[16] *Þat sumar var ok mǫrg ǫnnur óspekð gǫr við drykkjuna. Einn maðr var sá af Birkibeinum er hann var svá vitlauss af drykkju at hann hljóp ór hǫllinni milli ok konungsstofu, ok þóttisk hann hlaupa á sund ok fekk bana. Annarr hljóp af bryggju í konungsgarði ok drukknaði.*

[17] *Vér viljum þakka hingatkvámu ǫllum enskum mǫnnum, þeim er hingat flytja hveiti ok hunang, flúr eða klæði. Svá viljum vér ok þakka þeim mǫnnum ǫllum er higat hafa flutt léreft eða lín, vax eða katla. Þá menn viljum vér ok til nefna er komnir eru af Orkneyjum eða Hjaltlandi eða Færeyjum eða Íslandi ok alla þá er higat hafa flutt í þetta land þá hluti er eigi má missa ok þetta land bætisk við. En um þýðerska menn er higat eru komnir mikill fjǫlði ok með stórum skipum ok ætla heðan at flytja smjǫr ok skreið er mikil landseyra er at þeiri brotflutningu, en hér kømr í staðinn vín er menn hafa til lagzk at kaupa hvárirtveggju, mínir menn ok bœjarmenn eða kaupmenn. Hefir af því kaupi mart illt staðit en ekki gott.*

held today. Historians critical of the German influence in the Norwegian trade have often assumed that medieval Norwegians would have been equally critical, often citing this particular speech as evidence of such projections. However, it is not a xenophobic statement as such. As Sverre Bagge has highlighted, 'the trade policy conducted by governments in the High Middle Ages was determined by consumer rather than producer interests' (Bagge 2010: 351). The king of the saga welcomes foreign influences and trade, and the immigrants that came along with it – even though he may have been a little unfair to the German wine merchants.

Nevertheless, in general, *Sverris saga* seems to be much more appreciative of English traders and influences than of those from Germany (Cf. e.g. *Sverris saga*: Hauksson 2007: 173 and 202). This becomes particularly evident when comparing the depiction of the two groups in the second important saga mentioned above: the saga of Sverre's grandson, Håkon IV (r. 1217-1263). This text was commissioned by Håkon's son and successor Magnus Lagabøte and was written soon after Håkon's death in 1265 by the Icelandic writer and politician Sturla Þórðarson, the nephew of the famous historian Snorri Sturluson.

In this text, a different image emerges. The early parts of the *Hákonar saga* are not particularly interested in foreigners, trades- and craftsmen, because they are mostly concerned with Håkon's struggles for acceptance as king of the realm (Generally see Orning 1997). It was only magnates (*stórmenni*) and the assembly of free men who had a say in these matters (Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonar saga: Hauksson et al. 2013, vol.1: 257). Therefore, foreigners do not feature much in these sections of the text. An assembly described in it mentions bishops, abbots, lensmenn, lawmen, and peasants, but no foreigners (Ibid. Also cf. the description of King Håkon's coronation in 1247: Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonar saga: Hauksson et al. 2013, vol.2: 24). In later passages, however, the image changes and the text mentions several foreigners living in Norway, surprisingly often in royal service, and in close proximity to the king's court. It tells, for example, of a certain Sigar from Brabant who was knowledgeable in the art of healing. He is mentioned as the king's friend,[18] even though others at court were less than appreciative of his arts and decried them

[18] Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonar saga: Hauksson/Jakobsson/Ulset 2013, vol.1: 218-219: *Hann var vel hagr ok margra hluta vel kunnandí ok vitr til raðagerða. Sigarr lézk vera vin vin konungs mikill.*

as the devil's arts.[19] Another one, Henrik, a German who had grown up in Norway, was chosen by the king as his envoy to Emperor Frederick II:

> 'After that there was a man called Henrik, who mostly travelled between the emperor and King Håkon. He was of German descent, but had grown up in Norway. He was called 'Henrik the Envoy'. He went on many embassies between them with precious gifts. From this developed great friendship between the emperor and King Håkon' (Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonar saga: Hauksson et al. 2013, vol.2: 39).[20]

In stark contrast to *Sverris saga*, German merchants in Norway are presented in a very positive light in the saga of King Håkon, as they support the king and his retainers in various situations. In one instance in the civil wars, Dagfinn, a Norwegian peasant loyal to the king, was driven ashore by ice drift, but the entire coastline in that area, near Sandefjord, was held by the Ribbungs, the king's opponents in the civil wars (Arstad 1995). However, at the time there was a fleet of German merchants passing by, and when they heard that Dagfinn was a king's man, they immediately helped him: they hid his ship between their large cogs and thus protected him from discovery (Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonar saga: Hauksson et al. 2013, vol. 1: 279). *Sverris saga*, while rather critical of the Germans in Norway, draws positive images of several Englishmen loyally serving the Norwegian king. In *Hákonar saga*, by contrast, Sturla draws rather negative images of the English. When Cardinal William of Sabina was on his way to Norway for Håkon's coronation in 1247, he also stayed in England. There, the saga tells us:

> 'Because they were jealous of the Norwegians, the English told him that in Norway he would not be given a proper welcome, hardly any food, and they advised him as much as they could against sailing there. They tried to scare him both with the sea and with how dangerous the people were if he went there' (Sturla Þórðarson,

[19] Ibid.: *Ef Sigarr kemr hér eða annar maðr at bjóða yðr nǫkkur lyf eða vélar þa varizk þér þat sem hinn vrsta andskota. því at ek veit sannliga at fals ok flærð er undir þessu boði ok opinber svik.*

[20] *Eftir þetta fór sá maðr mest í milli keisara ok Hákonar konungs er Heinrekr hét. Hann var fæddr upp í Nóregi, en þýðverskr at ætt. Hann var kallaðr Heinrekr sendimaðr. Hann fór margar sendifarar í milli með ágætum sendingum. Af þessu varð hin mesta vinátta með keisara ok Hákoni konungi.*

Hákonar saga: Hauksson et al. 2013, vol. 2: 123-124.[21] For other aspects, cf. Ashurst 2007).

Sturla presents the English as being very much in opposition to the Norwegians, whereas the Germans appear as true and loyal supporters of king Håkon.

These examples serve to illustrate how much views of foreigners are based on political situations – in the Middle Ages as much as today. Much of Sturla's preference for Germans rather than Englishmen may be explained by the fact that Håkon was on very good terms with Frederick II, Emperor of Germany and Italy. Altogether, loyalties to the different factions at play in the conflicts and civil wars of their own times appear to be much more important than ethnic identities to these saga authors.[22] People may have been foreigners, but when they supported the king, they were accepted and appreciated. Very roughly speaking, the Birkebeiner and Bagler/Ribbung factions in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Norway are comparable to their counterparts, the Welf and Hohenstaufen factions in Germany or the *Guelfi* and *Ghibellini* in Italy (For these European factions, see Foerster 2016). Of course, not everyone who would have supported a Welf policy at the local level in Germany would also have given support to the Ribbung faction in Norway, as such loyalties were very situational. Nevertheless, as international involvement grew more extensive – and perhaps even as a result of this development – Norwegian identity may have become stronger in this period (Also cf. Bagge 2005b:180-181).

Of course, loyalty to political parties was much more important in the two sagas describing civil wars than in the compilations of 'national' history that were intended to create a 'national' identity. Their genre and their interests were different. Still, the elites of thirteenth-century Norway were much more European in their ideals and mentalities than earlier generations, and much more involved in European networks (Generally cf. Bagge 2009, Bagge 2012a. Also cf. the example of literary translations

[21] *Honum var ok þat sagt af enskum mǫnnum fyrir sakir ǫfundar við Nóregsmenn at hann mundi þar engar sæmdir fá ok varla vera fæddr, ok lǫttu enskir menn sem mest at hann færi í Nóreg ok ógnuðu honum bæði hafinu ok grimmleik fólksins, ef hann kvæmi fram.*

[22] Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonar saga: Hauksson/Jakobsson/Ulset 2013, vol.1: 179, even speaks about how easily the territory of the Norwegian kingdom could be split up and divided between different pretenders for the throne and between the different factions. Generally cf. Bagge 1993.

at the court of King Håkon, here see Irlenbusch-Reynard 2011). However, the major 'national histories' were written between *Sverris saga* and *Hákonar saga*, so it is not a chronological development emerging here. It was more that the authors of the two civil war sagas had different interests. When considering a civil war, if the royal protagonist of a story receives German or English help to fight his Norwegian opponents, any homogeneous Norwegian identity can be neither an interest nor a result of the narrative.

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Nineteenth-century historians often assumed that the Middle Ages envisioned ethnic groups, or *gens*, as a group of people that are all related to one another, that started with one family (Cf. the overview in Plassmann 2006: 13-14). In parts, this is true, as many origin myths referred to the Trojan descent mentioned before; and many medieval chroniclers would have said that they all descended from King Priam. This is not the whole story however. Most medieval chroniclers would have read the ancient Roman historians, and in their descriptions of the early history of Rome, the city's nascent people grew by integrating many of those who came to join them. Moreover, most of them would have read the Roman philosopher Cicero, and in his view, peoples did not begin their existence through kinship, but as political alliances: that a number of men and women came together, formed a band or a larger group based on common beliefs and ideals, and then settled together. In Cicero's view,

> 'a people is not any gathering of humans, but the coming together of a crowd bound together by a common view on what's right and an association of common utility' (Cicero, *De re publica*: Powell 2006: 28[23] translated by Sønnesyn 2013: 214).

The family relationships between them are therefore not the defining feature, but a result of their cohabitation. By living together they could not help but develop family ties. This Ciceronian reading has been pointed out by Sigbjørn Sønnesyn, who introduced the term *ethnopoiesis*,

[23] *Populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus.*

the making of a people, to use instead of the established *ethnogenesis* (Sønnesyn 2013). Cicero was the most widely read prose author in the Middle Ages, and it can be assumed that most medieval chroniclers would have known this passage and probably shared the view. As a result, the notions of 'Norwegian-ness' in our sources should not so much be understood as an ethnic idea with common DNA, or not only so, but also as being open to people deciding to be Norwegian, and that could, of course, also include immigrants.

This point may be illustrated with one final example. *Morkinskinna* tells of some trade disruptions due to wars and piracy in the Baltic in the early eleventh century, and in this situation, Karl, the owner of a large ship, addresses his men about the dangers.

> 'I want to tell you that I am determined to make the voyage, but I will give you the option of choosing a different course, and you are free to leave my ship. Let the Danes, Germans, and Englishmen here hire onto other ships and go wherever they prefer' (Morkinskinna: Jakobsson and Guðjónsson 2011, vol.1: 7[24] translated by Andersson and Gade 2000: 91).

As in the other sources, the Norwegians are clearly distinct from the Danes, the English and the Germans. In this situation, however, the entire crew decides not to desert their captain. They stay with him, they make their journey and they return safely. What is interesting here is that the text after this passage mentions the entire group as Norwegians only and makes no further reference to Danes, Germans, or Englishmen.

