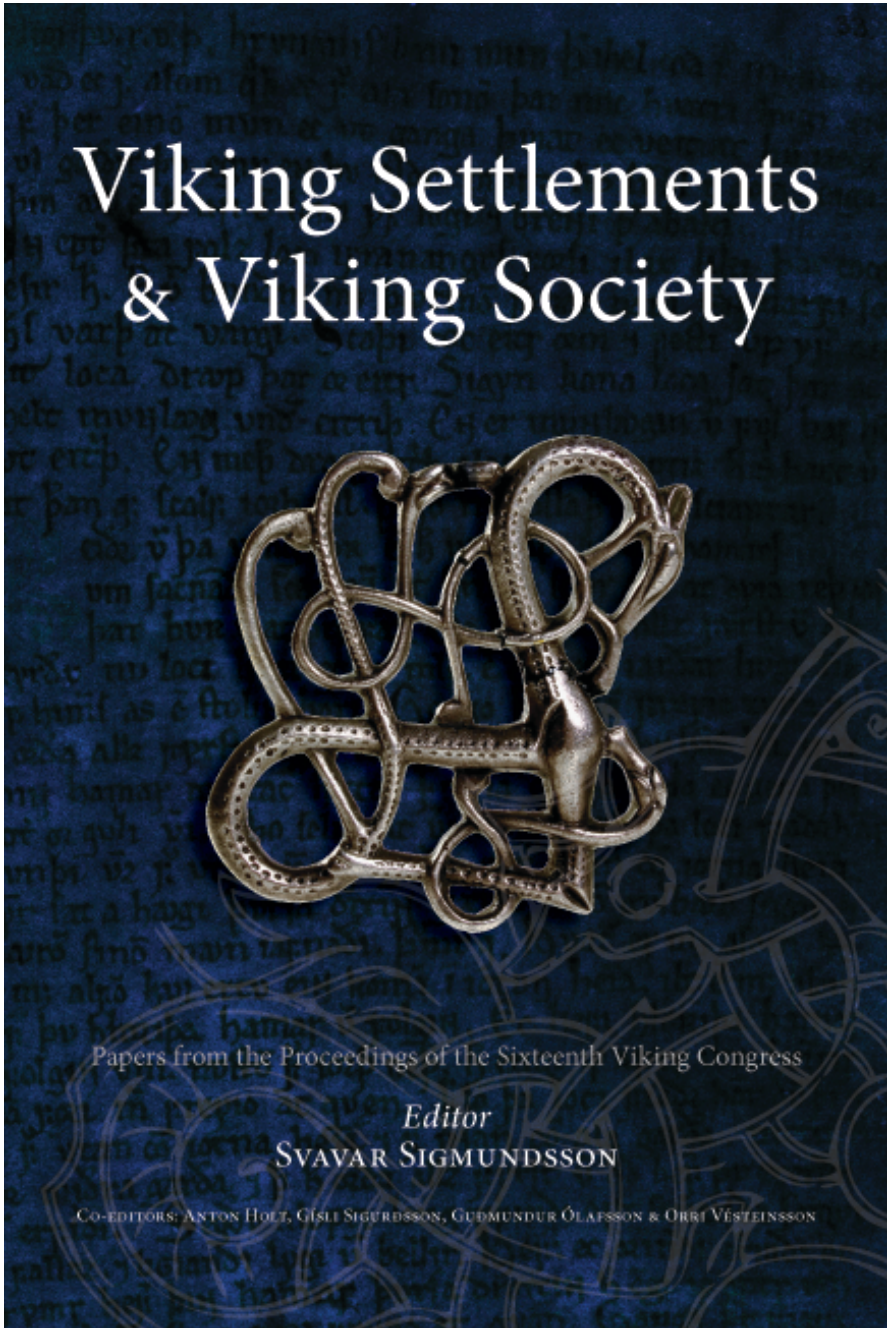


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The Beauty of *Bona Regalia* and the Growth of Supra-regional Powers in Scandinavia

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that the development of the so-called *bona regalia* represent a key to understanding the growth of supra-regional power in Northern Europe. *Bona regalia* were royal property and farms belonging to royal office – to the crown, and not the king in person. *Bona patrimonialia* was on the other hand, the kings dynastic property. I will also highlight the fact that these two types of royal manors/estates/rights had uneven distribution within the states of northern Europe. The hypothesis is that *bona regalia* were closely associated with the establishment of the supra-regional royal power in submitted regions.

Keywords: Bona regalia, Huseby, state formation, royal lands, Scandinavia, Viking Age, Middle Ages.

In his autobiography Emperor Charles IV wrote: “When the community of upright men in Bohemia saw that we were of the ancient lineage of the kings of Bohemia, they held us in affection and gave us aid ...” (Charles IV, 70f). In the 1330s Charles had been installed as Margrave of Moravia by his father. The Holy Roman Empire had nearly lost control of its margravate. The barons of Moravia had divided this kingdom among themselves. The upright men of Bohemia – *communitas de Boemia* – accepted Charles as king, and helped him identify the crown estates of Moravia – the *bona regalia*. A number of properties were identified, and Charles named 16 of these castles (*castra*). He spent considerable resources to restore the most important ones and revitalize the crown’s grip on Moravia (Charles IV, 70–72).

Although there are differences, this example seems relevant for the political situation in Scandinavia prior to the 14th century. The story highlights important factors and institutions in the maintaining of supremacy in a given province in a political “in-between zone”. The major players were; (1) the margrave (the supra-regional king’s son), considered a king in a regional perspective and a margrave in a supra-regional perspective, (2) the supra-regional king and the (3) local lords and barons, and (4) the community of upright men – most likely the “parliament” and the thing-men. The “parliaments” interac-

tions with the crown seem to have been important and institutionalised, and relevant to the Scandinavian case, albeit on a different scale. In practice “the upright men” controlled the land of the crown in the province – the *bona regalia*. After the act of acceptance, legitimized by kinship to the old rulers of the region, the new king was given access to this land. In this article, I will discuss similar aspects of royal land in Scandinavia based on the concepts of *bona regalia* and *bona patrimonialia*, and emphasize the importance of *bona regalia* in the very beginning of the process of state-formation.

Bona regalia is defined as the crown’s institutional property, as opposed to the personal lands of kings – the *bona patrimonialia*. *Bona regalia* – *kungalev* in Scandinavian sources – differ from ordinary crown lands (*fiscus*) as they probably had centralised functions of the early state. Farms with such functions could most likely not be alienated as easily as ordinary crown land. I will try to explain the *bona regalia* in spatial terms, and compare its spread in Scandinavia with the dynastic core areas, which seem to have different geographical locations. A dynastic core area is controlled by a powerful family or dynasty through their private property (*patrimonium*).

