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Innhold / Contents
Vol. 35 (2022)

Artikler / Articles

Bokanmeldelser / Book reviews

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Den tidlige kirkeorganisasjonen i Bergen bispedømme

Frode Iversen† & Jan Brendalsmo

In the article, we have examined the emergence of a public church organization in the diocese of Bergen in Norway 950–1250. We argue that three organizational levels of *county churches*, *quarter churches* and *eighth churches* were in place as early as the eleventh century.

Public local churches were established in collaboration with the *thing*. As early as the eleventh century, a third of the churches in western Norway were public. It makes a significant difference from the feudal societies on the continent and the British Isles. The proprietary church-system was dominant there until the Gregorian church reform spread from the second half of the 1000s. We find support to define six counties within the Bergen diocese. The church organization expanded in line with the secular division into counties, quarters and ship districts (associated with the eights). The oldest version of Bergen diocese, Selja diocese, was divided in the early twelfth century. New areas were added to the new units. The landscapes of Voss and Hardanger were added to the new diocese of Bergen 1160/70–1274 in the north, and Valdres and Hallingdal around 1170 to the diocese of Stavanger in the south. We find that the older large Selja diocese originally included the counties Sunnmøre, Romsdal and Nordmøre furthest north. These were later transferred to the diocese of Nidaros, probably around the time when the Norwegian church province was established in 1152/53. The remains of St. Sunniva, the patron saint of Western Norway, were moved from Selja to Bergen around 1170.

The high number of public churches, as we have shown in this article, suggests that there were other, more egalitarian social structures in Norway than elsewhere in Europe. Not least, the *thing* institution was an important driver for the development of the church organization, especially at the local level. Negotiations on the establishment of the Norwegian Church Province were at the forefront of developments in Europe. The negotiations went in the Church's favour and weakened private church owners' rights over their churches. This was perhaps possible because there was already a more than 150-year-old tradition for public churches in Norway.

Innledning

Det såkalte *egenkirkesystemet* står sentralt i diskusjonen om utviklingen av den tidlige kirken i Nord-Europa og England. Begrepet *Die Eigenkirche* ble lansert av den tyske kirkerettshistorikeren Ulrich Stutz i 1895, og beskriver en kirke bygd på privat grunn av en føydal herre. *Egenkirke* tilsvarer engelsk *proprietary church* (lat: *ecclesia propria*), og norrønt *hægendiskirkja/hægendakirkja*, som opptrer i tidlig kristenrettslovgivning i Norge. Den grunnleggende ideen har vært at *alle* engelske og kontinentale kirker på 1000-tallet var egenkirker. Historikeren Frank Barlow formulerte det slik: "All churches were Eigenkirchen [...] subject to some lord who expected to make a profit out of them" (Barlow 1979: 186–187; se også Lynch 1992: 126–130; Tellenbach 1993: 75–80; Wood 2006).

I denne artikkelen ser vi nærmere på dette med utgangspunkt i den rurale delen av Bergen bispedømme, der kildene ligger særlig godt til rette for å undersøke kirkeorganisasjonen på 1000-tallet.

I år 1600 var det 145 kirker i de rurale delene av bispedømmet.[1] Trettisju av disse var hovedkirker, de øvrige 108 var annekskirker i hovedkirkenes prestegjeld. I tillegg var omkring 46 kirker nedlagt i løpet av middelalderen (figur 1). Den rurale delen av Bergen bispedømme hadde dermed på det meste omkring 191 kirker. Var alle disse kirkene private, eller utviklet det seg alt tidlig en form for offentlig kirke?

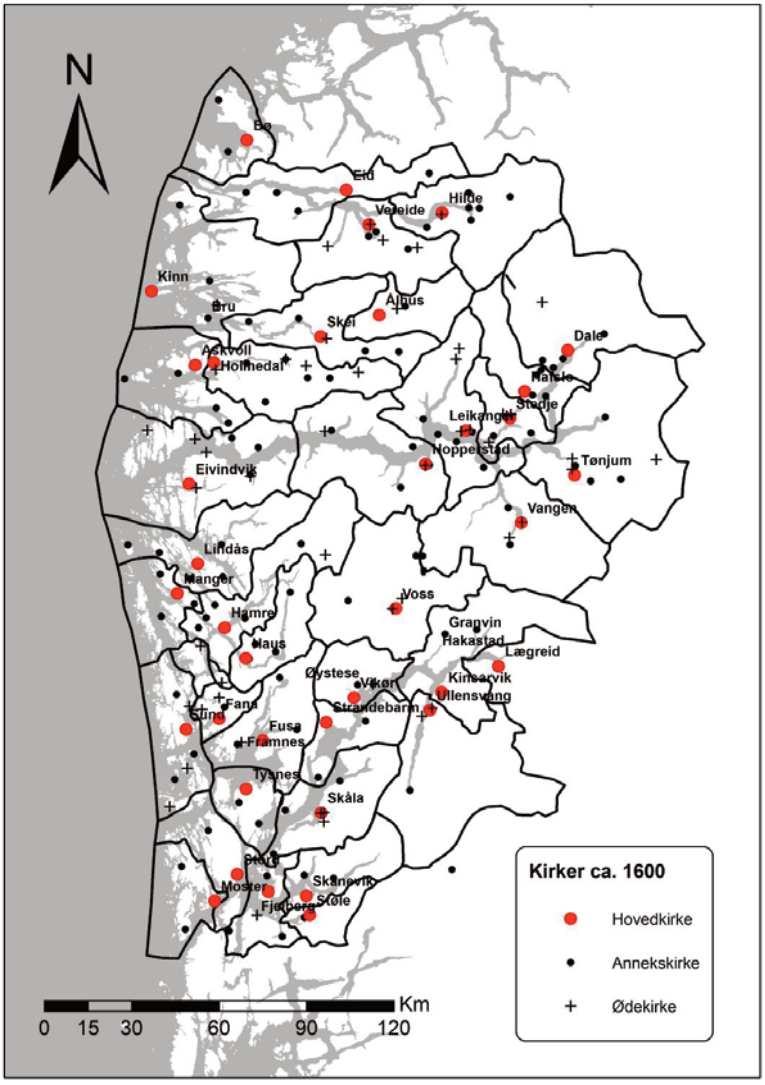
Vår tidsramme er fra ca. 950, da de første sikre tegnene til kristne menigheter dukker opp i området, og inntil ca. 1250, da det kirkelige administrative landskapet ble løsrevet fra eldre verdslige inndelinger og det oppsto et kirkelandskap med geografisk definerte prestegjeld og sogn med tidendeinntekt.

Vår hypotese er at det utviklet seg en offentlig kirke allerede på 1000-tallet, i et samspill mellom kongemakt og tinginstitusjonen. Kirkene ble knyttet til de verdslige inndelingene: fylker og fjerdinger, og trolig også åttinger. Åttingskirkene mener vi skal knyttes til de tidlige middelalderske skipreidene og tinglagene i undersøkelsesområdet.[2] Med *offentlig* mener vi ganske enkelt at kirkene var tilgjengelige for tinglyden i de ulike områdene. De private kirkene sto derimot til rådighet for elitens nettverk og bøndene som var avhengige av dem.

Dette henger sammen med spørsmålet om hvorvidt kongsbygde kirker på 900- og 1000-tallet skal betraktes som en del av *bona patrimonium* (kongens private eiendom), eller som *bona regalia* (kronens eiendom), et skille som er kjent i England,

[1] I tillegg var det 34 kirker i Bergen, inkludert kloster- og hospitalkirker, og fem kirker tilknyttet det gamle bispesetet på Selja. Fire av de sistnevnte er ikke medregnet i oversikten her.

[2] At den eldste kirkeorganiseringen knyttet seg til de eldre verdslige inndelinger har vi vist i våre tidligere undersøkelser av andre bispedømmer (Iversen & Brendalsmo 2020, 2021).



FIGUR 1. Hovedkirker og annekskirker i prestegjeldene i Bergen bispedømme omkring 1600, til sammen 145 kirker. I tillegg viser kartet 46 kirker som ble nedlagt i løpet av senmiddelalderen. Kart: Frode Iversen.

FIGUR 2. Stedje stavkirke. Ved den gamle fylkeskirken i Sogn fylke mottok biskopen i Bergen under visitas i 1322/23 24 tønner øl, over ni tønner mungåt (svakt øl) og to tønner vin. I alt fem prester skulle holde kosten for biskopen og et følge på rundt 18 personer. Det var kort vei til fjorden der biskopen ankom i eget skip. J. C Dahls maleri 1836. Stavkirken ble revet i 1867. CC wikicommons.

Tyskland og Skandinavia alt på 1000-tallet (Iversen 2011). Dette er aktuelt for flere kirker som er oppført på veitslejord[3] i vårt undersøkelsesområde, f.eks. Stedje kirke i Sogndal (antatt fylkeskirke) (figur 2) og Støle kirke i Etne (antatt fjerdingskirke).[4]

[3] *Veitslejord* vil si kongelig jord brukt som avlønning for kongelige tjenestepersoner i en gitt periode.

[4] Iversen 2008. **Stedje**: En Torgeir på Stedje, nevnt før 1329 (RN IV 684) og i 1338 (DN I 253), kan ha vært kongens mann, titulert som *radismaðr i Biorgvin*. I 1530 og tidligere bodde kongens fogder på Stedje (DN III 1123). Det kan indikere eldre veitslegods. **Støle**: hirdmannen Bjørn fra Støle ha hatt Støle i forlening av Olav Tryggvason alt i 990-årene. Støle var fremdeles kongelig forleningsgods i 1536 (Iversen 2008: 331).

Også aristokratiet i Norge lot oppføre kirker og etter hvert klostre. Egenkirkesystemet i Norge var av begrenset omfang sammenliknet med det føydaliserte og hierarkiserte Europa, der privatkirker var regelen heller enn unntaket. Der eliten i Norge fra 1100-tallet lot oppføre mer prangende steinkirker, forble de offentlige kirkene på lokalt nivå enkle trekirker med bondekommunalt preg. Følgelig har de fått mindre oppmerksom av fagfolk med blikk for kirkenes arkitektoniske og estetiske verdier, enn den mer iøynefallende og kontinentalt påvirkede arkitekturen som preger steinkirkene. De tidlige trekirkene er dessuten dårligere bevart.

Ett av siktemålene i denne artikkelen er å identifisere de offentlige kirkene. Vi bruker en rekke kriterier for de ulike kirketypene i Gulatingsloven, representativt for situasjonen i 1160- årene. Loven omtaler fylkeskirkene/hovedkirkene, fjerdingskirkene, og dessuten *åttingskirker*. I tillegg kommer de private egenkirkene, heretter kalt høgendeskirker.[5]

Det er fortsatt historiker Anna Elisa Trytis omfattende hovedoppgave fra 1987 som gir forskningsstatus for middelalderens kirkeorganisasjon i Bergen bispedømme, spesielt hvordan ulike funksjonsområder ble administrert de siste femti årene før svartedauden. Hun kartlegger forholdene i første halvdel av 1300-tallet med utgangspunkt i jordeboken Bergens Kalvskinn, Oluf Rygh *Norske Gaardnavne*, samt diplom- og brevmateriale, i hovedsak fra den bergenske bispestols Registrum eller Kopibok. Hun diskuterer også den eldre kirkeorganisasjonen med utgangspunkt i Gulatingslovens kirkehierarki. Hun finner at makt og myndighet i Bergen bispedømme ble holdt samlet i Bergen, hos biskop og domkapitel. På regionalt nivå var fjerdingskirkene administrative knutepunkter. Disse hadde en viktig funksjon i kommunikasjonen mellom sentrum og periferi i bispedømmet. De var viktige for sentralkirkelig myndighetsutøvelse ved visitas og sto sentralt i biskopens veitslesystem. Tryti konkluderer med at den utstrakte arbeidsdelingen på regionalt og lokalt nivå styrket sentralmakten. Den fikk ikke noe regionalt motstykke som utgjorde en trussel for sentralkirkelig kontroll, og nettopp differensieringen av regionale og lokale funksjoner gjorde en sterk sentral styring mulig. Tryti identifiserer de høyere rangerte kirkene (fylkes- og fjerdingskirker) utfra visitassteder, takster for pavetiende med mer. De eldre fjerdingskirkene var, sammen med sognet, de viktige for biskopenes grep om kristen tro og praksis på landsbygda.

Våre resultater avviker noe fra Trytis. Det skyldes primært at vi definerer fylkene annerledes enn henne. Med utgangspunkt i historiker P. A. Munchs (1849: 109)

[5] G 10, 12, 19. I G 12 nevnes også herredskirker, men som Robberstad påpeker i kommentarene til utgivelsen av Gulatingsloven (s. 326) er dette et senere innskudd og betyr bare 'bygdekirke'. Det kan også være at det med dette uttrykket vises til høgendeskirker som ennå ikke var trukket inn i den offentlige kirkeorganisasjonen.

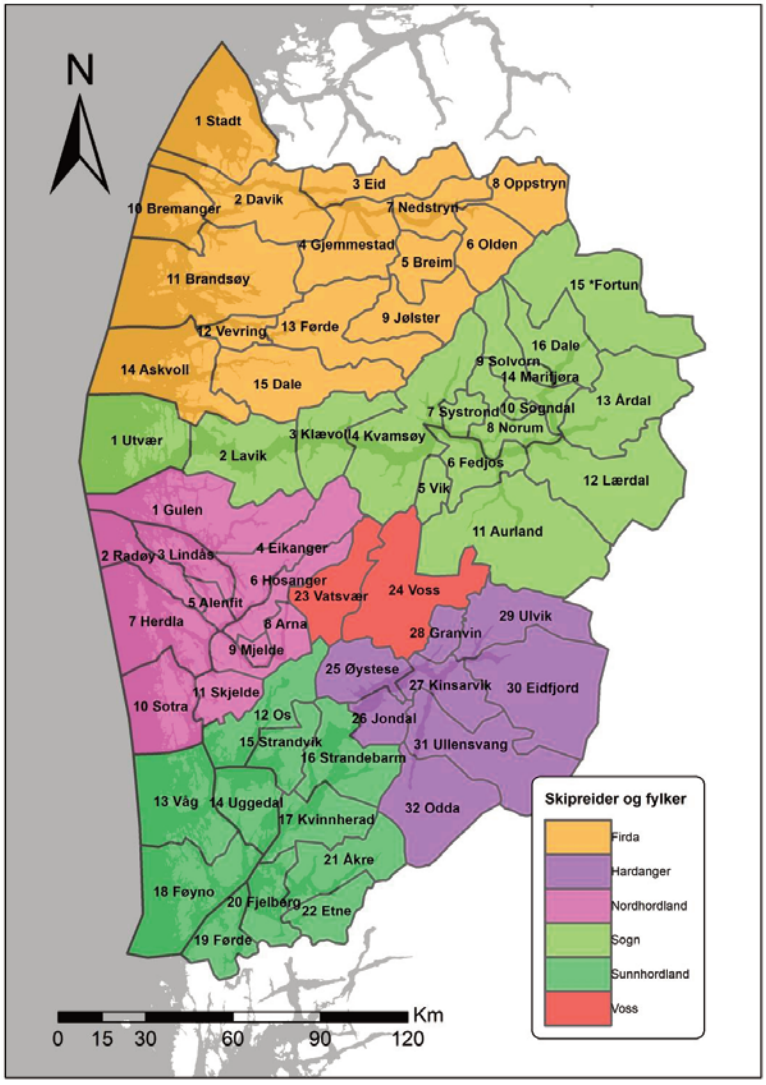
fylkesinndeling, opererer Tryti med tre kjernefylker i Bergen bispedømme: Hordaland, Firda og Sogn. Vi argumenterer derimot for en annen geistlig fylkesinndeling bestående av følgende enheter: Voss, Hardanger, Sunnhordland, Nordhordland, Sogn og Firda (figur 3). Følgelig får vi flere mulige fjerdings- og fylkeskirker enn Tryti, særlig i Hordaland. Denne inndelingen synes å sammenfalle med sysselinndelingen, som i dette området også har meget høy alder, og som er omtalt allerede i den eldste delen av Gulatingsloven, Olavsteksten (G 3, jf. også Steinnes 1929: 61–63 og Iversen 2008: 19). Vi er likevel på linje med Tryti når hun i et senere arbeid finner "… grunn til å anta at de fire viktigste kirkene i Hordafylket har vært på Hamre i Nordhordland, på Voss, i Kinsarvik i Hardanger og på Skåla i Sunnhordland" (Tryti 2006: 68).

Uten å foregripe resultatene finner vi åtte fylkeskirker, da to landskap har to fylkeskirker. Det gjelder lengst sørøst i bispedømmet (Ullensvang og Kinsarvik kirker i Hardanger) og lengst nord (Bø og Eid kirker). Årsaken til dette blir nærmere drøftet, og kan skyldes både kronologiske og geografiske endringer i bispedømmestrukturen.

Tryti finner ingen åttingskirker i sitt materiale. Historiker Knut Helle hevdet at det var et skille mellom norm og praksis i utbyggingen av kirkeorganisasjonen (Helle 1997: 243). Gulatingsloven bar preg av å være "… ein plan om å skape orden og territoriell dekning i kyrkjesystemet…" uten at det ble gjennomført i praksis.[6] Vi mener derimot at Gulatingsloven i hovedsak avspeiler kirkeorganisasjonen slik den faktisk ble bygget ut. Helles (2001: 204) argumentasjon om manglende spor i Gulatingsloven etter en fast sogneinndeling finner vi utilstrekkelig. Vi mener å kunne identifisere åttingskirker som en form for offentlige kirker knyttet til tingsteder i de minste administrative enhetene, nemlig *skipreidene*. Voss er et unntak fra dette, kanskje fordi stedet synes å være integrert i Gulatingsområdet nokså sent og lå for seg selv i innlandet uten tilkomst fra sjø eller fjord – i motsetning til de andre fylkene i Bergen bispedømme som var lett tilgjengelig med skip. Trolig er åttungen en gammel betegnelse som i kystområdene ble fortrengt av yngre terminologi (skipreider), men beholdt i et konservativt område som Voss, der skipreidene aldri slo gjennom.

Målet vårt er å identifisere det tidlige kirkehierarkiet i den rurale delen av Bergen bispedømme før ca. 1250, for å kunne diskutere graden av og karakteren til både den offentlige kirken og egenkirkesystemet i Norge i den tidlige kristningsfasen.

[6] Helle 2001: 203–204. Jf. Arne Odd Johnsen (1955: 40) som mener det var først ved forhandlingene med legat Nicolaus Brekespear i 1153 at det skjedde "et avgjort brudd [Canon I] med det tidligere egenkirkesystem som opprinnelig hadde hersket i Norge som i alle germanske land".



FIGUR 3. Fylker og skipreider i Bergen bispedømme før 1350. Legg merke til at de to vestligste skipreidene i ytre Sogn etter verdslig inndeling lå i Sogn fylke. Etter geistlig inndeling (kjent i 1329) lå de derimot til Eivindvik fjerding i Nordhordland fylke. Kart: Frode Iversen.

Bakgrunn og forskningsstatus

Forskningen på middelalderkirker i Bergen bispedømme er omfattende. Arkeolog og skolebestyrer Bendix Edvard R. Bendixen publiserte i 1906 en beskrivelse av kirkene i Søndre Bergenhus amt (dagens Hordaland) med fokus på bygning og inventar (Bendixen 1904). Det viktige referanseverket *Norges Kirker* behandler kirkene i Bergen og deler av Hordaland i seks bind (Lidén, Hoff m.fl. 1990–2003), og i 2000 utkom to bind om kirkene i Sogn og Fjordane (Aaraas m.fl. 2000). Sentrale forskere som kunsthistoriker Hans Emil Lidén (1961, 1968, 2009) og arkeolog Alf Tore Hommedal (1999, 2018, 2019, 2021) har arbeidet inngående med kirkene i Bergen og på Selja og dessuten med klostrene i Norge. Vårt fokus er likevel først og fremst den rurale kirkeorganisasjonen. I mindre grad berører vi klosterkirker og kirker ved de tidligere bispesetene.

De fleste av bispedømmets kirker er omtalt i bygdebøker og jubileumshefter, og alt kan ikke nevnes her. Lokalhistoriker Johan Litleskare utga fra 1929 til 1941 flere bøker om kirker på Osterøy og omegn. Bergen Domkirkes bygningshistorie er behandlet av Lidén (1970) og Lidén og Magerøy (1980). Den verdenskjente Urnes kirke er behandlet i flere større kirkemonografier og samleverk (Christie 2009; Krogh 2011). Kinsarvik kirke (Christie 1963), og kirkene på Selja (Djupedal 1966; Rindal (red.) 1997; Nybø 2000; Hoff m.fl. 2016), Eid kirke (Schanke Eikum 1999), Dale kirke (Hoff m.fl. 2000), Vang kirke på Voss (Berg 1977), Kinn (Vederhus 1978) og Herdla (Fossen 2013) er alle fyldig omtalt i forskningen. Nevnes skal også kunsthistoriker Leif Ankers (2000) stilhistoriske analyse av hvem som lot bygge kirkene i indre Sogn ca. 1150–1350. Han finner en blanding av enkeltmannsbyggeri og fellesbyggeri. Vi trekker veksler på disse arbeidene underveis.

I tillegg foreligger det flere arkeologiske hovedfagsoppgaver om kirker i utvalgte områder. Mona Beate Buckholm har undersøkt kirkenedleggelser på Vestlandet i seinmiddelalder og tidlig nytid. Mange nedlagte kirker sto i tunkontekst og var opprinnelig høgendeskirker (Buckholm 1998). Lilli M. Ingvaldsen studerte kirkestedene innenfor fem skipreider i søndre Sunnhordland med spørsmålet om hvor kirkene ble reist, hvorfor akkurat der og av hvem. Hun finner byggherrer både blant datidens sosiale elite og i ulike fellesskap av bønder (Ingvaldsen 1996). Lars Øyvind Birkenes analyserer kristningsprosessen i Hardangerregionen ved å se på forholdet mellom gård, grav og kirke/kirkested på 14 lokaliteter (Birkenes 2004). Ingen av disse studiene går likevel dypere inn på spørsmålet om kirkenes plassering innenfor kirkens organisasjon, slik vi skal gjøre her.

Begrepet *høgendeskirke* er kjent fra samtlige norske kristenretter, og de nevnes i Bjarkøyretten fra 1100-tallet og Byloven av 1276. Historikerne Gustav Storm og Ebbe

Herzberg forsto dette i 1895 (samme år som Stutz publiserte sitt arbeid om egenkirker på tysk grunn) som: "en kirke, der er opført til bekvemmelighed (for enkelte eller et vist mindre antal medlemmer af en menighed); annexkirke, privatkirke" (NGL V: 310). Begrepet *annekskirke* er yngre, og kan vise til en tidligere høgendeskirke som ved innføringen av tienden ble omgjort til en regulær sognekirke med inntekt, underordnet en hoved- eller fjerdingskirke i storsogn/prestegjeld.

Norske kirkehistorikere som har diskutert den tidlige kirkeorganisasjonen har tatt utgangspunkt i de middelalderske kristenrettene for å forstå høgendeskirkenes karakter. Historiker Rudolf Keyser mente disse var bygd enten av et bygdekollektiv eller av enkelte "formuende Mænd", og at de ble betjent fra hovedkirkene (Keyser 1856: 174). Men definisjonen av *hovedkirke* var vaklende. Etter 1250, særlig i senmiddelalder og nytid, synes *hovedkirke*-begrepet på Østlandet å ha blitt brukt om den øverste kirken innen prestegjeldet.[7] Gulatingsloven, derimot, sidestiller hovedkirke med fylkeskirke (G 10), som vi mener å identifisere åtte av før 1250. Biskopenes rettigheter til underhold ved fylkeskirkene ved visitas ble beholdt ut middelalderen og lenger.

Teolog og historiker Anton Christian Bang mente derimot at det bare var høvdinger, lendmenn og storbønder som lot bygge høgendeskirker (Bang 1912: 66–67; Paasche 1921). Etter å ha undersøkt forholdet mellom kirker og gårdsnavn som viste til førkristen kult, og disse gårdenes status, konkluderte norrønfilolog Magnus Olsen med at "Vi tør trygt si at det var storbønder som privat reiste kirker på sin gård" (Olsen 1978 [1926]: 202).

Oluf Kolsrud var påvirket av Olsen og påpekte at stormennenes gårder ofte var rettslige og religiøse midtpunkter for bygdefolket, og kirker bygd på slike steder var høgendeskirker (Kolsrud 1958: 46, 149).

Per Sveaas Andersen oppsummerte i 1977 sin gjennomgang av forskningen rundt de forskjellige kristenrettenes kirkebetegnelser med at det allerede på 1000-tallet, må ha eksistert et betydelig antall privatkirker bygd av konger, høvdinger og storbønder. Disse betegnet han "de private høgjendeskirkene". Han mente dessuten at en form for sognekirke var reist og eid av bondekollektiv, mens de private høgendeskirkene

[7] Det er noe uklarhet omkring innholdet i begrepet *hovedkirke* (se Iversen & Brendalsmo 2020: 126). Hovedkirker i prestegjeld nevnes sjeldent i middelalderkilder, men Stange kirke er nevnt som hovedkirke i *Håkon Håkonssons saga* (kap. 126) for året 1225, og Lom kirke (Mo kirke) i 1202–1220 i en avskrift fra 1333 (DN II 4). Begge hadde rang som ordinære hovedkirker i 1570-årene. Se for øvrig provinsialstatuttene fra 1306 og 1336 (på latin) som kan vise til denne type hovedkirker (RN III 342 og RN IV 1192), og ikke i betydningen fylkeskirke, slik vi ser begrepet brukt i Gulatingsloven.

med den jord de sto på var den enkelte grunnleggers og hans arvingers eiendom (Sveaas Andersen 1977: 322–323).

Hans Emil Lidén (1987) mente konger og bønder i fellesskap bygde et første nettverk av fylkes-/hovedkirker. I tillegg ble det reist en rekke høgendeskirker rundt om på stormannsgårdene, som i mange tilfeller gikk over til å bli regulære sognekirker senere. Dette er et synspunkt vi i det store og hele slutter oss til, men vi mener dessuten at tinglyden var mer aktivt lokalt enn det tidligere forskning har sett for seg – og da primært på lokalt skipreidenivå, som var den minste rettskretsen i Gulatingslagen med unntak for deler av Agder, Valdres og Hallingdal.

Fortsatt er norsk kirkeforskning delt i synet på hvorvidt de tidligste kirkene ble reist av konger, aristokrater og storbønder (Brendalsmo 2006; Trædal 2008; Brendalsmo & Sigurðsson 2019), eller om kirkebygging også var fellestiltak i bygda (Skre 1998: 109). Vi ser for oss ulike faser i utbyggingen: Perioden 950–1000 mener vi domineres av private og kongelige byggerier. I tiden rundt år 1000 bygges det ut en offentlig lokal kirkestruktur i samarbeid med tinget. Med innføringen av tienden og forskjellige kirkereformer ca. 1150–1200 blir eldre, private kirker underlagt biskopen og integrert i den offentlige kirkestrukturen. Et nytt kirkeorganisatorisk system ser dagens lys. Fra 1200-tallet danner nye prestegårder med tilhørende hovedkirker sentrum i prestegjeld som gjerne omfattet to-tre-fire sogn (Sandvik 1965). Denne strukturen vedvarer til vår tid.

I Sverige og Danmark er forskningen rundt den tidlige kirkeorganisasjonen preget av at en ikke har kristenretter eller verdslige kilder av tilsvarende høy alder som i Norge (Brendalsmo 2019). Her er det større samstemmighet om at både enkeltpersoner og kollektiver lot bygge kirker, selv om forskerne vektlegger forskjellig med hensyn til hvilke som var de mest aktive (Nyborg 1979; Ferm & Rahmqvist 1985; Bonnier 1987; Bolvig 1992: 136; Wienberg 1993: 174–176; Anglert 1995).

I Norge må det i tidlig kristen tid ha eksistert et langt høyere antall kirker enn de drøyt 1200 en regner som sikkert belagt. Et vitnesbyrd om dette er et vernebrev fra pave Celestin II til erkebiskop Eirik i 1194, der det heter at vigslede kirker ikke får rives eller flyttes uten biskopenes tillatelse.[8] Disse kirkene skjuler seg trolig i den store mengden tradisjon om nedlagte kirker (Brendalsmo 2007).

Høgendeskirker fortsatte å eksistere langt inn i middelalderen. Frostatingslovens kristenrett nevner kun fylkeskirker og høgendeskirker, selv om denne dikotomien i praksis må ha blitt opphevet i tidsrommet ca. 1200–1400. Unntak må likevel ha eks-

[8] DN II 2; RN I 226. *Ecclesias eciam dedicatas sine permissione dyocesani episcopi nulli omnino fas sit destruere siue de loco ad locum aliqua occasione transferre*.

FIGUR 4. I løpet av 1200-tallet ble mange privatkirker inkorporert i kirkeorganisasjonen. Kinn kirke synes f.eks. å ha blitt hovedkirke i Kinn prestegjeld, uten at den ser ut til å ha vært del av en offentlig kirkeorganisasjon i tidlig middelalder.

istert, som private kapeller lik de på Austrått, Giske og lignende adelsseter.[9] Muligens føyer Vangen kirke i Aurland seg inn i rekken av slike kapeller i den eldre del av middelalderen.

Som vi tidligere har vist, ble et stort antall høgendeskirker over tid inkorporert i kirkeorganisasjonen (figur 4), men også at et stort antall trolig ble lagt ned i løpet av 1000- og 1100-tallet (Iversen og Brendalsmo 2020; 2021).

Når det gjelder kongsgrunnlagte fylkes- og kanskje fjerdingskirker er bildet komplisert for den tidlige fasen. Delingen av kongelige land mellom *bona regalia* (det som tilfaller kronen) og *bona patrimonalia* (det som tilfaller kongen) er kjent i Nord-Europa på 1000-tallet (Maitland 1897 for England, Rosén 1949 for Sverige, se også

[9] Disse hadde prest, også benevnt kapellan: DN XIV 551, hhv. DN XV 1, DN II 377, DN V 1056.

Bjørkvik (1968) for Norge og Andrén 1983 for Danmark, oppsummert av Iversen 2011).

I Sverige synes *bona regalia* blant annet å ha inkludert kongsgårder og administrative gårder som Huseby-gårdene og komplekset til Uppsala öd (Schück 1914: 4; Rosén 1949: 71; Hamre 1962; Bjørkvik 1968: 43–50; Andrén 1983; Brink 2000: 70). På mange av disse stedene står det middelalderkirker.

I motsetning til rettshistorikere som Absalon Taranger (1934) og Fredrik Brandt (1892), avviste historiker Halvard Bjørkvik (1968) en slik oppdeling av kongseiendom i Norge før 1200-tallet. Etter hans syn var skillet unødvendig fordi man måtte være en etterkommer av Harald Hårfagres dynasti for å kunne arve riket, og ikke kunne velges fra andre dynastier. Dette var annerledes enn situasjonen i Sverige og Danmark, der det var flere rivaliserende dynastier (Bjørkvik 1968: 45). Dette er nok ikke fullt ut et holdbart argument, da tinget før 1100–1200-tallet sto nokså fritt til å utnevne konger, og Norge dessuten i flere år var styrt av ladejarlene som danske vasaller (Taranger 1934).

På den annen side, i Norge synes skillet mellom kongens egen eiendom og veitsleland å være grunnleggende i denne sammenhengen. Ordet *veizla* refererer blant annet til jord som er avstått til kongens elite som motytelse for deres kongelige tjeneste. Veitsleland var nært knyttet til lendmenn som dukker opp tidlig på 1000-tallet (Iversen 1999). Lendmenn var militære ledere fra ledende familier, mer eller mindre tilsvarende den engelske baronen – den betrodde kongens mann med delegert kongelig myndighet innenfor sine områder (Storm 1884; Iversen 1999). De var også aktive kirkebyggere. Veitsleland var et slags *bona regalia*, i motsetning til kongsgaven som etter lovene innstiftet odelsrett for mottakeren.

Bispedømmets avgrensning

Undersøkelsesområdet omfatter nåværende Vestland fylke. Det tilsvarer fylkene Hordaland og Sogn og Fjordane før 2020. I 1769 var det ca. 95 000 innbyggere i bygdene som utgjorde Bergen bispedømme i middelalderen. Amtskartene fra 1867 (Hordaland med Voss og Hardanger) og 1874–1880 (Sogn og Firda) viser ca. 9.000 gårdstun i området. I tillegg hadde Bergen by en befolkning på 13 600.

Trolig ble de lokale kretsene Sveio og Eidfjord alt i tidlig middelalder makebyttet mellom Stavanger bispedømme (som fikk Eidfjord), og Bergen bispedømme (som fikk Sveio) (Iversen & Brendalsmo 2021).

Historiker Ludvig Ludvigsen Daae mente det store vestnorske bispedømmet, Selja, strakte seg fra Stadlandet i nord til Gjernestangen i sør, og at det opprinnelig inkluderte Valdres og Hallingdal (Daae 1901: 232–288; 1904: 32–78). Senere har det

vært foreslått at sørgrensen gikk ved Lindesnes, som også utgjorde den verdslige grensen mellom Vestlandet og Viken (Sveaas Andersen 1977: 172; Helle 1997). Alternativt gikk grensen for Selja bispedømme noe øst for Lindesnes, slik at hele det eldre Nord-Agder, inkludert Foss og Kaddeland skipreider, sognet til Selja (Iversen & Brendalsmo 2021: 132, 152 fig. 7). I så fall skal det omdiskuterte grensemerket *Rýgjarbit* mellom landskapene Viken og Selja søkes i området mellom Mandal og Søgne (Ryvingen?).

Det er uklart når Valdres og Hallingdal ble overført til Stavanger bispedømme. Vi har tidligere foreslått at dette skjedde i 1170-årene, altså nær et halvt århundre etter grunnleggelsen av Stavanger bispedømme. Dette er noe usikkert. Fra *Historia Norwegie*, forfattet ca. 1150–1175, vet vi at Valdres og Hallingdal sognet til Gulatinget. Daae kan dermed ha rett i at disse to landskapene kan ha tilhørt Bergen bispedømme en periode i den første tiden etter delingen. Vi har likevel behandlet Valdres og Hallingdal under Stavanger bispedømme i vår 2021–artikkel, og tar ikke med disse områdene her.

Den tidlige kirkeorganiseringen synes å ha fulgt den verdslige tingorganisasjonen. Dette gir en særskilt utfordring for Sunnmøre. Ifølge Olavsteksten i Gulatingsloven, som trolig kan dateres til tidlig på 1000-tallet, skulle så mange fra Sunnmøre som ønsket det stille på Gulatinget. Senere, i Magnusteksten (ca. 1160–1170) var dette fiksert til 16 delegater. I 1274 var antallet redusert til 12 delegater fra Sunnmøre. I verdslig forstand sognet altså Sunnmøre fortsatt til Gulatingslagen. I en tidlig misjonsfase kan det dermed ha sognet til Selja bispedømme, før det ble overført til Nidaros. Ifølge *Håkon Håkonssons saga* (kap. 98) lå Sunnmøre til Nidaros bispedømme i 1223 (Helle 1997: 241–242), og i 1290 bekreftes det i diplommateriale (DN III 28).

Ifølge Adam av Bremen var kristendommen nordpå ny da han skrev i 1070-årene. Ennå var ikke bispedømmegrensene faste hos nordmennene og svearne (Adam av Bremen IV.34). Ifølge Adam var kong Olav Tryggvason døpt og den første kristne blant nordmennene. Hans etterfølger Svein Tjugeskjegg, som hevdet overherredømme over Norgesriket (regjeringstid 1000–1014), skal ha gjort slutt på avgudsdyrkingen og innført kristendommen ved lov (Adam av Bremen II.41).

Hjemlig sagatradisjon sier at Olav Tryggvason innførte kristendommen i vårt område via tinget. Omkring 997 kalte han sammen et firefylkers ting på Dragseid på Stadlandet, nær Selja (*Heimskringla, Olav Tryggvasons saga*, kap. 59). Det kom delegater fra fire fylker: Sogn, Firda, Sunnmøre og Romsdal. Olavs overlegne, tilstedeværende militærmakt ga ikke tingfolket noe reelt valg; de måtte ta kristendommen han bød dem. Det er ikke usannsynlig at Sunnmøre og Romsdal i de

påfølgende årene sognet sørover til Selja, og først siden ble lagt til Nidaros bispedømme – f.eks. da erkeprovinsen ble etablert i 1152/53.

Tradisjonelt er flyttingen av bispesetet fra Selja til Bergen antatt å ha skjedd en god stund før overføringen av Sunnivas levninger i 1170, kanskje allerede med biskop Bjarnhard i kong Olav Kyrres regjeringstid og dennes ferdigstilling av Lille Kristkirken (bl.a. Munch 1874: 565, Kolsrud 1958: 179, 37, Helle 1997: 246, Nybø 2000: 162–165; Hommedal 2019: 51; Hommedal, Ommundsen & O'Hara 2021: 37). Arne Odd Johnsen derimot, mener "Vestlandsbiskopen – i det minste til dels – holdt til på Selja også på 1100-tallet, dvs. i tiden før 1170 (...) Den som siste gang gikk under betegnelsen biskop *i Seliu* var Sigurd som fungerte som biskop i årene 1129–1156" (Johnsen 1968: 25–26). Biskop Sigurd blir ca. 1128 omtalt som prest i Bergen, men han tituleres også, som Johnsen påpeker, biskop i Selja (Kolsrud 1913: 220).

For vårt formål i denne artikkelen er det ikke avgjørende hvorvidt de vestnorske biskopene oppholdt seg mest på Selja eller i Bergen, men at relikviene av St. Sunniva ifølge *Breviarium Nidrosiense* i 1170 ble flyttet fra Selja til Bergen (Sperber 2019: 1069). Byen ble fra da av formelt det faste bispesetet på Vestlandet. En medvirkende årsak kan ha vært kirkens krav om at bispeseter skulle ligge i byer (Gee & Hardy 1910: 55). I Bergen er det først tidlig på 1000-tallet at det er registrert spor av en eldre bosetting som trolig viser til et kaupsted (Hansen 2008).

En tilsvarende situasjon finnes for Vik (senere Oslo) bispedømme, der biskop Viljalm, død 1157, var den første som titulerte seg som biskop i Oslo, og ikke i Vik (DN XVII B). Fram til da ble biskopene omtalt som *vikverjabiskup* eller *biskup i Vík austr*.[10]

Metode

Identifikasjonen av kirkenes status bygger på ulike skriftlige kilder. I motsetning til i våre tidligere artikler om den tidlige kirkeorganiseringen i Eidsivatingslagen (senere Hamar bispedømme) og Stavanger bispedømme, er det få arkeologiske og arkitektoniske kriterier som synes å kaste lys over kirkene status i kirkehierarkiet i Bergen bispedømme. Vi støtter oss i hovedsak på skriftlige kilder for fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene, og kart- og landskapsanalyser for åttingskirkene, selv om de vestlandske steinkorsene, noen runeinnskrifter og kirkenes bygningsmateriale vil bli trukket inn i diskusjonen avslutningsvis.

[10] Kolsrud 1913: 240–241. Et tidlig bispedømme i det danskkontrollerte Viken eksisterte trolig allerede på slutten av 900-tallet (Munch 1852: 12, Bang 1912: 143, Johnsen 1929: 71). Flere har pekt på at Adam av Bremens *civitatem Nortmannorum* skal identifiseres med byen Tønsberg (Daae 1879: 24; Johnsen 1929: 70–71; Morcken 1978: 8–12; Stylegar & Norseng 2003: 462).

Landbruksskolelærer Sigurd Liland foreslo at den store, monumentale steinkirken på Fana var felles fylkeskirke for Hordaland. Han pekte på at kirken lå sentralt i Hordaland, og mente, på høyst usikkert grunnlag, at det ble holdt fylkesting for Hordaland på Bjelkarøy (i 1519) ved munningen av Fanafjorden, eventuelt på Hordnes like i nærheten (Liland 1966: 71–72). Han fikk støtte fra bygdebokforfatter Jacob T. Larsen (1980: 165) og Hans Emil Lidén (1987: 18) (med henvisning til Larsen) som begge mente Fana kunne ha vært fylkeskirke. Tryti finner ingen grunn til å støtte denne tolkningen, og understreker at hun ikke finner en felles kirke for Hordaland. Skriftlige kilder indikerer dessuten at Fana kirke snarere var én av tre fjerdingskirker i Nordhordland i 1329.[11] Vi finner at den langt enklere trekirken på Hamre i Nordhordland var fylkeskirke for Nordhordland, og Skåla for Sunnhordland, noe som bekreftes i annet skriftlig kildemateriale. Heller ikke vi finner en felles fylkeskirke for det vi antar er et yngre Hordaland fylke.

To systematiske kilder er sentrale for identifiseringen av fylkeskirkene, i tillegg til diplomer som mer tilfeldig nevner fylkesprester ved bestemte kirker. *Antallet* fylkeskirker i Bergen bispedømme framgår indirekte av erkebiskops Eilivs brev av 13. august 1328 til biskop Audfinn i Bergen (DN VII 127; RN IV 609). Det heter at hver fylkesprest og hver fylkeskirke skal betale 1 mark hver i hjelp til paven, i alt 2 mark. Videre framgår det at alle andre prester i hvert fylke til sammen skal betale i alt 4 mark og tilsvarende for sine kirker, i alt 8 mark. Deler av teksten er uleselig, men totalsummen for bispedømmet er oppgitt til å være 80 mark. Av dette kan vi utlede at det var 8 fylkesprester og 8 fylkeskirker i Bergen bispedømme i 1328. Fra hvert fylke skulle det komme 10 mark, og totalsummen på 80 gir dermed 8 fylkeskirker totalt.[12] Ingen av fylkeskirkene er navngitt i notisen. Vi må derfor benytte andre kilder for å konkretisere fylkeskirkene.

For konkret identifikasjon av de høyest rangerte kirkene i Hordaland, benytter vi en notis fra 1329 for pavehjelpen (*subsidium*) (DN I 206). Den lister opp kirkene fylke for fylke, og skiller mellom Nordhordland, Voss, Hardanger og Sunnhordland. For hver enhet regnes det opp én prest og én navngitt kirke som skal betale 12 veide øre i avgift. Dernest nevnes tre prester og tre navngitte kirker for hvert fylke. Disse

[11] Chr. C. A. Lange (1856: 370–371) påpeker at kirken og hospitalet på Fana i en tidlig periode hadde "en klosterlignende organisasjon" (DN II: 6), men at denne var opphørt senest i 1303 da biskopen overdro anlegget til prosten og kannikene ved Apostelkirken i Bergen (DN III 58). Samtlige referanser til *rector* og *vicarius* etter dette tidspunkt viser således til et flertallig presteskap ved Fana kirke (jf. tabell 9).

[12] 1 mark fra hver fylkesprest +1 mark fra hans fylkeskirke + 4 mark fra de øvrige prestene i fylket + 4 mark fra deres kirker = 10 mark fra hvert fylke. Det gir 8 fylker og 80 mark i totalsum.

betaler 10 veide øre. Dette følges av flere prester og navngitte kirker som betaler 1 mark (= 8 veide øre). Dermed framtrer et kirkehierarki bestående av "12- 10-, og 8-øreskirker".

Voss skiller seg ut ved at den høyest rangerte kirken var skyldig dobbel takst av de andre fylkeskirkene, hele 3 mark som tilsvarer 24 veide øre. For tre andre kirker på Voss skulle det betales 1 mark hver (= 8 øre). Voss mangler dermed et midtsjikt av "10-øreskirker".

Hardanger skiller seg ut ved å ha to "12-øreskirker", nemlig Kinsarvik og Ullensvang. For øvrig følges mønsteret med tre "10-øreskirker", etterfulgt av flere "8-øreskirker". Sunnhordland følger samme mønster som for Nordhordland, det vil si med én "12-øreskirke", tre "10-øreskirker", i tillegg til noen "8-øreskirker".

I flere tilfeller bekrefter annet diplommateriale tilstedeværelse av fylkesprester på "12-øreskirkene". På Skåla i Sunnhordland nevnes det indirekte *fylkesprest* i 1306 (DN III 63).[13] Dermed synes notisen fra 1329 å avspeile et eldre kirkehierarki med fylkes-, fjerdings- og åttingskirker, tilsvarende det vi finner i Gulatingsloven. Åttingskirkene er ikke fullstendig og systematisk ført opp, men eksemplifiseres med 3–4 navngitte kirker i hvert fylke med en tilføyelse om at taksten også gjelder for andre tilsvarende kirker. I tillegg nevnes små kapeller i Sunnhordland, der taksten var ½ veide mark, altså tilsvarende 4 øre.[14]

I 1322/23 får vi konkrete opplysninger om hvordan visitas fungerte i Firda og Sogn i Bergen bispedømme (DN VII: 98; Indrebø 1935). Den metodiske bruken av denne kilden har vi redegjort for i Stavangerartikkelen (Iversen & Brendalsmo 2021). Ifølge Gulatingsloven pliktet bøndene å holde biskopen med 18 skysshester for transport mellom biskopsskipet og visitasstedet (G 33), og 30 hester dersom en hovedkirke skulle vigsles (G 11 og G 33) og 15 ved vigsling av andre kirker (G 14). Loven synes å forutsette én hest per person. Vi kan dermed utlede at biskopen brukte eget skip ved visitas og at følget besto av 18 personer.

Kilden fra 1322/23 lister opp kirkene der biskopen hadde rett til bevertning under sine visitasreiser, og for Sogn og Firda nevnes fylkeskirkene først, etterfulgt av fjerdingskirkene. Identifisering av fylkeskirkene stemmer også med annet diplommateriale, slik som f.eks. for Stedje kirke i Sogn. Biskopen hadde rett og plikt til å

[13] Det framgår av dette brevet at Steingrim må ha vært fylkes-/hovedprest i Sunnhordland: *(A*[rne] *med guds miskunn etc. sendir sira Stæingrimi a Skala ok ollum odrum prestom a Sunhordulande*). Steingrim hadde altså en overordnet rolle i Sunnhordland i forhold til de øvrige prestene i fylket (jf. RN III 325).

[14] Betegnelsen kapell er kirkens eget uttrykk for en kirke som er underlagt en annen kirke, hva enten det angjeldende kapell/kirke har egen prest eller ikke, men som uansett har eget sogn og kirkegård (Brendalsmo 2019).

visitere ved fire kirker i hvert fylke. I Firda gjaldt det Eid, Vereide, Bru og Askvoll kirker, i Sogn: Stedje, Tønjum, Aurland og Vik kirker. Bø på Selja var ikke lenger et av stoppestedene under bispevisitasen, noe som kanskje hadde sammenheng med at bispesetet var flyttet til Bergen. Antall netter er spesifisert: Fire ved én kirke i hvert fylke (den som nevnes først) og to eller tre netter ved de andre kirkene, unntatt Tønjum i Sogn med fire netter. Opplysningene gjaldt visitas for et bestemt år. Prestene som skulle holde kosten er ofte navngitt eller henført til bestemte kirker.

