

***Regesta Norvegica*, vol. IX: 1405–1419. Ed. Gunnar I. Pettersen. Oslo: Riksarkivet, 2010. 786 pp. ISBN 978–82–548–0111–6 (ib.)**

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The *Regesta Norvegica* IX is the newest volume in a long row of the *Regesta Norvegica*-series publishing Norwegian medieval documents from 822 onwards. The volume at hand consists of 1,445 summaries of documents from the years 1405–1419, which is an extremely interesting period in the Nordic Middle Ages, not least because of the death of the strong Union Queen Margaret in 1412.

As one can deduct from the name of the series, the *Regesta Norvegica* is a chronologically organized calendar-form source publication. Hence, it is not a full-text edition of documents in their original language but it consists of summaries, in modern Norwegian, of medieval documents concerning Norway or Norwegians. In addition to a full summary of the documents, the *Regesta Norvegica* gives precise information about in which form each document is preserved (original/copy/note), where it is preserved and where it has been published. The series form therefore a kind of database in a book form where the readers can find references to all medieval documents concerning Norway or Norwegians. The search in the volume is facilitated by two detailed indexes: The first one includes all person- and place names (pp. 597–706), while the second one is thematic (pp. 707–786). In addition to the indexes, the *Regesta Norvegica* IX contains an introduction which describes the edition principles (pp. 7–15), a list of abbreviations (pp. 17–37), and a very informative list of documents that have been re-dated after they have been published in a source edition (pp. 39–47).

Regesta Norvegica offers thus an extremely useful tool for those who are searching medieval documents concerning Norway or Norwegians, but not only to them. The publication is, indeed, not useful only for those interested in the Norwegian history but for a much broader public as well. According to the editorial principles, the publication contains summaries of documents that are related to “Norway” or “Norwegians” (p. 7). Since the volume covers the time period of the Kalmar Union, when the Union Queen or King was automatically also the Norwegian Queen or King, the concepts “Norway” or “Norwegians” become very broad. This has led to an editorial “problem”: which documents are so “Norwegian” that they should be included in the volume and which are not. Non-Norwegian scholars can be happy

about the decision of the author of the volume, *førstearkivar* Gunnar I. Pettersen, to rather include than exclude documents. Therefore we can find in the volume summaries of documents concerning not only the other Nordic countries or the Orkney Islands or Hebrides, which until 1472 were part of the Norwegian church province of Nidaros, but also England and Germany, for example. The broad geographical sphere can also be seen in the notes referring to in which archives the original documents are preserved or in which source publications they have been edited.

The volume at hand does not only offer us a broad geographical view to the “Norwegian” history but it gives us interesting glimpses on a large scale of different aspects of medieval life. Most important are obviously documents related to politics under the Kalmar Union rulers like the instructions of Queen Margaret to King Erik for his tour in Norway in 1405 (no. 16), the “hyllingsbrev” of the Islanders for King Erik (no. 1395), or royal relationship to various (Hanseatic) towns in the Baltic Sea (nos 27, 36). Of broader interest are also the statutes made for Hanseatic towns (nos 1232, 1298). The volume is rich with documents related to the Catholic Church too. Some of them are more general and concern for example matters handled during the Council of Constance (nos 1194, 1291), or they are more specific ones like indulgence letters for various churches (no. 1306), or directly personal like papal dispensations and provisions (nos 1372, 1379). A great number of documents are related to legal transactions like deeds of sale (no. 1258), quittances (no. 1259), donations (no. 1277), juridical decisions (no. 1359), witnesses (no. 1283), pledges (no. 1383), or wills (nos 1350, 1380). Even these few mentioned examples show how large spectrum of different kinds of documents the volume presents.

Furthermore, the volume refers to a wide range of different types of medieval documents. A great deal of the summaries refer to original documents, so-called diplomas, but the *Regesta Norvegica* includes also other kinds of medieval documents: entries in various copy books, like the different series in the Vatican Archives (nos 1255–1256); entries in later registers, like *Akershusregistret* from the year 1622 (nos 316–328); entries in diaries or annals, like that of the Vadstena abbey (no. 844); later certificated copies (vidimations) of original documents (no. 344). The author has also included in the volume summaries of documents of which we have no traces anymore but which are mentioned in other medieval or later documents, like a letter of King Erik to Pope Martin V (no. 1410) mentioned in a later papal letter (no. 1416), or summaries of supplications to the pope on the basis of which a preserved papal letter of grace has been issued (no. 1399). In the case of a full text edition the inclusion of inexistent documents should be impugned, but one can strongly argue for that in

publications like *Regesta Norvegica*, which aim at having a summary of every medieval document “preserved or not” (p. 7). One can, however, wonder why this principle has not been applied to all papal letters included in the *Regesta Norvegica*, like in the case of summary no. 1256, for example.

Despite this small remark, the newest volume of *Regesta Norvegica* is an excellent piece of work representing almost 1500 medieval documents. The volume will be of great help and use not only for historians in search of sources but also for scholars dealing with genealogy, linguistics, and other disciplines related to the medieval history of Norway. Gunnar I. Pettersen has made a great and precise job not only with the summaries but also with indexes and references.

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