In recent works on state formation, spatial terms such as *core*, *semi-peripheries* and *peripheries* have won popularity as analytic tools (Schneider, 1977; Peregrine, 2007), inspired by the world system theory of Immanuel Wallerstein. These terms also seem relevant to this study, but must be linked to the historical content. The growth of supra-regional powers in Europe was a complex process. Asymmetric regions with different economic bases and political organization level were tied together by various types of interactions, use of military force, diplomacy and treaties. There were core areas in these processes and there were peripheries, depending on where the leading power was geographically located at different times.

In earlier work I have argued for a model with dynastic core areas (Iversen, 2007; 2008; 2009). These I have tried to demonstrate through studies of royal property. Such areas have been suggested in various works, but little has been demonstrated conclusively. For the German regions in the 10th and 11th century it has been discussed for instance by John W. Bernhardt (1993) and Eckhard Müller-Mertens (1980). I have used analogies from Sussex and Kent, where it is possible to identify concentrations of the royal villas prior to mid 11th century within relatively small geographic areas (Iversen, 2007). I have also identified such areas in the Carolingian period in the German regions based on clusters of the royal villas referred to as palaces (*palatia*) in written sources (Iversen, 2009, 102f.). In this article, I will focus on royal lands in *semi-peripheries* and *peripheries* in a Scandinavian context, and the growth of supra-regional power.

Long term supra-regional kings depended on the establishment of physical systems and institutions to consolidate their domination. My hypothesis is that *bona regalia* is primarily a provincial phenomenon. I will differentiate between two kinds of *bona regalia*-farms; those *with uniformed* names and those *without* such names. The *Kingston-farms* in England, *Köningshöfen* in medieval Germany, and *Husebyar* in Scandinavia represent groups of farms with uniformed names. Several of the *Kingston-farms* had “double names” e.g. *Keinton Mandeville*, *Kingston Seymour* (Probert, 2008), and this is also the case for a handful of the Nordic *Huseby*-farms (Brink, 2000a; 2000b). It is not unlikely such farms were named or renamed when they were given responsibilities for the kingdom. The *bo-farms* in Västergötland (Westerdahl, 1978) and the *Uppsala öd* in Norrland, sometimes called *Huseby* and sometimes *Hög* (Grundberg, 2000), have elements of such similarities as well.

On the other hand, the so-called *farm of one night* in England (Lavelle, 2007) and the *kungalev*-farms in Denmark did not have uniformed names. Neither did the *Utskyld*-farms, which Asgaut Steinnes (1953) has suggested were part of an *itinerant kingship* in 10th and 11th century in South-West Norway.¹ Then again, several *Huseby*-farms belonged to monasteries and bishops prior to mid 13th century, e. g. Husby, Vansjö to *Vårfruberga* monastery (Södermanland) in 1233, which also seems to have been part of the foundation grant (Rosèn, 1949, 74, 76; 1962, 94). According to Snorre (c.1230), powerful magnates also possessed *Huseby*-farms, e.g. the pagan chieftain Tore Skjegge (mid 10th century) at Husabø, Inderøya (Trøndelag) (Hkr, Håkon den godes saga, chapter 18) and the famous Einar Tambarskjelve (c.980–1050) at Huseby, Skaun (Trøndelag) (Hkr, Olav den helliges saga, chapter 39).

Obviously, this is a complex matter with both chronological and regional variations, and different ownerships. However, in my view, it does not seem unreasonable that *bona regalia* farms in general were part of the *servitum regis* and *itinerant kingship* in *semi-peripheries* in the 10th century, and even earlier. Those with uniformed names seem somewhat younger, and might have served as collection units in the *peripheries* for royal fees and tributes.

The transformation from petty to supra-regional kingdoms in northern Europe has previously been seen as a teleological process that resulted in “nature-given” planned national states (Bagge, 2003). Moving away from this, I will also show how the *bona regalia* as strategic local communities in *semi-peripheries* and *peripheries*, had to meet the demands of shifting supra-regional rulers.

¹ These were farms paying the *utskyld*-tax in the 14th century onwards. J. A. Gjerløw (1988; 1990) has shown that the *utskyld* was a fee to the church, and it is unclear how this functioned towards the kingdom.

BONA REGALIA

The division of royal lands between *bona regalia* and *bona patrimonalia* is recognised in the 11th century in Northern Europe. The phenomenon has, among others, been discussed by F. Maitland (1897) for England, by Jerker Rosén (1949) for Sweden, by Halvard Bjørkvik (1968a) for Norway, and Anders Andrén (1983) for Denmark. The distribution of *bona regalias* and their role in the process of the development of supra-regional power is poorly understood. In Sweden, *bona regalia* may have included royal villas and administrative farms such as the Huseby-farms and the complex of *Uppsala öd*, as well as the crown rights (*Iura regni*) to commons, farms cleared in commons and different kinds of resources without owners or of weak ownership (Schück, 1914, 4; Rosén, 1949, 71; Hamre, 1962; Bjørkvik, 1968, 43ff; Andrén, 1983; Brink, 2000b, 70).

Unlike legal historians such as Absalon Taranger (1904) and Fredrik Brandt, Halvard Bjørkvik (1968) rejected a division in the royal lands in Norway prior to the 13th century. In his view the distinction was unnecessary; to inherit the kingdom, the king had to be a successor of the *Fairhair*-dynasty, and could not be elected from other dynasties. This was different from the situation in Sweden and Denmark where there were several rival dynasties (Bjørkvik, 1968, 45). Bjørkvik's argument seems slightly too close to the Norwegian national narrative, under-communicating e.g. the Danish influence. As Bjørkvik himself pointed out the distinction appears in the *rural law of Magnus the lawmender*, 1274 (L II 7).

On the other hand, in Norway the division between the king's own property and the *veitsle*-land seems to be fundamental in this context. The word *Veizla*, f. has several meanings, and refers to land ceded to retainers for royal service. *Veitsle*-land is closely associated with the *lendr maðr*, m. appearing in the early 11th century (Iversen, 1999). *Lendmenn* were military leaders from leading families, more or less equivalent to the English baron – the trusted men of the king with delegated royal authority within their areas (Storm, 1882; Iversen, 1999). The manors of the *lendmenn* were the leading aristocratic and royal centres in the regions. According to the *Hirdskrá* c.1273–1277, land paying of 15 mark silver annually was the minimum value for a such a baron (chapter 13 (18)), and before being hailed by the *Hird*, (*hird*, f.) new kings had to renew these privileges (chapter 2 (5)). The *veitsle*-land was probably a kind of *bona regalia*, and by analysing the prevalence of *lendmenn* in a geographical context some aspects of it can be revealed prior to the 14th century.