Disse kildene suppleres med, og vurderes mot, diplomer publisert i *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*. Flere diplomer nevner (1) *hovedprester* (= fylkesprester) og (2) *proster*, og dette materialet har til nå ikke blitt systematisk utnyttet for å identifisere de høyest rangerte kirkene i bispedømmet. Også termen (3) *rector* synes å være mer eller mindre eksklusiv for et sjikt av fylkes- og fjerdingskirker. Vi ser også nærmere på kirker med (4) flertallig presteskap og dessuten (5) kirkene biskopen visiterte. Disse fem variablene har vært viktige for å identifisere de eldre fjerdings- og fylkeskirkene.

Identifisering av åttingskirkene er mer usikker. Her har vi ingen direkte kilder, kanskje med unntak av de få "8-øreskirkene" som nevnes for Hordaland i 1329. Vi undersøker sammenhengen mellom kirkestedene og skipreidene, og legger til grunn at det var en åttingskirke i hvert av de 32 skipreidene i Hordaland, Voss og Hardanger, og tilsvarende for de 16 skipreidene i Sogn samt de 15 (16?) skipreidene i Firda. Vi undersøker kirkestedenes sentralitet og nærhet til skipreidenes tingsteder via stedsnavn og diplomer som omtaler tingmøter. Identifiseringen av skipreidene er basert på eldre litteratur, særlig Edvard Bulls arbeid, *Leding* fra 1920, som tar for seg alle skipreidene i Norge. Også Lilands analyse fra 1951 av skipreidene i Hordaland har vært nyttig. Dette suppleres med egen kontroll og gjennomgang av tingstedene og eldre regnskaper.

I alt omfatter analysen 63 skipreider. I tillegg var det i 1277 16 skipreider på Sunnmøre og de åtte i Romsdal som i mindre grad trekkes inn i analysen. Skipreidene er digitalisert etter 1647-matrikkelen. Noen grenseendringer synes å ha forekommet i ødeperioden i senmiddelalderen, slik det f.eks. sees for området rundt Kinn i Firda og i midtre Sogn. Det generelle inntrykket er likevel at skipreidene i 1647 stort sett er identisk med de middelalderske inndelingene, men at mindre endringer kan ha forekommet.

De eldre fjerdingsgrensene i Sogn og Firda er rekonstruert med utgangspunkt i biskopens visitasplan fra 1322/23 (DN VII 98) (figur 5). I noen tilfeller knytter den sammen områder på tvers av både 1600-tallets skipreideinndeling og den senere prestegjeldsinndelingen. Det gjelder blant annet i Indre Sogn der Urnes-grenda i 1322/23

var knyttet til Stedje fjerding og dermed området Solvorn/Hafslo, og ikke Årdal skipreide, slik som senere. Dessuten synes 1600-tallets Luster skipreide i 1322/23 å ha vært delt i to. I 1322/23 lå nemlig sognene Dale, Gaupne og Nes i Stedje fjerding, og sognene Fortun og Jostedal i Tønjum fjerding. Det kan indikere at Fortun og Jostedal før pesten i senmiddelalderen dannet en egen nå ukjent skipreide (*Fortun skipreide?), mens Dale, Gaupne og Nes kan ha utgjort en eldre, noe mindre Dale skipreide. Vi har derfor valgt å dele det senere Luster skipreide i to, i henholdsvis *Fortun og Dale skipreider.

Videre finner vi at den nedlagte sognekirken Njøs tilhørte Aurland fjerding i 1322/23, og dermed må ha tilhørt Norum skipreide før pesten. Senere må dette sognet ha blitt lagt til Systrond skipreide og Leikanger prestegjeld. Dette sannsynliggjøres ved at Leikanger kirke, nabokirken til Njøs mot vest, i 1322/23 lå i en annen fjerding enn Njøs kirke, nemlig i Vik fjerding.

Heller ikke fjerdingsgrensene i Hordaland er sikkert kjent. Vi har forsøkt å rekonstruere disse med utgangspunkt i den ovenfor diskuterte kilden som viser størrelsen på pavehjelpen prestene og kirkene i Hordaland skulle yte i 1329. Det framgår hvilke "8- og 10-øreskirker" som sognet til hvilke "12-øreskirker" (DN I 206). På den bakgrunn, og basert på hvilke skipreider som danner naturlige geografiske enheter, presenterer vi et nytt forslag til fjerdingsinndeling for Hordaland. For Sunnhordland følger vi et forslag framsatt av Iversen (2013: 22) i 2013, mens forslaget for Nordhordland og Hardanger er helt nytt.

Resultater

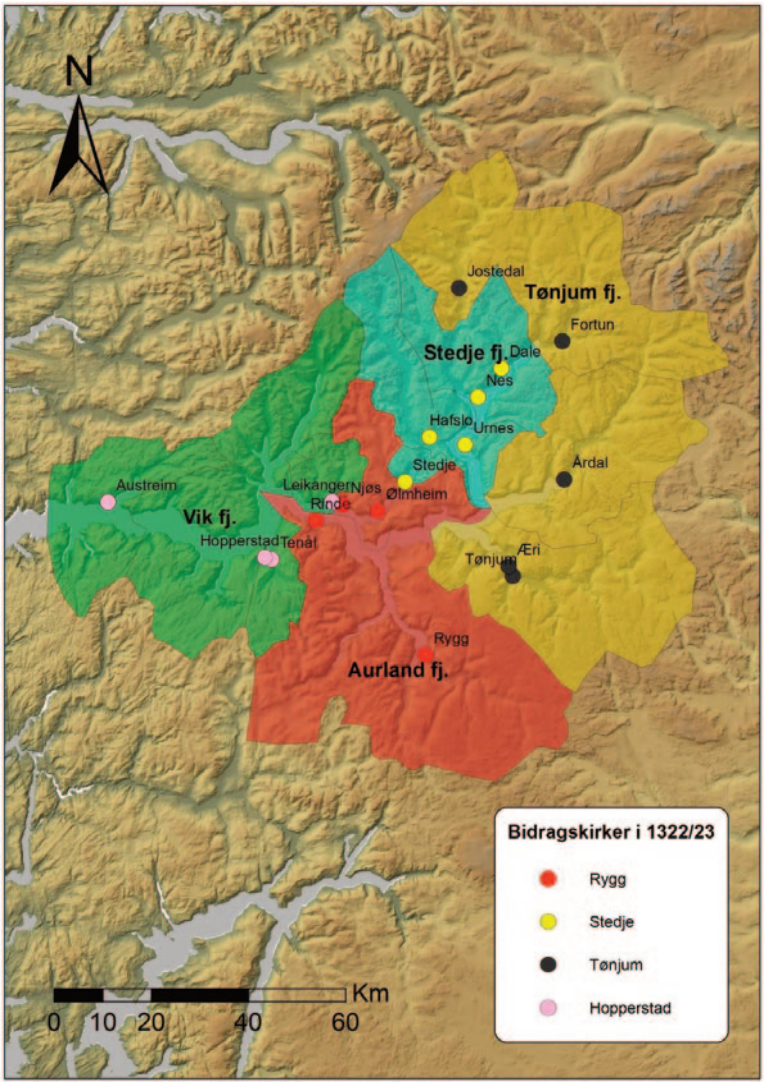
Her skal vi kort presentere de viktigste funnene i studien. Vi begynner med fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene og avslutter med åttingskirkene, der kildene er mindre sikre.

Hovedprester og fylkeskirker

I Bergen bispedømme ble fylkesprestene på 1300-tallet omtalt som 'hovedprester'. 'Hovedprest' synes å ha avløst et eldre 'fylkesprest' på begynnelsen av 1300-tallet (DN IV 64).

Omkring 1190 omtaler Odd Munk som den første en *fylkis kirkia*, på Selja (Han skriver at det i Selja er fem kirker, tilsynelatende i tillegg til fylkeskirken: "Der er fylkeskirke og Kristkirken og Mariakirken og Mikaelskirken, Albanuskirken og Sunnivakirken".[15] Det er alminnelig antatt at fylkeskirken skal identifiseres med Bø, som sto for seg selv på Selja, utenfor bispesetet der de øvrige kirkene sto. Hovedprest

[15] *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar*, kap. 21: *Oc i Selio ero fim kirkivr ok þar er fylkis kirkia ok Kriz kirkia ok Mariv k. ok Mikials k. Albanvs k. ok Svnnifo k.*



FIGUR 5. Fjerdinger i Sogn fylke omkring 1322/23. Biskopens følge omfattet trolig 18 personer. De overnattet ved fire forskjellige kirker i Sogn, der Stedje var den fremste kirken, en fylkeskirke, og Hopperstad, Rygg og Tønjum var fjerdingskirker. Det er kjent hvilke prester og kirker som skulle holde kosten (= bidragskirkene). Se også tabell 5. Kart: Frode Iversen.

på Bø nevnes også senere i middelalderen, i 1338 (DN VII 156; tabell 1). Det understøtter teorien om Bø som fylkeskirke.

For øvrig finner vi hovedprest på Stedje i Sogn i 1328 (DN I 197). Stedje var også den eneste kirken i Sogn med *hovedtiende* før ca. 1340 (BK 32a: 162–163), hvilket tydelig indikerer dens status som fylkeskirke.

I Nordhordland var det hovedprest på Hamre i 1329. Skriftemål for større synder skulle foregå hos denne hovedpresten, og det nevnes at dette allerede da var gammel skikk (DN IV 187). Hamre var på denne tiden en "12-øreskirke" (DN I 206). Det dukker opp hovedprester på Voss ("24-øreskirke") i tidsrommet 1348–1391 (figur 6), og på Skåla ("12-øreskirke") i Sunnhordland i 1341 (DN VII 178). Dessuten er det nevnt indirekte *fylkesprest* på Skåla i 1306 (DN III 63). I alt finner vi hoved- og fylkesprester ved fem kirker, én i Firda (Bø), én i Sogn (Stedje), én i Nordhordland (Hamre), én i Sunnhordland (Skåla), og én på Voss (Vangen) (tabell 1).

FIGUR 6. Fylkeskirken på Vossevangen. Steinkirken på Voss ble bygget i Magnus Håkonssons tid, trolig ikke så lenge etter at Voss ble integrert i Gulatingsområdet. Kirken synes å ha vært den eneste offentlige kirken på Voss. Vossevangen kring 1890 (Axel Lindahl).

Tabell 1. Kirker i Bergen bispedømme der det er omtalt hovedprest. Legg merke til at det nevnes fylkesprest på Skåla i 1306.

	Årstall	Fylkesprest/hovedprest	Kilde
Bø	1338	*hofudpreste j Seliu*	DN VII 156
Skåla	1306, 1341	*bref fylkisprestz sins, Sighurdi hofudprest a Skala*	DN III 63, også VII 178
Stedje	1338	*hafudprestrenn a Stædiu*	DN I 197
Hamre	1329	*hofudprestens a Hamre*	DN IV 187, også IV 187
Vangen	1348–1391	*hofuðpreste a Vange*	DN V 204, m.fl., for årene 1365, 1366, 1375, 1384, 1391

Prost

Bare få proster er nevnt i Bergen bispedømme. Proster opptrer ved Stedje kirke 1358 og 1463 og på Vangen kirke på Voss 1364 og 1413 (tabell 2). På Stedje faller prostebetegnelsen i tid etter hovedpresten, mens på Voss brukes termene omtrent samtidig. På Voss dreier det seg trolig om to forskjellige personer, som begge heter Jon til fornavn: Jon hovedprest og prost Jon Trondsson. Sistnevnte opptrer i flere diplomer mellom 1362 til 1364. Dessuten vitnet lagrettemennene på Voss i 1413 om at ingen proster noensinne hadde eid noe i prestegården på Vangen (DN XXI 264).

Tabell 2. Kirker i Bergen bispedømme der det er nevnt prost i middelalderen.

Kirke	Prost	Årstall	Kilde
Stedje	*preposito rurali in Stadhum*, 1358 / *soknaprester war i Stedio oc profaster i Sogn*, 1463	1358, 1463	DN VIII 169; IV 953
Vangen	*profastr á Wangenom a Voss* / Prost også nevnt 1413	1364, 1413	DN I 383; XXI 264

Rector

Det er noe uklart hva betegnelsen *rector* viser til i kildene. Tittelen synes reservert prester ved et øvre sjikt av kirker med flertallig presteskap som kan ha hatt opplæring- og utdanningsfunksjoner for det lokale presteskapet.

Hele 9 av 11 kirker med *rector* var også "12- eller 10-øreskirke" i 1329 (Hordaland) eller visitaskirke i 1322/23 (Sogn og Firda) (tabell 3). Det synes slik å ha sittet *rectori* ved mange av de antatte fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene. Dette gjelder Eid (1322), Bø (1322), Vereide (1310), Hamre (1327), Eivindvik (1327), Fana (1228, 1319, 1339), Os (1338), Ullensvang (1319, 1320), Kinsarvik (1298). De to unntakene er Strandvik kirke i Åkre (1263) og Kaldestad på Husnes (1337). *Rector* Edmund på Strandvik nevnes tidlig, alt i 1263. Han var sendemann for Håkon Håkonsson og dermed ingen hvemsomhelst. Den antatte fjerdingskirken for dette området sto på Os, ikke på Strandvik. Kaldestad var senere tilknyttet Skåla kirke, fylkeskirken for Sunnhordland.

Tabell 3. Kirker i Bergen rurale bispedømme der det er nevnt *rector*. Denne tittelen synes å være reservert for prester med særskilt høy rang der de fleste var tilknyttet antatte fjerdings- og fylkeskirker.

Kirke	Årstall	Rector	Kilde
Bø	1322	*rectore ecclesie de Selio*	DN III 128
Eid	1322	*rectori ecclesie de Eyghi,*	DN III 128
Vereide	1320	*rectoris ecclesia de Winreiđ*	DN III 91
Hamre	1327	*rectoribus ecclesiarum de Hamar…*	DN IV 172
Eivindvik	1327	*rectoribus ecclesiarum . . . de Oeyvindarviik*	DN IV 172
Fana	1228, 1319 og 1339	*rectori et fratribus ecclesie et hospitalis sancte crucis de Fana / rectores apud Fana / rectori ecclesie de Phana*	DN II 6; III 117; IV 237
Os (Framnes)	1338	*rectorem ecclesie de Oose,*	DN IX 111
Ullensvang	1319, 1320	*rectori ecclesie Ullinsvangh / rector ecclesie de Ullinsuang / rectoris ecclesie de Wllinsvang*	DN I 130; VIII 51; VIII 54
Kinsarvik	1298 og 1299, 1309	*Kinzarvik ….ecclesiarum rectoribus / rector ecclesie de Kinzarvik*	DN IV 26 og 27; III 85
Åkre (Strandvik)	1263	*rector ecclesie de Stranwic*	RN I: 1020, se også DN I: 58
Kaldestad (Husnes)	1337	*rectorem ecclesiæ de Caldreghstodum*	DN I: 249

Vi har ingen god forklaring på hvorfor Strandvik og Kaldestad kirker hadde slike rektorer.

Det nevnes for øvrig også *rector* ved bykirken St. Nikolai i Bergen (1320) (DN VII 54) som ikke inngår i analysen. Det kan neppe være tilfeldig at *rector*—betegnelsen i Bergen bispedømme knytter så tett an til et sjikt av antatte fylkes– og fjerdingskirker.

Flertallig presteskap

Foruten ved bykirkene og bispekirkene, Store Kristkirken, St. Maria, St. Nikolai, St. Lavrans, Korskirken og Apostelkirken, alle i Bergen, samt Kristkirken på Selja, finner vi flertallig presteskap på følgende 10 kirker på landsbygda: Bø, Eid, Vereide, Bru og Askvoll i Firda fylke og Tønjum i Sogn, Fana i Nordhordland, Vangen på Voss og Ullensvang og Kinsarvik i Hardanger (tabell 4). Det er dermed mange av de samme kirkene går igjen også på dette området.

Visitas

Foruten de nevnte opptegnelser for Firda og Sogn i Bergen kopibok (DN VII 98) er det få diplomer som vitner om bispevisitaser i Bergen bispedømme. Kopiboken nevner hvilke sogneprester som hadde ansvar for bevertningen. Det normale mønsteret var at biskopen med følge fikk store mengder "bjor og mungåt" (øl og lettøl), vin, samt kost på visitas. Dette er nærmere spesifisert i tabellen nedenfor. Vi har også talt opp samtidige kirker per fjerding i Firda og Sogn, og kan dermed beregne hvor mange som ikke bidro med bevertning dette året. For Eid fjerding mangler det dess-

Tabell 4. Kirker i Bergens bispedømme med flertallig presteskap.

Kirke	Fylke	Flertallig presteskap	Årstall	Kilde
Bø	Firda	*Kolbæini vicario*	1338	DN X 31
Eid	Firda	*Siugurði leighu preste j Oeyghi; prestom aat Oeyghis kirkiu*	1331; 1335	DN VIII 92; DN I 233
Vereide	Firda	*prestinom a Winreide*	ca. 1330	BK 17A
Bru	Firda	*sira Stæinar oc Arnfinner*	1322–23	DN VII 98
Askvoll	Firda	*erfingi sira Flosa oc sira Arnstæin* [Flose var prest på Askvoll ca. 1330 (BK: 24B)]	1322–23	DN VII 98
Tønjum	Sogn	*sira Ærlender oc sira Olafer*	1322–23	DN VII 98
Fana	Nordhordland	*vicarius de Fana*	1338	DN IX 111
Vangen	Voss	*Amundi ok Ogmundr vicarii a Wange, vnderprouest paa Voes*	1317, flere nevnt fram til 1446, 1556	DN I 151; VI 787
Ullensvang	Hardanger	*… et vicarie ecclesie de Vllinswange,*	1309, leieprest i 1340	DN III 84
Kinsarvik	Hardanger	*sira Arne «Viceprest» i Kinsarvik, sira arne vicarius i kinstævik*	1232, 1314	Olafsen 1903: 11; DN XXI 13

verre opplysninger om hvilke prester som var ansvarlig for kosten. For de syv gjenstående fjerdingene finner vi at 28 av 84 sogneprester var pliktige til å bidra dette året. Det utgjør en tredel av prestene. Sannsynlig gikk oppgaven på rundgang mellom prestene innen fjerdingen. Ved neste visitas var trolig en annen gruppe prester ansvarlig for bevertningen (kosten).

Historiker Gudmund Sandvik mener disse bispeveitslene ligner mye på kongenes veitsler i rikssamlingstiden da biskopene fikk sin årlige reide, og at veitsleutgiftene kunne gli over i det allmenkirkelige kravet om *cathedraticum* samt prestenes bispetiende. Veitslene var kostbare for prestene, og det hendte de måtte ta av kirkens vedlikeholdskasse (*fabrica*) for å dekke kostnadene (Sandvik 1965: 72–74). Bevertningen av biskopen var dermed prestenes ansvar, og de kunne neppe pålegge bøndene å delfinansiere visitasen.

I løpet av de tre og en halv ukene (24 overnattinger) visitasen varte, mottok følget 98 tønner bjor (øl), over 52 tønner mungåt (svakt øl), og 10,5 tønner vin. Dersom det i 1322/23 gikk 115,8 liter på tønnen, slik som på 1500-tallet, utgjorde dette formidable 11.000 liter øl, 6.000 liter svakøl og over 1.200 liter vin. I tillegg fikk følget mat på stedet (kost), men den er sjeldent spesifisert (bortsett fra smør på Stedje). Et biskopsfølge på 18 personer ville da ha ca. 42 liter alkoholholdig drikke tilgjengelig per person per dag. Det gir seg selv at så mye kunne ikke biskopsfølget drikke underveis. Vi får tro at de fleste av de 160 tønnene ble lastet om bord på biskopens skip og fraktet til bispesetet.

Følgende kirker var visitaskirker og 'bidragskirker' i 1322/23 (tabell 5):

Tabell 5. Visitaskirker i 1322/23. Tabellen viser hvor store ytelser biskopen og følget skulle ha på sin tre uker lange reise, og hvilke kirker og sogneprester som besørget kosten, og dessuten hvor mange middelalderkirker som fantes i de aktuelle fjerdingene.

Kirke	**Antall netter og ytelser**	**Kirker i fjerdingen som skulle bidra dette året**	**Totalt antall middelalderkirker i fjerdingen ca. 1322/23**
Eid	• 4 overnattinger • 16 tønner bjor • 24 tønner mungåt • Gudleik på Eid og de som er oppnevnt med ham skal holde kosten	1) Eid 2) Flere uidentifiserte prester	19 kirker (de fem på Selja kommer i tillegg). Uklart hvor mange som ikke bidro dette året
Vereide	• 3 overnattinger • 8 tønner bjor • 2 tønner vin • mungåt • 1 prest holder det meste av kosten, 2 andre supplerer (Helgheim og Ålhus)	1) Re (=Breim) 2) Helgheim 3) Ålhus 4) To uidentifiserte prester, trolig fra Vereide	10 kirker. Seks som ikke bidro dette året
Bru	• 2 overnattinger • 8 tønner bjor • 8 tønner mungåt • 1 tønne vin • 5 prester fra 3 kirker holder kosten	1) Kinn 2) Naustdal 3) To uidentifiserte prester, trolig fra Bru	11 kirker. Åtte som ikke bidro dette året
Askvoll	• 3 overnattinger • 10 tønner bjor • 8 tønner + 1 lest mungåt • 2 tønner vin • 4 prester fra 3 kirker holder kosten	1) Vik 2) Kvamme 3) To uidentifiserte prester, trolig fra Askvoll	13 kirker. Ti som ikke bidro dette året
Stedje	• 4 overnattinger • 24 tønner bjor • 9 tønner + 2 lester mungåt • 1 1/2 tønne vin • Smør og annet som hører med å spise • 5 prester skal holde kosten	1) Trolig Stedje (sira Arne) 2) Nes 3) Hafslo 4) Dale 5) Urnes	15 kirker. Ti som ikke bidro dette året
Tønjum	• 4 overnattinger • 16 tønner bjor • 2 lester mungåt • 2 tønner vin • 6 prester skal holde kosten	1) Tønjum (Erlend + Olav) 2) Fortun 3) Årdal 4) Jostedal 5) Æri	10 kirker. Fem kirker som ikke bidro dette året
Aurland (Rygg)	• 2 overnattinger • 8 tønner bjor • 2 små lester mungåt • 1 tønne vin • 2 prester skal holde kosten og 2 supplere	1) Rygg 2) Ølmheim 3) Njøs 4) Rinde	13 kirker. Ni kirker som ikke bidro dette året

Vik (Hopperstad)	• 2 overnattinger • 8 tønner bjor • 1 lest mungåt • 1 tønne vin • 3 prester + 1 kirkeombud skal holde kosten	1) Hopperstad 2) Leikanger 3) Austreim 4) Tenål	12 kirker. Åtte som ikke bidro dette året

Foruten visitaslisten fra 1322/23 finner vi også biskopen tilstede på Stårheim i 1328 (DN II 166), Kyrkjeeide i Stryn i 1328 (BK 11b, 39), i Naustdal i 1308 (DN X 7, 8), på Dale i 1438 (DN I 765) og i Hosanger i 1329 (DN IV 188), men ingen av disse kan knyttes sikkert til ordinære visitaser. Snarere ser det ut til å dreie seg om andre type saker: Om ekteskapssaker, jordhandler og tiendebetaling på nøttesanking.

Fra Voss har vi bedre bevart materiale og kan følge seks av biskopens visitaser over 180 år. Fire av visitasene fant sted om høsten, mellom 14. august og 13. oktober, mens to visitaser foregikk i mai måned.

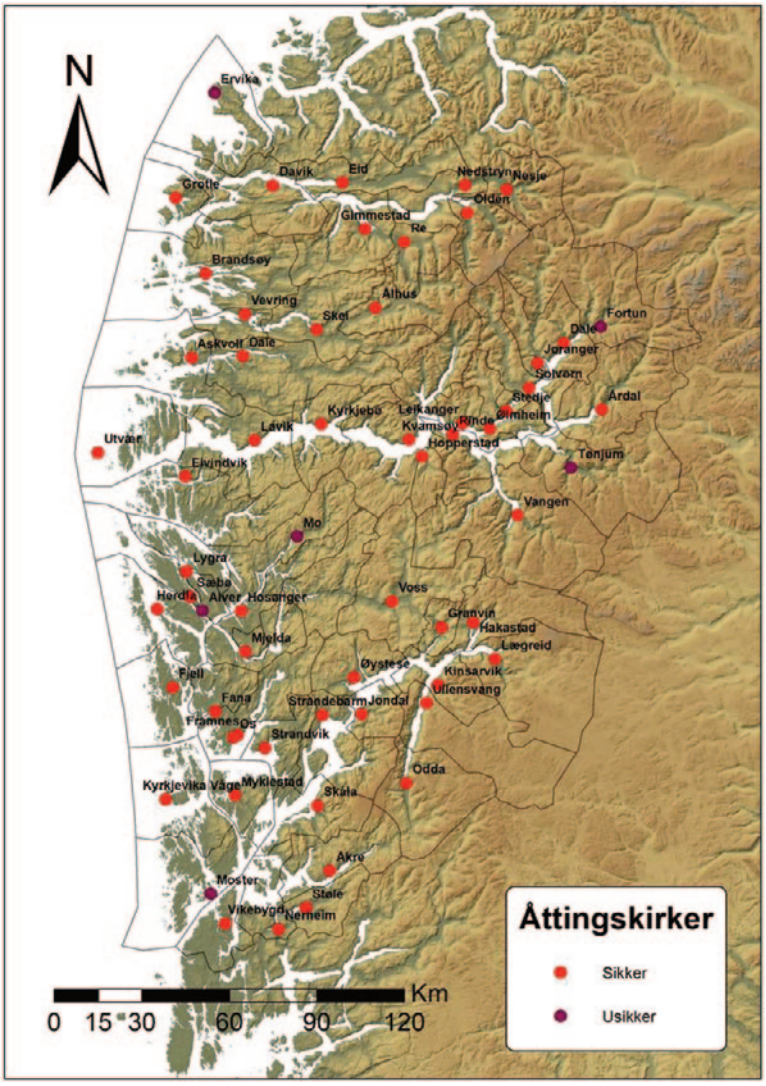
Det framtrer ikke et like klart årstidsmønster i Bergen bispedømme som i Eidsivatingslagen og Stavanger bispedømme. Muligvis ble nordre del av bispedømmet visitert vår og sommer, slik en visitas på Eid 1. mai i 1342 antyder (DN VIII 15), og søndre del sommer og høst, slik de fleste diplomene fra Voss indikerer (tidligste er 15. mai) (tabell 6).

Tabell 6. Kjente visitaser i Bergen bispedømme. Utenom visitaslisten fra 1322/23 er det bare kjent visitaser ved to kirker i Bergen bispedømme.

Kirke	Årstall	Visitas	Dato	Kilde
Eid	1342	*herra Paalls med guðs miskunn ærkibiskups j Nidarose* [på visitas] *fyrst til stadærss* ville innfinne seg der 1. mai	01/05-1342	DN VIII 150 *til stadærss* må leses ikke som feilskrift for til Stad (jf RN 5: 544), men helst til en kirke med flere prester, her Eid
Vangen, Voss	1309–1487		25/9-1309 13/10-1319 28/5-1365 01/10-1367 14/8-1441 15/5-1487	DN III 82 DN IV 130 DN I 385 DN XXI 125 DN XXI 398 DN XXI 624

Åttingskirkene

Vi finner i alt 53 mulige åttingskirker i Firda, Sogn, Nordhordland og Sunnhordland, ingen på Voss, utenom fylkeskirken, og 8 i Hardanger (tabell 7 og 8) (figur 7). Det gir 62 slike kirker i Bergen bispedømme. For kirkene vi regner som *sikre*, er det enten sammenfall mellom skipreidenavn og kirkenavn eller belagte skipreideting. Ti av forslagene er vi mer usikre på, men finner ingen klare alternativer.



FIGUR 7. Forslag til åttingskirker i Bergen bispedømme i tidlig middelalder. Kart: Frode Iversen.

Tabell 7, a–d. Forslag til kirkesteder med åttingskirker i Nordhordland, Sunnhordland, Firda og Sogn, satt opp fylkesvis. Dette tolker vi som de tidligste lokale offentlige kirkene i bispedømmet, trolig tidlig på 1000-tallet. Fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene kan derimot representere et noe eldre sjikt av offentlige kirker, og ha vært initiert av kongemakten på slutten av 900-tallet.

Tabell 7a. Kirkesteder med åttingskirker i Nordhordland

	Fylke	**Skipreide**	**Offentlig kirke (åttingskirke)**	**Status**	**Kilde**
1	Nordhordland	Gulen	Eivindvik	Fjerdingskirke	
2	Nordhordland	Radøy	Sæbø (1329)	Sikker	
3	Nordhordland	Lindås	Lygra (1329)	Sikker	Tingstadbakken (Ones 2000: 291)
4	Nordhordland	Eikanger	Mo?	Usikker	1382 *Moskirkiu sokn*, DN XII 113 / før 1340: *Moo i tysni*, BK 7
5	Nordhordland	Alenfit	Seim? Nærmeste kirke	Usikker	Tingvollen nær Seim
6	Nordhordland	Hosanger	Hosanger	Sikker	NRJ III: 446
7	Nordhordland	Herdla	Herdla	Sikker	*Herlla skipreida*, DN II 514
8	Nordhordland	Arna	Bruvik	Usikker	Eneste kirke i skipreiden og midt i
9	Nordhordland	Mjelde	Mjelde	Sikker	NRJ I: 126
10	Nordhordland	Sotra	Fjell	Usikker	
11	Nordhordland	Skjelde	Fana	Fjerdingskirke	

Tabell 7b. Forslag til kirkesteder med åttingskirker i Sunnhordland.

	Fylke	**Skipreide**	**Offentlig kirke (åttingskirke)**	**Status**	**Kilde**
1	Sunnhordland	Os	Os i Framnes	Sikker	DN III 162, NRJ II: 531
2	Sunnhordland	Våg	Forsv. kirke: Kyrkjevika ved Våge	Usikker	Våge gir navn til Våg skipreide
3	Sunnhordland	Uggedal	Uggdal (Myklestad)	Sikker	NRJ II: 518
4	Sunnhordland	Strandvik	Strandvik (Åkre)	Sikker	NRJ II: 533
5	Sunnhordland	Strandebarm	Strandebarm	Sikker	DN X 770
6	Sunnhordland	Kvinnherad	Kvinnherad (Skåla)	Fylkeskirke	DN VI 380
7	Sunnhordland	Føyno	Moster?	Usikker	G 10
8	Sunnhordland	Førde	Vikebygd?	Usikker	*Fiorde skelberede* NRJ II: 525
9	Sunnhordland	Fjelberg	Fjelberg (NB Nerheim 1329)	Sikker	*Ffieldbær skiprede*, NRJ I: 127
10	Sunnhordland	Skånevik	Skånevik	Sikker	*Skanewigh* [skipreide?]: NRJ II: 522
11	Sunnhordland	Etne	Etne (Støle)	Fjerdingskirke	DN XVIII 15

Tabell 7c. Forslag til kirkesteder med åttingskirker i Sogn

	Fylke	Skipreide	Offentlig kirke (åttingskirke)	Status	Kilde
1	Sogn	Utvær	Utvær St Clemens	Sikker	Skipreiden har navn etter øya (Steinsøy 1982: 13)
2	Sogn	Lavik	Lavik	Sikker	
3	Sogn	Klævoll	Kyrkjebø (Klævoll (Kirkebø) Tinglag)	Sikker	
4	Sogn	Kvamsøy	Kvamsøy	Sikker	Kvamsøy skipreide, se Hoprekstad (1957: 124)
5	Sogn	Vik	Vik (Hopperstad eller Fleti?)	Usikker	Hopperstad i *Vig skibree*, NRJ III: 407. 1522, se også NRJ III: 409
6	Sogn	Fedjos	Rinde (Feios)	Sikker	NRJ III: 405
7	Sogn	Systrond	Leikanger	Usikker	*I Søstrandt skibree*, NRJ III: 385
8	Sogn	Norum	Ølmheim (Norum)	Sikker	NRJ III: 388
9	Sogn	Solvorn	Solvorn	Sikker	NRJ III: 393
10	Sogn	Sogndal	Stedje	Fylkeskirke	*Sognnedall skibree*, NRJ III: 390
11	Sogn	Aurland	Vangen	Fjerdingskirke	*Wlland skibree*, NRJ III: 402
12	Sogn	Lærdal	Tønjum (fjerdingskirke) Lægreid (Årdal)	Fjerdingskirke	*Lerdall skibree*, NRJ III: 400
13	Sogn	Årdal	Årdal	Sikker	*Ordall skibree*, NRJ III: 399
14	Sogn	Marifjæren	Joranger	Usikker	*Mantz skibree* NRJ III: 395 gnr. 103 Marifjøra ligger i Joranger sogn
15	Sogn	*Fortun	Fortun	Usikker	Før 1340 (*j hofvæ j fortuni*, BK 33a)
16	Sogn	Dale	Dale	Sikker	*fimtar stemnu til Dals*, DN II 146

Tabell 7d. Forslag til kirkesteder med åttingskirker i Firda

	Fylke	Skipreide	Offentlig kirke (åttingskirke)	Status	Kilde
1	Firda	Stadt	Ervika?	Usikker	
2	Firda	Davik	Davik	Sikker	*Dhauika skipreido*, DN XII 128
3	Firda	Eid	Eid	Fylkeskirke	*Eygis skipreiðu* DN III 124
4	Firda	Gjemmestad	Gjemmestad	Sikker	*Gemlastada skipreidho* DN XII 127
5	Firda	Breim	Re (Breim)	Sikker	*Breideims skipreidu* DN IV 239
6	Firda	Olden	Olden	Sikker	*Alda skipreidho* DN XII 223
7	Firda	Nedstryn	Eide (Nedstryn)	Sikker	*Nidstrionv skipreidv* DN I 546
8	Firda	Oppstryn	Nesje (Oppstryn)	Sikker	*Vppstrionv skipreidv* DN I 546
9	Firda	Jølster	Ålhus (Jølster)	Sikker	*Iolmstar skipreidu*, DN XIII 11
10	Firda	Bremanger	Grotle (Bremanger)	Sikker	
11	Firda	Brandsøy	Brandsøy	Sikker	
12	Firda	Vevring	Vevring	Sikker	
13	Firda	Førde	Førde (Skei)	Sikker	
14	Firda	Askvoll	Askvoll	Sikker	
15	Firda	Dale	Dale [i Dalsfjorden]	Sikker	*Dals skiprede* DN IV 981

Voss skiller seg ut ved at det var tre "8-øreskirker" i 1329 (Vinje, Oppheim og Evanger) i tillegg til fylkeskirken (Vangen). Kjerneområdet i *Vossaveldi* var delt i åtte mindre, administrative områder kalt åttinger. Her slo aldri skipreidene igjennom. Åttingene framkommer samlet i et brev i 1343, der seks gamle menn forklarte for Gulatingslagmannen hvordan veiarbeidet var fordelt mellom bøndene på Voss, at ingen hadde noen gang vært pålagt større plikter, med hensyn til arbeid eller levering av virke, enn hva manntallet tilsa, og at veibøtingen var ordnet åttingsvis (DN VI 167; Rygh 1910: 559–560). Vi kan ikke utelukke at det har vært én kirke i hver av disse åttingene, men har altså bare klart å finne fire slike kirker (Haukenæs 1887: 104; Berg 1977: 189–190).

Vangen var tingsted og det naturlige samlingstedet på Voss. Her startet planleggingen av fylkeskirken i Håkon Håkonssons tid. I 1271 takket kong Magnus Håkonsson *ollum mannum i Vangs kirkiu sokn* for at de hadde valgt å bygge kirken sin i stein i stedet for i tre, og dermed hadde fulgt hans fars råd (DN IV 2).

Olav Haraldsson skal ha vært på veitsle på Voss alt i 1023, og han holdt samtidig ting med bøndene "der det heter Vang". Tinglyden på Voss fant det da fornuftig å ta kristendommen (*Heimskringla, Olav den helliges saga*, kap. 121). Vossevangen er nevnt som tingsted flere ganger i diplommaterialet, tidligst i 1333 (DN III 170). Her ble det holdt våpenting i 1343 (DN XXI 69), og i 1563 nevnes egen stevnestue (DN IX 788). Et spesielt trekk ved Vangen kirke er at kirkegården skal ha vært delt inn i 8 bolker, en bolk for hver av grendene på Voss, i tillegg til en niende for fremmende (Bendixen 1904: 568). I sum finner vi ingen sammenheng mellom de administrative enhetene på Voss og kirkeorganisasjonen, hverken for skipreidene eller åttingene. Konklusjonen blir derfor at det bare var kirken på Vossevangen som kan regnes som en offentlig kirke i dette fylket.

Dette står i skarp kontrast til Hardanger. Dette fylket var oppdelt i åtte tinglag i 1521. Tinglagene synes å korrespondere med skipreidene. Hardanger hadde ikke "8-øreskirker" i 1329. Derimot var det en nær sammenheng mellom kirkene og tinglagene i 1521 (tabell 8).

Tabell 8. Kirker og tinglag i Hardanger i 1521, og deres status i 1329.

Nr.	NRJ III. 1521	Kirke	Subsidium 1329 (DN I 673)	Tolkning status
1	*Vllingswangting* (NRJ: 151)	Ullensvang	12 øre	Fylkeskirke
2	*Østesøøn tingt* (NRJ: 138)	Øystese	10 øre	Fjerdingskirke
3	*Graffuetingt* (NRJ: 135)	Granvin	10 øre	Fjerdingskirke
4	*Vlwigt ting* (NRJ: 143)	Ulvik	10 øre	Fjerdingskirke
5	*Jonadall tingt* (NRJ III: 133)	Jondal	½ mark	Åttingskirke
6	*Kynssylwigt tingt* (NRJ: 146)	Kinsarvik	12 øre	Fylkeskirke
7	*Odhe tingt* (NRJ: 150)	Odda	½ mark	Åttingskirke
8	*Eidefiord tingt* (NRJ: 145)	Eidfjord		Åttingskirke. Overført Stavanger bd. før BK.

Vi konkluderer da med at det i Hardanger fantes en offentlig kirke i hver åtting og at dette kan ha dype røtter. Voss og Hardanger var ganske like med hensyn til befolkningsstørrelse (i 1769 5858 mot 6503) og antall gårdstun (431 mot 496). Begge landskapene var delt i åttinger. Likevel synes private kirker å ha dominert på Voss fram mot 1300, i motsetning til i Hardanger.

Oppsummering av resultatene

Vi finner i alt åtte fylkeskirker og 15 fjerdingskirker i den rurale delen av Bergen bispedømme (tabell 9, figur 8). Disse synes å ha beholdt sine funksjoner gjennom middelalderen. Ved fylkeskirkene finner vi hovedprester og fylkesprester (Stedje og Skåla). For Sogn og Firda lar disse seg identifisere i en visitasliste fra 1322/23, og for Nordhordland, Sunnhordland og Hardanger ved de såkalte "12-, 10-, og 8-øreskirkene" i 1329. Av seks fylker i bispedømmet mangler bare Voss fylke fjerdingskirker. Her hadde fylkeskirken dobbel avgift (24 øre).

Også fjerdingskirkene hadde flere prester. Ved 10 av 23 fylkes- og fjerdingskirker kan det dokumenteres flertallig presteskap. Tolkningen av fjerdingskirker i Hardanger er noe mer usikker. Vi har landet på Øystese, Granvin og Hakastad som opptrer i 1329-listen som "10- øreskirker".

I ni tilfeller finner vi at termen *rector* er knyttet til et sjikt av fylkes- og fjerdingskirker. Betegnelsen er likevel ikke eksklusivt for fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene da også to andre kirker i Sunnhordland hadde rektorer.

Tabell 9. Sammenfatning av resultatene for fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene i Bergen bispedømme.

Fylke	**Kirke**	**Rector**	**Flertallig Prestes.**	**Fylkespr. /hovedpr.**	**Prost**	**Visitas / «12- eller 10-øres-kirke»**	**Tolkning**
Nordhordland	Hamre	x		x		x (12)	Fylkeskirke
	Eivindvik	x				x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
	Haus					x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
	Fana	x	x			x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
Sunnhordland	Skåla			x		x (12)	Fylkeskirke
	Framnes	x				x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
	Moster					x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
	Støle					x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
Voss	Vangen		x	x	x	x (24)	Fylkeskirke
Hardanger	Kinsarvik	x	x			x (12)	Fylkeskirke
	Ullensvang	x	x			x (12)	Fylkeskirke
	Øystese					x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
	Granvin					x (10)	Fjerdingskirke
	Hakastad					x (10)	Fjerdingskirke

Sogn	Stedje			x	x	x	Fylkeskirke
	Hopperstad					x	Fjerdingskirke
	Vangen					x	Fjerdingskirke
	Tønjum		x			x	Fjerdingskirke
Firda	Eid	x	x			x	Fylkeskirke
	Bø	x	x	x			Fylkeskirke
	Vereide	x	x			x	Fjerdingskirke
	Bru		x			x	Fjerdingskirke
	Askvoll		x			x	Fjerdingskirke
Sunnhordland	Åkre	x					Annet
Sunnhordland	Kaldestad	x					Annet

Det hefter større usikkerhet ved identifikasjonen av åttingskirkene. Samlet finner vi 48 lokale åttingskirker. Flere fylkes- og fjerdingskirker fungerte også som åttingskirker. Vi foreslår at hver skipreide i kystfylkene hadde sin åttingskirke, og at disse ble etablert som kirkesteder tidlig på 1000-tallet i overenskomst mellom kongemakten og tinglyden i forbindelse med at kristendommen ble akseptert, kanskje på Dragseidet i 997 eller på Moster i 1024. Voss skiller seg ut ved at området mangler potensielle åttingskirker.

Diskusjon

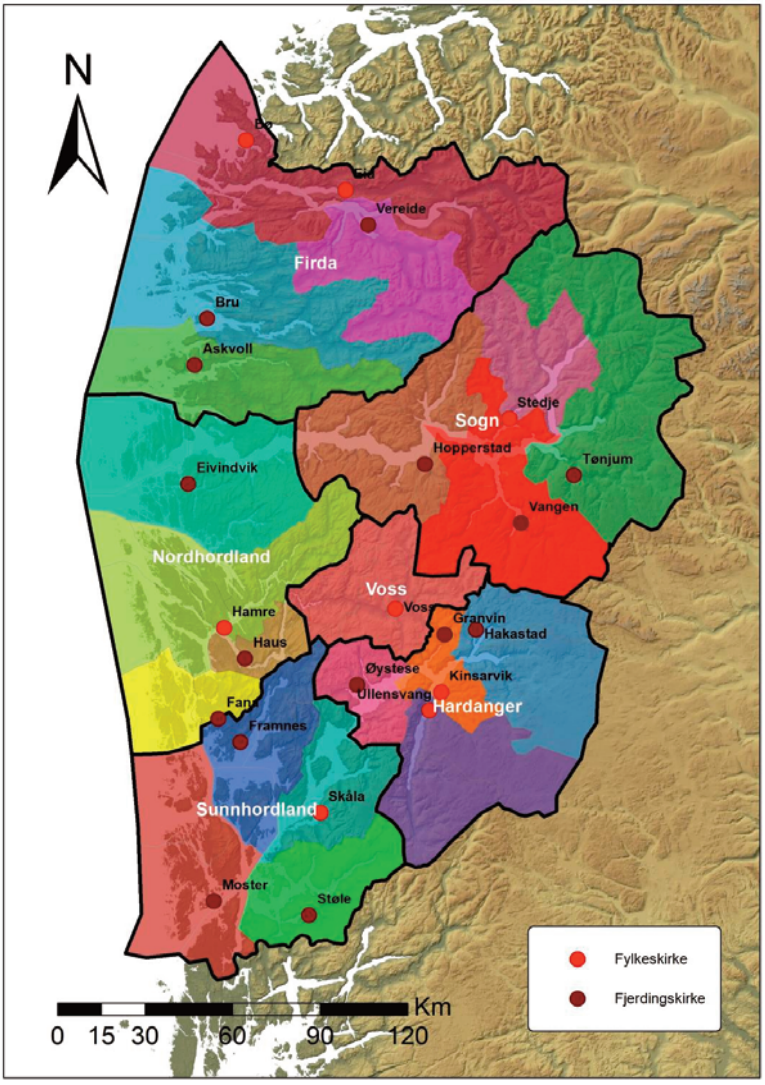
Vi vender tilbake til problemstillingen: Var alle de tidlige kirkene privatkirker? Når ble det etablert en offentlig kirkeorganisasjon i Norge? Og hvilke kirker omfattet den?

Arkeologiske funn gjort i Stavanger domkirke, og på Fitjar,[16] viser at kongen alt i siste halvdel av 900-tallet etablerte kirker langs kysten av Vest-Norge.[17]

Mens de øvre delene av kirkeorganisasjonen holdt seg gjennom middelalderen, ble det nederste nivået betydelig endret utover på 1200-tallet. Årsaken er å finne ikke bare i ny sognestruktur og endelig innføring av tidende, men også i befolkningsvekst og store samfunnsendringer med oppløsning av trelldomsinstitusjonen og endringer i elitenettverkene.

[16] En kistegrav innved den nåværende kirken på gården er radiologisk datert til AD 890–1025 (Dunlop 1998). Også på Veøya i Romsdalen er det registrert kirketufter datert til samme tidsrom (Solli 1999).

[17] En tilsvarende situasjon ser vi på det ytre Østlandet, der det også eksisterte et Viken bispedømme allerede på slutten av 900-tallet (Munch 1874: 555–560, Sveaas Andersen 1977: 190).



FIGUR 8. Forslag til fylkes- og fjerdingskirker i Bergen bispedømme i tidlig middelalder. Kart: Frode Iversen.

I *Ágrip* fortelles det at Olav Tryggvason (995–1000) for første gang la fram det kristne budskapet på Moster, med Guds støtte og i opposisjon til Håkon "den onde" (Håkon Ladejarl Sigurdsson). Folket tok imot troen og Olav makten. Videre kristnet Olav fem land, Norge, Island, Hjaltland, Orknøyene og Færøyene, og lot oppføre kirker, først på sine hovedgårder. For å tekkes folk erstattet han blot og blotdrikkelag med drikkelag ved jul og påske, mungåt ved Johannesmesse og høstøl ved mikkelsmesse (*Ágrip*, kap 19).

Den Legendariske Olavssaga (kap. 19) (ca. 1200) forteller at Olav Haraldsson, etter råd fra biskop Grimkjell, la jordegods til kirkene Olav Tryggvason hadde reist, slik at hver "hver fylkeskirke" (*hværrar fylcis kirkiu*) fikk jordegods til en årlig verdi av 1 mark sølv. Sagaene gir altså Olav Tryggvason æren for å ha oppført de første fylkeskirkene, og Olav Haraldsson for å ha gitt dem et økonomisk fundament. I så fall må sporene etter de kristne menighetene før dette helst knytte an til tidlige høgendeskirker. Flere av disse har åpenbart tilknytning til kongemakten i en tidlig fase.

