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Medieval Tønsberg, the Church and the Hinterland

Jes Wienberg

Beside the town a mountain rises against the sky. The steep slopes makes it almost into a fortified castle, and only a single path leads to the top. It is a work of man, and when it is blocked, it is easy to prevent the enemies to get up. Freely on the top of the mountain lies a beautiful church dedicated to St Michael. With its land it supports the canons of Premonstratensians, who are housed in this town.

(Historia de perfectione Danorum in Hierosolymam, translated from Eriksson & Thoresen 1976: 25 f.)

Abstract

The article studies the relationship between the medieval town of Tønsberg, its ecclesiastical institutions and its hinterland. The town, its churches, monasteries and hospitals are presented together with information on church property and benefactors according to the record book of bishop Eystein written down in 1388-1401 and diplomas.

It is argued, with reference to the importance of the church property and the domicile and contacts of the benefactors, that the distribution of the property reflects the social and economic hinterland of late medieval Tønsberg.

The hinterland extended far beyond Vestfold, and across the Oslofjord, indicating that even the origin and development of the town must be analysed in a wider context than just the present county.

Introduction

In "The history of the Danes' expedition to Jerusalem", the unknown author describes the town of Tønsberg in Norway in the year 1191. Despite the timelag of 800 years, the topogra-

phy is almost the same. The Castle Mountain still dominates its surroundings, but St Michael is now only a ruin, as is also the round church and monastery of the Premonstratensians. The other medieval churches, the Franciscan monastery and the hospitals disappeared long ago.

However, it is possible to reconstruct the building history of the churches in main lines from old notes, drawings and archaeological excavations. A property record and contemporary diplomas permit reconstructions of the church property. So the architecture and the economy might be estimated in relation to each other.

We can also look at the relationship between the town and its hinterland in an ecclesiastical perspective. Since the income from the church property played a central role in the total economy of the town, and since the property was founded by donations from people who were associated with the town, it is possible to recreate the hinterland using just the property as starting point. By combining the evidence of the landscape, the buildings and the parchment in this way, we obtain a clear view into the re-

lationships between the medieval town, its church institutions and hinterland.

Medieval Tønsberg

Tønsberg is situated near the Oslofjord in Vestfold, where two minor fjord arms meet. Here there was a good harbour under the mountain, a rich agricultural district and a neighbouring royal estate.

The Icelander Snorre Sturlasson (1179-1241) writes in his "Heimskringla", that Tønsberg was already a town (kaupstadr) in the time of king Harald Hårfager about 870. The town is also mentioned sporadically all throughout the 10th and 11th centuries. However, the archaeological excavations have not confirmed Tønsberg as the oldest town of Norway, as is often claimed with pride. Traces of an agrarian settlement from the Viking Age and earlier periods are found, but still no urban settlement before ca. 1100. The first contemporary source is the Norman writer Ordericus Vitalis, who mentions Tønsberg in the 1130s as one of the 6 Norwegian towns.

A fortification of the mountain is mentioned in connection with the civil wars of the 12th century. Through the following century Tønsberg developed into the largest castle of Norway and perhaps even Scandinavia, while a royal palace was placed at the foot of the mountain. Tønsberg became a centre of royal power and administration, the church and commerce. In the 14th century the importance of the town to the crown was reduced in favour of Bergen and Oslo, while the trade prospered. In 1503 the castle was burnt and the town plundered. The Middle Ages ended with the fire which devastated the town with its churches and monasteries in 1536.

In 1942 the architect and archaeologist Gerhard Fischer tried to map Tønsberg "about the 14th century" (Fig. 1). The starting points were the written sources, the ruins, a few drillings and excavations plus the preserved town plan. Despite several, almost yearly, archaeological excavations since 1969 the picture is al-

most unchanged (Eriksson & Thoresen 1976; Eriksson 1986).

The medieval town extended between the Castle Mountain, the Thing at Haugar with its barrows, and the Townfjord. Two streets ran parallel along the fjord, from the royal palace in the north to the St Olav monastery in the south. Cross streets connected the main streets with the harbour. The town properties lay in tight rows down to the water. Excavations have proved however, that the settlement spread over a greater area than Fischer supposed, in fact passing St Peter in the northeast up to the pond, and all the way to the royal palace and St Olav monastery. And the uninterrupted quay-fronts were gradually extended out into the fjord because of the landrise and dumping of rubbish.

Among the timber houses and in the outskirts of the town lay a few stone buildings, which dominated by virtue of their importance and precious architecture - the churches, monasteries and hospitals.

The churches, monasteries and hospitals

Ten ecclesiastical institutions are known in medieval Tønsberg: namely 3 parish churches, 2 monasteries, 3 chapels and 2 hospitals. Most of them can be located exactly or with reasonable accuracy, but the ground plan is only known by the castle chapel of St Michael, the parish churches of St Lawrence, St Peter and St Mary, and also the monastery church of St Olav (Fig. 2A-E). The other institutions are known from contemporary written sources, later observations and archaeological investigations (Gjessing 1913: 93 ff.; Johnsen 1929: 144 ff., 177 ff.; Wienberg 1991).