In Sweden, royal lands were often referred to as *bona regalia*, *bona coronae* or *bona acquisita* (Rosén, 1949, 22). *Bona corona* and *bona regalia* denote crown lands, and *bona acquisita* the king's family property (Line, 2007, 284). *Bona vacanti* denotes, on the other hand, waste land or empty regions where the

kingdom claimed rights (*ibid*). Still, in the reign of Knut Eriksson in the second half of the 12th century, it was differentiated between the king's personal property – *ex paterna successione* – and property he held by virtue of royal duties – *ex regio iure* (DS 67/SDHK 218). The earliest existing systematic inventory of the Swedish royal land is from the late Middle Ages (Larsson, 1985). Then there was no longer a distinction between these different forms of royal lands.

In England there were at least three types of royal land by the mid 11th century (Maitland, 1897, 255). *Regales terrae*, were lands “which pass from king to king” (*ibid*), and correspond to *bona regalia*. *Regii pueri* was land belonging to the king's family and *propria hereditas* was the king's own heritage. The distinction between the land of the *crown* and the land of the *king* appears in a charter issued by king Æthelred 1014–1016 (K 1312 (vi. 172)). In Germany the king's *patrimonium* is referred to as *ad regnum non pertinens* – which does not belong to the kingdom. The legal distinction between *patrimonialia* and *regalia* appears in 1020 in the reign of the Salian king Henry II (976–1024). In 1065 (under Henry IV) the king's private manors are named as *propria hereditates* and the crown's estate as *res ad regni fiscum pertinens* (LexMa; André, 1983; Brink, 2000b; Stylegar & Westerdahl, 2004).

The analytical challenge is to connect the phenomenon of *bona regalia* with actual property, and then study this in spatial terms. In Denmark, the cadastre of King Valdemar, 1231 AD fortunately enables us to find clues to these complex matters, as it actually registers and differentiates between the king's *patrimonium* and the *kungalev* (*regalia*). I will revisit the Huseby farms and discuss their role prior to the 13th century, hopefully with some new perspectives. In Sweden, in particular, I will try to relate them to different kinds of taxation systems discussed by the historian Thomas Lindkvist (1989), and I will also draw on the newest work in the field, by Frans-Arne Stylegar & Christer Westerdahl (2004). I will consider whether the Huseby-farms can be linked to fiefs. I will also investigate whether there are grounds for a hypothesis of a dual tax collection system prior to 1200, and I will draw a distinction between core areas controlled directly by the king, and *semi-peripheries* and *peripheries* controlled indirectly through alliance and delegated royal power. It is hardly meaningful to use the terms *regalia* and *patrimonialia* as analytical tools for the situation prior to the 11th century. The terms are dependent on each other, and are probably also historically linked to the rise of supra-regional kingdoms. It can, however, be fruitful to use the term *dynastic core areas* describing areas where powerful families of royal rank had their power bases in earlier times.

FIEFS AND VASSALS

We do not know how much revenue different regions in Scandinavia during the Viking Age could bring supra-regional kings. The *Tribal Hidage* (c.650–850) provides detailed information on what is believed to be the tribute value to a number of kingdoms and provinces south of the Humber, England (Kirby, 2000, 9–11). There is no reason to believe that such ideas would be strange to powerful people in Scandinavia. The so-called *Alfiva-law* mentions Christmas gifts (*julegafor*) to the king, and this is interpreted as the tribute from Norway based on taxes introduced by Canute's conquest in 1028 (Andersen, 1977, 145). His son Svein and Svein's mother Alfiva (Ælfigu) of Northampton served as Canute's vassals for a brief period (1029–1035). These unpopular taxes were first abolished a century later, at least in northern Norway (Ágr, chapter 52; F XVI, 1–3). Landowners in the provinces of Hålogaland and Namdalen regained c.1103–1107 full rights to commons, and were exempt from building and repairing houses at royal villas. Still every fisherman in Vågan had to pay five fish to the king for the right to fishing (NgL I, p. 257f; RN I, nr. 56).

Supra-regional power sought rights where it hardly existed, or where they were weak and could be challenged. An account of *Knýtlinga saga* (c.1260) sheds light on the relationship between central power and the periphery in the 11th century. The supra-regional King Canute “the holy” (c.1043–1086) threatened to take away from the inhabitants in the province of Halland their rights to keep cattle and swine in the forests. He also threatened to take away the (free) fishing in Öresund from the inhabitants of Skåne. Canute claimed rights on behalf of the kingdom to resources in the sea and the forest (Ulsig, 2001, 29f).

Pre-emption, called *konungs kaup*, was an important right of the crown (L VIII, 9). In Norway, the king had exclusive rights to the purchase of furs north of *Umeyarsund*, identified as either Vennesund in the province of Helgeland or Strimasund-Vilasund in Överuman near the present border between Norway and Sweden (F XVI, 2; RN I, nr. 56). The privilege to delegate such rights was a powerful tool for supra-regional kings in building alliances and developing new taxable objects in subordinated provinces (Blom, 1967). The Crown also had preemption to hunting-hawks and falcons in Norway (L VII, 52). It is a clear symbol of subordination when earl *Håkon Jarl* of Lade (province of Trøndelag) supposedly sent annually, twenty hunting-hawks to the supra-regional King Harold Bluetooth in 970/80th, according to Theodoric the monk (c.1180) (*Historia de antiquitate regum norwagiensium*, chapter 5). Norway is also referred to as *Harold's hawk island* (*Haralds Haukøy*) in a somewhat older source (*Bersöglisvísur* (c.1040) (verse 18, Msk, p. 32).

Ebbe Hertzberg (1893) has discussed the role of the fief (*lén*) in the Viking

Age. In-between areas and fringes were often given as fiefs. Hertzberg presents 13 examples from the sagas, over a period for nearly 450 years (Hertzberg, 1893, 285). The provinces of Sogn, half the Faroe Islands, Orkney, Shetland, half-Rogaland and Borgarsyssel are mentioned as fiefs (*lén*). Royal power was probably weak in these areas at the time. Recently, the situation for the North Atlantic islands, the so-called *Skattland* (*skattland*) has been discussed in more depth (Wærdahl, 2006). Also *Hirdskræen* (Chapter 14) and the *rural law of Magnus the lawmender* (L II, 9) have provisions for this. Large fiefs were accompanied with an earl's title. The powerful magnate Erling "Skakke" Ormsson (1115–1179) with a base in Etne in the province of Sunnhordland, Western Norway gained an earl's title around 1170. He then got the province of Viken, Eastern Norway to *léns ok yfirsóknar* of King Valdemar of Denmark (Hkr, Magnus Erlingssons saga, chapter 30). At the time Viken was a political *periphery* with strong Danish and Western Norwegian interests.