Kirkeforsker og tidligere biskop Fridtjof S. Birkeli (1973) delte kristningsprosessen i tre faser: (1) Først en infiltrasjonsfase, som varte til omkring 950. I denne perioden fikk de skandinaviske landene kontakt med kristnende områder og fikk impulser derfra. Dernest fulgte (2) en misjonsfase fra ca. 950 til 1030, og så (3) en fase der kirken bygde ut sin organisasjon.

Vi mener dette må nyanseres. Fasen fra 950 til nær 1000 karakteriseres av kongelige og private byggerier. I denne perioden er det lite offentlig utbygging, heller ikke av kongen. I årene rundt år 1000 startet en storstilt offentlig kirkeutbygging på flere nivåer. Det skjer i samarbeid med lokal-, fjerdings- og fylkestingene.

Våre beregninger viser at kanskje så mye som en tredel av kirkene i bispedømmet (71 av 191) var offentlig alt på 1000-tallet. Først med endelig innføring av tienden i det meste av riket, i siste halvdel av 1100-tallet og tidlig 1200-tallet, utvikles etter hvert hoved- og annekskirkesystemet. En ny gruppe av skolerte prester med egne prestegårder i Gulatingslagen fikk nå overoppsyn med to til tre sogneprester i sine prestegjeld. I løpet av de 100 årene etter etableringen av kirkeprovinsen ble nær alle kirkene offentlige.

En tredel offentlige kirker i Vest-Norge alt på 1000-tallet, er en stor andel sammenliknet med andre land i Europa. Historiker Arne Odd Johnsen (1955) peker på at legat kardinal Nicholas Brekespear hadde særlig suksess med å føre fram Kirkens sak i Norge da erkeprovinsen ble opprettet i 1152/53. *Canon I* vakte oppsikt og reduserte rettighetene *patronene* (*upphaldsmaðr*) hadde til privatkirkene. Det brøt med egenkirkesystemet "... som opprinnelig hersket i Norge som i alle germanske land" (Johnsen 1955: 40). Brekespear oppnådde særskilt gode resultater i Norge og

overskred "rådende kutyme" i Mellom-Europa. Han ble da også pave etter sin bedrift nordpå.

Våre funn indikerer at det fantes en tradisjon for offentlig kirker i Norge da forhandlingene om erkeprovinsen foregikk. Kanskje var ikke bruddet med den private eiendomsretten så sterkt som Johnsen tenkte seg – særlig ikke i Vest-Norge, ett av de viktigste kristne landskapene i landet. Åpenbart kan det ha hatt betydning for avtalen som ble inngått mellom de norske kongene og paven i Roma.

Biskopen beholdt likevel rettighetene til visitas ved de eldre fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene. Der fantes det et kompetent flertallig presteskap med hovedprester, rektorer, vikarer og administrativt personell (proster) som ivaretok biskopens interesser. På 1300-tallet ble fortsatt biskopsreiden samlet inn via dette eldre systemet, som dannet kjernen i den indre organiseringen av forholdet mellom biskop og presteskap (jf. Tryti 1987). Det nye systemet med hoved- og annekskirker siktet mer mot å organisere presteskap og menigheter, og var slik mer utadrettet mot offentligheten.

Hvordan utviklet den offentlige kirken seg i Norge, og hvilken rolle spilte kongen, eliten og tinget? Vi har først og fremst konsentrert oss om å identifisere det vi forstår som offentlige kirker, det vil si fylkes-, fjerdings- og åttingskirker. Etter vår mening kunne systemet med åttingskirkene, som vi oppfatter som lokale offentlige kirker, ikke ha blitt utbygd før tinget formelt hadde akseptert kristendommen. Det skjer tidligst på Dragseidtinget i 997.

Utviklingen av bispedømmet

Da Adam av Bremen skrev i 1070-årene var bispedømmegrensene i Norge ennå ikke fiksert. De tidlige misjonsområdene var løst organisert. Fastere bispedømmer tok først form under Olav Kyrre (1067–1093). På Olav Tryggvassons tid (995–1000) ble grunnlaget lagt for at Selja skulle bli et misjonssentrum. Myten om St. Sunniva og Seljamennene tok form, og allerede tidlig på 1000-tallet må det ha vært et miljø på Selja som drev misjonsvirksomhet mot nord, og som hadde et kristent bakland i sør. Ifølge myten lot Olav Tryggvason reise en kirke for de kristne som allerede var på stedet.

Vi er enige med rettshistoriker Knut Robberstad (1981: 6) som mente at det eldste Selja bispedømme trolig også omfattet deler av Nord-Vestlandet. Han la vekt på at Dragseidtinget i 997 samlet tingfolk fra Sogn, Firda, Sunnmøre og Romsdal, og at kongen dernest dro til Nordmøre og kristnet det fylket (*Heimskringla, Olav Tryggvasons saga*, kap. 59). Videre vil vi framheve at Håkon den godes misjonsforsøk omfattet tre fylker nord for Selja, og da også Nordmøre (*Heimskringla, Håkon den godes saga*, kap. 13). Kanskje var det først med etableringen av den norske kirkeprovinsen

i 1152/53 at grensen mellom Bergen og Nidaros bispedømmer blir satt slik vi kjenner den fra senere, og områdene Sunnmøre, Romsdal og Nordmøre kom under Nidaros bispedømme.

I antologien om innskriften på Kulisteinen (red. Stige & Risbøl 2021) gir historiker Jón Viðar Sigurðsson et viktig bidrag. Den kjente runesteinen i Romsdal vitner om at kristendommen hadde vært i landet i 12 vintre: *Þórir ok Hallvarðr reistu stein þenna ept Ulfljót(?) … Tolf vetr hafði kristindómr verit í Nóregi…*. Det er interessant at Sigurðsson (2021: 179) leser ordet 'kristendom' på innskriften som synonymt med 'kristenretter'. Han mener dette konkret viser til Olav Haraldssons besøk i Nidaros i 1017, da Olav skal ha satt en kristenrett etter Grimkjells og andre lærdes råd. Siden dro Olav sørover langs kysten og satte kristenretter (*kristin log*) på alle ting. Deretter dro han til Viken i 1019 og nordover i 1020. Tallet 12 oppfatter han for øvrig som et rundtall for 10. Han daterer dermed innskriften til 1027.

Det er imidlertid ingenting i veien for at innskriften kan være eldre. Filolog Aslak Liestøl foreslo alt i 1957 at innskriften henviste til Dragseidtinget i 997 (NIyR IV: 286). I så fall blir dateringen 1008 eller 1009, altså i Ladejarlens styringstid. I norsk sammenheng nevnes sjeldent Svein Tjugeskjeggs lovgiving. Ifølge Adam gjorde danekongen slutt på avgudsdyrkingen og innførte kristendommen ved lov (Adam av Bremen II.36, II.41). Hvorvidt en slik lov ble tatt opp i de norske landskapslovene under hans overherredømme tidlig på 1000-tallet, er likevel uklart.

Innenfor det eldste Selja bispedømme kan det i alt dokumenteres seks Kristkirker: På Veøya i Romsdal (DN XV 1; Brendalsmo 2008: 48–49), på Borgund på Sunnmøre (AB: 133, 136), på Selja, i Bergen, på Støle i Sunnhordland (JBB: 210) og i Stavanger (Kviterud 2006). Kirker med denne dedikasjonen har blitt satt i sammenheng med tidlige residenskirker for biskopene før det ble faste bispeseter (Taranger 1890: 219–221; Helle 1997: 244).

Hypotesen er besnærende, i og med at fire av disse er reist på markedsplasser (for å bruke et nøytralt begrep). Dette var steder hvor mange folk samlet seg, og kristendommen kunne nå ut. I tillegg var misjonsbiskopene beskyttet av høvdingen eller kongen som ivaretok freden og sikkerheten på stedet. Adam av Bremen forteller om Ansgar og Wittmar som drev misjonsvirksomhet i Birka på oppdrag for keiser Ludvig den fromme i 829, fulgt av erkebiskop Unni 70 år senere (Adam av Bremen I.21, I.60). Han nevner også at Ansgar vigslet biskoper til byene Slesvig, Ribe og Århus (Adam av Bremen II.4). Det er likevel bare kirkegården under Stavanger domkirke som med sikkerhet kan dateres til tidligste kristen tid (Høgestøl & Sandvik 2020: 168–169). Muligheten for at Kristkirkene skulle være uttrykk for en tidlig utbygging av residenser får så langt lite støtte i de arkeologiske kildene.

Uansett, den offentlige kirken bredte seg ut på bygdene. I hovedsak er det dette systemet vi mener å kunne påvise i denne artikkelen. Selv i de innerste fjordområdene og på Voss trengte den offentlige kirken gjennom, ved hjelp av tinginstitusjonen. Inkluderingen av åttingskirkene medførte at ca. en tredel av kirkene i bispedømmet allerede tidlig på 1000-tallet ble et ledd i den offentlige kirkeorganisasjonen.

Kristkirken på Selja var den viktigste residensen i tidlig kristen tid for biskopene som skrev seg til Selja (*biscup i Seliu*), og kan ha fungert som et senter for misjonsmarken videre nordover. Fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene ble trolig anlagt som offentlige kirker i den tidlige kristningsperioden. Vi finner i alt 23 slike offentlige kirker i den tidligste fasen (fylkes- og fjerdingskirker). Kongen er initiativtaker, og lar også sitt aristokrati oppføre slike kirker på kongelig veitslejord (eksempel Støle og Stedje). Det er sannsynlig at de kongsbygde kirkene ble reist på eiendommer som lå til kronen (*bona regalia*), i og med at flere av disse kan belegges som forleninger til lendmenn og senere kongelige tjenestemenn i middelalderen.

Betegnelsen og oppkomsten av åttinger og åttingskirker er et mysterium. Vi vet sikkert at det ble bygget kirker på Vestlandet ved midten av 900-tallet. Det er nettopp i denne perioden at skipreidesystemet etableres som et nasjonalt forsvarssystem, og det kan tenkes at ordet *skipreide* da fortrengte en eldre betegnelse, *åtting*, i kystområdene. Det virker lite sannsynlig at begrepet *åttingskirke* er en ren normativ konstruksjon, slik det har vært hevdet. Denne påstanden trenger omfattende dokumentasjon for å ha troverdighet. Åtting opptrer i mange sammenhenger i Gulatingsloven, ikke bare i forbindelse med åttingskirker. Det fremgår klart at åtting og skipreide brukes synonymt om Gulatingslovens manntallskrets (G 298; G 296; Robberstad 1981: 394). Det viser tydelig en nær sammenheng mellom åttingen og skipreiden, og at det sannsynligvis handler om endring i begrepsbruk over tid. Begrepet *åttingskirke* var fortsatt i bruk i Magnusteksten i 1160-årene (G 12). Hadde det vært en ren normativ konstruksjon er det lite sannsynlig at begrepet ville overlevd lovrevisjonen som fant sted da.

Spørsmålet vårt er likevel når disse åttingskirkene ble oppført av tinglyden. Det kan neppe ha skjedd før på 1000-tallet gjennom en enighet mellom kongemakten og tingsystemet. Da kan man forestille seg at termen *åtting* ennå ikke var utkonkurrert av den yngre skipreide-betegnelsen. En nærliggende mulighet er at hovedutbyggingen av åttingskirkene skjedde etter at tinget hadde godtatt kristendommen. På Vestlandet kan det ha vært allerede fra 997. Alternativt kan det ha skjedd noen tiår senere, i forbindelse med Mostertinget.

Vi finner 53 åttingskirker i Firda, Sogn og Hordaland, én på Voss (= fylkeskirken) og 8 i Hardanger: I alt 62 kirker der kanskje 13 også var fjerdings- eller fylkeskirker.

Det er påfallende at disse kirkene synes å ha betalt 8 øre i paveavgift på 1300-tallet. Dette kan være en gammel ordning, men det er tvilsomt at begrepet *åttingskirke* kommer fra denne avgiften. Det er mer sannsynlig at begrepet viser til en geografisk enhet. Det kan være av betydning at alle fylkene på Vestlandet, inkludert Rogaland, Møre og Romsdal, men unntatt Firda, besto av et antall skipreider som er delelig med 8 (fra sør: 32, 32, 16, 15, 16 og 8). Både Voss og Hardanger besto av 8 tingkretser hver (DN VI 167), og ved Vangen kirke på Voss var kirkegården inndelt i åtte bolker i tillegg til en niende for fremmede (Bendixen 1904: 568).

Ifølge Frostatingslovens kristenrett hadde *fylkis mænn alla* under trussel om bøter til biskopen plikt til å bygge fylkeskirker og tjærebre hvert tredje år (F II 7). Et tilsvarende påbud finnes ikke i Gulatingslovens kristenrett, bare vedlikeholdsplikt av alle typer kirker.[18] Dette viser trolig at fylkes-, fjerdings- og åttingskirker allerede eksisterte da Olavsteksten ble vedtatt på tinget. Når kongene mot slutten av 1000-tallet begynte å bygge i stein, og aristokratene fulgte etter gjennom 1100-tallet, må vi tro at vedlikeholdsplikten ikke gjaldt deres kirker. For åttingskirkene er det mulig at vedlikeholdet falt på tingfolket fram til tienden ble vanlig på 1200-tallet. Da falt vedlikeholdsplikten uansett bort for samtlige kirker, og offentlig oppnevnte kirkeverger tok over ansvaret.

Samtlige fylkeskirker i de seks fylkene på Olavs tid var upretensiøse trebygninger. Et godt eksempel er Hamre kirke, der den eldste kjente bygningen var i stavkonstruksjon, og som på slutten av 1500-tallet ble erstattet med en laftet tømmerbygning der skipet målte 8,6 x 8,6 m eller 8,5 x 10,6 m. Tre av kirkene ble derimot nybygd i stein. Ullensvang og Vangen (Voss) på 1200-tallet,[19] Skåla (Kvinnherad) noe tidligere.[20] Skåla og Vangen, og kanskje også Ullensvang, var krongods.

Også et flertall av de 23 fjerdings- og fylkeskirkene var trebygninger gjennom hele middelalderen. Fire av dem ble nybygd i stein: Støle, Moster, Fana og Vangen i Aurland, og de tre førstnevnte sto på krongods. Vangen kan ha vært lendmannsgård,

[18] G 10–13. En tilsvarende vedlikeholdsplikt finnes også i Eidsivating (E 34, 36, 39) og Borgarting (B 8).

[19] Kirken på Vangen kan være innviet i 1277 (Berg 1977).

[20] Hoff & Lidén (2000: 152–153) antyder en byggetid omkring 1275–1300. Generelt om dateringer: Vårt utgangspunkt er kirke*stedet*, og dette er som oftest eldre enn eldste daterte kirkebygning. Dette blir tydelig ved kirkesteder som Ullensvang, Vangen og Skåla (og flere andre), at det må ha stått eldre kirker der, i og med at de på 1300-tallet omtales som fylkeskirker, noe de neppe ville blitt dersom kirkestedet først ble etablert på 1200-tallet. Rundt 200 m ned for Skåla kirke ble det 2008 påvist en middelaldersk kirkegård (Birkenes 2004). Det er høyst tvilsomt at kirkestedet skulle være flyttet derfra og opp til der Skåla kirke står (jf. Rygh 1910: 42).

og dermed også krongods, i og med at en stor, kongevennlig ætt skal ha hatt sitt sete i Aurland, men uvisst på hvilken gård (Ohnstad 1962: 101-112).

Det kan se ut til at det meste av dette steinbyggeriet på 1100- og 1200-tallet skjer på gårder der det satt lendmenn, eller som var i kongens eie. Det kan ha vært deres måte å vise sin makt og posisjon i samfunnet på (*conspicuous consumption*).

Det var bare fire steinkirker blant de 45 "ordinære" åttingskirkene i områdene utenom Voss og Hardanger (Herdla, Kvamsøy, Leikanger og Dale) (de åtte høyere rangerte offentlige kirkene er tatt ut av tallene). Det gir en andel steinbyggeri på ni prosent for de lokale åttingskirkene. Tjueseks av bispedømmets øvrige 146 kirker var oppført i stein. Det gir en andel på 18 prosent steinbyggeri. Hardanger skiller seg ut med en særskilt høy andel steinbyggeri blant offentlige kirker. Fire av de åtte kirkene vi har identifisert som offentlige der, inkludert de høyere rangerte kirkene, var bygget i stein (Ullensvang, Odda, Kinsarvik og Eidfjord), det vil si halvparten. Det indikerer kanskje at den offentlige kirken i Hardanger ble utbygget noe senere enn i kystområdene. Vi kan uansett konkludere med at de lokale åttingskirkene ofte var enkle trekirker. Det yngre steinbyggeriet var mer utbredt blant private og høyere rangerte offentlig kirker. Kanskje fikk kvaliteten på kirkebygningen betydning når man senere utpekte de nye hovedkirkene i prestegjeldene.

Hordaland, Voss og Hardanger

Betegnelsen fylkesprest synes å ha blitt brukt om presten i Skåla kirke i 1306. Det aktuelle brevet var stilet til Sira Steingrim på Skåla og alle andre prester *...a Sunhordulande...* (DN III 63). Det viser at Sunnhordland ble regnet som et fylke av kirken og at Steingrim hadde en særskilt rolle.

Antallet delegater fra Hordaland til Gulatinget økte fra Magnus-teksten ca. 1170 til landsloven av 1274, sammenliknet med Rogaland, som Hordaland tidligere hadde likt antall med. Dette viser sannsynligvis at Voss og Hardanger (?) ble integrert i Hordaland i dette tidsrommet. Leidanglisten i G 315, som er av ukjent alder, men eldre enn 1170, viser at hordene skulle stille med 24 skip. Det sammenfaller med antall skipreider i Sunn- og Nordhordland, når de to skipreidene i ytre Sogn regnes med til Hordaland (de lå i Eivindvik fjerding). Det er usikkert om dette er tilfeldig eller ikke, og skipstallet i Sogn blir da dessuten vanskelig å få til å gå opp.

Det er også andre argumenter for at Voss var rettslig uavhengig og først ble integrert i Gulatingslagen og Hordaland mellom ca. 1160–70 og 1274. *Magnússdrápa*, et skaldekvad fra omkring 1100 (Gade 2009: 396–397), trekker et skille mellom horder og vossinger, og indikerer at både Voss og Hordaland var egne kongehyllingskretser. Fra Voss ble det utstedt eget kongevalgsbrev så sent som 1. september 1449

(NgL 2. R, bd II: 5, Tillegg 3; Opsahl 2022: 154). Normalt besto en kongehyllingskrets av ett fylke eller en kooperasjon av flere fylker (Taranger 1934). Det viser at Voss i eldre tid var et eget fylke.

I 2012 undersøkte arkeologer et ringtun fra eldre jernalder på Sausjord nær grensen mellom Voss og Aurland. Disse tolkes gjerne som tingsteder/samlingsplasser på regionalt nivå (Storli 2010; Iversen 2015). På Sausjord vedvarte kokegropaktiviteten i vikingtid og høymiddelalder. Utgraver mener at funksjonen som samlingsplass ble opprettholdt også etter at bygningene i tunanlegget forsvant på 500-tallet. Trolig teltet man da i området i stedet. Den yngste C14-dateringen viser 1280–1390 på 1. sigma (Beta 302076), men kan være både litt eldre og yngre på 2. sigma (Hatling & Bruen Olsen 2012: 71). Det er påfallende at aktiviteten varte til ut på 1200-tallet. En noe dristig tolkning er at Voss fremdeles tidlig på 1200-tallet sto utenfor Gulatingets jurisdiksjon, og at Sausjord fortsatt var stedet for å løse rettslige tvister mellom Voss og Aurland (se Iversen 2019 for mer utførlig diskusjon).

Voss og Hardanger skiller seg administrativt fra Hordaland, særlig Voss. Den minste tingkretsen der var åttingen, belagt i 1343 (DN VI 167). Det er mulig at hver åtting på Voss hadde egen kirke, men vi har bare funnet belegg for dette i fire tilfeller (Haukenæs 1887: 104; Berg 1977: 189–190). Også fylkeskirken på Voss skiller seg fra de andre fylkeskirkene; den var rikere, hadde et større sogn og betalte dobbel avgift til paven.

Hardanger skiller seg ut ved å ha to "12-øreskirker": Ullensvang og Kinsarvik. Her kan det være et kronologisk skifte, eller det kan forklares ved at kirkene hadde forskjellige funksjoner. Begge kirkene hadde flertallig presteskap. Begge var samlingsstedet i sin skipreide, og begge var tingsteder. To forhold skiller. På Almerket ved Kinsarvik kirke lå det en markedsplass, i en tidlig fase knyttet til Hallingdal og Valdres. Det er kjent at folk derfra søkte seg til Kinsarvik under markedet (Loftsgarden 2017: 105). I tillegg til Kinsarvik kirke skal det nær Almerket ha stått en kirke tilegnet Det hellige kors (Olafsen 1903: 6). Også Borgund og Veøya kjennetegnes ved flere kirker på stedet. Ifølge Robberstad (1966: 41) ble fjerdingstinget for Hardanger holdt på Almerket, men dette er usikkert. For øvrig er det nær sammenheng mellom de åtte tingkretsene i Hardanger og kirkene. Hver tingkrets hadde navn etter et kirkested. Disse regner vi som Hardangers åttingskirker. Dersom Voss og Hardanger ble integrert i Gulatingslagen etter 1170, men før 1274, er det også naturlig å tenke seg at den offentlige kirkeorganisasjonen ble etablert senere her enn i Gulatingets kjerneområde.

Bø og Eid

Også helt nord i bispedømmet er det uklarheter når det gjelder kirkestatus, da både Bø på Selja og Eid i Nordfjord framstår som fylkeskirker. Også her hadde begge kirkene flere prester. I 1338 ble sira Aslak på Bø av biskopen titulert *hofudpreste j Seliu* (DN VII 156). Dette til tross for at biskopen under visitas femten år tidligere i 1322/23 (DN VII 98) skulle ha fire overnattinger på Eid, og ingen på Bø. Kanskje hadde biskopen frasagt seg sin visitasrett på Bø, slik biskopen i Stavanger gjorde for Mariakirken der i 1445 (DN IV 896). I 1342 synes startskuddet for visitas å være Eid i Nordfjord, der erkebiskopen skulle være til stede 1. mai (DN VIII 150).

Rector

I 9 av 11 tilfeller har vi med sikkerhet kunnet knytte begrepet *rector* til kirker med flertallig presteskap. For de to siste – Kaldestad og Strandvik – har vi ingen god forklaring. I et brev fra 1309 ble presten ved Kinsarvik kirke omtalt som *rector ecclesie de Kinzarvik*, mens prestene ved kirkene på Odda og Ulvik ble titulert *presbiter ecclesie de Ulfvik et presbiter ecclesie de Odda* (DN III 85), og altså underordnet Kinsarvik-presten. På dette tidspunkt var det fortsatt leieprest (*vicarius*) ved Kinsarvik kirke (DN XXI 13). Trolig har vi her et eksempel på den da fortsatt pågående organiseringen av kirkene i lokale prestegjeld, og at *rector* "hang igjen" som en tittel på en overordnet prest.

I samtlige sammenhenger der *rector* blir benyttet som betegnelse, gjelder det dokumenter skrevet av ledende menn i kirken, mest vanlig i biskopens eller erkebiskopens brev. De er skrevet på latin, hvilket viser at mottagerne var latinkyndige. Vi kan derfor ta for gitt at mottagere av slike brev befant seg ved domkapitlet, fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene.

Arkeologiske indikatorer

Vi har tidligere (Iversen & Brendalsmo 2020, 2021) benyttet runeinnskrifter på eller nær kirkestedsgårder som kilde til tidlig kristen praksis. I Bergen bispedømme har vi også undersøkt distribusjonen av store steinkors for å vurdere deres nærhet til fylkes- og fjerdingskirker.

De norske steinkorsene er tidligere blitt behandlet av Fridtjov Birkeli (1973) i en større avhandling. Han konkluderer med at korsene hører hjemme i misjonstiden fra midten av 900–tallet og et stykke inn på 1000–tallet, da organiseringen av kirken til dels gikk side om side med det fortsatte misjonsarbeid i mer avsidesliggende strøk.

Kristine Holme Gabrielsen (2007) konkluderer i sin hovedfagsavhandling om de vestnorske steinkorsene med at midten av 900–tallet og begynnelsen av 1000–tallet

var det mest sentrale tidspunktet for når steinkorsene først ble reist, men mener analogier kan åpne for at det også kan ha skjedd senere. Ut fra formen grupperer hun korsene fra A til E og finner at A-korsene kan være eldre enn B-korsene. E-korsene kan trolig også tolkes som tidlige. En analyse av plasseringen for 56 kors fra hele Vestlandet inkl. Rogaland viste at et klart flertall sto på gårder (31), mens det var langt færre kors på kirkesteder (9), tingsteder (8) og ved veier (7). 2 sto ved grenser. Av kirkestedskorsene var det ett A-kors og to E-kors (Gabrielsen 2007: 253, 227). Av samtlige kirkestedskors er det kun på Eivindvik vi finner en av de eldste korstypene (A) i primærkontekst inne på kirkegården. Dette viser at bare få slike kors sto ved de tidlige fylkes- og fjerdingskirkene som vi har identifisert her, og at de eldste korstypene ikke kan benyttes som indikatorer for identifisering av offentlige sentralkirker.

FIGUR 9. Olavsteinen (189 x 35 cm) ved Stedje fylkeskirke i Sogn. "Olav konge skjøt mellom disse steiner". Innskriften fra ca. 1150 refererer trolig til Olav Haraldssons utstykking av kirketomten for den første fylkeskirken på Stedje på begynnelsen av 1000-tallet. Foto: Fylkesarkivet i Sogn og Fjordane. Tegning fra 1626 og tolkning av runene er hentet fra Norges innskifter med de yngre runer. Figur: Frode Iversen.

Det finnes et antall runeinnskrifter på kirkegårder som viser til tidlig kristning. Innskriften Gjerde I (NIyR IV: 271) "Erlend ristet disse runer etter Olve, (sin) far" har samme datering som Galteland-steinen på Agder (ca. 1020). Ved Grindheim kirke

(NIyR IV: 273): "Tormod reiste denne sten etter Tormod 'Svi(d)ende', sin far" er tidfestet til ca. 1050. En flat gravstein, nå tapt, som opprinnelig lå ved foten av alteret i nåværende kirke på Hopperstad (reist ca. 1130 på samme tuftsted som en eldre kirke bygd ca. 1060), og som bør kunne relateres til denne eldste kirken (NIyR IV: 390): "Gud Herren hjelpe Ketils sjel". På Svanøya i Kinn står et steinkors (NIyR IV: 417) med innskriften *Þórðr lét reisa kross þenna ept(ir ...)* datert til ca. 1000. I sum viser gjennomgangen at det er få slike innskrifter ved våre fylkes- og fjerdingskirker.

Kanskje den mest talende runeinnskriften i vår sammenheng er den såkalte "Olavssteinen" ved fylkeskirken på Stedje. Runesteinen er 1,89 cm høy og 39 cm bred, og sto i 1626 på en høy bakke rett nord for kirken. Innskriften er fra midten av 1100-tallet og lyder: *Ólafr konungr skaut milli steina Þessa* – Kong Olav skjøt mellom disse steiner (NiYR 4: 196). Den tradisjonelle tolkningen (fra *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer*) er at dette er en minnestein for utstykkingen av tomten til Stedje kirke. Det henvises trolig til den store middelalderkongen Olav Haraldsson. Eller som utgiver Magnus Olsen formulerer det: «Olav Tryggvason kan man, efter at Olav Haraldsson hadde gjort sin gjerning, umulig ha kalt *Olav konge*, rett og slett» (NiYR IV: 197). Sagnet skriver seg fra tiden da den norske kirkeprovinsen ble opprettet, og knytter Olav Haraldsson direkte sammen med grunnleggelsen av en av bispedømmets viktige fylkeskirker.

Oppsummering

I artikkelen har vi undersøkt oppkomsten av en offentlig kirkeorganisasjon i Bergen bispedømme i 950–1250. Vi argumenterer for at tre organisatoriske nivåer av fylkeskirker, fjerdingskirker og åttingskirker var på plass allerede tidlig på 1000-tallet.

Offentlige lokalkirker ble etablert i samarbeid med tinget. Allerede på 1000-tallet var en tredel av kirkene i Vest-Norge offentlige. Dette skiller seg fra de føydale samfunnene på kontinentet og De britiske øyer. Der var egenkirkesystemet dominerende fram til den gregorianske kirkereformen spredte seg fra andre halvdel av 1000-tallet.

Vi finner grunnlag for å definere seks fylker/sysler innenfor bispedømmet. Kirkeorganisasjonen ble bygd ut i tråd med den verdslige inndelingen i fylker, fjerdinger og skipreider (åttinger). Selja bispedømme ble delt tidlig på 1100-tallet. De nye enhetene fikk lagt til nye områder. Voss og Hardanger ble føyd til det nye Bergen bispedømme mellom 1160/70 og 1274, og Valdres og Hallingdal omkring 1170 til Stavanger bispedømme. Vi finner at det eldre, store Selja bispedømme opprinnelig omfattet fylkene Sunnmøre, Romsdal og kanskje Nordmøre lengst nord. Disse ble senere overført til Nidaros bispedømme, trolig i forbindelse med at den norske kirke-

provinsen ble etablert i 1152/53. De tidlige biskopene skrev seg til Selja fram til erkeprovinsen ble opprettet. I 1170 ble levningene av St. Sunniva, Vest-Norges skytshelgen, flyttet fra Selja til Bergen som nå definitivt var det det faste bispesetet, og som trolig hadde fungert som dette i flere tiår.

Det høye antallet offentlige kirker, som vi har påvist i denne artikkelen, viser at det var andre, mer egalitære samfunnsstrukturer i Norge enn ellers i Europa. Ikke minst var tinginstitusjonen en viktig driver for utbyggingen av kirkeorganisasjonen, særlig på lokalt nivå. Forhandlingene om opprettelsen av den norske kirkeprovinsen lå i forkant av utviklingen i Europa. Forhandlingene gikk i kirkens favør og svekket private kirkeeieres rettigheter til sine kirker. Det var kanskje mulig fordi det allerede fantes en mer enn 150 år gammel tradisjon for offentlig kirker i Norge.

Takkeord

Forfatterne ønsker å takke historiker Anna Kolberg Buverud, seniorrådgiver ved Universitetet i Oslo, for viktig bistand i skrivearbeidet med denne artikkelen. Vi vil også takke fagfellene for innspill som har gjort artikkelen bedre. Ikke minst vil vi takke redaksjonen for dens generøse tålmodighet med tidsfrister og øvrig hjelp med å ferdigstille manus.

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Frode Iversen †, Professor ved Kulturhistorisk museum, Universitetet i Oslo.

Jan Brendalsmo, tidligere seniorforsker NIKU. Email: jan.brendalsmo@gmail.com.

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Images and Inscriptions

A Study of the Murals in Kviteseid Old Church

Elisabeth Andersen, Johan Bollaert, Karen Langsholt Holmqvist & Susanne Kaun[1]

Kviteseid Old Church in Telemark, Norway, is a medieval stone church with murals of a seemingly informal character. These depictions consist of ships, figures, individual letters, and longer inscriptions, apparently randomly placed on the interior chancel walls. By studying the painting techniques, the stratigraphic structure and the motifs of the paintings, the authors explore the intentions behind these motifs. They argue that, although of simple manufacture and unprogrammatic, they were an important part of the late-medieval and post-Reformational church experience. Several of the images and inscriptions may have had a memorial intention. This study provides a new understanding of a type of murals found in several medieval churches in Norway and abroad that has often been (mis)interpreted as graffiti.

Introduction

Kviteseid Old Church, situated in the region of Telemark in central Norway, is one of 159 preserved medieval stone churches in the country. This stone church belonged to Oslo bishopric and is dated to the second half of the twelfth century (Nygaard 1996: 49; Ekroll & Stige 2000: 106). Kviteseid is a medieval stone church with understudied murals: remains of seemingly informal character, regarded by many as doodles, graffiti or unpretentious pieces of work by an untrained hand. These depictions consist of ships, figures, individual letters, and longer inscriptions, apparently randomly placed, clearly visible on the lower parts of the chancel walls.

Even if they do not fulfil the preconditions of "art" as part of a systematic iconographic programme or wall decoration, we argue that the purpose and meaning of these figures and letters requires further study. This article takes a novel approach

[1] The authors are listed alphabetically and have all contributed in equal measure to the article. We would like to thank NIKU for financial support for this article. Moreover, we would like to thank Stefka G. Eriksen, the editors and the anonymous reviewer for valuable feedback on the article.

by studying textual and pictorial elements together. By studying the painting techniques, the stratigraphic structure, and the paintings themselves, we identify different motifs and inscriptions on the walls of Kviteseid Old Church. Regardless of whether they were executed simultaneously or not, their collocation on the same lime layer means that the images must have been viewed together by the clergy and congregation.

In the present article, we ask whether the various signs and symbols belong together, when they were made, what they symbolize, and what their purpose is. We seek answers to these questions by analyzing painting and drawing techniques, the layout (i.e. the placement, orientation, and closeness to other motifs), and the stratigraphy. We further extend the analysis by comparing the motifs and inscriptions with similar motifs and inscriptions found in other churches, and by looking at by comparing the paintings' location with the functions of the different parts of the church.

In the following, we will first present previous research on graffiti and resembling murals in Norway and Scandinavia before we introduce the murals in Kviteseid. Secondly, we discuss 1) whether images and inscriptions belong together or not, 2) which period they are from, 3) what they symbolize, and finally, 4) what the purpose of these images, signs and letters was. By exploring the intentions behind these motifs, we gain new knowledge about a type of wall painting found in several medieval churches in Norway and abroad that has often been seen as graffiti, suggesting that they were produced unofficially. We argue that, although of simple manufacture and unprogrammatic, they were an important piece in the late-medieval and post-reformational church experience.

State of the art

Little research has been done on Norwegian wall paintings in general, and there is no published overview of the existing material. However, in connection with church interior registrations and restoration reports, we can often find some descriptions of murals. Nonetheless, in books describing church interiors, e.g., booklets and jubilee publications, apparently informal images, signs, and inscriptions are often omitted. Although there is no general overview of these murals, recent studies by Susanne Kaun and Elisabeth Andersen have provided further insight into the execution and history of various forms of unprogrammatic or often-neglected types of murals in various churches (Andersen & Kaun 2019; Andersen & Kaun 2021).

In Norwegian studies of text and motifs on church walls, emphasis has generally been put on graffiti, in particular on runes and ship motifs. Runic graffiti in churches has recently been studied by Zilmer (2016), Bernobi (2020), Holmqvist (2021a), and

Bollaert (2022). These studies share the position that church graffiti is added over time and that it is has various functions. They agree, moreover, that the religious function is dominant in medieval runic church graffiti. The largest study of figurative graffiti in Norwegian churches is Martin Blindheim's doctoral thesis (1985) on graffiti in the medieval stave churches. Blindheim claims that this graffiti was made by the stave church builders, and that they were, in part, carved as a pastime. Arne Emil Christensen's study on ship graffiti (1995) concludes that "ship graffiti are the work of men, depicting a male field of interest, and that they are restricted to maritime societies" (Christensen 1995: 184). These studies focus either on textual inscriptions or figurative motifs. However, there is a lack of studies which views textual and figurative expressions in conjunction with each other.

Pål Nymoen has discussed the painted ships in Kviteseid Old Church and Siljan Church (2010: 35–40). He dates the ships between the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century. Nymoen suggests that the ship paintings could have been inspired by the close connection between the church and seafaring. Kviteseid is located next to the lake Kviteseidvannet, which, although over 70 km inland, is navigable to the sea. Local placenames such as *Hollendarodden* indicate an international, seafaring connection.[2] Another explanation for ship paintings, Nymoen points out, are their votive functions: for gratitude and as prayers for a safe journey. He also points out the strong symbolic relation between ships and the church. Nymoen argues that ship paintings, such as the one in Siljan church, are often planned and accepted. However, he claims that the ships in Kviteseid appear as graffiti (Nymoen 2010: 38).

In Denmark, there has been more extensive research on the murals in medieval churches, most recently by Sissel F. Plathe (2019). She surveys and identifies "mason paintings", despite their primitive character, as an essential group of late-medieval murals. In 1991, Ulla Haastrup proposed that certain types of simple Danish medieval murals were executed by masons and not by professionally trained painters (Haastrup 1991: 26–28, 30–31). Plathe describes murals painted in wet lime and claims that they were executed by the vault masons immediately after vaulting (2019: 31). It is interesting that these mason paintings involve similar motifs and inscriptions as those found in Kviteseid Old Church. Nevertheless, the Danish vault paintings differ significantly in painting technique and background, as they were painted in newly applied lime in Gothic vaults (Plathe 2019). This means that these Danish vault paintings are from the Gothic period, executed as an ensemble. The mason paintings occur mostly in two colours, grey and red, and were constructed with the help of incisions and compasses (Plathe 2019: 33–34). Plathe demonstrates that each motif may

[2] Hollendarodden can be translated as "the Dutch promontory".

have symbolic connotations, and she also demonstrates how text and image may support each other. Danish church murals are also documented in the extraordinarily extensive database and homepage "Kalkmalerier i danske kirker" ("Wall paintings in Danish churches") from the National Museum of Denmark,[3] which describe and show all Danish murals dated between approximately 1100 and 1775. The database does not have a separate category for murals like those in Kviteseid Old Church, however, and this type of mural is greatly outnumbered by other kinds of decorational programmes and motifs.

In Finland, Katja Fält has explored these so called "construction worker paintings" or "primitive" wall paintings in her thesis "Wall paintings, workshops, and visual production in the medieval Diocese of Turku from 1430 to 1540" (Fält 2012), and in two articles from 2011 and 2013 (Fält 2011; Fält 2013). Her research covers a group of wall paintings made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the Diocese of Turku. The paintings have been attributed to church builders. She argues that the label "primitive" is a false, modern characterization and that there is no evidence to describe the painters as unskilled locals. She similarly argues against the subject matter being connected to paganism. Instead, she contends that the visual language of this extensive and diverse body of works is not fully legible, and paintings cannot be accurately interpreted.

As seen above, there is international research on material resembling what we find in Kviteseid and other Norwegian churches. However, few have studied the particularities of the Norwegian context, and none has sought to combine the study of informal text and images. This is the gap which the present article contributes to filling, using the Kviteseid murals as a case.

The murals in Kviteseid Old Church

Built in the twelfth century, Kviteseid Old Church has typical medieval architecture with a rectangular nave and a smaller chancel with an apse in the east. Inside, the church has whitewashed walls. The inventory is post-Reformational, dated mainly to the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Since 1915, Kviteseid Old Church has been out of use as a regular church, because a new church was built to replace it. The church is presently part of the Kviteseid Local History Museum which is found nearby.

In the chancel (fig. 1), we find the remains of several murals. At a height of between approximately 110 cm and 270 cm above the floor, we find various images and inscriptions, apparently unordered and painted on top of and next to each other. Both

[3] Nationalmuseet in Denmark. "Kalkmalerier i danske kirker" (Wall paintings in Danish churches) https://natmus.dk/salg-og-ydelser/museumsfaglige-ydelser/kirker-og-kirkegaarde/kalkmalerier-i-danske-kirker/, last accessed 5 October 2022.

the paintings and the inscriptions have been rendered in a monochrome, linear style, mostly in black.

Beginning from the east, we find at least four (maybe five) sailing ships and several longer inscriptions on the southern wall (fig. 3), as well as separately standing Gothic minuscule letters, clearly outlined. The longer inscriptions are painted with a greater care for layout. In total, eight inscriptions are identified on this wall. On the western wall, one can make out the remains of further sailing ships, at least one on each side of the chancel arch. On the northern wall (fig. 2), starting from the west, we find a large sailing ship, considerably larger than the other sailing ships, a huge, intertwined ornament, a decorative knot, and below the latter a helmeted soldier with a sword and a shield, the top of a sailing ship, and a consecration cross. Further east, we see an animal with antlers, most likely a deer. Partly covering the neck and throat of the deer, we find another inscription, the only one in red. To the east of the deer, another sailing ship is found, and in between the deer and the ship, several undefined signs and marks can be traced. In the eastern apse, there are two more consecration crosses. These crosses in Kviteseid are different from those found in other Norwegian churches. In contrast to those, the crossarms do not touch the surrounding circle, and they are smaller than what is common otherwise. These crosses are outside the scope of this article, though they may be relevant for the dating of the other murals.[4] In between these figures, traces of at least eight inscriptions are preserved. All consist of minuscule letters, excepting the capitalized first letter of names. These inscriptions are shorter, and only individual Gothic minuscule letters and words, most likely names, are present. The inscriptions vary in length, size, colour, and script, and are likely to have been made at different times and by different hands. It is likely that the chancel originally contained more inscriptions, since not all sections of these two walls have been equally well preserved. Even the inscriptions which are still discernible today are in most cases either damaged or faded, which means that the overall legibility is low.

All the images and inscriptions are rendered in monochrome; apart from the one red inscription, all of them are black in colour. They are painted with a dry application method by using an implement that might also be used for drawing, such as charcoal or red chalk. This is quite an unusual application technique for official wall paintings, which are often more colourful, using different pigments and binders. While most of the images have been produced in a simple, less artistic manner, the image of the deer shows that it was rendered by a skilled painter, although likewise using charcoal.

[4] Consecration crosses were painted in medieval time to mark where the bishop had anointed the church with chrism or holy water when consecrating the church. They must therefore pre-date the Reformation in 1537.

Fig. 1: The chancel in Kviteseid Old Church. Photo: Susanne Kaun

Their simple painting technique and their less artistic style gives Kviteseid's paintings a sketch-like character. Nevertheless, the reason for using a simple painting technique may lie in its accessibility and is not necessarily related to the value of the images as a religious expression. Charcoal and red chalk were more accessible and easier to use than paint and brush, since it involves readily available materials and does not require specific tools and knowledge.

These wall paintings were discovered under flaking lime layers (Helland 1967) and thereafter surveyed and partly uncovered by conservators Arne Bakken and Ola Grefstad (Bakken 1967). This work started in 1967.[5] The paintings were said to be found on a render from before 1591 (Hauglid 1967) and were dated to the sixteenth

[5] The restoration of the wall paintings seems to have continued after 1967, as the survey report mentioned further need for restoration of the wall painting. It is unclear when this restoration was finished due to the lack of a final restoration report or other documents that could confirm the restoration. Correspondence between Riksantikvaren and the congregation in the years 1968 and 1969, discussing financial issues, imply that restoration work might have been done during those years (e.g., Stephan Tschudi Madsen to John Hals, 1968, 26 February; Hals to Riksantikvaren, 1968, 6 September, RAA; Tschudi Madsen to Hals, 1969, 12 May, RAA).

Fig. 2: The northern chancel wall in Kviteseid Old Church. Photo: Susanne Kaun

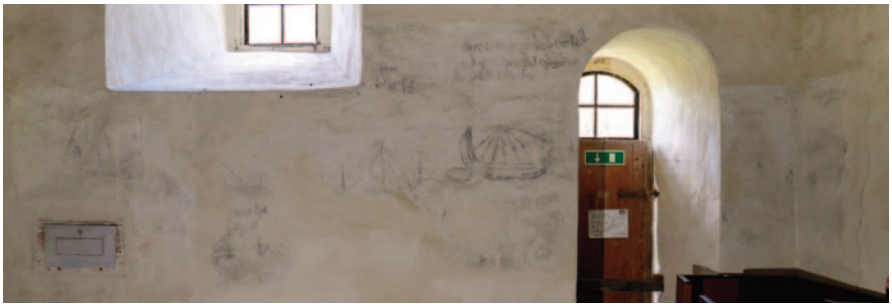

Fig. 3: The southern chancel wall in Kviteseid Old Church. Photo: Susanne Kaun

and seventeenth century. However, the consecration crosses have been dated to the thirteenth century (Ekroll and Stige 2000: 108–109). Since the consecration crosses and murals are both found on the same layer, we may conclude that some of the murals could have been painted before the Reformation.

Due to the lack of a final restoration report and complementary photo documentation, we do not have verified documentation of how much of today's paintings was added during the restoration. However, by comparing a limited number of historical photos from before and after the uncovering in 1967 with the situation today, we can infer that little retouching was done. A visual examination of the paint strokes confirms this assessment. This means that the murals can be considered original, and not a modern interpretation.

How should the murals in Kviteseid be understood?

The murals in Kviteseid are not part of a formal iconographic programme or ornamental interior painting. They do not form a coherent story or scene. The texts and images belong to different styles and were not all created simultaneously; the first ones were added to over time. That the murals were rendered at different times, as well as their apparently incoherent appearance and sketch-like character, could lead to the murals being (mis)interpreted as historic graffiti. The term graffiti is widely used in historic research in epigraphy and art (see, e.g., Bernobi 2020; Blindheim 1985; le Bon 1995; Hesjedal and Bertelsen 2011; Holmqvist 2021b; Lohmann 2020; Lovata & Olton 2015; Rozhdestvenskaja 2012; Yasin 2015; Zilmer 2016). It is used with various definitions, mostly based on criteria which are difficult, or impossible, to establish with certainty in historic material. At its core, graffiti is usually contrasted with official, authorized, and planned inscriptions and works of art, and is typically considered informal, unauthorized, and spontaneous.

However, these murals should not be understood as prototypical graffiti. In this article, we argue that they are not informal, unauthorized, or unplanned, at least at an individual level. Instead, we will propose that at least some of these murals were requested and paid for. It is worth noticing that this also applies to the ship motifs in Kviteseid. Ship drawings that are not part of a narrative, e.g., the legend of St Olav, Noah's ark, Jonah and the whale, are commonly categorized as graffiti (Artzy 1999; le Bon 1995; von Busch et al. 1993; Champion 2015; Christensen 1995), although some scholars have previously opposed this categorization (see Hesjedal and Bertelsen 2011; Nymoen 2010). They argue that these ships in general must have been part of, and accepted as, the church "decoration".

If the murals in Kviteseid are not graffiti, how are they then best understood? Referring to the National Museum of Denmark's homepage "Kalkmalerier i danske kirker" (Wall paintings in Danish churches) (2006–16), the Kviteseid motifs could be classified as "marks and signs".[6] This is, in our opinion, a good classification as it does not imply that the murals necessarily belong together or form a unity. This is, for instance, seen in churches with a formal iconographic room programme, where the church interior is decorated in the same style, and perhaps also with imagery forming a coherent story. We hypothesise that the murals in Kviteseid are formal, but not coherent, and that, like graffiti, they have been added over time.

[6] 'Tegn og merke', our translation, see: https://natmus.dk/salg-og-ydelser/museumsfaglige-ydelser/kirker-og-kirkegaarde/kalkmalerier-i-danske-kirker/om-motiver/.

What belongs together and when are they executed?

The walls in Kviteseid Old Church are uneven with a rough and bumpy surface. They are covered with an unevenly applied, coarse lime sludge with irregular brush structure. However, the lower parts of the walls in the chancel were re-rendered. This must have happened at some point in the medieval period, since a medieval consecration cross is painted on that reparation render. The images and letters are painted directly on the surface of the reparation render and therefore must have been executed after the renovation, at the earliest in the late-medieval period.