We see similar transitions in the interpretations of ethnicity occurring in other regions of Europe at the same time, namely that such ethnic categories seem to be derived much more from geographic names, namely that everyone living in Norway or committing to it could be called a Norwegian. There are similar examples from Sicily in the same time, a trilingual region of Greeks, Italians and Muslims living there together: One source mentions these groups as they rebelled against the emperor

[24] *Þú segi ek yðr [þat til] at ek vil at vísu fara, en ek vil yðr kost láta at fara annan veg ok heimilt at ganga af mínu skipi. Fari danskir menn eða Suðrmenn ok enskir menn hér á ǫnnur skip, ok þangat hverr sem sjálfr vill [...] en hverjum kunna þǫkk er með mér vill fara.*

and speaks of all of them as *Siculi* (Gaudenzi 1888: 32),[25] disregarding their differences in language, religion, tradition, and culture. Similarly, at this time, the legal title of the French king gradually changed from 'King of the Franks' (*rex Francorum*) to 'King of France' (*rex Franciae*) (Schneidmüller 1988. Also cf. Schneidmüller 1987). This is a development that is very open to including foreigners and that can be detected, at least in glimpses, in almost all regions of medieval Europe in the early thirteenth century. In the sources from medieval Norway, in the period from about 1100 to 1250, which saw the first larger waves of immigrants coming to the country, anyone committing to the Norwegian king or to Norway, could be called a 'Norwegian', because notions of ethnicity, following in Cicero's footsteps, would have been much more open to including foreigners than in later periods. Medieval Norwegians did not need to call upon Odin to exclude foreigners and to assure themselves of a Norwegian identity.

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[25] *Quod audientes Siculi, tam latini quam greci et sarracani, rebellati sunt omnes contra imperatorem.*

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The universal and the local: religious houses as cultural nodal points in medieval Norway

Synnøve Myking

This paper discusses the role of Norwegian religious houses as mediators of international (European) culture in medieval Norway.[1] The discussion will revolve around the following questions:

- Where did the members of the religious houses come from? Were they foreigners or locals? Did this change throughout the Middle Ages?
- What was their influence on Norwegian society from a cultural point of view? How, especially, did they contribute to the development of Norwegian book culture?
- In what ways did the convents adapt to local conditions?

The religious houses were places where people of different geographical backgrounds lived and worked together. Scholars who discuss their cultural role in society run up against a hurdle: we have little evidence, especially from the first couple of centuries after Christianisation. It is therefore necessary to establish what we do know and what must – at least for now – remain conjecture.

First of all, the terms should be clarified. I use 'religious houses' as a catch-all term for the various types of institutions belonging to the religious

[1] This article is an expanded version of the conference paper from March 2016. I thank Åslaug Ommundsen for her feedback on the draft.

orders. The encyclopaedia *Store Norske Leksikon* defines a religious order as an 'order, society or group of people following common rules'.[2] In the context of Christianity this means a group of men or women who have joined together to live in the service of God. During the High Middle Ages – that is, the 11th-early 14th centuries – several such orders came to Norway. We may group them in the following three categories: monastics, regular canons, and mendicants.

Monastics, as I use the term here, live according to the Rule of Benedict of Nursia (*Regula Sancti Benedicti*), a collection of guidelines dating back to the 6th century (Gunnes 1986: 27). The monastic institutions in Norway were Benedictine and Cistercian houses. All available evidence suggests that the first Norwegian monasteries, established towards the end of the 11th century, were Benedictine houses, most likely founded with the aid of English monks. The arrival of the Cistercians is much better documented: the sources state that the first two monasteries were founded from English mother houses in 1146 and 1147; the foundation of the first one, Lyse, is chronicled in some detail (see below). The Cistercian order, which started as a reform of Benedictine monasticism, was well-organised in a hierarchy of mother and daughter houses which allowed for an efficient network to spread across Europe.

Canons are priests living either with other priests under a common rule, or as part of a fellowship of priests serving a church (often a cathedral). The first group to live under the rule became known as canons regular. Most of these adopted the Rule of St Augustine as their guideline, and became referred to as Augustinians. They had several convents in Norway, ranging from the grand abbeys of Halsnøy and Utstein to the tiny house of *Jonsklosteret* ('the house of St John') in Bergen. The Augustinian houses, too, were probably founded with the aid of foreign canons; Halsnøy has been connected to the English convent of Wellow near Grimsby (Nenseter 2003: 46), and there were several prominent Norwegian clergymen with connections to the Augustinian convent of St Victor in Paris (see below).

Mendicants dedicated themselves to a lifestyle of travelling and preaching, rejecting (at least in theory) property in favour of poverty and relying on the goodwill of others. These orders, most notably the Franciscans

[2] https: //snl.no/religi%C3%B8s_orden, accessed on 1 June 2017.

and the Dominicans (both named after their founders), arose in the early 13th century and spread quickly, especially in urban contexts. Unlike the monastics, they did not want to withdraw from the world, but to immerse themselves in it and spread the faith amongst lay people. They became known as *friars*, or brothers. Both the Franciscan and the Dominican orders established themselves in Norway during the 13th century.[3]

One question that poses itself is how foreign the concept of religious orders was to Norwegians before Christianisation. Monastic institutions in the British Isles had been the victims of Viking raids, and we can expect that stories of these houses of riches and unarmed men had spread to Norway. Similarly, the legend of 'the Selja men' – purported saints living on the island of Selja, which was to host one of the first Norwegian monasteries – might be inspired by stories of Irish hermits, so-called *papas* (Hommedal 1993: 97). At any rate, with Christianisation monks and monasteries went from being the subjects of pillaging and violence to becoming important wielders of power in Norwegian society.

The foundation of the religious houses and the backgrounds of the first inhabitants

To our knowledge, there existed about thirty convents in medieval Norway (Figure 1), representing ten different orders (Hommedal 1999: 151). The first monasteries to be founded in Norway were all Benedictine houses: Selja on the north-western coast, Nidarholm near today's Trondheim, and Munkeliv in Bergen. These houses were probably all founded around 1100.[4] The Benedictine houses in Norway were largely independent of one another and may have served as temporary cathedral chapters in the new dioceses until such chapters were properly established (Hommedal 1993: 102; Nybø 2000: 194-196).

Who were the first inhabitants of these first monasteries? Scholars have tended to assume they were English monks, hailing from the great

[3] Both orders grouped the Nordic countries together under the name of *Dacia* ORRMAN, E. 2003b. Church and society. *In:* HELLE, K. (ed.) *The Cambridge history of Scandinavia : Vol. 1 : Prehistory to 1520.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..

[4] According to the chronicler Matthew Paris, Nidarholm was founded by King Knut the Great of Denmark, which would have happened around 1030. If so, no lasting establishment came of it. It has been suggested that Matthew confused the founding of Nidarholm with Knut's donation of land to the monastery Holme in Norfolk, England (Bratberg 2002).

FIGURE 1. MONASTERIES AND CONVENTS IN MEDIEVAL NORWAY
(IMAGE FROM OMMUNDSEN 2007: 63)

Benedictine houses on the east coast of England (Gunnes 1995: 135).[5] While this is not an unreasonable assumption – we know that there was regular contact between this region and Norway, and also that English clergy were part of Olav Haraldsson's retinue during the Christianisation of Norway – the fact remains that we do not have any written evidence of early English monastics in Norway. The initiative to found these early monasteries came from members of the ruling class in Norwegian society, who could afford to endow the new institutions with the property needed: Selje was probably founded by King Olav Kyrre or his son Magnus, whereas Munkeliv was founded by King Øystein Magnusson, Olav Kyrre's grandson. Nidarholm is said to have been founded by Sigurd Ullstreng, one of King Magnus Barefoot's closest men (though this may have been a second foundation, cf. footnote 4 above).

Establishing these institutions would, however, not have been possible without the involvement of already-existing monasteries, which provided the new houses with monks schooled in the ways of monastic life – it would have taken a certain amount of knowledge and experience in order for the new foundations to succeed, the proper performance of liturgy alone being a complex undertaking. The founders must therefore have made use of their connections to the English church, perhaps without any Norwegian clergy being involved. According to the chronicle *Historia Regum*, commonly attributed to Simon of Durham, an English cleric named Turgot spent some time as part of King Olav Kyrre's retinue, teaching him the Psalms (Arnold 1885: 203).[6] Based on his experiences with Turgot, one could imagine the King actively looking to recruit Englishmen for his new monastery.

The scholar Erik Gunnes studied the frequency of 'Christian' given names throughout the Middle Ages, and found that, as late as 1350, only a few of these names were in widespread use – these names are *Jon*, *Peter*, *Pål*

[5] In particular, Winchester has been named as a plausible centre of influence. The first Bishop of Stavanger, Reinald, was English. He dedicated the new Stavanger cathedral to St Svithun of Winchester; it has been suggested that Reinald's background was as a monk in Winchester, and that monks from this town followed him to Norway (Kolsrud 1925). Some of the surviving manuscript material from medieval Norway may be linked to Winchester, see for instance Susan Rankin's discussion of an 11th-century missal almost certainly made here (Rankin 2013).

[6] For an in-depth discussion of Turgot's story, see Watson (2015). She suggests that trade networks played a significant part in the transmission of book culture, since clergymen would have relied on such networks for their travels.

(Paul), *Andres* (Andrew), and *Nikolas,* the latter of which was introduced in the West with the translation of St Nicholas's relics to Bari in 1086 (Gunnes 1995: 134). Names such as *Laurentius* (Lawrence) and *Jakob* (James), which were popular in the neighbouring countries of Sweden and Denmark, remained rare before 1400. Up until the fifteenth century, traditional Norwegian names dominate the records. By examining the surviving records of given names, Gunnes was thus able to show that towards the end of the 13th century – that is to say almost two hundred years after its foundation – the leadership of Munkeliv in Bergen was dominated by Norwegians, who were part of the upper social strata of the town. Among these were Abbot Eirik, ambassador and councillor of the King, and Abbot Einar, who was the relative of several magistrates (Gunnes 1995: 135). In other words, the monastery had become an integral part of the ruling spheres of medieval Norwegian society during the two centuries after its foundation.

After Nidarholm, Selje, and Munkeliv, the next 'group' of monasteries to be founded during the first half of the twelfth century were the women's convents, which like their male counterparts were Benedictine houses: Bakke in Nidaros, Gimsøy on the south-eastern coast, and the two namesake female convents Nonneseter in Bergen[7] and Oslo.[8] In the case of one of these houses, we know the identity of the founder more or less for certain: Gimsøy, near today's town of Skien, seems to have been founded by the magnate Dag Eilivsson – Dag's daughter Baugeid was an abbess of the convent, and his son Gregorius was buried there.[9] Sadly, we have no information about the first inhabitants of any of the nunneries, but the majority of them, at least, must have been foreigners, as there simply could not have been a supply of local women with the knowledge and skills necessary to run a convent – again, the leaders of the convents, and preferably most of the inhabitants, ought to have been familiar with monastic life for the institutions to succeed.