Ebbe Hertzberg (1893, 309) believed the income of the fief, as a general rule, was shared; with 2/3 going to the king and 1/3 to the vassal, referring to an ordinance from 1320 (NgL III, 1 nr 64, p. 150) and the sagas. However, the ordinance clearly deals with the *sýslumaðr* in an urban context, and is hardly relevant to this question. More likely, this was the subject of negotiations between the parties. According to Grethe Authén Blom, who has studied the early policies in this field (until 1387), kings in the 10th and 11th century gave their foremost allies up to half of the fiefs' income (Blom, 1967, 45, 53–60). The main point is, however, that a significant portion of the income fell to the king. The bulk of the income must have been taxes and fines (*sakore*). These categories accounted later (15th and 16th century) for close to 80% of the crown's total income of Norway. Taxes alone accounted for 50% and fines over 30%. Revenues (*landskyld*) from crown land accounted for 12% and taxes on fishing (especially salmon) and hunting around 8% (Bjørkvik, 1968, 179). Prior to the mid 14th century, Halvard Bjørkvik estimates tax and fines to be lower; 65% of the total income (Bjørkvik, 1996, 62).

DENMARK

I will now briefly discuss the situation in Denmark. The cadastre of King Valdemar bears witness to an extensive system of royal villas in Denmark (Aakjær, 1926–1942; Andrén, 1983). The cadastre is special in a European context as it draws a clear distinction between *bona regalia* and *bona patrimonalia*. It is possible to identify and map 93 regalia-manors and 56 dynastic manors, in addition to a number of unidentifiable properties. Over a quarter of the *kun-galev*, 26 properties, are also mentioned in earlier sources (Andrén, 1983, 37f.

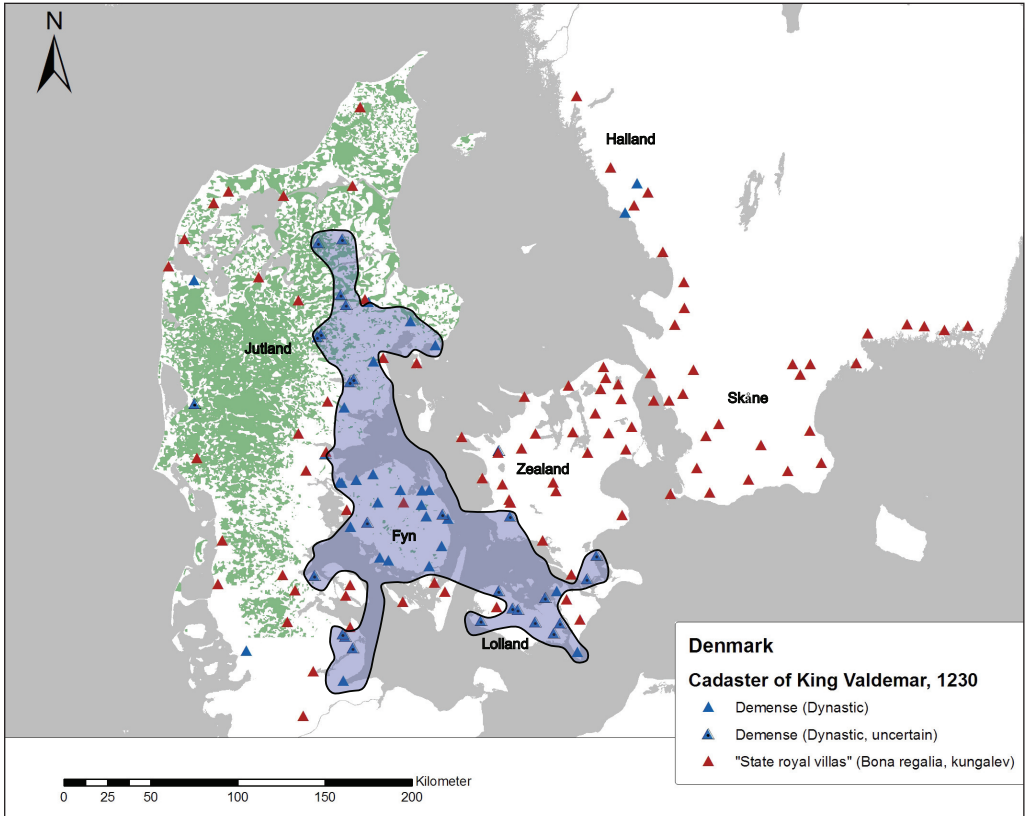


Fig.1. Bona regalia and bona patrimonialia in Denmark, according to the cadastre of King Valdemar *c.*1230 AD.

and note 36) (Figure 1). The king's *patrimonium* in the 1230s in Denmark lay in Lolland and Fyn, in parts of Eastern Jutland and eastern Schleswig. 50 out of 56 of the *patrimonium* manors (demesne) lay within the area I have marked out in Figure 1. This area was essential in controlling traffic between the North Sea and Baltic Sea.

The *bona regalia* and the *patrimonium* of King Valdemar clearly had different geographical locations in Denmark around 1230. The *kungalev* were located in the eastern and western parts of the country (Skåne and Halland, Jutland), and in the northern part of the island Zealand. There were hardly any *bona regalia* in the middle of Denmark, neither on the islands of Fyn and Lolland, nor in south Zealand. We do not know how far back in time this pattern goes. In several works, Anne Pedersen (1997; 1999) has discussed equestrian graves from the late Iron Age in Denmark. At least 60–70 of the equestrian graves can be