As described above, all images and inscriptions are drawn with something like a charcoal pin or red chalk. The different images and inscriptions vary in paint stroke and artistic quality; while most of the images are rendered in a simple, less artistic manner, the image of the deer was executed by a skilled artist. Therefore, we can assume that the motifs and letters were executed by different hands, indicating that they were not painted as one unit. Even if at first glance the distribution of the images appears random, a closer look reveals that they are not arbitrarily placed on top of each other. It seems more likely that they are intentionally placed side by side, each taking the others into consideration.

None of the longer inscriptions can be connected to the images; the lines of text seem to be independent of the images and of each other. Similarly, the ship images seem to stand on their own without any connection to letters or words. The only unambiguously intentional combination of image and letters is found in the huge decorative knot with an 'o' in the centre. Such a combination of single letters and images is also observed in Skrøbelev Church (fig. 4) and Husby Church (fig. 5), Denmark. Keeping this in mind, it is possible that some of the individual letters may be connected to proximate images, such as the minuscule letters next to the soldier image. However, due to the uncertain interpretation of these minuscule letters, any connection must remain hypothetical. Other minuscule letters appear to stand isolated, though the present degree of preservation does not allow for certain conclusions to be drawn.

Building on the hypothesis that these pictures and inscriptions were made one after the other, it is reasonable to believe that the large pictures came first, when the wall was like a white sheet, and the smaller pictures were applied one after the other in the remaining empty spaces. A stratigraphic study of the paint layers discloses that on the northern wall, the deer must have been painted before the huge decorative knot, and the knot before the soldier, while the red inscription was painted last. The red inscription is the only internally dated one, containing the date 1595. It is plausible

Fig. 4: The minuscule 'm' painted beside a unicorn, a well-known symbol for Mary, in Skrøbelev Church, Denmark. Photo from https://natmus.dk/salg-og-ydelser/museumsfaglige-ydelser/kirker-og-kirkegaarde/kalkmalerier-i-danske-kirker/, photographed by Kirsten Trampedach, 2007.

Fig. 5: The minuscule 'h' painted underneath Hilleborg Skinkel's coat of arms in Husby Church, Denmark. Photo from https://natmus.dk/salg-og-ydelser/museumsfaglige-ydelser/kirker-og-kirkegaarde/kalkmalerier-i-danske-kirker/, photographed by Kirsten Trampedach, 2015.

that this date refers to the time of production. Interestingly, this red inscription is drawn on top of the deer, implying that the deer must pre-date 1595.

Due to these technical observations, we believe that the different motifs and inscriptions are executed individually, one after the other, but each new one with respect to the existing ones. Taking the above-mentioned assumptions concerning the earliest possible and latest dating into account, the murals may be dated to the period between the late-medieval period and the end of the sixteenth century. Both the motifs and letter forms are typical for the period. In the following, we look closer at the various motifs and inscriptions.

The motifs

On the walls of the chancel, as described above, we find a large decorative knot, a soldier, a deer, and several ships; in between and above these, there are minuscule letters, names, uninterpreted inscriptions consisting of some words, and also longer inscriptions. Below, we go through these motifs and inscriptions in detail.

Decorative knot

In the centre of the north wall, we find a big, decorative knot which was originally sized 1.5 x 1.5 m (fig. 6). This is the largest mural in Kviteseid Old Church and was presumably one of the first to be drawn. It has the shape of an "endless knot", a symbol of eternity which is often found as a decorative element on church furniture, altarpieces, and grave slabs.

Inside the knot, a minuscule 'o' is found. This 'o' is one of up to eight minuscule letters drawn on the walls (see pp. 72–74 and figs. 6, 8), although it stands out from the others in two ways: it is placed out of reach of a standing individual, and it is clearly part of the larger decorative knot-design. A similar ornament, with a crowned 'p' drawn inside it, is found in Aarhus Cathedral, and eternal knot decorations reminiscent of those in Kviteseid Old Church, but without minuscule letters are found in several other Danish churches, e.g., Søften (see Plathe 2019: 103, fig. 84) and Astrup (see Plathe 2019: 110, fig. 92).

Both the placement and execution of this letter and its decorative knot indicate that its production was time-consuming and a matter of some importance. In contrast, the other painted minuscule letters are all drawn at eye level and seem to have been placed more haphazardly in between the other inscriptions and murals. As elaborated below, we have considered several interpretations for the minuscule letters. In this instance, it seems most likely that the 'o' refers to the name of a person who has had

a decoration knot painted on the wall. It is not possible to draw a firm connection to any person in this instance.

Fig. 6: The large, decorative knot is placed high up on the northern chancel wall in Kviteseid Old Church. In its middle, there is a minuscule 'o'. To the right: reconstruction drawing of the knot ornament. Drawing and photo: Susanne Kaun.

The soldier with minuscule(s) in Kviteseid

Just below the large knot, there is a soldier, measuring 45 cm in height. Beside him, there are two minims forming one or two minuscule letters (Fig. 8). The soldier faces east and is dressed in a tunic with a belt and knee-breeches, while parts of his feet have not been preserved. He is beardless and has short hair under a Renaissance helmet. His shield is raised in his left hand and a sword in his right, as though he is leaping towards an invisible enemy.

Soldiers are depicted on murals in narrative scenes from several biblical stories, such as Samson defeating the Philistines (Hassing church, Denmark), the Massacre of the Innocent (Church of St. Mary, Helsingør, Denmark), and the Passion of Christ. A soldier without a narrative scene could be a specific person, such as Holger Danske (Ogier the Dane) (Skævinge kirke, Denmark) or St. Olaf; the latter is often depicted with an axe (Dingtuna church, Sweden). When they are depicted alone, they are often passive, i.e., standing or sitting and not in action, like the one in Kviteseid, with the shield held up and the sword raised. It is therefore more likely that the soldier in Kviteseid, with his helmet, sword and shield could be interpreted as the Christian Knight in accordance with Paul's allegory in Ephesians 6: 13-18:

> Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ronneby Church in Sweden has an example of a depiction of the Christian knight dated to 1586. The Kviteseid knight appears to be a simpler variant of the Ronneby knight, with the belt of truth buckled around his waist, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit in his hand (Figs. 7 & 8).

Fig. 7: The Christian knight as he is depicted in Ronneby Church in Sweden. Photo: Danske kalkmalerier, bind 7: Efter Reformationen (København: Nationalmuseet, 1992), s. 156.

Fig. 8: The soldier in Kviteseid Old Church is located just underneath the decorative knot. Adjacent to him is one or two minuscules, which may be the initials of a person. Photo: Susanne Kaun.

Beside the soldier, there are two minuscule letters uncertainly identified as 'lk'. This is one of up to eight minuscule inscriptions painted on the chancel walls. In addition to the 'o' discussed above, part of the ornamental knot, there are two more minuscule letters on the northern chancel wall: an 'ø' just above the hind part of the stag and a single engraved minim, possibly an 'i', located just underneath and between the soldier and the ship. On the southern wall, 'pd' can be found. The area in front of 'pd' is damaged, and it is possible, though not certain, that the two extant minuscule letters were once preceded by more script. To the right of it, a faint 'o' can be found, only partially outlined and of uncertain form. Finally, to the west of the southern chancel portal, the remnants of three minims, possibly forming an 'm', can be seen. These

inscriptions share in common that they do not form words, that the letters are of Gothic minuscule script, and that they are outlined, i.e., most lines are drawn double. This contrasts with the other inscriptions, which are longer and form words or full sentences, and whose script consists of single lines. Similar outlined Gothic minuscule letters are found both painted and carved in several churches in Telemark and western Norway.[7]

Of these minuscule letters, 'lk' is the one positioned closest to a figurative motif, the soldier, and a central question is whether the two belong together. To answer this, we must first look at the possible functions of the minuscule letters.

Relatively common as these outlined minuscule letters seem to be, they are difficult to interpret, since no complete words are preserved. Holmqvist (2021a) discusses their function in Borgund Stave Church and presents various possible interpretations. However, she was unable to draw any definitive conclusions. In Denmark, similar minuscule letters are found in medieval churches, such as Øxendrup, Skrøbelev, Gudme, Hesselager, Husby, Skivholme, and Århus Cathedral. In these churches, more of the context has been preserved. For instance, in Øxendrup, the minuscule 'm' is crowned and encircled (see Plathe 2019: 182, fig. 161), indicating that it may denote Mary (see the discussion on crowned 'p' in Plathe 2019: 228). Similarly, in Skrøbelev an 'm' is painted beside a unicorn, a symbol of the Virgin Mary (Plathe 2019: 254, fig. 226; fig. 4 in the present article). In Gudme, 'p' is rendered through various symbolic ornamentations, including a lily (Plathe 2019: 193, fig. 169). This evidence suggests that single minuscule letters may have been used as religious symbols. Moreover, in Husby, a minuscule 'h' is painted underneath the coat-of-arms of Hilleborg Skinkel (Plathe 2019: 149, fig. 131; fig. 5 in the present article), in which case the 'h' is most likely to refer to the personal name Hilleborg.[8] The Danish evidence indicates that minuscule letters have been used both with worldly and religious symbolism, although everything carved or painted in churches may at one level be interpreted as religious.

In Kviteseid Old Church, and the other churches in Norway, however, a range of different minuscule letters are carved and drawn, and they lack a clear connection to imagery or identified individuals. This complicates analysis. There is no clear religious

[7] For instance, in Seljord Church in Telemark and Borgund Stave Church in Sogn. See Bollaert 2022 and Holmqvist 2021a.

[8] It is worth noting that minuscule letters are also sometimes found on coins and on seals from the period in question. See e.g., the coin of King Hans (1483–1513), which figures an 'h' (Skaare 1995: 21) and Nikolas Sveinsson's seal from 1430 which figures an 'n' (Fjordholm, Hohler, Kjellberg & Nyquist 2012: no 124). In both instances, the minuscule letter is identical to the first letter of the owner's name.

symbolism; the minuscule letters are not, for instance, 'm's found close to other symbols for Mary, such as the 'm' adjacent to a unicorn in Skrøbelev Church in Denmark (fig. 4), or crowned and encircled 'm's as seen e.g. in Øxendrup Church in Denmark as a symbol for Mary, or abbreviations for Jesus like 'ihs'. Instead, the body of Norwegian church wall minuscule letters represent a range of different letters, and they are not clearly connected to any imagery. This combination of great variety and a lack of unambiguous religious symbolism makes it likely that the minuscule letters represent initials of personal or place names in Norway, rather than being religious symbols.

Returning to the minuscule close to the soldier, it is possible that it is the initial of a person represented by the soldier, and thus that the minuscule and soldier belong together. An indication of this is the proximity of the two figures. However, this could also be incidental. If the minuscule and soldier belong together, an interesting discussion relates to the function the minuscule may have had. Contemporaries would have known which person the soldier represented, with or without a minuscule adjacent to it. Today, however, the minuscule will not help us in identifying the soldier. In that respect, the main function of the minuscule may be to signal that the soldier is not only a symbolic image, but also a representation of a person.

The deer

A deer is drawn east of the soldier (fig. 9), almost touching the knot with its head. The deer is 115 cm long and galloping westwards. It has large antlers, and its back is covered with a saddlecloth. As with the soldier, a minuscule can be found near the deer, above its hind quarters, though today, nothing indicates that the two are meant to be read together. They are located closely together, but not necessarily in a unified composition. The stroke thickness is also different. If they were intended to be read in conjunction, locating the minuscule underneath the deer would seem more natural. However, another inscription partly covers the minuscule, and this may have faded the minuscule and thus altered our impression of it. We cannot rule out that either name or minuscule was once connected with the deer.

Depictions of deer appear on wall paintings in different settings and may have several symbolic meanings. We find it on murals as part of the Creation (Brøby Church, Sorø), as part of a hunting scene (Bregninge Church), or as in Ørbæk where the deer is eating from the Tree of Wisdom (Søndergaard 1999: 207). Another depiction is the deer as a reference to Agnus Dei (the Lamb of God). This is found in Eidfjord Church and Bringetofta Church (Ullén 1995: 35). In the latter depiction, the deer has the same pose as the Lamb of God, lifting its front leg and turning its head.

In Kviteseid Old Church, on the other hand, the deer has a shabrack, a saddlecloth decorated with heraldic ornaments. Thus, it is probably referring to a family's coat of arms. Deer are commonly used as heraldic symbols, and the shabrack lends weight to this interpretation of the Kviteseid deer. Exactly which coat of arms is depicted on the shabrack is difficult to interpret, though it could be one of the many variations of ermine spots, as a heraldic representation of the tail (Neubecker 1979: 87).

Heraldry in Norwegian churches has been known since the Middle Ages (Nissen and Bratberg 2013: 51). In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, coats of arms and initials flourished in churches, e.g., on pews, pulpits, baptismal fonts, ritual vessels, textiles, and murals.[9] Although lost knowledge to us today, it must once have been well-known to the congregation which family or person the initial "o" in the knot and the coat of arms on the deer referred to.

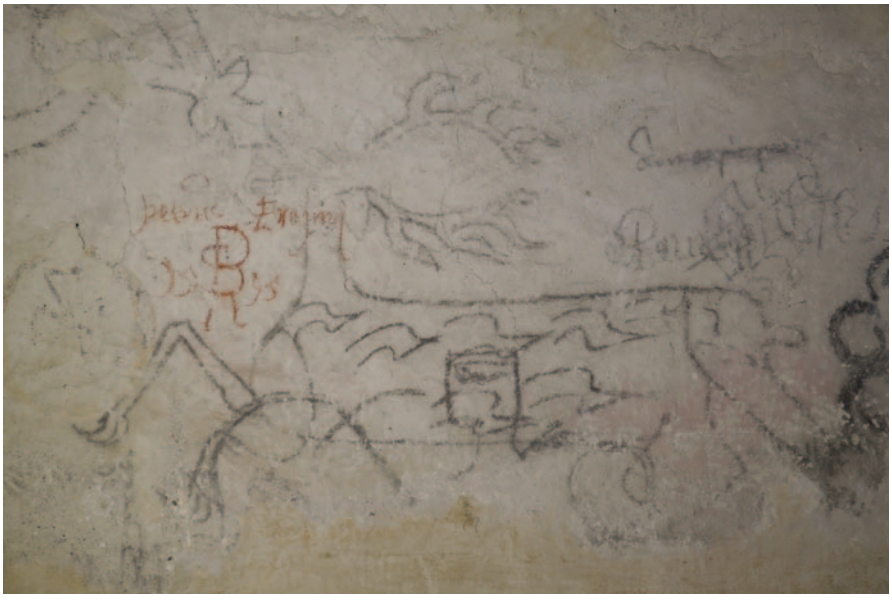

Fig. 9: The deer in Kviteseid. A name can be seen written in red to the left of and across its throat. A saddlecloth covers its back, and three different inscriptions, including a name, a minuscule and a sequence of undecipherable letters, are located above its hind. Photo: Susanne Kaun.

[9] See www.norgeskirker.no.

Names and short texts

In the chancel, there are also several names and other short, though uninterpretable, inscriptions. The most easily interpreted name is found to the left of and across the neck and throat of the deer, written in red over two lines:

Petrus Erasmi
15P̃RS95

Fig. 10: The name Petrus Erasmi is written to the left of and across the throat of the deer. Below, we find the year 1595 and a monogram consisting of the letters PRS. Photo: Susanne Kaun.

The first line contains a Latinization of the name Peder Rasmussen, the second line a date and monogram, PRS, for the same name. This inscription stands out as the only instance of red paint in the chancel. Even the script stands out, as it has a more cursive appearance than the others. The first name starts with an enlarged 'p' descending below the ground line, and the second name starts with a majuscule 'E'. Long 's' and the final 'i' descend below the ground line and 'a' is single story, distin-

guishing this script from that of the other inscriptions. Thus, both script and colour indicate that this inscription is different from the rest.

An interesting question is who Petrus was, and why his name was written on the wall. The different colour and script used for his name may indicate different origins, background, or time. Variants of this name – Petr, Peter, Peder, etc. – have been in common use in Norway since c.1200 (Lind 1905–15: col. 833), while his father's name, Erasmus / Rasmus, has been known in Norway since the late-fifteenth century (Kruken & Stemshaug 2013: 465–466), and even longer in Denmark (Knudsen, Kristensen & Hornby 1936–40: cols. 245–246). The name is originally Latin.

Peder Rasmussen may have been either Danish or Norwegian, and we know little more about him than his name and that he lived – or died – in the year 1595. Assuming that Peder wrote his own name, we may deduce that he was literate, for his writing is neat and the Latin is correct. It is possible that Peder Rasmussen could have been a priest, though no priest of that name is known to have worked in Kviteseid or any of the other churches in its vicinity.[10] The pastor (sogneprest) in Kviteseid at that time was Kristiern Olufssøn (Bang 1897: 101–102). The closest we get is a priest named Peder Rasmussen is registered from Volda in 1615, but we have found no connection between Kviteseid Church and this individual. No other Peder Rasmussen fitting to the period occurs in surviving written sources.

Literacy was, however, not restricted to the clergy, and it is also possible that he was a person of standing with knowledge of writing, or that someone else wrote his name for him. In that respect, it is interesting that in the year 1595, Jens Nilssøn, bishop of the diocese of Oslo 1580–1600, visited Kviteseid; in connection with this, restoration work was done in the church.[11] Peder Rasmussen may have given a donation to the church on this occasion. Another possibility is that Peder was part of the bishop's entourage, coming in from Denmark.[12] However, this would lead to the

[10] This information is collected from Bastian Svendsen's (1795-1865) Norsk prestehistorie (Svendsen n.d.), a catalogue over priests from the dioceses of Hamar and Oslo. The catalogue can found in microfilm format at https://www.genealogi.no/norsk-prestehistorie/. Svendsen worked on the catalogue for several years, and testamented it to the University Library. Several scholars and genealogists have added information after Svendsen's death, and the catalogue is presently administered by Norsk Slektshistorisk Forening, which is in a process of updating it and publishing it digitally.

[11] Kviteseid parish was part of the Diocese of Oslo until the fifteenth century, when it became part of the Diocese of Hamar. After the Reformation, the Diocese of Hamar became part of Oslo. Thus in 1595, Kviteseid was again part of the Diocese of Oslo.

[12] Indeed, a priest named Per is known to have visited the church in Bø together with Jens Nilssøn in 1579 (Søfrenssøn 1564–1599/1898: 11), and this Per may be identical to the Peder in Kviteseid. Most of all, however, this demonstrates how common the name is, and that several

question why only Peder wrote his name, and no one else in the party. If Peder was a particularly important person in this group, he would most likely have appeared in the surviving written records of the visit as well.

What occasioned the painting of this name on the chancel wall is uncertain, and we have not found any more information about the other names. However, it is clear that writing names on church walls was a common practice in the sixteenth century, since similar examples are found in other churches, such as Eidfjord, Siljan, and Trondenes. In Slidredomen, a similar but longer inscription mentions the death of a Dominus Haaning Olaf,[13] and in Trondenes, an inscription commemorates the death of Sira Anders.[14] It is possible that the painted names in Kviteseid are less explicit parallels, occasioned by the named person's death, though this is far from certain since it is not stated in the inscription (see also Holmqvist 2018: 116–119 for a parallel discussion on runic names).

Peder's name is the only fully interpreted inscription on the Kviteseid walls. Apart from his inscription, there are seven further short inscriptions in the chancel of Kviteseid which may be names similar to that of Peder's. These consist of one or several words and are carved over one or two lines. Of these, six are found on the north wall and an uncertain inscription is found on the south wall. Two inscriptions begin with an enlarged minuscule or capital and are most likely names. The other five may consist of names, or short messages, but their state of preservation is too poor to allow interpretation.

Per's, Peter's, and Peder's may have passed through Kviteseid around the year 1595. Thanks to the editors for pointing out this additional Per to us.

[13] Ano a Nat d̄no 1591 obiit
d̄ Haaning Olaf [...] die januari
sepultus die epiphanio [...]
Anno ab Nativitate domino 1591 obiit Dominus Haaning Olaf [...] die januari Sepultus die Epiphanio
[The year since the birth of our lord 1591 died Lord Haaning Olaf on the [...] day of January and he was buried on Epiphany day.] Translation by the authors.

[14] Anno 1561 døde sira Anders 9 Februarii
[The year 1516 sir Anders died on 9 February] Translation by the authors.

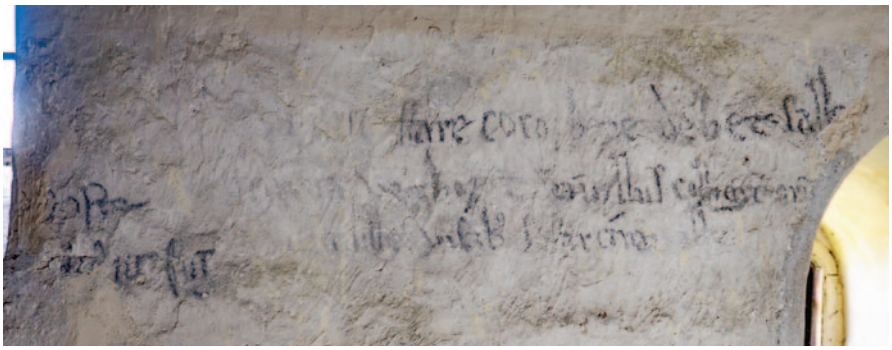

Fig. 11: Two of the longer inscriptions are located on the southern chancel wall in Kviteseid Old Church, as seen here; the inscription to the left has been damaged due to the enlargement of the window. The contrast and colours in the image have been adjusted to enhance details and make the inscriptions stand out. Photo: Susanne Kaun.

Longer texts

In addition to the short inscriptions, several painted inscriptions are remains of longer texts which probably once comprised one or more full sentences. They differ from the inscriptions discussed above not only in length, but also in style. We have identified three of these inscriptions, but it is possible that more were originally present. All three are found on the south wall, two are painted c. 2,5 m above floor level and are not accessible without a ladder, while one is painted at eye level. All three are only faintly and partly preserved, and in only one of them, distinct words can be read. This inscription is painted high up to the left of the southern entrance to the chancel (fig. 11). There, it seems to be located independently, somewhat removed from the more clustered inscriptions and murals on the northern and lower southern wall. The inscription consists of three well-spaced horizontal lines, and our attempt at reading results in the following transcription: [15]

a) [..] s͡tare c̣oro:ḅẹne debet sal̲l̲[. -]
b) [.c4.] [.]a̲b[..][-̣ṭ:n̲[..]llus[.] c̣allig[..-..]
c) [...]ll[.]:..s[.]ib̄ [..]sar[.]i[.]a [.]ll̲e

[15] The transcription follows the principles denoted in the catalogue to Bollaert (2022: 3–4). Notably [.c4] denotes that traces of approximately 4 signs can be seen. A dot represents an uninterpreted sign, while a dot underneath indicates uncertain reading of a sign. A bow over indicates ligatures, and a line over indicates abbreviation.

Individual words can be made out, and the inscription seems to make use of spaces, but also some word dividers consisting of two vertically aligned dots are present. It is possible that originally all words were separated with dots, but that these have been more prone to fading, since they may have been painted less strongly. The first line is best preserved, and three words can be read: *stare*, 'stand, stop', *bene* 'good', and *debet* 'it/he/she must'. In the final line, one recognises the abbreviated ending -ibus. While these words clearly indicate that the inscription is in Latin, they leave us with little information with regards to interpretation. The verb *stare* is sometimes used in epitaphs to request the attention of a reader (see, for instance, Syrett 2002: 195–202; Bollaert 2022, T21). However, it is far from certain that this inscription is an epitaph since attention may be requested in other contexts also. Moreover, since the preceding part of the wall is damaged, it may have contained a now lost prefix.

The script of the inscription is non-cursive, but from such a small sample its identification is difficult. This is further complicated by the lack of research on painted inscriptions, and their letter forms. Comparison can be made with engraved inscriptions, manuscript texts, or inscriptions on coins and sigils. However, as of yet it is unclear how painted inscriptions have responded to developments in writing practices related to either manuscript production, or that of inscriptions on stone or metal. In Norway (as abroad), carvers and writers seem to have responded differently to changing trends. As noted by Debias, et. al. (2007: 135), the dating of painted inscriptions is particularly difficult, and so far, we know little of what inspired the letter forms of wall paintings. In Kviteseid, it seems the individual Gothic minuscule letters may be inspired by epigraphic practices of the time, but this is less clearly the case for this longer text.

Considering its damaged quality and the small size of the sample, only few diagnostic features of the script are present. The lettering is perhaps too narrow to be a Caroline minuscule, and the upwards slanting tongue/beam of <e> also does not fit this script, in which this would be horizontal. The leftwards sloping shaft of <a> similarly does not fit Caroline minuscule form. It is unlikely the script is Caroline minuscule, and this fits well with the dating of the other inscriptions (Late Medieval, or Post Reformational). However, the script also contains few of the characteristics to be associated with Gothic minuscule scripts, at least when found epigraphically. The lettering is still rounder than would be expected, the shafts are unbroken, and the <st> ligature does not descend below the baseline. Perhaps, this may indicate that the painted inscription more closely followed manuscript practice, or that the script instead is of Humanist minuscule form, or a blend. The latter could indicate a dating to the Late Middle Ages or the Post Reformational period. It is evident, how-

ever, that the inscription is of a different script than the other, shorter inscriptions. This, together with the placement, layout, and length of the text, indicates that the inscription may be more formal, or at least more carefully executed than most of the others, making it stand out from the shorter inscriptions, such as the names and individual minuscule letters.

The two other longer inscriptions are so badly preserved that little can be made of them. It is possible that they were of a similar style as this one. One of them is located just to the left of this inscription and can partially be seen on the picture above (fig. 11). It is largely lost due to enlargement of the window in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The third longer inscription is rendered lower down, in a more accessible location.

Ships

At least nine sailing ship images are found in Kviteseid Old Church, and thus, the ship is the most common motif in Kviteseid. Various ship images are also found in other Norwegian churches, both outside and inside; some churches also have several ship images, for instance Trondenes Church.

In Kviteseid, the ship images are distributed approximately evenly on the southern, western and northern chancel walls, and are placed at different heights. They are painted in various styles and thus do not seem to be connected. We can find two types of ships, both considered medieval ones. First, we have at least four sailing ships with a round hull and a single mast; they might represent a boat type like a *bússa* or *knǫrr*, two Norse merchant ship types from the medieval period (von Busch et al. 1993: 33). The huge ship image on the northern wall stands out due to its bigger size (fig. 13),[16] but also because it is apparently a different ship type. Like the other ships, it is single masted, but it has a straight bow, and the hull planks are vertically divided. It might represent a cog, a medieval seagoing vessel, used for trading (von Busch et al. 1993: 34). On the other hand, it is hard to see if the ship in Kviteseid had a crow's nest, or a castle on the stern, which would be typical for seagoing vessels like the cog. None of Kviteseid's ships are depicted with set sail, and no anchor is detected. Such elements are found in ship images in other churches, such as in Høyjord and Kinsarvik. It is difficult to date the ship drawings certainly solely based on the ship type, as all of these ship types may have been used over a long period. In other churches, e.g. in Kinsarvik and Høyjord, apparently younger ship types with several

[16] The remains of the huge ship measure 1 m in height and 1.2 m in width; the smaller ones measure 25 to 55 cm in height and width.

masts and square sails are found; this indicates that ship images were made over a long period of time in Norwegian churches.

Ship images are widespread and are found in churches and elsewhere all over Europe. Their widely distributed presence suggests that ships must have been a commonly known symbol in many periods, and it most likely had various meanings. In the ensemble of murals in Kviteseid Old Church, the ships are not part of a biblical or religious scene (e.g., Noah's ark, Jonah, St Olav), and they do not seem to be connected to persons or dates. Most likely, the ships in Kviteseid were used as a symbol. In Christian iconography, ships have several symbolic meanings, foremost as the symbol of the Church, but also for the transition from life to death and salvation. A ship may also symbolize travelling and have a votive function. Sailing ships were the most effective and often the only means of transport for people and goods until steam engines made their entrance in the nineteenth century; they were essential for travel and trade. As such, they may have been executed as a form of prayer for a safe journey or in gratitude for surviving a dangerous voyage.

Fig. 12: This ship is located on the southern chancel wall, below the longest inscription. Below this ship, one may discern the remnants of another inscription. The words in this inscription cannot be read, and it is impossible today to determine whether ship and text were meant to be read together, or whether their collocation is incidental. Photo: Susanne Kaun.

Fig. 13: A large ship is located to the west on the northern chancel wall. This ship is considerably larger than the rest, measuring approximately 1 metre in height and 1.2 metres in length. Photo: Susanne Kaun.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, we return to our initial questions: Do the various signs and symbols belong together? When were they made? What do they symbolize? And what is their purpose?

In this article, we have shown that in general, the various signs and symbols on the walls of Kviteseid Old Church are not directly related to each other, but they were visible together over a long period, probably several decades. The images and inscriptions were probably executed successively between the late-fifteenth century and 1595. The localization of these murals in the chancel, practically filling the lower parts of the walls, means that they must have had a function in the church, or at least have been accepted. Their placement in the chancel, the location for high-status burials, is a further indication that they were connected to people of a high social standing. They are likely to have been drawn and paid for by different people on separate occasions, though they are related in that they had similar functions and were seen and understood together.

The murals were probably executed one after another and with respect to those already in existence. There is no obvious connection between text and images. Some single letters may belong together with images, and some of the longer texts and minuscules may relate to each other; the large minuscules may, for instance, give the initial of a person whom the image was meant to commemorate. The large minuscules are likely to give the initial of different persons; several of the shorter texts also consist of personal names. The deer carries a saddlecloth with a coat of arms which connects it to a family. The knot, a symbol of eternity, contains the letter 'o' that could connect it to a person or family. It may be connected to a burial or stand as a memorial

for a person or a part of a donation to the church. Ships could symbolize voyages and function as votives. The longer texts are very damaged. They may have had a memorial function as well, but other functions cannot be excluded. Several of the images and inscriptions in Kviteseid are therefore likely to have been made as votives, or in memory of a person or a donation.

This study of the murals in Kviteseid Old Church provides a new understanding and meaning to images and inscriptions that have been regarded by many as doodles, graffiti, or unpretentious pieces of work by an untrained hand. They were executed with a purpose, and they did indeed have a function and an accepted place in the church environment. They appear in the centuries around the Reformation, and we still have preserved remains of images and inscriptions of this kind in several Norwegian churches.

In future studies, further knowledge may be gained by studying additional murals of the same kind in other Norwegian churches. A major question is whether the conclusions drawn in the present article are transferable to other Norwegian churches, or whether an in-depth study of similar murals in other churches would alter the picture. Moreover, we find parallel motifs in heraldry, seals, and on coins, which can often be dated more accurately than murals; comparing church decorations to similar motifs on other types of artefacts may increase our knowledge of church murals of the type found in Kviteseid. Additionally, several manuscripts have marginalia of an apparently similar character, and it may prove fruitful to explore these seemingly similar expressions in various media in a future study.

Abbreviations

Riksantikvaren (The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage)

RAA (Riksantikvarens arkiver / Archive of the Directorate for Cultural Heritage in Norway)

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Elisabeth Andersen, art historian and researcher at Norwegian Institute of Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU)

Johan Bollaert, PhD, Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo

Karen Langsholt Holmqvist, Associate Professor, NLA University College; previously PhD Fellow, NIKU (correspondent author, email: KarenLangsholt.Holmqvist@nla.no).

Susanne Kaun, conservator of murals and researcher at Norwegian Institute of Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU)

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Pain, Fear, and the Emotional Regime of Hell

Chieftains and the Church in Thirteenth-Century Iceland

Eira Kathleen Ebbs

The period between c. 1170 and 1300 saw the most intense political conflict and change in Iceland's history as bishops, chieftains, and the Norwegian king vied for control. In their campaign to secure a dominant and autonomous position, the Church used Christian vision literature to address the sinfulness of the male elite and to attack the foundation of their power, threatening them with the ultimate punishment – everlasting pain in Hell. This message of pain and terror worked to shape an emotional regime of fear, providing the Church with a persuasive tool to use in their struggle against Iceland's chieftains.

Conflict in Thirteenth-Century Iceland

While thirteenth-century Iceland and its political power game has received considerable scholarly attention, the role of vision literature in the Church's efforts to influence and intimidate the social elite has not yet been discussed.[1] The following article will investigate the way in which the Church used visionary experiences as a weapon in their conflict with the chieftains, specifically how an emotional regime of fear, created by visions of the painful punishments of Hell, was intended to terrify the secular elite into submission. Utilising vision literature, represented here by *Rannveigar leizla*, *Sólarljóð*, and *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla*, to capture and convey an emotional experience helped the Church to convert, coerce, and compel Iceland's chieftains.

To understand the importance of this literature, it may be helpful to preface this discussion with some background on the conflict between the Church and the lay elite. The Church's ultimate goal was autonomy. It strove to claim authority over the clergy, control of property, legislative power in ecclesiastical affairs and judicial power

[1] Jón Jóhannesson 1974; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1987, 1999, 2008; 2013a: 53; Karlsson 1975, 2004; Líndal 1978; Miller 1990.

in Church and clergy affairs, and to affirm their exemption from state tax. As will be demonstrated, the Church's struggle for power over people, property, and incomes was one of institutional life or death. Perhaps even more starkly evident in Iceland, where resources were more limited than elsewhere in Europe, it was clear that it would not be possible for the Church and the chieftains to share power.

Christianity was legislated in Iceland in the year 1000, and an accompanying Church organisation was slowly built up, with the creation of the bishoprics of Skálholt in the south (1056) and Hólar in the north (1106), the introduction of a tithe (1096), and the foundation of several monasteries over the following two centuries. The Icelandic Church was challenged by a lack of qualified priests and the complications of enforcing new societal norms. Still, Christianity was supported by many chieftains, and the Church structure naturally began to mirror and merge with the existing social framework (Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 152). The early Church was controlled by the elite, and it provided them with new opportunities to increase their influence and incomes; in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, many became priests and deacons, built churches and endowed them with land, creating the *staðir* which they used as their residences and bestowed on their heirs (Auður Magnúsdóttir 2001: 29; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2017: 77–79).

An archdiocese was founded in Niðarós in 1152/53, initiating a programme of reform in Norway which reached Iceland in the 1170s when the Norwegian Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson (1161–1180) addressed its bishops and its people for the first time. He expressed his displeasure with the Icelanders' promiscuity, the lack of Church privileges, and the clerics who involved themselves in secular disputes.[2] The Church had begun its campaign for dominance; however, its efforts were met by growing resistance from the social elite, who were reluctant to comply with its moral code or demands for independence. The Church's aspirations threatened lay control of valuable property, priests, and incomes, and led to increasingly bitter conflict. This dispute is perhaps best characterised by the campaign for Church ownership of the *staðir* which was first taken up in 1178 by Þorlákr Þórhallsson, bishop of Skálholt (1178–1193) (Magnús Stefánsson 1978, 2000). He had some initial success, but was opposed by powerful chieftains and eventually had to concede defeat. At the same

[2] Three late twelfth-century letters issued by Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson highlight some of the issues at hand. In the first, he scolds the chieftains for their sinful lives, in particular for committing murder, and threatens eternal suffering and damnation. In the second, he admonishes the chieftains Jón Loftsson and Gizurr Hallsson specifically for their sexual misconduct which not only harms them but sets a bad example. And, in the third, he forbids everyone who has taken Holy Orders from acting in secular disputes or carrying weapons. (Diplomatarium Islandicum, [1173], [1180], [1190]).

time, other more successful measures were being taken to separate chieftains and the Church, for instance, when secular leaders were forbidden from being ordained as priests in 1190. By banning chieftain-priests and attacking *staðir* ownership, the Church was challenging chieftains at a local level. Bishop Þorlákr also made it his mission to reform sexual relationships, and condemned concubinage, as will be discussed more thoroughly in the section on *Rannveigar leizla* below. In doing so, Þorlákr was undermining vital connections between chieftains and prominent local families.

The battle continued under Bishop Guðmundr Arason (1203–1237). Guðmundr repeatedly challenged Iceland's most powerful men and was eventually ousted from his see by a host of chieftains; he never regained enough influence to enact serious change. Still, the Church found other ways to advance its position. Until 1237, four powerful Icelandic clans had selected almost all of the bishops, usually from among their own families, thereby maintaining a strong bond between the secular and ecclesial elite. This connection could have important consequences. For instance, during the early years of Archbishop Eysteinn's power, both Icelandic bishops belonged to powerful chieftain families and were not particularly interested in fighting for Church reform.[3] In the thirteenth century, however, foreign influence began to increase through the appointment of a growing number of Norwegian, rather than local, bishops. As will be explored below, personal connections were essential to the Icelandic elite who depended heavily upon their friends, including family members, for political support. Just like the attempts to claim *staðir* incomes or to forbid extra-marital relationships, both of which were used to make and maintain friendships, removing this connection between religious and secular leaders threatened the foundation of the social networks which were the source of the chieftains' power.

There was another shift in the structure of secular politics when the Norwegian king incorporated Iceland into his realm in 1262/1264. The Church leaders gained a new source of support as well as competition, and the success or failure of Church reforms would often come to rely on royal backing. This is seen, for example, in the career of Bishop Árni Þorláksson (1269–1298). Almost a century after Bishop Þorlákr's failed attempt, he was determined to take control of the *staðir*. Árni prevailed against the powerful owners of the largest and most prosperous properties with the help of the archbishop, Jón *rauði*, supported by the Norwegian King Magnús. When Magnús died the agreements made during his reign were annulled, and the Icelandic elite began to regain the *staðir*.[4] Still, Bishop Árni did not give up, and in 1297 he fi-

[3] Brandr Sæmundsson (1163–1201) and Klængr Torsteinsson (1152–1176).

[4] "Seventeen staðir are named in *Árna saga*, all in the diocese of Skálholt, as being seized

nally re-secured royal support in the Treaty of Ögvaldsnes, an agreement which settled the wealthiest and most important *staðir* on the bishop, who then granted them to powerful clerics, but allowed lay owners to maintain possession of the smaller farmers' churches (*bændarkirkjur*). Not only had he succeeded in boosting the Church's economy, Árni also developed its network by replacing chieftains with loyal clergymen in local positions. Although the Church officials were (mostly) triumphant in this case, the considerable time and great effort it took to secure victory is indicative of the fierce and protracted opposition they faced.

These years of political and economic conflict were also accompanied by moral struggle. Just as the chieftains clung to their properties and positions, so were they reluctant to set aside some cultural practices which did not fit the Christian norm, including those related to marriage or which opposed the masculine ideals of their honour culture. As will be discussed below, this reluctance led to clashes between the social elite and the Church officials who were attempting to moralise the population. It is significant that an attack on their sinfulness could also weaken the chieftains' political or social positions.

An Emotional Regime

In the effort to advance its aims, the Church made use of the horror inspired by depictions of pain in Hell to manipulate the chieftains, encouraging an emotional regime based on the fear of pain or the memory of pain experiences. When an emotional regime is employed with a specific purpose it may also be said to become an emotional tool, and I will argue that the depictions of powerful men and hellish punishments in the literature were deliberately used as such by Iceland's Church.

In the 1980s, Peter and Carol Stearns pioneered the idea of "emotionology"; they were interested in differences between the way people truly felt and standards of emotional expression. Since these standards could be seen to change over time, their work made way for investigation into the history of emotions (Stearns & Stearns 1985). As this field of study grew in popularity, two theories came to dominate the literature. The first is that of William Reddy's "emotional regime", which he defines as "The set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them…" (2001: 129). There is an element of control inherent in the notion of a regime, and Reddy believes that a failure to conform or perform enthusiastically enough will lead to punishment ranging from the physical to the social. The second is Barbara Rosenwein's concept of "emotional communities", which she describes as social groups with shared modes of emotional expression (2002:

by their original lay owners in 1284." (Sigurdson 2011: 35)

842–843). It is possible for several emotional regimes or communities to overlap, and for these smaller groups to exist within a broader, overarching regime – here, society's emotional response to a belief in pain in Hell.[5]

The Church's imposition of this new regime had serious implications for existing emotional communities. Although the Church tailored its message to fit the circumstances in Iceland, the idealisation of chastity and humility was directly at odds with traditional values and emotional norms which were aligned and interwoven with Iceland's social structure. As will be seen in this article, the introduction of a new emotional regime sparked changes within the community. Thus, the more tangible, material conflict between the Church and the chieftains was also occurring between opposing emotional discourses. Evidence that Iceland's elite could be influenced by this type of emotional tool is found in saga descriptions of their pilgrimages,[6] their practice of founding or retiring to monasteries,[7] their anxieties surrounding burial and excommunication,[8] and, finally, their deathbed confessions.

[5] Similarly, Rosenwein (2009) identifies the emotional community of the clerical elite, and discusses emotions as a tool of inclusion and exclusion used to influence Christians, with a focus on the efficacy of sadness and fear of exclusion for strengthening moral resolve.

[6] For example, the chieftain Gizurr Þorvaldsson's pilgrimage to Rome in 1247. The thirteenth-century chieftain Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson travelled to Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela, and Rome, and his rival Þorvaldr Snorrason was absolved in Rome.

[7] Powerful men established and made donations to monasteries, and most monastic clergy had an elite background (Orri Vésteinsson: 2000, 133). For instance, it seems that Þingeyrar Abbey was founded by chieftains, and a patron, Þorgils Oddsson, was a monk there in 1151, as was the chieftain Guðmundr dýri (Haki Antonsson: 2018: 127). The monastery at Viðey was founded by Þorvaldr Gizurarson in 1225 or 1226. He and four others became canons, and Þorvaldr was prior until his death in 1235. Even Jón Loftsson founded Keldur monastery in 1193 with the intention of becoming a monk (Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 197–198).

[8] See, for example, Cormack 1993. In *Íslendinga saga*, Hrani weeps as he confesses his sins, filled with fear of his uncertain fate after death. In the same text, the chieftain Oddr Þórarinsson asks to see a priest before he dies in 1255. Bishop Henrik had excommunicated Oddr, and his men therefore had to bury him directly outside the cemetery walls. When a payment was later made to lift his excommunication, Oddr was reburied in consecrated ground. Similarly, although he was not baptised, Egil Skallagrímsson's daughter moved his remains to the borders of Mosfell churchyard. For a discussion of these examples, amongst others, see Boyer: 1994 and Haki Antonsson: 2018. Similar examples are also found in Norway. For instance, in 1225, Jarl Skúli sent instructions to the korsbrødrene at Nidaros asking them to pray for him, to burn candles, ring the bell, and give money to priests. (Wellendorf: 2009: 17–18) In the Christian laws of Grágás, a focus on baptism and burial also shows anxieties regarding life after death. (Dennis, Foote & Perkins 1980)

Reddy' classic regime assumes that prescribed emotional responses can create suffering by forcing individuals to act in a way which does not feel natural to them, and it is accepted that many expressions in emotional communities are meant to convey a message through their performance alone. One could argue that a religious regime based in fear is more "genuine" than the ones envisioned by Reddy, and less performative than Rosenwein's communities. Further, it is important to remember that these communities had very different attitudes towards pain than most people do today, particularly regarding its potentially positive aspects (Cohen 2000; Mills 2005; Trembinski 2012). Nonetheless, this dread of the pain in Hell should not necessarily to be tied to a fear of pain on Earth. Its affirmative role in Christianity may have made a rejection of pain objectionable under certain emotional regimes, however, it seems to have been more acceptable, and encouraged, to react with "natural" horror or fear when faced with the torments of the afterlife – the response observed within the visions.[9] As the angel of the translated vision *Duggals leizla* asks: "...if God were to forgive everything, to what end should men be righteous? Or why should he repent and confess his sins, if he did not fear God?" (Cahill 1983: 123).

Visions and *Leizlur*

By the thirteenth century, the Icelandic Church had begun to expect more than simple baptism from its followers, and *exempla*, such as visions, were employed to encourage sincere emotional engagement with religion. Successful *exempla* should be believable and confirmed by witnesses, connect with the emotions, deliver a clear message, and leave a strong impression (Menache & Horowitz 1996: 324).

Christian vision literature was popular throughout medieval Europe, where it spread and was read in Latin as well as a great many vernacular translations. These morally instructive tales describe the otherworldly journeys of individual souls and their spiritual guides to observe or experience the afterlife before returning to their bodies. In Old Norse, works within this genre began to be translated before 1200 (Wellendorf 2009: 157, 199), and were called *leizla*, believed to stem from the verb *leiða* (to guide).[10] The most detailed Old Norse vision is *Duggals leizla*, a translation

[9] Menache & Horowitz 1996: 341. Invoking fear of pain was a suitable method of moral control in the thirteenth century. Esther Cohen provides examples of this belief, including a handbook for preachers with a section on "How to Terrify Listeners". (Cohen 2009: 41). Fear was also seen as positive in the journey towards repentance. (Snyder 1965) For more on the fear of pain see, Boddice 2017: 15–20; Cohen 2009: 25–42; Morris 1993: 125–126. On fear of Hell in Old Norse society specifically, see Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2008: 75–77, and in visions more generally, Gurevich & Shukman 1984: 52–53 and Konshuh 2010: 23–24.

[10] On the origin and meaning of the name *leizla* see Heide 2016; Wellendorf 2009: 43–61.

of *Visio Tnugdali*. Although its influence on other visions must be noted, this text, as well the other translated visions of *Gundelinus leizla* and *Páls leizla*, are not the focus of this article. Nor will the fragmentary Old Norse adaptations of Furseus's and Drycelm's *leizlur*, or the younger records of *Draumkvedet* be included in the following discussion.

As indicated by its title, *Rannveigar leizla* tells of a guided journey to the afterlife, however, *Sólarljóð* and *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla* do not fall strictly under the *leizla* definition. Nevertheless, they do centre on messages from, or travel to, the next world, and contain many of the elements found in traditional visionary texts – and most importantly they clearly share the same goals. Moreover, as original Icelandic compositions they represent a unique opportunity to explore the cultivation of the local influence of visionary narratives. All these stories are intended to impress the reader with accounts of the risks and rewards which await them after death, paying special attention to punishment, Hell, and the danger of sin. Visions are well suited to the dissemination of an emotional regime as they focus on the individual and their pain experience, and draw upon aspects of life familiar to ordinary people.[11]

The Icelandic visions are directly influenced and inspired by the European tradition, and are primarily distinguished from the translated material by more references to a pagan past, most notably through protagonists that are still learning about the basics of Christianity. Visions address moral issues such as the sexual misconduct of both secular and ecclesial leaders, the breaking of vows to God, and, more generally, behaviours which disrupted a peaceful and well-functioning society. Although the secular elite were a strong focus of these texts in both Europe and Iceland, visions should hold meaning for everyone.[12] Thus, I do not wish to argue that the experiences discussed below were only significant to the elite, nor that the sins they are condemned for were committed by this group alone. The intention of this paper is to demonstrate how these manuscripts and their contents were utilised by the Church in its campaign against the chieftains, not to preclude the presence of other messages and motives within this literature or the existence of a broader audience.

