

Comments on Marner's review of *Latin Manuscripts of Medieval Norway*

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Postdoctoral fellow Astrid Marner (Bergen) publishes a review of *Latin Manuscripts of Medieval Norway – Studies in Memory of Lilli Gjerløw* (Novus 2013) in this volume of *Collegium Medievale*.

As the editor of the volume, I would like to thank her for having taken the trouble to review this large, collective volume, for her comments and for the positive conclusion towards the end. There are, however, some misunderstandings and errors in the review, and as the editor I avail myself of this opportunity to comment upon some of them and adduce some information.

The book project is an interdisciplinary effort and covers various fields, as far as it was possible to enlist contributors. The primary aim was to sum up multidisciplinary research undertaken from the early 2000s on the fragmentary manuscripts of medieval Norway so as to prevent acquired knowledge from being forgotten (*Latin Manuscripts*, p. 22; cf. p. 7).¹ A large number of extant Latin manuscripts and manuscript fragments of Norwegian origin or provenance are presented for the first time in print, to demonstrate the range and the extent of the material. The book contains 231 plates with colour reproductions of manuscripts. Marner mentions the lack of a ruler (*Abbildungsmaßstabe*) accompanying the illustrations to indicate the original size. Of the 231 illustrations 206 are at actual size (see *Latin Manuscripts*, pp. 41, 67, 83, 125, 199, 215, 271, 279, 307, and 337). Which ones are reduced, are always indicated, and full measurements are given in several articles when relevant. This was done with the purpose of making the book a useful tool for reference and for identifying further fragments of the same manuscripts that are reproduced in the book. Like Marner, we would have preferred to reproduce all the mentioned fragments, but the high costs of production and a recent increase in shipping charges imposed limits. (Weighing less than two kilograms, the book can be sent abroad free of charge.²) The book was submitted to the publisher late in 2012 (cf. p. 8). Publications from 2013 are consequently not referred to with one exception added in the proofs.

¹ It was originally meant to be a Norwegian equivalent to *Latin Book Fragments in Sweden* (Brunius 2005), which contrary to the Norwegian volume collects the revised acts from a conference. The Norwegian volume studies complete manuscripts as well as fragments (hence the title) and is considerably larger.

² The paper quality could not be too heavy and still suitable for plates. *G-Print 115g* met these requirements.

The dedication to Lilli Gjerløw (1910–1998) was not my initiative only. It was agreed upon when the book was first discussed by some of the contributors in 2006 and 2007 (*Latin Manuscripts*, p. 22). This made it possible to include a memorial of Gjerløw and an account her contribution to Norwegian liturgical research, a reprint of a review of one of her books, as well as a bibliography of her publications. The dedication therefore is secondary in importance to the theme of the book. Marner's misunderstanding on this point has consequences for her review. Moreover, the book did not appear to celebrate Gjerløw's 100th birthday although she is worthy of commemoration (as indeed is Oluf Kolsrud, who first organized the collection of fragments in the National Archives and who recruited her to the Norwegian Institute for Historical Sources (*Norsk Historisk Kjeldeskrift-Institutt*)).

As for the introduction, it was a conscious choice not to set the articles clearly in perspective one against the other. Being the editor, I did not want to force an interpretation upon the individual authors. Marner finds this choice a flaw. As for my periodisation of the research history, I put Kolsrud and Gjerløw at the turning point in the account (*Latin Manuscripts*, pp. 16–18, 20).³ The introduction includes a description of the collection of fragments and its organisation in the National Archives at Oslo, as far as I know, the first one of its kind to appear in print (*Latin Manuscripts*, pp. 20–21).

The provenance of the fragmentary books is a central question for the whole fragment collection in the National Archives. Pettersen's article 'From parchment books to fragments' argues that many of the fragmentary manuscripts discussed in the volume have been in use in Norway, and in this way it serves as the basis for the other articles in the volume. I disagree with Marner when she finds the article 'deplaziert' in the volume and that it is too fundamental to belong in a *Gedenkschrift*. In fact, it is crucial to the other authors in the volume and a result of the original aim of the book project. Like most articles in the volume, it is not conceived as a *Gedenkschrift* contribution.

In this connection I am surprised that she does not mention the discussion of provenance in my article 'Latin Manuscripts of Medieval Norway – Survival and Losses' (in Marner's text: 'erster Beitrag'). It takes a first step into this field, *inter alia* in light of the evidence of the *vernacular* fragments (*Latin Manuscripts*, pp. 29–31). If Norwegian account books were bound centrally in Copenhagen, we would

³ Ommundsen (2007, vol. 1, 26) is probably the scholar who most unreservedly has underlined the significance of Gjerløw: 'Gjerløw is the giant whose shoulders we stand on; her work and publications on the Nidaros liturgy are invaluable, and quite unique in a Nordic context.' The research of Gjerløw might be what Marner refers to by the expression 'fragmentary turn', as she was the only one at that time in Norway to investigate fragments on a larger scale.

expect the Norwegian account books occasionally to be bound with Old Danish fragments. This is not the case. Old Norse fragments, on the other hand, are almost exclusively used in the binding of Norwegian account books. This is a clear indication that many Norwegian account books were bound in Norway.⁴