[7] Nonneseter in Bergen was for many years thought to be a Cistercian house, but scholars are now largely in agreement that it must have been a Benedictine convent. See Ommundsen (2010) and Tryti (1987).

[8] A fifth female convent, Rein, was founded by Duke Skule Bårdsson in the 13th century. There is no evidence which order the convent belonged to, although an Augustinian affiliation has been suggested by scholars, e.g. Kolsrud (1958: 207). In my view, the fact that the convent was founded later than the other Benedictine houses in Norway does not suffice as an argument for ruling out a Benedictine affiliation, which was the rule of Norwegian female convents.

[9] https: //nbl.snl.no/Gregorius_Dagsson, accessed on 5 June 2017.

The start of the next 'wave' of foundations – if 'wave' is an appropriate term to use about such a low number – is marked by the Cistercians' arrival in the middle of the twelfth century. In this case, we have more evidence of who they were and where they came from. Surviving records tell us that the first Cistercian monastery, Lyse near Bergen, was founded in 1146 by monks from Fountains near York, at the behest of Sigurd, the Bishop of Bergen.[10] The company of twelve monks, paralleling the twelve Disciples of Christ, was led by Ranulf, an English monk who was amongst the founders of Fountains and became the first abbot of Lyse.

The following year, in 1147, Hovedøya monastery near Oslo, was founded by English monks, this time from Kirkstead – another daughter house of Fountains. This time we do not know for certain who took the initiative, although it has been assumed that the bishop of Oslo – the Englishman William – was behind it (Johnsen 1974: 40, 45-60). A third monastery, Tautra, was founded near Trondheim in 1207 as a daughter house of Lyse. This monastery may have been a continuation or a refoundation of the failed Munkeby convent in the same area, which was closed down towards the end of the 12th century (Johnsen 1977: 28).

Throughout the Middle Ages the Cistercians seem to have kept their English connections intact, judging from their abbots' names. In the second half of the 12th century, the abbots of Lyse have 'foreign' names, such as Reinaldus (Reginald), Thomas, Gaufridus (Godfrey), and Stephanus (Johnsen 1977: 32). This is unsurprising so shortly after the monastery's foundation; however, Richard, abbot of Lyse in the 1260s, seems to have been English. Several of his successors have non-Norwegian names, such as Alexander or Hugo, though from the 14th century onwards, several abbots with Norwegian names – Gunnar, Arne, Andres – begin to appear (Gunnes 1995: 136). A similar dynamic may be assumed for Hovedøya near Oslo, although the source material is scarcer. Abbot Laurentius of Hovedøya, who was employed by King Håkon Håkonsson as ambassador to the pope, was later appointed abbot in Hovedøya's mother house, Kirkstead (Johnsen 1977: 49). This may be suggestive of an English origin in Laurentius's case. Both Hovedøya and Lyse, as well as Tautra near Trondheim, seem to have been ruled by Danish abbots in the 16th century, that is to say during the last decades of their existence, perhaps

[10] On the foundation of Lyse, see Johnsen (1977).

as a result of the political situation, with a heightened Danish influence on Norwegian society.

A little after the Cistercians' arrival, from around the middle of the twelfth century and onwards, Augustinian canons established convents in Norway. These are generally poorly documented, and in some cases, such as St Olav in Stavanger, scholars do not even agree about which order they belonged to.[11] Leaving aside the Stavanger house, or the Rein nunnery, which has sometimes been assumed to have belonged to the Augustinians (see footnote 8 above), there were seven Augustinian houses in medieval Norway: Halsnøy, Utstein, Jonsklosteret (in Bergen), Elgeseter (in Trondheim), Kastelle (in today's Sweden), St Olav (in Tønsberg), and Dragsmark (also in today's Sweden). The latter two belonged to the Premonstratensian congregation, a subgroup of Augustinian canons.

We have little direct evidence of where the canons came from, but we do know that leading Norwegian clergymen – such as Archbishop Øystein Erlendsson and his successor Eirik Ivarsson – were in contact with the famous Augustinian house of St. Victor in Paris; Eirik was even a canon there.[12] Historian Knut Helle has suggested that St. Victor 'donated' some of its canons to help with the founding of the first Augustinian houses in Norway (Helle 1993: 113). While we cannot know this for certain, just as we cannot know from where these hypothetical canons originated before joining the Paris convent, the thought is appealing. A letter written in 1169 by Thomas Becket, the exiled Archbishop of Canterbury, mentions that Archbishop Øystein had two clerics named Godfrey and Walter in his service (*Regesta Norvegica* 1: 126). These two may have been English, Norman, or French.[13] There is also the question of French influence on the chronicle *Historia de antiquitate Regum Norwagensium*, which was dedicated to Archbishop Øystein and whose author in all likelihood had ties to St Victor (see below).

[11] The debate has revolved around whether St Olav's was a Benedictine or Augustinian house. For arguments in favour of the former, see for instance Nenseter (2003); for arguments in favour of the latter, see for instance Helle (2008).

[12] On the contacts between St Victor and Norwegian clergymen, see Johnsen (1939) and Myking (2017).

[13] Anne Duggan (2012) refers to these two clerics as Anglo-Norman; however, the Latinised form of the name 'Walterius' does not preclude a northern French origin, as the initial 'w' was kept in many varieties of Picard. See Myking (2017).

The last 'wave' of religious orders to arrive in Norway is made up of the mendicant orders, Dominicans and Franciscans. They established themselves in all of the larger towns – Bergen, Oslo, and Trondheim – during the course of the thirteenth century. The records of given names suggest that the first friars were of Anglo-French origin, though the evidence is not conclusive (Gunnes 1995: 138). An example would be Friar Mauritius, who was envoy to Scotland on behalf of two Norwegian kings (perhaps being Scottish himself?) and who wrote the work known as *Itinerarium in terram sanctam* (ca. 1275), a description of his journey to the Holy Land.[14] There are also many Nordic names, suggesting that the orders recruited locals from the beginning; indeed, in the period from around 1250 until the Black Death Norwegians seem to have made up the majority of the convents' members (Ullern 1997: 14). This is not surprising, given the mendicant orders' prime objective: to spread the Word amongst lay people, which necessitated being able to easily communicate with the lay people in question.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages there is an increase in German names amongst the friars, Dominicans and Franciscans both. Some of these men may have been Swedish, like the Dominican prior in Oslo in 1447 (Gunnes 1995: 139). Indeed, one of the last orders to establish itself in Norway during the Middle Ages is the Swedish order of Saint Birgitta. The Brigittines established themselves in the old Benedictine monastery of Munkeliv in 1426. The founder of this convent, who was also the last Benedictine abbot of Munkeliv, was Swedish, but a couple of the nuns' names have survived, letting us know they were women of wealthy Norwegian families. This may be representative of the female Brigittines (Gunnes 1995: 139-40). On the other hand, the monastery struggled to recruit male members and had to 'import' Swedes and Danes to fill up the convent. The difficulties in recruiting new members to the monasteries were especially noticeable after the Black Death towards the end of the 14th century, and in truth the convents seem to have been either dead or dying at the time of the Reformation.

[14] https: //wikihost.uib.no/medieval/index.php/Mauritius, accessed on 7 June 2017.

The religious houses and medieval Norwegian book culture: bilingual scribes and travelling monks

Latin book culture was inherently 'international' in that it came to Norway with Christianity and was to a large extent shared all over Western Europe. The role of the religious houses in promoting books and writing in Norway is therefore one of the clearest examples of their importance as mediators of European culture in Norwegian society. Again, there is a lack of sources detailing the scribal activity in the medieval Norwegian convents, but we may make some fair assumptions based on our knowledge of the importance of books and reading amongst the religious orders, as well as what remains of early manuscripts thought to have been produced in Norway.

The monastic rule of Benedict of Nursia, which governed the way of life for the Benedictine and Cistercian orders, classifies reading and writing as part of the monastic duties. The first monasteries in Norway were founded at a time when the Norwegian Church was in its adolescence, and it is likely that there was close cooperation between the monasteries and the rest of the Church, as well as between the Church and royalty. The emerging clergy needed books in order to perform their duties, and once the monasteries had been established, it must have been easier to turn to them to have books copied, rather than go abroad.

An example of such cooperation is the work of a scribe working in the Trondheim area whose hand has been identified in an Old Norse translation of Benedict's monastic rule (Figure 2) – the so-called Benedict scribe of Nidaros. This scribe also wrote several liturgical books in Latin, at least one of which, a small and plain sacramentary, seems to have been used by a canon belonging to the Nidaros cathedral, perhaps the scribe himself.[15]

The liturgy used in monasteries for the Holy Office differs somewhat from the liturgy used in the secular Church, which means that some liturgical books, notably the breviaries and antiphoners (both of which are types of books used for the Office), could not simply be passed on or copied from

[15] This sacramentary is by far the plainest of the scribe's works, and seems to have been made for personal use. It contains references to St Olav's relics as well as a passage in Old Norse reflecting the dialect of the Trondheim era. See Gullick and Ommundsen (2012) for a full discussion.

monasteries to cathedrals or parish churches. However, the example of the Benedict scribe indicates a certain measure of cooperation between institutions, whether the scribe was a monk copying books for institutions or persons outside of the monastery, or whether it was a case of monasteries hiring non-monastic scribes to copy texts that were important to them.

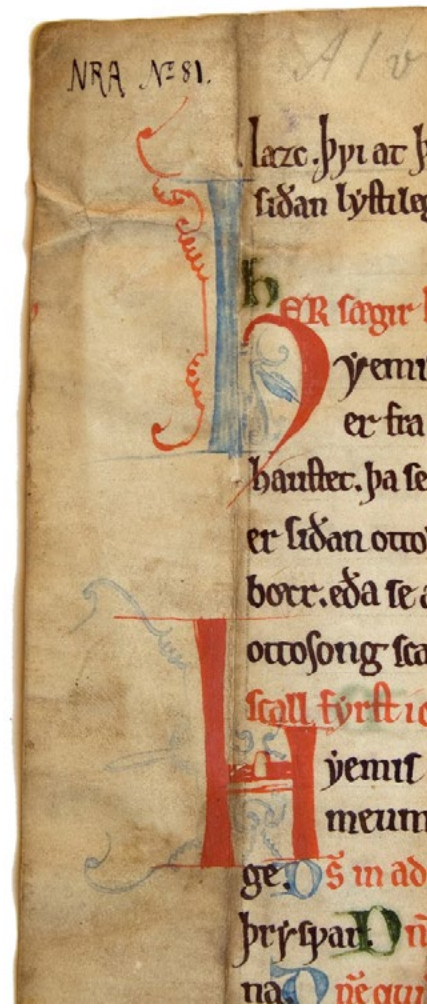

Figure 2. Oslo, Riksarkivet, Nor. Frag. 81a, f. 2v – from the Old Norse translation of Benedict's rule

The case of the Benedict scribe suggests two things: that there were no hard-and-fast divisions between the different institutions – in other word, a secular or regular canon could well take on copying work for the Benedictines – and that there also was no such hard-and-fast division between the literal spheres of Latin and vernacular writing. Pointing in the same direction is the work of another bilingual scribe of the late 12th century: the Homily Book Scribe, who wrote the oldest surviving intact book in Old Norse Vernacular along with several liturgical books in Latin that have survived as fragments. Scholars have suggested that the Homily Book Scribe belonged to the Augustinian convent of Jonsklosteret in Bergen, or the cathedral chapter in the same city (Berg 2010: 55-56, 74-76). The Augustinians, who were canons regular, used the same liturgy for their Office as 'ordinary' churches, and the role played by them in copying and disseminating books may

have been comparable to that played by the Benedictine monasteries, depending on the period in question.