As we no longer possess any of the "original" manuscripts, determining the age of these texts can be somewhat challenging, however, they can all be dated with vary-

[11] "The "internalisation" of the punishment suffered for past misdemeanours and the movement of the spiritual centre of gravity from the fate of the human race in general to the fate of an individual in particular are characteristic of medieval vision literature....in tales of the hereafter the individualistic aspect of man's subjection to death and punishment comes to the fore." Gurevich 1992: 77; Menache & Horowitz 1996: 324.

[12] On determining the intended audiences of visions, see Konshuh 2010.

ing degrees of certainty to the thirteenth century.[13] A more specific time frame for each vision will be considered as they are introduced, but it must be acknowledged that it is not possible to be exact. The visions will be presented in their established chronological order alongside relevant political and historical issues and events. The discussion begins with the journey of a priest's mistress in *Rannveigar leizla*, before turning to matters of malice and murder in *Sólarljóð*, and finally the inherently moral heathen hero of the conversion narrative *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla*.

Rannveigar leizla: A message on sexual morality

The only surviving original Icelandic contribution to the *leizla* genre, *Rannveigar leizla* is a brief description of an otherworldly journey taken during the winter of 1198 by Rannveig, an ordinary woman living in the eastern fjords of Iceland. Rannveig's vision is found in *Guðmundar saga biskups*, which survives in several manuscripts, the first dated to c. 1330–1350.[14] However, Stéfan Karlsson has argued that the vision was included in earlier accounts of the bishop's life composed shortly after his death in 1237, and it is within this context that I will be discussing its contents (Stéfan Karlsson 1983: clii; 1985). It is no coincidence that this vision should take place when it does – 1198 was an important year for the Icelandic Church as it was then that permission was given at the Alþing to make vows to Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallsson. St Þorlákr was especially interested in the prevention of sexual sins, the focus of this vision, and famously refused to marry although it was common practice amongst his peers. Nor is it strange that it is found in the life of Guðmundr Arason, who was bishop of Hólar from 1203 until his death in 1237. He was known as an especially pious man who followed and built upon Þorlákr's example in his aggressive confrontation of Iceland's chieftains in a campaign for Church autonomy. This may be the most historically engaged of the texts presented here, and it draws on many of the Church's concerns despite its brevity, most prominently the conduct and duties of powerful men and the admonition of those involved in illicit romantic affairs. Although powerful laymen constitute a primary focus, *Rannveigar leizla* also contains a broader perspective on priests and women. As will be seen, this is rather unique; in the other visions discussed below, individuals who do not belong to the male secular elite are barely mentioned, and even the clerical elite are not featured. Still, it is im-

[13] Jonas Wellendorf (2004) argues that the European translations would have been considered more or less contemporary during their transmission into Old Norse society.

[14] The version considered here is from *Guðmundar saga* A (MS AM 399, 4to), dated to the first half of the fourteenth century. Rannveig's vision is found in all four of the bishop's vitae, gaining particular prominence in *Guðmundar saga* D where it was moved to the beginning of the text alongside evidence of his miracles.

portant to consider that while the warnings implicit in Rannveig's journey are undoubtedly valuable to those they directly discuss, in attacking women and clergy this *leizla* is still indirectly confronting the chieftains, as it is they who usually controlled the other groups. For instance, at the time of Rannveig's vision, chieftains had recently been barred from the priesthood, but they maintained power as the employers or friends of priests as the role was frequently filled by their sons or allied farmers. Thus, these secular leaders continued to oppose the bishops' authority over the clergy. As for women such as Rannveig, it appears that they often had little or no say in marital or concubinage arrangements with chieftains, these matters often being decided by the male parties with a vested interest in the agreement.

Rannveig's journey begins when she suddenly falls into an unconscious state. There is an immediate indication that she is physically distressed, as "she would jerk her limbs violently from time to time, as if she were in great agony."[15] Meanwhile, her soul is brutally dragged across lava fields overgrown with briars, past various undescribed scenes of torture. It is significant that the pain she endures in Hell seems to be translated into her living body, highlighting suffering as the sensory focus from the vision's outset. Finally, she reaches the edge of a fiery pit:

> ...she saw in front of her something in the nature of a huge cauldron or a deep, wide pit; it was filled with boiling pitch and round it were blazing fires. Inside she saw many men, both those who were living at that time and those who were deceased, and she recognised some of them. There she saw nearly all the lay chieftains who had misused their authority.[16]

The prison-like pit traps those within, and the painful purpose of the boiling pitch and blazing fires seem fairly self-explanatory. Together, these elements create an atmosphere of continuous suffering, and, as Rannveig has not yet been subjected to them, the threat of pain to come. The laymen found here are specifically described as *høfðingia olérða*, uneducated chieftains, meaning those who had not been trained as priests. This detail may be meant to emphasise the distinction created by the official prohibition against the ordainment of chieftains in 1190. But more importantly, there is a sense of separation between them and the religious men associated with Ran-

[15] *hon kiptiz við hart. stundum. sem henne yrðe mioc sart.* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 93; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 32).

[16] *hon sa firi ser þui likast sem uére ketill mikill e(ða) pyttr diupr ok uiðr. ok ibik uellanda. en um huerfis elldr brennande. Þar sa hon marga menn béðe lifendr ok dauða. ok hon kende suma þar. Hon sa þar /nér\ alla høfðingia olérða. þa er illa foro með þui uallde er þeir høfðo.* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 93–94; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 33).

nveig, thus broadening the group of sinners to more deliberately include priests, chieftains, and perhaps chieftain-priests, since those who were already ordained maintained their positions and others continued to take on lesser clerical roles, even after the archbishop's ban. Further, it is important that some of these men are still alive as their presence demonstrates that their sins represent ongoing problems, increasing the urgency of this warning and the fear of punishment. This is also the point where Rannveig's Hell begins to be fleshed out, the previous torments and sinners going unnamed. Already it appears that the punishment of chieftains is being prioritised, however, they are not destined to suffer alone:

> Then the demons addressed her, saying: 'Down into this pit you shall be cast, for such are your deserts. You have shared in the same sin as those who are down there, namely loathsome lechery, which you committed when you lay with two priests and so defiled their office. To this you have added vanity and avarice. Now here you shall remain, since you would never abandon our service, and in many ways we shall torment you.' After this they dragged her to the edge of the pit, and it was boiling so fiercely that her legs were splashed, and every part of her body that was not covered by her clothes was burnt when she recovered consciousness.[17]

Once again, there is a connection between the torture Rannveig experiences in Hell and the suffering of her physical body on earth. Not only do her burns act as testimony to the veracity of her experience, they are an unmistakable reminder to herself and others that Hell is very real and very painful. Rannveig will be joining a group of male sufferers, and they are said to share three very chieftain-oriented sins: *ofmetnaðr* (pride, arrogance), *fégirni* (covetousness, avarice), and *hórdómr* (fornication, adultery). The accusation of *hórdómr* is justified by Rannveig's sexual relationships; she has been the mistress of two priests, and is therefore guilty of trespassing against moral restrictions which the Church was seeking to impose in Iceland.[18] The devils'

[17] *Þa toko fiandrnir til orða. uið hana. ok méltu. Her skaltu fara iofan. þui ‹at þat› er leiðiligr hordomr. er þu hefir framit til þessa hefir þu þer uerket. þui at þess ins sama ertu hluttakare. sem þeir er her ero iniðre. er þu hafir lagz undir .ij. presta. ok saurgat sva þeira þionosto. ok þar með ofmetnaðr ok fegirne. Nu skaltu her uera er þu uilldir alldri af lata at þiona oss. Nu skulo vér þic marga uega kuelea. Siþan draga þeir hana fram at pyttenum. eɴ þar var sua ogurlig uella. at støcc or upp a fétr henne ok allt þar er hon var ber. þa var hon brunniɴ er hon racnaðe uið.* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 94; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 33).

[18] Although the specific mention of two priests, rather than just one, is not dealt with in detail, Rannveig's transgressions are perhaps more intentional, and therefore more serious,

allegation comes in addition to her character's introduction at the beginning of the story, in which she is defined by her relationships: "A woman called Rannveig fell into a trance; she was the mistress of a priest called Audun and had lived with another priest before that."[19] However, she is an otherwise pious woman, and the sins of pride and avarice are not as clearly explained. *Ofmetnaðr* may refer to her later punishment for taking too much pride in her appearance, and *fégirni* may also be meant to relate to the fine clothing she is said to wear, nevertheless, it could also be argued that these crimes might be pinned much more easily upon the *høfðingia olérða* in the pit below. The Church's critique of the chieftain's attachment to wealth and property will be taken up in the following discussion of *Sólarljóð*, but it is still worthwhile to draw attention to the suggestive use of vocabulary here, as it subtly broadens the range of concerns being raised and strengthens the focus on a chieftain audience.

Returning once more to Rannveig's primary fault, her sexual sin, we find a strong relationship between the nature of her crime and contemporary Church anxieties. At this time, the Church was, rather unsuccessfully, attempting to impose new standards for sexual conduct, including clerical celibacy. It was common for priests to be married or to enter into *fylgilag* (companionship), a sort of common-law arrangement.[20] The term *fylgikonur* (concubine, companion) came to be used primarily for the mistresses of priests, some of whom believed they had found a loophole in Church doctrine by taking a concubine rather than a wife. It seems that this may have been the nature of Rannveig and Auðun's relationship as she is said to *fylgja* (follow after) him. Although it seems that people were aware of the Church's beliefs regarding celibacy, *Grágás* (the Icelandic law collection) mentioning bishops' heirs and the inclusion of priests in instructions concerning betrothal and marriage has been taken as proof that they were not legally prohibited from marrying (Jochens 1980: 379). Indeed, ecclesiastical celibacy was not enforced by law until 1275. Jenny Jochens was unable to find evidence of a single celibate Icelandic priest in this period, in fact, there is every indication that they married regularly, or at least had concubines, and produced many children. However, she does concede that the issue is complicated by the number of important chieftains who became acolytes, deacons, priests, and monks while maintaining their secular roles and relationships (Jochens 1980: 383). Even prominent religious leaders failed to conform. Despite their attempts to improve the

for having occurred on two separate occasions.

[19] *Hon het Rannueig. Hon fylgðe preste þeim er Auðun het. Hon hafðe fylgt øðrum preste aðr.* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 92, transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 32).

[20] *Fylgilag* resembled official marriage in the couple's responsibilities to each other and in that it required a divorce to be dissolved (Auður Magnúsdóttir 2008: 214).

sexual habits of others, they did not always follow their own advice; for instance, Bishop Jón Ögmundarson was married twice despite suggestions of his being influenced by the monastic order of Cluny which had clear views on ecclesiastic celibacy (Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 155), and his saga does not conceal that Bishop Laurentius had a son outside of marriage (Nedkvitne 2009: 50). Further, of the thirteen native bishops in Iceland between 1156 and 1237, seven are known to have been married (Jochens 1980: 382). Only two local bishops were particularly concerned with celibacy – Þorlákr Þórhallsson and Guðmundr Arason. Although Guðmundr did not campaign for chastity and celibacy quite as fiercely as the sainted Þorlákr, he did lead by example; as mentioned, unlike his contemporaries, Guðmundr was not married (Jochens 1980: 383). It is clear that the vision is addressing the Church's worries regarding celibacy, but some of its underlying consequences are not as obvious. Encouraging celibacy also worked to separate Iceland's priests and bishops from secular society, and to make them more dependent upon and loyal to the Church. Further, in promoting priestly obedience, the Church is challenging the chieftains, who, as the priests' employers, often had more direct control over this group.

Rannveig's history raises the matter of sexual depravity more generally. It has been argued that the lack of clauses referring to sexual behaviour such as adultery or incest in the Code of Church Law included in *Grágás* is a sign that the Church had little authority in this area when the ecclesiastical law was recorded around 1123 (Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 161–162), but this is not to say that they did not take issue with it. In Christian law, *einfaldr hórdómr* refers to fornication (between a married and an unmarried person), and *tvífaldr hórdómr* to adultery (between two married people) (Keyser & Munch 1848: 371). The use of the term *hórdómr* here is interesting as it points directly to the sexual iniquity of the chieftains – failing to conform to the norms of Christian marriage. It also represents an idea of punishment in this world and the next, with adultery having both legal and spiritual consequences. Rannveig's promiscuity, and its connected pain experience, can be linked to problems of chastity, which seem to have been considerably more offensive to the Church than a disregard for celibacy.

Most serious of all was the practice of concubinage among powerful, married men. As mentioned, Bishop Þorlákr was the first to seriously address this, and he faced opposition in his attempts to convince chieftains to give up their mistresses. Orri Vésteinsson suggests that Þorlákr's directive to regulate marital relationships may have been generally accepted, only strongly resisted by the elite who were used to living by different norms than ordinary people (2000: 172). That he often clashed with powerful men is evidenced in his saga:

> He was not wholly in agreement with some men, even chieftains, because he agreed only with what was fitting. It seemed to him that it was an even greater downfall of God's Church if noble men erred greatly. He also deemed it no more excusable that they, who had previously had great credit from God both in wealth and in honour, should not restrain themselves from unlawful things.[21]

It seems reasonable to assume that chieftains were the worst offenders as their social position and resources would have created opportunities, and motivations, unavailable to the average person. However, there is legal evidence that suggests illegitimate sexual intercourse was a bigger problem. Extensive material in *Grágás* addresses crimes ranging from kissing to impregnating women, and punishments from fines to outlawry, with some indication that adultery was considered to be more serious than fornication. Nonetheless, a related critique Þorlákr received from the Norwegian archbishop, who pointed out the sexual failings of specific chieftains, does show that it was the behaviour of the socially elite which was most urgently in need of reform due to the influence they had on others – seeming to confirm that sexual sinning was not limited to this group, but that it was most detrimental when found there. Archbishop Eysteinn worried that as long as the chieftains failed to respect the bond of marriage, the Icelanders would never change their ways, as nothing better could be expected from the common people. Despite his best efforts, Þorlákr had very limited success in changing Icelandic culture; even his own sister, Ragnheiðr Þórhallsdóttir lived for many years as a concubine to Jón Loftsson.[22] Although he was an ordained

[21] *Þorlákr byskup rauf þau ráð ǫll á sínum dǫgum sem hann vissi at ólǫgum ráðin vera, hvárt sem hlut áttu í meiri vissi at ólǫgum ráðin vera, hvárt sem hlut áttu í meiri menn eða minni. Eigi varð hann við suma menn né hǫfðingja með ǫllu samhuga, því at hann samþykkði þat eitt við þá er vel samði. Þótti honum þat miklu meira niðrfall Guðs kristni ef gǫfgum mǫnnum gáfusk stórir hlutir yfir. Virði hann ok við þá eigi meiri várkunn at hepta sik eigi at óleyfðum hlutum er áðr hǫfðu bæði mikit lán af Guði í auðœfum ok mannvirðingum."* (ÍF XVI 2002, 75 transl. Ármann Jakobsson & D. Clark 2013: 16–17) The translaters also suggest that Jón Loftsson may have been a specific target of this message, but that it was better to write more generally in the saga and remain applicable to a broader audience.

[22] "In one of his letters Archbishop Eysteinn addressed himself to five of the most prominent chieftains in south and east Iceland at the beginning of Bishop Thórlakr's episcopy and stated that in their intimate affairs they 'conducted themselves like the beasts of the barnyard'. This message was directed chiefly towards Jón Loftsson of Oddi and Gizurr Hallsson of Haukadalur who, despite their marriages, fathered children on concubines. Jón Loftsson, for example, kept Ragnheiðr, Bishop Thórlak's sister, who bore him two sons, Bishop Páll and Ormr Breiðbælingr. Bishop Thórlakr tried to separate them, but Jón was completely unyielding to his persuasions." (Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 187) Bishop Þorlákr also introduced a penitential for the clergy of his diocese. This guide covers a variety of subjects but there is an emphasis on sexual transgressions (Haki Antonsson 2018: 24).

deacon, Jón was married and had two legitimate children with his wife, Halldóra, thus technically breaking the laws of celibacy. But far worse, he had another two children with Ragnheiðr, and three more with various other women. In his time, Jón was the most powerful chieftain in Iceland, and it was not difficult for him to defy the Church. Jón's only legitimate son, Sæmundr, carried on his father's legacy, with even less respect for Church law – he had eleven children with four different women, including one who was related to him in the third degree.[23] It seems that concubinage was also an important part of Icelandic honour culture. Having many women and the capacity to care for them was a way for men to display their power and masculinity (Auður Magnúsdóttir 2001: 90–91). A look at *Sturlunga saga* will quickly show that these men and their mistresses are just two examples of many similar situations.

The system of concubinage was firmly integrated into Icelandic culture and society. It was useful for the priests, such as Rannveig's Auðun, as these women contributed to their households and helped to create a supportive family structure. These relationships could also result in children who were able to learn from their father, and eventually take up his profession. In a country which was severely lacking in priests this could be seen as advantageous. Among the chieftains, the practice was much more political, and it came to play a critical role in the creation and maintenance of their powerbases. Men took mistresses in order to build connections with them and their families that could outlive the romantic relationships themselves, possibly for generations to come. Concubines were usually of lower, although still significant, status than the chieftains. This alliance was valuable to both parties as the woman's family would be connected to the social elite, and the chieftain gained a new ally who was likely to be more loyal than one of his peers. One example is found in the life of Sturla Sighvatsson. His marriage to Solveig Sæmundardóttir tied Sturla to the powerful Sæmundr Jónsson of Oddi, but he did not receive much political support from his wife's brothers as they were too concerned with their own troubles. Sturla also had a concubine, Vigdís, whose father, Gísl Bergsson, was a prominent farmer. Through this relationship Sturla profited not only from Gísl's support, but also that of his social network, which included the leading famers in Miðfjörðr, as well as that of Gísl's own sons (at least two of which were at the Battle of Örlygsstaðir, where Sturla and Sighvatr were killed), his nephew, and the husband of his niece. As explored by Auður Magnúsdottir, this case demonstrates the value of the vertical nature of concubinage. Gísl and his family did not have the resources to act independently of Sturla, and were therefore much more reliant on him than his official in-laws were (2001: 44–45). Still, they were powerful enough to provide support. Further, she ar-

[23] This constitutes an incestuous relationship, something which the Church frowned upon.

gues that one reason this practice continued despite the Church's protests was that the bonds created by extramarital relationships were vital in the political strife of 1180–1264, and especially during the escalating conflict of the final forty years before the end of the Free State (Auður Magnúsdóttir 2001: 213, 216).

Just as the Church needed to use all its resources in its battle against the chieftains, the chieftains had to exploit every opportunity in their struggles against one another. Alongside friendship and fosterage, concubinage provided an opportunity to expand one's social network, the most important element of a chieftain's powerbase. Further, beyond these immediate advantages, it was beneficial for chieftains to have a number of children, both to position or marry off in ways that created more connections and support, and to provide several male heirs to choose from, allowing them to select the most promising candidate.[24] Political success depended strongly upon the individual, and uncertain inheritance or poor leaders could cost a family its position. In criticizing the practice of concubinage, the Church was threatening chieftains at a local level by limiting their prospects for creating support networks and friendships with wealthy householders. It also demonstrates the Church's desire and ability to assault the chieftains on many fronts. Taking aim at concubinage may appear to be a purely moral issue, but there are many other social and political factors at play.

As will be seen in the following discussion on *Sólarljóð*, which attacks the chieftains' economic foundation through its critique of their competition for property, *Rannveigar leizla* confronts not only the chieftains' sexual immorality, but the aspects of their powerbase to which their adulterous relationships were essential. If the chieftains had submitted to the demands of the Church, what would have become of them and their families? It is difficult to imagine how they would have been able to maintain their positions without exploiting every available resource, including the opportunities created by concubinage. None of the elements of the chieftains' bases could operate alone. For instance, through his concubine, Guðrún Hreinsdóttir, Snorre Sturluson fostered a relationship with her stepfather, Þórðr Böðvarsson, from whom Snorre received half of the Lundamanna chieftaincy in 1202. Through his connection to Guðrun's mother, Snælaug Högnadóttir, Snorre gained possession of Stafaholt, probably as part of the same agreement which made Guðrun his mistress (Auður Magnúsdóttir 2001: 68). This is a good example of how friendship, property, and concubinage interacted and depended upon one another – in condemning any one aspect of this system, the Church was effectively censuring all of them, or, at the very least, threatening their ability to function. The chieftains were interested and invested

[24] For example, Snorre Sturluson married his three daughters, only one of which was legitimate, into some of the most powerful families in Iceland, significantly increasing his influence thereby.

in the Church as long as it benefitted them, but were far less eager to support it when it undermined their very existence (Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2019).

Now, if male chieftains are meant to take note of the punishments described in this *leizla*, why is the protagonist a woman? One reason may be that Rannveig's vision is intended to glorify Guðmundr. The decision to include the account of a female visionary may have been influenced by the story of another woman's vision, said to have occurred in 1200, which promoted the sanctity of Bishop Jón Ögmundsson. In keeping with the intentions of this article, we can also focus on the didactic qualities of this choice. Her gender may be an important part of this role, as Carolyne Larrington argues that accounts of female visionaries are often a vehicle for social comment (1995: 241). Women could also have numerous sexual partners during their lives, but this was most often in the form of consecutive relationships. For instance, the abovementioned Ragnheiðr Þórhallsdóttir had children before she became Jón Loftsson's mistress, and went on to marry another man after he sent her away (of his own volition, not at Bishop Þorlákr's behest). Although this behaviour may be being critiqued by the detail that Rannveig's current relationship is, at least, her second, the real problem is that it is with a priest. Auður Magnúsdottir argues that guilt was shifted from priests to their women during the thirteenth century, accompanied by a belief that women's sexuality posed a threat to male celibacy (2001: 149). Jenny Jochens' work on concubines and wives supports Auður's theory. She maintains that it was typical for women to be blamed in matters of sexual misconduct at this time, and suggests that, having made so little progress with men, the Icelandic Church may have tried to convince women to reform instead.[25] It is certainly reasonable to think that a new tact was being taken in addressing female sinners due to a lack of success; despite the Church's efforts, it is clear that concubinage among lay and ecclesial leaders continued well into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Even Jón Arason (1484–1550), the last Catholic bishop in Iceland, had six children with his *fylgikona* (Jochens 1995: 31). Jochens uses the example of *Rannveigar leizla* to demonstrate that women were assigned sole responsibility in such cases. This may have been true for relationships with the clergy, however, the lack of other women in the vision and the clear punishment of men means that this strict statement does not necessarily apply to the chieftains Rannveig is joining. Nonetheless, that she is being held responsible for her lovers' transgressions is stressed by the connections between her sins and female vanity in her efforts to attract male attention. This is emphasised further in an episode where the devils attack her with a red-hot whip, beating and burning her

[25] Jochens 1995: 78. Women also became the subject of harsher legal punishments for infidelity, suffering heavier fines, and even risking their inheritance (Jochens 1995: 42).

shoulders, back, and loins. Afterwards, it is explained how the punishment is related to her sins:

> Now you have been shown what you and many others merit, for the present way of life of many men is not as it should be. It is your duty now to tell each one what you have seen of his fate. The reason why your legs were burnt was that you have worn hose of costly material and black shoes, decking yourself out to please men. Your hands were burnt because you stitched up sleeves for yourself and others on Feast Days, and your back and shoulders because you arrayed yourself in fine cloth and linen, adorning yourself for men in your vanity and moral weakness.[26]

Rannveig is forced to suffer for her vanity and moral weakness, and her pain and distress may have given other women pause for thought. If women really were to blame for male misbehaviour, then it was beneficial for the Church to frighten them away from extra-marital relationships. This scene of torture is the most detailed section of the text, and it is the only punishment which is fully explained, however, this is not to say that the spiritual fate of women was being prioritised. The souls of her priestly lovers are presumably in danger as well, and it could be that this message is relevant to the clergy – even simply as a warning to beware of women. It could also be extended to chieftains who take concubines; it is, after all, only men in the pit intended for those who have shared Rannveig's sins. This is an important detail, and it should be stressed that no other women are represented in this Hell. Rannveig sees what she and many others deserve, specifically many men who do not live as they should. Although this explanation does not necessarily exclude the possibility of other women, their absence elsewhere does not strongly imply their inclusion. It is also important to recognise that in relationships with concubines it was the male party who had the most control. As discussed, elite men usually chose women of lower social standing, and it was within their power to bring these women into their homes and to dismiss them. In a

[26] *Nu er þer syndr uerþleikr þinn ok margra annaʀa at eigi matte sua buit lyða um margra manna rað. En þess skaltu skylld at segia þat hverium manni. sem þu hefir sét um hans mal. Nu braʀtu þui afotum at þu hafðir skruðsocka ok suarta skúa. ok skreyttiz sua uið kørlum. eʀ þui a hondum at þu hefir saumat at høndum þer ok oðrum a hatiþum. enn þui a bake ok herðum at þu hefir borit a þic skruð ok lerept. ok skreytz við kørlum af metnaðe ok ostyrct* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 95–96, transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 34) Auður Magnúsdóttir (2001: 149) also speculates that the positioning of her injuries is meant to prevent her from posing sexual danger: "Här skulle en annan symbolik kunna tillföras, nämligen den som rör den fysiska intimiteten, för med brännskador på rygg och höfter kunde kvinnan inte ligga på rygg och hennes roll som erotisk, farlig förförerska är därmed förbi."

way, this is hinted at here, in that the sins which lead to Rannveig's torture can all be connected to the endangerment of a male audience; she is guilty of tempting men but not openly propositioning them or forcing them into relationships.

The Church's stance on sexual morality is undoubtedly the primary focus of this *leizla*, but it also explores the way that leaders' integrity affected their followers. Besides the sin of *hórdómr*, the men found in the bubbling pit are guilty of misusing their authority. Elite men were responsible for protecting their families, households, and communities. Not only are depraved leaders themselves damned, they also pose a spiritual danger to those who follow them, or who follow their example. A chieftain's choice to oppose the Church and its teachings would unavoidably impact on the lives of his supporters. For instance, those who did not comply with the Church's demands could deprive their householders of attending a consecrated church, of receiving visits from bishops, or even put them at risk of having their entire district excommunicated.[27]

This idea of interconnectedness and obligation amongst the population is taken one step further to include the island in its entirety. Rannveig is rescued from Hell by a trio of saints, Óláfr, Magnús, and Hallvarðr, and whisked away to Heaven:

> "And now you will be permitted to see the rewards of the righteous men of your country, both the living and the deceased, for in no other country is there a greater proportion of holy men than in Iceland; it is their prayers and ours which uphold the land, for otherwise it would perish."[28]

[27] A bishop was able to excommunicate a district, and presumably this drastic step would have been taken to punish or intimidate a prominent figure rather than an ordinary person. Technically, this excommunication had to be enforced by the pope, something which is not known to have occurred. Nonetheless, in 1245 it is recorded that the archbishop imposed this kind of ban on northern Iceland for unknown reasons (Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 164). Similar, better documented, lengths were gone to in Europe. Beyond the implied spiritual danger of following a leader banned from the Catholic Church, these punishments could also extend to the population in more tangible ways, for instance when Pope Innocent III placed an interdict on all of England in 1208 to chastise King John for opposing his appointment of archbishop. The actions of a leader had serious consequences for the everyday lives, and even the souls, of their subjects. That this type of redress was even an option highlights the communal nature of religion as well as the responsibilities of the elite.

[28] *ok skaltu na at sea uerðleik heilagra manna. er her ero a yðro landi béðe lifendr ok andaðir. þui at eigi ero a øðrom løndum at iafn muclum mᴀn fiolða. fleire heil(agir) menn enn ᴀIslandi. ok hallda bénir þeira ok uarar landino upp. eᴎ ella munde firi faraz landit ‹.›* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 96; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 34).

As in Hell, Rannveig is presented with a vision which reveals the fate of living and dead individuals, but this time it is to promote their saintliness. We learn that the prayers of saints Óláfr, Magnús, and Hallvarðr sustain Norway and the Orkneys, while those of Guðmundr assist Iceland. Although the protection these men offer is reliant on their holiness, it is not just the souls of their countrymen which are preserved, but the country – the society – itself. Even this detail may be taken as a threat referring to the potential earthly consequence of sin – the perishing of the Icelandic people. Supporting this terrifying notion, Rannveig also learns that these religious men are sorely tried by the waywardness of their congregations: "Likewise, those bishops now living are holy men, on account of the trials they undergo and their patience with the disobedience of their flock, for the holier is each man, the greater his endurance in God's name."[29] Once again, the reference to living people brings an immediacy and localisation to the problem at hand, demonstrating that the Church's struggles are ongoing and that they will affect Rannveig's fellow Icelanders. Although the living bishops suffer this insubordination with patience, its existence acts as a reminder that even though Iceland apparently abounds with holy men, there are still many who need to reform, and that their presence poses a threat to the community. Moreover, the dependence of all Icelanders on this devout group makes the wickedness of the disobedient even more condemnable, as through their evil actions they both offend those who protect them and put others at risk. Finally, it is significant that the saints who tell Rannveig all this, the same ones who intercede for her, are all native to the North, and thus represent an even broader network of social assistance, accountability, and potential friendship. They have been sent to aid Rannveig on behalf of Mary and Peter the Apostle, who they then introduce her to, demonstrating that these local men act as a connecting point between the Icelandic people and the most prominent saints in Heaven. This relationship is brought another step closer to Earth, in that the named residents of Heaven are Iceland's bishops, past and present:

> Here do your bishops dwell, for they have all been saintly men, yet the most saintly are Bishop Jon and Bishop Thorlak the Younger, and next to them Bishop Bjorn, Bishop Isleif and Bishop Thorlak the Elder.... The house you see over there, which is fair and lofty and from which no sound comes, for there silence reigns, that is the abode of Bjorn, the hermit of Thingeyrar. Beside it stands an-

[29] *Sva ero ok þessir helgir menn er nu lifa af skapraunum simun ok þolinméðe. ok ohlyðne lyðs(ins) uið sic. þui at þui helgare er hverr maðr er hann hefir meire þolinméðe. firi auðs nafne.* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 98; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 34).

> other dwelling, lofty and magnificent, from which-you can hear fair song and loud and glorious music, and that is the abode of Gudmund, the son of Ari...[30]

This passage serves to emphasise the bishops' power and the respect they, and thereby the Icelandic Church, deserve, as well as to include them within the social network of Heaven.[31] As will be discussed in the sections on *Sólarljóð* and *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla* below, the social relationships of chieftains are utilised as both a warning and an invitation. The friendship between the bishops, the saints, and thus God, is a relationship that the chieftains are sure to recognise and respect – it is valuable to befriend the friends of God (the bishops) and perhaps unwise to cross them. Cooperation with Church leaders may then represent new possibilities for expanding one's network, both in this world and the next, an attractive prospect for chieftains caught up in the period's power game. However, in this depiction of Heaven and its inhabitants, the chieftains are conspicuously absent. By excluding the secular elite from the landscape of Heaven, they are not only deprived of an opportunity to increase their influence through a connection with God, the value of their earthly relationships is also called into question. One advantage of friendship was that it also created connections with a friend's friends. If Rannveig's vision is to be believed, friendship with the bishops would grant access to a more desirable network than the chieftains could offer. Although it was possible for men to maintain relationships with conflicting parties, there were times when choices of loyalty needed to be made. As expressed in the wisdom poem *Hávamál*: "Be a friend to your friend and also to his friend, but never be a friend to the enemy of your friend."[32] At this time, friendship was based on practicality, not sentimentality, and the chieftains risked losing their connections if their rival the Church had more to give.

[30] *Nu ser þu her staðe þa er eigu helgir menn. béðe lifendr ok dauðir. eꝛ her ero hus eigi øll iafn føgr. þui at þeir ero helgir menn allir ok ero þo helgazstir af þeim Jon byskup ok Thorl(akr) byskup enn yngri. eꝛ þa nést Biørn byskup ok Isleifr byskup ok Thorl(akr) byskup enn ellre...En hus þat er þu matt sea fagrt ok hátt. ok heyrir ecke þangat. þui at þar er hliott. þat a Biørn einseto maðr at Þingeyrom. Eꝛ annat hus þar | hea hat ok gøfuglict. þangat mantu heyru søng fagran ok hlioð mikit. ok dyrðlict. Þat á G(uðmundr) prestr A(ra) s(on).* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 97–98; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 35).

[31] Once again, we are reminded of the connection between this *leizla* and the veneration of Þorlákr Þórhallsson, here through support of other local saints. Naturally, this practice would have lent the bishops and their demands legitimacy, but Jón Jóhannesson (1974: 190–192) also points out the economic benefits of creating an industry of gifts and donations within the country itself, and from other northern nations.

[32] Verse 43: *Vin sínum skal maðr vinr vera, þeim ok þess vin, en óvinar síns skyli engi maðr vinar vinr vera*. (Faulkes 1986: 47).

The theme of responsibility is also tied to Rannveig herself in her role as messenger. Her saintly saviours have told her: "Now you have been shown what you and many others merit, for the present way of life of many men is not as it should be. It is your duty now to tell each one what you have seen of his fate."[33] Building upon the many references to the reward or punishment of living men, the reader is reminded once more than many individuals need to change, and, more hopefully, that, like Rannveig, they have the opportunity to do so. As well, Rannveig is charged with delivering this message to sinful men, and the lack of women is, again, noteworthy and revealing. It seems that Rannveig takes her social duty seriously, but that her message is received with varying degrees of success: "Many men to whom she told hidden matters in their way of life benefited greatly by her vision, but others were resentful because they were despised for their faults and yet were unwilling to renounce them by making atonement for their sins."[34] The fate of these unwilling men is not elaborated upon, but it seems safe to assume that their imagined place in Hell is soon to become a reality.

It is also in the conveyance of her message that the reader gains some insight into Rannveig's emotional condition. When she first awakes, she expresses a desire to fulfil her duty of relaying the events of Hell to those they concern, although it appears to be a sacrifice: "She said she would relate to everyone those things which concerned them in her vision, unpleasant though the task might."[35] Rannveig sees her vision as a kind of burden, and simply discussing it weighs heavily on her; talking about her experience is *þungr* (heavy, oppressive), a term with connotations of suffering or feeling unwell, as well as the more directly somatic suggestion of a mental and physical weight.[36] Her story is concluded with a return to the effect that Rannveig's experience and the associated responsibility has on her: "Rannveig saw and heard many remarkable things there, but when she regained consciousness she was so much afraid that she could hardly speak of them, and likewise ever afterwards she used to tremble if

[33] *Nu er þer syndr uerþleikr þinn ok margra annaʀa at eigi matte sua buit lyða um margra manna rað. Eɴ þess skaltu skylld at segia þat hverium manni*. (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 95–96; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 34).

[34] *Eɴ af uitron þesse toko margir menn. micla bot. er leyndir lutir voro sagðir ifare þeira sealfra. Enn þo lagðo sumir menn øfund a þat er firi litnir voro. fire sina andmarka. eɴ nento þo eigi við at skileazt ‹eða yfir› at béta sina misverka.* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 98–99; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 35).

[35] *ok þat at segia hverium þeira sem til kom. þott þungt þétte."* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 93; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 33).

[36] Thanks to Sif Ríkharðsdóttir for informing me of the somatic implications.

she had to make any mention of them."[37] Although she carries out her task, her time in Hell seems to have damaged her both physically and emotionally. Her body is burned, but her reactions in life all focus on the inspiration of emotional torment which finds physical expression in her difficulty speaking and bodily shaking in fear. While in Hell, Rannveig is said to be "...more terrified than can be described...".[38] Naturally, her sheer horror contributes to the overall sense of distress in this vision, but it is her continued, and apparently unending, signalling of fright after she returns to life which drives this message home and makes it palpable to others.

This insight into Rannveig's emotions is an important part of her *leizla*, but, as is typical of Old Norse texts, the emotional elements are not much embellished. Nevertheless, the details that can be found draw a certain power from this scarcity, in that their inclusion can feel much more deliberate and meaningful. It is this emotional engagement, alongside other themes of social responsibility, and even female sexuality, which will be developed further in the following examination of the visionary poem *Sólarljóð*. Although their forms are very different, one being a true *leizla* and the other a type of advice-giving poem which takes the vision genre as its inspiration, the contents of these texts share other similarities. Like *Rannveigar leizla*, *Sólarljóð* manages to address a chieftainly sin, this time greed and the pursuit of property, and a fundamental element of secular power in the same stroke.

Sólarljóð: Property, power, and pain

The age of *Sólarljóð*, or *The Song of the Sun*, is uncertain as it only survives in paper copies from the seventeenth century onwards, however, it is generally assumed to date to the second half of the thirteenth century.[39] The text is presented as a message from a dead man, presumably to his son, and combines the characteristics of wisdom poetry, such as the traditional Eddic metre (*ljóðaháttr*), with themes found in Christian visions of the afterlife, and, curiously, elements of pre-Christian mythology. *Sólarljóð* is notable for its somewhat unusual structure which combines two genres. The first section presents moralising tales in a manner which has frequently been compared to *Hávamál*, before the poem shifts in style, expanding its scope to include the personal thoughts and sensations of the visionary narrator.[40] The reader is first presented with the deaths and afterlife experiences of various men, before following

[37] *Marge lute sa hon þar merkilega ok heyrðe. En er hon racnaðe við. þa var hon orðin sua rédd at hon matta uarla s(egia). ok ‹var› sua auallt siþan at hon skalf iafnan er hon skyllde nockut um réða.* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 98; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 35).

[38] *Þa var un hréddare enn fra mege s(egia).* (Stefán Karlsson 1983: 95; transl. Turville-Petre & Olszewska 1942: 33).

[39] For an overview of various opinions on this date see Larrington & Robinson 2007.

the poet on his own journey into death, through Hell, and into Heaven. The poem's tone is one of fear, sadness, and acceptance, but there is also a glimmer of hope that those who heed its warning will be spared the tortures of Hell. Here, the sin of murder, and the way it challenges communal norms and trusting relationships, is treated extensively. As well, elite readers are forced to question their misplaced aspiration for the fleeting rewards of worldly power and riches, instead considering the ways that their pursuit could create social conflict. As in other visions, this journey is presented as a lesson to be shared, first by the poet himself, who is relaying the experience to his heir (*arfi*), and then passed on more broadly as a responsibility to recite this poem to others in order to provide valuable instruction.[41]

Sólarljóð begins with the murder of a fearsome robber. This rather detailed story addresses the themes of aggression and social discord. Interestingly, it presents the unique idea that a murderer takes on the sins of their victim. In this case, the dead man, despite being a wicked thief, is instantly ferried to Paradise when he is killed:

> He asked God of the heavens to help him when he awoke slain, and the one [the guest] who had betrayed him without cause took on his sins./Holy angels came down from the heavens above, and gathered his soul to themselves; it will live in a pure existence forever with almighty God.[42]

This episode is the first of several which act as warnings, each representing a crime with a strong emphasis on social wrongdoing; many of the sins of *Sólarljóð* refer to

[40] For further information on its possible literary influences, as well as ideas on how the various elements in *Sólarljóð* fit together, see Amory 1990; Larrington 2002; Haki Antonsson 2018: 36–43; Schorn 2011.

[41] Stanza 81: "This poem which I have taught you, you must recite before living people, 'Sólarljóð' which will appear in many ways to be least untruthful [lit. lying]." (*Kvæði þetta, er þér kent hefi, skaltu fyr kvikum kveða, Sólarljóð, er sýnaz munu minst at mörgu login*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 356). The importance of learning by example is also suggested in stanza 19: "Never trust your enemies, though they speak fair words to you; promise good things; it is good to have another's punishment as a warning." (*Óvinum þínum trú þú aldrigi, þótt fagrt mæli fyr þér; góðu þú heit; gótt er annars víti hafa at varnaði*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 308).

[42] Stanzas 6-7: *Himna guð/bað hann hjálpa sér,/þá er hann/veginn vaknaði,/en sá gat/við syndum taka,/er hann hafði saklausan svikit. Helgir englar/kómu ór himnum ofan/ok tóku sál hans til sín;/í hreinu lífi/hon skal lifa/æ með almátkum guði.* (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 299–300). A similar idea is repeated in stanza 74: "I saw tall wagons journeying along the heavens; they have paths to God; men drive them who are murdered for no cause [lit. causes] at all." (*Hávar reiðir sá ek með himnum fara; þær eigu götur til guðs; menn þeim stýra, er myrðir eru alls fyrir öngvar sakir*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 348).

a breakdown in important personal ties and trust within community relationships. This first victim is killed by a wandering stranger whom he has given food and shelter. Aside from the obvious offence of murder, there is also a deplorable breach of trust between guest and host. That a fierce killer is himself slain reminds us that a man's fate can change in the blink of an eye, and this apparently groundless murder creates a sense of unease which is carried through the text. There is also an emphasis on themes of wealth and death, indicated already in the poem's first line, describing the robber: "The fierce man stole property and life from the offspring of men". This focus is even clearer in the Old Norse which literally starts with *fé* (property) and *fjörvi* (life): *Fé ok fjörvi rænti fyrða kind sá inn grimmi greppr*.[43] As will be seen, the sins of greed and violence are returned to again and again alongside the poet's own increasingly painful personal experiences, as well as descriptions of the suffering of others.

Next, we read of two close companions who kill one another in a duel, both committing murder and breaking the powerful bond of male friendship, the cultural importance of which will be discussed in detail in the section on *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla* below: "Sváfaðr and Skartheðinn were on good terms; neither could be without the other, until they went mad over a single woman; she was destined to bring disgrace to them."[44] Returning briefly to the themes of *Rannveigar leizla*, this story includes a warning against the love of pernicious women. Here, the male perspective is elaborated upon as their lovesickness is itself a source of sadness and suffering, described with the same vocabulary as the tortures of Hell: "The power of desire has brought many a man to grief; torment often stems from women…"[45] This detail builds upon the idea that women were blamed for tempting men, with strange and harmful consequences. Not only does a woman create a rift between these firm friends, their enjoyment of sport and beautiful days is destroyed by thoughts of her radiant body, and they are unable even to sleep.[46] Their lust is presented as a sin which disrupts both

[43] Stanza 1: "The fierce man stole property and life from the offspring of men; no one might pass alive over that road which he guarded." (*Fé ok fjörvi rænti fyrða kind sá inn grimmi greppr; yfir þá götu, er hann varðaði, mátti enginn kvikr komaz*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 296).

[44] Stanza 11: *Sáttir þeir urðu Sváfaðr ok Skartheðinn; hvárgi mátti annars án vera, fyrr en þeir ǽdduz fyr einni konu; hon var þeim til lýta lagin*. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 303).

[45] Stanza 10: *Munaðar ríki hefr margan tregat; opt verðr kvalræði af konum…* (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 302).

[46] Stanzas 12–13: "They paid no heed to anything, neither sport nor the radiant days, because of the shining girl; they could think about no other thing than that radiant body. The dark nights became gloomy for them; they could sleep no sweet [sleep]; but enmity sprang up

social and natural order. The situation is described as *fádæmi* (abnormal or exceptional events), for which the feuding friends are harshly repaid with death.[47] More dangerous women are found throughout the poem. Later, treacherous and dark women (*svipvísar konur, dökku konur*)[48] are introduced by an unnatural event as the wind falls silent and the waters stand still (*vindr þagði*; *vötn stöðvaði*). Two more evil, and possibly trollish, women are seen sitting outside a certain Herðir's doorway, with Herðir being variously interpreted as "the hardener" (of hearts), i.e., the devil, or Lævíss, another name for Lóki.[49] These women are charged with inspiring animosity between men. A Norse goddess is next to appear: "Óðinn's wife, mighty in desire, rows on the ship of the earth; her sails will be late furled, those which hang on the ropes of longing." "*Óðins kván*" refers to Frigg, or possibly Freyja, with both women being associated with Venus in Old Norse and Old English writing. Although it is suggested that the phrase *móðug á munað* (mighty in desire) is the result of mistranscription, there can be no mistaking the negative sexual connotations of these lines.[50] Building upon the representation of Rannveig's guilt, the women of *Sólarljóð* are shown to be

from that grief between those affectionate friends." (*Hvárskis þeir gáðu fyr þá hvítu mey leiks né ljóssa daga; engan hlut máttu þeir annan muna en þat ljósa lík. Daprar þeim urðu inar dimmu nætr; engan máttu þeir sætan sofa; en af þeim harmi rann heipt saman millum virktavina*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 303–304). For the connection between pain and lack of sleep, see Buntrock 2003.

[47] Stanza 14: Abnormal events are repaid fiercely in most places; they went to duel for the wise lady, and both were killed. (*Fádæmi verða goldin grimliga í flestum stöðum; þeir gengu á hólm fyr it horska víf, ok báðir fengu bana*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 305).

[48] Stanzas 57–58: "The wind fell silent; the waters stood still; then I heard a terrible din; treacherous women were crushing earth into food for their men. Those dark women were sorrowfully dragging gory stones; bloody hearts hung outside their breasts, exhausted by great grief." (*Vindr þagði; vötn stöðvaði; þá heyrða ek grimligan gný; sínum mönnum svipvísar konur moluðu mold til matar. Dreyrga steina þær inar dökku konur drógu daprliga; blóðug hjörtu hengu þeim fyr brjóst utan mædd við miklum trega*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 337–338). There is also a suggestion that these women are meant to be practicing witchcraft and should be connected to the "ogress's blood" (*ýgjar blóði*) that smears the maimed men who tread red-hot paths in the following stanza 59, but this is not entirely clear.

[49] Stanza 76: "Bjúgvör and Listvör sit on an organ stool in Herðir's doorway; iron blood falls from their nostrils; that awakens hatred among men." (*Bjúgvör ok Listvör sitja í Herðis dyrum organs stóli á; járnadreyri fellr ór nösum þeim; sá vekr fjón með firum*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 349–350).

[50] Stanza 77: *Óðins kván rær á jarðar skipi móðug á munað; seglum hennar verðr síð hlaðit, þeim er á þráreipum þruma*. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 351) Further, Freyja is presented as Freyja portkona 'Freyja the whore' in *Heilagra manna søgur*.

almost supernaturally untrustworthy.[51] However, readers are cautioned to be just as wary of the treachery of their fellow men.

A following episode describes how, Sörli, an innocent man, trustingly accepts compensation from his brother's killer, only to be secretly murdered by the same perpetrator:

> So it turned out for Sörli the well-meaning, when he put the matter in Vígolfr's power; he trusted securely in his brother's killer, but that man engaged in deceit./He offered them a truce with a good intention, and they promised him gold in exchange; they pretended to be reconciled while they drank together, but yet falsehoods emerged.[52]

Again, we are presented with a scene of hospitality and faith, which is marred by deceit. The term *grið* (truce) is often used in prose texts to describe elite conflict and sometimes takes on the positive, and quasi-sacred, connotations of safe conduct, sanctuary, and even sanctity. *Grið* also refers to periods of peace or amnesty guaranteed by the Church or a monarch. Although this was usually a temporary arrangement, in this case the promise of gold suggests that the truce may have been supported by a more permanent legal agreement. However, it quickly becomes clear that it is not to be upheld:

> And then afterwards on the second day, when they had ridden into Rýgjardalr, they maimed with swords the man who was innocent and deprived him of life./They dragged his body along a secret path and dismembered it [putting it] down into a well; they wanted to conceal it, but the holy Lord saw it from heaven./The true God commanded his soul to journey into his joy; but I think that his enemies will be summoned late from torments.[53]

[51] The text also contains a positive reference to women in the dísir of the Lord in stanza 25, as well as the holy virgins of Paradise: Stanza 73: "Holy maidens had washed clean [lit. cleanly] of sin the souls of those men who on many a day mortify themselves." (*Helgar meyjar höfðu hreinliga sál af syndum þvegit manna þeira, er á mörgum degi pína sjálfa sik*. However, neither example is discussed in any detail. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 311–312, 347–348).

