Norwegian Coin Distribution During the Reign of Håkon Håkonsson

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Abstract

The goal of this thesis is to develop a method of understanding coin distribution in Norway in order to identify probable locations for mints. This is done by comparing the distribution of English coin finds from the Middle Ages to the distribution of Norwegian types coin, dated to the reign of Håkon Håkonsson. Observations made from analyzing English coin finds would suggest that coins from a specific mint are more likely to be found in the area around the mint. Therefore a greater proportions of coin finds from a specific mint are found in the regions around the mint of origin. Some Norwegian coin types seem to adhere to this trend in coin distribution, however, the distribution of the Norwegian portrait type coin may indicate the presence of a travelling mint in Norway.
Preface

Through this thesis, I have tried to establish a possible method for interpreting the distribution of Norwegian coin finds from the reign of Håkon Håkonsson in order to locate the probable locations of mints in 13th century Norway. The fact that this thesis has been completed is due in large to the support and guidance I have received from Svein H. Gullbekk over the last year. Svein’s support helped me to develop new ideas in a field of study I had previously been unfamiliar with. I would also like to extend my thanks to Mikael Males, at the University of Oslo, who helped me develop the initial ideas for my thesis and encouraged me to reach out to Svein.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family back home in Canada, whose support allowed me to pursue my studies overseas. Your support over the past few years has been immense. I would also like to specifically dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Eleanor Toner, whose love for collecting coins must have nudged me towards the topic of this thesis.
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Introduction

This thesis will explore methods of interpreting coin distribution in order to determine the probable locations of Norwegian mints during the reign of the Norwegian king, Håkon Håkonsson. During the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, a variety of coin types were produced and used in circulation. These coins have been excavated at various church sites dating to the medieval period across Norway. I believe that these coin types can be used to determine the location of Norwegian mints.

In England, the distribution of coins have been studied by numismatists like, Michael Metcalf, Rory Naismith and J. L. Bolton.1 In the English context, coins have been unearthed with the location of the place of origin already known due to the presence of the name of the mint place on the surface of the coin. The English evidence for coin finds is prolific, especially in the case of single coin finds. During the last decades metal detectors have been used to find thousands, if not tens of thousands, of coins that provide scholars with a basis for the analysis of coin circulation. Even though metal detecting finds from Norway are much less frequent in comparison to those found in England, single finds from Norwegian medieval churches provide more than 10,000 finds from the period between the years 1180 and 1320.2 The evidence for single finds and hoards from secular and ecclesiastical contexts are, of course, different in both their nature and their scope. Still, the distribution of coin types provides insight into the distribution of different types in both cases. Therefore, I believe it is possible to utilize English methods of understanding coin distribution to make claims as to where the locations of Norwegian mints may have been.

As mints in England, during the medieval period, were primarily located in urban centres, such as London and the North Sea port towns, English methods of interpreting coin distribution would suggest that major centres in Norway, like Bergen and Trondheim, would be likely locations for

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2 Gullbekk and Sættem, [in press].
Norwegian mints. However, the presence of a travelling mint in Norway is also conceivable. The idea of a travelling mint can be traced back to the Graeco-Roman period and is associated primarily with the need to finance military campaigns. The idea of travelling mints as a medieval phenomenon has been discussed both in a Scandinavian context, and in the context of Norway. In Norway the Norwegian numismatist and historian Jon Anders Risvaag has taken up the idea of a travelling mint as a discussion point in his dissertation from 2006. Risvaag discussed the possibility of a travelling mint in Norway with references to travelling retinues, the diversification of coinage and coin types and topography. Even though Risvaag opens with theorizing that a travelling mint could have been present in Norway during the Middle Ages he ultimately concludes that it is not possible to determine whether or not one can be determined to have been present at the time. In this thesis, I hope to expand on this discussion utilizing a comparative perspective as my method.

Norway and England, however, are two different countries and this ought to be considered when working with Norwegian coins. The two countries have different histories and different geographical features, both of which would have impacted the ways in which coins were made and used during the medieval period. However, to get around this problem, I will attempt to determine what is similar between England and Norway and to build off of these similarities a method of determining the locations of Norwegian mints.

Following this, it will be my aim to argue that this method of understanding coin use and distribution in the medieval period could theoretically be used to discern the locations of mint places in other medieval European kingdoms that did not mark on their coins the locations in which they were minted.

5 Gullbekk 1996  
The scholarship that I will be primarily relying on, from the English perspective, are the three studies of English coin distribution produced by Michael Metcalf, Rory Naismith and J. L. Bolton. The studies produced by Naismith and Metcalf, however, will make up the bases for my comparative analysis. In 1998, Metcalf published *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Coin Finds*, which analyzed the distribution of single coin finds from across England, dated to between the years 973 and 1086. Naismith’s, *Money and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, focuses on the distribution of Anglo-Saxon coin finds from mints in the south of England between the years 757 and 865. Additionally, the Mayhews’ chapter from *Money and The Church in Medieval Europe, 1000-1200: Practice, Morality and Thought*, “The Church, Markets and Money in Early Medieval England,” will provide additional context for understanding coin use in England during the Middle Ages.

The scholarship that I will be relying on for my understanding of Norwegian coin finds and coin use comes from Jon A. Risvaag, Kolbjørn Skaare and Svein H. Gullbekk. Gullbekk’s book on Norwegian numismatics, *Pengevesenets Fremvekst og Fall i Norge i Middelalderen*, will function as my main point of entry in regards to understanding coin use in Norway. I will use Gullbekk’s article from 1996, “Myntsteder i Norge i tidlig middelalder,” Risvaag’s 2006 dissertation and Skaare’s article from 1970, “Norsk Utmynting på Håkon Håkonssons tid,” as a bases for determining the possible locations of Norwegian mint sites.

In order to build off of these scholars’ work, I will be analyzing coin finds from England and Norway, dated to the 13th century. The data that I will be using to understand the English coin finds will be obtained through the Portable Antiquities Scheme website, which acts as a database for archaeological finds from the United Kingdom. The Norwegian data will be obtained through the archives at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo.
Theory and Methodology

The Norwegian Context

Coin Use in Europe

The use of coin as a means of economic exchange and as a measure of wealth and value has persisted in Europe for most of the continent’s recorded history. The first mention of the minting and use of coin in Europe was recorded by the ancient Greek historian, Herodotus, in his work, *Histories.* Herodotus described how the Lydians, who were located in modern Turkey, used electrum, which is a natural alloy of gold and silver found in the Pactolus and Hermus river that flowed through the Lydian capital of Sardis, to produce coin. The Lydians were described by Herodotus as being accomplished traders. Due to the Lydians’ proficiency with trade and their reliance on it, the need for an efficient method of exchange prompted the Lydians to develop coinage.

The relative efficiency of coin as a medium for exchange led to its dissemination across the Mediterranean world, where it was eventually adopted by the Romans. The Romans used coinage as a means of exchange, but also as a tool for propaganda. During his lifetime, Julius Caesar began putting his portrait on coins that he had minted. This practice of putting their face on their coinage was adopted by subsequent emperors and was expanded to include additional imagery relevant to the political views and aspirations of the individual with the authority to commission the minting of coin.

The general method of coin production employed by the Romans persisted after the decline of the Western Roman Empire until the seventh century when the Merovingian Empire began to fracture and disintegrate due to loss of the emperor’s authority over his counts. However, the decline of the Merovingian Empire did not result in an end to coin production in Europe. The mints in the empire had been operated by the counts on the authority of the emperor. When the emperor’s authority had

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8 Gullbekk, 2014. pp. 45-46
diminished, the mints were left in the hands of the counts. Silver deniers continued to be issued and used as a medium of exchange. Other authorities, such as the church, also began producing their own deniers. St. Lambert, who was bishop of Lyon between 678 and 684, produced some of the earliest examples of these types of coin.⁹

The minting of coin became increasingly important for the church in the medieval period. As Christianity spread throughout Western Europe and became a key fixture in society, coin was used by the church as a tool to spread its own influence and to maintain its vast network of infrastructure across Europe. Christian iconography was frequently represented on coinage produced by both the bishops and by lay authorities. Coin also became an important part of expressing one’s religious devotion. People no longer buried their wealth with them when they died, but instead gave donations and paid a tithe to the church.¹⁰ The church used the production and distribution of coin to promote its position in Medieval European society and to finance its extensive holdings.

The French historian, Georges Duby, argued that coinage had three functions in the medieval period.¹¹ First, coinage promoted the image of the individual with the authority to produce it and raised the individual’s prestige. Second, coinage functioned as a symbol of order. The coin represented a fixed value that could be applied in numerous situations, such as paying a tax or tithe, paying a fine or purchasing goods for use or trade. Finally, coinage was used by the authority behind it to centralize its usages around their person. This meant collecting fines and issuing taxes on market exchanges. By the time of the adoption of coinage in Scandinavia it had already clearly been established as both a convenient medium for economic exchange and as a symbol for authority in the rest of Europe.

Coin Use in Norway

Before the region’s conversion to Christianity in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the use of coin in Scandinavia as currency was not widespread. However, coins from outside of Scandinavia made their way into the region and were used by craftspeople to produce jewellery and other goods. Coin was valued by Scandinavians during the Viking period for its silver content. Silver deniers and silver dirhams have been found in hoards across Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{12} Deniers were acquired by Vikings through periodically raiding and demanding tribute from the nobility of Western Europe. However, it is also likely that silver deniers were acquired and brought to Scandinavia through trade between the two regions. Goods, such as amber and fur, were sent to markets in Western Europe and exchanged for silver. Dirhams were brought into Scandinavia through similar means as the deniers were. The Khazars had been trading with the Abbasids; sending furs, amber and slaves south. Vikings, moving east into modern Russia, became involved in these markets and trading practices as well. These silver coins were spread throughout the territories held by Vikings from Gotland to Yorkshire.\textsuperscript{13}

Around the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh century, Christianity became increasingly more popular and accepted in Scandinavia. In 965, the Danish King Harald Bluetooth converted to Christianity and converted Denmark to the same religion. Around the same time, Christianity was also spreading into Norway. The Norwegian king, Håkon the Good, who reigned from 934 to 961, had tried to bring Christianity to Norway. However, opposition from Jarl Sigurd of Trøndelag prevented the conversion of the country to Christianity at that time. By the end of the tenth century though, the gradual adoption of Christianity in Norway continued to progress.\textsuperscript{14} In 995, Olav Tryggvason became the King of Norway. As king, Olav Tryggvason attempted to get all of the nobility to convert to Christianity and consolidated Norway into a single kingdom.\textsuperscript{15} However, it was not until

\textsuperscript{13} Skaare, 1976. p. 51.
\textsuperscript{14} Sawyer, 1993. pp. 101-104.
\textsuperscript{15} Historia Norwegiae. 10r.
the reign of Olav Haraldsson in the 11th century that Christianity was truly accepted by the majority of the ruling class in Norway and made a prominent feature of Norwegian culture.

Following the conversion of the Scandinavian kingdoms to Christianity, coin from outside of the region still made its way there. Between 991 and 1012, £134 000 of English coins were sent as tributary payments to Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{16} The production of coinage had taken place in Norway under the reigns of Olav Trygvarsson and Olav Haraldsson, however, it was not until the time of Harald Hardrada, who reigned from 1046 to 1066, that Norwegian kings started to produce coinage at a significant level. These coins tended to imitate the style of English coins, particularly those produced by the English king, Edward the Confessor.\textsuperscript{17} Olav Kyrres, Harald Hardrada’s successor, continued the practise of minting coins. Together, they helped establish a culture of coin production in Medieval Norway that persisted into the fourteenth century.

The production and use of coin in Medieval Norway was closely tied to the authority of the king.\textsuperscript{18} This reflects trends in coin production and use seen elsewhere in Europe during the medieval period. The Crown had the authority to produce coin, which it could then use to buy goods and to pay for military expeditions. The Crown could then collect coin from the people through the \textit{leidang}, or naval tax, and other regional taxes, called \textit{vissør}.\textsuperscript{19}

The Crown was also in the position to grant minting authority to others; particularly to the Church. In 1222, the Church in Norway received the authority to produce its own coins.\textsuperscript{20} This authority was renewed in 1277 in the Concordat of Tønsberg.\textsuperscript{21} Like the Crown, the Church was also in the position to collect coin from the people. This was done through the collection of tithes and the acceptance of donations. The Crown and the Church also both collected land rents from their tenants,

\textsuperscript{21} Sættargjerde av Kong Magnus og Erkebiskop Jon. 17 (quod clerici sint liberi a tributis).
however it is not clear how much of this was paid by coin or by goods produced. The collection of coin by the Crown and the Church created a need for coin in Norway.

The implementation of taxation on trade in Norway during the medieval period promoted the acquisition of coin by people desiring to take part in trade. This meant that more people over time began to possess coin and require it for their needs. Due to the fact that coin was necessary for trade in the market and required in the paying of tithes and taxes, it began to be used more often in various transactions between individuals living in Norway.

During the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, there was a great need for the crown to produce coin. This was due to the fact that at this time Norway was going through a period of relative political instability. In 1130, Sigurd the Crusader died and was succeed by his two sons; Magnus Sigurdsson and Harald Gille. In 1134, Harald was forced out of Norway. However, he later returned with Danish support launching Norway into civil war. This continued throughout the rest of the twelfth century as various members of the nobility and the Church formed factions supporting different claimants to the throne. Before Håkon Håkonsson became king in 1217, Norway had been divided into two by the Birkibeinar and Baglar factions. The Birkibeinar king, Inge Bårdsson, ruled the northern and western areas of Norway, while the Baglar king, Filippus Simonsson, ruled in the east. However, in 1217, both kings died and Håkon Håkonsson became king of a united Norway. Initially, however, Håkon was made to rule alongside his uncle, Skule.

During his reign, Håkon had to wage many military campaigns to maintain control over Norway, eventually even against his uncle, Skule. This meant that he needed to produce a vast quantity of coinage in order to pay his men. In Haakon Haakonssøns saga, Håkon is described as having to use his own silver to make coins to pay his men. The need for coinage at this time is also reflected in the

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24 The Saga of Hacon. 210
large amount of bracteates from Håkon’s reign found in churches across Norway. The processes of commercialization and urbanization taking place in Norway at the time, as well as costs associated with administrating a growing kingdom, would have promoted the production of additional coinage as well. However, the large amounts of certain coin types from this time could reflect the need to provide payment to the military. Coins from this time are not labelled with an indication of where it is that they were minted, so it is not clear that all of these coins were minted by the Crown.