In the context of this paper, it is worth noting that the work of both the Benedict Scribe and the Homily Book Scribe, while stylistically quite different, shows a clear English influence (Gullick and Ommundsen 2012: 37, 39). Since both scribes wrote in Old Norse, they are likely to have been Norwegian, either trained in England or by Englishmen in Norway. Stylistic influences on Norwegian-made manuscripts may thus reflect the international connections of those who wrote and decorated the books.

Several surviving works, such as Theodoricus Monachus's Latin history of Norwegian kings, testify to the role religious institutions played in promoting literature in medieval Norway. His work, *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagensium*, was written in the late 12th century and dedicated to Archbishop Øystein Erlendsson (d. 1188). It chronicles the kings of Norway from Harald Hårfagre (Harald 'Fairhair', late 9th century) to Sigurd Jorsalfare (d. 1130). It contains several references to learned European Latin culture, not only to the Bible, but also to philosophers and theologians (Johnsen 1939: 48, 50-55).

Theodoricus was most likely a canon, not a monk, perhaps identical with Archbishop Tore or Bishop Tore of Hamar, both of whom were affiliated with the Augustinian house of St Victor in Paris, as mentioned above.[16] The *Historia* contains a number of allusions to works and authors that could be found in the library of St Victor (Johnsen 1939: 56-57), as well as several mentions of specific French place names, factors which point towards an author with connections to the famous abbey in Paris. Arne Odd Johnsen proposes that Theodoricus wrote the *Historia* while staying with the monks of Nidarholm (and after his return from France), which would explain why he dedicates a certain amount of attention to this monastery (Johnsen 1939: 86). If that is the case, it is suggestive of scribal activity in the monastery that goes beyond the simple copying of liturgical books.

[16] One should not place too much weight on the designation of 'monachus', as it is only found in the incipit and explicit, which may have been added later; Theodoricus does not use the title for himself.

Such scribal activity does indeed seem to have taken place in other monasteries. Of the few remaining intact manuscripts used in medieval Norway, two can be traced to Munkeliv in Bergen: a 12th-century gospel book written in England, which contains a list of the monastery's property, and a 15th-century psalter written and decorated by the nun Birgitta Sigfusdaughter, after Munkeliv had been taken over by the Brigittine order (Ommundsen 2013: 52-53). Indeed, during the 13th century, Bergen became the leading literary centre in Norway. Here, at the court of King Håkon Håkonsson, several translations of courtly French literary works into Old Norse were commissioned.[17] A monk named Robert, who (judging by the name) was most likely English or French, has been accredited with the translation of the story of Tristan and Isolde from Old French into the Norse vernacular, although his identity is otherwise unknown, and so is his affiliation with any of the convents in the area.[18]

The *Maríu Saga* is a combination of miracle stories and saint's lives in Old Norse interspersed with theological commentary, and testify yet again to the interaction between the religious spheres and literature in the vernacular. At least one of these stories was written in the monastery of Lyse, by a monk who had first seen it in a book belonging to a Cluniac monk – in other words, the monk from Lyse seems to have been travelling, visiting a monastery of the Cluny order somewhere abroad. Upon his return, he told the others of this story, and his abbot encouraged him to write it down (Unger 1868: 231). In this way, we have a concrete example not only of Cistercian literary activity, but of this activity resulting from their travels and international connections.

In general, it doesn't seem unreasonable to agree with the historian Knut Helle and other scholars who suggest that the monasteries, along with the other religious institutions, were important for the development of Latin and vernacular writing both.[19] At the very least, the monasteries must have contributed to a higher level of literacy in society as a whole,

[17] For a general overview of the translation activity at King Håkon's court, see Kramarz-Bein (2015).
[18] Another translated work, *Elis saga ok Rosamundu*, names 'abbot Robert' as its translator; it has traditionally been assumed that he is identical to the monk who translated *Tristan* (Budal 2009).
[19] Helle (1993: 118) has also argued that the monasteries were essential in spreading the concept of Purgatory – a concept that was influential not only on theologians and clergy, but also on the popular imagination.

which would have also led to an increase in literature written in the Old Norse language.

The religious houses and book culture: variations between the orders

As discussed earlier, the various religious orders had different ideals and different ways of life. All orders would, certainly, have relied on books for their own use and edification. However, their different ways of relating to the rest of society would suggest they impacted Norwegian book culture in different ways. This may be demonstrated by comparing two orders with different approaches to the apostolic life – the monastic Cistercians and the mendicant Dominicans.

The Cistercians who left England for Norway in the middle of the 12th century arrived in what they must have perceived as wilderness – their mission was to build new houses for their Order, creating bastions of faith in a strange land which was still new to Christianity. They would have brought with them the minimum of books necessary for performing the liturgy and the *lectio divina*; copying these books was an important part of doing God's work – after all, if they were to found new convents, they would need to provide the new foundations with books in turn.

Additionally, they would acquire books necessary for the monks' studies, such as theology. Studying was prescribed by the Rule of St Benedict, as mentioned above, and was meant to enhance the spiritual lives of the monks. Moreover, acquiring and copying books was a way of maintaining their connections to the mother house and to the Order in general. Attending the General Chapter in Cîteaux, while a costly affair for the Norwegian abbots and their attending monks, also allowed them to familiarise themselves with the newest developments in the Order's intellectual spheres. An example of travels abroad leading to literary creation has been demonstrated by the *Mariú saga* written by the monk from Lyse.

To what extent Cistercian book culture influenced the rest of society is harder to tell. The Cistercians did not run schools, but they maintained ties with the world through commerce, and in the 13th century we have evidence of their working as messengers on behalf of the king – a clear

example of how the ideal of retiring from the world was not always followed in practice. As we have seen, the Cistercian monks were initially English, and their abbots continued to be English, or at least foreign, for a long period of time, though the majority of the monks must eventually have been recruited from the ranks of Norwegian families. It is quite possible to imagine that their culture of learning and writing would have permeated other spheres of Norwegian society, through familial and political ties, if only by serving as inspiration.

The Dominicans, for their part, arrived a century later, establishing themselves in cities that already had thriving literary and intellectual environments, especially in the case of Bergen and Trondheim. The Dominicans ran schools, preached, and received confessions, and were in general highly visible in their communities. Their mission was to spread the faith wherever their order deemed it most necessary. Their view on books was probably quite utilitarian; books were the vehicles of knowledge, although some manuscripts which we know belonged to the order were quite costly and finely-made. Dominicans produced books themselves, especially handbooks, reference books, and theology textbooks, but they could also acquire books from the secular workshops that had emerged around the new universities in Paris and Oxford.

What role, then, did the Dominicans play in the dissemination of books in medieval Norway? The order's high level of education had given them a central position in religious life in medieval Norway (Ullern 1997: 13). As a result, Dominicans were often recruited to higher offices within the church. An example is Jon Halldorsson, a Dominican friar in Bergen who later became bishop of Skålholt diocese in Iceland. He was the author of several works, including the *Clari saga*, which is supposedly a translation or a paraphrasing of a poem Jon knew from his time as a student in France.[20]

While friars were generally not supposed to possess property, it seems that they were allowed to own books, as implied in the *ordinatio studii* from 1236, where it is said that a friar who is sent to another province to teach must bring his books with him (Halvorsen 2002: 193). In cases where Dominican bishops such as Jon Halldorsson kept their books, these books

[20] https: //nbl.snl.no/Jon_Halldorsson, accessed 5 June 2017.

could be added to the cathedral chapter's library, where non-Dominican clergymen could access them. We know that a bishop could lend his personal books to the church, as exemplified by Bishop Torfinn of Hamar, who left an antiphoner he himself had commissioned to the church of Ulmshov, where it was already in use (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum* 17: 878). Jon and other Dominican scholars who became bishops would thus play a role in disseminating books and literature not only within the order, bringing their books with them from province to province, but to other parts of religious society as well.

The theological books used by Dominican students, Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, are well-represented in the Norwegian manuscript fragment material, which makes up most of the surviving evidence of medieval Norwegian book culture.[21] We also find several surviving fragments of works by the Dominican writer Thomas Aquinas, one of the most important theologians of the Middle Ages. Whether it was Dominicans themselves or other clergymen who brought these works to Norway, these fragments indicate that Dominican learning and education permeated Scandinavian book culture from the 13th century onwards, as was the case in other parts of Europe.

We should, however, remember that many medieval writers and theologians – such as Peter the Lombard and Peter Comestor – were of immense importance to several of the religious orders, and that these orders would all copy, buy, and spread the same types of book. Ultimately, there was more that united these orders than set them apart, devoted as they were to a life in God's service, all helping to shape Norwegian medieval book culture in various ways.

International standards and local pragmatism

On a final note, let us touch upon the ways religious houses adapted to local conditions. A central question here would be whether there was a gap between norm and practice, and to what extent such a gap would be explained by the location of the religious houses. Would, for instance, a Norwegian Cistercian monastery have similar architecture to French or English ones?

[21] For an introduction to the Norwegian fragments, see for instance Karlsen (2013).

In an article from 1999, the archaeologist Alf Tore Hommedal examines what remains of the buildings belonging to the different orders, asking whether they followed the standard (continental) norms for how their houses should be built. *A priori* one would expect a difference between the orders – the Benedictines, whose houses were independent of one another as well as subject to the local bishop's authority, allowing for more variation than the strict Cistercians – and also, perhaps, differences depending on the dating. As mentioned above, the ratio of Norwegian monks/canons/friars compared to people from elsewhere varied throughout the Middle Ages, judging from the surviving lists of names. Would the buildings be less likely to conform to continental norms if they were erected at a time when Norwegians dominated the monasteries?