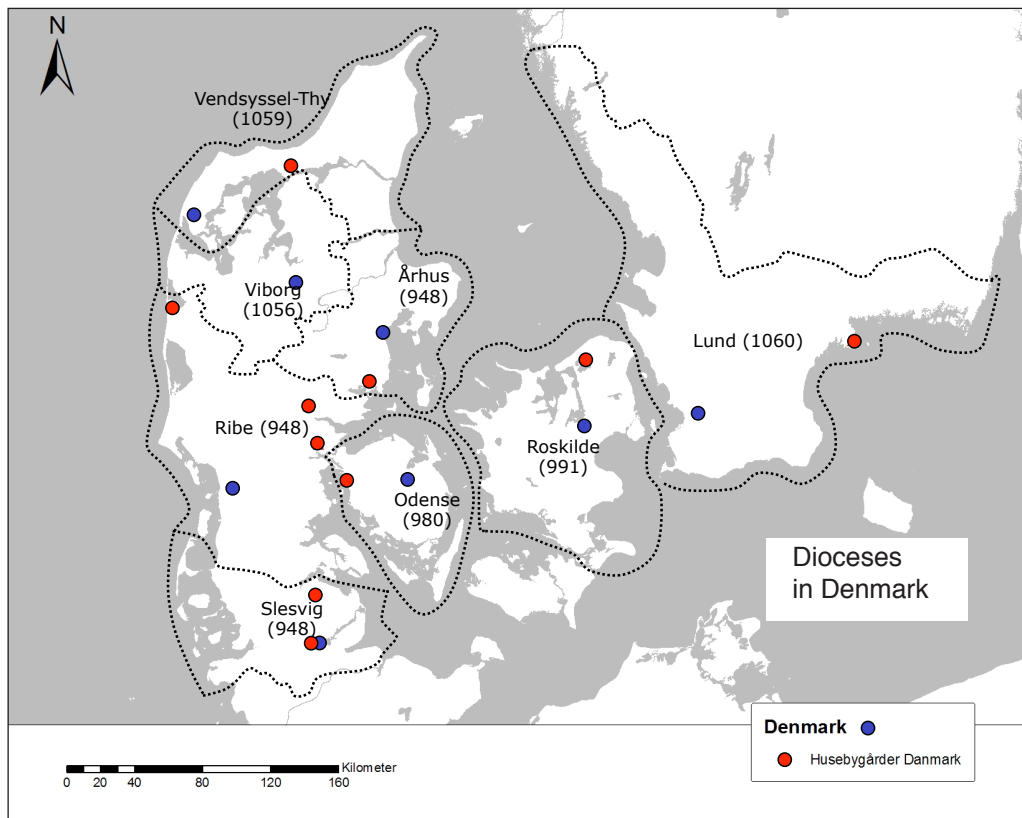


Fig. 2. Huseby-farms and dioceses in Denmark.

mapped more precisely, and are found in North Jutland, in Schlesvig-Holstein to the south, and on Langeland, south of Fyn. These were areas where Valdemar had little land *c.*1230. Only a few equestrian graves are known in Fyn, where Valdemar's *patrimonium* dominated later. There is a significant time span between the two source categories, and there is not a 1 to 1 pattern in terms of mutual geographic exclusion. Nevertheless, this suggests that the equestrian graves may represent some form of alliance with partners on a lower level, located in areas outside direct dynastic control. On Zealand, around Lejre, where there are few equestrian graves as well, one can also imagine such dynastic core areas.

Only ten Huseby-farms are known in Denmark in the Middle Ages (Stylegar & Westerdahl, 2004) (Figure 2). None of them are mentioned in the Cadastre of King Valdemar, neither as *bona regalia* nor *patrimonium*. However, they lie on strategic long sea-routes and correspond to some degree with the

earliest dioceses in Denmark. There were two Huseby-farms in Schlesvig and three in Ribe, one of them was the farm next to the important royal site of Jelling. It is possible that Husby in Hardsyssel close to the northern border of Ribe was connected with the Viborg diocese, which did not have a Huseby-farm. There was only one Huseby each in the other dioceses of Denmark. It is uncertain how to interpret this. It might make sense if we see the Huseby-farms in Denmark as storage facilities for the king's income from these regions, and where the bishops played a major role collecting taxes and revenues on behalf of the king. We shall now examine the conditions in Norway and Sweden.

NORWAY AND SWEDEN

In Norway and Sweden, we do not have any cadastres differentiating between *bona regalia* and *bona patrimonium*. The provincial laws nevertheless give us some clues, especially in Sweden. In some of these laws, and also in the Icelandic sagas, there are references to the so-called *Uppsala öd* (Brink, 2000b; Stylegar & Westerdahl, 2004 with references). It has been suggested that this complex is connected with the Huseby-farms.

There are all together nearly 140 Huseby-farms in the Nordic countries, Schleswig and the Orkneys (Steinnes, 1955; 1959; Stylegar & Westerdahl, 2004). Since Henrik Schück's (1914) classic work on *Uppsala öd* they have been central to the academic discussion on early royal power, in particular in Sweden and Norway (Stylegar & Westerdahl, 2004 with references; Berend, 2007, 175). It has been pointed out many times that *Uppsala öd* and the Huseby-farms seem to represent *bona regalia* (Brink, 2000a, 274–278). Recently, Barbara Crawford also discussed the four Huseby-farms (*Houseby*) in Orkney in more detail (Crawford, 2006). There are no Huseby-farms on the Faeroes or Iceland. In Norway, most of the 54 Huseby-farms are located in the grain-producing areas in Trøndelag and in the eastern part of Norway. The same applies to Sweden, where there are many Huseby-farms in Uppland in the east (Brink, 2000b). In Västgötland another group of *Uppsala öd* appear in the later *Vestgötalagen* from around 1300 AD, – where the eight so-called bo-farms are referred to as *Uppsala öd*. I will not discuss them in this context, but focus on the Huseby-farms, and the same applies to the *Uppsala öd* in Norrland.

SWEDEN

Thomas Lindkvist (1989) has argued that Sweden in the early Middle Ages can be divided into various “fiscal regions”. These he defines by types of taxes and their historical origins. He distinguishes between individual and collective taxes. Collective taxes are assessed per area (e.g. hundred) and individual taxes

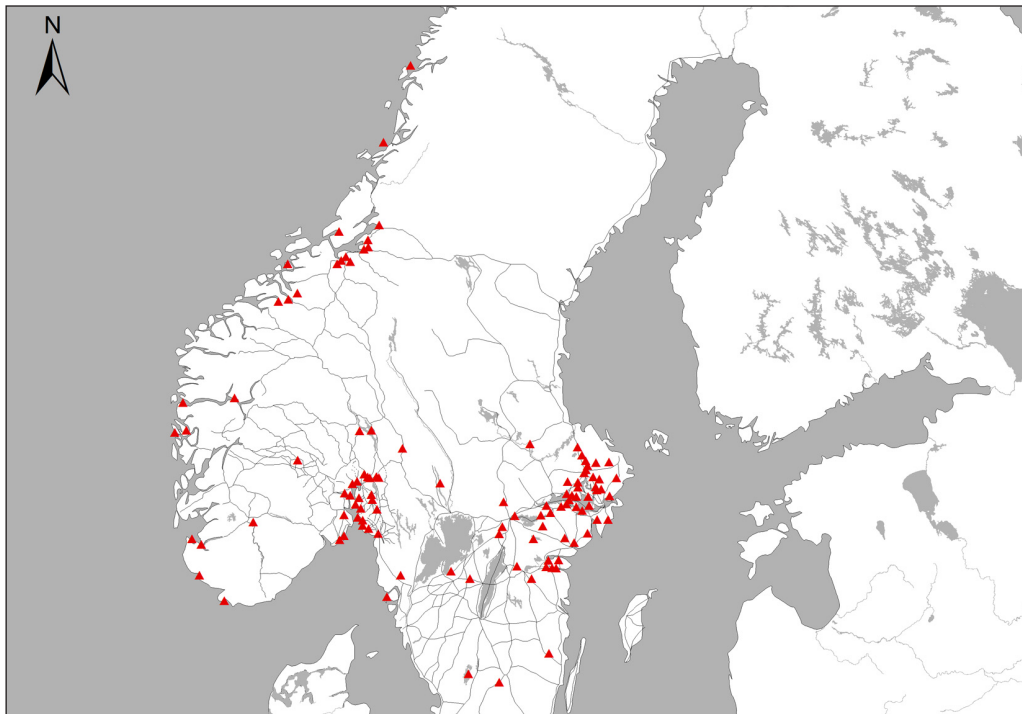


Fig. 3. Huseby-farms in Norway and Sweden.

per household and/or register (*mantall*) (Lindkvist, 1989, 173). Individual taxes require a high degree of direct control over the producers, and Lindkvist perceives them as “feudal” in character. At the same time he argues that collective taxes are more “primitive” because the individual’s contribution was beyond the king’s direct control. Consequently the king only dealt with the thing or the vassals in these areas.