[52] Stanzas 20–21: *Svá honum gafz/Sörla inum góðráða,/þá er hann lagði á vald hans Vígolfs;/tryggliga hann trúði,/en hinn at tálum varð,/sínum bróðurbana. Grið hann þeim seldi/af góðum hug,/en þeir hétu honum gulli í gegn;/sáttir létuz,/meðan saman drukku,/en þó kómu flærðir fram*. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 309–310).

[53] Stanzas 22–24: *En þá eptir á öðrum degi, er þeir höfðu í Rýgjardal riðit, sverðum þeir meiddu, þann er saklauss var, ok létu hans fjörvi farit./Lík hans þeir drógu á leynigötu ok brytjuðu í brunn niðr; dylja þeir vildu, en dróttinn sá heilagr himni af./Sál hans bað inn sanni guð í sinn fögnuð fara; en sökudólgar/hygg ek síðla myni kallaðir frá kvölum*. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 310–311).

Once more, murder is the sin which is being examined and the soul of the victim is ferried directly to Heaven while it is presumed that his killers will be tortured in the afterlife. It is also important to remember that although they may have attempted to disguise their evil actions, nothing is hidden from the eyes of God. In concealing the body, these men also break the secular law of *Grágás* which demands that killers confess to their crime, and defines murder as a hidden killing: "It is prescribed that if a man murders a man the penalty is outlawry (full outlawry). And it is murder if a man hides it or conceals the corpse or does not admit it." (Dennis, Foote, & Perkins 1980: 146) As in the condemnation of *hórdómr* in *Rannveigar leizla*, there is a parallel being drawn between spiritual and secular crimes. Further, there is a strong social undertone in this denunciation of those who would flout a truce. If elaborated upon, these examples can be taken as a warning against engaging in violent feuds or taking revenge more generally. A primary aim for the Church was to advance an agenda which supported social stability, something which the violent aspects of honour culture could make difficult. Although not explicitly stated, it may be argued that the poem's lessons on murder would be most pertinent to the elite men whose active competition could lead to slaughter. In attempting to end a conflict and reach a peaceful agreement, Sörli has done what is right. According to *Sólarljóð*, the contrasting route of revenge was not only socially wrong, it was spiritually dangerous; in the end, killing a killer would really only assist them by speeding them on their way to Heaven, and, with the same act, paving the murderer's own path to Hell. There is a clear and specific interest in this most detailed section of the poem on those sins which break both Christian and social or cultural laws, highlighting the Church's goal of promoting peacefulness and humility among Iceland's chieftains. Episodes such as this could also have led to a reorganisation of priorities – what is to be feared more, defeat or dishonour in an earthly conflict or an eternity of spiritual punishment?

These introductory tales are followed by an emotional sequence in which the poet is unwillingly drawn into the afterlife, although he remains "very eager to live."[54] It is here that pain becomes a personal experience. *Sólarljóð* is known for being a uniquely expressive text, and the father-poet's narrative introduces an opportunity to explore the emotions. The ability of vision literature to evoke emotional responses was one of the reasons it became a powerful teaching tool. Here the reader is engaged by a painful sensory example of reactions to the mental and physical torture of Hell: "The ropes of Hell came around my sides, powerfully twisted; I wanted to tear them

[54] Stanza 36: "I sat bowed; I was leaning over for a long time; I was then very eager to live; but he prevailed, who was powerful; the doomed man's roads are at an end." (*Lútr ek sat; lengi ek hölluðumz; mjök var ek þá lystr at lifa; en sá réð, sem ríkr var; frammi eru feigs götur*.) (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 319–320).

but they were tough; it is easy to move unbound./I alone knew how agonies surged over me in all directions; Hell's maidens dealt shivers home to me every evening."[55] A fear of death and damnation is conveyed more strongly in *Sólarljóð* than the other visions discussed here, and the emotional distress of the narrative is an expressive outcry entwined with the painful sensations of a failing body. There is suffering in the powerful and inexorable twisting of Hell's ropes, and a sense of frantic fear in the futile attempt to tear free. The emotional distress is compounded by the solitary experience of a final illness as the poet suffers *sút* (sickness, sorrow, agony), and it is suggested that the *hrolla* (shivers) visited upon him are the symptom of a fever. In the following passages, the repetition of the phrase "*sól ek sá*" (I saw the sun) creates a feeling of the poet's inexorable progress towards and through death, as well as crafting a growing sense of overwhelming fear and torment.

> I saw the sun, the true day-star, bow down in the noisy world; and in the other direction I heard the gate of Hell roaring weightily./I saw the sun, set with bloody staves; I was then forcefully tilting out of this world; it appeared mighty in many ways compared with how it was before./I saw the sun; it seemed to me as if I were looking at worshipful God; I bowed to it for the last time in the world of men./I saw the sun; it dazzled so much that I seemed to know nothing; but the currents of the sea roared in the other direction, greatly mingled with blood./Terrified and cowed, I saw the sun, trembling in my eyes, for my heart had completely turned to shreds./I saw the sun, [I was] seldom more grief-stricken; I was then forcefully tilting out of this world; my tongue was as if turned to wood and it was chilled on the outside./I saw the sun never again after that gloomy day, for the waters of the mountains closed together in front of me, and I turned away cold from the torments.[56]

[55] Stanzas 37–38: *Heljar reip kómu harðliga sveigð at síðum mér; slíta ek vilda, en þau seig váru; létt er lauss at fara. Einn ek vissa, hvé alla vegu sullu sútir mér; heljar meyjar mér hrolla buðu heim á hverju kveldi*. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 320–321).

[56] Stanzas 39–45: *Sól ek sá sanna dagstjörnu drjúpa dynheimum í; en heljar grind heyrða ek annan veg þjóta þungliga./Sól ek sá setta dreyrstöfum; mjök var ek þá ór heimi hallr; máttug hon leiz á marga vegu frá því, sem fyrri var./Sól ek sá; svá þótti mér, sem ek sæja á göfgan guð; henni ek laut hinzta sinni aldaheimi í./Sól ek sá; svá hon geisladi, at ek þóttumz vætki vita; en gylfar straumar grenjuðu annan veg blandnir mjök við blóð./Sól ek sá á sjónum skjálfandi hræzlufullr ok hnipinn, þvít hjarta mitt var harðla mjök runnit sundr í sega./Sól ek sá sjaldan hryggvari; mjök var ek þá ór heimi hallr; tunga mín var til trés metin ok kólnat at fyrir utan./Sól ek sá síðan aldri eptir þann dapra dag, þvít fjalla vötn lukðuz fyrir mér saman, en ek hvarf kaldr frá kvölum*. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 322–327).

The interpretation and symbolic meaning of devices such as the bloody staves, the mountain waters, and even the sun itself, have been the subject of much debate (Björn Magnússon 1915; Falk 1914; Fidjestøl 1979; Schorn 2011). However, for the purposes of this article, it may be enough to consider their overall effect. We are being presented with a sensory experience as, in addition to direct physical pain, the poet's ears are disturbed by the sound of the roaring gate of Hell, his eyes are dazzled by the sun, and he loses the power of speech as his tongue becomes cold and wooden. The vision's connection to the living body is indicated by blood, and to the geography of the living by the waters and mountains that seem to seal his entrance into the earth. Further, this is an expression of powerful emotions of dread and grief. As he nears his death, the poet is terrified and dejected (*hrælufullr ok hnipinn*), while the sun appears to tremble in his eyes – are they full of tears? – as his heart turns to shreds, he reveals that he has seldom been so grief-stricken (*hryggvari*). The poem thus conveys an atmosphere of all-consuming and inextricably linked physical and emotional torture, as well as one of regret and contrition.[57] These emotionally evocative stanzas focus upon the individual and the pain experience of Hell, first through personal torture and, later, as an observer of the suffering of others. Just as the presence of an angelic guide in more conventional visions ensures that the visionary (and the reader) will interpret their surroundings correctly, the reaction of the traveller themselves can act as an emotional guide to their audience. In this case, the poem might have been particularly meaningful for an elite audience, as it seems that the poet himself may be counted among them. The text contains various clues as to the identity of the anonymous poet. We learn that he lived in error, like those chieftains who jostled for property and income, in his desire for wealth, enjoying the pleasures of life, and thinking little of what was to come. Besides the allusion to his love of riches, he has the authority to impart good advice, a trait of chieftains and kings, and he is especially concerned with passing this information on to his heir, a relationship which is usually discussed in the context of powerful men.

Having firmly established a fear of the torture in Hell, the poem returns to its original subject matter – the wrongdoings of men – in which non-violence remains a central component. Just as the repetition of "*sól ek sá*" created a sense of unity within the segment on the poet's passage into death, these verses, each presenting a crime and its gory punishment, are bound together by their shared introduction of "*menn sá ek þá*" (I saw men):

[57] The poet's heart is ripped to shreds. This detail has been related to contritio cordis "contrition of the heart" or sorrow for sin, the first stage of the sacrament of penance (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 325–326).

> I saw men then who greatly nourish envy of another's affairs; bloody runes were painfully marked on their breasts [lit. breast]./I saw many unhappy men then; they had gone astray [lit. were erring with regard to ways]; he purchases that [unhappiness], who fools himself into the misfortunes of this world./I saw men then, who had defrauded another of property in many things; they travelled in crowds to Fégjarn's fortress, and carried burdens of lead./I saw men then who had robbed many a one of property and life; mighty poisonous dragons ran through the breasts of those men./I saw men then who least wished to observe holy days; their hands were nailed painfully onto hot stones./I saw men then who from pride esteemed themselves beyond expectation; their clothes were amusingly set on fire./I saw men then who had greatly slandered another; Hell's ravens violently tore the eyes out of their heads.[58]

The references to holy days and slander make an interesting addition to the conversation on respect for the Church and conflict avoidance. However, the overwhelming emphasis here is on subjects relating to wealth and property. Pain is also a focus of these lines, with a variety of associated vocabulary, such as *meinliga* (painful), *ófegna* (unhappy), *nauðliga* (painfully), *harðliga* (hard, severe), being employed, with equal stress on sins and their associated torments. To understand the significance of these verses, it is important to remember that Iceland's chieftains were not especially well-off. They did not have many personal possessions, and they accumulated wealth through agreements to control the revenue from chieftaincies and their associated estates or, later, the *staðir*. At this time, control of property was achieved through either a *heimildir á* (warranty, proof of authority) or *handsal* (formal handshake agreement) (Poulsen, Vogt, & Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2019: 279–280). Their incomes allowed chieftains to fund the other activities that supported their positions – gift-giving, feasting, paying compensation, etc. – and were therefore an important element of the power game. However, resources were limited and the gains of one chieftain usually came at the expense of another. Thus, it is fitting that this passage begins by addressing the sin of envying another's *hagr*, their affairs, but also their wealth, gains,

[58] Stanzas 61–67: *Menn sá ek þá, er mjök ala öfund um annars hagi; blóðgar rúnir váru á brjósti þeim merkðar meinliga./Menn sá ek þá marga ófegna; þeir váru villir vega; þat kaupir sá, er þessa heims apaz at óheillum./Menn sá ek þá, er mörgum hlutum véltu um annars eign; flokkum þeir fóru til Fégjarns borgar ok höfðu byrðar af blýi./Menn sá ek þá, er margan höfðu fé ok fjörvi rænt; brjóst í gegnum rendu brögnum þeim öflgir eitrdrekar./Menn sá ek þá, er minst vildu halda helga daga; hendr þeira váru á heitum steinum negldar nauðliga./Menn sá ek þá, er af mikillæti virðuz vánum framar; klæði þeira váru kýmiliga eldi um slegin./Menn sá ek þá, er margt höfðu orð á annan logit; heljar hrafnar ór höfði þeim harðliga sjónir slitu.* (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 339–344).

or advantages, and the accompanying painful punishment. Tapping into a more emotional suffering, economy and trade are referenced in the second stanza in which men *kaupa* (purchase) their unhappiness, by fooling themselves into cherishing wealth or property. This association is supported by the context, as well as the repetition of *apa* (to fool, to make a monkey of), a term which is also used earlier to condemn greed: "Desire and delusion trap the sons of men, those who are greedy for wealth; shining pieces of silver turn to grief in the long run; riches have made a monkey of many a man."[59] The poem continues by addressing the aggressive nature of the chieftains' economy with its inventive use of the fictive Fégjarn's fortress, the stronghold of avarice itself: "I saw men then, who had defrauded another of property in many things; they travelled in crowds to Fégjarn's fortress, and carried burdens of lead." The imagery of *fégjarn* (eager for money), conjures up a vivid picture of men weighed down by their greed – having sought riches they are now burdened by worthless lead. This torture shows how their struggle for property was in itself a futile and misguided pursuit, ultimately bringing suffering rather than prosperity. Furthermore, they gained their worldly wealth through deception, by defrauding others. The imagery here creates an association between a common elite goal and a pain experience.

A similarity between *Sólarljóð* and *Rannveigar leizla* can be seen in the vocabulary. The three sins for which Rannveig deserves to join the chieftains in their fiery pit are *ofmetnaðr*, *fégirni*, and *hórdómr*, and the connection in this instance is, of course, with *fégirni* (avarice). Again, this helps to strengthen the argument that much of Rannveig's experience was more relevant to elite men than women like herself. It also underscores the persistence of the Church's preoccupation with chieftains and their property. The term *flokkr* (company, host) is also worth drawing attention to, as it is frequently used to refer to the groups of men called upon to support chieftains in conflict (*reisa flokk*). Could it be that the bands of elite men who supported greedy chieftains now find themselves together again in Hell? This may indicate the use of a tactic similar to the frightening of women in *Rannveigar leizla*, this time of a more political variety. By instilling terror into the chieftains' followers, the Church might have hoped to scare them away from relationships with chieftains. The poem is also suggestive of the tactics employed by chieftains who could aggressively persecute others in disputes over property: "I saw men then who had robbed many a one of property and life; mighty poisonous dragons ran through the breasts of those men."

Chieftains used their existing positions to increase their power. For instance, in 1232 the chieftain Sighvatr Sturluson got *heimildir á* over Grenjaðarstaðir, one of Ice-

[59] Stanza 34: *Vil ok dul tælir virða sonu, þá er fikjaz á fé; ljósir aurar verða at löngum trega; margan hefr auðr apat.* (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 318–319).

land's wealthiest churches, from Jón Eyjolfsson in Möðruvellir and installed his son Kolbeinn there. As Sighvatr was the only chieftain in northeast Iceland, Jón would have been unable to refuse him.[60] This also demonstrates how strategic control of property helped to create networks for leading chieftains. However, not every case was as clear cut as the straightforward dominance of one man over another – the struggle for property could create more serious conflict. Disputes could erupt if a chieftain laid claim to a farmer's land, before clashing with other chieftains who took up the farmer's cause or perhaps that of his relatives. By becoming involved, "defending" chieftains created an opportunity to gain property for themselves, or, at the very least, to keep it out of their enemy's hands.[61] An example is found in the disagreement between Sturla Þórðarson and Einar Þorgilsson of Staðarhóll over the farmer Birning Steinarsson's valuable seal-hunting grounds. Einar's attempt to frighten Birning into ceding his property by killing his livestock forced the farmer to seek Sturla's support. Sturla was happy to oblige as this was a chance for him to check the power of his rival, Einar, and to take advantage of Birning's desperate situation to improve his own economic position; in exchange for his protection, Birning had to give Sturla *handsal* over all his property. Eventually Einar was killed for trying to take possession of the land after Sturla's death, and this episode ends without a clear resolution.

These verses may also reflect contemporary concerns regarding the accumulation of wealth among fewer, increasingly powerful, families (Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 23). They continue: "I saw men then who from pride esteemed themselves beyond expectation; their clothes were amusingly set on fire." When read in the context of the other verses, the classic Christian warnings against pride may take on a more direct meaning. The torture of blazing clothing can be seen as a symbol of worldly pride expressed through displays of wealth and vanity, and it contributes to the poem's other threats to chieftains who feel secure in the power of their property. Taken together, these "*menn sá ek þá*" verses attack the chieftains' economic and political foundation as well as their aspirations and the ways that they established dominance over others. They relate to the causes underlying and sustaining competition and disagreements between the chieftain families – envy, the desire for wealth and control of property, and pride – and each sin is paired with imaginative pain experiences. In line with the text's overall atmosphere, these punishments are intended to inspire fear and foreboding. This series is supported by references to the folly of arrogance or a belief that prosperity will last forever which are interspersed throughout the

[60] Bjørn Poulsen et al. 2019: 251. See more generally, a chapter in the same volume: "Social Elites and Incomes from Churches c. 1050-1250" by Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Jan Brendalsmo.

[61] For example, the struggle to control Helgastaðir in *Guðmundar saga dýra*.

poem. There are many concrete examples of the fickleness of fate, for instance, in the torment of Unnarr and Sævaldi:

> No man has control over riches or health, though it may go smoothly for him; what he least expects comes upon many a man; no one can set his own terms./Unnarr and Sævaldi did not think that their good fortune would tumble down; they became naked and deprived everywhere, and ran like wolves to the woods.[62]

Verses such as these demonstrate that no one has the power to control or predict their future (Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2013). Here, more specifically, that no one can determine their own *sætt* (terms, agreement, reconciliation). This vocabulary is interesting as it strengthens the general focus on a male elite by drawing on themes related to the settlement process, the domain of the chieftains. Now, for the unfortunate Unnarr and Sævaldi, a change in circumstances has deprived them of shelter and protection. Their story can be compared to the more detailed account of two other mighty but overconfident men who, despite the best intentions, failed to use their positions for good:

> Ráðný and Véboði became powerful and thought to do only good; now they sit and turn now one, now another wound towards the fires./They trusted in themselves and thought that they alone were above all people, but yet their condition seemed quite different to almighty God./They experienced sensuality in many ways and had gold for pleasure; now they are repaid, since they have to walk between frost and fire.[63]

These luckless souls are now travelling through Hell, enduring the twin tortures of fire and frost and toasting their various wounds. The cause of their demise is not entirely clear, but, as in the "*menn sá ek þá*" sequence above, their abrupt and agonising fall serves as a message to chieftains who think that earthly power will protect them after death, or even that it is worth cultivating in the first place. The warnings against

[62] Stanzas 8–9: *Auði né heilsu ræðr enginn maðr, þótt honum gangi greitt; margan þat sækir, er minst of varir; enginn ræðr sættum sjálfr./Ekki þeir hugðu Unnarr ok Sævaldi, at þeim mundi heill hrapa; nöktir þeir urðu ok næmðir hvervetna ok runnu sem vargar til viðar*. (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 300–301).

[63] Stanzas 16–18: *Þau Ráðný ok Véboði urðu rík ok hugðuz gótt eitt gera; nú sitja þau ok snúa ýmsum sárum til elda./Þau trúðu á sik ok þóttuz vera ein yfir allri þjóð, en þó leiz hagr þeira annan veg almátkum guði./Munað þau drýgðu á marga vegu ok höfðu gull fyrir gaman; nú er þeim goldit, er þau ganga skulu meðal frosts ok funa.* (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 306–307).

placing one's faith in these transient and unpredictable symbols of worldly wealth are ones that the Icelandic chieftains should heed.

Sólarljóð addresses the importance of maintaining a peaceful community and upholding social relationships, primarily enforced through the threat of punishment. Of course, these relationships include friendship. This connection was central in many property arrangements, as well as murderous quarrels, such as that between Sváfaðr and Skartheðinn. However, it is perhaps most poignantly referenced in the sorrowful stanza: "May the precious God, who created earth and heaven, value and know that, how many journey loveless, though they part from their kin."[64] Some copies have *einmana* (solitary, lonely) in place of *munaðarlausir* (loveless), although the meaning remains unchanged: it is sad and difficult to be separated from the companionship and security of close friends. This loss leaves the journeying soul feeling very alone and, if not for God, unprotected. This construction hints at the importance of positive earthly relationships, and the possibility of forming a friendship with God, both central elements of our next vision, *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla*.

Eiríks saga viðfǫrla: Fear and friendship

Perhaps the most unconventional text examined here, its protagonist, Eiríkr does not journey to Hell, and the saga lacks the intense focus on suffering which is a hallmark of vision literature. Further, Eiríkr travels to the afterlife in his physical body, not in spirit, although the discussion with his angelic guide occurs within a dream. However, *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla* and its tale of tutelage, friendship, and conversion still makes a valuable contribution to this investigation into Icelandic visions. The story survives in five manuscripts. The earliest can be dated to c. 1340–1390 and the latest to c. 1450[65], with the most complete version found in *Flateyjarbók*, however, it is believed to have been first recorded c. 1300 (Pulsiano & Wolf 1993). *Eiríks saga* follows a Norwegian prince who travels to Miklagarðr, where he learns about Christianity from a Greek king and is baptised at his court. He later sets out to find Ódáinsakr, the Deathless Acre to heathens or Paradise to Christians. This story is set in the distant past, and although the discussion of conversion may not seem entirely relevant to its contemporary audience, its underlying messages concerning traditionally prioritised friendships, and the social and spiritual responsibilities of chieftains, as referred to in both visions discussed above, are vital to Eiríkr's tale. In this journey to the Oth-

[64] Stanza 48: *Virði þat ok viti inn virki guð, sá er skóp hauðr ok himin, hversu munaðarlausir margir fara, þótt við skylda skili.* (Larrington & Robinson 2007: 329).

[65] AM 657 c4to (c. 1340-1390), GKS 1005 fol (1387-1394), AM 720 aVIII 4to5 (c.1400-1450), AM 557 4to (c.1420-1450), and GKS 2845 4to (c.1450).

erworld, the priorities of elite males and honour culture are played upon and used both to admonish and to entice.

In *Sólarljóð* and *Rannveigar leizla* the treatment of interpersonal relationships, including friendship, is primarily negative, focusing on their breakdown and loss, the exclusion of chieftains, or the consequences of a failure to uphold social responsibilities. Here, the positive aspects of friendship and loyalty come to the fore. When, having reached Ódáinsakr and conversed with his angelic guide, Eiríkr is asked whether he would like to remain in Paradise, our hero is determined to return home. He wants everyone to know he is alive, and to deliver his message of conversion:

> The angel asked Eiríkr, "Would you rather stay here, or return to your own lands?" Eiríkr answers, "I want to return." The angel said, "Why do you want to go?" Eiríkr says, "Because I want to tell those I know about these glorious demonstrations of the Lord's power, and if I do not come back, everyone will believe I died an awful death." The angel said, "Although there is now worship of heathen gods in the northern lands, the time will come when those people will be released from heresy, and God will call them to his faith. Now I give you leave to return to your own land and tell your friends about God's mercy, that which you saw and heard, because they will more quickly believe in God's word and his commandments when they hear such tales".[66]

As in other vision literature, there is a strong sense of the traveller's responsibility to instruct others – in this case Eiríkr is especially concerned with helping his friends. He expresses a desire to tell his *kunningjar* (acquaintances) of God's power, and is given permission to assist in hastening the conversion of his *vinir* (friends). A focus on friendship is also found in the Greek king's assurance that through baptism and faith Eiríkr could become a friend of God (*vinr guðs*) and feel assured of everlasting life.[67] This may be seen as a more straightforward take on the network of heavenly friendship explored in *Rannveigar leizla*. It seems that others may be given the same

[66] *Eingillinn spurde Æirak. huort uilltu her vera efter edr uilltu aftr huerfa til þinna att jarda. Æirekr suarar. aftr vil ek huerfa. æingillinn mællti. hui uilltu þat. Æirekr s(egir). þuiat ek vil segia kunningium minum fra slikum dyrdar verkum drottinsligs mattar. en ef ek kem æigi aftr þa munu þeir þui trua at ek hafui illum dauda dait. Æingillinn mællti. þo at nu se goda blot a nordr/londum þa mun þo koma su tid at þat folk mun leysazst fra villu ok man gud kalla þat til sinnar truar. Nu gef ek þer leyfui til aftr at fara til þinna ættiarda ok at segia þinum vinum fra guds miskunn þeire sem þu sætt ok heyrdir. þui skiotara munu þeir trua guds eyrende ok ollum hans bodorum er þeir heyra þuilikar sogr.* (Jensen 1983: 96–102) All English translations of *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla* are my own.

[67] For a discussion of friendship with God see Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2017: 90–102.

opportunity as Eiríkr, as the king explains that it is God's plan to replace his rebellious angels with people who lived pure lives, making them his *riddarar ok hirðsveitum* (knights and retainers)[68], essentially including them in his community of friends. In this way, the text draws attention to the possibility, and importance, of friendship in both this world and the next. Eiríkr's decision to share his visionary knowledge is already familiar, however, the vocabulary used here is especially meaningful as it draws on concepts recognisable, and exclusively applicable, to the masculine elite, particularly in reference to *hirðsmenn*, the king's retainers, a group which included some Icelandic chieftains. Thus, the saga's message to the elite is one of the prospects that friendship with God could provide, as well as the addition of a spiritual element to the existing responsibilities towards earthly friends.[69]

Friendship's prominence in *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla*, and the way it is represented as spanning the border into death, is demonstrative of an awareness of its cultural impact and its potential as a persuasive emotional tool. To fully understand the significance of these references, as well as those discussed above, one must be aware of the importance of personal relationships in the small and often vulnerable and disordered society of Iceland in this period. As described by Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, friendship was "the net that held society together" (2017: 130). As well as supporting individual identities created by social position in relation to others, vertical friendships between chieftains and householders offered security for the client and political support and power for the patron. The importance of personal relationships is also reflected in the formulation of the most serious secular punishment, outlawry, the rejection it prescribed, and the danger that the outlaw found themselves in without hope of assistance. The political advantages of pragmatic friendships were primarily available to elite men as they had the resources to maintain them, and it is for this reason that mentions of friendship are particularly intriguing in the visionary messages directed towards chieftains (Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2017: 26–28).

Eiríkr is a king's son, is hosted by both a Danish and a Greek king, and forms a friendship of equals with another prince. It is clear that the friends and acquaintances whose spiritual welfare so concerns him are other elite men. Eiríkr further appeals to and represents the typical Scandinavian chieftain in that he is brave, physically

[68] *En a fertuganda dege steig hann upp til himna ʀikis er ollum uoldum dugs er firir / buit ʀiddarum ok hirdsueitum ok þar er ollum skyllt til at stunda ok fylla þat skard er þa vard er einglarnnir spilltuzst. en gud mun þa tólu fylla med hreinlifis monnum.* (Jensen 1983: 26).

[69] *Eiríks saga*, particularly the emphasis on male friendship, can be compared with a similar vision experienced by Óláfr Trygvasson in which he sees his friends in peril (Oddr 2003: 54–55).

strong, and wins favour through feats of valour.[70] Conversely, the honour culture which celebrates Eiríkr's best traits is also strongly criticised, with the focus on a male elite audience becoming more apparent than ever. The author warns that heathen men who concern themselves with fame and the praise of others in this temporary life on earth will find nothing but punishment after death:

> Because, although heathen men may obtain much fame from their valiant deeds, there is a great difference, when this transitory life is at an end, they have been rewarded by men's praise for their courage, but they are punished for their sins and lack of faith, as they did not recognise their maker. But those who have loved God and put all their faith in Him and fought for the freedom of holy Christianity, receive more praise from the wisest men, as well, and more importantly, when they have gone through the common door of death, from which no flesh may save itself, then they will have their reward. Here is the division: an everlasting kingdom with Almighty God without end, like Eiríkr, of whom we have just spoken.[71]

The details of this passage, which revolves around courage and reputation (which can be maintained, and even increased, through conversion), highlights the aim of reaching chieftains with ideals more firmly based in honour culture than Christianity. Yet, it remains relatable to this group, in that the perils of Hell are contrasted with the promise of rewards which appeal to the same culture that is viewed as a source of sin. There is even the assurance of winning worldly praise, although naturally only from the wisest of men. As well, it is shown that Eiríkr is able to maintain the positive characteristics expected of an Icelandic leader while conforming to Christian ideals and saving his soul, presenting an opportunity for other men to do the same. In another, subtler, reference to both friendship and traditional masculine ideals, an example is made of the false Norse gods who now face the torments of Hell: "Eiríkr said, 'Is that not God, who we worship?' The king says, 'That is not God, for wretched things are said of them, how badly they died and what wicked lives they lived. Their

[70] *hann var vinsæll madr þegar a vnga alldri hann var ʀamr at afli frǽknn ok framr at óllu. dreingiligr j vexsti.* (Jensen 1983: 3–4).

[71] *... þuiat þo at heidnir menn fai frægd mykla af sinum af reks verkum þa er þat mikill munr þa er þeir enda þetta hit stundliga lijf at þeir hafa þa tekit sitt uerdkaup af ordlofui manna firir sinn frama en ægu þa von hegningar firir sin broth ok tru leyse er þeir kunnu ægi skapara sinn. en hinir sem gude hafa vnnat ok þat allt traust haft ok barizst firir frelse heilagrar kristne hafa þo af hinum vitrazstum monnum fǽingit meira lof en þat at auk at mest er at þa er þeir hafa fram geingit vm almenniligar dyr daudans sem ekki holld ma fordazst hafa þeir tekit sitt verdkaup þat er at skilia eilijft ʀiki med allzualldanda gude vtan enda sem þesse Ærekr sem nu var fra sagt.* (Jensen 1983: 114).

souls are now in eternal fire and unquenchable torments.'"[72] There was a time when chieftains strove to forge friendships with these fallen deities, and it is perhaps fitting that one of the saga's few references to pain should be found here in their condemnation. Connections may also be drawn between this depiction of the Norse gods suffering and the saintly social networks of *Rannveigar leizla*. In Rannveig's experience, friendship with chieftains is devalued by their exclusion from Heaven, here an even more negative consequence of making the wrong alliances is shown. If friendship can span from this world to the next, then friends in Heaven may be of assistance to their living allies; what support could friends in Hell offer anyone?

Beyond its more direct portrayal of punishment and reward, *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla* provides an opportunity to present a more general discussion of some of the ideas which made visions effective. For this text, and the others presented here, it is important to keep in mind that the threats and promises of the afterlife were very real to their medieval audience. In this saga, the quest for Paradise is prefaced by a discussion between Eiríkr and his teacher, the Greek king who introduces him to Christianity. The question and answer dialogue within which Eiríkr learns about his new faith provides a firm foundation for the saga's educational function. Further, it represents the keen interest of an individual who wishes to understand and engage with his religion. Eiríkr freely admits his ignorance, saying, for instance, "Never have I heard such things said of them."[73] When he is told that the Norse gods are wicked, and even surprises the king with the strange specificity of his questions regarding the precise nature of Heaven and Hell: "You are curious, Eiríkr, and you want to know many things which are unnecessary, unusual, and quite unknowable."[74] Eiríkr's lack of knowledge and his willingness to learn mirror real developments in the growing centrality of personal belief, understanding, and responsibility that accompanied the spread of Christianity, and with it the recognition of new practices and principles which highlighted the significance of individual emotions and concerns regarding the afterlife. Previously, religious belief in Iceland had not centred on the next world, but primarily on what could be gained on Earth. It was accepted that most people would go to Hel, an underworld ruled over by a goddess of the same name. The idea that the dead were either rewarded or punished for the morality of their actions did not exist and Hel is represented neither as a place of eternal torment nor of bliss. With

[72] *Æirekr mællti. er æigi þat gud er ver gófgum. æigi er þat gud þuiat fra þeim ‹er› sagt uesolum hue illa þeir fram læiddu medan þeir lifdu. þeira andir eru nu j eilijfum ellde ok o slokkuanligum kuolum.* (Jensen 1983: 31–32).

[73] *Æirekr mællti þa. alldri heyrda ek slika hluti fyr fra þeim sagda.* (Jensen 1983: 32).

[74] *foruitinn ertu Æirekr ok margra hluta uilltu uiss verda þeira sem o naudsynligir eru ok fa hyrdir ok miog okunnir.* (Jensen 1983: 40).

Christianity came the concept of salvation and a reconsideration of the hereafter. Originally, this meant preparing for the day of judgement and eternal life; later, the focus on Doomsday began to recede, to be eclipsed, although not entirely contradicted, by the idea that judgement took place individually and immediately after death.[75] These developments are particularly relevant to this paper in that they would have contributed to a sense of urgency and personal responsibility for one's fate, thereby creating a strong emotional element associated with the extreme binary of fear of Hell or a hope of Heaven. The focus on pain and the afterlife, as well as private emotional engagement, was supported by themes found within church imagery of a suffering Jesus or Mary[76], and religious rituals, the majority of which focused on the internalisation of a need for moral purification in preparation for death.[77] Such practices are represented in the saga by, for example, Eiríkr's baptism, and the mention of his later rising early to pray alone.[78] The emphasis on the individual in these rituals became stronger in the thirteenth century as the practice of private confession grew and acts of penance were prescribed (Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2008: 76–77). These actions required not only personal motivation but a real emotional connection, for example, true repentance was often accompanied by an emotive expression such as tears, something which could also enhance its sincerity in the eyes of others (Nedkvitne 2009: 218). The shifts created by Christian thought emphasised the importance of the individual, yet they also introduced new ideas about community and

[75] Nedkvitne 2009: 62. This difference is found in a comparison of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew's promises final judgement at the end of time after the second coming of Christ, while Luke's has Lazarus ascending directly to Heaven and Dives descending to Hell. This may have felt less contradictory to a medieval audience who were anticipating the Apocalypse. (Gurevich 1992: 67).

[76] Nedkvitne 2009: 62. Church decoration signalled changes in belief and highlights a growing focus on suffering. For instance, Jesus was most commonly depicted as a victorious figure who has defeated death until c. 1200 when gothic crosses holding a suffering Christ with hanging head and crown of thorns became the norm. (National Museum of Iceland, Christ from Ufsir statue of Christ as a Victor).

[77] Nedkvitne 2009: 157–158. This includes baptism, divine service, the last rights, the Eucharist, confession, fasting, private prayers, pilgrimage, the purchase of masses, and gifts to churches. These rituals prepared people for death and their results would not be seen until then.

[78] In the sagas private prayers are performed by a housewife in *Laxdœla saga* and a farmer and a chieftain in *Sturlunga saga* (Nedkvitne 2009: 126–127) Bishop Jón prescribed daily habits such as praying at the beginning and end of each day, keeping a symbol of the cross in one's room, crossing oneself before eating and sleeping, and upon waking etc. (Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 60).

expanded upon existing social relationships. An essential part of being Christian was the sense of belonging to something greater than oneself and to a group which was connected through their beliefs and identical rituals and routines. Familiar social hierarchies were recreated within the Church structure, and the communities of households, families, and friend groups remained a vital part of Icelandic society both before and after its adoption of Christianity.

Fear and belief: Iceland's Chieftans in Hell

The emotional regime of fear created by visionary literature would have been powerless if it were not supported by a strong belief in Hell. When looking at these texts, it is important to be conscious of the worldview held by their intended audience.

Descriptions of the visionary underworld draw on, and are strengthened by, other established literature and ideas known in Europe and in Iceland at this time. For instance, threats of pain and punishment are found throughout the sermons of the *Gamal Norsk Homiliebok*, which portrays Hell as a terrifying, and final, destination.[79] *Íslensk Hómilíubók* presents the idea of *hreinsunareldur*, the cleansing fire of purgatory and the potential for redemption.[80] Nevertheless, pain remains in focus. Sins must be burned away, and no one but Jesus himself is pure enough to be spared the torturous purgatorial flames.

The reality of Hell, and the veracity of the vision literature, was further supported by its connection to our earthly landscape, particularly that of the Northern world

[79] The afterlife is described in 'Sermo neceſſaria': *Sæler ero þæir menn er við ſlict ſculu vera. en hinir ero veſler er til hælvitiſ ſculu rapa. þar ſculu þæir vera með dioflum. þar er ei ok ei myrcr ok mæin ok ſut ok ſorg. hungr ok þorſte. firna froſt ok ofhiti ok hinar mæſto piningar. ok allar endi-laufar. þæir menn aller er í þann illa ſtað coma. þa æigu þæir alldrigi voen miſcunnar ſiðan*. (Indrebø 1931: 88–89) "They are wretched, however, who are bound for Hell. In that place they will be among the devils; and in that place there is perpetual darkness and agony, ailment and grief, hunger and thirst, horrendous frost and heat, and the severest torments everlasting. None of the people who go to that place may ever thereafter hope for mercy." (transl. Carlsen 2015: 15).

[80] *En svo er sem hverjum komi dómadagur, þegar er hann andast, fyr því að veit hver þá þegar sinn hluta, hvort hann skal helvítis kvalar hafa, þær er aldregi skal þrjóta, eða skal hann hafa hreinsunareld nekkverja stund og þau meinlæti, er af honum brenni inar smærri syndir, þær er hann hefir óbættar, áður hann andist. Af því nefni eg heldur inar smærri, til þess að hreinsunareldurinn megi af brenna, en inar stærri, að þær einar má hreinsunareldurinn af taka, er hinar smærri syndir eru kallaðar, en hinar öngar, er höfuðsyndir eru*. (de Leeuw van Weenen: 1993, 14–21) "...it is as if judgment day comes to each when he dies. For then, everyone will know his works, whether he shall suffer the Hell-punishment which never ends, or purgatorial fire for a while. And the wrongdoings which will be purged from him are the lesser sins, those which he has not made restitution for by the time of death. I mention the lesser sins because these may be burnt away by purgatorial fire; the other are the cardinal sins." (transl. Carlsen 2015: 17).

(Haki Antonsson 2018: 139–182). Although its exact whereabouts are uncertain, it is clear that the realm of the dead is both nearby and, in many ways, recognisable. The other world is sometimes represented as existing on the surface of the earth, to be found in some remote valley, or, more frequently, under the ground, where it nevertheless remains accessible to the living. More locally, in the Old Norse *Elucidarius*, Hell is presented as a pit of death within the dungeon that is earth. It is a "…place is full of darkness and diseases, fire and frost, hunger and thirst, and other pains of the body, such as fighting, grief and fear…" (Honorius 1992: 81). *Konungs skuggsjá* also presents an examination of the afterlife in which Upper Hell is the lower part of the world of the living. Here, the physical aspects of Hell infiltrate and entwine with the natural landscape of the real world. We learn that the volcanic fires of Iceland feed solely upon dead matter such as stone, indicating Hell as their source. The same lifeless nature is ascribed to certain Icelandic bodies of water which boil all year long; when the boiling is fierce, it petrifies everything it touches. Further, the island's dangerous glacial streams mirror the frost of Hell. These places of torment do more than torture the living, they make men more vigilant by serving as a constant reminder of the suffering to come (*Konungs skuggsjá* 1917: 126–133). It was even believed that the Icelandic volcano Hekla was itself an entrance to Hell, and that the souls tormented in its fires were also subjected to freezing cold in the pack ice off the coast (Sigurður Þórarinsson 1970). The contrast between hot and cold tortures, which renew the victim's suffering with each change in temperature, may be recognised in the fate of the damned Ráðný and Véboði who walk between frost and fire in *Sólarljóð*. In *Rannveigar leizla*, the volcanic landscape of Iceland can be recognised, and the physical connection between the soul and the body is revealed by the burn marks which, having been received in Hell, cover her living body when she awakes.[81] And in *Eiríks saga viðfǫrla*, our hero is able to make the journey to Ódáinsakr by travelling across the real world. This material association with Hell not only contributes to a sense of reality, and therefore fear, it blurs the lines between experiences in and after life, including that of pain.

The thirteenth century was a time of fundamental cultural change and intense political struggle in Iceland. This article has examined the role of vision literature in

[81] Nedkvitne (2009: 74) argues that elements of her vision are probably based on common knowledge about the afterlife: "To her heaven and hell were as tangible and concrete as the geography of Iceland…Her journey existed in time and space, the punishments were real and physical, and not symbolic representations of moral punishments." A similar argument is made by Haki Antonsson (2018: 170). Carolyne Larrington (1995: 525) contributes to this discussion by noting references folk beliefs surrounding the liminal space of thresholds, the area where Rannveig's journey begins.

the power game, and shown how it was used by the Church both to address its grievances with the chieftains and as an emotional tool to terrify this stubborn group into submission. Thus, it is able to both demonstrate and investigate the Church's need to exploit every available opportunity to increase control over the beliefs and behaviour of the social elite. The relatable, expressive aspects of the Icelandic visions support the internalisation of individual suffering and punishment, thereby strengthening the Church's emotional regime of Hell as well as the notion of personal responsibility for one's fate in the afterlife. The spiritual journeys discussed here also relate to historical disagreements between the Icelandic Church and the secular elite, most specifically opinions on sexual morality, social relationships and responsibilities, and the ideals of honour culture. More broadly, the literature can be referenced in disputes such as the *staðamál*, in that it supports an overarching goal to humble and intimidate the proud, worldly chieftains and force them to accept the Church's demands. However, we can also see that the conflict between secular and religious powers was a protracted one. It took almost a century from the time the visions were experienced for the ideals preached by their angelic guides to find secure footing among Iceland's chieftains.

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Eira Kathleen Ebbs, MA Nordic Viking and Medieval Studies, University of Oslo. Email: eirake@student.hf.uio.no.

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The Dynamics behind the Spread of the Cistercians in Galicia (North-Western Spain), 1142–1250

José Antonio López Sabatel

Galicia saw the first Cistercian foundation in the Iberian Peninsula. This essay explores the dynamics behind the introduction of the White Monks to this region. Consequently, the following lines are intended to address the current state of things in which there is such a traditional issue in medieval Spanish historiography, as monastic dominions. In order to achieve this, I have proceeded not only to examine the first Cistercian foundation charter in the Iberian Peninsula, but also to select, gather, and analyse the most relevant bibliography that has been written on the development of the Cistercian Order in Galicia. As nearly all the monasteries were existing houses which were incorporated into the Order it is necessary to begin with an examination of the context into which the Cistercians came. This is followed by an analysis of their spread and accumulation of endowments, and an examination of the consequences of this growth.

Background: Galician Monasticism before the Arrival of the Cistercians

The Galician medieval monasticism has an extensive and detailed work published by Freire Camaniel (Freire Camaniel 1998). In it, the different rules that the monasteries followed in Galicia until the eleventh century are studied, as well as the communities, usually double houses, that lived in them are analysed.[1] On the other hand, as was the case in all of Europe at the time, these centres were the property of the laity, and this circumstance was one of the issues that the Gregorian Reformation - that began in Rome in the middle of the eleventh century – will address. This new era of reorganization set in motion an important stage in the history of the Church that will be transcendental for the subsequent evolution of this institution. In addition to the exclusion of the laity from all aspects related to religious life, the reform proposed the unity of the Latin church and the standardization of Western monasticism with the imposition of the Benedictine rule, although giving also to the Augustinian some preference for the regular life of the cathedral councils (Knowles 1983, 2: 175–194).

[1] For a better understanding of the evolution of double monasteries in Galicia: Rodríguez Castillo 2005.

The central idea of the reform was that the Church should be independent of any other power and would be led without discussion by the Pope who would exercise control over all the churches through an episcopal hierarchy organized in ecclesiastical provinces. The Gregorian programme reached Galicia in the time of Alfonso VI (1065–1109) and was imposed after the Council of Burgos in 1080. As a direct result, the rite was unified, the double monasteries were suppressed, and the traditional peninsular rules were replaced by the Rule of Saint Benedict (Nieto Soria & Sanz Sancho 2002: 91–94). Thereby, Castilian monasteries were to be independent, owners of themselves, and free from any secular interference, being subject to the supervision of the corresponding diocesan bishops (García de Cortázar 1969: 312). As in Castile and León, in Galicia the reform implementation process was long. Many of the ancient monasteries ceased to exist, while others, sooner or later, ended up being reoccupied by Benedictine or Augustinian monks. Furthermore, the great and powerful monasteries such as Samos or Celanova were more than reluctant, on the one hand, to submit themselves to their bishops in the ecclesiastical sphere and, on the other, to give in ecclesiastical rights - exercised in their immediate territories for centuries- to the diocesans (Andrade Cernadas 1997: 183–188). After a hundred years of discrepancies, certain agreements were reached. These would leave the abbots of the houses as ecclesiastical hierarchs of those territories in exchange for them to recognize diocesan authority, episcopal visitation rights and confirmation by the bishop of the abbot chosen by the community of monks (Pérez Rodríguez 2008: 23). The role that the monks of Saint Peter of Cluny played in the imposition of the Gregorian norms during the reign of Alfonso VI was very significant. However, unlike what happened with the bishoprics, Cluny's influence on the Galician monasticism was rather low, reducing its presence to four priories of little relevance.[2]

So, while in Galicia some monasteries disappeared forever, others were converted into Benedictines or Augustinians, and others dedicated themselves to fighting against their bishops, twelve White Monks arrived in Galicia in 1142 from Clairvaux to reoccupy the old monastery of Sobrado that had been empty for decades.

Santa María de Sobrado is a Spanish monastery located in the municipality of the same name, Sobrado in the province of A Coruña, on the Way of Saint James, sixty kilometres from Santiago de Compostela. After the Spanish confiscation of 1835, the monastery was sold to private individuals, thereafter beginning a progressive abandonment and decay of the buildings that ended up becoming a huge pile of ruins. On

[2] San Salvador de Villafrío, San Vicente de Pombeiro, San Martín de Jubia and Santa María de Ferreira: López Sangil 2005: 16.

25 July 1966, the Cistercian monastic life started again in the monastery of Santa María de Sobrado.

The fame of this monastery resides in its condition as the first Cistercian house in the entire Iberian Peninsula (Vázquez Varela 1982: 100; Rucquoi 2000: 489; Alonso Álvarez 2007: 707). However, Sobrado, like so many other monasteries in Galicia, had an earlier medieval past before adopting the Cistercian rule.[3] The monastery was founded in 952 under the dedication of the Saviour (Salvador) by the counts of Présaras Hermenegildo and Paterna. In 1060 Ferdinand I confiscated the monastery from the descendants of the founding couple, thus disappearing as a religious community for over eighty years (Pallares Méndez 1979: 71–76, 109).

The First Cistercian Foundation Charter in the Iberian Peninsula

Basically, the foundation charter of the monastery of Sobrado consists of three parts: where the grantors are mentioned, the one concerning what is granted and, eventually, the signatures of the confirmers and witnesses who endorse the document.