St Michael lay on the highest point of the mountain, where it was visible from a great distance. Its first mention was in 1191, when its property was said to have supported the Premonstratensians. In 1308 it is named among the 14 royal chapels. It was one of the destinations, when Queen Margrethe decided in 1405 to send pilgrims. The church is mentioned for the

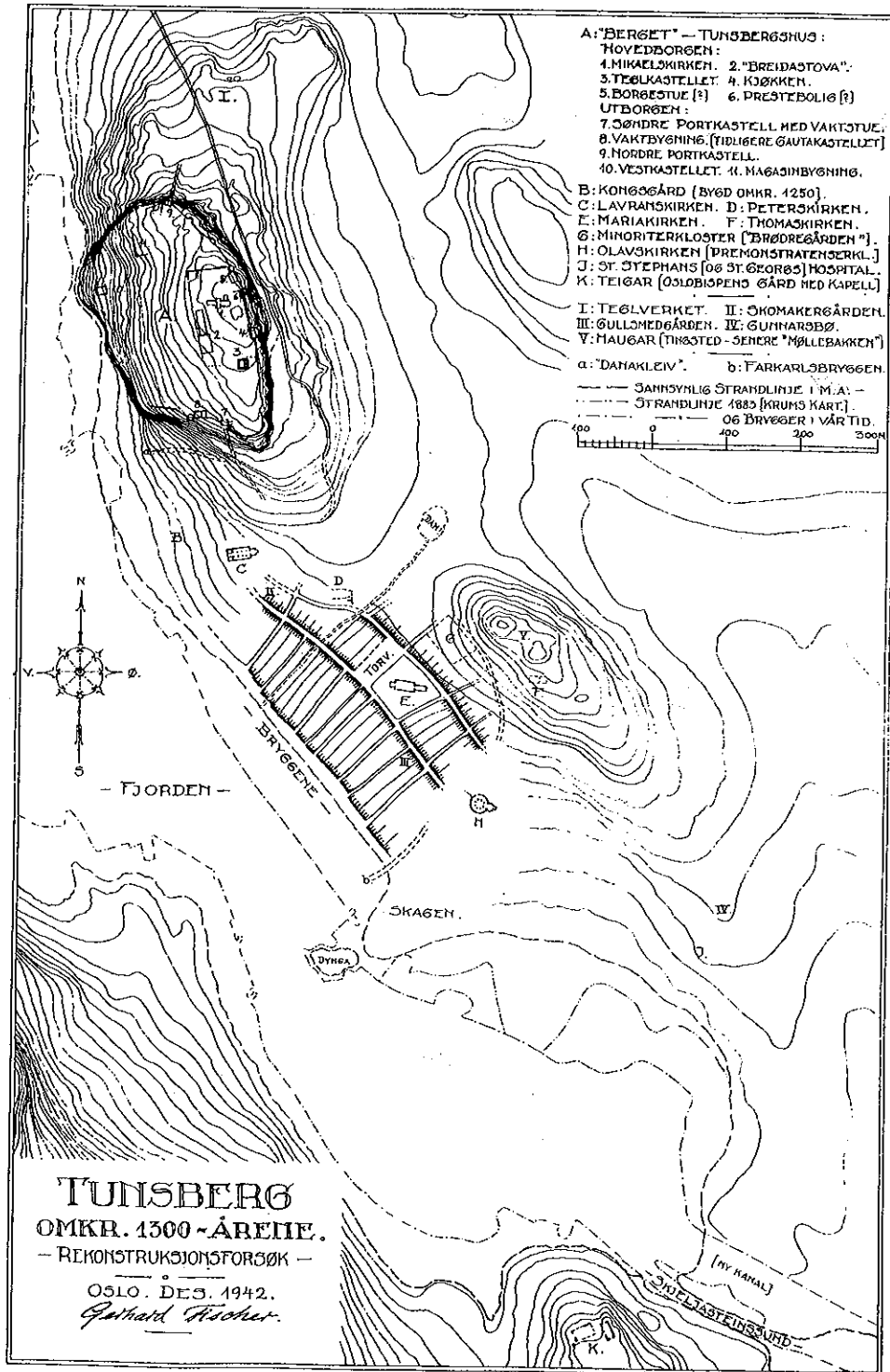


Fig. 1. Tønsberg in the 14th century according to Gerhard Fischer in 1942. The reconstruction should have illustrated an article to a volume of "Nordisk Kultur", which was never published. From Fischer 1951: 102.