Especially interesting in our context is the clear geographic distribution of individual and collective taxes in Sweden. There seems to be a pattern of individual taxes in the west (Västergötland, parts of Närke, northern Småland), collective taxes in the east (Uppland, eastern Västmanland and Södermanland), and a middle zone with both types represented (Östergötland). In Västergötland individual taxes dominated completely. They had their origin in the *servitium regis*, the king’s right to provision (*gjesting*) (*gengården*) and the “all men” tax (*allmänningsöret*). In Östergötland there were additional taxes based on the king’s right to commons, and collective taxes were also known in coastal areas in the east (*leidangsskatt*). On the other hand, the areas around Mälaren dominated collective taxes completely in the 13th and 14th century (*leidangsskatt*).

An implication of Lindkvist's hypothesis is that we might have to imagine that supra-regional power in Sweden originally was weaker in the areas with a high proportion of collective taxes. There is an interesting correlation between the prevalence of Huseby-farms and such areas, as pointed out by Stylegar & Westerdahl (2004). The Huseby-farms seem to have been located in areas with weak supra-regional power.

Except for a manor here and there, it is hard to point out the *bona patrimonialia* in Sweden. However, a combined analysis of royal itineraries and a more thorough review of the rural places where the king issued charters could put us on track. Figure 4 shows Sweden in the 13th and mid 14th century. The dots on the map are based on the locations where the king issued charters prior to the mid 14th century, in total at 62 rural and 19 urban sites. The urban ones are located along the so-called *Eiriksgatan*. This was the most important

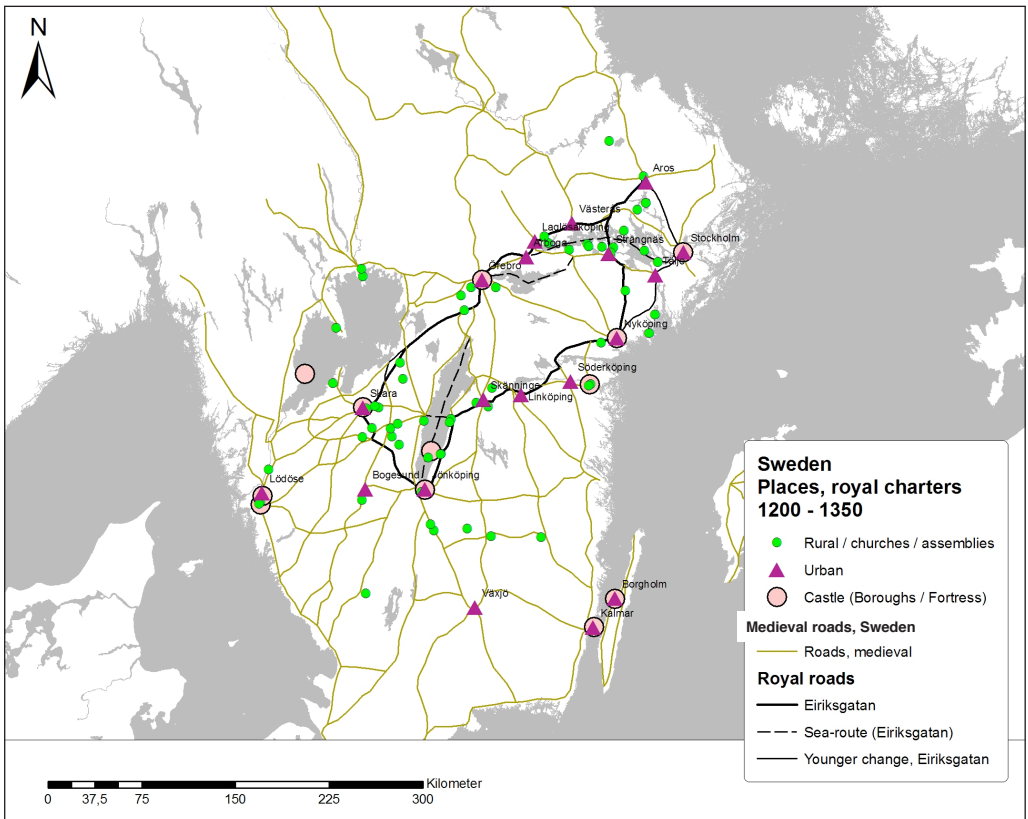


Fig. 4. Sweden mid 14th century.