As for the grantors, the name of Fernando Pérez de Traba stood out. As a leading member of the Froilaz-Traba lineage, he was outstanding in promoting the monarch's policy of attracting and privileging white monks. This nobleman ran for a long time the government of almost the entire Galician country and contributed handsomely to the foundation and wealth of the monasteries of Sobrado, Oseira, Monfero, Armenteira, and Toxosoutos (López Sangil 2002: 88). On 15 February 1142, the Count Don Fernando Pérez, together with his wife Doña Sancha, his brother Don Bermudo and his niece Doña Urraca Bermúdez, handed over the Sobrado monastery along with its possessions to the Cistercian Order.[4] Although Don Fernando and Don Bermudo had been enjoying all its land rentals for twenty-four years, at that time the monastery was abandoned and in ruins. The Cistercian foundation of the monastery of Sobrado had great importance for Galicia. It was unquestionably the first foundation as such and was a sign of Don Fernando's friendship with San Bernard of Clairvaux, and his interest in the introduction of the Order in Galicia. Proof of this is that

[3] As clearly appears from the work by Pérez Rodríguez 2008: 178–234.

[4] *...Unde ego Fernandus Petri Dei preveniente gratia cuius omnia elementa subsistunt arbitrio, uxorque mea Sancia Gundisalvi, una cum omnibus liberis meis dono et concedo medietatem integram de monasterio Superaddi sicut mih venit in particione fratrum meorum. Itaque consobrina mea Urracha Veremudi devota similiter dat aliam medietatem eiusdem monasterii que ei venit in particione inter fratres suos ex parte patris sui Veremudi Petri, cuius consilio et auctoritate sufulta in presenti facimus scripturam testamenti...et cartam firmitatis Deo et ordini Sancti Benedicti, secundum consuetudinem Cistercensium degenti, necnon vobis abbatis domno Petro et monachis vestris...de monasterio integro Superaddi...* (Pallares Méndez 1979, doc. 18: 278).

Saint Bernard himself sent twelve Cistercian monks, including the abbot Don Pedro, who arrived in Santiago in early February 1142, receiving the donation on the fourteenth of that same month. On 22 March, abbot Peter and the white monks took possession of the monastery.[5]

With regard to what is granted, certain parallelism enduring in time can be seen between the territory donated to the monastery of Sobrado for the first time in 952 by the counts of Présaras and the endowment received by the Cistercians from the counts of Traba in 1142.[6] It, therefore, seems obvious that the Cistercian monks were settled in the same areas that belonged to the earlier house monastery. In this way and for the most part, all the donations -i.e. the jurisdiction of a heterogeneous set of properties such as villages, hamlets, and messuages alongside their farmland and the men who inhabited them- were in the vicinity of the monastery in what was once the county of Présaras, converted, not without significant changes, in jurisdictional reserve or coto. The cradle of a territorial expansion nurtured by new donations and acquisitions that would eventually spread throughout Galicia, El Bierzo, and the Leonese plateau (Pallares Méndez & Portela Silva 2001: 231–232).

Concerning the confirmers and witnesses of the document, it is worth highlighting, among all, the names of Arias Múñoz, Pedro Cresconiz, and Pedro Helias. Archdeacons of great relevance in the chapter of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.[7] This seems to confirm, at the very least, the acquiescence of the Church of Compostela in the role played by the monarchy, the nobility, and the Cistercians in the reorganization of the Galician territory (Renzi 2013: 65).

[5] For a more detailed understanding of the process that culminated in the founding of the monastery of Santa María de Sobrado: Renzi 2013: 48–65.

[6] As evidence of this parallelism, I reproduce the first possessions that were granted both in the document of 952 and in that corresponding to 1142: *...arboribus fructuosis et infructuosis undique per terminum designatis. adnectimus ibidem uillas qui ibidem deseruiant, uidelicet uilla Martiani, uillare Plano, uilla Gunderedi, uilla, que dicitur Codegio ad sanctum Iulianum...* (Pallares Méndez 1979, doc. 5: 258). *...Petro et monachis uestris presentibus et futuris, de monasterio integro Superaddi cum omnibus hereditatibus suis propriis, uidelicet, Marciam et Oyam, Uillar Planum, Gunderei. in Portu Carral, suam directuram de Superaddo. de Uillaribus et de Santi et de Santui...* (Pallares Méndez 1979, doc. 18: 279). In fact, in this last charter it is specified that *... Omnes alias que iacent in circuitu monasterii et ab antiquo eius fuerunt damus et concedimus iam sepedicto monasterio...* (Pallares Méndez 1979, doc. 18: 279). Extract that directly relates the Cistercian endowment to the possessions of the old house monastery.

[7] *...Petrus Helie ecclesie beati Iacobi decanuset archidiaconus confirmat; Petrus Cresconii ecclesie archidiaconus confirmat; Arias Munionis archidiaconus confirmat...* (Pallares Méndez 1979, doc. 18: 280).

The Cistercians in Galicia: Wealth Accumulation and Spread

The arrival of these White Monks was not accidental, since they were summoned by the king Alfonso VII himself. What interests motivated the king and his successors not only to facilitate the establishment of the Cistercians in Sobrado, but also to grant them land and jurisdictional powers? The answer must be sought in the interest of the monarchy to obtain loyal support to organize, control and colonize a rearguard territory in the process of reconquest (Pallares Méndez 1979: 119-123). In order to come up with a more complete explanation, it has to be taken into account the historical context in which Sobrado reappeared on the scene in 1142 as a Cistercian house.

The kingdom of Alfonso VII (1126-1157) hosted, first, a monarchy that sought to consolidate and strengthen the royal authority, greatly weakened during the turbulent previous reign of his mother, Queen Doña Urraca (1109-1126); secondly, an aristocracy that had reached during that convulsive stage a jurisdiction capable of contesting the king's own authority; and last but not the least, the continuous threat that the expansionist ambitions of Alfonso Henriques, the future Alfonso I of Portugal, posed to the stability of the kingdom. To reinforce the royal power, Alfonso VII carried out a remarkable policy of attracting the local lords through negotiation and feudal pacts. Negotiation that pursued to obtain their support and, therefore, their fidelity, avoiding conflicts and rebellions that could disturb the consolidation of the king on the throne. The key to the negotiation was to try and keep the nobles satisfied, facilitating political participation in the kingdom, but, at the same time, controlling the power they exercised. Undoubtedly, one of the Galician noble families that benefited the most from this policy was that of the Froilaz-Traba.[8] Thanks to the allegiance to the king, this large lineage, along with other nobles eager to obtain royal favour, managed to gain undisputed supremacy in Galicia (Vital Fernández 2011: 117-119).

Once the territory to some extent was appeased with the support of an increasingly complacent aristocracy, it was time to ensure its effective control and organization. For this purpose, the best alternative found by Alfonso VII was that offered by the Cistercian monasteries. Especially if one takes into account that giving more power to the aristocracy was out of the question and trusting the episcopal sees had a double disadvantage: on the one hand and unlike the monasteries, they had little implantation in rural areas and, on the other, the accumulation of power in the hands of the bishops represented a risk for the monarchy (Portela Silva 1981: 325). Furthermore and, after all, the desire of the monks coincided with the policy of the crown:

[8] For a better understanding of the power dynamics and growth of this family within the monarchy of Alfonso VII: Vital Fernández 2016: 53–69.

organization of the territory through the establishment of monastic centres that guaranteed the stability of the reign (Romaní Martínez 1989b: 40).

It is no wonder, then, that under the protection of this royal policy, in addition to the monasteries of Sobrado and Oseira, the Cistercian Order spread across Galicia through the monasteries of Santa María de Melón in 1142, Santa María de Monfero in 1147 (although admitted in 1201), Santa María de Montederramo in 1153, Santa María de Meira around 1154, Santa María de Armenteira in 1162, Xunqueira de Espadañedo in 1170, the feminine of Ferreira de Pantón in 1175, and Santa María de Oya in 1185 (Torres Balbas 1954: 15). On the other hand, the possible religious explanation of this striking flowering of Cistercian monasteries in the twelfth-century Galicia was due to three factors: the proximity between the austere uses of the Order and Visigothic monasticism, the late penetration of the Rule of Saint Benedict, and the shallow roots of the Cluniac reform (Iradiel et al 1995: 194).

Apart from the socio-political explanations for the success of the Cistercian movement in Galicia, the economic causes that motivated it were also of great importance.[9] This fact leads to answering another question: What differentiated the Cistercians from the rest of the monastic orders regarding the economic use of the territorial property? Firstly, the close relationship between the establishment of the Cistercians in Galician lands and the loss of influence and economic decline of the Black Monks must be pointed out. It is worth noting that precisely from the middle of the twelfth century to the first third of the thirteenth –concurring with the Cistercian expansion – a turning point of stagnation was reached in terms of acquisition of new lands and wealth accumulation by the great Benedictine monasteries of the period.[10] Both Benedictines and Cluniacs were for a time completely relegated to the background due to the greater impulse and "modernity" of the White Monks. The main economic reason that traditional Castilian and Portuguese historiography uses to explain this decline is the little weight that direct exploitation had in the organization and the work of their dominions (Mattoso 1975, 2: 182). The exponential growth of the great Benedictine lordships towards the end of the eleventh century made their exploitation unthinkable only through the work of the monks on their own, leaving this task to domestic servants and serfs whose number did not increase parallel to the acquired lands which, in turn, had an adverse effect on seigneurial revenues (García de Cortázar 1969: 225). In this circumstance, we must add the little importance that the Galician Cluniacs gave to manual labour, dedicating themselves above all to prayer (Ríos Ro-

[9] A deeper analysis about the socio-political explanation of the arrival and expansion of the Cistercian Order in Galicia can be found in: Portela Silva 1981: 319–330.

[10] As evidenced in the cases of Samos and Celanova: Andrade Cernadas 1997: 52, 73.

dríguez 1993: 13). Thus, with regard to Galicia, two different periods can be drawn: one between the tenth and eleventh centuries characterized by the existence of certain spaces exploited by groups of serfs, and another, from the middle of the eleventh century in which direct exploitation, if it occurred, should have been of little significance (Andrade Cernadas 1997: 111).

The decreasing trend of direct exploitation, evident in the Benedictine lordships, marked a stark contrast with the new policies implemented by the Cistercians in the twelfth century. The direct exploitation of the patrimony, through the organization of granges and converts' workforce, was one of the most significant novelties of the White Monks. The incidence of this model in the Castilian, Leonese and Galician territory is more than obvious (Fortún Pérez de Ciriza 2002: 223).

In the case of Galicia, economic management was also a transcendental part of the life of any Cistercian monastery, and the most visible manifestation of this was the establishment of the network of granges. The Cistercian grange – as ruled by the *Exordium Parvum* and the *Carta Caritatis* – was a satellite agrarian unit of the monastery. The exploitation was carried out by the *conversi* and was run, at least at first, by one of them, the *magister grangiae*, always under the orders of the *cellararius* of the monastery. The appearance of these farms, so numerous in Galicia, implied the existence of exploitation units with characteristics very different from those that belonged to peasant families. Different in terms of the amount of cultivated land, in terms of the work employed -i.e. the team of monks and converts to which a contingent of permanent or temporary wage-earners was added since the beginning of the thirteenth century, far exceeded the available workforce within the framework of the peasant household- definitely different, because these granges were the preferred scenario of the intensification of agriculture.[11]

As it is logical to think, the success of resource management through direct exploitation of the lands initially donated by the monarchy and the nobility led to a large accumulation of wealth in the form of a vast territorial expansion thanks to the acquisition of new land. In this respect, the growth of the Galician Cistercian monastic dominions compared to those no Cistercians or Castilian Cistercians was spectacular. Thus, for instance, during the twelfth century, the acquisitions of the monastery of Sobrado developed a sixfold increase with regard to those of the Benedictine monastery of San Martín Pinario. Similarly, the monasteries of Sobrado, Oseira, Meira, Armenteira, Oia and Melón reached a number of acquisitions that –

[11] To get a more precise understanding of the running of these granges in Galicia: Pallares Méndez 1979: 193–194; Mariño Veiras 1983: 120–122, 166; Pascua Echegaray 1999: 64–71.

until 1250 – was nine times higher than that of the seventeen Castilian Cistercian monasteries (Portela Silva 1980: 31).

At this point, another question arises: What were the main defining features of the spread of these domains? It seems that ownership concentration in a few hands was the characteristic trait that best portrayed the territorial expansion of these monasteries. The main mechanisms to reinvest income were through purchase and sale contracts as well as exchange agreements whose main objective was to round off or marginally improve the properties so that they were more compact, manageable and profitable (Lucas Álvarez & Lucas Domínguez 1996: 109–113). Of course, this expansion policy was not only typical of Galician lands. Professor Berman has described for the French Midi region the two strategies that governed the economic performance of the entire Order. She calls "horizontal compacting" the attempt of the Cistercians to endow the domanial property with new lands adjacent to others they already owned and "vertical compacting", referring to the progressive redemption of any prospective right or claim to ownership on the same holdings where the Order already enjoyed prerogatives, reducing in this way the number of people, from lords to peasants, with entitlement to own land (Berman 1986: 46).

These two complementary ways of acting or "horizontal and vertical compacting" were also quite common on the part of the great Galician Cistercian monasteries. Among them, I have chosen Santa María de Montederramo as a clear exponent of this strategy to concentrate the surrounding lands.[12] Several contractual clauses -aimed at clarifying the property rights of the parties involved in the transactions- proved the monastery's interest in preventing families and communities from being able to claim future rights over the land. Often the grantor of the documents explicitly renounced to dispose of the property from then on.[13] The clause that was consolidated already by the thirteenth century was as follows: "that from this day and later (the inheritance/estate) be removed from our right and included in your domain".[14] In the course of time, the waiver of all the progeny's rights over the holdings for sale would be successively included.[15] It is evident that these clauses were intended to leave in

[12] The cartulary of Santa María de Montederramo is already transcribed and published: Ramón Lorenzo. 2019. *Mosteiro de Montederramo, Colección Documental e Índices.* Santiago de Compostela: Consello da Cultura Galega. From now on I will refer to this text as CDM and the subsequent abbreviation will be doc. for document.

[13] *...Ita quod ab hac die et deinceps non possumus ipsam hereditatem uendere nec supignorare, sed ipsi fratres debent eam ab hac die et deinceps libere et absolute possidere et nos tenemur supradictos fratres cum memorata hereditate quam eis pedegauimus in perpetuum tueri...* (CDM, doc. 96: 279).

[14] *...ut ab hac die et deinceps de iure nostro sit exempta et abrasa et in uestro dominjo sit tradita...* (CDM, doc. 99: 281).

writing the irreversible nature of transferring eminent property, the rupture of ties between the seller and the land, and the restriction of family rights. Another policy of the monastery was to acquire full jurisdiction of certain villages through exchange agreements with local lords and proprietors. In such a way, Montederramo obtained absolute control of the villages of San Martín (CDM, doc. 69: 250) and Peredo (CDM, doc. 77: 258). This manner of proceeding would guarantee Montederramo and the rest of the Galician Cistercian monasteries the ownership of rights over land, labour and surpluses, thus becoming political and cultural centres and, laying the institutional foundations of at least one century of agricultural expansion throughout the region (Reyna Pastor de Togneri et al 1999: 19).

The Cistercians in Galicia: Growth, Consequences and Ideals

In this section a question must be answered: What impact did the Cistercian expansion have on the ideals of the Order as well as on the practices of direct farming?

It was predictable that the scrupulous observance of the Rule of San Benedict, as well as the institutions of Chapter XV of the *Exordium Parvum*, would be infringed due to the increase in the patrimony of the different Cistercian monasteries settled in Galicia. Soon the direct exploitation gave way to the transfer of land by the abbots to people outside the Order for ploughing and farming. This way of working the land, handing it over to peasants, was in contradiction with the norms of the Order that valued above all else manual labour and direct exploitation through granges with *conversi* as the main workforce (Burton & Kerr 2011: 149–188).

However, it should be noted at this point that strict compliance with the rules of the Order was already in question at the time of affiliation with the Cistercian movement. The truth is that of the ten Galician Cistercian monasteries of the twelfth century, only two -Meira and Melón- were ex-novo foundations while the rest were the result of monastic reform or refoundation in pre-existing abbeys (Pérez Rodríguez 2008: 192). This means that from the first moment, most of these monks ignored the search for one of the purest -along with poverty- form of monasticism: inhabiting the most isolated and unexploited places. Instead, they did not hesitate to settle or remain in preestablished monasteries, accept donations and receive ownership of the existing lands at the time of the new affiliation.[16]

[15] *...ita ut ab hac die et deinceps a nostro iure et ab omni nostra progenie sit exempta et abrasa et in uestro dominjo in perpetuum tradita...* (CDM, doc. 137: 319).

[16] On the other hand, it must be remembered that the traditional view of white *monks as pioneers, reclaimers of waste* and creators of new arable land out of the wilderness is strongly contested by many local studies by arguing that Cistercian settlements were mostly located on land previously inhabited and cultivated. A synthesis of this line of historiographical thought

Nevertheless, it seems that this change towards indirect management was not only a consequence of the increase in arable land and the decrease in the monastic labour force. It would also have something to do with a provision of the General Chapter, issued in 1208 for the regions of Eastern Europe, by which monks were authorized to lease the least useful lands, extending this authorization to any type of lands in 1224 (Lekai 1957: 280). The provision of 1208, in view of the facts, was not only put into practice in the eastern countries but also in the West. For instance, of the twenty contracts signed by Oseira from 1205 to 1223, only one is prior to 1208 (Romaní Martínez 1989a doc. 114: 125). It is evident that as early as the first third of the thirteenth century, this monastery took advantage of provisions that, in principle, undermined the foundations of Cistercian doctrine.[17] It was throughout this century that Western Europe underwent a gradual process by which the Cistercians developed a course of action by turning their demesnes and granges into tenures and thus living on the incomes generated by their dependent peasants. This turn towards forms of a more complete seigneurial organization was also visible in France (Higounet 1983: 162), Germany (Rösener 1983: 152), and Wales (Williams 1984: 243, 267).

In Cistercian Galicia, the old serfdom system tended to fade away. A process that culminated in 1219, the year after which any mention of serfs disappears from the documentation of Sobrado (Pallares Méndez & Portela Silva 2007: 77). Indirect exploitation would gain prominence in this monastery from 1162 through certain agrarian agreements (*praestimonium, precaria, complanatio, ad laborandum, ad populandum*, sharecropping, and tenancy) whose final result was to turn the neighboring peasantry into monastery's vassals over time (Polaris Méndez 1979; 197–202). Such an outcome would be in complete contradiction with what is stipulated in Chapter XV of the *Exordium Parvum* by which it was mandatory to renounce both any type of seigneurial income and any possession of dependent peasants (Rixheim ed. & Berga Rosell trans., 1953: 38).

Conclusion

In February 1142 twelve monks arrived directly from Clairvaux and received the monastery of Sobrado as a donation from its owners, the Earls of Traba. This is how the first Cistercian house in the entire Iberian Peninsula was founded. Both Alfonso VII and Ferdinand II relied on the Cistercian monasteries as control centres of the

can be found in Alfonso Antón 1991: 8–9.

[17] Portela Silva 1980: 33. This author points out the contradiction between the austere Cistercian doctrine and the practice that led the communities to benefit from the lands worked by others, to the point that the practice ended up dragging the doctrine.

territory and sought their collaboration mainly due to the independence they maintained with the lay powers. Thus, since 1142, and cemented on the foundation, refoundation or reform of ten monasteries throughout this century, a process of expansion of the Order began. It was the moment of a colonizing movement based principally on agricultural exploitation through a network of granges worked by *conversi* and a policy of land consolidation through new acquisitions received through purchase and exchange agreements. Soon, the Cistercians accumulated land and jurisdictions in compacted ownerships, left behind direct exploitation, stabilized agrarian relations through rental agreements, and ultimately laid the institutional foundations for a century of agricultural expansion. Over time these monastic houses became the main economic accumulators and redistributors of surpluses in the Galician countryside. They were also subject of interest by a historiography that has been trying to combine two visions regarding the Cistercians: that of pioneers committed to abstinence, prayer and hard manual labour in the "desert" and that of a seigneurial organization forging dependency bonds with the peasant communities. What is unequivocal is that the white monks were a key part of the transformation of the countryside in Galicia, the humanization of the agrarian landscape and, in short, the growth of the Galician rural economy.

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José Antonio López Sabatel, Ph.D. in Medieval History. Supervising Professor in the UNED (Subject: Medieval History II). Member of the Research Group: Cultura, Paisaje y Patrimonio de la Vid y el Vino. Department of Medieval and Modern History and Historiographical Sciences (UNED). Email: ja.lopez@ponferrada.uned.es.

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The Weathervane from Heggen

Approaching a Discrete Artefact from the Nordic Middle Ages

Ingrid Birch Eide

The small-scale images executed on the weathervane from Heggen represent the culminations of battles of real and fantastic beasts. The historical action of engraving the metal plate once changed this structure permanently, creating a unit which transgresses our modern contrasting notions of dead material and live animal body. This article examines the presentation of the material object in the museum exhibition today in relation to the ways of displaying it in the Middle Ages. Influenced by the material and sensorial turns and theories of art-works' "mythopoetic" efficacy as outlined by Didi-Huberman, it lays forth a new layer of understanding Scandinavian weathervanes concerning the capacity for apotropaic protection.

Figure 1. Screenshot from the digital 360° interactive version of the exhibition VÍKINGR *at the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway.*

> From Ship's Prow to Church Spire. This weathervane from Heggen Church had an earlier life as a decoration atop a ship. There are only four such weathervanes preserved in Norway. This is the oldest, made in the mid-1000s.
>
> The Old Norse sagas tell of golden weathervanes mounted on the prows of warships. When people saw them glinting in the sunlight, they knew a chieftain or a king was approaching. The weathervanes were later removed and placed on medieval churches.
>
> C23602, ship's vane, gilded copper alloy, from Heggen Church, Buskerud, Dated to 1000–1050.[1]

Roaming the glass displays of the exhibition at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo, a triangular golden object appears near the end of the room. It is damaged, the gilding cracking near the edges, and several hits from both sides have left the thin metal plate uneven and rough. Looking closer, fantastic animals in violent battles play out in dynamic compositions in front of the viewer. These ornaments are prime examples of Viking art in the so-called Ringerike style, with a precision of vivid detail comparable to early twentieth century *art nouveau* (or vice versa) (Fuglesang 1974: 13–20, 46; Graham-Campbell 2013). By presenting the object in the cool, quiet, minimalistic hall flooded in bright lights, visitors today are asked to appreciate its impressive designs aesthetically, as a faded, once grand piece of handicraft.

The object on display is a weathervane dated to c. 1000–1050. The handout to the exhibition, quoted above, informs visitors that it was initially mounted in Viking longships, and secondarily moved to the spire of the early thirteenth-century church of Heggen, in inland Modum by Tyrifjorden, nearby Ringerike municipality. This much is clear from evidence discussed by previous researchers. In many ways, then, the exhibition handout presents what we positively know about the weathervane. From its previous uses, in the longship and the church's most holy location, the literally and essentially closest to the Godhead, the object must have been attributed vast powers. It was, it seems, constantly in use during the Middle Ages; never melted nor re-made, altered slightly but never significantly; and never buried nor deposited.

This article seeks to investigate the kinds of power bestowed on the weathervane from Heggen during the Middle Ages. Previously, the technical ways of attaching it to the longship stem have been discussed (Blindheim 1982; Engvig 2003a, 2003b). To others, artistic style has been the centre of interest as a key to understanding provenance (Brøgger 1925; Fuglesang 1974; Kielland 1927). A few have briefly commented

[1] From the informational handout to the exhibition *VÍKINGR* at the Historical Museum, Oslo, p. 20.

on the possible symbolisms behind the individual motifs, often as isolated from the vane's other properties.

In a recent study, Morten Stige underlined that the importance of the early medieval weathervanes derived from values beyond the symbolic and aesthetic realms, but did not explore this further (Stige 2020). This article continues this trail of thought. Focus is shifted from representation to action, situation, and experience: the performative aspects of the object in encounters with the medieval audiences. In this view, meaning and value is created when artefact and perceiver meet (f. ex Caviness 2006: 67; Carruthers 2013). The object's material and sensorial properties become crucial sources of knowledge, in addition to the specific physical and historical contexts in which they appeared; that is, the situations framing the encounter with the weathervane in its own time. The aim is not to *explain* the artefact; narrate its "biography" and provenance, which may never be fully understood due to a significant lack of evidence. Rather, the mute artefact is attempted "opened up", allowing various interpretations of historical functions and meanings to come to light and into discussion.

The time frame in this article spans the early and high medieval period in Scandinavia, from about 1000, when the object in question was created, to the fourteenth century, when the vane likely had been relocated to the church. As there is no consensus in research of the date of relocation, the wide time frame is meant to accommodate more precise future finds.

Three points will be made from three aspects of the weathervane as it is presented in the museum exhibition and the accompanying informational handout. The first looks at the Old Norse terminology and potential instrumentality. The second concerns a temporal aspect of the vane's aesthetics hardly accessible in the bright museum hall. The third explores the roles of the delicate and violent ornamentation, the most striking aspect of the artefact experienced in the museum but obscure to the eyes in the Middle Ages. I argue that the power of the weathervane in the early medieval period in Norway was understood as deriving from within the object itself, due to the ways it was displayed, which construed it as potent, energetic, active, and capable of affecting its surroundings.

Veðrviti

The exhibition handout identified the gilded artefact as a *weathervane*, that is, a wind or weather indicator. The Old Norse called them *veðrviti*. A total of four early medieval *veðrviti* are known today in Norway and Sweden, named after the church they

were once mounted in: Heggen, Tingelstad, Söderala and Källunge.[2] The weathervanes have relatives in numerous cultures up to our own time, and may all be defined by their light-reflective surfaces and, according to the terminology, the ability to indicate the wind's directions.

The four early medieval *veðrviti* conform to an object type designed and used in similar ways. Each is a 2-3 mm thin plate of copper alloy[3] cut to a triangle of about 28-35 x 19–23,5 cm, with a deeply arched underside and a blunt upper inner corner of c. 97–98°.[4] Because of this upper angle, the tip of the vane points upwards if the short side is attached to something vertical, like a ship mast or vertical spire. What is more, a cast figurine of a lion, or in the case of the Tingelstad weathervane, a dragon, is attached at the outer tip. The solid figurine ensures that most of the object's weight is firmly placed at the outer pointed edge. However, an upwards-turning metal triangle heavy at the tip, will be an unstable wind indicator. A simple piece of fabric would be a better option.[5] If, on the other hand, the sloping vane is attached to an equally sloping rod, its straight upper edge would rest horizontally for a balanced look. This position, however, would prohibit the weathervane from indicating the wind.

[2] These four objects are in fact only one group of weathervanes from the medieval period in Scandinavia: two other types exist. The first is an early type of miniature weathervanes dated c. 800-900, of which nine exemplars have been found in Norway, Sweden, Åland, Germany and Russia. The second group succeeded the early medieval vanes, all dated c. 1200–1300, and found in Høyjord, Norderhov, and Tovdal, Norway (see Eide 2021 for an overview of the medieval weathervanes discovered thus far in table I).

[3] Blindheim analysed the four early medieval weathervanes' metal compositions in 1983. The vane from Heggen consists of over 90% copper, while the figurine is 70% copper, 20% zinc, 5% lead and 5% other metals. The three other weathervanes are of similar copper alloys (Blindheim 1982: 104). No other chemical analysis has been undertaken, nor of the related types of weathervanes.

[4] The exception is the vane from Tingelstad, with an upper corner of 90°. Blindheim discovered that this is a secondary modification. He also observed that the vane from Heggen too had a portion of its lower arched underside cut off secondarily, which preserved the blunt upper angle. Reasons for the different modifications remain unclear (Blindheim 1982: 99, 103–104).

[5] The poor utility of the metal vane as wind-indicator was in fact proved in an experiment carried out by Olaf Engvig. He attached a replica of the vane from Heggen to a vertical mast and stem, concluding that it cannot have been used as technical wind indicators in any of the positions (Engvig 2003a, 2003b).

Figure 2. Carved image found under the Bryggen in Bergen, dated c. 1200-1250. © Illustration by Asbjørn E. Herteig (Hougen 1974, 12).

Several images and texts indicate the latter alternative as the likely way the *veðrviti* were fastened to early medieval longships. Consider first an image from Bergen (figure 2). It displays no less than 45 ship's stems, probably depicting the front of a levy fleet. Three of the stems have triangular vanes with the characteristic arched underside and indications of ornamentation. All three face the same direction; towards the sea. If this is a levy sailing, as might be expected, towards the right in the picture, the vanes would face the opposite direction if they were wind-indicators (Hougen 1974: 10–13). Indeed, the image displays another, square vane turning the opposite way to the *veðrviti*, with cords flapping in the wind. This must be a functional wind indicator in a lightweight material. Other images support this argument, depicting triangular vanes in ship stems turning towards the sea and not the ship. This suggests a discrepancy between the Old Norse terminology and the actual, practical functionality of the object type.

The Old Norse sagas mention the *veðrviti* several places. For instance, *Óláfs saga ins helga* tells of King Knútr of England and Denmark, who in 1025 sailed to fight King Olaf of Norway and King Onund of Sweden. When they retreated last minute, Hárekr of Tjøtta, liegeman of King Ólafr, attacked:

> Then he had the sail lowered and also the masts, the weathervane taken down and all the ship above the water line wrapped in grey awnings, and had rowers on a few benches fore and aft and made most of the men sit low down in the ship.

This made the ship appear to Knútr's men as an ordinary salt- and herring ship:

> [...] But when Hárekr got on into the sound and past the army, then he had the masts raised and the sail hoisted, had a gilded weathervane put up. The sail was as white as snow and coloured with red and blue stripes. Then King Knútr's men

> saw and tell the king that it was more than likely that King Óláfr had sailed by there (Snorri Sturluson 2014: ch 158, p. 195).

The vane was set up swiftly, discretely, *after* the mast, thus probably in another place (Stige 2020: 106). Moreover, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* tells of weathervanes put up right before an attack in order to indicate danger when it was already too late for the enemy to escape:

> The King called his councillors to him. And it was settled that the small-ships would fare first and the long-ships after them, and the masts should stand up in them. Then the Ribbalds would think they were all ships of burthen or small. And so it was done. [...]. The Ribbalds thought these were ships of burthen on a voyage and rowed as straight on against them as they could. But when they fell to shooting on board the small-ships at those who were nearest to them the Ribbalds saw that weathervanes [*veðrviti*] glistened in the sunshine of the long-ships. Then they thought they knew that there were greater men in company with the Birchshanks than liegemen alone (transl. by Dasent 1997: ch. 66; *Hákonar saga*, ch. LXIX, p. 235).

It has rightly been noted that the Ribbalds would have noticed the *veðrviti* right away had they been in the ship's mast top. In both passages above, weathervanes identify a ship as a warship and installs fear in enemies (Bugge 1931: 179–180). A third saga passage tells us that vanes could be attached and detached to the ship as loose objects, and that they could switch ownership, in this instance between earls and bishops:

> After that the bishop lent [the earl] the ship with her figureheads and all her [*veðrvitum*] (transl. by Dasent 1997: ch. 67; *Hákonar saga*, ch. LXX, p. 236).

Next, king Hákonar's new ship had weathervanes, shields, and heads in the stems, making it appear striking, awe-inspiring, blood-red golden, like fire:

> King Hacon had many other big ships and excellently well fitted. And in the sunshine it seemed very like as if fire burnt on the heads and vanes [*veðrviti*] and gilded shields which were on the stems and sterns. As Sturla sung:
>
> Twice-tried gold, O Rhine-flame giver,
> In scrolls upon thy sails was seen,
> The blood-red prows stretched out like necks

> Rose high above thy Dragon ship
> The rows of shields glowed bright as fire
> Gold-mounted at thy galleys sides,
> The burning gold-wave deeply reddened
> All shields among that glistening fleet. (Transl. by Dasent 1997: ch. 291; *Hákonar saga*, ch. CCCXLVII, p. 188).

The following lines explain how a whole ship's stem detached and fell into the sea after a crash between the two ships. The weathervane, however, stuck to the sail of the other ship:

> When the king sailed east out of Vegg, the Hardangers Thorir Grips' son and Bard Gro's son ran aboard the ship of archbishop Einar, and from the stern down to the waist, all fell into the sea together, the stern and the shields which were on it; but the vanes [*veðrvitana*] caught in the sail of Thorir's and Bard's ship, and they sailed away with them (*Hákonar saga* ch. CCCXLVII, p. 189; transl. by Dasent 1997: ch. 291).

The *veðrviti* cannot have been functional wind-indicators based on the saga testimony. It seems that the Old Norse name persisted regardless of its practical function, likely referring to a previous function for the same object type. That is, the name originally denoted the functional wind-indicators, which today are lost due to the fragility of their material. These vanes found their way to the ship stems as decorative, heavier metal plates, thus losing their primary instrumental function. This transition must have occurred before the weathervanes that remain today were created (Stige 2020: 103–105).

Figure 3. Heggen Church, Buskerud. The weathervane is depicted as attached to a sloping spire on the roof of the northern transverse ship of the church in this image of unknown origin and date. © Blindheim, 1984.

The weathervane was subsequently removed from use in longships and attached to the exterior of Heggen Church. This spire was most likely sloping like the ship stem.[6] The vane may thus never have acted as a wind-indicator during its entire material life, albeit continuously referring to this function through name.

Nevertheless, *veðrviti* were worth mentioning and depicting. The sagas present them as proud, impressive, and triumphant, alongside dragons' heads and golden shields in the warships. They were not reserved for specific ships, chieftains, or levies. The status they conferred seems interpersonal, and they were used by both bishops and earls. Above all, the saga evidence suggest that the power of the vanes was connected to materiality; their ability to create striking and fascinating spectacles unlike mundane experience, thus persisting in memory.

Vibrant materiality

The minimalist museum display floods the golden weathervane in bright, steady lights so that every ornamental detail, dent, and metal pore are equally aestheticized. This is a very different experience from any medieval encounter with the object. The sagas suggested this, describing them as of "burning gold", "glistening in the sunshine", and speaking of "blood-red prows". In fact, almost every saga passage mentioning *veðrviti* emphasised the golden surfaces or described the visual effects of this material; they "glistened" and looked "as if on fire" in the sun. By displaying the golden vanes outdoors far away from the audience, elevated in the sea- or landscape, a vane's appearance fluctuated and vibrated due to constantly changing light- and weather conditions. Further, they moved without human interference; when the ship moved, or when a gust of wind caused the vane in the spire to turn. The animated, "burning" vanes thus produced extraordinary sensory spectacles. The experience of the weathervane from Heggen today, then, lacks a central aspect of the medieval aesthetic: the temporal, complex, ephemeral, and ever-changing. Enabling, and fuelling, the golden spectacle was the vanes' materiality.

[6] Lamm 2002, 36; Blindheim 1982, 108. See figure 3. The Tingelstad vane was probably mounted on a vertical church spire, and this is the likely reason for its previously mentioned secondary modification to a right angle, enabling free rotation with the wind. The vanes from Källunge and Söderala might also have been mounted on vertical church spires, but were not modified, and thus indicated the wind unstably.

Figure 4. The weathervane from Heggen, side A. © Museum of Cultural History, Oslo.

The vane from Heggen is engraved and gilded by fire.[7] The thin golden layer perfectly covered the base to make it look as if of solid gold. A precious and costly material, gold carried with it an abundance of associations for a medieval audience related to wealth, power, strength, and generosity. The smiths' knowledge of metalworking was believed to come from Mímir's well, the source of all wisdom, and related to Odinn, the god of wisdom, magic, and of smithing. Smiths were believed to transfer their supernatural powers to the metalwork they made (Hed Jakobsson 2002: 286–288; Ekberg 2002: 4; Wright 2019). On a more general level, Old Norse kunst, artworks, were conceived of as objects whose value related to knowledge, insight, and sorcery, and thus itself embodying a magic potential (Kristoffersen 2010: 262). All golden artefacts and metalwork generally may thus have carried specific associations of inherent properties in the early medieval period.

[7] The techniques of engraving "de opere punctili" correspond to the recipes of artmaking in Theophilus Presbyter's twelfth-century treatise *Schedula diversarum artium* (Presbyter 1961, book 3, chapter LXIII, pp. 129–131).

The sagas' emphasis on materiality may be largely due to the vanes' signal functions. An individual, flat object with a golden, mirror-like surface can reflect a sunbeam across vast distances at the right angle. The ability to create light flashes to far-away viewers may have been valuable. The constant swinging of the vane due to the movement of the ship or the wind in the church spire, would send golden flashes in all directions. Standing at one angle, the sun's reflection in the vane would overwhelm the eyes, circumscribing vision for a second. From another angle, in another weather, the vane looked darkened, matted. Consequently, it was during changing weather events that the vanes shone the brightest, creating a *fluxus* of ever-changing light.

These signal effects were observed first-hand by Olaf Engvig, who sailed the North Sea with two replicas of the Heggen vane. He observed that the vanes allowed the two ships to communicate, calling them "grey weather lanterns":

> Not only did they sparkle in bright sunlight. Even in overcast or dull skies their flashing or signalling effect was worth recording as outstanding. Most impressive was their appearance when the sun was low on the horizon. It was almost frightening how the vanes sent off beams of light [...] (Engvig 2003a: 6).

That is, in darkened weather the little available light would magnify in the golden surface, glowing and shining brilliantly, as if independent sources of light.

Similarly, a weathervane in the church spire marked the church's position in the landscape. The golden vane would appear as a single golden spot of light to approaching pilgrims, depending on the position and angle of the perceiver related to it, in addition to the ever-shifting weather- and light conditions. The visual signal effects would have attracted the gaze of a perceiver in the distance, holding it in wonder at the extra-ordinary spectacle. Here too, the vane would look like a light source on its own, from which a pulsating glinting effect and bright signals were sent in several directions, due to the surface covered tightly by the layer of gilding.

Looking closer at the material artefact in the glass display, another aspect of the medieval encounter with the weathervane might be deduced, an aspect wholly integrated in the visual, golden spectacle it generated. It seems that the weathervane was once not only visible, but also audible. In fact, all the four early medieval vanes' undersides have around fifteen small holes pierced through the outer fittings, in addition to a hole through the mouths of the top figurines. Interestingly, all the holes are damaged in various degrees at the same place, at the bottom, many of them broken through

entirely. The Heggen vane's underside has been altered, perhaps due to the significant damage at the holes which can be observed on the three other vanes. The holes must have carried something of considerable weight to cause erosion on solid metal.

It is generally agreed upon in previous research that the reason for the damage is depicted in the mentioned image from Bergen (figure 2). The drawer has affixed short lines from the arched underside with small, round objects hanging in them. It is likely that a small metal ring was attached to each of the holes in the vane, in which a string with metal objects in hung freely.[8] Set in motion, the rings caused erosion on the bottom of the holes which is visible today. If this is correct, the hanging metal objects would, when clinging into each other, add a distinct aural aspect to the experience of a weathervane. The free-flying metal device would have produced low, metallic, sonorous noises. It is uncertain when the acoustic device dissociated from the weathervanes, and it may have persisted well after relocating to the church spire.

The noise of the vanes unfolded parallelly with the visual golden effects in shifting light. While the noise would be audible only at shorter distances, a strong gust of wind in the right direction could send the sounds far off in a flash. While the visual effects imposed on the perceiver from afar, the acoustics may have amplified this visual radiance.

The early medieval weathervanes thus generated spectacular visual and acoustic signals unfolding in temporal performances. The ever-changing event of light and sound was animated by two agents external to the vanes which put them in motion. The first was mechanical and man-made: the physical attachment to the stem or spire, enabling movement. The second agent included natural forces of wind, weather, and light which made the material move, fuelling the entire multisensory spectacle. In this way, the vanes moved without direct human contact. This was likely interpreted as a sign of inherent agency, dynamism, and a "kind of life" in the weathervanes. The saga passages quoted above indicated this in describing them as shaking in the wet wind and *attaching* and *detaching* seemingly by their own will. Centrally, the vanes appeared *as if* on fire; and not *as* burning, or as fire *itself*. There was awareness of the crafted, earthly materials the vanes were made up of, and all the while they were more than this mere materiality. In short, the vane created *signs of life*; movement, shifting visual and aural appearances which created an illusion of life by motion, while retaining its status as crafted by earthbound, dead materials (Jørgensen 2017: 261, 264–268).

[8] Salin suggested the presence of such "metal leaves" already in 1921 (Salin 1921: 2). Lighter materials like textile would not have damaged the holes to the degree visible on the vanes.

The vibrant, mirror-like surface of the vane thus generated manifold, temporally unfolding spectacles of variegated visual and aural signals. These signals immediately captured the eyes and ears of perceivers from a distance. The complexity of the sensorial spectacle evoked certain feelings in the perceivers; the sagas described that the vanes evoked awe and installed fear and terror in viewers of the weathervaned ship. Furthermore, it seems that the light- and noise-generating weathervane caused a heightened sensibility to the situation in which the vane appeared. Attached to the ship stem or church spire, the vane became synonymous with the power of the edifice it was attached to; the violently powerful and skilful Viking naval power or the shielding, reassuring permanence of the church building.

Engraved animals

None of the saga passages mentioned that the *veðrviti* are covered on all surfaces by ornaments. Only some drawers indicated decor by arbitrary, sketchy lines inside the triangular shapes. A reason for the notable absence is that few people, mainly those responsible for attaching the vane to the stem or spire, had opportunity to see the ornaments up close (Bugge 1925: 25; 1931: 183–184; Munksgaard 2004: 476; Stige 2020: 106–107). Everyone else, standing even at shorter distances, would be unable to see the specific motifs. By placing the vane far from most viewers, it was only intelligible through golden flashes and low ringing noises.

The museum exhibition, on the other hand, offers the opportunity to study the ornamental detail. The vane is engraved on both sides. On one side (side A, see figures 4 and 6) a large and a small lion follow each other in a leap forwards. The smaller lion in front is looking back at the larger one as if chased (Wilson & Klindt-Jensen 1966: 136–137). Their elongated bodies have spiral hips, fur indicated by small trefoils on the large lion, with ears, a large eye, and an open mouth. They have head pieces, like majestic crowns, composite of trefoils and elongated tendrils ending in small curls, and corresponding tails. The elongated tendril is repeated in the acanthus rank pattern on the framing fittings, where they grow down towards the lion motif. A "frieze" of stylised acanthus is placed between the fittings and lions. The double ornamental band provides compositional balance and rhythm. The inner frieze on the other side (side B, see figures 5 and 7) is in fact classicising: semi-circular arches are joined by a ring, each arch finishing in a fleur-de-lis (Brøgger 1925: 16). At the centre is a large eagle in battle with a snake. The eagle has a long neck with feathers. Like the lions on side A, the eagle has a large head piece and wings of elongated, curled tendrils. Around its neck and wings is the strangling snake, the eagle flapping the wings and opening the beak in a cry.

Figure 5. The weathervane from Heggen, side B. © Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway.

The repeated use of tendrils and trefoils blur the lines between plant and animal ornament, into a delightfully ambiguous yet linear and precise design. Each detail is a repetition yet rendered uniquely and differing slightly from the others. The animal bodies are stiff, but looping, dynamic, and the eagle strong and energetic in its struggle. The ambiguous forms making up the complex and unified composition puzzles the eye up close, prohibiting the gaze from fixing at a single detail. It invites a playful exploration of every minute detail, twist, and turn. Perceiving the ornaments in open air, in motion, would add a temporal unfolding of colours, light, and sounds, complicating the act of trying to discern the individual motifs. The obscure, enigmatic, complex style of the animal battles invited fascination, then as now.

The theme of the animal battle is common for three of the early medieval vanes.[9] They depict serpent-dragons, lions, birds, and eagles; high-status animals of predation

[9] The vanes from Heggen, Källunge and Söderala vanes features similar animal battles, while the vane from Tingelstad depicts the biblical David rescuing the lamb from the lion. Here, the theme of animal violence features in a specific biblical narrative (1. Sam 17, 34–35).

valued for aggression and physical strength (Høilund Nielsen 2002: 212, 214). The motifs can further be characterised as evoking the idea of violence itself, perhaps with a sense of impartiality: it is difficult to predict a winner. The clearest example is on the vane from Källunge, depicting two identical, mirroring serpents biting the other's tail in an equal battle. Side B of the vane from Heggen depicts a small serpent looping around the neck of a large eagle, strangling it. Despite the size difference, the eagle opens its beak in a cry, and flaps its wings in struggle.

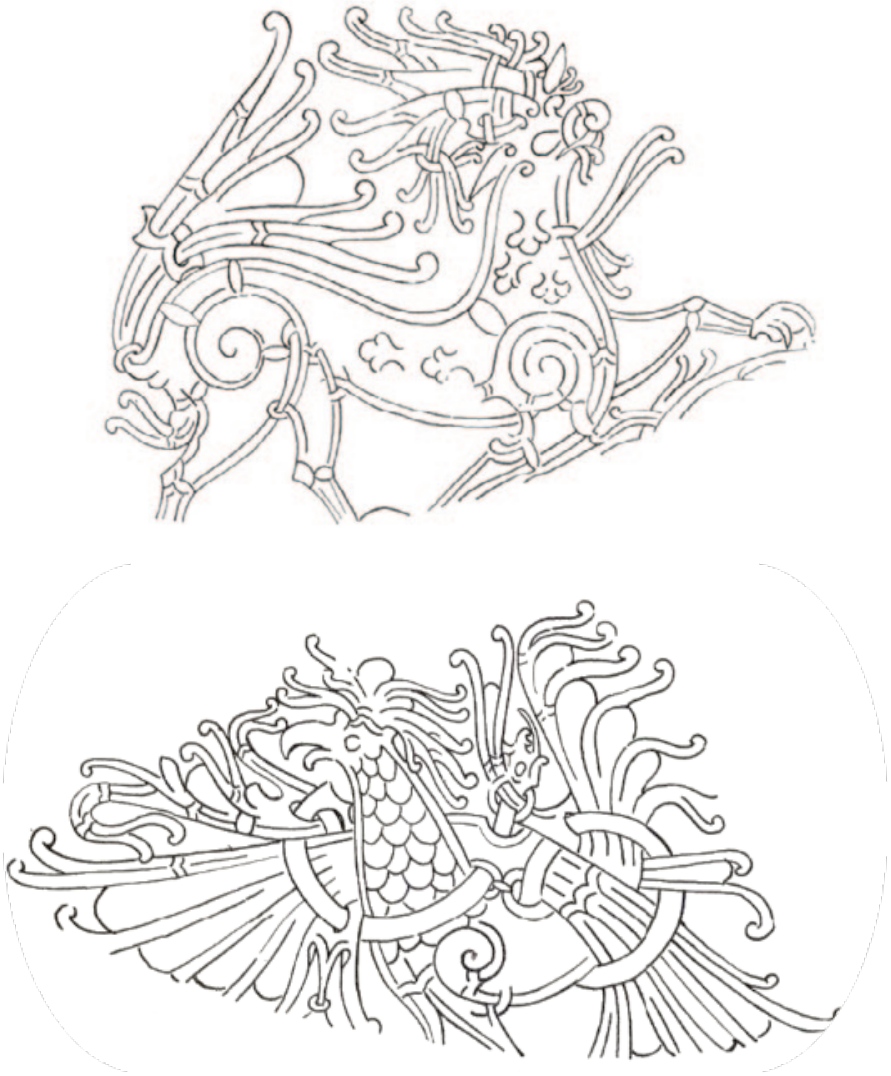
No consensus on how to understand the motifs has previously been reached. Several pre-Christian and Christian iconographical interpretations are available, for instance with the serpent-dragon or the lion as the good or evil part in the battles of good and evil.[10] An alternative is interpreting all large animals as the evil part of the battle, as a principle of Norse art (Lundborg 2006: 42). These may be relevant explanations. If the battle motifs conveyed specific stories or didactic messages to the public, however, it seems inexpedient to render these on the small surfaces of the vanes, with complexly intricate details, only to be placed far from the audience, on top of that, in a location constantly in movement.[11]

The meaning of the ornaments thus cannot be fully explained through any one surviving text: they are not primarily narrative nor didactic in character, nor were they discernible to most people. It seems that the motifs evoked a sense or a *spirit* of battle; the lethal violence of predatory beasts battling by twisting around each other. The bound, intertwining animal bodies in Viking-age art may more generally relate to military values, and thus become metaphoric for the bestial liquidation of enemies through battle.[12] According to this interpretation, the vane represent the climax of a violent, beastly battle.