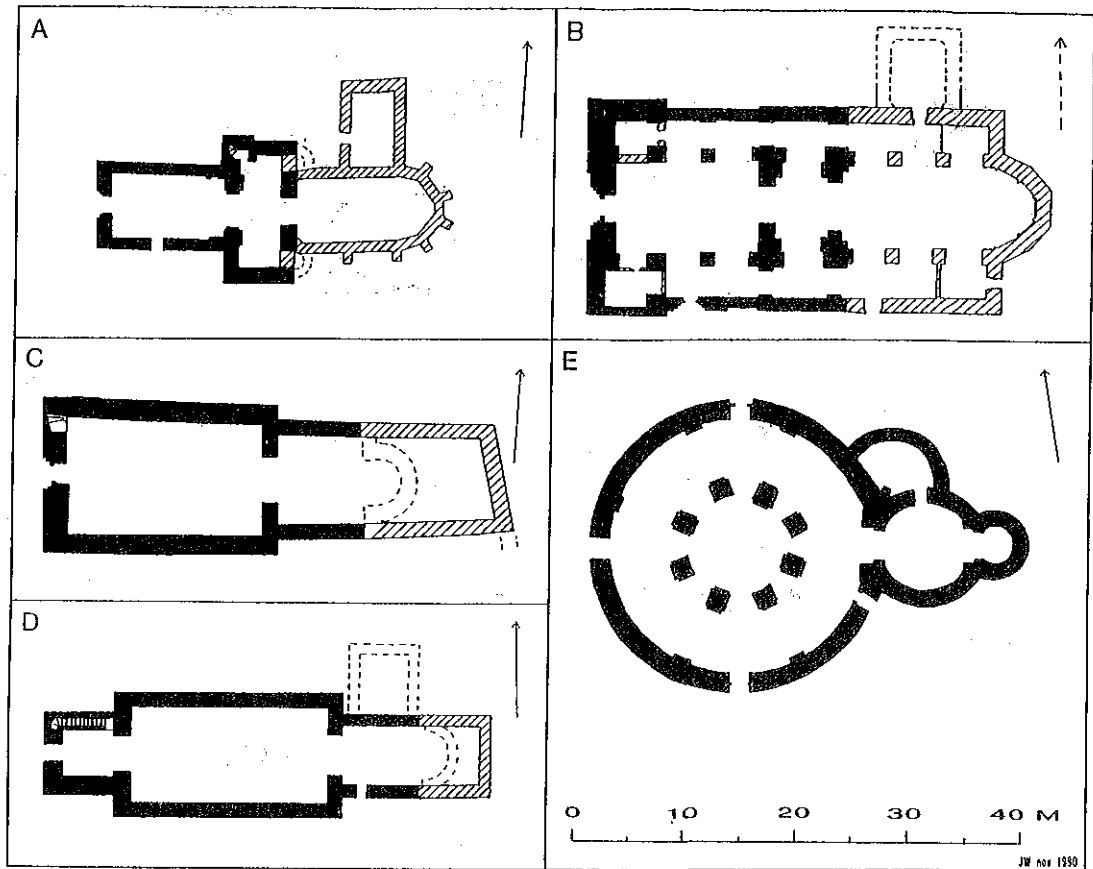


Fig. 2. The 5 medieval churches in Tønsberg with known ground plans. A: the castle chapel of St Michael. B: the parish churches of St Lawrence. C: St Peter and D: St Mary and also E: the church of St Olav of the Premonstratensians. Romanesque walls (1100-1250) are marked with black, and Gothic walls (1250-1535) with hatching.

last time in 1526 and was probably closed by the Reformation.

The ruin of St Michael was uncovered in 1878 and is now extensively restored. It was a small Romanesque church, where the crossing supported a central tower. The architecture might indicate that the church originally housed a monastery. Maybe the new Gothic chancel was associated with the establishment of a priest collegium. A sacristy might have functioned as both a chapterhouse and archive at the royal chancellery.

St Lawrence lay near the royal palace, where

the present cathedral is situated. It is mentioned for the first time in 1200-01 at the Siege of the Mountain, when its high tower was used as a look-out. St Lawrence was a collegiate church with a dean, several canons and a rector. The church is known from old descriptions, pictures and drawings. The building, which resembles St Mary in Bergen and the cathedral in Hamar, must have gone through many changes. Before the demolition in 1804-14, it was composed of a Romanesque basilica with a central tower over the crossing, a western front designed as two towers and a Gothic chancel with a poly-

gonal end. A burial chapel was added in ca. 1600 (Lange 1968).

The parish church of St Peter is mentioned for the first time in 1298 and then frequently during the Middle Ages. It was probably closed after the town fire of 1536. The Romanesque church with a Gothic extension of the chancel was centrally situated in the town. The church and graveyard were excavated in 1930, 1972 and the 1980s (Brendalsmo 1989).

The parish church of St Mary is mentioned for the first time in 1217. It is known from old descriptions, pictures and drawings. The Romanesque church with an early tower had a Gothic extension of the chancel and perhaps also a sacristy. The church was closed in 1858 and pulled down few years later. It was situated under the present market place, where the apse was found in 1958.

St Olav's church appears with certainty in 1207, when king Erling Steinvegg (1204-07) was buried here. The church belonged to a Premonstratensian monastery, which is mentioned several times during the Middle Ages until the secularization in 1532 and the fire in the fateful year of 1536. Both the church and monastery have been located by archaeological investigations in the southern outskirts of the medieval town. The Romanesque round church resembled St Michael in Schleswig. It was the largest in Scandinavia and the only one in Norway. The church was uncovered in 1877-78 and again examined in 1929 and the 1960s. Parts of monastic buildings in timber and stone were excavated south of the church in the 1970s and 1980s (Lunde 1971; Nordman 1989).

The Franciscan monastery dedicated to St Catherine was founded by king Håkon Håkonsson (1217-63). The first church, probably a stave church, was moved to the Premonstratensian monastery at Dragsmark in Bohuslän. The monastery appears as an important meeting place during the Middle Ages and was probably closed by the Reformation. It was situated in the area between the market place and Haugar, where masonry, burials and objects have been found over the years (Eriksson

1983).

St Thomas' church is only mentioned in 1218 and is otherwise quite unknown. It might have been a church, which the Franciscans took over, or an independent chapel on Haugar.

A chapel is mentioned in 1387 at Teie, where the bishop had a manor. Masonry has been discovered in several instances, but never properly examined.

St Stephan's hospital was founded by king Håkon Håkonsson and mentioned in 1308 among the royal chapels. It is named in 1445 as the St Stephen and St George hospital and later only as St George. Therefore it might have been an ordinary hospital, which was gradually reserved for the leprous. Its exact location and architecture is not known.

Finally, a hospital for the poor was founded at St Lawrence in 1319 by the knight and royal treasurer Bjarne Audunsson. The hospital was situated north of the church, but the buildings are undiscovered.

