

with an expectation of universalizing narratives belies the highly varied nature of the evidence across space and time. Harding should be commended for drawing together the more readily available information on the classic sites with the most recent developer-funded finds in a volume that most readers will find accessible, easy to navigate, and highly informative.

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doi 10.1017/eea.2017.53

Irene Baug, Janicke Larsen and Sigrid Samset Mygland, eds. *Nordic Middle Ages — Artefacts, Landscapes and Society. Essays in Honour of Ingvild Øye on her 70th Birthday* (University of Bergen Archaeological Series 8. Bergen: University of Bergen, 2015, 341 pp., 77 colour and 53 b/w illustr., ISBN 978-82-90273-89-2)

This anthology is dedicated to Ingvild Øye, former director of Bryggen Museum and professor of medieval archaeology at the University of Bergen (Norway), and one of the leading figures in Scandinavian medieval archaeology. It is both a scholarly publication and a personal tribute to a teacher, professional, and colleague who has exercised considerable influence on the field of medieval studies in Bergen and Norway. Consisting of twenty-three chapters, the volume offers a rich and varied

snapshot of current research on the Norwegian and Scandinavian Middle Ages, presenting themes that are close to Øye's own research interests: urbanization and urban culture, rural economies and settlements, gender archaeology, and issues of heritage protection and preservation. Material from the town of Bergen—which is closely connected with Øye's professional career and personal life, and which provides outstanding archaeological and historical material on medieval urban

culture and maritime connections—features abundantly in the volume. A few chapters engage with case studies from other parts of Norway, Scandinavia, and the North Atlantic region.

The dominant theme of the volume is urban archaeology, discussed from different perspectives and through different source material. Hans Andersson and Helge Sørheim, in separate chapters, tackle the large questions of urbanization processes in Norway and Scandinavia. Andersson ('Urbanization, Continuity and Discontinuity') takes a wide geographical and chronological approach. He reviews the scholarship on Iron Age and early medieval settlements in Scandinavia and argues that the muddle of existing terms and strict typologies inhibit productive engagements with the questions of what constitutes an urban form as well as why and when it emerges. He proposes instead a broad definition, in which centrality in either economic, religious, or administrative terms functions as a universal denominator of urbanity. Sørheim's discussion ('The First Norwegian Towns...') is more focused and traditional. Reviewing urbanization in medieval Norway against a wider European background, he concludes that the establishment of towns in the kingdom was of relatively late date and closely connected to economic, social, and political currents in north-western Europe. The process of urban development on a much smaller scale is traced by Petter B. Molaug ('From the Farm of Oslo to the Townyard of Miklagard') in his study of structural changes in five adjacent townyards in Oslo in the period spanning the tenth to the thirteenth century. The archaeology at the site disproves existing hypotheses about the spatial development and size of the early medieval town, but confirms the common pattern of early Scandinavian urban settlements, with the town area divided into plots and with

gradual densification of the settlement and increasing regulation of handicraft and trade.

The chapters by Øystein Ekroll, Gitte Hansen, and John Olsen discuss urban architecture and building practices in Bergen. Ekroll ('The Stone Buildings ...'), through detailed review of historical documents and architectural features, proposes that some of the stone buildings in the town served as dwelling houses, debasing previous assumptions about the religious character of all medieval stone architecture in Bergen. In turn, Olsen ('A Western Norwegian Log Building Technique ...') pays attention to the wooden domestic architecture in the town, documenting its unusually conservative and regional character. In a highly original contribution, and one of the strongest, Hansen ('After the Town Burned! ...') focuses on urban fires and studies reuse of timber and iron from devastated buildings and ships. The chronology of major town fires in Bergen is relatively well established (Øye, 1998) and in combination with dendrochronology it gives unique opportunities to study material responses to these catastrophes, human-object interactions, and biographies of ordinary, inconspicuous material culture. Hansen concludes that medieval residents recycled, sometimes repeatedly, substantial quantities of timber and they seemed to have actively pursued retrieving iron objects from the rubble and ashes. The chapters by Geir Atle Erslund ('How Archaeology Saved Bryggen') and by Ann Christensson and Rory Dunlop ('Management of Archaeological Heritage ...') take yet another approach to the archaeology of Bergen. They review a century-long history of urban excavations in Bryggen and subsequent efforts of heritage preservation through legislation and public engagement programs.

The medieval Norwegian towns were, as pointed out by Sørheim, connected

with the outside world through trade—a theme explored by Natascha Mehler ('The Sulphur Trade of Iceland ...') in her study of Icelandic sulphur, its production, and its place in trade competition between the Hanse and Denmark. The connection to Bergen is clear here as the town emerged as a monopolistic sulphur market in late medieval Northern Europe. Towns were also linked with the surrounding countryside, and Axel Christophersen ('The Hinterland Connection ...') explores some aspects of these connections through his stimulating study of metalworking in Trondheim. From the mid-twelfth century onwards, metalworking emerges as a specialized urban craft, supplying with its products both urban and rural clientele. However, the role of the peasants extends here far beyond consumers. The author, using the theoretical concept of entanglement elaborated by Ian Hodder (2012), points towards a chain of connections and dependencies between rural resources of timber and ore; the people extracting, processing, transporting these resources; and urban metalworkers. He considers metalworking as a practice that 'folds up' people from different places and of different experiences, and as a complex network entangling people, things, and environments.