**English Coin Distribution**

England, through much of the medieval period, had a strong tradition of coin production and circulation. England was divided into administrative sections, called boroughs, which were centred around towns that had been granted a charter by the English Crown. These towns also had the right to hold a market and to mint coin. The high rates at which these boroughs produced coin has provided the modern observer with a large corpus of numismatic material from the English medieval period, stretching from the Anglo-Saxon era into the Norman era that followed.

Due to the large collection of numismatic material in England, scholars have been able to do a substantial amount of research in the field. The English numismatist, D. M. Metcalf, produced a comprehensive study of single Anglo-Saxon and Norman coin finds from the period between 973 and 1086. Metcalf was able to produce a working model of monetary circulation in England at the time. Through his model, Metcalf was able to make some observations on the distribution of coin in England. Metcalf was able to do this due to the fact that English coins tended to be labelled with the name of the mint that they were produced.

Metcalf observed that the amount of coin finds from a specific mint were found more often in close proximity to the mint from which they were produced. Metcalf also observed that certain factors, regarding the location of the mint determined the range and scope for the distribution of coin from the
The size of the market in a borough had a direct impact on the range at which coin produced in the town's mint could be found in the rest of the country. London, with the largest market in England, had the largest range, resulting in coins minted there being found throughout much of the country. Metcalf also noted that local geography played a factor in the distribution patterns of a specific mint. Coins minted in York, for example, tended to be located primarily in the north. York was separated from the southern half of England by the Humber River, preventing its coins from going south in large quantities. Coins produced by mints located on the eastern North Sea coast of England also tended to be found along the North Sea coast line. This reflects the presence of trading networks that had developed there at the time with Scandinavia and Northern Europe.

Since Metcalf produced his study on Anglo-Saxon and Norman coin finds, the English numismatic corpus has grown substantially due to the growing popularity of metal detecting and cooperation between metal detectorists and numismatists. A study of English coin from the early medieval period, produced by S. J. And N. J. Mayhew, supported the observation, made by Metcalf, that coins from a town with a larger market tended to travel further than coins from towns with smaller markets. Mayhew’s study also supported Metclaf’s assertion that geography played an important role in the distribution of coin from a specific mint. Mayhew observed that, though coins from York can be found throughout England, the amount of coin finds in York and the surrounding area from south of the Humber River are far fewer than elsewhere in the country indicating that York was, to some extent, separated from the rest of England economically.

In a study of English coin finds from southern England between 757 to 865, Rory Naismith also observed that the amount of coin finds from a specific mint are found in larger quantities closer to the mint of origin. Naismith notes that mints from a particular region tended to be represented in the finds

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to a larger extent in the region the mint is located in. Coins minted in Ipswich, for example, were found more often and at a higher rate in East Anglia than they were elsewhere in the country. Naismith, however, also noted that some mints were consistently represented throughout the country. Coins minted in Canterbury, for example, were found in Kent in a large proportion, but were also found in other regions, such as East Anglia, Mercia and Wessex, making up a large proportion of the total coin finds found there as well. The fact that coin finds from Canterbury were consistently distributed throughout southern England at this time reflects the importance of Canterbury as a centre of exchange in the country.

*English Coin Finds from The Reign of Henry III*

The rise in the popularity of metal detecting in the United Kingdom has also coincided with increased efforts by the English numismatic community to produce better ways to document coin finds in the country. The Portable Antiquities Scheme, an online database of archaeological finds in England, is an example of this effort. Using the Portable Antiquities Scheme database, I was able to assemble a table of coin distribution for the ten most productive mints during the reign of Henry III. The ten most productive mints from the period, represented in the corpus of coin finds from the period of Henry III’s reign as King of England, were London, Canterbury, Bury St. Edmund, Lincoln, Winchester, Northampton, York, Oxford, Norwich and Gloucester. For each region in England, I calculated the proportion of coin finds from each of these ten mints. Following this, I was able to make some observations that reflect trends in English coin distribution outlined by Metcalf, Mayhew and Naismith.

Of the ten mints included in this table, London and Canterbury have produced the most coin finds. Of the total 10 373 coin finds from the period of Henry III’s reign, London produced 32.6% and Canterbury produced 22.2%. Together, the mints from London and Canterbury represent over 50% of the total coin finds from the period. For most of the regions documented in this table, London and

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28 See Distribution of English coin finds by region. *(Table 2)*
Canterbury comprise of anywhere between 40% to 60% of the total coin finds. I believe this reflects the importance of London and Canterbury as the primary commercial and religious centres in Medieval England.

The eight other mints represented in my table comprise a much smaller proportion of the total coin finds. Together they comprise less than 10% of the finds from the period. However, I believe the proportion at which these mints are represented regionally reflects geographic trends for coin distribution observed by Metcalf, Mayhew and Naismith. Mints located on the east coast, like Bury St. Edmund, are represented at a higher rate there than they are further west. Coins from York are also found at a higher proportion in the north than they are in the south.

The fact that patterns of coin distribution in England from the thirteenth century reflect patterns in coin distribution from the Early Medieval Period is important. I believe that this demonstrates that observations made by scholars like Metcalf on coin distribution in England can be applied throughout the Medieval Period. Due to the fact that these observations are not restricted by time, it can be possible to hypothesis that they are not restricted by place as well.

The Question of Geography

In this thesis, as outlined above, I will be analyzing the distribution of Norwegian coin types from the reign of Håkon Håkonsson using methods developed in the context of English coin finds in England. A potential problem with this method of analyses is the fact that Norway and England are two distinct countries with markedly different geography. This presents the question of whether or not these two countries can even be compared to one another that I will need to address before proceeding further.

The geography of Norway, and of Scandinavia as a whole, has been shaped through the process of glacial erosion that had occurred as the glaciers that once covered most of the region gradually receded over thousands of years. As the glaciers receded, they produced valleys, canyons, fjords and
lakes. The glaciers also moved large quantities of rocks and sediments with them as they receded up into the mountains. Some of these rocks and sediments were also moved in the opposite direction by streams and rivers that formed from the melt water produced by the glaciers. As the glaciers receded, Scandinavia also began to rise. The massive weight of the glaciers had compressed Scandinavia, so when they receded, the land mass began to expand due to the pressure that had been produced now being able to be released. The process of land rising is most observable in Sweden, however, it is also observed in the geography of Southern Norway around the Oslo fjord area.  

The topography of Norway played an influential role in determining where it was possible for people to establish communities. Much of Norway is covered in mountainous terrain, relatively unsuitable for large scale agricultural production. In these regions, the soil is either too thin or it retains too much water making it unsuitable for growing crops like grain. The soil, ideal for growing grain, is found, almost exclusively, along fjords and large inland lakes in Norway, making these areas the most suitable for development. In a yet unpublished study by Gullbekk and Sættem, topography and communication is being discussed at some length. They introduce monetary arenas as a theoretical approach to understanding coin circulation in the Middle Ages. In their study they have found a clear correlation between coin finds and communication routes in Norway.  

The geography of England, on the other hand, provided much more land suitable for agricultural use. South of the Humber River, rich soil allowed for both intense cultivation of crops and pastoral grazing. In the North, the soil was less fertile making the cultivation of crops on the scale seen in the South impossible, however, the soil was still able to support a system of pastoral agriculture. The abundance of arable land in England, compared to Norway, allowed for rural and urban development to comprise a much larger proportion of the total landmass. In Norway, the areas suitable
for development were restricted to small pockets of land, while in England there were far less restrictions on where development could occur. These factors had a direct impact on how communities in each of these respective countries could grow.

The way in which people moved from place to place was also influenced by the geography of each of these two countries. In this regard, there are some commonalities between Norway and England. The mountainous geography of Norway and the fact that most communities where situated on some body of water, as Norway possesses the longest coastline in all of Europe, promoted the use of ships or water craft to move about and to transport goods. In England, the use of waterways for transportation was also widespread. Communities in England were established along many different river systems and along the North Sea and Channel coasts in order to give them ready access to networks of economic exchange.\textsuperscript{33} Access to these shipping lanes, or \textit{skipsleia}, allowed for communities to specialize their economies. In Norway, the production of dried fish was prioritized over the production of grain due to demand for dried fish in the North Sea. This meant that Norwegians could favourably exchange their fish stocks for Baltic grain.\textsuperscript{34}

Roads where also present in both Norway and England. However, the roads in the two countries were very different. In Norway, roads were produced over time in the mountain passes that connected the western coast of the country to the south-eastern portion of the country around Oslo Fjord. In England, the Romans had left behind roads which were used throughout the medieval period. However, the use of waterways in England was cheaper and more efficient.\textsuperscript{35}

Metcalf\textquotesingle s study of Anglo-Saxon coin finds in England also indicates the importance of waterways as part of the commercial networks from the period. Metcalf concludes that a large proportion of coin production and use in Anglo-Saxon England took place on the east coast of

\textsuperscript{33} Creighton, 2005. pp. 41-42.
\textsuperscript{34} Orman, 2003. pp. 269-270.
England. People from the hinterland of England would have needed to travel to these communities to sell and buy goods or they would have needed to rely on some other individual to travel there and bring goods back to their community. People in Norway would have needed to rely on access to trade networks that passed through major coastal ports, such as Bergen or Trondheim, to support themselves as well. Communities located in areas with poor soil or no arable land would have needed access to the markets in towns like Bergen to supplement their stocks of food with grain either produced in Norway or abroad, or they would have gained access to commercially available crop through trade networks in relation to markets, thing assembly meetings, inns and in relation to church services throughout the year. This would have created patterns of economic exchange similar to those observed in England.

Though England and Norway are geographically distinct from one another the need for markets existed in both countries. This means that parallels can be draw between the two countries and because of this it should therefore be possible to adapt methods of understanding coin distribution in England to a Norwegian context.

Conclusion

I believe that observations made regarding coin distribution in England provide a theoretical foundation for developing a universal model for interpreting coin distributions. I believe that this model can be applied to the distribution of coins found in Norway in the Medieval Period, particularly during the reign of Håkon Håkonsson.

There are, however, some key differences between the corpus of English coin finds and Norwegian coin finds. English coins tended to be labelled with the name of the mint of origin, providing the modern observer with a point of departure for the coin. Norwegian coins, however, do not have this convenient label. However, various different types of coins from the reign of Håkon

37 Gullbekk and Sættem [in press]
Håkon Håkonsson have been catalogued.\textsuperscript{38} Using these catalogues of the different types of coins produced during the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, I can map the distribution of coin types in Norway through archaeological and numismatic evidence provided through church finds. I believe that the distribution of coin types will reflect patterns of coin distribution observed in an English context, allowing me to draw conclusions on the location of origin for a specific coin type.

**Norwegian Historical Context**

The history of medieval Norway, proceeding Håkon Håkonsson becoming the king of Norway in 1217, was characterized by succession disputes resulting from the method in which kings in Norway were crowned. In medieval Norway, in order to be acclaimed as king, a claimant to the throne needed to have the support of the people. In Norway, at the time, free men regularly participated in gatherings referred to as *things*. The *things* were held throughout Norway and functioned as gatherings where laws were agreed upon and disputes between individuals were adjudicated. The *things* also functioned as the venue for which a claimant to the throne could be given the support of the people.

At the *thing*, in order to legitimately be made the king of Norway, claimants needed to participate in a ceremony in which they are deemed, by the people, to be worthy of the title of king. If the claimant is seen as being worthy of the title, he was made to exchange pledges between himself and his subjects.\textsuperscript{39} The method of succession through acclamation at an *thing* became problematic, however, due to the fact that any son of a previous king was considered to be a legitimate candidate for king of Norway. The fact that there were multiple *things* across Norway, in the medieval period, also meant that multiple candidates could have the support of different *things*.

In 1130, the Norwegian king, Sigurd I, who was referred to as Sigurd *Jorsalfar* or “the Crusader,” died and was succeeded by his son, Magnus IV.\textsuperscript{40} Sigurd’s son, Magnus, was the son of one

\begin{footnotes}
\item[38] Person, 1937; Skaare, 1970.
\item[40] Ibid. p. 369.
\end{footnotes}
of his concubines. The fact that he was an illegitimate son may have made people less willing to support his claim. Sigurd, however, was a very popular king during his reign. This popularity with the people of Norway, at the time, allowed for Sigurd to promote his son, Magnus, as his heir and afforded Magnus with a great deal of support from the people.\textsuperscript{41} The medieval monk, Theodoric, in his history of the kings of Norway, \textit{Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium}, however, accounts that, near the end of Sigurd’s reign as king of Norway, a man named Harald Gille arrived at court from Ireland, claiming to be Sigurd’s brother. Harald’s claim was first met with skepticism from the king, so to prove his parentage, Sigurd ordered Harald to walk across burning ploughshares. Following the ordeal, Harald was revealed to has sustained no injuries and Sigurd proclaimed him to be his brother.\textsuperscript{42} After being named as Sigurd’s brother, Harald also agreed to recognize Magnus’ right to the throne.\textsuperscript{43} However, following Sigurd’s death, Harald soon went back on his word.

Initially, both Magnus and Harald we named king and, for a short period of time, ruled together. The relationship between the two kings was tense, however, and by 1134, war had broken out between the two king’s rival factions. Harald was driven out of Norway by Magnus in 1134. In the following year though, Harald returned to Norway with the support of his Danish allies. Harald and his allies attacked Magnus at Bergen, where Magnus was captured and mutilated.\textsuperscript{44} The conflict between Magnus and Harald, following the death of Sigurd in 1130, sparked a series of succession disputes that would last throughout much of the 12\textsuperscript{th} century.

In 1136, Harald Gille was killed and was succeeded by his two infant sons, Inge and Sigurd. Inge was Harald’s legitimate son and Sigurd was illegitimate. Harald had had most of his support centred in the Viken region of Norway, and this was also the case for Inge. Sigurd, on the other hand, was supported by the people of Trøndelag. Both infants were proclaimed to be king in 1136, due to the

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Agrid af Noregskonungasøgum}. LVII.
\textsuperscript{42} Theodoricus. 34. 1-9.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Agrid af Noregskonungasøgum}. LVIII.
\textsuperscript{44} Helle, 2003. p. 371.
fact that Inge’s supporters felt that otherwise the people of Trøndelag would not support Inge as king.\textsuperscript{45}

In 1142, a third king was brought to Norway from Scotland, named Eystein. Like Sigurd, Eystein was an illegitimate son of Harald.