The church property

The church with its people, services, buildings and furnitures was maintained by sources of income, which effected everyone, both the living as well as the dead. The church received land rent, tithes from the parish, testamentary gifts, offerings, charges, fines and labour. Perhaps the most important was the land rent from the church properties. Before a church was consecrated, the bishop had to make sure, that it was sufficiently supplied with land.

Using a contemporary property record and diplomas, we get a rather precise view into the size, composition, distribution and sometimes even the origin of the property owned by the ecclesiastical institutions of Tønsberg (Johnsen 1929: 144 ff., 177 ff.; Wienberg 1991). Bishop Eystein Aslakssons (1386-1407) property book, also named "The Red Book" after its binding, was written down in the period 1388-1401 at visitations. It records almost all land owned by the churches of the Oslo bishopric. The property is divided in mensa, i.e. the rector, fabri-

ca, i.e. the building, prebends and altars. There is information about the name of the property, often its parish or district, the size of the land and in some cases also the donor, exchange of property, hire, purchase of the tithe or the annual fee to the bishop. The record includes the parish churches of St Lawrence, St Peter and St Mary, the monastery of St Olav, and St Lawrence's hospital (RB; Hamre 1959). Diplomas can supplement records by, for instance, showing us a large donation to St Michael in 1317 and all the property of the St Stephen and St George hospital in 1445 (DN III 110, IX 295).

The church property could be farms and parts of farms, town yards, houses, mills, fishery and pastures among others. Most of it can be identified by means of a splendid survey of farm names in Norway (Rygh 1897-1936).

The land rent is often recorded in "markebol", "laupsländ", "øresbol", "ørtugbol" and "penningebol", which here are calculated according to the formula $1 \text{ mb} = 3 \text{ lp} = 8 \text{ øre} = 24 \text{ ørt} = 480 \text{ pb}$ (Steinnes 1936: 141 ff.).

In 1317 King Håkon Magnusson (1299-1319) donated in all 109 mb land to his chapel St Michael in the castle of Tunsberghus, its dean, 4 canons, two pew openers, a bell ringer, plus their bailiffs, cooks and their helpers (DN III 110; Johnsen 1905: 104 ff.). The land was divided between 94 properties in 16 parishes (Fig. 3A), all of which with one exception belonged to Bohuslän in present-day Sweden. Of this no less than 23 mb, more than in any other parish, were in Bro, where the foundations of a castle are to be seen. Otherwise we do not know about the property of St Michael, which might have been considerably larger.

St Lawrence's church had in 1396-99, according to the record of bishop Eystein, in all 216 mb, of which only 29 mb belonged to fabrica. The major part was tied to the common mensa, the 4 prebends, the sacristy, the cantor, the service, the altars of St Olav, St Mary and the Holy Cross (RB: 181 ff.). The land was divided between 231 properties in 53 parishes (Fig. 3B). Most of the land (78 %) was in Vestfold. The rest was distributed especially in

Østfold, Buskerud og Telemark, but also in other regions all the way to Vinje in Hordaland.

According to the property record St Peter had control in 1399 over 53 mb, of which 13 mb belonged to fabrica (RB: 195 ff.). The land was divided between 89 properties in 25 parishes (Fig. 3C). Most of the land (84 %) was in Vestfold, but there was also more remote land at Eidanger in Telemark, at Gran in Hadeland and in Østfold (Thoresen 1972).

According to the record St Mary's church had in all 59 mb in 1399, of which 8 mb tied to the fabrica (RB: 200 ff.). It was divided between 80 properties in 19 parishes (Fig. 3D). In this case, too the major part of the land (79 %) was in Vestfold, plus distant properties at Nes in Akershus and in Østfold.

St Olav's monastery was, as far as we know, by far the richest of the ecclesiastical institutions in Tønsberg. According to the record it had 316 mb in all in 1399 (RB: 204 ff.). The land was divided between 208 properties in 38 parishes (Fig. 3E). Most of it (82 %) was in Vestfold, especially in the neighbouring parishes of Tønsberg. The rest were found in Østfold and other areas of Eastern Norway.

The Franciscans were not permitted to possess land, but they received the Husvik farm in the parish of St Peter in 1525, which they sold 10 years later for some silver and a piece of cloth (DN XI 409, 629).

St Stephen's hospital received 88 mb divided between 55 properties from the kings Håkon Håkonsson and Magnus Håkonsson Lagabøte (1263-80). The land was distributed between two major farms in Gudbrandsdalen and the rest in Østfold, Buskerud and Vestfold (DN II 139; Bjørkvik 1970: 55 ff.). The property of the St Stephen and St George hospital is recorded in a diploma from 1445 (DN IX 295). At that time it had grown to 147 mb divided between 123 properties in 37 parishes (Fig. 3F). Some of the land (31 %) was in Vestfold, some (20 %) in Østfold, and in Buskerud (17 %), and in Oppland, Telemark, all the way to Valle in Agder.