Of the 31 convents that existed in Norway in the Middle Ages, only 7 are well-preserved enough to inform us of the central convents' layout. These show that the standard square layout was used across the board, and that the different orders tried to follow the norms for their houses, independently of affiliation (Hommedal 1999: 175). The same is true for the convent churches, except in the cases where the convent took over an older non-monastic church, in which case the lack of conformity with the ideal model does not seem to have prevented them from using the church. The main tendency seems to be that the convents tried to follow their orders' norms (where these existed) to the extent it was possible, but in practice they allowed for a certain pragmatism.

In general, however, we do not know much about the ways in which the orders adapted to their surroundings. An intriguing detail is the fact that the Franciscans were referred to as 'bærfættisbræðr' – barefoot brothers. This suggests that the Franciscans did indeed go barefoot in the cold Nordic climate, since it seems unlikely that this unofficial term would have been adopted otherwise (Hommedal 1999: 178). However, it is possible the friars contented themselves with going barefoot during summer, and that this was enough for the name to stick.

Lastly, the Rule of St Benedict itself is open to adaptation depending on local conditions, as exemplified in chapter 55, which states that the monks should be equipped with clothing according to the environment and climate where they live; it is the abbot's responsibility to decide how much clothing is needed (Gunnes 1986: 91). Even in the cases where

such flexibility was not explicitly allowed for, one must assume that practice did not always strictly adhere to the ideal – which, after all, was something to strive for, inherently out of reach.

Summary

As this brief overview suggests, there is much that remains unknown about convents and monasteries in medieval Norway, and their impact on local society. There is reason to believe that the Norwegian religious houses were generally founded by foreign monks, nuns, canons, or friars, albeit with the aid of local magnates in many cases. Based on surviving records of names, the geographical background of the convents' inhabitants seems to have shifted as the convents attracted more Norwegian members, though this seems to have varied from order to order.

One of the ways in which religious houses made an impact on Norwegian society was through the role they played as centres of book culture. Scribes and authors were affiliated with religious houses in various ways, whether they were members of the houses themselves, like the monk from Lyse who contributed to the *Mariú saga*, or secular clergy or laymen who were hired by the convents (as is probably the case for the Benedict scribe).

From the available evidence, some observations might be made about the convents as meeting points between 'international' culture and the rest of Norwegian society.

- Even if founded by foreigners, the convents quickly recruited locals; even so, we find evidence of non-Norwegian monks and friars throughout the Middle Ages
- The religious institutions were not isolated from society at large, as exemplified by their contributions to writing in the vernacular and to Norwegian book and scribal culture in general
- In the cases where the orders planned the building of their houses themselves, continental norms were followed; however, this practice was not so strict as to disallow the use of older, non-typical church buildings – an example of pragmatism

The archaeological remnants are among the few sources regarding the oldest history of the convents and the meeting point they represent between a 'universal' and a local culture. Manuscript culture as it has been preserved in fragments and books, such as the works by the Benedict scribe briefly discussed above, is another such source. Although material remains scarce, it still offers us a glimpse of a society where the boundaries between 'foreign' and 'local', or 'Latin' and 'vernacular', were less neat than has often been assumed.

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Foreign envoys and resident Norwegians in the Late Middle Ages – a cultural clash?

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Some years ago, I contributed to an anthology, which was intended as an academic response to the new right-wing-extremism (Indregard 2012). I wrote about immigration to pre-modern Norway, up till 1814, and the editors chose to title the article 'Norway has been homogeneous' (Opsahl 2012b). I was a bit reluctant about the title because I feared some would read the title and the article like the devil reads the Bible. Unfortunately, I was right. A critical reviewer of the anthology characterised my article as the strangest contribution, because, according to him, I did not manage to undermine the fact that the pre-modern Norwegian farming community was one hundred percent homogeneous (Bakka 2012). Besides the fact that the reviewer appeared more self-confident than well informed, he missed the whole point in the article, or rather, he wrote it off. The immigrants were, overall, a colonising elite of officials, priests, and members of the bourgeoisie who influenced religion and language, the two most important cultural marks, according to the reviewer. The first mass immigration was the ca. 100,000 Swedes who came to Norway around 1900. They were foreigners, but not as foreign as a Kurd today, the reviewer asserted.

Firstly, it was obvious the reviewer had overlooked the fact that my article was about pre-modern Norwegian society *as a whole*, not only the farming community, even though this group represented the majority of society. Secondly, the reviewer seemed to look upon farmers as the only 'Norwegians' in pre-modern time; all other people in Norway during this

period were 'outsiders'. Thirdly, he seemed to presuppose that there was little or no interaction between the farming community and elites in Norway in this period, or at least only interaction of little importance.

All of this, I find historically naive and unfruitful. In this article, I will discuss the question of multiculturalism in Norway in the Late Middle Ages, focusing on potential cultural differences in the interaction between Norwegian farmers and foreign envoys or royal administrators.

Culture

'Culture' is a very complicated word, and carries many different meanings. An open and descriptive term for 'culture', useful in cultural history and the social sciences, is 'the form of human beings' lives'. 'Culture' here means the ideas, values, rules, and norms that a human being inherits from earlier generations and tries to impart – often slightly altered – to the next generation. 'Culture' is, in other words, what one learns is right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, useful or useless, about daily behaviour and the meaning of life (Klausen 1970: 10). 'Culture' can also be defined as the skills, opinions, and manners which people have acquired as members of a society (Eriksen 1993: 21). By this definition, 'culture' also includes functional and material manifestations like rituals and institutions (Kleinschmidt 2000: 8-9).

Cultural meetings presuppose cultural borders. It is an old ethnological observation, which has increasingly captured historians' interest that it is possible to define specific cultural areas, characterised by special material features, intellectual or mental culture, attitudes, and behaviour (Blomkvist 1998: 19). Such delineation must constantly be questioned with regard to what degree one may speak of cultural variations within the same cultural area (i.e. quantitative variations or differences), or of different cultural areas (i.e. mainly qualitative differences)? There is a long tradition of perceiving European medieval culture as one homogeneous culture. Nowadays, there is a growing tendency to recognise that European medieval culture contained more variation, as well as more tension and antagonism, than the original, more idealistic, uniform picture (Kleinschmidt 2000). A consequence is to speak about variations of the European pattern rather than to ask to what degree a country was integrated into, or part of, a European Medieval culture (Gelting 1999).

Traditionally Denmark has been characterised as being more 'continental' than Norway and Sweden in the Middle Ages when it comes to social structures and culture. The proximity and connections to northern Germany are often seen as the main reasons for this. There exists, on the other hand, an idea of Denmark as being on the European periphery in the Middle Ages (Gelting 1999). In a European perspective, Scandinavia and the northernmost parts of northern Germany, can be looked upon as a single cultural and economic region (Nicholas 2009). The Union of Kalmar united the main parts of this region – Denmark, Norway, and Sweden – into one political unit in 1397. My focus in this article will be potential cultural meetings or clashes resulting from that union. The point of departure will be the political riots and revolts of the period.

Nordic union and revolts

All Union monarchs appointed foreigners, in varying numbers, to administrative posts in Norway. The majority were Danes and Germans, but there were also some Swedes. This last group seems to have more often been genuine immigrants to Norway than the other groups. Both Queen Margaret (Margareta/Margrete), around the year 1400, and her successors must have found foreigners particularly well suited as royal administrators. Without any relatives or other connections, and with few or no estates in Norway, they had to depend more on royal favour for their career and success than did native aristocrats. Foreigners could therefore be more loyal and reliable men for the monarchs in building a strong central power base than native Norwegian aristocrats. On the other hand, if foreign aristocrats settled down permanently in Norway, they could be as 'Norwegian' in their interests and politics as native Norwegians. This is true for national and union politics, but also for their behaviour towards the Norwegian population in general. Here they could differ from foreign aristocrats who stayed in Norway only as long they held an administrative post.

A distinct feature of the Late Middle Ages, not only in Norway but also in Europe overall, are the so called 'peasant revolts'. In Norway and the rest of Scandinavia, we know of riots, revolts, and perhaps even rebellions against the authorities and their representatives both locally and regionally, throughout the 15th century and during most of the 16th century. In Norway, it started with unrest and riots in the 1420s.

This must have been the tip of the iceberg and a result of increasing tension between the population and the authorities. In 1436, a revolt, which might be called a rebellion, broke out in the central part of southeastern Norway under the leadership of Amund Sigurdsson (Bolt), a Norwegian aristocrat. The rebels enjoyed success and made progress in the beginning, but over time their position appears to have become so severe and weakened that they had to surrender. Nevertheless, the rebels obtained a favourable peace treaty with the Norwegian Council of the Realm in 1437. Both in this treaty and the truce from 1436, foreigners in the administration were a central question. The truce declared that 'Danish men' should leave the country within a fixed time. The Council of the Realm promised in the peace treaty to instruct the King to never appoint foreigners to administrative posts, neither clerical or secular, in Norway again. According to the treaty, the population in Norway had agreed at all 'things' (assemblies) that foreigners should leave the country because of 'the great injustice and burdens' they had inflicted on cloisters and churches, as well as learned and lay people, in Norway. Exceptions to this were foreigners who were married to Norwegians. They could stay in the country as long as they lived but without any 'power', and had to swear loyalty to the King, the realm, and the men of the realm ('rikets men') (Taranger 2012: 176-177). The rebellion of 1437 began a series of rebellions and riots throughout the 15th century and long into the 16th century. However, the situation in Norway and the rest of Scandinavia was, in a European perspective, not particularly violent and there were no wide-ranging, system-threatening rebellions (Imsen 1990a).

The background for the Scandinavian revolts was complex and shall not be discussed in full here. The Norwegian historian Steinar Imsen has roughly classified the explanations in three categories: class struggle, resistance to a growing state, and national protest. I will focus on the last explanation and the social character of the revolts. There has been a long tradition in Norwegian historiography of perceiving what has been called 'peasant revolts' as revolts against foreign rule. The Norwegian historian Oscar Albert Johnsen wrote in his book 'Norges bønder' ('Norway's farmers') from 1919 (my translation): 'The native officials could be both greedy and arbitrary, the farmers were, however, frequently more satisfied with them than with the foreigners who obtained power and authority in Norway under the union monarchs. The Danish and German

tax collectors ('fogder') who Queen Margaret and King Erik appointed aroused common displeasure because of their lawlessness and violence' (Johnsen 1919: 168). Another Norwegian historian, Halvdan Koht, emphasised that the rebellions had a national aim as well as a social one (Koht 1926: 25-37). Moreover, he pointed to the connection between the foreign administrators' official behaviour and their background: 'this [i.e. their official behaviour] had...a connection with their experiences from more feudalised countries, from Denmark and Germany' (Koht 1926: 26, my translation). Here, Koht suggests a cultural element as explanation, namely a resistance to the import of Danish and German social conditions in the interaction between population and authorities in Norway.