The presence of three kings in Norway, at this time, exasperated a growing sense of regional particularism in Norway. This led to the various supporter groups of the three kings becoming established groups or \textit{flokkar}. Following the deaths of the three brothers in the 1150s, the supporters of Inge promoted Magnus Erlingsson as their king. Magnus was the son of Sigurd the Crusader’s daughter, Kristin, making his claim to the throne rather weak. However, Inge’s \textit{flokkar} had grown to be the dominant faction in Norway, which gave them the influence to promote Magnus’ claim. In 1177, however, a rival faction, referred to as the \textit{Birkibeinar}, declared Sverre Sigurdsson as their king. Sverre was the illegitimate son of Sigurd Haraldsson and had been brought up in the Faeroe Islands.\textsuperscript{46}

The arrival and crowning of Sverre, in 1177, changed the way in which the conflicts in Norway at the time were fought. Initially, fighting had taken place primarily between the close supports, or \textit{lendir menn}, of the various Norwegian kings. Now, however, the various factions were mobilizing the men of entire regions to go on yearly expeditions. Thousands of men were now taking part in battles across Norway.\textsuperscript{47} The conflicts between the various factions at this time were quickly causing Norway to militarize.

In 1184, Magnus was defeated by Sverre and his supports. However, various other factions persisted and continued to support different pretenders to the throne of Norway. In 1196, the bishop of Oslo, Nikolas Arnesson, with support from the archbishop of Nidaros, Eirik Ivarsson, established the \textit{Baglar} faction in opposition to the rule of King Sverre. Eirik Ivarsson had been forced out of Norway into exile due to his opposition to Sverre’s policy of reducing the freedom of the Church in Norway.

\textsuperscript{45} Helle, 2003. p. 373.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid. pp. 373-374.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. p. 374.
The Baglar’s association with the Church in Norway afforded them a great deal of support among the people. This support allowed for the Baglar faction to persist throughout the rest of Sverre’s reign. However, the Baglar resistance to the crown inadvertently caused the power of the monarchy in Norway to grow. The constant warfare taking place in Norway at the time, due to the conflict with the Baglar, led to Sverre’s close followers becoming hardened loyal soldiers, who he could trust to represent the crown in regions of Norway he was not present in. Having trusted followers being able to represent the crown, without the king being present, allowed for Sverre to exert control over a large proportion of Norway. This in turn prevented smaller regional factions from establishing themselves throughout the kingdom.

By the 13th century, however, the constant state of warfare in Norway had begun to temper many of the peasants willingness to take part in the conflict between the Birkibeinar and Baglar factions. In 1204 and in 1207, the Birkibeinar and Baglar factions, respectively, needed to elect new leaders at the things. The peasantry and the clergy opposed militaristic factions within the two groups, at each of the things, to elect militaristic leaders and instead forced more peaceful minded candidates to be nominated. In 1204, Inge Bårdsson was named king of the Birkibeinar faction and in 1207, Filippus Simonsson was named king of the Baglar faction. In 1208, Norway was divided between the two kings. Inge was made king in the western and northern regions of Norway and Filippus was made king in Østlandet. In 1217, both kings died allowing for the two factions to agree on a single king, Håkon Håkonsson. The election of Håkon Håkonsson as the king of Norway put an end to the series of succession disputes and factional warfare that had prevented Norway from unifying under a single person for nearly a century.

The Reign of Håkon Håkonsson

The reign of Håkon Håkonsson as king of Norway, can be roughly divided into three periods. These three periods reflect the way in which Håkon ruled Norway. The first period stretches from 1217 to 1240 reflecting Håkon’s shared leadership of Norway with Skule Bårdsson. The second period stretches from 1240 to 1261 when Håkon ruled Norway independently. The last and shortest period stretches from 1261 to 1263 when Håkon ruled alongside his son, Magnus VI, who would succeed him as king of Norway after Håkon’s death.

In 1217, Håkon Håkonsson was named king of Norway at one of the primary things, called the Gulating. However, members of the past factions that had been fighting against one another for nearly a century before Håkon became king were still influential in the decision making process for electing the new king of Norway. The brother of Inge Bårdsson, Skule, was popular among many of the Norwegian nobility. Skule’s influence, at the time, allowed for him to obtain a prominent position in court, following Håkon becoming king. In 1223, the supporters of Skule in the Norwegian court called for a national assembly at the Gulating. The Gulating was one of the four law-things in Norway at the time that presided over the region of Vestlandet. The national assembly had been called due to the fact that many of the supporters of Skule doubted Håkon’s right to be king of Norway. At the assembly, it was determined that Håkon was the legitimate king and Skule and his supporters agreed to recognize the verdict. However, in the following two decades, Skule began polarizing the kingdom by repeatedly raising soldiers and building ships without the permission of the king. In 1239, Skule was finally proclaimed king of Norway by his followers, echoing the succession crisis of the previous century. However, as Skule was disobeying the king by raising soldiers and building ships, the king was establishing himself as a capable leader. Håkon had succeeded in putting down most of the revolts that

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50 Saga of Hacon. 23-24.
had taken place in the east of Norway following his declaration as king in 1217. In 1227, Håkon had defeated the Ribbungar faction in Viken, located in the east of Norway, allowing him to establish himself in the region. Following Skule being declared king in 1239, Håkon was able to call on the support of his allies that he had earned by leading multiple successful campaigns up to that point. By 1240, Skule and his allies had been defeated, leaving Håkon as the undisputed king of Norway.\(^{52}\)

Following the events of 1240, the amount of conflict taking place in Norway during the reign of Håkon Håkonsson decreases dramatically. This fact is observed by Hans Jacob Orning in his 2008 study of *Haakon Haakonssøns saga*.\(^ {53}\) Orning notes that Skule’s defeat left the country devoid of potential candidates for king, who could be rallied behind by regional factions in Viken and in Trøndelag. Orning also argues that the issue of regional divisions was not necessarily solved during Håkon’s reign. When it came time to begin determining who ought to be the king in the future, there were still arguments for different candidates. However, after Håkon, by the time it was necessary to name a new monarch, there was generally only ever one eligible male heir.

Though following 1240 the rate of conflict in Norway had been reduced drastically, there were still a couple of events that I believe require mentioning, as they may have had an impact on the minting of coins in Norway at the time. Both of these events are related to coronations.

The first of these coronations occurred in the second period of Håkon’s reign, that I had distinguished earlier. Håkon was born from the concubine of Håkon III, who had ruled for a short time between 1202 and 1204. The circumstances of his birth had made Håkon ineligible to be king, from the perspective of the Papacy. The assembly of 1223 had in part been called due to these papal concerns regarding Håkon’s right to rule Norway. Following the assembly of 1223, Håkon made multiple efforts to gain the support and recognition of the Pope. Following the death of Pope Gregory IX in 1241, Håkon was able to establish a good relationship with his successor, Innocent IV. Håkon did this by

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aligning himself with the Pope in his disputes with the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederik II. In 1246, Innocent IV officially recognized Håkon as king of Norway. The following year, the Cardinal, William of Sabina, arrived in Bergen and Håkon was officially made king of Norway and given a coronation. After his coronation, Håkon was also given permission by the church to force Iceland to acknowledge him as their king and to pay him taxes. The coronation of Håkon in 1247 was a momentous event. The coronation both functioned to legitimize his reign in the eyes of the Church, strengthening his ties with the rest of medieval Europe, and allowed for Håkon to exert greater control over Norway’s distant western colonies.

The second coronation heralded the last of the three periods of time making up Håkon’s reign as king of Norway. Initially, Håkon’s son, Håkon the Young, had been named as Håkon’s heir. However, following the death of Håkon the Young in 1257, Håkon’s second son, Magnus, was named as his heir. In 1261, Magnus was crowned as Håkon’s co-king in Bergen. Following his coronation, Magnus was also given his own fief in Stavanger, south of Bergen. The coronation of his son, Magnus, foreshadowed the end of Håkon’s reign as king of Norway. In 1262, Håkon began preparations for an invasion of the Scottish Isles. In 1263, Håkon left Norway for Scotland, leaving his son in charge of the kingdom, however, upon reaching Scotland, Håkon became ill and eventually died. The importance of these events, in the context of my thesis, is that, following his coronation, Håkon’s son Magnus was made king and potentially afforded the same privileges as his father. Therefore, from Stavanger, Magnus may have had the authority to produce his own coinage.

The reign of Håkon Håkonsson followed a period of time in Norwegian history that was characterized by continuous warfare. This acted to militarize the society that Håkon would be made to rule over. Therefore, for much of his reign, though the level of conflict in the kingdom had decreased

54 The Saga of Hacon. 254-255.
55 Ibid. 257.
56 Ibid. 310.
57 Ibid. 328-330.
since the times of king Sverre, going on campaigns in order to put down regional revolts or potential pretenders was what Håkon was still required to do. This would have required a great deal of coinage, as Håkon would have needed to pay his soldiers for their services.

**Norwegian Towns and Church Provinces**

The medieval Church in Norway can be traced back to the 10th and 11th centuries. During this period of time there were many attempts made to convert the kingdom to Christianity. By the end of the 10th century, during the reign of the Norwegian king, Olav Tryggvason, the chieftains of Norway had agreed to adopt Christianity as their religion at the *thing*. Following the adoption of Christianity by the majority of the ruling elite in Norway, the religion gradually began to cement itself as a key component of Norwegian society. The Church in Norway also gradually was able to establish itself. Initially the role of the clergy in Norway was to travel around the country, building churches and converting people to Christianity. Adam of Bremen, writing in the later half of the 11th century, described the bishops of Norway and Sweden as being responsible for the organization and construction of churches. He also noted that they were responsible for the conversion of the people in the two kingdoms and making sure that, after conversion, they continued to follow the laws dictated by their new faith.

By the 12th century, Norway had firmly become part of the Scandinavian church province, centred in Lund. However, in 1152 or 1153, The province under Lund was divided and a new church province was established in Norway under the archbishopric in Nidaros. The new church province under Nidaros was divided internally into dioceses centred in Bergen, Stavanger, Oslo and Hamar. These four towns, as well as Trondheim where Nidaros was located, were also some of the main urban centres in Norway during the medieval period. For the coinage of Nidaros and the use of money in

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59 Adam of Bremen. Book 4, Ch. 34.
Nidaros there exists a monograph that provides a detailed discussion on the subject in Jon Anders Risvaag dissertation from 2006.61

The city of Bergen, listed above, was a major commercial centre in Norway as well as the seat of a bishopric. Norway was an important node in the network of North Sea trade due to the kingdoms large stocks of fish. The fishing industry in Norway was centred around Lofoten in the north where fish stocks were collected and sent south to be sold. Initially, this system of trade allowed the city of Trondheim to flourish. Fish from Lofoten were brought to the city and sold to merchants who then travelled to other towns in the North Sea region and beyond. By the 13th century, many towns in England and the Low Countries had begun to develop into major urban centres making access to food supplies like fish very important. During the reign of the Norwegian king, Olav Kyrre, the town of Bergen was established as the new centre of fish export in Norway, displacing Trondheim.62 The importance of this network of trade, centred around fish, allowed Bergen to become one of the largest towns in Scandinavia during the medieval period, with a population of around 7 000 people by the end of the 13th century.63

The large size and economic importance of Bergen made it an important political centre in Norway during the medieval period. In Haakon Haakonssøns saga, the town of Bergen, as well as Tønsberg to a lesser extent, was depicted as being the king’s primary residence. It was in Bergen, and on some occasions in Tønsberg, that Håkon Håkonsson regularly celebrated Yule. During his reign, Håkon needed to travel between his territories in the west and his territories along the Oslo Fjord. The political instability of the 12th century in Norway had divided the kingdom along regional lines making it impossible to govern from a fixed capital.

63 Ibid. p. 42.
The town of Tønsberg is located on the Oslo Fjord and was an important centre for the Baglar faction before it was captured in 1201. In 1223, Håkon had the leaders of the local peasantry in the region around the town swear allegiance to him. The presence of local support in the region surrounding the town and the symbolic importance attributed to the town due to its role in the civil wars cemented the town as an important centre for the king’s rule in the region. The presence of the monarchy in the town on a regular basses may have given the town an important economic role in the medieval Norwegian economy as well.

The presence of a major church centre, like a bishopric, or a royal residence in a town would likely have made the town an important economic centre in its immediate vicinity at the very least during the medieval period. In Norway, however, a third factor may have made the town into an important centre as well. During the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, Norway was divided into four law regions, centred around a law-thing. These four law-things were the Borgarting, located near the town of Borg, the Eidsivating, located near Lake Mjøsa which is near to the town of Hamar, the Gulating, located in Gulen near Bergen, and the Frostating, located at Tinghaugen in Trøndelag. These four law-things functioned to oversee the fylke, or counties, in the different regions of the kingdom. The Borgarting administrated the region of Viken in the east along the borderer with Sweden. The Eidsivating administrated Oppland, which was north of Viken. The Gulating administrated Vestlandet and the Frostating administrated the fylke in Trøndelag. For some time there was also a fifth law-thing near Tønsberg, called the Haugating, but its association with the Baglar faction saw it fall from prominence during the 13th century.

The presence of any of these institutions mentioned earlier in or around a town in medieval Norway would have likely made the town an important economic centre on a regional level. If a town had more than one of these institutions located in or around itself, it is possible that this may have

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promoted the towns economic impact on the economy of Norway at the time. This could therefore have made these towns candidates for mints and coin production in order to fill a potential demand for currency in these towns.

The Question of Geography

Before proceeding to an analysis and comparison of coin distribution in Norway to coin distribution in England during the 13th century, I would first like to address the issue of geography, mentioned earlier in this paper. To reiterate, the two medieval kingdoms of England and Norway were significantly different from one another in regards to their geographical features. The landscape of England is characterized by rivers and farmlands, while the Norwegian landscape is shaped by mountain ranges and fjords.

The difference in terrain between the two countries would of had an effect on the economies within both the kingdoms. Travelling by land, for example, would have been much more time consuming and dangerous in Norway due to the treacherous terrain, as well as to the fact that Norway was much larger and many of the towns in Norway were further apart. This would also potentially have an impact on the distribution of coins in each of the countries. However, both England and Norway share a key geographical feature that I believe makes them valid for comparison in an economic context. Both Norway and England are located along the coast of the North Sea.