The royal treasurer Bjarne Audunsson do-

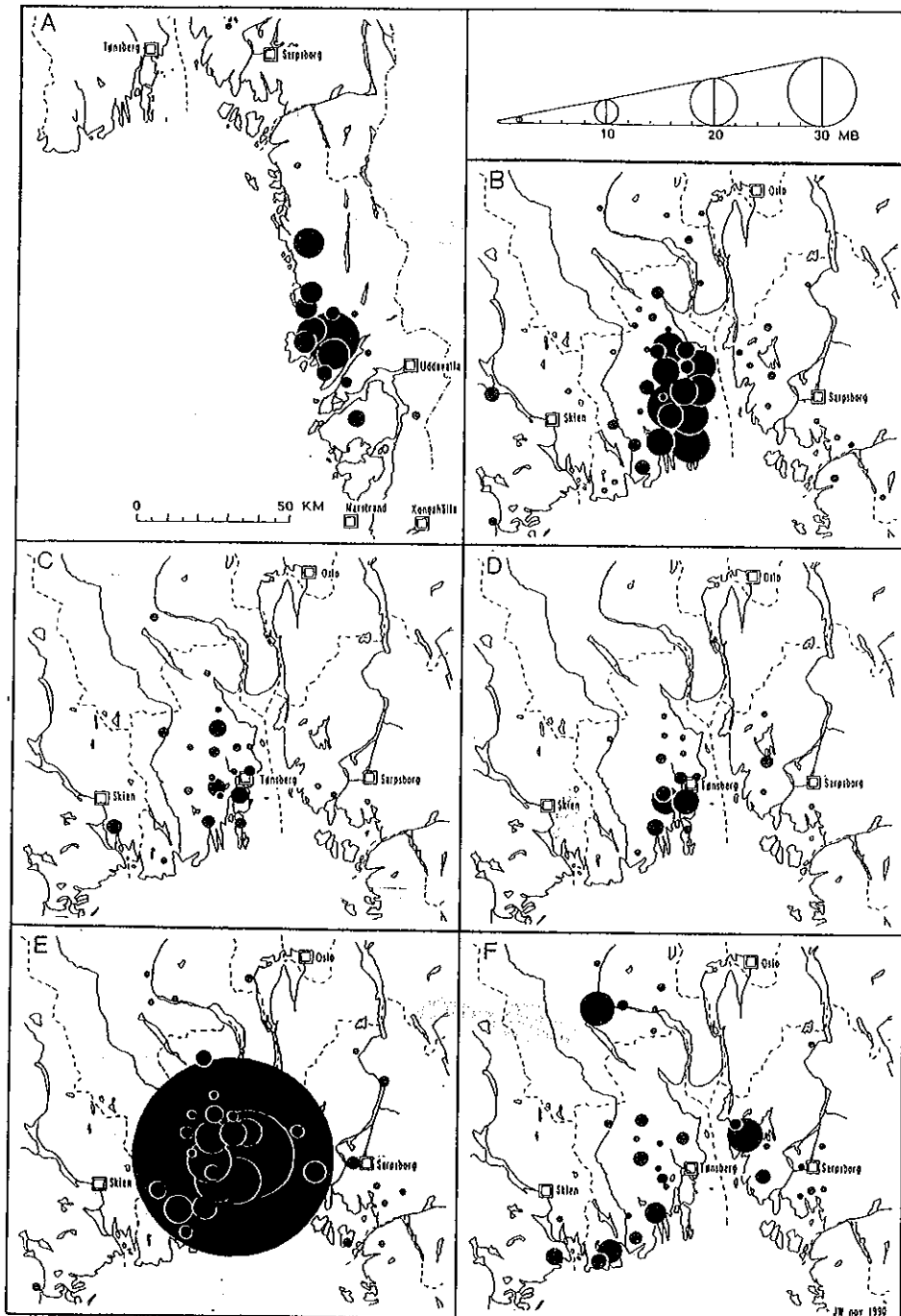


Fig. 3. The land belonging to the church of Tønsberg. A: St Michael in 1317 (donation). B: St Lawrence 1396-99. C: St Peter 1399. D: St Mary 1399. E: St Olav 1399. F: St Stephen and St George 1445. Each circle represents a parish.

nated 30 mb for the foundation of St Lawrence's hospital in 1319-20. The land was divided between 26 properties in the parishes of Nøtterøy and Sandherred in Vestfold. In 1399 only 2 properties had vanished and 3 new ones appeared (DN IV 139; RB: 194 f.).

Like the castles and cathedrals, the town churches received and disposed an agrarian surplus from an extensive region. As a comparison the episcopate of Oslo had in 1396 in all 382 properties, which were valued at 475 mb and rendered 166 buckets of butter in land rent. The chapter had 166 properties valued at 227 mb and 109 buckets (Andersen 1974: 34 f.).

None of the country churches in Vestfold had so many farms and parts of farms as the parish churches in Tønsberg. Tjølling had most with 62 properties valued at 54 mb. The county churches of Hedrum and Sem had only 43 and 33 properties respectively. Many had fewer, down to the 11 properties of Slagen valued at 5,7 mb. And while the churches of Tønsberg had their property spread over almost all of Vestfold and further away, the country churches had most of the land in their own parishes, in adjacent parishes and seldom outside the county (RB: 42 ff.).

Relationships can be observed between the church property and architecture. The size of the property as a whole was of no importance, but a beautiful correlation, maybe not unexpected, can be observed between the fabrica of the parish churches and their size measured by the ground plan. St Lawrence had 29 mb in fabrica and measured 714 m², St Peter respectively 13 mb and 498 m², and finally St Mary 8 mb and 379 m². It is only in the town that we find Gothic extensions, but the economy did not necessarily determine the building activity. An articulated architecture might also have attracted pious founders. The church architecture of the town was, as already mentioned, tied to an economy far beyond the town boundaries.

If we now mechanically summarize the data on the church property in 1317, 1396, 1399 and 1445, we arrive at a property of 930 mb in 96

parishes (Fig. 4). This is only a minimum, because we do not know the total size of St Michael's property, and because some of the farms can not be identified.