Rural settlement and economy was the initial subject of interest of Professor Øye that underpinned her academic career (Øye, 1976). This subject is also the focus of the chapter 'Medieval Rockshelters in Western Norway—Activities, Functions and Social Identities', by Knut Andreas Bergsvik and Gitte Hansen, on the economic and cultural meaning of rock shelters and caves in medieval and early modern Norway. Contrary to saga literature and ethnographic sources that suggest the uninhabitable or liminal character for these places, and based on a review of archaeological material, the authors argue that rock shelters were used in connection

with the exploitation of natural resources and animal grazing. The variety of recovered material—tools and domestic refuse—suggests that these locations served as convenient temporary or seasonal places of habitation. The economic importance of the outfield areas is discussed by Ole Tveiten in chapter 'A Tale of Two Technologies—Late Medieval Iron Production in Oppland, Norway'. He documents a technological shift from primary reliance on bog ore to exploitation of rock ore, and poses interesting questions about the processes and actors standing behind it, speculating that new mining technologies in neighbouring Sweden and the changes caused by the agrarian crisis of the fourteenth century might have been some of the triggers leading to this technological transformation. Outland use and its role in agrarian economy are also discussed by Eva Svensson ('Upland Living. The Scandinavian Shielings and their European Sisters'). She focuses on shielings and summer pastures in Scandinavia and Europe, seeing them not only as economically important places for rural populations living outside the agricultural plains but also as practices entangled with socio-cultural notions of gender and work. Shielings, and more specifically the female work of spinning conducted at summer pastures, are also discussed by Ragnheiður Traustadóttir ('Spindle Whorls from Urriðakot'). She connects shielings in which spindle whorls with runic inscriptions—names of owners—were found to large and wealthy farms on Iceland.

A number of authors engage with the socio-cultural aspects of medieval material culture. Irene Baug ('Stones for Bread ...') studies vessels and utensils used for everyday cooking. Discussing bread culture, she notices differences in the practice of baking and taste preferences dividing Norwegian and Scandinavian populations along urban-rural, regional, and wealth lines. Volker

Demuth ('Faces and Figures ...') turns his attention to late medieval imported stoneware tankards and earthenware serving dishes found in Bergen, seeing in their decorative motifs—referencing myths, folklore, biblical stories, symbols, and scenes of everyday life—a window into medieval sensibilities. Connecting the iconographic 'Bartmann' jugs with a masculine ideology; erotically loaded images of flutes and birds with ideas of morality and sexuality; and religious and political motifs with Reformation propaganda, the author illuminates how ceramics—a ubiquitous archaeological material—can shed light on late medieval mentalities. Else Roesdahl ('Fine Belt-Buckles of Walrus Ivory ...') discusses belt buckles and other ivory objects from Greenland, disputing the notion of a lack of artisanal skills among the Norse on the island. And Barbara Crawford ('Two Seals from Orkney ...'), using iconography of late medieval communal and personal seals from Orkney, draws conclusions about political relations between Norway and the islands, identities and their material manifestations, and the integration of European courtly culture in Norway. Discussing the find of a fourteenth-century broken seal matrix belonging to a woman from aristocratic circles, her chapter touches on issues of gender and women's ability to act as independent actors in medieval society. This subject is also discussed by Else Mundal ("svá kona sem karlmaðr." Women in Old Norse Society) through the lens of medieval Norwegian and Icelandic laws. She observes striking differences in these written regulations regarding women's rights to act as witnesses, godmothers, and plaintiffs. Icelandic laws appear to be more discriminatory and limiting of women's possibilities in legal measures. She suggests that this phenomenon might have been influenced by the demographics of the settlement period, when the laws were written, with many women coming to Iceland from Ireland and

being of low social status, thus having a marginal role in influencing legal codification. Aspects of gender and archaeological practice are the subject of Sigríð Samset Mygland's chapter "Female" Activities, "Female" Artefacts? A Theoretical Approach to Women and Gender in Medieval Bergen', in which she interrogates the routine association of certain artefacts with female work. Her case study is medieval Bryggen in Bergen, a district heavily connected with the Hanseatic trade and male-dominated German settlement governed by strict rules forbidding intermarriage. In such an environment, the traditional gender roles were likely to be subverted. Citing recorded cases of male apprentices performing traditional female duties such as cooking and cleaning, and women acting as merchants, she argues for a greater need for, on the one hand, contextual consideration of the construction of gender, and, on the other hand, more reflexive archaeological interpretation of artefacts and their users.

The volume's leading themes of urban and rural landscapes and materialities are enriched by the studies of Frode Iversen ('Houses of Commons, Houses of Lords? ...') and Bergljot Solberg ('From Paganism to Christianity in Norway...'). The former examines the evolution and role of the representational *things*—legal assemblies—in Norway, especially in the province of Rogaland from the Viking Age to the early modern period. The latter focuses on the process of Christianization in medieval Norway using the presence and chronology of weapons deposited in the graves as an indication of religious transformations. She observes regional patterns in the custom, concluding that the relics of pre-Christian burial practices persisted in the inland provinces of the country long after the institutionalization of Christianity, and attributing it to the character of early medieval royal power.

The variety of material, themes, and approaches presented in the volume offers

a good overview of current archaeological research on medieval Bergen and Norway and provides snapshots of the larger landscape of Scandinavia and the North Atlantic region. The chapters range from descriptive and rather superficial presentations to highly original, interpretative, and stimulating studies that use innovative methodologies and theories. The anthology is richly illustrated and produced on high-quality paper, but the language editing could have been more thorough. Overall, however, the volume provides a rewarding read and a beautiful tribute to Ingvild Øye, whose research continues to inspire scholars in Norway and elsewhere.

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doi 10.1017/eea.2017.54