The North Sea acted as a highway linking distant towns in the region together during the medieval period. This is clearly reflected in the distribution of English coins in Scandinavia during the Viking Age.66 Between 970 and 1145, for example, K. Jonsson calculated that around half of the coins found in Norwegian hoards were from England, illustrating the two kingdoms’ close economic bonds.67 The trade routes along the North Sea also facilitated urban and population growth in the two kingdoms.

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Bergen had become one of the largest towns in all of Scandinavia by the end of the 13th century, due in part to demand for fish from other North Sea ports stimulating economic growth in the town. In England, trade in the North Sea also acted in a similar manor, causing development and growth to occur in the regions of England on the sea’s coast.68 The importance of coastal trade to the development of urban communities in both England and Norway would have stimulated the growth of trade in the North Sea as well. This in turn would have promoted travelling by sea in both England and Norway.

The importance of the North Sea trade routes gave England and Norway a common economic characteristic, which I believe makes it possible to compare the two. All of the major Norwegian towns at the time, with the exception of Hamar, which was located on Lake Mjøsa, were located on the Norwegian coast line, or near to it, and had access to the North Sea. Though it should be noted that it is still important to take into consideration the two countries geographical differences when comparing the two, it is clear that the shared North Sea coastline will have impacted commercial practises in the two kingdoms in similar ways.

Money

The concept of money or currency has discussed and thought about by academics throughout much of history. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, defined the key properties of money in his work, *Nicomachean Ethics*.69 Aristotle describes money as “a guarantee of exchange in the future.” Aristotle notes that, in an exchange of goods, two people may not both be in possession of things that the other wants or needs. Instead, someone may approach another and use money as a substitute for some commodity. This insures that exchange can still happen, even when one part is not in need of something. Due to it’s function, Aristotle notes that the value of money ought to be fixed. Money then should also be valuable.

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69 Aristot. Nic. Eth. 5.5.14
The first coins produced by the Lydians were made from an alloy of gold and silver, called electrum.\textsuperscript{70} The alloy was rare and possessed desirable physical features, making it a valuable commodity. However, the alloy had very few practical applications. This principle is reflected in the use of silver and gold, separately, in the production of coinage throughout much of the world. The use of these metals then becomes a practical way of producing money that is universally understood to have some fixed value. The use of cowry shells along the coast of the Indian Ocean as money, also reflect this principle of money as the shells themselves do not have any practical usage, but instead reflect some fixed agreed upon value. However, as Aristotle notes, the value of money, like the value of goods, can fluctuate due to demand. The cowry shells are valued less in places like the Maldives where they are readily available, while in places located further away, from where the shells are collected, they are given a much higher value.\textsuperscript{71} The impact of demand on the value of gold and silver currency can also be observed. In the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, the Malian king, Musa I, went on pilgrimage to Mecca. To finance his pilgrimage, Musa I carried with him a large quantity of gold. While travelling through Egypt, Musa I spent such a large quantity of gold that the value of gold dropped throughout the entire Mediterranean and silver became more valuable than gold in Egypt.\textsuperscript{72}

Though vulnerable to fluctuation in regards to their value, the use of coins made from preciousness metals as money was fitting, as, for the most part, their value would remain roughly the same. Aristotle argues that “there can be no exchange without equality, and no equality without commensurability.” Therefore, in a medieval European context, the use of coins made from valuable metals like gold and silver were necessary for currency to be established and used. The value of these rare metals could be clearly determined and fixed, while alternatives to coins made of rare metals

\textsuperscript{70} Carson, 1962. p. x.
\textsuperscript{71} Van Damme, “Cowry Shells, a trade currency.”
\textsuperscript{72} Goodwin, 1957. p. 110.
would have been valued differently by people of different backgrounds and in different contexts, forcing people to rely on barter for exchange.

Coin Finds

Before continuing to proceed, it may be necessary to establish the differences between various kinds of coin finds. First, however, I believe it would be helpful to briefly define what is a coin in a medieval context. Earlier, while arguing for a definition of what is money, the concept of a coin was put forward. In essence, a coin in a medieval context is relatively similar to contemporary coins. However, it could be argued that medieval coins were made using more valuable metals than modern coins. Coins in the medieval period tended to be made with either silver or copper. Some coins, particularly those from Greece, were also made of gold, however, between the 9th and 13th centuries, gold coins were quite rare. Other metals were also added to coins to debase them during the medieval period. This was done during recoinage. In England, recoinage was generally carried out on a semi-regular basis, two to three times a decade. However, in later periods, recoinage was carried out much less often, occurring once or twice a century.73

In Norway, during the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, the appearance of a coin varied slightly from the appearance one might generally attribute to a coin. When a coin is pictured in one’s mind, it is general seen as possessing an obverse side and a reverse side. These two sides of the coin are often colloquially referred to as the head side and as the tails side. In many cases, medieval coins paralleled this modern conception of what a coin ought to look like. Generally, one face of the coin had and image of a monarch displayed on it and the other side displayed some image relevant to the crown. These images could include crosses, animals or other forms of heraldry. Coins in Norway, however, diverted from this trend.

In 13th century Norway, a type of coin, referred to as bracteates, were commonly used and produced. The name of this type of coin derives from *bractea*, which means a thin sheet of metal.\(^7\) This reflects the fact that these coins were made using thin stripes of metal, usually containing some percentage of silver, in the case of Norwegian bracteates. The thin size of the coins meant the reverse side of the coin was an indentation of the obverse side. When a bracteate was produced, the metal strip was struck by a minter using a die and a hammer. The benefit to producing coinage using this method was that a coin could contain less metal and that they were easier to produce. The minter did not need to worry about messing up the reverse side of the coin during the striking process.\(^7\) In this thesis, I will refer to bracteates as coins. I believe that this simplifies vocabulary. Both bracteates and other coin types possess an identical role in commerce. Though, when I will be discussing English coin finds, which are made up of conventional coin types and bracteate types, as coins collectively, it ought to be taken without controversy that I refer to bracteates as coins.

As mentioned earlier, it is important that I clarify what it is that I mean when I am referring to coin finds in this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis, there are three distinct kinds of coin finds. These types are hoard finds, single finds and church finds. Hoard finds ought to be understood as a group of coins, concealed together as a unit.\(^7\) This implies that the coins were purposefully deposited into whatever context they were found in for some specific reason. Hoards could be associated with rituals or could indicate a need for an individual to conceal their wealth.

Single finds, as the name would suggest, consist of coins that would appear to have been lost without intent or by accident. In his study of Anglo-Saxon coin finds, Metcalf used single coin finds to develop his model of coin use and distribution in England.\(^7\) A single coin find can provide an untainted look into the potential patterns of coin use in the past. Theoretically, a small percentage of all coins in

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\(^7\) Laing, 1969. pp. 11-12.
\(^7\) Grierson, 1975. p. 125.
circulation are lost on a regular basis, as people tend to occasionally lose track of their money or let a coin drop from their pocket or purse without knowing. Many of these lost coins are picked up, however, the few that remain can provide insight into the rates at which coins are used in a specific area. Theoretically, fewer single coin finds should be found in a small village than in a large city where commerce takes place more often and at a higher frequency.

Church finds are coins that have been found in or around a church during an excavation. These finds are different from hoard finds due to the fact that they were not deposited on purpose. These coin finds are more similar to single coin finds, due to the fact that they were lost on accident. Church finds, though, are, to some extent, influenced by their location. The reasons for which someone might visit a church are limited. Therefore, church finds arguably give a more limited sense of coin use and displacement when compared to single coin finds. In the context of this paper, Norwegian church finds are being used to analyze patterns in Norwegian coin distribution in Norway. Ideally, a study using single coin finds from Norway would be used to compare patterns observed in coin distribution in England to patterns of coin distribution observed in Norway. However, the system for recording single coin finds in England has not been comparatively implemented in Norway as of this point, so an ideal comparison is not yet possible.

**Medieval Commerce and Coin Use**

In his study of medieval English society, Stephan H. Rigby discusses the definitions Marx and Engels gave for the concepts of feudalism and capitalism. The definition Marx and Engels gave for capitalism was one in which capitalism is defined as a system of relationships in production in which the means of production are owned by and concentrated in a select group of people or entrepreneurs. The labour is separated from the means of production, as they are prevented by societal factors from owning it. Instead, workers are forced to work for wages that are taken from a small portion of the

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entrepreneurs profits. Marx contrasts capitalism with feudalism by noting that in a feudal society, feudal lords use non-economical powers of compulsion to extract rent or other services from their tenants. Rents in this feudal society were not fixed and were instead collected from the tenants surplus production. This meant that production in a feudal society was based on use rather than on the potential to make a profit from selling your production. This in turn meant that feudal markets were limited and unable to support artisan producers while capitalist markets were larger and able to support a great deal more industries. 79 J. L. Bolton, however, notes that the medieval economy was much more dynamic than the rigid feudal model set out by Marx and Engels. Bolton concedes that a large proportion of production during the medieval period was likely intended for use, rather than for making a profit. However, the presence of coins from the medieval period in the archaeological records indicates that aspects of capitalism did play some role in the economic systems of the Middle Ages. 80

The economy of medieval Norway in the 13th century reflects the multifaceted economic system outlined by Bolton. In 1226, the Saga of Tristram was translated into Norse for literate members of Norwegian society. As part of the translation, Norwegian aspects were added to the saga, most likely to appeal to the Norwegian audience. The author described a Norwegian vessel travelling to France in order to sell its wears. The ship is described as carrying skins from multiple wild animals, like beavers, bears and squirrels, tusks from walruses, live birds, such as hawks and falcons, wax, the skins and hides of domesticated animals, stockfish and other goods like tar, oil and sulphur. 81 Though the contents of the ship may have been exaggerated in order to meet the expectations of the readers, the idea of ships carrying goods from Norway to other markets in Europe for sale reflects the reality of the Norwegian economy at the time. 82 The economies of Norway, as well as the other kingdoms in Scandinavia and along the coast of the North Sea, had developed into a kind of market economy by the 13th century.

82 Sawyer, 1993. p. 158.
Søren Michael Sindbæk outlined two models of economic ties, illustrating the ways in which goods were moved around Europe during the Viking period in Scandinavia. These two models are referred to as weak ties and hubs. Both systems function to form a “small world” system, that is characterized by people developing ties to other people not in their direct vicinity. Weak ties are characterized by a series of nodes all sharing links with a few other nodes, creating a circular system of exchange. Nodes, in this instance refer to places where people travel to in order to buy and sell wares. The hub system, on the other hand is made up of a few nodes having many connections with other nodes that have very few connections with other nodes.\(^{83}\) These two systems of networks ought to be considered in conjunction with one another. It is likely that nodes operating together on a system of weak ties also function as hubs in a more local context. In Norway, for example, goods were shipped in and out of the port to and from other cities on the North Sea. These goods could then potentially make their way out of the North Sea region and into the rest of Europe and potentially beyond. Inversely, goods from outside the North Sea region could potential be passed along from one node to another until they reach the area and end up in a market in a town like Bergen.

Locally, Bergen would function as a hub. Bergen was the primary destination for foreign merchants travelling to Norway. The city of Bergen was made so important due to the fact that foreign merchants were not allowed to travel north of the city to do business.\(^{84}\) This caused the city to function as the kingdoms primary point of access with the rest of Europe. The English monk, Matthew Paris, recorded his experiences travelling to Bergen as part of a papal mandate in 1248. Matthew Paris had been ordered to travel to Norway to reform a monastery north of the town. Matthew Paris recounts how he had to travel on a vessel transporting fabrics to Bergen. When the ship arrived in Bergen, people began to board in order to buy the fabrics on the ship. However, the ship was set on fire by lightning

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\(^{83}\) Sindbaek. 2007. p. 62.  
forcing Matthew Paris to flee.\(^{85}\) This account is also recounted in *Haakon Haakonssøns saga*.\(^{86}\) The arrival of the ship to the port of Bergen reflects the town’s importance in the Norwegian economy. The people boarding the ship in order to buy fabrics could also be interpreted as reflecting the presence of a hub system in place in the local region centred around Bergen. People in and around Bergen would have needed to travel to the town’s port in order to gain access to goods from outside of the region. These goods would then disperse to all of the separate nodes located around and connected to Bergen.

The goods described in the Norse translation of the *Saga of Tristram* would also have made their way from these nodes to Bergen in order to gain access to the North Sea trade routes. Fish from Lofoten, for example, were transported south to Bergen and sold to merchants from places like England and Flanders.\(^{87}\) In order to support this economy, coinage needed to be produced and made available to the people. In Norway, the right to produce coins was regarded as the king’s prerogative. The beginning of royal coin production in Norway can be traced back to the reign of the 10\(^{th}\) century Norwegian monarch, Olaf Tryggvason. These coins were imitations of Anglo-Saxon *Crux* type coins.\(^{88}\) In the 11\(^{th}\) century the Norwegian king, Olaf Haraldsson or St. Olaf, continued minting coins. However, the rate at which these two kings minted coin was fairly low. This is reflected by the fact that coins from these two kings hardly end up being unearthed and generally appear identical.\(^{89}\) During the reigns of Harald Hardrade and Olav Kyrre, in the second half of the 11\(^{th}\) century, however, coin production in Norway began to become more established. As stated earlier, it was the king’s prerogative to produce coin. However, it is likely that the right to mint coins was extended to other figures within Norwegian society. Coins from the 12\(^{th}\) and 13\(^{th}\) centuries with different cross types and single letters on them could have been produced by and issued by the archbishop of Nidaros or some other bishop from one

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86 The Saga of Hacon. 260.
89 Ibid. p. 63.
of the four dioceses in Norway. In 1222, the archbishop had been granted the right to issue coins by the king, possible indicating that other figures could have been given this same right. Furthermore, a coin type with the Latin phrase, *REX ET COMES*, or “king and earl” etched on its surface could indicate that Skule Bårdsson could have been issued the right to produce coins during the reign of Håkon Håkonsson.\(^9\) In medieval Norway, it is likely that coinage was issued primarily by the monarch, however, on the whim of the monarch, the right to produce and issue coins could be given to other individuals, likely of some prominence in Norwegian society at the time.