The income from such an extensive church property directly or indirectly played a major role in the total economy of Tønsberg. Especially in the late Middle Ages, when the presence of royal power in the town had diminished, the church must have developed a relatively greater importance, even if the real land rent was reduced by then. The land rent made possible an ecclesiastical foreign trade. It provided a living not only to the town clergy, but also to their supporters in the churches, monasteries and rectories. The income increased trade among the merchants and craftsmen, and meant employment to workmen. Last, but not least, the building activities and daily maintenance must have demanded great efforts.

The benefactors

The record book of bishop Eystein and the diplomas often permit us to trace the origin of the church property. The Norwegian kings Håkon Håkonsson, Magnus Håkonsson Lagabøte and Håkon Magnusson donated many properties, as, the royal treasurer Bjarne Audunsson and bishop Helge of Oslo (1304-22). Numerous other persons contributed, because the churches and monasteries were attractive for burial and masses. Thus, at the parish church of St Peter, we know of at least 28 persons who have donated property. Among these we find the bishop, the dean, rectors, the royal treasurer, judges, the mayor, councillors, noblemen, citizens and major farmers. The records name several others, mainly women, where we do not know their domicile or social class.

The sources leave behind the impression that the donators were tied by family or property both to the town and to the countryside. The donors as individuals might belong both to the lower nobility and the citizenry at the same time. We catch a glimpse of a network of persons and families crossing the Oslofjord with

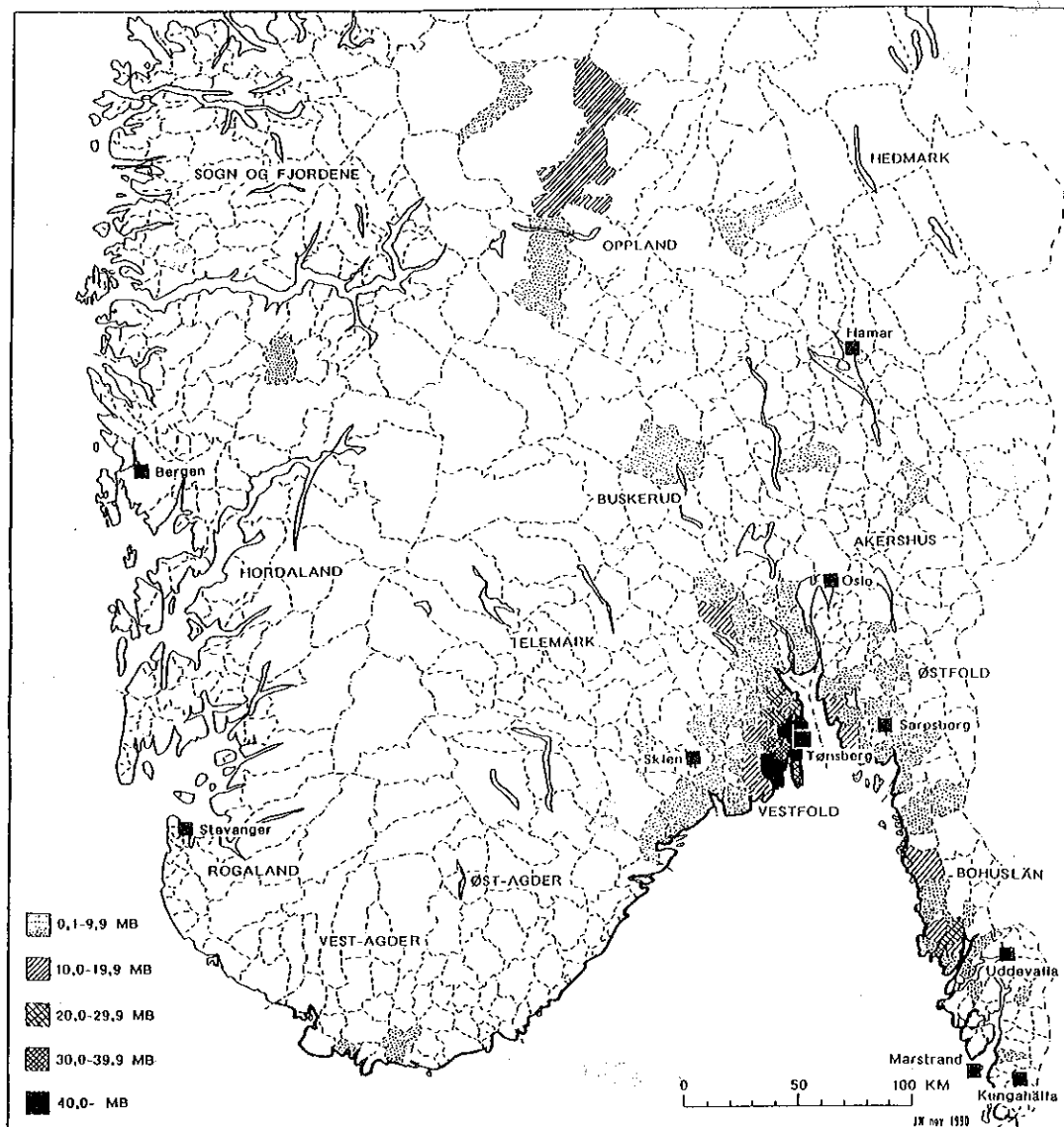


Fig. 4. The parishes in medieval Norway with land belonging to the church of Tønsberg as we know it in 1317, 1396-99 and 1445. The size of the property in each parish is marked. Also emphasized is the coastline, where Tønsberg, Oslo and Sarsborg according to privileges of 1538 and 1582 had their commercial hinterland.

possessions both in the town and the countryside, active in the government of the town, in the church, in trade and in agriculture (Johnsen 1929: 469 ff.).