Marner mentions a discussion in the above article paper that attempts to estimate a total of the Latin books in medieval Norway. It is based on fragments and on inventories dating later than 1300. This is a period of more than 500 years, and she points out that there are many books from the second half of the twelfth century in Scandinavia. The article contains a discussion of the number of books in Norway owned by the churches, an argument that takes the discussions of earlier efforts, such as Karlsen (2003), and Ommundsen (2007) and (2008), a step further. The data used are those collected by the archaeologist Jan Brendalsmo (Oslo), who has used the available evidence to estimate the number of churches. An average of ten books for every church with some variation is suggested (*Latin Manuscripts*, pp. 34–36 with further references), following Karlsen (2003) and Ommundsen (2007, 76–77). The number of churches and books have naturally varied through the centuries (*Latin Manuscripts*, pp. 33–36). There is a correlation between the building of churches in the twelfth century and the number of service books of Norwegian provenance from the same period (Karlsen 2005, 151 with footnote 22; Karlsen 2006, 20). The lack of source material on the number of books in Norwegian churches makes further refinement in this field difficult.⁵ I recommend that readers consult the article itself

⁴ I will here draw attention to a more recent discussion of provenance, complementing the discussion of Pettersen and myself (cf. *Latin Manuscripts*, pp. 28–29; 50–51). Fragments were used to bind land registers (*jordebøker*). They were bound either centrally at Akershus or locally in Norway and were never sent to Copenhagen for auditing. A full inventory of the material from the governors' archive, now in the National Archives, is found in Weidling & Karlsen (2014).

⁵ There has been an immense loss of medieval documents in Norway (cf. Pettersen 2014, xix). In the paper under discussion is included a comparison with the situation in the early 1300s on Iceland, another part of the Nidaros province where more sources have survived. As for the varying number of churches, Brendalsmo (2006, 285–290) operates with three phases of church building in Trøndelag with the first phase until 1200 being the high point of construction with 84% (= 117 churches) of the churches. The second phase from 1200–1350 presents only four churches, whereas there is an increase between 1350 and 1600 with nineteen churches. In the second and third phase there are fewer service books as well, especially in the third. The situation is complex throughout the Middle Ages with some churches rebuilt and others abandoned or demolished (Brendalsmo 2006, 228 and 230). As mentioned in *Latin Manuscripts* (p. 33), there are traditions, in place names or other traditions, for approximately 1000 additional churches, some of which have been proved to have existed (Brendalsmo 2007). Some known from oral tradition only, have also been proven to have existed. Two have been

and make up their own opinion, as Marner does not relate much of its discussion.

I take the liberty to add a few comments upon two articles containing results that are not fully appreciated by Marner.

Susan Rankin introduces an important issue, the eleventh-century missals which were made in Anglo-Saxon England, and now kept in the Norwegian National Archives. One of these (Mi 14) was discussed by Lilli Gjerløw (1974), but Rankin adds two more fragments and some new results. She identifies the music scribes and the text scribes and includes a reconstruction of the liturgical content. I do not think Susan Rankin would have called it an edition, though (cf. *Latin Manuscripts*, p. 74). She makes the valuable observation that the book was still in use in England c. 1100. To pursue this topic further would probably entail researching a large corpus of fragments, so rather than recommend that Rankin immerse herself into this matter, I suggest this to be left for future research in an ongoing process.

Gjerløw filed a fragment in the National Archives as a Christian commentary on Vergil (NRA lat. fragmenter 38, 1). Marianne Wifstrand Schiebe is a renowned authority on the reception of Vergil and was invited to give her opinion on the fragment. Her finds are surprising. The fragment contains a part of a twelfth century work with the title *De pastoribus et ovibus* ('On Shepherds and Sheep') by Hugo de Folieto, the French regular Augustinian canon, theologian and prior of Saint-Laurent-aux-Bois, so far known in only eleven manuscripts and fragments. It has been assumed that his writings did not reach Scandinavia, but the fragment has probably been copied locally in Norway or Scandinavia early c. 1200–1250. The most important results in the paper are that Hugo's comments on *Eclogues* 9, as well as 1, 3, and 7 in this work, are without parallel in other texts. This text contains more *Eclogues* interpreted in a Christian manner than previously known and it deserves a prominent position in the history of the Christian reception of Vergil.

A spin-off of the book project was a standardisation of the designations of the fragment collection in the National Archives done by Gunnar I. Pettersen in order to avoid a series of inconsistencies and to bring them in accordance with the standards of the National Archives.⁶ The designations were previously used inconsistently and have in fact never before been explained in print. It is to be hoped that this standard-

excavated recently on the basis of oral tradition only (Brendalsmo 2007, 72). The many churches known from documents and oral tradition only may prove difficult to date. The highest number of churches suggested for medieval Norway on the whole is 2500–3500 (Bertelsen in Brendalsmo 2007, 78). I leave this question to the archaeologists.

⁶ Designations that include brackets, square brackets and Roman numerals have especially led to inconsistency in other research literature.

isation will be of lasting significance, and that future scholars will use the designations offered by Pettersen in *Latin Manuscripts*.

Hopefully, *Latin Manuscripts* will offer the general medievalist a more easily accessible introduction than what has been available so far. The publications of Gjerløw are difficult reading for non-experts, as Christopher Hohler remarked in his review of Gjerløw's study of the lost Nidaros Antiphoner: 'This is the sort of book that is welcomed with admiring enthusiasm by the cognoscenti, but is liable to appear stupefyingly repellent and abstruse to those who are not involved' (*Latin Manuscripts*, p. 238).

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