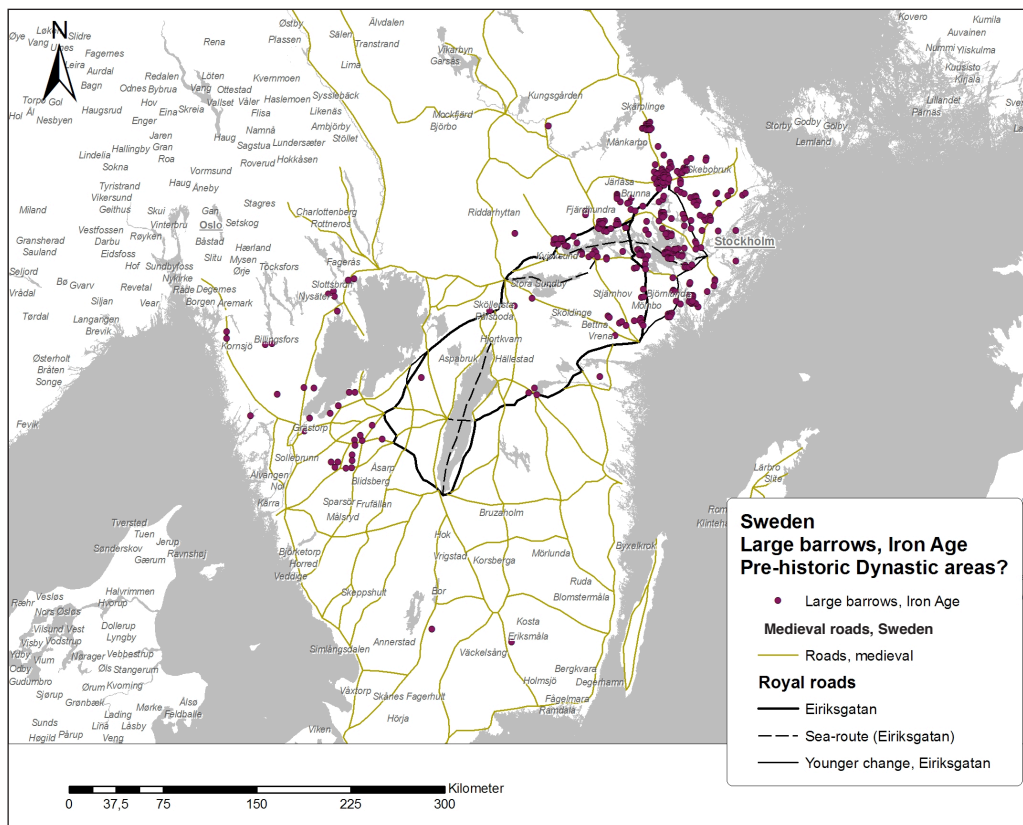


Fig. 5. Great mounds in Sweden, prior to the 11th century.

medieval royal road in Sweden. *Eiriksgatan* was the “coronation road” until the reign of King Gustav Wasa in the 16th century. The pretender had to do the ‘circuit’, to be accepted in all of the ancient (law) provinces, to become the king of Sweden. We have less knowledge of the earlier situation.

The prevalence of the nearly 320 great mounds (*storhauger*) in Sweden prior to the 11th century (Hyenstrand, 1980, 34; Bratt, 2008) indicates at least two main areas standing out as potential dynastic core areas; Västergötland and the area of the Mälars valley (Figure 5). Traditionally, great mounds have been interpreted as an expression of power in a fairly direct one to one ratio. I will not go into the full discussion here, but note that maybe it is in these areas we should expect dynastic power from an early phase with petty kingdoms. Evaluated by the distribution of great mounds, there seem to have been many powerful elites in the eastern parts of Sweden before the rise of a wider supra-regional power.

The name *Uppsala öd* meaning “the wealth of Uppsala” may indicate that the Uppsala area, and a royal dynasty here, were subjected to a dynasty from the west. The Uppland province is extremely well organized, or reorganized. This is clearly seen in the medieval administrative names: *Tiundaland* (the land of ten hundreds), *Åttungaland* (the land of eight hundreds), and *Fjärdrundaland* (the land of four hundreds). The names *af Tindæ Landi* and *Fiaerðundæ landi* are known in a document from the 14th century describing a border-agreement between Denmark and Sweden from the mid 11th century (KLN 18, 402). The so-called Florentine document from 1120 is the oldest source using the names – *Tindia*, *Fedundria* and *Atanth* (ibid). There is no reason to doubt that these units existed under these names, at least in the 11th century, if not earlier.

This may indicate an administrative reorganization of the landscape in eastern Sweden, and fits in well with the idea of the establishment of supra-regional power in Sweden, and the rise of the *bona regalia* called *Uppsala öd*. It also fits well with the prevalence of Huseby farms, which has its most systematic distribution in Uppland with a good correlation using ‘hundreds’, and this also gives support to Lindkvist’s hypothesis about the taxes.

NORWAY

There were several petty kingdoms in Scandinavia prior the 11th century. In Norway, they tend to have followed the areas of the earliest known provincial laws. This applied particularly to Trøndelag (The law of Frostathing) and in the Western part of Norway (The law of Gulathing). These provinces had strong competing elites. Western Norway is today considered as the geographical starting point for the rise of supra-regional power in the 9th and 10th centuries. Historians such as Claus Krag (1990; 1993; 1995), Knut Helle (1982; 2001) and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson (2008) have pointed out that Trøndelag was the first province to be submitted to an expanding supra-regional kingdom, and that the eastern parts of Norway were gradually integrated from the 11th century onwards. Norway was an unstable political unit with alternating domination and rival elites. The royal power in Trøndelag was gathered around the so-called Earls of Lade (*Ladejarlene*), searching for alliances with kings in Denmark.

We know of nearly 40 potential dynastic royal manors in Norway prior to the mid 12th century. They are mainly identified in the sagas from the 13th century (Storm, 1882; Iversen, 1999; 2008). It is interesting to note that the Huseby-farms in Norway, the assumed *bona regalia*, are in general located in the submitted provinces, in Trøndelag and the Viken-area in eastern Norway.

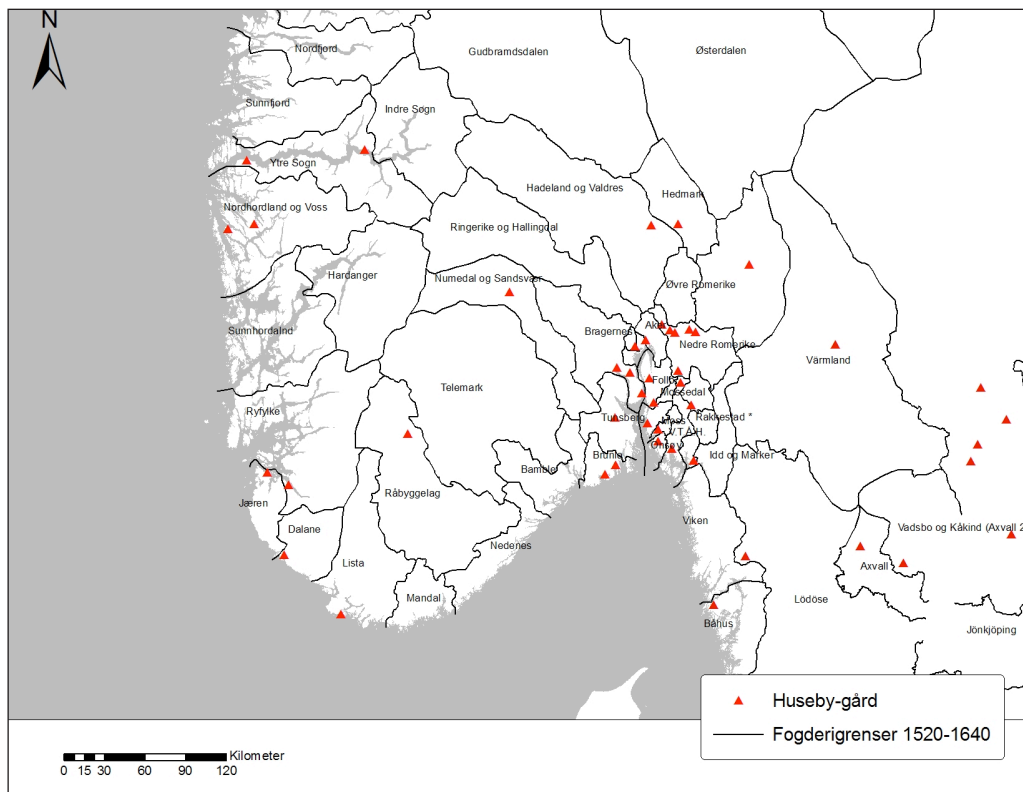


Fig. 6. Huseby-farms and taxation regions (fogderier) in the late Middle Ages.