In this way Evind Bonde at Skardeberg in

Tjølling in 1352 gave a part of a farm at Nøtterøy to St Peter for holding masses for himself, for Brynhild in the townyard Musen, perhaps his sister, and her son (DN II 311). In 1361 the nobleman and citizen Hermund

Bergsson bequeathed land at Kvelde in Vestfold to St Peter, but paid tithe and was buried together with his wife Ingerid at Glemminge in Østfold (DN XI 50; RB: 547). His son Berg Hermundsson, judge in Tønsberg, gave land on Kråkerøy in Østfold to St Peter (RB: 199).

Finally, the size and distribution of the single properties might point to the origin of the church land. It has been claimed that the king donated entire farms or collected property. In Eastern Norway before 1350 a farm represented 1,5-2,0 mb (Sandnes 1981: 98). Since the properties of St Olav were valued at 1,6 mb on average, and the major farms at 3-6 mb, all were located in Vestfold, many close to Tønsberg, this indicates a larger royal donation. On the other hand, the many small and scattered properties of St Peter reflect the donations from the gentry, citizens and farmers.

The hinterland of medieval Tønsberg

Studies into the relationship between the medieval towns of Norway and their hinterland are very few. The historians have traditionally avoided geographical investigations, while the archaeologists have been preoccupied with the analysis of the growing material from too many town excavations. The research has been tied to the origin and internal development of towns, and rarely to their later functions and contacts. The early "great" period of the Middle Ages has had priority for national reasons. Norway has also lacked a "medieval Towns Project", which could stimulate and create a holistic perspective as in Denmark and Sweden. Still, a few studies from Eastern Norway ought to be mentioned.

The hinterland of Oslo in the Middle Ages was reconstructed using the property of the citizens and the church. The hinterland should extend from Göta river in the south to Gudbrand vally in the north, from Skienfjord in the west to Solør in the east. In Vestfold alone, the church of Oslo had in all 160 properties or 161 mb in 1396. From the hinterland the town received land rent such as timber, grain, butter,

hides, cattle and fish, which in fact were important commodities and raw materials. So the supply of goods was controlled by the town aristocracy and the clergy. The merchants, which at the same time might be citizens and gentry, invested their profits in land so that they could influence production according to their needs (Fougli 1916; Schia 1989).

Skien has thus been interpreted as a port of shipment of the surplus production of Telemark, especially hone, but also soapstone, timber, grain, hide, antler, pig iron and wool (Myrvoll 1986).

The hinterland of Tønsberg varies of course with the perspective and the sources. It should extend beyond Vestfold to Drammensfjord in the north and Langesund in the southwest. Or it should be smaller than the county itself - naturally limited by mountains in the west and north, and by the water of the Oslofjord in the east. The hinterland is often defined without reflection as the present county of Vestfold. The research concentrates almost solely on why the medieval town arose just at Tønsberg and not in contact with old centres like Borre in the north and Kaupang in the south (Gjessing 1913: 1 ff.; Johnsen 1929: 11 ff., 309 ff.; Eriksson 1991).

Here it is argued that the social and economic hinterland of medieval Tønsberg far exceeded the borders of Vestfold. In line with the study of Oslo and its hinterland, the point of departure here is the church property. The church property in the 96 parishes roughly reflects the social and economic contacts of the church and thus also of the town aristocracy. The distribution indicates the region where the clergy and citizens had their origin, had a part of the land rent, and would invest and dominate production.

We can now determine the hinterland in more detail by showing how many farms in a parish paid land rent to the church of Tønsberg. For each parish we can count the number of so-called named farms, of which the church owned a part, in relation to the total number of medieval farms. The "named farm" is estab-

lished in agrarian research of Norway as a concept of the medieval farm, which has its own name (Sandnes 1981: 88ff). The method is not new. It has been used before to examine the property of the archbishop in ca. 1435 at the level of counties in all of Norway (Hagen et al. 1980: 63).

The study is based on the data relating to the property belonging to the parish churches of St Lawrence 1396-99, St Peter 1399 and St Mary 1399, the monastery of St Olav 1399, the hospital of St Stephen and St George 1445 and St Lawrence's hospital in 1399, but not the donation to St Michael in 1317. The many properties were identified with patience, and the number of medieval named farms in each parish was counted from the survey of Norwegian farms (Rygh 1897-1936). The farms mentioned up to the written sources of 1577 are defined as medieval.

There are of course reservations. We do not know the property of all the church institutions in Tønsberg. The property might have been changed between 1396 and 1445. Some of the farms cannot be identified, and others might have been wrongly located. The medieval farms may also have been more numerous than the documents before 1577 show. It is difficult to estimate the consequences of the so-called agrarian crisis on the real size of the church property. The parish borders might have been moved. The investigation has to leave out Bohuslän, because the farms have not been published as in Norway. For practical reasons we also omit 12 parishes outside Eastern Norway. Left behind is the property in 67 parishes (Fig. 5), where the relative trend hardly can be questioned.

In terms of church property the hinterland of Tønsberg can be described as an extensive area, where the influence of the town decreases surprisingly well in relation to the distance over land and water. The influence is greatest in the neighbouring parishes. Thus in Sem the church had a share in 29 of 42 farms (69 %). The hinterland includes Vestfold and surrounds Skien and Sarpsborg, but not Oslo.

The hinterland, which we reconstruct, also fits in well with other contemporary or later phenomena. We glimpse long-lasting connections between property, administration and commerce without having to establish cause and effect.