[10] Most literary sources of these beastly animals, particularly variations of the serpent-dragon, are related to war and violence (Acker 2012: 2–3).

[11] Other, contemporary images rendered narratives in clearer, less detailed ways to make the story easily recognizable. For instance, images of Sigurd Fåvnesbane have a clarity of style and form, ordered inside medallions separating the story from surrounding ornaments, following the logical sequence of the story.

[12] Lundborg 2006: 38–41. Lundborg found a poetic counterpart to the bound animal bodies in *Beowulf*. In the final battle with Grendel, Beowulf will: "with steady nails | to the bed of death | get that beast bound | and hold him hard | in my grip of hand | until his last moment Beowulf", lines 963–966.



Figures 6 and 7. Illustrations of the main animals depicted on the weathervane from Heggen.
© Brøgger, 1925.

By re-presenting something, something is made present. As such, it can protect against that which it re-presents. In this way, a re-presentation of evil protects against evil (Donceel-Voûte 2018: 17–20). That is, by drawing the shape of an animal onto an artefact, it is filled with the powers of the animal the drawing represents, as the imposition of a graphic element onto the artefact changes its structure and creates a new unit. The artefact *becomes* or is transformed into the animal graphically rendered on it, while retaining its function, for instance for a box to contain things within it. The new unit could actively watch over what that box contained. "The final product is a whole: utensil – ornament, object – animal, box – that speaks", as Lévi-Strauss explained it (Kristoffersen 1997: 246–247; Lévi-Strauss 1963: 260–261). Norse Migration period swords and jewellery with animal ornamentation have been interpreted accordingly (Kristoffersen 1997; Hed Jakobsson 2002: 283, n25). The unification of object and animal made swords share its powers with the depicted animal, thus increasing the sword strike's lethality. The animal depicted, on the other hand, *became the sword*. The transformation was not understood metaphorically but as a real transformation with practical consequences. By engraving bestial and violent animals, real or fantastic, on the weathervanes, they were imbued with the fierceness believed to be characteristic of these animals. The artefact with engravings of violent evil became potent deflectors of just what it represented.

This is the notion of *apotropaia*, generally defined as the ability of an artefact, word, or phrase to ward off evil (Weinryb 2016: 122). The perhaps most common apotropaic symbol is the evil eye. This symbol was imported to pre-Christian Scandinavia from the East, and likely brought the processes of apotropaia with it (Bill 2016: 143). By placing weathervanes in outwards-sloping fore stems, the top animal would look out in the direction of sailing, towards the sea and the possible dangers ahead. Vanes placed in back-stems pointed behind the ship, the top animal looking for and protecting against followers and back-hand attacks.[13] The watching gaze of the top animal was protective, like the evil eye, sending evil back by mirroring it. In this way, one function of the weathervanes was like the protective, gilded animal and dragon ship heads.[14]

[13] Comparing to ninth-century animal heads on the Oseberg sledges, fixed to the sledges' fronts and backs looking forwards and backwards like the vanes, protected against evil. They have open mouths and more pronounced eyes than the top animals on the vanes. It seems there may have been a continuation of animal ornamentation on travelling vessels for apotropaic protective functions (Bill 2016: 147–153).

[14] The sagas describe golden heads attached to longships as gold, loose objects, so frightening to the "land spirits" that they must be removed before approaching land. This is accepted as evidence for their apotropaic function. See *Landnámabok* in *Hauksbók*, ch. 268.

Thus, for the apotropaic transformation to take place, the specific motifs did not have to be discernible to the audience. However, the engraved weathervane needed to be displayed. Not only did the top animals look out for their gazes to meet and avert evil forces; the re-presentations of evil had to be seen. Light is a powerful apotropaion, a central passageway for evil to roam freely. Sound is another apotropaion familiar to Norse medieval society (Bill 2016: 144–146; Weinryb 2016: 124), continuing in Christianity through for instance bronze bells. Through the ritual of baptism, bells could avert evil forces through its powerful sounds. Signals of light and sound were thus capable of transporting evil and apotropaic forces. These signals unleashed into the environment when on display, communicating the apotropaic potential of the vane acquired through the engravings. Displayed in the ship or church spire, the golden vane became an energetic, potent source constantly radiating signals of light and sound into the environment, and thus creating a particular protective aura about the ship or church. Ensuring this, as seen, was the constant mechanical movement of the vane in both ship stem and church spire without direct human intervention. The rich, golden red, vibrating, fire-like energy would attract the gazes of people from a distance, hold it in fascination, and provoke feelings of awe and fear. The visual, audial effects and the resulting emotional affects may have suggested a superhuman force within the artefact; it may have been interpreted as evidence to its ability to protect against dark forces, physical, visible, or invisible.

If light and sound are central passageways for evil to roam freely, to be exposed and avoided, they also need to be controlled. As seen above, the sagas explained that golden weathervanes were attached to the ship stems right before attacking or approaching the enemy. This may be sketching an image of a possible ritual of mounting and dismounting of the vane right before and after an attack, to unleash the vane's apotropaic energy at a highly strategic time. By mounting the vane, creating an aura of light and sound, a magic layer of protection around the ship, the ship would be stronger in situations of extreme vulnerability. The act of mounting a weathervane to a ship stem, making it visible and audible, may have been believed to activate its apotropaic potential to protect. The dismounting of the vane signalled that the danger was over.

In this way, placing a vane in a ship stem right before an attack was an integral and strategic part of that military operation. Violent and beastly animal power was unleashed into the environment and may have been viewed as complicit to success. The actions of raising and demounting the sounding, golden weathervane to specific locations may be viewed as a kind of ritual practice which regulated the passageways for evil. It is difficult to ascertain specific ritual practices related to vanes without additional

evidence. However, the widespread belief in the powers of certain objects to protect; the human need to control and regulate such power; in addition to the evidence of the uses of the vanes found in the sagas, make it likely that specific rites followed belief in their apotropaic potential. The visio-aural experiences, activated by ritual, enabled the apotropaic forces inherent in the vane to be effectively communicated.

The argument above also sheds new light to the choice of ornamental style. As the mere *evocation* of predatory animals sufficed to transform the material artefact and fuse it with the animals' perceived powers, mimetic likeness to the animals as such was unimportant (Kristoffersen 2010: 263). Thus, the engraver may have had creative freedom with the design. The choice of a wonderfully complex, looping, and perplexing design was likely according to the medieval taste for variegated, complex designs capable of fascinating and entertaining.[15] In this way, the engravings served not only the function of transforming the material artefact into an evil-warding instrument; but also, to install awe through beauty. The presence of ornament on the vane perpetuated, even though the individual motifs were difficult to make out from a distance. The mere fact that the vane from Heggen was ornate, through its sumptuousness, in addition to the precious materiality, the vane was immediately perceptible by the sense organs as an object of wealth, or surplus power and otherworldly beauty. The aesthetic aspect was significant, enabling the golden weathervane to be revered as an artefact of magical efficacy.

Interpretatio Christiana

It is uncertain when the exhibited golden vane relocated to the church spire. Most previous researchers agree it was probably during the later eleventh to the early fourteenth centuries. It has been suggested that the golden weathervanes ended up in churches alongside other ship equipment when these were not in use. The storage of ship gear in churches was in fact enforced by the law of Magnus Lagabøte.[16] Conse-

[15] Thomas Aquinas described a medieval taste for the multisensorial and variegated aesthetic: "For if many sensations are perceived as a rational mixture, they are made pleasurable; just so in tastes, when a thing is according to due proportion either sharp or sweet or salty; then indeed things are entirely pleasing, and all that is mixed is more pleasing than what is single: so a concord is composed as much of a high voice as a low…". Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia De Anima* 3, lectio 2, no. 15 (cited from Carruthers 2013: 47-48).

[16] "The sails shall be taken care of by those who are the most judicious and live closest to the church closest to the ship. But all the equipment shall follow the sail to the church, as well as all tools, and it shall be stored so that it will not be damaged". *Law of the Realm*, Part III: *Landevernsbolken*, ch. 14.4 (cited from Munksgaard 2004: note 3). Indeed, all four early medieval weathervanes were discovered in churches close to the sea and lakes which we know Vikings sailed.

quently, researchers have proposed that the vanes were mounted to church spires when their old function in the longships was forgotten (Bugge 1931; Blindheim 1982). It is my contention that this theory undermines the vast powers that medieval people attributed to the vanes. That is, regardless of how the vane ended up in Heggen Church, which may equally be as a gift from a ship owner, it was hardly a coincidence that it ended up in the highest point of the church building, in one of the location the closest to the Christian Godhead. If a primary function of the vane had been as apotropaic device, this would not prohibit them from acquiring Christian aspects of meaning. Besides, as seen, ship vanes could protect any edifice; ownership changed unproblematically.

Officially, the Church banned magic. But belief in and practices of magic in various forms were socially deep-seated in early medieval Scandinavia and did not cease with the introduction of Christianity (Price 2019: 324–325). A significant exception to the Church's ban on magic concerned, for instance, magic that could protect. Only a fine line separated pagan apotropaic magic from Christian miracles and relic works. The ambiguous attitude of the early church towards apotropaic magic meant that protective images were frequently employed by Christians, particularly through the symbol of the cross whose protective power derived from God. Another example is the pagan convention of wearing protective amulets, which in the Middle Ages were designed unaffected by the religious change, or mixing pagan magic elements and spells with liturgical narratives and crosses, engaging both traditions actively.[17] Apotropaic images adorned churches, especially at weaker points like doors, arches, and pillars, that is, thresholds, to prohibit invisible evil forces from entering (Maguire & Maguire 2007: 69–71; Donceel-Voûte 2018: 37–38). Magic objects in church contexts should thus not be considered folkloric. They were continuations of pre-Christian magic as magic permeated all of society and was practiced by religious and secular powers and the lower classes (Nordanskog 2006). Thus, if a prime function of the weathervanes was as apotropaic devices, this does not preclude them from secondarily functioning as apotropaic device after it has been placed. Its original function as an apotropaic device did not have to be forgotten for the church to appropriate it, neither is it likely it ended up in the symbolically charged location by chance. It is likely that the church knew of the powers inherent in the material and employed it for their own purposes.

All the while, by appropriating the old weathervane into the church spire, its meanings developed. All Christian objects served a specific purpose, pointing beyond

[17] Korsvoll 2018: 150-152, 160. This is particularly relevant to the case of the vane from Tingelstad, which mixes elements of the Christian faith with that belonging to older, pre-Christian traditions.

itself to a deeper Christian meaning. Christian visual arts aimed at dazzling their spectators by precious materiality and ornamentation – aiming to exceed the beauty of earthly nature, not to imitate it (Loic 2019: 413–414). Gold was particularly suitable as the earthly counterpart to heaven's splendour, from which God's light radiates. The earthly material pointed towards that which resides in the sky in conjunction with it. In a material understanding too, gold was rare and enigmatically powerful: it does not corrode, it resists fire, and is thus a potent symbol for nobility, purity, and wisdom. It thus appropriately represents the supernatural (Bucklow 2009: 300, 323; see f. ex. Lamentations 4:1, Job 23:10). Accordingly, by placing the golden weathervane in the church spire, allowing it to perform its golden spectacle, it could aptly be understood as making perceptible aspects of heaven's splendour. The apotropaic protection the golden vane conjured and radiated, may have expressed a God-sent power to ward off evil by means of His greatness, triumph, and wealth, which is also contained within His Church, and which protected that very building from harm, spiritual and physical. In this way, the apotropaic potential believed already inherent in the material artefact may have been cast in a Christian light, the power to protect understood as deriving, ultimately, from the Christian godhead, reflected through the artefact.

Artefacts can be neither inherently pagan nor Christian. The ship *Mariasuden* was dedicated to the Virgin and had relics in the stems (*Sverris saga*, 122). Viking ship gear was moved to or made for churches; like two *skipsbrandr* placed in front of the church door of Miklagardr on Iceland (Falk 1995: 95). In a cultural climate where pre-Christian and Christian aspects of culture mixed and entangled, the apotropaic potential of the golden weathervanes did not necessarily have to be forgotten before being mounted in church spires. It seems the early Church not only allowed the appropriation but judged it important and beneficial. This practice may indicate a tolerant or ambivalent attitude to magic practices with pre-Christian roots, especially that of apotropaia, in early medieval Norway and Sweden.

The continuous belief in the magic potential of the vanes met a continuous demand for magic protection, a demand which transgressed questions of religion. Thus, the convention of making and displaying efficacious weathervanes seems to have been strategically and knowingly manipulated to serve different practical purposes according to the specific situation and its requirements. Attached to a ship stem, the vane was probably believed to aid and protect in battle, largely due to the animal battle ornamentation. Mounted in the church spires, their past efficacy was exploited, persisting, while also gaining a religious significance; or rather, magical and religious aspects of meaning blurred together without distinctions. The vane's power to avert

evil was understood as ultimately deriving from God.[18] It seems that physical, immediate circumstances, the particular kind of edifice, specific situations, and the ways of displaying weathervanes, were central for the ways in which they were understood.

The potential for apotropaic protection was one of the principal reasons for the elevated status and exceptional treatment and display of the gilded weathervanes in the Middle Ages. There were likely other reasons too, and it is difficult to positively determine specific magic principles where little direct context is left. Previous research has largely looked for representative values in the ornamental motifs and in the weathervanes as such. I believe the element of magic belongs to this discussion, as it has been disclosed above as a central reason for the construction and practices of display of the weathervane.

The weathervane from Heggen is not a unique example but stands for a whole convention of attaching older ship vanes to church spires. While only a few weathervanes have survived, these represent a fraction of the medieval total (Blindheim 1982), in addition to the numerous discovered related artefacts. This article has investigated one token of the type through a magnifying glass, focussing on its material, sensorial, aesthetic properties, and the physical, historical situations in which it appeared in the Middle Ages. Through immersion into medieval encounters with the weathervane, I hope to have contributed to nuance the understanding of a spectacular, yet often underestimated, mute material trace of the Middle Ages.

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[18] Other objects similarly functioned partly for magic and partly for votive purposes (MacLeod & Mees 2006: 163).

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Ingrid Birch Eide, MA University of Oslo, Winner of Collegium Medievale's Prize for best Master thesis in medieval studies 2021. Email: ingrid.b.eide@hotmail.com.

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Alf Tore Hommedal, Åslaug Ommundsen og Alexander O'Hara (red.), *St. Sunniva – irsk dronning, norsk vernehelgen*. Bergen: Alvheim & Eide akademisk forlag, 2021. 261 s.

Melding av Steffen Hope

Denne boka inneheld Sunniva-legenda i omsetjing, ein introduksjon, og tolv artiklar som dekkjer viktige aspekt ved Sunniva-kulten i mellomalderen og i moderne tid. Boka har oppstått som ein respons på den betydelege merksemda Sunniva-figuren har fått i seinare år, ein respons som kulminerte med Sunniva-festivalen i Bergen i 2020, og som i sin tur var ei markering av at det var 850 år sidan relikviane til Sunniva vart flytta frå Selja til Bergen. Festivalen tente også som ei god påminning om at mellomalderske helgenar framleis spelar viktige roller i det moderne samfunnet, til dømes som identitetsskapande figurar eller som historiske referansepunkt. Boka sitt føremål om å «formidle rikdomen i dette materialet» knytt til Sunniva-figuren gjennom tidene er derfor svært aktuelt (s. 48), og dette formidlingsføremålet vert oppnådd ved at artiklane set fokus på fleire viktige tema innanfor den historiske og samtidige Sunniva-kulten. Artiklane dekkjer også eit veldig breitt kronologisk spekter, frå 1000-talet til i dag, og det vert derfor mogeleg å få ei betre forståing for både brot og kontinuitet i Sunniva-figuren si historiske utvikling. At boka også er rikt illustrert og dessutan med norsk og engelsk tekst i alle artiklane gjer at innhaldet vert tilgjengeleg for eit publikum både i og utanfor akademia, noko som er eit stort demokratisk pluss.

Dei tolv artiklane i boka gjev lesaren ei god innføring både i Sunniva-kulten sin mellomalderske kontekst og den moderne resepsjonen av Sunniva i religiøse så vel som sekulære rammeverk. I det fyrste kapittelet gjev redaktørane ei oversikt over Sunniva si utvikling gjennom tidene, og løftar fram visse hovudpunkt i denne utviklinga. Til dømes vert det påpeikt at den tidlege framveksten av Bergen som bispesenter var ein viktig impuls for korleis Sunniva-figuren vart utkrystallisert frå dei meir anonyme Seljumennene. I kapittel to tek Haki Antonsson føre seg Sunniva-kulten i ljos av den breiare nordiske helgenkulten, noko som gjev ein veldig viktig kontekst for å forstå Sunniva si rolle i det mellomalderske samfunnet. Ein helgenkult utviklar seg sjeldan i isolasjon frå andre helgenkultar, og ei slik kontekstualisering av kulten er viktig for at vi skal forstå Sunniva-figuren si utvikling, men også for at vi skal forstå omstenda som gjorde Sunniva til Bergen sin vernehelgen.

Sankta Sunniva er på mange måtar ein enigmatisk figur, og på grunn av det relativt spinkle tilgjengelege kjeldematerialet er vanskeleg å danne seg eit godt bilete av kva impulsar som har vore med på å formulere Sunniva som helgen. Av denne årsaka er dei neste tre kapitla svært gode tilskot til forskinga, og dei set fokus på ulike aspekt som gjer det lettare å danne seg eit bilete av kvifor mellomalderkjeldene formulerte Sunniva slik dei gjorde.

Alf Tore Hommedal syner korleis den politiske konteksten kring 1170 kan forklare kvifor den latinske Sunniva-liturgien legg vekt på hennar kongelege byrd, og at Sunniva som dronning kunne legitimere ei omskifting i den norske kongerekkja som opna opp for at Magnus Erlingsson vart vald til konge sjølv om det var mor hans og ikkje far hans som var av kongeleg slekt. Alexander O'Hara tek føre seg korleis vi kan sjå spor som peikar mot at den eldste Sunniva-hagiografien vart forfatta av ein cisterciensar, og dette opnar opp for ei viktig nærlesing av intertekstualiteten i Sunniva-legenda slik den har blitt overlevert i liturgiske lesingar frå seinmellomalderske kjelder. Ei slik nærlesing er svært verdifull og viktig for å forstå det liturgiske materialet, men det er også viktig å hugse på at det materialet som er tilgjengeleg for oss i dag ikkje nødvendigvis har overlevd i den forma liturgien hadde på midten av 1100-talet.

Sjølv om der er mykje uvisse knytt til Sunniva-liturgien og korleis den utvikla seg gjennom mellomalderen – musikken har til dømes ikkje blitt overlevert – er det liturgiske materialet ei av dei aller viktigaste kjeldene til kulten kring Sunniva og Seljumennene. Åslaug Ommundsen sitt kapittel er derfor eit verdifullt bidrag, ettersom vi her får eit innblikk i både officiumsliturgien og messa som vart feira i løpet av festdagen. Den liturgiske feiringa utgjorde eitt av dei mest sentrale kontaktpunkta mellom kultsenteret og ålmenta i mellomalderen, men er lite kjent og forstått i moderne tid.

Dei følgjande tre kapitla bidrar til å utvide den kontekstuelle forståinga av Sunniva-figuren. At Sunniva har blitt formulert gjennom ei samanblanding av element frå ulike figurar og legender er allereie velkjent i forskinga, men der står framleis att mykje arbeid for å kartlegge det fulle omfanget av impulsar og intertekstuelle og ikonografiske lån som har gjort Sunniva til den figuren ho er i legenda. Det er denne prosessen Alexander O'Hara i sitt kapittel kallar «magpie hagiography» (s. 93). Edel Bhreathnach tek i sitt kapittel tak i spørsmålet om irsk påverknad ved å gje ei oversikt over hovudtrekk i den irske helgenkulten, og særleg rolla til jomfruhelgenar. Dette gjev ein verdifull kontekst for diskusjonen om både likskapar og skilnader mellom Irland og Skandinavia. Else Mundal syner korleis kvinner i den heimlege sagatradisjonen kan ha gjort det lettare for Sunniva-figuren å få innpass i den norrøne føre-

stillingsverda, og vi vert dermed minte på at den latinske litteraturen eksisterte i ein kulturell sfære som ikkje var skild frå den eldre norrøne tradisjonen, og at Sunniva og sagakvinnene var delar av den same historiske forståing – sjølv om Sunniva sjølvsagt hadde ei meir tidlaus rolle som levande helgen. Justin Kroesen analyserer Sunniva-framstillingar i den seinmellomalderske kyrkjekunsten, og gjev dermed viktige innblikk i korleis denne ikonografien vart ein kombinasjon av standarduttrykk basert på teiknebøker og etablerte føredøme ved kunstverkstadane i Nederland og Nord-Tyskland, men også spesifikke detaljar som er kopla til sjølve Sunniva-legenda.

Dei neste tre kapitla tek føre seg Sunniva i den moderne verda, særleg i overgangen til 2000-talet. Lisbeth Mikaelsson minner oss på at helgenen har hatt ei viktig rolle i moderne kulturliv, og at Sunniva er eit referansepunkt i samtidig underhaldningslitteratur, særleg innan krimsjangeren. Torunn Selberg analyserer Sunniva sine roller i den samtidige lokale og regionale konteksten, både på Selja og i Bjørgvin bispedøme, kor Sunniva framleis har ein sentral plass i identitetskonstruksjon. Hannah Kristine Lunde ser nærare på oppbløminga av pilegrimstrafikken til Selja, og korleis denne trafikken dreg vekslar både på historisk praksis og samtidige, internasjonale trendar. I alle desse tre kapitla vert minte på at helgenfigurar sin plastiske og omformelege natur også betyr at Sunniva kan formulerast etter påverknad frå nyreligiøse og ikkje-religiøse impulsar, og at helgenar vert reaktualiserte på ulike måtar til ulike tider, og av ulike publikum. Boka sitt tolvte og siste kapittel handlar også om Sunniva i den moderne verda. Alf Tore Hommedal granskar historia bak ein Sunniva-relikvie som no ligg i Sankt Magnus-kyrkja på Lillestrøm, og påpeikar dermed at helgenkulten framleis ein levande og aktuell religiøs praksis.

Takka vere eit breitt tematisk og kronologisk omfang er denne boka eit viktig bidrag til forskingsfronten, både når det gjeld Sunniva og kulten kring henne og Seljumennene, men også når det gjeld mellomaldersk helgenkult meir generelt. Her er framleis forsking som står att, men vi har no kome fleire viktige steg vidare i forsøket på å forstå heilskapen i Sunniva-kulten si historie.

Steffen Hope, PhD, Postdoktor, Institutt for arkeologi, konservering og historie. Email: s.a.b.hope@iakh.uio.no.

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Radosław Kotecki, Carsten Selch Jensen, Stephen Bennett (red.), *Christianity and War in Medieval East Cenral Europe and Scandinavia*. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2021. xiii + 310 s.

Anmeldt av Max Naderer

Problemer knyttet til forholdet krig og kristendom i middelalderen har blitt undersøkt særlig i kontekst av korstogene. Denne gode antologien skifter fokuset fra en korstogs-sentrisme til en bredere problemstilling rundt kristendommen og kirkens innflytelse på krigens kultur. Det geografiske fokuset retter seg mot en region som har blitt betegnet som «Younger Europe» eller «New Christianity» (s. 2) og behandler denne i tiden fra 1000-tallet til 1200-tallet.

Utgiverne har erfaring med temaet og har tidligere utgitt noen bøker som går i samme retning. Særlig Radosław Kotecki har sammen med andre utgitt flere antologier som tar opp forholdet mellom vold, kirken og religion i middelalderens Europa. Carsten Selch Jensen og Stephen Bennett er eksperter angående korstogshistorien i henholdsvis de baltiske områdene og det hellige landet. For denne antologien har de samlet 14 etablerte forfattere som i tidligere publikasjoner har demonstrert sin kunnskap passende til bokens overordnede tema.

Boken har to eksplisitte mål – å presentere originale og nye innsikter samt å gjøre resultatene kjent for et bredere publikum utover lokale forskningsmiljøer (s. 2–3, 20–22). Boken oppnår sine mål. Som bokens styrkes fremheves, «its frequent use of a comparative perspective, which embeds the results of the research in a pan-European context» (s. 20). Det komparative perspektivet kan ikke oppfylles av hver enkel artikkel og i like stor grad, med dette minsker hverken deres eller bokens kvalitet som helhet. Det er imidlertid litt synd at en mer helhetlig komparasjon av bokens funn blir overlatt til leseren, selv om boken ikke vil gi et uttømmende perspektiv.

Boken har to deler med henholdsvis seks og sju artikler. Artiklene i den første delen omhandler relasjonen mellom kirken, geistligheten og krig. Ikke minst biskopenes aktiviteter spiller en fremtredende rolle som blir drøftet av fire forfattere i sine respektive artikler (Judit Gál, Gábor Barabás, Sini Kangs, og Jacek Maciejewski). I den andre delen fokuserer artiklene på ideer om krig og hvordan de ble påvirket av religiøse faktorer. Denne delen drøfter både religiøse ritualer på slagfeltet og praksiser

i krig påvirket av kristne forestillinger samt krigføringens fremstilling og legitimering ifølge de narrative kildene.

Det er ikke plass her til å oppsummere alle artiklene i boken, så det gjøres bare for et utvalg. Det er de fem artiklene til Sini Kangas, Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen, Martin Wangsgaard Jürgensen, Carsten Selch Jensen, Bjørn Bandlien. Med tanke på Collegium Medievales fokus og lesekrets omhandler disse bokens tema med særlig relevans for de skandinaviske riker og regionene.

Sini Kangas analyserer fremstillingen av kriger-biskopene («warrior-bishops») i de narrative kildene som behandler korstogene i Baltikum og Finland. Hun fokuserer på biskopene Meinhard (d. 1196), Berthold (d. 1198), og Albert av Livland (d. 1229) samt Henrik av Finland (påstått d. 1154/1155) og hvordan deres involvering og deltakelse ble omtalt i krøniker og helgenlegender. Forbudet mot å bære våpen til strid samt rettslige krav til å reise en hær og lede den skapte en spenning mellom ulike forventninger. Kangas' artikkel fullfører en dobbel komparativ analyse. Hun gir en sammenlignende presentasjon av de baltiske misjonsbiskopene ifølge krøniker og helgenlegender, samtidig henviser hun gjennomgående til det første korstog til det hellige landet og kan utpeke noen forskjeller. Ingen av biskopene er fremstilt som aktivt kjempende, mens flere opptrer som militære ledere. (Det står i en interessant motsetning til den ortodokse geistligheten som Anti Selart diskuterer i sin artikkel.) Det gjenstår imidlertid noe ambiguitet angående beskrivelse av den klerikale deltakelsen i selve kamphandlingene og forfatterne fremhevet heller biskopenes spirituelle omsorg.

Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen trekker fram Dominikanerordenens viktighet rundt krigs- og korstog ved den østre og sørlige østersjøkysten. Han argumenter at de ikke bare tjente som instrument i pavelig politikk, men også fremmet krig på vegne av verdslige makter som de skandinaviske konger og den tyske orden. Til 1265 var prekene rettet mot å fremme korstog i østersjøområdet, deretter ble oppmerksomheten vendt mot det hellige landet. Omkring 1300 dalte Dominikaneres involvering i korstogsbevegelsen til et knapt merkbart nivå som muligens kom av endrede relasjoner til den tyske orden og Johannitterordens rehabilitering. Dominikaneres fokus skiftet deretter til misjon.

Martin Wangsgaard Jürgensen tar opp forbindelsen mellom vold, krigføring og martyrdom i malerier i danske kirker i romansk stil fra omkring 1200. Slik tilbyr den en annerledes tilnærming som utvider bokens ellers tekstfokuserte analyser. Han argumenterer at fremstillingen av kjempende riddere i de fragmentarisk bevarte maleriene var del av et ikonografisk program hos den danske kirken som forfulgte to mål med dette – oppmuntring til aktiv og ekspressiv fromhet som inspirerte til

handling heller enn kontemplasjon, samtidig som kirken ville danne og kontrollere den for dermed å hevde sin autoritet.

Carsten Selch Jensen analyserer flere retoriske strategier i Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* relatert til krig og religion. Han drøfter hvordan Saxo legitimerer ulike kriger – både indre stridigheter samt korstogene mot venderne, hvordan Gud intervenerer i disse konfliktene og ikke minst hvordan biskopenes deltakelse i krig ble fremstilt; her er det særlig fokus på biskop Absalon på grunn av hans fremtredende rolle i krøniken selv.

Bjørn Bandliens artikkel omhandler borgerkrigsperioden i Norge på 1100-tallet og samtidens oppfattelse og fremstilling av – samt dens konsepter for krigføring. Med Mikhail M. Bakhtins ideer om polyfone diskurser viser han at retorikken og forestillinger om hellig krig har eksistert ved siden av tradisjonelle diskurser om krig allerede i begynnelsen av borgerkrigsperioden. Det fikk sin videre utvikling under kong Magnus Erlingssson og erkebiskop Øystein Erlendsson. Særlig Olav den hellige ble brukt og omtalt på ulike måter og i ulike diskurser som ikke hadde samme relevans for ulike publikum – geistlige og verdslige. Polyfonien er først vist ved hjelp av ulike kilder og deretter påpekes ulike stemmer i Sverres saga.

Videre fremheves kan artiklene av Radosław Kotecki samt David Kalhous og Ludmila Luňáková. Disse artiklene etterlater et inntrykk fordi de utmerker seg gjennom en særskilt bred komparativ tilnærming til sine temaer. Kalhous og Luňáková diskuterer den klerikale oppfattelsen av krig i flere krøniker fra ulike regioner skrevet mellom 950 og 1120. Krønikeskrivere søkte legitimitet når de beskrev en krig, men samtidig aksepterte de krig som en regulær og legitim del av livet. Koteckis drøfter den militære tilbedelsen og inngripen av engler i Polen og Kyiv-Rus som sannsynlig varte lengre i disse delene av Østeuropa når den hadde blitt foreldret i andre sentrale kristne områder. Hans artikkel imponerer med sin vide bruk av kildemateriale som går utover det tittelen ellers antyder.

Boken kan bare anbefales. Kritikken min er begrenset og ganske pirkete. Ved første øyekast kan man savne en avsluttende oppsummering eller konklusjon i boken. Imidlertid oppfyller introduksjonen denne funksjonen på en god måte, slik at det ikke fremstår som nødvendig – til tross for at den kunne ha avrundet boken gjennom å samle noen overgripende tråder. Den redaksjonelle prosessen har vært bra. Kun i Wangsgaard Jürgensen har jeg lagt merke til et komma etter fotnote 32 som ikke burde være der. Ellers fremstår bruken av ordet «Wendic» i Selch Jensens artikkel (s. 196, 198) litt uvanlig, istedenfor for «Wendish». Forhåpentligvis får boken et bredere publikum og vil bli lest av flere folk som har interesse i de diskuterte områdene. Artiklene egner seg ikke utelukkende for å få et innblikk i aktuell forskning om regioner

hvor litteraturen ellers har begrenset tilgjengelighet grunnet språket. Flere av dem kan tjene som inspirasjon for videre forskning og komparative problemstillinger.

Max Naderer, PhD, Institutt for arkeologi, konservering og historie, Universitet i Oslo. Email: max.naderer@iakh.uio.no.

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Annette Lassen, *Oldtidssagaernes verden*. København: Gyldendal, 2021. 208 s.

Recenserad av Mikael Males

Med *Oldtidssagaernes verden* har Lassen skrivit en lättläst och balanserad introduktion till fornaldarsagorna. Boken börjar med en diskussion av genrens bakgrund, och Lassen noterar att forskare idag inte längre menar att fornaldarsagorna är en sen genre (s. 10). Detta är en viktig poäng, även om det mest förvånande i sammanhanget snarast är att forskare tidigare har påstått detta. Lassen diskuterar därefter mötet mellan germansk poesi och annan europeisk litteratur, tradering, undergrupper och datering.

Lassen diskuterar sedan mer detaljerat genrens början. Hon är befriande skeptisk till källvärdet i en 1200-talsbeskrivning av sagaläsning år 1119. Denna passage används ofta för att "bevisa" att sagorna existerade i sin senare form redan vid denna tid, men det antagandet medför en del problem, inte minst eftersom sagornas form tycks ha utvecklats gradvis. Lassen övergår därefter till att diskutera möjligheten att de tidigaste fornaldarsagorna skrevs på latin. I likhet med andra forskare utgår hon här från Dietrich Hofmanns hypotes från 1985 att *Yngvars saga* först skrevs på latin. Som Sabine Walter påpekade i sitt föredrag på Sagakonferensen 2022 bjuder denna hypotes dock på en del problem. För det första förutsätter den att den latinska avslutningen av sagan är en rest av en latinsk förlaga, snarare än att vara ett ornament för att få framställningen att framstå som mer trovärdig. Vid närmare granskning framstår den senare förklaringen som den mer sannolika. För det andra tycks det som föga sannolikt att man vid denna tid skulle ha investerat så stora resurser för att skriva en hagiografi över en relativt obskyr person. Forskarnas konsensus synes här att vara byggd på ett tvivelaktigt grundlag, och även om detta bara gäller en saga är ringverkningarna för vår förståelse av den norröna litteraturens utveckling påtagliga.

Lassen övergår därefter till en beskrivning av "Grensen mellem løgn og virkelighed". Av särskilt intresse i detta kapitel är de olika källorna till att nordiska pilgrimer tyckte sig finna relikvier av de gamla hjältarna, särskilt Sigurd och Starkad, på sina resor till de heliga platserna (s. 52–53). Detta antyder dels att vissa teman från sagornas värld var djupt inpräntade i pilgrimerna, men kanske också att de såg något slags konceptuellt släktskap mellan den religiösa och den heroiska världen.

Därefter diskuterar Lassen i tur och ordning sagornas stil, deras bruk av eddadiktning, det samhälle de skildrar och deras moderna reception. Lassens analyser är

i huvudsak goda och balanserade. Här vill jag bara återkomma till balansen mellan latinsk påverkan och lokal tradition. På s. 122 diskuterar Lassen en detalj i *Ragnar Lodbroks saga*, nämligen att svenskarna skall på dyrkat en ko som de kallade *Síbilja* 'den evigt råmande' (< *belja* 'råma, bröla', jämför formuleringen i sagan *er Síbilja beljar* 'när Síbilja brölar'). Lassen föreslår att namnet istället skall ses som en avledning av Sibylla. Kanske är Lassen här inspirerad av formuleringen i prologen till Snorres Edda: *...fann hann spákonu þá, er Sibil hét, er vér kǫllum Sif* '...träffade han den spåkvinna som hette Sibil (=Sibylla), som vi kallar Sif'.

Lassens hypotes är intressant, då den förutsätter ett inslag av medeltida etymologi, där vagt liknande ord fritt kunde sammankopplas. Exemplet från Snorre illustrerar hur fria de etymologiska spekulationerna kunde vara. Det finns dock en grundläggande skillnad mellan de två exemplen. I Snorres text används ett namn från latinsk (ursprungligen grekisk) tradition för att förklara ett existerande norrönt namn, medan *Síbilja* enligt Lassens hypotes skulle vara *skapat* i efterlikning av *Sibylla* eller *Sibil*. Jag känner inte till några paralleller till en sådan utveckling, och Lassen anför inga. Dessutom är Síbilja inte en spåko, utan en brölande ko, och namnets tolkning antyds i frasen *er Síbilja beljar*. Ett antal kriterier talar alltså emot Lassens tolkning.

Detta exempel är av visst intresse för att belysa hur Lassens bok förhåller sig till strömningar inom forskningen. Under senare årtionden har Lassen och andra forskare, inklusive undertecknad, dragit allt större uppmärksamhet till latinsk påverkan på norrön litteratur. Något förenklat kan man säga att Lars Lönnroth med ett antal artiklar publicerade under 60-talet öppnade forskarvärldens ögon för möjligheten av latinsk påverkan inte bara på översatt litteratur, utan också på mer traditionsbundna genrer. Frågan blir då hur stor denna påverkan kan ha varit och hur stora likheterna mellan latinska och norröna motiv och konventioner behöver vara för att vi skall bedöma påverkan som ett sannolikt skäl till dem. Här finns inga enkla svar, men det är möjligt att reaktionen mot en äldre forskningssyn som prioriterade inhemsk tradition framför latinsk påverkan kan leda dagens forskare till en omvänd preferens. Också den kan skapa störningar för en balanserad utvärdering av sannolikheter. Lassen är en alltför solid och samvetsgrann forskare för att någon större obalans skall prägla hennes bok, men i diskussionen av *Yngvars saga* och *Síbilja* skymtar en viss förkärlek för extern påverkan, och den väldigt korta beskrivningen av äldre germanska paralleller tycks bekräfta detta (s. 16–19). Det är ju trots allt anmärkningsvärt att talare av germanska språk delade en motivvärld som gick tillbaka till senantiken, och det faktum att intresset för germanska paralleller upplevs som gammaldags gör inte parallellerna mindre anmärkningsvärda. Omfattningen av den latinska påverkan bör naturligtvis utforskas, men vår nuvarande positiva hållning till kulturellt utbyte gör

det inte mer sannolikt att enskilda ord, motiv eller texter utgör en frukt av ett sådant utbyte.

Sammanfattningsvis är Lassens bok en utmärkt, uppdaterad och balanserad introduktion till ämnet. Man kan ana en viss slagsida till förmån för latin, och germanska paralleller får lite utrymme. Jämfört med många studier av möjlig latinsk påverkan från 60-talet och framåt representerar boken likväl ett steg mot en mer balanserad bild. Min förhoppning är att denna utveckling fortsätter och att forskare alltmer överger dikotomin mellan en inhemsk och en latinsk förklaringsmodell. Ur ett europeiskt, jämförande perspektiv kan det inte råda någon tvekan om att den norröna litteraturen i många avseenden var mer traditionsbunden än de flesta, och troligen kan de starka poetiska konventionerna i någon mån förklara detta. Inte desto mindre var det mötet med latinet som gav upphov till den kreativa kraft som gjorde norrön litteratur till en världslitteratur. Den inhemsk–latinska symbiosen är en nödvändig komponent i vår förståelse av denna litteratur, och vår analytiska träffsäkerhet är beroende av att vi lägger våra egna, möjliga preferenser för germanska eller latinska förklaringsmodeller åt sidan.

Mikael Males, Professor i norrøn filologi, Institutt for lingvistiske og nordiske studier, Universitetet i Oslo. E-mail: mikael.males@iln.uio.no.

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Francesco D'Angelo, *Il primo re crociato: La spedizione di Sigurd in Terrasanta.* Roma: Editori Laterza, 2021. x + 212 pp. ISBN 9788858143803

Reviewed by Kurt Villads Jensen

The first king to go a crusade to the Holy Land was Sigurd Jorsalfare of Norway (1089?–1130). The crusaders' bloody conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 had been led by very high-ranking nobles from Western Europe, but kings only afterwards recognized the potentialities of crusading and began investing time and money in defending religion and gaining political prestige.

The young Sigurd of Norway left Bergen in 1107 with 60 ships and a large contingent of warriors, fought against Muslims in Western and Eastern Mediterranean, and returned four years later to Norway. On a single ship and with only few men left, but with a splint of the Holy Cross that Jesus had died on, and with a reputation for valiant deeds that is still alive now 900 years later.

The general course of events of Sigurd's expedition is well known, to researchers and a broad public outside academia, but with the book by D'Angelo we are now on a much more solid ground than before, and on a much more interesting ground. D'Angelo from La Sapienza university in Rome is well-known internationally as an expert on Scandinavian medieval history and Nordic literature, and he analyses Sigurd's crusade in a much broader context than it has been done earlier. It concerns both the general crusading background, and the question of whether Sigurd and other Scandinavian fighters for the faith were proper crusaders or simply continued an old Viking raiding tradition. Complicated questions with no simple answers, but D'Angelo's discussions are excellent and balanced and will be an inspiration for further research within the field.

The sources for Sigurd's crusade are of very diverse nature, and in collecting them and sifting information from tendencies, D'Angelo demonstrates excellent knowledge and acute methodological consciousness. Some sources are in Latin and contemporary or almost contemporary with Sigurd, some are Nordic from the thirteenth century but containing skaldic verses which D'Angelo with caution accepts as composed by Sigurd's contemporaries. These sources are supplemented for the earlier period with Runic inscriptions, for the stay in the Holy Land with the Damascene Al-Qalanisi's chronicle from the mid-twelfth century.

Sigurd's first major battle was in 1108 against the duke or count of Galicia who had broken an agreement to deliver provisions to the Norwegians – an agreement that must have been made before Sigurd arrived in Spain which illustrated the solid and well-functioning communication system of the twelfth century. Count Raimondo of Galicia had died in 1107, and D'Angelo suggests that the adversary of Sigurd was actually Count Henrique of Portugal. It is possible, but it could also have been Raimondo's army controlled by his widow Urraca or his father-in-law, Alfonso VI. It would fit much better with Sigurd's later conquest of the Muslim fortress of Sintra in Portugal which must have been done in cooperation with Count Henrique who was very active in the area in those years.

Sigurd let Sintra's Muslims choose between baptism or death. Forced conversion was not part of the early crusading movement and became only more commonly accepted with Bernard of Clairvaux's promulgation of a Baltic crusade in 1146–1147 and his famous statement concerning the Baltic pagans that 'either their religion or their people shall be destroyed.' That Sigurd forced the Portuguese Muslims to become Christians is either surprisingly early in the history of the crusades, or it may be an anachronistic assumption of the Nordic source relating the episode, which was from the 13th century where forced conversion had become daily practise in the Baltic crusades. D'Angelo suggests that the thirteenth century Nordic sources formed Sigurd in the image of the missionary kings of Norway to whom violence was a perfectly acceptable argument in a religious dispute. It sounds convincing, but it could also had been interesting to have had D'Angelo's reflection upon a possible Bernardine influence on the missionary thinking of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Sigurd continued to Mallorca and fought against Muslim pirates who had a stronghold in an inaccessible cave on a mountain. He had his men carrying a boat up the mountain to a plateau above the pirates' hiding place from where it could be filled with warriors and lowered down in ropes to the entrance of the cave. The pirates were killed, and Sigurd became famous for his innovative ruse. Much more interesting is D'Angelo's suggestion that Sigurd's Balearic expedition in 1109 may have been part of the Pisan crusade towards Mallorca of 1113, or at least in practise paved the way for the Pisans by pursuing the pirates.

The fleet moved from Mallorca to Sicily where Sigurd was warmly welcomed by the local Norman ruler, Duke Roger. According to Nordic sources, Roger arranged a splendid banquet for Sigurd and served him personally at the table. Sigurd, clearly aware of contemporary – that is thirteenth century – chivalrous behaviour took the duke by the hands and led him to the most prominent place at the table, and created him king. This story is not only dubious, but must be an outright fabrication, but is

followed in Snorri's account by a list of descendants of Duke Roger including the great Emperor Frederick II of Germany and Sicily (+1250), Snorri's contemporary. Why was this important, what was actually the idea of Sigurd's Sicilian intermezzo?

D'Angelo's thorough discussion of this question is splendid, and positions relations between the Normans and the Scandinavians in a well reflected and balanced historical and medieval historiographic context. Some motives could have been to show in the 13th century that Sigurd and the peripherical Norway was accepted internationally and fully part of a chivalrous European culture; that kingship was firmly established in Norway already under Sigurd and elevated above any duke no matter how mighty he was; that even Emperor Frederick II somehow owed his title to a Norwegian king, etc.

The goal of Sigurd and his men was Jerusalem and the Holy Land where they were very well received by King Baldwin II of Jerusalem and Sigurd provided the naval support to Baldwin's conquest of the strong fortress of Sidon. As a reward, Sigurd was given a piece of the Holy Cross that Jesus was crucified upon, and he swears to place it in Nidaros and to work for establishing a Norwegian archbishopric. The sources for this episode are all written after the elevation of Nidaros to archepiscopal see in 1153 and may or may not reflect concerns at the time of Sigurd.

After the Holy Land, the Norwegian groups continued to Constantinople where Sigurd allegedly was received in 1111 by the emperor with splendour and privileges to an extent which shows that some of the episodes described were Norwegian fantasies and never could have happened. Sigurd was allowed to enter the city on horse and through the Golden Gate, Nordic authors claimed, although that gate was strictly reserved for higher ranking rulers and members of the imperial family. The marvellous reception continued with a game in circus to the honour of Sigurd where the Norwegians could admire the decorations showing many mythological figures including the Asa-gods, perhaps Snorri's Trojans emigrating after the Trojan war and coming to the north and founding the Scandinavian kingdoms? D'Angelo's investigation of Sigurd's adventures in Constantinople is again excellent methodologically and demonstrating his strong knowledge of pertinent sources.

Many different traditions and motives are weaved together in the Nordic retelling of Sigurd's crusade. One is probably an attempt to show Sigurd as better than the Danish King Erik Ejegod who had also received a splendid banquet in Constantinople from the emperor, who had also got a relic of the true Cross, and who had also been on an expedition to the Holy Land but died on way on Cyprus in 1103. All that Eric did, Sigurd did better, D'Angelo suggests as one key to understand the sources better.

Sigurd was a Janus-figure. A creation of Norse authors in a transition period, in 'a continuous dialectic between the old world of the Vikings and the Varangians, and the new world of pilgrims and crusaders'. It is the very great merit of D'Angelo to have demonstrated this on a much more sophisticated level than has been done earlier, and to have done so in a language that makes this important period in Norwegian and Scandinavian history accessible to the international scholarly world.

The Germanic languages of Scandinavia can be precise, they can be poignant, especially New Norwegian, but without a targeted effort they are seldomly pretty. Italian has as many other Romance languages a natural elegance and beauty. It is a pleasure to read Francesco D'Angelo's book on Sigurd the First Crusader King.

Kurt Villads Jensen, professor of medieval history at Stockholm University. Email: kurt.villads.jensen@historia.su.se.