The Norwegian historian Halvard Bjørkvik argues however that both 'national' and 'social' uprising are insufficient descriptions of the revolt in 1437. The central cause was administrative injustice, according to Bjørkvik. However, because Danish and German tax collectors were the prime targets of the opposition, xenophobia took hold among the Norwegians. Nevertheless, he continues, 'it is right to perceive the revolts as results of a 'national' common feeling and unification against threats from outside. On the other hand, a revolt led by a nobleman [i.e. Amund Sigurdsson (Bolt)], with the support of the leading farmers, directed against arbitrary conduct by the tax collectors, cannot be characterised as social.' (Bjørkvik 1996: 166, my translation).

Steinar Imsen interpreted the resistance as primarily a negative variant of Norwegian patriotism or what he calls 'proto-nationalism' (i.e. resistance to and dislike of foreigners, Danes and Germans, in the administration) (about the existence of a national identity in Norway in the Late Middle Ages, see Imsen 2015, Opsahl 2008, Opsahl 2009, Opsahl 2012a, Opsahl 2014). As Imsen points out, the motive was the one most frequently cited by the rebels as their motivation for revolt at the beginning of the 15th century (and it was used later too). Therefore, concludes Imsen, the motive must have been widespread (Imsen 1998: 95). He finds what he calls a 'proto-national' element in the revolt of 1437, which he suggests should be perceived as 'a protest against how the political and administrative system in the union had developed under King Erik' (Imsen Imsen: 96). The demand for a Norwegian national administration and a domestic central administration, which was also promoted by the rebels

in 1437, was, on the other hand, primarily a political programme of the aristocracy and the Council of the Realm. However, this programme could also have gained support in what Imsen characterises as 'the traditional Norwegian rural elite' ('bygdeeliten'), at least in southeastern Norway where the structure and position of this group could be identified with such a programme, according to Imsen (Imsen 1998: 96).

Imsen sees the revolts in the 1430s as a conflict between a traditional domestic rural and farming elite and a partial foreign elite bound to the new administration of the union, consisting of royal servants and their clients. These clients were starting to place themselves between the King's most prominent men and the rural elite, and they brought with them a political culture that challenged Norwegian political tradition (Imsen 1990b, Imsen 1998, Opsahl 2008). Kåre Lunden, Imsen's antagonist in many ways, also discussed whether the revolts were the result of a conflict between a domestic and a foreign political culture. He criticised Imsen's use of the German term 'Kommunalismus', (i.e. local self-administration, 'bondekommunalisme'), regarding how public tasks were accomplished in Norwegian local societies in the Middle Ages. Studying the difference between Norwegian and Continental conditions is as important as to look for common features by using the term 'Kommunalismus', argued Lunden (Lunden 2002: 103-109).

'Kommunalismus' – domestic or continental?

The continental village was a co-operative working partnership that followed from the village as a form of settlement or dwelling place. This made it possible to further define the village as a judicial and administrative unit. In the continental 'Kommunalismus', the three aspects of settlement, working partnership, and judicial-administrative unit were three sides of the same subject, according to Lunden. In particular, the village as a judicial and administrative unit is a telling difference from Norway, argued Lunden. The continental village community grew out of interplay and conflict with the feudal, private estate. The estate and the villages constituted a political society under the feudal lord where the king had little or no influence or power. Both economically and politically the estate and the dominion of the feudal lord stood between the king on one side and the peasants on the other. The peasants on the continent, therefore, had much less contact with

the king and his administration when compared to Norwegian peasants or farmers. The latter were politically, judicially, and administratively far more directly connected to the 'state level'. They lived under a national code ('Landslov'), handed down by the king and not under a municipal common law authorised by a feudal lord (Lunden 2002: 106).

Like many others, Lunden sees a connection between the continental background of the Danish and German royal officials in Norway and their conflicts with Norwegian farmers in the 15th century. He proposed that the revolts were driven by both a class and a national motive. Lunden called attention to the repeated complaints of foreigners who did not know Norwegian law well enough. He also pointed out that the difference in language may have increased the distance between the authorities and the people in Norway. From the second half of the 15th century royal Norwegian letters from Denmark were written in Danish increasingly often (Lunden 2002: 114-115). More or less implicit in Lunden's argumentation is the opinion that there was a cultural conflict between the Norwegian and the continental, or Danish-German, political and social systems in the Late Middle Ages. Here Lunden followed Koht's opinion. Norwegian farmers had a tradition, at least in principle, of communicating with the king through royal officials. Danish and German aristocrats in Norway came from political and social systems where peasants, much more so than in Norway, were subjected to the power of feudal lords independent of royal power. In Lunden's view, the Norwegian farmers defended and upheld Norwegian law and the Norwegian political and social systems through opposition and revolts in the Late Middle Ages and, in doing so, pursued a tradition from the High Middle Ages (Lunden 2002: 15, see also Opsahl 2008; Opsahl 2012a; Opsahl and Sogner 2003). Imsen draws the same conclusion in many ways, but he speaks of the Old Norse municipal system, which included direct interaction with the king. This accords with Lunden's view. This system continued throughout the Middle Ages, concludes Imsen (Imsen 1990b: 193-203).

Cultural meeting or cultural conflict?

In what follows, I shall discuss to what extent the revolt of 1436-37 was a cultural conflict. Two years earlier an analogous revolt, with the same demands regarding foreigners, had broken out in Sweden, the third kingdom in the union and one that shared the political satellite position

of Norway in relation to Denmark. However, for our purposes, the fact that several peasants revolts broke out in Denmark in the years 1438-41 is more interesting. These revolts were reactions to severe impositions on Danish farmers' living conditions. Danish aristocrats pursued a strong offensive during the 15th century, with the result that Danish farmers became tied to landowners with feudal bonds of protection – both freeholders and the Danish form of tenants ('festebønder'). This implied, at the minimum, an increased formal privatisation and decentralisation of state-power in Denmark – primarily understood as jurisdiction. At the same time, a centralisation of power took place based on the fundamental principle that the king was responsible for the maintenance of the legal system. Typical, rebellious Danish farmers addressed their complaints directly to the king in 1438-41. The Danish historian Anders Bøgh has argued that the German term 'Kommunalismus' is relevant in Denmark where there was a genuinely autonomous farming society in the villages in the Late Middle Ages (Bøgh 1994, see also Würtz Sørensen 1983).

Overall, the contemporary Swedish, Norwegian and Danish revolts had many features in common with their European counterparts. The farmers' living conditions were improved during this period and their military significance increased in many places. The results probably included greater self-confidence and self-respect among the farmers and a growing ability and determination to defend, and even improve, their living conditions. The American historian Samuel Cohn has labelled this growing political consciousness and activity among the people of late Medieval Europe as a 'lust for liberty' (Cohn 2008). All this is in accordance with the American sociologist James Chowney Davies' theory of political revolutions. Davies is perhaps best known for this theory, which seeks to explain the rise of revolutionary movements in terms of rising individual expectations and falling levels of perceived well-being. According to Davies, revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal. People then subjectively fear that ground gained with great effort will be lost; their mood becomes revolutionary (Davies 1962).

All in all, living conditions for the common people did become better in the Late Middle Ages. At the same time, at least from the 15th century on, tenants experienced a growing pressure from property owners precisely

because they felt their position threatened. Over time the peasants' overall conditions worsened in several regions of Europe during the Late Middle Ages. Moreover, state and church increased their tax demands to compensate for their losses in land rents and to finance new and ambitious political projects. As already mentioned, in a long-term perspective, the Late Middle Ages was a period of growing state power and an important precursor to the expansive state power that characterised early modern Europe.

In all three Scandinavian kingdoms, we see robust resistance in the 1430s to what the farmers argued were illegal taxation and ruthless behaviour from officials in the administration. The revolts took place within a common political organisation, certainly loose at this time: the Union of Kalmar. The fact that the new king, Christopher, issued almost identical decrees of the King's peace in each kingdom at the beginning of the 1440s, illustrates the Scandinavian political commonwealth. The decrees were a reaction to the riots and revolts in the 1430s and were directed at both the King's and aristocrats' officials who claimed too much, including illegal taxation and other services, as well as at a population that was unwilling to pay what the King had the right to demand according to the law (Taranger 2012: nr. 106).

However, the Danish revolts lacked some interesting elements which those in Norway and Sweden had. The Danish rebels voiced no criticism regarding foreigners in the administration or about the fact that foreign officials did not know the domestic Danish laws (Würtz Sørensen 1983). The reason could not be a lack of foreigners in the Danish administration in the period. On the contrary, approximately one third of all fief holders in Denmark between 1400 and 1440 were German or of German ancestry. It is difficult to decide how many of these men were permanent immigrants to Denmark or descendants of such men, but a considerable number of them do not seem to have taken up permanent residence in Denmark (see below) (Lerdam 1996: 27-31). Unfortunately, we have no systematic overview of who held fiefs in Norway in the Late Middle Ages. A preliminary and uncertain estimate assumes that the number of foreigners was approximately the same in Norway during the reign of King Erik (1389-1442) (i.e. one third). However, in Norway there were Danes and some Swedes in addition to Germans (Opsahl and Sogner 2003:

144). On the other hand, the immigration of aristocrats seems to have been much larger in Norway in the first half of the 15th century than in Denmark in the same period. For the latter country, the 15th century seems to have been an exception to the usual pattern of considerable immigration of German aristocrats during the Middle Ages (Dahlerup 1971: 55, see also Opsahl and Sogner 2003: 148-160 and Lerdam 1996: 27-31).

The other element the Danish revolts lacked compared to those in Norway, was aristocrats as rebel leaders. There was one exception, and this exception can probably be explained as a reaction against the expansion of other aristocratic families in the region (Würtz Sørensen 1983: 124-126). The motivation behind the fact that Norwegian aristocrats like Amund Sigurdsson (Bolt), took leadership of riots and revolts, was probably frustration at being increasingly replace as fief holders in Norway. The Norwegian Council of the Realm raised this political dissatisfaction at national and union level by insisting a monopoly on fiefs and other administrative posts in Norway for the domestic aristocracy. There was a similar situation in Sweden. Even in Denmark, the Danish Council of the Realm justified their dethronement of King Erik with the king's policy of giving many fiefs to Germans or minor Danish aristocrats with no connection to the Council of the Realm. The King's goal was to increase his power at the expense of the Council of the Realm. The policy gave fewer fiefs to the members of the Council and thereby reduced their political power. In addition, by appointing Germans and minor Danish aristocrats, the king created fief holders who were more depended on the King's favour for their position and career, and thereby more loyal to him than the Councillors of the Realm (Lerdam 1996: 49-55). As we have already seen, the same motivation underlay the king's appointment of foreigners as fief holders in Norway and Sweden.