The coins that were issued by the king, particularly those issued during the reigns of Håkon Håkonsson and many of the kings who ruled Norway in the 12\(^{th}\) century, were likely used by the king to pay for some service that was required. Due to the tumultuous state of Norway in the 12\(^{th}\) century and during the first half of the 13\(^{th}\) century, coins were likely used to pay for the services of soldiers. In *Haakon Haakonssøns saga*, following the defeat of Skule, there is a passage recounting the way in which Håkon was forced to pay his soldiers wages. During the years Yule celebrations, Håkon realized that he did not have enough coin in his treasury to pay the wages of his soldiers who had just finished helping him defeat Skule. In order to pay his soldiers, Håkon collected all of his silver and had it broken down and handed out.\(^9\) This could be interpreted as Håkon issuing the production of new coins to be used to pay for his soldiers services.

After the coins were issued and handed out by the crown. It is likely that they were used to purchase goods and services and gradually made their way from person to person. Archaeological excavations in Scandinavia have revealed that seasonal fairs were organized at rural sites throughout the region.\(^9\) These fairs would have been held in rural villages and potentially on rural church property as well. People would have been able to come to these fairs to buy and sell goods, attracting merchants

\(^{9\text{II}}\) Sawyer, 1993. pp. 149-151.
from larger economic centres. This in turn could have facilitated the spread of coinage from out of the major towns and into more rural areas.

**English Coin Finds**

In 1998, D.M. Metcalf published a study of the distribution of Anglo-Saxon coin finds in England from the 10th and 11th centuries. The goal of the project was to assemble a working model of monetary circulation using the evidence provided by a random sample of single coin finds. I believe the observations made by Metcalf, as part of his study into English monetary circulation during the 10th and 11th centuries, provide insight into a more general understanding of monetary circulation in a Medieval European context.

One of the first observations made by Metcalf, as part of his study, was the rate at which various mint-towns in England produced coins between the years 973 and 1086. The year, 973, is of note due to the fact that it was at this time that the Anglo-Saxon King of England, Edgar I, made the silver penny the standard English coin.93 The year, 1086, is also of note as it is the year in which the *Doomsday Book* was completed.

Metcalf notes in his study that between 973 and 1086 there were over a hundred towns producing coin finds. Some of these towns produced thousands of coin finds. A total of 10 023 coins have been found from London dating from the period between 973 and 1086 and 4 805 have been found from York. However, there are over a dozen towns that have only produced a single coin find dated to the period.94 Due to the vast disparity in coin find production between different towns and the relatively small scale of the random sample of coins used by Metcalf in his study, the evidence of monetary activity for certain larger mint towns was much more statistically secure in comparison to the smaller mint towns. Metcalf noted that the top ten mints represented in his random sample, which

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93 Bolton, 2012. p. 50
94 Metcalf, 1998. p. 18
consisted of 588 coin finds, produced nearly 68 percent of the total coin finds. These mints included London with 133 finds, Lincoln with 73 finds, York with 48 finds, Stamford and Thetford with 27 finds each, Winchester with 25 finds, Canterbury and Norwich with 19 finds each, Chester with 18 finds and Wallingsford with 13 finds.\textsuperscript{95} Metcalf notes that, of these mints, London, Lincoln, York, Stamford, Norwich and Thetford make up over half of the national coinage found as random coin finds. These towns were important due to their proximity to the North Sea coastline.\textsuperscript{96} Merchants from across Northern Europe and the British Isles sailed around the North Sea, buying and selling goods, connecting the towns on the sea and the Baltic’s coast together through their commercial enterprises. The rate at which towns produce coins is therefore influenced by the towns relative importance as a part of a greater commercial network.

Another observation made by Metcalf, as part of his study, was the diffusion of currency from a specific mint as you move further from its point of production. Metcalf observed that the amount of coin finds from a specific mint is greatest in the immediate vicinity of the specific mint and decreases as you move away from it. Metcalf made this observation by taking each mint and drawing concentric circles around them. He then calculated the percentage of coin finds of the total for the mint in each zone. Metcalf did this by totalling the amount of coin finds in each zone and then adding half the percentage value of each adjacent zone to this total and dividing by two in order to smooth the data. Therefore, each the areas that are being considered are 50km zones that overlap with their neighbours.\textsuperscript{97} This method allowed for each mint, with enough coin finds to be statistically secure, to be compared together.

\textsuperscript{95} Metcalf, 1998. p. 19
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid. p. 19
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid. p. 45
Figure 1 Histograms representing the diffusion of English coin finds from seven mints. (Taken from Metcalf, D. M. An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Coin Finds, c. 973-1086. London; Royal Numismatic Society. 1998. p.47)
In order to present this data, Metcalf produced a series of histograms representing the diffusion of coin finds as you move further away from a specific mint. Metcalf produced these histograms for seven mints; London, Winchester, Thetford, Norwich, Canterbury, Lincoln and York. The vertical axis represents the percentage of coins found in the zone and is logarithmic so that the angles of each slope can be compared. The horizontal axis represents the zones with 0 representing the immediate zone, which was calculated without smoothing the data, and each number after that representing a zone further away from the original mint site. The horizontal dotted line running parallel to the horizontal axis shows the mints’ estimated share of the total national output. Metcalf’s histograms show that the general slope for each mint is relatively similar, with the only real difference being that some mints like London are represented at a higher rate in more zones than others. This could mean that coins from London were being carried further on longer journeys as part of inter-regional trade or it could reflect the fact that coins from certain mints were struck more often and had a greater chance of being distributed throughout the country.

In his study, Metcalf illustrated two important characteristics for coin distribution that I believe are important for the analysis of coin finds in a Norwegian context. Metcalf showed that the distribution of coins from a specific mint is greater near the mint of origin. Metcalf also demonstrated that larger mints, located in important economic centres in Medieval England, distributed their coins at a higher rate over a larger area compared to smaller local mints.

The English numismatist, Rory Naismith, made similar observations in his study of coin finds from the Southern English Kingdoms between the years 757 and 865. As part of his study, Naismith compared the distribution of coin finds from two different mints. These two mints were the mint at Ipswich in East Anglia and the mint at Canterbury in Kent.

98 Metcalf, 1998. p. 45
The distribution of coin finds from the Ipswich mint closely reflects the patterns of coin distribution observed by Metcalf. As part of his study, Naismith subdivided the period of his analysis into three sections. The first spanned the period between 760 and 796, the second spanned the period between 796 and 830 and the third section spanned the period between 830 and 865. For those three periods of time the percentage of single coin finds from Ipswich in East Anglia was 41, 49 and 63 percent respectively. The percentage of Ipswich coin finds in the other regions of England hardly ever exceeded ten percent. Between 760 and 796 the percentage of single coin finds from Ipswich in Kent and Essex was 13 and 18 percent respectively. 99

The distribution of coin finds from Canterbury, however, follows a different set of patterns than those displayed by coin finds from the Ipswich mint. The distribution of Canterbury coins in Kent reflects the way Ipswich coins are distributed in East Anglia due to the fact that Canterbury is the most represented mint in its home region. However, Canterbury also makes up between 10 and 20 percent of coin finds in most of the other regions of England at the time. 100 The difference in the distribution of single coin finds from these two mints could reflect the difference status the two towns had in England at the time. Ipswich was an important regional centre of trade in East Anglia, however the city did not have as big of an influence over commerce in other regions of England. Canterbury, on the other hand was equally important both in its region of Kent and the rest of England. Naismith argued that the distribution of coin finds from Canterbury shows that it was an important centre for both the production of coins and long distance trade. I believe this reflects Canterbury’s important position in England as the centre of the English Church. In 672, the Synod of Hertford gave Canterbury authority over the rest of the Church in England. 101 Canterbury’s position as the top of the English church allowed it to exert

100 Ibid. p.213-214
101 Cubitt, 1995. p. 62
its influence over the rest of England, which can be observed in the distribution of coin finds from Canterbury mint.

**13\(^{th}\) Century English Coin Finds**

The observations made by numismatist like Metcalf and Naismith regarding the distribution of English coin finds rely on data obtained using the distribution of coins dating from between the 8\(^{th}\) and 11\(^{th}\) centuries found in England. The fact that the patterns of coin distribution tend to stay relatively the same through such a long period of time suggests that, regardless of the time period, the fundamental observations of coin distribution ought to apply to the distribution of coins at a later date as well. In order to test this, I believe that it is necessary to look at the distribution of coins in England at a later period in time. The main focus of this thesis is to analyze the distribution of Norwegian coins during the reign of the Norwegian king, Håkon Håkonsson. Therefore, it may be pertinent to analyze coin distribution in England from a contemporary period.

As Håkon Håkonsson was the king of Norway during the 13\(^{th}\) century, it is fitting to use data dating from the reign of the 13\(^{th}\) century English monarch, Henry III, to test to see if the observations made by Metcalf and Naismith are relevant to this time period as well.

**Context of Henry III’s Reign as King of England**

Henry III ruled as the King of England from 1216 to 1272. When Henry III was first crowned on the 28\(^{th}\) of October, 1216, he was only nine years old and forced to inherit the political instability gripping the Kingdom of England, left to him by his father, King John.\(^{102}\) The relationship between King John and the local English nobility, referred to as the barons, had grown tense before his death in 1216. In 1214, King John had tried to organize an invasion of France in order to reclaim Normandy, which had been lost to Philip II in 1204.\(^{103}\) King John’s campaign had initially seemed to be going well.

\(^{103}\) Turner, 2009. p. 103.
King John had managed to organize an alliance with the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto IV, in 1212 in preparation for his invasion. King John also formed alliances with the counts of both Boulogne and Flanders in 1212 as well.¹⁰⁴ King John’s alliances with Otto IV and the counts of Boulogne and Flanders meant that King John and his allies were in a position to attack Philip II of France from two sides. Otto IV and King John’s other allies pushed into France from the East, while King John advanced North-East from his territories in Poitou.¹⁰⁵ However, many of the English barons, who provided the manpower for King John’s military refused to join him on his campaign in France, resulting in King John being forced to rely on the services of mercenaries. When King John met the French forces at Roche-au-Moine, after initially successfully being able to reclaim territory lost to France ten years earlier, the English were defeated and forced to retreat and give up all the territory they had fought to retake.¹⁰⁶ After the English were defeated at Roche-au-Moine, King John’s allies were also defeated by the French at the battle of Bouvines and King John was forced to sign a treaty with Philip II of France forcing King John to pay compensation.¹⁰⁷

The barons that did not join King John on his campaign to France, following King John’s defeat, began organizing resistance to the crown when King John returned from France.¹⁰⁸ In 1215, in order to try and deescalate the growing tension between the barons and King John, talks, mediated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephan Langton, were held between both parties. On the 15th of June, 1215, King John and the barons came to terms at Runnymede, resulting in the creation of the Magna Carta.¹⁰⁹ However, the signing of the Magna Carta did not put an end to the conflict in England.

In 1207, King John had tried to bar Stephan Langton from becoming the Archbishop of Canterbury in order to make the Bishop of Norwich, John de Gray, the Archbishop instead. King John

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 224.
had had the nominal right to appoint the next Archbishop of Canterbury, however the cathedral chapter for Canterbury Cathedral had claimed that they had the right to vote on the succession and had instead elected the chapters sub-prior to be Archbishop. In parallel to the cathedral chapter claiming the right to vote on the succession of Archbishop, the bishops of the Church province of Canterbury also claimed the right to elect a successor. This resulted in three factions disputing the succession for the Archbishopric. Due to this conflict, Pope Innocent III felt it was necessary to step in and disavowed both candidates and instead appointed Stephen Langton.\footnote{110 Turner, 2009. pp. 125-126.} In response, King John barred Langton from entering England and seized the Pope’s properties in England. This in turn forced the Pope to put England under interdict in 1208.\footnote{111 Ibid. pp. 127-128.}

In response to the Papal interdict placed on England, King John began seizing the lands of clergy observing the interdict. These were the clergy who were refusing to provide services such as Mass, baptism, confession or marriage. King John also promised to protect any members of the English clergy willing to remain loyal to him.\footnote{112 Ibid. p. 128.} In response, Innocent III excommunicated King John in 1209. Initially this had little impact on King John, however, by 1213 King John had begun to grown worried that the French may use his excommunication as an excuse to invade England. In May of 1213, King John met with the papal legate, Pandulf Verraccio, and agreed to surrender the Kingdom of England to the Papacy and to pay the Church compensation.\footnote{113 Ibid. p. 133.} This agreement resulted in King John’s relationship with the Pope changing from enemies to close allies.

The *Magna Carta* had promised a great deal of power to the barons and the creation of a baronial council. However, King John had had no intention of recognizing the councils legal authority. Instead, King John turned to Innocent III for help. King John argued that the *Magna Carta* undermined
the Pope’s rights as King John’s feudal lord. In response, Innocent III excommunicated the barons.\textsuperscript{114} The excommunication of the barons led to them openly supporting the claim of the French prince, Louis, to the throne of England, which forced them into open revolt against the crown.

When the nine year old Henry III inherited the crown of England from his father, King John, in 1216. Henry III also inherited his father’s war with the barons. Due to his young age, however, Henry III relied on his advisors to do much of the governing. Chief among these advisors was William Marshal, who managed to defeat the barons and prevent the French from invading England. After King John’s death, many of the barons became less resolute in their support of Prince Louis’ claim to the throne of England.\textsuperscript{115} The war against Louis was also declared a religious crusade by Cardinal Guala, who had been sent to England by the Pope to support King John and later Henry III in the war against the barons.\textsuperscript{116} This put additional stress on Louis to quickly end the war, however, on the 20\textsuperscript{th} of May, the barons forces were defeated at Lincoln\textsuperscript{117} and on the 24\textsuperscript{th} of August the French fleet, attempting to ferry French reinforcements across the Channel was defeated off the coast of Sandwich.\textsuperscript{118} The successive defeats at both Lincoln and Sandwich led to the end of Henry III’s war with the barons, however, this war would not be the only war fought during his reign.

