Summaries

Physical geography and historical regionality

By Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen

Physical geography is the natural starting-point for studies within the conglomerate discipline of historical geography. Even though the hardcore natural-deterministic ideas of nineteenth-century historical geographers have long been abandoned, it would be folly to ignore the importance of the physical surroundings for the people living in them. Certainly, the author of the present article supports the concept of a historical-geographical *possibilism*, as introduced by the French scholar Lucien Febvre, where physical geography is believed to have set the overall frame within which people through history have chosen various creative ways of utilizing the possibilities. The need for keeping the physical geography in mind is even more obvious when studying regional variations, as in this present case of Viking-Age and medieval Denmark.

The article gives a short presentation of Danish and Scanian studies, in which historical regionality and physical geography have been analysed and linked. Historical geography as such has in Denmark experienced a series of ups-and-downs, and even though we still await a continuation of the numerous interdisciplinary, state-funded initiatives of the 1990s dealing with various aspects of the historical, cultural landscape, a number of individually based studies by young scholars in recent years within the boundaries of the field of historical-geographical research, often using new technology such as GIS, do bring hope for the future.

The final part of the article seeks to provide a physical-geographical regionalisation of medieval Denmark (including Schleswig, Scania, Halland and Blekinge) primarily based on variations in soil and terrain, to the extent that these factors are likely to have played a role for the medieval inhabitants. The classification has suggested eight such physical-geographical regions, and by comparing these regions with the regions identified in the articles below, we may get a better foundation for interpreting the possible reasons for any intra-national, cultural variations within medieval Denmark – or at least be able to judge whether these were based on physical-geographical differences or not.

Historical geography and regionalisations.

Prospects and problems

By Peter Dam

Historical geography is an interdisciplinary discipline which attempts to combine the methodology of the two mother-disciplines history and geography as well as having its own methods. In this article the most

commonly used historical sources, mapping techniques and historical-geographical methods seen in relation to regionalisation are discussed. The most commonly used historical-geographical sources are categorised into three main-groups: 1) relics, 2) present-day collection and classification of sources and 3) sources from the early modern period that can be used as guidelines for the landscape in early periods. Mapping techniques or type are categorised into area, line and point-based maps – plus rastermaps which belong to a separate category. Finally, four methods are described: *retrogressive analyses*, *retrospective analyses*, *synchronic analyses* and the *regional comparative analyses*.

Historical regions produced by historical-geographical methods have boundaries following natural-geographical boundaries, mainly soil- and terrain variation, and administrative districts from the Middle Ages, mainly *herreder* (~ shires), *sysler* (local Jutish districts) and the three countries (Skåne, Sjælland and Jutland). Just to mention a few. The are no 'main' regional boundaries – there are many and various types of boundaries in the historical regions, depending on period, sources, methods and objective.

Can regionality be pointed out through archaeological material?

Some methodical and source critical aspects.

By Bertil Helgesson

The spread of archaeological and historical source material has been an important factor when discussing regional variations during the Iron Age and the Middle Ages in Southern Scandinavia. In this paper the conception of regionality is discussed and it is obvious that this may be expressed in many ways, depending on which historic problems are under discussion. The source material is, of course, an important variable but also social structure, social levels, natural geography, expressions in the periphery, anomalies and chronological duration. Regional studies on the basis of many categories of source material are necessary for understanding variations in landscape and society. Unfortunately there are too few of them. We must also be aware of the fact that the questions that we want to answer are basic and must be clearly expressed.

These different variables are applied on an historical course of events, i.e. the province of Scania around 1000 A.D. It is obvious that different regions in Southern Scandinavia played different roles during the transition from the Viking Age into the Middle Ages. The rather neglected fact that medieval Denmark was united from Jelling, Jutland, might have been a more nuanced process seen in a regional context.

The examination of the spread of source material can never be the goal of regional studies. The goal must be to express what the spread of the source material can tell us about landscape, social structure and human strategies. For this, more penetrating investigations are necessary involving several scientific disciplines.

Cultural difference, social networks and regionality in Viking-period archaeology

By Søren M. Sindbæk

This study surveys the wealth and diversity of archaeological material which has come to light in recent decades in Denmark and neighbouring lands. It shows that prominent cultural differences between regions

can be identified in this area in the Viking Period. Interpreting these differences in terms of identities, communications and social networks, it is argued that the most significant factor in forming cultural differences was not tribal grouping, resulting from barriers to contact or deliberate separation, but the impact of the gravitational fields of the most significant recurrent communicative events in Viking-Age Scandinavia: regional assemblies or thing-moots. Such occasions, at which large groups of people met with peers of their region, gave rise to shared cultural norms that were reflected in aspects of material culture.

No distinctive feature of material culture can be identified whose distribution coincides even roughly with the extent of the medieval Danish kingdom. This does not imply that a common kingdom did not exist; rather that the network holding it together was constituted differently from those which sustained its provinces. There was no common assembly for the entire kingdom and thus no series of focal events to support the dissemination of common culture. As a concept and a political dominion 'Denmark' existed in some form throughout the Viking Age. But for most people within Denmark it meant a relatively distant and faint association compared with those within the districts or 'lands' where people met regularly.

Region, network and material culture

By Jette Linaa

Plotting phenomena onto maps is a basic archaeological craft. Numerous works by distinguished scholars have given us hundreds of maps where areas with similar phenomena such as brooches, grave equipment, pots etc. have been pronounced to be regions. But what constitutes a region? How do we define regions, sub-regions, local groups etc? Are the archaeological regions of today of any relevance to past society? Or are they an analytical tool? Our insight into the archaeological record, the ruins of past societies, is increasing rapidly. We are faced with traces of a massive diversity, where no single or simple explanation, geographical or otherwise, seems to be sufficient. So should we use the region today, or should we abandon it? This article offers a few preliminary thoughts on the nature and relevance of regions based on observations in medieval north Zealand.