The political aristocratic revolt in Denmark came from the upper strata of the aristocracy because King Erik's fief policy challenged the position of aristocratic families who contributed members to the Council of the Realm. Interaction and co-operation between the Council of the Realm and the rebels did not take place in Denmark. Why then, did Danish peasants not complain about foreigners in the administration and demand their expulsion from the country as did their Norwegian and

Swedish counterparts? Furthermore, during the rebellion in Jutland in 1439 the rebels appealed to an enemy of the kingdom of Denmark, Count Adolf (or Alf) VIII of Holstein, for protection after King Erik had fled to Gotland and was, therefore, no longer able to fulfil his role as peacekeeper of the Realm. Count Adolf let himself be acclaimed by the Jutes and took them under his protection as a means of promoting his political interests in Schleswig and the Kingdom of Denmark (Würtz Sørensen 1983: 42-46). Obviously, a German lord did not frighten Danish peasants. One obvious reason for the lack of antagonism to Germans among Danish peasants in this period must be the cultural, political, geographical, and social similarities between Danish and German conditions.

Conclusion

Both social, economic and political conditions underlay the Nordic revolts in the first half of the 15th century. Steinar Imsen has pointed to opposition to the process of political and economic modernisation as underlying the Norwegian rebellions and revolts in the 1430s (Imsen 1998: 103-107). However, by comparing the Danish revolts with those in Norway and Sweden, we can discern elements of a cultural conflict in Norway and Sweden. The basic social conditions in Denmark had much more in common with the situation in northern Germany than did the conditions in Norway and Sweden. Consequently, Germans were much less foreign for Danes than for Norwegians or Swedes; the cultural differences were fewer and smaller. Geographical proximity was, of course, important here. A German could act more German in Denmark without being provocative than he could in Norway and Sweden. On the other hand, a Swede was obviously perceived as much less foreign in Norway in the 15th century than a Dane was. It is revealing that the peace treaty from 1437 determined that the Council of the Realm should ask King Erik to defend the Realm against the Danish and other foreign men who had to leave the country because of the treaty (Taranger 2012: nr. 90, paragraph 6). The fact that Danes were explicitly mentioned was probably due to the numbers of them in Norway and the Danish domination in the union. However, we know there were Swedish aristocratic immigrants in Norway in the period (Opsahl 2008). It is, therefore, probably illustrative of their lack of foreignness, in both background and behaviour, in Norway that Swedes are not mentioned explicitly in the peace treaty of 1437. As far as

I know, there are no examples of Swedes being criticised by Norwegians as foreigners in the 15th century.

We can conclude with something perhaps obvious: that Norwegians and Swedes looked upon themselves as the peoples of Scandinavia in the Late Middle Ages who had most in common. In other words, the Norwegian and Swedish cultures were quite similar. Norwegian farmers expressed this view during the struggle for the Norwegian throne in 1448-50, when they declared in favour of the Swedish King Charles (Karl Knutsson Bonde). Norway and Sweden had, for a very long time, been allied on the basis of agreements made in confidence. God had made the two kingdoms so geographically linked, with a common border of more than 400 or 500 hundred Norwegian miles (some 4000 km – today's border is 1630 km), that a destruction of the alliance between Norway and Sweden would have led to a great deal of suffering for the people of both kingdoms (Johnsen et al. 1934: nr. 6, Opsahl 2008). Nevertheless, my experience tells me that sometimes it might be necessary to be reminded of the obvious when analysing different aspects of the social development in Scandinavia in the Late Middle Ages.

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Scandinavian immigrants in late medieval England: sources, problems and patterns

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Introduction

At the start of the fifteenth century, the English king Henry IV made a vow to establish three monasteries. The foundation of these religious houses was meant to expiate the guilt the monarch felt for his involvement in the deposition and the murder of his predecessor Richard II. Henry died before he was able to fulfil his vows, but his plans were reinvigorated by his son and successor Henry V. The monasteries were to be part of the 'The King's Great Work', the redevelopment of a derelict royal manor on the banks of the river Thames around Isleworth and Twickenham, begun in 1413. Following advocacy by Henry Lord Fitz Hugh, one of Henry's courtiers who had travelled extensively through Scandinavia, the king decided to grant one of the three religious houses, the monastery of Syon, to the Bridgettines, a monastic religious order of Augustinian nuns and monks founded by St Birgitta of Sweden in the fourteenth century (Knowles 1957: 175-81).

To prepare for the establishment of the order in England, four sisters, three novices and a brother from the Bridgettine mother house in Vadstena were sent by the king and queen of Sweden in May 1415. Accompanying them was the Swedish chaplain Magnus Hemmingi (Gejrot 1988: 54). Not much is known about Hemmingi's activities in England (Fletcher: *1 a*), but there are indications that his role in the foundation and, possibly, the early years of Syon Monastery was not insignificant. It is also likely

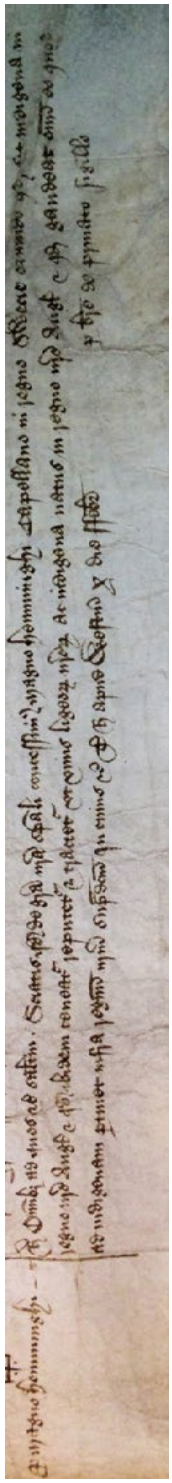

Figure 1: Entry relating to Magnus Hemmingi's denization on the patent rolls, 10 February 1414 (*TNA, C 66/93, m. 21*).

that the embassy of May 1415 was not his first visit to the British Isles. One year earlier, in February 1414, Hemmingi had obtained so-called letters of denization from the English chancery. The documents stipulated that the chaplain, though born in the Kingdom of Sweden, should henceforth be treated as one the king's own liegemen and would enjoy all privileges that were usually reserved for native Englishmen (*TNA, C 66/393, m. 21*). Hemmingi's letters of denization (Figure 1) thus provided him with prerogatives that facilitated longer stays in England, possibly even permanent residence, and protected him against the risks and restrictions he could encounter. In the years that followed, Syon Monastery would go on to become one of the wealthiest and most influential religious houses in the country until its dissolution under King Henry VIII in the sixteenth century (Knowles, 1957: 175-81).

It was to reconstruct the experiences of Magnus Hemmingi and thousands of other alien-born residents and longer-term visitors, both from Scandinavia and other parts of Europe, in late medieval England that the project 'England's Immigrants, 1330-1550' was set up. Funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council, this research project was carried out at the University of York in collaboration with the Humanities Research Institute in Sheffield and the National Archives in Kew between February 2012 and February 2015. Its aim was to survey the resident alien population of England during the period of the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, and the Wars of the Roses. One of the project's major outcomes was a fully searchable online database with

over 64,000 entries relating to people who migrated to England between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries (www.englandsimmigrants.com). Most of these people came from the neighbouring countries of Scotland, France and the Burgundian Low Countries, but England's late medieval immigrants also included people from Greece, Iceland, and even three men believed to have come from the Indian subcontinent. The project thus allowed a first comprehensive view on the lives of what, around the middle of the fifteenth century, constituted up to one percent of the country's total population. In London, as much as six percent of the city's inhabitants in 1440 are thought to have been first-generation immigrants (Bolton 1998: 8-9).

In addition, members of the England's Immigrants team have conducted research into the regulation of alien presence (Lambert and Ormrod 2015, Lambert and Ormrod 2016), its economic impact (Lambert and Pajic 2014), and the relationship between the local and native population (Lambert and Pajic 2016), providing deep historical and cultural context to pressing contemporary debates about ethnicity, multiculturalism, and national identity. Yet the project's findings are not only relevant for the past, present, and future of England, but also for the history of the many regions of origin of the immigrants, including the medieval kingdoms of Scandinavia. They inform us about the settlement of people from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in the British Isles long after the much better known influx of the Vikings in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. The evidence collected by the project sheds light on the push factors that inspired Scandinavians to leave their home regions. It shows how they presented themselves and how they were perceived abroad, and how easily they integrated into a different society. England's Immigrants thus also offers a new perspective on Scandinavia during the late medieval period.

Alien Subsidies

The information about most of England's late medieval immigrants has been extracted from the returns of the alien subsidies. During the 1430s, a series of military and diplomatic setbacks in the war with France and a deteriorating economic climate resulted in a growth in tensions between the country's native and foreign populations. Convinced that aliens resident in the realm possessed greater wealth but were not contributing

accordingly, the English parliament asked for and obtained a tax on all first generation immigrants over the age of twelve in 1440. This alien subsidy was first collected in the same year, 1440, and continued to be levied until 1487. Several groups were exempt from payment of the tax. Neither alien wives of Englishmen, nor English wives of alien husbands were assessed. Members of religious orders, including the Bridgettines in Syon Monastery, did not pay the subsidy either. Merchants of the Hanseatic League, who might have overlapped to a significant degree with England's Scandinavian immigrants, claimed exemption from all national taxation. They only paid the alien subsidy in exceptional circumstances and were officially exempted in 1483.

The assessment of the aliens residing in each town, village or hundred was carried out by the local justices of the peace. They returned the names of those liable to the exchequer, which sent lists of the taxpayers to the collectors of the tax (Thrupp 1957). A substantial number of these documents have been preserved, presenting us with a wealth of information about immigrant presence that is unique in a late medieval, European context. There are considerable differences in the quality of the records, however. In 1440, the first year of collection, nearly 16,000 aliens were identified. In subsequent years, the numbers of people assessed dropped sharply and the information became less detailed. Documents in and around London, where anti-alien political sentiment was concentrated, are generally more reliable than in the provinces.

Ideally, the alien subsidy returns provide us with the forenames, surnames, occupations, and places of origin of the taxpayers. In reality, origins are specified in only 13,674 cases, or 26 percent of the 53,180 entries between 1440 and 1487. Sometimes, surnames can help fill the gaps. Clays de Norbarne, a taxpayer in Boston in 1440 (*TNA, E179/136/206, m. 3*), is likely to have come from Bergen in Norway. Yet Albright Vandanske, assessed in London in 1441 (*TNA, E179/144/73, rot. 1, m. 2*), could have hailed from either Denmark or Gdansk (Danzig). In some cases, not even a surname is recorded. In 1440, a man from Finnmark, the northern part of Norway, only known to the assessors as Beerne (Figure 2), paid the tax in the market town of Stokesley in Yorkshire's North Riding (*TNA, E179/270/31, m. 39*).