In 1226, the King of France, Louis VIII, dies and left his twelve year old son, Louis IX, as king. Due to the French king’s young age and support from rebellious Norman nobility, Henry III began planning an invasion of France with his advisor Hubert de Burgh, who had led the English fleet at the Battle of Sandwich in 1217. In 1230, the English forces landed in Brittany with the intent of retaking Normandy, but instead were forced south to Gascony were he was made to sign a truce with France until 1234.\textsuperscript{119} Following the truce, England was met with fresh civil unrest. In 1232, Peter des Roches

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid. p. 190.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Carpenter, 1990. pp. 19-21.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid. pp. 28-29.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Carpenter, 2004. p. 302.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Carpenter, 1990. p 44.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Carpenter, 2004. p. 310.
\end{itemize}
replaced Hubert de Burgh on the king’s council. The son of William Marshal, Richard Marshal, opposed the appointment of des Roches to the council due to the fact des Roches was using his position to claim his opponents territories resulting in Marshal openly declaring war against des Roches. The conflict between des Roches and Marshal persisted until 1234 when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Rich was forced to intervene, forcing des Roches to resign from the council. Following this period of conflict between his councillors, Henry III began directly governing England as opposed to governing with the support of people like de Burgh or des Roches as he had done up to that point.

Following the civil conflict between 1232 and 1234, Henry III became concerned with strengthening his realm and waging sporadic campaigns against the French. However, in 1242, the English forces led by Henry III were defeated at the Battle of Taillebourg resulting in the English being made to stop their campaigns to reclaim their lost territory in France. Growing discontent with the monarchy in England at the time also led to renewed support, by the barons, for revolt against the crown. In 1258, Henry III was forced to reconvene his council which was to be appointed half by him and half by the barons. However, Henry III’s reluctance to listen to his councillors that were appointed by the barons and his deteriorating relationship with the Papacy led to the outbreak of war with the barons in 1263. The rebel baron forces, led by Peter de Montfort, were initially able to defeat Henry III’s forces at the Battle of Lewes in 1264. Henry III’s wife, however, was able to organize a campaign to invade England, from her territories in Aquitaine, led by her and Henry III’s son, Edward. Prince Edward was able to defeat de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham in 1265 which eventually led to the last of the rebel baron forces being defeated on the Isle of Ely in 1267.

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121 Ibid. p. 338.
122 Ridgeway, 2004
124 Ibid. pp. 79-82.
125 Ibid. P 144.

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the conflict with the rebel barons, the territories that once belonged to the rebel barons were taken and were permitted to be looted.\textsuperscript{127} This continued until October of 1266 when the Dictum of Kenilworth was issued, allowing for the rebels to reclaim their land in exchange for paying a fine.\textsuperscript{128} Henry III continued to rule England until 1272 when he died leaving his son Edward as his heir.

**English Coin Collection and Analysis**

In order to test whether or not Metcalf and Naismith’s observations, that the distribution of coin finds from a specific mint is influenced by the specific mint’s location and relative size or importance, is true for English coin finds dated to the reign of Henry III in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century, it is first necessary to collect a survey of coin finds dated to the period. In 1996, the government of the United Kingdom passed the Treasure Act which gave protection to archaeological sites within the United Kingdom. The passing of this act in turn promoted the recording of archaeological finds. The archiving of archaeological finds had initially relied on people reporting their finds to local authorities who did not always have the proper ability to adequately record all of the necessary information leading to the contexts of many finds being lost. The Portable Antiquities Scheme was enacted in conjunction with the passing of the new Treasure Act and by 1999 pilot schemes had been established in Kent, Norfolk, the West Midlands, North Lincolnshire, the North West and Yorkshire. These pilot schemes were coordinated and funded by the British Museum. In July of 1999, the information collected by the pilot schemes was centralized and placed on a database on the internet. Into the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, this database has expanded to encompass the entire United Kingdom.

Using the database of archaeological information stored on the internet as part of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, I was able to create a survey of English coin finds dated to the reign of Henry III. Using the database search functions, I was able to produce a collection of over ten thousand English coin finds.


\textsuperscript{128}Ibid. p. 152.
single coin finds dated to the period between 1216 and 1272. I elected to focus my survey on single coin finds due to the fact that it was these types of coin finds that Metcalf used in his study.

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<th>Winchester</th>
<th>Northampton</th>
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Table 1. The ten most productive producers of single coin finds from the reign of Henry III (data from the Portable Antiquities Scheme finds.org.uk)

The collection of coin finds, however, proved far too large initially for me to adequately analyze. In order to get around this problem, I elected to focus my analysis on the ten mints that had produced the most single coin finds. These mints were London with 3340 finds (32.2%), Canterbury with 2378 finds (22.9%), Bury St. Edmunds with 226 finds (2.2%), Lincoln with 161 finds (1.6%), Winchester with 142 finds (1.4%), Northampton and York with both 125 finds each (1.2%), Oxford with 89 finds (0.9%), Norwich with 80 finds (0.8%) and Gloucester with 75 finds (0.7%). By focusing on these ten mints, the collection of single coin finds became more manageable.

As the Portable Antiquities scheme was originally a collection of separate pilot projects located in different regions of the United Kingdom, the data is subdivided within the database between these regions. With this information in mind, I decided to further reduce the size of my collection of coins by limiting it to the 25 regions with the most single coin finds. To manage the data from these 25 regions, I decided to sort them into five groups based on the locations of these 25 regions. The first group I have elected to call “North,” and it consists of North Yorkshire and East Yorkshire. The second group I have labelled “Middle,” and it consists of Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. The third group I have called “East,” and it consists of Norfolk,

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129 See Table 1.
Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Essex and Cambridgeshire. The fourth group I have named “South East,” and it consists of Kent, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and East Sussex. Finally, the last group is called “South,” and consists of Hampshire, Wiltshire, West Sussex, Somerset, Dorset and Gloucestershire.

After dividing the regions into five groups, I was able to calculate the average proportion of single coin finds from each of the ten mints. After calculating the averages for each of the groups, I was then able to calculate a general average proportion for each of the ten mints. After completing these calculations I was able to make some observations by comparing the general average for each mint to the averages for each of the five groups.

The first observation that I was able to make was that the London and Canterbury mints produced a disproportionately high amount of the total single coin finds. Together, they consisted of over fifty percent of the single coin finds in the Portable Antiquities Scheme database, dated to the reign of Henry III. The high rate of coin production from the London mint reflects the fact that London

<table>
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<th>Middle</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South East</th>
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Table 2. The proportion of single coin finds found in the five groups of regions
was the commercial centre of Medieval England. London’s location on the Thames river provided the city access to the North Sea and the commercial networks located there, as well as to the English Midlands, allowing for the city to function as a commercial node.

The Canterbury mint, at first glance, appears to be over represented as it consistently makes up around a fifth of the total single coin finds in each region. This runs counter to the trends for the other mints which tend to have a greater representation in their home regions. Therefore, I believe that it would seem that Canterbury does not follow the trends outlined by Metcalf and Naismith. However, I believe that Canterbury had established itself as a major commercial centre during the reign of Henry III, making it comparable to London. Naismith noted that Canterbury was consistently represented at somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of the total single coin finds in the various regions of England between the 8\textsuperscript{th} and 9\textsuperscript{th} centuries, reflecting the city’s importance as the centre of the English Church. Following the dispute between King John and Pope Innocent III, the influence of the Church in England would have been increased, potentially increasing the commercial importance of the city. The death of Thomas Becket in 1170 and the development of his shrine as a place of pilgrimage may have also promoted the commercial importance of Canterbury within England. Though it is unlikely that large numbers of pilgrims travelled to Becket’s shrine in Canterbury from outside of England like how pilgrims from all over Europe travelled to Rome,\textsuperscript{130} it is still conceivable that pilgrims from all around England would have travelled regularly to Canterbury.

The high rate of coin finds from both the London and Canterbury mints most likely also reflects the fact that, of all the mints included within this study, these two mints consistently produced coinage throughout the 13\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{131} The English historian and numismatist, J. L. Bolton, noted that, following the recoinage of English coins in 1247, London, Canterbury and Bury St. Edmunds were the

\textsuperscript{130} Spufford, 1988. p. 158.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. p. 202.
three principle mints for new coinage production in England following the shift from the use of short-cross type coinage to the use of long-cross type coinage.132

The status of London and Canterbury as primary mint places in England, following the recoinage of English coins from the short-cross types to the long-cross types in 1247, is clearly reflected in the distribution of single coin finds from London and Canterbury in the five groups of regions listed earlier. However, I believe that the distribution of coins from Bury St. Edmunds also reflects its status as a primary mint place after 1247. Bury St. Edmunds produced nearly twice as many coins as the next highest mint, Lincoln. However, it is clear that the mint at Bury St. Edmunds has not produced nearly as many coins as the mints at London and Canterbury. This could be due to the fact that Bury St. Edmunds became a more predominant place of coin production in 1247, while London and Canterbury had been central to English coin production for years before 1247 as well. The average spread of coins from Bury St. Edmunds also seems to differentiate itself from the distribution of coins from London and Canterbury. Bury St. Edmunds has a general average of about 2.2, and it is only in the East and South East groups that the mints regional average exceeds its general average.

The distribution of Canterbury coins, on the other hand, stays rather close to the general average throughout all of the five groups. The London mint on the other hand would seem to have averages that fluctuate for all of the regions, with South, North and East being represented greater than the average and South East and Middle being represented below the average. However, I believe this average distribution of coin finds from London reflects the city’s position as the primary economic centre of England. London is over its general average in regions primarily near the coast, with the exception of the South East region in which Canterbury is located.

I believe the differences between the patterns of distribution between the mint at Bury St. Edmunds and the mints at London and Canterbury reflects the fact that Bury St. Edmunds was not a

Figure 2. Distribution of single coin finds from London mint. (finds.org.uk)
Figure 3. Distribution of single coin finds from Canterbury mint. (finds.org.uk)
Figure 4. Distribution of single coin finds from Bury St. Edmunds mint. (finds.org.uk)
national economic centre like London and Canterbury, but was instead more of a regional economic centre comparable to Ipswich in Naismith’s study of coins from the 8th and 9th centuries. I believe that this can be further observed in the distribution of coins placed on a map. The Portable Antiquities Scheme website allows for the user to produce distribution maps. Using these maps, trends in the distribution of coin finds can be observed. The distribution of single coin finds from Bury St. Edmunds, as show in Figure 4 possesses characteristics that clearly differentiate it from the distribution of coin finds from the London and Canterbury mints as show in Figure 2 and Figure 3. In Figure 4 the majority of coin finds appear to be located along the North Sea coastline. With exception for a concentration of coin finds in the south, north of Portsmouth, coin finds from Bury St. Edmunds are few and spread apart from one another. The distribution of coins shown on Figure 2 and on Figure 3 are clearly different from those shown on Figure 4 due to the fact that they clearly are found regularly across much of England.

I believe that Figure 4 clearly reflects the observations made by Metcalf and Naismith as part of their studies. The map shows how coin finds are more abundant close to the mint of origin. The map also illustrates how the rate of coin distribution decreases as you move away from the point of origin. These trends are also reflected by the data for the seven other mints included in this analysis. For all of the data points, with an exception of a few outliers which may be caused due to statistical error, the distributional average for a mint in the region or regions closest to the mint place are higher than the distributional averages for the regions further away from the place of origin. This could suggest that the observations made by Metcalf and Naismith hold true throughout the medieval period in England.
Presenting the Norwegian Church Finds

The majority of coin finds from Medieval Norway have been discovered in church sites throughout Norway. In this section, I will be presenting the Norwegian coin finds from the period of Håkon Håkonsson’s reign found in church sites from four different regions of Norway. These regions are Nordland and Trøndelag, Oppland, Vestlandet and the Oslo Fjord area. The church sites that I will be including in this study are Dønnes kirke, Alstahaug kirke, Ranem kirke and Mære kikre from Nordland and Trøndelag, Høre kirke from Oppland, Kinsarvik, Borgund and Urnes stavekirkes from Vestlandet and Hvaler kirke, Berg and Sandar gamle kirkes from the Oslo Fjord area.

In this section, I will also present coin finds from Kunghälla in Bohuslän. Though now a part of Sweden, Kunghälla used to be part of the medieval kingdom of Norway. When the site was excavated, a large amount of coins from the period of Håkon Håkonsson’s reign were discovered. These coins have been used by Erik Person and Kolbjørn Skaare to produce a typology of Norwegian coin types from the period of Håkon Håkonsson’s reign. Using Person and Skaare’s typologies, as well as the typology of Norwegian coin types produced by C. I. Schive in 1865, I will present the distribution of coin types found at the church sites listed above. I will then analyze this information in the next section of this thesis.

Nordland and Trøndelag

The region of Nordland is located in the north of Norway. Nordland is south of the region, Troms, and north of Trøndelag. Nordland is characterized by large mountains and cliffs running along the coast. Parts of the region are also located within the Arctic Circle. The high latitude of the region causes periods of constant sunshine or total darkness to occur. Though Nordland is so far north, the region maintains a relatively temperate climate. This is due to its location on the Norwegian Sea. Warm

133 Person, 1937; Skaare, 1970.
134 Schive, 1865.
currents and air from the South Atlantic are pushed north by the Gulf Stream, preventing the region from experiencing extreme arctic weather. This in turn allowed for the fishing industry to establish itself in the north of the region at Lofoten. The fishing industry linked the region directly to the major port town of Bergen by sea.

The region of Trøndelag is located in Central Norway and lies south of Nordland. The Trondheimsfjord bisects the region which is surrounded by the Norwegian mountain range and the North Atlantic. The largest city in the region is Trondheim, which was the location of the Archbishopric of Nidaros. The Frostating was also located in Trøndelag, making the region both the administrative centre of the north of Norway and the centre of the Norwegian church province. Part of the region has weather similar to Nordland. The Gulf Stream warms the coastal portion of the region, maintaining a temperate climate. However, the part of the region located directly on Trondheimsfjord is shielded from the Atlantic and therefore is subjected to greater degrees of climactic fluctuations.

Dønnes and Alstahaug in Nordland are located relatively close to one another. Dønnes is located on the island of Dønna which is directly north of the island of Alsta, where Alstahaug is located. The two islands lie directly north of the modern national park of Lomsdal-Visten. The two churches were probably constructed at the beginning of the 13th century. This is evident due to the presence of archaeological finds, located at the two churches, from the 13th century.135 However, the two churches could have been constructed on the site of older wooden churches.