On the other hand, there is some correspondence between the distribution of Huseby-farms and taxation regions documented in the late Middle Ages (*fogderi*), at least in the southern and northern parts of Norway (Figure 6). This is somewhat more dubious in Trøndelag where they tend to relate to the old fylkes-division instead.

Let us take a closer look at Viken, as our last example. In the Viking and Middle Ages this area was a cultural and political melting pot squeezed in between Sweden, Denmark and Norway, and had switched political affiliation over time. Viken was often subjected to the kings of Denmark at least from the 9th century to the fall of the Danish vassals, the Earls of Lade in Trøndelag, in the beginning of the 11th century. First, in the 13th century stable political structures were established here, as seen from a Norwegian perspective. In the sagas it is possible to identify at least 5 or 6 dynastic royal manors in this area, in addition to 20 baron-seats (*lendmenn*) – shown as black dots in Figure 7.

The barons in eastern Norway controlled the traffic routes from the moun-

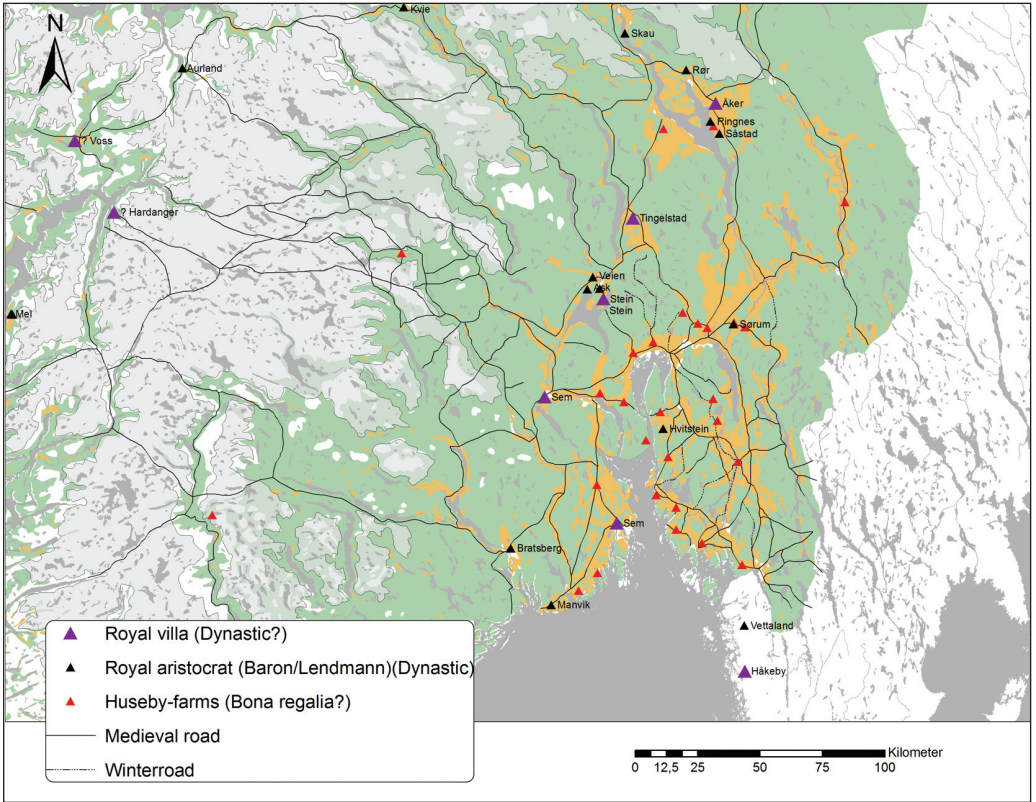


Fig. 7. The spatial organisation of Royal land in eastern Norway, prior to 14th century.

tains down to the coast. In the commons of the Highlands, large amounts of iron were produced (Larsen et al., 2008), adding to the fact that this was the most important hunting area in Norway. In particular, it was reindeer that was hunted. The goods had to be transported down to the coast, passing the major power centres along the routes. Also the Huseby-farms lay along important routes in the lowlands, and in the coastal areas in Viken. There was only one single Huseby-farm in each so-called *skipreide*, which is equivalent to the hundred, but not all of the *skipreids* in the Viken-area had Huseby-farms. There is a possible connection with the younger taxation regions (*fogderi*) which could have comprised of several *skipreider*. A thoughtful geographical organization seems to be an element of the *bona regalia* in Norway, and Sweden.

THE BEAUTY OF BONA REGALIA – SOME PERSPECTIVES

Terms such as *conglomerate state* or *composite states* (Gustafsson, 1998 with references) have been used to describe fragile states and supra-regional kingdoms in the Middle Ages. However, in the debate *bona regalia* have in a small degree been recognized as a mechanism of early state-formation in northern Europe. Neither in the standard-works of the 19th century, e.g. by Henry Lewis Morgan (1877) and Friedrich Engels (1884), nor in later work when discussing chiefdoms and states in evolutionary perspectives (e.g. Elman Service, 1962; 1975), have *bona regalia* been given their rightful place. I have somewhat simplified the argument that we should at least distinguish between three kinds of geographical zones in the development of supra-regional royal powers in Scandinavia. *Dynastic core areas* with deep roots as power centres, also characterising petty kingdoms, had direct lordship and were controlled through dynastic property. In the nearby *semi-peripheries* minor travelling kings had rights to *veitsler*, and provisions at specific farms which later were regarded as part of the *bona regalia*. Such farms are probably equivalent with the English *farm of one night*.

During 9th and 10th centuries some of these royal dynasties gained ground. They experienced a need to develop more permanent structures in submitted and disputed regions. *Bona regalia* developed in a more systematic form, especially in the *peripheries*. In these regions supra-regional kings depended on existing powerful dynasties and the church. Fringe areas were defined as fiefs and earldoms, and became increasingly important. A system for taking care of the king's income from fiefs developed, and was closely associated with the Huseby-farms in Scandinavia and Kingston-farms in England. It was indirectly controlled both by local magnates perhaps in cooperation with the Thing-institution. A variety of revenues and goods to the king were stored at farms with good housing-facilities. In such areas supra-regional kings also needed the acceptance of the Thing-institution to get access to the *bona regalia*. The local communities themselves were driving forces in such processes, benefiting from the king's authority and power to sanction the law. By interactions between the kings, earls, magnates and the Thing-institution, supra-regional powers in Scandinavia developed from the 9th to 12th century, and the creation of *bona regalia* seem to be of great importance in this process.

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