Regionality and language contact during the Viking Age and the Middle Ages

By Peder Gammeltoft and Jakob Povl Holck

This article is a comparative analysis of two important influences on Southern Scandinavia during the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages, namely the Anglo-Saxon and the Slavic (Wendish) cultures. The historical and archaeological evidence for these two influences are well known and established beyond doubt. But how do these influences manifest themselves in the linguistic landscape in Southern Scandinavia – are they regional in character, or even supra-regional?

By paying careful attention to the linguistic differences between Scandinavian and Old English/Wendish, it is possible to establish a number of criteria by which it is possible to determine the origin of a word. The result of the analysis is that Old English has left a relatively large number of traces in the Scandinavian word stock, whereas Wendish is almost absent. By integrating place-names of Old English and Wendish origin into the survey, it is possible to modify this picture

somewhat. The influence from Old English is mainly connected to learning and Christianity and to some extent to the sphere of nobility, seemingly spurred by a relatively high degree of bilingualism. The Wendish influence, on the other hand, seems to be related to a limited, but relatively concentrated settlement in Lolland, Falster and Møn in Denmark and to trade. The status of the Wendish language was however not very high, whereas Old English – being to a great extent associated with the introduction of Christianity – appears to have been of high status. The close linguistic relationship of Scandinavian with Old English may also have been a contributing factor.

Regionality in Danish place names with focus on torp-, rød-, tved- and holt-names

By Birgit Eggert

In the author's opinion there is a connection between the four place-name types in *-torp*, *-rød*, *-tved* and *-holt*, when we are talking about distribution, age and their situation in settlement history. All the four name types belong to the Viking Age and the Middle Ages. The *torp*-names reflect a new colonization of the mother town's land, as well as reclamation of new land. The clearing names in *-rød* and *-tved* must reflect colonization of woodland, as the *holt*-names also do. But where the clearing names signify that the wood has been removed, the *holt*-names tell either of the former wood that existed before the clearing or that people moved into the wood without clearing it. The four place-name types are all inter-Nordic phenomena which spread out over the national borders. The names in *-torp* are found in all the Nordic countries as well as in the Viking colonies in the Danelaw and Normandy, but with a huge concentration in Denmark and in the southern part of Sweden. The *rød*-names are found mainly in the south and east of Denmark, as well as in Sweden and Norway, while the *tved*-names are found further west in Denmark, the Danelaw and Normandy as well as in Norway. But in Sweden there are only very few *tved*-names. The *holt*-names on the other hand are found in large numbers in all the Scandinavian countries, but like the *rød*-names they are absent from the Danelaw and Normandy. None of the four name types are thus typical just for Denmark, and therefore their regionality has to be seen in a larger perspective than a national one.

The introduction of a regulated coin economy in a geographical perspective, c. 600-ca. 1150

By Jens Christian Moesgaard

In Viking-Age Denmark, coins were predominantly used by weight along with ingots and other silver artefacts. They were bent and pecked in order to test the alloy, and they were cut to make up small change. However, another form of coin use emerged at various places and at various times: the use at tale (by number) in a regulated currency, the way we use coins today. This system required a powerful coin issuer to guarantee the coin value, and coin users ready to accept it. The study of coin issues and circulation reveals that coins were used at tale in Ribe during the 8th-9th centuries, perhaps in Haithabu in the 9th century, and for certain in south-eastern Schleswig in the 10th century. A tentative attempt was made in the 970s and 980s to introduce a regulated currency on a national scale. During the 11th century, a regu-

lated currency slowly evolved, first in the cities and by the third quarter of the century all over the country except in Bornholm and Blekinge, where the weight economy was maintained well into the 12th century.

Regional differences in coinage and monetary circulation in Denmark c. 1050-c. 1500

By Jørgen Steen Jensen

A system of regular mints was introduced into Denmark during the reign of Cnut (c. 1018-35). It is evident that the coins from Jutland were struck to a lighter standard (c. ¾ gram) than the coins in Eastern Denmark (Scania and Sealand) (c. 1 gram). The difference is upheld during most of the 11th century and well into the 12th century, culminating, so to say, with the small bracteates of Northern Jutland in the middle of the 12th century, weighing between a fifth and a quarter of a gram.

In the 13th century there were several mints in the country, Scania, Sealand, Northern and Southern Jutland, but in the middle of the century there is a growing tendency to strike better coins at the mint of Lund than in the rest of the country. This is expressed in the strife between the archbishop of Lund and the king in 1298. The archbishop expresses his wish to have the Scanian denars struck to the same standard as the *denier tournois*. The archbishop was apparently successful in his argumentation, and the Lund coinage would seem to have been struck to this standard till the mint was closed in the 1370s, the other Danish mints striking a very debased coinage until they were closed after the death of King Christoffer II in 1332.

In the early 15th century Danish mints were established again, but the minting of the widespread copper sterlings c. 1420-c.1430/35 took place at four mints, one in each major province, Scania, Sealand, Funen and Jutland (Lund, Næstved, Odense and Randers). Apparently it is only a question of logistics which makes the establishing of the four mints important, as there is nothing to indicate any regional differences in the standard or fineness.

In most of the 2nd half of the 15th century only one mint existed, that of Malmø, but late in the century mints were established both in Copenhagen and Aalborg. Here again it rather seems to be a question of rational distribution.