Old Vestfold covered parts of present-day Telemark and Buskerud, where we find church property. The district under the judge of Tønsberg at times comprised not only Vestfold, but also parts of Telemark and Østfold, where we find the main bulk of the property. Privileges in 1538 and 1582 show that the commercial hinterland of Tønsberg, in competition with Oslo and Sarpsborg, followed a long coastline from Sireå in the southwest at the border of Rogaland to the Göta river in the southeast. And the property stopped just north of Jeløy, where the exclusive rights of Oslo began (Johnsen 1929: 353 ff.; 1934: 64 ff.; Thoresen 1970: 44 ff.).

The hinterlands of the towns in Eastern Norway indicate a hierarchy where Oslo dominated over Tønsberg, which itself dominated the other towns. Thus the size and distribution of the property of the church in Tønsberg clearly surpassed the church property of Skien, Sarpsborg and Kungälv. The monastery of Gimsø at Skien had properties in Vestfold, but none of the other town churches (RB: 25 ff., 328 ff., 496 ff.).

The investigation demonstrates that the hinterland of Tønsberg in the late Middle Ages, extended far outside Vestfold, even across the Oslofjord. Where the water today separates, it connected Tønsberg with Østfold and Bohuslän in the Middle Ages. The hierarchy among the towns shows that Tønsberg can not be studied in isolation. Probably we have to understand the origin and development of Tønsberg in a larger area than just Vestfold. And instead of a discussion in principle of the town and its context, which varies with the questions, sources and perspectives, we have tried to fill the concept of a "hinterland" with an empirical content.

The possibilities to continue are plenty. The

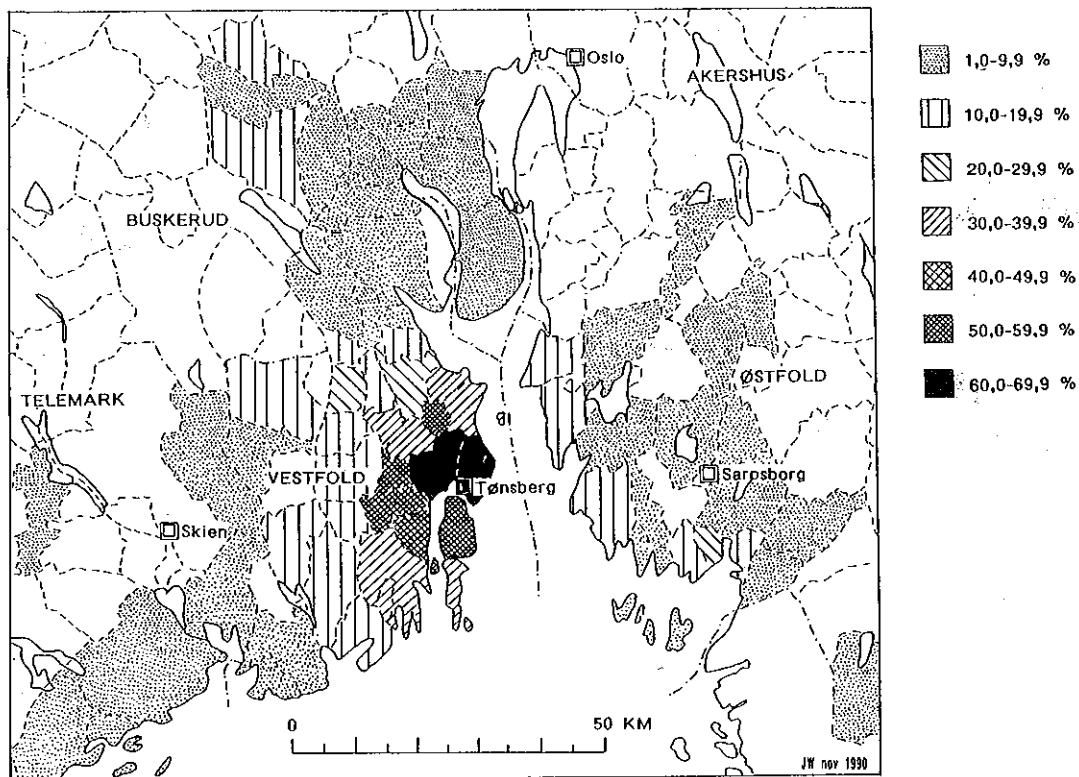


Fig. 5. Tønsberg's nearest hinterland in the late Middle Ages. The map shows the portion of medieval named farms in the parishes round the Oslofjord, where the churches, monasteries and hospitals of Tønsberg received land rents in 1396-99 and 1445.

other towns in Eastern Norway could be investigated with the same methods to map the hierarchy of the hinterlands. The relationship between aristocracy, property, administration, trade and craft could be studied. The internal development of the towns known from archaeological excavations could be analysed in relation to the resources of their hinterland. The church property could be investigated in more detail to trace the founders. Or we could move the perspective away from abstract units such as the town, the church and the hinterland towards the family and the individual. Then St Peter was only one among many churches which received donations. Thus, Amund Borgarsson and Margrete Brynjulfsdatter in Ande-

bu, and her parents, made donations in 1317/18 not only to St Peter, but also to St Lawrence and St Mary in Tønsberg, St Halvard in Oslo, and the churches at Kjos in Romerike and at Haug in Buskerud (DN XI 9). Here we might see a different context.

Exhausted, we can now climb the Castle Mountain. Here we see all of Tønsberg and a minor part of its great hinterland. The once beautiful St Michael's church is almost gone. We do not know exactly which property supported the canons in 1191. But we understand, that the church property had a wider importance in the past, from which we in the present can benefit.

Acknowledgement

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