Ranem and Mære are both situated in the north of Trøndelag and were both probably constructed in the mid-twelfth century.136 Ranem is located in the town of Ranemsletta which lies in land, but still relatively close to the Atlantic coast line. Mære is located south of Ranemsletta in the town of Mære. The town of Mære lies on the northern edge of Trondheimsfjord. Both churches are in close proximity to Trondheim.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ranem</th>
<th>Mære</th>
<th>Alstahaug</th>
<th>Dønnes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shield Type</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle and Crown</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait Type</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Coin types from church finds in Nordland and Trøndelag

A total of 527 coins have been unearthed at the site of Dønnes. A total of 26 of these coins can be dated to the period of Håkon Håkonsson’s reign. Of these 26 coins, seven (26.98%) can not be identified as a particular coin type. Two (7.69%) of the coins can be identified as portrait types. One consists of a male portrait orbited by flowers or small suns, while the other consists solely of a male portrait. Eleven (42.31%) of the coins can be identified as profile types. One includes a series of dots, in a triangular formation, near the mouth. Three have the face of the man in profile looking at either a half moon, backwards “B” or a star. Three (11.54%) of the coins can be identified as crown types, two of which feature a crown above a dot. Two cross type coins were also found, however they differ in appearance dramatically.

A total of 386 coins have been discovered at Alstahaug. A total of 38 of these coins can be dated to the period of Håkon Håkonsson’s reign. Of the 38 coins, three (7.89%) can not be identified as a particular type. Three letter type coins have been found at Alstahaug. Two (5.26%) feature a capital “A,” while one (2.63%) feature a lowercase “h.” Seven cross type coins have been identified. Two (5.26%) feature a single cross, while four (10.53%) feature a double cross. One (2.63%) features a

137 Ranem Church, coin list; Mære Church, coin list; Alstahaug Church, coin list; Dønnes Church, coin list.
cross with what appears to be lags. There are also two (5.26%) coins featuring stars and one (2.63%) featuring what appears to be a clover. There are between four and ten (10.53% to 26.32%) portrait type coins and between six to twelve (15.79% to 31.58%) right facing profile type coins. There is also an additional (2.63%) left facing profile coin as well. Of the right facing profile types, one includes dots in a triangular formation near the mouth, one has the face looking at a half moon and a third is looking at a star. There are also two (5.26%) crown type coins.\textsuperscript{139}

A total of 615 coins have been found at Ranem. Of the 615 coins, 263 can be dated to Håkon Håkonsson’s reign. Of these 263 coins, 102 (38.78%) can not be identified as a particular coin type. A total of 36 (13.69%) of the coins found can be identified as double cross types and four (1.52%) can be identified as single cross types. Two (0.76%) of the coins found can be identified a “A” type coins. Twenty-seven (10.27%) of the coins can be identified as portrait types. Six of these coins feature stars orbiting around the face and three give the face a beard. Thirty-six (13.69%) of the coins found at Ranem can be identified as right facing profile types and four (1.52%) can be identified as left facing profile types. Of the right facing profile types, one includes dots in a triangular formation near the mouth, four are facing a star and six are facing a moon. However, of the six facing the moon, two also have moustaches. An addition 30 (11.41%) coins can be identified as crown types. Four of the crown types feature a crown above a dot and three feature a crown above a letter. Two of the letters are “M” and one is “E.”\textsuperscript{140}

A total of 575 coins have been found at Mære. Of the 575 coins, 190 have been dated to Håkon Håkonsson’s time. A total of 42 (22.11%) of these coins can not be identified. Fourteen (7.37%) of the coins found can be identified as double cross types and one (0.53%) can be identified as a single cross type. Thirty of the coins can be identified as letter types. Ten (5.26%) are “R” types, 18 (9.47%) are “B” types and there are a single “T” (0.53%) and “A” (0.53%) type. There are 21 (11.05%) portrait type

\begin{footnotes}
\item[139] Gullbekk and Sættem, [in press]. pp. 32-33.
\item[140] Ibid. pp. 15-18.
\end{footnotes}
coins, 14 (7.37%) right profile type coins and three (1.58%) left profile coins. On the right profile types, one includes dots in a triangular formation near the mouth, one faces a star and another faces a half moon. There are also 25 (13.16%) crown type coins and six (3.16%) coins featuring a shield. Of the crown types, five feature a dot below the crown and two feature the crown above a “M.”\textsuperscript{141}

\textbf{Vestlandet}

The region of Vestlandet is located, as the name would suggest, in the west of Norway south of the region of Trøndelag. The geography of Vestlandet is divided between its mountainous interior and its habitable coastline along the North Sea. The region is also bisected by a series of fjords. The longest of these fjords is the Sognefjord, which is also the longest fjord in all of Norway. The \textit{Gulating} was held at the mouth of the Sognefjord, and it was there that Håkon Håkonsson was first declared king in 1217. The two major medieval Norwegian towns, Bergen and Stavanger, are also located in Vestlandet. Bergen is located south of Sognefjord and north of the Hardangerfjord in the \textit{fylke} of Hordaland, on the coast of the North Sea. Stavanger is located further south from Bergen near the Boknafjord. Both towns were important due to the fact that they were both the seats of dioceses. Bergen, however, was arguably of more economic importance during the medieval period due to the fact that it was the centre of North Sea trade in Norway, as well as the primary residence of the king during the reign of Håkon Håkonsson. The influence of Stavanger, however, could have increased near the end of Håkon’s reign due to the fact that it was given to Håkon’s son, Magnus, as a fief.

As, part of this thesis, I have used data from three church finds from this region for my analysis. Two of these church finds were located near the Sognefjord and the third was located the Hardangerfjord. The two church finds near the Sognefjord are located at Borgund and Urnes. The Borgund church find lies east of the Sognefjord along the Borgundsfjord that flows west from the east into the Sognefjord. Urnes lies north of the Sognefjord on the Lustrafjord, which flows south into the

\textsuperscript{141} Gullbekk and Sættem, [in press]. pp. 21-26.
Sognefjord. Both church finds are directly connected to the coastline via the Sognefjord. Their geographic locations also placed them near the eastern most reaches of the Sognefjord. This meant that people travelling east from the coast, by way of the Sognefjord, would have likely needed to pass through these areas. The church find located on the Hardangerfjord is in the town of Kinsarvik. Kinsarvik is located in Hordaland and is a short distance away from the town of Bergen.

The church find at Borgund contained the most coins from the reign of Håkon Håkonsson of the three in the region of Vestlandet. Of the 722 coins found at the church, 344 were from Håkon’s reign. At Urnes, 74 coins, from a total of 244, were dated to the reign of Håkon and 40 coins, of a total of 425, were dated to the reign of Håkon at Kinsarvik. A total of 17 letter type coins were found in Borgund, 13 of which were marked with the letter, “B.” In Urnes and Kinsarvik, far fewer letter types were found. Three were found in Urnes and two were found in Kinsarvik. There was also a single “B” type coin in each of these churches. A total of 25 cross type coins were found in Borgund, while only three were found in Kinsarvik and three were also found in Urnes. The majority of these coins were patriarchal cross types, with 15 being found in Borgund and two of the three cross types from Urnes being of this type. However, only one of the three cross types at Kinsarvik was a patriarchal cross type. Animal type coins were also found at the Borgund and Urnes church sites, however, none were found at Kinsarvik.

Castle and crown type and portrait type coins were found in all three church sites. At each church find, the majority of the portrait types were facing right, with 63 being found in Borgund, 11 in Urnes and six in Kinsarvik. Left facing portrait types were the least represented in all three church finds. Only six were found in Borgund of a total of 105 portrait types and only one of the portrait types from Kinsarvik faced left. None of the portrait types at Urnes faced left.

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142 Gullbekk and Sættem [ in press ]; Svarstad, 1962. pp. 73-76
The regions of Oppland and the Oslo Fjord area are located east of Vestlandet and south of Trøndelag. Oppland lies north of the Oslo Fjord and is characterized by its mountainous terrain. Lake Mjøsa is located in Oppland and it was there that the *Eidsivating* was held. The town of Hamar, which was the seat of one of the dioceses of the Norwegian Church in the medieval period, was also located in Oppland near Lake Mjøsa. The Høre church find lies north-west of Lake Mjøsa, near the Slidrefjord. The Slidrefjord flows south towards Hamar and Oslo. Høre is also located relatively close to Borgund. Therefore it is likely that people travelling the land route from east to west, or vice versa, passed near both towns.

The Oslo Fjord region lies directly south of Oppland and is the location of the most arable land in Norway. The three major medieval towns of Oslo, Tønsberg and Borg are all located in this region. Oslo, like Bergen, Stavanger and Hamar, was the seat of one of the Norwegian dioceses. Tønsberg was the centre of royal authority in the eastern regions of Norway and Borg was the location for the *Borgarting*. The eastern regions of Norway were the main power base for the *Baglar* faction during

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143 Borgund Church, coin list; Urnes Church, coin list; Kinsarvik Church, coin list.
much of the civil unrest in the kingdom during the 12th and early 13th centuries. During Håkon’s reign, the eastern regions around Oslo Fjord were the location for revolts against the king.

The three church find locations in the Oslo Fjord area are located at Sandar, Berg and Hvaler. All of these churches are located in the south of the region near the mouth of the Oslo Fjord. Sandar is located on the western coast of the fjord in the town of Sandefjord, south of Tønsberg. Berg is located on the same side of the fjord south of Sandefjord. Finally, Hvaler lies on the island, Kirkeøy, off the eastern edge of the Oslo Fjord.

<table>
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<th>Letter Type</th>
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<th>Sandar</th>
<th>Berg</th>
<th>Hvaler</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross Type</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Type</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Shield Type</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Type</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle and Crown</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait Type</td>
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<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5. Church coin finds from Oppland and Oslo Fjord*

The letter type coins found at Høre comprise of “B” and “T” type coins with seven of them being “B” types. The letter types from the church finds in Oslo Fjord are more diverse. “A” and “T” type coins are found at all three church finds and an “M” type was found at Sandar. “B” types were also found at Sandar and Berg, however, none were found at Hvaler. In Høre, one patriarchal cross type coin was found. Two patriarchal cross types were found in Sandar, five in Berg and two more in Hvaler. In Berg and Hvaler the amount of non patriarchal cross types was greater than the number of patriarchal cross types. In Høre, the majority of the portrait types faced right and the least amount faced left. This trend is repeated in Sandar and Berg, however, this is not the case in Hvaler. The majority of portrait types faced right. The table above shows the number of each type of coin found at each church.

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144 Høre Church, coin list; Sandar Church, coin list; Berg Church, coin list; Hvaler Church, coin list.
types in Hvaler face forward, at 74, while only 16 face right and three face left. Portrait type coins with the Latin phrase *REX ET COMES* have also been found in all three of the church sites in the Oslo Fjord area. Additional coin types have also been found at these four sites. Animal types have been discovered at all four church sites and star types have been found at the three sites in the Oslo Fjord area.

Additionally, two shield types were found at Sandar and three coins marked with a dot surrounded by a circle were found at Høre.

**Kungahalla**

During the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, Kungahalla was an important castle on the boarders with both Sweden and Denmark. In, 1256, it was from Kungahalla that Håkon launched an invasion of the neighbouring Danish region of Halland.145 The site is now located in Sweden, but, at the time, was a part of the Kingdom of Norway. In 1937, Erik Person published an analysis of the coins that had been unearthed at the site by Wilhelm Berg between 1891 and 1892.146 In 1970, Kolbjørn Skaare produced his own analysis of Norwegian coin finds from the reign of Håkon Håkonsson from the data provided by the excavation of Kungahalla.147 Using the Skaare, I was able to determine the seven major coin types from Håkon’s reign that I could refer to when analyzing the church finds. These seven types, as shown earlier, are letter types, star type, shield type, animal type, castle and crown types and portrait types. A total of 1850 coins dated to Håkon’s reign were excavated at Kungahalla, of these 588 were castle and crown types148 and 745 were portrait types. The next highest represented coin type at Kungahalla is the cross type coins which only make up a total of 29 of the coins found at the site. This discrepancy between the rates at which castle and crown and portrait type coins are paralleled in the finds from other regions, though at a less drastic rate.

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146 Person, 1937.
147 Skaare, 1970.
148 I would like to note that I elected to combine the castle and crown type coins together due to the fact that they both share a similar general appearance.
Due to the fact that castle and crown and castle and portrait type coins are so over represented in the coin finds from Kungahalla, I believe that it may be possible to theorize that these coin types were used to pay soldiers. Kungahalla was an important castle on the boarder, used by Håkon to launch an invasion of Halland. Therefore, many soldiers would have been present there. Håkon would have also personally travelled there to lead his forces. Based on this, I would like to assert that portrait and castle and crown type coins were minted by a mint that travelled with the king.

**Analysis of Norwegian Coin Finds**

The 745 portrait type coins found at Kungahalla can be divided into three general groups using the information provided by Skaare in his analysis from 1970. Around 69.4% of these coins, or 517, face right, around 3.2%, or 24, face left and around 26.9%, or 201 face forward. Additionally, three coins have a Latin phrase on them. Two of these are *REX HACU* and one is *REX ET COMES*.

The rates at which the different facing portrait type coins are represented in the coin finds from Vestlandet and the Høre church find closely reflect those seen at Kungahalla. Around 61.1% of portrait types in Vestlandet face right, while 5.3% face left and 33.6% face left. In Høre, 59.1% face right, 9.1% face left and 31.8% face forward. In Nordland and Trøndelag, however, the right and forward facing coins are represented at a closer rate. Around 50.4% of the coins face right, 5.8% face left and 43.8% face forward. The fact that right facing portrait types are the most represented, however, is still maintained in this region.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kungahalla</th>
<th>Nor. &amp; Trøn.</th>
<th>Vestlandet</th>
<th>Høre</th>
<th>Oslo Fjord</th>
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<td>69(50.4)</td>
<td>80(61.1)</td>
<td>13(59.1)</td>
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<td>24(3.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Forward Facing</strong></td>
<td>201(26.9)</td>
<td>60(43.8)</td>
<td>44(33.6)</td>
<td>7(31.8)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1850</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Portrait type coins and the rates at which they are found facing either right, left or forward.

149 Skaare, 1970. p. 34.
Figure 5. Plate from Schive's typology of Norwegian coin finds from the reign of Håkon Håkonsson
In the Oslo Fjord area the relationship between the proportion of right facing coins and forward facing coins is flipped. Around 32.5% of the coins face right, 3.6% face left and 62.1% face forward. This, however, is likely due to the unusually high rate of forward facing coins found at Hvaler. A total of 74 of the coins face forward, while 16 face right and three face left. This discrepancy could indicate that, at some point, Håkon may have issued a large amount of portrait type coins in the Hvaler area. If the designs on the coins are regularly changed when new batches of coins are issued, it is likely that the large amount of forward facing portrait types at Hvaler could suggest that at some point the king’s mint was in the area and produced the coin type. As shown by Metcalf and Naismith, coins from a specific place are found at the highest rate near their location of origin. However, I believe it is because of this observation that the disproportionate amount of forward facing coins at Hvaler is likely a statistical anomaly.