The alien subsidy was payable at two different rates. Householders, who were relatively settled people such as artisans or tradesmen, originally

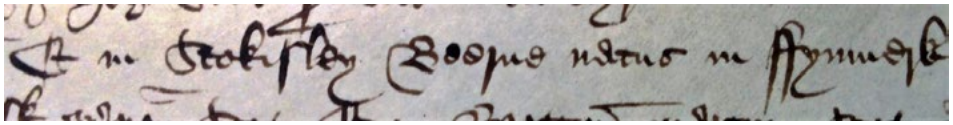

Figure 2: Assessment of Beerne, a male non-householder from Finnmark, in the alien subsidy roll for Stokesley in Yorkshire's North Riding in 1440 (*TNA, E 179/270/31, m. 39*).

paid 16d. each year. Alan Johnson, a Dane who lived in a room in Watling Street in London's Bread Street Ward, was assessed as a householder in 1483 (*TNA, E179/242/25, m. 15v.*). The same happened to the Norwegian Perkyn Wever in the village of Snettisham in Norfolk in 1456 (*TNA, E179/235/67, m. 1*). Non-householders, generally people working for others, such as servants, apprentices, and labourers, originally paid 6d. a year. Their records are interesting sources for the study of the professional relationships between English and alien residents, as they often give the names of the taxpayers' masters. John Dewson, a Danish non-householder paying the alien subsidy in Walbrook Ward in London in 1483 (*TNA, E179/242/25, m. 9*), had joined the large hordes of alien servants, mainly coming from Germany and the Low Countries, flocking to the capital. He worked for Agnes Forster, the widow of a fishmonger and former alderman, mayor, and MP (Bolton 1998: 62). When Forster had her will registered before the prerogative court of Canterbury in 1484, 'Johan my servant' was one of the many people she left money to so they would remember her in their prayers (*TNA, PROB 11/7/154*).

John Andrewe from Bergen was assessed as the servant of Henry Tamworth in Lincoln in 1440 (*TNA, E179/270/32, part 1, m. 3*). Tamworth had served his town as mayor and MP and was a successful cloth merchant (Kirby and Stevenson 2002: 79). His commercial interests might have reached as far as Scandinavia, which could explain why he had a Norwegian employee. Trading links might also have brought John Longe, a Danish servant, to the Hanseatic port of Lynn in Norfolk in 1483. Unfortunately, the returns only reveal that he worked for a merchant, without specifying his master's name (*TNA, E179/149/177, m. 2*). Also among the non-householders listed in the alien subsidy rolls are five men staying at the University of Cambridge around Easter 1440. One of them, Benedict Nicoll, was recorded as being Swedish. The names of three others, Olavus Guthe, Magnus Daghr, and

Laurence Arbogh, equally suggest Scandinavian origins (*TNA, E179/235/4, m. 4*). We know nothing about the status of these people, but full members of universities generally enjoyed exemption from taxation and none of the four left any traces in the university's records (Emden 1963). When the next instalment of the tax was due, they were not assessed again.

Between 1440 and 1487, only nine taxpayers, or 0.07 percent of the entries where origins were given, were identified as coming from Scandinavia. Four were recorded as Danish, one as Swedish and one as Norwegian. Two came from Bergen and one from Finnmark. The alien subsidies were collected during the time of the Kalmar Union, when the three kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden and Norway joined together under a single monarch, but no references to an overarching Scandinavian identity were made. 26 taxpayers came from the Orkney Islands, which fell under the sovereignty of the Danish-Norwegian crown until 1469, and 190 originated from Iceland, which remained a virtual Danish-Norwegian dependency until the end of the Middle Ages (Schuck 2003). Even if those assessed without a region of origin included disproportionately high numbers of Scandinavians and the Hanseatic exemptions obscured many of them, the numbers of people coming from Denmark, Sweden or Norway and permanently residing in England are astonishingly low, certainly given the history of Scandinavian settlement in earlier centuries and the strong trade relations across the North Sea.

What can account for these remarkable figures? The evidence is often fragmentary, but everything suggests that the Black Death struck just as hard in Scandinavia as in England (Benedictow 1992: 104-15). Neither Denmark, Sweden nor Norway suffered from overpopulation and entire regions in the north were only settled during the late medieval period (Vahtola 2003). Shortages in the workforce resulted in higher real wages, which made it less attractive to move abroad. Specialised in the exploitation of raw materials and sylvan products particular to Scandinavia (Orrman 2003: 581-600), workers might not have been able to offer the skills that were in demand in the English economy. Whereas many low-skilled migrants from France, Scotland, Germany and the Low Countries moved to England to work as servants, the distance and the language barrier seems to have prevented Scandinavians from doing so.

In Scandinavian historiography, the later Middle Ages are commonly considered as a period during which the region came under increasing political, economic, and cultural influence from northern Germany. Under several kings of German origins, German aristocrats, clergy, and common people infiltrated into the Scandinavian church, nobility and administration. Low German impacted strongly upon the development of Scandinavian languages (Opsahl 2014). These connections might have made the German territories a more likely destination than England for Scandinavians wanting to emigrate. Trade links often facilitated the permanent settlement of immigrants in England from other European regions. Yet by the late medieval period, most of the Anglo-Scandinavian commercial relations had been monopolised by an external group, the Hanseatic League (Christensen 1957: 108-117). This may have obstructed Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians from visiting a country that could later become a permanent home. Traders from Norway and Gotland were still frequent visitors to the East Anglian port of Lynn during the thirteenth century, for example. After 1300, they were completely supplanted by Hanseatic merchants, first from Lübeck and later from Danzig (Jenks 2005: 98-100).

Letters of Denization and Other Sources

While the alien subsidy returns have provided the overwhelming majority of the information in the England's Immigrants database, some of the most detailed data has been gathered from letters of denization, the type of document obtained by Magnus Hemmingi in 1414. The emergence of these grants resulted from the crown's policy towards aliens resident in England during times of war or diplomatic tension. From the end of the thirteenth century onwards, international armed conflicts became more numerous and prompted the royal government to take measures against the subjects of enemy rulers living within its borders. Its initial response was uncompromising, confiscating the assets of all immigrants who originated from the regions England was at war with. In the course of the fourteenth century, the crown came to appreciate the benefits alien residents could bring to the country's economy and switched to a lighter-touch approach (Lambert and Ormrod 2016). At the end of the 1370s, after an expulsion of all Frenchmen living in the realm had been ordered, a procedure was introduced, now known as denization,

whereby immigrants renounced their former loyalties and swore an oath of allegiance to the English crown. In return, they were given certain privileges which were commonly reserved for the native population. These could include the right to pay taxes at lower, denizen rates and the right to acquire immovable property and to pass it on to one's heirs. Unlike other aliens in England, immigrants-turned-denizens could also sue and plead in the king's courts.

The number of denizations would remain very low until the end of the medieval period. They were still granted at the discretion of the king, who decided which specific privileges were bestowed. The fees to be paid for the procedure were also rather high and were not affordable for everyone. This probably explains why, throughout the whole fifteenth century, only 335 immigrants took out letters of denization. Most of the recipients were high-status individuals such as merchants, secular clergy and people with a connection to the royal court (Lambert and Ormrod 2015). The fact that Magnus Hemmingi was involved in Henry V's plans in Isleworth and Twickenham certainly helped secure his letters in 1414. Only in the 1540s, during the reign of Henry VIII, would denizations be made accessible to larger parts of England's alien population, with thousands of them granted each year.

There are no indications that immigrants took out letters of denization out of a desire to become more English. The privileges included in the grants must have been the main reason for them to swear the oath and pay the fee. Hemmingi's letters gave him the legal prerogatives he needed while carrying out his work at Syon Monastery. In 1442, John Holte from Denmark acquired several cottages, acres of land and a garden in Wheatley in Oxfordshire. On the land, part of which was the king's, he built a house containing a stable and a chamber. During the Inquisition, however, the authorities found out that Holte was an alien and was therefore not allowed to own real property. The Dane was first granted a pardon for his wrongdoing and subsequently paid for the denization procedure, which entitled him to continued ownership of his lands and cottages (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1908: 63*).

Because of their more elevated social positions, recipients of denization often lend themselves more easily to biographical research than payers of the alien subsidies. One of those granted denizen status was Andrew Ogard.

The son of a Danish knight and councillor of the realm, Ogard was born as Anders Pedersen Gyldenstjerne in Aagaard in North Jutland. During the 1420s, he accompanied the Duke of Bedford, regent for the underage King Heny VI, and fought for the English in France. In recognition of his services, Gyldenstjerne, who restyled himself Ogard after his place of birth, was awarded denization in 1433 (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1907a: 288*) and was knighted in 1441. In 1445, Henry VI needed to give his new liegeman permission to take possession of an inheritance in his native country of Denmark (Nicholas 1837: 38). Ogard was involved in several more missions in France and sat as an MP for Norfolk shortly before his death in October 1454. Here too, the main reason for granting him letters of denization was to enable him to develop his property portfolio. He inherited his first wife's estates in Buckenham in Norfolk and he imparked the Isle of Rye in Hertfordshire, where he built Rye House (Figure 3), one of the earliest brick mansions in the country (Wedgwood 1936: 644-645).

Figure 3: gatehouse of Rye House in Hertfordshire, built by Danish-born Andrew Ogard around 1443.

Even though they were not supposed to, Scandinavian immigrants in England also appear in another series of sources. In 1435, following the Treaty of Arras, the Burgundian Duke Philip the Good ended his alliance with the English and joined forces with the French. In order to assure himself of their loyalty, but also to protect them against hostile reactions from his native population, King Henry VI gave all immigrants from the Burgundian Low Countries the chance to swear an oath of fealty. In the course of 1436, over 1,800 people accepted the offer (Thielemans 1966: 283-97). Among them were also one Dane, one Norwegian and three Swedes from Stockholm, including a man with the evocative name All' Good (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1907a: 547, 556, 584; 1907b: 37*). They were not subjects of the Burgundian duke, but they probably feared to be mistaken for one, reminding us that, despite the ongoing regulation of immigrant presence, alien identities in late medieval England were still very much a matter of perception and interpretation.

Conclusions

The England's Immigrants project has shown how, during the closing centuries of the Middle Ages, a national government dealt with significant numbers of alien residents, how the newcomers integrated into their host society, and what the economic impact of their influx was. Its conclusions draw heavily on the study of a body of sources – the records of the direct, nation-wide taxation of first-generation immigrants – that is unique in European, late medieval history and they can therefore not simply be projected onto other parts of the Continent. This does not mean that the findings of the 'England's Immigrants' project are not relevant to the rest of Europe, on the contrary. They highlight the movement of people from specific European regions to the British Isles and place them within a wider context. The low numbers of recorded immigrants from Denmark, Sweden and Norway living in England, certainly in comparison with neighbouring regions and places such as Iceland, underline the particular position of these kingdoms in late medieval European migration flows. Clearly, Scandinavia had a specific demographic and economic context that did not provide sufficient incentives for its inhabitants to cross the North Sea and reside permanently in England. Still, this did not prevent those who did move from engaging fully with everything their new country had to offer and, each in their own way, making a vital contribution to its society.

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