The closest find site to Hvaler is Kungahalla. The proportion of forward facing and right facing coins in Kungahalla is very different from the proportion of those same types of coins at Hvaler, as can be seen in Table. 6. The proportion of these same coin types at Berg and Sandar is also very different. A total of 26 of the portrait coin types at Berg face right, while 22 face forward and 13 face right at Sandar, while nine face forward.

*Illustration 1: Vestfold Portrait Types*
Illustration 2: Østfold Portrait Types

Illustration 3: Oppland Portrait Types
Illustration 4: Hordaland Portrait Types

Illustration 5: Sognefjorden Portrait Types
Illustration 6: Trøndelag Portrait Types

Illustration 7: Nordland Portrait Types
In order to determine whether or note I could argue that portrait and castle and crown type coins were produced by a travelling mint, I decided to further divide the coin types based on Schive’s typology. By using Schive’s typology, I was able to further distinguish the coin types by features clearly visible on their surfaces.

Using Schive’s typology, I was able to provide a more precise analyses of portrait type coins by dividing the portrait type coins into a series of different groups for each region. Schive’s typology was prefered in this thesis over the typology made by Skaare in 1970, due to the fact that Schive’s was more comprehensive in comparison. I decided, as well, to divide some of the regions into smaller regions in order to discern whether or not they exhibited different trends in the distributions of these types. These findings are represented in the pie charts (Illustrations 1-7) displayed on the preceding pages. I separated Hvaler from Berg and Sandar in order to separate Østfold and Vestfold from one another. I also separated Kinsarvik from Borgund and Urnes in order to distinguish Hordaland from the rest of Vestlandet. Finally, I separated Nordland and Trøndelag into two distinct groups. Following these divisions, I was able to make some additional observations pertaining to the portrait type coins.

When distinguishing the coins from one another, I relied on the presence of additional iconography on the surface of the coin. This iconography tended to include celestial imagery, like the moon and stars, dots or occasionally crosses or letters. These symbols are used as potential markers for different periods in which portrait type coins may have been issued. However, there were also quite a lot of portrait types that did not include additional iconography. These coins are referred to as generic in my analysis.

In all of the regions listed above, left facing portrait types are never depicted with any additional iconography. They are also consistently represented at a rate of ten percent or less in all of the regions. The low representation of the left facing coin type and its relatively standard appearance could indicate that it was produced for only a short period of time. Forward facing portrait types are also fairly generic
in appearance. In every region, 30% or more of the portrait type coins are a generic forward facing type. Of the portrait types, the generic forward facing type is consistently the most represented. In both of the Oslo Fjord regions and in Nordland and Trøndelag, there are also forward facing portrait types with stars, however, there are far fewer of these types than of the generic types. Potentially they were produced at one time and discontinued in favour of other designs.

The church find at Hvaler is the only church site to have further distinguishing features on its forward facing portrait type coins. These include dots around the head or in the boarder, as well as crosses in the boarder. The presence of a variety of forward facing portrait type coins in the Hvaler church find, and not in any of the other church finds used in this analysis, could indicate that these coin types were produced for a short duration in the Østfold area. However, in order to test if this is true, additional church sites from the region would need to be analyzed to see if the unique forward facing portrait coin types from Hvaler are present throughout the region or just in the single church.

Right facing portrait types consistently represent the second most represented portrait type in all of the regions. The generic right facing portrait types are the most represented right facing portrait type coins in all of the regions with an exception in Hordaland where it is unclear if the majority are the generic right facing type due to the state in which the coins were in after excavation. Of the six right facing portrait types found at Kinsarvik, two are clearly generic types and four are unclear. Due to trends seen within all of the other church finds, however, it may be possible to speculate that right facing generic types were the most represented type in the region as well. Of the additional right facing types, moon type is present in all of the regions, except for Hordaland. A right facing type with dots is also present in most of the regions, with the exceptions of Oppland, Hordaland and Østfold. In each of these regions, only a single church site is located. This could explain there absence, as there representation in the regions that they are present in is minimal. A final right facing portrait type to be considered in this analysis is the “B” type. This coin type is only found in Oppland and Sognefjorden.
The presence of a “B” on the coin could indicate that it was produced in Bergen, and there sole representation in church find sites located near the main route across Norway, over land, near Bergen, could further support this theory as to the location at which they were minted.

Castle and crown type coins are consistently the second most represented coin types in all of the regions, following portrait type coins. These coin types make up 11.7% of the total finds in Vestfold, 10.4% in Østfold, 25% in Hordaland, 9.7% in Oppland, 14.9% in Sognefjord, 10.3% in Trøndelag and 8.5% in Nordland. The crown and castle type coins have been grouped together in the analyses, due to the fact that they have very similar features. Both types generally consist of a bottom bar with three towers protruding from it, with the tower in the middle being shorter than the two on the ends. In some cases the middle tower is absent, so it is likely that these types are meant to look like castles. Some also have triangles at the top of the tower segments, giving them the appearance of a crown. The two most represented types of these coins are a generic crown type and a castle type over a dot. These two types are in every region, except for Oppland, where the only type represented in the generic crown type. The generic crown type is generally more represented than the castle over a dot type, except for in Sognefjorden and Hordaland, where this is reversed. Some castle and crown type coins are depicted with a letter. The most noteworthy of these types is the crown over an ‘M” type, which is found in Vestfold, Sognefjord and Trøndelag. This coin type is found in three of the four regions with multiple church sites and is represented in Sognefjord at a higher rate than in Vestfold and Trøndelag, with 14.3% of castle and coin types in Sognefjord being the “M” type, compared to 3.2% and 4.3% in the other two regions respectively.

A final two type of coins need to be analyzed before proceeding with the next section of this thesis. These two types are the patriarchal cross type coins and the “B” type coins. As their names would suggest, these two coin types are characterized by a patriarchal cross or the letter “B” on the face of the coin. The patriarchal cross type is found in all seven of the regions and a total of 60 have been
found in all of the church sites. Seven were found in Vestfold, two in Østfold, one in Oppland and Hordaland each, 17 in Sognefjord, 29 in Trøndelag and three in Nordland. A total of 73 “B” type coins were found in six of the seven regions, with none being found in Østfold. Seven were found in Vestfold and Oppland each, one in Hordaland, 14 in Sognefjord, 42 in Trøndelag and two in Nordland. These two coin types differ from the portrait and castle and crown types, as they are not represented as consistently in all of the regions. This could indicate that their use was primarily done in the regions around the mint at which they were produced.

**England and Norway; A Comparative Perspective**

In the context of English coin distribution in the medieval period, the place from which a coin is minted is known due to it being marked on the coin. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, that has allowed academics, such as Metcalf and Naismith, to produce some observations about coin distribution in England during the Middle Ages. However, in Norway, the place of origin of a coin is not known. The majority of all coins minted were issued anonymously during the reign of Håkon. This means that coins were minted without any legends, either providing the name of the issuer or the mint from which the coin was struck. During the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, a large variety of coin types were produced. In fact, the amount of types produced at this time was greater than at any other time in Norway during the Middle Ages.\(^\text{150}\) Using these types, it is possible to draw some parallels between the distribution of coins in Norway to the distribution of coins in England.

In England, during the medieval period, the town of London functioned as the primary location for the redistribution of imports into England and the collection of exports to be sent out of the kingdom.\(^\text{151}\) In this sense, London operated as England’s primary hub for trade in the country and with the rest of Europe. The importance of London’s commercial impact on the English economy during the

\[^{150}\text{Skaare, 1970.}\]
\[^{151}\text{Bolton, 2012. p. 118.}\]
Middle Ages can be seen reflected in the distribution of coins, minted in London, throughout the rest of the country. The large distribution of coins, minted in London, and their consistent representation in the various regions of England (see Table 2) is comparable to the distribution of portrait type coins in Norway.

The portrait type coins, and to a lesser extent the castle and crown type coins, are most similar, in regards to their distribution, to the coins minted in London. In both cases these coin types are consistently the most represented across their respective countries. The portrait type coins are varied in appearance, with some regions containing variants that are not found in other areas, however, this could be a result of coins being reissued with new designs. In all seven region discussed earlier, generic forward facing and right facing portrait types make up around half of the total portrait types found in each region. I believe this may suggest that they were produced at a single mint as their consistent portrait style contrasts with the presence of varying other coin types.

As pointed out though, some regions posses portrait types not found in other regions. This could indicate that portrait types were not minted at a fixed location. Therefore, it could be the case that there was a mint in Norway that travelled around the country.

The portrait types similarities to London type coins would imply that they were produced in a similar location to London in Norway. The most comparable town in Norway at the time was Bergen due to it being both the economic and political centres of the kingdom. The fish trade in the North Sea linked Bergen with the rest of the region forcing merchants from within Norway and abroad to assemble there in order to sell their wares and to buy goods. The Norwegian historian, Knut Helle, in Konge og Gode Menn, showed that, at the end of the 13th century, the Norwegian king, Eirik II, spent the majority of his time in the town of Bergen. Håkon’s saga would suggest that Håkon, during his

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reign, likely also spent a great deal of time in Bergen, as it was there that he consistently travelled to before celebrating Yule at the end of the year.\textsuperscript{153}

However, during his reign Håkon was continuously organizing and leading campaigns against his enemies. Up until 1240, Norway was experiencing a period of civil unrest that had been going on for nearly a century. Following 1240, Håkon continued to wage wars with neighbouring Scandinavian kingdoms and Scotland.\textsuperscript{154} The continuous state of war in Norway at this time shows that warfare had become an integral part of Norwegian society. To some extent, it could be argued that warfare had become a tradition.

The use and production of money in Norway was, as it was elsewhere, broad and encompassing and increasingly linked to the processes of commercialization, urbanization and state formation.\textsuperscript{155} Money was needed to pay for goods and services and was produced by the crown in Norway to fill this need. However, in \textit{Haakon Haakonssøns saga}, the only reference to the production of coin is linked to the king needing to pay his men.\textsuperscript{156} The fact that coin production is only referenced in the saga in regards to the need for the king to pay his soldiers their wages could indicate that minting in Norway was most associated with warfare during Håkon’s reign.

The king, during Håkon’s reign, was directly involved with the act of warfare. Håkon would lead his men personally and therefore was present in the regions that campaigning was taking place. Due to this, Håkon spent a great deal of his time outside of Bergen. When travelling, however, it would still have been necessary to pay his soldiers and this could have required the use of a mint. If a mint did travel with the king, it could account for the presence of certain portrait types in some regions, but not in the others, as these types could have been produced and used in the regions that they were found.

\textsuperscript{156}The Saga of Hacon, 211.
The “B” type coin could further show that there was a travelling mint in Norway, as well as show that there were smaller mints operating in towns at the same time. In 1222, Hákon gave the archbishop of Nidaros the right to produce coinage.157 The distribution of patriarchal cross type coins could show that they were minted in or around Trondheim. Nearly half of the patriarchal cross type coins were found in Trøndelag and a third were found in Sognefjorden in church sites located along probably routes between Trondheim and Bergen. The distribution of “B” type coins could indicate that they were produced in the town of Bergen. Though it is possible that they could have been minted in a town like Borg, the distribution of the coins points to their place of origin being located somewhere on the North Sea coast. Over half of the “B” types were found in Trøndelag and around a quarter were found in Sognefjorden. This could be a reflection of the fish trade out of Bergen. People along the Norwegian coastline may have travelled to Bergen to sell their fishstock and returned north with “B” type coins. In his own study of Norwegian coin types, Jon A. Risvaag also noted that “B” type coins were found in regions around Bergen and along the coast, with the majority being found in the regions, Sogn and Fjordane, Northern Trøndelag, Oppland and Buskerud.158 If the “B” type coin was minted in Bergen, it would have been odd if the portrait type coins were being minted there as well. The two coin types have different distribution patterns which would make it seem unlikely that they were produced at the same mint. Instead, I believe that a mint could have been present in Bergen that operated in a similar fashion as mints found in North Sea port towns in England. A mint that travelled with the king, however, was also present in Norway at the time and functioned as the kingdom’s primary mint, comparable to the English mint in London.

Conclusion

In their analyses of English coin distribution, Metcalf and Naismith both made note of some key observations regarding the distribution of coins. They noted that coins from a larger mint were more likely to be represented at a higher rate in the archaeological record. Therefore, coins from the London mint were found more often and in more regions across England. Metcalf and Naismith also both noted that it is more likely that coins from a specific mint will be found in closer proximity to the mint they were produced from. Therefore, coins minted at the English trading ports along the North Sea were more likely to be found in the regions along the North Sea coast.

In the Norwegian context, this trend could be mirrored by the letter type coins. If, for example, the “B” type coins were minted in Bergen, there distribution would reflect the trends illustrated by the second observation made by Metcalf and Naismith. “B” type coins were found more often in church finds relatively close to the North Sea coast or with direct access to it. In his 2006 dissertation, Jon Anders Risvaag observed a similar distribution of the “B” coin type in regions close to Bergen. However, compared to the amount of other types of coins being produced, it seems unlikely that towns in Norway were operating mints in a comparable fashion to the way towns in England were operating mints in the medieval period.

Instead, it seems likely that the mint, in Norway, followed the king. The reign of Håkon Håkonsson was characterized, in some part, by warfare. In Haakon Haakonssøns saga, the process of producing coin is only ever referenced in connection to the need to pay soldiers’ wages. If portrait type and castle and crown type coins were produced primarily for paying soldiers, there high representation among the church finds could reflect the fact that, for much of his reign, Håkon was waging war.

The aim of this thesis was to discern if a single method of understanding coin distribution, derived from methods of understanding English coin distribution, could be applied to the distribution of coinage in

Norwegian coin finds in order to locate the probable locations for Norwegian mints. I believe, to some extent, this was successful. It is likely that “B” type coins and patriarchal cross type coins were minted in Bergen and Trondheim respectively. However, it would seem that, in Norway, there was no town, comparable to London, in regards to coin production.
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**Newspaper Articles**

